

**ORNITHOLIDAYS' TOUR TO PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

*Birds of Paradise*

**18 September – 05 October 2012**



**Leader: Nigel Jones**

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### A Personal Diary

#### **Tuesday 18 September**

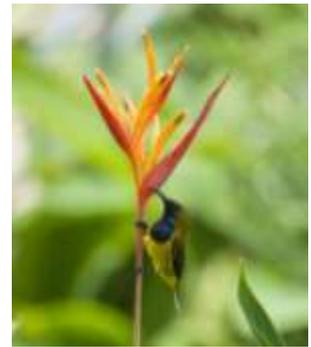
We all met up punctually at London Heathrow and were away on time to Singapore on one of the new A380 double-decker Airbuses, with Singapore Airlines. We had all chosen to add an extra day to our holidays so we could break our journey to PNG with a night in Singapore.

#### **Wednesday 19 September**

A few meals and films later we arrived into Singapore at 5.20pm local time, after a 13 hour flight. The customs formality for me was being grilled on how Arsenal was doing - I was unhappy to report they beat Southampton 6-1 recently! A short walk took us to the Crowne Plaza Hotel and our sumptuous rooms. An hour later we met up for a drink and a chat about our plans for tomorrow. The samosas went well with the Tiger beers!

#### **Thursday 20 September**

After breakfast we all met at 11.30am. A seven-seater taxi took us to the Botanic Gardens where we started our birding with Javan Mynas and Spotted Doves. We spent the rest of the day here walking around the ponds and through the remnant area of rain forest. Highlights included Hill Mynas, Greater Racket-tailed Drongos, Asian Paradise Flycatcher, Arctic Warbler, Common Iora, Ashy Tailorbird, three species of sunbird (Crimson, Olive-backed and Plain-throated) and Blue-eared Kingfisher. We caught a return taxi around 5pm, hitting the rush hour traffic. We then checked-in for our Air Niugini flight, which left on-time, just before midnight.



#### **Friday 21 September**

Just over six hours later, we arrived into a sunny Port Moresby and spotted Masked Lapwing, Pacific Duck and Eastern Cattle Egrets before the plane came to rest. Port Moresby is nine hours ahead of GMT and on the same time zone as Sydney. Immigration formalities and money changing were soon completed and we checked-in our bags for the next flight before relaxing at the Airways Hotel for a couple of hours. Birding by the pool provided our first Singing Starlings, Bar-shouldered Dove, Willie Wagtail, Pacific Swallow, Torresian Crow and even a couple of Fawn-breasted Bowerbirds. We drove to the domestic terminal to catch our flight, but it was delayed, so we didn't reach Mt Hagen until after 3pm. While we waited for our bags we found our first Black Kites, Pied Bushchats and Black-winged Kites. The scrum to pick your own bags off the cart was an eye-opener for some!

After meeting some of the lodge staff, we started the 50 minute climb to Rondon Ridge, travelling along a well-rutted track and passing small villages with waving children. Phil spotted a Great Cuckoo-Dove and there were also more Pied Bushchats and a Singing Starling.



We received a warm welcome from the manager Andrew and were soon installed into our spacious rooms. Rondon Ridge is one of the lodges owned by Trans Niugini Tours and provides great accommodation in the wilds of the country. We had some time for birding though and in the well-planted and colourful garden we managed to find noisy Yellow-browed Melidectes, beautiful White-shouldered Fairy-wrens and Hooded Munias. A quick checklist was taken, along with a refreshing beer, before

we had pumpkin soup followed by a tasty chicken escallop and then a sugar enriched pancake. These were all well received after missing lunch here due to the delayed flight!

We checked the moths attracted to the lights before retiring to comfortable beds. Some of us tried the electric blanket option, as the lodge is at 7,000 feet here, and it's chilly at night!

### **Saturday 22 September**

We met just before 5am for hot drinks and biscuits. Paul, our local birding guide, was raring to go. The rain had stopped and the stars were showing. A fantastic large green cicada had been attracted to the window lights. Soon we took the winding and slippery path upwards to the rainforest. A Mountain Owlet-Nightjar called and then flew quite close to us but it was not seen. It took almost 90 minutes to reach the clearing where the group settled and watched.



The forest resounded with bird calls but our first stop was for a Brown Sicklebill, our first Bird of Paradise (BOP). Stephanie's Astrapia, Black Sicklebill and King of Saxony BOP soon followed. We enjoyed our packed breakfast before starting down the hill, the walking sticks provided by the lodge proving very useful. Other birds seen included Red-collared Myzomela, Friendly Fantail, New Guinea White-eye and Buff-faced Scrubwren.



Lunch was taken back at the lodge at about 12.30pm, where a birdwing butterfly interrupted our meat pasties. We then took a break until 3pm, when light rain was falling. However this did not perturb Paul, so we set off down the drive finding some fine male Red-collared Myzomelas, plus a fly-past Yellow-breasted Bowerbird. We then walked uphill to the new plantation where Common Smoky Honeyeaters lived up to their name, and Phil found an Island Leaf Warbler. A smart male Fan-tailed Berrypecker was next with its shining blue mantle. Yellow-browed Melidectes perched in full view and sang – more a cackle, rattle and whistle really. Phil found a female Superb BOP and a Black-throated Robin performed well, showing off its little white whiskers. A Grey Goshawk perched briefly. The male Superb BOP

continued to call but rarely showed well. Black Fantails, both male and female, performed much better for the group.

We returned to the lodge by 6pm, very pleased with our first full (and tiring) day in the field. Dinner was much enjoyed, and a log call of today's birds was taken, before we reached our (pre-warmed) beds

### **Sunday 23 September**

We took breakfast at 6am and then departed 30 minutes later, wending our way down the road towards Mt Hagen. We stopped to watch a Black-billed Cuckoo-Dove as it picked up grit from the track. The Waghi Valley was our destination this morning, and after negotiating some fields of sweet potatoes in a village, we were soon watching a fine male Raggiana BOP in the casurina trees. All around the Brush Cuckoos were calling. We also found two Yellow-breasted Bowerbirds, numerous Black-headed Whistlers, a male Mountain Red-headed Myzomela, some fine Ornate Melidectes and some noisy Helmeted Friarbirds. A honeyeater that Phil spotted is later identified as a Scrub White-eared Meliphaga.

We drove the short distance to another village, where we watched the Mana Mudmen, a clan in the Kauga tribe, re-enact how they chased off invading tribes from their lands. Keith looked particularly frightening when he donned one of the large clay masks – we appreciated how small the locals were when he stood next to them! We had brief views of a male Superb BOP, along with New Guinea White-eyes and Buff-faced



Scrubwren. An orchid garden held captive Northern Cassowary, a very tame and free ranging Vulturine Parrot, two fine Victoria Crowned-Pigeons and a Tree Kangaroo. We admired the many species of colourful orchids and found a very gravid Praying Mantis. Overhead we had brief views of two Double-eyed Fig-Parrots.

We returned to the lodge for lunch just after 1.30pm, which was a fine chicken escallop with chips. Our planned departure at 3.30pm was delayed due to rain, so tea and coffee were taken as a welcome interlude, before we left 30 minutes later. We stopped to look at fruiting trees, where Island Leaf Warbler and a Brown-breasted Gerygone were seen feeding. Two species of robin showed well – Black-throated and Blue-grey, before we finally managed to scope a male Superb BOP which began to display. We were at the edge of a stand of bamboo, and we could hear an Orange-crowned

Fairy-wren but it would not come out of the thicket, even in response to playback. Keith spotted a fine Black-breasted Boatbill, which came even closer when the call was played. We walked quietly along the forest paths, hoping to hear Spotted Jewel-babbler, but there was no sign. A male Macgregor's Bowerbird was spotted feeding in the top of a fruiting tree and gave good views.

As we returned to the lodge we flushed a few Brown Quail and a Papuan Grassbird gave brief glimpses amongst the rank sedges.

### **Monday 24 September**

We had breakfast at 6am and then said our goodbyes and thanks to the staff at Rondon Lodge, before we left for the airport. Today, Brian was the pilot, and fine weather ensured we had great views as we crossed mountain peaks and hidden river valleys – even Brian was taking photos! Thanks to cross winds we had an interesting landing at the short Ambua airstrip. We were driven the short distance to Ambua Lodge, set high above the town of Tari, next to a road that gave access to high elevation forest – beloved by many species of BOPs. A problem with the hydro-electrics meant we were not in the thatched rondavels, but in the new business rooms, next to the main reception. Here they ran a generator to give us light and heat. Keen to get birding, we took a short walk before lunch and found Yellow-billed Lorikeets, a female Stephanie's Astrapia, Black Fantails, Canary Flycatcher and Rufous-naped Whistler.

After our spaghetti and meatball lunch, we tried to leave at 2.30pm, but rain was the problem – so we decided to take the coach up the road and hope that the deluge would stop. We had to wait until 4pm when the rain cleared and then we walked down the road birding. The road runs right through good tract rainforest and because it is slightly elevated, looks down onto many of the trees. Phil found a smart Blue-capped Ifrita, and we then came across a group of Papuan Scrubwrens. Yellow-browed Melidectes called from some of the giant trees festooned with hanging lichens and dotted with bromeliads.

After dinner we walked to the gift shop and played the call of Papuan Boobook – the bird obliged by perching on the fence and then flying into an Angel's Trumpet bush. It showed very well in the torchlight and the group was amazed how small it was, very like a scops owl in size.

### **Tuesday 25 September**

After breakfast we met with Joseph, the main bird guide at the lodge, and stood by a flowering pandanus and watched a male Black Sicklebill as it fed on the flowers and fruits. Unfortunately, most of the trees in the grounds had finished fruiting and the birds had stripped all remaining berries. We did find a Short-tailed Paradigalla and a Spotted Berrypecker.

We then drove up the road finding a smart male Stephanie's Astrapia. As we birded from the roadside we could hear the call of Mountain Kingfisher, but could not spot the well-hidden bird. However, we were luckier with Black-fronted Honeyeaters, Orange-billed Lorikeets and Papuan Mountain-Pigeons. The temperature rose as the



sunrise appeared through the trees.

Further up, by “Seven Bends” we watched Ribbon-tailed Astrapias as they fed on the round fruits of a nearby tree. Joseph led us into a purple patch of birding with Crested BOPs, Garnet Robin, Mountain Firetail, Papuan Lorikeets, both Crested and Mid-mountain Berrypeckers, Large Scrubwrens and White-winged Robins. By using playback we even had very close views of a Lesser Melampitta.



Some ventured to a lower path through the forest, where the trees were covered with lichens and the ground was damp and covered in mosses. Here we had mixed luck; Chestnut Forest Rail is only heard, but Mountain Mouse-Warblers are better behaved giving close views, but only some see the Papuan Logrunners, as they crept past. A Brown Sicklebill was watched at close quarters, gleaning food from a nearby epiphyte.

We returned to the lodge at 11.30am for tea, coffee and cookies and Phil did well to spot a Little Eagle as it flew across the valley.

After lunch and a rest we left at 2.30pm and drove up the road in heavy rain, seeing the problems of drinking and driving, as a large lorry was down the steep embankment - perhaps in an irrecoverable position. The rain though was too heavy and set in, so we returned to the lodge and drank tea and coffee until about 4.15pm when the rain began to falter. A Black Butcherbird was singing near the lodge as we walked down to the helipad. Across the valley a Black Sicklebill is watched displaying in the peak of a dead tree, while a Mountain Peltops sat close by. We managed both back and front views of a Papuan Mountain-Pigeon and had good views on an Orange-billed Lorikeet. The star of the afternoon was a small group of Papuan King-Parrots. The mist continued to roll in and out so we drew stumps at about 6pm.

### Wednesday 26 September

The weather this morning started with clear and bright skies and we were all assembled at 6am watching the fruiting tree near room 6. Two Short-tailed Paradigallas attended, while the Sacred Kingfisher perched close by. We took the coach down the road to an area of open woods, where a Blue BOP was displaying. We watched as it called and its two tail streamers shivered. On the opposite side of the road two Buff-tailed Sicklebills were feeding amongst the epiphytes of a tall tree. In the distance we could also see and hear a Black Sicklebill on display, while a Superb BOP was also calling in the woods. Red-collared Myzomelas were feeding on the flowering bushes, while a pair of Stout-billed Cuckoo-shrikes chased and called around the trees. Marbled Honeyeaters were a common sight as we watched them feeding on fruits and a Great Cuckoo-Dove gave the group a great fly-past. A Black Butcherbird was also found by Phil.



Once more we drove up the road from the lodge, pausing to watch the displaying male King of Saxony BOP. A male Stephanie's *Astrapia* flew over the road and a Brown Sicklebill was also found here. Near "Seven Bends" we had numerous sightings of Ribbon-tailed *Astrapias* and two more Brown Sicklebills. A male Crested BOP gave stunningly close views as it fed above us in a tree laden with berries – its fiery red upperparts contrasted sharply with the jet black underparts. Also there were Mid-mountain Berrypeckers, White-winged Robins, a female Spotted Berrypecker, Brehm's Tiger-Parrot and a party of Mountain Firetails. We drove past the lorry in the ditch, which now had chains attached as they tried to extract the vehicle. On the moorland our first Island Thrushes were seen, along with numerous Papuan Grassbirds and a Long-tailed Shrike. A piece of woodland had a couple of Brown-backed Whistlers but little else.

We returned to the lodge for lunch where Sue found a fine Brahminy Kite. We reconvened at 3pm but the afternoon rain persisted until 4pm, when we stepped into the garden. Rufous-naped Whistler, Papuan Flowerpecker, Black Monarch and Black-breasted Boatbill were all feeding near the rooms. At the helipad we managed to see a group of Hooded Cuckoo-shrikes plus a Superb BOP, which brought our tally of BOPS for the day to eleven!

#### **Thursday 27 September**

We were still missing Loria's BOP, probably due to the absence of fruits in the Ambua garden. We made various stops up the road searching for it, which did yield an Ornate Fruit-Dove (found by Phil) and a Rufous-throated Bronze-Cuckoo near the lodge, but no sign of the Loria's. The King of Saxony BOP was still displaying well and we attempted more photos through the scope.



The Highlanders have a strong warrior tradition of defending their lands and blood relations. This morning was "cultural time" with a visit to a Sing-Sing, a traditional dance normally performed before (and after) tribal fighting. We arrived at a small clearing, where we sat on benches and watched as the men finished painting their faces. They were painted with colourful yellow clay from which Ambua gets its name. Their skin was oiled and their wigs bedecked with feathers. Our guide Paulos told us of some of the tribal fights he had been involved with and even showed us his arrow and spear scars. He ran through each species present in the wigs: King of Saxony, Black and Brown Sicklebills, Blue, Superb, Lesser, Raggiana, Ribbon-tailed *Astrapia* and even Lawes' Parotia. They are finished off with numerous wing and tail feathers of Yellow billed and Papuan Lorikeets,



as well as some Dwarf Cassowary feathers. They performed their ceremonial dance with waving feathers and a bouncing tail made of palm leaves – the dance is meant to emulate the displays of the birds of paradise. They also had the thigh bones of a Dwarf Cassowary as a dagger head, and a Blyth's Hornbill beak on their backs. Hand-held drums were played as they got the rhythm and started to shout and dance – quite a sight! Later, we had our photos taken with them and again dwarfed many of the warriors with our tall statures. A pair of Variable Goshawks displayed as we watched the ceremony.

We also made a visit to the local Wig School where we were shown the “magic” involved in growing ceremonial wigs for such traditions as the Sing-Sing.

Back at the lodge we took lunch and found a spectacular moth on the wall – a Hercules Moth, almost the



world's largest. Our afternoon visit was to an area of agriculture, fields and trees, where we had to negotiate some streams and ditches before we arrived at a tree where a Sooty Owl sometimes roosts – alas he wasn't home today. However, nearby we watched a pair of Papuan Frogmouths that roosted at the top of a casurina. We had a large entourage of local helpers to give hands-on help in crossing the muddy areas, all keen on trying to obtain umbrellas off us! A Peregrine Falcon dashed over our heads and took a Feral Pigeon from out of a small flock and then laboured to keep in the sky with its heavy kill. There were also at least 20 Capped White-eyes feeding in a stand of casurinas.

We returned to the road above the lodge and stopped by the Bailey bridge. Joseph finally managed to find us a Lawes' Parotia – only a female, but nevertheless, our missing BOP from Ambua. There were also four Black-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes and a fine male Ribbon-tailed Astrapia with long white tail plumes. The King of Saxony BOP was watched displaying for the last time and we were still enthralled by the buzzing notes he produced.



### Friday 28 September

We made a visit near the airstrip to look for a male Lawes' Parotia, but it yielded just a male and female Black Sicklebill and a mysterious immature BOP. A Hooded Pitohui was heard calling and we also watched Island Leaf Warblers, Grey Wagtail, Capped White-eyes and some Brahminy Kites. We walked the last part of the entrance to the lodge drive and found Short-tailed Paradigallas, Common Smoky Honeyeaters and Blue-grey Robins.

Our charter flight left after a short delay, having said our goodbyes to Joseph and Paulos. The 45 minute flight was over some extensive areas of virgin mountain forest with one particularly memorable view of a

waterfall cascading off a sheer limestone cliff. We then saw the lowlands and oxbows of the Sepik River and its tributaries, and we made the landing on the grass strip at Karawari. Masked Lapwings flew off as we landed. The locals were here to greet us and now we had to get used to the heat and humidity of the river and jungles. Chris, our birding guide, met us and even before we left the terminal building, we watched Lowland Peltops and Brown Oriole. We took a short boat trip to the lodge where we climbed the steps cut from the red earth bank and into a vehicle, which drove the two minutes to the lodge.

After welcoming drinks, and a briefing from Augus, who is Chris's nephew, we sat down to enjoy our first lunch at Karawari Lodge. The view from the balcony of the restaurant was stunning, with views over miles of unbroken forest, with mountains in the far distance, and no man-made structure visible, save a few fishing huts on the river below. The main building was shaped like a Spirit House with a high gable end and the restaurant adorned with spirit masks from the Sepik River region.



After a short siesta we were soon back on the boat and cruising downstream, watching Brahminy, Whistling and Black Kites, Great, Little and Intermediate Egrets, Little Black and Little Pied Cormorants and more Masked Lapwings. The boat was a double-hulled, metal one, with fixed rows of seats and a covering over us to keep the sun off – an excellent construction for birding from, and even stable enough to be able to use a telescope on the deck. The main theme of the afternoon though was parrots, with noisy and colourful Eclectus,

hundreds of Brown Lorries, a few Red-thighed Lorikeets, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, some Double-eyed Fig-Parrots and Red-cheeked Parrots. There were so many new birds, and they were coming thick and fast: Oriental Cuckoo, Australian Koel, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Metallic Starlings, Uniform Swiftlets, Rufous-bellied Kookaburra and Hooded Butcherbirds – so much to look at, and what a relaxing way to do it! As the day cooled, groups of Dollarbirds took to the wing, perhaps catching a termite hatch after the rains. The highlight for many was a close fly past of a Blyth's Hornbill.

Margaret and Connie found out about the termite hatch when they ventured into their showers as it coincided with literally hundreds of the winged beasts being attracted to their lights! As the termites mated, and shed their wings, the floors were literally covered with a thin coating of wings - a clean-up was needed! A Hook-billed Kingfisher was briefly heard to call by the lodge as darkness fell.

The dinner was excellent and the plans for the early start tomorrow were outlined: on the menu, two more BOPs.



## Saturday 29 September

After tea, coffee and cake we left the lodge at 5.45am promptly and headed for the boat, cruising downstream as the dawn broke. It was a magical time to be on the river, the local fisherman already out on their dugout canoes with nets. Metallic Starlings left their roosts and the Whistling and Brahminy Kites were perched in the trees by the water's edge. Two Rufescent Night-Herons were spotted perched in the riverside trees as well.

Below the airstrip we pulled the boat to the bank, and all disembarked and walked about 100 metres into the forest edge. Here, on top of a broken stump, we watched a male Twelve-wired BOP display and call. Unfortunately this was a wire less BOP as his moult had already begun, but his lovely yellow body contrasted beautifully well with the dark mantle and head. An excellent start to the morning!



Well pleased with these views, we moved back upstream, passing three or four Palm Cockatoos perched in a palm. We could see their dark grey bodies and red cheek patches well, and some had their crest raised. Our next quest was for the King and we motored past the lodge and took a side arm of the river. We passed a fishing village with people waiting to go to the local market down river, while the small children were all on the banks trying their luck with fishing poles and nylon lines. A lovely tranquil scene and we wondered for how many more years this scene would persist. The houses are all built on stilts and Chris said that in the rainy season the river breaks its bank and inundates the village, so they can walk from their front doors straight into their boats! A pair of Glossy-mantled

Manucodes (yet another bird of paradise) flew over the river, as we pulled the boat against the bank. Chris set off and confirmed he could hear our target species calling, so we followed in his footsteps, his machete clearing a path through the thick (and damp) riverine jungle for us. Luckily, the King was on his throne, high in a tangle of vines, and initially proved difficult to see but eventually we all had views of his fine royal red back and white end parts. The telescope even allowed a view of the two spindly wire tail feathers. The King BOP is a very small bird of paradise and is a difficult bird to see, as it keeps to the high trees and tangles of vines – so we had been very lucky with our quest. We left the mosquitoes to digest our blood presents.

The boat took us back to the lodge, but not before Phil had found a pair of Black-browed Trillers and a Mountain Peltops in the same tree. Breakfast was waiting for us, and it was still only 9am! Forty-five minutes later we followed Chris up the hill through the garden and into the wood but the activity was low and it was already very hot. The butterflies were numerous though and John chased a good variety, trying to get photos for later ID. The best bet seemed to be to replenish our lost liquid and sit on the verandah. This proved successful with views of a Hooded Pitohui taking berries from a nearby palm. The pitohuis are poisonous, with a noxious chemical on their feathers. Chris told us that he has spoken with the people in his village, telling them not to kill this family of birds and just stick with pigeons if they need bird meat for the pot. In the past people have become sick through trying to eat these birds.

A good buffet lunch followed at 12.30pm and then we rested until 3pm. We were soon travelling upriver again and we stopped in a “garden” to watch Spangled Drongo, Meyers Friarbird and Mimic Meliphaga. A Variable Goshawk shot past us, carrying a rat to its nest. Back on the river we saw at least 600 Dusky Lories, a Palm Cockatoo, a good group of four Blyth’s Hornbills (plus some singles), a Common Sandpiper, various Orange-bellied Fruit-doves, Hooded Butcherbirds, Rufous-bellied Kookaburras and some Edwards’ Fig-Parrots on tall dead tree, inspecting nesting holes.



We returned around 6.15pm and tried our luck with the Hook-billed Kingfisher in the garden. Two were calling and one came near but we couldn’t see it in the dusk. The supper was excellent with barramundi as the main dish, followed by a fine fruit mousse. Everyone was tired so by 8.30pm it was bedtime – but it had been another excellent day’s birding, with three more BOPs seen well.

**Sunday 30 September**

The Hook-billed Kingfisher was still calling at first light and some of us managed a few glimpses of the bird in the torchlight, before this nocturnal bird disappeared – fascinating to think of a kingfisher exploiting a night-time niche to catch large insects. We then transferred to the boat and moved downstream, and explored a small tributary of the river. The vegetation was high on both sides as we entered what would probably soon become an oxbow lake. As we moved slowly a large bird flew across in front of us – we all shouted Victoria Crowned-Pigeon! This was our quarry species and we had found it. It flew up to a flowering and fruiting



and fruiting palm and perched – and then we realized it was with its mate. With the engines off we manhandled the boat to a position where we could watch them through the scope as they fed – amazing views!

After having our fill of the birds, we went to start the engine but the battery was flat. A radio call was made to base and another boat was dispatched to come and help. As we sat we found Shining Flycatcher and Large-billed Gerygones. Forty

minutes later we were heading back to the lodge for breakfast.

After breakfast we walked uphill once more to the woods. Again it was hot but we did hear Hooded Pitta and Hooded Pitohui. We managed to get views of a Rusty Pitohui before we decided that there might be more bird activity in the garden near the rooms. We sat on one of the verandahs and watched the forest – the best bird was a Frilled Monarch, with a supporting cast of Mimic Meliphagas.



We returned to the bar for drinks, watching the Eclectus Parrots flying over the river. After lunch and a siesta, we went to the airstrip where we walked and birded. Coronated Fruit-Doves and Streaky-headed Honeyeaters showed well, but we also had amazing views of parrots: Eclectus, Western Black-capped Lorries, Edwards' Fig-Parrots and best of all Palm Cockatoos. Amongst the many Uniform Swiftlets we managed to find one Papuan Needle-tail.

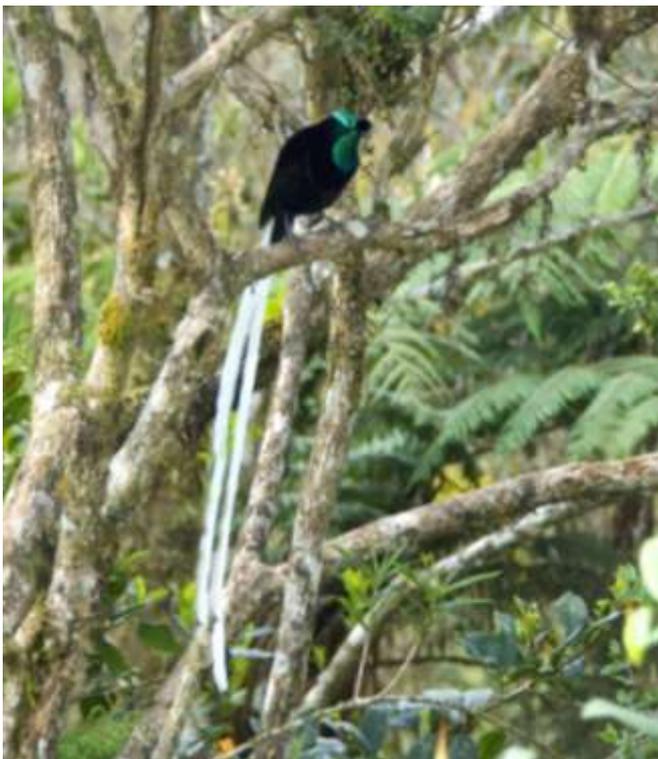
We returned and had our final dinner at the lodge, with some managing to pay their bar bills.

### Monday 01 October

Just before coffee and cakes the Hook-billed Kingfisher showed by torchlight near the lodge; we noted the very broad-based bill. After breakfast we walked down the main drive seeing Buff-faced Pygmy-Parrots and stood to watch almost a feeding frenzy of birds that were coming to a tall flowering tree. Mimic Meliphagas, Double-eyed Fig-Parrots, Red-cheeked Parrots and Plain Honeyeaters were the main birds watched. A White-bellied Thicket Fantail was briefly seen as it flicked its tail in trackside bushes, but we were treated to fine views of a perched Pinon Imperial-Pigeon.



After breakfast we were driven down to the boat and then taken to the airstrip, where the plane was waiting. Bob Bates, owner of Trans Niugini Tours, was our pilot. After saying our thanks and goodbyes to Chris and his team, we were soon on our way to Mt Hagen, where we arrived about 45 minutes later.



We were whisked away by a vehicle from Kumul Lodge and taken through the bustling streets of Mt Hagen. For such a remote location, they have had a large increase in population, with its associated litter problem. Our drivers told us that action was being taken to rectify the refuse that was accumulating!

It took almost an hour and a half for the transfer, mainly because the roads have become so rutted and holed. However, we were soon in our rooms at Kumul Lodge and enjoying a hearty lunch. Kumul (Bird of Paradise in Pidgin) is set just across the border in Enga Province. In the National Parks in PNG, and also in the Trans Niugini Tour lodges, they do not feed wild birds. This is not the case at Kumul Lodge, where they keep a well provisioned "table" covered in fruit most of the year.

We sat and watched (and photographed) the comings and goings at the table. Ribbon-tailed Astrapias were most evident, along with Brown Sicklebills. However, for me, the stars of the show

were the small group of Brehm's Tiger-Parrots that fed on the bananas. They would slowly move up to the table like furtive mice, but best of all was when they had to progress down a branch to reach the table – which they did by changing from left facing, to right facing, as they hopped in quick-time – very comical.



We had a conversation about whether the Ribbon-tailed Astrapias we were watching had the longest tail feathers in the world. Most of us thought the Argus Pheasant probably had them, but post-tour Sue does her homework: Argus Pheasant has the longest feathers, measured at just under six feet. Ribbon-tailed Astrapia has the longest tail feathers, *in relation to body size of any bird*, over three times the length of its body – thanks Sue!

Some walked with Max into his small patch of forest festooned with orchids and epiphytes. Here he showed the group Archbold's Bowerbird, Lesser Melampitta, Blue-capped Ifrita, Friendly Fantails, Garnet Robin, Fan-tailed Berrypecker and Rufous-naped Whistler. There was also a nest of a White-winged Robin.

Kumul Lodge is situated at 2,800 metres, so at night times it gets cold. After dinner we retreated to our beds, with their electric blankets – ever so warm!

### **Tuesday 02 October**

All of us were up by 6.45am to watch the coming and goings at the bird table. The Ribbon-tailed Astrapias were the true early birds and the activity took a while to get going. As we sat down to breakfast an Archbold's Bowerbird came to feed, joined by the normal gang of Brehm's Tiger-Parrots, White-winged Robins and some Brown Sicklebills. After goodbyes have been made to the staff, the Kumul vehicle took a speedier approach to the rutted road, aided by the many bags of stone in the boot to act as ballast when empty - needed to negotiate the rutted road on the return trip. We arrived at Mt Hagen airport by 9.15am and swiftly checked in for our flight which departed bang on time and arrived likewise into Port Moresby at 11.30am. We had a choice of vehicles to choose from to take us to our hotel, but we travelled with Stephen and Norman from Trans Niugini Tours and soon checked in and enjoyed a lunch of eastern stir-frys.



At 2.30pm we departed for the campus of the Pacific Adventists' University (PAU). We had Leonard and Ben as our guides – this was the good news. The bad news was that it was already raining and it looked set-in for the afternoon. However, as we entered PAU we found a Peaceful Dove, some White-breasted Woodswallows and a Blue-winged Kookaburra before we had even hit the reception gate – so the bad weather hadn't deterred the birds! A problem with Chinese whispers meant that we thought we were looking for a White's Thrush - but it was actually a Shrike-Thrush, a Grey one.

The campus has a system of ponds covered with water lilies and well laid lawns with large acacia trees. There were Little Black Cormorants roosting in trees on the islands, a Pacific Golden Plover walking on the lawn, and there were numerous Pacific Black Ducks on the lake. Purple Swamphens and Dusky Moorhens patrolled the edges while Comb-crested Jacanas did what they are meant to do - trot over the lilies. A Rufous-banded Honeyeater was spotted feeding on some white flowers, quickly followed by sightings of an Orange-breasted Fruit-Dove and then a Torresian Pied Imperial-Pigeon. The next pond held Plumed Whistling-ducks, Little Grebes, Australian Ibis and both Great and Intermediate Egrets.



We moved to a more settled pond, surrounded by large trees, where a few White-headed Shelduck were feeding. Our key species here was also soon found, with Spotted Whistling-Ducks seen perched in the trees. A Black-backed Butcherbird was heard and then spotted, and we inspected the bower of a Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, with an entrance passage between two rows of erect twigs and decorated with pale moss. We had seen some of the owners in flight. Phil spotted a Black Bittern as it flushed, but it then perched in the reeds so we could all get scope views; a Rufescent Night-Heron also showed well.

We decided that the rain has us beaten so at 5.30pm we returned to the hotel for a warm bath – however, the bird list showed that PAU had really produced lots of new birds for us.

### Wednesday 03 October

We had planned for a 5am start, but the driver of the coach had other ideas, so it was 5.30am before we departed for Varirata NP with Leonard and Ben as our guides. The bad news was that it was still pouring with rain. We drove for just over an hour and parked where the Raggiana BOPs should have been displaying! We waited and snoozed until the rain started to falter and it was okay to bird with umbrellas. A Chestnut-backed Jewel-babbler was singing just below us on a slope, and using the tape we enticed it nearer, but only Leonard managed a view. Phil spotted a Yellow-billed Kingfisher, which was much more obliging. A few Raggiana BOPs could be seen feeding distantly in the trees, but their display had been abandoned due to the rain. We walked to a viewpoint 833 m above sea level but all we could see was mist! Leonard led us on a path through the forest that takes “normal people” some 45 minutes.

We started very well with a Barred Owlet-Nightjar in a tree hole! The scope views were fantastic with the rectal bristles showing well – a new bird for all the party members. The trail yielded many goodies. Some glimpsed a Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher, but everyone had





good views of the Frilled and Spot-winged Monarchs. A Rusty Mouse-Warbler called but couldn't be enticed to the playback. Phil spotted a Pink-spotted Fruit-Dove, and the rest of the group managed to watch Yellow-bellied Gerygones, Chestnut-bellied Fantails, and Lemon-bellied Flycatchers. A Northern Scrub-Robin called from the undergrowth but would not show itself. Right next to the path, the boys scratched a tree and a second Barred Owlet-Nightjar popped its head out! Again, amazing views were had and the cameras clicked! A Marbled Frogmouth was flushed from near the path, but landed close by so we could all see it in the scope – interestingly it was a new bird for both of the local guides.

As we arrived back near the coach, a Pacific Baza flew over – the 45 minute walk had taken almost three hours! We took lunch at the picnic site, with more views of the baza, as well as Boyer's Cuckoo-shrikes and Hooded Pitohui. We heard the raucous call of the Magnificent Riflebird but could not pinpoint the actual bird.

After lunch we walked the short distance back into the forest and were soon watching a Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher – a new bird again for the whole group. We also found both Black Berrypecker and Green-backed Gerygones.

As we drove back down the entrance road we stopped a couple of times for some birding and

photography. For the photographers, the task was to get some decent images of the small group of Rainbow Bee-eaters. Meanwhile the rest of us walked slowly down the road, now in a different, more open habitat, than the upper areas of the park. We found White-throated Honeyeaters, Yellow-bellied Sunbird, a female Leaden Flycatcher, a Great Cuckoo-Dove in flight, and a Pheasant Coucal skulking in the riverside vegetation.

We drove back to the hotel, passing floods which had attracted hundreds of Pied Herons. Later, some of us took to the swimming pool to relax - a Rufous-banded Honeyeater gave close views as it tried to drink from the pool. Our very successful day ended with a fine dinner of barramundi, or the catch-of-the-day; both were excellent!



### **Thursday 04 October**

This morning we took a short city tour with some birding mixed in. Our first port of call was the National Parliament building, which was enormous and shaped like a spirit house, with White-breasted Woodswallows soaring above its gable end. We then travelled to the museum, where their bird collection housed live Eclectus Parrots and Victoria Crowned-Pigeons. Next stop was the zoo, which had cassowaries of three species, plus we found a wild Australian Hobby in the grounds which was trying to catch birds in the open parkland habitat. Finally, we visited the port, where the traffic was somewhat congested! Here we watched Lesser Frigatebirds soaring over the dockside cranes, plus a few Crested Terns. Near the bus we find two Grey-hooded Munias.

The traffic snarl up meant we were late back to the hotel, but we all managed to shower and pack, before we left for the airport just after 12.15pm. We were soon flying on the Air Niugini plane to Singapore, where we connected with our Singapore Airlines flight to London.



### **Friday 05 October**

After being stacked over London we arrived just 10 minutes late into London Heathrow. Bags were soon collected and we said our goodbyes after a very successful tour – with some promising to meet up again on next year's Taiwan holiday.

### **Acknowledgements**

Many thanks to Trans Niugini Tours for making all the arrangements for the tour, and to all the local guides and drivers who added so much to our experiences of PNG. Thanks are also due to the group, who were always punctual and good fun to be with at all times. I hope that we shall meet up again on another Ornitholidays' tour shortly. Also, many thanks to Margaret, Sue, Phil, Connie and John for the photos used in the report.

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December 2012

## Itinerary and Weather

- 21 Sep Arrive Port Moresby. Fly to Mount Hagen. Drive to Rondon Ridge  
Fine and sunny, with rain in late evening 30C (PM) 16C (RR)
- 22 Sep Rondon Ridge  
Fine and sunny, with rain later in day 22C
- 23 Sep Rondon Ridge. Upper Wahgi Valley  
Fine and sunny, with rain later in day 22C
- 24 Sep Rondon Ridge to Mount Hagen. Fly to Ambua Lodge  
Fine and sunny, with rain later in day 20C
- 25 Sep Ambua Lodge  
Fine and sunny, with rain later in day 22C
- 26 Sep Ambua Lodge. Tari Gap  
Fine and sunny, with rain later in day 21C
- 27 Sep Ambua Lodge  
Fine and sunny 22C
- 28 Sep Ambua Lodge. Fly to Karawari Airstrip. Boat to Lodge. Arafundi River pm  
Fine and sunny 34C
- 29 Sep Karawari Lodge  
Fine and sunny 35C
- 30 Sep Karawari Lodge. Down Karawari River in am. Airstrip pm  
Fine and sunny 36C
- 01 Oct Karawari Lodge. Fly to Mount Hagen. To Kumul Lodge (2,800m)  
Fine 15C
- 02 Oct Kumul Lodge to Mount Hagen. Fly Mt. Hagen to Port Moresby. Pacific Adventist University  
Kumul: cloudy, 14C; Port Moresby: sunny, 34C
- 03 Oct Port Moresby to Varirata National Park  
Rain, bright and dry later 24 C
- 04 Oct Port Moresby, city tour  
Sunny 28 C

**CHECKLIST OF BIRDS SEEN DURING TOUR – PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

<b>No of days recorded</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Abundance Scale</b> (max. seen on 1 day)
1 2h means seen on 1 day and heard on 2 other days	H = Mt.Hagen area, incl. Rondon Ridge A = Ambua, Tari, Tari Gap S = Sepik area, esp. Karawari E = Enga Province: Kumul Lodge M = Port Moresby, PAU & Varirata N.P.	1 = 1 - 4 individuals 2 = 5 - 9 3 = 10 - 99 4 = 100 - 999 5 = 1,000+

<b>SPECIES</b>	<b>No of days recorded</b>	<b>Locations</b>	<b>Abundance Scale</b>	<b>SCIENTIFIC NAME</b>
Lesser Frigatebird	1		M 1	<i>Fregata ariel</i>
Little Grebe	1		M 3	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
Little Black Cormorant	4	S	M 3	<i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>
Little Pied Cormorant	5	S	M 1	<i>Phalacrocorax melanoleucos</i>
Great-billed Heron	2	S	1	<i>Ardea sumatrana</i>
Great Egret	5	S	M 2	<i>Ardea alba</i>
Pied Heron	2		M 4	<i>Ardea picata</i>
Intermediate Egret	6	S	M 2	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>
Little Egret	3	S	1	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
Cattle Egret	3		M 3	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
Rufous Night-Heron	2	S	M 1	<i>Nycticorax caledonicus</i>
Black Bittern	1		M 1	<i>Ixobrychus flavicollis</i>
Australian (Sacred) Ibis	2		M 3	<i>Threskiornis molucca</i>
Pacific Baza (Crested Hawk)	1		M 1	<i>Aviceda subcristata</i>
Black-shouldered (-winged) Kite	2	H	M 1	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
Black Kite	10	H S E	M 3	<i>Milvus migrans</i>
Whistling Kite	6	S E	3	<i>Haliastur sphenurus</i>
Brahminy Kite	9	H A S	M 3	<i>Haliastur indus</i>
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	3	S	1	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>
Variable Goshawk <sup>1</sup>	3	H A S	1	<i>Accipiter hiogaster</i>
Little Eagle	1	A	1	<i>Hieraetus morphnoides</i>
Oriental Hobby	1	A	1	<i>Falco severus</i>
Australian Hobby	1		M 1	<i>Falco longipennis</i>
Peregrine Falcon	1	A	1	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Spotted Whistling Duck	1		M 3	<i>Dendrocygna guttata</i>
Plumed Whistling-Duck	1		M 2	<i>Dendrocygna eytoni</i>
Wandering Whistling-Duck	1		M 2	<i>Dendrocygna arcuata</i>
White-headed Shelduck	1		M 1	<i>Tadorna radjah</i>
Pacific Black Duck	5	S	M 4	<i>Anas superciliosa</i>
Brown Quail	3 2h	H A	1	<i>Coturnix ypsilophora</i>
Chestnut Forest Rail	- 1h	A	1	<i>Rallina rubra</i>
Dusky Moorhen	1		M 3	<i>Gallinula tenebrosa</i>
Purple Swamphen	1		M 3	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>
Comb-crested Jacana	1		M 3	<i>Irediparra gallinacea</i>
Masked Lapwing	6	S	M 3	<i>Vanellus miles</i>
Pacific (Lesser) Golden-Plover	1		M 1	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>
Common Sandpiper	3	S	M 1	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
Crested Tern	1		M 2	<i>Sterna bergii</i>
Rock (Feral) Pigeon	6		M 3	<i>Columba livia</i>
Black-billed Cuckoo-Dove	4	H A S	1	<i>Macropygia nigrirostris</i>
Great Cuckoo-Dove	4	H A S	M 1	<i>Reinwardtoena reinwardtii</i>
Emerald Ground-Dove	1	S	1	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>
Stephan's Ground-Dove	1	S	1	<i>Chalcophaps stephani</i>
Peaceful Dove	1		M 3	<i>Geopelia placida</i>
Bar-shouldered Dove	2		M 1	<i>Geopelia humeralis</i>
Victoria Crowned-Pigeon	1	S	1	<i>Goura victoria</i>
Pink-spotted Fruit-Dove	1		M 1	<i>Ptilinopus perlatus</i>
Ornate Fruit-Dove	1	A	1	<i>Ptilinopus ornatus</i>
Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove	1		M 1	<i>Ptilinopus aurantiifrons</i>
White-breasted Fruit-Dove	- 2h	A	2	<i>Ptilinopus rivoli</i>

Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove	3			S		3	<i>Ptilinopus iozonus</i>
Pinon Imperial-Pigeon	4			S		3	<i>Ducula pinon</i>
Collared Imperial-Pigeon	3			S		2	<i>Ducula muellerii</i>
Zoe Imperial-Pigeon	3			S		1	<i>Ducula zoeae</i>
Torresian (Pied) Imperial-Pigeon	2				M	1	<i>Ducula spilorrhoea</i>
Papuan Mountain-Pigeon	4		A			3	<i>Gymnophaps albertisii</i>
Dusky Lory	3			S		5	<i>Pseudeos fuscata</i>
Rainbow Lorikeet	3				E M	3	<i>Trichoglossus haematodus</i>
Western Black-capped Lory	3			S		3	<i>Lorius lory</i>
Red-flanked Lorikeet	2			S		2	<i>Chamosyna placentis</i>
Papuan Lorikeet	3		H A			3	<i>Chamosyna papou</i>
Yellow-billed Lorikeet	6			A	E	3	<i>Neopsittacus musschenbroekii</i>
Orange-billed Lorikeet	2			A		2	<i>Neopsittacus pullicauda</i>
Palm Cockatoo	2			S		1	<i>Probosciger aterrimus</i>
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	5			S	M	2	<i>Cacatua galerita</i>
Buff-faced Pygmy-Parrot	1			S		1	<i>Micropsitta pusio</i>
Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrot	2			A		2	<i>Micropsitta bruijnii</i>
Double-eyed Fig-Parrot	2		H	S		1	<i>Cyclopsitta diophthalma</i>
Edwards' Fig-Parrot	3			S		2	<i>Psittaculirostris edwardsii</i>
Brehm's Tiger-Parrot	3			A	E	1	<i>Psittacella brehmii</i>
Red-cheeked Parrot	7			S	M	3	<i>Geoffroyus geoffroyi</i>
Eclectus Parrot	5			S		3	<i>Eclectus roratus</i>
Papuan King-Parrot	2			A		2	<i>Alisterus chloropterus</i>
Oriental Cuckoo	2			S		1	<i>Cuculus saturatus</i>
Brush Cuckoo	1	1h	H	S		1	<i>Cacomantis variolosus</i>
Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo	-	1h			M	1	<i>Cacomantis castaneiventris</i>
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	1			A		1	<i>Cacomantis flabelliformis</i>
Rufous-throated Bronze-Cuckoo	1	1h	H A			1	<i>Chrysococcyx ruficollis</i>
Australian Koel <sup>2</sup>	1	1h		S		1	<i>Eudynamis cyanocephala</i>
Pheasant Coucal	1				M	1	<i>Centropus phasianinus</i>
Lesser Black Coucal	1	1h		S		1	<i>Centropus bernsteini</i>
Papuan Boobook	1			A		1	<i>Ninox theomacha</i>
Marbled Frogmouth	1				M	1	<i>Podargus ocellatus</i>
Papuan Frogmouth	1			A		1	<i>Podargus papuensis</i>
Barred Owlet-Nightjar	1				M	1	<i>Aegotheles bennettii</i>
Mountain Owlet-Nightjar	-	1h	H			1	<i>Aegotheles albertisi</i>
Uniform Swiftlet	4			S		3	<i>Aerodramus vanikorensis</i>
Mountain Swiftlet	7		H A			3	<i>Aerodramus hirundinaceus</i>
Glossy Swiftlet	10		H A			3	<i>Collocalia esculenta</i>
Papuan Needletail (Spine-tailed Swift)	1			S		1	<i>Mearnsia novaeguineae</i>
Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher	1				M	1	<i>Tanysiptera danae</i>
Rufous-bellied Kookaburra	3	2h		S	M	5	<i>Dacelo gaudichaud</i>
Blue-winged Kookaburra	1				M	1	<i>Dacelo leachii</i>
Hook-billed Kingfisher	2	1h		S		1	<i>Melidora macrorrhina</i>
Sacred Kingfisher	6			A	M	1	<i>Todiramphus sanctus</i>
Yellow-billed Kingfisher	1	1h		S	M	1	<i>Syma torotoro</i>
Mountain Kingfisher	-	3h		A		1	<i>Syma megarhyncha</i>
(Variable) Dwarf Kingfisher	-	1h			M	1	<i>Ceyx lepidus</i>
Rainbow Bee-eater	2	1h	H		M	2	<i>Merops ornatus</i>
Dollarbird	5			S	M	3	<i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>
Blyth's Hornbill	4			S		2	<i>Rhyticeros plicatus</i>
Hooded Pitta	-	1h		S		1	<i>Pitta sordida</i>
Pacific Swallow	10		H	S	M	3	<i>Hirundo tahitica</i>
Grey Wagtail	2			A		1	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
Hooded Cuckoo-shrike	1			A		1	<i>Coracina longicauda</i>
White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	5			S	M	2	<i>Coracina papuensis</i>
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	2				M	1	<i>Coracina novaehollandiae</i>
Stout-billed Cuckoo-shrike	2			A	M	1	<i>Coracina caeruleogrisea</i>
Boyer's Cuckoo-shrike	1	1h		S	M	1	<i>Coracina boyeri</i>
Grey-headed Cuckoo-Shrike	1				M	1	<i>Coracina schisticeps</i>
Black-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	1			A		1	<i>Coracina montana</i>
Black-browed Triller	2			S		1	<i>Lalage atrovirens</i>
Long-tailed Shrike	5		H A		M	1	<i>Lanius schach</i>

Pied Bushchat (Chat)	10		H	A		M	2	<i>Saxicola caprata</i>	
Island Thrush	3			A		E	1	<i>Turdus poliocephalus</i>	
New Guinea Logrunner <sup>3</sup>	1			A			1	<i>Orthonyx novaeguineae</i>	
Spotted Jewel-babbler	-	1h	H				1	<i>Ptilorrhoa leucosticta</i>	
Chestnut-backed Jewel-babbler	-	1h				M	1	<i>Ptilorrhoa castanonotus</i>	
Blue-capped Ifrita	3			A		E	1	<i>Ifrita kowaldi</i>	
Papuan Grassbird <sup>4</sup>	4		H	A			1	<i>Megalurus macrurus</i>	
Island Leaf Warbler	5		H	A			2	<i>Phylloscopus poliocephalus</i>	
White-shouldered Fairy-wren	4		H	A			2	<i>Malurus alboscapulatus</i>	
Orange-crowned Fairy-wren	-	1h	H				1	<i>Clytomyias insignis</i>	
Rusty Mouse Warbler	-	1h				M	1	<i>Crateroscelis murina</i>	
Mountain Mouse-Warbler	1			A			1	<i>Crateroscelis robusta</i>	
Large Scrubwren	2			A		E	2	<i>Sericornis nouhuysi</i>	
Buff-faced Scrubwren	2		H				1	<i>Sericornis perspicillatus</i>	
Papuan Scrubwren	3			A			2	<i>Sericornis papuensis</i>	
Grey Gerygone	2			A			1	<i>Gerygone cinerea</i>	
Yellow-bellied Gerygone	1					M	1	<i>Gerygone chrysogaster</i>	
Green-backed Gerygone	1					M	1	<i>Gerygone chloronotus</i>	
Large-billed Gerygone	2				S		1	<i>Gerygone magnirostris</i>	
Brown-breasted Gerygone	2		H				1	<i>Gerygone ruficollis</i>	
White-bellied Thicket Fantail	1				S		1	<i>Rhipidura leucothorax</i>	
Dimorphic Fantail	2	1h	H	A			1	<i>Rhipidura brachyrhyncha</i>	
Black Fantail	5		H	A			1	<i>Rhipidura atra</i>	
Chestnut-bellied Fantail	1				S		1	<i>Rhipidura hyperythra</i>	
Friendly Fantail	8		H	A		E	2	<i>Rhipidura albolimbata</i>	
Willie Wagtail	12		H	A		E	M	3	<i>Rhipidura leucophrys</i>
Black Monarch	1			A			1	<i>Monarcha axillaris</i>	
Spot-winged Monarch	1					M	1	<i>Monarcha guttula</i>	
Friiled Monarch	2				S	M	2	<i>Arses telescopthalmus</i>	
Leaden Flycatcher	1					M	2	<i>Myiagra rubecula</i>	
Shining Flycatcher	2				S		1	<i>Myiagra alecto</i>	
Black-breasted Boatbill	3		H	A			1	<i>Machaerirhynchus nigripectus</i>	
Lemon-bellied Flycatcher	1					M	1	<i>Microeca flavigaster</i>	
Canary Flycatcher	3		H	A			1	<i>Microeca papuana</i>	
Garnet Robin	2			A		E	1	<i>Eugerygone rubra</i>	
Black-throated Robin	2		H				1	<i>Poecilodryas albonotata</i>	
Northern Scrub-Robin	-	1h				M	1	<i>Drymodes superciliaris</i>	
Lesser Ground Robin	-	1h	H				1	<i>Amalocichla incerta</i>	
White-winged Robin	4			A		E	2	<i>Peneothello sigillatus</i>	
Blue-grey Robin	5		H	A			1	<i>Peneothello cyanus</i>	
Mottled Whistler	1			A			1	<i>Rhagologus leucostigma</i>	
Regent Whistler	2		H	A			1	<i>Pachycephala schlegelii</i>	
Brown-backed Whistler	1			A			1	<i>Pachycephala modesta</i>	
Black-headed Whistler	1		H				3	<i>Pachycephala monacha</i>	
Rufous-naped Whistler	6		H	A		E	1	<i>Aleadryas rufinucha</i>	
Grey Shrike-Thrush	1					M	1	<i>Colluricincla harmonica</i>	
Variable Pitohui	1				S		1	<i>Pitohui kirhocephalus</i>	
Hooded Pitohui	1	1h			S	M	1	<i>Pitohui dichrous</i>	
Rusty Pitohui	1						1	<i>Pitohui ferrugineus</i>	
Black Pitohui	-	1h			S		1	<i>Pitohui nigrescens</i>	
Wattled Ploughbill	-	2h	H				1	<i>Eulacestoma nigropectus</i>	
Black Berrypecker	1					M	1	<i>Melanocharis nigra</i>	
Mid-mountain Berrypecker	5			A		E	1	<i>Melanocharis longicauda</i>	
Fan-tailed Berrypecker	4		H	A		E	1	<i>Melanocharis versteri</i>	
Spotted Berrypecker	2			A			1	<i>Rhamphocharis crassirostris</i>	
Red-capped Flowerpecker <sup>5</sup>	4			A	S	E	1	<i>Dicaeum geelvinkianum</i>	
Tit Berrypecker <sup>6</sup>	1			A			1	<i>Oreocharis arfaki</i>	
Crested Berrypecker <sup>6</sup>	5			A		E	3	<i>Paramythia montium</i>	
Black Sunbird	5				S		1	<i>Nectarinia aspasia (Leptocoma sericea)</i>	
Olive-backed (Yellow-bellied) Sunbird	1					M	1	<i>Nectarinia (Cinnyris) jugularis</i>	
Capped (Western Mountain) White-eye	2			A			3	<i>Zosterops fuscicapillus</i>	
New Guinea White-eye	2		H				2	<i>Zosterops novaeguineae</i>	
Red-throated Myzomela	1				S		1	<i>Myzomela eques</i>	

Mountain Red-headed Myzomela	1		H				1	<i>Myzomela adolphinae</i>	
Red-collared Myzomela	8		H	A		E	3	<i>Myzomela rosenbergii</i>	
Scrub White-eared Meliphaga	1		H				1	<i>Meliphaga albonotata</i>	
Mimic Meliphaga	4					S	2	<i>Meliphaga analoga</i>	
Black-throated Honeyeater	2			A			2	<i>Lichenostomus subfrenatus</i>	
Tawny-breasted Honeyeater	1					S	1	<i>Xanthotis flaviventer</i>	
White-throated Honeyeater	1						M	1	<i>Melithreptus albogularis</i>
Plain Honeyeater	1					S	1	<i>Pycnopygius ixoides</i>	
Marbled Honeyeater	1			A			2	<i>Pycnopygius cinereus</i>	
Streak-headed Honeyeater	2					S	1	<i>Pycnopygius stictocephalus</i>	
Meyer's Friarbird	4					S	1	<i>Philemon meyeri</i>	
Helmeted Friarbird <sup>7</sup>	7		H			S	M	2	<i>Philemon buceroides</i>
Rufous-backed Honeyeater	2	1h	H	A				1	<i>Ptiloprora guisei</i>
Grey-streaked Honeyeater	6		H	A		E	2	<i>Ptiloprora perstriata</i>	
Belford's Melidectes	5			A		E	3	<i>Melidectes belfordi</i>	
Yellow-browed Melidectes	8		H	A			2	<i>Melidectes rufocrissalis</i>	
Ornate Melidectes	1		H				2	<i>Melidectes torquatus</i>	
Common Smoky Honeyeater	9		H	A		E	3	<i>Melipotes fumigatus</i>	
Rufous-banded Honeyeater	2						M	1	<i>Conopophila albogularis</i>
Blue-faced Parrot Finch	1			A				1	<i>Erythrura trichroa</i>
Grey-headed Munia <sup>8</sup>	1						M	1	<i>Lonchura caniceps</i>
Hooded Munia <sup>8</sup>	7		H	A			M	3	<i>Lonchura spectabilis</i>
Mountain Firetail	2			A				1	<i>Oreostruthus fuliginosus</i>
House Sparrow <sup>9</sup>	3						M	1	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Eurasian Tree Sparrow <sup>10</sup>	1		H				M	1	<i>Passer montanus</i>
Singing Starling	5		H				M	3	<i>Aplonis cantoroides</i>
Metallic Starling	4					S		3	<i>Aplonis metallica</i>
Yellow-faced Myna	6					S	M	2	<i>Mino dumontii</i>
Brown Oriole	5					S	M	1	<i>Oriolus szalayi</i>
Figbird	1						M	2	<i>Sphecotheres viridis</i>
Spangled Drongo	3					S	M	2	<i>Dicrurus bracteatus</i>
White-breasted Woodswallow	3						M	3	<i>Artamus leucorhynchus</i>
Great Woodswallow	7		H	A				2	<i>Artamus maximus</i>
Hooded Butcherbird	5					S		3	<i>Cracticus cassicus</i>
Black-backed Butcherbird	2						M	1	<i>Cracticus mentalis</i>
Black Butcherbird	3			A		S		1	<i>Cracticus quoyi</i>
Lowland Peltops	4					S		3	<i>Peltops blainvillii</i>
Mountain Peltops	1			A				1	<i>Peltops montanus</i>
Archbold's Bowerbird <sup>11</sup>	2	1h		A		E		1	<i>Archboldia papuensis</i>
Macgregor's Bowerbird	3	1h	H	A				1	<i>Amblyornis macgregoriae</i>
Yellow-breasted Bowerbird	2		H					1	<i>Chlamydera lauterbachii</i>
Fawn-breasted Bowerbird	3						M	1	<i>Chlamydera cerviniventris</i>
Crested Bird of Paradise	2			A				1	<i>Cnemophilus macgregorii</i>
Loria's Bird of Paradise	2			A				1	<i>Cnemophilus loriae</i>
Glossy-mantled Manucode	3					S		1	<i>Manucodia atra</i>
Short-tailed Paradigalla	4			A				1	<i>Paradigalla brevicauda</i>
Magnificent Riflebird <sup>12</sup>	-	1h					M	1	<i>Ptiloris magnificus</i>
Twelve-wired Bird of Paradise	2					S		1	<i>Seleucidis melanoleuca</i>
Buff-tailed Sicklebill	1			A				1	<i>Epimachus albertsi</i>
Black Sicklebill	5			A				1	<i>Epimachus fastuosus</i>
Brown Sicklebill	6	1h	H	A		E		1	<i>Epimachus meyeri</i>
Ribbon-tailed Astrapia	6			A		E		1	<i>Astrapia mayeri</i>
Stephanie's Astrapia	5		H	A				1	<i>Astrapia stephaniae</i>
Superb Bird of Paradise	3		H	A				1	<i>Lophorina superba</i>
Lawes' Parotia	1			A				1	<i>Parotia lawesii</i>
King of Saxony Bird of Paradise	4		H	A				1	<i>Pteridophora alberti</i>
King Bird of Paradise	1					S		1	<i>Cicinnurus regius</i>
Raggiana Bird of Paradise	2		H				M	2	<i>Paradisaea raggiana</i>
Blue Bird of Paradise	1			A				1	<i>Paradisaea rudolphi</i>
Lesser Melampitta <sup>13</sup>	2			A		E		1	<i>Melampitta lugubris</i>
Grey Crow	2					S		1	<i>Corvus tristis</i>
Torresian Crow	3							3	<i>Corvus orru</i>

**TAXONOMIC NOTES** (following J. Clements' *Birds of the World – A Checklist*, 2000, plus updates).

- |    |                            |   |
|----|----------------------------|---|
| 1  | Variable Goshawk           | This is a recent split from Australian Grey Goshawk, <i>A. novaehollandiae</i> .  |
| 2  | Australian Koel            | <i>E. cyanocephala</i> is a recent split from Asian Koel, <i>E. scolopacea</i> .  |
| 3  | New Guinea Logrunner       | <i>O. novaguineae</i> is a recent split from the Australian <i>O. temminckii</i> .  |
| 4  | Papuan Grassbird           | Grassbirds of the Central Highlands are now classified as Papuan, split from the Australian Tawny (which also breeds in the Fly River area of PNG).   |
| 5  | Red-capped Flowerpecker    | Papuan Flowerpecker has been split into three species: the one that occurs in our area is Red-capped, <i>D. geelvinkianum</i> .   |
| 6  | Berrypeckers and Longbills | Two species, Tit and Crested Berrypeckers, have now been removed from the flowerpecker family <i>Dicaeidae</i> , and are now recognized as New Guinea's only endemic family, <i>Paramythiidae</i> . The other berrypeckers are also removed from <i>Dicaeidae</i> , and are placed in <i>Melanocharitidae</i> , which includes the longbills and the aberrant Dwarf Honeyeater. |
| 7  | Helmeted Friarbird         | At present lumped with the N. Australian form, this is likely to be split in future to New Guinea Friarbird ( <i>Philemon novaeguineae</i> )  |
| 8  | Munia                      | Munia is now preferred to the older name Mannikin for this group of Asian waxbills.   |
| 9  | House Sparrow              | This is a recent colonist, arriving in Port Moresby in 1992; and therefore not in <i>Beehler</i> .  |
| 10 | Eurasian Tree Sparrow      | This is a recent colonist and therefore not in <i>Beehler</i> .   |
| 11 | Archbold's Bowerbird       | <i>A. papuensis</i> may be split into 2 species: Archbold's ( <i>A. papuensis</i> ) in Irian Jaya, and <i>A. sanfordi</i> in the Papua highlands; but this is not widely accepted.  |
| 12 | Magnificent Riflebird      | Two populations are likely to be split in future: birds in the west give a clear whistle while near Port Moresby they growl. If split, the western birds would remain <i>P. magnificus</i> ; while eastern birds would be called Eastern Riflebird, <i>P. intercedens</i> .   |
| 13 | Melampitta                 | The two Melampitta are now regarded as birds of paradise, in the family <i>Paradisaeidae</i> .  |



**Front cover: Victoria Crowned-Pigeon**

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## CHECKLIST OF BIRDS SEEN DURING TOUR – SINGAPORE

Lesser Whistling-Duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>
Blue-eared Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo meninting</i>
White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>
Collared Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus chloris</i>
Blue-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops philippinus</i>
Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamys scolopacea</i>
Dollarbird	<i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>
Rainbow Lorikeet (introduced)	<i>Trichoglossus haematodus</i>
Germain's or Black-nest Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia germani/maxima</i>
Asian House Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>
Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
Spotted Dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>
Pink-necked Pigeon	<i>Treron vernans</i>
White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>
Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>
Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striatus</i>
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>
House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
Black-naped Oriole	<i>Oriolus chinensis</i>
Pied Fantail	<i>Rhipidura javanica</i>
Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>
Asian Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>
Asian Brown Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa daurica</i>
Oriental Magpie Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>
Asian Glossy Starling	<i>Aplonis panayensis</i>
Javan (White-vented) Mynah	<i>Acridotheres grandis</i>
Hill Mynah	<i>Gracula religiosa</i>
Pacific Swallow	<i>Hirundo tahitica</i>
Yellow-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus goiavier</i>
Olive-winged Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus plumosus</i>
Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>
Ashy Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus ruficeps</i>
Arctic Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus borealis</i>
Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum cruentatum</i>
Olive-backed Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia jugularis</i>
Plain-throated Sunbird	<i>Anthreptes malacensis</i>
Crimson Sunbird	<i>Aethopyga siparaja</i>
Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>

This list represents those birds and other animals seen by party members of this tour.



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