

Ventures Trip to Philippines: Palawan, Luzon and Mindanao: Dec 25, 2026 – Jan 12, 2027

You may wish to arrive in Manila the day before in order to rest before the tour starts. Just let us know your flight plans and also whether you will need a hotel room.

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Thursday, December 25

Arrival into Manila

Today we plan to fly into the Philippine capital of Manila and stay at the Belmont Hotel near the airport.

Day 1 (Friday, December 26)

Palawan

This morning we fly to Palawan and start the day at the Irawan Eco Park looking for Philippine Pitta, Rufous-backed Dwarf Kingfisher, Blue-eared Kingfisher, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Palawan Flycatcher and others. We then have lunch break and spend the afternoon and evening birding looking for Red-vented Cockatoo, Spotted Wood-Owl, Palawan Frogmouth, and Palawan Scops-Owl. Night in Palawan

Days 2 & 3: (December 27 & 28)

Palawan

We will spend much of the next two days roadside birding to try and find a good number of endemics, such as Lovely Sunbird, Palawan Hornbill, Palawan Myna, Melodious Babbler, Falcated Wren-babbler, Palawan Tit, Red-headed and Spot-throated Flamebacks, and non-endemics such as the Great Slaty Woodpecker among other species. Evening targets will include Large-tailed Nightjar and others we missed previously. Night in Palawan

Day 4 (Monday, December 29)

Palawan to Manila

This morning we will have another round of clean-up as we look for birds we may have missed. We fly back to Manila on a late afternoon flight. Evening at Belmont Hotel near airport.

Day 5 (Tuesday, December 30)

Fly to Mindanao

We'll take the early morning flight to Mindanao that will take us to Cagayan de Oro where our driver and minivan waits to transfer us to Dalwangan village. Here we will get a ride up in the Kitanglad Mountains to just short of the Del Monte lodge. We will need to walk the last stretch, but this is nothing too strenuous so we should make it easily in time for lunch. As we hike to the lodge, we spend time looking for Pied Harrier, and there may be Needletails swifts flying over our heads. We will spend the afternoon looking for endemic bird species, such as the Cinnamon Ibon, a handsome species certainly not done any justice in the field guide. Of course it will be the more elusive species we will focus on, some of the goodies to look for are Apo Myna (worth the trip alone), as well as Blue-capped Kingfisher, Stripe-breasted Rhabdornis, McGregor's Cuckooshrike, Red-eared Parrotfinch, Mindanao Racquet-tail and Long-tailed Bush Warbler. Night at Del Monte Lodge

Days 6 & 7 (December 31 & January 1)

Mindanao

The star bird on Mt. Kitanglad and of course our main target in the Philippines is the Philippine Eagle (aka Monkey-eating Eagle) and we'll head straight up to the Eagle Viewpoint on our second day. Also the trail above the viewpoint needs a visit as the forest at this slightly higher altitude is the best spot to look for White-cheeked Bullfinch, Apo Sunbird, Amethyst Brown-Dove and better chances for Mindanao Racquet-tail. Evenings around the camp may produce Philippine Frogmouth, Philippine Nightjar, Bukidnon Woodcock and with a bit more luck Everett's and Giant Scops-Owls. All are present in the immediate vicinity of the Mt. Kitanglad lodge.

Day 8 (Friday, January 2)

Kitanglad to PICOP

Morning hike down from Kitanglad back to base with long drive to PICOP. Afternoon birding in Bislig.

Day 9, 10 & 11 (January 3, 4, 5) PICOP

We'll spend two full days on PICOP and a couple other spots nearby. PICOP's many specialties are Philippine Green Pigeon, Pink-bellied Imperial-Pigeon, Steere's Pitta, Mindanao Wattled Broadbill, Mindanao Blue Fantail, Striated Wren-Babbler, Rufous-ored Kingfisher, Southern Silvery Kingfisher, Celestial and Short-crested Monarchs, Black-faced Coucal and Rufous-fronted Tailorbird. Both Rufous Hornbill and Mindanao Bleeding-heart occur but are seldom reported.

A few other species are more widespread but nowhere common; Bicolored Flowerpecker, Red-bellied Pitta, Philippine Trogon, Philippine Oriole, Yellow-wattled Bulbul, and Blue-crowned Racquet-tail. PICOP is a good spot to look for night-birds and they are represented with Philippine Frogmouth, Philippine Nightjar, Mindanao and Chocolate Boobooks, and Everett's Scops-Owl. We'll certainly make an effort to see the Philippine Tarsier.

Day 12 (Tuesday, January 6) Mindanao to Manila

We will leave PICOP this morning and head to the Airport to fly back to Manila. We will stop by the coast to look for Chinese Crested Tern on our way to the airport. Night near Subic

Day 13 (Wednesday, January 7) Manila & Subic

From Manila we head to La Mesa Eco Park to look for Ashy Thrush before driving 3 hours to Subic where we stay in a beach hotel inside the Subic Bay Freeport Zone. On our way to Subic we will stop off at Candaba wetland, a good spot to get the Philippine Duck, as well as a host of waterbirds including the now rare Philippines Swampphen. We will spend the next two days at Subic, where we will have a host of new endemics waiting for us in the excellent forest on the Subic Bay naval base. We aim to look for Subic specials such as Luzon Flameback, Northern Sooty Woodpecker, Luzon Scops-Owl, and Chocolate Boobook. This is some of the most easy, enjoyable and rewarding birding found in the country, with the following being possible: Green Racquet-tail, Blue-naped Parrot, Sooty and White-bellied Woodpecker, Rufous Coucal, White-ored Oriole, White-fronted Tit, Purple Needletail, Yellow-breasted Fruit-Dove, Blackish Cuckoo Shrike, Red-crested Malkoha, Scale-feathered Malkoha, Philippine and Great-eared Nightjar, White-browed Shama, Philippine Hawk-Owl, Philippine Falconet, Philippine Serpent-Eagle, Spotted Buttonquail, Barred Rail, Luzon Hornbill, and Stipe-sided Rhabdornis. Night near Subic.

Day 14 (Thursday, January 8) Subic

We will spend another full day birding in Subic for any species we have not seen. Evening targets will include Philippine Eagle- Owl, Philippine Scops-Owl. Night near Subic

Day 15 (Friday, January 9) Subic to Mt Polis

This morning we leave Subic for a 9 hour drive to Mt Polis, having lunch along the way. We will stop to look for some birds like Indigo-banded Kingfisher along the way and aim to see more as we arrive in the late afternoon. In the evening we will look for Luzon Scops-Owl.

Days 16 & 17 (January 10 & 11) Mt Polis

We spend the next two days in Mt Polis looking for northern Luzon highland species such as Benguet Bush Warbler, Luzon Bush Warbler, Flame-breasted Fruit-Dove, Philippine Shortwing, Luzon Redstart, Turquoise Flycatcher, Bundok Flycatcher, Chestnut-faced Babbler, Green-backed Whistler, Yellow Crowned Flowerpecker, and more.

Day 18 (Monday, January 12) Manila and flights home

We depart early morning from Mt. Polis on a long drive to Manila airport, in time for drop off for flights back to USA. Tour concludes at Manila airport drop off or you can stay nearby for a morning flight the following day.