

## Project Bird Watch - Indonesian Parrot Project Team 2005 Briefing



### Rendezvous/Travel Planning

As soon as all our visitors are confirmed, we will coordinate all flights with our travel agent and choose a rendezvous point so we can travel together. We will send you a PBW T-Shirt which you can wear at the airport so we can all recognize each other.

### Visa & Passport Information

American citizens require \$25 U.S. for a tourist visa to enter Indonesia. To make sure we can get your *surat jalan* (walking papers) for Maluku or West Papua, we request that you scan a copy of your passport and send it or email it to Bonnie Zimmermann no later than August 17, 2005.

Please be sure your passport is up-to-date (U.S. passport must be valid for 6 months beyond stay and must have at least four blank pages for immigration).

Carry at least 2 copies of the cover pages of your passports, and additional passport photos of yourself.

### Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance is highly recommended, and offers an added sense of protection. It can be purchased online in advance. We have used three different companies and they are all good. Visit [www.travelguard.com](http://www.travelguard.com), [www.globaltravelinsurance.com](http://www.globaltravelinsurance.com), and [www.specialtyrisk.com](http://www.specialtyrisk.com)

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## Outside Communication

Phone service is not available on Seram, Gam, Batanta and Waigeo Islands. We will be traveling with a satellite phone but this is for emergency purposes only.

## Currency - The Key is in the Details!

Currency exchange and ATMs are available in the Denpasar and Makassar Airports. Traveler's checks are not accepted in most banks or stores in Indonesia; it is probably not worth bringing them. We don't recommend the use of credit cards except in major hotels or larger stores; however, you should bring one for emergencies. Plan on either using your ATM card for money (ideally bring two), and bring American money, preferably \$100 bills. Any bills dated 1996 or 1999 will not be accepted anywhere in Indonesia due to counterfeiting problems in the past. They will accept the 2001 or the very new 2003 issue of \$100 bills. Allow at least several weeks for your bank to obtain these for you. Also throughout Indonesia, people will not accept bills that are worn or ripped. A rip of only 1/16<sup>th</sup> of an inch can make a bill unusable. The current exchange rate as of 6/1/2005 is 9000 rupiah to \$1.00. If you are planning on exchanging more than a few hundred dollars (which in all likelihood you will), please be aware that Indonesian money is bulky, so bring an appropriately sized waist-pack or purse to carry it in. Depending on your shopping plans, we can advise you how much cash to bring.

## Physical Conditioning

Participants must be healthy and able to walk over uneven terrain on forest trails. We routinely hike several hours during the day and up to 60 minutes through the dark to arrive or return from canopy platforms. Hikes may traverse deep mud or dense roots ; some are uphill climbs or involve walking through some dense rattan vine with sharp, cutting barbs. (Of course, our guides will help clear the way). Besides hiking, we will be traveling by long boat sitting on hard wooden seat-less plank seats, possibly dugout canoes, inter-country air flights, and hydrofoil. Our platforms are up to 160 feet in height. You will not be required to climb up to these platforms, but will be hauled to the top in a climbing rig.

Volunteers allergic to bee stings must bring their epinephrine shots as stinging bees, wasps, and ants are common. It is very important that you talk to your doctor, or if possible, visit a Travel Clinic, about immunizations and malaria prophylaxis at least 4-6 weeks prior to departure.

The team leaders carry a well-stocked first aid kit, but participants are encouraged to bring a small supply of personal medications, including

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painkillers, anti-diarrhea medicine, and Cipro (a broad spectrum digestive system antibiotic.). Talk to your doctor about other potential medicines.

There is no physician, nurse or EMT on the team and the time to reach the nearest hospital can be up to seven hours. Therefore, we suggest strongly that you consider Travel Insurance which includes coverage for Emergency Evacuation. We also suggest that you check with your health insurance company regarding coverage, policies and procedures for any emergency care delivered in outside of the United States.

### Jungle Camps, Canopy Platform & Cave

These unique places to view the birds will leave you with incredible memories about your experience, but please understand they are primitive.

These outdoor facilities offer very little privacy. Near the canopy platforms we will be sleeping in elevated wood huts; all you will need is a good PAD for a sleeping bag (not a sleeping bag itself) and a light sheet, preferably silk or a similar material. Jungle camps we have primitive latrines, but be prepared that you may have to use the forest as a bathroom. We will teach you the proper way to do this so as not to impact the environment.

At Api Lima we will be sleeping under a stone outcropping. There is a simple, low, wood platform which we will share with our guides. On this overnight trip we ask that you travel as light as possible.

There is no power or running water and we go to bed early and rise early. If you wish to bring books to read, it can be done without disturbing others by using a head lamp.

At our jungle camps in Seram, bathing can be done in the stream, but in Sawai and in West Papua we take a “mandi” or shower. In a private area you will get a medium sized bucket of water and a ladle to rinse with. It’s simple, but effective.

### Meals

In the tourist areas most types of food and drink will be available, but meals will become simpler as we move into the forest areas. Except in Bali, diet drinks are not available. We can accommodate vegetarians and special dietary needs if we know in advance. Most meals are based around rice and fish, noodles and a few vegetables. Due to the lack of refrigeration, dairy products and ice are not common. We suggest you bring your favorite snacks or protein bars to supplement your diet (and its fun to share things with the local people!) Candy is a rare treat for the local children.

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## Respect for Culture

Please be aware that we are traveling to a complex culture that is very different than the United States, so we must be aware that what might be viewed as normal public behavior in the U.S., may offend or clash with the sensibilities of local residents in Indonesia, or potentially violate local laws.

Beyond practicing cultural sensitivity and showing common courtesy, please be mindful of the following limitations.

Please take care not to make off color jokes or comments. Likewise, some discretion should be used in choice of clothing. When in tourist areas such as Bali, you are free to dress as you wish, but when we are visiting areas outside of the large cities we ask that women avoid revealing clothing, and low rise jeans, tank tops, etc.

Indonesia is a strict country and offers the death penalty for those possessing illicit drugs. Possession, use, purchase, and/or sale of illegal drugs is strictly forbidden while on a PBW expedition. Prescription drugs may only be purchased and used by the individual indicated on the prescription, in keeping with the intended-use guidelines.

## Facts About Fears

PBW has made many trips to Indonesia, and we love it so much we can't wait to go back. Many of your friends and family will think you're crazy and talk about all the scary things you'll encounter. So let's talk about them and what the chances actually are. After all, knowledge is power.

## Civil Unrest

Not surprisingly, we're sure you have heard concerns about safety issues with respect to the political situation in Indonesia. We imagine these questions will cross the minds of just about everyone on the trip.

If you read all the US State Department travel advisories, there's a good chance you'll never leave the country. Perhaps that's why only 4% of Americans hold passports, and even a smaller fraction use them. Just rest assured that the millions of Europeans, Aussies and Japanese that continue to travel to Indonesia each year will tell you it's perfectly safe to travel to the areas where we are going. Despite years of ongoing political "emergencies", we assure you that we have never once felt at personal risk. Where there have been incidents, they have been targeted at large cities, and venues (such as large expensive hotels or nightclubs attracting large numbers of affluent tourists), places which we do not frequent. And such incidents have been extremely

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infrequent. Please keep in mind that Indonesia is a Muslim country: it is NOT a terrorist country! To put things in best perspective, we honestly feel safer here than in the big cities in the US.

On the other hand, having said that, please understand that you will be traveling to some of the most remote places on earth. Part of the fun is treating the whole trip as one big *petaluangan* (adventure). Things WILL undoubtedly go wrong! "Tidak apa-apa" (or as they say on Seram: "Moolamoolakoa")--which are both local equivalents of "NO WORRIES, MATE!".

### 10 Meter Man-eating Pythons

Such things are rumored—at least one film crew has scoured Seram in search of the world's longest snake. We, however, can consider ourselves lucky if we spot a little 5-meter guy. As it turns out, people find pythons quite tasty. Fortunately (or unfortunately?) the feeling isn't mutual.

Pythons only very rarely eat people. Pythons much prefer pigs and deer. The snake's three-week sedentary digestion process makes a worthy tourist spectacle.

In case you're generally adverse to slithery serpentine things, you're in luck. As an oceanic island, Seram has kept most snakes at bay.

### Headhunting Cannibals

Yeah, there's probably still a few around. . Ears, apparently are especially relished. However, most apparently emigrated to the U.S. and changed their names to Pak (Mr.) Jeffrey Dahmer. To be safe, consider wearing stiff collars and long hair, and don't pick any fights. If the timing is right when we're in Masohi (for those on the Seram Trip) we'll make a visit to a very unique headhunter museum.

### Bugs

Not much problem at the coastal guesthouse in Sawai. Nor up in the trees, which is one of many splendid reasons to climb them. But on the forest floor, in certain areas, mosquitoes and sand flies can be a nuisance. It's best to move through these areas quickly and to protect yourself with lightweight clothing and repellent, and always wear long pants and socks (ideally, tuck the former into the latter) when walking through grass or underbrush. Please see Packing List for more details about clothing.

On clothing, you might consider an investment in some of the space-age jungle outfits available through most outdoor retailers these days. The best ones

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are the thin, soft nylon varieties that might pass for cotton. You'll be a very happy camper in these as they're loose-fitting, fast-drying (a VERY important feature), and simply help you look and feel the part of the swashbuckling jungle adventurer. (Pith helmet optional.) AVOID cotton which dries agonizingly slowly if at all in the tropics. (and it gets stinky!) The khaki and olive tones of most of these clothes blend well in the forest and cause birds the least possible alarm. Avoid bright colors and white. Two outfits are ideal. One can be hand-washed and solar dried as you wear the other.

While still thinking about clothing, remember that happy feet means happy people. Choose lightweight, comfortable hiking boots. Thin Capilene (or polypropylene) liner socks make a nice, soft wicking layer between your feet and regular socks. If you're prone to blisters, bring along Second Skin, Mole Skin, or the like. Better yet, hike around lots in your shoes before coming. Bring LOTS of fresh socks, foot powder, and some camp flip-flops. Or go all out with Teva's or Chaco Canyon sport sandals. Any guest who says he/she is "gellin' like Magellan" will be roasted in a pit over embers!!!"

But back to bugs! As well as protective clothing, there are times you'll want repellent. I often carry some groovy botanical (Citronella-based) Mixture (which is pretty well shown to have little potency), then curse it out and resort to DEET. It has been shown that 20-35% DEET works just about as well as up to 100%. The little dropper bottles are far easier to keep handy than those big spray bottles (which are also not welcome on planes).

Other than the mosquitoes and sand flies, Seram doesn't boast much excitement in the creepy-crawly realm. If you're anticipating run-ins with deadly assassin bugs, excruciating bola ants, or maggots that burst out of your skin, make a detour to Central and South America. There are some large Golden Orb Web spiders with big webs (the largest in the world) occasionally crossing the trail; the guides will remove the webs or we just walk around (after taking photos, of course). They are not dangerous to humans, except for the usual concussion or broken leg or two sustained trying to get out of the way of them.

### Diseases

Surprise! Malaria is endemic to Seram and Irian Jaya. Indonesia has some falciparum, the nastiest of the malaria bugs. We are not in a position to make any more than suggestions about your medical care. However, it's a good idea to give some personal consideration to your choice of prophylaxis - we suggest malarone, and not Larium. We strongly recommend that you are positive that both your tetanus and polio immunizations are complete and up-to-date; polio is now being reported in Java (albeit far from where we are going).

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Aside from anti-malarials, you'll probably want a typhoid vaccine—now oral and painless. Hep A will probably be recommended . Discuss other possibilities with a Health Care Professional trained in Travel and Wilderness Medicine.

### The Water

Indonesians are quite sensible about water. In developed areas, bottled water is readily available. Elsewhere, and in private homes and smaller restaurants, drinking water is boiled and when served, is often still quite warm. Such purified water is known as air putih (eyer-r poo-teeh).

Ice in the larger hotels and restaurants should appear as the little cubes you're used to. This means the ice was made on the premises and is generally safe. Chunks of ice cleaved off a big block **are** suspect.

When jungle-camping in Seram, we collect lovely water, mostly out of springs. Locals know which stuff is safe to drink, but you'll sleep better drinking water from your purifying bottle which you purchased back in the U.S.

### Shopping

We'll have the opportunity to do some shopping in Bali and there are incredible items to be had for very little money. You'll find wood and stone carvings, batik clothing and linens, artwork, sarongs, jewelry, and all kinds of wonderful local crafts.

### Eco-Tour Packing List

Note: There are an increasing number of garments available in the BUZZ-OFF brand, meaning that that are pre-bound with permethrin, an excellent, broad-spectrum repellent of biting insects. We have been pleased with these, although they are on the expensive side. The largest selection to date is probably at LL Bean

- 2-3 pair of lightweight shorts, ideally fast drying nylon. Particularly useful are the nylon pants which zip off at the knee to become shorts, leaving the leggings to be washed separately
- 2 pair lightweight long pants, fast drying nylon  
1-2 lightweight long-sleeved shirts, avoid cotton, use nylon where possible. A compromise is Cool-Max polyester blend, although not nearly as fast-drying as nylon.
- 2-4 other shirts and tank tops

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- Socks (get the hot weather kind; consider BUZZ-OFF)
- Underwear (micro fiber is best in rainforest climates)
- Lightweight jacket
- Lightweight hiking boots (worn in please)
- Sports sandals (for example Teva, Chaco)
- Flip flops
- Swim suit (modest please)
- Hat, preferably broad brim and quick dry
- Sunglasses
- Bandannas (you'll want some sort of sweat band and these always look cool)
- Flashlight(s) at least two, one a strong headlamp, one handheld, and one lantern style
- Package of 20 AA batteries and some AAA (depending on your two flashlights) if needed. This is not too many - they will come in handy.
- Binoculars - best you can afford
- Camp towel - largest you can find and quickest drying
- Small pillow for sleeping, a flat form one for sitting on in the boats (optional)
- Biodegradable camp soap, for body, hair and clothes
- Biodegradable toilet paper
- Thermarest or other - sleeping pad Note: sleeping bag NOT needed
- Silk sleeping bag liner or light blanket (optional) -- used as blanket
- Backpack big enough for overnight treks
- Insect Repellent

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- Sunscreen
- Over the counter medications, i.e., aspirin, Tylenol, lomotil, benedryl, Pepto Bismol
- All your prescription medications including Malaria and seasickness pills
- Second set of eyeglasses
- Band aids, hydrocortisone cream, antibiotic cream
- Personal water purifying bottle with holder (this is indispensable)- We suggest the **Katadyn Exstream Water Purifier** Just dip and sip - the easiest, most convenient way to treat your water. Excellent for traveling, paddling, biking, day hikes, fishing, etc. Carry loop provides easy attachment to packs, kayaks, etc. No hassle with hoses, pumping, or separate containers. Just scoop or fill the bottle with water and squeeze. The ViruStat purification cartridge purifies water on demand (no waiting). Highest safety level - removes bacteria, protozoa (Giardia, cryptosporidium) plus kills over 99.99% of waterborne viruses, as determined under the U.S. EPA. Treats 26 gallons (100 liters) per replacement cartridge (4-6 weeks when used regularly). The only EPA registered purifier bottle. 26 oz. bottle fits into any standard bottle holder and requires minimal space in travel packs and suitcases. PBW Team members have used these in Indonesia, and South and Central America. They run about \$39.95 at Camp-mor, [www.campmor.com](http://www.campmor.com)
- Camera and precharged backup batteries. Access to power is very limited, and if you are traveling with a digital camera or other equipment - please be sure to bring extra batteries. We'd hate to see that you missed that fantastic shot because you were out of power.
- Personal entertainment--strongly suggest you bring 2-3 books or a supply of music. An iPod is perfect for this kind of trip.
- Sturdy waist pack or purse large enough to conveniently and safely carry passport, credit cards, airline tickets, and a thick stack of Indonesian cash (rupiah)

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### Optional

- Protein bars, dried fruit, nuts, vitamins, etc. to supplement your diet
- Pens, mechanical pencils, erasers, note book
- Gifts or small items for the children at the villages
- Dry bag, especially good for protecting valuable items such as cameras and binoculars. Several large packets of desiccant and/or a Pelican-style humidity and shock-proof camera case are recommended
- Alarm clock
- Pocket knife (do NOT pack this in your overnite airline bag!)
- Pocket English-Indonesian phrasebook

### Reading List

\*Paul Jepson Fielding's Birding Indonesia Periplus Editions

A Neotropical Companion, John C, Kricher, 1989. A good introduction to general tropical ecology. Written in a simple, easy-to-read style.

\*Birds of Indonesia Field Guide, Morten Strange

\*Maluku - Indonesian Spice Islands, Periplus Adventure Guides

Tropical Diversity, John Terborgh, 1992. This is a nice mix of coffee table book and scientific treatise. Interesting and readable scientific style text describes a wide variety of complex rainforest interactions and is richly illustrated throughout with photos, graphics, and charts.

\*The Malay Archipelago, Alfred Russel Wallace, paperback published by Periplus [www.periplus.com](http://www.periplus.com)

\*Ibu Maluku, W. Ronald Heyneman, paperback published by Temple House Pty, Ltd. Australia

Nathaniel's Nutmeg, Giles Milton, paperback published by Penguin Books.

NOTE: several of these, marked \*, are usually available in the Indonesian airport.