

REMOTE PAPUA NEW GUINEA

22 JUNE – 18 JULY 2008

TOUR REPORT

LEADERS: MARK VAN BEIRS

The exquisite Superb Pitta and the extraordinary Fire-maned Bowerbird were, without any doubt the two avian highlights of this amazing trip. Both these gems performed so incredibly well in their remote and rarely visited haunts that they will be cherished by all of us for ever. The other important and beautifully observed splendours of this adventurous tour included a wide array of members of the best bird family in the world, the Birds of Paradise, of which Emperor, Raggiana and Lesser Birds of Paradise, Eastern Riflebird, Huon *Astrapia* and the exquisite Wahnes' Parotia stood out. This journey took us to some of the most remote areas of Papua New Guinea, where we birded New Ireland, Tench, Djaul, New Hanover, Manus, the Huon peninsula and the Adelbert Mountains. We enjoyed a close insight into the culture and lifestyle of this traditional and very religious country and at the same time we also experienced some major frustrations at the hand of rough seas, Air Niugini and obnoxious landowners. We recorded 290 species that included well performing 'diamond' birds such as Melanesian Scrubfowl, Pied Cuckoo-Dove, Nicobar Pigeon, White-naped Lory, Meek's Pygmy-Parrot, Vulturine Parrot, Manus and New Ireland Boobooks, Marbled Frogmouth, Brown-headed Paradise, Hook-billed and Beach Kingfishers, Blue-breasted Pitta, Brown-capped Jewel-Babbler, New Ireland Drongo, Djaul Pied and Admiralty Pied Monarchs, Banded Yellow Robin, Spangled Honeyeater, Spotted Berrypecker, Hunstein's, New Ireland and New Hanover Mannikins and Atoll Starling.

The tour started with an atrocious 15 hour delay in Singapore, courtesy of Air Niugini. Eventually the airplane, leased from Icelandair, took us to Port Moresby, the infamous capital of Papua New Guinea, where after some serious reorganising we spent the night in an airport hotel. Before sunrise we had already checked in for the flight to Alotau. We observed our first New Guinea birds from the waiting room at Jackson airport. Several elegant Australian Pratincoles were found foraging on the airport concourse and we also observed Australasian Swamphen and Masked Lapwing here. Ian and Steve did their good deed by buying and releasing a young Australian Pratincole that had been trapped by an airport official. A short flight took us east to the town of Alotau, situated near the easternmost cape of mainland Papua New Guinea. Upon arrival the captain of our chartered boat told us the seas were much too rough to risk going out, so we had to wait for more clement weather before sailing across the Goshen Strait to the islands of Normandy and Ferguson in the D'Entrecasteaux Archipelago. A storm warning had been issued for all small vessels. Disappointed and while waiting for the rain to abate, we observed Grey-tailed Tattler, New Guinea Friarbird, Scrub

White-eared Meliphaga, Black Sunbird and Fawn-breasted Bowerbird in the gardens of our lovely hotel. Not much later we visited a nice patch of nearby foothill forest where we were treated to sightings of goodies like Osprey, Whistling Kite, Long-tailed Buzzard, Slender-billed Cuckoo-Dove, Wompoo, Pink-spotted and Orange-bellied Fruit-Doves, Pinon Imperial Pigeon, lots of raucous Sulphur-crested Cockatoos and Eclectus Parrots, Red-cheeked Parrot, Rainbow Lorikeet, Eastern Black-capped Lory, Brush Cuckoo, Uniform Swiftlet, Forest and adorable Yellow-billed Kingfishers, Blyth's Hornbill, White-bellied and Yellow-eyed Cuckoo-Shrikes, Varied Triller, Black-faced and attractive Frilled and Golden Monarchs, Tawny-breasted Honeyeater, Hooded Butcherbird and Grey Crow. Several male and female Raggiana Birds of Paradise showed off, providing an excellent introduction to one of the most desired bird families in the world, the Birds of Paradise (BoPs for the aficionados).

Next morning, we heard that the Disaster Office had issued another Storm Warning for small vessels and even the local ferry service, operating quite large ships, had been suspended. So we decided to stick around, and while waiting for our transport, we picked up Brown-backed and Rufous-banded Honeyeaters in the hotel gardens. Helmut located a Common Spotted Cuscus in a fruiting tree, but it turned out later that this beautiful animal was an escaped pet. We spent most of the day in a nice patch of swamp and adjoining hill forest, but sadly the weather gods didn't like us there as we saw almost nothing inside the forest. We only heard Brown-collared Brush-turkey, but the steep hill, the extremely muddy trail, the leeches and the several streams we had to wade across provided a great introduction to the joys of New Guinea forest birding. Along the forest edge we found Lesser Frigatebird, Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove, several impressive Palm Cockatoos, Pheasant Coucal, Azure Kingfisher, cute White-shouldered Fairy-Wrens, White-bellied Thicket-Fantail, Shining Flycatcher, Mimic Meliphaga, Metallic Starling and Glossy-mantled Manucode.

Next dawn, things had improved a little bit, as the Disaster Office warning had been tuned down to "Strong Winds", but it was obvious that our captain did not want to risk going out in his fairly small boat in two to two and a half metre waves. It became clear we were never going to make it to the display grounds of Goldie's Bird of Paradise and Curl-crested Manucode on Fergusson Island. Our first days of the tour were definitely a serious let down. We tried to make the best of a sad situation and found some males and females Red-flanked Lorikeets feeding in a flowering tree, with incredibly graceful Moustached Tree-Swifts flying overhead and Little and Grey Shrike-Thrushes hiding in the garden bushes. We birded the whole day in a mosaic of grassland and forest patches overlooking hills covered in primary forest. Here we found Pacific Baza, several Variable Goshawks, a cracking Gurney's Eagle, a single Papuan Hanging Parrot, Slender-billed and Black-billed Cuckoo-Doves, a Shining Bronze-Cuckoo, Common Cicadabird and Black-shouldered Cuckoo-Shrike and heard Hook-billed Kingfisher and Blue-breasted Pitta. Another morning in the same area yielded Long-tailed Buzzard, Little Eagle, a displaying pair of Grey-headed Goshawks, Stephan's Ground-Dove, Superb and Coronated Fruit-Doves, a fly by Purple-tailed Imperial Pigeon, a male Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Black Cuckoo-Shrike, Green-backed, Dusky and Streak-headed Honeyeaters, Puff-backed Meliphaga and several Raggiana Birds of Paradise, that included a young male 'anting' itself. We then packed up and made our way to Alotau airport where Pacific Golden Plovers showed. The first chapter of the tour had not gone as planned and was a disappointment, so we were keeping our fingers crossed for the rest of the tour to go smoothly....

After an overnight in Port Moresby, we checked in for the flight to Kavieng, the capital of New Ireland, only to be told the flight would be delayed for 3 hours. We quickly organised a trip to a local patch of eucalypt savanna on the outskirts of Port Moresby, where Rufous Night-Heron, Black Kite, Bar-shouldered Dove, an impressive Blue-winged Kookaburra, Tree Martin, Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike, Golden-headed Cisticola and Black-backed Butcherbird were noted. In late morning we returned to the airport, where, after a bit more delay we finally took off. A stop on the island of Manus was prolonged because of a thunderstorm and a heavy downpour. Finally, in late afternoon we arrived at Kavieng. It was too late to drive down to our base further south, so we opted to spend

the night in a local hotel. We picked up our two Toyota Hilux vehicles and spent the rest of the afternoon exploring the surroundings of the airfield. Dozens of endemic Hunstein's Mannikins flitted about and we also found Oriental Hobby, Buff-banded Rail, Glossy Swiftlet, Australian Reed Warbler, Island Crow and a single enormous Great Flying Fox.

Next morning, long before dawn, we were already driving along the famous, coast-hugging Boluminski highway to our lodge at the base of the Lelet Plateau. A few stops on the way yielded Eastern Reef-Egret, a smashing Black Bittern, a couple of Nicobar Pigeons, Yellow-tinted Imperial Pigeon and Common, Collared and Little Kingfishers. After checking in into our guesthouse we drove up into the higher reaches. An obnoxious, machete-juggling landowner gave us a bit of a hard time, but eventually we were able to concentrate on birding. We witnessed the spectacular display of Pied Cuckoo-Dove and observed Red-knobbed Fruit-Dove, Red-knobbed Imperial Pigeon, White-naped Lory (only in flight), Pied Coucal, a couple of impressive New Ireland Drongos (but a bit brief), Golden Monarch, Lesser Shining Flycatcher, lots of Red-tinted Honeyeaters, Red-banded Flowerpecker and Long-tailed Myna. At dusk we were treated to fine views of a New Ireland Boobook while others were calling nearby. It rained most of the night, so early next morning we had to tackle the slippery Limbin track to get to the higher altitudes. We struggled a bit, but our 4x4 vehicles did a good job and soon we were studying Oriental Hobby, White-bibbed Fruit-Dove, Finsch's Imperial Pigeon, Bismarck Hanging Parrot, White-rumped Swiftlet, New Ireland Drongo and Black-headed White-eye in their montane habitat. In the afternoon we explored some grassy glades where a large mixed flock of Buff-bellied and New Ireland Mannikins proved excellent value. Nearby, a Breadfruit tree was regularly visited by Great Flying Foxes feasting on the buttery, glutinous fruits.

Next morning, we paid another visit to the Lelet plateau along the Limbin road. The montane forest, bathing in the bright morning sunlight was heaving with bird activity, but flight views mainly of our targets were obtained. We flushed a Melanesian Scrubfowl, observed several displaying Pied Cuckoo-Doves, admired a wing-clapping pair of Finsch's Imperial Pigeons and added Black Imperial Pigeon, Papuan Mountain Pigeon, Song Parrot and Bismarck Woodswallow to the tally. After having seen about a dozen Lories in flight, it was great to be able to scope a stunning White-naped Lory perched in all its glory and showing off its obvious white nape and dark cere. Magnificent stuff! In late morning we returned to base, replaced a flat tyre (three nails!) and after a hearty lunch we drove back to Kavieng taking the doctor and his family. A few stops on the way gave us several Ospreys including two carrying fish.

Next day was Tench day! After a bit of a delay because of an engine problem we sailed to the distant small island of Tench, situated c100km to the northwest of New Ireland. It was rather quiet at sea as only a Bulwer's Petrel and a few Wedge-tailed Shearwaters provided distraction. But once we were approaching the island seabirds started to appear, with Black Noddies and Red-footed Boobies dominating. Upon arrival we were welcomed by the small community consisting of c50 people. After paying our respects, we explored the forest-covered island and immediately saw several Atoll Starlings, our main target here. These very localized, small island favouring starlings proved to be quite common and we were able to study them in detail. The island was deliciously full of birds. Black Noddies were nesting everywhere and endearing Red-footed Boobies favoured the larger trees. Appealing White Terns observed us from their nesting branches, but best of all were the dozens of amazing Nicobar Pigeons. These highly sought, rather bizarre creatures flushed up from the forest floor or perched up on the palm fronds of the ubiquitous coconut palms. Great Frigatebirds were hovering over the island and we were lucky enough to locate a displaying male with his grotesquely inflated bright red gular pouch. Other interesting species on Tench included White-tailed Tropicbird, Brown Booby, Melanesian Scrubfowl, Brown Noddy (much less common than the Black Noddies), Yellow-bibbed Fruit-Dove, Pacific Imperial Pigeon, Island Monarch and Bismarck Black Honeyeater. We really enjoyed our visit to the seabird island of Tench. The return boat trip didn't produce anything, although we kept our eyes open in case a rare Beck's Petrel would cross our path. This very

rare seabird had been refound in these waters recently, but we did not see anything that looked like a *Pterodroma* petrel.

The following day was packed with action. At dawn we observed an Oriental Hobby while boarding the banana boat that took us to Djaul Island. We made our way around the western end of New Ireland, crossed the smooth waters of the Gazelle Strait and arrived midmorning on the island of Djaul. We visited some patches of nice forest at the edge of the gardens of a small village and soon located our main quarry: the Djaul Pied Monarch. It took a while before everyone obtained excellent views of this pretty creature. Although not considered a full species by most checklists, we judged it distinctive enough to merit the effort. The very different tail pattern compared to Bismarck Pied Monarch was plain for all to see. We then sailed to the distant island of New Hanover. On the way we found a large feeding frenzy of Black Noddies together with multiple Red-footed Boobies and attending Lesser Frigatebirds. Huge numbers of silvery small fish were driven to the surface by hunting bonitos and the seabirds were doing their best to decimate the population. Great Crested, Bridled and Common Terns were also present, but, sadly no Heinroth's Shearwaters could be found. At a quiet beach a pair of Beach Kingfishers performed really well and upon arrival at New Hanover, the heavens opened and we had to seek shelter for a while. A nearby extensive patch of grassland held a party of New Hanover Mannikins. Considered a distinctive race of Hunstein's Mannikin by most, we made sure we obtained good views and then sailed back to Kavieng. A bit of a swell made for a bumpy ride, resulting in sore butts, but a pod of Indopacific Bottle-nosed Dolphins provided some relief. The late afternoon found us at the edge of a nice tract of swamp forest where Bismarck Pied Monarch showed well and Striated Heron, an Osprey eating a colourful parrotfish and Nicobar Pigeon provided a fitting end to the day. We returned to the same area next morning and found the place alive with parrots. A displaying pair of Eastern Black-capped Lories was much appreciated and a sneaky Rufous-tailed Bush-hen called from impenetrable vegetation. Our scheduled midday flight to Port Moresby was delayed and retimed (a much dreaded word!!), so in the end a different flight took us via Rabaul (with its active volcanoes), Lae, Madang to Port Moresby. Rather tedious business.

The third leg of the tour took us to famous Manus Island in the Admiralty Archipelago. We landed on time at the huge WWII airfield and were met by our able men on the spot. Not much later we were already walking in a nice tract of forest where our first endemic obliged. Several, rather wary White-naped Friarbirds (or Chaukas) gave good views in the treetops. An endemic Admiralty Pied Monarch was whistled in and along the forest edge we found Island Imperial Pigeon, the recently split Manus Cuckoo-Shrike and Black-headed White-eye. Towards dusk we heard a Manus Boobook call from very dense cover, but it would not budge. Our first full day on Manus was one of the most important days of the tour, as we were going to try for the holy grail of Manus, the fabled Superb Pitta. We first checked the spot where we had seen it so well three years ago, but not a sniff. So we walked deeper into the forest and eventually, after some sweaty and slippery walking along muddy trails, we heard the distinctive double 'coi coi' call of our quarry. It then took a bit of patient waiting and diligent playing of the tape till we obtained great views of this magnificent creature. It shivered all over, showing off its bright blue and red finery, while emitting its distinctive call. Billy especially was enthralled as this was his 21st species of pitta. Helmut obtained some good video footage and it transpired that this was Ian's first pitta!! A fantastic start to this fascinating family! We also had great views of several Admiralty Pied Monarchs and of a perched Variable Dwarf Kingfisher. During the lunch pause a White-bellied Sea-Eagle was seen and in the afternoon we birded along the inland road, where we obtained great scope views of several Meek's Pygmy-Parrots. A couple of Nicobar Pigeons flew over and one was scoped in a rubber plantation. Before dusk we heard the guttural calls of a Manus Boobook and eagle-eyed Steve found it perched within dense vegetation. What a find! Our last possible mainland Manus endemic had succumbed.

Next morning, a banana boat took us to one of the offshore islands, but the journey turned out to be rather rough. In view of deteriorating weather in the afternoon, we aborted the trip and visited another much closer island, where Rufous Night-Heron, Black-naped Tern, Mackinlay's Cuckoo-

Dove, Stephan's Ground-Dove, five Beach Kingfishers, Island Monarch and many Bismarck Black Honeyeaters showed. On our last morning on Manus, I spent some prime time in the Air Niugini office trying to salvage our so-called cancelled onward flights – god knows what happened! Once solved, we went off to watch waders on the grasslands surrounding the airfield, where we located Eurasian Whimbrel, lots of Pacific Golden Plovers, a couple of Lesser Sand Plover and a Yellow Wagtail. We then waved goodbye to Manus and flew to Lae's Nadzab airport, where we observed lots of Black Kites and a couple of Papuan Harriers. The 35km drive from Nadzab airport to our hotel in town in a fortified bus with windows protected by grilles and escorted by armed guards created a rather unpleasant atmosphere and made us feel as if we were in the middle of a war zone. The gardens of our very nice hotel, guarded by razor wire fencing, held a couple of incredibly cute Huon Tree Kangaroos.

Early next morning, we returned to Nadzab airport in a high security bus and after a very informal check in we birded the airfield and observed lots of Black Kites, Papuan Harrier and several Australasian Bushlarks. A New Zealand built single engine plane took us over the mountain ranges of the Huon to the seacoast village of Wasu. Good numbers of Torresian Imperial Pigeons adorned the trees here and we soon drove up into the hills to our base at the village of Gatop. It was great to see our amiable host Gerhard again and we got settled in. In the afternoon we explored the hill forest above the village and came away with observations of Rufescent Imperial Pigeon, Dusky Lory, Papuan Lorikeet, a brief Vulturine Parrot, Channel-billed Cuckoo, Mountain Swiftlet, Mountain Kingfisher, Buff-faced Scrub-Wren, Brown-breasted Gerygone, Black and Friendly Fantails, a male Regent Whistler, Cinnamon-browed and Ornate Melidectes, the Huon endemic Spangled Honeyeater, Rufous-backed and Black-throated Honeyeaters, Red-collared Honeyeater, Mid-mountain and Spotted Berrypeckers and Mountain Peltops. But seeing multiple Huon *Astrapias* and several Wahnes' Parotias in action in a fruiting tree was the highlight here. These two restricted range Birds of Paradise performed very well, as they allowed great scope studies. Next morning we covered the beautiful montane forest at altitudes between 1700 and 1900m. The day started with a cracking encounter with nine Vulturine Parrots, uttering raucous calls, sitting and flying about and doing a bit of display. Truly great stuff. Other splendours seen here included Black-mantled Goshawk, Brown Falcon, White-bibbed Fruit-Dove, Rufescent Imperial Pigeon, Papuan Mountain Pigeon, Hooded Cuckoo-Shrike, Black-breasted Boatbill, Canary Flycatcher, Mottled Whistler, Spotted and Tit Berrypeckers and New Guinea White-eye. In the afternoon we visited hill forest and gardens at lower elevations, where we encountered lots of activity of Birds of Paradise. A tricky, rather slippery trail and an awkward stream crossing led to observations of Crinkle-collared Manucode, Eastern Riflebird and several Emperor Birds of Paradise.

Early next morning, in the same patch of hill forest, we were sitting in a badly-built hide in front of a display court of a Magnificent Bird of Paradise, but the male, sadly, only paid a brief visit. For the rest of the day we wandered through the forest and listened to uncooperative Pheasant Pigeons, White-crowned Koel and Blue-breasted Pittas. We observed Lemon-bellied Flycatcher, Hooded and Variable Pitohuis, White-rumped Robin and Rusty Mouse-Warbler. Around noon we positioned ourselves at a lovely lookout, where Great Cuckoo-Dove, Ornate and Pink-spotted Fruit-Doves, Papuan Sittella, several exquisite males Eastern Riflebird, Crinkle-collared Manucode and Black-winged Monarch obliged. In the evening we were asked to join the special welcome feast prepared for us. An excellent meal was cooked in a pit filled with exceedingly hot stones (a "mumu"), and a pig was roasted on top. The whole village was invited, and although there was a bit of religious stuff, the atmosphere was marvellous and the Lutheran priest gave an interesting talk.

Because of landowner problems (read jealousy) in the village at the higher altitudes, we were strongly advised not to visit the montane forests anymore, so we concentrated on the lower hill forests and the nearby gardens. Land rights are always a tricky issue in Papua New Guinea, and a lot of energy is spent trying to sort out recurring problems. We revisited the nice forest tracts below the village and added Western Black-capped Lory, Double-eyed Fig-Parrots, Fairy Gerygone, Grey Whistler and

more Eastern Riflebirds to the list. Our last afternoon was enlivened by a pair of displaying Great Cuckoo-Doves. Our gracious hosts offered us bilums (Papuan carrying bags weaved from tree bark) and beautiful shell necklaces as farewell presents and then we travelled down the Huon hills to the airstrip at Wasu. Our small chartered plane took us along the coast of the Huon peninsula to Astrolabe Bay and the enchanting town of Madang.

After a bit of waiting, shopping and observing a Varied Honeyeater, we boarded a Toyota Landcruiser that took us along the coastal road northwards and then along a rather rough track up into the Adelbert Mountains to famous Keki Lodge, situated at 850m altitude. Within minutes of arriving a cracking male Fire-maned Bowerbird showed very well in a fruiting fig tree and we had already seen our main target here! Observing this incredible species was the main reason for travelling to this remote lodge and was Steve's reason to be on this tour. A life's ambition had been fulfilled! This exquisite bird turned out to be one of the two major highlights of the tour. What a fabulous introduction to the Adelbert Mountains! Other goodies in the clearing included Western Black-capped Lories, a Hook-billed Kingfisher (beautifully silhouetted at dusk), Boyer's Cuckoo-Shrike and a male Lesser Bird of Paradise.

Our full day at Keki Lodge started at dawn at the display trees of the Lesser Bird of Paradise. We saw a couple of males parade but they kept quite hidden in the treetops. At the clearing we observed the comings and goings of a whole range of species including males and females Fire-maned Bowerbird that showed very well again. A true mega species. An Oriental Hobby was catching insects overhead and other remarkable birds included Zoe Imperial Pigeon, several Vulturine Parrots, Dwarf Koel, Stout-billed Cuckoo-Shrike, a female Magnificent Bird of Paradise, Black-browed Triller, Meyer's Friarbird and Plain Honeyeater. A couple of participants had a great time with a responsive Blue-breasted Pitta. In midmorning we retreated into the forest, where a tape duel with a Brown-capped Jewel-Babbler resulted in fair views. A Banded Yellow Robin played hide and seek and only showed to a few. Later, an after dinner night birding session produced two tremendous Marbled Frogmouths. We heard another two and also heard Papuan Frogmouth and three unresponsive Papuan Boobooks. Another morning at the Keki Lodge clearing gave us yet again fantastic views of a male and an immature male Fire-maned Bowerbird. In the forest we heard White-eared Catbird and observed a Spot-winged Monarch. Our return transport had a worrying three hour delay, but eventually we were on our way down to Madang, where a pond produced Little Black Cormorant, Wandering Whistling Duck and Comb-crested Jacana with chicks. A mid afternoon flight took us to Port Moresby and our scrumptious farewell dinner in a Chinese restaurant was a great success. The final birding of the tour took place at Varirata National Park, where before dawn a Large-tailed Nightjar obliged. We then admired several males Raggiana Birds of Paradise, and although they did not dance, we obtained wonderful views. A Brown-headed Paradise Kingfisher allowed intimate scope studies, two males and two females Papuan King Parrots showed at length and we heard a Painted Quail Thrush nearby. The last bird of the tour was an incredibly adorable Barred Owlet Nightjar that was sunning itself in a tree hole.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

PROCELLARIIDAE

Bulwer's Petrel *Bulweria bulwerii*: Brief views of one during our boat trip to distant and fascinating Tench Island.

Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus pacificus*: A few off Kavieng. Never really close.

PHAETONTIDAE

White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaeton lepturus*: Great views of this elegant and attractive seabird on Tench Island. The race involved is *dorothea*.

SULIDAE

Red-footed Booby *Sula sula*: Commonly encountered on and around Tench Island. Most birds were of the white morph, but we also encountered small numbers of brown morphs and white-tailed brown morphs. The young birds were especially inquisitive around our boat (*rubripes*)

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster*: Small numbers were seen on Tench Island. One very smart bird breeding on a log just above the high tide mark was particularly appreciated. The race involved is *plotus*.

PHALACROCORACIDAE

Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*: Five birds were found roosting at a pond in downtown Madang.

FREGATIDAE

Great Frigatebird *Fregata minor*: Good numbers were seen on and around Tench Island and we were able to admire a displaying male showing off his inflated, bright red pouch. Frigatebirds have the lowest wing-loading (low weight in contrast to large wing area) of all birds, enabling them to be amongst the most nimble of fliers.

Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel*: Regular encounters on our boat trips off New Ireland and Manus Island.

ARDEIDAE

Great Egret *Egretta alba*: Just a few observations of this widespread species.

Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia*: Good numbers were recorded around the Port Moresby and Madang airports.

Eastern Reef-Egret (Pacific R-E) *Egretta sacra*: Regular observations of both white and dark morphs around smaller islands and on tidal flats.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus*: Regular observations of this well-known bird.

Striated Heron (Green-backed Heron) *Butorides striatus*: One showed well in an area of mangrove near Kavieng. The race involved is *solomonensis*. No fewer than 25 races of this widespread species have been described.

Rufous Night-Heron (Nankeen Night-Heron) *Nycticorax caledonicus*: Several were found roosting in a clump of trees near Port Moresby and we also saw a few along the coast of Manus Island.

Black Bittern *Ixobrychus flavicollis*: Fantastic scope studies of a feeding bird in a patch of mangrove along the New Ireland coast (*australis*). It is often placed in the genus *Dupetor*.

ANATIDAE

Wandering Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna arcuata*: Several showed well amongst the water lilies of the Madang pond.

Grey Teal *Anas gracilis*: A few were seen at Port Moresby airport.

Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa*: A few were noted at Port Moresby airport.

PANDIONIDAE

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*: No fewer than 17 observations of this widespread piscivore. The scope studies of a bird eating his parrotfish near Kavieng were particularly appreciated. Recent research has shown that the Osprey complex may in fact consist of five closely-related species. The form involved would then be called: Wallacean Osprey *P. melvillensis*.

ACCIPITRIDAE

Pacific Baza (Crested Hawk) *Aviceda subcristata*: Six sightings of this handsome bird of prey. We admired a bit of display in the Alotau area.

Long-tailed Buzzard *Henicopernis longicauda*: Smashing views on several occasions of this very attractively-patterned New Guinea endemic. Also known as Long-tailed Honey Buzzard, its recorded prey items include a variety of insects (also wasps), tree lizards, birds and bird eggs. The genus *Henicopernis* is endemic to New Guinea/New Britain and shows a very distinctive wing-shape.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*: This well-known raptor was especially common at Lae's Nadzab airport and around the Wasu airstrip. The race involved is *affinis*.

Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus*: Small numbers were noted around Port Moresby and Alotau.

Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus*: Small numbers were seen on almost every day of the trip.

White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* (NL): Strangely enough, only a single observation of this powerful raptor.

Papuan Harrier (Spotted Marsh Harrier) *Circus spilothorax*: Several great sightings at Lae's Nadzab airport.

Variable Goshawk *Accipiter hiogaster*: Regular sightings of this fine-looking bird of prey. The New Guinea and Solomons subspecies are now generally split off as *Accipiter hiogaster*, separate from the larger Grey Goshawk *A. novaehollandiae* of Australia.

Black-mantled Goshawk *Accipiter melanochlamys*: Two birds showed briefly, but quite well in the higher reaches of the Huon peninsula. A montane speciality.

Grey-headed Goshawk *Accipiter poliocephalus*: Excellent observations of a displaying pair in the Alotau area. A particularly fetching bird of prey!

Gurney's Eagle *Aquila gurneyi*: Great views of this most impressive eagle in the Alotau area. Obviously closely related to the well-known Golden Eagle. It is treated as "**NEAR THREATENED**" by BirdLife International in 'Threatened Birds of the World' in BirdLife International's 'Threatened Birds of the World'. The bird is named after John Henry Gurney (1819-1890), English banker, collector and author. He also has a gorgeous Pitta and a Sugarbird carrying his name.

Little Eagle *Hieraaetus morphnoides*: Two lovely observations of immature birds. One was noted in the Alotau area and one circled above us in the higher reaches of the Huon.

FALCONIDAE

Brown Falcon *Falco berigora*: Excellent observations of this large falcon in the highlands of the Huon peninsula. We obtained scope studies of a very smart-looking perched individual. This species can often look rather unkempt.

Oriental Hobby *Falco severus*: Five encounters with this adorable, dashing falcon. Best of all was the one showing off its amazing prowess at catching insects at Keki Lodge. A great bird!!

MEGAPODIIDAE

Brown-collared Brush-Turkey *Talegalla jobiensis* (H): We heard the distinctive calls in the Alotau area and at Keki Lodge.

Melanesian Scrubfowl (Volcano Scrubfowl) *Megapodius eremita*: Several observations and many audio encounters. Great to see it on remote Tench Island, which is located c100km from its nearest 'breeding grounds' on New Ireland. Although it doesn't look as if it can fly well, it sure must be able to do so!! A well-known breeding area is located on the lower slopes of the active Torvurur volcano near Rabaul.

RALLIDAE

Buff-banded Rail *Rallus philippensis*: Good views of several at Kavieng airport.

Rufous-tailed Bush-hen *Amaurornis moluccanus* (H): We heard the distinctive calls of this skulking species on several occasions.

Australasian Swamp-hen (Black-backed Swamp-hen) *Porphyrio melanotos*: A few at Port Moresby airport. A recent split in the Purple Swamp-hen complex.

JACANIDAE

Comb-crested Jacana *Irediparra gallinacea*: Great views of several at the Madang pond, where we also saw several cute chicks. The name jacana is derived from the Tupi (Brazilian) Indian word jasaná, so the right pronunciation should really be 'jasaná'. Amazingly long toes!!

GLAREOLIDAE

Australian Pratincole *Stiltia isabella*: A few of these migrants favoured the runways at Port Moresby airport and we also saw one at the Rabaul airstrip.

CHARADRIIDAE

Masked Lapwing *Vanellus miles*: Several were seen in the grasslands of Lae's Nadzab airport.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*: Quite common at Alotau airport and on Manus Island. One or two still showed the striking breeding plumage.

Lesser Sand Plover (Mongolian Plover) *Charadrius mongolus*: Two showed well at the enormous Manus Island airstrip.

SCOLOPACIDAE

Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*: Seven on the grasslands of the enormous Manus Island airstrip.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*: Just a few sightings of this widespread species.

Grey-tailed Tattler *Heteroscelus brevipes*: Four observations of this Palearctic migrant.

STERNIDAE

Greater Crested Tern (Crested Tern, Swift Tern) *Sterna bergii*: Regular observations of this widespread species.

Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana*: A couple of observations of this distinctive species in the Manus Island area. Their plumage really stands out as shiny-pink-white.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*: Several at sea on our way to Tench Island and a flock of c25 off Manus Island.

Bridled Tern *Sterna anaethetus*: Small numbers at sea off New Ireland. Although they breed on Tench Island, we didn't see any there.

- Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus*: Regular observations near and on Tench Island.
- Black Noddy *Anous minutus*: Much more common than the previous species. Large numbers were nesting all over Tench Island.
- White Tern (Common White Tern) *Gygis alba*: Regular observations of this delightful species on Tench Island. One of the most appealing of seabirds!!

COLUMBIDAE

- Rock Pigeon (Rock Dove, Feral Pigeon) *Columba livia*: A few.
- Slender-billed Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia amboinensis*: A common dove, especially in the lowlands of the Huon peninsula. Named after the island of Ambon (= Amboina) in Indonesia, it is usually split from the Brown Cuckoo-Dove *M. phasianella* of Australia.
- Black-billed Cuckoo-Dove (Bar-tailed Cuckoo-Dove) *Macropygia nigrirostris*: Many excellent scope studies of this often more montane species, although we saw this and the previous species feeding together at Keki Lodge, making for excellent comparison.
- Mackinlay's Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia mackinlayi*: Six on a small island off Manus Island included great views of a pair in a Casuarina tree. This is a rare small-island tramp in the Bismarcks but common (in the absence of any other cuckoo-doves) in the Solomons and Vanuatu. It is sometimes called Spot-breasted Cuckoo-Dove. Archibald Mackinlay (1850-1924) was a Scottish explorer and naturalist.
- Great Cuckoo-Dove (Long-tailed Cuckoo-Dove) *Reinwardtoena reinwardtii*: Great views of displaying birds and perfect scope views of a singing bird in the middle reaches of the Huon peninsula. The species and the genus are named after Caspar Reinwardt, a Dutch ornithologist and collector, who worked in Java between 1817 and 1822.
- Pied Cuckoo-Dove *Reinwardtoena browni*: Repeated cracking views of singing and displaying birds in the higher reaches of New Ireland. The display flight is really quite spectacular. It is endemic to the Admiralty Islands and the Bismarck Archipelago.
- Stephan's Ground-Dove *Chalcophaps stephani*: Regular observations on New Ireland and Manus, including fantastic scope views for all. Honoré Jacquinot (1815-87) was a French surgeon serving onboard expeditions on the *Coquille* and the *Astrolabe* led by his brother, the explorer Vice-Admiral Charles Hector Jacquinot. Honoré collected the bird and is believed to have asked Jacques Pucheran who described it in 1853 to name it after their father Étienne Stephan Jacquinot.
- Bar-shouldered Dove *Geopelia humeralis*: A few in the eucalypt savanna near Port Moresby.
- Nicobar Pigeon *Caloenas nicobarica*: Repeated fantastic views of this glorious and rather stunning species on Tench Island. Although the locals favour its flesh, they leave the birds in peace, so it is still numerous here. Some of the scope studies were out of this world. We also saw several birds on the mainland of New Ireland and on Manus. Definitely one of those must see birds!!! It is treated as "**NEAR-THREATENED**" by BirdLife International in 'Threatened Birds of the World' and is named after the tiny islands of Nicobar, situated to the north of Sumatra in the Andaman Sea.
- Pheasant Pigeon *Otidiphaps nobilis* (H): We heard the distinctive vocalizations in the foothills of the Huon peninsula.
- Wompoo Fruit-Dove (Magnificent Fruit-Dove) *Ptilinopus magnificus*: Great views, including first-rate scope studies in the Alotau area. The world's largest fruit-dove.
- Pink-spotted Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus perlatus*: Repeated sightings. Like with most fruit-doves, good views were needed to appreciate the beautiful plumage.
- Ornate Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus ornatus*: Quite common in the highlands of the Huon. Small numbers were sunning themselves on exposed branches in the early morning sun.
- Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus aurantiifrons*: A few observations in the Alotau area.
- Superb Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus superbus*: Several sightings of this gorgeous species.

- Coroneted Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus coronulatus*: Scope studies of a couple in the Alotau area.
- White-bibbed Fruit-Dove (White-breasted Fruit-Dove) *Ptilinopus rivoli*: Excellent views in the mountains of New Ireland and the Huon peninsula. The bib varies in colour from white to yellow and white.
- Yellow-bibbed Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus solomonensis*: Superb scope views of a male and a female on Tench Island. This is a small island species that ranges from the islands in the Geelvink Bay (West Papua) to the Solomons.
- Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus iozonus*: Regularly observed in the Alotau area and also at Keki Lodge.
- Red-knobbed Fruit-Dove (Knob-billed Fruit-Dove) *Ptilinopus insolitus*: Fairly common on New Ireland. This allospecies of Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove is very similar except for its knob.
- Pacific Imperial Pigeon *Ducula pacifica*: Great views of several on Tench Island. Remember the black, enlarged cere! Another small island and atoll specialist, ranging from Eastern New Guinea to the Cook Islands.
- Rufescent Imperial Pigeon *Ducula chalconota*: Several observations in the Huon highlands. An unobtrusive mid-storey species.
- Red-knobbed Imperial Pigeon *Ducula rubricera*: Daily sightings on New Ireland of this large and spectacular Bismarck/Solomons endemic. No-one knows why red knobs are so fashionable in the Bismarcks. A highly distinctive voice!
- Purple-tailed Imperial Pigeon *Ducula rufigaster*: A single showed quite well in the Alotau area and we heard the characteristic voice at Keki Lodge.
- Finsch's Imperial Pigeon *Ducula finschii*: Repeated excellent views of this unassuming species in the New Ireland highlands. Quite often heard. It is endemic to New Britain and New Ireland and is named after Friedrich Hermann Otto Finsch (1839-1917), a German diplomat, administrator, ornithologist, collector and author. He was appointed Imperial Commissioner for the German colony known as 'Kaiser-Wilhelmland' that is now PNG.
- Island Imperial Pigeon (Grey Imperial Pigeon) *Ducula pistrinaria*: We found this one commonly on Manus Island. A small-island and coastal species.
- Pinon Imperial Pigeon *Ducula pinon*: Regular observations in the lowlands of mainland Papua New Guinea. The bird is named after L. Pinon, wife of French explorer Captain Louis Freycinet.
- Black Imperial Pigeon (Bismarck Imperial Pigeon) *Ducula melanochroa*: A couple of all too brief observations in the higher reaches of New Ireland.
- Zoe Imperial Pigeon *Ducula zoeae*: A few at Keki Lodge and cracking views of a singing bird at Varirata National Park. Zoë was the wife of the French naturalist and author René Lesson (1794-1849).
- Torresian Imperial Pigeon *Ducula spilorrhoa*: This attractive species was quite common in the Wasu area of the Huon peninsula. Generally split as a New Guinea/Australian endemic, distinct from the Pied Imperial Pigeon *D. bicolor* of Asia. The Spanish navigator Luis Vaez de Torres lent his name to the Torres Strait that separates Papua New Guinea from Australia. He discovered the passage in 1606.
- Yellow-tinted Imperial Pigeon *Ducula subflavescens*: A few only on New Ireland, appearing quite yellow. Split by Sibley and Monroe (1993 supplement) and Pigeons of the World (Gibbs *et al.* 2000) as a Bismarck endemic, but not by Clements.
- Papuan Mountain Pigeon *Gymnophaps albertisii*: Quite common in the highlands of the Huon, where we also obtained scope views of perched birds.

PSITTACIDAE

- Palm Cockatoo *Probosciger aterrimus*: Regular fantastic views of this truly magnificent species. Definitely one of the best parrots in existence!

- Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita*: This well-known and vociferous species was regular in the lowlands of mainland Papua New Guinea.
- Dusky Lory *Pseudeos fuscata*: Flight views of flocks going to roost in the foothills of the Huon. A species that is usually only seen in flight.
- Rainbow Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus*: The common lowland lorikeet on the mainland of Papua New Guinea, New Ireland and Manus.
- Eastern Black-capped Lory (Purple-bellied Lory) *Lorius hypoinochrous*: Pairs were common and very noisy near Alotau and on Manus, with up to 20 in a day. Only small numbers were recorded in the lowlands of New Ireland.
- Western Black-capped Lory *Lorius lory*: A few observations at Keki Lodge and at Varirata National Park.
- White-naped Lory *Lorius albidinuchus*: After having noted several pairs in flight, we eventually managed to obtain scope views of a perched bird in the highlands of New Ireland. The very obvious white nape of this New Ireland endemic showed very clearly. The voice is obviously the best clue to identification. Great stuff! It is treated as “**NEAR-THREATENED**” by BirdLife International in ‘Threatened Birds of the World’.
- Red-chinned Lorikeet *Charmosyna rubrigularis*: Fantastic scope looks at several feeding in flowering trees on New Ireland. This Bismarck endemic roosts and nests in the mountains but forages at all altitudes.
- Red-flanked Lorikeet *Charmosyna placentis*: Very common in the Alotau area and on New Ireland. Many great views.
- Papuan Lorikeet *Charmosyna papou*: A few observations only in the Huon highlands. A real gem with its remarkable long yellow streamers.
- Meek’s Pygmy-Parrot *Micropsitta meeki*: Terrific, prolonged scope views of several birds on Manus Island. We could discern the bare shafts on the tips of the tail feathers. A much appreciated performance. It is endemic to the Admiralty Islands and St Matthias. The species is named after Albert S. Meek (1871-1943), English explorer and collector in New Guinea, the Solomons and Australia and author of “A Naturalist in Cannibal Land”
- Double-eyed Fig-Parrot *Cyclopsitta diopthalma*: Fantastic scope views of several perched birds in the middle reaches of the Huon. A cracker!
- Brehm’s Tiger-Parrot *Psittacella brehmii*: A pair of these unobtrusive birds showed well in the *Astrapia* tree in the higher reaches of the Huon. Alfred Edmund Brehm (1829-84) was a German collector.
- Red-cheeked Parrot *Geoffroyus geoffroyi*: Quite common in the lowlands of mainland Papua New Guinea.
- Song Parrot (Singing Parrot) *Geoffroyus heteroclitus*: Several excellent views of perched and flying birds on New Ireland. Not very well named really!!
- Eclectus Parrot *Eclectus roratus*: A splendidly common, beautiful and noisy parrot that was recorded at most visited spots. The name is derived from the Greek *eklektos*, the chosen one, the selected one.
- Vulturine Parrot (Pesquet’s Parrot) *Psitttrichas fulgidus*: Cracking views of vociferous and interacting small parties both perched and in flight in the hills of the Huon peninsula and at Keki Lodge. It is treated as “**VULNERABLE**” by BirdLife International in ‘Threatened Birds of the World’, as it is heavily hunted for its red feathers. It is probably better to use the name Pesquet’s Parrot, as Vulturine Parrot *Pionopsitta vulturina* is a Neotropical species of Eastern Amazonian Brazil.
- Papuan King-Parrot *Alisterus chloropterus*: Great scope views of both sexes of this very attractive species at Varirata National Park.
- Papuan Hanging Parrot (Orange-fronted Hanging Parrot) *Loriculus aurantiifrons*: An individual perched all too briefly on a palm frond near Alotau.

Bismarck Hanging Parrot (Green-fronted Hanging Parrot) *Loriculus tener*: A single was seen in flight in the hills of New Ireland. It is endemic to the Bismarcks and is treated as “**NEAR-THREATENED**” by BirdLife International in ‘Threatened Birds of the World’.

CUCULIDAE

Brush Cuckoo *Cacomantis variolosus*: Commonly heard, and regularly seen all over our itinerary.

Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo *Cacomantis castaneiventris*: Regularly heard in the foothills of the Huon and at Keki Lodge, but we only obtained flight views.

Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cacomantis flabelliformis* (H): A few audio encounters in the higher hills of the Huon.

Shining Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx lucidus*: Good looks at this Australian migrant in the Alotau area.

White-crowned Koel *Caliechthrus leucolophus* (H): We heard the distinctive vocalizations in the Huon hills.

Dwarf Koel (Black-capped Koel) *Microdynamis parva*: Perfect scope views of an obliging male at Keki Lodge.

Australian Koel *Eudynamis cyanocephala*: Several audio encounters and brief views of a female on New Ireland.

Channel-billed Cuckoo *Scythrops novaehollandiae*: Just a couple of observations in the lowlands of the Huon. Not proven to nest in PNG, these are mostly migrants from Australia, where they nest-parasitize several species of crows, currawongs, Australian Magpie, Australian Magpie-Lark and (strangely) Collared Sparrowhawk.

Greater Black Coucal *Centropus menbeki* (H): We heard its distinctive voice in the Alotau area.

Lesser Black Coucal *Centropus bernsteini* (H): We heard its distinctive voice in the lower reaches of the Huon.

Pied Coucal (White-necked Coucal) *Centropus ateralbus*: Regular observations on New Ireland, mostly of birds hiding in the dense canopy of secondary forest thickets. Smart!! It is endemic to the Bismarck Archipelago.

Pheasant Coucal *Centropus phasianinus*: Several excellent observations on mainland Papua New Guinea.

STRIGIDAE

Papuan Boobook *Ninox theomacha* (H): We heard the empathically uttered double call in the Huon and at least three birds were calling nearby at Keki Lodge, but we never managed to lure one in.

Manus Boobook (Manus Hawk-Owl) *Ninox meeki*: We heard this Manus endemic on several occasions (even during the daytime) and eventually eagle-eyed Steve found a perched bird just before dusk in a patch of dense growth at the edge of a garden near Rossun. This species is obviously endemic to the island of Manus.

New Ireland Boobook (Bismarck Hawk-Owl) *Ninox variegata*: Great views of a responsive bird in the beam of our torch on New Ireland. Several others were heard. One of the best sounds of the tour!

PODARGIDAE

Papuan Frogmouth *Podargus papuensis*: We heard the distinctive calls at our base in the Huon and glimpsed it there. We also heard it at Keki Lodge, but always quite distant.

Marbled Frogmouth *Podargus ocellatus*: First heard in the Huon and eventually, after a bit of a struggle, two birds showed incredibly well at Keki Lodge. Magnificent views at extremely close range of an extraordinary bird!

AEGOTHELIDAE

Barred Owlet-Nightjar *Aegotheles bennettii*: Our man on the spot at Varirata National Park showed us two different, very obliging birds that were sunning themselves in a tree hole. Cute and utterly adorable.

CAPRIMULGIDAE

Large-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus macrurus*: Good looks at a singing bird at Varirata National Park on our last day in PNG.

APODIDAE

Glossy Swiftlet *Collocalia esculenta*: Quite common on New Ireland and in the Huon. Attractive when seen well.

Uniform Swiftlet *Collocalia vanikorensis*: Generally common in the lowlands. A well-named swiftlet.

Mountain Swiftlet *Collocalia hirundinacea*: A few were recorded in the highlands of the Huon. It is subtly different from Uniform Swiftlet.

White-rumped Swiftlet *Collocalia spodiopygius*: Quite common on New Ireland. Quite convincing when seen well!

HEMIPROCNIDAE

Moustached Tree-Swift *Hemiprocne mystacea*: Many magnificent observations of this eye-catching species. This spectacular bird is by far the largest of this small, but distinctive family.

ALCEDINIDAE

Variable Dwarf Kingfisher (Dwarf Kingfisher) *Ceyx lepidus*: Many audio encounters and a few fleeting observations of this usually hard-to-see-well species were eventually followed by great views of a perched bird along a small forest stream on Manus Island.

Azure Kingfisher *Alcedo azurea*: This widespread Australasian species showed well in the Alotau area.

Little Kingfisher *Alcedo pusilla*: A few brief encounters in mangroves along the coast of New Ireland.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*: A few showed very along streams on New Ireland. The Bismarck subspecies *hispidoides* looks more like an Azure Kingfisher.

Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher *Tanysiptera danae*: Fantastic scope views of this New Guinea endemic at Varirata National Park on our last day in PNG. A truly gorgeous representative of an exquisite genus of usually shy, forest inhabiting kingfishers. This species is endemic to south-east New Guinea.

Hook-billed Kingfisher *Melidora macrorrhina*: We heard a single bird at dusk near Alotau and then had to wait till Keki Lodge, before we finally managed to scope this crepuscular and vociferous species beautifully silhouetted on a bough of a large forest tree. Never an easy bird to get to grips with.

Rufous-bellied Kookaburra *Dacelo gaudichaud*: Great views of a male in the Alotau area and regularly heard elsewhere in the lowlands of mainland PNG.

Blue-winged Kookaburra *Dacelo leachii*: Great views of several of these impressive birds in the Port Moresby area.

Forest Kingfisher *Halcyon macleayii*: Repeated great views of calling, interacting pairs in the Alotau area.

Collared Kingfisher *Halcyon chloris*: Regularly encountered on New Ireland. No fewer than 49 races have been described.

Sacred Kingfisher *Halcyon sancta*: Many observations of this Australian migrant.

Beach Kingfisher *Halcyon saurophaga*: We saw this good-looking species near Kavieng and also on a couple of small islands off Manus. The scientific epithet refers to its lizard-eating characteristics (*sauros* = a lizard, *phagos* = a glutton, an eater, in Greek).

Yellow-billed Kingfisher *Halcyon torotoro*: Excellent scope views of this beauty in a patch of forest near Alotau. We also heard several at Varirata National Park. The scientific epithet seems to be an onomatopoeic New Guinea aboriginal name for this species.

Mountain Kingfisher *Halcyon megarhyncha*: Good scope views of one in the highlands of the Huon. Very vocal.

MEROPIDAE

Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops ornatus*: Many encounters with this multicoloured Australian migrant.

CORACIIDAE

Common Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis*: Regular observations of the red chilli pepper bird.

BUCEROTIDAE

Blyth's Hornbill (Papuan Hornbill) *Rhyticeros plicatus*: An indicator of big fig trees and low hunting levels, we saw this magnificent bird with its evocative calls and whirring wings all over our route. Edward Blyth (1810-73) was an English zoologist and Curator of the Museum of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

PITTIDAE

Blue-breasted Pitta (Red-bellied Pitta) *Pitta erythrogaster*: Good views for most of us, eventually.... Regularly heard. No fewer than 24 races have been described. One of Ian's favourites!

Superb Pitta *Pitta superba*: Definitely one of the highlights of the tour! The joint number one – with Fire-maned Bowerbird - in the **Bird of the Trip** contest. What a magnificent creature!! We obtained terrific views of a singing bird, whereby it shook its whole body and showed off its bright pale blue wings. The local onomatopoeic name is Coucou or Ku Ku. This Manus endemic is treated as “**VULNERABLE**” by BirdLife International in ‘Threatened Birds of the World’. The total population is probably quite small and its ecological requirements are not known at all. The 32 species of Pitta are amongst the most highly favoured targets for world birders and the Superb Pitta is one of the harder ones to get to grips with!!! Pure magic. The Superb Pitta was Billy's 21st species of Pitta and Helmut obtained some really nice video. The favourite bird for Chris, Helmut and Billy.

ALAUDIDAE

Australasian Bushlark (Singing Bushlark) *Mirafra javanica*: Several were showing well at Lae's Nadzab airport.

HIRUNDINIDAE

Pacific Swallow *Hirundo tahitica*: Small numbers, especially around towns and airports.

Tree Martin *Hirundo nigricans*: A couple were noted in the Port Moresby area.

MOTACILLIDAE

Eastern Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla (flava) tschutschensis* (NL): One was seen by several participants at the airfield on Manus.

CAMPEPHAGIDAE

- Hooded Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina longicauda*: A single observation of this montane species in the higher reaches of the Huon. It probably is the most attractive of a complex range of cuckoo-shrikes.
- Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina novaehollandiae*: A few were noted in the Port Moresby area.
- White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina papuensis*: Commonly encountered. A widespread forest-edge species.
- Manus Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina ingens*: This is a recent split from previous species (see vol 10 of the Handbook of the Birds of the World) and is now another Manus Island endemic. Its larger size and stouter bill are quite obvious. Several observations in more open habitat.
- Stout-billed Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina caeruleogrisea*: Good views of two at Keki Lodge. This is the largest of New Guinea's endemic cuckoo-shrikes.
- Yellow-eyed Cuckoo-Shrike (Barred Cuckoo-Shrike) *Coracina lineata*: Regular observations of this widespread non-endemic. Only the female is barred.
- Boyer's Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina boyeri*: This New Guinea endemic was commonly encountered in the Keki Lodge area. Joseph Emmanuel P. Boyer (1815-?) was a French sea captain who explored in the area with Dumont d'Urville.
- Grey-headed Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina schisticeps*: A male showed well in the Alotau area.
- Common Cicadabird (Cicadabird) *Coracina tenuirostris*: Commonly recorded all over our itinerary. A very distinctive voice!!
- Black Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina melas*: Good looks at a male and a female in the Alotau area. The Handbook of the Birds of the World (HBW) has renamed this species New Guinea Cuckoo-Shrike, as there is already a Black Cuckoo-Shrike in Africa.
- Black-shouldered Cuckoo-Shrike (Black-shouldered Cicadabird/Papuan Cuckoo-Shrike) *Coracina incerta*: A single bird was seen in the Alotau area. A rather indistinct endemic.
- Varied Triller *Lalage leucomela*: Common and obvious in small numbers in the Alotau area, on New Ireland and near Port Moresby.
- Black-browed Triller *Lalage atrovirens*: Several showed well at Keki Lodge. This species is restricted to the far west and the north of New Guinea.

TURDIDAE

- Pied Chat (Pied Bushchat) *Saxicola caprata*: Several observations at Port Moresby airport. It has been suggested that the populations of New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago be split as a separate species, Black Bushchat *S. aethiops*.

EUPETIDAE

- Brown-capped Jewel-Babbler *Ptilorrhoa geislerorum*: It took a while, but in the end most of us obtained fair to good views of a bright male of this very secretive species in the forest near Keki Lodge. It is a recent split from Blue Jewel-Babbler *Ptilorrhoa caerulescens* and HBW calls it Dimorphic Jewel-Babbler, mainly because the totally rufous female is so strikingly different from the blue male. This magnificent species is restricted to northeastern New Guinea, ranging from the Adelbert Mountains east to Collingwood Bay.

CINCLOSOMATIDAE

[Beehler lumps this family in the *Orthonychidae*.]

- Painted Quail-Thrush *Cinclosoma ajax* (H): We heard the distinctive call at close range at Varirata National Park.

MALURIDAE

White-shouldered Fairywren *Malurus alboscapulatus*: A handful of observations of this lovely species. It is the only grassland fairy-wren in New Guinea and is much easier to see than the forest species.

ACANTHIZIDAE

Rusty Mouse-Warbler *Crateroscelis murina*: A few sightings and many audio encounters in the Huon highlands and in the Adelbert Mountains. A very distinctive voice.

Buff-faced Scrub-Wren *Sericornis perspicillatus*: Good looks at several parties in the Huon hills. When seen well, this is a quite distinctive and attractive scrub-wren!

Grey-green Scrub-Wren *Sericornis arfakianus*: Just a single encounter with this unobtrusive species in the Huon hills.

Yellow-bellied Gerygone *Gerygone chrysogaster*: Two were recorded near Alotau and we also recorded it at Keki Lodge. A characteristic voice of lowland forest!

Green-backed Gerygone *Gerygone chloronota*: Good views of this unassuming species in the Huon hills. We also heard it at Varirata NP near Port Moresby. A very distinctive voice of foothill forest. This species also occurs in northwestern Australia.

Fairy Gerygone *Gerygone palpebrosa*: Males showed well in the lower Huon and at Keki Lodge. It also occurs in northeastern Australia.

Brown-breasted Gerygone *Gerygone ruficollis*: Several showed well in the Huon mountains. The word *gerygone* is derived from the Greek *gerugonos*, meaning echoes (*geruo*, to sing; *gone*, a child), referring to the thin, plaintive song of these birds.

SYLVIIDAE

Australian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus australis*: We noted several singing birds in the tall grasses at Kavieng airport on New Ireland.

Island Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus poliocephala* (H): Several were heard in the more open habitats of the Huon hills.

Papuan Grassbird *Megalurus macrurus* (H): We heard the distinctive calls emanating from dense vegetation in the Huon hills. Beehler lumps this form in Tawny Grassbird *M. timoriensis*. If split this species is endemic to New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago.

Golden-headed Cisticola *Cisticola exilis*: Several observations of this widespread species on New Ireland, New Hanover and at Lae's Nadzab airport.

RHIPIDURIDAE

Sooty Thicket-Fantail *Rhipidura threnothorax* (H): Heard only at Keki Lodge.

White-bellied Thicket-Fantail *Rhipidura leucothorax*: Seen well and heard in the Alotau area. Yet another secretive species!!

Rufous-backed Fantail *Rhipidura rufidorsa* (NL): Chris observed it in a mixed species flock in the lower reaches of the Huon.

Black Fantail *Rhipidura atra*: Several observations in the Huon highlands. Sexual dimorphism is unusual in fantails – this species seems to mimic both Dimorphic Fantail and Black Monarch.

Chestnut-bellied Fantail *Rhipidura hyperythra*: Several excellent encounters with this charming species in the Huon hills.

Friendly Fantail *Rhipidura albolimbata*: Regular and obvious in the Huon mountains. One of New Guinea's few friendly birds - apparently it jumps too quickly to be shot by catapult.

Northern Fantail *Rhipidura rufiventris*: Regular sightings in most areas that were visited. A widespread species that is also found in Australia.

Willie Wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys*: One of the most common birds of the trip, with up to 10 seen daily.

DICRURIDAE

Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus bracteatus*: We only recorded this widespread species in the Alotau area and at Varirata NP near Port Moresby.

New Ireland Drongo (Ribbon-tailed/Paradise Drongo) *Dicrurus megarhynchus*: Several nice encounters with this appealing New Ireland endemic, but most observations were sadly quite brief. With its striking tail, this must be the best drongo in existence!! The bird of New Ireland!!

MONARCHIDAE

Island Monarch *Monarcha cinerascens*: Quite common on Tench and on a small island off Manus. A classic super-tramp, found on tiny islands from the Moluccas to the Solomons.

Black-faced Monarch *Monarcha melanopsis*: Regular observations in the Alotau area. An Australian migrant.

Black-winged Monarch *Monarcha frater*: Good views of this foothill species in the lower Huon and at Keki Lodge.

Spot-winged Monarch *Monarcha guttula*: A single bird showed well in a mixed species flock at Keki Lodge.

Bismarck Pied Monarch (Black-tailed Monarch) *Monarcha verticalis*: Just a couple of encounters with this fetching Bismarck endemic on New Ireland. Quite unassuming but its distinctive voice betrays its whereabouts.

Djaul Pied Monarch *Monarcha ateralba*: It took a while, but eventually we all got cracking views of this very localized endemic on the small island of Djaul. The distinctive tail pattern was seen well. This split from Bismarck Pied Monarch is not widely recognized yet.

Admiralty Pied Monarch *Monarcha infelix*: A rather secretive forest inhabitant that eventually showed very well to all on Manus. It is endemic to the Admiralty Islands and is treated as “**NEAR-THREATENED**” by BirdLife International in ‘Threatened Birds of the World’. HBW calls it Manus Monarch.

Golden Monarch *Monarcha chrysomela*: Quite common and cooperative on New Ireland, where it is represented by the nominate race. We also saw it near Alotau.

Friiled Monarch *Arses telescopthalmus*: Regular observations of this very attractive species. Arses was a king of the Persians (4th century BC).

Shining Flycatcher *Myiagra alecto*: Commonly recorded all over our itinerary. Typically a waterside species, but it also occurs in gardens and thickets.

Lesser Shining Flycatcher (Dull Flycatcher) *Myiagra hebetior*: We only recorded this Bismarck endemic on New Ireland. An unusually shy and wary species. The not very flattering scientific epithet ‘*hebetior*’ stands for duller or more sluggish.

MACHAERIRHYNCHIDAE

[Beehler lumps this family in Monarchidae.]

Yellow-breasted Boatbill *Machaerirhynchus flaviventer*: A single bird was seen near Alotau. This lowland species also occurs in northeastern Australia.

Black-breasted Boatbill *Machaerirhynchus nigripectus*: A few of these outlandish birds showed extremely well in the Huon hills. A very attractive New Guinea endemic.

PETROICIDAE

[Beehler uses the name Eopsaltriidae for this family.]

Lemon-bellied Flycatcher (Lemon-bellied Flyrobin) *Microeca flavigaster*: A single observation of this unobtrusive species in the Huon hills.

Olive Flycatcher (Olive Flyrobin) *Microeca flavovirescens* (NL): Billy recorded this modestly-clad species at Keki Lodge.

Canary Flycatcher (Canary Flyrobin) *Microeca papuana*: This tiny bright yellow bird showed well in the Huon highlands.

Banded Yellow Robin (Banded Robin/Olive Yellow Robin) *Poecilodryas placens*: We heard it regularly in the forest surrounding Keki Lodge, but only a few of us managed to observe this skulker. It only occurs in widely scattered localities on New Guinea. Have a look at the eye-opening distribution map on p470 in volume 12 of HBW. It is treated as “**NEAR-THREATENED**” by BirdLife International in ‘Threatened Birds of the World’.

White-rumped Robin *Peneothello bimaculatus*: Regular observations of this delightful species in the Huon foothills.

PACHYCEPHALIDAE

Dwarf Whistler (Goldenface/Pachycare) *Pachycare flavogrisea* (NL): One was seen by Ian and Steve in the Huon hills.

Mottled Whistler *Rhagologus leucostigma*: Several excellent observations of males and females in the Huon hills. The female especially is very distinctive.

Regent Whistler *Pachycephala schlegelii*: One of the regulars of the mountain forest of the Huon. Another bird which far exceeds the field guide illustration!

Sclater’s Whistler (Hill Golden Whistler) *Pachycephala soror*: Just one in the Huon highlands – this is the montane golden whistler.

Common Golden Whistler *Pachycephala pectoralis*: Fairly regularly encountered on New Ireland and on Manus. No fewer than 64 races have been described!!

Grey-headed Whistler *Pachycephala griseiceps*: Single birds were noted in the Huon and at Keki Lodge.

Rufous-naped Whistler *Pachycephala rufinucha* (H): This atypical, skulking whistler was heard in the Huon highlands. It is now often placed in the genus *Aleadryas*.

COLLURICINCLIDAE

[Beehler lumps this family in Pachycephalidae.]

Little Shrike-Thrush (Rufous Shrike-Thrush) *Colluricincla megarhyncha*: A few encounters in the Alotau forests and also in the Huon foothills. Like the pitohuis this bird can also contain traces of poison.

Grey Shrike-Thrush *Colluricincla harmonica*: Good looks at a few in the gardens of our hotel at Alotau.

Variable Pitohui *Pitohui kirhocephalus*: A single bird was seen in the Huon hills.

Hooded Pitohui *Pitohui dichrous*: Several showed well in the Huon hills and at Keki Lodge. This is one of those famous poisonous birds, whose feathers and skin contain homobatrachotoxin, a powerful poison of the batrachotoxin group. These poisons were previously considered to be restricted to neotropical poison-dart frogs of the genus *Phyllobates*. However it seems (inexplicably) that not all individuals or indeed populations of pitohuis are poisonous and the reason for the presence of these toxins has not yet been discovered. It is thought that other black and rufous New Guinea birds mimic their plumage for protection.

NEOSITTIDAE

Papuan Sittella *Daphoenositta papuensis*: Great views of just one bird in the Huon hills. A recent split. Beehler lumps this form in Varied Sittella *D. chrysoptera*.

MELIPHAGIDAE

Meyer's Friarbird *Philemon meyeri*: A single bird was noted at Keki Lodge.

New Guinea Friarbird (Helmeted Friarbird) *Philemon novaeguineae*: Quite common around Alotau, Port Moresby and in the lowlands of the Huon, where it is one of the loudest birds. It is often lumped with Helmeted Friarbird *P. buceroides* of Australia.

Manus Friarbird (White-naped Friarbird) *Philemon albitorques*: The avian symbol of Manus Island, locally called the Chauka. Often heard and regularly seen on our wanderings on Manus. One of the better-looking ones of the genus.

Cinnamon-browed Melidectes *Melidectes ochromelas*: Regular encounters in the Huon highlands. Fairly common, very noisy but also very attractive when we looked closely at them!

Ornate Melidectes *Melidectes torquatus*: A few observations in more open habitat in the Huon.

Spangled Honeyeater *Melipotes ater*: Just a few sightings of this striking Huon endemic in the higher hills of the Huon peninsula. *Melipotes* honeyeaters are unique in not having a brush tip to the tongue. They are mainly berry eaters.

Rufous-backed Honeyeater *Ptiloprora guisei*: Probably the most common bird in the forests of the higher reaches of the Huon. They were everywhere.

Plain Honeyeater *Pycnopygius ixoides*: Several showed well in the fig tree at Keki Lodge. Not too many distinguishing features!

Streak-headed Honeyeater *Pycnopygius stictocephalus*: Great scope studies in the Alotau area.

Tawny-breasted Honeyeater *Xanthotis flaviventer*: A few near Alotau and also seen in the lower Huon.

Black-throated Honeyeater *Lichenostomus subfrenatus*: Good views in the mountains of the Huon. More often heard than seen. Quite a voice!!

Yellow-tinted Honeyeater *Lichenostomus flavescens* (NL): Chris saw it in the hotel gardens at Port Moresby.

Varied Honeyeater *Lichenostomus versicolor*: Several were noted in flowering trees in downtown Madang.

Puff-backed Meliphaga (P-B Honeyeater) *Meliphaga aruensis*: A single bird showed well in the Alotau area.

Scrub White-eared Meliphaga (Scrub W-E Honeyeater) *Meliphaga albonotata*: A single near Alotau and quite a few at Keki Lodge. A distinctive meliphaga!

Mountain Meliphaga (Mountain Honeyeater) *Meliphaga orientalis*: Several showed well in the Huon Mountains.

Mimic Meliphaga (Mimetic Honeyeater) *Meliphaga analoga*: Regular observations on mainland PNG. The *Meliphaga* honeyeaters are surely the most difficult New Guinea species complex to identify. They share features and vocalizations and there seem to be few reliable criteria for identification!

Green-backed Honeyeater *Glycichaera fallax*: A single bird obliged quite well near Alotau.

Brown-backed Honeyeater *Ramsayornis modesta*: Regular observations in the Alotau area.

Rufous-banded Honeyeater *Conopophila albogularis*: Singles of this mainly Australian species in the hotel garden in Alotau.

Dusky Honeyeater (Dusky Myzomela) *Myzomela obscura*: A single bird was observed near Alotau.

Red-tinted Honeyeater (Red Myzomela) *Myzomela cruentata*: We found this attractive species to be common in the highlands of New Ireland.

Papuan Black Honeyeater (P B Myzomela) *Myzomela nigrita* (NL): One or two were noted at Keki Lodge.

Bismarck Black Honeyeater (Ebony Myzomela) *Myzomela pammelaena*: Regular observations on Tench Island and on an offshore islet of Manus. Restricted to smaller islands in the Bismarck archipelago.

Red-collared Honeyeater (Red-collared Myzomela) *Myzomela rosenbergii*: Another tiny gem. Several lovely sightings in the mountains of the Huon.

NECTARINIIDAE

Black Sunbird *Nectarinia aspasia*: Many observations, all over the place.

Yellow-bellied Sunbird *Nectarinia jugularis*: Regular sightings, occurring more in disturbed habitats.

DICAEIDAE

Red-capped Flowerpecker (Papuan Flowerpecker) *Dicaeum pectorale*: Regular encounters on mainland PNG.

Red-banded Flowerpecker (Bismarck Flowerpecker) *Dicaeum eximium*: Fairly common on New Ireland. A Bismarck archipelago endemic.

MELANOCHARITIDAE

Mid-mountain Berrypecker *Melanocharis longicauda*: Two were seen in the Huon hills. This species and indeed this family as a whole is endemic to New Guinea and associated islands.

Spotted Berrypecker *Ramphocharis crassirostris*: Three excellent observations in the Huon highlands. The female is much more stylish than the male.

PARAMYTHIIDAE

Tit Berrypecker *Oreocharis arfaki*: A few encounters in the Huon mountains, resulting in great views of this strange species – a gorgeous mutant Great Tit. Another striking and unique species in the only other family endemic to New Guinea.

ZOSTEROPIDAE

Black-fronted White-eye *Zosterops atrifrons*: We noted a flock in the Huon hills and several more at Keki Lodge.

Black-headed White-eye *Zosterops hypoxantha*: Great views in the highlands of New Ireland and on Manus Island. This typical white-eye is endemic to the Bismarck archipelago and to the Admiralty Islands.

New Guinea White-eye *Zosterops novaeguinae*: A few were noted in the higher reaches of the Huon. This species is endemic to New Guinea and associated islands.

PASSERIDAE

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*: Only seen in the Port Moresby area, where it was first noticed in 1992.

ESTRILDIDAE

Hunstein's Mannikin (H Munia/Mottled M) *Lonchura hunsteini*: Many excellent scope observations of this nice endemic in the northern half of New Ireland.

New Hanover Mannikin (N H Munia) *Lonchura nigerrima*: At least 40 showed brilliantly in the grasslands of New Hanover, off northern New Ireland. This New Hanover endemic is obviously closely related to the previous species, but this split is not widely recognized.

New Ireland Mannikin (N I Munia) *Lonchura forbesi*: Many good views of this southern New Ireland endemic in a mixed mannikin flock in a patch of tall grassland in central New Ireland. Have a look at plate 62 in the excellent "Finches and Sparrows" book by Clement, Harris & Davis for a really good illustration.

Chestnut-breasted Mannikin *Lonchura castaneothorax*: Several small flocks were noted in the Alotau area. Attractive.

Buff-bellied Mannikin (Bismarck Munia) *Lonchura melaena*: Good views of many in a flock together with New Ireland Mannikins in central New Ireland. It was long thought to be a sedentary New Britain endemic, till a small population appeared on Bougainville, where it was named as a separate subspecies that now appears to have died out. Their occurrence on New Ireland is fairly recent and it seems to be spreading there.

STURNIDAE

Singing Starling *Aplonis cantoroides*: Regular observations. It is endemic to New Guinea and the Solomons, including the Torres Strait islands where it creeps onto the Australian list.

Atoll Starling *Aplonis feadensis*: About 15 showed very well on Tench Island. The yellow eyes and square tail were distinctive. This extreme small island specialist is treated as “**VULNERABLE**” by BirdLife International in ‘Threatened Birds of the World’. The total population only numbers a few thousand birds.

Metallic Starling *Aplonis metallica*: Very common all over our route.

Yellow-faced Myna *Mino dumontii*: A few near Alotau, in the Huon lowlands, at Keki Lodge and at Varirata NP.

Long-tailed Myna *Mino kreffti*: Fairly common on New Ireland, where up to 10 were seen daily. Not particularly long-tailed but also differs from the preceding species by its facial pattern and calls.

ORIOLIDAE

Brown Oriole *Oriolus szalayi*: Regular encounters near Alotau, in the Huon and at Varirata NP. No one really knows why it mimics the friarbird (or is it vice versa?).

ARTAMIDAE

White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus*: Small numbers were noted in towns and villages.

Great Woodswallow (New Guinea Woodswallow) *Artamus maximus*: These striking New Guinea endemics were fairly common in the Huon highlands.

Bismarck Woodswallow (White-backed Woodswallow) *Artamus insignis*: Just a few were noted on New Ireland: a beautiful but rather uncommon Bismarck endemic.

CRACTICIDAE

Hooded Butcherbird *Cracticus cassicus*: Regularly recorded near Alotau and in the Huon.

Black-backed Butcherbird *Cracticus mentalis*: Nice observations of several in the Port Moresby eucalypt savanna.

Mountain Peltops *Peltops montanus*: Several encounters with this snazzy species in the Huon highlands. The two species of Peltops are now usually considered to belong with the Butcherbirds, where before they were thought to belong with the Woodswallows.

PTILONORHYNCHIDAE

White-eared Catbird *Ailuroedus buccoides*: Steve saw one and we all heard the distinctive vocalizations in the Keki Lodge forests. Here the brown-capped race.

Fire-maned Bowerbird *Sericulus bakeri*: The joint number one – with Superb Pitta - in the **Bird of the Trip** contest. We obtained many excellent scope views of this magical species in the fig trees at Keki Lodge. It was in fact the first bird we saw upon arrival. Adult males are really out of this world, and we also observed an immature male and several females. The Fire-maned Bowerbird is endemic to the Adelbert Mountains in central north Papua New

Guinea, has a very restricted range of only 570 km² and occupies a narrow altitudinal band between 850 and 1400m. It is treated as “**VULNERABLE**” by BirdLife International in ‘Threatened Birds of the World’ and it is definitely worth reading the section on this species in this book – have a look who sponsored that entry!! It was very obvious that Steve was really infatuated by this species. The look on his face when he saw this beauty was incredible and will stay with me for ever. A new species for the already extensive Birdquest lifelist and also for your leader. The Fire-maned Bowerbird is one of those MUST SEE birds! The scientific epithet refers to George Fisher Baker Jr (1878-1937), a US banker and trustee of the American Museum of Natural history. The favourite bird for Steve, Ian and your leader.

Fawn-breasted Bowerbird *Chlamydera cerviniventris*: Many excellent views of this modestly-clad species in the Alotau area.

PARADISAEIDAE

Glossy-mantled Manucode *Manucodia atra*: Several were seen well near Alotau. A lanky but otherwise indistinctive species. The name Manucode is derived from the old Javanese (Malay) manuk dewata, bird of the gods.

Crinkle-collared Manucode *Manucodia chalybata*: Fairly common along forest edges in the Huon and also at Keki Lodge.

Trumpet Manucode *Manucodia keraudrenii* (NL): One was seen by Chris in the forest at Keki Lodge.

Huon Astrapia *Astrapia rothschildi*: Marvellously regular and not very shy in the highlands of the Huon. Many great views were obtained, especially in fruiting trees. This delightful species is evidently endemic to the Huon peninsula. Adult males were, as usual, rather thin on the ground.

Wahnes’ Parotia *Parotia wahnesi*: Several observations of this shy species, which is endemic to the higher reaches of the Huon peninsula (1100-1700m) and the nearby Adelbert range (1300-1600m). Most birds observed were females or young males, but we enjoyed several good sightings of cracking adult males. Wahnes’ Parotia is treated as “**VULNERABLE**” by BirdLife International in ‘Threatened Birds of the World’. Carl Wahnes (1835-1910) was a German naturalist and collector in New Guinea.

Eastern Riflebird *Ptiloris intercedens*: Many excellent observations of this exquisite species in the lower hills of the Huon. East New Guinea and north Queensland birds were split by Beehler *et al.* in the OUP ‘Birds of Paradise’ family guide, based on their call: a deep throaty growl as opposed to the clear and very loud wolf whistle of central New Guinea birds.

Superb Bird of Paradise *Lophorina superba* (H): We heard several in the more open habitats of the Huon peninsula.

Magnificent Bird of Paradise *Cicinnurus magnificus*: Some of us had fair views of a male in the Huon. A male was also seen at Keki Lodge and all of us saw the more modest female there. A pity the birds were not active at their dance court.

Lesser Bird of Paradise *Paradisaea minor*: A splendid performance of several calling and courting males in the display trees near Keki Lodge. Both males and females visited the fig trees and allowed great scope studies.

Raggiana Bird of Paradise *Paradisaea raggiana*: Perfect scope views of several males at close range in open display trees at Varirata NP. We didn’t witness any display, but the views were excellent. In the Alotau area we observed some interesting behaviour as a young male was anting itself. This is the iconic bird of paradise, named after Marchese Francesco Raggi, an Italian naturalist and collector in New Guinea in the second half of the 19th century. This is the national bird of Papua New Guinea.

Emperor Bird of Paradise *Paradisaea guilielmi*: Good views of brilliant males and modest females of this Huon endemic in the Huon foothills. We managed to get pretty good views of dancing males really showing off their distinctive and unique white plumes. This jewel has the best voice of any *Paradisaea* and is treated as “**NEAR-THREATENED**” by BirdLife International in ‘Threatened Birds of the World’. The scientific epithet *guilielmi* (= William in latin) refers to Willem III, Emperor of Germany and King of Prussia (1859-1891).

CORVIDAE

Torresian Crow *Corvus orru*: Common at all the PNG mainland sites visited.

Island Crow (Bismarck Crow) *Corvus insularis*: Common on New Ireland. This is a recent split from the previous species, as it differs in calls, eye colour and jizz. The split is not widely accepted yet.

Grey Crow (Bare-eyed Crow) *Corvus tristis*: Regular observations at Alotau, in the Huon hills and at Keki Lodge. This crow is quite unusual in its plumage, habits and call.

MAMMALS

[Common Spotted Cuscus *Spilogiscus maculatus*: One was found in a fruiting tree in the garden of our hotel at Alotau, but it later transpired that it was an escaped pet from our landlord. Lovely animal though.]

Agile Wallaby *Macropus agilis*: One was briefly seen in Varirata NP.

Admiralty Flying Fox *Pteropus admiralitatum*: These were the smaller flying foxes that we saw on Manus Island.

Great Flying Fox (Bismarck Flying Fox) *Pteropus neohibernicus*: The huge fruit bats on New Britain and New Ireland (up to 50 daily) were this species. Great looks at feeding animals in breadfruit trees.

Indo-Pacific Bottle-nosed Dolphin *Tursiops aduncus*: A small pod off New Ireland.

Spinner Dolphin *Stenella longirostris*: A party of c15 off dalom guesthouse in central New Ireland.

OTHERS

Papilio ulysses: This spectacular blue morpho-like swallowtail was common in lowland forests.

BIRD OF THE TRIP

1. Superb Pitta (22)
Fire-maned Bowerbird (22)
3. Vulturine Parrot (6)
4. Marbled Frogmouth (4)
Blue-breasted Pitta (4)
6. Nicobar Pigeon (3)
Magnificent Bird of Paradise (3)