

Papua New Guinea

Naturetrek Tour Report

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Report compiled by Jon Hornbuckle



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On this year's tour of Papua New Guinea, we succeeded in seeing 21 species of the unique Birds of Paradise, along with a variety of kingfishers, parrots, pigeons, bowerbirds, whistlers and honeyeaters. Highlights included displaying King of Saxony, Twelve-wired, Superb and King Birds of Paradise, a beautiful Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher singing his heart out, and a rarely seen Dorias Hawk. Add to these Brown Sicklebill, Ribbon-tailed and Stephanie's Astrapias, and an impressive collection of New Guinea's endemic birds, such as Brehm's, Painted and Modest Tiger-Parrots, Blue-capped Ifrita, Obscure and Crested Berrypeckers, Salvadori's Teal, and Wallace's Fairy-Wren, and you can see why this tour was a success.

After a chaotic check-in at Heathrow's Terminal 4, during which BA lost my checked-in bag, five of us collected free sandwiches and bottled water to tide us over on the food-free BA flight to Singapore. At Changi airport the following evening, we met Malc and Issy who arrived an hour later on BA's second flight of the night from Heathrow. We all boarded our Air Niugini flight to Port Moresby and arrived early in the morning. After checking in at the comfortable Granville Hotel, we were joined by Jane and Gillian and after breakfast, took off for Varirata National Park. We soon had our first taste of New Guinea's birds at wayside ponds with Pied Herons, Black-backed Butcherbird and Fawn-breasted Bowerbird. We climbed up the approach road to Varirata and stopped to bird the dry eucalypt savanna along the road. Here we saw species such as Rainbow Bee-eater, Lemon-bellied and Leaden Flycatchers, White-bellied Whistler and Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike. The Circuit Trail was rather quiet, with only Azure Kingfisher and Rusty Mouse-Warbler of note. As we ate our packed lunch, watching Mountain Peltops and Hooded Pitohuis, with Red-cheeked Parrots and Black-capped Lorries flying over, Augustus, a local ranger, appeared and showed us a beautiful Yellow-billed Kingfisher perched inside a large bush nearby. We proceeded up Gares Look-out Trail, spotting Frilled and Black-faced Monarchs but the highlight was a Barred Owllet-Nightjar's head poking out of a hollow tree. We returned to Moresby late afternoon, seeing Pheasant Coucal in the eucalypt savanna this time. Passing the airport, we stopped to find Issy's missing bag in customs, but not mine.

An early start saw us at the Raggiana Bird of Paradise lek at Varirata, where the magnificent males gave a fine display. A walk down the Varirata Look-out Trail took us to a large Riflebird nest but the owner was absent – a stunning Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher was a consolation prize. More trail-bashing was rewarded with a Black-billed Brush-Turkey, more often heard than seen, Wampoo Fruit-Dove, Blyth's Hornbill, Chestnut-bellied Fantail and Boyer's Cuckoo-shrike, but bird activity ceased as the day warmed up. After lunch we drove through the Eucalypts, stopping for a few birds such as White-throated Honeyeater, down to the Kokoda Monument, an interesting memorial to Second World War activities but largely birdless.

The following morning we drove back to Varirata, arriving at dawn. A New Guinea Harpy-Eagle called tantalisingly in the distance. We took Gares Look-out Trail before dropping down through the forest into a dry stream bed. Here we looked for Dwarf Cassowary but only saw its droppings. There was plenty of action here though, highlights being sightings of Dwarf Whistler and Eastern Riflebird. We finished the morning at the lower end of the Circuit Trail, with Black Berrypecker and Black Myzomela. After lunch, we drove down to the War Cemetery for Norman to look for a grave, then to the Pacific Adventist's University (PAU) where we soon added a good selection of waterbirds to the list: Little Pied Cormorant, Wandering Whistling-Duck, White-headed Shelduck, Grey Teal, Buff-banded Rail and Comb-crested Jacana, while with Mike Tarburton's help we found landbirds such as Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove, Blue-winged Kookaburra, Grey Shrike-Thrush, Singing Starling, Figbird, Rufous-banded Honeyeater, Black-backed Butcherbird, Grey-headed and Chestnut-breasted Munias, Rufous Night-Herons and a pair of roosting Papuan Frogmouths. On the way out we inspected the bower of a Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, a fine end to a good day's birding.

Another early start saw us at the airport for 06.00 for the two hour flight westwards, over almost continuous unbroken forest, to the port of Kiunga, near the border with Irian Jaya. Here we were met by Samuel, our guide for the next 6 days. After checking in at Kiunga Guesthouse, we returned to the far end of the airstrip for a two hour session with little reward. After lunch we drove to Km 17 where we had fine views of Greater Birds of Paradise displaying their beautiful plumes, plus an assortment of fruit-doves, parrots and other birds such as the strange Trumpet Manucode. In the evening we celebrated Malc's birthday with duty-free Drambuie and Whiskey.

Next day, we boarded our boat up the Fly and Elevala Rivers. As we set off, many large fruit-bats were flying overhead to roost. We soon saw Twelve-wired Bird of Paradise displaying on a dead snag, followed by Great-billed Heron, Large Fig-Parrot, Palm Cockatoo and Golden Myna. Other sightings included Pacific Baza, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove, Zoe and Collared Imperial-Pigeons, Papuan Needletail and Rufous-bellied Kookaburra. We eventually disembarked on the muddy bank and took a path into the forest to look for King Bird of Paradise. Common Paradise-Kingfisher was calling and we managed to scope up one of these beauties, but its rarer cousin, Little Paradise-Kingfisher, would not co-operate. Superb Fruit-dove, White-bellied Pitohui, Rufous Babbler, Black-sided Robin, Hooded Monarch and Yellow-bellied Longbill were added to the list. The last hour of day-light was spent looking for Southern Crowned-Pigeon from the boat, unsuccessfully, before we retired to Ekame Lodge for a spartan supper.

At dawn, John and Magnus had brief views of a Hook-billed Kingfisher, responding to my play-back of its call. Then we spent most of the morning cruising the rivers in search of the Crowned-Pigeon. One was flushed and eventually relocated by Samuel, perched atop a tall tree – a mega bird! After lunch at the lodge, we went slowly back to Kiunga, seeing a flock of the weird-looking Channel-billed Cuckoo. Back at the guest-house some of us discovered we were covered in chigger bites, which took several days to clear-up.

The next day we drove to the "Manucode Mound" on Boystown Road, to look for the spectacular Flame Bowerbird in the partially logged forest. A grand total of five were seen, along with a good selection of birds including Shining Bronze and Long-billed Cuckoos, White-crowned and Dwarf Koels, and a brief view of a Blue Jewel-Babbler. After lunch, we drove to Tabubil, only stopping at one view point and at a stake-out for the endemic race of Little Ringed Plover. We reached the Cloudlands Hotel in time for a good dinner.

The following morning saw us at Dablin Creek in light rain. Almost the first bird was a rare Doria's Hawk, soon followed by a host of good birds including Carola's Parotia, Magnificent and Superb Birds of Paradise – all female types unfortunately – and Black-winged Monarch, Stout-billed Cuckoo-shrike, Obscure Berrypecker and Sclater's Whistler. After lunch at the hotel, we returned to Dablin Creek but found it very disturbed as locals had arrived to chop down all the trees along the edge of the track, to ensure the large water pipe there was not damaged, so we left for the Ok Menga hydro station. Here we immediately found a pair of Salvadori's Teal on the river, along with Torrent-Larks, Torrent Flycatchers and Moustached Treeswift. We returned to Cloudlands as the rain turned into a downpour.

Next day we returned to Dablin Creek, rather than the intended Ok Ma Road, because the bridge was down thanks to the river flooding some weeks earlier. Although blighted by rain for most of the day, we saw Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrot, Orange-breasted Fig-Parrot (at its nest hole), White-eared Bronze-Cuckoo and Spot-breasted Meliphaga, but Greater Melampitta and White-rumped Robin were only heard. After lunch we drove to Km 120 to look for Vulturine Parrot but only succeeded in seeing Emperor Fairy-Wren and Oriental Hobby, while 100s of Dusky Lories flew over to roost. The most remarkable sight was a distant Spotted Cuscus sleeping curled up on a thin branch, like a large white and ginger ball – an obvious target for a New Guinea Eagle one would have thought.

Our departure for Tari was scheduled for 10.00, so we returned to Dablin Creek at dawn for three hours. An obliging party of Wallace's Fairy-Wrens, Mottled Whistler and Obscure Berrypecker made it worthwhile. Back at Cloudlands we found the chartered MAF flight had been postponed till noon, and then it was further delayed so we did not get airborne until 2.15 pm. We touched down at Arou, then Kopingo, so did not arrive at Tari till 4 pm. Here we were met by Benson, one of the bird-guides at Ambua Lodge. The coach drive to the lodge was enlivened by views of local Wigmen adorned with head-dresses made of feathers from cassowaries, parrots and birds of paradise. We tucked into cake and coffee or tea on arrival at the renowned Ambua Lodge, to tide us over before the fine dinner at 7 pm.

Ambua is without doubt the highlight of a visit to PNG: as well as good food and luxurious accommodation, there is a wealth of montane birds occurring in the nearby forests, including no less than 11 species of Birds of Paradise. Over the next three days we explored the different habitats, with the aid of sharp-eyed Joseph. Persistent rain dampened bird activity but we were able to see a good collection of New Guinea's endemic birds. Repeated visits to the mossy elfin forest near Tari Gap yielded beauties such as Papuan and Plum-faced Lorikeets, White-winged Robin, Regent Whistler, Blue-capped Ifrita, Crested, Tit and Fan-tailed Berrypeckers, Lesser Melampitta, Sanford's (Archbold's) Bowerbird, and Crested BoP for Janie and Magnus. Lower down, in the tall mid-altitude forest we tracked down Goldie's Lorikeet, Painted Tiger-Parrot, Rufous-throated Bronze-Cuckoo, Mountain Kingfisher, Papuan Treecreeper, Black Sitella, Rufous-naped Whistler, Ribbon-tailed and Stephanie's Astropias, King of Saxony and Loria's Birds of Paradise, Brown and the rare Black-billed Sicklebills, Lesser Ground-Robin, and the rare Buff-tailed Sicklebill. In the immediate surroundings of the lodge we observed White-breasted and Ornate Fruit-Doves, Modest Tiger-Parrot, Blue-grey and Black-throated Robins, Brown-backed Whistler, Black-breasted Boatbill and a flock of Varied Sitella. Tame Great Woodswallows and Mountain Peltopses perched on the roof of the restaurant or nearby wires and were hand-fed on cicadas by lodge staff. Visits to the lower Tari Valley with its gardens, fields and casuarina copses added Papuan Boobook, a superb pair of Greater Sooty Owl, and the exquisite Blue Bird of Paradise, Superb Bird of Paradise and Lawes's

Parotia to our BoP list. On one afternoon some of the group chose to attend a local Sing Sing performed by the Huli Wigmen, resplendent in all their finery.

All too soon it was time to depart, to Port Moresby and beyond for all except Magnus and Norman who continued to Kumul Lodge near Mount Hagen. A visit to the fascinating country of Papua New Guinea is always an adventure, and this, Naturetrek's third tour, was no exception. A total of 274 species was seen by the group, with an additional 26 heard only. Many of the birds were difficult to see and so inevitably some were missed or not seen well, but everyone saw some fantastic birds, especially the birds of paradise - an experience to savour.

Bird list

- Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*: numerous at the Pacific Adventist's University (PAU), with a few on the way and on the Fly and Elevala Rivers.
- Little Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*: only 1 at the PAU and a few on the Elevala River.
- Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*: 1 on the Elevala River.
- Great-billed Heron *Ardea sumatrana*: 2 or 3 along the Elevala River and 1 on the Ok Tedi.
- Great Egret *Egretta alba*: a few singles noted around Port Moresby, Kiunga and Tabubil.
- Pied Heron *Egretta picata*: 20 of this restricted range species in pools near Port Moresby was an unusually high number, with 2 at the PAU.
- Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia*: quite common in the Port Moresby area.
- Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*: one near Port Moresby.
- Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*: common around Port Moresby and a few near Kiunga.
- Striated Heron *Ardeola striata*: 2 along the Elevala River.
- Rufous Night-Heron *Nycticorax caledonicus*: 10 roosting at the PAU and 1 along the Elevala River.
- Wandering Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna arcuata*: 4 at the PAU.
- White-headed (Rajah) Shelduck *Tadorna radjah*: 8 of this scarce irruptive visitor from Australia at the PAU.
- Salvadori's Teal *Anas waiguensis*: a fine pair of this rare endemic at Ok Menga, Tabubil.
- Grey Teal *Anas gracilis*: 6 at the PAU.
- Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa*: over 100 at the PAU.
- Pacific Baza (Crested Hawk) *Aviceda subcristata*: up to 5 daily in the Kiunga area and 1 at Tabubil.
- Long-tailed Honey Buzzard *Henicopernis longicauda*: singles at Varirata and up to 3 at Dablin Creek, Tabubil; endemic to New Guinea and feeds mainly on insects, including wasps.
- Black Kite *Milvus migrans*: 2 singles near Port Moresby.
- Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus*: a few observations near Port Moresby.
- Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus*: fairly common, especially along the Fly and Elevala Rivers.
- White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*: singles along the Fly and Elevala Rivers.
- Variable Goshawk *Accipiter hiogaster* (: 2 near Kiunga and singles along the Elevala River, at Tabubil and below Ambua Lodge; a split from Grey Goshawk *A. novaehollandiae*, an Australian species).
- Grey-headed Goshawk *Accipiter poliocephalus*: one at Kiunga and 2 along the Elevala River.
- Doria's Hawk *Megatriorchis doriae*: one at Dablin Creek flew from a perch by the track; the next day its whistled call was heard and a bird seen with prey flying across the track was almost certainly this rarely observed species.
- New Guinea Eagle *Harpyopsis novaeguineae*: one was heard calling at Varirata and below Ambua Lodge but none seen unfortunately.
- Oriental Hobby *Falco severus*: one perched atop a snag across the Ok Tedi.
- Australian Hobby *Falco longipennis*: one in the Tari Valley.
- Black-billed Brush-turkey *Talegalla fuscirostris*: one was seen on a trail at Varirata and calling birds were heard at Kiunga, Elevala River and Varirata.
- Brown Quail *Coturnix australis*: two sighted daily near Tari Gap and flushed at Benson's garden.
- Red-necked Crake *Rallina tricolor*: one calling at Dablin Creek.
- Buff-banded Rail *Rallus philippensis*: singles at the PAU sewage lagoon and Benson's garden, Tari.

- Rufous-tailed Bush-hen *Amaurornis moluccanus*: heard at Kiunga and Dablin Creek.
- Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa*: several at the PAU.
- Purple Swamphen (Purple Gallinule) *Porphyrio porphyria*: lovely views of the common black-backed race (or species) melanotus at the PAU; also seen near Moresby and at Kiunga airport.
- Comb-crested Jacana *Irediparra gallinacea*: 2 at the PAU.
- Australian Pratincole *Stitia isabella*: 3 at Tari airport.
- Masked Lapwing *Vanellus miles*: several at the PAU and 3 en route to Varirata.
- Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*: 3 pairs near Tabubil; this resident race dubius differs somewhat from Palearctic birds and may be a candidate for splitting.
- Common Sandpiper *Tringa hypoleucos*: singles on the Ekame river and 4 near Tabubil.
- Slender-billed Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia amboinensis*: 4 at Varirata and 1 at Tabubil. This split from the Australian Brown Cuckoo-Dove *M. phasianella* is named after the island of Ambon (previously Amboina Island) in the Moluccas.
- Black-billed Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia nigrostris*: 1 or 2 near Ambua.
- Great Cuckoo-Dove *Reinwardtoena reinwardtii*: one along the Elevala River, 4 near Kiunga and 1 at Tari.
- Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica*: heard at the PAU.
- Stephan's Dove *Chalcophaps stephani*: singles along the Elevala River and near Kiunga.
- New Guinea Bronzewing *Henicophaps albifrons*: heard at Boystown Road.
- Peaceful Dove *Geopelia striata*: at least 5 at the PAU and 1 at Port Moresby.
- Wompoo Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus magnificus*: singles at Varirata and heard along the Elevala River. The name is onomatopoeic.
- Pink-spotted Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus perlatus*: singles at Varirata and Dablin Creek, 6 at Km 17, Kiunga.
- Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus aurantiifrons*: unusually common this year with 4 at the PAU and 10 along the Elevala River.
- Ornate Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus ornatus*: the only one identified was in a fruiting tree at Ambua lodge.
- Superb Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus superbus*: singles at Varirata, the Elevala River and Dablin Creek.
- White-breasted Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus rivoli*: the race bellus was not uncommon above Ambua Lodge by voice but only 2 were seen, at the lodge.
- Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus iozonus*: 1 or 2 daily around Kiunga only - the race is pseudohumeralis with a maroon shoulder bar.
- Dwarf Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus nana*: the only one identified was at Km 17, Kiunga.
- Purple-tailed Imperial-Pigeon *Ducula rufigaster*: 2 at Varirata and several along the Fly and Elevala Rivers.
- Pinon Imperial-Pigeon *Ducula pinon*: the only 1 noted was at Boystown Road.
- Collared Imperial-Pigeon *Ducula muellerii*: common along the Fly and Elevala Rivers, a specialist of riverine forest.
- Zoe Imperial-Pigeon *Ducula zoeae*: several daily around Kiunga.
- Torresian Imperial-Pigeon *Duculaspilorrhoa*: 8 flew over the PAU.
- Papuan Mountain Pigeon *Gymnophaps albertisii*: widespread and common, in high flying flocks, in both lowlands and hills as well as the mountains.
- Palm Cockatoo *Probosciger aterrimus*: up to 3 of this spectacular bird daily in the Kiunga area.
- Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita*: up to 10 daily along the Fly and Elevala Rivers, 5 at Boystown Road and 2 at Tabubil.
- Yellow-(Greater) Streaked Lory *Chalopsitta sintillata*: common in flight around Kiunga and a few at Tabubil.

- Dusky Lory *Pseudeos fuscata*: common in flight near Tabubil.
- Rainbow Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus*: common in the lowlands and hills up to Varirata and Tabubil, with a few in the Tari Valley.
- Goldie's Lorikeet *Trichoglossus goldiei*: common this year above Ambua.
- Black-capped Lory *Lorius lory*: up to 6 daily (race somu) at Varirata and the Kiunga area.
- Striated Lorikeet *Chamosyna multistriata*: heard in flight at Dablin Creek early morning when visibility was poor.
- Red-flanked Lorikeet *Chamosyna placentis*: up to 10 daily in the Kiunga area.
- Papuan Lorikeet *Chamosyna papou*: good views of this stunning endemic in the Ambua area, with up to 6 daily. Both black and red colour morphs were seen.
- Plum-faced Lorikeet *Oreopsittacus arfaki*: singles twice at Tari Gap.
- Yellow-billed Lorikeet *Neopsittacus musschenbroekii*: common around Ambua.
- Orange-billed Lorikeet *Neopsittacus pullicauda*: several in flight above Ambua and a flock feeding in the Tari Valley.
- Yellow-capped Pygmy-Parrot *Micropsitta keiensis*: 6 at Boystown Road and heard at Dablin Creek; a restricted range species. All pygmy-parrots creep along trunks and branches, feeding on lichens and other epiphytes.
- Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrot *Micropsitta bruijnii*: at least 3 at Dablin Creek and heard at Ambua. The world's smallest parrot.
- Orange-breasted Fig-Parrot *Cyclopsitta gulehnitertii*: good views of 3 feeding along the Elevala River, 2 at Boystown Road and 5 at Dablin Creek.
- Double-eyed Fig-Parrot *Cyclopsitta diopthalma*: a few in flight at at Boystown Road, Kiunga.
- Large Fig-Parrot *Psittaculirostris desmarestii*: up to 5 along the Elevala River.
- Painted Tiger-Parrot *Psittacella picta*: one of this difficult-to-see species on Benson's Trail. A very quiet and unobtrusive genus.
- Brehm's Tiger-Parrot *Psittacella brehmi*: one below Tari Gap.
- Modest Tiger-Parrot *Psittacella modesta*: one at Ambua Lodge on the last morning.
- Red-cheeked Parrot *Geoffroyus geoffroyi*: fairly common at Varirata and in the Kiunga area.
- Blue-collared Parrot *Geoffroyus simplex*: heard at Dablin Creek.
- Eclectus Parrot *Eclectus roratus*: fairly common and noisy in the Kiunga and Tabubil areas. Eclectus means the chosen one, in Latin.
- Papuan King-Parrot *Alisterus chloropterus*: only 1 seen below Ambua on the journey from Tari airport.
- Brush Cuckoo *Cacomantis variolosus*: commonly heard, mainly in the lowlands, but only seen near Ekame Lodge and at Boystown Road.
- Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo *Cacomantis castaneiventris*: heard at Dablin Creek.
- Shining Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx lucidus*: one during the cuckoo-fest at Boystown Road; an Australian migrant.
- Rufous-throated Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx ruficollis*: one above Ambua Lodge.
- White-eared Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx meyeri*: good views of 2 at Dablin Creek; a rather uncommon endemic.
- Little Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx minutillus*: one seen at Dablin Creek and another heard along the Elevala River.
- Long-billed Cuckoo *Rhamphomantis megarhynchus*: one scoped at Boystown Road; a rare bird.
- White-crowned Koel *Caliechthrus leucolophus*: 1 at Boystown Road.

- Dwarf Koel *Microdynamis parva*: another good sighting of 1 at Boystown Road.
- Australian Koel *Eudynamis cyanocephala*: regularly heard in the Kiunga area but never seen.
- Channel-billed Cuckoo *Scythrops novaehollandiae*: a couple of singles preceded a flock of 10 along the Elevala River in late afternoon, all flying in the same direction; presumably going to a communal roost; an Australian migrant.
- Greater Black Coucal *Centropus menbeki*: singles near Ekame Lodge and at Boystown Road.
- Pheasant Coucal *Centropus phasianinus*: a few sightings below Varirata.
- Greater Sooty Owl *Tyto tenebriosa*: a pair roosting in a hollow tree in the Tari Valley.
- Papuan Boobook *Ninox theomacha*: one roosting in the Tari Valley and 2 heard calling at Ambua. The scientific epithet 'theomacha' is a Mediaeval Latin word for witch.
- Barred Owlet-Nightjar *Aegotheles bennettii*: one roosted in a hollow tree at Varirata with its head poking out of the hole all 3 days we passed it.
- Papuan Frogmouth *Podargus papuensis*: a roosting pair was seen well at the PAU and 1 heard at Ekame Lodge.
- Large-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus macrurus*: one was flushed at Varirata and another seen near Tabubil.
- Moustached Tree-Swift *Hemiprocne mystacea*: up to 4 daily along the Elevala River and 2 near Tabubil.
- Uniform Swiftlet *Collocalia vanikorensis*: regularly encountered in the lowlands, Tabubil area and lower Tari Valley.
- Mountain Swiftlet *Collocalia hirundinacea*: fairly common near Tari Gap.
- Glossy Swiftlet *Collocalia esculenta*: widespread and common.
- Papuan Needletail *Mearnsia novaeguineae*: up to 10 daily in the Kiunga area.
- Azure Kingfisher *Alcedo azurea*: singles at Varirata and on the Elevala River.
- Rufous-bellied Kookaburra *Dacelo gaudichaud*: several splendid views of this spectacular and noisy bird at Kiunga and Tabubil.
- Blue-winged Kookaburra *Dacelo leachii*: 3 singles near Varirata and the PAU.
- Forest Kingfisher *Todirhamphus macleayi*: only one seen, below Varirata; an Australian migrant.
- Sacred Kingfisher *Todirhamphus sancta*: a common Australian winter migrant as high as Varirata and Tabubil.
- Hook-billed Kingfisher *Melidora macrorrhina*: although heard calling along the Elevala River, only brief flight views were obtained by some at Ekame Lodge.
- Yellow-billed Kingfisher *Syna torotoro*: scope views of this gorgeous bird at Varirata and Boystown Road.
- Mountain Kingfisher *Syna megarhyncha*: a rare sighting of one enticed by play-back into a clearing above Ambua and perching high in a tall tree.
- Little Paradise-Kingfisher *Tanysiptera hydrocharis*: only heard, near the King BoP site.
- Common Paradise-Kingfisher *Tanysiptera galatea*: one scoped near the King BoP site, another seen and others heard along the Elevala River.
- Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher *Tanysiptera dana*: several heard at Varirata and 2 seen well.
- Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops ornatus*: small numbers of this multicoloured Australian migrant were seen across the lowlands, with 2 in the Tari Valley.
- Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis*: common along the Fly and Elevala Rivers.
- Blyth's Hornbill *Rhyticeros plicatus*: 4 at Varirata and great views on several occasions in the Kiunga area, especially on the upper Elevala River.
- Red-bellied Pitta *Pitta erythrogastrer*: one heard calling near the King BoP site.

- Hooded Pitta *Pitta sordida*: several calling in the lowlands but never seen.
- Pacific Swallow *Hirundo tahitica*: common and widespread.
- Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina novaehollandiae*: common at Varirata and a few at the PAU and in the Kiunga area; an Australian migrant.
- Stout-billed Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina caeruleogrisea*: 2 daily at Dablin Creek.
- Boyer's Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina boyeri*: 4 at Varirata and 2 along the Elevala River and at Boystown Road; named after Captain J. Boyer (b.1815), French navigator in the Pacific with Dumont d'Urville.
- Hooded Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina longicauda*: 2 in the forest above Ambua.
- Grey-headed Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina schisticaps*: 2 daily at Dablin Creek and 1 at Ambua.
- Black-shouldered (Papuan) Cicadabird *Coracina incerta (morio)*: 3 at Dablin Creek.
- Black (New Guinea) Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina melaena (melas)*: 2 along the Elevala River.
- Black-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina montana*: 4 at Dablin Creek.
- Varied Triller *Lalage leucomela*: 2 most days at Varirata and in the Kiunga area, with up to 7 daily at Dablin Creek.
- Pied Bushchat *Saxicola caprata*: fairly common in the highlands and one at Port Moresby.
- Island Thrush *Turdus poliocephalus*: just 1 single seen near Tari Gap.
- Tawny Grassbird *Megalurus timoriensis*: a few brief sightings around Ambua.
- Island Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus poliocephala*: 4 below Ambua Lodge.
- Northern Fantail *Rhipidura rufiventris*: 2 daily at Dablin Creek.
- Willie Wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys*: widespread and common.
- Black Fantail *Rhipidura atra*: 2 at Dablin Creek and 1 above Ambua.
- Dimorphic Fantail *Rhipidura brachyrhyncha*: up to 4 daily above Ambua.
- Chestnut-bellied Fantail *Rhipidura hyperythra*: 3-5 daily at Varirata in mixed feeding flocks.
- Friendly Fantail *Rhipidura albolimbata*: common and friendly around Ambua.
- Rufous-backed Fantail *Rhipidura rufidorsa*: heard at Boystown Road.
- White-bellied Thicket-Fantail *Rhipidura leucothorax*: only heard in the Kiunga area and at Dablin Creek.
- Black Monarch *Monarcha axillaris*: singles at Varirata, Dablin Creek and above Ambua.
- Black-winged Monarch *Monarcha frater*: one at Dablin Creek.
- Black-faced Monarch *Monarcha melanopsis*: 2 at Varirata.
- Spot-winged Monarch *Monarcha guttula*: one at Varirata.
- Hooded Monarch *Monarcha manadensis*: one at the King BoP site on both days.
- Golden Monarch *Monarcha drysonela*: only heard along the Elevala River.
- Frilled Monarch *Arses telescopthalmus*: up to 4 of this striking bird at Varirata, 1 at the King BoP site and heard elsewhere along the Elevala River.
- Leaden Flycatcher *Myiagra rubecula*: 2 in savanna woodland below Varirata.
- Shining Flycatcher *Myiagra alecto*: 6 along the Elevala River.
- Black-breasted Boatbill *Machaerirhynchus nigripectus*: up to 3 seen daily on 3 days at Ambua.
- Yellow-breasted Boatbill *Machaerirhynchus flaviventer*: one at Dablin Creek.
- Lesser Ground-Robin *Amalocichla incerta*: one or 2 seen on 2 days above Ambua.
- Torrent Flycatcher *Monachella muelleriana*: 4 at Ok Menga, Tabubil.
- Lemon-bellied Flycatcher *Microeca flavigaster*: one or 2 of this Australian species in savanna woodland below Varirata and singles at Dablin Creek on 2 days.
- Canary Flycatcher *Microeca papuana*: one or 2 in the Ambua area on 2 days.
- Black-sided Robin *Poecilodryas hypoleuca*: one of this skulking species seen by some at the King BoP site.

- Black-throated Robin *Poecilodyras albonotata*: one at Ambua Lodge on the last 2 days.
- White-winged Robin *Peneothello sigillatus*: one below Tari Gap.
- White-rumped Robin *Peneothello bimaculatus*: another elusive robin, only heard at Dablin Creek.
- Blue-grey Robin *Peneothello cyanus*: lovely views of up to 3 around Ambua Lodge.
- Ashy Robin *Poecilodyras albispecularis*: this mega-skulker was only heard above Ambua.
- Northern Scrub-Robin *Drymodes superciliosus*: heard at Varirata.
- Mottled Whistler *Rhaglogus leucostigma*: 2 at Dablin Creek on the last morning.
- Dwarf Whistler (Goldenface) *Pachycare flavogrisea*: heard at Varirata on the first morning and 1 seen on the last morning; another tricky bird and species of uncertain affinity.
- Rufous-naped Whistler *Pachycephala rufinucha*: one or 2 at Ambua on 2 days only.
- Grey-headed Whistler *Pachycephala griseiceps*: 3 seen at Varirata; a split from the Australian species Grey Whistler *P. simplex*,
- Brown-backed Whistler *Pachycephala modesta*: up to 5 at Ambua.
- Sclater's Whistler *Pachycephala soror*: up to 3 at Dablin Creek and 1 or 2 above Ambua.
- Regent Whistler *Pachycephala schlegelii*: 2 below Tari Gap.
- Black-headed Whistler *Pachycephala monacha*: one seen in the Tari Valley and heard at Tari airport.
- White-bellied Whistler *Pachycephala leucogaster*: one in the Eucalypts below Varirata on the first morning; a recent split from the Rufous Whistler *P. rufiventris* of Australia.
- Rufous (Little) Shrike-Thrush *Colluricincla megarrhyncha*: up to 3 singles at Varirata, one at Ambua and heard at Dablin Creek.
- Grey Shrike-Thrush *Colluricincla harmonica*: one at the PAU.
- Hooded Pitohui *Pitohui dichrous*: fairly common at Varirata and up to 3 daily at Dablin Creek; the first bird to be declared poisonous.
- White-bellied Pitohui *Pitohui incertus*: one of this rare species seen along the Elevala River and others heard.
- Crested Pitohui *Pitohui cristatus*: the amazing repetitive song was heard at Varirata.
- Variable Pitohui *Pitohui kirhocephalus*: only heard at Km 17, Kiunga and along the Elevala River.
- Wattled Ploughbill *Eulacestoma nigropectus*: heard in the bamboo by Ambua Lodge.
- New Guinea (Rufous) Babbler *Pomatostomus isidorei*: a shy party of about 4 at the King BoP site.
- Spotted Jewel-Babbler *Ptilorrhoa leucosticta*: after hearing 2 calling on the first day, another pair vigorously responded with a variety of calls and were seen by a lucky few.
- Blue Jewel-Babbler *Ptilorrhoa caeruleascens*: we had a tape-duel with this skulker on the Boystown Road, culminating in it leaping into view but only briefly.
- Chestnut-backed Jewel-Babbler *Ptilorrhoa castanonota*: heard at Varirata and Dablin Creek but refused to show.
- Blue-capped Ifrita *Ifrita kowaldi*: good views of this distinctive bird above Ambua, with up to 4 a day. Its uncertain taxonomic position is indicated in its scientific name: ifrit is an Arabic word meaning spirit, djinn.
- Wallace's Fairywren *Sipodotus wallacii*: parties of 4 at Varirata and Dablin Creek; a rather rare species, named after Alfred Russell Wallace (1823-1913).
- Emperor Fairywren *Malurus cyanocephalus*: 2 at Km 120, the LRP site near Tabubil.
- White-shouldered Fairywren *Malurus alboscapulatus*: 4 below Varirata and at Dablin Creek, 1 at Kiunga airstrip, and singles below Ambua Lodge.

- Rusty Mouse-Warbler *Crateroscelis murina*: although frequently heard in the hills, only one or 2 were seen, at Varirata and Dablin Creek.
- Mountain Mouse-Warbler *Crateroscelis robusta*: only one seen above Ambua, where heard daily.
- Large Scrubwren *Sericornis nouhuysi*: a few at Ambua.
- Buff-faced Scrubwren *Sericornis perspicillatus*: quite common near the Lodge at Ambua.
- Papuan Scrubwren *Sericornis papuensis*: commonly heard below Tari Gap but only 2 seen.
- Pale-billed Scrubwren *Sericornis spilodera*: one at Varirata.
- Green-backed Gerygone *Gerygone chloronotus*: commonly heard in the hills and lowlands but only seen at Varirata and Dablin Creek.
- Fairy Gerygone *Gerygone palpebrosa*: 2 at Varirata in a bird wave.
- Yellow-bellied Gerygone *Gerygone chrysogaster*: 2 daily at Varirata and along the Elevala River.
- Large-billed Gerygone *Gerygone magnirostris*: one along the Elevala River.
- Brown-breasted Gerygone *Gerygone ruficollis*: fairly common around Ambua but few seen.
- Varied Sittella *Daphoenositta chrysoptera*: a flock of at least 15 was seen in the last few minutes at Ambua Lodge!
- Black Sittella *Daphoenositta miranda*: two above Ambua.
- Papuan Treecreeper *Cornobates placens*: two above Ambua on the first full day.
- Black Sunbird *Nectarinia aspasia*: fairly common with a few at Varirata and the Kiunga area.
- Obscure Berrypecker *Melanocharis arfakiana*: two singles at Dablin Creek, gave excellent views; an unobtrusive and rather shy family.
- Black Berrypecker *Melanocharis nigra*: up to 4 at Varirata.
- Mid-mountain Berrypecker *Melanocharis longicauda*: 2 singles below Tari Gap.
- Fan-tailed Berrypecker *Melanocharis versteri*: 2 above Ambua.
- Yellow-bellied Longbill *Toxorhamphus novaeguineae*: one at Varirata and 2 at the King BoP site.
- Dwarf Honeyeater *Oedistoma iliolophus*: one at Varirata and heard at Dablin Creek; a difficult bird to see well.
- Pygmy Honeyeater *Oedistoma pygmaeum*: only heard at Dablin Creek.
- Tit Berrypecker *Oreocharis arfaki*: scarce at Ambua this time, with only 2 seen below Tari Gap.
- Crested Berrypecker *Paramythia montium*: good views of up to 6 daily of of this striking bird below Tari Gap.
- Olive-crowned (Papuan) Flowerpecker *Dicaeum pectorale*: one or 2 seen or heard most days.
- Black-fronted White-eye *Zosterops atrifrons*: 4 or 5 at Varirata and Dablin Creek.
- Capped (Western Mountain) White-eye *Zosterops fuscicapillus*: 10 at Dablin Creek, unusually low for this species, and common in the Tari valley.
- Long-billed Honeyeater *Melilestes megarhynchus*: singles at Boystown Road and Dablin Creek.
- Papuan Black Myzomela *Myzomela nigrita*: 2-4 at Varirata.
- Red-collared Myzomela *Myzomela rosenbergi*: a few at Ambua.
- Spot-breasted Meliphaga *Meliphaga mimikae*: two singles at Dablin Creek.
- Mountain Meliphaga *Meliphaga orientalis*: one or 2 at Dablin Creek.
- Scrub Honeyeater (Scrub White-eared Meliphaga) *Meliphaga albonotata*: singles around Kiunga and up to 4 at Dablin Creek.
- Puff-backed Meliphaga *Meliphaga aruensis*: a few at Varirata and 1 at Dablin Creek; the puff-back is only visible in the hand.
- Mimic Meliphaga *Meliphaga analoga*: one at Boystown Road.

- Black-throated Honeyeater *Lichenostomus subfrenatus*: heard above Ambua but only 1 seen; distinctive song but a difficult bird to see well.
- Spotted Honeyeater *Xanthotis polygramma*: one or 2 at Dablin Creek.
- Tawny-breasted Honeyeater *Xanthotis flaviventer*: up to 3 most days in the Kiunga – Tabubil area.
- White-throated Honeyeater *Melithreptus albogularis*: only one below Varirata.
- Plain Honeyeater *Pycnopygius ixoides*: one at Boystown Road.
- Marbled Honeyeater *Pycnopygius cinereus*: 2 in the Tari Valley.
- Streak-headed Honeyeater *Pycnopygius stictocephalus*: 2 at Km 17 and Boystown Road, Kiunga.
- Meyer's Friarbird *Philenon meyeri*: 2 at Boystown Road,
- Helmeted (New Guinea) Friarbird *Philenon buceroides (novaeguineae)*: common throughout the lowlands and hills.
- Rufous-backed Honeyeater *Ptiloprora guisei*: a few seen most days around and above the lodge at Ambua.
- Grey-streaked Honeyeater *Ptiloprora perstriata*: common above Ambua.
- Belford's Melidectes *Melidectes belfordi*: very common and noisy around and above Ambua.
- Yellow-browed Melidectes *Melidectes rufocrissalis*: only a few seen at or below Ambua Lodge.
- Common Smoky Honeyeater *Melipotes fumigatus*: common around Ambua and up to 4 at Dablin Creek.
- Rufous-banded Honeyeater *Conopophila albogularis*: 2 below Varirata and 10 at the PAU.
- Brown Oriole *Oriolus szalayii*: common in the lowlands and hills, though more often heard than seen.
- Green Figbird *Sphecotheres viridis*: 15 at the PAU.
- Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach*: 2 or 3 below Ambua.
- Papuan (Mountain) Drongo *Chaetorhynchus papuensis*: heard in forest at Varirata on 17th and 1 seen the next day..
- Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus bracteatus*: fairly common throughout lowland and hill forest.
- Torrent-lark *Grallina bruijnii*: 2 at Dablin Creek and Ok Menga, Tabubil.
- White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus*: Common in small numbers around Port Moresby, Kiunga and Tabubil.
- Great Woodswallow *Artamus maximus*: lovely views at Ambua where the guards hand feed them on cicadas; 1 at Dablin Creek.
- Lowland Peltops *Peltops blainvillii*: 3 at Km 17, Kiunga; a beautiful and unique genus.
- Mountain Peltops *Peltops montanus*: great views of 3 or 4 at Ambua Lodge, where they have become tame, 1 at Varirata and 2 at Dablin Creek.
- Hooded Butcherbird *Cracticus cassius*: fairly common in the lowlands and foothills, but more often heard than seen.
- Black-backed Butcherbird *Cracticus mentalis*: scattered throughout the savannah around Port Moresby.
- Black Butcherbird *Cracticus quoyi*: singles seen at Varirata, Boystown Road, Dablin Creek and Tari Valley.
- Crested Bird of Paradise *Cnemophilus macgregorii*: one below Tari Gap for a lucky few.
- Loria's Bird of Paradise *Cnemophilus loriae*: 2 singles above Ambua.
- Glossy-mantled Manucode *Manucodia atra*: heard along the Elevala River.
- Crinkle-collared Manucode *Manucodia chalybeata*: 2 along the Elevala River, 1 at Boystown Road and 4 at Dablin Creek.
- Trumpet Manucode *Manucodia keraudrenii*: up to 6 near Kiunga.
- Ribbon-tailed Astrapia *Astrapia mayeri*: wonderful views at Ambua, with up to 6 a day.
- Princess Stephanie's Astrapia *Astrapia stephaniae*: up to 5 seen daily at Ambua.

- Carola's Parotia *Parotia carolae*: up to 6 seen daily in fruiting trees at Dablin Creek. The species is named after Queen Carola of Saxony (1835-1907), wife of King Albert of Saxony.
- Lawes' Parotia *Parotia lawesii*: only 1 female in Benson's garden at Tari. The four species of Parotia are sometimes called the Six-wired Birds of Paradise because of the spectacular six head wires that adult males show.
- King of Saxony Bird of Paradise *Pteridophora alberti*: up to 6 daily below Tari Gap, showing well and displaying on several occasions.
- Magnificent Riflebird *Ptiloris magnificus*: heard sporadically around Kiunga and at Dablin Creek, and 2 females seen at Boystown Road.
- Eastern (Magnificent) Riflebird *Ptiloris (magnificus) intercedens*: at least 2 females and a male seen in the dry stream-bed at Varirata;. Considered a separate species, based on its call: a deep throaty growl as opposed to the clear, loud whistle of the more westerly birds.
- Superb Bird of Paradise *Lophorina superba*: one or 2 female-types at Dablin Creek and a displaying male below Ambua and in the Tari Valley.
- Black-billed (Buff-tailed) Sickbill *Epimachus alberti*: one seen on the new lower trail above Ambua Lodge was a rare record for this site.
- Brown Sickbill *Epimachus meyeri*: good views of up to 3 together above Ambua; the males make a highly distinctive and far-carrying machine-gun rattle call.
- Magnificent Bird of Paradise *Cicinnurus magnificus*: a female-type at Boystown Road and 2 or 3 at Dablin Creek.
- King Bird of Paradise *Cicinnurus regius*: a displaying male was seen in the high canopy near Ekame Lodge, Elevala River.
- Twelve-wired Bird of Paradise *Seleucidis melanoleuca*: 4 singles flew across the Fly and Elevala Rivers and a displaying male was scoped by the Fly River near Kiunga.
- Greater Bird of Paradise *Paradisaea apoda*: around 10 were seen, with several displaying males, at Km 17, Kiunga, 5 at Boystown Road and a few heard elsewhere. The scientific epithet apoda (lack of feet) refers to the first Birds of Paradise that were transported from New Guinea to Europe and which lacked feet, giving rise to theories of an exclusively aerial way of life (in paradise) - hence the commonly used name of the birds.
- Raggiana Bird of Paradise *Paradisaea raggiana*: around 10 males were displaying with attendant females at Varirata, and a few were seen around Kiunga. It is named after Marchese Francesco Raggi, an Italian naturalist and collector in New Guinea in the second half of the 19th century.
- Blue Bird of Paradise *Paradisaea rudolphi*: 2 males and a female showed well in fruiting trees below Ambua Lodge.
- Lesser Melampitta *Melampitta lugubris*: one or 2 were seen briefly on 3 days on trails below Tari Gap but its strange clicking noise was more often just heard. A species of uncertain affinity, possibly a terrestrial bird of paradise.
- Greater Melampitta *Melampitta gigantea*: heard calling briefly at Dablin Creek. This mysterious bird is reported to spend much of its time underground in limestone sink-holes.
- Sanford's (Archbold's) Bowerbird *Archboldia sanfordi (papuensis)*: one or 2 seen near Tari Gap on 2 days. A very shy species with a scattered range in New Guinea's highest mountains; split by some authorities from Archbold's *A. papuensis*.
- Flame Bowerbird *Sericulus aureus*: 5 of these stunningly-coloured birds were seen, mainly in flight, at Boystown Road.

- Fawn-breasted Bowerbird *Chlamydera cerviniventris*: fairly common around Port Moresby, with a new bower seen at the PAU.
- Grey Crow *Corvus tristis*: a few of this strange corvid daily at Varirata and in the Kiunga – Tabubil areas.
- Torresian Crow *Corvus orru*: common around Port Moresby.
- Singing Starling *Aplonis cantoroides*: 4 at the PAU.
- Metallic Starling *Aplonis metallica*: numerous along the Fly River, with several breeding colonies, and a few around Kiunga.
- Yellow-faced Myna *Mino dumontii*: fairly common in the lowlands and foothills.
- Golden Myna *Mino anais*: up to 15 along the Fly and Elevala Rivers, 1 at Boystown Road and 2 at Dablin Creek.
- Mountain Firetail *Oreostruthus fuliginosus*: only 1 noted above Ambua Lodge.
- House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*: a few in Port Moresby, where it only began colonizing in 1992.
- White-spotted (Streak-headed) Munia *Lonchura spectabilis (tristissima)*: singles of this surprisingly elusive species at Kiunga airport and Boystown Road; listed as a distinct species by Beehler et al (1986) but lumped by Clements into *L. tristissima*.
- Hooded Munia *Lonchura spectabilis*: 3 below Ambua Lodge and a flock of about 10 in the Tari Valley.
- Grey-headed Munia *Lonchura caniceps*: a large flock at the PAU.
- Chestnut-breasted Munia *Lonchura castaneothorax*: 5 in the Grey-headed flock at the PAU.

Mammal list

- Greater Bare-backed Fruit-bat *Dobsonia magna*: hundreds of huge fruit bats over the Fly River at Kiunga should be this species, according to Flannery's book on the mammals of New Guinea, but according to Samuel they are Big-eared Flying Fox *Pteropus macrotis*. We also saw one at Tari. Other bats were seen at Tabubil but are very difficult to identify in the field.
- Rusa Deer *Cervus timorensis*: 3 by the road at Varirata; an introduced species.
- Spotted Cuscus *Spilogale maculata*: a good sighting of one sleeping in a tree beside the Ok Tedi near Tabubil.