Papua New Guinea
Birding in Paradise III
Trip Report
19th July to 5th August 2016 (18 days)

Wattled Ploughbill by Frank Smith

Tour Leaders: Adam Walleyn and Wayne Jones
Trip report compiled by Tour Leader: Adam Walleyn
Tour Summary

The group convened in Port Moresby and we headed out for an afternoon excursion to the grounds of the Pacific Adventist University. This is a great place to start out a New Guinea tour because of its abundant and easily observable birdlife. En route we had a brief view of Grey-headed Mannikins, our first endemic for the trip. Birding the grounds, we quickly scored several Yellow-tinted Honeyeaters, Grey Shrike-thrush, a rather unexpected pair of Great Frigatebirds flying overhead, and a couple of the local specialities: Black-backed Butcherbird and Fawn-breasted Bowerbird. We also visited a bower of the latter species, decorated with various green items. The ponds were rather low, but still harboured a nice collection of waterbirds: Little Pied and Little Black Cormorant, Australian White Ibis, Nankeen Night-Heron, Pied Heron, Great, Little, Cattle and Intermediate Egret, Dusky Moorhen, Australasian Swamphen, Australian Little Grebe, Masked Lapwing, Comb-crested Jacana, Pacific Black Duck, both Wandering and Plumed Whistling Duck and a fine pair of Rajah Shelducks. Fruiting and flowering trees in the vicinity produced stunning Orange-frosted Fruit Doves, Bar-shouldered Dove, Torresian Imperial Pigeon, plus several Australian Figbirds and Rufous-banded Honeyeaters. A careful scan of some nearby trees was rewarded with a roosting Papuan Frogmouth, massive and perfectly camouflaged! Some nearby fields finally rewarded us with good views of Grey-headed Mannikins and with the light fading, it was time to call it a successful afternoon!

A full day of birding at the fabulous Varirata National Park was next up on the schedule. With an early start from Moresby, we arrived just as the sun was rising up and positioned ourselves for one of the quintessential experiences of Papuan birding – a Raggiana Bird-of-Paradise lek. The loud calls of several birds rang out and in no time at all, we were watching 4 different males in full display – incredible! A female bird or two appeared for a close inspection, but quickly disappeared, apparently far less impressed by the display than we were! As we watched, a Black-billed Brush-turkey’s loud calls were heard at an almost deafeningly close range and some people managed to watch this shy bird walking along the forest floor. Off to a great start, we headed for the road where several uncommon birds taunted us with their calls, but remained unseen: Growling Riflebird, White-crowned Koel and Yellow-billed Kingfisher. So we headed to a more open area, this turned out to be a good move as we recorded many new species here in the active, early morning period: Pink-spotted, Orange-bellied and Dwarf Fruit Dove, Amboyna and Great Cuckoo Dove, Blue-winged Kookaburra, Red-cheeked Parrot, Boyer’s Cuckooshrike, Mimic Honeyeater, poisonous Hooded Pittohuis, Red-capped Flowerpecker, Papuan Black Myzomela, Plain Honeyeater and a perched Growling Riflebird. We then entered a quiet forest trail and were soon scoping up a stunning Brown-headed Paradise Kingfisher, followed shortly after by several people seeing the very reclusive Painted Quail-thrush!
Carrying on, we bumped into a little flock that contained Black Berrypecker, White-faced Robin and a cooperative Olive Flyrobin – a reclusive forest species that is infrequently seen. A very active but fast-moving flock was then found, which had a stunning Goldenface showing well for a short time; Chestnut-bellied Fantail, Pale-billed Scrubwren and much more were also here. Unfortunately, the flock did not stick around long. We also picked up both Wompoo and Beautiful Fruit-Dove along this trail. Returning to the picnic area for lunch, we found it to be surprisingly active with Stout-billed Cuckooshrikes, another female Growling Riflebird and best of all, a fantastic response from 2 Dwarf Koels that sat out in the open! Making a brief stop in another area of forest, we found Black Cicadabirds and several Papuan King Parrots. After some time, we located a Yellow-billed Kingfisher that was calling high in the canopy, giving us a great scope view! We then explored another trail, which gave us a great start by producing a surprised-looking Barred Owlet-Nightjar staring at us out of its cavity. The trail was predictably quiet during the early afternoon period but we did finally get at least flight views of a persistently-calling White-crowned Koel and we also had a second encounter with a Painted Quail-thrush, which gave good views to the people that were looking in the right direction down the trail! Leaving the park proper, we spent the remainder of the afternoon birding the eucalypt forest along the entrance road. Our first stop saw us quickly connecting with a fine male White-bellied Whistler – an enigmatic species that is not often seen. During our leisurely walk through the eucalypts, we added a number of new birds: Pheasant Coucal, Forest Kingfisher, Rainbow Bee-eater, White-throated Honeyeater, Lemon-bellied Flyrobin and also 3 Agile Wallabies trying to hide in the tall grass. With a fine sunset underway, we returned to our lovely base in Moresby, with a couple of Straw-necked Ibis being picked up on the way.

We had a travel morning today, with a flight to the highlands hub of Mt Hagen. Here we boarded our bus and drove to the famous Kumul Lodge, situated in the upper montane cloud forests. Lunch was waiting for us, but the legendary feeding table was waiting for us as well – which meant lunch was a bit delayed! A session around the tables that lasted a couple of hours produced several fine Ribbon-tailed Astrapias, Brehm’s Tiger Parrot, Island Thrush, Belford’s Melidectes, Common Smoky Honeyeaters, Grey-streaked Honeyeater, White-winged Robins, Large Scrubwren, the unique Rufous-naped Whistler, plus the much-wanted Blue-capped Ifrit. A stunning male Crested Satinbird showed for some and a female showed exceptionally well, almost at arm’s length! We headed a short distance into the forest to a tree where the male satinbird had been frequenting. A lengthy vigil in the afternoon rain produced little: a White-breasted Fruit Dove cautiously visited the fruiting tree, Papuan Lorikeets appeared, and the female Satinbird came. The male made several visits to the area – alas never visiting the fruiting tree and only being seen by some of us at various perches he was using high in the canopy - frustrating. We took a pre-dinner walk in the hopes of finding a New Guinea Woodcock, but the rather heavy rain ruined any chances of finding one. During dinner, we admired the impressive Black-tailed Giant Rat that was boldly feeding at the feeding table.
An early morning start saw us heading into the Lai Valley, crossing an interesting bridge and driving up a slippery road, all to arrive at a tiny grove of native trees that harboured a displaying Lesser Bird-of-Paradise. Upon arrival, the bird was already there sitting up high on an open perch and boldly displaying. What a bird - this definitely ranks as one of the most poorly named birds! A couple of females showed some interest, but he seemed to be a bit overanxious and ended up chasing them away. In the same area, we enjoyed White-shouldered Fairywren and Brush Cuckoo before reboarding our vehicle and heading to a *Casuarina* grove where the scarce Yellow-breasted Bowerbird was waiting for us, perched out in the open allowing for good views! A few extra minutes in here gave us nice views of Ornate Melidectes and lots of Hooded Mannikins, plus a Brown Goshawk sat on a nest. We made another stop at the Lai River where we easily found several Torrent Flyrobins, along with several Mountain Honeyeaters. We then returned to the lodge and walked the trails around there, it was a good walk as we found both Regent Whistler and Dimorphic Fantails attending to nests; Brown Quail running on the ground in a clearing; skulking Mountain Mouse Warbler, and then had reasonably good views of the shy Lesser Melampitta. Following lunch, our vehicle and local guide both failed to show and we ended up spending the afternoon around the lodge, probably for the best as it rained heavily all afternoon. A few keen folks still opted for a walk through the forest and were rewarded with a good view of Mountain Firetail and another Crested Satinbird (female again!). Most of us spent a good deal of time at the bird feeders as the rain poured down on the roof above us. Birds came and went, the highlight being a pair of Modest Tiger Parrots that showed very well in the trees above the feeders. In the late afternoon, the rain eased up and we were treated to a couple of absolutely spectacular male Ribbon-tailed Astrapias, along with an incredible response from a Garnet Robin that flew in and landed right in front of us!

Today would be BOP day as we ended up seeing males of 7 species! We started out early with another drive down towards the Lai Valley. We walked up a steep track into some mid-mountain oak forests and heard the calls of our quarry – the incredible Blue Bird-of-Paradise – resounding along the hill. It did not take long to find a fine male sitting out in the open for some great scope views. The area proved to be very birdy and we recorded many species here. Mountain Kingfisher, often seemingly impossible to see, proved relatively easy this time as it perched out in the open for excellent scope views. The very shy Bronze Ground Dove came in and landed on a low perch right in front of us. Male Superb Birds-of-Paradise were also around, showing off their glossy breast shield, and Blue Birds-of-Paradise were eventually seen at close range! Other new species around included Mountain Myzomela, Buff-faced and Papuan Scrubwren, and an unusually cooperative pair of Marbled Honeyeater that sat out for extended periods of time. Slaty-headed Longbill also showed unusually well as a very relaxed bird fed quietly on some purple flowers. From this site, we carried on to another high elevation site. We were greeted here...
by a distant male Lawe’s Parotia, scoped at some distance - it would prove to be our only one of the trip. We then embarked on a short but muddy walk, well worth it as the endpoint produced a bonanza of BOPs! The same large tree hosted, in order of appearance, a stunning male King of Saxony, followed by a male Loria’s Satinbird (okay not considered a BOP anymore, but still great!), and then a male Brown Sicklebill. Plum-faced Lorikeets and Tit Berrypeckers also showed in the same tree. Returning to a clearing that was being logged, we tallied several more good birds – Black-throated Honeyeater, Black-bellied Cuckooshrike and 2 male Princess Stephanie’s Astrapia. As the rain descended upon us, we returned to our vehicle and the comfort of the lodge. The rain would continue all afternoon. Some of us tried to bird the lodge trails in the rain, but it proved a rather fruitless exercise. Back at the lodge and the feeder area, the male Ribbon-tailed Astrapias showed very well, making it 7 male BOPs for the day! We even tried an after dark owlet-nightjar session, still in the rain, but unsurprisingly failed to see or even hear anything. Frank did hear the Mountain Owlet-Nightjar give a call or two in the middle of the night, but the bird remained unseen.

We now had a travel day, with a departure from the brand new terminal at Mt Hagen airport. The flight was scheduled to land in Tari, but the weather was socked in there, the pilots did not even have a look, and dropped us off in the humid lowlands of Kiunga instead. After sorting out lunch and a bus, we undertook the drive up to Tabubil and arrived in the late afternoon, settling into our accommodations and ready to start birding the area bright and early the next morning.

We headed up to the Dablin Creek Road and spent much of the morning at the usual scanning area there. It quickly became apparent that any fruiting trees in the area were very distant and so we were going to have our work cut out for us this year! One highlight here was a male Magnificent Bird-of-Paradise that spent much of his time quietly sitting in one of the distant fruiting trees. Although it was indeed distant, it nonetheless offered prolonged scopes, a rare treat for this species here! There was a nice variety of other birds around, as usual. Highlights on this first morning included several good cuckoos: White-eared Bronze Cuckoo, Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo and Brush Cuckoo. Honeyeaters were much in evidence and included Green-backed, Long-billed, Tawny-breasted, Mimic and Scrub, along with Ornate Melidectes, Common Smoky Honeyeater,
Papuan Black Myzomela, and the infrequently recorded Red Myzomela.

A good range of cuckooshrikes were also studied: Boyer’s, Stout-billed, and Grey-headed. Mountain Peltops and Black Butcherbird both showed nicely. A nice treat here was a lone Blue-collared Parrot, often only heard up in the clouds; on this day, it was flying low enough that its colours could actually be discerned! Torrent Larks proved elusive this year and although a pair flashed across the road above us, that would be the only glimpse we would get. As the morning warmed up, a few raptors were noted: Variable Goshawk, Long-tailed Honey Buzzard and a Pygmy Eagle that came in and landed for a rare perched view! We also tried some of the upper forest, but this was disappointing as it was being cleared for “maintenance” reasons. We did have a view of a lone Mottle-breasted Honeyleater foraging on the ground probably wondering where his forest had gone and a pair of Black-shouldered Cicadabirds showed well, along with probably the same lone Blue-collared Parrot that flew very low right over our heads! Following lunch and a quick siesta, we headed out to the Ok Menga area. A Torrent Duck was waiting for us and we watched it at leisure as it sat on a rock, later joined by a second bird that swam in to join it on the rock! We then embarked on an afternoon walk. It proved relatively quiet for the most part, although we did add a couple of interesting species, including Crinkle-collared Manucode and White-bellied Thicket-fantail. Things really picked up in the late afternoon as we had a most impressive group of 6 Pesquet’s Parrots cavorting on the ridge above us for about half an hour, offering lovely scope views! Birds were heading off to roost, and we picked up on flying flocks of 2 scarce species – a flock of 12 Yellow-eyed Starlings, and even better, a flock of 7 Striated Lorikeets – a nomadic and enigmatic species that seems to be very rarely recorded! As dusk descended, we entered the forests in search of the always-tricky Shovel-billed Kookaburra. With no response, we emerged from the forest and could hear one calling from the roadside, along with the almost equally-tricky Hook-billed Kingfisher, but in the darkness, there would be little chance of seeing either. We ventured on a post-dinner owling session in Tabubil and were nicely rewarded with a pair of Papuan Boobooks high up in a tree, showing well!

With another full day in the Tabubil area, we headed straight back to Dablin Creek Road. We enjoyed a similar selection of birds to the previous day with the addition of terrific views of a pair of Spotted Honeyeaters. We also had a White-rumped Robin that would momentarily alight on a little perch every hour or so, and over the course of the morning, almost everyone got to see this elusive bird. Chestnut-backed Jewel-Babblers were calling around, but only JJ managed to see one by scrambling inside the forest and waiting patiently! Obscure Berrypeckers tantalised us by calling close-by on two occasions, unfortunately eluding detection. In the later morning, we scoped up a male Carola’s Parotia on a very distant fruiting tree, but only a couple of people made it to the scope before the bird disappeared, not to be seen again. In the afternoon, we checked out another area for Torrent Lark – no luck there, although several Torrent Flyrobins did show very well. We then returned to Dablin Creek for a last try in the hopes that the Parotias would return to their fruiting tree, but this was not to be and it was a quiet afternoon. We finished up the day trying another area for Shovel-billed Kookaburra. Things were very quiet, although we did hear a Red-necked Crake calling nearby. Then just as darkness was descending, the
Shovelbills started calling – nearby! We could not get a view of them in the fading light, but did have a flurry of other crepuscular birds: a Large-tailed Nightjar overhead, 2 Papuan Boobooks, and JJ even saw the Red-necked Crake. We vowed to return at first light next morning, and did so. The Shovelbills were calling tantalizingly close and we found a small trail where we could get inside the forest with the birds. After trying some playback, a bird (the juvenile) was glimpsed flying in and landing, but it was blocked by leaves. Our local guide, Eddy, had just found an angle to see the bird when it disappeared, never to be seen again - frustrating! We did a bit of roadside birding, had some breakfast and then drove to Kiunga, stopping en route for the locally breeding race of Little Ringed Plover. After lunch, we made our first foray into the humid lowland forests and picked up several new BOPs – some Trumpet Manucodes in the canopy were first to be seen. We then scoped up a stunning little male King Bird-of-Paradise, after watching it for some time, we were delighted to watch it go into full display mode, puffing out its epauletts and erecting its coiled wires and flicking them around – fantastic stuff. We finished off the afternoon at the display area of Greater Bird-of-Paradise and had several birds up in the canopy, some of which displayed for us for a short while!

Early the next morning, we were down at the edge of the Fly River, boarding our boats that would take us into the heart of the lowland forests in this area, to the famous Kwatu Camp. Great Flying Foxes winged overhead in the predawn and shortly after dawn, we stepped onto a sandbar, set up the scopes and enjoyed an incredible display of Twelve-wired Birds-of-Paradise, two males going into full display on the same perch, as a rather uninterested female looked on! Birds were flying and perching up all over the place here and further along the river, as we tallied massive Palm Cockatoos, Yellowish-streaked and Black-capped Lory, Pacific Koel, Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Collared Imperial Pigeon, Glossy-mantled Manucodes, Golden Myna, and masses of Metallic Starling. We then got caught in a short but heavy downpour as we entered the Elevela River. The rain cleared quickly, though, and as we dried out, so did the birds. Shortly after the rain, we were really fortunate to see a pair of Long-billed Cuckoos, a poorly-known species, perched up in the tops of two trees. The elusive New Guinea Bronzewing flew across the river with its typical slow-flapping flight. A pair of Double-eyed Fig Parrots emerged from their nesting cavity and we enjoyed nice views. Nearing the camp, we got out on the muddy shores for a birding walk towards the camp, while the boats went ahead with our luggage. We quickly found Beautiful Fruit Dove and Frilled and Golden Monarch, but just as quickly, the heavens opened up and the rain absolutely bucketed down on us! After trying to wait it out, we realised it would be raining for a while and started walking towards camp. The rain did let up before we reached camp, and as so often happens, there was a flurry of bird activity following the rain. A drenched Purple-tailed Imperial Pigeon was sat out on an exposed perch to dry out and an active little flock produced good views of Papuan Babblers, 2 Hooded Monarchs, and our only Golden Cuckoo-shrike
of the trip. Another flock we bumped into provided unusually good views of 2 Wallace’s Fairywrens, initially right down at eye level (!), along with the scarce Yellow-gaped Honeyeater, another Hooded Monarch, and more common birds like Yellow-bellied Gerygone and Frilled Monarch.

We had lunch in camp and settled into our lovely, rustic accommodations. A Yellow-gaped Honeyeater was also in the clearing and showed its yellow legs very nicely to some! Orange-breasted Fig Parrots showed extremely well and before leaving camp, Eddy took us to a nest of Marbled Frogmouth, which allowed for unbeatable views!

We then set off for a lengthy walk in some flooded forest, and although birding was slow, we did pull out scope views of 2 very quality kingfishers – Common and Little Paradise Kingfisher! We also managed various brief views of a Black-sided Robin that circled around us.

From here, we boarded the boats and cruised the Elevela River. We soon came across a large flock of 50 or so Yellow-eyed Starlings that showed exceptionally well – both adults and young birds.

As we continued our cruise, the birding and lighting were very pleasant and we saw many Collared and Pinon Imperial Pigeon, but it took quite some time before we found our main quarry, the amazing Southern Crowned Pigeon. Rather frustratingly, the bird showed very well to one boat, but poorly to the other, but late in the afternoon, all was rectified as a second bird was found and everyone got the views we all desired! As we headed back to base in the fading light, a Papuan Nightjar briefly hawked over the river. We continued birding into the night by boat and by foot, alas, we could not add any night birds to our tally – finding only a Common Cuscus and 2 roosting Long-tailed Honey Buzzards.

The next morning saw us back in the boats and heading up the Ketu Creek to assemble inside the Flightless Rail blind. I never really expect to see the bird here, but this time we were very much in luck. After about a 15-minute wait, the massive rail walked into the open and spent the next 10 minutes parading around, constantly flicking its wings as it fed on the sago leavings. It must have been aware of our presence but was seemingly oblivious - Wow!!

We continued birding this area, finding a flock that contained Yellow-breasted Boatabill and Grey Whistler. We spent quite some time at a most impressive fig tree that contained no less than 5 species of fruit dove: Pink-spotted, Orange-bellied, Beautiful, stunning views of Dwarf, and best of all, several Ornate! Nearby a pair of Double-eyed Fig Parrots were mating! Returning back to camp, we added a couple of riparian species: Large-billed Gerygone and Ivory-billed Coucal. We also got our only views of White-bellied Pitohuis – albeit very poor ones. Another highlight was finding a Lowland Peltops sitting on its nest. It was now time for lunch, during which period JJ managed excellent views of Papuan Pitta not far from the lodge. We then went for one last walk in the forest, where our dynamic duo of Eddy and Glen kicked it into high gear, wandering off and invariably returning with some terrific birds: a roosting Marbled Frogmouth, stunning views of Southern Crowned Pigeon, and for the grand finale, a
Hook-billed Kingfisher! These guys are just amazing!

Just before boarding our boats, we finally saw a Large Fig Parrot stick its head out of its nest hole, a glorious bird when seen this well! On a major high, we returned to Kiunga with a Great-billed Heron, our final species for this area. For many of us, this 2-day visit was the highlight of the trip!

The next morning we were off for some easier birding along the Boystown Road and set up on the knoll for a long wait. First bird of the day was a female Magnificent Riflebird flying across the road – not a bad start! The area’s prime attraction, a male Flame Bowerbird, crossed the road early on, followed closely by a female, although it was not seen by all. Later in the morning, the female perched in an open, if distant, tree and gave prolonged scope views. It was joined by an apparent young male that was displaying to it for some time, without any obvious effect! Birding here was as good as ever and some top birds through the morning included: scope views of all 3 manucodes: Crinkle-collared, Glossy-mantled, and Trumpet (the latter showing very closely), repeated flybys of male Greater Bird-of-Paradise, phenomenal views of Grey-headed Goshawk, including a pair that chased each other down the road at below eye level (!), plus wonderful views of Yellowish-streaked Lory, Yellow-billed Kingfisher, stunning Emperor Fairywrens and flight views of Yellow-capped Pygmy Parrot. As the activity quieted down, we went for a walk and a highlight here was a Dwarf Koel being harassed by - in order - Mimic Honeyeater, Tawny-breasted Honeyeater, and Streak-headed Honeyeater. Seems honeyeaters do not like this bird! We checked out the airport by late morning, but everything was very quiet there so we returned to our lodgings for lunch and a short siesta. We opted to return to the Boystown Road for some afternoon birding. It was rather quiet, as expected, and the only new species we added was a Little Bronze Cuckoo. We heard a Meyer’s Friarbird from inside the forest and were standing underneath it, but could not locate it in the dense canopy. We tried some nocturnal birding in the area and all was very quiet, however, our “night drive” back to Kiunga was more eventful. First up was a White-throated Nightjar, a rarely recorded species in PNG – initially in flight but then offering excellent perched views! We followed this up with a Papuan Frogmouth, and then the finale was an amazing synchronous firefly display.

For our final morning in the area, we returned to the Boystown Road for a final watch. It was raining and quiet this morning, although, during a brief lull in the rain, the female Flame Bowerbird returned to her perching tree and was soon joined by a stunning male giving good, if distant, scope views! With a bit of spare time, we returned to the airport for a last check. We immediately found some mannikins that initially had me puzzled - just as they flew off, I clued in that these were almost certainly Black Mannikins. Frustratingly, the birds were gone and this is such a rarely recorded species here that I was in a bit of doubt, but it did not last long as we soon found lots more and they were indeed Black Mannikin
– a Fly Plains endemic that has very rarely been seen at this location and certainly not on any previous Rockjumper tours – a lifer for all! They were joined by a few Crimson Finches, another wandering finch that is not often seen here!

Our flight left early and we did some afternoon birding in the Port Moresby area. Right in the city, we found a Silver-eared Honeyeater on a nest but the views were not especially good, so we went and found another one in a flowering tree that was also full of Rufous-banded Honeyeaters and New Guinea Friarbirds. We set off down the Lea Lea Road and explored some wetlands in the hopes of Spotted Whistling Duck, but it was not to be. We saw lots of Blue-winged Kookaburras, Brown Goshawks, and Black-faced Cuckooshrikes but, eventually, we called it a day.

Next up was not our finest day. We arrived at the airport eager for our flight to Tari, only to find out that there was a severe delay. We finally set off mid-afternoon, and after circling the Tari strip a couple of times, the pilot announced it was too windy to land and we would be returning to Moresby!

Our flight was rescheduled for mid-day today and we arrived on schedule, heading up to Ambua lodge and birding straight away, we had no time to waste! We started off with a pair of very scarce Spotted Berrypecker in their favourite fruiting tree on the grounds and had great views of Slaty Robin. We then drove a short distance to an amazing flowering tree that harboured no fewer than three species of scarce and nomadic lorikeets: Josephine’s, Pygmy, and Fairy - just amazing! There were also Dusky Lorys and Yellow-billed and Papuan Lorikeets feeding on this bonanza; while a flock of Blue-collared Parrots flew low overhead! A huge bonus here was excellent views of the always difficult Papuan Treecreeper. We drove a bit higher up the road and had a bit of frustration with a loudly calling King of Saxony Bird-of-Paradise playing hide and seek with us, but we did get nice views of Fan-tailed Berrypecker. We then did some roadside birding, finding a nice late afternoon flock that contained the rarely-recorded Olive Straightbill, along with Rufous-backed Honeyeater and Sclater’s and Brown-backed Whistler. Following a wonderful dinner, we were treated to the incredibly bizarre sight of “the” Rufous Owl that turned up about a month ago and has come in almost every night to a bare tree above the lodge where it sits around, oblivious to the noise and lights - Wow! We also went out in search of Archbold’s Nightjar, but drew a blank.

With only one full day at Ambua, we had a very busy day ahead of us, and wow, it sure would be a good one! We drove up to the Gap and stopped to admire an incredible sunrise when we found a male King of Saxony Bird-of-Paradise perched out completely in the open, twitching his bizarre head-wires around! We then birded the Gap, enjoying good views of Crested Berrypecker, Blue-capped Ifrit, Dimorphic Fantail, and various flybys of Orange-billed and Papuan Lorikeets.
The high elevation grasslands yielded several Brown Quails and Papuan Grassbird, and then we enjoyed a most entertaining observation of a young Papuan Harrier flopping around on the ground. Eventually, an Australasian Pipit emerged to see what he was doing, the two stared at each other for a long time, then the pipit decided to fly away and the harrier made several very feeble attempts to catch the pipit - Just bizarre! We birded another patch of high elevation forest where we had great views of Black-throated Honeyeater, Loria’s Satinbird, Fan-tailed Cuckoo and heard an Archbold’s Bowerbird at very close range but failed to find it. We then entered the forest interior. Often these forest trails are painfully quiet, but this walk would be a pleasant exception. We started off with a Bronze Ground Dove that flew just over our heads and landed briefly, before continuing on its way. We followed this up with variable views of Ashy Robin and great views of Black-throated Robin. Next up, we had an outrageous encounter with the much-wanted male Wattled Ploughbill. We heard it calling and I had just finished telling the group that they never respond to playback, but I would give it a try. In a second or two, the male shot in, landed just above us and stared down at us quizzically for the next 15 minutes. Ultimately, we walked away from the bird, and it even seemed to follow us. I never thought I would walk away from a male Ploughbill… you just never know what is going to happen in New Guinea! Not a minute later, we were watching a pair of exquisite Spotted Jewel Babblers and shortly after that, we had a pair of Lesser Ground Robins responding strongly to the tape and popping up just below us - Fantastic stuff!

We tried another forest interior trail that was more typically quiet and then tried another short trail that led to a forest clearing. A scarce Black-mantled Goshawk was perched on the edge of the clearing, but frustratingly, it flew off just as I got the scope on it. We did, however, catch up with Rufous-throated Bronze Cuckoo and some people had brief views of Blue-faced Parrotfinch in this area, but they were really skulking. Following lunch, the group split in two – half of the group went down the valley to watch a great performance by the Huli Wigmen; while the other group walked a trail below the lodge. We started off with several Black-breasted Boatbills and a Short-tailed Paradigalla flying through the forest. We also heard a Mottled Berryhunter. Things were really quiet for a long stretch, but being shown a bower of Macgregor's Bowerbird was a highlight, even if the bird itself was not seen! We finally nailed a good look at White-bibbed Fruit Dove, and then heard a second Mottled Berryhunter, so close it seemed we must be able to find, alas, we only saw the male flying past us and disappearing for good! Just as we finished the walk, we were treated to great views of a Madarasz’s Tiger Parrot, the most unobtrusive of the tiger parrots (and our third species for the day!). After dinner, the Rufous Owl was right back in its tree, while simultaneously, a Papuan Boobook was sitting on the roof of one of the huts! We tried again for the Archbold’s Nightjar with no luck, but Wayne found us something at least as good, a Plush-coated Ringtail wandering around at our feet! What a day!
We had just a brief time in the early morning before our flight back to Moresby. We started off by scoping out two distant Black Sicklebills, one of which was tentatively displaying from its exposed perch. We then revisited the amazing flowering tree up the road and found it to be hopping with activity. At least 40 Pygmy Lorikeets and several Fairy Lorikeets were joined by several Goldie’s, Papuan and Yellow-billed Lorikeets, plus Dusky Lorys. Nearby, a couple of Hooded Cuckoo-shrikes were calling and seen briefly. Heading down the road towards the airport, we made a final stop en route for one species that was missing from our list: Black-headed Whistler; and we were successful in attaining good views. The flight to Moresby was delayed an hour, but we saw a few interesting birds during the wait, including a rather surprising observation of a young Gurney’s Eagle. Upon arrival in Moresby, we checked into our lodgings and whisked off to Varirata National Park for a fairly brief afternoon visit.

Along the entrance road, we stopped for 2 soaring Gurney’s Eagles (3 for the day!) and then headed down the lookout trail. Things were very quiet initially, although we did find a male Growling Riflebird and picked up Elegant Honeyeater – our 6th species of the confusing Meliphaga genera for the trip, and one of the easier to identify! Near the end of the trail, we found the hoped for Chestnut-bellied Fantails that signaled the presence of a flock and this turned out to be a good one as we picked up Rusty Pitohui, Pale-billed Scrubwren, Frilled, Spot-winged and Black-winged Monarchs, Fairy and Yellow-bellied Gerygone, Olive Flyrobin, a pair of very well behaved Dwarf Longbills and then also a pair of Pygmy Longbills for a very rare side-by-side comparison! This, the smallest of all Papuan birds, would prove to be our final new bird from this great trip! It was almost sunset by the time we emerged at the parking area, boarded our bus and returned to Moresby.

Thanks to everyone for helping to make this trip a resounding success!

**Annotated Checklist of Birds Recorded**


**Key to abbreviations**

**Key to bracketing**
Round bracket refers to the alternative name for the species
Ducks, Geese & Swans Anatidae

Plumed Whistling Duck
Dendrocygna eytoni
A flock of 10 birds were seen at PAU.

Wandering Whistling Duck
Dendrocygna arcuata
Good numbers at PAU.

Raja (Rajah) Shelduck
Tadorna radjah
Two of these attractive pied ducks were seen at PAU.

Salvador’s Teal (NG)
Salvadorina waigiuensis
We enjoyed excellent views of a pair at the Ok Menga Hydro Plant near Tabubil.

Pacific Black Duck
Anas superciliosa
Good numbers were enjoyed at PAU.

Megapodes Megapodiidae

Black-billed Brushturkey (NG)
Talegalla fuscirostris
Seen by some of the group in Varirata NP on two occasions, also regularly heard there and in the Kwatu area.

Orange-footed Scrubfowl
Megapodius reinwardt
Heard from our beds late at night in Kwatu Camp.

Pheasant, Fowl & Allies Phasianidae

Brown Quail
Coturnix ypsilophora
Two birds running on the ground near Kumul and another three flushed at Tari Gap.

Ibis, Spoonbills Threskiornithidae

Australasian Grebe
Tachybaptus novaehollandiae
Small numbers were seen at PAU.

Ibises, Spoonbills Threskiornithidae

Australian White Ibis
Threskiornis molucca
Small numbers were seen at PAU.

Straw-necked Ibis
Threskiornis spinicollis
A single and a pair were seen on two dates near PAU, an uncommon species in this area.

Herons, Bitterns Ardeidae

Black Bittern
Dupetor flavicollis
A female was seen well along the Elevela River.

Nankeen (Rufous) Night Heron
Nycticorax caledonicus
A few were found at PAU.

Striated Heron
Butorides striata
A few seen along the Elevela River.

Eastern Cattle Egret
Bubulcus coromandus
Seen in the Port Moresby area.

Great-billed Heron
Ardea sumtrana
A single bird flushed out of a large tree along the Elevela River.
Great Egret
Seen in small numbers in the lowlands.

Intermediate (Yellow-billed) Egret
A few were seen at the PAU ponds.

Pied Heron
Small numbers were found at PAU. A striking heron!

Little Egret
A few were seen at PAU.

Frigatebirds Fregatidae
Great Frigatebird
Two birds sailing high over PAU were a bit of a surprise!

Cormorants Phalacrocoracidae
Little Pied Cormorant
Small numbers seen at PAU.

Little Black Cormorant
Large numbers were seen at PAU and a single along the Fly River.

Kites, Hawks & Eagles Accipitridae
Pacific Baza (Crested Hawk)
Sightings in the Tabubil area and along the Elevela River.

Long-tailed Honey Buzzard (Hawk) (NG)
Frequently seen in the Tabubil and Kiunga area, an interesting find was 2 roosting birds at night near Kwatu Camp!

Pygmy (Little) Eagle (NE)
A bird at Dablin Creek was seen both in flight and perched.

Gurney’s Eagle (NE)
Three birds were seen in a single day – a young bird flew over Tari airport and then two adults soaring along the entrance road to Varirata NP.

Variable Goshawk
Seen several times in the Tabubil area.

Brown Goshawk
The most commonly seen Accipiter, we recorded 12 birds including a pair on a nest below Kumul.

Black-mantled Goshawk (NG)
A frustrating sighting with a perched immature inside a forest trail above Ambua disappearing before many people could get on it!

Grey-headed Goshawk (NG)
Seen on the Elevela River and then an incredible pair at Boystown Road – displaying and chasing each other along the road right in front of us!

Papuan (Swamp) Harrier (NG)
Two very good sightings at Tari Gap included a young bird trying to work out how to catch a pipit – and not getting very far!

Black Kite
Abundant in the Mt. Hagen area and also seen around Port Moresby.
Whistling Kite  
*Haliastur sphenurus*
Small numbers were seen in the Port Moresby area.

Brahminy Kite  
*Haliastur indus*
This common and widespread raptor was seen most days during the tour.

White-bellied Sea Eagle  
*Halieetus leucogaster*
An impressive beast – Six birds seen along the Fly and Elevela Rivers, often at close range. Two more at Port Moresby.

**Rails, Crakes & Coots  Rallidae**

Red-necked Crake  
*Rallina tricolor*
We heard it near Tabubil and then JJ had a brief sighting right at dusk.

Buff-banded Rail  
*Gallirallus philippensis*
A single bird was seen near Tabubil.

New Guinea Flightless Rail (NG)  
*Megacrex inepta*
One of the highlights of the tour. One of these massive rails showed at the hide after a short wait and spent several minutes calmly feeding on sago leavings in front of the group. Wow!!

Australasian (Purple) Swamphen  
*Porphyrio melanotus*
Good numbers were seen at PAU.

Dusky Moorhen  
*Gallinula tenebrosa*
Good numbers were found at PAU.

**Plovers & Lapwings  Charadriidae**

Masked Lapwing  
*Vanellus miles*
Small numbers were encountered in grassland habitat throughout the Port Moresby area.

Little Ringed Plover  
*Charadrius dubius*
Three birds were seen near Tabubil – here of the locally breeding nominate race.

**Jacanas  Jacanidae**

Comb-crested Jacana  
*Irediparra gallinacea*
Three of these striking birds were encountered at PAU.

**Sandpipers, Snipes  Scolopacidae**

Common Sandpiper  
*Actitis hypoleucos*
Seen at PAU and along the Elevela River.

**Pigeons, Doves  Columbidae**

Rock Dove (Pigeon) (I)  
*Columba livia*
Seen at Mount Hagen.

Metallic (White-throated) Pigeon  
*Columba vitiensis*
Three birds in high flight at Tari Gap.

Amboyna (Brown) Cuckoo-Dove (NE)  
*Macropygia amboinensis*
A common species, seen on 9 days of the tour.

Bar-tailed (Black-billed) Cuckoo-Dove (NE)  
*Macropygia nigrirostris*
Three birds were seen below Kumul Lodge with another at Dablin Creek.

Great Cuckoo-Dove (NE)  
*Reinwardtoena reinwardtii*
Just two sightings, both flyovers – at Varirata NP and on the Elevela River.
Stephan’s Emerald (Ground) Dove (NE)  
*Chalcophaps stephani*

Seen crossing the Elevela River on several occasions and also at the Boystown Road.

New Guinea Bronzewing (NG)  
*Henicophaps albifrons*

A scarce species, one of the boats was fortunate to have flight views of a bird crossing the Elevela River.

Peaceful Dove  
*Geopelia placida*

A number of birds were seen at PAU and the Port Moresby area.

Bar-shouldered Dove  
*Geopelia humeralis*

A few birds were seen on our visit to PAU.

Bronze Ground Dove (NE)  
*Alopecoenas beccarii*

A shy species that we had two reasonably good views of – a low perched bird below Kumul, and a bird flying over our heads and landing briefly at Tari Gap.

Pheasant Pigeon (NG) (H)  
*Otidiphaps nobilis*

Heard quite closely on both visits to Varirata NP and also heard near Kwatu Camp.

Southern Crowned Pigeon (NG)  
*Goura scheepmakeri*

After some effort, everyone got a good view from the boats along the Elevela River. The following day an even better sighting was had inside the forests near Kwatu Camp. A spectacular pigeon and undoubtedly one of the trip highlights!

Wompoo Fruit Dove  
*Ptilinopus magnificus*

Seen on both visits to Varirata NP and also near to Kwatu Camp.

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

Commonly seen in the lowlands: at Varirata NP, Kwatu Camp and Boystown Road.

Ornate Fruit Dove (NG)  
*Ptilinopus aurantiifrons*

Quite a few of these stunning montane breeders had obviously wandered down to the lowlands, with sightings along the Fly River and Boystown Road, but best of all in the big fruiting fig tree near Kwatu Camp.

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

Excellent views were had of this beautiful species at PAU.

Superb Fruit Dove  
*Ptilinopus superbus*

Several sightings around Tabubil and Kiunga.

Beautiful Fruit Dove (NG)  
*Ptilinopus pulchellus*

Seen well on several occasions in the lowlands, beautiful indeed!

White-bibbed (Mountain) Fruit Dove (NE)  
*Ptilinopus rivoli*

Heard daily in the highlands and seen briefly on several occasions, we finally got a good view of a female below Ambua.

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

Commonly seen in the lowlands.

Dwarf Fruit Dove (NG)  
*Ptilinopus nanus*

Regular sightings of this scarce, minuscule fruit dove in the lowlands – best views coming at Varirata NP and the fruiting fig tree near Kwatu Camp.

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

Excellent views of a bird drying out on an exposed perch following the downpour at Kwatu Camp!

Rufescent Imperial Pigeon (NG) (H)  
*Ducula chalconota*

This rarely seen pigeon was heard in montane forest on the Tari Gap.

Pinon’s Imperial Pigeon (NG)  
*Ducula pinon*

Regularly seen in the lowlands around Kiunga and Kwatu Camp.
Collared Imperial Pigeon (NG)  
*Ducula mullerii*
Good numbers along the Elevela and Fly Rivers.

Zoe’s Imperial Pigeon (NG)  
*Ducula zoeae*
Regularly seen and heard in the lowlands, at Varirata NP and around Kiunga and Kwatu Camp.

Torresian Imperial Pigeon  
*Ducula spilorrhoa*
Small numbers were seen at PAU and along the Lea Lea Road.

Papuan Mountain Pigeon (NE)  
*Gymnophaps albertisii*
Seen regularly throughout the tour, an aerially-displaying bird at Tari Gap that then perched up in a snag was the most memorable.

**Cuckoos Cuculidae**

Ivory-billed (Greater Black) Coucal (NG)  
*Centropus menbeki*
Seen along the Ketu River, with others heard.

Black-billed Coucal (NG) (H)  
*Centropus bernsteini*
Heard only in the Kiunga and Tabubil areas.

Pheasant Coucal  
*Centropus phasianinus*
Regular sightings in the Port Moresby area.

Dwarf Koel (NG)  
*Microdynamis parva*
This often tricky species was seen very well with a male and female perched up at Varirata, then another male along the Boystown Road being harassed by several species of honeyeater!

Pacific (Australian) Koel  
*Eudynamys orientalis*
Several birds, both males and females, were seen while boating along the Elevela and Fly Rivers.

Long-billed Cuckoo (NG)  
*Chrysococcyx megarhynchus*
Very good views of two birds from along the Elevela River, an enigmatic lowland species!

Rufous-throated Bronze Cuckoo (NG)  
*Chrysococcyx ruficollis*
After hearing a few, we finally scoped one up at Tari Gap.

White-eared Bronze Cuckoo (NG)  
*Chrysococcyx meyerii*
Good scope views were had of this species at Dablin Creek.

Little Bronze Cuckoo  
*Chrysococcyx minutillus*
Excellent scope views were had of one along Boystown Road.

White-crowned Cuckoo (Koel) (NG)  
*Cacomantis leucolophus*
This shy cuckoo was calling up a storm at Varirata, and we finally saw it, but only in flight!

Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo (NE)  
*Cacomantis castaneiventris*
Seen well at Dablin Creek.

Fan-tailed Cuckoo  
*Cacomantis flabelliformis*
Seen well at Tari Gap, with others heard around Kumul.

Brush Cuckoo  
*Cacomantis variolosus*
Seen and heard regularly throughout the tour..

**Owls Strigidae**

Papuan Boobook (Jungle Hawk-Owl) (NG)  
*Ninox theomacha*
Nice views of two birds in Tabubil, another pair in flight near Tabubil, and regularly heard.

Rufous Owl  
*Ninox rufa*
An exceptional sighting of this very scarce species on both nights at Ambua Lodge, where it has very recently taken up the habit of perching on a bare tree above the lodge. Wow!!!
**Frogmouths Podargidae**

Marbled Frogmouth *Podargus ocellatus*
Excellent views of a bird on the nest at Kwatu Camp and another roosting bird in the forests nearby.

Papuan Frogmouth *Podargus papuensis*
Great views of a roosting bird at PAU and another spotlit along the Boystown Road.

**Nightjars Caprimulgidae**

White-throated Nightjar *Eurostopodus mystacalis*
Excellent views along the Boystown Road of this scarce winter visitor to New Guinea.

Papuan Nightjar (NG) *Eurostopodus papuensis*
A very brief dusk sighting along the Elevela River.

Large-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus macrurus*
Two seen along the Varirata NP entrance road and another near Tabubil.

**Owlet-nightjars Aegothelidae**

Mountain Owlet-nightjar (NG) (H) *Aegotheles albertisi*
Consistent rains at night meant there was really no opportunity to look for this species around Kumul, although Frank did hear one call in the middle of the night.

Barred Owlet-nightjar (NG) *Aegotheles bennettii*
This species was scoped at its daytime roost hole in Varirata National Park.

**Treeswifts Hemiprocniidae**

Moustached Treeswift (NE) *Hemiprocne mystacea*
A few sightings of this handsome species around Tabubil and Kiunga.

**Swifts Apodidae**

Glossy Swiftlet *Collocalia esculenta*
One of the most commonly seen species along the route.

Mountain Swiftlet (NG) *Aerodramus hirundinaceus*
This endemic was regularly seen throughout the higher areas of the tour.

Uniform Swiftlet *Aerodramus vanikorensis*
Very common in the lowlands, where seen virtually every day.

Papuan Spine-tailed Swift (Needletail) (NG) *Mearnsia novaeguineae*
Several seen along the Elevela and Fly Rivers, with a few more at Boystown Road.

**Rollers Coraciidae**

Oriental Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis*
Good numbers were seen around Kiunga and Kwatu Camp.

**Kingfishers Alcedinidae**

Hook-billed Kingfisher (NG) *Melidora macrorrhina*
This very shy bird was expertly spotted by Glen in the forest along the Ketu River and we could enjoy excellent scope views!

Common Paradise Kingfisher (NE) *Tanysiptera galatea*
Superb views in the forests along the Ketu River.
Little Paradise Kingfisher (NG)  
_Tanysiptera hydrocharis_
A localised and shy species, we were fortunate to scope one up in the forests along the Ketu River.

Brown-headed Paradise Kingfisher (PNG)  
_Tanysiptera danae_
Excellent views were had of one bird in the forest at Varirata NP – a stunning species!

Shovel-billed Kookaburra (NG)  
_Clytoceyx rex_
So close! After hearing it at close range near Tabubil, we finally lured a bird in, only to have it land behind the foliage and then disappear.

Blue-winged Kookaburra  
_Dacelo leachii_
Regular sightings in the Port Moresby area.

Rufous-bellied Kookaburra (NG)  
_Dacelo gaudichaud_
Seen well on several occasions in the lowlands.

Forest Kingfisher  
_Todiramphus macleayii_
Two birds were seen at Varirata.

Sacred Kingfisher  
_Todiramphus sanctus_
This common wintering bird from Australia was seen frequently in the lowlands and hills.

Yellow-billed Kingfisher (NE)  
_Syma torotoro_
A common voice of the lowlands, we had excellent scope views at Varirata and the Boystown Road.

Mountain Kingfisher (NG)  
_Syma megarhyncha_
This extremely elusive kingfisher was seen very well below Kumul Lodge.

Common Kingfisher  
_Alcedo atthis_
A single bird at PAU.

Papuan Dwarf Kingfisher (NG) (H)  
_Ceyx solitarius_
Heard at Varirata.

Azure Kingfisher  
_Ceyx azureus_
Three birds were seen along the Elevela and Ketu Rivers.

Bee-eaters _Meropidae_
Rainbow Bee-eater  
_Merops ornatus_
Seen regularly throughout the tour.

Hornbills _Bucerotidae_
Blyth’s Hornbill  
_Rhyticeros plicatus_
This large, impressive hornbill was commonly seen along in the lowlands.

Cockatoos _Cacatuidae_
Palm Cockatoo (NE)  
_Probosciger aterrimus_
This massive cockatoo was seen very well on a few occasions along the Elevela River. Also seen at Km 17 and Ok Menga.

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo  
_Cacatua galerita_
This raucous cockatoo was seen in small numbers in the lowlands and foothills.

Parrots _Psittacidae_
Pesquet’s Parrot (NG)  
_Psittrichas fulgidus_
Extended views of a group of 6 birds cavorting on the ridge above Ok Menga was memorable, even if distant!
Yellow-capped Pygmy Parrot (NG)  
*Micropsitta keiensis*
Several flight views at Boystown Road.

Red-breasted Pygmy Parrot (NG)  
*Micropsitta bruijnii*
Just a single bird was seen at Dablin Creek.

Papuan King Parrot (NG)  
*Alisterus chloropterus*
A group of 8 showed quite well at Varirata NP, with further sightings at Kwatu Camp and Ambua.

Eclectus Parrot (NE)  
*Ectctus roratus*
Seen regularly in the foothills and lowlands

Red-cheeked Parrot (NE)  
*Geoffroyus geoffroyi*
Commonly seen in the lowlands and foothills throughout the tour.

Blue-collared Parrot (NG)  
*Geoffroyus simplex*
Unusually good flight views of a single bird at Dablin Creek, also a flock of 10 at Ambua.

Brehm's Tiger Parrot (NG)  
*Psittacella brehmii*
A pair daily at the Kumul feeding table, and another pair in the forest at Tari Gap.

Modest Tiger Parrot (NG)  
*Psittacella modesta*
A pair showed very well at Kumul lodge.

Madarasz's Tiger Parrot (NG)  
*Psitacella madaraszi*
A female seen very well below Ambua, with another seen briefly at dusk around the lodge. The scarcest of the tiger parrots!

Plum-faced (Whiskered) Lorikeet (NG)  
*Oreopsittacus arfaki*
Seen at Kumul and Tari Gap, mostly flight views.

Striated Lorikeet (NG)  
*Charmosyna multistriata*
A flock of 7 at dusk near the Ok Menga tunnel. This species is seemingly very scarce and nomadic and is rarely seen at all!

Pygmy Lorikeet (NG)  
*Charmosyna wilhelminae*
This nomadic and tiny bird is rarely observed, so what a treat to have about 40 visiting the flowering tree above Ambua and to be able to study them at length in the scope!

Red-flanked Lorikeet (NE)  
*Charmosyna placenis*
A few around Kwatu Camp and others at Boystown Road, we obtained perched views at the latter site.

Fairy Lorikeet (NG)  
*Charmosyna pulchella*
About half a dozen birds were visiting the amazing flowering tree above Ambua, where rare perched views were obtained!

Josephine's Lorikeet (NG)  
*Charmosyna josefinae*
Yet another rarely seen lorikeet that we recorded on this tour. Indeed one of the first birds we saw at Ambua as a single bird gave us nice scope views in the flowering tree.

Papuan (Stella's) Lorikeet (NG)  
*Charmosyna papou*
This stunning species was encountered a number of times at Tari Gap and Ambua Lodge, mainly in flight.

Yellow-billed Lorikeet (NG)  
*Neopsittacus musselsbroekii*
Commonly seen at Kumul, Ambua, and Tari Gap with some good perched views.

Orange-billed Lorikeet (NG)  
*Neopsittacus pullicauda*
Some flight views at Tari Gap.

Black-capped Lory (NG)  
*Lorius lory*
This gorgeous bird was first seen at Varirata NP and further views were had around Tabubil and Kiunga.

Yellowish-streaked (Greater Streaked) Lory (NG)  
*Chalcopsitta sintillata*
Good numbers were seen around Kiunga and Kwatu Camp.
Dusky Lory (NG) *pseudeos fuscata*
A flock in typical high flight at Varirata NP, and then nice views of four birds visiting the flowering tree above Ambua!

Goldie’s Lorikeet (NG) *Psitteuteles goldiei*
Regularly seen in flight in the highlands, our best views came at the flowering tree above Ambua where several birds were feeding!

Coconut (Rainbow) Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus*
These gaudy lorikeets were seen regularly in the lowlands and foothills.

Large Fig Parrot (NG) *Psittaculirostris desmarestii*
After a few unsatisfactory flight views in the Kwatu Camp area, we had a stunning male crawling out of his nest hole just before we left the area. Fantastic!

Orange-breasted Fig Parrot (NG) *Clycopsitta guliemmiterti*
These beautiful parrots were seen regularly in the lowlands and foothills.

Double-eyed Fig Parrot *Cyclopsitta diophthalma*
Regularly seen around Kiunga and the Kwatu Camp, a copulating pair was the most memorable sighting!

**Pittas  Pittidae**

Papuan (Red-bellied) Pitta (NE) *Pitta erythrogaster*
This recently split species was not vocal at all this year around Kwatu Camp. Only a single distant bird was heard. However, JJ managed excellent views of a bird very close to the camp during lunch break!

Hooded Pitta (H) *Pitta sordida*
This species was also particularly quiet this year with just two distant birds heard around Kwatu Camp.

**Bowerbirds  Ptilonorhynchidae**

Black-eared Catbird (NE) (H) *Ailuroedus melanotis*
Heard at Boystown Road. New Guinea’s two catbirds are now eight and all are difficult to observe!

Archbold’s Bowerbird (NG) (H) *Archboldia papuensis*
We heard a bird at close range at Tari Gap, but it somehow eluded detection.

Flame Bowerbird (NG) *Sericulus ardens*
Distant, but prolonged, scope views of several birds at Boystown Road included several females, an apparent displaying immature male, and finally the stunning male!

Yellow-breasted Bowerbird (NG) *Chlamydera lauterbachii*
A single bird was scoped in the Lai Valley.

Fawn-breasted Bowerbird (NE) *Chlamydera cerviniventris*
Good numbers were seen in the PAU grounds, where a bower was also seen. Another bird seen near Varirata NP.

**Australasian Treecreepers  Climacteridae**

Papuan Treecreeper (NG) *Cormobates placens*
A tricky species, we were fortunate to get excellent views in our first minutes of birding above Ambua.

**Australasian Wrens  Maluridae**

Wallace’s Fairywren (NG) *Sipodotus wallacii*
Unusually good views of a pair of this shy species near Kwatu Camp.
Emperor Fairywren (NG)  *Malurus cyanocephalus*
Seen well near Kwatu Camp, and then even better at the Boystown Road.
White-shouldered Fairywren (NG)  *Malurus alboscapulatus*
Seen below Kumul, and then very well at the Tari airport.

**Honeyeaters Meliphagidae**

**Red Myzomela (NE)**  *Myzomela cruentata*
Infrequently seen on this route, we had a nice male seen briefly at Dablin Creek.
**Papuan Black Myzomela (NG)**  *Myzomela nigrita*
Observations at Varirata NP and in the Tabubil area.
**Mountain Myzomela (NG)**  *Myzomela adelphinae*
Several birds were seen below Kumul.
**Red-collared Myzomela (NG)**  *Myzomela rosenbergii*
Seen around Kumul, Ambua and the Tari Gap, the males are just stunning!
**Green-backed Honeyeater (NE)**  *Glycichaera fallax*
A single sighting of this unobtrusive bird at Dablin Creek.
**Rufous-backed Honeyeater (PNG)**  *Ptilopora guisei*
Several sightings were had in the forests just above Ambua.
**Grey-streaked Honeyeater (NG)**  *Pycnopygius ixoides*
Commonly seen at the highlands, especially easy to see at Kumul Lodge.
**Plain Honeyeater (NG)**  *Pycnopygius nigricollis*
Pairs were seen at Varirata NP and the Boystown Road.
**Marbled Honeyeater (NG)**  *Pycnopygius cinereus*
Two at the Lai River and then prolonged views of two below Kumul.
**Silver-eared Honeyeater (NG)**  *Lichmera alboauricularis*
A pair in downtown Moresby included a bird sat on a nest, another was seen at a flowering tree on the outskirts of town.
**Streak-headed Honeyeater (NG)**  *Pycnopygius stictocephalus*
Seen at Varirata NP and the Boystown Road.
**Spotted Honeyeater (NG)**  *Xanthotis polygrammuss*
Excellent views of a pair at Dablin Creek.
**Tawny-breasted Honeyeater (NE)**  *Xanthotis flaviventer*
Regularly encountered around Tabubil and Kiunga.
**Meyer’s Friarbird (NG) (H)**  *Philemon meyeri*
A persistently calling bird at the Boystown Road could not be located.
**New Guinea (Helmeted) Friarbird (NG)**  *Philemon novaeguineae*
Commonly seen and heard throughout the lowlands and foothills.
**White-throated Honeyeater**  *Melithreptus albogularis*
Good numbers were seen in woodland in Varirata NP.
**Long-billed Honeyeater (NG)**  *Melilestes megarhynchus*
A few seen at Dablin Creek.
**Common Smoky Honeyeater (NG)**  *Melipotes fumigatus*
Common in the high mountains and seen daily in the Tari and Kumul areas, with a single at Dablin Creek.
**Olive Straightbill (NG)**  *Timeliopsis fulvigula*
Two birds were seen just above Ambua Lodge, a rarely recorded species.
Rufous-banded Honeyeater (NE)  *Conopophila albogularis*
Seen at PAU, Port Moresby and Kiunga.

Black-throated Honeyeater (NG)  *Caligavis subfrenata*
One seen at Murumuru Pass, we had much better views at the Tari Gap.

Yellow-browed Melidectes (NG)  *Melidectes rufocrissalis*
Seen below Kumul and also at Ambua Lodge.

Belford's Melidectes (NG)  *Melidectes belfordi*
Common at high elevations. Particularly obvious and aggressive at the Kumul Lodge feeder.

Ornate Melidectes (NG)  *Melidectes torquatus*
Seen quite well in the Lai Valley and later on the Dablin Creek Road.

Yellow-tinted Honeyeater  *Lichenostomus flavescens*
Six birds showed nicely at PAU.

Mottle-breasted Honeyeater (Meliphaga) (NG)  *Meliphaga mimikae*
A few people got on this at Dablin Creek, where it foraged on the ground in the very recently cleared forest at Dablin Creek.

Mountain Honeyeater (Meliphaga) (NG)  *Meliphaga orientalis*
About ten birds in the Lai Valley.

Scrub Honeyeater (Meliphaga) (NG)  *Meliphaga albonotata*
Regularly sightings in the Tabubil and Kiunga areas.

Mimic Honeyeater (Meliphaga) (NG)  *Meliphaga analoga*
Seen at Varirata NP, Tabubil, and Kiunga.

Elegant Honeyeater (Meliphaga) (PNG)  *Meliphaga cinereifrons*
Two birds were seen at a flowering tree in Varirata NP.

Yellow-gaped Honeyeater (Meliphaga) (NG)  *Meliphaga flavirictus*
A scarce meliphaga, we had nice views of two birds near Kwatu Camp, where the brighter-coloured legs could be discerned!

Australasian Warblers  *Acanthizidae*

Goldenface (Dwarf Whistler) (NG)  *Pachycare flavogriseum*
A much-wanted species, a single bird was seen by most in a fast-moving flock at Varirata NP.

Rusty Mouse-warbler (NG)  *Crateroscelis murina*
Heard and seen briefly on several occasions in Varirata NP again in the Tabubil area.

Mountain Mouse-warbler (NG)  *Crateroscelis robusta*

Pale-billed Scrubwren (NG)  *Sericornis spilodera*
Two birds showed briefly in a flock in Varirata NP.

Papuan Scrubwren (NG)  *Sericornis papuensis*
Observed below Kumul and at Tari Gap.

Large Scrubwren (NG)  *Sericornis nouhuysi*
Observed at Kumul and Tari Gap.

Buff-faced Scrubwren (NG)  *Sericornis perspicillatus*
We saw a few near Kumul and again near Ambua.

Brown-breasted (Treefern) Gerygone (NG)  *Gerygone ruficollis*
Pairs were seen and heard a few times below Kumul and at the Tari Gap.

Large-billed Gerygone  *Gerygone magnirostris*
A pair was seen along the Ketu River.
Yellow-bellied Gerygone (NG)  
*Gerygone chrysogaster*

Seen nicely near Kwatu Camp, the beautiful song was regularly heard.

Green-backed Gerygone  
*Gerygone chloronotus*

A drab species that was seen quite well at Varirata NP and Dablin Creek. The lovely song was regularly heard.

Fairy Gerygone  
*Gerygone palpebrosa*

Single birds seen in mixed flocks during both visits to Varirata NP.

### Australasian Babblers  
**Pomatostomidae**

Papuan (New Guinea) Babbler (NG)  
*Garritornis isidorei*

Seen at km 17 and Boystown Road, with the best views at Kwatu Camp.

### Satinbirds  
**Cnemophilidae**

Loria’s Satinbird (NG)  
*Cnemophilus loriae*

Nice views of two males at Murumuru Pass and then a pair at the Tari Gap.

Crested Satinbird (NG)  
*Cnemophilus macgregorii*

Females were regularly seen at Kumul, on one occasion just a couple of meters away! The sensational male proved more furtive, and while it was regularly seen not everyone got on it.

### Berrippeckers, Longbills  
**Melanocharitidae**

Obscure Berrypecker (NG) (H)  
*Melanocharis arfakiana*

Heard on two occasions at the Dablin Creek Road.

Black Berrypecker (NG)  
*Melanocharis nigra*

A number of birds showed well in Varirata NP.

Fan-tailed Berrypecker (NG)  
*Melanocharis versteri*

A single bird at Kumul was followed by several birds at Ambua.

Spotted Berrypecker (NG)  
*Rhamphocharis crassirostris*

A male and the spotted female were seen very well at their favourite fruiting tree at Ambua Lodge.

Dwarf (Spectacled) Longbill (NG)  
*Oedistoma iliolophus*

Quite good views of a relaxed pair within a flock at Varirata NP.

Pygmy Longbill (NG)  
*Oedistoma pygmaeum*

A pair showed briefly in a flock at Varirata NP.

Slaty-headed (-chinned) Longbill (NG)  
*Toxorhamphus poliopterus*

An unusually relaxed bird watched at length feeding on pink flowers below Kumul.

### Painted Berrypeckers  
**Paramythiidae**

Tit Berrypecker (NG)  
*Oreocharis arfaki*

Several sightings at Kumul and the Tari Gap.

Crested Berrypecker (NG)  
*Paramythia montium*

Seen around Kumul Lodge and at Tari Gap.

### Whipbirds, Jewel-babblers, Quail-thrushes  
**Psophodiidae**

Spotted Jewel-babbler (NG)  
*Ptilorrhoa leucosticte*

Most people managed quite good views of this striking bird at the Tari Gap.

Blue Jewel-babbler (NG) (H)  
*Ptilorrhoa caerulescens*

Heard around Kwatu Camp and the Boystown Road.
Chestnut-backed Jewel-babbler (NG)  *Ptilorrhoa castanonota*
We heard it at Dablin Creek, but only JJ managed to get a view.

Painted Quail-thrush (NG)  *Cinclosoma ajax*
Two birds were encountered in Varirata NP and most people ended up with a view of one or the other.

**Boatbills  Machaerirhynchidae**

Yellow-breasted Boatbill (NE)  *Machaerirhynchus flaviventer*
Good views of an adult feeding a begging juvenile near Kwatu Camp.

Black-breasted Boatbill (NG)  *Machaerirhynchus nigripectus*
Several sightings of this stunner, at Murumuru Pass, Tari Gap and Ambua.

**Woodswallows, Butcherbirds & Allies  Cracticidae**

White-breasted Woodswallow  *Artamus leucorynchus*
Commonly seen in the lowlands around Port Moresby and Kiunga.

Great Woodswallow (NG)  *Artamus maximus*
Seen regularly in the highlands, it was especially prominent at Ambua Lodge.

Lowland Peltops (NG)  *Peltops blainvillii*
Sightings at Boystown Road and along the Ketu Creek included a bird sitting on its nest.

Mountain Peltops (NG)  *Peltops montanus*
Good views at Dablin Creek and Ok Menga.

Black Butcherbird  *Cracticus quoyi*
Good views at Dablin Creek.

Black-backed Butcherbird (NE)  *Cracticus mentalis*
Great views were had of these birds in PAU.

Hooded Butcherbird (NG)  *Cracticus cassinus*
Regularly sightings at Varirata NP, Kwatu Camp and Boystown Road.

**Mottled Berryhunter  Rhagologidae**

Mottled Berryhunter (Whistler) (NG)  *Rhagologus leucostigma*
We heard two birds along the Waterfall Trail below Ambua Lodge, and while the second male was calling at very close range, we only managed flight views.

**Cuckooshrikes  Campephagidae**

Black-faced Cuckooshrike  *Coracina novaehollandiae*
Regular sightings of small flocks in the lowlands.

Stout-billed Cuckooshrike (NG)  *Coracina caeruleogrisea*
This very large cuckooshrike was seen at Varirata NP and Dablin Creek.

Boyer's Cuckooshrike (NG)  *Coracina boyeri*
Regularly seen at Varirata NP, Tabubil and Kiunga.

White-bellied Cuckooshrike  *Coracina papuensis*
Just one bird at PAU.

Hooded Cuckooshrike (NG)  *Coracina longicauda*
Heard and seen very poorly near Ambua Lodge.

Black-shouldered (Papuan) Cicadabird (NG)  *Coracina incerta*
Good views on consecutive days at Dablin Creek.
Grey-headed Cuckooshrike (NG) *Coracina schisticeps*
A few sightings, at Dablin Creek, Kwatu Camp, and the Boystown Road.

**Black Ciccadabird (Cuckooshrike) (NG)** *Coracina melas*
Several seen at Varirata NP and also on the Boystown Road.

**Black-bellied Cuckooshrike (Ciacadabird) (NG)** *Coracina montana*
Seen at Murumuru Pass and Tari Gap.

**Golden Cuckooshrike (NG)** *Campochaera sloetii*
A real stunner, just a single bird was seen well near Kwatu Camp.

**Varied Triller** *Lalage leucomela*
Just one pair at Varirata NP.

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**Ploughbill Eulacetomidae**

**Wattled Ploughbill (NG)** *Eulacestoma nigropectus*
One of the most-wanted birds in New Guinea, we had an absolutely outrageous encounter with a male that landed a few meters above our heads and stared down at us for 15 minutes until we decided to walk away. It then proceeded to follow us along the trail for a short while. Wow!??

**Australo-papuan Bellbirds Oreoicidae**

**Rufous-naped Whistler (Bellbird) (NG)** *Alaedryas rufinucha*
We had very good views of this taxonomic anomaly on the ground of Kumul Lodge, with another pair below Ambua.

**Crested Pitohui (Bellbird) (NG) (H)** *Ornorectes cristatus*
We heard the incredible call of this shy species at Varirata NP.

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**Whistlers & Allies Pachycephalidae**

**Brown-backed Whistler (PNG)** *Pachycephala modesta*
Commonly seen in the highlands.

**Grey Whistler (NE)** *Pachycephala simplex*
Sightings of single birds at Varirata NP and Kwatu Camp.

**Sclater's Whistler (NG)** *Pachycephala soror*
A female below Kumul and then several stunning males around Ambua.

**Regent Whistler (NG)** *Pachycephala schlegelii*
This stunner was seen on several occasions in the highlands.

**Black-headed Whistler (NG)** *Pachycephala monacha*
After hearing a few, a last ditch effort on the way to Tari airport produced nice views of a pair.

**White-bellied Whistler (NG)** *Pachycephala leucogastra*
A male showed very well in the woodland into Varirata NP, an enigmatic species!

**White-bellied Pitohui (NG)** *Pitohui incertus*
Regularly heard around Kwatu Camp, we had only the briefest of views.

**Rusty Pitohui (NG)** *Pitohui ferrugineus*
A group of three recorded on our final walk in Varirata NP.

**Little Shrike-thrush** *Colluricincla megarhyncha*
Observed at Varirata NP and Kwatu Camp.

**Grey Shrike-thrush** *Colluricincla harmonica*
Seen at PAU and Varirata NP.

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Rockjumper Birding Tours
**Shrikes Laniidae**

Long-tailed Shrike  
*Lanius schach*

Seen on a few dates in the highlands.

**Figbirds, Orioles Oriolidae**

Australasian Figbird  
*Sphecotheres vieilloti*

Good numbers were seen on our trip to PAU, with a pair in Port Moresby.

Hooded Pitohui (NG)  
*Pitohui dichrous*

Good numbers in Varirata NP. This black-and-rufous bird is the traditional “poisonbird” as it was the first bird species discovered to possess poisonous compounds in its tissues.

Brown Oriole (NG)  
*Oriolus szalayi*

This friarbird mimic was seen on numerous occasions in the lowlands and foothills.

**Drongos Dicruridae**

Spangled Drongo  
*Dicrurus bracteatus*

Encountered on most days in the lowlands and foothills.

**Fantails Rhipiduridae**

Willie Wagtail  
*Rhipidura leucophrys*

Very widespread and seen almost every day of the trip.

Sooty Thicket Fantail (NG) (H)  
*Rhipidura threnothorax*

Heard just briefly at Varirata NP.

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

We had three sightings in the Tabubil area, all rather brief.

Black Thicket Fantail (NG)  
*Rhipidura atra*

A constantly calling bird would not show in a sago swamp. JJ went in for it alone and was rewarded with a view.

Black Fantail (NG)  
*Rhipidura atra*

Seen below Kumul, on the Dablin Creek and below Ambua.

Chestnut-bellied Fantail (NG)  
*Rhipidura hpyerythra*

The dominant species in flocks at Varirata NP.

Friendly Fantail (NG)  
*Rhipidura alboblimbata*

One of the most commonly seen birds in the highlands.

Dimorphic Fantail (NG)  
*Rhipidura brachyrhyncha*

We found a nest of this species at Kumul Lodge where we enjoyed great views, and had further views at the Tari Gap.

**Monarchs Monarchidae**

Spot-winged Monarch (NG)  
*Symposiachrus guttula*

A brief sighting at Kwatu Camp and then a better sighting on our final visit to Varirata NP.

Hooded Monarch (NG)  
*Symposiachrus manadensis*

We recorded three of these in a short period of time near Kwatu Camp, a difficult bird that gave us quite good looks.

Black-winged Monarch (NG)  
*Monarcha frater*

A single bird was seen in a flock at Varirata NP.
Golden Monarch (NE)  
*Carterornis chrysomela*  
Singles were seen on both days around Kwatu Camp.

Frilled Monarch (NG)  
*Arses telescopthalmus*  
Seen at Kwatu Camp and Varirata NP.

Torrent-lark (NG)  
*Grallina bruijni*  
Very brief views of a pair flashing across the road at Dablin Creek.

Shining Flycatcher  
*Myiagra alecto*  
Frequently seen along the Elevela and Ketu Rivers.

### Crows, Jays  Corvidae

Grey Crow (NG)  
*Corvus tristis*  
A few sightings on the Elevela River and another one in Varirata NP.

Torresian Crow  
*Corvus orru*  
This species was common in the Port Moresby region.

### Melampittas  Melampittidae

Lesser Melampitta (NG)  
*Melampitta lugubris*  
Several encounters around Kumul Lodge resulted in reasonable views for most.

### Ifrita  Ifritidae

Blue-capped Ifrit (NG)  
*Ifrita kowaldi*  
A very sought-after, unique and attractive bird that was seen regularly in the highlands. This is another of the ‘poison-birds’ and is believed to be the most poisonous of them all.

### Birds-of-paradise  Paradisaeidae

Glossy-mantled Manucode (NG)  
*Manucodia ater*  
This unlikely bird-of-paradise was seen regularly along the Elevela and Ketu Rivers.

Crinkle-collared Manucode (NG)  
*Manucodia chalybatus*  
We recorded this species regularly: at Varirata NP, Dablin Creek, Ok Menga and the Boystown Road, getting scope views on multiple occasions.

Trumpet Manucode (NE)  
*Phonygammus keraudrenii*  
Seen at km 17 and particularly well at the Boystown Road.

Short-tailed Paradigalla (NG)  
*Paradigalla brevicauda*  
A poor showing this year with few fruiting trees around Ambua, we did have a brief sighting on the Waterfall Trail.

Ribbon-tailed Astrapia (PNG)  
*Astrapia mayeri*  
We saw these phenomenal birds regularly at Kumul and the Tari Gap, including regular sightings of the extraordinary males and their tail streamers. This PNG endemic has a very limited range and was the last recognised species of bird-of-paradise to be discovered in 1938.

Princess Stephanie's Astrapia (PNG)  
*Astrapia stephaniae*  
Another sensational Bop, we saw a pair at Murumuru Pass, and then had better views at Ambua Lodge. Both males and females were encountered.

Queen Carola's Parotia (PNG)  
*Parotia carolae*  
Despite a lot of effort, only a couple people managed very distant scope views of a male visiting a fruiting tree at Dablin Creek.
Lawes's Parotia (PNG)  
*Parotia lawesii*
A distant male was scoped near Kumul.

King of Saxony Bird-of-paradise (NG)  
*Pteridophora alberti*
We had reasonably good views of a male and female at Murumuru Pass, but this was superseded by exceptional views of a male at Tari Gap perched out on an open snag for an extended period in the great early morning light.

Superb Bird-of-paradise (NG)  
*Lophorina superba*
Really nice views of about three males below Kumul!

Magnificent Riflebird (NE)  
*Ptiloris magnificus*
Often heard, rarely seen, we did get to see a female crossing the road at Boystown Road.

Growling Riflebird (NG)  
*Ptiloris intercedens*
Females showed quite well on two occasions, while a distant perched male was also observed.

Black Sicklebill (NG)  
*Epimachus fastuosus*
Two distant males were scoped below Ambua Lodge, one of which was displaying from its songpost.

Brown Sicklebill (NG)  
*Epimachus meyeri*
A fine male was seen at Murumuru Pass, while a female made occasional visits to the feeding table at Kumul Lodge.

Magnificent Bird-of-paradise (NG)  
*Diphyllodes magnificus*
A stunning male spent much of its time feeding in and guarding at *Schefflera* fruiting tree at Dablin Creek. Though distant, we could enjoy it at leisure through the scopes!

King Bird-of-paradise (NG)  
*Cicinnurus regius*
A really special encounter along km 17. As we watched the male in the scope, he began to go into full display mode, flicking his coiled green wires around. Terrific! A female was also seen near Kwatu Camp.

Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise (NG)  
*Seleucidis melanoleucus*
Yet another sensational BOP! Several birds were seen along the Fly, Elevela and Ketu Rivers. The undoubted highlight was scoping two males that went into full display mode.

Greater Bird-of-paradise (NG)  
*Paradisaea apoda*
A few males were eventually seen at km 17 and briefly displaying high up in the trees. Equally good were repeated close flybys at Boystown Road. Females were seen very well too.

Raggiana Bird-of-paradise (PNG)  
*Paradisaea raggiana*
An exceptional display at the lek during our first morning at Varirata NP kicked the tour off with style! We saw lots of females there and some more at km 17.

Lesser Bird-of-paradise (NG)  
*Paradisaea minor*
At Kama village, we had really special views of a male going into full display mode in full view for us and two interested females!

Blue Bird-of-paradise (PNG)  
*Paradisaea rudolphi*
Quality views of three males below Kumul Lodge, this is one of the most-wanted birds in the country.

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**Australasian Robins Petroicidae**

Ashy Robin (NG)  
*Heteromyias albispecularis*
This very shy forest-interior species was seen very briefly in the forest at the top of the Tari Gap.

Black-sided Robin (NG)  
*Poecilodryas hypoleuca*
Another shy forest-interior robin, we regularly heard it around Kwatu Camp. One bird gave some views as it circled round and round us!

Black-throated Robin (NG)  
*Poecilodryas albonotata*
Good views were had of a single bird at Tari Gap.

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Rockjumper Birding Tours
White-winged Robin (NG) *Peneothello sigillata*
Regular and superb sightings were had of this species around Kumul Lodge.

Slaty (Blue-grey) Robin (NG) *Peneothello cyanus*
Great views around Ambua Lodge.

White-rumped Robin (NG) *Peneothello bimaculata*
Another elusive robin, most people obtained views of it as it made several brief appearances at a perch along the Dablin Creek Road.

White-faced Robin (NE) *Tregellasia leucops*
A single bird in Varirata NP.

Torrent Flyrobin (Flycatcher) (NG) *Monachella muelleriana*
We had great views of several birds at the Lai River and again a few days later in the Tabubil area.

Canary Flyrobin (Flycatcher) (NG) *Microeca papuana*
Daily sightings in the highlands.

Olive Flyrobin (Flycatcher) (NG) *Microeca flavovirescens*
An unobtrusive forest interior species, we were fortunate to see it well on both visits to Varirata NP.

Lemon-bellied Flyrobin (Flycatcher) *Microeca flavigaster*
A few individuals were seen along the entrance road to Varirata NP.

Garnet Robin (NG) *Eugerygone rubra*
An incredible response from a male at Kumul that flew in and landed right in front of us! Wow!!

Papuan Scrub Robin (NG) (H) *Drymodes beccarii*
This extremely shy species was heard on both visits to Varirata NP.

Lesser Ground Robin (NG) *Amalocichla incerta*
Brief, but good, views at Tari Gap.

### Swallows, Martins Hirundinidae

**Pacific Swallow** *Hirundo tahitica*
This is the common swallow of the region and was seen on most days of the trip.

### Leaf Warblers & Allies Phylloscopidae

**Island Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus poliocephalus*
Several were seen below Kumul and below Ambua.

### Grassbirds and allies Megaluridae

**Papuan (Tawny) Grassbird** (NE) *Megalurus macrurus*
Several birds were seen in grasslands at the Tari Gap.

### White-eyes Zosteropidae

**Black-fronted White-eye** (NG) *Zosterops minor*
Flocks were regularly encountered, at Varirata NP, the Lai Valley, and the Dablin Creek Road.

**Capped (Western Mountain) White-eye** (NG) *Zosterops fuscicapilla*
Flocks regularly passed through swiftly at the Dablin Creek Road.

**Papuan (New Guinea) White-eye** (NG) *Zosterops novaeguineae*
Quite a few seen in the Ambua area.
**Starlings  Sturnidae**

**Metallic Starling (NE)**  
* Aplonis metallica  
Abundant in the Kiunga area, with a few more at PAU.

**Yellow-eyed Starling (NG)**  
* Aplonis mystacea  
A flock of 10 was seen at Ok Menga at dusk, apparently going to roost. An impressive flock of about 50, including adults and young, was observed at length on the Ketu River.

**Singing Starling (NE)**  
* Aplonis cantoroides  
Two at PAU and a pair feeding a juvenile at the Tari airport.

**Yellow-faced Myna (NG)**  
* Mino dumontii  
Seen almost daily in the lowlands and foothills with our largest numbers in the Kiunga region.

**Golden Myna (NG)**  
* Mino anais  
This very attractive species was seen well along the Elevela River

**Thrushes  Turdidae**

**Island Thrush**  
* Turdus poliocephalus  
Made regular visits to the feeding table at Kumul and also seen at the Tari Gap.

**Chats, Old World Flycatchers  Muscicapidae**

**Pied Bush Chat**  
* Saxicola caprata  
Good numbers were seen daily in grassland habitat, mainly in the mountains.

**Flowerpeckers  Dicaeidae**

**Red-capped Flowerpecker (NG)**  
* Dicaeum geelvinkianum  
Widespread and commonly seen in small numbers on almost every day of the trip.

**Sunbirds  Nectariniidae**

**Black Sunbird**  
* Leptocoma sericea  
Fairly commonly seen in the lowlands.

**Old World Sparrows  Passeridae**

**House Sparrow (I)**  
* Passer domesticus  
A few birds were seen around Port Moresby.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow (I)**  
* Passer montanus  
Recorded fairly frequently in and around towns and cities.

**Waxbills, Munias & Allies  Estrildidae**

**Mountain Firetail (NG)**  
* Oreostruthus fuliginosus  
One showed well at Kumul Lodge.

**Crimson Finch**  
* Neochmia phaeton  
We were very fortunate to see 4 of the rarely seen white-bellied *evangelinae* subspecies at the Kiunga airstrip.

**Blue-faced Parrotfinch**  
* Erythrura trichroa  
A couple of brief sightings at Dablin Creek and another above Ambua.

**Grey-headed Mannikin (Munia) (PNG)**  
* Lonchura caniceps  
Good views around PAU.
Hooded Mannikin (Munia) (NG)  *Lonchura spectabilis*
Flocks of these were regularly seen in the highlands.

Black Mannikin (Munia) (NG)  *Lonchura stygia*
My personal highlight of the trip was getting exceptional views of about 30 of these Fly Plains endemics at the Kiunga airstrip. There are only a handful of sightings and perhaps no previous photographic documentation of the birds from the Kiunga area. Last year’s El Nino drought is the likely cause of their dispersal here.

**Pipits  Motacillidae**

**Australian Pipit**  *Anthus australis*
A single bird being chased around by a harrier at the Tari Gap, another at the Tari airstrip.

### Annotated Checklist of Mammals Recorded

**Great Flying Fox**  *Pteropus neohibernicus*
A massive camp of these mega-bats was enjoyed along the Elevela River, with more seen in flight.

**Speckled Dasyure**  *Neophascogale lorentzii*
A brief view of one at the Tari Gap.

**Agile Wallaby**  *Macropus agilis*
A nice bonus was seeing three of these along the entrance road to Varirata NP.

**Southern Brown Cuscus**  *Phalanger mimicus*
A single animal was spotlight along the Ketu Creek, but kept to the densest tangles.

**Plush-coated Ringtail**  *Pseudochirops corinnae*
The mammalian highlight of the tour was undoubtedly our very close nocturnal encounter with this beautiful marsupial found by Wayne and then sniffing our feet as it ran around wondering where to go!

**Black-tailed Giant Rat (NG)**  *Uromys anak*
This massive rat was seen at the feeder at Kumul Lodge nightly and seems to be getting bolder!