



The star of the Arfak Mountains – a male Western Parotia strutting his stuff! All tour photos by Josh Bergmark unless otherwise stated

BEST OF WEST PAPUA

12 – 26 AUGUST 2018

LEADER: JOSHUA BERGMARK

Birdwatching in New Guinea can be more challenging and frustrating than anywhere else in the world, but the world-famous Arfak Mountains and tropical Waigeo in the Raja Ampat Islands these days offer more of an “Attenborough Experience” than anywhere else in the land of paradise. The local people of the Vogelkop Peninsula in West Papua truly understand the value of their birds and ecotourism, which has resulted in world-class hides and blinds for all the star avifauna of the area, allowing us to take a fantastic glimpse into the secret life of the world’s best birds. It is no surprise that the extraordinary ballerina courtship dance of the male Western Parotia and the jaw-droppingly striking Black Sicklebill headed up the list of amazing species enjoyed on our short Best of West Papua tour this year. In fact, the whole top-five list was comprised of birds-of-paradise which we witnessed in full display! From the tiny yet incandescent Wilson’s Bird-of-paradise which vibrantly glows in the dark understorey of Waigeo, to his close relative on the mainland, Magnificent Bird-of-paradise with his intricate feathery cape. Of course the famous *Paradisaea* genus made an impression as usual, with the Raja Ampat endemic Red Bird-of-paradise observed flamboyantly dancing around in their lek with remarkable style.

It is unfortunate that with so many amazing birds some real stunners always get left out! We enjoyed stupendous views of both Masked Bowerbird and Vogelkop Bowerbird, the former with his gorgeous fiery plumage, and the latter with his eye-catching and impeccably designed bower. The newly-split Curl-caped Lophorina (Vogelkop Superb Bird-of-paradise), impressive Arfak Astrapia, and particularly rare Long-tailed Paradigalla are all Vogelkop endemic birds-of-paradise which showed well this year, while Black-billed Sickiebill took a little more time! In the lowlands, the stupendous King Bird-of-paradise was found sitting unusually unobscured in his display tree, allowing detailed and prolonged scope views, and Glossy-mantled Manucodes were seen performing display flights. We cannot forget of course to mention the hulking Western Crowned Pigeons which showed ever so brilliantly, amongst the other Vogelkop endemics which appeared in our binoculars. Red-billed Brushturkey was particularly exciting, as it is unusual for the whole group to see this shy species as well as we did, while the similarly cryptic White-striped Forest Rail literally ran circles around us and hopped onto logs in full view! Spice Imperial Pigeon, Arfak Catbird, Vogelkop Melidectes, Arfak Honeyeater, Vogelkop Scrubwren, Vogelkop Whistler, Raja Ampat Pitohui and the restricted Grey-banded Munia popped up too. Indeed, we saw all but one of the Bird's Head endemics this year – that last owlet-nightjar didn't want to show itself – but we did enjoy tremendous looks at both Feline Owlet-nightjar and Mountain Owlet-nightjar around Syoubri.



Another spectacular transformation – the star male Black Sickiebill high in the Arfaks practices his performance

Parrots were another highlight, with perched views of some tricky species like Violet-necked Lory, Blue-collared Parrot, the decidedly rare and nomadic Pygmy Lorikeet, Fairy, Plum-faced, Yellow-billed, Red-flanked and Papuan Lorikeets, Palm Cockatoo, Eclectus Parrot, Great-billed Parrot and Modest Tiger Parrot. Other species performed well as fly-bys, such as the endemic Black Lory which we saw multiple times near

Sorong, along with Black-capped Lory, Large Fig Parrot, Red-cheeked Parrot, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo and Yellow-capped Pygmy Parrot. Other excellent sightings were abundant, with Spotted Whistling Duck, Dusky Megapode, Great-billed Heron, Pygmy Eagle, Long-tailed Honey Buzzard, Gurney's Eagle, Black-mantled Goshawk, Bronze Ground Dove, Greater Sooty Owl, Papuan Boobook, Marbled Frogmouth, Papuan Frogmouth, Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Papuan Dwarf Kingfisher, Papuan Pitta, Hooded Pitta, Papuan Treecreeper, Wallace's Fairywren, Pygmy Longbill, Tit Berrypecker, Spotted Jewel-babbler, Yellow-breasted and Black-breasted Boatbill, Lowland and Mountain Peltops, the monotypic Mottled Berryhunter, Rusty Pitohui, Black Pitohui, Piping Bellbird, Rufous-naped Bellbird, Dimorphic Fantail, Rufous-backed Fantail, Golden Monarch, Black-winged Monarch, Brown-headed Crow, Ashy Robin, Smoky Robin, Green-backed Robin, Garnet Robin, Lesser Ground Robin, Olive-crowned Flowerpecker and Streak-headed Mannikin. We finished up with some special birds around Sorong, specifically the sparse and unpredictable Blue-black Kingfisher, two cooperative Little Kingfishers, and the mega rare Tawny Straightbill. Overall we recorded a respectable 246 species of bird, including 12 heard only, plus an additional 8 species of mammal!



The top-male Red Bird-of-paradise asserts his dominance from his special branch above Waigeo

After convening in Manokwari we introduced ourselves to the magnificent isle of New Guinea with a bit of lowland forest birding. A good selection of common species included Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Frilled Monarch, both Golden Monarch and Golden Cuckooshrike, Black Cuckooshrike, Northern Variable Pitohui, Black-browed Triller, New Guinea Friarbird, Brown Oriole, Double-eyed Fig Parrot, Olive-crowned Flowerpecker and a few female Lesser Bird-of-paradise. Unfortunately heavy logging undertaken since our last visit had all but extinguished the large parrots and pigeons which were in evidence last year!

The next day we found ourselves positioned overlooking a forested valley in the Arfak Mountains not long after sunrise, scanning dead snags in vain for the regular Masked Bowerbird. A pair of Long-tailed Honey Buzzards proved to be the first real excitement of the morning as they came overhead, and Blue-collared Parrots were seen well in flight soon after. A Hooded Pitohui came up into a tree, but this often birdy clearing was otherwise quiet today. Just around the corner we had success with some hill-forest species including the

vibrant Goldenface, both Black-faced and Black Monarch, White-faced Robin and Yellow-legged Flyrobin. The local form of Black-fronted White-eye was seen particularly well, as was a single Vogelkop Whistler - the first of our Arfak endemics. After adding Island Leaf Warbler, Red Myzomela, Mountain Myzomela and a soaring Pygmy Eagle to the growing list, our satisfied group continued on to Mingre where we would spend the coming days.



The taxonomically confusing Black-fronted White-eyes (left) need to be seen well here to be sure they are not the rarer black-fronted form of Papuan White-eyes, while Arfak endemic Vogelkop Whistlers (right) can look superficially similar to female Sclater's Whistlers!

A short midday break became almost non-existent when news of a roosting Mountain Owlet Nightjar reached our ears, and soon afterwards we were soaking up this cute bundle of feathers in our binoculars. Moving straight on to the Magnificent Bird-of-paradise hides provided mixed results - a juvenile bird for one group, and an immaculate adult male for the other! Excellent views were obtained of this spectacular golden-yellow bird with bright blue legs and red highlights calling from the display court, but displays would have to wait. Not far away a responsive female White-striped Forest Rail ran circles around us, showing brilliantly.

Pre-dawn breakfast was rudely interrupted by a well-responsive Greater Sooty Owl which perched perfectly in the tree next to the dining area. The rising sun saw us eager for what many consider to be a tour (if not a life) highlight - a session with Western Parotias, the ballerina experts of the Arfak. One half of our contingent was extremely fortunate and witnessed a male practicing almost his entire routine as the court was cleaned. After some bouncing across the cleared ground, he stood up straight and unfurled his costume before pausing for dramatic effect. Then while facing us he started dancing, teetering back and forth while gently swaying his head and feathery antennae, all the while pumping his neck to show off that magnificent iridescent sheen. Spectacular! The other group was not so lucky, and despite being at the best court did not even see their male. The challenges of New Guinea birding!

A walk around the forest trails after our vigils concluded yielded both Vogelkop and Ornate Melidectes, while some more common understory birds like delightful Black Fantails, Slaty Robin and Vogelkop Scrubwren also delighted. Black-breasted Boatbill and Lesser Ground Robin showed briefly while a pair of Sclater's Whistlers foraged overhead. We soon headed up the terrible road towards Anggi Lakes in search of the

incredibly range-restricted Grey-banded Mannikin which we succeeded in locating, alongside Brown-breasted Gerygone, Papuan Grassbird, and a brief Arfak Honeyeater. The persistent rain hindered any further birding on the return journey, and also hampered the efforts of two participants who had chosen to stay behind in one of the hides.



Magnificent Birds-of-paradise can be seen Papua-wide, but only here do you get to see them like this! (Tour Participant Martin Rutz)



Often the locals find us roosting Mountain Owlet-nightjars – it only took them two hours on our first afternoon this year!



Just two years ago these restricted endemic Grey-banded Mannikins were still a Birdquest lifer, but the new road still works (for now)!



The master builder of the bird world is without a doubt the Vogelkop Bowerbird – we enjoyed checking out the various unique bower designs and colour schemes utilised by five different birds during our time in the Arfaks.

With a clear sky greeting us the next day, one group headed to the display log of a Curl-caped Lophorina... Better known as the newly split Vogelkop Superb Bird-of-Paradise by everyone except the IOC naming committee! After a long wait in the hide, all punters managed to score both Arfak Catbird and Green-backed Robin, but no BoP! On exiting the hide, the male was tracked down in his advertising tree without much hassle and provided good views with his flamboyant breast cover waving around. Content with this, we headed back up the hill where we struck gold with a flowering tree containing not just Red-collared Myzomelas and Fairy Lorikeets, but more than twenty ultra-rare Pygmy Lorikeets! In the afternoon, this

contingent visited the Vogelkop Bowerbird hide before a return visit to the Magnificent Bird-of-paradise courts finally produced the goods with a full enthusiastic display seen exceptionally well.

The other group visited the parotia hides in the morning (where this time they were just as successful as the others had been previously), and enjoyed views of the nearby Vogelkop Bowerbird attending his magnificent structure filled with trinkets from all over the forest and nearby village – always a crowd pleaser! It is a joy to spend some time sitting near the hide and watching the professional gardener meticulously rearrange his collections and tidying things up. The afternoon saw us heading to the Lophorina hide, but before arriving we had already enjoyed views of the male BoP in his tree, and the lorikeets in theirs. Another long wait ensued (the poor leader sat in this hide for over 9 hours today), and although again no display was witnessed, both the Arfak Catbird and Green-backed Robin returned for an encore.



Despite spending a combined total of 16 hours in the hide between us without a single showing of this extremely shy bird-of-paradise, we all enjoyed great looks at the newly-split Crescent-caped Lophorina in the trees behind his display log.

The following morning saw us back at the Masked Bowerbird lookout. Despite two bowers with hides having been active the day before we arrived (one of which was specifically located for us), they had both fallen into disuse by our first afternoon. Luckily it didn't take long before a fluorescent orange dot was spotted in the soft morning light a little way down the valley below us and we had amazing scope views of this phenomenal bird sitting high on a dead snag. A distant Josephine's Lorikeet was also scoped up, and two Blue-collared Parrots offered a rare perched view by the side of the road nearby. Heading higher up we explored the forest interior picking up Arfak Honeyeaters with their brilliant facial wattles, a Rufescent Imperial Pigeon, a pair of Chestnut-breasted Cuckoos, plus a single Canary Flyrobin.

The first part of the afternoon was spent on a low altitude trail where we enjoyed some excellent but challenging birds. Piping Bellbirds taunted us with their monotonous call before finally flying in with their crests erect for a few seconds, while a pair of Wallace's Fairywrens was spotted high overhead in a feeding flock which also contained our second Rufous-backed Fantail. Skulking Rusty Mouse-warblers showed themselves too, albeit briefly. Later on we were led to a blind under the favourite tree of a Black-billed Sicklebill, but although he called all around us we did not manage a view. A Drongo Fantail on the trail was picked up by his piercing contact call, while a Little Shrikethrush snuck through the midstory.

Zeth's reliable roosting Feline Owlet Nightjar had not returned since a selfie incident earlier in the year, so we made sure to focus on spotlighting one. This did not take long tonight, and a fine individual showing off his cat-like whiskers at close range was well appreciated. Later on, a Ground Cuscus was seen by Richard and myself during an extended (unsuccessful) search for other birds.



We had multiple showings of the shy Green-backed Robin this year, including some great looks from the Lophorina hide.



Papuan Logrunners don't often come out into the open like this! This vocally distinct subspecies in the Arfaks is a potential split.



Typically it takes a few hours of waiting before everybody sees Long-tailed Paradigalla well, but this pair was very cooperative!

We returned to settle our score with Black-billed Sicklebill the following morning, and most of the group managed either flight or brief binocular views. Always a tricky one! A pair of Mid-mountain Berrypeckers were finally seen by all, a Grey Thornbill came through briefly, and more Arfak Honeyeaters perched up nicely.

After greeting Zeth (the original Arfak bird guide!) we began our hike up the steep hillside without seeing many birds, however on arrival at the fabled Paradigalla Clearing we were almost immediately watching an uncharacteristically showy pair of Long-tailed Paradigallas circling multiple times. This rare and poorly known species was truly a treat, but we tore ourselves away to obtain the typically brief views of Lesser Melampitta and the monotypic Mottled Berryhunter. The latter species is of course essential for family listers (one such participant was particularly merry after seeing this bird), and the Arfaks are by far one of the best places to find it - we saw seven individuals this year.

Continuing upwards the trail became steeper and steeper before we arrived at Sicklebill Camp which was to be our home for two nights. Much upgraded from our earlier trips to the region, we are now fairly comfortable at night on our raised bamboo beds! A spot of afternoon birding in the mist almost immediately netted us an inquisitive Lesser Ground Robin, and absolutely phenomenal views of the vocally distinct Arfak form of Papuan Logrunner. Friendly Fantails, Large Scrubwrens and Ashy Robins rounded out the day. Those who opted for a spotlighting session enjoyed another Feline Owlet Nightjar, a cute Stein's Cuscus, and the possum pictured below which looks like Masked Ringtail, however must surely be something else based off the accepted range maps? If anyone knows better than I do, please let me know!



Some Lesser Ground Robins are bolder than others (left), but no matter how well you see some mammals in New Guinea their ID is not always straight-forward with material to reference so thin on the ground! This is some type of highland ringtail possum (right).

Our dawn appointment with Black Sicklebill seemed shaky at first due to a strong wind, but after a tense hour the magnificent male finally descended to his display pole and proceeded to show off his moves, practising for a female which never materialised. The amazing transformation as he twirls sideways and extends into an elongated arrow was an unforgettable experience for all participants.

Next up was Arfak Astrapia, which has been missed by almost all groups this year and as such our expectations were low. The young male which flew in above us to feed certainly abated these pessimistic thoughts! The rest of the day was spent wandering through the magnificent Arfak cloud forest and the new birds came thick and fast. Smoky and Ashy Robins hopped around on the sides of the tracks while Regent Whistlers, Papuan Treecreepers, a Dimorphic Fantail, Fan-tailed Berrypeckers, Black-throated Robins, Mountain Mouse-warblers, and more Mottled Berryhunters were teased out. One female Modest Tiger Parrot, Tit Berrypeckers, a showy Garnet Robin and Papuan Lorikeets added some colour, while Black Pitohui and Rufous-naped Whistler were both seen well by the whole group in the same tree - somewhat surprising as these can be difficult birds! Free time in the middle of the day allowed one participant to get to grips with a Spotted Jewel Babbler (otherwise only flushed and seen briefly a few times this year - completely unresponsive, maybe due to the unusually dry weather which had preceded our visit). We visited a number of Vogelkop Bowerbird bowers and marvelled at the architectural diversity that each of these master crafters displays. Rufous-sided Honeyeaters proved common as usual, but Cinnamon-crowed Melidectes took more work before we obtained a view.



The two stars of the high camp behind Syoubri are the impressive Black Sickbill (left) and the cute Feline Owlet-nightjar (right).



Another angle on the Black Sicklebill – photos could never do this phenomenal species justice!



This male Garnet Robin (left) came uncharacteristically low down for us, while Papuan Treecreepers (right) played very nicely.

After a farewell visit to the male Black Sicklebill at dawn and some final looks at a few highland species we began our descent back to Syoubri, picking up perched Yellow-billed and Plum-faced Lorikeets on the way. A pile of Dwarf Cassowary faeces on the trail reminded us of the rarities these pristine forests still conceal, and not long after we found a Long-tailed Paradigalla on the nest - something which was first recorded by a Birdquest group many years ago, but now a more regular find despite the species remaining very poorly known! We enjoyed scope views of the subtle blue feather sheen and the tiny feathery bill tuft above the three multi-coloured wattles. Some of these features are usually hard to observe on such a skittish species. We tried hard for Orange-crowned Fairywren but turned up a blank, however had good views of White-shouldered Fairywren lower down, along with Capped White-eye. A quick Grey-green Scrubwren twitch was successful - the forest around Syoubri is at just the right altitude for this restricted species. Our final inspection of a low hill forest trail only added Chestnut-backed Jewel Babbler to the heard list, but our

extended views of a tiny Pygmy Longbill (the smallest New Guinea bird) were a real treat. The hot showers back in Manokwari were also appreciated!



Pygmy Longbills are not always observed on our tours in New Guinea - despite their alleged field guide status as "abundant in the forest" you count yourself lucky to see one zoom overhead. This individual in a flowering tree however came down to eye-level!

After a Cinnamon Bittern at Sorong airport and the world's fastest pizza delivery, we boarded a ferry and began the crossing to our next adventure in the Raja Ampats. The windy conditions were conducive for???? birding, with the likes of Red-necked Phalarope, Wedge-tailed Shearwater, Wilson's Storm Petrel, Long-tailed Jaeger and Bridled Tern all seen, along with a distant pod of Short-finned Pilot Whales. A pair of Singing Starling greeted us at the wharf on Waigeo before we spent some time birding along the main road. The surprisingly birdy patch of lowland forest held dozens of gaudy Eclectus Parrots, Brahminy Kites and Rainbow Bee-eaters, while lesser numbers of Moustached Treeswift, Black-capped Lory, Blyth's Hornbill, Red-cheeked Parrot and Sacred Kingfishers also impressed. Our first Red Bird-of-paradise (a young male) was a highlight, backed up by a very cooperative Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, and fly-by Raja Shelducks, Palm Cockatoos, Pinon's Imperial Pigeons and two Great Cuckoo Doves. As the sun was setting, a roadside pond suddenly caused the brakes to be applied rapidly as a female Spotted Whistling Duck with chicks in tow appeared - this lovely endemic waterfowl is crepuscular and can be somewhat cryptic in thick riparian vegetation except during the late evenings. It has become difficult on our other New Guinea tours, and is definitely not guaranteed even on Waigeo, so we were happy to see them here.



Mother Spotted Whistling Duck keeping a watchful eye on us before disappearing into the thick vegetation.

A short walk the next day pre-dawn positioned us under a Red Bird-of-paradise display tree. The owner of the tree was present all morning, occasionally jumping up and fluttering his wings, but a moderate breeze prevented him and his friends from going crazy when a small group of females passed through. Not long after dawn the activity ceased, so we headed down another trail where two immense Western Crowned Pigeons were suddenly flushed! One perched in a tree for as long as we wanted while everyone had time to admire the magnificent feathery crown, bright red eye, and striking black mask. With two of the three big Waigeo birds down, we arrived for our appointment with one of the world's star birds - Wilson's Bird-of-paradise - to complete the set. We had hardly settled in before three females arrived and the luminescent ball of colour descended to his court, hopping around doing his little dance and holding himself erect to impress the girls. Truly an amazing species - another one to which photos can never do justice! It was now 8:30am and the leader was almost out of ideas! While we waited in and around the hide enjoying more views of the male Wilson's tidying his bachelor pad, we also found ourselves two noisy Dusky Scrubfowl and a Common Paradise Kingfisher. Nearby we also observed the common endemic Raja Ampat Pitohui, Hooded Butcherbird, Stephan's Emerald Dove and a brief Wompoo Fruit Dove.



This beautiful male Eclectus Parrot perched at eye level for a minute or so allowing us to admire his finery.



The impossibly vibrant Wilson's Bird-of-paradise (left) is undoubtedly one of the world's best birds, but a couple of immense Western Crowned Pigeons (right) aren't bad either, especially when you see them this well on your first morning!!!

After spending the middle of the day around our beachside lodgings (where some restless participants added Beach Kingfisher and Torresian Crow, plus had perched views of Palm Cockatoo and Eclectus Parrot), we headed back into the forest where the afternoon was predictably slow. Black-sided Robins, a Yellow-breasted Boatbill, Grey Whistlers and Tawny-breasted Honeyeaters eventually gave themselves up, plus a rare Brown-headed Crow flew overhead. Point blank views of a Papuan Dwarf Kingfisher were probably the most exciting observation. Spotlighting was challenging, with upwards of five Marbled Frogmouths heard only. Eventually we saw a Papuan Boobook before calling it a night, getting a huge Papuan Frogmouth on the road back along with a brief Striped Possum and some Sugar Gliders.

The wind continued through the night, and our morning of birding was fairly slow. The absolute highlight was a responsive Papuan Pitta and Hooded Pitta duo. Some impressive multitasking by the whole group resulted in excellent looks for everyone at both species - they were in the same binocular view for a second or two at one stage! A Hook-billed Kingfisher was finally coaxed out of her thicket and showed well, while Puff-backed, Tawny-breasted and a canopy-loving Spotted Honeyeater were also noted. Black Berrypeckers played cat and mouse with us, and a big Waigeo Spotted Cuscus slowly and methodically disappeared up a tree after showing well (he would have done well in a pot, the locals advise).



This tiny Papuan Dwarf Kingfisher gave us excellent perched views on Waigeo.



The huge Great-billed Heron rarely sticks around as long as this one did, so we were very pleased!

Unfortunately the unseasonal wind had been whipping up the whitecaps for days, so we had to abandon our plans to visit an offshore island during the middle of the day. Luckily the waves died down just enough for us to slowly make our way along the coast to our favourite secluded bay late in the afternoon where we found both the key near-endemic targets - Spice Imperial Pigeons and Violet-necked Lorys. Our afternoon also included other highlights of course, with excellent views of a stonking Great-billed Heron, multiple Beach Kingfishers which allowed close approach, Great-billed Parrots coming to roost, a courting colony of Black-naped Terns, and singles of both Gurney's Eagle and White-bellied Sea Eagle soaring above the bay. A few other species were also around including Oriental Dollarbirds, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, Coconut Lorikeets, Willie Wagtails and Singing Starlings.



Excellent perched views of Violet-necked Lory (left) were had after this pair landed, and a big Waigeo Spotted Cuscus next to the road.

A continuous overnight deluge paused just long enough for us to get out of bed at 4am and make our way to the forest before the rain started again. Despite this we were eventually able to bring out a very wet Marbled Frogmouth which posed well for us. The rest of the morning was spent cleaning up some remaining targets including the endemic forms of Rusty Pitohui and Little Shrikethrush (both of which are good candidates for splitting), plus some species which had eluded us previously like Spot-winged Monarch, Yellow-bellied and Green-backed Gerygone, Yellow-bellied Longbill, Yellow-faced Myna and Plain Honeyeater. Two Glossy-mantled Manucodes doing display flights over the road were also quite impressive. Try as we might, Olive Flyrobin did not appear, and we eventually called it a morning.

Those who were still awake after lunch ventured out to a different Red Bird-of-paradise lek where the reward at the top of the strenuous hill was stupendous. Half a dozen males carried on for hours only metres above us as females came and went, making a racket and showing off their impressive dance moves. Looping around the branches, hanging upside-down, hopping side to side and vibrating their wings - we even saw a copulation. This species probably has the best choreography of all the *Paradisaea* and we felt privileged to have witnessed it in full glory. A last minute duo of Beautiful Fruit Doves and another responsive Papuan Pitta rounded out our final afternoon on the paradise isle.



Watching the dance of this male Red Bird-of-paradise was the leader's favourite moment on the tour!

After transferring back to Sorong and checking in to our luxurious hotel, we spent the latter part of the day searching for Blue-black Kingfisher in the mangroves. Despite hearing two different birds only one row of trees back from the track, we could not coax them out in the heavy rain (although boy did we try)! Some wet Orange-fronted Fruit Doves and flocks of Metallic Starlings were spotted trying to dry out on dead snags, but the afternoon was otherwise quiet, except for the constant dripping...

Unfortunately the weather remained the same overnight and we found ourselves tired and soggy at our lowland forest site as the sun was rising. We tried to find some birds, but in 5 hours we only saw three or four species (although one of them, Scrub Honeyeater, was a trip addition). Eventually whoever was in charge of the weather took pity on us and it dried up just before lunch, so we immediately set to work. A King Bird-of-paradise was found sitting on an open branch in his display tree and gave walk away views, while a quick burst of tape resulted in a Red-billed Brush Turkey walking right in to check us out twice! It is unusual to see this western endemic on tour, let alone have the whole group see the full bird unobscured through binoculars! The hoped-for kingfishers had been silent all day, so we ventured further into the forest with the intent of trying to lure one out. We enjoyed a Spotted Honeyeater, Red-flanked Lorikeets and Ruby-throated Myzomelas in a flowering tree, but the absolute mega of the afternoon came in a small feeding flock where a dull skulking bird immediately caught our attention amongst some female Shining Flycatchers - it was the uber-rare Tawny Straightbill! Everybody was quickly looking at the weird aberrant honeyeater and I was able to rattle off a number of shots which I believe are the second ever field photos of this scarce species which has been seen by only two or three dozen birders. It stuck around for a few minutes before the flock moved on. As the light was fading, we moved back onto the road and finally lucked out with a quartet of Vogelkop endemic Black Lories flying over three times in the space of a few minutes giving excellent views.

The final morning of the tour was attended by those who hadn't had enough mud yet, and we returned to the mangroves. With a clear sky and soft morning light we had excellent looks at two different Blue-black Kingfishers by the track, along with a few final additions like Streak-headed Mannikin, Little Kingfisher, Brown-backed Honeyeater, Pale-vented Bush-hen and a few Collared Imperial Pigeons (which seem to be regular here, despite some range maps indicating otherwise).



The unassuming Tawny Straightbill was a big find this year – these are the second ever field photographs of this rare honeyeater

With that, it was time to head off home after another phenomenal visit to West Papua with a fantastic group. From the misty mountains of the Arfaks to the steaming lowlands and azure blue seas of Waigeo, we enjoyed the unbounded variety of New Guinea birding at its very best. With improved accommodation and less physical effort necessary to reach some of the sites, it was good fun all round. The birding here is of a different class to elsewhere in the world, and although it is usually hard work, all participants agreed that the trip had exceeded their expectations and many of the birds remain incomparable to any other. Somewhat unsurprisingly, the many excellent courtship displays we witnessed resulted in an all-BoP top five, with many of the participants agreeing yet again that the challenging forests of the Vogelkop Peninsula contain some of the best birds in the world.

BIRDS OF THE TOUR

1. Western Parotia (28 points)
2. Black Sicklebill (27 points)
3. Wilson's Bird-of-paradise (12 points)
4. Magnificent Bird-of-paradise (11 points)
5. Red Bird-of-paradise (9 points)

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).

Spotted Whistling Duck ◊ *Dendrocygna guttata* Mum with chicks seen by the road on Waigeo
Raja Shelduck ◊ (White-headed S) *Radjah radjah* A small flock flew overhead on our first afternoon on Waigeo
Red-billed Brushturkey ◊ *Talegalla cuvieri* Often heard, but seen exceptionally well by all near Sorong
Dusky Megapode ◊ (D Scrubfowl) *Megapodius freycinet* Numerous on Waigeo, with a handful of good looks
Wilson's Storm Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus* One seen quite close to shore from the Waigeo ferry
Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Ardena pacifica* Seen by some on the ferry to Waigeo
Cinnamon Bittern (Chestnut B) *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus* One skulking in long grass at the Sorong airport terminal
Nankeen Night Heron (Rufous N H) *Nycticorax caledonicus* Noted a couple of times on Waigeo and near Sorong
Striated Heron (Little H) *Butorides striata* Regular along the Waigeo coastline, seen well on our boat trip
Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus* Just a few in some grassland on Waigeo
Great-billed Heron *Ardea sumatrana* One huge individual perched at length just above us on our Waigeo boat trip



Another angle on our cooperative Great-billed Heron along coastal Waigeo

Great Egret *Ardea alba* This widespread species was noted a few times during the tour
Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* At least one was seen in the Sorong mangroves
Pacific Reef Heron (Eastern R Egret) *Egretta sacra* Regularly seen flying past our accommodation on Waigeo
Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel* Common throughout the Raja Ampats, with hundreds seen on our ferry crossings
Little Pied Cormorant *Microcarbo melanoleucos* One fishing in the bay on our Waigeo boat trip
Eastern Osprey *Pandion cristatus* (NL) One above our accommodation on Waigeo
Pacific Baza (Crested Hawk) *Aviceda subcristata* Just a few brief looks in the lowland forest near Sorong
Long-tailed Honey Buzzard ◊ (L-t Buzzard) *Henicopernis longicauda* A couple of splendid Arfak observations
Papuan Eagle ◊ (New Guinea Harpy E) *Harpyopsis novaeguineae* (H) Heard pre-dawn on the way to the Arfak hides
Pygmy Eagle ◊ (Little E) *Hieraaetus weiskei* Good looks on our first morning over the road up into the Arfaks
Gurney's Eagle ◊ *Aquila gurneyi* One soaring over the ridge seen from our speedboat on Waigeo
Variable Goshawk ◊ (Varied G) *Accipiter hiogaster* The common New Guinea raptor, seen several times
Black-mantled Goshawk ◊ *Accipiter melanochlamys* Unfortunately only glimpsed by half of the group in the Arfaks
Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus* A lovely raptor, commonly seen throughout the tour
White-bellied Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* Some on Waigeo, with one adult in particular performing well
White-striped Forest Rail ◊ *Rallicula leucospila* Phenomenal looks at this Arfak endemic as she circled us



You can't always get perfect shots in low light unfortunately! Female White-striped Forest Rail (left) and Bronze Ground Dove (right)

Pale-vented Bush-hen ◊ (Rufous-tailed B-h) *Amauornis moluccana* Heard and glimpsed near Sorong
Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* One in a roadside pond on Waigeo
Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii* Two individuals on the Waigeo coast
Whimbrel (Eurasian W) *Numenius phaeopus* One in flight in the Sorong mangroves on our last morning
Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* Two small flocks from the ferry to Waigeo
Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* Numerous around the Waigeo coastline
Greater Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii* Regular observations in the Raja Ampats
Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus* Two big feeding flocks seen well, each with dozens of individuals
Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana* Lovely views of a small courting colony on our boat trip off Waigeo
Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* One bird on the ferry from Waigeo
Long-tailed Jaeger *Stercorarius longicaudus* One from the ferry to Waigeo
Rock Dove (introduced) *Columba livia* Noted around Sorong
Spotted Dove (introduced) *Spilopelia chinensis* One on our last morning in Sorong
Sultan's Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia doreya* Heard often, but eventually some good views on Waigeo
Great Cuckoo-Dove ◊ *Reinwardtoena reinwardti* Multiple looks at this huge pigeon perched and in display flights
Stephan's Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps stephani* A couple of brief observations with flyby individuals
Bronze Ground Dove ◊ *Alopecoenas beccarii* One female enjoyed sitting on her tiny nest in the high Arfaks
Western Crowned Pigeon ◊ *Goura cristata* Four lovely encounters on Waigeo, two perched on our first morning
Wompoo Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus magnificus* Heard often on Waigeo and briefly seen flying across the road

Orange-fronted Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus aurantiifrons* A handful drying themselves out in the Sorong mangroves
Superb Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus superbus* Heard often, sadly only seen by some – no fruiting trees this year!
Beautiful Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus pulchellus* Excellent looks at two chasing each other around the Red BoP lek
White-bibbed Fruit Dove ◊ (W-breasted F D) *Ptilinopus rivoli* Many in the Arfak, eventually seen by everyone
Claret-breasted Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus viridis* Noted on our first afternoon and in the Arfaks
Orange-bellied Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus iozonus* (H) Heard daily on Waigeo, but never in view! Frustrating!
Spice Imperial Pigeon ◊ *Ducula myristicivora* Many of these near-endemics on our boat trip off Waigeo
Purple-tailed Imperial Pigeon ◊ *Ducula rufigaster* (H) Another frustrating pigeon heard and never seen this year
Rufescent Imperial Pigeon ◊ *Ducula chalconota* One individual perched for as long as we wanted in the Arfak
Pinon's Imperial Pigeon ◊ *Ducula pinon* Abundant in the lowlands, especially on Waigeo and around Sorong
Collared Imperial Pigeon ◊ *Ducula mullerii* Two birds seen well in the Sorong mangroves – not supposed to be here!
Pied Imperial Pigeon *Ducula bicolor* Noted flying by in the mid afternoon from our accommodation on Waigeo
Papuan Mountain Pigeon ◊ (Bare-eyed M-P) *Gymnophaps albertisii* Abundant in the Arfak Mountains



Two montane pigeons of New Guinea – Rufescent Imperial Pigeon (left) and White-bibbed (Mountain) Fruit Dove (right).

Black-billed Coucal ◊ (Lesser Black C) *Centropus bernsteini* (H) Heard on our last morning in the Sorong mangroves
Pacific Koel *Eudynamis orientalis* (H) Heard almost daily, but never seen as usual!
Channel-billed Cuckoo ◊ *Scythrops novaehollandiae* A small flock on Waigeo, getting ready to return to Australia
Rufous-throated Bronze Cuckoo ◊ *Chrysococcyx ruficollis* (H) Heard distantly in the Arfaks, but never responsive
White-eared Bronze Cuckoo ◊ *Chrysococcyx meyerii* Excellent looks of an individual by the road in the Arfaks
Little Bronze Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx minutillus* One in the scope near Sorong in the mangroves
White-crowned Cuckoo ◊ (W-c Koel) *Cacomantis leucolophus* (H) Heard a few times and almost seen once...
Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo ◊ *Cacomantis castaneiventris* A very responsive pair showed well in the Arfaks
Brush Cuckoo *Cacomantis variolosus* Heard regularly, viewed well on Waigeo
Greater Sooty Owl ◊ *Tyto tenebricosa* Interrupting our breakfast in the Arfaks one morning for excellent looks!
Papuan Boobook ◊ *Ninox theomacha* Heard a few times, and eventually seen despite the wind and rain on Waigeo
Marbled Frogmouth ◊ *Podargus ocellatus* Another success despite the rain, perched low down in the Waigeo forest
Papuan Frogmouth ◊ *Podargus papuensis* Spotted hunting on the roadside while returning to our Waigeo hotel
Feline Owlet-Nightjar ◊ *Aegotheles insignis* Heard regularly and seen twice in the high Arfaks at night
Mountain Owlet-Nightjar ◊ *Aegotheles albertisi* At a roost on our first day at Mingre – how do the locals find them...
Moustached Treeswift ◊ *Hemiprocne mystacea* A few of these elegant beauties on Waigeo

Glossy Swiftlet *Collocalia esculenta* Abundant throughout the tour
Mountain Swiftlet ◊ *Aerodramus hirundinaceus* A few each day in the Arfak whenever we were out of the forest
Uniform Swiftlet *Aerodramus vanikorensis* Common in the lowlands, especially on Waigeo
Oriental Dollarbird (Common D) *Eurystomus orientalis* Numerous and obvious on Waigeo
Hook-billed Kingfisher ◊ *Melidora macrorrhina* Heard many times on Waigeo before a responsive bird finally came
Common Paradise Kingfisher *Tanysiptera galatea* Commonly heard on Waigeo, a few really good looks this year
Rufous-bellied Kookaburra ◊ *Dacelo gaudichaud* Regular on Waigeo, again showing well a couple of times
Blue-black Kingfisher ◊ *Todiramphus nigrocyaneus* Heard on our first attempt, then two seen near Sorong



This lovely female Rufous-bellied Kookaburra was not appreciated by the Frilled Monarchs whose nest she was watching!



The widespread Rainbow Bee-eater (left) is a beautiful bird. Beach Kingfisher (right) is similarly attractive, but tends to stay distant!

Beach Kingfisher ◇ *Todiramphus saurophagus* Five individuals on our Waigeo boat trip allowing close approach!
Sacred Kingfisher *Todiramphus sanctus* Noted regularly throughout the tour
Yellow-billed Kingfisher ◇ *Syma torotoro* One of the first birds of the tour, seen exceptionally well near Manokwari
Papuan Dwarf Kingfisher ◇ *Ceyx solitaries* Single bird perched right by the track at length on Waigeo
Little Kingfisher *Ceyx pusillus* Two on our second visit to the Sorong mangroves
Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops ornatus* Common on Waigeo, noted elsewhere. A beautiful species.
Blyth's Hornbill ◇ (Papuan H) *Rhyticeros plicatus* Many squadrons seen throughout, with a few perched views
Palm Cockatoo ◇ *Probosciger aterrimus* Stunning point-blank views as a flock fed in the hotel grounds on Waigeo
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita* Common and noisy in the lowlands!
Pesquet's Parrot ◇ (Vulturine P) *Psitttrichas fulgidus* (H) Heard flying by in the Arfaks, but behind trees unfortunately!
Yellow-capped Pygmy Parrot ◇ *Micropsitta keiensis* One seen briefly in flight on our first day
Moluccan King Parrot ◇ *Alisterus amboinensis* (NL) Seen by some on Waigeo, heard by everyone else near Sorong
Eclectus Parrot ◇ *Eclectus roratus* This beautiful species is abundant on Waigeo and often affords excellent looks!
Red-cheeked Parrot ◇ *Geoffroyus geoffroyi* A couple on Waigeo, mostly noted in flight over the forest
Blue-collared Parrot ◇ *Geoffroyus simplex* Heard often in the Arfaks, but rare perched views were a treat this year

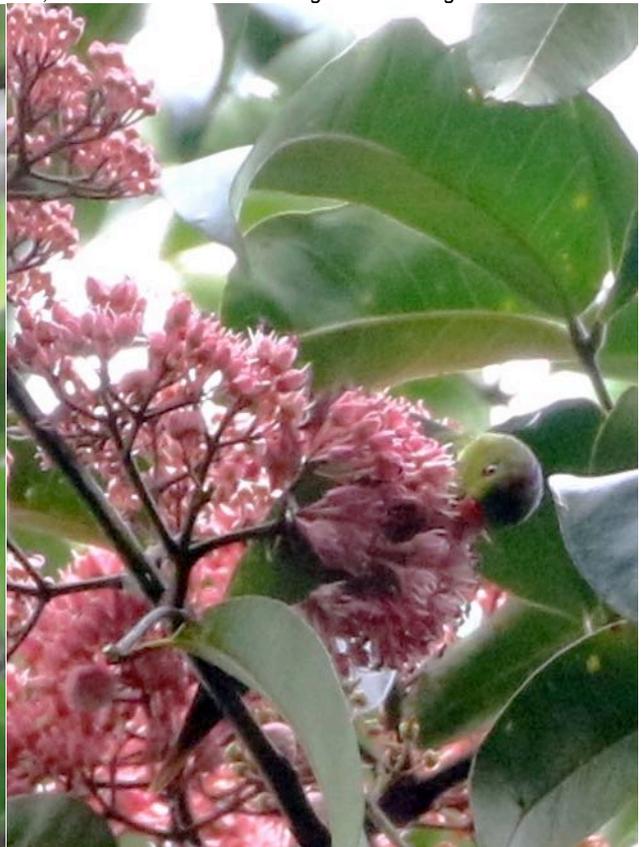


While my camera doesn't do distant birds well, we had excellent looks at this Blue-collared Parrot (left) and Great-billed Parrot (right).

Great-billed Parrot ◇ *Tanygnathus megalorynchos* Seen coming in to roost as the sun was setting off Waigeo
Modest Tiger Parrot ◇ *Psittacella modesta* One lovely female seen rather briefly in the high Arfaks
Plum-faced Lorikeet ◇ (Whiskered L) *Oreopsittacus arfaki* Just one individual found perched this year, but seen well
Pygmy Lorikeet ◇ *Charmosyna wilhelminae* Excellent observations of this rare nomad in a low flowering tree
Red-flanked Lorikeet ◇ *Charmosyna placentis* Two birds in a flowering tree in the Sorong lowlands on our last day
Fairy Lorikeet ◇ (Little Red L) *Charmosyna pulchella* Some of this lovely species feeding with the Pygmy Lorikeets
Josephine's Lorikeet ◇ *Charmosyna josefinae* One bird scoped out from the Masked Bowerbird stakeout
Papuan Lorikeet ◇ *Charmosyna papou* A few seen both in flight and briefly perched in the high Arfaks
Yellow-billed Lorikeet ◇ *Neopsittacus musschenbroekii* Common in the Arfaks, with perched views for everyone
Black-capped Lory ◇ (Western B-c L) *Lorius lory* Regular throughout the tour
Black Lory ◇ *Chalcopsitta atra* Four individuals in flight during the evening parrot movements near Sorong
Violet-necked Lory ◇ *Eos squamata* Two in flight and perched on a small islet off Waigeo from our speed boat
Coconut Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus* Abundant on Waigeo, mostly seen in flight
Large Fig Parrot ◇ *Psittaculirostris desmarestii* A pair in flight over the road in the Sorong lowlands
Double-eyed Fig Parrot ◇ *Cyclopsitta diophthalma* One small flock perched in a dead tree on our first afternoon
Papuan Pitta ◇ *Erythropitta macklotii* Heard regularly on Waigeo, and taped in twice for extended views
Hooded Pitta *Pitta sordida* Only heard once on Waigeo, but he behaved well and came in to show off



Palm Cockatoos don't often perch for us, so this bird above the dining area on Waigeo was a real treat!



Yellow-billed Lorikeets (left) are common in the high Arfaks, but Pygmy Lorikeets (right) are a very rare nomad throughout New Guinea

Arfak Catbird ◇ *Ailuroedus arfakianus* Heard daily as usual, but we had multiple rare looks this year
Vogelkop Bowerbird ◇ *Amblyornis inornata* Many bowers marveled at in the Arfaks, with their males showing well
Masked Bowerbird ◇ *Sericulus aureus* One sadly abandoned bower, but excellent scope views of a male nearby



A lovely dragon on Waigeo – unfortunately I cannot find any references to identify it!



It can be hard to see Papuan Pitta (left), but the whole group got onto this individual on Waigeo. The Masked Bowerbird at the overlook was a little too distant for photos, but this is his tiny bower (right) which was sadly abandoned less than 24 hours before we arrived!

Papuan Treecreeper ◇ *Cormobates placens* Lovely views of a few individuals in the high Arfaks
Wallace's Fairywren ◇ *Sipodotus wallacii* Brief views of a pair high up in a canopy feeding flock in the Arfaks
White-shouldered Fairywren ◇ *Malurus alboscapulatus* Noted on the walk down from the high Arfaks
Ruby-throated Myzomela ◇ (Red-t M) *Myzomela eques* Glimpsed in the lowlands near Sorong by some of us
Red Myzomela ◇ *Myzomela cruentata* Many in evidence coming up into the Arfaks
Mountain Myzomela ◇ *Myzomela adolphinae* Just a couple seen during our mountain explorations
Red-collared Myzomela ◇ *Myzomela rosenbergii* Quite common in the higher Arfaks near flowering trees
Rufous-sided Honeyeater ◇ *Ptiloprora erythropleura* Regular and unusually showy this year in the Arfaks
Plain Honeyeater ◇ *Pycnopygius ixoides* One individual viewed by some of the group on Waigeo

Marbled Honeyeater ◊ *Pycnopygius cinereus* A couple in the higher Arfaks, but difficult to see well
Spotted Honeyeater ◊ *Xanthotis polygrammus* Two observations of this sparse species on Waigeo and near Sorong
Tawny-breasted Honeyeater ◊ *Xanthotis flaviventer* Abundant on Waigeo in particular
New Guinea Friarbird ◊ *Philemon novaeguineae* Noted throughout the lowlands – loud and ugly!
Long-billed Honeyeater ◊ *Melilestes megarhynchus* (H) Heard once, in the lower Arfaks but never seen unfortunately
Arfak Honeyeater ◊ (Western Smoky H) *Melipotus gymnops* Regular in the Arfaks, with good looks for everyone
Tawny Straightbill ◊ *Timeliopsis griseigula* This mega-rare bird was seen in a feeding flock in the Sorong lowlands
Cinnamon-browed Melidectes ◊ *Melidectes ochromelas* Seen high up in the Arfaks, usually high up in a tree!
Vogelkop Melidectes ◊ *Melidectes leucostephes* Several nice looks at this Bird's Head endemic this year
Ornate Melidectes ◊ *Melidectes torquatus* Multiple individuals were particularly showy around the parotia hides
Mountain Honeyeater ◊ (M Meliphaga) *Meliphaga orientalis* (NL) Probably this species seen by some in the Arfaks
Scrub Honeyeater ◊ (S White-eared Meliphaga) *Meliphaga albonotata* One in lowland forest near Sorong after rain
Mimic Honeyeater ◊ (M Meliphaga) *Meliphaga analoga* (NL) Probably this species seen by some on Waigeo
Puff-backed Honeyeater ◊ (P-b Meliphaga) *Meliphaga aruensis* Two noted on Waigeo showing their puff backs
Goldenface ◊ (Dwarf Whistler, Pachycare) *Pachycare flavogriseum* This splendid bird was seen well in the Arfaks
Rusty Mouse-Warbler ◊ *Crateroscelis murina* Heard regularly, seen a few times throughout
Mountain Mouse-Warbler ◊ *Crateroscelis robusta* A small group was taped in one morning in the high Arfaks
Large Scrubwren ◊ *Sericornis nouhuysi* A few individuals noted on the highest Arfak ridge behind Syoubri
Vogelkop Scrubwren ◊ *Sericornis rufescens* Abundant throughout the Arfak forests
Grey-green Scrubwren ◊ *Sericornis arfakianus* Just one bird after a targeted search in the narrow altitudinal range
Brown-breasted Gerygone ◊ *Gerygone ruficollis* Common in the Arfak Mountains with a sweet song
Yellow-bellied Gerygone ◊ *Gerygone chrysogaster* One or two of the distinct Waigeo form seen in the forest
Green-backed Gerygone ◊ *Gerygone chloronota* Heard often, seen on Waigeo after some neck-craning!
Fairy Gerygone ◊ *Gerygone palpebrosa* Excellent looks at an adult bird on our way into the Arfaks
Grey Thornbill ◊ *Acanthiza cinerea* Just one bird passing through in a mixed feeding flock near the parotia hides
Papuan Logrunner ◊ *Orthonyx novaeguineae* One pair giving outstanding views in the high Arfaks
Black Berrypecker ◊ *Melanocharis nigra* A few individual on Waigeo defending their berries
Mid-mountain Berrypecker ◊ *Melanocharis longicauda* Regular in the Arfaks, a pair eventually seen by everyone
Fan-tailed Berrypecker ◊ *Melanocharis versteri* A few looks at the lovely males especially in the higher Arfaks
Dwarf Longbill ◊ *Oedistoma iliolophus* Brief encounters with this species throughout the tour, mainly in the Arfaks
Pygmy Longbill ◊ *Oedistoma pygmaeum* The best views ever of this usually retiring and flighty species in the Arfaks
Yellow-bellied Longbill ◊ *Toxorhamphus novaeguineae* Some individuals seen well on Waigeo and near Sorong
Tit Berrypecker ◊ *Oreocharis arfaki* A handful of birds (both male and female) in the high Arfaks with Zeth
Spotted Jewel-babbler ◊ *Ptilorrhoa leucosticte* Frustratingly silent and unresponsive this year – glimpsed by some
Chestnut-backed Jewel-babbler ◊ *Ptilorrhoa castanonota* (H) Responding but refusing to come in the lower Arfaks
Yellow-breasted Boatbill ◊ *Machaerirhynchus flaviventer* Showed well on Waigeo
Black-breasted Boatbill ◊ *Machaerirhynchus nigripectus* Several excellent views in the Arfaks showing off that bill!
Lowland Peltops ◊ *Peltops blainvillii* One pair in the lowland forest near Manokwari hawking from dead snags
Mountain Peltops ◊ *Peltops montanus* Some individuals during our Arfak visit
Black Butcherbird ◊ *Melloria quoyi* One by the road after the rain stopped near Sorong
Hooded Butcherbird ◊ *Cracticus cassicus* Abundant and vocal on Waigeo
Mottled Berryhunter ◊ *Rhagologus leucostigma* Many observations this year – seven different birds in the Arfaks



The special monotypic Mottled Berryhunter (left) and a male Regent Whistler (right) are regular in the Arfaks.

- Barred Cuckooshrike (Yellow-eyed C) *Coracina lineata*** One small group passing through in Sorong lowlands
Boyer's Cuckooshrike ◊ *Coracina boyeri* A handful in the Sorong lowlands
White-bellied Cuckooshrike *Coracina papuensis* Numerous in the Sorong mangroves
Black Cicadabird ◊ *Coracina melas* Two pairs in the Manokwari lowland forest
Black-bellied Cuckooshrike ◊ *Coracina montana* Common in the Arfaks
Golden Cuckooshrike ◊ *Campochaera sloetii* One male scoped above us in the forest near Manokwari
Black-browed Triller ◊ *Lalage atrovirens* One pair feeding above the road in the lowland forest near Manokwari
Rufous-naped Bellbird (R-n Whistler) *Aleadryas rufinucha* Heard often, and seen very well by all in the Arfaks
Piping Bellbird (Crested Pitohui) *Ornorectes cristatus* Seen briefly as the noisy pair came straight in above us
Black Pitohui ◊ *Melanorectes nigrescens* One male and one young male observed well in the Arfaks behind Syoubri
Vogelkop Whistler ◊ *Pachycephala meyeri* Quite a few of these endemics showed well this year in the Arfaks
Grey Whistler ◊ *Pachycephala simplex* Commonly heard, seen a few times on Waigeo
Sclater's Whistler ◊ *Pachycephala soror* A pair viewed at length on our first morning in the Arfaks, noted elsewhere



The strange Black-breasted Boatbill in the high Arfaks.

- Regent Whistler** ◊ *Pachycephala schlegelii* Common and beautiful in the higher Arfaks behind Syoubri
Rusty Pitohui ◊ *Pseudorectes ferrugineus* Well heard and eventually whistled in on Waigeo – an endemic form here
Little Shrikethrush ◊ *Colluricincla megarhyncha* Soon to be split, we saw both the Waigeo and Vogelkop forms.

Northern Variable Pitohui ◇ *Pitohui kirhocephalus* A couple of birds in the Manokwari lowlands
Raja Ampat Pitohui *Pitohui cerviniventris* Abundant on Waigeo, often coming to random tape playing
Hooded Pitohui ◇ *Pitohui dichrous* One bird scoped well foraging just beside the road near the Masked BB overlook
Brown Oriole ◇ *Oriolus szalayi* Common and vocal in the lowlands
Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus bracteatus* Noted throughout the tour
Willie Wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys* Regular on Waigeo and near Sorong, not so much elsewhere
Northern Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura rufiventris* Common in the Raja Ampats and near Sorong in the forest
Black Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura atra* Delightfully common in the Arfak Mountains
Friendly Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura albolimbata* Mostly in the high Arfaks with a lovely call
Dimorphic Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura brachyrhyncha* Just one pale individual by itself on the ridge behind Syoubri
Rufous-backed Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura rufidorsa* A few observations in the mid-Arfaks this year – often quite rare
Drongo Fantail ◇ (Mountain Drongo) *Chaetorhynchus papuensis* Good looks at this strange species in the Arfaks
Black Monarch ◇ (Fan-tailed M) *Symposiachrus axillaris* A few observed below Mingre in the Arfaks
Spot-winged Monarch ◇ *Symposiachrus guttula* Two on our final morning on Waigeo
Black-winged Monarch ◇ *Monarcha frater* Excellent looks at this lovely monarch on the way up into the Arfaks
Golden Monarch ◇ *Carterornis chrysomela* This stunningly vibrant species was seen a few times in the lowlands
Frilled Monarch ◇ *Arses telescopthalmus* Another common monarch with that fluorescent blue eye ring



The common lowland Frilled Monarch (left) and the uncommon highland Dimorphic Fantail (right), this individual a pale morph

Shining Flycatcher (S Monarch) *Myiagra alecto* A few birds in a mixed feeding flock with the Tawny Straightbill
Brown-headed Crow ◇ *Corvus fuscicapillus* One or two birds flying over the road on Waigeo during our visit
Torresian Crow (Australian C) *Corvus orru* Common on Waigeo around our accommodation
Lesser Melampitta ◇ *Melampitta lugubris* Heard at the Arfak Paradigalla Clearing, and glimpsed by a lucky few
Glossy-mantled Manucode ◇ *Manucodia ater* Heard often on Waigeo, and seen in display flight a few times
Trumpet Manucode ◇ *Phonygammus keraudrenii* (H) Multiple individuals heard in the lower Arfaks
Long-tailed Paradigalla ◇ *Paradigalla carunculata* Exceptional views of this often retiring species in the Arfaks
Arfak Astrapia ◇ *Astrapia nigra* One of the scarcer endemics around Mokwam, we found one sub-adult male high up
Western Parotia ◇ *Parotia sefilata* Truly an outstanding bird, everyone got to see the full display this year!



Male Western Parotia in non-display mode – still a good looking bird!

Crescent-caped Lophorina (Vogelkop Superb Bird-of-paradise) ◇ *Lophorina superba* Excellent views of two males
Magnificent Riflebird ◇ *Ptiloris magnificentus* (H) Heard a few times near Sorong, but unfortunately not seen this time
Black Sicklebill ◇ *Epimachus fastosus* Tremendous views of this stonking bird in the high Arfaks on his display post
Black-billed Sicklebill ◇ (Buff-tailed S) *Drepanornis albertisi* Always a skulker, most of the group managed fair looks
Magnificent Bird-of-paradise ◇ *Diphyllodes magnificentus* Another stunning performance from one of the Arfak hides
Wilson's Bird-of-paradise ◇ *Diphyllodes respublica* Amazing bird, we all enjoyed our time with these on Waigeo
King Bird-of-paradise ◇ *Cicinnurus regius* One male was scoped up well in his display tree near Sorong
Lesser Bird-of-paradise ◇ *Paradisaea minor* A number of females seen throughout the trip in various mixed flocks
Red Bird-of-paradise ◇ *Paradisaea rubra* We spent a mind-blowing few hours watching an active lek on Waigeo
Ashy Robin ◇ *Heteromyias albispecularis* Common in the high Arfaks, most obvious early in the morning
Black-sided Robin ◇ *Poecilodryas hypoleuca* Regular in the lowland forest, we eventually all saw this on Waigeo
Black-throated Robin ◇ *Poecilodryas albonotata* Some seen in the high Arfaks following up their high pitched whistle
Smoky Robin ◇ *Peneothello cryptoleuca* Heard in the high Arfaks, with good views of one showy bird on the trail
Slaty Robin ◇ (Blue-grey R) *Peneothello cyanus* Common in the Arfak Mountains, often dominating the dawn chorus
White-faced Robin ◇ *Tregellasia leucops* A few observations in the mid-elevation Arfak foothills
Green-backed Robin ◇ *Pachycephalopsis hattamensis* Some quite showy birds this year in the Superb BoP hide
Canary Flyrobin ◇ *Microeca papuana* Various observations throughout our time in the Arfaks
Yellow-legged Flyrobin ◇ (Y-I Flycatcher) *Microeca griseiceps* One individual in the Arfak foothills this year
Garnet Robin ◇ *Eugerygone rubra* This canopy-loving bird was taped down for extended looks behind Syoubri
Lesser Ground Robin ◇ *Amalocichla incerta* A wonderfully cooperative pair hopped around us at length in the Arfaks
Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* (NL) One for Raul at the Manokwari hotel on the first day of the tour



A more traditional angle of the male Wilson's Bird-of-paradise – if he turned a little further left you would also see the green breast!

Pacific Swallow *Hirundo tahitica* Common throughout the lowlands

Island Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus maforensis* Regularly heard in the cloud forests, seen a few times

Papuan Grassbird ◊ (P Grass Warbler) *Megalurus macrurus* Some were tempted out around Anggi Lakes

Black-fronted White-eye ◊ *Zosterops minor* Lovely close-up views of this taxonomically confusing bird in the Arfaks

Capped White-eye ◊ (Western Mountain W-e) *Zosterops fuscicapilla* Only a few seen behind Syoubri on our hike

Metallic Starling (Shining S) *Aplonis metallica* A few large flocks overhead around Sorong

Singing Starling ◊ *Aplonis cantoroides* Excellent views at the Waigeo wharf allowed us to really see the features well

Yellow-faced Myna ◊ *Mino dumontii* Some, mostly on Waigeo, often perched up on dead trees in the distance

Olive-crowned Flowerpecker ◊ *Dicaeum pectorale* Abundant in the lowlands of the Vogelkop Peninsula

Black Sunbird ◊ *Leptocoma Aspasia* Regularly seen in the lowlands

Olive-backed Sunbird (Yellow-bellied S) *Cinnyris jugularis* Common in the Sorong mangroves

Eurasian Tree Sparrow (introduced) *Passer montanus* Common in the lowland towns

Scaly-breasted Munia (introduced) *Lonchura punctulata* Multiple flocks in the Sorong mangroves

Streak-headed Mannikin ◊ *Lonchura tristissima* Four mixed in with Scaly-breasts on our final morning near Sorong

Grey-banded Mannikin ◊ *Lonchura vana* Two flocks up near Anggi Lakes in the Arfak Mountains

MAMMALS

Red-bellied Phascogale *Phascolosorex doriae* (NL) One seen by some of the group from the parotia hides

Striped Possum *Dactylopsila trivirgata* Spotted in a tree next to the road at night on Waigeo

Sugar Glider *Petaurus breviceps* Near the hotel on Waigeo

Ground Cuscus *Phalanger gymnotis* One for Richard and myself during a late night walk near Mingre

Waigeo Spotted Cuscus *Spilocuscus papuensis* Expertly detected by our local guide on Waigeo

Stein's Cuscus *Phalanger vestitus* Two individuals near Camp Sicklebill in the Arfaks

Short-finned Pilot Whale *Globicephala macrorhynchus* Large pod in the distance from our ferry to Waigeo

Moluccan Naked-backed Fruit Bat (Great Bare-b F B) *Dobsonia moluccensis* A couple in the forest on Waigeo



Black-throated Robin (top left) in the sun and Stein's Cuscus (top right) in the torch! The group with Zeth, our porters, and our helpers in the high Arfak Mountains behind Syoubri at Sicklebill Camp.



Another lovely Red Bird-of-paradise display move.



Part of the dance sequence of our Western Parotia.