Bali – East Java 02/12 – 12/12 2018

Introduction

This was an independent, non-exclusive birding trip as I was travelling (for the first time!) with my non-birding partner.

I will not write a complete trip report but give a few information abound Bali Barat and Kawah Ijen that could be useful for others.

We stayed a week in Bali (Bali Barat, Bedugul, Uluwatu area) and 2 days in East Java (Kawah Ijen).

Bali Barat

At first, I had contact with a renewed local guide but his cost was simply too high for me (3.000.000 IDR to guide me between 7 am and 4 pm). I ended birding by myself and probably lost a few targets in the process (like Javan banded Pitta or Javan Flameback, but I saw the Pitta later in Java).

I only birded the grounds of the Nusabay Menjangan and, on one occasion, of the Menjangan resort.

I had no time to visit the saltpans to the east of Bali Barat or other parts of the park.

Nusabay Menjangan

We stayed 3 nights at the Nusabay Menjangan https://wakahotelsandresorts.com/nusabay-menjangan/, inside Bali Barat NP. The location is fantastic and the price reasonable by European standard (they are of course much cheaper but probably less idyllic alternatives in the area). We liked the place very much.

The site is only accessible by boat (15 min transfer) from the jetty of Labuhan Lalang at -8.14356, 114.539959. There are fixed boat transfer schedule, otherwise you have to pay 550.000 IDR per transfer. Labuhan Lalang is an interesting place from a birding perspective as it is one of the reintroduction site for Bali Mynah. There were a dozen free flying birds present and another dozen in an aviary.

There are walking trails starting north and south from the Nusabay Menjangan, which you can’t normally walk without a guide as you are inside the NP. I was, however, able to walk them alone without being stopped by anyone.

From a birding perspective, the Nusabay is not the best location around Bali Barat because it is situated in a drier part of the forest, meaning that a few targets are not present. There are also no free boat shuttle in the early morning, meaning that you have to charter one if you want to go birding in another area (probably not before 7 am which is already late).

I saw the following targets there: Black-winged Starling (2 birds seen in flight the last morning were the only ones), Beach Thick-Knee and Great-billed Heron (regularly seen on the beach from the jetty of Nusabay), Green Junglefowl, Freckle-breasted Woodpecker, White-shouldered Triller, Kamchatka Leaf Warbler, Bar-winged Prinia, Olive-backed Tailorbird.

My complete birding lists for the area are available on ebird:

https://ebird.org/view/checklist/SS0720612
https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S50721689

I saw no Bali Mynah during my stay at the Nusabay (but well at the Labuhan Lalang jetty), but they are probably possible there.

Other targets of Bali Barat like Javan Banded Pitta, Fulvous-chested Jungle-Flycatcher, Javan Flameback, Crescent-chested Babbler, Racket-tailed Treepie, Yellow-throated Hanging Parrot were not seen and are probably not present around the Nusabay Menjangan.

Menjangan resort
I visited the grounds of the Menjangan resort (not to be confused with the Nusabay Menjangan) for a few hours in the afternoon. It is a well known place to see Javan Banded Pitta and Black-winged Starling. I had difficulties to enter the grounds of the resort (wich is vast) because I had no guide.

At the end, the security guard accepted that I went to the Menjangan tower (1.5 km from the entry) but it was forbidden to walk and a guard brought me there with his motorbike!

From the tower, I saw Racket-tailed Treepie, Yellow-throated Hanging-Parrot, and Rufous-backed Pygmy-Kingfisher. I heard also Javan Banded Pitta, but too far away.

Walking from Labuhan Lalang to the entry of the Menjangan resort, I had a Fulvous-chested Jungle-Flycatcher singing at -8.14733, 114.551118.

Serangan Island

This is supposed to be the best site for waders in (south) Bali.

However, I was denied access to the site (after trying multiples access points) as mega construction works for a new resorts had started in October 2018. Apparently, the site is the property of a son of former dictator Suharto, and even the army was present!

The only possibility was to scan the mudflats from the bridge at -8.728056, 115.229531.

From there, I saw Sunda Teal, a few Cerulean Kingfisher and a few waders, but unfortunately no Javan Plover.

Kawah Ijen (East Java)

This site is really easy to visit from Bali. We took the ferry from Gilimanuk to Banyuwangi. It cost 6500 IDR one way.

Contrary to many others, we stayed in the little village of Licin, wich is nicer than the city of Banyuwangi and also closer to the volcano. (45 min drive from Banyuwangi and 40 min to the top of the pass were the walk to the crater start (Paltunding).

We stayed at Mi Casa Ijen https://www.micasableueflames.com/ which was very nice with very friendly owners (a french-indonesian couple). The cost was 576.000 IDR per night, wich is quite at the “expensive” end but was, in my opinion worth it (there are many cheaper options available). It had the added value of having residents Javan Kingfisher and Sunda Scops Owl in the garden.

They organized transport from the ferry terminal to Licin and brought me every day to Ijen when I wanted to. Transport was quite expensive, but I have no comparison point…
As explained in other trip report, birding is mostly done along the access road to the volcano. Good forest is found from the top at 1800 m at Pos Paltunding to an altitude of 1000 m were the forest give place to plantations. It’s a 9 kms walk from Pos Paltunding and the end of the forest at 1000 m alt.

I birded 1 full day, 1 afternoon (with 1 hour night birding) and half a morning.

What is probably the most important news is the fact that a local (Sam “Kawah Ijen”) have now started to exploit a hide for the east-Java endemic **Grey-breasted Partridge**, which is now, thanks to him, nearly guaranteed.

I was his first client and after 5 minutes in the hide we had a group of 8 partridge down to 5 m !

He is a photographer but know his birds well. He’s probably also able to organize a visit to the volcano or to other part of east Java as he is the leader of a tour company.

His contact: [ijen.expedition@gmail.com](mailto:ijen.expedition@gmail.com)
WhatsApp: +6283111817366

My observations are available on ebird:

[https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S50637409](https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S50637409)
[https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S50637790](https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S50637790)
[https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S50640287](https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S50640287)

I saw also the following species (wich won’t appear on ebird because they are in the “sensitive” category).

- **Javan Banded Pitta**: 1 easily taped it at -8.111611, 114.242192, along the trail starting in front of the second shelter area (when coming from Licin);

- **Orange-spotted Bulbul**: a few seen along the trail from Pos Paltunding to the crater. A family along the road at 1600 m alt.

- **Pied Shrike-Babbler**: a few in birds wave at lower elevation

- **Trilling Shrike-Babbler**: a few in birds wave at lower elevation

- **Javan Grey-throated White-eye**: very common

- **White-flanked Sunbird**

- **Blue-winged Leafbird**

Biggest miss were:

- **Horsfield’s Thrush.** It is generally seen around Pos Paltunding at sunrise, but as we walked to the crater (which is really recommended for the views!), I wasn’t there in time;

- **White-bibbed Babbler.** Not seen or heard despite prospective taping.

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