The bird of the trip was the Western Parotia that we saw so amazingly well doing his mind-boggling ballerina dance at his display court: a totally extravagant, magnificent and gripping performance. Other highlights included the stunning Wilson’s Bird of Paradise (maybe the best bird in the world?), the much-prized Macgregor’s Bird of Paradise, the astounding Spotted Jewel-babbler, the exquisite Feline Owlet-Nightjar in broad daylight, the cute Mountain Owlet-Nightjar, a stupendous New Guinea Harpy Eagle and a splendidly-performing female White-striped Forest-Rail. Our sixth tour to West Papua (ex Irian Jaya) produced a rich array of highly-prized and much-wanted birds. 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 a potential for 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 20 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 326 species.

After long flights from the United States and Europe the group gathered at Jakarta airport, from where another long overnight flight took us to Sentani, the airport of the capital of West Papua. A thorough briefing on things to come and things to do, was followed by some introductory birding in the nearby grasslands and forest edge. We identified our first bird of paradise – Glossy-mantled Manucode – and noted a good selection of more widespread species like Brahminy Kite, Papuan Harrier, Spotted Whistling Duck, Pacific Black Duck, a migrant Australian Hobby, Brown and Blue-breasted Quails, Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove, several monstrous Channel-billed Cuckoos, Pheasant Coucal, Uniform Swiftlet, Blue-tailed and Rainbow Bee-eaters, Dollarbird, Pacific Swallow, Tree Martin, Pied Chat, Golden-headed Cisticola, Papuan Grassbird, several cute White-shouldered Fairy Wrens, Willie Wagtail, Yellow-bellied Sunbird, Scrub White-eared Meliphaga, New Guinea Friarbird, impressive Grand and Hooded Mannikins, an unexpected Crimson Finch and a Fawn-breasted Bowerbird. We
heard the distress calls of Rufous-tailed Bush-hens and a distant perched raptor sadly remained unidentified. At dusk Black Bittern and Large-tailed Nightjar appeared.

Early next morning we flew inland to the town of Wamena, situated in the fabled Baliem Valley. We were met by our capable man on the spot and immediately received the bad news of a collapsed bridge at the start of the road to Lake Habbema. Some serious reorganizing followed and a couple of hours later we started our hike up towards the lake through the Ibele Valley. Because of the broken bridge, we were forced to tackle the Snow Mountains in the old fashioned way and had to hike up to where our target birds lived. One person stayed behind and joined us several days later, but most of the group hiked up through the well kept sweet potato fields without grumbling and discovered how most Papuans make a living here. We picked up species like Variable Goshawk, Collared Sparrowhawk, Brown Falcon, Salvadori’s Teal, Island Leaf Warbler, Brown-breasted Gerygone, Black Fantail, Common Golden Whistler (of the well-named endemic race balim), Red-capped Flowerpecker, Marbled Honeyeater, Ornate Melidectes and lots of Black-breasted Mannikins. By late afternoon we managed to find room to sleep in a well-built priest’s house. It rained throughout the night and we were really glad we avoided spending the dark hours under our tarpaulin. At dawn, we continued our hike up the Ibele Valley. In a lovely patch of moss-festooned forest a pair of gorgeous Short-tailed Paradigallas performed beautifully and we also noted Superb Bird of Paradise, Sacred Kingfisher, a party of Papuan Sittellas and Red-collared Myzomela. By late morning, we climbed out of the valley and finally entered proper montane forest with its many pandanus palms and Castanopsis oaks. The trail was quite muddy and rather steep, but the birding was good fun as we observed White-breasted Fruit Dove, lots of Orange-billed Lorikeets, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Black-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike, Papuan and Buff-faced Scrub-wrens, Dimorphic and Friendly Fantails, Canary Flycatcher, Black-breasted Boatbill, Blue-grey Robin, Regent and Lorentz’s Whistlers, Papuan Treecreeper, Black Sittella, adorable Crested Berryeckers, Yellowish-streaked and Grey-streaked Honey eaters, Belford’s Melidectes, Common Smoky Honeyeater, several Splendid Astrapias and a cracking singing male King of Saxony Bird of Paradise. By late afternoon we arrived at our well laid out camp in a small clearing amidst beautiful montane forest.

A Rufous-throated Bronze Cuckoo and a distant Brown Sicklebill doing its magnificent machinegun rattle livened up dawn and after some excellent porridge, we continued our seriously muddy climb through this marvellous, but rather quiet mossy forest. Grey Gerygone, more Crested Berryeckers and a very well behaved Blue-faced Parrotfinch were added to the tally. Further up, the trail became a torrent, which we had to cross over and over again, and then we scrambled through mysterious elfin forest with a rather open understorey. The treeline beckoned and, in mid afternoon, not far below our final camp, a mud-covered and exhausted group of Birdquesters positioned itself at my favourite viewpoint overlooking a lovely valley. A striking male Splendid Astrapia started the show, which continued with a gorgeous, unbeatable Macgregor’s Bird of Paradise in all its glory. Minutes later an Archbold’s Bowerbird performed on cue, while Painted Tiger-Parrot, New Guinea Thornbill, a splendid young male Wattled Ploughbill and Large Scrub-wren added to our joy. Later, a short exploration of the camp area gave us a male Snow Mountain Quail, Buff-banded Rail, Island Thrush, Orange-cheeked Honeyeater and Short-bearded Melidectes. A dusk we heard a roding New Guinea Woodcock and observed a Mountain Nightjar. We had finally reached the spot we had wanted to drive to originally, and had already seen several of the main specialities. That night, a happy and very tired group crawled into the sleeping bags immediately after a great dinner.

Predawn, we tried again to get to grips with the New Guinea Woodcock, but it remained unseen. A glorious day started with fantastic views over the surrounding mountain scenery, and even the bare rock habitat of the Snow Mountain Robin on Mount Trikora showed. Unhurriedly, we explored the grasslands and treeline scrubby forest in the surroundings of Lake Habbema and admired Papuan Lorikeet (black morph), Island Thrush, Rufous-naped Whistler, Short-bearded Melidectes, Great Wood-swallow, a few Splendid Astrapias, several charming Macgregor’s Birds of Paradise, displaying Alpine Pipits and a party of Western Alpine Mannikins. The lake itself held Salvadori’s Teal, Pacific
Black Duck and Eurasian Coot. In the afternoon Hugh finally joined us having arrived from Wamena by motorcycle, and at dusk we again tried for New Guinea Woodcock. Several attentive members of the party saw the bird land at a puddle and perform some display. Next day, we wandered through the grasslands, the montane scrubby growth and along forest edges, enduring heavy showers, hail and some sunny bouts. We saw a great selection of specialities including Black-mantled Goshawk, Spotless Crake (Heidi had one at her feet), Modest Tiger-Parrot, Papuan Grassbird, New Guinea Thornbill, Mountain and White-winged Robins, Fan-tailed Berrypecker, Sooty Melidectes, Western Alpine Mannikin, Mountain Firetail and Brown Sicklebill.

It rained most of the night, while we enjoyed the lovely soporific singing by our porters. We packed up early and after a tasty breakfast, we started to walk along the road towards Wamena, hoping that the broken bridge would have been repaired so our 4x4 vehicles would come to pick us up. The montane forest produced an excellent selection of splendid encounters with Painted Tiger-Parrot, Fan-tailed Berrypecker, Macgregor’s Bird of Paradise and an unexpected, colourful male Crested Bird of Paradise (sadly, all too brief). Around midmorning three Toyota pickups turned up and we were happy to know we were not supposed to have to walk the whole 30 kilometres back to Wamena. Although Jean Marc almost did it! Another stop in highland forest gave us Brehm’s Tiger-Parrot, Mountain, Black-throated and several White-winged Robins, Mountain Firetail and scope views of an outstanding male Brown Sicklebill. We then said farewell to our 27 faithful porters and made our way to our hotel in town, where a much desired hot shower awaited. The Habbema trek had delivered the goods and although it had required more physical effort than expected, we were all very happy with the birding results!!

The following morning we flew back to Sentani, where, after organizing our luggage at the hotel, we drove to the lowland forests at the base of the Cyclops Mountains. A stop at Lake Sentani only produced Whistling Kite and White-breasted Wood-swallow. In early afternoon, we arrived at our well-built camp situated at the edge of a clearing amidst splendid tracts of lowland rainforest. During the hotter hours we observed the bird activity at our clearing, adding Orange-bellied Fruit Dove, Pinon Imperial Pigeon, Red-flanked Lorikeet, Eclectus and Red-cheeked Parrots, Horsfield’s and Brush Cuckoos, Shining Bronze-Cuckoo, Dwarf Koel, Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Black-browed Triller, Black Sunbird, Long-billed Honeyeater, Yellow-faced Myna, Lowland Peltops and Grey Crow to the growing list. Later we walked along the nearby wide track, noting Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, Blyth’s Hornbill, Black Cuckoo-Shrike, White-bellied Thicket-Fantail, Northern Fantail, Shining Flycatcher, Mimic Meliphaga, Plain and Streak-headed Honeyeaters and a lovely female Twelve-wired Bird of Paradise. We heard the cackling sounds of Brown-collared Brush-turkeys and at dusk a Papuan Nightjar briefly showed.

Before dawn, in a stretch of semi-flooded forest, we were already waiting at the display tree of a male Twelve-wired Bird of Paradise. Not much later we were lucky enough to be able to witness some lovely courting as the male was visited by three different females. Breathtaking moments at close range! We then walked to a display area of a male King Bird of Paradise in a very tall tree decorated in vines and obtained great views of this red and white jewel adorned with bright blue legs and glistening green tail discs. Another magical experience! Other goodies in these forests included Long-tailed Buzzard, Wompoo Fruit Dove, Boyer’s and Grey-headed Cuckoo-Shrikes, Yellow-bellied Gerygone, Golden, Spot-winged and cute Rufous-collared Monarchs, Black-sided Robin, Little Shrike-Thrush, Meyer’s Friarbird and Spangled Drongo. In the afternoon we explored another area of lowland rainforest where we eventually tracked down a much-wanted Pale-billed Sicklebill, but only after having endured lots of rattan thorns, sharp leaves and tons of mud. And, of course, the way it so often happens, we then found another male along the wide track, where we could scope this cracker at length! Super views! After dinner we managed to lure a stunning and much appreciated Marbled Frogmouth into view. A great end to a fantastic day.
Next morning, we were again splashing about in the semi-flooded rain forest checking particular spots for some of our quarries. Best of all was the bout spent at a display tree of Lesser Birds of Paradise. Several exquisitely-plumed adult males gave a really tremendous show and at least five females visited the display trees. Stunning! A rarely-seen, fabulous Blue-black Kingfisher offered splendid scope views, we found tracks of Northern Cassowary and admired an impressive mound of Brown-collared Brush-turkey under a giant strangler fig. Superb Fruit Dove, Purple-tailed Imperial Pigeon, Western Black-capped Lory, Palm Cockatoo, Buff-faced Pygmy-Parrot, cute Salvadori’s Fig-Parrots, Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Rufous Babbler, Brown Oriole and Black Butcherbird were also identified. In the afternoon, a death march took us through a very nice forest block to a nesting tree of Brown Lory. We were not disappointed as we managed to scope this attractively-patterned bird in all its glory in the canopy of a forest giant. We also heard a distant New Guinea Harpy Eagle and noted several Papuan Spine-tailed Swifts and Streak-headed Mannikins.

After another early breakfast we spent a couple of hours watching the comings and goings in our camp clearing where Zoe Imperial Pigeon, Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, Channel-billed Cuckoo and an unobtrusive Jobi Manucode performed. Then the group split up. Several hardy souls went bashing with our local tracker through the seasonally flooded forest in search of rarely seen denizens, but had to satisfy themselves with Great Cuckoo-Dove and a nest of Wompoo Fruit Dove. It was very hard and sweaty work and not a sniff was obtained of the hoped for Victoria Crowned Pigeon or Northern Cassowary. Jean Marc walked the wide track by himself and stumbled on a party of Brown-collared Brush-turkeys, while the rest of us birded the same wide track and observed Gould’s Bronze-Cuckoo, Lesser Black Cuckoo and Yellow-billed Kingfisher. At midday we packed up, the camp was dismantled and a short stroll amidst disused rice paddies gave us Streak-headed Mannikin. In the garden of our host we admired a pair of incredibly-camouflaged Papuan Frogmouths. Sheer delight! We then returned to our base in Sentani for a thorough clean up and an excellent Padang dinner followed by a much savoured ice cream.

The following morning we flew from Sentani to the famous island of Biak, best known for its turbulent WWII history. Now it is a sleepy backwater island, where nothing really happens. For a while, in the nineties, the Indonesian authorities tried to make Biak into a resort island, but the boom never really happened. Sadly, most of the island has been logged and one needs to drive far from the main town to find some fairly decent habitat. In the afternoon we did just that and in patches of selectively logged forest we found several of the endemics. Striking Biak Paradise Kingfishers eventually showed very well and were scoped, so we could study their intricate finery in detail. Long-tailed Starlings proved to be the most common endemic and favoured fruiting trees. We also heard their beautiful and varied song. Colourful Biak Red Lories flew overhead and were then scoped in a flowering tree. A male Biak Black Flycatcher also performed very well for us while shivering his tail. We sadly only heard the booming calls of the Biak Coucal. Other goodies in the Biak forests and clearings included Crested Hawk (superb views of perched birds), Yellow-bibbed Fruit Dove, Spice Imperial Pigeon, Sooty-headed Bulbul and Hooded Butcherbirds. The second vehicle picked up a Peregrine and at dusk we heard a distant Biak Scops Owl and saw Large-tailed Nightjar overhead. Our only full day on Biak started with persistent rain, which luckily soon abated. We again obtained excellent views of Biak Red Lory, Biak Paradise Kingfisher (delightfully common), Biak Black Flycatcher and Long-tailed Starling and found Biak White-eye, Biak Gerygone (but only for the lucky ones) and speedy Geelvink Pygmy Parrots in the forest. We also noted displaying Crested Hawks, several Variable Goshawks, a lovely pair of Emperor Fairy Wrens and delicious Golden Monarchs (of the distinctive orange race kordensis). We heard Biak Megapode and in late afternoon spotted a large rail at a forest puddle: a rarely-seen and shy Bare-eyed Rail!! Incredible. After dusk we tried again for Biak Scops Owl, and although the bird came very close, it, frustratingly, didn’t want to perform at all.

After a very short night we took the plane to Sorong, where we revisited the nearby grasslands, as our onward flight to Sorong had been seriously delayed. Goodies here included Whistling Kite (at a nest), White-bellied Sea Eagle, Blue-breasted Quail, Buff-banded Rail, Black-backed Swamphen, Dusky...
Moorhen, Tree Martin, White-bellied and Yellow-eyed Cuckoo-Shrikes and Grand and Hooded Mannikins. After a hearty lunch we flew to Sorong where we were welcomed by our Dutch-speaking agent. We checked into our waterfront hotel and enjoyed an excellent seafood dinner. Next morning a Grey-tailed Tattler was found on the nearby shoreline and after some delay, we finally boarded our speed boat and travelled west to our base on the island of Batanta. A short stop at a small island gave us four Great-billed Parrots and a Beach Kingfisher, while at sea we picked up Lesser Frigatebird and Crested Tern. In the Sagewin Strait between the islands of Salawati and Batanta we sailed close to the shoreline and found Osprey and a lovely pod of Indo-Pacific Bottle-nosed Dolphins. Upon arrival we checked out our specially built house, situated just off the beach overlooking Salawati, enjoyed the cooling sea breeze and settled in for a three day stay. After a snooze, we visited a nearby display area of Red Bird of Paradise and we were not disappointed as at least ten fantastic males were interacting and displaying. Lots of activity and splendid display could be admired through the scope. Excellent value. We also observed Long-tailed Buzzard, Little Eagle, Palm Cockatoo, Common Paradise Kingfisher, Frilled Monarch, Green-backed Gerygone, Rusty Pitohui and Puff-backed Meliphaga. Just before dusk a trio of Black Lories flew past, while 19 elegant Moustached Tree Swifts circled overhead.

Next day was Wilson’s Bird of Paradise day! This meant a middle of the night departure for Hugh and a very early start for the rest of the group, as we had to be in the hides situated at the dance courts before dawn. We climbed up to an altitude of c350m along a steep and muddy trail to reach the hides. One party was extremely lucky and got an almost continuous show of the display and the antics of an unbelievable two males and two females Wilson’s Bird of Paradise. They hopped about, pranced, danced and performed at length only a few metres away. The male, a symphony in red, electric blue, yellow and green gave an extraordinary performance and must be one of the most attractive birds in existence. We couldn’t believe our eyes. The folks at the other hide were not so lucky and although they saw the birds quite well, no display at all was witnessed. Hugh was totally unlucky in his easier to reach hide and sadly arrived too late at the active one, so he decided to stay up there till the following morning to give it another go… A Little Shrike Thrush and a Pheasant Pigeon were also seen from the hide. We then walked slowly down through the foothill forest and had splendid encounters with Pheasant Pigeon, Gurney’s Eagle, Red-bellied and Hooded Pittas, Wompoo Fruit Dove, Yellow-capped Pygmy Parrot, Variable and Rusty Pitohuis and a Yellow-bellied Longbill. A bit of scanning and scoping at our large camp clearing produced Grey Imperial Pigeon (should not be here according to the books, but we had seen it here before). At dusk, we all enjoyed a great clean up in the freshwater stream at our camp or in the sea. Delightful.

Next morning, Dave and Sue joined Hugh in the hide to give the Wilson’s Bird of Paradise another try and they also observed fantastic display. Most of us spent the early hours of the day in the clearing where Long-tailed Buzzard, Grey-headed Goshawk and Pink-spotted and Claret-breasted Fruit Doves showed. Later we walked up the trail into the hill forest where Pale-billed Scrub-wren was the only species of note. Our afternoon session in the open areas yielded a dazzling Gurney’s Eagle at close range, Osprey, Little Eagle and impressive roost flights of no fewer than 113 Eclectus Parrots. Before dawn we were already sailing to nearby Salawati, where we walked and thrashed through flooded swamp forest and heard the distinctive loud clutter of the wings of Western Crowned Pigeon, our main quarry. Sadly, only one person saw it perched, and several saw it later in flight. Very frustrating! We heard Red-billed Brush-turkey and at midday returned to Batanta, picking up Common Tern. In the last hours of the day Phil bumped into a Spotted Cuscus and a Nicobar Pigeon in the forest, while we had to satisfy ourselves with a pair of Crested Hawks with their recently fledged chick. Next day, several of us decided to give the Western Crowned Pigeon another try on Salawati. We made three landings, walked through the alluvial forest for hours, found several feathers, and didn’t get a single sniff of our quarry. Maybe the wet conditions – it had rained all night – had made the pigeons decide to stay in the highest trees. We did find a mound of Red-billed Brush-turkey, a Lesser Black Coucal and an impressive, incredibly-camouflaged New Guinea Ground Boa. The rest of the gang remained on Batanta and explored the surrounding hill forest where Azure Kingfisher and a few Black Lories

5 Birdquest: West Papua 2008
were noted. We then packed up, said goodbye to our hosts and sailed along the forested coast of Batanta. A Great-billed Heron was well appreciated as were some Black-naped Terns. The fleshpots of Sorong provided us with hot showers and a scrumptious seafood dinner.

Our early morning flight to Manokwari took us over the tantalizing mountains of the Vogelkop peninsula and upon arrival we transferred to the hotel to reorganize our stuff for our stay in the Arfak Mountains. As Manokwari is now a dry town, following violence and stupid accidents caused by drunkenness, some of us had smuggled a supply of beer from Sorong. We boarded our 4x4 vehicles and drove up into the Arfak Mountains, making long stops in the foothills where we recorded Papuan Mountain Pigeon, Little Red Lorikeet and a male Flame Bowerbird and heard the distant calls of a Magnificent Riflebird. In late afternoon we arrived at our house in the Arfaks where we met our local expert, settled in and did a short recce of the area.

Before dawn we were already overlooking the dance courts of male Western Parotias from our two hides. In one of those the four Birdquesters were extremely fortunate to observe splendid display as a cracking, six-wired, blue-eyed and silvery-fronted male was visited by up to four females. Superb dervish dancing and ballerina display was witnessed and for some of us these magical moments proved to be one of the highlights of their birding career. Tears of happiness flowed as the spectacle was so totally unreal and unbelievably gripping. The other hide wasn’t so lucky and had to do with good views of an inquisitive Vogelkop Bowerbird. The unlucky gang changed hides and thus managed to see the parotia well, although no display was noted. A Lesser Ground Robin provided some consolation. We also spent a bit of time in a hide overlooking an amazing bower of the Vogelkop Bowerbird. This extraordinary structure with its twig tent and mossy carpet adorned with berries, mushrooms, elytra and flowers has to be seen to be believed. We observed this drably-hued, but well-voiced creature attending his unique work of art. Later we slowly walked up to our next camp overlooking a beautiful forested valley, where White-throated Pigeon, White-bibbed Fruit Dove, Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo, Black Monarch, Black-breasted Boatbill, Vogelkop Whistler, a female Black Pitohui, Rufous-sided Honeyeater, Vogelkop Melidectes and Mountain Peltops were noted. A foray into the mountain forest yielded a magnificent roosting Feline Owlet-Nightjar at extremely close range. The cameras had a super time with this fabulous-looking creature of the night.

Our afternoon walk in the well-preserved montane forest gave us a female Garnet Robin, Sclater’s Whistler, a Black Sicklebill and a scurrying Red-bellied Marsupial Shrew. A Sooty Owl performed very well just after dusk next to our camp. The falling bomb vocalizations of this beautiful species enhanced “our sleeping in the open under tarpaulin experience”.

Next morning, some of us returned for another session in the Western Parotia hide and also had a fantastic time. It was totally out of this world to see the dazzling male perform its ballerina display again and again. Glorious moments. Incredible to see the amazing cape develop, the six wires shiver and the incredible purple-blue eyes go in trance, while the shining green throat glistened and the silvery front changed shape. Exquisite! A male Bronze Ground-Dove also took our breath as it walked through the dance court. Meanwhile Hugh managed to see a much wanted Long-tailed Paradigalla. A Mountain Owlet-Nightjar was located by one of our lads and this endearing creature allowed superb views. After lunch we walked up to our next camp, noting White-eared Bronze-Cuckoo and a male Garnet Robin on the way. Above our highest accommodation we explored the untouched montane forest where Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrot (near its nest hole), Vogelkop Melidectes and Black Sicklebill showed. A Papuan Boobook called almost throughout the night, but stayed high up in the trees, not wanting to cooperate.

Next morning, we walked up predawn to the higher altitudes of the Arfaks. It started to rain just when it was getting light, and a couple of hours later, when it abated a bit a male Black Sicklebill commenced calling and was soon scoped on its half hidden perch. At this altitude we also found Rufescent Imperial Pigeon, lovely Josephine’s Lorikeets, Mountain Mouse-Warbler, Ashy Robin (super views at and near a bower) and a male Arfak Astrapia, but best of all were the four displaying and
superbly showing Spotted Jewel-babblers. What a fantastic performance they gave! On our walk down we also found a Smoky Robin. Jean Marc went solo again today and noted a New Guinea Harpy Eagle and a Wattled Brush-turkey on his long hike. Rain ruined the first two hours of the following day and then we walked slowly along the long trail down to Zeth’s hut. A Long-tailed Paradigalla showed all to briefly and lots of adorable Tit Berriesperers flitted through fruiting trees. In the afternoon we birded along the entrance road to Mokwam. It gave us a luxurious feeling to be able to observe birds along a wide track without having to note where you put your feet, without slipping and without anyone blocking your view. We found several new species for the tour, including Grey-green Scrub-wren, Dwarf Whistler and Mountain Red-headed Myzomela, but the greatest surprise was hearing the grunting calls of a White-striped Forest-Rail. After a fair bit of clambering and waiting four intrepid birders obtained superb views of a female of this very little known species. It was our first encounter with this Vogelkop endemic and obviously a new species for the Birdquest list. On our way out, we found another Mountain Owlet-Nightjar that performed very well at extremely close range and totally seduced Dave and Sue. A Vulturine Parrot was seen by those who choose to remain on the road.

On our last morning in the Arfak Mountains three Birdquesters chose for another hide experience, this time at the dance court of a Magnificent Bird of Paradise. They had a truly great time with two displaying males and four attending females. We were told it was a stupendous experience. The rest of the bunch walked along the entrance road and returned to the White-striped Forest-Rail spot, where we obtained glorious scope views of a very responsive female. All its plumage characteristics were seen, even the distinctive barred tail. We heard a few call notes of Buff-tailed Sicklebill, but no luck with that one. In the late morning the whole group convened and walked out of the Mokwam valley. A quartet of Blue-collared Parrots was scoped and further down Dave spotted a magnificent New Guinea Harpy Eagle perched in an enormous tree. We observed this rarely-seen, much-wanted and very impressive bird of prey through the scopes for more than half an hour. It was the last major observation of a really special, quite demanding and fabulous tour.
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
[Northern Cassowary Casuarius unappendiculatus: We found tracks and several piles of droppings containing remains of fruit in the Nimbokrang rainforests.]

FREGATIDAE
Lesser Frigatebird Fregata ariel: Just a couple of observations on our boat trips off Sorong. 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.

ARDEIDAE
Great-billed Heron Ardea sumatrana: Excellent views of this huge heron along the Batanta shoreline.
Great Egret Egretta alba: Just a few sightings of this well known and very widespread species.
Eastern Cattle Egret Bubulcus coromandus: We only saw it in the Sentani area.
Eastern Reef Egret (Pacific Reef Egret) Egretta sacra: Four observations. Both pale and dark morphs were noted.
Black Bittern Ixobrychus flavicollis: A couple of flight observations of this mainly crepuscular species near Sentani. It is often placed in the genus Dupetor.

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

ACCIPITRIDAE
Crested Hawk (Pacific Baza) Aviceda subcristata: No fewer than 17 observations of this attractive, quite widespread and lanky raptor. We witnessed its lovely display and also saw it perched.
Long-tailed Buzzard Henicopernis longicauda: We were lucky enough to register about 20 observations, including some splendid close-up encounters of displaying pairs. 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: Five excellent observations in the Sentani area included activity around its eyrie.
Brahminy Kite Haliastur indus: The most widespread raptor in West Papua, usually noted along seacoasts or over manmade habitat.
White-bellied Sea Eagle Haliaeetus leucogaster: About ten sightings of this always impressive bird of prey. Both immaculate-looking adults and mottled immatures were noted. At Lake Sentani, this species was obviously preying on the many Greater Flying Foxes.
Papuan Harrier Circus spilothorax: Two 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 (Varied Goshawk) *Accipiter biogaster*: Many observations of this smart, forest edge inhabitant. Jean Marc was especially delighted with his sighting of a white morph bird at Nimbokrang.

Black-mantled Goshawk *Accipiter melanochlamys*: Several encounters with this montane forest species. Especially excellent views of a slowly soaring adult showing off its black head and chestnut collar near Lake Habbema. We also noted it in the Arfak Mountains.

Grey-headed Goshawk *Accipiter poliocephalus*: A couple of brief sightings on Batanta were followed by a clean adult carrying prey (lizard or snake?) in the foothills of the Arfak Mountains.

Collared Sparrowhawk *Accipiter cirrocephalus*: One showed well on our first day of our unexpected Lake Habbema trek.

New Guinea Harpy Eagle (New Guinea Eagle) *Harpyopsis novaeguineae*: One was heard at the Brown Lory spot near Nimbokrang. A splendid perched adult was found by Dave in the lower foothills of the Arfak Mountains. We admired this largest of New Guinea’s birds of prey through the scope for more than 30 minutes. What a fantastic raptor! It should be noted that the maximum weight ever recorded for this species is only 2.4kg. Compare this to the 9kg of the Neotropical Harpy Eagle or the 8kg of the Philippine Eagle!! It is treated as “Vulnerable” in BirdLife International’s ‘Threatened Birds of the World’.

Gurney’s Eagle *Aquila gurneyi*: Superb 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*: Regular observations on Batanta and in the lower and middle foothills of the Arfak Mountains. Beehler indicates that there are no known observations from the Vogelkop area…

**FALCONIDAE**

Brown Falcon *Falco berigora*: Several nice views of this large, rather ungainly, Australasian falcon on the Lake Habbema trek. ‘Berigora’ is an Australian aboriginal name for this distinctive species.

Australian Kestrel *Falco cenchroides*: A couple of observations of the resident endemic subspecies baru in the Lake Habbema area.

Oriental Hobby *Falco severus*: A single bird showed well in the Sentani area. Always dashing and impressive.

Australian Hobby *Falco longipennis*: Three observations of this speedy Australian migrant in the Sentani area.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* (NL): A single bird was noted by the second vehicle on the island of Biak.

**ANATIDAE**

Spotted Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna guttata*: Six of these usually crepuscular birds showed well near Lake Sentani.

Salvador’s Teal *Anas waigiensis*: Good views of one on a stream in the Ibele valley were followed by distant views of several 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.

Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa*: Several observations in the Sentani area and at Lake Habbema.
MEGAPODIIDAE

Dusky Megapode  *Megapodius freycinet* (NL): Hugh saw one on his long vigil at the Wilson’s Bird of Paradise hide on Batanta.

Biak Megapode  *Megapodius geelvinkianum* (H): We heard the distinctive call of this shy species in the forest on the island of Biak. It is considered as a separate species by Jones, Dekker and Roselaar in their handbook “The Megapodes”, but none of the well known World checklists follow their opinion and it is usually considered as a subspecies of Dusky Megapode. If split it is confined to the islands of Numfor, Biak, Supiori and neighbouring islets. It is treated as “Vulnerable” in BirdLife International’s ‘Threatened Birds of the World’.

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*: We all heard the distinctive vocalizations in the Nimbokrang area and saw a large, active mound under a gigantic Strangler Fig. Jean Marc managed to see three interacting birds on one of his solo walks.

Wattled Brush-turkey  *Aepypodius arfakianus* (NL): We were shown a non active mound in the higher reaches of the Arfak Mountains and Jean Marc glimpsed a bird on his long hike beyond Gunung Nadim.

PHASIANIDAE

Snow Mountain Quail  *Anurophasis monorthonyx*: Excellent views of a male of this intriguing gamebird on our wanderings through the grasslands near Lake Habbema. 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*: A single bird showed quite well in the grasslands near Sentani. A widespread species.

King Quail (Blue-breasted Quail)  *Coturnix chinensis*: Several were flushed from the grasslands in the Lake Sentani area, enabling us to discern the distinctive colours of the male.

RALLIDAE

Bare-eyed Rail  *Eulabeornis plumbeiventris*: Quite a surprise to find this very shy, almost wood-rail-like species at a forest puddle in the forest on Biak. We obtained good views of this rarely observed bird.

Buff-banded Rail  *Rallus philippensis*: Several excellent encounters with this attractive, well-known and widespread species.

White-striped Forest-Rail  *Rallina leucospila*: Fantastic views for all of a calling female in the mid-montane forests of the Arfak Mountains. We even managed scope views on our second encounter and admired the distinctive barred tail and white spotted mantle. It is the first time we have recorded this almost unknown species on this tour. It took a bit of a scramble and nobody liked the nettles, but it was definitely worth the effort! This cutie is confined to the Tamrau, Arfak and Wandammen Mountains of the Vogelkop region, making it a West Papua endemic. A new bird for the Birdquest lifelist and for your leader! It is treated as “Near-Threatened” in BirdLife International’s ‘Threatened Birds of the World’.

Spotless Crake  *Porzana tabuensis*: Two sightings of this tiny crake in the Lake Habbema area: Heidi obtained fantastic views of one walking at her feet and your leader briefly saw one on one of the bashes through the grasslands. The scientific epithet refers to the island of Tonga Tabu, the largest of the Tongan islands.
Rufous-tailed Bush-hen *Amaurornis moluccanus*: A couple of observations of this shy and retiring species in the Baliem grasslands. We also heard the distinctive calls in the Sentani grasslands.

Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa*: A single bird showed well on Lake Sentani. It took us a while to find one, suggesting that numbers have dropped significantly recently.

Australian Swamphen *Porphyrio melanotus*: Four birds were found at Lake Sentani. This black-backed form is lumped by Beehler and other authors in Purple Swamphen *P. porphyrio*.

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

**SCOLOPACIDAE**

Grey-tailed Tattler *Heteroscelus brevipes*: A single bird showed very well along the Sorong waterfront.

New Guinea Woodcock *Scolopax rosenbergii*: At dusk, near Lake Habbema, some of us obtained fantastic views as a roding bird landed briefly in front of us at a puddle and did a bit of displaying, before flying off to continue its territorial rounds. We all heard the distinctive calls, although it seemed clear that roding was not in full swing yet. A rarely-seen and much-appreciated species. Beehler lumps this form in Rufous Woodcock *Scolopax saturata*.

**STERNIDAE**

White-winged Black Tern (White-winged Tern) *Chlidonias leucopterus*: A few in winter plumage at sea off Sorong.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*: Six birds were observed at sea off Sorong.

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

Crested Tern (Great C T) *Sterna bergii*: Regular observations of this well known and widespread species at sea off Sorong.

**COLUMBIDAE**

Rock Pigeon (R Dove) *Columba livia*

White-throated Pigeon (Metallic Pigeon) *Columba vitiensis*: Just a few brief encounters in the lower forests of the Arfak Mountains.

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, and it was also noted in the Snow Mountains.

Great Cuckoo-Dove *Reinwardtoena reinwardtsi*: Several, sadly all too brief sightings of this always impressive bird.

Stephan’s Ground Dove (S’s Pigeon) *Chalcophaps stephani*: A few observations and an often heard voice of lowland forest. The bird is named after Etienne Stephan Jacquinot, father of French explorer Vice Admiral Jacquinot, so watch your pronunciation!!

Nicobar Pigeon *Caloenas nicobarica* (NL): Phil bumped into this bizarre species on the island of Batanta. It is treated as “Near-Threatened” in BirdLife International’s ‘Threatened Birds of the World’.

Bronze Ground-Dove *Gallicolumba beccarii*: Fantastic views for a lucky few of a lovely male that visited the dance court of that incredible Western Parotia in the Arfak Mountains. We also heard its distinctive voice. The bird is named after Odoardo Beccari (1843-1920) Italian botanist, explorer, collector and author.

Pheasant Pigeon *Otidiphaps nobilis*: Great views of this magnificent species in the foothills on Batanta.
Western Crowned Pigeon *Goura cristata*: One of the disappointments of the tour!! We heard the distinctive wing-clapping several times in the forest on Salawati and a few of us obtained flight views, but we never managed to find it perched, sadly. This extraordinary species is 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’.

Wompoo Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus magnificus*: Several excellent encounters with this very attractive species. A distinctive sound of lowland forest.

Pink-spotted Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus perlatus*: We only saw this handsome bird on Batanta.

Ornate Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus ornatus*: Two were seen in flight on our last morning near Manokwari.

Orange-fronted Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus aurantiifrons*: A few observations along forest edge in the Sentani area.

Superb Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus superbus*: Several very nice observations of this gorgeous and widespread species.

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, on Batanta and near Manokwari.

Orange-bellied Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus iozonus*: The most commonly-encountered Fruit Dove. Another cracker of a bird!

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*).

Purple-tailed Imperial Pigeon *Ducula rufigaster*: We saw a couple of birds in flight on Batanta and regularly heard the distinctive vocalizations.

Rufescent Imperial Pigeon *Ducula chalconota*: Excellent views in the higher reaches of the Arfak Mountains.

Grey Imperial Pigeon (Island Imperial Pigeon) *Ducula pistrinaria*: Very nice scope studies in the clearing behind our house on Batanta. Remember the white eye ring and the pale underwing coverts.

Pinon Imperial Pigeon *Ducula pinon*: Many lovely 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 zoaeae*: A few sightings 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, as it often feeds in the lowlands.

**PSITTACIDAE**

Black Lory *Chalcopsitta atra*: A few were seen in flight on Salawati. These birds belonged to the totally black, western nominate race. Endemic to West Papua. This species has become much harder to find of late.

Brown Lory *Chalcopsitta duivenbodei*: Perfect scope studies of one in the lowland forest at Nimbokrang. Much better looking than the field guide suggests.
Biak Red Lory *Eos cyanogenia*: This smart species is still common on Biak, and is almost always seen in flight. We did manage to scope several perched birds. 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.

Red-flanked Lorikeet *Charmosyna placentis*: A few encounters at Nimbokrang and on Biak.

Little Red Lorikeet *Charmosyna pulchella*: A few were seen in flight in the lower foothills of the Arfak Mountains.

Josephine’s Lorikeet *Charmosyna josefinae*: Great scope studies of a party in a flowering tree in the higher reaches of the Arfak mountains, where we could compare them with the following species.

Papuan Lorikeet *Charmosyna papou*: Several encounters. Both the black and the red morphs of this splendid species were observed.

Plum-faced Lorikeet (Whiskered Lorikeet) *Oreopsittacus arfaki*: A few encounters in the highlands. Really attractive when seen well, especially the males.

Yellow-billed Lorikeet *Neopsittacus musschenbroekii*: Many were seen 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 at Nimbokrang and on Salawati and Batanta. A truly magnificent creature.

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita*: Still quite common in the lowlands.

Buff-faced Pygmy Parrot *Micropsitta pusio*: Good scope studies of these tiny critters at their nest in the Nimbokrang area.

Yellow-capped Pygmy Parrot *Micropsitta keiensis*: Great looks at one inspecting the bark of a forest giant on Batanta.

Geelvink Pygmy Parrot *Micropsitta geelvinkiana*: Brief views of several 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*: Brief encounters with this striking species at a nest hole in the Arfak mountains.

Double-eyed Fig-Parrot *Cyclopsitta diopthalma*: Prolonged scope studies of a pair 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. 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 near Lake Habbema. One was scoped while walking around on the ground!

Modest Tiger-Parrot *Psittacella modesta*: Great looks at two well-behaved birds on the Habbema trek.

Red-cheeked Parrot *Geoffroyus geoffroyi*: A very common, attractive and vociferous bird of the lowlands.

Blue-collared Parrot *Geoffroyus simplex*: Great scope views of several perched birds in the foothills of the Arfak mountains. We first heard the distinctive chimes-like tinkling.
Great-billed Parrot  *Tanygnathus megalorhynchos*: Four showed nicely in flight over a small island near Batanta.

Eclectus Parrot  *Eclectus roratus*: Fairly common in all the visited lowland habitats, and 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.

Vulturine Parrot (Pesquet’s Parrot)  *Psittichas fulgidus*  (NL): A single bird was seen in flight by Sally and Hugh in the Arfak mountains. 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.

**CUCULIDAE**

Horsfield’s Cuckoo  *Cuculus horsfieldi*: One showed very well in a clearing at Nimbokrang. It is thought that these birds are migrants from Siberia that mainly winter in Australia. A recent split in the Oriental Cuckoo  *C. saturatus* complex.

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 observations in the Lake Habbema area.

Shining Bronze Cuckoo  *Chrysococcyx lucidus*: Good views of several in the lowland forests of Nimbokrang. A migrant from Australia.

Rufous-throated Bronze Cuckoo  *Chrysococcyx ruficollis*: Great views in the Lake Habbema area and again in the Arfak Mountains.

Gould’s Bronze Cuckoo  *Chrysococcyx russatus*: A single singing bird in the Nimbokrang rain forest.

White-eared Bronze Cuckoo  *Chrysococcyx meyerii*: Excellent studies of several of these very smart birds in the Arfak Mountains. It is 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*: Repeated great views of these impressive, prehistoric-looking birds in lowland areas. 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): Often heard in the lowland forest at Nimbokrang and also on Batanta and Salawati.

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 phasianinus*: Good views of several in the Sentani grasslands.
Lesser Black Coucal *Centropus bernsteini*: Great looks, eventually, for most of us. We noted it at Nimbokrang and on Batanta.

**TYTONIDAE**

Sooty Owl (Greater Sooty Owl) *Tyto tenebricosa*: Fantastic views of this beautiful species at one of our camps in the Arfak Mountains, where we heard the distinctive “falling bomb” calls at dusk and at dawn.

**STRIGIDAE**

Biak Scops-Owl *Otus beccarii* (H): We heard it at close range in a nice patch of forest on Biak, but never managed to see it. We sure tried, but no luck really. It is 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 emanating from high in a forest giant in the Arfak Mountains.

**PODARGIDAE**

Marbled Frogmouth *Podargus ocellatus*: Fantastic views of a responsive bird near our camp in the lowland forest at Nimbokrang. A splendid species.

Papuan Frogmouth *Podargus papuensis*: We were shown a pair on their day roost in a garden in Nimbokrang. Fantastic scope studies of this truly bizarre species. We also heard it regularly on Biak.

**AEGOTHELIDAE**

Feline Owlet-Nightjar *Aegotheles insignis*: Our man on the spot in the Arfak Mountains found this jewel on a day roost in montane forest. 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.

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. Upon our return from our first encounter with the White-striped Forest-Rail, we bumped into another individual, that charmed Dave and Sue.

**CAPRIMULGIDAE**

Papuan Nightjar *Eurostopodus papuensis*: Brief views of one just after dusk near our camp at Nimbokrang.

Mountain Nightjar *Eurostopodus archboldi*: Good views of a single bird at dusk near our camp at Lake Habbema.

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

**HEMIPROCNIDAE**

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

**APODIDAE**

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

Mountain Swiftlet *Collocalia hirundineae*: 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) *Mearsia novaeguineae*: Regular sightings of this distinctive swift at Nimbokrang.

**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*: Brief flight views only of this crepuscular, different-looking species in the lowland forest near Manokwari. We often heard it in the Nimbokrang forests, but no response there.

Shovel-billed Kingfisher *Clytoceyx rex* (H): We heard this really enigmatic species, predawn, in the distance at Nimbokrang.

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

Blue-black Kingfisher (Black-sided Kingfisher) *Halcyon nigrocyanea*: Great scope views of this localized species in swamp forest at Nimbokrang. We located it by its distinctive chatter. 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 one on the shore of a small island off Sorong. 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 at Nimbokrang. 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.

Azuere Kingfisher *Alcedo azurea* (NL): Phil and Jean Marc saw several on Batanta.

**MEROPIDAE**

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

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

**CORACIIDAE**

Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis*: Regular encounters with the red chilli 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*: Most of us obtained fair to good views on Batanta. We also heard it at Nimbokrang. No fewer than 24 races of this widespread species have been described.
Hooded Pitta *Pitta sordida*: Brief, but great looks at a dramatically responsive bird in foothill forest on Batanta. A real stunner! A regular voice of lowland and foothill forest of islands.

**HIRUNDINIDAE**

Pacific Swallow *Hirundo tahitica*: Regular observations in towns and at airports. The only resident hirundine in West Papua.

Tree Martin *Hirundo nigricans*: A party of 15 of these Australian migrants showed very well in the Sentani grasslands.

**MOTACILLIDAE**

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

**CAMPEPHAGIDAE**

Hooded Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina longicauda*: We saw several vocal parties on the Lake Habbema trek.

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

Yellow-eyed Cuckoo-Shrike (Barred C-S) *Coracina lineata*: Great views of this easily identified species along forest edge at Sentani and in the foothills of the Arfak Mountains. The male is uniformly grey and the female shows the distinctive barring.

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

Grey-headed Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina schisticeps*: Several excellent encounters in the lowland rainforests of Nimbokrang and in the Arfak foothills. A very vocal species. Distinctive females!

Black Cuckoo-Shrike (New Guinea Cuckoo-Shrike) *Coracina melaena*: Several observations in the lowland forest at Nimbokrang, on Biak and in the Arfak foothills. Don’t confuse this species with the Black Cuckoo-Shrike *Campephaga flava* of Africa.

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

Golden Cuckoo-Shrike *Campochaera sloetii*: We obtained brief views of 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. The females of the race on Biak – *leucoptera*, the only race next to the nominate - lack the distinctive barring.

**PYCNONOTIDAE**

Sooty-headed Bulbul *Pycnonotus aurigaster*: Several individuals of this introduced species showed well on Biak and we also noted it, for the first time, in the Manokwari area. It is obviously spreading.

**TURDIDAE**

Pied Chat (Pied Bushchat) *Saxicola caprata*: This well-known and very widespread species was encountered in grassland habitat near Sentani and also in the Lake Habbema area. 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 and along the treeline near Lake Habbema. The taxonomy of this diverse species is highly complex with at least 49 subspecies having been described for this widespread bird, usually from the highest mountains or smallest islands.

**EUPETIDAE**
[Beethler lumps this family in *Orthonychidae.]**

Spotted Jewel-babbler  *Ptilorrhoa leucosticta*: Fantastic views of this gorgeous and mysterious species in the highland forest of the Arfak Mountains. Four birds were admired interacting, displaying and vocalizing for several minutes on mossy logs on a forest track. What a magnificent spectacle! The well deserved number four in the “Bird of the Trip’ contest. Definitely my best experience with this exquisite and much wanted species ever.

**INCERTAE SEDIS**
[Great mystery surrounds the ‘correct’ taxonomic treatment of these rather special species. Beethler places them in Orthonychidae/Eupetidae but Sibley & Monroe and Clements treat the melampittas as terrestrial Birds of Paradise, Paradisaeidae and place the Ifrita in Eupetidae/Cinclosomatidae.]**

Lesser Melampitta  *Melampitta lugubris*: Glimpses only for some of this mega skulker in the Arfak Mountains. No luck with this one this year. A very distinctive voice.

Blue-capped Ifrita  *Ifrita kowaldi* (NL): Hugh saw this poisonous bird near our Lake Habbema camp. The highest levels of poisons (batrachotoxins) are generally present in the contour feathers of belly, breast and legs. These same toxins are found in most of the pitohuis and in neotropical frogs of the genus *Phyllobates*. However, it seems (inexplicably) that not all individuals or indeed populations of ifritas and pitohuis are poisonous and the reason for the presence of these toxins has not yet been discovered. The species uncertain taxonomic position (perhaps even a monotypic family?) is also reflected in the species scientific name as *ifrit* is an Arabic word for spirit. This species is endemic to New Guinea.

**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. This species is endemic to New Guinea and associated islands. Isidore Geoffroy Saint Hilaire (1805–61) was a zoologist who continued with his father’s (Étienne) work and professorships.

**SYLVIIDAE**
Papuan Grassbird (Papuan Grass Warbler)  *Megalurus macrurus*: Several in the grasslands near Sentani and near Lake Habbema. Beethler 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, but we witnessed some lovely display of bright-headed birds.

Island Leaf Warbler  *Phylloscopus poliocephala*: Several were seen in the Ibele valley in the Snow Mountains and again at the edge of montane forest in the Arfak Mountains. The only *Phylloscopus* warbler in New Guinea.

**MALURIDAE**
Emperor Fairy-wren  *Malurus cyanopecephalus*: Pairs showed beautifully in the lowland rainforest at Nimbokrang and on the island of Biak. A splendid and very striking species.
White-shouldered Fairy-wren *Malurus alboscapulatus*: First seen very well in the Sentani grasslands. We also had several encounters in secondary growth in the Baliem valley and in the lower Arfak Mountains. Males are really cute.

**ACANTHIZIDAE**

Rusty Mouse-Warbler *Crateroscelis murina*: A highly distinctive voice of lowland rainforest, but we only managed to catch glimpses of this mega skulker.

Mountain Mouse-Warbler *Crateroscelis robusta*: Fairly common by voice in the montane forests of the Arfak Mountains, where we obtained great views on several occasions. Remember the pale eye.

Pale-billed Scrub-wren *Sericornis spilodera*: Good looks at several on Batanta. A distinctive scrub-wren!

Large Scrub-wren *Sericornis nouhuysi*: Singles were seen in the highlands of the Snow Mountains.

Buff-faced Scrub-wren *Sericornis perspicillatus*: Fairly common on the Habbema trek. A distinctive head pattern.

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*: Several encounters with this unobtrusive little bird in the Mokwam area of the Arfak Mountains. A well-chosen scientific epithet.

New Guinea Thornbill (Papuan Thornbill) *Acanthiza murina*: Several excellent encounters with this unobtrusive species. Usually living high in the canopy, but several times found in low bushes at the treeline. The only thornbill in New Guinea.

Grey Gerygone *Gerygone cinerea*: We saw this clean-looking bird in the Snow Mountains and then again 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*: Its repetitive song was regularly heard, and we managed good views of this canopy inhabitant on Batanta.

Biak Gerygone *Gerygone hypoxantha*: Three birds performed all to briefly in a patch of secondary forest on Biak. It is endemic to West Papua and is treated as “Endangered” in BirdLife International’s ‘Threatened Birds of the World’.

Large-billed Gerygone *Gerygone magnirostris*: Several excellent sightings on Batanta. The broken eye-ring showed quite well.

Brown-breasted Gerygone *Gerygone ruficollis*: One of the most often encountered small birds in montane forest.

**RHIPIDURIDAE**

Sooty Thicket-fantail *Rhipidura threnothorax* (H): The distinctive voice was heard in the lowland rainforest at Nimbokrang.

Black Thicket-fantail *Rhipidura maculipectus* (H): The distinctive voice was heard in the lowland rainforest on Salawati, but we were too focused on trying to get to grips with the Western Crowned Pigeon.

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 and in the Arfaks. Both morphs showed very well.
Black Fantail  *Rhipidura atra*: Commonly observed in the mountain forests of the Arfak and also seen near Lake Habbema.

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 ruifringens*: Many sightings of this rather unobtrusive species.

Willie Wagtail (White-browed Fantail)  *Rhipidura leucophrys*: Common and quite entertaining. Often heard singing at night.

**MYIAGRIDAE**

Black Monarch  *Monarcha axillaris*: Several males showed nicely in middle elevation forest of the Arfak Mountains. A distinctive grating voice.

Spot-winged Monarch  *Monarcha guttula*: Several excellent encounters with this cute species in lowland rain forest.

Golden Monarch  *Monarcha chrysomela*: This spritely species was regularly observed in the lowlands. The distinctive orange race on Biak (*kordensis*) was also noted.

Frilled Monarch  *Arses telescophthalmus*: 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 (Biak 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.]

Torrent Flycatcher (Torrent Flyrobin, River Flycatcher)  *Monachella muelleriana*: Good views of a couple along a stream in the Arfak foothills.

Canary Flycatcher (Canary Flyrobin)  *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 (Alpine Robin)  *Petroica bivittata*: We all saw this cutie in the mountain forest near Lake Habbema.

Ashy Robin  *Poecilodryas albispecularis*: We regularly heard this ace skulker in the higher reaches of the Arfak Mountains, and obtained splendid and prolonged views at one visiting an extraordinary bower of the Vogelkop Bowerbird. It is now sometimes placed in the genus *Heteromyias*.

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 and again in the higher reaches of the Arfak Mountains. Another distinctive voice of the montane forest.

Lesser Ground-Robin  *Amalocichla incerta:* First heard on the Habbema trek and later observed at close range in the Arfak. The one visiting the dance court of the Western Parotia was especially appreciated. Subtly attractive!!

White-winged Robin  *Peneothello sigillatus:* Several excellent encounters in the Lake Habbema area. The recently fledged youngsters were gorgeous.

Smoky Robin  *Peneothello cryptoleucus:* A couple of observations in the higher reaches of the Arfak Mountains. A West Papua endemic. It took a bit of effort to get to grips with this one!

Blue-grey Robin (Slaty 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 flavogriseum:* A truly great and very attractive bird, which we encountered a few times in the Arfak Mountains.

Common Golden Whistler (Golden Whistler)  *Pachycephala pectoralis:* Several were seen in the Baliem Valley, where a separate population, aptly named “balim”, 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 on both treks. 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. Hendrik Lorentz (1871-1944) was a Dutch explorer.

Vogelkop Whistler  *Pachycephala meyeri:* A regularly encountered species in the Arfak Mountains. Another ‘hen-plumaged’ Whistler. It is endemic to the mountains of the Vogelkop and thus to West Papua.

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

Little Shrike-Thrush  *Colluricincla megarhyncha:* Quite 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:* Heard by all and seen by Sue from the Magnificent Bird of Paradise hide in the Arfaks. Another poisonous species.

Rusty Pitohui  *Pitohui ferrugineus:* Good views of several parties of these large and very vocal birds in foothill forest on Batanta. The race here has a distinctive pale bill. We also noted it at Nimbokrang. 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.

Wattled Ploughbill *Eulacesoma nigropectus*: A young male of this different-looking species was admired at close range near the treeline on the Habbema trek. Our first encounter with this strange-billed species on this tour.

**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 small parties on both treks. Beehler lumps this form in Varied Sittella *D. chrysoptera*.

Black Sittella *Daphoenositta miranda*: Several excellent observations at close range on the Lake Habbema trek. A truly gorgeous species, that spoilt us again 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 following 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.

**PARAMYTHIIIDAE**

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. The race we observed is *olivaceum*.

**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 *Melilестes megarhynchus*: A few observations in the Nimbokrang area and in the Arfak foothills.

Yellow-bellied Longbill *Toxorhamphus novaeguineae*: A few showed quite well on Batanta. Although Beehler treats this species as a honeyeater, other taxonomists place it with the berrypeckers in the family Melanocharitidae.

Dwarf Honeyeater (Grey-bellied Longbill) *Oedistoma iliolophus*: Good looks at this tiny bird at Nimbokrang and in the Arfak foothills.

Pygmy Honeyeater (Pygmy Longbill) *Oedistoma pygmaeum* (NL): Phil saw one in the Arfak foothills.

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.

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

Puff-backed Meliphaga *Meliphaga aruensis*: Several encounters with this stout-billed species on the island of Batanta.

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!

Black-throated Honeyeater *Lichenostomus subfrenatus* (H): The loud, bubbling and cheerful song is one of the most distinctive sounds of the upper montane forest on the Lake Habbema trek. We never really managed to lure one into view.

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, Salawati and in the Arfak foothills. Here represented by a rather dull race.

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

Marbled Honeyeater *Pycnopygius cinereus*: Great views in the scrub of the Ibele valley, at the start of the Habbema trek.

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.

Yellowish-streaked Honeyeater (Olive-streaked H) *Ptiloprora meekiana*: Excellent views of this unobtrusive canopy inhabitant in the lower montane forest on the Habbema trek. A rarely encountered species.

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*: This attractive species was regularly heard and seen in the higher reaches of the Arfak Mountains.

Vogelkop Melidectes *Melidectes leucostephes*: Quite common by voice, but usually not that 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. George Belford was a son of a Samoan chieftain and was a collector for Sir William McGregor (1847-1919), British colonial governor, ornithologist and collector. One of Sue’s favourite species of the tour!!

Ornate Melidectes *Melidectes torquatus*: Great views of several in the Ibele valley at the start of the Habbema trek and also seen in the middle reaches of the Arfaks.

Western Smoky Honeyeater *Melipotes gymnops*: A common sight in the montane forests of the Arfaks. Endemic to West Papua. Quite a shy species.

Common Smoky Honeyeater *Melipotes fumigatus*: A common bird of the montane forests on the Lake Habbema trek.

Estrildidae

Blue-faced Parrot-finch *Erythrura trichroa*: Fantastic views of a really well behaved bird in mossy forest near our second camp on the Habbema trek. A striking species with a wide distribution.

Streak-headed Mannikin *Lonchura tristissima*: Several were seen well in the surroundings of the village of Nimbokrang and then again at Mokwam, in the Arfak Mountains.

Grand Mannikin *Lonchura grandis*: Several gave perfect views in the Sentani grasslands.

Hooded Mannikin *Lonchura spectabilis*: Up to eight birds showed well in grassland habitat near Sentani.

Black-breasted Mannikin *Lonchura teerinki*: Good views of many in the cultivated valleys on the Lake Habbema trek. A West Papua endemic.

Mountain Firetail *Oreostruthus fuliginosus*: Several excellent encounters at close range in montane shrubbery on the Habbema trek. A striking species.

Crimson Finch *Neochmia phaeton*: A couple of encounters with this lovely species in the Sentani grasslands. It is normally confined to the southern watershed of New Guinea, so it was a real surprise finding it here. A new species for this tour.

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* (NL): Just a couple 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 at Sentani and near Nimbokrang.
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!
Black Butcherbird *Cracticus quoyi*: Good views of a couple in the Nimbokrang forest. A distinctive voice.
Lowland Peltops *Peltops blainvillii*: Many fantastic views in the Nimbokrang forests. A splendid creature. Are peltopses really closely related to butcherbirds?
Mountain Peltops *Peltops montanus*: Good looks at a single bird in the Arfak Mountains.

PTILONORHYNCHIDAE
White-eared Catbird *Ailuroedus buccoides* (H): We heard 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 melanotis* (H): Regularly heard in the montane forests of the Arfak Mountains, but always too distantly or not responsive. It also occurs in northeastern Australia.
Archbold’s Bowerbird *Archboldia papuensis*: We all had great views of this very shy species in the higher reaches of the Snow Mountains. 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. Most of us also enjoyed good 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. Zeth also showed us a nest with a largish chick in a tree fern. This species is endemic to West Papua.
Flame Bowerbird *Sericulus aureus*: A striking male was found in flight in the lower Arfak Mountains by sharp-eyed Sue.
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.]
Crested Bird of Paradise *Cnemophilus macgregorii*: A male showed quite well to some of us in the higher reaches of the Snow Mountains. Our first observation of this gorgeous species on this tour.

PARADISAEIDAE
Macgregor’s Bird of Paradise *Macgregoria pulchra*: We all enjoyed excellent scope views of this most bizarre and highly attractive 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. A distinctive voice.
Jobi Manucode *Manucodia jobiensis*: Good looks at a couple of birds in the lowland rainforest at Nimbokrang. It is named after Jobi, or Yapen, one of the largest islands in Geelvink Bay.
Long-tailed Paradigalla *Paradigalla carunculata*: Frustratingly brief views for most of us in the middle reaches of the Arfak Mountains, although Hugh saw this rarely observed species very well. 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’.
Short-tailed Paradigalla *Paradigalla brevicauda*: Fantastic views of a pair in a patch of montane forest in the Ibele valley, on the Habbema trek. A cracking species when seen well.
Magnificent Riflebird *Ptiloris magnificus* (H): We heard it distantly in the foothills of the Arfak Mountains.
Twelve-wired Bird of Paradise *Seleucidis melanoleuca*: Lengthy scope views of a displaying and calling male, just after dawn in the Nimbokrang alluvial forests. He was visited by at least three females and gave quite a show. An exhilarating experience!!
Buff-tailed Sicklebill *Epimachus albertisi* (H): We heard the distinctive call in the distance in the Arfak Mountains. The scientific epithet refers to Cavaglieri Luigi d’Albertis (1841-1901), Italian botanist, zoologist and ornithologist in New Guinea, 1871-1877.
Black Sicklebill *Epimachus fastuosus*: Good views of several males and females 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*: Good, but brief views of an immature male 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*: Good views of a singing male in the Baliem Valley and also recorded on our walk out of 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. Most of us were lucky enough to see the fantastic and utterly unbelievable dervish dance (ballerina) display. 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 Dave, Sue, Heidi, Sally and Phil. Tears of happiness and utter admiration were shed whilst observing the incredible display of this amazing species!!

King of Saxony Bird of Paradise *Pteridophora alberti*: A glorious male showed off near our second camp on the Habbema trek. Another fabulous species.

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 two handsome males displaying on a dancing court in the foothills of the Arfak Mountains for those that visited the hide. No fewer than four females visited the court. Exquisite intimate views of a gorgeous bird of paradise.

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. We also admired some great display as a couple of females visited the court. 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 Hugh, maybe also because he spent more time in that hide than anyone else…. 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 paradisean 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*: A couple of observations of this attractive carnivorous marsupial. A splendid little creature.
Greater Flying Fox (Bismarck Flying Fox) *Pteropus neohibernicus*: Hundreds were found at a roost near Lake Sentani.
Indo-Pacific Bottle-nosed Dolphin *Tursiops aduncus*: Several pods showed well in the Batanta area.