



Pohnpei Lorikeet is one of the great looking endemics of this remote corner of the World (János Oláh)!

MICRONESIA

28 MARCH – 15/16 APRIL 2019

LEADER: JÁNOS OLÁH

This was our fifth tour to explore some of the more remote areas of the Western Pacific. We were pioneers with our first tour back in 2008 and even nowadays very few birders visit Micronesia on such a thorough basis as we do! Virtually no other birding companies offer such a comprehensive tour to this remote corner of the World, especially now as we supplemented the main tour with a short extension to Kosrae – following the splitting of Kosrae Frui-dove and Kosrae White-eye. After completing the first four tours we had plenty of experience to find the birds though the main concern on island-hopping tours is always the flights. Well, this time we were lucky and all flights were pretty much on time though having said that we had to tolerate a few rather awkward starting and arrival times! This epic journey was very successful this year as we managed to see all the endemic birds and almost all the endemic races as well. The only exception being the Chuuk race of Micronesian Imperial Pigeon which remained heard-only. So all in all it was a super tour with all gettable birds seen, and seen well! Some of these endemics are really impressive such as Golden White-eye, Pohnpei Loreekit, Palau Owl, Micronesian Megapode (both Palau and Mariana forms), Palau, White-throated and White-fronted Ground Doves, Chuuk Momarch, the rare Guam Rail and an excellent selection of kingfishers, fruit doves and white-eyes to name just a few. The impact of humanity on the fragile island

ecosystems was sadly evident. Of the 107 species recorded, just over 28% are species of conservation concern (30 species). One species is considered 'Extinct in the Wild' (Guam Rail), four are considered 'Critically Endangered' (Mariana Crow, Saipan Reed Warbler, Golden White-eye and Rota White-eye) and nine are considered 'Endangered' (Micronesian Megapode, Palau Ground Dove, Mariana Swiftlet, Mariana Fruit Dove, Yap and Pohnpei Cicadabirds, Chuuk Monarch, Teardrop and Birdled White-eyes). An additional three species are considered 'Vulnerable' (White-fronted Ground Dove, Pohnpei Kingfisher and Tinian Monarch) and thirteen species considered 'Near Threatened'. As a sad footnote, the endemic landbirds of Guam have already been obliterated (all are extinct), although there are measures in place to try to prevent the spread of the destructive Brown Tree Snake or even to eradicate them from Guam. We will see what future brings but all these small island endemics are really fragile populations, and severe weather conditions can also damage or destroy valuable habitat or an entire population of rare bird. The Tinian Monarch which is considered 'Vulnerable' supposed to be relatively common on the tiny island of Tinian near Saipan. However the huge - category five - typhoon 'Yutu' hit and devastated the island in October 2018 and we only managed to find a single Tinian Monarch on our day-visit, despite covering a lot of destroyed habitat. The same typhoon hit Saipan as well and we were struggling with Saipan Reed Warbler too, although eventually found several.



White-eyes were certainly a main feature on this tour. The superb Golden White-eye was voted the bird of the trip (János Oláh)!

The tour started in Koror which is the capital of the Palau Archipelago. Well, this destination is rather far from almost anywhere but we all made it here in good time. In fact this amazing area ranks really high on the divers wish-list as well, so some of us even arrived earlier to explore some coral reefs before the birding started! Our splendid adventure through the South Pacific started with a full day from proper dawn to dusk birding! We set off by boat and made our way through the gorgeous Rock Islands. We soon picked up a Tropical Shearwater and started seeing Black and Brown Noddies and Crested, Bridled and stunning Black-naped Terns. We saw one or two Nicobar Pigeons flying high overhead before arrived to the tiny Ulung Island. We disembarked and made our way into the fantastic strand forest. Skittish Micronesian (Palau) Megapodes scurried around and, after a bit of a search, we found our main quarry, the tiny but delightful Palau Ground Dove. These proved a little tricky to see well, but with perseverance, we all enjoyed good views of this super little bird. We even had a fine male sitting up and singing for us. Magical! We also had

great looks of the gorgeous Palau Flycatcher and some nice adult Morningbirds. As our main target was already in the bag we enjoyed the Micronesian Megapodes on the shore before taking a slow cruise around some remote bays of the Rock Islands. We soon found the bulky Micronesian Imperial Pigeon and also managed some excellent looks of Nicobar Pigeon. This unique pigeon has an endemic race on Palau and quite common, but never easy to get good looks. Well satisfied we continued our journey and came across a pair of White-breasted Woodswallows. This was very welcome as the endemic *pelewensis* race is very rare now, and might even be a future split as Palau Woodswallow. More fantastic scenery, delightful White-tailed Tropicbirds as well as terns and noddies entertained. It was an excellent morning indeed and we anchored in a nice shady bay at Ngeruktabel Island for a fine picnic lunch.



Palau Ground Dove (top), pelewensis race of both White-breasted Woodswallow (left) and Nicobar Pigeon (János Oláh)!

After food and a little rest we birded the trail up to the Old German Lighthouse. This proved to be an easy trail and we managed to see several Giant White-eyes. This *Megazosterops* was our main target - a rather strange looking species that one would never guess was a white-eye - but we also managed to find Dusky and Citrine White-eyes and more Palau Fantails, Palau Flycatchers and Morningbirds. We also had our first looks of Palau Fruit Dove, Palau Bush Warbler and some noisy introduced Eclectus Parrots. We also had a few history lessons as we walked past some old cannons, shells and artillery stores – our first of many reminders of darker times.



Giant White-eye the only member of the Megazosterops genus and a strange looking bird (János Oláh).

With another task complete we headed back to Koror seeing several Palau Swiftlets along the way - and paid a quick visit to the... water treatment works! There is no birding tour without visiting such a site, somewhere hidden away. A number of waders were present including Pacific Golden Plovers (widespread throughout the islands), Long-toed Stints, a Swinhoe's Snipe and Wood and Common Sandpipers. Our first day was not finished yet and after an early dinner we were out again at dusk. We positioned ourselves at a little clearing and soon had good looks of several Palau Nightjars which was followed by a Palau Owl for some. The owl was not quite as obliging as we were hoping so we decided to try yet another area. More owls were heard but they were not playing so we retired for a well earned rest after a really action-packed day. We do not give up as easily as this on a better view for Palau Owl so we were out again before breakfast and soon had our main target fixed in the spotlight. In fact we moved to another area and had yet another Palau Owl still before dawn. Everybody happy with the superb Palau Owl, which is the sole member of the *Pyrroglaux* genus, we had a nice breakfast by the sea. We knew the first day was going to be a hard act to follow but boarded our comfortable boat and headed way south to the island of Peleliu. It was a nice and smooth ride and once we got to this island we switched to landtransportation. We drove to the middle of the island and visited a nice mature forest area called the 'Bloody Nose Ridge' where we managed to find Palau Cicadabirds! We had a pair along the trail, and just as we returned to the truck we had a pair with and immature bird on the forest edge too while more looks of Palau Fruit Dove, Giant White-eye, a brief Palau Ground Dove and Palau Bush Warbler were all appreciated. We were very pleased with our morning success as the cicadabird can be a tricky one to find. There were continuously White Terns and Palau Swiftlets overhead. We had yet another lovely picnic lunch amongst the Rock Islands on our way back. This secluded

bay was also good for some snorkelling for those interested. In the afternoon we were back to main island of Babeldaob and ventured into the north. We only drove as far as to get our first Rusty-capped or Palau Kingfisher and we also managed to see another male Palau Cicadabird. We stayed out until dusk but only had brief glimpses of nightjar and some distant owls calling.



*Palau Owl (top) has its own genus *Pyrroglaux* (Denzil Morgan). Immature Palau Cicadabird (left) and Palau Bush Warbler (János Oláh)*

Our last day was a relaxing one as we have seen all the key birds by now. We were still eager to get better looks of Rusty-capped Kingfisher though and also hoping for some Blue-faced Parrotfinches somewhere. Most of the day we spent exploring the main island of Babeldaob. We got all we wanted, had great looks of Rusty-capped and Collared Kingfishers perched up, excellent looks of Palau Fruit Doves, close Citrine White-eyes and several Buff-banded Rails. A mudflat area produced eight Nankeen Night Herons, both Lesser and Greater Sand Plovers, Grey-tailed Tattlers and three Red-necked Stints for some. We also visited the impressive partly EU funded parliament buildings before returning to Koror. An optional late afternoon birding produced excellent looks of Palau Nightjar again and a few Blue-faced Parrotfinches. We had a nice dinner and retired for a very short sleep as we had a late evening flight to Guam and then to

Saipan. Unfortunately this night travel was part of the experience in Micronesia as we had several flights in the most unusual and uncomfortable time of the day.



Palau Fruit Dove (top), Morningbird (left) and Palau Flycatcher (János Oláh).



Citrine (top left) and Dusky (top right) White-eyes, female Palau Cicadabird (left) and Palau Fantail (János Oláh).

After arriving at Saipan the following morning, we dropped our bags off and started birding in the hope of some handsome endemics! We drove to the north of the island and in between the showers we quickly saw large numbers of Mariana Swiftlets hunting low down and the by-now familiar fruit dove calls soon led us to the simply superb Mariana Fruit Dove. The attractive Saipan form of Mariana Kingfisher posed in the open and proved to be common. There were Bridled White-eyes everywhere and it did not take long to find the stunning Golden White-eye as well. It was a promising start but temperature was rising and our first try for

the rare Saipan Reed Warbler was not successful. It was time for lunch and a bit of relaxation. In the afternoon we concentrated our efforts on the Saipan Reed Warbler again, checking several places where they were found in recent years. The best we could do however was only a distant bird calling briefly. It was disappointing indeed and we started to think about the effects of typhoon Yutu in last October. While searching for the warbler we did come across a superb male White-throated Ground Dove and had excellent looks at Marianna Fruit Dove and Mariana Kingfishers again. We finished the day around the Korean Monument where we managed to track down the often elusive Mariana form of the Micronesian Megapode. It was a great bird to get under the belt on our first day! After all the travelling we did last night we were certainly ready for bed early.



Golden (top left) and Bridled (left) White-eyes, Mariana Kingfisher (top right) and Micronesian Myzomela on Saipan (János Oláh).

At dawn the following morning we checked again some promising sites for the Saipan Reed Warbler without any success. Later in the morning we took the short but scenic flight across to the adjacent Tinian Island. It took some time to taxi everybody over, but we had a proper breakfast at Tinian airport while waiting for the tail-end to arrive. Once all together and well-fed we started exploring the island for our number one target: Tinian Monarch. The island and most of the habitat on it was devastated by typhoon Yutu and we were slightly concerned about how easy this supposedly 'common' endemic bird is going to be. After some search however we did manage to locate a single endemic Tinian Monarch. We all got excellent looks and took

some images as well. Mariana Kingfishers and Mariana Fruit Doves gave great looks again. We still had some time until our first possible flight back to Saipan so we set about a little exploration of this island which is synonymous with Second World War history. We even looked at where the infamous nuclear warheads that were dropped on Japan were housed, the huge airfields that dominated the north of the island and other war artefacts. Whilst reflecting back on the terrible times, we could only hope that we do not plunge back into such chaotic times again.



Tinian Monarch (top; Denzil Morgan) and Mariana Kingfisher (left) and Mariana Fruit Dove on Tinian Island (János Oláh).

Back on Saipan, we really only had one piece of outstanding business and that was to find the critically endangered Saipan Reed Warbler. We decided instead of looking at 'old sites' we will concentrate on the best looking habitat and cover as much ground as possible. To cut a long story short, we eventually heard a singing bird from the car and once we got out from the car it gave us a superb performance as long as we

wanted. While watching this singing individual which covered a fair sized area while singing, yet another individual started to answer from the other side of the road. The effort we had put in was finally richly rewarded as we got an excellent performance from two individuals as they were singing around us. Smile all round, we headed for a quick visit around the some scenic spot like the 'Bird Island lookout' and the 'Banzai Cliff Memorial' where we got to see a few Wedge-tailed Shearwaters, White-tailed Tropicbirds and Brown Boobies.



Saipan landscape (left) and a blowhole on Tinian (right). The critically endangered Saipan Reed Warbler (János Oláh).

Another day, another island... This time we were making our way to Rota to find some tough and very rare birds. As the airplanes were small we had to be transferred in two flights. Eventually we were all together and drove to an amazing cliffside lookout area where we managed to find a single Mariana Crow and after some work we got pretty good scope views of this very rare corvid. Other goodies in this area were as many as 12 White-throated Ground Doves and the Rota form of Mariana Kingfisher was just as common as the one on Saipan and Tinian. We then made our way to the other end of the island, where, driving around various grassy areas we were hoping to find the re-introduced, extinct in the wild, Guam Rail. The area was very promising but we had no luck to spot any rails on the roadside at all. We were flushing numerous

introduced Philippine (Island) Collared Doves and Black Drongos as we went but no sign of the rails. In the very last minutes of daylight we finally heard Guam Rails calling but they were rather far into the vegetation. We were back early next morning to the rail area. After several hours of driving on the most suitable looking roads, just as we were about to give up, we saw a Guam Rail briefly running across the road. It was rather brief but certainly a start. The temperature was rising by now and we were eager to do some proper birding so made our way into the mountains. Once in the mountains, we soon found the critically endangered Rota White-eye as well as smart Mariana Fruit Doves, Rufous Fantails and the other usual suspects! In the late afternoon we were back to the rail area in hope for better looks. We spent some time again around the various tracks and eventually at the very same spot as in the morning we had a slightly longer look of a Guam Rail. This time we all got on the bird as it was walking along the edge of the road before disappearing into the vegetation again.



The critically endangered Rota White-eye (top), White-throated Ground Dove (left) and Mariana Kingfisher on Rota (János Oláh).

On our final morning on Rota we once again headed back to the Guam Rail area and got one more view of this rare rail. Later we drove back to the seaside lookout area where this time three Mariana Crows were showing well for a long time. It was a better look indeed with birds calling, flying and chasing each other. We also visited an impressive seabird colony where we could admire Red-tailed Tropicbirds and Red-footed and

Brown Boobies cruising past at eye level. That afternoon we flew to Saipan but again in two different flights. There was a short optional birding on Saipan but no new birds were noted.



Red-tailed Tropicbird on Rota (top) and Guam landscape from 'Fort Soledad' (János Oláh).

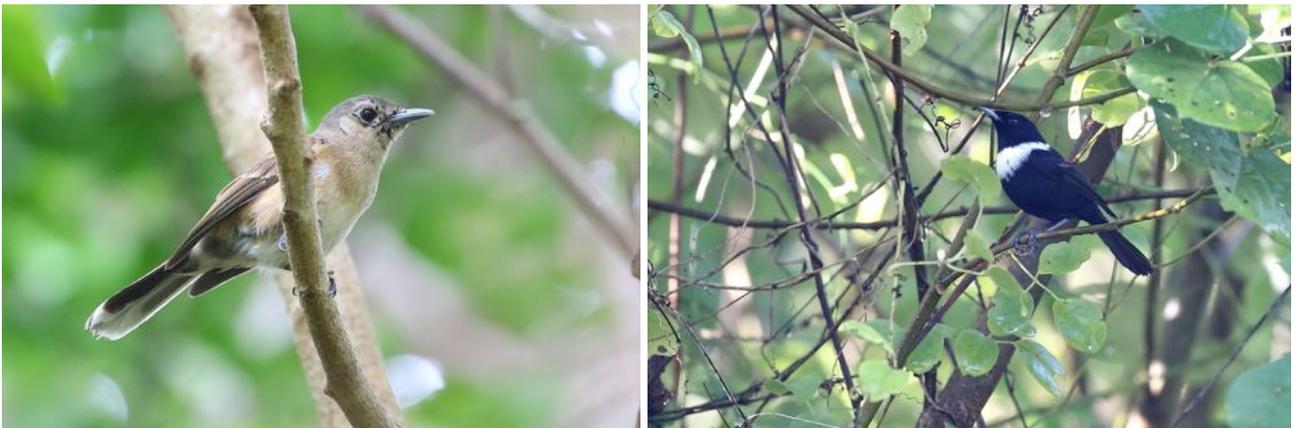
Next morning we flew to Guam and we had the pleasure to spend all day on this birdless island. Our spirit was high however and we circumnavigated the island on a scenic drive and even saw some shorebirds before having a great lunch in a nice seaside restaurant. In the afternoon we managed to see a pair of Black Francolins and enjoyed a fantastic ice cream in the local Haagen-Dazs shop. As it was getting dark we

returned to the airport and patiently waited for our night flight to Yap. Guam was certainly not our favourite island for birds. Next one was Yap, our first state to be visited in the Federal States of Micronesia!



Our hotel's restaurant was a boat on Yap (top), White Tern (left) and immature White-throated Ground Dove on Yap (János Oláh).

After a bit of sleep and a late breakfast we started to explore Yap. The island endemics started to show up and we had repeated good looks of Plain White-eyes, Yap Monarchs and the local form of Rufous Fantail still before lunch. Having enjoyed a great lunch on the hotel's ship restaurant, we made our way to the northern part of the island for an afternoon birding session. Here we found more Micronesian Imperial Pigeons, Yap Monarchs and eventually three Yap Olive or Olive-coloured White-eyes were spotted. We had good looks of these scarce birds before they flew off. On our entire visit these were the only ones we saw. This species clearly much more rare on the island than it is suggested, and outnumbered by the Plain White-eyes in a long way. On our first day we did not connect with Yap Cicadabirds but we still had more time on this island on the following days so we retired for a nice dinner and an early sleep.



Male (top), immature (left) and female Yap Monarchs. Certainly a beauty and one of the key bird on this island. (János Oláh).

Back on track with the sleep we made our way the following morning along a track that traversed the island. This proved a good move as the remaining endemic soon obliged. It did not take long to find a party of three, somewhat starling-like Yap Cicadabirds. The female of this species is very distinctively different from other female cicadabirds being mostly orangy yellow and with a rather stout bill. It was a very obviously different and they allowed great looks to all of us. We had more good looks of Yap Monarchs in all plumages and Micronesian Imperial Pigeon as well as some Yap Flying Foxes were also seen. We crossed the island on this track and visited a nice mangrove area but apart from a Whimbrel and the very common Micronesian Myzomelas there was not much else there. We had brilliant looks of an immature White-throated Ground Dove as well. It seems that most have abandoned the idea of elevating the form on Yap to specific (or even sub-specific) status. Once it was suggested as a possibility as White-headed Ground Dove. Along the coast we had a few Ruddy Turnstones and Pacific Golden Plovers. In the afternoon we visited the Fanif area and had plenty more opportunities to admire the Yap endemics. We connected with Yap Cicadabirds again this afternoon. We were back to our superb boat restaurant for dinner and we decided to try a short pelagic trip the following day into some deep waters of the Yap Trench. This was something new and our hopes were not high for many seabirds but we saw all the island endemics by now and were happy to do some

exploration. The Yap Trench is an oceanic trench which is part of the Pacific Ring of Fire between the Palau Islands and the Mariana Trench. It is 650 kilometres long and 8527 metres deep at its deepest point.



Plain White-eye (left, János Oláh) and female Yap Cicadabird (right, Björn Andersson).

We did the pelagic next morning but there were no special birds seen. Although we did get to deep water, it was still classic 'tropical activity' with only Great Frigatebirds, Brown Boobies, Brown and Black Noddies, White Terns in huge numbers, Black-naped Tern were seen as well as a Sooty Tern which was a write-in. For the rest of our time on this peaceful island we could relax somewhat, we had the afternoon off. Some of us admired the Yap money (huge stones!) and the gorgeous coastal scenery and some even went snorkelling.



Lagoon Triggerfish (left) and Regal Angelfish (Björn Andersson).

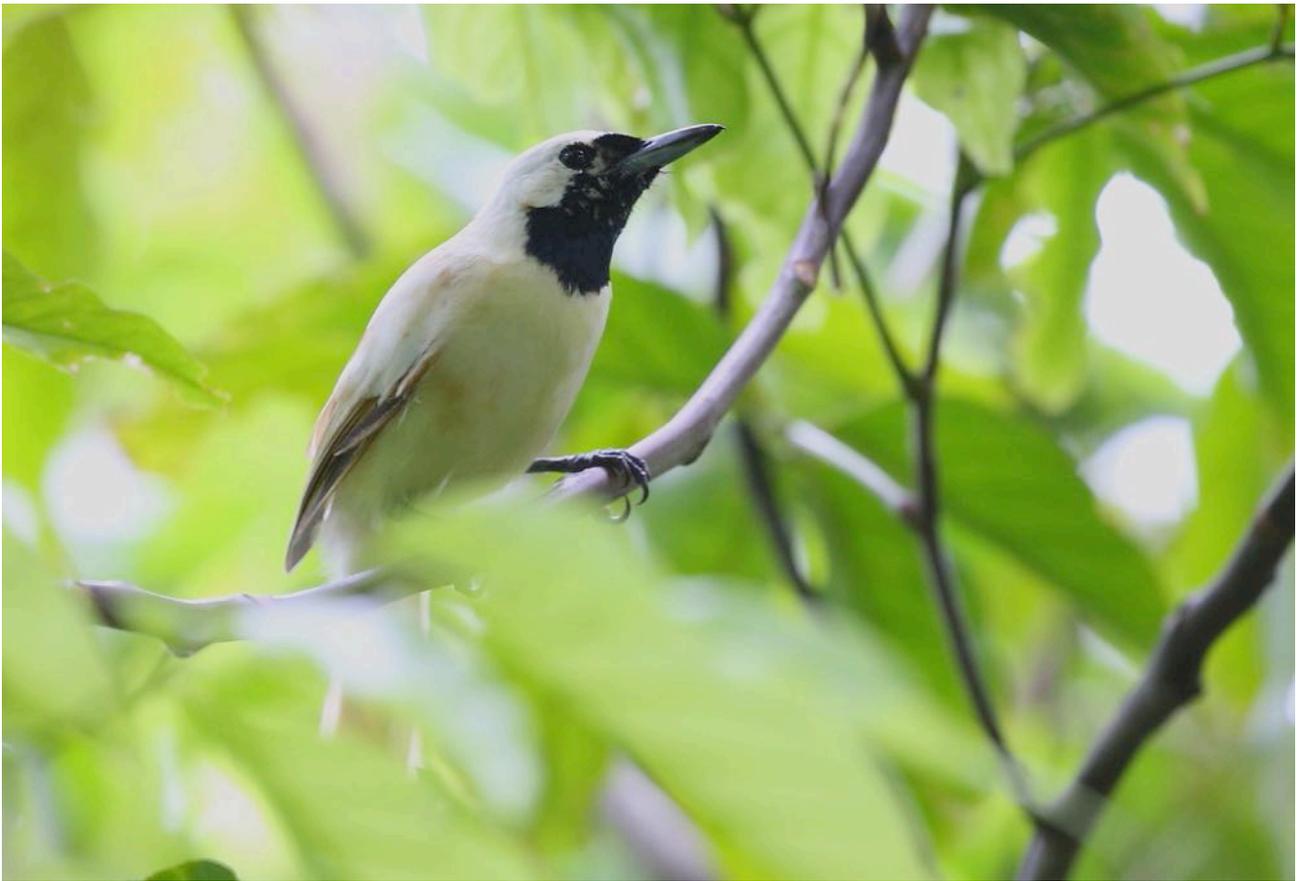
Yet another night flight took us back to Guam for a few hours and then we continued to Chuuk as the second destination for us in the Federal States of Micronesia! We arrived on Weno, Chuuk, late morning, and made our way to our comfortable base right at the south end of the island. This time because of flight schedule we had the extra time on Yap and less time on Chuuk compared to previous tours. So we wasted no time and quickly had a birding session in the garden of the resort which produced many Micronesian Myzomela, Micronesian Starling, localized Island Swiftlets, and the lawns were covered in Ruddy Turnstones and Pacific Golden Plovers. We also had our first White-fronted Ground Dove (we went on to see several more), also

found colourful Purple-capped Fruit Doves, cute little Oceanic Flycatchers, bold Carolinian Reed Warblers and a few Citrine White-eyes, as well as Nankeen Night Herons and Chuuk Flying Foxes. Later that afternoon we made our way to Dublon Island. Unfortunately the weather was a bit breezy and unsettled, and our boat trip was choppy and wet! We made it over and managed to find some key birds this afternoon. Our prime target, the large and stunning Chuuk Monarch obliged for most people, and we also saw the other Chuuk endemics again and some stunning Blue-faced Parrotfinches showed well too.



White-fronted Ground Dove (top), Blue-faced Parrotfinches (left) and Purple-capped or Pohnpei Fruit Dove (János Oláh).

The following day the weather was nice and calm in the early morning and we embarked on the passage over to Tol South. We arrived at the village, met with the local leader who appointed a few guides and began climbing. It must be said that it was not a pleasant walk, in fact it was sweaty and miserable. Climbing to the sufficient altitude was tough, but we all made it and when we got there we were rewarded. After a few tense moments, a pair of Teardrop White-eyes showed very well. We did linger a short while, gaining more views of the white-eyes and also got great looks of Chuuk Monarchs. We made it back down safe and sound, thanked our happy brigade of helpers and headed on our way. The return ride was choppy and wet again. Nevertheless we made it back safely and our mission was completed. The late afternoon birding in the garden was simply washed out by a huge storm. How lucky we were not to have rain our our climb to Mount Winipot!



Immature male Chuuk Monarch (top) and Teardrop White-eye (left by Björn Andersson) on Mount Winipot (János Oláh).

The following morning we were out of Chuuk and on our way to the third state in Micronesia: Pohnpei. Our flight was a little bit late but by midday we were sitting on our final flight on the main tour. We arrived to Kolonia on Pohnpei where we quickly checked into the hotel, grabbed some lunch and headed for the forest. This time we had more than two full days on this island, so we were not in a rush though the Pohnpei Cicadabird is not an easy bird to connect with. Our first afternoon was great, and we had a nice introduction to the island's superb endemics. We had great looks of the spectacular Pohnpei Lorikeet, the attractive Pohnpei Kingfisher as well as many Pohnpei Fantails, Grey-brown White-eyes and even a Pohnpei Flycatcher in the last minute. It was a great afternoon birding though there was no sign of the rare Pohnpei Cicadabird or Long-billed White-eye.



Pohnpei Lorikeet (left), Pohnpei Kingfisher (right) and Pohnpei Fantail on the island of Pohnpei (János Oláh).

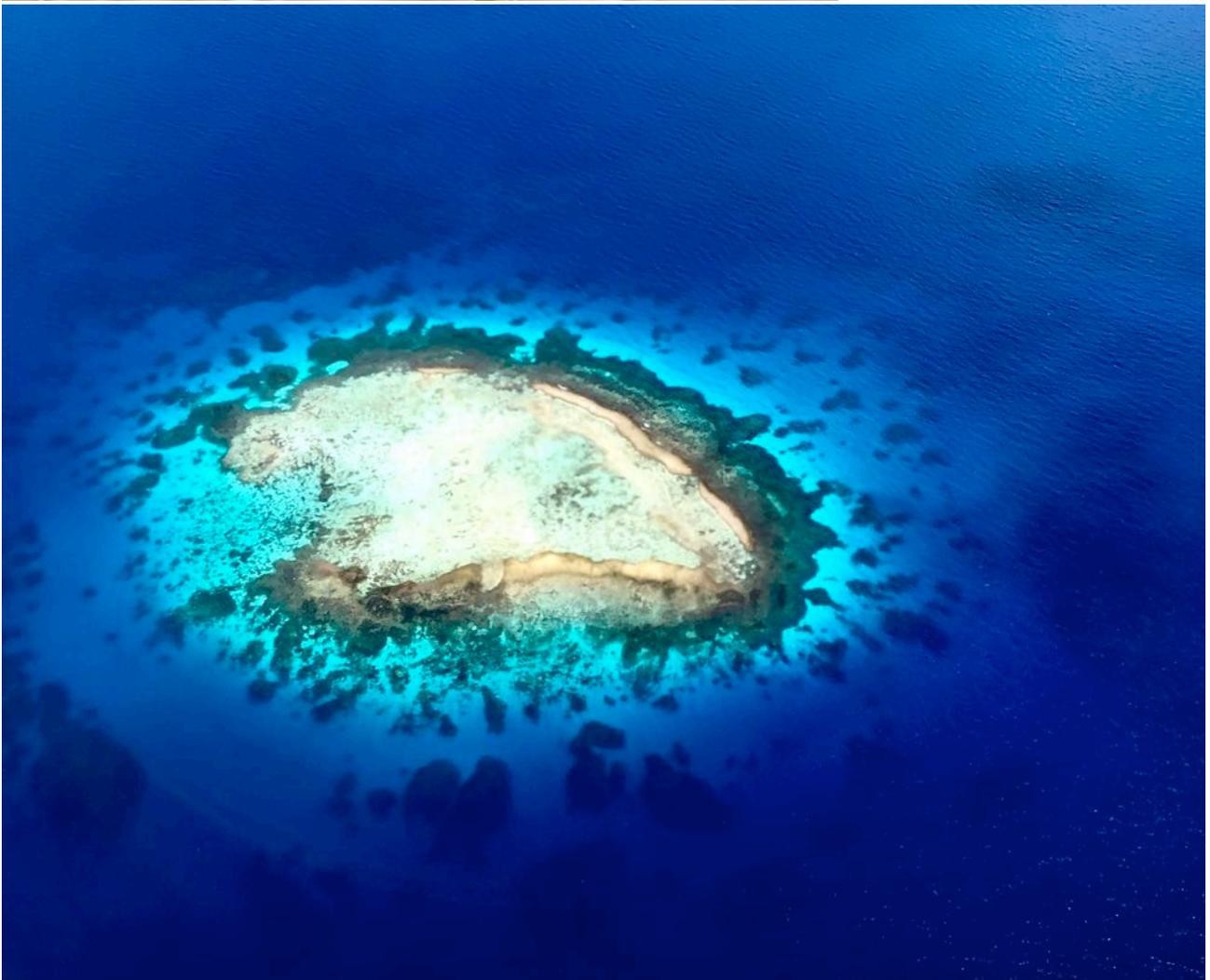
The following morning we were back to the forest in search of the remaining endemics, the Pohnpei Cicadabird and the Long-billed White-eye. It was a superb morning and both Pohnpei Fantail and Pohnpei Flycatcher entertained at close range on numerous occasions. We also had several Purple-capped Fruit Doves and after a bit of search finally we got several Long-billed White-eyes and even found a nest of this unusual and subtle beauty! Spending most of the day in the forest we still did not connect with any cicadabirds. Pohnpei Kingfisher showed well again and in the more grassy area we admired the introduced Hunstein's Mannikin. Finally by mid morning the following day we found a male Pohnpei Cicadabird and after a bit of sweat and revisiting the area we all got to see this rare bird. Other more widespread Caroline Island endemics such as the Purple-capped Fruit Dove and Carolinian Reed Warbler showed well, and we also found the local form of Micronesian Imperial Pigeon a couple of times and Citrine White-eyes as well. Funny enough on our last morning we had a last optional birding for some and we saw a female and two immature Pohnpei Cicadabirds again! So finally this last leg of the main tour was a great success as well and once again we saw all the species and forms we were after on Pohnpei.



Male Pohnpei Cicadabird (top left) and Long-billed White-eye (bottom right, Björn Andersson) and female Pohnpei Cicadabird (top right) and Pohnpei Flycatcher (János Oláh).

Although the main tour has ended on Pohnpei the new addition to this tour was an extension to Kosrae and this year every participant joined this first adventure. So an afternoon flight took us to the forth and last state in the Federal States of Micronesia. Kosrae is probably as far from anywhere as it can be. This tiny island now has two endemic birds after the splitting of Kosrae White-eye and Kosrae Fruit Dove. These two birds were the primary reason for our visit. When we arrived we were transferred to our hotel and the late afternoon birding produced excellent looks of both special birds. It was not difficult to get the two extra birds and they were new for the Birdquest list too. We also had Blue-faced Parrotfinches and Kosrae Flying Foxes. The following morning we still had some birding time and right in front of our hotel we spotted large flocks of shearwaters passing. They were distant and the identification will never be sure, but they were either Short-tailed or Sooty Shearwaters - I think they were more likely to be the former. We had repeated looks of the white-eye and the fruit dove in the morning too. Seeing the Grey-brown White-eye on Pohnpei just the previous day, this Kosrae White-eye did look more uniformly greyer and a different, almost bluish shade of grey. The fruit dove had a distinctive green belly and a very prominent yellow terminal tail band which was very obvious from below and above too. Well, this was the end of the tour and the extension. All left for us to make our way back to Guam as the main gateway for everybody to go home or continue birding. I think Guam was the only place on the tour where we had no special birds at all, but as being the main airport in the region we were forced to be back over and over. We certainly go to know the airport well! All in all it was a great group of Birdquesters seeking adventures and first of all, the Micronesian endemics! Its fair to say we had a successful tour where we managed to find all our target birds! It's a great and seldom-visited part of

the world with some really smart and unfortunately threatened birds. If you looking for such birds I can highly recommend this fantastic tour!



Kosrae White-eye (left) and Kosrae Fruit Dove (right) and a coral reef from above (János Oláh).



Micronesian Megapode in the Rock islands of Palau (János Oláh).

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

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

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

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

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

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

CR = Critically Endangered, **E** = Endangered, **V** = Vulnerable, **NT** = Near Threatened

For polytypic species, the subspecies seen on the tour, where known, is placed in parentheses at the end of the species comment. Generally, species listed with trinomials are not currently split by the IOC.

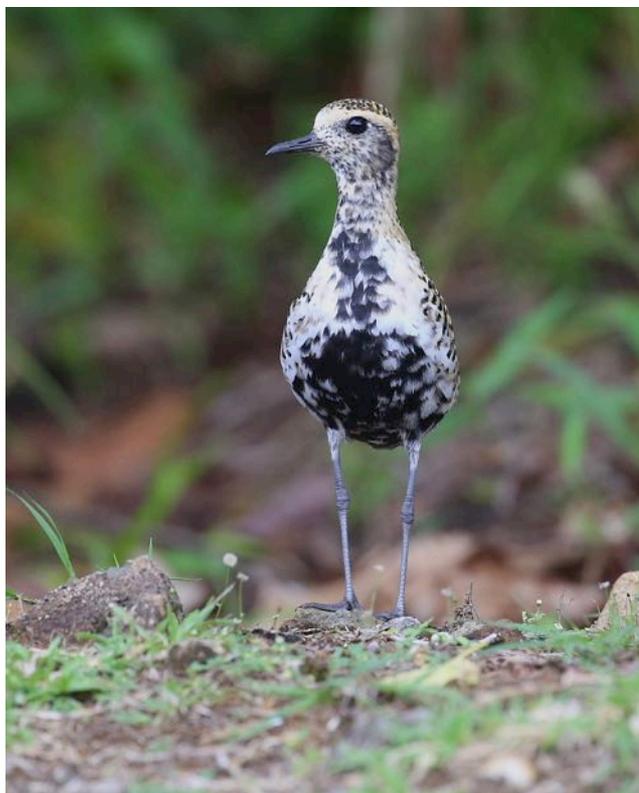
The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows **Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). 2018. IOC World Bird List (v 9.2)**. This list is updated several times annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>. Please note, this was the current version when the report checklist was created. Some alternative names are given in parentheses.

All of our checklists are powered by our partner iGoTerra (www.igoterra.com) who provide web and mobile applications for bird and wildlife enthusiasts and businesses. Their suite of services cover observations, rankings, lists, photos and trip management tools.

BIRDS

Total of bird species recorded: 107

- Micronesian Megapode** ◊ (*Palau M*) *Megapodius [laperouse] senex* About five were seen on Palau. **EN** See note
- Micronesian Megapode** ◊ (*Mariana M*) *Megapodius [laperouse] laperouse* Just one seen on Saipan. **EN** See note
- Black Francolin (Introduced)** *Francolinus francolinus* A pair was seen on Guam.
- Red Junglefowl (introduced)** *Gallus gallus* Chickens, hens and roosters were seen everywhere.
- Wedge-tailed Shearwater** *Ardenna pacifica* A few seen off the Banzai Cliffs, Saipan. All were pale phase.
- Short-tailed Shearwater** *Ardenna tenuirostris* Large numbers seen on Kosrae were believed to be this species.
- Tropical Shearwater** ◊ *Puffinus bailloni* One was seen on our way to the Rock Islands on Palau [*dichrous*].
- Red-tailed Tropicbird** ◊ *Phaethon rubricauda* Some great looks on Rota [*melanorhynchos*].
- White-tailed Tropicbird** *Phaethon lepturus* Fairly widespread during the tour with many great looks [*dorotheae*].
- Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis* Seen well on most islands but not on Pohnpei and Kosrae.
- Nankeen Night Heron (Rufous N H)** *Nycticorax caledonicus* Seen on Palau, Yap and Chuuk [*pelewensis*].
- Eastern Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus coromandus* Singletons were seen on Yap and Chuuk.
- Intermediate Egret** *Egretta intermedia* Seen on Palau and Yap [*nominate*].
- Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* Only seen on Palau [*nigripes*].
- Pacific Reef Heron (P R Egret)** *Egretta sacra* Small numbers were seen along the coasts of most islands [*nominate*].
- Great Frigatebird** *Fregata minor* Just a few seen on Saipan, Rota and Yap [*palmerstoni*].
- Red-footed Booby** *Sula sula* Great views of a good number at the seabird colony on Rota [*rubripes*].
- Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster* Seen on Saipan, Rota and Yap [*plotus*].
- Little Pied Cormorant** *Microcarbo melanoleucos* A few were seen daily around Palau [*nominate*].
- Buff-banded Rail (Banded R)** *Gallirallus philippensis* Common on Palau [*pelewensis*].
- Guam Rail** ◊ *Gallirallus owstoni* Seen on Rota. The established population here is hanging on in some areas. **EW**
- Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* It was seen on Saipan, Rota and Yap. See note
- Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus* Just a single bird was seen on Saipan
- Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva* Common and widespread, can be found in all sort of habitat.



Pacific Golden Plover was numerous on all islands. They left the area by our last day on Kosrae (János Oláh).

Lesser Sand Plover (Mongolian S P) *Charadrius mongolus* Singleton on Palau [*mongolus/stegmanni*].
Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii* About 15 on Palau [*nominate*].
Whimbrel (Eurasian W) *Numenius phaeopus* Widespread in small numbers [*variegatus* - part of 'Eurasian' group].
Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* Seen on Guam, Yap and Chuuk [*nominate*].
Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta* It was common at the sewage works of Palau.
Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis* (NL) Three were seen on Palau by some. **NT**
Swinhoe's Snipe *Gallinago megala* Two sightings on Palau.
Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* Small numbers seen on Palau, Yap and Chuuk.
Wandering Tattler *Tringa incana* One was identified at Tinian.
Grey-tailed Tattler (Siberian T) *Tringa brevipes* Several seen on Palau, and a few on Guam and Kosrae. **NT**
Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* Only one was seen at the water treatment works at Koror, Palau.
Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* Only seen at the water treatment works at Koror, Palau.
Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus* Many great views throughout the tour [*pileatus*].
Black Noddy ◊ *Anous minutus* Many sightings, widespread throughout the tour [*marcusii*].
White Tern (Common Fairy T) *Gygis alba* Another widespread and commonly seen, but delightful species [*candida*].



White Terns on Saipan (János Oláh).

Greater Crested Tern (Great C T) *Thalasseus bergii* Widespread, with many great views [*cristatus*].
Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus* Small numbers in the Rock Islands, Palau [*nominate*].
Sooty Tern *Onychoprion fuscatus* A one seen off Yap from the boat [*oahuensis*].
Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana* Great views around Palau and Yap [*nominate*].
Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* Small numbers seen on Palau, Saipan and Yap [*javanicus*].
Rock Dove (introduced) *Columba livia* Very few seen.
Island Collared Dove (introduced) *Streptopelia bitorquata* See note.
Nicobar Pigeon ◊ *Caloenas nicobarica* A total of 11 seen in the Rock Islands of Palau [*pelewensis*]. **NT**
White-fronted Ground Dove ◊ (Caroline Islands G D) *Alopecoenas kubaryi* Several seen brilliantly. **VU**
White-throated Ground Dove ◊ *Alopecoenas xanthonurus* Common on Saipan, Rota and Yap. Superb! **NT**
Palau Ground Dove ◊ *Alopecoenas canifrons* Superb looks on Ulung Island Palau. Shy! **EN**



Palau Ground Dove (left; János Oláh) and White-fronted Ground Dove (Denzil Morgan).

Purple-capped Fruit Dove ◊ (Pohnpei F D) *Ptilinopus ponapensis* Seen on Chuuk and Pohnpei. See note
Kosrae Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus hernsheimi* Common and easily seen on Kosrae. Birdquest lifer!
Palau Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus pelewensis* Very common by voice throughout. Several seen well.
Mariana Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus roseicapilla* Quite common on Saipan, Tinian and Rota, with many seen well. **EN**
Micronesian Imperial Pigeon ◊ (Micronesian P) *Ducula oceanica* Seen on Palau, Yap and Pohnpei. **NT** See note
Palau Owl ◊ *Pyrroglauis podargina* Several brilliant views on Palau. Certainly a star bird of this tour.
Palau Nightjar ◊ *Caprimulgus phalaena* We had several good looks of this isolated species. **NT**
Palau Swiftlet ◊ *Aerodramus pelewensis* Common and widespread throughout the Palau Archipelago.
Mariana Swiftlet ◊ (Guam S) *Aerodramus bartschi* Large numbers seen on our rainy fist day on Saipan. **EN**
Island Swiftlet ◊ *Aerodramus inquietus* *Rukensis* on Chuuk, *ponapensis* on Pohnpei and *nominate* on Kosrae.
Collared Kingfisher *Todiramphus chloris* Several seen on Palau. See note
Mariana Kingfisher ◊ (White-headed K) *Todiramphus albicilla* Common on Saipan, Tinian [*nominate*] and Rota [*ori*].
Rusty-capped Kingfisher ◊ (Palau K) *Todiramphus pelewensis* Total of six were seen on Palau. **NT** See note
Pohnpei Kingfisher ◊ *Todiramphus reichenbachii* A few were seen on Pohnpei. Another smart endemic! **VU**



Palau Kingfisher (left), 'teraokai' Collared Kingfisher (middle) and Pohnpei Kingfisher (János Oláh).

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (introduced) *Cacatua galerita* Common and noisy introduction on Palau [*triton*].
Eclectus Parrot (introduced) *Eclectus roratus* Just two seen in the Rock Islands, Palau [*polychloros*].
Pohnpei Lorikeet ◊ (P Lory) *Trichoglossus rubiginosus* Commonly seen on Pohnpei. Superb looking bird! **NT**
Micronesian Myzomela ◊ (M Honeyeater) *Myzomela rubratra* Very common throughout. See note
White-breasted Woodswallow ◊ (Palau W) *Artamus leucorhynchus* Two were seen on Palau [*pelewensis*]. See note
Palau Cicadabird ◊ *Coracina monacha* A family party and two single males were seen on Palau.

Yap Cicadabird ◊ *Coracina nesiotis* Three were seen on Yap. **EN** See note
 Pohnpei Cicadabird ◊ *Coracina insperata* Finally two males and a female with two immatures were seen. **EN**
 Morningbird ◊ *Pachycephala tenebrosa* This rather strange, drab, whistler was fairly common on Palau.
 Black Drongo (introduced) *Dicrurus macrocercus* A very common introduction on Rota.
 Palau Fantail ◊ *Rhipidura lepida* Common, widespread and cute in the Palau Archipelago.
 Rufous Fantail *Rhipidura rufifrons* *Saipanensis* on Saipan and Tinian, *mariae* on Rota and *versicolor* on Yap.
 Pohnpei Fantail ◊ *Rhipidura kubaryi* Fairly common and small numbers seen in forested habitats daily.
 Chuuk Monarch ◊ (Truk M) *Metabolus rugensis* Seen on Dublon and on Tol South Islands of Chuuk. **EN**
 Yap Monarch ◊ *Monarcha godeffroyi* Fairly common on Yap where seen daily in small numbers. **NT**
 Tinian Monarch ◊ *Monarcha takatsukasae* Just one seen on Tinian! See note **VU**
 Oceanic Flycatcher ◊ *Myiagra oceanica* Common at all islands visited in the Chuuk Lagoon.
 Palau Flycatcher ◊ (Mangrove F) *Myiagra erythrops* Small numbers seen daily on Palau. Cracker!



Palau Flycatcher (top left), Rufous Fantail on Tinian (top right), Tinian Monarch (left) and Oceanic Flycatcher at Chuuk (János Oláh).

Pohnpei Flycatcher ◊ *Myiagra pluto* Fairly common with many great views on Pohnpei.
 Mariana Crow ◊ *Corvus kubaryi* Four birds were seen at the Alaguan Bay lookout on two dates. **CR**
 Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* (LO) Two seen on Palau [*gutturalis*].
 Palau Bush Warbler ◊ *Horornis annae* Commonly heard a few seen on Palau. The long pale bill was unusual!
 Saipan Reed Warbler ◊ *Acrocephalus hiwae* It took some time to find but great looks finally! Quite a bill! **CR**
 Carolinian Reed Warbler ◊ (Caroline Islands R W) *Acrocephalus syrinx* Quite common on Chuuk and on Pohnpei.
 Giant White-eye ◊ *Megazosterops palauensis* Great views on Ngeruktabel and Peleliu on the Palau Archipelago. **NT**
 Golden White-eye ◊ *Cleptornis marchei* Quite common on the north of Saipan. Voted the 'Bird of the trip!'! **CR**
 Teardrop White-eye ◊ (Great Truk W-e) *Rukia ruki* Great views on Tol South, after a tough and sweaty climb! **EN**
 Long-billed White-eye ◊ *Rukia longirostra* Several great views of this unusual white-eye on Pohnpei. **NT**
 Rota White-eye ◊ (Rota Bridled W-e) *Zosterops rotensis* Excellent views on Rota. Rather restricted. **CR**
 Bridled White-eye ◊ *Zosterops conspicillatus* Common on Saipan, Tinian [*saypani*]. Nominate extinct (Guam). **EN**
 Citrine White-eye ◊ *Zosterops semperi* *Nominate* on Palau, *owstoni* on Chuuk, *takatsukasai* on Pohnpei.



White-eyes GALORE in clockwise naming, starting with Plain White-eye on the top left (János Oláh), Bridled White-eye (Denzil Morgan), Citrine White-eye, Kosrae White-eye, Teardrop White-eye, Long-billed White-eye, Grey-brown White-eye (János Oláh) and finally Rota White-eye (Björn Andersson) .

Plain White-eye ◊ (Yap P W-e) *Zosterops hypolais* Common and widespread in suitable habitat on Yap. **NT**
Kosrae White-eye ◊ *Zosterops cinereus* Common on Kosrae. Birdquest lifer!
Grey-brown White-eye ◊ (Grey W-E) *Zosterops ponapensis* Common on Pohnpei.
Olive-colored White-eye ◊ (Yap Olive W-e) *Zosterops oleagineus* Seemed very scarce on Yap. Only a 3 seen. **NT**
Dusky White-eye ◊ *Zosterops finschii* A common and unusual looking white-eye in the Palau Archipelago.
Micronesian Starling ◊ *Aplonis opaca* Commonly seen. See note
Eurasian Tree Sparrow (introduced) *Passer montanus* A common and widespread introduction.
Orange-cheeked Waxbill (introduced) *Estrilda melpoda* Several introduced bird on Saipan.
Blue-faced Parrotfinch ◊ *Erythrura trichroa* We saw *pelewensis* on Palau, *clara* on Chuuk and *nominata* on Kosrae.
Scaly-breasted Munia (introduced) *Lonchura punctulata* A common introduction on Yap.
Chestnut Munia (introduced) *Lonchura atricapilla* A common introduction on Palau.
Hunstein's Mannikin (introduced) *Lonchura hunsteini* Several seen on Pohnpei. Introduced and smart!
Eastern Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla tschutschensis* Several were seen on Palau.



Introduced Hunstein's Manakin on Pohnpei (János Oláh).

MAMMALS

Total of mammal species recorded: 9

Polynesian Rat *Rattus exulans* Very common, especially on Palau.
Pacific Sheath-tailed Bat ◊ *Emballonura semicaudata* Very common on Palau, with big numbers some evenings.
Ruck Flying Fox ◊ (Truk F F) *Pteropus insularis* Small numbers were seen on Chuuk.
Marianas Flying Fox ◊ *Pteropus mariannus* Just a few seen on Rota, mostly from the lookout.
Pohnpei Flying Fox ◊ *Pteropus molossinus* It was seen daily on Pohnpei.
Palau Flying Fox ◊ *Pteropus pelewensis* Common on Palau... the commonest of the flying foxes.
Yap Flying Fox ◊ *Pteropus yapensis* About nine were seen on Yap.
Kosrae Flying Fox ◊ *Pteropus ualanus* About ten seen on Kosrae.
Philippine Brown Deer (introduced) *Rusa marianna* One was seen on Rota.



Yap (left) and Chuuk Flying Foxes (János Oláh).

REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

Mangrove Monitor (introduced) *Varanus indicus* Three were seen on Yap.

NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

The most up to date referenced taxonomic list referred to in the Tour Report is that of the IOC World Bird Names. Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). 2019. IOC World Bird List (v 9.1). Available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>

Micronesian Megapode (Palau M) *Megapodius [laperouse] senex*
and Micronesian Megapode (Mariana M) *Megapodius [laperouse] laperouse*

We had excellent views of several Palau Megapodes on Ulong Island in the Rock Islands, near Palau. Mariana Megapode was more of a challenge to find, but we did see one well near to the Korean Monument on Saipan. The birds on Saipan are part of a long established but struggling re-introduced population. The two forms are somewhat different from one another and may merit specific status.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

On Saipan and Rota we saw the *guami* race. They were darker than the nominate.

Island Collared Dove *Streptopelia bitorquata*

A common introduction on Saipan and Tinian. Many seen well. Also on Rota. The form concerned, *dusumieri*, is from the Philippines and is split off by some authors as a separate species: Philippine Collared Dove.

Purple-capped Fruit Dove (Pohnpei F D) *Ptilinopus ponapensis*

Small numbers seen daily on Chuuk, with several superb views, and seen daily on Pohnpei. Now treated as a separate species to Crimson-crowned Fruit Dove *P. porphyraceus* of Fiji, Tong and Samoa, with which it was, until recently, lumped.

Micronesian Imperial Pigeon *Ducula oceanica*

We enjoyed good views of several on Palau, including perched birds. Also seen well on Yap, where they are possibly introduced. On both these islands the form is *monacha*. We also heard the *teraokai* race on Tol South in Chuuk but did not manage to see it. On Pohnpei we had great looks along the Cicadabird trail. Here, the form is *townsendi*.



Micronesian Imperial Pigeon on Palau (János Oláh).

Collared Kingfisher *Todiramphus chloris*

This formerly widespread species has seen widespread taxonomic revision and may yet see more in the future. We saw one taxon on this tour which is currently included in this species, namely *teraokai* the form which is fairly widespread on the Palau archipelago.

Rusty-capped (or Palau) Kingfisher *Todiramphus pelewensis*

It was not common but finally seen at several sites on Badeldaob. Most showed nice rusty crowns, but a few buff-crowned individuals were also seen. A really smart kingfisher!

Micronesian Myzomela (or Honeyeater) *Myzomela rubratra*

A widespread endemic which was found throughout the islands. We saw six different subspecies as follows: *kobayashii* (Palau Archipelago); *saffordi* (Saipan, Tinian and Rota); *kurodai* (Yap); *major* (Chuuk); *dichromata* (Pohnpei) and the nominate on Kosrae.

White-breasted Woodswallow (Palau W) *Artamus leucorhynchus*

The local and rare form *pelewensis* was finally tracked down around the Rock Islands of Palau. This isolated race is smaller, darker and has a distinctive 'browner back' compared with other races. It might be a future split as Palau Woodswallow.

Yap Cicadabird *Coracina nesiotis*

Three birds – two female and a male - were seen well on the Trans Island track on Yap. Much bigger than Palau Cicadabird. Female distinctive, being almost orange underneath, male nearly all blackish with greyer wings. Almost starling-like, but longer-tailed, dark iris, hooked bill and greyer wings, as well as different flight and foraging behaviour. Seems to be a worthy split.

Tinian Monarch *Monarcha takatsukasae*

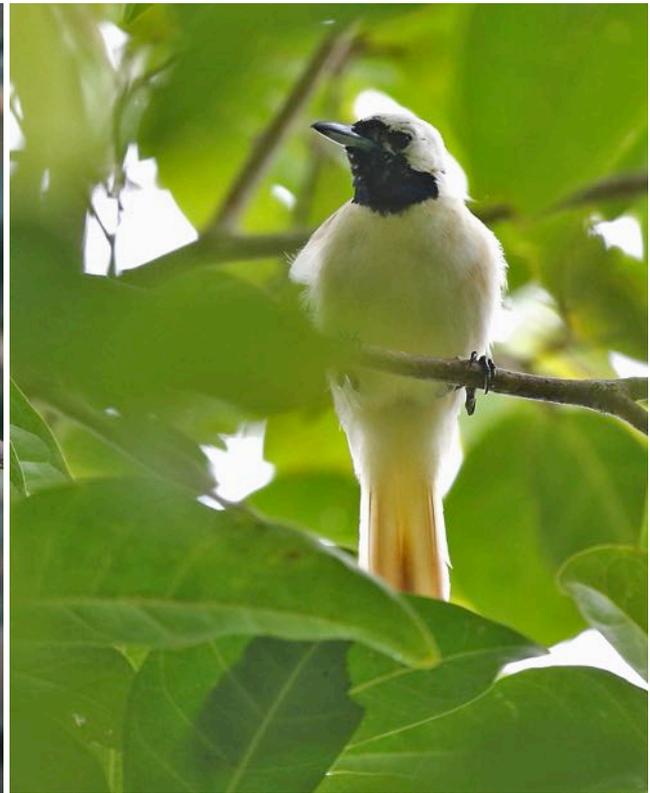
We only managed to see a single bird near the airport on Tinian. It supposed to be common on the island but typhoon Yutu devastated the island in October 2018. Not sure what is the real status of the bird now.

Micronesian Starling *Aplonis opaca*

Another widespread Micronesian species of which we noted six different subspecies as follows: *orii* (Palau Archipelago); *guami* (Saipan, Tinian and Rota); *kurodai* (Yap); *anga* (Chuuk); *ponapensis* (Pohnpei) and the nominate *opaca* on Kosrae.

APPENDIX 1: Overall results of the 'Bird of the tour' contest in Micronesia

	Species	Points	Nominations
1st	Golden White-eye	60	8
2nd	Teardrop White-eye	38	6
3rd	Pohnpei Lorikeet	26	5
4th	Kosrae Fruit Dove	20	3
5th	Chuuk Monarch	18	4



Golden White-eye (left) and Chuuk Monarch were voted into the top five birds of the tour. Palau Sea landscape (János Oláh).