



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**New Guinea & Australia 2018**

Oct 11, 2018 to Oct 29, 2018

Jay VanderGaast

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



*Female Brown Sicklebills are easy enough to see at the Kumul Lodge feeders, but getting a good look at a male is another story. Luckily for us, this male spent a fair amount of time sitting out in the open and giving his incredible machine gun rattle at Murrumbidgee Pass. Photo by guide Jay VanderGaast.*

Another New Guinea and Australia tour is in the books, and once again, it was a great success, and a whole lot of fun. Sampling some of the choicest birding destinations in both countries, we tallied close to 400 species of birds, including a whole bevy of unique, strange, and/or beautiful birds, many of them found nowhere else on earth. Not a bad way to spend a few weeks at this time of year!

As usual, we started things off in Cairns, one of Australia's most diverse birding regions, and every site we visited had something special to offer. Yorkey's Knob offered us fine close views of a pair of Double-eyed Fig-Parrots and a pair of Mistletoebirds constructing a wonderful, pear-shaped nest in a palm tree. At Cattana Wetlands we enjoyed our first Orange-footed Scrubfowl and Comb-crested Jacana, and Centenary Lakes offered up a pair of cryptic Papuan Frogmouths and some lovely Radjah Shelducks. Further afield, we stopped in at Cassowary House for an incredible cassowary experience, with the male and three small chicks practically brushing past us on their way to score some fruit. We birded the dry, northern parts of the tablelands, finding Australian Bustards, Squatter Pigeons, and Gray-crowned Babblers at Granite Gorge, Apostlebirds, Channel-billed Cuckoo, and Brown Treecreepers near Mareeba, and Lovely Fairywrens, Weebill, (Australia's smallest bird) and a super flock of Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos along some of the rural roads. And we toured the high elevation rainforest regions, tallying localized endemics like Tooth-billed Catbird, Chowchilla, and Pied Monarch. And we won't soon forget the sight of those amazing Victoria's Riflebirds displaying on a dead snag above Chambers!

All too soon it was time to leave Cairns behind and wing across the Coral Sea to neighboring Papua New Guinea, for a complete cultural switch and a whole bunch of new birds. WE eased into things there with a visit to PAU, where we saw a lot of birds we'd already met up with in Oz, and added a handful of new species, including Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove, Yellow-faced Myna, and Gray-headed Munia. Next day, a visit to Varirata National Park, one of my favorite birding areas in the country, really got us going with PNG specialties. Five species of fruit-doves, including Dwarf and Beautiful, were a big hit, as were both Zoe and Purple-tailed Imperial-Pigeons. Three different Barred Owlet-Nightjars got that special family onto our lists, both species of paradise-kingfisher showed beautifully, Black-capped Lories were spectacular, as always, and toxic Hooded Pitohuis were well-received. But it was the Raggiana BoPs that stole the show, a couple of stunning, breeding-plumaged males wowing the group at their display area.

We then flew up to Mt Hagen, for a 3 night stay at the basic, but well-situated Kumul Lodge. Despite a dire weather forecast, we really lucked out with some reasonably dry days, and we took full advantage of them. Birds-of-Paradise are always high on the target list here, and they did not disappoint, as we got breeding males of most of the species we were seeking. A long-tailed male Ribbon-tailed Astrapia was a huge hit at the lodge feeders, males of both Brown Sicklebill and the spectacular King-of-Saxony BoP were scoped at Murrumbidgee Pass, and male Lesser and Blue BoPs, and Greater Lophorina (I.e. Superb BoP) were also scoped in areas below the lodge. Only male Magnificent BoPs failed to show, though we had decent looks at a couple of females. Other good finds in the region included a pair of delightful Blue-capped Ibis around the lodge, bizarre Wattled Ploughbills at a couple of sites, an unusually confiding Lesser Melampitta, and such varied birds as Plum-faced Lorikeets, Yellow-breasted Bowerbird, Crested and Tit Berrypeckers, Ashy Robin, Blue-faced Parrotfinch, and many more. All in all our time here was a huge success.

Heading back to Australia, we flew down to Brisbane, heading up to O'Reilly's, always a highlight destination for any birder. Before we got there, we stopped for Black Swan, Chestnut Teal, and Striped Honeyeater at the Port of Brisbane, and a nest of Square-tailed Kites at Daisy Hill. O'Reilly's was fantastic, as always, and I think everyone enjoyed the up close and personal encounters with Australian King Parrots, Crimson Rosellas, and Regent Bowerbirds. We did well on other specials here, too, with incredible scope views of a Noisy Pitta calling in the subcanopy, Australian Logrunners kicking leaf litter aside on the forest floor, a male Satin bowerbird at a nicely decorated bower, and a male of the very local Albert's Lyrebird foraging next to the maintenance area in full view. We also had my first ever looks at a displaying male Paradise Riflebird, and added striking species like Spotted Pardalote and White-eared Monarch to our lists.

Finally, we headed down to Sydney for a day at the beautiful Royal NP. Superb Lyrebirds were our main goal here, and we nailed them, getting awesome views of two different males during our walk. The local Rockwarbler also put in an appearance, though it did make us sweat a bit, showing up as we were about to end our sea watch and head back into Sydney. As always, we left a few things on the table, but our final bird tally of 390 species was above average for this tour, not too shabby! In addition to all these wonderful bird sightings, we also enjoyed a bunch of unique Aussie mammals, 23 species in all! That included iconic species like Platypus and Koala, both of which showed perfectly, plus gorgeous Sugar Gliders, swarms of flying-foxes, five possum species, including striking Striped Possums, and 9 species of macropods, including great looks at Lumholtz's Tree-Kangaroo, lovely Whiptail Wallabies, and the smallest of all, a Musky Rat-Kangaroo.

I enjoyed meeting all of you and showing you some of the best birding that these two countries have to offer, and I hope you went home with some wonderful memories and a real appreciation of the diversity and uniqueness of this region's bird life. I always like birding Down Under, and if it wasn't for folks like you opting to travel with Field Guides, I wouldn't get that opportunity, so many thanks to all of you. Would be great to see you all on another trip someday soon. Until the next time, happy holidays, and I wish you great birding, wherever you go.

--Jay

Bird of the trip voting results:

Australia: 1) Papuan Frogmouth and Lovely Fairywren (tied)

3) Noisy Pitta and Albert's Lyrebird (tied)

PNG: 1) King-of-Saxony BoP

2) Ribbon-tailed Astrapia

3) Crested Berrypecker and Raggiana BoP (tied)

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## 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

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## BIRDS

### Casuariidae (Cassowaries and Emu).

**SOUTHERN CASSOWARY** (*Casuarius casuarius*) – On my last couple of tours here, this bird has been a bit unpredictable and problematic for our groups, so I was especially pleased that they came so easily this trip. Just as we arrived at the entrance to Cassowary House, I received a text from Phil that the female was present, so we hurried in to see her. She was resting near the house as we arrived, then got up to have a drink at a nearby water hole. While we watched her from a few feet away, I suddenly noticed the male and three very small chicks heading our way down the path, and we had to step aside to allow them to pass by at extremely close quarters! A couple of us could have easily reached out and touched them! It was a fantastic experience with these amazing birds, many thanks to Phil and Sue for their hospitality in letting us enjoy them there. [E]

### Anseranatidae (Magpie Goose).

**MAGPIE GOOSE** (*Anseranas semipalmata*) – This often abundant odd goose was not particularly numerous this trip, but we still saw several of them around the Cairns and Atherton regions, with a handful also at the Port of Brisbane wetlands. [E]

### Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl).

**PLUMED WHISTLING-DUCK** (*Dendrocygna eytoni*) – As usual there were some fairly impressive numbers at Hasties Swamp, but away from there, we saw just a handful of birds at the ponds near and at PAU. [E]

**WANDERING WHISTLING-DUCK** (*Dendrocygna arcuata*) – At least 3 of these were mixed in among the many Plumed Whistling-Ducks at Hasties, where they could be picked out by their black bills and dark cap and line down the back of the neck. There were also 9 or 10 at the PAU ponds.

**FRECKLED DUCK** (*Stictonetta naevosa*) – Range maps in the field guides are a bit misleading, as they don't show this species at all in FNQ, but they are irruptive and nomadic, and they appear in varying numbers at Hasties Swamp most years. We saw at least 16 of them among the many other ducks there.

**BLACK SWAN** (*Cygnus atratus*) – These birds were present in big numbers at the appropriately-named Swan Lake in the Port of Brisbane wetlands. We counted around 100 of these beauties there.



**RADJAH SHELDUCK** (*Tadorna radjah*) – A pair with a lone duckling were on the Centenary Lakes at Cairns, and another 4 adults were at the Yorkey's Knob Golf Course pond. We also saw these at PAU, where a count of 13 birds was the most I'd ever seen here. [N]

**GREEN PYGMY-GOOSE** (*Nettapus pulchellus*) – Rain and a bevy of anglers conspired against our attempts to get the usual close views of these small geese at Cattana Wetlands, but a pair that we found at PAU back in July were still around, and they cleaned up our looks at this species. [E]

**MANED DUCK** (*Chenonetta jubata*) – First seen as a group of about 15 birds at the sam along Chewko Road on our way out from Granite Gorge. These were also the only ones we saw in the far north; further south, around Brisbane and Sydney, these were quite numerous, and most small bodies of water had at least one pair in residence. [E]

**PACIFIC BLACK DUCK** (*Anas superciliosa*) – The default dabbling duck in these parts, and pretty much any suitable body of water had its fair share of them.

**GRAY TEAL** (*Anas gracilis*) – Especially numerous at Cattana Wetlands, where one of the ponds had a flock of 40+ birds, including some with extensive staining making them look much buffier than normal. A single bird was also at the PAU ponds, and a few were noted at Hasties Swamp and the Port of Brisbane wetlands as well.

**CHESTNUT TEAL** (*Anas castanea*) – A very buffy female teal I'd photographed at Cattana Wetlands the day before the tour was accepted by Ebird reviewers as a female of this species, which is known only as a vagrant in this region. We saw the same bird on the first day of the tour, but after looking at definite Chestnut Teal females at the Port of Brisbane wetlands, I am of the opinion that the bird near Cairns was just a heavily-stained Gray Teal. [E]

**PINK-EARED DUCK** (*Malacorhynchus membranaceus*) – At least 50 of these unique small ducks were at Hasties Swamp, where we got to enjoy watching them feed in their characteristic way, as "rotating, locked pairs" as one of the field guides puts it. The pink ear for which they are named is a pretty obscure mark, but with the aid of the scope, at least a few folks managed to see this feature. [E]

**WHITE-EYED DUCK** (*Aythya australis*) – Aka the Hardhead, this is the common diving duck around Australia, and we saw them at all the suitable wetlands, with particularly big numbers on Swan Lake.

*Megapodiidae (Megapodes)*

**AUSTRALIAN BRUSHTURKEY** (*Alectura lathami*) – Super common in the eastern rainforests of Australia, and downright tame at some locations. You almost had to kick them out of the way at places like O'Reilly's! Despite that, it was especially fun to watch them working on nest mounds both at O'Reilly's and Chambers. [EN]

**YELLOW-LEGGED BRUSHTURKEY** (*Talegalla fuscirostris*) – Much shier and more difficult to see than their Australian cousins, and as usual, this was a heard only bird at Varirata. [E\*]

**ORANGE-FOOTED SCRUBFOWL** (*Megapodius reinwardt*) – Pretty numerous in the Cairns region, where we saw them daily.

*Podicipedidae (Grebes)*

**AUSTRALASIAN GREBE** (*Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*) – About 50 of these birds on the water at Hasties Swamp were all in non-breeding plumage, but further south we saw a couple of breeding-plumaged birds on Swan Lake and on a dam below O'Reilly's.

**GREAT CRESTED GREBE** (*Podiceps cristatus australis*) – Lake Barrine was the only place we saw this elegant grebe, as is usually the case on this tour. There were about 20-25 in all, most of which were a long way away across the lake, but a lone bird was on our side, and seen very well at close range.

*Procellariidae (Shearwaters and Petrels)*

**WEDGE-TAILED SHEARWATER** (*Ardenna pacifica*) – Fair numbers were seen offshore at Royal NP, identified by their longish wings and tails, and all dark plumage. There were certainly other shearwaters present, as I saw at least one small white-bellied type (Hutton's or Fluttering) but this was the only one we could positively identify.

*Ciconiidae (Storks)*

**BLACK-NECKED STORK** (*Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus australis*) – Not a common bird on this trip, and I've only ever seen it in the Cairns region, so it was a great surprise to spot one in a roadside wetland on our way up to O'Reilly's.

*Sulidae (Boobies and Gannets)*

**AUSTRALASIAN GANNET** (*Morus serrator*) – At least 2 or 3 of these were seen during our sea-watch vigil at Royal NP, with everyone managing to get a look in the scope as they flew low over the water.

*Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)*

**LITTLE PIED CORMORANT** (*Microcarbo melanoleucos*) – Pretty common at most suitable wetland sites in Australia, and we saw a single bird at the PAU ponds as well.

**GREAT CORMORANT (AUSTRALASIAN)** (*Phalacrocorax carbo novaehollandiae*) – A couple of sightings in the Atherton tablelands (singles each at Lake Barrine and the platypus site) and a few offshore at Royal NP.

**LITTLE BLACK CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*) – Numerous at most of the Australian wetland sites visited, as well as at PAU, where 200+ birds were coming in to roost for the night. [E]

**PIED CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax varius*) – Larger than the Little Pied, and with obvious yellow lores and blue around the eyes. We saw these only at the Port of Brisbane wetlands. [E]

*Anhingidae (Anhingas)*

**AUSTRALASIAN DARTER** (*Anhinga novaehollandiae*) – A few scattered records at various wetlands, mainly as single birds, except at Yorkey's Knob, where there were several nesting pairs on the treed island in the middle of the pond. [EN]

*Pelecanidae (Pelicans)*

**AUSTRALIAN PELICAN** (*Pelecanus conspicillatus*) – These huge pelicans were a common site at most of the wetland sites we visited. [E]

*Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)*

**PACIFIC HERON** (*Ardea pacifica*) – Never numerous, but we had more than usual this trip, with records at several sites. First seen at the dam on our way out from Granite Gorge, then again at Hasties Swamp, with a couple of roadside sightings also in the farmland below Lamington NP. [E]

**GREAT EGRET (AUSTRALASIAN)** (*Ardea alba modesta*) – A few birds at pretty much all the wetlands we visited, including the PAU ponds in PNG. One bird at Swan Lake was initially confusing as it had a very dark bill, but it was evidently in non-breeding condition.

**INTERMEDIATE EGRET** (*Ardea intermedia*) – Smaller than the similar Great Egret, but where size is tough to judge, a good look at the gape line is enough to clinch it. The gape line stops below the eye in this species, but extends behind the eye in Great. We saw a few at Hasties Swamp, then a couple at PAU.

**WHITE-FACED HERON** (*Egretta novaehollandiae*) – Widespread in small numbers. The oddest one was a bird on a floating log deep down in the crater lake at Mt Hypipamee!

**LITTLE EGRET (AUSTRALASIAN)** (*Egretta garzetta nigripes*) – Very few, with just a single on our first day around Cairns, a couple at the PAU ponds, and a few more at the Port if Brisbane wetlands.

**PACIFIC REEF-HERON** (*Egretta sacra*) – Our only sighting was of a white morph bird on the mudflats at Machan's Beach on our first afternoon, though one or two of the group saw a dark one along the Esplanade before the tour started.

**PIED HERON** (*Egretta picata*) – A bunch of these lovely, small herons were at the ponds on the PAU campus and in the newly constructed rice paddies along the main road nearby.

**CATTLE EGRET (EASTERN)** (*Bubulcus ibis coromandus*) – Common in suitable grasslands and pastures in both countries.

**STRIATED HERON** (*Butorides striata*) – One each at Machan's Beach and Cattana Wetlands on our first day, then a couple of sightings south of Brisbane.

**RUFIOUS NIGHT-HERON** (*Nycticorax caledonicus*) – A bunch of day-roosting birds were in their usual tree along the busy Cairns Esplanade, where a number of people stopped to see what it was we were looking at. We also had a single juvenile bird at PAU. [E]

#### Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

**GLOSSY IBIS** (*Plegadis falcinellus*) – A few birds on the fringes of Hasties Swamp and a couple more around the PAU ponds.

**AUSTRALIAN IBIS** (*Threskiornis molucca*) – Pretty much everywhere in Australia, other than in heavily forested regions. In PNG we saw just a handful at PAU.

**STRAW-NECKED IBIS** (*Threskiornis spinicollis*) – Also quite numerous this year, particularly around Cairns. Believe it or not some years there are very few around. We also had a lone bird in PNG, seen our last morning as we drove by the ponds near the PAU entrance. [E]

**ROYAL SPOONBILL** (*Platalea regia*) – Most wetlands in Australia had a few of these handsome spoonbills, but there were some especially impressive numbers at Swan Lake, where we counted at least 75 of them !

#### Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

**AUSTRALIAN KITE** (*Elanus axillaris*) – Single birds were seen on two days in the Atherton tablelands, one near Mareeba and the other by Bromfield Swamp. Note that in the upcoming taxonomic changes, this species will be renamed Black-shouldered Kite. [E]

**LONG-TAILED HONEY-BUZZARD** (*Henicopernis longicauda*) – A second visit to Varirata NP on our final morning in PNG netted us a handful of new birds, including a couple of these raptors. Our first flew into the big fruiting tree at the picnic area, then quickly flew back out, eluding most everyone. A short while later it was spotted perched in the canopy, but once again it slipped away before everyone could see it. Luckily, a final stop along the entrance road paid off when one flew quite low and directly overhead, giving us all smashing views in the process! [E]

**SQUARE-TAILED KITE** (*Lophoictinia isura*) – Serendipity plays a big part in birding, and our finding of this species was definitely serendipitous. We were just about to leave Daisy Hill Koala Reserve when a roadside wallaby demanded a stop. But with another car right on my tail, I had to move, so I pulled into the nearby parking area and we got out to walk over to it for photos. While everyone was working on framing their photos, I glanced up and noticed a large stick nest. Result: we all enjoyed what were easily my best ever looks at this uncommon raptor, both the rusty juveniles in the nest and the adult perched in the open directly below! [EN]

**PACIFIC BAZA** (*Aviceda subcristata*) – This lovely small raptor showed beautifully this year, and we had 4 different pairs on 4 different days. Three of these were in the Cairns region with a pair along the Mareeba Wetlands entrance road showing best. We had great scope looks at them as they perched in some roadside trees, and even got to see the male present the female with a nice yellow frog which she promptly flew off with. Our final pair was along the entrance road to Varirata NP, where we observed one of the pair fly in to a well-concealed nest in the crotch of a Eucalyptus. [N]

**WEDGE-TAILED EAGLE** (*Aquila audax*) – A couple of high-flying birds at Granite Gorge were our first, but we improved on that view in the Lamington NP area, where we had several sightings. Best was the bird perched on a fencepost below the road, patiently waiting for a trio of Dingos to finish feeding at a carcass of some sort. [E]

**GRAY GOSHAWK** (*Accipiter novaehollandiae*) – Our first and only one came very early in the tour-- Kay spotted a gray morph bird flying over at Centenary Lakes on the first afternoon of the trip. [E]

**COLLARED SPARROWHAWK** (*Accipiter cirrocephalus*) – An excited group of Passerines, including babblers, gerygones, whistlers, and honeyeaters, appeared to be mobbing something near the road at Granite Gorge, but we couldn't find the source of all the fuss, and I was beginning to think it was a well-hidden snake. But it was really a well-hidden Collared Sparrowhawk which finally burst out of the foliage and gave us a quick, close flyby as it bolted for friendlier parts. [E]

**BLACK KITE (BLACK)** (*Milvus migrans affinis*) – Very common in the Atherton tablelands as well as the PNG highlands.

**WHISTLING KITE** (*Haliastur spheurnus*) – Not as numerous as the Black Kite, but still seen daily in the tablelands, with a single bird each at PAU and the Fred Bucholz Park.

**BRAHMINY KITE** (*Haliastur indus*) – Small numbers of these handsome kites were seen throughout the tour.

**WHITE-BELLIED SEA-EAGLE** (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) – Other than a lone bird being mobbed by a couple of crows at the Port of Brisbane wetlands, we saw this huge eagle only on the first day around Cairns, and the last day at Royal NP. The final ones soaring over the gorgeous, rugged coastline were especially memorable.

#### Otididae (Bustards)

**AUSTRALIAN BUSTARD** (*Ardeotis australis*) – Stumbling across two pairs of these in a large pasture was a great way to kick off our visit to Granite Gorge. This is always a hit and miss kind of species on this tour. [E]

#### Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

**BUFF-BANDED RAIL** (*Gallirallus philippensis*) – Driving along a gravel road near the Curtain Fig Tree, one of these rails scurried across the road ahead of the vehicle, so we stopped to try and relocate it. As we approached the area where the rail had been, it suddenly sauntered out into the road and began feeding in full view of us. Another one the next day, bathing in a small pond was superfluous.

**AUSTRALASIAN SWAMPHEN** (*Porphyrio melanotus melanotus*) – A common species at most all of the wetland sites visited, including at PAU.

**DUSKY MOORHEN** (*Gallinula tenebrosa*) – I found it surprising to see just a single juvenile at Hasties Swamp, as it seems an ideal place for these birds. The ponds at PAU and Swan Lake were evidently more to their liking as there were plenty at both sites, including some tiny chicks at the latter.

[N]

**EURASIAN COOT** (*Fulica atra australis*) – Quite numerous in suitable wetland areas throughout the Australian portion of the trip.

*Gruidae (Cranes)*

**SARUS CRANE** (*Antigone antigone gillae*) – We saw these daily in the Atherton tablelands, with as many as 60 of them on our first day there. And while it is always nice to see cranes, we were a bit disappointed to miss out on finding any Brolgas among them, despite a good deal of effort.

*Burhinidae (Thick-knees)*

**BUSH THICK-KNEE** (*Burhinus grallarius*) – Quite common and pretty easily seen in the Cairns region, where they are pretty habituated in a lot of places. [E]

*Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)*

**PIED STILT** (*Himantopus leucocephalus*) – Small numbers at various wetlands in the Cairns region, and a big flock at the high tide roost at the Port of Brisbane.

*Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)*

**PACIFIC GOLDEN-PLOVER** (*Pluvialis fulva*) – Just a couple of birds this trip, at the ponds at PAU. [b]

**MASKED LAPWING (MASKED)** (*Vanellus miles miles*) – This is the northern version, which was common in open areas throughout the Cairns region and around Port Moresby. One bird at PAU was on a nest with eggs. [N]

**MASKED LAPWING (BLACK-SHOULDERED)** (*Vanellus miles novaehollandiae*) – This subspecies has black braces along the sides of the upper breast. This was the form seen around the Brisbane and Sydney regions.

**GREATER SAND-PLOVER** (*Charadrius leschenaultii*) – A couple of good flocks of sand-plovers were seen at Machan's Beach and at Lea Lea in PNG, but a close study of them showed them all to be this species, though Lesser is also often present in smaller numbers. [b]

**RED-CAPPED PLOVER** (*Charadrius ruficapillus*) – Several of these attractive little plovers were at Machan's Beach on our second visit there, and a few were at the high tide roost at the Port of Brisbane. [E]

**RED-KNEED DOTTEREL** (*Erythronyx cinctus*) – Another attractive endemic plover, and one that is generally scarce on this trip, so the 4 or 5 birds at Hasties Swamp were a pleasant surprise. [E]

**BLACK-FRONTED DOTTEREL** (*Elseya melanops*) – Usually the commonest of the endemic small plovers, though we didn't see all that many this trip. Just a couple each at Cattana Wetlands, the Esplanade, and Machan's Beach. [E]

*Jacaniidae (Jacanas)*

**COMB-CRESTED JACANA** (*Irediparra gallinacea*) – We struggled a bit to find these at Cattana Wetlands where they are usually common and easy to see, but ultimately we managed to track a couple of them down. We had a few others elsewhere, but they were probably best seen trotting across the lily pads at the PAU ponds.

*Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)*

**WHIMBREL (SIBERIAN)** (*Numenius phaeopus variegatus*) – Seen in small numbers at several sites, including a lone bird in PNG on the beach at Lea Lea. [b]

**FAR EASTERN CURLEW** (*Numenius madagascariensis*) – A couple of these showed off their incredibly long beaks at Machan's Beach, and a lone bird was at the Port of Brisbane high tide roost. [b]

**BAR-TAILED GODWIT** (*Limosa lapponica*) – A few at each shorebird site we visited in Australia, then a big flock of 200+ roosting at the high tide roost at the Port of Brisbane. [b]

**BLACK-TAILED GODWIT (MELANUROIDES)** (*Limosa limosa melanuroides*) – A lone bird with a group of 6 Bar-tailed Godwits showed beautifully at the Cairns Esplanade and gave a good opportunity to compare the two species and note their differences. [b]

**GREAT KNOT** (*Calidris tenuirostris*) – We saw just a single bird with a handful of other shorebirds (including the 2 godwit species) at the Cairns Esplanade. Our low tally of most of the shorebirds was partly due to the unfavorably high tides when we were able to visit the shore. [b]

**SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER** (*Calidris acuminata*) – Among the more numerous shorebirds we saw, and frequently seen at inland sites as well as coastal. We had a high count of about 50 at the Port of Brisbane. [b]

**RED-NECKED STINT** (*Calidris rubicollis*) – The default peep here, and they were pretty common, with a high count of about 20 at the Barron River mouth (though there were 250+ there the previous day). [b]

**LATHAM'S SNIPE** (*Gallinago hardwickii*) – Though three extremely similar snipe species occur in Australia, this is the only one known from the regions we visit. We had a trio of birds at Hasties Swamp, then a single bird at PAU. [b]

**TEREK SANDPIPER** (*Xenus cinereus*) – The short legs, and long upturned bill immediately identify this distinctive sandpiper, but its habit of running around can make it a difficult bird to scope. We had a single bird on each of two visits to Machan's Beach. Those that went the second time were treated to fabulous scope views of an unusually stationary bird! [b]

**COMMON SANDPIPER** (*Actitis hypoleucos*) – Anything but common this trip, and our only sighting was of a single bird in a grassy field near the PAU entrance. [b]

**GRAY-TAILED TATTLER** (*Tringa brevipes*) – Oddly seen in mainly in threes this trip, with three birds each at Machan's Beach, the Esplanade, and at Lea Lea. [b]

**COMMON GREENSHANK** (*Tringa nebularia*) – Just a lone bird at Machan's Beach and a couple at the Port of Brisbane high tide roost. [b]

*Stercorariidae (Skuas and Jaegers)*

**PARASITIC JAEGER** (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) – A single light morph bird flew low over the water during our sea watch at Wattamolla in Royal NP. Mathias also saw a second, dark morph bird at about the same time. [b]

*Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)*

**SILVER GULL** (*Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae*) – The only gull in most of the region, and common at most coastal sites in Australia. Only occurs in PNG as a vagrant.

**LITTLE TERN** (*Sternula albifrons*) – A bunch of these were patrolling the shallow waters offshore at Machan's Beach.

**GULL-BILLED TERN** (*Gelochelidon nilotica*) – Quite a few along the coast both at Cairns and Brisbane.



**CASPIAN TERN** (*Hydroprogne caspia*) – A lone bird in non-breeding plumage was among a bunch of Gull-billed Terns at the high tide roost at the Port of Brisbane.

**WHISKERED TERN** (*Chlidonias hybrida*) – One non-breeding plumaged bird was all alone at Hasties Swamp, and three distant birds were scoped at Bromfield Swamp the next day.

**GREAT CRESTED TERN** (*Thalasseus bergii*) – A few birds along the coast at Cairns, several more at Lea Lea in PNG, then a bunch seen from our sea-watching spot in Royal NP.

**LESSER CRESTED TERN** (*Thalasseus bengalensis*) – Kay, Mathias, and I saw one bird with 4 Great Crested Terns, roosting at Machan's Beach.

*Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)*

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) – We just couldn't avoid them, despite my ROPI filters. [I]

**WHITE-HEADED PIGEON** (*Columba leucomela*) – A lone bird was seen teed up on a treetop one early morning at O'Reilly's by those that were out early enough. [E]

**SPOTTED DOVE** (*Streptopelia chinensis*) – Unusually small numbers around Cairns this trip. [I]

**BROWN CUCKOO-DOVE** (*Macropygia phasianella*) – Common and seen regularly in the eastern rainforest of Australia. Up until recently, the next species was treated as a subspecies of this one. [E]

**AMBOYNA CUCKOO-DOVE** (*Macropygia amboinensis*) – The common cuckoo-dove of PNG, where we saw several at Varirata (including one we flushed from a nest) and a couple of times in the highlands. [E]

**CRESTED PIGEON** (*Ocyphaps lophotes*) – Very common in drier areas of Australia, and we saw these striking pigeons often and well. [E]

**SQUATTER PIGEON** (*Geophaps scripta*) – Granite Gorge is the best place to see this species as they've gotten quite tame and approachable at the campground there. We had about a dozen birds on our visit to the area. [E]

**WONGA PIGEON** (*Leucosarcia melanoleuca*) – A beautiful but rather shy pigeon of the forest floor in eastern Australia. O'Reilly's is one of the best places to see these birds, but even there, they are somewhat furtive and are mainly out in the open only in the early mornings, and that is exactly when our birds were seen. [E]

**PEACEFUL DOVE** (*Geopelia placida*) – Very common around the Cairns region with a number of them also at PAU and elsewhere near Port Moresby. Strangely we didn't see any in the Brisbane and Sydney areas though they these cities are also within their range. [E]

**BAR-SHOULDERED DOVE** (*Geopelia humeralis*) – Has a similar range to the Peaceful Dove and we saw it in many of the same places (including at PAU) though generally in smaller numbers. [E]

**PHEASANT PIGEON** (*Otidiphaps nobilis*) – Will I ever see this species? I certainly have heard it often enough, and once again, we had a reasonably close calling bird at Varirata that just refused to show itself. [E\*]

**WOMPPOO FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus magnificus*) – Fruit-doves seemed pretty scarce in Australia this trip, and we saw just one of these spectacular birds early one morning at Chambers.

**PINK-SPOTTED FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus perlatus*) – We did much better with fruit-doves in PNG and this was one of the more numerous and easily seen species at Varirata, where several were at the wonderful fruiting tree in the picnic area. [E]

**ORANGE-FRONTED FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus aurantiifrons*) – A couple of males showed fairly well at PAU on our first afternoon in PNG. [E]

**SUPERB FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus superbus*) – On the same morning as we saw our only Wompoo Fruit-Dove at Chambers, we also caught quick looks at a pair of these handsome doves. A couple more were seen in the fruiting fig at Varirata, but, as usual, they were fairly furtive there.

**ROSE-CROWNED FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus regina*) – A lone male at Chambers gave us a hat trick of fruit-doves for the pre-breakfast birding there. Our only other one was in a fruiting fig tree along the Esplanade on our last morning in Cairns. [E]

**BEAUTIFUL FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus pulchellus*) – Super scope views of a lovely male high overhead in a tall casuarina tree near the Raggiana BoP lek at Varirata. [E]

**WHITE-BREASTED FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus rivoli*) – A pair of these highland doves were scoped from a roadside vantage point below Kumul Lodge, though they were feeding very actively in a fruiting tree and didn't stay in sight for long. [E]

**ORANGE-BELLIED FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus iozonus*) – A solitary male in the fruiting fig tree at the picnic area in Varirata gave good looks to all. [E]

**DWARF FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus nainus*) – Matthias found this tiny dove, a female, in the same fig tree that gave us several other fruit-doves at Varirata. [E]

**PURPLE-TAILED IMPERIAL-PIGEON** (*Ducula rufigaster*) – A single bird on each of our two visits to Varirata. The first one gave us gorgeous looks near the Raggiana BoP lek. On our return visit, we found one in the fruiting fig tree, a beautiful catch-up bird for Doris who had missed the first as she was feeling ill on our first visit.

**ZOE IMPERIAL-PIGEON** (*Ducula zoeae*) – A couple of these robust pigeons showed well on our first visit to Varirata. [E]

**TORRESIAN IMPERIAL-PIGEON** (*Ducula spilorrhoa*) – Numerous around the Cairns region at this time of year, including many nesting in the trees along the Esplanade. We also saw a couple of birds fly overhead along the road to Lea Lea. [N]

**TOPKNOT PIGEON** (*Lopholaimus antarcticus*) – Though we had a number of good-sized flocks fly over in the Atherton tablelands, O'Reilly's and Royal NP, we never connected with any perched birds. [E]

**PAPUAN MOUNTAIN-PIGEON** (*Gymnophaps albertisii*) – A single bird perched high up on a distant ridge line along the road below Kumul showed surprisingly well through the scope. Our only other sighting was of a trio of birds that flew past on our second visit to Varirata.

*Cuculidae (Cuckoos)*

**PHEASANT COUCAL** (*Centropus phasianinus*) – Our first was spotted strolling across a parking lot in the town of Mareeba, and we had a couple more later that day. All of our other sightings came from PNG, where they are pretty common in the savanna habitats near Port Moresby. This is the only non-parasitic cuckoo in Australia.

**DWARF KOEL** (*Microdynamis parva*) – A cooperative male allowed great scope views in the Varirata NP picnic area on our second visit to the park. [E]

**PACIFIC KOEL (AUSTRALIAN)** (*Eudynamis orientalis cyanocephalus*) – A breeding visitor to Australia that winters in PNG and Indonesia. We had remarkably few this trip, with just one sighting of a pair along the road into the Mareeba Wetlands Reserve.

**CHANNEL-BILLED CUCKOO** (*Scythrops novaehollandiae*) – A bit of a lucky find on our last day in the Cairns region. We stopped by the Mareeba Saleyards in hopes of finding Red-winged Parrot, but instead had this massive cuckoo fly out from the tree above us, then give excellent looks as it

flew past a couple of times, then perched briefly in a bare tree. Another breeding visitor that winters in Indonesia and PNG, this parasitic cuckoo targets large birds such as magpies, crows, and currawongs.

**RUFIOUS-THROATED BRONZE-CKUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx ruficollis*) – An endemic bronze-cuckoo of PNG's highland regions. We had two sightings of what was probably the same bird on our two visits to Murmur Pass. The first one was acceptable, if not stellar, but on our second visit we had a much better look at one in a bare tree just in front of us. [E]

**SHINING BRONZE-CKUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx lucidus*) – Heard a few times in the Atherton tablelands and around O'Reilly's, but we never did find a cooperative bird anywhere. [\*]

**LITTLE BRONZE-CKUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx minutillus*) – Several were seen over our first couple of days in the Cairns region. At least some of these birds, if not all, were of the race *russatus*, which has sometimes been split off as Gould's Bronze-Cuckoo. They differ from typical Little BC by their rufous-washed upperparts, a feature we saw in at least a couple of our birds.

**WHITE-CROWNED KOEL** (*Cacomantis leucolophus*) – As is often the case, we only heard this species calling incessantly in the distance on both of our visits to Varirata NP. [E\*]

**CHESTNUT-BREASTED CUCKOO** (*Cacomantis castaneiventris*) – Super looks at a singing bird in the picnic clearing at Varirata NP. [E]

**FAN-TAILED CUCKOO** (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*) – Our first was seen sitting on a barbed wire fence next to the road in a rural area of the Atherton tablelands,, with another more cooperative bird later the same morning at Wondecla. Our only other Australian sighting was of one along Duck Creek Road near O'Reilly's. All of these belong to the nominate subspecies. We also had good looks at one in the garden clearing at Murmur Pass. This highland PNG subspecies, *excitus*, may one day be split off as a good species on its own.

**BRUSH CUCKOO** (*Cacomantis variolosus*) – Heard a few times, but our only sighting of this drab cuckoo was of a calling bird at PAU.

#### Strigidae (Owls)

**RUFIOUS OWL** (*Ninox rufa*) – Matthias and I tried to track down a calling bird our first night in Chambers, but all we saw was a ghostly shape flying overhead as it switched perches. The next night, however, it was calling nearby during dinner and I went out to find it, and quickly located it not far from the dining room. I had to interrupt everyone's dinner, but luckily the owl was still perched nearby and we all had excellent looks at it. Not a bad dessert! [E]

**BARKING OWL** (*Ninox connivens*) – We were rained out on our first afternoon at Varirata and abandoned the search for a roosting pair of these birds along the entrance road. On our return visit, we headed straight for the site, and the owls cooperated nicely, giving us super scope views, and a vocal performance, demonstrating how they came to be called Barking Owls.

**SOUTHERN BOOBOOK** (*Ninox novaeseelandiae*) – A calling bird near O'Reilly's remained stubbornly out of sight high in the canopy over the road, and we had to choose between continuing to search or just going back to the lodge to get some sleep. Sleep prevailed. [E\*]

#### Podargidae (Frogmouths)

**PAPUAN FROGMOUTH** (*Podargus papuensis*) – I spent part of the day prior to the tour's start trying to track down this cool bird at Centenary Lakes, but I was unsuccessful until I bumped into a local birder who showed me where a well-hidden pair were apparently nesting. Thanks to him, I was able to show the group the next day. We also saw a bird on a nest at PAU, thanks to our local guide Leonard, who keeps tabs on these sort of things there. Kay and Doris both chose this bird as their favorite for the Australian portion of the tour. [EN]

#### Aegotheidae (Owlet-nightjars)

**AUSTRALIAN OWLET-NIGHTJAR** (*Aegotheles cristatus*) – Kay, Matthias and I heard one calling at the Curtain Fig Tree during an after-dinner excursion. [E]

**BARRED OWLET-NIGHTJAR** (*Aegotheles bennettii*) – Not only did we find a couple of reliable roosting birds in their usual spots at Varirata, we also stumbled across a third one in a previously unknown roost hole near the brushturkey mound. [E]

#### Apodidae (Swifts)

**WHITE-THROATED NEEDLETAIL** (*Hirundapus caudacutus*) – These swifts breed in northern Asia and winter here in Australia, and the flock of 21 birds we saw over Granite Gorge was likely a recently arrived migrant flock. [b]

**GLOSSY SWIFTLET** (*Collocalia esculenta*) – The most widespread swift in PNG and common at all elevations. We saw them daily there.

**AUSTRALIAN SWIFTLET** (*Aerodramus terraereginae*) – There seemed to be fewer of these than I'm used to seeing around Cairns, though we still had small numbers of them on several days. [E]

#### Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

**COMMON KINGFISHER** (*Alcedo atthis*) – One showed pretty well at PAU, though it didn't stick around for long. This is the same species as is found throughout Europe, and here it is at its southeastern-most part of its range.

**AZURE KINGFISHER** (*Ceyx azureus*) – One of these stunning little kingfishers started fishing right in front of us as we waited patiently for a platypus to show up. It turned out to be the only one for the trip. [E]

**PAPUAN DWARF-KINGFISHER** (*Ceyx solitarius*) – I spotted one flying in and perching ever so briefly along the trail at Varirata, but it dashed off again before I could point it out to anyone else. We heard a couple more of these, but never laid eyes on another. [\*]

**LAUGHING KOOKABURRA** (*Dacelo novaeguineae*) – Arguably the most iconic bird species of Australia, and fittingly we saw them almost daily there. The one at lunch at Royal NP was especially cheeky, stealing french fries off of Paula's plate a couple of times when she let her guard down! [E]

**BLUE-WINGED KOOKABURRA** (*Dacelo leachii*) – We picked one up along the entrance road to the Mareeba Wetlands Reserve, with a pair of Laughing Kookaburras nearby for a good comparison. Apart from that bird, we only saw these in PNG, where they are quite common in the savannas around Port Moresby. [E]

**RUFIOUS-BELLIED KOOKABURRA** (*Dacelo gaudichaud*) – A pair of these handsome kingfishers were seen beautifully near the Raggiana BoP lek at Varirata NP. [E]

**FOREST KINGFISHER** (*Todiramphus macleayi*) – Seen on three consecutive days in the Atherton tablelands region, with the birds at Wondecla State Forest probably being the most cooperative of the bunch.

**TORRESIAN KINGFISHER** (*Todiramphus sordidus*) – The former Collared Kingfisher (which was chopped up into several species). We had distant (though good) scope views of a couple of birds perched on top of the mangroves across the Barron River mouth from our vantage point one morning, then excellent and much closer looks at another in the mangroves at the north end of the Esplanade on our final morning in Cairns.

**SACRED KINGFISHER** (*Todiramphus sanctus*) – Greener above and buffier below than the similar Forest Kingfisher, and we also saw them together at least once at Hasties Swamp. All of our records were in the tablelands area except for a single bird seen at Royal NP.

**YELLOW-BILLED KINGFISHER** (*Syma torotoro*) – One of our main targets on the return trip to Varirata NP, and we nailed it easily, getting super scope studies of a cooperative bird perched along the entrance road. [E]

**BROWN-HEADED PARADISE-KINGFISHER** (*Tanysiptera danae*) – A Varirata specialty, and we did well on both of our visits, getting nice looks at a pair on the first morning, then catching Doris up with a couple more on the return visit. [E]

**BUFF-BREASTED PARADISE-KINGFISHER** (*Tanysiptera sylvia*) – Rather uncommon in Varirata, where there is a small breeding population (most birds breed in northern Queensland, and winter in PNG). Matthias spotted this one along the trail, and we had some great scope looks at it before it melted back into the forest. [E]

#### Meropidae (Bee-eaters).

**RAINBOW BEE-EATER** (*Merops ornatus*) – Fairly common around the Cairns region where we had some very nice looks at them. Elsewhere we only had a few birds at the Port of Brisbane wetlands.

#### Coraciidae (Rollers).

**DOLLARBIRD** (*Eurystomus orientalis*) – A couple of birds were missed by almost everyone along the Mareeba Wetlands entrance road, but we cleaned up with some good views of one along the Varirata NP entrance road on our second visit there. There were also a couple of birds spotted on roadside power lines on our way up to O'Reilly's.

#### Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras).

**AUSTRALIAN KESTREL** (*Falco cenchroides*) – Not many this trip, but we saw a few in the Atherton tablelands region and a single bird along the road out towards Lea Lea. [E]

**BROWN FALCON** (*Falco berigora*) – Two sightings, the first at the dam along Chewko Road that flew past a couple of times. The second bird was perched in a dead tree along the entrance road to the Mareeba Wetlands. When we first looked at it with strong backlighting, we wondered if it might be a hobby, but its identity became much clearer when we drove past it and looked again with the sun at our backs. [E]

**PEREGRINE FALCON** (*Falco peregrinus*) – After doing a slow drive past the Black-necked Stork en route to O'Reilly's, I pulled into an entrance road to turn back around, and spotted a very close Peregrine perched on a fencepost just 20 feet from the car! It sat for just a few seconds, then took off and powered its way low across the fields and out of sight.

#### Cacatuidae (Cockatoos).

**RED-TAILED BLACK-COCKATOO** (*Calyptorhynchus banksii*) – Our chances to find these magnificent birds were dwindling, and it was starting to look pretty bleak until we stumbled across a group of 20+ feeding along the road on the way up to Davies Creek! [E]

**YELLOW-TAILED BLACK-COCKATOO** (*Calyptorhynchus funereus*) – Not a bird I've had often (if ever) on this tour, so it was good to see a lone bird flying by and calling as we birded the Lady Carrington Track at Royal NP. We heard a few others as we birded in the heathland, but they never came into view. [E]

**GALAH** (*Eolophus roseicapilla*) – Though these gorgeous cockatoos are abundant in some parts of Australia, they are easily missable on this tour route, so we did pretty well with them this time around. We started off by spotting 4 birds feeding on the ground in the outskirts of Mareeba, then had a couple more sightings in the rural areas near Canungra as we headed up to O'Reilly's. [E]

**LITTLE CORELLA** (*Cacatua sanguinea*) – Quite numerous at Fred Bucholz Park, but mostly seen in flight there. Later at Royal NP, we had excellent studies of a few birds feeding on the ground amidst a large number of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos. [E]

**SULPHUR-CRESTED COCKATOO** (*Cacatua galerita*) – Very common and seen daily in Australia, with a handful of birds also seen at Varirata NP.

#### Psittaculidae (Old World Parrots).

**AUSTRALIAN KING-PARROT** (*Alisterus scapularis*) – Though it's always fun to have these birds land on your head at O'Reilly's (and I think everyone got their turn here), it's also nice to see some that are a little less domesticated. We had a few truly wild birds both at Chambers and Royal NP. [E]

**PAPUAN KING-PARROT** (*Alisterus chloropterus*) – The PNG version of the king-parrot never lands on anyone's head, and in reality, rarely even shows itself, and we had to be content with heard-only birds on both visits to Varirata. [E]

**ECLECTUS PARROT** (*Eclectus roratus*) – Another of the main targets on our return visit to Varirata, and they came pretty easily. Three or 4 males, and finally, a red female, came flying overhead as we birded along the entrance road.

**RED-CHEEKED PARROT** (*Geoffroyus geoffroyi*) – Pretty common in the PNG lowlands and foothills, and we saw a bunch at PAU and Varirata NP. [E]

**BREHM'S TIGER-PARROT** (*Psittacella brehmii*) – Charming and easy to see as usual at the Kumul Lodge feeders. [E]

**YELLOW-BILLED LORIKEET** (*Neopsittacus musschenbroekii*) – Tough this trip, as there weren't many about, but we managed so-so views at a handful along the road below Kumul Lodge, though mainly in flight. [E]

**ORANGE-BILLED LORIKEET** (*Neopsittacus pullicauda*) – The higher elevation replacement of the very similar Yellow-billed Lorieet. These were seen pretty well at a fruiting tree at Murmur Pass. [E]

**CRIMSON ROSELLA** (*Platycercus elegans*) – Equally cheeky to the king-parrots at O'Reilly's, and just as likely to land on a person. We also had a few wild ones at Royal NP. [E]

**PALE-HEADED ROSELLA** (*Platycercus adscitus*) – A couple of pairs flew past at Granite Gorge but the views were barely countable. Another flew past at the Port of Brisbane, and yet another was seen briefly in a pasture below O'Reilly's. But it wasn't until our 4th and final encounter at Fred Bucholz Park that we finally cleaned up our looks. [E]

**DOUBLE-EYED FIG-PARROT** (*Cyclopsitta diophthalma*) – Fantastic looks at a pair just overhead at the Yorkey's Knob Golf Course pond started things off right, and we had a couple of other good looks at these lovely little parrots, including in a fruiting fig tree on the Esplanade. Most surprisingly, we also had a trio of these in PNG, a pair with a juvenile along the roadside below Kumul Lodge. I had never seen them here before and was surprised to find them at such a high elevation, though Wilson didn't seem surprised at all.

**PLUM-FACED LORIKEET** (*Oreopsittacus arfaki*) – These tiny lorikeets are not always easy to find, but there seemed to be a fair number around Kumul Lodge this time around. We kicked things off with a nice scope study of a bird up by the cabins on our first afternoon there, then had several other nice views of them over the next couple of days, including quite a few at Murmur Pass. [E]



**PAPUAN LORIKEET** (*Charmosyna papou*) – Scarce this trip, but we finally connected with a good look at a pair that flew past as we birded the clearing just below Kumul Lodge. That super long tail is pretty distinctive. [E]

**BLACK-CAPPED LORY** (*Lorius lory*) – Excellent looks at a perched trio at the Varirata Lookout on our first visit to the park. [E]

**LITTLE LORIKEET** (*Glossopsitta pusilla*) – Wondecla is the only place we usually encounter this small lorikeet, and they are usually pretty tough to see as they scurry around in the canopy of flowering eucalyptus trees. Probably in part due to the nice calm conditions, we had no trouble at all getting a look at them this trip, and we all wound up with some super scope views. [E]

**GOLDIE'S LORIKEET** (*Psittuteles goldiei*) – Several pairs flew over on our last morning at Kumul, but only one pair landed nearby, and it was tough to find them. We finally did and I got them in the scope, but only one person managed to see them before they flew the coop. [E]

**DUSKY LORY** (*Pseudeos fuscata*) – A lone lorikeet that flew over at PAU was in bad light and no plumage features could be discerned. I thought it sounded like a Rainbow Lorikeet, but the shape was wrong, and it looked more like either this or Yellow-streaked Lory. A short while later, a flock of 79 more flew high overhead, their calls, flight, and the sheer size of the flock all suggested this species.

**RAINBOW LORIKEET (COCONUT)** (*Trichoglossus haematodus haematodus*) – This is the PNG form of this common species, perhaps due for a split in the future. We saw them regularly except at the higher elevations around Kumul Lodge.

**RAINBOW LORIKEET (RAINBOW)** (*Trichoglossus haematodus moluccanus*) – Easily the most numerous lorikeet in eastern Australia, and these brilliant birds were a daily sight for us, though mostly just as colorful shapes whizzing past overhead, screeching.

**SCALY-BREADED LORIKEET** (*Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus*) – When you encounter big groups of Rainbow Lorikeets at flowering trees in eastern Australia, there are often two or three of these slightly smaller birds mixed in among them. We found that to be the case a couple of times in the Cairns region, at least, and though they were a bit tricky to pick out, we eventually managed some good views of them. [E]

#### Pittidae (Pittas)

**NOISY PITTA** (*Pitta versicolor*) – After being spurned by a couple of calling birds earlier in the trip, we finally connected with a very cooperative one along the Wishing Tree Track at O'Reilly's. We initially had great scope views as it sang from a perch in the subcanopy, then had some more nice looks after it dropped to the ground and began bounding across the forest floor. I believe this was the first pitta seen for a number of you.

#### Menuridae (Lyrebirds)

**ALBERT'S LYREBIRD** (*Menura alberti*) – Just once I'd like to see this highly-prized target species on our first morning at O'Reilly's, but once again we dipped on the first try, though we could hear a male singing intermittently from a densely wooded ravine. We fared far better on our second morning, as Matthias had seen "George" a partially habituated male that often frequents the area around the lodge, just before we met up. We headed back up to the maintenance area where it was last seen, and found him scratching around on the edge of the roadway, right out in the open. This was Matthias's pick as top Australian bird for the tour. [E]

**SUPERB LYREBIRD** (*Menura novaehollandiae*) – Usually not quite as tough as Albert's Lyrebird, but with all the Sunday morning joggers and mountain bikers sharing the same trail we were birding along, I was a bit concerned that these birds would be buried in the deep brush. But partway along the track, I heard a slight rustle in the leaves below the track, and we peered over the edge. At first there was nothing to see, but then a young male lyrebird stepped out from behind a boulder and began scratching around in the leaf litter in full view of us. We watched him for quite some time as he seemed pretty unperturbed by our presence. At one point, he picked up a lyrebird tail plume (one of the fancy, lacy ones), and he played around with it for quite some time. I wonder if it was his or if it came from another bird? Another male at the turnaround point on our walk also put on a good show. [E]

#### Ptilonorhynchidae (Bowerbirds)

**SPOTTED CATBIRD** (*Ailuroedus maculosus*) – The yowling cat calls of these birds were part of our early morning wake up call at Chambers, where they were also easy to see. [E]

**GREEN CATBIRD** (*Ailuroedus crassirostris*) – This catbird has even stranger sounding calls than the Spotted, and it was heard regularly at O'Reilly's. They are a bit harder to see than the above species, but we did well with them. Our first one, along the trail to the villas, was a nice consolation prize during our failed first attempt to find Albert's Lyrebird. [E]

**TOOTH-BILLED CATBIRD** (*Scenopoeetes dentirostris*) – A couple of these were seen in fruiting trees around the parking area of Chambers, but the better encounters came at Lake Barrine. At least 4 or 5 bowers were along the trail there, and one of the birds allowed us to walk right up to the bower as it sat there singing just a few yards away. [E]

**GOLDEN BOWERBIRD** (*Amblyornis newtoniana*) – Most of the adult males at known bowers disappeared at about the same time last year, and there doesn't seem to be a good explanation for it. Whatever the cause, we had to settle for a subadult male trying to impress a female at a long-used territory in the Crater Lakes NP. [E]

**REGENT BOWERBIRD** (*Sericulus chrysocephalus*) – I don't recall ever seeing this stunning species away from the O'Reilly's area, but they certainly are common and easy to see there! At least a couple of people had one land on them as well. [E]

**SATIN BOWERBIRD** (*Ptilonorhynchus violaceus*) – Common at O'Reilly's where the best one was the male at a newly-constructed bower not far from the lodge. The bower was nicely decorated with blue objects and we were able to observe the male calling and displaying, and trying to impress a visiting female. [E]

**GREAT BOWERBIRD** (*Chlamydera nuchalis*) – A few birds at Granite Gorge, but the long-used bower had been abandoned and a new one built, though in a harder place to see. We made up for that by visiting a great bower in the town of Mareeba, this one well-decorated with snail shells and bits of glass. [E]

**YELLOW-BREADED BOWERBIRD** (*Chlamydera lauterbachii*) – A couple of these were in a fruiting tree at the Lesser BoP site below Kumul Lodge. [E]

**FAWN-BREADED BOWERBIRD** (*Chlamydera cerviniventris*) – Numerous at PAU, (where we also saw a nice avenue bower) with a couple also at the fruiting fig tree in the Varirata NP picnic area. [E]

#### Climacteridae (Australasian Treecreepers)

**WHITE-THROATED TREECREEPER** (*Cormobates leucophaea*) – We had a couple of different forms of this one, including the subspecies minor which is sometimes treated as a good species, Little Treecreeper. Also seen well at Royal NP. [E]

**BROWN TREECREEPER** (*Climacteris picumnus*) – After missing this one at Wondecla, we were lucky to pick up a cooperative pair along the entrance road to the Mareeba Wetlands. [E]

#### Maluridae (Fairywrens)

**ORANGE-CROWNED FAIRYWREN** (*Clytomyias insignis*) – I've only seen this scarce species a couple of times before, and I still haven't had a really good view of one. We had a furtive pair along the trails at Kumul, but only a couple of us got any kind of look at them.

**VARIEGATED FAIRYWREN** (*Malurus lamberti*) – Quite a few of these long-tailed birds were found in the dry forest along Duck Creek Road, with a few also at Royal NP. This species has just been split, though the birds that occur east of the Great Dividing Range (essentially anything along the east coast) retain this name, with the interior birds now being called Purple-backed Fairywren. [E]

**LOVELY FAIRYWREN** (*Malurus amabilis*) – This species was also once part of the Variegated Fairywren group, but this species differs by the much shorter tail and the very distinct, blue, female plumage. Though we didn't see a female, we did get fine looks at a couple of gorgeous males in a lantana-choked gully in the Cairns region. Paula and Karen both voted this as their favorite bird in Australia. [E]

**SUPERB FAIRYWREN** (*Malurus cyaneus*) – We didn't get this species until our arrival in Brisbane, but once we got down there, we saw a bunch of them, including all those very tame birds at O'Reilly's. [E]

**RED-BACKED FAIRYWREN** (*Malurus melanocephalus*) – Our first fairywren species, seen pretty well in the dense lantana along the road at Hasties Swamp, then again at Wondecla. We also had a group at Davies Creek as we searched unsuccessfully for Lovely Fairywrens. [E]

**WHITE-SHOULDERED FAIRYWREN** (*Malurus alboscapulatus*) – The fairywrens in PNG are all quite difficult to find and see, except for this species, which is pretty common in open scrubby habitats throughout. We had some fine views of a little party of them at the Lesser BoP site. [E]

*Meliphagidae* (Honeyeaters).

**EASTERN SPINEBILL** (*Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*) – Easily one of the most beautiful of the honeyeaters. That flowering tree near the cafe at O'Reilly's sure attracted a bunch of them, too. [E]

**PLAIN HONEYEATER** (*Pycnopygius ixoides*) – A couple of these well-named birds were at the fruiting fig tree at Varirata. Despite their drab appearance, I was quite happy to see these birds as I've only seen the rufous form that occurs in the park a couple of times previously.

**MARbled HONEYEATER** (*Pycnopygius cinereus*) – Scope views of one of these local birds at a roadside stop below Kumul Lodge. [E]

**STREAK-HEADED HONEYEATER** (*Pycnopygius stictocephalus*) – Single birds were seen on each of our visits to Varirata, but neither stuck around long and they probably left some of you wanting more. [E]

**YELLOW-SPOTTED HONEYEATER** (*Meliphaga notata*) – The birds in this genus are notoriously hard to tell apart, though the situation is easier in Australia as this is one of only 3 species there. Our first was seen near the coast at Cairns, where it is the only one of the three to occur. We also saw a few at Black Mountain Road where Graceful also occurs. There we were able to separate the 2 by voice. [E]

**LEWIN'S HONEYEATER** (*Meliphaga lewinii*) – This is the most widespread of the genus in Australia, occurring in rainforests all along the east coast, and we saw plenty of them throughout. [E]

**MOUNTAIN MELIPHAGA** (*Meliphaga orientalis*) – Several of these were at the Lesser BoP site and in the trees along the Lai River. At these high elevations, this is the only yellow-eared Meliphaga that occurs. [E]

**MIMIC HONEYEATER** (*Meliphaga analoga*) – One of the two most commonly found of the genus at Varirata NP. It takes a good look though, to tell it apart from the similar Elegant, but we did have a very good look at one from the Varirata Lookout on our first visit to the park. [E]

**GRACEFUL HONEYEATER** (*Meliphaga gracilis*) – A few birds along Black Mountain Road, told by voice more than anything. [E]

**ELEGANT HONEYEATER** (*Meliphaga cinereifrons cinereifrons*) – One of the more distinctive ones in PNG, this one is quite common at Varirata, where we saw a bunch around the picnic area. [E]

**YELLOW HONEYEATER** (*Stomiopera flava*) – Fairly numerous around Cairns and in parts of the tablelands. Perhaps best seen at Granite Gorge where there were plenty. [E]

**YELLOW-FACED HONEYEATER** (*Caligavis chrysops*) – One of the more numerous honeyeaters at several spots, including Hasties Swamp, along Duck Creek Road, and at Royal NP. [E]

**BELL MINER** (*Manorina melanophrys*) – Colonial and local, but once you get to a site that has these birds, it's hard to miss their presence, as they advertise it with a wonderful, dingy bell call. We got to enjoy these birds at one such site in eucalyptus forest below O'Reilly's. [E]

**NOISY MINER** (*Manorina melanocephala*) – First seen at Wondecla, where there were just a few birds, but once we got further south around Brisbane and Sydney, they were abundant and hard to miss. [E]

**ORNATE MELIDECTES** (*Melidectes torquatus*) – Quite a spectacular honeyeater, this melidectes is found at lower elevations than the other 2 species we encounter on this trip. We had some super looks at the Lesser BoP site. [E]

**BELFORD'S MELIDECTES** (*Melidectes belfordi*) – And this one lives at the highest elevations among the 3 species and they were abundant around Kumul Lodge. [E]

**YELLOW-BROWED MELIDECTES** (*Melidectes rufocrissalis*) – That leaves this one in the middle, though it overlaps both species to a certain extent. We saw just one bird during a roadside stop below Kumul. [E]

**BRIDLED HONEYEATER** (*Bolemoreus frenatus*) – An Atherton Tablelands specialty, this one is quite easy to see at Mt Hypipamee. [E]

**LITTLE WATTLEBIRD** (*Anthochaera chrysoptera*) – Numerous in flowering trees at Royal NP, the only place we encountered this species. [E]

**VARIED HONEYEATER** (*Gavicalis versicolor*) – We watched an angry mob of these birds knock a Brown Honeyeater to the ground and proceed to peck at it as it struggled to get away at the Esplanade. It looked like the poor bird was going to be beaten to a pulp but it managed to get away after a fairly prolonged attack. The Varied Honeyeaters at Lea Lea were considerably calmer! [E]

**FUSCOUS HONEYEATER** (*Ptilotula fusca*) – Loads of these at the Wondecla Forest, though there is some contention about what these birds actually are. They are much more yellow-headed than typical Fuscous, looking more like a cross between that species and Yellow-tinted. They are locally known as Wondecla, or Herberton Honeyeater, and some folks maintain that they are a separate species. [E]

**BROWN-BACKED HONEYEATER** (*Ramsayornis modestus*) – Our only ones were a couple of birds around the Yorkey's Knob pond on our first afternoon. [E]

**RUFOUS-BANDED HONEYEATER** (*Conopophila albogularis*) – Pretty common at PAU where they are often bathing in the ponds during our late afternoon visits. We also had a single bird along the coast at Lea Lea. [E]

**SMOKY HONEYEATER** (*Melipotus fumigatus*) – Abundant in the highland forests of PNG, and as always fun to see as their facial skin flushes from yellow to red in an instant. [E]

**DUSKY MYZOMELA** (*Myzomela obscura*) – Seen daily in small numbers in the Cairns region.

**ELFIN MYZOMELA** (*Myzomela adolphinae*) – We had some good views of a couple of these small honeyeaters, including a nice red-headed male. at the Lesser BoP site, where they are common and expected. We then also found a female on our second visit to Varirata, where they are uncommon and seem to be somewhat seasonal. [E]

- SCARLET MYZOMELA** (*Myzomela sanguinolenta*) – Pretty common in the eastern rainforests of Australia, though heard far more often than they are seen due to their preference of staying high up in the canopy. Still, we had some good encounters on several days in the tablelands, then again on our final day at Royal NP. [E]
- RED-COLLARED MYZOMELA** (*Myzomela rosenbergii*) – Just a couple of sightings along the roadside below Kumul Lodge, but we did enjoy a stonking male of this gorgeous species. [E]
- GREEN-BACKED HONEYEATER** (*Glycichaera fallax*) – Dull, nondescript, and easily overlooked, though it is regular at Varirata, where we had great looks at a pair in the fruiting fig tree on our first visit.
- RUFIOUS-BACKED HONEYEATER** (*Ptiloprora guisei*) – While the next species is very common around Kumul Lodge, this virtual lookalike replaces it at slightly lower elevations, where it is also numerous. We saw loads of these at Murrumbidgee Pass. [E]
- GRAY-STREAKED HONEYEATER** (*Ptiloprora perstriata*) – Daily at Kumul, where they show a preference for the orange honeysuckle type flowers that grow throughout the lodge grounds. [E]
- BROWN HONEYEATER** (*Lichmera indistincta*) – Not especially memorable, and not especially brown. These were pretty common in the Cairns region, where we nearly saw one come to an untimely demise at the hands (well, beaks) of a mob of Varied Honeyeaters.
- SILVER-EARED HONEYEATER** (*Lichmera alboauricularis*) – A pretty local species, and the main target of our trek out to Lea Lea, where we got a great look at a handsome pair. [E]
- NEW HOLLAND HONEYEATER** (*Phylidonyris novaehollandiae*) – Normally hard to miss at Royal, but they were not as visible this trip, and our only ones were a bunch chattering in a flowering shrub across the Hacking River from where we stood along the Lady Carrington Track. [E]
- WHITE-CHEEKED HONEYEATER** (*Phylidonyris niger*) – This fancy honeyeater is quite missable in some years, but they were around in decent numbers this year, and we enjoyed half a dozen or so bathing in the creek as we waited for a platypus to swim by, and then had several more along a creek bed at Wondecla. [E]
- BLUE-FACED HONEYEATER** (*Entomyzon cyanotis*) – This large and striking honeyeater showed up in a bunch of places around Cairns and Brisbane after our initial sighting during a roadside stop near Mareeba. [E]
- WHITE-THROATED HONEYEATER** (*Melithreptus albigularis*) – This genus is made up of seven small, fairly similar looking honeyeaters, though generally only two are found on this tour route. Of course, they are two of the most similar species, though with a good view they can be told apart by the color of the bare skin by their eyes. In this species, it is bluish. This is also the only one to occur in PNG, and we had a bunch in both countries. [E]
- WHITE-NAPED HONEYEATER** (*Melithreptus lunatus*) – If you can see the red skin by the eye, this one is a cinch to identify, though that isn't always an easy task! We saw it well in both of our encounters, first with a pair at Wondecla, then again along Duck Creek Road. [E]
- TAWNY-BREASTED HONEYEATER** (*Xanthotis flaviventris*) – A few of these spectacled honeyeaters were in the fruiting fig tree at the Varirata NP picnic area on our first visit. [E]
- MACLEAY'S HONEYEATER** (*Xanthotis macleayana*) – An Atherton area endemic, this attractive bird showed up outside the restaurant at Chambers a couple of times, but they were especially easy to see at Cassowary House where they are regulars at the sugar water feeders on the porch. [E]
- STRIPED HONEYEATER** (*Plectorhyncha lanceolata*) – This one played a bit hard to get but we walked away with super looks at a lone bird at the Port of Brisbane wetlands. [E]
- LITTLE FRIARBIRD** (*Philemon citreogularis*) – Never seems as numerous or gregarious as the other friarbird species, and that was the case this trip as well. We had a lone bird during our roadside stop near Mareeba, than a handful more at the Fred Bucholz Park. [E]
- HELMETED FRIARBIRD (NEW GUINEA)** (*Philemon buceroides novaeguineae*) – This species is sometimes chopped up into 3 good species, with this one endemic to PNG, where it is pretty common. [E]
- HELMETED FRIARBIRD (HORNBILL)** (*Philemon buceroides yorki*) – Numerous around Cairns, though replaced by the next species in much of the tablelands. [E]
- NOISY FRIARBIRD** (*Philemon corniculatus*) – Noisy, yes, but they are also gregarious and widespread, and good flowering trees (like that one at Granite Gorge's parking area) can hold a load of these birds. [E]
- Pardalotidae (Pardalotes)*
- SPOTTED PARDALOTE** (*Pardalotus punctatus*) – These wonderful little birds put on quite a show along Duck Creek Road, where we eventually came to the realization that we were probably very near a nest burrow in the cut bank along the roadside. [E]
- STRIATED PARDALOTE** (*Pardalotus striatus*) – Our first at Granite Gorge was just okay; a couple more along Henry Hannam Drive a few days later were somewhat better, but our third and final sighting below O'Reilly's blew those ones away. That bird perched out in the open on the roadside power lines for long enough to get some smashing scope views! [E]
- Acanthizidae (Thornbills and Allies)*
- ROCKWARBLER** (*Origma solitaria*) – We were nearing the end of our sea watch, and our time at Royal NP, when this bird suddenly appeared in the rocks along the path just above where we were standing. It played hide and seek a bit among the boulders, but ultimately gave us all smashing views. This restricted-range species is the only bird endemic to the state of NSW, where it is confined to Hawkesbury Sandstone habitat and adjacent limestone regions. [E]
- MOUNTAIN MOUSE-WARBLER** (*Crateroscelis robusta*) – Secretive and tough to see, though a couple of these are often found skulking around the gardens at Kumul Lodge, where most, if not all of us, eventually caught up with them. [E]
- YELLOW-THROATED SCRUBWREN** (*Sericornis citreogularis*) – The similarity to our Common Yellowthroat is pretty striking, isn't it? We saw these birds easily along the trails at O'Reilly's. [E]
- WHITE-BROWED SCRUBWREN** (*Sericornis frontalis*) – Very common and easy to see at O'Reilly's as well as Royal NP. [E]
- LARGE SCRUBWREN** (*Sericornis nouhuysi*) – A small party of these drab little birds were regularly seen on the Kumul Lodge grounds. [E]
- LARGE-BILLED SCRUBWREN** (*Sericornis magnirostris*) – Not uncommon in the rainforests around the Atherton tablelands. [E]
- PAPUAN SCRUBWREN** (*Sericornis papuensis*) – A single bird was encountered a few times at Kumul, including at the garbage pile alongside the parking area. Most easily told apart from the Large Scrubwrens it hung out with by its song, and it fortunately did sing a number of times. [E]
- MOUNTAIN THORNBILL** (*Acanthiza katherina*) – Restricted to the higher elevation forests in the Atherton region. We had good looks at a couple at Mt Hypipamee. [E]
- BROWN THORNBILL** (*Acanthiza pusilla*) – Numerous and pretty easy to see at both O'Reilly's and Royal NP. [E]



**STRIATED THORNBILL** (*Acanthiza lineata*) – Similar to the above species, which is also heavily streaked, but the white crown streaks on this bird help separate the two. We had some great looks along Duck Creek Road and at Royal NP. [E]

**WEBBILL** (*Smicronis brevirostris*) – Australia's smallest bird, and not one we see often on this tour. We had fantastic looks at a singing bird along Henry Hannam Drive. [E]

**GREEN-BACKED GERYGONE** (*Gerygone chloronota*) – The wonderful tinkling song of this species is easily heard at Varirata NP, but seeing the bird is a much more difficult task. Still, we managed pretty good views of one near the Raggiana BoP display area our first morning. [E]

**FAIRY GERYGONE** (*Gerygone palpebrosa*) – We had two different races of this species. First we had the comparatively dull race *personata* in a mixed flock at Granite Gorge, then in PNG we ran into the much more striking (male at least) race *inconspicua* at Varirata NP. The males there have a very dark head that contrasts strongly with the white lores and whiskers. [E]

**LARGE-BILLED GERYGONE** (*Gerygone magnirostris*) – A cooperative pair at the Cattana Wetlands on our first afternoon were the only ones we saw. [E]

**BROWN GERYGONE** (*Gerygone mouki*) – Common in the eastern rainforests from Cairns right down to Royal NP. [E]

**BROWN-BREASTED GERYGONE** (*Gerygone ruficollis*) – Heard often along the roadsides below Kumul and we managed to get a couple of nice views of them as well. [E]

**MANGROVE GERYGONE** (*Gerygone levigaster*) – These showed up right on cue in the mangroves at the Port of Brisbane. [E]

*Pomatostomidae (Pseudo-Babblers).*

**GRAY-CROWNED BABBLER** (*Pomatostomus temporalis*) – Granite Gorge is about the only place we can find this species on this tour, and that's where we ran into a group of half a dozen of them, part of the mob of birds that were upset by the presence of that well-hidden Collared Sparrowhawk. [E]

*Orthonychidae (Logrunners).*

**AUSTRALIAN LOGRUNNER** (*Orthonyx temminckii*) – Noisy, strikingly patterned, and with endearing habits, including the sideways kicking motion they use to forage on the forest floor. And they're pretty approachable and easy to see at O'Reilly's. What's not to like? [E]

**CHOWCHILLA** (*Orthonyx spaldingii*) – Generally much tougher to see on this tour than their close relative (the logrunner), partly due to the fact that they just aren't very vocal during this period. Unlike most of my recent tours here, though, we did track down a pair at Lake Barrine on our first (and consequently, only) visit. They were still a bit tricky to get onto, but we all managed decent looks before they skulked off into the forest. [E]

*Cnemophilidae (Satinbirds).*

**LORIA'S SATINBIRD** (*Cnemophilus loriae*) – A few females turned up in a fruiting tree right in front of the viewing area at Murmur Pass, but every one of them seemed to fly off as soon as we clocked their presence, and a few folks may not have had satisfying looks at them. [E]

**CRESTED SATINBIRD** (*Cnemophilus macgregorii*) – We never did find one of the stunning males at Kumul, but that isn't all that unusual. The females are always more numerous and easier to find, and we had to be happy with that once again. [E]

*Melanocharitidae (Berrypeckers and Longbills).*

**FAN-TAILED BERRYPECKER** (*Melanocharis versteri*) – Berrypeckers were pretty scarce and difficult this trip, but we did get a few quick looks at this species feeding in low scrub at Murmur Pass. [E]

*Paramythiidae (Tit Berrypecker and Crested Berrypecker).*

**TIT BERRYPECKER** (*Oreocharis arfaki*) – This and the next species are in a different family than the other berrypeckers, and these ones were a lot more in evidence than the true berrypeckers. And that's okay, as these are far more unique and attractive birds. We had these stunners in small numbers each day around Kumul, and we all had some excellent looks at those gorgeous males. [E]

**CRESTED BERRYPECKER** (*Paramythia montium*) – A pair of these stunners put in regular appearances in the trees just off the viewing deck at Kumul, and we enjoyed daily sightings of them there, often at quite close quarters. This was the only non bird-of-paradise to get a first place vote, with Karen choosing it as her favorite PNG bird overall. [E]

*Psophodidae (Whipbirds and Wedgebills).*

**EASTERN WHIPBIRD** (*Psophodes olivaceus*) – After being teased by the unique vocalizations of these on a daily basis in the Atherton Tablelands, we were more than ready to lay eyes on them by the time we arrived at O'Reilly's, and the birds didn't disappoint. We saw our first in the shrubs around the pool, then ran into them regularly along the trails. [E]

*Cinclosomatidae (Quail-thrushes and Jewel-babblers).*

**PAINTED QUAIL-THRUSH** (*Cinclosoma ajax*) – A super tough terrestrial bird, and as is often the case, we had to settle for just hearing these birds at Varirata. [E\*]

**CHESTNUT-BACKED JEWEL-BABBLER** (*Ptilorrhoa castanonota*) – Ditto what I wrote above for most of us, though at least Matthias and Leonard managed to get a look at one of these skulkers on our first visit to Varirata. [E]

*Machaerirhynchidae (Boatbills).*

**BLACK-BREASTED BOATBILL** (*Machaerirhynchus nigripectus*) – Lovely views of this beautiful little bird, which looks a lot like a tody-flycatcher, in the highland forests around Kumul Lodge. [E]

**YELLOW-BREASTED BOATBILL** (*Machaerirhynchus flaviventer*) – Our only one was a well-behaved bird at Lake Barrine that showed nicely for all. [E]

*Artamidae (Woodswallows).*

**GREAT WOODSWALLOW** (*Artamus maximus*) – Matthias and I spotted one flying high overhead during our bus ride from Mt Hagen up to Kumul Lodge, and that was it for the trip. [E]

**WHITE-BREASTED WOODSWALLOW** (*Artamus leucorhynchus*) – Common around Cairns and Port Moresby.

**WHITE-BROWED WOODSWALLOW** (*Artamus superciliosus*) – A big flock of woodswallows were circling overhead as we birded the dry eucalyptus forest on the slopes below O'Reilly's. Lighting was poor, and viewing times were brief, and we were unable to identify most, but we clearly saw rufous bellies and white brows on a couple of the lower birds. The flock almost certainly also contained Masked Woodswallow, and perhaps another species or two. These birds are highly nomadic and irruptive, and often show up where they aren't really expected. Like where we saw them!

**DUSKY WOODSWALLOW** (*Artamus cyanopterus*) – We found just one pair in the dry woodland at Wondecla. [E]

*Cracticidae (Bellmagpies and Allies).*

**BLACK-BACKED BUTCHERBIRD** (*Cracticus mentalis*) – The butcherbird of savannah regions around Port Moresby. We saw a couple at PAU, one of which was being harassed by woodswallows. [E]

**GRAY BUTCHERBIRD** (*Cracticus torquatus*) – A pair was working on a nest above the road into the Wondecla Forest, and we saw this species again at the Daisy Hill Koala Center. [EN]

**HOODED BUTCHERBIRD** (*Cracticus cassicus*) – Replaces Black-backed Butcherbird in wetter forest types, though the two can overlap in the transition zones such as along the Varirata entrance road. This was one of the species we picked up on our second visit to the park. [E]

**PIED BUTCHERBIRD** (*Cracticus nigrogularis*) – Widespread in eastern Australia, and we saw them at a number of different sites. [E]

**BLACK BUTCHERBIRD** (*Cracticus quoyi*) – Not uncommon around Cairns, where we saw them at Centenary Lakes and Cassowary House, among other spots. We also had a brief look at one at Varirata NP.

**AUSTRALIAN MAGPIE** (*Gymnorhina tibicen*) – A common open country species in Australia. [E]

**PIED CURRAWONG** (*Strepera graculina*) – A single bird was glimpsed in the tablelands, but it wasn't a problem as these birds were common and hard to miss once we got down around Brisbane and Sydney. [E]

*Campephagidae (Cuckooshrikes).*

**BARRED CUCKOOSHRIKE** (*Coracina lineata*) – Birds found in Australia belong to the nominate race, in which both male and female are barred below. In the widespread PNG race, *axillaris*, only the female is barred, with the male being a solid gray color. We saw the former race at Chambers early one morning, and the latter was seen on both of our visits to Varirata. [E]

**BOYER'S CUCKOOSHRIKE** (*Coracina boyeri*) – A conspicuous and regular visitor to the area around the picnic clearing at Varirata, where we saw it on both visits. [E]

**BLACK-FACED CUCKOOSHRIKE** (*Coracina novaehollandiae*) – A few were seen in the Cairns region, and 4 birds were at PAU. Many of the Australian breeders migrate to PNG for the winter, though at this time of year, it is likely that the ones we saw at PAU are part of a small breeding population from the savannas around Port Moresby.

**WHITE-BELLIED CUCKOOSHRIKE** (*Coracina papuensis*) – Common and seen most days in the Cairns region, and we also saw a couple in the PNG highlands below Kumul Lodge.

**VARIED TRILLER** (*Lalage leucomela*) – Seen in small numbers mainly around the Atherton Tablelands, though we also had one which we scoped along the road below O'Reilly's.

**COMMON CICADABIRD** (*Edolisoma tenuirostre*) – The only ones we saw were on our very first afternoon at the Centenary Lakes, where a calling pair showed very nicely. We did hear them a couple of other times, though, including along Duck Creek Road.

**BLACK CICADABIRD** (*Edolisoma melan*) – A male along the Varirata entrance road was one of our final new birds before leaving PNG. [E]

*Eulacestomatidae (Ploughbill).*

**WATTLED PLOUGHBILL** (*Eulacestoma nigropectus*) – Always a highly sought-after species, and a much more incredible looking bird than any of the books show. We not only found one male along the trails at Kumul Lodge, but the very same day also had great looks at a pair at Murmur Pass. What a treat! [E]

*Falcunculidae (Shrike-tit).*

**CRESTED SHRIKE-TIT (EASTERN)** (*Falcunculus frontatus frontatus*) – One of my all-time favorite birds in Australia, partly due to its striking appearance, but also as it isn't always an easy bird to find. We had no such trouble this year however, as we had excellent looks at one at Hasties Swamp, then happened upon another at Wondecla a couple of days later. [E]

*Pachycephalidae (Whistlers and Allies).*

**LITTLE SHRIKETHRUSH** (*Colluricincla megarrhyncha*) – This bird is likely to be split up into at least 7 different species; we saw two of them. In Australia, we saw them regularly around the Atherton Tablelands (race *griseata*) and we also had one sighting in PNG at Varirata NP (race *despecta*). Race *griseata*, along with several subspecies, will likely be named Rufous Shrikethrush (*C. rufogaster*) after the split, with *despecta* and a few other PNG races becoming Variable Shrikethrush (*C. fortis*).

**GRAY SHRIKETHRUSH** (*Colluricincla harmonica*) – Most commonly seen in the Brisbane area, though we also had sightings at Wondecla, and at Varirata and the Lesser BoP site in PNG. [E]

**BOWER'S SHRIKETHRUSH** (*Colluricincla boweri*) – An Atherton area endemic. We had a couple of sightings of this one, including good side by side comparisons of this bird associating with a pair of Little Shrikethrushes at Lake Barrine. [E]

**REGENT WHISTLER** (*Pachycephala schlegelii*) – This beauty was seen daily at Kumul Lodge, but the highlight for me was seeing several males displaying and counter-singing at Murmur Pass, their yellow nape patches fully expanded. This is a posture that is shown in the field guides, but which I had never seen before. [E]

**GOLDEN WHISTLER** (*Pachycephala pectoralis*) – Our many sightings of this one throughout eastern Australia included a female working in a nest above the track at Royal NP. [N]

**BROWN-BACKED WHISTLER** (*Pachycephala modesta*) – A rather quiet and unobtrusive whistler from the New Guinea highlands. We saw this species in ones or twos daily around Kumul. [E]

**GRAY WHISTLER (GRAY-HEADED)** (*Pachycephala simplex peninsulae*) – This species occurs in both countries, but we had just one bird of this eastern Australian race along Black Mountain Road. [E]

**WHITE-BELLIED WHISTLER** (*Pachycephala leucogastra*) – The very last bird we added to our PNG lists before returning to Australia. It didn't seem like we were going to get this species, but one called just before I was about to pull the plug on it, and we soon had both members of a pair showing well along Varirata's entrance road. [E]

**BLACK-HEADED WHISTLER** (*Pachycephala monacha*) – A calling bird at the Lesser BoP site finally turned up in a large Casuarina tree right in front of for some nice looks. It was the only one we had on tour. [E]

**RUFIOUS WHISTLER** (*Pachycephala rufiventris*) – This beautiful whistler was seen a handful of times in the drier parts of the Atherton tablelands. [E]

*Oreoicidae (Australo-Papuan Bellbirds).*

**RUFIOUS-NAPED BELLBIRD** (*Aleadyras rufinucha*) – Once considered to be a whistler, but now aligned with two other species in the very small Bellbird family. We saw these birds regularly on the grounds of Kumul Lodge. [E]

**PIPING BELLBIRD** (*Ornorectes cristatus*) – Formerly Crested Pitohui, now in the Bellbird family with the above species (and Australia's Crested Bellbird). As is often the case, we only heard the long, repetitive calls of this species at Varirata. [E]

#### *Laniidae (Shrikes)*

**LONG-TAILED SHRIKE (NASUTUS GROUP)** (*Lanius schach stresemanni*) – Regular in open habitats in the PNG highlands, and we saw single birds daily during our time there.

#### *Oriolidae (Old World Orioles)*

**HOODED PITOUI** (*Pitohui dichrous*) – One of the true pitohuis, with the toxic feathers. This bird is fairly easy to see at Varirata, and we had good looks on both of our visits. [E]

**BROWN ORIOLE** (*Oriolus szalayi*) – Among the first of the PNG endemics to find its way onto our lists, as we ticked a couple of them at PAU. Also seen on both visits to Varirata. [E]

**OLIVE-BACKED ORIOLE** (*Oriolus sagittatus*) – Two singles were seen at either end of the tour. First was one along the road into the Mareeba Wetlands Reserve, and the other, 10 days later, was at Fred Bucholz Park. [E]

**GREEN ORIOLE** (*Oriolus flavocinctus*) – The only place we ever see Green Oriole this tour is along the Cairns Esplanade, and that's where we had them again this time. Some of the field guides still call this species Yellow Oriole, though that name belongs to another oriole in northern South America. [E]

**AUSTRALASIAN FIGBIRD** (*Sphecotheres vieilloti*) – Common around the Cairns region where we saw plenty most days. We also had a few around Brisbane, as well as several around Port Moresby, where the endemic race *salvadorii* is found. [E]

#### *Dicruridae (Drongos)*

**SPANGLED DRONGO** (*Dicrurus bracteatus*) – Lots in northern Queensland, where we saw them daily, and we saw a single bird fly across the road on our way down from O'Reilly's. Also seen at Varirata NP, where the endemic race *carbonarius*, sometimes considered as a separate species, is found.

#### *Rhipiduridae (Fantails)*

**WILLIE-WAGTAIL** (*Rhipidura leucophrys*) – Pretty much ubiquitous, and we only missed seeing these charming little birds on two days, the day we traveled from PNG back to Australia, and our full day around O'Reilly's. [E]

**DIMORPHIC FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura brachyrhyncha*) – Singing birds taunted us on both our visits to Murmur Pass, but we finally caught up with them as we were headed back to the van on our second visit. Just as we got back to the road, a pair, with one of each plumage type, turned up right over the track and showed quite well. [E]

**RUFIOUS FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura rufifrons*) – A lone bird with a little mixed flock at Granite Gorge was our only one until we got down to O'Reilly's, where we ran into this gorgeous fantail a few times.

**FRIENDLY FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura albolimbata*) – Compared to most of the other PNG fantails, this one is pretty friendly, and they gave us daily sightings around Kumul Lodge. [E]

**CHESTNUT-BELLIED FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura hyperythra*) – This fantail is found in hill forest in PNG, where it is often one of the nuclear members of mixed feeding flocks. Our only one was in just such a flock on our first visit to Varirata, where, despite it moving around a lot, we all managed good looks. [E]

**GRAY FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura albiscapa*) – Though we heard them regularly in the tablelands, it wasn't until we got to O'Reilly's that we finally laid eyes on this common species. [E]

#### *Ifritidae (Ifrita)*

**BLUE-CAPPED IFRITA** (*Ifrita kowaldi*) – After bouncing around from family to family for years, this unique bird has finally settled in its own, monotypic family. Seems like the right move, too, as there is nothing really similar. A pair that hung around Kumul Lodge were fantastic, showing up almost daily, and showing off, too, especially that one morning when they were feeding just outside the windows of the lodge. [E]

#### *Monarchidae (Monarch Flycatchers)*

**WHITE-EARED MONARCH** (*Carterornis leucotis*) – This handsome monarch usually gives us more trouble than the other Australian species, and we took it to the wire again this trip, finally finding a wonderfully cooperative pair as we headed down from O'Reilly's on our last day in the area. [E]

**BLACK-FACED MONARCH** (*Monarcha melanopsis*) – Numerous and easy to see from the Cairns region right down to Royal NP in Sydney. [E]

**SPECTACLED MONARCH** (*Symposiachrus trivirgatus*) – Restless and active, and often a bit tricky to get bins on, but we did fine with this lovely monarch at Lake Barrine, and along Black Mountain Road. [E]

**SPOT-WINGED MONARCH** (*Symposiachrus guttula*) – Heard on both of our visits to Varirata, but they stubbornly refused to show. [E\*]

**FRILLED MONARCH** (*Arses telescopthalmus*) – usually not tough at Varirata, but they were quiet this time around, and only Matthias saw a male as we birded near the picnic area on our second visit. Playback elicited only a vocal response, and it never came back out to where we could see it. [E]

**PIED MONARCH** (*Arses kaupi*) – Another specialty of the Atherton tableland region, where our only pair showed nicely in the tall forest around the Curtain Fig tree. [E]

**MAGPIE-LARK** (*Grallina cyanoleuca*) – Numerous, bold, and easy to see in open country throughout eastern Australia. [E]

**LEADEN FLYCATCHER** (*Myiagra rubecula*) – A few birds, mostly females were around the Cairns region over the first two days, with some nice looks especially at Granite Gorge. Our only other ones were a pair along Duck Creek Road. [E]

#### *Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)*

**GRAY CROW** (*Corvus tristis*) – Though these are often in pretty good-sized flocks, we had just one bird, which fortunately flew across the Varirata entrance road during one of our final stops before leaving the park. [E]

**TORRESIAN CROW** (*Corvus orru*) – Pretty common in the savannas around Port Moresby, where the nominate race occurs, and the Brisbane region, where the widespread Australian subspecies *ceciliae* is found. [E]

**AUSTRALIAN RAVEN** (*Corvus coronoides*) – Replaces Torresian Crow around Sydney, where we saw quite a few, and heard their distinctive, and rather comical, crying baby calls. [E]

#### *Corcoracidae (White-winged Chough and Apostlebird)*



**APOSTLEBIRD** (*Struthidea cinerea*) – Not a bird I've seen often on this trip, in fact I've only had them once before along the Mareeba Wetlands entrance road. When we arrived at that same spot, it was pretty quiet, but I tried a snatch of playback anyway, and immediately a gang of 10 of these noisy birds exploded out of the scrub and perched in view, whining and complaining loudly. For those listing bird families, this was a great find, as they are one of only two species in another Australian endemic family.

*Paradisaeidae (Birds-of-Paradise)*

**CRINKLE-COLLARED MANUCODE** (*Manucodia chalybatus*) – A manucode that flew over a couple of times at Kama was identified to species based solely on the fact that it should be the only one present at such high elevations. Luckily, we also saw a pair around the picnic area at Varirata a couple of days later, and we had good scope views that time, in which we could easily see the bumps on the head that separate this from the other two species found locally. [E]

**KING-OF-SAXONY BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Pteridophora alberti*) – In a family full of unique and fantastic-looking birds, this one stands out as one of the most unique and fantastic. And I was pleased to see that a gorgeous adult male was hanging around at Murmur Pass this year, as on past trips we've only seen a subadult male in female-type plumage here. We had several excellent scope views of this gem, leading both Doris and Matthias to choose this as their favorite PNG bird. [E]

**GREATER SUPERB BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Lophorina superba*) – Forget the long, unwieldy name of this species, as it will soon be changed to the shorter, and not especially attractive, Greater Lophorina. Whatever it's called, it's an awesome bird, and our scope views of calling males below Kumul Lodge were pretty sweet! [E]

**PARADISE RIFLEBIRD** (*Ptiloris paradiseus*) – After some good encounters with a couple of females on our first day at O'Reilly's, I was especially pleased to find a displaying male the next day on our way back to Brisbane. Though I've seen males here before, I think this was the first time I'd had one on a display perch. [E]

**VICTORIA'S RIFLEBIRD** (*Ptiloris victoriae*) – We couldn't have asked for a better introduction to the bird-of-paradise family than what this species gave us. We saw them daily around the Atherton tablelands, with an incredible show each morning at Chambers, where several males, including a couple of adults, performed regularly on a display perch above the restaurant! [E]

**GROWLING RIFLEBIRD** (*Ptiloris intercedens*) – Though we heard them growling a few times at Varirata, our views were limited to a couple of flyovers as we birded inside the forest on our first visit to the park. [E]

**BROWN SICKLEBILL** (*Epimachus meyeri*) – A couple of females were regulars at the Kumul Lodge feeders, while a long-tailed male was seen beautifully at Murmur Pass, giving its incredible, loud machine-gun rattle from a treetop perch. [E]

**STEPHANIE'S ASTRAPIA** (*Astrapia stephaniae*) – Generally at slightly lower elevations than the next species, though, as we found, they do overlap at some sites, such as Murmur Pass. We had decent looks of up to three here. [E]

**RIBBON-TAILED ASTRAPIA** (*Astrapia mayeri*) – A stunning bird no matter what the length of the tail, but when you see a male with a full, meter-long white tail, whoa! It was great this trip that among the many astrapias around Kumul, there was one such male that wowed us daily. Kay picked this as her fave PNG bird. [E]

**BLUE BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Paradisaea rudolphi*) – With landowner issues keeping us from visiting the best area for this stunning bird, we were limited to looking for it along the roadside, where it's always possible, but much harder to find. But luck was on our side, and Karen spotted a male in the same tree as a male Greater Superb BoP we had been watching. It didn't stick around for too long, but long enough for everyone to get a couple of excellent scope views! [E]

**LESSER BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Paradisaea minor*) – A single male and a single female were all we saw, but that male put on a great show at Kama, calling throughout the morning, perching in the open for a good long time, and flying overhead a couple of times. All in all a real good showing from this flashy bird. [E]

**RAGGIANA BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Paradisaea raggiana*) – Paula's pick for top PNG bird, and it's hard to argue with the looks we had at those spectacular males at the lek on our first morning at Varirata. [E]

*Melampittidae (Melampittas)*

**LESSER MELAMPITTA** (*Melampitta lugubris*) – The two melampittas were until very recently included in the bird-of-paradise family, but now make up a family of their own, which seems a much better treatment. They are shy, skulking birds, and difficult to see well, so we often have to be content with a glimpse of a dark, pitta-like shape bounding through a small opening in the dense understory. Not so this trip, as we had an incredibly confiding bird hop up through the fairly open branches of a tree along the track at Murmur Pass. By far my best views of this species, and the only time I've ever been able to discern the red eyes! [E]

*Petroicidae (Australasian Robins)*

**TORRENT FLYCATCHER** (*Monachella muelleriana*) – Well-named as they generally stick to areas along rushing mountain rivers. We had them a couple of times below Kumul Lodge. [E]

**LEMON-BELLIED FLYCATCHER** (*Microeca flavigaster*) – It's been a while since I've seen this species in Australia, so a lone bird in eucalypt woodland in the Mareeba region was nice to see. For those that missed that one, we picked up a few more along the entrance road to Varirata. [E]

**ROSE ROBIN** (*Petroica rosea*) – A bit tough this trip, and the only cooperative one we had at O'Reilly's was a subadult male in drab plumage. Only a couple of folks got onto an adult male in the canopy along the Python Rock Trail. [E]

**WHITE-FACED ROBIN** (*Tregellasia leucops*) – Just one along the Varirata Lookout Track on our first visit to the park. [E]

**PALE-YELLOW ROBIN** (*Tregellasia capito*) – We had a good showing from this species, of which we often don't see many, as we saw them on three days in the tablelands this time around. Easily the best was the one that showed up almost right beside us as we were watching the female cassowary as she rested in the shade. [E]

**EASTERN YELLOW ROBIN** (*Eopsaltria australis*) – A couple of quick sightings at Wondecla, then a daily companion along the trails at O'Reilly's and Royal NP. [E]

**MANGROVE ROBIN** (*Eopsaltria pulverulenta*) – A true mangrove specialist, rarely venturing far from that habitat. We tallied these on our final day around Cairns when we explored the north end of the Esplanade and found a confiding pair feeding along the edge of the mangroves there. [E]

**WHITE-BROWED ROBIN** (*Poecilodryas superciliosa*) – A rather uncommon and local Queensland endemic. We had super scope views of a singing bird along a creek at the north end of the Atherton tablelands. [E]

**WHITE-WINGED ROBIN** (*Peneothello sigillata*) – Numerous and conspicuous around Kumul Lodge. Has a varied vocal repertoire, and much of the early dawn chorus around the lodge was from this species. [E]

**ASHY ROBIN** (*Heteromyias albispectularis*) – A fairly recent split from the next species, which may be due for further splitting someday soon, in which case the one we saw can be called Black-capped Robin (as the field guides already refer to it). Can be a very elusive bird, but those ones

around the clearing at Murrumbidgee Pass are generally pretty cooperative. [E]

**GRAY-HEADED ROBIN** (*Heteromyias cinereifrons*) – Following the split from the PNG forms, this is now an Atherton tableland endemic. We had fair numbers around the Crater Lakes NP. [E]

*Alaudidae (Larks)*

**AUSTRALIAN BUSHLARK** (*Mirafrja javanica*) – A small brown bird perched on a fence along the road to Machan's Beach caught my eye, and we pulled over to find a bushlark or two singing around a weedy pasture. After that first afternoon, we never saw another for the rest of the tour.

*Hirundinidae (Swallows)*

**WELCOME SWALLOW** (*Hirundo neoxena*) – The default swallow in Australia, seen pretty much everywhere, but especially numerous around O'Reilly's where they roost and nest in the carports below the rooms. [E]

**PACIFIC SWALLOW** (*Hirundo tahitica*) – The PNG version of the previous species, likewise quite common and seen daily there.

**FAIRY MARTIN** (*Petrochelidon ariel*) – Good numbers around the Port of Brisbane Wetlands were the only confirmed ones we had this trip. [E]

**TREE MARTIN** (*Petrochelidon nigricans*) – A few birds flying around and sitting in dead trees at Fred Bucholz Park were our only ones of the tour. [E]

*Phylloscopidae (Leaf Warblers)*

**ISLAND LEAF WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus maforensis*) – More easily heard than seen, and we just managed to get looks at a single bird along the road below Kumul Lodge.

*Acrocephalidae (Reed Warblers and Allies)*

**AUSTRALIAN REED WARBLER** (*Acrocephalus australis*) – A single bird in the dense lantana thickets lining the road at Hasties Swamp, then quite a few (heard mostly) at the Port of Brisbane wetlands. [E]

*Locustellidae (Grassbirds and Allies)*

**TAWNY GRASSBIRD** (*Megalurus timoriensis*) – The subspecies *alisteri* is the one we saw in eastern Australia, in the reedy margins of the lake at Fred Bucholz Park. [E]

**TAWNY GRASSBIRD (PAPUAN)** (*Megalurus timoriensis montanus*) – Common in scrubby, open areas in the PNG highlands, where we saw several. This form is often treated as a separate species from true Tawny Grassbird. Note that I believe it is this race, and not the one we had on our checklist (i.e. *macrurus*) that we saw.

*Cisticolidae (Cisticolas and Allies)*

**GOLDEN-HEADED CISTICOLA** (*Cisticola exilis*) – A few birds in areas of tall grass along the roads in the drier parts of the Atherton Tablelands.

*Zosteropidae (White-eyes, Yuhinas, and Allies)*

**BLACK-FRONTED WHITE-EYE** (*Zosterops minor*) – A very attractive and distinctive white-eye with a lovely song. We saw and heard this one on both visits to Varirata. It is also possible we saw the Green-fronted form (subspecies *minor*) at Kama, but the white-eye situation in that region is still a bit of a mess. [E]

**NEW GUINEA WHITE-EYE** (*Zosterops novaeguineae*) – Among the many white-eyes we saw below Kumul Lodge, most showed just a white crescent below the eye and resembled the race *oreophilus* as pictured in Phil Gregory's field guide, though presumably the race here is *wahgiensis*. But one bird stood out as different, being much brighter below and showing a prominent white crescent above the eye. Not sure what that one was, but as I said, the white-eye situation here is a bit messy! [E]

**SILVER-EYE** (*Zosterops lateralis*) – Thankfully, much of Australia and all the areas we visit) only has this one species of white-eye. We saw them pretty regularly throughout.

*Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)*

**PIED BUSHCHAT** (*Saxicola caprata*) – Common in open habitats of the PNG highlands.

*Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)*

**BASSIAN THRUSH** (*Zoothera lunulata*) – We heard one singing across the Hacking River from where we were walking at Royal NP, but we couldn't draw it across. [E]

**RUSSET-TAILED THRUSH** (*Zoothera heinei*) – The only thrushes we managed to identify at O'Reilly's, including one feeding small young in the same roadside nest as we had found last year, were this species. [EN]

**ISLAND THRUSH** (*Turdus poliocephalus*) – A couple of them were regulars around Kumul Lodge.

*Sturnidae (Starlings)*

**METALLIC STARLING** (*Aplonis metallica*) – Numerous in the Cairns region, with exceptional views of the ones nesting communally in the palm trees of the shopping center at Smithfield. [N]

**SINGING STARLING** (*Aplonis cantoroides*) – A couple of birds at PAU were not seen by all, but our backups at the international airport were present once again, and seen well from the departure lounge as we awaited our flight to Brisbane. [E]

**YELLOW-FACED MYNA** (*Mino dumontii*) – A few birds were singing their awkward, unmusical calls at PAU, and we had a couple of others in the fruiting fig at Varirata on our second visit there. [E]

**EUROPEAN STARLING** (*Sturnus vulgaris*) – A few birds around Brisbane and Sydney. [I]

**COMMON MYNA** (*Acridotheres tristis*) – Abundant in urban areas throughout eastern Australia. [I]

*Dicaeidae (Flowerpeckers)*

**RED-CAPPED FLOWERPECKER** (*Dicaeum geelvinkianum*) – We had a tough time getting a clean look at this bird for everyone, as they just never sat still for long, but with all the sightings we did have, I think everyone finished up with a reasonable view. [E]

**MISTLETOEBIRD** (*Dicaeum hirundinaceum*) – Our first of several great sightings in the Cairns region was of a pair building a beautiful nest in a palm tree at Yorkey's Knob. [EN]

*Nectariniidae (Sunbirds and Spiderhunters)*

**OLIVE-BACKED SUNBIRD** (*Cinnyris jugularis*) – Quite common around Cairns, where we saw quite a few.

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits).

**AUSTRALASIAN PIPIT (AUSTRALIAN)** (*Anthus novaeseelandiae australis*) – We saw two races of this species, *australis* in Australia in the Atherton region and the Port of Brisbane wetlands, and *exiguus* in PNG, along the runway at the Mt Hagen airport.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows).

**HOUSE SPARROW** (*Passer domesticus*) – Not uncommon around the Cairns region. [I]

**EURASIAN TREE SPARROW** (*Passer montanus*) – Quite numerous, increasing, and spreading in PNG. Now common around Port Moresby where it seemed to appear as recently as 2006! [I]

Estrildidae (Waxbills and Allies).

**MOUNTAIN FIRETAIL** (*Oreostruthus fuliginosus*) – Just one or two birds were found around Kumul Lodge. [E]

**RED-BROWED FIRETAIL** (*Neochmia temporalis*) – Common in eastern Australia, and most easily seen at O'Reilly's where a bunch of them regularly hang out near the bird feeding area. [E]

**DOUBLE-BARRED FINCH** (*Taeniopygia bichenovii*) – Not many this year, but we had a flock of about a dozen at Granite Gorge that showed well. Aside from that, we had just a single bird in front of the visitor center building at the Port of Brisbane wetlands. [E]

**BLUE-FACED PARROTFINCH** (*Erythrura trichroa*) – We owe our lone sighting to the Rufous-throated Bronze-Cuckoo at Murmur Pass. The parrotfinch didn't stick around long, but as it turned up in the tree the cuckoo had been in just minutes before, I could quickly get everyone on the right spot, in time for a quick look before it dropped back down out of sight.

**SCALY-BREASTED MUNIA** (*Lonchura punctulata*) – Just a few birds seen on our first afternoon around Cairns. [I]

**HOODED MUNIA** (*Lonchura spectabilis*) – A few small flocks of this handsome munia were found in scrubby areas below Kumul Lodge. [E]

**GRAY-HEADED MUNIA** (*Lonchura caniceps*) – We estimated at least 50 of these munias (along with an equal number of the next species, in tall seeding grass outside of the fence at PAU. [E]

**CHESTNUT-BREASTED MUNIA** (*Lonchura castaneothorax*) – The big group of these with the Gray-headed Munias at PAU made up for our unsatisfying ones in Australia, where only a couple of us saw them feeding in the short grass along the highway north of Cairns as we whizzed past, with no good place to stop nearby. [E]

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## MAMMALS

**PLATYPUS** (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*) – Our platypus experience was incredible this year, as our first animal showed up right in front of us while there was still plenty of light, then made several more close passes before we called it a day. One of my best sightings ever. [E]

**LONG-NOSED BANDICOOT** (*Peramelas nasuta*) – One visited the feeding station at Chambers, licking up honey that had trickled down to the base of the tree. Others were seen along the road around Lake Eacham as we drove it after dark. [E]

**KOALA** (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) – This was perfect! I told everyone to stay put and I would carry on a little further to make one last attempt to find a koala. I only got about 100 yards away when I spotted one, and we were soon all enjoying views of it as it played hide and seek in the canopy. [E]

**COMMON BRUSHTAIL POSSUM** (*Trichosurus vulpecula*) – One was seen by Kay, Matthias, and me during our night spotting at the Curtain Fig. [E]

**COPPERY BRUSHTAIL POSSUM** (*Trichosurus johnstonii*) – It was great to see a lone one of these fairly localized possums shortly after seeing our lone Common Brushtail. The two were treated as conspecific until fairly recently.

**SHORT-EARED POSSUM** (*Trichosurus caninus*) – This very dark possum turned up at the feeders outside the windows of the O'Reilly's dining room on our second night there. [E]

**SUGAR GLIDER** (*Petaurus breviceps*) – For those that stayed up late enough, as many as three of these cute animals put on a nice show at the feeders at Chambers. [E]

**GREEN RINGTAIL POSSUM** (*Pseudochirops archeri*) – Another mammal from our night spotting outing near Chambers. We saw 5 different individuals of this distinctive ringtail. [E]

**STRIPED POSSUM** (*Dactylopsila trivirgata*) – A strikingly beautiful animal, also seen at the feeders at Chambers. [E]

**MUSKY RAT-KANGAROO** (*Hypsiprymnodon moschatus*) – The smallest of the Macropods (i.e. kangaroos and wallabies). We saw a single one below the balcony at Cassowary House. [E]

**RED-NECKED PADEMELO** (*Thylogale thetis*) – Numerous and easy to see at O'Reilly's. [E]

**RED-LEGGED PADEMELO** (*Thylogale stigmatica*) – Shyer than the above species, but a youngster seemed pretty unfazed by us as it fed in the lawn at Chambers after dark. [E]

**MAREEBA ROCK-WALLABY** (*Petrogale mareeba*) – A highlight of our visit to Granite Gorge was our close encounters with these charming little wallabies. [E]

**LUMHOLTZ'S TREE KANGAROO** (*Dendrolagus lumholtzi*) – We spotted one feeding in a tree overhanging the road as we drove along the Upper Barron Road en route to Mt Hypipamee. There was no good place to pull off and view from a distance, so we pulled up alongside the tree, but the kangaroo took off pretty quickly. Still, it wasn't a bad look. We also had good views of one at the Curtain Fig on our night spotting outing. [E]

**AGILE WALLABY** (*Macropus agilis*) – Quite numerous in the Atherton Tablelands, including some sparring ones at Hasties Swamp. [E]

**RED-NECKED WALLABY** (*Macropus rufogriseus*) – Our first one at Daisy Hill ended up leading us to the Square-tailed Kite nest! [E]

**WHIPTAIL WALLABY** (*Macropus parryi*) – Also called Pretty-face Wallaby, for good reason, as they are beautifully marked. We saw a bunch of them on our way up to O'Reilly's. [E]

**EASTERN GRAY KANGAROO** (*Macropus giganteus*) – On the tour route, pretty much only found at Mareeba, where we enjoyed the mob that hangs out on the golf course there. [E]

**SPECTACLED FLYING-FOX** (*Pteropus conspicillatus*) – That huge roost in downtown Cairns is an amazing sight to see, especially at dusk as they start flying around and heading out to feed. [E]

**GRAY-HEADED FLYING-FOX** (*Pteropus poliocephalus*) – Equally impressive was the big roost of these along the creek at Canungra. [E]

**OLD WORLD RABBIT** (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) – Only one was seen up in the Atherton tablelands. [I]

**AUSTRALIAN SWAMP RAT** (*Rattus lutreolus*) – A couple of these native rats were seen chasing each other around near the cabins on our first afternoon at O'Reilly's.

**WHITE-TAILED RAT** (*Uromys caudimaculatus*) – A single one was seen on our nocturnal foray to the Curtain Fig Tree.



### Herps

**EASTERN WATER DRAGON** (*Intellagama lesueurii*) – One at the platypus spot, then a bunch of the in a grassy lawn along the Canungra Creek, a group that included a couple of large, colorful males.

**FRILL-NECKED LIZARD** (*Chlamydosaurus kingii*) – Super looks at one along the roadside as we were leaving Granite Gorge.

**CARPET PYTHON** (*Morelia spilota*) – One individual about 10' in length crossed the road at Lake Eacham as we returned from dinner at Yungaburra. We then found another during the day at Duck Creek Road, again, right along the roadside.

**YELLOW-FACED WHIP SNAKE** (*Demansia psammophis*) – One of these beautiful snakes was going in and out of a small hole in a brick wall at the Bromfield Swamp overlook. We learned later why it was doing this, as we found its newly shed skin lodged in the hole. This is the second year in a row I've seen this snake there.

**LACE MONITOR** (*Varanus varius*) – The two large monitors we saw at Wondecla seem to have been this widespread species.

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## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

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**Totals for the tour: 390 bird taxa and 23 mammal taxa**