Papua New Guinea Highlights Custom Tour June-July 2011

www.tropicalbirding.com                       info@tropicalbirding.com

1-409-515-0514

Papua New Guinea

A male **Crested Satinbird** thrills us in the garden at Kumul Lodge; one of the birds of the trip (*Nick Leseberg*)

A Tropical Birding Custom Tour

28 June – 10 July 2011

Guided by Sam Woods & Nick Leseberg

*All photos by Sam Woods & Nick Leseberg/Tropical Birding*

“Few if any groups of birds set a naturalist’s imagination on fire as do the birds-of-paradise. Their very names suggest our sense of their ethereal and unearthly mystery, while their remote homes in New Guinea place them outside the personal experience of all but intrepid few ornithologists.” Paul A Johnsgard (1994)
Papua New Guinea is a forest-cloaked island that has tantalized birders for many years through the extraordinary images and film of the famous David Attenborough bird documentaries. These films have enticed people to travel there in pursuit of the most glorious bird family on Earth: the aptly-named Birds-of-Paradise. The two birders who arranged this private tour were no different. These wildlife films and countless other striking images had brought them here to sample the rich New Guinea birdlife on offer, and especially the birds-of-paradise that were, of course, right at the top of their shopping list. This custom tour was modeled on our PNG Highlights tour that is perfect for those who have either limited time or budget but want to walk away with a healthy batch of BOPs and other cool New Guinea birds. Therefore, we combined a visit to one famous highland birding site: Kumul Lodge (2800m/ft), with a trip into the foothills at Varirata National Park (800m/ft), and also birded the lowlands (near sea level) by visiting jungle patches around Brown River, and the coastal environments and mangroves of Hisu. This allowed us to build a healthy list of some of PNG’s most wanted birds, including some 15 species of “Birds-of-Paradise” (the newly created family the satinbirds are included in this as they were formerly listed as BOPs), and a good crop of colorful kingfishers, parrots, and pigeons in under two weeks on the island.

Indelible images were left in our memory from Kumul Lodge’s famous bird table and garden that was a regular haunt of several birds-of-paradise including the striking Ribbon-tailed Astrapia (above) as well as a number of other cool highland garden birds such as Crested Berrypecker and Regent Whistler. Day trips downslope from there produced some of the World’s most extraordinary birds such as the impossibly beautiful Blue Bird-of-Paradise, the strange and unique King-of-Saxony Bird-of-Paradise, and the jaw-dropping Crested Satinbird (formerly a bird-of-paradise). Although a regular female Brown Sicklebill
dropped impressively onto the Kumul bird table daily, it was the huge and striking males “machine-gunning” in the treetops downslope from there that will be best remembered: for their remarkable and surprisingly striking plumage (it is dramatically more impressive than the field guide suggests), and their extraordinary sounds that combined for a wonderful experience of highland birding like no nowhere else on Earth. However, the tree packed with displaying male Lesser Birds-of-Paradise in the tiny village of Kama will perhaps be most remembered for both the difficult journey to get there, and the unbeatable looks we had of males in full breeding regalia displaying in dramatic fashion that would have been more than worthy of any BBC wildlife documentary show. Another less more subtle favorite was a remarkably confiding Mountain Owlet-Nightjar (above) that sat untroubled in our spotlight just a meter or so away as it sheltered from a heavy evening shower on the fence of Kumul Lodge, allowing for long, long views of this odd nightbird.

The foothills of Varirata National Park brought us a different side of avian wildlife than we experienced in the mountains. More birds-of-paradise were observed, including the national bird of PNG: the flamboyant Raggiana Bird-of-Paradise. On top of this a flurry of kingfishers came our way including the amazing Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher that lit up the dark understory, a charismatic Yellow-billed Kingfisher that sat for such a long time in our ‘scope, and a confiding Variable Kingfisher in the same park. Two cryptic day roosting nightbirds were also much appreciated in the park: a line of three bark-like Papuan Frogmouths roosting near the parking lot were popular, as was a cute Barred Owlet-Nightjar keeping a close eye on us from his roost hole. However, perhaps
the biggest highlight from there (in more than one sense) was less predictable: a massive **New Guinea Harpy Eagle** clasping a lizard in its substantial talons was a shock find and was arguably the most impressive find in Varirata.

![New Guinea “Harpy” Eagle at Varirata: even outshone many Birds-of-paradise, to take the title of *top trip bird* (Nick Leseberg)](image)

Finally, the lowlands aided us in adding a whole new swathe of birds including another dazzling kingfisher in the form of the **Common Paradise-Kingfisher** at Brown River, and the localized **Black Thicket-Fantail** gave up close views like never before, and a munia-packed grassland yielded not only the endemic **Gray-headed Munia** but also the rare **Grand Munia** on our final afternoon. However, a mighty **Gurney’s Eagle** perched along the road as we headed back to Moresby late in the afternoon on our final day will be the longest living memory from our time along New Guinea’s coastline and a fitting final image of the tour...

Our final dinner debate centered on what were the “best birds of the trip”, an almost impossible task in Papua New Guinea, an island that is simply loaded with extraordinary and dazzling birds. Unsurprisingly all agreed that if asked a day later the list might change completely! All the same this was the list of contenders that “made the grade”, many predictable and many less so... **Lesser Bird-of-Paradise, Blue Bird-of-Paradise, Brown Sicklebill, Princess Stefanie’s Astrapia, Crested Satinbird, Orange-footed...**

The following birds received the most votes and were therefore considered the top five species on the trip:

1= New Guinea Harpy Eagle

It is almost impossible to convey the attraction of this strange New Guinea eagle without hearing its odd “uumphing” call that is very un-eagle like, and has been compared to the sound of a bowstring when an arrow is unleashed! This soft, though far-carrying call, stopped us in our tracks in Varirata National Park one afternoon. Once it had sunk in what we were listening to we scurried along the trail searching for a clear view of the canopy where New Guinea’s largest raptor usually hangs out. Once we found an opening finding the eagle proved easy as it was sat prominently high in the trees with a lizard clasped in its substantial talons, a remarkable sight. After a few minutes this giant eagle lifted off and resumed calling from a hidden perch deeper in the forest. The rarity, sheer size, and wonderfully different sounds of this great raptor made it a memorable sighting and out it right up there at the top of the list alongside the more predictable birds-of-paradise in the best highlights of the tour.

1= Lesser Bird-of-Paradise

“The gun remained idle in my hand for I was too astonished to shoot...It was like a meteor whose body, cutting through the air, leaves a long trail of light.” Rene P. Lesson (the first westerner to set eyes on a Lesser Bird-of-paradise in 1824)

The indelible images from David Attenborough’s shows remain etched in our memories of birds-of-paradise displays, although the truth is that on many occasions such avian shows cannot be seen readily without a good deal of time spent in uncomfortable blinds in the field and a great deal of luck besides. Thus when you see a show like this one it remains memorable. We enjoyed a true “Attenborough” moment as we watched five or so males do all in their power to impress the attendant females. Their extraordinary displays were seen from every possible angle and were thrilling to behold. Truly, one of the greatest avian shows on Earth.

1= Crested Satinbird (Bird-of-Paradise)

Kumul Lodge remains one of the most reliable places in the world to get this bird, although if trees are not fruiting, getting a good look at a male can be very
challenging indeed. So you can imagine the guide’s relief when Nick found a shocking orange male within a few hours of our arrival, foraging on some berries in the garden, (while we watched, nearly open-mouthed, from the lodge balcony). This fiery-colored bird fed in the open, revealing its vivid flame-orange upperparts, velvety black underparts, and subtle blue eye. We were all transfixed and it was a breathtaking start to our time in the highlands. OK it may not be considered a bird-of-paradise anymore (having recently been reclassified in a newly-created family, the Satinbirds) but it is every bit as breathtaking. A very glamorous bird indeed!

4= **Blue Bird-of-Paradise**
A predictable entry in the top trip birds list, by virtue of its seductive pale blue plumage and fancy breeding feathers. A bit of a hike was needed to get us in position, although this was soon forgotten when literally minutes later a mesmerizing male appeared dramatically in the trees alongside us. If that view was not good enough the same male and at least one other female returned to the area time and again to give us views from every possible angle, leaving no one in any doubt as to the breathtaking beauty of this special bird-of-paradise.

4= **Mountain Owlet-Nightjar**
I am always delighted to see something other than a bird-of-paradise get a mention in the trip highlights for I feel that PNG has much more to offer than “just” a handful of BOPs. While the birds-of-paradise are of course spectacular and beautiful PNG offers much more besides from other gorgeous species to strange and quirky species that deserve our attention too, like this one. Kumul Lodge is THE place to get this bird, although in recent years it has become increasingly challenging to find them. Persistence usually pays off, although maintaining people’s willpower to see one after numerous failed attempts is the true challenge to finding this bird. And so I prepared myself (and the group) for the long haul, explaining that it might take some work to find it. After our initial attempts to see it on our first night revealed neither sight nor sound of it I feared this was to be the case again. We re-convened the next night for another attempt although were thwarted by a very heavy downpour that caused us to cancel our search and so we all headed back to the shelter of our mountain cabins. James was in the front and remarked casually that he had flushed a bird off the fence ahead of him. We quickly froze and I swept the fence line further up with my light. Within seconds the bird that James had disturbed, a wonderfully tame Mountain Owlet-Nightjar, was found blinking back at us in the spotlight. It remained on the fence for an age, allowing us to go and get our cameras (and Monroe, who had already retired to his cabin) and ogle it for some time. Views down to just four feet more than justified this selection!
ITINERARY

28 June  Brisbane (Australia) to Port Moresby (PNG)/night Port Moresby
29 June  Port Moresby to Mount Hagen (flight), transfer to Kumul/night Kumul Lodge
30 June  Tonga and Kumul area/night Kumul Lodge
1 July   Kumul and surrounds/night Kumul Lodge
2 July   Kumul and surrounds/night Kumul Lodge
3 July   Kama and Kumul area/night Kumul Lodge
4 July   Kumul and surrounds/night Kumul Lodge
5 July   Kumul to Mount Hagen to Port Moresby (flight)/night Port Moresby
6 July   Varirata NP/night Port Moresby
7 July   Varirata NP/night Port Moresby
8 July   Brown River/night Port Moresby
9 July   Hisiu/night Port Moresby
10 July  Port Moresby (PNG) to Brisbane (Australia)/departure

Brehm’s Tiger-Parrot: a near-permanent feature on the Kumul Lodge bird table (Sam Woods)

DAILY LOG

29 June  **KUMUL LODGE (highlands)**
After our late afternoon arrival from Australia the day before our birding started in earnest today. After a short 60-minute morning flight to Mount Hagen and a drive up into the mountains from there we finally arrived at our first birding destination: **Kumul Lodge** in the highlands of Enga province. This simple community lodge is nestled within short stunted alpine forest, whose centerpiece attraction is their well-established feeding area. There is
nothing like the first day in a new birding country to get the juices flowing and the adrenalin pumping. Kumul provided this in spectacular fashion. Arriving at lunchtime we wolfed down lunch and then settled in for an afternoon on the lodge balcony overlooking their small garden, and large bird table. This feeding platform is well-established and is swathed in mosses and grasses, appearing as a mere extension of the forest alongside. At first things appeared quiet on deck, although a handful of tropical fruits (pineapple, papaya) thrown onto the bird table by the lodge staff soon changed that. In just minutes our first bird-of-paradise landed on the table: a female **Ribbon-tailed Astrapia**, followed by more common fare like the ever-present **Belford’s Melidectes**, the sounds of which haunt these highland forests constantly. **Smoky Honeyeaters** were another common visitor, often turning up with their bare facial skin an angry looking red color, which soon cooled to a mellow yellow once they had arrived and were feasting on the abundant food on the table. The greediest visitor though appeared to be the tame **Brehm’s Tiger-Parrots** (photo page 7) that allowed extremely close approach as if they were reluctant to let go of the juicy fruit harvest on offer.

The moss-covered legs of the table provided regular perches for a party of **White-winged Robins** (photo above) that frequently clung to these vertical limbs and pounced down on to the ground to pick off insects. A large brown shape suddenly dropped on to the table, with a long down curved beak, that took no time in getting stuck into the papaya on the platform, throwing it comically up in the air and throwing its head back to catch it in its throat, revealing its striking orange-yellow gape in the process. This was our first encounter with our second bird-of-paradise of the tour, a big and bold female **Brown Sicklebill** that regularly dropped in on the table during our visit. A movement on the ground alerted us to our first **Rufous-naped Whistler** hopping along the lawn, and regularly giving its scratchy rasping call. While
contemplating a trip onto their trails to check out a fruiting tree for one of Kumul's most striking residents, Nick noticed a movement in the orange flowers in the garden. Then the male Crested Satinbird emerged into view: all flame orange on the back with glossy jet black underparts and a dreamy blue eye. The odd Friendly Fantail also lived up to its name in the garden (photo below). It did not take long for Nick to draw our attention to this incredible bird. We rounded out a wonderful first afternoon in the highlands with a short trip along the road above the lodge to a stakeout for the rare and local Archbold’s Nightjar. We waited at dusk as the sky dimmed and we were soon surrounded by darkness, with no sight nor sound of our quarry. A little use of a recording then brought this dark nightjar out of the forest and fluttering just over our heads where it was lit up by our spotlight. A nice end to a great first day.

![Friendly Fantail: very well-named indeed! (Nick Leseberg)](photo)

**30 June TONGA and KUMUL area (highlands)**

The highlands of New Guinea are a must for visiting birders as this is where the extraordinary birds-of-paradise reach their highest diversity. We had some stellar species on offer in the Engan highlands, and we chose to go straight after the “fairest of them all” on the first day. We were up early and as the sun rose over the highlands we drove downslope to a forested hillside, where after a short hike up we positioned ourselves so that we could scan the treetops for our significant target bird. As we were walking upslope we could hear the distinctive (and tantalizing) “reverse signal” calls of the Blue Bird-of-
Paradise in the trees above so we knew well that our quarry was closeby. Momentary distraction was provided on the walk up by a male Superb Bird-of-Paradise that appeared briefly on a dead snag, where he loudly announced his presence to unseen females. It was hard to comprehend that this bird was merely the supporting cast! Once we had reached a good vantage point we began searching the trees for our star quarry, and with little time and trouble at all found our bins had latched on to a spectacular male Blue Bird-of-Paradise feeding in the treetops. He did not remain for long though and frustrated a few of us who were trying to get positioned on the slippery muddy slope. We need not have worried though for we soon discovered a fruiting tree in the area that played host to regular visits from both Blue and Superb Birds-of-Paradise and allowed us to get repeated views of both males and females of both, as well as hosting regular groups of both Black-billed and Slender-billed Cuckoo-Doves also attracted by the abundant fruits. This magnetic tree also provided us with prolonged views of both of these unique birds that permitted us to soak up the very best of their plumages: from the shimmering green winged breast shield of the male Superb, to the seductive sky-blue plumes and subtle tail rackets of the male Blue we grilled both species thoroughly and felt completely satisfied leaving after long good looks at both these breathtaking birds. Although the BOPs overshadowed all else, the area also produced some other endemics such as a mobile party of Hooded Munias that caused the feathery tops of the grasses to twitch while they fed among them. Pied male White-shouldered Fairywrens also frequented the grasses and cocked their tails regularly in front of us. While the trees above hosted a handsome male Red-headed Myzomela, a more subtle Marbled...
Honeyeater, Red-capped Flowerpecker, and Yellow-browed Melidectes. Black and Brahminy Kites regularly glided over the mountains above too and would become familiar birds to us during our time in the highlands.

We returned to the lodge for lunch, enjoying especially a bowl of their hot and spicy soup, a great antidote to the chilly highland air, and to check out the goings on in the garden once more. The regulars were there: Ribbon-tailed Astrapias, the lone Brown Sicklebill, (photo below) Brehm's Tiger-Parrots etc. The female Sanford's Bowerbird (photo page 10) that had stole in the afternoon before also returned, stuffing her beak full of papaya before departing as if to return to a nest for hungry youngster nearby as she did often during our visit. A very short walk along the lodge trails led us to a fruiting tree which yielded further views of the gaudy male Crested Satinbird that fed within it, and our first Canary Flycatcher was found closeby too.

After this “break” in the middle of the day we ventured a little downslope from the lodge, where the lower altitude would offer us greater variety of highland birds. Although we were here in the dry season, a regular pattern of building afternoon cloud and heavy downpours continued on this day. A heavy burst of rain confining us to the vehicle for a while, as we sat out the passing storm. Once it had moved through we out of the van in a heartbeat as we were here for another very special bird, locked in our memories from another infamous Attenborough scene. A dry rattle betrayed the presence of a male King-of-Saxony Bird-of-Paradise calling from the near treetops, and it did not take long to locate this amazing bird with the bizarre lobed “antennae” formed from a pair of very unusual feathers that protrude conspicuously from its temples. A light wind revealed these strange
feathers (that are often prized and prominent in the headdresses of many local people), to great effect as they drifted out to the sides of the head from the breeze. A remarkable bird in many ways: for these strange head feathers, and it also has the distinction of boasting the longest bird name of any bird on Earth. Nick’s keen eyes also picked up a flock of Black Sitellas working the roadside treetrunks whose pink faces were much appreciated by all, even in the glowing aftermath of the “Sax BOP”. We were also treated to our first views of a black-and-gold male Regent Whistler in the same area that surely must be the most gorgeous of all the whistlers?

This remarkable day though did not close once the sun had gone down. After dinner we quickly abandoned a plan to search for nightbirds as the rains had moved in once more, and so returned to our mountain cabins. As James was walking back to his cabin he flushed something from the fence outside his room, and telling me of this we made a quick sweep of the fence line with the spotlight, where seconds later my light fell on a heavily whiskered Mountain Owlet-Nightjar (photo right) blinking back at us in the spotlight! This was the very bird that we had contemplated looking for just before the rains came crashing down that caused us to rethink our plans! Remarkably this bird remained there for a long, long time. Time enough for Monroe to arrive, and for us to grab cameras and return to this wonderful photo opp with cameras at the ready. The bird was dappled with raindrops that glistened in the spotlight, and made me wonder whether this aberrant weather had actually done us a favor: perhaps the owlet-nightjar was using the walkway for shelter from the unseasonal rains, and hunt the many moths attracted to the cabin lights? Whatever the reason we were not complaining as this strange nightbird (that is neither an owl nor a nightjar), was a welcome family addition for the group and one that James had stated
was a major target for his personal list. We could not have dared to hope for better looks than this confiding individual that allowed us to glare at it from just a meter or so away. After seeing it in such a wonderful way, it came as no surprise to find it within the top five birds of the trip when votes were taken at the end of the tour.

1 July **KUMUL area (highlands)**

On this day we once again took a drive downslope from the lodge to lower elevations that would offer some other target birds not possible at the high elevations of the lodge itself. Particularly we were trying to track down the **Magnificent Bird-of-Paradise**. To this end we succeeded, although not in finding the male we craved so dearly, and we had to satisfy ourselves with a group of three females that were drawn to a fruiting tree alongside the pot-holed highway. We also managed to find several trees hosting small groups of **Yellow-breasted Bowerbirds**, a rare and local species that can be surprisingly easy to find in this area. A large fig tree above a white water river brought us a party of conspicuous black-and-white **Torrent Flycatchers**, and the most striking honeyeater of them all: **Ornate Melidectes** was found a number of times through the morning. On our way back upslope towards the lodge for lunch we managed to find a pair of the powerfully-built **Stout-billed Cuckoo-Shrike**, an **Island Leaf-Warbler**, and even some perched **Yellow-billed Lorikeets** (whose calls had taunted us for some time before we finally got some proper looks at them). We also managed to track down our first **Black-headed Whistler** on the return journey to the lodge.

On returning to the cooler climes of **Kumul Lodge** we were forced to abandon a plan to return to some lower elevation forest in the afternoon as the afternoon rains returned, heavier and more prolonged than before that
left us stranded at the lodge itself. However, if you are going to be marooned anywhere then Kumul Lodge is not such a bad place. We sat transfixed by the afternoon comings and goings around their fruit-laden table. Berries above the table drew in a pair of spiffing Crested Berrypeckers, a large plump blue, black, and white bird with a crest in shape rather like a waxwing, although in fact in a two-bird family shared only with another strange New Guinea endemic, the Tit Berrypecker. Every year the list of regular visitors to the Kumul bird table seems to grow, with this years addition being a faithful female Crested Satinbird that dropped in regularly through the afternoon (photo page 13), and on other days during our time there. The extraordinarily loud Blue-capped Ifrita also popped up in the garden and was a delight for us all. This strange nuthatch-like bird shares no affinities with that family despite some behavioral similarities and gave us some great close ups from the lodge balcony as rain continued to fall. A young male Chestnut Forest-Rail also fed around the edges of the garden for short time during the afternoon, and our local guide Max managed to show us a Dusky Woodcock that also fed briefly in the forest undergrowth near the lodge parking lot.

After dark the sharp squeaking calls (like someone treading on a rubber duck) alerted us to the presence of a Mountain Owlet-Nightjar once more outside our cabins. After the bird flew up to our window to snatch insects that were attracted to the lights some of us could not resist another look at it, although were surprised to find that it was another very different individual from the previous evening!

2 July KUMUL area (highlands)
For this morning we decided to walk a trail not far below the lodge, often referred to simply as the “Saxony Trail” for obvious reasons...Although not far from the lodge the slightly lower elevations offer a significant number of new species from those found around the lodge itself, and so we were excited by the prospect of yet more birds-of-paradise, as well as a number of more shy and elusive forest denizens that inhabit the forest there. Not far up the trail we bumped into our first flock of Tit Berrypeckers (the male of which looks remarkably similar to the unrelated Great Tit of Europe). By the end of the morning we were to come to realize roaming flocks of these striking birds were among the commonest birds along the trail. This is not always the case and was a welcome surprise. Having just homed in our first Tit Berrypeckers, and had some looks at a much more subdued Mountain Gerygone, the sight of a large black shape moving into a fruiting tree overhead quickly distracted us. With some slight maneuvering we eventually all clapped our eyes on a jet black male Loria’s Satinbird (formerly Loria’s Bird-of-Paradise) one of our key targets for the morning. Moving further up the trail another, very
different, black bird joined the list with our first male Black Monarch. Having descended lower down we also found that the familiar Black-backed Honeyeater that graced the lodge garden regularly was replaced at these lower elevations by the Rufous-backed Honeyeater, at least one of which gave us some long looks. Then the distinctive sound of a Lesser Melampitta was heard emanating from the forest undergrowth and so James and I worked our way down a narrow, well-hidden side trail in order to get in close to it. Before we knew it we were soon surrounded by at least three different melampittas calling back at us from all sides. In spite of being outnumbered though we still struggled to get looks at any of them as they called from closely from the dense understory. So we tried re-positioning ourselves several times, while all the while various melampittas taunted us from all around. Finally, we found a good spot and with a little further use of playback the plump glossy black form of a Lesser Melampitta was noticed as it jumped up onto a mossy stump to call back. This strange black bird in shape rather like an antpitta or pitta is a bit of taxonomic mystery, and currently sits within the bird-of-paradise family, in spite of the fact in appearance, sound and behavior there seem to be few similarities at all! Not long after a long-tailed shape in the trees above revealed itself to be yet another bird-of-paradise, and one that shows more obvious affinities with the family than the melampitta: a fine fully-tailed male Princess Stephanie’s Astrapia. All too soon with a whoosh of sound caused by its extravagant tail the bird disappeared off into a distant canopy and was lost from view. Sadly, though other calling birds like Garnet Robin and Wattled Ploughbill were less obliging, and failed to respond well to playback and remained off our lists for now. However, a foray downslope proved very worthwhile. The loud machike gun rattles of male Brown Sicklebills could be heard all around. As we stood surrounded by thick jungle and took in this wonderful sound it felt like we were in true, wild New Guinea. Every so often the huge shape of a male sicklebill would sail overhead and then evaporate into a dense canopy. Six or more of these huge birds-of-paradise called around us, and frustrated us regularly by ensuring we have never had clear sight of one. However, we persevered and finally we were rewarded by several good long looks at these incredible birds, with its near meter-long tail hanging down below it, golden-brown flanks plumes fluffed up in order to attract surrounding females, and piercing blue eye glowing from within its glossy black head. We even got to see several males give their jack-hammer like calls and observed their bodies shuddering from the effort as they gave this extraordinarily loud call. One of the great sounds of New Guinea’s highlands for sure. On our return walk back to the trailhead we also managed to find a fantastic Black-breasted Boatbill calling beside the trail. After lunch a short walk along the lodge trails yielded little except for a flyover Long-tailed Honey Buzzard, before we did some
more roadside birding in the afternoon. It was a generally quiet afternoon although the walk did produce our first Dimorphic Fantail, a wonderful male Regent Whistler, and a much less conspicuous Brown-backed Whistler. A short stop higher up the road led us to luck in on a Black-mantled Goshawk that flew low over the top of the trees. We thought that was it for the afternoon although as we were driving up the lodge drive on our return a finch flushed off the track. However, this Mountain Firetail (a bird that had strangely eluded us until now) - photo right - quickly returned to the track and gave super looks as it fed within just a few meters of us. A great close to the day.

3 July KAMA & KUMUL area (highlands)
This morning was planned to be one of the most memorable of our time at Kumul Lodge, for we were to go after one of the most dazzling birds of the tour as a whole. However, it almost became memorable for all the wrong reasons. In order to find the Lesser Bird-of-Paradise it is necessary to travel considerably downslope from the lodge, over very rough dirt roads. Even in an ordinary year, when at this time it is traditionally dry in the highlands, a 4-wheel drive vehicle is required to navigate through this bumpy route. However, in spite of a sometimes jarring ride there has never been any suggestion that reaching the destination: an open highland garden, would ever be in any doubt. This year though a prolonged period of very wet weather had turned the road into a thick muddy mess (photo page 17) and more than once on the way our dreams of drooling over Lesser Birds-of-Paradise in the morning seemed a distant and unachievable wish as we managed to get our vehicle stuck in several bogged areas of this makeshift road. However, the ingenuity and industrious nature of the local people defied our most pessimistic thoughts and time and again we managed to be freed from seemingly terminal cases of being mired in dense unforgiving mud. And so finally we made it through to Kama, and quickly hurried to the
“magic” garden where Lesser BOPs have been coming for a decade or more to display. We felt the need to hurry as we had lost precious time during our various problematic moments while trying to reach the lodge, and the BOPs sometimes only choose to display for short periods after dawn. Although we had already surpassed this time we hurried up to the garden anyway, encouraged by the loud nasal slurs of Lesser BOPs emanating from the trees above. On reaching the garden though we soon realized the trees holding these extravagantly adorned birds were draped in low cloud and mist, making seeing them near on impossible. At first this frustrated us, and we cursed our luck. However, in hindsight this proved to be a gift, as birds such as Lesser Birds-of-Paradise that have such extraordinary bright display plumes prefer to display in the first rays of sunlight that bring out their most beautiful colors to best effect. As the sun had not been visible at all on this day so far the birds bided their time, called away and then went into fits of dramatic displays once the sun emerged late morning that coincided with the arrival of several female-plumaged birds. Thus our late arrival, caused by the diabolical road conditions, proved fortuitous as it turned out as we may well have left before they reached the zenith of their displays had we not been delayed and frustrated by the early morning mist. However, we savored their displays to the full as the males flared their golden-yellow display plumes over their heads, bowed their yellow-and-green heads, and shimmied up and down their traditional display perches in a show that would have been worthy of any BBC David Attenborough film. It came as no surprise when this was picked as one of the standout moments of the tour, anyone witnessing this would agree this was one of the best shows in the bird world. Although everything else paled into insignificance compared to the BOPs we did also manage to see our first Brush Cuckoos, and welcomed further views of the
striking *Ornate Melidectes*, a calling male *Black-headed Whistler*, and several *White-shouldered Fairywrens*.

Our journey back up to the lodge was thankfully less eventful than the journey down. The afternoon was also fairly quiet except for three *White-breasted Fruit-Doves* that were found feeding in a roadside fruiting tree, and a *Black-throated Honeyeater* was found feeding on the nectar of some vivid orange roadside flowers.

**4 July KUMUL area (highlands)**

Our morning involved a return to the “Saxony Trail” just below Kumul Lodge in an effort to try and find some of the skulkers that eluded us there a few days earlier. Specifically we were hoping for Watted Ploughbill and Garnet Robin, although once again both were heard, but only Nick managed the briefest of glances at a ploughbill. A *Papuan King-Parrot* joined our lists when a pair flew over us just after we reached a ridge top, although other parrots were typically more frustrating: *Papuan Lorikeet* being seen briefly perched, although *Plum-faced Lorikeets* only being seen flying high overhead. Once again the trail was graced with good numbers of *Tit Berrypeckers*, and a few *Fan-tailed Berrypeckers* were found along there too. *Black-breasted Boatbill* was found again in one of the same areas we had seen it days earlier, although a *Black-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike* was a new bird for most of us a little further up the trail. We lingered again on the ridge in the hope of catching another look at the striking male *Princess Stephanie’s Astrapia* a few days before. On that occasion the views had been frustratingly brief so we were desperate to spend more time with it. We were not to be disappointed as four birds were found in the area, three female types, and the same full-tailed male that this time allowed us to grill it thoroughly, taking in its wonderful, broad-tipped black tail, with white shafts running through the center, gorgeous shimmering green face, and deep red breast band. A *Canary Flycatcher* also turned up in the same area. The remainder of the morning was slower than hoped, with distinctly less bird calls compared to a livelier day a few days previously. A *Lesser Ground-Robin* serenaded us for some time, although was of course typically elusive and difficult to find as it scurried through the understory. Two of us did manage to get a couple of good looks though. We did enjoy a late morning flurry when we managed to get great looks at a brace of robins: first a pair of *Blue-Gray Robins* and then a *Black-throated Robin* perched up in the canopy.
In the afternoon we put the bins away and went for a visit to a village below Kumul, where the local Engan people dressed up in their best sing-sing refinery and delighted us with a wonderful insight into their remarkable tribal life. One of the highlights was seeing them dressed with headdresses that had been handed down through generations, and as decorated with feathers from local species like Lesser, Blue and King-of-Saxony Birds-of-Paradise as well feathers from other areas such as the scarlet and blue plumes of Eclectus Parrots that were traded in the distant past so that people could use their extravagant feathers to adorn their headdresses far from where they originated.

5 July KUMUL area (highlands)
For our final morning in the highlands, before we took an afternoon flight back to PNG’s capital, Port Moresby, we decided to bird the forested road below the lodge and have one final stab at finding two species that had frustrated us regularly before then: Wattled Ploughbill and Garnet Robin. We begin by getting our best looks yet at Papuan Mountain-Pigeons, with a pair found perched by the road that lingered in our scope for some time. Then suddenly the soft whistles of a ploughbill were heard from further down the road and we set off in pursuit. A little use of playback brought a male up into the trees that sadly dropped down before we could all see it. It continued to call on and off but remained in deep cover, until finally the male Wattled Ploughbill appeared once again in the very tree that it had been in earlier and this time allowed us to get a
look at the strange shaped bill and bizarre fleshy pink wattles hanging from its face that make this such an odd and highly-desired species. One target in the bag we set about finding the other, and it appeared like our luck was in with this too when one began calling close to the road. However, an hour later it has fallen silent and had not brought us even a mere glimpse. Indeed by mid-morning with the sun high in the sky, the day warming up, and bird song reduced somewhat I played the call one more time in the vein hope of starting one up again. By this point I may have lost the faith in this of the others who were busy photographing a Black-throated Robin perched by the roadside. Then suddenly a small passerine darted into a low tree right in front of me. A quick glance through the bins revealed the garnet-red upperparts of a super male Garnet Robin. I quickly alerted the others and thankfully it remained in the area over the next five minutes giving us repeated looks through bins and even by ‘scope and proved a great closing bird for our time in the highlands. In the afternoon we flew back to Port Moresby, picking up a souvenir bilum or two (woven bags that are widely used by New Guineans to carry all and everything) in Mount Hagen airport along with our only Australasian Pipit of the trip.

6 July VARIRATA NATIONAL PARK (foothills)
The next two days were spent in the foothills in Varirata National Park that covers an interesting mix of tropical savanna and tropical rainforest close to Port Moresby. The drive up to this park through a deep gorge within the Owen Stanley Ranges is indeed a highlight in itself. We made our way up through the grassy savanna as we rose up towards the rainforest cloaked plateau on top, making some short stops for a bold Blue-winged Kookaburra and an Azure Kingfisher perched up beside a river we passed by on the way, a striking Black-backed Butcherbird hunting prey from a small garden en route, and a few carrot-billed Dollarbirds standing sentry in the savanna. Varirata and the lowland region of this tour turned out to be very productive for kingfishers, bringing us 6 new species on this day and a total of 9 species over just three days.

As until now we had only birded the highlands so far we expected a rush of exciting new species; we were not to be disappointed. Once we emerged out of the savanna at the top of the hill and entered the rainforest, we drove straight to the display area of the Raggiana Bird-of-Paradise, which gave us great looks at their fancy, vibrant red display plumes, although unfortunately on this day were in no mood for full-on displays. It was good to finally see New Guinea’s national bird that adorns their planes and so much other PNG paraphernalia.
Before entering the rainforest itself we checked around the clearing where Daniel, our excellent “local” guide (although actually originally from Enga province in the highlands), soon located a single Papuan Frogmouth sleeping, bark-like, in an open tree. Several Red-cheeked Parrots betrayed their presence with their typically loud piercing calls that led us to them sitting conspicuously in the canopy, and our first poisonous species, the Hooded Pittohui, made its first of several appearances around the edge of the clearing. A dashing Moustached Treeswift was found perched conspicuously on the rainforest edge too. We then walked into the rainforest to go straight after one of Varirata’s most spectacular residents, which for a change was not a bird-of-paradise but a beautiful and striking forest kingfisher. We were soon distracted however, by a pair of Beautiful Fruit-Doves that were located after they called softly from the canopy above just after entering the forest, and then a White-faced Robin that hopped up onto the side of a vertical trunk before perching right above us after putting my I-pod to good use. It did not take long for a Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher to answer our tape. Within seconds of using playback two to three birds responding quickly. A couple more bursts and our local guide latched onto a bird perched at close range. Although it soon flew to another perch it did not take long for us all to soak up this fantastic rainforest bird with the long blue and white tail and glowing red breast that even allowed us to line it up in the ‘scope. One of the true gems of Varirata’s rainforest, and an endemic species confined to the southeast of the country. Venturing further into the rainforest we picked up several Black Berrypeckers, and later chanced upon a great feeding flock that bought a burst of color to proceedings when a Yellow-breasted Boatbill, a party of Wallace’s Fairywrens, and a pair of
Frilled Monarchs were found within this interesting feeding party. Sadly, the Dwarf Whistler that called from within the forest though never showed itself. At the end of the morning we returned to the clearing at the edge of the rainforest for a picnic lunch and to survey the rainforest edge that can be productive in itself.

After a quiet lunch with a locally breeding Brahminy Kite and a family party of Boyer’s Cuckoo-Shrikes for company, which also yielded a good look at a Rufous-bellied Kookaburra for James at least on the edge of the clearing, and a party of vocal Gray Crows passing overhead, we headed up to the Varirata lookout, from where we were going to search for another of Varirata’s special target birds. We were however stopped in our tracks when a Rusty Pitohui flew low over the road, and while we got out of the car to find that we managed to locate a superb Yellow-billed Kingfisher (photo below by Nick Leseberg). At the lookout a perched Sulphur-crested Cockatoo was the first sighting of the species for James and Monroe who had spent almost no time birding Australia thus far and was therefore very highly-rated. A short walk into the rainforest led us to a small dead stump, from where a Barred Owlet-Nightjar (photo page 21) peeked out from the top. As usual, a nice and easy stake-out at a day roost that avoids all the trouble of trying to chase them down at night that is so often needed with other owlet-nightjars in New Guinea. Aside from this cute nightbird staring at us with bug eyes from its roost hole little else stirred along the trail and so we decided to bird our way back down the road to the clearing, finding a pair of Hooded Butcherbirds and a jet black male New Guinea Cuckoo-Shrike in doing so, and running into a flock that held a fine female Magnificent Riflebird that fed so long in one spot (often a rare thing), that we managed to get prolonged ‘scope looks too.
Having put a considerable amount of time into finding rainforest birds (with some undoubted success) we decided to try some final birding in the more open savanna just below the plateau, and perhaps to also check an area of grassland nearby for munias. The tropical savanna that cloaks the hillsides on the way up to Varirata holds a number of species common to the savannas of northern Australia too, that included the White-throated Honeyeater and Lemon-bellied and Leaden Flycatchers we picked up that afternoon. However, we were most interested in an endemic whistler that is confined to southeast New Guinea. We tried a spot which had been productive in recent years and played the call for what seemed like a long time, with no response whatsoever. Then suddenly a black-and-white bird darted into the trees overhead and a quick check with bins revealed it to be a fine male White-bellied Whistler that never once uttered its distinctive song, but just sat there in the open looking for its intruder. With the afternoon waning and the whistler safely “in the bag” we decided to try some grassland near the Kokoda monument for the rare Grand Munia that had been sighted there just the day before. Unfortunately the locals had opted to bird some of the grasslands that day that brought in a Brown Goshawk but may have put paid to the munias that we did not manage to find. However, we did add another bird-of-paradise, if only one of the more crow-like ones, with several Glossy-mantled Manucodes in the trees beside, and also picked up a flock of Yellow-faced Mynas, and finally got great looks at an overflying emerald-green male Eclectus Parrot, before we turned back and returned to Port Moresby for the night. Moresby was buzzing with excitement as the third stage of the State of Origin Australian Rugby match between New South Wales and Queensland was being played that night and Queensland anyway clearly had a massive following in PNG.

7 July **VARIRATA NATIONAL PARK (foothills)**

The start to our final day in the park began with panic when we arrived to find the unmanned gate was locked, and seemingly no way round it. However, five minutes later (after much horn beeping) a sleepy park ranger arrived and things were looking good once more! We tried first around the park clearing that was decidedly livelier than the day before, with a handsome male Dwarf Koel, our first pair of Brown Orioles, and a low flying Black-capped Lory providing the headlines. We then returned to the display site for the Raggiana Birds-of-Paradise, which once again decided not to display as we wished. However, we did get choice views of several fully-plumed males that left us in no doubt of their extraordinary beauty and worthy status as PNG’s flamboyant national bird. While watching this BOP we were soon distracted by another new BOP calling closeby: Crinkle-collared Manucode, that came in at some speed to playback of its odd call. Unlike the extraordinary
Raggiana, this all glossy black bird-of-paradise was easier to conceive as a close relation of the crows (as all BOPs are). Another wander through the rainforest brought us in contact with some feeding flocks, that held a number of repeat species as well as some new additions like **Spot-winged and Frilled Monarchs, Yellow-bellied and Fairy Gerygones, Pale-billed Scrubwren**, and numerous **Chestnut-bellied Fantails**. A check on the **Papuan Frogmouth** we had seen the day before revealed three frogmouths this time all lined up sleeping together. Things settled down during the heat of the day, although we did manage to add several new cuckoo-shrikes, proving what a great place for this family that Varirata NP is: a **Yellow-eyed Cuckoo-Shrike** called regularly while feeding in a fruiting tree, a **Black-shouldered Cuckoo-Shrike** lingered for a while as it came through with a roadside feeding flock, and the clearing produced **Stout-billed Cuckoo-Shrike** and **Varied Triller**.

We then decided to have one final stab at some rainforest birds with a last walk into another area of rainforest, and what a prize choice this turned out to be. Shortly after wandering into the forest a Variable Kingfisher gave its position away with its high-pitched whistles, and Nick’s keen eyes soon located this tiny kingfisher perched nicely above us, before it darted away giving us a more typical view of a blue flash after leaving its perch! Things then took a turn for the worse for me at least, as while crossing a river to access a rich forest trail on the other side I had forgotten to secure my sound gear, which fell catastrophically into the water. After wading to thigh-level I managed to retrieve both that emerged from the water still playing but died—presumably permanently shortly after! This was heartbreaking, although thankfully our journey to the other side of this narrow creek proved very, very worthwhile. At first things were quiet then a strange “umphing” sound emanated from the canopy. After a short time this bizarre sound finally penetrated my subconscious, and I realized I was listening to the extraordinarily un-eagle like calls of a **New Guinea Harpy Eagle**, the country’s largest, and one of its rarest raptors. Knowing well that at such times when they call they often sit up high in an exposed position in the canopy we dashed up the trail in pursuit of the sound, and pretty soon we found an opening that gave us an unhindered look at the rainforest canopy on the other side of the river, where there sat in the open was a massive Harpy Eagle perched on an exposed branch, with a large lizard clasped in its substantial talons. We got crystal clear looks as it sat there letting out this strange sound as we watched on, and then after a few minutes this huge eagle took flight and disappeared into the forest once more, from where it continued to call its extraordinary and unforgettable call. The rarity of the bird, the great looks, and the atmospheric sound led this to beat all of the birds-of-paradise to top the list of tour highlights. I for one was in full support.
of this, knowing that any sighting of this increasingly rare raptor are to be cherished.

We closed the day with a final check of the rainforest edge around the main clearing where a **Pink-spotted Fruit-Dove** posed in the 'scope, and a **Streak-headed Honeyeater** came into tape, before we once more departed for Moresby picking up a **Long-tailed Honey-Buzzard** that passed overhead on our way out of the park.

### 8 July BROWN RIVER & PAU (lowlands)

On this shorter version of our longer, more comprehensive tour, we visited **Brown River**, an area of lowland forest fragments west of Port Moresby that offered us many lowland forest species not possible on any other section of the tour. Soon after walking along the forest track we found one of these: a huge **Greater Black Coucal** hiding in a vine tangle. From the massive to the minute, next up was a small party of delightful Emperor Fairywrens that hid well at first but emerged eventually to ensure we all got satisfactory looks at this endemic fairywren. Watching the forest edge in the early hours of the morning produced an influx of new pigeons for the list with first a **Zoe Imperial Pigeon**, followed by several parties of **Orange-bellied Fruit-Doves**, and a pair of **Pinon Imperial-Pigeons**. Several calls coming from a near patch of rainforest had us diving in their hot pursuit, which after some effort led us to both **Black and White-bellied Thicket-Fantails**, **Shining Flycatcher**, **Northern Fantail**, and a confiding **Black-faced Monarch**. Back out on the forest edge several **Pacific Bazas** ensured we saw them both perched and in flight, while **Dusky Lories** only granted us with flight views, although several scarlet-and-blue female and gem-green male **Eclectus Parrots** obliged by perching out in the open. However, it was the kingfishers that were causing us the most trouble; **Common Paradise-Kingfishers** taunted us from all around, although gave
only the briefest looks so after several attempts we changed location and finally got a crystal clear view of one perched just above us that finally put us out of our misery and proved what a cracking kingfisher it is. **Rufous-bellied Kookaburra** also obliged us while we hunted for the Common Paradise-Kingfisher by landing in a near tree and remaining there for all to soak it up. A **Black-sided Robin** also put in appearance in the same area. Sadly though the **Coroneted Fruit-Dove** in the same area was less helpful, landing in a roadside tree just long enough to for a confirmed ID then quickly being flushed out of the tree by a loud passing vehicle.

Once the day had heated up and caused the activity to drop off considerably we headed back to Moresby for a late lunch. In the afternoon we took a light trip out to the **Pacific Adventists University**. This is usually our great starting location in New Guinea on our arrival day, although our late flight out of Brisbane did not allow us. Just inside the gate we found our first **Forest Kingfisher** of the tour. A flurry of waterbirds were added to the list on arrival at the ponds, with the recently-colonizing **Plumed Whistling-Duck** providing the biggest surprise, although numerous **Comb-crested Jacanas** *(photo page 25)* trotting along the Lilly pads, **Wandering Whistling-Ducks, Green Pygmy-Geese, Australasian Grebes, Little Pied and Little Black Cormorants, and Pied Herons** were much more expected. A shady tree above the pond hosted a sleeping adult **Rufous (Nankeen) Night-Heron**, while the same tree also held **Helmeted Friarbirds** and **Rufous-banded Honeyeaters** within its branches. The latter were also seen perched on Lilly pads right out in the middle of the water too. A check of a sparse line of trees on the edge of the campus held the hoped-for **Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove** waiting helpfully for us on arrival, before we scampered off into a campus garden to admire the bower of a **Fawn-breasted Bowerbird**, *(photo above)* a number of which were also seen
around the uni grounds. This particular bowerbird seems to favor the color green when decorating its avenue bower constructed out of locally-found sticks. Overhead a number of boldly marked Torresian Imperial-Pigeons passed over, as did a lone Collared Sparrowhawk that cut through the air above us, while Singing Starlings and White-breasted Woodswallows hugged the dead snags above. A nice way to finish the day with some light relief from the rigors of rainforest birding.

9 July HISIU (coastal lowlands)
For our final day we opted to do some coastal birding around the town of Hisiu, west of Port Moresby. Our first port of call was an area of low mangroves that quickly produced a pair of vocal Mangrove Gerygones, although the Mangrove Robins required a little more persistence before then posing perfectly out in the open (as our local guide, Daniel, correctly predicted). The same area also held a feisty pair of Black Thicket-Fantails (photo below) that provided us with excellent looks at this local endemic. Another vine tangle held another delightful party of twittering Emperor Fairywrens, and an open tree had a pair of Variable Goshawks perched prominently within it. A sudden burst of wings from the mangroves led us to a pair of Orange-footed Scrubfowl. Checking along the sandy beaches we found a large raft of terns roosting on a sand bar that held Gull-billed, Crested, and Lesser Crested Terns while a distant offshore stack was being circled by a Brown Booby, while another stand held a White-bellied Sea-Eagle perched prominently on its tip. With the mangroves increasingly quiet as the heated up considerably we decided to check a large, though well-hidden, swamp. This produced two of our main target birds for the day: multiple Spotted Whistling-Ducks swum among the large Lilly pads.
The trees along its edge were home to a small group of the localized Silver-eared Honeyeater (photo below). The reedy edge held a noisy Australian Reed-Warbler that emerged onto the tops of the reeds on several occasions, and a White-browed Crake was persuaded to emerge out into the open much to our delight. Surrounding trees also held Gray Shrike-Thrush, and Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrikes were especially common around Hisiu, although was the only site we recorded this common Australian species on the tour. Another swamp stop produced nothing new on the swamp itself although Brown-backed Honeyeaters and a White-throated Gerygone were found around the edges, along with a crisp look at a male Papuan (Eastern Marsh) Harrier as it quartered the savanna grasslands. After a picnic lunch we began slowly making our way back towards PNG's capital, although ensured we made a stop in an area of extensive seeding grasslands and marshland on the lookout for the endemic Gray-headed Munia. We had barely alighted from the car when a pair of munias was noted on top of some near rushes. However, rather than the common Gray-headed Munias we had expected to see in our binoculars we were shocked to find a stout pair of the rare Grand Munia staring back at us! Indeed over the next thirty minutes we bumped into this, much rarer, species a number of times leading us to estimate at least ten birds were in the area. The more expected Gray-headed Munia was also found with considerably more trouble, although seen well in the end. A bonus bird there too, was a perched Yellow-streaked Lory that lingered in the telescope for some time. With that we set off to Moresby for the end of the tour, thinking no more stops were likely, but one more special stop was made when Daniel calmly declared "I think there might a Gurney’s Eagle (photo next page) sitting in the top of that tree" (or words to that effect). We were out of the car in a New York minute and soon confirmed the massive dark shape in this bare tree was indeed a Gurney’s, one of New Guinea’s largest birds-of-prey. It was fantastic to see it in such a way perched at close range, as it is more often seen soaring high overhead (if seen at all). Another small party of munias behind
the eagle held further **Gray-headed Munias**, as well as our final new bird of the trip, a bunch of **Chestnut-breasted Munias**.

A massive **Gurney’s Eagle** comes in to land on our final afternoon

**BIRD LIST**


*This list is up to date with the major changes published by Cornell in December 2008 and further updates in December 2009.*

**H** indicates a species that was HEARD only;

**GO** indicates a species recorded by the GUIDE ONLY.

**New Guinea Endemics** are indicated in **red**.

**DUCKS, GEese AND WATERFOWL: ANATIDAE**

**Spotted Whistling-Duck** *Dendrocygna guttata*

Double figures were seen on a large swamp near Hisiu on our final day.

**Plumed Whistling-Duck** *Dendrocygna eytoni*

Five birds were seen in the grounds of PAU.

**Wandering Whistling-Duck** *Dendrocygna arcuata*

A handful of birds was seen at PAU in Port Moresby, and also along the coast at Hisiu.

**Green Pygmy-Goose** *Nettapus pulchellus*

Good numbers of them were seen at both PAU and at a swamp at Hisiu.
Pacific Black Duck  *Anas superciliosa*
Recorded at both Hisiu and PAU.

**MEGAPODES: MEGAPODIIDAE**
Black-billed Brush-turkey  *Talegalla fuscirostris*
Heard calling at distance in Brown River, although we never really came close to seeing this shy species.
Orange-footed Scrubfowl  *Megapodius reinwardt*
A pair of these megapodes flew low over our heads while at Hisiu mangroves.

**GREBES: PODICIPEDIDAE**
Australasian Grebe  *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*
Three were seen at PAU and several more were seen near Hisiu.

**BOOBEYS AND GANNETS: SULIDAE**
Brown Booby  *Sula leucogaster*
One of these boobies was seen flying out at sea at Hisiu.

**CORMORANTS AND SHAGS: PHALACROCORACIDAE**
Little Black Cormorant  *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*
We had a scattering of sightings in the lowlands around Port Moresby, PAU, and Hisiu.
Great Cormorant  *Phalacrocorax carbo*
One was seen on an outing down slope from Kumul Lodge.
Little Pied Cormorant  *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*
A couple were seen by the ponds at PAU, and another handful were seen at Hisiu.

**ANHINGAS: ANHINGIDAE**
Australasian Darter  *Anhinga novaehollandiae*
One was seen by Sam briefly at PAU, although several were seen by all on a large swamp near Hisiu.

**FREGATIDAE: FRIGATEBIRDS**
Frigatebird sp.  *Fregata sp.*
Some very distant birds were seen flying above a large stack of the coast of Hisiu but could not be identified to species at that range.

**HERONS, EGRETS AND BITTERNS: ARDEIDAE**
Great Egret  *Ardea alba*
Recorded around Port Moresby (PAU), and Hisiu.
Intermediate Egret  *Mesophoyx intermedia*
A scattering of sightings around Port Moresby (PAU), and also around Hisiu.
Little Egret  *Egretta garzetta*
One was seen around the PAU ponds, and small numbers were also seen at Hisiu.
Pacific Reef-Heron *Egretta sacra*
Both white and dark morphs were seen in small numbers on the coastlines around Hisiu.

Pied Heron *Egretta picata*
This sharp-dressed heron was seen at PAU.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*
Scattered sightings on the mainland, around Moresby.

Striated Heron *Butorides striata*
Just the one was seen, briefly, in the mangroves at Hisiu.

Rufous Night-Heron *Nycticorax caledonicus*
Also known as Nankeen Night-Heron. A dozing adult bird was seen well by the ponds at PAU, and some distant birds flew over Port Moresby Airport while we waited to fly into the highlands.

**IBISES AND SPOONBILLS: THRESKIORNITHIDAE**

Australian Ibis *Threskiornis molucca*
A few were seen at Brown River.

Straw-necked Ibis *Threskiornis spinicollis*
Recorded while we were waiting to fly into the highlands at Port Moresby Airport.

**HAWKS, EAGLES AND KITES: ACCIPITRIDAE**

Pacific Baza *Aviceda subcristata*
One flew over the main clearing at Varirata NP, although a pair was seen much better at Brown River.

Long-tailed Honey-buzzard *Henicopernis longicauda*
One flew over us while on one of Kumul Lodge’s trails in the highlands, and another glided over while we were leaving Varirata NP one afternoon.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*
Very commonly encountered in the Engan highlands around Kumul Lodge.

Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus*
Recorded in small numbers around Port Moresby, although the best views came around Hisiu, where a vocal pair were observed mating on the edge of the mangroves.

Brahminy Kite *Haliastur Indus*
A common raptor recorded regularly in the highlands around Kumul Lodge, and also a nesting pair was observed in Varirata NP.

White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*
Just one very distant bird was seen sitting on a far off coastal stack at Hisiu.

Eastern (Papuan) Marsh-Harrier *Circus spilonotus spilothorax* **ENDEMIC?**
Two male birds were seen quartering some lowland grassland near Hisiu. Nick also saw a female around the Mount Hagen airstrip.

NB. The birds in New Guinea are considered a separate species, Papuan Harrier, *C. spilothorax* on the IOC list, and are therefore a New Guinea endemic under this classification. The field guide makes a hash of this species, wrongly lumping it within Spotted Harrier.
Variable Goshawk  *Accipiter hiogaster*
A pair were seen perched near the mangroves at Hisiu.

Brown Goshawk  *Accipiter fasciatus*
One was seen attending a burn during a futile Grand Munia search near the Kokoda Monument.

Black-mantled Goshawk  *Accipiter melanochlamys*
One flew over us late one afternoon below Kumul Lodge.

Collared Sparrowhawk  *Accipiter cirrocephalus*
One glided over us at PAU.

New Guinea Eagle  *Harpyopsis novaeguineae*
*ENDEMIC*
Also known as New Guinea Harpy Eagle. The strange “uumphing” calls of this enormous raptor were heard mid afternoon in Varirata NP, and so we set off in hot pursuit. Knowing well that when they call, they often do so from exposed perches in the canopy we raced up the trail on the lookout for an opening in the canopy. As soon as we found one we also found the eagle, sitting completely in the open, calling occasionally while clasping a large lizard in its talons. A fantastic sighting that was considered THE BEST BIRD OF THE TRIP.

Gurney’s Eagle  *Aquila gurneyi*
Very nearly the final bird of the trip: on our final day around the coastlines of Hisiu we were well on our way back when our local guide, Daniel exclaimed “I think there’s a Gurney’s Eagle up there!” He soon brought the car to a halt and we were soon able to confirm his suspicions. This massive raptor was perched in a tall dead tree, transferred to another tall dead tree and then flapped off into the distance. Great views of another of New Guinea’s large raptors. A group of Chestnut-breasted Munias found minutes later at the same site relegated this to the second to last new bird of the trip.

**FALCONS AND CARACARAS: FALCONIDAE**

Brown Falcon  *Falco berigora*
Two singles were found on two different excursions downslope from Kumul Lodge in the highlands.

**RAILS, GALLINULES AND COOTS: RALLIDAE**

Chestnut Forest-Rail  *Rallina rubra*
*ENDEMIC*
One male scurried along the Kumul Lodge flowerbeds one afternoon.

White-browed Crake  *Porzana cinerea*
One gave remarkable views as it slinked along the edge of a large swamp near Hisiu on our final day.

Purple Swamphen  *Porphyrio porphyrio*
Recorded around Port Moresby, PAU, and Brown River.

Dusky Moorhen  *Gallinula tenebrosa*
Good numbers were seen around the ponds at PAU.
PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: CHARADRIIDAE
Masked Lapwing  *Vanellus miles*
Small numbers were seen around Port Moresby, at both the airport and at PAU.

JACANAS: JACANIDAE
Comb-crested Jacana  *Irediparra gallinacea*
Some excellent views were obtained on the ponds at PAU and on a large swamp at Hisiu.

SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: SCOLOPACIDAE
Whimbrel  *Numenius phaeopus*
Two were seen on the beach at Hisiu.
Dusky Woodcock  *Scolopax saturate*
One was found by Max, our local guide, at Kumul Lodge, who came racing in with the news. Soon after we obtained some views as it scurried along the ground before it promptly disappeared never to be seen again.

GULLS, TERNs, AND SKIMMERS: LARIDAE
Noddy  *Anous sp.*
Some distant noddies were seen well off the coast at Hisiu, although were too distant to firmly identify.
Gull-billed Tern  *Gelochelidon nilotica*
Good numbers were seen on the beach at Hisiu.
Lesser Crested Tern  *Thalasseus bengalensis*
A handful of birds were found resting among a large flock of Great Crested on a sand bar at Hisiu.
Great Crested (Swift) Tern  *Thalasseus bergii*
Good numbers were seen on the coast at Hisiu.

PIGEONS AND DOVES: COLUMBIDAE
Rock Pigeon  *Columba livia*
Recorded around Port Moresby on several occasions.
Slender-billed Cuckoo-Dove  *Macropygia amboinensis*
Recorded on six different days, both in the highlands during day trips down slope from Kumul Lodge, and also at Varirata NP.
Black-billed (Bar-tailed) Cuckoo-Dove  *Macropygia nigrirostris*
Recorded on three days of our time at Kumul Lodge, during day trips down slope from the lodge.
Great Cuckoo-Dove  *Reinwardtoena reinwardtii*
Just the one was seen, darting overhead one afternoon at Varirata NP.
Peaceful Dove  *Geopelia placida*
Recorded at PAU in Port Moresby.
Bar-shouldered Dove  *Geopelia humeralis*
Just recorded on our final day at Hisiu, where a flock of five birds were seen feeding along a dirt road.
Cinnamon Ground-Dove *Gallicolumba rufigula* **GO**
One of these scarce doves crept by us one afternoon at Varirata NP, but was only seen by Nick and Sam.

Pheasant Pigeon *Otidiphaps nobilis* **H**
We heard just one of these pigeons one our first day at Varirata NP that showed no signs of coming in.

Pink-spotted Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus perlatus* **ENDEMIC**
Due to no fruiting trees being found just the one bird was seen at Varirata NP that posed for some time by the large clearing there.

Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus aurantiifrons* **ENDEMIC**
This striking dove was seen perched by the main building at PAU.

Coroneted Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus coronolatus* **GO**
A briefly perched bird was seen by Sam at Brown River.

Beautiful Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus pulchellus* **ENDEMIC**
A pair of these well-named doves was found at Varirata NP.

White-breasted Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus rivoli*
This handsome highland pigeon was seen on three days below Kumul Lodge, including both males and female birds.

Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus iozonus* **ENDEMIC**
Several small groups were observed perched in some dead trees at Brown River.

Rufescent Imperial-Pigeon *Ducula chalconata* **H**
Heard calling some distance away on the Saxony Trail, below Kumul.

Pinon Imperial-Pigeon *Ducula pinon* **ENDEMIC**
Two perched birds were found at Brown River.

Zoe Imperial-Pigeon *Ducula zoae* **ENDEMIC**
1 was scoped at Brown River.

Torresian Imperial-Pigeon *Ducula spilorrhoa*
Three birds were seen in flight at PAU, and another five or so birds were noted at Hisiu.

Papuan Mountain-Pigeon *Gymnophaps albertisii*
Seen on six different days of the tour, all in the highlands around Kumul. Our best views came on our final morning there when two birds were scoped at close range.

**COCKATOOS: CACATUIDAE**

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita*
Several seen around Varirata NP were very popular with the group who enjoyed their very first encounters with cockatoos on this trip.

**PARROTS: PSITTACIDAE**

Yellow-streaked Lory *Chalcopsitta sintillata* **ENDEMIC**
Also known as Greater Streaked Lory. Marvelous views were had of a perched bird on our final day at the Grand Munia spot while traveling back from Hisiu to Moresby. Both the munias and the lorikeet were a very pleasant surprise at this spot, where we had stopped for the more common Gray-headed Munia.
Dusky Lory  *Pseudeos fuscata*  
One was seen passing low overhead at Brown River, and another two overflew us on our journey back from Hisiu.

Rainbow Lorikeet  *Trichoglossus haematodus*  
This beautiful parrot was recorded on three days of the tour: at PAU, Varirata NP, and during one of our forays downslope from Kumul Lodge.

Goldie’s Lorikeet  *Psitteuteles goldiei*  
Like many lorikeets far more often seen flying high overhead than perched. After many frustrating flocks in the highlands, we finally got the view we craved, of several perched birds, visible from the lodge at Kumul on our final morning there.

Black-capped Lory  *Lorius lorry*  
Also known as Western Black-capped Lory. A couple of singles were seen, at Brown River and at Varirata NP.

Red-flanked Lorikeet  *Charmosyna placentis*  
A single bird flashed overhead (briefly) at Brown River.

Papuan Lorikeet  *Charmosyna papou*  
These extremely long-tailed parrots were seen a number of times in the highlands, mostly as flyovers, although finally we got one perched alongside the “Saxony Trail” near Kumul.

Plum-faced Lorikeet  *Oreopsittacus arfaki*  
Seen three or four times as flyovers in the highlands. Sadly no trees were blooming during our time at Kumul and so the perched views we craved eluded us.

Yellow-billed Lorikeet  *Neopsittacus müsschenbroekii*  
Although a number of high-flying flyovers were seen, we enjoyed some good views of several perched birds one morning below Kumul Lodge.

Orange-billed Lorikeet  *Neopsittacus pullicauda*  
A few flyovers were had around Kumul Lodge in the highlands, although we never managed to nail any perched.

Buff-faced Pygmy-Parrot  *Micropsitta pusio*  
These parrots were heard at Varirata NP, although we could not pick their tiny shapes out of the sky.

Brehm’s Tiger-Parrot  *Psittacella brehmii*  
The ONLY easy tiger-parrot in PNG, thanks to Kumul Lodge’s feeding table that attracted a minimum of 5 different individuals during our stay there. An extremely bold species there allowing us to approach within ten feet of them.

Red-cheeked Parrot  *Geoffroyus geoffroyi*  
Recorded on our four days in the foothills and lowlands, with particularly good views in Varirata NP.

Eclectus Parrot  *Eclectus roratus*  
We saw several male birds well in flight at Varirata NP, and also managed to get both sexes perched up at Brown River. Another pair were also encountered on our journey back from Hisiu to Moresby.
Papuan King-Parrot *Alisterus chloropterus*  
A pair flew low over our heads along the Saxony Trail near Kumul Lodge in the highlands. Others were heard in Varirata NP.

**CUCKOOS: CUCULIDAE**

Brush Cuckoo *Cacomantis variolosus*  
Seen on two days on our morning trips out of Kumul Lodge, and another was seen at Brown River.

Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo *Cacomantis castaneiventris*  
One found by Nick at Varirata NP showed to him only unfortunately.

Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cacomantis flabelliformis*  
This highland cuckoo was heard below Kumul Lodge on several occasions.

Rufous-throated Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx ruficollis*  
Several birds were heard near Kumul Lodge but could not be tempted in.

White-crowned Koel *Caliechthrus leucolophus*  
A distant bird was heard in Varirata NP.

Dwarf Koel *Microdynamis parva*  
A bird was taped in around the clearing at Varirata NP and gave superb views as it lingered in the area, and our ‘scope, for some time.

Greater Black Coucal *Centropus menbeki*  
This hulking coucal was seen clumsily moving around a vine tangle at Brown River.

Pheasant Coucal *Centropus phasianinus*  
Good views were had just below Varirata NP, and also again near Hisiu.

**OWLS: STRIGIDAE**

Jungle Hawk-Owl (Papuan Boobook) *Ninox theomacha*  
A bird was heard calling distantly, late one night at Kumul Lodge.

**OWLET-NIGHTJARS: AEGOTHELIDAE**

Mountain Owlet-Nightjar *Aegotheles albertisi*  
Kumul Lodge is THE place to get this cryptic nightbird. However, this does not mean to say that it is easy. Indeed often it is far from it and requires persistence and patience to see it. And so it appeared it would be for us after a fruitless search on our first night, with not a glimpse or a peep out of it. Then late in the night Sam heard it “squeaking” outside his cabin at 2am. The following night we planned to search long and heard to get it as it was high on James’s wish list. The weather scuppered our plans though, and heavy rains had us abandoning this plan altogether. As we walked back to our cabins with rain crashing down James commented that he had just flushed a bird off the fence outside his room. I quickly swept the waist high fenceline, and was incredulous to find a Mountain Owlet-Nightjar blinking back at me! It remained there for 15 minutes or more, giving us time to round everyone up and get some great photo memories of the occasion. The following night Nick and Sam noticed a large shape flapping by their window that under further investigation turned out to be another individual that once again happily posed for photos. Rarely has this bird
been so easy! After this star performance it was no surprise to see it voted as \textbf{ONE OF THE BEST BIRDS OF THE TRIP}.

**Barred Owlet-Nightjar** \textit{Aegotheles bennettii}  *ENDEMIC*

Our local guide Daniel led us to a daytime stakeout for one of these roosting nightbirds in Varirata NP, that peered out from its hole with bug eyes. Then the next day while we were admiring a Variable Kingfisher at Varirata Nick found another bird peering out of a different hole.

**FROGMOUTHS: PODARGIDAE**

\textit{Papuan Frogmouth} \textit{Podargus papuensis}

Three of these bark-like birds were seen roosting in Varirata NP.

**NIGHTJARS AND ALLIES: CAPRIMULGIDAE**

\textit{Archbold's (Mountain) Nightjar} \textit{Eurostopodus archboldi}  *ENDEMIC*

One put on a great show on our first night near Kumul Lodge, when it fluttered just over our heads in the spotlight.

**SWIFTS: APODIDAE**

\textit{Glossy Swiftlet} \textit{Collocalia esculenta nitens}

Recorded on 8 days of the tour, at a number of sites in the highlands, foothills, and lowlands.

\textit{Mountain Swiftlet} \textit{Aerodramus hirundinaceus}  *ENDEMIC*

Seen on most of our days in the highlands near Kumul Lodge.

\textit{Uniform Swiftlet} \textit{Aerodramus vanikorensis}

Recorded regularly in the lowlands and foothills, at Varirata, Hsiu, and Brown River.

**TREESIWFTS: HEMIPROCNIDAE**

\textit{Moustached Treeswift} \textit{Hemiprocn multispec}

This immaculate bird was seen on both of our visits to Varirata NP.

**KINGFISHERS: ALCEDINIDAE**

\textit{Azure Kingfisher} \textit{Alcedo azurea}

Our very first kingfisher of the trip, found perched alongside a river en-route to Varirata NP.

\textit{Variable Kingfisher} \textit{Ceyx Lepidus}

Also known as \textit{Variable Dwarf Kingfisher}. Some fine work by Nick helped pick out this bird, perched up, in Varirata NP.

\textit{Blue-winged Kookaburra} \textit{Dacelo leachii}

One was found on our first journey into Varirata NP, another pair were seen at Brown River, and finally another was seen along the beach at Hsiu.

\textit{Rufous-bellied Kookaburra} \textit{Dacelo gaudichaud}

One was seen around the clearing at Varirata NP, with further good views obtained at Brown River.

\textit{Forest Kingfisher} \textit{Todiramphus macleayii}

One was found during our afternoon jaunt around PAU, and another 2 were seen near Hsiu.
Sacred Kingfisher  *Todiramphus sanctus*
Two birds were seen, one in Varirata, and another at PAU.

Yellow-billed Kingfisher  *Syma torotoro*
A fantastic bird posed for us in Varirata NP, allowing Nick and James to take some choice shots.

Common Paradise-Kingfisher  *Tanysiptera galatea*
By voice a common bird at Brown River. However, this species likes to stick to thick cover, and is easy to flush when searching for it. And so it proved at Brown River, where many of our initial efforts resulted in just brief views for Nick or Sam only. Finally though, one bird landed above us and lingered long enough for us all to soak it up.

**Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher  *Tanysiptera danae***  *ENDEMIC*
This handsome kingfisher is confined to SE New Guinea. Thankfully it is reasonably easy to find at Varirata NP, and it did not take long for us to find this beautiful bird glowing back at us from the understory.

**BEE-EATERS: MEROPIDAE**

Rainbow Bee-eater  *Merops ornatus*
A small group was found at the Lesser Bird-of-Paradise site below Kumul Lodge, with better looks coming in our time around Varirata NP and PAU where others were seen.

**ROLLERS: CORACIIDAE**

Dollarbird  *Eurystomus orientalis*
Four birds were found on our way into Varirata NP, and another was seen at Hisiu.

**BOWERBIRDS: PTILONORHYNCHIDAE**

Sanford's Bowerbird  *Archboldia sanfordi***  *ENDEMIC*
Kumul Lodge must be the most reliable place to find this normally shy bird right now, as a female regularly drops in to the bird table each day. While we were there we saw this bird numerous times when it appeared to be collecting fruit to take back to a nearby (and undiscovered) nest.

NB. This is a split from Archbold’s Bowerbird.

Macgregor’s Bowerbird  *Amblyornis macgregoriae***  *ENDEMIC*
This incredibly shy bird popped up in Sam’s binoculars at the Blue Bird-of-Paradise site near Kumul, but disappeared before anyone else could get a look.

Yellow-breasted Bowerbird  *Chlamydera lauterbachi***  *ENDEMIC*
This local species was seen well down slope from Kumul Lodge, where at least four birds were seen.

Fawn-breasted Bowerbird  *Chlamydera cerviniventris*
We managed to find them on three separate days: firstly while trying to find Grand Munias near the Kokoda Monument, then five or so birds were found in the grounds of PAU, and finally one was seen near Hisiu.
FAIRYWRENS: MALURIDAE

Orange-crowned Fairywren *Clytomyias insignis* H
A group of these skulking birds were heard near Kumul Lodge.

Wallace’s Fairywren *Sipodotus wallacii* *ENDEMIC*
A pair of these canopy fairywrens was found in a flock at Varirata NP.

White-shouldered Fairywren *Malurus alboscapulatus* *ENDEMIC*
This cute and striking endemic was seen a number of times, near Kumul Lodge, at Kama (the Lesser BOP site), Brown River, and Hisiu.

Emperor Fairywren *Malurus cyancephalus* *ENDEMIC*
Two parties of this handsome fairywren were seen in the lowlands: a deep blue male and two rusty females at Brown River, and another party of three were found at Hisiu.

HONEYEATERS: MELIPHAGIDAE

Green-backed Honeyeater *Glycichaera fallax* H
Heard once around the park at Varirata.
This species is also found in northeast Queensland.

Silver-eared Honeyeater *Lichmera alboauricularis* *ENDEMIC*
A very co-operative group was found near a large swamp at Hisiu on our final day.

(Papuan) Black Myzomela *Myzomela nigrita* GO
One was seen by Sam in Varirata NP.

Mountain (Red-headed) Myzomela *Myzomela adolphinae* *ENDEMIC*
A striking male was seen at the Blue Bird-of-Paradise site near Kumul.

Red-collared Myzomela *Myzomela rosenbergii* *ENDEMIC*
Three of these handsome honeyeaters were seen at the Blue BOP site near Kumul Lodge.

Mountain Meliphaga *Meliphaga orientalis* *ENDEMIC*
Seen on a couple of days in the highlands.

Mimic Honeyeater *Meliphaga analoga* *ENDEMIC*
Recorded on both of our visits to Varirata NP.

Black-throated Honeyeater *Lichenostomus subfrenatus* *ENDEMIC*
One put in a late afternoon performance near Kumul Lodge as it fed on some bright orange roadside blooms. Another was seen by Sam while everyone else was admiring a prominent Black-throated Robin along the Saxony Trail.

Tawny-breasted Honeyeater *Xanthotis flaviventer*
Just the one was seen during our morning in the lowlands of Brown River.
The species is also found in extreme northern Queensland (Australia).

White-throated Honeyeater *Melithreptus albogularis*
Several were seen in the tropical savanna just outside Varirata NP, during our successful search for the White-bellied Whistler.

Plain Honeyeater *Pycnonpygius ixoides* *ENDEMIC*
One was seen beside the clearing at Varirata NP.

Marbled Honeyeater *Pycnonpygius cinereus* *ENDEMIC*
One was seen first at the Blue BOP site below Kumul Lodge, with several further sightings in this area of the highlands.
Streak-headed Honeyeater  *Pycnopygius stictocephalus*  *ENDEMIC*
One showed up by the clearing at Varirata NP, although we were still reeling from the New Guinea (Harpy) Eagle we had seen moments earlier, so it was a little overshadowed by that beastly raptor!

Helmeted Friarbird  *Philemon buceroides*
Seen in the lowlands at PAU, and also near Hisiu.

Rufous-backed Honeyeater  *Ptilopora guisei*  *ENDEMIC*
Several were seen in the highlands, along the Saxony Trail below Kumul Lodge.

Black-backed Honeyeater  *Ptilopora perstriata*  *ENDEMIC*
Also known as Gray-streaked Honeyeater. This highland honeyeater was regularly encountered in the garden of Kumul Lodge, and along the road below there.

Belford’s Melidectes  *Melidectes belfordi*  *ENDEMIC*
The most conspicuous bird in the highlands, regularly encountered around the lodge at Kumul, and high altitude sites nearby.

Yellow-browed Melidectes  *Melidectes rufocrissalis*  *ENDEMIC*
The lower altitude “cousin” of Belford’s, a handful of which were seen at the Blue BOP site, downslope from Kumul Lodge.

Ornate Melidectes  *Melidectes torquatus*  *ENDEMIC*
A striking honeyeater which was seen at the Lesser BOP site (Kama), and at another nearby site in the highlands.

Smoky Honeyeater  *Melipotes fumigates*  *ENDEMIC*
Another common highland honeyeater, regularly recorded in and around Kumul (seen daily).

Brown-backed Honeyeater  *Ramsayornis modestus*
A pair were found in the savanna near Hisiu.

Rufous-banded Honeyeater  *Conopophila albogularis*
Four birds were seen in the well-manicured grounds of PAU, two of which were observed hopping around on the lilies in the middle of the lake! Another pair was found at Hisiu.

THORNBILLS AND ALLIES:  *ACANTHIZIDAE*

Rusty Mouse-Warbler  *Crateroscelis murina*  *H*  *ENDEMIC*
This reclusive warbler was heard a number of times at Varirata NP.

Mountain Mouse-Warbler  *Crateroscelis robusta*  *ENDEMIC*
Three different birds were seen on one day around Kumul Lodge, including one bird that hopped helpfully along the walkway to the lodge.

Large Scrubwren  *Sericornis nouhuysi*  *ENDEMIC*
Several sightings were made in the highlands around Kumul Lodge.

Buff-faced Scrubwren  *Sericornis perspicillatus*  *ENDEMIC*
A small party (3) were found along the Saxony Trail near Kumul Lodge.

Papuan Scrubwren  *Sericornis papuensis*  *ENDEMIC*
Regularly encountered in the highlands.
Pale-billed Scrubwren *Sericornis spilodera*  
This foothill species was seen within a flock of monarchs, pitohuis, and berrypeckers in Varirata NP.

Mountain (Gray) Gerygone *Gerygone cinerea*  
Two were seen along the Saxony Trail below Kumul Lodge.

Green-backed Gerygone *Gerygone chloronota*  
Singles were seen on both of our ventures into Varirata NP.  
Also occurs in tropical northern Australia.

Fairy Gerygone *Gerygone palpebrosa*  
Several were picked out of feeding flocks in Varirata NP.

White-throated Gerygone *Gerygone olivacea*  
This amazing little songster was seen (and heard) in the tropical savanna near Hisiu.

Yellow-bellied Gerygone *Gerygone chrysogaster*  
One of these gregarious birds was found within a feeding party (that included pitohuis and monarchs too) in Varirata NP.

Brown-breasted Gerygone *Gerygone ruficollis*  
Two were seen down slope from Kumul during one of our trips out of the lodge.

Mangrove Gerygone *Gerygone levigaster*  
A very vocal and confiding pair was found in the mangroves at Hisiu.

SATINBIRDS: *CNEMOPHILIDAE*

Loria’s Satinbird *Cnemophilus loriae*  
Three birds were seen along the productive Saxony Trail below Kumul Lodge, which included a glossy-black male first seen in a fruiting tree, and also two other female birds.  
Formerly known as Loria’s *Bird-of-Paradise*.

Crested Satinbird *Cnemophilus macgregorii*  
One of the undoubted highlights of the trip was when a breathless Nick announced a fiery orange male had just dropped into a flowering tree in the garden of Kumul Lodge which we all admired for a good time. This same bird was also later seen in one of their favored fruiting trees along the trail at Kumul. During our time there another bird, a female, regularly dropped onto the bird table to pick up fruits, which was seen on at least three occasions. ONE OF THE BEST BIRDS OF THE TRIP  
NB. The satinbirds were formerly classified as *Birds-of-Paradise*.

BERRYPECKERS AND LONGBILLS: *MELANOCHARITIDAE*

Black Berrypecker *Melanocharis nigra*  
At least three birds were seen on the edges of a feeding flock in Varirata NP.

Lemon-breasted Berrypecker *Melanocharis longicauda*  
Also known as Mid-mountain Berrypecker.

Fan-tailed Berrypecker *Melanocharis versteri*  
Found on at least four occasions in the highlands.
Streaked Berrypecker  *Melanocharis striativentris*  
Nick and Sam had brief looks at one along the road below Kumul Lodge.  

Slaty-chinned Longbill  *Toxorhamphus poliopterus*  
A very uncooperative bird called for some time at Tonga, although never showed itself.  

Dwarf Honeyeater  *Toxorhamphus iliolophus*  
One was seen (and a number of others heard) at Varirata.  

**TIT BERRYPECKER, CRESTED BERRYPECKER: PARAMYTHIIDAE**  
**Tit Berrypecker  *Oreocharis arfaki***  
This Great Tit lookalike was pleasantly common along the Saxony Trail, being the most numerous and conspicuous bird along there on both of our visits.  

**Crested Berrypecker  *Paramythia montium***  
After a brief, and tantalizing, look in a dense fruiting tree along the trails at Kumul, we were very relieved to find another in their garden that showed off its beautiful features to much better effect.  

**QUAIL-THRUSHES AND JEWEL-BABBLERS: CINCLOSOMATIDAE**  
**Painted Quail-thrush  *Cinclosoma ajax***  
Most of us were frustrated by their high-pitched whistles, although Nick managed to get at least poor views!  

**Spotted Jewel-babbler  *Ptilorrhoa leucosticte***  
A very distant calling bird in the highlands remained distant, sadly.  

**Chestnut-backed Jewel-babbler  *Ptilorrhoa castanonota***  
Just Sam and Nick got short looks at a bird that only came in the once at Varirata before slinking back in to the undergrowth.  

**BOATBILLS: MACHAERIRHYNCHIDAE**  
**Black-breasted Boatbill  *Machaerirhynchus nigripectus***  
The montane boatbill in New Guinea. Seen on both of our ventures along the Saxony Trail (downslope from Kumul Lodge). Three birds were seen on our first visit, and another single was seen during our second morning there.  

**Yellow-breasted Boatbill  *Machaerirhynchus flaviventer***  
The lowland boatbill in New Guinea. One was seen in a canopy flock at Varirata NP, which also held a party of Wallace’s Fairywrens. This species is also found in northern Queensland (Australia).  

**WOODSWALLOWS: ARTAMIDAE**  
**Great Woodswallow  *Artamus maximus***  
Recorded four times in the highlands near Kumul Lodge, including on the drives in and out of there between the lodge and Mount Hagen.  

**White-breasted Woodswallow  *Artamus leucorynchus***  
Seen on both our lowland days out of Port Moresby, including at PAU and around swamps in the Hisiu area.
BELLMAGPIES AND ALLIES: CRACTICIDAE
Black-backed Butcherbird *Cracticus mentalis*
A few were seen in the tropical savanna just below the park at Varirata, and others were seen in the Hisiu area.
Also found on the Cape York Peninsula in northern Queensland (Australia).
Hooded Butcherbird *Cracticus cassicus* *ENDEMIC*
A pair were seen in the rainforest at Varirata NP, and further sightings came at Brown River and in the Hisiu area.

CUCKOO-SHIRKES: CAMPEPHAGIDAE
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina novaehollandiae*
Regularly encountered around Hisiu.
Also found commonly over much of Australia.
Stout-billed Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina caeruleogrisea* *ENDEMIC*
A pair of these hulking cuckoo-shrikes was seen near Lae (in the highlands below Kumul Lodge), and another single bird was seen in the foothills, in the clearing at Varirata NP.
Yellow-eyed (Barred) Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina lineate*
At least one of these frugivorous cuckoo-shrikes was seen visiting a fruiting tree at Varirata.
Also occurs in NE Australia.
Boyer's Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina boyeri* *ENDEMIC*
Three were seen during our first visit to Varirata, and another two were seen there the following day.
White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina papuensis*
Three sightings: one was seen during one of our morning outings from Kumul, another single was seen at Brown River, and finally one was seen at Hisiu.
Papuan (Black-shouldered) Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina incerta* *ENDEMIC*
One lingered for some time in our 'scope at Varirata.
New Guinea (Black) Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina melas* *ENDEMIC*
A pair was seen on our first venture into Varirata NP, and another three were found during our second visit there.
Black-bellied Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina Montana* *ENDEMIC*
A single bird was seen during both of our hikes along the Saxony Trail (near Kumul Lodge).

White-winged Triller *Lalage sueurii* GO
Nick saw one briefly on the journey from Hisiu to Port Moresby.
Varied Triller *Lalage leucomela*
A distant bird was found during our first, futile, search for Grand Munias, near the Kokoda Monument. Another much closer bird was seen from the clearing at Varirata NP the following day.
SITTELLAS: NEOSITTIDAE
Black Sittella  *ENDEMIC*
Sittellas are the Australasian equivalent of the nuthatches, which they closely resemble in their behavior. A party of these scarce sittellas was found along the road below Kumul Lodge that comprised of at least five birds.

WHISTLERS AND ALLIES: PACHYCEPHALIDAE
Mottled Whistler *ENDEMIC*
Several were heard during trips downslope from Kumul, although unfortunately they could never be tempted to show themselves.
Dwarf Whistler *ENDEMIC*
A flock was encountered on both days along the Tree House Trail at Varirata NP that held one of these vocal whistlers within it. However, despite much effort put in to seeing it, this whistler managed to successfully elude us on both occasions.
Rufous-naped Whistler *ENDEMIC*
One of the conspicuous residents of the Kumul Lodge garden; seen every day while we were there. Often encountered hopping on the ground across the open lawn and watched from the lodge balcony.
Brown-backed Whistler *ENDEMIC*
Three sightings around Kumul: one in the lodge garden, another along the road below the lodge, and a third was seen on the Saxony Trail.
Gray-headed Whistler *ENDEMIC*
Singles were seen during both of our visits to Varirata NP.
Note: this used to be lumped with Gray Whistler, but has been split from that Australian species making both species endemics.
Sclater's Whistler *ENDEMIC*
Sam managed to get brief looks at a female during one of our outings from Kumul Lodge.
Named after the English ornithologist and collector Philip Lutley Sclater.
Regent Whistler *ENDEMIC*
Arguably the most dazzling of all the whistlers. This highland species was seen 5-6 times around Kumul Lodge, which included two or three striking male birds.
Black-headed Whistler *ENDEMIC*
Another, less striking, highland whistler. We found a pair along the road well downslope from Kumul Lodge on one day, and also saw another male at Kama, the Lesser BOP display site.
White-bellied Whistler *ENDEMIC*
A scarce whistler of PNG’s tropical savanna, which was seen just outside the park at Varirata on afternoon. A male responded to playback by flying in to the eucalypt tree above, although never uttered a sound the whole time.
Note: this form was formerly considered a local New Guinea race of Rufous Whistler, although is now widely split as this endemic species.
Rufous (Little) Shrike-Thrush *ENDEMIC*
A couple of singles were seen in Varirata NP, and Sam also saw one well down slope from Kumul Lodge.
Gray Shrike-Thrush *Colluricincla harmonica*
Several were seen at Hisiu.

Hooded Pitohui *Pitohui dichrous* *ENDEMIC*
Regularly encountered in passing flocks at Varirata NP.

Rusty Pitohui *Pitohui ferrugineus* *ENDEMIC*
Just brief views were had of this shy forest denizen, in Varirata NP and Brown River.

Crested Pitohui *Pitohui cristatus* *ENDEMIC*
One of PNG’s shyest birds, always a real challenge to see at all, and even harder to see well. Therefore the brief view we had in Varirata NP could be considered a little above average!

Wattled Ploughbill *Eulacestoma nigropectus* *ENDEMIC*
PNG is full of quirky birds that appear to not fit well into any of the current bird families. The ploughbill is a prime example of this, which although considered an odd whistler bares little resemblance to the rest of the family. It exhibits fleshy pink face wattles and calls quite unlike all the other whistlers! For this reason it is therefore much desired among visiting birders. James was no different. As is often the case though the ploughbill proved elusive at first, with a calling bird showing to just Nick along the Saxony Trail, then the next day a male popped up briefly for Sam along the road below Kumul. A nervy wait followed, the ploughbill fell silent, and just when we thought the chance had passed the male ploughbill appeared in the same tree that it had first appeared and this time showed to all. This was part of our final morning finale at Kumul, which also included a gorgeous male Garnet Robin.

**SHRIKES: LANIIDAE**

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach*
5-6 were seen on open country within the highlands.

**OLD WORLD ORIOLES: ORIOLIDAE**

Brown Oriole *Oriolus szalayi* *ENDEMIC*
A couple of showy birds were found in Varirata NP, and others were also encountered at Brown River.

Australian Figbird *Sphecotheres vieilloti*
One was seen in the well-manicured grounds of PAU, and another one at least was seen at Hisiu on our final day.

**DRONGOS: DICRURIDAE**

Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus bracteatus*
Recorded on four days around Port Moresby, including at Brown River, Varirata, and Hisiu.

**FANTAILS: RHIPIDURIDAE**

Northern Fantail *Rhipidura rufiventris*
One was seen at Brown River.
Willie-wagtail  *Rhipidura leucophrys*
A delightfully common bird in New Guinea, (away from densely forested areas), which was recorded on most days of the tour.

**Friendly Fantail  *Rhipidura albolimbata*  *ENDEMIC***
A regular and prominent resident in the Kumul Lodge garden, which regularly posed in front of their balcony.

**Chestnut-bellied Fantail  *Rhipidura hypeythra*  *ENDEMIC***
The flock fantail in Varirata NP, which was encountered on 4-5 occasions there.

**Black Thicket-Fantail  *Rhipidura maculipectus*  *ENDEMIC***
A local species of fantail in SE New Guinea. We had awesome views of a very responsive pair in the mangroves at Hisiu.

**White-bellied Thicket-Fantail  *Rhipidura leucothorax*  *ENDEMIC***
Cracking views were had of a bird in the lowland rainforest at Brown River.

**Black Fantail  *Rhipidura atra*  *ENDEMIC***
A pair was seen at Tonga, the Blue BOP site near Kumul, and another male was seen on the Saxony Trail.

**Dimorphic Fantail  *Rhipidura brachyrhyncha*  *ENDEMIC***
Some fantails rarely fan their tails, although this species does this continually. One of these rufous fantails was seen well along the road below Kumul Lodge.

**MONARCH FLYCATCHERS: MONARCHIDAE**
Black Monarch  *Monarcha axillaris*  *ENDEMIC***
A male was seen along the Saxony Trail, below Kumul.

**Black-faced Monarch  *Monarcha melanopsis***
Several of these striking monarchs were seen at Brown River. Also found in Australia.

**Spot-winged Monarch  *Monarcha guttulus*  *ENDEMIC***
1-2 were seen on both of our ventures into Varirata NP.

**Frilled Monarch  *Arses telescophthalmus*  *ENDEMIC***
A few of these stunning monarchs were seen on both of our visits into Varirata NP, and others were also seen at Brown River.

Note: this has been split from the form in extreme northern Australia, (which is now named Frill-necked Monarch), and so is now considered an endemic species to New Guinea.

**Leaden Flycatcher  *Myiagra rubecula***
A peach-throated female was seen in the tropical savanna just outside Varirata NP. A pied male was also seen at Hisiu on our final day.

**Shining Flycatcher  *Myiagra alecto***
Several birds were seen at Brown River that included both shiny deep blue males, and a rufous-backed female. Another male was also seen in the mangroves at Hisiu.

This species also occurs in tropical Australia.
CROWS, JAYS AND MAGPIES: CORVIDAE

Gray (Bare-eyed) Crow *Corvus tristis*
A couple of groups of this odd and noisy crow were seen in Varirata NP.

Torresian Crow *Corvus orru insularis*
Seen regularly in the lowlands around Port Moresby, where it is the only regular "black" crow.

BIRDS-OF-PARADISE: PARADISAEIDAE

Glossy-mantled Manucode *Manucodia ater*
This crow-like BOP was seen first near Kokoda (while trying to find Grand Munias), and others were seen at Brown River.

Crinkle-collared Manucode *Manucodia chalybatus*
A very responsive pair was seen multiple times in Varirata NP.

Ribbon-tailed Astrapia *Astrapia mayeri*
Several males and females dropped in to feed on the bird table at Kumul on a daily basis. Sadly, no full-tailed males were present in our time there.

Princess Stephanie’s Astrapia *Astrapia stephaniae*
Up to 4 birds were seen along the Saxony Trail, which included one gorgeous, glossy male among them.

King-of-Saxony Bird-of-paradise *Pteridophora alberti*
One of the World’s strangest birds: it has the longest name of any bird on Earth, and possesses strange antennae-like head feathers that are like no other bird on Earth. We found a calling, “rattling” male along the road at Kumul that displayed this weirdness to good effect! Another male and several females were also encountered during our visits to the well-named Saxony Trail.

Magnificent Riflebird *Ptiloris magnificus magnificus*
A female gave prolonged views at Varirata NP. Strangely silent in our time at Varirata NP this year, where they are usually extremely vocal, giving their distinctive growling calls often. The growling calls of this New Guinea form differ markedly from the calls of the form/species of Magnificent on the Cape York Peninsula.

NB. This is not split under Clements being considered a race of Magnificent, (which also occurs in extreme northern Queensland Australia), although on the IOC list is split off as Growling Riflebird when it then becomes an endemic species.

Superb Bird-of-paradise *Lophorina superb*
At least three males and three females were encountered at Tonga in the highlands, where they put on a great show. Several of the males were seen calling from high in the trees, when they revealed their glossy green breast shield that was fanned out at this time. These birds were also regularly visiting a fruiting tree there that also attracted several Blue Birds-of-Paradise too.
Brown Sicklebill  *Epimachus meyeri*  
James was thrilled with this one. On one of our mornings along the Saxony Trail James and I, along with our local guide Max went in hot pursuit of some calling sicklebills. Surrounded by dense montane forest we listened excitedly to the machine-gun rattles of around half a dozen male Brown Sicklebills. Then after some fleeting glimpses at this massive BOP we managed to see several different males sitting high in the trees, with their long, long tail dangling below them, and watched in awe as their whole body vibrated and jerked excitedly as they gave their remarkable loud calls from the treetops. James voted this as one of the standout moments of the trip.

**ONE OF THE BEST BIRDS OF THE TRIP.**  

**Magnificent Bird-of-paradise  *Cicinnurus magnificus GO***  
Three female birds were seen during one morning trip from Kumul Lodge, although the gorgeous male seen on another day trip from there was unfortunately only seen by Nick and Sam.

**Lesser Bird-of-paradise  *Paradisaea minor***  
Due to heavy and unseasonal rains experienced in the highlands this year a truly Herculean effort was required to even get to the site from Kumul Lodge. All credit to Max (our local guide) and all the villagers who helped us through some truly difficult moments en-route (that had me at least convinced we were not going to make it through the thick mud to the display site). Thankfully though, despite more than a few lengthy delays we made it to Kama, a tiny village with a patch of casuarinas that Lesser BOPs have been coming to for ten years or more to display each day. Our troubles did not end with our arrival on site though, as a thick blanket of fog and cloud covered the site and all we could make out were some blurry, dark shapes moving around the dark treetops! One thing was certain though, we were prepared to wait as long as it takes to get the views we craved. As it turned out the fog may well have been a blessing in disguise as the birds chose to display later in the morning so that they could take advantage of the suns rays which would bring their extravagant feathers to life. So we waited, the birds displayed later, and we left well and truly satisfied, having watched a true “Attenborough moment” as the birds danced along branches, reacted excitedly to the presence of the arrival of several female – type birds, and fanned their wings, flared out their breeding plumes and called loudly. The tally on site amounted to at least 5 male birds and 6 female-type birds (females and some young immature male birds are inseparable). A remarkable showing that is rightly what motivates people to come to this great country.

**ONE OF THE BEST BIRDS OF THE TRIP.**  

**Raggiana Bird-of-paradise  *Paradisaea raggiana***  
Half a dozen or so birds were seen on both of trips into Varirata NP, with fantastic views of several males in their traditional display tree there. This is PNG’s national bird.
Blue Bird-of-paradise *Paradisaea rudolphi* **ENDEMIC**
A dazzling BOP that is always high on the shopping list of any visiting birder. The motivation of seeing this extraordinary bird motivated Monroe to push on up the rather steep hill to the site at Tonga, although it was well, well worth it. Repeated views of males and females were had from each and every angle and were much appreciated by all. A mesmerizing bird that we all hope one day to see display, although display sites remain remote and elusive thus far. However, even when not displaying, **ONE OF THE BEST BIRDS OF THE TRIP**.

Lesser Melampitta *Melampitta lugubris* **ENDEMIC**
James and I chased after several calling birds along the Saxony Trail, and finally got good looks at a bird that leapt onto a mossy tree stump to call back at my I-pod. Currently still considered a strange, ground-dwelling bird-of-paradise, that neither appears like one, behaves like one, nor sounds like one!

**AUSTRALASIAN ROBINS: PETROICIDAE**

Lesser Ground-Robin *Amalocichla incerta* **ENDEMIC**
One elusive individual showed a couple of times along a trail below Kumul Lodge.

Torrent Flycatcher *Monachella muelleriana* **ENDEMIC**
Up to three birds were seen along the Lae River in the highlands.

Lemon-bellied Flycatcher *Microeca flavigaster*
A few were seen in the tropical savanna just outside Varirata NP.

Yellow-legged Flycatcher *Microeca griseoceps* **GO**
Also known as Yellow-legged Flyrobin. Sam saw one briefly in Varirata NP. This species also occurs in far eastern Indonesia and northern Australia.

Canary Flycatcher *Microeca papuana* **ENDEMIC**
Recorded three times in the highlands: once along a trail at Kumul Lodge, and twice along the Saxony Trail below there.

Garnet Robin *Eugerygone rubra* **ENDEMIC**
We tried really hard to get one of these beautiful robins along the Saxony Trail on both of our visits there, but despite several birds being heard on none were seen. A final attempt was made to find one along the road near Kumul Lodge on our last morning in the highlands, and it appeared the same dismal luck that had plagued us thus far was to continue, but then late in the morning one began calling and this time a wonderful male came in and gave great looks for us all in the ‘scope. A fantastic final addition to our bird list in the highlands.

White-faced Robin *Tregellasia leucops*
A pair gave us great looks while we went on a successful search for the outstanding Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher at Varirata NP. This species also occurs in extreme northern Queensland (Australia).

Mangrove Robin *Eopsaltria pulverulenta*
A feisty pair reacted strongly to tape at Hisiu, posing nicely in the tops of the mangroves.
Also occurs in northern Australia.
Black-sided Robin *Poecilodryas hypoleuca* *ENDEMIC*
One was seen in a forest patch at Brown River that also yielded great views for us of Common Paradise-Kingfisher.

Black-throated Robin *Poecilodryas albonotata* *ENDEMIC*
Two were seen in the highlands, during our time at Kumul Lodge.

White-winged Robin *Peneothello sigillata* *ENDEMIC*
A delightful and common visitor to the Kumul Lodge garden frequently encountered hopping along the lawn, or perched on one of the vertical legs of the bird table. Up to three birds were seen at any one time, and several browner, juvenile, birds were also seen.

Blue-gray Robin *Peneothello cyanus* *ENDEMIC*
Nick and Sam managed to find one at Tonga in the highlands, although unfortunately this bird eluded the others in its few, brief, appearances. Finally, we found a showy pair along the Saxony Trail below Kumul that showed to all present.

Northern Scrub-Robin *Drymodes superciliaris H*
This extremely secretive robin was heard on several occasions around Varirata NP and at Brown River.
Also occurs on the Cape York Peninsula of northern Queensland.

**RAIL-BABBLER AND IFRITA: EUPETIDAE**

Blue-capped Ifrita *Ifrita kowaldi* *ENDEMIC*
Another undeniable New Guinea oddity, whose affinities are far from clear. In recent years it has been regrouped within the same family as the ground-dwelling, jewel-babbler like Rail-Babbler; something that is hard to fathom. The *Ifrita* is a gregarious, nuthatch-like bird that sounds and behaves radically different from its supposed nearest relative! We saw a small group (2-3 birds) of these fascinating birds in the garden at Kumul.

**SWALLOWS: HIRUNDINIDAE**

Welcome Swallow *Hirundo neoxena*
A number of these common Aussie swallows were flitting around outside the Brisbane departure lounge window at the start of our journey to PNG.

Pacific Swallow *Hirundo tahitica*
The most common and widespread swallow in Papua New Guinea, recorded regularly in the lowlands and foothills.

Tree Martin *Petrochelidon nigricans*
In New Guinea a handful were seen at Brown River, and a large flock of 20+ birds were seen on the journey back from Hisiu to Moresby. In Australia a small number were seen around the airport at Brisbane.

**LEAF-WARBLERS: PHYLLOSOCIDAE**

Island Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus poliocephalus*
Although a number were heard, just the one was seen late one morning below Kumul Lodge.
REED-WARBLERS AND ALLIES: ACROCEPHALIDAE  
Australian Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus australis*  
A showy bird was seen singing from the tops of the reeds at Hisiu.

GRASSBIRDS AND ALLIES: MEGALURIDAE  
Tawny Grassbird *Megalurus timoriensis macrurus*  
Five or more birds were seen during one of our morning outings from Kumul Lodge.  
NB. This form is split as an endemic species, Papuan Grassbird, *M. macrurus* on the IOC list, although is listed as only a subspecies under Clements.

CITICOLAS AND ALLIES: CISTICOLIDAE  
Golden-headed Cisticola *Cisticola exilis*  
One bird was seen in the grasslands at Brown River, and another couple was seen during our day at Hisiu.

OLD WORLD FLYCATCHERS: MUSCICAPIDAE  
Pied Bushchat *Saxicola caprata*  
Scattered sightings were made in the highlands, with a few others seen near Varirata.

THRUSHES AND ALLIES: TURDIDAE  
Island Thrush *Turdus poliocephalus*  
A regular visitor to the lawn and bird table in the Kumul garden.

BABBLERS: TIMALIIDAE  
New Guinea White-eye *Zosterops novaeguineae*  
First recorded at the Blue BOP site down slope from Kumul, with several other parties seen during other outings from Kumul.

STARLINGS: STURNIDAE  
Metallic Starling *Aplonis metallica*  
Good numbers of this long-tailed, forest, starlings were seen at Brown River.  
Singing Starling *Aplonis cantoroides*  
Two were seen on our first morning at Port Moresby airport as we flew to the highlands, and others were seen around the uni campus at PAU.  
Yellow-faced Myna *Mino dumontii*  
Recorded on four days of the tour: at Kokoda, Brown River, Hisiu, and Varirata.

FLOWERPECKERS: DICAEIDAE  
Red-capped Flowerpecker *Dicaeum geelvinkianum*  
Five or so birds were seen in the highlands at Tonga, and this species was also recorded on both of our visits to Varirata NP.
**SUNBIRDS AND SPIDERHUNTERS: NECTARINIIDAE**
Olive-backed Sunbird *Cinnyris jugularis*
Recorded in the lowlands at Brown River and Hisiu.

**WAGTAILS AND PIPITS: MOTACILLIDAE**
Australasian Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae*
One of these large pipits was seen feeding along the runway at Mount Hagen airport.

**OLD WORLD SPARROWS: PASSERIDAE**
House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*
Just recorded around Port Moresby.
Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*
Several of these recent colonizers were seen at Port Moresby airport.

**WAXBILLS AND ALLIES: ESTRILDIDAE**
Mountain Firetail *Oreostruthus fuliginosus*
A super view was had of a bird along the driveway at Kumul Lodge.
Grand Munia *Lonchura grandis*
Our first attempt near Kokoda came up empty-handed, a few flyover groups of munias remaining unidentified. On the return journey from Hisiu to Moresby we stopped at marshy grassland to try and track down the more common Gray-headed Munia, and stumbled onto a number of these rare munias that actually outnumbered the more common species there. These birds had not been recorded there previously and were a nice surprise, with a minimum of 10 birds seen there.
Hooded Munia *Lonchura spectabilis*
Several large groups were seen in the highlands during our time at Kumul, with one flock at Tonga (the Blue BOP site) numbering around 30 birds.
Gray-headed Munia *Lonchura caniceps*
Recorded on our last day on our return journey to Moresby from Hisiu. The same grassland area also held at least 10 Grand Munias, along with 6+ Gray-headed Munias.
Chestnut-breasted Munia *Lonchura castaneothorax*
The final addition of the trip was a flock of these finches while we were watching a perched Gurney’s Eagle on our journey back to Moresby from Hisiu.