

ITINERARY
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

July 2-20, 2019

New Britain Extension

July 20-25, 2019



The Smoky Honeyeater is common in the highlands of central New Guinea, but this bird is unusual in that its facial skin blushes, turning from yellow to a bright red! We'll probably see our first one at Kumul Lodge, but they will become familiar as we bird our way through the highlands. Photograph by participant Randy Beaton.

We include here information for those interested in the 2019 Field Guides Papua New Guinea 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 reference list
- 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

This 1400-mile-long island, the largest tropical island and the world's second largest overall (after Greenland), lies less than 400 miles below the equator. Here in the warm latitudes of the South Pacific, New Guinea represents the northern limit of the Australasian Region, and a major center for avian evolution with well over 400 endemics. It is in the massive backbone cordillera of New Guinea that the great mountain system extending from the Himalayas through Indonesia makes its easternmost thrust into the Pacific.

New Guinea's location at the juncture of two vast biogeographic regions has made it a crossroads on the pathway of evolution. There is a high degree of specialization to be found in virtually all forms of life, from entire families of minute

invertebrates living on the mossy backs of weevils, to the more than 800 distinct languages spoken by native peoples. And New Guinea is the land of the fabled birds-of-paradise and bowerbirds. These two fascinating groups have evolved to occupy practically every habitat on this great island, from verdant rainforest and dry savanna to montane forest at treeline on high mountain peaks.

Our tour centers around locating as many birds-of-paradise as possible. Among them are some of the most highly sought birds on Earth: King-of-Saxony, Twelve-wired, Raggiana, Greater, King, and Blue birds-of-paradise, the elegant Ribbon-tailed *Astrapia*, the huge Brown Sicklebill, and many more, each so uniquely plumed as to seem unrelated to the others. Parrots, pigeons and fruit-doves, cuckoos, and kingfishers are also particularly well represented, and most have elaborate and beautiful plumages. Some less-familiar groups of birds form the bulk of the passerine avifauna: spritely fairywrens, gemlike pittas, cuckooshrikes, whistlers, logrunners, babblers, and honeyeaters. There are seven endemic families too, in berrypeckers and longbills, Crested and Tit berrypeckers, satinbirds, and five species of birds so unique they've recently been split off into four more families: Wattled Ploughbill, Mottled Berryhunter, Blue-capped Irita, and the two species of melampitta. We stand a good chance of seeing representatives of all seven of these families on our tour.

Over the centuries, the island of New Guinea developed a human population equally as colorful and diverse as its bird life. Amid the isolation of forested mountains, more than 800 languages developed, representing some 20% of the world's languages. Here, far more than in most places, the native peoples understand and appreciate their bird life, an attitude strongly reflected in their art and customs. Today, dress is mostly western and the housing increasingly so, but there is still ample evidence of cultures in recent transition.

Many people have the impression that a birding tour to Papua New Guinea must be unusually demanding or uncomfortable. For all of Papua New Guinea's remoteness, however, travel is surprisingly easy and food and accommodations are mostly good to very good. While we spend some time in the humid lowlands (which can be hot if sunny!), more than half of our birding is done in the wonderfully comfortable foothills and highlands, with cool nights and pleasant days.

Our tour will sample the Moresby savannas; lowland and foothill rainforest on the south slope near Port Moresby, Kiunga, and Tabubil; and montane forest and grasslands of the Central Highlands at Rondon Ridge and Kumul Lodge, (where the feeders are a great place for photography) both near Mt. Hagen. The extension will take us to the western part of the island of New Britain.



Although this tour may have some challenging moments, we feel it is worth it for the chance to visit the amazing forests of Papua New Guinea. Here, a Field Guides group hikes through the Papuan rainforest.

Photograph by participant Randy Beaton.

About the Physical Requirements & Pace: New Guinea represents a particular challenge for our company. To get you to join us we need to convince you that it is one of the most wonderful regions on Earth, one of those must-see destinations on the planet. However, we find that the people who enjoy the tour the most are those who have (relatively) low expectations, and are then excited by the numerous rewards. Thus, our challenge is to raise your expectations, carefully lower them, and then let New Guinea delight you.

The birding in New Guinea may well be the most difficult in the world. Many species are very shy (be very careful about pointing!), the beautiful forests have quite low bird densities, and individual birds are often very wary. Do not go to New Guinea thinking the birding will be like an endless David Attenborough documentary: Adult male birds-of-paradise may constitute only 10% of a population and be the shyest individuals, and we don't have the months to spend waiting for every skulker to perform. Not everyone sees every bird; some shy ones will slip away.

New Guinea also presents other challenges. It rains a lot (in some areas at some point most every day) and heavy rain means no birds; this is indeed rubber boot or neos and umbrella country. It can be warm and humid in the lowlands. There are bugs (mosquitoes, leeches, etc.), though they are seldom bad. There are travel hassles (planes and drivers can be late, tires do go flat). We see very few mammals in New Guinea (though there are many endemic species) as hunting pressure is high and most live in areas inaccessible to us.

Papua New Guinea can also be a dangerous place, though many of the dangers are in common with many other tours (boats, planes, etc.), and as with those, we rely on well-established local operators, with many of whom we have worked for years. Crime is a major problem in this country, a country that is more elemental, closer to the edge. We believe that travel as a group reduces the risks, and we limit our activities to areas that we understand to be safe: certain areas around Port Moresby, the "company towns" of Kiunga and Tabubil, and Rondon Ridge and Kumul Lodge, both long-established and run by a veteran company or the local landowners. ***Note that the famous Ambua Lodge, which is usually on our itinerary, is closed for the foreseeable future due to tribal and political unrest, and overall lawlessness, and there are no plans to reopen in 2019. The areas we visit are well removed from this hazardous region.** We are comfortable offering this tour, but we also know that it encompasses even more of what adventure travel is about, the risks and benefits, than most other tours we do. Be assured though that our local contacts are our best insurance policy, as it is in their interest to look after us, and they have a great track record.

That said, New Guinea *is* one of the most wonderful regions on Earth, one of those must-see destinations on the planet. The birds include some of the most incredible in the world. Of the roughly twenty species of birds-of-paradise the tour encounters, we see adult males of a majority, usually including the displays of several. While these are truly incredible, there are a delightful number of New Guinea birds that possess a simpler but almost equal beauty, including fruit-doves, lorries and lorikeets, kingfishers, whistlers, robins, jewel-babblers, boatbills, and berrypeckers. The accommodations range from rustic but comfortable to excellent (and are often remarkable given the remote locations), the food is quite good (though one does not come here for a gourmet experience!), and there is enough of a transportation system to get us around some of the most rugged country on the globe. The cultural milieu is fascinating.



Papua New Guinea is a center of bird diversity, and has an amazing 400-plus endemic species, including such wonders as this Blue Bird-of-Paradise. Photograph by guide Jay Vandergaast.

Field Guides has been taking one or more groups to Papua New Guinea every year for nearly thirty years; the route we have developed consistently produces a comprehensive survey of New Guinea's habitats and birds. By selecting five rich areas in different regions, we are able to reduce the number of changes of hotels; multi-night stays are the rule. Early mornings are precious, and we will be up early to enjoy them. Siestas are possible on a number of days, and a good night's sleep is typically to be had. Our birding will be on a mixture of seldom-traveled roads and trails, a few of them steep or muddy, and some patience and agility are needed every day for climbing over treefalls, getting in and out of

boats, pushing through wet shrubbery to get to a trail. We will take it all slowly. Overall, the pace of this trip is certainly not strenuous and is mostly easy, though regularly moderate.

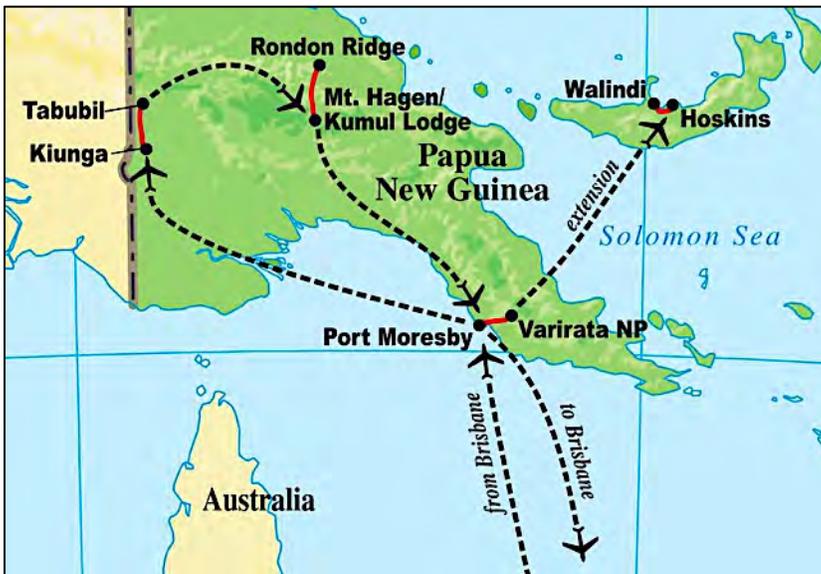
If you are uncertain about whether this tour is a good match for your abilities, please don't hesitate to contact our office; if they cannot directly answer your queries, they will put you in touch with the guide.

Special Notes: Plane schedules change all the time. It is possible that our original itinerary will not be the final itinerary. We try to keep the tour length the same, but likely changes up and down include the number of days around Port Moresby, Tabubil, and Kiunga, and the order of Kiunga and Tabubil often flip-flops. Then there are unscheduled changes, such as those caused by weather or tribal troubles, which may necessitate last minute changes, though we always end up finding great birds whatever comes.

Another issue of which you should be aware is the luggage limitation on this tour. Depending on the airline we use, there can be luggage weight restrictions of 35 lbs. (16 kg) on checked baggage on our commercial flights within Papua New Guinea. If your luggage exceeds 35 lbs., we will be fortunate merely to pay additional charges to the airline, which we will pass along to you. More likely and the worst case, overweight bags may be left until a later flight. By packing reasonably and leaving excess weight in Port Moresby, we've had relatively few troubles with these weight restrictions in the past. "Unnecessary" luggage (clothes for the return flight or items you may need if you are doing the extension, and/or staying over in Australia) can be stored safely at our hotel in Port Moresby.

About the Tour Fee: This tour is not inexpensive. In fact, it is very expensive, as tourist-class travel in remote parts of the world generally is, but you have some of the most experienced tour leaders in New Guinea, and a great support staff with whom we have dealt for years. We have had to make many decisions, our primary concern being to maximize your experience through a convenient, safe, and comfortable trip. In particular, we are staying at some wonderful lodges (Rondon and Kumul) that are expensive. This tour may stretch your budget, but year after year our clients have found it an excellent way to have a comprehensive introductory tour of Papua New Guinea, with many fantastic sightings of unforgettable birds.

About the Birding Areas



Port Moresby, the capital of Papua New Guinea, lies in the rain shadow of the Owen Stanley Mountains and is in one of the driest parts of the country. Predominant habitats are grasslands, spotted with palm-like *Pandanus* and *Eucalyptus* and *Melaleuca* savanna, both very similar to (and sharing birds with) the drier regions of northern Australia. As one moves westward or inland from the immediate Port Moresby area, however, rainfall increases gradually until one reaches humid forest. In much of the region, this forest type has been selectively logged, but most of the original avifauna still is present, and the birding can be very productive. Species for which we'll make an effort in the Port Moresby area include Spotted Whistling-Duck, Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove, Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, the huge and bizarre Papuan Frogmouth, and Gray-headed Munia. We usually have time to visit a couple of

ponds, and while the species are often widespread, Australasian Swamphen, Pied Heron, and Comb-crested Jacana are always fun.

Varirata National Park, in the low Astrolabe Mountains paralleling the Owen Stanley Range east of Port Moresby, 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 different group of birds from those of lower-elevation forests near Port Moresby. A fine network of trails provides 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 Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher, Frilled and Spot-winged monarchs, Chestnut-bellied Fantail, Goldenface, Hooded Pitohui, White-faced Robin, Black Berrypecker, Raggiana Bird-of-Paradise, Growling Riflebird, and a long list of compelling but very difficult-to-see birds, among them: Dwarf Cassowary, Yellow-legged Brushturkey, Pheasant Pigeon, Barred Owlet-Nightjar, Painted Quail-Thrush, Chestnut-backed Jewel-Babbler, and Papuan Scrub-Robin.

Tabubil area—Situated at about 2000 feet (615 m) in the Ok Tedi (= Tedi River) valley, the town of Tabubil owes its existence to the Ok Tedi Mining Corporation, whose mine above the town site is working a large gold and copper find. Based in Tabubil, we have access to forest in the 1600 feet (492 m) to 3000 feet (900 m) elevational range. The foothill zone of the remote Star Mountains harbors a great variety of birds, many of which are of restricted distribution or are rarely seen anywhere. This rich area, first visited by a birding tour on the 1987 Field Guides trip, has one of the highest annual rainfalls in New Guinea, but even in light mist or drizzle the birding can be extremely productive.

Birds of special interest in the Tabubil area include Salvadori's Teal (increasingly difficult), a distinctive form of Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrot, Orange-breasted Fig-Parrot, the scarce Pesquet's Parrot, Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo, White-eared Bronze-Cuckoo, Shovel-billed Kookaburra (a mega-challenge and heard far more often than seen), White-rumped Robin (a shy forest dweller), Torrent-lark, Torrent Flycatcher (along rushing streams), Mountain Peltops, Great Woodswallow, Spotted Honeyeater, Golden Cuckooshrike, Papuan and Gray-headed cicadabirds, Obscure Berrypecker, Magnificent Bird-of-Paradise, the bizarrely adorned Carola's Parotia, and the little-known Greater Melampitta, a great rarity thought to roost in limestone sinkholes and recently found near Tabubil!



The large and spectacular Sclater's (Southern) Crowned Pigeon is often one of the favorite birds of the trip. Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.

Kiunga—Lying in the lowlands of the northern Fly River basin (and on the Fly River itself), the town of Kiunga is the shipping port for the Ok Tedi mine at Tabubil. The town and surrounding area are only very sparsely settled, and from the air the surroundings have a very wild aspect. We'll bird this extensive lowland forest both from land and by boat from the river.

Since our first visit in 1987 as the first organized birding tour to the area, we have learned much about Kiunga's avifauna, and it is rich indeed. Pigeons and fruit-doves abound, Moustached Treeswifts and bands of noisy cuckooshrikes (including Golden) are often overhead, and Hooded Pittas call from the forest floor. Over the years we have found such scarce species as Little Paradise-Kingfisher, Long-billed Cuckoo, White-bellied Pitohui, Yellow-eyed Starling, and White-spotted (Streak-headed) Munia here, and other specialties of the area include Gray-headed Goshawk, Collared Imperial-Pigeon, Palm Cockatoo, Yellow-capped Pygmy-Parrot, Large Fig-Parrot, Dwarf Koel, Blyth's Hornbill, Obscure Honeyeater, Black-sided Robin, Papuan Babbler, and the spectacular Flame Bowerbird. The area holds an incredible lek of Greater Birds-of-paradise, where we can watch

fabulous males displaying raucously in the treetops overhead, usually with a Raggiana or two in the mix, as well as the odd hybrid. On past tours the display has been a huge trip highlight, with both species plus hybrids carrying on wonderfully at a very accessible forest tree. Upriver a King Bird-of-Paradise can often be seen proclaiming its viney tangle courtship area to passing females. With luck we could even find a male Magnificent Riflebird on its song perch. Scope views of these displaying birds often constitute one of the highlights of the tour. The river offers another vantage point and an opportunity (with luck, of course) to see the fantastic Sclater's (formerly Southern) Crowned-Pigeon, often voted as bird of the trip!



This Feline Owlet-Nightjar was one of four owlet-nightjar species we found on our 2018 tour. Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.

Kumul Lodge is a rustic, landowner-style lodge situated in high moss forest at 9000 feet (2740m) with sometimes-erratic hot water and electricity. The site is great and best of all, there are feeders that lure in such gems as Brown Sicklebill, Ribbon-tailed Astropia, Brehm's Tiger-Parrot, and occasionally Archbold's Bowerbird, Crested Satinbird, or Bronze Ground-Dove. There are excellent photographic opportunities at the lodge while nearby sites have King-of-Saxony, Magnificent, Blue, and Lesser birds-of-paradise, and Yellow-breasted Bowerbird. Other notable species we have seen around the area include New Guinea Woodcock, Madarasz's Tiger-Parrot, Papuan and Plum-faced lorikeets, Mountain Mouse-Warbler, Crested Berrypecker, the bizarre Wattled Ploughbill, Regent and Brown-backed whistlers, charming Blue-capped Iffrits, the sneaky (but common) Lesser Melampitta, and Mountain Firetail, while on some nights, Mountain and Feline owlet-nightjars call near our rooms.

Rondon Ridge perches on a hillside at 7100 feet (2150m) with a magnificent view over the Wahgi Valley, home to the Melpa people, with whom first contact with the western world occurred as recently as the 1930's, when three brothers from Australia entered the valley in search of gold. Though seemingly remote

and isolated, the lodge lies within easy reach of Mt Hagen, the commercial center of the region and capital of the Western Highlands. With this luxurious lodge as our base, we'll have easy access to some gorgeous montane rainforest at an elevation below that of Kumul Lodge, with a bunch of species that don't occur there are easier to find here. Among the many species we've encountered here are Mountain Kingfisher, Hooded Cuckooshrike, Gray Thornbill, Buff-faced Scrubwren, Black-throated Robin, Sclater's Whistler, Black Pitohui, Mid-mountain Berrypecker, Red-collared Myzomela, the local Yellow-streaked Honeyeater, McGregor's Bowerbird, Stephanie's Astropia, and Greater Lophorina (formerly Superb BoP). A steep hike to a ridgetop clearing will give us the chance to add Black-bellied Cicadabird, Black Sicklebill, King-of-Saxony Bird-of-Paradise, Short-tailed Paradigalla, Garnet Robin, and more. The forests here are also good for both Mottled Berryhunter and Wattled Ploughbill, both in their own, monotypic families, though both species are much more often heard than seen. At night, Papuan Boobooks call outside the lodge, and Feline Owlet-Nightjars are regular inside the forest; weather permitting, we'll make an effort to find these nocturnal birds as well.

New Britain extension—The largest island in the Bismarck Archipelago, New Britain lies about 55 miles to the east of mainland Papua New Guinea's Huon Peninsula. Though the volcanic uplands of the island are difficult to reach, and the once extensive lowland forests have been mainly replaced by oil palm plantations, a number of endemics to New Britain and/or the Bismarck Archipelago can be found in the patches of lowland and foothill forest that remain. Based out of the lovely and comfortable Walindi Plantation Resort, we will make daily forays out in search of such specialties as Melanesian Scrubfowl, Red-knobbed, Finsch's, and Bismarck imperial-pigeons, Pied and Violaceous coucals, New Britain and Melanesian kingfishers, the black-capped form of Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher (perhaps a good species), Blue-eyed Cockatoo, Purple-bellied Lory, Ashy Myzomela, New Britain Friarbird, Dull Flycatcher, Long-tailed Myna, Bismarck Munia, and Red-banded Flowerpecker. Many rarer endemics are possible as well, including such species as Black Honey-Buzzard, New Britain Rail, Yellow-legged Pigeon, the poorly known Golden Masked-Owl, Bismarck Kingfisher, Singing Parrot, New Britain Pitta, Black-bellied Myzomela, and Black-tailed Monarch, and we will be on the lookout for these birds as well. On one morning we'll do a boat trip to some small satellite islands in Kimbe Bay, where island specialists like Nicobar Pigeon, Island Imperial-Pigeon, Mackinlay's Cuckoo-Dove, Beach Kingfisher, Island Monarch, and Black-tailed Whistler may be found. For those interested, the lodge also arranges for snorkeling opportunities around these islands.



*No visit to Papua New Guinea would be complete without seeing the fabulous birds-of-paradise. One of the highlights of recent tours has been witnessing the display of the Raggiana Bird-of-Paradise, seen here from our 2018 tour.
Photograph by participant Randy Beaton.*

Itinerary for Papua New Guinea

Days 1-3, Tue-Thu, 2-4 Jul. Los Angeles to Brisbane; continue to Port Moresby. Qantas offers a direct flight from Los Angeles to Brisbane, departing at 11:20 p.m. on Day 1 and arriving the morning of Day 3 at 6:05 a.m. (“losing” Day 2 to the International Dateline). Our group flight to Port Moresby is scheduled to depart Brisbane at 10:40a.m., arriving in Port Moresby at 1:50 p.m. If you fly out on July 2, you will have over 4 hours before your flight to Port Moresby. The flight to Port Moresby often changes to 9:40am which would still give you 3 hours connecting time. However, if you have the time, we encourage you to fly to Brisbane on July 1 and overnight at a hotel near the Brisbane Airport. This will give you a chance to get some rest after the long flight. The Field Guides office will be happy to book a room for you near the airport if you decide to do this.

Upon arrival at the airport in Port Moresby, each participant will need to get a tourist visa (free for US and Canadian citizens; other nationalities may need to pay. See the Information Bulletin for more information). Currency exchange counters are located in the main terminal just outside the arrivals hall. Jay will be on the flight with you from Brisbane to Port Moresby, so he will be able to help you with the process of navigating through the airport. Upon arrival, we will be transferred to our city hotel, a short drive from the airport. The hotel grounds hold few birds (and we advise against solo excursions outside of the grounds), but Willie-Wagtail, White-breasted Woodswallow, and Fawn-breasted Bowerbird are possibilities here. In the afternoon, we will head out for some introductory birding of the savanna habitats around Port Moresby. Brahminy Kite, Red-cheeked Parrot, Blue-winged Kookaburra, Forest Kingfisher, Torresian Imperial-Pigeon, Brown-backed and Yellow-tinted honeyeaters, Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, and Black-backed Butcherbird are just some of the species we could encounter today, and we’ll make an effort to find the very local Silver-eared Honeyeater as well. Night of Day 3 in Port Moresby.

Day 4, Fri, 5 Jul. Varirata National Park. We’ll have an early breakfast today so that we can be at the park near first light. At Varirata, most of our birding today will be on foot along the entrance road and at clearing edges, though we may stray along a well-maintained forest trail or two as well. We definitely will want to enter the forest to visit a well-known Raggiana Bird-of-Paradise display area for a look at those spectacular birds!

Entrance road and clearing-edge possibilities include Pacific Baza, Great and Amboyna cuckoo-doves, Beautiful, Orange-bellied, and Pink-spotted fruit-doves, Zoe Imperial-Pigeon, Eclectus Parrot, Black-capped Lory, Rainbow Lorikeet, Brush Cuckoo, Pheasant Coucal, Sacred, Azure, and Yellow-billed kingfishers, Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher, Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Barred Owlet-Nightjar, Red, Elfin, and Papuan Black myzomelas, White-throated Honeyeater, Lemon-bellied Flycatcher, White-bellied Whistler, Gray Shrikethrush, Hooded Pitohui, Glossy-mantled Manucode, Hooded

Butcherbird, Brown Oriole, Black-faced, White-bellied, Barred, Boyer's, and Stout-billed cuckooshrikes, Red-capped Flowerpecker, and Black-fronted White-eye.

Inside the forest, we will focus on mixed-species flocks, which may include Chestnut-bellied Fantail, Goldenface (Dwarf Whistler), Yellow-bellied, Fairy, and Green-backed gerygones, Spot-winged, Frilled, Black-faced, and Black-winged monarchs, Pale-billed Scrubwren, Pygmy Drongo-Fantail, and the scarce Wallace's Fairywren. Elusive voices can include Pheasant Pigeon and Piping Bellbird, both far more often heard than seen.

After a picnic lunch at the park, we'll head back down towards the city, making a stop at the grounds of the Pacific Adventist University (PAU). The fenced college grounds here include several ponds where a nice variety of waterbirds are protected—and hence quite approachable. Among the more interesting possibilities are Australasian Darter, Wandering, Plumed, and Spotted whistling-ducks (if we're very lucky), Pied Heron, Rufous Night-Heron, Comb-crested Jacana, Papuan Frogmouth, Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove, Helmeted (New Guinea) Friarbird, Rufous-banded Honeyeater, Yellow-faced Myna, Australasian Figbird, Gray-headed Munia, and Fawn-breasted Bowerbird. We'll return to our hotel around dusk, so be prepared for a long day in the field. Night in Port Moresby.

Day 5, Sat, 6 Jul. Flight to Tabubil. This morning we'll take a flight from Port Moresby to the mining town of Tabubil. After settling into our hotel and having some lunch, we'll head out for some local birding at Ok Menga to search the river for the local Salvadori's Teal. Other birds we may see locally include the scarce Pesquet's Parrot, Orange-breasted Fig-Parrot, Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo, Rusty Pitohui, Torrent Flycatcher, and Long-billed, Spotted, and Tawny-breasted honeyeaters. Near dusk, we'll make an attempt to find the extremely difficult Shovel-billed Kookaburra, and, if weather permits, we'll stay out after dark to try for Marbled Frogmouth and Papuan Boobook. Night in Tabubil at Cloudlands Hotel, a basic but comfortable hotel.



Salvadori's Teal is an endemic species found along fast-moving streams. We'll look for these little-known ducks near Tabubil. Photograph by participant Randy Beaton.

Day 6-7, Sun-Mon, 7-8 Jul. Tabubil. We'll have the better part of two days for birding the few accessible sites in the Tabubil area. July is one of the driest months here, which means the daily rainfall average is a mere two-thirds of an inch! So have your rubber boots and umbrella at hand, just in case. Most of our birding will be along side roads with little or no traffic but we will ascend at least one steep stony road/trail at Dablin Creek to get to good foothill forest, which is under pressure now from a growing population in the Tabubil area. Specialties here include Long-tailed Honey-buzzard, Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrot, Blue-collared Parrot, White-eared Bronze-Cuckoo, White-crowned Koel, White-rumped Robin, the poorly-known Obscure Berrypecker, Golden Cuckooshrike, Papuan and Gray-headed cicadabirds, Mountain Peltops, Magnificent Bird-of-Paradise, and Carola's Parotia (though males of both of these are often elusive). On the second day, after lunch back at the hotel, we'll begin the 135 km drive down to Kiunga. If we missed Salvadori's Teal the previous day, another stop at Ok Menga may be in the cards; otherwise, the odd roadside stop along the way will help to break up the long drive. If we make good time, a stop at km 17, site of a wonderful Greater Bird-of-Paradise lek will be an excellent way to finish off the day. July 7, night at Cloudlands and July 8, night at Kiunga Guest House.

Days 8-10, Tue-Thu, 9-11 Jul. Kiunga. We will have a little more than three full days to bird the exceptionally rich lowland forests of the Kiunga region. Our time will be spent at several different sites including the aforementioned km 17, where, in addition to the Greater BoPs, we could find things like Hooded Pitta, Blue Jewel-Babbler, Papuan Babbler,

Variable Pitohui, White-bellied Thicket-Fantail, Frilled Monarch, and many more. We'll also spend some time birding the forest areas along the Boystown Road where Flame Bowerbird is a good bet. Among the many other possibilities here are Yellow-streaked Lory, Orange-breasted and Double-eyed fig-parrots, Red-flanked Lorikeet, Long-billed Cuckoo, the stunning little Emperor Fairywren, Plain and Streak-headed honeyeaters, Meyer's Friarbird, Yellow-bellied and Pygmy longbills, the brilliant Golden Monarch, Rufous-backed Fantail, Black-sided Robin, Lowland Peltops, Crinkle-collared Manucode, and the scarce Yellow-eyed Starling.



We'll look for the beautiful Golden Monarch in the forests around Kiunga. Photograph by participant Randy Beaton.

One day we'll make a boat trip up the Fly River and up one of its tributaries, the Elevala River, for much of the day (how long depending on weather). For this, make sure you have a way of protecting both yourself and your gear adequately from rain and sun as these boats are not covered. Although we will spend much of our time in the boats, we plan to get out in several spots—and to walk a trail in search of some very local species—so you'll want waterproof boots for the muddy river banks and plenty of insect repellent or sulfur powder (there can be bad chiggers here). A considerable variety of species can be seen along the river, including White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Gray-headed Goshawk, Great-billed Heron (when water levels are low), the incredible Sclater's Crowned-Pigeon, Collared Imperial-Pigeon (locally common here), raucous Palm Cockatoos, Large and Orange-breasted fig-parrots, magnificent Blyth's Hornbills, Channel-billed Cuckoo, sleek Moustached Treeswifts, Shining Flycatcher, the diminutive King and the incredible Twelve-wired birds-of-paradise, Golden and Yellow-faced mynas, and huge flights of flying-foxes (fruit-bats). On the trails we will look for Common and Little paradise-kingfishers, the elusive Hook-billed Kingfisher, (thought by some to be capable of teleportation!), Papuan Pitta, the very local White-bellied Pitohui, Hooded Monarch, and many more. Look out for the synchronized glow-worms pre-dawn, too. Nights in Kiunga.

Day 11, Fri, 12 Jul. AM Kiunga region; PM flight to Mt Hagen, drive to Kumul Lodge. A final morning in the Kiunga region will allow us to target any key species we have so far missed, and this morning could find us back out on the river in search of Twelve-wired Bird-of-Paradise or back along Boystown Road for another stab at Flame Bowerbird if it eluded us the first time around. We'll return to the hotel in the late morning in time to pack up our things and have some lunch before we head to the airport for a mid-afternoon flight to Mt. Hagen. From the airport, we'll have roughly a 1-hour drive up to the basic but wonderfully-situated Kumul Lodge, where we'll spend the remaining daylight hours getting a first look at some typical highland species. The feeders here are a major highlight, and should provide great looks at such regular visitors like Brown Sicklebill, Ribbon-tailed Astrapia, Belford's Melidectes, Smoky Honeyeater, and Brehm's Tiger-Parrot, while the chance of a rarity like Archbold's Bowerbird, Bronze Ground-Dove, or Crested Satinbird will keep us glued to the spot. A parade of other species may also pass through, with Blue-capped Ifrita, Regent and Brown-backed whistlers, Friendly Fantail, White-winged Robin, and the gorgeous Crested Berrypecker among the many species we've seen here regularly. Some years after dark, the feeders have attracted several nocturnal mammals, so it's worth bringing a flashlight and binoculars to dinner here. Giant rats, long-nosed bandicoots, and the squirrel-like Speckled Dasyure have all been seen on or under the feeders here on recent trips. Night at Kumul Lodge.

Days 12-13, Sat-Sun, 13-14 Jul. Kumul Lodge. We'll have a little more than two full days in the Kumul Lodge region, which we'll use primarily to focus on some of the species we're less likely to see around Rondon Ridge. Foremost among these are Lesser and Blue birds-of-paradise, which we'll make special effort to track down. Among the many other possibilities we'll look for in the region are such incredible birds as New Guinea Woodcock, Papuan and Plum-faced lorikeets, Madaraz's Tiger-Parrot, Ornate Melidectes, Marbled Honeyeater, Elfyn Myzomela, Crested and Tit berrypeckers, Crested Satinbird, Blue-capped Ifrita, Wattled Ploughbill, Black-headed Whistler, Mottled Berryhunter, Rufous-naped Bellbird, Greater Lophorina, Lesser Melampitta, Mountain Firetail, and many, many more. On one evening we plan to make a short search for night birds; Mountain and Feline owl-nightjars are regularly heard near the lodge, though both are incredibly difficult to see. Nights at Kumul Lodge.

Day 14, Mon, 15 Jul. We'll remain flexible about our plans for our final morning at Kumul. Our plan will depend in good part on what species we are missing at this point, as we'll head to whichever area gives us our best chance to track these down. We'll return to the lodge in time to pack up our things, then eat lunch and hop aboard our transport to Rondon Ridge. The transfer should take somewhere between 2-3 hours, and upon our arrival, if time and weather permits, we'll make an initial exploration of trails nearest the lodge. Night birding here will also be weather dependent, and if the conditions are good, we may very well venture out on our first night here. For this, an individual flashlight or headlamp is an excellent idea. Night at Rondon Ridge.



The mature male Ribbon-tailed Astrapia has amazing tail feathers! Photograph by participant Betsy Fulmer.

Days 15-16, Tue-Wed 16-17 Jul. Rondon Ridge. Rondon Ridge is set on the slopes of the mountains overlooking the Wahgi Valley and is generally a high-rainfall area. Although the trails are quite good, they may be muddy if rains have been significant, so rubber boots could come in handy here (though your guide generally makes do without them here).

Pretty much all of our time here will be on foot, as we explore the many trails that wind through the forest. On one day we will make the trek up a fairly steep trail to a lovely clearing near the ridge top, a spot that can be productive for King-of-Saxony Bird-of-Paradise, Black Sicklebill, Short-tailed Paradigalla, and many other species. Though there will be considerable overlap with the birds we've already seen at Kumul Lodge, there are plenty of species here that we will not yet have seen, and we will be targeting them. Wattled Ploughbill and Mottled Berryhunter are two birds that will be high on our lists, but we will also search for Hooded Cuckooshrike, Black Pitohui, Fan-tailed Monarch, Dimorphic Fantail, Yellow-streaked Honeyeater, Gray Thornbill, Sclater's Whistler, Black-throated Robin, MacGregor's Bowerbird, Loria's Satinbird, and many other wonderful birds. Nights at Rondon Ridge.

Day 17, Thu, 18 Jul. AM at Rondon Ridge; PM flight to Port Moresby. After a final morning of birding around Rondon, we'll head for our afternoon flight to Port Moresby, where we anticipate arriving in time for dinner. Night in Port Moresby.

Day 18, Fri, 19 Jul. Varirata National Park. Varirata National Park is always worth a second visit, so that's what we'll do today, with another early start to get to the park at a reasonable hour. The plan will vary depending on what birds we want to target, but very likely will involve more birding along interior forest trails, where many of the more difficult species may be encountered. Among the many skulkers here, we will likely still be searching for some real gems like Hooded Pitta, Chestnut-backed Jewel-Babbler, Painted Quail-Thrush, Papuan Scrub-Robin, Piping Bellbird, and the scarce Pheasant Pigeon to name just a few. We'll make the most of our final day here, with a late afternoon return to our hotel. Night in Port Moresby.

Day 19, Sat, 20 Jul. Flight to Brisbane and on to the US. The flight to Brisbane departs Port Moresby this afternoon at 1:25pm arriving in Brisbane at 4:35pm. The Qantas flight departs Brisbane at a.m. and the Qantas non-stop flight departs Brisbane for LAX at 5:50pm. This is a legal connection but you may not feel comfortable with this option. You may opt to overnight in Brisbane in which case the Field Guides office will be happy to book you a room at a hotel near the airport. If you choose this option there is a Qantas flight on July 21st that departs Brisbane at 10:20am arriving in LAX on the same day at 6am. Those continuing on the New Britain extension will take a flight to Hoskins on the island of New Britain.

New Britain Extension:



*Blue-eyed Cockatoo is a New Britain endemic. We had great views of this little-known species on our 2018 tour.
Photograph by participant Randy Beaton.*

Day 1, Sat, 20 Jul. Flight to Hoskins. A morning flight will take us the short distance across to the island of New Britain. Upon arrival in Hoskins, we will be met by representatives of the Walindi Plantation Resort and transferred to the lodge, about an hour's drive to the west. After settling in, we'll have lunch at the lodge and do some afternoon birding. Night at Walindi Plantation Resort.

Days 2-4, Sun-Tue, 21-23 Jul. Walindi area. We'll have three full days to explore the various sites around the Kimbe Bay region in search of the many local specialties to be found here. We will generally start out early in the morning, returning to the lodge for lunch and an afternoon break before heading out on another excursion in the late afternoon. Destinations will be chosen with the help of the local guides, and will be dependent on local conditions and what birds have been seen recently. Likely venues will include: Garu Wildlife Management Area, a known nesting site of Melanesian Scrubfowl, and home to a variety of species dependent on good quality lowland forest, including New Britain Kingfisher, Finsch's Imperial-Pigeon, and perhaps even the rare Black Honey-Buzzard; Kulu River, with a narrow strip of native riparian vegetation bordering the watercourse holds such species as Pied and Violaceous Coucals, New Britain Dwarf-Kingfisher, Black-capped (Buff-breasted) Paradise-Kingfisher, the elusive New Britain Pitta, and Dull Flycatcher; Restorf Island, a small satellite island located about an hour's cruise from the lodge, and home to a number of small island specialists including Beach Kingfisher, Island Monarch, and Sclater's Myzomela; Kilu Ridge, where a short, steep trail leads along a ridge through decent foothill forest, where New Britain Boobook, Bismarck Imperial-Pigeon, Singing Parrot, and Black-bellied Myzomela will be high on our radars; and the Numundo Cattle Farm, where an area of wet grassland adjacent to the cattle pens is home to Buff-banded Rail, White-browed Crake, the elusive but vocal Rufous-tailed Bushhen, Blue-breasted Quail, the local race of Papuan Grassbird, and the endemic Bismarck Munia. Nights at Walindi.

Day 5, Wed, 24 Jul. Flight to Port Moresby. We'll take a late afternoon flight from Hoskins to Port Moresby where we will spend the night and enjoy a final dinner. Night in Port Moresby.

Day 6, Thu, 25 Jul. Flight to Brisbane and on to the US. Our flight departs Port Moresby this morning for Brisbane and on to LAX. The flight arrives in Brisbane at 9:25 a.m. and the Qantas non-stop flight departs Brisbane for LAX at 10:20 a.m. This is a legal connection but you may not feel comfortable with this option. You may opt to overnight in Brisbane in which case the Field Guides office will be happy to book you a room at a hotel near the airport. If you choose this option then you may want a later flight out of Port Moresby so you don't have to get up at 3am for a 6:15am flight!

About Your Guides

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.

When he's not on tour, Jay makes his home near Montreal, Canada.

"Jay VanderGaast was a delight to travel with...incredible at finding the birds and extremely helpful in getting us on the birds—which was much appreciated! His organization and professionalism were first rate. He made the trip an exceptional experience which I will remember for the rest of my life." L.K., Costa Rica

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

Financial Information

FEE: \$12,175 from Brisbane (includes all flights within New Guinea as well as the flight from Brisbane to Port Moresby and return)

New Britain Extension: \$2950

DEPOSIT: \$1200 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: March 4, 2019

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$2100; New Britain Extension-\$650

LIMIT: 8

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!

DOCUMENTS: A current **passport**, valid beyond the date of your return, is necessary for US citizens to enter Australia and Papua New Guinea. We recommend that your passport be valid for at least 6 months beyond the dates of your visit, as regulations vary from country to country, and are subject to change. You will need to acquire a tourist visa for Papua New Guinea upon arrival in Port Moresby. For US and Canadian citizens, the visa can be obtained at no charge upon arrival at the Port Moresby airport; **however, some other nationalities require the visa to be purchased before arrival. If you are traveling with a passport other than from the US or Canada, please check with the PNG consulate for visa requirements.** Visas are also necessary for passengers transiting Australia; our office can issue them electronically for you (no need to part with your passport or fill out any forms!).

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.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The **tour fee** is \$12,175 for one person in double occupancy from Brisbane. It includes all lodging from Day 3 through Day 18, all meals from dinner on Day 3 through breakfast on Day 19, airfare from Brisbane to Port Moresby and return, all flights within New Guinea, 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 to Brisbane, airport taxes, visa fees, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips to local drivers, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The **single supplement** for the tour is \$2100. 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).

The fee for the **New Britain Extension** is \$2950 for one person in double occupancy from Port Moresby. This includes all lodging from Day 1 to Day 5, all meals from breakfast on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 6, all air transportation from Port Moresby to Hoskins and return, 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 **single supplement** for the New Britain Extension is \$650.

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, complete the Registration/Release and Indemnity form and return it with a **deposit of \$1200** per person. If registering by phone, a deposit must be received within fourteen days, or the space will be released. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to departure, or **by March 4, 2019. We will bill you for the final payment at either 120 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 120 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 119 and 70 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable.

This policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour fees (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 the 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 airlines restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. 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, we cannot offer any refund when cancellation occurs within 70 days of departure, and only a partial refund from 70 to 119 days prior to departure (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 from us a brochure 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. **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 with InsureMyTrip (www.insuremytrip.com) in the past, and would suggest that company as an alternative. Please let us know if you have any questions about this. If you purchase the insurance within 24 hours of making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights), pre-existing conditions are covered. The CSA brochure includes a contact number; you may also purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at <https://fieldguides.com/travelinsurance.html> and clicking the link to CSA. 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 reverse side of 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. Field Guides Incorporated accepts no responsibility 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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