



Field Guides Tour Report
New Guinea & Australia 2019

Oct 8, 2019 to Oct 26, 2019
Jay VanderGaast

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Nobody wants to miss seeing cassowary, but it was looking like we might until this one wandered onto the beach at Etty Bay and proceeded to forage unconcernedly down the whole length of the beach, accompanied by an entourage of admirers, our group included. What an amazing encounter! Photo by guide Jay VanderGaast.

Australia and Papua New Guinea are a natural fit to pair up on a tour such as this. Aside from being close together, they share a similar avifauna, with a lot of families, and a fair number of species, occurring in both countries. On the other hand, they also each have their own distinct flavor, and plenty of endemics, making them both excellent destinations on their own. Quite obviously, no single tour to either country can even come close to cleaning up on the birds, and this tour certainly makes no attempt to do that. It is more a tour of highlights, and one thing is for certain, there were plenty of those everywhere we went!

Things started off on a high note on our first outing in the Cairns region, where in addition to a nice list of expected species, we tallied a trio of Lovely Fairywrens at Cattana Wetlands and a gorgeous Little Kingfisher at Yorkey's Knob, and it just kept on rolling from there. A few days later, by the time we moved on to PNG, we'd enjoyed a close encounter with an imposing Southern Cassowary at Etty Bay, admired the brilliant colors of Wompoo and Rose-crowned Fruit-Doves, had an impromptu photos session with a stunning Spotted Harrier, and been introduced to an assortment of range-restricted specialties of the Atherton Tablelands, from quirky Chowchillas kicking leaves around in the understory, to the display of a shimmering male Victoria's Riflebird, to the construction prowess of a Golden Bowerbird. And we got our first taste of the uniqueness of Australia's mammal life as well, with nice encounters with an assortment of wallabies, kangaroos, and possums, plus Sugar Gliders, Long-nosed Bandicoots, and even a Platypus or two!

The short hop across the Coral Sea to Port Moresby brought us into another world, very different in so many ways from Australia. From a birding standpoint, Cairns, with its plentiful birdlife, contrasts sharply with Port Moresby, where few, if any, birds were noted in the urban areas. But getting out of the city, it was a different story, and soon we were marveling at such birds as a very cryptic Papuan Frogmouth at PAU, and fantastically-plumed Raggiana Birds-of-Paradise at their display area in Varirata. Our brief time in the Port Moresby region also offered up such lookers as Beautiful and Orange-fronted fruit-doves, Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Brown-headed Kingfisher, Eclectus and Red-cheeked parrots, an enormous Blyth's Hornbill, the poisonous Hooded Pitohui, and many more. Moving up into the highlands, we marveled at more wonderful birds-of-paradise--an antennae male King-of-Saxony, a dazzling male Blue, and a fancy-plumed Lesser, plus the usual Brown Sicklebill and Ribbon-tailed Astropia--without ignoring some of the less heralded specialties. Bronze Ground-Dove, Mountain Kingfisher, Brehm's Tiger-Parrot, Plum-faced and Papuan lorikeets, Tit Berrypecker, Black-breasted Boatbill, Lesser Melampitta, and Regent Whistler, were just some of the many wonderful birds we crossed paths with before our time in PNG came to a close.

The bustling port of Brisbane welcomed us back to Australia, and a visit to the Port of Brisbane Wetlands en route to Lamington National Park welcomed us with Black Swans, a surprise Black-backed Bittern (first record for the site!), and Striped Honeyeater, before we immersed ourselves in the experience that is O'Reilly's. I believe everyone had a lifer perched on them at some point, whether it was an Australian King-Parrot, a Crimson Rosella, or a gorgeous Regent Bowerbird, and most local specialties cooperated to a varying degree. Dapper Wonga Pigeons, funky Topknot Pigeons, intricately-patterned Australian Logrunners, a lovely female Paradise Riflebird, a delicate Rose Robin, and even the very local and often difficult Albert's Lyrebird all put on a pretty decent show during our time there. And in the drier forests below, we enjoyed a trio of scarce Glossy Black-Cockatoos, tinkling Bell Miners, Red-browed Treecreeper, and Variegated Fairywrens, along with a number of Whiptail (Pretty-face) Wallabies, and a very large, very cool legless lizard known as a Southern Scaly-foot! Finally, we ended the tour in the Sydney area, with a visit to the enormous Royal National Park, where Superb Lyrebird made things more difficult than usual, but the highly local Rockwarbler surprised us by showing up without much effort on our part, and birds like Pacific Baza, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Azure Kingfisher, Little Wattlebird and New Holland Honeyeater heated up a scorcher of a day!

I always really enjoy this trip, and it's even more fun when I'm accompanied by a fun, enthusiastic group of fellow birders. Thanks for being that group! It was a lot of fun, and I hope our paths cross on another tour soon. In the meantime, keep safe and enjoy the upcoming holiday season.

--Jay

KEYS FOR THIS LIST

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

BIRDS

Casuariidae (Cassowaries and Emu).

SOUTHERN CASSOWARY (*Casuarius casuarius*) – When Clayton, our Cairns-area driver, informed us that cassowary wasn't showing up reliably at Cassowary House this year, we decided we needed a backup plan, so on our way down from the Atherton Tablelands, we headed over to Etty Bay Beach, where there had been plenty of sightings of late. When we arrived, the beach was absolutely packed with people, and I was pretty sure we would strike out with the bird, but with nothing else to do, we waited. I think we were all starting to lose hope when word came that the bird had shown up on the other end of the beach, so we hurried over to find the cassowary foraging its way along the beach, completely unconcerned by the hordes of onlookers! Good thing we waited, too, as no cassowaries put in an appearance when we visited Cassowary House the next day. Both Dianne and Bob picked this as their top Australian bird. [E]

EMU (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*) – I didn't think we had much chance for this bird either, given that our usual spot at the Mareeba Wetlands is now inaccessible, being permanently closed to the public. But luckily, a couple of Emus turned up along the entrance road, the second one walking past at close range, almost treading on my toes, in fact! [E]

Anseranatidae (Magpie Goose).

MAGPIE GOOSE (*Anseranas semipalmata*) – Loads in the Cairns region, particularly behind the cattle barn at Gallo Dairyland, where 2000-3000 of them crowded the field. [E]

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl).

PLUMED WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna eytoni*) – We estimated about 2500 of these handsome ducks at Hasties Swamp, though there could have been far more. We also had a few in PNG, with 5 birds being seen at PAU. [E]

WANDERING WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna arcuata*) – We couldn't find any among the thousands of Plumed WD at Hasties Swamp, though there are usually a few about. We did, however, find a bunch at PAU, with roughly 35-40 of them present there.

BLACK SWAN (*Cygnus atratus*) – The aptly-named Swan Lake at the Port of Brisbane is the place for these on this tour, though there were fewer than usual of these handsome birds there, with only 20-25 gracing the waters. I've seen up to 100 of them here in the past. [E]

RADJAH SHELDUCK (*Radjah radjah*) – We got this lovely duck in both countries, but we only had a handful of them. We first encountered a pair along the Salt Water Creek at Centenary Lakes in Cairns, then saw another pair in the rice paddies near PAU.

GREEN PYGMY-GOOSE (*Nettapus pulchellus*) – Cattana Wetlands can usually be counted on to harbor a few of these tiny geese, and we tallied 3 of them there this trip, getting nice studies of their intricately barred plumage. [E]

MANED DUCK (*Chenonetta jubata*) – Usually we see bunches of these on the drive up to O'Reilly's, as every farm dam (i.e. pond) generally has a large group of them hanging out. But with many of the dams lacking in water, we saw none on the way up. But no matter, as there were good numbers around the lake at Fred Bucholz Park as we drove back down from the lodge, and more still the next day at Royal NP. [E]

PACIFIC BLACK DUCK (*Anas superciliosa*) – This is the Australian equivalent of our Mallard, present pretty much anywhere and everywhere that is attractive to ducks. So, of course, we saw them regularly in Australia, as well as at PAU.

GRAY TEAL (*Anas gracilis*) – Quite common at most of the waterfowl sites in Australia, though way more numerous than usual at Swan Lake, with an estimated 150 of them there. We also had 10 birds at the PAU ponds, where I first saw them just a couple of years ago.

CHESTNUT TEAL (*Anas castanea*) – Seen only at the Port of Brisbane Wetlands, where 20-30 of these attractive birds were among the many other waterfowl. [E]

PINK-EARED DUCK (*Malacorhynchus membranaceus*) – Water levels were higher than usual in the Cairns region, and there hadn't been many of these reported at Hasties Swamp prior to our visit, and trying to find them among the hordes of whistling-ducks, Hardheads, etc wasn't going to be easy. So I was pretty relieved when we managed to pick out three pairs of these floating amongst the other ducks. We all managed to get decent scope views of these odd ducks before they once again vanished in the crowd. [E]

HARDHEAD (*Aythya australis*) – The roughly 200+ of these on Hasties Swamp was probably something of an underestimate. The estimate of 100 or so on Swan Lake was probably a little bit more accurate. [E]

Megapodiidae (Megapodes).

AUSTRALIAN BRUSHTURKEY (*Alectura lathami*) – Numerous and easy to see in Australia's eastern rainforests. One of the more memorable sightings was of a male and two females digging into a huge mound along the Wishing Tree Track at O'Reilly's. Presumably the females were ready

to lay eggs, and the fact that there were two of them there seems to indicate that this male was pretty adept at maintaining a temperature of 33C in his mound. [EN]

YELLOW-LEGGED BRUSHTURKEY (*Talegalla fuscirostris*) – Unlike its Australian cousin, this bird is extremely wary and difficult to see. As usual, we just heard one at Varirata NP, though we also saw the active mound along the trail to the viewpoint. [E*]

ORANGE-FOOTED SCRUBFOWL (*Megapodius reinwardt*) – Like the brushturkeys, this is also a mound-builder. We had several good close looks at these birds around Cairns, with our first and best being on our initial morning at Cattana Wetlands.

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

BROWN QUAIL (*Synoicus ypsilophorus*) – We heard one calling along the Varirata entrance road, and tried to call it in with playback. The bird approached the road, but seemed unwilling to come out where we could see it. But when Leonard approached more closely, the bird flushed across the road and gave us a good look as it flew by at close quarters.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

AUSTRALASIAN GREBE (*Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*) – A couple of birds at the Cattana Wetlands, about 20 of them at Hasties Swamp, and a single on Swan Lake, none of which were yet in full breeding plumage.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE (*Podiceps cristatus australis*) – We only ever see this species on Lake Barrine, and this year I counted about 170 of them, with some close enough for excellent looks. Yes, this is the same species as in Europe, though it's a different race, which is restricted to Australia and New Zealand.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – Towns and cities throughout. [I]

WHITE-HEADED PIGEON (*Columba leucomela*) – Our final morning at O'Reilly's started off well when we found a pair of these large, uncommon pigeons perched in a tall tree just outside of our rooms. A couple more pairs flew by later that morning, and that was all we had for the tour. [E]

SPOTTED DOVE (*Streptopelia chinensis*) – This was our last new bird in the Cairns region, found just before we entered the airport for the flight onward to PNG. We also saw a number of these from the bus in the suburbs of Sydney. [I]

BROWN CUCKOO-DOVE (*Macropygia phasianella*) – Regularly encountered at all the Australian forest sites. Most numerous at Chambers, where several were perched on the roof of the main building, drinking out of the eavestroughs in the early morning. [E]

AMBOYNA CUCKOO-DOVE (*Macropygia amboinensis*) – The common cuckoo-dove of PNG, and we saw them both at Varirata and at a couple of sites in the highlands. Formerly lumped with the above species, and the Pratt & Beehler field guide continue to treat it as Brown Cuckoo-Dove. [E]

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO-DOVE (*Macropygia nigrirostris*) – Smaller and more brightly rufous-colored than the preceding species, and generally more of a bird of higher elevations. We had just two brief sightings of birds flying past, once at the Murrumbidgee Pass clearing, the other along the Tonga trail. [E]

PACIFIC EMERALD DOVE (*Chalcophaps longirostris longirostris*) – Another bird which we only got in flight, with one hurtling past in the early morning at Chambers. Looks could have been better, but there aren't too many low-flying pigeons of this color!

BRONZE GROUND-DOVE (*Alopecoenas beccarii*) – A shy and easily missed species, but the clearing at Murrumbidgee Pass has become a good place to observe this tiny pigeon, and we had some excellent scope views of one foraging on an open patch of ground. The glossy maroon shoulder patch marked this bird as a male.

CRESTED PIGEON (*Ocyphaps lophotes*) – Originally a bird of the interior, this gorgeous pigeon has been expanding into coastal regions in recent years. We first saw them around the Mareeba Golf Course, then had regular sightings in the Brisbane and Sydney regions as well. [E]

SQUATTER PIGEON (*Geophaps scripta*) – One of our main targets at Granite Gorge, and as usual, they were not at all difficult, though they can be incredibly inconspicuous as we saw--whenever you spot a bird or two, it soon becomes apparent that there are actually quite a few more around than you first realized. [E]

WONGA PIGEON (*Leucosarcia melanoleuca*) – We were searching for an incessantly calling bird on one side of the road at O'Reilly's, when Duncan spotted a second bird trying to sneak in to the feeding area quietly behind us. After initially playing hide and seek among the bushes, the bird eventually got bold enough to feed out in the open. [E]

PEACEFUL DOVE (*Geopelia placida*) – In Australia we had these mainly in the Cairns region, including one bird on a nest out in the full sun, just above the pond at the Yorkey's Knob Golf Course. We also had a few in PNG, on the grounds of PAU. Elsewhere we had just a couple of birds at Brisbane. [EN]

BAR-SHOULDERED DOVE (*Geopelia humeralis*) – Small numbers in the Cairns region, and a trio of birds at PAU. [E]

WOMPOO FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus magnificus*) – Though we heard the distinctive calls regularly in both countries, we only had two sightings of this large, gaudy pigeon. Fortunately both were excellent, with scope views of our first perched just over our heads at the Curtain Fig, and the other perched at eye level along the Wishing Tree Track at O'Reilly's. Paul's pick for top Australian bird.

PINK-SPOTTED FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus perlatus*) – One was calling intermittently from above the newly opened visitor center at Varirata, but we were having a hard time tracking it down, until I spotted it sitting on a nest in the outer branches of the large fig tree overhead. Despite the difficult angle, we could actually see the pink shoulder spots, but I think we were all happy to get better looks at one perched out in the open on our subsequent visit. [EN]

ORANGE-FRONTED FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus aurantiifrons*) – Tougher than usual at PAU, but Leonard eventually spotted one perched in a fairly distant coconut palm, where the scope allowed us some pretty nice views of it. [E]

SUPERB FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus superbus*) – We heard these several times in the Atherton tablelands, but our only sighting was of a rather dull female near the Raggiana BoP display area at Varirata.

ROSE-CROWNED FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus regina*) – A beautiful male we scoped one morning at Chambers was nice enough, but another male we found in the mangroves at Cairns on our final morning there blew it away, giving us incredible close scope studies of it, almost at eye level. What a beauty! [E]

BEAUTIFUL FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus pulchellus*) – A calling bird at Varirata was a bit tricky to track down, but we eventually found just the right window through which to scope the bird, a stunning male. The name is pretty fitting, though it could just as easily be applied to any of the other members of this spectacular group of pigeons. [E]

ORANGE-BELLIED FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus iozonus*) – These were doing a pretty good job of eluding us until we finally managed to scope a distant couple of birds that didn't fly off as soon as we'd seen them. [E]

ZOE'S IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula zoeae*) – Good scope views of this large pigeon at Varirata, where we had one on each of our visits. [E]

TORRESIAN IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula spilorrhoa*) – Impossible to miss around Cairns, where there are loads of them flying around at all times of day, and nesting in many of the trees along the Esplanade. We also saw a few of these around the Port Moresby region, including at PAU. [EN]
TOPKNOT PIGEON (*Lopholaimus antarcticus*) – We first had this odd, large pigeon at Mt Hypipamee, though we had far better looks at O'Reilly's where fruiting trees near the lodge attracted in small numbers of them. [E]
PAPUAN MOUNTAIN-PIGEON (*Gymnophaps albertisii*) – We scoped a single, partially obscured bird on our first visit to Varirata, then had 40+ of them along the entrance road on our second visit to the park, with good scope views of a couple of perched birds.

Otididae (Bustards)

AUSTRALIAN BUSTARD (*Ardeotis australis*) – We were on our way out along the Mareeba Wetlands road, and getting down to the wire as far as finding one of these birds was concerned, when one suddenly appeared in a field right near the road. What a save! [E]

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

PHEASANT COUCAL (*Centropus phasianinus*) – Super looks at our first one, near the rock wallaby feeding area at Granite Gorge. We saw another along the Mareeba Wetlands road, and a couple in the savanna on each of our visits to Varirata. All of the ones we saw appeared to be in non-breeding plumage, being very brown and heavily barred.
DWARF KOEL (*Microdynamis parva*) – Great scope studies of a perched male in the heat of the day at Varirata, with an Elegant Honeyeater sat beside him for at least part of the time. [E]
PACIFIC KOEL (AUSTRALIAN) (*Eudynamis orientalis cyanocephalus*) – We heard this species a couple of times in the Atherton region, but never actually laid eyes on one. [*]
CHANNEL-BILLED CUCKOO (*Scythrops novaehollandiae*) – We had just hopped back into the van at the Mareeba Golf Course when three of these massive cuckoos flew past in front of us, though I don't think anyone saw them but me and Clayton. Luckily, I had called them out, so everyone was looking out the front of the van when one of the three made another fly past. Though we heard this species at Royal NP as well, we never saw another.
RUFIOUS-THROATED BRONZE-CUCKOO (*Chrysococcyx ruficollis*) – A couple of birds were pursing each other around our viewing spot at Murrumbidgee Pass, and rarely settled down long enough to get bins on them, though they did calm down finally, allowing us to get the looks we desired. [E]
SHINING BRONZE-CUCKOO (*Chrysococcyx lucidus*) – We scoped a calling bird perched high over the entrance road at Mt Hypipamee, which was the only one we saw until our final day at Royal NP where we encountered a pair, followed by a single, along the Lady Carrington track.
LITTLE BRONZE-CUCKOO (*Chrysococcyx minutillus*) – We spotted a pair of bronze-cuckoos at Fred Bucholz Park, and I was hoping they would be Horsfield's, which we had not yet seen, but when we saw the red eye of the male, it was clear that it was this species. The birds found here (race barnardi) lack the rufous tones in the upperparts of the Gould's form.
LITTLE BRONZE-CUCKOO (GOULD'S) (*Chrysococcyx minutillus russatus*) – The Little Bronze-Cuckoos in the Cairns region, starting with a pair on our first day at Cattana Wetlands, have variable amounts of rufous in the green upperparts, and are of this race, which is treated in some books as a good species. [E]
WHITE-CROWNED KOEL (*Cacomantis leucolophus*) – Heard calling incessantly at Varirata, but it kept its distance. [E*]
CHESTNUT-BREADED CUCKOO (*Cacomantis castaneiventris*) – This took some patience and persistence, but we ultimately managed to track down a calling bird in the canopy on our second visit to Varirata. [E]
FAN-TAILED CUCKOO (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*) – While searching for a calling Mountain Kingfisher along the Tonga Trail, this bird kept showing up and distracting us. The race here was excitus, which is endemic to the PNG highlands. Back in Australia, we ran into the nominate form a few times at O'Reilly's, and heard them both at Mt Hypipamee and Royal NP.
BRUSH CUCKOO (*Cacomantis variolosus*) – A widespread species occurring from SE Asia through eastern Australia, and we saw it in both countries. In Australia, our only one was seen on our first day by the Yorkey's Knob Golf Course, while in PNG, we had sightings both at PAU and at the Lesser BoP site, and we heard them almost daily.
ORIENTAL CUCKOO (*Cuculus optatus*) – There must have been a push of migrants coming through, as we spotted a couple of these along the Varirata entrance road, and had what was likely a couple more flying overhead at the picnic area in the park. These were my first ever records for the country!

Podargidae (Frogmouths)

TAWNY FROGMOUTH (*Podargus strigoides*) – We may not have been able to locate a wild Koala at Daisy Hill, but we found one of these cryptic birds easily enough, spotting it perched up right over the path shortly after getting out of the bus. [E]
MARbled FROGMOUTH (*Podargus ocellatus*) – Very frustrating. We spent a fair bit of time trying to track down a calling bird at O'Reilly's, and I finally found it, after walking off into the woods. Unfortunately, as soon as everyone else began walking towards me, the crackling of the leaves underfoot seemed to make it nervous, and it flew deeper into the forest before anyone had got into a position to see it. [E*]
PAPUAN FROGMOUTH (*Podargus papuensis*) – The largest and most impressive of the frogmouths. One of the resident birds at PAU came through again, and we enjoyed excellent scope studies of it perched high in a rain tree. [E]

Aegotheidae (Owlet-nightjars)

MOUNTAIN OWLET-NIGHTJAR (*Aegotheles albertisi*) – Heard a couple of times at Kumul Lodge, and sounding like it was right outside the cabins a couple of times in the wee hours. [E*]
AUSTRALIAN OWLET-NIGHTJAR (*Aegotheles cristatus*) – At our first afternoon at O'Reilly's, Duncan took us to a spot where he'd recently found one roosting in a dying tree, and we were happy to find it was there again. It may not be for long though, as the tree appeared ready to fall down, and Duncan had actually tied it to other trees with ropes to try and keep it upright for as long as possible! [E]
BARRED OWLET-NIGHTJAR (*Aegotheles bennettii*) – On our first visit to Varirata, we checked several of the regular roost trees and there were no birds in any of them. I think that may have been the first time I'd ever had that happen here. On our second visit, we only had to check one roost, and the bird sat out in the opening for great views for all. [E]

Apodidae (Swifts)

WHITE-THROATED NEEDLETAIL (*Hirundapus caudacutus*) – On our second morning at Chambers, about a dozen of these swifts were flying about over the parking area in excellent light, giving us exceptional views of them.

GLOSSY SWIFTLET (*Collocalia esculenta*) – Seen almost daily in PNG, with especially close views of a couple at the start of the Murrumbidgee Pass trail, flying around at arm's length and below eye level!

MOUNTAIN SWIFTLET (*Aerodramus hirundinaceus*) – More than usual were seen in the highlands of PNG, where they replace the almost identical Uniform Swiftlet. [E]

AUSTRALIAN SWIFTLET (*Aerodramus terraereginae*) – I was surprised at how few of these we saw this trip, with just 3 or 4 birds flying over the Cattana Wetlands on our first morning, and a single bird over the parking lot at Chambers. [E]

UNIFORM SWIFTLET (*Aerodramus vanikorensis*) – The high-flying, all dark swift we saw on both visits to Varirata.

PACIFIC SWIFT (*Apus pacificus*) – I'm pretty certain this was the first time I've recorded this species on this tour. We had 4 or 5 of them mixed in with the needletails at Chambers on morning, readily distinguishable from the needletails by their blacker plumage, contrasting white rump band, and long forked tail, though they were holding their tails closed most of the time. Both these and the needletails are migrants here, and were almost certainly just recently arrived from their breeding grounds.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots).

BUFF-BANDED RAIL (*Gallirallus philippensis*) – Paul spotted our only one when it came down to the edge of the river for a drink as we waited for platypus to appear.

DUSKY MOORHEN (*Gallinula tenebrosa*) – Small numbers scattered around a number of suitable sites in Australia, as well as a dozen or so at PAU. The only sizable number we saw was about 25-30 at Swan Lake.

EURASIAN COOT (*Fulica atra australis*) – Seen commonly at all suitable wetland sites in Australia.

AUSTRALASIAN SWAMPHEN (*Porphyrio melanotus melanotus*) – Common at most wetland sites in Australia as well as at PAU. Biggest numbers were at Hasties Swamp, where we estimated about 100 of them.

Gruidae (Cranes).

BROLGA (*Antigone rubicunda*) – There were few cranes of any sort about this year, and the only flock we came across was a group of about 25 of these in a stubble field on our way out from Granite Gorge. Last year we missed Brolga, and only found Sarus! [E]

Burhinidae (Thick-knees).

BUSH THICK-KNEE (*Burhinus grallarius*) – Common and easily seen in the Cairns region, where we had them almost daily, including a pair with a fairly large pair of chicks, all hunkered down motionless, trying hard to blend in to all the dry leaves, at Centenary Lakes. [EN]

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets).

PIED STILT (*Himantopus leucocephalus*) – Small numbers at various wetlands around Cairns, and slightly higher numbers at the Port of Brisbane wetlands.

Haematopodidae (Oystercatchers).

PIED OYSTERCATCHER (*Haematopus longirostris*) – A lone bird was on the mudflats along the Cairns Esplanade, where I don't see these very often. [E]

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings).

MASKED LAPWING (MASKED) (*Vanellus miles miles*) – This is the subspecies seen commonly in the Cairns region and around Port Moresby.

MASKED LAPWING (BLACK-SHOULDERED) (*Vanellus miles novaehollandiae*) – This subspecies with the black sides of the breast was the one seen around Brisbane and Sydney, where it was also numerous.

RED-CAPPED PLOVER (*Charadrius ruficapillus*) – We found a trio of these on the mudflats along the Cairns Esplanade on our final morning of birding there. [E]

RED-KNEED DOTTEREL (*Erythronyx cinctus*) – Not a common bird on this tour route, and we usually feel lucky to see one; this year we had two. Our first was standing motionless on the edge of the water at the north end of Hasties Swamp, the second among all the swans and ducks on the edge of Swan Lake, where it was the only small shorebird present. [E]

BLACK-FRONTED DOTTEREL (*Elseya melanops*) – A bunch of these beautiful little plovers were hanging out along the Esplanade on each of our visits there. [E]

Jacaniidae (Jacanas).

COMB-CRESTED JACANA (*Irediparra gallinacea*) – Seen only on our first day in each country. We first saw several of these at Cattana Wetlands and a single at the Yorkey's Knob Golf Course pond on our first outing around Cairns, then in PNG there were 3 or 4 on the ponds at PAU.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies).

WHIMBREL (SIBERIAN) (*Numenius phaeopus variegatus*) – Our first look at the mudflats along the Esplanade was pretty lacking in shorebirds, and we saw just 4 of these among about 45 shorebirds. On our second look at the southern end of the Esplanade, I counted roughly 130 of them!

LITTLE CURLEW (*Numenius minutus*) – When we landed back in Port Moresby after our time in the PNG highlands, I noticed a couple of these flush up from the edge of the runway, so the next afternoon when we left for Brisbane, most of us were watching for them again. The folks that were on the right side of the plane were the fortunate ones, as we saw a group of 8-10 fly up from the grassy verge as we taxied out to the runway.

FAR EASTERN CURLEW (*Numenius madagascariensis*) – A couple of these impressively long-billed curlews were present on the mudflats on each of our visits to the Esplanade.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT (*Limosa lapponica*) – The common godwit along the Esplanade, with a few on each of our visits, and a high count of about 20 on the first visit, where they accounted for roughly half of all the shorebirds present. The migration of this species is incredible as birds that breed in eastern Siberia and Alaska fly nonstop from their breeding areas to Australia/New Zealand in about 8 days. That's a distance of about 7,000 miles or 11,000 km!

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT (MELANUROIDES) (*Limosa limosa melanuroides*) – A single bird, picked out by its longer, straighter bill and less-patterned gray plumage, was among the Bar-tailed Godwits on our first look at the shorebirds on the Esplanade.

SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER (*Calidris acuminata*) – A large number of them (~200) were on the mudflats at the north end of the Esplanade on our final morning around Cairns, with far smaller numbers present on our other visits, as well as at the Port of Brisbane shorebird roost. Surprisingly, we also found one in the rice paddies near PAU, where I believe it was a new species for local guide Leonard.

CURLEW SANDPIPER (*Calidris ferruginea*) – Just a single bird was seen along the Esplanade on each of our three visits there, but we made up for that in Brisbane, where there were 100+ along the margins of the pond at the Port of Brisbane shorebird roost.

RED-NECKED STINT (*Calidris ruficollis*) – We had about 20 at the north end of the Esplanade, and a couple among all the Curlew Sandpipers at the Port of Brisbane.

NEW GUINEA WOODCOCK (*Scolopax rosenbergii*) – As we approached the usual area at in the Kumul Lodge forest at dusk, we heard one perform a single display flight, then after that, nothing. [E*]

TEREK SANDPIPER (*Xenus cinereus*) – A lone bird at the southern end of the Esplanade showed well.

COMMON SANDPIPER (*Actitis hypoleucos*) – A single bird in each country, with one along the Saltwater Creek at Centenary Lakes, and then one along the coast west of Port Moresby.

GRAY-TAILED TATTLER (*Tringa brevipes*) – About half a dozen were tucked up at the foot of the mangroves at the north end of the Esplanade.

WOOD SANDPIPER (*Tringa glareola*) – At least 2 were in one of the rice paddies near PAU along with a single Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. This was just my 2nd record of this species in PNG, and a first for Leonard.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers).

SILVER GULL (*Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae*) – Common in all coastal areas of Australia, where it is normally the only gull present.

GULL-BILLED TERN (*Gelochelidon nilotica*) – Plenty along the Esplanade, where we had a high count of 26 one day, and we also had one or two among the many Whiskered Terns at Swan Lake.

CASPIAN TERN (*Hydroprogne caspia*) – A lone bird was roosting among the many Gull-billed Terns on the Cairns Esplanade.

WHISKERED TERN (*Chlidonias hybrida*) – A single bird roosting on the Cairns Esplanade, then good numbers (15-20), some of which were in fine breeding plumage, feeding over Swan Lake.

GREAT CRESTED TERN (*Thalasseus bergii*) – We saw 3 large terns flying along the coast west of Port Moresby, but the only one we managed to see well enough to identify was this species. Almost certainly the other 2 were as well.

Ciconiidae (Storks).

BLACK-NECKED STORK (*Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus australis*)

Anhingidae (Anhingas).

AUSTRALASIAN DARTER (*Anhinga novaehollandiae*) – Small numbers both around Cairns (Cattana Wetlands, Yorkey's Knob, Hasties Swamp) and the Port of Brisbane.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags).

LITTLE PIED CORMORANT (*Microcarbo melanoleucos*) – Seen mostly as singles at various wetlands in Australia, with a high of about 10 at Hasties Swamp. We also had a single bird among a large number of Little Black Cormorants at PAU.

GREAT CORMORANT (AUSTRALASIAN) (*Phalacrocorax carbo novaehollandiae*) – A lone bird roosting on the edge of Lake Barrine, and a couple along the Hacking River in Royal NP.

LITTLE BLACK CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*) – The most numerous cormorant at many of the wetlands visited, with a high count of about 25 at PAU.

Pelecanidae (Pelicans).

AUSTRALIAN PELICAN (*Pelecanus conspicillatus*) – Encountered regularly in suitable areas around Cairns and Brisbane, with a high of 24 birds on one of our visits to the Cairns Esplanade. [E]

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns).

BLACK-BACKED BITTERN (*Ixobrychus dubius*) – I was scanning through the reed bed at Swan Lake, trying to pick out a reed-warbler that was singing, when I spotted this bird emerging from the reeds, definitely not something I was expecting! We all had great scope views of the bird, a female, as it sat in the open for a long period before melting back into the reeds. This was apparently the first record for this site, and I believe it was a lifer for me as well, and thus my favorite bird of the Oz portion of the trip.

PACIFIC HERON (*Ardea pacifica*) – This handsome heron was formerly and more descriptively known as White-necked Heron. We had a couple of birds each at Cattana Wetlands and Hasties Swamp, then saw just one more from the bus as we headed down to Brisbane from O'Reilly's. [E]

GREAT EGRET (AUSTRALASIAN) (*Ardea alba modesta*) – After seeing about half a dozen on our first day around Cairns, we only saw two more the entire rest of the trip--one on the mudflats at the Esplanade, and the other in a ditch at the POM airport.

INTERMEDIATE EGRET (*Ardea intermedia*) – Small numbers around Cairns, and a few birds at PAU were all we had.

WHITE-FACED HERON (*Egretta novaehollandiae*) – We had just a couple of these in the Brisbane region, with good scope looks of one on the mudflats across the road from Swan Lake.

LITTLE EGRET (AUSTRALASIAN) (*Egretta garzetta nigripes*) – Very few this trip, with a lone bird seen at the Crake Pond at Cattana Wetlands, and a couple on the mudflats along the Cairns Esplanade.

PACIFIC REEF-HERON (*Egretta sacra*) – A couple of dark morph birds were seen at the southern end of the Cairns Esplanade.

PIED HERON (*Egretta picata*) – About 15-20 of these lovely, small herons were around the ponds at PAU.

CATTLE EGRET (EASTERN) (*Bubulcus ibis coromandus*) – Seen only in the Cairns region and the lowlands around Port Moresby, with fair numbers at various suitable sites.

STRIATED HERON (*Butorides striata*) – Dianne spotted one crouched under the mangroves along the Saltwater Creek at Centenary Lakes, and we had another along the Cairns Esplanade.

RUFIOUS NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax caledonicus*) – Seen in both countries. In Australia, we counted 7 at a minimum in the usual roosting tree along the Esplanade, and also saw a single next to the bird hide at Hasties Swamp, while in PNG, we had a couple at PAU, though their regular roost tree there was completely devoid of them. [E]

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills).

GLOSSY IBIS (*Plegadis falcinellus*) – A couple of these were scoped on the far shore of the lake at Hasties Swamp.

AUSTRALIAN IBIS (*Threskiornis molucca*) – Just about everywhere in Australia, and there were a trio of these at the PAU ponds as well.

STRAW-NECKED IBIS (*Threskiornis spinicollis*) – Seen in small numbers mainly around Cairns, though we did have a couple in the Brisbane region as well, with one at Swan Lake, and another below us in the pasture we overlooked from the top of Duck Creek Road. The latter was a bit surprising, and an unusual bird for the O'Reilly's area according to Duncan. [E]

ROYAL SPOONBILL (*Platalea regia*) – The common spoonbill on this tour, and we saw a number of them at various sites around Brisbane and Cairns, with a high count of 20+ at Swan Lake.

YELLOW-BILLED SPOONBILL (*Platalea flavipes*) – Not one we see every year, as it is rather scarce on this tour route, but we picked up a pair of them feeding with a single Royal Spoonbill at Fred Bucholz Park. [E]

Pandionidae (Osprey).

OSPREY (AUSTRALASIAN) (*Pandion haliaetus cristatus*) – A lone bird was flying over the parking lot of the Cattana Wetlands, being dive-bombed by an angry pair of Masked Lapwings. Our only other record was a heard-only bird in a somewhat unlikely area along Lady Carrington Track at Royal NP.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites).

BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE (*Elanus axillaris*) – We just had one in the Atherton tablelands, but it gave us an excellent look as it sat teed up in a dead tree next to the road. [E]

SQUARE-TAILED KITE (*Lophoictinia isura*) – There was an active nest at Daisy Hill again this year, and once again this provided our only sightings of this scarce species. As we approached the nest area, most of us had good looks at one of the adults circling overhead, and we also saw two nearly full-grown chicks hunkered down in the nest itself. [EN]

PACIFIC BAZA (*Aviceda subcristata*) – A couple of birds spotted along the Varirata entrance road were decidedly uncooperative, and left the area before we could get a decent look. Then on our visit to Royal NP, Paul spotted one perched near the track, and we got awesome looks at it and its mate as they briefly perched together and exchanged an item of prey (a small frog, I think).

WEDGE-TAILED EAGLE (*Aquila audax*) – I believe it was Tad that spotted our only ones, a couple of birds circling around way off in the distance, from the viewpoint along Duck Creek Road. [E]

SPOTTED HARRIER (*Circus assimilis*) – The first one we saw, flying over the road as we drove out from Granite Gorge, gave a pretty decent view, certainly acceptable at least. But the second was incredible! We noticed it sitting on a fence post as we drove a back road in the tablelands, and it surprisingly did not flush when we pulled up nearby. Even more surprising was that it also didn't flush when we got out of the vehicle for better views, and we ended up with stunning scope studies of this beauty! It eventually did fly, but only to another perch a little further along the fence line. This was easily my best view ever of this gorgeous raptor! [E]

GRAY GOSHAWK (*Accipiter novaehollandiae*) – I was beginning to think we would miss this lovely hawk altogether when one flew by overhead and tried to pick off the first Brown Thornbill we encountered at the Kamarun Lookout below O'Reilly's! [E]

BROWN GOSHAWK (*Accipiter fasciatus*) – We had just two sightings, first of an immature bird flying over the tea plantations after our lunch at the Nerada Tea Estate, with the other seen flying over the forest along the Lady Carrington Track at Royal NP.

BLACK KITE (BLACK) (*Milvus migrans affinis*) – Lots in the Cairns region as well as in the PNG highlands.

WHISTLING KITE (*Haliastur sphenurus*) – Just a handful of birds in the Cairns region, and a single at Fred Bucholz Park, with that last bird giving us especially good views.

BRAHMINY KITE (*Haliastur indus*) – Seen in small numbers over several days in the Cairns region and PNG, with our final sighting coming at Swan Lake.

WHITE-BELLIED SEA-EAGLE (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) – Who knew that those distant birds spotted by Wayne on our first morning afield at the Cattana Wetlands would be the only ones of the trip? Good thing we scoped them despite the distance and heat haze!

Strigidae (Owls).

RUFIOUS OWL (*Ninox rufa*) – A distant calling bird was lured in at Chambers and ended up landing right over the track near the feeding area, where we enjoyed fantastic looks at this big, beautiful owl! Surprisingly, the owl's presence didn't seem to really bother the Sugar Gliders at all! [E]

SOUTHERN BOOBOOK (*Ninox novaeseelandiae*) – We tracked one down just inside the forest near the restaurant at O'Reilly's to kick off our nocturnal outing there. [E]

Bucerotidae (Hornbills).

BLYTH'S HORNBILL (*Rhyticeros plicatus*) – A massive male flew past the picnic clearing at Varirata on our first visit to the park, though one or two folks only got to hear the whoosh of its wingbeats as it went by. Wayne, who had missed seeing the bird that first day, was really hoping for a repeat on our return visit, and his wish was fulfilled when we had super looks at what was likely the same male as it flew past the picnic area once again. Wayne consequently picked this as his top bird for PNG.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers).

AZURE KINGFISHER (*Ceyx azureus*) – It was a pretty good trip for this species, as we saw this brilliant kingfisher at several sites in Australia, and also heard it at Varirata. Our first was along the Barron River as we watched for platypus one evening, then we had another at Davies Creek, and finally a couple along the Hacking River at Royal NP. This was Jean's pick as top Australian bird. [E]

LITTLE KINGFISHER (*Ceyx pusillus*) – This was only the second time I've had this species on the tour, the first being 5 years ago, and at the very same spot at the Yorkey's Knob Golf Course. The bird didn't stick around for long, but just long enough for most everyone to get a good scope view of it as it perched low over the water. [E]

PAPUAN DWARF-KINGFISHER (*Ceyx solitarius*) – A Leonard special at Varirata NP, and he came through again, spotting one in the forest along the stream. I think everyone saw it, but it was a bit flightier than usual and didn't hang around with us for long. [E]

LAUGHING KOOKABURRA (*Dacelo novaeguineae*) – There's no more iconic Australian bird than this one, and we saw this wonderful large kingfisher pretty much daily on the Australian portion of the tour. [E]

BLUE-WINGED KOOKABURRA (*Dacelo leachii*) – We never really connected with this one in Australia, with just a flash of wings from one that Clayton called out from the bus. But we did connect with a trio of them around the picnic area at Varirata NP. [E]

RUFIOUS-BELLIED KOOKABURRA (*Dacelo gaudichaud*) – One of a pair perched out over the road near the Raggiana BoP lek at Varirata, giving us long scope views of this striking kookaburra. This bird was identified as a female by its rufous brown tail; the tail of the male is bright blue. [E]

FOREST KINGFISHER (*Todiramphus macleayi*) – I scoped one perched on the far side of the lake at Hasties Swamp, fully expecting that we'd see another somewhere along the way, but it turned out to be the only one of the trip!

TORRESIAN KINGFISHER (*Todiramphus sordidus*) – A few years ago, what was then called Collared Kingfisher was split into 6 species, with Torresian being the species found in Australia and southern PNG. We saw just one, a bird that appeared to be checking out a potential nest hole in the mangroves at the north end of the Cairns Esplanade.

SACRED KINGFISHER (*Todiramphus sanctus*) – Mainly seen as single birds at scattered locations across the Atherton Tablelands, and we also had one at Fred Bucholz Park, and then about 3 pairs of them along the Lady Carrington Track at Royal NP.

YELLOW-BILLED KINGFISHER (*Syma torotoro*) – We heard plenty at Varirata, but it took a while to locate one, which we finally did in the picnic area. But once we found it, the bird posed for a good long time, until we finally turned our attentions to other species that were around. [E]

MOUNTAIN KINGFISHER (*Syma megarhyncha*) – A slightly larger, high elevation version of the preceding species, and generally a much tougher bird to find. We struggled to track down a calling bird along the Tonga trail, and had pretty much given up when Wilson managed to pick it out in the canopy of a tall tree on the ridge, where we got nice scope views of it before it took off. [E]

BROWN-HEADED PARADISE-KINGFISHER (*Tanysiptera danae*) – Restricted to PNG's Southeast Peninsula, and always one of the big targets at Varirata NP. We had to put in some work for this one, but eventually managed to locate a couple of them for some super looks. [E]

Meropidae (Bee-eaters).

RAINBOW BEE-EATER (*Merops ornatus*) – We saw these brightly-colored birds daily in small numbers around the Cairns region, and a single bird at PAU, where presumably it would have been part of a small resident breeding population.

Coraciidae (Rollers).

DOLLARBIRD (*Eurystomus orientalis*) – Our first spent the entire early morning on a prominent perch overlooking the parking lot at Chambers. Another was at Mt. Hypipamee and then several at Royal NP. All these belong to the race *pacificus*. Presumably the ones we saw at Varirata were the resident PNG race *waigiouensis*, though I guess we can't completely rule out lingering migrant *pacificus* birds.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras).

AUSTRALIAN KESTREL (*Falco cenchroides*) – I don't know why this species is so scarce on this tour route, but we never see many of them. This trip, we had nice views of one perched on a electric pole along the road to the Mareeba Wetlands, then just one more at Centennial Park in Sydney. [E]

BROWN FALCON (*Falco berigora*) – Tor spotted this one for us, perched in a roadside tree as we drove back to Kumul from the Lesser BoP site. [E]

Cacatuidae (Cockatoos).

RED-TAILED BLACK-COCKATOO (*Calyptorhynchus banksii*) – A pair feeding in a line of roadside trees near Atherton gave beautiful close views. All of our other sightings were right around Cairns, where I've only seen this impressive cockatoo once before. On our final morning before flying out to PNG, we had 5 birds at the north end of the Esplanade, and then, at the airport, I counted 16 of them flying around the area and perching on the light poles! [E]

GLOSSY BLACK-COCKATOO (*Calyptorhynchus lathami*) – The smallest of the black-cockatoos, this species shows a strong preference for the seeds of *Casuarina* trees, so seeing these does depend on whether and *Casuarinas* have good seed crops in the area. Lucky for us, there was a patch of trees with plenty of seeds down the main road from O'Reilly's, and after a bit of a search, we found a trio of these cockatoos feeding quietly at eye level not far off the road. We also saw these birds at the same spot as we drove down to Brisbane the next day, though we forgot to mark them on our checklist. [E]

YELLOW-TAILED BLACK-COCKATOO (*Calyptorhynchus funereus*) – I think this was just the 2nd time I've had this species on the tour, but there were plenty at Royal NP this year, and we had multiple good looks at them as they flew over giving their trumpeting calls. I estimated that we saw 25 or more as we walked the Lady Carrington Track. [E]

GALAH (*Eolophus roseicapilla*) – An abundant crop pest in many parts of the country, but usually not very numerous on this tour route. We ended up with just a couple of sightings, first a trio of birds (which we managed to scope) at the Mareeba Golf Course, and then another three birds seen during the drive down from O'Reilly's. [E]

LITTLE CORELLA (*Cacatua sanguinea*) – We can thank Clayton for these birds, as he spotted them resting quietly in a large tree hollow on the road into the Mareeba Wetlands. These were the first ones I've seen in this region. Our only other sighting was of a lone bird at Royal NP. [E]

SULPHUR-CRESTED COCKATOO (*Cacatua galerita*) – A familiar sight throughout eastern Australia, and we had these in fair numbers most days, though they were especially numerous at Royal NP. In PNG they are not quite as numerous, and we had just a couple of pairs of the endemic subspecies, *triton*, at Varirata.

Psittaculidae (Old World Parrots).

AUSTRALIAN KING-PARROT (*Alisterus scapularis*) – These beauties are found all along the east coast of Australia, though we didn't run into them until we got to O'Reilly's. There we had them often, and I think everyone had at least one on their head at one point or another. For purists, a couple of pairs of wild ones were seen at Royal NP. [E]

RED-WINGED PARROT (*Aprosmictus erythropterus*) – The Mareeba area is the only place on this tour route where we can realistically expect to see this lovely parrot, and we got it on two occasions. First we saw a pair at Mareeba Golf Course, though the female showed better than the male. A few days later we had superb looks at a colorful male in a flowering shrub along the road into the Mareeba Wetlands. [E]

ECLECTUS PARROT (*Eclectus roratus*) – A few birds in flight over the entrance road to Varirata NP, with a couple of males passing overhead and a female that we accidentally flushed from a roadside tree before we realized she was there on our first visit, then a lone male on the second trip.

RED-CHEEKED PARROT (*Geoffroyus geoffroyi*) – Reasonably common in the Port Moresby region, and we had excellent scope views of them a few times both at PAU and Varirata. [E]

BREHM'S TIGER-PARROT (*Psittacula brehmii*) – These delightful little parrots are regular visitors to the fruit feeders at Kumul, and we also saw a pair feeding in a more natural setting at Murmur Pass, though we tried unsuccessfully to turn those ones into one of the scarcer species of tiger-parrot. [E]

YELLOW-BILLED LORIKEET (*Neopsittacus musschenbroekii*) – This species and the very similar Orange-billed Lorieet separate out by elevation to a certain extent (with this one at lower elevations) but they do overlap quite a bit, and I have seen both species at several sites around Kumul Lodge. So the many flyovers at Murmur Pass were left unidentified to species. But one pair of lorikeets dropped into the clearing and began feeding in the low weeds on the far side of the clearing, where scope views clearly showed them to be this species. [E]

CRIMSON ROSELLA (*Platycercus elegans*) – All of our many sightings came from around O'Reilly's where they were just about as bold and cheeky as the king-parrots. [E]

PALE-HEADED ROSELLA (*Platycercus adscitus*) – A couple of birds turned up in the big flowering silky oak tree (*Grevillea* sp.) at the Granite Gorge campground, though they were a bit tricky to see well among the dense flowers. [E]

DOUBLE-EYED FIG-PARROT (*Cyclopsitta diophthalma*) – These tiny parrots were seen almost daily in the Cairns region, with some especially nice scope views of a couple on our first day at Yorkey's Knob.

- PLUM-FACED LORIKEET** (*Oreopsittacus arfaki*) – Several of these diminutive lorikeets scampered around in a flowering tree along the trail at Murmur Pass, where most folks managed some kind of scope view of them. [E]
- PAPUAN LORIKEET** (*Charmosyna papou*) – A couple of birds, including a handsome black morph bird, flew into the flowering tree behind the Kumul Lodge feeders, where they stayed just long enough for some folks to get their bins on them. Aside from those, we just had a few flyovers both around the lodge and at Murmur Pass. [E]
- BLACK-CAPPED LORY** (*Lorius lory*) – Oddly we missed seeing this one on our first visit to Varirata, and we barely did better on the return trip, though we did manage some okay flyby views of a couple of pairs. [E]
- LITTLE LORIKEET** (*Glossopsitta pusilla*) – There were very few eucalyptus flowers available in the Wondecla forest, and there seemed to be none of these birds around at all. But, just as we were about to load up and leave, I heard a single bird overhead, and we saw it fly into a nearby tree. We managed to find it, but then it flew to another close tree, and disappeared. Since none of us had seen it fly out, I was pretty certain it was still there, but try as I might, I couldn't find it. Then, suddenly, there it was, feeding in a small bunch of flowers, and we got nice looks at it before it took off once again. We were pretty lucky, as sometimes there are lots around and we still can't get a good look at one! [E]
- RAINBOW LORIKEET (COCONUT)** (*Trichoglossus haematodus haematodus*) – Just before the tour, the most recent taxonomic updates came out, and this PNG bird is now a good species on its own, Coconut Lorikeet (*Trichoglossus haematodus*). We saw them pretty regularly in PNG, mainly at lower elevations, though there were a few up as high as the Lai River bridge.
- RAINBOW LORIKEET (RAINBOW)** (*Trichoglossus haematodus moluccanus*) – Rainbow Lorikeet was recently split into 6 different species (including the above Coconut Lorikeet), with this former subspecies retaining the name "Rainbow". This is the common lorikeet species all down the east coast, and we recorded them daily on the Oz portion of the trip. [E]
- SCALY-BREASTED LORIKEET** (*Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus*) – There are usually a few of these mixed in with the mobs of Rainbow Lorikeets around Cairns, and we managed to pick out about 8 of these in some flowering trees at Yorkey's Knob, then also had a couple at Granite Gorge. [E]

Pittidae (Pittas)

- NOISY PITTA** (*Pitta versicolor*) – I don't know if it was the extremely dry conditions that had these birds acting less territorial than they usually are at this season, but whatever it was, we struggled with them, and only managed one close flyby of a bird on the trail below the lodge at O'Reilly's.

Menuridae (Lyrebirds)

- ALBERT'S LYREBIRD** (*Menura alberti*) – Of all the birds we saw, this species probably has the smallest, most restricted world range, as it occupies a tiny area along the border between Queensland and New South Wales. As always, this was one of our major targets at O'Reilly's, and as usual, it gave us some trouble, and we were still searching for it on our final morning there. That morning, we tracked down a male that was calling from a hidden display area in a wooded ravine, but he sounded so close, I was convinced we should be able to find him if we found the right window through the vegetation. Long story short, we eventually did, and I got him in the scope, through which everyone managed to see bits and pieces of him--his long, lacy tail, his head and orange throat-- before he moved off. Of course, after all this hard work, several of us headed to the camping area and easily found a female feeding right out in the open just a few yards away! [E]
- SUPERB LYREBIRD** (*Menura novaehollandiae*) – Our day at Royal NP was exceptionally hot, easily the hottest day I've experienced there, and it seemed the lyrebirds were less active than usual, despite a very light amount of human traffic. We failed to see any along the Lady Carrington Track and the only ones we heard were across the river. So, after lunch, we headed to another spot, and soon we could hear a male lyrebird nearby, though it remained well hidden in the underbrush. We stuck with it though, and after a long time tracking it, we finally were rewarded with a sighting as it slunk up a fern-covered hillside. Not everyone had great looks, though I'd posit that Tad did, given that he chose it as his favorite bird in Australia! [E]

Ptilonorhynchidae (Bowerbirds)

- SPOTTED CATBIRD** (*Ailuroedus maculosus*) – A specialty of Far North Queensland, this catbird gave us daily sightings in the rainforest areas of the Atherton Tablelands. [E]
- GREEN CATBIRD** (*Ailuroedus crassirostris*) – Replaces the above species in SE Australia. These were numerous around O'Reilly's and we had some decent looks at them there, but our best views came at Royal NP, where we had close scope views of a perched bird panting in the shade as we searched for the lyrebird. [E]
- TOOTH-BILLED BOWERBIRD** (*Scenopoeetes dentirostris*) – There were fewer vocalizing at Lake Barrine than there usually are, and only one of the two that was calling was near the trail, and it was in a very dense tangle where it was difficult to see and scope. Still, we managed to get everyone some kind of look, and we all saw the basic display platform--a cleared circular area on the forest floor, covered with large leaves, turned upside down to display the silvery underside. For those of us that were up early at Chambers the next morning, we had far better and easier views of one singing right outside the dining area of the lodge! [E]
- ARCHBOLD'S BOWERBIRD** (*Archboldia papuensis papuensis*) – Tad saw a female out back of his cabin at Kumul Lodge, and had a photograph to prove it! I hadn't seen one around the lodge in a couple of years, so it's good to have evidence that there are still some around. [E]
- GOLDEN BOWERBIRD** (*Amblyornis newtoniana*) – Apparently males of this species take 5-6 years to attain their adult plumage, so it may take a couple more years before this bird gets to that point, given that this is the 3rd year he's been attending his bower at Mt Hypipamee. While he wasn't all that colorful, his bower sure was impressive, and well-tended, with fresh lichen adorning the display platform tucked between the tall maypoles on either side. Though this is the smallest of the bowerbirds in Australia, no species constructs a larger bower than this one! [E]
- REGENT BOWERBIRD** (*Sericulus chrysocephalus*) – Given how easy it is to see these stunning birds at O'Reilly's, it's hard to imagine that they aren't so easy to see elsewhere in their range. Wayne chose this gorgeous bird as his top overall bird in Australia. [E]
- SATIN BOWERBIRD** (*Ptilonorhynchus violaceus*) – Though we saw these best at O'Reilly's, including a wonderfully habituated and confiding male working on his nicely decorated bower, our first sighting was actually up at Mt Hypipamee, where Clayton had spotted a female sitting tight on a nest in a vine tangle near the parking area. [EN]
- GREAT BOWERBIRD** (*Chlamydera nuchalis*) – Not among the most colorful of the bowerbirds, but they do make an impressive, large avenue bower, and it was the first bower we encountered, with a couple of nice ones right near the road at Granite Gorge. We also had good scope studies of a male, with some folks treated to a view of the lilac pink crest feathers, though they weren't erected while we watched. [E]
- YELLOW-BREASTED BOWERBIRD** (*Chlamydera lauterbachii*) – We had good scope views of this bowerbird perched in a dead tree below the viewing area at the Lesser BoP site. [E]
- FAWN-BREASTED BOWERBIRD** (*Chlamydera cerviniventris*) – Fairly numerous in the Port Moresby region, including at PAU, where we saw about half a dozen, as well as a well-maintained bower. [E]

Climacteridae (Australasian Treecreepers)

WHITE-THROATED TREECREEPER (*Cormobates leucophaea*) – The common treecreeper of the eastern rainforests. Note that the first ones we saw and heard in the Atherton Tablelands belonged to the subspecies minor, which is potentially a good species, Little Treecreeper. [E]

RED-BROWED TREECREEPER (*Climacteris erythroptus*) – Not a bird we get every year, but we nailed them easily this trip, getting excellent looks at a couple almost immediately after arriving at the eucalyptus forest along Duck Creek Road. [E]

BROWN TREECREEPER (*Climacteris picumnus*) – Despite the hot and dry conditions at the Wondecla forest, we did pretty well with our main targets, including this species, thanks to Dianne's sharp eyes. [E]

Maluridae (Fairlywrens).

VARIEGATED FAIRYWREN (*Malurus lamberti*) – This was our final species of fairywren, first seen beautifully along Duck Creek Road, where a group of about half a dozen, including at least 2 adult males, worked through the low vegetation below the road. We also had this species at Royal NP. Note that this name now applies only to the birds found east of the Great Dividing Range (so essentially along the east coast). The widespread form found west of the GDR has been split off and is now called Purple-backed Fairywren, *Malurus assimilis*. [E]

LOVELY FAIRYWREN (*Malurus amabilis*) – We often struggle a bit to find this species, but it was easy this year, as we ran into a trio of them (an adult male and 2 females) on our first morning at Cattana Wetlands! A few of us also had another trio as we walked around in search of the cassowary at Etty Bay. This species was once lumped with Variegated Fairywren, but the much shorter tail and the very distinctive female plumage led to it being split off a few years back. [E]

SUPERB FAIRYWREN (*Malurus cyaneus*) – Though we first recorded these fine birds at the Port of Brisbane, our best encounters were easily at O'Reilly's, where small parties of incredibly tame birds wandered around on the lawn outside the reception building, and we had to be careful not to tread on them! Tor was a big fan of these little gems, and chose them as his favorite Australian bird. [E]

RED-BACKED FAIRYWREN (*Malurus melanocephalus*) – Burkhard was the first to notice a group of these below the hide as we were scoping the waterfowl from said hide at Hasties Swamp. Several of us got a good view of them then, but for those that missed those ones, we found some more along the road that were more cooperative. We also saw a couple of these along Duck Creek Road. [E]

WHITE-SHOULDERED FAIRYWREN (*Malurus alboscapulatus*) – Tor is certainly a big fan of fairywrens, as, in addition to choosing Superb FW as his favorite Australian bird, he also chose this species as his top PNG bird. We had a couple of encounters with these birds in scrubby areas of the PNG highlands. [E]

Meliphagidae (Honeyeaters).

EASTERN SPINEBILL (*Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*) – Some folks saw one of these fancy honeyeaters early one morning at Chambers, while the rest of the group caught up with them at O'Reilly's, where several were regulars at a flowering bottle brush tree. [E]

MARbled HONEYEATER (*Pycnopygius cinereus*) – Heard along the Tonga Trail, but it never showed itself. [E]

STREAK-HEADED HONEYEATER (*Pycnopygius stictocephalus*) – We heard these a few times, but I think we only saw one along the Varirata entrance road. [E]

YELLOW-SPOTTED HONEYEATER (*Meliphaga notata*) – Common along Black Mountain Road, and we saw quite a few while searching in vain for a graceful Honeyeater. [E]

LEWIN'S HONEYEATER (*Meliphaga lewinii*) – The common Meliphaga through most of the rainforest along the east coast, and we saw plenty throughout. [E]

MOUNTAIN MELIPHAGA (*Meliphaga orientalis*) – Occurs at higher elevations than any other Meliphaga in PNG, and we had some great looks at a couple as we waited for the Lesser BoP to appear. [E]

GRACEFUL HONEYEATER (*Meliphaga gracilis*) – Heard along Black Mountain Road, but we never tracked one down. But they almost identical to Yellow-spotted Honeyeater anyway;-) [E*]

ELEGANT HONEYEATER (*Meliphaga cinereifrons cinereifrons*) – The only species in this genus that we identified at Varirata, though we likely saw some Mimic Honeyeaters as well. We had a couple of great looks at this one, including one bird that was perched beside the Dwarf Koel that we were enjoying through the scope. [E]

YELLOW HONEYEATER (*Stomiopora flava*) – Pretty common and very vocal around Cairns. We saw these first at Cattana Wetlands, where a pair was building a nest alongside one of the ponds. [E]

YELLOW-FACED HONEYEATER (*Caligavis chrysops*) – Numerous along Duck Creek Road, where we first saw them. Also seen along Lady Carrington Track at Royal NP. [E]

BLACK-THROATED HONEYEATER (*Caligavis subfrenata*) – The flowering tree behind the Kumul Lodge feeders was attracting in good numbers of this honeyeater, and they were pretty easy to see for a change. [E]

BELL MINER (*Manorina melanophrys*) – The forest fire that ravaged much of Lamington NP a couple of months ago had burned through the area with the only accessible colony on our tour route, but luckily there were still a few birds hanging on there, and we managed decent views of a couple. [E]

NOISY MINER (*Manorina melanocephala*) – Numerous around Brisbane and Sydney, especially at Daisy Hill where their calls were a constant background sound. [E]

ORNATE MELIDECTES (*Melidectes torquatus*) – Easily the most attractive of the Melidectes, and we had some fine views of this one as we awaited the Lesser BoP. [E]

BELFORD'S MELIDECTES (*Melidectes belfordi*) – Numerous around Kumul Lodge, including the feeders. [E]

YELLOW-BROWED MELIDECTES (*Melidectes rufocrissalis*) – Occurs between the elevational range of the preceding two species. We had a couple during a roadside stop below Kumul Lodge. [E]

BRIDLED HONEYEATER (*Bolemoreus frenatus*) – A high elevation specialty of the Atherton Tablelands, and we found several quite easily at Mt Hypipamee. [E]

LITTLE WATTLEBIRD (*Anthochaera chrysoptera*) – Quite a few were seen in flowering trees along the Lady Carrington Track at Royal NP. [E]

VARIED HONEYEATER (*Gavicalis versicolor*) – After hearing them on our first couple of visits to the Cairns Esplanade, we finally tracked some down for fine views on our final morning in Cairns. Though Ebird shows some records of this bird in the Atherton Tablelands, I believe most of those to be dubious, as this bird seems very much tied to the coast. In fact, a local Cairns birder friend we met told me he hasn't even recorded them a couple of blocks inland from the Esplanade in all the years he's birded there! [E]

MANGROVE HONEYEATER (*Gavicalis fasciolaris*) – While we did get fairly good looks at one of these at the Port of Brisbane Wetlands, we could have had a whole lot better look if I hadn't been experiencing technological problems. By the time I got everything sorted out, the bird seemed to be long gone. [E]

- YELLOW-TINTED HONEYEATER** (*Ptilotula flavescens*) – Locally common in the savanna region around Port Moresby, and we found a couple at PAU, then another couple at Parliament Haus a few days later. [E]
- FUSCOUS HONEYEATER** (*Ptilotula fusca*) – Generally the most numerous honeyeater in the Wondecla forest, and while that was still the case, the near lack of flowering eucalyptus there meant the numbers were way down from all my previous visits. Note that these Wondecla birds are distinct from other Fuscous Honeyeater populations, showing yellow faces much like Yellow-tinted Honeyeaters. Some local birders think they should be split, but I don't think that's too likely. [E]
- BROWN-BACKED HONEYEATER** (*Ramsayornis modestus*) – Seen in small numbers in the Cairns region (most numerous at Granite Gorge) including a pair building a nest low over the water at Cattana Wetlands. [EN]
- RUFIOUS-BANDED HONEYEATER** (*Conopophila albogularis*) – Fairly numerous around the ponds at PAU. [E]
- SMOKY HONEYEATER** (*Melipotes fumigatus*) – Abundant in PNG's highland forests, with plenty seen daily at Kumul lodge, including the feeders, which is great, as its an easy place to see their facial skin blush from yellow to bright red in a flash. [E]
- DUSKY MYZOMELA** (*Myzomela obscura*) – Not much of a looker, this myzomela was around the Cairns area in small numbers. We also saw one at PAU, which I believe was my first one ever in PNG.
- ELFIN MYZOMELA** (*Myzomela adolphinae*) – Just a couple of birds at the Lesser BoP site, and they never sat around long enough for us to get really great looks. [E]
- SCARLET MYZOMELA** (*Myzomela sanguinolenta*) – Seen regularly from the Atherton Tablelands right down to Royal NP, with our first ones at Hasties Swamp showing especially well. This was Burkhard's favorite species from the Australian portion of the tour. [E]
- RED-COLLARED MYZOMELA** (*Myzomela rosenbergii*) – The same flowering tree that attracted the Black-throated Honeyeaters at Kumul Lodge also drew in a couple of these striking birds. [E]
- GREEN-BACKED HONEYEATER** (*Glycichaera fallax*) – Not a very memorable species, but I like it as we really don't see this one often. We had great looks at one in a fruiting tree by the picnic area at Varirata. [E]
- RUFOUS-BACKED HONEYEATER** (*Ptiloprora guisei*) – Very similar to the next species, but replaces it at slightly lower elevations. We had a couple of these at the Murrumbidgee Pass clearing. [E]
- GRAY-STREAKED HONEYEATER** (*Ptiloprora perstriata*) – And this one is found right in the gardens of Kumul Lodge, usually feeding in the orange honeysuckle-like flowers, which is just where we saw them. [E]
- BROWN HONEYEATER** (*Lichmera indistincta*) – Pretty numerous in the Cairns area, with the biggest concentration seen at Granite Gorge. [E]
- SILVER-EARED HONEYEATER** (*Lichmera alboauricularis*) – Leonard's stakeout for this local species worked brilliantly, and we had fine views of a couple of these attractive honeyeaters before heading over to Parliament Haus. [E]
- NEW HOLLAND HONEYEATER** (*Phylidonyris novaehollandiae*) – Our final addition to a list of around 45 honeyeater species was this handsome species. We saw a bunch of them at flowering trees along the Lady Carrington Track. [E]
- WHITE-CHEEKED HONEYEATER** (*Phylidonyris niger*) – Similar to the above species, but with a dark eye, and a large white cheek patch. Sandy first picked out one of these from the bird hide at Hasties Swamp, and we found several more as we walked down the road there, catching up the folks that missed the one from the hide. [E]
- BLUE-FACED HONEYEATER** (*Entomyzon cyanotis*) – This large and distinctive honeyeater was fairly common in drier parts of the Atherton Tablelands, where we had great looks at the Mareeba Golf Course and Granite Gorge, where the flowering silky oak pulled in a bunch of them. Our final ones were a pair seen at Swan Lake. [E]
- WHITE-THROATED HONEYEATER** (*Melithreptus albigularis*) – This genus is made up of 7 fairly similar small honeyeaters, all endemic to Australia, except for this one, which also occurs in savanna areas of southern PNG. We saw a number of these in the eucalypt savanna along the Varirata entrance road in PNG, and in Australia had them at Granite Gorge and Davies Creek. [E]
- WHITE-NAPED HONEYEATER** (*Melithreptus lunatus*) – Fairly similar to the above species, but with a less obvious white nape band (!) and a small patch of red skin behind the eye, which we actually saw quite well on several of the birds we saw along Duck Creek Road. [E]
- TAWNY-BREASTED HONEYEATER** (*Xanthotis flaviventris*) – Mainly a bird of PNG, though this species also occurs in Cape York in Australia. Quite a varied species across its range, and there may be more than one species involved. We had pretty good looks at these on both visits to Varirata, where I believe the race is *gilianettii*. [E]
- MACLEAY'S HONEYEATER** (*Xanthotis macleayana*) – The flowering bush this species used to favor at Chambers had been removed, and so we never saw this Atherton specialty there. Consequently, we were still looking for it on our final day in the region, and we managed to pick up a couple along Black Mountain Road, then had excellent close views of a couple at the sugar water feeders at Cassowary House. [E]
- STRIPED HONEYEATER** (*Plectorhyncha lanceolata*) – Super looks at our only one, as it perched in a bare tree right above my head at Swan Lake. [E]
- LITTLE FRIARBIRD** (*Philemon citreogularis*) – Less numerous and conspicuous than the other friarbirds on this tour route, though we did find 4 or 5 at the flowering silky oak in the Granite Gorge campground. [E]
- HELMETED FRIARBIRD (NEW GUINEA)** (*Philemon buceroides novaeguineae*) – Helmeted Friarbird could potentially be split into 3 different species, and we saw 2 of these 3 forms. This one, quite obviously, was the one we saw regularly around the Port Moresby region and at Varirata. [E]
- HELMETED FRIARBIRD (HORNBILL)** (*Philemon buceroides yorki*) – And this one was fairly common in the Cairns region. [E]
- NOISY FRIARBIRD** (*Philemon corniculatus*) – This species, with its completely bare, black head, mostly replaces Helmeted Friarbird in drier areas of the Atherton Tablelands. That flowering silky oak at Granite Gorge attracted a fair number of them, and we also saw them at the Wondecla forest and at Davies Creek, and heard them below O'Reilly's. [E]

Pardalotidae (Pardalotes)

- SPOTTED PARDALOTE** (*Pardalotus punctatus*) – Our first was a bit of a surprise, showing up above the crater at Mt Hypipamee, where I don't think I'd even heard one before. We saw more of them, and had far better views, along Duck Creek Road, where one male in particular came in quite low and close, giving spectacular views of its beautifully-patterned plumage. Sandy was especially impressed, and this was her pick for top bird in Australia. [E]
- STRIATED PARDALOTE** (*Pardalotus striatus*) – A family group of 5 birds was found at Granite Gorge, though the looks we had there weren't especially memorable, so it was great to find a pair attending a nest burrow in the bank of a stream bed in the Mareeba region. We were able to get repeated views of them as they went off to forage, then returned time and again with a series of small prey items, always stopping on the same branch above the stream bed before flying into the nest burrow. [EN]

Acanthizidae (Thornbills and Allies)

- ROCKWARBLER** (*Origma solitaria*) – I've got to admit I wasn't too hopeful that we'd find these birds, given the extreme heat we were dealing with at Royal NP, but as we headed back to the bus after our morning walk, I spotted a bit of movement next to the track and realized it was a pair of these very local birds. We all ended up with excellent views of this regional specialty, which is the only species of birds entirely restricted to New South Wales. [E]
- FERNWREN** (*Oreoscopus gutturalis*) – This species seems to be very secretive at this time of year, and we rarely even hear it, so hearing one at Mt Hypipamee this trip should be seen as a small victory, I guess. [E*]
- RUSTY MOUSE-WARBLER** (*Crateroscelis murina*) – Heard on both visits to Varirata, but they kept well out of sight. [E*]
- MOUNTAIN MOUSE-WARBLER** (*Crateroscelis robusta*) – Jean and Tor spotted one of these small birds along the driveway as we were walking back up to Kumul Lodge, but by the time Paul, Wayne, and I caught up, it had flown off. The three of us decided to hang around a bit to see if we could find it, and I eventually spotted it sunbathing on an open, mossy perch, where we had super looks at it before it skulked back into the underbrush. [E]
- YELLOW-THROATED SCRUBWREN** (*Sericornis citreogularis*) – A pretty handsome bird, especially among the scrubwrens! We had great looks at some pretty habituated ones along the trails at O'Reilly's. [E]
- WHITE-BROWED SCRUBWREN** (*Sericornis frontalis*) – Also quite a looker for a scrubwren, and even more bold than the above species. Most of ours were at O'Reilly's, though we did see one at Royal NP as well. Interestingly, I was just looking at Wayne's video of the Albert's Lyrebird on our Smugmug page, and noticed that one of these birds was foraging right behind the lyrebird, much like Pilotbirds are meant to do. [E]
- ATHERTON SCRUBWREN** (*Sericornis keri*) – A very local species, and easily overlooked as it closely resembles Large-billed Scrubwren, which occurs sympatrically. We saw just one of these at Mt Hypipamee, which was found by Bob and Jean as they waited on the road while the rest of us went to look at the Golden Bowerbird bower. We ended up getting great looks at it as it hopped about on the ground gathering nesting material. [EN]
- LARGE SCRUBWREN** (*Sericornis nouhuysi*) – A small party of these were seen along the trails at Kumul Lodge. [E]
- LARGE-BILLED SCRUBWREN** (*Sericornis magnirostra*) – A few groups of these nondescript birds were seen at scattered locations in the rainforests on the Atherton Tablelands. [E]
- BUFF-FACED SCRUBWREN** (*Sericornis perspicillatus*) – A few of these foraged through the trees next to our viewing area on the Tonga trail. [E]
- PALE-BILLED SCRUBWREN** (*Sericornis spilodera*) – One of several new species we picked up on our second visit to Varirata. There were at least 4 of these with a small feeding flock, poking around in dead leaf clusters and constantly wagging their tails, as this species does habitually. [E]
- BUFF-RUMPED THORNBILL** (*Acanthiza reguloides*) – Not one we see often on this tour, so it was nice to catch up with a small party of them along Duck Creek Road, thanks to Duncan, who knew just where to look. [E]
- MOUNTAIN THORNBILL** (*Acanthiza katherina*) – Another local, high-elevation Atherton specialty. We made a roadside stop to look for this one, and almost immediately after we got out of the van, one flushed up from on or near the ground, sat very briefly in the open, and then disappeared for good. A few folks saw it well enough to make out the pale eye, though most of us saw nothing more than an LBJ. [E]
- BROWN THORNBILL** (*Acanthiza pusilla*) – Seen a few times at O'Reilly's and Royal NP. Our first one almost became an afternoon snack for a marauding Gray Goshawk! [E]
- STRIATED THORNBILL** (*Acanthiza lineata*) – To my eye, these birds appear to be less stripy than Brown Thornbills, which occur in many of the same areas. We had good looks at these along Duck Creek Road, then saw them closer and better at Royal NP. [E]
- GREEN-BACKED GERYGONE** (*Gerygone chloronota*) – The most memorable thing about this species is the wonderful song, which we heard at Varirata. A few folks also saw one there on our first visit. [E]
- FAIRY GERYGONE** (*Gerygone palpebrosa*) – Quite a nice gerygone, though we missed the more attractive form in PNG. Still, we had several nice looks at the better-looking of the Australian subspecies at several sites around the tablelands, beginning with a trio at Granite Gorge. [E]
- YELLOW-BELLIED GERYGONE** (*Gerygone chrysogaster*) – Another of about a dozen new species we picked up on our return visit to Varirata. A lone bird was with the small mixed feeding flock that also had the Pale-billed Scrubwrens. [E]
- LARGE-BILLED GERYGONE** (*Gerygone magnirostris*) – We had reasonable views of a pair at Cattana Wetlands, but then improved on those views when we found another pair foraging with a couple of Fairy Gerygones along the road into the Mareeba Wetlands. [E]
- BROWN GERYGONE** (*Gerygone mouki*) – While most of the gerygones have lovely, tinkling songs, this species is an exception. We saw and heard these regularly at O'Reilly's and Royal NP. [E]
- BROWN-BREASTED GERYGONE** (*Gerygone ruficollis*) – A common bird of the PNG highlands, and we recorded them at several sites, but had our best looks at a trio of them feeding above our viewing area at Murmur Pass. [E]
- MANGROVE GERYGONE** (*Gerygone levigaster*) – Replaces the quite similar Large-billed Gerygone in the mangroves around Brisbane, where we found a pair quite easily at the Port of Brisbane. [E]

Orthonychidae (Logrunners).

- AUSTRALIAN LOGRUNNER** (*Orthonyx temminckii*) – I'm not sure there's a better place to see these lovely birds than at O'Reilly's, where they are somewhat habituated to people and often feed in the open at fairly close range. We had these regularly on the trails there. [E]
- CHOWCHILLA** (*Orthonyx spaldingii*) – I find these birds much trickier than the closely related logrunners, but we got lucky this trip, as we spotted a party of 5 birds foraging right at the start of the trail at Lake Barrine. They quickly scurried off into the forest on our approach, but by hurrying into the forest myself, I was able to herd them back across the trail, where everyone was able to see them. [E]

Cnemophilidae (Satinbirds).

- LORIA'S SATINBIRD** (*Cnemophilus loriae*) – Good scope views of a calling male along the Murmur Pass trail, allowing us to tick off this PNG endemic family, which only contains 3 species. [E]

Melanocharitidae (Berrypeckers and Longbills).

- BLACK BERRYPECKER** (*Melanocharis nigra*) – Another family endemic to PNG, and we almost dipped on this one, though a trio of these birds above the trail on our second visit to Varirata saved the day. [E]
- SPECTACLED LONGBILL** (*Oedistoma iliolophus*) – Heard along the creek at Varirata, but as often is the case with this species, that was all we got. [E*]

Paramythiidae (Tit Berrypecker and Crested Berrypecker).

- TIT BERRYPECKER** (*Oreocharis arfaki*) – And yet another family endemic to PNG, this one with only 2 species. There seemed to be quite a few of these foraging around at Murmur Pass, but they proved difficult to see, either remaining well hidden in the canopy, or chasing each other around

actively and never sitting still in the open. Still, eventually I think everyone got pretty good views of this fine bird. [E]

Psophodidae (Whipbirds and Wedgebills)

EASTERN WHIPBIRD (*Psophodes olivaceus*) – Far easier to see at O'Reilly's than anywhere else, as they are quite habituated there, but we did see these a few other places, too, beginning with a couple feeding on the edge of the lawn in front of the cabins at Chambers. In fact, one even hopped along the railing of one of the balconies at one point! [E]

Machaerirhynchidae (Boatbills)

BLACK-BREASTED BOATBILL (*Machaerirhynchus nigripectus*) – This beautiful and charming small bird gave us some great views around the clearing at Murmur Pass. [E]

YELLOW-BREASTED BOATBILL (*Machaerirhynchus flaviventer*) – Heard at a number of sites around the tablelands, but the only one we saw was early one morning at Chambers. These two boatbills make up the entire family, so we cleaned that one up! [E]

Artamidae (Woodswallows)

GREAT WOODSWALLOW (*Artamus maximus*) – Finding a bird perched on a prominent bare tree at the Murmur Pass trail head was a bit of a surprise, as it was my first one at that site, and one of few I've seen around Kumul. [E]

WHITE-BREASTED WOODSWALLOW (*Artamus leucorhynchus*) – Common and easily seen around Cairns, and we also saw a pair in New Guinea at PAU.

DUSKY WOODSWALLOW (*Artamus cyanopterus*) – One of our targets at the Wondelba forest, where we found just one, though it did give us some fine views. [E]

Cracticidae (Bellmagpies and Allies)

BLACK-BACKED BUTCHERBIRD (*Cracticus mentalis*) – Single birds were seen on the PAU grounds and along the Varirata entrance road on our second visit to the park. [E]

GRAY BUTCHERBIRD (*Cracticus torquatus*) – A lone bird was seen from the bus as we pulled into the parking lot at Daisy Hill, though we couldn't refind it after disembarking. Our only other ones were a pair along Lady Carrington Track at Royal NP. [E]

HOODED BUTCHERBIRD (*Cracticus cassicus*) – Replaces Black-backed Butcherbird (which prefers open eucalypt savanna habitat) in rainforest, though they do overlap along the Varirata entrance road. We saw a couple of birds on each of our park visits. [E]

PIED BUTCHERBIRD (*Cracticus nigrogularis*) – Not many this trip, though we had a few in the Brisbane area, including one on a nest at Daisy Hill. [EN]

BLACK BUTCHERBIRD (*Cracticus quoyi*) – A bird on a nest at the Cattana Wetlands was barely visible, so the clear views of several at Centenary Lakes were most welcome. Upon looking over his bird lists after getting home, Wayne figured that this species, and not the brushturkey, as he'd originally thought, was his 1000th life bird! Congratulations Wayne! [N]

AUSTRALIAN MAGPIE (*Gymnorhina tibicen*) – Though we saw a couple in the tablelands early on in the trip, it wasn't until we got to Brisbane that we started seeing this bird regularly. [E]

PIED CURRAWONG (*Strepera graculina*) – Similar situation to that of the magpie, where we had a brief look at one at Mt Hypipamee, then went on to see plenty in the Brisbane and Sydney regions. [E]

Campephagidae (Cuckooshrikes)

HOODED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina longicauda*) – It was kind of frustrating, as both this species and Black-bellied Cicadabird called within a couple of minutes of each other at Murmur Pass, but neither species showed itself. [*]

BARRED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina lineata*) – We saw both possible forms on this tour. First we had several good looks at Australia's nominate subspecies, in which both sexes have barred bellies, around the Atherton Tablelands. Then at Varirata, we saw the PNG endemic race *axillaris*, in which males are all gray, lacking the barring below. [E]

BOYER'S CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina boyeri*) – Small parties of these are usually hanging around the picnic area and elsewhere in Varirata NP, and are generally not too difficult to find. We encountered several such groups of them, and some may have even been able to see the chestnut wing linings of these birds, a feature they share only with the much larger Stout-billed Cuckooshrike. [E]

BLACK-FACED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina novaehollandiae*) – Singles were seen at several sites, but mostly just as flybys. I think the only place we saw several and saw them quite well, was at Swan Lake.

WHITE-BELLIED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina papuensis*) – Though widespread in eastern Australia, all our records came from Far North Queensland, where we had from 1-3 of them at a bunch of different sites. In PNG, where it is also resident, we had just one sighting of a single bird along the Varirata entrance road.

VARIED TRILLER (*Lalage leucomela*) – We had sightings daily in the Cairns region, but rarely of more than a single bird. Also recorded a few times around O'Reilly's, where Duncan claimed they weren't very common.

BLACK-BELLIED CICADABIRD (*Edolisoma montanum*) – Heard only at Murmur Pass, just after the calling Hooded Cuckooshrikes. [E*]

COMMON CICADABIRD (*Edolisoma tenuirostre*) – An interesting bird, in that there may be a cryptic species involved here. The birds in NE Queensland have a loud ringing song; elsewhere in Australia, they give a faster, raspier call song. Could there be two species involved? We heard a few of these rainforest types around Cairns, and saw males both at Yorkey's Knob and Chambers, while one of the raspy-sounding birds was singing at Daisy Hill. We also saw a pair along the entrance road to Varirata. I assumed they were of the resident race, but by the looks of the maps, it appears that only the migrant form from Australia occurs in this region.

BLACK CICADABIRD (*Edolisoma melan*) – We picked up a nice male along the Varirata entrance road on our way out of the park on our first visit. [E]

Neosittidae (Sittellas)

VARIED SITTELLA (*Daphoenositta chrysoptera*) – Quite variable throughout its range (hence the name) and we were lucky to see two very different subspecies. First we had great, close looks at an active party of six birds at Davies Creek, where the race *striata* (Striated Sittella) occurs. In this subspecies, the male has a black cap, the females a black hood, and they were quite streak below. Then along Duck Creek Road we found a pair of the race *leucocephala* (White-headed Sittella), in which, you guessed it, the head is completely white in both sexes. Note that the former subspecies of Varied Sittella found in PNG have recently been split off as Papuan Sittella, so this is now an Australian endemic. [E]

Eulacestomatidae (Ploughbills)

WATTLED PLOUGHBILL (*Eulacestoma nigropectus*) – We heard one along the track at Kumul, but it stayed well away from the trails. [E*]

Falcunculidae (Shrike-tit)

CRESTED SHRIKE-TIT (EASTERN) (*Falcunculus frontatus frontatus*) – Nice spotting by Tad allowed us to see our only one of these fine birds at the Wondecla forest. This species is now in its very own family. [E]

Pachycephalidae (Whistlers and Allies)

RUSTY PITOHI (*Pseudorectes ferrugineus*) – Heard on our first visit to Varirata. [*]

BOWER'S SHRIKETHRUSH (*Colluricincla boweri*) – This Atherton specialty showed well for us a couple of times both at Lake Barrine and Mt Hypipamee. [E]

GRAY SHRIKETHRUSH (*Colluricincla harmonica*) – The habituated ones around O'Reilly's gave us our best views, but we first encountered this species at Hasties Swamp, and also saw one at the Lesser BoP site in PNG. [E]

LITTLE SHRIKETHRUSH (*Colluricincla megarrhyncha*) – This species is a bit of a mess taxonomically, and is due for some major splitting, with as many as 7 different species making up what is currently this species. One former subspecies was recently discovered not to be a shrikethrush at all, and was just removed from this species and elevated to species level as a whistler! What this all means, then, is that it pays to keep careful track of where you saw these birds, as changes are imminent! That said, we saw this species several times around the Atherton Tablelands, where race griseata occurs, and is part of the "Rufous Shrikethrush" group. Then in PNG we had race despecta, which is part of the "Variable Shrikethrush" grouping at Varirata.

REGENT WHISTLER (*Pachycephala schlegelii*) – Several of these stunning whistlers delighted the group in the forests around Kumul Lodge. [E]

GOLDEN WHISTLER (*Pachycephala pectoralis*) – A common rainforest bird down the east coast of Australia, but that doesn't make them any less gorgeous.

BROWN-BACKED WHISTLER (*Pachycephala modesta*) – Overall a quiet and easily overlooked whistler. We saw just one from the viewing deck at Kumul. [E]

GRAY WHISTLER (BROWN) (*Pachycephala simplex brunnescens*) – I believe this is the subspecies we saw at Varirata NP, a single bird with a mixed flock on our second visit, and not the race griseiceps that was actually on our checklist.

GRAY WHISTLER (GRAY-HEADED) (*Pachycephala simplex peninsulae*) – And this form was the one seen nicely a couple of times along Black Mountain Road. [E]

WHITE-BELLIED WHISTLER (*Pachycephala leucogastra*) – Once treated as a race of Rufous Whistler, this scarce and patchily distributed species was seen nicely along the Varirata entrance road. [E]

BLACK-HEADED WHISTLER (*Pachycephala monacha*) – Decent views of a pair at the Lesser BoP site. [E]

RUFOUS WHISTLER (*Pachycephala rufiventris*) – This dry country whistler gave us a few nice sightings in the drier regions of the Atherton Tablelands, showing up first at Granite Gorge, with subsequent sightings at the Wondecla forest at Davies Creek. [E]

Rhagologidae (Mottled Berryhunter)

MOTTLED BERRYHUNTER (*Rhagologus leucostigma*) – For some reason this species was missing from our checklists, though we heard it calling a couple of times at Murrumbidgee Pass. [*]

Oreoicidae (Australo-Papuan Bellbirds)

RUFOUS-NAPED BELLBIRD (*Alcedryas rufinucha*) – Up until fairly recently, this was thought to be a whistler, but it is now part of a small family with two other species, Crested Bellbird of Australia, and Piping Bellbird (formerly Crested Pitohui!) of PNG. We had nice looks at one adult on and around one of the downed logs in the clearing at Murrumbidgee Pass, and others, mainly juveniles, on the Kumul Lodge grounds. [E]

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LONG-TAILED SHRIKE (NASUTUS GROUP) (*Lanius schach stresemanni*) – Another species that probably requires some taxonomic revision, and this isolated subspecies, restricted to the highlands of PNG (and not on the Indonesian half of the island) could very well be a valid species on its own. We saw a handful of these in open country below Kumul Lodge.

Oriolidae (Old World Orioles)

HOODED PITOHI (*Pitohui dichrous*) – This is the infamous poisonous pitohui, and we saw several of them easily and well on both visits to Varirata. [E]

BROWN ORIOLE (*Oriolus szalayi*) – Pretty drab as orioles go, and actually looks much like a friarbird! We saw a couple at Varirata, and if I'm remembering correctly, Leonard showed an active nest to you while I was off looking at something else. [EN]

OLIVE-BACKED ORIOLE (*Oriolus sagittatus*) – The more widespread of the two Aussie orioles. We first encountered this species at Granite Gorge, and we heard them elsewhere around the tablelands. We then saw another at Fred Bucholz Park, and a couple more at Royal NP. [E]

GREEN ORIOLE (*Oriolus flavocinctus*) – Only seen around Cairns, with good looks our first day at Cattana Wetlands and Yorkey's Knob, then again at the north end of the Esplanade on our final morning there. [E]

AUSTRALASIAN FIGBIRD (*Sphecotheres vieilloti*) – Quite numerous at a number of sites around Cairns, including along the Esplanade, and we also saw quite a few at the Port of Brisbane Wetlands. In PNG, we saw the endemic subspecies salvadorii at PAU. [E]

Dicruridae (Drongos)

SPANGLED DRONGO (*Dicrurus bracteatus*) – Recorded almost daily on the tour, other than in the PNG highlands. A flock of 25 birds along Black Mountain Road was most likely a recently arrived migrant flock from PNG (or elsewhere in Australia). The birds we saw at Varirata were almost certainly of the resident race carbonarius, which some authors have split off as a separate species, Papuan Spangled Drongo.

Rhipiduridae (Fantails)

BLACK FANTAIL (*Rhipidura atra*) – A pair was foraging in the dense brush along the Tonga Trail as we tried to spot the Mountain Kingfisher, but I believe only the female was seen well by most. [E]

WILLIE-WAGTAIL (*Rhipidura leucophrys*) – One of Australia's most familiar birds. We recorded these on every day but one--our full day at O'Reilly's, where it is unusual, though I have seen it before. [E]

DIMORPHIC FANTAIL (*Rhipidura brachyrhyncha*) – Singles along the Murrumbidgee Pass trail and the Tonga Trail (better views at the latter site). Both of these were rusty-tailed birds, or dark-morphed, as the field guides call them. [E]

RUFIOUS FANTAIL (*Rhipidura rufifrons*) – Though we saw a couple of these lovely fantails in the Atherton Tablelands (one each at Etty Bay and the road to the Mareeba Wetlands), most of our records came from around O'Reilly's, where we had many good views of these active little birds.

FRIENDLY FANTAIL (*Rhipidura albolimbata*) – When you got to know the other fantail species in PNG, you realize that this name is pretty accurate, as it is generally way easier to see well than most other species there. We had small numbers of these daily in the PNG highlands. [E]

CHESTNUT-BELLIED FANTAIL (*Rhipidura hyperythra*) – A regular member of mixed species flocks at Varirata, and we saw a single bird with such flocks on both of our visits to the park. [E]

GRAY FANTAIL (*Rhipidura albiscapa*) – Seen mainly around O'Reilly's, though we had our first at Mt Hypipamee, and our final ones at Royal NP. [E]

Ifritidae (Ifrita)

BLUE-CAPPED IFRITA (*Ifrita kowaldi*) – With the birds that usually hang around Kumul Lodge absent this trip, we didn't do very well with this cool bird, which is in an endemic, monotypic family. Our only one was a bird that flew across in front of us just after we arrived at the Murmur Pass viewing area on our first visit, then promptly disappeared into the forest. [E]

Monarchidae (Monarch Flycatchers)

WHITE-EARED MONARCH (*Carterornis leucotis*) – It took a while to track down this striking monarch, but when we finally found one below O'Reilly's, we had some pretty smashing views! [E]

BLACK-FACED MONARCH (*Monarcha melanopsis*) – Oddly difficult to see in the Atherton Tablelands, this year, despite quite a few birds singing. We did finally tick one along Black Mountain Road, but then found them to be far easier to see, and more numerous at O'Reilly's, especially so along Duck Creek Road, where we saw 7 or 8 birds in the open eucalyptus forest. [E]

BLACK-WINGED MONARCH (*Monarcha frater*) – Paul spotted this one in a mixed flock of small birds on our second visit to Varirata. This bird is very similar to the above species, and can require a good view to separate them; though the field guides suggest that they can be separated on elevation, both species do occur regularly here, with this species being resident, Black-faced a winter migrant. [E]

SPECTACLED MONARCH (*Symposiachrus trivirgatus*) – We had several nice sightings of the attractive, restless monarchs at various sites in the Atherton Tablelands, then just a single bird afterwards, taking a late afternoon bath at Charley's water hole below O'Reilly's. [E]

SPOT-WINGED MONARCH (*Symposiachrus guttula*) – Another regular member of mixed flocks at Varirata, and we saw a single bird with one of these flocks on our first visit. [E]

FRILLED MONARCH (*Arses telescopthalmus*) – Ditto the above, as this is also a common mixed flock member, though this species is generally a little more common and easy to see. We had a male on our first visit to Varirata, then a pair on our return. [E]

PIED MONARCH (*Arses kaupi*) – This local specialty was very quiet around the Atherton Tablelands this trip, and it took some persistence to finally track down the only one we heard along Black Mountain Road, but in the end we had fabulous looks at it. [E]

MAGPIE-LARK (*Grallina cyanoleuca*) – Another widespread and familiar Australian bird, and we didn't miss these on too many of our days in the country. [E]

LEADEN FLYCATCHER (*Myiagra rubecula*) – Not many this trip, though we had a few, mainly females, in the Cairns region. We also had some nice views of a couple of birds of the resident breeding race papuana along the Varirata entrance road. [E]

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

GRAY CROW (*Corvus tristis*) – A trio of these flew past on our first visit to Varirata, though I don't think the views were all that great. [E]

TORRESIAN CROW (*Corvus orru*) – Quite common in the Port Moresby region savannas, and this is also the common Corvid in the Brisbane region. [E]

AUSTRALIAN RAVEN (*Corvus coronoides*) – And this is the common Corvid around Sydney, where we saw a couple on the drive to Royal NP, and heard their unique calls at the park itself. [E]

Paradisaeidae (Birds-of-Paradise)

CRINKLE-COLLARED MANUCODE (*Manucodia chalybatus*) – Nice looks at one of these inside the forest at Varirata, where it kept returning to the same tree, giving us multiple chances to see its bumpy-headed appearance. [E]

GLOSSY-MANTLED MANUCODE (*Manucodia ater*) – Good scope views of a bird singing from atop a distant bare tree on our second visit to Varirata. This is the one that sounds a lot like a tuning fork. [E]

KING-OF-SAXONY BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Pteridophora alberti*) – A territorial male called regularly from an exposed perch at the Murmur Pass clearing on both of our visits, giving everyone ample time to get brilliant looks at his strange antennae-like head plumes. [E]

GREATER LOPHORINA (*Lophorina superba*) – Tough this trip, and we never managed to track down a male despite hearing a couple. We did however, get decent views of a couple of females along the Tonga Trail. [E]

PARADISE RIFLEBIRD (*Ptiloris paradiseus*) – The dry conditions at O'Reilly's may have been impacting this species behavior, as they were not very vocal this visit. But luckily, we did manage to get nice views of a female right outside our rooms on our final morning there. [E]

VICTORIA'S RIFLEBIRD (*Ptiloris victoriae*) – Easily seen around Chambers in the early morning, though none of them were displaying there this year. We also had fine looks at these daily throughout the rainforests of the tablelands, including one male that did display a couple of times near the picnic area at Mt Hypipamee. [E]

GROWLING RIFLEBIRD (*Ptiloris intercedens*) – Common by voice at Varirata, but again, we only managed to see females, with especially good views of one at the picnic area on our second visit. All things considered, female riflebirds are really lovely birds. [E]

BROWN SICKLEBILL (*Epimachus meyeri*) – Apart from the usual females at the Kumul Lodge feeders, we also had excellent looks at a calling male with an extraordinarily long tail at Murmur Pass. [E]

RIBBON-TAILED ASTRAPIA (*Astrapia mayeri*) – Several of these at the Kumul Lodge feeders included a stunning adult male, with immaculate long white tail plumes. Believe it or not, those tail plumes were only about half the length of some I've seen. Still, he was fancy enough to catch Jean's eye, and topped her list of PNG's best birds. [E]

MAGNIFICENT BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Cicinnurus magnificus*) – A calling bird at the Lesser BoP site didn't seem too far away, but it stayed out of viewing range, unfortunately. [*]

BLUE BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Paradisaea rudolphi*) – Of the 6 people that did the hard hike up the Tonga Trail to look for this breathtaking bird, 4 of them--Tad, Dianne, Sandy, and Paul--chose it as their favorite PNG bird. We did have some pretty stellar looks at the male, didn't we? [E]

LESSER BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Paradisaea minor*) – The calling male kept well-hidden for the better part of our vigil at Kama, but eventually he flew out across the clearing and landed in a large tree above a nearby home, and we wound up with some pretty awesome scope views of him there. [E]

RAGGIANA BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Paradisaea raggiana*) – The only thing that could have made our Raggiana experience any better was if a female or two had shown up at the display area and the males had gone into full display mode. That's not to take anything away from our views, which were simply amazing. Both Bob and Burkhard gave these stunning birds the nod as their PNG favorite. [E]

Melampittidae (Melampittas)

LESSER MELAMPITTA (*Melampitta lugubris*) – Despite the dwindling light, we actually had some pretty reasonable views of this super skulker along the Kumul Lodge trails late one afternoon. [E]

Petroicidae (Australasian Robins)

TORRENT FLYCATCHER (*Monachella muelleriana*) – There was only one of these elegant flycatchers at the Lai River bridge when we stopped there, but that was really all we needed, and it did allow for some long scope studies. [E]

JACKY-WINTER (*Microeca fascians*) – An unusual bird on this tour route, especially where we saw it along Duck Creek Road. I noticed this bird moving with a party of other small birds, and quickly scoped it, and was surprised to see it was this species, which I had never seen there before, and which Duncan confirmed was an unusual record. He also noted the bird had probably been driven up by the drought-like conditions in the region. [E]

LEMON-BELLIED FLYCATCHER (*Microeca flavigaster*) – Several were chasing each other around and performing song flights along the Varirata entrance road. [E]

PAPUAN FLYCATCHER (*Microeca papuana*) – One of these cute flycatchers was perched just overhead along the trails at Kumul. Formerly called Canary Flycatcher, a name I much prefer. [E]

GARNET ROBIN (*Eugerygone rubra*) – Heard only at Kumul. [E]

ROSE ROBIN (*Petroica rosea*) – Lovely views of a male perched out in the open right at the edge of the rainforest along Duck Creek Road. [E]

WHITE-FACED ROBIN (*Tregellasia leucops*) – Great looks at one perched on the side of a tree (as they often do) near the turkey mound at Varirata. [E]

PALE-YELLOW ROBIN (*Tregellasia capito*) – We saw a couple of these along the trail at Lake Barrine, though neither stuck around for long. [E]

EASTERN YELLOW ROBIN (*Eopsaltria australis*) – A lone bird was seen by some at the Wondecla forest, but the majority of these were down at O'Reilly's and Royal NP, where they are common and easy to see. [E]

MANGROVE ROBIN (*Eopsaltria pulverulenta*) – It really looked like we were going to have to leave Cairns without this one, as we were running out of time, and the birds seemed to be staying out of sight well inside the mangroves, but one final look finally paid off as we found a lone bird foraging just inside the mangroves. [E]

WHITE-BROWED ROBIN (*Poecilodryas superciliosa*) – Great looks at this handsome robin along Davies Creek. [E]

WHITE-WINGED ROBIN (*Peneothello sigillata*) – A few birds are regular denizens of the Kumul Lodge grounds where they are easy to see. A common voice around the lodge from about 4:00 AM to dawn; judging by the calls, there seems to be a lot of these there! [E]

BLUE-GRAY ROBIN (*Peneothello cyanus*) – Heard along the Tonga trail, where I have yet to see it, though they are always around. [E*]

ASHY ROBIN (*Heteromyias albispecularis*) – This used to be an extremely tough bird to see, but the clearing at Murmur Pass seems to be to their liking, and it is now a pretty reliable and easy to see bird there. [E]

GRAY-HEADED ROBIN (*Heteromyias cinereifrons*) – An Atherton Tablelands endemic, though it was once lumped with the very different looking Ashy Robin. We heard more than we saw, but had fabulous looks at a couple at Mt Hypipamee. [E]

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

WELCOME SWALLOW (*Hirundo neoxena*) – The standard Barn Swallow-like swallow of Australia, widespread and generally numerous. Lots of these were nesting under the overhangs above the doors on the upper cabins at O'Reilly's. [EN]

PACIFIC SWALLOW (*Hirundo tahitica*) – Replaces the very similar Welcome Swallow in PNG, where we saw plenty around Port Moresby.

FAIRY MARTIN (*Petrochelidon ariel*) – Though we did see a few in the tablelands, around Hasties Swamp and Yungaburra, our best views came at Swan Lake, where quite a few were among the Welcome Swallows over the lake. [E]

TREE MARTIN (*Petrochelidon nigricans*) – A handful of these at Fred Bucholz Park were the only ones for the tour. [E]

Phylloscopidae (Leaf Warblers)

ISLAND LEAF WARBLER (*Phylloscopus maforensis*) – Quite a few were singing along the Tonga trail, but we only managed to see one or two.

Acrocephalidae (Reed Warblers and Allies)

AUSTRALIAN REED WARBLER (*Acrocephalus australis*) – We had a brief view of one that was kind of upstaged by the Red-backed Fairywrens at Hasties Swamp, then saw a couple more at Swan Lake. It was while scanning for a singing reed-warbler that I spotted the Black-backed Bittern. [E]

Locustellidae (Grassbirds and Allies)

TAWNY GRASSBIRD (PAPUAN) (*Megalurus timoriensis macrurus*) – Too late for the printed checklist, but this bird has now been split from Tawny Grassbird and is a New Guinea endemic. We saw a couple, and heard more, in the highlands. [E]

Cisticolidae (Cisticolas and Allies)

GOLDEN-HEADED CISTICOLA (*Cisticola exilis*) – A couple of folks managed to see one in the scrubby field near the Cattana Wetlands parking lot, while the rest of us caught up with a pair along with a bunch of Chestnut-breasted Munias along the road into the Mareeba Wetlands.

Zosteropidae (White-eyes, Yuhinas, and Allies)

BLACK-FRONTED WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops minor*) – Heard more than seen, but we did get quick looks at a restless pair of birds at the Varirata NP viewpoint. [E]

NEW GUINEA WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops novaeguineae*) – This appears to be the common white-eye below Kumul Lodge (i.e. at the Lesser BoP site) though there may be more than one species locally. [E]

SILVER-EYE (*Zosterops lateralis*) – A regular early morning visitor at the fruiting tree above the parking area at Chambers, and we had regular sightings at numerous other sites all down the coast to Royal NP.

Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)

PIED BUSHCHAT (*Saxicola caprata*) – A common inhabitant of scrubby fields in the PNG highlands.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

RUSSET-TAILED THRUSH (*Zosterornis heinei*) – Thrushes were tough at O'Reilly's this year, but we finally came across a pretty cooperative couple of birds along the boardwalk. Separating the two species is difficult without them vocalizing, but I was able to study the wing coverts through the scope, and the white covert spots lacked the white shafts that would be seen on Bassian Thrush. Thus, they were this species, which is also the more common one locally. [E]

ISLAND THRUSH (*Turdus poliocephalus*) – A number of these including several immature birds were regulars at the Kumul Lodge feeders.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

METALLIC STARLING (*Aplonis metallica*) – Numerous birds daily in the Cairns environs, with especially excellent views of the colonial nesting ones in the palms at the shopping center north of the city. In PNG we saw just a single bird at PAU. [N]

SINGING STARLING (*Aplonis cantoroides*) – Often this is our final new bird in PNG, as we tick them from the departure lounge at the airport. Though we did see them there again this trip, they weren't our final new species, due to our spotting the Little Curlews from the plane! [E]

YELLOW-FACED MYNA (*Mino dumontii*) – Nice views of this cool myna at PAU and along the Varirata entrance road. [E]

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) – Seen only in the city of Sydney. [I]

COMMON MYNA (*Acridotheres tristis*) – Numerous all down the eastern seaboard of Australia. [I]

Dicaeidae (Flowerpeckers)

RED-CAPPED FLOWERPECKER (*Dicaeum geelvinkianum*) – Widespread in PNG, from the coast right up into the highlands, and we recorded them almost daily there, though we heard far more than we actually saw. [E]

MISTLETOEBIRD (*Dicaeum hirundinaceum*) – Australia's lone flowerpecker, this species was quite common in the Cairns region, though, as with the above species, heard far more often than seen, though we did manage a few nice looks at these beautiful birds. [E]

Nectariniidae (Sunbirds and Spiderhunters)

OLIVE-BACKED SUNBIRD (*Cinnyris jugularis*) – Quite numerous and easy to see around Cairns.

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

AUSTRALASIAN PIPIT (AUSTRALIAN) (*Anthus novaeseelandiae australis*) – Only those of us that had been rebooked onto the later flight from Mt Hagen to Port Moresby got to see a single bird on the verge of the taxiway at Mt Hagen airport.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – Though widespread and common in Eastern Australia, and also established in PNG, our only records were of a few birds in Cairns. [I]

EURASIAN TREE SPARROW (*Passer montanus*) – Quite a few around Port Moresby, where they've been established since about 2003. [I]

Estrildidae (Waxbills and Allies)

MOUNTAIN FIRETAIL (*Oreostruthus fuliginosus*) – A couple of birds in the gardens of Kumul Lodge. [E]

RED-BROWED FIRETAIL (*Neochmia temporalis*) – Most numerous around O'Reilly's, where they come out to feed on spilled seed from the parrot feedings. [E]

DOUBLE-BARRED FINCH (*Taeniopygia bichenovii*) – I don't usually like to refer to birds as cute, but it is kind of fitting for this species. We had great looks of these at Granite Gorge, where there were 25-30 of them, including a few drinking and bathing along the stream below the rock wallaby feeding area. [E]

SCALY-BREASTED MUNIA (*Lonchura punctulata*) – Just a few birds in the grass along the Esplanade on our final morning in Cairns. [I]

HOODED MUNIA (*Lonchura spectabilis*) – The common highland munia in PNG, and we had some nice views of about a dozen in the scrub at the Lesser BoP viewing area. [E]

GRAY-HEADED MUNIA (*Lonchura caniceps*) – Two or three in the tall grass on the verge of one of the ponds at PAU. They stayed mostly out of sight, but occasionally popped up on top of a seed head to glean the seeds before dropping back down out of sight. [E]

CHESTNUT-BREASTED MUNIA (*Lonchura castaneothorax*) – We had just encounter with this lovely munia, finding about a dozen of them along the road to the Mareeba Wetlands, alongside a couple of Golden-headed Cisticolas. [E]

MAMMALS

SHORT-BEAKED ECHIDNA (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*) – We rarely see echidnas on this tour, and this was just the second time since I've been leading the trip. This was a nice reward, and partial compensation, for our lyrebird-less walk along Lady Carrington Track. And we could easily have walked past it without seeing it, but a slight rustle in the leaves gave away its presence and I spotted it next to the track, trying to hide in a little hollow. Along with the platypus, echidnas are the only egg-laying mammals on earth! [E]

PLATYPUS (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*) – I wasn't sure how the high water levels at our usual viewing spot would impact our chances of sightings, but I needn't have worried, as a couple of these odd beasts were soon spotted in different parts of the river, and our patience was ultimately rewarded when one of them surfaced right in front of us a couple of times! [E]

SPECKLED DASYURE (*Neophascogale lorentzii*) – We were heading down the trails at Kumul in the late afternoon, when some rustling above us stopped Wilson and I in our tracks. We looked around over our heads but could see nothing, and were about to move on when deep in the shadows of the pandanus fronds a couple of meters up, I saw a pointy little nose and pair of beady eyes peering down on us. Not much more was visible to us, but it was enough to see it was a dasyure, aka marsupial mouse. [E]

LONG-NOSED BANDICOOT (*Peramelas nasuta*) – At least three different individuals were visiting the feeding area at Chambers after dark, lapping up the honey that ran down the tree trunk to the foot of the tree. [E]

COPPERY BRUSHTAIL POSSUM (*Trichosurus johnstonii*) – A couple of these handsome, rust-colored brushtails were seen during our night-spotting at the Curtain Fig.

SHORT-EARED POSSUM (*Trichosurus caninus*) – A nightly visitor to the feeders outside the dining room windows at O'Reilly's. [E]

MOUNTAIN CUSCUS (*Phalanger carmelitae*) – After doing a bit of research, I've concluded that the animal we saw above the trail at Kumul as we returned from the woodcock outing was this highland cuscus, and not Common Cuscus as we had put on our checklists.

SUGAR GLIDER (*Petaurus breviceps*) – A couple of these charming little animals showed up at the feeders on both of our nights at Chambers. [E]

COMMON RINGTAIL POSSUM (*Pseudocheirus peregrinus*) – Usually pretty common around O'Reilly's, but we only managed to see one as we tried for frogmouths below the lodge. [E]

GREEN RINGTAIL POSSUM (*Pseudocheirus archeri*) – We found a half a dozen different individuals at the Curtain Fig during our night-spotting outing. [E]

STRIPED POSSUM (*Dactylopsila trivirgata*) – I was pretty thrilled when these gorgeous animals started turning up at the Sugar Glider feeders a number of years ago, and I never tire of seeing these striking critters there. This year there were a couple of them there on the first night. [E]

MUSKY RAT-KANGAROO (*Hypsiprymnodon moschatus*) – The smallest of the Macropods, this tiny kangaroo is restricted to the highland rainforests of the Atherton Tableland region. We almost missed it, but had a brief look at one below the deck at Cassowary House. [E]

RED-NECKED PADEMELON (*Thylogale thetis*) – Plenty of these at O'Reilly's, though according to the local guides, quite a few of them have fallen prey to Dingos, supposedly as a result of the fires and dry conditions, which have forced the Dingos to hunt more in the rainforest. At least that's the way I understood it. [E]

RED-LEGGED PADEMELON (*Thylogale stigmatica*) – Not as numerous at Chambers now that they've stopped feeding them there, and no longer water their lawn. But we did see a couple, mainly darting across the road around dusk. [E]

MAREEBA ROCK-WALLABY (*Petrogale mareeba*) – It's always fun to hang with the darling little wallabies at Granite Gorge, though I gotta say they were looking a little tattier than usual. [E]

LUMHOLTZ'S TREE KANGAROO (*Dendrolagus lumholtzi*) – I saw my first one of these in 2014, but have done pretty well with them since, getting them on most tours during that time. This year, we had a couple of sightings. First we found one along the road at Mt Hypipamee, alerted to its presence by a loud thump, then getting good looks as it clambered about in the trees before dropping to the ground and hopping away. Then at the Nerada Tea Estate, where we had lunch, we located a mother and her youngster sitting quietly on a large branch in the shade, pretty much right next to the cafe! [E]

AGILE WALLABY (*Macropus agilis*) – A trio of these were grazing on the grass on the far side of Hasties Swamp. [E]

RED-NECKED WALLABY (*Macropus rufogriseus*) – Tad and I had one near the visitor center at Daisy Hill while everyone else was learning about koalas. It turned out to be the only one of the tour, as they were missing from all their usual hangouts along the road up to O'Reilly's due to the drought and the complete lack of anything to eat in the normally verdant draws. [E]

WHIPTAIL WALLABY (*Macropus parryi*) – Aka Pretty-faced Wallaby. These lovely wallabies were seen daily in the eucalyptus forest below O'Reilly's, and included a mother with a joey in her pouch that was drinking from a muddy puddle in the middle of Duck Creek Road. [E]

EASTERN GRAY KANGAROO (*Macropus giganteus*) – Our first macropods, seen on the golf course at Mareeba, where the green grass of the fairways keeps them hanging around. We also saw a single one along the road into the Mareeba Wetlands. [E]

SPECTACLED FLYING-FOX (*Pteropus conspicillatus*) – The massive camp of these in downtown Cairns is always an impressive sight! [E]

GRAY-HEADED FLYING-FOX (*Pteropus poliocephalus*) – And the huge camp of these along Canungra Creek is equally impressive, though the site was completely devoid of bats on our way up to O'Reilly's. On our return, there were the usual huge numbers there. [E]

BLACK RAT (*Rattus rattus*) – One below the Sugar Glider feeders was decidedly not black. [I]

WHITE-TAILED RAT (*Uromys caudimaculatus*) – A couple of these large native rats were spotlighted along the road at the Curtain Fig.

BLACK-TAILED GIANT RAT (*Uromys anak*) – And one of these made a couple of nocturnal visits to the fruit feeders at Kumul, though it was kind of on the small side for this species. [E]

DINGO (*Canis familiaris dingo*) – We spotted this one before it spotted us, as it was walking along the track ahead of us at the mostly scorched forest where the Bell Miners hang out.

Herps

EASTERN WATER DRAGON (*Intellagama lesueurii*) – A couple lounging on rocks in some of the streams in the Atherton Tablelands. [E]

FRILL-NECKED LIZARD (*Chlamydosaurus kingii*) – I almost stepped on one of these in the Granite Gorge campground, and it raced a few meters up a nearby tree trunk where it sat out for some super looks. [E]

YELLOW-FACED WHIPSNAKE (*Demansia psammophis*) – We made a stop to look for this lovely snake at a spot where I've seen them the last two years, and found three of them basking in the sun at the base of the rock wall there. Though venomous, it is not an aggressive, and not considered a dangerous species. Still, a bite would be pretty painful, I'd imagine.

BOYD'S FOREST DRAGON (*Lophosaurus boydii*) – Clayton spotted a couple of these spectacular, spiky lizards sitting motionless on tree trunks along the Lake Barrine trail, including one that was right next to the boardwalk.

SOUTHERN SCALY-FOOT (*Pygopus lepidopodus*) – When Paul found this one along Duck Creek Road, we first thought it was a snake, and I was thinking it was one of the highly venomous species of brown snake, but something didn't look quite right. When Duncan arrived on the scene, he quickly pointed out that it wasn't a snake at all, but a legless lizard! I had no idea they were so big, but we could clearly see the vestigial hind-leg flaps along its sides. This was one of my favorite sightings of the tour!

LACE MONITOR (*Varanus varius*) – Rustling in the leaves along Duck Creek Road led me to find this big boy just below the road. [E]

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 401 bird taxa and 26 mammal taxa