

ITINERARY  
**NEW GUINEA & AUSTRALIA**  
October 12-31, 2024



*The Blue-capped Irita is the only member of its family, and it is a New Guinea endemic. These small birds spend their time looking for insects in the moss and epiphytes on tree branches in the montane forests. We will look for them at Kumul Lodge. Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.*

*We include here information for those interested in the 2024 Field Guides New Guinea & Australia tour:*

- a general introduction to the tour
- a description of the birding areas to be visited on the tour
- an abbreviated daily itinerary with some indication of the nature of each day's birding outings

*Those who register for the tour will be sent this additional material:*

- an annotated list of the birds recorded on a previous year's Field Guides trip to the area, with comments by guide(s) on notable species or sightings (may be downloaded from our web site)
- a detailed information bulletin with important logistical information and answers to questions regarding accommodations, air arrangements, clothing, currency, customs and immigration, documents, health precautions, and personal items
- a Field Guides checklist for preparing for and keeping track of the birds we see on the tour
- after the conclusion of the tour, a list of birds seen on the tour

**If** you think you may have only one chance to visit Australasia, and you're looking for a good sampling of the region's unique wildlife, this tour is designed for you. We'll be visiting two great birding sites in New Guinea (including Kumul Lodge with its amazing birds-of-paradise) and some of the best sites in eastern Australia (including the Cairns area and the diverse Atherton Tableland, O'Reilly's at Lamington National Park near Brisbane, and Royal National Park near Sydney). This tour not only offers a sample of many of the bird families endemic to the region (including lyrebirds, bowerbirds, fairywrens, berrypeckers, and more) but is also excellent for a variety of iconic Australian mammals, and there should be excellent photo and video opportunities.

We'll begin in Cairns, in tropical northern Queensland, where beautiful rainforest reserves of the coast and the Atherton Tableland harbor such fabulous natural symbols of Australia as the huge Southern Cassowary, mound-building megapodes, Australian Bustard, Victoria's Riflebird, Great and Golden bowerbirds, Chowchilla, possums and bandicoots, and even the wonderfully exotic Platypus. We'll also take the time to visit the city's famous Esplanade, which is not only a wonderful place for a stroll, but also one of the Australia's premier shorebird sites.

From Cairns we'll fly across the Coral Sea to Port Moresby, capital of Papua New Guinea, evolutionary showcase of the birds-of-paradise. In the Astrolabe Mountains near Port Moresby we'll visit Varirata National Park, haven for Raggiana Bird-of-paradise, Growling Riflebird (recently split from Magnificent Riflebird), the striking Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher, and a multitude of other birds. Then we'll continue to the highlands near Mt. Hagen and the rustic charms of Kumul Lodge, an ideal site for exploring the surrounding montane forest. In this region, we could find a variety of birds-of-paradise, including such incomparable species as King-of-Saxony, Blue, and Lesser birds-of-paradise, Greater Lophorina (formerly Superb Bird-of-Paradise), Brown Sicklebill, and Ribbon-tailed Astrapia. Other spectacular possibilities include Stella's Lorikeet, Brehm's Tiger-Parrot, Black-capped and White-winged robins, the extraordinary Wattled Ploughbill, Eastern Crested and Tit berrypeckers, Blue-capped Ifrita and Regent Whistler. Enga Province itself, first touched by western influence only a little more than fifty years ago, is a remarkable backdrop for our birding, with many people still practicing their traditional subsistence lifestyles.

From Papua New Guinea we'll return to Australia, flying to Brisbane to visit O'Reilly's (Lamington National Park), perhaps the single most famous birding spot on the continent. Here such fantastic species as Regent and Satin bowerbirds, Australian Logrunner, Australian King-Parrot, and Crimson Rosella are easily seen at close range, and in our two days there we'll also have time to search for some more challenging ones, including Noisy Pitta, Albert's Lyrebird, Paradise Riflebird, and Australian Owlet-Nightjar. Then on to Sydney and a visit to Royal National Park—home to many birds typical of Australia's eucalypt woodlands, from cockatoos and kookaburras to Superb Lyrebird, the world's largest passerine—before returning home.

*We want to be sure you are on the right tour! Below is a description of the physical requirements of the tour. If you are concerned about the difficulty, please contact us about this and be sure to fully explain your concerns. We want to make sure you have a wonderful time with us, so if you are uncomfortable with the requirements, just let us know and we can help you find a better fitting tour! Field Guides will not charge you a change or cancellation fee if you opt out within 10 days of depositing.*

## Physical requirements of this tour

- **TRAILS & WALKING:** Good amounts of walking (up to 3 miles per day), along roadsides and trails, some of which will be muddy (rubber or neoprene boots necessary), some of which will be steep and have obstacles such as tree roots, rocks, or fallen trees (walking sticks can be useful).
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:** We drive for long periods several times on this tour. Participants should be able to step up (and step down) 10-12 inches to get into and out of our vehicles. Leeches may be encountered if conditions are wet, though are usually not a problem.
- **PACE:** After breakfast (set for as early as 5:00 a.m., as sunrise in Papua New Guinea is at 5:40 a.m.), we bird until lunch time. Normally, weather permitting, we bird after lunch or else continue traveling to our next destination. On several occasions, we take a siesta of several hours after lunch.
- **WEATHER:** Temperatures will range from the 60s at night to the 90s F at lower elevations. In the highlands, temperatures may drop in to the 40's F at night, and early mornings and evenings are often decidedly chilly. Rain showers, sometimes heavy, are likely, and humidity is high.
- **ELEVATION:** We spend several nights at elevations of about 9300 feet at Kumul Lodge, though our birding on those days will be primarily at somewhat lower elevations.
- **VEHICLE SEATING:** So that each participant has equal opportunity during our travel, we employ a seat rotation system on all tours. Participants will need to be flexible enough to maneuver to the back of the vehicle on occasion. Those who experience motion sickness will need to bring adequate medication for the duration of the tour, as we are not able to reserve forward seats for medical conditions.
- **BATHROOM BREAKS:** Participants should be prepared to make comfort stops in nature, as there are simply no other options (away from our lodgings) on many sections of this tour's route.
- **OPTING OUT:** Where we are staying multiple days in the same lodging, participants can opt to sit out a day or sometimes a half-day. This will not be possible on days when we are changing locations.

This tour is one of highlights, designed to provide an introduction to one of the world's most fascinating regions. It also, however, takes into account the fact that this is a vacation. We will make an effort to see the vast majority of the specialties, but we'll de-emphasize some of the most difficult-to-see birds unless clear opportunities present themselves.

All visitors to New Guinea find that the birding can be difficult at times; many species favor either the canopy or dense thickets in the understory and can be frustrating. Yet persistence generally affords good views. Furthermore, while at Kumul Lodge, we'll have the assistance of local experts, which greatly facilitates locating birds-of-paradise. Birding in Australia is somewhat easier, and species are usually easier to come by.

If you are uncertain about whether this tour is a good match for your abilities, please don't hesitate to contact our office; if they cannot directly answer your queries, they will put you in touch with the guide.

**About the Tour Limit:** Beginning in 2018, we lowered our tour limit for NEW GUINEA & AUSTRALIA to 9 participants. We think this will make for a better tour experience; with smaller groups on forest trails, there is a greater opportunity for everyone to see the birds. So when comparing features and prices, please keep in mind the many subtle benefits of a smaller group.

## About the Birding Areas



**The Cairns Esplanade** is an elevated walkway along the waterfront that is famous for its wintering assemblages of Palearctic migrant shorebirds. Near-high tides can push hundreds of birds in close for good viewing, including Pied Stilt, Pacific Golden-Plover, Greater and Siberian (Lesser) sand-plovers, Red-capped Dotterel, Far Eastern Curlew, Black-tailed and Bar-tailed godwits, Common and Terek sandpipers, Common Greenshank, Gray-tailed Tattler, Great Knot, Red-necked Stint, and Sharp-tailed, Curlew, and perhaps the rare Broad-billed sandpipers. The marshy waterfront also supports small numbers of Royal Spoonbill, Australian Ibis, Australian Pelicans, and often, Australian Terns. Mangroves at the north end of the Esplanade can be good for Torresian Kingfisher, Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove, and Mangrove Robin, among others. We'll try to work in a visit to the Esplanade when the tide is right; at low tide, the birds are but specks in the distance.

Other sites we may visit in and around Cairns include the Cattana Wetlands, where Green Pygmy-Goose, White-browed Crake, Orange-footed Megapode, and Green Oriole are among the many possibilities, and Centenary Lakes, a lovely park within the city where a variety of waterbirds can often be seen, along with Bush Thick-knee, the occasional Papuan Frogmouth, Common Cicadabird, and, if we're lucky, the elusive Little Kingfisher.

**Atherton Tableland**—Two of the finest rainforest preserves on the Atherton Tableland are around Lakes Eacham and Barrine, both of which occupy long-dormant volcanic craters. Some of the specialties we'll seek here include White-headed Pigeon, the showy Wompoo Fruit-Dove, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Pacific Emerald Dove, Australian Brushturkey, Barred Cuckooshrike, Bower's Shrikethrush,

the odd Chowchilla, several fancy flycatchers (Yellow-breasted Boatbill and Spectacled and Pied monarchs), Pale-yellow and Gray-headed robins, Golden Whistler, Scarlet Myzomela, Lewin's Honeyeater, the strange Tooth-billed Catbird (an evolutionary link between the catbirds and bowerbirds), and the exquisite Victoria's Riflebird.

Another tableland site, "The Crater," a sheer-sided hole 200 feet wide and nearly 500 feet deep, is said to be the result of a single violent volcanic eruption many thousands of years ago. The rainforest here is rich in special birds, including the skulking, monotypic Fernwren, Atherton and Large-billed scrubwrens, Mountain Thornbill, "Little" Tree-creeper (the race *minor* of White-throated), Bridled Honeyeater, and perhaps even a fabulous male Golden Bowerbird at its enormous "double-maypole" stick bower. In the open country en route to The Crater we'll scan the grasslands for the beautiful Spotted Harrier, Chestnut-breasted Munia, and flocks of Sarus Cranes and Brolga.



During our visit we will also explore the drier parts of the Tableland. Waterholes in the region may harbor birds such as Plumed Whistling-Duck, Magpie Goose, a number of herons, Black-necked Stork, Comb-crested Jacana, and Black-fronted Dotterel among others, while a search of open grasslands and dry woodland may reveal Australian Bustard (one of the heaviest flying birds), Squatter Pigeon, Red-winged Parrot, Blue-winged Kookaburra, Brown Treecreeper, Dusky Woodswallow, Red-backed Fairywren, Gray-crowned Babbler, Apostlebird, and Emu.

A nocturnal foray in the rainforest near Yungaburra could produce Southern Boobook, with both Barn and (Lesser) Sooty owls also possible. But the main attraction in this area is the mammals. Our spotlights are sure to reveal the presence of several fascinating creatures, some of which, like many of the Tableland's birds, are of very restricted distribution; these include Long-nosed Bandicoot, the gorgeous Striped Possum, Green and Common ringtail possums, Coppery Brushtail Possum, Sugar Gliders, and possibly Lumholtz's Tree-Kangaroo (yes, a kangaroo that clammers around in rainforest trees!). We may also visit a site where you can hand feed the remarkably tame Mareeba Rock Wallabies, which was a big hit on past tours. And on one evening we will make an effort to see Platypus, easily one of the most unique mammals to be found on earth!



*Macleay's Honeyeater is endemic to the Atherton Tableland region, where it is fairly common.  
Photograph by guide Cory Gregory.*

**Port Moresby and Varirata National Park**—Port Moresby lies in the rain shadow of the Owen Stanley Mountains in one of the driest parts of the country. Predominant habitats are grasslands spotted with palm-like *Pandanus* and *Eucalyptus/Melaleuca* savanna, both very similar to (and sharing birds with) the drier regions of northern Australia. However, rainfall increases inland and to the northwest, producing humid forest. In much of the region this forest type has been selectively logged, but most of the original avifauna is still present, and the birding can be very productive. Depending on flight schedules, we may well have time to bird some in the immediate Moresby area.

We will definitely have time for Varirata National Park, east of Moresby. In the low Astrolabe Mountains paralleling the Owen Stanleys, Varirata represents Papua New Guinea's first conservation area, encompassing 3265 acres (1306 hectares) of savanna and undulating, forest-covered hills. Atop the Sogeri Plateau, at elevations ranging from 2200 feet (677 m) to about 3000 feet (923 m), the rainforest is high enough to support a distinct and varied assemblage of birds. A high lookout trail and fine loop trail provide access to the forest interior, and the bird life here is rich in rare or secretive species as well as more widespread foothill birds. Species of particular interest in the park include several beautiful fruit-doves, Black-capped Lory, Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher, Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Chestnut-bellied Fantail, Goldenface, Frilled Monarch, Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, Raggiana Bird-of-paradise, Growling Riflebird, the now famous (and poisonous) Hooded Pitohui, and a number of alluring but very difficult-to-see birds: Yellow-legged Brushturkey, Forest Bittern, Pheasant Pigeon, Painted Quail-thrush, Chestnut-backed Jewel-babbler, and Eastern Hooded and South Papuan pittas.

**Kumul Lodge**—The Kumul Lodge area, nestled in a remote valley of Enga Province, was first touched by outside influence in the 1930s. Indeed, the Highlands Highway that ascends the mountains from Lae, passing through Goroka and Mt. Hagen, was completed this far west only in the 1980s. Thus the local people are undergoing the thorough (and inevitable) cultural reorganization experienced by most tribal societies accessible to outsiders. This is evident, as a few people in town and at small markets along the road still wear traditional dress, though this is now increasingly becoming a rarity. Although the area around Kumul and Mt Hagen is a typical, intensively cultivated highland valley, the lushly forested Hagen Range provides a vast, relatively undisturbed refuge for numerous birds-of-paradise and other highland birds. The mountains of Papua New Guinea are home to a high proportion of the island's endemic birds, and charming Kumul Lodge, situated at about 9000 feet (2800 m) and overlooking the hills of Enga Province, is the perfect base from which to enjoy this avian wealth. Above the lodge, the forest is dominated by *Lithocarpus* or *Castanopsis* oaks and *Nothofagus* "Antarctic beeches," and epiphytes and ferns abound. Highland specialties we'll look for in the area include Stella's, Plum-faced, and Orange-billed lorikeets, Brehm's Tiger-Parrot, Rufous-throated Bronze-Cuckoo, Black-bellied Cicadabird, Mountain Mouse-Warbler, Dimorphic and Friendly fantails, Black-breasted Boatbill, Blue-capped Ifrita, Eastern Crested and Tit-berrypeckers, (the only members of an endemic family), and also Fan-tailed Berrypecker (another endemic New Guinea family), Wattled Ploughbill, Regent and Brown-backed whistlers, Rufous-naped Bellbird, Red-collared Myzomela, Belford's and Ornate melidectes, Smoky Honeyeater, and such spectacular birds-of-paradise as Brown Sickbill, Ribbon-tailed Astrapia, Greater Lophorina, and Blue, Lesser, and King-of-Saxony birds-of-paradise. Kumul has also been a good site at times for lesser-known rarities like New Guinea Woodcock, the spectacular orange and black male Crested Satinbird (formerly classed as a bird-of-paradise and now an endemic family), and Archbold's Bowerbird.



*The beautiful Square-tailed Kite is found year-round in eastern Australia, and sometimes breeds in the Brisbane region, where we will keep an eye out for them. Photograph by guide Cory Gregory.*

**Brisbane area**—We'll make a couple of forays around the city, one to a mangrove and wetland area along the coast where we can look for Black Swan, Chestnut Teal, Red-necked Avocet, Pied Oystercatcher, Torresian Kingfisher, Mangrove and Striped honeyeaters, Mangrove Gerygone, Australian Reed-Warbler, and Fairy Martin among others. Another site en route to Lamington sometimes has breeding Square-tailed Kite, a good chance of Tawny Frogmouth, and the iconic Aussie mammal, the Koala.

**Lamington National Park and O'Reilly's**—Lamington National Park is about a three-hour drive from Brisbane. O'Reilly's Guest House, our home while at Lamington, is a lovely, modern motel that was once a family farm. This is one of the birdiest places in all of Australia, and many of the usually shy forest species are common on the hotel grounds and trails.



Meal times and late afternoon are feeding time, and the lawns and feeding trays are usually alive with gaudy (and bold!) Crimson Rosellas, Australian King-Parrots, Wonga Pigeons, Australian Brushturkeys, Pied Currawongs, stunningly beautiful Regent and Satin bowerbirds (the latter with bowers adorned with blue objects), Superb Fairywrens, Red-browed Firetails, and a few mammals such as the little Red-necked Pademelon (a small kind of wallaby). Short-eared Possums visit the feeding trays by night—oblivious to the spotlights and the humans dining just inside the glass.

We'll have two days to wander the many forest trails and bird the road near O'Reilly's, allowing us a good amount of time to enjoy the region's special birds and a nice variety of mammals. Ornithologically, the principal specialty in this forest is the Albert's Lyrebird, a species of *very* limited distribution and the second largest of the world's passerines. We'll make a concerted effort to see the lyrebird, concentrating on favored forest ravines in the early morning, but be aware that they have become much harder to find of late and the odds of seeing them vary from year to year.

In addition to rainforest habitats, we will also bird the drier *Eucalyptus* woodland just down the mountain from O'Reilly's, where in addition to searching for species not normally found in the rainforest (Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Spotted Pardalote, Red-browed Treecreeper, Varied Sittella, etc.), we'll also hope to spot a Koala. Other species that we may see at Lamington include the showy Topknot Pigeon, Noisy Pitta, Russet-tailed and Bassian thrushes, Gray Shrikethrush (a beautiful singer), Rose and Eastern Yellow robins, the fabulous Australian Logrunner (which forages on the ground in groups, noisily kicking dry leaves out of the way at a 90-degree angle from its body), White-throated Treecreeper, Yellow-throated Scrubwren, Gray and Australian Rufous fantails, Eastern Spinebill, Green Catbird, and the elusive Paradise Riflebird. We'll also go afield by night—if the weather permits—in search of (Greater) Sooty-Owl (rare), Southern Boobook, frogmouths, Australian Owlet-Nightjar, and several nocturnal mammals.



*The Yellow-throated Scrubwren is reminiscent of a North American warbler, but the scrubwrens and their allies belong to a family endemic to Australia, New Guinea and nearby areas. This species is found only in coastal eastern Australia.*  
 Photograph by participant Conny Palm.

**Royal National Park** is situated in a scenic setting of forest and heathland only forty minutes south of Sydney. In the lovely *Eucalyptus* woodlands we may see a number of common birds that are widespread in Australia but which could be new for us, e.g. Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Brown and Striated thornbills, Red and Little wattlebirds, New Holland and Yellow-faced honeyeaters, Silveryeye, and Variegated Fairywren.

There are a few birds of restricted distribution that we'll especially concentrate on locating in this area. Foremost is the Superb Lyrebird, certainly among the most spectacular songbirds in the world. With patience and luck, we should be able to locate one. The Rockwarbler is another priority, restricted mostly to the Hawkesbury sandstone of NSW and the state's only endemic. The heaths in the higher parts of the park may also have Tawny-crowned Honeyeater, Chestnut-rumped Heathwren, Beautiful Firetail, and the delightful Southern Emuwren. We'll be on the lookout, too, for Short-beaked Echidna, an engaging, large hedgehog-like mammal that is related to the Platypus. A sea-watch off a scenic coastal headland has been productive when the winds are right, and there is a chance of Short-tailed, Wedge-tailed, and Hutton's or Fluttering shearwaters, Australasian Gannet, and just maybe, a Black-browed Albatross.



*Sulphur-crested Cockatoos are familiar members of the avifauna of eastern Australia and much of Papua New Guinea. We should get good views of these sometimes cheeky residents near Royal National Park. Photograph by participant Jody Gillespie.*

## Itinerary for New Guinea & Australia

**Days 1-3, Sat-Mon, 12-14 Oct. Travel from Los Angeles to Cairns.** The recommended QANTAS flight is scheduled to depart Los Angeles Saturday evening, arriving in Cairns at around noon on Monday morning, October 14. (We will "lose" October 13 to the International Date Line.) It is a good idea to fly into Cairns a day or two early so you can acclimate to the time change. We can book extra nights for you at our hotel in Cairns, and you can meet the group there on October 14. Participants arriving in Cairns are responsible for the cost of a taxi to the Holiday Inn in Cairns. Please note that QANTAS often enforces its rule of one small carry-on piece per passenger, so be prepared.

If everyone comes in early, Jay will meet the group on the morning of October 14<sup>th</sup>. If we have participants arriving on October 14<sup>th</sup>, the group will meet at around lunchtime at the hotel on the 14<sup>th</sup>. Later this afternoon if the tide is right, we may go to the Cairns Esplanade, where we should encounter large numbers of waterbirds and waders. Otherwise we'll visit other productive local birding sites, to start familiarizing ourselves with the avifauna. Expect the weather to be warm in Cairns and humid on the waterfront. Night in Cairns.

**Day 4, Tue, 15 Oct. Cairns area and Atherton Tableland birding.** This morning we'll bird our way up the Atherton Tableland with a number of stops along the way. Several species of birds are endemic to the tableland, and we hope to encounter most of them during our stay. We plan to arrive in Yungaburra in the late afternoon. A comfortable local motel will be our home for the next two nights as we explore this picturesque region. Late in the afternoon, we'll station ourselves along a quiet stream on the edge of the forest where we've had many successful attempts to see the marvellous Platypus. Night at Chambers Rainforest Apartments set deep in the forest at Lake Eacham.

**Day 5, Wed, 16 Oct. Atherton Tableland.** We'll have the day to explore the beautiful crater lakes, Eacham and Barrine, and some other great local spots. Weather permitting, we'll do some nightbirding near Yungaburra. Night at Chambers Rainforest Apartments.



**Day 6, Thu, 17 Oct. More Atherton Tableland birding; to Cairns.** Today we'll plan on heading to the southwest where the forested habitat is decidedly drier. Here we'll search for a number of species we'll likely see nowhere else, including Little Lorikeet, Dusky Woodswallow, Red-backed Fairywren, Fuscous Honeyeater, Brown Treecreeper, and the striking Eastern Shrike-tit, among others. If we haven't already encountered Southern Cassowary at this point, we will make an excursion to a popular bach area that is a pretty reliable site for these massive birds on our way back to Cairns. Night in Cairns.

**Day 7, Fri, 18 Oct. Cairns area.** Our final day in the Cairns region will be spent trying to track down and local species we've missed up to this point. Sites we may visit include Machan's Beach for Beach Thick-Knee, Davies Creek for White-browed Robin and the often elusive Lovely Fairywren, and the Mareeba area for dry country birds like Emu, Australian Bustard, Blue-winged Kookaburra, Red-winged Parrot, Pale-headed Rosella, and others. We will also try to return to the city early enough to scope out the southern end of the Esplanade for the numerous shorebirds that often winter here. Night in Cairns.



*The Lovely Fairywren is a specialty of the Cape York peninsula that we'll seek near Cairns.  
Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.*

**Day 8, Sat, 19 Oct. Cairns; to PNG.** After some morning birding around Cairns (flight time permitting) we will board our short (90 minutes) mid-day flight to Port Moresby, capital of Papua New Guinea. Upon arrival at the airport in Port Moresby, we'll need to purchase local SIM cards and change money for any extras at the airport before making the short drive to our lodging. Depending on our flight's arrival time, we may have time to do some introductory New Guinea birding in the Port Moresby region. Night in Port Moresby.

**Day 9, Sun, 20 Oct. Varirata National Park.** We'll spend all day at the park with a picnic lunch. Most of our birding will be along forest trails where conditions vary greatly depending on recent weather. Sneakers or hiking boots are probably adequate, but bring your waterproof boots in the bus (where you can safely leave them) for use just in case there has been recent rain and the trails are muddy. Various fruit-doves, imperial-pigeons, parrots, several stunning kingfishers, cuckooshrikes, honeyeaters, pitohuis, and more will be sure to make our time here exciting (not to mention the Raggiana Birds-of-Paradise!) Night in Port Moresby.

**Days 10-12, Mon-Wed, 21-23 Oct. To Mt. Hagen; Kumul Lodge.** We'll fly on the morning of Day 10 over the amazing forested highlands of Papua New Guinea to Mt. Hagen, where we will begin our highland birding. We'll have two-and-a-half days to seek out the local highland specialties, which will give us a good sampling of the species to be found in New Guinea's montane regions. We will be birding along dirt roads and at times on quite steep trails where walking sticks and waterproof boots are advised (this is a high-rainfall area) in pursuit of some of the world's great birds. Nights at Kumul Lodge.





*The Barred Owlet-Nightjar is an endemic of Papua New Guinea that we've seen well at Varirata on previous tours.  
Photograph by participant Pete Peterman.*

**Day 13, Thu, 24 Oct. To Port Moresby.** Depending on flight schedules, we may have some time this morning in the Hagen area before we fly back to Port Moresby, and/or we may have time in the afternoon for some birding or sightseeing around Port Moresby. Night in Port Moresby.

**Day 14, Fri, 25 Oct. Varirata National Park** Today will give us a second opportunity to enjoy the highly productive park, perhaps focusing more on some interior forest birds that require a little extra time to see. Once again we'll take a pack lunch and spend the entire day here before returning to Port Moresby for our final night in the country.

**Day 15, Sat, 26 Oct. Flight to Brisbane.** We expect to be on either a late morning or early afternoon flight to Brisbane, leaving New Guinea behind. If we arrive in Brisbane early enough, we may have time for a lovely ride on the Brisbane River for a short afternoon visit to the botanical gardens. Night in Brisbane.

**Day 16, Sun, 27 Oct. To O'Reilly's.** This morning we'll start with a visit to an area of wetlands and coastal mangroves to the south of the city, where we will search for a number of waterfowl and shorebirds, as well as some local songbird species like Striped and Mangrove honeyeaters and Mangrove Gerygone. Another morning stop will find us searching for Koalas and Tawny Frogmouths in a reserve of dry eucalyptus forest, before we begin the climb up to O'Reilly's. Red-necked and Whiptail (Pretty-face) wallabies can often be seen along the roadside during the drive up, and a careful scan in the treetops could also reveal Glossy Black-Cockatoos or even a Koala. We'll arrive at O'Reilly's in the afternoon ready for a bunch of new birds. Night at O'Reilly's.

**Days 17-18, Mon-Tue, 28-29 Oct. Lamington National Park and O'Reilly's.** We'll have all of Day 16 and the morning of Day 17 to wander the alluring trails and enjoy the birds of Lamington National Park. We'll return to Brisbane on the afternoon of Day 17 for our flight to Sydney. We'll spend the night of Day 16, with possible owling that evening, at O'Reilly's and then be in Sydney on Day 17.

**Day 19, Wed, 30 Oct. Royal National Park.** We'll have the entire day for birding in Royal National Park. It should be a day full of excitement, with a good chance of Superb Lyrebird plus some new heathland species and possibly some seabirds. Night in Sydney.

**Day 20, Thu, 31 Oct. Flight to Los Angeles.** Participants will take the QANTAS flight to Los Angeles, departing Sydney at 10:20 a.m. and arriving the same day (having "gained" our day back over the International Date Line) in Los Angeles at 6:05 a.m.

## About Your Guide

**Jay VanderGaast** was introduced to birding by his father, and his obsession with birds was evident by age seven when he memorized the plates in Peterson's eastern field guide. He went on to earn a B.S. in biology at university and briefly contemplated a career in research, but two years on the buggy arctic tundra watching ptarmigan do little other than occasionally getting eaten by Gyrfalcons soon put an end to that plan! Instead, he strapped on a backpack and a pair of bins and began roaming the world in search of birds.

His travels eventually led him to Costa Rica, where he stumbled into a job as a birding guide at Rancho Naturalista Lodge. Amazed that he was actually getting paid to watch birds, he jealously guarded his position there for six years. His career with Field Guides coincided with the dawn of the new millennium (if you believe that began in 2000!), and since then he has guided more than 100 tours on several continents.

*"Jay VanderGaast is an excellent guide. The trip would not have been the same without him. His acute hearing and sight and genuine interest and caring resulted in our seeing many exquisite birds. He made certain that everyone saw each bird. He took great care of us from handling things at airports to choosing super restaurants. The pace was perfect."  
S.M., New Guinea & Australia*

Visit <https://fieldguides.com/guides> for Jay's complete tour schedule; just click on his photo.

## Financial Information

**FEE: \$10,695 from Cairns** (includes flights from Cairns to Port Moresby, Port Moresby to Mt. Hagen and return, Port Moresby to Brisbane; and Brisbane to Sydney)

**DEPOSIT:** \$1075 per person

**FINAL PAYMENT DUE:** April 15, 2024

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional):** \$1350

**LIMIT:** 9

**All participants will be required to confirm they will have completed a full COVID vaccination course at least two weeks prior to the tour (which includes a booster for those eligible to have one).** Note too, that many travel destinations may still require proof of vaccination for entry to bypass testing delays or quarantine, and that entry requirements for a destination can change at any time. Proof of a booster shot, too, may be a requirement for some travel destinations.

## Other Things You Need to Know

**TOUR MANAGER:** The manager for this tour is Karen Turner. Karen will be happy to assist you in preparing for the tour. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call her!

**A NOTE ON ALTITUDE:** Kumul Lodge in Papua New Guinea is located at about 9000 feet or 2800m. Most people have little trouble at this altitude, but if you are concerned, consult your physician for remedies to ward off altitude sickness.

**DOCUMENTS:** A valid **passport** is necessary for US and Canadian citizens to enter Australia and New Guinea. In addition, a **visa** (electronic Travel Authority) is required for travel to both countries. This is done online at the following link: <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/electronic-travel-authority-601#HowTo> The visa for Papua New Guinea has to be done online as well at the following link: <https://evisa.ica.gov.pg/evisa/account/Apply>.

If you are not a US or Canadian citizen, please check with the Australia and New Guinea consulates nearest you for entry requirements. Information about consulates and entry requirements is generally available online or you can contact us and we will be happy to look this up for you. Passports should have an adequate number of blank pages for the entire journey. Some countries require a blank page for their stamp and as a precaution it is best to have one blank page per country you will visit or transit.



**AIR ARRANGEMENTS:** Field Guides is a full service travel agency and your tour manager will be happy to assist you with flights to join this tour. Field Guides does not charge a service fee for these services to clients booking a tour. However, we understand that tech-savvy clients often prefer to shop online or that you may wish to use mileage to purchase tickets. Regardless of which method you choose, your tour manager will be happy to provide assistance regarding ticket prices and schedules, along with rental cars and extra hotel nights as needed.

Please be sure to check with your tour manager prior to purchasing your ticket to make sure the flights you have chosen will work well with the tour itinerary and that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. Once purchased, most airline tickets are non-refundable and carry a penalty to change. Field Guides cannot be responsible for these fees.

**Also, it is imperative that we receive a copy of your comprehensive flight itinerary—including any and all flights not covered in the tour fee—so that we may track you in the event of missed connections, delays, or other mishaps.**

**LUGGAGE:** Please be aware that many airlines have recently modified their luggage policies and are charging additional fees for checked bags. Updates could easily occur before your departure, so you may wish to contact your airline to verify the policy. Additional charges for bags on any flights, whether these are covered by the tour fee or not, will be the client's responsibility. Note that our internal flights in PNG can be particularly restrictive, and extra baggage fees are not uncommon here. Any unnecessary luggage can be stored at our Port Moresby hotel until our return there from Kumul Lodge. In addition, local airlines often insist that all spare batteries are carried in your hand luggage, so please keep this in mind when packing your bags.

**TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS:** The **tour fee** is \$10,695 for one person in double occupancy from Cairns. It includes all lodging from Day 3 through Day 18, all meals from lunch on Day 3 through dinner on Day 19, the flights from Cairns to Port Moresby, Port Moresby to Mt. Hagen and return, and Port Moresby to Brisbane, all ground transportation, entrance fees, and the guide services of the tour leader(s). Tipping at group meals and for drivers, porters, and local guides is included in your tour fee and will be handled for the group by your Field Guides leader(s). However, if you would like to recognize your Field Guides leader(s) or any local guide(s) for exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are optional and not expected.

The above fee does not include your airfare from Los Angeles to Cairns and Sydney to Los Angeles, airport taxes, visa fees, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips to local drivers and guides, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The **single supplement** for the tour is \$1350. If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes).

**TOUR REGISTRATION:** To register for this tour, please contact us at [fieldguides.com/contact-us/](https://fieldguides.com/contact-us/). Our office will be in touch with you by email by the next business day (Mon-Fri) with instructions on how to complete our new electronic registration form and medical questionnaire. (We are no longer accepting the paper version.)

Please mail your **deposit of \$1350** per person, or see [fieldguides.com/payment-options/](https://fieldguides.com/payment-options/) for our Payment Options.

**Full payment** of the tour fee is due 180 days prior to departure, or **by April 15, 2024**. **We will bill you for the final payment at either 180 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.** Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

**SMOKING:** Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. If you smoke, please be sensitive to the group and refrain from smoking at meals, in vehicles, and in proximity to the group on trails and elsewhere.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Refund of deposit and payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 180 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 179 and 90 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable and non-transferable.

Our cancellation policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour (and any services included in those fees). Airline tickets not included in the tour fee and purchased separately often carry penalties for cancellation or change, or are sometimes totally non-refundable. Additionally, if you take out trip insurance the cost of that insurance is

not refundable, so it is best to purchase the policy just prior to making full payment for the tour or at the time you purchase airline tickets, depending upon the airline's restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure. In most such cases, full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. Note this exception, however: If you have been advised pre-tour that there is a non-refundable portion of your tour fee no matter the reason for Field Guides cancellation of the tour, that portion will not be refunded. The right is reserved to substitute in case of emergency another guide for the original one.

**TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE:** We strongly recommend you consider purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during a trip. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, you acknowledge and agree that we will not issue a refund when cancellation occurs outside of our cancellation policy as published in the itinerary (see CANCELLATION POLICY). In addition, the Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. US medical insurance plans seldom cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Furthermore, US Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

When making a decision regarding health insurance, Americans should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the United States may cost well in excess of \$50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, please ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses that you incur.

US citizens will receive information from us regarding optional tour cancellation/emergency medical insurance. Our agent, CSA, will insure for trip cancellation and interruption, medical coverage, travel delay, baggage loss and delay, and emergency medical transportation. If you purchase the insurance prior to, or within 24 hours of making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights and in some cases, other arrangements), pre-existing conditions are covered. You may purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at <https://fieldguides.com/trip-cancellation-insurance/> and clicking the link to CSA. The CSA webpage also includes a contact number.

**Currently we are unable to offer CSA insurance policies to residents of New York and Hawaii.** We have had clients provide positive feedback after acquiring insurance thru InsureMyTrip (<https://www.insuremytrip.com/>) in the past, and would suggest that company as an alternative. When purchasing insurance with a company other than CSA, you will want to understand whether the timing of your purchase will affect coverage before paying your first deposit. Insurance purchase requirements can vary from company to company, and such requirements could limit your options if you do not look into this until making your final payment for your tour. Please let us know if you have any questions about this.

Please note, once the insurance is purchased it is non-refundable, so please check with your tour manager prior to making the purchase to assure the tour will operate as scheduled. Citizens of other countries are urged to consult their insurance broker.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Field Guides Incorporated, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the registration form. Field Guides Incorporated acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. You acknowledge and agree that Field Guides Incorporated is not responsible for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for



the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, the information bulletin, and other pertinent matter provided by Field Guides. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

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