

Philippines 10/01 – 8/02/2015

Luzon and Mindoro

Introduction

This report is based on an 11 weeks trip to Thailand, Laos and the Philippines on which I was joined by my girlfriend Thai Kong. We travelled 4 weeks by public transport on Luzon and Mindoro and visited the following sites for bird watching: Subic Bay, Candaba Marsh, Banaue (Mt. Polis), Los Banos (Mt. Makiling) and Siburan Forest. It was not just a birding holiday, for we enjoyed some spectacular landscapes or a few days on the beach as well.

Climate

While visiting the country, the weather was generally fine, sunny and warm. But in the mountains of northern Luzon it rained every day (not all the time though) and the temperature was rather cold early in the morning and at night. Clouds and mist made bird watching on Mt. Polis almost impossible. People told me that April would be the perfect month to visit Banaue and Sagada.

Visa

As a German no visa was required for a stay of up to 30 days. The police at Manila airport told me, that it would be no problem at all to get an extension for a small fee for a maximum of 3 months in total. This could be done directly at the airport.

How to get there

We flew from Bangkok to Manila with Philippine Airline for 175 Euro return p.p.. This very cheap flight was booked online through expedia. There must be lots of flights with many different airlines from Europe to Manila or Cebu.

Getting around

To travel around we used buses for the longer distances, Jeepneys for journeys up to two hours or in cities. To go bird watching we chartered taxis, trikes or motorbike taxis or rented a motorbike. To get to Mindoro we took a ferry. Generally we found it easy to travel around with public transport. Buses or Jeepneys departed mostly often and were leaving and arriving in time. Only in northern Luzon transport was less frequent.

Money

The currency in the Philippines is called Piso or Peso. At the time we were in the country the exchange rate was about 45 Piso for one Dollar and 50 for one Euro. In some hotels it was

possible to pay the bill with credit card. ATMs were available in towns. In smaller places like for example Bulalacao we found a money changer to exchange some Dollars or Euros.

Safety

We thought the Philippines to be a very safe country to travel. But be careful in Manila, especially at night. I recommend staying in a quiet and safe district, like Ermita.

Language

English is widely spoken on the Philippines.

People

People on the Philippines were generally extremely friendly, honest and helpful. It was a pleasure for us to travel through this country using public transport.

Food

Food is a bit Americanized with lots of fast food chains, burger restaurants and so on. But there is also delicious local food like Chicken Pinakbet, Nilagang Baka, Beef or Oxtail Kare-Kare, Chicken Curry, Buffalo-Soup and tasty fresh seafood along the coasts. But generally the food cannot match with other Asian countries like Thailand, Indonesia or Vietnam and lacks spices (chilies).

Accommodation

We generally stayed in cheaper or middleclass hotels and paid between 600 and 1800 Piso per night for a double room with attached bathroom. We found accommodation to be more expensive than in Thailand or Laos.

Books/Reports

As a field guide I had the very good “Birds of the Philippines” by Kennedy, Gonzales and Dickinson. Trip reports I used were from Field Guides – Dave Stejskal and Mark Villa 2013, Rockjumper 2011 and Birdtours 2001.

Acknowledgement

Thanks a lot to Segfredo R. Serrano for his kind help and for letting me use some of his pictures. I would also like to thank my friend Thomas Herzog for editing this report.

Itinerary

10/01/2015 6pm flight to Manila (Philippine Airlines, 3h, 175 Euro return). Hotel near Airport (3500 Peso). Earthquake at night.

- 11/01/2015 Taxi (150 P) to bus terminal. Bus to Olangapo (4h, 225P). Taxi with driver Rhoi to Hotel Kokomos at Baloy Beach (1700P, quiet, directly at the beach). He agreed to drive me to Subic Bay for birding for 1000P/half day.
- 12/01/2015 5am with Rhoi to Subic Bay Forest. Excellent bird watching. Afternoon at the beach. Tasty dinner at Blue Rock Resort.
- 13/01/2015 Birding with Rhoi. Very Good!
- 14/01/2015 Trike to bus station. Bus to Dau (1.5h, 140P). Trike to Angeles. Hotel Marble Inn (1200P, OK). Not a nice city. Many bars with girls, terrible!
- 15/01/2015 with rented motorbike (300P for 24h) to Candaba Marsh via Magalang and Santa Ana. Takes about 2 hours. Have to ask directions many times. Enjoyable birding together with some local wildlife photographers and birders.
- 16/01/2015 5am pick up for a prearranged tour to Mount Pinatubo (Amega Travel, 2700Peso p.p. incl. lunch). 2.5 hours drive to the starting point of an easy hike to the scenic crater. Worth it!
- 17/01/2015 Bus to Baguio (5h, 320 P). The city is full of tourists and we only found a room in the noisy, dirty and overprized Pension Ferrioni (1200 P). City Market and Benham Park. All restaurants fully booked.
- 18/01/2015 Bus to Sagada (4.5h, 220 P, spectacular mountain scenery). Sagada Homestay (600 P, OK). Rain all night.
- 19/01/2015 less rain in the morning. Lugong Cliffs and Lumiang Cave. Good birding around the cave and at forest patches. Walk to pretty rice terraces. Delicious chicken curry at Bana`s Café.
- 20/01/2015 Jeepney to Bontoc (30min), change to Jeepney to Banaue (2.5h, 150 P). Beautiful scenery. Friendly and nice hotel Banaue View Inn (garden and view from our balcony, 1000 P, bargained). We meet trike driver Jun and arrange 3 tours with him. We have to pay him 700 P for Mt. Polis, and 1000 P for Hapao and Batad (all day).
- 21/01/2015 5:30am pick up from Jun at our hotel. Drive up Mt. Polis to Virgin Maria. Fantastic view at first morning light. Later thick clouds make birding impossible. Afternoon birding in the garden of Banaue Hotel.
- 22/01/2015 Rain all night. 9am with Jun to Hapao on a terrible, muddy road. We spend hours walking through the wonderful rice terraces, the village and forest at village edge with guide Joseph (300 P). A very special place and a highlight of our trip! Bath at the hot springs behind the terraces in a pool where the hot water was mixed with water from the river – very pleasant. And the river holds Luzon Water Redstart.

- 23/01/2015 7am with Jun to the saddlepoint near Batad. From there we hike one hour to Batad. Many birds at forest edge. Beautiful and impressing rice terraces again. Different from Hapao and more touristy.
- 24/01/2015 visit small market. Bus to Manila 7pm (450 P, 9h)
- 25/01/2015 arrival Manila 4am. Taxi to bus station where we can catch a "Greenliner" bus to Los Banos (90 P, 2h). Jeepney to UP campus, forestry department next to the Alumni Guesthouse (1000 P). Are lucky that nobody is staying there except the very helpful housekeeper and have got the whole house incl. kitchen for ourselves. Short visit to the Botanical Garden. Arrange an early visit on the 27th with one of the stuff. Shopping and dinner in good restaurant "Spy C Kitchen" outside the campus. Easy to reach by Jeepney.
- 26/01/2015 5:30am with motorbike taxi (70 P) and guide Henry (500 P, a must if alone? Did not allow me to go on my own) from the NP entrance gate to Station 7. Birding the trail to the mud-springs and all the way back to the park entrance.
- 27/01/2015 6am Botanical Garden. Sonny opens the gate for me (pay him 300 P for this service). Good birding around the stream (Indigo-banded Kingfisher !!) and on the Eco-Trail Loop. Afternoon hitch to Agri Park (Jubilee Ville). Unsuccessful search for Spotted Buttonquail.
- 28/01/2015 Jeepney to SM-Crossing in Calamba (20P). Jeepney (8 P) to Turbina Bus Station. Bus "Jam Liner" to Batangas Pier (87 P, 1,5h). Ferry to Abra de Illog on Mindoro (260 P, 3h). Bus to Sablayan via Mamburao and Santa Cruz (220 P, 3h). This bus was already on the ferry and we take our seats before arriving at Mindoro. Trike to simple Beach Resort, Adventure Park (800 P, OK but bit noisy).
- 29/01/2015 stroll through the village and its nice market with some food stalls. Walk to Lighthouse Hill along some mangroves. Dinner at the market.
- 30/01/2015 6:30am boat (250 P, 30min) to Pandan Island. Stay in a bungalow in the beautiful Pandan Island Resort (1600 P) on this "dream island". Very nice beach, good snorkeling, interesting birds in good forest. Walk on a trail through the forest to a bay called "Spanish Nose". Delicious buffet for dinner (470 P p.p., one buffet per day, lunch or dinner, is a must if staying at the resort).
- 31/01/2015 early morning birding on the forest trail. Lazy day and some snorkeling.
- 01/02/2015 walk to "Wild Lagoon". Boat back to "Adventure Park". Permit for the Penal Colony from the Tourist Office.

- 02/02/2015 5am trike (800 P) with driver Arnold (organized through hotel) to Lake Libuao and Siburan Forest in the Sablayan Prison and Penal Farm. Chat with some of the officers and the head of the prison. Get introduced to Inmate bird watching guide Archie (we pay him 300 or 500 P, am not sure anymore). Do not see many birds, because it's already bit late.
- 03/02/2015 4:45am motorbike (quicker) with Arnold to Siburan Forest. Excellent birding this time. Definitely a highlight of our trip! We are lucky to see most of the specialties!! Back to our hotel, van to San Jose (140 P, 2h). From there van to Bulalacao (150 P, 1.5h). Nice and quiet resort Philipa, situated 1km before the village (1000 P). Excellent dinner at the resort.
- 04/02/2015 walk into the village. Meal at the small market.
- 05/02/2015 Van to Roxas (80 P, 1h). Van to Calapan (180 P, 3.5h). Hotel Ma-Yie (850P, simple, bit smelly). Not much to see in town.
- 06/02/2015 Fast Cat to Batangas (250 P, 1.25h). Bus to Manila (160 P, 2h). Taxi (100 P) to Hotel Soriente in Ermita (1800 P, very friendly, big clean rooms, quiet). Walk to Rizal-Park and to the old Spanish Quarter Intramuros. Old city wall, Cathedral, San Augustin church (oldest church in Manila).
- 07/02/2015 Shopping at Robinsons Mall. Walk along Marina Drive and through the streets of Ermita.
- 08/02/2015 Taxi (200 P) to the airport. Flight with Philippine Airlines to Bangkok. Taxi to hotel Banglumpoo Place.

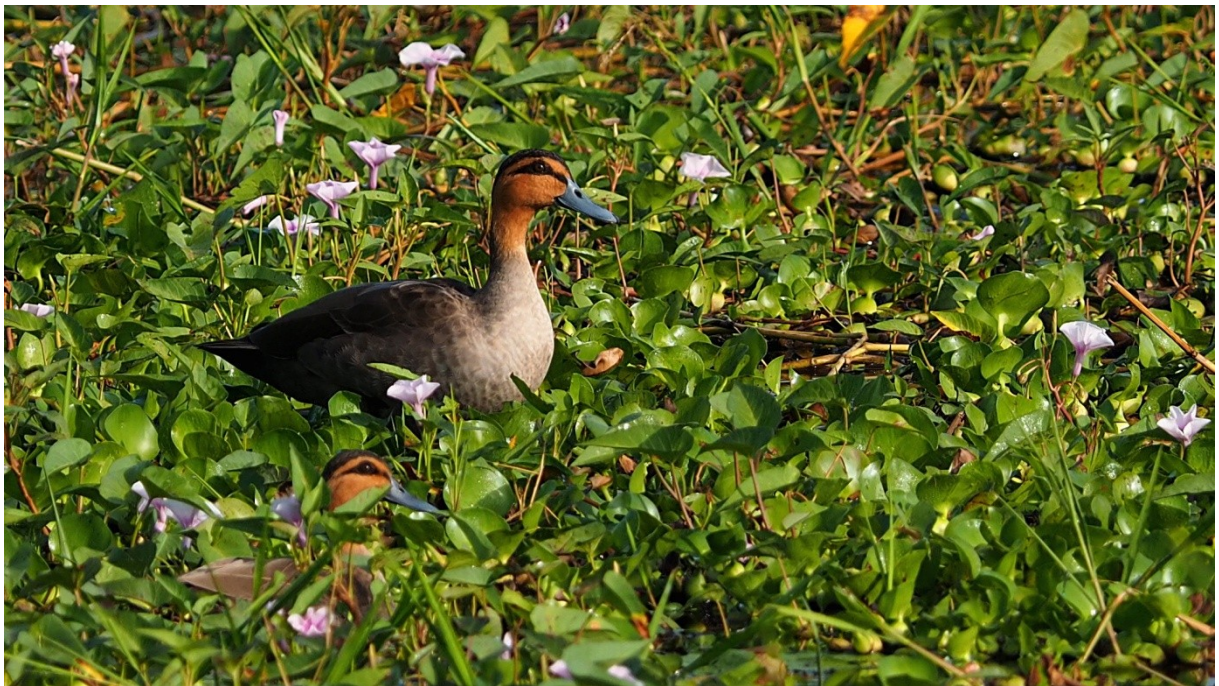
Subic Bay

This was our first birding spot in the Philippines. We went from Manila to Olongapo by bus (4 hours). At the bus terminal, taxi driver Rhoi offered us to bring us to a quiet hotel at Baloy Beach. As we thought him a nice man, we also arranged trips to the forest at Subic Bay with him for a very reasonable price. Paid him 1000 (20 Euro) from early morning to mid day. Other taxi drivers we spoke to later, asked already for a minimum of 700 P just for a drop off. We stopped wherever the habitat looked promising. We walked along the streets and on some of the trails, like number 5, 6, 7 or 9. The highly recommended trail at hill 394 is not accessible anymore; maybe it is with a permit. From our hotel in Baloy Beach it was a 20-30 minutes drive to the forest. I would recommend you to stay at Baloy Beach rather than in Olongapo. It is bit further to Subic Bay but definitely more pleasant. We found our hotel Kokomos (1700 P) a nice and quiet place. Good food is available at the Blue Rock restaurant, but rooms there are probably noisy, because bar and restaurant are open 24 hours. Some of the guests were disgusting folks too (ugly and noisy old men with young local women).

We spent two days of excellent and easy birding in this lowland forest. Would have liked to have one more day, but Rhoi was busy/booked and we did not like to look for another driver. This forest is part of the Subic Freeport Zone, the former US-Navy Base, but there are no problems/restrictions getting there. This might be the reason why the forest is still intact.

4	Brahminy Kite	1	Philippine Hawk-Eagle
1	Red Junglefowl	4	Philippine Green Pigeon
7	White-eared Brown-Dove	f	Green Imperial Pigeon
f	Guiabero	1	Blue-naped Parrot
2	Green-tailed Racquet-tail	4	Red-crested Malkoha
1	Philippine Coucal	2	Rufous Coucal
f	Pygmy Swiftlet	c	Glossy Swiftlet
3	Purple Needletail	f	Whiskered Treeswift
4	Brown-breasted Kingfisher	fc	Rufous-crowned Bee-eater
5	Luzon Hornbill	2	Philippine Pygmy Woodpecker
1	Sooty Woodpecker	1	Luzon Flameback
f	Bar-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	1	Blackish Cuckoo-shrike
fc	Ashy Minivet	c	Luzon (Philippine) Bulbul
1	Balicassiao	2	White-lored Oriole
2	White-lored Oriole	fc	Elegant Tit
1	Stripe-headed Rhabdornis	1	Blue-headed Fantail
f	White-breasted Wood-swallow	f	Brown Shrike
fc	Coletto	f	Large-billed Crow
f	Tawny Grassbird		

Candaba Marsh





Philippine Duck, Buff-banded Rail, Eastern Marsh Harrier (photos by Segfredo R. Serrano)

We rented a motorbike for 24h in Angeles at Soyti Motorbike Rental in the Fields Street (cheap, think it was less than 10 dollar). Fetched it late evening so that we were able to start very early in the morning. It took us almost two hours to get to the marsh and we had to ask directions 10 times. We drove via Magalang and Santa Ana, as we thought this would be on smaller roads and easier to drive for us. Fortunately we met some very friendly local wildlife photographers (among them Segfredo R. Serrano) and birders, who could tell us exactly where to look for the birds. First interesting bird we saw was a Watercock. Spent the morning observing the birds like Philippine Ducks, then we drove a circle around the marsh and made several bird watching stops. We returned to Angeles in the afternoon.

	Little Grebe	f	Purple Heron
f	Black-crowned Night-Heron	fc	Yellow Bittern
f	Cinnamon Bittern	f	Wandering Whistling Duck
100+	Philippine Duck	1	Eastern Marsh Harrier
fc	Barred Rail	f	White-browed Crake
fc	White-breasted Waterhen	2	Watercock
f	Purple Swampphen	12	Black-winged Stilt
1	Common Kingfisher	f	Blue-tailed Bee-eater
f	Singing Bushlark	fc	Pied Bushchat
c	Striated Grassbird	2	(Philippine) Pied Fantail
fc	Richards Pipit	f	Long-tailed Shrike
c	Chestnut Munia		





(Philippine) Pied Fantail, Striated Grassbird, Chestnut Munia (photos by Segfredo R. Serrano)

Sagada

We spent two nights in this pleasant village in the northern mountains of Luzon. Was quite a spectacular bus ride from Baguio. Sagada is famous for its caves and hanging coffins. During our stay it rained most of the time, but when the rain ceased and the sun came out, birding was good. We had a fantastic observation of a Scaly-feathered Malkoha on the path to Lumiang Cave. We birded around the village wherever the habitat looked promising. Sagada is not a must for birders, but we liked it as a stopover. Anyway, coming from Baguio, there would have been no connecting transport to Banaue the same day anymore.

1	Besra	1	Scale-feathered Malkoha
c	Elegant Tit	f	Sulphur-bellied Nuthatch
c	Chestnut-faced Babbler	2	Island Thrush
3	Eye-browed Thrush		Arctic Warbler
	Mountain Leaf-Warbler	f	Philippine (Luzon) Bush-Warbler
2	Mountain Verditer Flycatcher	2	Little Pied Flycatcher
fc	Blue-headed Fantail	c	Brown Shrike
f	Mountain Shrike	1	Lovely Sunbird
1	Buzzing Flowerpecker	c	Mountain White-eye





Banaue





It took us about 3 hours to get there from Sagada by Jeepney. We stayed in the friendly and quiet Banaue View Inn, overlooking the village. Banaue is famous for its wonderful ancient rice terraces. Those are not only found in Banaue itself, the most impressive ones lie in different villages in the area. You may reach those villages like Hapao or Batad by organized tour, rented car or taxi, by motorbike taxi (like we did) or public bus and hiking. The extremely steep and 2000 years old rice terraces are really worth visiting. You can spend hours walking around and across. The villages are small with lots of trees and small forests at their edges. We especially enjoyed Hapao (much less touristy than Batad) with its hot pools to relax after some hours walking. There is accommodation in Batad. Doing a 3 or 4 days hike seems a fantastic idea to me, when the weather is fine.

To get to Mt. Polis we also chartered a motorbike taxi to its peak (virgin Maria statue), but were unfortunate with the weather. Was beautiful to drive up early, starting in the very dark, but 10 minutes after reaching the summit, we were covered in clouds with a visibility of less than 10m. Heard parrots (Racquet-tails?) flying by, without seeing them at all. After waiting quite some time, we went further down, but there were almost no birds. We did not try another day, because the weather turned to worse the next days. It seemed not to be the perfect month for a visit. I think there are also public buses or Jeepneys to the summit. Hitching back should not be a problem I suppose.

The gardens of the more expensive Banaue Hotel are also worth a visit or an alternative place to stay if you are not on a tight budget.

1: Mt. Polis 2: Banaue Hotel 3: km 10 4: Hapao 5: Batad 6: Banaue View Inn

1	Cinnamon Bittern	4	4	White-eared Brown-Dove	5
2	Philippine Coucal	4	2	Scale-feathered Malkoha	1
2	Philippine Swiftlet	6			
f	Striated Swallow	2	c	Elegant Tit	
f	Sulphur-bellied Nuthatch	4	c	Chestnut-faced Babbler	1 - 5
1	Siberian Rubythroat	5	1	Luzon Water-Redstart	4
1	Pied Bushchat	4	f	Brown-headed Thrush	1 2
f	Eye-browed Thrush	1	fc	Arctic Warbler	4 5 6
fc	Mountain Leaf Warbler	4 6	1	Mountain Tailorbird	5
fc	Philippine (Luzon) Bush-Warbler	1	4	Mountain Verditer Flycatcher	5
f	Snowy-browed Flycatcher	5	3	Little Pied Flycatcher	4
fc	Blue-headed Fantail		f	Citrine Canary-Flycatcher	6
1	Black-naped Monarch	4 5	1	Green-backed Whistler	1
fc	Grey Wagtail		f	Paddyfield (Oriental) Pipit	1
f	Long-tailed Shrike	4	fc	Brown Shrike	5 6
f	Mountain Shrike	1	fc	Metallic-winged Sunbird	3
1	Lovely Sunbird	5	2	Bicolored Flowerpecker	5
c	Buzzing Flowerpecker		1	Fire-breasted Flowerpecker	5
2	Pygmy Flowerpecker	5	fc	Yellowish White-eye	2
c	Mountain White-eye	1 4 5	fc	Chestnut Munia	4

Los Banos/Mt. Makiling

We took a bus from Manila to reach Los Banos (2 hours). There we had to catch a Jeepney uphill to the forestry department of UP (University of the Philippines). We got dropped next to the Alumni-Guesthouse. We did not call there to make a reservation, but just showed up and were lucky to find the housekeeper immediately. He gave us a room for 1000 P and during our stay we had the whole house for ourselves and were allowed to use the kitchen

as well. When Thai was cooking, she also prepared some food for the friendly and helpful housekeeper. There is another guesthouse called Trees near the park entrance, few minutes walking distance from the Alumni. The guesthouse is perfectly situated at forest edge and some easy birding can be enjoyed from the terrace. The whole, huge campus complex is like a park. Green, some small woods, grassland, a river, big old trees! And the Botanical Garden is part of it. Next to the guesthouse is a small canteen where you may have your meals, but the far better option is to catch a Jeepney just to outside of the campus, where you can find lots of restaurants and supermarkets. We liked our vegetarian meals at “Spy C Kitchen” a lot.

We birded at the following sites:

1. Around the guesthouse.
2. At the Botanical Garden: The Botanical Garden opens at 8am. To arrange early morning birding you have to talk to the stuff and pay someone to open the gate for you at let’s say 6am. We came to know Sonny whom we paid 300P. Another advantage is that there are no other visitors until 8am. We searched (and found) the little stream for Indigo-banded Kingfisher, birded along the main road and did the Eco-Loop trail (Yellow-wattled Bulbul, Yellow-bellied Whistler).
Sonny: 0906-2047998
3. Mt. Makiling National Park: The entrance is only 5 minutes walking distance from the Guesthouse. Pre-arranged a motorbike-taxi to Station 7 (heard later that this is officially forbidden, but was suggested to us by the Park staff) and an early morning visit. Had to pay for a guide because the staff would not let me visit the NP alone. Had to pay Ranger Henry 500 P. Birded the path to the mud-springs and the way back to the entrance gate.
4. Agri Park, Jubilee Ville: About 10 km from the campus. Found a ride to this site one afternoon. Took a Jeepney back after dark. Rice fields and grassland. Searched unsuccessfully for Spotted Buttonquail. But saw Grass Owl flying in the light of our torch and some Java Sparrows. Early morning might be better.

f	Cinnamon Bittern	4	f	Yellow Bittern	4
f	Black-crowned Night-Heron	4			
1	Besra	1	2	Philippine Serpent-Eagle	2 3
2	Philippine Falconet	3	f	Barred Rail	4
f	White-browed Crake	4	1	White-breasted Waterhen	4
f	Little Ringed Plover	4	f	Wood Sandpiper	4
f	Colasisi	2	2	Philippine Drongo-Cuckoo	2
f	Red-crested Malkoha	2 3	f	Lesser Coucal	4
1	Eastern Grass-Owl	4	1	Philippine Scops-Owl	3

1	Indigo-banded Kingfisher	2	f	Brown-breasted Kingfisher	1 2
f	Rufous-crowned Bee-eater		f	Luzon (Tarictic) Hornbill	2 3
1	Philippine Pygmy Woodpecker	3	2	Luzon Flameback	3
f	Oriental Skylark	4	fc	Bar-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	3
2	Black-and-white Triller	3	20	Ashy Minivet	2 3
2	Yellow-wattled Bulbul	2	c	Balicassiao	3
3	Black-naped Oriole	4	1	Philippine Fairy-Bluebird	1
c	Elegant Tit	3	f	Sulphur-bellied Nuthatch	3
3	Stripe-headed Rhabdornis	1 3	c	Striated Grassbird	4
f	Zitting Cisticola	4	f	Grey-streaked Flycatcher	1 3
2	Yellow-bellied Whistler	2	f	White-breasted Wood-swallow	4
c	Brown Shrike		4	Chestnut-cheeked Starling	1
3	Flaming Sunbird	1 2	f	Red-keeled Flowerpecker	2
fc	Yellowish White-eye	3	3	Java Sparrow	4
c	Scaly-breasted Munia	4	c	Chestnut Munia	4

Sablayan/Siburan Forest

The friendly village Sablayan is situated on the west coast (Mindoro occidental) of Mindoro. It is a 3 hours drive from Abra de Illog, where we arrived with the ferry from Batangas or 8.5 hours by bus from Calapan (the way we went back to Manila. Our intention was to drive around the Island rather than going the same way back). In Sablayan you can find a handful of accommodations. We stayed at Adventure Camp (a kind of beach resort) in a simple room for 850 Peso. From there you can catch a boat to Pandan Island or walk to a little hill with a lighthouse called Parola Park or Lighthouse Hill, passing through some mangroves and forest. We usually had our meals at the friendly foodstalls at the lively market, which is a good place to buy fruit too. To visit the Sablayan Penal Colony and Siburan Forest you need to obtain a permit from the Tourist Office paying a small fee. They will then inform the Penal Colony about your arrival, so you must know the exact date of your visit there.

To get there I chartered a trike and a motorbike the following day (quicker) for 800 P through our hotel. It takes about an hour, so we left already at 4:45am. Be careful that the driver knows where to go. Our driver dropped us at Lake Libuao, where we found a guide,

insisting that this was the only place to visit. Until I could convince them, that we were at the wrong place a lot of time was already wasted. The lake itself is nice, with plenty of birds, but should be visited later in the day. When we reached the Penal Colony we had to register, then we were introduced to our bird guide Archie, who has been an inmate for 17 years. I enjoyed exploring the Siburan Forest with him very much, as he was a very nice guy and knew the birds and locations well. On the second day we followed a river bed uphill, which was very productive. Especially many pigeons of various kinds could be seen there. I was surprised to find such a warm and friendly atmosphere in this place (more than 3000 prisoners). I was welcomed heartily by the staff, the head of the prison and the inmates I have met. And birding was really excellent! A very special place indeed!!

1:	Siburan Forest	2:	Lake Libuao
fc	Philippine Duck 2	f	Brahminy Kite
1	Philippine Falconet 1		
1	Spotted Imperial Pigeon 1	1	Mindoro Imperial Pigeon 1
c	Green Imperial Pigeon 1	2	Metallic Pigeon 1
1	Mindoro Bleeding-heart (heard) 1	f	Pink-bellied Imp. Pigeon (heard) 1
f	Colasisi 1	f	Mindoro Racquet-tail 1
1	Philippine Coucal 1	1	Black-hooded Coucal 1
2	Philippine Drongo Cuckoo 1	1	Mindoro Hawk-Owl
2	Savannah Nightjar 1	1	Brown-breasted Kingfisher 1
f	Collared Kingfisher 2	f	Blue-tailed Bee-eater 2
f	Rufous-crowned Bee-eater	f	Mindoro Hornbill
2	Coppersmith Barbet 1	1	White-bellied Woodpecker 1
2	Black-bibbed Cuckoo-shrike 1	c	Balicassiao 1
fc	Coletto 1	f	Slender-billed Crow 1
fc	Scarlet-collared Flowerpecker 1		

Pandan Island



Pandan Island, off Sablayan is a beautiful small island covered with dense forest which also has a clean white beach with coconut trees. It is an excellent place to relax and enjoy a couple of quiet days. And it holds some very interesting birds too, which are fairly easy to see at the resort or along a trail that runs from the resort to Wild Lagoon or to Spanish Nose. The only place to stay is Pandan Island Resort. They offer nice bungalows at different prices. We stayed in a simple bungalow with terrace and a hammock under coconut trees for 1600 Peso (30 Euro). Every guest must have at least one buffet per day (lunch or dinner) which costs 470 Peso and is worth the money. The resort has a diving school too and offers trips around the island or to Apo Reef for diving. The reef right along the beach is pretty good for snorkeling and gear can be rented at the dive shop. 2 kinds of turtles breed on the beach and esp. Green Turtles are easy to watch when snorkeling. To get there takes only 30 minutes by boat from Sablayan Peer at a cost of 250 P for the two of us.

c	Tabon Scrubfowl	2	Plain Bush-Hen
2	Emerald Pigeon	1	Philippine Cuckoo-Dove
f	Green Imperial Pigeon	f	Collared Kingfisher
2	Common Koel	1	Lesser Coucal
f	Savannah Nightjar	1	Hooded Pitta
c	Philippine Pied Fantail	f	Mindoro Bulbul
1	Mangrove Flycatcher	1	Lowland White-eye

Birdlist Philippines

Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

Seen at Candaba Marsh

Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)

Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*)

Seen at Candaba Swamp

(Eastern) Great Egret (*Ardea (alba) modesta*)

Intermediate Egret (*Egretta intermedia*)

Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)

(Eastern) Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus (ibis) coromandus*)

Striated Heron (*Butorides striata*)

Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)

Singles at Agripark, few at Candaba Marsh.

Cinnamon Bittern (*Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*)

Singles at Candaba Swamp and Agripark. One at Hapao

Yellow Bittern (*Ixobrychus sinensis*)

More common than the previous species. Seen at Candaba Marsh and Agripark

Wandering Whistling Duck (*Dendrocygna arcuata*)

Few seen very well at Candaba Marsh

Philippine Duck (*Anas luzonica*) E

Hundreds at Candaba swamp, few dozen at Lake Libuao

Brahminy Kite (*Haliastur Indus*)

Singles found at Subic Bay and Siburan.

Eastern Marsh Harrier (*Circus spilonotus*)

A singleton at Candaba Marsh

Besra (*Accipiter virgatus*)

2 individuals observed at UP Campus in Los Banos, 1 at Sagada.

Philippine Serpent-Eagle (*Spilornis holospilus*) E

2 birds seen soaring over the forest at Mount Makiling NP and in the Botanical Garden.

Philippine Hawk-Eagle (*Nisaetus philippinensis*) E

A single observation at Subic Bay

Philippine Falconet (*Microhierax erythrogenys*) E

Two birds observed sitting on top of a dead tree near the entrance gate to Makiling NP. One more Falconet seen at Siburan forest.

Tabon Scrubfowl (*Megapodius cumingii*)

Common and rather tame on Pandan Island. Two individuals visited the resort in the mornings.

Red Junglefowl (*Gallus gallus*)

1 female seen along a track at Subic Bay

Barred Rail (*Gallirallus torquatus*)

Fairly common at Candaba Marsh, few at Agripark. Had beautiful looks at this species.

White-browed Crake (*Porzana cinerea*)

Several at Candaba Marsh and Agripark

White-breasted Waterhen (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*)

Fairly common at Candaba Marsh. A singleton at Agripark.

Plain Bush-Hen (*Amaurornis olivacea*) E

Two of those shy and secretive birds on Pandan Island.

Watercock (*Gallicrex cinerea*)

2 birds glimpsed at Candaba Marsh. Once hidden they did not show again.

Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)

Purple Swamphen (*Porphyrio porphyrio pulverulentus*)

Seen at Candaba Marsh

Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*) ???

Few at Agripark.

Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*)

Several in the paddies around Agripark.

Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*)

Black-winged Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*)

A dozen discovered at Candaba Marsh area

Whiskered Tern (*Chlidonias hybrida*)

Philippine Green Pigeon (*Treron axillaris*) E

4 individuals spotted at Subic Bay

Pink-necked Green-Pigeon (*Treron vernans*)

Several at Parola Park (Bundok Bayan) , Sablayan and around our Guesthouse in Bulalacao.

White-eared Brown-Dove (*Phapitreron leucotis*) E

Found at Subic Bay and Batad

Mindoro Imperial-Pigeon (*Ducula mindorensis*) E

Found a singleton of this Mindoro endemic at Siburan forest

Spotted Imperial-Pigeon (*Ducula carola*) E

Finally spotted a single bird among a flock of Green Imperial Pigeons at Siburan forest

Pink-bellied Imperial Pigeon (*Ducula poliocephala*) heard only

Heard them calling several times at Siburan forest, but did not manage to spot one. They were always hidden.

Green Imperial Pigeon (*Ducula aenea*)

Common at Siburan Forest. Also seen at Subic Bay and on Pandan Island

Metallic Pigeon (*Columba vitiensis*)

2 birds seen at Siburan forest

Philippine Cuckoo-Dove (*Macropygia tenuirostris*) E

One seen on Pandan Island.

Spotted Dove (*Streptopelia chinensis*)

Common.

Zebra Dove (*Geopelia striata*)

Emerald Dove (*Chalcophaps indica*)

A single bird on Pandan Island.

Mindoro Bleeding-heart (*Gallicolumba platenae*) (heard only)

Heard at Siburan forest. Found footprints in the sand at a stream where it came to drink. Just missed it by a few seconds!

Guaiabero (*Bolobopsittacus lunulatus*) E

Several seen at Subic Bay

Blue-naped Parrot (*Tanygnathus lucionensis*) E

One observation of a bird in a treetop at Subic Bay

Green Racquet-tail (*Prioniturus luconensis*) E

2 individuals observed at Subic Bay

Mindoro Racquet-tail (*Prionituru mindorensis*) E

Few birds seen flying at Siburan forest. Did not manage to get decent looks at a bird sitting.

Colasisi (Philippine Hanging Parrot) (*Loriculus philippensis*) E

Seen at Los Banos Bot. Garden and Siburan forest.

Philippine Drongo Cuckoo (*Surniculus velutinus*) E

Found at Siburan forest and Los Banos Botanical Garden.

Common Koel (*Eudynamis scolopacea*)

Seen at Pandan Island.

Scale-feathered Malkoha (*Dasylophus cumingi*) E

A wonderful observation of a bird sunbathing on the path to Lumiang Cave at Sagada. Watched it very close for 30 minutes! Also seen at Mt. Polis.

Red-crested Malkoha (*Dasylophus superciliosus*) E

Few of those pretty birds found at Subic Bay, Mt. Makiling NP and the Bot. Gardens,

Black-hooded Coucal (*Centropus steerii*) E

One bird seen flying on the walk back to the HQ of the prison at Siburan forest. Quite a surprise, cause I already thought I dipped with this Mindoro endemic. Heard two in the early morning, but they did not show. Lucky!

Greater Coucal (*Centropus sinensis*)

Lesser Coucal (*Centropus bengalensis*)

Found at Agripark, Los Banos.

Philippine Coucal (*Centropus viridis*) E

Seen at Hapao, Subic Bay and Siburan forest.

Rufous Coucal (*Centropus unirufus*) E

2 observations of this skulking species at Subic Bay. Had quite good looks.

Eastern Grass-Owl (*Tyto longimembris*)

One bird flew over the paddies at Agripark, Los Banos after dusk. Had it in my flashlight.

Philippine Scops-Owl (*Otus megalotis*) E

A single bird flew low next to me before dawn at Mt. Makiling NP near the food stalls at Station 7, just before the right turn to the mud springs.

Mindoro Hawk-Owl (*Ninox mindorensis*) E

One bird was flying around high just before dawn at the beginning of Siburan forest.

Great Eared Nightjar (*Eurostopodus macrotis*)

Savanna Nightjar (*Caprimulgus affinis*)

Seen at Pandan Island and Siburan forest.

Philippine Swiftlet (*Aerodramus mearnsi*) E

Only two at Banaue from the balcony of our Hotel Banaue View Inn.

Pygmy Swiftlet (*Collocalia troglodytes*) E

Few spotted among many Glossy Swiftlets at Subic Bay. Found them not easy to identify

Glossy Swiftlet (*Collocalia esculenta*)

common

Purple Needletail (*Hirundapus celebensis*)

3 birds found flying over the lowland forest at Subic Bay

Asian Palm-Swift (*Cypsiurus balasiensis*)

Whiskered Treeswift (*Hemiprocne comate*)

Several sitting at a telegraph line at Subic Bay

Common Kingfisher (Alcedo atthis)

Seen at several sites, like Lake Libuao or Candaba Swamp.

Indigo-banded Kingfisher (Alcedo cyanopectus) E

Searched for this goodie in the Botanical Garden. When we had already given up hope to find it, it suddenly sat on a stone of the stream flowing through the gardens!! One of the best birds of the trip!!!

Brown-breasted Kingfisher (Halcyon gularis) E

This recent split species was the commonest Kingfisher of the trip. Seen at Subic Bay, Los Banos Bot. Garden and Campus and at Siburan.

Collared Kingfisher (Halcyon chloris)

Seen in the mangroves around Sablayan and on Pandan Island

Rufous-crowned Bee-eater (Merops americanus) E

This bird (split from Blue-throated) was found at several sites, like Subic Bay or Mt. Makiling, Siburan. A beautiful bird often observed in best light

Blue-tailed Bee-eater (Merops philippinus)

Few seen at Lake Libuao, on the way to Siburan forest and at Candaba Marsh.

Luzon (Tarictic) Hornbill (Penelopides manilloe) E

Fairly common at Subic Bay, Mt. Makiling, Los Banos Campus and Botanical Garden.

Mindoro (Tarictic) Hornbill (Penelopides mindorensis) E

Not uncommon at Siburan forest

Coppersmith Barbet (Megalaima haemacephala)

This widespread species was seen at Siburan.

Philippine Pygmy Woodpecker (Dendrocopus maculates) E

2 birds at Subic Bay and a single bird at Mt. Makiling.

Sooty Woodpecker (Mulleripicus funebris) E

A female was finally spotted at Subic Bay

White-bellied Woodpecker (Dryocopus javensis)

Only observed at Siburan forest.

Luzon Flameback (*Chrysocolaptes haematribon*) E

2 observed at Mt. Makiling, 1 at Subic Bay

Hooded Pitta (*Pitta sordida*)

A beautiful early morning observation on the path across Pandan Island. Had it clearly in my bins for some time.

Barn Swallow (*Hirunda rustica*)

Striated Swallow (*Hirunda striolata*)

Some around Banaue Hotel. Seen from its restaurant.

Pacific Swallow (*Hirundo tahitica*)

Singing Bushlark (*Mirafra javanica*)

Several at Candaba Marsh

Oriental Skylark (*Alauda gulgula*)

Few around Agripark, Los Banos University.

Bar-bellied Cuckoo-shrike (*Coracina striata*)

This bird was fairly common at Mt. Makiling and Subic Bay.

Blackish Cuckoo-shrike (*Coracina coerulescens*) E

A singleton seen sitting in top of a tree at Subic Bay

Black-bibbed Cuckoo-shrike (*Coracina mindanensis*) E

Two birds seen far away in a treetop at Siburan forest where probably this species.

Black-and-white Triller (*Lalange melanoleuca*) E

2 birds found in the treetops at Makiling NP, not too far away from the entrance.

Pied Triller (*Lalange nigra*)

Ashy Minivet (*Pericrocotus divaricatus*)

About 20 individuals seen at Mt. Makiling and Los Banos Botanical Garden. This species was fairly common at Subic Bay too

Scarlet Minivet (*Pericrocotus flammeus*)

Yellow-vented Bulbul (*Pycnonotus goiavier*)

Yellow-wattled Bulbul (*Pycnonotus urostictus*) E

My only observation of this species was two individuals at Los Banos Bot. Garden.

Luzon Bulbul (*Ixos philippinus*) E

Common at suitable habitat throughout Luzon.

Mindoro Bulbul (*Ixos mindorensis*) E

This recent split is fairly common on Pandan Island.

Balicassiao (*Dicrurus balicassius*) E

A single bird found at Subic Bay. Vocal and common at Mt. Makiling and at Siburan forest.

White-lored Oriole (*Oriolus albiloris*) E

2 individuals observed at Subic Bay

Black-naped Oriole (*Oriolus chinensis*)

3 at Agripark, few at Subic Bay

Philippine Fairy-Bluebird (*Irena cyanogaster*) E

Seen briefly next to our Guesthouse at UP-Campus, Los Banos

Slender-billed Crow (*Corvus enca*)

Seen at Siburan forest.

Large-billed Crow (*Corvus macrorhynchus*)

Elegant Tit (*Periparus elegans*) E

Saw this rather common pretty little bird at Subic Bay, Sagada, Banaue and Mt. Makiling.

Sulphur-bellied Nuthatch (*Sitta oenochlamys*) E

Singles of this bird (split from Velvet-fronted) at various sites, like Banaue, Sagada, Mt. Makiling.

Stripe-headed Rhabdornis (*Rhabdornis mystacalis*) E

Good looks at this species at Subic Bay and Los Banos (Campus and Mt. Makiling NP). The Rhabdornis family, consisting of only 3 species is endemic to the Philippines.

Chestnut-faced Babbler (Stachyris whiteheadi) E

Common around Banaue and Sagada

Siberian Rubythroat (Luscinia calliope)

Good looks on a singleton at Batad

Luzon Water-Redstart (Phoenicurus bicolor) E

Found sitting on rocks at the river that flows through Hapao. Good observation!

Pied Bushchat (Saxicola caprata)

Fairly common at Candaba Swamp, 1 at Hapao

Island Thrush (Turdus poliocephalus)

2 at Sagada village

Brown-headed Thrush (Turdus chrysolaus)

Few individuals of this winter visitor seen at Mt. Polis and Banaue Hotel. Probably 2 at Sagada as well (no good looks)

Eye-browed Thrush (Turdus obscurus)

Few at Mt. Polis, 3 at Sagada

Arctic Warbler (Phylloscopus borealis)

Seen for ex. at Banaue, Sagada, Los Banos/Mt. Makiling

Mountain Leaf-Warbler (Phylloscopus trivirgatus)

Seen at Batad and Sagada

Tawny Grassbird (Megalurus timoriensis)

Striated Grassbird (Megalurus palustris)

Common at Candaba Marsh and Agripark, Los Banos.

Mountain Tailorbird (Orthotomus cuculatus philippinus)

One bird at Batad

Zitting Cisticola (*Cisticola juncidis*)

Few at Agripark.

Philippine (Luzon) Bush-Warbler (*Cettia seebohmi*) E

Fairly common. Seen at Sagada and Mt. Polis. Much more often heard than seen.

Grey-streaked Flycatcher (*Muscicapa griseisticta*)

Few individuals at Mt. Makiling NP, one at Agripark.

Mountain Verditer (Turquoise Island) Flycatcher (*Eumyias panayensis*)

4 birds found at Batad and in the gardens of Banaue View Inn, 2 at Sagada

Snowy-browed Flycatcher (*Ficedula hyperythra*)

Found at Batad

Little Pied Flycatcher (*Ficedula westermanni*)

3 seen at Hapao, 2 at Sagada

Mangrove Blue Flycatcher (*Cyornis rufigastra*)

A singleton observed on Pandan Island.

(Philippine) Pied Fantail (*Rhipidura (javanica) nigritorquis*) E

Several on Pandan Island, 2 at Candaba Marsh

Blue-headed Fantail (*Rhipidura cyaniceps*) E

Fairly common around Banaue (Batad, Hapao, Mt. Polis, Hotel Banaue, km 10) and Sagada. 1 seen at Subic Bay

Citrine Canary-Flycatcher (*Culicicapa helianthea*)

Few in the garden of Banaue View Inn

Black-naped Monarch (*Hypothymis azurea*)

1 at Batad

Green-backed Whistler (*Pachycephala albiventris*) E

Glimpsed at Mount Polis. Was very foggy when I was up there

Yellow-bellied Whistler (*Pachycephala philippinensis*) E

2 birds of this not easy to see species found at the loop trail at Los Banos Bot. Garden

Grey Wagtail (Motacilla cinerea)

Fairly common. Seen for ex. around Banaue

(Eastern)Yellow Wagtail (Motacilla (flava) tschutschensis)

Paddyfield (Oriental) Pipit (Anthus rufulus)

Seen at Mt. Polis

Richard`s Pipit (Anthus novaeseelandiae)

Several at Candaba Marsh

White-breasted Wood-swallow (Artamus leucorhynchus)

Seen at Agripark, Siburan forest and Subic Bay.

Long-tailed Shrike (Lanius schach)

Found at Candaba Marsh and Hapao

Brown Shrike (Lanius cristatus)

Common at Subic Bay, Los Banos and Mt. Makiling, around Banaue and Sagada.

Mountain Shrike (Lanius validirostris) E

few birds observed at Mt. Polis and around Banaue. Also at Sagada

Asian Glossy Starling (Aplonis panayensis)

Seen at Sablayan, around Siburan forest.

Chestnut-cheeked Starling (Sturnus philippensis)

4 birds seen from the terrace of the Alumni-Guesthouse at UP Los Banos Campus.

Coledo (Sarcops calvus) E

Fairly common at Subic Bay and at Siburan forest.

Crested Myna (Acridotheres cristatellus)

Common at several sites

Olive-backed Sunbird (Nectarinia jugularis)

Common throughout.

Flaming Sunbird (Aethopyga flagrans) E

2 birds seen at Los Banos Botanical Garden and at the Campus near Alumni Guesthouse.

Mountain (Metallic-winged) Sunbird (Aethopyga (pulcherrima) jefferyi) E

Wonderful observations of this tiny beauty at most sites around Banaue

Lovely Sunbird (Aethopyga bella) E

One observation at Batad, a female at Sagada

Bicolored Flowerpecker (Dicaeum bicolor) E

2 birds among many Buzzing FP were observed in a flowering tree at Batad

Red-keeled (striped) Flowerpecker (Dicaeum australe) E

Observed at a flowering tree at Los Banos Botanical Garden.

Scarlet-collared Flowerpecker (Dicaeum retrocinctum) E

Good looks at Siburan forest where this Mindoro endemic is fairly common.

Buzzing Flowerpecker (Dicaeum hypoleucum) E

Seen everywhere around Banaue. Particularly common at Hapauo and Batad.
A single bird at Sagada

Orange-bellied Flowerpecker (Dicaeum trigonostigma)

Fire-breasted Flowerpecker (Dicaeum ignipectus)

A single bird was seen at Batad

Pygmy Flowerpecker (Dicaeum pygmaeum) E

2 finally seen at Batad near Banaue

Lowland White-eye (Zosterops meyeri) E

Only observed in the resort at Pandan Island.

Yellowish White-eye (Zosterops nigrorum) E

This bird was fairly common at Banaue (Garden of Hotel Banaue) and at Makiling NP.

Mountain White-eye (*Zosterops montanus*)

Common in the mountains of northern Luzon around Sagada and Banaue (seen at Mt. Polis, Hapao and Batad)

Eurasian Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*)

Java Sparrow (*Padda oryzivora*)

A nice surprise were 3 individuals at Agripark

Scaly-breasted Munia (*Lonchura punctulata*)

Common at Agripark

Chestnut Munia (*Lonchura Malacca*)

Common at Candaba Marsh, Hapao and Agripark

Other animals:

Crab-eating (Long-tailed) Macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*)

Philippine Flying Fox (*Pteropus speciosus*)

Philippine Golden-crowned Flying Fox (*Acerodon jubatus*)

Pandan Island:

Green Turtle

Banded Sea Krait (*Laticauda colubrina*)

Blue-spotted Fantail Ray

Titan Triggerfish

Striped Surgeonfish

Blue Starfish

Common Lionfish

Long-finned Cod
Brown-marbled Grouper
Orange-lined Sweetlip
Yellow-ribbon Sweetlip
Foxface Rabbitfish
Tailspot Squirrelfish
Double-saddle Butterflyfish
Regal Butterflyfish
Long-nose Butterflyfish
Moorish Idol
Gaimard`s Wrasse
Blackbelt Hogfish
Yellowtail Blue Damsel
Emperor Angelfish
Parrotfish spec.

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