



Bali and Lombok 8. – 21. 4. 2023

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We spent two weeks in Bali and Lombok in April. While the primary focus was on snorkeling, we also looked for some mammals where possible. Even though Bali is outright overpopulated and Lombok is only slightly less full of people, we ended up with at least 19 species, 15 of which we count as new (but some of them are IDed only as “this or that”). Obviously, in a heavily populated area, one can hardly expect some big animals: from our 19 species, 7 are bats, 4 rodents, 1 treeshrew and 1 shrew – the only larger mammals were 2 ungulates, 2 monkeys and 2 dolphins. Apart from mammals we saw 230 species of fish, 20 species of herps, but somewhat surprisingly only 78 species of birds. Lombok, in particular, is really shockingly birdless – we suspect that it’s persecution that keeps most birds well out of sight.

Both Bali and Lombok were nice to visit. At sea level it was terribly hot, but higher altitudes were surprisingly pleasant. There was some really good food in small venues and street stalls and an abundance of cheap accommodation that could be booked for the same day on booking.com. The only problem was moving around – public transport is increasingly hard to find on Bali, so we ended up taking mostly transfers arranged by the accommodations, which were quite expensive. I know that many foreigners are still renting motorbikes in Bali, but the traffic is terrible and strictly speaking you need a proper motorbike license, which we do not have, and there are all sorts of other risks (in the near future it may become impossible for foreigners anyway). Renting a car would have been an option – it would end up costing roughly the same, but after seeing the traffic, I was somewhat glad that I did not have to drive there. Still, even with a local driver, the constant traffic jam that fills half of the island means that journey times were surprisingly long. The traffic in Lombok was much quieter and renting a car was the best option. We booked boat tickets online for a direct boat from Amed to Gili, hoping to save some time, but after paying online we learned that all such boats had been canceled months ago as the Amed “harbor” was deemed unsafe by the authorities. Why they still sell the tickets is a mystery to me – we almost considered the money lost, but we were eventually able to contact the company and they put us on a boat from another company – from Padangbai, to which they also arranged a transfer. An interesting aspect of logistics on both islands was that everything is done on WhatsApp – lodge bookings, transfers, car rental.



Indopacific Bottlenose Dolphins

We stayed the first 3 nights in **Amed** for snorkeling, during which we saw **Indopacific Bottlenose Dolphins** from the shore – they were close enough to ID to species. A night walk around the area filled mainly with tourist accommodations brought only an unidentified small rodent; there were also bats flying in the evening above the beaches, but we did not get any reasonable photos.



Unidentified bat



Indomalayan Pencil-tailed Tree Mice

For the next two days we moved to Gili, where we only saw some more unidentified bats in flight. After a short hop to Lombok, we rented a car for two days and headed to **Sembalun**, where a good paved road crosses the Rinjani massif east of the volcano at about 1600 meters a.s.l. The road south of the pass goes through some beautiful forest before it reaches some plantations and eventually a village. It had quite some traffic in the evening, but that relatively quickly died out. We explored some of the forest trails that branch off the road with no results, but then the road itself has proven to be the main highlight. With IR we found a handful of rodents on branches along the road that are most likely **Indomalayan Pencil-tailed Tree Mice**, a species that is not known from literature to even occur in Lombok, but Vladimir Dinets agrees that this should be it (he has also kindly provided IDs on further rodents from the trip). **Diadem Roundleaf Bats** were sometimes hanging directly above the road and there were also **Rousettus** and **Cynopterus** bats on the trees. These we could not ID to species, but there aren't that many possibilities – *Rousettus* should be *amplexicaudatus* or *leschenaultii* and for *Cynopterus* the options are apparently *brachyotis*, *horsfieldii*, *nusatenggara* or *titt-haecheilus*. In the plantations we also spotted a small carnivore, possibly a civet, but we got no usable photos unfortunately and the animal quickly



Cynopterus sp.



Diadem Roundleaf Bat



Rousettus sp.

disappeared. In the forest, we heard calls of the Rinjani Scops Owl, the only endemic bird of Lombok.

During the day, we found some **Javan Lutungs** right at the pass; **Long-tailed Macaques** were common (as they were at other places in both Lombok and Bali). A few kms south from the end of the mountain road, in a small isolated forest around some temple ruins, we again saw both species of monkeys. On the south coast, we visited **Goa Bangkang Prabhu**, apparently a rather famous bat cave. For a small fee we could walk the cave system with a guide, who seemed mildly annoyed by how long we took to photograph the bats, but allowed us pretty much free reign. The variety of bats in the cave is pretty impressive: there are **Black-bearded Tomb Bats**, **Wrinkle-lipped Bats** and then some species of **Rousettus** (the same possibilities as above), **Minopterus** (blepotis, australis or shortridgei) and **Rhinolophus** (pusillus, affinis, acuminatus, keyensis or luctus). Again, these are terribly difficult to ID to species, but as we have so far seen neither of the possibilities, we are happy to count them as a new species. Lombok truly is a bat island!



Javan Lutung



Long-tailed Macaques



Miniopterus sp.



Rhinolophus sp.



Wrinkle-lipped Bats



Rousettus sp.



Black-bearded Tomb Bats



Pantropical Spotted Dolphin



Geoffroy's Rousettes

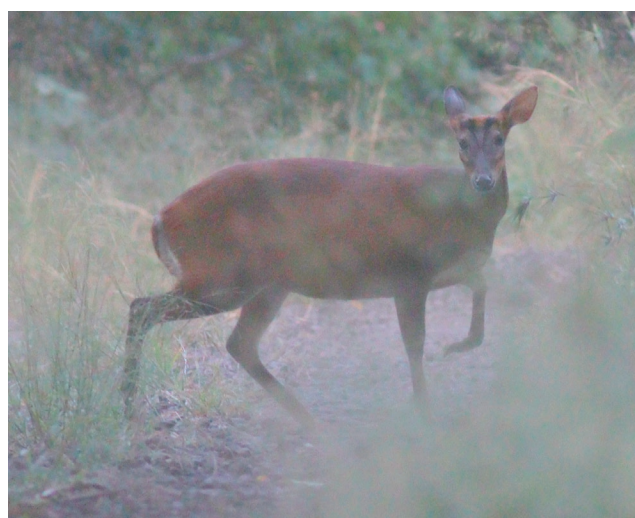
We returned back to Bali using the same company as on the way to Lombok, Ekajaya. Compared to some of the other speedboats, these are a bit bigger and slower, which has the main advantage that you can safely stay on the top deck with fantastic views of the ocean, which brought us some **Pantropical Spotted Dolphin**. Photography is, however, quite challenging, due to the violent motions of the sea.

We sailed to Padangbai and stayed there. On the way from Padangbai to the next destination, we asked the driver to briefly stop at **Pura Goa Lawah**. There was some religious ceremony and the temple was full of people, but the staff knew exactly what we were looking for and they led us through a back path straight to a place from which we could see the **Geoffroy's Rousette** colony without disturbing the ceremony. This colony is well known and the bats has been IDed over and over – as this species also occurs on Lombok, the Rousettes seen there could have been the same species and thus barring further ID they are not an extra species.

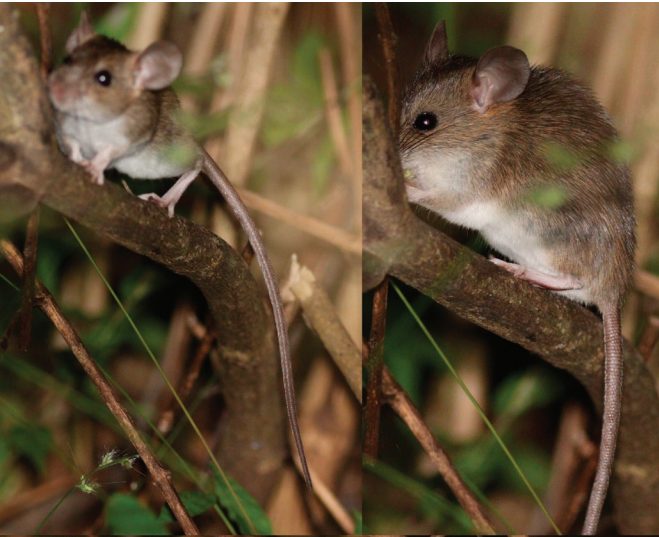
For the next two nights, we, following Michael Johnson's report, booked a stay in the "ecolodge" in the **Plataran Menjangan Resort**, which sits in a forest right next to West Bali NP. This is a truly amazing way to get unrestricted access to an interesting area for a somewhat reasonable cost. The ecolodge has private rooms with a shared bathroom and common areas, but we were the only guests, so we had it all to ourselves. It's some 1.5 kms walk from the central area of the resort (where the other guests stay and where you get breakfast, a restaurant and a snorkeling pier) and you can ask to be driven there and back in a "buggy" anytime you want. There are multiple roads and trails in the area which we walked in both day and night. **Javan Rusa** are very common, often grazing right next to the resort buildings, **Southern Red Muntjac** was seen only twice, further in the forest. Some reports claimed Black-striped Squirrels in the area but the two that we saw looked fine for **Plantain Squirrels**. Night walks produ-



Javan Rusa



Southern Red Muntjac



Indomalayan Pencil-tailed Tree Mouse



Plantain Squirrel

ced another **Indomalayan Pencil-tailed Tree Mouse**. The Plataran grounds were quite productive (for Bali standards) for birds, including the endemic Bali Starling.

From West Bali we backtracked to **Bedugul** to visit the botanical gardens. The first evening we walked to the western end of the village where a road leads uphill through the forest to some geothermal installations. There was a closed gate but it was easy to bypass; in the forest there are some mountain biking trails and tourist shelters but nobody was there in the evening.

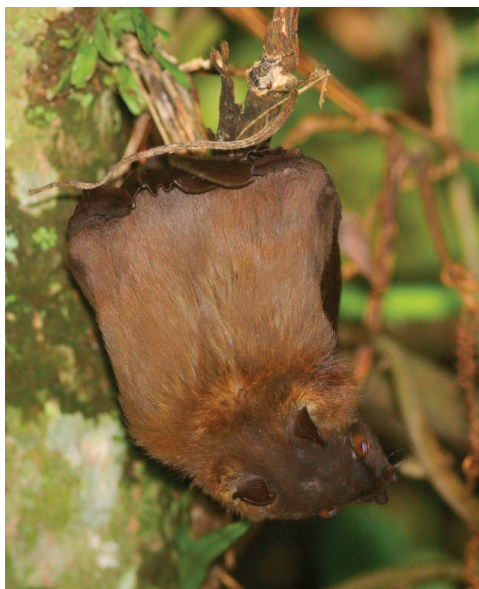
A few hundred meters before reaching the forest we saw a **Horsfield's Treeshrew**. A night walk in the forest brought some IR signals (probably from small rodents), but no animals were seen. Returning through the agricultural landscape, we found first a **Cynopterus** bat - here, the options are brachyotis, sphinx, horsfieldii, nusatenggara or titthaecheilus, but Carlos N. G. Bocos, who has provided us with bat ID hints throughout the trip, comments that „ ...I would exclude brachyotis and sphinx, attending to the ears. I don't see any white rim, they are quite short and rounded and subtly notched. The dark face is interesting in my opinion as I haven't seen any dark-faced Cynopterus. I wonder if the animal is C. nusatenggara but I don't have experience with the species.“

However the main stars of this area were **Asian House Shrews**. At first we noticed some activity in a small field with IR, but nothing could really be seen. Then Ivana made a loud scream – from my point of view for absolutely no reason, so I was quite confused. It turned out that the shrews were really loud and startled her – but on a frequency that I don't hear at all. Eventually the shrews allowed us to take some pictures; on the next walk, we found several more in various places mostly close to houses.



Horsfield's Treeshrew

In the garbage around the creek in the village there were some really



Cynopterus sp.



Asian House Shrew



Brown Rat

large rats, which should be **Brown Rats** – according to Vladimir, all other rats on Bali are smaller and have lighter belly. A few hundred meters further, there was a markedly different rat with white belly. Vladimir suggests **Dark-tailed Tree Rat**, commenting that „ .. is tricky because it's possibly a juvenile. If it's a Niviventer, there are two options: *N. bukit* and *N. cremoriventer*. The former has pale feet and bicolored tail while the latter has white feet with dark stripe and uniform tail, so should be the latter.“ Following the path that leads north around the southernmost tip of the gardens (keeping the garden wall on your right), one easily finds a rubbish dump on the other side of the wall – there were some further rodents, but we got no pictures. Further north along the wall there is an opening that allows a clandestine night visit to the gardens; we took the opportunity but found only another **Asian House Shrew**. Daytime birding walks in the gardens brought quite some birds and **Plantain Squirrels, Horsfield's Threeshrews** and **Long-tailed Macaques**.

Following Paul Carter's reports, we then went to **Uluwatu** to look for Dugongs from the coast, both at the Uluwatu Beach and Uluwatu Temple. This was not productive for mammals, but we were able to watch Green Turtles and a Black-tipped Reef Shark from the cliffs of the temple. A night walk in the area brought nothing of note.

Mammal list:

- Javan Lutung
- Long-tailed Macaque
- Javan Rusa
- Southern Red Muntjac
- Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin
- Pantropical Spotted Dolphin
- Horsfield's Treeshrew
- Asian House Shrew
- Plantain Squirrel
- Brown Rat
- Indomalayan Pencil-tailed Tree Mouse
- Dark-tailed Tree Rat
- Geoffroy's Rousette
- Wrinkle-lipped Bat
- Diadem Roundleaf Bat
- Black-bearded Tomb Bat
- Cynopterus sp.*
- Miniopterus sp.*
- Rhinolophus sp.*



Dark-tailed Tree Rat