



After some hard work, we managed to find and enjoy point blank views of this pair of Victoria Crowned Pigeons. (Nigel Voaden)

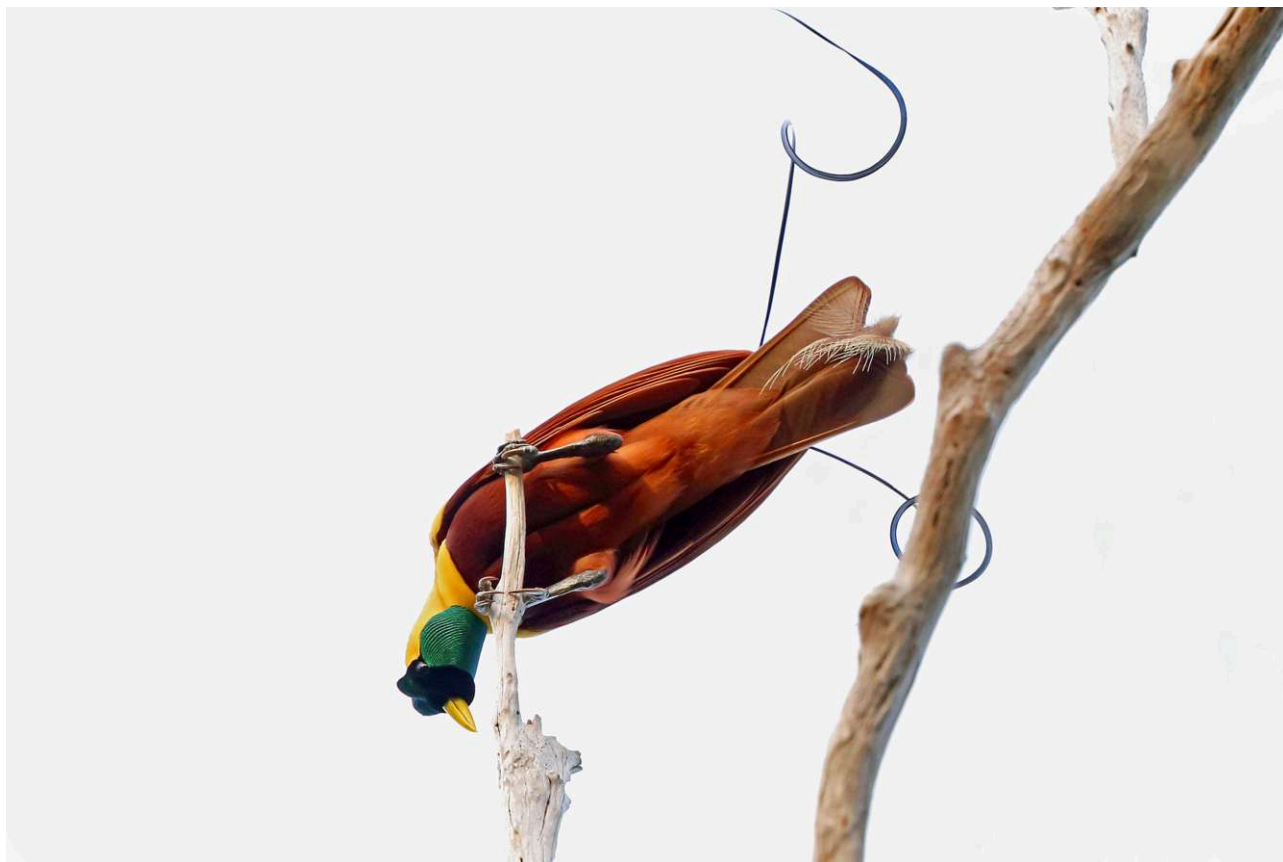
ULTIMATE WEST PAPUA

3/5 – 29 AUGUST 2015

LEADER: DANI LOPEZ-VELASCO

You know you've seen some very good birds when Wilson's Bird-of-paradise doesn't win the bird of the trip contest...and doesn't even get to second place! The award this year went to Black Sicklebill, not only because it's such a stonking bird, but mostly because of the absolutely mind-boggling views we had of it in full display in front of us, in David Attenborough's style. Almost tied with the out-of-this-world Western Parotia display dance that we witnessed in dismay just a few feet from our hide. And of course we were also blessed with gripping views of displaying Wilson's Bird-of-paradise (for many, the best bird in the world) in Waigeo – and very close to the road! - Other close contenders included a ridiculously tame Lesser Melampitta, the two bizarre Feline Owlet-Nightjars that we saw so well in their daytime roosts, the

outstanding Macgregor's Honeyeater (sadly not a bird-of-paradise anymore) and the grotesque Victoria Crowned Pigeon, which showed exceedingly well after playing very, very hard to get.



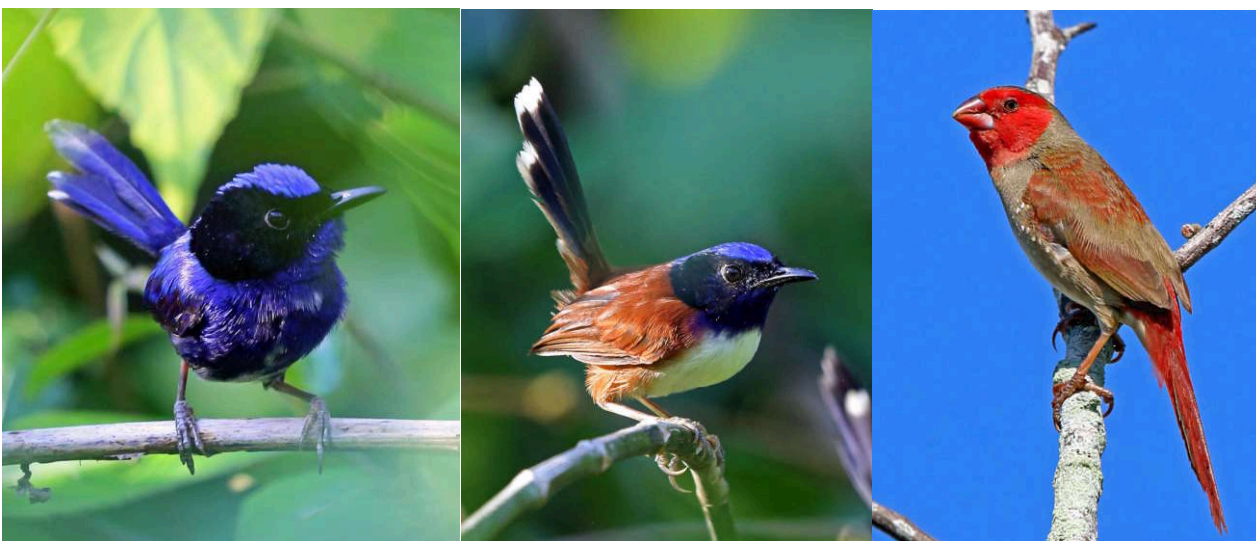
Displaying male Red Bird-of-paradise in Waigeo, by the roadside. West Papua birding made easy! (Nigel Voaden)

Probably the main attraction of this tour is the chance to get up close encounters with some members of the most beautiful, spectacular and enigmatic bird family in the world: the Birds-of-paradise (BoPs for the aficionados). In fact, the heart-warming display of quite a few species was witnessed at minimal range, and this is surely an experience any birder should experience at least once in a lifetime. We also observed a great selection of kingfishers, pigeons and parrots, as well as many endemics or rarely observed species such as Biak Scrubfowl (Biak Megapode), Snow Mountains Quail, Papuan (New Guinea Harpy) Eagle, Chestnut Forest Rail, Western Crowned Pigeon, Geelvink Imperial Pigeon, Black and Violet-necked Lories, Modest and Painted Tiger Parrots, Salvadori's Fig Parrot, Archbold's Nightjar, Mountain Owlet-Nightjar, an uncooperative Papuan Hawk-Owl, Habenicht's and Papuan (Red-bellied) Pittas, White-eared Catbird, Vogelkop Bowerbird, Papuan Treecreeper, Spotted, Black-throated, Orange-cheeked and Marbled Honeyeaters, Short-bearded, Sooty and Vogelkop Melidectes, Ruby-throated, Biak (Dusky) and Red Myzomelas, Vogelkop and Grey-green Scrubwrens, Fairy Gerygone, Goldenface, Papuan Logrunner, Western Crested Berrypecker, Spotted Jewel-babbler, Black Butcherbird, Biak Triller, Black Sittella, Wattled Ploughbill, Mottled Berryhunter (a new endemic NG family!), Vogelkop, Lorentz's and Sclater's Whistlers, Arafura Fantail, Raja Ampat Pitohui, Sooty Thicket Fantail, Biak Monarch, Brown-headed Crow, Blue-capped Ifrit, Loria's Satinbird, Jobi Manucode, Long-tailed Paradigalla, Arfak and Splendid Astrapias, Black-billed and Pale-billed Sicklebills, King, Lesser, Red and Magnificent Birds-of-paradise, Ashy, Garnet, Mountain and Smoky Robins, Greater Ground Robin, Mountain Firetail and Streak-headed, Great-billed, Black-breasted and Western Alpine Mannikins, amongst others.



MacGregor's Honeyeater (or MacGregor's BoP, as I still prefer to call it) in its typical habitat. (Nigel Voaden)

Our West Papua tour used to be one of our toughest ones due to a combination of some rather basic camping, hard and long hikes on slippery, muddy and steep trails, hot and sticky or cold and damp weather, the potential for lots of rain and the sometimes shaky logistics. However, things have changed dramatically over the last couple of years, and, although the birding in New Guinea can be extremely frustrating because of the many shy and skulking species, at least the physical effort required to see them is not as great as it used to be just a few years ago. In fact, one can now see Wilson's and Red BoPs from the road itself in Waigeo, and you can drive all the way up to our camp in Lake Habbema and see Snow Mountains Quails from the vehicle. Deforestation in the lowlands, especially around Nimbokrang, is at its worst, and unfortunately going at a very fast pace. The forest patch where we used to camp and see most of the birds is sadly completely gone, and although there are still some other areas with trees left, one wonders how long will some of the species, such as crowned pigeons, last in the area. During our tour we birded a wide variety of habitats, including hot and sticky lowlands, montane grasslands and moss forests, primary forest on offshore islands and rich hill forest.



Some colourful WP passerines: Emperor Fairywren of the endemic mysorensis race, of Biak, and Crimson Finch. (Nigel Voaden)

We arrived in the early morning at Biak airport in a clear but very windy day. We checked in at our nearby hotel, where we were informed by our local agent that the plan of going straight to Numfor Island had to be cancelled today, due to very rough seas, which made the crossing too risky. Because of these unexpected news, we quickly made a change in plans and made our way to some secondary forest patches on this oceanic island situated in the famous Geelvink Bay. We noted a nice selection of widespread New Guinea species like Yellow-bibbed and Claret-breasted Fruit Doves, Slender-billed and Great Cuckoo-Doves, Torresian (Pied) Imperial Pigeon, Eclectus Parrot (very smart males and females), two showy Brush Cuckoos, Glossy and Uniform Swiftlets, Sacred Kingfisher, Oriental Dollarbird, Rainbow Bee-eater, Hooded Butcherbird, Spangled Drongo, Willie Wagtail, Torresian Crow, Sooty-headed Bulbul (introduced), Pacific Swallow, Metallic Starling, Red-capped Flowerpecker and Olive-backed and Black Sunbirds. Our first Geelvink endemic was Biak Lorikeet (recently split from Coconut Lorikeet), followed by a party of Long-tailed Starlings that foraged in a fruiting tree. Nearby, we enjoyed good views of a pair of Biak Trillers, also recently split from Black-browed Triller. Further on, we caught up with the splendid Biak Paradise Kingfisher, which eventually performed very well. This mega endemic is the most endearing of the Geelvink specials and its calls emanate everywhere from the forest. A pair of Biak Black Flycatchers really wanted to be seen, and we also obtained great looks at the smart, orange *kordensis* race of Golden Monarch. An hour of seawatching from the hotel garden produced a flock of Raja Shelducks and some Lesser Frigatebirds, Brown Boobies and Bridled Terns, all flying pretty close to shore due to the very strong winds. In the afternoon we visited a patch of scrubland and small trees not far from town where our target, the endemic and scarce Biak White-eye, showed very well, while a Large-tailed Nightjar was also seen at dusk.



The stunning Biak Paradise Kingfisher and the colourful Biak Red Lory. (Nigel Voaden and DLV)

Over the next two days, sea conditions were unfortunately not suitable at all for the boat crossing to Numfor, with very rough seas and strong winds, so instead we visited various forest patches in Biak, looking for the remaining endemics. The rare Biak Monarch, a species that's been seen by few birders, proved quite easy to see this time, and we managed to get great view of at least 4 individuals. Excellent! Another tricky endemic is Biak Coucal. As usual, it wasn't responsive at all, but we succeeded in finding two birds in the forest which gave fair views to everyone. Biak Paradise Kingfishers were very common, and colourful

Hooded Pittas showed very well a couple of times. The unobtrusive Biak Gerygone was seen in its canopy home, and a mixed flock held a brief Biak Leaf Warbler. Endemic Biak Red Lories provided a splash of colour, as did a pair of beautiful Emperor Fairywrens that skulked in the undergrowth. Sulphur-crested Cockatoos were seen a number of times, and several raptors were also in evidence including Brahminy Kite, Variable Goshawk, Eastern Osprey and Pacific Baza, the latter showing its crest and bright yellow eyes. We were pleased to connect with Biak (Dusky) Myzomela (the endemic subspecies of Dusky, with a very striking reddish colour, and possibly a good species), while other species seen both in the forest and in more open areas included Red-cheeked Parrot, Common Cicadabird, Little Shrikethrush and Shining Flycatcher. A quick scan along the shoreline revealed a nice Beach Kingfisher, found by Dave perched in a dead tree, and some Grey-tailed Tattlers. We spent quite a lot of time at night looking for Biak Scops Owl. The owls were pretty vocal, hearing at least 3 different birds at a certain spot, but for some reason they weren't responsive at all and never came close enough to be spotlighted. During one of the owling sessions we found a roosting Superb Fruit Dove, which was admired at length.



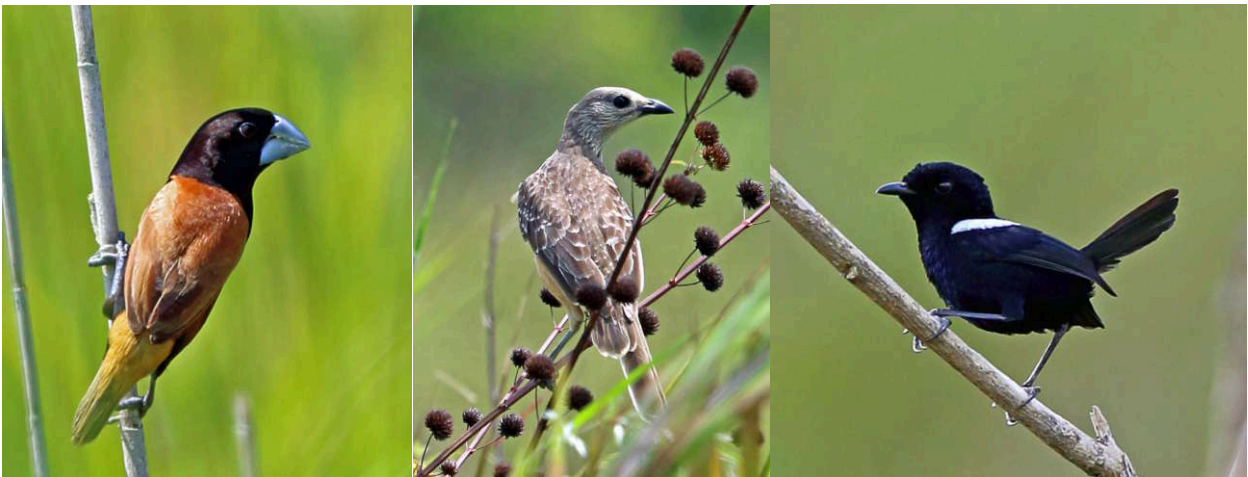
Two Biak endemics: Biak White-eye and Biak Black Flycatcher (Nigel Voaden)

Given that sea conditions had slightly improved on our last day in Biak, we decided to make an attempt and try to cross to Numfor, with the idea of seeing the endemic paradise kingfisher quickly and then heading back before dark. We left the harbour in the speedboat early in the morning, and after a couple of hours cruising around Biak, going quite slow due to the waves and choppy seas, we reached Rani Island and the start of the actual sea crossing. Conditions then seriously deteriorated, swell size increased as did the wind, and after some calculations we realized that first, it was probably too dangerous to get into the open seas of the channel, as the possibility of capsizing down was high, and second, even if we made it, we wouldn't have time to get back to Biak in daytime. So unfortunately I had to make the difficult call of turning around and going back. Safety is always first, and I think everyone appreciated the effort of trying very hard to reach the island, even in challenging conditions. Thankfully all participants understood the decision, and some were even pleased with it. We then had lunch in a small and pristine islet, where we enjoyed great views of the endemic Geelvink Imperian Pigeon, split from the very different looking Spice Imperial Pigeon, and a Moluccan Fruit Dove (part of the White-breasted F D complex). Noddies were present in good numbers around the island, and both Brown and Black gave very good comparison, side-by-side views. Back in Biak we tried again for the scops owl, which was again as unresponsive as in previous nights. The highlight of the owling session however came in form of the rarely seen Biak Scrubfowl. This species is always a tricky one, so I couldn't believe my eyes when I found one roosting high up on a tree. Some of us didn't actually believe it until they laid their eyes on the bird!



Rani Island, off Biak. (DLV)

In the early hours of the next day we flew from Biak to Sentani. Instead of having to stay in a rather basic guesthouse like in previous years, we now had a very comfortable, five star hotel at our disposal. Very posh and very much appreciated by everyone. In the afternoon we explored the nearby grasslands surrounding huge Lake Sentani. It was quite birdy in this open habitat and birds kept coming our way. Highlights included King and Brown Quails for Nigel, Orange-fronted Fruit Dove, Black-billed Coucal, the impressive Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, several pretty White-shouldered Fairywrens and many Great-billed Mannikins. Other goodies included Whistling Kite, Orange-bellied Fruit Dove, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Mimic, Long-billed, Streak-headed and Tawny-breasted Honeyeaters, New Guinea Friarbird, Tree Martin, Golden-headed Cisticola, Hooded and Chestnut-breasted Mannikins and Crimson Finch (probably introduced here).



Great-billed Mannikin, Fawn-breasted Bowerbird and White-shouldered Fairywrens near Sentani. (Nigel Voaden)

The morning flight from Sentani to Wamena took us over endless expanses of rain forest, a truly fantastic sight. While approaching our destination we could see the formidable peaks of the Snow Mountains and the famous Baliem Valley. Upon arrival we were welcomed by our trusted man on the spot with his team. We transferred to the hotel for a bit of repacking and reorganizing and off we went in our 4x4 vehicles towards Lake Habbema. A couple of stops on the way gave us delightful Plum-faced and Orange-billed Lorikeets, Mountain Swiftlet, the boisterous Belford's Melidectes, a pair of Papuan Treecreepers, a brief Black Sittella and a Mountain Robin. We arrived at a breath-taking 3,300m altitude and settled in our campsite very close to the scenic Lake Habbema. A magic spot. The 4,750m high rocky outcrop of Mount Trikora (the old Mount Wilhelmina) was towering in the distance. This third highest top of New Guinea used to be regularly covered in snow till the early nineties...Sadly, nowadays this is a rare sight, although the following morning we were greeted by snow capped peaks, making for a wonderful vision. We spent the afternoon walking in the grassland and forest edge around the lake, hoping to flush a Snow Mountains Quail. We were unsuccessful, but managed to see a few other good birds including Orange-cheeked and Black-throated Honeyeaters, a cracking male Papuan Harrier, Nankeen Kestrel, Great Woodswallow, Sooty and Short-bearded Melidectes, Island Thrush, Red-collared Myzomela, New Guinea Thornbill, Lorentz's Whistler, a pair of Papuan Grassbirds, Alpine Pipit and several flocks of the desired Western Alpine Mannikin. We had an excellent dinner at our very comfortable camp, and at dusk we visited a nearby spot where we had a New Guinea Woodcock in flight, as well as an Archbold's Nightjar. We also admired the amazing starry sky and happily hit the sack.



The rare Snow Mountains Quail showed extremely well near our camp by Lake Habbema. (Nigel Voaden)

Next morning we headed to a nearby ridge in search of the mythical MacGregor's Honeyeater (better known as MacGregor's Bird-of-paradise, as it was thought to be a BoP until recently). On the way we found a small flock of Snow Mountains Quail, which showed exceedingly well by the roadside. Our early morning walk through the open *Libocedrus* pine forest produced several exquisite species. It didn't take long to find our main garget, *Macgregoria*, foraging, sitting about and preening, and we appreciated their fashionable

orange cheek patches with the scope. A marvellous experience. It might not be a BoP anymore, but definitely still one of the best birds of the tour. Four colourful Painted Tiger Parrots invited close inspection, while nearby a male Splendid Astrapia displayed in a treetop, uttering his liquid 'plik' call. Several Salvadori's Teals and Pacific Black Ducks were scoped in the lake, and we spent some time trying to lure a calling Spotless Crake into the open, only resulting in brief views for the leader. With all main targets safely secured in the bag, we returned to camp for a well-deserved lunch. A short outing in the afternoon, before it started to rain, produced some widespread and previously seen birds, plus a skulking Rufous-naped Whistler (Rufous-naped Bellbird in the new field guide).



Lake Habbema, surrounded by forested ridges, home to MacGregor's Honeyeaters and Splendid Astrapias, with Mt Trikora in the background. (DLV)

At dawn we walked down into the Ibele valley, following a steep, muddy, slippery trail through beautiful Tolkienesque, mossy forest. The birding was superb, and we had many highlights. Bird of the day wasn't an easy picking at all, and was tied between three species: the rare, shy and Antpitta-like Greater Ground Robin that showed so well; the obliging Chestnut Forest Rail that came within a few feet from us and just stayed there for as long as we wanted, or, probably, even better, a tame, completely fearless female Lesser Melampitta – a renowned skulker-, that spent an hour hopping around us, and in between our legs (jj) along the trail. While having lunch the bird came to check us out again, and actually spent some time sitting on our wellington boots, which she used as a perch to find worms. Absolutely amazing! This wasn't a habituated or hand-fed bird or something like that. The bird hadn't probably seen a human being before and perhaps that's the reason why it wasn't afraid of us. MacGregor's "HoneyBop" showed extremely well again, and a juvenile Loria's Satinbird caused a bit of confusion, until Nigel obtained some photos, which clinched the ID. We also obtained good looks at Common Smoky Honeyeater, Large and Papuan Scrubwrens, lots of delightful Western Crested Berrypeckers and Friendly Fantail. At dusk, the hoped for Archbold's Nightjar didn't show up.



This “tame” but completely wild, Lesser Melampitta was one of the birds of the tour. (Nigel Voaden)

We explored the same forest down the Ibele valley next day, and while bird activity wasn’t as good as on the previous day, and birds were far less vocal, we managed to score a few good species. Papuan Logrunner is always a difficult species to see, so we were more than pleased to have very close and prolonged views of a female. Nigel found us a nice Blue-capped Ifrit (a poisonous bird, like the more famous Pitohuis), while a pretty female Garnet Robin, doing its distinctive wing flicking action, was much appreciated. A single Papuan Mountain Pigeon posed nicely in the scope, and we also enjoyed excellent perched views of Plum-faced Lorikeets. A calling Mountain Mouse-warbler was eventually coaxed into view, while a Wattled Ploughbill unfortunately didn’t stay in view for long. We also caught up with a very well behaved Mountain Firetail on our walk down. Another try in the late afternoon didn’t produce any nightjars at our stake out.



Two rarely-encountered specialties: Papuan Logrunner – female- and Greater Ground Robin. (Nigel Voaden)

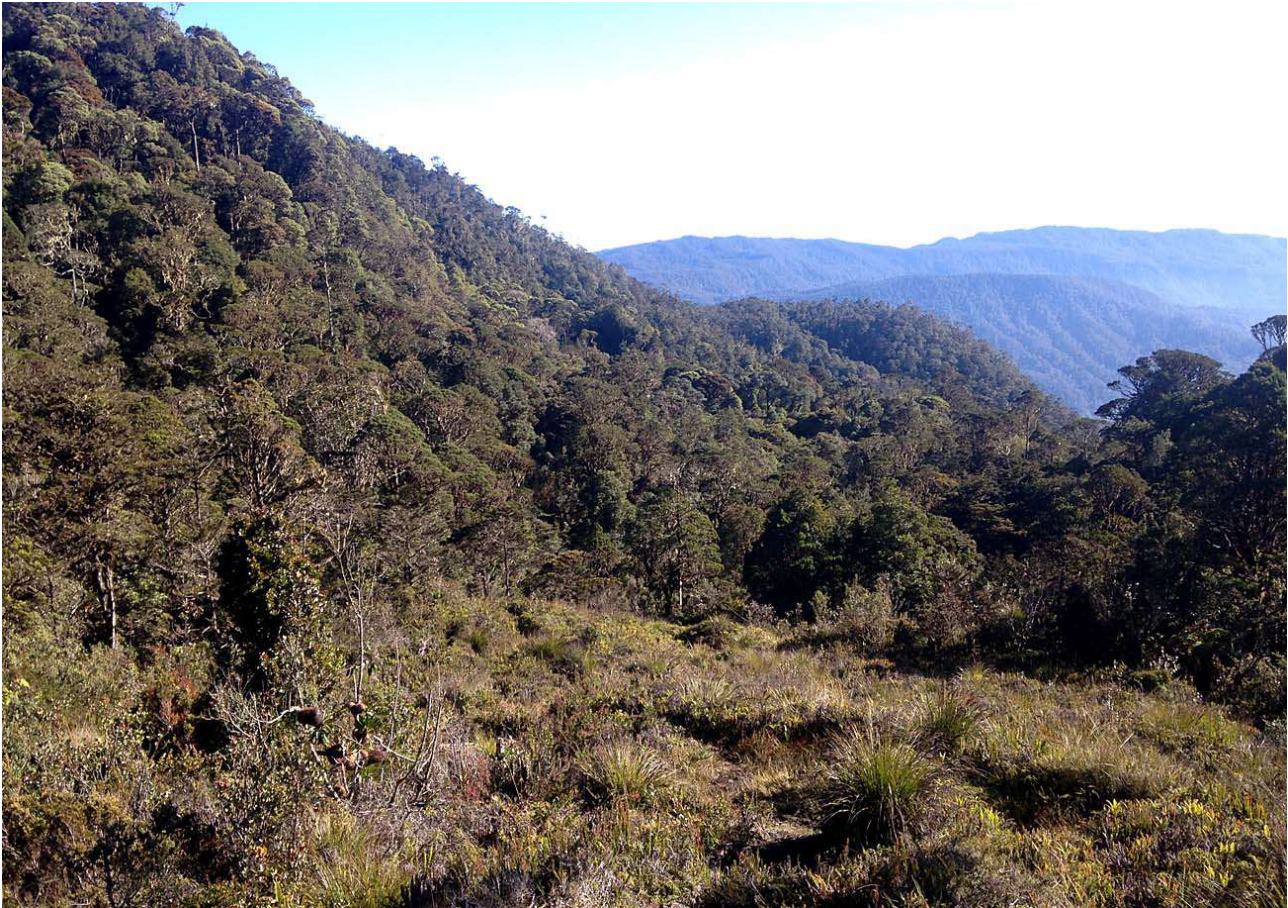


Salvadori's Teal. (Nigel Voaden)

Next morning, the 4x4 vehicles that were supposed to take us back to civilization didn't show up at the appointed time, so we had to wait for a couple of hours before they arrived. In the meantime, we saw some more Snow Mountains Quails around the camp, as well as the usual suspects, that included another male Papuan Harrier. Once the vehicles arrived, we drove down to Wamena, making a couple of stops on the way. Unfortunately, it was already very hot and sunny by the time we got to our usual birding spot, and there were very few birds around. Highlights included a noisy and lively flock of 9 Black Sittellas, three Brown Falcons, a group of Hooded Cuckooshrikes and several endemic Black-breasted Mannikins. We tried at various reliable places for Baliem Whistler (split from Common Golden), but they were strangely silent. Once back at the hotel, the hot showers and the soft beds were very much appreciated.



Orange-cheeked Honeyeater, Black Fantail and Mountain Firetail. (Nigel Voaden and DLV)



Ibele Valley still hosts large tracts of well preserved forest. (DLV)

Our flight from Wamena to Sentani was a bit delayed, but nevertheless we spent some enjoyable time watching the local people at the airport. Upon arrival we rearranged things at the hotel, had a tasty lunch in the restaurant that Dave rightly recommended, and then drove to our well-known lowland rainforest site near the foothills of the Cyclops Mountains. We met our man on the spot and drove on a bumpy track for a while, until we eventually reached our well-appointed camp. I was shocked to see the results of the devastating illegal logging that's going on in the area. The forest where we used to camp in the past, and that hosted cassowaries and crowned pigeons, was completely thrashed out, and for that reason we had to move our base camp to another location, where the forest was still in decent shape. However, one wonders how long will this patch of lowland rainforest last, and most likely some of the species will be gone from here soon. Our man in the spot also told us that it hadn't rained at all for months here. In fact it was probably the driest year ever on record, and thus bird activity was very poor. With very little vocalization displaying amongst BoPs – the same general conditions were encountered during most of the tour- birding was even more challenging than usual here, and some species, like Blue-black Kingfisher, seemed to have vanished in recent weeks. After settling down in our camp, we went to a good viewing spot from the road, where new birds came fast: Imperial pigeons were much in evidence, with both Pinon's and Zoe's seen in numbers, and the highlight being a Purple-tailed Imperial Pigeon that Nigel found perched in a tree, and posed nicely in the scope. Good numbers of Pink-spotted and Orange-bellied Fruit Doves were also seen quietly feeding in a fruiting tree, and a vocal Dwarf Koel was eventually lured into an open branch. A pair of noisy Black Butcherbirds showed nicely, but a calling White-eared Catbird remained hidden in the forest despite all of our efforts. New Guinea Friarbirds, Hooded Butcherbirds and Yellow-faced Mynas entertained us with their loud and distinctive calls, and we also saw our first Double-eyed Fig Parrots and tiny Buff-faced Pygmy Parrots. At least three Glossy-mantled Manucodes were scoped, and overhead our first Papuan Spine-tailed Swifts were found. Nearby, a pair of Boyer's Cuckooshrikes, which would be common over the next few days, was also found. However, best of all was the calling Pale-billed Sicklebill that showed so very well on top of a palm. Good stuff!



We had great views of this displaying male Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise. (Nigel Voaden)

After a hot and sticky night in our tents in the lowland rainforest, we walked a short distance and waited at the favourite display spike of a male Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise. Indeed, soon we were able to observe this splendid creature uttering its mournful call and parading to a visiting female. WOW, brilliant!! Ben, a highly talented bird artist, and definitely the best one I've seen in the field, made some wonderful sketches of it (as well as of many other BoPs and other birds during the trip). After an hour admiring this cracking bird, we decided it was time to move on. Next on the agenda was a nearby fruiting tree, which luckily had plenty of good birds attending it. Amongst them, a rare Jobi Manucode showed exceptionally well and allowed us to study its subtle id features in detail. Other birds of paradise coming to the tree included several female King BoPs, a single female 12-wired BoP and another Pale-billed Sicklebill that showed nicely. Plenty of fruit doves were present as well: Wompoo, Coroneted and Beautiful Fruit Doves being the best ones, and all new birds for the trip. A Little Bronze Cuckoo was seen in the canopy, while a colourful male Ochre-collared Monarch and a Rufous-backed Fantail flittered around. Tawny breasted and Plain Honeyeaters, and Meyer's Friarbird all made short visits, and a pair of gorgeous Blyth's Hornbills was also admired at length. Not much later we were witnessing a magnificent male King Bird-of-paradise (King Bop for the aficionados) in his display tree. Although this jewel bird was quite high up, we could still discern his striking, blue legs, green tail discs and bizarrely shaped head. What a bird! Not far from there, the normally shy Sooty Thicket Fantail gave itself up quite easily, and sat in the open for a while, allowing for great views, while a Common Paradise Kingfisher was also glimpsed. On the other hand a calling Blue Jewel-babbler wasn't very responsive and only our local guide saw it. Cuckooshrikes are well represented here, and apart from Boyer's we encountered several noisy flocks of Grey-headed Cuckooshrikes, heard Golden and also found a pair of White-bellied Cs in a clearing near the river. The repetitive songs of Yellow-bellied and Green backed Gerygone are very familiar sounds in the lowland rainforest and we managed to get very decent views of both species, while a Large-billed Gerygone was also seen nesting by the river. On the walk back we came across a midstorey "brown " flock, which held a couple of female Lesser BoPs, some Rusty Pitohuis, Little Shrikethrushes and a Brown Oriole. Other interesting species seen included Black Berrypecker and White-bellied Thicket Fantail. In the afternoon we birded along the Jalan Korea road, but things were fairly quiet. Highlights included good flight views of Brown Lory, our first and always impressive Palm Cockatoo, single

soaring Long-tailed Honey Buzzard and Pygmy Eagle (now a New Guinea endemic after the splitting off from Little Eagle), a Variable Dwarf Kingfisher and a pair of Lowland Peltops. The loud calls of Hook-billed Kingfishers seemed to emanate from just about everywhere, but as usual, they paid very hard to see. We got very close to one near the camp, and Ben managed to find it with the bins just before it flew off.



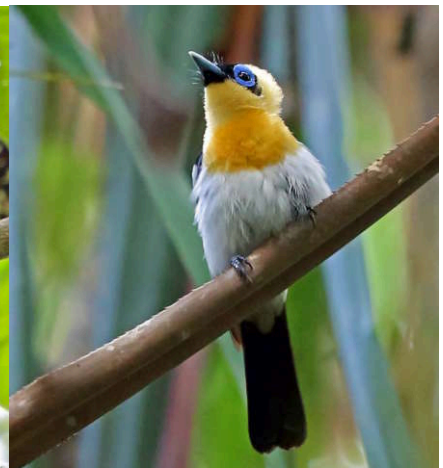
The usually very shy Sooty Thicket Fantail showed exceedingly well, and even posed for photos! (Nigel Voaden)

At dawn next morning we tried for the rare Shovel-billed Kookaburra at a favoured place, but no birds were heard calling. A White-eared Catbird was also seen there, and a small flock of Streak-headed Mannikins was found in the roadside vegetation. We then went to our former camping area, where it was very sad to see that most of the big trees had recently been chopped down, including the usual Lesser Bird-of-paradise displaying tree. Seeing this entire good habitat thrashed out was a truly horrible sight. A few birds miraculously still hanged around, and we were taken to a King BoP display tree. The male was, for a change, sitting very low down, allowing for brilliant, full-frame views. A retiring Black-sided Robin gave decent views, although never sat for long, and a Yellow-breasted Boatbill was also found. After lunch we went to another patch of forest, and were soon admiring a stunning, fully plumaged male Lesser BoP in his display tree, together with some immature males and females. Seeing it dancing and calling like crazy was a great experience. On the way to the tree we came across a flock of Papuan Babbler and a male 12-wired BoP. Our man in the spot also showed us a nice Coronated Fruit Dove at its nest, and from a nearby vantage point we admired a Palm Cockatoo, some Great and Slender-billed Cuckoo-Doves, and improved our views of Brown Lory. At dusk we went in search of the rarely seen Papuan Hawk-Owl. After a while we got a response but unfortunately the bird soon stopped calling. On the way back I spotlighted a roosting Pale-vented Bush-hen, which gave cracking views.



Two rare species seen in Nimbokrang: Brown-headed Crow, showing its distinctive bright blue eye, and the little-known Jobi Manucode. (Nigel Voaden)

We spent all of the following morning in some hot, humid, sticky and muggy lowland rainforest trying to track down the nowadays rare -mostly due to hunting- and difficult to find Victoria Crowned Pigeon (local name: mambruk). You have to walk quite some distance to get to good mambruk habitat, and that's what we did today. With the help of our local man, Dante, who knows this forest and how to find mambruks better than anyone, we checked a lot of suitable places, but despite a lot of hard work, we didn't have a sniff. The streams where we had seen Blue-black Kingfishers in the past were dry or mostly dry, and thus no kingfishers were in residence. A good bonus however came in form of a showy Habenicht's Pitta (split from Red-bellied, and with a range located in northern New Guinea; thus not the one you get in the usual PNG tour, nor in the Raja Ampat islands, which is now called Papuan Pitta). A pair of endemic Salvadori's Fig Parrots in the scope was, although distant, much appreciated, and we also saw Spot-winged Monarch and heard a Magnificent Riflebird, but that was about it. After lunch back at the camp we visited a nearby patch of forest in search of Shovel-billed Kookaburra, but the place was very dry and didn't seem to be suitable at the moment for the big kingfisher. Things were very quiet there, and the only bird of note was a Black Cicadabird. Another attempt at the hawk-owl at dusk left us empty handed, and despite a lot of trying, with the bird calling close for a while, it just wouldn't move from its position, which was blocked by some thick vegetation.



Pygmy Eagle -split from Little Eagle-, male Red-cheeked Parrot and a cracking Ochre-collared Monarch. (Nigel Voaden)



A jewel-like King BoP at his display tree, and a pair of impressive Blyth's Hornbills. (Nigel Voaden)



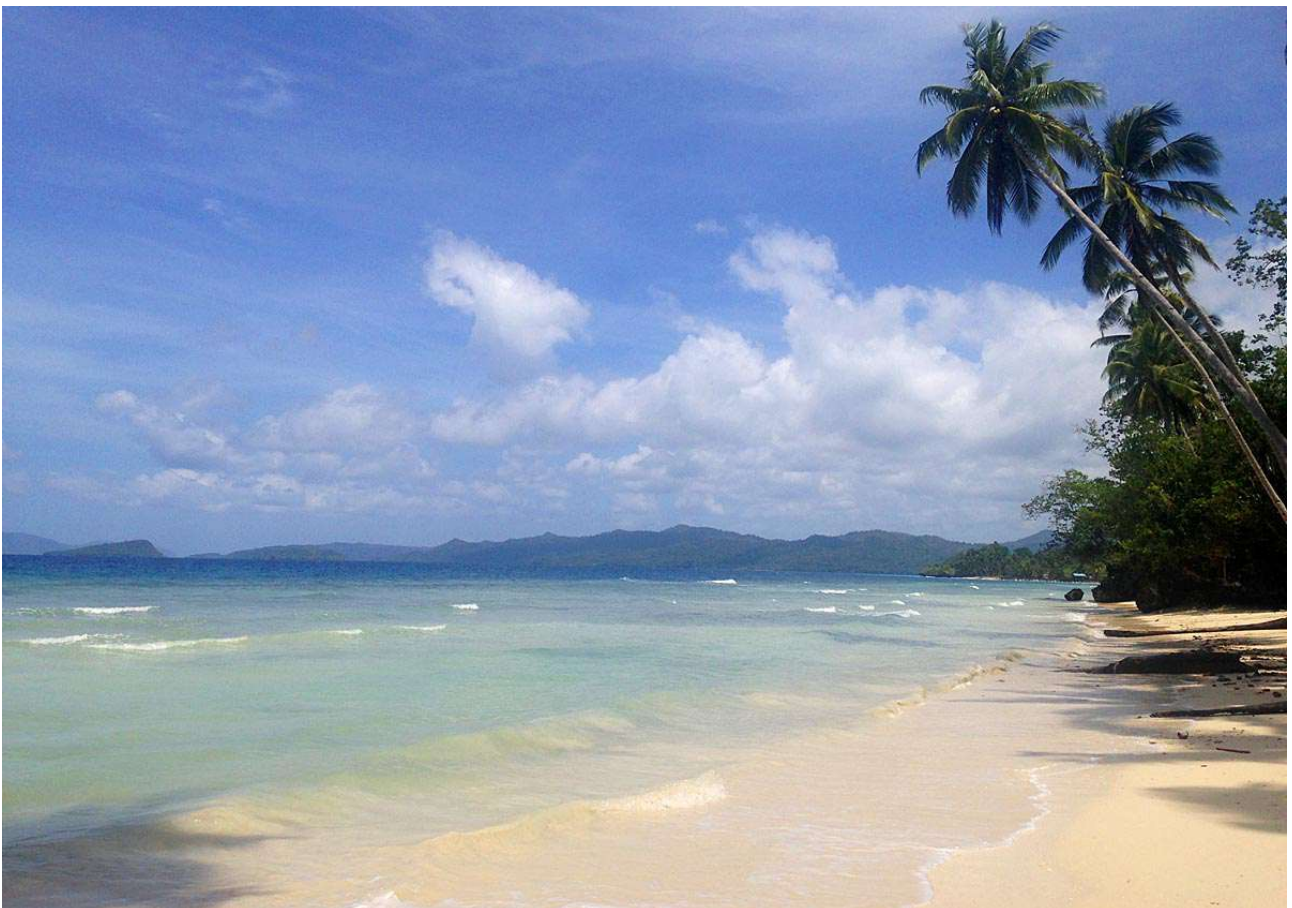
At dawn next morning we were back on our particular battle with the owl. Again, the bird started calling soon after arriving, and this time the bird was a bit more responsive, moving from tree to tree, but even though we played all sorts of tricks and were very, very patient, it never came close enough for the spotlight, and was only half glimpsed when it flew off from a distant tree. Very frustrating... After a quick breakfast it was time to go give one last try at the crowned pigeon. We drove for a while and then started walking through the forest, following a river. After a couple of hours we reached prime mambruk habitat, and Dante wandered off on his own, trying to find one on the ground. He was unsuccessful, so knowing we were in a mission; we left the trail and followed him. He was using his machete to get through the thick vegetation, which was hard work. It was very hot, humid and by then we were pretty exhausted, and were beginning to lose hope. However, things quickly changed when suddenly Dante flushed a crowned pigeon from the ground. We couldn't see where the bird had flown to, but after a frantic search I miraculously managed to locate its head amongst the foliage. I put the scope straight away on the bird and we were soon watching this impressive species. The views were ok, but then the bird flew off and landed in a far more open branch, low down, and for the next 30 minutes we were able to study this jewel through the scope in all its glory. The intricate patterning of its crest, the maroon chest and the red eye of this enormous pigeon showed very, very well. What a fabulous species! After a while, the bird was joined by a second one, and we had absolutely stunning views of these mega birds. We worked very hard for it, so the reward felt very good, and we certainly deserved it! The morning also produced another very good bird in form of Brown-headed Crow, a rare endemic known only from a handful of locations, which showed exceedingly well perched in a tree. Other birds seen included (Western) Black-capped Lory, a leader-only Grey-headed Goshawk, lots of, a very obliging Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, a flock of Papuan Babblers and lots of Streak-headed Mannikins in a grassy area. Happy with our success, we walked back to the vehicles, in a seemingly endless and very hot march. We eventually made it, and after some refreshing drinks, we drove to the nearby village, where we saw a Common Spotted Cuscus (apparently a wild one), said goodbye to our guides and returned to the very much appreciated air-conditioned rooms and hot showers in the classy hotel at Sentani.



A tired, sweaty but very happy group, with our local guide Dante, after seeing Victoria Crowned Pigeon. Pinon's Imperial Pigeon. (Nigel Voaden)

Next morning we flew from Sentani westward to the large town of Sorong, where met our capable lady agent and got organized at the hotel. In the late afternoon we went to a nearby forest where we did some birding from the road, hoping to at least hear the calls of the uncommon Red-breasted Paradise Kingfisher. The kingfisher had other plans though, things were very quiet, and we only saw a handful of common birds.

We returned to the same tract of forest next morning. Birding was still pretty slow, the whole forest was very dry and there was little bird song. No kingfishers were even heard, although we enjoyed great views of perched Black Lories, much to Dave's delight, as a consolation prize. Other birds seen included Spotted Honeyeater, Pygmy and Yellow-bellied Longbills, Singing Starling Starling and Olive-crowned Flowerpecker. We then boarded in the ferry that took us across smooth waters to the nearby island of Waigeo. In the past we visited Salawati and Batanta, in order to see such beauties as Wilson's and Red BoPs and Western Crowned Pigeon. However, extensive logging is taking place in these two islands, and in fact a recce trip by our guide earlier this year failed to turn up any male Wilsons at the traditional sites, so in no time we made the necessary arrangements to visit Waigeo instead. And this turned out to be a great decision! Once in this lovely and still well forested island, we transferred into the vehicles and drove to our accommodation, a lovely resort by the ocean. After leaving our staff in our wonderful cabins and having a tasty lunch, we drove a short distance to a Red BoP display site, located just 5 minutes from the road itself. We didn't have to wait for long under the display tree before a male Red BoP started calling. Meanwhile we had good views of a long overdue Yellow-billed Kingfisher. The bop was at first a bit wary but after a while it made several visits to the tree, and did some crazy displays. The views were much, much better than the ones in Batanta, and Nigel managed to take some good photos.



Idyllic scenery as seen from our cabins in Waigeo. A major improvement compared to the place where we used to stay in Batanta.

(DLV)

Next morning was hopefully going to be one of the best days of the tour, as we would visit the display court of the highly desired Wilson's Bird-of-paradise. Instead of the traditionally strenuous and very steep hike we had to do in Batanta in order to reach the display area, this time we just drove for half an hour and then walked in flat terrain for 100 metres to reach the hide... Now that's a big difference! So by dawn, and without having had to sweat, we were all sitting behind the palm leaf screen overlooking the display area of one of the most colourful, bizarre and spectacular birds our planet has on offer. Soon we were admiring the improbably decorated and patterned male cleaning his court only metres away. Sometimes he was just sitting on an open branch over his court and uttering his raucous call to warn off intruders and to attract females. We all tried to puzzle together the different feather tracts of this truly amazing bird, which is restricted to just two islands off the western tip of New Guinea! We observed this gorgeous species for a couple hours and then happily went back to the road. Those on the first vehicle were the lucky ones today, as they had a cracking Western Crowned Pigeon slowly crossing the road in front of them. The bird soon flew off and despite all of our efforts we couldn't find it again. The rest of the morning was spent trying to see another crowned pigeon in the forest, covering a lot of terrain, but to no avail. We had plenty of highlights though: Yellow-capped Pygmy Parrot, a rare Rufous Owl that was flushed and seen by Brian, the recently split Arafura Fantail seen briefly along the road, a responsive Frilled Monarch, a couple of fly-bys Brown-headed Crows, Puff-backed Honeyeater, and a good mid storey flock that contained Fairy Gerygone, Olive Flyrobin and Grey Whistler. A small group of Rusty Pitohui showed pretty well, as did both Dwarf, Yellow-bellied and Pygmy Longbills. One of the highlights of the morning was seeing one of our locals climb, only with his feet and hands, no ropes at all, all the way up to a tall tree, to show us a Waigeo Cuscus. In the afternoon we went on a boat trip, through very calm and turquoise seas, towards some remote islets in a distant bay along the coast. It was a very enjoyable and pleasant trip that kicked off with excellent views of Spice and Pied Imperial Pigeons. Brown Booby, Eastern Osprey, and Greater Crested and Black-naped Terns were all seen fishing in the calm waters. Further on, we stopped the boat in a sheltered bay and enjoyed terrific views of the much-wanted Violet-necked Lory. Excellent! We then reached our final destination, a tiny, 50 m long "rock" covered with thick vegetation and some trees that was supposed to be a big Great-billed Parrot roost. At first, not much was going on, but as light faded, the first Great-billed Parrots started to arrive. Soon, flocks and flocks of them appeared, totalling more than 300 birds, and making for a really impressive sight! Together with them, lots of Spice and Pied Imperial Pigeons, as well as Rainbow Bee-eaters and Singing Starlings covered the whole islet. After admiring a lovely sunset, with all the birds in the background, we happily returned back to our accommodation.



A cracking Western Crowned Pigeon and a beautiful Spice Imperial Pigeon, both seen in Waigeo. (Nigel Voaden)



We witnessed a spectacular sunset in a remote bay in Waigeo, surrounded by hundreds of Great-billed Parrots. Quite unforgettable!
(Nigel Voaden)

The first plan of the morning was to visit another Wilson's BoP display court. The bird in attendance was a young male, but nevertheless we had point blank views of it, as it cleaned its court. Afterwards, some

decided to go to the other dancing ground, and on the way they got to see two more Western Crowned Pigeons by the track, which we later failed to find there or in the forest, despite a lot of searching. However, we caught up with the endemic and recently split Raja Ampat Pitohui, as well as with Dusky Megapode, which was seen twice. Other birds seen were Common Paradise Kingfisher, lots of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos- an encouraging sight given all the hunting and illegal trapping that occurs in other places- and a Papuan (Red-bellied) Pitta. Afterwards we said goodbye to our hosts, drove to the ferry terminal and returned to Sorong.



Great-billed Parrots coming to roost and Sulphur-crested Cockatoo. (Nigel Voaden)

After a good night's sleep, we flew to Manokwari, the main town at the other side of the Vogelkop peninsula, and now West Papua's capital, and drove straight up the fabled Arfak Mountains. We arrived at Zeth's place at midday, met the man himself – one of the most talented local guides in the world- , and got ourselves ready for the wonders of Zeth's fabulous valley. It hadn't rained for weeks here, something very unusual at this time of the year, and Zeth informed us that most of the BoPs, as well as other species, were fairly quiet. Anyway.... We spent the afternoon birding in the lower part of the valley, mostly looking for the rare Long-tailed Paradigalla, which refused to show. A new Bird-of-paradise for us came in the form of a female Black Sicklebill. We also observed Bar-tailed Cuckoo-Dove, Mountain (White-bibbed) Fruit Dove, Papuan (flight only) and Yellow-billed Lorikeets, Rufous-sided Honeyeater, Arfak (or Western Smoky) Honeyeater, Vogelkop Melidectes, Vogelkop Scrubwren, Black-breasted Boatbill, Stout-billed Cuckooshrike, Vogelkop, Sclater's and Rufous-naped Whistlers, Slaty (or Blue-grey) Robin and a showy Leser Ground Robin. In the late afternoon it started to rain, and we headed back to Zeth's house.



This male Magnificent BoP couldn't have shown any better... (Nigel Voaden)

Next morning, we visited the Western Parotia hide and sat there for a couple of hours. The male parotia called around the hides during most of the morning, but only came in very briefly. Afterwards some of us decided to spend the rest of the morning in the forest, while others opted to stay in the hide for more parotia time. Those who went to the forest were rewarded with very good views of the mysterious Long-tailed Paradigalla. First, we encountered a pair which stayed very high up in the canopy and was only glimpsed, but before going back for lunch Zeth heard one tapping on a tree, and after some searching we managed to get great views of this much wanted speciality. The long tail and the blue and yellow facial markings of this extreme rarity showed well. Another speciality, and now a family on its own, that gave terrific, eye-level views was the rare Mottled Berryhunter (Mottled Whistler). Zeth also showed us a nice male Bronze Ground Dove on its nest. We also came across a large feeding flock of Yellow-billed Lorikeets, and, best of all, a group of 6 Modest Tiger Parrots. And it was Zeth, of course, who also showed us two cryptic day-roosting Mountain Owlet-Nightjars, which were admired at very close quarters. Other birds seen included Orange-crowned Fairywren, Mountain Mouse-warbler, Regent Whistler, Black Monarch, Canary Flyrobin and Capped White-eye. Those staying at the parotia hide were rewarded with excellent views of the male in full display, and also observed a Green-backed Robin. Just before lunch, one of Zeth's sons came with big news: he had just found a roosting Feline Owlet-Nightjar! So after having a very quick meal we went straight to the place, and were soon face to face with this stunning creature. Seeing it only a couple feet away sure was a heart-warming event! One can only wonder how the locals find these roosting nightbirds with such ease... In the afternoon we visited two hides of Magnificent Bird-of-paradise. The male very active in one of them, so in the end all of us spent some quality time watching it calling, briefly displaying, and also cleaning up his dancing court. What a bird! We tried hard for White-striped Forest Rail at the place where we had seen it in previous trips, but we didn't even hear it, perhaps a result of the lack of rain in recent weeks. Other birds seen in the afternoon included Rusty Mouse-warbler, Grey-green Scrubwren, Chestnut-bellied Fantail and two Trumpet Manucodes for Brian. Also of note was an interesting mouse-warbler that sounded and looked like a Bicolored, but according to the recent edition of the NG field guide, they aren't supposed to occur here in the Arfaks.



Two most-wanted and adorable critters: Feline, above, and Mountain, below Owlet-Nightjars. (DLV)



Forest in the mist in the upper reaches of the Arfaks, home of Arfak Astrapias. (DLV)

It rained heavily at night, but luckily it dawned clear. We paid another visit to the parotia hides, and we were very fortunate to see the male in full display, doing his incredible dervish dance two times, with no less than

4 females together in attendance. The silvery frontal shield, the six head plumes, the iridescent chest and the purple eyes sure made an impression. The views of the displaying male were simply out of this world, and this is surely one of the most amazing avian displays on Earth. Afterwards, we moved up to the higher reaches of Gunung (Mount) Indon. We waited for a while at the place where we had seen the paradigalla the day before, but it didn't show up, the only birds of note being a pair of Black-throated Robins. Later, the heavens opened, and we suffered a lot of rain during the whole hike. I was feeling quite sick, so it was a relief when we finally reached the camp, in the afternoon. Fortunately it soon stopped raining, so we left our clothes drying up and had a quick rest. Next on the agenda was the endemic Smoky Robin, which didn't take long to find next to the camp. Also in the area we saw our first Black Pitohui. Afterwards we visited a couple of Vogelkop Bowerbird hides, right next to their bowers. The bower of this species is probably the most amazing structure built by any bird. We, especially one of the groups, had good views of this drably-coloured species. It was gratifying to see this self-effacing, fashion-conscious bird so very well. After leaving the hides, and just before dark, Zeth told us he had found yet another roosting Feline Owlet Nightjar! So we followed him and enjoyed terrific views, and great photo opportunities, of this cracking bird for the second time in two days.



Black Sickbill. Bird of the trip. And what a bird! (Nigel Voaden)

Before dawn next morning we were already sitting quietly inside two hides overlooking a Black Sickbill display perch. Soon the bird started uttering his distinctive and far-carrying explosive double note. And after some nervous waiting, the male flew straight to the perch, located very close to the hide. The red eye, the glossy blue-black back and the very long tail really stood out. As if this wasn't enough, the male then started doing his horizontal courtship display with the pectoral plumes raised around its head. Absolutely unbeatable, mind-goggling views (I know I have used this sort of expressions many times during the report, but that's the only way of describing the views we had of some displaying BoPs!), and bird of the trip! All of a sudden a female came, and after some mating, both flew off. After such an amazing experience, we left the hide and walked towards our next base camp. It seemed my stomach sickness was spreading to other members of the group, but eventually we all made it. After a short rest, we hit the forest around the camp.

The highlight was undoubtedly the Spotted Jewel-babbler that gave very reasonable views.



Different Vogelkop Bowerbird bowers. Note the different materials used, including various human made items, such as cans and even toilet paper... Thrash for us, but not for the bowerbirds it seems! (DLV)

Over the next two days we explored the higher reaches of the forest. Our main target here was the endemic Arfak Astrapia, which had played hard to get recently. On the first afternoon, before it started to rain, I had brief views of a female, but it soon flew off. Luckily, next day Nigel found it again and we all enjoyed very good views of this little known BoP. The other main target here, the uncommon and easy-to-miss Black-billed Sickiebill, was also found on the first day, and we followed it for some time in the forest, ultimately giving great views to everyone. A pair of Red-breasted Pygmy Parrots was seen near their nest hole, some flocks of striking Tit Berrypeckers were watched at close quarters, shy Ashy Robins showed nicely and a Brehm's Tiger Parrot was found quietly sitting in the canopy. A pair of Papuan Lorikeets gave fantastic views as they sat in a branch, and other species like Marbled Honeyeater and Cinnamon-browed Melidectes were also seen. At night, a Papuan Boobook eventually showed well in the torch beam.

On our last morning, Dave decided to go with Zeth to look for the astrapia again, and they succeeded in seeing both a cracking male and a female. They also caught up with Rufescent Imperial Pigeon. The rest of us slowly made our way downhill, in a crisp and sunny morning. Two of the porters walking ahead came across a Dwarf Cassowary (!) on the trail, but sadly when we arrived the bird was gone. A pair of Papuan (New Guinea Harpy) Eagles spent most of the morning uttering their remarkable and very loud calls, from various sites in the valley, but only Nigel managed to get his eyes on one of these impressive raptors. We waited again at the paradigalla spot but no birds were on show. We got to Zeth's house just in time for lunch, where a young kid showed us a Mountain Myzomela at its nest. It rained a bit in the afternoon, and we returned to the White-striped Forest Rail spot, just in case they had got more active. It wasn't the case though, as again we didn't even hear them. The only birds of interest during the walk were Island Leaf Warbler and Hooded Pitohui.



A pair of lovely Red-breasted Pygmy parrots, and a close up of a male Western Parotia. (Nigel Voaden)

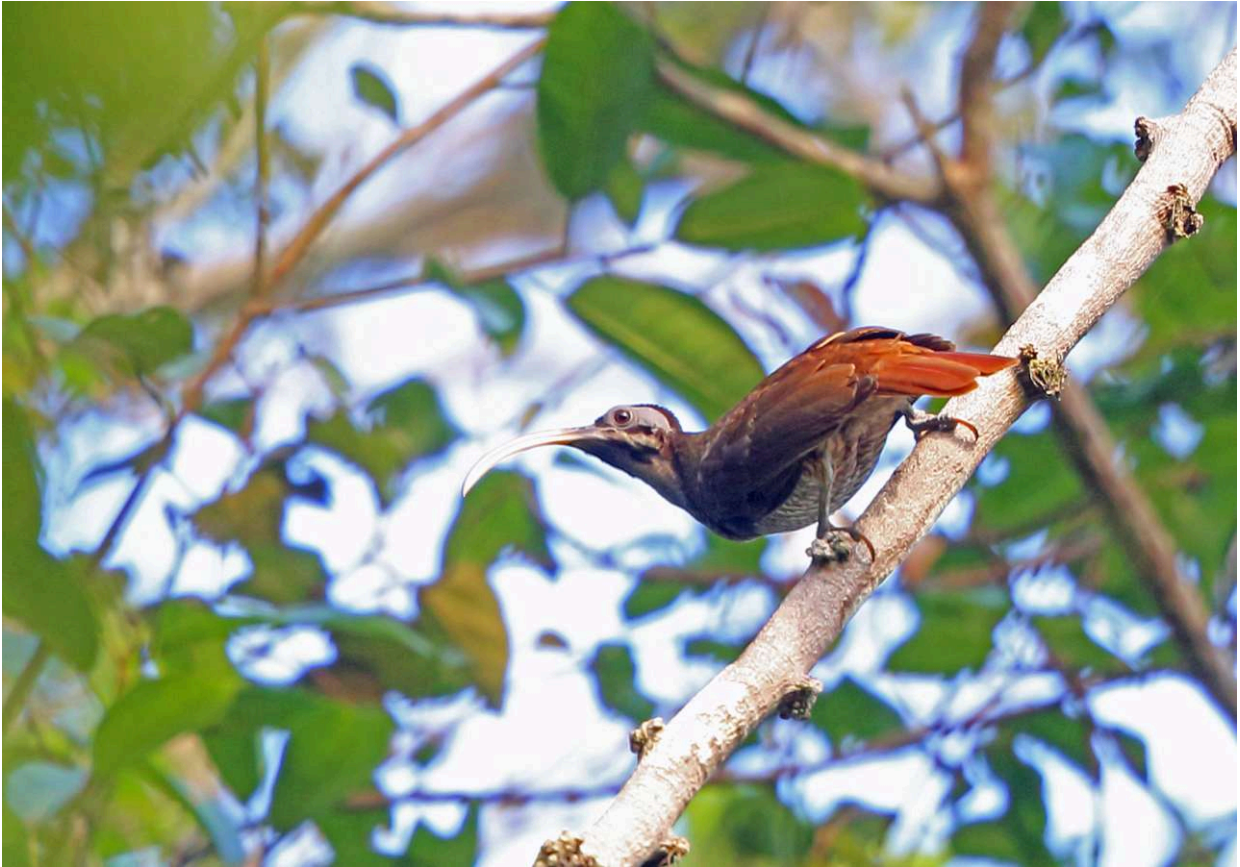


And then it was time to leave this magnificent valley. After an early breakfast we said goodbye to Zeth's family and thanked them for a fantastic stay. We stopped a couple of times at specific altitudes in the foothills hoping for Masked Bowerbird. Bird activity was however very poor and no bowerbirds were seen. A few pairs of Blue-collared Parrots flew overhead – lower down than usual- and gave good looks, both Rufous-throated and White-eared Bronze Cuckoos showed well, a Mountain Meliphaga was found, and a pair of unexpected Red Myzomelas gave wonderful views. Other birds added to the list included Goldenface, Grey Crow and Black-fronted White-eye. We then said goodbye to Zeth and drove to Manokwari, where we had a sumptuous dinner overlooking the sea.



The mighty Arfak Mountains, where many exciting endemics occur. (Nigel Voaden)

And so another fantastic (and definitely less demanding than in the past) tour came to an end. West Papua is not an easy tour to lead, the birds are shy and difficult to see, logistics are problematic, there are always some delays and things can go wrong. For a tour to be successful, you need, above everything else, a good group, with open-minded and understanding participants. And luckily, this was by far one of the best groups I've ever lead, who coped with all kinds of adverse conditions, including at-times very slow birding, so big thanks to all of you: Suzanne, Ben, Jake, Dave, Nigel and Brian for making such successful and enjoyable tour run so smoothly. I am most grateful to New Guinea bird guru Mark van Beirs for all his expert advice, and also to Rob Hutchinson.

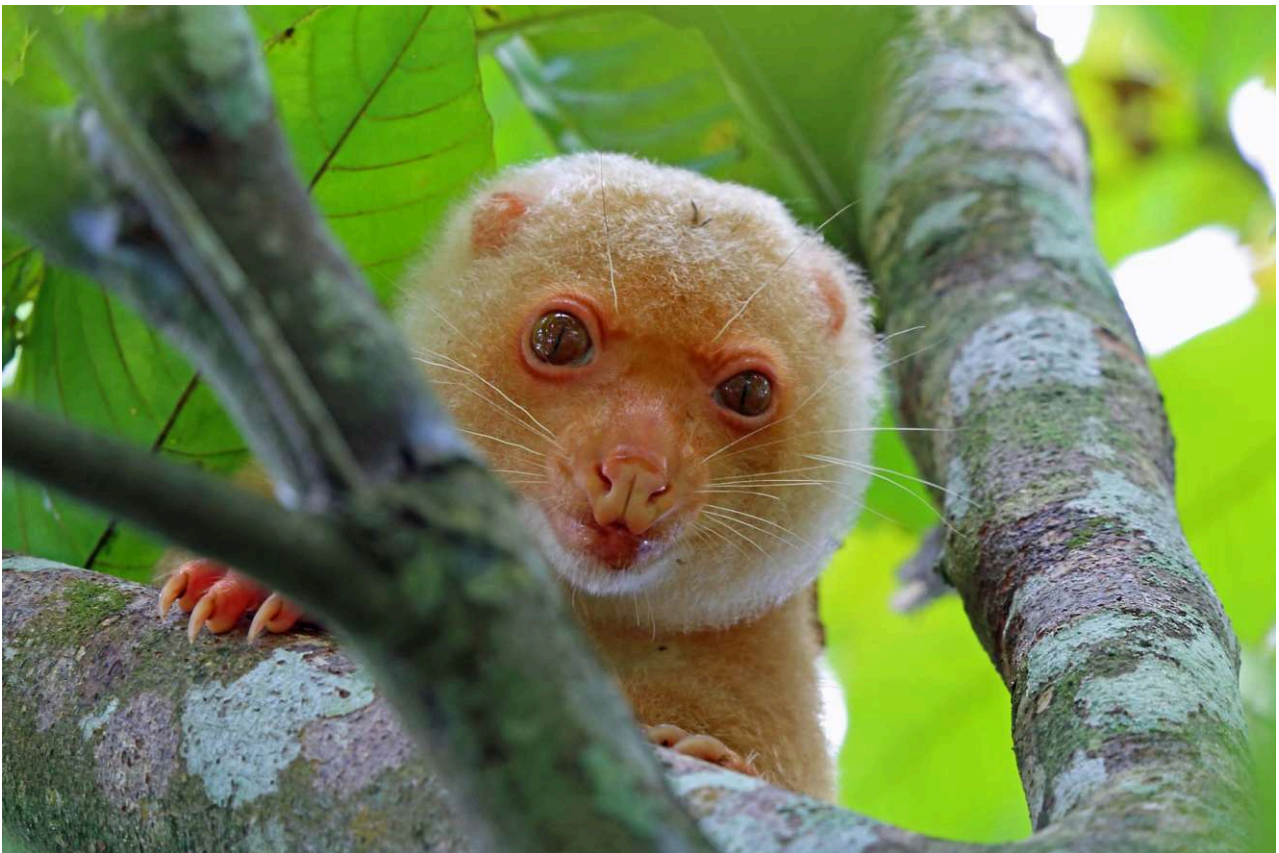


One of the highlights of the trip was having excellent views of the 2 small sicklebills: Pale-billed above and the difficult to get Black-billed, below. (Nigel Voaden)





Papuan Frogmouth at night and a Common Spotted Cuscus. (Nigel Voaden)





SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H). Species which were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO). Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g. it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

- Wattled Brushturkey** ◊ *Aepyodius arfakianus* (H) Heard only in the Arfaks.
- Red-billed Brushturkey** ◊ *Talegalla cuvieri* (H) Heard near Sorong.
- Collared Brushturkey** ◊ *Talegalla jobiensis* (H) Heard only in the Nimbokrang area.
- Dusky Megapode** ◊ (B Scrubfowl) *Megapodius freycinet* Seen well in Waigeo.
- Biak Scrubfowl** ◊ (B Megapode) *Megapodius geelvinkianus* Lucky sighting of a roosting bird spotlighted in Biak.
- Brown Quail** *Coturnix ypsilophora* (NL) Seen near Sentani.
- King Quail** *Excalfactoria chinensis* (NL) Seen near Sentani.
- Snow Mountains Quail** ◊ *Anurophasis monorthonyx* Excellent looks at this speciality near Lake Habbema.
- Raja Shelduck** ◊ *Tadorna radjah* Seen in flight at Biak.
- Salvadori's Teal** ◊ *Salvadorina waigiensis* Cracking scope studies of this unusual duck on Lake Habbema.
- Pacific Black Duck** *Anas superciliosa* A few were seen on Lake Habbema.
- Black Bittern** *Dupetor flavicollis* A single was seen briefly in the Sentani grasslands.
- Nankeen Night Heron (Rufous N H)** *Nycticorax caledonicus* (NL) One in Nimbokrang by Ben.
- Eastern Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus coromandus* Just a few.
- Great Egret** *Ardea alba* Just a few.
- Intermediate Egret (Yellow-billed E)** *Egretta intermedia* A couple were noted.
- Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* A few seen.
- Pacific Reef Heron (Eastern Reef Egret)** *Egretta sacra* A few seen along the coast.
- Lesser Frigatebird** *Fregata ariel* Good numbers around Biak, also in Waigeo.
- Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster* A few were noted at sea near Biak and Waigeo.
- Little Pied Cormorant** *Microcarbo melanoleucos* Seen on Lake Habbema and Waigeo.
- Eastern Osprey** *Pandion cristatus* A few birds seen.
- Pacific Baza (Crested Hawk)** *Aviceda subcristata* Just a few encounters with this attractive bird of prey.
- Long-tailed Honey Buzzard** ◊ (L-t Buzzard) *Henicopernis longicauda* Several much appreciated close encounters.
- Whistling Kite** *Haliastur sphenurus* Several were noted over the Sentani grasslands.
- Brahminy Kite** *Haliastur indus* Regular encounters.
- White-bellied Sea Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucogaster* Good looks at this striking bird along the coast.
- Papuan Harrier** ◊ *Circus spilothorax* Male and female showed well hunting over the Lake Habbema grasslands.
- Variable Goshawk** ◊ (Varied G) *Accipiter hiogaster* A few sightings.
- Grey-headed Goshawk** ◊ *Accipiter poliocephalus* (LO) One in Nimbokrang.
- Collared Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter cirrocephalus* Single juvenile seen in the lower Arfaks.
- Papuan Eagle** ◊ (New Guinea Harpy E) *Harpyopsis novaeguineae* (NL) Seen briefly by Nigel and heard in the Arfaks.
- Gurney's Eagle** ◊ *Aquila gurneyi* A nice observation in Biak.
- Pygmy Eagle** ◊ (Little Eagle) *Hieraaetus weiskei* A couple of sightings.
- Nankeen Kestrel (Australian K)** *Falco cenchroides* A few sightings around Lake Habbema.
- Brown Falcon** *Falco berigora* Seen at Lake Habbema.
- Chestnut Forest Rail** ◊ *Rallidula rubra* Excellent close up views in the Snow Mountains.
- Buff-banded Rail** *Gallirallus philippensis* Very nice looks of this widespread species.
- Pale-vented Bush-hen** ◊ (Rufous-tailed Bush-hen) *Amauornis moluccana* Seen very well at Nimbokrang.
- Spotless Crake** *Porzana tabuensis* (LO) One seen at Lake Habbema.
- Eurasian Coot (Common C)** *Fulica atra* Small numbers were at Lake Habbema.
- New Guinea Woodcock** ◊ *Scolopax rosenbergii* Seen and heard in the Snow Mountains.
- Eurasian Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus* A single seen at Biak.
- Grey-tailed Tattler** *Tringa brevipes* Two were seen at Biak.
- Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* A single seen at Biak.



Pacific Baza and Nankeen Kestrel. (Nigel Voaden)

- Brown Noddy** *Anous stolidus* A few at Biak and Rani Island.
- Black Noddy** *Anous minutus* Seen very well off Biak and Rani I.
- Greater Crested Tern** *Thalasseus bergii* Small numbers were seen on our boat trips.
- Bridled Tern** *Thalasseus bergii* Seen well at Biak and Rani.
- Black-naped Tern** *Sterna sumatrana* Small numbers were seen on the different boat trips.
- Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo* A few were seen at sea.
- Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida* Seen at Sentani lake.
- White-winged Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus* A few seen.
- Rock Dove** *Columba livia*
- Spotted Dove** *Spilopelia chinensis* A few seen .
- Slender-billed Cuckoo-Dove** *Macropygia amboinensis* Regular encounters.
- Bar-tailed Cuckoo-Dove** ♦ (Black-billed C-D) *Macropygia nigrirostris* Regular good looks in the Arfaks.
- Great Cuckoo-Dove** ♦ *Reinwardtoena reinwardtii* Seen well a few times.
- Bronze Ground Dove** ♦ *Gallicolumba beccarii* Nice looks at a pair in the nest in the higher reaches of the Arfaks.
- Western Crowned Pigeon** ♦ *Goura cristata* Three seen in Waigeo.
- Victoria Crowned Pigeon** ♦ *Goura victoria* After much effort, great scope views of 2 at Nimbokrang.
- Wompoo Fruit Dove** ♦ *Ptilinopus magnificus* Regularly heard and also seen in the Nimbokrang area.
- Pink-spotted Fruit Dove** ♦ *Ptilinopus perlatus* A few in Nimbokrang.
- Orange-fronted Fruit Dove** ♦ *Ptilinopus aurantiifrons* Nice looks at several in the Sentani grasslands.
- Superb Fruit Dove** *Ptilinopus superbus* Good looks on Biak (including a roosting bird) and in the lower Arfaks.
- Coronated Fruit Dove** ♦ *Ptilinopus coronulatus* Seen well in the Nimbokrang area, including one in the nest.
- Mountain Fruit Dove** ♦ (White-bibbed F D) *Ptilinopus (rivoli) bellus* Regular encounters in the Arfaks. See Note.
- Moluccan Fruit Dove** ♦ (White-bibbed F D) *Ptilinopus (rivoli) prasinorrhous* One at Rani Island. See Note.
- Yellow-bibbed Fruit Dove** ♦ *Ptilinopus solomonensis* Lovely looks at this delightful bird on Biak. See Note.
- Claret-breasted Fruit Dove** ♦ *Ptilinopus viridis* Several fantastic observations of this very striking species.
- Orange-bellied Fruit Dove** ♦ *Ptilinopus iozonus* The most common *Ptilinopus* of New Guinea.
- Geelvink Imperial Pigeon** *Ducula (myristicivora) geelvinkiana* Seen at Rani Island. Very different from Spice I P.
- Spice Imperial Pigeon** ♦ *Ducula myristicivora* Great views in Waigeo.
- Purple-tailed Imperial Pigeon** ♦ *Ducula rufigaster* Great scope views in Nimbokrang.
- Rufescent Imperial Pigeon** ♦ *Ducula chalconota* (NL) One seen by Dave in the Arfaks.



Long-tailed Honey Buzzard and Palm Cockatoo. (Nigel Voaden)

- Pinon's Imperial Pigeon ♦ *Ducula pinon* Seen plenty of times.
- Zoe's Imperial Pigeon ♦ *Ducula zoeae* A few sightings. Really nice scope looks at Nimbokrang.
- Torresian Imperial Pigeon ♦ *Ducula spilorrhoa* Seen at Biak.
- Pied Imperial Pigeon ♦ *Ducula bicolor* Commonly seen at Waigeo.
- Papuan Mountain Pigeon ♦ (Bare-eyed M-P) *Gymnophaps albertisii* A handful of observations in the highlands.
- Palm Cockatoo ♦ *Probosciger aterrimus* Several sightings. Sometimes close and impressive.
- Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita* A common sight in the lowlands.
- Yellow-capped Pygmy Parrot ♦ *Micropsitta keiensis* Seen briefly at Waigeo.
- Buff-faced Pygmy Parrot ♦ *Micropsitta pusio* Nice views of several in the Nimbokrang forests.
- Red-breasted Pygmy Parrot ♦ *Micropsitta bruijnii* Several encounters in the higher reaches of the Arfaks.
- Black Lory ♦ *Chalcopsitta atra* Excellent perched views of this western speciality near Sorong.
- Brown Lory ♦ *Chalcopsitta duivenbodei* Nice looks at this localized species in the Nimbokrang area.
- Violet-necked Lory ♦ *Eos squamata* Seen well on Waigeo.
- Biak Red Lory ♦ (Black-winged L) *Eos cyanogenia* Many encounters with this endemic on Biak.
- Biak Lorikeet ♦ *Trichoglossus rosenbergi* Seen well several times in Biak. A recent split.
- Coconut Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus* Screeching parties are a common sight in the lowlands.
- Black-capped Lory ♦ (Western B-c L) *Lorius lory* A handful of observations in the Nimbokrang and Waigeo forests.
- Red-flanked Lorikeet ♦ *Charmosyna placentis* (LO) A pair seen in flight at Nimbokrang.
- Fairy Lorikeet ♦ (Little Red L) Seen in the lower Arfaks.
- Josephine's Lorikeet ♦ *Charmosyna josefinae* (LO) Seen briefly in flight in the lower Arfaks.
- Papuan Lorikeet ♦ *Charmosyna papou* Several excellent sightings in the Arfaks.
- Plum-faced Lorikeet ♦ (Whiskered L) *Oreopsittacus arfaki* Quite common in the Snow Mountains. Stylish.
- Yellow-billed Lorikeet ♦ *Neopsittacus musschenbroekii* Several fine encounters in the Arfaks.
- Orange-billed Lorikeet ♦ *Neopsittacus pullicauda* Many excellent sightings in the Snow Mountains.
- Brehm's Tiger Parrot ♦ *Psittacella brehmii* Seen in the higher Arfaks.
- Painted Tiger Parrot ♦ *Psittacella picta* Excellent observations in the Lake Habbema area.
- Modest Tiger Parrot ♦ *Psittacella modesta* Great looks at several in the higher reaches of the Arfaks.
- Red-cheeked Parrot ♦ *Geoffroyus geoffroyi* A regular bird of the lowlands.
- Blue-collared Parrot ♦ *Geoffroyus simplex* Seen very well in the middle Arfaks.

Great-billed Parrot ♦ *Tanygnathus megalorynchos* Impressive roost of several hundred birds in Waigeo.
Eclectus Parrot ♦ *Eclectus roratus* A delightfully common and attractive species in all the visited lowland areas.
Double-eyed Fig Parrot ♦ *Cyclopsitta diophthalma* Several showed well at Nimbokrang.
Salvadori's Fig Parrot ♦ *Psittaculirostris salvadorii* Good looks at Nimbokrang. A localized speciality.
Ivory-billed Coucal ♦ (Greater Black C) *Centropus menbeki* (H) Often heard.
Biak Coucal ♦ *Centropus chalybeus* One seen well in Biak.



Yellow-bibbed Fruit Dove and a roosting Superb Fruit Dove. (Nigel Voaden)

Black-billed Coucal ♦ (Lesser Black C) *Centropus bernsteini* Repeated scope views in the Sentani area.
Pheasant Coucal *Centropus phasianinus* A couple of sightings.
Dwarf Koel ♦ (Black-capped Koel) *Microdynamis parva* A male was scoped in the Nimbokrang forests.
Pacific Koel *Eudynamis orientalis* (H) We heard this secretive species several times.
Channel-billed Cuckoo ♦ *Scythrops novaehollandiae* Seen briefly in Nimbokrang.
Rufous-throated Bronze Cuckoo ♦ *Chrysococcyx ruficollis* Seen very well in the Arfaks.
White-eared Bronze Cuckoo ♦ *Chrysococcyx meyerii* Several cracking sightings in the Arfak Mountains.
Little Bronze Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx minutillus* Seen in Nimbokrang.
White-crowned Cuckoo ♦ (W-c Koel) *Cacomantis leucolophus* (H) We heard it in the Nimbokrang forests.
Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo ♦ *Cacomantis castaneiventris* Seen a couple of times.
Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cacomantis flabelliformis* (H) Heard in the Snow Mountains.
Brush Cuckoo *Cacomantis variolosus* Often heard in lowland forests and seen a few times.
Sooty Owl ♦ (Greater S O) *Tyto tenebricosa* (H) Heard in the Arfaks.
Biak Scops Owl ♦ *Otus beccarii* (H) We heard this little devil in Biak very close, but it wouldn't budge.
Papuan Boobook ♦ *Ninox theomacha* Great looks at this jewel in the Arfaks.
Papuan Hawk-Owl ♦ *Uroglauks dimorpha* (H) Despite all of our efforts, just an unsatisfactory flight look of a calling bird.
Marbled Frogmouth ♦ *Podargus ocellatus* (H) Regularly heard.
Papuan Frogmouth ♦ *Podargus papuensis* Several magnificent observations all along our route.
Archbold's Nightjar ♦ (Mountain N) *Eurostopodus archboldi* Seen briefly in the Snow Mts.
Large-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus macrurus* A couple of nice views on Biak.
Feline Owlet-Nightjar ♦ *Aegotheles insignis* Two of these magnificent birds showed so very well in the Arfaks.

Mountain Owlet-Nightjar ♦ *Aegotheles albertisi* Two of these critters allowed incredible close ups in the Arfaks.

Moustached Treeswift ♦ *Hemiprocne mystacea* A few of these elegant birds seen on Batanta.

Glossy Swiftlet (White-bellied S) *Collocalia esculenta* A very common bird all over West Papua.

Mountain Swiftlet ♦ *Aerodramus hirundinaceus* A regular sight in the highlands.

Uniform Swiftlet *Aerodramus vanikorensis* A common bird in all the lowland sites.

Papuan Spine-tailed Swift ♦ (P Needletail) *Mearnsia novaeguineae* Fantastic looks in Nimbokrang.

Oriental Dollarbird (Common D) *Eurystomus orientalis* Many observations.

Hook-billed Kingfisher ♦ *Melidora macrorrhina* Commonly heard, and one glimpsed in Nimbokrang.

Common Paradise Kingfisher *Tanysiptera galatea* Seen in Nimbokrang and Waigeo.

Biak Paradise Kingfisher ♦ *Tanysiptera riedelii* Magnificent observations of this exquisite creature on Biak.

Rufous-bellied Kookaburra ♦ *Dacelo gaudichaud* Seen at length on several occasions in the lowlands.

Beach Kingfisher ♦ *Todiramphus saurophagus* Seen on Biak.

Sacred Kingfisher *Todiramphus sanctus* Quite common on Biak.

Yellow-billed Kingfisher ♦ *Syma torotoro* Good looks at Waigeo.

Variable Dwarf Kingfisher ♦ (Dwarf K) *Ceyx lepidus* Seen at Nimbokrang.

Blue-tailed Bee-eater *Merops philippinus* Regular at the Sentani grasslands.

Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops ornatus* Small numbers noted at various locations.

Blyth's Hornbill ♦ (Papuan H) *Rhyticeros plicatus* Good numbers were at Nimbokrang and on Waigeo.

Habeneicht's Pitta (Red-bellied P) *Erythropitta (erythrogaster) habenichti* Good looks in Waigeo.



Habeneicht's Pitta and Wompoo Fruit Dove. (Nigel Voaden)

Papuan Pitta (Red-bellied Pitta) *Erythropitta (erythrogaster) macklotii* Seen on Waigeo.

Hooded Pitta *Pitta sordida* Two showed very well in Biak.

White-eared Catbird ♦ *Ailuroedus buccoides* Seen in Nimbokrang.

Vogelkop Bowerbird ♦ *Amblyornis inornata* Splendid views of birds attending their bower. Incredible bowers.

Fawn-breasted Bowerbird ♦ *Chlamydera cerviniventris* Nice looks at one in the Sentani grasslands.

Papuan Treecreeper ♦ *Cormobates placens* Regular brilliant looks at this friendly species.

Emperor Fairywren ♦ *Malurus cyanocephalus* Two sightings of this colourful species.

White-shouldered Fairywren ♦ *Malurus alboscapulatus* Regular encounters with this dainty bird.

Orange-crowned Fairywren ♦ *Clytomyias insignis* Seen in the Arfaks.

Spotted Honeyeater ♦ *Xanthotis polygrammus* Seen well in Sorong and Waigeo.

Tawny-breasted Honeyeater ♦ *Xanthotis flaviventer* A few observations.

Black-throated Honeyeater ◇ *Lichenostomus subfrenatus* Regularly observed in the Snow Mountains.
Orange-cheeked Honeyeater ◇ *Oreornis chrysogenys* Many marvellous views of this localized speciality.



Clockwise: Common Smoky Honeyeater, Arfak Honeyeater, Sooty Melidectes, Short-bearded Melidectes. (Nigel Voaden)

Mountain Honeyeater ◇ (M Meliphaga) *Meliphaga orientalis* A couple of views in the Arfaks.
Scrub Honeyeater ◇ (Scrub White-eared Meliphaga) *Meliphaga albonotata* One record.
Mimic Honeyeater ◇ (Mimic Meliphaga) *Meliphaga analoga* Regular sightings.
Puff-backed Honeyeater ◇ (P-b Meliphaga) *Meliphaga aruensis* A couple of records.
Plain Honeyeater ◇ *Pycnopygius ixoides* A single bird was identified at Nimbokrang.
Streak-headed Honeyeater ◇ *Pycnopygius stictocephalus* Good looks at a few in the Sentani area.
Meyer's Friarbird ◇ *Philemon meyeri* Seen at Nimbokrang.
New Guinea Friarbird ◇ *Philemon novaeguineae* Regular encounters with this bald species. Distinctive calls.
Arfak Honeyeater ◇ (Western Smoky H) *Melipotes gymnops* This endemic is quite common in the Arfak forests.
Common Smoky Honeyeater ◇ *Melipotes fumigatus* Fairly regular in the Snow Mountains.
MacGregor's Honeyeater ◇ *Macgregoria pulchra* One of the highlights. Great views in the Snow Mountains.
Sooty Melidectes ◇ *Melidectes fuscus* A few were seen near the tree line in the Snow Mountains.
Short-bearded Melidectes ◇ *Melidectes nouhuysi* Regular in the Snow Mountains.
Cinnamon-browed Melidectes ◇ *Melidectes ochromelas* Several showed well in the higher reaches of the Arfaks.
Vogelkop Melidectes ◇ *Melidectes leucostephes* Often heard and regularly seen in the Arfaks. Quite shy!
Belford's Melidectes ◇ *Melidectes belfordi* Many sightings of this noisy bandit in the Snow Mountains.
Rufous-sided Honeyeater ◇ *Ptiloprora erythropleura* Regular in the Arfaks.
Grey-streaked Honeyeater ◇ *Ptiloprora perstriata* Common in the Snow Mountains.

Long-billed Honeyeater ♦ *Melilestes mearghynchus* A few sightings in the Nimbokrang forests.

Ruby-throated Myzomela ♦ *Myzomela eques* Seen well at Waigeo.

Biak (Dusky) Myzomela ♦ *Myzomela (obscura) rubrobrunnea* Seen well in Biak.



Spotted Honeyeater and Red-collared Myzomela. (Nigel Voaden)

Red Myzomela ♦ *Myzomela cruentata* Seen very well in the lower Arfaks.

Mountain Myzomela ♦ (Mountain Red-headed M) *Myzomela adolphinae* A female on the nest in the Arfaks.

Red-collared Myzomela ♦ *Myzomela rosenbergii* The common Myzomela of the higher mountains. Colourful.

Rusty Mouse-warbler ♦ *Crateroscelis murina* Regularly heard and finally seen in the lower Arfaks.

Mountain Mouse-warbler ♦ *Crateroscelis robusta* Seen In the Snow Mountains and in the Arfaks.

Pale-billed Scrubwren ♦ *Sericornis spilodera* (H) Heard in Waigeo.

Papuan Scrubwren ♦ *Sericornis papuensis* Quite common in the Snow Mountains.

Large Scrubwren ♦ *Sericornis nouhuysi* A handful of sightings in the highland areas.

Buff-faced Scrubwren ♦ *Sericornis perspicillatus* Seen in the Snow Mountains.

Vogelkop Scrubwren ♦ *Sericornis rufescens* Family parties showed well in the Arfak Mountains.

Grey-green Scrubwren ♦ *Sericornis arfakianus* Great looks at this subtle species around Zeth's house in the Arfaks.

Brown-breasted Gerygone ♦ *Gerygone ruficollis* An often heard voice in the Snow Mountains. A few observations.

Yellow-bellied Gerygone ♦ *Gerygone chrysogaster* A few in the Nimbokrang forests.

Large-billed Gerygone ♦ *Gerygone magnirostris* Seen well in Nimbokrang.

Green-backed Gerygone ♦ *Gerygone chloronota* An often heard voice. Good looks at this canopy bird in the Arfaks.

Fairy Gerygone ♦ *Gerygone palpebrosa* Seen well on Waigeo.

Biak Gerygone ♦ *Gerygone hypoxantha* Seen in the Biak forests .

New Guinea Thornbill ♦ (Papuan T) *Acanthiza murina* Plenty of first-rate looks in the Snow Mountains.

Goldenface ♦ (Dwarf Whistler, Pachycare) *Pachycare flavogriseum* This beauty showed well in the lower Arfaks.

Papuan Babbler ♦ (Rufous B) *Garritornis isidorei* A few in the flooded forests of Nimbokrang. Quite shy.

Papuan Logrunner ♦ *Orthonyx novaeguineae* Mega views of this skulker in the Snow Mountains.

Loria's Satinbird ♦ *Cnemophilus loriae* A female and a juvenile seen in the Snow Mountains.

Black Berrypecker ♦ *Melanocharis nigra* Seen in Nimbokrang.

Mid-mountain Berrypecker ♦ *Melanocharis longicauda* Several showed well in the Arfaks.

Fan-tailed Berrypecker ♦ *Melanocharis versteri* A few in the highland areas. Smart when seen well.

Dwarf Longbill ♦ (Spectacled L, Dwarf Honeyeater) *Oedistoma iliolophus* Two observations

Pygmy Longbill ♦ (Pygmy Honeyeater) *Oedistoma pygmaeum* This tiny bird showed a few times.

Yellow-bellied Longbill ◇ *Toxorhamphus novaeguineae* Several good looks.

Tit Berrypecker ◇ *Oreocharis arfaki* This stunning species showed very well in the Arfaks.

Western Crested Berrypecker ◇ *Paramythia (montium) olivacea* Fairly common around Habbema. See Note.



New Guinea Thornbill and female Shining Flycatcher. (Nigel Voaden)

Spotted Jewel-babbler ◇ *Ptilorrhoa leucosticta* This wonderful skulker showed very nicely in the upper Arfaks.

Blue Jewel-babbler ◇ *Ptilorrhoa caerulescens* (H) Heard in Nimbokrang a few times.

Yellow-breasted Boatbill ◇ *Machaerirhynchus flaviventer* A few encounters in the Nimbokrang lowland forests.

Black-breasted Boatbill ◇ *Machaerirhynchus nigripectus* This unusual species was seen in the highland areas.

Black Butcherbird ◇ *Cracticus quoyi* Seen well in the Nimbokrang forests.

Hooded Butcherbird ◇ *Cracticus cassicus* Especially common on Biak. Very vocal.

Lowland Peltops ◇ *Peltops blainvillii* Just a few in the Nimbokrang forests. A splendid bird.

Mountain Peltops ◇ *Peltops montanus* (H) Heard in the Arfaks.

White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus* A handful of observations.

Great Woodswallow ◇ (New Guinea W) *Artamus maximus* We saw these well in the higher Snow Mountains.

Stout-billed Cuckooshrike ◇ *Coracina caeruleogrisea* Seen in the Arfaks.

Boyer's Cuckooshrike ◇ *Coracina boyeri* Small numbers in the lowland forests.

White-bellied Cuckooshrike *Coracina papuensis* A pair seen.

Hooded Cuckooshrike ◇ *Coracina longicauda* A perfect encounter in the Snow Mountains. Very vocal.

Common Cicadabird (Slender-billed C) *Coracina tenuirostris* We saw this modest species on Biak.

Grey-headed Cuckooshrike ◇ *Coracina schisticeps* Fairly common at Nimbokrang.

Black Cicadabird ◇ (Black Cuckooshrike) Seen in Nimbokrang.

Black-bellied Cuckooshrike ◇ *Coracina montana* A few were seen on our final day in the Arfaks.

Golden Cuckooshrike ◇ *Campochaera sloetii* (H) Heard in Nimbokrang.

Biak Triller ◇ *Lalage (atrovirens) leucoptera* Seen on Biak.

Black-browed Triller ◇ *Lalage atrovirens* Vocal and obvious at Nimbokrang.

Black Sittella ◇ *Daphoenositta miranda* Good looks at a big party in the Snow Mountains. Attractive.

Wattled Ploughbill ◇ *Eulacestoma nigropectus* (LO) Seen in the Snow Mountains.

Mottled Berryhunter ◇ *Rhagologus leucostigma* Mega views of this rarity in the Arfaks.

Vogelkop Whistler ◇ *Pachycephala meyeri* Regular in the Arfak forests.

Grey Whistler ◇ *Pachycephala simplex* Seen in Waigeo.

Sclater's Whistler ◇ (Hill Golden W) *Pachycephala soror* Recorded in both highland areas.
Lorentz's Whistler ◇ *Pachycephala lorentzi* A few in the higher reaches of the Snow Mountains.
Regent Whistler ◇ *Pachycephala schlegelii* Seen well in the Arfaks.
Little Shrikethrush ◇ *Colluricincla megarhyncha* A commonly recorded species of lowland rainforest.



Highland specialities. Clockwise: White-winged Robin, Western Crested Berrypecker, Capped White-eye and Hooded Cuckooshrike.
 (Nigel Voaden)

Raja Ampat Pitohui ◇ *Pitohui cerciniventris* This recent split was seen well on our last morning in Waigeo.
Hooded Pitohui ◇ *Pitohui dichrous* A pair of these poisonous birds in the lower Arfak Mountains.
Rusty Pitohui ◇ *Pitohui ferrugineus* Several at Nimbokrang.
Black Pitohui ◇ *Pitohui nigrescens* Several encounters in the middle reaches of the Arfaks.
Rufous-naped Whistler ◇ *Aleadryas rufinucha* Regularly recorded in the highland areas. Quite skulky!
Brown Oriole ◇ *Oriolus szalayi* Perfect scope studies in Nimbokrang. A regularly heard song.
Pygmy Drongo ◇ (Mountain D) *Chaetorhynchus papuensis* Seen well in the lower Arfaks.

Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus bracteatus* Regular and vocal.

Willie Wagtail (White-browed Fantail) *Rhipidura leucophrys* A common bird of open lowland areas.

Northern Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura rufiventris* A regular member of lowland rainforest flocks.

Sooty Thicket Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura threnothorax* Excellent views of a couple in the Nimbokrang forest. Shy!

White-bellied Thicket Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura leucothorax* Often heard and seen a few times at Nimbokrang.

Black Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura atra* A typical member of highland forest flocks.

Chestnut-bellied Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura hyperythra* One seen in the lower Arfaks.

Arafura Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura dryas* Seen on Waigeo.

Friendly Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura albolimbata* Regular and friendly indeed...



A pair of stunning Papuan Lorikeets in the Arfaks, and a Black Butcherbird in Nimbokrang. (Nigel Voaden)

Dimorphic Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura brachyrhyncha* Another inquisitive species of highland forest.

Rufous-backed Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura rufidorsa* We saw this one once at Nimbokrang.

Black Monarch ◇ *Symposiachrus axillaris* Seen in the higher Arfaks.

Spot-winged Monarch ◇ *Symposiachrus guttula* Several encounters in the Nimbokrang lowland rainforests.

Biak Monarch ◇ *Monarcha brehmii* Great looks at this mega rarity on Biak. At least 3 birds seen!

Golden Monarch ◇ *Carterornis chrysomela* Regular encounters with this beauty.

Ochre-collared Monarch ◇ (Rufous-collared M) *Arses insularis* Fairly common in the Nimbokrang forests. Smart!

Frilled Monarch ◇ *Arses telescopthalmus* This splendour was regular on Waigeo.

Biak Black Flycatcher ◇ (Biak F) *Myiagra atra* Several very nice encounters with this Geelvink endemic.

Shining Flycatcher (S Monarch) *Myiagra alecto* Regularly heard and seen in lowland habitat.

Brown-headed Crow ◇ *Corvus fuscicapillus* Excellent views of this rare species at Nimbokrang. Also in Waigeo.

Grey Crow ◇ (Bare-eyed C) *Corvus tristis* Seen a few times.

Torresian Crow (Australian C) *Corvus orru* Regular in small numbers in more open areas.

Lesser Melampitta ◇ *Melampitta lugubris* Amazing looks of a “tame” bird the mossy forests of the Arfaks.

Blue-capped Ifrit ◇ (B-c Ifrita) *Ifrita kowaldi* Great looks at this poisonous species in the Snow Mountains.

Glossy-mantled Manucode ◇ *Manucodia ater* Nice looks at this subtle bird of paradise in the Sentani area.

Trumpet Manucode ◇ *Phonygammus keraudrenii* (NL) Seen briefly by Brian in the lower Arfaks.

Jobi Manucode ♦ *Manucodia jobiensis* Excellent, convincing views of two in the Nimbokrang forests.
Long-tailed Paradigalla ♦ *Paradigalla carunculata* Good views of 2 for half of the group in the middle Arfaks.
Arfak Astrapia ♦ *Astrapia nigra* A female for all and a male for Dave showed very well in the higher Arfaks.
Splendid Astrapia ♦ *Astrapia splendidissima* Fairly common in the higher forests of the Snow Mountains.
Western Parotia ♦ *Parotia sefilata* Incredible views of males displaying in the Arfaks. Unforgettable!
Superb Bird-of-paradise ♦ *Lophorina superba* Nice looks for some in the Arfak Mountains.
Magnificent Riflebird ♦ *Ptiloris magnificus* (H) Heard in the foothills of Nimbokrang and in the Arfaks.
Black Sicklebill ♦ *Epimachus fastosus* Cracking views of a displaying male in the higher Arfaks.



Some drab New Guinea birds...Clockwise: Grey Whistler, Lorentz's Whistler, Canary Flyrobin and Olive Flyrobin. (Nigel Voaden)

Black-billed Sicklebill ♦ **(Buff-tailed S) *Drepanornis albertisi*** Excellent views of a male in the Arfaks.
Pale-billed Sicklebill ♦ ***Drepanornis bruijnii*** Many good looks in the Nimbokrang area.
Magnificent Bird-of-paradise ♦ ***Diphyllodes magnificus*** Great views of a displaying male from the hide.
Wilson's Bird-of-Paradise ♦ ***Diphyllodes respublica*** Stunning eye-ball to eye-ball views of a displaying male.
King Bird-of-paradise ♦ ***Cicinnurus regius*** Great studies of a cracking adult male at Nimbokrang.
Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise ♦ ***Seleucidis melanoleucus*** Excellent views of a displaying male at Nimbokrang.
Lesser Bird-of-paradise ♦ ***Paradisaea minor*** Regular looks at this gorgeous species. So beautiful.
Red Bird-of-paradise ♦ ***Paradisaea rubra*** Excellent looks at several displaying males in Waigeo.
Ashy Robin ♦ ***Heteromyias albispecularis*** Good views in the Arfaks.



Alpine Pipit and "Biak" Golden Monarch. (Nigel Voaden)

Black-sided Robin ♦ ***Poecilodryas hypoleuca*** Regularly heard in lowland rainforest and eventually seen.
Black-throated Robin ♦ ***Poecilodryas albonotata*** A few showed quite well in the higher Arfaks.
White-winged Robin ♦ ***Peneothello sigillata*** Seen a few times in the Snow Mountains.
Smoky Robin ♦ ***Peneothello cryptoleuca*** Excellent views in the higher Arfaks. A localized speciality!
Slaty Robin ♦ **(Blue-grey R) *Peneothello cyanus*** Quite a few in the Arfaks.
Green-backed Robin ♦ ***Pachycephalopsis hattamensis*** One seen in the Arfaks..
Canary Flyrobin ♦ **(C Flycatcher) *Microeca papuana*** Fairly common and appealing in the highland areas.
Olive Flyrobin ♦ **(O Flycatcher) *Microeca flavovirescens*** Seen well in Waigeo.
Garnet Robin ♦ ***Eugerygone rubra*** Males and females performed well in the Snow Mts and the Arfaks.
Mountain Robin ♦ **(Alpine R) *Petroica bivittata*** Just a couple of encounters in the Snow Mountains.
Greater Ground Robin ♦ ***Amalocichla sclateriana*** Great views of this rare antpitta-like creature!
Lesser Ground Robin ♦ ***Amalocichla incerta*** Excellent views.
Sooty-headed Bulbul ***Pycnonotus aurigaster*** This introduced species is quite common on Biak.
Pacific Swallow ***Hirundo tahitica*** Regular observations.
Tree Martin ***Petrochelidon nigricans*** A few seen over the Sentani grasslands.
Island Leaf Warbler ***Phylloscopus poliocephalus*** Seen in the lower Arfaks.
Biak Leaf Warbler ♦ ***Phylloscopus mysorensis* (LO)** Brief looks at one in Biak, in a mixed flock.
Clamorous Reed Warbler ***Acrocephalus stentoreus* (H)** Heard only.
Papuan Grassbird ♦ **(P Grass Warbler) *Megalurus macrurus*** A few birds showed well in the Habbema grasslands.
Golden-headed Cisticola **(Bright-capped C) *Cisticola exilis*** Good looks at several in the Sentani grasslands.
Black-fronted White-eye ♦ ***Zosterops minor*** Regular in the Arfak foothills.
Biak White-eye ♦ ***Zosterops mysorensis*** Nice looks at this Biak endemic in the Biak forests.
Capped White-eye ♦ **(Western Mountain W-e) *Zosterops fuscicapilla*** Common in the middle reaches of the Arfaks.
Metallic Starling **(Shining S) *Aplonis metallica*** A common species of the lowlands.



Clockwise: Long-tailed Starling, endemic to the Geelvink Bay Islands, a roosting Pale-vented Bush-hen and a Little Shrikethrush of the *ssp melanorhyncha*, from Biak, a very likely future split.

Long-tailed Starling ♦ *Aplonis magna* Many excellent looks on Biak. A Geelvink endemic.

Singing Starling ♦ *Aplonis cantoroides* A few sightings.



Olive-crowned Flowerpecker, Red-capped Flowerpecker, Slaty (Blue-grey) Robin and Grey-streaked Honeyeater. (Nigel Voaden)

Yellow-faced Myna ♦ *Mino dumontii* Small numbers were noted in the lowlands.

Island Thrush *Turdus poliocephalus* Regular observations in the Lake Habbema area.

Pied Bush Chat (Pied Chat) *Saxicola caprata* Just a few in grassy areas.

Red-capped Flowerpecker ♦ *Dicaeum geelvinkianum* Small numbers were seen in the first half of the tour.

Olive-crowned Flowerpecker ♦ *Dicaeum pectorale* Small numbers were noted in Waigeo and in the Arfaks.

Black Sunbird ♦ *Leptocoma sericea* Regular sightings of this endemic in all the lowland areas.

Olive-backed Sunbird (Yellow-bellied S) *Cinnyris jugularis* Regular in the same areas.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* Common in most of the visited towns and villages.

Mountain Firetail ♦ *Oreostruthus fuliginosus* Great looks at this curious species in the Snow Mountains.

Crimson Finch ♦ *Neochmia phaeton* Good numbers in the Sentani grasslands. Probably introduced here.

Streak-headed Mannikin ♦ *Lonchura tristissima* Good numbers in Nimbokrang.

Great-billed Mannikin ♦ (Grand M) *Lonchura grandis* Excellent views in the Sentani grasslands.

Hooded Mannikin ♦ *Lonchura spectabilis* Some nice scope views in the Sentani grasslands.

Chestnut-breasted Mannikin *Lonchura castaneothorax* A few seen in the Sentani grasslands.

Black-breasted Mannikin ♦ *Lonchura teerinki* Good looks at several of these localized endemics near Wamena.



Clockwise: Western Alpine Mannikins at Habbema, Violet-necked Lory and Fairy Gerygone at Waigeo, Coronated Fruit Dove at Nimbokrang. (Nigel Voaden)

Western Alpine Mannikin ♦ (Snow Mountain M) *Lonchura montana* Several flocks in the Habbema grasslands.
Alpine Pipit ♦ *Anthus gutturalis* Small numbers were seen in the Lake Habbema area. Display flight!



Male Garnet Robin and an ultra colourful Black-capped Lory. (Nigel Voaden)



Black Lory, displaying Lesser Bird-of-paradise and female Western Parotia. (Nigel Voaden)

MAMMALS

Red-bellied Marsupial Shrew *Phascolosorex doriae* Seen in the Arfaks.
Common Spotted Cuscus *Spilocuscus maculatus* One seen at Nimbokrang.
Waigeo Cuscus *Spilocuscus papuensis* One seen at Waigeo. A Birdquest lifer!
Common Echymipera *Echymipera kalubu* One seen.
Sugar Glider *Petaurus breviceps* One sighting.
Indo-Pacific Bottle-nosed Dolphin *Tursiops aduncus* Two seen off Biak.
Feral Pig (Wild Boar) *Sus scrofa* One encounter. Impressive beasts!

NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

The most up to date referenced taxonomic list referred to in the Tour Report is that of the IOC World Bird Names. Gill, F and Donsker, D (Eds). 2012. IOC World Bird Names (v2.11). Available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>

Long-tailed Honey Buzzard *Henicopernis longicauda*

Also known as Long-tailed Buzzard, its recorded prey items include a variety of insects (also wasps), tree lizards, birds and bird eggs. This is a member of a genus which possesses a very distinctive jizz and which is endemic to New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago.

Mountain Fruit Dove (White-bibbed F D) *Ptilinopus (rivoli) bellus* and **Moluccan Fruit Dove (White-bibbed F D)** *Ptilinopus (rivoli) prasinorrhous*

The IOC hasn't accepted yet the various splits proposed for the White-bibbed/White-breasted FD complex. However, Mountain, White-bibbed and Moluccan have been included as separate species in the new edition of the Pratt & Beehler Birds of New Guinea guide though.

Yellow-bibbed Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus solomonensis*

The IOC hasn't split off the Geelvink bay subspecies *speciosus* as a separate species. Pratt & Beehler also treat it as part of Yellow-bibbed F D. However, HBW has split this form off as Geelvink Fruit Dove *P speciosus*.

Bronze Ground-Dove *Gallicolumba beccarii*

The bird is named after Odoardo Beccari (1843-1920) Italian botanist, explorer, collector and author.



Western Crowned Pigeon *Goura cristata*

This extraordinary species is endemic to West Papua. This and the other two *Goura* allospecies are by far the largest of the Pigeon family. All are restricted to alluvial forest, are heavily hunted.

Geelvink Imperial Pigeon *Ducula (myristicivora) geelvinkiana* and **Spice Imperial Pigeon** *Ducula myristicivora*

Pratt & Beehler split Geelvink Imperial Pigeon *D geelvinkiana*, endemic to the Bay Islands, from Spice Imperial Pigeon *D myristicivora*, restricted to the Moluccas and W Papuan Islands. Both show many different plumage details. The IOC hasn't adopted this split yet.

Biak Lorikeet *Trichoglossus rosenbergi*

Biak Lorikeet, endemic to Biak Island, has recently been split from Coconut Lorikeet, *T haematodus*.

Habenicht's Pitta (Red-bellied P) *Erythropitta (erythrogaster) habenichti* and **Papuan Pitta (Red-bellied Pitta)** *Erythropitta (erythrogaster) macklotii*

Based in a recent paper (Irestedt *et al*, 2013) Clements has split off the Red-bellied Pitta complex into 17 species. Two are possible in the tour, Habenicht's Pitta *E habenichti*, endemic to Northern New Guinea, and Papuan Pitta *E macklotii*, ranging from the Aru and Raja Ampat Islands, and western, southern and southeastern New Guinea to northeastern Cape York in Australia. The IOC hasn't accepted this split yet.

Vogelkop Bowerbird *Amblyornis inornatus*

We were able to admire several magnificently built bowers, which must surely be the best of any Bowerbird. We enjoyed good views of this modestly-plumaged bird in action at its bower. The song is totally amazing and the bird seems to be able to imitate about everything it hears. This species is endemic to West Papua.

Macgregor's Honeyeater *Macgregoria pulchra*

It is much rarer there now than it used to be, mainly because of it being hunted for its delicious taste. Sadly, recent research has shown that this species belongs with the Honeyeaters.... Pratt & Beehler call it Giant Wattled Honeyeater.

Biak (Dusky) Myzomela *Myzomela (obscura) rubrobrunnea*

The form of Dusky Myzomela in Biak, ssp *rubrobrunnea*, washed with red in the plumage, might represent a different species.

Western Crested Berrypecker *Paramythia (montium) olivacea*

Pratt & Beehler have split off Crested Berrypecker into Western Crested Berrypecker *P olivacea* and Eastern Crested Berrypecker *P montium*. The IOC hasn't accepted this split yet.

Biak Triller *Lalage (atrovirens) leucoptera*

Pratt & Beehler have split off Biak Triller *L leucoptera* from Black-browed Triller *L atrovirens*. The IOC hasn't accepted this split yet.

Raja Ampat Pitohui *Pitohui cerciniventris*

Raja Ampat Pitohui, has recently been split off from Variable Pitohui *P. kirhocephalus*, and is endemic to Batanta, Waigeo and Gam. This is one of those famous poisonous birds, whose feathers and skin contain homobatrachotoxin, a powerful poison of the batrachotoxin group. These poisons were previously considered to be restricted to neotropical poison-dart frogs of the genus *Phyllobates*. However it seems (inexplicably) that not all individuals or indeed populations of pitohuis are poisonous and the reason for the presence of these toxins has not yet been discovered.

Grey Whistler *Pachycephala simplex*

The form involved is sometimes split off as Grey-headed Whistler *P. griseiceps*.

Blue-capped Ifrita *Ifrita kowaldi*

Ifrita is now a New Guinea endemic monotypic family. The highest levels of poisons (batrachotoxins) are generally present in the contour feathers of belly, breast and legs. These same toxins are found in most of the pitohuis and in Neotropical frogs of the genus *Phyllobates*. However, it seems (inexplicably) that not all individuals or indeed populations of ifritas and pitohuis are poisonous and the reason for the presence of these toxins has not yet been discovered.

Long-tailed Paradigalla *Paradigalla carunculata*

This rarely-seen, much prized bird is endemic to West Papua. *Paradigalla* is derived from *Paradisea*, bird of paradise and the Latin *gallus*, a farmyard cock, probably referring to the colourful facial wattles typical of the genus.

Arfak Astrapia *Astrapia nigra* and **Splendid Astrapia** *Astrapia splendidissima*

Astrapia is derived from the Greek meaning a flash of lightning.



Female Splendid Astrapia. (Nigel Voaden)

Wilson's Bird-of-paradise *Diphyllodes respublica*

Tremendous close up views for all of two males and females of this most wonderful and extraordinary Bird of Paradise on his display court in Waigeo. The combination of colours is totally amazing and the blue head seems to be illuminated from inside. It took a bit of effort to get to the spot, but it was well worth it. This species is restricted to Batanta and nearby Waigeo and is thus a West Papua endemic. The scientific epithet refers to the "republic". In naming this species Prince Bonaparte expressed his disenchantment with the French republic, ensuring that since there could not be a paradisean republic, there should at least be a republican bird of paradise..

Island Thrush *Turdus poliocephalus*

The race *versteegi* (restricted to the Jayawijaya Mountains) was not uncommon in the grasslands and along the treeline near Lake Habbema. The taxonomy of this diverse species is highly complex with at least 49 subspecies having been described for this widespread bird, usually from the highest mountains or smallest islands.



Pied Bush Chat *Saxicola caprata* It has been suggested that the populations of New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago be split off as a separate species, Black Bush Chat *S. aethiops*.



This female Lesser Melampitta liked to use our boots as a perch to find worms.... What a sight! (DLV)

