



Rockjumper Birding Tours

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Papua New Guinea II

10th July - 31st July 2006



Trip Report compiled by Tour Leader David Shackelford

Top 10 list as voted by participants

1. Southern Crowned Pigeon
2. King Bird-of-paradise
3. Shovel-billed Kingfisher
4. King-of-Saxony Bird-of-paradise
5. Black Sicklebill
6. Yellow-billed Kingfisher
7. Blue Bird-of-paradise
8. Vulturine Parrot
9. Greater Sooty Owl
10. Superb Bird-of-paradise

Trip Summary

Beams of sunlight filtered through the canopy foliage, illuminating a labyrinth of red plumes arched into a veiling bouquet over its back and passionately quivering in extraordinary display. The intense golden feathers on the head were surpassed only by the glitter of emerald shimmering iridescent as the throat inflated to produce the raucous courtship call in bold excitement and exclamation. If ever a bird were to emulate a vision of beauty, the Raggiana Bird-of-paradise that was performing an intricate exhibition only a few meters above our heads would undoubtedly be the embodiment of such inspiration.

Papua New Guinea is rightfully regarded as one of the wildest yet most amazing and inspirational destinations on earth. The world's highest island, New Guinea is still almost completely carpeted by tropical rain forest spreading across imposing jagged mountains and extremely rugged territory.



Because of this densely forested and topographically forbidding territory, population groups developed in virtual isolation from each other in remote mountain valleys thereby generating hundreds of unique languages and tribal cultures. In fact, New Guinea hosts one of the world's most diverse and fascinating cultural landscapes with many inhabitants adhering still to traditional tribal customs. Papua New Guinea occupies the eastern half of this, the second largest island in the world, and

within this nation is a complex mosaic of diversely vegetated habitats giving rise to arguably the most spectacular birds on earth.

Our tour of Papua New Guinea began with some participants partaking in the pre-tour extension as we boarded our aircraft to the South Pacific islands of the Bismarck Archipelago. This volcanic series of islands is situated along the Pacific "Ring of Fire," and from our diving resort we were we were literally encircled by a chain active volcanoes periodically billowing plumes of ash-laden smoke into the atmosphere.

Venturing into the surrounding rainforest in Pokili Wildlife Management Area was quite an endeavor as we literally had to weave our footsteps around thousands upon thousands of Melanesian Scrubfowl burrows that had been dug deep into the ground to incubate clutches of eggs in the warm volcanic soil. This otherworldly experience of venturing into the heart of the largest megapode colony on earth is something that has to be experienced to be believed! In the same area we managed outstanding views of the gorgeous Black-headed Paradise-Kingfisher while Blue-eyed Cockatoos and Red-knobbed Imperial-Pigeons whizzed past acrobatically in flight over the treetops past Queen Alexandra's Birdwing Butterflies, the largest butterfly in the world with a wingspan over a foot wide! Another afternoon we were fortunate to fins the scarce New Britain Kingfisher and with persistence locate the beautiful Bismarck Woodswallow.

Boarding our sea-bound diving vessel we motored into the Bismarck Sea to explore several small remote tropical islands. As the sun's first rays reflected across the sea, playful Spinner Dolphins and impressive Short-finned Pilot-Whales greeted us with impressive leaps and breaches before we continued further out to sea finding the scarce Heinroth's Shearwater gliding effortlessly over the breaking surf. Anchoring beside the white sand beaches of Restorf Island we continued our explorations discovering the boldly attractive Beach Kingfisher and the extraordinary shaggy Nicobar Pigeon before we adorned masks and swam

through the maze of surrounding spectacular coral reef. In an underwater extravaganza of living coral we swam through the exceptionally clear turquoise water beset with every color imaginable in vivid motion from anemones to urchins, starfish to crabs, and sea lilies to parrotfish.

Returning to the capital city of Port Moresby, we continued our explorations on the narrow forested trails of Varirata National Park, impressed by the rocky eucalypt scenery and dense lowland rainforest so close to the city limits. At first light the forest came alive with vivacious song and flocks of noisy crimson Western Black-capped Lories and Eclectus Parrots flying past overhead and a secretive Dusky Pademelon bounding away into the forest like an Australian kangaroo. Although the sounds percolated through the forest interior, it took persistence and patience to obtain views of secretive denizens of the undergrowth such as the incomparable Chestnut-backed Jewel-Babbler, a Dwarf Whistler that quietly fed in a mixed flock, and the stunning Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher. *Papilio* butterflies flashed by with electric blue wings as we patiently attempted to follow the tracks of Dwarf Cassowary and the ethereal calls of Northern Scrub-Robins taunted us as we enjoyed scope views of the rarely seen Barred Owlet-Nightjar. Here we also encountered our first of several poisonous birds, the Hooded Pitohui, a member of the only bird family known to have poisonous feathers loaded with homobatrachotoxin, a chemical also found in poison dart frogs in Central America.

Traveling into more open secondary habitat surrounding the slow flowing Brown River, we obtained amazing views of gems such as Yellow-billed Kingfisher, the incomparable Common Paradise-Kingfisher, and superb views of the brilliant Emperor Fairy-Wren, a tiny blue gem secretively bounding through the



undergrowth. The coastal mangroves yielded views of Orange-footed Scrubfowl and Mangrove Robin before we retired to a remote beach at the edge of the Coral Sea for lunch listening to the sound of crashing waves and the salty breeze blowing through the palm fronds.

A visit to the manicured grounds of the Pacific Adventist University allowed us a chance to scope the nocturnal Papuan Frogmouth frozen in an a deceptively disguised daytime position, several charming White-headed Shelduck, and Comb-crested Jacana walking on lily pads with specially designed elongated toes. Here we also carefully studied the alley-shaped bower of a Fawn-breasted Bowerbird created with thousands of carefully placed sticks and decorated with particular colored fruits and leaves for decoration in hopes of attracting a mate.

Flying west close to the Irian Jaya border of Indonesia to a small settlement called Kiunga, we set out in high anticipation for what was soon to come. We were approaching one of the most famous sites in Papua New Guinea, the location where David Attenborough was ceremoniously hoisted into the treetops for awe-inspiring footage of displaying Greater and Raggiana Bird-of-paradise. Many birds-of-paradise keep traditional display trees that are used generation after generation, and as we drew near to the site we could hear a cacophony of sound echoing through the forest. After carefully approaching we took position beneath the sprawling tree and gazed skyward to behold a flurry of rhythmic displays, intricate wing mantling and vibrant golden plume posturing. One of the finest avian experiences on earth, it was spellbinding to be besieged by such a marvelous and captivating demonstration of nature's efforts to survive and compete within a species.

Departing before dawn from the bank of the expansive Fly River, we loaded into an open canoe and began our journey into the remote lowland rainforest interior. Passing by small forest villages and locals transporting materials by dugout canoes, we slowed to hear the sharp cries of an extraordinary Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise that we located displaying at the top of a conspicuously exposed Pandanus palm. Eventually we veered onto a smaller tributary and were overwhelmed by the sheer number of brightly colored parrots, pigeons and doves, and hornbills giving testimony to the pristine condition of the surrounding forest. We sat mesmerized as gaudy Palm Cockatoos flashed brilliant red cheek-patches while massive flocks of Collared Imperial Pigeons outnumbered spectacular Australian migrants such as the giant Channel-billed Cuckoo and Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher.

Our rainforest lodge built of local palms and set on stilts was very basic but offered spectacular views of the serene Elevala River that winds for miles into increasingly remote territory. The locals were eager to peer through our scopes and flip through the field guides, and in return they caught fish that they delicately cooked over open fire in the evenings after we took rainwater showers. Exploring this truly wild place was enthralling and we vigilantly persisted along the muddy forest trails finding rarely encountered gems such as the stunning Little Paradise-Kingfisher and enigmatic Hook-billed Kingfisher, the wary Blue Jewel-Babbler, the incomparable King Bird-of-paradise displaying in a tangle of vines above our heads, and with persistence and a bit of luck we managed to obtain perched views of the endangered Pesquet's (Vulturine) Parrot. A highlight of the tour materialized one calm evening while quietly scanning the river when a colossal Southern Crowned Pigeon flew in perching on a hefty tree branch extending over the water's edge. This creature is completely intrepid blue combined with deep maroon and an extravagant crest of feathers extending over its head; by far the most outrageous of all the world's pigeons and doves.



After returning to the small town of Kiunga we spent a morning staking out a section of remnant forest where we were fortunate to find a gorgeous sunset-radiant male Flame Bowerbird, a species that contends to have the brightest plumage in the world! Loading our gear into our 4x4s we set out northward along a mining road maintained to transport the vast quantities of gold and copper that are extracted from this region. Stopping at a the rapids of a hastily flowing watercourse, we scanned carefully finding white-water specialists including the petite Torrent Flycatcher and boldly patterned Torrent-lark as Great Woodswallow flew by gracefully overhead.



In the foothills of the Star Mountains we spent considerable time searching for fruiting trees in the collage of lower montane vegetation enshrouded in mist giving our surroundings a rather ethereal feel. The wind chime song of Blue-collared Parrots could be heard overhead and with careful scanning we managed to locate the Magnificent Bird-of-paradise among many other bird species and an immense Hercules Moth with amazing elongated tail steamers, the largest moth on earth. Perhaps the show was stolen in the morning before

watching gems such as Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrots and a Papuan Hanging Parrot by very rare Doria's Hawk with nesting material clung tightly in its talons fly by at eye-level!

We continued to the mining road near the Ok Tedi River where we arrived pre-dawn in search of a truly mythical species, the fantastic Shovel-billed Kingfisher. Few people have ever heard much less seen this species, and to our amazement with persistent searching through the rain we were able to obtain unbelievable scope views of what is probably the most difficult kingfisher in the world! The surrounding forest was alive with song and the harsh screams of the Magnificent Riflebird pierced the air continuously throughout the morning as we birded through the forest interior riddled with limestone sinkholes. Our final great bird of the day was a brief but memorable encounter with the very secretive Greater Melampitta, a very challenging representative of a phenomenal twenty-five species of birds-of-paradise encountered on the mainland tour!

We bid a goodbye to the humidity and heat of the lowlands and set off by small aircraft to a picturesque lodge nestled in the mountain forests of the Central Ranges over 9,000 feet above sea level. Even from the wooden balcony we marveled at the active fruit feeding tray teeming with ornamental birds such as the complexly patterned Brown Sicklebill that gives a startlingly loud machinegun-like call and the brightly colored Brehm's Tiger-Parrot among many others.

Innumerable varieties of mosses, bromeliads, and orchids presented the feeling of a natural wonderland as the surrounding stunted forest enveloped us during our explorations. Consequently, Papua New Guinea hosts more species of orchids than any other nation in the world! Through a series of waterfalls and steep scenic cliffs we found such birds as the aloof Mountain Firetail, appropriately named Ornate Melidectes, and with persistence we tracked down a phenomenally the Crested Bird-of-paradise and gorgeous Crested Berrypecker. Following the fern-laden walkways adjoining the lodge with persistence we eventually tracked down a pair of the extraordinary Mountain Owlet-Nightjar of which we approached with the use of spotlight to within only a few feet for incredible photographic opportunities. Later while exploring a remote forest patch where we located the stately Gurney's Eagle and range restricted Yellow-breasted Bowerbird I was surprised to hear an unexpected call reverberating through the forest. Further investigations brought us face to face with a very unexpected find, a new site for the previously unrecorded Lesser Bird-of-paradise!

Our final mainland destination was to the Central Highlands of the Tari Valley. Spread below us during the



flight we were privileged to gaze down upon one of the largest expanses of tropical forest on earth surpassed only by the Congo Basin of Ituri and the vast lowlands of Amazonia. Landing on a dirt runway, there were literally hundreds of local people who had come to watch the spectacle of an airplane landing in the village. Men wearing traditional grass coverings, cassowary bones for protection, and bird-of-paradise plumes placed in their hair greeted us and assisted us transporting our luggage to our off-road vehicle. Making our way along a horribly muddy and potholed road, it was fascinating to see the steep sun-baked mud walls surrounding properties and

graves of respected ancestors still well kept from generations past.

Arriving at our excellently located lodge, we had breathtaking views of the surrounding montane forest featuring heavy growth of bryophytes and mosses. Even nearby the lodge itself we were fortunate to find the gorgeous Princess Stephanie's *Astrapia* displaying its spectacular tail plumes from a prominent perch, the unique and boldly marked Mountain Peltops, and the highly sought-after but bizarre male Wattled Ploughbill feeding cooperatively for extended views.

Ascending into the steep highlands almost to where the tree line ends near the mountain pass we continued our search for some of the most spectacular birds on earth including the outrageous King-of-Saxony Bird-of-paradise sporting unbelievable elaborate head plumes that it brandishes in earnest while uttering energetic display songs. Here we crept carefully along the densely forested trails thick with bamboo finding the secretive Northern Logrunner listening to the songs of the Spotted Jewel-Babbler as well as more conspicuous birds such as the dazzling Blue Bird-of-paradise and later the Ribbon-tailed *Astrapia* that supports white tail feathers over three times the length of its own body - proportionally the longest streamers of any bird in the world! Lunch was enjoyed looking out over the undulating grasslands of the spectacular Tari mountain pass while smart Papuan Harriers cruised by.

It wasn't until the mid-1800s that European traders and missionaries began to settle in New Guinea, and even then the highland region, thought to be inhospitable, wasn't explored until the 1930s. Here in remote mountain valleys brave explorers in search of gold discovered people living in fertile mountain valleys with cultures surviving unchanged for countless centuries. Even as we walked along muddy paths through one of the villages we could see people wearing traditional dress, tending their gardens and pigs, and building their bush material huts. Here we spent an incredible few hours with the Huli Wigmen, famous for their elaborate and colorful dress demonstrating their great admiration for the birds-of-paradise. In an intimate ceremonial dance we watched the men spectacularly adorned with elaborate wigs of feathers, flowers and cuscus fur performing while looking skyward with decorated faces painted with yellow ochre clay. Branches of leaves were positioned behind each man to form a tail plume and vines with brightly colored berries and forest beads were hung from the arms and ankles in an astonishing festival of dynamic color and rhythmic beating drums.

In the Tari Valley we carefully stalked a vocalizing Lawe's Parotia that sported a set of impressive head rackets shimmering lively in the morning sunlight and successfully staked out the bower of the rarely seen McGregor's Bowerbird. Black Sicklebills displaying conspicuously on a forested crest with a sudden rigid flexing of wings over the head was a pleasure to witness in the wild and we were fortunate to find the localized Greater Sooty Owl that we scoped for an extended period of time near a roost cavity.

We tallied an incredible 414 bird species, one of the highest totals of any PNG tour ever. Most of the 25 birds-of-paradise that we enjoyed included full-plumaged males with nearly half performing spectacular courtship displays! Other prominent bird groups with many stunning species included parrots, honeyeaters, doves, and kingfishers. From poisonous birds and giant butterflies to ornamented tribesmen and displaying birds-of-paradise, Papua New Guinea is undoubtedly one of the most fascinating destinations on earth.

Photo Credits: Southern Crowned Pigeon, Huli Wigmen, Raggiana Bird-of-paradise, Crested Berrypecker King-of-Saxony Bird-of-paradise, Montane Rainforest Scenery, All photos by David Shackelford

Annotated Species List

Codes: NG – endemic to New Guinea, PNG – endemic to Papua New Guinea, NB – endemic to New Britain, BA – endemic to the Bismarck Archipelago, NE – near endemic to New Guinea

BIRDS

Cassowaries *Casuariidae*

(Southern Cassowary NE) (*Casuarius casuarius*)
Tracks and scats seen in the Elevala River area. Not counted in the trip total, of course.
(Dwarf Cassowary NE) (*Casuarius casuarius*)
We only saw signs and tracks of this denizen of the forest in Varirata National Park.

Grebes *Podicipedidae*

Australasian Grebe (*Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*)
Up to twelve in the Port Moresby area: at PAU, Varirata, and near Brown River.

Shearwaters & Petrels *Procellariidae*

Heinroth's Shearwater NE (*Puffinus heinrothi*)
One of this seldom-seen species was seen by four of us on the Bismarck Sea boat trip.

Boobies & Gannets *Sulidae*

Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*)
Three on the Bismarck Sea boat trip.

Cormorants *Phalacrocoracidae*

Little Black Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*)
Up to 50 daily in the Port Moresby area at Pacific Adventist University and Brown River.
Little Pied Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*)
Up to ten daily in the Port Moresby area at PAU and Brown River.

Anhinga & Darters *Anhingidae*

Darter (*Anhinga melanogaster*)
Three at Brown River with singles later on the Elevala River.
Taxonomic note: Race *A. m. novaehollandiae* is usually split as Australasian Darter, occurring from Australia, New Guinea and Wallacea.

Frigatebirds *Fregatidae*

Lesser Frigatebird (*Fregata ariel*)
Twenty far offshore Walindi were apparently this species, as confirmed by the 35 on the Bismarck Sea boat trip there the next day. Also five seen at the Hsui Mangroves.

Herons, Egrets & Bitterns Ardeidae**Great Egret***Ardea alba*

Up to 20 around Port Moresby and small numbers around Kiunga.

Taxonomic note: The nominate Old World Great Egret may be split from the New World *A. a. egretta* which would become American Egret. This split is as yet not recognised by Clements.

Pied Heron*Egretta picata*

Up to 10 birds per day around Port Moresby: at PAU and the nearby rice paddies.

Intermediate Egret*Egretta intermedia*

Up to 10 per day around Port Moresby and small numbers around Kiunga.

Taxonomic note: This group may be split into 3 species, Yellow-billed Egret *E. brachyrhyncha*, Plumed Egret *E. plumifera* (which is what we recorded in PNG) and the nominate Intermediate Egret. This split is as yet not recognised by Clements.

Little Egret*Egretta garzetta*

Single birds at Brown River.

Pacific Reef-Heron*Egretta sacra*

Single dark morph birds on Timor and Restorf islands.

Cattle Egret*Bubulcus ibis*

Up to 150 daily in the Port Moresby area.

Taxonomic note: This group may be split into 2 species, the nominate Common Cattle Egret and the Asian/Australasian Eastern Cattle Egret *E. coromanda*. This split is as yet not recognised by Clements.

Rufous (Nankeen) Night-Heron*Nycticorax caledonicus*

Up to 15 at Pacific Adventist University and Brown River; eight were seen on New Britain, including pre-dawn on the paved highway, where they apparently eat road-killed frogs.

Black Bittern*Ixobrychus flavicollis*

On New Britain, one flushed by the owling site and one scoped closely from the Kulu River Bridge.

Ibises & Spoonbills Threskiornithidae**Australian (White) Ibis***Threskiornis molucca*

Up to 15 per day in the Port Moresby area: at PAU and Brown River.

Ducks, Geese & Swans Anatidae**Spotted Whistling-Duck***Dendrocygna guttata*

Eight were seen in their roost at Pacific Adventist University. Two were seen from the Kulu River Bridge.

Wandering Whistling-Duck*Dendrocygna arcuata*

About 40 were at Pacific Adventist University.

Radjah Shelduck*Tadorna radjah*

We scoped a pair roosting at the PAU and later we encountered another of this attractive waterfowl species near the Brown River.

Green Pygmy-goose*Nettapus pulchellus*

Over 50 were on the lake near Vanapa trans-Brown River and one was at Pacific Adventist University. A distinctive and beautiful little duck.

Gray Teal*Anas gracilis*

Two picked out amongst the many Pacific Black Ducks at Pacific Adventist University.

Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa*

Up to 70 at Pacific Adventist University; four on New Britain.

Osprey Pandionidae

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

A pair flying over an island off the tip of the Willaumez Peninsula of New Britain on our boat trip.

Hawks, Eagles & Kites Accipitridae

Pacific Baza (Crested Hawk) *Aviceda subcristata*

Seen almost daily in the Kiunga-Tabubil area, with up to five daily along the Elevala River; up to four seen per day on New Britain.

Long-tailed Honey-buzzard E *Henicopernis longicauda*

Seen most days in the Kiunga-Tabubil region in small numbers.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

Up to 25 daily in the Mt. Hagen area; singles near Port Moresby and between Kinuga and Tabubil.

Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus*

Up to 15 were near Brown River with several more sightings in the Port Moresby region on other days.

Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus*

Common everywhere in the New Guinea and New Britain lowlands, with up to 20 near Brown River and daily on New Britain.

White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*

Three at Mora Mora and pairs on Timor and Restorf Island and later three on the Fly River.

Eastern [Papuan] Marsh-Harrier *Circus spilonotus*

Singles various days at the Brown River, Tari Gap, and at Mt. Hagen Airport.

Taxonomic note: Race *C. s. spilothorax* is sometimes considered a full species, Papuan Marsh-Harrier.

Variable Goshawk *Accipiter hiogaster*

From one to three seen on most days in the Port Moresby-Varirata and Kiunga-Tabubil regions including one stunning white-phase. Up to eight were seen daily on New Britain.

Brown Goshawk *Accipiter fasciatus*

A total of two birds in Tari Valley.

Gray-headed Goshawk NG *Accipiter poliocephalus*

Several sightings in the area from Kiunga to Ekame Lodge and once from the Ok Ma Road.

Collared Sparrowhawk *Accipiter cirrocephalus*

One bird seen in the Port Moresby region near Varirata.

New Britain Sparrowhawk NB *Accipiter brachyurus*

One flew to a perch and remained there as we watched it in the fading light during our drive to Walindi on the day we arrived. Any of New Britain's endemic raptors is a prize during a brief visit.

Doria's Goshawk NG *Megatriorchis doriae*

We had excellent views of this rare species flying over the Elevala River and later amazingly we saw another individual carrying nesting material over Dablin Creek Road, Tabubil.

Gurney's Eagle *Aquila gurneyi*

We had prolonged scope views of this stout raptor soaring above a ridge near Mount Hagen.

Little Eagle *Hieraaetus morphnoides*

We enjoyed our first sighting from Varirata National Park with three subsequent sightings in the Kiunga

area.

Falcons & Caracaras *Falconidae*

Australian Kestrel

Falco cenchroides

A single bird scoped on the aviation tower during a plane stopover en route to Kiunga.

Australian Hobby

Falco longipennis

One individual seen soaring over the Brown River area.

Brown Falcon

Falco berigora

Excellent scope views of this species in the Tari Valley while searching for Greater Sooty Owl.

Peregrine Falcon

Falco peregrinus

An immature was eating a chicken high in a tree along the highway east of Kimbe, New Britain. This bird, presumably of the resident subspecies *ernesti*, initially confused us as it showed little of the expected ventral streaking but it was clearly too large and powerful to be a hobby.

Megapodes *Megapodiidae*

Black-billed (Yellow-legged) Brush-turkey NG *Talegalla fuscirostris*

Heard at Varirata and Ekame Lodge on several days and seen briefly on a forest trail adjacent the Elevala River. Nest mounds were also seen at Varirata National Park.

Melanesian (Volcano) Scrubfowl NE

Megapodius eremita

Always a highlight of our visit to New Britain is the vast nesting colony at Pokili Wildlife Management Area. Thousands of birds lay their eggs in the warm soil in this hot springs area that covers many hectares! The entire area is riddled with nest burrows. Just walking through a portion of the colony, we flushed many adults and had many great views of these strange birds skulking in the trees.

Orange-footed Scrubfowl

Megapodius reinwardt

We had scope views of a single bird that flushed from the ground while exploring the Hsui Mangroves.

Pheasants & Partridges *Phasianidae*

Brown Quail

Coturnix ypsilophora

Up to fifteen were seen on the road to Tari Gap.

Rails, Gallinules & Coots *Rallidae*

Buff-banded Rail

Gallirallus philippensis

One walked into an opening at the PAU with subsequent views en route to Tabubil and in the Tari Valley.

Red-necked Crake

Rallina tricolor

A bird calling at dusk from across the Elevala River.

White-browed Crake

Porzana cinerea

From the Kulu River Bridge in New Britain, a cooperative pair was scoped.

Purple Swamphen

Porphyrio porphyrio

Common around Port Moresby, with up to 30 seen daily from Pacific Adventist University to Vanapa, trans-Brown River.

Taxonomic note: This cosmopolitan species is currently in taxonomic review and several forms are expected to be recognised as distinct species. The form we recorded might then become Black-winged

Swamphen *P. melanopterus*. Other forms to be recognised may include Indian Swamphen *P. poliocephalus*, Philippine Swamphen *P. pulverulentus* and Eastern Swamphen *P. melanotus*.

Dusky Moorhen*Gallinula tenebrosa*

Locally common around Port Moresby, with moderate numbers seen from Pacific Adventist University to Vanapa, trans-Brown River.

Jacanas Jacanidae**Comb-crested Jacana***Irediparra gallinacea*

Two at Pacific Adventist University, an attractive species.

Plovers & Lapwings Charadriidae**Masked Lapwing***Vanellus miles*

Common in the Port Moresby lowlands, with up to 10 daily along roads, fields, and wetlands.

Little Ringed Plover*Charadrius dubius*

Three seen at Kilometer 120 near Tabubil, a distinct resident subspecies strikingly different from the more widespread migrant.

Sandpipers & Allies Scolopacidae**Whimbrel***Numenius phaeopus*

Five were at Garu Beach and Walindi Resort, both on New Britain.

Far Eastern Curlew*Numenius madagascariensis*

One flying high over Garu Forest was a surprise sighting.

Common Sandpiper*Actitis hypoleucos*

Five were at Walindi Resort.

Terns Sternidae**Great Crested Tern***Sterna bergii*

About 50 were day roosting on the reefs off Garu Beach and Walindi Resort; fifteen were tallied on our boat trip on the Bismarck Sea the next day.

Common Tern*Sterna hirundo*

One was at Walindi Resort; four were seen on the Bismarck Sea boat trip the next day. These were young birds overwintering from the Asian population *longipennis*, in which adult birds have a black bill even when breeding.

Bridled Tern*Sterna anaethetus*

One on our boat trip on the Bismarck Sea was initially riding flotsam and then flushed away.

Black Noddy*Anous minutus*

One hundred unidentified noddies were foraging far offshore Garu Beach. On the Bismarck Sea boat trip the next day, 25 of 26 noddies were Black Noddies.

Brown Noddy*Anous stolidus*

One individual was flying with the largest flock of Black Noddies during our Bismarck Sea boat trip.

Pigeons & Doves Columbidae

- Rock Pigeon (Dove)** *Columba livia*
Several were around the Port Moresby airport and at the airport in Mount Hagen.
- Metallic Pigeon** *Columba vitiensis*
Two birds were seen along the Boystown Road in flight showing the distinctive stark white throat.
- Slender-billed [Brown] Cuckoo-Dove** *Macropygia amboinensis*
Widespread, with small numbers first seen at Varirata and thereafter throughout the tour.
- Black-billed Cuckoo-Dove NG** *Macropygia nigrirostris*
Several flight views in the Tari Valley and at Mount Hagen.
- Mackinlay's Cuckoo-Dove** *Macropygia mackinlayi*
One bird seen in flight on Timor Island and three seen better on Restorf Island, in Kimbe Bay. This is one of the small-island specialist species.
- Great Cuckoo-Dove NE** *Reinwardtoena reinwardtii*
Four sightings at Tari and three scoped at length at the Ok Ma Power Station en route to Tabubil.
- Stephan's Dove** *Chalcophaps stephani*
Fly-bys at Boystown Road and in the forest near Ekame Lodge, and very good views of five on the road at Pokili in New Britain.
- Peaceful Dove NE** *Geopelia placida*
Up to fifteen at Pacific Adventist University and a few others near Port Moresby.
- Bar-shouldered Dove** *Geopelia humeralis*
One at Pacific Adventist University and one en route to the Hsui Mangroves. Very local in New Guinea.
- Nicobar Pigeon** *Caloenas nicobarica*
Eight of this highly sought-after, unique pigeon gave us many merry chases within the forest on Restorf Island, but eventually all pursuers got good views of this elusive small-island specialist, a real prize.
- Bronze Ground-Dove** *Gallicolumba beccarii*
One bird seen briefly by some along a forest trail in the Tari Valley.
- Thick-billed Ground-Pigeon NG** *Trugon terrestris*
Heard along one of the Elevala River forest trails.
- Southern Crowned-Pigeon NG** *Goura scheepmakeri*
One of the trip highlights was the superb views that we enjoyed of this amazing bird! All were along the Elevala River. We had great views during daylight during our boat ride to the lodge followed by fantastic scope views from the lodge itself! A total of seven sightings, this was voted the number one bird of the trip almost unanimously.
- Wompoo (Magnificent) Fruit-Dove** *Ptilinopus magnificus*
A dozen seen well at Varirata feeding in a fruiting tree with scattered sightings in lowland forests thereafter.
- Pink-spotted Fruit-Dove NG** *Ptilinopus perlatus*
Up to 20 daily in the Kiunga – Elevala River area with smaller numbers at Varirata.
- Ornate Fruit-Dove NG** *Ptilinopus ornatus*
First seen along the Brown River with several more scoped from the Elevala River.
- Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove NG** *Ptilinopus aurantiifrons*
We were fortunate while scoping a tree full of fruit-doves near a fruiting tree on the Elevala River to pick up a single individual of this scarce species.
- Superb Fruit-Dove** *Ptilinopus superbus*
Singles heard and seen around Varirata, Ekame Lodge, and daily around Tabubil.
- Coroneted Fruit-Dove NG** *Ptilinopus coronulatus*

We had brief scope views of a pair along the Brown River.

Beautiful Fruit-Dove NG *Ptilinopus pulchellus*

Singles seen at Varirata, Ekame Lodge, and Tabubil.

White-breasted Fruit-Dove NE *Ptilinopus rivoli*

Two seen well along a forest trail near the Tari Gap, represented the mainland New Guinea form with a purple belly and yellow surrounded by white on its breast.

Yellow-bibbed Fruit-Dove NE *Ptilinopus solomonensis*

Three seen on Timor Island as we viewed from the boat. This is another small-island specialist.

Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove NG *Ptilinopus iozonus*

Common in the New Guinea lowlands of Kiunga and Port Moresby, with up to 15 daily near Kiunga and in the Brown River area.

Knob-billed Fruit-Dove BA *Ptilinopus insolitus*

We totaled four birds on New Britain. Although it was initially just seen as a fly-by at Garu Forest, eventually we all rejoiced at great scope views of this species hooting trans-Kulu River.

Dwarf Fruit-Dove NG *Ptilinopus nanus*

First seen at length feeding on a fruiting tree in Varirata followed by great scope views of seven from the Ekame Lodge.

Red-knobbed (Knob-billed) Imperial-Pigeon NE *Ducula rubricera*

Abundant on New Britain, with maximums of 80 at Mora Mora and Pokili and 60 at various sites the next day. Clements and others use the name Red-knobbed instead of Knob-billed because six species of imperial-pigeons have a knobbed bill, but only this species has a red knob.

Purple-tailed Imperial-Pigeon NG *Ducula rufigaster*

Several individuals seen and more heard inside the forest along the Elevala River.

Rufescent Imperial-Pigeon NG *Ducula chalconota*

Prolonged views of a cooperative pair inside the forest at Varirata were a surprise for this normally high altitude species.

Finsch's Imperial-Pigeon NG *Ducula finschii*

One flyby inside Poliki Wildlife Management Area on New Britain.

Island (Gray) Imperial-Pigeon NE *Ducula pistrinaria*

About 60 were swarming all over both Timor and Restorf islands during our Bismarck Sea boat trip. This species found east of New Guinea is often called Gray Imperial-Pigeon but that name belongs to another, quite similar species found from the southern Philippines to north Borneo and Sulawesi.

Pinon Imperial-Pigeon NG *Ducula pinon*

Up to 20 seen daily in the Kiunga – Elevala River region with others scoped brilliantly at Brown River.

Collared (Black-collared) Imperial-Pigeon NG *Ducula mullerii*

Abundant along the Elevala and Fly rivers, with 150 estimated on our initial trip along both rivers and smaller numbers the next two days. As lowland rainforest along rivers is its optimum habitat, boat trips on these rivers are the easy way to see many of this species.

Zoe Imperial-Pigeon NG *Ducula zoeae*

Heard daily in the Kiunga, Elevala River, Tabubil, and Brown River areas with small numbers seen daily.

Torresian Imperial-Pigeon NE *Ducula spilorrhoea*

One of the nominate form flew over the Brown River area. On New Britain we had the strikingly yellowish-creamy form that may be split in the future as **Yellowish-tinted Imperial-Pigeon** *D. subflavescens*. We had eight at Pokili and two trans-Kulu River.

Papuan Mountain-Pigeon NE *Gymnophaps albertisii*

Typically, flocks flashed overhead on whooshing wings both in lowlands and highlands. They were

commonest from Kiunga to Tabubil, with the highest total being 80 in a single day.

Cockatoos & Allies *Cacatuidae*

Palm Cockatoo NE

Probosciger aterrimus

One or two seen and heard daily in the Kiunga – Elevala River region and both days at Ok Ma, and we had incredible views along the Elevala River. This is a mind-blowing bird when first encountered and it never becomes boring.

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo

Cacatua galerita

Encountered in the Port Moresby and Kiunga – Elevala River areas with up to 15 seen in a single day.

Blue-eyed Cockatoo NB

Cacatua ophthalmica

Pleasingly common on New Britain, with 30 at Mora Mora and Pokili being the maximum count.

Parrots, Macaws & Allies *Psittacidae*

Yellow-streaked (Greater Streaked) Lory NG *Chalcopsitta sintillata*

We enjoyed several sightings of this attractive species first perched at the Brown River, several flybys in the Kiunga – Tabubil region, and excellent perched views on a forest trail adjacent the Elevala River.

Dusky Lory NG

Pseudeos fuscata

We had two individuals fly by while exploring the secondary forest remnants of the Brown River.

Rainbow Lorikeet

Trichoglossus haematodus

Common and widespread in the lowlands, with the highest numbers being 60 in the Port Moresby area.

Goldie's Lorikeet NG

Psitteuteles goldiei

High flocks flying over at the Kumul Lodge, later we enjoyed excellent perched views in the Tari Area.

Purple-bellied (Eastern Black-capped) Lory PNG

Lorius hypoinochrous

Common on New Britain, with a maximum of 50, when we had many fine views of this beautiful bird nectaring.

(Western) Black-capped Lory NG

Lorius lory

Up to ten birds per day at Varirata, Kiunga, Elevala River, Tabubil, and Brown River.

Striated Lorikeet NG

Charmosyna multistriata

We had a vocal pair fly over us at the Dablin Creek Road.

Red-flanked Lorikeet NE

Charmosyna placentis

Regular sightings at Boystown Road and Brown River with perched scope views along the Ok ma Road in Tabubil. As usual, more numerous on New Britain with up to 200 at Garu Forest.

Papuan Lorikeet NG

Charmosyna papou

Excellent views at the Kumul Lodge, where dark morph birds predominate with further views in the Tari Valley. One of the world's most beautiful parrots!

Plum-faced (Whiskered) Lorikeet NG

Oreopsittacus arfaki

Excellent scope views of feeding birds near the Kumul Lodge with brief views thereafter near the Tari Gap.

Yellow-billed Lorikeet NG

Neopsittacus musschenbroekii

Up to 10 birds daily at Kumul Lodge and in the Ambua Lodge area.

Orange-billed Lorikeet NG

Neopsittacus pullicauda

Only a single sighting at the Kumul Lodge.

Pesquet's (Vulturine) Parrot NG

Psitttrichas fulgidus

Often called Vulturine Parrot but a South American species has that name. Usually difficult to see well, we had satisfying flight views which were overshadowed by excellent scope views of three perched

individuals!

Yellow-capped Pygmy-Parrot NE

Micropsitta keiensis

Flybys in the Kiunga to Ekame Lodge later with excellent perched views of a feeding individual.

Buff-faced Pygmy-Parrot NG

Micropsitta pusio

We also had scope views of seven in one dead tree at Garu Forest in New Britain.

Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrot NE

Micropsitta bruijnii

A single individual seen well feeding on a tree limb at the Dablin Creek Road.

Orange-breasted Fig-Parrot NG

Clycopsitta gulielmitertii

Up to 25 birds every day in the Kiunga – Elevala River – Tabubil region.

Double-eyed Fig-Parrot NE

Clycopsitta diophthalma

Seen nearly daily in the Kiunga region, with four on the Elevala River being the maximum.

Large Fig-Parrot NG

Psittaculirostris desmarestii

A pair perched and scoped while boating along the Elevala River.

Painted Tiger-Parrot NG

Psittacella picta

One seen by many along a forest trail in the Tari area. The field guide color plate has the labels for male and female transposed for this species.

Brehm's Tiger-Parrot NG

Psittacella brehmii

Up to five daily at Kumul Lodge, most often feeding obligingly on the fruit at the bird feeder. This is the largest and most-common tiger-parrot but it is always charming to watch.

Madarasz's Tiger-Parrot NG

Psittacella madaraszii

We first encountered this species along the Dablin Creek Road where we scoped an individual and later we were treated to incredible scope views of a female at no more than 25 feet away!

Red-cheeked Parrot NE

Geoffroyus geoffroyi

Common at Varirata and in the Kiunga – Elevala River area, with up to 25 birds seen daily; smaller numbers at Brown River and PAU.

Blue-collared Parrot NG

Geoffroyus simplex

What this bird did not provide in views – flocks flying high against and even into the clouds – it granted in its delightful voice – musical “wind chimes” cascading down from the heavens throughout or days at Dablin Creek Road. A remarkable, joyful sound! We estimated up to 8 birds.

Eclectus Parrot NE

Eclectus roratus

Common and seen daily in numbers up to 15 in the Kiunga – Elevala River – Tabubil region; six at Brown River. This bird is much more abundant on New Britain, where we estimated 100 on each of our birding days on land.

Papuan King-Parrot NG

Alisterus chloropterus

Several of these spectacular parrots were seen in Tari Valley over two days.

Papuan Hanging-Parrot NG

Loriculus aurantiifrons

We were very fortunate to obtain scope views of this tiny but distinctive species on the Dablin Creek Road near Tabubil.

Green-fronted (Bismarck) Hanging-Parrot BA *Loriculus tener*

A flock of four flying past Mora Mora were seen by some. This species would better be named Green-rumped Hanging-Parrot, as several hanging-parrots have green fronts but all other species except this one have red rumps.

Cuckoos Cuculidae

Brush Cuckoo

Cacomantis variolosus

The two main songs of this cuckoo were heard on most days in the lowlands and the lower portions of the montane valleys and we had scattered sightings throughout the tour.

Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo NE *Cacomantis castaneiventris*

Several heard throughout the tour and excellent close scope views were obtained along the Boystown Road.

Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cacomantis flabelliformis*

This Australian migrant was heard in the Tari Valley while searching for the Greater Sooty Owl.

Shining Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx lucidus*

This migrant from Australia and New Zealand was scoped trans-Kulu River in New Britain.

White-eared Bronze-Cuckoo NG *Chrysococcyx meyeri*

Five birds were seen well along the Dablin Creek Road with a further sighting at Ok Ma.

Rufous-throated Bronze-Cuckoo NG *Chrysococcyx ruficollis*

A single bird scoped at length and others heard near the tree line in the Tari Gap.

Little Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx minutillus*

Two were seen very well at Varirata our first afternoon.

Taxonomic note: This species is often split into two species, the northern Malay Bronze-Cuckoo *C. peninsularis* and the nominate and southern Gould's Bronze-Cuckoo. The form we saw this year represented the former grouping.

White-crowned Koel NG *Caliechthrus leucolophus*

We had a single bird working in a mixed feeding flock along a forest trail near Ekame Lodge.

Dwarf Koel NG *Microdynamis parva*

We enjoyed incredible views of this species feeding at a fruiting tree in Varirata National Park followed by views at Dablin Creek Road, Tabubil.

Asian Koel *Eudynamis scolopacea*

This species was heard several times and seen by some in New Britain.

Australian Koel *Eudynamis cyanocephala*

From two to five were seen and heard daily in the Kiunga – Elevala River area.

Channel-billed Cuckoo *Scythrops novaehollandiae*

We saw up to seven individuals daily of this spectacular giant along the Elevala River; this cuckoo is a brood parasite of crows.

Violaceous Coucal BA *Centropus violaceus*

Five were seen and others heard in our two days on mainland New Britain.

Greater Black Coucal NG *Centropus menbeki*

We regularly heard several calling along the Elevala River, especially in the evening around Ekame Lodge and had a brief view of an individual flying from one dense clump of vines to another.

Pied (White-necked) Coucal BA *Centropus ateralbus*

About eleven individuals in small groups were seen, and others heard, in our two days on mainland New Britain. Even in this small sample, a variety of plumage patterns was represented.

Pheasant Coucal *Centropus phasianinus*

Up to nine seen daily in the Port Moresby - Varirata region.

Lesser Black Coucal NG *Centropus bernsteini*

Singles heard near Kiunga and the Elevala River and alter one seen running across the road at Ok Ma, Tabubil.

Barn Owls *Tytonidae*

Greater Sooty-Owl NE *Tyto tenebricosa*

After trying two other Tari Valley roost trees without success, the villagers reconstructed the fallen bridge to the same tree that produced for us last year and again one bird was flushed from its roost tree cavity for our viewing. As it paused on the lip of the cavity, the view was more prolonged than some. We also heard this owl at night by Ekame Lodge.

Australasian Grass-Owl *Tyto longimembris*

One and possibly two birds seen flying alongside the vehicle before dawn while we traveled through open grassland near secondary growth en route to Varirata NP.

Typical Owls *Strigidae*

Jungle Hawk-Owl (Papuan Boobook) NG *Ninox theomacha*

We heard this chocolate-colored owl at several locations throughout the tour and had spotlight views on the Boystown Road and again on the Ok Ma Road with a further silhouette in the Tari Valley.

New Britain Hawk-Owl NG *Ninox variegata*

We heard this species calling in an isolated forest patch near our accommodation during the New Britain extension.

Owlet-Nightjars *Aegothelidae*

Mountain Owlet-Nightjar NG *Aegotheles albertisi*

After some persistent searching, two vocalizing birds were seen at close range at the Kumul Lodge of both the gray and rufous phase.

Barred Owlet-Nightjar NG *Aegotheles bennettii*

We observed one individual peering from its roost tree cavity at Varirata National Park.

Frogmouths *Podargidae*

Marbled Frogmouth NE *Podargus ocellatus*

Two birds were lit up in the spotlight nicely during the evening boat ride at the Ekame Lodge of both the rufous and gray phase. Later we had an individual on the day roost in the Tari Valley.

Papuan Frogmouth NE *Podargus papuensis*

A magnificent trio was found roosting together in large shade trees at Pacific Adventist University and were scoped in intimate detail.

Nightjars & Allies *Caprimulgidae*

White-throated Nightjar *Eurostopodus mystacalis*

We were fortunate to see a single bird on the entry road to Varirata National Park, an Australian migrant.

Papuan Nightjar NG *Eurostopodus papuensis*

After brief views of two near the Boystown Road, we had excellent prolonged views of a single bird feeding at dusk along the Elevela River.

Archbold's (Mountain) Nightjar NG *Eurostopodus archboldi*

Seen at close range in the spotlight from the roof at Kumul Lodge. We later had another individual on the road en route to the Tari Gap.

Large-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus macrurus*

One was seen on the road in Varirata National Park at dawn with others heard near the Warili Lodge.

Swifts Apodidae**Glossy Swiftlet***Aerodramus esculenta*

Up to 100 birds estimated daily in the hills and mountains from Varirata National Park and Tabubil up to Tari Gap and Kumul Lodge. Most entertaining when it darts between members of our group!

Mountain Swiftlet NG*Aerodramus hirundinaceus*

Up to 50 daily in the Tari Gap – Ambua Lodge area.

White-rumped Swiftlet*Aerodramus spodiopygius*

A swarming flock of 200 at the Kulu River Bridge gave us great views from all angles as many flew right below us as we stood on the bridge.

Uniform Swiftlet*Aerodramus vanikorensis*

On the mainland of New Guinea, up to 100 per day were seen in the lowlands and hills, with high numbers on the boat rides between Kiunga and Ekame Lodge.

Papuan Needletail (New Guinea Spine-tailed) NG*Mearnsia novaeguineae*

From ten to twenty-five seen most days in the Kiunga – Elevala River area.

Treeswifts Hemiprocnidae**Moustached Treeswift NE***Hemiproctne mystacea*

About a half-a-dozen sightings of this sublime bird delighted us on mainland New Guinea, at Varirata and Elevala River. On New Britain we had up to fifteen each day.

Kingfishers Alcedinidae**Common Kingfisher***Alcedo atthis*

A single bird was seen perched in a rice paddy in the Port Moresby area and four were seen on New Britain at Garu Beach, Walindi Resort, and at the Kulu River Bridge.

Azure Kingfisher*Alcedo azurea*

One seen very well at the river crossing in Varirata National Park.

Variable (Dwarf) Kingfisher*Ceyx lepidus*

One of this little gem was seen in Varirata National Park. Four birds seen on New Britain represented that island's endemic form that is larger, darker-colored, has a thicker dark red bill, and may be split as a separate species in the future.

Blue-winged Kookaburra*Dacelo leachii*

One bird was seen at length in Varirata with another at the Brown River. One of the largest kingfishers, with a truly massive bill!

Rufous-bellied Kookaburra NG*Dacelo gaudichaud*

Frequently heard and seen regularly in small numbers especially in the Kiunga – Elevala River area. A striking bird, even for a kingfisher.

Shovel-billed Kookaburra NG*Clytoceyx rex*

We made two pre-dawn forays to Ok Ma near Tabubil, primarily for this species. It was quite vocal calling through the dense foliage and with persistence we managed to obtain amazing scope views for everyone for several minutes! An absolutely killer bird with an enormous bill!

Forest Kingfisher*Todirhamphus macleayii*

We saw two birds along the road at the Brown River.

New Britain (White-mantled) Kingfisher NB*Todirhamphus albonotatus*

After much search, we scoped a pair perched high on an open branch bordering one of the clearings trans-Kulu River. As these two birds departed the branch and returned, they turned all sides to us.

Collared Kingfisher*Todirhamphus chloris*

One was Garu Beach, where it was one of three species of kingfishers. Further sightings of three birds were had at the Hsui Mangroves.

Beach (White-headed) Kingfisher NE*Todirhamphus saurophaga*

One on Timor Island and a pair on Restorf Island gave us good views. This is a specialist of island shores.

Sacred Kingfisher*Todirhamphus sanctus*

This common wintering bird from Australia was widespread and frequently seen in the lowlands of both New Guinea and New Britain.

Hook-billed Kingfisher NG*Melidora macrorrhina*

We heard individuals calling each day near Kiunga and along the Elevala River, mostly in the usual crepuscular timing. One bird immediately responded to a recording and we managed multiple prolonged scope views of this secretive kingfisher!

Yellow-billed Kingfisher NE*Syma torotoro*

A total of three birds seen and many more heard at Varirata, Brown River, and on the forest trails near Ekame Lodge.

Mountain Kingfisher (Mountain Yellow-billed) NG*Syma megarhyncha*

Two birds seen at length although high in the canopy in the Tari Valley.

Little Paradise-Kingfisher NG*Tanysiptera hydrocharis*

A single bird was scoped at length on a forest trail adjacent the Elevala River.

Common Paradise-Kingfisher NE*Tanysiptera galatea*

We had great scope views of several birds seen near Brown River.

Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher PNG*Tanysiptera danae*

We scoped one bird nicely in the forest off the Boundary Track in Varirata National Park.

Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher NE*Tanysiptera sylvia*

After some work, we all obtained scope views of at least one of the three birds seen in and near the huge colony of Melanesian Scrubfowl at Pokili, New Britain. This form sometimes split as **Black-headed Paradise-Kingfisher** is unique to New Britain and is a standout even among the spectacular paradise-kingfishers! We later found the nominate form of this species in a mixed flock along the forest trails near the Elevala River.

Taxonomic note: The nigriceps race of the Bismarck Archipelago is likely to be split off as Black-headed Paradise-Kingfisher.

Bee-eaters Meropidae**Rainbow Bee-eater***Merops ornatus*

Up to 25 per day were seen in the Port Moresby area.

Typical Rollers Coraciidae**Dollarbird***Eurystomus orientalis*

Most abundant along the Fly and Elevala rivers, where up to 40 per day were estimated; lesser numbers seen at Brown River, PAU, and New Britain.

Hornbills Bucerotidae**Blyth's Hornbill NE***Aceros plicatus*

Up to 30 hornbills per day were seen along the Elevala and Fly rivers; we saw a total of ten on mainland New Britain. It is good to see that this vulnerable bird is still common in such places.

Pittas Pittidae**Hooded Pitta***Pitta sordida*

We heard from one to four birds daily in the Elevala River – Kiunga area; and most of us had excellent views near the Ekame Lodge.

Red-bellied Pitta (Blue-breasted)*Pitta erythrogaster*

Two were heard along the Elevala River.

Swallows Hirundinidae**Pacific Swallow***Hirundo tahitica*

This is the common swallow of the region and it is very widespread; we had small numbers up to 25 per day throughout the lowlands and in the montane valleys.

Tree Martin*Hirundo tahitica*

We found this Australian migrant in the Brown River area where we estimated 20 individuals.

Wagtails & Pipits Motacillidae**Australasian Pipit***Anthus novaeseelandiae*

We saw three birds in the Tari Gap grasslands.

Alpine Pipit NG*Anthus novaeseelandiae*

After extensive walking through the grasslands in the Tari Gap we were very fortunate to flush a single bird that allowed for relatively prolonged but distant views.

Cuckoo-shrikes Campephagidae**Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike***Coracina novaehollandiae*

This Australian migrant was only seen at Varirata where we had two individuals.

Stout-billed Cuckoo-shrike NG*Coracina caeruleogrisea*

Among New Guinea's cuckoo-shrikes, of which we saw all twelve possible species, this large bird is particularly impressive. We saw one well at Varirata and up to three each day in the Tabubil area.

Yellow-eyed Cuckoo-shrike*Coracina lineata*

In Varirata we heard and later saw four birds.

Boyer's Cuckoo-shrike NG*Coracina boyeri*

We had small numbers throughout the lowlands with daily encounters of several birds near the Ekame Lodge.

White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike*Coracina papuensis*

Up to ten were seen in Varirata and the Brown River area.

Hooded Cuckoo-shrike NG*Coracina longicauda*

Two individuals of this striking cuckoo-shrike were seen from the Ambua Lodge.

Cicadabird*Coracina tenuirostris*

We had a pair in Varirata and later a female along the main road near the Brown River. See all of the geographic forms of Cicadabird that you can, as many have a possibility of being split.

Papuan (Black-shouldered) Cuckoo-shrike NG *Coracina incerta*

Seen only at Dablin Creek Road, Tabubil, where we saw a pair.

Gray-headed (Black-tipped) Cuckoo-shrike NG *Coracina schisticeps*

Seen in good numbers, daily encounters from Ekame Lodge and Kiunga through Tabubil.

New Guinea (Black) Cuckoo-shrike NG *Coracina melas*

A pair first observed in Varirata with a female later being seen in the Kiunga area.

Black-bellied Cuckoo-shrike NG *Coracina montana*

The very distinctive male-female antiphonal duet was heard first at Mount Hagen and later we had sightings at the King-of-Saxony Bird-of-paradise site below Kumul Lodge and many more cooperative individuals in the Tri area.

Golden Cuckoo-shrike NG *Campochaera sloetii*

We had up to three per day along the Elevala River and around Tabubil, a stunning species.

Varied Triller *Lalage leucomela*

We found this bird almost daily in the lowlands and hills, usually in pairs, and saw a maximum of ten birds on New Britain.

Thrushes & Allies Turdidae**Island Thrush***Turdus poliocephalus*

Up to seven daily at Kumul Lodge with another sighting in the Tari Gap.

Cisticolas & Allies Cisticolidae**Golden-headed Cisticola***Cisticola exilis*

We had five individuals near the Brown River area.

Old World Warblers Sylviidae**Island Leaf-Warbler NE***Phylloscopus poliocephalus*

We had from five to ten daily in the Tari Valley and scattered sightings at Mount Hagen.

Tawny Grassbird*Megalurus timoriensis*

Up to ten in the tall grass along the Tari Gap road and others heard at the Warili Lodge.

Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae**Pied Bushchat***Saxicola caprata*

Seen daily in small numbers throughout the tour from Port Moresby through the Tari and Mt. Hagen regions.

Fantails Rhipiduridae**Northern Fantail***Rhipidura rufiventris*

First found at the Brown River and later seen at Tabubil on the Dablin Creek Road where we had a

cooperative pair.

Willie Wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys*

Very widespread, being seen almost daily throughout the trip.

Friendly Fantail NG *Rhipidura albolimbata*

Delightfully common in the highlands, with up to ten per day around both Kumul and Tari.

Chestnut-bellied Fantail NG *Rhipidura hyperythra*

Five birds were seen at Varirata National Park associating with mixed feeding flocks.

Sooty Thicket-Fantail NG *Rhipidura threnothorax*

Heard several times in Varirata and Kilometer 17 near Kiunga before we all had outstanding views near the Ekame Lodge.

Black Thicket-Fantail NG *Rhipidura maculipectus*

We heard this species at the Brown River area and eventually everyone had unprecedented scope views of this uncommon skulky species!

White-bellied Thicket-Fantail NG *Rhipidura leucothorax*

One bird was seen along the Brown River and others heard at scattered lowland sites thereafter.

Black Fantail NG *Rhipidura atra*

First observed at Mount Hagen and later several sightings of this charismatic species in the Tari areas.

Mangrove Fantail *Rhipidura phasiana*

Heard at the Hsui Mangroves and some people had brief views.

Dimorphic Fantail NG *Rhipidura brachyrhyncha*

The pale morph (pale gray tail) was seen well at the King-of-Saxony Bird-of-paradise site at Mount Hagen and later the dark morph (bicolor tail) was seen in the Tari Valley.

Rufous-backed Fantail NG *Rhipidura rufidorsa*

One was seen near the Ekame Lodge and later another individual was found in the Tabubil area.

Monarch Flycatchers *Monarchidae*

Black Monarch (Fantail Monarch) NG *Monarcha axillaris*

We saw two at Ambua Lodge which allowed for prolonged views.

Island Monarch *Monarcha cinerascens*

We saw a pair in the forest on Restorf Island. As its name implies, this is one of the small-island specialists.

Black-winged Monarch NE *Monarcha frater*

One at Dablin Creek Road associating with a mixed feeding flock.

Black-faced Monarch *Monarcha melanopsis*

One sighting at Varirata National Park with a further sighting at the Brown River.

Spot-winged Monarch NG *Monarcha guttulus*

Several were seen at Varirata and two more were found along the Elevala River forest.

Hooded Monarch NG *Monarcha manadensis*

This species was only heard along the Elevala River.

Black-tailed [Bismarck Pied] Monarch NG *Monarcha verticalis*

A single bird seen briefly but well by some during a forest walk during the New Britain extension.

Golden Monarch NG *Monarcha chrysomela*

Single males were seen well along the Elevala River, a beautiful species.

Frilled Monarch NG *Arses telescopthalmus*

Impressive male-female pairs were found at Varirata, Dablin Creek Road, and Brown River, and along the

Elevala River.

Taxonomic note: The Australian A. t. *lorealis* has now been raised to full species status as Frill-necked Monarch, making the Frilled Monarch a New Guinea endemic.

Leaden Flycatcher *Myiagra rubecula*

A single individual of this Australian migrant was found at Varirata.

Shining Flycatcher *Myiagra alecto*

First seen at the Brwon River, this species was most common alongside water, giving us daily totals of five or six birds seen along the Elevala River, with others heard.

Dull (Lesser Shining) Flycatcher BA *Myiagra hebetior*

A male was seen in one of the trans-Kulu River clearings on New Britain and another male was on Restorf Island.

Black-breasted Boatbill NG *Machaerirhynchus nigripectus*

Usually a male-female pair was seen nearly every day in the highlands of Tari and Kumul Lodge. This is always an eye-pleaser.

Yellow-breasted Boatbill NG *Machaerirhynchus flaviventer*

We had scattered sightings in mixed feeding flocks in Varirata and again in the Kiunga area.

Australasian Robins *Petroicidae*

Lesser Ground-Robin NG *Amalocichla incerta*

One was heard from the road near the tree line in the Tari Gap, but it did not vocalize again after we entered the forest.

Torrent Flycatcher NG *Monachella muelleriana*

We scoped four from the Ok Menga Hydroelectric Plant near Tabubil.

Lemon-bellied Flycatcher *Microeca flavigaster*

We saw two birds in the savanna along the entrance road to Varirata National Park.

Yellow-legged Flycatcher *Microeca griseocephala*

We encountered a single bird on the Boundary Track in Varirata National Park.

Olive Flyrobin NG *Microeca flavovirescens*

A single bird was scoped along a forested track near Tabubil.

Canary Flycatcher NG *Microeca papuana*

We enjoyed several sightings of this cute bird throughout the highlands with highest numbers in the forests surrounding the Tari Gap.

Garnet Robin NG *Eugeryone rubra*

A single bird was seen briefly inside a feeding flock in the canopy of the forest in the Tari Gap.

White-faced Robin *Tregellasia leucops*

An individual was seen by some of us in Varirata National Park but did not stay long enough for everyone to obtain views.

Mangrove Robin *Eopsaltria leucops*

We had a pair respond actively to imitations of its calls to within ten feet of where we were standing in the Hsui Mangroves.

Black-sided Robin NG *Poecilodryas hypoleuca*

Up to three were heard along the Elevala River and we called in and saw the bird singing behind Ekame Lodge.

Black-throated Robin NG *Poecilodryas albonotata*

Two birds were seen near the Kumul Lodge including an individual that perched on one of our scopes!

White-winged Robin NG*Peneothello sigillatus*

Four to five birds were seen every day around Kumul Lodge.

White-rumped Robin NG*Peneothello bimaculatus*

A single bird was seen flying across the Dablin Creek Road with others being heard but unresponsive.

Blue-gray Robin NG*Peneothello cyanus*

Up to five birds were seen around Tari area each day compared to our previous brief views along the King-of-Saxony Bird-of-paradise forest near Kumul Lodge.

Ashy Robin NG*Heteromyias albispecularis*

We heard this bird calling along a forested trail near the Tari Gap but it would not respond to playback.

Northern Scrub-Robin NE*Drymodes superciliaris*

This ground skulker was heard on the Circuit Track of Varirata.

Whistlers & Allies *Pachycephalidae***Mottled Whistler NG***Rhagologus leucostigma*

The female of this species was scoped on the Dablin Creek Road but soon after disappeared not to be relocated.

Dwarf Whistler NG*Pachycare flavogrisea*

Two individuals were seen associating with mixed feeding flocks in Varirata National Park, a very attractive species.

Rufous-naped Whistler NG*Aleadryas rufinucha*

This distinctive whistler was seen several times in the highlands around the Kumul Lodge with another sighting later in the Tari area.

Rusty Whistler NG*Pachycephala hyperythra*

One was seen in Varirata NP. This is the southeastern race that is much more dull-colored than those in central New Guinea.

Brown-backed Whistler PNG*Pachycephala modesta*

We encountered this whistler almost daily in the highlands, with a high count of three birds seen in the Tari area on several days.

Gray-headed [Gray] Whistler NE*Pachycephala griseiceps*

This species was seen at Varirata with a further sighting at Tabubil.

Sclater's Whistler NG*Pachycephala soror*

We had several sightings of this species, with up to five individuals per day in the Tari area and a single bird on the Dablin Creek Road, Tabubil.

Black-tailed Whistler*Pachycephala melanura*

One female was at Pokili and three were on Restorf Island. Normally a small-island and mangrove specialist, this whistler also occurs inland on the Bismarcks.

Regent Whistler NG*Pachycephala schlegelii*

Several birds were seen in the Tari area and in the vicinity of the Kumul Lodge and nearby King-of-Saxony Bird-of-paradise site.

Black-headed Whistler NG*Pachycephala monacha*

A pair was seen in the Tari Valley while searching for the Greater Sooty Owl.

White-bellied Whistler NG*Pachycephala leucogastra*

We were fortunate to see one bird along the Brown River Road.

Rufous (Little) Shrike-Thrush*Colluricincla megarhyncha*

We noted mostly single birds at Varirata, in Tari Valley, near Kiunga, Elevala River, and both areas around

Tabubil.

Gray Shrike-Thrush

Colluricincla harmonica

Three birds were seen at length along the Brown River area. This bird's melodious scientific name is appropriate.

Hooded Pitohui NG

Pitohui dichrous

From seven to five individuals at Varirata National Park and Dablin Creek Road, Tabubil. This aposematically colored bird is the traditional "poison-bird" as it was the first bird species discovered to possess poisonous compounds.

White-bellied Pitohui NG

Pitohui incertus

We encountered three flocks along the Elevala River, once inside the forest and once lured across the river itself by our recording. Typically, they responded vigorously but remained shy.

Rusty Pitohui NG

Pitohui ferrugineus

A single bird was seen and others heard at Kilometer 17 near Kiunga.

Variable Pitohui NG

Pitohui kirhocephalus

Only one bird was seen in the Kiunga region with others heard in the vicinity. This is a brown-hooded subspecies.

Black Pitohui NG

Pitohui nigrescens

A male was seen briefly near Kumul Lodge.

Wattled Ploughbill NG

Eulacestoma nigropectus

After extensive searching we were fortunate to have extended views of a cracking male cooperatively feeding for extended views.

Pseudo-babblers Pomatosromidae

New Guinea (Rufous) Babbler NG

Pomatostomus isidorei

We heard several in the Elevala area and had views of up to seven birds along Kilometer 17 north of Kiunga.

Logrunners Orthonychidae

Northern Logrunner NG

Orthonyx novaeguineae

We initially glimpsed this species along a forested trail near the Tari Gap and with persistence many of us were able to obtain outstanding views of this shy retiring species recently split from the more cooperative Southern Logrunner of eastern Australia.

Whipbirds & Quail-thrushes Cinclosomatidae

Papuan Whipbird NG

Androphaobus viridis

We were very fortunate to obtain scope views of a female of this very rarely encountered species while scanning along the forested edge below the Tari Gap.

Painted Quail-thrush NG

Cinclosoma ajax

Singles were heard at Varirata and some were fortunate to have a female flush from the trail in front of us.

Chestnut-backed Jewel-babbler NG

Ptilorrhoa castanonota

With persistence at Varirata many of us were able to get extremely close views of a vocal and responsive individual.

Spotted Jewel-babbler NG

Ptilorrhoa leucosticta

Despite our efforts we only heard this species calling through several forest sites in the Tari area.

Blue Jewel-babbler NG *Ptilorrhoa caerulescens*

We had simply amazing repeated views of this gorgeous bird responding to imitations and playback along an Elevala forested trail.

Blue-capped Ifrita NG *Ifrita kowaldi*

We had from two to eight individuals daily in the Tari area. This is another of the “poison-birds” and is believed to be the most poisonous of them all. In any case, it is a unique bird with an electric blue crown.

Fairywrens *Maluridae*

Orange-crowned Fairywren NG *Clytomyias insignis*

Several birds were glimpsed in the forest at the King-of-Saxony Bird-of-paradise site where we found a noisy flock.

Wallace’s Fairywren NG *Sipodotus wallacii*

Several birds were heard both at KM 17 near Kiunga and again at the Elevala River and some were fortunate to have views near the Ekame Lodge.

White-shouldered Fairywren NG *Malurus alboscapulatus*

Widespread in both lowland and highland grasses, in groups up to six or more. Encountered at Varirata, Tari Valley, Dablin Creek Road, and Brown River.

Emperor Fairywren NG *Malurus cyanocephalus*

We had great studies of a trio inside a forest patch at Brown River with further sightings near Kiunga. An absolutely glowing blue bird.

Thornbills & Allies *Acanthizidae*

Rusty Mouse-Warbler NG *Crateroscelis murina*

Heard daily at both Varirata National Park and Tabubil and several were seen well at both sites.

Bicolored Mouse-Warbler NG *Crateroscelis nigrorufa*

An unexpected surprise, while watching the King-of-Saxony Bird-of-paradise display along a forested trail near the Kumul Lodge we were fortunate to have a single individual hop onto a nearby fallen log providing some with exceptional views of this under recorded species.

Mountain Mouse-Warbler NG *Crateroscelis robusta*

Heard both at Tari and Kumul lodges and seen very well eventually by everyone at both locations.

Large Scrubwren NG *Sericornis nouhuysi*

Seen almost daily in the Tari highlands and surroundings of Kumul Lodge with up to eight in a single day.

Buff-faced Scrubwren NG *Sericornis perspicillatus*

Up to at least five seen almost every day around Tari and Kumul lodges.

Papuan Scrubwren NG *Sericornis papuensis*

Up to at least ten seen most days in the Tari highlands.

Gray-green Scrubwren NG *Sericornis arfakianus*

A single bird was seen well foraging in a mixed flock group of various scrubwrens allowing for close comparisons.

Pale-billed Scrubwren NG *Sericornis spilodera*

Three distinctive individuals were found foraging in mixed feeding flocks in Varirata National Park.

Papuan Thornbill NG *Acanthiza murina*

A single individual was seen well foraging near the tree line at the Tari Gap.

Mountain (Gray) Gerygone NG*Gerygone cinerea*

Recorded almost daily in the Tari highlands, with up to three per day.

Green-backed Gerygone NE*Gerygone chloronotus*

Its distinctive song was heard many times in the lowlands from Varirata to Tabubil. A total of six birds were seen throughout this time.

Fairy Gerygone*Gerygone palpebrosa*

Two separate sightings were had of this Australian species in Varirata National Park.

Yellow-bellied Gerygone NG*Gerygone chrysogaster*

Several were seen on both visits to Varirata with further sightings along the Elevala River.

Large-billed Gerygone*Gerygone magnirostris*

We had two separate sightings of this species in the vegetation along the Elevala River.

Brown-breasted (Rufous-breasted) Gerygone NG*Gerygone ruficollis*

We heard and saw this bird almost every day in the highlands, with up to four seen and many more heard in a day. Its song is one of the beautiful and characteristic sounds of the montane forest.

Mangrove Gerygone NG*Gerygone levigaster*

We encountered three individuals in the Hsui Mangroves.

Australasian Treecreepers Climacteridae**Papuan Treecreeper NG***Cormobates placens*

The cryptic behavior and plumage made it a challenge and we only heard this species in a large mixed flock in the Tari highlands.

Sunbirds & Spiderhunters Nectariniidae**Black Sunbird***Leptocoma sericea*

We saw up to twenty birds nearly every day in the lowlands and hills from Kiunga, Elevala River, and Tabubil to Port Moresby.

Olive-backed (Yellow-bellied) Sunbird*Cinnyris jugularis*

Seen much less than the previous species, we saw eight total at Brown River.

Berrypeckers & Longbills Melanocharitidae**Obscure Berrypecker NG***Melanocharis arfakiana*

The Tabubil area again produced this enigmatic species, which was almost unknown until discovered to be regular at this site. One was scoped along the Dablin Creek Road.

Black Berrypecker NG*Melanocharis nigra*

Five birds were seen at Varirata National Park with another three birds along the Elevala River area.

Lemon-breasted (Mid-mountain) Berrypecker NG*Melanocharis longicauda*

A female was studied on forest edge below the Tari Gap.

Fan-tailed Berrypecker NG*Melanocharis versteri*

Several birds were seen in the Kumul Lodge region and close studies were had again in the Tari highlands with up to four in a day.

Spotted Berrypecker NG*Melanocharis crassirostris*

We had a close up view of a male while trying to get looks at a nearby Northern Logrunner in the Tari highlands.

Yellow-bellied Longbill NG*Toxorhamphus novaeguineae*

A total of three birds were seen along the Elevala River.

Slaty-chinned Longbill NG*Toxorhamphus poliopterus*

One was heard in the forest below Warili Lodge but we were concentrating on the Macgregor's Bowerbird.

Dwarf Honeyeater NG*Toxorhamphus iliolophus*

Two birds were seen at Varirata and two more at Dablin Creek Road.

Pygmy Honeyeater NG*Toxorhamphus pygmaeum*

Singles of this tiny bird were at Varirata, along the Elevala River, and at Ok Ma.

Painted Berrypeckers *Paramythiidae***Tit Berrypecker NG***Oreocharis arfaki*

We first encountered this species at Mount Hagen with poor views but later in the Tari Valley everyone was saturated with over fifty birds feeding in front of us throughout the morning.

Crested Berrypecker NG*Paramythia montium*

We had a plethora of superb views of this stunning painted Berrypecker at the Kumul Lodge. It is hard to tire of this beautiful bird.

Flowerpeckers *Dicaeidae***Red-capped [Papuan] Flowerpecker NG***Dicaeum geelvinkianum*

Widespread in small numbers throughout the lowlands and hills, with five at Varirata the maximum.

Taxonomic note: This species has been split from the former Papuan Flowerpecker *D. pectorale*.

Red-banded (Bismarck) Flowerpecker BA*Dicaeum eximium*

Up to twelve were seen per day on New Britain.

White-eyes *Zosteropidae***Black-fronted White-eye NG***Zosterops minor*

Several were seen at Varirata NP and up to ten were in mixed flocks with Capped White-eyes at Dablin Creek Road, Tabubil.

Capped (Western Mountain) White-eye NG*Zosterops fuscicapillus*

Up to ten were seen with Black-fronted White-eyes at Dablin Creek Road, Tabubil.

New Guinea White-eye NG*Zosterops novaeguineae*

Eight individual were estimated in the valley below Kumul Lodge.

Honeyeaters *Meliphagidae***Long-billed Honeyeater NG***Melilestes megarhynchus*

Small numbers were encountered of this distinctive honeyeater on most days from the Elevala River to Tabubil.

Green-backed Honeyeater NE*Glycichaera fallax*

One was scoped at length along Ok Ma, Tabubil.

Silver-eared Honeyeater NG*Lichmera indistincta*

Two were seen well at Brown River.

Red-throated (Ruby-throated) Myzomela NG*Myzomela eques*

Two along the Elevala River with another male sighted at the Boystown Road.

Ashy Myzomela BA *Myzomela cineracea*

Up to twenty per day were seen on New Britain.

Black Myzomela NG *Myzomela negrita*

Three birds were scoped at the edge of the forest at Varirata National Park.

Scarlet-bibbed (Sclater's) Myzomela BA *Myzomela sclateri*

More than twenty were seen on the three small islands visited on our Bismarck Sea boat trip. This small honeyeater is endemic to islands (mostly small ones) offshore the main Bismarck Islands.

Ebony (Bismarck Black) Myzomela BA *Myzomela pammelaena*

From the boat we saw two on Timor Island, well out in Kimbe Bay, Bismarck Sea. This species generally inhabits only the more remote small islands offshore the main Bismarck Islands and only recently was it found to inhabit Timor Island.

Black-bellied (New Britain Red-headed) Myzomela NB *Myzomela erythromelas*

Up to twelve individuals of this pretty little myzomela were seen each day on mainland New Britain.

Red-collared Myzomela NG *Myzomela rosenbergii*

Up to three per day were seen in the Tari region and Kumul Lodge vicinity. This is another eye-pleaser.

Spot-breasted Meliphaga NG *Meliphaga mimikae*

A single bird was seen well feeding at a fruiting tree at Varirata National Park.

Mountain Meliphaga NG *Meliphaga orientalis*

Sighted almost daily in the highlands with a high of up to eight birds one day near Kumul Lodge.

Scrub (Scrub White-eared) Honeyeater NG *Meliphaga albonotata*

We had several sightings of this distinctive honeyeater on the Elevala River and Kiunga to Tabubil.

Puff-backed Honeyeater (Meliphaga) NG *Meliphaga aruensis*

Two birds seen at close distance at Varirata where we had a pair feeding on a fruiting tree.

Mimic Honeyeater (Meliphaga) NG *Meliphaga analoga*

Seen throughout the lowlands in small numbers daily with our first sightings from Varirata National Park.

Graceful Honeyeater (Meliphaga) NE *Meliphaga gracilis*

A single bird seen feeding on a fruiting tree in Varirata National Park.

Yellow-gaped Honeyeater NE *Meliphaga flavirictus*

One bird was seen well along the Elevala River.

Black-throated Honeyeater NG *Lichenostomus subfrenatus*

We heard this species in the Tari Gap and Kumul Lodge areas, and had extended views of one bird below Kumul Lodge.

Obscure Honeyeater NG *Lichenostomus obscurus*

We had a single bird seen at Kilometer 17 and later we had another sighting near Tabubil.

Yellow-tinted Honeyeater *Lichenostomus flavensis*

We found a pair of this delightful species otherwise confined to northern Australia.

Tawny-breasted Honeyeater NE *Xanthotis flaviventer*

We had almost daily sightings of this familiar species from Kiunga to Tabubil with a high number of twelve in a single day at Boystown Road.

Spotted Honeyeater NG *Xanthotis polygramma*

Seen only in the Tabubil area, with three at Ok Ma and three at Dablin Creek Road.

White-throated Honeyeater *Melithreptus albogularis*

We had three birds in the savanna along the Varirata National Park entrance road.

Plain Honeyeater NG *Pycnopygius ixoides*

Two individuals were scoped near Kiunga.

Marbled Honeyeater NG*Pycnopygius cinereus*

Two were first seen near the Kumul Lodge with excellent scope views later in the Tari Valley near the Blue Bird-of-paradise site.

Streak-headed Honeyeater NG*Pycnopygius stictocephalus*

Pairs and singles were seen at Boystown Road, Kiunga, and at Dablin Creek Road, Tabubil.

Meyer's Friarbird NG*Philemon meyeri*

We had excellent scope views of a single individual at Boystown Road.

Helmeted [New Guinea] Friarbird*Philemon buceroides*

Common in the New Guinea lowlands and recorded almost daily in numbers up to over twelve daily in the Port Moresby area.

New Britain Friarbird NB*Philemon cockerelli*

Up to twenty per day on mainland New Britain.

Rufous-backed Honeyeater PNG*Ptiloprora guisei*

Up to ten daily around the Tari highlands. More common at lower elevations than the following species.

Black-backed (Gray-streaked) Honeyeater NG*Ptiloprora perstriata*

Most common high where we found up to ten daily around Kumul Lodge and smaller numbers at the Tari Gap.

Belford's Melidectes NG*Melidectes belfordi*

Most common high where we found up to twenty daily around Kumul Lodge. Seen in good numbers later in the Tari Gap

Yellow-browed Melidectes NG*Melidectes rufocrissalis*

Mostly below the elevation zone dominated by Belford's. Some showed signs of introgressive hybridization from Belford's, as is common in this region. Daily numbers of about ten were seen in the Tari Valley.

Ornate Melidectes NG*Melidectes torquatus*

Two of these gems were first seen on the Dablin Creek Road near Tabubil and later we had another sighting at the Lesser Bird-of-paradise site near Mount Hagen.

(Common) Smoky Honeyeater NG*Melipotes fumigatus*

Common in the high mountains, with up to twenty daily at Kumul Lodge and in the Tari Valley. The Kumul Lodge bird feeder provided many opportunities for close views of their faces blushing from yellow to red and back again, often in odd blotchy patterns.

Rufous-banded Honeyeater NE*Conopophila albogularis*

Two birds were seen at the Pacific Adventist University.

Old World Orioles Oriolidae**Brown Oriole NG***Oriolus szalayi*

We noted small numbers seen daily in the Port Moresby and Tabubil regions.

Green Figbird*Sphecotheres viridis*

We saw about fifteen birds at the Pacific Adventist University and later up to twenty five near the Hsui Mangroves.

Shrikes Laniidae**Long-tailed Shrike***Lanius schach*

We found several along the roads near Kumul Lodge with smaller numbers at the Tari Gap.

Drongos Dicruridae**Papuan (Mountain) Drongo NG***Chaetorhynchus papuensis*

We were fortunate to find a single bird in the forest at Varirata.

Spangled Drongo*Dicrurus bracteatus*

We saw and heard about four or five on most days in the lowlands of both New Guinea and New Britain.

Mudnest Builders Callaeidae**Torrent-lark NG***Grallina bruijni*

One pair that we scoped upriver from the Ok Menga Hydroelectric Plant near Tabubil provided prolonged scope views.

Woodswallows Artamidae**Great Woodswallow NG***Artamus maximus*

Up to a dozen daily from Ambua Lodge into the Tari Valley with other sightings near the Kumul Lodge and at the Ok Menga Hydroelectric Plant.

White-breasted Woodswallow*Artamus leucorhynchus*

Up to ten in the Port Moresby area.

Bismarck (White-backed) Woodswallow BA*Artamus insignis*

After we did not find this special bird at the usual clearing near Ismin in the trans-Kulu River area, a local man directed us to another clearing where we scoped a brilliant pair. Considered the most beautiful of all the woodswallows, this bird is rendered all the more striking by its narrow white eyering.

Bellmagpies & Allies Cracticidae**Mountain Peltops NG***Peltops montanus*

Four were scoped at Dablin Creek Road with another sighting in the Tari highlands.

Lowland Peltops NG*Peltops blainvillii*

Single birds were seen at the Brown River and on the Elevala River.

Black-backed Butcherbird NE*Cracticus mentalis*

Up to four per day at the Pacific Adventist University and Varirata savanna.

Hooded Butcherbird NG*Cracticus cassicus*

Conspicuous at Varirata, around Kiunga, along the Elevala River, and along the Kiunga-Tabubil road.

Black Butcherbird*Cracticus quoyi*

Two seen well near Tabubil followed by a subsequent sighting in the Tari highlands.

Birds-of-Paradise Paradisaeidae**Loria's Bird-of-paradise NG***Cnemophilus loriae*

We scoped a male calling from open perches along the road above Ambua Lodge and later saw two females foraging in the forest.

Crested Bird-of-paradise NG*Cnemophilus macgregorii*

At Kumul Lodge we saw two females and briefly a single male feeding at a fruiting tree not but twenty feet

away for excellent views.

Glossy-mantled Manucode NG

Manucodia atra

We had good numbers of this vocal species near Kiunga, especially along the Elevala River where we identified up to six birds in a single day.

Crinkle-collared Manucode NG

Manucodia chalybata

We had prolonged scope views of a single individual near Kiunga followed by two birds the following day.

Trumpet Manucode NE

Manucodia keraudrenii

Several birds were scoped while puffing-calling at Kilometer 17 and later at Boystown Road.

Short-tailed Paradigalla NG

Paradigalla brevicauda

We first had this species fly over the road for brief views followed by a wait in the garden across from Ambua Lodge where we were rewarded by scope views of one bird perched cooperatively several minutes near a nest tree.

Ribbon-tailed Astrapia PNG

Astrapia mayeri

We enjoyed up to ten individuals of this species per day at Kumul Lodge. Although the many females and subadult males visiting the bird feeder at Kumul Lodge were most welcome, it was the full-tailed adult males later in the Tari highlands that really made a lasting impression. The adult males have the longest tail in proportion to body size of any bird in the world! This PNG endemic has a very limited range and was the last recognized species of bird-of-paradise to be discovered (in 1938).

Princess Stephanie's Astrapia PNG

Astrapia stephaniae

We had amazing scope views of gorgeous male along the road on the way up to the Tari Gap.

Carola's Parotia NG

Parotia carolae

We had good views of two females at Dablin Creek Road, Tabubil.

Lawes' Parotia PNG

Parotia lawesii

Early morning scoping from the road below Warili Lodge produced awesome views of a beautiful adult male.

King-of-Saxony Bird-of-paradise NG

Pteridophora alberti

This unique and spectacular bird was voted one of the best birds of the trip, and several adult males performed a great "semaphore" display as we scoped individuals both below the Kumul Lodge and again several times in the Tari Valley. This indescribable bird must be seen to be believed!

Magnificent Riflebird NE

Ptiloris magnificus

We had excellent views of a calling individual at Varirata National Park. This is the gruff-voiced form split by many as **Eastern Riflebird**. We heard males of the clear-voiced nominate form three times in the Kiunga area but it was at Ok Ma, Tabubil, where some of us finally saw this shy species.

Taxonomic note: The eastern race *P. [m.] intercedens* is sometimes split as Eastern Riflebird.

Superb Bird-of-paradise NG

Lophorina superba

We first scoped females in the forest near the Kumul Lodge and later that morning we encountered our first displaying male. Later in the Tari highlands we had another male nicely showing its bizarre plumage, with iridescent blue breast shield, amazing nuchal cape, and facial tufts, as they preened or advertised with their harsh calls.

Black Sicklebill NG

Epimachus fastuosus

Early morning scoping from the road below Warili Lodge revealed two adult males, and we could clearly see one male displaying by raising his pectoral fans and holding himself horizontal on one side. This is the largest of all birds-of-paradise, reaching a length of 44 inches (1.1m)!

Brown Sicklebill NG

Epimachus meyeri

This was a most entertaining feeder bird at Kumul Lodge, with daily totals of up to six females and sub

adult males. At the nearby King-of-Saxony Bird-of-paradise site, an adult male's "jackhammer burst" calls could be heard inside the forest. We later had great scope views of an adult male in display in the Tari highlands.

Magnificent Bird-of-paradise NG

Cicinnurus magnificus

We saw up to two females at Dablin Creek Road and two females at Ok Ma, Tabubil.

King Bird-of-paradise NG

Cicinnurus regius

We encountered this smallest of birds-of-paradise first near Kiunga where we saw a female. Later along the Elevala River we had a glorious adult male faithfully residing in the canopy of his display tree. Our views of this gleaming red-orange gem with green tail rackets propelled it to be voted one of the top ten birds of the trip.

Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise NG

Seleucidis melanoleuca

The very strange adult male Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise kept his early morning appointment as he repeatedly perched on his display snags to show all his glory beside the Fly River.

Greater Bird-of-paradise NG

Paradisaea apoda

The spectacular courtship displays by numerous gorgeous adult males at Kilometer 17, in both the tree near the gate and the "Attenborough Tree," were scoped at length. Here we witnessed several full dance sequences leading to copulations. It was nice to be able to visit twice to experience this amazing natural phenomenon. We estimated up to twenty birds to be present. Elsewhere in the Kiunga area we saw a few additional females.

Raggiana Bird-of-paradise PNG

Paradisaea raggiana

We first encountered the national bird of Papua New Guinea in Varirata National Park, when at least eighteen individuals were seen, and others heard, both scattered and visiting the lek off the Varirata Lookout road. There we sat quietly under the display trees and waited until two wary adult males returned to court. We also saw one adult male performing his courtship dances among the Greater Birds-of-paradise in the Attenborough lek tree at Kilometer 17. We saw and heard small numbers along the Elevala River and around Kiunga, plus we heard one in Tari Valley.

Lesser Bird-of-paradise PNG

Paradisaea minor

A very pleasant unexpected surprise, while exploring a remote forest patch in the Mount Hagen area I was surprised to hear an unexpected call reverberating through the forest. Further investigations brought us face to face with a very unexpected find, a new site for the previously unrecorded Lesser Bird-of-paradise! We found five individuals including three females, one immature male, and one stunning adult male.

Blue Bird-of-paradise PNG

Paradisaea rudolphi

We had absolutely amazing views that filled the scope of a cooperative male as it called in a very nearby tree in the Tari Valley. This PNG endemic is one of the most desired of all birds-of-paradise.

Lesser Melampitta NG

Melampitta lugubris

After persistent scanning, a cooperative individual actually hopped out onto the open trail allowing for everyone to get amazing views. After that day in the Tari Valley we encountered another two birds that some participants were able to see. The current edition of the Clements checklist classifies the melampittas as aberrant birds-of-paradise.

Greater Melampitta NG

Melampitta gigantea

A loudly calling bird at Ok Ma, Tabubil, reacted very aggressively to playback after we bush whacked our way into careful position at the top of a vertical bluff of limestone. Several participants obtained rare views of this seldom-encountered species.

Bowerbirds *Ptilonorhynchidae*

White-eared Catbird NG

Ailureodus buccoides

We heard this species calling at Kilometer 17 near Kiunga but only managed brief glimpses before it disappeared high in the canopy.

Macgregor's Bowerbird NG

Amblyornis macgregoriae

After carefully watching an active bower in the Tari Valley, we were rewarded with excellent views of a beautiful male complete with an orange mane extending down the back of the head.

Flame Bowerbird NG

Sericulus aureus

We had numerous views of this amazing species both along the Boystown Road where we saw two glorious males and three females and again along the Elevala River where another male flew over our boat. We also scoped a female at length in a fruiting tree along the Elevala River. This is perhaps the brightest plumaged bird in the entire world! We later visited the bower of this species.

Yellow-breasted Bowerbird NG

Chlamydera lauterbachii

In the valley below Kumul Lodge we were fortunate to find a pair of this very local bowerbird.

Fawn-breasted Bowerbird NE

Chlamydera cerviniventris

We found up to four individuals at the Pacific Adventist University including a highlight that morning inspecting a very nice bower, an amazingly constructed courtship building. In some ways, the bowerbirds are even more outstanding than the birds-of-paradise!

Crows, Jays & Magpies *Corvidae*

Gray (Bare-eyed) Crow NG

Corvus tristis

Up to eight per day were seen, mostly in small yelping flocks, first near the Brown River, later along the Elevala River, and finally near Tabubil.

Torresian Crow

Corvus orru

The typical form we saw only in the Port Moresby – Varirata region, up to 50 per day. The “**Island Crow**,” which sounds much more like an American Crow, was common on New Britain, with up to sixty per day. Taxonomic note: The *insularis* race of the Bismarck Archipelago is likely to be split off as Island Crow.

Starlings *Sturnidae*

Metallic Starling NE

Aplonis metallica

We found this colonial starling to be common in the Elevala River – Kiunga region, at Brown River, and on New Britain. One day when we passed multiple nesting colonies we estimated numbers such as over 300 along the Fly and Elevala Rivers and 400 at Pokili Wildlife Management Area.

Yellow-eyed Starling NG

Aplonis mystacea

After carefully scanning through flocks of Metallic Starlings, we found a nesting colony of this species and were treated to scope views of over one hundred birds along a forested trail near the Elevala River. The odd bristly nasal/frontal tuft plus the unusual head shape and hackles were nicely displayed.

Singing Starling NE

Aplonis cantoroides

Familiar to us from PAU and the Gateway Hotel, this patchy species also turned up at Mt. Hagen Airport and in the Hoskins area of New Britain with an estimated 75 birds.

Yellow-faced Myna NG

Mino dumontii

Seen essentially daily in the New Guinea lowlands, with maximum numbers up to 40 in the Elevala River –

Kiunga region.

Long-tailed Myna NE

Mino kreffti

Up to fifteen per day were seen on New Britain. Perhaps this bird has the shortest tail of any bird species named long-tailed!

Taxonomic note: This species occurring in New Britain and the Solomon Islands has been split off from Yellow-faced Myna *M. dumontii*.

Golden Myna NG

Mino anais

Up to seven of this colorful species per day on the Elevala River, including those scoped at Ekame Lodge.

Old World Sparrows *Passeridae*

House Sparrow

Passer domesticus

Up to five were seen and heard at and near the Port Moresby Airport.

Waxbills & Allies *Estrildidae*

Mountain Firetail NG

Oreostruthus fuliginosus

This finch was again particularly cooperative at Kumul Lodge, where we had two daily and we particularly admired a male-female pair that we saw feeding below the cabins.

Blue-faced Parrotfinch

Erythrura trichroa

In usual secretive flocks, but persistence earned us some rather good views on most occasions. We had our first sightings at the Dablin Creek Road with further sightings in the Tari Valley with up to six in a day.

Streak-headed Munia NG

Lonchura tristissima

One of the typical form was seen near Vanapa, trans-Brown River. Later near Kiunga at Boystown Road we were treated to scope views of up to ten birds, sometimes split as the distinctive “**White-spotted Munia.**”

Taxonomic note: White-spotted Munia *L. [t.] leucosticta* is sometimes split as a separate species.

Hooded Munia NG

Lonchura spectabilis

Up to 30 daily in Tari Valley, in several flocks.

Gray-headed Munia PNG

Lonchura caniceps

From 12 – 30 seen daily at the Gateway Hotel and near Vanapa trans-Brown River, and the PAU.

Chestnut-breasted Munia

Lonchura castaneothorax

Four of this Australian species were found in the grasslands near Vanapa trans-Brown River.

Bismarck Munia (Buff-bellied Mannikin) BA *Lonchura melaena*

Up to twenty per day on mainland New Britain were mostly seen in flight but a few gave excellent studies while perched on fence wires.

MAMMALS

Dusky Pademelon NG

Tylogale brunii

We were fortunate to see one of these secretive mammals along the forested roadside as we entered the interior of Varirata National Park.

Black-tailed Giant Rat NG

Uromys anak

We watched two of these giant rats eating leftover fruit on the bird feeder at Kumul Lodge after dark. They fled from bright lights. This is the only giant rat of New Guinea’s high elevations that lacks substantial areas of white on its tail.

Big-eared Flying-fox NG*Pteropus macrotis*

We found good numbers flushing from a roost tree along the Elevala River, a spectacular and characteristic sight of that part of the world.

Great Flying-fox NE*Pteropus neohibernicus*

Of the numerous flying-foxes seen on New Britain, we identified at least thirty at Mora Mora and Pokili as Great Flying-fox.

Variable Flying-fox*Pteropus hypomelanus*

Two Variable Flying-foxes were hanging in a roost tree with Great Flying-foxes at Mora Mora on New Britain. We identified them based on their smaller size and more-furred back. Some of the unidentified flying-foxes on New Britain were likely also this widespread species.

Spinner Dolphin*Stenella longirostris*

We had at least ten but probably more than twenty come to our boat in Kimbe Bay not far east of the tip of the Willaumez Peninsula. The close views allowed us to see the long, slender rostrum (*longirostris*) with its small dark tip, among other characters.

Short-finned Pilot Whale*Globicephala macrorhynchus*

Almost in the same place as the Spinner Dolphins we had a dispersed pod of at least eight but more likely about fifteen Short-finned Pilot Whales. Many good close views showed us the huge round melon, the long-based dorsal fin, and other characters. Most of the individuals were small, with only a few animals that seemed large enough even for adult females, and perhaps an adult male or two.

REPTILES**Tropical House Gecko***Hemidactylus frenatus*

We saw this ubiquitous tropical commensal of man in many of our lodgings but especially at Cloudlands Hotel in Tabubil, where about thirty appeared each night outside our rooms.

Cane Toad*Bufo marinus*

Numerous in several locations throughout the tour, an unfortunate introduction.

Papuan Black Snake NE*Pseudechis papuanis*

We had a single individual of these extremely venomous creatures make a quick escape as we walked through secondary habitat near the Brown River.

Northern Death Adder NE*Acanthophis praelongus*

We were fortunate to discover one (before stepping on it!) along the forest trail near the Elevala River. It looks very dangerous, having an adder-like shape with thick body, triangular head, and “horns” over its eyes. Plus it has a great name to match! Despite its appearance and its name, it is not an adder but rather an elapid related to cobras, kraits, tiger snakes, and taipans. As a sit-and-wait predator, it remains coiled and still, relying on its camouflage (and thus making it a particular hazard to be stepped on accidentally!). On approach by an unsuspecting animal, the snake wiggles its slender tail tip like a distressed worm to lure in the prey, then captures the prey animal with a lightning-fast strike that injects one of the world’s most potent neurotoxic venoms.

Taxonomic note: The species taxonomy of death adders is not settled. Current Australian works accept four species, of which the Northern Death Adder *Acanthophis praelongus* is also represented in New Guinea. However, the number of death adder species recognized in Australia has ranged from only one to significantly more than four. Moreover, the New Guinea Death Adder *Acanthophis* sp.? may eventually be considered a separate species.

Several other reptile species were observed but could not be identified in the absence of good identification

references in the field, this included a remarkable forest lizard that closely resembled the New World iguanas.

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