

INDONESIA



MV Mermaid in Komodo National Park

BALI TO KOMODO AND BEYOND

**A Wonderful Wildlife Cruise
13th – 22th Sept 2020
Led by Dr. Charles Anderson**

WildOceans

BALI TO KOMODO & BEYOND

A wonderful wildlife cruise, 13 - 22 Sept 2020

SUMMARY

Join us for a 9 night / 10 day cruise from Bali to Komodo and on in September 2020. On board our exclusively chartered liveaboard vessel, we will cruise eastwards from Bali for 3 days, watching out for dolphins and whales, and stopping in sheltered locations for island visits and snorkeling on the magnificent coral reefs. A further 3 days will be spent around Komodo, an area known for its high density of whales and dolphins. There will be visits ashore to see the famous Komodo Dragons and other wildlife. And there will also be time for more snorkeling on the coral reefs, where there is a real chance of Manta Rays. We then wend our way onwards around the coast of Flores, with plenty more time for cetacean watching and snorkeling en-route. We end our voyage at the port of Maumere, from where we fly back to Bali.

INTRODUCTION TO INDONESIA

Indonesia is a country of superlatives. It is the largest archipelago in the world (over 17,000 islands) with a stunning diversity of cultures, and the most diverse marine-life anywhere. For example, over 3500 species of fish have been recorded – more than enough to keep the keenest snorkeler enthralled. Although it is not well known, this diversity also extends to the marine mammals, with our previous trips recording a wealth of dolphins and whales.



Sangeang Island



Manta off Komodo

Our cruise starts from the island of Bali, which is just as exotic as it sounds, especially away from the busy south. But Bali is just the beginning of a great arc of islands, Nusa Tenggara or the Lesser Sunda Islands, which stretches away to the east. These islands (Lombok, Sumbawa, Komodo and Flores) become more arid the further east you go, and are of particular interest to naturalists because it is here that the Asian fauna finally gives way to Australasian wildlife (the boundary being marked as the famous Wallace's Line).

DATES

The dates of our 2020 trip are:

Trip	Group size	Depart Bali	Disembark Maumere	Nights	RRP From
Bali-Maumere	14 max	13 Sep, Sun	22 Sep, Tue	9	£3499 pp

These dates are for *time on board*. Add on time at each end to include flights. In addition, we *strongly* recommend that you arrive in Bali one day early at the very latest; the boat cannot wait for late arrivals.

OUR BOAT

On this trip we travel through the Indonesian archipelago on board our exclusively chartered 28 m liveaboard safari vessel, **M.V. *Mermaid***. She is very comfortable and ideal for our needs. *Mermaid* has a local crew of 15, including an experienced captain and two full-time cooks. There are 7 guest cabins, including: one master suite, with panoramic windows looking forward over the bows; four standard cabins on the main deck, each with windows; and two lower deck cabins without windows. All cabins are ensuite and air-conditioned.

Our itinerary while on board will be very flexible, to make the most of cetacean sightings. The outline given below should therefore be considered to be a guideline only, not a rigidly structured programme. We will journey past far-flung islands, enjoying the scenery, and taking our time to watch dolphins, whales, flying fish and seabirds. We will travel by day and anchor early most evenings in a sheltered spot. Depending on our location there should be opportunities for a snorkel or island visit at these times, using the *Mermaid's* two inflatable tenders. And after dark, far from city lights, the top deck offers stunning views of the night sky. Because of the distances involved, we will need to cruise through some nights.

In summary, this promises to be a superb wildlife cruise with great cetacean sightings, magnificent coral reefs and tropical islands together with friendly local people and not-so-friendly Komodo Dragons.

ITINERARY

Bali to Komodo to Maumere, 2020

Day 1. Sun 13 Sept. Start of cruise from Bali. Board MV *Mermaid* at Benoa port, from 1300h. Depart soon after 1430h. Cruise towards Nusa Penida Island, looking out for dolphins en-route. Depending on conditions we may anchor here (in which case there may be time for a coral reef snorkel) or we may sail on through the night. After sunset tonight there will be an orientation talk, and on most other nights there will be a slide show. We *strongly* recommend that you arrive in Bali at least one day early.

Days 2-3. Mon 14 to Tues 15 Sept. Heading East. We will slowly work our way eastwards, past the islands of Lombok and Sumbawa, looking out along the way for whales and dolphins, flying fish and seabirds. There will be opportunities for snorkeling on the coral reefs and for island visits.

Days 4-6. Wed 16 to Fri 18 Sept. Around Komodo. We plan to have three full days within the Komodo National Park. There should be time to visit both Komodo and Rinca Islands to see the extremely impressive Komodo Dragons, and other wildlife. We will snorkel on some of the superb coral reefs, and hope to encounter Manta Rays at one site. And of course our main aim will still be locating and observing whales and dolphins. NB Komodo Island maybe closed in 2020, Rinca Island has plenty of Dragons too!

Days 7-9. Sat 19 to Mon 21 Sept. Heading East. We cruise on, along the coast of Flores, with plenty more time for whale and dolphin watching. And we will have time to snorkel on different reefs and perhaps also to visit different islands. We should arrive at Maumere in Flores late on the penultimate day of the trip.

Day 10. Tues 22 Sept. Disembark. After breakfast we will sadly have to disembark and transfer to Maumere airport for our domestic flight back to Bali. There is of course the opportunity to stay on in Flores for a few days for those who would like to explore this little-visited island.



MV Mermaid 1

NATURALIST

These trips will be led by Dr. Charles 'Chas' Anderson, a professional marine biologist who lives and works in the Maldives. He is an authority on both the cetaceans and fishes of the tropical Indian Ocean, and the pioneer of whale and dolphin watching in the region, including Indonesia. Chas has made numerous visits to Indonesia over the past 25 years (including a spell working as a diving instructor on Flores), and has dived widely throughout the archipelago. He is the author of 'An Underwater Guide to Indonesia', and a major contributor to the best-selling divers' guide 'Underwater Indonesia'. Chas may be assisted by his wife Sue Anderson, who is a qualified nurse as well as an experienced and enthusiastic whale spotter, and is well known as a caring host.

CLIMATE

Indonesia spans the equator, so the climate is tropical. September is in the inter-monsoon season, and is normally calm and sunny, but the wind can occasionally pick up and bring showers. Temperatures typically reach 29-33°C during the day, dropping to about 25-27°C at night. Sea breezes make this quite comfortable, although when there is no wind it does feel hot. While snorkeling, sea temperatures are pleasantly warm (typically 27-29°C). In a few places (notably off the south of Komodo) the sea can be cooler (24-27°C) as a result of upwelling – which is the source of nutrients that ultimately feed the local Mantas and cetaceans.

COST

Master suite:	£3995
Standard cabin:	£3799
Lower deck cabin:	£3499
Single supplement:	£1895 (subject to availability)

Includes: Accommodation and all meals on *MV Mermaid*; teas and coffees; naturalist guide; transfers to boat from airport and nearby hotels and vice versa.

Does not include: International flights; domestic flight from Maumere to Bali (currently about £90); insurance; airport or boat transfers to and from more distant hotels on Bali; bar bill; airport taxes; gratuities; personal items. Also, there is a Komodo National Park entrance fee (currently Euro 150 per person) which has to be paid in person on the boat. There may be a fuel surcharge, to be determined by the boat owner in April 2020. And any additional costs, such as new government taxes or fees, will have to be paid at cost.

Payment schedule: To confirm your booking we will require a non-refundable deposit of £750 per person. The balance should be paid no later than four months before departure. We reserve the right to impose a surcharge at cost in case of major increase in fuel prices, Indonesian tax or similar.

INDONESIAN WILDLIFE

Cetaceans

The main attraction of whale and dolphin watching in Indonesia is the wonderful diversity of tropical cetaceans. Our recent trips have in particular highlighted the abundance of species in and around the Komodo National Park. Of course, nothing can be guaranteed with wild animals, but it would be very surprising if we did not see a good selection of whales and dolphins. One species that we will be looking out for especially is Eden's Whale. This little-known baleen whale is a pending split from Bryde's Whale, occurs in inshore waters around the northern Indian and western Pacific Oceans, and has been positively recorded several times from the south of Komodo. Cetaceans that we are likely to see include:

Melon-headed Whale	<i>Peponocephala electra</i>
Pilot Whale	<i>Globicephala macrorhynchus</i>
Spinner Dolphin	<i>Stenella longirostris</i>
Spotted Dolphin	<i>Stenella attenuata</i>
Risso's Dolphin	<i>Grampus griseus</i>
Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>
Indo-pacific Bottlenose	<i>Tursiops aduncus</i>
Fraser's Dolphin	<i>Lagenodelphis hosei</i>

We also hope to see some of the following:

Blue Whale	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>
Eden's Whale	<i>Balaenoptera edeni</i>
Bryde's Whale	<i>Balaenoptera brydei</i>
Sperm Whale	<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>
Dwarf Sperm Whale	<i>Kogia sima</i>
False Killer Whale	<i>Pseudorca crassidens</i>
Pygmy Killer Whale	<i>Feresa attenuata</i>
Killer Whale	<i>Orcinus orca</i>
Cuvier's Beaked Whale	<i>Ziphius cavirostris</i>
Humpback Dolphin	<i>Sousa chinensis</i>
Rough-toothed Dolphin	<i>Stenobredanensis</i>



Fraser's Dolphins

Other Wildlife

While out with the whales and dolphins there will be plenty of opportunities for seabird watching. Many tropical species have been recorded from the region. Possibilities include Boobies (Brown, Red-footed and perhaps also Abbott's), Frigatebirds (Lesser, Great and Christmas Island), Tropicbirds (White-tailed), Shearwaters (Wedge-tailed and Streaked), Petrels (Bulwer's) and Storm-petrels (Swinhoe's and Matsudaira's) as well as thousands of dainty Red-necked Phalaropes.

As for land birds, Indonesia has the highest diversity in the entire old world, and the Lesser Sunda islands alone are home to some 45 endemic species. We will not have time to search them all out, but we will have some island visits, and can expect to see a number of local specialties. These should include the Yellow-crested Cockatoo, once widely distributed but now endangered and seen regularly only within the Komodo National Park. A further terrestrial attraction should be the tens of thousands of fruit bats that roost on the small island of Satonda off Sumbawa.

However, the main attraction on land will undoubtedly be the Komodo Dragon. This fearsome lizard can grow to 3m (10') in length. It is confined to Komodo and Rinca Islands (and some small surrounding areas) and we hope to go ashore on both.



Komodo Dragons

Other Marine Life

While underway, in addition to whales and dolphins, we will undoubtedly see plenty of other marine life. Both flying fish and tuna are abundant and should be spotted regularly. If we are lucky we may see Turtles, Sunfish and possibly also a Whale Shark. But a real highlight should be snorkeling on the magnificent coral reefs, which are alive with myriad colourful reef fishes. And at one site on the south side of Komodo we have a real chance of snorkeling with Manta Rays. There will be time in the evenings for discussion and identification of the bewildering variety of reef animals.

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

You will need to arrange your own flight to Bali in Indonesia. Note that Ngurah Rai International Airport is at Denpasar in Bali, and most airlines list it as Denpasar.

www.baliairport.com

Scheduled airlines flying to Denpasar include **Singapore Airlines** (SQ), **Garuda Indonesia** (GA), **Malaysia Airlines** (MH), **Cathay Pacific** (CX), **Royal Brunei** (RB), **KLM** (KL), **Emirates** (EK) and **Qatar Airways** (QR). September is a moderately busy time for flights; do book early, especially for the best prices.

We can board the *MV Mermaid* from about 1300h on the first day. We should set sail soon after 1430h. I strongly recommend arriving in Bali at least one day early, and ideally even earlier. That will allow time to recover from the long flight, see something of Bali, and minimize the risk of arriving late and missing the boat.

We expect to arrive at Maumere, Flores, during the evening of the penultimate day. We will disembark after early breakfast the last day. A domestic flight back to Bali departs at about 0830h on Tuesday 22 September (see below for more details).

Airline timetables are available at:

www.singaporeair.com

www.garudaindonesia.co.uk

www.malaysiaairlines.com

www.emirates.com

www.klm.com

www.cathaypacific.com

www.flyroyalbrunei.com

www.klm.com

www.emirates.com

www.qatarairways.com

STOPOVERS

Bali is a long way from Europe, so if you have the time you might want to think about a stopover, either on the outward or return journey. The airline you choose will determine your likely options, eg Singapore with SQ, Kuala Lumpur with MH or Hong Kong with CX.

In Bali itself, there are *many* options for accommodation. Note that the airport and Benoa port (from which we sail) are both in the far south of Bali. If you have only one or two nights in Bali before sailing you might want to stay relatively nearby, eg in Nusa Dua or Sanur. If you have more time, you might want to explore further away from the somewhat crowded south.

VISAS

You will require a visa for Indonesia. Nationals of some countries (mostly in SE Asia and Europe, including the UK) will be issued with a free visa on arrival. Nationals of other countries will still have a tourist visa issued on arrival, but will have to pay a fee (currently US\$35 payable in cash on arrival). Everyone must have at least 6 months remaining on their passport and a valid return air ticket.

DOMESTIC FLIGHT

This voyage will terminate at the port city of Maumere on the island of Flores, and the trip officially ends when we disembark on the morning of Tuesday 22 September. There are domestic flights back to Bali, including:

Wings Air: IW-1821: Maumere (MOF) to Denpasar, Bali (DPS) 0830h-1020h
NAM Air: IN-9661: Maumere (MOF) to Denpasar, Bali (DPS) 1350h-1515h

There are also plans for Garuda, the national carrier, to start flights between Maumere and Bali. However, details are not yet available. Wings Air is a division of Lion Air: www.lionair.co.id

The current cost of the flight is about £90; this might increase by September 2020. Flight times might change too. Note that there is a check-in luggage allowance of just 10kg, and the space for carry-on baggage is limited. The good news is that there is room for excess baggage and the current cost is just £1.90 per kilo (payable in local currency on checking in).

It is not always easy to book Indonesian domestic flights online. The boat owner can book your flight for you if you would like. Just let us know when you book the cruise. (Of course, you have the opportunity to stay on in Flores if you would like and take a later flight; we are happy to advise on options).

Note that domestic flights in Indonesia are notorious for running late. Early morning flights are likely to be on time, but this is not guaranteed. So do not book an international flight out of Bali without *plenty* of time to spare.

www.wildwings.co.uk