

WEST PAPUA

7 JULY – 4 AUGUST 2007

TOUR REPORT

LEADER: MARK VAN BEIRS

Our fifth tour to West Papua (ex Irian Jaya) produced a rich array of highly-prized and much-wanted birds and also lots and lots and lots of rain. West Papua is probably Birdquest's hardest tour through a combination of lots of rather basic camping, quite a few hard and long hikes on slippery, muddy and steep trails, hot and sticky weather with lots of rain, many incredibly shy and skulking birds making for really challenging birding and irregular airline schedules which may result in long and frustrating delays. We warn our travellers to West Papua to be both physically and psychologically prepared for this experience of a lifetime. But the avian rewards are out of this world as quite a few members of the most beautiful, spectacular and enigmatic bird family in the world, the Birds of Paradise (BoPs for the connoisseurs) can be observed at close range. We saw 21 species this year! And then there are some amazing bowerbirds, gaudy kingfishers, grotesque pigeons and colourful parrots. Our party of eight keen and intrepid birders came well prepared and coped well with the sometimes difficult circumstances and we recorded 293 species. The bird of the trip was the Western Parotia that we saw so amazingly well doing his mind-boggling dervish dance at his display court: a totally extravagant and magnificent performance. Other highlights included the stunning Wilson's Bird of Paradise (maybe the best bird in the world?), the exquisite Feline Owlet-Nightjar in broad daylight, the stupendous Western Crowned Pigeon, all four species of Sicklebills (seen very well by everyone), the much-prized Macgregor's Bird of Paradise, the adorable Twelve-wired Bird of Paradise, the cute Mountain Owlet-Nightjar and the attractive Magnificent Bird of Paradise.

After a lot of travelling we finally arrived in Sentani, the airport of Jayapura, the capital of the Indonesian province of West Papua. We then enjoyed a well-earned rest and our first West Papuan lunch. After a briefing on what to expect on our camping and trekking trips, we explored the nearby grasslands, forest edge and lake for some introductory birding and came away with goodies like Little Pied Cormorant, a Whistling Kite that caught a fish, White-bellied Sea Eagle, a cracking male Papuan Harrier, Dusky Moorhen, a party of eight formidable Channel-billed Cuckoos, Pheasant Coucal, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Pied Chat, Golden-headed Cisticola, New Guinea Friarbird, Hooded Mannikin and several Fawn-breasted Bowerbirds. The day ended with a cooperative Large-tailed Nightjar at dusk.

Early next morning we boarded a small plane that took us to the town of Wamena. We flew over uninterrupted expanses of pristine rain forest and upon arrival we were met by our man on the spot.

After a bit of organizing at the hotel and being gazed at by smiling, penis-sheath wearing Dani, our 4x4 vehicles drove us up along the pretty bad road towards Lake Habbema. Several stops along the road in moss forest yielded typical montane species like White-breasted Fruit Dove, Plum-faced and Orange-billed Lorikeets, Mountain and Glossy Swiftlets, Island Thrush, Black-throated and White-winged Robins, Lorentz's Whistler and a party of cute Black Sitellas. In mid afternoon we arrived at our camp near the shore of Lake Habbema. While our tents were being put up, we scoped several lovely Salvadori's Teal on the lake. After having settled in, an organized bash in the grasslands gave us great views of two pairs of endemic Snow Mountain Quail walking about. Some furtive Papuan Grassbirds and several attractive Orange-cheeked Honeyeaters were also noted. The walk left us all a bit breathless as we were after all at an altitude of 3200 metres.

The next morning started with cold, glorious open weather and the distant top of Mount Trikora (4673m) could be seen mirrored into Lake Habbema. Its steep, rocky slopes, the habitat of the fabled Snow Mountain Robin were very visible, but sadly still unreachable because of local politics. One day, maybe... We warmed ourselves with hot porridge and then walked through beautiful Dacrycarpus forest to a favourite area of that holy grail of the New Guinea highlands, the fabulous Macgregor's Bird of Paradise. It didn't take too long before we saw this magnificent creature perched up in all its black and orange glory. We obtained excellent scope views in perfect light conditions. Great stuff. Amongst this beautiful scenery and the dramatic landscapes, we also found Papuan Harrier, another Snow Mountain Quail, Painted Tiger Parrot, Brown-breasted Gerygone, Crested Berrypecker, Black-throated and Grey-streaked Honeyeaters, Belford's, Sooty and Short-bearded Melidectes and Great Woodswallow. Our afternoon walk along the road added Alpine Pipit, another Macgregor's Bird of Paradise and several fine-looking Splendid Astrapias to the tally. Overnight we experienced lots of rain, and after packing up, we walked in rainy, cold and miserable conditions to our next camp. A party of Western Alpine Mannikins and three Snow Mountain Quails provided some consolation. In the afternoon we birded the scrubby forest edge at the treeline, where we found Brehm's and Painted Tiger Parrots, Fan-tailed and lots of Crested Berrypeckers and a gorgeous pair of Mountain Firetails. At dusk we were able to witness the display flight of a New Guinea Woodcock, but the show only lasted a few seconds. Next morning, on Friday the thirteenth, we were waiting before sunrise for the Woodcock and we heard it rode several times at very close range. Sadly, we only managed brief glimpses as it flew so very low. A great audio experience nevertheless. Near the camp we also found Alpine Pipit doing its song flight and an adorable Dimorphic Fantail. After breakfast and packing up - we were getting rather good at it - we slowly walked down along the steep and muddy path through beautiful mossy forest, where some of us observed a shy Archbold's Bowerbird. By late morning we had reached the really steep descending bit of our journey and from here on we just concentrated on reaching our next camp. We followed the luckily rather dry stream and several hours later we arrived, rather stiff-limbed, at our camp, located in a picturesque stretch of moss-festooned, montane forest. After a bit of rest we explored the surroundings where Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Papuan Treecreeper, another lovely flock of Black Sitellas and a charming family of Great Woodswallows showed.

The following day was spent along a narrow trail through these Tolkienesque woods, where intensive scanning and patient stalking added Papuan Lorikeet, Hooded and Black-bellied Cuckoo-Shrikes, Black-breasted Boatbill, Blue-grey Robin, Brown Sicklebill, several males and females Splendid Astrapia and a young male King of Saxony Bird of Paradise to the list. The next morning, at dawn we scoped a Papuan Mountain Pigeon and while packing listened to the machinegun salvos of three different male Brown Sicklebills. The tough hike up to our previous camp went without a hitch, partly due to the cool, dry weather and the almost dry stream, that on previous tours had held lots of water and had to be crossed dozens of times. Everyone did very well and in a particularly excellent stretch of gnarled moss forest we observed two Lesser Melampittas, an Archbold's Bowerbird (for some),

Mountain Robin, Large and Papuan Scrub-Wrens, Rufous-naped Whistler and our final Macgregor's Bird of Paradise. We arrived at the top around noon, enjoyed a hearty lunch and had a great photo session with our 21 Lani porters. We then drove down towards Wamena and watched several localized Black-breasted Mannikins during a short stop. The hotel provided us with a delicious and much-appreciated shower and we celebrated the end of our first successful trek with a scrumptious dinner.

Next morning, our return flight to Sentani was delayed for two hours because of inclement weather. Upon arrival we transferred to our well-known hotel, where we arranged our luggage for our next bout of camping. After lunch we drove southwest to a splendid tract of lowland rain forest in the Nimbokrang area. A King Quail was flushed during a stop at lake Sentani. Later we were warmly welcomed by our knowledgeable man on the spot and our camp crew and got settled in. Our introductory walk along a wide open track through partly degraded forest gave us an excellent selection of species including Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove, Zoe Imperial Pigeon, Western Black-capped Lory, Red-cheeked and Eclectus Parrots, Papuan Hanging Parrot, a gorgeous Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Uniform Swiftlet, Blyth's Hornbill, Grey-headed Cuckoo-Shrike, Black-browed Triller, Northern Fantail, Golden Monarch, Shining Flycatcher, Red-capped Flowerpecker, Black Sunbird, Yellow-faced Myna, Lowland Peltops, Spangled Drongo, Glossy-mantled Manucode and Grey Crow. The highlight of the afternoon was a fabulous male Pale-billed Sicklebill that posed for ten minutes in the scope in an open treetop. Glorious moments!!

The following morning, before dawn, we were already walking along a barely visible trail through partially flooded lowland rain forest. Not much later we were scoping a cracking male Twelve-wired Bird of Paradise on his display branch. He was calling enthusiastically and was soon visited by three different ladies. After this magnificent show we moved to the display tree of a King Bird of Paradise, where both male and female performed very well, leaving us all a bit breathless after all this stupendous Bird of Paradise showing off. There was a lot of activity of more modestly-clad forest birds like Buff-faced Pygmy Parrot, Rufous Babbler, Emperor Fairy-Wren, Yellow-bellied Gerygone, White-bellied Thicket-Fantail, Rufous-collared Monarch, Yellow-breasted Boatbill, Black-sided Robin, Little-Shrike-Thrush, Dwarf and Plain Honeyeaters and Meyer's Friarbird. We heard a Brown-headed Crow in the distance and when it started to become a bit too hot and sweaty, we returned to our camp. Here, during the quiet hours of the day, a Jobi Manucode and a pair of Boyer's Cuckoo-Shrikes were seen and in the afternoon we returned to the forest. A long hike along a very muddy trail took us deep into the flooded rainforest, where a couple of lucky Birdquesters managed to lay eyes on a awesome New Guinea Flightless Rail. Out of this world!!! Not much later we all enjoyed scope views of a striking Hook-billed Kingfisher in broad daylight. Quality! A Blue-black Kingfisher called and responded briefly, but was only glimpsed.

Next dawn found us again in the forest, where a White-eared Catbird was playing hide and seek and only allowed brief views. We managed to scope a male Salvadori's Fig-Parrot in a forest giant and in the afternoon hiked to a distant display tree of Lesser Birds of Paradise. It was quite a slog to get there, but all hardship was forgotten when we were able to admire the fantastic display of these truly outstanding creatures. The scope views of the displaying males were real eye candy and left us almost speechless. Truly stunning. On the return walk Palm Cockatoo, Slender-billed Cuckoo-Dove, Rainbow Bee-eater, Golden Cuckoo-Shrike, Long-billed and Streak-headed Honeyeaters, Meyer's Friarbird and Brown Oriole kept us busy and at dusk we found a Black Bittern and a quiet Papuan Nightjar. At the camp we heard a Marbled Frogmouth, but it would not budge. On our last morning at Nimbokrang we walked along the wide Jalan Korea, where Rufous Night Heron, Black Bittern, Brush Cuckoo, Shining Bronze-Cuckoo and Papuan Spine-tailed Swift performed. When it started to get too hot for comfort, we retreated to the forest, where Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, Dwarf Koel and

Lowland Peltops obliged. After an early lunch we packed up and returned to Sentani for a major clean up and some much appreciated cold beers.

Next morning, when leaving for the airport an Oriental Hobby was catching dragonflies over the hotel. An uneventful flight took us to the oceanic island of Biak, where a feeding party of Bridled and Crested Terns over the sea greeted us upon arrival. In the afternoon we explored a mosaic of forest, secondary growth and glades, where we found a splendid selection of what Biak had to offer. Best of all were the exquisite Biak Paradise Kingfishers that showed so well, and the supporting cast included marvels like Crested Hawk, Claret-breasted Fruit Dove, Spice Imperial Pigeon, Biak Red Lory, Cicadabird, Biak Black Flycatcher, Black Sunbird, Biak White-eye, Long-tailed Starling and Hooded Butcherbird. At dusk we tried to lure a Biak Scops Owl within view, and although it was quite vocal, we only managed glimpses. Most of the early hours of the following day were a wash out, but we still managed pleasing observations of Superb Fruit Dove, Biak Red Lory (perched), Biak Gerygone and more Biak White-eyes. The afternoon session produced Yellow-bibbed Fruit Dove, Brush Cuckoo and elegant Moustached Tree Swifts.

Our flight from Biak to Sorong, via Jayapura, seemed problematical at first, after the initial threat of cancelled bookings. We never found out what really happened, but luckily we experienced no problems and the flights went very smoothly. Upon arrival at Sorong we were welcomed by Yoris, our man on the spot and soon transferred to our speedboat for the two hour trip to Wai Lebet on the island of Batanta. We observed Great and Lesser Frigatebirds and Black-naped and Common Terns at sea. A small island yielded Beach Kingfisher, three unexpected Great-billed Parrots, White-bellied Sea Eagle and some White-breasted Woodswallows. Upon arrival at Batanta we organized our sleeping arrangements and soon went for a walk in the nearby forest. Variable Goshawk, Pink-spotted Fruit-Dove and Frilled Monarch showed well, but the amazing spectacle of displaying Red birds of Paradise was something to cherish for ever. We saw the magnificent males dance like crazy and admired them hanging upside down. A truly wonderful and heartwarming experience. We left our sleeping bags in the middle of the night, as we wanted to be in the hides at the display court of one of the most wanted birds of the trip before dawn. After a rather hard, steep, muddy and sweaty hike, we divided up over two well-built hides and had a splendid time observing the antics of a male Wilson's Bird of Paradise at and around his dance court. We observed this most colourful BoP chasing a female around, preening itself and cleaning his dance ground. Truly amazing, out of this world stuff. Definitely one of the highlights of the trip and I still think Wilson's Bird of Paradise is one of the best birds in the entire world. After this exceptional experience, we slowly walked down the hill, adding Common Paradise Kingfisher (perfect scope studies), Hooded Pitta (perfect scope studies), Rusty Pitohui, Yellow-bellied Longbill and Mimic Meliphaga to the tally. Not much moved about in the afternoon, as we only noted a cooperative Black Cuckoo-Shrike for the list.

Next morning, before dawn, we crossed the Sagewin Strait to the island of Salawati and were soon walking in a flooded tract of rainforest in search of another megaspecies. It took a while, but eventually we heard our main target taking off from the forest floor with a lot of wing clapping and soon found an awesome and colossal Western Crowned Pigeon perched on a thick, horizontal bough of a huge tree. This fantastic creature just sat there, showing off its amazing crest and maroon back, while slowly pumping its tail. Magic moments. We then returned slowly through the alluvial forest picking up Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Spot-winged Monarch and Tawny-breasted Honeyeater on the way. Our boat then sailed unhurriedly along the Salawati shore, giving us the opportunity to admire Great-billed Heron, Eastern Reef Egret, Osprey, White-headed Shelduck and at least five Palm Cockatoos. It rained in the afternoon, but we still had a great time at a productive forest edge where the parrot family in particular was well represented with lots of Sulphur-crested and Palm Cockatoos, Eclectus Parrots, Rainbow Lorikeets, Western Black-capped Lories and a single party of furtive Black

Lories. We also marveled at Long-tailed Buzzard, Great Cuckoo-Dove, displaying Moustached Tree Swifts, White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrikes and an obliging flock of Grey Crows. A dawn boat trip along the Salawati coast churned out several White-bellied Sea Eagles, multiple flocks of Black Lories and an impressive Beach Kingfisher. Later, on a short walk near our camp we heard an invisible Green-backed Gerygone sing from the highest treetops. Our stay on Batanta had already come to its end, so after an early lunch, we packed up again and bade farewell to our gracious hosts. While waiting on the dock for the boat to get ready, we scoped distant Gurney's and Little Eagles and on the return journey to Sorong we were escorted by immaculate Black-naped Terns. Halfway through the boattrip, one of engines gave up, so we arrived at the fleshpots of Sorong a bit later than expected.

We had heard that Manokwari had become an beer free zone – because of violence and incredibly stupid road accidents involving drunks – so some of us purchased a good sample of alcoholic beverages for the next adventure. Our flight to Manokwari was delayed because of severe thunderstorms and as soon as we arrived in this harbour town on the northeast coast of the Vogelkop peninsula, we organized our equipment and were soon on our way into the Arfak Mountains in our 4x4 vehicles. In the foothill forest we walked along the track watching Red-breasted Pygmy Parrot, an angry Greater Black Coucal, Grey-headed Whistler, Variable Pitohui, Olive-crowned Flowerpecker, Black-fronted White-eye and Scrub White-eared and Yellow-gaped Meliphagas. In late afternoon we arrived at our well-built house at the edge of the village of Mokwam, where our local guide made us feel very welcome. Two hours before dawn, we were already hiking up towards the hides that overlook the display courts of one of the most mind-blowing birds of paradise, the astonishing Western Parotia. We all had a great time observing the antics of this really splendid bird performing only meters away, totally puzzled by how the different feather tracts are able to produce that full-grown cape and that bizarre breast shield. One of the groups even saw the male perform his spectacular dervish dance whilst a couple of females kept a close eye on things. A genuinely mind-boggling spectacle!! A Lesser Ground Robin visited the court that the other group attended and later we all sat in a hide overlooking the incredible bower of the Vogelkop Bowerbird. This fantastic piece of art must surely be one of the most amazing structures built by a bird. We saw the subtly-hued male at work amongst the brightly-coloured trophies he had amassed to adorn his beautifully constructed maypole bower. Joe's brightly-coloured M&Ms that we put amongst the fruits, insect carapaces, fungi, moss, flowers and leaves were immediately inspected and placed in an appropriate spot. We also heard the male utter an incredible variety of sounds, imitating virtually everything. After this spine-tingling experience we slowly walked through the montane forest and were then shown a superb Feline Owlet-Nightjar on its dayroost. We could approach this unreal-looking nightbird within a few meters and could not believe our luck. A real jawdropper. Half an hour later our local man showed us a day roosting Mountain Owlet-Nightjar, that again left us speechless. We then walked back to base, watching Black Fantail and Mountain Peltops on the way. In the afternoon we explored the more open terrain near the village where we heard Buff-tailed Sicklebill and saw a displaying Long-tailed Buzzard, as well as Island Leaf Warbler, White-shouldered Fairy-Wren, Black Monarch, Sclater's and Vogelkop Whistlers, Vogelkop Melidectes, Western Smoky Honeyeater and Streak-breasted Mannikin.

The next morning half of our party went into a hide put up at the dance court of a Magnificent Bird of Paradise. They saw the male very well, but the bird did not display. On their return they found Yellow-bellied and Slaty-chinned Longbills attending a flowering tree. The other half of the group went for a midmontane forest walk that produced White-eared Bronze Cuckoo, Garnet Robin, Sclater's and Vogelkop Whistlers, Black Pitohui, Rufous-sided Honeyeater, a shy Long-tailed Paradigalla and a Red-bellied Marsupial Shrew. Dense mist marred the afternoon walk along the road, but we did hear a male Buff-tailed Sicklebill. He immediately responded beautifully and showed very well for about ten minutes. Thrilling!! A Dwarf Whistler also obliged and then the mist

really became too dense and we had to abort. The following morning we packed our stuff for a two nights stay at higher altitudes and slowly walked along the contouring track up to the Lemon Hut. Some of the more special encounters included Green-backed and Garnet Robins, Lesser Melampitta and several Western Parotias in a fruiting tree. We arrived at our new camp at midday. Rain and mist sabotaged our afternoon's birding and we had to satisfy ourselves with Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo, Mountain Mouse Warbler, Vogelkop Scrub-Wren and a preening pair of Rufous-sided Honeyeaters. After a moonlit bright night at our camp we were woken up by a downpour which shook us all up. It sadly kept on raining throughout the morning and all we could do was just peer out from under our tarpaulin and hope for things to improve. A Regent Whistler and a couple of Blue-faced Parrotfinches eased the pain a bit. In the afternoon the rain abated and we went for a forest walk to an area of fruiting trees, which held lots of Black-billed Cuckoo-Doves, a couple of Bronze Ground-Doves (flushed), Yellow-billed Lorikeet, Orange-crowned Fairy-Wren and Tit Berrypecker.

Finally the higher altitudes beacons with dry weather and we hiked up to the right elevation for two more Birds of Paradise. We arrived in the early morning and heard Black Sicklebills call regularly in the distance. It took a while before we all managed to get really satisfactory views of the largest of the BoPs and in the end we even managed to scope a calling male. Pure magic. A couple of Arfak *Astrapias* clambered about at close range offering intimate looks at their exquisite finery. We also had a look at an active mound of Wattled Brush-turkey and observed Papuan Lorikeet, Smoky Robin, Papuan Sitella, Cinnamon-browed *Melidectes* and three superb bowers of Vogelkop Bowerbirds on the walk down. It started raining again in the afternoon and our return to base camp was an extremely muddy and wet affair. On our last full day in the Arfaks, one intrepid birder spent time in the hide of Western Parotia and witnessed some excellent display. Another member of the party explored the gardens of Mokwam and saw Hooded Pitohui and Mountain Meliphaga, while the rest of us returned to the midmontane forest, where from a strategic lookout, we eventually found a smashing Long-tailed Paradigalla in all its glory. It was fairly distant, but the prolonged scope views of this rarely-seen stunner sure made up for that. Lots of Papuan Mountain Pigeons were also about and once again the afternoon turned out to be a total wash out.

The next morning we said farewell to Mokwam and its warm hospitality and birded along the road at mid elevation. The final birds of the tour included a drying out Grey-headed Goshawk, Little Eagle, Rusty Whistler, Hooded Pitohui, Mountain Meliphaga, a cracking, but distant male Flame Bowerbird and a male Magnificent Riflebird, before the mist and the rain returned again en force.

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).

CASUARIIDAE

Dwarf Cassowary *Casuarius bennetti*: We found several piles of droppings in the higher reaches of the Arfak mountains.]

FREGATIDAE

Great Frigatebird *Fregata minor*: An adult male was seen along the Sorong waterfront. 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 observations during our boat trips off Sorong. Adult males, adult females and lots of immature birds were noted.

PHALACROCORACIDAE

Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*: We saw two in flight along the Jalan Korea, near Sentani.

Little Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*: Ten were found on Lake Sentani and a single bird was seen on Salawati.

ARDEIDAE

Great-billed Heron *Ardea sumatrana*: Excellent views of this huge heron along the Salawati shoreline. Well spotted, Daniel.

Great Egret *Egretta alba*: Just a few sightings of this well known and very widespread species.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Egretta coromandus*: We only saw it in the Sentani area.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*: Just a couple of observations.

Eastern Reef Egret (Pacific Reef Egret) *Egretta sacra*: A single dark morph was found on the shore of Salawati.

Rufous Night Heron (Nankeen Night Heron) *Nycticorax caledonicus*: One was seen in flight along a wet stretch of the Jalan Korea, where we could hear one or two others grunting from within dense cover.

Black Bittern *Ixobrychus flavicollis*: A couple of observations of this mainly crepuscular species along the Jalan Korea near Sentani.

PANDIONIDAE

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*: Three sightings of this well known piscivore in the Salawati/Batanta area.

ACCIPITRIDAE

Crested Hawk (Pacific Baza) *Aviceda subcristata*: Just a few observations of this widespread and lanky raptor. The pair going to roost on Biak was particularly noteworthy.

Long-tailed Buzzard *Henicopernis longicauda*: Eight observations, including some splendid close-up encounters. Always a delight to see. Also known as Long-tailed Honey Buzzard, its recorded prey items include a variety of insects (also wasps), tree lizards, birds and bird eggs. This is a member of a genus which possesses a very distinctive jizz and which is endemic to New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago.

Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus*: Two excellent observations in the Sentani area.

Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus*: The most widespread raptor in West Papua.

- White-bellied Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*: No fewer than seven sightings of this always impressive bird of prey.
- Papuan Harrier *Circus spilothorax*: Three observations over the Sentani and the Lake Habbema grasslands. The male especially is really striking. Beehler and other authors lump the form concerned in Spotted (or Eastern) Marsh Harrier *C. spilonotus*. This form has in turn been lumped in Western Marsh Harrier *C. aeruginosus* with the name Marsh Harrier being used for the enlarged species. If split it becomes a New Guinea endemic.
- Variable Goshawk *Accipiter hiogaster*: Four observations of this smart, forest edge inhabitant.
- Black-mantled Goshawk *Accipiter melanochlamys*: One was seen in the lake Habbema area and a confusing immature bird showed in the Long-tailed Paradigalla grove in the Arfak Mountains.
- Grey-headed Goshawk *Accipiter poliocephalus*: Splendid scope views of a wet bird, trying to dry out after some have rain, in the foothills of the Arfak Mountains.
- Gurney's Eagle *Aquila gurneyi*: Fair views of this impressive raptor on Batanta. Obviously closely related to the well-known Golden Eagle. It is treated as "**Near-Threatened**" 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 that carry his name.
- Little Eagle *Hieraaetus morphnoides*: Single birds were noted on Batanta and in the lower foothills of the Arfak Mountains. Beehler indicates that there are no known observations from the Vogelkop area.....

FALCONIDAE

- Brown Falcon *Falco berigora*: Nice views of this large, rather ungainly falcon near our Lake Habbema camp.
- Australian Kestrel *Falco cenchroides*: A single observation of the resident endemic subspecies *baru* in the Lake Habbema area.
- Oriental Hobby *Falco severus*: One was catching dragonflies over our hotel in Sentani and another bird showed near our base on Batanta.

ANATIDAE

- White-headed Shelduck (Radjah Shelduck) *Tadorna radjah*: A few observations of this handsome duck along the Salawati coast.
- Salvadori's Teal *Anas waigiensis*: Repeated perfect scope studies of at least ten of these localized ducks on Lake Habbema. These smart, unusual birds are sometimes placed in the unique genus *Salvadorina*. They are treated as "**Vulnerable**" in BirdLife International's 'Threatened Birds of the World'. Conte Adelardo Tommaso Paleotti Salvadori (1835-1923) was an eminent Italian physician and ornithologist.

MEGAPODIIDAE

- Red-billed Brush-turkey *Talegalla cuvieri* (H): We heard the raucous calls in the lower foothills of the Arfak Mountains.
- Brown-collared Brush-turkey *Talegalla jobiensis* (H): We heard the distinctive vocalizations in the Nimbokrang area and saw an active mound under a gigantic Strangler Fig.
- [Wattled Brush-turkey *Aepyodius arfakianus*: We were shown an active mound in the higher reaches of the Arfak Mountains.]

PHASIANIDAE

Snow Mountain Quail *Anurophasis monorthonyx*: Excellent views of males and females of this intriguing gamebird on our wanderings through the grasslands near Lake Habbema. No fewer than ten birds were seen, both in flight and on the deck. This Red Grouse-like species is endemic to West Papua and is restricted to the higher reaches of the Snow Mountains. It is also the only member of its genus. It is treated as “**Near-Threatened**” in BirdLife International’s ‘Threatened Birds of the World’.

Brown Quail *Coturnix australis* (NL): A single bird showed briefly to a lucky soul in the grasslands near Sentani.

King Quail (Blue-breasted Quail) *Coturnix chinensis*: One was flushed from a grassy patch on the shore of Lake Sentani.

RALLIDAE

Rufous-tailed Bush-hen *Amaurornis moluccanus* (H): We heard the distinctive calls in the distance in the Sentani grasslands.

New Guinea Flightless Rail *Megacrex inepta* (NL): Moray and Nigel managed to see this prehistoric-looking species, after our man on the spot had located one in swamp forest at Nimbokrang. How lucky can one get!!! One of those mega birds!!! The locals know this species quite well and trap it for food. It is treated as “**Near-Threatened**” in BirdLife International’s ‘Threatened Birds of the World’.

Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa*: More than a dozen showed well on Lake Sentani.

Eurasian Coot (Common C) *Fulica atra*: Up to ten were seen on Lake Habbema.

SCOLOPACIDAE

New Guinea Woodcock *Scolopax rosenbergii*: Brief views of a roding bird performing its territorial rounds at dusk and again just before dawn along a forest edge near Lake Habbema. A rarely-seen and much-appreciated species. Beehler lumps this form in Rufous Woodcock *Scolopax saturata*.

STERNIDAE

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*: Parties of four and six were observed at sea off Sorong.

Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana*: A few of these immaculately-plumaged terns were seen at sea off Sorong.

Bridled Tern *Sterna anaethetus*: A feeding party of at least 30 birds could be studied from the airport in Biak upon our arrival there.

Crested Tern (Great C T) *Sterna bergii*: Regular observations at sea off Sorong.

COLUMBIDAE

Rock Pigeon (R Dove) *Columba livia*

Slender-billed Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia amboinensis*: Easily the most commonly observed dove of the lowlands.

Black-billed Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia nigrirostris*: Regular observations in the Arfak Mountains, where we also saw a nest with one egg.

Great Cuckoo-Dove *Reinwardtoena reinwardtsi*: Two sightings of this always impressive bird.

Emerald Ground Dove (Green-winged Pigeon) *Chalcophaps indica* (H): We heard it on Biak.

Stephan’s Ground Dove (S’s Pigeon) *Chalcophaps stephani*: A single bird showed all too briefly at Nimbokrang. The bird is named after Etienne Stephan Jacquinet, father of French explorer Vice Admiral Jacquinet, so watch your pronunciation!!

Bronze Ground-Dove *Gallicolumba beccarii*: Several brief encounters with this small and furtive species in the Arfak Mountains.

- Western Crowned Pigeon *Goura cristata*: One of the birds of the tour!! It took a while, but eventually we found one of these incredible creatures perched on a bough of a forest giant on the island of Salawati. Endemic to West Papua. This and the other two *Goura* allospecies are by far the largest of the Pigeon family. All are restricted to alluvial forest, are heavily hunted and therefore treated as “**Vulnerable**” in BirdLife International’s ‘Threatened Birds of the World’. The number four in the Bird of the Trip contest and Daniel’s favourite.
- Wompoo Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus magnificus* (H): Audio encounters only.
- Pink-spotted Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus perlatus*: We only saw this handsome bird on Batanta.
- Superb Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus superbus*: A splendid male showed well on the island of Biak.
- Beautiful Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus pulchellus*: A couple of brief observations at Nimbokrang.
- White-breasted Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus rivoli*: Regularly observed and heard in the highlands surrounding Lake Habbema and in the Arfak Mountains.
- Yellow-bibbed Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus solomonensis*: Cracking views of this striking species in the forests of Biak.
- Claret-breasted Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus viridis*: Regular observations of this magnificent creature on the island of Biak.
- Orange-bellied Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus iozonus*: The most commonly-encountered Fruit Dove.
- Spice Imperial Pigeon *Ducula myristicivora*: We found this island dweller regularly on Biak. A distinctive voice. Note that the birds on Biak (race *geelvinkiana*) do not show the characteristic enlarged black cere. The scientific epithet refers to nutmeg-eating (*Myristica*, nutmeg and vorus, eating)
- Rufescent Imperial Pigeon *Ducula chalconota* (H): We heard several in the higher reaches of the Arfak Mountains.
- Pinon Imperial Pigeon *Ducula pinon*: Many encounters in the Nimbokrang area and on Batanta. The bird is named after L. Pinon, wife of French explorer Captain Louis Freycinet.
- Zoe Imperial Pigeon *Ducula zoeae*: We managed to scope it along a forest edge at Nimbokrang and again on Batanta. Zoë was the wife of the French naturalist and author René Lesson (1794-1849) who described the pigeon in 1826.
- Papuan Mountain Pigeon (Bare-eyed M-P) *Gymnophaps albertisii*: One of the more regularly observed pigeons, often seen in swirling flocks. Not strictly a montane species.

PSITTACIDAE

- Black Lory *Chalcopsitta atra*: Several flocks in flight on Salawati. These birds belonged to the totally black, western nominate race. Endemic to West Papua.
- Biak Red Lory *Eos cyanogenia*: This smart species is still common on Biak, and is almost always seen in flight. We managed to scope several perched birds this year. It is endemic to islands of the Geelvink Bay and thus a West Papua endemic. It is treated as “**Vulnerable**” in BirdLife International’s ‘Threatened Birds of the World’.
- Rainbow Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus*: Regular encounters with this widespread and colourful species.
- Western Black-capped Lory *Lorius lory*: A splendid species, which is luckily still fairly common everywhere in the lowlands.
- Papuan Lorikeet *Chamosyna papou*: Several encounters. Both the black and the red morphs of this splendid species were observed, but the former only in flight.
- Plum-faced Lorikeet (Whiskered Lorikeet) *Oreopsittacus arfaki*: Regular encounters in the highlands. Really attractive when seen well, especially the males.
- Yellow-billed Lorikeet *Neopsittacus musschenbroekii*: Just a few in the highlands of the Arfak Mountains.
- Orange-billed Lorikeet *Neopsittacus pullicauda*: Small numbers were seen very well in the higher reaches of the Habbema trek.

- Palm Cockatoo *Probosciger aterrimus*: Regular observations on Salawati and Batanta and a single sighting in the Nimbokrang area. A truly magnificent creature.
- Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita*: Still quite common in the lowlands.
- Buff-faced Pygmy Parrot *Micropsitta pusio*: Excellent scope studies of these tiny critters in the Nimbokrang area.
- Yellow-capped Pygmy Parrot *Micropsitta keiensis*: We heard this unobtrusive creature on Batanta and saw several briefly in flight in the lower foothills of the Arfak Mountains.
- Geelvink Pygmy Parrot *Micropsitta geelvinkiana* (H): Sadly, heard only on Biak. It is endemic to Biak and Numfor and thus to West Papua. It is treated as “**Near-Threatened**” in BirdLife International’s ‘Threatened Birds of the World’.
- Red-breasted Pygmy Parrot *Micropsitta bruijnii*: A magnificent encounter with this striking species in the Arfak mountains.
- Double-eyed Fig-Parrot *Cyclopsitta diophthalma*: Prolonged scope studies of a male of this beautifully-patterned species in the lowland forest at Nimbokrang.
- Salvadori’s Fig-Parrot *Psittaculirostris salvadorii*: Several were heard feeding in the canopy of a forest giant at Nimbokrang, but it was not easy to locate these very well camouflaged critters. Eventually we managed to scope a lovely male. Well spotted, Robin. Endemic to West Papua. It is treated as “**Vulnerable**” in BirdLife International’s ‘Threatened Birds of the World’.
- Brehm’s Tiger-Parrot *Psittacella brehmii*: Several perfect observations in the Habbema highlands.
- Painted Tiger-Parrot *Psittacella picta*: Several excellent encounters with this gorgeous species at Lake Habbema.
- Modest Tiger-Parrot *Psittacella modesta*: Great looks at two well-behaved birds at our last camp of the Habbema trek.
- Red-cheeked Parrot *Geoffroyus geoffroyi*: A very common, attractive and vociferous bird of the lowlands.
- Great-billed Parrot *Tanygnathus megalorynchos*: Three showed nicely in flight over a small island near Batanta. Our first encounter with this uncommon species on this tour.
- Eclectus Parrot *Eclectus roratus*: Fairly common in all the visited lowland habitats, but always spectacular. Especially marvellous on Batanta, where birds can still be found foraging in the village trees. They have, sadly, become fairly scarce on Biak.
- Papuan Hanging Parrot *Loriculus aurantiifrons*: Scope views of a male of this rather uncommon creature at Nimbokrang.

CUCULIDAE

- Brush Cuckoo *Cacomantis variolosus*: Regular observations of this loud songster.
- Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo *Cacomantis castaneiventris*: Often heard in its mid montane habitat, and eventually seen very well.
- Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cacomantis flabelliformis*: Several excellent views in the Lake Habbema area.
- Shining Bronze Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx lucidus*: Good views of two in the lowland forests of Nimbokrang.
- White-eared Bronze Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx meyerii*: Excellent studies of several in the Arfak Mountains. Usually the only non-passerine in the mixed species flocks of the lower montane forests.
- White-crowned Koel *Caliechthrus leucolophus* (H): Regularly heard in the distance in the lowland forest at Nimbokrang.
- Dwarf Koel (Black-capped Koel) *Microdynamis parva*: Splendid scope studies of a male at Nimbokrang. Remember the red iris.

Australian Koel *Eudynamys cyanocephala* (H): Only heard. Beehler and other authors lump this form in Asian Koel *E. scolopacea* with the name Common Koel being used for the enlarged species. Alternatively it has been suggested that the black-billed populations of Sulawesi to the Moluccas and New Guinea be split as a separate species *E. melanorhyncha*. However vocalisations of all forms of this complex species are very similar and the only differences appear to be in the plumage. The name koel is an onomatopoeic rendering of the call.

Channel-billed Cuckoo *Scythrops novaehollandiae*: Good views of eight of these impressive, prehistoric-looking birds at Sentani. Not proven to nest in PNG, these are mostly migrants from Australia, where they nest-parasitise several species of crows, currawongs, Australian Magpie, Australian Magpie-Lark and (strangely) Collared Sparrowhawk!

Greater Black Coucal *Centropus menbeki*: Often heard in the lowland forest at Nimbokrang and eventually seen very well in the foothills of the Arfak Mountains.

Biak Coucal *Centropus chalybeus* (H): We only heard this retiring Biak endemic. No response at all of this West Papuan speciality, which is treated as “**Near-Threatened**” in BirdLife International’s ‘Threatened Birds of the World’.

Pheasant Coucal *Centropus phasianus*: Good views of two in the Sentani grasslands.

Lesser Black Coucal *Centropus bernsteini* (H): We heard the distinctive calls in the forests of Salawati.

STRIGIDAE

Biak Scops-Owl *Otus beccarii*: We heard it in a nice patch of forest on Biak, but only managed a glimpse. We sure tried, but no luck really. Endemic to Biak and thus to West Papua. It used to be lumped in Moluccan Scops Owl *O. magicus* and it is treated as “**Endangered**” in BirdLife International’s ‘Threatened Birds of the World’.

Papuan Boobook *Ninox theomacha* (H): We heard its distinctive voice at night in the Arfak Mountains, but always rather distantly.

PODARGIDAE

Marbled Frogmouth *Podargus ocellatus* (H): One was heard near our camp in the lowland forest at Nimbokrang.

Papuan Frogmouth *Podargus papuensis* (H): Regularly heard on Biak.

AEGOTHELIDAE

Feline Owlet-Nightjar *Aegotheles insignis*: Our man on the spot in the Arfak Mountains showed us this jewel on its day roost in a dense patch of secondary growth. We were able to study this spectacular and weird-looking nightbird at very short range for as long as we wanted and quite a few photos were taken. Definitely one of the highlights of the tour. The number three in the Bird of the Trip contest and my personal favourite.

Mountain Owlet-Nightjar *Aegotheles albertisi*: Fantastic day time views, including scope studies, in a dense patch of secondary growth in the Arfak Mountains. A marvellous little creature.

CAPRIMULGIDAE

Papuan Nightjar *Eurostopodus papuensis*: One flew over the road just after dusk near our camp at Nimbokrang.

Large-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus macrurus*: Good views of several at dusk near Sentani.

HEMIPROCENIDAE

Moustached Tree Swift *Hemiprocne mystacea*: This beautiful and extremely elegant species was fairly common on Batanta. Only the males have the distinctive red cheek mark.

APODIDAE

Uniform Swiftlet *Collocalia vanikorensis*: A common bird of the lowland forests.

Mountain Swiftlet *Collocalia hirundinacea*: Commonly observed over the highland forests.

Glossy Swiftlet (White-bellied Swiftlet) *Collocalia esculenta*: One of the most common birds in West Papua. We observed them at all altitudes.

Papuan Spine-tailed Swift (Papuan Needletail) *Mearnsia novaeguineae*: Regular sightings of this distinctive swift at Nimbokrang and also seen on Batanta.

ALCEDINIDAE

Common Paradise Kingfisher *Tanysiptera galatea*: Perfect views of this very attractive bird on Batanta. The calls betrayed the very high density. A real cracker of a bird!!

Biak Paradise Kingfisher *Tanysiptera riedelii*: Perfect scope views of several in the forest on Biak. Most only had short tails, but we saw one or two with distinctive elongated tail feathers. Beehler considers it as belonging with Common Paradise Kingfisher, but it is now generally considered a separate species. Endemic to Biak and thus to West Papua. It is treated as “**Near-Threatened**” in BirdLife International’s ‘Threatened Birds of the World’.

Hook-billed Kingfisher *Melidora macrorrhina*: Stupendous day time views of this crepuscular, different-looking, but attractive species in the lowland forest at Nimbokrang.

Rufous-bellied Kookaburra *Dacelo gaudichaud*: Regular sightings of this impressive species. A regular voice of the lowland forests.

Blue-black Kingfisher (Black-sided Kingfisher) *Halcyon nigrocyanea*: Glimpses only of this localized species in swamp forest at Nimbokrang. We heard its distinctive chatter, but response was rather poor. It is treated as “**Data Deficient**” in BirdLife International’s ‘Threatened Birds of the World’.

Sacred Kingfisher *Halcyon sancta*: Regular observations.

Beach Kingfisher *Halcyon saurophaga*: Good views of two on the shore of a small island off Sorong and excellent views of one along the Salawati coast. The scientific epithet refers to its lizard-eating characteristics (*sauros* = a lizard, *phagos* = a glutton, an eater, in Greek)

Yellow-billed Kingfisher *Halcyon torotoro*: Much appreciated scope views of this distinctive lowland forest denizen on Salawati. The scientific epithet seems to be an onomatopoeic New Guinea aboriginal name for this species.

Dwarf Kingfisher (Variable Kingfisher) *Ceyx lepidus*: A few brief encounters with this unobtrusive forest bird. Quite often heard.

MEROPIDAE

Blue-tailed Bee-eater *Merops philippinus*: Two were hawking for insects over the Sentani grasslands.

Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops ornatus*: Regular encounters with this striking Australian migrant.

CORACIIDAE

Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis*: Regular encounters with the red chili pepper bird.

BUCEROTIDAE

Blyth’s Hornbill (Papuan Hornbill) *Rhyticeros plicatus*: A truly impressive bird that luckily is still quite common in the lowlands. The “Lancaster Bomber”.

PITTIDAE

Blue-breasted Pitta (Red-bellied Pitta) *Pitta erythrogaster* (H): Only heard in the distance on Batanta. No fewer than 24 races have been described.

Hooded Pitta *Pitta sordida*: Great looks at a responsive bird in foothill forest on Batanta. A real stunner!

HIRUNDINIDAE

Pacific Swallow *Hirundo tahitica*: Regular observations.

MOTACILLIDAE

Alpine Pipit *Anthus gutturalis*: A fairly regular bird of the alpine grasslands surrounding Lake Habbema. Quite shy for a pipit!! We were lucky enough to be able to witness its songflight.

CAMPEPHAGIDAE

Hooded Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina longicauda*: We heard parties near Lake Habbema and in the higher reaches of the Arfak Mountains, where one or two birds were briefly seen.

White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina papuensis*: Several excellent observations of this widespread species on Batanta.

Yellow-eyed Cuckoo-Shrike (Barred C-S) *Coracina lineata*: Great views of two birds in the foothills of the Arfak Mountains.

Boyer's Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina boyeri*: A pair showed well in the lowland forest at Nimbokrang. Named after captain J. Boyer, French navigator in the Pacific with Dumont d'Urville, so another species with a French name!!

Cicadabird (Common Cicadabird) *Coracina tenuirostris*: Two pairs of the resident, endemic race *meyeri* were observed on Biak. Cicadabirds are mainly Australian migrants in New Guinea, but breed in the south and on a number of satellite islands.

Grey-headed Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina schisticeps*: Several excellent encounters in the lowland rainforests of Nimbokrang. A very vocal species.

Black Cuckoo-Shrike (New Guinea Cuckoo-Shrike) *Coracina melaena*: Several observations in the lowland forest at Nimbokrang.

Black-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina montana*: We heard the typical duetting calls in the highland forest near Lake Habbema, where we obtained good views of three birds.

Golden Cuckoo-Shrike *Campochaera sloetii*: We scoped this handsome species in the lowland rainforest of the Nimbokrang area.

Black-browed Triller *Lalage atrovirens*: Regular observations of this very vocal bird in the lowlands. It is restricted to the northern watershed of New Guinea, but also occurs on Tanimbar, in the Southern Moluccas.

PYCNONOTIDAE

Sooty-headed Bulbul *Pycnonotus aurigaster*: Several parties of this introduced species showed well on Biak.

TURDIDAE

Pied Chat (Pied Bushchat) *Saxicola caprata*: This well-known and very widespread species was only encountered in grassland habitat near Sentani. It has been suggested that the populations of New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago be split off as a separate species, Black Bushchat *S. aethiops*.

Island Thrush *Turdus poliocephalus*: The race *versteegi* (restricted to the Jayawijaya Mountains) was not uncommon in the grasslands near Lake Habbema. No fewer than 50 races of this widespread bird have been described!!

ORTHONYCHIDAE

Spotted Jewel-babbler *Ptilorrhoa leucosticta*: Glimpses only of this gorgeous and mysterious species on the floor of the highland forest of the Arfak Mountains. Not responsive at all this year. We sure tried...

INCERTAE SEDIS

[Great mystery surrounds the 'correct' taxonomic treatment of this rather special species. Beehler places it in Orthonychidae but Sibley & Monroe and Clements treat the melampittas as terrestrial Birds of Paradise, Paradisaeidae]

Lesser Melampitta *Melampitta lugubris*: Good to excellent views for all of this mega skulker. We saw it both in the Lake Habbema area and again in the Arfak Mountains. A very distinctive voice.

POMATOSTOMIDAE

Rufous Babbler *Pomatostomus isidorei*: Great views of a vocal party in the lowland rainforest at Nimbokrang. The only New Guinea member of a small Australian family.

SYLVIIDAE

Papuan Grassbird (Papuan Grass Warbler) *Megalurus macrurus*: Several in the grasslands near Lake Habbema. 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 (Bright-capped Cisticola) *Cisticola exilis*: This widespread species was common in the grasslands near Sentani. Most birds were in non-breeding plumage.

Island Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus poliocephala*: Several were seen at the edge of montane forest in the Arfak Mountains.

MALURIDAE

Emperor Fairy-wren *Malurus cyanocephalus*: A pair showed quite well in the lowland rainforest at Nimbokrang.

White-shouldered Fairy-wren *Malurus alboscapulatus*: Several encounters in secondary growth in the Arfak Mountains. Males are really cute.

Orange-crowned Fairy-wren *Clytomyias insignis*: Fair views of a swift-moving party in the Arfak Mountains.

ACANTHIZIDAE

Rusty Mouse-Warbler *Crateroscelis murina* (H): A highly distinctive voice of lowland rainforest, but we never managed to lure one into view.

Mountain Mouse-Warbler *Crateroscelis robusta*: Especially quite common by voice in the montane forests of the Arfak Mountains.

Large Scrub-wren *Sericornis nouhuysi*: Singles were seen in the highlands on both treks.

Buff-faced Scrub-wren *Sericornis perspicillatus*: Fairly common on the Habbema trek. Distinctive.

Vogelkop Scrub-wren *Sericornis rufescens*: The most common Scrub-wren in the Arfak Mountains. Small parties were regularly encountered. Endemic to West Papua.

Papuan Scrub-wren *Sericornis papuensis*: Several were seen in the higher reaches of the Snow Mountains.

Grey-green Scrub-wren *Sericornis arfakianus*: Four encounters with this unobtrusive little bird in the Mokwam area of the Arfak Mountains. A well-chosen scientific epithet.

Grey Gerygone *Gerygone cinerea* (NL): Daniel saw this clean-looking bird in the Arfak highlands. 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.

- Yellow-bellied Gerygone *Gerygone chrysogaster*: A few observations in lowland forest at Nimbokrang.
- Green-backed Gerygone *Gerygone chloronotus* (H): Its repetitive song was regularly heard, but we never managed to lay eyes on this canopy inhabitant.
- Biak Gerygone *Gerygone hypoxantha*: Two birds performed beautifully in a patch of secondary forest on Biak. Endemic to West Papua. It is treated as “**Endangered**” in BirdLife International’s ‘Threatened Birds of the World’.
- Large-billed Gerygone *Gerygone magnirostris*: Several excellent sightings along the Jalan Korea near Sentani. The broken eye-ring showed quite well.
- Brown-breasted Gerygone *Gerygone ruficollis*: One of the most often encountered small birds in montane forest.

RHIPIDURIDAE

- White-bellied Thicket-fantail *Rhipidura leucothorax*: A mega skulker, that showed very well in the Nimbokrang rainforest. Common by voice.
- Dimorphic Fantail *Rhipidura brachyrhyncha*: Several lovely encounters in the highland forest of the Snow Mountains.
- Black Fantail *Rhipidura atra*: Commonly observed in the mountain forests of the Arfak.
- Friendly Fantail *Rhipidura albolimbata*: The most inquisitive inhabitant of mountain forest. We saw it forage together with Papuan Treecreeper and several other species. A well-chosen name.
- Northern Fantail *Rhipidura rufiventris*: Many sightings of this rather unobtrusive species.
- Willie Wagtail (White-browed Fantail) *Rhipidura leucophrys*: Common and quite entertaining.

MYIAGRIDAE

- Black Monarch *Monarcha axillaris*: Two males showed nicely in middle elevation forest of the Arfak Mountains.
- Spot-winged Monarch *Monarcha guttula*: One or two showed well, but briefly, in a mixed flock on Salawati.
- Golden Monarch *Monarcha chrysomela*: Regularly observed in the lowlands.
- Frilled Monarch *Arses telescopthalmus*: This very attractive species was quite common on Batanta and Salawati. Arses was a king of the Persians (4th century BC).
- Rufous-collared Monarch *Arses insularis*: Several lovely observations in the lowland forest at Nimbokrang.
- Biak Black Flycatcher *Myiagra atra*: Several excellent encounters in forest patches on Biak. It is endemic to the islands of Biak and Numfor and thus to West Papua. It is treated as “**Near-Threatened**” in BirdLife International’s ‘Threatened Birds of the World’.
- Shining Flycatcher (Shining Monarch) *Myiagra alecto*: Regularly observed and often heard. Widespread and always smart.

MACHAERIRHYNCHIDAE

[Beehler lumps this family in *Monarchidae*.]

- Yellow-breasted Boatbill *Machaerirhynchus flaviventer*: We saw this smart species at Nimbokrang. This lowland forest inhabitant also occurs in northeastern Australia.
- Black-breasted Boatbill *Machaerirhynchus nigripectus*: Often heard in mountain forest and seen very, very well on several occasions. A really snazzy species, full of character.

PETROICIDAE

[Beehler uses the name *Eopsaltriidae* for this family.]

Canary Flycatcher *Microeca papuana*: Fairly regular in the mountains. Often not shy at all and really showing off its orange feet.

Garnet Robin *Eugerygone rubra*: Several encounters with this elusive, inconspicuous, but very attractive species in mountain forest in the Arfaks.

Mountain Robin *Petroica bivittata*: Only Peter and Mark saw this cutie in mountain forest near Lake Habbema.

Ashy Robin *Poecilodryas albispecularis* (H): We regularly heard this ace skulker in the higher reaches of the Arfak Mountains, but we always seemed to have something else to do at the time.

Black-sided Robin *Poecilodryas hypoleuca*: Good views for all in swamp forest at Nimbokrang. Really striking!!

Black-throated Robin *Poecilodryas albonotata*: This attractive species was seen very well near Lake Habbema. Another distinctive voice of the montane forest.

Lesser Ground-Robin *Amalocichla incerta*: First heard on the Habbema trek and later observed at close range by most in the Arfak. Subtly attractive!!

White-winged Robin *Peneothello sigillatus*: Several excellent encounters in the Lake Habbema area.

Smoky Robin *Peneothello cryptoleucus*: A couple of observations in the higher reaches of the Arfak Mountains. A West Papua endemic.

Blue-grey Robin *Peneothello cyanus*: This lower montane species was seen very well on both treks.

Green-backed Robin *Pachycephalopsis hattamensis*: Splendid views, eventually, of this lovely species in highland forest in the Arfak Mountains. It is endemic to the mountains of West Papua. The scientific epithet refers to the Hattam language, one of the four spoken languages in the Arfak Mountains.

PACHYCEPHALIDAE

Dwarf Whistler (Goldenface, Pachycare) *Pachycare flavogrisea*: A truly great and very attractive bird, which we encountered a few times in the Arfak foothills.

Common Golden Whistler (Golden Whistler) *Pachycephala pectoralis* (H): Several were heard in the Baliem Valley, where a separate population occurs. No fewer than 64 subspecies have been described of this widespread species.

Sclater's Whistler *Pachycephala soror*: Several excellent observations in the Arfak Mountains.

Regent Whistler *Pachycephala schlegelii*: Seen very well in the Arfak Mountains. One of the more attractive whistlers.

Lorentz's Whistler *Pachycephala lorentzi*: Common at the higher altitudes of the Lake Habbema area. One of the 'hen-feathered' whistlers.

Vogelkop Whistler *Pachycephala meyeri*: A regularly encountered species in the Arfak Mountains. Another 'hen-plumaged' Whistler. Endemic to the mountains of the Vogelkop and thus to West Papua.

Grey-headed Whistler *Pachycephala griseiceps*: A few were observed in the foothills of the Arfak Mountains. Beehler lumps this form, together with the east Australian population, in Brown Whistler *P. simplex* of northern Australia, with the name Grey Whistler being used for the enlarged species.

Rusty Whistler *Pachycephala hyperythra*: Heard and briefly seen in the foothills of the Arfak Mountains.

Rufous-naped Whistler *Pachycephala rufinucha*: Several birds were seen in detail, but the species was obviously much more often heard. Not a typical whistler at all!!

Little Shrike-Thrush *Colluricincla megarrhyncha*: A few observations in the Nimbokrang forests and also regularly heard elsewhere.

Variable Pitohui *Pitohui kirhocephalus*: Several excellent encounters with this very variable species. Several forms were noted. 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.

Hooded Pitohui *Pitohui dichrous*: Seen well in the Arfak foothills. Another poisonous species.

Rusty Pitohui *Pitohui ferrugineus*: Good views of a party of these large and very vocal birds in foothill forest on Batanta. The race here has a distinctive pale bill. This species is also poisonous.

Black Pitohui *Pitohui nigrescens*: Both males and females of this unobtrusive mountain forest inhabitant showed very well on several occasions in the Arfak Mountains.

CLIMACTERIDAE

Papuan Treecreeper *Cormobates placens*: Regularly encountered in the highlands on both treks. Often not shy at all. The only New Guinea member of a small Australian family.

NEOSITTIDAE

Papuan Sittella *Daphoenositta papuensis*: Great views of a small party in a mountain forest glade in the Arfaks. Beehler lumps this form in Varied Sittella *D. chrysoptera*.

Black Sittella *Daphoenositta miranda*: Many excellent observations at close range on the Lake Habbema trek. A truly gorgeous species, that really spoilt us this year!

MELANOCHARITIDAE

Fan-tailed Berrypecker *Melanocharis versteri*: Regularly encountered in the highlands on both treks.

DICAEIDAE

Red-capped Flowerpecker *Dicaeum geelvinkianum*: Regular encounters. This is the form on Biak and on the remaining mainland of New Guinea. It used to be lumped with the previous species.

Olive-crowned Flowerpecker *Dicaeum pectorale*: Regular observations. This is the form on the Vogelkop, Batanta and Salawati. It should not have any red on the rump or the crown, but some birds show at least traces of red. Endemic to West Papua.

PARAMYTHIIDAE

Tit Berrypecker *Oreocharis arfaki*: An extremely attractive inhabitant of highland forest. We observed it well in the Arfak Mountains. The Paramythiidae (just two species) are one of the two (or three) families that are endemic to New Guinea.

Crested Berrypecker *Paramythia montium*: A handsome species that we observed at length in the higher reaches of the Snow Mountains. They are most obvious at the treeline.

NECTARINIIDAE

Black Sunbird *Nectarinia aspasia*: Regular encounters in the lowlands. The males are very attractive when seen well.

Yellow-bellied Sunbird (Olive-backed Sunbird) *Nectarinia jugularis*: Regular sightings of this widespread species.

ZOSTEROPIDAE

Black-fronted White-eye *Zosterops minor*: A few were seen well in the foothills of the Arfak Mountains.

Biak White-eye *Zosterops mysorensis*: This uncommon Biak endemic showed really well on our visit. Mysore, or Misori, is an old name for Biak. Endemic to West Papua. It is treated as “**Near-Threatened**” in BirdLife International’s ‘Threatened Birds of the World’.

Western Mountain White-eye *Zosterops fuscicapillus*: Many encounters on both treks through the highlands.

MELIPHAGIDAE

Long-billed Honeyeater *Melilestes megarhynchus*: A few observations in the Nimbokrang area.

Yellow-bellied Longbill *Toxorhamphus novaeguineae*: One showed quite well on Batanta and another was seen in the middle reaches of the Arfak Mountains. Although Beehler treats this species as a honeyeater, other taxonomists place it with the berrypeckers in the family *Melanocharitidae*.

Slaty-chinned Longbill *Toxorhamphus poliopterus* (NL): One was seen foraging together with the previous species in the middle reaches of the Arfak Mountains.

Dwarf Honeyeater *Oedistoma iliolophus*: Good looks at this tiny bird at Nimbokrang.

Dusky Myzomela (Dusky Honeyeater) *Myzomela obscura*: A single bird was seen on Biak. A bird with a strange distribution in the New Guinea area as it only occurs along the southern coast of New Guinea, in the Popondetta area, on Aru and on Biak.

Mountain Red-headed Myzomela *Myzomela adolphinae*: A few were seen near and below the village of Mokwam, in the Arfak Mountains.

Red-collared Myzomela *Myzomela rosenbergi*: A common highland bird that was seen on both treks. Always fun to observe.

Mountain Meliphaga *Meliphaga orientalis*: A few were noted in the lower Arfak Mountains.

Scrub White-eared Meliphaga *Meliphaga albonotata*: A couple showed well in a shrubby area in the Arfak foothills.

Mimic Meliphaga *Meliphaga analoga*: Quite common in the Nimbokrang area, on Batanta and in the lower Arfak Mountains. The *Meliphaga* honeyeaters are surely the most difficult New Guinea species complex to identify. They share features and vocalisations and there seem to be few reliable criteria for identification!

Yellow-gaped Meliphaga *Meliphaga flavirictus*: Fantastic studies of this uncommon species in the lower reaches of the Arfak Mountains.

Black-throated Honeyeater *Lichenostomus subfrenatus*: The loud, bubbling and cheerful song is one of the most distinctive sounds of the upper montane forest on the Lake Habbema trek. Several excellent observations.

Orange-cheeked Honeyeater *Lichenostomus chrysogenys*: A very obvious inhabitant of treeline scrub in the Snow Mountains. It is restricted to the Snow Mountains and is thus a West Papua endemic.

Tawny-breasted Honeyeater *Xanthotis flaviventer*: Several observations on Batanta and Salawati. Here represented by a rather dull race.

Plain Honeyeater *Pycnopygius ixoides*: Several observations of this unobtrusive species in the Nimbokrang forests.

Streak-headed Honeyeater *Pycnopygius stictocephalus*: Good views of several in the lowland forests at Nimbokrang.

Meyer’s Friarbird *Philemon meyeri*: Regularly seen at Nimbokrang.

New Guinea Friarbird *Philemon novaeguineae*: Quite common, but surely its song is its best attribute.

Rufous-sided Honeyeater *Ptiloprora erythropleura*: Commonly encountered in the mountain forests of the Arfaks. Endemic to West Papua.

Grey-streaked Honeyeater *Ptiloprora perstriata*: A regular bird of the montane forests of the Lake Habbema trek.

- Sooty Melidectes *Melidectes fuscus*: Several showed very well near the treeline in the Snow Mountains.
- Short-bearded Melidectes *Melidectes nouhuysi*: A regular and attractive bird of the treeline scrub in the Snow Mountains. Endemic to West Papua.
- Cinnamon-browed Melidectes *Melidectes ochromelas*: Several were heard and one or two briefly seen in the higher reaches of the Arfak Mountains.
- Vogelkop Melidectes *Melidectes leucostephes*: Quite common by voice, but usually not easy to see well. Endemic to the Vogelkop and the Kumawa Mountains and thus endemic to West Papua.
- Belford's Melidectes *Melidectes belfordi*: THE bird of the higher reaches in the Snow Mountains. Impossible to miss.
- Western Smoky Honeyeater *Melipotes gymnops*: A common sight in the montane forests of the Arfaks. Endemic to West Papua.
- Common Smoky Honeyeater *Melipotes fumigatus*: A common bird of the montane forests on the Lake Habbema trek.

ESTRILDIDAE

- Blue-faced Parrot-finch *Erythrura trichroa*: A few observations in grassy glades in the Arfak Mountains. A species with a wide distribution.
- Streak-headed Mannikin *Lonchura tristissima*: Several were seen well in the surroundings of the village of Mokwam, in the Arfak Mountains.
- Hooded Mannikin *Lonchura spectabilis*: Two birds showed briefly in grassland habitat near Sentani.
- Black-breasted Mannikin *Lonchura teerinki*: Good views of several in a patch of cultivation in the Baliem Valley. A West Papua endemic.
- Western Alpine Mannikin *Lonchura montana*: Eight birds showed beautifully in the grasslands surrounding Lake Habbema. This species is virtually confined to West Papua, but just creeps into Papua New Guinea at Mount Capella in the Star Mountains.
- Mountain Firetail *Oreostruthus fuliginosus*: Excellent views at close range in montane shrubbery on the Habbema trek.

PASSERIDAE

- Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*: Everywhere in towns and villages. On our 1995 visit we could only find it at the airport on Biak.

STURNIDAE

- Singing Starling *Aplonis cantoroides*: Just a handful of observations of this widespread species.
- Long-tailed Starling *Aplonis magna*: The most common Biak endemic. It seems to adapt well to secondary growth. Endemic to West Papua.
- Metallic Starling (Shining Starling) *Aplonis metallica*: Regular observations of this very widespread species.
- Yellow-faced Myna *Mino dumontii*: Regular, but not really common. Often heard overhead from within the lowland forest.

ORIOLIDAE

- Brown Oriole *Oriolus szalayi*: An often heard voice in lowland forest, with several seen well. Deceptively similar to friarbirds!!

DICRURIDAE

- Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus bracteatus*: Regular observations in lowland rain forest.

ARTAMIDAE

White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus*: We only observed this widespread bird on a small island off Sorong.

Great Woodswallow *Artamus maximus*: Regularly encountered, even at 3250m near Lake Habbema. An attractive species.

CRACTICIDAE

Hooded Butcherbird *Cracticus cassicus*: A common species with a beautiful song. A bit too vociferous on Biak!

Lowland Peltops *Peltops blainvillii*: Two birds were scoped in the Nimbokrang forests. A splendid creature.

Mountain Peltops *Peltops montanus*: Good looks at several in the Arfak Mountains.

PTILONORHYNCHIDAE

White-eared Catbird *Ailuroedus buccoides*: Brief views of this expert skulker in the lowland forest at Nimbokrang. Here of the race *geislerorum* with a distinctive brown cap. Highly characteristic calls!

Spotted Catbird *Ailuroedus melanoti* (H): Regularly heard in the montane forests of the Arfak Mountains, but always too distantly. It also occurs in northeastern Australia.

Archbold's Bowerbird *Archboldia papuensis*: We heard its grating call emanating from undergrowth in the higher reaches of the Snow Mountains and some of us had quite good views. It is treated as "**Near-Threatened**" in BirdLife International's 'Threatened Birds of the World'. The bird is named after Richard Archbold (1907-1976), US zoologist and philanthropist and leading light behind the three Archbold Expeditions to various parts of New Guinea for the American Museum of Natural History.

Vogelkop Bowerbird *Amblyornis inornatus*: We were able to admire several magnificently built bowers, which must surely be the best of any Bowerbird. We also enjoyed fantastic views of this modestly-plumaged bird in action at its bower. The song is totally amazing and the bird seems to be able to imitate about everything it hears. This species is endemic to West Papua.

Flame Bowerbird *Sericulus aureus*: A striking male was found on a distant hill slope in the lower Arfak Mountains by sharp-eyed Nigel. Sadly, soon after, low cloud obliterated our view.

Fawn-breasted Bowerbird *Chlamydera cerviniventris*: Several showed well in the Sentani grasslands. This species also occurs in northern Australia.

CNEMOPHILIDAE

[Beehler lumps this family in Paradisaeidae. They are now known as Satin Birds. The taxonomic relationships of the members of this family are not fully understood. Once thought to be more closely related to the bowerbirds this appears now to not be the case and their closest relatives may in fact be cuckoo-shrikes.]

[Loria's Bird of Paradise *Cnemophilus loriae*: On our ascent from Pos 2 on the Habbema trek, some of us saw a fat black bird disappear in the canopy of a forest giant. It was most probably a male of this species.]

PARADISAEIDAE

Macgregor's Bird of Paradise *Macgregoria pulchra*: We all enjoyed excellent scope views of this most bizarre Bird of Paradise on several occasions at the treeline near Lake Habbema. It is much rarer there now than it used to be, mainly because of it being hunted for its delicious taste. Sadly, recent research has shown that this species probably belongs with

the Honeyeaters. It is treated as “**Vulnerable**” in BirdLife International’s ‘Threatened Birds of the World’.

Glossy-mantled Manucode *Manucodia atra*: Many excellent scope observations in the lowlands.

Crinkle-collared Manucode *Manucodia chalybata*: Bad views of this species in the mist in the foothills of the Arfak Mountains.

Jobi Manucode *Manucodia jobiensis*: Good looks at a single bird in the lowland rainforest at Nimbokrang. It is named after Jobi, or Yapen, one of the largest islands in Geelvink Bay.

Trumpet Manucode *Manucodia keraudrenii*: Glimpses only of one in the gardens below Mokwam in the Arfak Mountains.

Long-tailed Paradigalla *Paradigalla carunculata*: Two nice observations in the middle reaches of the Arfak Mountains. Superb lengthy scope studies of this rarely observed species. This much prized bird is endemic to West Papua. *Paradigalla* is derived from *Paradisea*, bird of paradise and the Latin *gallus*, a farmyard cock, probably referring to the colourful facial wattles typical of the genus. It is treated as “**Near-Threatened**” in BirdLife International’s ‘Threatened Birds of the World’.

Magnificent Riflebird *Ptiloris magnificus*: We heard it distantly in the foothills of the Arfak Mountains and Moray did well finding a male perched up on a dead branch.

Twelve-wired Bird of Paradise *Seleucidis melanoleuca*: Lengthy scope views of a displaying and calling male, just after dawn at Nimbokrang. He was visited by at least two females and gave quite a show. An exhilarating experience!!

Buff-tailed Sicklebill *Epimachus albertisi*: Superb views of a calling male in the mid montane forest of the Arfak Mountains. A wonderful and much appreciated spectacle!! The scientific epithet refers to Cavaglieri Luigi d’Albertis (1841-1901), Italian botanist, zoologist and ornithologist in New Guinea, 1871-1877.

Pale-billed Sicklebill *Epimachus bruijinii*: Fantastic, prolonged scope studies of a perched up male in the soft late afternoon light at Nimbokrang. Well spotted, Nigel. Endemic to north central New Guinea. It is treated as “**Near-Threatened**” in BirdLife International’s ‘Threatened Birds of the World’.

Black Sicklebill *Epimachus fastuosus*: Good views of a calling male in the higher reaches of the Arfak Mountains. This is the largest of the Birds of Paradise. It is treated as “**Vulnerable**” in BirdLife International’s ‘Threatened Birds of the World’.

Brown Sicklebill *Epimachus meyeri*: Several nice observations in the moss-forests of the Snow Mountains. Its machine gun salvo song was definitely one of the most eloquent sounds of the tour.

Arfak Astrapia *Astrapia nigra*: Excellent views of an adult and an immature male clambering about in a forest giant in the higher reaches of the Arfak Mountains. This fancy bird is endemic to West Papua.

Splendid Astrapia *Astrapia splendidissima*: Regular observations of both males and females of this very attractive species in the montane forests of the Snow Mountains. A distinctive sound.

Superb Bird of Paradise *Lophorina superba* (H): We only heard this usually rather easy to see Bird of Paradise in the Baliem Valley and also near our base in the Arfak Mountains.

Western Parotia *Parotia sefilata*: **The bird of the trip!!** Everyone enjoyed the incredible, close up display of a six-wired, blue-eyed, extremely handsome adult male on his dancing court in the mountain forest in the Arfaks. Seeing the shape of the silvery-white forehead crest change with the mood of the bird was really amazing. Some of us were lucky enough to see the fantastic and utterly unbelievable dervish dance display and Moray managed to film that unique bit of courting. We also saw good numbers of females. This gorgeous species only occurs in the mountains of the Vogelkop and the Wandammen peninsulas and is thus endemic to West Papua. The favourite bird for Moray, Nigel and Joe.

King of Saxony Bird of Paradise *Pteridopora alberti*: We observed a calling immature male near our third camp on the Habbema trek.

King Bird of Paradise *Cicinnurus regius*: A splendid overhead performance by an absurdly-handsome male high up in a forest giant in swamp forest at Nimbokrang. We all saw those strange green tail discs and the incredible blue legs. Always a cracking bird to see!

Magnificent Bird of Paradise *Cicinnurus magnificus*: Great views of a handsome male on his dancing court in the foothills of the Arfak Mountains for those that visited the hide. We did not witness any display, but sure admired the exquisite finery of this bizarre and well-named species. Also regularly heard.

Wilson's Bird of Paradise *Cicinnurus respublica*: Excellent close up views for all of a male of this most wonderful and extraordinary Bird of Paradise on his display court in the hills of Batanta Island. The combination of colours is totally amazing and the blue head seems to be illuminated from inside. It took a bit of effort to get to the spot, but it was well worth it. This species is restricted to Batanta and nearby Waigeo and is thus a West Papua endemic. The number two in the Bird of the Trip contest. The favourite bird for Peter, Roger and Robin. It is treated as "**Near-Threatened**" in BirdLife International's 'Threatened Birds of the World'. The scientific epithet refers to the "republic". In naming this species Prince Bonaparte expressed his disenchantment with the French republic, ensuring that since there could not be a paradisaean republic, there should at least be a republican bird of paradise.....

Lesser Bird of Paradise *Paradisaea minor*: Fantastic observations of courting and calling males in a display tree in the Nimbokrang rainforest. A superb spectacle!!

Red Bird of Paradise *Paradisaea rubra*: A great showing of displaying males of this localized species in a forest giant on Batanta. Perfect scope studies for all. It is restricted to a number of West Papuan islands and is thus a West Papua endemic. It is treated as "**Near-Threatened**" in BirdLife International's 'Threatened Birds of the World'.

CORVIDAE

Brown-headed Crow *Corvus fuscicapillus* (H): The distinctive vocalizations were heard in the distance at Nimbokrang. It is treated as "**Near-Threatened**" in BirdLife International's 'Threatened Birds of the World'.

Grey Crow (Bare-eyed Crow) *Corvus tristis*: Several close up observations in the Nimbokrang forests, on Batanta and in the Arfak foothills.

Torresian Crow (Australian Crow) *Corvus orru*: Regular sightings.

MAMMALS

Red-bellied Marsupial-Shrew *Phascolosorex doriae*: Eight observations of this attractive carnivorous marsupial in the Arfaks. A splendid little creature.

Greater Flying Fox (Bismarck Flying Fox) *Pteropus neohibernicus*: Hundreds at a roost near Lake Sentani.

Timor Deer (Rusa Deer) *Cervus timorensis* (H): We heard the distinctive bark of this introduced species at Nimbokrang.