



The exquisite Nicobar Pigeon showed so very well on the islet of Tench (Mark Van Beirs)

REMOTE PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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LEADER: MARK VAN BEIRS

The avian highlights of our recent exciting and remarkable Remote Papua New Guinea tour were the stunning Wahnes's Parotia, the extraordinary Goldie's Bird of Paradise, the exquisite Fire-maned Bowerbird and the gorgeous Emperor Bird of Paradise. Several other members of what is probably the best bird family in the world, the Birds of Paradise, also performed very well: Magnificent and Lesser Birds of Paradise, the amazing Huon Astrapia and the more subtle Glossy-mantled, Crinkle-collared and Curl-crested Manucodes. We visited some remote corners of Papua New Guinea, as we explored Fergusson Island in the D'Entrecasteaux Archipelago, New Ireland and Tench in the Bismarcks, Manus and Tong islands in the Admiralties, the fabled Huon peninsula and the remote Adelbert range. Our visit to the tiny seabird island of Tench was especially memorable with its tame Melanesian Megapodes, displaying Great Frigatebirds, scores of breeding Red-footed and Brown Boobies, thousands of Black Noddies, stylish and so adorable White Terns, magnificent Nicobar Pigeons and rare Atoll Starlings. We took nine flights and four boat trips and enjoyed a close insight into the culture and lifestyle of this traditional and very religious country. At the

same time we also experienced some major cultural frustrations, but the trip went unexpectedly smoothly. The logistics worked very well on this trip, Air Niugini only let us down once (!!!), the seas were smooth and we only experienced a few minor hiccups. We recorded an excellent variety species that included well performing 'diamond' birds such as Heinroth's Shearwater, Matsudaira's Storm Petrel, Long-tailed Honey Buzzard, Black-mantled Goshawk, Papuan Harrier, Forbes's Forest Rail, Pale-vented Bush-hen, Great and Pied Cuckoo-Doves, no fewer than 13 species of Fruit Doves, 10 species of Imperial Pigeons, Dwarf Koel, lots of Channel-billed Cuckoos, Manus and New Ireland Boobooks, Islet, Beach and Yellow-billed Kingfishers, Palm and superb Pesquet's Parrots, Papuan King Parrot, the lovely Edward's Fig Parrot, MacGregor's Bowerbird, New Ireland and Bismarck Black Myzomelas, Manus Friarbird, Spangled Honeyeater, Mottled Berryhunter (in its own family), the splendid Paradise Drongo, Bismarck Fantail, Banded Yellow and Black-throated Robins and Louisiade White-eye. For the first time on this tour we heard the rare Red-breasted Paradise Kingfisher. Mammals were not very obvious, but we did enjoy the nice sightings of Northern Common Cuscus, Great Flying Foxes and elegant Indo-Pacific Bottle-nosed Dolphins.



Huge Palm Cockatoos and screeching Sulphur-crested Cockatoos never fail to impress (Mark Van Beirs)

Our German/American/Swedish/Norwegian/Belgian party gathered in the early hours of the second of July at the domestic airport of Port Moresby, the rather infamous capital of Papua New Guinea (PNG for the connoisseurs). An uneventful flight took us to the town of Alotau, situated near the extreme eastern point of the mainland of New Guinea. After checking in into a cosy hotel and a tasty lunch we explored the nearby gardens where several smart-looking Orange-fronted Fruit Doves obliged. A flowering tree was visited by a subtle Silver-eared Honeyeater, a Sacred Kingfisher was sitting on the wires and flighty, ever so smart Red-flanked Lorikeets visited a Javan Apple tree (*Syzigium*) with its amazing bright pink-coloured stamens. Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, Dusky Myzomela, Grey Shrikethrush, Willie Wagtail and Singing Starling also showed. In mid-afternoon we drove to a stretch of fairly open pandanus savanna where we didn't move further than 20 metres from our minibus for the first two hours. It was pure magic to be able to observe a splendid selection of parrots perched up or flying over. Enormous Palm Cockatoos slowly winged past while snow-white Sulphur-crested Cockatoos and colourful Eclectus Parrots screeched away. Several parties of Red-cheeked Parrots, some Purple-bellied Lorries and pairs of swift Coconut Lorikeets zoomed past, but best of all were the superb views we got of foraging male and female Orange-fronted Hanging Parrots. A fruiting tree was visited by Orange-bellied and rarely seen Dwarf Fruit Doves and overhead we noted a quartet of handsome Pacific Bazas and a couple of Brahminy Kites. A dead tree looked like a Christmas tree as 25 or so lovely Rainbow Bee-eaters sat about. We found our first Bird of Paradise as a pair of Glossy-mantled Manucodes gloriously sat in an open treetop, displaying their purple sheen and bright red eyes. Other goodies that showed well here included Slender-billed Cuckoo-Dove, Shining Bronze Cuckoo, White-shouldered Fairywren, Streak-headed Honeyeater, New Guinea Friarbird, Mimic Honeyeater, White-breasted Woodswallow, Hooded Butcherbird, Boyer's Cuckooshrike, Varied Triller, Spangled Drongo, a

female Leaden Flycatcher, a party of Grey Crows, Torresian Crow, Red-capped Flowerpecker, Black and Olive-backed Sunbirds and Great-billed and Chestnut-breasted Mannikins.



This male Orange-fronted Hanging Parrot was feeding quietly in the subcanopy; a Varied Triller comforts its downy chick on the nest
(Mark Van Beirs)

At dawn the following morning we were ready to board the live aboard dive boat that would take us to the D'Entrecasteaux Islands, but some mechanical problems had to be sorted out first. This archipelago was named for the French navigator Antoine Raymond Joseph de Bruni d'Entrecasteaux who, in his ship the *Espérance*, passed through the area in 1782. We had more good looks at Orange-fronted Fruit Doves and Silver-eared Honeyeaters in the hotel area. In mid-morning we boarded the boat and while waiting about we observed Torresian Imperial Pigeon and Yellow-faced Myna in the harbour area. After the crew solved another problem (with the anchor this time), we were finally on our way to distant Fergusson Island. We sailed leisurely out of Milne Bay and crossed the deep Goshen Strait. Not much was happening at sea, but several large feeding flocks of Black Noddies enlivened the journey. We also found Great Frigatebird, Red-footed and Brown Boobies, Great Crested Tern and a single Bridled Tern roosting on a bit of flotsam. A Beach Stone-curlew was found on a distant stretch of reef. We approached the northern coast of the island of Normanby by sunset and anchored for part of the night in quiet waters.

We continued our travels in the middle of the night and arrived at our destination on the island of Fergusson at daybreak. During the night a small chick Orange-footed Scrubfowl had flown onto the boat and we admired this lovely creature close up, before we released it. We got in touch with our man on the spot and not much later we were walking through a very nice stretch of lowland rainforest where we soon heard both of our main targets. It took a little while to get decent views of the Goldie's Bird of Paradise, but with a bit of perseverance we all obtained fantastic looks at several displaying males in the lower canopy. The red flank plumes, the glistening green throat, the distinctive grey breast, the bright yellow head and the piercing, pale eyes were seen at length. This most restricted of the classical *Paradisaea* Birds of Paradise can only be found on the islands of Fergusson and Normanby. The haunting, rolling calls of Curl-crested Manucodes are one of the most distinctive sounds of these forests and after several fleeting observations we managed cracking looks at these glossy critters with their very distinctive tails and floppy flight. The range of this Bird of Paradise is also restricted to these eastern islands. While hanging about at a bank of flowering ginger plants we scoped a pair of Double-eyed Fig Parrots (of the distinctive race *virago*, where the male lacks the

eye spot) and observed several attractive Black Sunbirds, a smart Black-faced Monarch, a male Satin Flycatcher, Shining Flycatcher and Grey Whistler. We flushed more than 50 prehistoric-looking Channel-billed Cuckoos from a giant fig tree. A truly amazing sight! Other interesting species included Western Osprey, Stephan's Emerald Dove, Wompoo, Pink-spotted and Superb Fruit Doves, Pinon's and many Torresian Imperial Pigeons, Pheasant Coucal, Blyth's Hornbill, Purple-bellied Lory (scope views of perched birds), Tawny-breasted and Puff-backed Honeyeaters and Spot-winged and Golden Monarchs. We heard the mournful call of a Red-bellied Pitta but couldn't entice it to show itself. The local race was considered a separate species (D'Entrecasteaux Pitta) with the fairly recent splitting of Red-bellied Pitta into 16 taxa, but in the latest IOC update there has been some reshuffling and lumping and the form concerned is now considered a race of Papuan Pitta. The final bird of the day was an Islet Kingfisher, that showed just before we boarded our dinghy. This is a recent split in the Collared Kingfisher complex and it is endemic to these southeastern islands. In late afternoon we sailed a short distance to a quiet anchor spot, where we enjoyed a peaceful night.



Glorious male Goldie's Birds of Paradise performed beautifully (tour participant Charles Davies)

Early in the morning we sailed onwards to our favourite islet in the D'Entrecasteaux archipelago. The only birds of note at sea were a dark morph Wedge-tailed Shearwater and a Brown Noddy roosting on a floating log. We anchored in crystal clear water next to a beautiful reef and from the boat already saw lots of Torresian and several Island Imperial Pigeons. The skies looked very threatening with low, dark clouds and distant showers, so we soon disembarked and scrambled up through a stretch of razor sharp along along grass bordered by rows of impressive pandanus palms, to the higher patches of forest. A cracking White-bellied Sea Eagle circled over the islet. As soon as we arrived we picked up several dainty Louisiade White-eyes and while quietly hanging about we got excellent looks at this restricted range cutie. Several small parties flitted past while they were foraging in the low canopy, allowing for really good views. A few colourful Mangrove Golden Whistlers performed very well and we also found Rufous Fantail and some vocal Varied Honeyeaters. An Islet Kingfisher showed quite well and a large, active mound of an Orange-footed Scrubfowl was found on the ridge. Someone flushed a Nicobar Pigeon and more than 20 rather menacing-looking Lesser Frigatebirds were hanging over the highest top. And then it started raining and raining, so we started our return journey to Alotau. In the Goshen Strait, in between showers, we picked up thousands of Black

Noddies, another Wedge-tailed Shearwater and both Brown and Red-footed Boobies. In late evening we arrived at the harbour of Nawaii, where we spent a peaceful night on the boat.



D'Entrecasteaux Islands scenery (Mark Van Beirs)

The following day was a travelling day. We picked up widespread species like Intermediate and Eastern Cattle Egrets, a distant Variable Goshawk, Austrasian Swamphen, Pacific Emerald Dove and Pied Bush Chat in the Alotau area while waiting about, but best of all was an attractive Great-billed Mannikin that showed well in a patch of tall grass. An uneventful flight took us first to Port Moresby and then onwards to Kavieng, the capital of New Ireland, where we arrived in late afternoon.

A pre breakfast outing produced excellent looks at the endemic Hunstein's Mannikin, and Clamorous Reed Warbler and Golden-headed Cisticola also showed. A pair of Eastern Osprey were guarding their eyrie on a pylon next to the hotel. After buying groceries we boarded our Toyota Hilux vehicles and drove along the almost deserted Boluminski Highway (named after Franz Boluminski, the German District Officer from 1910 until the First World War) south to central New Ireland. Brief stops gave us Black Bittern, Knob-billed Fruit Dove, Melanesian Kingfisher (split from Collared) and a couple of Buff-bellied Mannikins. We reached our guesthouse on the beach in the heat of the day. Smart Red-chinned and colourful Red-flanked Lorikeets were feeding on coconut flowers and after a heavy shower we explored the track up to the Lelet plateau. We stopped at a strategic viewpoint and enjoyed several birdy hours watching the comings and goings of a whole range of endemics and near endemics. Pigeons especially were prevalent as we managed to get good scope views of an attractive Pied Cuckoo-Dove and of Red-knobbed and subtly-patterned Black Imperial Pigeons. Several handsome Song Parrots showed very well and a Bismarck Hanging Parrot zoomed over. A Paradise Drongo (New Ireland's totem bird) sat up for a while. Other interesting species included Red Myzomela, White-backed Woodswallow, Barred and White-bellied Cuckooshrikes, Long-tailed Myna and Bismarck White-eye. We heard the distinctive calls of Melanesian Megapodes in late afternoon. At dusk we found a nice stretch of woodland where a short blast of the tape soon allowed us to admire a pair of New Ireland Boobooks at length and at short range. Magical moments!



Song Parrots and Moustached Treeswifts were regularly observed in the highlands of New Ireland (Mark Van Beirs)

The next morning found us again in the submontane forests of the Lelet plateau and pigeons were again doing their best to hold our attention. A Pied Cuckoo-Dove performed its spectacular display flight in full view and we scoped both Bar-tailed and an out of place MacKinlay's Cuckoo-Dove. Several flighty White-bibbed Fruit Doves showed briefly and some of us had great looks at a Finsch's Imperial Pigeon. A mixed flock held several Shining Bronze Cuckoos, a female Bismarck Whistler, a furtive Bismarck Fantail and Golden Monarch. A Finsch's Pygmy Parrot performed well and a mimosa-like tree held scores of Red Myzomelas and several Bismarck White-eyes, but it took a while to find the smart-looking New Ireland Myzomela. Majestically flying Moustached Treeswifts and a couple of White-rumped Swiftlets foraged overhead. In the heat of the day we relaxed at our seaside guesthouse, where the cool freshwater stream was well appreciated. In the afternoon we checked several areas with flowering grasses, but we could only find a couple of Buff-bellied Mannikins. An exploration of a new logging road produced good looks at several Nicobar Pigeons in flight and a singing male Pacific Koel. At dusk dozens of impressive Great Flying Foxes took to the air.

Another morning in the forests of the Lelet plateau gave us more good looks at already seen specialities. Paradise Drongos especially put in a very nice appearance, as we were able to discern the bright red eye and the long, twisted outer tail feathers of this New Ireland endemic. We witnessed more impressive flight display of Pied Cuckoo-Doves and scoped a cracking male White-bibbed Fruit Dove. Papuan Mountain Pigeon was a new bird for the trip and we managed several nice sightings of the secretive White-necked Coucal. Three male Grey-capped Cicadabirds showed well and quite a few Moustached Treeswifts and White-backed Woodswallows were showing off their aerial hunting prowess. A Variable Goshawk was noted and several smart Golden Monarchs were foraging in the lower canopy. In a more open area we heard the cat-like wails of Pale-vented Bush-hen. In the heat of the afternoon we returned to Kavieng, where hot showers and cold beer were much appreciated. Several Buff-bellied Mannikins were seen during a short stop in a grassy area.



A pair of stylish White Terns pair bonding on Tench (Mark Van Beirs)

We had a fabulous time on the small seabird island of Tench, which is situated about 100 km north of Kavieng. A dive boat took us across very calm seas to this amazing bird paradise. On the way we only saw a handful of seabirds. Best of all was a Heinroth's Shearwater that briefly appeared on our port side. A Matsudaira's Storm Petrel was also identified (on Charles's camera) next to the more regular fare of Black Noddies and Red-footed Boobies. We arrived in mid-morning and were warmly welcomed by old friends. A small community manages to survive and eke out a living on this barely one km² small chunk of land. We slowly walked around this incredible site, gorging ourselves on the sight of thousands upon thousands of breeding Black Noddies, hundreds of Red-footed Boobies (both white and brown morphs) and dozens of Great Frigatebirds. We scoped the very localized Atoll Starling (only known from a handful of islets in Melanesia) and had regular encounters with Island Monarchs as we walked under the dense canopy. Tiny Bismarck Black Myzomelas flitted about in the subcanopy. The highlight of our visit were the many excellent observations of the unique Nicobar Pigeon. Quite a few nests were located and we had many brilliant views of this outstanding and so very much-wanted species. We saw them display, whereby they showed off their exquisite hackles and we admired the iridescent green plumage and the short, bright white tail. Golden moments! Melanesian Megapodes were happily foraging on the forest floor. We observed several displaying male Great Frigatebirds sitting in the canopy showing off their bright red, inflated pouches to circling females. Adorable young White Terns were quietly waiting to be fed by their ghostly white parents. Other interesting species included White-tailed Tropicbird, Brown Booby, Common Sandpiper, Yellow-bibbed Fruit Dove (glimpses only), Pacific Imperial Pigeon and a pair of impressive Beach Kingfishers. The return journey to Kavieng took four hours longer than the inward trip, mainly because of increased wave action, a strong counter current and some engine problems, so it was late in the evening by the time we went to bed.

A stretch of lowland rainforest and adjoining mangrove forest not too far from Kavieng was our birding site for the next day. We were already quite familiar with most of the species recorded, but new additions to the list included Pale-vented Bush-hen (several heard and one seen crossing a track), Common Kingfisher and a

Northern Fantail. We saw our first female Grey-capped Cicadabird (the distinctive sex of this newly split form) and had great looks again at Beach Kingfisher and at Melanesian Kingfisher.



A posing Melanesian Megapode and a rare Atoll Starling on the seabird paradise of Tench (Mark Van Beirs)

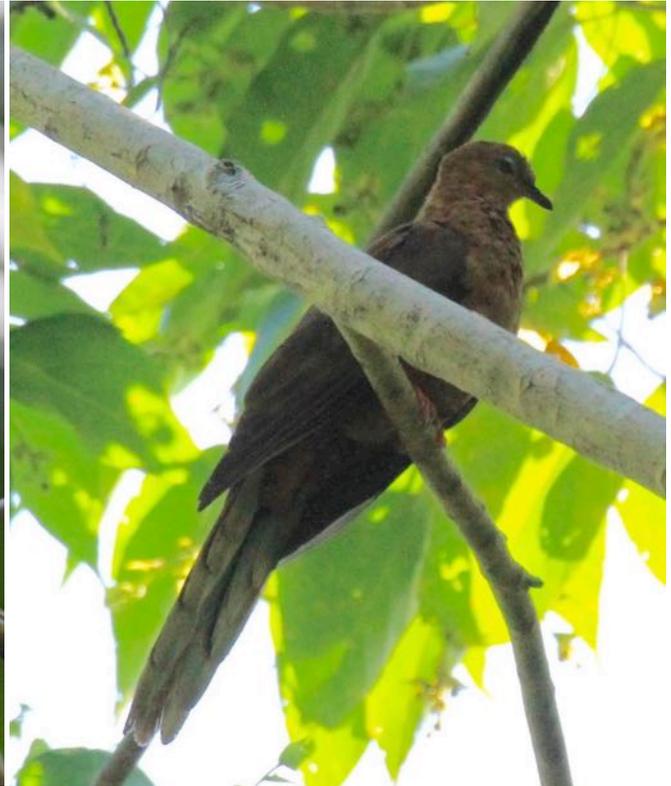
A morning of smooth travelling with Air Niugini brought us to the island of Manus, where upon arrival we saw some Pacific Golden Plovers and Whimbrels on the extensive grassy areas surrounding the runway. We drove into the town of Lorengau, checked in, had lunch and observed some Black-naped Terns offshore. In the afternoon we had an enjoyable introduction to the avifauna of this by birdwatchers much neglected island. We first walked along a wide road where Island Imperial Pigeon, Brush Cuckoo and Common Cicadabird (the local form is sometimes split as Manus Cicadabird) showed well. Later we followed a trail into the forest, where we scoped a flowering tree with Coconut Lorikeets (including some with olive-yellow backs). Manus Friarbirds were extremely vocal and we saw these shy birds very well as they flitted about in the canopy. Several Manus Cuckooshrikes showed briefly and a smart male Bismarck Whistler performed beautifully. A Manus Monarch gave all too brief looks, and we got really excited when we heard the distinctive call note of a Superb Pitta in a nice patch of forest. We tried to get to grips with it, but no luck ... At dusk a Manus Boobook started calling and fairly soon gave uncharacteristically good looks to all of us. Great stuff. Lots of Great Flying Foxes and a few Admiralty Flying Foxes were plying the skies.

Dawn found us along a forest edge inland from Lorengau, the capital of Manus. We scoped a singing Claret-breasted Fruit Dove and walked to the area where we had heard the pitta call yesterday, but nothing pitta-like was singing, sadly. We explored this beautiful forest but encountered very little activity. We obtained good looks at extremely noisy Manus Friarbirds and had all too brief views of tiny Meek's Pygmy Parrots. We paused for a while in the heat of the day and in the afternoon we returned to the forest where a male Superb Fruit Dove and a couple of dainty Bismarck White-eyes caught our attention. We stayed till dark and heard several Manus Boobooks call, but of the hoped for Admiralty Cuscus not a sniff.



Tong Island is home to the dainty Manus Fantail and to the distinctive *coultasi* race of Manus Monarch (Mark Van Beirs)

Tong is a small island situated c35 km east of Manus airport and accompanied by one of the local chiefs we took a bananaboat across smooth seas to get there. It is only very rarely visited by birders, but it is one of the very few islands in the Admiralty Archipelago where the rare Manus (or Admiralty Rufous) Fantail can be found. Several flocks of Black Noddies escorted us on our sea voyage. Upon arrival we sailed into the scenic central lagoon, where a sleek Oriental Hobby sat in a dead tree and soon we set foot on this peaceful island, which is inhabited by just 66 people. Several extremely smart Yellow-bibbed Fruit Doves were happily feeding in a fruiting tree. The male of this race (*johannis*) sports a distinctive large lilac-mauve cap. A short burst of the tape lured a Manus Fantail into view and on our relaxed wanderings around the island we found several more of these attractive and highly active little critters flitting about in the undergrowth and mid canopy. A few pied Manus Monarchs of the race *coultasi* were playing hide and seek in the canopy and showed off their very white tail, in contrast to the almost black-tailed nominate race on Manus itself. Tiny Bismarck Black Myzomelas were all over the place and MacKinlay's Cuckoo-Doves were displaying in fruit-bearing saplings. We saw two vocal pairs of buff-bellied Collared Kingfishers of an undescribed race. The Melanesian field guide doesn't show Manus as part of their area of distribution, but even more strange was the bird that looked exactly like the *matthiae* race of the Melanesian Kingfisher (which lives on distant Mussau). Very peculiar! Several sturdy Island Monarchs were also noted. After having gorged ourselves on these lovely specialities we boarded our boat and sailed across aquamarine waters back to the airport island of Los Negros. Four Indo-Pacific Bottle-nosed Dolphins showed nicely and shortly before arriving we got totally soaked in a torrential shower. In the afternoon we visited another stretch of rainforest on the mainland of Manus, but the persistent rain kept the birds in hiding and nothing of note was observed.



We found several Melanesian Kingfishers on Tong (Mark Van Beirs), where MacKinlay's Cuckoo-Dove was quite easy to see (tour participant Charles Davies)

On our final morning on Manus we revisited our favourite stretch of forest, but we stayed on the road to have a better view over the nearby treetops. A Brush Cuckoo was scoped and Manus Cuckooshrikes finally performed well for everyone. Upon returning to the hotel we were told that all the Air Niugini flights had been cancelled because of a major pilot strike and that there was very little chance that we would be able to fly for another 3 days. Desperate times require desperate methods, so after a group pow wow, it was decided we would charter an aircraft that would take us to Lae that same afternoon. Some phonecalls were made and soon we were on our way to the airport, where Pacific Golden Plovers, a Whimbrel and a Ruddy Turnstone were seen. A Tropic Air Beechcraft King Air B200 plane took us across the Bismarck Sea and over the stratovolcanoes of Long island to the airport of Lae. Upon arrival we observed a cracking male Papuan Harrier quartering over the grassy expanses and soon drove in a bus fitted with grilled windows to our nice hotel in Papua New Guinea's second city. We were warmly welcomed by Cheyne, our Mr fix it for the Huon chapter, and enjoyed a relaxed afternoon. 13 Channel-billed Cuckoos were noted in the gardens and the pizza dinner was much appreciated by all.



Next morning, at Lae's Nadzab's airport, we observed several Horsfield's Bush Larks while our charter plane was being serviced. We took to the air in a small New Zealand built PAC 750 XL plane and flew over the impressive, forested mountains of the Huon peninsula. We thoroughly enjoyed this exciting flight and all too soon we landed at the grassy airstrip of the coastal village of Wasu. Cheyne organized the transport and after some shopping for essentials like beer and water we were on our way up to the village of Gatop, situated at an altitude of 850m altitude. A short stop produced excellent views of a pair of Brown Falcons and also some Black-fronted White-eyes. We were given a room at the local school for young ladies and organised our sleeping arrangements. In the afternoon we explored a stretch of disturbed forest below our accommodation and heard the distinctive calls of displaying Emperor Birds of Paradise. It didn't take too long to find a spot which offered views of these remarkable birds, but sadly their main display branches were rather hidden in the canopy, so we didn't really get unobstructed looks at these localized BoPs. But, it was a really good start! A lanky Long-tailed Honey Buzzard circled lazily over us and a smart Great Cuckoo-Dove flew past. While standing about a brightly red and black Pesquet's (or Vulturine) Parrot showed briefly in flight and several displaying Double-eyed Fig Parrots showed. A pair of Mountain Peltopses sat about and when dusk was threatening we walked back to our base, where the cold shower and tasty food were better than expected.



We had excellent looks at the two special Birds of Paradise of the Huon: Huon Astrapia (tour participant Charles Davies) and Wahnes's Parotia (Mark Van Beirs)

On our first day in the mountains of the Huon (named after the French explorer Jean-Michel Huon de Kermadec), we concentrated on the mid altitudes, where we had a very enjoyable time amongst the beautiful moss and lichen covered trees of this rarely visited area. Best of all were the many encounters with male and female Huon Astrapias and although it was quite difficult to see their real colours, we sure appreciated the beauty of this localized endemic. We had several excellent looks at Spangled Honeyeaters, another species that is only found in the mountains of the Huon. Very smart-looking Ornate Fruit Doves showed regularly at close range and we had good looks at gaudy Papuan King Parrots. A Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo sat up, tiny Red-collared Myzomelas flitted about in the canopy and a pair of Black-throated Robins was scoped at length. Modestly-clad Mid-mountain and Fan-tailed Berrypeckers worked their way through the mid-levels. Flowering trees held very smart Papuan, Fairy (or Little Red) and Yellow-billed Lorikeets. In mid-morning birds of prey started to use the thermals and next to already known species we found a nice Black-mantled Goshawk. Other birds that caught our attention included Marbled Honeyeater, Brown-breasted Gerygone, Tit Berrypecker, Regent Whistler, Slaty Robin, Garnet Robin (a female high in the canopy), Canary Flyrobin, Island Leaf Warbler, Papuan White-eye and Friendly Fantail. A bout at a stretch of forest edge gave us a lovely Rufescent Imperial Pigeon. On the return drive to base a Long-tailed Shrike was spotted.



The highlands of the Huon also gave us Black-throated Robin and Ornate Fruit Dove (Mark Van Beirs)

At dawn we were overlooking a mosaic of forest patches and gardens at mid altitude, hoping for exciting new additions to the list. We heard the raucous calls of a male Wahnes's Parotia and a female was glimpsed, but sadly, these shy Birds of Paradise didn't want to cooperate. We had good looks at another Rufescent Imperial Pigeon, watched a pair of perched Dusky Lories and observed a Rufous-backed Honeyeater feeding in a flowering ginger. We scoped a distant male Superb Bird of Paradise and found a female foraging in the canopy above us. Brown-backed and Sclater's Whistlers were other new birds for the tally. In mid-morning we drove to the highest part of the road, at an altitude of c2,050m and waited for things to happen. It was hot and very quiet, and the only bird of note was a Peregrine Falcon of the local, very dark race *ernesti*. After our picnic lunch we ventured into a nice stretch of montane forest, where we heard the quacking calls of a Forbes's Forest Rail. A bit of strategic positioning and a burst of the tape soon gave most of us pretty good views of this skulking forest floor inhabitant. While patiently waiting a Spotted Jewelbabbler suddenly appeared, obviously attracted to the commotion. Further into the forest some fruiting trees were visited by several Huon Astrapias, including some magnificent males with very long, blunt-tipped tails. A young male Wahnes's Parotia showed to some lucky souls. We observed the activity at these fruit-bearing trees for quite a while and observed lots of smart Spangled Honeyeaters, a retiring female MacGregor's Bowerbird (the local form is sometimes split off as Huon Bowerbird) and a party of exquisite Tit Berrypeckers. We also managed good views of Black-throated Honeyeater, Cinnamon-browed Melidectes, Buff-faced Scrubwren, Black-breasted Boatbill and Black-throated Robin from our vantage point. A couple of Pesquet's Parrots only allowed the briefest of looks.



A 'poisonous' Hooded Pitohui and the best bird plant in New Guinea: Schefflera (Mark Van Beirs)

We spent most of the following morning at the same location and had a marvellous time observing a young male and a female Wahnes's Parotia feeding leisurely on Schefflera fruits. The scope views were quite excellent as we could discern 4 head plumes (adult males have 6) and the pale blue eye of the male bird. Huon Astrapias showed well again, a White-bibbed Fruit Dove perched briefly and several noisy Pesquet's Parrots gave brief looks. In the forest we observed several Papuan King Parrots in flight and we scoped a female feeding upside down on a passion fruit. We noted several Mottled Berryhunters and also found Black and Dimorphic Fantails. A male Superb Bird of Paradise was calling nearby, but only allowed all too brief views of his splendid finery. Around noon mist and rain came in, so we made our way down to our accommodation and had a pleasant afternoon at a nearby viewpoint over the surrounding hill forest. Our man on the spot pointed out two distant display trees of Emperor Birds of Paradise and although they were rather far away, we could observe and hear their elaborate display for most of the afternoon. Several males were seen hanging upside down and waving their wings and flank plumes about as the females incited mega activity. Glorious moments! While admiring these unique Birds of Paradise we also observed Whistling Kite, Pink-spotted Fruit Dove (of the grey-headed race *plumbeicollis*), Plain Honeyeater, Fairy Gerygone, Hooded Pitohui and Brown Oriole. A male Growling Riflebird was scoped singing away on a rather distant bough. At night a Papuan Frogmouth serenaded us nearby.



The bunch in the Huon (Mark Van Beirs)

The 20th of July started with a session at the nearby viewpoint which gave us more views of the rather distant displaying Emperor Birds of Paradise. A pair of Crinkle-collared Manucodes was found foraging in an open tree and Oriental Dollarbird and a dashing Oriental Hobby were also seen. And then it was time to pack up and say goodbye to our gracious hosts. We drove down to the airstrip at Wasu where our charter plane arrived within minutes of our arrival. The lovely flight to Madang followed the coastline of the Huon peninsula and in late morning we landed at Madang airport. We said goodbye to Cheyne, our efficient Mr fix it and had a delicious lunch at the luxurious Madang resort, where Moyang, our man on the spot joined us. After a bit of final shopping we drove northwest along the coastal highway and eventually drove inland and up into the Adelbert Mountains along a pretty awful track. We managed to drive up to c800m altitude, but had to walk the last three kilometres as the track was not really suited for even 4x4 vehicles. We arrived at cosy Keki Lodge in late afternoon and were welcomed by a loudly screeching Pesquet's Parrot. We spent the final hour of the day at the famous clearing where we picked up a few species like Zoe's Imperial Pigeon and perched Black-capped Lories. We settled in and explored the facilities. An after dinner walk in the nearby forest gave us a calling Marbled Frogmouth and Papuan Boobook, but neither was interested in showing itself.



The outstanding Pesquet's Parrot gave a sterling performance at Keki (tour participant Charles Davies)

The clearing at Keki Lodge has an impressive fig tree, which often attracts a variety of frugivores. At dawn we were already standing guard and it didn't take too long till a fabulous male Fire-maned Bowerbird showed itself. We all eventually had great looks at this extremely localized, fantastically attractive species. This bird was the main reason why we had come to this remote location and we all agreed that it sure had been worth it. Our vigil produced several more splendid species. A pair of vociferous, brightly coloured Pesquet's Parrots perched very nicely in the open allowing scope studies of their unique plumage. An enormous Palm Cockatoo sneaked past and a selection of parrots was witnessed bathing in a hole in a tree. The stunning Dusky Lories especially were very much appreciated as that species is usually only seen flying high overhead, but the smart Black-capped Lories were also admired at length. A Collared Sparrowhawk flew past and a singing male Dwarf Koel posed beautifully. Other species seen included Green-backed Gerygone, Black-shouldered Cicadabird and we only obtained glimpses of a male and a female Lesser Bird of Paradise. We heard quite a few of the latter, and also listened to the raucous calls of a Collared Brushturkey and the trills of a rare Red-breasted Paradise Kingfisher. We obviously tried the lure the

kingfisher in, but to no avail. In late morning we explored one of the forest trails, but nothing of note was recorded. After a break in the heat of the day some participants voted to spend time in the Magnificent Bird of Paradise hide and although they didn't really observe any display they had great looks at a marvellous male. Rusty Mouse-Warbler was seen and a Brown-headed Jewel-babbler heard. The others walked along the main track and picked up Papuan Black Myzomela. A Banded Yellow Robin was heard at very close range, but wasn't inquisitive enough, sadly. A night walk produced a heard only Papuan Boobook and a couple of frustrating Marbled Frogmouths that were vocalizing just out of reach.



Long-tailed Honey Buzzards regularly plied the sky at Keki (Mark Van Beirs)

Next morning several participants opted for the Magnificent Bird of Paradise hide and had a terrific time when the male displayed to two females at his dance court, showing all the details of his beautiful plumage. The rest of the group patrolled the clearing and came away with a well-behaved, exquisite male Fire-maned Bowerbird in the fig tree and a rather distant, splendidly displaying male Lesser Bird of Paradise totally in the open in a dead tree top. A surprise Purple-tailed Imperial Pigeon flew past and we also noted Papuan Black Myzomela and Black-browed Triller. In mid-morning we hit the forest trails and heard a male Brown-headed Jewel-babbler sing nearby. The densely vegetated terrain was not very convenient for observing this skulker, but luckily he decided to fly across the trail and showed his nice blue finery. We also found a smart Ochre-collared Monarch and some lucky souls connected with a fairly responsive Banded Yellow Robin. The growling calls of a White-eared Catbird emanated from the mid canopy. We took a break in the heat of the day and in the afternoon the clearing produced another male Lesser Bird of Paradise and a nice flyby pair of Pesquet's Parrots. The forest gave us a lovely Beautiful Fruit Dove and Charles encountered a mixed party with Chestnut-bellied Fantails and Ochre-collared Monarchs. A pleasant final daytime hour at the clearing

yielded four cracking, perched Pesquet's Parrots which were observed while enjoying cans of SP beer. An after dinner foray in the woods was again very frustrating with singing Marbled Frogmouths just out of reach in the high canopy.



Coronated Fruit Dove was the 13th species of Ptilinopus of the tour (tour participant Charles Davies); this female Rufous-bellied Kookaburra posed at length (Mark Van Beirs)

On our final morning at Keki we stood in the clearing and enjoyed the activity. A glorious Pesquet's Parrot flew into the famous fig tree allowing for great views of its black and bright red plumage and its bizarre vulturine head. Dusky Lorries sat nicely in the open and both red and yellow hued birds posed next to each other. In a distant dead tree, several male Lesser Birds of Paradise displayed, lighted by the bright morning sun, trying to impress the visiting ladies. Several distinctive white-bellied females also visited the fig tree. And then it was time to pack up and leave this delightful venue. We slowly walked down the track and observed Purple-tailed Imperial Pigeon, a fine female Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, a couple of furtive Long-billed Honeyeaters, Black-browed Triller and heard Little Shrikethrush (usually a dominant voice, but it had been strangely quiet). In late morning we scoped a graceful Yellow-billed Kingfisher, said goodbye to hosts Moyang and Ruth and boarded the 4x4 vehicles that drove us smoothly to Madang. We had a relaxed afternoon in the extended gardens of our very nice hotel. An eyrie of a Variable Goshawk held two downy chicks and the attending parents obliged very well. We also noted lots of vociferous Varied Honeyeaters and a Peaceful Dove.

The Ohu Conservation Area protects a large stretch of hilly lowland rainforest not too far from Madang and at dawn we were walking into the gardens of the buffer zone. The large fig tree that usually harboured several nests of our main quarry had sadly been chopped, so we had to walk further into the area to where our man on the spot knew of a nest of the much-wanted Edward's Fig Parrot. After a fair amount of scrambling about we were shown a nest hole high up in a large tree. We watched the tree for quite a while, but our stint didn't produce a thing. However, while returning slowly along the trail Helge suddenly spotted movement in the canopy and sure enough no fewer than four gorgeous Edward's Fig Parrots were munching on fruits. We managed to scope these jewels and studied them for a while. Smiles all around! While wandering through this forest we also found already seen goodies like Lesser Birds of Paradise and a good selection of parrots. Elated and profusely sweating we made our way back up the hill, where we were offered much appreciated fresh coconut milk and very tasty bananas by the family of our guide. In the afternoon a well-equipped dive boat took us to a nearby uninhabited small island, covered in impressive giant pandanus palms. We

wandered about and everyone eventually obtained pretty good views of our main target, the rather shy New Guinea Scrubfowl. We found several active mounds and a fruiting tree held several smart Coroneted Fruit Doves, the final new bird of this adventurous, rather unusual tour!



New Ireland scenery (Mark Van Beirs)



The stunning Orange-fronted Fruit Dove showed ever so well (Mark Van Beirs)

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). **IOC World Bird Names**. This list is updated several times annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>.

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

Species which were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

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

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g. it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

Conservation threat categories and information are taken from *Threatened Birds of the World*, BirdLife International's magnificent book on the sad status of the rarest 10% of the world's avifauna, and updates on the BirdLife website: <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/home>

E = Endangered, **V** = Vulnerable, **NT** = Near Threatened, **DD** = Data Deficient.

Collared Brushturkey ◊ (**Brown-collared B**) *Talegalla jobiensis* (H) We heard the raucous calls at Keki and at Ohu.

Melanesian Megapode ◊ *Megapodius eremita* Mega close up looks on Tench.

New Guinea Scrubfowl ◊ (**N G Megapode**) *Megapodius decollatus* Good views on an islet near Madang.

Orange-footed Scrubfowl *Megapodius reinwardt* A chick flew on the Chertan at night off Normanby. Marvellous!

Matsudaira's Storm Petrel *Oceanodroma matsudairae* One showed quite well on the boat trip to Tench. See Note.

Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Ardenna pacifica* A couple of encounters with dark morphs birds.

Heinroth's Shearwater *Puffinus heinrothi* **V** A single bird was identified on our boat trip to Tench. See Note.

Black Bittern *Dupetor flavicollis* One was flushed at the edge of an oil palm plantation on New Ireland.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus* Regular at Port Moresby and Madang.

Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia* A few at Port Moresby.

Pacific Reef Heron *Egretta sacra* Regular observations. Mainly dark morphs were noted.



Tench Island held many Great Frigatebirds and Red-footed Boobies (Mark Van Beirs)

Great Frigatebird *Fregata minor* Splendid encounters on Tench included displaying males.

Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel* Small numbers were observed on the boat trips.

Red-footed Booby *Sula sula* Hundreds showed very well on and around Tench. See Note.

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster* Small numbers were noted at sea and breeding birds performed well on Tench.

Eastern Osprey *Pandion cristatus* 13 observations of this well-known piscivore. Several eyries were found.

Pacific Baza (Crested Hawk) *Aviceda subcristata* Several superb close up encounters with this smart raptor.

Long-tailed Honey Buzzard ◊ (**L-t Buzzard**) *Henicopernis longicauda* Five sightings of this lanky bird. See Note.

Variable Goshawk ◊ (**Varied G**) *Accipiter hiogaster* Regular. The pair at the nest with chicks in Madang was fun.

Black-mantled Goshawk ◊ *Accipiter melanochlamys* A single sighting in the highlands of the Huon. Distinctive.

Collared Sparrowhawk *Accipiter cirrocephalus* One flew over the clearing at Keki.

Papuan Harrier ◊ *Circus spilothorax* Good looks at this beautiful bird of prey at Lae airport.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans* Regular observations in the east and the north of mainland PNG.

Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus* Two sighting along the coast of the Huon.

Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus* The most common bird of prey of the tour. See Note.



Displaying Brown Boobies and an inquisitive Pacific Baza (Mark Van Beirs)

- White-bellied Sea Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucogaster* Three encounters with this impressive species.
- Forbes's Forest Rail** *Rallricula forbesi* Heard and seen in the highlands of the Huon. A new species for the tour.
- Buff-banded Rail** *Gallirallus philippensis* (H) We heard the distinctive calls at Kavieng airport.
- Pale-vented Bush-hen** ◊ (Rufous-tailed B-h) *Amaurornis moluccana* Heard and seen on New Ireland.
- Australasian Swamphen** *Porphyrio melanotus* Two birds showed well at Alotau.
- Beach Stone-curlew (B Thick-knee)** *Esacus magnirostris* NT A distant bird was found on a reef off the East Cape.
- Masked Lapwing** *Vanellus miles* We only saw it at Port Moresby airport.
- Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva* A few here and there, but Manus airport held quite a few of these migrants.
- Whimbrel (Eurasian W)** *Numenius [phaeopus] phaeopus* Several were seen at Manus airport.
- Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* This migrant was found on distant Tench.
- Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* A single bird was at Manus airport.



Huge White-bellied Sea Eagles patrolled the coasts and an eyrie of Variable Goshawk was found in the hotel garden at Madang (Mark Van Beirs)

- Brown Noddy** *Anous stolidus* Just a few observations at sea.
- Black Noddy** *Anous minutus* Thousands performed beautifully on Tench. Also noted elsewhere at sea.



A well-dressed Black Noddy and a cute youngster White Tern on Tench (Mark Van Beirs)

White Tern (Common W T) *Gygis alba* Mega views of this classy species on Tench. So very attractive.

Greater Crested Tern (Crested T) *Thalasseus bergii* Small numbers were noted at sea.

Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus* A few were found at sea.

Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana* Just a few sightings of this very distinctive species.

Rock Dove (introduced)(R Pigeon) *Columba livia*

Slender-billed Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia amboinensis* Regular and showy. See Note.



Bar-tailed Cuckoo-Dove and Rufescent Imperial Pigeon enlivened the forests of the Huon (Mark Van Beirs)

Bar-tailed Cuckoo-Dove ◊ (Black-billed C-D) *Macropygia nigrirostris* Small numbers were noted in the highlands.

MacKinlay's Cuckoo-Dove ◊ (Spot-breasted C-D) *Macropygia mackinlayi* Excellent looks on Tong. See Note.

Great Cuckoo-Dove ◊ (Long-tailed C-D) *Reinwardtoena reinwardti* Several sightings on mainland PNG. See Note.

Pied Cuckoo-Dove ◊ *Reinwardtoena browni* NT Splendid observations of displaying birds on New Ireland.

Pacific Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps longirostris* One was seen at Alotau.



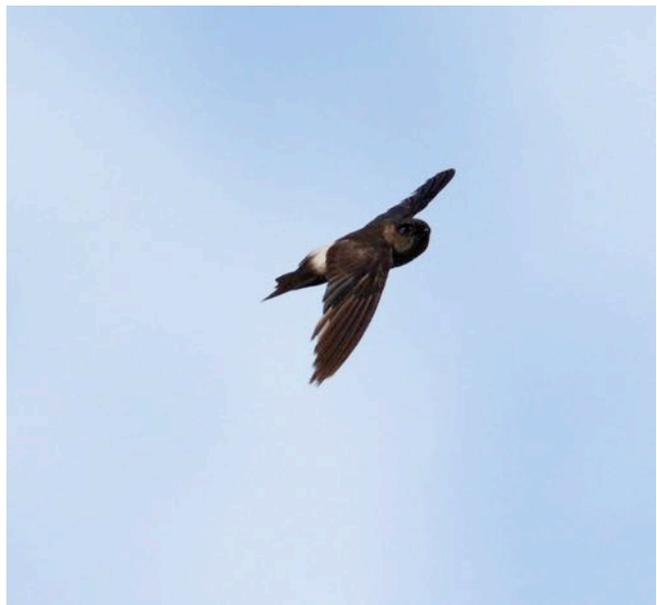
Slender-billed Cuckoo-Doves were regularly seen, but we only saw Pacific Imperial Pigeons (here a young bird) on Tench (Mark Van Beirs)

- Stephan's Emerald Dove (S Ground Dove) *Chalcophaps stephani*** Just a few encounters. See Note.
- Peaceful Dove *Geopelia placida*** A couple were seen in the Madang area.
- Nicobar Pigeon** ♦ *Caloenas nicobarica* NT Many fantastic sightings on Tench. See Note.
- Wompoo Fruit Dove (Magnificent F D) *Ptilinopus magnificus*** Several excellent encounters with this smart bird.
- Pink-spotted Fruit Dove** ♦ *Ptilinopus perlatus* Regular.
- Ornate Fruit Dove** ♦ *Ptilinopus ornatus* Many great looks in the highlands of the Huon (race *gestroi*).
- Orange-fronted Fruit Dove** ♦ *Ptilinopus aurantiifrons* Perfect scope views in the Alotau gardens.
- Superb Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus superbus*** A few encounters with this attractive species.
- Coroneted Fruit Dove** ♦ *Ptilinopus coronulatus* Several showed very well on an islet near Madang.
- Beautiful Fruit Dove** ♦ *Ptilinopus pulchellus* A few were found within the forest at Keki.
- White-bibbed Fruit Dove** ♦ (White-breasted F D) *Ptilinopus rivoli* Seen on New Ireland and in the Huon. See Note.
- Yellow-bibbed Fruit Dove** ♦ *Ptilinopus solomonensis* Glimpsed on Tench and perfect views on Tong.
- Claret-breasted Fruit Dove** ♦ *Ptilinopus viridis* Regularly observed on Manus.
- Orange-bellied Fruit Dove** ♦ *Ptilinopus iozonus* The most common fruit dove on mainland PNG.
- Knob-billed Fruit Dove** ♦ (Red-knobbed F D) *Ptilinopus insolitus* Regular on New Ireland.
- Dwarf Fruit Dove** ♦ *Ptilinopus nainus* Several performed well near Alotau.
- Pacific Imperial Pigeon** ♦ *Ducula pacifica* Good looks at several on Tench.
- Red-knobbed Imperial Pigeon** ♦ *Ducula rubricera* NT Regular in the forests of New Ireland. See Note.
- Purple-tailed Imperial Pigeon** ♦ *Ducula rufigaster* Three all too brief sightings in the Keki-Madang area.
- Finsch's Imperial Pigeon** ♦ *Ducula finschii* NT Good looks at several on New Ireland. See Note.
- Rufescent Imperial Pigeon** ♦ *Ducula chalconota* Scope views of this highland species in the Huon.
- Island Imperial Pigeon** ♦ (Grey I P) *Ducula pistrinaria* Regular on Manus and also on an islet off Normanby.
- Pinon's Imperial Pigeon** ♦ *Ducula pinon* Small numbers were seen in the PNG lowlands. See Note.
- Black Imperial Pigeon** ♦ (Bismarck I P) *Ducula melanochroa* Small numbers were noted in the New Ireland hills.
- Zoe's Imperial Pigeon** ♦ *Ducula zoeae* A few were seen in flight at Keki. See Note.
- Torresian Imperial Pigeon *Ducula spilorrhoea*** Regular on Fergusson, in the lowlands of the mainland. See Note.
- Papuan Mountain Pigeon** ♦ *Gymnophaps albertisii* Small numbers were seen in the highlands of the Huon.



An exquisite male Yellow-bibbed Fruit Dove; beautiful orchids of the Huon mountains (Mark Van Beirs)

- White-necked Coucal** ◊ (Pied C) *Centropus ateralbus* Several good sightings on New Ireland.
- Pheasant Coucal** *Centropus phasianinus* A few encounters.
- Dwarf Koel** ◊ (Black-capped K) *Microdynamis parva* Scope views of a singing male at Keki.
- Pacific Koel** ◊ *Eudynamis orientalis* A single sighting of a male. Regularly heard.
- Channel-billed Cuckoo** *Scythrops novaehollandiae* 80+ were seen on Fergusson and 12 or so in Lae. See Note.
- Shining Bronze Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx lucidus* Good looks at several in the flocks on New Ireland.
- White-crowned Cuckoo** ◊ (W-c Koel) *Cacomantis leucolophus* (H) Regularly heard in the Huon and at Keki.
- Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo** ◊ *Cacomantis castaneiventris* Scope views of this attractive species in the Huon.
- Brush Cuckoo** *Cacomantis variolosus* An often heard voice in the lowlands. Seen well on Manus.
- Papuan Boobook** ◊ *Ninox theomacha* Heard and glimpsed at Keki.
- Manus Boobook** ◊ (M Hawk Owl) *Ninox meeki* Superb looks, just after dusk, at this retiring species on Manus.
- New Ireland Boobook** ◊ (Bismarck Hawk Owl) *Ninox variegata* Fantastic views of a pair on New Ireland.



Uniform and White-rumped Swiftlets were regularly seen (Mark Van Beirs)

Marbled Frogmouth ◇ *Podargus ocellatus* Heard and glimpsed at Keki. A great voice, but sadly not cooperative.

Papuan Frogmouth ◇ *Podargus papuensis* (H) We heard the distinctive song in the Huon and at Keki.

Moustached Treeswift *Hemiprocne mystacea* Regular observations of this very elegant species.

Glossy Swiftlet *Collocalia esculenta* Regular.

Mountain Swiftlet ◇ *Aerodramus hirundinaceus* Small numbers were seen in the Huon.

White-rumped Swiftlet *Aerodramus spodiopygius* Many great looks on Manus.

Uniform Swiftlet *Aerodramus vanikorensis* Common and widespread.

Oriental Dollarbird (Common D) *Eurystomus orientalis* A handful of observations.

Hook-billed Kingfisher ◇ *Melidora macrorrhina* (H) Heard at night at Keki.

Red-breasted Paradise Kingfisher *Tanyiptera nympha* (H) Regularly heard at Keki. We tried, but...

Rufous-bellied Kookaburra ◇ *Dacelo gaudichaud* A few very nice observations of this attractive species.

Islet Kingfisher ◇ *Todiramphus colonus* Good looks at this Collared Kingfisher split off Normanby.



Rainbow Bee-eater and flashy Pesquet's Parrots (Mark Van Beirs)

Melanesian Kingfisher ◇ *Todiramphus tristrami* Another Collared Kingfisher split that was seen on New Ireland.

Beach Kingfisher ◇ *Todiramphus saurophagus* Good views on Tench and near Kavieng. See Note.

Sacred Kingfisher *Todiramphus sanctus* Regular encounters with this Australian migrant.

Yellow-billed Kingfisher ◇ *Syma torotoro* Scope views of this canopy inhabitant upon leaving Keki. See Note.

Mountain Kingfisher ◇ *Syma megarhyncha* (H) Regularly heard in the Huon, but unresponsive.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* A couple of sightings along the Kavieng waterfront.

Blue-tailed Bee-eater *Merops philippinus* One or two were identified at the Wasu airstrip.

Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops ornatus* Regular observations of this Australian migrant.

Blyth's Hornbill ◇ (Papuan H) *Rhyticeros plicatus* Many excellent encounters. See Note.

Oriental Hobby *Falco severus* Good looks at this swift raptor on Tong and in the Huon.

Brown Falcon *Falco berigora* Regular and showy in the Huon.

Peregrine Falcon (Peregrine) *Falco peregrinus* A single bird of the race *ernesti* flew past us in the Huon.

Palm Cockatoo ◇ *Probosciger aterrimus* Great looks near Alotau and also seen at Keki. Impressive!

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita* Many observations of this very vocal species.

Pesquet's Parrot ◇ *Psittichas fulgidus* V After some brief sightings we had perfect looks at Keki. See Note.

Meek's Pygmy Parrot ◇ *Micropsitta meeki* Several observations on Manus, but mainly in flight. See Note.

Finsch's Pygmy Parrot ◇ (Green P P) *Micropsitta finschii* A couple showed quite well in central New Ireland.

Papuan King Parrot ◇ *Alisterus chloropterus* Regular sightings in the Huon. Scope looks at a feeding female.

Eclectus Parrot ◇ *Eclectus roratus* Marvellously common.



Blyth's Hornbills are always impressive (Mark Van Beirs)

Red-cheeked Parrot *Geoffroyus geoffroyi* A handful of observations on mainland PNG.

Song Parrot ◊ (Singing P) *Geoffroyus heteroclitus* Several very nice sightings on New Ireland.

Red-chinned Lorikeet ◊ *Charmosyna rubrigularis* Scope views of feeding birds in the New Ireland lowlands.

Red-flanked Lorikeet ◊ *Charmosyna placentis* Regular encounters on New Ireland. Very smart.

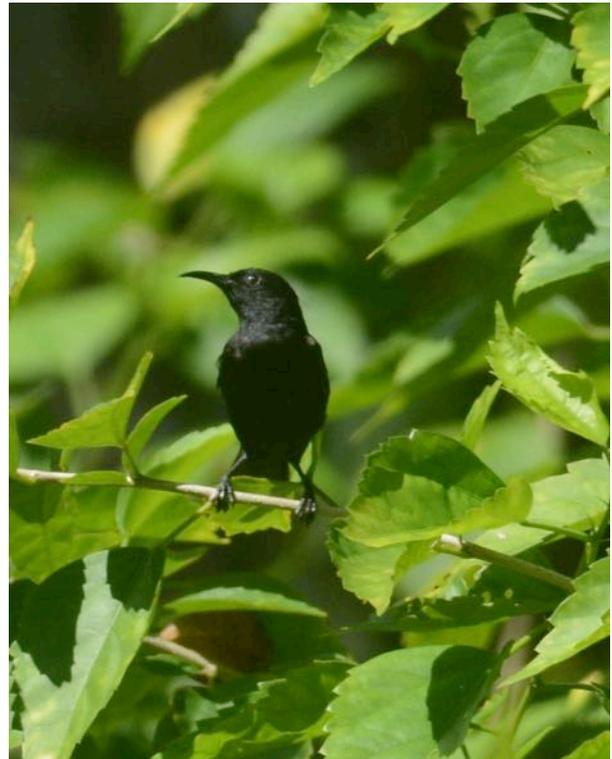
Fairy (Little Red) Lorikeet *Charmosyna pulchella* Several showed well in the Huon highlands.

Papuan Lorikeet ◊ *Charmosyna papou* Just a few in the Huon highlands. Both black and red morphs were noted.

Yellow-billed Lorikeet ◊ *Neopsittacus musschenbroekii* Small numbers showed in the Huon.

Black-capped Lory ◊ (Western B-c L) *Lorius lory* Excellent sightings in the Huon and in the Adelbert range.

Purple-bellied Lory ◊ (Eastern Black-capped L) *Lorius hypoinochrous* Very nice looks in the Alotau area.



Both yellow and red morphs of Dusky Lorries showed unexpectedly well; Bismarck Black Myzomelas favour offshore islets (Mark Van Beirs)

- Dusky Lory** ◇ *Pseudeos fuscata* Fantastic encounters, including bathing birds, at Keki.
- Coconut Lorikeet** *Trichoglossus haematodus* The most common lorikeet of the tour. See Note.
- Edward's Fig Parrot** *Psittaculirostris edwardsii* Great looks at four birds in forest near Madang. See Note.
- Double-eyed Fig Parrot** ◇ *Cyclopsitta diophthalma* Seen well near Alotau and in the lower Huon.
- Orange-fronted Hanging Parrot** ◇ (Papuan H P) *Loriculus aurantiifrons* Scope views of feeding birds near Alotau.
- Bismarck Hanging Parrot** ◇ *Loriculus tener* NT Three sightings on New Ireland.
- Red-bellied Pitta (Blue-breasted P)** *Erythropitta erythrogaster* (H) We heard it on Fergusson and at Keki.
- Superb Pitta** ◇ *Pitta superba* (H) E Heard a few times, in late afternoon, not far from Lorengau. No response, sadly!
- White-eared Catbird** ◇ *Ailuroedus buccoides* (H) We heard the cat-like calls at Keki.
- MacGregor's Bowerbird** ◇ *Amblyornis macgregoriae* Good looks at a female in the Huon. See Note.
- Fire-maned Bowerbird** ◇ *Sericulus bakeri* NT Nice looks at a glorious male in the fig tree at Keki. See Note.
- Fawn-breasted Bowerbird** ◇ *Chlamydera cerviniventris* Good views in the Alotau area.
- White-shouldered Fairywren** ◇ *Malurus alboscapulatus* Several encounters with this perky species.
- Dusky Myzomela** ◇ *Myzomela obscura* A couple of sightings in the Alotau area.
- Red Myzomela** ◇ (Red-tinted Honeyeater) *Myzomela cruentata* Common in the New Ireland forests.
- Papuan Black Myzomela** ◇ *Myzomela nigrita* A few sightings at Keki.
- New Ireland Myzomela** ◇ (Olive-yellow M) *Myzomela pulchella* Good looks at one on New Ireland.
- Bismarck Black Myzomela** ◇ (Ebony M) *Myzomela pammelaena* Common on Tench and on Tong islands.
- Red-collared Myzomela** ◇ *Myzomela rosenbergii* Regular observations in the highlands of the Huon.
- Rufous-backed Honeyeater** ◇ *Ptiloprora guisei* Several nice encounters in the Huon.
- Plain Honeyeater** ◇ *Pycnopygius ixoides* Fairly common at Keki. Unobtrusive.
- Marbled Honeyeater** ◇ *Pycnopygius cinereus* Several showed well in the Huon.
- Streak-headed Honeyeater** ◇ *Pycnopygius stictocephalus* Nice looks near Alotau and also in the Huon.
- Silver-eared Honeyeater** ◇ *Lichmera alboauricularis* Regular in the Alotau gardens.
- Tawny-breasted Honeyeater** ◇ *Xanthotis flaviventer* A few were seen on Fergusson.
- New Guinea Friarbird** ◇ *Philemon novaeguineae* Regular and vocal on the mainland of PNG. See Note.
- Manus Friarbird** ◇ (White-naped F) *Philemon albitorques* It was common and noisy on Manus. See Note.
- Long-billed Honeyeater** ◇ *Melilestes megarhynchus* A couple were seen upon leaving Keki.



The Spangled Honeyeater is endemic to the Huon peninsula (tour participant Charles Davies); White-backed Woodswallows are restricted to the Bismarcks (Mark Van Beirs)

- Spangled Honeyeater** ◇ *Melipotes ater* Regular observations of this nice endemic in the Huon. See Note.
- Black-throated Honeyeater** ◇ *Caligavis subfrenata* Vocal and quite sneaky in the Huon.
- Cinnamon-browed Melidectes** ◇ *Melidectes ochromelas* Another vocal species of the Huon highlands.
- Varied Honeyeater** *Gavicalis versicolor* Obvious in the Madang gardens and also seen the east.
- Scrub Honeyeater** ◇ (S White-eared Meliphaga) *Meliphaga albonotata* (H) We heard it in the Huon.
- Mimic Honeyeater** ◇ *Meliphaga analoga* Regular encounters. See Note.
- Puff-backed Honeyeater** ◇ (P-b Meliphaga) *Meliphaga aruensis* Nice looks at one on Fergusson.
- Rusty Mouse-Warbler** ◇ *Crateroscelis murina* Regularly heard at Keki and seen once or twice.
- Buff-faced Scrubwren** ◇ *Sericornis perspicillatus* Fairly common in the Huon highlands.
- Brown-breasted Gerygone** ◇ *Gerygone ruficollis* Regular in the Huon highlands. See Note.
- Yellow-bellied Gerygone** ◇ *Gerygone chrysogaster* (H) We heard it on Fergusson.
- Green-backed Gerygone** ◇ *Gerygone chloronota* This foothill species was regularly heard and also seen.
- Fairy Gerygone** ◇ *Gerygone palpebrosa* Several nice sightings.
- Mid-mountain Berrypecker** ◇ *Melanocharis longicauda* Fairly common in the montane forests of the Huon.
- Fan-tailed Berrypecker** ◇ *Melanocharis versteri* Several excellent encounters in the Huon.
- Tit Berrypecker** ◇ *Oreocharis arfaki* Several parties showed well in the Huon forests.
- Spotted Jewel-babbler** ◇ *Ptilorrhoa leucosticta* One was seen while we were trying to attract Forbes's Forest Rail.
- Brown-headed Jewel-babbler** ◇ *Ptilorrhoa geislerorum* Brief looks at a male at Keki. See Note.
- Black-breasted Boatbill** ◇ *Machaerirhynchus nigripectus* Several lovely encounters in the Huon forests.
- White-breasted Woodswallow** *Artamus leucorhynchus* Regular observations.
- White-backed Woodswallow** ◇ (Bismarck W) *Artamus insignis* Perfect views in the New Ireland highlands.
- Mountain Peltops** ◇ *Peltops montanus* Several showed well in the Huon highlands. See Note.
- Hooded Butcherbird** ◇ *Cracticus cassicus* Quite common and very vocal.
- Mottled Berryhunter** ◇ *Rhagologus leucostigma* Several nice observations in the Huon forests.
- Barred Cuckooshrike (Yellow-eyed C)** *Coracina lineata* Regularly observed in the lowlands of the mainland.
- Boyer's Cuckooshrike** ◇ *Coracina boyeri* Fairly common in the lowland forests of the mainland. See Note.
- White-bellied Cuckooshrike** *Coracina papuensis* Widespread and common.
- Manus Cuckooshrike** ◇ *Coracina ingens* Good looks at this Manus endemic. See Note.



A female Common Cicadabird foraging in a casuarina; the Mangrove Golden Whistler inhabits offshore islets (Mark Van Beirs)

Common Cicadabird *Coracina tenuirostris* Male and female showed well on Manus.

Grey-capped Cicadabird ◊ *Coracina remota* Regular in the New Ireland forests.

Black-shouldered Cicadabird ◊ (Papuan C) *Coracina incerta* A single bird showed well at Keki.

Black-browed Triller ◊ *Lalage atrovirens* Good looks at this vocal species at Keki and Ohu.

Varied Triller *Lalage leucomela* Regular observations in the Alotau area.



A male Bismarck Whistler; children on Tench (Mark Van Beirs)

Rufous-naped Whistler ◇ *Aleadryas rufinucha* (H) Several were heard in the Huon highlands.

Brown-backed Whistler ◇ *Pachycephala modesta* A male showed well in the Huon highlands.

Grey Whistler *Pachycephala simplex* Small numbers were noted in the lowland forests of the mainland.

Sclater's Whistler ◇ (Hill Golden W) *Pachycephala soror* A few were seen in the hill forests of the Huon.

Bismarck Whistler ◇ *Pachycephala citreogaster* Regular on New Ireland and on Manus.

Mangrove Golden Whistler ◇ (Black-tailed W) *Pachycephala melanura* Good looks were had on several islets.

Regent Whistler ◇ *Pachycephala schlegelii* This beauty showed well in the Huon forests.

Little Shrikethrush *Colluricincla megarhyncha* (H) Heard a few times at Keki and Ohu. See Note.

Grey Shrikethrush *Colluricincla harmonica* Regular and vocal in the Alotau area.

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* A single bird was seen in the Huon highlands.

Hooded Pitohui ◇ *Pitohui dichrous* Several were observed near our accommodation in the Huon. See Note.

Brown Oriole ◇ *Oriolus szalayi* Nice looks at two in the Huon. Also heard at Ohu.

Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus bracteatus* A handful of sightings of this well-known bird.

Paradise Drongo ◇ *Dicrurus megarhynchus* NT Excellent views of this New Ireland speciality. See Note.

Willie Wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys* Very common.

Northern Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura rufiventris* Small numbers were noted.

Sooty Thicket Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura threnothorax* Heard and seen by some at Keki.

White-bellied Thicket Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura leucothorax* (H) We heard it in the lower reaches of the Huon.

Black Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura atra* A few were seen in the montane forests of the Huon.

Chestnut-bellied Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura hyperythra* One or two were seen at Keki.

Friendly Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura albolimbata* Regular and showy in the montane forests of the Huon.

Dimorphic Fantail *Rhipidura brachyrhyncha* A single bird was found in the higher reaches of the Huon.



Willie Wagtails are delightfully inquisitive; we found Island Monarchs on three locations (Mark Van Beirs)

Bismarck Fantail ◇ (B Rufous F) *Rhipidura dahlia* All too brief looks of one in a flock on New Ireland.

Manus Fantail ◇ (Admiralty Rufous F) *Rhipidura semirubra* V Splendid encounters of this rarity on Tong island.

Rufous Fantail *Rhipidura rufifrons* One or two were found on an islet off Normanby.

Black Monarch ◇ *Symposiachrus axillaris* A single bird showed all too briefly in the Huon.

Spot-winged Monarch ◇ *Symposiachrus guttula* Two were seen in a mixed party on Fergusson.

Manus Monarch ◇ (Admiralty Pied M) *Symposiachrus infelix* NT A few on Manus, but better on Tong.

Island Monarch ◇ *Monarcha cinerascens* This tramp species was easy to see on Tench and on Tong. See Note.



Black-faced and Golden Monarchs are real jewels (Mark Van Beirs)

- Black-faced Monarch** *Monarcha melanopsis* Very nice looks at this migrant on Fergusson.
- Golden Monarch** ◊ *Carterornis chrysomela* Seen both on New Ireland and on the mainland.
- Ochre-collared Monarch** ◊ ++ (Rufous-collared M) *Arses insularis* Several were found at Keki. See Note.
- Leaden Flycatcher** *Myiagra rubecula* A female was seen near Alotau.
- Satin Flycatcher** *Myiagra cyanoleuca* Good looks at a male on Fergusson.
- Shining Flycatcher** *Myiagra alecto* Regular encounters all along our route.
- Grey Crow** ◊ (Bare-eyed C) *Corvus tristis* Fairly common and always vocal.
- Torresian Crow** *Corvus orru* Quite common on mainland New Guinea.
- Bismarck Crow** ◊ (Island C) *Corvus insularis* Small numbers were seen on New Ireland.
- Glossy-mantled Manucode** ◊ *Manucodia ater* Two showed well along a forest edge near Alotau.
- Crinkle-collared Manucode** ◊ *Manucodia chalybatus* Two were found near our lodging in the Huon. See Note.
- Curl-crested Manucode** ◊ *Manucodia comrii* One of the target birds on Fergusson. Maybe great looks! See Note.
- Huon Astrapia** ◊ *Astrapia rothschildi* Great looks at these gorgeous birds in the Huon.
- Wahnes's Parotia** ◊ *Parotia wahnesi* NT The Bird of the Trip. Scope studies of a young male and a female. See Note.
- Superb Bird-of-paradise** ◊ *Lophorina superba* Several sightings in the Huon, but always a bit too brief.
- Growling Riflebird** ◊ (Eastern R) *Ptiloris intercedens* A very distant male was scoped in the Huon. See Note.
- Magnificent Bird-of-paradise** ◊ *Diphyllodes magnificus* Great looks at a displaying male from the hide at Keki.
- Lesser Bird-of-paradise** ◊ *Paradisaea minor* Males showed well in the scope at Keki. Far away, but very nice.
- Goldie's Bird-of-paradise** ◊ *Paradisaea decora* V Males showed very well in the forest on Fergusson. See Note.
- Emperor Bird-of-paradise** ◊ *Paradisaea guilielmi* NT Scope views of distantly displaying males. See Note.
- Banded Yellow Robin** ◊ (Olive Yellow R) *Poecilodryas placens* NT Several were seen at Keki. See Note.
- Black-throated Robin** ◊ *Poecilodryas albonotata* Marvellous looks at several in the higher reaches of the Huon.
- Slaty Robin** ◊ (Blue-grey R) *Peneothello cyanus* A few observations in the Huon.
- Canary Flyrobin** ◊ (C Flycatcher) *Microeca papuana* A single sighting in the Huon highlands.
- Garnet Robin** *Eugerygone rubra* A female was found foraging high in a forest giant in the Huon.
- Horsfield's Bush Lark** (Australasian B L) *Mirafra javanica* Several showed well at Lae airport.
- Pacific Swallow** *Hirundo tahitica* Regular observations.
- Island Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus maforensis* Small numbers were noted in the Huon highlands.
- Clamorous Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus stentoreus* Two were singing away at Kavieng airport.
- Golden-headed Cisticola** (Bright-capped C) *Cisticola exilis* Several were seen at Kavieng airport.
- Black-fronted White-eye** ◊ *Zosterops minor* Regular in the Huon hills.
- Bismarck White-eye** ◊ (Black-headed W-e) *Zosterops hypoxanthus* Regular on New Ireland and on Manus.
- Papuan White-eye** ◊ (New Guinea W-e) *Zosterops novaeguineae* Small numbers were found in the Huon.
- Louisiade White-eye** ◊ *Zosterops griseotinctus* A dozen or so showed well on an islet off Normanby.



The Curl-crested Manucode is restricted to the eastern islands (tour participant Charles Davies); Huon Astrapias are a feature of the Huon forests (Mark Van Beirs)

Metallic Starling *Aplonis metallica* Common and widespread.

Singing Starling ◊ *Aplonis cantoroides* Fairly common. Usually near villages.

Atoll Starling ◊ *Aplonis feadensis* NT Small numbers were seen well on Tench island. See Note.

Yellow-faced Myna ◊ *Mino dumontii* A handful were seen at Keki and in the Alotau area.

Long-tailed Myna ◊ (Melanesian M) *Mino kreffti* Fairly regular on New Ireland.

Pied Bush Chat (Pied Chat) *Saxicola caprata* Seen at Alotau and in the Huon. See Note.

Red-capped Flowerpecker ◊ *Dicaeum geelvinkianum* Fairly common on mainland PNG.

Red-banded Flowerpecker ◊ (Bismarck F) *Dicaeum eximium* Quite regular on New Ireland.

Black Sunbird ◊ *Leptocoma sericea* Regular sightings. Smart when seen well.

Olive-backed Sunbird (Yellow-bellied S) *Cinnyris jugularis* Regular.



Long-tailed Mynas were easy to see on New Ireland; an unobtrusive Island Leaf Warbler in the mountain forest of the Huon (Mark Van Beirs)

House Sparrow (introduced) *Passer domesticus* Only seen in Port Moresby.
Eurasian Tree Sparrow (introduced) *Passer montanus* Seen at Port Moresby, Lae and Madang.
Great-billed Mannikin ◊ (Grand M) *Lonchura grandis* Nice looks of this beauty at Alotau airport.
Hunstein's Mannikin ◊ (Mottled Munia) *Lonchura hunsteini* Several showed well at Kavieng airport.
Chestnut-breasted Mannikin *Lonchura castaneothorax* Regular in the Alotau area.
Buff-bellied Mannikin ◊ (Bismarck M) *Lonchura melaena* Just a few in central New Ireland. See Note.



New Ireland scenery (Mark Van Beirs)

MAMMALS

Common Spotted Cuscus *Spilocuscus maculatus* One was found at night at Keki. Nice!

Admiralty Flying Fox *Pteropus admiralitatum* A few were identified on Manus.

Great Flying Fox (Bismarck F F) *Pteropus neohibernicus* Common all along our route.

Indo-Pacific Bottle-nosed Dolphin *Tursiops aduncus* Several family parties were seen.



Mammals are hard to spot in PNG, but beetles (here a weevil of the genus *Eupholus* - family Curculionidae) and dragonflies (here a female *Agrionoptera longitudinalis*) abound (Mark Van Beirs)



A market scene in the Huon (Mark Van Beirs)

NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

Heinroth's Shearwater *Puffinus heinrothi*

This rarely recorded species is only known from the Solomon Islands and the seas surrounding New Britain (Bismarck Archipelago) and Bougainville (Papua New Guinea). No nest has ever been found, but it is presumed to breed in the mountains of these islands. The total population is estimated at between 350 and 1,500 birds. The species is named after Oskar Heinroth (1871–1945), German zoologist, collector in the Pacific and author.

Red-footed Booby *Sula sula*

Most birds were of the very attractive white morph, but we also encountered small numbers of brown morphs and white-tailed brown morphs. The race is *rubripes*.

Long-tailed Honey Buzzard *Henicopernis longicauda*

The recorded prey items include a variety of insects (also wasps), tree lizards, birds and bird eggs. The genus *Henicopernis* is endemic to New Guinea/New Britain and shows a very distinctive wing-shape.

Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus*

The name refers to Brahma, the most absolute, abstract form of God and the creator of the universe in the Hindu religion.

Slender-billed Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia amboinensis*

This species is named after the island of Ambon (= Amboina) in Indonesia.

Mackinlay's Cuckoo-Dove (Spot-breasted C-D) *Macropygia mackinlayi*

This is a rare, small-island tramp in the Bismarcks but common (in the absence of any other cuckoo-doves) in the Solomons and Vanuatu. It is sometimes called Spot-breasted Cuckoo-Dove. Archibald Mackinlay (1850-1924) was a Scottish explorer and naturalist.

Great Cuckoo-Dove (Long-tailed C-D) *Reinwardtoena reinwardtii*

The species and the genus are named after Caspar Reinwardt, a Dutch ornithologist and collector, who worked in Java between 1817 and 1822.

Stephan's Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps stephani*

Honoré Jacquinot (1815-87) was a French surgeon serving on board expeditions on the *Coquille* and the *Astrolabe* led by his brother, the explorer Vice-Admiral Charles Hector Jacquinot. Honoré collected the bird and is believed to have asked Jacques Pucheran who described it in 1853 to name it after their father Étienne Stephan Jacquinot.



Tench is heaven for Nicobar Pigeons (Mark Van Beirs)

Nicobar Pigeon *Caloenas nicobarica*

We also saw several birds on the mainland of New Ireland. Definitely one of those must see birds!!! It is named after the tiny, for westerners inaccessible islands of Nicobar, situated to the north of Sumatra in the Andaman Sea.

Red-knobbed Imperial Pigeon *Ducula rubricera*

No-one knows why red knobs are so fashionable in the Bismarcks.

Finsch's Imperial Pigeon *Ducula finschii*

It is endemic to New Britain and New Ireland and is named after Friedrich Hermann Otto Finsch (1839-1917), a German diplomat, administrator, ornithologist, collector and author. He was appointed Imperial Commissioner for the German colony known as 'Kaiser-Wilhelmland' that is now PNG.

Pinon's Imperial Pigeon *Ducula pinon*

The bird is named after L. Pinon, wife of French explorer Captain Louis Freycinet.

Zoe's Imperial Pigeon *Ducula zoeae*

The bird is named after Zoë Lesson, wife of the French ornithologist René Lesson.

Torresian Imperial Pigeon *Ducula spilorrhoa*

The Spanish navigator Luis Vaez de Torres lent his name to the Torres Strait that separates Papua New Guinea from Australia. He discovered the passage in 1606.



A party of Channel-billed Cuckoos on Fergusson (Mark Van Beirs)

Channel-billed Cuckoo *Scythrops novaehollandiae*

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 even (strangely) Collared Sparrowhawk.

Beach Kingfisher *Halcyon saurophaga*

The scientific epithet refers to its lizard-eating characteristics (*sauros* = a lizard, *phagos* = a glutton, an eater, in Greek).

Yellow-billed Kingfisher *Halcyon torotoro*

The scientific epithet seems to be an onomatopoeic New Guinea aboriginal name for this species.

Blyth's Hornbill (Papuan Hornbill) *Rhyticeros plicatus*

An indicator of big fig trees and low hunting levels, we saw this magnificent bird with its evocative calls and whirring wings all over our route. We saw the race *dampieri* on New Ireland and *jungei* on mainland New Guinea. Edward Blyth (1810-73) was an English zoologist and Curator of the Museum of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

Pesquet's Parrot (Vulturine P) *Psitttrichas fulgidus*

This splendid species is heavily hunted for its red feathers. It is better to use the name Pesquet's Parrot, as Vulturine Parrot *Pionopsitta vulturina* is a Neotropical species of Eastern Amazonian Brazil.

Meek's Pygmy-Parrot *Micropsitta meeki*

It is endemic to the Admiralty Islands and St Matthias. The species is named after Albert S. Meek (1871-1943), English explorer and collector in New Guinea, the Solomons and Australia and author of "A Naturalist in Cannibal Land".

Coconut Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus*

The common lowland lorikeet on the mainland of Papua New Guinea (*intermedius* & *micropteryx*), New Ireland (*massena*) and Manus (*flavicans*). The species has been renamed following the splitting off of Rainbow Lorikeet as *T. moluccanus*.

Edward's Fig Parrot *Psittaculirostris edwardsii*

The smart-looking bird is named after Alphonse Milne-Edwards, a 19th century French zoologist.



One of the highlights of the tour was this splendid male Fire-maned Bowerbird (Charles Davies)

Fire-maned Bowerbird *Sericulus bakeri*

The Fire-maned Bowerbird is endemic to the Adelbert Mountains in central north Papua New Guinea, has a very restricted range of only 570 km² and occupies a narrow altitudinal band between 700 and 1400m. It is definitely worth reading the section on this species in 'Threatened Birds of the World'. The Fire-maned Bowerbird is one of those MUST SEE birds! The scientific epithet refers to George Fisher Baker Jr (1878-1937), a US banker and trustee of the American Museum of Natural history.

New Guinea Friarbird *Philemon novaeguineae*

It is often lumped with Helmeted Friarbird *P. buceroides* of Australia.

Manus Friarbird (White-naped F) *Philemon albitorques*

The avian symbol of Manus Island, locally called the Chauka. One of the better-looking ones of the genus.

Spangled Honeyeater *Melipotes ater*

Melipotes honeyeaters are unique in not having a brush tip to the tongue. They are mainly berry eaters.

Mimic Honeyeater (Mimic Meliphaga) *Meliphaga analoga*

The *Meliphaga* honeyeaters are surely the most difficult New Guinea species complex to identify. They share features and vocalizations and there seem to be few reliable criteria for identification!

Brown-breasted Gerygone *Gerygone ruficollis*

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.

Brown-headed Jewel-babbler (Dimorphic Jewel-babbler) *Ptilorrhoa geislerorum*

This is a recent split from Blue Jewel-babbler *Ptilorrhoa caerulescens* and HBW calls it Dimorphic Jewel-Babbler, mainly because the totally rufous female is so strikingly different from the blue male. This magnificent species is restricted to northeastern New Guinea, ranging from the Adelbert Mountains east to Collingwood Bay. Bruno Geisler was a German taxidermist and collector in New Guinea in the late 19th century.

Mountain Peltops *Peltops montanus*

Peltops is derived from the Greek, *pelte* meaning small shield and *ops* face thus referring to the distinctive cheek patches. The two species of Peltops are now usually considered to belong with the Butcherbirds, where before they were thought to belong with the Woodswallows.

Boyer's Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina boyeri*

Joseph Emmanuel P. Boyer (1815-?) was a French sea captain who explored in the area with Dumont d'Urville.

Manus Cuckooshrike *Coracina ingens*

This is a recent split from White-bellied Cuckooshrike (see vol 10 of the Handbook of the Birds of the World) and is now another Manus Island endemic, although Dutson doesn't consider it as a separate species. Its larger size and stouter bill are quite obvious.

Little Shrikethrush *Colluricincla megarhyncha*

Like the pitohuis and the ifrita this bird can also contain traces of poison.

Hooded Pitohui *Pitohui dichrous*

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 that not all individuals or indeed populations of pitohuis are poisonous. The toxin is derived from a small beetle that forms part of the bird's diet. It is thought that other black and rufous New Guinea birds mimic their plumage for protection.

Paradise Drongo (Ribbon-tailed/New Ireland D) *Dicrurus megarhynchus*

With its striking tail, this must be the best drongo in existence!! The bird of New Ireland!

Island Monarch *Monarcha cinerascens*

This species is found on tiny islands from the Moluccas to the Solomons.



A gaudy male Ochre-collared Monarch (tour participant Charles Davies); the Curl-crested Manucode has a peculiar flight (Mark Van Beirs)

Ochre-collared Monarch (Rufous-collared M) *Arses insularis*

This species is restricted to the lowlands of northern New Guinea. Arses was a king of the Persians (4th century BC).

Crinkle-collared Manucode *Manucodia chalybata*

The name Manucode is derived from the old Javanese (Malay) manuk dewata, bird of the gods.

Curl-crested Manucode *Manucodia comrii*

It is endemic to the D'Entrecasteaux and the nearby Trobriand Islands. It is by far the largest and the most appealing of the five species of manucode.

Wahnes's Parotia *Parotia wahnesi*

This shy species is endemic to the higher reaches of the Huon peninsula (1100-1700m) and the nearby Adelbert range (1300-1600m). Carl Wahnes (1835-1910) was a German naturalist and collector in New Guinea.

Growling (Eastern) Riflebird *Ptiloris intercedens*

East New Guinea and north Queensland birds were split by Beehler *et al.* in the OUP 'Birds of Paradise' family guide, based on their call: a deep throaty growl as opposed to the clear and very loud wolf whistle of central New Guinea birds.



We had a fantastic time observing displaying Goldie's Birds of Paradise (tour participant Charles Davies)

Goldie's Bird of Paradise *Paradisaea decora*

Long thought to be restricted to the hills, our man on the spot, David Mitchell, found this lowland population only recently and is carrying out an in depth study. This species is endemic to the islands of Fergusson and Normanby in the D'Entrecasteaux archipelago.

Emperor Bird of Paradise *Paradisaea guilielmi*

This species has the best voice of any *Paradisaea*. The scientific epithet *guilielmi* (= William in latin) refers to Willem III, Emperor of Germany and King of Prussia (1859-1891).

Banded Yellow Robin (Olive Yellow Robin) *Poecilodryas placens*

Its song was one of the main components of the dawn chorus at Keki Lodge. It only occurs in widely scattered localities on New Guinea. Have a look at the eye-opening distribution map on p470 in volume 12 of Handbook of the Birds of the World.

Atoll Starling *Aplonis feadensis*

This extreme small island specialist has a total population of just a few thousand birds and its whole range encompasses only 44 km²!

Pied Bush Chat *Saxicola caprata*

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*.

Buff-bellied Mannikin (Bismarck M) *Lonchura melaena*

It was long thought to be a sedentary New Britain endemic, till a small population appeared on Bougainville, where it was named as a separate subspecies that now appears to have died out. Their occurrence on New Ireland is fairly recent and it seems to be spreading there.



A petrol station on New Ireland; a male skink on Tench (Mark Van Beirs)

BIRD OF THE TRIP

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| 1) Wahnes's Parotia | 17 points |
| 2) Goldie's Bird of Paradise | 16 points |
| 3) Fire-maned Bowerbird | 12 points |
| 4) Emperor Bird of Paradise | 11 points |
| Magnificent Bird of Paradise | 11 points |
| 6) Common Spotted Cuscus | 10 points |



Our accommodation on the beach at Dalom (New Ireland)(Mark Van Beirs)



D'Entrecasteaux scenery (Mark Van Beirs)