

MOLUCCAS 2019

Though the Moluccas has over 100 endemic bird species, the mammals of the region are extremely poorly-known and seldom looked for. Though our trip was bird-focussed, we tried to include as many mammals as possible. This report gives you an idea of what can be seen with a little bit of effort. Obviously, a mammal-orientated trip here would yield far more bats, and rodents.

The Moluccas is home to 160 mammals, 29 of which are endemic. The status of many is not well-known, though over the past five years, I've made numerous visits to the islands and gained more knowledge on what is possible to see. On the three week visit in August 2019, we recorded 27 mammals, of which 7 are endemic. Additionally, 8 different bats and rodents could not be ID. Many of the species are threatened due to high hunting pressure, for food.

The bird report, available below, includes our mammal list, and photos of several of these. For a more detailed account on the mammals, below is a summary:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1w5Jc2CMnBBVFw2GQkmWMuNrXf0gmRcAe/view>

We visited nine islands; Ternate, Morotai, Bacan, Obi, Seram, Ambon, Boano, Buru and Yamdena.

Ternate: Some of us spent a day in Ternate, pre-tour. Gardens near the city had very good activity at night, with several Blue-eyed Cuscus (endemic to just Ternate and Tidore), Halmahera Bare-backed Fruit-bat, North Moluccan and Island Flying Foxes.



Blue-eyed Cuscus and North Moluccan Flying Fox

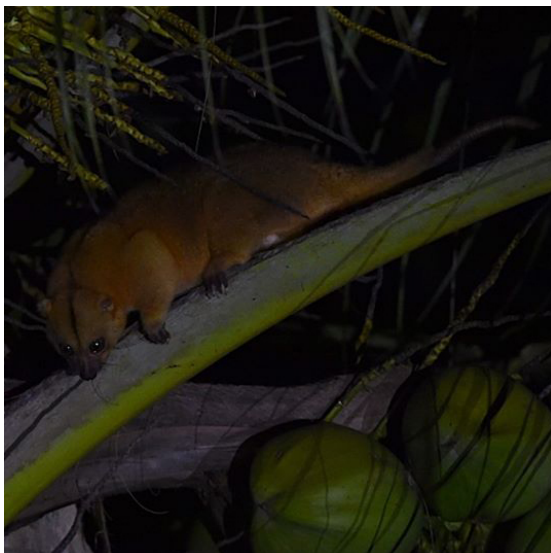
Morotai: A single night, around two hours at the plantations and gardens near the main town delivered a number of Halmahera Bare-backed Fruit-bats and two Halmahera Rats

Bacan: A single night, a couple of hours at secondary forest near the main town, delivered one Ornate Cuscus, endemic to the North Moluccas and a species that we rarely see on the better-known Halmahera, and one Halmahera Rat

Obi: 3 nights, spending few hours at night, delivered Rotschild's Cuscus (endemic), Moluccan Flying Fox, Halmahera Bare-backed Fruit Bat and Obi Melomys (endemic).



Moluccan Flying Fox and Halmahera Bare-backed Fruit-bat



Rotschild's Cuscus and Obi Melomys (Photographs by Abdelhamid Bizid)

Seram: 3 nights, spending few hours at night, delivered Temmincks, Moluccan, Black-bearded and Seram Flying Foxes, loads of Nyctimenes sp, Northern

Common Cuscus and Common Spotted Cuscus. At daytime, we found a number of Arcuate Horseshoe Bats roosting inside culvers under the Trans-Seram Highway and a big cave near Sawai hosted a large colony of Greenish Bare-backed Fruit Bats.



Temminck's Flying Fox and Arcuate Horseshoe Bat

Buru: 3 nights, spending few hours at night, delivered very similar results than Seram, though no Common Spotted Cuscus or Nyctimenes but here was the only place where we had good views of Moluccan Bare-backed Fruit-bat.

Ambon: a single Black-bearded Flying Fox was seen flying above the city, at daytime. Interesting record as recent surveys failed to record it on the island.

Kei Kecil: We spent a single night out. Mammal highlight of the island was the Kei Flying Fox – the islands only endemic mammal, which gave us excellent views at close range. Dagger-toothed Long-nosed Fruit Bat and Beccari's Sheath-tailed Bat were also observed



Kei Flying Fox and Beccari's Sheat-tailed Bat

Tanimbar: 3 nights out, spending few hours out, didnt deliver much as expected, but Greenish Bare-backed Fruit-bat, Black-bearded Flying Fox and one Yamdena Island Melomys a bit too brief. We did visit a couple of caves at daytime. One hosted a big cluster of *Miniopterus* sp. And the other hosted at least, Kei Horseshoe Bat, Diadem Leafnosed Bat and *Miniopterus* sp. We also found a Keast's Tube-nosed Fruit-bat at roost.



Systematic List

Moluccas endemics are indicated with a M. Introduced species are indicated with an I

LIST OF MAMMALS RECORDED

Common Spotted Cuscus *Spilocuscus maculatus*
Rothschild's Cuscus *Phalanger rothschildi* M
Northern Common Cuscus *Phalanger orientalis*
Blue-eyed Cuscus *Phalanger matabiru* M
North Moluccas Flying Fox *Pteropus caniceps* M
Island Flying Fox *Pteropus hypomelanus*
Seram Flying Fox *Pteropus ocularis* M
Moluccan Flying Fox *Pteropus chrysoproctus* M
Black-bearded Flying Fox *Pteropus melanopogon*
Kei Flying Fox *Pteropus keyensis* M
Halmahera Bare-backed Fruit Bat *Dobsonia crenulata* M
Moluccan Bare-backed Fruit Bat *Dobsonia moluccensis* M
Keast's Tube-nosed Fruit Bat *Nyctimene keasti*
Dagger-toothed Long-nosed Fruit Bat *MacroGLOSSUS minimus*
Arcuate horseshoe Bat *Rhinolophus arcuatus*
Diadem leaf-nosed Bat *Hipposideros diadema*

Beccari's Sheath-tailed Bat *Emballonura beccarii*
Maluku Myotis *Myotis moluccarum*
Sperm Whale *Physeter macrocephalus*
Indo-Pacific Bottle-nosed Dolphin *Tursiops aduncus*
Spinner Dolphin *Stenella longirostris rufiventris*
Obi Mosaic-tailed Rat *Melomys obiensis*
Yamdena Mosaic-tailed Rat *Melomys cooperae*
Polynesian Rat *Rattus exulans* I
Javan Deer *Rusa timorensis* I
Common Palm Civet *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus* I