

CRUISES FOR NATURE'S CRUISE ON THE 'SPIRIT OF ENDERBY'

WESTERN PACIFIC ODYSSEY

*New Zealand, New Caledonia, Solomon Islands, Caroline Islands, Bonin Islands,
Izu Islands and Japan*

14 March to 19 April 2009



Leaders: Tony Pym and onboard guides

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A Personal Diary

Saturday 14 March

The meeting time for the group was 1500 at the Cathay Pacific check-in desks at Terminal 3, Heathrow. Within ten minutes all the group were accounted for, everyone was on time, and it was nice to see some familiar faces once again for this very special holiday.

We went through the Security area and into the Departure Lounge to await the call for our first flight, to Hong Kong. At the gate everyone was introduced to each other, all were looking forward to the trip and eager to get going.

The flight, by Boeing 747-400, was to take just under 11 hours. We left the docking bay on time and were soon airborne....the adventure was underway!

We flew through the night, our route taking us south of Russia, over Kazakhstan, then across central China to make our approach to Hong Kong.

Sunday 15 March

It was 1400 local time in Hong Kong when we touched down. The transfer involved passing through Security once more and this took time. Our plane was beginning to load when we reached the gate and soon the second leg of our journey was underway, from Hong Kong to Auckland, New Zealand. This, another long haul flight, would take some 10 hours, most of it flying again through the night. Most of the group did get some sleep on both these long flights to the southern hemisphere.

Monday 16 March

At last, we touched down; we had arrived into New Zealand. It was 0715 in the morning, and it was a lovely sunny day in Auckland. Once we had cleared Immigration and collected our bags we met our two drivers in the Arrivals Hall. We loaded the luggage and drove into the city, through the morning rush-hour traffic, and to our city centre hotel. Common birds from home, like Blackbird and House Sparrow, are introductions here, as are the ubiquitous Common Mynas.

It was still early morning and our rooms were not yet cleaned and ready, so we enjoyed coffee and toast in the hotel's café. Once into our rooms we showered and freshened-up after the long flights. Most wanted a short walk, to stretch the legs, so we met in the lobby and strolled down to the waterfront. The harbourside was busy with its bistros and smart cafés, only metres from luxury yachts moored along the quay. Noisy Red-billed and Kelp Gulls added to the holiday atmosphere. A longer walk took us to a small pool, close to the Parnell district of the city, where many Sacred Kingfishers were feeding on small crabs on the exposed mud and a few Black-winged Stilts were at the water's edge. Silver-eyes were in the bushes, feeding on berries, and a lone Tui put in an all too brief appearance.

In the evening we walked back to the quayside and had dinner at an Italian restaurant, which was enjoyed by all, before returning to the hotel and to that long-awaited bed for the night. It had been a very long but enjoyable day.

Tuesday 17 March

We had a relaxing morning, giving everyone the chance to 'recharge their batteries' and readjust their body clocks. Breakfast was served from 0700 to 1000, some went for a walk to the harbourside and others went for some light local birding.

The group met at midday, to check out from the hotel, and to put the luggage into storage for a few hours whilst we lunched down at the waterside.

Our three taxis arrived at the hotel at 1500 to transfer us to the Mercure Hotel, the meeting point for transfer to the ship. A number of other passengers were here and we made new friends, who would be with us for the next month. Personally, it was nice to see birders from many years ago, some I had not seen for 20 years.

A coach took us to the docks where there was a security check and then our main bags were whisked away to our allotted cabins. The Expedition Leader, Nathan Russ, welcomed us aboard and the Hotel Manager, Robyn, showed everyone to his or her 'home' for the next 33 days.

We took time to familiarise ourselves with the boat, moving from the cabins to the lecture room, the restaurant areas and so on. Fresh juice was served in the small lounge where we met all the other travellers whilst the New Zealand customs staff cleared us for leaving. Later Nathan gave a briefing about the journey ahead and introduced the staff, and Robyn explained the on-board workings of the ship.

We ate our first dinner aboard, then relaxed chatting before retiring for our first night at sea. Tomorrow was to be a full-day sailing the Hauraki Gulf, so there would be many new birds to look forward to....

Wednesday 18 March

The ship sailed through the night. For some the motion took a little getting used to. By the early morning, we were off the Hauraki Gulf, now a legendary pelagic birding site, particularly after the rediscovery of New Zealand Storm-petrel there as recently as 2003.

Many people were out, on the decks, before breakfast to get their birding lists underway. Black Petrels were common and a couple of Flesh-footed Shearwaters started the first debate on identification between these two. *Pterodroma* petrels, the dynamic gadfly petrels, were distant, and most, if not all, had to be Cook's Petrels, though a later bird did show good qualities to be a Pycroft's - these two have plumage and field features that directly overlap.

Chris Collins, one of the guides aboard, began the 'chumming'; firstly a container dripping fish oil was positioned over the stern and later larger fish offal was thrown overboard. We cruised around the slick that was created and after some time finally attracted a few storm-petrels. A New Zealand Storm-petrel came bouncing into the ship's wake, a key bird for this voyage (even if a little distant), and a couple of Wilson's Storm-petrels were seen later.

Between breakfast and lunch the birds mounted up. Distant Grey Ternlets were feeding close to Maori Rocks and a few Black-browed Albatrosses (and one a definite Campbell with its honey-coloured irides). Next came Grey-faced Petrels followed by two Fairy Prions. Shearwaters were well represented with many Buller's around the ship and a solitary Sooty that made a pass. We got the cetacean list underway with a good record, a pod of False Killer Whales, and the more common Short-beaked Common and Bottlenose Dolphins.

In the evening, the first birdlog was called for everyone to chip in, and then it was dinner followed by a short slide show in the lecture room showing some of the seabird species to be expected on the first leg of our journey.

Thursday 19 March

Pre-breakfast birding from the decks was excellent. A young 'Wandering Albatross', two Red-tailed Tropicbirds and two new gadfly petrels, Black-winged and White-necked.

It was a lovely day and the sea was smooth with only a slight swell. It became hotter during the morning and the sunshade was erected over the upper deck. The morning's birds included many Grey-faced Petrels, a few Kermadec Petrels and a lone Gould's. A most odd find was a New Zealand Fantail sitting on a handrail at the stern. Why this resident species was here was anyone's guess. We were more than 50 nautical miles from shore and I wondered if it had been on the ship from leaving Auckland?

The numbers of Black-winged Petrels picked up once more during the afternoon and we still had a couple of Black Petrels that came past the boat. Later examination of a photograph showed we had seen a Collared Petrel also, maybe the first record for New Zealand.

Friday 20 March

At sea, sailing towards Norfolk Island, and during the morning we had a few squalls of rain. Masked Boobies shone brilliant white against the grey sea. Black-winged and Grey-faced Petrels shot across the bow and now we were into the range of Gould's and Kermadec Petrels also. Beautiful and elegant Red-tailed Tropicbirds kept going, showing little interest in us.

The energetic gadfly petrels kept everyone looking as they arced over the waves - we saw six species of these *Pterodroma* today. The numbers of Kermadec Petrels increased slightly and during the afternoon we saw our first impressive Tahiti Petrel, later adding three more. This was a 'wanted' bird for many.

After dinner there was a briefing about the landing tomorrow at Norfolk Island and a stimulating discussion on some problematic *Pterodroma*. A number of photos had already been taken, including yesterday and today's birds, and downloaded from the digital cameras straight onto laptops. The main confusion is sorting light-phase Collared Petrels and Gould's Petrels.

Saturday 21 March

At dawn Norfolk Island was in view. As we approached it became very clear that the sea conditions were deteriorating fast. The weather chart showed we had a cyclone to our north and this had broken into two deep depressions creating strong wind from the east.

The captain tried two positions in an endeavour to get us ashore; both sites had jetties, but boarding the zodiacs, even dropping the gangplank, were just too dangerous. The swell was getting worse and crashing waves could be seen inshore. We sailed to yet another point, trying the lea of the island, but the swell here along the beach was two metres high, again too dangerous for the zodiacs to attempt a landing. After great debate amongst the staff, inevitably the decision was taken to leave Norfolk Island...we simply could not land, and the Expedition Leader would now review the best alternatives to use the extra time.

We began heading northwards, the island disappearing off the stern. Many Black-winged Petrels, which breed on Norfolk Island, were passing fast, many crossing the bow giving great views. Wedge-tailed Shearwaters were now becoming common, sometimes seen in feeding flocks of thirty and more.

A White-bellied Storm-petrel put on a great show crossing from port to starboard, this species had never been seen before on the Western Pacific Odyssey and another bonus was a Providence Petrel that came in high, to cross the bow, then to bank to show the gleaming white underwing flashes. This species was not seen on last year's cruise.

The day got even better when two beaked whales breached in front of the boat at position 25 57'S 167 41'E. The photos showed them to be Ginkgo-toothed Beaked Whales, a rarely seen cetacean with an almost unknown ecology. The identification is usually based on the animals' surfacing but here the whole thing was out of the water!

With more Tahiti Petrels and a few White-necked Petrels to end the day we went down below for the birdlog and dinner. Some of the more interesting photos were discussed further in the lecture room. The photographers had captured many of today's treats including the White-bellied Storm-petrel and the beaked whales and, of course, more puzzling *Pterodromas*.

Sunday 22 March

This morning the weather was not good. It was dull, overcast and squalls came and went. Birding was only possible from the bridge or the sheltered decks during the morning. We were in an area where we needed to be vigilant and where I had high hopes for Providence Petrel. We had a narrow window of a couple of days only for this species, and we were not disappointed - ten birds before lunch! These birds showed an obvious grey cast to their backs and rumps. The supporting cast included White-necked, Black-winged and Gould's-type Petrels.

The squalls were lighter during the afternoon but, interestingly, there were no more records of Providence Petrels after lunch. The seabirding now involved birds of quality, not quantity.

The Expedition Leader gave a quick briefing as we ate dinner. It was regarding the landings tomorrow on New Caledonia. We relaxed at the bar after our meal, socialising and chatting, before going to our cabins.

Monday 23 March

In contrast to yesterday, it was a lovely morning. The island of New Caledonia lay ahead and we could see the waves breaking over the reef in front of the island. Large numbers of Wedge-tailed Shearwaters skirted around the boat and Gould's Petrels came hurtling by, plus a few Tahiti Petrels also.

A pilot boat arrived to guide us through the reef to the harbour. Crested Terns, typically an inshore species, flew past and an Osprey lifted from a distant coral cay.

We waited to hear the expedition team's plans for the day as the authorities cleared the ship into the island. We were ahead of schedule and they had tried to arrange buses to take everyone to Mount Koghi, a birding site about forty minutes from the capital Noumea.

As time went on, and lunchtime passed, it became clear there was a problem getting us to the interior. The buses were available but not the drivers! After more and more frantic telephone calls the idea was abandoned. Plan number two came into effect - a visit to the botanical gardens, just outside the town. Those interested met by the gangplank and started what turned out to be quite a long hike. The walk was further than anticipated, and we were to learn, luckily before reaching there, that the gardens were closed. We had a few birds for the day trip though - Green-backed White-eye and Brown Honeyeater, both endemic species to New Caledonia - and, at least, we did get ashore for some needed exercise.

We arrived back at the ship early evening. Dinner was to be a little earlier than usual as tomorrow would be a *very* early start for everyone

Tuesday 24 March

An early wake-up call had everyone roused at 0300 (yes, 0300!) and breakfast was served 0415. We left the ship and had a one-and-half hour drive in a coach to the Parc Rivière Bleue. It was dark as we left and some took the opportunity of a little more shut-eye on the way.

At the park, two Frenchmen met us, Jean-Marc Meriot, the Head Ranger, and Yves Letocart, who is widely accredited with saving the park's famous resident, the Kagu. We drove to another point where we boarded smaller buses that took us deeper into the park. Once everyone was gathered we walked the main trail. Jean-Marc, at the front, played the call of Kagu but it was at the back that I turned to see the first bird looking at the group from five metres away!

This is an amazing bird. Endemic to New Caledonia it is an endangered species whose affinities are still not resolved. Once thought to be related to pigeons, then considered belonging to the herons, after that the cranes and rails yet recent studies indicate that the Sunbittern of Central and South America is its closest living relative (thus the two form a distinct Gondwanan lineage). It is placed in its own family (monotypic) and has unique structures that cover the nostrils, not shared with any other bird. Incidentally, it is these that give it the scientific name *Rhynochetos* meaning nasal corns!

Within moments we had more birds further down the trail, at one time seven birds had gathered, calling loudly. Birds ran only metres in front of us and others could be seen stalking insects on the forest floor.

The rain started to get heavier and soon everyone had his or her waterproofs on or brollies up. We got drenched and birding became more difficult as the day progressed with the rain so heavy at times that the binoculars got soaked. There were occasionally birds though; Barred Honeyeaters, colourful New Caledonia Myzomelas, plus Yellow-bellied Robins and New Caledonia Whistlers, and another of the fantails, Streaked Fantail - all these birds endemic or near-endemics.

With the poor conditions lunch was brought forward and the baguettes and fruit were eaten at two shelters along the trail. A short pause in the rain gave most Southern Shrikebill and New Caledonia Cuckoo-shrike.

We left the park a little earlier than planned as Chris Collins had a 'stakeout' for Red-throated Parrotfinch and we were successful in finding a small flock in grassland bordering scrub before heading back to Noumea and the ship.

A hot drink, followed by a hot shower, was welcomed after getting wet through. The ship set sail at 1600. All passengers were called to a briefing to be told that there was a severe weather warning out for all shipping. A tropical cyclone was heading our way and currently was to the northwest of the island. A cyclone has the same intensity as a hurricane and the captain decided a different course was preferable. We would sail south firstly, then take an easterly course past New Caledonia, which would avoid, hopefully, the main thrust of the storm.

Wednesday 25 March

During the night we headed south. We turned then, on a course to the east, so as to pass New Caledonia before heading north once again. There was a grey sea and rain was in the air. Birding was difficult in these conditions; the commonest species was Wedge-tailed Shearwater.

During the morning there were a few bright spells, both in the weather and the birds seen. Providence Petrels were being seen still, though we must now be on the edge of their western range. A Black-bellied Storm-petrel was seen very well and Tahiti Petrels put on a great show, including two birds that followed the fish oil drip at the stern for more than half-hour.

The weather really was fickle; sometimes there were banks of rain, then a sudden bright patch. A new weather chart, mid-afternoon, showed that tropical cyclone 'Jasper' had changed direction to move westwards. It was good news for us, meaning we (and it) were progressively getting further apart!

The birdlog tonight had to cover the last three days and took time to complete. We stopped the log mid-way to sit for dinner, and then carried on afterwards to get up to date.

Thursday 26 March

The sea had calmed down and many passengers were out and on the decks. A couple of storm-petrels were called but each time seen by few, and none were identified. The prize in this area would be Polynesian Storm-petrel, an uncommon bird throughout its entire range (and, I believe, rarer than most realise).

Wedge-tailed Shearwaters were the commonest bird and still all were dark-phase birds, not one light phase to date. Distant Red-footed Boobies and a few debateable terns added interest.

After a major detour the cruise was well behind schedule. The opposite of a few days back, but this is expedition cruising for you. The Expedition Leader made a number of changes 'behind the scenes' to announce that all landings in the Solomon Islands would most likely go ahead, even if time ashore had to be reduced to get us back onto schedule.

Friday 27 March

It was a nice day, very warm out on the decks and the sea was now calm again after the last few days. We were sailing in tropical waters and this meant tropical birds. Large numbers of Sooty Terns regularly appeared and a flock of some hundreds gathered over a fish school. A Red-footed Booby tried catching flying fish put up by the ship and later it was joined by a second. Both would cruise steadily at the ship's speed to then turn and dash rapidly after the flying fish as they lifted from the water. The birds took

advantage of the lift from the ship to then zoom in for the attack. A Wilson's Storm-petrel was seen to come close to the bow.

It was generally a quiet morning for birds though, and most people chatted, sunbathed or simply took it easy on deck or in the lounge.

After lunch it became hotter and those on the upper decks were using copious amounts of sunscreen. A few more birds were seen during the afternoon, including another large flock of Sooty Terns with both Brown and Red-footed Boobies mixed in. A Flesh-footed Shearwater was a surprise, though was still just within the species known range.

All passengers met in the bar for the day's birdlog before dinner and Chris Collins gave a presentation on some of the cetacean species we may encounter over the coming days.

Saturday 28 March

A herd of some 12 Sperm Whales were blowing at a distance in the early morning. The views were not good but the distinctive blows of these whales, always forward and to the right side, could be seen. More whale blows were seen later but too far away for certain species identification.

Before lunch a Flesh-footed Shearwater came alongside the ship, giving excellent views, a species on the westernmost edge of its range here, and we came upon a few mixed feeding flocks of Wedge-tailed Shearwaters and Sooty Terns.

Birding continued, though on the upper decks the temperature soared into the mid 30°C - it was hot in the direct sun! Occasional boobies, frigatebirds and shearwaters kept the interest. A most unusual record was a Great Cormorant that kept circling the ship trying to land, as we were 70 miles from the nearest land, Rennell Island.

A chum slick was laid in the late afternoon and the *Spirit of Enderby* turned to follow the trail then hove to, to see what species would arrive. I think many were still hoping for the Polynesian Storm-petrel, not seen on the voyage, but it did attract five Tahiti Petrels that arrived from downwind, following in the chum scent.

After dinner, an important briefing was held in the lecture room on tomorrow's landing at Rennell Island.

Sunday 29 March

Breakfast was served at 0600. The immigration and customs team from the Solomon Islands were already aboard and the paperwork was completed quickly.

At 0715 we were called to our first zodiac boarding. The life jackets were donned and checked, tags turned to let the staff know we were onshore, and we boarded the zodiacs. The boats had to negotiate a reef and then landed bow-up onto a sandy beach.

On shore all the passengers soon assembled to then break into smaller separate groups for the various walks on offer – these were graded from the hardcore birding through to easy walking and ending with a snorkelling option.

After a short distance my group was too many in number and needed breaking into two, and I set off with eight people and a local islander called Lamik, accompanied by his nephew, Reagan. This 'medium' classified walk was still difficult as it crossed over a sloping raised coral bed into deep forest but everyone enjoyed the experience as well as the new birds. We did well with views of all five endemics - Rennell Fantail, Rennell Shrikebill, Rennell White-eye, Rennell Starling and Bare-eyed White-eye. Some very attractive tropical pigeons were seen also – both Pacific Imperial and Island Imperial Pigeons, and the Silver-capped Fruit-Dove. We were all particularly impressed with Finsch's Pygmy Parrot, a tiny job, seen climbing vertically the trunk of a large tree.

It had been hot and humid and the villagers supplied us with thirst-quenching coconuts for liquid refreshment before we returned to the ship where lunch awaited us.

The ship sailed, our course now Makira (it used to be called Anuta Island). This took us around the west of Rennell where a few seabirds were seen before dusk. These included Brown Booby and both the white and dark morphs of Red-footed Booby, a couple of the familiar Wedge-tailed Shearwaters and some 20 frigatebirds (both Great and Lesser) which were heading to a known large roost at a freshwater lake on Rennell Island.

Everyone met for a drink and the birdlog in the bar area at 1900. We had dinner and then went to a briefing to hear about tomorrow's landing at Makira, still within the Solomon Islands group.

Monday 30 March

The wake-up calls came at 0630 on the public address system. After having breakfast we boarded the zodiacs to be taken into Makira. This landing was at a jetty where many of the local people had gathered - they hadn't seen any tourist boat since the *Spirit of Enderby* this time last year, and that was the first tourist boat ever!

After changing footwear and handing-in the life jackets to the crew we started the walk. There was one main track that led from the jetty uphill to then flatten out at the ridge. This island has a number of Solomon endemics and soon there were shouts coming for some of these.

The first was Red-knobbed Imperial-Pigeon, a cracking bird, that was found to be common but in amongst the small flock was a pigeon that is now classed as endangered and declining rapidly in numbers, the Chestnut-bellied Imperial-Pigeon. Recently the only records of this bird came from this small island.

A huge bird was seen, perched in a dead tree to the right of the path. It was a Solomon Sea-Eagle, a bird that can be difficult to see throughout the islands, despite it being so large. Soon, we had another bird that came flying in to join it. Sooty Myzomelas flew over our heads and now and again came the metallic 'chip' calls from Mottled Flowerpeckers. A San Cristobal Melidectes, a honeyeater with a long name, perched in the open for all to admire as a pair of Yellow-bibbed Lories came screeching over the road ahead.

At the far end of our walk a particularly large fruiting tree held many pigeons and additionally two starling species, Metallic Starling and the Makiran endemic, the San Cristobal Starling.

The weather turned for the worse and soon we had heavy downpours, which eased to only start once more. It didn't stop the birding on the way back. A pair of vociferous Eclectus Parrots flew lazily to land and be put into the scopes for amazing views. As we returned to the jetty a White-collared Monarch and a Golden Whistler were found in the same bush and Brahminy Kites and a Dollarbird perched atop tall dead trees.

Back at the jetty we boarded the zodiacs to be taken to a small offshore island where the local people had laid on a welcome for us. It was very moving to see the effort they had gone through. Tribal warriors with spears ran towards the zodiacs and us. It was like a form of the Maori 'haka', bearing in mind these people were once cannibals! All the young girls were in grass skirts and handed leis, flower garlands, to us. Coconuts were prepared as refreshment and some of the ladies sang songs for us. There followed a few speeches from the chief and the local government representatives and the reply came from the Expedition Leader. The entire village were here and I learnt that other islanders had paddled canoes for more than three hours to see us.

We left Makira and the *Spirit of Enderby* started to sail for Honiara, the main town on the island of Guadalcanal. Dusk approached and a Brown Noddy came to roost on a handrail outside one of the cabins. It was dinner next with our usual banter about the day, before a briefing on tomorrow's landing, another new island for us, Guadalcanal.

Tuesday 31 March

The very early morning call was at the 0345 as the Honiara landing was scheduled for 0500. The zodiacs took us into the harbour, past a number of boats, in the dark. Two buses were waiting plus a couple of 4-wheel-drives. These took us through Honiara, which hadn't woken up yet, and on to Mount Austin, the chosen birding site.

The buses struggled but got us as high up the mountain track as was possible. The walk was downhill for some (and most of our group) or by boarding the 4-wheel-drives and going down to then walk back up the track. As dawn broke we were finding birds. Brown-winged Starlings were high in the trees and then came an amazing call, containing gruffs and growls, from a Buff-headed Coucal - two were seen briefly.

We walked down a slippery track, birding was not as easy as expected and in the cool air there were fewer birds than usual. Yellow-bibbed Parrots called deafeningly as they flew overhead and soon we had found their relatives, the impressive Ducorp's Cockatoos that gave a raucous 'erck erck' flight-call. It took time for everyone to see a tiny bird that lived up to its most suitable name, the Midget Flowerpecker and, another small one, Black-headed Myzomela, seemed just as active and never pausing.

At various points we met with other passengers along the trail to compare notes and find out where we should be, and what we had missed so far. This information led us to three species of cuckoo-shrikes - Yellow-eyed, White-bellied and the endemic Solomon Cuckoo-Shrike.

At a viewpoint on the return walk a delightful Steel-blue Flycatcher was being watched when two giant Blyth's Hornbills came powering over. We finished with two Yellow-faced Mynas, so had succeeded in seeing a lot of birds in a short time.

We returned to Honiara, a rather shabby town that was now a hive of activity, and arrived back at the ship in time for lunch.

The afternoon was quiet for seabirds. Only a couple of our group saw a Tropical Shearwater, one of the recent splits from Audubon's Shearwater, as most were still showering after the morning's activities or chatting over tea and coffee.

Mid-afternoon and blows from whales had us rushing back onto the decks. The forward blow meant they were Sperm Whales and the first dived with tail flukes up, but a second animal stayed logging in the same place as the ship passed closely. The enormous bulbous head, wrinkly back and small dorsal fin of this species could be clearly seen.

Tomorrow's landing would be at the island of Kolombangara.

Wednesday 1 April

Birding early on the decks produced only a Crested Tern and four Sooty Terns. After breakfast it was extremely quiet with seawatching producing no birds at all, nothing until lunchtime. The boredom was relieved when a pod of distant Short-finned Pilot Whales appeared to the port side

We had an early lunch to prepare for our next island. The zodiacs took us inshore to a small village called Kukundu on Kolombangara, in the Western Province. The landing point was at a Christian school where striking Moustached Treeswifts perched in the trees, a delightful bird. We were welcomed by the Principal and soon were underway on foot and into the forest.

Chris Collins gathered all the passengers together along a small track. He had a singular bird in mind, the Roviana Rail, a species discovered only in 1991. The tape was played, no response. Was it due to the heat of the day whereas in the past the ship had been here in the mornings?

We tried again, still nothing. A villager came along the track and told us a bird was calling further along, and he had seen another yet further. So, we tried at the new spot, only to find the bird ran behind us, across the track. It was obvious there was more than one when some people saw it in one direction and others the other way! It was playing 'hide and seek'. I expected the local children, who were watching with great amusement, to shout, pantomime-like... 'it's behind you!'

Soon, panic over, everyone had views, and we broke into different groups heading for separate walking trails. My group of 12 was helped along by Carlton, a local lad who took us to another forest entrance. It was a good walk, on mostly level ground, but it was still hot and humid until under the shade of the trees.

At the edge of the village the School Principal beckoned us over as there in a domestic garden, after all the earlier effort, was a Roviana Rail, walking only four metres from us. He said he knew where the nest of this 'grass bird' (as he called it) was, and offered to show it to us, but we declined as the bird may have become anxious.

On the top of a knoll we could look out to see a huge Solomon Sea-Eagle soaring, carrying a large rat in its talons. The local boys pointed to another raptor perched in a coconut tree and through the scopes we could identify it as a male Pied Goshawk. A lovely Steel-blue Flycatcher performed well under the forest canopy followed by a new bird for us, White-capped Monarch, endemic to the central Solomons. We found Eclectus Parrots and the common Rainbow Lorikeets but couldn't find any of the Solomon Island's endemic parrots.

Back at the beach we donned our life jackets once more and boarded the zodiacs for the transfer back to the ship. It had been another memorable day in the Solomon Islands. Who could forget the Roviana Rail?

Thursday 2 April

Today was important for those with a specific interest in seabirds. It may be our only chance for a near-mythical species, Heinroth's Shearwater, and many were on the decks at dawn to begin seawatching. We were over a submarine canyon to the southwest of the island of Bougainville and only in this area has the shearwater been seen.

We got off to a good start when a pod of Rough-toothed Dolphins came close to the ship, showing their diagnostic pink lips. A skua lifted from the water ahead, an adult Long-tailed. Then we came across a feeding flock of hundreds of noddies, other terns and shearwaters.

The canyon ledge was living up to expectation. The upwellings gave us so many species of birds and cetaceans that there was always something of interest, even if the numbers weren't high. I called a logging *Kogia* (either a Dwarf or Pygmy Sperm Whale) that was later identified from photographs as a Dwarf Sperm Whale. A large group of Short-finned Pilot Whales came past.

The ship exploded into action when an 'interesting shearwater' appeared, flying across from port to starboard...it was THE bird, a Heinroth's Shearwater, but this was totally eclipsed later with a bird seen sitting on the water. The captain turned the *Spirit of Enderby* around, all 72 metres of her, and started to head back for this bird so that everyone could come onto the decks. We had great views of this virtually unknown species and could see the long bill and underwing flashes that identify this very small dark shearwater. We noted that the flight was determined, with wings bowed, not as fluttery in flight as I expected though maybe the very calm conditions were relevant.

After this star bird we continued to find another feeding flock, which contained our first pale-phase Wedge-tailed Shearwater, a full-tailed Pomarine Skua and we spotted another two Heinroth's in with all the action. We had seen four Heinroth's now.

Also cetaceans featured heavily in today's sightings with many Sperm Whales and Short-finned Pilot Whales plus the Rough-toothed Dolphins and good views of Fraser's Dolphins. There were others, like the unidentified beaked whales and some 'blackfish', the latter may have been Pygmy Killer Whales but, as with so many cetaceans, were best left unnamed.

All these birds and mammals today really did impress me, and only strengthened my opinion of the importance of this little-explored area. It had been a truly memorable day in a little known region of sea.

Friday 3 April

Early morning and we were now along the other side of the undersea canyon, off the islands of New Britain and New Ireland. This area has recently received fame and status with the refinding of a seabird, Beck's Petrel, which had been lost since 1929 when first described. Our mission today was to try and see this one, observed by so few people.

For me, it was up and out on the deck before dawn, about 0620 this morning. Our first birds were the precursors, Tahiti Petrels, the species that Beck's is always compared against in the literature. Two Tahiti's flew in front of the bow, about twenty minutes apart.

The commoner birds in this area - Red-footed Booby, Brown Noddy and Sooty Tern - were in view regularly and in one feeding frenzy we were to find small numbers of Streaked Shearwaters (this bird would become numerous as we headed further north) and, maybe a little surprising, were the numbers of Heinroth's Shearwaters – we tallied about 20 of this range-restricted species today and the great views helped.

At lunchtime a lone Wilson's Storm-petrel flew directly past the ship, determined to keep going on a straight track. Skuas, were well represented with Arctic, Pomarine and Long-tailed, some hassling the terns, others often quite high whilst migrating.

It turned into an amazing day for cetaceans that that could be seen well on a glassy tropical sea. Pantropical Spotted Dolphins, then a school of Spinner Dolphin that leaped high from the sea to tumble in the air and splash back into the water. A group of three *Kogia*-like animals that fluked were found to be certain Pygmy Killer Whales (unlike yesterday's sighting).

A Collared Kingfisher was a surprising passenger on board that flew around the ship a few times, perching on the mast wires and preferring the revolving weather vane. We had seen that Collared and Sacred Kingfishers on the islands had shown confusing features, including bill length and supercilia, and this one was subject to some debate also.

The bird of the day though was undoubtedly Beck's Petrel and we had two good sightings. The first was a bird early morning that came along the port side. It was a small 'Tahiti-type' but the jizz was so different from Tahiti Petrel - small, appearing relatively stockier proportionately, and wings that seemed more rounded at the tips. The second, luckily seen by most aboard, in the late afternoon came to the chum slick that had been laid close to the island of Feni. (In retrospect I believe we should have put down more chum off the south of New Ireland and not here). The slick took time to bring in any birds and many people were losing heart. We stood off for probably two hours and, in that time, only a single Wedge-tailed Shearwater appeared and, fortunately, this lone Beck's.

A long day on deck had been rewarded. We had success with species known only from this very small pocket of ocean.

Saturday 4 April

We had sailed from the Solomon Islands; our course was now due north towards Truk Island (also called Chuuk) in the Caroline Islands. A few cetaceans early morning included a small pod of False Killer Whales and during the afternoon a Risso's Dolphin was seen to breach - I had not seen this behaviour from this species before today.

The sea was exceptionally quiet (especially after the seabird sightings of the last few days!) added to which it was very hot on the open decks. For many this was the opportunity to send emails, view and download their photos, read, sunbathe or simply relax and chat over a cup of tea or coffee.

The evening birdlog was a very quick affair before dinner. Some went to the film show in the lecture room.

Sunday 5 April

We had crossed the equator during the night and were still on a course for Truk Island. This sea area is a known 'dead zone' for birds and cetaceans and during early morning just a few terns on the bird front and some distant Sperm Whales blowing some five miles away to the port side.

In the late morning, just before lunch, and we had our first Bulwer's Petrel of the cruise, which livened-up the action. The bird flew close to the bow, before powering away, and the upperwing bars and long tail of this species were seen well. Then, it became quiet again, just a few Sooty Terns and a lone tropicbird.

For many it was total relaxation today, a day to do as one wished, and to take it easy. In the bar at 1900 we gathered for the birdlog which took all of five minutes....what a difference to a few days back!

Monday 6 April

It was a lovely day; the sun was shining, as we continued north towards Truk Island.

Seawatching was slow but another Bulwer's Petrel in the morning revived the enthusiasm. Feeding flocks of Sooty and White Terns with attendant Wedge-tailed Shearwaters were distant. Another Bulwer's crossed the bow at lunchtime and, choosing its timing, a South Polar Skua decided to pass the ship when most were below taking food or drink.

There were some interesting seabirds, but the day was slow and birds were being seen every twenty minutes or so. Tomorrow could well be different as we should be on the approach to Truk lagoon and the reef, so shallower water could offer more diversity....we would see.

Our daily birdlog in the bar had few species but some were good. After dinner a briefing about Truk Island, and the birding planned for the next two days, took place in the lecture room. A seabird presentation followed, with a slide show showing the species we should encounter after Truk, as we cruised north towards the Bonin Islands and Japan.

Tuesday 7 April

The ship had slowed to a virtual stop as we were ahead of the scheduled time to meet the pilot who would be taking us into Truk Lagoon. We were about eight miles out from the archipelago and many White Terns were passing as well as a nice Pomarine Skua.

As we started to approach the reef the pilot boarded to take us inshore. Bird numbers picked up substantially with White-tailed Tropicbird, hundreds of Brown Noddies and many Black Noddies. I shouted that a small shearwater was flying fast and low to the water, behind two noddies, 11 o'clock to the bow. This had to be one of the Tropical Shearwater forms, a bird we had wanted to see. A further two were seen just before we passed inside the reef.

Truk consisted of a number of mountainous islands, surrounded by a string of islets on a barrier reef. We tied up alongside the wharf at Weno Island where customs and immigration officials came onto the ship. Birding from the decks gave us some of the endemics and Micronesian specialities without stepping ashore! Caroline Islands Swiftlets were flying low along the shoreline whilst Micronesian Starlings flew in small flocks between the harbour buildings. Showy Micronesian Myzomelas moved busily between the bushes and even humble Tree Sparrows were here, a recent colonist and presumably originally ship-assisted.

Along the shore we scoped Black-naped Terns diving for fish and waders included Ruddy Turnstone, Common Sandpiper and a Wandering Tattler. A Rufous Night-Heron flew along the tree line to perch in the crown of a coconut tree.

Once ashore most passengers went into the town for a short walk, returning to the ship for lunch. I offered a bird walk to the edge of town and the small airport to begin at 1345, but it began raining very heavily. This was tropical rain, monsoon-like, and we decided to sit it out in the lounge.

The rain came and went, and we ventured out mid-afternoon. The town was flooded in places and the roads had large potholes making it difficult to walk any drier areas. We got soaked as the rains came once again but we did squeeze in views of Caroline Reed Warbler, many Micronesian Myzomelas and Micronesian Starlings and at the town sports field found a flock of Pacific Golden Plovers (most showing all or some of their new summer plumage).

On the return walk two Rufous Night-Herons were at the edge of the sports field, and were probably stalking amphibians in the grass. The rain pelted down once more and we headed back to the quayside at speed. A hot shower on board was most welcome.

Wednesday 8 April

An early start this morning with the wake-up calls at 0545 on the tannoy system. After a quick breakfast everyone gathered at the buses to take us birding. The first bus left at 0630, the second was scheduled for 0700.

We were driven up a hill, close to the town, and the plan then to walk back to town, about four kilometres. The bus stopped at a cul-de-sac where there were just a few houses and trees covered a hillside. We knew in advance that all of the local birds were here (except one, the rare Truk Monarch). The first bus scored with a few endemics whilst awaiting the second, but all the birds were seen by everybody after about an hour-and-half.

Surprisingly easy was the Caroline Islands Ground-Dove, as these birds, as a genus, can be very shy and retiring. We soon had one, then another, perched and viewed through the scopes. This species with its iridescent purple back was much better in life than depicted in the (rather ancient) field-guide.

Another lovely bird here was the Crimson-crowned Fruit-Dove. Which to watch first? The dove sat feeding in one tree and in the next an Oceanic Flycatcher sallied for insects whilst a couple of Caroline Islands White-eyes energetically jumped around as they gleaned insects from the leaves.

The most frustrating species was the Blue-faced Parrotfinch. This is found in Australia and New Guinea also, so not endemic, and a very smart bird that took the most effort. All passengers ended up with views, though some better than others.

Other island specialities – the Caroline Reed Warbler, Caroline Islands Swiftlet, Micronesian Myzomela and Micronesian Starling – we found very easy to see, both on the walk downhill and around the town.

The ship had arranged an early lunch for us at the Truk Stop Hotel. A buffet was served during which pupils from the local high school sang songs of Micronesia for us. We returned to the ship and cast off at 1300, saying goodbye to Truk Island. Next stop, the Bonin Islands, more than 1200 nautical miles to the north.

The ship sailed out through the reef entrance, to then follow the line of the reef from three miles out, following around its eastern edge to the open sea. Birds seen from the decks were the 'expected' noddies and White Terns plus a single frigatebird and Black-naped Tern.

Thursday 9 April

We were en route for the Bonin Islands. The birding was very slow indeed, with just a few Sooty Terns during the whole morning and the afternoon had no improvement but for a single feeding flock. After no birds whatsoever this was a pleasant surprise as it contained 40 Sooty Terns and three adult Long-tailed Skuas, none of which had complete tail streamers.

The birdlog was decidedly short, today being the quietest for birds so far. Most passengers relaxed, drank even more teas and coffee, read a book, or had a chat. The Expedition Leader handed out a fun question paper about birds, to tax the brain, which created good-humoured debate and passed some time. The quiz winner was awarded a free bottle of wine.

There was a most interesting lecture after dinner. Frank Gill, an eminent ornithologist, author of many bird papers and recently retired as Chief Scientist for the Audubon Society was aboard and had agreed to give a talk. We had badgered the ship for some days to allow time for Frank to present on 'speciation in birds'. He gave a very good introduction to species concepts, particularly with reference to island allospecies. It was well-attended and good stuff!

Friday 10 April

The ship had rolled and pitched during the night. This morning the wind was Beaufort 6, 'strong breeze', with plenty of white caps. Birds were non-existent during the morning - a lone tropicbird from one observer and a Sooty Tern from another. We would be entering the zone for Matsudaira's Storm Petrel soon, so we needed to be on the lookout for this one.

Most passengers seemed to be in their cabins either dozing or getting away from the swell. After dinner the evening presentation by Dick Filby was about the Emperor Penguins of Antarctica (excellent...though somewhat removed from where we were at present!)

Saturday 11 April

We had crossed the Mariana Trench; this is the deepest part of all the world's oceans, and the deepest location on the surface of the Earth's crust. It has a maximum depth of about 10,911 metres (35,798 feet or 6.78 miles). The trench forms the boundary between two tectonic plates. A fact for consideration is if Mount Everest, the tallest point on earth is 8,848 meters (29,029 feet), were set in the Mariana Trench there would still be 2,183 meters (7,166 feet) of water left above it!

As predicted, Matsudaira's Storm-petrel would be our new bird today. This large storm petrel came into the wake to then flap, tern-like, towards the stern but always turned around too soon! For some, there was initial confusion with Bulwer's Petrel. As best I tried I couldn't see the white upperwing primary bases (as Tristram's Storm Petrel needed eliminating) though the deeply forked tail was obvious when the birds banked.

After lunch our course was still to the east of the Mariana Islands, though they were out of sight just over the horizon. These probably accounted for the flocks of Sooty Terns, probable breeders from the Marianas, that one moment would be with us and the next gone.

Matsudaira's Storm-petrels were still coming into the wake but the afternoon light was now so different from this morning that we could easily see the white 'flashes' on the primaries. We surmised that the morning's strong light was 'burning out' and bleaching some colours causing the problem. Matsudaira's Storm Petrel needed studying to see all their features well. Our day total for this species was 15 (though allowing for what may have been the same bird coming-in a few times!)

Another Bulwer's Petrel was called from the bridge lookout and some got onto this bird from the decks as it passed the eight o'clock position.

Another passenger presented the evening lecture. Doug Gill, an American University professor, spoke about the restoration of prairies in the United States.

Sunday 12 April

What a difference a day makes. This morning the Matsudaira's Storm-petrels were positively common, with birds in the wake virtually constantly, sometimes three or four together. Some were coming closer to the stern, and by using distinct deep wingbeats (not the usual fluttery style of storm-petrels) would then glide away parallel to the ship. The overall shape and wing flashes reminded me of Common Nighthawk.

After lunch the new fish oil drip at the stern helped, and the storm petrels kept coming - more Matsudaira's, sometimes four at a time. Then came a call from the bow, 'very tall blow to the port side', most likely a Fin Whale but nobody saw the back of the animal. Later, there was a further blow, and this time I saw the back of what appeared to be a Bryde's or Sei Whale. Ahead, and at the same time, were the diagnostic blows from Sperm Whales. Quite a show!

Then, another call, this time 'Bannerman's Shearwater' had everyone running to see this small black and white shearwater. It had a noticeable and distinct underwing with a broad dark border. This poorly known species appears to be sedentary to the Bonin and Volcano Islands and thus a very small pelagic range indeed.

To the other side of the ship, to starboard, a pod of Short-finned Pilot Whales cruised by. The action not yet over, an adult full-tailed Long-tailed Skua lifted from the water in front of the ship giving excellent views to all. We had hit a veritable purple patch!

The sunset this evening was watched passionately for the legendary 'green flash' - is it a myth, does it really happen when the sun goes down? Well, I have to say that we *did* see a green light as the sun dropped beneath the horizon...though not so much a flash, more a glow...it really does exist!

Monday 13 April

We had crossed the Tropic of Cancer overnight to technically leave 'the tropics'.

A great day for seabirds: From early morning the first of the Bonin Petrels was sighted. From the bow this superb *Pterodroma* came banking and arcing across the sea. A couple of Bannerman's Shearwaters lifted ahead to fly strongly away from us and a lone Leach's Storm-petrel kept pace with the ship for some time.

Matsudaira's Storm-petrels were plentiful today but it was the occasional Tristram's Storm-petrels that needed to be closely studied - they were stubbier than Matsudaira's and the wingbeats were not so deliberate giving a different jizz. They lacked the white upperwing primary flashes and, when seen well, there was a hooded appearance and the carpal bar seemed to join the paler rump patch.

A feeding group mid-afternoon contained many Sooty Terns and pale-phase Wedge-tailed Shearwaters. It would have been good to have got closer to this frenzy as a skua and a small shearwater were in the melee.

We had a briefing in the lecture room after dinner outlining our landing tomorrow at Chichi-jima, the largest island of the Bonin Islands or Ogasawara archipelago, and the plans for the next few days leading up to our arrival in Yokohama.

Tuesday 14 April

Some passengers saw a Humpback Whale breaching as we made our approach to Chichi-jima where we pulled alongside the wharf at 0700. Clearance by the Japanese authorities was quick and efficient (as expected), even though all crew and passengers had to queue for fingerprint checking and iris photography.

Seen from the ship, the most surprising of birds were two flocks of Japanese Waxwings, seen perched high in large trees on the hillside. These are an irruptive species from the Russian Far East and northeast China to mainland Japan where they search out berries. I saw a few in Japan in February, a good record, but to have birds arrive here on these tiny islands, about 580 miles from Japan, was remarkable. Will they reorientate?

My allotted walk this morning, with a group of 14, was up a small hillside opposite the quay. This was a small recreational park where Japanese Bush Warblers sang from deep cover. This is a skulker that can be difficult to see but eventually all succeeded (after using the iPod). Brown-eared Bulbuls flew across the path in front of us and Japanese White-eyes sang from treetops. Two Eastern Buzzards circled over a distant hillside to be joined later by two Eurasian Sparrowhawks. Back at the wharf, Blue Rock Thrushes were found to be common, even one was singing from the ship's radar.

We left Chichi-jima at midday, sailing for another island in the Bonin group, Haha-jima. Two Humpback Whales were seen on this crossing and another first for the cruise, a Black-footed Albatross. Small groups of Short-tailed Shearwaters shot past as we made our way. These had a fast flight, and in today's wind were often arcing high off the waves.

We reached the island and entered the shelter of a cove, surrounded by islets and seastacks. It was calm here and the zodiacs were launched to take us to shore. Those waiting for a zodiac place could watch as a young Humpback breached clear of the water and flipper-slapped continuously for at least half-hour.

The Bonin Islands have an endemic bird species, the Bonin Honeyeater. It is now found only on the small Haha-jima group and we were here! This was the first time the ship had been to this island. By the time the last zodiac was landing passengers the bird had already been found by those first ashore! There was some frantic searching for the next hour or so, before dusk and the last zodiac back to the vessel, and a few honeyeaters were found but sadly not seen by our entire group.

The Expedition Leader later told us this was a first for the Western Pacific Odyssey, and due to dual-engine use to get us here (direction south, when our dedicated course was north, of course) was most unlikely to happen again!

We returned to the ship to sail away from the Bonin Islands, next heading the island of Torishima, home of the Short-tailed Albatross.

Wednesday 15 April

The sky was grey, the sea was grey, and there was light rain in the air this morning. A few Matsudaira's Storm-petrels were following in the wake and the occasional Black-footed Albatross and Bonin Petrel were seen from the bow. Birds regularly appeared to keep everyone focused. A pod of small whales of the 'blackfish' group, were only identified later from photographs as Melon-headed Whales.

After lunch, the bird of the day, and for many the bird of the trip, came into view, a Short-tailed Albatross. This one was a younger immature, maybe three or four year old. A majestic flying machine that had all passengers rushing out onto the decks as it performed admirably at the stern, coming very close to the ship. Whilst looking at this bird through binoculars a full-tailed Pomarine Skua and two Bonin Petrels passed across the field of view.

The story of the Short-tailed Albatross is not a happy one. They were killed in their millions - the feathers used in quilts, pillows and for quill pens. An unbelievable five million birds were killed in just 12 years at the turn of the 19th century. Following volcanic eruptions on the breeding island it was presumed extinct in the 1940's but, incredibly, in December 1950 eight birds were found on Torishima (where we would be going tomorrow). Unbeknown, some immatures had been at sea all the time to now return as adults to the island.

By 1960, only 22 birds survived but even though the population has increased now to some 2000 plus (according to BirdLife International) it is still a bird of great concern, a vulnerable species.

Thursday 16 April

Early morning wake-up calls proclaimed we were off Torishima Island, home of the rare Short-tailed Albatross. At 0500 most passengers were outside as dozens of albatrosses were circling the ship.

Chumming from the stern brought in many birds, the majority, as expected, were Black-footed Albatrosses and the star of the show, in various plumage phases, the incomparable Short-tailed Albatross. This, undoubtedly, one of the highlights of the trip as these glorious birds came so close that photographers were taking full-frame shots of the heads and bills. In amongst them Streaked, Wedge-tailed and Short-tailed Shearwaters and a lone Pomarine Skua that put on the most prolonged view as it took scraps of chum. It was a memorable morning!

We circumnavigated the island, the crater could be seen steaming and smoking and recent lava flows were apparent. The Short-tailed Albatross breeding site was on a precipitous slope where slippage of volcanic ash had divided the colony into two. More than 100 birds were at the colony. On another less steep gradient there were derelict buildings, assumed used by the feather collectors in the past on this extremely dangerous volcanic rock.

We left Torishima, carving our way through a huge flock of Streaked and Wedge-tailed Shearwaters that numbered thousands of birds. After lunch, those out on deck added a few more to the totals of albatross numbers, both Short-tailed and Black-footed, but the next surprise was not a seabird at all, but a small passerine. This migrating waif was trying to land on the ship but after several attempts carried on northwards, low to the waves. Some said it was green in colour, some said it had white-outer tail feathers, some said it was a pipit but the bird remarkably had been photographed in flight and it was a Red-flanked Bluetail (i.e is not green, doesn't have white-outers, and isn't a pipit!)

Following the Red-flanked Bluetail came two, maybe three, individual Barn Swallows and a couple of Red-rumped Swallows. One bird flew into the wheelhouse, and was caught and released, and another was put into a box to be roosted overnight. One bird found shelter for the night above an outside doorframe.

A charity auction was held in the bar this evening with proceeds being donated to BirdLife's 'Save the Albatross' fund. There were books, photos, paintings and more entered, many by passengers who had taken time to prepare an auction lot. The total reached was US\$715. Good fun for us, and hopefully this small sum may help in giving those wonderful birds a future.

Friday 17 April

The ship was on its way to Miyake-jima in the Izu archipelago and we were now encountering large flocks of Streaked Shearwaters. Another flock of nearly 500 birds, first thought to be Short-tailed Shearwaters, were actually storm-petrels and would most probably have been Tristram's but they were too far away to be sure.

A lone Japanese Crested Murrelet seen by one lucky observer had everyone wondering if we were to see more. Luckily, *many* more *were* seen, (I stopped counting at 20) between the islands of Mikura-jima and Miyake-jima. Mostly in pairs, sometimes threes and fours, these small flying 'golfballs' would dive or go hurtling away from the ship. From the bow, there were cracking views of birds on the sea, then diving or flying from under the hull. Designated a 'natural treasure' by the Japanese government these would have been local breeding birds (as eggs are laid early, in March).

After lunch we were laying off the island and the zodiacs took us ashore. Birding here was more active and like being on the mainland of Japan. The star bird was probably Ijima's Leaf Warbler, a species with a chequered taxonomic history which is thought to breed only on the Izu and Tokara Islands, an incredible small breeding range – though it may simply be overlooked elsewhere.

Further along the trail we found Izu Thrushes, Japanese Pygmy Woodpeckers plus good birds like Hawfinch, Meadow Bunting and Japanese White-eye. We returned on a bumpy zodiac to the *Spirit of Enderby* late afternoon.

Saturday 18 April

It was disembarkation day. Breakfast was served from 0630 during which the luggage was collected by the crew and put onto the wharf, grouped by onward destination. We left the ship around 0815 saying goodbye to the expedition team before heading to the large Immigration and Customs area. Formalities were brief and efficient by the Japanese and we gathered at a seating area in the hall.

Ornitholidays and Cruises for Nature had prearranged a large bus for transfer to the international airport of Narita. We had offered seats to other passengers on the ship and a further 21 had taken this up, plus our original 13. The bus and luggage van were waiting and we were soon loaded and on our way. The road journey took nearly two hours by way of Tokyo city outskirts.

We arrived early at the airport and said further goodbyes to some who were travelling on other flights. Our flight to Hong Kong was airborne 1600. We landed in Hong Kong where we had a few hours before our next flight to Heathrow.

Sunday 19 April

Our flight was through the night and we arrived into London a little ahead of time at 0530 local time. We met at the baggage carousel where we said goodbye to each other. We had been 37 days in each other's company and it was time to bid farewell...until the next time!

Acknowledgements

We travelled 5300 nautical miles (6100 miles) on this remarkable sea journey that took us from New Zealand to Japan via some remote West Pacific island groups. All this mileage doesn't take into account getting to New Zealand and getting back from Japan.

We saw some remarkable birds: 39 species of procellariids (tubenoses) including many which are rare and poorly known, plus other splendid seabirds like the Japanese Crested Murrelet. There were the island specialities too, many endemic, to drool over, maybe the doves and parrots spring to mind, or the Monarchs and the Myzomelas.

It wasn't only the birds as the cetacean list was extraordinary with 16 species of whales and dolphins, with many species of which so little is known, like the very rare Ginkgo-toothed Beaked Whale.

Our thanks to the officers, crew and staff aboard the *Spirit of Enderby* that got us to all the places safely and looked after us whilst we were aboard. My thanks also to some other tour leaders, notably Dick Filby, for freely sharing their knowledge and experience to all the passengers and myself.

My gratitude to Geoff Jones, who gave permission to use the stunning photographs that adorn this report (and for their use within future scientific work). I should add that these reduced-size images do no justice to his original shots when seen at full size.

We made friends with many other passengers on the ship and thanks to them for stimulating conversation during the cruise. Lastly, my thanks to you for coming on this cruise of the Western Pacific. I hope this report rekindles some good memories and that your photographs and videos remind you of this unique journey that we took together. I look forward to seeing you again on another adventure with *Ornitholidays* or one of our *Cruises for Nature*.

Tony Pym
Ornitholidays and Cruises for Nature
29 Straight Mile
Romsey
Hants
SO51 9BB
Tel: 01794 519445
Email: info@ornitholidays.co.uk

May 2009

Itinerary and Weather

14 March	Flew Heathrow, London to Hong Kong
15 March	Arrived Hong Kong. Flew Hong Kong to Auckland, New Zealand
16 March	a.m Arrived Auckland. Transfer to hotel p.m afternoon bird walk Pleasant, sunny 18°C
17 March	a.m At leisure p.m Transfer to hotel meeting place for transfer to <i>Spirit of Enderby</i> . Embarkation and sailing late evening Pleasant, sunny 20°C
18 March	Hauraki Gulf passing Maori Rocks, Mokahinau Islands Warm 20°C
19 March	At sea, sailing to Norfolk Island Hot, sunny 25°C
20 March	At sea, sailing to Norfolk Island Hot, a few light showers 23°C
21 March	Landing at Norfolk Island aborted. At sea, heading north Overcast but hot, some light showers 25°C
22 March	At sea towards New Caledonia Overcast, squalls, better afternoon 20°C
23 March	Noumea, New Caledonia. Walk to Botanical Gardens Sunny and hot 22°C
24 March	New Caledonia. Transfer to Parc Rivière Bleue Raining all day, very heavy at times 22°C
25 March	At sea. Route changed to avoid cyclone 'Jasper', to east of New Caledonia Squalls with occasional bright spells 20°C
26 March	At sea heading towards Rennell Island, Solomon Islands Hot at times, humid 28°C
27 March	At sea towards Rennell Island Very hot, cloudy 32°C
28 March	At sea towards Rennell Island Very hot, cloudy 31°C
29 March	a.m Rennell Island p.m At sea Very hot, humid 35°C
30 March	Makira Island. Anuta village gathering. At sea towards Guadalcanal Very Hot, heavy rain at times 34°C
31 March	a.m Guadalcanal Island. Mount Austin p.m At sea towards Kolombangara Sunny, humid 30°C

1 April	a.m At sea p.m Kolombangara Very hot, humid 30°C
2 April	At sea, off Bougainville Very hot, humid 33°C
3 April	At sea. Cruising close to New Britain and New Ireland. Off Feni Island Very hot 32°C
4 April	At sea towards Truk Lagoon Very hot, breeze later 34°C
5 April	At sea towards Truk Lagoon Very hot 33°C
6 April	At sea towards Truk Lagoon Very hot 34°C
7 April	Weno Island, Truk Lagoon Humid, rain at times, very heavy 27°C
8 April	Weno Island, Truk Lagoon Very hot, humid 30°C
9 April	At sea towards Bonin Islands Overcast, hot 26°C
10 April	At sea towards Bonin Islands Overcast, very hot 30°C
11 April	At sea towards Bonin Islands Very hot 32°C
12 April	At sea towards Bonin Islands Very hot 36°C
13 April	At sea towards Bonin Islands Very hot at times, noticeably colder late afternoon 32°C
14 April	Bonin Islands a.m Chichi-jima p.m Haha-jima Pleasant, hot, cooler late afternoon 24°C
15 April	At sea towards Torishima Noticeably cooler, particularly late afternoon 22°C
16 April	Torishima Island. At sea towards Izu Islands Overcast 20°C
17 April	a.m At sea p.m Miyake-jima Overcast 20°C
18 April	Yokohama: Disembarkation <i>Spirit of Enderby</i> early morning. Transfer to Narita Airport, Tokyo. Flew Narita to Hong Kong. Flew Hong Kong to Heathrow, London
19 April	Arrived Heathrow, London

CHECKLIST OF BIRDS SEEN DURING THE CRUISE

No of days seen

Maximum = 34

Location

P = Pelagic, at sea
 N = New Zealand
 C = New Caledonia
 S = Solomon Islands
 T = Truk (Chuuk, Micronesia)
 B = Bonin Islands
 I = Izu Islands and Japan

Abundance Scale

Maximum seen on one day

1 = 1-4
 2 = 5-9
 3 = 10-99
 4 = 100-999
 5 = 1000-9999

Species	No of days recorded	Locations	Abundance Scale	Scientific Name
Wandering Albatross sp	1 P		1	<i>Diomedea (exulans) sp.</i>
Gibson's Albatross	1 P		1	<i>Diomedea (exulans/antipodensis) gibsoni</i>
Short-tailed (Steller's) Albatross	2 P		4	<i>Phoebastria albatrus</i>
Black-footed Albatross	4 P		4	<i>Phoebastria nigripes</i>
Black-browed Albatross	1 P		1	<i>Thalassarche melanophris</i>
Campbell Albatross	1 P		1	<i>Thalassarche (melanophris) impavida</i>
Beck's Petrel	1 P		1	<i>Pseudobulweria becki</i>
Tahiti Petrel	11 P		3	<i>Pterodroma rostrata</i>
Grey-faced Petrel	4 P		4	<i>Pterodroma gouldi</i>
Providence (Solander's) Petrel	3 P		3	<i>Pterodroma solandri</i>
Kermadec Petrel	5 P		3	<i>Pterodroma neglecta</i>
White-necked (-naped) Petrel	5 P		3	<i>Pterodroma cervicalis</i>
Cook's Petrel	1 P		3	<i>Pterodroma cookii</i>
Gould's Petrel	4 P		3	<i>Pterodroma leucoptera</i>
Collared Petrel	5 P		1	<i>Pterodroma brevipes</i>
Gould's/Collared Petrel	3 P		2	<i>Pterodroma leucoptera/brevipes</i>
Bonin Petrel	2 P		3	<i>Pterodroma hypoleuca</i>
Black-winged Petrel	6 P		4	<i>Pterodroma nigripennis</i>
Pycroft's Petrel	1 P		1	<i>Pterodroma pycrofti</i>
Fairy Prion	1 P		1	<i>Pachyptila turtur</i>
Bulwer's Petrel	3 P		1	<i>Bulweria bulwerii</i>
(Parkinson's) Black Petrel	4 P		4	<i>Procellaria parkinsoni</i>
Streaked Shearwater	3 P		5	<i>Calonectris leucomelas</i>
Flesh-footed Shearwater	4 P		1	<i>Puffinus carneipes</i>
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	24 P		4	<i>Puffinus pacificus</i>
Buller's Shearwater	1 P		4	<i>Puffinus bulleri</i>
Sooty Shearwater	2 P		1	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>
Short-tailed Shearwater	3 P		4	<i>Puffinus tenuirostris</i>
Tropical Shearwater	2 P		1	<i>Puffinus bailloni</i>
Bannerman's Shearwater	2 P		1	<i>Puffinus bannermani</i>
Heinroth's Shearwater	2 P		3	<i>Puffinus heinrothi</i>
Wilson's Storm-petrel	4 P		1	<i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>
New Zealand Storm-petrel	1 P		1	<i>Oceanites maorianus</i>
White-faced Storm-petrel	1 P		1	<i>Pelagodroma marina</i>
Black-bellied Storm-petrel	1 P		1	<i>Fregatta tropica</i>
White-bellied Storm-petrel	1 P		1	<i>Fregatta grallaria</i>
Leach's Storm-petrel	1 P		1	<i>Oceanodroma leucorhoa</i>
Tristram's Storm-petrel	2 P		4	<i>Oceanodroma tristrami</i>
Matsudaira's Storm-petrel	5 P		3	<i>Oceanodroma matsudairae</i>
Common Diving-petrel	1 P		1	<i>Pelecanoides urinatrix</i>
Red-tailed Tropicbird	3 P		2	<i>Phaethon rubricauda</i>
White-tailed Tropicbird	6 P		1	<i>Phaethon lepturus</i>
Australian Gannet	1 P		3	<i>Morus serrator</i>
Masked Booby	5 P		3	<i>Sula dactylatra</i>
Red-footed Booby	9 P		3	<i>Sula sula</i>
Brown Booby	10 P		3	<i>Sula leucogaster</i>
Great Cormorant	1 P		1	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
Little Pied Cormorant	2 P	N C	2	<i>Phalacrocorax melanoleucos</i>
Great Frigatebird	7 P	S T	1	<i>Fregata minor</i>

Lesser Frigatebird	2	P		S			2	<i>Fregata ariel</i>
Great/Lesser Frigatebird	9	P		S			3	<i>Fregata minor/ariel</i>
Great Egret	1					B	1	<i>Egretta alba</i>
White-faced Heron	3	P	N				1	<i>Egretta novaehollandiae</i>
Pacific Reef Heron	4			C	S	T	1	<i>Egretta sacra</i>
Rufous Night-Heron	1					T	1	<i>Nycticorax caledonicus</i>
Yellow Bittern	2				S	T	1	<i>Ixobrychus sinensis</i>
Australian Ibis	1				S		3	<i>Threskiornis molucca</i>
Northern Pintail	1					B	3	<i>Anas acuta</i>
Osprey	2			C	S		1	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
Black-eared Kite	1					I	1	<i>Milvus (migrans) lineatus</i>
Whistling Kite	1			C			1	<i>Haliastur sphenurus</i>
Brahminy Kite	1				S		1	<i>Haliastur Indus</i>
Solomon Sea-Eagle	2				S		1	<i>Haliaeetus sanfordi</i>
Variable Goshawk	1				S		1	<i>Accipiter hiogaster</i>
Brown Goshawk	1			C			1	<i>Accipiter fasciatus</i>
Pied Goshawk	1				S		1	<i>Accipiter albogularis</i>
New Caledonia Goshawk	1			C			1	<i>Accipiter haplochrous</i>
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	1					B	1	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>
Eastern (Japanese) Buzzard	1					B	1	<i>Buteo japonicus</i>
Oriental Hobby	1				S		1	<i>Falco severus</i>
Roviana Rail	1				S		1	<i>Gallirallus philippensis</i>
Kagu	1			C			3	<i>Rhynchotus jubatus</i>
Variable Oystercatcher	1		N				1	<i>Haematopus unicolor</i>
Black-winged (Pied) Stilt	1		N				1	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
Pacific Golden-Plover	2			C		T	3	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>
Bar-tailed Godwit	3	P		C			3	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>
Common Sandpiper	1					T	1	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
Wandering Tattler	2					T	1	<i>Heterosceles incanus</i>
Ruddy Turnstone	2					T	3	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
South Polar Skua	2	P					1	<i>Stercorarius maccormicki</i>
Pomarine Skua	7	P					1	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>
Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua)	3	P					1	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>
Long-tailed Jaeger (Skua)	6	P					1	<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>
Black-tailed Gull	2					I	1	<i>Larus crassirostris</i>
Silver Gull	2		N	C			1	<i>Larus novaehollandiae</i>
Red-billed Gull	1		N				3	<i>Larus scopulinus</i>
Kelp Gull	1		N				3	<i>Larus dominicanus</i>
Slaty-Backed Gull	1					I	2	<i>Larus schistisagus</i>
Great Crested Tern	4	P		C	S		2	<i>Sterna bergii</i>
Black-naped Tern	3	P				T	1	<i>Sterna sumatrana</i>
Little Tern	1	P					2	<i>Sterna albifrons</i>
Grey-backed Tern	2	P					1	<i>Sterna lunata</i>
Bridled Tern	3	P					1	<i>Sterna anaethetus</i>
Sooty Tern	17	P					4	<i>Sterna fuscata</i>
Black Noddy	4	P					4	<i>Anous minutes</i>
Brown Noddy	11	P				T B	4	<i>Anous stolidus</i>
Black/Brown Noddy	3	P					4	<i>Anous minutes/stolidus</i>
Grey Noddy (Ternlet)	3	P					3	<i>Procelsterna albivitta</i>
White Tern	10	P				T	4	<i>Gygis alba</i>
Japanese Murrelet	1	P					3	<i>Synthliboramphus wumizusume</i>
Oriental Turtle-Dove	1					I	1	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>
Spotted Dove	2			C			3	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>
Mackinlay's Cuckoo-Dove	2				S		1	<i>Macropygia mackinlayi</i>
Caroline Islands Ground-Dove	1					T	1	<i>Gallicolumba kubaryi</i>
Crimson-Crowned Fruit-Dove	2					T	1	<i>Ptilinopus porphyraceus</i>
Silver-Capped Fruit-Dove	1				S		1	<i>Ptilinopus richardsii</i>
Pacific Imperial-Pigeon	1				S		1	<i>Ducula pacifica</i>
Red-knobbed Imperial-Pigeon	3				S		3	<i>Ducula rubricera</i>
Island Imperial-Pigeon	1				S		1	<i>Ducula pistrinaria</i>
Chestnut-bellied Imperial-Pigeon	1				S		1	<i>Ducula brenchleyi</i>
New Caledonian Imperial-Pigeon	1			C			1	<i>Ducula goliath</i>
Ducorps' Cockatoo	1				S		2	<i>Cacatua ducorpsii</i>

Rainbow Lorikeet	3		C	S			3	<i>Trichoglossus haematodus</i>
Yellow-bibbed Lory	2			S			2	<i>Lorius chlorocercus</i>
Finsch's Pygmy-Parrot	3			S			1	<i>Micropsitta finschii</i>
Crimson Rosella (introduced)	1		N				2	<i>Platycercus elegans</i>
Eastern Rosella (introduced)	1		N				2	<i>Platycercus eximius</i>
Singing Parrot	1			S			1	<i>Geoffroyus heteroclitus</i>
Eclectus Parrot	2			S			1	<i>Eclectus roratus</i>
Buff-headed Coucal	1			S			1	<i>Centropus milo</i>
Glossy Swiftlet	5		C	S			4	<i>Collocalia esculenta</i>
White-rumped Swiftlet	2		C	S			3	<i>Aerodramus vanikorensis</i>
Uniform Swiftlet	2			S			3	<i>Aerodramus vanikorensis</i>
Caroline Islands Swiftlet	2				T		3	<i>Aerodramus inquietus</i>
Fork-tailed (Pacific) Swift	1					I	1	<i>Apus pacificus</i>
Moustached Treeswift	1			S			2	<i>Hemiproctus mystacea</i>
Common Kingfisher	1			S			1	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
Ultramarine Kingfisher	1			S			1	<i>Todiramphus leucopygius</i>
Collared Kingfisher	3			S			1	<i>Todiramphus chloris</i>
Sacred Kingfisher	2		N	S			3	<i>Todiramphus sanctus</i>
Dollarbird	1			S			1	<i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>
Blyth's Hornbill	1			S			1	<i>Aceros plicatus</i>
Pygmy Woodpecker	1					I	1	<i>Dendrocopos kizuki</i>
Barn Swallow	2	P				I	2	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Pacific Swallow	2			S			2	<i>Hirundo tahitica</i>
Red-rumped Swallow	1	P					1	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>
White Wagtail	1					I	1	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
Yellow-eyed Cuckoo-shrike	2			S			3	<i>Coracina lineata</i>
White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	2			S			2	<i>Coracina papuensis</i>
New Caledonian Cuckoo-shrike	1		C				2	<i>Coracina analis</i>
Solomon Islands Cuckoo-shrike	1			S			1	<i>Coracina holopolia</i>
Long-tailed Triller	1			S			3	<i>Lalage leucopyga</i>
Red-vented Bulbul (introduced)	2		N	C			1	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>
Brown-eared Bulbul	2					B I	3	<i>Ixos amaurotis</i>
Japanese Waxwing	1					B	4	<i>Bombycilla japonica</i>
Blue Rock-Thrush	2					B I	3	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>
Eurasian Blackbird	1		N				2	<i>Turdus merula</i>
Island Thrush	1			S			1	<i>Turdus poliocephalus</i>
Izu Thrush	1					I	2	<i>Turdus celaneps</i>
Japanese Bush-Warbler	2					B I	3	<i>Cettia diphone</i>
Caroline Reed-Warbler	2				T		2	<i>Acrocephalus syrinx</i>
Ijima's Leaf-Warbler	1					I	3	<i>Phylloscopus ijimae</i>
Red-flanked Bluetail	1	P					1	<i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i>
Willie-wagtail	1			S			1	<i>Rhipidura leucophrys</i>
Rennell Fantail	1			S			3	<i>Rhipidura rennelliana</i>
Grey Fantail	1		C				1	<i>Rhipidura fuliginosa</i>
New Zealand Fantail	1	P					1	<i>Rhipidura fuliginosa</i>
Streaked Fantail	1		C				1	<i>Rhipidura spilodera</i>
Rufous Fantail	1			S			1	<i>Rhipidura rufifrons</i>
Southern Shrikebill	1		C				1	<i>Clytorhynchus pachycephaloides</i>
Rennell Shrikebill	1			S			2	<i>Clytorhynchus hamlini</i>
White-capped Monarch	1			S			1	<i>Monarcha richardsii</i>
White-collared Monarch	1			S			1	<i>Monarcha viduus</i>
Oceanic Flycatcher	1				T		2	<i>Myiagra oceanica</i>
Steel-blue Flycatcher	2			S			1	<i>Myiagra ferrocyanea</i>
Melanesian Flycatcher	1			S			1	<i>Myiagra caledonica</i>
Yellow-bellied Robin	1		C				1	<i>Eopsaltria flaviventris</i>
Golden Whistler	1			S			1	<i>Pachycephala pectoralis</i>
New Caledonian Whistler	1		C				1	<i>Pachycephala caledonica</i>
Rennell (Fantailed-) Gerygone	1			S			2	<i>Gerygone (flavolateralis) citrina</i>
Great Tit	1					I	1	<i>Parus major</i>
Varied Tit	1					I	2	<i>Sittiparus varius</i>
Midget Flowerpecker	1			S			3	<i>Dicaeum aeneum</i>
Mottled Flowerpecker	1			S			2	<i>Dicaeum tristrami</i>
Japanese White-eye	2					B I	3	<i>Zosterops japonicus</i>

Caroline Islands White-eye	1			T	2	<i>Zosterops semperi</i>	
Rennell White-eye	1			S	1	<i>Zosterops rennellianus</i>	
Green-backed White-eye	2		C		3	<i>Zosterops xanthochrous</i>	
Silver-eye	1	N			2	<i>Zosterops lateralis</i>	
Bare-eyed White-eye	1			S	3	<i>Woodfordia superciliosa</i>	
Dark-brown Honeyeater	1		C		1	<i>Lichmera incana</i>	
New Caledonian Myzomela	1		C		3	<i>Myzomela caledonica</i>	
Micronesian Myzomela	2			T	3	<i>Myzomela rubratra</i>	
Cardinal Myzomela	1			S	2	<i>Myzomela cardinalis</i>	
Black-headed Myzomela	1			S	1	<i>Myzomela melanocephala</i>	
Sooty Myzomela	1			S	2	<i>Myzomela tristrami</i>	
San Cristobal Melidectes	1			S	2	<i>Melidectes sclateri</i>	
Bonin Honeyeater	1				B	1	<i>Apalopteron familiare</i>
Barred Honeyeater	1		C		1	<i>Phylidonyris undulata</i>	
Tui	1	N			1	<i>Prothemadera novaeseelandiae</i>	
Bull-headed Shrike	1				I	1	<i>Lanius bucephalus</i>
White-breasted Woodswallow	1		C		2	<i>Artamus leucorhynchus</i>	
Large-billed Crow	1				I	2	<i>Corvus macrorhynchus</i>
Metallic Starling	1			S	3	<i>Aplonis metallica</i>	
Singing Starling	2			S	1	<i>Aplonis cantoroides</i>	
Rennell Starling	1			S	3	<i>Aplonis insularis</i>	
Brown-winged Starling	1			S	3	<i>Aplonis grandis</i>	
San Cristobal Starling	1			S	3	<i>Aplonis dichroa</i>	
Micronesian Starling	2				T	3	<i>Aplonis opaca</i>
Yellow-faced Myna	2			S	1	<i>Mino dumontii</i>	
Common Myna	3	N	C	S	3	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	
European Starling (introduced)	1	N			3	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	
House Sparrow (introduced)	1	N	C		3	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	2			T	I	3	<i>Passer montana</i>
Blue-faced Parrotfinch	1			T	2	<i>Erythrura trichroa</i>	
Red-throated Parrotfinch	1		C		3	<i>Erythrura psittacea</i>	
Oriental Greenfinch	1				I	1	<i>Carduelis sinica</i>
Hawfinch	1				I	1	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>
(Siberian) Meadow Bunting	1				I	1	<i>Emberiza cioides</i>

CHECKLIST OF CETACEANS SEEN DURING THE CRUISE

Sperm Whale	5	P			3	<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>
Humpback Whale	2	P			1	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>
Short-finned Pilot Whale	4	P			3	<i>Globicephala macrorhynchus</i>
Pygmy Killer Whale	1	P			1	<i>Feresa attenuata</i>
Melon-headed Whale	1	P			3	<i>Peponocephala electra</i>
False Killer Whale	2	P			3	<i>Pseudorca crassidens</i>
Risso's Dolphin	1	P			1	<i>Grampus griseus</i>
Ginkgo-toothed Beaked Whale	1	P			1	<i>Mesoplodon ginkgodens</i>
Blainville's Beaked Whale	1	P			1	<i>Mesoplodon densirostris</i>
Beaked Whale sp.	1	P			2	<i>Ziphiidae sp.</i>
Dwarf Sperm Whale	1	P			1	<i>Kogia simia</i>
Bottlenose Dolphin	2	P			3	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>
Rough-toothed Dolphin	1	P			3	<i>Steno bredanensis</i>
Short-beaked Common Dolphin	1	P			4	<i>Delphinus delphis</i>
Spinner Dolphin	1	P			3	<i>Stenella longirostris</i>
Pantropical Spotted Dolphin	1	P			3	<i>Stenella attenuate</i>
Fraser's Dolphin	1	P			3	<i>Lagenodelphis hosei</i>

CHECKLIST OF OTHER MAMMALS SEEN DURING THE CRUISE

Pacific Flying-Fox	1		S		2	<i>Pteropus tonganus</i>
Solomon Islands Flying-Fox	1		S		3	<i>Pteropus rayneri</i>

Also seen were Ocean Sunfish, Hammerhead Shark, Manta Rays and a sea turtle (probably a Hawksbill)

SEABIRDS SEEN ON THE VARIOUS SECTORS:

Sector 1 – from New Zealand to New Caledonia

Wandering Albatross sp	<i>Diomedea (exulans) sp</i>
Gibson's Albatross	<i>Diomedea (exulans/antipodensis) gibsoni</i>
Black-browed Albatross	<i>Thalassarche melanophris</i>
Campbell Albatross	<i>Thalassarche (melanophris) impavida</i>
Tahiti Petrel	<i>Pterodroma rostrata</i>
Grey-faced (Great-winged) Petrel	<i>Pterodroma (macroptera) gouldi</i>
Providence (Solander's) Petrel	<i>Pterodroma solandri</i>
Kermadec Petrel	<i>Pterodroma neglecta</i>
White-necked (-naped) Petrel	<i>Pterodroma cervicalis</i>
Cook's Petrel	<i>Pterodroma cooki</i>
Gould's Petrel	<i>Pterodroma leucoptera</i>
Collared Petrel	<i>Pterodroma brevipes</i>
Black-winged Petrel	<i>Pterodroma nigripennis</i>
Pycroft's Petrel	<i>Pterodroma pycrofti</i>
Fairy Prion	<i>Pachyptila turtur</i>
(Parkinson's) Black Petrel	<i>Procellaria parkinsoni</i>
Flesh-footed Shearwater	<i>Puffinus carneipes</i>
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	<i>Puffinus pacificus</i>
Buller's Shearwater	<i>Puffinus bulleri</i>
Sooty Shearwater	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>
Wilson's Storm-petrel	<i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>
New Zealand Storm-petrel	<i>Oceanites maorianus</i>
White-faced Storm-petrel	<i>Pelagodroma marina</i>
White-bellied Storm-petrel	<i>Fregetta grallaria</i>
Common Diving-petrel	<i>Pelecanoides urinatrix</i>
Red-tailed Tropicbird	<i>Phaethon rubricauda</i>
Australian Gannet	<i>Morus serrator</i>
Masked Booby	<i>Sula dactylatra</i>
Brown Booby	<i>Sula leucogaster</i>
Great Frigatebird	<i>Fregata minor</i>
Pomarine Skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>
Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua)	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>
Silver Gull	<i>Larus novaehollandiae</i>
Great Crested Tern	<i>Sterna bergii</i>
Bridled Tern	<i>Sterna anaethetus</i>
Sooty Tern	<i>Sterna fuscata</i>
Black Noddy	<i>Anous minutes</i>
Brown Noddy	<i>Anous stolidus</i>
Grey Noddy (Ternlet)	<i>Procelsterna albivitta</i>
White Tern	<i>Gygis alba</i>

Sector 2 – from New Caledonia, through Solomon Islands, to Truk

Beck's Petrel	<i>Pseudobulweria becki</i>
Tahiti Petrel	<i>Pterodroma rostrata</i>
Providence (Solander's) Petrel	<i>Pterodroma solandri</i>
Kermadec Petrel	<i>Pterodroma neglecta</i>
Gould's Petrel	<i>Pterodroma leucoptera</i>
Collared Petrel	<i>Pterodroma brevipes</i>
Bulwer's Petrel	<i>Bulweria bulwerii</i>
Flesh-footed Shearwater	<i>Puffinus carneipes</i>
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	<i>Puffinus pacificus</i>
Sooty Shearwater	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>
Tropical Shearwater	<i>Puffinus bailloni</i>
Heinroth's Shearwater	<i>Puffinus heinrothi</i>
Wilson's Storm-petrel	<i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>
Black-bellied Storm-petrel	<i>Fregetta tropica</i>
White-tailed Tropicbird	<i>Phaethon lepturus</i>
Masked Booby	<i>Sula dactylatra</i>

Red-footed Booby	<i>Sula sula</i>
Brown Booby	<i>Sula leucogaster</i>
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
Great Frigatebird	<i>Fregata minor</i>
Lesser Frigatebird	<i>Fregata ariel</i>
South Polar Skua	<i>Stercorarius maccormicki</i>
Pomarine Skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>
Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua)	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>
Long-tailed Jaeger (Skua)	<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>
Great Crested Tern	<i>Sterna bergii</i>
Black-naped Tern	<i>Sterna sumatrana</i>
Little Tern	<i>Sterna albifrons</i>
Grey-backed Tern	<i>Sterna lunata</i>
Bridled Tern	<i>Sterna anaethetus</i>
Sooty Tern	<i>Sterna fuscata</i>
Black Noddy	<i>Anous minutes</i>
Brown Noddy	<i>Anous stolidus</i>
White Tern	<i>Gygis alba</i>

Sector 3 – from Truk to the Bonin Islands, then the Izu Islands, to Japan

Short-tailed (Steller's) Albatross	<i>Phoebastria albatrus</i>
Black-footed Albatross	<i>Phoebastria nigripes</i>
Bonin Petrel	<i>Pterodroma hypoleuca</i>
Bulwer's Petrel	<i>Bulweria bulwerii</i>
Streaked Shearwater	<i>Calonectris leucomelas</i>
Flesh-footed Shearwater	<i>Puffinus carneipes</i>
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	<i>Puffinus pacificus</i>
Short-tailed Shearwater	<i>Puffinus tenuirostris</i>
Bannerman's Shearwater	<i>Puffinus bannermani</i>
Leach's Storm-petrel	<i>Oceanodroma leucorhoa</i>
Tristram's Storm-petrel	<i>Oceanodroma tristrami</i>
Matsudaira's Storm-petrel	<i>Oceanodroma matsudairae</i>
White-tailed Tropicbird	<i>Phaethon lepturus</i>
Masked Booby	<i>Sula dactylatra</i>
Red-footed Booby	<i>Sula sula</i>
Brown Booby	<i>Sula leucogaster</i>
Great Frigatebird	<i>Fregata minor</i>
Pomarine Skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>
Long-tailed Jaeger (Skua)	<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>
Black-tailed Gull	<i>Larus crassirostris</i>
Slaty-Backed Gull	<i>Larus schistisagus</i>
Sooty Tern	<i>Sterna fuscata</i>
Black Noddy	<i>Anous minutes</i>
Brown Noddy	<i>Anous stolidus</i>
White Tern	<i>Gygis alba</i>
Japanese Murrelet	<i>Synthliboramphus wumizusume</i>

Aboard the ship a *general birdlog* was called each evening for all passengers. The above lists are believed to represent the species (and numbers) seen by Cruises for Nature clients - these lists represent therefore those birds, and other animals, seen by party members on this tour.



Albatrosses!

Short-tailed Albatross -
adult, left and immature centre



Left -
immature Black-footed Albatross



Left - a Pomarine Skua
takes food from the water



Left -
Wedge-tailed Shearwater

Lower -
Red-footed Booby





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Bonin Petrel



White-necked Petrel



Upper - Japanese Crested Murrelets

Centre - Ijima's Leaf Warbler

Lower - Moustached Treeswift



Front cover – Matsudaira's Storm-petrel

All photos taken on the Western Pacific Odyssey
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