

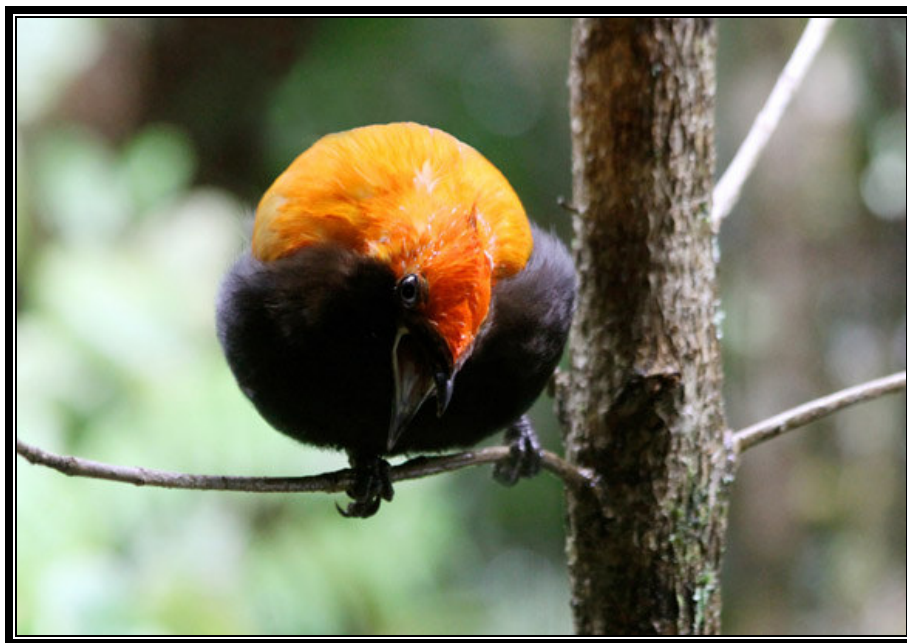


Rockjumper Birding Tours

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Papua New Guinea *Trip Report*

21st July to 7th August 2009



Tour Leaders: David Shackelford and Frank Lambert/David Hoddinott

Top ten birds as voted by participants:

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------------|-----|------------------------|
| 1. | Raggiana Bird-of-paradise | 6. | Ribbon-tailed Astrapia |
| 2. | Southern Crowned Pigeon | 7. | Wattled Ploughbill |
| 3. | Shovel-billed Kookaburra | 8. | King Bird-of-paradise |
| 4. | King-of-Saxony BOP | 9. | Emperor Fairy-Wren |
| 5. | Crested Berrypecker | 10. | New Guinea Woodcock |

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, three species of whistling-duck including Spotted, Wandering, and Plumed, Black-backed Butcherbird, Forest Kingfisher, 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 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 Raggiana Bird-of-paradise. 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. Although their sounds percolated through the forest interior, it took persistence and patience to obtain views of other forest species such as the unique Black Berrypecker, noisy Red-cheeked Parrot, Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Pygmy Drongo, and the stunning Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher. *Papilio* butterflies flashed by with electric blue wings while the ethereal calls of a Painted Quail-Thrush taunted us and we enjoyed scope views of the tough Hook-billed Kingfisher. Other great birds included a close encounter with Black-fronted White-eye, noisy Growling Riflebirds, Spot-winged Monarch, noisy crimson Western Black-capped Lory, and 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 the incomparable Common Paradise-Kingfisher, Pink-spotted and Orange-bellied Fruit-Doves, several Eclectus Parrots including some stellar scope views of crimson females, and superb views of the brilliant Emperor Fairy-Wren, a tiny blue gem secretively bounding through the



undergrowth. We also explored the edge of the Coral Sea where coastal mangroves yielded views of Mangrove Gerygone, Orange-footed Scrubfowl, Shining Flycatcher, and a secretive Mangrove Robin among others.



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, 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 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. Even in the hotel gardens we were soon finding the attractive Rufous-naped Whistler, excellent views of the cute Blue-grey Robin, MacGregor's Bowerbird, the scarce Meyer's Goshawk, and Papuan Boobook by twilight. 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 Loria's Bird-of-paradise, dozens of Tit Berrypeckers, our first Blue and Superb Birds-of-paradise, and outstanding views of the scarce Short-tailed Paradigalla.

Ascending into the steep highlands almost 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, Mottled and Sclater's Whistlers, and Lesser Melampitta. In other areas we managed simply amazing views of the unbelievable male Wattled Ploughbill, Blue-capped Ifrita, Black-throated and the localized Marbled Honeyeaters, Rose-breasted Pygmy-Parrot, and secretive Orange-crowned Fairy-Wren among many others.

On a forested crest in the Tari Valley we scoped a brilliant male Blue Bird-of-Paradise, vocally displaying with a sudden rigid flexing of its wings, and we were fortunate to find the scarce Black Sicklebill as well as several Lawes' Parotia, with the male sporting dazzling wires from its head, emitting electric iridescence! 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, the phenomenal Ribbon-tailed Astrapia, 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! Following the fern-laden walkways adjoining the lodge we were fortunate to find Archbold's Bowerbird, the gorgeous Crested Berrypecker, a pair of confiding Chestnut Forest-Rail, simply unbelievable views of a perched New Guinea Woodcock, and we gawked for several unforgettable minutes at a phenomenally brilliant orange male Crested Bird-of-paradise little more than ten feet away! We finished our highland birding adventures with a morning marvelling at the elaborate breeding displays of Lesser Bird-of-paradise, the appropriately named Ornate Melidectes, the endemic Yellow-breasted Bowerbird, and a surprise sighting of a stellar male Magnificent Bird-of-paradise sporting long tail wires that curl behind its golden back.

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 tending their gardens 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 encountered unusually pleasant weather allowing us to productively bird the accessible degraded forest sites of the Star Mountains foothills. With persistence we found the boldly marked Mountain Peltops, bright Golden and Stout-billed Cuckoo-Shrikes, Spotted and the scarce Obscure Honeyeaters, Orange-breasted Fig-Parrot, several Carola's Parotia, impressive flocks of feeding Rose-breasted Pygmy-Parrot, amazing scope views of the inappropriately named Dusky Lory, White-rumped Robin, the wind chiming Blue-collared Parrot, Obscure Berrypecker only ten feet away, awesome scope views of Papuan Hanging Parrot, Variable Pitohui, and outrageous daytime scope views of a responsive Shovel-billed Kookaburra!

Having already found the petite Torrent Flycatcher, we stopped at the rapids of a hastily flowing watercourse on our way to Tabubil where we found the white-water specialist Salvadori's Teal that swam gracefully through the surging water and later found the and boldly patterned Torrent-lark. 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 the skulky Papuan Babbler, tiny perched Red-flanked Lorikeets, Pink-spotted and Wompoo Fruit-Doves, perched Streaked Lory and the tiny Yellow-capped Pygmy-Parrot, Plain Honeyeater, Lowland Peltops, and outrageous views of a responsive Dwarf Koel.



We also 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.

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 tributary that winds for miles into increasingly remote territory. Exploring this truly wild place was enthralling and we walked along the muddy forest trails finding rarely encountered gems such as the difficult Wallace's Fairy-Wren, Golden and Hooded Monarchs, record numbers of the brilliant Golden Myna, retiring Black-sided Robin, numerous enormous Blyth's Hornbills, Yellow-eyed Starling, and the incomparable King Bird-of-paradise displaying in a tangle of vines above our heads! By twilight we also spot lit calling Marbled Frogmouth and the almost unknown Wallace's Owlet-Nightjar. A final highlight of the main tour materialized while we travelled along the river in the late afternoon when we spotted a colossal Southern Crowned Pigeon displaying 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!

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!

Photo Credit: Crested (Bird-of-paradise) Satinbird and Man canoeing on Elevala River by David Shackelford. Red-breasted Pygmy-parrot, Wattled Ploughbill and Shovel-billed Kookaburra by John Tino



Annotated Checklists of Birds

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows the IOC 2.1 List of: Gill, F. and M. Wright. August 2009. Birds of the World: Recommended English Names. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.

Key to endemic/near endemic abbreviations

NG – endemic to New Guinea

PNG – endemic to Papua New Guinea

NE – near endemic to New Guinea

Cassowaries Casuariidae

Southern Cassowary

Casuarius casuarius

We saw the footprints along the forested edges of the Elevala River and later heard the deep guttural grunts of a nearby bird while watching the King Bird-of-paradise.

Megapodes Megapodiidae

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

Heard regularly in lowland areas and nest mounds were also seen at Varirata and Ekame Lodge (now called the Kwatu Lodge, but for sanity's sake the name will remain Ekame for the purposes of this trip report).

Orange-footed Scrubfowl

Megapodius reinwardt

We had great views of two birds while exploring the Hsui Mangroves.

Ducks, Geese & Swans Anatidae

Spotted Whistling-Duck

Dendrocygna eytoni

A dozen birds were scoped perched in a large tree at Pacific Adventist University followed by a few more birds near the Brown River.

Plumed Whistling-Duck

Dendrocygna eytoni

We were fortunate to find a single bird, a vagrant to New Guinea, which we scoped at the Pacific Adventist University.

Wandering Whistling-Duck

Dendrocygna arcuata

About forty birds were seen at the Pacific Adventist University and again along the Brown River area.

Salvadori's Teal (NG)

Salvadorina waigiensis

We scoped two swimming amongst the rocks on a larger river near Tabubil. This is a highly-desired bird on any New Guinea tour.

Green Pygmy Goose

Nettapus pulchellus

We found ten birds swimming in a backwater lagoon while approaching the Hsui Mangroves.

Pacific Black Duck

Anas superciliosa

Good numbers were seen at the Pacific Adventist University.

Grebes Podicipedidae

Australasian Grebe

Tachybaptus novaehollandiae

About ten birds were seen at Pacific Adventist University and again near the Brown River.



Ibises & Spoonbills Threskiornithidae

Australian (White) Ibis *Threskiornis molucca*

About ten five were seen in the vicinity of the Brown River.

Straw-necked Ibis *Threskiornis spinicollis*

A few birds were observed at the Port Moresby airport.

Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns Ardeidae

Rufous (Nankeen) Night-Heron *Nycticorax caledonicus*

Several birds were seen at the Pacific Adventist University and again near the Brown River.

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

Only seen once along the Elevala River.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus*

Good numbers seen in the Port Moresby region with a few scattered sightings thereafter.

Great-billed Heron *Ardea sumatrana*

We had a flight view on the Fly River of this huge heron while checking out a White-bellied Sea Eagle.

Some of us also saw an individual in flight near the Cloudlands Hotel in Tabubil!

Eastern Great Egret *Ardea modesta*

Widespread in small numbers in the lowlands.

Yellow-billed (Intermediate) Egret *Egretta intermedia*

Widespread and seen almost daily in small numbers while birding in the lowlands.

Pied Heron *Egretta picata*

We saw about six of this beautiful heron at PAU.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

A few birds were seen at the PAU and again near the Brown River area.

Frigatebirds Fregatidae

Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel*

One bird was seen flying above the Hsui Mangroves.

Cormorants Phalacrocoracidae

Little Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*

Several birds at the PAU followed by numerous birds at the Brown and Fly Rivers.

Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*

Common in the Port Moresby area with numerous sightings.

Anhinga & Darters Anhingidae

Oriental Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*

Several birds were seen at the PAU and again near the Brown River.

Hawks, Eagles & Kites Accipitridae

Pacific Baza (Crested Hawk) *Aviceda subcristata*

This attractive raptor was seen almost daily in the Kiunga and Elevala River areas.

Long-tailed Honey Buzzard (NE) *Henicopernis longicauda*

Just one of these distinctive birds was seen flying over the Elevala River.

Australian (Black-shouldered) Kite *Elanus axillaries*



A few on the way from Mt. Hagen to Kumul Lodge.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

Up to fifty birds were seen daily in the Mt. Hagen area and one or two per day in the Port Moresby region.

Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus*

Numerous birds were seen in the Port Moresby area.

Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus*

Seen regularly throughout the tour with especially nice views during our river trip.

White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*

Superb views of this huge fish-eating eagle on the Fly River.

Papuan Harrier (NG) *Circus spilothorax*

A few birds were seen at scattered sites during the tour quartering low over grasslands; our first views were along the Brown River.

Variable Goshawk *Accipiter hiogaster*

Widespread and seen several times along the Brown and Elevala Rivers.

Brown Goshawk *Accipiter fasciatus*

A few scattered sightings of this widespread raptor with especially nice views at the Tari airport.

Grey-headed Goshawk *Accipiter poliocephalus*

We had great scope views near Tabubil followed by further scope studies along the Boystown Road.

Collared Sparrowhawk *Accipiter cirrocephalus*

One bird was seen near Mount Hagen on the way to the cultural event.

Meyer's Goshawk (NG) *Accipiter meyerianus*

An uncommon bird, we saw one bird perched distantly at the Ambua Lodge.

Papuan (New Guinea Harpy) Eagle (NG) *Harpyopsis novaeguineae*

We were very fortunate to see a massive adult cruising over the road above the Ambua Lodge.

Falcons and Kestrels Falconidae

Australian Hobby *Falco cenchroides*

One of these sleek falcons was seen in the Tari Valley.

Brown Falcon *Falco berigora*

One bird was seen in Port Moresby.

Rails, Gallinules & Coots Rallidae

Chestnut Forest Crake (NG) *Rallina forbesi*

We first heard this often secretive species near Ambua and later had incredible views on two occasions of a male and female near the Kumul Lodge.

Red-necked Crake *Rallina tricolor*

We had amazing views of two birds that responded to playback along the Dablin Creek Road and proceeded to walk across the road in the open!

Plain (Rufous-tailed) Bush-hen *Amaurornis olivacea*

We only heard this species along the Dablin Creek Road

Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*

At least sixty birds were recorded in the vicinity of Port Moresby with excellent views at the Pacific Adventist University.

Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa*



About ten were at Pacific Adventist University with another along the Brown River.

Plovers & Lapwings Charadriidae

Masked Lapwing

Vanellus miles

Numerous birds were seen in the vicinity of Port Moresby with our first views at the PAU.

Little Ringed Plover

Charadrius dubius

One bird was observed at length around some shallow pools between Tabubil and Kiunga.

Jacanas Jacanidae

Comb-crested Jacana

Irediparra gallinacea

Only two were found at the Pacific Adventist University followed by another along the Brown River.

Sandpipers Scolopacidae

New Guinea Woodcock (NG)

Scolopax rosenbergii

We ventured out at dusk and were rewarded with simply incredible views of a perched bird for several minutes after listening to its bizarre call echoing through the boggy forest.

Coursers and Pratincoles Glareolidae

Australian Pratincole

Stiltia isabella

A couple birds were seen on two occasions with our best views of two sleek individuals along the Tari airstrip.

Pigeons & Doves Columbidae

Common Pigeon

Colomba livia

Available in urban areas.

Metallic Pigeon

Colomba vitiensis

We were fortunate to have three birds offer a prolonged flight view while scanning from Kilometer 17 near Kiunga.

Brown (Slender-billed) Cuckoo-Dove

Macropygia amboinensis

This species was widespread and common in small numbers from the lowlands up to mid-level mountains.

Black-billed Cuckoo-Dove

Macropygia nigrirostris

Seen mostly in the highlands with some excellent scope studies.

Great Cuckoo-Dove (NE)

Reinwardtoena reinwardtii

We had some nice flight views of this species including one memorable view near the Shovel-billed Kookaburra site.

Stephan's Emerald Dove

Chalcophaps stephani

A few scattered sightings near Kiunga and along the Elevala River.

Thick-billed Ground Pigeon (NG)

Trugon terrestris

This retiring species was heard calling from the forest vicinity of Kiunga.

Peaceful Dove

Geopelia placida

Several of these widespread birds were seen at the PAU with a few further sightings along the Brown River.

Bar-shouldered Dove

Geopelia humeralis



We found this highly localized bird in New Guinea at Pacific Adventist University and again along the Brown River.

Cinnamon Ground Dove *Gallicolumba rufigula*

We flushed this shy forest understory bird near Kiunga.

Southern Crowned-Pigeon (NG) *Goura scheepmakeri*

Always one of the main target birds along the Elevala River, this amazing bird did not let us down. We had fantastic prolonged views of a displaying bird; simply unbeatable!

Wompoo (Magnificent) Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus magnificus*

Several of these beautiful birds seen in Varirata followed by other scattered sightings in the lowlands thereafter.

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

The commonest fruit-dove on this tour and seen regularly in the lowlands.

Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove (NG) *Ptilinopus aurantiifrons*

Two birds flew by at the PAU followed by six perched birds in the morning birding along the Brown River area.

Superb Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus superbus*

Seen in the Kiunga and Elevala River areas with nice scope views of a male.

Beautiful Fruit-Dove (NG) *Ptilinopus pulchellus*

We first found two of these often scarce birds in Varirata followed by excellent scope views along the road to Kiunga.

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

Good numbers were seen in the Port Moresby and Kiunga areas with up to ten each day.

Dwarf Fruit-Dove (NG) *Ptilinopus nanus*

Seen and heard on several days in the Kiunga area, but only seen in flight.

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

We first enjoyed unbelievable scope views in Varirata followed by several other flight views near Kiunga and along the Elevala River.

Shining (Rufescent) Imperial-Pigeon (NG) *Ducula chalconota*

We only managed flight views of one individual in the highlands.

Pinon Imperial-Pigeon (NG) *Ducula pinon*

We enjoyed daily views of this massive pigeon in the Kiunga and Elevala areas.

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

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

Zoe Imperial-Pigeon (NG) *Ducula zoeae*

Small numbers of this distinctive species with a black chest band were encountered at Varirata, along the Elevala River, and around Kiunga.

Torresian Imperial-Pigeon (NE) *Ducula spilorrhoea*

Numerous birds were seen in the Port Moresby area with our first sighting at the PAU our first afternoon.

Papuan Mountain-Pigeon (NE) *Gymnophaps albertisii*

Widespread and often seen in large flocks throughout the tour, not only in the mountains but also in lowland areas.

Cockatoos Cacatuidae

Palm Cockatoo (NE) *Probosciger aterrimus*

This magnificent species was encountered almost daily in the lowlands of Kiunga and Elevala areas with amazing perched views along the river.



Sulphur-crested Cockatoo*Cacatua galerita*

Observed in the lowlands of Kiunga and Fly River areas where it was fairly common.

Parrots Psittacidae**Orange-fronted Hanging Parrot (NG)***Loriculus aurantiifrons*

We enjoyed outrageous scope views of two individuals near the Ok Menga area of Tabubil.

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

Several of these tiny birds were seen both in flight and perched in the scope near Kiunga.

Buff-faced Pygmy-Parrot (NG)*Micropsitta pusio*

One of these parrots was first seen in Varirata and then heard the following day along the Brown River area.

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

One bird first seen amazingly well in the Tari Valley only twenty feet away followed by further great views on the Dablin Creek Road, where at least fifteen were feeding in the taller trees.

(Greater) Streaked Lory (NG)*Chalcopsitta sintillata*

Several birds were seen in flight in the Varirata area followed by further views of several perched birds scoped at length and seen in flight in the Kiunga area and Elevala River.

Dusky Lory (NG)*Pseudeos fuscata*

Scattered flight views from Tabubil to Kiunga with some awesome scope views of two birds checking out a nest cavity along the Dablin Creek Road.

Coconut (Rainbow) Lorikeet*Trichoglossus haematodus*

Common and widespread in the lowlands and hills.

Goldie's Lorikeet (NG)*Psitteuteles goldiei*

We found this species in the highlands of Mount Hagen but only managed flight views.

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

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

Red-flanked Lorikeet (NE)*Charmosyna placentis*

Fairly numerous this year in the lowlands with some excellent scope views especially in the Kiunga area.

Papuan Lorikeet (NG)*Charmosyna papou*

Small numbers were seen in the mountains including some nice perched views; this must rate as one of the world's most beautiful parrots!

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

We found a number of small flocks flying by at rapid speeds in the highlands with perched scope views at the highlands of Tari.

Yellow-billed Lorikeet (NG)*Neopsittacus musschenbroekii*

Small numbers below Kumul Lodge and in the Ambua Lodge areas.

Orange-billed Lorikeet (NG)*Neopsittacus pullicauda*

Several birds at both Kumul Lodge and the Ambua Lodge areas.

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

Up to ten seen 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.

Modest Tiger-Parrot (NG)*Psittacella modesta*

We were very fortunate for everyone to have excellent views of this scarce highland endemic above the Ambua Lodge.

Madarasz's Tiger-Parrot (NG)*Psittacella madaraszii*

Three birds were studied feeding quietly only fifteen feet away for twenty minutes near the Ambua Lodge.

Red-cheeked Parrot (NE) *Geoffroyus geoffroyi*

Common throughout the tour in lowland areas with our first sighting at the PAU, Varirata, Brown River, and in the Kiunga – Elevala River areas.

Blue-collared Parrot (NG) *Geoffroyus simplex*

At least five of these vocal birds were seen in flight overhead at Dablin Creek Road.

Eclectus Parrot (NE) *Eclectus roratus*

Seen regularly in small numbers on the mainland, though no more than fifteen per day.

Papuan King-Parrot (NG) *Alisterus chloropterus*

Seen on several occasions with flight views and one cooperative perched bird scoped in the Tari Valley.

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

Fairly common in the lowlands and foothills, especially in the Tabubil area where we scoped numerous birds.

Double-eyed Fig Parrot *Cyclopsitta diophthalma*

We had several sighting in the lowlands near Kiunga including some fine perched scope views of this tiny but attractive species.

Flame-headed (Large) Fig Parrot (NG) *Psittaculirostris desmarestii*

We were fortunate to have a perched view of this scarce parrot along the Elevala River.

Cuckoos and Coucals Cuculidae

Ivory-billed (Greater Black) Coucal (NG) *Centropus menbeki*

We first heard this shy species along the Brown River and then saw several birds later along the Elevala River.

Black-billed (Lesser Black) Coucal (NG) *Centropus bernsteini*

Singles heard near Kiunga and then seen very well on two occasions along the Elevala River.

Pheasant Coucal *Centropus phasianinus*

Numerous birds seen during the first few days of the tour in the Port Moresby surroundings.

Dwarf Koel (NG) *Microdynamis parva*

We enjoyed incredible views of this species responding to playback along the Boystown Road.

Australian (Pacific) Koel *Eudynamis cyanocephala*

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

Channel-billed Cuckoo *Scythrops novaehollandiae*

Several massive birds were observed along the Elevala and Fly Rivers

Rufous-throated Bronze-Cuckoo (NG) *Chrysococcyx ruficollis*

After hearing this species we finally managed nice perched scope views above Ambua.

White-eared Bronze-Cuckoo (NG) *Chrysococcyx meyeri*

We enjoyed exceptional views of this attractive cuckoo on several occasions in the Tabubil area.

Little Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx minutillus*

One bird was seen very well at Varirata during the afternoon and two more along the Brown River. 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.

Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo (NE) *Cacomantis castaneiventris*

We found a singing bird at Dablin Creek Road with further scope studies near the Ok Menga area.

Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cacomantis flabelliformis*



Heard only in the highlands.

Brush Cuckoo*Cacomantis variolosus*

A common bird that was seen occasionally and frequently heard.

Typical Owls Strigidae**Jungle (Papuan) Boobook (NG)***Ninox theomacha*

One bird was seen in the spot light at the Ambua Lodge.

Frogmouths Podargidae**Marbled Frogmouth (NE)***Podargus ocellatus*

Three of these gigantic night birds seen at a daytime roost in Varirata

Papuan Frogmouth (NE)*Podargus papuensis*

Essentially the first birds of this tour were several magnificent roosting birds together in a tree at the Pacific Adventist University. We scoped these astounding birds in intimate detail.

Nightjars & Allies Caprimulgidae**Papuan Nightjar (NG)***Eurostopodus papuensis*

One bird was seen briefly as it flushed from the road pre-dawn along the Boystown Road.

Large-tailed Nightjar*Caprimulgus macrurus*

One bird was called into view and spot lit at Varirata.

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

Despite our efforts, one bird was only heard and glimpsed near the Ekame Lodge.

Wallace's Owlet-Nightjar (NG)*Aegotheles wallacii*

We were very surprised to find a calling pair of this seldom recorded species at the Ekame Lodge in the early pre-dawn which we spot lit for excellent views.

Mountain Owlet-Nightjar (NG)*Aegotheles albertisi*

Heard nightly around Kumul Lodge but not seen.

Treeswifts Hemiprocnidae**Moustached Treeswift (NE)***Hemiprogne mystacea*

Seen regularly in the lowlands near Kiunga and Tabubil including some great flight and close perched views.

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

Abundant birds daily especially in the hills and mountains.

Mountain Swiftlet (NG)*Aerodramus hirundinaceus*

This endemic was also abundant through our time in the higher areas of the tour.

Uniform Swiftlet*Aerodramus vanikorensis*

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

Papuan Spine-tailed Swift (NG)*Mearnsia novaeguineae*

Small numbers were found foraging above the Kiunga area and Elevela River.



Rollers Coraciidae

Oriental Dollarbird*Eurystomus orientalis*

Seen regularly in the lowlands with up to thirty per day near Kiunga.

Kingfishers Alcedinidae

Hook-billed Kingfisher (NG)*Melidora macrorrhina*

One of New Guinea's most elusive kingfishers, we were delighted when one bird showed exceptionally well out first morning in Varirata through the scope only thirty feet away!

Galatea (Common) Paradise-Kingfisher (NE)*Tanysiptera galatea*

Three birds seen exceptionally well along the Brown River – a stunning and memorable species.

Little Paradise-Kingfisher (NG)*Tanysiptera hydrocharis*

Because of recent flooding access to proper varzea habitat was limited and we only managed to hear this uncommon species in the Elevala River forest area.

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

We were thrilled to obtain unbelievable views of this stunning bird at Varirata National Park.

Shovel-billed Kookaburra (NG)*Clytoceyx rex*

In the afternoon near Tabubil we concentrated on this species and were rewarded with amazing ten minutes views of a cooperative bird perched in the scope!

Blue-winged Kookaburra*Dacelo leachii*

A few of these massive kingfishers were seen in the Port Moresby area.

Rufous-bellied Kookaburra (NG)*Dacelo gaudichaud*

Seen and heard in the lowlands and hills on several different dates with up to six birds in a single day at the Elevala River.

Forest Kingfisher*Todirhamphus macleayii*

We had great views of this smart kingfisher at the PAU and again the following day in the savannah of Varirata.

Collared Kingfisher*Todirhamphus chloris*

Four birds recorded at the Hsui Mangroves

Sacred Kingfisher*Todirhamphus sanctus*

This common wintering bird from Australia was widespread and frequently seen in the lowlands and hills.

Yellow-billed Kingfisher (NE)*Syma torotoro*

We first enjoyed fabulous views of this species in Varirata National Park followed by another close encounter along the Elevala River forest.

Mountain Kingfisher (NG)*Syma megarhyncha*

Heard near Ambua Lodge but sadly never seen.

Chameleon (Variable) Dwarf Kingfisher*Ceyx lepidus*

One bird was seen by some in Varirata.

Azure Kingfisher*Alcedo azurea*

This Australian species was only heard in Varirata National Park.

Common Kingfisher*Alcedo atthis*

Three birds total were seen at the PAU and Brown River areas.

Bee-eaters Meropidae

Rainbow Bee-eater*Merops ornatus*

This Australasian migrant was fairly common throughout the tour, especially in the lowlands.

Hornbills Bucerotidae

Blyth's Hornbill (NE)

Aceros plicatus

This species is always most common along the Elevala and Fly rivers, where we saw it daily in numbers up to 50. The only hornbills we saw elsewhere were a few near Tabubil.

Pittas Pittidae

Red-bellied (Blue-breasted) Pitta

Pitta erythrogaster

We heard this reclusive species only in Varirata.

Hooded Pitta

Pitta sordida

We heard this species regularly along the Elevala River and in the Kiunga area but had poor response to playback.

Bowerbirds Ptilonorhynchidae

White-eared Catbird (NG)

Ailuroedus buccoides

We heard this species along the Boystown Road.

Archbold's Bowerbird (NG)

Archboldia papuensis

A female and probably immature seen regularly around Kumul Lodge and occasionally on or below the feeder station.

Macgregor's Bowerbird (NG)

Amblyornis macgregoriae

A female was seen by some of the group at the Ambua Lodge.

Yellow-breasted Bowerbird (NG)

Chlamydera lauterbachi

Near Munganda village below Kumul Lodge we found several confiding individuals.

Fawn-breasted Bowerbird (NE)

Chlamydera cerviniventris

We saw at least five birds at Pacific Adventist University and later at other sites in the Port Moresby area; we were also able to study an active bower.

Australasian Treecreepers Climacteridae

Papuan Treecreeper (NG)

Cormobates placens

We only heard this species calling from inside the forest above Ambua.

Australasian Wrens Maluridae

Wallace's Fairywren (NG)

Sipodotus wallacii

We were fortunate to find several of these birds in the vicinity of Kiunga and Elevala.

Emperor Fairywren (NG)

Malurus cyanocephalus

Two birds seen along the Brown River and later a glorious male in the open along the Boystown Road; a stunning species when the male is in the sunlight.

White-shouldered Fairywren (NG)

Malurus alboscapulatus

Fairly widespread and seen at several sites below Kumul Lodge, at Varirata, and in the Kiunga lowlands.

Orange-crowned Fairywren (NG)

Clytomyias insignis

A small group was encountered twice near Ambua Lodge and seen remarkably well for this bamboo-loving species.



Honeyeaters Meliphagidae

- Spotted Honeyeater (NG)** *Xanthotis polygramma*
A few birds were seen on the Dablin Creek Road. A strikingly marked honeyeater.
- Tawny-breasted Honeyeater (NE)** *Xanthotis flaviventer*
Common in lowlands and hills, this species was seen on seven days with a maximum daily count of six.
- Black-throated Honeyeater (NG)** *Lichenostomus subfrenatus*
This canopy-loving species was seen above Ambua and again heard near the Kumul Lodge.
- Obscure Honeyeater (NG)** *Lichenostomus obscurus*
Several birds were seen well in the vicinity of Tabubil; sometimes this is quite a tricky species.
- Yellow-tinted Honeyeater (NE)** *Lichenostomus flavescens*
Several were seen at the Gateway Hotel, Port Moresby.
- Hill-forest (Mountain) Meliphaga (NG)** *Meliphaga orientalis*
Seen in the Tabubil area and below Kumul Lodge, with up to ten a day.
- Scrub (White-eared) Honeyeater (NG)** *Meliphaga albonotata*
Several along the Dablin Creek Road.
- Mimic Honeyeater (Meliphaga) (NG)** *Meliphaga analoga*
Several sightings in the lowland areas throughout the tour with our first birds recorded at Varirata National Park.
- Graceful Honeyeater (Meliphaga) (NE)** *Meliphaga gracilis*
This confusing species was identified along the Brown and Elevala River areas.
- White-throated Honeyeater** *Melithreptus albogularis*
Up to eight birds were found in savannah along the Varirata National Park entrance road.
- Plain Honeyeater (NG)** *Pycnopygius ixoides*
Two vocal birds were scoped on the Boys Town Road, Kiunga
- Marbled Honeyeater (NG)** *Pycnopygius cinereus*
Two of these scarce birds were seen very well below the Ambua Lodge on the way to the airport.
- Streak-headed Honeyeater (NG)** *Pycnopygius stictocephalus*
Seen only near Kiunga where we scoped three birds.
- Meyer's Friarbird (NG)** *Philemon meyeri*
Heard only along Boys Town Road
- Helmeted (New Guinea) Friarbird** *Philemon buceroides*
Common in the New Guinea lowlands and recorded throughout the tour.
- Common Smoky Honeyeater (NG)** *Melipotes fumigatus*
Common in the high mountains, with up to twenty daily at Kumul and Ambua lodges. 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.
- 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 near the Ambua Lodge.
- Belford's Melidectes (NG)** *Melidectes belfordi*
Most common high and heard constantly with dozens in the Kumul Lodge and Ambua areas.
- Ornate Melidectes (NG)** *Melidectes torquatus*
This is a common bird in the vicinity of Kama Village where we had fabulous views of several of these attractive birds.
- Rufous-backed Honeyeater (PNG)** *Ptiloprora guisei*
Small numbers seen daily around Ambua Lodge.



- Black-backed (Grey-streaked) Honeyeater (NG)** *Ptiloprora perstriata*
Daily numbers of up to ten around Kumul Lodge and six in the Ambua area.
- Long-billed Honeyeater (NG)** *Melilestes megarhynchus*
Just a few scattered sightings beginning in Tabubil to Kiunga.
- Silver-eared Honeyeater (NG)** *Lichmera alboauricularis*
Several birds were found en route to the Hsui Mangroves, a highly localized species on this tour.
- Rufous-banded Honeyeater (NE)** *Conopophila albogularis*
Several birds were found at the Pacific Adventist University and along the Brown River area.
- Ruby-throated Myzomela (NG)** *Myzomela eques*
We had excellent scope views of this species first at Kilometer 17 and again at the Boystown Road.
- Dusky Myzomela** *Myzomela eques*
We found this uncommon species first at Varirata and again along the Brown River.
- Black Myzomela (NG)** *Myzomela negrita*
Three birds were scoped at the edge of the forest at Varirata National Park.
- Red-headed Myzomela** *Myzomela erythrocephala*
One bird was seen on the day we visited the Brown River.
- Midget (Mountain Red-headed) Myzomela (NG)** *Myzomela adolphinae*
We had several nice sightings of this attractive species in the highlands with our best views near the Kumul Lodge.
- Red-collared Myzomela (NG)** *Myzomela rosenbergii*
We enjoyed almost daily sightings of this very attractive honeyeater in the highlands.
- Green-backed Honeyeater** *Timeliopsis fallax*
Two birds were found and seen well in the Tabubil area.
- Tawny Straightbill (NG)** *Timeliopsis griseigula*
Some people were able to see one of these scarce birds in a large mixed flock behind the Ekame Lodge.

Thornbills & Allies Acanthizidae

- Rusty Mouse-Warbler (NG)** *Crateroscelis murina*
One bird was seen at Varirata with later sightings between Tabubil and Kiunga.
- Mountain Mouse-Warbler (NG)** *Crateroscelis robusta*
Up to three seen daily near both Kumul and Ambua Lodges.
- Pale-billed Scrubwren (NG)** *Sericornis spilodera*
Three birds were seen well in a mixed flock at Varirata.
- Papuan Scrubwren (NG)** *Sericornis papuensis*
Also seen daily at Kumul Lodge and Ambua Lodge.
- Large Scrubwren (NG)** *Sericornis nouhuysi*
Three at Ambua and up to three per day at Kumul Lodge.
- Buff-faced Scrubwren (NG)** *Sericornis perspicillatus*
Seen almost daily in small numbers at Ambua and Kumul Lodges.
- Treefern (Brown-breasted) Gerygone (NG)** *Gerygone ruficollis*
Heard almost daily and seen in the mountains near both Kumul and Ambua Lodges; its song is one of the beautiful and characteristic sounds of the montane forest.
- Mangrove Gerygone (NG)** *Gerygone levigaster*
We encountered several individuals in the Hsui Mangroves.
- Large-billed Gerygone** *Gerygone magnirostris*
Seen and heard along the Elevala River.



Yellow-bellied Gerygone (NG) *Gerygone chrysogaster*

A bird of the lowlands, a few were seen near Kiunga.

Ashy (Grey) Gerygone (NG) *Gerygone cinerea*

A flock of about six were seen on Max's Trail below Kumul Lodge.

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, and several were seen in both areas.

Australasian Babblers Pomatosromidae**Papuan (Rufous) Babbler (NG)** *Pomatostomus isidorei*

Despite the cryptic behavior of this species we managed incredible views of up to a dozen birds near Kiunga.

Satinbirds Cnemophilidae**Loria's Satinbird (Bird-of-paradise) (NG)** *Cnemophilus loriae*

Numerous males and females were seen in the vicinity of the Ambua Lodge especially around the fruiting tree, and again near the Kumul Lodge.

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

A phenomenal adult male was seen at the Kumul Lodge feeding only a few meters away!

Berrypeckers Melanocharitidae**Obscure Berrypecker (NG)** *Melanocharis arfakiana*

We saw this species very well on the Dablin Creek Road. This enigmatic species was almost unknown until discovered to be regular around Tabubil.

Black Berrypecker (NG) *Melanocharis nigra*

Three observed at Varirata National Park.

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

Several observed in the highlands near Kumul and Ambua Lodge.

Fan-tailed Berrypecker (NG) *Melanocharis versteri*

Fairly common this year with almost daily sightings in the highlands including some stellar males.

Pygmy Longbill (Honeyeater) (NG) *Oedistoma pygmaeum*

One bird was sighted along the Dablin Creek Road.

Green-crowned (Yellow-bellied) Longbill (NG) *Toxorhamphus novaeguineae*

We found this fast-moving species near Kiunga.

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

About twenty seen daily in the grounds of Ambua Lodge and several in the vicinity of the Kumul Lodge.

Crested Berrypecker (NG) *Paramythia montium*

Small numbers seen daily around Kumul Lodge offering incredible views of this colorful species.

Whipbirds and Jewel-babblers Eupetidae**Spotted Jewel-babbler (NG)** *Ptilorrhoa leucosticta*

We only heard this species calling in the forest near the Kumul Lodge.



- Blue Jewel-babbler (NG)** *Ptilorrhoa caerulescens*
Despite numerous attempts we only heard this beautiful but elusive species near Kiunga.
- Chestnut-backed Jewel-babbler (NG)** *Ptilorrhoa castanonota*
Heard in Varirata and near Tabubil but never seen.
- Painted Quail-thrush (NG)** *Cinclosoma ajax*
Heard only in Varirata.

Boatbills Machaerirhynchidae

- Yellow-breasted Boatbill (NG)** *Machaerirhynchus flaviventer*
We found one bird on the Dablin Creek Road, seemingly a little high in elevation for this species.
- Black-breasted Boatbill (NG)** *Machaerirhynchus nigripectus*
This attractive species was seen almost daily around the Kumul and Ambua Lodges.

Butcherbirds & Allies Cracticidae

- Black Butcherbird** *Cracticus quoyi*
First seen at the Ambua Lodge with several more noisy birds in the Tabubil area.
- Black-backed Butcherbird (NE)** *Cracticus mentalis*
Several of these localized birds were seen 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.
- Mountain Peltops (NG)** *Peltops montanus*
Fairly conspicuous this year with several nice sightings between the Ambua and Tabubil areas with one unexpected bird at Varirata.
- Lowland Peltops (NG)** *Peltops blainvillii*
One seen on Boys Town Road with another sighting along the Elevela River.

Woodswallows Artamidae

- White-breasted Woodswallow** *Artamus leucorhynchus*
Common in the Port Moresby area and lowlands.
- Great Woodswallow (NG)** *Artamus maximus*
Conspicuous at the Ambua Lodge and a few elsewhere in the highlands.

Cuckoo-shrikes Campephagidae

- Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina novaehollandiae*
This Australian migrant was first noted at Varirata with others were seen in the Kiunga area.
- Stout-billed Cuckoo-shrike (NG)** *Coracina caeruleo-grisea*
Among New Guinea's cuckoo-shrikes, this large bird is particularly impressive. We saw our first at Varirata with two more birds along the Dablin Creek Road.
- Boyer's Cuckoo-shrike (NG)** *Coracina boyeri*
Fairly common between sightings at Varirata, Tabubil, and the Kiunga areas.
- White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina papuensis*
Widespread in the lowlands where large flocks were seen in the areas surrounding Port Moresby.
- Hooded Cuckooshrike (NG)** *Coracina longicauda*
Two small groups of this impressive cuckoo-shrike was seen near Ambua.
- Common Cicadabird** *Coracina tenuirostris*



We first found this species in Varirata.

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

We found this species on several occasions near Tabubil.

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

Several nice sightings in the Tabubil area.

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

We had great views of this species on several occasions in the Ambua area and heard the antiphonal duet between the male and female.

Golden Cuckoo-shrike (NG) *Campochaera sloetii*

This is always a popular bird and we saw several beautiful birds on the Dablin Creek Road.

Varied Triller *Lalage leucomela*

Regularly encountered in the lowlands and foothills throughout the tour in small numbers.

Sittellas Neosittidae

Papuan Sittella (NG) *Neositta papuensis*

A flock of at least twenty above Ambua Lodge.

Black Sittella (NG) *Neositta miranda*

Two flocks of at least ten birds total were seen very well above the Ambua feeding like nuthatches.

Shriketits Falcunculidae

Wattled Ploughbill (NG) *Eulacestoma nigropectus*

A male seen wonderfully on one memorable occasion along the road above Ambua, and later another more briefly near the Kumul Lodge.

Goldenface (Dwarf Whistler) (NG) *Pachycare flavogriseum*

This attractive species was seen well in Varirata.

Whistlers Pachycephalidae

Mottled Whistler (NG) *Rhagologus leucostigma*

We enjoyed some nice sightings of the often scarce species at the Ambua Lodge and again in the Mount Hagen highlands.

Rufous-naped Whistler (NG) *Aleadryas rufinucha*

This distinctive whistler was seen nearly every day in the highlands around Kumul and Ambua Lodges; at Kumul they were particularly tame.

Rusty Whistler (NG) *Pachycephala hyperythra*

One bird was seen on the Dablin Creek Road.

Brown-backed Whistler (PNG) *Pachycephala modesta*

We encountered this whistler several times in the highlands, especially above Ambua.

Sclater's Whistler (NG) *Pachycephala soror*

This attractive whistler was seen on several occasion in the highlands both near Ambua and Kumul.

Regent Whistler (NG) *Pachycephala schlegelii*

Another attractive whistler that was seen regularly in the highlands with sightings both at Kumul Lodge and Ambua Lodge.

Black-headed Whistler (NG) *Pachycephala monacha*

Seen first in the Tari Valley with other sightings near Tabubil.

White-bellied Whistler (NE) *Pachycephala leucogastra*



We had great views of this uncommon species in the open savannah of Varirata.

Little (Rufous) Shrike-Thrush *Colluricincla megarhyncha*

Encountered first in Varirata with a few other scattered encounters later in the tour.

Variable Pitohui (NG) *Pitohui kirhocephalus*

Singles seen on successive dates near Kiunga and Tabubil.

Hooded Pitohui (NG) *Pitohui dichrous*

Only one seen at Varirata National Park where good numbers of at least a dozen birds were observed at length. This aposematically-colored bird is the traditional “poisonbird” as it was the first bird species discovered to possess poisonous compounds in its tissues.

White-bellied Pitohui (NG) *Pitohui incertus*

Heard along the Elevala River.

Rusty Pitohui (NG) *Pitohui ferrugineus*

Heard but not seen in Varirata.

Crested Pitohui (NG) *Pitohui cristatus*

We heard its remarkably long pulsing song along the Boystown Road.

Shrikes Laniidae

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach*

Regularly encountered in the highlands in open grassland.

Figbirds and Orioles Oriolidae

Green Figbird *Sphecotheres viridis*

Several at Pacific Adventist University.

Brown Oriole (NG) *Oriolus szalayi*

Small numbers encountered daily at Varirata and around Kiunga.

Drongos Dicruridae

Pygmy (Papuan) Drongo (NG) *Chaetorhynchus papuensis*

One seen very well in Varirata where this is a regular but rather scarce species.

Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus bracteatus*

Encountered almost every day in the lowlands and lower hills.

Fantails Rhipiduridae

Willie Wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys*

Very widespread, being seen every day throughout the trip.

Northern Fantail *Rhipidura rufiventris*

Only seen in the Tabubil area.

Sooty Thicket-Fantail (NG) *Rhipidura threnothorax*

One seen and others heard in the Tabubil area.

Black Thicket-Fantail (NG) *Rhipidura maculipectus*

Two birds were seen by some of this skulking species at Varirata and then later heard along the Brown River.

White-bellied Thicket-Fantail (NG) *Rhipidura leucothorax*

Heard and seen on several occasions with out best views near Kiunga.

Black Fantail (NG) *Rhipidura atra*



Seen on most days in the highlands with some excellent encounters of both males and females.

Chestnut-bellied Fantail (NG) *Rhipidura hyperythra*

Several were seen at Varirata National Park.

Friendly Fantail (NG) *Rhipidura albolimbata*

Relatively common in the highlands, with numerous sightings almost daily around Kumul and Ambua Lodges.

Dimorphic Fantail (NG) *Rhipidura brachyrhyncha*

We enjoyed several sightings of this active species near Ambua and singles near the Kumul Lodge.

Rufous-backed Fantail (NG) *Rhipidura rufidorsa*

Two of these scarce fantails were seen in a large mixed flock behind the Ekame Lodge.

Monarchs Monarchidae

Black Monarch (Fantail Monarch) (NG) *Monarcha axillaris*

This species was observed at the Ambua Lodge.

Spot-winged Monarch (NG) *Monarcha guttulus*

Singles seen twice in Varirata with another bird in the forest behind the Ekame Lodge in a mixed flock.

Hooded Monarch (NG) *Monarcha manadensis*

Two of these scarce monarchs were seen in the forest near Kwatu Lodge.

Black-winged Monarch *Monarcha frater*

We first found this species along the Brown River with further excellent views at the Dablin Creek Road.

Golden Monarch (NG) *Monarcha chrysomela*

First seen at the Brown River with several very nice views in the Kiunga area.

Frilled Monarch (NG) *Arses telescopthalmus*

We enjoyed several sightings of this attractive monarch in Varirata followed by further encounters in the lowlands near Kiunga.

Torrentlark (NG) *Grallina bruijni*

One bird was seen first below the Kumul Lodge at a river crossing followed by great views of a pair on the Dablin Creek Road.

Leaden Flycatcher *Myiagra rubecula*

Two seen in Varirata with another sighting along the Brown River.

Broad-billed Flycatcher *Myiagra ruficollis*

One of these uncommon flycatchers was seen well at the Hsui Mangroves.

Shining Flycatcher *Myiagra alecto*

Common along the Brown and Elevala Rivers where several males and females were seen.

Crows and Jays Corvidae

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

Seen regularly in the lowlands and foothills near Tabubil and Kiunga.

Torresian Crow *Corvus orru*

This species was common in the Port Moresby region.

Family Uncertain

Lesser Melampitta (NG) *Melampitta lugubris*

Several of us saw this species well near the Ambua Lodge, and others gave views near the Kumul area.



Blue-capped Ifrita (NG)*Ifrita kowaldi*

Seen very well near Ambua and again in the Kumul Lodge vicinity. 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.

Birds-of-Paradise Paradisaeidae**Glossy-mantled Manucode (NG)***Manucodia atra*

This species was most common along the Elevala River where numerous birds were seen, some of which were heard and scoped.

Crinkle-collared Manucode (NG)*Manucodia chalybata*

We had a few separate sightings in the Tabubil and Kiunga areas.

Trumpet Manucode (NE)*Manucodia keraudrenii*

We found this noisy manucode near Kiunga which we scoped.

Short-tailed Paradigalla (NG)*Paradigalla brevicauda*

Several of these bizarre birds were seen daily in a fruiting tree at Ambua Lodge.

Ribbon-tailed Astrapia (PNG)*Astrapia mayeri*

Several birds were first sighted near the Ambua and later at Kumul we watched individuals visiting the fruit feeder. 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*

A couple birds were seen around the Ambua Lodge at the fruiting tree.

Carola's Parotia (PNG)*Parotia carolae*

A few birds were seen along Dablin Creek Road including scope views.

Lawes' Parotia (PNG)*Parotia lawesii*

Besides seeing this species feeding on the fruiting tree at the Ambua Lodge, in the lower Tari Valley we scoped at least six birds including some dazzling males sporting head racquets.

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

We watched several our males calling from exposed perches atop large trees above Ambua and also saw a number of females in this area as well as below Kumul Lodge. These observations included the male's characteristic 'radio static' song and incredible 'semaphore' displays with their two unreal head plumes!

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

We enjoyed some great views of this species in the highlands including scope views of males displaying iridescent frontal feathers.

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

We first encountered this species at Varirata followed by further views of females along the Dablin Creek Road and a gorgeous male in a small group during an excursion from the Kumul Lodge.

Growling Riflebird (NG)*Ptiloris intercedens*

We saw four birds total at Varirata.

Magnificent Riflebird (NE)*Ptiloris magnificus*

We heard this species along the Boys Town Road near Kiunga.

Brown Sickbill (NG)*Epimachus meyeri*

This species was an entertaining visitor to the Kumul Lodge feeders including a fully adorned male, and we heard and saw others above Ambua Lodge. The adult male's 'machine-gun burst' calls always impress.



Black Sicklebill (NG)*Epimachus fastuosus*

A female was scoped very well in the Lower Tari Valley perched on the top of a snag.

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

The adult male faithfully attended the canopy tangle of a display tree by 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*

Typically active in the early morning, and occasionally late afternoon, this species treated us to a good show along the Elevala and Fly Rivers.

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

Although we saw this species at a few sites from Tabubil to Kiunga, we also witnessed the amazing display of this species at Km 17 with full plumaged males alongside similarly splendidly adorned Raggiana Bird-of-paradise males. Without a doubt, this must be one of the most memorable spectacles of the tour.

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

At least six male and two female birds were seen in and around the display tree at Munganda village. Again, they put on a marvelous show for us!

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

This is the national bird of Papua New Guinea, endemic to PNG. Waiting under the lek trees in Varirata National Park early on our first morning, we were treated to the spectacle of several prime males displayed briefly, dancing and shivering their rich reddish flank plumes every time a female appeared. We also saw this species in the Kiunga area and on the Elevala River.

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

We scoped an adult male and saw several females very well in the Ambua area. Even the female of this PNG endemic is strikingly colored and patterned.

Australasian Robins Petroicidae

Ashy (Grey-headed) Robin (NE)*Heteromyias albispectularis*

Only heard in the highland forests.

Black-sided Robin (NG)*Poecilodryas hypoleuca*

This tiny black and white robin was seen well along the Elevala River forest, one of our last birds of the tour.

Black-throated Robin (NG)*Poecilodryas albonotata*

We saw one vocal bird very well above the Ambua Lodge.

White-winged Robin (NG)*Peneothello sigillatus*

First encountered above Ambua and the some great sightings daily around Kumul Lodge.

Slaty (Blue-grey) Robin (NG)*Peneothello cyanus*

We enjoyed great views in the vicinity of the Ambua Lodge of this species.

White-rumped Robin (NG)*Peneothello bimaculatus*

We had great views of this often tough species on the Dablin Creek Road.

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.

White-faced Robin (NE)*Tragellasia leucops*

One bird was seen at Varirata.

Torrent Flyrobin (NG)*Monachella muelleriana*

Several seen around the Ok Menga Hydroelectric area near Tabubil and a few on the main river below Kumul.

Canary Flyrobin (NG)*Microeca papuana*

We had regular sightings throughout the highlands.

Olive Flyrobin (NE)*Microeca flavovirescens*

Two seen at the Dablin Creek Road.

Lemon-bellied Flyrobin (NE)*Microeca flavigaster*

Two on an afternoon birding session in Varirata.

Garnet Robin (NG)*Eugerygone rubra*

Some of us has excellent views of a male above Ambua Lodge but otherwise only heard.

Lesser Ground-Robin (NG)*Amalocichla incerta*

One seen well above Ambua along a forest trail. Also heard below Kumul Lodge.

Swallows & Martins Hirundinidae**Pacific Swallow***Hirundo tahitica*

This is the common swallow of the region and it is very widespread throughout the lowlands and in the montane valleys.

Tree Martin*Petrochelidon nigricans*

About sixty birds were noted on our day along the Brown River area.

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

Small numbers heard and occasionally seen in the highlands, with nice views below Ambua Lodge.

Clamorous Reed Warbler*Acrocephalus stentoreus*

One bird was seen well responding to playback at a wetland near the Hsui Mangroves.

Tawny Grassbird*Megalurus timoriensis*

Seen and heard most days in the highlands around Ambua and Kumul.

Cisticolas and allies Cisticolidae**Golden-headed Cisticola***Cisticola exilllis*

Small numbers were seen in the grasslands near the Hsui Mangroves.

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

Several birds were seen well at Varirata.

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

A few birds were seen well in the Tari Valley.

Papuan White-eye (NG)*Zosterops novaeguineae*

We only found this species in the Mt Hagen area on one day of the tour where it was seen well.

Starlings Sturnidae**Metallic Starling (NE)***Aplonis metallica*

We found this colonial starling to be common along the Elevala River and Kiunga areas.



Yellow-eyed Starling (NG)*Aplonis mystacea*

We found a large colony on the Elevela River and another flock was inadvertently harassing a Southern Crowned Pigeon!

Singing Starling (NE)*Aplonis cantoroides*

We saw this species in Port Moresby and others near Mt Hagen.

Yellow-faced Myna (NG)*Mino dumontii*

Seen almost daily in the lowlands with our largest numbers in the Kiunga region.

Golden Myna (NG)*Mino anais*

We enjoyed nice perched views of this colorful species in Kiunga and many along the Elevela River area.

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

A regular visitor to the Kumul Lodge fruiting table.

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

Local in the lowlands and widespread in the mountains with several solid sightings.

Flowerpeckers Dicaeidae**Red-capped Flowerpecker (NG)***Dicaeum geelvinkianum*

Widespread in small numbers throughout the lowlands, hills, and mountains, with some great scope views of feeding males.

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

Fairly common in the lowlands with our peak numbers along the Brown River.

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

This species was also most common at the Brown River.

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

Seen at the Port Moresby Airport.

Tree Sparrow*Passer montanus*

A few at the Port Moresby Airport.

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

Several birds were seen at different times at the Kumul Lodge.

Blue-faced Parrotfinch*Erythrura trichroa*

We had a couple brief sightings of this shy species in the highlands but otherwise only heard.

Streak-headed Munia*Lonchura tristissima*

We enjoyed great views of this scarce species in the grasslands along the Brown River.

Grey-headed Munia (PNG)*Lonchura caniceps*

Numerous birds were seen very well at the PAU and again along the Brown River.



Hooded Munia (NG)*Lonchura spectabilis*

Seen in the highlands on several days, with some great scope views.

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

A few were seen at the Mt. Hagen Airport.

**Annotated Checklist of Mammals****Dusky Pademelon (NG)***Tylogale brunii*

We were fortunate to see a couple of normally secretive mammals quite relaxed feeding at the Kumul Lodge.

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)*Pseudocheirops [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.

Black-tailed Giant Rat (NG)*Uromys anak*

We watched a couple 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.

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 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.

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

Rockjumper Birding Tours
Worldwide Birding Adventures
PO Box 13972, Cascades, 3202, South Africa
Tel: +27 33 394 0225
Fax: +27 88 033 394 0225
Email: info@rockjumper.co.za
Alternative Email: rockjumperbirding@yahoo.com
Website: www.rockjumper.co.za

