

West Papua - A Birds-of-paradise Special

Naturetrek Tour Report

2nd – 20th August 2025



Magnificent Riflebird



Common Paradise Kingfisher



Papuan Pitta



Metallic Pigeon

Tour report by Jean Harlow
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Tour participants: Sujan Chatterjee (leader) with seven Naturetrek clients

Day 1

Saturday 2nd August

Departure

Our flight left Heathrow in the early afternoon.

Day 2

Sunday 3rd August

Arrival in Jakarta

Our small group met in the foyer of the Swiss Hotel, Jakarta on the evening of 3rd August. Four of the group had flown in overnight from Heathrow via Dubai. I had flown in three nights earlier to explore Java's botanical gardens. Sujan, our genial tour guide, hosted our evening meal in the hotel restaurant, which served both western and Indonesian fare, before telling us to be ready to set off at 5.30am the next day for our first excursion. We were to return to the hotel afterwards, checking out in the evening for an overnight flight to Papua.

Day 3

Monday 4th August

Tour of Jakarta Bay and overnight flight to Jayapura

After meeting as planned at 5.30am, we boarded two waiting cars which took us to a dark riverside, where we boarded a covered riverboat and cruised across the river mouth up another river. We were joined by a local bird guide called Desi.

The water was very still and calm as dawn broke, and an explosion of herons took flight from their overnight roosts. One river edge was lined with reeds, scrub and litter, but less rubbish than I had expected, to be honest. The other riverside had more signs of human settlement and moored boats. Lurking around the water's edge were huge monitor lizards, numerous herons and many smaller birds. We saw Sunda Collared Dove, Pink-necked Green Pigeon, Javan Pond Heron, Cerulean Kingfisher, Javan Myna, Malaysian Pied Fantail, Javan Munia, Zebra Dove, White-breasted Waterhen and Black-backed Swamphen, among others.

We sailed past an island which appeared to be made of compressed rubbish, declined a walk on it, and then headed out to sea for an hour or so. During this time, Desi passed around what she patriotically stated was the 'most delicious Indonesian mango' and the 'most delicious Indonesian mangosteens', stating these were obviously 'most delicious', because they were Indonesian varieties. We all enthusiastically agreed as we relished the refreshment!

At sea, we found the water was covered in recycled plastic floats made from old water containers, or large empty plastic containers for other liquids. These were laid out in huge chequerboards of blue, black and white. As a careful path was picked between them by the boatman, we could see they had ropes attaching them to the sea bed; they were a makeshift mussel bed. Periodically, a flimsy bamboo stilt house rose above the water level, with basic walls and a roof: shelter for the people who tended the mussel beds and fishing nets.

Further out to sea, we saw long lines of bamboo canes emerging from the sea, supporting great lengths of fishing nets. On top of each vertical pole, frigatebirds posed, as smaller cormorants rested below on the horizontals. There was a mix of juvenile and adult Christmas and Lesser Frigatebirds. The rows of frigatebirds gave a striking picture and many photo opportunities. We turned the boat to return to shore and, after disembarking, we were taken for an Indonesian lunch in a local restaurant.

Most people had a satay dish with rice cakes which appeared some time later; food was not always served for people to eat at the same time! A couple of sweet dishes were ordered for us to sample, which proved popular. We then returned to the hotel at about 3.00pm. We met again at 7.00pm for dinner and the bird list, before arranging to meet at 9.45pm for the airport run. The plane was delayed by thirty minutes. We were given a packaged filled roll and a flimsy, plastic beaker of water with an impossible straw, resulting in several soaked knees. After this, we all tried to sleep for six or so hours.

Day 4

Tuesday 5th August

Jayapura to Nimbokrang

The flight landed around 8.45am local time; we had gained two hours and were now eight hours ahead of UK time. Once we were reunited with our baggage, Sujana directed us to a small stall where we could order Danish pastries and coffee or tea, which was a pleasant surprise. Two cars took us away on the road for around two hours towards Nimbokrang. We stopped at a picturesque lake and saw our first Willie-wagtail. The road changed from metalled to unmetalled, and then to a track into the village. It was quite a large settlement, with shops and mosques, inhabited by Javan settlers. Humidity was around 95% and the sun was very hot. Sweat poured from us while we were standing still.

The homestay had two newly-refurbished blocks of three rooms, each with two beds and a toilet cubicle, the latter flushed with a pan of water from 'the plunge pool', a water-butt inside the cubicle. The same water was the source for a basic shower. The rooms had a fan but no air conditioning. The rooms all had keys and any valuables could be left safely in the rooms while we were out birding.

A resident (and semi-domesticated) Southern Cassowary greeted us; it was a strange but interesting bird to see at close quarters as it walked over very dodgy decking to its very small enclosure. Most are found as chicks, then hand-raised after the parent has been hunted for food. They imprint on whoever raises them, so problems can arise if that person then moves away: they become unmanageable. Lunch was rice with chicken and vegetable dishes. Tea and coffee were available at all times from hot-water flasks, as was drinking water. There was no need for the water filters we had specially purchased for this trip.

At 3.00pm, we met again to go out to the rice fields. It was extremely hot. We looked successfully for Crimson Finch, and quickly saw Variable Goshawk, Black-billed (Lesser Black) Coucal, Sahul Sunbird, Rainbow Bee-eater, Brown Lory, White-shouldered Fairywren, Pacific Swallow, Tree Martin and Singing Starling, together with several mannikins.

We were grateful for a light breeze which filtered through the shrubs, and also for a bottle of 'Pocari Sweat', a local rehydrating drink, as we drove through the village to our next stop in a small patch of scrub across the road. Dusk

had fallen during the drive, and two fabulous Papuan Frogmouths were viewed on the way back to the homestay. The guide had the scope on them very quickly, so we all got a good view. We returned to the homestay for a dinner of rice, chicken and vegetables, then went to bed around 8.30pm: breakfast would be at 4.00am!

Day 5

Wednesday 6th August

km6 / km9

Alarms started going off from 3.00am, even before we heard the call to prayer from the nearby mosque. Breakfast was boiled eggs, banana and tea. I think there were some noodles in which others indulged. We boarded the cars and drove through deserted streets before arriving at the trailhead. We walked in single file as there were narrow boards under our feet; apparently these used to be used by motorbikes but had since fallen into disrepair and were quite slippery. Walking sticks and head torches were essential kit, as those without them soon found out! The trail changed to long grass, eventually emerging at a clearing where chairs were put up, enabling us to sit facing a tree pole: a tall, thin, curved trunk without foliage. Suddenly, a bird alighted on it in a flash of yellow and black: the Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise! It perched for a long time, then started to fluff itself up and lift its wings to form a butterfly shape. We watched as it hopped up and down the pole, switching its body from side to side. As the sun rose, the twelve wires became more defined against a brightening sky.



White-rumped Robin



Arfak Honeyeater

After this wonderful display, the bird flew off, and we walked a short distance into the trees, where there was another clearing with a view of an open treetop. We could hear the calls of Lesser Bird-of-paradise all around, and then one appeared on a branch high up. As its auburn-tinged wings and flowing yellow plumes caught the sunshine, it was a truly beautiful and memorable sight. The bird was joined by two other males and a female, all of which were quite mobile, flying around the treetops. Females appeared twice. The males hopped along a horizontal branch, turning the body forwards and backwards until all flew off in a flurry of calls.

We then drove to a third spot, where we were directed to a hide after a short hike on a level trail. We were viewing a horizontal perch across a clear area where the guide scattered some earthworms. Suddenly, our quarry was there: a gorgeous Common Paradise Kingfisher, with a brilliant blue head, violet cheeks and a long tail. He stayed for around ten minutes, posing and eating worms.

Our final morning call was to see some Buff-faced Pygmy Parrots, West Papua's smallest parrots. These were to be found in a large garden, where we came across a roaming Southern Cassowary, as well as two more caged birds. The pygmy parrots ate lichen growing on the tree bark by hanging upside down acrobatically, but they were tricky

to see in the canopy. Driving back, we stopped at the shop for 'Pocari Sweat' and 'Beng-Beng' bars, before returning for lunch at 11.00am.

Lunch was a chicken casserole in a ginger and lemon sauce with rice and mixed vegetables, tofu cakes and papaya. We regrouped at 3.30pm for a canopy search, which revealed impressive scenery as storm clouds rolled in. We stood on high ground accessed by a short walk and overlooked a deep valley, where we could observe the flight paths of different birds. Sightings included Black Butcherbird, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, Blyth's Hornbills, Boyer's Cuckooshrike, Wompoo Fruit Dove, Sooty Thicket Fantail, four Grey Crows, Glossy-mantled Manucode and Mamberamo Shrikethrush, among others.

Our days generally followed this pattern of a very early start to see the focus bird-of-paradise from a hide or viewing area in the morning, followed by an afternoon of more general birdwatching for any available species.

Day 6

Thursday 7th August

km7 am / Jalan Korea pm

We set off at 5.00am having had a quick, easy breakfast at 4.30am of noodles, boiled eggs and coffee. The cars drove us to a forest track which we walked carefully in the pitch dark. Although it was fairly level, it was muddy and slippery. Head torches and walking sticks were essential. We waited in a clearing trying to call in Pale-billed Sickiebill, unsuccessfully. However, the stunning Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise was perching and displaying on a pole, so we had very good views again. Moustached Treeswift, Red-cheeked Parrot, Black-capped Lory and Black Sunbird were added, as was our second bird-of-paradise, a Glossy-mantled Manucode which perched up nearby.

We then descended on a short but steep trail to another clearing for about twenty-five minutes, where I took a tumble into the shrubbery when my home-made forest stick snapped! Tree roots were very slippery and treacherous to step on. We crossed two stony streams where the water level was low before we arrived at the clearing. Once on level ground again, we waited for an hour or two for the King Bird-of-paradise to appear; we could hear him calling. As this is a small bird of the canopy, we had to crane our necks up when he eventually appeared, flitting restlessly between vines and branches. We first caught glimpses of bright red feathers high in the canopy, and occasionally some of us got stunning, full-body views as he perched. We waited a while after he disappeared, but then returned to the waiting cars for lunch at 11.00am and a couple of hours' rest before the afternoon session.

Following an early afternoon thundery downpour, we met again at 3.00pm. We drove for what seemed a long way to a very nicely tarmacked road in the middle of a shrubby area of secondary regrowth. This soon changed to an unmetalled track bordered by small shrubs. We strolled along the road with 'Chairman Mao' (the chair porter) listening and watching for birds. These included amazing Papuan Spinetails, Brahminy Kite, flyovers by Lesser and Twelve-wired Birds-of-paradise, Mimic Honeyeaters, Zoe's Imperial Pigeon, fantails, flowerpeckers, monarchs and Black-browed Triller.

Day 7

Friday 8th August

km8 trek

We left at 3.30am in the cars, following a 3.00am breakfast, to drive to the start of a long trail. It was very dark, wet and muddy from the previous day's rainfall. Although classed as 'level', there were some short but steep ups and downs which required some skill to avoid slips and trips. It took an hour for most of us to reach the hide, and some a little longer. We took a while to settle down, getting cameras and binoculars ready, but could hear the bird calling above. People moved location in the hide, aiming for a better view of the bird when it eventually came. We also found leeches were everywhere: one client achieved the record with six of them at one time. The leeches either started on the ground and worked their way up from the boots, or appeared to drop from branches above onto hats, faces and lips! As it was dark and torches were off, we found them as they felt their wiggly way across skin. However, after an hour of calling, the bird did not show, which was frustrating. The guide said it was a fairly new site and not truly established, but it could also have been because we had taken a while to settle into the hide. It was disappointing, after a long, dark trek following an early start, not to see the bird.

We moved back to the site of the King Bird-of-paradise spot, where refreshments were provided and welcomed. The King Bird-of-paradise was seen high up in the canopy and better full-body views were had by all. Nearby, we could hear a Yellow-billed Kingfisher calling. This was a bird one client really wanted to see and film; we all did, but it was a special bird for him. The guides went off to locate it using the scope, and eventually it was spotted, but it was very difficult to see. It merged perfectly with the surrounding foliage of the canopy tree where it was perched and needed to be pointed out to several of us. We were relieved when our colleague got his prized photo, after a few camera malfunctions caused him more than a little extra stress!

We then retreated back up the long trail where we emerged from the forest after several slips, trips and falls. Returning to the homestay via the shop for refreshments, we had an early lunch around 11.00am, and most of us had a sleep before the afternoon's endeavours. After lunch, we returned to the pylon area for the Pale-billed Sickiebill, which duly flew in and perched on a palm frond shortly after we arrived, giving good views. We had missed this bird the previous day. We watched Barn Swallow, Glossy and Uniform Swiftlets and Moustached Treeswifts flying and perching on wires overhead, saw Blyth's Hornbills fly over, and found a Rufous-bellied Kookaburra. The scope revealed a spectacular Orange-fronted Fruit Dove, as well as Beautiful and Coronated Fruit Doves, plus Pinon's Imperial Pigeon and Island Monarch.

We waited in the clearing as dusk fell and bats appeared, before the glow-worms. Then we were called by a guide to view a Marbled Frogmouth roosting a short distance down a muddy trail, before returning to the cars and making the drive back in the dark.

Day 8

Saturday 9th August

km8 trek repeat or Jalan Korea

Today we had a choice of repeating the previous day's early start and walk for a second attempt to see the Magnificent Riflebird, or more leisurely walking along the Jalan Korea logging trail. Four of us opted for the early start and another long walk. So, we got up again at 2.30am for a 3.00am breakfast. It was a very foggy morning;

trees were dripping moisture (and imaginary leeches in our minds!) and very thick mud was underfoot, which we had churned up on our walk the previous day. Although the mud was ankle-deep and slippery, we walked without many breaks, probably as we were walking slowly. However, we seemed to arrive at the hide site faster than the previous day, and quickly got settled, sitting quietly while picking off leeches, which were somewhat bigger than yesterday's. Spraying with DEET seemed to solve the issue, temporarily. We waited as dawn broke, listening to the birdsong gradually increase with the light. In almost full daylight, the riflebird approached from low down on the left-hand side, and perched while looking all around. Then he began calling, throwing his head back to give loud whoops, which seemed to be answered. As he called, a crescent of blue feathers on his chest undulated and shimmered as he fluffed out his feathers. The blue was iridescent, changing colour with the light. As he turned, we could see blue on his tail and sides. He stretched out his wings alternately and tapped his beak on the trunk as part of his display. After around thirty minutes, he flew off to the right, and we could hear him calling.

We then went out of the hide to the King Bird-of-paradise site. Chairs were set up as we gazed up, getting neck ache, but we were rewarded with decent views. At 8.30am, we started the return journey up the long track, weary but satisfied with our sightings. It was good to get clothes and boots cleaned up for the afternoon. Packing a few metal coat hangers in luggage would have been useful for hanging clothes out to dry, as these were in short supply on our trip, and line space was limited. Those who rewalked the Jalan Korea road spotted birds including Yellow-faced Myna, Lesser Bird-of-paradise, Pale-billed Sicklebill, Glossy-mantled Manucode, Shining Flycatcher, Emperor Fairywren and Helmeted (New Guinea) Friarbird.

After lunch, we went for a short walk to some agricultural fields bordered by trees. There were a few showers in the afternoon. Chairs were provided, from which we spotted a range of smaller birds: Channel-billed and Brush Cuckoos, Great and Amboyna Cuckoo-Doves, Zoe's and Pied Imperial Pigeons, Variable Goshawk, Red-cheeked Parrot, Black and Sahul Sunbirds, among others.

On our return drive, we stopped at a wooded area where we waited as night fell. Mosquitoes were abundant and walking was tricky with thick mud and puddles underfoot. We waited as the guides scouted for birds. One of our guides found a Papuan Frogmouth roosting, which made for a great way to end our day.

Day 9

Sunday 10th August

Travel day to Manokwari

As this was a travel day, we had to be packed and out of our accommodation for a 6.00am breakfast and a 6.45am departure. We headed back on the two-hour drive to Jayapura and our flight to Manokwari.

There were no free refreshments on the flight, which took an hour and twenty minutes, but some were available for sale. Sujan had treated us to Dunkin' Donuts at the airport as we waited for the flight. Having collected luggage, we boarded two pick-ups. Our luggage was lashed in the back of one under a tarpaulin. We set off for lunch at a Chinese restaurant in a busy shopping mall. A nearby supermarket was used to source all our food and water supplies for the next five days. Sujan and his new team went around armed with shopping lists and trolleys, while we looked for any specific treats and nibbles, which Sujan paid for and returned to us. The supplies were loaded into the back of the other pick-up, and off we set. The road out of town followed the bay and then climbed as it

went inland. We shared the road with numerous motorcycles and other vehicles as we negotiated the streets lined with stalls and homes.

We then left town and slowly started climbing steep hills; on one particularly steep stretch the engine of our vehicle shuddered to a stop, steam billowing from under the bonnet. The radiator was dry. We all tumbled out; the first pick-up with the rest of the group was unaware of the issue, being out of sight. The driver lifted the bonnet, seeing what the issue was; he poured water from small bottles into the radiator, then went off to gather more from a nearby stream. Two trips with three bottles restored things, and we were able to set off about forty minutes later. We arrived at our new homestay in the dark during a power cut, so it was difficult to see where we were staying! Electricity was usually on between 6.00pm and 6.00am here. It came on a little later, when we had an improvised meal and went to bed. The rooms here were wooden, raised on a platform in rows of four. Each room had two beds or two compartments with two beds in each. Again, there was a toilet cubicle with a tub of water for flushing and washing. We had mosquito nets above the beds. It was much cooler than Jayapura, and sleeping bags were essential. Again, the rooms had individual keys, and valuables could safely be left while we were out birding. There was a washing line under cover outside each room. For meals, we went to a dining room, where there were flasks of hot water and drinking water available.

Day 10

Monday 11th August

Syubri Village, Hans's hide and observation towers and church

We awoke in the mountain village of Syubri at 1200m altitude, surrounded by jungle, Papuans and chickens, for a 5.00am breakfast. A steep uphill ride in the pick-ups gained us some height, followed by a climb on foot up a steep muddy track. Handrails helped guide us. We were split between two hides about 100m apart. On arrival, some in the furthest hide saw a perched Mountain Owlet-nightjar. The Western Parotia showed at both hides to clear the display arenas of leaves, but only fully displayed at one. The steep muddy climb down was led by Zeth Wonggor, our guide, who once also guided David Attenborough. He led us one at a time to a fabulous Allied Owlet-nightjar perched at close range, before we returned for lunch.

Over lunch, a mobile shop arrived on a motorbike. The array of goods displayed was quite amazing, ranging from ready-made fritters to vegetables, sweets, biscuits, haberdashery, frozen ices and lollies, as well as plastic household goods. All were carried between villages packed on the back of a scooter.

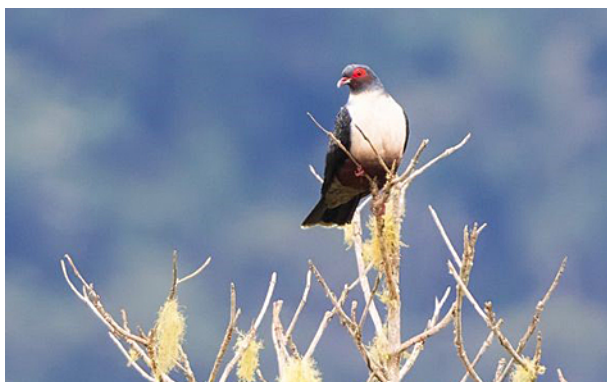
Afternoon roadside birding began at 2.00pm. We were dropped off and walked downhill. As soon as we left the vehicles, the heavens opened, so umbrellas proved very useful. As birding had come to a standstill, so did we, until Zeth eventually started strolling down the road. The road quickly turned into a stream before we reached two lookout towers, where we could get some shelter and birdwatch, giving us a Papuan Mountain Pigeon and Stout-billed Cuckooshrike. Continuing down the road, we reached a large garden where a steeply descending, muddy trail led down a forested gully, before we slid down into a muddy and steep narrow ravine. However, a spectacular, roosting Feline Owlet-nightjar was in full view at the bottom of the gully, so it was all worth it. After climbing out, we carried on down the road to a church, where we were able to sit and wait for dusk to fall. To conclude the evening, Sujana called in a Papuan Boobook from around the church area, which was seen well by all.

Day 11

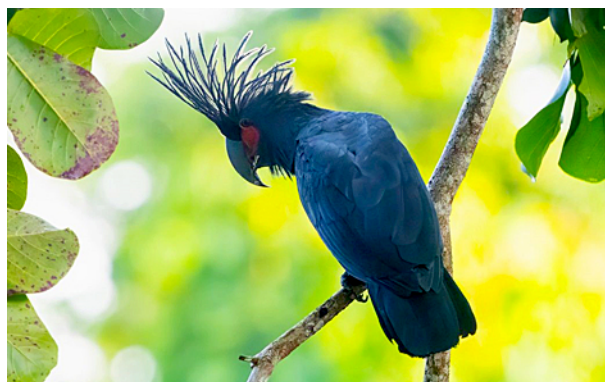
Tuesday 12th August

Syubri village garden house and Maybri

Breakfast at 5.00am was a treat of warm baked beans. We left at 5.30am to ascend a steep trail from the village which turned sharply right, and those at the back of the group got temporarily lost. From the front of the walk, we could see their torches continuing uphill and had to call them back. As the track became steeper and slipperier, the group spread out quite widely until we reached the hide. It was a new hide, and the Magnificent Bird-of-paradise called all the time over in a thicket of bamboo, but we did not get a view. We got a fleeting view of a female. It was disappointing.



Papuan Mountain Pigeon



Palm Cockatoo

To help our descent, Zeth made steps in the mud. We would have to return on Friday, our final day, for a second attempt at the Magnificent Bird-of-paradise. As we descended, we were treated to refreshments and told we would head to the German Camp the next day. Between 2.00pm and 6.00pm, we drove up to a house and sat under the eaves in the rain. We were waiting for the Masked Bowerbird, but this was another no-show; the wet weather wasn't helping! The scenery was spectacular as clouds rolled in between the mountains down the valley. We made friends with the resident chickens, and saw both the caterpillar and pupae of the Goliath Birdwing butterflies which are farmed for sale by villagers; they grow specific food plants to attract the butterflies. A hunter appeared and posed for pictures with a bow and arrow. As the clouds lifted, we saw some smaller birds including Olive-crowned Flowerpecker, Drongo Fantail, Lesser Ground Robin, Capped White-eye and a female Magnificent Bird-of-paradise.

Day 12

Wednesday 13th August

Hike to German Camp

This was a properly tough, steep and prolonged three-hour climb to a basic encampment on the mountain top called the German Camp, from Syubri Village. We set off around 6.30am. We ascended the track for an hour, stopping at a hide in an attempt to see a Western Parotia, which was a no-show, although a female Superb Bird-of-paradise did put in an appearance. After this, the already steep track ascended even more sharply, and mud turned to stones then back to mud again. The track goes straight up without bends or any level areas and is a tough climb.

Vogelkop Bowerbird, Modest Tiger Parrot, Smoky Honeyeater, Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo and White-eared Bronze Cuckoo were all seen en route. Then, in the misty canopy, a male and two female Black Sicklebills appeared. Torrential rain greeted us as we reached the encampment around 12.30pm, and we sheltered in a purpose-built lean-to which functioned as our dining room. We discussed sleeping arrangements as we set up bedrolls; there were five in a row on the wooden floor. The toilet was in a tent nearby, complete with a large bucket of water and a pot for flushing. It felt quite cool and very wet on the mountain top. We were at around 1800m elevation. After dinner, we went to bed at 8.00pm, but very little sleep was had by any of us other than Sujan, who snored happily throughout the night! The night was clear and, for those of us who were up and about throughout the night, the stars shone clear through the canopy.

Day 13

Thursday 14th August

Return from German Camp

Wake-up was at 4.15am. It took around twenty minutes to walk to the bamboo hide, which had two storeys. There was a steep descent to access the lower hide entrance. About thirty minutes later, when it was light, the Black Sicklebill arrived. His display was truly incredible, and was repeated around five times; he posed in his erect, crescent shape with iridescent purple and black feathers shimmering. As we returned and had breakfast, it poured with rain again, so we had been lucky with a break in the weather to view the bird. We sat about eating cake and drinking tea while the rain poured.

Around 11.00am, we had lunch and began the steep descent, which took about two hours. This trek was broken by a side trip to see an amazing Vogelkop Bowerbird's bower. This was a wigwam-like structure with an array of colourful treasures in the entranceway. We again visited the bird hide on the way down, and saw a female Superb Bird-of-paradise. Then it began to rain heavily, so we made a very slow descent towards the village. At one point the trail had followed a dry streambed which, due to the rain, was now flowing freely as a stream. We had to negotiate this for about 100m, which was tricky as it flowed with some force, before we climbed out (with wet feet) back onto the trail to the village.

Day 14

Friday 15th August

Trail walk and travel to Manokwari

Breakfast was at 4.30am, as we were to try again to see the Magnificent Bird-of-paradise. The pre-dawn trek took about forty minutes as we yet again followed the muddy trail through tangled jungle to reach the rudimentary hide.

However, shortly after arriving, an amazing display by a Magnificent Bird-of-paradise made it all worthwhile. The stunning display and vocalisation were truly memorable. It displayed by raising a yellow ruff, lowering its head and raising back feathers and tail. After a group discussion, we decided to try to see the Masked Bowerbird further up the road. Although we waited patiently, this bird was a no-show.

At 9.30am, we returned to the homestay to pack up ready for the transfer back to town. Lunch was a small bowl of fried rice, which was very nice, but there was not a lot to go around. After lunch, we were transferred back to Manokwari for a hotel stay before the next day's flight. However, as we drove down the road, the first pick-up

came to an abrupt stop due to a mechanical fault. It was decided the second vehicle would carry on, then return for the first vehicle. This took around three hours, and it was a hot wait at the roadside for the passengers of the stranded vehicle. We had a hotel meal together at 7.00pm, after all had had a hot shower, our first since we had left Jakarta!

Day 15

Saturday 16th August

Travel to Raja Ampat via flight and ferry

Breakfast in the hotel was western or Asian, and there were many choices. We left at 7.00am for the airport and a short flight to Sorong.

Some small kiosks sold a limited range of souvenirs: T-shirts, key rings and string bags. The plane was scheduled for 9.20am. It was chaotic getting on, as people boarded randomly from front and rear, and there was a lot of hand luggage. The flight lasted an hour or so. We were met off the flight by people selling bags and asking if we wanted taxis. We had cars waiting, which took us to a Pizza Hut! Sujan bought us a massive pizza with different toppings: we all tucked in. We had some time to wait until the ferry was due to board. We were able to shop in the mall for sweets and snacks.

Leaving at 1.00pm, we boarded cars which took us to the ferryboat. We were seated in the VIP lounge, which had air conditioning and was fairly quiet. The sea was calm and the ferry only rolled slightly. Not many birds were seen by those who went on deck, but they did see dolphins. The journey took two hours. Once we arrived, it was rather chaotic getting off. By mistake, we descended into the hull of the ferry and got off with the mass of passengers rather than staying on our VIP level and using a walkway! Instead, we crawled through a crowded hatch and up a plank. Porters brought the bags off and took them to waiting cars.

We were now on Waigeo, an island of Raja Ampat which means Four Kings, as there are four islands in this group. A drive of thirty minutes took us to the dive resort, where we had allocated chalets around a dining area. The chalets had door locks, air conditioning and hot water in the showers. Tea and coffee were available in the dining area at all times.

Day 16

Sunday 17th August

Sapokrane Village and Warkaysi Bird Park

We set off at 5.00am to see Wilson's Bird-of-paradise. A drive took us up a steep stony track, and then a steeper, even narrower track through the forest for forty-five minutes.

We walked for around fifteen minutes up a track to a hide. At 6.30am, we could see the bird flitting around the display arena, with good side views on an oblique perch. The bird flew into the brush then returned, and stayed for around half an hour. We also saw Raja Ampat Pitohui, and a walk down the forest trail gave us a showy female Red Bird-of-paradise, Frilled Monarch and a hornbill flypast. Later, the guides called in a Papuan Pitta from a blind. Although it hid quite a lot, it eventually came in response.

Days 17-19

Monday 18th – Wednesday 20th August

Travel home

We made our complex and lengthy journey home, via Jakarta, Soekarno and Dubai, finally arriving back in London early in the afternoon of 20th August.

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Species lists

Birds (H = Heard only)

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic, I=Introduced		August 2025															
Common name	Scientific name	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Sunda Teal	<i>Anas gibberifrons</i>	✓															
Collared Brushturkey	<i>Talegalla jobiensis</i>					H	H										
Dusky Megapode	<i>Megapodius freycinet</i>														H	✓	
New Guinea Scrubfowl	<i>Megapodius decollatus</i>					H	H										
Brown Quail	<i>Synoicus ypsilophorus</i>		H														
Papuan Nightjar	<i>Eurostopodus papuensis</i>			✓													
Marbled Frogmouth	<i>Podargus ocellatus</i>			H		✓									H	H	
Papuan Frogmouth	<i>Podargus papuensis</i>		✓				✓								H		
Feline Owlet-nightjar	<i>Aegotheles insignis</i>								✓								
Mountain Owlet-nightjar	<i>Aegotheles albertisi</i>								✓								
Vogelkop Owlet-nightjar	<i>Aegotheles affinis</i>								✓								
Moustached Treeswift	<i>Hemiprocne mystacea</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓									✓		
Glossy Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia esculenta</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Cave Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia linchi</i>	✓															
Mountain Swiftlet	<i>Aerodramus hirundinaceus</i>								✓				✓				
Uniform Swiftlet	<i>Aerodramus vanikorensis</i>			✓		✓	✓										
Papuan Spinetail	<i>Mearnsia novaeguineae</i>				✓												
House Swift	<i>Apus nipalensis</i>	✓															
Ivory-billed Coucal	<i>Centropus menbeki</i>			H	H	H	H										
Sunda Coucal	<i>Centropus nigrorufus</i>	✓															
Black-billed Coucal	<i>Centropus bernsteini</i>		✓														
Dwarf Koel	<i>Microdynamis parva</i>			H			H										
Pacific Koel	<i>Eudynamys orientalis</i>									H							
Channel-billed Cuckoo	<i>Scythrops novaehollandiae</i>						✓										
Rufous-throated Bronze Cuckoo	<i>Chalcites ruficollis</i>										✓						
White-eared Bronze Cuckoo	<i>Chalcites meyerii</i>										✓						
Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis castaneiventris</i>										✓						

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Sahul Brush Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis variolosus</i>			✓	H		✓										
Rock Dove - I	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓															
Metallic Pigeon	<i>Columba vitiensis</i>								✓	✓			✓				
Sunda Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia bitorquata</i>	✓															
Spotted Dove	<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>	✓	✓				✓										
Sultan's Cuckoo-Dove	<i>Macropygia doreya</i>									✓	H	H				✓	
Bar-tailed Cuckoo-Dove	<i>Macropygia nigrirostris</i>									✓			✓				
Great Cuckoo-Dove	<i>Reinwardtoena reinwardti</i>			✓		✓	✓								✓		
Zebra Dove	<i>Geopelia striata</i>		✓														
Western Crowned Pigeon	<i>Goura cristata</i>														✓		
Pink-necked Green Pigeon	<i>Treron vernans</i>	✓															
Wompoo Fruit Dove	<i>Ptilinopus magnificus</i>			✓		H											
Pink-spotted Fruit Dove	<i>Ptilinopus perlatus</i>														✓		
Ornate Fruit Dove	<i>Ptilinopus ornatus</i>								H								
Coroneted Fruit Dove	<i>Ptilinopus coronulatus</i>			✓		✓											
Beautiful Fruit Dove	<i>Ptilinopus pulchellus</i>					✓											
White-bibbed Fruit Dove	<i>Ptilinopus rivoli</i>								H								
Claret-breasted Fruit Dove	<i>Ptilinopus viridis</i>													✓		✓	
Orange-bellied Fruit Dove	<i>Ptilinopus iozonus</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓										
Spice Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula myristicivora</i>															✓	
Purple-tailed Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula rufigaster</i>				✓												
Pinon's Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula pinon</i>			✓		✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	
Zoe's Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula zoeae</i>				✓		✓										
Pied Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula bicolor</i>	✓															
Papuan Mountain Pigeon	<i>Gymnophaps albertisii</i>								✓	✓			✓				
Black-backed Swamphen	<i>Porphyrio indicus</i>	✓															
White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amauornis phoenicurus</i>	✓															
Pale-vented Bush-hen	<i>Amauornis moluccana</i>												✓				
Pacific Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>														✓		
Javan Plover	<i>Anarhynchus javanicus</i>	✓															
Eurasian Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	✓													✓		

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Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>														✓		
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>														✓		
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>	✓												✓			
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	✓															
Greater Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>	✓												✓			
Milky Stork	<i>Mycteria cinerea</i>	✓															
Lesser Frigatebird	<i>Fregata ariel</i>	✓														✓	
Great Frigatebird	<i>Fregata minor</i>															✓	
Christmas Frigatebird	<i>Fregata andrewsi</i>	✓															
Oriental Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>	✓															
Little Black Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>	✓															
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	✓															
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	✓															
Black Bittern	<i>Botaurus flavicollis</i>														✓		
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	✓															
Pacific Reef Heron	<i>Egretta sacra</i>															✓	
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	✓												✓	✓		
Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>	✓													✓		
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	✓															
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓															
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	✓															
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>														✓	✓	
Long-tailed Honey Buzzard	<i>Henicopernis longicauda</i>								✓								
Grey-headed Goshawk	<i>Tachyspiza poliocephala</i>									✓							
Variable Goshawk	<i>Tachyspiza hiogaster</i>		✓	✓			✓										
Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>				✓		✓								✓	✓	
Papuan Boobook	<i>Ninox theomacha</i>								✓						H	H	
Blyth's Hornbill	<i>Rhyticeros plicatus</i>			✓		✓								✓	✓	✓	
Oriental Dollarbird	<i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	
Hook-billed Kingfisher	<i>Melidora macrorrhina</i>			H		H									H	✓	
Common Paradise Kingfisher	<i>Tanysiptera galatea</i>			✓											H	H	

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Rufous-bellied Kookaburra	<i>Dacelo gaudichaud</i>			H		✓									✓	✓	
Collared Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus chloris</i>	✓															
Beach Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus saurophagus</i>														✓	✓	
Sacred Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus sanctus</i>				✓		✓							✓	✓	✓	
Yellow-billed Kingfisher	<i>Syma torotoro</i>				H	✓	H								H	H	
Cerulean Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo coerulescens</i>	✓															
Papuan Dwarf Kingfisher	<i>Ceyx solitarius</i>															✓	
Rainbow Bee-eater	<i>Merops ornatus</i>		✓												✓	✓	
Sunda Pygmy Woodpecker	<i>Yungipicus moluccensis</i>	✓															
Freckle-breasted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos analis</i>	✓															
Palm Cockatoo	<i>Probosciger aterrimus</i>													✓	✓	✓	
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	<i>Cacatua galerita</i>			✓	✓					✓					✓	✓	
Buff-faced Pygmy Parrot	<i>Micropsitta pusio</i>			✓													
Papuan King Parrot	<i>Alisterus chloropterus</i>				✓												
Papuan Eclectus	<i>Eclectus polychloros</i>				✓		✓							✓	✓	✓	
Red-cheeked Parrot	<i>Geoffroyus geoffroyi</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓								✓	✓	
Red-breasted Parakeet	<i>Psittacula alexandri</i>	✓															
Modest Tiger Parrot	<i>Psittacella modesta</i>										✓						
Plum-faced Lorikeet	<i>Oreopsittacus arfaki</i>								✓								
West Papuan Lorikeet - E	<i>Charmosyna papou</i>			✓													
Yellow-billed Lorikeet	<i>Neopsittacus musschenbroekii</i>										H						
Black-capped Lory	<i>Lorius lory</i>			✓	✓		✓								✓	H	
Brown Lory	<i>Chalcopsitta duivenbodei</i>		✓	✓			✓										
Coconut Lorikeet	<i>Trichoglossus haematodus</i>			✓	✓		✓							✓	✓	H	
Papuan Pitta	<i>Erythropitta macklotii</i>					H									✓		
White-eared Catbird	<i>Ailuroedus buccoides</i>			✓													
Arfak Catbird - E	<i>Ailuroedus arfakianus</i>									H			✓				
Vogelkop Bowerbird - E	<i>Amblyornis inornata</i>										✓	✓					
Fawn-breasted Bowerbird	<i>Chlamydera cerviniventris</i>		✓														
Emperor Fairywren - N	<i>Malurus cyanocephalus</i>				✓		✓										
White-shouldered Fairywren - N	<i>Malurus alboscapulatus</i>		✓						✓								

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Rufous-sided Honeyeater - E	<i>Ptiloprora erythropleura</i>										✓						
Arfak Honeyeater - E	<i>Melipotēs gymnops</i>										✓						
Streak-headed Honeyeater	<i>Pycnopygius stictocephalus</i>			✓													
Red Myzomela	<i>Myzomela cruentata</i>									✓							
Mountain Myzomela	<i>Myzomela adolphinae</i>									✓							
Meyer's Friarbird	<i>Philemon meyeri</i>						✓										
Helmeted Friarbird	<i>Philemon buceroides</i>		H	✓	✓		✓							✓	✓	✓	
Tawny-breasted Honeyeater	<i>Xanthotis flaviventer</i>				✓	✓	✓									✓	
Mountain Honeyeater	<i>Microptilotis orientalis</i>								✓	✓							
Mimic Honeyeater	<i>Microptilotis analogus</i>		✓		✓												
Ornate Melidectes	<i>Melidectes torquatus</i>								✓								
Goldenface	<i>Pachycare flavogriseum</i>								✓	✓							
Rusty Mouse-warbler	<i>Origma murina</i>				H				H	H			✓		✓	H	
Grey-green Scrubwren	<i>Aethomyias arfakianus</i>								✓								
Green-backed Gerygone	<i>Gerygone chloronota</i>															H	
Golden-bellied Gerygone	<i>Gerygone sulphurea</i>	✓															
Brown-breasted Gerygone	<i>Gerygone ruficollis</i>								✓	H							
Fan-tailed Berrypecker	<i>Melanocharis versteri</i>										✓						
Blue Jewel-babbler	<i>Ptilorrhoa caerulescens</i>						H										
Black-breasted Boatbill	<i>Machaerirhynchus nigripectus</i>										✓						
White-breasted Woodswallow	<i>Artamus leucorynchus</i>	✓													✓		
Lowland Peltops	<i>Peltops blainvillii</i>			✓													
Black Butcherbird	<i>Melloria quoyi</i>			✓	H	H	H										
Hooded Butcherbird	<i>Cracticus cassicus</i>					H								✓		✓	
Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>	✓															
Stout-billed Cuckooshrike	<i>Coracina caeruleo-grisea</i>								✓								
Boyer's Cuckooshrike	<i>Coracina boyeri</i>			✓													
White-bellied Cuckooshrike	<i>Coracina papuensis</i>									✓							
Black-browed Triller	<i>Lalage atrovirens</i>			✓	✓		✓										
Pied Triller	<i>Lalage nigra</i>	✓															
Rufous-naped Bellbird	<i>Aleadyras rufinucha</i>										H	H					

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Sclater's Whistler	<i>Pachycephala soror</i>								✓								
Rusty Pitohui	<i>Pseudorectes ferrugineus</i>												✓				
Mamberamo Shrikethrush - E	<i>Colluricincla obscura</i>			✓	✓	✓											
Raja Ampat Pitohui	<i>Pitohui cerviniventris</i>														✓	✓	
Spangled Drongo	<i>Dicrurus bracteatus</i>			✓		H									✓	H	
Malaysian Pied Fantail	<i>Rhipidura javanica</i>	✓															
Willie Wagtail	<i>Rhipidura leucophrys</i>		✓		✓		✓							✓	✓	✓	
Northern Fantail	<i>Rhipidura rufiventris</i>					✓									✓		
Sooty Thicket Fantail	<i>Rhipidura threnothorax</i>			✓	✓												
White-bellied Thicket Fantail	<i>Rhipidura leucothorax</i>			H		✓	✓										
Black Fantail	<i>Rhipidura atra</i>								✓	✓	✓						
Friendly Fantail	<i>Rhipidura albolimbata</i>										✓	✓					
Dimorphic Fantail	<i>Rhipidura brachyrhyncha</i>											✓					
Rufous-backed Fantail	<i>Rhipidura rufidorsa</i>			✓	✓												
Drongo Fantail	<i>Chaetorhynchus papuensis</i>								✓	✓			✓				
Spot-winged Monarch	<i>Symposiachrus guttula</i>				✓												
Hooded Monarch	<i>Symposiachrus manadensis</i>				✓												
Golden Monarch	<i>Carterornis chrysomela</i>				✓	✓									✓		
Ochre-collared Monarch	<i>Arses insularis</i>				✓												
Frisled Monarch	<i>Arses telescopthalmus</i>														✓		
Shining Flycatcher	<i>Myiagra alecto</i>						✓							H			
Racket-tailed Treepie	<i>Crypsirina temia</i>	✓															
Grey Crow	<i>Corvus tristis</i>			✓			✓										
Torresian Crow	<i>Corvus orru</i>													✓	✓	✓	
Glossy-mantled Manucode	<i>Manucodia ater</i>			✓	✓		✓							✓	✓		
Western Parotia - E	<i>Parotia sefilata</i>								✓		✓	✓					
Vogelkop Lophorina - E	<i>Lophorina superba</i>											✓					
Magnificent Riflebird	<i>Ptiloris magnificus</i>					H	✓						H				
Black Sicklebill	<i>Epimachus fastosus</i>										✓	✓					
Pale-billed Sicklebill	<i>Drepanornis bruijnii</i>			✓	H	✓	✓										
Magnificent Bird-of-paradise	<i>Diphyllodes magnificus</i>								H	✓			✓				

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Wilson's Bird-of-paradise - E	<i>Diphyllodes respublica</i>														✓		
King Bird-of-paradise	<i>Cicinnurus regius</i>				✓	✓	✓										
Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise	<i>Seleucidis melanoleucus</i>			✓	✓	✓											
Lesser Bird-of-paradise	<i>Paradisaea minor</i>			✓	✓	H	✓			H							
Red Bird-of-paradise - E	<i>Paradisaea rubra</i>														✓	✓	
Lesser Ground Robin	<i>Amalocichla incerta</i>								✓		✓		✓				
Ashy Robin - E	<i>Heteromyias albispecularis</i>												✓				
Black-sided Robin	<i>Poecilodryas hypoleuca</i>											✓			✓	H	
Slaty Robin	<i>Peneothello cyanus</i>								✓			✓					
Yellow-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus goiavier</i>	✓															
Sooty-headed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus aurigaster</i>	✓															
Pacific Swallow	<i>Hirundo javanica</i>	✓	✓										✓	✓	✓	✓	
Tree Martin	<i>Petrochelidon nigricans</i>		✓			✓											
Island Leaf Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus poliocephalus</i>									✓			✓				
Clamorous Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus stentoreus</i>	✓															
Golden-headed Cisticola	<i>Cisticola exilis</i>		✓														
Bar-winged Prinia	<i>Prinia familiaris</i>	✓															
Yellow-bellied Prinia	<i>Prinia flaviventris</i>	✓															
Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inornata</i>	✓															
Olive-backed Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sepium</i>	H															
Black-fronted White-eye	<i>Zosterops chrysolaemus</i>									✓							
Capped White-eye	<i>Zosterops fuscicapilla</i>								✓	✓	✓						
Papuan White-eye	<i>Zosterops novaeguineae</i>									✓							
Metallic Starling	<i>Aplonis metallica</i>		✓		✓												
Singing Starling	<i>Aplonis cantoroides</i>														✓		
Yellow-faced Myna	<i>Mino dumontii</i>				✓		✓									H	
Javan Myna	<i>Acridotheres javanicus</i>	✓															
Olive-crowned Flowerpecker - E	<i>Dicaeum pectorale</i>								✓	✓	✓		✓				
Red-capped Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum geelvinkianum</i>				✓		✓										
Black Sunbird	<i>Leptocoma aspasia</i>				✓	✓	✓								✓		
Sahul Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris frenatus</i>		✓		✓		✓								✓		

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Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	✓	✓			✓	✓						✓				
Crimson Finch	<i>Neochmia phaeton</i>		✓														
Streak-headed Mannikin	<i>Mayrimunia tristissima</i>		✓														
Scaly-breasted Munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>	✓															
Javan Munia	<i>Lonchura leucogastroides</i>	✓															
Great-billed Mannikin	<i>Lonchura grandis</i>		✓														
Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	<i>Lonchura castaneothorax</i>		✓														