



Field Guides Tour Report

New Guinea & Australia 2017

Oct 27, 2017 to Nov 14, 2017

Jay VanderGaast

For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please [VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE](#).



This nesting Tawny Frogmouth was pointed out to us by a local birder near the end of our tour, when we visited Royal National Park. Photo by guide Jay VanderGaast.

This was my second of back to back tours down here, and it was interesting to see what a difference a couple of weeks can make. Though the trip lists were pretty similar in size, there were 45-50 species that didn't overlap between the two tours, despite visiting all the same places, and doing all the same things, for the most part. The most notable change was in the Atherton Tablelands, where heavy rains in between my two visits filled many of the lakes and rivers, causing a lot of the water birds to disperse, so places like Hasties Swamp, which had thousands of whistling-ducks on the first visit, had none at all on this second. Less noticeable were the changes caused by the presence or absence of suitable fruiting or flowering trees for frugivorous and nectarivorous birds. But these fruiting and flowering events can certainly have an impact, and 2 weeks can make the difference between seeing a certain species or missing it altogether. In any case, I always enjoy these chances to see these changes in play, as it really shines some light on how many factors can impact what we see on any given day/visit/tour.

I'm not sure what factors were at play at Varirata on our first visit there, but for me, this tour will always be memorable for "the day of the kingfisher", when we tallied great views of 8 different species of these incredible birds! The park is always great for these birds, with regulars like Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher, Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, and Yellow-billed Kingfisher all having high "wow!" factors. But aside from getting these three and other regulars, adding in Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher, Papuan Dwarf-Kingfisher, AND an amazing Hook-billed Kingfisher really made this a standout day of the trip. And that's saying a lot, since there were plenty of days that stood out besides that one.

Starting out at O'Reilly's, the very local Albert's Lyrebird was the target on top of pretty much everyone's list, and though it taunted and teased us for the first few outings, a male finally wandered into view, prompting a few sighs of relief, and not just from the tour participants. A low-flying Paradise Riflebird, ruffling our hair with its wingbeats, and a smashing Noisy Pitta were among the other highlights here. More unexpected was the wonderful performance by a Lewin's Rail that popped out onto the road and stood there in view for a few seconds--a long-awaited lifer for your guide!

Cairns was next on the agenda, and, as always, the region was full of exciting wildlife. The visit to Black Mountain Road and Cassowary House was memorable, though almost for the wrong reason, as the cassowary looked to be a no-show as it had been in 2016. Lucky for us, not only did the birds

show up, but they hung around long enough for us to (quickly) finish our lunch in Kuranda and get back in time for a long, satisfying encounter with "Father" and the three kids. The final view of "Father" may have been a little too close for comfort, but all's well that ends well!

Continuing around the region, a trio of Australian Bustards surprised us by turning up after I'd thought we were done with them, a lovely Spotted Harrier gobbled down an unlucky rodent it had just plucked from the roadside, Lovely and Red-backed Fairywrens impressed with super views at a new site for us, a site that also gave us Varied Sittella and White-browed Robin, and a gorgeous Crested Shrike-Tit almost made up for the lack of waterfowl at Hasties Swamp, and certainly made the visit worthwhile. And seeing Platypus, Green Ringtail and Coppery Brushtail Possums, and Long-nosed Bandicoot, among other mammals, was also a real treat.

On to PNG, in addition to all those kingfishers, Varirata offered up a bunch of other great birds, including a number of stunning fruit-doves-- Wompoo, Beautiful, Pink-spotted, Orange-bellied, and Superb--, nesting Papuan Frogmouth, Chestnut-bellied Fantail, Spectacled Longbill, the scarce Black-winged Monarch, and a last-minute Hooded Pitohui among many others. And in the highlands, a whole new suite of new birds kept our attention. A New Guinea Woodcock flying over, calling, at dusk, colorful Orange-billed Lorikeets working over a flowering tree next to the lodge, Brehm's Tiger-Parrots hopping comically down to the feeders, stunning Red-collared and Elfin myzomelas, a brilliant male Garnet Robin, beautiful Crested Berrypeckers, and the always charming Blue-capped Ifrita were just some of the birds that stood out here. And, while the birds-of-paradise were not quite as cooperative as we'd hoped, we still enjoyed great looks at a bustle-less Lesser BoP, the showy Blue BoP, and the star of the show--that amazing, long-tailed Ribbon-tailed Astrapia, which nabbed bird of the trip honors, and rightly so!

A final stop back in Sydney wrapped up our tour, where our morning at Royal NP was superb, as in Superb Lyrebird, one of which fed alongside the track right out in the open. Nesting Tawny Frogmouth was also a hit here, while the photographers enjoyed all the close cockatoos and Maned Ducks. A brief stop in the heathland gave us skulking Southern Emuwrens and a gorgeous, and bold, Beautiful Firetail. And taking things right down to the wire, a well-hidden Powerful Owl was a memorable grand final to the tour's birding.

As always, this was such a fun trip to lead. I love birding in Australia and PNG, and I hope that showed through during the course of the tour. Thanks to all of you for making my job of guiding feel so unlike work that it rarely seems like a job. I enjoyed meeting you all, and sharing the birds of this diverse region with you, and I look forward to the chance to do the same again on another tour somewhere. In the meantime, happy holidays to all of you, and all the best in the new year.

--Jay

KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: * = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

BIRDS

Casuariidae (Cassowaries and Emu)

SOUTHERN CASSOWARY (*Casuarius casuarius*) – I was starting to have a little bit of a flashback to last year's tour: we spent all day along Black Mountain Road waiting to no avail for the birds to show up at Cassowary House, and finally, we had to call it quits and head to lunch. Then, while we were eating lunch in Kuranda, Rowan called to tell me the male was there with the three chicks. We hurried as best we could through our meals, then raced back to the lodge, luckily in time to catch the birds! I gotta admit I was pretty concerned we'd miss them, but it all worked out and we had an amazing close encounter with the impressive birds, which Polly chose as her top Australian species for the trip. [E]

EMU (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*) – With us getting all our Wondecla area targets quickly and easily, we found ourselves with enough time to make a quick jaunt to the Mareeba Wetlands, where 3 Emus turned out to be the highlight of our visit. [E]

Anseranatidae (Magpie Goose)

MAGPIE GOOSE (*Anseranas semipalmata*) – Some folks saw a flock flying by as we came down from O'Reilly's, then the rest of us caught up with a bunch lounging in the shade around Gallo Dairyland. [E]

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

PLUMED WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna eytoni*) – The huge numbers at Hasties Swamp from 2 weeks earlier had vanished after some heavy rains had filled up the lake and many other water holes, allowing these birds to disperse. But we did finally nail some down at the pond at Jaques Coffee Farm, then saw a bunch more at PAU the next day. [E]

WANDERING WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna arcuata*) – Only at PAU, where there were a fair number on the ponds.

BLACK SWAN (*Cygnus atratus*) – Swan Lake in the Port of Brisbane Wetlands gave us our first and best views of these handsome swans.

RADJAH SHELDUCK (*Tadorna radjah*) – A couple of birds at one of the quieter ponds at PAU were the only ones we found.

GREEN PYGMY-GOOSE (*Nettapus pulchellus*) – A couple of birds at the Mareeba Wetlands, and a bunch more on the ponds at Cattana Wetlands. [E]

COTTON PYGMY-GOOSE (*Nettapus coromandelianus*) – It's been a long time since I've seen this species, so finding a half a dozen on the creek at our platypus viewing site was a big, and pleasant, surprise!

MANED DUCK (*Chenonetta jubata*) – Formerly known as Australian Wood Duck, this duck is usually found around most farm ponds around Brisbane, but we saw them best at Royal NP, where I was very nearly attacked by a hungry, panhandling brood! [E]

PACIFIC BLACK DUCK (*Anas superciliosa*) – The local equivalent of the Mallard; this species is pretty common in appropriate habitat in both countries.

GRAY TEAL (*Anas gracilis*) – Quite a few around the Port of Brisbane Wetlands and a single bird at Hasties Swamp, followed by a 22 of them (my high count in PNG) at PAU.

CHESTNUT TEAL (*Anas castanea*) – This handsome teal was seen only at the Port of Brisbane Wetlands, where they were fairly numerous. [E]

PINK-EARED DUCK (*Malacorhynchus membranaceus*) – With the rains filling Hasties Swamp and causing the dispersal of the hordes of ducks from a couple of weeks earlier, I think we were lucky to see any of these at all. As it was, we had three of these strange, striking ducks. [E]

WHITE-EYED DUCK (*Aythya australis*) – Quite common on various wetlands around Brisbane and Cairns, with a couple also on one of the ponds at PAU, where they are scarce.

Megapodiidae (Megapodes)

AUSTRALIAN BRUSHTURKEY (*Alectura lathami*) – Common, bold, and easy to see in the Cairns and Brisbane areas. [E]

YELLOW-LEGGED BRUSHTURKEY (*Talegalla fuscirostris*) – Much shyer than its Australian cousin, and we just heard this one at Varirata as is usually the case. [E*]

ORANGE-FOOTED SCRUBFOWL (*Megapodius reinwardt*) – Barb spotted our first group one along the road at the Curtain Fig one afternoon, and we wound up seeing a few more around Cairns.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

AUSTRALASIAN GREBE (*Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*) – There were still decent numbers at Hasties Swamp, though nowhere near the 80+ of a couple of weeks earlier.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE (*Podiceps cristatus australis*) – A huge number of them (150+) on Lake Barrine, the only place we ever see them on this tour. This subspecies is restricted to Australia and New Zealand.

Procellariidae (Shearwaters and Petrels)

FLESH-FOOTED SHEARWATER (*Ardenna carneipes*) – The darker shearwater that came closest to shore off Wattamolla was this species.

WEDGE-TAILED SHEARWATER (*Ardenna pacifica*) – A small number of these were well offshore at the sea-watching site at Wattamolla.

Ciconiidae (Storks)

BLACK-NECKED STORK (*Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus australis*) – We rarely see this species on the tour, so spotting one next to the road on our way to Yorkey's Knob was a real treat! By the way, though this bird is sometimes called Jabiru, it turns out this is not an Aboriginal name, but comes from South America.

Sulidae (Boobies and Gannets)

AUSTRALASIAN GANNET (*Morus serrator*) – Pretty good fly-by views of one from the viewpoint at Wattamolla.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

LITTLE PIED CORMORANT (*Microcarbo melanoleucos*) – Quite numerous at the various wetlands in both countries.

GREAT CORMORANT (AUSTRALASIAN) (*Phalacrocorax carbo novaehollandiae*) – A few birds were seen around the Atherton region, then several more from the Wattamolla sea-watching site.

LITTLE BLACK CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*) – Numerous at suitable wetlands in both countries. [E]

PIED CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax varius*) – More of a coastal bird than the other cormorants we saw. This species was only at the Port of Brisbane Wetlands, where we had nice side by side views with the Little Pied Cormorant. [E]

Anhingidae (Anhingas)

AUSTRALASIAN DARTER (*Anhinga novaehollandiae*) – Scattered records of ones and twos throughout Australia. [E]

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

AUSTRALIAN PELICAN (*Pelecanus conspicillatus*) – Can be quite abundant at some sites, such as the Port of Brisbane Wetlands. We saw them almost daily until we left for PNG. [E]

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

PACIFIC HERON (*Ardea pacifica*) – Doug spotted our only one, far below us as we scanned Bromfield Swamp from the viewpoint. Also known as White-necked Heron. [E]

GREAT EGRET (AUSTRALASIAN) (*Ardea alba modesta*) – Small numbers at various wetlands in Australia.

INTERMEDIATE EGRET (*Mesophoyx intermedia*) – One at Yorkey's Knob was our only Australian one, and we saw quite a few at PAU in New Guinea. The length of the gape line helps separate this one from the similar Great Egret. On this species the gape line stops below the eye, extending further back on Great.

WHITE-FACED HERON (*Egretta novaehollandiae*) – A single one at the Port of Brisbane shorebird roost was the only one we saw the entire trip.

LITTLE EGRET (AUSTRALASIAN) (*Egretta garzetta nigripes*) – A fair number of these were at the Port of Brisbane Wetlands on our first day, and we also had one each at Fred Bucholz Park and at PAU. Surprising, as we couldn't even muster up one on my earlier tour.

PIED HERON (*Egretta picata*) – A handful of these small striking herons were at the PAU ponds.

CATTLE EGRET (EASTERN) (*Bubulcus ibis coromandus*) – Common in appropriate habitat in both countries.

STRIATED HERON (*Butorides striata*) – One in each country. We saw one on the mudflats at Lota, then another in the mangroves along the Lea Lea Road west of Port Moresby.

RUFUS NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax caledonicus*) – Several at the two usual roost sites along the Cairns Esplanade and in the big rain tree at PAU. Pete also saw a couple along the Hacking River at Royal NP. [E]

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

GLOSSY IBIS (*Plegadis falcinellus*) – A single bird each at Hasties Swamp and Bromfield Swamp.

AUSTRALIAN IBIS (*Threskiornis moluccus*) – A common sight in many areas of Australia, including a number of city parks.

STRAW-NECKED IBIS (*Threskiornis spinicollis*) – There were good numbers of these around the Cairns region this year. Some years I've had difficulty finding any on the tour. [E]

ROYAL SPOONBILL (*Platalea regia*) – A good number of these were at the Port of Brisbane Wetlands, otherwise we had just a few scattered individuals.

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (AUSTRALASIAN) (*Pandion haliaetus cristatus*) – Three were seen in the coastal areas south of Brisbane one morning, and a couple were seen along the coast west of Port Moresby.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

AUSTRALIAN KITE (*Elanus axillaris*) – A couple of sightings in the Atherton Tablelands, including a trio of recently-fledged juveniles at the Bromfield Swamp. [E]

PACIFIC BAZA (*Aviceda subcristata*) – An all-too-brief sighting of one along the Varirata entrance road as we left the park after our first visit.

WEDGE-TAILED EAGLE (*Aquila audax*) – Seen on two days in the O'Reilly's area, with good looks at a couple from the Kamarun Lookout. That flight shape is certainly distinctive, even from quite a distance. [E]

EASTERN MARSH-HARRIER (PAPUAN) (*Circus spilonotus spilothorax*) – Doug and I spotted one from the plane as we taxied out to the runway at the Port Moresby airport en route to Mt Hagen. [E]

SPOTTED HARRIER (*Circus assimilis*) – It was great to see one of these scarce raptors again. The bird flew up out of the roadside grasses south of Malanda, and dropped down into a gully as Sharon deftly and quickly swung the bus onto the shoulder so we could get out. When we did, we spied the harrier on the ground, eating whatever hapless creature it had plucked out of the long grass, and we had good scope views of it as it fed. [E]

GRAY GOSHAWK (*Accipiter novaehollandiae*) – Those of us who had not gone in to use the rest rooms had a quick look at one of these soaring past the terrace of the cafe at O'Reilly's, and sending up a screech of fear some of the birds that were waiting for a chance to snatch some table scraps. [E]

COLLARED SPARROWHAWK (*Accipiter cirrocephalus*) – One soared over the forest at the Daisy Hill Koala Center--our only one for the trip. [E]

BLACK KITE (BLACK) (*Milvus migrans affinis*) – Those recently ploughed fields near Atherton sure attracted in hordes of these scavengers, didn't they? Also seen commonly in the PNG highlands.

WHISTLING KITE (*Haliastur sphenurus*) – Generally not as numerous as the preceding species, and we saw our only ones at Hasties Swamp.

BRAHMINY KITE (*Haliastur indus*) – Aside from a single bird south of Brisbane, all our sightings of this handsome kite came from PNG, including one bird being harassed by an angry Black-backed Butcherbird.

WHITE-BELLIED SEA-EAGLE (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) – A lone bird over the mangroves south of Brisbane was the only one for the tour.

Otididae (Bustards)

AUSTRALIAN BUSTARD (*Ardeotis australis*) – After missing this one at the Mareeba Wetlands, I thought we'd run out of chances, so it was a wonderful surprise to chance across a trio of these stately birds in a stubble field on our way out from lunch at Jaques Coffee Farm. [E]

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

LEWIN'S RAIL (*Lewinia pectoralis*) – I had tried for the species several times before at O'Reilly's, never with any success, so I was surprised and thrilled to get a vocal response immediately this time around. I was even more thrilled when the bird ultimately scurried across the road nearby, and even happier when, on its way back across, it paused for several seconds in full view in the middle of the road! A long-awaited lifer, and my choice for Australian bird of the trip.

AUSTRALASIAN SWAMPHEN (*Porphyrio melanotus melanotus*) – Plenty of these at wetlands in both countries.

DUSKY MOORHEN (*Gallinula tenebrosa*) – Also quite common in suitable areas in both countries.

EURASIAN COOT (*Fulica atra australis*) – Lots of these in wetland sites in Australia, but not seen in PNG.

Gruidae (Cranes)

SARUS CRANE (*Antigone antigone gillae*) – A half dozen of these pink-legged cranes were found in a recently ploughed field near Atherton. This species was first noted in Australia in 1966, but since then has increased greatly.

BROLGA (*Antigone rubicunda*) – Just a couple of these were found along the road as we were on our way out from Granite Gorge, on the same day as we found our Sarus Cranes. [E]

Burhinidae (Thick-knees)

BUSH THICK-KNEE (*Burhinus grallarius*) – After missing these on several drives past an orchard where they usually hang out, we finally nailed them, and had super looks at a dozen or more. We also got to hear them give their mournful, wailing cries, which is really something to hear at close range! [E]

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

PIED STILT (*Himantopus leucocephalus*) – Small numbers of these elegant wader were at many of the wetland sites visited.

RED-NECKED AVOCET (*Recurvirostra novaehollandiae*) – The avocets we'd found on the Port of Brisbane shorebird roost were luckily still there, and the numbers had actually increased to eight this time. We seldom see this more inland species on the tour.

Haematopodidae (Oystercatchers)

PIED OYSTERCATCHER (*Haematopus longirostris*) – A couple of birds at the Port of Brisbane shorebird roost including one on a nest. [EN]

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER (*Pluvialis squatarola*) – Single birds on the mud at the Cairns Esplanade and at Lota. [b]

PACIFIC GOLDEN-PLOVER (*Pluvialis fulva*) – Five of these were on the mudflats in the Lota area with a few more on playing fields near our Port Moresby hotel. [b]

MASKED LAPWING (MASKED) (*Vanellus miles miles*) – The northern version of this species, commonly seen around Cairns and Port Moresby.

MASKED LAPWING (BLACK-SHOULDERED) (*Vanellus miles novaehollandiae*) – This one occurs around Brisbane and Sydney, and shows the black bars down the sides of the upper breast.

GREATER SAND-PLOVER (*Charadrius leschenaultii*) – We managed to pick out 3 of these among the many waders along the Esplanade, before that bloody drone flew over and chased everything off. :([b]

RED-CAPPED PLOVER (*Charadrius ruficapillus*) – Ten birds along the Esplanade included at least a couple of attractive breeding-plumaged birds with full red caps. [E]

RED-KNEED DOTTEREL (*Erythrogonys cinctus*) – We found just one of these handsome endemic plovers along the lake at Fred Bucholz Park; not bad, as we often miss this scarce bird altogether. [E]

BLACK-FRONTED DOTTEREL (*Elseynornis melanops*) – Generally more common than the preceding species, though we also found just one this trip, also at Fred Bucholz Park. [E]

Jacaniidae (Jacanas)

COMB-CRESTED JACANA (*Irediparra gallinacea*) – A few sites in the Cairns region held this species, sometimes called the Lotusbird locally. Also seen at PAU, where one male was accompanied by several chicks.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

- LITTLE CURLEW** (*Numenius minutus*) – Leonard had located some of these on some playing fields near our Port Moresby hotel, and took us to see them our first afternoon in PNG. We counted 14 of them there along with several Pacific Golden-Plovers. [b]
- WHIMBREL (SIBERIAN)** (*Numenius phaeopus variegatus*) – Some good numbers on the mudflats at Cairns and south of Brisbane. [b]
- FAR EASTERN CURLEW** (*Numenius madagascariensis*) – A handful of these long-billed birds were on the coastal mudflats in both the Cairns and Brisbane regions. [b]
- BLACK-TAILED GODWIT (MELANUROIDES)** (*Limosa limosa melanuroides*) – The less common of the two godwits that regularly occur here. We picked out just 2 of them from among a flock of Bar-tailed on the Cairns Esplanade. [b]
- BAR-TAILED GODWIT** (*Limosa lapponica*) – A pretty common migrant at all the coastal mudflats visited. [b]
- GREAT KNOT** (*Calidris tenuirostris*) – We had just started to look at a flock of these at Cairns when the drone came over and chased them all off. [b]
- SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER** (*Calidris acuminata*) – A handful of these were on the mudflats at the north end of the Esplanade on our final morning at Cairns. [b]
- RED-NECKED STINT** (*Calidris ruficollis*) – The drone also chased off a good-sized flock of these birds before we'd had the chance to take a proper look at them through the scope. [b]
- NEW GUINEA WOODCOCK** (*Scolopax rosenbergii*) – John, Doug, and I went out into the forest to look for this this bird late one afternoon at Kumul, but with the rainy weather creeping in, I wasn't expecting the search to be successful. Happily, I was wrong, and just before dusk, a woodcock flew overhead, calling, a couple of times. It wasn't what you'd call a great look, though it was clearly a woodcock. But the sound and the experience in general was incredible, so much so that Doug chose this as his top bird in PNG! [E]
- TEREK SANDPIPER** (*Xenus cinereus*) – We managed to pick out one of these at the north end of the Esplanade on our final morning around Cairns, though it was a bit challenging. After I'd initially spotted the bird, we lost track of it and it took several minutes to refind, though we finally got some good scope views for all. [b]
- GRAY-TAILED TATTLER** (*Tringa brevipes*) – A lone bird on the Port of Brisbane shorebird roost on our first afternoon, and a handful at the north end of the Esplanade. [b]

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

- SILVER GULL** (*Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae*) – A common coastal species in Australia, and the only gull that we have any expectation of seeing on this tour.
- LITTLE TERN** (*Sternula albifrons*) – At least 4 of these tiny terns were along the Esplanade late one afternoon.
- GULL-BILLED TERN** (*Gelochelidon nilotica*) – Good numbers around the Port of Brisbane wetlands.
- WHISKERED TERN** (*Chlidonias hybrida*) – A few of these lovely terns were at Swan Lake in the Port of Brisbane wetlands.
- GREAT CRESTED TERN** (*Thalasseus bergii*) – We saw one from the bus as we crossed the Barron River north of Cairns one afternoon, then saw another from the Wattamolla sea watch site in Royal NP.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

- ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) – In cities and towns around Australia, but missed in Port Moresby where they are present but are usually scarce. [I]
- WHITE-HEADED PIGEON** (*Columba leucomela*) – Never a numerous bird, but we had some good looks at several in the early mornings around O'Reilly's. [E]
- SPOTTED DOVE** (*Streptopelia chinensis*) – Just a few of these were seen along the Cairns Esplanade and in Sydney. [I]
- BROWN CUCKOO-DOVE** (*Macropygia phasianella*) – Quite a common rainforest bird along the east coast of Australia, and we saw plenty, especially in the introduced tobacco trees at O'Reilly's. [E]
- AMBOYNA CUCKOO-DOVE** (*Macropygia amboinensis*) – A fairly recent split from the Brown Cuckoo-Dove, this one is pretty widespread and easy to see in PNG. We had several at Varirata as well as a few in the highlands. [E]
- BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO-DOVE** (*Macropygia nigrirostris*) – Smaller, and more richly-colored than the Amboyna, this cuckoo-dove is also usually more numerous in the highlands, though we saw just one at Tonga this trip. [E]
- PACIFIC EMERALD DOVE** (*Chalcophaps longirostris longirostris*) – Heard at Chambers but we couldn't track it down. [*]
- STEPHAN'S DOVE** (*Chalcophaps stephani*) – I think Doug was the only one to see this bird fly past along the road at Varirata. [E]
- CRESTED PIGEON** (*Ocyphaps lophotes*) – A showy and conspicuous pigeon of open country in Australia, where we had them on most days. [E]
- SQUATTER PIGEON** (*Geophaps scripta*) – The birds at Granite Gorge have become so accustomed to people that they are now really reluctant to flush, even when someone almost steps on them, as we noted when a couple of young women walked right through a group of them along the road. [E]
- WONGA PIGEON** (*Leucosarcia melanoleuca*) – Unusually elusive this visit, and there were none wandering around the clearings at O'Reilly's as there usually are. We ended up with just one poor view of a bird we flushed along the Lady Carrington Track, which then started to sing from an obscured perch up the hill from us. [E]
- PEACEFUL DOVE** (*Geopelia placida*) – Quite common and approachable in the Cairns region, and we saw a few as well in the mangroves along the coast west of Port Moresby. [E]
- BAR-SHOULDERED DOVE** (*Geopelia humeralis*) – A trio of these were seen our first afternoon around Brisbane, with only two others for the rest of the trip, one at Granite Gorge, the other at PAU. [E]
- PHEASANT PIGEON** (*Otidiphaps nobilis*) – I've heard this bird often at Varirata, but have yet to see it. I was hoping this would be the trip, but we only heard it once again. [E*]
- WOMPOO FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus magnificus*) – Seen in both countries, but that first cooperative one we found along Black Mountain Road was pretty hard to beat.
- PINK-SPOTTED FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus perlatus*) – Generally one of the easiest of the fruit-doves to see at Varirata, as they often hang out in the casuarina trees around the picnic area. We had good looks at several here. [E]
- ORANGE-FRONTED FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus aurantiifrons*) – Though we had three at PAU, our usual site for these, the brief views weren't particularly satisfying, so it was great to find a much more friendly one singing from an exposed perch in the mangroves west of Port Moresby. [E]
- SUPERB FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus superbus*) – Heard several times in Australia, and we had a female on our first visit to Varirata, but it was the male that Jody spotted sitting way back in a casuarina tree behind a fruiting fig that made us really feel like we'd seen this species.

- ROSE-CROWNED FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus regina*) – Nice scope views of one of these attractive doves in the mangroves at Cairns on our final morning there. [E]
- BEAUTIFUL FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus pulchellus*) – This seems an odd name given that so many of the fruit-doves are incredibly gorgeous, but when you see a male, it does make sense. We saw one, in the big fruiting fig at Varirata, on our second visit to the park. [E]
- ORANGE-BELLIED FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus iozonus*) – A couple of birds in the fruiting fig tree at Varirata (the same tree as the above bird was in) didn't stick around too long, but a few folks had good looks before they took off. [E]
- ZOE IMPERIAL-PIGEON** (*Ducula zoeae*) – Good looks at one of the chunky pigeons around the same fig tree that was pulling in all the fruit-doves at Varirata. [E]
- TORRESIAN IMPERIAL-PIGEON** (*Ducula spilorrhoa*) – Not seeing these around Cairns at this time of year would be a pretty difficult accomplishment-- they are literally everywhere there, with many nesting along the Esplanade. We also tallied a few in the Port Moresby region. [N]
- TOPKNOT PIGEON** (*Lopholaimus antarcticus*) – Lots and lots of flyovers at O'Reilly's and in the Atherton Tablelands, but we never found any of these perched for good views. We did have some perched above the road below O'Reilly's, but after dropping a bomb on Eve, they promptly flew off. [E]
- PAPUAN MOUNTAIN-PIGEON** (*Gymnophaps albertisii*) – Despite the name, these birds rarely are numerous in the higher mountains, though we had a couple at Kumul Lodge. A largish flock at Varirata on our second visit was far more typical.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

- PHEASANT COUCAL** (*Centropus phasianinus*) – Aside from a roadside bird on our way up to O'Reilly's, all of our sightings of this large cuckoo were from PNG, where we had several at PAU and a few more along the Varirata entrance road.
- PACIFIC KOEL (AUSTRALIAN)** (*Eudynamis orientalis cyanocephalus*) – Scarce this trip, and our only sighting came at the rock wallaby feeding area where an excited, calling male made a quick flyby in response to my whistled imitations.
- CHANNEL-BILLED CUCKOO** (*Scythrops novaehollandiae*) – We heard one of these massive cuckoos calling from a fair distance at the Bromfield Swamp, too far to do anything about, or so I thought. A little bit of playback brought 3 of them blasting past for some awesome flyby views. Like many Australian cuckoos, these monsters are brood parasites, laying their eggs in the nests of currawongs, crows, and magpies, among other large birds.
- SHINING BRONZE-CUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx lucidus*) – A couple of birds around O'Reilly's and a single at our White-browed Robin site were the only ones we saw this trip.
- LITTLE BRONZE-CUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx minutillus*) – A couple of these were around the campground at Granite Gorge.
- FAN-TAILED CUCKOO** (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*) – One in the O'Reilly's area, and one near the Lesser BoP site in PNG. The endemic PNG highland subspecies (*excitus*) is thought by some to be a separate species, so watch for an armchair tick sometime in the future.
- BRUSH CUCKOO** (*Cacomantis variolosus*) – Hard to believe we only saw one of these normally common cuckoos, though we did hear a few more. We saw the one as we waited for the Lesser BoP to show up at Kama.

Strigidae (Owls)

- RUFOUS OWL** (*Ninox rufa*) – I'd never even heard this owl around Chambers (or anywhere really) before, so was surprised to hear one calling on our first night. A little playback brought it right in, and the folks that were still out watching for Sugar Gliders (Doug, Jim, and Barb) got a great look as it sat directly above calling in a subdued voice. [E]
- POWERFUL OWL** (*Ninox strenua*) – The final new bird of the trip, and what a finish! We had all but given up on finding this bird after a careful search of the canopy of its roost tree in Sydney's Centennial Park. I was just about to call time when I located the bird tucked away in an almost completely hidden spot among the leaves. With just a couple of small windows through which to see it, I think we were really fortunate to find this bird's hiding place on our own.
- SOUTHERN BOOBOOK** (*Ninox novaeseelandiae*) – One was calling incessantly through the night at Chambers, but though it was close, we just couldn't lay eyes on it. [E*]

Podargidae (Frogmouths)

- TAWNY FROGMOUTH** (*Podargus strigoides*) – Some amazing spotting by Polly got us our first, very cryptic pair high in a eucalyptus at Daisy Hill. Then at the end of a tour, we enjoyed another on a nest with a small chick peeping out from under its belly, thanks to a local birder we bumped into at Royal NP. [EN]
- PAPUAN FROGMOUTH** (*Podargus papuensis*) – One was on a conveniently located nest in the picnic area at Varirata, which was great since we'd missed finding them at PAU where we usually see them. [EN]

Aegothelidae (Owlet-nightjars)

- BARRED OWLET-NIGHTJAR** (*Aegotheles bennettii*) – The usual roost hole was vacant, but Leonard found us another and we enjoyed great looks as it peered sleepily out of its hollow at Varirata. [E]

Apodidae (Swifts)

- WHITE-THROATED NEEDLETAIL** (*Hirundapus caudacutus*) – A bathroom break at a service station south of Brisbane really paid off when we spotted about a half a dozen of these large swifts circling fairly low overhead for some great views. They turned out to be our only ones for the tour. [b]
- GLOSSY SWIFTLET** (*Collocalia esculenta*) – Almost everywhere we went in PNG. This species often flies very low, and as such offers very good, close looks at its glossy blue back.
- MOUNTAIN SWIFTLET** (*Aerodramus hirundinaceus*) – Quite a few of these brownish swifts were seen high in the PNG mountains, where they replace the very similar Uniform Swift. [E]
- AUSTRALIAN SWIFTLET** (*Aerodramus terraereginae*) – Fairly numerous in the Cairns region. [E]
- UNIFORM SWIFTLET** (*Aerodramus vanikorensis*) – A few of these plain swifts were at Varirata on our first visit.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

- COMMON KINGFISHER** (*Alcedo atthis*) – A lone bird was found at one of the quieter ponds at PAU. This subspecies, *hispidoides*, is the southernmost occurring population of this widespread species.

- AZURE KINGFISHER** (*Ceyx azureus*) – Not always an easy species to see on this tour, but we had them very easily this trip, seeing them at 5 different sites altogether. It was no surprise to see them at Varirata and Royal national parks, where we encounter them regularly, but I was a bit surprised to find them at 3 different places around the Atherton Tablelands, none of which I'd ever seen them at before. [E]
- PAPUAN DWARF-KINGFISHER** (*Ceyx solitarius*) – Always a tricky bird to track down, but Leonard is a pro at spotting these tiny, elusive kingfishers, and he did it again, giving us excellent scope studies of this lovely little bird. This was one of an amazing 8 species of kingfishers seen on a single day at Varirata NP (as was the Azure KF).
- LAUGHING KOOKABURRA** (*Dacelo novaeguineae*) – An iconic Australian species, widespread and seen often throughout the country. [E]
- BLUE-WINGED KOOKABURRA** (*Dacelo leachii*) – Not very common on the Australian portion of our tour route, but we picked up good views of several of these in the savannah regions around Port Moresby. [E]
- RUFUS-BELLIED KOOKABURRA** (*Dacelo gaudichaud*) – Super looks at these beauties on both of our visits to Varirata. Maybe I rarely see these birds from the back, but it was the first time I actually noted the difference in tail color between the sexes, with the male showing a blue tail, while the female's is rusty brown. Another of the "amazing 8" kingfishers at Varirata. [E]
- FOREST KINGFISHER** (*Todiramphus macleayi*) – And another of the "amazing 8", a couple of these were seen along the Varirata entrance road. We also saw these nicely at several sites around the Atherton Tablelands. The PNG birds were the endemic subspecies *elisabeth*, while the ones in Australia were subspecies *incinctus*.
- TORRESIAN KINGFISHER** (*Todiramphus sordidus*) – Formerly part of the Collared Kingfisher complex, though that species was split up recently, with this one now being endemic to Australia and southern PNG. We eventually tracked down a trio of vocal birds in the mangroves in Cairns.
- SACRED KINGFISHER** (*Todiramphus sanctus*) – Amazing that we didn't find this widespread species until our final morning at Royal NP, but at least we had some fantastic looks at them there, though.
- HOOK-BILLED KINGFISHER** (*Melidora macrorrhina*) – A big surprise at Varirata, where I'd seen this bird only once before, and Leonard had seen it only twice (one time with me). The bird flew in with a loud squawk, then took off again before anyone could get on it and figure out what it was. Luckily, Ellen somehow spotted it again way back in the forest, and then managed to get me onto it. I quickly got the scope on it, and I think most everyone got a look at it before it vanished for good. Another of the "amazing 8" and my PNG bird for the trip.
- YELLOW-BILLED KINGFISHER** (*Syma torotoro*) – This beauty, as well as the next 2 species, was also part of the "amazing 8" at Varirata on our first visit. We had great looks at a couple of these, with the first one along the entrance road posing beautifully for several long minutes. [E]
- BROWN-HEADED PARADISE-KINGFISHER** (*Tanysiptera danae*) – While the group was enjoying a rest after lunch at Varirata, I wandered onto a nearby trail and stumbled across a pair of these spectacular kingfishers at a nest hole in a termite mound just off the ground next to the trail. Tracking the birds down again when I returned there with the group was about as easy as they come. [E]
- BUFF-BREASTED PARADISE-KINGFISHER** (*Tanysiptera sylvia*) – Overall a much harder species to see at Varirata than Brown-headed, but Leonard picked one out along the Varirata Lookout Track and we got the scope on it for some awesome views. [E]
- Meropidae (Bee-eaters)*
- RAINBOW BEE-EATER** (*Merops ornatus*) – Seen only in the Cairns region, where we had some super views of these colorful birds at Granite Gorge, Yorkey's Knob, and elsewhere.
- Coraciidae (Rollers)*
- DOLLARBIRD** (*Eurystomus orientalis*) – A common summer breeding migrant to much of northern and eastern Australia, as well as PNG. We saw them numerous times at a bunch of different sites, including a copulating pair at Royal NP.
- Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)*
- AUSTRALIAN KESTREL** (*Falco cenchroides*) – A single bird was seen on the Atherton Tablelands this trip. Rather surprising as they are usually more numerous. [E]
- BROWN FALCON** (*Falco berigora*) – One flew overhead when we stopped to look at Sarus Cranes and black-cockatoos in some ploughed fields near Atherton, and another flew past at the Lai River bridge on our way back up to Kumul from the Lesser BoP site. [E]
- Cacatuidae (Cockatoos)*
- RED-TAILED BLACK-COCKATOO** (*Calyptorhynchus banksii*) – A quick adjustment of the shutters in the cafe allowed most folks to get a decent look at a couple of birds that flew by as we ate lunch in Tolga. Otherwise all the birds we saw were unfortunately quite distant, though we had okay scope views of some in the recently ploughed fields near Atherton. [E]
- GALAH** (*Eolophus roseicapilla*) – This tour never really produces many of these birds, which are quite abundant in some areas of the country. We did see a couple along the drives to and from O'Reilly's, and some folks also saw a pair that flew over one of the playing fields at Centennial Park on our final afternoon. [E]
- LITTLE CORELLA** (*Cacatua sanguinea*) – The birds we saw around the Canungra-Beenleigh region south of Brisbane may be part of a naturally occurring population. In Royal NP, the population has certainly derived from escapees, now breeding ferally. [E]
- SULPHUR-CRESTED COCKATOO** (*Cacatua galerita*) – A very common sight through all the regions of Australia we visited, and we also saw a few around Varirata NP in PNG, where the endemic subspecies, *triton*, occurs.
- Psittaculidae (Old World Parrots)*
- AUSTRALIAN KING-PARROT** (*Alisterus scapularis*) – Though it kind of feels like being in a zoo, who doesn't enjoy the fact that these birds regularly sit on people's heads at O'Reilly's? For any purists, we did see some truly wild (i.e. non-head-perching) birds in the Atherton Tablelands and Royal NP. [E]
- PAPUAN KING-PARROT** (*Alisterus chloropterus*) – A much scarcer and harder to see bird than its Australian counterpart, and I have yet to have what I consider a truly spectacular look at this species. We did get pretty reasonable flyby views at Varirata this trip, though. A male flew overhead at the picnic area as we emerged from the trail, followed shortly afterward by the female. I think everyone was out of the forest by the time the latter bird flew over. [E]
- ECLECTUS PARROT** (*Eclectus roratus*) – Strange that there were so few this trip, as we usually tally a few birds flying around at Varirata. We were limited to a single bird this time around, and only Pete got to see it, as he was in the picnic clearing when it flew over, while the rest of us were still inside the forest, and only heard its loud squawking.
- RED-CHEEKED PARROT** (*Geoffroyus geoffroyi*) – There were also relatively few of these common parrots around, though we fared better with these, getting some decent scope views, primarily of females, at Varirata. [E]

- BREHM'S TIGER-PARROT** (*Psittacula brehmii*) – The usual great studies of these charming small parrots at the Kumul Lodge feeders. Polly was especially taken with them, and chose them as her favorite PNG bird overall. [E]
- MADARASZ'S TIGER-PARROT** (*Psittacula madaraszii*) – A lone male along the Tonga trail wasn't the most cooperative, but I think we all managed reasonable looks at it in the end.
- YELLOW-BILLED LORIKEET** (*Neopsittacus musschenbroekii*) – A few of these were flying around at the Kama Lesser BoP site, but I don't recall ever getting a good view of any perched. [E]
- ORANGE-BILLED LORIKEET** (*Neopsittacus pullicauda*) – Replaces the very similar Yellow-billed at higher elevations. We had some excellent views of this one, feeding in a flowering tree next to the lodge on our final morning there. [E]
- CRIMSON ROSELLA** (*Platycercus elegans*) – Only seen around O'Reilly's this trip, where the usual habituated birds performed as expected. [E]
- DOUBLE-EYED FIG-PARROT** (*Cyclopsitta diophthalma*) – A few birds were hanging around a fruiting tree at Chambers, and, while they were a bit tricky to track down, we did manage to get some good looks at them one morning.
- PLUM-FACED LORIKEET** (*Oreopsittacus arfaki*) – We only saw these tiny lorikeets in flight and scrambling quickly around in the foliage atop a tall fruiting tree at Murrumbidgee Pass, so the looks weren't great, but if you managed to see the long, red-tipped tail, you saw all that you needed to identify it. [E]
- PAPUAN LORIKEET** (*Charmosyna papou*) – Mostly seen in flight, though that's distinctive enough, as it's a large lorikeet with an incredibly long, slender tail. A couple of the birds that flew over at Murrumbidgee Pass were dark morph birds, but most were the usual red. John and I also had good looks at a perched pair near the flowering tree beside Kumul Lodge one afternoon. [E]
- BLACK-CAPPED LORY** (*Lorius lory*) – All the usual parrots at Varirata were scarcer than usual this trip, perhaps a factor of low availability of suitable flowering/fruiting trees. We ended up with just one brief sighting of a pair flying over the picnic area on our second visit to the park. [E]
- LITTLE LORIKEET** (*Glossopsitta pusilla*) – Often a very difficult lorikeet to see well, but we nailed some perched birds immediately upon our arrival in the eucalyptus woodland at Wondecla, and ended up with excellent scope views of a cooperative pair, while plenty of others flew around. [E]
- GOLDIE'S LORIKEET** (*Psittacodes goldiei*) – Only a handful of folks were on hand by the flowering tree outside of Kumul Lodge when we tracked down a few of these lovely little lorikeets perched in the top of a distant emergent tree. Scope views were good, despite the distance, but unfortunately the birds didn't stick around long enough for anyone else to get there. [E]
- RAINBOW LORIKEET (COCONUT)** (*Trichoglossus haematodus haematodus*) – This is the subspecies found commonly in PNG, thought by some to be a good species of its own. Perhaps another armchair tick in the future.
- RAINBOW LORIKEET (RAINBOW)** (*Trichoglossus haematodus moluccanus*) – Pretty numerous throughout the east coast of Australia, and we saw loads of them.
- SCALY-BREASTED LORIKEET** (*Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus*) – A couple of birds at Hasties Swamp showed fairly well, but I think we saw them better in the big flowering tree at the Curtain Fig the next day. Never as numerous as Rainbow Lorikeet, but the two species are often together. [E]

Pittidae (Pittas)

- NOISY PITTA** (*Pitta versicolor*) – A calling bird near O'Reilly's one morning just wouldn't move closer to the road, so we had to walk into the forest to look for him. Still, it was proving very difficult to find, and it didn't seem to be budging, so I kept moving closer and closer until there he was, right out in the open and not too far away! Problem was we could only get one person at a time into position to see him without spooking him, so that's what we did, and it almost worked perfectly, though he left just before the final person's turn. We made up for it the next day with another along the Python Rock Trail, though it wasn't quite so cooperative. John and Eve both chose this as their favorite Australian bird.

Menuridae (Lyrebirds)

- ALBERT'S LYREBIRD** (*Menura alberti*) – And this was Jim's favorite bird in Australia. This one gave us the runaround the first couple of days, but we finally were able to track down a male foraging below the cabins along the Wishing Tree track. [E]
- SUPERB LYREBIRD** (*Menura novaehollandiae*) – A chance encounter with a local birding guide saved us from a long walk along Lady Carrington Track. After a brief chat during which I mentioned we were looking for lyrebird, we went on our way, only to hear him shout back to us that there was one on the trail. The bird, a female, had evidently walked out onto the track just after we passed by! In any case, we had super looks at her as she scratched around in the leaf litter next to the trail, thanks to this local guide. This was Barb's pick for Australian bird of the trip. [E]

Ptilonorhynchidae (Bowerbirds)

- SPOTTED CATBIRD** (*Ailuroedus maculosus*) – This is the catbird around the Atherton Tableland region. We had plenty of good sightings of these, especially around Chambers, where they would come in to feed on some papaya I'd placed out for them.
- GREEN CATBIRD** (*Ailuroedus crassirostris*) – And this is the species around O'Reilly's. We heard their strange, mewling calls often, and did get a few good looks, though they weren't as easy to see as the Spotted Catbirds up north. [E]
- TOOTH-BILLED CATBIRD** (*Scenopoeetes dentirostris*) – The leks along the track at Lake Barrine were pretty active, and we had some good views of these rather plain catbirds singing loudly above their display areas, which they clear, then cover with a certain type of leaf, all placed with their silver undersides turned up. [E]
- GOLDEN BOWERBIRD** (*Amblyornis newtoniana*) – Adult males have apparently disappeared from several sites, so the long-used bower we normally visit had been abandoned, though a new one, tended to by a subadult male, has been built nearby, and we got good looks at this bird on our second attempt. [E]
- REGENT BOWERBIRD** (*Sericulus chrysocephalus*) – Showy, flashy, spectacular, these birds are simply gorgeous no matter which words you use to describe them. As usual, we only saw these otherwise shy birds around O'Reilly's, but as usual, the looks were amazing, and who could ask for any better? [E]
- SATIN BOWERBIRD** (*Ptilonorhynchus violaceus*) – Also seen only around O'Reilly's where one tending to his bower, well-decorated with many blue objects, was a highlight. [E]
- GREAT BOWERBIRD** (*Chlamydera nuchalis*) – A pretty dull bowerbird, but with a nice big avenue bower. We saw several of the birds, and a couple of bower, one of them a double with loads of large white snail shells as decoration, at Granite Gorge. [E]
- YELLOW-BREASTED BOWERBIRD** (*Chlamydera lauterbachii*) – A couple of these showed well at the Lesser BoP site below Kumul. [E]
- FAWN-BREASTED BOWERBIRD** (*Chlamydera cerviniventris*) – Quite numerous at PAU, with a few seen in the mangrove area west of Port Moresby, too. [E]

Climacteridae (Australasian Treecreepers)

WHITE-THROATED TREECREEPER (*Cormobates leucophaea*) – First seen at O'Reilly's and we went on to have several sightings of this species in the Atherton Tablelands and at Royal NP. The Atherton region birds belong to the subspecies minor, which is sometimes suggested as a valid species on its own (then called Little Treecreeper). [E]

RED-BROWED TREECREEPER (*Climacteris erythroptis*) – Somewhat local on this tour route, and as usual, we saw them only along Duck Creek Road below O'Reilly's. [E]

BROWN TREECREEPER (*Climacteris picumnus*) – We found a lone bird in eucalyptus woodland near Wondecla, generally the only place we see this dry country species on the tour. [E]

Maluridae (Fairyrwrens)

SOUTHERN EMUWREN (*Stipiturus malachurus*) – Sneaky, as always, but we got some pretty decent views of these neat little birds in the heathy woodland in Royal NP. [E]

VARIEGATED FAIRYWREN (*Malurus lamberti*) – Great views of a small party, including 2 or 3 adult males, along Duck Creek Road, then seen again on our final day at Wattamolla. [E]

LOVELY FAIRYWREN (*Malurus amabilis*) – Once lumped with Variegated FW, but the much shorter tail and very distinct female plumage has led to this form being elevated to a species. A new site I'd scouted on my earlier tour came through again, and we had super views of both members of a pair. The fairyrwrens were popular as a group, an Ellen chose this one as her top Aussie bird. [E]

SUPERB FAIRYWREN (*Malurus cyaneus*) – And this was Jody's pick as her favorite Australian bird. This was by far the fairyrwen we saw most often, and we enjoyed them daily at O'Reilly's and we also encountered them at Wattamolla. [E]

RED-BACKED FAIRYWREN (*Malurus melanocephalus*) – And Doug's nod for favorite bird in Oz was this fairyrwen. We only had one pair, at the same site as our Lovely Fairyrwrens, but we had excellent views of them. We even got to watch the male perform a little courtship flight carrying a small red flower petal in its beak. According to the article that Pete passed around, the males only do this when they are courting a new female, so that's apparently what we were seeing. [E]

WHITE-SHOULDERED FAIRYWREN (*Malurus alboscapulatus*) – Pete spotted these birds as we were heading down the steep trail from the Blue BoP site at Tonga. As usual, they were the only species of fairyrwen we encountered in PNG. [E]

Meliphagidae (Honeyeaters)

EASTERN SPINEBILL (*Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*) – These striking honeyeaters are always a real treat to see. Our encounters came at O'Reilly's and on our final day a Royal NP. [E]

MARbled HONEYEATER (*Pycnopygius cinereus*) – The lone bird we found at Tonga sat still on a couple of occasions, but never long enough for more than one or two folks to see before it dashed off again. [E]

STREAK-HEADED HONEYEATER (*Pycnopygius stictocephalus*) – A difficult bird to find when they aren't vocal, but luckily they are singing a lot at this time of year, and we saw these birds easily at PAU and Varirata. [E]

YELLOW-SPOTTED HONEYEATER (*Meliphaga notata*) – Easy to see at Cassowary House, where they are regular visitors to the sugar water feeders off the balcony. [E]

LEWIN'S HONEYEATER (*Meliphaga lewinii*) – The common eastern rainforest Meliphaga. We had them most days, and sometimes in large numbers, all down along the east coast. [E]

ELEGANT HONEYEATER (*Meliphaga cinereifrons cinereifrons*) – The only Meliphaga honeyeaters we were able to see and identify were this common species, which is generally easy at Varirata. [E]

YELLOW HONEYEATER (*Stomiopera flava*) – Granite Gorge was especially good for this species, though we saw them in other areas of the tablelands as well. [E]

YELLOW-FACED HONEYEATER (*Caligavis chrysops*) – Especially good views of this common species along the Lady Carrington Track on our final day. [E]

BLACK-THROATED HONEYEATER (*Caligavis subfrenata*) – Heard around Kumul Lodge, but they were usually quite distant and never showed. [E*]

BELL MINER (*Manorina melanophrys*) – Visiting a Bell Miner colony is always a fun experience, The sounds that come from dozens of miners is just beautiful, as we experienced at the colony inn the eucalyptus woodland below O'Reilly's. [E]

NOISY MINER (*Manorina melanocephala*) – Numerous around Brisbane and Sydney. [E]

ORNATE MELIDECTES (*Melidectes torquatus*) – A few of these fancy honeyeaters were around the Lesser BoP site, where we saw them nicely. [E]

BELFORD'S MELIDECTES (*Melidectes belfordi*) – The common highland melidectes, these birds are conspicuous around Kumul Lodge, including at the feeders. [E]

YELLOW-BROWED MELIDECTES (*Melidectes rufocrissalis*) – Occurs at elevations between that of the two preceding species, with a little overlap with both. We saw these ones at the Blue BoP spot. [E]

BRIDLED HONEYEATER (*Bolemoreus frenatus*) – It was hot and still during both of our visits to Mt Hypipamee, and even this normally conspicuous species was pretty difficult, though we managed a few brief looks at them. [E]

LITTLE WATTLEBIRD (*Anthochaera chrysoptera*) – There were plenty of good flowering trees along the Lady Carrington Track this trip, and there were heaps of these birds--more than I've ever seen along here before. [E]

VARIED HONEYEATER (*Gavicalis versicolor*) – Seems pretty restricted to coastal habitats, and, as usual, we saw these only along the Esplanade in Cairns. [E]

FUSCOUS HONEYEATER (*Ptilotula fusca*) – This yellow-faced variety is restricted to the Wondecla region, prompting one local birder to suggest they be elevated to species status as "Wondecla Honeyeater". This is the most numerous of the honeyeaters in the eucalyptus woodland at Wondecla. [E]

BROWN-BACKED HONEYEATER (*Ramsayornis modestus*) – One in a flowering tree at Granite Gorge threw me off for a moment, as I'm accustomed to seeing this species only right around Yorkey's Knob on this trip. We did have them at Yorkey's as well. [E]

RUFOUS-BANDED HONEYEATER (*Conopophila albogularis*) – Common around the ponds at PAU, as well as in the mangroves to the west of Port Moresby. [E]

SMOKY HONEYEATER (*Melipotus fumigatus*) – One of the most conspicuous birds in PNG's highland forests. [E]

DUSKY MYZOMELA (*Myzomela obscura*) – Not a very memorable bird, but we had a few of these around the Atherton Tablelands.

ELFIN MYZOMELA (*Myzomela adolphinae*) – Super views of a handsome male at the Kama Lesser BoP site. [E]

SCARLET MYZOMELA (*Myzomela sanguinolenta*) – A common voice in eucalyptus forests down the east coast of Oz, and we had regular sightings in the Atherton Tablelands, with a particularly cooperative one at Hasties Swamp. [E]

RED-COLLARED MYZOMELA (*Myzomela rosenbergii*) – These striking honeyeaters were seen regularly in the forests around Kumul Lodge. [E]

RUFIOUS-BACKED HONEYEATER (*Ptiloprora guisei*) – On this trip we only ever find this species at the Murrumbidgee site, and we had several there again this trip. [E]

GRAY-STREAKED HONEYEATER (*Ptiloprora perstriata*) – Replaces the similar Rufous-backed at higher elevations, and a fairly common bird right around Kumul Lodge. [E]

BANDED HONEYEATER (*Cissomela pectoralis*) – I found these birds at Wondecla on the earlier tour, the first time I'd had them there, and was pleased to find them again this time around. We had a pair sitting high in a casuarina along the creek. [E]

BROWN HONEYEATER (*Lichmera indistincta*) – One of the more common honeyeater species around Brisbane and Cairns.

NEW HOLLAND HONEYEATER (*Phylidonyris novaehollandiae*) – As usual, we didn't see this species until our final day at Royal NP, but there were plenty of them there, thanks in part to the profusion of suitable flowering shrubs. [E]

WHITE-CHEEKED HONEYEATER (*Phylidonyris niger*) – A pair of these beauties were coaxed out of a lantana thicket at Wondecla, the only place we saw them on the tour. [E]

BLUE-FACED HONEYEATER (*Entomyzon cyanotis*) – It was looking like we would miss this large honeyeater after we'd failed to see any at Granite Gorge, but luckily we picked out a silent bird perched near the visitor center at the Mareeba Wetlands and enjoyed some great looks at it. [E]

WHITE-THROATED HONEYEATER (*Melithreptus albigularis*) – A fair number of these were present in the dry forest at our Lovely Fairywren site, and a bunch more were seen along the Varirata entrance road. [E]

WHITE-NAPED HONEYEATER (*Melithreptus lunatus*) – Differs from the very similar White-throated Honeyeater in having a small bit of bare red skin behind the eye. We actually saw them well enough at Wondecla to see this feature, which we'd failed to see on our first ones along Duck Creek Road. [E]

TAWNY-BREASTED HONEYEATER (*Xanthotis flaviventer*) – Missed by most on our first visit to Varirata, so a scope view of one sitting in a dead tree on our second visit was most welcome. [E]

MACLEAY'S HONEYEATER (*Xanthotis macleayanus*) – An attractive and easy to see Atherton endemic, particularly at Cassowary House, where they are regulars at the sugar water feeders on the balcony. [E]

STRIPED HONEYEATER (*Plectorhyncha lanceolata*) – Once again our only one was seen beautifully at the Port of Brisbane, though we had to work for it this time. [E]

LITTLE FRIARBIRD (*Philemon citreogularis*) – A pair building a nest at Fred Bucholz Park were the only ones this trip. [EN]

HELMETED FRIARBIRD (NEW GUINEA) (*Philemon buceroides novaeguineae*) – A very common species in PNG. This subspecies is sometimes split off as a good species, endemic to PNG. [E]

HELMETED FRIARBIRD (HORNBILL) (*Philemon buceroides yorki*) – The Queensland counterpart of the above species, this one is common around Cairns. Sometimes split from the PNG subspecies and the subspecies found in the northern part of the Northern Territory, and called Hornbill Friarbird. [E]

NOISY FRIARBIRD (*Philemon corniculatus*) – Replaces the Helmeted in drier regions of the Atherton Tablelands, and south of that species range. Often in big numbers at flowering trees, and we saw them commonly at several sites. [E]

Pardalotidae (Pardalotes)

SPOTTED PARDALOTE (*Pardalotus punctatus*) – Several of these wonderful little birds were seen along Duck Creek Road, mainly fairly high in the eucalyptus, but a couple came low enough to offer good looks. [E]

Acanthizidae (Thornbills and Allies)

ROCKWARBLER (*Origma solitaria*) – We heard one calling way up the slope at Royal NP, but it just wouldn't come down to see us. [E*]

RUSTY MOUSE-WARBLER (*Crateroscelis murina*) – Heard at Varirata. [E*]

MOUNTAIN MOUSE-WARBLER (*Crateroscelis robusta*) – We heard a party of these moving through the undergrowth at Kumul, but only managed quick views of a juvenile. [E]

YELLOW-THROATED SCRUBWREN (*Sericornis citreogularis*) – Pretty striking, and easy to see, for a scrubwren. We had them regularly along the trails at O'Reilly's. [E]

WHITE-BROWED SCRUBWREN (*Sericornis frontalis*) – Even easier to see than the preceding species, and quite cheeky at O'Reilly's, where we could even lure them onto our hands if they thought we had some food. [E]

LARGE SCRUBWREN (*Sericornis nouhuysi*) – A small party of these were seen a couple of times right around Kumul Lodge. [E]

LARGE-BILLED SCRUBWREN (*Sericornis magnirostra*) – Jody spotted our first as we searched for lyrebirds one morning at O'Reilly's. We saw them again in the Atherton Tablelands one morning. [E]

BUFF-FACED SCRUBWREN (*Sericornis perspicillatus*) – A few folks got on these birds along the Tonga Trail, though they were less visible than usual. [E]

PAPUAN SCRUBWREN (*Sericornis papuensis*) – Good views of a small party of these along the road near Kumul Lodge. Though this species and the similar Large Scrubwren do occur together, this one mostly occurs at higher elevations than any other scrubwren. [E]

PALE-BILLED SCRUBWREN (*Sericornis spilodera*) – A few folks got on this bird with a little mixed flock on our first visit to Varirata, but with a lot of other things going on around us, it was easily missed. [E]

CHESTNUT-RUMPED HEATHWREN (*Hylacola pyrrhopygia*) – We heard the songs of a couple of these skulking birds in the heathland at Royal NP, but we couldn't get them to show. [E*]

MOUNTAIN THORNBILL (*Acanthiza katherina*) – The bubbly song of this Atherton endemic was heard at Mt Hypipamee, but, again, the bird stayed out of sight. [E*]

BROWN THORNBILL (*Acanthiza pusilla*) – Seen daily around O'Reilly's, then again at Royal NP. Generally the most common and easily seen of the thornbills. [E]

STRIATED THORNBILL (*Acanthiza lineata*) – Similar to the previous species, but shorter-billed and shorter-tailed, and with white streaks on the crown. We had poor views of these in the canopy along Duck Creek Road, then much closer and better looks at several at Royal NP. [E]

FAIRY GERYGONE (*Gerygone palpebrosa*) – The fanciest of the gerygones. We saw both possible subspecies of this bird; the trio of birds we saw at close range along Black Mountain Road belong to the subspecies *personata*, while the well-marked, black-headed male at Varirata was race

inconspicua, which endemic to PNG. [E]

WHITE-THROATED GERYGONE (*Gerygone olivacea*) – Another distinctive looking gerygone, and one of my favorite Australian songsters. A pair sang beautifully and showed well at Granite Gorge. [E]

YELLOW-BELLIED GERYGONE (*Gerygone chrysogaster*) – A couple of these were with a mixed flock of small insectivores (including the Fairy Gerygone and Pale-billed Scrubwren) inside the forest at Varirata. [E]

LARGE-BILLED GERYGONE (*Gerygone magnirostris*) – A coastal species, which replaces the similar Mangrove Gerygone in the mangroves and coastal forests around Cairns. We had a close pair at the Cattana Wetlands. [E]

BROWN GERYGONE (*Gerygone mouki*) – The common forest gerygone in most of eastern Australia. We saw and heard them pretty regularly. [E]

BROWN-BREASTED GERYGONE (*Gerygone ruficollis*) – A PNG highland species that we saw pretty well at both the Lesser BoP and Blue BoP sites. [E]

MANGROVE GERYGONE (*Gerygone levigaster*) – We only were able to track down a single one at the Port of Brisbane wetlands, but it was very responsive and showed well, at least. [E]

Orthonychidae (Logrunners)

AUSTRALIAN LOGRUNNER (*Orthonyx temminckii*) – Pete's favorite Australian bird for the trip, and who can fault that choice? This is an awesome bird, and we had some incredible close views, and enjoyed seeing their unique sideways-scratch foraging technique, at O'Reilly's. [E]

Cnemophilidae (Satinbirds)

CRESTED SATINBIRD (*Cnemophilus macgregorii*) – A female led us on a bit of a chase as she kept moving every time one or two folks got into a place where they could see her. In the end, a couple of folks at the end of line either missed her altogether, or only had substandard views. [E]

Melanocharitidae (Berrypeckers and Longbills)

BLACK BERRYPECKER (*Melanocharis nigra*) – A male was seen by some on our first visit to Varirata. [E]

SPECTACLED LONGBILL (*Oedistoma iliolophus*) – A fairly cooperative one with a little mixed flock at Varirata was seen by everyone in the end, I think. Formerly called Dwarf Honeyeater, but now the 4 longbills are aligned with the berrypeckers. [E]

Paramythiidae (Tit Berrypecker and Crested Berrypecker)

TIT BERRYPECKER (*Oreocharis arfaki*) – Though there's a spot below Kumul where these birds are almost always present, seeing them is not a straightforward proposition, or at all guaranteed. We heard them immediately upon our arrival at the site, but it took a lot of hard work and determination before we finally tracked one down. Eventually we had pretty good scope views of a gorgeous male, good enough to prompt Ellen into choosing it as her favorite PNG bird. [E]

CRESTED BERRYPECKER (*Paramythia montium*) – We fared far better with this species, as a pair fed in the trees right off the balcony a couple of times, giving us all ample opportunity to drink in all their beauty. [E]

Psophodidae (Whipbirds and Wedgebills)

EASTERN WHIPBIRD (*Psophodes olivaceus*) – If they weren't so easy to see along the trails at O'Reilly's we would be spending a fair bit of time on this species, as they can pretty elusive elsewhere, though they occur at all the Australian rainforest sites we visited. We did get a few quick looks at them elsewhere, and heard them regularly, but there was no beating those views of the O'Reilly's habituated birds. [E]

Cinclosomatidae (Quail-thrushes and Jewel-babblers)

CHESTNUT-BACKED JEWEL-BABBLER (*Ptilorrhoa castanonota*) – Though we technically did see this species, and some may have actually been able to discern some features and/or colors, I wouldn't classify those quick glimpses as the bird flew across the track as particularly satisfying. [E]

Machaerirhynchidae (Boatbills)

BLACK-BREASTED BOATBILL (*Machaerirhynchus nigripectus*) – A wonderful male pranced around in the treetops at the Murrumbidgee clearing, giving good looks, though he was highly mobile and thus a little tough to track. [E]

YELLOW-BREASTED BOATBILL (*Machaerirhynchus flaviventris*) – A single bird seen in each country. Along Black Mountain Road we had pretty good views of a male of the subspecies *secundus*, while at Varirata NP, a lone bird of the subspecies *xanthogenys*, was with a mixed flock of small insectivores at Varirata. [E]

Artamidae (Woodswallows)

GREAT WOODSWALLOW (*Artamus maximus*) – Doug picked out one of these highland woodswallows flying high above the forest at Murrumbidgee Pass. [E]

WHITE-BREASTED WOODSWALLOW (*Artamus leucorhynchus*) – The common woodswallow of lower elevations of PNG, and around Cairns.

DUSKY WOODSWALLOW (*Artamus cyanopterus*) – A pair of these appeared pretty much right on cue in the dry forest at Wondecla, which is usually the only site we find this species on the tour route. [E]

Cracticidae (Bellmagpies and Allies)

BLACK-BACKED BUTCHERBIRD (*Cracticus mentalis*) – The common open-country butcherbird in the PNG lowlands. We had them at PAU and along the entrance road to Varirata. [E]

GRAY BUTCHERBIRD (*Cracticus torquatus*) – Our first butcherbird, we found this one during our stop at Daisy Hill Koala Center, then saw one again at tour's end at Royal NP. [E]

HOODED BUTCHERBIRD (*Cracticus cassicus*) – Usually pretty common in the rainforest at Varirata NP, but we missed it the first visit, surprisingly. Good thing we had enough time to make a return, and that visit we managed to connect with some good looks near the picnic area. [E]

PIED BUTCHERBIRD (*Cracticus nigrogularis*) – Generally a common species, but I see I have only a single bird marked down on our list this trip. Was that one we saw feeding on the ground at Granite Gorge really our only one? [E]

BLACK BUTCHERBIRD (*Cracticus quoyi*) – The nominate subspecies is widespread in PNG; we saw one at a nest in Varirata. We also had a few scattered records of subspecies *rufescens* around the Cairns region, including the one hitting the Cassowary House feeders for cheese cubes. [N]

AUSTRALIAN MAGPIE (*Gymnorhina tibicen*) – Widespread and common to abundant in all of the eastern Australian areas we visited, though I we missed it, and I don't think I've ever seen it, right around the city of Cairns. [E]

PIED CURRAWONG (*Strepera graculina*) – Pretty common throughout eastern Australia, but especially so at O'Reilly's where a gang of marauders hung around the cafe, waiting to pounce on an unwary french fry or hamburger. [E]

Campephagidae (Cuckooshrikes)

BARRED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina lineata*) – Another species that we saw in both countries, with two different subspecies, though in this case the two are quite different. Around O'Reilly's and the Atherton Tablelands we saw the nominate subspecies, in which both male and female are barred below, while at Varirata NP, we encountered *axillaris*, in which only the female is barred, the male being solid gray. In both forms, the obvious yellow eye is probably the most distinctive feature, though. [E]

BOYER'S CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina boyeri*) – The usual small party of these cuckooshrikes was seen around the picnic clearing at Varirata. [E]

BLACK-FACED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina novaehollandiae*) – We saw just a few scattered individuals of this large, widespread cuckooshrike in the Brisbane and Cairns regions.

WHITE-BELLIED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina papuensis*) – The most commonly seen cuckooshrike of the tour, with plenty of nice views in both countries, including at least one bird on a ridiculously tiny nest. In this case, all the birds seen belonged to the same subspecies, *oriomo*, though we were in the range of a couple of others. [N]

VARIED TRILLER (*Lalage leucomela*) – We had this one at a bunch of different sites in both countries. Again two different subspecies were involved: in PNG we saw *polygrammica*, while in Australia, it was the nominate form we encountered.

BLACK-BELLIED CICADABIRD (*Edolisoma montanum*) – A pair of these attractive cuckooshrikes were hanging around the clearing at Murmur Pass, though I don't recall them ever posing for really prolonged views. [E]

COMMON CICADABIRD (*Edolisoma tenuirostre*) – Quick views of a singing male along Duck Creek Road were improved upon when with a much more cooperative male near the creek at Granite Gorge. This species exhibits different call types in different parts of their range, and there is some thought that more than one species may be involved.

BLACK CICADABIRD (*Edolisoma melan*) – A single bird was seen on our first visit to Varirata, a rufous female, if I recall correctly. Then as we left the park on our second visit, someone spotted a very distant black bird sitting low in some vines on the edge of the forest. Even with the scope cranked up, this wasn't an easy call to make, but we decided it was almost certainly a male of this species rather than a Pygmy Drongo-Fantail, which was our first thought. [E]

Neosittidae (Sittellas)

VARIED SITTELLA (*Daphoenositta chrysoptera*) – After nailing down our targets--Lovely Fairywren and White-browed Robin--at a new site for the tour, we were already pretty happy with the success of the morning, so when a trio of these cool birds passed nearby, it really was an unexpected bonus. As it was, these were the only ones for the trip. [E]

Eulacestomatidae (Ploughbill)

WATTLED PLOUGHBILL (*Eulacestoma nigropectus*) – We had limited success with this odd bird, which is now in a family all by itself. Doug, John and I happened across a foraging male during an optional afternoon walk, but it didn't stick around long, and I think only Doug got a reasonable view. We tried again on our final morning, but though we heard it singing several times, it was on the move, and we just couldn't track it down. [E]

Falcunculidae (Shrike-tit)

CRESTED SHRIKE-TIT (EASTERN) (*Falcunculus frontatus frontatus*) – This uncommon bird is always a great find, and those views we got of the lone bird at Hasties Swamp were pretty satisfying. Some authorities split this species into three (Eastern, Western, and Northern) based on their highly disjunct ranges. This eastern form is the most widespread of the three. [E]

Pachycephalidae (Whistlers and Allies)

RUSTY PITOHUI (*Colluricincla ferruginea*) – I think only one or two people actually saw this species at Varirata, not too surprising as it can be quite elusive. This is not one of the poisonous pitohuis, and is actually more closely aligned with the shrikethrushes, as the latin name suggests. [E]

LITTLE SHRIKETHRUSH (*Colluricincla megarhyncha*) – Occurs pretty much all along this tour route, in both countries. We saw them in the Atherton Tablelands, at Varirata NP, and a couple of places in the highlands (I believe the subspecies were *griseata*, *despecta*, and *maeandrina*, respectively). With nearly 30 subspecies across its range, it seems likely this bird will be split into a bunch of different species one day.

GRAY SHRIKETHRUSH (*Colluricincla harmonica*) – Pretty easy to see around O'Reilly's, like so many other birds. Elsewhere we saw just one in the tablelands, and heard one at Royal NP. [E]

BOWER'S SHRIKETHRUSH (*Colluricincla boweri*) – This Atherton specialty is more two-toned than the similar Little Shrikethrush which can often be found in the same areas. We ran into this species a couple of times around the Crater Lakes NP areas. [E]

REGENT WHISTLER (*Pachycephala schlegelii*) – The stunning male never fails to elicit some "oohs" and "aahs" when people first lay eyes on them, and that was certainly the case again this trip. We got to "ooh" and "aah" over them almost daily around Kumul. [E]

GOLDEN WHISTLER (*Pachycephala pectoralis*) – Regular in rainforests all down the east coast of Australia. At first we were having trouble connecting with a male, but we did finally track some down by tour's end.

GRAY WHISTLER (GRAY-HEADED) (*Pachycephala simplex peninsulae*) – A lone bird was found in a wooded strip along a pine plantation on Black Mountain Road. [E]

RUFOUS WHISTLER (*Pachycephala rufiventris*) – We had a few good looks at this lovely bird, at Granite Gorge, Wondecla, and Royal NP. [E]

Oreoicidae (Australo-Papuan Bellbirds)

RUFOUS-NAPED BELLBIRD (*Aleadryas rufinucha*) – Up until recently considered a whistler, but now aligned with Crested Bellbird and Piping Bellbird (formerly Crested Pitohui) in a very small family. We saw these birds daily around Kumul Lodge, where a couple of them regularly foraged for insects below some of the lights outside the lounge. [E]

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LONG-TAILED SHRIKE (NASUTUS GROUP) (*Lanius schach stresemanni*) – The only regularly occurring shrike to the south of Wallace's Line. We had excellent views of one at the Kama Lesser BoP site. This subspecies is endemic to PNG, though this is a widespread species in southern Asia.

Oriolidae (Old World Orioles)

HOODED PITOHUI (*Pitohui dichrous*) – This is the famous poisonous bird, discovered to be so when scientists preparing pitohui skins experienced numbness and a burning sensation on their hands! It is this fact that always makes this a big target for visiting birders, though it doesn't hurt that it is also a pretty handsome bird. Oddly we missed it our first visit to Varirata, and almost did again on the second, though we finally tracked one down literally minutes before we were to leave the park. Whew! [E]

- BROWN ORIOLE** (*Oriolus szalayi*) – Usually a pretty easy PNG endemic to see, but we struggled a bit for clean views, and had to work to secure looks for everyone on the second visit to Varirata. [E]
- OLIVE-BACKED ORIOLE** (*Oriolus sagittatus*) – The more widespread of the two Australian orioles. We saw a few of these, with one near the hide at Hasties Swamp providing the best looks. [E]
- GREEN ORIOLE** (*Oriolus flavocinctus*) – Primarily a species of coastal lowlands, and we see this species only around Cairns. We had just one bird this year, showing well at the Yorkey's Knob Golf Course pond. [E]
- AUSTRALASIAN FIGBIRD** (*Sphecotheres vieilloti*) – Seen most days, sometimes in big numbers, in the Cairns and Brisbane regions, and again at PAU. The PNG subspecies is *salvadorii*, which is endemic to the SE of PNG. In Australia we had 2 different subspecies, the yellow-bellied *flaviventris* around Cairns, and the dingier nominate form around Brisbane. [E]

Dicruridae (Drongos)

- SPANGLED DRONGO** (*Dicrurus bracteatus*) – Another species in which we saw two subspecies, one each in either country. Around Cairns we saw *atrabetus*, while at Varirata we had the endemic PNG subspecies *carbonarius*, which some consider to be a good species on its own. One pair in the picnic clearing at Varirata were in the process of building a nest. [N]

Rhipiduridae (Fantails)

- BLACK FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura atra*) – Great looks at a couple of pairs along the Tonga Trail. The female is quite something, with those black central tail feathers contrasting with the rest of her plumage, which is bright rufous. [E]
- WILLIE-WAGTAIL** (*Rhipidura leucophrys*) – We somehow managed to miss this species on a couple of days, but we probably could have had them daily if we'd tried a bit harder. A widespread, familiar, and charming little bird that is almost as often seen inside restaurants and shops as it is outside! [E]
- DIMORPHIC FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura brachyrhyncha*) – Barb and Ellen were the only ones to see the first bird on the edge of the clearing at Murrumbidgee Pass. A pair the next day along the road below the lodge were seen by most, though they were quite shy and only showed well as they flew across the road to disappear into the vegetation on the other side. [E]
- RUFIOUS FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura rufifrons*) – Some stellar views of these little gems at O'Reilly's where they regularly were feeding on or near the ground in forest clearings.
- FRIENDLY FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura albolimbata*) – The common fantail of PNG's highland forests, and we saw them daily around Kumul Lodge. [E]
- CHESTNUT-BELLIED FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura hyperythra*) – This gorgeous little fantail is only found at Varirata on this tour route, and that's where we found a pair feeding actively with a little mixed flock of small insectivores along the creek. [E]
- GRAY FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura albiscapa*) – Quite widespread in the eastern Australian rainforests, and we saw them from Cairns right down to Royal N, where we came across one pair building a nest next to the Lady Carrington Track. [E]

Ifritidae (Ifrita)

- BLUE-CAPPED IFRITA** (*Ifrita kowaldi*) – This ranks high on my list of all-time best birds in PNG. The sky-blue crown, the nuthatch-like foraging behavior, and those squeaky-toy calls are all part of the allure, but they also have toxins in their skin and feathers like the pitohuis. Oh, and they are now in a monotypic family. What's not to like? We saw them often around Kumul Lodge. [E]

Monarchidae (Monarch Flycatchers)

- WHITE-EARED MONARCH** (*Carterornis leucotis*) – We heard one along Black Mountain Road. [E*]
- BLACK-FACED MONARCH** (*Monarcha melanopsis*) – The most regularly seen monarch; we enjoyed this lovely bird from Cairns region right down to Royal NP. [E]
- BLACK-WINGED MONARCH** (*Monarcha frater*) – Seems to be pretty scarce at Varirata, and I've only seen it a few times, so it was great to get good looks at one of these along the entrance road. [E]
- SPECTACLED MONARCH** (*Symphysichrus trivirgatus*) – Another beautiful monarch, encountered a few times, both at O'Reilly's and the Atherton Tablelands. [E]
- FRILLED MONARCH** (*Arses telescopthalmus*) – A fairly common bird inside the forest at Varirata. We had a beautiful black-and-white male on our first visit to the park, then both sexes (the female is a rich, rusty color) on our second trip. [E]
- PIED MONARCH** (*Arses kaupi*) – Not as obviously dimorphic as the similar Frilled Monarch, with both sexes of this species being pied. We saw a pair along Black Mountain Road, then another at the Curtain Fig. [E]
- MAGPIE-LARK** (*Grallina cyanoleuca*) – A common, widespread, and conspicuous species in Australia, where we saw them most days. [E]
- LEADEN FLYCATCHER** (*Myiagra rubecula*) – A male along Duck Creek Road, and a couple of birds in the tablelands would have represented two different subspecies, *yorki* and *okyri* respectively. And along the Varirata entrance road, we encountered a female of the PNG endemic subspecies, *papuana*. [E]

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

- GRAY CROW** (*Corvus tristis*) – We could hear these far below the Varirata Lookout, but they never came into view. [E*]
- TORRESIAN CROW** (*Corvus orru*) – The common crow of both Brisbane and Cairns regions, as well as around Port Moresby. At PAU we saw a one capture a frog and fly off with it, then another do the same with a toad. [E]
- AUSTRALIAN RAVEN** (*Corvus coronoides*) – Only around Sydney, where this is the common Corvid, and we saw a few around the city. [E]

Paradisaeidae (Birds-of-Paradise)

- KING-OF-SAXONY BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Pteridophora alberti*) – A male was calling at Murrumbidgee Pass, but it took some time to track it down. When we finally did, we were a bit disappointed to find it was a juvenile, in a plumage very similar to that of a female. [E]
- SUPERB BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Lophorina superba*) – This species has been recently split into 3 and this one is now the Greater Superb Bird-of-Paradise. We saw single males on two consecutive days below Kumul, though neither one was especially cooperative. [E]
- PARADISE RIFLEBIRD** (*Ptiloris paradiseus*) – We had several close views of this riflebird at O'Reilly's, but especially exciting and memorable was the male along the Villa Track that flew so low over our heads that we felt the breeze from his wings in our faces as he passed over! [E]
- VICTORIA'S RIFLEBIRD** (*Ptiloris victoriae*) – Endemic to the Atherton Tablelands region. We had multiple great views of this one, with that male performing on his display perch above the restaurant at Chambers one morning being an obvious highlight! [E]

MAGNIFICENT RIFLEBIRD (GROWLING) (*Ptiloris magnificus intercedens*) – Fairly quiet this visit, and we only heard a couple of growls on our first day at Varirata. This form has now been elevated to a full species, Growling Riflebird, based on its very different vocalizations. [E*]

BROWN SICKLEBILL (*Epimachus meyeri*) – A female at Murmur Pass was all we could muster this time around, though we heard the very distinctive machine gun rattle of a calling male a few times. [E]

RIBBON-TAILED ASTRAPIA (*Astrapia mayeri*) – With 5 people choosing this as their favorite PNG bird (Pete, Jody, Jim, John, and Barb), this was the runaway winner as bird of the trip. And that's not surprising considering the many amazing views we had of this stunning bird-of-paradise! Tops was the gorgeous long-plumed male that was a regular visitor to the feeders, and around the lodge in general. It's been quite some time since a male of his caliber had been around the feeders, so nice to see one like this back. [E]

BLUE BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Paradisaea rudolphi*) – Unlike the Lesser BoP, this male still had his tail bustle, and was looking might fine. We only got on him once, but the looks in the scope were good, and everyone got a good view. I think if we'd had him a little bit longer, or a couple more times, it would have gotten more votes, but as it was, Eve was the only one to vote it as top bird of PNG. [E]

LESSER BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Paradisaea minor*) – This bird wasn't at his traditional display area while we were at the site, but we could hear him calling back towards the road, and so we ventured back to look for him. We soon had him in sight, close to the road, and while he still looked good, he had lost the bushy bustle that elevates him from attractive to spectacular. [E]

RAGGIANA BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Paradisaea raggiana*) – I've never had so much trouble with these birds before. There were no males at the regular lek on either visit, though we could hear them calling and displaying below the road. And in the end, though we saw a number of females, the only males we had were either subadults or post-breeders, lacking the lovely tail plumes. [E]

Melampittidae (Melampittas)

LESSER MELAMPITTA (*Melampitta lugubris*) – John, Doug, and I had reasonably good views of a couple of these skulking birds during an optional afternoon walk on the trails at Kumul. [E]

Petroicidae (Australasian Robins)

TORRENT FLYCATCHER (*Monachella muelleriana*) – A pair of these attractive flycatchers were at their usual haunt along the Lai River, where they showed quickly and well. [E]

LEMON-BELLIED FLYCATCHER (*Microeca flavigaster*) – Nice views of a pair in the savannah habitat along the Varirata entrance road. [E]

OLIVE FLYROBIN (*Microeca flavovirescens*) – We had pretty good views of one along the creek at Varirata, as it moved along with a mixed flock of small insectivores.

GARNET ROBIN (*Eugerygone rubra*) – A singing male at the start of the Murmur Pass trail teased us for a while before finally flying over us, the garnet coloring showing beautifully as it lit in a shrub across the way. It continued to prance around at eye level in the nearby bushes, giving us several good chances to enjoy the gorgeous coloration. Certainly not our usual experience with this lovely bird, as we rarely see it so well. [E]

ROSE ROBIN (*Petroica rosea*) – These proved tough this time around; though we did manage to track a couple of birds along the Python Rock Trail, they remained high in the canopy, and were way too restless and elusive for everyone to get clear views. [E]

PALE-YELLOW ROBIN (*Tregellasia capito*) – Super views of one that popped out nearby along Black Mountain Road, then another at Lake Barrine a couple of days later. A pretty good tally for a species we sometimes miss on this tour. [E]

EASTERN YELLOW ROBIN (*Eopsaltria australis*) – Far more common and easy to see than the Pale-yellow Robin, and we recorded them a bunch of times from Cairns right down to Sydney. [E]

MANGROVE ROBIN (*Eopsaltria pulverulenta*) – These have certainly been easier on past trips, but by sticking with a calling pair, we eventually got nice looks as they came out to the edge of the mangroves to feed. [E]

WHITE-BROWED ROBIN (*Poecilodryas superciliosa*) – A new site I'd scouted on the earlier trip came through again with awesome views of a species I'd only seen once or twice before. [E]

WHITE-WINGED ROBIN (*Peneothello sigillata*) – A family group of these highland robins were regulars around the lodge at Kumul, often feeding near the lights, and clinging to the walls of the buildings. [E]

BLUE-GRAY ROBIN (*Peneothello cyanus*) – Typically elusive at Tonga, though we heard it calling quite close. [E*]

ASHY ROBIN (*Heteromyias albispecularis*) – One of the biggest surprises for me at Murmur Pass was getting incredible views of this normally tough species as a pair and a juvenile fed in the garden clearing and popped into view a bunch of times. Though I've heard this species on many visits to the country, I think this was only the second time I'd ever seen it. Note that the field guide splits this species, and calls the central highlands form which we saw Black-capped Robin. [E]

GRAY-HEADED ROBIN (*Heteromyias cinereifrons*) – Formerly lumped together with Ashy Robin, but now treated as a full species, endemic to the Atherton Tablelands. We had these around our lodging at Chambers, and saw them a few other places in the Crater Lakes NP system. [E]

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

WELCOME SWALLOW (*Hirundo neoxena*) – The Barn Swallow equivalent in Australia, common and seen most days in most places. [EN]

PACIFIC SWALLOW (*Hirundo tahitica*) – Replaces Welcome Swallow in PNG, and as always, the only swallow we saw in that country, though only in the Port Moresby region.

FAIRY MARTIN (*Petrochelidon ariel*) – Several around the Port of Brisbane Wetlands were easy to pick out from the Welcome Swallows by their bright white rump and rusty caps. [E]

TREE MARTIN (*Petrochelidon nigricans*) – Our only one this trip was a single bird flying around with several swallows at the Kamarun Lookout. [E]

Phylloscopidae (Leaf Warblers)

ISLAND LEAF WARBLER (*Phylloscopus maforensis*) – We nailed some excellent views of a couple that were feeding below eye level as we got to the bottom of the Tonga Trail.

Acrocephalidae (Reed-Warblers and Allies)

AUSTRALIAN REED-WARBLER (*Acrocephalus australis*) – Single birds at two places, both showing well. First we had an enthusiastic singing bird on the margins of Swan Lake at the Port of Brisbane wetlands, then another was seen foraging in creekside vegetation at our platypus viewing spot. [E]

Locustellidae (Grassbirds and Allies)

TAWNY GRASSBIRD (TAWNY) (*Megalurus timoriensis alisteri*) – A single bird showed nicely in a reed bed along the lakeshore at Fred Bucholz Park. This subspecies is widespread in northern and eastern Australia.

TAWNY GRASSBIRD (PAPUAN) (*Megalurus timoriensis macrurus*) – This highland Papuan form (along with several other subspecies) is sometimes split off as Papuan Grassbird. [E]

Cisticolidae (Cisticolas and Allies)

GOLDEN-HEADED CISTICOLA (*Cisticola exilis*) – Our only sighting came on our final morning in PNG, when we spotted one in the tall grasses along the road on our way down from Varirata.

Zosteropidae (White-eyes, Yuhinas, and Allies)

BLACK-FRONTED WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops minor*) – Common, but not always easy to see, at Varirata. We had so-so views of a couple at the picnic area on our second visit to the park. [E]

NEW GUINEA WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops novaeguineae*) – These were the white-eyes that were quite numerous in the areas below Kumul. Although there is still some uncertainty as to whether or not this is the only species present here, all the ones we saw well enough to identify appeared to be this species. [E]

SILVER-EYE (*Zosterops lateralis*) – Aside from a sighting of 2 birds at O'Reilly's, all of our records were from the Atherton region, where we had them in small numbers daily.

Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)

PIED BUSHCHAT (*Saxicola caprata*) – Quite common in open grasslands in the highlands of PNG. Less so in the lowlands, where a dull female plumaged bird had us puzzled for a moment or two in the savannas to the west of Port Moresby.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

RUSSET-TAILED THRUSH (*Zosterops heinei*) – O'Reilly's guide Matt had found a thrush nest next to the road near the lodge, and we stopped by several times to check it out and try to see the field marks that would identify it to species. On our final stop, the bird was positioned to show off the wing covert markings that clinched it as this species. [E*]

ISLAND THRUSH (*Turdus poliocephalus*) – A couple of these were daily visitors to the Kumul Lodge feeders. With some 50 or so subspecies (some extinct), this species seems primed to be split up into several different species. The one around Kumul is the subspecies carbonarius

Sturnidae (Starlings)

METALLIC STARLING (*Aplonis metallica*) – Numerous around Cairns, and the close views we had of several at a nesting colony in the parking lot of a shopping complex allowed us to appreciate all the reflective colors shown by their metallic sheen. [N]

SINGING STARLING (*Aplonis cantoroides*) – Our final new species in PNG, seen, as often is the case, from the departure lounge at the airport, where two pairs were perched on one of the jet bridges. [E]

YELLOW-FACED MYNA (*Mino dumontii*) – A common lowland endemic in PNG, which we saw at several sites around Port Moresby. [E]

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) – One this trip, only seen in Sydney, where one of the 4 birds we saw was partially leucistic, and showed white cheeks, making it look very similar to White-cheeked Starling of eastern Asia. [I]

COMMON MYNA (*Acridotheres tristis*) – A common introduced species in Australia, much more numerous than the starling on the tour route. [I]

Dicaeidae (Flowerpeckers)

RED-CAPPED FLOWERPECKER (*Dicaeum geelvinkianum*) – A few scattered sightings in PNG included some scope views; though they never really sat long enough for the whole group to cycle through, we had enough encounters so that everyone had good views. [E]

MISTLETOEBIRD (*Dicaeum hirundinaceum*) – The only member of this diverse Asian family to make it to Australia, where it is found pretty much throughout the country. We saw them a few times, with our best views probably coming along Black Mountain Road, where a pair seemed to be working on a nest in a young pine plantation. [E]

Nectariniidae (Sunbirds and Spiderhunters)

OLIVE-BACKED SUNBIRD (*Cinnyris jugularis*) – Another widespread Asian family with just a lone representative in Australia (with a couple more in PNG). We had this in both countries-- a few around Cairns, and a couple in the mangroves west of Port Moresby.

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

AUSTRALASIAN PIPIT (AUSTRALIAN) (*Anthus novaeseelandiae australis*) – Single birds on a couple of days in open areas below O'Reilly's.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – We normally don't run into too many of these on this tour route, and our only ones this time were around the restaurant at Gallo Dairyland. [I]

EURASIAN TREE SPARROW (*Passer montanus*) – Quite numerous and widespread in PNG now, having spread at an incredible rate since my first sighting in about 2009. [I]

Estrildidae (Waxbills and Allies)

BEAUTIFUL FIRETAIL (*Stagonopleura bella*) – A curious and rather bold bird was a fantastic find at Royal NP, where it had been several years since my last sighting. An aptly-named bird, and big highlight of our day at the park.

MOUNTAIN FIRETAIL (*Oreostruthus fuliginosus*) – One or two around the edge of the forest at Kumul Lodge showed nicely. [E]

RED-BROWED FIRETAIL (*Neochmia temporalis*) – Common and widespread in the eastern Australian rainforest region, and we saw them from Cairns right down to Royal NP. [E]

DOUBLE-BARRED FINCH (*Taeniopygia bichenovii*) – Some good numbers of these little cuties were pretty confiding around the Granite Gorge campground. [E]

SCALY-BREASTED MUNIA (*Lonchura punctulata*) – Small numbers in the Cairns area, particularly in seeding grasses along the Esplanade. [I]

HOODED MUNIA (*Lonchura spectabilis*) – Ellen spotted our only ones in some weedy vegetation as we descended the Tonga Trail. [E]

GRAY-HEADED MUNIA (*Lonchura caniceps*) – A pair were at PAU, and small numbers along the road below Varirata, but the biggest numbers were seen late in the afternoon west of the city, where several large flocks flew past as we birded the mangroves. [E]

CHESTNUT-BREASTED MUNIA (*Lonchura castaneothorax*) – A pair in each country. In Australia, we had fine looks at them in the lakeside vegetation at Fred Bucholz Park, in PNG, Leonard spotted a couple from the bus, perched in a small bush next to the highway. [E]

MAMMALS

PLATYPUS (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*) – I was a bit concerned with the water levels at our traditional platypus site, as I'd never before seen so much water, and wasn't sure how it would impact the activity of the animals. Well, I need not have worried, as a platypus began surfacing shortly after we arrived, and as the light was beginning to fade, it made a couple of passes on the surface right in front of us, giving us some super views of this strange creature! [E]

LONG-NOSED BANDICOOT (*Peramelas nasuta*) – A lone one of these terrestrial marsupials turned up along the roadside during our night spotting expedition near Yungaburra. [E]

COPPERY BRUSHTAIL POSSUM (*Trichosurus johnstonii*) – Also seen during the same night outing as the bandicoot. We saw three of these handsome possums in the roadside trees, getting excellent looks at what I think was a lifer mammal for me!

SHORT-EARED POSSUM (*Trichosurus caninus*) – One of these brushtails showed up at the feeders one night at O'Reilly's. [E]

SUGAR GLIDER (*Petaurus breviceps*) – Only a couple of folks got to see one just before it disappeared from the feeding area at Chambers, and everyone was a bit too tired to put in a long vigil in hopes that a glider would come back. The fact that both Rufous Owl and Southern Boobook were calling nonstop nearby may have also put a damper on small mammal activity! [E]

COMMON RINGTAIL POSSUM (*Pseudocheirus peregrinus*) – A couple of these common possums were seen after dark at O'Reilly's. [E]

GREEN RINGTAIL POSSUM (*Pseudocheirus archeri*) – Pretty much restricted to the tablelands region, this sleepy looking possum was seen beautifully during our spotlighting session near Yungaburra. We saw a total of 4 of these on the night. [E]

STRIPED POSSUM (*Dactylopsila trivirgata*) – While looking for the Southern Boobook near the cabins, Doug, Eve, and I found one of these strikingly gorgeous possums instead. Not a bad consolation prize! [E]

MUSKY RAT-KANGAROO (*Hypsiprymnodon moschatus*) – Missing below the feeders at Cassowary House due to the damp weather, but we manage to get a couple of views of this small kangaroo at a couple of other places around the Crater Lakes. [E]

RED-NECKED PADEMELON (*Thylogale thetis*) – Common and easy to see in the open areas around O'Reilly's. [E]

RED-LEGGED PADEMELON (*Thylogale stigmatica*) – We picked out one of these pademelons, which are much shyer than the preceding species, at O'Reilly's, then saw them regularly after dark at Chambers. [E]

MAREEBA ROCK-WALLABY (*Petrogale mareeba*) – These cute little devils are always a big hit at Granite Gorge. [E]

WHIPTAIL WALLABY (*Macropus parryi*) – Also known as Pretty-faced Wallabies, these attractive beasts were seen a couple of times on the slopes in the eucalyptus forest below O'Reilly's. [E]

SPECTACLED FLYING-FOX (*Pteropus conspicillatus*) – All those bats at the huge roost in Cairns are this species. [E]

GRAY-HEADED FLYING-FOX (*Pteropus poliocephalus*) – And the equally enormous congregations of bats along the creek at Canungra and Beenleigh are mainly this species, though careful inspection may reveal a few bats of other species mixed in. [E]

EUROPEAN BROWN HARE (*Lepus europaeus*) – Several of these were hanging around at the Port of Brisbane Wetlands, the only place we saw them.

WHITE-TAILED RAT (*Uromys caudimaculatus*) – At least 4 of these large, arboreal, native rats were seen on our spotlighting night near Yungaburra, where we mostly tracked them down by the sound of them gnawing on hard nuts.

BLACK-TAILED GIANT RAT (*Uromys anak*) – One showed up at the Kumul Lodge feeders one night. [E]

DINGO (*Canis familiaris dingo*) – We saw three of these wild dogs around O'Reilly's, with a pair of them along the road late in the afternoon, then a gorgeous black one well-known to the park rangers, and nicknamed "Midnight", which we saw beautifully during an unsuccessful search for Marbled Frogmouth.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

A few other critters we came across on the trip were:

Land Mullet (*Egernia major*): That big lizard that was sunning itself at the entrance to the Villa Track at O'Reilly's.

Australian Water Dragon (*Intellagama lesueurii*): the large, spiky lizard along the creek at the platypus spot.

Carpet Python (*Morelia spilota*): one along the roadside at O'Reilly's, another that we almost ran over on the road at night near Chambers.

Dwarf Crowned Snake (*Cacophis krefftii*): the small, ring-necked snake Eve and I saw near our cabins at O'Reilly's.

Yellow-faced Whip Snake (*Demansia psammophis*): that fast, attractive snake that almost slithered across Pete's feet at the overlook at Bromfield Swamp.

Totals for the tour: 381 bird taxa and 19 mammal taxa