



The vivid Numfor Paradise Kingfisher is always a standout on this route – what a bird!!

All photos by Joshua Bergmark.

WEST PAPUA: FROM BIAK TO THE SNOW MOUNTAINS

1 JUNE – 16 JUNE 2019

LEADER: JOSHUA BERGMARK

Consistently, West Papua proves itself as one of the most marvelous birding destinations in the world. This tour explored the eastern half of the region, which is not covered on our complimenting “Best Of” Vogelkop trip. As intended, a keen group of birders relished the opportunity to spend a whirlwind two weeks in the paradise isle. Starting on Biak in the Geelvink Islands, the star Biak Paradise Kingfisher delighted us with his vibrant turquoise plumage as we excitedly worked our way through the likes of the rare and declining Biak Scrubfowl, and Biak Lorikeet, with beautiful golden Biak Monarchs and sneaky Biak Coucals providing great views in the same area. A suite of other endemics such as the elegant Long-tailed Starling and Geelvink Pygmy Parrot, musical Biak Whistler and Biak Gerygone, plus the more widespread Biak White-eye and Biak Triller. Isolated subspecies are also abundant here, with “Biak” Hooded Pitta, “Geelvink” Yellow-bibbed Fruit-Dove, “Geelvink” Spice Imperial Pigeon and “Geelvinck” Common Cicadabird. A pair of Red-fronted Lorikeets were also a welcome surprise! Over on adjacent Numfor, the splendid Numfor Paradise Kingfisher and Numfor Leaf-warbler delighted us, along with “Numfor” Barred Cuckooshrike and “Numfor” Hooded Pitta. Truly a tour of contrasts, we moved from tropical islands to the majestic montane highlands of Snow Mountains where the alpine grasslands and cloud forest yielded specialties such as the incomparable

Macgregor's Honeyeater, beautiful Splendid *Astrapia*, melon-sized Greater Ground Robins, and the ridiculously confiding trio of Lesser Melampitta, Papuan Logrunner and Chestnut Forest Rail! The restricted Snow Mountain Quail, Short-bearded Melidectes and Western Alpine Mannikin, plus Mountain Robin, "Western" Crested Berrypecker, and the superb "Snow Mountains" Painted Tiger Parrot were primary targets, all nailed down well in the end. Both Archbold's Nightjar and New Guinea Woodcock performed splendidly at night, while lower down on the road the endemic Baliem Whistler and Black-breasted Mannikins showed very well. Other standout species included Ornate Melidectes, Lorentz's Whistler, Black Sittella, New Guinea Thornbill, Mountain Firetail, and the amazing Greater Lophorina even giving us a little display! Finally in the lowland forest around Nimbokrang we were able to bird around the new guesthouse (this tour for the first time involved not even one night of camping!) where the key restricted-range Pale-billed Sickbill and Salvadori's Fig Parrot were easily found on our first morning. Of course the Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise on his pole, the King Bird-of-paradise in his leafy tangle, and the gaggle of Lesser Bird-of-paradise dancing in their display tree were big highlights for all. Our spectacular selection of rare lowland targets this trip was astounding really – from the Shovel-billed Kookaburra which shot in at eye level to the Papuan Hawk-Owl which perched ever so nicely. We tempted one Collared Brushturkey right onto the track in front of us, while Victoria's Crowned Pigeon was possibly overshadowed for the first time ever when we jammed into a Forest Bittern on the walk back to the road. Pesquet's Parrot proved to be our best flyover, and bonus species like Buff-faced Pygmy Parrot, Orange-fronted Hanging Parrot, Coronated Fruit-Dove, Papuan Nightjar, Hook-billed Kingfisher, Papuan Dwarf Kingfisher, Ochre-collared Monarch, Hooded Monarch, Sooty Thicket Fantail, White-bellied Thicket Fantail, Torrent Flyrobin, Lowland Peltops, and Great-billed Mannikin. All in all, we recorded 245 species of birds (a frustrating 20 heard only) and 6 species of mammals.



Macgregor's Honeyeater is the star of the Snow Mountains – the winner of Bird of the Tour!

With a partially rested group off red-eye flights, we got stuck into Biak immediately on our first morning. Along a nice track through selectively logged forest we tried to have breakfast as gorgeous electric blue Biak Paradise Kingfishers distracted. Next up was a vocal Biak Whistler, now formally accepted to not be even slightly related to the Little Shrikethrush it has formerly been included within! The vocally distinct Biak form of Hooded Pitta showed off his flashy purple flanks bouncing along in front of us, and a small flock contained Biak Gerygone, "Biak" Northern Fantail, and "Biak" Golden Monarch. Overhead, endemic Long-tailed

Starlings mixed with Metallic Starlings, while some excellent positioning allowed everybody to have cracking views of the declining Biak Scrubfowl as one sauntered leisurely into full view three times!



The electric Biak Paradise Kingfisher is quite common, but we don't always manage superb looks such as this!

The excitement continued as a pair of endangered Biak Monarchs appeared with their subtly beautiful pale-gold and black feathers glowing in the forest gloom, while some endemic Black-winged Lory, the Biak form of “Geelvink” Common Cicadabird and Emperor Fairywren similarly obliged. On the pigeon front, we enjoyed Great Cuckoo-Dove, Amboyna Cuckoo-Dove, and the smart “Geelvink” Yellow-bibbed Fruit-Dove. After a quick lunch back in town, we headed out again to enjoy yet more endemics, as Biak Black Flycatcher and a tiny Geelvink Pygmy Parrot performed very nicely. More widespread species included Pacific Baza, Brush Cuckoo, Red-capped Flowerpecker, Black Sunbird, Olive-backed Sunbird, Glossy Swiftlet and Uniform Swiftlet. Spotting for Biak Scops Owl proved typically frustrating, with two birds being heard only despite our best efforts.



One of the first photos of “Numfor” Barred Cuckooshrike – we were very pleased to find this rare taxon during our stay!

The ever-anticipated excursion to Numfor has become less reliable in recent years due to apparent climatic shifts, however our decision to run this tour earlier in the season than normal seemed to pay off - the sea was calm every day during our stay on Biak! As such, we started motored across the channel early in the morning on our second day, notching up the likes of Bridled Tern, Black Noddy, Common Noddy, Brown Booby and Lesser Frigatebird as we gradually chugged westwards. An Orca hunting some fleeing Short-finned Pilot Whales also provided some entertainment! A bit before lunchtime we arrived on the remote island shore and were promptly whisked away in an open truck to start exploring. As usual, one of the first birds we saw was the incomparable Numfor Paradise Kingfisher, with at least four individuals carrying on in trees all around us, despite the heat of the day! A calling “Numfor” Hooded Pitta was successfully tracked down - the plumage only slightly differs from those on Biak, but the call is completely distinct! Oriental Dollarbirds and Sacred Kingfishers lined the wires, while our first Shining Flycatchers and Rainbow Bee-eaters were noted. After checking in to our guesthouse we were soon out again searching for the up-and-coming second endemic, Numfor Leaf Warbler. We quickly tracked down a singing individual in a scrubby clearing, and then were able to relax! Continuing along the road we enjoyed perched views of Claret-breasted Fruit Dove and some “Geelvink” Spice Imperial Pigeon with their striking yellow eyes. We had some good looks at the Numfor form of “Geelvink” Common Cicadabird (the female being particularly distinctive with her spotted breast), but the leader got particularly excited when he realised that the two cicadabird-esque birds flying over the road had yellow eyes, and were in fact the extremely rare “Numfor”

Barred Cuckooshrike! Though they disappeared initially, after half an hour we refound them in the same general area for further views. Otherwise we resighted a few species shared with Biak, added Variable Goshawk and Island Monarch, finally got eyes on a Hooded Butcherbird, and had further views of Black-winged Lory, Eclectus Parrot, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, and the ever-impressive Blyth's Hornbill powering overhead. Some Torresian Crows were also interesting to observe, here demonstrating obviously blue eyes unlike those elsewhere.

Some brief birding stops en. route to the jetty the next morning turned up the Numfor race of Geelvink Pygmy Parrot as hoped, with a pair sitting on a branch kissing each other in the scope for a few minutes. Another (!!!) pair of Barred Cuckooshrike surprised us, and this time we managed photographs as they foraged in a low tree. A final look at "Numfor" Hooded Pitta was enjoyed before we hopped back on the boat after a very successful visit. The return journey saw us seeing most of the same birds as yesterday, plus Pacific Reef Heron, Beach Kingfisher and Torresian Imperial Pigeon. An afternoon session back on Biak was rather wet and dreary, but we were ultimately pleased with a sneaky Biak Coucal which showed for everyone after a little bush-bashing! Our first dapper Moustached Treeswift also put on a good show. The owls once again refused to play ball before we had to retire to the hotel due to rain, and despite three more dawn and dusk attempts over the coming days at every opportunity we never did connect... We did however find a rare Biak Glider, which was probably the best mammal of the tour.



"Geelvink" Yellow-bibbed Fruit-Dove is now often split off as an extra endemic species for this excellent IBA!

With a handful of endemics remaining the pressure was on for our final full day on Biak. Typically it started raining as we departed from the hotel, and the downpour continue well into the mid-morning. Nothing of note was apparent for a long time, but as soon as the sun returned both Biak White-eyes and "Biak" Black-browed Trillers appeared promptly! Most of the rest of the day we dedicated to searching out the rapidly disappearing Biak Lorikeet - common just five years ago, they are now heading towards extinction due to trapping for the cage bird trade. We succeeded in the final hours of daylight as three of these beautiful parrots alighted in a flowering tree, giving perfect scope views. A strange call in an adjacent tree pulled us away, and amazingly as suspected it turned out to be a pair of Red-fronted Lorikeets, a cryptic New Guinea endemic seen only very rarely despite having such a wide distribution!



The endemic Biak Gerygone has a wonderful song which is often heard in the forest.

Leaving the islands behind we headed to the mainland, staying overnight in Sentani at a luxurious hotel which suits our transit needs perfectly! The nearby grasslands surrounding Lake Sentani always hold some interesting birds, but in particular we wanted to see the resident Great-billed Mannikins, which tend to be hit-and-miss elsewhere in New Guinea. We succeeded in finding this big-beaked wonder, and also some striking Hooded Mannikins, plus a few Crimson Finch. Nearby New Guinea Friarbirds and Streak-headed Honeyeaters competed for perches, while a superb Rufous-bellied Kookaburra sat regally on an open branch. The local subspecies of Pied Bush Chat was common, and White-shouldered Fairywren were very friendly. Whistling Kite, Pheasant Coucal, over twenty Channel-billed Cuckoo, Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, Brown Quail, King Quail, and a somewhat lost Australian Hobby made it feel a little like the land down under New Guinea, but subsequent Black-billed Coucals and a roving flock of Glossy-mantled Manucodes reminded us where we were!

Some low clouds delayed our landing at Wamena, but eventually they lifted and we had marvelous views as we flew over pristine forest on the northern slopes of the central ranges. As we descended, the scenery changed to the cultivated fields and small villages which typify the famous Baliem Valley, which was to be our home for the coming few days. The security situation here for the past six months had been somewhat fluid, but with the help of our excellent ground agents our birding was not once hindered by the military (however on occasion our dinner schedule was!!!). After checking in to our pleasant hotel, we headed straight up the partially-completed Trans-Papuan Highway into the Snow Mountains. We stayed low today, marvelling at the boisterous Ornate Melidectes and Belford's Melidectes, while Canary Flyrobins, Capped White-eyes and Red-collared Myzomelas investigated us curiously. Sultan's Cuckoo-Dove, Slaty-headed Longbill, and a female Superb Bird-of-paradise showed briefly, while both Dimorphic Fantail and Friendly Fantail performed well. A little higher, we found the dapper New Guinea Thornbill to be delightfully common, and Ashy Thornbill were located nearby. A Mountain Firetail fed near our first Alpine Pipits, while a fruiting tree held our first "Stella's" Papuan Lorikeet and a young male Splendid Astrapia. Some Lorentz's Whistlers and a pair of Black-breasted Mannikins were important birds to see, essentially restricted to this area.



Hooded Mannikins have several plumage variations across New Guinea - this white-bellied form is perhaps the most striking!



Orange-cheeked Honeyeaters are a constant companion at the treeline in the Snow Mountains!

Rising early we drove up to our old campsite, and soon set to work searching for the grouse-like Snow Mountain Quail. We succeeded in getting stupendous views of a male standing motionless by the roadside alongside a number of Island Thrush before breakfast, after which we started exploring the area around Lake Habbema. Amidst spectacular scenery and perfect weather, we searched out Short-bearded Melidectes and Black-throated Honeyeater, while Orange-cheeked Honeyeater and Grey-streaked Honeyeater proved abundant as always. Salvadori's Teal were searched out from amongst Pacific Black Ducks and Eurasian Coots on the lake, and a flock of attractive Western Alpine Mannikins appeared in our binoculars. We kept our eyes peeled and before too long some whooshing wingbeats lead us straight to the star of the Snow Mountains - *Macgregoria*. All participants watched in awe as the improbably amazing Macgregor's Honeyeater came closer and closer, revealing his bright golden primary panels with every flight between the trees. It is easy to see why for many years the species was thought to be a bird-of-paradise, but now of course it wins the title of ultimate honeyeater! A real "Attenborough Moment" for sure. Some nearby Brown-breasted Gerygones, Papuan Grassbirds, a quartering Papuan Harrier, and one Nankeen Kestrel did little to excite us after such an experience, but we made do!



The pristine grasslands around Lake Habbema (top) are home to beautiful Western Alpine Mannikins (bottom).

Our first assault on the always challenging Ibele Trail after lunch proved slow birding, but everyone had fabulous views of both male and female Papuan Logrunner and our first Common Smoky Honeyeater before we headed back up the hill. The resident New Guinea Woodcock performed his roding flyby at eye-level right on cue, and even landed for a few seconds on the deck after his third pass. We had to search for a while longer until an Archbold's Nightjar appeared, but once found it hovered above us at length giving great views. Satisfied that we had nailed both the target nightbirds in once go, we headed down for a late dinner and settled in to our comfy beds – an excellent upgrade from the frigid camping we have previously employed!



We were able to truly admire the beautiful facial pattern on this Black-throated Honeyeater – they do not pose like this in PNG!

Back on the Ibele for most of the next day, highlights just kept coming and coming. A male Lesser Melampitta wowed us as he promptly flew up into a mossy tree at eye level after a few bursts of the tape, and sat still in our views for at least 10 seconds!!! Such behaviour is almost unheard of for this retiring species, but for some reason the birds on this trail always seem to be very inquisitive. A female Crested Satinbird flew in soon after, and we watched her feeding for a time before continuing. Papuan Scrubwren and Large Scrubwren obliged as usual, and we studied the Mountain Mouse-warblers which do not really look like the field guides imply they should in the Snow Mountains! A pair of Chestnut Forest Rails delighted, and some flashy White-winged Robins perched up well, while a pair of beautiful Tit Berrypeckers (aka, Papuan Great Tit) stunned us. A final highlight showed up as a Rufous-naped Bellbird performed uncharacteristically boldly right by the track!

Exiting the trail in the late afternoon we birded some sections of the road heading downhill. Despite every stretch having now been selectively (and excessively) logged, we still managed our first dapper “Western” Crested Berrypeckers, while annoyingly aggressive Sooty Melidectes made sure we had to work extra hard before a calling Mountain Robin settled down in the scope. We spent some time studying the Glossy Swiftlets, which all appear remarkably turquoise blue here, although have not been described as taxonomically distinct from the lowlands birds! Some more Mountain Firetails, New Guinea Thornbills, and our only Brehm’s Tiger Parrot were logged before the sun set on another wonderful day in the Snow Mountains.



Dapper New Guinea Thornbills are regularly encountered in the higher forest, often in large flocks darting between trees.



The superb Black Sittella showed very nicely this year along the road to Lake Habbema!

While everybody did come to the Ibele the following morning, it was only the keenest who braved another slog before breakfast to try and nail the Greater Ground Robin which had not yet even been heard. The

cloud had descended today which must have gotten the birds excited - after hearing three individuals, a pair was coaxed onto the track for our extended enjoyment of this antpitta-like monster! Back on the road, some brief Plum-faced Lorikeets, Snow Mountain Quail, and more Macgregor's Honeyeater action highlighted the list of re-sighted species during the morning. Slowly winding our way down, a few fortuitous stops added the cracking Black Sittella, another female Crested Satinbird, the New Guinea form of Fan-tailed Cuckoo, and at long last a male Baliem Whistler - a must see in the Baliem Valley! In the afternoon some exploration of forest patches on the outskirts of Wamena was highlighted by a number of male Greater Lophorina (previously Greater Superb Bird-of-paradise), one of which we watched practicing his moves on top of a tree. We were able to clearly see the shape of the oval cape which distinguishes this species from those in the Arfaks. Otherwise some more Baliem Whistlers and Ornate Melidectes were seen well, but another Mountain Kingfisher refused to reveal himself. In the grasslands, Black-breasted Mannikins were numerous, and both Buff-banded Rail and Papuan Harrier were noted.



With persistence, the antpitta-like Greater Ground Robin appeared on the Ibele Trail and gave walkaway views!

Our final day in the mountains had one key goal - find a male Splendid Astrapia. Although we searched along the road thoroughly all day, we only managed a brief flight view of one bird. Nevertheless, our hard work did nail on some new birds, probably highlighted by a male Modest Tiger Parrot which clambered around feeding in some antplants right by the road, and a pair of Black-throated Robins which perched up in a dead tree at eye level for many minutes. Otherwise, some Yellow-billed Lorikeets were picked out lower down, and Plum-faced Lorikeets did some more flybys. A brief Black Fantail and Slaty Robin duo was outperformed by two vocal Hooded Cuckooshrikes, and a pair of Garnet Robin singing away. Brown Sicklebill, Papuan Treecreeper, Black-breasted Boatbill and Mountain Kingfisher once again refused to come anywhere near the road despite calling regularly. At long last we found Great Woodswallow and Island Leaf Warbler before we headed back for dinner, with half a village crammed into the back of our pickup trucks!



A common sight in the Snow Mountains. I swear there used to be Papua Treecreeper around here somewhere...



The New Guinea endemic Meyer's Friarbird is rarely seen at eye-level!

Our agents whisked us away the next day and before we knew it we were checking out our lovely new accommodation in hot and sweaty Nimbokrang, hosted by the wonderful Alex. This superb lowland rainforest is, like all good things, slowly being corrupted by hunting and logging, but for now it still offers some great birding. Our first afternoon saw us spend some time scanning from two different viewpoints where Golden Cuckooshrikes looked a lot more flamboyant than their Boyer's Cuckooshrike relatives, a Yellow-billed Kingfisher came straight in, Orange-bellied Fruit Dove and Pink-spotted Fruit Dove perched up, all the while Pinon's Imperial Pigeons and Zoe's Imperial Pigeon flew through, accompanied by Coconut Lorikeets and a lone Palm Cockatoo. Who could forget of course our first encounter with an adult male Lesser Bird-of-paradise bubbling away above us! A Meyer's Friarbird circled us before perching beautifully, and in the forest a noisy bunch of Papuan Babblers entertained. The newly-split Mamberamo Shrikethrush proved common (although the birds here do not appear visually the same as they are supposed to!), but the tricky Pale-billed Sickbill managed to get itself on the "leader only" list, for now! Papuan Hawk-Owl however eventually gave in during our spotlighting session, and the persistent participants had mind blowing views of this very poorly known species. A roosting Azure Kingfisher was a bonus.



Almost unknown for decades, we have been successful in finding Papuan Hawk-Owl on all of our recent West Papua tours.

Hook-billed Kingfishers had been very vocal during our nocturnal session, but come dawn there were none to be seen. No matter, as our eyes were soon trained on a pole in the middle of the forest where before long an impossible shape appeared in view - a male Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise, one of the highlight BoPs of any tour to New Guinea! Unsurprisingly, our first real morning in the lowlands just kept on giving, so much so that we found ourselves deep in the forest at the designated lunchtime, but had to keep stopping for birds as we tried to return promptly! At Alex's canopy tower again activity was high, with Plain Honeyeaters, Grey-headed Cuckooshrike, Buff-faced Pygmy Parrots, Orange-fronted Hanging Parrot, and Coronated Fruit-Dove all appearing. Continuing along the trails, Black-capped Lory and Yellow-faced Myna were seen feeding, while a family of restricted Salvadori's Fig Parrots were enjoyed at their nesting tree. Collared Brushturkey are heard regularly in this forest, but to have one walk onto the track and provide binocular views for everyone was something else entirely! Both White-bellied Thicket Fantail and Sooty Thicket Fantail proved somewhat bold today, and a few flocks contained our first Ochre-collared Monarch, Hooded Monarch, and a

Rufous-backed Fantail. Maybe best of all, a Pale-billed Sicklebill finally played ball, and we had outrageous looks at one individual circling us and landing in view on various open perches! Other species during our walk included Papuan Dwarf Kingfisher, Green-backed Gerygone, Spot-winged Monarch, and Golden Monarch.



If you still need a reason to visit New Guinea, this is it! A male Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise surveying his territory early one morning.

The afternoon was typically slow, and visiting some of the old sites in the vicinity of what used to be our camp turned out to be very depressing. We did find our first Long-billed Honeyeater, and had superbly close views of a Hook-billed Kingfisher for as long as we wanted, but the desired pigeon and parrot flyovers never occurred... Spotlighting at a new site which has recently turned up the rare Papuan Nightjar found us some very friendly White-throated Nightjar and some Large-tailed Nightjars, but sadly not the elusive rarity!



The range-restricted Pale-billed Sicklebill was very cooperative this year, and both males and females gave awesome views!

Tensions were high at dawn. The hoped-for Shovel-billed Kookaburra was silent initially, but suddenly a reverberating bullet shot into the tree only metres above us. We knew it was the bird, but we also knew we could not move! It dropped and we thought all hope was lost, but after a little patience the stonking kookaburra flew in and landed only three metres in front of Mark at eye-level, but was out of sight for everyone else! Luckily she flew onwards after a few seconds and perched where we could all marvel at her impressive bill and subtly beautiful rusty plumage. As the Latin name suggests, this beast it is truly the king of all kingfishers! Smiles on our faces we continued with more birding after enjoying a field breakfast with Double-eyed Fig Parrots and Black Butcherbirds perched up behind us. Trekking into the forest with some locals in search of big birds, we emerged a few hours later pretty much empty-handed, however a perched Papuan Dwarf Kingfisher, a responsive Dwarf Koel, and a steaming pile of cassowary evidence was nice to see. A more relaxing afternoon scanning over the forest yielded very bold Ochre-collared Monarchs, one perched Coronated Fruit Dove, and a male Pale-billed Sickbill advertising from atop a palm, half-raising his magnificent circular cape in excitement. Spotting at the normal spot this time easily found us two rare Papuan Nightjars which made multiple passes overhead in the torch while making both the recently-recorded flight call, and once a noise which sounds most similar to the unrecorded song phrase described in field guides. On the way out, more White-throated Nightjars and a brief Large-railed Nightjar made excellent comparisons in the nearby fields.



The king of the kingfishers! Shovel-billed Kookaburra was one of the birds of the trip after showing this well!

We hoped to find a few remaining species on our last full day, and we started off with first a Ruby-throated Myzomela, and then the incomparable King Bird-of-Paradise calling away and moving up and down him display pole. While he was a little high, we had great scopes views of this jewel! Nearby Andy finally spotted us the vocal but elusively Lowland Peltops, while Long-tailed Honey Buzzard, the strange Grey Crow and Yellow-bellied Gerygone obliged. For the first time we had a convenient window to twitch the nesting Papuan Frogmouth behind the kitchen, and as the day was particularly hot with little activity we called a break until after lunch. Soon after lunch, the exact opposite problem fell from the sky as torrential rain completely eliminated birding opportunities for most of the afternoon. Luckily, a very wet Torrent Flyrobin (aka, a squished minivet) didn't mind the weather, and with the limited time under clear skies at dusk we bagged a brief Ivory-billed Coucal which somehow disappeared into thin air, some Papuan Spine-tailed Swifts, and an awesome Pesquet's Parrot flying right overhead (why it is not still called Vulturine I will never understand)!



The tiny King Bird-of-paradise sporting his flashy blue legs and green tail spirals delighted us at Nimbokrang!



It's becoming harder and harder, but we did once again find a superb Victoria Crowned Pigeon after trekking deep into the forest!

We split up the following morning with different targets in mind. The nutters went with the leader, searching primarily for Victoria Crowned Pigeon (locally known as the mambruk). You have to walk a long, long way to get into unlogged habitat where these immense pigeons have not been cleaned up by hunting, but things looked promising as two birds were heard calling soon after we arrived. A worrying two hours passed as Dante the Mambruk Man threaded his way through the forest, flushing the unseen duo at least five times as we stayed just in sight behind him. Finally we were beckoned over and Dante excitedly got us on a stunning Victoria's Crowned Pigeon which just sat there as we drank it in for an hour. Despite some trying, not a single other window could be found with the bird in view anywhere around the base of the tree, so we were lucky! Northern Cassowary was heard calling very close to us a few times, and Andy once saw some bushes moving, but it was not to be... However! On the hot and sweaty return walk, what else flushed up from a ditch but the ultra-rare New Guinea endemic Forest Bittern! We were speechless! A pair of Brown-headed Crow rounded out the morning.



A real New Guinea rarity, this Forest Bittern was an excellent surprise at Nimbokrang!

The remainder of the group stayed with Alex, focusing on witnessing the incredible display of Lesser Bird-of-paradise. The resident *Paradisaea* put on a fantastic show, shaking their bright yellow plumes and running up and down the tree calling their heads off to no end. A wonderful end to this abridged tour, where we managed to find some really rare and special endemics alongside some of New Guinea's most charismatic birds. All the time, in charismatic company! Thanks for a great tour guys!

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

- 1: Macgregor's Honeyeater (17 points)
- 2: Shovel-billed Kookaburra (16 points)
- = 3: Numfor Paradise Kingfisher (6 points)
- = 3: Lesser Bird-of-paradise (6 points)
- = 3: Lesser Melampitta (6 points)



Our small group near Wamena on one of many sunny days!

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF BIRD SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

Total number of bird species recorded: 245

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).

Salvadori's Teal ◊ *Salvadorina waigiensis* Small numbers on Lake Habbema seen well.

Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa* Some on Lake Habbema with the teal.

Collared Brushturkey ◊ (Brown-c B) *Talegalla jobiensis* Superb views of one enticed onto the track at Nimbokrang.

Biak Scrubfowl ◊ (B Megapode) *Megapodius geelvinkianus* Two very showy individuals delighted on Biak.

Brown Quail *Coturnix ypsilophora* Heard only in the grasslands near Lake Sentani. (H)

King Quail (Blue-breasted Q) *Excalfactoria chinensis* Two flushed for us by a running cow at Lake Sentani.

Snow Mountain Quail ◊ *Anurophasis monorhonyx* Great looks at a male standing by the road at Lake Habbema.

Forest Bittern ◊ *Zonerodius heliosylus* Probably the biggest surprise of the tour – one at Nimbokrang. Mega!

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus* Noted in grasslands throughout.

Great Egret *Ardea alba* Only noted at Lake Sentani.

Intermediate Egret (Yellow-billed E) *Ardea intermedia* One in a small wetland on Biak.

Pacific Reef Heron (Eastern R Egret) *Egretta sacra* Some nice white morphs on Numfor.

Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel* Some identified on the crossing to Numfor from Biak.

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster* Small numbers during the Numfor crossing.

Eastern Osprey *Pandion cristatus* One on the eastern shore of Biak.

Pacific Baza (Crested Hawk) *Aviceda subcristata* Two on Biak one evening, another at Nimbokrang.

Long-tailed Honey Buzzard ◊ (L-t Buzzard) *Henicopernis longicauda* Superb views at Nimbokrang.

Variable Goshawk ◊ (Varied G) *Accipiter hiogaster* Noted a handful of times during the tour.

Papuan Harrier ◊ *Circus spilothorax* Great looks at two different pied males in the highlands.

Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus* Some at Lake Sentani.

Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus* Regularly observed in the lowlands.

Chestnut Forest Rail ◊ *Rallacula rubra* Great looks at a pair on the Ibele Trail down from Lake Habbema.

Buff-banded Rail *Gallirallus philippensis* Seen a few times from vehicles in the late evenings.

Pale-vented Bush-hen ◊ (Rufous-tailed B) *Amaurornis moluccana* Well heard, and flight views for the leader. (LO)

White-browed Crake *Porzana cinerea* Heard calling deep in a swamp at Nimbokrang. (H)

Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa* One heard calling in the distance at Lake Sentani. (H)

Eurasian Coot (Common C) *Fulica atra* Just a handful on Lake Habbema.

New Guinea Woodcock ◊ *Scolopax rosenbergii* Great views of one roding at eye-level near Lake Habbema.

Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus* Some mixed in with Black Noddies on the crossing the Numfor.

Black Noddy *Anous minutus* Good numbers on the crossing to Numfor.

Greater Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii* Some offshore from Biak.

Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus* Many on the crossing to Numfor.

Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana* Some noted from our hotel on Biak.

Rock Dove (introduced) *Columba livia* Only on Biak.

Spotted Dove (introduced) *Spilopelia chinensis* Noted throughout.

Amboyna Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia amboinensis* Current classification applies this species to the Geelvink Islands.

Sultan's Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia doreya* Current classification applies to the Baliem Valley and Nimbokrang.

Great Cuckoo-Dove ◊ *Reinwardtoena reinwardti* Great looks on Biak, also noted on the mainland.

Pacific Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps longirostris* Some good looks on the roadside on Biak.

Victoria Crowned Pigeon ◊ *Goura victoria* One seen superbly with some significant effort by part of the group.

Wompoo Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus magnificus* Heard daily in the lowlands, but not once could we get a view! (H)

Pink-spotted Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus perlatus* Common at Nimbokrang.

Superb Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus superbus* Heard a few times on Biak. (H)

Coroneted Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus coronulatus* Some nice looks at Nimbokrang on a few occasions.

White-bibbed Fruit Dove ◊ (Mountain F D) *Ptilinopus [rivoli] bellus* Two briefly in the Snow Mountains.

Yellow-bibbed Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus solomonensis* Cracking looks on Biak and Numfor.

Claret-breasted Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus viridis* Nailed down on Numfor during our afternoon walk.

Orange-bellied Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus iozonus* Common in the lowlands.

Spice Imperial Pigeon ◊ (Geelvink I P) *Ducula [myristicivora] geelvinkiana* Really close views on Numfor.

Pinon's Imperial Pigeon ◊ *Ducula pinon* Delightfully abundant on the mainland.

Zoe's Imperial Pigeon ◊ *Ducula zoeae* Just a couple seen at Nimbokrang.

Torresian Imperial Pigeon ◊ *Ducula spilorrhoa* Good numbers on islets offshore from Biak while crossing to Numfor.

Papuan Mountain Pigeon ◊ (Bare-eyed M-P) *Gymnophaps albertisii* Briefly at Habbema, perched at Nimbokrang.

Ivory-billed Coucal ◊ (Greater Black C) *Centropus menbeki* Typically brief looks at one near Nimbokrang.

Biak Coucal ◊ *Centropus chalybeus* Seen well by everyone in the end – a tricky one!

Black-billed Coucal ◊ (Lesser Black C) *Centropus bernsteini* Nice views in the Sentani grasslands.

Pheasant Coucal *Centropus phasianinus* One or two in the Sentani grasslands.

Dwarf Koel ◊ (Black-capped Koel) *Microdynamis parva* A very cooperative bird gave great views at Nimbokrang.

Channel-billed Cuckoo ◊ *Scythrops novaehollandiae* A big flock of 25 birds at Lake Sentani!

Rufous-throated Bronze Cuckoo ◊ *Chrysococcyx ruficollis* Heard only once in the highlands – unresponsive. (H)

Little Bronze Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx minutillus* Cooperative on Biak.

Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cacomantis flabelliformis* Great looks at one bird in the highlands.

Brush Cuckoo *Cacomantis variolosus* A common voice, seen well a few times.

Biak Scops Owl ◊ *Otus beccarii* Our big frustration – heard six birds multiple times, but never in view. (H)

Papuan Hawk-Owl ◊ *Uroglaux dimorpha* Great views of one bird at Nimbokrang!

Marbled Frogmouth ◊ *Podargus ocellatus* Heard only at Nimbokrang. (H)

Papuan Frogmouth ◊ *Podargus papuensis* On the nest behind our guesthouse at Nimbokrang.

White-throated Nightjar ◊ *Eurostopodus mystacalis* Small numbers around Nimbokrang at night.

Papuan Nightjar ◊ *Eurostopodus papuensis* Two seen well calling in flight above us at dusk near Nimbokrang.
Archbold's Nightjar ◊ (Mountain N) *Eurostopodus archboldi* One located in the Snow Mountains.



White-throated Nightjars (above) spend the Austral winter in New Guinea, sharing habitat with Papuan Nightjars!

Large-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus macrurus* Fairly numerous on Biak.
Moustached Treeswift ◊ *Hemiprocne mystacea* A lovely bird, seen regularly.
Glossy Swiftlet *Collocalia esculenta* Common throughout. The birds at Lake Habbema are beautifully turquoise blue.
Mountain Swiftlet ◊ *Aerodramus hirundinaceus* Numerous in the Snow Mountains.
Uniform Swiftlet *Aerodramus vanikorensis* Numerous throughout the lowlands.
Papuan Spine-tailed Swift ◊ (P Needletail) *Mearnsia novaeguineae* Some in the evenings around Nimbokrang.
Oriental Dollarbird (Common D) *Eurystomus orientalis* Regularly observed.
Hook-billed Kingfisher ◊ *Melidora macrorrhina* Heard often, one scoped through a small window at only 10 metres!
Biak Paradise Kingfisher ◊ *Tanyiptera riedelii* This delightful species was common on Biak.
Numfor Paradise Kingfisher ◊ *Tanyiptera carolinae* One of the first birds we saw on Numfor – a real stunner!
Shovel-billed Kookaburra ◊ (S-b Kingfisher) *Clytoceyx rex* This cryptic endemic performed well near Nimbokrang.
Rufous-bellied Kookaburra ◊ *Dacelo gaudichaud* Superb looks on a few occasions.
Beach Kingfisher ◊ *Todiramphus saurophagus* Some during our crossing to Numfor.
Sacred Kingfisher *Todiramphus sanctus* Regularly noted.
Yellow-billed Kingfisher ◊ *Syma torotoro* Nice looks at Nimbokrang.
Mountain Kingfisher ◊ *Syma megarhyncha* Heard very close a few times in the highlands. (H)
Papuan Dwarf Kingfisher ◊ *Ceyx solitarius* Stunning perched views at Nimbokrang.
Azure Kingfisher *Ceyx azureus* One found roosting at Nimbokrang.
Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops ornatus* Regularly encountered, in much dustier plumage than when in Australia!
Blyth's Hornbill ◊ (Papuan H) *Rhyticeros plicatus* A common and sublimely inspiring bird!
Nankeen Kestrel (Australian K) *Falco cenchroides* One hovering above the Lake Habbema grasslands.
Australian Hobby *Falco longipennis* One Lake Sentani, another at Lake Habbema... Usually rarer than Oriental!
Palm Cockatoo ◊ *Probosciger aterrimus* Brief views from the canopy tower at Nimbokrang.
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita* Regularly encountered.
Pesquet's Parrot ◊ (Vulturine P) *Psitttrichas fulgidus* One gave a magnificent flyover one afternoon at Nimbokrang.

Geelvink Pygmy Parrot ◇ *Micropsitta geelvinkiana* Lovely perched views of both the Biak and Numfor subspecies.
Buff-faced Pygmy Parrot ◇ *Micropsitta pusio* Came into the tree next to the Nimbokrang canopy tower at eye-level!
Eclectus Parrot ◇ *Eclectus roratus* Most numerous on Biak, but some on the mainland too.
Red-cheeked Parrot ◇ *Geoffroyus geoffroyi* Regularly observed in flight, some nice perched views too.
Brehm's Tiger Parrot ◇ *Psittacella brehmii* Just one on the road up to Lake Habbema.
Painted Tiger Parrot ◇ *Psittacella picta* Pleasantly numerous around the treeline at Lake Habbema.
Modest Tiger Parrot ◇ *Psittacella modesta* One male feeding in an antplant near Lake Habbema.
Plum-faced Lorikeet ◇ (Whiskered L) *Oreopsittacus arfaki* Common flyovers at Lake Habbema, a few good views.
Red-fronted Lorikeet ◇ *Charmosyna rubronotata* A rare one – two birds in a flowering tree on Biak.
Red-flanked Lorikeet ◇ *Charmosyna placentis* Two briefly in flight at Nimbokrang.
Papuan Lorikeet ◇ *Charmosyna papou* Several great encounters with the purple “Stella’s” for in the Snow Mountains.
Yellow-billed Lorikeet ◇ *Neopsittacus musschenbroekii* Small numbers low down on the road to Lake Habbema.
Orange-billed Lorikeet ◇ *Neopsittacus pullicauda* Common in the Snow Mountains.
Black-capped Lory ◇ (Western B-c L) *Lorius lory* Regularly seen in the lowlands at Nimbokrang.
Brown Lory ◇ *Chalcopsitta duivenbodei* Strangely absent – heard only on our last morning at Nimbokrang. (H)
Black-winged Lory ◇ (Biak L) *Eos cyanogenia* Still good numbers of this pretty species on Biak for now...
Coconut Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus* Regular in the lowlands on the mainland.
Biak Lorikeet ◇ *Trichoglossus rosenbergii* Three of this highly endangered species tracked down on Biak.



We spent a wonderful half hour watching a male and female Salvadori's Fig Parrot come in and out of their nesting hollow!

Salvadori's Fig Parrot ◇ *Psittaculirostris salvadorii* Great views of a family at their nesting tree in Nimbokrang.
Double-eyed Fig Parrot ◇ *Cyclopsitta diophthalma* Several good looks around Nimbokrang.
Orange-fronted Hanging Parrot ◇ (Papuan H P) *Loriculus aurantiifrons* One briefly perched at Nimbokrang.
Hooded Pitta ◇ *Pitta sordida* Both the Biak and Numfor subspecies performed very well this year. Likely splits.
Fawn-breasted Bowerbird ◇ *Chlamydera cerviniventris* Two at Sentani Grasslands.
Papuan Treecreeper ◇ *Cormobates placens* Heard only in the Snow Mountains – no big trees left near the road! (H)
Emperor Fairywren ◇ *Malurus cyanocephalus* Superb looks on Biak, and a few at Nimbokrang.
White-shouldered Fairywren ◇ *Malurus alboscapulatus* Fairly common on the mainland.



The New Guinea endemic Emperor Fairywren is probably easiest to see on Biak, where we had a great show this year!

- Ruby-throated Myzomela** ◊ (Red-t M) *Myzomela eques* One in the canopy at Nimbokrang.
- Red-collared Myzomela** ◊ *Myzomela rosenbergii* Abundant in the Snow Mountains.
- Grey-streaked Honeyeater** ◊ *Ptiloprora perstriata* A common voice in the Snow Mountains.
- Plain Honeyeater** ◊ *Pycnopygius ixoides* Several good looks at this unassuming species at Nimbokrang.
- Streak-headed Honeyeater** ◊ *Pycnopygius stictocephalus* Some in the lowlands, good looks at Lake Sentani.
- Tawny-breasted Honeyeater** ◊ *Xanthotis flaviventer* Regular in the lowlands.
- Meyer's Friarbird** ◊ *Philemon meyeri* Nice looks at this sometimes tricky species at Nimbokrang.
- New Guinea Friarbird** ◊ *Philemon novaeguineae* Abundant in the lowlands.
- Long-billed Honeyeater** ◊ *Melilestes mearnsi* Heard regularly in the lowland forest, one or two good sightings.
- MacGregor's Honeyeater** ◊ *Macgregoria pulchra* The star of Lake Habbema – fantastic views on most days.
- Common Smoky Honeyeater** ◊ *Melipotis fumigatus* Regularly encountered in the Snow Mountains.
- Black-throated Honeyeater** ◊ *Caligavis subfrenata* Easier to see at Lake Habbema than elsewhere in New Guinea!
- Sooty Melidectes** ◊ *Melidectes fuscus* Some eventually tracked down in the Snow Mountains.
- Short-bearded Melidectes** ◊ *Melidectes nouhuysi* Uncommon, but showy once found in the Snow Mountains.
- Belford's Melidectes** ◊ *Melidectes belfordi* Abundant in the Snow Mountains – copes well with cleared forest.
- Ornate Melidectes** ◊ *Melidectes torquatus* A real stunner, we had several nice looks around Wamena.
- Mimic Honeyeater** ◊ (M Meliphaga) *Meliphaga analoga* The only meliphagas we got in the bins this time were Mimic.
- Orange-cheeked Honeyeater** ◊ *Oreornis chrysogenys* Pleasantly common around Lake Habbema.
- Rusty Mouse-warbler** ◊ *Origma murina* Two heard distantly at Nimbokrang. (H)
- Mountain Mouse-warbler** ◊ *Origma robusta* Some nice looks on the Ibele Trail – field guides show this form poorly!
- Buff-faced Scrubwren** ◊ *Aethomyias perspicillatus* Some in the lower parts of the Snow Mountains.
- Papuan Scrubwren** ◊ *Aethomyias papuensis* Some flocks on the Ibele Trail in the Snow Mountains.
- Large Scrubwren** ◊ *Sericornis nouhuysi* Quite a few on the Ibele Trail below Lake Habbema.
- Brown-breasted Gerygone** ◊ *Gerygone ruficollis* Several showy birds in the Snow Mountains.
- Biak Gerygone** ◊ *Gerygone hypoxantha* Great looks on Biak of this fairly recent split.
- Yellow-bellied Gerygone** ◊ *Gerygone chrysogaster* Eventually tempted lower at Nimbokrang.
- Green-backed Gerygone** ◊ *Gerygone chloronota* Regular around Nimbokrang.
- New Guinea Thornbill** ◊ (Papuan T) *Acanthiza murina* Abundant in certain parts of the Snow Mountains – delightful.



Short of a helicopter charter, the restricted Short-bearded Melidectes can only be seen easily around Lake Habbema!

- Grey Thornbill** ◇ *Acanthiza cinerea* Just one pair on the way up to Lake Habbema.
- Papuan Babbler** ◇ (Rufous B) *Garritornis isidorei* One flock at Nimbokrang.
- Papuan Logrunner** ◇ *Orthonyx novaeguineae* Great looks at a pair along the Ibele Trail
- Crested Satinbird** ◇ *Cnemophilus macgregorii* Two individuals in the Snow Mountains – both females!
- Fan-tailed Berrypecker** ◇ *Melanocharis versteri* Some passing by in the Snow Mountains.
- Yellow-bellied Longbill** ◇ *Toxorhamphus novaeguineae* Two heard in the Nimbokrang forests did not come in. (H)
- Slaty-headed Longbill** ◇ (Slaty-chinned L) *Toxorhamphus poliopterus* One on our first day in the Snow Mountains.
- Tit Berrypecker** ◇ *Oreocharis arfaki* A handful of observations in the Snow Mountains.
- Crested Berrypecker** ◇ (Western C B) *Paramythia [montium] olivacea* Several around Lake Habbema.
- Blue Jewel-babbler** ◇ *Ptilorrhoa caerulescens* Heard only around Nimbokrang – tricky in this part of New Guinea! (H)
- Black-breasted Boatbill** ◇ *Machaerirhynchus nigripectus* An unresponsive heard only in the Snow Mountains. (H)
- Great Woodswallow** ◇ (New Guinea W) *Artamus maximus* Caught up with this one on our last day in the highlands.
- Lowland Peltops** ◇ *Peltops blainvillii* Great looks at a few individuals around Nimbokrang.
- Black Butcherbird** ◇ *Melloria quoyi* Some around Nimbokrang.
- Hooded Butcherbird** ◇ *Cracticus cassicus* Common on Biak, noted around Nimbokrang.
- Hooded Cuckooshrike** ◇ *Coracina longicauda* Nice views of a pair on the road up to Lake Habbema.
- Barred Cuckooshrike (Yellow-eyed C)** *Coracina lineata* The rare Numfor subspecies was seen twice.
- Boyer's Cuckooshrike** ◇ *Coracina boyeri* Common in the lowlands.
- White-bellied Cuckooshrike** *Coracina papuensis* Two at Lake Sentani.
- Golden Cuckooshrike** ◇ *Campochaera sloetii* A cracking bird, seen well at Nimbokrang.
- Black-bellied Cuckooshrike** ◇ *Edolisoma montanum* Heard only in the Snow Mountains. (H)
- Grey-headed Cuckooshrike** ◇ *Edolisoma schisticeps* Regular at Nimbokrang.
- Common Cicadabird (Slender-billed C)** *Edolisoma tenuirostre* Both the Biak and Numfor subspecies seen well.
- Black Cicadabird** ◇ *Edolisoma melas* One female at Nimbokrang.
- Black-browed Triller** ◇ *Lalage atrovirens* Both the mainland and distinct 'Biak Triller' forms observed well.
- Black Sittella** ◇ *Daphoenositta miranda* Great point-blank views in the Snow Mountains.
- Rufous-naped Bellbird** ◇ *Aleadryas rufinucha* Unusually good views of this usually quick species!
- Grey Whistler** ◇ *Pachycephala simplex* Heard often around Nimbokrang, a few good sightings.



Often a shy and skulking species, this Rufous-naped Bellbird was happy to pose in the open for us on the Ibele Trail!

- Baliem Whistler** *Pachycephala balim* Great looks at this very restricted endemic a few times in the Baliem Valley.
- Lorentz's Whistler** ◊ *Pachycephala lorentzi* Common in the Snow Mountains.
- Biak Whistler** ◊ *Pachycephala melanorhyncha* Good looks at this cryptic ex-shrikethrush on Biak.
- Rusty Pitohui** ◊ *Pseudorectes ferrugineus* Heard only in a dense thicket at Nimbokrang. **(H)**
- Mamberamo Shrikethrush** ◊ *Colluricincla obscura* Common at Nimbokrang – does not look like illustrations!
- Northern Variable Pitohui** ◊ *Pitohui kirhocephalus* Heard only right before a heavy downpour. **(H)**
- Spangled Drongo** *Dicrurus bracteatus* Common in the Geelvinks, and on the mainland.
- Willie Wagtail** *Rhipidura leucophrys* Regularly noted on the tour.
- Northern Fantail** ◊ *Rhipidura rufiventris* Both on Biak and around Nimbokrang.
- Sooty Thicket Fantail** ◊ *Rhipidura threnothorax* Great views of a pair at Nimbokrang.
- White-bellied Thicket Fantail** ◊ *Rhipidura leucothorax* Similarly excellent views of this traditional skulker.
- Black Fantail** ◊ *Rhipidura atra* Seeing birds from the Lake Habbema road is becoming harder every year... **(LO)**
- Friendly Fantail** ◊ *Rhipidura albolimbata* Pleasantly common in the Snow Mountains.
- Dimorphic Fantail** ◊ *Rhipidura brachyrhyncha* Also common and obliging in the Snow Mountains.
- Rufous-backed Fantail** ◊ *Rhipidura rufidorsa* One showed well at Nimbokrang near the hill lookout.
- Spot-winged Monarch** ◊ *Symposiachrus guttula* Some good looks in mixed monarch flocks at Nimbokrang.
- Biak Monarch** ◊ *Symposiachrus brehmii* This endangered stunner was seen a few times on Biak.
- Hooded Monarch** ◊ *Symposiachrus manadensis* Often tricky, but we saw four this trip around Nimbokrang.
- Island Monarch** *Monarcha cinerascens* One pair searched out on Numfor.
- Golden Monarch** ◊ *Carterornis chrysomela* Both the Biak and mainland forms seen well.
- Ochre-collared Monarch** ◊ (Rufous-c M) *Arses insularis* A very pretty bird, quite common at Nimbokrang.
- Biak Black Flycatcher** ◊ (Biak F) *Myiagra atra* A great species, regularly encountered on Biak and Numfor.
- Shining Flycatcher (S Monarch)** *Myiagra Alecto* Noted a few times throughout.
- Brown-headed Crow** ◊ *Corvus fuscicapillus* Two on our last morning at Nimbokrang – strange distribution!
- Grey Crow** ◊ (Bare-eyed C) *Corvus tristis* Two flocks of this noisy corvid around Nimbokrang.
- Torresian Crow** *Corvus orru* Some on Numfor, sporting obviously blue eyes... Very strange...
- Lesser Melampitta** ◊ *Melampitta lugubris* Few people have seen one of these in a tree, but the Ibele Trail produced!



Friendly Fantails were friendly as usual!



Some marvelous views of White-winged Robin were had in the Snow Mountains.

Glossy-mantled Manucode ◊ *Manucodia ater* Good looks near Lake Sentani, some more at Nimbokrang.

Splendid Astrapia ◊ *Astrapia splendidissima* A handful of female-types, and a single adult male in the mountains.

Greater Lophorina ◊ (Greater Superb BoP) *Lophorina superba* We had good looks at one puffing out his costume!

Brown Sicklebill ◊ *Epimachus meyeri* Heard from distant ridges in the Snow Mountains. (H)

Pale-billed Sicklebill ◊ *Drepanornis bruijnii* Superb views of females and a partially-displaying male at Nimbokrang.

King Bird-of-paradise ◊ *Cicinnurus regius* This regal gem was observed at length at Nimbokrang.

Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise ◊ *Seleucidis melanoleucus* Another big draw in New Guinea, great views!

Lesser Bird-of-paradise ◊ *Paradisaea minor* Another star of Nimbokrang, a fantastic display on the last morning!

Black-sided Robin ◊ *Poecilodryas hypoleuca* Elusive this year, heard only at Nimbokrang. (H)

Black-throated Robin ◊ *Poecilodryas albonotata* Two perched up together in the Snow Mountains.

White-winged Robin ◊ *Peneothello sigillata* A few along the Ibele Trail down from Lake Habbema.

Slaty Robin ◊ (Blue-grey R) *Peneothello cyanus* Commonly heard in the lower Snow Mountains, seen briefly once.

Torrent Flyrobin ◊ (T Flycatcher) *Monachella muelleriana* Nice looks at this strange robin near Nimbokrang.

Canary Flyrobin ◊ (C Flycatcher) *Microeca papuana* A handful of observations in the Snow Mountains.

Garnet Robin ◊ *Eugerygone rubra* One pair performed for us well in the highlands.

Mountain Robin ◊ (Alpine R) *Petroica bivittata* A family perched nicely for us near Lake Habbema.

Greater Ground Robin ◊ *Amalocichla sclateriana* With some effort, a pair showed unbelievably well on the Ibele.

Sooty-headed Bulbul (introduced) *Pycnonotus aurigaster* Noted on Biak.

Pacific Swallow *Hirundo tahitica* Common throughout.

Island Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus poliocephalus* Some in the lower reaches of the Snow Mountains.

Numfor Leaf Warbler ◊ *Phylloscopus maforensis* This recent split was seen well on Numfor.

Papuan Grassbird ◊ (P Grass Warbler) *Cincloramphus macrurus* Two near Lake Habbema.

Golden-headed Cisticola (Bright-capped C) *Cisticola exilis* Some in the lowlands around Lake Sentani.



The confusingly-named Biak White-eye eluded us until our last day on Biak!

Biak White-eye ◊ *Zosterops mysorensis* One of the last Biak endemics to fall, but performed well in the end!

Capped White-eye ◊ *Zosterops fuscicapilla* Some around Wamena.

Metallic Starling (Shining S) *Aplonis metallica* Common in the lowlands.

Long-tailed Starling ◊ *Aplonis magna* A regular and impressive sight on Biak and Numfor.

Yellow-faced Myna ◇ *Mino dumontii* Often heard, and seen well at Nimbokrang.

Island Thrush *Turdus poliocephalus* Pleasantly common in the Snow Mountains above the treeline.

Pied Bush Chat (Pied Chat) *Saxicola caprata* Regularly observed in open grasslands.

Red-capped Flowerpecker ◇ *Dicaeum geelvinkianum* Common, seen well a few times.

Black Sunbird ◇ *Leptocoma aspasia* A regular bird of the forest edge.

Olive-backed Sunbird (Yellow-bellied S) *Cinnyris jugularis* Seen a few times in open forest.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow (introduced) *Passer montanus* Noted mainly in the Geelvink Islands.

Mountain Firetail ◇ *Oreostruthus fuliginosus* A few pairs on the way up to Lake Habbema.

Crimson Finch ◇ *Neochmia phaeton* Some of the white-bellied form around Sentani. Provenance unknown.

Great-billed Mannikin ◇ (Grand M) *Lonchura grandis* Grand looks at this grand mannikin near Lake Sentani.

Hooded Mannikin ◇ *Lonchura spectabilis* Even better looks at this cracker near Lake Sentani.

Black-breasted Mannikin ◇ *Lonchura teerinki* Seen a few times in the vicinity of Wamena. Highly restricted.

Western Alpine Mannikin ◇ (Snow Mountain M) *Lonchura montana* One big flock seen in the Snow Mountains.

Alpine Pipit ◇ *Anthus gutturalis* Regularly seen on the road around Lake Habbema.



Great-billed Mannikins were observed on multiple occasions this year!

MAMMALS

Total number of mammal species recorded: 6

Common Echymipera *Echymipera kalubu* One weak individual sadly found caught in an old snare near Nimbokrang.

Biak Glider *Petaurus biacensis* One while spotlighting on Biak.

Wild Boar (Wild Boar) *Sus scrofa* Two on the trails at Biak.

Short-finned Pilot Whale *Globicephala macrorhynchus* Small pod being hunted by an Orca on the way to Numfor.

Orca (Killer Whale) *Orcinus orca* Hunting Pilot Whales on the way to Numfor.

Indo-pacific Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops aduncus* Large pod on the return trip from Numfor.



Western Alpine Mannikins were seen very well in open grasslands of Lake Habbema!



Storms like this can turn a flat sea rough very quickly, but getting to Numfor this year was no problem for us!