

ASIAN ISLAND ODYSSEY
on board HERITAGE ADVENTURER
9 - 27 June 2025



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Day 1
June 9, 2025
Taipei

As we arrived at the vibrant capital of Taiwan, Taipei City, we settled into the Taipei Marriott Hotel alongside fellow adventurers from around the globe. After enjoying a delicious dinner at our own pace, we went to explore the nightlife or catch up on sleep from international flights.

Day 2
June 10, 2025
Taipei

Leaving behind the wonderful Taipei Marriott, we headed out for an exciting day of experiencing the wonders of Taipei.

First, we arrived at the National Revolutionary Martyrs' Shrine just in time for the changing of the guard. We watched as the four guards marched in perfect synchrony for the changeover on the hour at 0900 hours. The shrine honoured over 390,000 soldiers who had died for the Republic of China. It is a tranquil sanctuary surrounded by verdant forest, which the birders amongst us spotted Crested Serpent Eagles (the endemic Taiwanese subspecies) and Crested Goshawks soaring far above.

We then reached the National Palace Museum and had a wonderful tour of the most fabulous artefacts, many extraordinarily ornate and ancient, some dating back even to Neolithic times. We took in as much as we could of a huge array of ancient decorative pieces – from the famous and beautiful ‘jade cabbage’ to giant vases scrawled with delicate paintings of natural scenes.

Lunch was truly memorable: a banquet-style buffet at the Grand Garden Hotel. Once a temple, this huge, dramatic building has 72 giant pillars running through each side. The food was exceptional – everything from fresh crab to sushi platters to the local specialty beef soup, and a bespoke patisserie delicatessen!

Next on our journey was the Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall – an enormous structure dedicated to Taiwan’s former leader, with spectacular views stretching across the high city, and surrounded by lush gardens of ponds and pines.

Finally, we reached the Yehliu Geopark, where millions of years of wave and wind erosion have carved some of the most remarkable rock formations anywhere on Earth. Towers of rock teetered on tiny stems of sandstone, while in other places large balls of rock sat on plinths like giant hand-carved marbles.

By 1800, we reached our home for our Asian Island Odyssey adventure – *Heritage Adventurer*. After a warm welcome from the ship’s crew, we settled in for yet another memorable meal - the first of many four-course feasts.





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Day 3

June 11, 2025

Hualien City Tour & Taroko Gorge

This morning, we woke to a beautiful scene as the soft colours of the early-morning sun cast their rays on the dramatic mountains of the East Coast of Taiwan. Little Terns glided across the ocean as we made our way into port at Hualien and as we disembarked *Heritage Adventurer*, our local guides and respective buses were eagerly awaiting us outside the terminal, and we were off.

Our first stop of the day was at the entrance to Taroko National Park, where many people took the opportunity for a quick photo op before getting back on the buses. Next up was another short stop at the visitor centre to walk around and take in the scenery before getting back in the buses for the real show.

As the buses made their way into the park, the mountains continued to grow steeper, the road became increasingly narrower, and the gorge below seemed to drop away further and further as we wound our way up the canyon. The marble walls were a key feature, but the impacts from the recent earthquake seemed to catch the most attention, with large suspension bridges left buckled and bent and significant sediment placed so high up the ravine that it left most in awe.

Upon arrival at the top of the gorge road the groups split up, with birders chasing avian highlights through the gardens, while others took the long walk up the steps to the temples overlooking the gorge. A family of Formosan Rock Macaques caught the attention of many adventurers while the local café was tending to the needs of those who wanted a rest or something to eat.

After ample time to explore, we boarded the buses and began the winding trip home down the gorge. Upon arrival back at *Heritage Adventurer*, everyone enjoyed lunch as we set sail for an afternoon at sea, bound for the Philippines.

Meanwhile, a smaller group hopped on a bus for a tour of Hualien – our first stop was at the Qixingtang Beach front, where waves lapped the sandy beach, and we listened to the fighter jets landing and taking off at the local military base. From here, we ventured to Chisingtan Katsuo Museum, an old bonito drying house that has been transformed into a museum to help us understand the process of making bonito. We had a hands-on session making Takoyaki – famed as street food from Osaka and a tasty treat in Taiwan too. We had our individual BBQs lit and poured in the mixture. After some careful instructions, we perfected the art of turning the food into a sphere and produced 5 tasty octopus' balls and topped them with bonito, kewpie mayo and BBQ soy sauce.

With the tasty snack fuelling us, we were off to the Taiwan Gongtian Temple – a Taoist temple dedicated to the sea goddess Mazu protecting seafarers, sailors and fishermen. It was a very fitting way to start the voyage. With multiple floors, our local guide showed us to the many rooms and levels, and to the highest level to then descend the spiral staircase to the ground floor made to represent the spiritual growth and self-discovery journey for those who pilgrim to the temple. After exploring every nook and cranny of the temple, we headed off to Jiang Jun Fu. This was once the general's residence which was built in a typical Japanese manner, these original buildings have been renovated keeping as many original features as possible. The old bunk rooms which were used by the Japanese now house small retail shops and a beautiful Japanese-inspired garden.

Our last stop of the day was the Pine Garden; this was the Hualien Harbor Military Command built in 1942 with a great view of the coastline providing excellent observations through times of trouble. The local community fought to preserve the building and gardens as they realised it was an important part of Hualien's history. The construction of the two-storey western-style main structure adopts "eclecticism" and was built with bricks, wood, concrete and steel. The so-called eclecticism refers to the adoption of the Baroque style by the main structure, with arcades on the 1st and 2nd floors and covered with a Japanese-style tile rooftop. The garden, proud with pine trees, also housed Banyan Trees, ferns, Silver Grass and many more. Ending with a walk down the hill to the bus we were a hop, skip and jump away from *Heritage Adventurer* – clearing Taiwan immigration and were onwards to the Philippines.



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Day 4

June 12, 2025

Calayan Island

In the early morning we headed south, now below the Tropic of Cancer, steaming towards the Philippines.

Waking up to a rather grey and rainy scene out at sea the early birders were not deterred, recording a great array of tropical seabirds - Bulwer's and Swinhoe's Petrels, Streaked and Wedge-tailed Shearwaters and a Red-footed Booby who followed *Heritage Adventurer* for a while.

After a relaxing morning on board, we reached the remote northern Philippine outpost of Calayan Island, where Expedition Leader Aaron Russ went ashore in a Zodiac to scout out how we might reach the shore. There was a heavy swell coming straight onto the beach, so the Zodiac landings were something of an adventure in themselves.

The first to arrive were the intrepid group of nine 'birders', plus guides Jonathan Rossouw and Toby Nowlan, who were heading in search of the mysterious Calayan Rail, discovered only in 2004. They met local guide and expert Jam and jumped on tricycles and motorbikes to head up towards the forest edge. After an hour of walking uphill towards the forest, they paused to take shelter in a small cabin from a torrential rainstorm. After the rain had cleared, they continued to climb, scrambling higher on thick clay mud into the gorgeous primary rainforest. They never found the rail, but they did see some wonderful birds found only in the Philippines including Whistling Green-Pigeon, Bundok Flycatcher, and Pygmy Swiftlet.

Meanwhile, another group were treated to a fantastic welcome from the local Calayan Island people. They had been working on a presentation and performance for us for

weeks. They told the story of the island through narration, vibrant dances and even some sword fighting all performed by the local school children. We even had a guest appearance from the local mascot - the Calayan Rail himself. This was enjoyed all while enjoying fresh coconuts and sticky rice treats!

It was a fantastic morning exploring Calayan Island; getting to know its nature and its people before it was time to get back aboard the Zodiacs and back to *Heritage Adventurer*, ready for our next adventure.



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Day 5
June 13, 2025
Divilacan Bay

This morning, we awoke to stormy conditions as *Heritage Adventurer* took shelter behind a reef pass in Divilacan Bay, Philippines. Zodiacs were lowered, and we set out for a local village tour, but first, we had to make it through wind-swept seas. As we entered the

estuary, we encountered some local boys spearfishing with traditional wooden goggles. As the Zodiacs continued upstream, we had good views of Purple-throated Sunbirds and Green Imperial Pigeons.

Upon arrival, we were welcomed to two villages: a more traditional-style village on the south side of the peninsula, followed by a more modern-style village on the north side of the peninsula. Local dancing was abundant, and an authentic Filipino spread was served, with many indulging in local snacks washed down with freshly harvested coconuts.

For most, a second lunch was enjoyed on board *Heritage Adventurer* as we anticipated a great afternoon of snorkelling. Unfortunately, the snorkelling was cancelled due to an abundance of stinging jellyfish occupying the snorkel location.

A quick change of plans, and we were back out on the Zodiacs searching for the holy grail of mangrove rivers. As the Zodiacs dodged their way through a shallow reef passage, it felt like we might make it into the river; however, an even shallower mudflat had other ideas, with the water level being a few inches too low to pass.

As we made our way out of the estuary, we were treated to a Crocodile Needlefish flying across the water surface in front of the Zodiacs, a reward for our persistence during the afternoon exploration. Back on board, we enjoyed dinner with anticipation of the great adventure still to come.





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Day 6

June 14, 2025

Polillo Islands

It was an early start on board *Heritage Adventurer* – as we woke to a calm, warm and clear morning. At 0730 hours we all hopped in the Zodiacs to cruise around some shallow reefs and cays, alongside stunning, low-lying uninhabited palm-fringed islands, before meandering into the river channel of Patnanongan Island. We glided through a beautiful winding channel in the mangrove forest with patches of huge Nipa Palms before reaching a wharf where we jumped on the back of motorbikes to take us onwards.

After a tour of the palm-covered lowlands by motorbike we were welcomed into a very friendly village. Here we were given fresh coconuts and enjoyed a wonderful performance from the villagers as they danced and sang.

We then left on a wonderful nature walk, spotting endemic Sunbirds, Skimmer Dragonflies, Leopard Frogs, bizarre fungi and flying lizards, soon reaching two spectacular bat caves. These were packed with life and a huge privilege to see. We counted at least five species of bat, as well as cave spiders, cave crickets, Whip Scorpions and two species of snake. There were also incredible calcite crystals that had formed on the walls.

In the afternoon, Matt and Courtney scouted a superb snorkelling beach and we went ashore for our first snorkel of the expedition. Just a few metres offshore were wonderful coral bombies, including Big Plate Coral and Staghorn Coral, and patches of seagrass. We saw an excellent range of reef fish, including Clownfish, Butterflyfish, Fusiliers, Cigar Wrasse and Pipefish. Beachcombers saw hundreds of Hermit Crabs, Fiddler Crabs,

Mudskippers, a large green Mantis Shrimp and the rare Malaysian Plover. Another day packed with adventure in the Philippines!



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Day 7

June 15, 2025

Caramoan Peninsula

This morning dawned with one of the most stunning sunrises of the voyage thus far. Limestone Karst seemed to erupt from the mirror-like ocean as we approached Caramoan National Park. As we entered the Zodiacs, the groups were split, with some opting for an

adventurous nature walk, while others went off for a Zodiac exploration of a nearby mangrove estuary.

The estuary was lush, with Nipa Palms and mangroves lining the riverbank. Our local guide, Christian, took us into a small offshoot of the estuary that led to an incredible limestone cave full of bats. As other Zodiacs lined up for access to the cave, a handful of guests decided to take a walk with some local guides across lush fields to a postcard-perfect beach, before heading off to another beach for more of the Filipino hospitality that we have grown to love. A large lunch spread was put on with local dancing and many people indulging in a refreshing fresh coconut.

Meanwhile, the nature walkers ran into some roadblocks with the trail proving not suitable for walking. Plan B was quickly put into place, and the nature walkers were treated to a beautiful morning Zodiac cruise through the myriads of karst islands before linking up at the beach for the buffet.

During the afternoon, most people took the opportunity for a snorkel with the adventurous folk heading to a nice deep drop-off reef and the more relaxed snorkellers heading for a local beach. It was a perfect afternoon with a short, but well-received, downpour cooling everyone off before we made our way back to *Heritage Adventurer*.

After a delicious dinner, the late evening was occupied with two lectures, one on the fish we had seen earlier while snorkelling by Matt Boyle, and then an epic on tropical seabirds by the legendary Peter Harrison.





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Day 8

June 16, 2025

Samar Island

It was an early start on *Heritage Adventurer* today, for today was a very special day – we had permission to be the first expedition ship to visit Samar Island – a very rarely visited location, despite being the third largest island in the Philippines. Samar is covered in dense, lush rainforest, and we planned to explore it.

Adventurers joined different exploring parties, depending on whether they wanted some serious birding, a mixed nature hike, or a very gentle stroll. Whatever people chose, they had a memorable time in the jungle. Giant Swallowtail Butterflies, stunning Azure-breasted Pittas, local Visayan Blue Fantail, and a range of medicinal rainforest plants were just some of the things seen in this wonderful habitat.

After exploring, yet another extraordinary spread of tasty treats, local foods and drinks were laid out for us next to a beautiful riverbank, while local children dressed as the mighty Philippine Eagle danced.

In the afternoon, strong currents precluded the chance of a snorkel, so plans changed, and we headed out on guided Zodiac cruises around the local karst islands. It turned out the islands were crowded with life – grey and white morph Reef Herons fishing, Pacific Swallows nesting in the cracks, noisy and electric-blue Collared Kingfishers, lemon-coloured Garden Sunbirds, shy, pink-necked Green Pigeons and brilliant golden Black-naped Orioles fed on the figs that sprung out of the limestone rocks. At the end of the cruise, we all jumped in for a swim, looking down on some truly enormous Giant Barrel Sponges on the reef underneath us.

Back on board that evening we enjoyed fascinating lectures on the birds of the Philippines and the history of the region from Jonathan and Konrad (respectively).



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Day 9

June 17, 2025

Bohol & Balicasag Island

This morning, we were up early for a sunrise Zodiac ride into the beautiful Bohol Island, a jewel of the Philippines. Everyone was split into three groups for an exciting trifecta of activities. Our first stop was at the Tarsier Sanctuary, where we took a walk through a

beautiful, forested area and were able to spot three Philippine Tarsiers resting under dense foliage. These animals are one of the world's smallest primates and it's said that Yoda from *Star Wars* was based on this animal – and it's easy to see why. Their large eyes take up 60% of their head and they truly look out of this world.

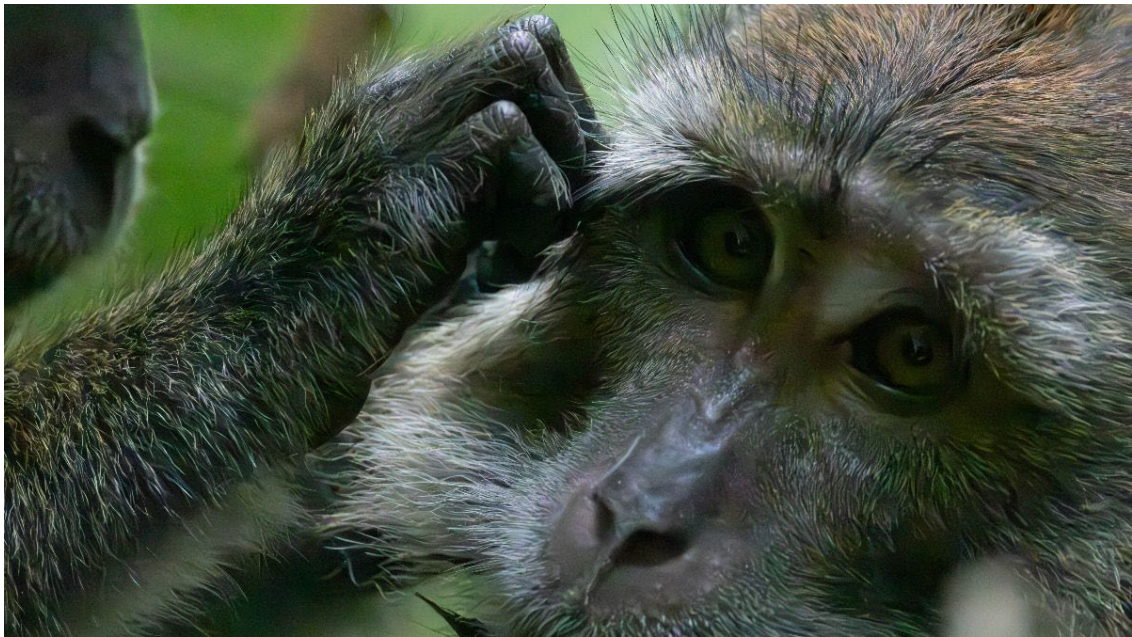
Next up was a wildlife journey through Rajah Sikatuna National Park, home to a vast array of fascinating wildlife and lush tropical rainforests. We started with a steep incline hike up a hill before arriving at a large clearing where a family of Macaques were resting in a tree. After getting reports of the trail condition, most opted for a wildlife walk through the clearing rather than battling up the hill. Those that stayed in the clearing were treated to great views of the seldom-seen Colugo; an order of large gliding mammals found throughout the tropics. The final wildlife spectacle that the park had in store for us was a Philippine Frogmouth, which our guides pointed out to us near the guide station.

Moving onwards we travelled to the famed Chocolate Hills, which were beginning to turn green as we were visiting outside of the dry season. The hills, formed through the uniform erosion of karst limestone were a sight to behold, as we took the opportunity to snap a nice photo in front of them. With the Chocolate Hills in our rearview mirror, it was time to head back to our floating HQ for lunch. Luckily for us, *Heritage Adventurer* had repositioned during the morning creating a great opportunity for a bonus Zodiac cruise down a beautiful river system for our return.

During lunch, we repositioned to the breathtaking Balicasag Island where most took the chance to jump in the crystal-clear water for a snorkel during the afternoon. We were all blown away by the beauty of the reef, the diversity of corals and the abundance of fish, which are all a byproduct of the stringent protections that this ecosystem has received for the past 40 years. As the sun dipped low on the horizon we made our way back to *Heritage Adventurer*, with most agreeing that today had been the highlight of the voyage – so far.



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Day 10

June 18, 2025

Bucas Grande

By 0600 hours, *Heritage Adventurer* was looking upon the stunning karst islands of Bucas Grande. This was an extra special morning – these many, tiny, limestone islands quilted in pristine primary rainforest, provided an incredible backdrop for our Zodiac cruises. Groups

of Mindanao and Rufous Hornbill, brilliant Philippine Trogon, clouds of Swiftlets and Emerald-coloured Kingfishers as well as giant Birdwing Butterflies, colourful orchids and Pitcher Plants, were the supporting cast as our Zodiacs nosed their way around these magical jungle islands surrounded by crystal clear tropical waters.

After cruising around the island group, we all boarded local canoes and were taken deep into Bucas Grande and into a freshwater lake where we swam with endemic, beautiful, golden stingless jellyfish. We explored caverns and caves by canoe before returning to the Zodiacs and heading back to *Heritage Adventurer*.

All aboard by midday, with the equatorial sun beating down, we departed the Philippines, heading south towards Indonesia for the second half of the voyage.

As we made our way south, we journeyed above a vast deep-sea trench, and the guides on top deck spotted exciting things in this highly productive area, including a breaching Mobula Ray, and around a hundred Melon-headed Whales.

After dinner, a brilliant lecture was given by Matt Vance on the history of wayfinding and voyaging canoes in the region.





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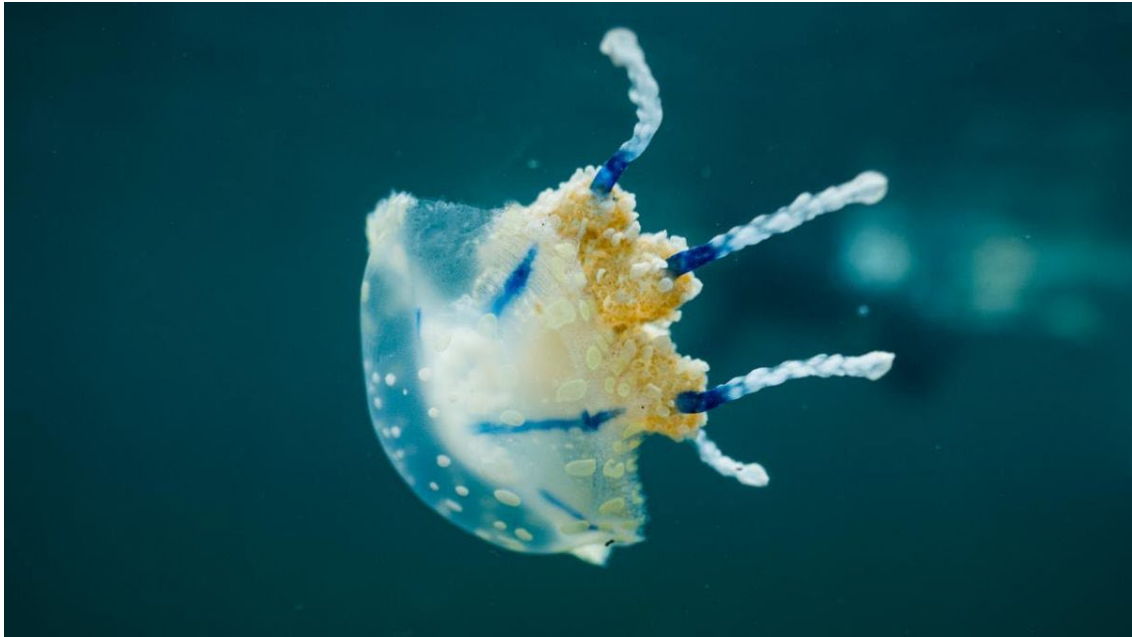
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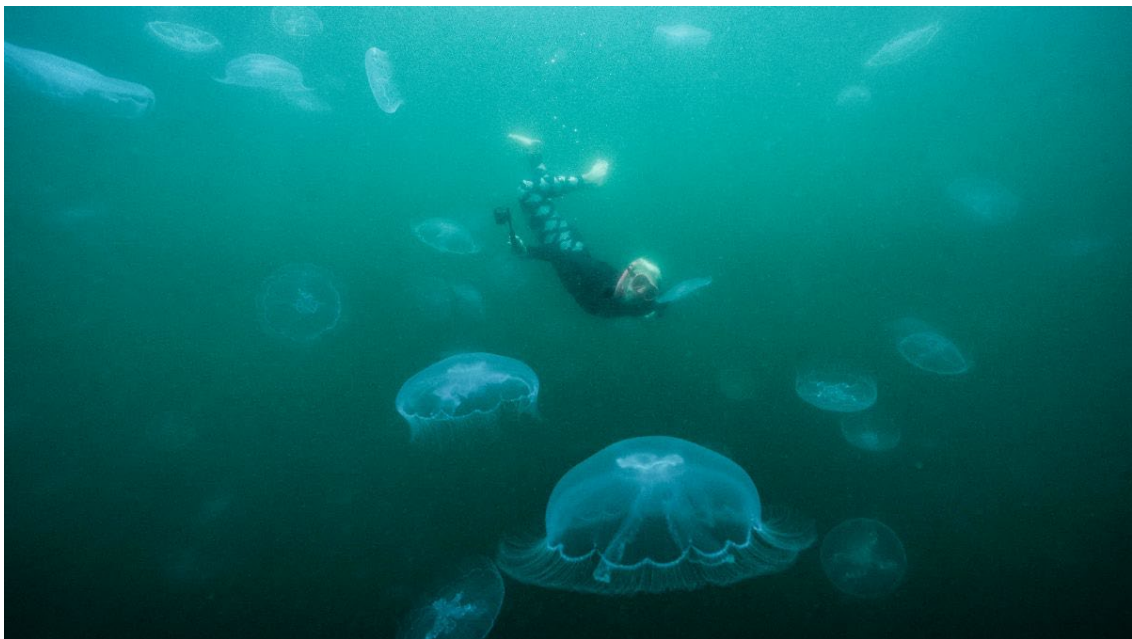
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Day 11
June 19, 2025
Sea Day

This morning, we awoke to grey skies, rain and a messy ocean giving most the chance for a well-deserved sleep in after a busy few days to end our time in the Philippines. With a sea day on hand, the education programme was stacked, with Matt B. starting us off with

his fascinating talk on corals. This lecture was perfectly timed after our epic afternoon of snorkelling two days prior at Balicasag Island.

Next on the schedule was the greatly anticipated talk from Toby Nowlan, diving into his history as a wildlife documentary filmmaker with an emphasis on his recently released *Ocean with David Attenborough* film. We enjoyed the at-sea premiere as tissues quickly turned into a hot commodity with many shed tears while watching the destruction of the bottom trawling sequence, with Toby then sharing how the film had made almost instant changes to legislation on bottom trawling in the UK and around the globe, a truly inspiring hour on *Heritage Adventurer*.

We ended the day with an epic talk from Jonathan exploring the colourful world of the birds of the Philippines, his contagious enthusiasm for avifauna truly turning heads in the audience. We ended the day with another tasty dinner, with a buzz of excitement and anticipation ringing out across the Deck 4 aft.



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Day 12
June 20, 2025
Tangkoko & Lembeh Strait

It was a very early start on *Heritage Adventurer* – but with good reason – today was the day we visited a particularly special place – Tangkoko Batu Angus Reserve.

The Zodiacs had us all ashore by 0700 hours, and we were busy exploring the many trails of this beautiful reserve. Tangkoko is the last area of intact primary lowland tropical rainforest in the northernmost arm of Sulawesi. This stunning jungle features giant buttresses, huge figs, palms and ferns right onto the beach. It is so pristine that the understorey is wonderfully open – a classic feature of old-growth primary rainforest – and makes for some exceptional wildlife viewing. We had excellent views of the impressive endemic Sulawesi Bear Cuscus, including one individual feeding on leaves in the middle of the day. We also saw the beautiful endemic kingfisher species – Lilac Kingfisher and Green-backed Kingfisher, the tiny Spectral Tarsiers tucked up in their tree-hole roosting sites, and large groups of the approachable (Critically Endangered) Gorontalo Black-crested Macaques.

At an enormous fruiting fig tree, we had exceptional views of a pair of locally endemic Knobbed Hornbills carefully inspecting a nest hole they have been using for over 20 years.

By midday, we had moved to a corner of the ocean made world-famous for its ‘muck diving’ – finding some of the most unusual sea creatures imaginable in black volcanic sands.

Whilst a group headed off for a ‘muck dive’, the rest of us went snorkelling Lembeh’s reefs. The coral cover was exceptional – huge mounds of Acropora Coral grew back-to-back, and clouds of colourful fish patrolled the reef. Expedition Leader Aaron also discovered something none of us had ever seen – a vast field of anemones, with many thousands of resident Anemonefishes. It was truly a snorkel to remember.

Back on board, Suzanne Noakes delivered a fascinating lecture on the cultural importance of the Indonesian ‘ikat’, and a handful of us watched the sunset just past 1800 hours on the top deck, where we were lucky enough to spot both Pygmy Killer Whales and Melon-headed Whales just off the bow.



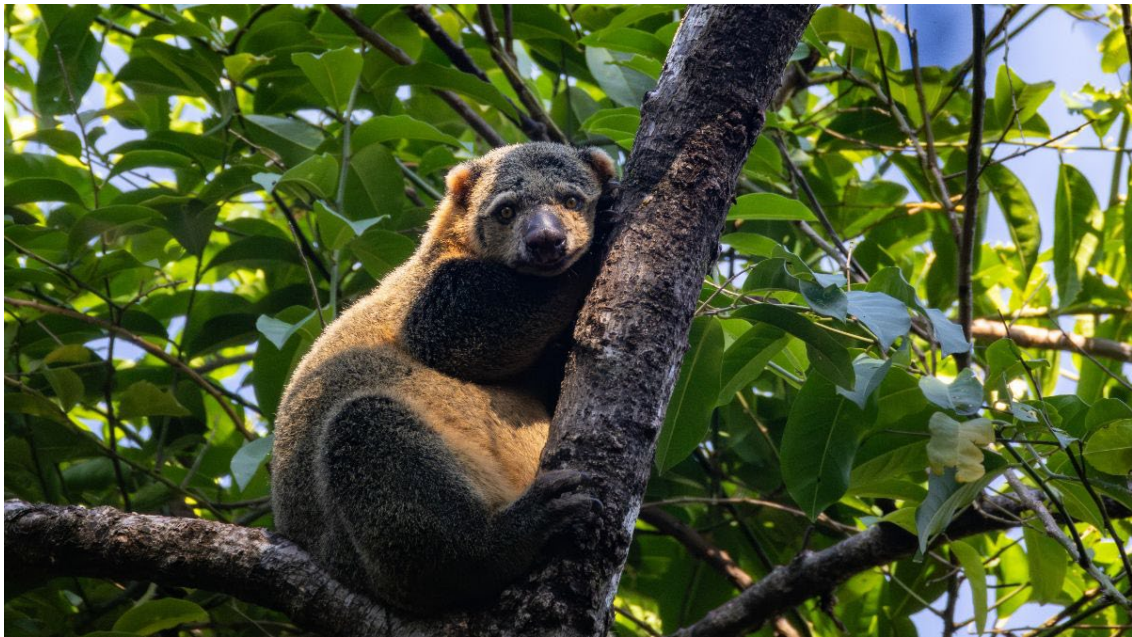
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Day 13

June 21, 2025

Gorontalo & Pulau Malenge

We awoke early this morning with serious anticipation as *Heritage Adventurer* made her way into Gorontalo, with dark clouds hanging over the mountains and the ocean looking very messy. The dark sky couldn't kill the buzz as we were all looking forward to potentially swimming with the biggest fish in the sea – the Whale Shark.

As we repositioned towards the fishing platforms, the scout Zodiacs were dropped to go and assess the scene. Unfortunately, there had been a large storm overnight resulting in a 12-metre-deep layer of turbid water extending from the shoreline out for 5km. Our local guides told us that the Whale Sharks would not be coming to feed here in these water conditions and stayed just out of visibility where we were snorkelling in the deeper, clearer water.

Lunchtime took a turn as we crossed the Equator, and the mighty Neptune boarded the vessel. With a large collection of pollywogs on board, a ceremony took place, with fish kissing, shot drinking, and pool jumping all being part of the show. Before long, the pollywogs had been declared shellbacks, Neptune left the vessel, and we could continue for our afternoon crossing of the Gulf of Tomini.

After a smooth crossing of the Gulf of Tomini we arrived at our afternoon destination, the rarely visited Pulau Malenge. Our time at Pulau Malenge was spent in the presence of one of the most seldom-seen mammals on the planet – the Babirusa. Luckily our local guides had been caring for some in the area, having built a close bond with one animal in particular. Not long after everyone had arrived and was in place the animal appeared out

of the forest, looking for food. After a beautiful experience with the Babirusa, most opted for an exploration of the reef out in front of the island.

The day ended with a beautiful sunset sending us off to the next day's adventures.



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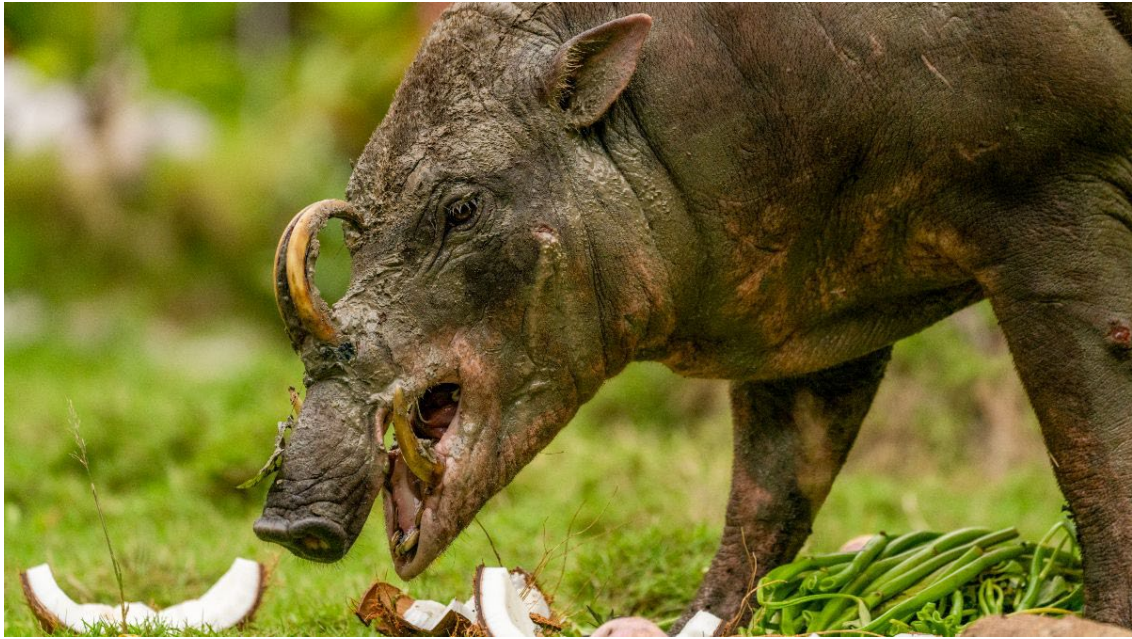
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Day 14

June 22, 2025

Taliabu Islands

As we navigated from the Philippine Time Zone into the Eastern Indonesia Time Zone overnight, we welcomed a later start this morning. After an especially hearty breakfast, 1000 hours saw the departure of all the Zodiacs for Seho Island, part of the Taliabu Island Regency.

We cruised slowly past a thick curtain of absolutely stunning pristine primary lowland rainforest. Giant emergent trees erupted out of the dense forest cover and huge figs tumbled down onto white sand beaches.

The birding was so good, that one especially bird-loving Zodiac group decided to forego lunch and spend the entire day searching for hidden treasure – and the sightings were indeed spectacular. The birders saw displaying White-bellied Sea Eagles, two species of Pitta (Elegant and Sula), Great-billed Herons, and a whole host of other endemic specialities including Sula Fruit Dove, Sula White-eye, Sula Fantail and Sula Cuckoo Dove. The weather stayed pleasantly overcast and cool all day – perfect birding weather!

Others snorkelled the stunning reefs in some of Seho's sheltered bays and saw colourful Nudibranchs, curious Tunicates and impressive Moray Eels.

Those who returned to our trusty expedition vessel for lunch visited Taliabu to see a local community and visit the market. We were warmly welcomed by the local community with traditional dance being performed and many taking the opportunity to snap some photos with us - a role reversal for most.

With the last Zodiac back on board by 1730 hours, the clouds parted and revealed a glorious sunset as we bade farewell to the Taliabu Island Regency and continued our journey south.



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Day 15

June 23, 2025

Buru Island

This morning, we awoke to beautiful glassy conditions as the 2000-metre-high peaks of Buru Island reflected in the ocean-surrounding *Heritage Adventurer*. As the sun slowly rose, our Zodiacs departed for a morning cruise around Pulau Tomahu Island. We were treated to outstanding conditions, the water being gin-clear and 30+ turtles cruising underneath the Zodiacs. We continued along the coastline of Buru Island, scanning through the mangroves and looking for Saltwater Crocodiles and birds. No crocodiles were sighted, but a beautiful waterfall was discovered that we were only able to access due to the morning high tide.

After a warm welcome by the local villagers, most of us got in the water for a snorkel with many reporting it as the best snorkelling so far on the voyage. Some spotted turtles, while others commented on the beautiful variety of fish.

After a hearty and delicious lunch, it was time for an afternoon at sea as we made our way to Banda Neira for the following day's adventures. A handful of staff put on lectures which were enjoyed by all, and many people took the opportunity to relax after a busy few days exploring some of the most magical places in the world.



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Day 16

June 24, 2025

Banda Neira

Luckily the plan for today was a slightly later start, as there was much excitement early in the morning out on deck; viewing conditions were perfect – cool and flat calm, and a steady stream of seabirds – Red-footed Boobies, Brown Boobies, and tiny Matsudaira's Storm Petrel winged their way past *Heritage Adventurer*. Soon enough, Kristian's diligent scanning for cetaceans paid off as he spotted a group of distant dark fins. The animals hung around near the surface long enough for our Captain to change direction slightly, and for everyone on board to see them from the deck. As we approached, we enjoyed superb views of a large group of Short-finned Pilot Whales, including several large bulls and small calves. It was an excellent omen for what was to be a superb day.

The snorkellers and scuba divers were dropped above a submerged, relatively fresh lava flow, allowing wonderful views of coral succession, as coral communities colonised the new rock (starting with huge fields of Acropora Staghorn Coral). The intact reef slightly further out was perhaps the best coral we'd seen so far – a stunningly diverse array of corals including huge, ancient Table Corals. An exceptionally diverse cast of fish and marine creatures crowded the reef, including schools of Triggerfish, large Moray Eels, Yellow-lipped Sea Kraits and an otherwise exceptional diversity.

Once everyone had been in the water for as long as they could, we all returned to our floating home to prepare for a brilliant afternoon barbeque out on the deck, with a huge spread of food, live music, and a spectacular visit from the local traditional voyaging canoes Kora Kora – which flanked either side of *Heritage Adventurer*.

In the afternoon some of the guests went ashore to visit the local village, whilst the birders took a gentle hike through some of the coastal rainforest, getting fantastic views of the outrageously attractive and endemic Banda Sea Pitta, and a beautiful Spotted Cuscus eating figs in a tree.

The village visit was splendid, with a tour of the local Nutmeg farm, a visit to the old colonial fort, the chance to do some shopping and a tasty selection of local snacks put on at a local resort.

Many chose to see Banda Neira off with cocktails at the pool bar on the top deck, as a deep orange sunset accompanied our farewell and departure south.



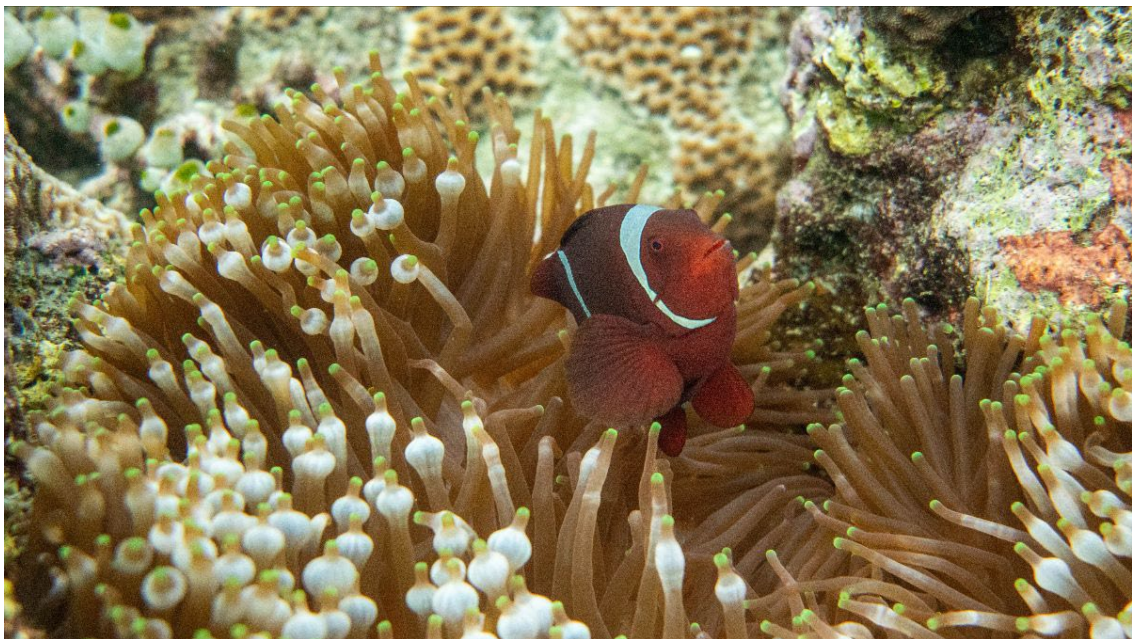
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Day 17

June 25, 2025

Kai Kecil Island

We arrived under a stormy sky at our final location in Indonesia - Kai Kecil Island. The morning started with everyone visiting the village and receiving a warm welcome from the local people of the Island. A large spread of local snacks was put on alongside a beautiful display of traditional dancing, which all enjoyed. The weather quickly improved, with the stormy clouds blowing away to the west and the sun taking their place.

Following the visit to the community, it was time for more snorkel adventures and the reef didn't disappoint. A beautiful array of colourful corals and dazzling fish covered the reef with most people staying in until the urge for food and refreshments sent them back to *Heritage Adventurer* to refuel.

After another excellent lunch, we repositioned to a tiny island for the final adventure of our Asian Island Odyssey voyage. Most took the time to explore across the reef, with beautiful snorkelling conditions to send us off. While we were snorkelling, the bar team snuck onto the beach and set up a beach bar for all to enjoy. Cold drinks were flowing, and most people took the opportunity to 'cheers' to an amazing voyage aboard *Heritage Adventurer*.



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Day 18

June 26, 2025

At Sea

After a fabulous adventure, we had a day at sea to reflect on our journey, organise photos and enjoy the many amenities *Heritage Adventurer* had to offer. Enjoying the lectures taking place, we spent the day on our own accord as we approached Darwin. The night saw us enjoy the Captain's Farewell Cocktails, and a fabulous slideshow which perfectly encapsulated the incredible voyage we had all experienced. After chatting with all our new friends, we headed to bed to get ready for tomorrow's departure.

Day 19

June 27, 2025

Departure in Darwin

Our Asian Island Odyssey adventure had come to an end as we arrived in the former frontier outpost of Darwin. We said goodbye to the amazing Expedition Team and *Heritage Adventurer*, filled with wonderful memories of the last 19 days.



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