



Who could not be impressed by the marvelous Sclater's Crowned Pigeons of PNG?! All photos by Joshua Bergmark.

ULTIMATE PAPUA NEW GUINEA I

14 – 31 JULY / 4 AUGUST 2019

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When one thinks of New Guinea, the mesmerising displays of various extravagant birds-of-paradise immediately come to mind, and a trip to this exciting and remote region is usually high on the wish-list of all birders! This time everybody was visiting the island for the first time, and none will soon forget the cacophony of sounds which erupted from the Greater Bird-of-Paradise display tree as we witnessed our first full display, only a few hundred metres from where David Attenborough's segments were first filmed in the 1990's! On the other hand, some species have only rarely been seen doing what they do best, with the courtship of Flame Bowerbird filmed properly for the first time just a few years ago by the BBC. Following in their footsteps, we had an out-of-this world experience with the very same glowing male at his bower, showing off to a female

with mechanical wing movements and a purple berry in his mouth! Not to get ahead of myself, this tour was full of other exceptional birds, both in terms of beauty, and rarity. Varirata National Park saw us score the cryptic Forest Bittern, a curious Pheasant Pigeon in uncharacteristically full view, the striking Painted Quailthrush sauntering across the track, a rare Spotted Honeyeater mixing with Elegant Meliphagas, some bright Goldenface, the restricted White-bellied Whistler, a retiring Drongo Fantail, and the long-reliable Barred Owl-nightjar in his hollow. A glittering Brown-headed Paradise Kingfisher was one of seven Kingfisher species we saw in the park, along with Dwarf Fruit-Dove, Papuan King Parrot, the poisonous Hooded Pitohui, Growling Riflebird, Crinkle-collared Manucode, and of course the famous lek of Raggiana Bird-of-paradise. Tabubil provided us with some very scarce species like the sinkhole-dwelling Greater Melampitta, a daytime Shovel-billed Kookaburra, beautiful Queen Carola's Parotia, an Ornate Fruit-Dove, two chortling Wallace's Fairywren, the vulturine Pesquet's Parrot, a confiding Chestnut-backed Jewel-Babbler for the whole group, one Obscure Berrypecker, and the striking Torrent-lark. Magnificent Bird-of-paradise, White-crowned Cuckoo, Mountain Pelops, Rufous-backed Fantail, Golden Cuckooshrike, Slaty-chinned Longbill, Torrent Flyrobin and Orange-breasted Fig-Parrots helped support the cast! Along the Fly River in pristine lowland rainforest we had several tour (or even life) highlights, with Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise and King Bird-of-paradise in their display trees, two mysterious New Guinea Flightless Rail at a hide, one absolutely stonking Spangled Owl-nightjar, both the scarce Wallace's Owl-nightjar and Papuan Hawk-Owl, Blue Jewel-Babbler walking on the track, and who could forget the magnificent Sclater's Crowned Pigeons!!! Restricted and scarce specialties included White-bellied Pitohui, Long-billed Cuckoo, Hook-billed Kingfisher, Hooded Monarch, Papuan Babbler, Golden Myna, and extended scope views of a flushed Black-billed Brushturkey.



This male Flame Bowerbird put on such an exquisite show to his attending female (you can see her head in the bower)!

For a video of this astounding display put on for us, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8tYTAIXKhA>



The almost entirely unknown Starry Owlet-nightjar was a Birdquest lifer, but this one sat above us wagging its tail unconcernedly!

The highlands beckoned, and the plethora of cloud forest birds was almost too much to handle! Two different male Blue Bird-of-paradise showed exceptionally well on their usual hill, King of Saxony Bird-of-paradise waved his antennae, and males of both Princess Stephanie's *Astrapia* and Ribbon-tailed *Astrapias* exhibited their exorbitant tails, the latter even visited the feeding table at Kumul Lodge, alongside Brehm's Tiger Parrot and a Bronze Ground Dove! Nearby a pair of splendid Crested Satinbirds and some Mountain Firetails gave themselves up, while Forbes's Forest Rail, Orange-crowned Fairywren and Feline Owlet-nightjar behaved impeccably. Males of Lesser Bird-of-paradise, Greater Lophorina, and Brown Sicklebill all gave excellent looks, but as representatives of endemic families, Blue-capped Irit, Wattled Ploughbill, Tit Berrypecker, Crested Berrypecker and Loria's Satinbird were just as important! Yellow-breasted Bowerbird and Black-headed Whistler are key targets here, and one exciting flowering tree held Goldie's Lorikeet, Papuan Lorikeet, Orange-billed Lorikeet, and Yellow-billed Lorikeet! Rondon Ridge was hard work in the dry and hot conditions, but we still found most of the key birds we used to see at the now closed Ambua Lodge - Madarasz's Tiger Parrot, Yellowish-streaked Honeyeater, Black Pitohui and Lesser Ground Robin in particular were very confiding, but Streaked Berrypecker and Macgregor's Bowerbird less so! Black Monarch, Grey Thornbill, Papuan Boobook, and a Pygmy Eagle were all good pickups here. Back in Port Moresby the Pacific Adventist University held Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove, Grey-headed Mannikin, Black-backed Butcherbird, Fawn-breasted Bowerbird and Papuan Frogmouth as our key targets, amidst some nice Australian waterfowl and open woodland species.



The New Britain form of Bismarck Pitta took some tracking down, but the wait was worth it!

No trip to PNG is complete without a sortie to New Britain, where our selection of endemics and near-endemics included the amazing and now very un-mythical Golden Masked Owl, Bismarck Pitta, Yellowish Imperial Pigeon, Finsch's Imperial Pigeon, Sclater's Myzomela, Black-bellied Myzomela, Ashy Myzomela, Black-tailed Monarch, and no less than three endemic kingfishers - New Britain Dwarf Kingfisher, White-mantled Kingfisher, and Black-capped Paradise Kingfisher. A roosting New Britain Boobook, Blue-eyed Cockatoos, some wet Violaceous Coucal, White-necked Coucal, Red-banded Flowerpecker, Melanesian Megapode, fabulous perched views of Nicobar Pigeon, and a restricted Heinroth's Shearwater were all highlights, but the more widespread Beach Kingfisher, Melanesian Kingfisher, Purple-bellied Lory, and the plentiful Eclectus Parrots were of course appreciated too. In all the tour recorded 381 species of birds, which included some big numbers! 36 honeyeaters; 34 pigeons; 25 parrots; 19 kingfishers; 18 birds-of-paradise; 17 cuckoos; 15 nightbirds; 13

robins; 11 cuckooshrikes; 9 fantails; 8 whistlers, 5 scrubwrens; 4 bowerbirds; 3 longbills; 2 mouse-warblers; and 1 brushturkey in a dead tree! The mammal list was typically short, but a nice Pygmy Ringtail showed well at Kumul, and the huge Bismarck Flying Foxes awed us on New Britain.



The regular Barred Owlet-nightjar was yet again easy to find in his favourite hollow at Varirata!

First on the agenda was Varirata National Park. Along the way we encountered Pied Herons, a Blue-winged Kookaburra sitting politely in a tree with a Sacred Kingfisher, and one Azure Kingfisher on some nearby rocks. We arrived early and some birding around the clearing produced Boyer's Cuckooshrike, Red-capped Flowerpecker, Green-backed Honeyeater, Mimic Meliphaga, Tawny-breasted Honeyeater, Zoe's Imperial Pigeon, Pink-spotted Fruit-Dove, an endearing Dwarf Fruit-Dove, the always stupendous Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, and our first female Raggiana Bird-of-paradise. Entering the trails, a Chestnut-backed Jewel Babbler showed only to the leader, and a Papuan Scrub Robin stayed heard only. To make up for these frustrations, Brown-headed Paradise Kingfisher and Papuan Dwarf Kingfisher positively glowed in the dim forest. Growling Riflebirds proved tricky for now, only giving flight views, but some nice flocks tallied up the poisonous Hooded Pitohui, Rusty Pitohui, Brown Oriole, Chestnut-bellied Fantail, Yellow-bellied Gerygone, Fairy Gerygone, the endemic Papuan form of Spangled Drongo, Spot-winged Monarch, Golden Monarch, Black-faced Monarch, Black Berrypecker, Grey Whistler, and an unexpected Olive Flyrobin. While a Sooty Thicket Fantail played hard to get for a while, both it and the comparatively easy Barred Owlet-nightjar were star performers in the end. Lunch was happily disrupted by a party of Grey Crows before we moved to the open savanna woodland on the entrance road - here we soon had excellent views of the handsome restricted endemic White-bellied Whistler. Despite constant drizzle, we enjoyed a fabulous Barking Owl, the dapper Moustached Treeswift, colourful Black-capped Lory and Coconut Lorikeet, Amboyna Cuckoo-Dove, Hooded Butcherbird, New Guinea Friarbird, and a suite of Australian species including Forest Kingfisher (our 7th kingfisher for the day!), Rainbow Bee-eater, Lemon-bellied Flyrobin, Grey Shrikethrush, White-throated Honeyeater, Varied Triller, Black-faced Cuckooshrike, Barred Cuckooshrike, and perched views of both the eclectic Eclectus Parrot and Red-cheeked Parrot.

Our flight the next morning was a little delayed, but after a late lunch in Kiunga we drove north to the foothills of the Star Mountains for a three-night stay at a perpetually wet Tabubil. Our first session in the evening was no exception, but despite the drizzle we enjoyed a pair of smart Torrent Flyrobin at length. The following morning at Dablin Creek Road started off similarly wet, but soon enough the sun came out and immediately the birds appeared. Pride of place went to good numbers of both male and female Queen Carola's Parotia - we had good views of this restricted BoP coming and going from fruiting trees through the morning. We were lucky to find a male Magnificent Bird-of-paradise which showed well, and nearby the highly site-specific Obscure Berrypecker was found giving his strident call. A short foray into the forest gave us an outstanding encounter with Chestnut-backed Jewel Babbler which was seen well by the whole group, while a mix of Mountain Meliphaga, Scrub Meliphaga, Long-billed Honeyeater and Ornate Melidectes kept us busy. From a few strategic viewpoints we picked up Long-tailed Honey Buzzard, Mountain Peltops, Capped White-eye, Grey-headed Cuckooshrike, Black-shouldered Cicadabird, Black Butcherbird, perched Double-eyed Fig Parrots and Orange-breasted Fig-Parrots, plus some decidedly astronomical Blue-collared Parrots and Red-breasted Pygmy Parrots. The afternoon was again damp but we did have close studies of the endemic Little Ringed Plover form which is resident on rocky streams throughout New Guinea. Towards dusk we lured in a White-eared Bronze Cuckoo, some Southern Variable Pitohui, and as a finale brought out a stunning male Shovel-billed Kookaburra which landed on a completely open branch so that we could perfectly admire his glistening blue tail and enormous beak. My first ever walk away views of this monster kingfisher!



The interestingly named Obscure Berrypecker is known only from a few sites in New Guinea, the most reliable being Dablin Creek!

Visiting Kivitembip Forest the next morning was somewhat disheartening - a lot had been cut down since last year, including the best flowering trees! Nevertheless birding here was still excellent, with a pair of Wallace's Fairywren chortling away in full view and some fantastic perched Pesquet's Parrots being the highlights. Otherwise, we added many new birds at the clearing which included White-crowned Cuckoo, Golden Cuckooshrike, Streak-headed Honeyeater, Rufous-backed Fantail, Northern Fantail, the uncommon Ornate Fruit-Dove, Beautiful Fruit-Dove, and perched Papuan Mountain Pigeon. A White-rumped Robin taped across the track, but it was so quick that most hardly saw it. Returning after lunch, at long last we laid eyes on a specky Torrent-lark in one of the many bouldery rapids we had been checking, but aside from a trio of Great Woodswallows not much else was in evidence until dusk when finally the hoped-for Salvadori's Teal appeared right in front of us! There was still time for a Variable Goshawk to fly over, two Golden Mynas to perch up, and a whole family of Pesquet's Parrots to show well as they noisily chased Sulphur-crested Cockatoos around the ridge. A great end to the day!



It took us a few tries, but we eventually located a Salvadori's Teal in one of the rapids near Tabubil!

With a few hours in the morning available for birding, we spent time searching for one of the least known birds in New Guinea. To our delight, we succeeded in locating a calling Greater Melampitta which flew straight in! Although we never did see it perched, a number of good flight views of this strange limestone-loving species were had as it crossed a small stream multiple times. Nearby we had even better Torrent-lark views, while a male Superb Fruit-Dove, Black-billed Coucal, Slaty-chinned Longbill and White-shouldered Fairywren made up the other additions. Heading back to the lowlands we stopped once to admire a circling Papuan Spine-tailed Swift, and later at the famous KM17 a jewel-like King Bird-of-paradise performed marvellously on his chosen vine, showing off his ruby-red plumage and bouncing tail shafts. Towards dusk we had brief views of both Blue Jewel Babbler and Hooded Pitta as they were enticed across the track, but the Wallace's Owlet-nightjar found after dark was definitely a favourite for all!



This male Golden Cuckooshrike is certainly very dressed up compared to the usually grey and white colouration of the family!

Returning the next morning, a date with one of the performing stars of New Guinea was on the agenda. We were not disappointed as when we arrived at the Greater Bird-of-paradise tree, at least a dozen females were in attendance, causing the attending males to go bonkers. We had a fantastic time watching them pose dramatically upside-down, then dancing, shuffling and mating with much vigor! All too soon we had to head back to town to prepare for our excursion up the mighty Fly River, but before leaving we added our first Yellowish-streaked Lory and Pinon's Imperial Pigeon.



Witnessing the spectacular display of Greater Bird-of-paradise is one of the main reasons to visit PNG!

Boarding our boat, we motored upstream towards the confluence of the Fly and Elevela Rivers. Variable Goshawks, Brahminy Kites, Whistling Kites and Pacific Baza plied the emergent trees as we sped inland, and on arriving at Kwatu we scoped up a very showy family of Golden Myna. Taking a little time to settle in after lunch, we were off again for our first session, where a hide provided us with unbeatable views of the mega New Guinea Flightless Rail! Traditionally almost impossible to see, our local agents now have a tried-and-tested method which will hopefully keep this awesome bird on the agenda for the foreseeable future! Content with this, we searched hard for Little Paradise Kingfisher in the flooded forest, but when one was calling close it was chased by two Common Paradise Kingfishers before anyone could spot it. The range-restricted White-bellied Pitohui eventually sat still for all of us, then we saw our first Collared Imperial Pigeons and Shining Flycatchers on the return. Of course we were not done yet, and after dinner most of us headed out for some spotlighting in the boat. The group were sceptical of my plans to disembark and hike through the leech-infested muddy forest for a bird which had never been seen on a Birdquest tour before, but when we immediately had a strong response and after some tense minutes I turned on the torch to find a sublime Spangled Owlet-nightjar perched only five metres away from my head, we were all speechless. Almost as an afterthought (disgraceful, I know), we had great looks at a Papuan Hawk-Owl on our way back to a well-deserved rest.



The cryptic New Guinea Flightless Rail was reliably staked out this year - hopefully this continues into the future!

Our first morning in this fantastic riverine forest was excellent as usual. Soon after dawn we were admiring a male Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise, marvelling as he went through his entire routine to impress a visiting female. He worked up and down the stick to entice her closer, then she perched below him as he tickled her with his wires. He then raised his frilly cape in a grand finale - clearly this was enough, and after a bit of pecking behind the neck they copulated before she promptly flew away to do the rest herself. Not long after we had the best possible views of four different Sclater's Crowned Pigeon by the side of the river - one even strutted along beside the boat before opening his spectacular wings and whooshing across in front of us. Red-flanked Lorikeets and Large Fig Parrots performed brief flybys, and the strange Long-billed Cuckoo was tempted to perch on a dead stick over a clearing. Working forest trails for the remainder of the morning yielded great views of Blue Jewel Babbler for the whole group as a male wandered slowly across an open area, and subsequently a Black-billed Brushturkey flushed up to perch in a tree and was enjoyed through the scope. Papuan Pitta and Hooded Pitta played hard to get, although everybody at least saw both species in flight. Obscure Honeyeater was unobscured for a lucky few, and Wompoo Fruit-Dove was seen well behind Kwatu during lunch.

Of the many birding highlights on his tour, one in particular stood out. Arriving at a hide deep in the forest we peered through some little holes where we could see a small structure constructed out of sticks. Flashes of yellow and orange out the back told us the bird was present, but would he come? Suddenly, a dull brown and yellow bird landed behind the bower - a female Flame Bowerbird has arrived. We held our breath, and within seconds the male arrived looking like an over-saturated painting with impossibly vibrant plumage. He immediately got to work, and we watched in awe as he displayed to the female for over half an hour. Holding blue berries in his mouth, he would whirl his left wing and slowly raise off the ground as if mechanically winding himself up before releasing with a crescendo of clicks and buzzes. A truly out-of-this-world experience, of course taking out bird of the tour. Nick was especially happy, given this Flame Bowerbird was in fact his #5000th species!



The gloriously incandescent Flame Bowerbird. There is nothing more to say!

One final push the next morning added a few great species to our tally. First up, everybody finally connected with Black-sided Robin, which had been proving diabolically difficult up until now. Some noisy Papuan Babblers, three Hooded Monarch, and some recently-split Arafura Shrikethrush appeared in our binoculars,

but a flyby Purple-tailed Imperial Pigeon was only glimpsed by some. Trying another spot we struck gold with a perched Hook-billed Kingfisher allowing close studies, while Frilled Monarch and Yellow-bellied Longbill flitted about. Trumpet Manucode was briefly seen too, but a calling Little Paradise Kingfisher would not come closer. We tried some more birding after lunch where only a male Golden Monarch was of note, but the return journey to Kiunga provided us with an overdue Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove, one somewhat distant Lowland Peltops, and many flocks of Metallic Starlings which we scoured in vain for the uncommon Yellow-eyed Starling. A short dusk vigil at the airport turned up Crimson Finch, but nothing else of particular note.



The crepuscular Hook-billed Kingfisher is often hard to see in daylight hours, but this one didn't mind!

While we no longer needed to see the namesake bird at Bowerbird Knoll on Boystown Road, we nevertheless made the trip out from Kiunga for a vigil over the forest before our late-morning flight. Bird activity was excellent, and we quickly added a calling Dwarf Koel, Meyer's Friarbird, and probably best of all, the uncommon Grey-headed Goshawk perched on a palm by the road! Trumpet Manucode stayed put in the scope long enough for most of us to see the wispy head feathers, and a male Black Sunbird perched up nicely. We also had unbeatable scope studies of a preening Puff-backed Meliphaga showing all his diagnostic features, including the usually hidden white-fringed rump feathers! Some meowing Black-eared Catbirds could not be coaxed out of the forest, while a Plain Honeyeater was heard and subsequently seen briefly as it dropped out of the tree.

Following a rearrangement of our bags, we were soon touching down in the highland town of Mount Hagen. A swift transfer to Kumul Lodge had us watching beautiful Brehm's Tiger Parrot and glorious Ribbon-tailed Astrapia visiting the feeding table while we visited our feeding table! Common Smoky Honeyeaters demonstrated their amazing colour transformations, while bossy Belford's Melidectes chased Grey-streaked Honeyeaters around. Nearby, confiding Mountain Mouse-warblers and parties of White-winged Robins gave welcome relief from their shy cousins in the lowlands, and likewise some Mountain Firetails allowed very close approach. A lovely male Fan-tailed Berrypecker sat in the sun, and Friendly Fantails lived up to their name. We hit the trails and soon were elated to discover a very confiding pair of Forbes's Forest Rail which sat on the exact log we hoped they would! Some pretty Orange-crowned Fairywren and Papuan Scrubwren preceded a Rusty-naped Bellbird, but no new birds for the trip were added after that, for as usual spotlighting only gave us heard records of Mountain Owlet-nightjar.



Pretty Brehm's Tiger Parrot are one of the common feeder birds at Kumul Lodge! This is a male.



One rarely has an encounter with Forbes's Forest Rail quite like this!

At dawn we headed to Murmur Pass where we spent the whole morning staking out a very birdy clearing. A large flowering tree held multiple Orange-billed Lorikeets, Papuan Lorikeets, and the uncommon Goldie's Lorikeet - all gave excellent perched views in the scope. We were periodically distracted by poisonous Blue-capped Ifrit squeaking above us, two male Loria's Satinbird chasing each other through the trees, and Black-breasted Boatbills flitting about. A trio of Rufous-throated Bronze Cuckoos performed exceptionally, and one Fan-tailed Cuckoo was around nearby. Rufous-backed Honeyeater, Red-collared Myzomela and Black-bellied Cuckooshrike foraged above us, but Regent Whistler and Brown-backed Whistler came down to eye-level. Periodic stops on the return drive yielded Long-tailed Shrike, Pied Bush Chat, the endemic Hooded Mannikin, and later in the day also a Papuan Grassbird. Midday around Kumul saw us enjoying a fabulous pair of "Eastern" Crested Berrypecker, and a confiding Island Thrush on the lawn.



The poisonous Blue-capped Ifrit delighted us at Kumul! When handled, batrachotoxin in the feathers causes numbness in your hands!

Returning to Murmur Pass in the afternoon, we immediately found Bronze Ground Dove and "Black-capped" Ashy Robin associating with each other at the clearing, both giving excellent and lengthy views. A flock of Yellow-billed Lorikeets soon appeared, feeding low down with some Orange-fronted Lorikeets to allow comparison of the bill structure and colour. The brief morning views King-of Saxony Bird-of-Paradise had provided were significantly improved as he sat on a dead branch advertising for some time, but a male Brown Sicklebill stole the show as he posed atop a bare tree preening his incomprehensible feathery protrusions and practising a few dance moves while showing off the vibrant aqua blue highlights on his special feathers! A pair of wonderful Tit Berrypecker and a Dimorphic Fantail were added before we returned to the lodge, where this time we had fair flight views of New Guinea Woodcock at dusk, although once again the owlet-nightjars evaded us. We did see a cute Pygmy Ringtail though - our first real mammal of the tour!



A male Bronze Ground Dove was frequenting the feeder at Kumul on dusk, giving great looks!

Next day we found ourselves listening to the loud ringing call of a Blue Bird-of-paradise in anticipation as the sun was peeking over the hills. It was not long before he appeared, giving us multiple excellent and extended scopes views during the morning of his vibrant blue and black plumage with subtle pink plumes and feathered highlights. As always, we accepted it to be one of the best birds in the world! Nearby plenty of Greater Lophorina (ex Superb BoP) were present, and eventually an advertising male was scoped up in good light allowing us to examine exactly where the various feather extensions were attached! Other birds hanging around included Marbled Honeyeater, Mountain Myzomela, Buff-faced Scrubwren, Island Leaf Warbler, another Slaty-chinned Longbill, a Sepik-Ramu Shrikethrush, and two heavily scrutinised Papuan White-eyes (it is well known that the birds here do not follow the rules in current field guides, but theoretically this identification is correct). As it got hotter we spent some time in the dry hills above the Lai River adding both Black-headed Whistler and Yellow-breasted Bowerbird fairly quickly.



The stunning male Blue Bird-of-paradise is always a highlight in PNG!

Our afternoon session was extremely quiet on the trails, but as soon as we arrived back at the lodge we were overjoyed to spot a male Crested Satinbird feeding unobtrusively in a small tree by our rooms! Only half the group was present, but luckily he stuck for ten minutes and everybody was able to rush over and enjoy his vivid colours! Satisfied, a feeder stakeout until dusk yielded another Bronze Ground Dove and two adult male Ribbon-tailed Astrapia proving that they really do look the best in low light!



The impossibly vibrant male Crested Satinbird is a star bird at Kumul Lodge - he is often very confiding once he has been located!

Our final full day around Kumul began at an overlook where a male Lesser Bird-of-paradise promptly appeared at dawn and gave great views as he moved around his small hillside territory. Not much else was in evidence aside from another Yellow-breasted Bowerbird, so we drove to a different patch of forest where things were fairly quiet. A Lesser Melampitta was not quite seen, but a pair of showy Canary Flyrobin made up for it. Back at Kumul, the hot and sunny weather made for poor cloud forest birding. A small feeding flock contained Mountain Firetail and Blue-capped Ifrit, but we soon retired until the late afternoon. Activity improved and we finally had nice looks at Large Scrubwren, got everybody onto a Black-throated Honeyeater, plus heard a distant Papuan Eagle which did not come any closer no matter how many loud noises came from the leader. Some spotlighting after dinner resulted in great looks at a Feline Owlet-nightjar, here a very distinct dark grey-purple, unlike the reddish birds we commonly see in West Papua!



This male Lesser Bird-of-paradise showed very nicely in the Lai River Valley!

Transferring to the luxurious Rondon Ridge the next morning saw us arriving in time for a delectable lunch, with Pygmy Eagle, Long-tailed Honey Buzzard, and more Papuan White-eyes enjoyed beforehand. Afterwards we hit the trails in earnest, but the continued hot and sunny weather meant that birds were again thin on the ground. We were happy to add Black Pitohui and Bar-tailed Cuckoo-Dove, but frustratingly a Wattled Ploughbill stayed heard only...



Plucky little Mountain Firetails feed on the lawns at Kumul!

The next morning we began early up to the ridge, but indeed this time one of the first birds of the day was a superb male Wattled Ploughbill! Comprising one of the key monotypic families in New Guinea, he was well appreciated! On reaching the upper clearing it wasn't long before a spectacular full-plumage Princess Stephanie's *Astrapia* made an appearance and allowed us to marvel at his iridescent green breast shield complete with orange band. He stuck around and gave continued views throughout the morning, as did a male Brown Sicklebill and a well-endowed King of Saxony Bird-of-paradise. Continued efforts allowed us to get to grips with Plum-faced Lorikeet feeding in a tree, two brief Black Monarch for some, a much more obliging pair of Black-throated Robins, some rare perched views of both Rufescent Imperial Pigeon and Metallic Pigeon, plus and a few "Mountain" White-bibbed Fruit-Dove. Walking slowly down the hill as the day warmed up we were delighted by two different Lesser Ground Robin, a Slaty Robin, and Grey Thornbill. Mottled Berryhunter and Spotted Jewel Babbler were less cooperative, only offering the briefest glimpses, while Black Sicklebill and Mountain Kingfisher called throughout the morning but sadly never came within reach (although these four species are much easier in West Papua, for those with a taste for more!). Once the afternoon arrived, everything disappeared. Close to dusk we were happy to find two female Madarasz's Tiger Parrot feeding in a tree at close range, but a rare Streaked Berrypecker was less cooperative, only being seen by some. After dinner however, a delightful Papuan Boobook made up for it!



The typically uncommon Madarasz's Tiger Parrot is easy to find at Rondon Ridge!

Due to some unavoidable flight schedule changes, we only had a rushed hour available for birding in the morning. Macgregor's Bowerbird was seen a few times briefly coming in and out of a fruiting tree, and a scarce Yellowish-streaked Honeyeater was enjoyed feeding at eye-level in front of us! The latter species has not been seen on a Birdquest tour for many years, but Rondon is the most reliable site for it. Back in Port Moresby we spent the whole afternoon birding in the Pacific Adventist University grounds, where birds were positively abundant! In a nice change from the shy and skulking forest birds of New Guinea, point blank views of Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove, Grey-headed Mannikin, Black-backed Butcherbird, Fawn-breasted Bowerbird and Papuan Frogmouth were well-received, these species rounding out our list of key targets here. The ponds held a good selection of waterfowl including both Plumed Whistling Duck and Wandering Whistling Duck, Raja Shelduck, Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal, Australasian Swamphen, Dusky Moorhen, Great Egret, Intermediate Egret, Little Black Cormorant and Little Pied Cormorant. Nankeen Night Heron, Pied Heron and the lovely Comb-

crested Jacana were particular favourites, while fruiting trees were full of Torresian Imperial Pigeon, Australasian Figbird and Yellow-faced Myna. Some drier woodland allowed us to see a nice active Fawn-breasted Bowerbird bower hidden under a dense bush, with Bar-shouldered Dove, Peaceful Dove, Yellow-tinted Honeyeater and White-bellied Cuckooshrike nearby.



This delightful Long-tailed Honey Buzzard circled low down over us at Varirata!

Returning to Varirata for the entirety of the following day was productive as usual. Arriving early this time, we were treated to the wonderful dancing display of Raggiana Bird-of-Paradise at close quarters for as long as we wanted - certainly one of the tour highlights, and a real "Attenborough Moment" to be able to observe them in their element! A flock of Papuan King Parrots were located nearby, and being the first people along the river trail for the day allowed us to find a stunning Forest Bittern, which was flushed up from the stream and subsequently located amongst the foliage by Lindsay! Birding our way up and down before lunch, other highlights included perfect views of a male Painted Quailthrush slowly walking across the track, a male Growling Riflebird initially spotted feeding at eye-level, and a family of White-faced Robin working methodically through the understory. Crinkle-collared Manucode, Black Cicadabird, a brief Elegant Meliphaga, the smart Black-fronted White-eye, and recently split Variable Shrikethrush also put in appearances. During the middle of the day a flowering tree gave us many new birds after some diligent watching. Elegant Meliphaga allowed extended study here, while Papuan Black Myzomelas and Plain Honeyeaters flitted in and out. A Dwarf Longbill took longer for everybody to see, but in the end we were all happy. A variety of pigeons was highlighted by much improved views of Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove, but Purple-tailed Imperial Pigeons again only performed brief flybys. Just before our departure we scoped up a long overdue Yellow-billed Kingfisher, ending the day on a high.



Watching the cacophony of male Raggiana Bird-of-paradise at their lek in Varirata is never to be forgotten!

Our third and final day in Varirata continued to pile on new species to our list. Most of the morning on trails got us face-to-face with the strange Drongo Fantail (now considered closely related to the Silktails of Fiji) and some confiding Yellow-legged Flyrobin. The attractive Goldenface and a Black-winged Monarch stayed higher in the trees but still gave good views, while Red Myzomela, Pale-billed Scrubwren and Green-backed Gerygone (finally!!!) also appeared in view nearby. Revisiting the excellent flowering tree around lunchtime was a good decision, as the rare Spotted Honeyeater came in a few times, along with a Ruby-throated

Myzomela and, unusually for this site, a Dusky Myzomela! Quite the tree! During the afternoon a pair of Stout-billed Cuckooshrike dropped by, and Varirata proved it still had things left to give by finally allowing us fair views of Piping Bellbird after half a dozen previous attempts on the tour, plus as the icing on the cake we tempted a superb “Grey-naped” Pheasant Pigeon to slowly walk onto the trail ahead of us before it paused and spotted us, subsequently bolting in the opposite direction! Wonderful stuff!



Currently known as the Drongo Fantail, this curious species may in fact be more closely related to the Silktails of Fiji!

Next morning we found ourselves arriving on the tropical volcanic paradise of New Britain. Driving through the extensive palm oil plantations we could already add Black Bittern to the list, while the grounds of the ever wonderful Walindi Plantation Resort played host to Black Sunbird, Olive-backed Sunbird and the endemic Ashy Myzomela, all feeding in a flowering bush in front of our rooms! Some New Britain Friarbirds chased each other around the larger trees while scanning the mudflats produced Bismarck Crow, Pacific Reef Heron, and one or two the world's easternmost Common Kingfishers! Even better, our man on the spot Joseph lead us over to a tangle of vines in a tree and what was peering out of them but a superb New Britain Boobook! We hadn't even officially started our afternoon birding session and already the good species were appearing! We started well in a small tract of forest, having lovely looks at the Melanesian endemic Yellowish Imperial Pigeon and Red-knobbed Imperial Pigeon, plus the New Britain endemic Blue-eyed Cockatoo perched up showing his small yellow crest. Sadly the rain soon started in earnest, and although we kept trying, the rest of the afternoon and evening was a write-off!

Eager to get out the next morning, we found ourselves in Garu Conservation Area soon after dawn. Raucous Blue-eyed Cockatoos and Eclectus Parrots filled the skies, a few Purple-bellies Lory perched nicely offering our first views, and Red-flanked Lorikeets fed happily in a flowering tree. Soon after, a handful of tiny Buff-faced Pygmy Parrots were spotted feeding on some on branches. Both Violaceous Coucal and White-necked Coucal perched out on shrubs drying themselves after a wet night, and a calling Finsch's Imperial Pigeon was picked out by Joe right next to the road! Kingfishers really stole the show however, with three marvellous endemics all performing brilliantly; Black-capped Paradise Kingfisher, New Britain Dwarf Kingfisher, and White-mantled Kingfisher. While not endemic, a few pairs of Melanesian Kingfishers were also appreciated, and Melanesian Megapode offered some rare perched views after we took a short stroll through their nesting colony. There was no sign of Black-tailed Monarch, but some lucky souls had fair looks at a skittish Velvet

Flycatcher. In the afternoon we visited the Kilu River, here failing to lure out a calling “New Britain” Bismarck Pitta. Nonetheless, we had some fantastic perched Nicobar Pigeon showing off their wispy hairdos, a trio of Spotted Whistling Duck, a flock of White-rumped Swiftlet, and better views of Velvet Flycatcher. Nobody could argue however that the highlight of our day was a post-dinner night drive, where the once mythical Golden Masked Owl proved to once again be anything but elusive! After two brief flight views, we located what was presumably a third well-marked bird, eating a rat right by the side of the track! It is always exciting to see this amazing nightbird, even if they are now somewhat easy!



Two magnificent owls of the Bismarck Archipelago – New Britain Boobook (top) and the once-mythical Golden Masked Owl (bottom)!

With a beautiful sunrise we were off on a boat into Kimbe Bay. After seeing a few feeding flocks with Black Noddy, Black-naped Tern and Common Tern, we arrived at the lovely little Restorff Island. Drifting over the turquoise blue shallows we enjoyed watching the range-restricted island tramp Sclater's Myzomela, abundant on this island. A Mangrove Golden Whistler dropped in, while Island Imperial Pigeons and two MacKinlay's Cuckoo-Dove showed nicely. Moving over to the Malumalu Islands, a lovely Beach Kingfisher was sat out in the sun calling away, and a pair of Island Monarchs fed unobtrusively near the shoreline. The boatman deemed that conditions were calm enough for us to venture further, and in keeping our good track record for the third year running we found a Heinroth's Shearwater out past the edge of the bay! Pleased, we returned to Restorff for a nice lunch, with some opting to have a snorkel along the pristine reef. The afternoon saw us venturing up the flank of the volcano behind Walindi, where a grove of flowering trees connected us with the uncommon endemic Black-bellied Myzomela, and some more Ashy Myzomela. A few Pacific Koel and a Shining Bronze Cuckoo were seen nearby and a Pacific Baza perched up nicely, before some Red-banded Flowerpeckers finally showed very well a little before sunset.



New Britain is an idyllic tropical paradise – make sure to bring your swimmers!

On our last full day of the tour we had some hard work cut out for us. At dawn we were searching for “New Britain” Bismarck Pitta, however none of the calling birds were moving closer to our tape. Miraculously, by sneaking up to one individual we managed to find it perched in a low tree as it sang, offering the best possible studies for as long as we wanted! A subsequent search for Black-tailed Monarch seemed to be in vain, as after checking at least half a dozen territories we never even heard one. Nonetheless, we set about trying to see an “Eastern” Bronze Ground Dove, which flew by at least three times and offered perched looks to a lucky few. Paul distracted us though when he suddenly noticed three Black-tailed Monarchs foraging silently above the trail, and after some scrambling everybody got onto the birds! Content with that we headed back for lunch, after which those with energy still remaining returned to the volcano trail. Nothing major was added, but nice looks at the New Britain form of Northern Fantail and a variety of parrots, pigeons and hornbills in the evening light was an excellent way to end the tour...

... However the tour was not over! Overnight one of the volcanoes to our east erupted, spewing large quantities of ash which drifted straight over and onto the airport we were due to use. This event ultimately shut down all air traffic to Kimbe for two weeks! We had seen all of the key birds already, but some snorkeling opportunities were well-received. A few short outings added only White-browed Crake and Brown Booby to the list. Our stranding at Walindi lasted three days before transit to Rabaul using a combination of air, sea, and land vehicles could be arranged, and we were able to fly onwards back to Port Moresby. We were all happy to get on to our rebooked international flights without any further issues! New Guinea is indeed always an exciting country to visit.



An orange sunset on our New Britain extension-extension! You can see a thin layer of ash stretching across the horizon.!

BIRD OF THE TOUR (AS VOTED FOR BY THE GROUP)

1. Flame Bowerbird
2. Sclater's Crowned Pigeon
- = 3. Golden Masked Owl
- = 3. Raggiana Bird-of-paradise
- = 3. "New Britain" Bismarck Pitta



A flock of Black Noddy pass by offshore from Walindi during our pelagic.

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF BIRD SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

Total number of bird species recorded: 381

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).

Spotted Whistling Duck ◊ *Dendrocygna guttata* Three along the Kilu River behind Walindi on New Britain.

Plumed Whistling Duck ◊ *Dendrocygna eytoni* Several at PAU.

Wandering Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna arcuata* Good numbers at PAU.

Raja Shelduck ◊ (White-headed S) *Radjah radjah* Fairly common at PAU.

Salvadori's Teal ◊ *Salvadorina waigiensis* One finally found at Ok Menga.

Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa* Noted at PAU and on New Britain.

Grey Teal *Anas gracilis* A few at PAU mixing with Pacific Black Ducks.

Black-billed Brushturkey ◊ (Yellow-legged B) *Talegalla fuscirostris* Tremendous looks at one in a tree near Kwatu.

Melanesian Megapode ◊ *Megapodius eremita* Very nice views of one perched up on New Britain.

Brown Quail *Coturnix ypsilophora* A small covey as we were leaving Rondon Ridge.



The elusive Forest Bittern is a strange creature, and one rarely seen on bird tours! We saw this young bird very well at Varirata.

King Quail (Blue-breasted Q) *Excalfactoria chinensis* Heard in the New Britain grasslands. (H)

Heinroth's Shearwater ◊ *Puffinus heinrothi* One briefly off to starboard was seen by some on our NB pelagic.

Australian White Ibis *Threskiornis molucca* Common at PAU.

Forest Bittern ◊ (New Guinea Tiger-heron) *Zonotrichia heliosylus* Fantastic looks at a young bird in Varirata!
Black Bittern *Dupetor flavicollis* Abundant in the palm oil plantations of New Britain.
Nankeen Night Heron (Rufous N H) *Nycticorax caledonicus* One roosting in a large tree at PAU.
Striated Heron (Green-backed H) *Butorides striata* One at Walindi on New Britain during our extension-extension.
Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus* Common around PAU.
Great Egret (Eastern G E) *Ardea [alba] modesta* Some at PAU.
Intermediate Egret ◊ *Ardea intermedia* Some at PAU.
Pied Heron ◊ *Egretta picata* A nice flock of these pretty herons at PAU.
Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* One on New Britain.
Pacific Reef Heron (Eastern R Egret) *Egretta sacra* Two birds noted on New Britain.
Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel* Several off New Britain.
Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster* Some on our pelagic off New Britain.
Little Pied Cormorant *Microcarbo melanoleucos* A few at PAU.
Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris* A few at PAU.



Variable Goshawk is a regular sight throughout New Guinea.

Eastern Osprey *Pandion cristatus* Seen at Walindi on New Britain.
Pacific Baza (Crested Hawk) *Aviceda subcristata* Noted both on the mainland and on New Britain.
Long-tailed Honey Buzzard ◊ (L-t B) *Henicopernis longicauda* One particularly nice view at Varirata.
Papuan Eagle ◊ (N G Harpy E) *Harpyopsis novaeguineae* One calling at Kumul in the mist. (H)
Pygmy Eagle *Hieraaetus weiskei* One overhead at Rondon.
Variable Goshawk *Accipiter hiogaster* Noted regularly on the tour, most common on New Britain.
Grey-headed Goshawk ◊ *Accipiter poliocephalus* One at Boystown Road near Kiunga.
Black Kite *Milvus migrans* Abundant around Mount Hagen.
Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus* A few along the Fly River, and at PAU.
Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus* Regularly noted this beautiful raptor.
White-bellied Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* Some on the Fly River.
Forbes's Forest Rail ◊ *Rallicula forbesi* Astounding views of a pair near Kumul Lodge!
Buff-banded Rail *Gallirallus philippensis* A few on New Britain.

Pale-vented Bush-hen ◊ *Amaurornis moluccana* Heard on New Britain. **(H)**
White-browed Crake *Porzana cinerea* Brief views in a muddy pond on New Britain.
New Guinea Flightless Rail ◊ *Megacrex inepta* Superb views of this cryptic species along the Fly River.
Australasian Swamphen *Porphyrio melanotus* Several at PAU.
Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa* Several at PAU.
Masked Lapwing *Vanellus miles* Common around PAU.
Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* One of the resident endemic subspecies seen below Tabubil.



The endemic resident form of Little Ringed Plover may be a distinct species.

New Guinea Woodcock ◊ *Scolopax rosenbergii* The regular bird at Kumul was seen in the roding clearing.
Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* Noted on New Britain – the only wintering migratory wader we saw!
Black Noddy *Anous minutus* Fairly common offshore on New Britain.
Greater Crested Tern (C T, Swift T) *Thalasseus bergii* Some on the New Britain pelagic.
Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana* Some on the New Britain pelagic.
Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* Just a few on the New Britain pelagic.
Rock Dove (introduced) *Columba livia* Noted in a few towns.
Metallic Pigeon (White-throated P) *Columba vitiensis* Two perched up beautifully at Rondon Ridge.
Amboyna Cuckoo-Dove ◊ *Macropygia amboinensis* Regularly encountered throughout the lowlands and hills.
Bar-tailed Cuckoo-Dove ◊ (Black-billed C-D) *Macropygia nigrirostris* Some seen well at Rondon Ridge.
MacKinlay's Cuckoo-Dove ◊ *Macropygia mackinlayi* Some on the small offshore islets of New Britain.
Great Cuckoo-Dove ◊ (Long-tailed C-D) *Reinwardtoena reinwardti* A surprise individual feeding at Kumul.
Stephan's Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps stephani* Abundant on New Britain.
Peaceful Dove *Geopelia placida* Common at PAU.
Bar-shouldered Dove *Geopelia humeralis* A few seen well at PAU.
Nicobar Pigeon ◊ *Caloenas nicobarica* Several feeding in the palm oil plantations behind Walindi.
Bronze Ground Dove ◊ *Alopecoenas beccarii* Nominated form seen well at Kumul, "Eastern" form seen well on NB.
Pheasant Pigeon ◊ *Otidiphaps nobilis* Phenomenal looks at one bird on the trail on our last day at Varirata.
Sclater's Crowned Pigeon ◊ *Goura sclaterii* Could not have asked for better encounters with this stunner on the Fly!
Wompoo Fruit Dove ◊ (Magnificent FD) *Ptilinopus magnificus* Several seen along the Fly River.

Pink-spotted Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus perlatus* One of the more common fruit-doves, seen a few times.
Ornate Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus ornatus* One perched by the clearing at Tabubil for a brief period.
Orange-fronted Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus aurantiifrons* Several at PAU in their usual trees!
Superb Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus superbus* Some seen around Tabubil and Kiunga.
Beautiful Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus pulchellus* Several seen, one very low down in a tree when up the Fly River.
White-bibbed Fruit Dove ◊ (Mountain FD) *Ptilinopus rivoli* Males and females at Rondon Ridge.
Orange-bellied Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus iozonus* First seen on the Fly River, more at Varirata.
Knob-billed Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus insolitus* Pleasantly common on New Britain.
Dwarf Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus nainus* Several at Varirata.



An abundance of fruit-doves cover New Guinea -this is a Beautiful Fruit-Dove.

Red-knobbed Imperial Pigeon ◊ *Ducula rubricera* Common on New Britain.
Purple-tailed Imperial Pigeon ◊ *Ducula rufigaster* Several seen in flight at various points of the tour.
Finsch's Imperial Pigeon ◊ *Ducula finschii* One perched up very nicely on New Britain.
Rufescent Imperial Pigeon ◊ (Shining IP) *Ducula chalconota* A pair sat above our heads at length near Rondon.
Island Imperial Pigeon ◊ (Floury IP) *Ducula pistrinaria* Common on the offshore islets of New Britain.
Pinon's Imperial Pigeon ◊ *Ducula pinon* Common in the lowlands of mainland New Guinea.
Collared Imperial Pigeon ◊ *Ducula mullerii* Several along the Fly River.
Zoe's Imperial Pigeon ◊ *Ducula zoeae* Some nice views at Varirata and elsewhere.
Torresian Imperial Pigeon ◊ *Ducula spilorrhoea* Some at PAU.
Yellowish Imperial Pigeon ◊ (Yellow-tinted I P) *Ducula subflavescens* Common in the forests of New Britain.
Papuan Mountain Pigeon ◊ *Gymnophaps albertisii* Regularly noted, often in big flocks.
White-necked Coucal ◊ (Pied C) *Centropus ateralbus* Both pied and white phases were seen on New Britain.
Ivory-billed Coucal ◊ (Greater Black C) *Centropus menbeki* One briefly for the leader up the Fly River. (LO)
Violaceous Coucal ◊ *Centropus violaceus* Several sitting out in the open after rain on New Britain.
Black-billed Coucal ◊ (Lesser Black C) *Centropus bernsteini* Seen nicely near Tabubil.
Pheasant Coucal *Centropus phasianinus* Heard near Varirata. (H)



The Violaceous Coucal of New Britain is easiest to see after a heavy downpour when they come up to dry themselves!

- Dwarf Koel** ◇ *Microdynamis parva* Excellent views at Boystown Road.
- Pacific Koel** *Eudynamis orientalis* Heard throughout, three seen chasing each other on New Britain.
- Channel-billed Cuckoo** *Scythrops novaehollandiae* Several noted on a few occasions.
- Long-billed Cuckoo** ◇ *Chrysococcyx megarhynchus* Great looks at this strange cuckoo on the Fly River.
- Rufous-throated Bronze Cuckoo** ◇ *Chrysococcyx ruficollis* A trio hung around at Murrumbidgee Pass.
- Shining Bronze Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx lucidus* One spotted by Paul on New Britain.
- White-eared Bronze Cuckoo** ◇ *Chrysococcyx meyerii* Several nice looks at Dablin Creek near Tabubil.
- Little Bronze Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx minutillus* One on the Fly River.
- White-crowned Cuckoo** ◇ (W-c Koel) *Cacomantis leucolophus* Scoped up at Tabubil.
- Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo** ◇ *Cacomantis castaneiventris* Heard only near Tabubil. (H)
- Fan-tailed Cuckoo** *Cacomantis flabelliformis* A few individuals around Mount Hagen.
- Brush Cuckoo** *Cacomantis variolosus* Noted a few times.
- Greater Sooty Owl** ◇ *Tyto tenebricosa* Heard distantly at Rondon. (H)
- Golden Masked Owl** *Tyto aurantia* Sublime views of this amazing owl on New Britain!
- Barking Owl** *Ninox connivens* One at Varirata on our first day.
- Papuan Boobook** ◇ (Jungle Hawk Owl, Jungle B) *Ninox theomacha* Great views of a responsive bird at Rondon.
- New Britain Boobook** ◇ (Russet Hawk Owl) *Ninox odiosa* Two roosting behind Walindi were appreciated!
- Papuan Hawk-Owl** ◇ *Uroglaux dimorpha* One seen very nicely on the Fly River at night.
- Marbled Frogmouth** ◇ *Podargus ocellatus* Heard on the Fly River. (H)
- Papuan Frogmouth** ◇ *Podargus papuensis* Two roosting at PAU.
- Large-tailed Nightjar** *Caprimulgus macrurus* One on the Varirata entrance road one morning.
- Feline Owlet-Nightjar** ◇ *Aegotheles insignis* Great views of one bird at Kumul.
- Starry Owlet-nightjar** ◇ *Aegotheles tatei* One of the best birds of the tour, this Birdquest lifer sat right by our heads!
- Wallace's Owlet-nightjar** ◇ *Aegotheles wallacii* New for Birdquest last year, we continued our run of great views!
- Mountain Owlet-Nightjar** ◇ *Aegotheles albertisi* Heard only at Kumul. (H)
- Barred Owlet-Nightjar** ◇ *Aegotheles bennettii* Mr Reliable was still in his tree hollow at Varirata, as usual!
- Moustached Treeswift** *Hemiprocne mystacea* Small numbers at Varirata and along the Fly River.
- Glossy Swiftlet** *Collocalia esculenta* Abundant throughout.

Mountain Swiftlet ◇ *Aerodramus hirundinaceus* Noted around Kumul.
White-rumped Swiftlet ◇ *Aerodramus spodiopygius* Some near the Kilu River on New Britain.
Uniform Swiftlet *Aerodramus vanikorensis* Common throughout the lowlands.
Papuan Spine-tailed Swift ◇ (P Spinetail, P Needle-tail) *Mearnsia novaeguineae* Common along the Fly River.
Oriental Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis* Common along the Fly River.



Brown-headed Paradise Kingfisher was perhaps the most impressive of our 19 kingfisher species!

Hook-billed Kingfisher ◇ *Melidora macrorrhina* Superb extended views of one bird in broad daylight!
Common Paradise Kingfisher ◇ *Tanysiptera galatea* Brief views along the Fly River.
Little Paradise Kingfisher ◇ (Aru P K) *Tanysiptera hydrocharis* Chased by Common Paradise before we saw it! (H)
Black-capped Paradise Kingfisher ◇ (B-headed P K) *Tanysiptera nigriceps* Great views on New Britain.
Brown-headed Paradise Kingfisher ◇ *Tanysiptera danae* Some extended views at Varirata were nice!
Shovel-billed Kookaburra ◇ (S-b Kingfisher) *Clytoceyx rex* One super responsive bird came in immediately!
Blue-winged Kookaburra *Dacelo leachii* Several near Varirata.
Rufous-bellied Kookaburra ◇ *Dacelo gaudichaud* Regularly heard, a few seen well.
Forest Kingfisher *Todiramphus macleayii* Some near Varirata.
White-mantled Kingfisher ◇ (New Britain K) *Todiramphus albonotatus* One pair at Garu on New Britain.
Melanesian Kingfisher ◇ (Collared K) *Todiramphus tristrami* A few on New Britain in the forests.
Beach Kingfisher ◇ *Todiramphus saurophagus* One on Malu Malu Island off New Britain.
Sacred Kingfisher *Todiramphus sanctus* Regularly noted throughout.
Yellow-billed Kingfisher ◇ (Lesser Y-b K) *Syma torotoro* One eventually see well at Varirata.
Mountain Kingfisher ◇ (M Yellow-billed K) *Syma megarhyncha* Heard one unresponsive bird at Rondon. (H)
Common Kingfisher ◇ *Alcedo atthis* Some on New Britain.
Papuan Dwarf Kingfisher ◇ *Ceyx solitarius* Great looks at one bird in particular at Varirata.
New Britain Dwarf Kingfisher ◇ *Ceyx sacerdotis* Superb scope studies of one at Garu.
Azure Kingfisher *Ceyx azureus* Some at Varirata.
Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops ornatus* Noted regularly.



The tiny New Britain Dwarf Kingfisher showed well at Garu!

- Blyth's Hornbill** ◊ (Papuan H) *Rhyticeros plicatus* Most common along the Fly River, an impressive beast!
- Brown Falcon** *Falco berigora* On the outskirts of Port Moresby one afternoon.
- Palm Cockatoo** ◊ *Probosciger aterrimus* A few pairs along the Fly River.
- Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** *Cacatua galerita* Common and noisy!
- Blue-eyed Cockatoo** ◊ *Cacatua ophthalmica* Really nice perched scope studies on New Britain.
- Pesquet's Parrot** ◊ (N G Vulturine P) *Psittichas fulgidus* Multiple encounters of this weird bird around Tabubil!
- Yellow-capped Pygmy Parrot** ◊ *Micropsitta keiensis* Some in a low tree at Kwatu.
- Buff-faced Pygmy Parrot** ◊ *Micropsitta pusio* Both the mainland (Varirata) and New Britain forms seen well.
- Red-breasted Pygmy Parrot** ◊ *Micropsitta bruijnii* A tight flock seen briefly over Dablin Creek Road.
- Papuan King Parrot** ◊ *Alisterus chloropterus* Several encounters in Varirata.
- Eclectus Parrot** ◊ *Eclectus roratus* Seen a few times on the mainland, but abundant on New Britain!
- Red-cheeked Parrot** *Geoffroyus geoffroyi* Abundant throughout.
- Blue-collared Parrot** ◊ *Geoffroyus simplex* A small flock high overhead at Tabubil.
- Brehm's Tiger Parrot** ◊ *Psittacella brehmii* A fantastic parrot, seen well at the Kumul feeders.
- Madarasz's Tiger Parrot** ◊ *Psittacella madaraszii* This traditionally uncommon species was easy to see at Rondon.
- Plum-faced Lorikeet** ◊ (Whiskered L) *Oreopsittacus arfaki* Some above Rondon in the clearing.
- Red-flanked Lorikeet** ◊ *Chamosyna placentis* Some near Kiunga, nice looks on New Britain.
- Papuan Lorikeet** ◊ *Chamosyna papou* Several near Kumul.
- Yellow-billed Lorikeet** ◊ *Neopsittacus musschenbroekii* Some at Murmur Pass mixing with Orange-billed.
- Orange-billed Lorikeet** ◊ *Neopsittacus pullicauda* Some at Murmur Pass mixing with Yellow-billed.
- Black-capped Lory** ◊ (Western B-c L) *Lorius lory* Regularly noted.
- Purple-bellied Lory** ◊ (Eastern B-c L) *Lorius hypoinochrous* Fairly common on New Britain.
- Yellowish-streaked Lory** ◊ (Yellow-s L, Greater S L) *Chalcopsitta scintillata* A few around Kiunga.
- Goldie's Lorikeet** ◊ *Psittuteles goldiei* Great scopes studies at Murmur Pass.
- Coconut Lorikeet** ◊ (Rainbow L) *Trichoglossus haematodus* Common throughout the lowlands.
- Large Fig Parrot** ◊ (Yellow-naped F P) *Psittaculirostris desmarestii* Some in flight over the Fly River.
- Orange-breasted Fig Parrot** ◊ (Dusky-cheeked F P) *Cyclopsitta gulelmitertii* Common near Tabubil.
- Double-eyed Fig Parrot** ◊ (Red-faced F P) *Cyclopsitta diophthalma* Some in the lowlands around Kiunga.
- Bismarck Pitta** ◊ (Red-bellied P) *Erythropitta novaehibernicae* Unbeatable views on New Britain in the end!

Papuan Pitta ◇ (Red-bellied P) *Erythropitta macklotii* One crossed the trail twice for us near Kwatu.

Hooded Pitta ◇ *Pitta sordida* Seen a few times coming in quickly to the tape, and leaving just as quickly!

Black-eared Catbird ◇ *Ailuroedus melanotis* Heard only near Kiunga. (H)

MacGregor's Bowerbird ◇ *Amblyornis macgregoriae* Some around Rondon in fruiting trees.

Flame Bowerbird ◇ *Sericulus ardens* Bird of the tour, this absolute stunner displayed in front of us for over an hour!

Yellow-breasted Bowerbird ◇ (Lauterbach's B) *Chlamydera lauterbachii* A few seen near Mount Hagen.

Fawn-breasted Bowerbird ◇ *Chlamydera cerviniventris* Common at PAU.

Wallace's Fairywren ◇ (W Wren) *Sipodotus wallacii* One pair above Tabubil.

White-shouldered Fairywren ◇ *Malurus alboscapulatus* Some near Tabubil were seen well.

Orange-crowned Fairywren ◇ *Clytomyias insignis* Small flocks seen around Kumul.

Ashy Myzomela ◇ (Bismarck M) *Myzomela cineracea* Some in flowering trees on New Britain.

Ruby-throated Myzomela ◇ (Red-throated) *Myzomela eques* One in a flowering tree at Varirata.

Dusky Myzomela *Myzomela obscura* Two in a flowering tree at Varirata.

Red Myzomela ◇ *Myzomela cruentata* A few nice males in Varirata.

Papuan Black Myzomela ◇ (B M) *Myzomela nigrita* Good numbers in the flowering tree at Varirata.

Mountain Myzomela ◇ (Elfin M, M Red-headed M) *Myzomela adolphinae* Common around Rondon.

Sclater's Myzomela ◇ (Scarlet-bibbed M) *Myzomela sclateri* Very nice looks on Restorff off New Britain.

Black-bellied Myzomela ◇ (NB Red-headed M) *Myzomela erythromelas* Eventually found on New Britain.

Red-collared Myzomela ◇ *Myzomela rosenbergii* Fairly common in the highlands.

Green-backed Honeyeater ◇ *Glycichaera fallax* Nice views on our first morning in Varirata.

Yellowish-streaked Honeyeater ◇ (Yellow-s H) *Ptiloprora meekiana* One seen well feeding at eye-level at Rondon.

Rufous-backed Honeyeater ◇ *Ptiloprora guisei* Common at Murrumbidgee Pass near Kumul.

Grey-streaked Honeyeater ◇ (Black-backed H) *Ptiloprora perstriata* Another excellent feeder bird of Kumul.



Grey-streaked Honeyeaters are regular visitors to the gardens of Kumul Lodge!

Plain Honeyeater ◇ *Pycnopygius ixoides* Common in Varirata.

Marbled Honeyeater ◇ *Pycnopygius cinereus* Some seen along the Tonga Trail.

Streak-headed Honeyeater ◇ *Pycnopygius stictocephalus* Encountered in the lowlands near Kiunga.

Spotted Honeyeater ◇ *Xanthotis polygrammus* Excellent views of one returning the flowers at Varirata.

Tawny-breasted Honeyeater ◇ *Xanthotis flaviventer* Common throughout the lowlands.

Meyer's Friarbird ◇ *Philemon meyeri* Some at Boystown Road.

New Guinea Friarbird ◇ (Helmeted F) *Philemon novaeguineae* Common in the lowlands.

New Britain Friarbird ◊ *Philemon cockerelli* Common on New Britain.

White-throated Honeyeater ◊ *Melithreptus albogularis* A few on the outskirts of Varirata.

Long-billed Honeyeater ◊ *Melilestes mearghynchus* Regularly seen in flight, a few nice perched views.

Common Smoky Honeyeater ◊ *Melipotus fumigatus* Abundant in the highlands.

Rufous-banded Honeyeater ◊ *Conopophila albogularis* At Kiunga jetty, and at PAU.

Black-throated Honeyeater ◊ *Caligavis subfrenata* A few around Kumul.

Obscure Honeyeater ◊ *Caligavis obscura* Seen by some of the group at Kwatu.

Yellow-browed Melidectes ◊ *Melidectes rufocrissalis* Most common at Rondon.

Belford's Melidectes ◊ *Melidectes belfordi* The loudest voice of the highlands, common at Kumul.

Ornate Melidectes ◊ (Cinnamon-breasted M) *Melidectes torquatus* Great views in the Lai River Valley.

Yellow-tinted Honeyeater ◊ *Ptilotula flavescens* Some at PAU.

Mountain Honeyeater ◊ (M Meliphaga, Hill Forest H) *Meliphaga orientalis* Nice studies at Tabubil.

Scrub Honeyeater ◊ (S Meliphaga, S White-eared M) *Meliphaga albonotata* A few on Dablin Creek Road.

Mimic Honeyeater ◊ (M Meliphaga, Mimetic M) *Meliphaga analoga* Both at Varirata and up the Fly River.

Elegant Honeyeater ◊ (E Meliphaga) *Meliphaga cinereifrons* Many at Varirata this year in the flowering tree.

Puff-backed Honeyeater ◊ (P-b Meliphaga) *Meliphaga aruensis* Extended studies of this one at Boystown.

Goldenface ◊ (Dwarf Whistler) *Pachycare flavogriseum* A few at Varirata.

Rusty Mouse-warbler ◊ (Lowland M-w) *Origma murina* Heard often, a few seen on various occasions.

Mountain Mouse-warbler ◊ *Origma robusta* Seen well below the feeder at Kumul.

Pale-billed Scrubwren ◊ *Aethomyias spilodera* Some at Varirata.

Buff-faced Scrubwren ◊ *Aethomyias perspicillatus* Some in the Lai Valley were seen well.

Papuan Scrubwren ◊ *Aethomyias papuensis* Common around Kumul.

Large Scrubwren ◊ *Sericornis nouhuysi* Common around Kumul.

Brown-breasted Gerygone ◊ *Gerygone ruficollis* Some in the garden at Kumul.

Large-billed Gerygone *Gerygone magnirostris* Common along the Fly River.

Yellow-bellied Gerygone ◊ *Gerygone chrysogaster* Common in Varirata.

Green-backed Gerygone ◊ *Gerygone chloronota* Regularly heard, eventually seen in Varirata.

Fairy Gerygone *Gerygone palpebrosa* Seen well in Varirata.

Grey Thornbill (Ashy Gerygone, Mountain G) *Acanthiza cinerea* Some nice views at Rondon.

Papuan Babbler ◊ (Rufous B, NG B) *Garritornis isidorei* Small group on our last morning at Kwatu.

Loria's Satinbird ◊ *Cnemophilus loriae* Regularly seen at Murrur Pass.

Crested Satinbird ◊ (C Bird-of-paradise) *Cnemophilus macgregorii* The sublime male appeared at Kumul for us!

Obscure Berrypecker ◊ *Melanocharis arfakiana* A few at Dablin Creek Road.

Black Berrypecker ◊ *Melanocharis nigra* Commonly heard in the lowlands, nice views at Varirata.

Fan-tailed Berrypecker ◊ *Melanocharis versteri* A few at Kumul.

Streaked Berrypecker ◊ *Melanocharis striativentris* One briefly at Rondon.

Dwarf Longbill ◊ (Spectacled L, D Honeyeater) *Oedistoma iliolophus* Some at Tabubil.

Yellow-bellied Longbill ◊ (Green-crowned L) *Toxorhamphus novaeguineae* Best seen along the Fly River.

Slaty-headed Longbill ◊ (S-chinned L, Grey-winged L) *Toxorhamphus poliopterus* Noted in the highlands twice.

Tit Berrypecker ◊ *Oreocharis arfaki* Some nice views around Kumul.

Crested Berrypecker ◊ *Paramythia montium* One pair gave extended views at Kumul.

Blue Jewel-babbler ◊ *Ptilorrhoa caerulescens* Tempted across an open area in front of us, one showed very well!

Spotted Jewel-babbler ◊ *Ptilorrhoa leucosticta* Heard at Rondon often, one crossed the trail briefly.

Chestnut-backed Jewel-babbler ◊ *Ptilorrhoa castanonota* Fantastic views at Tabubil this year!

Painted Quail-thrush ◊ *Cinclosoma ajax* Another difficult skulker which was seen well at Varirata!

Black-breasted Boatbill ◊ *Machaerirhynchus nigripectus* A few in the highlands.

White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus* Noted throughout the lowlands.

Great Woodswallow ◊ (New Guinea W) *Artamus maximus* Some seen well at Tabubil.

Lowland Peltops ◊ *Peltops blainvillii* One along the Fly River.

Mountain Peltops ◊ *Peltops montanus* Common around Tabubil.

Black Butcherbird *Melloria quoyi* Noted a few times in lowland forests.

Black-backed Butcherbird ◊ *Cracticus mentalis* Several of this restricted species at PAU.

Hooded Butcherbird ◊ *Cracticus cassicus* Common throughout.

Mottled Berryhunter ◊ *Rhagologus leucostigma* A few sadly unsatisfying glimpses at Rondon.

Stout-billed Cuckooshrike ◊ *Coracina caeruleogrisea* A pair showed well at Varirata.
Barred Cuckooshrike ◊ (Yellow-eyed C) *Coracina lineata* Some at Varirata.
Black-faced Cuckooshrike *Coracina novaehollandiae* Some near Varirata.
Boyer's Cuckooshrike ◊ *Coracina boyeri* Common in the lowlands.
White-bellied Cuckooshrike *Coracina papuensis* Common around Port Moresby.
Golden Cuckooshrike ◊ *Campochaera sloetii* Some really excellent views at Tabubil.
Black-bellied Cuckooshrike ◊ (B-b Cicadabird) *Edolisoma montanum* Some around Mount Hagen.
Grey-headed Cuckooshrike ◊ (G-h Cicadabird) *Edolisoma schisticeps* Noted at Dablin Creek.
Black-shouldered Cicadabird ◊ *Edolisoma incertum* Noted at Dablin Creek.
Black Cicadabird ◊ (B Cuckooshrike, New Guinea C) *Edolisoma melas* One male showed well in Varirata.
Varied Triller *Lalage leucomela* Noted regularly in the lowlands.
Wattled Ploughbill ◊ *Eulacestoma nigropectus* A superb male showed beautifully at Rondon.
Rufous-naped Bellbird ◊ (R-n Whistler) *Aleadryas rufinucha* Common and showy at Kumul.
Piping Bellbird ◊ (Crested Pitohui) *Ornorectes cristatus* Heard often, some brief views at Varirata.
Black Pitohui ◊ *Melanorectes nigrescens* Nice looks at Rondon of a pair.



The voice of Brown Oriole is commonly heard in New Guinea – we had excellent views in Varirata!

Brown-backed Whistler ◊ *Pachycephala modesta* Seen around Mount Hagen.
Grey Whistler *Pachycephala simplex* Seen both at Varirata and along the Fly River.
Sclater's Whistler ◊ *Pachycephala soror* Heard at Rondon in the pre-dawn chorus only. (H)
Mangrove Golden Whistler ◊ (Black-tailed W) *Pachycephala melanura* On the offshore islets of New Britain.
Regent Whistler ◊ *Pachycephala schlegelii* Common around Kumul.
Black-headed Whistler ◊ *Pachycephala monacha* Nice views of a pair in the Lai River Valley.
White-bellied Whistler ◊ *Pachycephala leucogastra* Very showy near Varirata.
White-bellied Pitohui ◊ *Pseudorectes incertus* Some extended views of a feeding flock at Kwatu.
Rusty Pitohui ◊ *Pseudorectes ferrugineus* Brief views only in Varirata.
Arafura Shrikethrush ◊ *Colluricincla megarhyncha* A few around Kwatu up the Fly River.
Variable Shrikethrush ◊ *Colluricincla fortis* Common in Varirata.
Sepik-Ramu Shrikethrush ◊ *Colluricincla tappenbergi* One near Kumul on the northern slopes.
Grey Shrikethrush *Colluricincla harmonica* Seen near Varirata.
Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* Common by the roadsides in the highlands.

Australasian Figbird *Sphecotheres vieilloti* Many at PAU.
Southern Variable Pitohui ◇ *Pitohui uropygialis* Seen at Tabubil, and around Kiunga.
Hooded Pitohui ◇ *Pitohui dichrous* Common in Varirata.
Brown Oriole ◇ *Oriolus szalayi* A common voice of the lowlands, seen well a few times.
Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus bracteatus* Common in Varirata in particular.
Willie Wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys* Noted regularly.
Northern Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura rufiventris* One at Tabubil, another on New Britain. Potential splits.
Sooty Thicket Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura threnothorax* One at Varirata.
White-bellied Thicket Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura leucothorax* A pair on the Fly River performed eventually.
Black Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura atra* Singles noted multiple times in the mountains.
Chestnut-bellied Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura hyperythra* Common at Varirata.
Friendly Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura albolimbata* Most common at Kumul.
Dimorphic Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura brachyrhyncha* A few encounters in the highlands.
Rufous-backed Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura rufidorsa* One very showy bird at Tabubil.
Drongo Fantail ◇ (Pygmy Drongo, Mountain D) *Chaetorhynchus papuensis* Nice looks at Varirata.



This male Princess Stephanie's Astrapia had an enormously long tail which wowed us as he flew overhead!

Black Monarch ◇ (Fantailed M) *Symposiachrus axillaris* A few at Rondon.
Spot-winged Monarch ◇ *Symposiachrus guttula* Common in the lowlands.
Hooded Monarch ◇ *Symposiachrus manadensis* A few around Kwatu.
Black-tailed Monarch ◇ (Bismarck Pied M) *Symposiachrus verticalis* Eventually located on New Britain.
Island Monarch ◇ (Islet M) *Monarcha cinerascens* A few on the offshore islets of New Britain.
Black-faced Monarch ◇ *Monarcha melanopsis* Seen well at Varirata.
Black-winged Monarch ◇ *Monarcha frater* Seen well at Varirata.
Golden Monarch ◇ *Carterornis chrysomela* Regularly noted throughout.
Frilled Monarch ◇ *Arses telescopthalmus* Regularly noted throughout.
Torrent-lark ◇ *Grallina bruijnii* A pair on the river at Ok Menga.
Shining Flycatcher (Common SF) *Myiagra alecto* Common in scrubby habitat on New Britain.
Velvet Flycatcher ◇ (Dull F, Lesser Shining F) *Myiagra hebetior* Responsive male seen well on New Britain.
Grey Crow ◇ (Bare-eyed C) *Corvus tristis* Often encountered in the lowlands.
Torresian Crow *Corvus orru* Regular around Port Moresby.

Bismarck Crow ◊ (Island C) *Corvus insularis* Common around Walindi.

Lesser Melampitta ◊ *Melampitta lugubris* Tried hard for this one (~20 attempts), but never even saw movement! **(H)**

Greater Melampitta ◊ *Megalampitta gigantea* Better luck with this one at Tabubil, seen crossing an open area twice.

Blue-capped Ifrit ◊ (B-c Ifrita) *Ifrita kowaldi* Very nice views around Kumul.

Glossy-mantled Manucode ◊ (Glossy M) *Manucodia ater* Common along the Fly River.

Crinkle-collared Manucode ◊ *Manucodia chalybatus* Showed well in Varirata.

Trumpet Manucode ◊ *Phonygammus keraudrenii* A few views along the Fly River, and at Boystown Road.

Ribbon-tailed Astrapia ◊ *Astrapia mayeri* Always a favourite, these beautiful birds were common at Kumul.

Princess Stephanie's Astrapia ◊ *Astrapia stephaniae* A particularly nice male was seen at Rondon!

Queen Carola's Parotia ◊ *Parotia carolae* Nice scopes views of a few males and females at Dablin Creek Road.

King of Saxony Bird-of-paradise ◊ *Pteridophora alberti* Two different males seen at Kumul and Rondon.

Greater Lophorina ◊ *Lophorina superba* Very good views in the Lai River Valley.

Magnificent Riflebird ◊ *Ptiloris magnificentus* Heard only around Tabubil. **(H)**

Growling Riflebird ◊ (Eastern R) *Ptiloris intercedens* Regular encounters in Varirata.

Black Sicklebill ◊ *Epimachus fastosus* Heard only at Rondon. **(H)**

Brown Sicklebill ◊ *Epimachus meyeri* Typically impressive, great encounters around Kumul with males and females.

Magnificent Bird-of-paradise ◊ *Diphyllodes magnificentus* Males and females seen at Dablin Creek.

King Bird-of-paradise ◊ *Cicinnurus regius* The famous km17 bird performed for us!

Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise ◊ *Seleucidis melanoleucus* Another weird and wonderful BoP from the Fly River.

Greater Bird-of-paradise ◊ *Paradisaea apoda* Fantastic display action for us at km17!

Raggiana Bird-of-paradise ◊ *Paradisaea raggiana* A really great morning with these guys, very active and excited!

Lesser Bird-of-paradise ◊ *Paradisaea minor* The male at Kama Village showed very nicely above us.

Blue Bird-of-paradise ◊ *Paradisaea rudolphi* One of the best birds in the world, we had magnificent views!



Black-fronted White-eyes are striking birds indeed!

Ashy Robin ◊ (Black-capped R) *Heteromyias albispecularis* A few seen at Murrumbidgee Pass.

Black-sided Robin ◊ (B-bibbed R) *Poecilodryas hypoleuca* Eventually seen by all on the Fly River.

Black-throated Robin ◊ *Poecilodryas albonotata* Two on the ridge behind Rondon.

White-winged Robin ◊ *Peneothello sigillata* Common in the garden at Kumul.

Slaty Robin ◊ (Blue-grey R) *Peneothello cyanus* Some good looks at Rondon.

White-rumped Robin ◊ *Peneothello bimaculata* One flew across the trail at Tabubil, others remained invisible.

White-faced Robin ◊ *Tregellasia leucops* Really great views at Varirata of these retiring robins.

Torrent Flyrobin ◊ (T Flycatcher, River F) *Monachella muelleriana* Plentiful around Tabubil.
 Canary Flyrobin ◊ (Papuan Flycatcher, Montane F) *Microeca papuana* A pair at Murrumbidgee Pass.
 Yellow-legged Flyrobin ◊ (Y-l Flycatcher) *Microeca griseiceps* Some at Varirata were very confiding.
 Olive Flyrobin ◊ (O Flycatcher) *Microeca flavovirescens* One at Varirata was a good find in a feeding flock!
 Lemon-bellied Flyrobin ◊ (L-b Flycatcher) *Microeca flavigaster* A few on the outskirts of Varirata.
 Papuan Scrub Robin ◊ *Drymodes beccarii* This skulker was heard only at Varirata. (H)
 Lesser Ground Robin ◊ *Amalocichla incerta* An excellent showing at Rondon Ridge was appreciated!
 Pacific Swallow *Hirundo tahitica* Common throughout.
 Island Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus maforensis* Common in the Lai River Valley, and at Rondon.
 Australian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus australis* Some noted on New Britain.
 Papuan Grassbird ◊ *Cincloramphus macrurus* Noted in the highlands, heard the other form on New Britain.
 Golden-headed Cisticola *Cisticola exilis* One in the grasslands on New Britain.
 Black-fronted White-eye ◊ *Zosterops minor* Common in Varirata.
 Capped White-eye ◊ *Zosterops fuscicapilla* Many at Dablin Creek.
 Papuan White-eye ◊ *Zosterops novaeguineae* Common at Rondon, and a few in the Lai River Valley.
 Metallic Starling (Shining S) *Aplonis metallica* Common throughout.
 Yellow-eyed Starling ◊ *Aplonis mystacea* A presumed pair flew over Boystown giving unusual calls.
 Singing Starling ◊ *Aplonis cantoroides* Just a few at Kimbe Airport.
 Yellow-faced Myna ◊ *Mino dumontii* Common on the mainland.
 Long-tailed Myna ◊ (Melanesian M) *Mino kreffti* Common on New Britain.
 Golden Myna ◊ *Mino anais* Greats looks around Kwatu on the Fly River.



Buff-bellied Mannikin is endemic to the Bismarck Archipelago – a lovely finch!

Island Thrush *Turdus poliocephalus* Common around Kumul, and on the feeder.
 Pied Bush Chat (P Chat) *Saxicola caprata* Regular roadside birds in the highlands.
 Red-capped Flowerpecker ◊ *Dicaeum geelvinkianum* Common throughout.
 Red-banded Flowerpecker ◊ (Bismarck F) *Dicaeum eximium* Eventually seen well on New Britain.
 Black Sunbird ◊ *Leptocoma aspasia* A few around Kiunga, more common on New Britain.
 Olive-backed Sunbird *Cinnyris jugularis* A few around our rooms at Walindi.
 House Sparrow (introduced) *Passer domesticus* Noted in Port Moresby.
 Eurasian Tree Sparrow (introduced) *Passer montanus* Common in most towns.
 Mountain Firetail ◊ *Oreostruthus fuliginosus* Very nice views around Kumul.
 Crimson Finch ◊ *Neochmia phaeton* A few at Kiunga airstrip.
 Blue-faced Parrotfinch *Erythrura trichroa* Parrotfinches heard at Rondon were presumably this species. (H)
 Grey-headed Mannikin ◊ *Lonchura caniceps* One big flock in the grass at PAU.
 Hooded Mannikin ◊ *Lonchura spectabilis* Quite common in the highlands.
 Buff-bellied Mannikin ◊ (Bismarck M) *Lonchura melaena* Some lovely looks on New Britain.



The group waiting at our backup airstrip on New Britain, hoping the volcano wasn't about to erupt again before the backup plane landed!

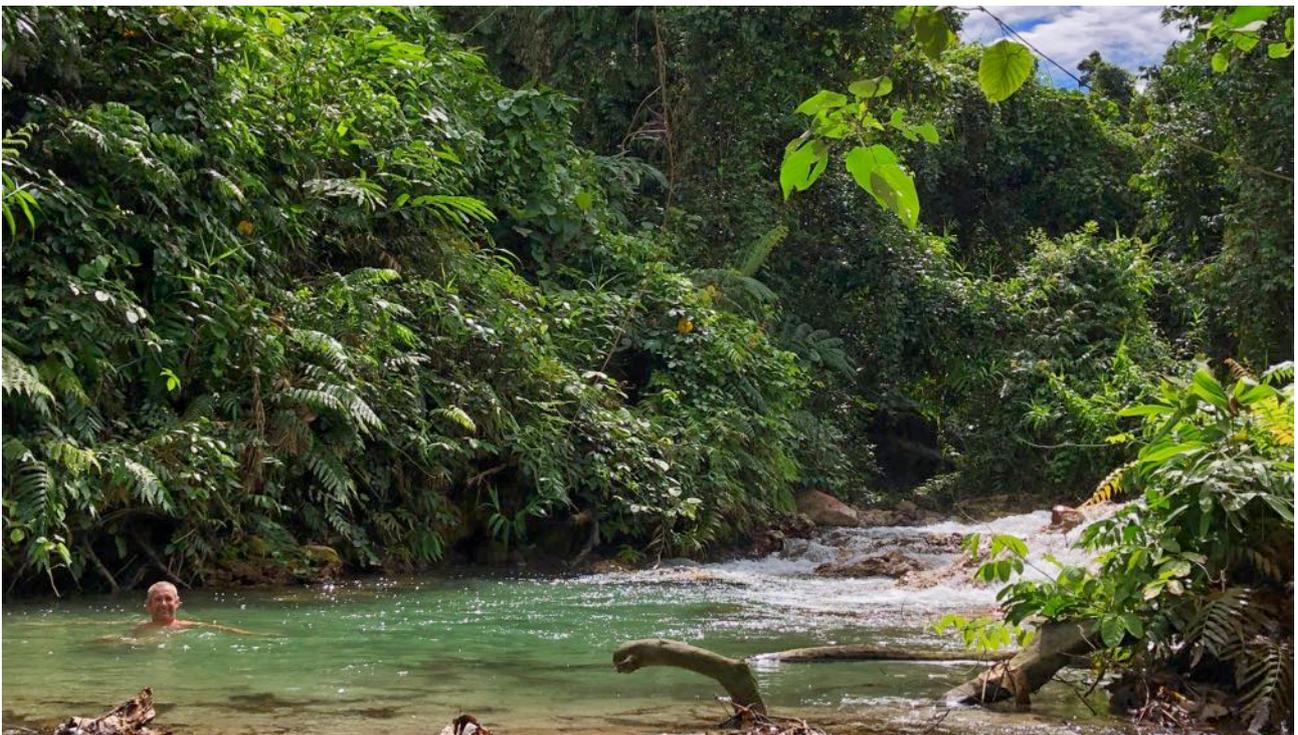
MAMMALS

Total number of mammal species recorded: 3

Pygmy Ringtail *Pseudochirulus mayeri* One at Kumul during a night walk.

Bismarck Bare-backed Fruit Bat *Dobsonia praedatrix* One on New Britain (LO).

Great Flying Fox (Bismarck F F) *Pteropus neohibernicus* Abundant on New Britain.



Paul having a refreshing dip in the hot springs after a hard morning's birding at Garu on New Britain!