PAPUA NEW GUINEA
(with the NEW BRITAIN EXTENSION):
*Paradise Untamed*

**RIBBON-TAILED ASTRAPIA** Kumul Lodge
Voted *bird of the trip*

15 July – 5 August, 2010

Tour Leader: Sam Woods
Papua New Guinea is known as the “land of unexpected”, and their national saying is “expect the unexpected”. For good, and bad, we experienced some examples of this during this successful tour on this resource-rich island, and amassed a great trip list of 407 species. Some of what we saw was very much expected: a slew of species from arguably the most spectacular bird family on the planet, the outrageous birds-of-paradise. We picked up 24 species of birds-of-paradise on the tour, with the majority being males, some of which were seen in full, jaw-dropping display mode! The flurry of displaying male Greater Birds-of-paradise during a late afternoon show in the steamy lowland jungle near Kiunga standing out, as did the wonderful performance put on by PNG’s national bird, the Raggiana Bird-of-paradise near the nation’s capital, at Varirata NP. Getting a bunch of BOPs was expected, even in the land of the unexpected. However, on only our third day in the country watching a tree full of BOPs, of NINE different species (and 3 sicklebill species at one time in the same tree) was very much unexpected even in New Guinea. All of this happened right in the garden of our fancy highland lodge, Ambua. Also unexpected was a recent development in the lowland jungle surrounding Kwatu Lodge: a genuine stake out for the near mythical New Guinea Flightless Rail! We watched on as one of these hulking rails came to feed in a sago swamp during the late afternoon, parading for us all. Something I am personally still reeling from!

PNG is paradise for kingfishers too, and we always expect a good haul of these colorful species on this tour, although 18 kingfisher species was remarkable, including 5 different Paradise-kingfishers! The standouts among this Technicolor crowd were the odd Shovel-billed Kookaburra found nesting in the mining town of Tabubil; the Brown-headed Paradise-kingfisher that glowed red in the forest understorey at Varirata NP; and 3 Bismarck endemic species on New Britain: Black-capped Paradise-kingfisher seen near the massive megapode colony at Pokili, a pair of frisky New Britain Kingfishers on our final afternoon at Garu; and a fine Bismarck Kingfisher lurking alongside a forest stream at Tove. Other groups we experienced a good number of included fantails (10 species); 9 monarch species; 14 Australian Robins; 30 types of pigeon/dove including many colorful fruit-doves like Beautiful on the mainland and Knob-billed on New Britain, in addition to the monstrous Southern Crowned Pigeon on the banks of the Ketu River, and “shackled” Nicobar Pigeons on a small islet in Kimbe Bay; 27 parrot species with all three fig-parrots seen perched and all 4 tiger-parrots seen; 17 species of whistler including a family of the bizarre Wattled Ploughbill at Kumul, and the vivid Dwarf Whistler or Goldenface at Varirata NP; and 12 cuckoos including Long-billed Cuckoo, and Dwarf and White-crowned Koels.

Other avian gems we were treated to included several audacious male Flame Bowerbirds passing over the infamous knoll in Kiunga; a good set of scarce raptors including the hulking New Guinea Harpy Eagle that flapped past us at the Tari Gap, with a close passby of Meyer’s Goshawk too there the next day, a couple of Gurney’s Eagle sightings, and even a flyby Doria’s Hawk at Tabubil all on the
mainland, and a group of 3 **Black Honey Buzzards** that glided overhead on New Britain; just visiting the huge **Volcano Megapode colony** at Pokili on New Britain was a standout experience as literally hundreds of birds were flushed up dramatically from the colony as we strolled through the forest and then seen peering down at us below!

At the end of it all we had the tough task of trying to pick out a top five from this delectable set of unique birds, and not surprisingly there were quite a few choices from the group. Indeed, 22 different birds were picked by the group including a few BOPs of course: King-of-Saxony BOP; Brown Sicklebill, Greater BOP, Raggiana BOP, Ribbon-tailed Astrapia, Superb BOP, Lawe’s Parotia, and King BOP all being picked; along with Gray-headed Goshawk; Marbled and Papuan Frogmouths; Barred and Feline Owlet-Nightjars; Moustached Treeswift; Yellow-billed Kingfisher; Shovel-billed Kookaburra; Blyth’s Hornbill; New Guinea Flightless Rail (my personal pick!); Southern Crowned Pigeon; Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove; Mountain Peltops; and Orange-breasted Fig-Parrot. However, only 5 (ish) could win, and the final list was as follows:

1. **Ribbon-tailed Astrapia**
   Particularly, the stunning adult male with a lengthy ivory-white tail, and glittering green throat that sat above the famous Kumul Lodge bird table just after our arrival. What a dramatic opener to this magical birding venue.

2. **Yellow-billed Kingfisher**
   We saw this cute kingfisher twice on the tour, although the first showing of a lone bird sitting quietly under a casuarina tree in Varirata NP was particularly special as it lingered for some time in the open allowing us all long, glorious looks.

3= **Raggiana Bird-of-paradise**
   This resplendent BOP is PNG’s national bird, so it was fitting to see it displaying so spectacularly and dramatically on the edge of the nation’s capital, Port Moresby, in Varirata NP. There we watched on during the afternoon as a minimum of 6 males displayed in the treetops. These BOPs were seen repeatedly through the tour and at Varirata, although none of the other sightings could come close to this spectacular showing.

3= **Greater Bird-of-paradise**
   Much like the Raggiana’s it was the way we saw them that counted in their favor. We had a last minute long delay for our flight to Kiunga, threatening our chance at seeing this extravagantly plumed bird in full display. On arrival we rushed to the site, and were fortunate that in the late afternoon several dowdy females dropped in sending the males into a frenzy of activity. At least five males fluffed up their plumes, spread their wings and “serenaded” the accompanying females. This involved rather brutally thrashing them with their wings and teasing them when they
seemed all too keen to take part by rejecting their advances! (Although in the end the males and females succumbed to each other’s advances). An amazing show that was genuinely the most jaw-dropping ‘foreplay’ you will ever see!

3= **King Bird-of-paradise**

Remarkably this red-and-white jewel has never featured in the top five before, which has always baffled me, as it is almost always the one that people fantasize about most before arrival in PNG. We watched this regal BOP dancing his way up and down a rainforest vine along the banks of the Ketu River. As if its gem-like red upperparts are not enough, he also possesses a coiled tail that looks akin to green ribbon. Otherworldly.

3= **Brown Sicklebill**

At first glance this would seem a strange choice. I mean the field guide does not paint a particularly special picture of this bird after all. However, any stay at Kumul Lodge would change your mind, the moment the colorful male drops dramatically on to the bird table, or calls, machine gun like in the background. We heard this spectacular call while at Kumul and watched in amazement as a minimum of seven different birds visited the feeding table, including at one time five female type/juvenile birds together, and later two males feeding shoulder to shoulder. When you get a close up of this dramatic BOP you realize calling it just “Brown”, is a little unfair. As the crown is decorated with shimmering emerald green, its flanks are pale golden brown, and it has piercing yellow eyes that draw you in. That is not to mention the canary yellow gape that is seen so well at the bird table when it literally throws large chunks of fruit down its gullet. In short, an absolute stunner that when seen like this, as only Kumul can offer, should make any short list no sweat!
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* An extra night was spent in Tabubil (and one night less in Kumul) due to a canceled flight.

TOUR LOG

Day 1: July 15

Pacific Adventists University (Port Moresby)

Just as the tour turned out to be far from conventional in terms of some of the birds seen, it also started this way. Air Niugini delayed us for some time in Brisbane, and we took advantage of this delay by watching a mighty Black-necked Stork cruise past the departure lounge window! Most unexpected indeed. When we finally arrived in Port Moresby we hurried to our first destination, the well-groomed grounds of the Pacific Adventists University, and set about picking up birds fast as we only had just a few hours to spare there before dark. Actually we began birding before we had reached there when a roadside flock of finches had us pulling the van over to admire our first official PNG bird, and suitably a New Guinea endemic too: a flock of Gray-headed Munias were causing the grass tops to twitch as they fed within them by this busy Moresby road. Once at the uni we pulled off the road sharply when the first Fawn-breasted Bowerbird alighted in a tree alongside the bus, and also admired some more widespread Aussie species like Comb-crested Jacanas trotting over the lily pads on the ponds, and a Rufous (Nankeen) Night-Heron snoozing in a tree above. We also picked up another New Guinea endemic in the form of the friarbird lookalike, Brown Oriole. Daniel (our thickly-bearded local guide), then alerted us to jump on the bus as he’d just found our main quarry sleeping in a tree up the road: 3 bark-like Papuan Frogmouths greeted us on arrival in one of the massive rain trees on the campus. After wonderful views of these cryptic nightbirds we moved on for our next target, beside a hidden pond, where a number of Spotted Whistling-Ducks were
waiting for us, sleeping in the trees above. The same area also held some dapper Pied Herons, and Black-backed Butcherbirds. Another area held a pair of frisky Orange-fronted Fruit-Doves, and Singing Starlings also dotted the campus roofs. At the end of the afternoon we headed to our hotel and took in our first of many “SPs” or South Pacific beers of the trip, welcome refreshment from the heat and humidity of PNG’s sticky capital.

Day 2: July 16  Port Moresby to Tari

After an all too predictable delay courtesy of Air Niugini, we were winging our way into the Central Highlands, to Ambua Lodge near the town of Tari. A packed audience of colorfully adorned Huli people awaited us at the airport, some even decorated by the feathers of birds-of-paradise and the casques of hornbills. This alone was quite a welcome, then we arrived at our luxurious mountain lodge, with a neatly trimmed lawn, well-manicured flower beds, and Great Woodswallows continually floating in the air overhead. After lunch we checked out a rather famous tree in their garden, that should have been pretty quiet in the mid-afternoon warmth, but was soon alive with our very first birds-of-paradise taking advantage of the bountiful fruit hanging from its branches. We had barely been at the lodge an hour and we racked up many species of BOP in the lodge garden: Lawe’s Parotias came and went first and were our first official BOP of the tour, that included a male with “dangly bits” hanging from his head, a striking Blue Bird-of-paradise, a female Princess Stefanie’s Astrapia, and the strange Short-tailed Paradigalla. We really could not have wished for more out of our first hour in the highlands! Also in the garden, and attracted too to the bounty of fruits available, were a male Spotted Berrypecker, and a large mobile flock of Tit Berrypeckers too that would become a familiar sight in the garden.

Still high from our first BOP “fix”, we drove up towards the Tari Gap, and picked up another bird-of-paradise that rivaled all those in the lodge garden for its dramatic appearance. A lichen-encrusted branch provided an open song post for a stunning male King-of-Saxony Bird-of-paradise, that may not have the striking plumage of say a Blue BOP, but more than made up for this with it’s strange white serrated “antennae” that so often lifted up with a light gust of wind, leaving these unique head feathers flailing spectacularly in the air around it. Every so often this wonderful male BOP would sing to attract females, a dry rattling sound that belies the beauty of the author. Even if you take away the males spectacular appendages the “KOSBOP” also has the distinction of having
the longest bird name of any in the world. It was only our second day, but a surefire contender for bird of the trip was already being discussed over dinner!

With all this high-class action the other “padders” seem hardly worth mentioning although we did pick up a superb nesting White-breasted Fruit-Dove (see photo on previous page), a Mountain Firetail clambered up some low brush at the roadside, and our first Blue-gray Robins were found feeding at the edges of the road in the late afternoon.

Day 3: July 17 Tari
Our first full day in the Southern Highlands region was magical. With the promise of what the amazing fruiting tree in the lodge garden might bring at peak time (early morning) we could not resist spending some time just a few short steps from our cabins. Our unassuming local guide Joseph soon picked up a distant dark shape on the top of a dead limb: a calling male Black Sicklebill, which was a precursor to a truly incredible day for BOPs. Soon after, we also ran into our first Black-breasted Boatbill in the trees above some cabins, and also found a chattering Black Monarch which was using the lodge flowerbeds for cover. We then put ourselves in pole position: looking up at the fruiting shefflera tree for any signs of activity. Immediately its branches were shaking with BOPs pushing their way into the feast, and pretty soon this and other trees around came alive with BOPs. The first headliner was a small sicklebill that flew in conspicuously causing Joseph and I to shout excitedly “Buff-tailed Sicklebill” that on and off over the following half hour or so fed brazenly in the open, an ordinarily very tough, and rarely seen species, and a lifer for all, guide included! Indeed, sicklebills were the star performers of the morning as this magical tree hosted three species at once, with both female Brown and Black Sicklebills too. In all 9 species of birds-of-paradise came to visit during our hour vigil: Loria’s BOP (actually technically now considered in a different, newly formed family the Satinbirds), Blue BOP, all 3 Sicklebills, female Superb BOP, the pair of Short-tailed Paradigallas returned again, multiple male and female Lawe’s Parotias, and a few female Princess Stephanie’s Astrapias. Our tenth species of BOP for the day was added with a late morning King-of-Saxony BOP still “rattling” from his open perch as he had been the day before.

Some trail work was required to go after some of the famous skulkers of the highlands. Sometimes this can be a painful task, as some of these species can be some of the most challenging to see, and frequently cause open frustration due to their retiring habits. However, you never would have guessed that from the male Northern Logrunner that showed just after we entered the trail and gave us all good views of his gleaming white throat that enabled us to sex the bird. This is not typical for the species (considered separate from the Australian one that looks very similar, but sounds and behaves markedly different), that can usually be one of the most dastardly of all of the many highland skulkers. While we searched for further views of the logrunner a Lesser Ground Robin surprised us by hopping onto an open log just a meter away from us before it quickly melted back into the forest understorey. Jim got very lucky as he managed to catch a view of a male Papuan Whipbird that the rest of us only managed to hear. A distraction from
the denizens of the forest floor was provided when Kelly spotted a magnificent male 
Ribbon-tailed Astrapia with full meter long clean white tail feathers floating gracefully 
below it, a truly gob smacking bird. Some of the other skulkers however, remained silent
and hidden despite considerable effort, so we decided to return to them again the next
day.

Back at the lodge for lunch saw us finally find a deep velvety black male Loria's Bird-of-
paradise (Satinbird) that dropped into the same fruiting tree that continued to hold 
multiple parotias too. A couple of other treats graced the garden too, including the drab but 
scarce male Mottled Whistler, a decidedly more dapper male Sclater's Whistler, and best
of all a pair of Mountain Peltops flycatching in the hot sun that shone during the middle of the
day near Elaine's cabin (see photo alongside). Meanwhile Jim glanced out of his window and
found a small party of Hooded Munias feeding quietly on the lawn outside, and quickly turned
his room into a makeshift blind for many of us.

The afternoon in the upper part of the Tari Valley was generally fairly quiet although the
Hooded Cuckooshrike that Jim pulled the bus to a stop for proved our only sighting of the tour,
and a little later a smashing band of Black Sitellas had us pile out of the bus once more
as we watched them crawling around the mossy branches of a roadside tree. Lower
down in the valley again we were frustrated by a calling Papuan Treecreeper, that refused to
come in, although a splendid male Garnet Robin performed much better, and our first Black-throated Robin was found in the same
area. A night search for Feline Owlet-Nightjar and Mountain Nightjar proved fruitless, 
but we would return to them again later.
Day 4: July 18  
Tari

Our “birding” begun as we gathered for breakfast in darkness, when one of the local Huli pointed to a giant Hercules Moth resting on the side of the lodge, one of the World’s largest moth species (see photo on this page). After yesterday’s heady start things just had to slow down, and indeed they did. A quietish start was punctuated first by a gorgeous male Princess Stephanie’s Astrapia that lit up our scope. Then a short time later near the Tari Gap, a massive New Guinea Harpy Eagle powered impressively passed us all. This area also surrendered a pair of spiffing Crested Berrypeckers, and for a few people anyway, a cute Plum-faced (Whiskered) Lorikeet that shot off before we could all admire it. We then went on the “hunt” for skulkers once more. Like hunting this can require more than a little patience, with many hours put into sometimes minimal return. This is how it felt for a while, a fleeting Spotted Jewel-Babbler eluding all but Eugenia and myself, slinking past us at high speed.

We tried another trail and were thwarted by local people logging trees noisily (an activity that is alarmingly increasing in this former highland wilderness), and we were soon getting the feeling it was not meant to happen for skulkers when a Lesser Ground Robin then brought us hope as it hopped out on the open trail, in the same area where an Ashy Robin came in very close on several occasions, (but still thwarted many from getting crisp looks). With all the noise from the local loggers we felt lucky to pick up anything at all, and so opted to try a another different trail in the late morning. After the inevitable patient (and sometimes painful) wait a glossy black Lesser Melampitta hopped into view for all, allegedly a strange ground-dwelling bird-of-paradise if you believe its current classification, (I am having serious trouble with that though!) We then attempted to return to the lodge for lunch only to get distracted by another tricky customer, an Orange-crowned Fairywren that circled us in the forest and gave some
excellent looks in the process that was quickly followed by our first “toxic” species, the nuthatch-like **Blue-capped Ifrita**. This provided Jim with a landmark poisonous 4000th bird. We returned to the lodge, and after a morning of chasing difficult skulkers we changed tact, and headed lower down the valley, where some of the best birds of the day came to us in dramatic fashion...

We headed down lower in the afternoon to where *casuarina* trees dot the sparsely vegetated landscape, (where local Huli have cleared much of the lower slopes to create mountain gardens). It was to one particular garden we headed in earnest. Here over a number of years the locals have come to know the birds that frequent their land, and so are well-acustomed to the habits of the **Sooty Owl** that has taken up residence in a tree there. A little persuasion from the local landowner brought this large dusky owl out of its hole, and led it to perch angrily just above us giving us sweet looks (**see photos alongside**). For those who have struggled to find one of these fierce-looking owls in Australia,
Tari is the place to get it! As we waited for the owl we were frequently sidetracked by the considerable distraction of a male **Superb Bird-of-paradise** calling and displaying in the tree behind, and so once the owl had been “dispatched” we focused our attentions on this “crevatted” quarry. The open nature of the feathery-leaved *casuarina* trees led us to fantastic views of this strange bird with his shimmering emerald green “crevatte” spread out to distract any passing females that did not appear for him while he continued to display, although he certainly had more than a few admirers among us below (*see photo beside*). Some other *casuarinas* hosted a **Black-headed Whistler**, a male **Black-bellied Cuckooshrike**, and a pair of dull **Brown-breasted Gerygones**. A brief pre-dinner look for the regular Ambua **Papuan Boobook** came up blank, although *after* dinner a few of us managed to relocate one that then sat in the spotlight calling forever, allowing us to round up all the troops to dress up and come and get it!

**Day 5: July 19  Tari to Varirata NP**

A last few choice hours were spent in Tari in the Southern Highlands targeting any last species we had not yet found before we flew back southeast to the nation’s capital. After arriving in “POM” we whisked straight off to **Varirata NP**, a park we would be visiting more extensively later on the tour, where we set about getting a head start on some of the park’s any special birds. A dawn start saw us up at the Tari Gap, where soon after the rare **Meyer’s Goshawk** flew past us at close range, although the constantly calling **New Guinea Harpy Eagle** remained firmly hidden on this occasion. A **Painted Tiger-Parrot** flew by us, and for Gary only a **Bronze Ground-Dove** whipped past at close range too. A **Papuan King-Parrot** gave us a close flyby a little lower down the valley, as did a **MacGregor’s Bowerbird** before we had to drag ourselves away and head to Tari’s small airstrip. As expected the plane was delayed a little, although we did have the odd **Papuan Harrier**, and **Australasian Pipit** to look at while we were waiting.
The change in climate from the cool highlands to the steamy lowlands was evident as we stepped off the plane into the heat of Moresby. Soon after we were heading east out of the capital and up into the hills to Varirata NP. As we traveled we first passed through dry and open savanna woodland reminiscent of northern Australia, before reaching rainforest on the top of the plateau. Once we reached the rainforest (having munched a packed lunch en-route) we went straight after one of Varirata’s star birds straight off the bat. Walking a short distance up a forest trail we went straight to a gnarly tree with a large hollow in its trunk, where there at the bottom was a Barred Owlet-Nightjar peering out at us. In fact we ended up seeing two different birds just a short distance from each other hiding out in their daytime roost holes.

Back on the bus, we then dropped down and checked in on another roosting bird, this time a pair of Marbled Frogmouths slept statuesque in a tree, before we were pulled away from this cryptic bird as Jim had found a Rufous-bellied Kookaburra sitting impressively in a tree alongside. We had only just started to take in this striking kingfisher when Gary drew our attention to a large raptor circling above us that turned out to be the scarce Gurney’s Eagle. We did not know which way to turn at this point! Although, Paul, our local guide (and often-times political philosopher too), helped make this decision for us when he found the comical Yellow-billed Kingfisher sat quietly by the clearing (see photo above). This cute ‘fisher sat there for an age and was strongly admired by all, being picked out as one of the top birds of the trip at the end of it all.

A short walk on a forest trail bought joy for some and frustration for others, as some got an eyeful of our first gorgeous Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher, and others were left wanting. We then returned to the clearing and surveyed the forest edge in the late afternoon picking up our first Zoe Imperial-Pigeon, and managed to tape in a fine Dwarf Koel that was still there when we walked away late in the afternoon.

We had just time for one final stakeout that worked to perfection: a quick stop in the open woodland below the plateau brought us a fine male White-bellied Whistler singing in a eucalypt. In the evening a well-planned phone call to the airline brought bad news: our flight to Kiunga had been put back five hours the following day. I quickly hatched new plans for our next morning, and we decided to head out and bird a new area for us...
Day 6: July 20  Laelae Road to Kiunga
The phone call the evening before saved us from a long, laborious morning waiting at Port Moresby airport. This left us with a morning free to plan something new, and so we opted to check out the Laelae Road that heads northwest along the coast from Port Moresby, and passes through important coastal habitat we would not touch later on the tour. This forced change of plans courtesy of Airlines PNG proved a boon for us ultimately as we picked up a few key trip exclusives during our short foray into the area. First up was the scarce Silver-eared Honeyeater, a highly-localized species of which we found a small group along the palm-fringed highway. Then our local guide, Daniel, picked up the call of another quarry, and another scarcity, and an oft-tricky one: the Black Thicket-Fantail, coming from a close patch of mangroves. As the tide was fortuitously in our favor we could walk out onto the mud and right up to the edge of the mangroves from where the sound emanated. I put my sound recorder into play, and soon played back at the bird which came in swiftly and gave some stellar views to us all. This and the fantail provided more than ample compensation for our delayed trip to Kiunga, although we also added a few other species like Chestnut-breasted Munia hiding out in another Gray-headed Munia flock; plentiful Yellow-bellied Sunbirds; several Mangrove and White-throated Gerygones; Elegant (Graceful) and Variable Honeyeaters; and Shining Bronze-cuckoo. Most of these species were never recorded again on the tour.

We then returned and dined in the airport departure lounge while we awaited the departure of our already delayed plane. A further delay had me sweating as we’d planned an afternoon visit to the Greater Bird-of-paradise display tree in Kiunga, and I could feel the opportunity slipping painfully away. We arrived late afternoon in Kiunga and jetted straight off to the site that also involved a hurried hike into the rainforest. However, despite the late hour luck was on our side and several females had decided to come and see what the male BOPs were up to. This sent at least five different males into frenzy, flexing their wings, fluffing up their ornate feathers up over their backs, and using their wings to gently slap one of the attendant females, and push her back from advancing. A quite dramatic show and one we stood transfixed to, until finally the females left the tree and the males left their impressive stage! The day was not over though for as we left to get out of the forest and have a late check in to our guesthouse, we were sidetracked by a massive Palm Cockatoo perched quietly by the track, and our local guide Samuel pointed out a nesting Beautiful Fruit-Dove to boot. We may have had only an hour light on arrival but we packed a lot into this precious time!

Day 7: July 21  Fly River Cruise (Kiunga to Kwatu Lodge)
This is always one of the most popular days of the trip, for many reasons. The morning involves a cruise up first the massive Fly River, and then onto the smaller Elevala River, and finally up the Ketu River, where Kwatu Lodge is located. All these rivers are flanked by virtually untouched virgin rainforest, which is home to some of the most special birds of the tour, many of which fall on this first day on the river. So not only is the day a bountiful one for birds, the setting is fantastic too. We set off in darkness so that we would arrive at a special snag at first light. On arrival at the riverside snag we looked up from the boat to see
the male **Twelve-wired Bird-of-Paradise** was already busy working his way up and down the pole as part of his display. This was our *first* bird of the day! The next target was to try and pick up the massive **Southern Crowned Pigeon**, although this did not go so well. Low water levels led to no pigeons being found in the morning, as they were presumably already feeding in the substantial feeding areas available. We soon resigned ourselves that we would have to put some further time into finding them in the late afternoon. Despite that though there were tons of birds to see along the river. Pigeons and parrots especially feature heavily, and everyone was continually raising their bins to the sky to take in the passing birds as they passed low overhead. **Eclectus Parrots** became a regular feature of our time on the river, with a few hulking **Palm Cockatoo** thrown in too for good measure. During the day we managed to get all three fig-parrots perched up too: firstly a **Double-eyed Fig-Parrot** was found resting at the side of the river, then a wonderful group of three flame-headed **Large Fig-Parrots** were seen at length perched further on, and finally a small party of **Orange-breasted Fig-Parrots** were seen gorging on fruits in the Kwatu Lodge garden over lunch. Another prominent feature of this “mini-cruise” were pigeons, dozens of which peppered the sky and lined various riverside branches. The dominant species was as usual **Collared Imperial-Pigeon**, that is arguably the most striking of them all, but also small numbers of **Pinon and Zoe Imperial-Pigeons** too. No less appealing were our first **Moustached Treeswifts** that flew gracefully overhead on several occasions. Many birds were added to the trip list in quick succession as this was our first extended period of birding within the lowlands, too many to mention, and many of these were flashy species like the male **Golden Monarch** that we watched “posing” beside the Ketu River; the **Long-billed Cuckoo** seen in the same area; a number of huge **Blyth’s Hornbills** that conspicuously passed over our boat; and a pair of perched gleaming **Golden Mynas. Glossy-mantled Manucodes**, an indistinctive bird-of-paradise were also a conspicuous bird along the river, their high-pitched whistles noted regularly and many birds “decorating” the many riverside snags.

Just before lunch we made a very special stop in an area of swamp forest just off the Ketu River, where we fixed our gazes on a vine tangle, where almost immediately our spectacular quarry- a scarlet-and-white male **King Bird-of-paradise** set about climbing up and down the vine in display (see photo above)! This crisp, stunning BOP continued to do
this on and off over the next 30 minutes or so giving us all a thrilling experience of one of PNG’s most wanted. The same area also held a dizzy flock containing Hooded and Frilled Monarchs, and just a few people also got a rather tricky Common Paradise-Kingfisher that never remained on any perch for long. It was then time for lunch at our lodge for the night, the decidedly rustic Kwatu Lodge, a distinctly basic structure nestled within one of the greatest rainforest wildernesses on Earth.

After lunch we entered into the swampy, chigger-infested, riverside forest once more armed with masses of insect repellant and an ample target list. Again we added some stunning species: a Hook-billed Kingfisher came in very well and perched right overhead, although the angle meant that only a few got a clear look at this elusive kingfisher from their position. Not long after this a glittering Hooded Pitta came bounding past us too. We then got wind of a new and exciting project underway near the lodge where they have cleared an area of sago swamp, and set up a small blind of woven palm fronds in a feeding area of one of the PNG’s most mythical and very, very rarely seen birds: the New Guinea Flightless Rail. I had been within the first group to visit this blind just a few weeks before with no success, and the poor set up of the blind at that time did not instill confidence in this “project”. However, Jimmy (our friendly local guide), informed me that he had since cleared the view in front of the blind and this had led several groups to have seen this strange rail in the few weeks since. Armed with this new information I felt we simply had to give it a try. The way to the blind may have been short, but it made up for this by being slippery, and boggy so it felt like a battle just to get there. Jimmy was just ahead of me and reached the blind first, and immediately announced the rail was present, feeding out in front. I got there just in time to see it sneak behind a tree and then disappear for a long time. A nail biting wait followed, with only Eugenia getting a glimpse of this mythical beast, due to the limited viewing space in the small blind that had only tiny viewing holes so as not to disturb the bird. It was soon clear that faith that it would reappear was waning among us all, then suddenly there it was again prowling underneath a sago palm. At first there was some panic among us as it was only possible to see it through one small hole, although it continued to feed and eventually walked out into a more prominent position, and finally we all had repeated looks at this immense, sturdy-legged, flightless bird stomping around the swamp. For the guide anyway the unquestionable bird of the trip, which has now dropped from the list of mythical birds in PNG to a distinct reality!

We waded/walked away from this monstrous bird and soon after tried again for a Black-sided Robin that had eluded us on our journey to the blind before. This time (with no pressure to reach the rail spot), a pair of these boldly marked robins came in and gave as an eyeful at close range. Another unsuccessful duel with a Hook-billed Kingfisher followed before we had to return to the boats with another huge (literally) target bird in mind: Southern Crowned Pigeon. After another nervy time with no success Jimmy pulled out no less than 6 different birds (3 groups) in the late afternoon. This hulking pigeon is the largest on Earth – at a whopping 30 inches – it is the same length as a Golden Eagle! However, it is not only size that matters with this marvelous pigeon as it sports a delicate
lace-like crest, deep maroon underparts and a striking white wing patch. So it’s big and a looker too, and a great way to finish this classic “Fly River Day”.

A post-dinner search for owlet-nightjars was partially successful: Jimmy did a great job (after a lot of searching) to find a Wallace’s Owlet-Nightjar perched in the subcanopy. Unfortunately though only Kelly was well-positioned to see it before it flew off deeper into the forest once more. The recently discovered Starry Owlet-Nightjar was less obliging, mocking us just a couple of times only.

Day 8: July 22     Kwatu Lodge to Kiunga

Most of this day was spent in the rich swamp forests near to Kwatu Lodge, home to yet more special species than we had already seen. A pre-dawn search for the extremely difficult Starry Owlet-Nightjar found the birds to be highly vocal, although no less easy and just some close calls were heard coming from hidden areas within the rainforest canopy. We then set about righting some wrongs with kingfishers that had taunted us so much the day before-most notably the paradise-kingfishers. This took a lot of persistence, Jimmy and I dueling with a Little Paradise-Kingfisher for what felt like an age, as every time we got within sight of it, the bird flitted off before we could all enjoy it. This frustrating stalemate continued for some time before finally the bird settled down, and in the end allowed us all scope-filling views! It felt extremely pleasing after such a prolonged chase to finally see it, see it so well indeed! The same area also held some responsive White-bellied Pitohuis that circled us a number of times (although again required lightning reflexes to see them when they perched for very brief periods), and a pair of Emperor Fairywrens skulked in the rainforest understorey. The loud grating calls of New Guinea (Rufous) Babblers were heard a little later, and soon after with a little use of playback they came in close to check us out.

After lunch we walked a final trail near Kwatu Lodge before we boarded our boat and headed back to Kiunga. This forest walk was decidedly more lively than our morning walk, with a flock holding a showy Rufous-backed Fantail, Gray-headed Whistler, a couple of Black Berrypeckers, a Yellow-bellied Gerygone that finally showed to all, and the poisonous Variable Pitohui too. Better still though was a Blue Jewel-Babbler that was tempted to fly low across the trail in front of us. We finished with a Crinkle-collared Manucode that came into tape on a number of occasions, allowing perched views for most. The boat cruise back to Kiunga did not bring many new birds – a low perched female Yellow-eyed Starling being the main exception – although we enjoyed further looks at Collared Imperial-Pigeons, hulking hornbills crossing the river (Blyth’s Hornbill), and a last look at a powerful Palm Cockatoo. There are frankly no bad boat trips along this river, as there are always many birds to see, as ever dominated by colorful parrots and pigeons.
Day 9: July 23  Kiunga to Tabubil
This morning was largely spent in an an area of lowland forest near Kiunga, known as Boystown Road, before departing for the mining town of Tabubil in the afternoon. Our main reason for visiting Boystown was the flashy Flame Bowerbird that often passes over the road, (although seems to be increasingly unreliable in recent years). We waited impatiently from dawn, and then several hours later first a female, then an immature male flew over. This was followed by two more sightings, both of them being shocking adult males that flapped over the road and bought audible gasps from the group. We also picked up another bird-of-paradise, with a Trumpet Manucode using an open snag as a display perch, and later being replaced there by a Crinkle-collared Manucode using the very same dead branch! A silvery Gray-headed Goshawk came in and perched on a snag up close, although soon disappeared when it realized there was a sizeable crowd admiring it! As we stood sentry on the knoll on the lookout for the “avian torch” (Flame Bowerbird), we were entertained by a group of Red-flanked Lorikeets that returned to a fruiting tree across the way on several occasions. Parrots were again prominent with several low-flying Black-capped and Yellow-streaked Lorys giving us much better looks that we had enjoyed on the Fly River trip. Activity though was generally low, but a Yellow-billed Kingfisher did come in and settle on a close perch, where it remained for us to ogle for some time, (much to the group’s delight as they were very fond of this cute kingfisher). Other birds in the area included Streak-headed Honeyeater, Green-backed Gerygone, a male Black Sunbird that flashed its emerald green shoulder patch at us, and Gray-headed Cuckoo-shrike. As activity remained generally low, and with the Flame “in the bag”, we ventured onto the Kiunga airstrip, formed a line and went on the search for Red-backed Buttonquail. After a brief sighting for our local guide Jimmy only, one came up right at our feet and then flew within inches of all us before dropping down. As far as flight views go this was as good as it gets, superb.

In the afternoon we headed for Tabubil, and checked out the OK Menga hydroplant where we saw our first dapper Torrent Flycatchers perched on large boulders in the middle of the river, a Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo was watched calling at close range, and the well-named Stout-billed Cuckoo-shrike was picked out by Kelly’s sharp eyes.

Days 10 – 12: July 24 – 26  Tabubil
Our original plan was to spend two full days in the Tabubil area that offers up many mid-elevation species absent from most of the other sites on the tour. However, we ended up spending three full days courtesy of a 24 hour delay in our departure for Kumul Lodge due to a frustrating canceled flight from Airlines PNG. The one silver lining to this exasperating delay was Vulturine (Pesquet’s) Parrot that finally succumbed to our many efforts to see them on that unplanned extra day!

On our first full day we went after Tabubil’s flagship bird: the bizarre Shovel-billed Kookaburra. This strange, chunky-billed kingfisher is crepuscular, calling for only a short period each day at dawn and dusk that gives just a very short window in which to try and see it. We arrived pre-dawn and waited for the first rays of light to break through the
darkness, and we hoped would initiate the kookaburra to call. Soon enough, some quiet calls from at least two Shovel-billeds were heard, although they were muffled and subdued and at no time before full light did the bird show any interest in moving any closer. A short time later, and with full daylight on us the forest fell silent (in terms of kingfisher calls anyway), and it seemed as if our chance had gone. Our latest local guide Kwiwan though had other ideas. The muffled nature of the calls and the direction they were coming from indicated it may indeed have been calling back from a nest, and the very dead stump they had used the year before lie in the same area from where the call came. Unfortunately there was no sign of the bird at the hole that faced us, but it was possible another hidden hole existed around the other side, across a difficult looking gully from us. So Kwiwan went to investigate and instructed us to keep a close eye on the particular dead stump that the sound came from. A short time later a large kingfisher flew from the stump at Kwiwan’s approach, although alarmingly we could not find its perch, panic set in until Kelly announced “I have it” and put us all onto this charismatic kookaburra.

Other highlights of our time at Tabubil were a lone Salvadori’s Teal for a short time one morning, followed by a tiny, tiny Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrot (one of the smallest parrots on Earth); and a pied Torrent Lark feeding on boulders in a rushing mountain stream, all at OK Menga. Our visits to the famous Dablin Creek Road were tainted by the obvious and stark deforestation that has continued at an alarming pace in the area, and clearly is limiting the species available in the area now. Having said that we did pick up some key species still, including the inconspicuous Obscure Berrypecker that gave us some choice looks (even if there is nothing much to look at on it!), a wonderful White-rumped Robin, and a Wallace’s Fairywren was found hiding out in a small mixed flock. On one morning Kwiwan found some hidden fruits that attracted a male Carola’s Parotia, that lingered for just a couple of people to get some good scope views before annoyingly vanishing thereafter. A pair of gorgeous Golden Cuckoo-shrikes were much more helpful, and gave us all repeated looks at their anomalous plumage, that makes it appear completely unrelated to other cuckoo-shrikes that are usually draped in drab gray colors, not the golden-yellow of this one. Indeed, cuckoo-shrikes were prominent in Tabubil with five different species seen there: Golden, Gray-headed, Stout-billed, Papuan (Black-shouldered) Cuckoo-shrikes, and Varied Triller all seen there. A nesting Black-headed Whistler entertained along the Dablin Creek road that also bought a fine performance by a Lesser Black Coucal that was carrying around a bright yellow leaf, and was presumably nest-building in the area.

Raptors were well-represented in Tabubil too, with one flyover Doria’s Hawk that alerted us to it with its high-pitched screams, and a young Gurney’s Eagle was also seen the same morning at OK Menga. Variable Hawks regularly overflew Dablin, as did multiple Long-tailed Honey-Buzzards, and a Peregrine Falcon also put in an appearance there as well. Lastly, after the brief appearance at Kiunga, we had some prolonged looks at an immaculate Gray-headed Goshawk that was picked up in display flight, and then perched for a long time in our scope. This so impressed one hawk-watcher in the group it made it
into her top five birds of the trip. An unusual pick when competing with all the colorful kingfishers and extravagant BOPs but one I welcomed, as it is a sharp raptor.

Other species recorded in Tabubil included Green-backed Honeyeater, Mountain Peltops, multiple Eclectus Parrots and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, a massive high-flying flock of Dusky Lory, Lemon-bellied Flycatcher, and Island Leaf-Warbler. Our time there came to a close one evening when several small groups of Vulturine Parrots came into roost on a hillside along the OK (river) Tedi.

Day 13: July 27
Tabubil to Kumul Lodge

With our unfortunate delay in getting to Kumul Lodge, we were all understandably desperate to get there and check out their legendary bird table that attracts an assortment of attractive montane species, including a few stunning birds-of-paradise. On arrival at the parking lot we rushed to the balcony overlooking their moss-encrusted feeding table, and walked straight into a full adult male Ribbon-tailed Astrapia perched directly above it! What an opener! We had all seen (and gasped) at this outrageous bird in the Tari Valley earlier on the trip, although these views were unbeatable, and we all stood gawping and drooling at this extraordinary bird-of-paradise. In five visits to the lodge, this was the first time I had ever encountered a full adult male there (see photo beside). It was of little surprise to me that this became a contender for bird of the trip, and in the end walked away with top spot. The “usual”, and exceptional assortment of birds were present, including Crested Berrypecker and Black-backed Honeyeaters feeding in the flowering orange
shrubs alongside; **White-winged Robins** used the vertical table legs to launch attacks on insects prey from; a few boldly-marked **Brehm’s Tiger-Parrots** shuffled their way over to the fruit on the table (**see page 25**); and a large and striking female **Brown Sicklebill** swooped in and threw slices of papaya down its gaudy yellow throat. As if that was not enough, a movement under the table caught our eye when a polka-dotted female **Chestnut Forest-Rail** wandered out from the forest edge and fed brazenly in the open (**see photo below**).

With our late arrival at Kumul, and birds falling thick and fast, I was keen to crack on and check a certain tree within the forest for one of their flagship species: **Crested Bird-of-paradise** (now known as **Crested Satinbird** as it is now re-classified within that new 2 species family). Twenty minutes later we were standing there fixated on their tree of choice, with no sign of movement in the first five minutes, when suddenly a shocking orange bird flew in and tensions immediately disappeared. The male satinbird was ready to feed. We then watched him feeding in the tree revealing his flame orange back, velvety black front, and gorgeous blue eye. One of the best looking birds of the tour for me that amazingly never made it into the top twenty two or so choices for bird of the trip, (I am still outraged!) Having seen the flashy male we also checked a nest of the same species a little further down the trail and watched the much more subdued female coming into to feed her young chick at their mossy nest (**see page 23**). With everyone elated at these sightings we returned again to the feeding table, and shortly after one of the regulars we were still missing from there came in to feed: a female **Sanford’s Bowerbird**. A strange and rare sighting followed when we bumped into an American researcher who’d recently caught a very high altitude species, **Sooty Melidectes**, in the lodge grounds, much lower than their normal haunts (**see page 21**). We ended this bird-filled afternoon with a short drive along the road to search for a localized nightjar species. We had barely got out of the van when an **Archibald’s (Mountain) Nightjar** landed on the paved road, red eyes glowing in the flashlight that was soon after flushed off the road by a passing car.
Day 14: July 28
Kumul Lodge
Kumul Lodge situated in the highlands of Enga, is a good alternative site for highland birds to the more traditional site of Tari in the Southern Highlands. However, they make a great combination as there are a number of special birds that are only possible at one or other of these sites. On this morning we went after a couple of very special ones indeed that Kumul is currently the best site for. An extremely bumpy ride was required for this as we traveled in 4WD vehicles on extensively potholed roads to reach an unremarkable looking mountain garden flanked by feathery-leaved *casuarina* trees in the tiny village of Kama. If you look closely in the village the very bird we were looking for even adorns the sign of their small primary school. On arrival we were greeted by Peter, the proud local Engan landowner. Then we waited, with our target bird loudly calling/taunting from the depths of the *casuarinas* every so often. Before we got that one though some attractive
orange blooms attracted a handsome Ornate Melidectes. This is a large and spectacularly marked honeyeater that was seen repeatedly in this highland garden. A couple of Goldie’s Lorikeets then passed by, before we were distracted by the loud raucous calls of our quarry, the Lesser Bird-of-paradise. Pretty soon our local guide picked one up feeding low in the back although the views were poor, and the frustration continued. Then after a dramatic flyby of a male, with his spectacular plumes flailing impressively behind him, another male turned up feeding at the top of open eucalypt tree, where he probed the flaky bark and remained firmly in the open for some time, for amazing views of this flashy BOP.

Next up was another scarce and local species, the Yellow-breasted Bowerbird, that (after stopping for some roadside Hooded Munias), turned up beside another lookout, in another mountain garden. There was a noteworthy distraction from the bowerbirds, when a male Superb Bird-of-paradise decided to perform from the top of a neighboring tree, spreading his green crevatte to dramatic effect. After the BOP had dropped from view, and repeated looks of the bowerbird had been had we also took in a few close Mountain Red-headed Myzomelas in a close flowering shrub, a tiny honeyeater with a shocking vermillion red hood.

We then continued our journey back towards Kumul Lodge with one more very special stop planned. Just shy of the Lae River a large fig tree was bearing hundreds of ripe, juicy fruits, and this was to be our next fixation, as another special bird-of-paradise had been recently coming to feast on the harvest. We positioned ourselves just under the tree, where the branches were shaking with the many small birds coming in to feed, mostly honeyeaters, from Mountain Meliphagas to a few beefy Marbled Honeyeaters, and the odd New Guinea White-eye too. Then suddenly Max, our local guide, announced the arrival of a male Magnificent Bird-of-paradise! The bird nipped in and out though before most could get a look and a long nervy wait followed, while the sun’s heat intensified, bird activity slowed to a trickle, and it appeared as if the opportunity may have agonizingly passed. Dave had other ideas, positioning himself nearer the tree he was treated to a special close up of the male for his eyes only. We were all just about to leave when suddenly a pair of Magnificent Birds-of-paradise appeared dramatically in the tree overhead when the males “curled ribbon” tail could be sent to good effect. A few minutes later the male and less dramatically adorned female departed to cheers from all of us! Phew!

On returning to the lodge and lunching we checked the table once more. There were few regulars left to see, but the male Brown Sicklebill was one were all very, very keen to see. We had checked out the blue-eyed females that had dropped in regularly the afternoon before, that were attractive enough of course. However, the male is another proposition altogether. We could not have hoped for more. Over an hour after lunch no fewer than SEVEN different Brown Sicklebills came in to feed: FIVE female/immatures, and two separate males that even fed shoulder to shoulder (see photo on page 22). Magic. We
then returned to see the male *Crested Satinbird* again, that once more posed in his favored tree, preening, feeding, and glowing orange in front of us.

In the late afternoon we did some road birding near the lodge, where we were really hoping to pick up the bizarre *Wattled Ploughbill*. After the poisonous *Blue-capped Ifrita* crept up a near lichen-encrusted trunk, heavy rain began to fall and we flirted with the idea of retiring early. Thankfully we did not... A short time later the rain suddenly stopped, and the birds began to appear: a *Black-throated Robin* hopped out onto an open branch, a *Red-collared Myzomela* appeared in a near tree, a *Plum-faced (Whiskered) Lorikeet* dropped into to feed on some fruits, and a male *Garnet Robin* popped up on a close branch. Then the high, soft whistles of a *Wattled Ploughbill* drifted towards us, and we chased around until we found no less than three birds – indeed a family – of these strange “whistlers” feeding in a roadside tree, jackpot! On return back to the lodge a few of us had a short pre-dusk walk, and got some cracking looks at the often furtive *Mountain Mouse-warbler* hopping along a mossy log.

In the evening most of us endured another failed attempt to get a *Mountain Owlet-Nightjar* to call, although Kelly clung on longer and was rewarded with views of another species, the *Feline Owlet-Nightjar* that responded a number of times, giving us some close flybys but sadly never *perching* in view. In the dark of the night Eugenia heard the “Sooty” (of the British TV show “Sooty and Sweep”) like call of the *Mountain Owlet-Nightjar* and managed to spotlight it from her cabin, leaving us all green with envy the following morning!
Day 15: July 29  Kumul Lodge to Port Moresby
One final day was spent in the highlands of Enga before we returned to the heat and humidity of Port Moresby. Some of us went to a steep trail close to the lodge that holds a number of very special birds. However, before we did we revisited the mountain road that had been so productive the evening before. Again, it was lively with the same Black-throated Robin posing this time on an open cable; a male Red-collared Myzomela showed well; a small band of Black Sitellas crept actively along the trunks that included a begging youngster among them; a male Black Monarch, the fantail mimic, popped up here and there; a stunning male Regent Whistler appealed to many of us (the dowdy Brown-backed Whistler also there a little less so); and a female Wattled Ploughbill showed up again briefly too.

With the sun beating down and activity slowing, we decided to head to the shade of the trail, where we hoped we experience more activity at this time than the road. Early on up the trail a male Black Fantail appeared in front of us, and several close, though brief, Gray Gerygones also put in an appearance. A try for Spotted Jewel-Babbler was typically frustrating, just a short flyby of the bird at close range being all we could muster. Kelly locked eyes on a great Modest Tiger-Parrot that was feeding low in a tree, and allowed us all choice looks. However, late in the morning the local landowner accompanying us gestured to an area for Forbe’s Forest-Rail that had until then remained firmly silent during our attempts both here and in Tari. This time though the frog-like calls of the rail soon came back at us, and there and there a male Forbe’s Forest-Rail popped up at close range to check out its unseen intruder. A superb finish to our morning. In the late afternoon we returned to our now familiar Moresby hotel that was to be our base for exploring the rich forests and savanna of Varirata NP in the coming days...

Day 16: July 30  Varirata National Park
Varirata National Park hosts dry mid-elevation forest unlike anything we had been in before, and therefore held some huge target birds for us even at this late stage of the trip. We began at the clearing near park HQ, where a number of fruiting trees were laden with figs and birds, namely fruit-doves. These trees over the course of an hour in the morning and a short period of observation in the afternoon bought us dozens of fruit-doves, mainly the common Pink-spotted Fruit-Dove, although also one Ornate Fruit-Dove in their midst, and even a perched Dwarf Fruit-Dove, and also a lone Superb Fruit-Dove later in the day. We then visited a well-known stakeout for PNG’s flagship national bird: the resplendent Raggiana Bird-of-paradise. We checked out a display site for them that ordinarily had been very reliable for watching their fascinating and extravagant displays. Unfortunately on this day they seemed nervous and despite giving us some fantastic close up looks (see photo on page 23), of their ornate plumage we would have to wait until the afternoon to indulge ourselves by watching their dramatic displays. While we were waiting for the Raggianas to perform we were taunted by the loud and vocal White-crowned Koel, a notorious tormenter of tour leaders in PNG, by virtue of its loud far-carrying call that can be heard at many sites on the tour. Despite being a fairly common and widespread species it is often a tricky bird to see.
RAGGIANA BIRD-OF-PARADISE
Papua New Guinea’s flagship bird, and their national bird. Fitting then that it can be found on the outskirts of their bustling capital, Port Moresby, where this male was photographed. Always one of the highlights of any trip to this wonderful island.
And so a bit of a chase ensued, where we managed to lure it in and the bird passed low overhead, and then we tried desperately to find it as it began once more to taunt us from an even closer perch. Thankfully, Eugenia put us out of our misery finding it perched up, and persistently calling, in a near *casuarina*.

It turned out to be a strange although perhaps typical Varirata day: lots of good birds were seen, while many of us were frustrated by others, as Varirata (like many PNG sites) has its fair share of skulkers. A forested trail bought some frustration with a *Pheasant Pigeon* that came in close, but not close enough, and seems to be one of Varirata’s toughest birds these days. Some had brief views of Dwarf Whistler and Yellow-breasted Boatbill in a fast-moving flock, although most got good looks at one or two Chestnut-bellied Fantails in the same flock. The same bird party also held the ultra-elusive ground-dwelling *Crested Pittohui* in its midst and amazingly both Eugenia (on the deck) and Kelly (perched in a tree), managed to get stellar looks at this master-skulker. Returning to the trail head we found a pair of *Fairy Gerygones* feeding overhead, and just before lunch enjoyed looks at two more notorious skulkers: first a female Painted Quail-Thrush, then a superb Northern Scrub-Robin that hopped out onto an open trail and lingered in full view. A real rarity then showed up and shocked us all: a pair of Tawny Straightbills that are more usually found at lower elevations than Varirata.

In the afternoon, (after we had watched a Papuan King-Parrot float over the clearing during lunch), a short walk along a forest trail provided a stunning Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher as an opener, a bird that thus far had been surprisingly elusive to many of us. This time though, an obliging bird let us ALL get our fill, much to my relief. For me this is one of those “always the bridesmaid, and never the bride” birds. For some reason this exquisite kingfisher never makes the top five list of birds from the tour. I cannot fathom why!? A short time later (and after flushing up a pair of Painted Quail-Thrushes from our feet), we managed to get up close with a pair of White-faced Robins. Moving further up the trail we made it to another Raggiana display site, and as we climbed up to the area, it became evident many birds were in the vicinity and in a very excitable state. We made it to the tree and looked up at a minimum of 5 different males with wings fanned, feathers fluffed, and heads bowed. The females were in the tree with them and they were determined to snare them! Our final session in the park was spent in the clearing, checking out the fruiting trees and bare trees, where several cuckoo-shrikes were added to the day list bringing it to a respectable five different species: Boyer’s, Stout-billed, Yellow-eyed, New Guinea, and White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes all appearing through the day. Black-fronted White-eye, that had been so frustratingly elusive in Tabubil, redeemed itself though as a pair of these striking white-eyes were seen at the forest edge.

Our last stop of the day was outside the park altogether. We decided to have a break from trying to track down elusive forest birds and go after a rare bird of open, rank vegetation instead. The nomadic and erratic *Grand Munia* is sparsely distributed in the south-east of PNG, and in many years there are no reported sightings at all. This year though they were back, so we took full advantage. After Eugenia had the briefest of showings, we swept the
tops of the grass stalks for any sign of this large-billed finch. Suddenly, there they were: two rusty-backed munias perched up in full view, exactly where Eugenia had seen them moments earlier. Some scope-twisting and turning was required to get a clear view over the tall grass in front of us but thankfully the Grand Munias lingered for all to soak them up, just getting away when my camera was heading for the scope to capture the moment!

**Day 17: July 31  
Varirata National Park**
The last day of the main tour saw us return to the rainforests of Varirata, just outside PNG’s capital. As we had such a flurry of birds by the clearing first thing the day before we opted to start there, although the hoped-for activity around the fruiting figs was much less than anticipated, a few Pink-spotted Fruit-Doves on this occasion, and a lone Beautiful Fruit-Dove seen in the area too. This bought our pigeon/dove count for the days in Varirata to an amazing 12 species including: Slender-billed and Great Cuckoo-Doves, Wompoo Fruit-Dove, Pink-spotted, Ornate, Orange-bellied, Dwarf, Superb, and Beautiful Fruit-Doves; Zoe Imperial-Pigeon, and Papuan Mountain Pigeon. A Curl-crested Manucode came in and perched up prominently on several occasions too, before we returned to yesterday’s rainforest trail.

More than anything our focus was to try and track down the regular flock that roams the area, as it had been so uncooperative the day before. A number of times we ran into it, although it took most of the morning before we all got good looks at the striking Dwarf Whistler (that had regularly tormented us through the morning with its loud distinctive calls), and also finally enjoyed a better look at Yellow-breasted Boatbill. Also found within the flock were a pair of Frilled Monarchs, a Spot-winged Monarch or two, regular Black Berryeckers turned up too, along with a few smart-dressed Chestnut-bellied Fantails, and our only Pale-billed Scrubwren. The flock came and went through the morning, at one time also holding a single Spotted Honeyeater, and a dapper Wallace’s Fairywren. Several calling Wompoo Fruit-Doves played hard to get for a while, before one finally stuck to a spot, convinced we could not see it, while we ogled it through the scope.

As usual in PNG there were always a few skulkers to search for too: the Pheasant Pigeon despite being highly-vocal at the time managed to completely avoid us again; 2 superb Chestnut-backed Jewel-Babblers were tempted across the trail so that all could see
them; and a calling Red-bellied Pitta bounced through a few people’s binoculars at first, then came in rather dramatically several times by flying out in front of the whole group. On the way back for lunch we also finally all caught up with the secretive Rusty Mouse-Warbler, whose melancholy calls had been heard numerous times before then. This time though one was seen creeping along a rainforest log on several occasions while we looked on.

After a picnic in the clearing we tried another more easy-going trail (after this morning’s more challenging terrain), to finish our time within the park, and to end the main tour. Having had a tip-off that another group of Swedish birders had seen Eastern (Magnificent) Riflebird along there we decided it was worth one last search for this elusive bird-of-paradise, with the distinctive growling call. We had been on this trail before, during our very first afternoon in the park, and could not resist checking a certain hollow and having one final look again at a day roosting Barred Owlet-Nightjar (see photo on previous page). We were then distracted by a fast-moving flock that held both Rusty Pitohui and a female Eastern Riflebird. The birds moved through fast, and managed to avoid many of our gazes and so we went off trail to try and track the birds down. Our local guide Daniel soon found a female Eastern Riflebird feeding inconspicuously in a fruiting tree, that soon gave most of us looks as it probed with its stout bill, and the Rusty Pitohuis put in another, all be it brief, appearance too. We had come to the area most importantly though for yet another flashy kingfisher, and Daniel and I set about finding it. This took a bit of time, and just as things were starting to look hopeless Daniel waved us over. Just as we got there the bird spooked and we had to creep in deeper. We managed to line the Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher in the ‘scope at last, but then it whisked off just after only Kelly got an eyeful. We crept deeper into the rainforest and finally I found it sitting quietly in the rainforest understorey. Finally, this time it remained in place for all of us to gaze at in the ‘scope. A great final addition for the main tour, and bought our kingfisher tally to an amazing 12 species, 4 of which were paradise-kingfishers. It was most fitting though that the Willie-wagtail was the very last bird seen as we drove into Port Moresby for one final night, a charismatic bird that had been with us daily throughout and that always remains a firm favorite among visiting birders to PNG or Australia.

Over dinner we reflected on what had been a remarkable PNG tour. Everyone had come to realize that seeing birds in PNG can be extremely difficult at times, due to a long and continuing history of hunting causing many species to be very shy. However, we still managed to find some of the most spectacular species the country has to offer, many of which were seen by everyone: from flashy kingfishers to gorgeous birds-of-paradise and also some real oddities, that only the island of New Guinea can provide, like Wattled Ploughbill, Blue-capped Ifrita, Crested Berryecker, and New Guinea Flightless Rail. We had enjoyed some cool nightbirds too, like Sooty Owl and Barred Owlet-Nightjar during the day, and some spectacular species from normally subdued families that only New Guinea can provide like the gorgeous Golden Cuckoo-shrike, and outlandish Golden Monarch.
Through a not so rigorous voting process we finally whittled down a list of over 20 choices to just six species that were considered the very best birds of the trip: Ribbon-tailed Astrapia stood out for many, and won top spot; along with the “oh so cute” Yellow-billed Kingfisher (fitting that at least one kingfisher should make it in there with all the varied and colorful species encountered on this tour); male Brown Sicklebill; and King, Greater and Raggiana Birds-of-Paradise.

While we ended the night by bidding farewell to Eugenia, Kelly, Elaine, and Jim; Gary, Nancy, Dave, Dotty and I looked forward to our next adventure to the Bismarck Archipelago on the post-tour extension that offered us a host of pigeons, parrots, and even more kingfishers...
NEW BRITAIN EXTENSION

Day 18: August 1  Port Moresby to Kimbe Bay
What with all the “standard”, regular delays to domestic flights we had experienced thus far we expected the same for our flight to Hoskins on New Britain. However, when we arrived at the Port Moresby check in for Air Niugini the attendant proudly informed us when asked “is the flight on schedule?”, that this was a new plane. That supposedly explained everything, and indicated there was no way it could be late. Amazingly they were right, a bright shiny new Dash 8-400 greeted us on the runway, and left bang on time. We sat there in shock, looking down on the attractive coastline of New Britain as we touched down at the tiny terminal on Hoskins. A brief view of a munia in the long grass bordering the airstrip for the guide only gave a hint of the many endemics to come on this Bismarck island. We arrived in the baking heat of mid-morning, with just a few Singing Starlings to greet us at the terminal itself, and a representative from our luxurious dive resort decked out in a loud Hawaiian-style floral shirt. This indeed felt immediately different from mainland PNG. We were soon winging our way westwards towards our fancy dive resort, Walindi overlooking Kimbe Bay.
The reason for adding this island to the itinerary is simple: the possibility of a whole bunch of endemics to either New Britain or the Bismarck Archipelago (a set of islands that also includes New Ireland to the north of mainland PNG), in addition to a number of specialties only found in this archipelago and the Solomon Islands to the north. We were all very eager to start seeing some of these and so we made a stop along the way for one of the more common endemics of the islands, Buff-bellied Mannikin, a pair of which posed on a roadside cable, while another common species, the Bismarck (Island) Crow passed noisily overhead. The latter species (amazingly not yet recognized as distinct from Torresian Crow in the Clements checklist), has a distinctive voice and unique blue-eye making the name “Blue-eyed Crow” a much more favorable name in my book. On reaching Walindi, a superb dive resort overlooking Kimbe Bay we were impressed by the setting, the view, and our wonderful fan-equipped cabins to rest in the midday heat. Dave and I could not resist heading out to investigate their well-manicured grounds, and found some dramatic New Britain Birdwing butterflies chasing each other around the pink blooms in the garden (see photo below). Not long later another widespread species on New Britain showed up, the striking Red-knobbed Imperial-Pigeon sitting quietly behind some cabins (see photo on page 34).

After lunch we checked out a bobbing Common Sandpiper on the beach just outside our resort, and a mass of terns fishing way offshore include Crested and Common Terns, and even a few Black-napped Terns too. Our local guide from Walindi, Joseph, then
Some of the colorful Pigeons and Doves of New Britain...
turned up and plans were made for our first exciting afternoon on the island. Joseph is a dive-instructor-turned bird guide who has taken up the hobby with great relish and success in only a very short time. First we spent a short time at Nick’s Place, suitably enough owned by a guy called Nick, and saw our first New Britain Friarbird, and begun experiencing firsthand quite how common Eclectus Parrots are on New Britain. This spectacular parrot, that we had already encountered more than a few times on the mainland is one of the most common and conspicuous birds on the island, breaking the skyline regularly, and noisily announcing their presence on a regular basis. Indeed one of the fascinating aspects of New Britain birding is the bird groups that dominate. Very few small birds seem to exist, and the commoner and most visible species are parrots and pigeons. Indeed on this first afternoon Nick’s Place also bought us some playful Purple-bellied Lories courting each other playfully in the scope for some time. Kingfishers are also well-represented on the island, although we were frustrated by Black-capped Paradise-Kingfishers on this afternoon, none being heard at all at the first site, and others being annoyingly responsive but remaining hidden later at Ela Ridge. With an unresponsive Violaceous Coucal also frustrating us at Nick’s we moved onto another close site, seeing more Buff-bellied Mannikins en-route and arriving to find a Brahminy Kite trying to poke around some Yellowish Imperial-Pigeon nests, that owners of which stood alongside agitatedly (see photo on previous page). Also in the same area were our first Long-tailed Mynas, a close relative of the familiar Yellow-faced Myna from the mainland, with a marginally longer tail (a very short-tailed species for one called long-tailed frankly), and with a markedly different call. We also enjoyed more Red-knobbed Imperials, and our first Blue-eyed Cockatoo that typically announced its presence loudly (see photo alongside).

In the evening we feasted at the wonderful resort buffet, supped on more cold “SPs”, and headed to bed early for our very early morning visit to the Pokili Wildlife Management Area the following morning, that bought with it the promise of megapodes aplenty...
Day 19: August 2  
**Pokili Wildlife Management Area**

Much of New Britain is now carpeted in oil palm plantations, with fragments of endemic-rich remaining forest dotted among these. A consequence of this is some traveling is required to get to these valuable remaining forest fragments for dawn, as the hot steamy climate on New Britain leads the birds to be most active in the cool hours just after dawn. What this meant for us was an ungodly 03.30am wake-up call! Do not let this put you off though, as this was one of my favorite days on the island. On arrival at *Pokili* we immediately began hearing the calls of key endemics ringing out of the forest (and also had some choice looks at a *Stephan’s Dove* feeding on the road ahead), and we burst into action, keen to start racking up specialties. The first target “growled” at us further along this deserted, forested track. Thankfully only a short search was required before we were eyeballing a *Finsch’s (Growling) Imperial-Pigeon* perched in the trees above, with its diagnostic white-banded tail clearly visible at the time. This was a great kickstart to our first “serious” birding on New Britain.

![Image of a praying mantis held in hands]

We then began our walk in the thick lowland forest of Pokili, a vital area that still holds a great stand of tall rainforest trees with a decent, vine-tangled understorey. Regularly emanating from the understorey was the distinctive call of another smashing endemic, the *Black-capped Paradise-Kingfisher*. Seeing one of these flashy ‘fishers though is less straightforward than hearing them. At least four different birds were heard, although the birds all toyed with us for a while, before Gary picked one out sat high in the understorey. A few of us locked onto it, before most inconveniently it dropped out of sight, from where it continued to taunt us with it’s loud calls! A brief respite from this was brought by a flurry of coucal activity, when first a *Violaceous Coucal* appeared close, but largely visible to Dave
only (who got fabulous looks), although the Pied Coucal in the same area was much more helpful, gifting us all stellar looks. This gave Dave at least both Coucals in just a short five minute spell, (and as he’d just had the kingfisher and imperial-pigeon too, he had quite an impressive introduction to the birds of Pokili!) With some of us still smarting from the brief looks at the initial Black-capped Paradise-Kingfisher we set about righting that wrong, and after several duels got underway we finally all got great looks at another of these striking forest kingfishers.

Once we had “solved” the kingfisher problem we headed deeper into the forest for one of the highlights of our time on New Britain: the massive Pokili megapode colony. This in itself is worth the flight over to the island. Literally hundreds (if not thousands) of these scrubfowl nest at Pokili in two distinct colonies. Huge burrows dot the forest floor, providing an absolute maze of megapode nests to negotiate as you walk through the forest there. We were very grateful of our local guide Andrew’s navigation skills here as everyway you turned looked identical: tall thickly vined rainforest trees and masses of holes dotting the forest floor in every direction. At times it felt like a minefield as we weaved our way around the burrows, and tried to avoid falling into them (which I failed to do on several occasions). What was truly amazing though were the hundreds of Volcano Megapodes seen (see photo alongside). At times it felt like every step we took was overshadowed by the event of dozens of megapodes taking flight up from their nesting holes, and flushing up into the trees overhead. A truly unique and wonderful experience, capped off by a few tiny young megapodes that shot out of their holes at high speed at eye level just in front of us. An absolutely superb experience. Having seen literally hundreds of different “scrubfowl” we then worked our way gradually out of the nesting area, when a small flock brought us to attention. As few flocking species occur in the area, any could be significant. The first seen was a Northern Fantail, a species that also occurs on the mainland (and that we had seen poorly at Tabubil), although here on the Bismarck’s possesses distinct white fringing on the secondary wing feathers. However, despite the more impressive looks we managed here this was not really the cause of our excitement, that was saved for another striking flycatcher-like bird, the scarce Bismarck Pied Monarch, that was taped in successfully and close several times there, when it was found to be sharing the same flock as the fantail.
Having “survived”, and thoroughly enjoyed, the megapode colony we returned to the road for lunch with a number of persistent sweat bees (no sting, but a comparison to Aussie flies would not be unjustified!), and later in the afternoon we finally found a calling Red-knobbed Fruit-Dove that had been tormenting us with its constant calling that rounded out our time at Pokili (see photo on page 34). Gary also was brave enough to pick up the largest stick insect I have ever seen, an absolute monster (see photo on page 38)!

Day 20: August 3  Island Cruise in Kimbe Bay

We took a very different tack today as we spent the day in Kimbe Bay, checking out the small islands offshore from mainland New Britain, and also taking a short pelagic to the edge of the shelf in search of seabirds. We began by circling Restorff Island, where Island Imperial-Pigeons were calling, sitting and flying everywhere. This small island specialist may be common on these smaller islands but is generally absent or hard to come by on the nearby mainland. Indeed that was what this day was all about, trying to pick up the “island tramps” that specialize and are often largely confined to, such smaller islets. White-bellied Sea-Eagles, Brahminy Kites, and Eastern Ospreys passed ominously overhead. We then moved to Malumalu Island. Our quest here was for one of the great “tramps” of them all, the quintessential island pigeon: Nicobar Pigeon. Often this involves just a gentle cruise near the beach, where they can come to feed in the morning. Sadly though this was not their plan this day, and so we waded ashore, looked up in the trees and there they were: several “shackled” Nicobar Pigeons quietly perched overhead. As one person missed them before they moved off, we walked up a ridge to the top of the island where we flushed another into the trees overhead that glared down at us impressively. Also on the island was a Mackinlay’s Cuckoo-Dove, another small island specialist although just a few of us got it perched before it flew off. Later in the day another flew low past us on Restorff Island. We also heard a Beach Kingfisher calling from a hidden beach below. With this gentle reminder of other species we were looking for we boarded our boat again and shot over to a smaller island where the boat captain Andrew pointed towards a bright white bird loafing on a snag: the Beach Kingfisher we had come for.

With the weather calm, and the heat rising we decided to try our luck and venture into deeper waters in the hope of rare seabirds (Beck’s Petrel and Heinroth’s Shearwater are found in these waters), although the extremely calm conditions did not bode well for seabirds to be frank. We picked up Black Noddies, Bridled Terns, Brown Boobies, Lesser and Greater Frigatebirds, and even a Wedge-tailed Shearwater, although generally things were pretty quiet and we returned to Restorff Island. Once anchored at the edge of a golden sandy beach on Restorff (that we had all to ourselves), we lunched and took in the idyllic setting around us: a sandy beach, clear blue sea, and the gentle lapping of the tide against the comfortable boat we were on. As the day was still very, very hot some of us dropped into the waters of Kimbe Bay and enjoyed some spectacular inshore snorkeling on a close reef, where an array of angelfish, clownfish, batfish, and butterfly fish swarmed the reef.
For the land lovers among us we enjoyed close up looks at a pair of Mangrove Golden Whistlers, including a spanking male (see photo above of female), and also got a close flyby view of another Mackinlay’s Cuckoo-Dove. In the late afternoon we retired back to Walindi Dive Resort for some early evening drinks and to recover from our day of sun, sea, and sand.

Day 22: August 4  
Tove and Garu Wildlife Management Area
Our final full day on New Britain was a classic. We targeted a number of special birds and picked up many of them, as well as enjoying the odd surprise too. Another pre-dawn drive along a bumpy road indicated we were back to “real birding” today, after a day “swanning” around Kimbe Bay. Just after sunrise we were positioned on a grassy knoll overlooking the forest edge at Tove, and soon after a pair of Song Parrots passed overhead. The heat on this day kicked in very early, making things slow for a while, although we wandered along the road and noted the first of many White-rumped Swiftlets hawking overhead. Then, a little further on we admired another Red-knobbed Fruit-Dove calling with all its might from an open canopy, but better still was a hulking Violaceous Coucal watched wrestling with a large insect for some time (see photo on page 32). Finally, after Dave’s exclusive show at Pokili, we could all finally enjoy this endemic coucal. Gary added to this by finding a further few marvelous Pied Coucals that also gave choice looks. A couple of Black-bellied Myzomelas also showed up, but just a few of us managed to get onto them before they were quickly gone. Better still was a glossy deep-blue male Dull (Lesser Shining) Flycatcher that came in extremely close on several occasions and may represent the first records for this particular site on New Britain. Walking another logging road we tried to shelter in the few shady patches we could, one of which held a Northern Fantail sitting quietly on a nest (see photo above), and a short time later produced wonderful views of
three **Black (New Britain) Honey-Buzzards** gliding gracefully overhead, and led us to another new kingfisher for the trip: this time the widespread **Collared Kingfisher**.

Having unsuccessfully searched for the Bismarck Kingfisher before lunch, after lunch this became our single-minded focus. Our first attempt involved our local guide Joseph wandering a long way upstream and trying to push the bird down towards us. This worked with limited success as when the bird came flying down towards us a local man had chosen just that moment to bathe in the river, causing the bird to panic and swerve away from us without perching! So we went back to plan A, and re-visited the usual spot, and surveyed the river with no initial sign. Then a small splash alerted us to a **Bismarck Kingfisher** that had dropped into the river and then perched on an open boulder for us to admire on and off over the following twenty minutes or so as it fished in the area from a variety of perches. Our fifth new kingfisher on New Britain.

It was not over for them though, as we had tried, and failed, to find another endemic kingfisher a number of times on New Britain previously, (notably at Pokili and Tove). We now decided to give it another final shot at another site, **Garu Wildlife Management Area**. On reaching the site and with dark thundery skies gathering overhead, things did not look particularly promising at all. A quick burst of the tape produced no response at all, and my mind wandered to the idea of returning to Garu again at dawn. The thought had barely entered my head, when suddenly a **White-mantled (New Britain) Kingfisher** called unequivocally back from the top of the tree, and swiftly after Gary announced (not for the first time on New Britain) that he had a new kingfisher for us in his sights! They reshuffled themselves and changed position a few times creating minor panic, although finally this pair of canopy kingfishers gave great looks and were even seen calling back and displaying to each other. At one point these canopy kingfishers decided to leave their chosen tree and head away, although as the tape was played once more mid-flight they rapidly about turned and landed back in the same tree! A fantastic finish to our last full day on New Britain: by adding our last of SIX possible new kingfishers on the island, three of which were endemics. With heavy rain crashing down we returned back to Walindi (stopping for a **Black Bittern** perched in an oil palm en-route), discussing how lucky we had been with the weather thus far. PNG can be a very rainy destination,
although you would have never known it from this trip that experienced just one or two short bursts of rain throughout.

**Day 23: August 5  Joe’s Place**

This was our final day of the tour, just a morning was left for birding on New Britain before we had to depart for mainland PNG to connect with flights to Australia for departure. With such little time, and so few birds missing at this late stage we put all our eggs in one basket and went after a woodswallow that had recently been found on the ridge behind our resort. A short hike was needed to get up to the ridge top, that gave us wonderful views of the surrounding ridges, the plantations off in the distance, and even out to Kimbe Bay. However, we were not here for that but for **Bismarck Woodswallow** though an initial short survey of the dead snags found them to be woodswallowless. However, plenty of other avian distractions were there: several sharp-dressed **Moustached Treeswifts** decorated several limbs ([see photo on previous page](#)), and several **Blyth’s Hornbills** crash-landed nearby too. We also upgraded our views of **Song Parrot**, this time perched in a fruiting tree. Then suddenly a white shape alighted on a near snag, and there it was: **Bismarck Woodswallow**...

![Bismarck Woodswallow](image)

We watched it extensively and while I was filming the bird realized my tripod was inexplicably shaking before we came to the realization we were experiencing a tremor from a recent earthquake in the area! What a way to end our time! We then began our long journeys home with a short flight (once again in their bright shiny new plane) from Hoskins to Port Moresby, where we connected smoothly with our flight to Brisbane where we all
went our separate ways and reflected on what had been a successful extension and successful tour all round.

We took all the various things that PNG threw at us and came out with a great trip list of **410 species**, adding more than 40 species on the extension alone, including six species of kingfisher and 7 different pigeons. Many of these were specialties of the archipelago. Certainly, a worthy addition to an already fascinating itinerary on the mainland. With a markedly different feel to the main tour due to the skies and trees being dominated by large colorful pigeons and parrots, with few small birds among them, and strikingly, no birds-of-paradise at all. Among the highlights on this short extension (that involved just three full days of birding), included **Bismarck, New Britain, and Beach Kingfishers, Black-capped Paradise-Kingfisher**; the vast, dramatic **Volcano Megapode** colony at Pokili; a flurry of new, colorful pigeons: **Red-knobbed Fruit-Dove, Nicobar Pigeon, and Yellowish-tinted, Red-knobbed, Finsch’s, and Island Imperial Pigeons**; two endemic coucals: the hulking **Violaceous Coucal** and striking **Pied Coucal**; New Britain’s flagship bird, the noisy and ever-present **Blue-eyed Cockatoo**; and lastly the one we ended on: a **Bismarck Woodswallow** shaking on a dead snag, in the middle of a small earthquake. A dramatic end, to what had been a truly fascinating addition to our Papua New Guinea tour.

The last sunrise of the tour, over Kimbe Bay, seen from Walindi Resort...
Bird list
The taxonomy of the list follows: Clements, James F., White, Anthony W., and Fitzpatrick, John W. The Clements Checklist of Birds of the World. Cornell, 2007. 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.
Endemics are indicated in red.

CASSOWARIES: CASUARIIDAE
Southern Cassowary *Casuarius casuarius*
Tracks of this towering bird were seen in the rainforest near Kwatu Lodge.

DUCKS, GEESE AND WATERSHOFS: ANATIDAE
Spotted Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna guttata*
A minimum of 8 birds were seen in the grounds of the Pacific Adventists University (PAU) on our first afternoon. A return to form for this species (?) that has been tricky there in recent years.

Wandering Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna arcuata*
3 birds were seen at PAU on our first afternoon.

Salvadori’s Teal *Salvadorina waigiuensis*
A single bird was seen well for a short time early one morning at OK Menga (Tabubil), its unexpected sudden and early departure leaving a number of the group without this rare duck.

Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa*
Seen on the ponds within the university grounds at PAU on our first day, and later seen along the Laelae Road.

MEGAPODES: MEGAPODIIDAE
Black-billed Brush-turkey *Talegalla fuscirostris* H
This extremely shy species was heard a number of times around Kwatu Lodge, and also in Varirata NP.

Melanesian Scrubfowl (Volcano Megapode) *Megapodius eremite*
An undisputed highlight of our New Britain extension was walking into the vast megapode colony at Pokili. At one point it seemed that every step we took punctuated dozens of megapodes to take flight from their burrows and land in the trees above us. An experience you can only get on the extension. Indeed this is the only tour we offer that has anything quite like that!
Only possible on the New Britain Extension.

GREBES: PODICIPEDIDAE
Australasian Grebe *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*
A few were seen on the ponds at PAU on our first day.
SHEARWATERS AND PETRELS: PROCELLARIIDAE
Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus pacificus*
Just the one was seen during our frankly disappointing pelagic in Kimbe Bay, on the New Britain extension.

STORM-PETRELS: HYDROBATIDAE
Wilson's Storm-Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*
Dotty picked up one of these small petrels on our mini-pelagic in Kimbe Bay (New Britain).

BOOBIES AND GANNETS: SULIDAE
Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster*
More than 10 birds were seen in Kimbe Bay on New Britain.

CORMORANTS AND SHAGS: PHALACROCORACIDAE
Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*
Good numbers were seen at PAU on our first day on PNG.
Little Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax melanoleucus*
A few were seen at PAU on the mainland, and another was seen in an oil palm plantation on New Britain.

ANHINGAS: ANHINGIDAE
Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*
One glided overhead while we were watching the Grand Munias near Varirata NP.

FREGATIDAE: FRIGATEBIRDS
Great Frigatebird *Fregata minor*
A minimum of 5 birds were seen in Kimbe Bay on New Britain.
Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel*
A minimum of 4 birds were seen in Kimbe Bay on New Britain.

HERONS, EGRETS AND BITTERNS: ARDEIDAE
Black Bittern *Ixobrychus flavicollis*
One was seen late on our final afternoon on New Britain, when a bird was seen perched in a palm plantation near Garu.
Only possible on the New Britain Extension.
Great Egret *Ardea alba*
Recorded a few times in the Port Moresby area, and also around Kwatu Lodge.
Intermediate Egret *Mesophoyx intermedia*
A few were seen at PAU, and also along the Ketu River near Kwatu Lodge.
White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae*
One was seen at Brisbane Airport.
Pacific Reef-Heron  *Egretta sacra*
One or two were seen along the Laelae Road on the mainland, and a few others were seen on the New Britain extension, in Kimbe Bay.

Pied Heron  *Egretta picata*
This immaculate heron was seen at PAU on our first afternoon.

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

Striated Heron  *Butorides striata*
A couple were seen near Kwatu Lodge.

Rufous Night-Heron  *Nycticorax caledonicus*
A few snoozing birds were found at PAU on the main tour, and a few more singles were seen on New Britain on the extension too.

**STORKS: CICONIIDAE**

Black-necked Stork  *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*
Two shock finds on the tour. Firstly one flying past the departure lounge at Brisbane Airport, and then another bird seen briefly flying along the OK Tedi in Tabubil.

**IBISES AND SPOONBILLS: THRESKIORNITHIDAE**

Australian Ibis  *Threskiornis molucca*
First seen from the departure lounge at Brisbane Airport on the way over to PNG; another sighting was made along the Laelae Road in New Guinea itself.

Straw-necked Ibis  *Threskiornis spinicollis*
One or two were seen flying around Brisbane Airport (Australia) from the departure lounge.

**OSPREY: PANDIONIDAE**

(Eastern) Osprey  *Pandion haliaetus cristatus*
Two birds were seen just off Restorff Island in Kimbe Bay, on the New Britain extension.

NB. The Osprey found from Sulawesi through Australia, (that includes the one seen in Papua New Guinea), has been split off from the western forms as Eastern Osprey, *P. cristatus* on the IOC list. The western birds are listed as a separate species, Western Osprey, *P. haliaetus* (that covers all the ospreys except those from Sulawesi to Australia).

**HAWKS, EAGLES AND KITES: ACCIPITRIDAE**

Pacific Baza  *Aviceda subcristata*
Not as numerous as they can be on this tour, with just 5 sightings: our first were a pair at PAU on our first afternoon; then several sightings were had in the Kwatu area; another was seen en-route from Kiunga to Tabubil; and finally one 1 was seen at Variarata NP.
Long-tailed Honey-buzzard *Henicopernis longicauda*

Seen on five different days of the main tour, with a minimum of four sightings from Tabubil (at least 3 birds being seen in one day), and a single bird was also seen from Kwatu Lodge.

Black Honey-buzzard *Henicopernis infuscatus*  *NEW BRITAIN ENDEMIC*

3 superb, low-flying birds were seen over Tove on the New Britain extension.

Only possible on the New Britain Extension.

**Black Kite *Milvus migrans***

Very commonly encountered in the Engan highlands around Kumul Lodge, with a few elsewhere, including within Port Moresby.

**Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus***

Recorded 5 times on the tour: in the lowlands around Port Moresby (and at Varirata NP too), and also in the highlands around Tari.

**Brahminy Kite *Haliastur Indus***

A very common raptor both on the mainland also on New Britain too, only unrecorded on just a few days of the tour.

**White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster***

On the mainland one was seen perched up by the Fly River; on New Britain this massive raptor was seen on two days, with a minimum of 4 birds around the islands in Kimbe Bay during our cruise around the islands.

**Eastern (Papuan) Marsh-Harrier *Circus spilonotus spilothorax*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC***

One was seen in the grass verge beside the Tari 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.

**Variable Goshawk *Accipiter hiogaster***

Recorded daily in Tabubil, with up to 3 in one day there. On New Britain we saw them on 3 occasions too.

**Brown Goshawk *Accipiter fasciatus***

We had 2 sightings on the mainland: a single along the Laelae Road, and another single in Varirata NP.

**Gray-headed Goshawk *Accipiter poliocephalus*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC***

A bird was seen perched for a short time beside the Boystown Road in Kiunga, and another bird (initially picked up in display flight) was seen perched alongside the Tedi River in Tabubil.

**Collared Sparrowhawk *Accipiter cirrocephalus***

Two different birds were seen, one along the Laelae Road, and another by Port Moresby Airport.

**Meyer's Goshawk *Accipiter meyerianus***

A low flying bird passed by at close range near Tari Gap. This scarce species is also found on the Solomon Islands.

**Doria's Goshawk *Megatriorchis doriae*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC***

A calling bird was picked up flying over OK Menga (Tabubil).
New Guinea Eagle  *Harpyopsis novaeguineae*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*

Also known as New Guinea Harpy Eagle. This huge raptor was seen for a short time as it flapped by near Tari Gap. We tried to find it again the following day, hoping we could find a perched bird, and although it was heard calling for a long period we could not locate it within the dense cover.

**Gurney’s Eagle  *Aquila gurneyi***

Two birds were seen: a prolonged view of a bird cruising overhead picked up by Gary over Varirata NP; and an immature seen gliding above OK Menga.

**FALCONS AND CARACARAS: FALCONIDAE**

**Australian Kestrel  *Falco cenchroides***

2 birds were seen from the departure lounge at Brisbane Airport.

**Peregrine Falcon  *Falco peregrinus***

2 singles were seen gliding over Dablin Creek in Tabubil.

**RAILS, GALLINULES AND COOTS: RALLIDAE**

**Chestnut Forest-Rail  *Rallina rubra*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC***

This usually shy species was a regular visitor this year to the Kumul Lodge garden, where 1-3 birds came to feed underneath the bird table. On this tour we enjoyed excellent prolonged views of a polka-dotted female creeping around under the bird table, and another 2 birds were seen by those that remained at the lodge for a last taste of feeder action on our final morning at Kumul.

**Forbes’s Rail  *Rallina forbesi*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC***

We tried a number of times for this elusive forest denizen, that left it very late to finally respond, during our very final morning in the highlands, where a male was seen when it taped in close several times along a forest trail near Kumul Lodge.

**Bare-eyed Rail  *Gymnocrex plumbeiventris***

A bird was heard calling tantalizingly close near Kwatu Lodge.

**Rufous-tailed Bush-hen  *Amaurornis moluccana***

A close calling bird was seen very briefly by just two people, along the Dablin Creek Road in Tabubil.

**New Guinea Flightless Rail  *Megacrex inepta*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC***

An amazing recent development near Kwatu Lodge was a blind that had been set up in a sago swamp in order to watch for this beastly rail in a known feeding area. Immediately on arrival Jimmy our local guide announced one was prowling around the back of the swamp, only for it to disappear just after only Sam saw it. A tense waited followed, and Eugenia was treated to an exclusive glimpse. Then finally it reappeared and this time wandered around the swamp for some time, allowing everyone views of this mythical creature. For the guide anyway one of the undoubted trip highlights. A truly mythical bird, which is very rarely seen.

**Purple Swamphen  *Porphyrio porphyrio***

Seen on two days of the tour, in the grounds of PAU, and later along the Laelae Road.
Dusky Moorhen  *Gallinula tenebrosa*
Good numbers were seen on the ponds at PAU on our first afternoon.

**PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: CHARADRIIDAE**
Masked Lapwing  *Vanellus miles*
Small numbers were seen around Port Moresby, at both the airport and at PAU.
Little Ringed Plover  *Charadrius dubius*
The distinctive form on New Guinea (formerly listed under the race *papuanus*, that is not recognized under Clements at all) was seen just outside Tabubil, where a pair were seen.

**JACANAS: JACANIDAE**
Comb-crested Jacana  *Irediparra gallinacea*
Some excellent views were obtained on the ponds at PAU during our first afternoon on PNG.

**SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: SCOLOPACIDAE**
Common Sandpiper  *Actitis hypoleucos*
2 birds were seen from our resort on New Britain.

**BUTTONQUAIL: TURNICIDAE**
Red-backed Buttonquail  *Turnix maculosus*
A line was formed to sweep an area of thick grassland bordering the runway at Kiunga airport, and one of these birds came up in front of our guide and then promptly went to ground. Walking a little further on, another buttonquail came up within inches of all of us and flew by us all giving excellent flight views in the process. These birds are very rarely seen on the ground.

**PRATINCOLES AND COURSERS: GLAREOLIDAE**
Australian Pratincole  *Stiltia Isabella*
These migrants from Australia were difficult to find on this tour (their numbers seem to vary greatly through the year), with just 2 people seeing single birds on the runway at Port Moresby from their fortuitous position on the plane.

**GULLS, Terns, and Skimmers: LARIDAE**
Black Noddy  *Anous minutus*
At least 15 birds were seen in Kimbe Bay on the New Britain extension.
Bridled Tern  *Onychoprion anaethetus*
30 or so birds were seen in Kimbe Bay on New Britain.
Black-naped Tern  *Sterna sumatrana*
2 birds were seen on separate days flying around Kimbe Bay in New Britain.
Common Tern  *Sternula hirundo*
Very common in Kimbe Bay on New Britain, where it was the most numerous tern species.
Great Crested (Swift) Tern  *Thalasseus bergii*
Fairly numerous in Kimbe Bay on New Britain; and another small group flew over the Laelae Road on coast of mainland New Guinea.

**PIGEONS AND DOVES: COLUMBIDAE**

**Rock Pigeon  *Columba livia***  
Scattered sightings were made in Port Moresby.

**Slender-billed Cuckoo-Dove  *Macropygia amboinensis***  
Seen on six days of the tour: at Kiunga, Tabubil, downslope from Kumul Lodge, and also in Varirata NP.

**Black-billed (Bar-tailed) Cuckoo-Dove  *Macropygia nigrirostris***  
Small numbers were seen around Tari, and also downslope from Kumul Lodge on the mainland; and at Tove on New Britain.

**Mackinlay’s (Spot-breasted) Cuckoo-Dove  *Macropygia mackinlayi***  
This small island specialist was seen on two different islands in Kimbe Bay, one time in flight, and another time perched for a short time.  
**Only possible on the New Britain Extension.**

**Great Cuckoo-Dove  *Reinwardtoena reinwardtii***  
Recorded five times on the tour, mostly in flight, although Jim found a superb bird perched up briefly in the lodge grounds at Ambua (Tari) near the start of the tour.  
Three other sightings came from Tari too, with a singles also seen flying through the clearing at Varirata NP,

**Stephan’s Dove  *Chalcophaps stephani***  
Just the briefest sighting of a flying bird over the Elevala River was obtained on the mainland. However, they are much easier to see on New Britain, where multiple sightings on all our full days on the island included some great looks at birds walking along the forest floor.

**New Guinea Bronzewing  *Henicophaps albifrons***  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*  
Only Jim was positioned fortuitously for this one, that was seen flushing off the forest floor near Kwatu Lodge.

**Peaceful Dove  *Geopelia placida***  
Small numbers were seen at PAU, along the Laelae Road, and also on the edge of Varirata NP.

**Bar-shouldered Dove  *Geopelia humeralis***  
One was seen in PAU on our first day, and others were also seen along the Laelae Road.

**Nicobar Pigeon  *Caloenas nicobarica***  
Around 5 birds were seen perched on a small island in Kimbe Bay, on the New Britain extension, with another seen flying over mainland New Britain at Tove on our final afternoon there.  
**Only possible on the New Britain Extension.**

**Bronze Ground-Dove  *Gallicolumba salamonis***  
Just Gary and our guide Joseph managed to get this one, when a bird shot low across the road near Tari Gap. This species also occurs in the Solomon Islands.
Pheasant Pigeon *Otidiphaps nobilis* H

Despite hearing this large pigeon close on two consecutive days at Varirata NP, we just could not get it to show itself. Frustrating!

Southern Crowned-Pigeon *Goura scheepmakeri* H

As water levels along the rivers were very low when we took our trip up the Fly River this massive pigeon was not as easy as it can when waters are higher, and we missed them completely on our way into Kwatu Lodge as presumably by the time we reached the best areas they had left their roosting sites in the trees and were feeding on the forest floor (making them very tough to find). However, as we were staying upriver at Kwatu Lodge we had little reason to panic as I knew we could try and find them once they went back up into the trees in the late afternoon. Later that afternoon we gently cruised the Ketu River hear our lodge, where our local guide Jimmy then excelled himself, finding 3 different groups of birds (6 individuals). Panic over! This enormous pigeon is the largest species on Earth, being the same length as a Golden Eagle! On top of that it is a looker with its delicate, lacy crest, and deep wine colored belly.

**Wompoo Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus magnificus***

One was seen really well on our final morning in Varirata NP.

**Pink-spotted Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus perlatus*** H

The most regularly recorded fruit-dove on the tour; recorded in the lowlands around Kiunga, and also regularly in our three visits to Varirata, where some fruiting figs held many individuals.

**Ornate Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus ornatus*** H

1 was seen in an area of fruiting figs in Varirata NP, that also attracted Dwarf, Superb, Orange-bellied, Beautiful, and Pink-spotted Fruit-Doves in our few days in the area.

**Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus aurantiifrons*** H

A frisky pair were seen at PAU on our first afternoon. A few were seen flying over the Laelae Road too.

**Superb Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus superbus***

Just the two sightings: 1 was seen at Kwatu in flight, and a female was seen perched by the clearing Varirata NP.

**Beautiful Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus pulchellus*** H

Three birds were seen perched on the tour: first a bird on a nest during our one hour’s birding session after our late arrival in Kiunga; then another bird near Kwatu Lodge; and finally a single perched by the clearing at Varirata NP.

**White-breasted Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus rivoli***

A bird was seen sitting on a nest during our first birding up at Tari Gap. Strangely the nest was in an open tree, right by the road. This species also occurs in the Moluccan Islands.

**Yellow-bibbed Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus solomonensis*** H

One bird was heard on Malumalu Island in Kimbe Bay. Only possible on the New Britain Extension.
Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove  *Ptilinopus iozonus*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
A few birds were seen on three days in the lowlands around Kiunga/Kwatu, and another couple were seen on one day in Varirata NP.

Knob-billed (Red-knobbed) Fruit-Dove  *Ptilinopus insolitus*  *BISMARCK ENDEMIC*
Four sightings on New Britain: After some considerable chasing around, a calling bird was finally located at Pokili; then a further 10 birds were seen at Tove that included one flock of at least 7 birds.

Only possible on the New Britain Extension.

Dwarf Fruit-Dove  *Ptilinopus nanus*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
This tiny fruit-dove was seen three times on the tour: a bird was seen perched beside the Erelava River en-route to Kwatu Lodge (and another was seen in flight only later that day); and prolonged, much closer views of a perched bird were obtained in Varirata NP.

Red-knobbed (Knob-billed) Imperial-Pigeon  *Ducula rubricera*
This distinctive pigeon is fairly common on New Britain, being seen on all of our days on the main island, with numerous sightings, including within the grounds of our luxurious dive resort overlooking Kimbe Bay.

Only possible on the New Britain Extension.

Finsch’s (Growling) Imperial-Pigeon  *Ducula finschii*  *BISMARCK ENDEMIC*
The growling calls of this pigeon were heard as we got out of the jeep at Pokili, and soon after we were getting good long scope views of the bird preening and calling. Several others were heard both there and at Tove, although this was the only sighting.

Only possible on the New Britain Extension.

Island (Floury/Grey) Imperial-Pigeon  *Ducula pistrinaria*
Recorded in New Britain: This pigeon is a small island specialist, and was very common on small island in Kimbe Bay. Another pair were also seen in our resort on the main New Britain island itself.

Only possible on the New Britain Extension.

Pinon Imperial-Pigeon  *Ducula pinon*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Small numbers were seen on our boat rides in and out of Kwatu Lodge, and another was seen along the Boystown Road in Kiunga too.

Collared Imperial-Pigeon  *Ducula mullerii*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Easily the commonest pigeon on the boat trips in and out of Kwatu Lodge, where good numbers were seen as we cruised our way along.

Zoe Imperial-Pigeon  *Ducula zoeae*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Seen on six days of the tour, including at Varirata NP, Kiunga, on the Fly River boat trips, and along the Boystown Road (Kiunga).

Torresian Imperial-Pigeon  *Ducula spilorrhoa*
Just seen in the lowlands close to Port Moresby, (at PAU, and along the Laelae Road).

Yellowish Imperial-Pigeon  *Ducula spilorrhoa subflavescens*  *BISMARCK ENDEMIC*
Recorded daily on New Britain, especially on our first afternoon on Ela Ridge, where several nesting birds were a little unhappy at some marauding Brahminy Kites in the area.
NB. This is considered a subspecies on the Clements list, although is split off as an endemic species under the IOC list.  
Only possible on the New Britain Extension.

Papuan Mountain-Pigeon  *Gymnophaps albertisii*

Birders are often frustrated by poorly named species, and this is just such a case in question, as the species is far from confined to the mountains, occurring all the way from the lowlands up into the highlands! Seen on twelve days of the tour, including regularly at Tari, and also around Kiunga and Tabubil, and in Varirata NP too.

**COCKATOOS: CACATUIDAE**

Palm Cockatoo  *Probosciger aterrimus*

This massive cockatoo was seen five times on the tour. A perched bird was seen as we headed back from the spectacular Greater Bird-of-Paradise display tree at km17 in Kiunga; three sightings were had on the boat trip into Kwatu Lodge, and another two birds were seen on our return trip along the Elevala River to Kiunga.

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo  *Cacatua galerita*

Recorded on eight days of the tour, with regular sightings around Tabubil, Kiunga, and Varirata NP.

Blue-eyed Cockatoo  *Cacatua ophthalmica*  
*BISMARCK ENDEMIC*

Seen on all four days on the main island of New Britain, with sightings at all sites visited.  
Only possible on the New Britain Extension.

**PARROTS: PSITTACIDAE**

Yellow-streaked Lory  *Chalcopsitta sintillata*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*

Also known as Greater Streaked Lory. Small groups of these lories were seen on three days of the tour, on the boat trips in and out of Kwatu Lodge, and also along the Boystown Road in Kiunga.

Dusky Lory  *Pseudeos fuscata*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*

Three flocks were seen flying high over OK Menga in Tabubil, one flock holding at least 60 birds.

Rainbow Lorikeet  *Trichoglossus haematodus*

Recorded regularly in small numbers, on both the mainland and New Britain too.

Goldie’s Lorikeet  *Psitteuteles goldiei*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*

This mountain species was seen three times in the Tari Valley, and another 2 were seen briefly at Kama, near Kumul Lodge.

Purple-bellied Lory  *Lorius hypoinochrous*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*

Also known as Eastern Black-capped Lory. Regularly seen on the New Britain extension, where it was seen at numerous sites and on all of our days on the island.  
Only possible on the New Britain Extension.

Black-capped Lory  *Lorius lorry*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*

Also known as Western Black-capped Lory. Small numbers were seen regularly around Kwatu and Tabubil. Most sightings involved birds flying over.
Red-flanked Lorikeet *Charmosyna placentis*
Good views were obtained of around 10 perched birds on the mainland along the Boystown Road (Kiunga), and in New Britain some good views were had in the trees within our resort grounds. This species also occurs in the Moluccas.

Papuan Lorikeet *Charmosyna papou*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
This spectacular montane parrot was seen at both Tari and around Kumul Lodge.

Plum-faced Lorikeet *Oreopsittacus arfaki*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
This super mountain species was seen several times in the Tari Valley, and later around Kumul Lodge too.

Yellow-billed Lorikeet *Neopsittacus musschenbroekii*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
This montane parrot was seen several times in the Tari Valley, including perched within trees in the garden of Ambua Lodge. It was seen daily in Tari, where most sightings involved low fly overs.

Orange-billed Lorikeet *Neopsittacus pullicauda*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
After a brief sighting (in flight only) near the Tari Gap, we enjoyed much better views of a perched bird along a trail downhill from Kumul Lodge.

Pesquet's Parrot *Psittrichas fulgidus*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Also known as Vulturine Parrot (although that name has now been taken by a South American parrot). This bird was tough for us on this tour, and we lined up to leave Tabubil knowing that we had missed it. However, our flight out of there was annoyingly canceled leaving us stranded in Tabubil for an extra night. For this species anyway this turned out good, as we saw 5 of these parrots flying to roost during that overnight delay.

Yellow-capped Pygmy-Parrot *Micropsitta keiensis*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Two calling birds flew over the “Flame Knoll” on Boystown Road (Kiunga), but were nothing more than dots in flight.

Buff-faced Pygmy-Parrot *Micropsitta pusio*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Another tiny parrot seen as nothing more than a dot flying over at Varirata NP on the mainland. However, better views of lower flying birds were had at “Joe’s Place” on New Britain.

Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrot *Micropsitta bruijnii*
Just one of these tiny parrots was seen feeding in a tree near the OK Menga hydroplant in Tabubil.

Orange-breasted Fig-Parrot *Cyclopsitta guliemiterii*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Recorded regularly around Kiunga, Kwatu ands Tabubil, where they were seen on five consecutive days of the tour. Some great looks at them feeding in the trees were obtained in the garden of Kwatu Lodge, and also at OK Menga (Tabubil).

Double-eyed Fig-Parrot *Cyclopsitta diophthalma*
A perched bird was seen from our boat along the Elevala River, on the way in to Kwatu Lodge.

Large Fig-Parrot *Psittaculirostris desmarestii*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
3 perched birds were seen along the Elevala River, en-route to Kwatu Lodge. The name Flame-headed Parrot would be better applied to this wonderful parrot with the fiery orange head.
Painted Tiger-Parrot *Psittacella picta*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*  
Of all the four species of tiger-parrot seen on this tour, this was seen the worst, of just a single close flyby near Tari Gap.

Brehm’s Tiger-Parrot *Psittacella brehmii*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*  
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.

Modest Tiger-Parrot *Psittacella modesta*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*  
Kelly found a close perched bird along a steep forest trail close to Kumul Lodge on our final morning there.

Madarasz’s Tiger-Parrot *Psittacella madaraszi*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*  
The lodge grounds at Ambua were excellent during our stay in Tari, and brought us this bird perched close to our cabins (along with a fruiting tree full of nine species of birds-of-paradise, regular Tit Berrypeckers, Spotted Berrypecker, regular Yellow-billed Lorikeets, Black-breasted Boartbill, Sclater’s & Mottled Whistlers, and Papuan Boobook at night among others).

Red-cheeked Parrot *Geoffroyus geoffroyi*  
Recorded on seven different days of the tour, with sightings at PAU on our first afternoon, and also in Kiunga and along the Laelae Road. However, the best views came at Varirata NP where we had regular sightings of both males and females perched in the trees.

Blue-collared Parrot *Geoffroyus simplex*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*  
This is jokingly referred to as the “parrot without legs” as it is NEVER seen perched, always invariably being seen in high flying flocks passing over the forest. And so it was for us too, with a single flock seen after being picked up by their distinctive flight calls, as they flew high over Dablin Creek.

Singing (Song) Parrot *Geoffroyus heteroclitus*  
A pair was seen flying low over the forest at Tove, although 2 other birds were seen much better feeding on fruits at “Joe’s Place” on our final morning on New Britain. The species is found on the Bismarck Archipelago, and also in the Solomon Islands. Only possible on the New Britain Extension.

Eclectus Parrot *Eclectus roratus*  
Seeen well on the mainland on the boat journeys in and out of Kwatu, and also regularly in Tabubil. However, the species is remarkably common on New Britain, where all areas ring to the sound of these noisy parrots, and many excellent views were had of both the emerald green males and vermillion red females. They could quite well be nicknamed “New Britain Sparrow”!

Papuan King-Parrot *Alisterus chloropterus*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*  
Good low flight views were had of this distinctive parrot flapping by in Tari (two sightings), and also once in Varirata NP.

**CUCKOOS: CUCULIDAE**

Brush Cuckoo *Cacomantis variolosus*  
Seen on six different days on the mainland and also in New Britain.
Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo  *Cacomantis castaneiventris*
One was seen at OK Menga (Tabubil), and also in Varirata NP.

Fan-tailed Cuckoo  *Cacomantis flabelliformis* H
This highland cuckoo was heard below Kumul Lodge, and also in Tari.

Shining Bronze-Cuckoo  *Chrysococcyx lucidus*
A single bird was seen in coastal woodland along the Laelae Road.

Rufous-throated Bronze-Cuckoo  *Chrysococcyx ruficollis* H *
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC* Just a single distant bird was heard calling in Tari.

White-eared Bronze-Cuckoo  *Chrysococcyx meyeri* *
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC* One was seen well close to the OK Menga hydroplant in Tabubil.

Long-billed Cuckoo  *Rhamphomantis megarhynchus* *
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC* 2 birds were seen beside the Elevala River en-route to Kwatu Lodge.

White-crowned Koel  *Caliechthrus leucolophus* *
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC* A calling bird at Varirata NP frustrated for a while until Eugenia located it within a casuarina tree.

Dwarf Koel  *Microdynamis parva* *
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC* Excellent, long looks were had of a bird that taped in well on the edge of the clearing at Varirata NP late one afternoon.

Australian Koel  *Eudynamys cyanocephalus*
3 birds were seen during our boat ride up to Kwatu Lodge.

Asian Koel  *Eudynamys scolopaceus* H
Heard at a couple of sites on New Britain.

Channel-billed Cuckoo  *Scythrops novaehollandiae*
This massive cuckoo was seen on the mainland and also on New Britain. 3 birds were seen from the boat on the way to Kwatu Lodge on the mainland, and then during our Bismarck Woodswallow vigil on our final morning in New Britain another 4 birds were seen perched at the top of Joe’s Ridge.

Violaceous Coucal  *Centropus violaceus* *
*BISMARCK ENDEMIC* Two sightings were obtained on New Britain: first Dave enjoyed some great looks at Pokili (unfortunately the rest of us were blocked from getting decent looks on that occasion), just before our first Pied Coucal also homed into view. Then later at Tove a good long look was had by all of a bird loafing around a vine tangle with a large insect in its beak.

*Only possible on the New Britain Extension.*

Greater Black Coucal  *Centropus menbeki* H *
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC* This notoriously shy cuckoo was heard near Kwatu Lodge and also close at OK Menga (Tabubil).

Pied Coucal  *Centropus ateralbus* *
*BISMARCK ENDEMIC* This striking coucal was seen three times on New Britain, once in Pokili Forest, and then twice in Tove.

*Only possible on the New Britain Extension.*

Pheasant Coucal  *Centropus phasianinus*
1-2 birds were seen on all three of our visits to Varirata NP, and another single was seen as we entered the grounds of PAU.
Lesser Black Coucal  *Centropus bernsteini*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*  
Excellent views of a bird were had by all late one afternoon at Dablin Creek (Tabubil).

**BARN-OWLS: TYTONIDAE**  
Greater Sooty-Owl  *Tyto tenebricosa*  
Although this species also occurs in Australia, it can be very tough to track down there, and therefore Tari arguably remains the best place in the World to see it. Over some 8 years or so local guides have had a number of roosting sites staked out. We visited one of these and got great looks at a menacing looking bird that left its hole and perched up above us, while a male *Superb Bird-of-Paradise* called and displayed in a tree behind. A magical moment.

**OWLS: STRIGIDAE**  
Jungle Hawk-Owl (Papuan Boobook)  *Ninox theomacha*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*  
An excellent bird was seen perched by the cabins at Ambua Lodge (Tari). The bird remained rooted to its perch, allowing us to round up everyone else from their cabins and rush out to see it.

**OWLET-NIGHTJARS: AEGOTHELIDAE**  
Feline Owlet-Nightjar  *Aegotheles insignis*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*  
Once most people had gone to bed (after no sight nor sound out of any nightbirds in an initial search), a couple of us stayed out and got a response from this very shy bird at Kumul Lodge. Over the next few hours we tried very hard to see it, and succeeded only in getting some close flight views as it repeatedly responded to playback, although always perched out of sight.  
**Singled out by one person as one of the trip highlights.**

Spangled (Starry) Owlet-Nightjar  *Aegotheles tatei*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*  
Once again this tricky bird (that was only re-discovered three years ago) proved very difficult at Kwatu Lodge. In spite of some close calls being heard at dawn we could not manage to locate it within the rainforest.

Wallace’s Owlet-Nightjar  *Aegotheles wallacii*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*  
After quite a long search for a calling bird near Kwatu Lodge, Jimmy masterfully managed to locate one sitting quietly in the rainforest canopy, although unfortunately only Kelly was well-placed to see it before it flitted off into the darkness once more.

Mountain Owlet-Nightjar  *Aegotheles albertisi*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*  
Just Sam and Eugenia managed to track this bird down, that was not calling much during our stay at Kumul Lodge. Sam found one while alone near the car park just before dawn, while Eugenia heard one squeaking outside her cabin during the night, and armed with a small spotlight managed to find it perched outside her cabin.
Barred Owlet-Nightjar *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Finally, an owlet-nightjar that we ALL got to see! 2 birds were seen during the day along a trail at Varirata NP, peering out from their roosting holes. Checking one of the same holes again on our final afternoon in the same park we found the same bird dozing at the edge of its hole once more.

Singled out as one of the trip highlights.

FROGMOUTHS: PODARGIDAE
Marbled Frogmouth *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
2 birds were seen in Varirata NP.
Papuan Frogmouth
3 of these bark-like birds were a big highlight of our first afternoon in PNG, at PAU.

NIGHTJARS AND ALLIES: CAPRIMULGIDAE
Archbold's [Mountain] Nightjar *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
This local species has been increasingly difficult at Tari, and so it proved for us where a couple of searches came up blank (although this may be due to increasing forest clearance and disturbance in that area?). However, we did manage to see one sitting on the road near Kumul Lodge just after dusk.

Large-tailed Nightjar
One was flushed off the road in Tabubil one morning.

SWIFTS: APODIDAE
Papuan Needletail
Recorded daily in the lowlands around Kiunga and Kwatu.
Glossy Swiftlet
On mainland PNG seen on all but a few days, both in the highlands and lowlands.
Mountain Swiftlet *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Regularly recorded in the highlands, especially in Tari where the species was seen daily.
White-rumped Swiftlet
Numerous at Tove on New Britain, which was the only place we recorded it on the tour.

TREESWIFTS: HEMIPROCNIDAE
Moustached Treeswift
Recorded on four days of the main tour (on our boat trips around Kwatu), and also several times in Varirata NP. Also recorded on New Britain where spectacular views were had on our final morning at Joe's Ridge, where several birds were seen at close range perched and gliding elegantly around the ridge.
**KINGFISHERS: ALCEDINIDAE**

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*
Only recorded on New Britain, where several birds were seen on three different days.

Azure Kingfisher *Alcedo azurea*
Just the one brief sighting was made on our way out of Varirata one afternoon.

Bismarck Kingfisher *Alcedo websteri*  
Two different birds were seen on New Britain.

Variable Kingfisher *Ceyx Lepidus* H
A bird that zipped up and down a stream calling several times in Varirata although never perched unfortunately.

Blue-winged Kookaburra *Dacelo leachii*
One or two birds were seen on all three of our visits to Varirata NP. Other singles were also seen in PAU and by the Laelae Road.

Shovel-billed Kookaburra *Clytoceyx rex*  
Due to the traditional site along the OK Ma Road being still inaccessible as the bridge had still not been repaired (despite rumors it would have been finished in time for the tour!), this bird has been tough to find this year. This is largely due to fewer places and therefore territories available in which to try and see it. It is a crepuscular species that is very hard to find away from these times when it is vocal. So we arrived at another Tabubil site pre-dawn to ensure we would be there for their short window of calling at daybreak. Sure enough as the first glimmers of light came through the trees two birds were heard calling, although showed no signs of responding to playback at all. Our local guide Kwiwan speculated that the low volume of the call and direction indicated it might be nesting nearby, and so wandered down into a gully to investigate leaving us with strict instructions to keep an eye on a likely looking dead stump in case a bird emerged from there on his approach. As he got closer a kookaburra shot out from the stump and landed in a tree nearby. Panic set in when several sweeps failed to find the bird until Kelly picked it out and got us all quickly on to the bird. Good views in broad daylight, we could not have asked for more from this charismatic and odd kingfisher. 

Singled out as one of the trip highlights.

Forest Kingfisher *Todiramphus macleayii*
Recorded three times on the tour, twice just below Varirata NP, and another 2 were seen along the Laelae Road.

New Britain Kingfisher *Todiramphus albonotatus*  
Also known as White-mantled Kingfisher. The eighteenth, and last, kingfisher of the tour added on our final full day on New Britain. Having unsuccessfully tried a number of known spots for this canopy-dwelling kingfisher, things were beginning to look bleak by late afternoon on our final day on the island. We had not yet though tried Garu, and that was chosen as our final stop for the day. However, on arrival there dark gray clouds loomed overhead and an imminent threat of a tropical downpour did not bode well for our final attempt. I tried the recording anyway, and
with the first spits of rain coming down and no immediate response I thought about returning there the next morning before our flight out. Just as the thought popped into my head though a New Britain Kingfisher called back, and within minutes Gary had picked up a new kingfisher for us sitting in the canopy. In fact there was a pair of these striking kingfishers that were so worked up from the recording they even sat in the tree displaying and calling while we watched on, a superb end to our last full day on New Britain.

Only possible on the New Britain Extension.

Collared Kingfisher  *Todiramphus chloris*

This widespread kingfisher was one of six new kingfishers added to the trip list during our short extension on New Britain. A single bird was seen in the forest at Tove.

Beach Kingfisher  *Todiramphus saurophagus*

This well-named kingfisher was seen perched above a white sandy beach on an islet in Kimbe Bay (New Britain), during our day checking the various islands and islets in the bay for small island specialists.

Only possible on the New Britain Extension.

Sacred Kingfisher  *Todiramphus sanctus*

Recorded seven or eight times, on both the main tour and New Britain extension.

Hook-billed Kingfisher  *Melidora macrorrhina*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*

This is always a real tricky kingfisher to see, despite being common by voice in the lowland forests especially. During a fantastic day around Kwatu Lodge, one of these shy kingfishers came in really close and perched above us for a few minutes. Unfortunately the angle left many people blocked from their position, so that only three people in the group managed to see it before it flew off.

Yellow-billed Kingfisher  *Syma torotoro*

This cute kingfisher was seen twice on the main tour: a bird was seen perched by the clearing at Varirata NP one afternoon, and another was perched by the “Flame Knoll” on the Boystown Road (Kiunga).

This was a very popular kingfisher among the group, which was nominated as one of the trip highlights, in the end being voted as the second best bird of the trip.

Mountain Kingfisher  *Syma megarhyncha*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*

An unresponsive bird was heard in Tari.

Little Paradise-Kingfisher  *Tanysiptera hydrocharis*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*

After several hours of chasing this oft-elusive kingfisher around near Kwatu Lodge, the bird relented, and finally remained in one spot for a long time, when we all got excellent ‘scope-filling looks.

Common Paradise-Kingfisher  *Tanysiptera galatea*

Usually Little Paradise-Kingfisher is the trickier of these two kingfishers that occur together in the swamp forests close to Kwatu. Things were turned around on this tour though, where Common proved to be much more difficult to find. Despite hearing a number of calling birds only a few people managed a brief look at one, the birds never remaining in position for more than a few seconds.

The species also occurs in the Moluccas.
Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher *Tanysiptera danae*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Normally straightforward at Varirata NP, the key site for the species, we struggled on our first afternoon with just a few people getting looks of one. However, when we returned to the park later on the tour things were very different, with excellent scope views of a bird glowing in the understorey. This local species is confined to southeast Papua New Guinea. It always surprises me that this luminous kingfisher has never been voted for as one of the birds of the trip, as it is such a looker, and so it proved again on this tour when it was ignored by everyone, and did not even make it into the twenty two different choices for top trip birds!

Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher *Tanysiptera Sylvia*
The last new bird added on the main tour, when we saw a superb bird sitting in the understorey at Varirata NP.

Black-capped Paradise-Kingfisher *Tanysiptera sylvia nigriceps*  *BISMARCK ENDEMIC*
Fairly common by voice on New Britain, although (as with many of the paradise-kingfishers) frequently difficult to see. So this proved on our first afternoon when we could not track down a constantly calling bird at Ela Ridge. We had much better luck though at Pokili where we saw 2 different individuals in our morning there.

NB. This “form” is treated as a full species on the IOC list, although only as a subspecies under Clements.

Only possible on the New Britain Extension.

**BEE-EATERS: MEROPIDAE**
Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops ornatus*
Scattered sightings at multiple lowland sites on the main tour and also on the New Britain extension.

**ROLLERS: CORACIIDAE**
Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis*
Regularly seen in the lowlands on both the main tour and extension to New Britain. Especially numerous along the rivers around Kwatu.

**HORNBILLS: BUCEROTIDAE**
Blyth’s Hornbill *Aceros plicatus*
This large and spectacular bird was seen regularly on our Fly River trip, and also on several occasions at Tabubil too, both on the mainland. On New Britain birds were seen on four of our five days on the island.

**PITTAS: PITTIDAE**
Hooded Pitta *Pitta sordida*
One bounded past us briefly near Kwatu Lodge.
Red-bellied Pitta *Pitta erythrogaster*
A couple of people managed to see a bird hopping along the forest floor at Varirata NP, and everyone saw the same bird when it flew in to the tape there a little later.
**BOWERBIRDS: PTILONORHYNCHIDAE**

**Spotted Catbird** *Ailuroedus melanotis*  
Heard calling distantly on 2 days in the Kiunga area.

**Sanford’s Bowerbird** *Archboldia sanfordi*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*  
Traditionally a shy and difficult highland species, although with at least one bird regularly dropping in to feed on fruits at the Kumul Lodge feeding table distinctly easier this year. A female bird came in twice while we were there. The last time was brief and many people missed it, although the first sighting was prolonged and allowed everyone to get cracking views as it sat on the bird table.  
NB. This is a split from Archbold’s Bowerbird.

**Macgregor’s Bowerbird** *Amblyornis macgregoriae*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*  
A bird flew by us on the road at Tari one morning. A very shy and rarely seen montane species.

**Flame Bowerbird** *Sericulus aureus*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*  
Another extremely shy bowerbird. Unfortunately during both of our tours to PNG this year no bowers were available to check, and so we had to look for it at the more traditional site, Boystown Road just outside Kiunga. Traditionally, this has been a reliable spot for the bird, although they appear to have become less reliable there in the last few years. We were therefore mightily relieved to see 4 different birds there one morning. The first a female dropped into a tree and vanished before anyone but Sam saw it. Then an immature male was seen flying over by a few, before 2 separate adult males were seen flying over the forest, that most people saw, and gasped at the unbelievable brightness of the orange-and-yellow plumage.

**Yellow-breasted Bowerbird** *Chlamydera lauterbachi*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*  
This local endemic was seen during one of our morning trips out of Kumul Lodge. At least 3 different birds were seen in a 30 minute search. During this incredible morning we also saw a superb male Lesser Bird-of-Paradise, a male Superb Bird-of-Paradise, and a pair of marvelous Magnificent Birds-of-Paradise too.

**Fawn-breasted Bowerbird** *Chlamydera cerviniventris*  
At least five birds were seen during our first afternoon in PNG, at the Pacific Adventists University in Port Moresby. This species also occurs on the Cape York Peninsula in far northern Queensland.

**AUSTRALASIAN TREECREEPERS: CLIMACTERIDAE**

**Papuan Treecreeper** *Cormobates placens*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*  
This difficult highland species was heard several times in Tari.

**FAIRYWRENS: MALURIDAE**

**Orange-crowned Fairywren** *Clytomyias insignis*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*  
This hyper-active inhabitant of the forest understorey was seen well by most of the group as it circled us a few times in the forest at Tari.
Wallace's Fairywren *Sipodotus wallacii*
Two birds showed up briefly within passing flocks: firstly at Dablin Creek (Tabubil) in a party with a Northern Fantail, and then another was seen for a short time in a massive feeding flock in Varirata NP (that held Dwarf Whistler, Frilled & Spot-winged Monarchs, and Yellow-breasted Boatbill among others).

White-shouldered Fairywren *Malurus alboscapulatus*
Very unlike many of the Australian Fairywren species, many of the New Guinea species are shy forest inhabitants and so frequently difficult to see or see well. This species of open scrubby areas is the one exception, being generally easy to find and also to see well. A pair was seen very well hopping around in an open shrub along the Laelae Road. A few more were also seen at the Grand Munia site near Varirata NP.

Emperor Fairywren *Malurus cyanocephalus*
2 different pairs were seen in the Kwatu area. Both sightings were brief and involved birds skulking around a dense tangle, so that only a few in the group managed to get clear looks.

**HONEYEATERS: MELIPHAGIDAE**

Tawny Straightbill *Timeliopsis griseigula*
A pair chasing each other around at Varirata NP in the middle of the day was most unexpected. Not a regular bird at this site, although another tour group had reported it there not long before we visited.

Long-billed Honeyeater *Melilestes megarhynchus*
A few birds were seen briefly along the road up Dablin Creek, although none of the birds were seen perched for long enough to get your binoculars on!

Green-backed Honeyeater *Glycichaera fallax*
1 was seen late one afternoon in OK Menga (Tabubil), and another pair were seen in Varirata NP. This species is also found in northeast Queensland.

Silver-eared Honeyeater *Lichmera alboauricularis*
A phone call to Airlines PNG the evening before our planned morning flight from Moresby to Kiunga enlightened us to a severe delay in our flight plans. New plans were hatched to fill our time and so we decided to go and look for this species instead of sitting out our delay in a hot airport lounge. It turned out to be a great choice, as several of these scarce honeyeaters were seen sitting in some coastal palms on the Laelae Road. On top of that we also got great looks at another endemic species, the normally shy Black Thicket-Fantail, in some neighboring mangroves. A flight delay never felt so good!

Ashy Myzomela *Myzomela cineracea*
One of the more common endemics on New Britain, seen on three days there, and seen most frequently at Pokili Forest. Only possible on the New Britain Extension.

(Papuan) Black Myzomela *Myzomela nigrita*
Just a single sighting in dry woodland in Varirata NP.
Mountain Myzomela *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Some great looks at a smart adult male with a bright scarlet hood were had near the
Lesser Bird-of-Paradise site at Kama (near Kumul Lodge).
Scarlet-bibbed (Sclater's) Myzomela *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
A small island specialist, seen a number of times on islets during our island hopping
trip around Kimbe Bay on New Britain.
Only possible on the New Britain Extension.
Black-bellied Myzomela *NEW BRITAIN ENDEMIC*
Just a couple were seen briefly by some of us at Tove Forest.
Mountain Meliphaga *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Recorded a number of times around Tabubil, and another few were seen downslope
from Kumul Lodge.
Scrub Honeyeater *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Recorded on three days in the Tabubil area.
Puff-backed Honeyeater *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Kwiwan and some of the group had a bird scoped up at Dablin (Tabubil).
Mimic Honeyeater *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Seen multiple times in the lowlands of Kiunga/Kwatu.
Graceful (Elegant) Honeyeater *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
A few birds were identified along the Laelae Road.
NB. Cinereifrons is an endemic form confined to SE New Guinea, and has been split
on the IOC list as Elegant Honeyeater, M. cenereifrons, although remains as a
subspecies of Graceful on the Clements list.
Black-throated Honeyeater *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
This handsome highland honeyeater was seen twice on the tour: firstly in Tari, then
later near Kumul Lodge in the Engan highlands.
Obscure Honeyeater *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
This notoriously shy honeyeater was heard on three occasions on the tour, although
was never even glimpsed (in Tabubil and near Kwatu Lodge).
Yellow-tinted Honeyeater
Seen several times in the casuarina trees within the parking lot of our Port Moresby
hotel.
Varied Honeyeater *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Two birds were seen in dry woodland along the Laelae Road.
Tawny-breasted Honeyeater
Seen on five days of the tour, in the lowlands around Kiunga, and more frequently in
the hills around Tabubil.
The species is also found in extreme northern Queensland (Australia).
Spotted Honeyeater *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
This boldly-patterned honeyeater turned up in a passing flock at Varirata NP on our
final day of the main tour.
**White-throated Honeyeater** *Melithreptus albogularis*
A few were seen one afternoon in Varirata NP, while we were watching a male White-bellied Whistler.

**Plain Honeyeater** *Pycnopygius ixoides* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
One was heard calling along the Boystown Road, near Kiunga.

**Marbled Honeyeater** *Pycnopygius cinereus* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
A minimum of 2 birds were seen in a massive fruiting fig tree downslope from Kumul Lodge that shared the tree with multiple honeyeaters, white-eyes and even a pair of magnificent Magnificent Birds-of-Paradise on occasion!

**Streak-headed Honeyeater** *Pycnopygius stictocephalus* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Seen on five different days of the tour, firstly at PAU on our opening afternoon, then later in Varirata NP on three occasions, and once on the Boystown Road (Kiunga).

**Meyer’s Friarbird** *Philemon meyeri* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
One was scoped in Tabubil.

**Helmeted Friarbird** *Philemon buceroides*
Regularly recorded in the lowlands and foothills (on at least eleven days).

**New Britain Friarbird** *Philemon cockerelli* *BISMARCK ENDEMIC*
Small numbers were seen on four of our five days on New Britain, including within our resort overlooking Kimbe Bay.

**Olive-streaked Honeyeater** *Ptiloprora meekiana* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
One of these extremely shy honeyeaters was seen briefly by a few of us near Ambua Lodge.

**Rufous-backed Honeyeater** *Ptiloprora guisei* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Good views were had of a bird along the road up from Ambua Lodge in the highlands of Tari.

**Black-backed Honeyeater** *Ptiloprora perstriata* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Also known as Gray-streaked Honeyeater. Recorded daily in good numbers in the highlands around Tari and Kumul.

**Sooty Melidectes** *Melidectes fuscus* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
A most unexpected bird at Kumul Lodge, where a researcher had recently captured a bird and very generously showed it to us before its release. Normally only expected at higher altitudes than Kumul.

**Belford’s Melidectes** *Melidectes belfordi* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Regularly recorded in the highlands around both Kumul Lodge and in Tari. Regularly dropped in to the Kumul Lodge feeding table.

**Yellow-browed Melidectes** *Melidectes rufocrissalis* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Recorded in small numbers daily in the lower part of the Tari Valley.

**Ornate Melidectes** *Melidectes torquatus* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
At least 4 of these boldly-marked honeyeaters were seen at the Lesser Bird-of-Paradise site Kama, downslope from Kumul Lodge.

**Smoky Honeyeater** *Melipotes fumigates* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Commonly encountered in the highlands of Tari and around Kumul too. One of the regular visitors to the Kumul bird table.
Rufous-banded Honeyeater *Conopophila albogularis*
A good number were seen in the grounds of PAU on our first afternoon, with other sightings along the Laelae Road.

**THORNBILLS AND ALLIES: ACANTHIZIDAE**

**Rusty Mouse-Warbler** *Crateroscelis murina* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Two birds were seen on our final day in Varirata NP.

**Mountain Mouse-Warbler** *Crateroscelis robusta* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Three sightings were made in the highlands, firstly a bird seen briefly along a trail at Tari, although much better views were obtained twice on the Kumul Lodge grounds.

**Large Scrubwren** *Sericornis nouhyusi* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Recorded on most days in the highlands, at both Tari and Kumul.

**Buff-faced Scrubwren** *Sericornis perspicillatus* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
2 birds were seen on one day in the Tari Valley.

**Papuan Scrubwren** *Sericornis papuensis* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Recorded a number of times around Tari and Kumul.

**Pale-billed Scrubwren** *Sericornis spilodera* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Just one bird was seen on our last day on the mainland at Varirata NP.

**Mountain (Gray) Gerygone** *Gerygone cinerea* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Two different birds were seen briefly one morning along a trail close to Kumul Lodge.

**Green-backed Gerygone** *Gerygone chloronota*
Two sightings: One along the Boystown Road near Kiunga, and another in Tabubil. Also occurs in northern Australia.

**Fairy Gerygone** *Gerygone palpebrosa*
A few were seen in Varirata NP.

**White-throated Gerygone** *Gerygone olivacea*
A pair were seen in an area of dry woodland along the Laelae Road.

**Yellow-bellied Gerygone** *Gerygone chrysogaster* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Although heard regularly around Kwatu Lodge, just two were seen there.

**Large-billed Gerygone** *Gerygone magnirostris*
Just the one was seen from our boat near Kwatu Lodge.

**Brown-breasted Gerygone** *Gerygone ruficollis* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Recorded regularly in the highlands of Tari and Kumul.

**Mangrove Gerygone** *Gerygone levigaster*
A single bird was found in some mangroves along the Laelae Road.

**PSEUDO-BABBLERS: POMATOSTOMIDAE**

**New Guinea Babbler** *Pomatostomus isidorei* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Also known as *Rufous Babbler*. A group of at least 5 birds were seen in swamp forest close to Kwatu Lodge.
LOGRUNNERS: ORTHONYCHIDAE
Northern Logrunner Orthonyx novaeguineae  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Known as Papuan Logrunner on the IOC checklist. PNG is filled with elusive and skulking birds, of which this is frequently one of the most tricky. However, we all enjoyed great views of a white-throated male on our first morning in Tari.

SATINBIRDS: CNEMOPHILIDAE
Loria's Satinbird Cnemophilus loriae  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
A male and a female were seen in a magical fruiting tree in the garden of Ambua Lodge (Tari). This tree also attracted 3 species of sicklebill, Superb BOP, Blue BOP, Lawe’s Parotia, Short-tailed Paradigalla, and Princess Stephanie’s Astrapia in our time at the lodge!

Crested Satinbird Cnemophilus macgregorii  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Shockingly this stunning bird did not make it into anyone’s top five birds of the trip. An amazing orange-and-black male was seen feeding in a fruiting tree close to Kumul Lodge, and on top of that we also watched a female bringing in food to a chick at a mossy nest close by.

NB. The satinbirds were formerly classified as Birds-of-Paradise.

BERRYPECKERS AND LONGBILLS: MELANOCHARITIDAE
Obscure Berrypecker Melanocharis arfakiana  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
This little known (and only recently rediscovered) species was seen very well at Dablin Creek (Tabubil), the only reliable location for the species.

Black Berrypecker Melanocharis nigra  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
One bird near Kwatu Lodge was the first sighting. Multiple sightings were made in Varirata NP, with at least 6 different birds on one day.

Lemon-breasted Berrypecker Melanocharis longicauda  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Also known as Mid-mountain Berrypecker. A pair was seen downslope from Kumul Lodge.

Fan-tailed Berrypecker Melanocharis versteri  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
One or two were seen on all of our days in Tari.

Streaked Berrypecker Melanocharis striativentris  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
This scarce berrypecker was seen in the lower Tari Valley.

Spotted Berrypecker Melanocharis crassirostris  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
A male was seen in the lodge garden at Tari.

Yellow-bellied Longbill Toxorhamphus novaeguineae  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Two birds were seen, unfortunately both being brief, at Kwatu Lodge, and also at Boystown Road.

Slaty-chinned Longbill Toxorhamphus poliopterus  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Two sightings were made, in Tabubil, and then later in Varirata NP by just one or two people in the group.

Dwarf Honeyeater Toxorhamphus iliolophus  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
One was seen in Varirata NP on our final day on the mainland.
Pygmy Honeyeater *Toxorhamphus pygmaeum* GO  
A bird was seen briefly in Varirata NP, and also on the Boystown Road (Kiunga), although on both occasions only Sam got a glance before it disappeared.

**TIT BERRYPECKER, CRESTED BERRYPECKER: PARAMYTHIIDAE**  
**Tit Berryecker *Oreocharis arfaki***  
A fruiting tree within the garden of Ambua Lodge (Tari) attracted a small group of these birds on a daily basis.  
**Crested Berryecker *Paramythia montium***  
This stunning bird was seen first near the Tari Gap, although was seen much better in the garden of Kumul Lodge (where it turned up on a daily basis).

**WHIPBIRDS AND WEDGEBILLS: PSOPHODIDAE**  
**Papuan Whipbird *Androphobus viridis***  
Jim was very fortunate to get a look at a male of this notorious skulker, on a narrow forest trail at Tari.

**QUAIL-THRUSHES AND JEWEL-BABBLERS: CINCLOSOMATIDAE**  
**Painted Quail-thrush *Cinclosoma ajax***  
Three sightings were made on one day in Varirata NP, although none of the birds lingered for long. The best views came of a female that crossed the same section of trail several times.  
**Spotted Jewell-babbler *Ptilorrhoa leucosticte***  
Although two sightings were made (one in Tari and another near Kumul Lodge), on both occasions the sightings were brief for just some of the group. Fairly typical for this species unfortunately!  
**Blue Jewell-babbler *Ptilorrhoa caerulescens***  
A bird flew across the trail at close range near Kwatu Lodge, in response to playback.  
**Chestnut-backed Jewell-babbler *Ptilorrhoa castanonota***  
The best performer of the jewell-babblers, seen twice in one morning in Varirata NP, where several birds were tempted across the trail. All of the group managed some kind of a view, with some getting good looks as it walked into their bins.

**BOATBILLS: MACHAERIRHYNCHIDAE**  
**Black-breasted Boatbill *Machaerirhynchus nigripectus***  
Just the one was seen, a stunning bird one morning in the Ambua Lodge garden.  
**Yellow-breasted Boatbill *Machaerirhynchus flaviventer***  
Recorded on two days in Varirata NP, where a pair was seen in a large feeding flock. It wasn’t until the second day though that we all managed to get good looks. This species is also found in northern Queensland.
WOODSWALLOWS: ARTAMIDAE

Great Woodswallow  *Artamus maximus*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Recorded daily in Tari, where a resident flock were hanging around the lodge garden, and others were seen in Tabubil and near Kumul Lodge.

White-breasted Woodswallow  *Artamus leucorynchus*
Seen on three days of the tour: at PAU, along the Laelae Road, and also at the Grand Munia site near Varirata NP.

Bismarck Woodswallow  *Artamus insignis*  *BISMARCK ENDEMIC*
Our final morning on New Britain was spent up on a ridge behind our resort in the hope of this striking and low density endemic. Initial sweeps of the dead snags produced no sign of it, and then after an hour or so Gary spotted one sitting quietly on a near dead tree. We even got to observe the bird mid-earthquake, as a minor tremor from a recent quake occurred while we were watching the bird! A very strange close to our time on New Britain. Only possible on the New Britain Extension.

BELLMAGPIES AND ALLIES: CRACTICIDAE

Mountain Peltops  *Peltops montanus*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
A pair showed very well beside our cabins in the Ambua Lodge garden one lunchtime. Others were seen on two days along the Dablin Creek Road, Tabubil.

Black-backed Butcherbird  *Cracticus mentalis*
Recorded three times on the tour. Firstly at PAU on our first afternoon, another two were seen along the Laelae Road, and a bird was also seen in dry woodland on the way up to Varirata NP. Also found on the Cape York Peninsula in northern Queensland.

Hooded Butcherbird  *Cracticus cassicus*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Recorded on six days of the tour: from the boat trips in and out of Kwatu; several times at Tabubil; and also at Varirata NP.

Black Butcherbird  *Cracticus quoyi*
One showed well on our walk up the Dablin Creek Road one morning in Tabubil.

CUCKOO-SHRIKES: CAMPEPHAGIDAE

Stout-billed Cuckoo-shrike  *Coracina caeruleogrisea*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Three sightings were made, two in Tabubil, and another in Varirata NP.

Yellow-eyed (Barred) Cuckoo-shrike  *Coracina lineate*
A pair was seen by the clearing at Varirata NP one afternoon. On New Britain one was also seen briefly in the grounds of our dive resort one morning. Also occurs in NE Australia.

Boyer’s Cuckoo-shrike  *Coracina boyeri*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Recorded five times on the tour, with three of these coming from Varirata NP, and others from the Kiunga area.

White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike  *Coracina papuensis*
A few were seen in Varirata NP. Also seen on two days on New Britain on the extension too.
Hooded Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina longicauda* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Jim found a pair from the bus in Tari, that was the only sighting of the tour.

Cicadabird *Coracina tenuirostris*
Only recorded on New Britain (although they do also occur on the mainland), when a single bird was seen at Tove.

Papuan (Black-shouldered) Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina incerta* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
A single bird was seen on two visits to Dablin Creek in Tabubil.

Gray-headed Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina schisticeps* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
3 were seen en-route to Kwatu Lodge, 1 was seen at Boystown Road, and finally another pair was seen at Daiblin Creek (Tabubil).

New Guinea (Black) Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina melas* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
2 were seen on our boat ride up to Kwatu Lodge, and another female was seen in Varirata NP.

Black-bellied Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina Montana* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
A male bird was seen near the Sooty Owl site in Tari.

Golden Cuckoo-shrike *Campochaera sloetii* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
One of many oddities in New Guinea is this black-and-yellow cuckoo-shrike. A really stunning bird that was seen really well at Dablin in Tabubil.

Varied Triller *Lalage leucomela*
Two birds were seen on the mainland, firstly near Kwatu Lodge, and then at Dablin (Tabubil). On New Britain birds were seen at a number of sites on three days with multiple sightings at Tove Forest in particular.

**SITTELLAS: NEOSITTIDAE**

Black Sittella *Neositta Miranda* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
This rare sitella was seen twice on the tour. Firstly, along the road at Tari we found a party of at least 4 birds, then near Kumul Lodge we found another band of at least 6 birds including one begging juvenile among them.

**WHISTLERS AND ALLIES: PACHYCEPHALIDAE**

Mottled Whistler *Rhagologus leucostigma* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
This rare whistler was found in the Ambua Lodge garden by our local guide Joseph. We then watched this male bird singing away from an exposed branch near our cabins.

Dwarf Whistler (Goldenface) *Pachycare flavogriseum* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
This stunning whistler was seen on two days in Varirata NP, when it was seen within a large feeding flock. The difficulty in viewing the flock though from our narrow forest trail meant that many did not see the bird well until our final day there, when many of us eventually managed good looks after some considerable effort.

Rufous-naped Whistler *Aleadryas rufinucha* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Recorded twice in Tari, and then again at Kumul Lodge. At the latter site a single bird was seen very well in the garden on several occasions.

Brown-backed Whistler *Pachycephala modesta* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Seen on two days along the road up from Ambua Lodge at Tari, and another two were seen just down the road from Kumul Lodge.
Gray-headed Whistler  *Pachycephala griseiceps*
Just the one was seen on a forest trail close to Kwatu Lodge.

Sclater’s Whistler  *Pachycephala soror*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
A super male was seen in the garden of Ambua Lodge, Tari.
Named after the English ornithologist and collector Philip Lutley Sclater.

Black-tailed (Mangrove Golden) Whistler  *Pachycephala melanura*
A pair were seen well on a tiny island in Kimbe Bay on the New Britain extension.
Only possible on the New Britain Extension.

Regent Whistler  *Pachycephala schlegelii*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Arguably the most beautiful of all the New Guinea whistlers. One or two were seen on all of our days in the highlands.

Black-headed Whistler  *Pachycephala monacha*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
A male was seen near the Sooty Owl roost site in Tari, and a nesting pair were also seen at Dablin (Tabubil).

White-bellied Whistler  *Pachycephala leucogastra*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
This local bird was seen very well during our first afternoon visit to Varirata NP.

Rufous (Little) Shrike-Thrush  *Colluricincla megarhyncha*
One was seen at Varirata NP, and others were heard in the Tari Valley.

Hooded Pitohui  *Pitohui dichrous*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
This poisonous species was seen on all three visits to Varirata NP.

White-bellied Pitohui  *Pitohui incertus*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
This very local species came in close to tape on two different days near Kwatu Lodge, although they were fast moving and hard to get prolonged looks at.

Rusty Pitohui  *Pitohui ferrugineus*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Two were seen briefly in a flock with a female Eastern (Magnificent) Riflebird at Varirata NP.

Crested Pitohui  *Pitohui cristatus*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
This is a very elusive species that is easy to hear but very difficult to see. Therefore two people (Kelly and Eugenia) both managing to get good looks at this species was considered a good result.

Variable Pitohui  *Pitohui kirhocephalus*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Two were seen well on a forest trail close to Kwatu Lodge.

Wattled Ploughbill  *Eulacestoma nigropectus*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
A family party was seen along the road down from Kumul Lodge one afternoon, that contained a male, female and presumed immature in the party. A female was seen in the same area the following morning briefly too.

SHRIKES: LANIIDAE

Long-tailed Shrike  *Lanius schach*
Scattered sightings were made in the highlands around Tari and Kumul.
OLD WORLD ORIOLES: ORIOLIDAE
Brown Oriole *Oriolus szalayi* *
One of the first endemics recorded on the tour, in the grounds of PAU on our first afternoon. Others were seen at Kwatu Lodge, Boystown Road, OK Menga, and in Varirata NP.

Australian Figbird *Sphecotheres vieilloti*
A minimum of five birds were seen at PAU on our first afternoon. These were the only birds seen on the tour.

DRONGOS: DICRURIDAE
Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus bracteatus*
Recorded on at least nine days of the main tour, including in the Kwatu area, Tabubil, Varirata NP, and in Kiunga too. Also seen several times on New Britain.

FANTAILS: RHIPIDURIDAE
Northern Fantail *Rhipidura rufiventris*
Just the one bird was seen on the main tour, at Dablin. On New Britain a nesting bird was sitting on a nest at Tove, and another 2 birds were seen at Pokili Forest.

Willie-wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys*
The ever-present fantail, recorded on every day of the tour both on the mainland and also in New Britain.

Friendly Fantail *Rhipidura albolimbata* *
Recorded daily in the highlands.

Chestnut-bellied Fantail *Rhipidura hyperythra* *
This attractive fantail was seen on both of our full days within Varirata NP, usually within a passing feeding flock.

Sooty Thicket-Fantail *Rhipidura threnothorax* *
Just a couple of people managed to get looks at this shy fantail that showed briefly on two occasions: at Varirata NP, and also flitting across the Boystown Road.

Black Thicket-Fantail *Rhipidura maculipectus* *
A phone call to the airline the night before brought us worrying news, our flight to Kiunga the following morning had been put back to the afternoon leaving us with a morning free. We chose to not kick our heals in the hotel but head out for new birds and were rewarded with stunning looks at this normally shy bird in some mangroves along the Laelae Road.

White-bellied Thicket-Fantail *Rhipidura leucothorax* *
One was seen from our boat on the way to Kwatu Lodge that was sharing a vine tangle with a pair of Emperor Fairywrens. Another was seen at OK Menga in Tabubil.

Black Fantail *Rhipidura atra* *
A male was seen at Tari, with another one seen briefly in Tabubil, and finally a pair was seen near Kumul Lodge.

Dimorphic Fantail *Rhipidura brachyrhyncha* *
A single bird was seen on four consecutive days at Tari, the only place we recorded it on the tour.
Rufous-backed Fantail  *Rhipidura rufidorsa*  
A great view of this often shy bird was had along a trail close to Kwatu Lodge that gave us all repeated close looks.

**MONARCH FLYCATCHERS: MONARCHIDAE**

**Black Monarch  *Monarcha axillaris***  
A male was seen in the Ambua Lodge garden on our first morning, and another male was seen along the road below Kumul Lodge.

**Black-winged Monarch  *Monarcha frater***  
A calling bird could not be located in a passing flock in Varirata NP.

**Black-faced Monarch  *Monarcha melanopsis***  
A male and female were seen on separate days at Kwatu Lodge.

**Spot-winged Monarch  *Monarcha guttulus***  
A couple of singles were seen at Kwatu Lodge, and two different birds were seen better on our last day of the main tour at Varirata NP.

**Hooded Monarch  *Monarcha manadensis***  
One was seen by some of the group in a mixed flock near Kwatu Lodge, with Frilled Monarchs and Yellow-bellied Gerygones.

**Black-tailed Monarch  *Monarcha verticalis***  
One was seen in Pokili Forest on New Britain. Also known as Bismarck Pied Monarch. *Only possible on the New Britain Extension.*

**Golden Monarch  *Monarcha chrysomela***  
This stunning monarch was seen on our way to Kwatu Lodge, when we saw a male from our boat along the Ketu River.

**Frilled Monarch  *Arses telescophthalmus***  
Two sightings each at Kwatu and Varirata NP was the total for the tour.

**Magpie-lark  *Grallina cyanoleuca***  
One was seen from the Brisbane Airport departure lounge.

**Torrent-lark  *Grallina bruijni***  
A single bird was seen hopping around the boulders of a small stream at OK Menga (Tabubil).

**Leaden Flycatcher  *Myiagra rubecula***  
A female was seen while we were tracking down a White-bellied Whistler one afternoon at Varirata NP.

**Shining Flycatcher  *Myiagra alecto***  
Recorded regularly along the rivers around Kwatu Lodge. On New Britain seen at Tove Forest and also several times within our resort.

**Dull Flycatcher  *Myiagra hebetior***  
Three males were seen at Tove. *Only possible on the New Britain Extension.*
CROWS, JAYS AND MAGPIES: CORVIDAE

Gray (Bare-eyed) Crow  *Corvus tristis*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*

Seen several times on the boat trips in and out of Kwatu Lodge, and also at OK Menga in Tabubil.

Torresian Crow  *Corvus orru insularis*

On mainland New Guinea recorded in the lowlands around Port Moresby, and also near Varirata NP.

[Bismarck Crow  *Corvus orru insularis*  
*BISMARCK ENDEMIC*]

This crow is fairly common on New Britain and was seen every day there, and was one of the first birds encountered on the island. This distinctive “form” is lumped within Torresian Crow under the Clements list, although split off as Bismarck Crow on the IOC list. It is also referred to as Island Crow sometimes. It differs in voice from Torresian and also has distinctive blue eyes. Wouldn’t “Blue-eyed Crow” be a much nicer name?

BIRDS-OF-PARADISE: PARADISAEIDAE

Glossy-mantled Manucode  *Manucodia ater*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*

Fairly common during the ride into Kwatu Lodge, many seen perched up and often calling by the river edge. Two were also seen at Varirata NP on our final day.

Crinkle-collared Manucode  *Manucodia chalybatus*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*

Three sightings in all: one in the forest close to Kwatu Lodge, another calling from an open branch along the Boystown Road near Kiungu, and finally one perched by the clearing at Varirata NP on the final day of the main tour.

Trumpet Manucode  *Manucodia keruadrenii*

A bird was seen calling from an open branch beside Boystown Road. Strangely, a little while later a Crinkle-collared Manucode used the very same branch too. This species is also found in extreme northern Queensland.

Short-tailed Paradigalla  *Paradigalla brevicauda*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*

This odd BOP was seen in the garden of Ambua Lodge on three days, when one or two birds came in to feed on a tree that was laden with fruits and attracted an array of BOPs at the time including Blue BOP, Lawe’s Parotia, Superb BOP, three species of sicklebill, and Princess Stephanie’s Atrapia.

Ribbon-tailed Astrapia  *Astrapia mayeri*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*

A spectacular male pointed out by Kelly opened the book for this species the tour in Tari. Further birds were seen there too, although the best views were as always at Kumul Lodge, where a number of females and immature males visited their famous bird table. However, the best one of all was one of the very first birds we saw when we rushed up to the Kumul balcony to view their famous bird table for the first time, only to find a full adult male Ribbon-tailed perched above it. Most unexpected there, and the first time I had seen a full adult male in the Kumul garden. Absolutely spectacular, and with those views unsurprisingly voted as the BEST BIRD OF THE TRIP.
Princess Stephanie’s Astrapia  *Astrapia stephaniae*  
Recorded on three days in Tari. The first two days we saw several females in the

garden of our lodge, and then on the third day we finally managed to track down a

marvelous male further up the road from the lodge.

Carola’s Parotia  *Parotia carolae*  
Our local guide Kwiwan located an area of well-concealed fruits at Tabubil that

attracted a male for a short time one morning at Dablin, although only hung around

for Kelly and Jim to get good looks in the telescope. With all the rampant, recent
deforestation along the Dablin Creek Road at Tabubil, it was a surprise to get it at all.

Lawes’s Parotia  *Parotia lawesii*  
In the absence of any fruiting trees this can be a tough bird to find around Tari, the

only regular area for it on the tour. Luckily though there was a tree fruiting right

within the lodge grounds at Ambua that was in tip top condition and so attracted

numerous BOPs, including at least four different parotias, including some fancy

males complete with “dangly bits”!

King-of-Saxony Bird-of-paradise  *Pteridophora alberti*  
Absolutely fabulous views of a male perched on a snag waving its strange serrated

ivory head feathers around while giving its rattling call were had on two occasions in

Tari. A truly unique bird and when seen this well unsurprisingly nominated as ONE

OF THE BIRDS OF THE TRIP.

Magnificent Riflebird  *Ptiloris magnificus magnificus*  
Heard calling distantly at Boystown Road, and at OK Menga.

[Growling Riflebird  *Ptiloris magnificus intercedens*]  
Two sightings of females were had at Varirata NP. Also known as Eastern Riflebird.

NB. This is not split under Clements being considered a race of Magnificent, although

on the IOC list is split off as Growling Riflebird when it then becomes an endemic

species.

Superb Bird-of-paradise  *Lophorina superb*  
Three birds were seen in total. At Tari a female came into the fruiting tree that held

up to 8 other species of BOP too, in the Ambua garden. Also in Tari a calling male,

with its iridescent green “crevatte” spread out was a constant distraction at the Sooty

Owl site, and even allowed us to take photos and video. Another more distant male

was seen at the Yellow-breasted Bowerbird site downslope from Kumul Lodge in the

highlands of Enga. The amazing views of the dramatic male in Tari made it ONE OF

THE BIRDS OF THE TRIP.

Black Sicklebill  *Epimachus fastuosus*  
A very distant male perched out on a dead snag at Tari (viewed from the lawn of

Ambua Lodge), opened a phenomenal morning for BOPs in Tari. This included nine

species (if you include a satindbird) in a single tree in the Ambua garden: Buff-tailed

Sicklebill, three female Black Sicklebills, a female Brown Sicklebill, a female Superb

BOP, a female Blue BOP, multiple Lawe’s Parotias, a Loria’s Satinbird, female Princess

Stephanie’s Astrapia, and a pair of Short-tailed Paradigallas!
Brown Sicklebill  *Epimachus meyeri*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
A couple of females were seen at Tari, including one female in a magical fruiting tree in the Ambua garden that also attracted 8 other species of BOP too. However, the best views came as ever at the Kumul Lodge bird table. On one day 7 different individuals visited the bird table, that included 5 female/immature types that fed on the table together at one time, and two adult males that fed shoulder to shoulder on the bird table too on one occasion. The males were also heard giving their atmospheric machine-gun like call in the garden of Kumul. A very popular bird on the tour by virtue of the amazing views that Kumul offers and was **JOINT THIRD ON THE LIST OF FIVE BEST BIRDS OF THE TRIP.**

Black-billed Sicklebill *Epimachus albertisi*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
This BOP is very rare indeed, which some of the local guides have only seen a handful of times. While surveying the fruiting tree in the Ambua Lodge one morning we saw one of these distinctive sicklebills fly in and was later joined by another. One of the birds, a female was then seen feeding in the open for some time. A great sighting of a genuinely rare bird. Also known as **Buff-tailed Sicklebill**, arguably a more suitable name.

Magnificent Bird-of-paradise  *Cicinnurus magnificus*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
After a poor view of a female in Tabubil, much better looks were had near Kumul Lodge. Stopping by a fruiting fig tree it was not long before a male Mag BOP appeared, although disappeared almost as quick, before most had got a look. Dave drew the envy of many when we was treated to a super low down look of the male, while the rest of us viewed the tree from elsewhere. Just as we gave up with no further sign after much searching, and we were heading for the van, a pair came shooting into the tree again and this time we all got views of the male and female, when we could even make out the “coiled ribbon” like tail of the flashy male. **Superb.**

King Bird-of-paradise  *Cicinnurus regius*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
This dreamy BOP with the crisp red-and-white body and coiled green ribbon tail is always one of the birds that people dream about before they get to PNG. Thankfully then the male King BOP performed with aplomb, climbing up and down its regular display vine in an area of swamp forest close to Kwatu Lodge. A shockingly bright bird. **JOINT THIRD ON THE LIST OF FIVE BEST BIRDS OF THE TRIP.**

Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise  *Seleucidis melanoleucus*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Literally one of the very first birds of our boat trip up to Kwatu Lodge was a black-and-yellow male dancing up and down its display “pole” (a riverside dead snag). A female was also seen that morning, and the following day another male was found on another riverside snag by Kwatu Lodge.

Lesser Bird-of-paradise  *Paradisaea minor*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
A very bumpy ride was required to get to the site, but the long slow looks at a smashing male feeding in a eucalypt tree were well worth it in the end.

Greater Bird-of-paradise  *Paradisaea apoda*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
With an extremely long delay to our flight to Kiunga we arrived with just an hour or so light left to get to the display tree for this bird before dusk fell. Knowing this we rushed to the site on the outskirts of Kiunga and hurried along the trail to the display
area, not sure if we were too late for any action at that late time. However, luckily for us a number of female birds had dropped in sending the 6 or so males gathered into a frenzy. One male was watched fluffing up its display feathers and dramatically using its wings to restrain the advances of a keen female. Quite a show. The long looks at birds displaying, and at least ten birds gathered in the tree at the time led to this bird being voted to **JOINT THIRD ON THE LIST OF FIVE BEST BIRDS OF THE TRIP**.

**Raggiana Bird-of-paradise** *Paradisaea raggiana* [NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC]

New Guinea’s national bird was seen around Kwatu and also in Varirata NP. At Varirata a tree full of displaying males (at least six birds) was one of the tour highlights. Seeing any displaying BOP will always dominate tour highlights as it is one of the great avian shows on Earth. **JOINT THIRD ON THE LIST OF FIVE BEST BIRDS OF THE TRIP**.

**Blue Bird-of-paradise** *Paradisaea rudolphi* [NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC]

A fantastic female bird was seen on three days in the garden of Ambua Lodge.

**Lesser Melampitta** *Melampitta lugubris* [NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC]

One bounced past the group at Tari, and was seen by all.

**Greater Melampitta** *Melampitta gigantea* [NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC]

A distant calling bird was heard at OK Menga (Tabubil), and another bird seen briefly by Dotty flying across the road at Dablin might have been this species.

**AUSTRALASIAN ROBINS: PETROICIDAE**

**Lesser Ground-Robin** *Amalocichla incerta* [NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC]

Singles were seen on three days in Tari, with everyone getting close looks of at least one of these birds.

**Torrent Flycatcher** *Monachella muelleriana* [NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC]

Five sightings were made on the main tour. The best looks were as always at OK Menga in Tabubil. Four of the sightings were in Tabubil, with another coming from near Kumul Lodge.

**Lemon-bellied Flycatcher** *Microeca flavigaster*

One bird was seen at Varirata NP, and another two sightings came at Dablin Creek (Tabubil).

**Yellow-legged Flycatcher** *Microeca griseoceps*

One was seen for a short time in Varirata NP that only a few in the group saw before it disappeared.

Also occurs in extreme northern Queensland.

**Canary Flycatcher** *Microeca papuana* [NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC]

Seen four times in Tari, and once also downhill from Kumul Lodge.

**Garnet Robin** *Eugerygone rubra* [NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC]

Three sightings of spanking males in the highlands: our first came along the road above Ambua Lodge, and then another male was seen along the road below Kumul Lodge. Eugenia was also treated to a male in the lodge garden at Kumul on our final morning there.
White-faced Robin  *Tregellasia leucops*
A pair of these smashing robins were seen up close at Varirata NP. This species also occurs in extreme northern Queensland.

Black-sided Robin  *Poecilodryas hypoleuca*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
One bird came in extremely close in response to tape near Kwatu Lodge, while we all still in the afterglow of seeing a New Guinea Flightless Rail prowling around a sago swamp moments earlier.

Black-throated Robin  *Poecilodryas albonotata*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
A bird was seen late one afternoon in Tari, and a single bird was seen perched alongside the road below Kumul Lodge on two consecutive days. The last sighting involved a bird perched on a roadside cable.

White-winged Robin  *Peneothello sigillata*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Recorded each day at Kumul, where several birds frequented the garden, and others were seen on their trails.

White-rumped Robin  *Peneothello bimaculata*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Seen well along the Dablin Creek Road, Tabubil.

Blue-gray Robin  *Peneothello cyanus*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Two singles were seen along the road above Ambua Lodge in Tari, and another was seen on a forest trail below Kumul Lodge.

Gray-headed (Ashy) Robin  *Heteromyias albispecularis centralis*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
A bird came in really close several times at Tari, although was always brief and never lingered for long.

NB. Under the Clements list this “form” is considered a subspecies of Gray-headed Robin, a bird with a different call and appearance that also occurs in Queensland, Australia. Under the IOC list however it has been split off as an endemic species, Ashy Robin, *H. albispecularis*.

Northern Scrub-Robin  *Drymodes superciliaris*
A good view was obtained in Varirata NP one lunchtime of this often elusive species. Also occurs on the Cape York Peninsula of northern Queensland.

**RAIL-BABBLER AND IFRITA: EUPETIDAE**

Blue-capped Ifrita  *Ifrita kowaldi*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
A group of three birds in Tari were a landmark bird for Jim bringing him his 4,000th bird on his world list. Another three birds were seen near Kumul Lodge.

**LARKS: ALAUDIDAE**

Australasian Bushlark  *Mirafra javanica*
A bird in display flight was seen over the Laelae Road.

**SWALLOWS: HIRUNDINIDAE**

Welcome Swallow  *Hirundo neoxena*
A few were flitting around outside the Brisbane departure lounge window.
Pacific Swallow  *Hirundo tahitica*
Commonly recorded throughout the tour both on the mainland and on New Britain too.

Tree Martin  *Petrochelidon nigricans*
Several birds were seen flying around Brisbane airport.

**LEAF-WARBLERS: PHYLLOSCOPIDAE**

Island Leaf-Warbler  *Phylloscopus poliocephalus*
One was seen at Dablin (Tabubil).

**GRASSBIRDS AND ALLIES: MEGALURIDAE**

[Tawny Grassbird  *Megalurus timoriensis macrurus* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*]
One was seen very well in Tari.
NB. This form is split as an endemic species, Papuan Grassbird, *M. macrurus* on the IOC list, although is listed as a subspecies under Clements.

**CITICOLAS AND ALLIES: CISTICOLIDAE**

Golden-headed Cisticola  *Cisticola exilis*
Recorded regularly during our morning along the Laelae Road. Another was seen on our first day on New Britain.

**OLD WORLD FLYCATCHERS: MUSCICAPIDAE**

Pied Bushchat  *Saxicola caprata*
Regularly recorded in highland areas on the mainland.

**THRUSHES AND ALLIES: TURDIDAE**

Island Thrush  *Turdus poliocephalus*
A few were seen around Tari, although much better views came at Kumul Lodge where a few regularly dropped in to feed at the bird table.

**BABBLERS: TIMALIIDAE**

Black-fronted White-eye  *Zosterops minor* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Two were seen at Varirata NP.
Capped White-eye  *Zosterops fuscicapilla* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Just three birds were seen by some of the group in the fruiting tree within the Ambua Lodge grounds.
New Guinea White-eye  *Zosterops novaeguineae* *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Recorded on just one day, below Kumul Lodge, where a number of individuals were seen.

**STARLINGS: STURNIDAE**

Metallic Starling  *Aplonis metallica*
Commonly recorded on the mainland in the Kwatu area. On New Britain a very common bird, encountered on all of our five days on the island.
Yellow-eyed Starling *Aplonis mystacea*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*  
Just a few were seen on the way back from Kwatu to Kiunga, the best views being of a female bird perched at eye level close to the boat.

Singing Starling *Aplonis cantoroides*  
Several birds were seen in the grounds of PAU on our first day, with another one or two seen at Port Moresby airport the following day. On New Britain a few birds were seen around Hoskins on our way in and out of the island.

Yellow-faced Myna *Mino dumontii*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*  
Regularly recorded in the lowlands and foothills.

Golden Myna *Mino anais*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*  
Three of four sightings were had in the Kwatu area, and another sighting came in Tabubil too.

Long-tailed Myna *Mino kreftti*  
Seen on Ela Ridge, Pokili Forest and also at Tove on New Britain. The species also occurs in the Solomon Islands.  
Only possible on the New Britain Extension.

FLOWERPECKERS: DICAEIDAE

Red-capped Flowerpecker *Dicaeum geelvinkianum*  
*NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*  
Recorded on at least six days of the tour, around Varirata NP, Tabubil, Kiunga, and Tari.

Red-banded Flowerpecker *Dicaeum eximium*  
*BISMARCK ENDEMIC*  
Not as numerous as expected on New Britain, with just a few birds seen at Tove and Pokili.  
Only possible on the New Britain Extension.

SUNBIRDS AND SPIDERHUNTERS: NECTARINIIDAE

Black Sunbird *Leptocoma sericea*  
Recorded on six days of the main tour around Kiunga and Tabubil. Also seen on New Britain with sightings on all five days on the island.

Olive-backed Sunbird *Cinnyris jugularis*  
Several sightings were made on New Britain, and on the mainland at least five birds were seen along the Laelae Road.

WAGTAILS AND PIPITS: MOTACILLIDAE

Australasian Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae*  
At least three birds were seen on the Tari airstrip.

OLD WORLD SPARROWS: PASSERIDAE

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*  
Recorded several times in Port Moresby, and also in highlands around Tari too.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*  
One was seen at PAU, and another was seen at Port Moresby airport.
WAXBILLS AND ALLIES: ESTRILDIDAE

Mountain Firetail  *Oreostruthus fuliginosus*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
One bird was seen at Tari, and two other singles were seen around the lodge at Kumul.

Blue-faced Parrotfinch  *Erythrura trichroa*
One was seen by just a few people in the group by the road at Tari.

Grand Munia  *Lonchura grandis*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
This erratic and local species had a welcome return to form (after an absence of records last year). Two birds were seen well a short drive from Varirata NP.

Hooded Munia  *Lonchura spectabilis*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Jim came upon a group feeding on the Ambua Lodge lawn one lunchtime and opened up his room to us to view them. Another small group were seen near Kama downhill from Kumul Lodge.

Gray-headed Munia  *Lonchura caniceps*  *NEW GUINEA ENDEMIC*
Virtually the first bird we saw when we arrived in New Guinea was a roadside flock of this endemic species just before we arrived at PAU. Another large group were seen along the Laelae Road.

Chestnut-breasted Munia  *Lonchura castaneothorax*
One was seen in a large flock of Gray-headed Munias along the Laelae Road.

Bismarck Munia  *Lonchura melaena*  *BISMARCK ENDEMIC*
Seen four times on New Britain, being the first endemic we picked up on the island a short time after our arrival. Also known as Buff-bellied Mannikin.

*Only possible on the New Britain Extension.*