

Papua New Guinea

Naturetrek Tour Report

2 - 18 September 2007



Large-tailed Nightjar



Ornithoptera chimaera (Chimaera Birdwing)



Southern Crowned Pigeon



Raggiana Bird of Paradise

Report & photos compiled by Tony Clarke



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This place usually lives up to the motto “expect the unexpected” and this tour was certainly no exception. The species total at 284 seen with an additional 17 heard was not a record breaker but the quality was unrivalled.

22 different species of Bird-of-paradise for the group and for one lucky person a remarkable 23, 23 species of Parrot, 22 species of Pigeon or Dove, 10 species of Kingfisher and 25 species of Honeyeater with a main cast including the highly sought New Guinea Eagle, the rarely observed Shovel-billed Kingfisher, the rare and decreasing Pesquet’s Parrot, the secretive Forest Bittern and the little known Papuan Whipbird.

Plus the usual favourites including Southern Crowned-Pigeon, male Blue Bird-of-paradise, displaying Raggiana Bird-of-paradise, the huge and rather prehistoric Palm Cockatoo and Blyth’s Hornbill and the colourful Golden Monarch and Golden Cuckoo-shrike. Interested? Then read on.

Days 1 & 2

Sunday/Monday 2nd & 3rd September

Travelling days from London

Day 3

Tuesday 4th September

The trip started in disastrous fashion with the late arrival in Port Moresby of the flight from Singapore which had suffered a four hour delay. This meant that we lost a whole morning in Varirata National Park but we couldn’t do much about it except carry on regardless and see what the rest of the day would bring forth. Somewhat surprisingly the first bird we saw as we approached the picnic area in the National Park was a Large-tailed Nightjar which was perched in the open on the end of an exposed branch. However the most interesting sighting of the afternoon was a pair of Black-billed Brush-turkey at the beginning of the Koiari Tree House Trail in the same area that we had seen a stunning pair of Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfishers a little earlier in the day. The Barred Owlet-Nightjar was another star of the day but unfortunately the views were rather brief and the bird was rather flighty.

Our first Bird-of-paradise for the trip was Crinkle-collared Manucode near the picnic area but that was followed later in the afternoon by at least three male Raggiana Bird-of-paradise seen in display along the Tree House Trail. These birds gave us some memorable views and the display was really something to be seen.

Day 4

Wednesday 5th September

Our first full day in the field started early with a visit to the Raggiana lek in Varirata. As always the birds performed well but there was little sign of any full display but still the sights and sounds of these birds would be something permanently etched into our memories of the tour. Unfortunately the weather wasn't so memorable and we spent the rest of the day trying to make the most of what were predominantly wet conditions. We tried the Gare's Lookout Trail but got rained off after a while, we had a crack at the Circuit Trail but that was rather wet as well and was so slippery in places that Daniel had to try and create some new steps to avoid the possibility of personal injury. But despite the conditions we still saw a few things the best of which were a Rufescent Imperial-Pigeon that flew through the picnic area showing the grey cowl and the green tail, a couple of Large-tailed Nightjars that were flushed off their nests, a fine Lesser Yellow-billed Kingfisher, for some a Spot-winged Monarch and the strange looking Grey Crow. We all heard a distant Pheasant Pigeon but it couldn't be tempted in either by Daniel mimicking the call or by the use of a tape. We tried a bit of birding around the entrance gate and that gave us our third Bird-of-paradise in the form of a pair of Eastern Riflebirds that after some tracking down gave most of us some good views.

Day 5

Thursday 6th September

We were on the move this morning with a morning flight to Kiunga, as the flight was an hour late and we had two birding groups on board the captain decided to fly to Kiunga direct which caught up a little time. When we got to the Kiunga Guest House it seemed as though they were in a state of chaos. Firstly we weren't expected until later in the day and then the rooms which we had been allocated were not actually finished yet. They were still being built and currently had no power or water. We were assured that they would be useable by the time we returned from our afternoon excursion and so after lunch we headed off in a pair of 4-wheel drives to Boystown Road.

Our guide for the afternoon was Jimmy, he is one of the new boys in Kiunga Nature Tours but it is clearly obvious that with a bit more experience and practice he will be just as good as the others. Clearly the road had been impassable until recently as it was still very wet and muddy, in one place particularly. Having negotiated all the hazards successfully we arrived at a roadside pile of earth known affectionately as Manucode Mound, from where we would concentrate our efforts for the remainder of the afternoon. The highlight, for those that saw them, was the pair of Flame Bowerbirds that flew across the area but at some distance. The male is completely unmistakable but the female is not so blatantly obvious being brown above and yellow below without any of the vivid orange of the male.

Other notable observations during the afternoon included some excellent perched views of a Purple-tailed Imperial-Pigeon, the only Double-Eyed Fig-Parrots of the tour, feeding Red-flanked Lorikeets, the first of many Papuan Needletails, some superb views of Moustached Treeswift, the scarce Meyer's Friarbird for those fortunate enough to see it and two more Birds-of-paradise, the rather unimpressive Trumpet Manucode with its shaggy, elongated neck feathers and the much more impressive Greater Bird-of-paradise.

The return journey to the guest house was rather eventful as one of our Land Cruisers managed to get bogged in the worst section of the road – and it wasn't going to come out easily. Fortunately for us there were a group of three guys on hand to assist and to provide us with a chain so we could pull it out. Mind you what they were doing in the middle of nowhere and just drinking beer in the dark was anybody's guess. Still they were friendly enough and it was a good thing that they were there.

Obviously we got back to the guest house a bit later than anticipated but it was nice to see that the new rooms now had power for the air conditioning and hot water coming out of the showers. That evening we were told that we had to use them because some local politicians had turned up a couple of days ago demanding rooms and you can't afford to upset these guys if you run a local business. No what I mean!!!!

Day 6

Friday 7th September

These early starts are becoming a bit of a habit and this morning was no exception as we had to get to the wharf and begin our journey up the Fly River well before dawn. As dawn began to break over the river the first things that became visible and identifiable were the huge outlines of Flying Foxes as they flew to roost in the surrounding forest. One of the first birds we saw and for most people one of the highlights of the river trip was a fine adult male Twelve-wired Bird-of-Paradise seen displaying on a thin dead trunk. Watching it as it danced up and down the trunk was certainly one of the memories from this trip that will never be forgotten.

Continuing up river and turning from the Fly onto the Elevala the bird sightings included species such as many Collared Imperial and Papuan Mountain Pigeons, Palm Cockatoo, the colourful Golden Cuckoo-shrike, Shining Flycatcher, the iridescent Glossy-mantled and Trumpet Manucodes, the impressive Greater Bird-of-Paradise and the gorgeous Golden Myna. En route to our base at Ekame Lodge we stopped at the last village to try for the Flame Bowerbird at his bower but unfortunately he was not keeping house and so we moved on up river. Soon after leaving the village we had our only views of the highly sought after Southern Crowned-Pigeon. One was seen on a branch at the edge of the river and we all enjoyed some great views after the initial panic had gone.

After stopping for lunch at Ekame Lodge we were back on the river again for the afternoon but the water level meant that we were unable to explore the forest as we could not get out of the boat in the usual areas meaning that some species became a lot more difficult than on previous tours. The main prize for the afternoon was the King Bird-of-Paradise but unfortunately it eluded all our efforts and we had to return to the Lodge empty handed. This was a major disappointment but there were some major highlights from the afternoon that raised our spirits and gave us plenty to talk about over dinner that evening.

These included the huge and almost prehistoric looking Blyth's Hornbill with their noisy wing beats and a rather skulking and elusive White-bellied Thicket-Fantail. Then as dusk crept in we chanced upon two Forest Bitterns that were flushed from over hanging vegetation and flew away from our boats down river before being lost from view as they returned to the trees and back to the forest. Then a Papuan Nightjar appeared briefly for some, a Marbled Frogmouth flew in front of the first boat and we were able to spotlight a fine Papuan Frogmouth all before getting back to the Lodge but that wasn't the last of it as a Greater Sooty Owl started to screech from a tree on the edge of the clearing by the Lodge and proceeded to give some excellent views before the spotlight began to lose its power and the Owl dissolved back into the night.

Day 7

Saturday 8th September

Back on the river early this morning and we were concentrating on the King Bird-of-Paradise again but today, again after much effort, we finally located a male in one of his favourite display areas. The bird remained well hidden for much of the time but most people managed to get some sort of a view all be it mainly brief and mostly obscured. Also in this area a male Flame Bowerbird flew through giving a few of the group some good but brief views. Another stop produced a stunning Beautiful Fruit-Dove on the nest and at yet another location some of us had some excellent views of the exquisite Common Paradise-Kingfisher. The closely related Little Paradise-Kingfisher was heard but could not be enticed into a position where we could see it from the boats and it was a similar story for the Hook-billed Kingfisher.

Back to Ekame for lunch and then a brief exploration on one of the trails gave us an annoying experience with a Southern Cassowary that had left a very recent footprint in the mud but was nowhere to be seen. In the forest we located a couple of New Guinea Babblers, a Hooded Pitta for some, a Blue Jewell Babbler that we could hear well but not see and a rather uninspiring Yellow-bellied Gerygone. In the afternoon we called in again at the village to try for the Flame Bowerbird but the result was the same. There were a few other things of interest in the area though including a pair of Emperor Fairywrens, a Rufous-backed Fantail but most interesting of all was a Hook-billed Kingfisher. This bird came so close that we could have touched it but only Gerry managed to see it and the rest of us had to put up with the frustration that many others have felt trying to see this secretive and elusive species. The rest of the trip back to Kiunga was mostly in the dark and so we saw very little of interest.

Day 8

Sunday 9th September

This morning we were back on Boystown Road and the star of the morning was undoubtedly the female Flame Bowerbird that, although at some distance, remained on view long enough for everyone to see well through the telescope. Other highlights this morning were a pair of Grey-headed Goshawks including one bird demonstrating some display flight, a Black-billed Cuckoo-Dove with its barred tail, the strange looking Long-billed Cuckoo, a pair of Blyth's Hornbills, a very obliging pair of Golden Monarchs that performed very well in response to a tape with both birds coming close and perching well in the open for everyone to appreciate the brilliant gold and black plumage of the male, an adult Plain Honeyeater feeding a juvenile, two rather strange Papuan Drongos that even had Kwiwan (our guide) dashing for a field guide and a smart Lowland Peltops. We went back to Kiunga for lunch at the guest house and then headed off to Km 23 where Kwiwan had his special location for a King Bird-of-Paradise.

We spent most of the afternoon in this area and although we did see the male it was still rather brief and not as good as we would have liked but perhaps this was to be a bit of a bogey bird for us. The last part of the afternoon was at Km 17 where we tried again for Hook-billed Kingfisher but the results were the same as all our other tries we heard the bird well, in fact two birds at least, but we were unable to see either of them. Oh well there is always tomorrow morning to try yet again.

Day 9

Monday 10th September

Well no prizes for guessing where we started birding this morning. Yes, we were trying for Hook-billed Kingfisher and again it was giving us the run around. We had two birds calling but even going into the forest

failed to produce either of the birds. Mind you we did have a few other things to keep us entertained such as a Rusty Pitohui that responded well to Kwiwan's imitation and flew straight onto a branch in front of us, a noisy flock of Variable Pitohuis that called loudly to each other as they moved around the trees with a few New Guinea Babblers mixed in with them. After breakfast at the guest house we began our drive from Kiunga up to Tabubil taking a packed lunch with us. A brief stop in the vicinity of Km 23 was not overly productive but we did get some excellent views of three Pacific Bazas including two birds demonstrating the peculiar aerobatic display flight, a few Red-flanked Lorikeets feeding in a flowering tree and a rather unimpressive Large-billed Gerygone.

We continued on our way and the next birding stop, and the lunch stop, was at Km 93 where we were hoping for a Pesquet's Parrot as they had been seen in this area before. However, the first bird of note was a distant raptor picked out by Tony Smith and it looked quite large. The bird disappeared behind a ridge but then it was back again and a close inspection through the scope revealed the birds' correct identity, it was the most sought after of the endemic birds of prey – the New Guinea Eagle. The views were rather brief but we could see the very broad and rounded wings that were held forward as the bird flew, the long tail, the general colouration and the black barring on the underwings. We stayed in this area for a while but the eagle never reappeared and there was no sign of any Pesquet's Parrots so we moved closer to Tabubil.

The next stop was in the cleared area by the river at Km 120 where we soon located the local form of Little Ringed Plover. Continuing on we turned off the main road and headed towards the hydro station on the Ok Menga which is the current stake out for a few of the more unusual riverine species but en route we found a Whimbrel by the road which was a new bird for Kwiwan! Getting out of the minibus we were greeted by a cacophony of screeches and squawks indicating the presence of a large number of parrots. We easily located these birds in a flowering tree and the flock consisted of a mixture of Rainbow Lorikeets and the first Dusky Lories of the trip.

Then looking along the river we soon located one of the specialities of this site the black-and-white Torrent Flycatcher but as there was still work in progress the more wary species would have to wait. As things turned out we didn't have to wait long as they finished work earlier than usual and we were soon watching a pair of Salvadori's Teal feeding in the fast flowing water. This is the one we had all hoped to see here but little did we know that there was still one good bird that we thought we would probably miss out on. Whilst watching the ducks Tony located a Torrent Lark on top of one of the boulders in the river. This bird gets seen here occasionally but it is certainly one that you wouldn't expect and a very nice addition to the trip list. That was the icing on the cake for the day and we travelled the last few kilometres into Tabubil and checked into the Cloudlands Hotel.

Day 10

Tuesday 11th September

The late arrival of our driver, Raki, meant that an early morning attempt for Shovel-billed Kingfisher was out of the question and so we decided to go to Dablin Creek instead. Little did we know it at the time but this was going to be a very fortuitous change of plan. The forest destruction by local people is continuing at a rather alarming rate and if it isn't checked then Dablin Creek will no longer be on the tour circuit which would be a great shame. Still while it does exist lets make the most of it and enjoy everything we can see in this great area.

One of the first things this morning was a diminutive Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrot that perched in the open briefly before flying off, all the others seen today were just fly over individuals. A female Magnificent Bird-of-Paradise paid a brief visit to a fruiting tree that was also being frequented by a Dwarf Fruit-Dove, our first Fairy (Little Red) Lorikeets flew over, a couple of the little known Obscure Berrypeckers appeared briefly and for the lucky few there were some brief views of Carola's Parotia.

The big surprise of the morning came when Kwiwan started calling everyone to look in the scope as he had noticed a group of five Pesquet's Parrots perched in a couple of dead trees. These birds were rather distant and with the mist closing in the conditions weren't helping but at times the unique red and black plumage could be seen clearly. A couple of the more skulking species were brought out briefly using a tape but the views, or perhaps glimpses would be a better word, of Chestnut-backed Jewell Babbler and Rusty Mouse-Warbler were only for the fortunate few.

On the way back to the bus we encountered a mixed species feeding flock that included a few species that we hadn't recorded before including White-eared Bronze-Cuckoo, Black Fantail, Black-faced Monarch and Black-fronted White-eye. In the afternoon we went out to the Ok Ma Road where although things were fairly quiet we did locate a flowering tree with lots of Yellow-streaked and Dusky Lories and Rainbow Lorikeets and a few Orange-breasted Fig-Parrots. A pair of Black-shouldered Cuckoo-shrikes perched high up, a shy Long-billed Honeyeater and a couple of Magnificent Riflebirds were the major attractions for the afternoon but as dusk crept in we could hear Shovel-billed Kingfisher and the other thorn in our side, the elusive Hook-billed Kingfisher both birds came quite close but we couldn't see either. Then a Papuan Nightjar flew across the road and a Papuan Boobook began calling, soon we had the bird in the spotlight and were getting some excellent views of this endemic owl. Frustratingly we could still occasionally hear the Shovel-billed but we couldn't persuade it into view.

Day 11

Wednesday 12th September

This morning it was planned to do a predawn raid on the Ok Ma Road for the Shovel-billed Kingfisher but we were let down by our driver who turned up late this morning and so in not particularly good moods we headed off to see what we could salvage from the morning. On arrival at the Ok Ma Road there was a sudden mood change and Kwiwan started running about like a headless chicken. He called for the scope and told everyone to stay still until he had the bird in view and then form an orderly queue to see whatever it was he had located. It was a Shovel-billed Kingfisher that proceeded to give us some great views as it stayed in view for the next forty minutes before flying from its perch, further into the forest and out of sight. This was one bird we thought we'd missed but in the end our views were excellent, in full daylight, almost unobscured and in sight for a record period - it is unlikely that any other groups have had the bird on view for so long.

The rest of the morning was going to be a bit of an anticlimax but we still managed to see a few good things. A robin sallying forth from the roadside vegetation was the rarely seen but often heard White-rumped Robin, a predominantly red and quite long-tailed Parakeet on close inspection was found to be Josephine's but unfortunately not many of us got to see this one and a Pygmy Honeyeater crawled around a moss and lichen covered branch. We were then asked to leave the area by the landowner and so rather reluctantly we had to move on.

We drove round to the Dablin Creek turn off and birded around the bottom of the road where we were entertained by a few feeding Fairy Lorikeets, a Canary Flycatcher, a singing male Black-headed Whistler and a pair of the intricately patterned Ornate Melidectes. After lunch we returned to this area and added a fine male Black Butcherbird but then the rain set in and birding for the rest of the afternoon was forgotten as the drizzle became heavier and the skies thickened.

Day 12

Thursday 13th September

This morning there was a little mist in the valley but the thick low cloud of yesterday had fortunately moved on. This morning we were due to catch a chartered plane from Tabubil to Tari and the weather certainly seemed to be in our favour. One thing that was against us was that the plane had to divert and pick up a medical emergency and got to us about 40 minutes late but we all understood the situation and had a small delay of about an hour. Whilst hanging around the airport we birded in the vicinity of the MAF terminal and discovered a Buff-banded Rail, Wood Sandpiper, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and Swinhoe's Snipe. On arrival in Tari the usual throngs of local people were not awaiting our arrival but this was because we came in on a charter and not a scheduled flight. The bus was there to meet us and we were soon on our way up to our base for the next three nights at the rather plush and elaborate Ambua Lodge. Set in well manicured gardens and surrounded by rainforest this really is one of the best birding locations and the species in the area are some of the most spectacular in New Guinea.

After lunch we gave Benson, our guide for the area, our shopping list and off we went on a Bird-of-Paradise hunt. It all started so nicely with a male Princess Stephanie's *Astrapia* in the grounds of the lodge which was seen well by everyone. Then after a short ride uphill from the lodge and near the entrance to Benson's Trail we added three species in very quick succession a male Loria's Bird-of-Paradise, a male King-of-Saxony Bird-of-Paradise and three Brown Sicklebills. By now things were going very well indeed and this was shaping up to be one of the best birding afternoons ever. We arrived at the area by the broken container below Tari Gap and almost immediately added the exquisite Ribbon-tailed *Astrapia* but by now the weather was getting a bit grizzly and it was decided to head back downhill. But before heading back Tony Smith managed to add a Meyer's Goshawk but unfortunately very few others got onto it.

On our return to Ambua some birding in the grounds produced a Painted Tiger-Parrot for some and two more Birds-of-Paradise, a male Short-tailed *Paradigalla* and a female Superb Bird-of-Paradise which adds up to seven different Birds-of-Paradise in one afternoon and a supporting cast that included many other species that were new for the trip as we hadn't birded anywhere of this altitude before. What an afternoon!

Day 13

Friday 14th September

Our early start was delayed by the discovery of two female Blue Birds-of-Paradise outside chalet number 9. An excellent start to the morning but were we going to be too late for our next Bird-of-Paradise, the spectacular Black Sicklebill? We drove downhill from the lodge this morning to the Benari Road and set up the scopes in hope. After about 45 minutes, during which time we were entertained by groups of Goldie's Lorikeets flying over and a fine male Superb Bird-of-Paradise, Benson located a single bird at great distance partly obscured and feeding in a fruiting tree most of us managed to see this but unfortunately it dropped out of view before everyone got a look. Just as we were about to leave the area a fine male Blue Bird-of-Paradise came into view and performed well for everyone that wanted to see it and two Fan-tailed Cuckoos appeared in response to a tape.

The next area visited was by the broken container below Tari Gap and it was just as impressive as it was yesterday. A perched Great Cuckoo-Dove was an impressive sight, a few Papuan Lorikeets flew by with a flash of colour, a couple of Plum-faced Lorikeets didn't give as good views as yesterday, a small group of Brehm's Tiger-Parrots were a bit elusive but gave some good views in the end, Dimorphic and Friendly Fantails danced among the vegetation, a couple of Black-breasted Boatbills performed well and there were also things like Brown-backed and Regent Whistlers, White-winged Robin, Papuan Scrubwren and Fan-tailed Berrypecker.

A few of the favourites in this area were the Blue-capped Ifrita with, as its name suggests, a brilliant metallic blue crown, the Tit Berrypecker with the male showing a superficial resemblance to a Great Tit and the highly sought Crested Berrypecker which is a beautiful looking bird. Another species seen up here was the gaudy Red-collared Myzomela which had been missed by the previous tour. Finally a couple of species were seen flying across the road and hence were only seen by a few of us and those were a Lesser Melampitta and a Sanford's Bowerbird. The weather during the afternoon was not the best and we didn't add much except for those cryptic Large and Buff-faced Scrubwrens.

Day 14

Saturday 15th September

We tried the Benari Road early again but this time the mist defeated us and we were unable to locate a Black Sickbill but we did see another male Superb Bird-of-Paradise, our first Lawe's Parotia of the tour and the rather drab Brown-breasted Gerygone. On our way back to the lodge we stopped by Warili Lodge for another male Lawe's Parotia that Benson spotted and whilst watching this bird we could hear a distant Black Sickbill. Not long after Benson located the bird and got it in the scope so those who missed it yesterday had the chance to see it now.

Up at Tari Gap we located our first Crested Bird-of-Paradise for the trip and this made a grand total of twenty-two B-o-Ps on the tour which was the most we could have expected. Our first Crested B-o-Ps were all female types but still it was better than nothing. Now the group had to split as it was suggested that we tried the forest trail but access was steep and a few decided to stay on the road. For those who went into the forest the highlights included Lesser Melampitta, Lesser Ground Robin, Mountain Mouse-Warbler and stunning views of a superb Chestnut Forest-Rail. But in the meantime the few still on the road had located a brightly coloured immature male Crested Bird-of-Paradise, a couple of Orange-billed Lorikeets and what was certainly one of the most rarely seen species in New Guinea, in fact it isn't actually on the country list yet, a female Papuan Whipbird that was seen down to just a few feet and all confusion species could easily be eliminated from the views we had.

Whilst in the forest Gerry saw a bird which could only have been the rare Buff-tailed Sickbill but unfortunately it didn't wait around for others to see it. The immature male Crested BoP reappeared for those who had been in the forest but when it did the rain started to increase in intensity and so we headed back to the lodge for lunch.

After lunch most of the group went with David to see the orchid collection and meet his family in his village and the remaining few remained at the lodge. By now the rain could be classified as torrential and any attempt at birding was a complete waste of time so we basically gave up for the day.

Day 15

Sunday 16th September

Our final morning at Ambua and we had an early departure to the airport so the birding was limited to the main road outside the lodge gates. A noisy feeding flock of Yellow-billed Lorikeets gave some good views and additional species included a couple of Island Leaf Warblers, three Rufous-backed Honeyeaters and on the way back we encountered a mixed species flock that included Macgregor's Bowerbird and Black Pitohui. Then just as we were about to depart Macgregor's Bowerbird was discovered in the grounds causing a minor delay but only a few minutes.

Once at the airport we were informed of a delay of about an hour which was better than expected as today was Independence Day which is obviously a big day of celebrations a could cause flight cancellations. Our time spent at the airport produced a few birds the ones of most interest including an Oriental Plover (seen by Tony), a Barn Swallow, an Australasian Pipit and for Martin a Mountain Red-headed Myzomela. Once back in Port Moresby the late arrival combined with rather dubious looking weather meant that we had the rest of the afternoon at leisure.

Day 16

Monday 17th September

Our final morning and a visit to the PAU campus is scheduled in for the morning. Within the grounds are three lakes that attract a wide variety of waterbirds and the surrounding trees hold some interesting species as well. The morning was fine and warm, in fact all in all a very pleasant way to spend a final morning in the fabulous country of New Guinea. Even though we had been in the country for 13 days we had not visited an area like this and for this reason we added 25 species to the trip list which is one great boost in the last few hours.

Things started with a bang as our first stop was at the first two lakes which were full of birds including Australasian Grebe, Little Black Cormorant, Darter, Pied Heron, Wandering Whistling-Duck, Pacific Black Duck, Purple Swamphen, Dusky Moorhen and Comb-crested Jacana. The third lake is not visible from the paths but in the surrounding trees we found one of the stars of the morning, a group of seven Spotted Whistling-Ducks. Also in the same trees were a few Australian Ibis and a couple Rufous Night-Herons.

The neighbouring vegetation held Golden-headed Cisticola and the trees were home to Black-backed Butcherbirds, Green Figbirds and Fawn-breasted Bowerbirds. Whilst driving from one area to another we added an Osprey which is a scarce bird around Port Moresby and during a search for Forest Kingfisher, which we didn't find, we located a Common Kingfisher.

In another area of the campus we located a flock of finches that were predominantly Grey-headed Munias but there were a few Chestnut-breasted Munias mixed in with them, also in this area we had some brief looks at a Singing Starling. In a fruiting tree we found an Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove but it didn't hang around for long and in a nearby large tree there was a Papuan Frogmouth on a nest. All too soon our time ran out and so it was back to the hotel, collect our bags and head for the airport the end of another superb trip to the unrivalled Papua New Guinea.

New Guinea Bird List

Southern Cassowary *Casuarius casuarius*

A fresh footprint of this species was discovered on the trail behind Ekame Lodge on the 8th.

Australasian Grebe *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*

Three were seen on our last morning at the PAU.

Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*

As with the previous species the only record for the tour was from the PAU where about ten birds were seen.

Little Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*

Only seen on the trip along the Fly and Elevala rivers.

Darter *Anbinga melanogaster*

One on the Fly river on the 7th and one at the PAU on the last morning were the only records.

Great-billed Heron *Ardea sumatrana*

One was flushed from the side of the Elevala River on the 8th.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Scattered records from the lowland areas.

Pied Heron *Egretta picata*

Only recorded on our final morning at the PAU where we saw about twenty of these rather attractive small herons.

Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia*

Fairly common on the river trips and around the PAU on the final morning.

White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae*

One of this uncommon Australian visitor by Kiunga airstrip on the 9th and one on the outskirts of Port Moresby on the 17th.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Common and widespread around Port Moresby.

Striated Heron *Butorides striatus*

One on the Elevala River on the 7th was the only record for the trip.

Rufous Night Heron *Nycticorax caledonicus*

Two found roosting at the PAU on the last morning.

Forest Bittern *Zonerodius heliosylus*

Certainly one of the big surprises of the tour especially as the riverine habitat was flooded which would normally cause this species to go further into the forest. Still there they were two birds flushed from trees at the edge of the Elevala River in the evening of the 7th. The dark crown and transverse barring on the upperparts were clearly seen as was the pale rump.

Australian Ibis *Threskiornis molucca*

About five birds at the PAU campus were the only ones seen on the tour.

Spotted Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna guttata*

Seven at the PAU was a slight return to form having missed it at this site on the previous tour.

Wandering Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna arcuata*

Only recorded from the PAU where about forty birds were present.

Salvadori's Teal *Salvadorina waigiensis*

A pair gave us some good prolonged views on the Ok Menga River above the hydro plant on the 10th.

Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa*

Common at the PAU but not seen elsewhere on the tour.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

One rather tatty individual was at the PAU on the final morning, this was a bit of a surprise as it is an uncommon bird around Port Moresby.

Pacific Baza *Aviceda subcristata*

Three birds in the vicinity of Km 23 were seen in display flight, the views were excellent but rather surprisingly these were the only ones of the trip.

Long-tailed Honey-buzzard *Henicopernis longicauda*

One seen rather briefly on the river trip on the 7th.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

Only recorded around Port Moresby.

Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus*

Another species only recorded in the vicinity of Port Moresby.

Brahminy Kite *Haliastur Indus*

The most common and widespread of the raptors, recorded on a total of nine dates.

Variable Goshawk *Accipiter biogaster*

One along the Ok Ma Road on the 11th.

Brown Goshawk *Accipiter fasciatus*

One flew over the PAU on the final morning.

Black-mantled Goshawk *Accipiter melanochlamys*

Superb views of two birds soaring over the restaurant building at Ambua Lodge just before we made our exit on the 16th.

Grey-headed Goshawk *Accipiter poliocephalus*

Two were seen well along Boystown Road on the 9th, one was seen in a type of display flight.

Meyer's Goshawk *Accipiter meyerianus*

One was seen just below Tari Gap on the 13th but only Tony Smith saw it well enough to identify it.

Doria's Hawk *Megatriorchis doriae*

Heard at Dablin Creek but we could not locate the source of the call.

New Guinea Eagle *Harpyopsis novaeguineae*

One seen at distance at Km 93 first picked up by Tony Smith and seen by all but rather briefly before it disappeared from view and was never seen again. This was another of the highly rated species that we recorded on this trip.

Black-billed Brush-turkey *Talegalla fuscirostris*

Two were seen on our first day in Varirata National Park, this species is normally heard but not seen so obviously our luck was in from the beginning.

Brown Quail *Coturnix ypsilophora*

Three along the entrance road to Varirata on the 5th and then two at the PAU on the last morning.

Red-backed Button-Quail *Turnix maculosa*

One was seen in the grass by the airstrip at Kiunga on the 9th.

Chestnut Forest-Rail *Rallina rubra*

One along the trail below Tari Gap on the 15th was seen well as it circled the group.

Buff-banded Rail *Gallirallus philippensis*

One on the airport at Tabubil on the 13th and then the following day two were seen around the chalets at Ambua Lodge.

Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*

Only encountered on the lakes at the PAU on our final morning.

Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa*

Another species only encountered at the PAU.

Comb-crested Jacana *Irediparra gallinacean*

Yet another waterbird that was only recorded on our final morning at the PAU campus.

Masked Lapwing *Vanellus miles*

Only recorded around Port Moresby.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*

One on Tabubil golf course and then one at Tari airport.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

One feeding in the rough area just before the tunnel on the road to Ok Menga, rather surprisingly this was a new bird for Kwiwan.

Swinhoe's Snipe *Gallinago megala*

Two on the golf course at Tabubil on the 13th.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

One on the Tabubil golf course on the 13th.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius dubius*

This distinct form was recorded from Km 120 on the 10th and then from Tabubil airport on the 13th.

Oriental Plover *Charadrius veredus*

The only record was one bird at Tari airport on the 16th but it was only seen by Tony.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Fairly widespread and recorded on six different dates.

Slender-billed Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia amboinensis*

Fairly common and widespread with a maximum of ten on the 6th at Boystown Road.

Black-billed Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia nigrirostris*

One at Boystown Road on the 9th.

Great Cuckoo-Dove *Reinwardtoena reinwardtii*

One along the Elevala River on the 7th and two at Tari Gap on the 14th.

Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indicus*

Two in Varirata National Park on the 5th.

Stephan's Dove *Chalcophaps stephani*

One on the 6th and one on the 9th, both at Boystown Road.

Peaceful Dove *Geopelia placida*

Four at the PAU on the final morning.

Pheasant Pigeon *Otidiphaps nobilis*

Heard in Varirata National Park and along the Ok Ma Road

Southern Crowned Pigeon *Goura scheepmakeri*

One was seen well in a riverside tree on the afternoon of the 7th.

Wompoo Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus magnificus*

The only one recorded was one in Varirata on the 5th.

Pink-spotted Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus perlatus*

A fairly common lowland species.

Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus aurantiifrons*

Two at the PAU on our last morning.

Superb Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus superbus*

A male on a nest in Varirata was unquestionably the best views of this species.

Beautiful Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus pulchellus*

Another species seen on the nest, more excellent views of a stunning Fruit-Dove.

White-breasted Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus rivoli*

Two seen in flight at Tari Gap were the only ones recorded and unfortunately were only seen by Tony.

Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus iozonus*

Seen daily around Kiunga.

Dwarf Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus nanus*

One on the 7th and then one at Dablin Creek on the 11th were the only records of this diminutive Fruit-Dove, in reality no bigger than a House Sparrow!

Purple-tailed Imperial-Pigeon *Ducula rufigaster*

Only recorded from Boystown Road, near Kiunga.

Rufescent Imperial-Pigeon *Ducula chalconota*

A surprise find at Varirata, although only a fly by in the picnic area the grey head and nape and the green tail were seen well. This species is usually at higher elevations than this!

Pinon Imperial-Pigeon *Ducula pinon*

Common around Kiunga, particularly on the trips up and down the Fly and Elevala Rivers.

Collared Imperial-Pigeon *Ducula mullerii*

Another common species along the rivers around Kiunga.

Zoe Imperial-Pigeon *Ducula zoeae*

First seen at Varirata but also around Kiunga and at Tabubil.

Torresian Imperial-Pigeon *Ducula spilorrhoa*

The only record was a single bird at the PAU on the final morning.

Papuan Mountain Pigeon *Gymnophaps albertisii*

Obviously the name doesn't count for much as the first birds seen were in the lowlands around Kiunga.

Palm Cockatoo *Probosciger aterimus*

Only recorded around Kiunga but as usual the views were excellent.

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita*

One in Varirata but more common around Kiunga and Tabubil.

Yellow-streaked Lory *Chalcopsitta sintillata*

Common around Kiunga and Tabubil with a maximum of about 30 on the 9th.

Dusky Lory *Pseudeos fuscata*

First seen at Ok Menga where we got some great views of birds attending a flowering tree, also quite common around Tabubil and Ambua.

Rainbow Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus*

The flowering trees around Tabubil were a big attraction for this species and it was the most numerous Lorikeet in the area.

Goldie's Lorikeet *Psittenteles goldei*

Only seen around Ambua Lodge and Tari Gap, a few gave us some reasonable views but most birds were rapid flyovers.

Western Black-capped Lory *Lorius lorry*

Quite numerous and widespread around Port Moresby, Kiunga and Tabubil.

Red-flanked Lorikeet *Charmosyna placensis*

The best views were a pair seen well in a tree along Boystown Road on the 9th.

Fairy Lorikeet *Charmosyna pulchella*

Otherwise known as Little Red Lorikeet, a few were seen in a flowering tree at the bottom of the Dablin Creek road. It is rather unusual to get the opportunity to see this species as well as we did.

Josephine's Lorikeet *Charmosyna josefina*

Rather brief flight views of three birds along the Ok Ma Road on the 12th were the only record of this species. It is rather uncommon in this area and thus a highly sought after species.

Papuan Lorikeet *Charmosyna papou*

A few were seen daily around Ambua and Tari Gap.

Plum-faced Lorikeet *Oreopsittacus arfaki*

Only recorded below Tari Gap with fly overs being seen on the 13th and 14th.

Yellow-billed Lorikeet *Neopsittacus musschenbroekii*

Common around Ambua and Tari Gap, some excellent views of feeding birds were had on our first afternoon and final morning in the area.

Orange-billed Lorikeet *Neopsittacus pullicauda*

Just two birds were seen by Tony and Tony below Tari Gap by the rusty container on the 15th.

Pesquet's Parrot *Psittrichas fulgidus*

Another of the species vying for bird of the trip. They were a bit distant in the mist at Dablin Creek but this is a rarely observed species nowadays and we heard of no other birding group seeing this bird recently.

Yellow-capped Pygmy-Parrot *Micrositta keiensis*

This diminutive parrot was only recorded around Kiunga and only in flight.

Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrot *Micropsitta bruijnii*

One was seen perched briefly at Dablin Creek on the 11th but otherwise the birds seen were just fly overs.

Orange-breasted Fig-Parrot *Clycopsitta gulielmitertii*

Common around Kiunga and Tabubil with a maximum of 30+ seen on the 11th.

Double-eyed Fig-Parrot *Clycopsitta diophthalma*

The only records were two birds along Boystown Road on the 6th and two at Km 23 on the 10th.

Large Fig-Parrot *Psittaculirostris desmarestii*

Heard along the river on the 7th but we were unable to get any views of this rather scarce species.

Painted Tiger-Parrot *Psittacella picta*

A male was seen in a fruiting tree in the Lodge gardens at Ambua on the 13th. It was difficult to observe and unfortunately not seen by everyone.

Brehm's Tiger-Parrot *Psittacella brehmii*##

About six birds were seen in the vicinity of the wrecked container on the morning of the 14th and then one was in the fruiting tree in the Lodge gardens in the afternoon.

Red-cheeked Parrot *Geoffroyus geoffroyi*

Common and widespread at lower elevations around Port Moresby and Kiunga.

Eclectus Parrot *Eclectus roratus*

Most numerous along the Fly and Elevala Rivers but also seen at Tabubil, Varirata and the PAU.

Brush Cuckoo *Cacomantis variolosus*

As always this species was heard everywhere in the lowlands but the only one seen was on our trip up river on the 7th.

Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo *Cacomantis castaneiventris*

Heard in Varirata National Park but one was seen along the Ok Ma Road on the 12th.

Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cacomantis flabelliformis*

Three were seen around Ambua on the 14th with two of these being along the Benari Road.

White-eared Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx meyeri*

Three were seen in a mixed species feeding flock at the bottom of the Dablin Creek road on the 11th.

Long-billed Cuckoo *Rhamphomantis megarhynchus*

One decided to show itself eventually along Boystown Road on the 9th, a particularly uncuckoo-like cuckoo. In fact some almost dismissed it as a type of Honeyeater!

White-crowned Koel *Caliechthrus leucolophus*

One was heard rather distantly at Km 17 on the 10th.

Australian Koel *Eudynamis cyanocephala*

Only recorded during the Kiunga section of the tour but a few were seen daily.

Channel-billed Cuckoo *Scythrops novaehollandiae*

The largest parasitic cuckoo in the world was seen well along the Elevala River on both the 7th and 8th.

Greater Black Coucal *Centropus menbeki*

Heard daily around Kiunga but we never even got a glimpse.

Pheasant Coucal *Centropus phasianinus*

Only recorded around Port Moresby on our trips to Varirata and the PAU.

Greater Sooty Owl *Tyto tenebricosa*

One in the camp at Ekame whilst we were having dinner on the evening of the 7th, remarkably it stayed in the same tree for some 10 minutes or so allowing everyone to get some great views.

Papuan Boobook *Ninox theomacha*

Heard at Cloudlands Hotel in Tabubil and at Ambua Lodge but the only bird seen was along the Ok Ma Road on the evening of the 11th.

Papuan Hawk Owl

The only record was a bird heard at a location which we were asked by our guide to keep secret.

Feline Owlet-Nightjar *Aegotheles insignis*

One heard above Ambua Lodge early in the morning of the 15th, this bird actually hit Tony whilst he was attempting to get it to respond to a tape. Seems as though it took exception to the impostor.

Barred Owlet-Nightjar *Aegotheles bennettii*

One was seen in Varirata National Park where it was roosting in exactly the same hole as last year. The views were a bit brief but most managed to see it even though it didn't perch out in the open.

Marbled Frogmouth *Podargus ocellatus*

One along the Elevala River at dusk on the 7th.

Papuan Frogmouth *Podargus papuensis*

One along the Elevala River just after dusk on the 7th and then one seen on a nest in the PAU on the 17th. One was also heard at Ambua on the 14th.

Papuan Nightjar *Eurostopodus papuensis*

Only one along the Elevala River on the evening of the 7th and then one along the Ok Ma Road on the 11th.

Archbold's Nightjar *Eurostopodus archboldi*

They kept us dangling for a while but eventually a pair were seen, and heard, in the second quarry above Ambua Lodge early morning on the 15th.

Large-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus macrurus*

The first was perched on an exposed branch in broad daylight near the picnic area at Varirata on the 4th, then we flushed two off nests on the 5th and then saw one along Boystown Road on the 6th.

Glossy Swiftlet *Aerodramus esculenta*

The most numerous and widespread of all the swiftlets and recorded on virtually all dates on the tour.

Mountain Swiftlet *Aerodramus hirundinaceus*

Only recorded around Ambua Lodge and Tari Gap where it was seen daily in small numbers.

Uniform Swiftlet *Aerodramus vanikorensis*

A common species around Kiunga and Tabubil.

Papuan Needletail *Mearnsia novaeguineae*

Seen every day around Kiunga with a maximum of about 30 on the 7th.

Moustached Treeswift *Hemiprocne mystacea*

Recorded almost daily around Kiunga and Tabubil but it wasn't common, the most seen were six along Boystown Road on the evening of the 6th.

Azure Kingfisher *Alcedo azurea*

The only one seen was at Varirata National Park on the 5th, but it was only seen by Roger even though we all heard it.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

One seen at the PAU on the final morning was the only record for the tour.

Blue-winged Kookaburra *Dacelo leachii*

Only recorded around Port Moresby with one on the 5th and then three on the 17th.

Rufous-bellied Kookaburra *Dacelo gaudichaud*

One in Varirata on the 4th but most numerous along the Elevala River on the 7th and 8th.

Shovel-billed Kingfisher *Chytoceyx rex*

This is one of the birds of the trip and Kwiwan finding it was a piece of absolute genius. It was obviously sheltering from the rain and remained in view for more than 40 minutes which must be a world record for observing this species. What a strange creature this is and oh how we enjoyed the time it shared with us.

Sacred Kingfisher *Todirhamphus sanctus*

Most numerous on the trip up the Fly and Elevala Rivers when six birds were seen.

Hook-billed Kingfisher *Melidora macrorrhina*

Heard in a few places, the best being one incredibly close bird by the hide in front of the Flame Bowerbird bower. This one was seen by Gerry but nobody else managed to see this very elusive species.

Yellow-billed Kingfisher *Syma torotoro*

The only birds seen were two individuals on consecutive days in Varirata National Park but it was also heard in other areas.

Little Paradise-Kingfisher *Tanysiptera hydrocharis*

Heard along the Elevala River on the 8th but the high water level meant we were unable to try locating the bird on foot.

Common Paradise-Kingfisher *Tanysiptera galatea*

One stunning adult was seen on the Elevala River on the 8th. It was seen in the riverine vegetation where it could be rather difficult to locate and once it flew across the river.

Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher *Tanysiptera danae*

A pair of these superb birds were seen on the Koiari Tree House Trail on the 4th, that red breast seems to almost light up the surrounding forest.

Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops ornatus*

Seen in the areas of lower elevation like Port Moresby and Kiunga.

Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis*

Abundant along the Fly and Elevala Rivers also seen around Port Moresby and Tabubil.

Blyth's Hornbill *Aceros plicatus*

Only recorded on our river trip and along Boystown Road, these are pretty huge beasts.

Hooded Pitta *Pitta sordida*

One was seen briefly on the trail behind Ekame Lodge on the 8th.

Pacific Swallow *Hirundo tabitica*

Recorded on most dates during the tour.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

The only record was one flying around the airport at Tari on the 16th.

Australasian Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae*

The only one this trip was at Tari airport as we were waiting for our flight.

Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina novaehollandiae*

The most numerous and frequently recorded of the Cuckoo-shrikes.

Stout-billed Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina caeruleo-grisea*

Two along Ok Ma Road on the 11th.

Yellow-eyed Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina lineate*

Three in Varirata on our first day were the only record for the trip.

Boyer's Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina boyeri*

Three in Varirata on the first day and then a pair as we went up river were the only records, which was a bit unusual.

White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina papuensis*

Only recorded on three dates throughout the tour.

Black-shouldered Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina morio*

Two on the Ok Ma Road on the 11th were the only record.

Grey-headed Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina schisticeps*

One on the 8th and then three along the Ok Ma Road on the 12th, the rusty-orange female is very distinctive.

Black Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina melaena*

Seen on both our visits to Varirata National Park and on the 6th when we visited Boystown Road near Kiunga.

Black-bellied Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina montana*

Four above Ambua on the 13th were the only record of this montane species.

Golden Cuckoo-shrike *Campochaera sloetii*

Difficult to get good views of on this trip but when we did get a male perched for a few seconds there were a few oohs and aaahs from the admiring audience.

Varied Triller *Lalage leucomela*

Four were seen on the 11th, two at Dablin Creek and then two along the Ok Ma Road.

Island Thrush *Turdus poliocephalus*

This high elevation species was only recorded from the vicinity of Tari Gap.

Golden-headed Cisticola *Cisticola exilis*

Just two at the PAU on the final morning was a rather poor showing for this species.

Island Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus poliocephalus*

Two just outside the gate to Ambua Lodge on the morning of the 16th were the only ones recorded.

Pied Bushchat *Saxicola caprata*

Most numerous around the Ambua area and Tari Airport.

Northern Fantail *Rhipidura rufiventris*

Two along the Ok Ma road on the 11th were the only record of the trip.

Willie-wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys*

A common and widespread species, most numerous along the Fly and Elevala Rivers and recorded almost daily on the tour.

Friendly Fantail *Rhipidura albolimbata*

Common and friendly around Ambua and Tari Gap.

Sooty Thicket-Fantail *Rhipidura threnothorax*

Heard from the picnic area in Varirata on the 5th but that was the nearest we got.

White-bellied Thicket-Fantail *Rhipidura leucothorax*

One was enticed from its hiding place along the Elevala River on the 7th.

Black Fantail *Rhipidura atra*

One at Dablin Creek on the 11th was the only record.

Dimorphic Fantail *Rhipidura brachyrhyncha*

Seen in the Tari Gap area on two consecutive dates.

Rufous-backed Fantail *Rhipidura rufidorsa*

A few were seen around Kiunga and then two at Tabubil.

Black Monarch *Monarcha axillaris*

Tony and Liz saw a male from their chalet at Ambua on the 15th.

Black-faced Monarch

One was seen in the mixed species flock at the beginning of the Dablin Creek track on the 11th.

Spot-winged Monarch

One was seen by a few on the Circuit Trail at Varirata on the 5th.

Hooded Monarch *Monarcha manadensis*

The only one seen was around Ekame Lodge on the 8th.

Golden Monarch *Monarcha chrysomela*

This is one little stunner, a pair were seen along the trail from Manucode Mound along Boystown Road on the 9th.

Friiled Monarch *Arses telescophtthalmus*

Fairly common in the areas of lower elevation around Port Moresby, Kiunga and Tabubil.

Shining Flycatcher *Myiagra alecto*

As expected this species was only seen on our river journeys, two on the way up and then one on the way back.

Black-breasted Boatbill *Machaerirhynchus nigripectus*

Fairly common this trip around Tari Gap and Ambua Lodge. One bird gave us some exceptionally good views by the broken container in response to a tape.

Yellow-breasted Boatbill *Machaerirhynchus flaviventer*

Only heard, with one proving highly elusive in Varirata on the 5th and one at Km 23 on the 9th.

Lesser Ground Robin *Amalocichla incerta*

Two were seen well on the 15th on the trail below the wrecked container at Tari Gap.

Torrent Flycatcher *Monachella muelleriana*

Only recorded from Ok Menga on the 10th when half a dozen birds were seen around the hydro plant area.

Lemon-bellied Flycatcher *Microeca flavigaster*

Two in the open Eucalypt woodland bordering Varirata National Park on the 5th.

Canary Flycatcher *Microeca papuana*

One at Dablin Creek on the 11th and one around Ambua Lodge on the 16th.

Garnet Robin *Eugeryone rubra*

An immature was seen by Gerry and Martin below Tari Gap on the 15th.

Black-sided Robin *Poecilodryas hypoleuca*

One was heard behind Ekame Lodge on the 8th.

White-winged Robin *Peneothello sigillatus*

Quite common around Ambua and Tari Gap with the best views in the lodge car park on the 15th.

White-rumped Robin *Peneothello bimaculatus*

One was seen along the Ok Ma Road by Margaret and Kwiwan on the 11th although it was heard by everyone else. The following morning one was seen in the same area flycatching twice very briefly by where we parked the bus.

Blue-grey Robin *Peneothello cyanus*

Only recorded from the Ambua and Tari Gap areas where occasional birds were seen daily.

Rufous-naped Whistler *Aleadryas rufinucha*

An immature was seen by Martin on the 15th and then a close bird by the access road to the lodge early on the 16th was seen by most people.

Brown-backed Whistler *Pachycephala modesta*

Four were seen near the broken container on the 14th and then two around the lodge on the 16th.

Grey-headed Whistler *Pachycephala griseiceps*

Only heard on the 12th along Ok Ma Road.

Sclater's Whistler *Pachycephala soror*

A male was seen by the waterfall on the 15th.

Regent Whistler *Pachycephala schlegelii*

Seen below the Tari Gap on both the 14th and 15th, the male is a real stunner.

Black-headed Whistler *Pachycephala monacha*

A singing male was enticed into view at the bottom of the Dablin Creek track on the 12th.

Little Shrike-Thrush *Colluricincla megarhyncha*

One behind Ekame Lodge on the 7th and then one just above Ambua Lodge on the 16th.

Grey Shrike-Thrush *Colluricincla harmonica*

The only one was in Varirata on the 5th.

Hooded Pitohui *Pitohui dichrous*

Seen on both visits to Varirata National Park and then along the Ok Ma Road on the 11th.

White-bellied Pitohui *Pitohui incertus*

As we were unable to get into the forest near Ekame this species was only heard .

Rusty Pitohui *Pitohui ferrugineus*

One was called up by Kwiwan just after dawn on the 10th at Km 17, but it didn't give great views and its appearance was very brief.

Crested Pitohui *Pitohui cristatus*

One was attracted into view at Dablin Creek on the 11th but as with the previous species the period it was visible was very brief.

Variable Pitohui *Pitohui kirbocephalus*

Heard at Km 17 on the 9th but the following morning at the same location about ten birds were seen well.

Black Pitohui *Pitohui nigrescens*

One female was seen in a mixed species flock by the entrance gate to Ambua Lodge on the 16th.

New Guinea Babbler *Pomatostomus isidorei*

Two were seen behind Ekame Lodge on the 8th and then about half a dozen at Km 17 on the 10th in association with the Variable Pitohuis.

Papuan Whipbird *Androphobus viridis*

A female was seen very well just inside the forest opposite the broken container. Full details of this bird have been submitted to the New Guinea rarities committee.

Painted Quail-thrush *Cinclosoma ajax*

Heard on our second visit to Varirata along the Circuit Trail.

Blue Jewell-babbler *Ptilorrhoa caerulescens*

Heard behind Ekame Lodge on the 8th and at Km 23 on the 9th.

Chestnut-backed Jewell-babbler *Ptilorrhoa castanonota*

Heard along the Circuit Trail at Varirata on the 5th and then at Ok Ma Road and Dablin Creek on the 11th and 12th.

Blue-capped Ifrita *Ifrita kowaldi*

This little stunner got the usual oohs and aahs as people got to see the amazing head pattern. Seen around Ambua and Tari Gap on three consecutive dates.

Wallace's Fairywren *Sipodotus wallacii*

One or two were heard on the trail behind the lodge at Ekame but unfortunately we could not locate them.

White-shouldered Fairywren *Malurus alboscapulatus*

Our first birds were seen well by the roadside on our way back from Varirata on the 5th, then a couple were seen on the drive from Tari airport to Ambua Lodge and finally one at the PAU on the final morning.

Emperor Fairywren *Malurus cyanocephalus*

Seen in the Kiunga area on three consecutive dates but it was not an easy bird to get good views of as they were continually moving around and would dive for cover frequently.

Rusty Mouse-Warbler *Crateroscelis murina*

It was heard far more often than it was seen. When it was seen it was usually a small dark bird crossing a trail or track very quickly.

Mountain Mouse-Warbler *Crateroscelis robusta*

Quite good views of birds around Tari Gap and Ambua Lodge.

Large Scrubwren *Sericornis noubuyai*

Seen on three consecutive dates in the Tari Gap/Ambua Lodge area.

Buff-faced Scrubwren *Sericornis perspicillatus*

Only recorded from around Ambua Lodge with two on the 14th and five on the 15th.

Papuan Scrubwren *Sericornis papuensis*

Only recorded from below the Tari Gap with six on the 14th and one on the 15th.

Green-backed Gerygone *Gerygone chloronotus*

Heard on six dates but the only one seen was behind Ekame Lodge on the 7th.

Yellow-bellied Gerygone *Gerygone chrysogaster*

One was seen on the trail behind Ekame Lodge on the 8th and then three were seen along Boystown Road on the 9th.

Large-billed Gerygone *Gerygone magnirostris*

One was seen at Km 23 on the 9th and near to Km 23 on the 10th.

Brown-breasted Gerygone *Gerygone ruficollis*

Recorded on the 15th along the Benari Road and from below Tari Gap and then on the 16th from near Ambua Lodge.

Black Sunbird *Leptocoma sericea*

Seen around Kiunga, Tabubil and the PAU.

Obscure Berrypecker *Melanocharis arfakiana*

Only recorded from Dablin Creek which is now a regular site for this species which was previously very poorly known.

Black Berrypecker *Melanocharis nigra*

One early morning on the 10th at Km 17 near Kiunga.

Fan-tailed Berrypecker *Melanocharis versteri*

Fairly common around Tari Gap and Ambua Lodge.

Dwarf Honeyeater *Taxorbamphus iliolophus*

Heard at Varirata on the 4th but unfortunately we never saw one.

Pygmy Honeyeater *Taxorbamphus pygmaeum*

One at Ok Ma Road on the 12th was the only record of this diminutive honeyeater.

Tit Berrypecker *Oreocharis arfaki*

Seen on our first afternoon below Tari Gap and then in the same area the following day. Both sexes were seen really well as a flock moved around the canopy.

Crested Berrypecker *Paramythia montium*

Only recorded from the Tari Gap area where birds were seen on the 14th and 15th.

Olive-crowned Flowerpecker *Dicaeum pectorale*

Fairly common and widespread with records from eight dates.

Black-fronted White-eye *Zosterops minor*

Two were seen at Dablin Creek on the 11th.

Capped White-eye *Zosterops fuscicapillus*

About 15 in the Tari Gap area on the 14th were the only record.

New Guinea White-eye *Zosterops novaeguineae*

Half a dozen at Varirata on our first afternoon were the only record of the tour.

Long-billed Honeyeater *Melilestes mearhynchus*

Two records from the Kiunga area and then one from the OK Ma Road were the only birds seen.

Mountain Myzomela *Myzomela adolphinae*

One was seen by Martin at Tari airport as we were waiting for our plane on the 15th but unfortunately disappeared before anyone else from our group could see it.

Red-collared Myzomela *Myzomela rosenbergii*

Only recorded from the Tari Gap area where we saw three of the red and black males on the 14th.

Mountain Meliphaga *Meliphaga orientalis*

Seen on consecutive days at Dablin Creek.

Scrub Honeyeater *Meliphaga albonotata*

One at Dablin Creek on the 11th was the only record.

Puff-backed Honeyeater *Meliphaga aruensis*

The only birds seen were on the 7th and 11th.

Mimic Honeyeater *Meliphaga analoga*

Only recorded at the beginning of the tour from Varirata National Park.

Graceful Honeyeater *Meliphaga gracilis*

Also only recorded from Varirata, just one bird on the 4th.

Black-throated Honeyeater *Lichenostomus subfrenatus*

Heard on our first visit to the Tari Gap area but small numbers were seen on our subsequent visits.

Obscure Honeyeater *Lichenostomus obscurus*

Two around Km 23 on the afternoon of the 9th and then heard along the Ok Ma Road on the 11th.

Yellow-tinted Honeyeater *Lichenostomus flavescens*

One seen in Port Moresby by the PNG Arts and Crafts shop on the 16th was the only record.

Tawny-breasted Honeyeater *Xanthotis flaviventer*

Common on the 9th at various locations around Kiunga and also seen around Tabubil on the 11th and 12th.

Spotted Honeyeater *Xanthotis polygramma*

One at Dablin Creek on the 11th was the only record of this rather spectacular honeyeater.

White-throated Honeyeater *Melithreptus albogularis*

Only seen in the dryer woodland bordering Varirata NP on the second afternoon.

Plain Honeyeater *Pycnopygius ixoides*

An adult with young was seen well through the telescope from Manucode Mound along Boystown Road on the 9th.

Streak-headed Honeyeater *Pycnopygius stictocephalus*

One was seen in the Ambua/Tari area on the 14th but the best views were a singing bird at the PAU on the 17th.

Meyer's Friarbird *Philemon meyeri*

Seen on both visits to Boystown Road outside Kiunga but on each occasion the sightings were brief and the bird was only seen by a few of us.

New Guinea Friarbird *Philemon novaeguineae*

Common and widespread in all areas except for the highlands around Ambua and Tari Gap where it was absent.

Rufous-backed Honeyeater *Ptiloprora guisei*

Three were seen along the roadside close to the Ambua Lodge entrance gate on the 16th.

Grey-sided Honeyeater *Ptiloprora perstriata*

Fairly common around the Tari Gap area where it was seen on three consecutive dates.

Belford's Melidectes *Melidectes belfordi*

Common around the Tari Gap.

Yellow-browed Melidectes *Melidectes rufocrissalis*

Common around Ambua Lodge.

Ornate Melidectes *Melidectes torquatus*

Two were seen in a flowering tree at the base of the Dablin Creek track on the 12th.

Smoky Honeyeater *Melipotes fumigatus*

Seen on six consecutive dates from the 11th to the 16th around Tabubil and Tari.

Rufous-banded Honeyeater *Conopophila albogularis*

Heard in the Gateway Hotel gardens on the 16th but the only birds seen were at the PAU on the final morning.

Brown Oriole *Oriolus szalayi*

Quite widespread at lower elevations but nowhere common.

Green Figbird *Sphecothebes viridis*

About twenty birds were seen on the final morning at the PAU.

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach*

The only one recorded flew in front of our bus as we were driving past Warili Lodge on the morning of the 14th.

Papuan Drongo *Chaetorhynchus papuensis*

This species even caused Kwiwan to look for a field guide when two appeared along Boystown Road on the 9th.

Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus bracteatus*

Fairly common around Port Moresby, Kiunga and Tabubil.

Torrent-lark *Grallina bruijnii*

One was seen on the rocks at the furthest visible point in the river by the Ok Menga hydro station on the 10th.

Great Woodswallow *Artamus maximus*

Seen at Tabubil and then around Ambua.

White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus*

Common in the areas of lower elevation and overlaps with the previous species around Tabubil.

Mountain Peltops *Peltops montanus*

Seen at Dablin Creek and then in the Ambua/Tari Gap area.

Lowland Peltops *Peltops blainvillii*

Seen at Boystown Road and Km 17 near Kiunga on the 9th and 10th.

Black-backed Butcherbird *Cracticus mentalis*

Only recorded on the last day when about ten were seen around the PAU grounds.

Hooded Butcherbird *Cracticus cassicus*

Quite common in the areas of lower elevation like Varirata and around Kiunga.

Black Butcherbird *Cracticus quoyi*

Seen on three consecutive dates but the last of these was the best at Dablin Creek on the 12th.

Loria's Bird-of-Paradise *Cnemophilus loriae*

A male was in his usual dead tree opposite the start of Benson's Trail on the afternoon of the 13th, but this was the only record.

Crested Bird-of-Paradise *Cnemophilus macgregorii*

The only birds recorded were three females and an immature male along the short trail opposite the broken container below Tari Gap on the 15th.

Glossy-mantled Manucode *Manucodia atra*

Common around Kiunga and seen on three consecutive dates.

Crinkle-collared Manucode *Manucodia chalybata*

Seen at Varirata National Park, plus one around Kiunga and one in the Tabubil area.

Trumpet Manucode *Manucodia keraudrenii*

Only recorded around Kiunga and our best views were probably along Boystown Road when the little crest and elongated neck feathers could be seen.

Short-tailed Paradigalla *Paradigalla brevicauda*

One came into a fruiting tree by chalet number 9 at Ambua Lodge on the afternoon of the 13th.

Ribbon-tailed Astrapia *Astrapia mayeri*

Seen on all our visits to the Tari Gap areas and included a few full males with their exceptionally long and elaborate tail feathers.

Princess Stephanie's Astrapia *Astrapia stephaniae*

Recorded on all four dates around Ambua Lodge but perhaps the best was a full male on the afternoon of the 13th.

Carola's Parotia *Parotia carolae*

Only seen by a few people in the Dablin Creek area on the morning of the 11th.

Lawes' Parotia *Parotia lawesii*

We struggled a bit for this one but we did find a couple of rather distant males on the morning of the 15th, one along Benari Road and the other opposite Warili Lodge.

King-of-Saxony Bird-of-Paradise *Pteridophora alberti*

A male was seen well on the 13th and then a female was seen by a few the following day.

Magnificent Riflebird *Ptiloris magnificus*

Quite common around Kiunga and Tabubil but it was far more frequently heard than seen. The best views were a male along the Ok Ma Road on his display perch on the morning of the 12th.

Eastern Riflebird *Ptiloris intercedens*

Only seen on our second visit to Varirata this species has a completely different call to the preceding species.

Superb Bird-of-Paradise *Lophorina superba*

A female was seen in a fruiting tree near chalet number 9 at Ambua Lodge and one or two males were scoped along the Benari Road on consecutive morning visits.

Buff-tailed Sickelbill *Epimachus albertisi*

One was seen by Gerry along the short trail below the broken container but unfortunately it was lost from view before anyone else could get onto it.

Black Sickelbill *Epimachus fastuosus*

One was very distant along the Benari Road on the 14th and then one, also rather distant, over the valley from Warili Lodge on the 15th.

Brown Sicklebill *Epimachus meyeri*

Three on our first day in the Ambua/Tari Gap area were the only ones we saw.

Magnificent Bird-of-Paradise *Cicinnurus magnificus*

The only one seen was a female at Dablin Creek on the 11th.

King Bird-of-Paradise *Cicinnurus regius*

This one really did cause some difficulties. The height of the river meant that we had to look for the bird from the boats and they made themselves very awkward to observe. The bird at Km 23 was also very unobliging but everyone saw one of these little gems eventually.

Twelve-wired Bird-of-Paradise *Seleucidis melanoleuca*

At our first stop along the Fly River a male was seen displaying on his dead stick and we saw two others that day and two the next.

Greater Bird-of-Paradise *Paradisaea apoda*

Seen on all dates around Kiunga and Tabubil. The usual birds were seen in the display trees at Km 17 but probably the best views were the male along the Boystown Road.

Raggiana Bird-of-Paradise *Paradisaea raggiana*

Always a good way to start the tour with a visit to a lek of this species and we weren't disappointed. We saw birds in display on both our visits to Varirata National Park once along the Koiari Tree House Trail and then the following morning at the traditional site.

Blue Bird-of-Paradise *Paradisaea rudolphi*

For many this species was one of the highlights of the trip. Two females were seen outside chalet number 9 early morning on the 14th and then a little later there was a superb male along the Benari Road.

Lesser Melampitta *Melampitta lugubris*

One flew across the road by the broken container on the 14th and then the following day one was seen along the small trail that leads away from the same container.

Sanford's Bowerbird *Archboldia sanfordi*

One bird on the 14th and one on the 15th both in the vicinity of the broken container below Tari Gap.

Macgregor's Bowerbird *Amblyornis macgregoriae*

One or two were seen on our last morning at Ambua. One was seen about 250 metres uphill from the lodge along the road and then it or another was found along the access track within the lodge grounds seconds before our scheduled departure.

Flame Bowerbird *Sericulus aureus*

Despite two visits to an active bower we didn't get the crippling views we had hoped for but we did see this very gaudy species a couple of times. Firstly a male and female were seen in flight along Boystown Road, then one was seen up river from Ekame Lodge and Tony saw a male in the trees near the bower and finally a female was seen well along Boystown Road on the 9th.

Fawn-breasted Bowerbird *Chlamydera cerviniventris*

One as we drove back from Varirata on the 5th and then twenty or more around the PAU on our final morning.

Grey Crow *Corvus tristis*

Recorded on a total of six dates from Varirata, Kiunga area and Tabubil.

Torresian Crow *Corvus orru*

Common in the Port Moresby area.

Metallic Starling *Aplonis metallica*

Most numerous on the river trips to and from Ekame Lodge and many of the colonial nests were seen as well.

Yellow-eyed Starling *Aplonis mystacea*

Three were seen well but briefly along Boystown Road on the 9th.

Singing Starling *Aplonis cantoroides*

Only recorded from the PAU where a total of seven were seen on our final morning.

Yellow-faced Myna *Mino dumontii*

Recorded on most dates except for those around Ambua and Tari.

Golden Myna *Mino anais*

Seen on the two dates that we were on the river, this is a little gem.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Only recorded around Port Moresby.

Mountain Firetail *Oreostruthus fuliginosus*

Seen on three consecutive dates in the vicinity of the broken container just below Tari Gap.

Blue-faced Parrotfinch *Erythrura trichroa*

Common around Ambua with a maximum of 20+ on the 15th.

Hooded Munia *Lonchura spectabilis*

Seen on all dates around Ambua but with a maximum of about 50 on the 16th.

Grey-headed Munia *Lonchura caniceps*

About a hundred were seen on the final morning in the PAU grounds.

Chestnut-breasted Munia *Lonchura castaneothorax*

Seen among the far more numerous Grey-headed Munias that outnumbered this species by about 10-1.

Mammals

Agile Wallaby - one was seen in Varirata National Parks

Flying Fox sp (Either Spectacled or Greater Bare-backed) – hundreds seen along the Fly River.

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