



Rockjumper Birding Tours

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Papua New Guinea I

1st July - 22nd July 2008



RBT Group Photo on Mount Hagen, Papua New Guinea All photos by David Shackelford

Trip Report compiled by Tour Leaders David Shackelford & Frank Lambert

Top ten birds as voted by participants:

1. King-of-Saxony BOP
2. Southern Crowned Pigeon
3. King Bird-of-paradise
4. Wattled Ploughbill
5. Raggiana Bird-of-paradise
6. Crested Bird-of-paradise
7. Shovel-billed Kingfisher
8. Greater Sooty-Owl
9. Flame Bowerbird
10. Palm Cockatoo



Tour Summary

Papua New Guinea is rightfully regarded as one of the wildest, most amazing and inspirational destinations on earth. The world's highest island, New Guinea is still almost completely carpeted by tropical rainforest 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 still adhering 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.

Beginning our explorations with 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 Rufous Night-Heron, Black-backed Butcherbird and Comb-crested Jacana, walking on lily pads with specially designed, elongated toes. Here we also found the attractive Fawn-breasted Bowerbird and carefully studied the alley-shaped bower of this species, created with thousands of carefully placed sticks and decorated with particular coloured fruits and leaves for decoration in hopes of attracting a mate.

Hiking along the narrow forested trails of Varirata National Park outside the capital city of Port Moresby, we were 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 Lory and Eclectus Parrot flying past overhead. Although their sounds percolated through the forest interior, it took persistence and patience to obtain views of the unique Black Berrypecker, noisy Red-cheeked Parrot, gaudy Papuan King Parrot 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, while the ethereal calls of a Painted Quail-Thrush taunted us as we enjoyed scope views of the rarely seen Barred Owlet-Nightjar. Other great birds included a close encounter with Doria's Hawk, the scarce Dwarf Whistler, Black-fronted White-eye, Pale-billed Scrub-wren, Spot-winged Monarch and outrageous eye-level views of the rarely encountered Wallace's Fairywren. 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.

We bid a temporary goodbye to the humidity and heat of the lowlands and set off by small aircraft



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 lowland tropical forest on earth, surpassed only by the Congo Basin 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 in transporting our luggage to our off-road vehicle. Making our way along a recently improved road (from the previously horrifically muddy and potholed track), it was fascinating to see the steep sun-baked mud walls surrounding properties and graves of respected ancestors from generations past, still well maintained.

Arriving at the luxurious Ambua Lodge, we were all impressed by the quality of the round thatched rooms, complete with hydroelectric power and electric blankets for warmth. Nestled inside montane forest featuring heavy growth of bryophytes and mosses, the view of the surrounding valley was simply breathtaking. Indeed, Ambua Lodge is often ranked as the finest eco-lodge in the entire world. Even in the hotel gardens we were soon finding the attractive Rufous-naped Whistler, excellent views of the often reclusive Blue-faced Parrotfinch, the tiny Blue-grey Robin and several people had great views of the striking Mountain Kingfisher. One of the highlights of the lodge was a fruiting tree directly in the lodge vicinity, so that literally footsteps from our cabin doorways we enjoyed marvellous views of the gorgeous Princess Stephanie's *Astrapia* displaying its spectacular tail plumes from a prominent perch, our first Blue and Loria's Birds-of-paradise, outstanding views of the scarce Short-tailed Paradigalla and very close views of a pair of Lawe's Parotia, with the male sporting dazzling wires from its head, emitting electric iridescence!

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, which brandishes its unbelievably elaborate head plumes in earnest while uttering energetic display songs. Here we crept carefully through forest, thick with bamboo, and found the secretive and skulky Lesser Ground Robin, scarce Ashy Robin, both Chestnut and the little known Forbe's Forest-Rails, Mottled Whistler and, only 20 metres away from a fruiting tree, a male Archbold's Bowerbird! We also scanned out over the undulating grasslands of the spectacular Tari mountain pass, while a smart Papuan Harrier cruised by, and later watched the phenomenal Ribbon-tailed *Astrapia* that supports white tail feathers over three times the length of its own body - proportionally the longest tail of any bird in the world!

On a forested crest in the Tari Valley we scoped a brilliant Superb Bird-of-Paradise, vocally displaying with a sudden rigid flexing of its wings, and we were fortunate to find the localized Greater Sooty Owl that we scoped for an extended period of time near a roost cavity. Taxiing across the Tari airport runway, and about to lift off we were discouraged (and yet slightly amused!) to find that the plane had become stuck in the mud, so after shutting off the propellers, the gates were opened and hundreds of people swarmed around excitedly, and helped dig us out! After a successful lift off we were finally on our way to our next mountain lodge, nestled in the mountain forests of the Central Ranges of Mount Hagen – over 9,000 feet above sea level. Even from the wooden balcony we marvelled 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, Smoky Honeyeater, Island Thrush, White-winged Robin feeding on insects attracted by the fruit, Belford's *Melidectes* and the brightly coloured Brehm's Tiger-Parrot.



Innumerable varieties of mosses, bromeliads, and orchids presented the feeling of a natural wonderland as the surrounding stunted forest enveloped us during our explorations (Incidentally, Papua New Guinea hosts more species of orchids than any other nation in the world!) While trekking at higher elevations (over 3500 metres) near the summit of Mount Hagen, we had eye-level views of the male Garnet Robin, both Sooty and the range-restricted Long-billed Melidectes, elegant Papuan Lorikeet and several close encounters with the gorgeous Crested Berrypecker. Through a series of waterfalls and steep, scenic cliffs we found such birds as Blue Bird-of-paradise (both male and female), White-bibbed Fruit-Dove, the localized Marbled Honeyeater, Lesser Melampitta hopping across the forest trail and awesome views of a pair Spotted Jewel-Babbler. Following the fern-laden walkways adjoining the lodge we were fortunate to find both Mountain Cuscus, a unique highland possum species, Mountain Owlet-Nightjar during the day and, with persistence, we tracked down a phenomenally brilliant orange male Crested Bird-of-paradise. We finished our highland birding adventures with a morning gawking at the elaborate breeding displays of Lesser Bird-of-paradise, the appropriately named Ornate Melidectes and a memorable encounter with the bizarre and highly sought-after Wattled Ploughbill.

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 afternoon with the locals of Mount Hagen in their traditional dress, famous for the elaborate and colourful demonstrations with their great admiration for the birds-of-paradise. We watched the men and women in an intimate ceremonial dance, all spectacularly adorned with elaborate wigs of feathers, flowers and cuscus fur performing while looking skyward with decorated faces painted with bright yellow and red clay. Branches of leaves were positioned behind each man to form a tail plume and vines with brightly coloured berries and forest beads were hung from the arms and ankles in an astonishing festival of dynamic colour and rhythmic beating drums. We were also enthralled by the otherworldly movements of the famous Mud Men wearing gruesome clay helmets and long ghastly nails of bamboo!

Flying west towards the Irian Jaya border of Indonesia to the mining town of Tabubil, we set out in high anticipation for what was soon to come. Here in the foothills of the Star Mountains we spent considerable time searching for fruiting trees in the collage of foothill vegetation enshrouded in mist giving our surroundings a rather ethereal feel. The wind chime song of Blue-collared Parrots could be heard overhead and we found the boldly marked Mountain Peltops, bright Golden Cuckoo-Shrike, Spotted and for some the rare Leaden Honeyeater, Orange-breasted Fig-Parrot and an impressive flock of feeding Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrot. With careful scanning we also located the Magnificent Bird-of-paradise, but the show was perhaps stolen by a stunning male Carola's Parotia!

Stopping at the rapids of a hastily flowing watercourse, we scanned carefully finding white-water specialists including the petite Torrent Flycatcher, boldly patterned Torrent-lark and the difficult Salvadori's Teal that swims gracefully through the surging water. Next we travelled to the mining road near the Ok Tedi River where we arrived pre-dawn in search of a truly mythical species, the Shovel-billed Kingfisher. With a little persistence, we all enjoyed incredible close scope views in perfect light for more than five unbelievable minutes! The surrounding forest was alive with song, with the piercing screams of the Magnificent Riflebird stabbing the air continuously throughout the morning! We birded through the



forest interior riddled with limestone sinkholes and found Sooty Thicket-Fantail, Variable Dwarf-Kingfisher, the little-known Obscure Berrypecker, nice looks for several people of Red-bellied Pitta and, with some hard work, some of us obtained glimpses of the very secretive but vocal Greater Melampitta.

After travelling 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 male Flame Bowerbird, a contender for the species with the brightest plumage in the world! Here we also obtained views of the skulky Blue Jewel-Babbler, Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, scope views of the difficult Long-billed Cuckoo, Obscure Honeyeater, Pinon Imperial-Pigeon and the brilliant Emperor Fairy-Wren, a tiny blue gem secretively bounding through the undergrowth.

We then approached 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 Birds-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 and red plume posturing. Undoubtedly one of the highlights of the tour! The intensely coloured feathers on the bird's heads were surpassed only by the glitter of emerald, as the throats inflated to produce the raucous courtship call in bold excitement and exclamation. If ever a bird were to emulate a vision of beauty, these birds-of-paradise that were performing an intricate exhibition above our heads would undoubtedly be the embodiment of such inspiration.

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 heard the sharp cries of an extraordinary Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise that we located displaying at the top of a conspicuously exposed snag. On a smaller tributary we were overwhelmed by the sheer number of brightly coloured parrots, imperial-pigeons and hornbills, giving testimony to the pristine condition of the surrounding forest. We were mesmerized as gaudy Palm Cockatoos flashed brilliant red cheek-patches, while massive flocks of Collared Imperial Pigeons only just outnumbered spectacular Australian migrants such as the giant Channel-billed Cuckoo.

Our rainforest lodge built of local palms and set on stilts was very basic, but offered spectacular views of the serene Elevala River, which winds for miles into increasingly remote territory. Exploring this truly wild place was enthralling and we vigilantly walked along the muddy forest trails finding rarely encountered gems such as the stunning Little Paradise-Kingfisher, Golden Monarch, wary Hooded Pitta, a pair of stunning Large Fig-Parrot, Golden Myna and the incomparable King Bird-of-paradise displaying in a tangle of vines above our heads. A highlight of the tour materialized while we travelled along the river – having found the rare New Guinea Crocodile, we then spotted a colossal Southern Crowned Pigeon perched on a hefty tree branch extending over the water's edge. Combining an extravagant crest of feathers with a huge, deep maroon and blue-grey body, this must be the most outrageous of all the world's pigeons and doves!

Boarding our aircraft to the South Pacific islands of the Bismarck Archipelago, we landed on New Britain, part of a volcanic series situated along the Pacific "Ring of Fire," where, from our diving resort, we



were literally encircled by a chain of 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 endeavour, as we literally had to weave our footsteps around thousands of Melanesian Scrubfowl burrows that had been dug deeply 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 Cockatoo and Red-knobbed Imperial-Pigeon whizzed over the treetops past Queen Alexandra's Birdwing Butterflies, the largest butterfly in the world with a wingspan over a foot wide! The following day we were fortunate to find the scarce New Britain Kingfisher, Buff-faced Pygmy Parrot, scope views of Finsch's Imperial-Pigeon, Singing Parrot, stunning views of a soaring Black Honey-Buzzard, a pair of beautiful Bismarck Woodswallow and an unexpected sighting for every person of the critically endangered Yellow-legged Pigeon!

In all we tallied nearly 400 bird species during our tour, a very high total for any PNG tour. Of the more than twenty birds-of-paradise species that we encountered, most 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!



Annotated Checklists of Birds

Key to endemic/near endemic abbreviations

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

Grebes Podicipedidae

Australasian Grebe

Tachybaptus novaehollandiae

Two were seen at Pacific Adventist University and again in Varirata.



Gannets & Boobies Sulidae**Brown Booby***Sula leucogaster*

Several birds were encountered feeding off the coast of New Britain.

Cormorants Phalacrocoracidae**Little Black Cormorant***Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*

Common in the Port Moresby area including numerous birds at the Pacific Adventist University (PAU).

Little Pied Cormorant*Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*

Widespread in small numbers with our first birds at the PAU and final sightings during the extension to New Britain.

Anhinga & Darters Anhingidae**Darter***Anhinga melanogaster*

Scattered sightings throughout the tour near wetlands.

Note: Race *A. m. novaehollandiae* is usually split as Australasian Darter, occurring from Australia, New Guinea and Wallacea.

Frigatebirds Fregatidae**Lesser Frigatebird***Fregata ariel*

Four birds were seen in flight off the coast of New Britain.

Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns Ardeidae**Great-billed Heron***Ardea sumatrana*

Encountered

Great Egret*Ardea alba*

Widespread in the Port Moresby and Kiunga regions along with sightings in New Britain.

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*

We saw about a dozen of these beautiful herons at PAU.

Intermediate (Yellow-billed) Egret*Egretta intermedia*

Widespread and encountered at a few locations with peak numbers at Port Moresby airport where they seem to replace the niche of Cattle Egrets.

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.

Pacific Reef Heron*Egretta sacra*

A few birds including both colour phases were watched feeding along the reefs during the extension to New Britain.

Cattle Egret*Bubulcus ibis*

Encountered in the Port Moresby region with our first sightings near the PAU.

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.

Striated (Little Green/Green-backed) Heron *Butorides striatus*

Several were seen daily the Elevala River and Kiunga surroundings.

Note: A polytypic and cosmopolitan superspecies with over 30 recognized forms. Clements recognizes two full species, the North American Green Heron *B. virescens* and the most widespread nominate form which we recorded in PNG. This split is not recognized by Handbook of Birds of the World (del Hoyo et al.) who lump these forms under the nominate.



Rufous (Nankeen) Night-Heron*Nycticorax caledonicus*

Several were at their Pacific Adventist University roost with several other birds during the extension to New Britain.

Black Bittern*Ixobrychus flavicollis*

We had fantastic looks at a motionless bird at the PAU followed by a subsequent sighting near the Kiunga airport.

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

In the Port Moresby region we found numerous birds at the PAU.

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

This species was found at Pacific Adventist University after returning from the New Britain extension.

Wandering Whistling-Duck*Dendrocygna arcuata*

About thirty birds were at Pacific Adventist University.

Salvadori's Teal (NG)*Salvadorina waigiensis*

We scoped three birds total including two perched birds and other individual as it swam around the rocks near Tabubil. This is a highly-desired bird on any New Guinea tour.

Pacific Black Duck*Anas superciliosa*

About eighty birds at the Pacific Adventist University.

Hawks, Eagles & Kites Accipitridae**Osprey***Pandion haliaetus*

One sighting of this scarce bird on this tour at the PAU our first day.

Pacific Baza (Crested Hawk)*Aviceda subcristata*

Seen almost daily in the Kiunga area and several sightings during the extension to New Britain.

Black Honey-Buzzard*Henicopernis infuscatus*

We enjoyed magnificent views of a soaring pair of this scarce raptor that circled above us for several minutes above the Garu Forest.

Long-tailed Honey-buzzard (E)*Henicopernis longicauda*

Just a few birds at scattered locations during the tour including our first two birds watched flying in Varirata.

Black-shouldered Kite*Elanius axillaris*

Just one bird seen at the roadside during our drive up the Tari Road to the Ambua Lodge.

Black Kite*Milvus migrans*

Numerous birds in the Mt. Hagen area and a few in the Port Moresby and Kiunga regions.

Whistling Kite*Haliastur sphenurus*

A few sightings and scope views of perched birds in the Port Moresby with additional sightings near Kiunga.

Brahminy Kite*Haliastur indus*

Common throughout the lowlands with especially memorable views along the Elevala River as well as feeding birds on the reef in New Britain.

White-bellied Sea-Eagle*Haliaeetus leucogaster*

An adult bird was seen flying above us along the Fly River with an additional sighting the following day.

Eastern Marsh-Harrier [Papuan]*Circus spilonotus*

We saw a female quartering low over the Tari Gap grasslands.

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

Grey Goshawk *Accipiter novaehollandiae*

Great views in the lowlands including scope views near Kiunga on multiple occasions.

Variable Goshawk *Accipiter hiogaster*

Several birds were seen during the tour including scope views of perched birds in Kiunga and Tabubil.

Grey-headed Goshawk (NG) *Accipiter poliocephalus*

One bird seen well flying in front of our boat along the Elevala River.

Brown Goshawk *Accipiter fasciatus*

Magnificent scope views on several occasions in the Tari Valley and again in Tabubil.

New Britain Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brachyurus*

Up to four birds each day were watched at length during our explorations of New Britain, unusually common this year.

Meyer's Goshawk *Accipiter meyerianus*

An adult was seen flying and briefly perched on a tall snag along the road approaching Tari Gap.

Doria's Hawk *Megatriorchis doriae*

One bird perched very close to our group before flying away offering further flight views in the forest of Varirata.

New Guinea Eagle (NG) *Harpyopsis novaeguineae*

This difficult forest eagle was heard calling in the Tari Gap and again at a great distance along our hike on Mount Hagen.

Falcons & Caracaras Falconidae

Australian Hobby *Falco longipennis*

One bird was scoped from our hotel in Port Moresby.

Megapodes Megapodiidae

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

This shy species was heard at Varirata as well as in the Kiunga region as well as active nest mounds that were found.

Melanesian Scrubfowl *Megapodius eremite*

A highlight was visiting a breeding colony at Pokili Reserve where we had excellent scope views of numerous perched birds and several hundred birds flushing around us.

Pheasants & Partridges Phasianidae

Brown Quail *Coturnix ypsilophora*

One bird was flushed along the Tari Gap and otherwise heard at the PAU.

Buttonquails Turnicidae

Red-backed Buttonquail *Turnix maculosa*

We flushed three of these secretive little birds at Kiunga Airport and were treated to good flight views.

Rails, Gallinules & Coots Rallidae

Chestnut Forest-Rail *Rallina rubra*

Many of us had excellent views of this ground skulker responding to playback in the forest undergrowth near the Ambua Lodge.

Forbes's Forest-Rail *Rallina forbesi*



We were very fortunate to coax a responsive bird into view for some of us in the highland forest of the Tari Valley; also heard in the forest of Mount Hagen.

Buff-banded Rail *Gallirallus philippensis*

First seen well through the scope at the PAU and later seen again in the gardens of the Ambua Lodge.

Rufous-tailed Bush-hen *Amaurornis magnirostris*

Heard in the dense undergrowth along the Dablin Creek Road.

Purple Swampen *Porphyrio porphyrio*

Numerous birds were recorded at Pacific Adventist University with a few scattered sightings elsewhere during the tour.

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

Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa*

Several birds were seen at a close distance at Pacific Adventist University.

Jacanas Jacanidae

Comb-crested Jacana *Irediparra gallinacea*

A cooperative pair were found feeding at the Pacific Adventist University.

Plovers & Lapwings Charadriidae

Masked Lapwing *Vanellus miles*

Numerous birds were seen closely at the PAU and Port Moresby airport.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

The resident pair of this distinctive subspecies entertained us on the gravel stockpiling area at Kilometre 120.

Sandpipers Scolopacidae

Dusky (New Guinea) Woodcock *Scolopax rosenbergii*

Only seen by some of us unfortunately as one bird flushed from the boggy undergrowth near the Kumul Lodge.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

The extension to New Britain produced sightings a sighting of this species along the waterfront.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

One bird fed on the reef in front of our hotel during lunch one day in New Britain.

Pratincoles Glareolidae

Australian Pratincole *Stiltia isabella*

Seen by some at the airports both in Port Moresby and again on the New Britain Extension; also incredible close views from our vehicle of one bird near Kiunga.

Terns Sternidae

Great Crested (Swift) Tern *Sterna bergii*

Numerous birds were scoped from the shore during our extension to New Britain.

Pigeons & Doves Columbidae

Rock Pigeon (Dove) *Columba livia*

Available in urban areas.



Metallic (White-throated) Pigeon*Columba vitiensis*

A lucky sighting of a single attractive adult in flight that flew right in front of the group in Varirata.

Yellow-legged Pigeon*Columba pallidiceps*

Probably the rarest bird of the entire tour, we were very fortunate to enjoy outstanding views in the sunlight of this critically endangered species along the Kilu Ridge in New Britain. Publications suggest that there have only been a handful of sightings over the past century.

Slender-billed [Brown] Cuckoo-Dove*Macropygia amboinensis*

This species was widespread and common in small numbers from the lowlands up to mid-level mountains throughout the tour including New Britain.

Black-billed Cuckoo-Dove*Macropygia nigrirostris*

Seen and scoped on more than one occasions in the highlands.

Great Cuckoo-Dove (NE)*Reinwardtoena reinwardtii*

A few scattered sightings of this impressive bird with our first encounters near the Lesser Bird-of-paradise Display site near Mount Hagen followed by further views in Tabubil.

Pied Cuckoo-Dove*Reinwardtoena browni*

One bird was seen briefly flying across the dirt track in the Garu Forest. Like the Great Cuckoo-Dove, this species is impressive with slow wing beats.

Stephan's Dove*Chalcophaps stephani*

A pair flew across the Elevala River with a few other quick fly-bys, but then seen very well on the ground in New Britain where we had at least twenty-five birds in a single day.

Peaceful Dove*Geopelia placida*

Numerous at the Pacific Adventist University.

Bar-shouldered Dove*Geopelia humeralis*

We found this highly localized bird (in New Guinea) at Pacific Adventist University.

White-bibbed Ground-Dove (NE)*Gallicolumba jobiensis*

We had a fly-by view of one bird along the Dablin Creek Road in Tabubil.

Bronze Ground-Dove (NE)*Gallicolumba beccarii*

One fly-by as it crossed the open dirt road through the forest during our extension to New Britain.

Pheasant Pigeon (NE)*Otidiphaps nobilis*

One bird was heard calling in the forest of Varirata NP.

Southern Crowned-Pigeon (NG)*Goura scheepmakeri*

Always one of the main target birds along the Elevala River, this amazing bird was voted second-best of the trip! In total we found seven birds and enjoyed several remarkable perched views of this gaudy species.

Wompoo (Magnificent) Fruit-Dove*Ptilinopus magnificus*

Heard at Varirata National Park and along the Elevala River where a single bird flew in front of our boat.

Pink-spotted Fruit-Dove (NG)*Ptilinopus perlatus*

Several birds scoped in Varirata followed by further scope views in the Kiunga and Elevala River areas.

Superb Fruit-Dove*Ptilinopus superbus*

One birds briefly along the Dablin Creek Road followed by another bird that perched above us in the forest along the Elevala River.

Beautiful Fruit-Dove (NG)*Ptilinopus pulchellus*

Several great sightings of this attractive species including scope views along the Elevala River, Varirata, and at Kilometre Seventeen.

Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove (NG)*Ptilinopus iozonus*

Just a few birds encountered including scope views near Kiunga and again along the Elevala River.

White-bibbed Fruit-Dove (NG)*Ptilinopus rivoli*

First encountered in the highlands of the Tari Valley and later we had scope views of four birds near Mount Hagen feeding on a fruiting tree.

Knob-billed Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus insolitus*

Several great sightings during the extension to New Britain including multiple scope views.

Red-knobbed Imperial Pigeon *Ducula rubricera*

Pleasingly common and cooperative on New Britain where encountered up to one hundred birds daily.

Finsch's (Growling) Imperial Pigeon *Ducula finschii*

Outstanding scope views in the Pokili Forest followed by a further pair scoped in the Garu Forest.

Purple-tailed Imperial-Pigeon (NG) *Ducula rufigaster*

One sighting along the Elevala River and another that flew right in front of us along the Boystown Road.

Pinon Imperial-Pigeon NG *Ducula pinon*

Several birds daily in the Kiunga – Elevala River region including multiple scope views of perched birds.

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

Abundant along the Elevala and Fly rivers with up to one hundred estimated daily. 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*

Commonly heard in lowlands and hills and seen in Varirata, in Kiunga areas, and along the Elevala River.

Torresian Imperial-Pigeon (NE) *Ducula spilorrhoea*

Several birds seen at the PAU represented the nominate form.

Yellowish-tinted Imperial Pigeon *Ducula spilorrhoea subflavecens*

Numerous flocks were seen in New Britain including scope views of up to forty birds along the Kilu Ridge one memorable afternoon.

Papuan Mountain-Pigeon (NE) *Gymnophaps albertisii*

As is typical, flocks flashed overhead on whooshing wings in mountains, hills, and the Kiunga lowlands. They were commonest above Ambua Lodge and also sighted daily on the Elevala River.

Cockatoos & Allies Cacatuidae

Palm Cockatoo (NE) *Probosciger aterrimus*

We saw our first incredible bird perched at length through the scope near Boystown Road followed by a couple impressive flight views along the Elevala River. This is a mind-blowing bird when first encountered and it never becomes boring. It was voted eighth-best bird of the trip.

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita*

Seen on a regular basis throughout the lowlands of mainland New Guinea.

Blue-eyed Cockatoo *Cacatua ophthalmica*

This attractive species was seen very well in large numbers at all forest patches on New Britain.

Parrots, Macaws & Allies Psittacidae

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

Several sightings throughout the lowlands with nice scope views of perched birds along the Boystown Road near Kiunga.

Rainbow Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus*

Common and widespread in the lowlands and hills with our largest numbers at Varirata as well as numerous birds in New Britain.

Goldie's Lorikeet (NG) *Psitteuteles goldiei*

A large roost of this species was found flying from their roost one morning near Mount Hagen.

Western Black-capped Lory (NG) *Lorius lory*



This gorgeous bird was common through the lowlands and hills in small numbers.

Eastern Black-capped Lory *Lory hypoinochrous*

We enjoyed extended scope views of this attractive bird on numerous occasions on the extension to New Britain.

Red-flanked Lorikeet (NE) *Charmosyna placensis*

Several sightings mostly of birds in flight in the vicinity of Kiunga followed by multiple prolonged perched views of dozens feeding at lowland forest sites in New Britain.

Papuan Lorikeet (NG) *Charmosyna papou*

Seen daily in the Tari area and again in the highlands of Mount Hagen including both red and black morphs. This is one of the world's most beautiful parrots!

Plum-faced (Whiskered) Lorikeet (NG) *Oreopsittacus arfaki*

Several birds were seen in flight both near the Ambua Lodge and again in the vicinity of Mount Hagen including perched birds near the Kumul Lodge.

Yellow-billed Lorikeet (NG) *Neopsittacus musschenbroekii*

Common in the Ambua Lodge area where we enjoyed multiple scope views.

Orange-billed Lorikeet (NG) *Neopsittacus pullicauda*

A few birds were seen and scoped both in the Tari Gap area and again near Mount Hagen.

Buff-faced Pygmy-Parrot *Micropsitta pusio*

At least six birds were seen well in the Garu Forest of New Britain.

Yellow-capped Pygmy-Parrot (NE) *Micropsitta keiensis*

A pair of these tiny birds was seen by everyone along the Boystown Road.

Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrot (NE) *Micropsitta bruijnii*

We enjoyed dozens upon dozens of these delightfully tiny but attractive birds along the Dablin Creek Road where we had multiple scope views as they worked the branches like a nuthatch.

Orange-breasted Fig-Parrot (NG) *Clycopsitta guilmitertii*

Fairly common along the Dablin Creek Road and the Elevala River where we scoped many of these cute parrots.

Double-eyed Fig-Parrot (NG) *Clycopsitta diophthalma*

Great scope views of a pair as they foraged in a tree cavity above us for several minutes along the Boystown Road.

Large Fig-Parrot (NG) *Psittaculirostris desmarestii*

Several birds were scoped along the Boystown Road.

Brehm's Tiger-Parrot (NG) *Psittacella brehmii*

Several birds first found along a forested trail in the Tari Gap followed by incredible views of at least five birds feeding daily at the Kumul Lodge on the fruit at the bird table.

Painted Tiger-Parrot (NG) *Psittacella picta*

One bird was found in a fruiting tree on the other side of the Tari Gap.

Red-cheeked Parrot (NE) *Geoffroyus geoffroyi*

Common in the lowlands of mainland Papua New Guinea where we enjoyed our first scope views in Varirata.

Blue-collared Parrot (NG) *Geoffroyus simplex*

At least seven individuals were seen while calling in flight overhead at the Dablin Creek Road.

Singing Parrot *Geoffroyus heteroclitus*

The final member of this unique genus of parrot, two birds were seen flying over the Garu Forest on New Britain calling loudly.

Eclectus Parrot (NE) *Eclectus roratus*



Pleasantly common and observed at length on numerous occasions. Especially abundant on New Britain where dozens of brightly coloured females were more conspicuous than on the mainland.

Papuan King-Parrot (NG) *Alisterus chloropterus*

This spectacular parrot was found in Varirata as well as in the Tari Valley.

Cuckoos Cuculidae

Brush Cuckoo

Cacomantis variolosus

This species favors more open habitats and was found on numerous occasions throughout the tour including the extension to New Britain.

Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo (NE)

Cacomantis castaneiventris

We only heard a singing bird at Dablin Creek Road.

Fan-tailed Cuckoo

Cacomantis flabelliformis

Two birds were sighted and scoped in the higher reaches of the Tari Valley.

Rufous-throated Bronze-Cuckoo (NG)

Chrysococcyx ruficollis

Great scope views for several minutes of this highland endemic cuckoo as it called boldly in response to playback.

White-eared Bronze-Cuckoo (NG)

Chrysococcyx meyeri

We had good views of one bird on the Ok Ma Road near Tabubil.

Little (Malay) Bronze-Cuckoo

Chrysococcyx minutillus

One bird was scoped at Varirata responding to playback followed by another individual along the Elevala River.

Shining Bronze-Cuckoo

Chrysococcyx lucidus

This species was heard calling on two occasions during our extension to New Britain.

Long-billed Cuckoo (NG)

Rhamphomantis megarhynchus

We scoped an unbelievable four vocal birds at Kilometre Seventeen.

Asian [Common] Koel

Eudynamis scolopacea

Encountered in small numbers throughout the lowlands of New Guinea.

Channel-billed Cuckoo

Scythrops novaehollandiae

We saw several of these spectacular giants along the Fly River offering exceptional views; this cuckoo is a brood parasite of crows.

Violaceous Coucal

Centropus violaceus

We scoped two very cooperative birds at close distance and heard others at Pokili Forest.

Greater Black Coucal (NG)

Centropus menbeki

Heard calling on several occasions and this secretive species was seen once in the forest at Kilometre Seventeen near Kiunga.

Pied Coucal

Centropus ateralbus

Multiple unobstructed views of this attractive coucal both in Pokili and Garu Forest during the extension to New Britain.

Pheasant Coucal

Centropus phasianinus

Seen on several occasions in the open eucalypt forest bordering Varirata and heard at other lowland birding sites.

Lesser Black Coucal (NG)

Centropus bernsteini

We were fortunate to obtain good views of one bird beside our boat while travelling up the Fly River.

Barn Owls Tytonidae

Greater Sooty-Owl (NE)

Tyto tenebricosa



Absolutely stunning views of an adult bird perched in the open sunlight at the edge of its roosting cavity in the Tari Valley.

Typical Owls Strigidae

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

We had good views of two of these chocolate-coloured owls at the Ambua Lodge and heard them calling nightly.

Owlet-Nightjars Aegothelidae

Spangled (Starry) Owlet-Nightjar (NG) *Aegotheles tatei*

We heard this enigmatic species calling at Ekame Lodge.

Barred Owlet-Nightjar (NG) *Aegotheles bennettii*

One bird was scoped as it peered from its roost tree cavity in Varirata National Park.

Mountain Owlet-Nightjar (NG) *Aegotheles albertisi*

Heard each night near the Kumul Lodge and one bird seen very well by some on the day roost also in the vicinity of the lodge.

Frogmouths Podargidae

Marbled Frogmouth (NE) *Podargus ocellatus*

We heard this species calling along the Ok Ma Road as well as again at the Ekame Lodge.

Papuan Frogmouth (NE) *Podargus papuensis*

Essentially the first birds of this tour were the magnificent pair roosting together in a tree at the Pacific Adventist University which we scoped in intimate detail.

Nightjars & Allies Caprimulgidae

Large-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus macrurus*

A couple birds were seen well responding to playback at Varirata National Park.

Archbold's Nightjar *Eurostopodus archboldi*

One bird was seen flushing from the road in front of us and flying in front of our vehicle on the road to Mount Hagen.

Swifts Apodidae

Glossy Swiftlet *Aerodramus esculenta*

Numerous and conspicuous throughout the tour in forested areas.

Mountain Swiftlet (NG) *Aerodramus hirundinaceus*

Numerous in the highlands where we had views of up to fifty birds daily.

Uniform Swiftlet *Aerodramus vanikorensis*

Very common in the lowlands and hills, where this species was seen virtually every day.

White-rumped Swiftlet *Aerodramus spodiopygius*

About a dozen birds were seen on New Britain flying in the Pokili Forest.

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

Numerous in the Kiunga area and especially common foraging above the Elevala River.

Treeswifts Hemiprocnidae

Moustached Treeswift (NE) *Hemiproctus mystacea*

This is one of New Guinea's sublime birds and it was seen first at Tabubil as well as multiple scope views thereafter during the tour including on the extension to New Britain.



Kingfishers Alcedinidae

Common Kingfisher*Alcedo atthis*

Seen first at the PAU followed by multiple views during the extension to New Britain.

Azure Kingfisher*Alcedo azurea*

Just one bird that called near the entrance of the forest trail in Varirata and one briefly along the Elevala River.

Variable (Dwarf) Kingfisher*Ceyx lepidus*

Quick views near the forest at Tabubil followed by incredible scope views of a pair in Pokili Forest of New Britain.

Blue-winged Kookaburra*Dacelo leachii*

Several birds were seen in the lowlands near Port Moresby. One of the largest kingfishers, with a truly massive bill!

Rufous-bellied Kookaburra (NG)*Dacelo gaudichaud*

We first found this attractive kingfisher in Varirata followed by subsequent sightings in the Kiunga area and along the Elevala River.

Shovel-billed Kookaburra (NG)*Clytoceyx rex*

After considerable searching along the Ok Ma Road near Tabubil we all managed phenomenal scoped views of this near-mythical species in the sunlight for nearly five unforgettable minutes!

Forest Kingfisher*Todirhamphus macleayii*

A few scattered sightings of this handsome bird including scope views in Varirata National Park.

New Britain (White-mantled) Kingfisher*Todirhamphus albinotatus*

Absolutely stunning views on two occasions of this scarce New Britain endemic through the scope for several minutes.

Collared Kingfisher*Todirhamphus chloris*

This widespread species was heard calling in the mangroves during the New Britain extension.

Sacred Kingfisher*Todirhamphus sanctus*

This common wintering bird from Australia was widespread and frequently seen in the lowlands as well as the extension to New Britain.

Hook-billed Kingfisher (NG)*Melidora macrorrhina*

We heard this crepuscular species calling at birding sites near Kiunga and had one bird come in exceptionally close but only some people were in position to see it before it flew back into the dense forest.

Yellow-billed Kingfisher (NE)*Syma torotoro*

We had outstanding views of several birds at Varirata National Park as well as further scope views near Kiunga.

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

At the Ambua Lodge one bird was seen by many of us perched casually close to our cabins.

Little Paradise-Kingfisher (NG) *Tanysiptera hydrocharis*

Along the Elevala River we scoped one bird and called in a second for eye-level views in the forest.

Common Paradise-Kingfisher (NE)*Tanysiptera galatea*

One bird aggressively flew over us and perched on several occasions in response to payback.

Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher (PNG)*Tanysiptera danae*

Great scope views of three birds total at Varirata National Park, yet another wonderful paradise-kingfisher.

Buff-breasted [Black-headed] Paradise-Kingfisher (NE) *Tanysiptera Sylvia nigriceps*

Absolutely stunning scope views of three gorgeous birds total were enjoyed in Pokili as well as heard later in Garu Forest. This resident subspecies of Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfisher on New Britain may be split



as a full species.

Bee-eaters Meropidae

Rainbow Bee-eater

Merops ornatus

This is a migrant from Australia was recorded throughout the lowlands in small numbers as well as during the extension to New Britain.

Typical Rollers Coraciidae

Dollarbird

Eurystomus orientalis

Most abundant along the Fly and Elevala rivers where we saw up to fifty each day.

Hornbills Bucerotidae

Blyth's Hornbill NE

Aceros plicatus

This vulnerable but awesome bird was most abundant along the Elevala and Fly rivers where we admired it daily in numbers up to thirty strong. Our first sighting was along the Ok Ma Road near Tabubil as well as numerous birds during our extension to New Britain.

Pittas Pittidae

Red-bellied Pitta

Pitta erythrogaster

Several participants managed excellent views of this skulking bird along the Ok Ma Road near Tabubil feeding along the forest floor. Otherwise we heard this bird daily along the Elevala River.

Hooded Pitta

Pitta sordida

Several birds were seen in response to playback in the forest surrounding the Elevala River.

Swallows Hirundinidae

Pacific Swallow

Hirundo tahitica

This is the common swallow of the region and we found it to be widespread and fairly numerous throughout the tour.

Tree Martin

Petrochelidon nigricans

This species was noted the morning the tour began by some participants near our accommodation in Port Moresby.

Wagtails & Pipits Motacillidae

Australasian Pipit

Anthus novaeseelandiae

We had views of birds perched on the road along the grasslands of the Tari Gap.

Cuckoo-shrikes Campephagidae

Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike

Coracina novaehollandiae

This Australian migrant was widespread and fairly common during the tour while birding in the lowlands with our first views in Varirata.

Stout-billed Cuckoo-shrike (NG)

Coracina caeruleogrisea

Among New Guinea's cuckoo-shrikes this large bird is particularly impressive with our forest of several views in Varirata.

Yellow-eyed (Barred) Cuckoo-shrike

Coracina lineata

A couple nice views at Varirata with a couple scattered sightings thereafter during the tour including several birds in New Britain.

Boyer's Cuckoo-shrike (NG)

Coracina boyeri



First scoped at Varirata with further sightings at scattered sites during the tour including the Dablin Creek Road.

White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina papuensis*

Regularly recorded in the lowlands of New Guinea with our first views our first afternoon at the PAU.

Common Cicadabird *Coracina tenuirostris*

The distinctive female of this species was seen on a few occasions throughout the tour with our first views in Varirata and final views in New Britain.

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

We enjoyed multiple nice views of this species both at Dablin Creek Road and along Ok Ma Road.

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

Fairly numerous during our stay in Tabubil where we found five birds one day along the Dablin Creek Road.

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

Our first views of this species were in Varirata where we found both the male and distinctive rufous female followed by scattered sightings thereafter.

Black-bellied Cuckoo-shrike (NG) *Coracina montana*

Excellent close views were obtained in the Tari Gap area followed by further sightings of several birds giving the distinctive male-female antiphonal duet at Mount Hagen.

Golden Cuckoo-shrike (NG) *Campochaera sloetii*

This is always a popular bird and we enjoyed several scope views along the Dablin Creek Road.

Varied Triller *Lalage leucomela*

Fairly numerous throughout the tour at scattered locations including Varirata, Dablin Creek Road, and in New Britain.

Thrushes & Allies Turdidae

Island Thrush *Turdus poliocephalus*

First sighted along the Tari Gap with numerous views at the Kumul Lodge of Mount Hagen.

Cisticolas & Allies Cisticolidae

Golden-headed Cisticola *Cisticola exilis*

One bird was flushed from the grasses at the PAU our first afternoon.

Old World Warblers Sylviidae

Island Leaf-Warbler (NE) *Phylloscopus poliocephalus*

Locally abundant below the Ambua Lodge where we found up to twenty birds during one morning followed by a couple sightings at Mount Hagen.

Tawny Grassbird *Megalurus timoriensis*

Seen or heard almost daily in the mountains around Kumul and Ambua lodges with our first scope views along the Tari Gap.

Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae

Pied Bushchat *Saxicola caprata*

Widespread in the mountains with up to six birds sighted daily.

Fantails Rhipiduridae

Northern Fantail *Rhipidura rufiventris*

Fairly common during the tour with our first of many sightings along the Dablin Creek Road.



- Willie Wagtail** *Rhipidura leucophrys*
Very widespread and seen almost every day throughout the trip.
- Friendly Fantail (NG)** *Rhipidura albolimbata*
Delightfully common in the highlands with up to ten per day around Kumul and Ambua Lodges.
- Chestnut-bellied Fantail (NG)** *Rhipidura hyperythra*
This species was seen regularly at Varirata National Park.
- Sooty Thicket-Fantail (NG)** *Rhipidura threnothorax*
Although never especially cooperative, several vocal birds were seen flying through the undergrowth or across the dirt road in the Tabubil area.
- White-bellied Thicket-Fantail (NG)** *Rhipidura leucothorax*
A vocal bird responded but did not show near Tabubil.
- Black Fantail (NG)** *Rhipidura atra*
Two below the Kumul Lodge, several in the Ambua area, and further brief sightings near Tabubil.
- Dimorphic Fantail (NG)** *Rhipidura brachyrhyncha*
A couple birds were seen by many participants near our lodge in the Tari Valley with further sightings in the forest near the Kumul Lodge.

Monarch Flycatchers Monarchidae

- Black Monarch (Fantail Monarch) (NG)** *Monarcha axillaris*
Seen on several occasions in the highlands of Tari and Mount Hagen as well as along the Dablin Creek Road.
- Black-winged Monarch** *Monarcha frater*
Only one bird seen in Varirata NP in a small mixed flock.
- Spot-winged Monarch (NG)** *Monarcha guttulus*
Two birds were forest sighted at Varirata followed by another bird along the forested edges of the Elevala River.
- Hooded Monarch (NG)** *Monarcha manadensis*
One calling bird was heard in the forest near the Ekame Lodge.
- Black-tailed Monarch** *Monarcha verticalis*
A single bird was seen briefly in the forest of Pokili on New Britain.
- Golden Monarch (NG)** *Monarcha chrysomela*
One vocal male was seen foraging in the canopy in the forest surrounding the Elevala River.
- Frilled Monarch (NG)** *Arses telescopthalmus*
We found this attractive species on several occasions in Varirata as well as along the Elevala River and Kiunga region.
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*
Several birds were seen in the savannah area by Varirata.
- Shining Flycatcher** *Myiagra alecto*
Pairs were observed along the Elevala River alongside water as well as on the extension to New Britain.
- Dull (Lesser Shining) Flycatcher** *Myiagra hebetior*
A male was seen in the Pokili Reserve in New Britain.
- Black-breasted Boatbill (NG)** *Machaerirhynchus nigripectus*
This eye-pleaser was found in the Tari Valley where we enjoyed scope views followed by further sightings near Mount Hagen.



Yellow-breasted Boatbill (NE)*Machaerirhynchus flaviventer*

This species shared with Australia was heard in Varirata NP.

Australasian Robins Petroicidae**Lesser Ground-Robin (NG)***Amalocichla incerta*

We called an individual into view to within five feet of the group above the Ambua Lodge! Between this sighting and another forest near Mount Hagen we all managed excellent views of this ground-skulker.

Torrent Flycatcher (NG)*Monachella muelleriana*

We saw this attractive species along waterways near Mount Hagen and again at the Ok Menga Hydroelectric Plant near Tabubil.

Lemon-bellied Flycatcher (NE)*Microeca flavigaster*

Several birds were seen and heard in the savannah by Varirata.

Canary Flycatcher (NG)*Microeca papuana*

Seen almost on a daily basis between sites near the Kumul Lodge and Ambua Lodge.

Garnet Robin (NG)*Eugerygone rubra*

Two sightings in the canopy of this tiny but attractive forest robin followed by outrageous eye-level views of a displaying bird acting like a fantail near the summit of Mount Hagen.

White-faced Robin (NE)*Tragellasia leucops*

Three birds were seen very well in the lowland forest of Varirata.

Black-sided Robin (NG)*Poecilodryas hypoleuca*

Near Ekame Lodge we heard one bird calling in the thick vine tangles behind the cabins.

Black-throated Robin (NG)*Poecilodryas albonotata*

This bird looks much like a small cuckoo-shrike and we found it on several occasions including scope views for everyone both in the Tari Gap and near Mount Hagen.

White-winged Robin (NG)*Peneothello sigillatus*

Confiding birds were seen daily at Kumul Lodge.

White-rumped Robin (NG)*Peneothello bimaculatus*

Both the birds calling at Dablin Creek Road were seen exceptionally well by everyone including prolonged scope views.

Blue-grey Robin (NG)*Peneothello cyanus*

Several birds were seen sporadically around the Ambua Lodge and also heard near the Mount Hagen.

Grey-headed [Ashy] Robin (NE)*Heteromyias albispecularis*

One bird was seen, albeit briefly, while birding in the forest above the Ambua Lodge.

Northern Scrub-Robin (NE)*Drymodes superciliaris*

We heard this ground skulker in the forest of Ok Ma while searching for the Red-bellied Pitta.

Whistlers & Allies Pachycephalidae**Dwarf (Golden-faced) Whistler (NG)***Pachycare flavogriseum*

We enjoyed outstanding views of this species singing loudly in front of us in the forest of Varirata followed by further views along the Dablin Creek Road.

Mottled Whistler (NG)*Rhagologus leucostigma*

We coaxed one bird into view in the forest of the Tari Valley allowing many to obtain views of this scarce species.

Rufous-naped Whistler (NG)*Aleadryas rufinucha*

This distinctive whistler was seen nearly every day in the highlands around Kumul and Ambua Lodges.

Rusty Whistler (NG)*Pachycephala hyperythra*

One bird was heard early in the morning at Varirata.

Brown-backed Whistler (PNG) *Pachycephala modesta*

We encountered this whistler almost daily in the highlands, with several conspicuous birds around Ambua Lodge.

Grey-headed [Grey] Whistler (NE) *Pachycephala griseiceps*

Single birds at Varirata and again along the Dablin Creek Road.

Slater's Whistler (NG) *Pachycephala soror*

Several brightly coloured birds were seen at the Ambua Lodge and again near Tabubil.

Regent Whistler (NG) *Pachycephala schlegelii*

One of the most colourful of all whistlers, we enjoyed multiple sightings both in the Tari Valley and near the Kumul Lodge.

Black-headed Whistler (NG) *Pachycephala monacha*

We had great scope views of this species in the Tari Valley while searching for the Greater Sooty-Owl.

Rufous Whistler (NG) *Pachycephala leucogastra*

We had views of this species in the secondary forest outside Varirata NP of the unique white-bellied form.

Rufous (Little) Shrike-Thrush *Colluricincla megarhyncha*

Regular at Varirata including several sightings and encountered again near Tabubil.

Grey Shrike-Thrush *Colluricincla harmonica*

One in savanna outside Varirata followed by another bird near the Mount Hagen Airport. This bird's melodious scientific name is appropriate.

Hooded Pitohui (NG) *Pitohui dichrous*

Memorable sightings at Varirata National Park, this aposematically-coloured bird is the traditional "poison-bird" as it was the first bird species discovered to possess poisonous compounds in its tissues.

Rusty Pitohui (NG) *Pitohui ferrugineus*

Two birds were seen at Kilometre Seventeen first located feeding in thick vegetation.

White-bellied Pitohui (NG) *Pitohui incertus*

Two birds were seen by some of us along the Elevala River and we could hear another small flock aggressively responding vocally to playback in this area.

Crested Pitohui (NG) *Pitohui cristatus*

We heard its remarkably long pulsing song at Varirata.

Variable Pitohui (NG) *Pitohui kirhocephalus*

Several birds were seen along the Dablin Creek Road offering great views.

Wattled Ploughbill (NG) *Eulacestoma nigropectus*

One of those unforgettable moments, we had time for a final forest walk in the highlands at Mount Hagen specifically to search for this species. After a long wait without success we finally decided it was time to head back only to hear a bird calling near the beginning of the trail. With patience we were all treated to multiple views of the male of this bizarre but thrilling avian gem.

Pseudo-babblers Pomatosromidae

New Guinea (Rufous) Babbler (NG) *Pomatostomus isidorei*

Several birds were seen by some moving quickly and calling at Kilometre Seventeen.

Whipbirds & Quail-thrushes Cinclosomatidae

Painted Quail-thrush (NG) *Cinclosoma ajax*

Two lone singing birds at Varirata would not come to recordings.

Spotted Jewel-babbler (NG) *Ptilorrhoa leucosticta*



We first heard this highland species near the Ambua Lodge followed by very good views of two birds feeding under leaf-litter along a forest trail near Mount Hagen.

Blue Jewel-babbler (NG) *Ptilorrhoa caerulescens*

Some people managed views of a calling bird in the forest behind Ekame Lodge and otherwise almost everyone saw a responsive bird that came in to a recording and proceeded to quickly cross the open dirt road!

Chestnut-backed Jewel-babbler (NG) *Ptilorrhoa castanonota*

Several birds were heard and one bird seen only by some at Varirata; another was heard at Ok Ma.

Blue-capped Ifrita (NG) *Ifrita kowaldi*

Amazing views including scope studies both near the Ambua Lodge and again near Mount Hagen. 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 a distinctive charm.

Fairywrens Maluridae

Orange-crowned Fairywren (NG) *Clytomyias insignis*

First heard at Ambua Lodge surroundings and then most people saw two or three birds working through the thick bamboo on one of the forest trails near Mount Hagen.

Wallace's Fairywren (NG) *Sipodotus wallacii*

A typically difficult bird to see, a pair at Varirata incredibly foraged down at eye level beside the trail for an extended period, including absolutely stunning views, and later this species was encountered on two occasions at Tabubil and near Kiunga.

White-shouldered Fairywren (NG) *Malurus alboscapulatus*

First seen very well and scoped near the PAU followed by regular but scattered sightings throughout the tour.

Emperor Fairywren (NG) *Malurus cyanocephalus*

One male-female pair was coaxed into view with playback along the Boystown Road allowing for views of the amazing electric blue of the male.

Thornbills & Allies Acanthizidae

Rusty Mouse-Warbler (NG) *Crateroscelis murina*

What a skulker! We tried for this bird on numerous occasions with most people managing views in the forest understory either in Varirata or near Kiunga.

Mountain Mouse-Warbler (NG) *Crateroscelis robusta*

Heard daily near Kumul and Ambua Lodges, with multiple birds being seen at each location.

Large Scrubwren (NG) *Sericornis nouhuysi*

Regular around the Kumul Lodge and near the Ambua Lodge.

Buff-faced Scrubwren (NG) *Sericornis perspicillatus*

Excellent views near the Ambua Lodge on several occasions of this cute species followed by subsequent sightings near Mount Hagen.

Papuan Scrubwren (NG) *Sericornis papuensis*

Regular in the highlands often associating with the previous two species.

Pale-billed Scrubwren (NG) *Sericornis spilodera*

Singles were seen at Varirata feeding in a mixed species flocks.

Mountain (Grey) Gerygone (NG) *Gerygone cinerea*

A couple nice sightings along a forested trail near Mount Hagen.

Green-backed Gerygone NE *Gerygone chloronotus*

Its distinctive song was heard frequently in the lowlands and hills from Varirata and the Kiunga region to



Tabubil with a good sighting in Varirata.

Yellow-bellied Gerygone (NG)

Gerygone chrysogaster

Heard on a few occasions in the lowlands near Kiunga including along the river near the Ekame Lodge.

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

Heard almost daily in the highlands and seen on several occasions both near Kumul and Ambua Lodges; this song is one of the beautiful and characteristic sounds of the montane forest.

Large-billed Gerygone

Gerygone magnirostris

We had great views of a pair singing and responding to payback along the Elevala River.

Fairy Gerygone

Gerygone palpebrosa

Seven birds total seen very well at eye-level in the forest of Varirata.

Papuan Thornbill (NG)

Acanthiza murina

Several nice sightings of this highland specialty while hiking near the summit of Mount Hagen.

Sittellas Neosittidae

Black Sittella (NG)

Neositta miranda

Two flocks were seen of this erratic species, eight birds first seen and scoped in the forest above the Ambua Lodge followed by a smaller flock near Mount Hagen.

Sunbirds & Spiderhunters Nectariniidae

Black Sunbird

Leptocoma sericea

Several birds observed almost daily in the Kiunga area as well as on the extension to New Britain.

Olive-backed (Yellow-bellied) Sunbird

Cinnyris jugularis

Only seen near the airport on the extension to New Britain.

Berrypeckers & Longbills Melanocharitidae

Obscure Berrypecker (NG)

Melanocharis arfakiana

We saw three along the Dablin Creek Road and again along the Ok Ma Road; this enigmatic species was almost unknown until discovered to be regular at these sites.

Black Berrypecker (NG)

Melanocharis nigra

Seen first in Varirata National Park followed by another female in the lowland forest near the Elevala River.

Lemon-breasted (Mid-mountain) Berrypecker (NG)

Melanocharis longicauda

Several sightings in the highland forest near the Ambua Lodge and again near Mount Hagen.

Fan-tailed Berrypecker (NG)

Melanocharis versteri

Nice views of a couple females in the Tari Valley and a male later seen in the forest above the Kumul Lodge.

Yellow-bellied Longbill (NG)

Toxorhamphus novaeguineae

A few sightings of this quick species along the Dablin Creek Road.

Slaty-chinned Longbill (NG)

Toxorhamphus poliopterus

One bird was first encountered in Varirata followed by an addition sighting at Dablin Creek Road.

Dwarf Honeyeater (NG)

Toxorhamphus iliolophus

Several were seen at Varirata National Park including several vocal birds visiting a flowering tree.

Pygmy Honeyeater (NG)

Oedistoma pygmaeum

Two sightings in Varirata National Park in a mixed species flock near the picnic area.



Painted Berrypeckers Paramythiidae

Tit Berrypecker (NG)*Oreocharis arfaki*

This charming bird was seen well on numerous occasions in the highlands with one memorable flock of more than sixty individuals near Mount Hagen.

Crested Berrypecker (NG)*Paramythia montium*

This, the second and final species of the painted berrypecker family, was seen very well several times in the highlands near the Kumul Lodge with nearly fifteen individuals total.

Flowerpeckers Dicaeidae

Red-capped [Papuan] Flowerpecker (NG)*Dicaeum geelvinkianum*

Widespread in small numbers throughout the lowlands, hills, and mountains with our first sightings in Varirata NP.

Note: This species has been split from the former Papuan Flowerpecker D. pectorale.

Red-banded (Bismarck) Flowerpecker*Dicaeum eximium*

Regular at both Pokili and Garu Forests during the extension to New Britain.

White-eyes Zosteropidae

Black-fronted White-eye (NG)*Zosterops minor*

We found this species in the Tari Valley followed by subsequent sightings along the Dablin Creek Road.

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

Many birds were found along the Dablin Creek Road near Tabubil.

New Guinea White-eye (NG)*Zosterops novaeguineae*

Regular sightings at Varirata and again in the mid-elevations of the Tari Valley.

Honeyeaters Meliphagidae

Long-billed Honeyeater (NG)*Melilestes megarhynchus*

A few scattered sightings with our best views along the Dablin Creek Road and Boystown Road.

Ashy Myzomela*Myzomela cineracea*

Recorded at all forest patches during our extension to New Britain.

Black Myzomela (NG)*Myzomela negrita*

Numerous at Varirata National Park with at least a dozen birds visiting a flowering tree.

Mountain Red-headed Myzomela (NG)*Myzomela adolphinae*

First seen well at the Tari airport where we had a pair followed by a few other birds in the Mount Hagen area.

New Britain Red-headed Myzomela (NG)*Myzomela erythromelas*

Several sightings of this attractive species in forested areas including our first scope views of a pair in the forest of Pokili during the extension to New Britain.

Red-collared Myzomela (NG)*Myzomela rosenbergii*

Nice views on a few occasions in that Tari Valley including several stunning bright males.

Mountain Meliphaga (NG)*Meliphaga orientalis*

First scoped along the road near Mount Hagen and later seen regularly along the Dablin Creek Road and Ok Ma.

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

We found this species only along the Dablin Creek Road.

Mimic Honeyeater (Meliphaga) (NG)*Meliphaga analoga*

Scattered sightings of this species in the lowlands with our first encounter in Varirata.

Graceful Honeyeater (Meliphaga) (NE)*Meliphaga gracilis*

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Yellow-gaped Honeyeater (Meliphaga) (NE) *Meliphaga flavirictus*

Encountered along the Dablin Creek Road and again at Ok Ma.

Black-throated Honeyeater (NG) *Lichenostomus subfrenatus*

This bird's distinctive and attractive song steered us in the right direction and we obtained views in the Tari Valley of several birds and later heard it in the Mount Hagen area.

Obscure Honeyeater (NG) *Lichenostomus obscurus*

One bird was heard and seen twice along the Boystown Road near Kiunga.

Yellow-tinted Honeyeater (NE) *Lichenostomus flavescens*

Several birds were found at our hotel in Port Moresby before the flight to New Britain.

Tawny-breasted Honeyeater (NE) *Xanthotis flaviventer*

Several sightings in the lowlands and hills with our best individuals along the Dablin Creek Road and Ok Ma.

Spotted Honeyeater (NG) *Xanthotis polygramma*

We had outstanding views of this strikingly marked honeyeater along the Dablin Creek Road.

White-throated Honeyeater *Melithreptus albogularis*

Several birds were found in savannah along the Varirata National Park entrance road.

Plain Honeyeater (NG) *Pycnopygius ixoides*

One bird seen on two occasions and heard singing while it sat on open stag along the Boystown Road.

Marbled Honeyeater (NG) *Pycnopygius cinereus*

We encountered four birds in the roadside forest near Mount Hagen that distracted us briefly from the male Blue Bird-of-paradise.

Streak-headed Honeyeater (NG) *Pycnopygius stictocephalus*

Outstanding scope views of this uncommon species first in Varirata followed by further views near the Kiunga airport.

Meyer's Friarbird (NG) *Philemon meyeri*

A couple birds were seen only briefly as they flew across the Boystown Road while vocalizing.

Helmeted [New Guinea] Friarbird *Philemon buceroides*

Common in the New Guinea lowlands and recorded almost daily with our first sightings at Varirata.

New Britain Friarbird *Philemon cockerelli*

Recorded daily in small numbers during our extension to New Britain.

Rufous-backed Honeyeater (PNG) *Ptiloprora guisei*

Numerous around the Ambua Lodge; more common at lower elevations than the following species.

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

Most common at higher reaches of the mountains with daily numbers of up to ten around Kumul Lodge and in the higher Tari Gap area.

Leaden Honeyeater (NG) *Ptiloprora plumbea*

One bird was seen feeding on a fruiting tree along the Dablin Creek Road.

Belford's Melidectes (NG) *Melidectes belfordi*

Most common in the higher elevations and heard constantly with up to thirty daily in the Kumul Lodge and Tari Gap areas.

Yellow-browed Melidectes (NG) *Melidectes rufocrissalis*

Mostly below the elevation zone dominated by Belford's Melidectes. Some showed signs of introgressive hybridization from Belford's, as is common in this region with daily numbers of up to forty individuals.

Long-bearded Melidectes (NG) *Melidectes princeps*

We were fortunate to encounter a single bird that cooperated nicely along our trek up Mount Hagen; this is



a specialty of the highest reaches of Papua New Guinea.

Ornate Melidectes (NG) *Melidectes torquatus*

Great views of this attractive species on several occasions including scope views near the Lesser Bird-of-paradise display site.

(Common) Smoky Honeyeater (NG) *Melipotes fumigatus*

Common in the high mountains both near Kumul and Ambua lodges and one bird along the Dablin Creek Road. 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.

Sooty Honeyeater (NG) *Melidectes fuscus*

During the long trek to the top of Mount Hagen we found three individuals of this highland specialty.

Rufous-banded Honeyeater (NE) *Conopophila albogularis*

We had scattered sightings near the Gateway Hotel, Pacific Adventist University, and Varirata savanna.

Green-backed Honeyeater *Timeliopsis fallax*

Two sightings of this species first along the Dablin Creek Road followed by a further view near Kiunga.

Old World Orioles Oriolidae

Brown Oriole (NG) *Oriolus szalayi*

A few birds were present on most days in the lowlands birding areas such as Port Moresby, Kiunga, and Tabubil.

Green Figbird *Sphecotheres viridis*

Several birds were seen well at the Pacific Adventist University.

Shrikes Laniidae

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach*

Several daily near Kumul Lodge and in lower numbers along the Tari Gap.

Drongos Dicruridae

Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus bracteatus*

We had several birds on most days in the lowlands and lower hills as well as on the extension to New Britain.

Mudnest Builders Callaeidae

Torrent-lark (NG) *Grallina bruijni*

We eventually scoped a male-female pair above the Ok Menga Hydro Plant allowing everyone to obtain good looks at this sometimes difficult species.

Woodswallows Artamidae

Great Woodswallow (NG) *Artamus maximus*

Ambua Lodge is almost overrun with this attractive species and we enjoyed further views in the Mount Hagen area. This bird is always entertaining to watch plus it has a lively and joyful-sounding song and affectionate social behavior.

White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus*

Numerous in the Port Moresby lowlands and around Kiunga.

White-backed (Bismarck) Woodswallow *Artamus insignis*

We were fortunate to obtain outstanding views of two individuals flying together allowing for eye-level views of this seldom-encountered and declining species.



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

Nice looks on two occasions along the Dablin Creek Road where we found this bird in pairs.

Lowland Peltops (NG)*Peltops blainvillii*

Two birds were scoped at the Boystown Road birding site. A little smaller than the highland species.

Black-backed Butcherbird (NE)*Cracticus mentalis*

Several birds were scoped at the Pacific Adventist University.

Hooded Butcherbird (NG)*Cracticus cassicus*

Conspicuous, by both sight and sound, at Varirata, around Kiunga, and along the Elevela River.

Black Butcherbird*Cracticus quoyi*

Nice looks at a perched bird near the Ok Menga Hydro Plant and again later near Tabubil.

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

We found several birds including nice males on a daily basis near the Ambua Lodge at a fruiting tree.

Crested Bird-of-paradise (NG)*Cnemophilus macgregorii*

A glorious adult male and a female pair as well as an immature male were seen near the Kumul Lodge. The male's glowing shaded red-orange upperparts contrasting against the pure black face and underparts was just outrageous.

Glossy-mantled Manucode (NG)*Manucodia atra*

We saw several birds daily on the Elevela River and near Kiunga, where most manucodes were this species.

We also had our first sighting at Varirata.

Crinkle-collared Manucode (NG)*Manucodia chalybata*

First seen well and heard at Varirata followed by several sightings at Ok Ma and Tabubil.

Trumpet Manucode (NE)*Manucodia keraudrenii*

Nice views of several near Kiunga sporting loose head and neck plumes plus another bird first noted at Ok Ma as well as along the Elevela River.

Short-tailed Paradigalla (NG)*Paradigalla brevicauda*

At the Ambua Lodge we were pleased to see a pair visiting the fruiting fig offering outrageous daily views.

Ribbon-tailed Astrapia (PNG)*Astrapia mayeri*

Up to five per day were seen at the Kumul Lodge included several visiting the feeder and several birds aily near the Ambua Lodge. 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*

One very aggressive but spectacular male and several females were seen around Ambua Lodge near a fruiting fig. We found several others while birding along the road in the surrounding area. This is simply an amazing bird!

Carola's Parotia (NG)*Parotia carolae*

Several birds were seen very well at Dablin Creek Road, Tabubil, included a rarely-seen adult male that we watched through the scope for several minutes!

Lawes' Parotia (PNG)*Parotia lawesii*

At least two birds were scoped daily at Ambua Lodge included one outrageous adult male that sported the bizarre wires on top of ties head and a bright iridescent shield cross the throat and breast.

King-of-Saxony Bird-of-paradise (NG)*Pteridophora alberti*

This unique and spectacular bird was voted the top bird of the trip! Observations above the Ambua Lodge



included the males' characteristic 'radio static' song and incredible 'semaphore' displays with their two unreal head plumes!

Magnificent [Eastern] Riflebird (NE) *Ptiloris magnificus*

We saw both females and a glorious male directly above us feeding on fruit at Varirata. This is the gruff-voiced form split by many as Eastern Riflebird. Later we heard and saw a male and two females of the clear-voiced nominate form along the Ok Ma Road.

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

Superb Bird-of-paradise (NG) *Lophorina superba*

We also saw several birds in the Tari Valley including a very close displaying male followed by further views of displaying males and feeding females near Mount Hagen. Even when the adult male is merely moving about and eating fruit its plumage makes it appear as if he is actively displaying! The iridescent blue breast shield and amazing nuchal cape are always there to impress.

Brown Sicklebill (NG) *Epimachus meyeri*

This species was an entertaining visitor to the Kumul Lodge feeders with up to six birds daily, and we heard an adult male first when we were watching a male King-of-Saxony Bird-of-paradise display in the Tari Valley.

Black Sicklebill (NG) *Epimachus fassuosus*

We heard the distinctive song of this species echoing from the ridge near the Ambua Lodge, however the thick fog prevented us from seeing the bird.

Magnificent Bird-of-paradise (NG) *Cicinnurus magnificus*

Both along the Dablin Creek Road and Ok Ma we had several scope views of feeding females and visited a display site that was unfortunately inactive due to steady rain.

King Bird-of-paradise (NG) *Cicinnurus regius*

Simply unforgettable views of a gorgeous adult male attending the canopy tangle of his display tree by the Ketu River, a tributary of the Elevala River. Although often difficult to see, his repeated movements within a small and predictable area gave us many striking views of his gleaming red-orange and white plumage with unique green tail rackets. We even saw his green-tipped pectoral fans! This is the smallest bird-of-paradise but also one of the brightest and most unique.

Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise (NG) *Seleucidis melanoleuca*

This beautiful species treated us to a good show along the Elevala River including two adult males and one female including a vocal male perched atop his bare snag top, showing his dark breast disc, puffy yellow flank plumes, and of course those recurved wires that must be seen to be believed!

Greater Bird-of-paradise (NG) *Paradisaea apoda*

First seen in the Kiunga area and heard near Tabubil. The very impressive courtship displays involving several males in their lek tree being visited by numerous females was at Kilometre Seventeen where we witnessed many full dance sequences leading to copulations.

Lesser Bird-of-paradise (NG) *Paradisaea minor*

At least eight birds in and around the big display tree at Munganda village included adult males, females, and several incredible males in full display.

Raggiana Bird-of-paradise (PNG) *Paradisaea raggiana*

This is the national bird of Papua New Guinea, endemic to PNG. We first enjoyed outstanding views of this dazzling species at Varirata followed by a lek tree at Kilometre Seventeen where we watched as about ten prime males displaying along with Greater Bird-of-paradise, dancing and shivering their rich reddish flank plumes for each female that appeared.

Blue Bird-of-paradise (PNG) *Paradisaea rudolphi*

We first scoped a female perched near a fruiting tree at the Ambua Lodge followed by several views of both



male and female along the forested edge of Mount Hagen. Even the female of this species is strikingly coloured and patterned.

Lesser Melampitta (NG) *Melampitta lugubris*

First heard and movement seen in the forest above Ambua Lodge followed by outrageous views of a couple birds near Mount Hagen including one individual casually hopping along the open trail.

Greater Melampitta (NG) *Melampitta gigantea*

Calling birds were both above and below the road at Ok Ma, Tabubil and one individual circled us enough that some of us saw it briefly. This species is one of New Guinea's near-mythical birds.

Bowerbirds Ptilonorhynchidae

White-eared Catbird (NE) *Ailuroedus buccoides*

This species was heard by our local guide along the Boystown Road.

Archbold's Bowerbird (NE) *Archboldia papuensis*

A very scarce bird that we were fortunate to all see within only twenty metres as one bird flew over our heads along the Tari Gap and perched on an open branch for several moments offering unobstructed views.

MacGregor's Bowerbird (NE) *Amblyornis macgregoriae*

One male was seen by some of us in the thick vegetation near the Ambua Lodge.

Flame Bowerbird (NG) *Sericulus aureus*

We birded from a vantage point along the Boystown Road and were rewarded with several gorgeous males allowing for unforgettable views of this radiant bird.

Yellow-breasted Bowerbird (NG) *Chlamydera lauterbachii*

We found this local species at two sites near Mount Hagen.

Fawn-breasted Bowerbird (NE) *Chlamydera cerviniventris*

At least fifteen birds that we saw at Pacific Adventist University were complimented by the active bower that we were able to study at close range there.

Crows, Jays & Magpies Corvidae

Grey (Bare-eyed) Crow (NG) *Corvus tristis*

Our first small yelping flocks were seen in Varirata as well as further scattered sightings in Tabubil and Kiunga.

Torresian Crow *Corvus orru*

The typical 'mainland' form we saw primarily in the Port Moresby and Varirata region.

Island Crow *Corvus orru insularis*

Pleasantly common on New Britain were we watched numerous birds daily.

Starlings Sturnidae

Metallic Starling (NE) *Aplonis metallica*

We found this colonial starling to be common along the Elevala River. On days when we passed multiple nesting colonies we estimated numbers up to five hundred birds along the Fly and Elevala rivers; also recorded on the extension to New Britain.

Singing Starling (NE) *Aplonis cantoroides*

First noted in the vicinity of our hotel in Port Moresby followed by many more views near Mount Hagen.

Yellow-eyed Starling (NE) *Aplonis mystacea*

Twenty birds seen well through the scope along the Boystown Road.

Yellow-faced Myna (NG) *Mino dumontii*

Seen almost daily in the lowlands with our first views at the PAU.



Long-tailed Myna*Mino Kreffti*

Numerous birds enjoyed at Pokili and Garu Forests during the extension to New Britain.

Golden Myna (NG)*Mino anais*

First scoped near Kiunga followed by numerous views of this colourful species along the forested edges of the Elevala River.

Old World Sparrows Passeridae**House Sparrow***Passer domesticus*

Present in the Port Moresby area.

Waxbills & Allies Estrildidae**Mountain Firetail (NG)***Oreostruthus fuliginosus*

Up to three of these pretty birds seen daily at Kumul Lodge.

Blue-faced Parrotfinch*Erythrura trichroa*

Excellent views were enjoyed by all of a few birds that fed on seeds of the bamboo that had recently flowered at Ambua Lodge.

Hooded Munia (NG)*Lonchura spectabilis*

Numerous sightings in the highlands with our first views of several birds at the Tari airport.

Grey-headed Munia (PNG)*Lonchura caniceps*

Very nice scope views of several small flocks of these attractive birds along borders of the PAU.

Chestnut-breasted Munia*Lonchura castaneothorax*

Several birds were seen at the PAU following our extension to New Britain.

Bismarck Munia*Lonchura melaena*

About ten birds were seen well perched on the top of tall grasses in New Britain.

Annotated Checklist of Mammals**Short-furred Dasyure (NG)***Murexia longicaudata*

Two or three of these little animals were seen in the immediate vicinity of the Kumul Lodge.

Ringtail Possum sp. (NG)*Pseudochirops [cupreus]*

We had a great encounter with a single animal, probably Coppery Ringtail Possum but identifying these ringtail possums to species level is difficult, feeding on the fruit tray on two consecutive days at the Kumul Lodge as well as an additional sighting in the nearby forest.

Common (Mountain) Cuscus (NG)*Phalanger carmelitae*

One animal was seen in the spotlight as it crossed the road and disappeared into the undergrowth one early morning for those hiking to the top of Mount Hagen.

Big-eared Flying-fox (NG)*Pteropus macrotis*

Numerous animals hanging from the trees and flying over the Elevala River.

Great Flying-fox (NE)*Pteropus neohibernicus*

One representative of this very large species of flying-fox was observed near Kiunga in flight.

Annotated Checklist of Reptiles**New Guinea Crocodile (NG)***Crocodylus novaeguineae*

We had two excellent sightings of this endemic freshwater crocodile on the Elevala River. This is a small crocodile, as the maximum length recorded is about ten feet.



Tropical House Gecko

Hemidactylus frenatus

We saw small numbers of this ubiquitous tropical commensal of man in several of our lodgings.

Other reptiles and amphibians were encountered during the tour including an attractive snake along the Elevala River and presumably Cane Toads near Kiunga, but these species remain unidentified due to the lack of knowledge of PNG herpetology.

Photos on Cover Page: Princess Stephanie's Astrapia, Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Raggiana Bird-of-paradise, Greater Sooty Owl, Wattled Ploughbill, Brown Sicklebill, and Shovel-billed Kookaburra – all photos taken by David Shackelford - RBT PNG July 2008

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