



Field Guides Tour Report

Papua New Guinea 2015

Jun 28, 2015 to Jul 16, 2015

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There's nothing like a bright red parrot to brighten up a bush! This Papuan Lorikeet (which the field guide splits as Stella's Lorikeet) made multiple visits to a Schefflera plant just off the Kumul Lodge balcony. Photo by participant Greg Griffith.

This year's was one of the most unusual Niugini trips I've had, in a way that I don't expect to be repeated anytime soon: for the first time ever, we didn't once have to bird in the rain! In fact, we had pretty clear and sunny conditions through most of the tour, with even perpetually foggy, misty Tabubil providing blue skies and sunshine for most of our stay there. As a result, we had some of the best viewing conditions I've ever experienced on this tour, even if some bird activity was suppressed by the gorgeous weather. Add in the fact that the local airlines performed well, and this was a pretty darned good run of this often challenging trip.

Despite the good weather, the total number of species we saw was remarkably similar to the total we find in years with more typical weather. But even if it didn't increase the bird list, it sure did make for more pleasant birding conditions, and resulted in some fine views of several birds that have been troublesome in the past.

We kicked things off with an afternoon visit to the grounds of the Pacific Adventist University, which gave us a gentle intro to PNG's varied birdlife. Standouts here included those marvelous Papuan Frogmouths dozing above the basketball court, and a couple of lovely Orange-fronted Fruit-Doves, a scarce species that we weren't to encounter again. Next morning came the first of our two visits to wonderful Varirata NP, still my favorite birding locale in the country. Male Raggiana Birds-of-paradise (BoPs) on their lek were a highlight as always, but memorable too were the great variety of fruit-doves (with Wompoo, Pink-spotted, Superb, Dwarf, and the rare Coroneted all showing well), the stunning Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher, a young male Magnificent (Growling) Riflebird, Black-capped Lories, and a plethora of other great birds making for a fantastic first visit to the park.

Next stop was Tabubil, where the aforementioned fabulous weather was a pleasant surprise. So too was the number of Carola's Parotias: we saw no fewer than half a dozen (probably more), with adult males and females plus a couple of young males, one with a complete set of head wires. Salvadori's Teal, Pesquet's Parrot, Golden Cuckooshrike, Torrent-Lark, White-eared Bronze-Cuckoo, and the best views I've had yet at Obscure Berrypecker were a few of the other highlights of our visit.

On to the rich lowland forests around Kiunga, where our BoP count took a jump, with fabulous displaying Greater BoPs and a wonderful little King BoP at Km 17, and all three manucode species at Boystown Road. The spectacular Flame Bowerbird wowed us with a close flyover at the mound, a rare Long-billed Cuckoo put in an appearance, and we even managed brief looks at such difficult-to-see species as White-eared Catbird and Blue Jewel-Babbler, while Blyth's Hornbills, Red-flanked Lorikeets, and Golden Monarchs all showed beautifully. As usual, our day trip on the Fly and Elevala rivers was a major highlight of the trip, with this year's trip providing unbeatable views of a trio of amazing Southern Crowned-Pigeons -- the runaway

favorite in "Bird of the Trip" voting. A riverside Palm Cockatoo with its crest fully extended, a brilliant Common Paradise-Kingfisher perched high in a vine tangle, and one of the best pairs of Black-sided Robins I've yet seen provided some of the many other exciting moments on this wonderful day.

Moving up to the highlands, we flew to Tari for several days at the marvelous Ambua Lodge. Our bird list grew, with some notable BoPs joining the ranks. Short-tailed Paradigalla put on a magnificent showing at the fruiting trees behind the cabin, a male King-of-Saxony BoP waved his antenna-like head plumes from his canopy perch at the Tari Gap, and a frantic male Superb BoP in the Tari Valley gave a truly memorable performance, even raising his cape feathers a few times, the first time I'd ever seen that! Among the non-BoPs, standouts included a male Spotted Berrypecker at the fruiting tree, scope views of a tiny Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrot just above the cabins, both Crested and Tit berrypeckers at the Tari Gap, a bizarre male Wattled Ploughbill displaying his bright pink wattles, also at the Gap. Gorgeous White-breasted Fruit-Doves, Red-collared Myzomelas, and Black-breasted Boatbills all provided brilliant splashes of color.

Our final venue was rustic Kumul Lodge near Mount Hagen, where the feeders once again provided great looks at Ribbon-tailed Astrapia, Brown Sicklebill, and Brehm's Tiger-Parrots, among others, while Blue-capped Ifritas, Regent Whistlers, and Rufous-naped Bellbirds showed well in the area around the gardens, and a eye-popping Papuan Lorikeet paid a number of visits to a flowering Schefflera tree next to the porch. Further afield, we enjoyed a stunning male Crested Satinbird at a fruiting tree near Max's Orchid Garden, a fine experience with a Lesser BoP across the Lai River, and a perfect liaison with a male Blue BoP at his display tree above Tonga, to name just a few of the highlights.

A final visit to Varirata capped off our PNG experience, and we enjoyed another fine morning there, with memorable species including the local White-bellied Whistler, Forest Kingfisher, Blue-winged Kookaburra, and Great Cuckoo-Dove along the entrance road, and pretty good views for many of a sneaky pair of Chestnut-backed Jewel-Babblers, plus Crinkle-collared Manucode, Spot-winged Monarch, and White-faced Robin in the forest.

I had a great time sharing PNG's many spectacular birds with all of you--it was a great group and here's a big thanks to you! Have a great rest of the summer, everyone, and I hope to see you all on another trip some day soon.

--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

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

PLUMED WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna eytoni*) – An incredible 61 of these were hanging around the ponds at PAU, one more than I counted there last year, and the largest number yet recorded in PNG. Up to a couple of years ago, there were very few records of this species in the country.

WANDERING WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna arcuata*) – About 20 of these were at PAU, where they are usually the most numerous whistling-duck.

SALVADORI'S TEAL (*Salvadorina waigiensis*) – Bad news on this one, as Greg analyzed his photos of the pair we saw the first afternoon at Ok Menga, and realized that those high-flying birds were actually a pair of Great Cormorants. Oops. Guess no one had a good view of them. Good thing we went back and actually had an excellent view of an authentic Salvadori's Teal flying low over the water. [E]

PACIFIC BLACK DUCK (*Anas superciliosa*) – Lots at PAU, including one mother with a bunch of fuzzy ducklings.

Megapodiidae (Megapodes)

BLACK-BILLED BRUSH-TURKEY (*Talegalla fuscirostris*) – Heard at fairly close range at Varirata, and more distantly along Boystown Road. We also saw a huge active mound along the Varirata Lookout Track. [E]

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

AUSTRALASIAN GREBE (*Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*) – Sally spotted our only one sneaking around among the lily pads on the pond at PAU.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

LITTLE BLACK CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*) – A bunch were flying in to roost in the late afternoon at PAU. Another group of 4 flew over in the Tari valley.

GREAT CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) – A juvenile that flew past as watched for Salvadori's Teals at Ok Menga was a bit of a surprise there. A couple more were seen along the Lai River and near Tonga.

LITTLE PIED CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*) – Around 10 among the many Little Black Cormorants at PAU, and a single bird along the Fly River.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT EGRET (AUSTRALASIAN) (*Ardea alba modesta*) – About a half a dozen at PAU, and a handful along the rivers during our boat trip.

INTERMEDIATE EGRET (*Mesophoyx intermedia*) – Best seen at PAU where we could compare it to a nearby Great Egret. The difference in size and structure of the two is pretty obvious when they are side by side.

PIED HERON (*Egretta picata*) – A lone bird flew in to roost at PAU, surprising as there are usually quite a few here.

CATTLE EGRET (ASIAN) (*Bubulcus ibis coromandus*) – Numerous in the area around Port Moresby, but we didn't see any anywhere else.

STRIATED HERON (*Butorides striata*) – Good views of a couple along the Elevala River.

RUFIOUS NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax caledonicus*) – We found 6 of these roosting in a large Mimosa tree next to one of the ponds at PAU, and got good scope looks at both adults and juveniles.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

AUSTRALIAN IBIS (*Threskiornis moluccus*) – Just a couple at the mostly hidden pond at PAU.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

- LONG-TAILED HONEY-BUZZARD** (*Henicopernis longicauda*) – Jan spotted the first of three from the bus along the road to Tabubil, and we had a couple of other sightings at Dablin Creek and Ok Menga. One of the birds the first day was carrying a snake in its talons. [E]
- PACIFIC BAZA** (*Aviceda subcristata*) – Fewer than we usually see, but we had decent views of a pair that flew past the mound on Boystown Road, and then better views of a lone bird flying over Kwatu Lodge.
- NEW GUINEA EAGLE** (*Harpyopsis novaeguineae*) – Jenny and I heard a distant bird calling late one afternoon at Ambua. [E]
- PYGMY EAGLE** (*Hieraaetus weiskei*) – The clear, sunny conditions may have had a hand in the fact that we saw this scarce raptor on three different days. We started with one flying over at Varirata our first morning, added another soaring over the hillside at Ok Menga, and finally had another fly past over Ambua Lodge. This is the most Buteo-like raptor in the region, the Buteo shape a good way to help separate it from the similarly plumaged juvenile Brahminy Kite, which we also saw a few times. [E]
- EASTERN MARSH-HARRIER (PAPUAN)** (*Circus spilonotus spilothorax*) – This endemic subspecies is sometimes treated as a good species on its own and is then called Papuan Harrier. We drove up on a handsome male feasting on a rodent right next to the road at the Tari Gap, and got to watch him for a few minutes before he retired to a more secluded spot, then had another male make a few close passes overhead near Joseph's new trails across the Gap. [E]
- VARIABLE GOSHAWK** (*Accipiter hiogaster*) – In general the most common Accipiter in the country. We started with views of a distant pair of birds at Dablin Creek, which we improved upon that afternoon with one perched right over the bus at Ok Menga.
- BROWN GOSHAWK** (*Accipiter fasciatus*) – Martha saw one from the bus as we drove from the Tari airport up to Ambua Lodge.
- GRAY-HEADED GOSHAWK** (*Accipiter poliocephalus*) – Our only one was a pretty distant perched bird at Dablin Creek, in the same tree as our first Variable Goshawk. With the scope, though, the light gray head and orange feet and cere were clearly visible. [E]
- COLLARED SPARROWHAWK** (*Accipiter cirrocephalus*) – One flew in and landed right next to the road as we birded our way through the savanna zone into Varirata NP on our last day. We had great looks of the bird both perched and in flight, clearly noting the rusty collar and the Sharp-shinned Hawk flight shape (small head, squared tail) that distinguish this one from the similar Brown Goshawk.
- BLACK KITE (BLACK)** (*Milvus migrans affinis*) – Apart from a single bird over PAU, we saw this one only around Kumul Lodge and Mt Hagen, where they are numerous.
- WHISTLING KITE** (*Haliastur spheurnus*) – Nice looks at a pair tending a nest with at least one fuzzy chick at PAU. [N]
- BRAHMINY KITE** (*Haliastur indus*) – The most widespread and numerous raptor, and we only had a couple of days without a sighting of at least one of these handsome birds. As usual, there was an active nest at Varirata NP. [N]
- WHITE-BELLIED SEA-EAGLE** (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) – Great looks at a pair of these huge birds at an active nest along the Fly River. [N]

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

- RUFIOUS-TAILED BUSH-HEN** (*Amaurornis moluccana*) – Heard on our way into Varirata the first day and at the Kiunga dock at the end of our boat trip. I still have never seen this species. [*]
- PURPLE SWAMPHEN (AUSTRALASIAN)** (*Porphyrio porphyrio melanopterus*) – At least 20 of these huge gallinules were at the PAU ponds.
- DUSKY MOORHEN** (*Gallinula tenebrosa*) – And this smaller cousin of the previous species was a bit more numerous at PAU, with about 30 or more.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

- MASKED LAPWING** (*Vanellus miles miles*) – Another bird we saw only at PAU, with at least 5 pairs, one or more of which must have been nesting if their behavior was any indication. [N]
- LITTLE RINGED PLOVER (SOUTHERN)** (*Charadrius dubius dubius*) – The open gravel area where we usually find these birds at KM 120 on the Kiunga-Tabubil road was nearly completely covered by tents as an oil exploration crew has camped out there, so I thought we'd have to look elsewhere for them. But Jimmy spotted a couple on the only tentless patch of open ground available there. This race breeds locally in PNG.

Jacaniidae (Jacanas)

- COMB-CRESTED JACANA** (*Irediparra gallinacea*) – Only about 5 at PAU where we enjoyed nice views of them trotting across the lily pads on their enormously long toes.

Glareolidae (Pratincoles and Coursers)

- AUSTRALIAN PRATINCOLE** (*Stiltia isabella*) – A lone bird was on the tarmac at the Kiunga airport, easily visible from the "departure lounge", and a couple were seen along the runway by some at Port Moresby the next day.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

- ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) – Apart from three the first day in Port Moresby, I don't recall seeing any others on the trip. [I]
- SLENDER-BILLED CUCKOO-DOVE** (*Macropygia amboinensis*) – The most commonly seen cuckoo-dove with 4 at Varirata our first full day and a scattering of records in the Kiunga region and below Kumul Lodge. Best views were probably of the one gobbling grit in the middle of the road at the Boystown Road mound.
- BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO-DOVE** (*Macropygia nigrirostris*) – Smaller and more richly rufous than the similar Slender-billed, this one is mostly found at higher elevations, though they do overlap in some places (we saw both species at Tonga). We had pairs on three days, with especially nice looks at a perched pair where we went looking for Sooty Owl in the Tari valley. [E]
- GREAT CUCKOO-DOVE** (*Reinwardtoena reinwardti*) – Scope views of a distant perched bird at Dablin would have been good enough, but it sure was nice to get such great close views of a couple of different birds along the Varirata NP entrance road on our final day. [E]
- STEPHAN'S DOVE** (*Chalcophaps stephani*) – One flew past very close by the mound at Boystown Road, and most saw it well enough to make out the brilliant green back and brown underparts. It was easily my best view yet at this shy species.
- PEACEFUL DOVE** (*Geopelia placida*) – Fairly common in the Port Moresby savannahs, and we had a few at PAU and a pair along the Varirata entry road on each visit there.
- BRONZE GROUND-DOVE** (*Gallicolumba beccarii*) – A birthday bird for Jenny! She was the only one to see a male pay an early morning visit to the Kumul Lodge feeder while the rest of us were toiling up the track to find the Blue BoP.
- SOUTHERN CROWNED-PIGEON** (*Goura scheepmakeri*) – There was no contest in the bird of the trip voting this year, with this species being the runaway favorite (chosen as #1 by Martha, Jenny, Dave and Greg) and it's not hard to figure with the views we had. They started out scurrying across the open muddy banks of the Ketu River before flushing up to perch in the open branches of some riverside trees offering up loads of great looks and photo ops! Could not have had them any better this year. [E]
- WOMPOO FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus magnificus*) – We did well on fruit-doves on our first visit to Varirata NP, and this was the first of six species

we saw that day! That first one also proved to be the only one we were to see on the whole trip.

- PINK-SPOTTED FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus perlatus*) – Easily the most often-seen fruit-dove, with good sightings on both visits to Varirata and daily sightings in the Kiunga region. It was especially nice watching one breaking twigs off a bare tree next to the Boystown Road mound, then flying up to the dense cover in an adjacent tree to construct a nicely concealed nest. [EN]
- ORANGE-FRONTED FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus aurantiifrons*) – Normally seen only at PAU, and that was the case again this year. We had really nice views of a couple of these attractive doves in the late afternoon there. [E]
- SUPERB FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus superbus*) – For most of us, the only one we saw was a female in the fruiting fig tree next to the Varirata picnic area, though a few folks also saw one that Jimmy pointed out during our boat trip.
- CORONATED FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus coronulatus*) – Scoping a fruit-dove along the Varirata entrance road, I was surprised when I realized I was looking at this species, which I had previously only seen in the Sepik-Ramu lowlands at Karawari Lodge. Too bad not everyone got a scope view before it took off, but we did all see it through bins at least.
- BEAUTIFUL FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus pulchellus*) – An aptly-named bird, though all the fruit-doves are quite beautiful. We had excellent scope looks at our only BFD from the mound at Boystown Road. [E]
- WHITE-BREASTED FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus rivoli*) – One blasted over our heads as we birded inside the forest at Ambua, but a little playback lured it right back in. Though it first chose a mostly concealed perch, it eventually sat right out on an open branch in fantastic light giving us a real eye-ful! Note that the new field guide has mislabelled this species in the plates; the bird we saw (called Mountain Fruit-Dove in the guide), is actually the one labelled "7". [E]
- ORANGE-BELLIED FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus iozonus*) – Fewer than usual but we had some nice views of a pair along the Varirata entrance road on our first visit, then several sightings in the Kiunga region. [E]
- DWARF FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus nainus*) – Incredible scope views of a male sitting quietly in a fruiting tree next to the picnic area at Varirata. Easily among the best views I've ever had at this tiny fruit-dove, which is often tough to find. [E]
- PURPLE-TAILED IMPERIAL-PIGEON** (*Ducula rufigaster*) – We had to settle for quick views of a couple that flew by and quickly disappeared into the forest along Boystown Road. [E]
- PINON IMPERIAL-PIGEON** (*Ducula pinon*) – Daily in the Kiunga region with some nice scope studies at KM 17. Those heavily made-up eyes are particularly attractive, aren't they? [E]
- COLLARED IMPERIAL-PIGEON** (*Ducula mullerii*) – As usual seen only along the rivers during our boat trip, but they are by far the most numerous large pigeon in that riparian habitat, and we saw somewhere between 50 and 100 of them. [E]
- ZOE IMPERIAL-PIGEON** (*Ducula zoeae*) – Just a few in the lowlands, but we had good views of a couple, including that first bird at the fruiting tree in Varirata. [E]
- TORRESIAN IMPERIAL-PIGEON** (*Ducula spilorrhoa*) – Seen only our first afternoon at PAU, where we had nice looks at about 10 of these lovely pigeons, which migrate here from Australia in the Austral winter.
- PAPUAN MOUNTAIN-PIGEON** (*Gymnophaps albertisii*) – Despite the name, these birds are not restricted to the mountains, and it isn't unusual to see large flocks of them winging overhead in the lowlands. We saw this species on 7 days of the tour, starting at Varirata, and at pretty much every site onward, with a max of about 50 birds on one dat at Tabubil. [E]

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

- WHITE-CROWNED KOEL** (*Cacomantis leucolophus*) – Always a tough one to see though I thought we had a shot at that responsive bird at Ambua. It obviously had other ideas. [E*]
- BRUSH CUCKOO** (*Cacomantis variolosus*) – No doubt this is the most widespread and common cuckoo in the country. We heard it regularly throughout the tour, and saw a few too, starting with the juvenile behind the Cloudlands Hotel in Tabubil when we returned for lunch.
- CHESTNUT-BREASTED CUCKOO** (*Cacomantis castaneiventris*) – Nice response from a pair of these richly colored cuckoos wound up with us getting super looks at one along the roadside at Dablin Creek.
- FAN-TAILED CUCKOO** (*Cacomantis flabelliformis excitus*) – Replaces the very similar preceding species at higher elevations. We had good views of a calling bird at the Yellow-breasted Bowerbird spot near the Lai River. There is a chance this endemic resident race could one day be split from the Australian migrant form which also occurs in PNG in the Austral winter.
- SHINING BRONZE-CUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx lucidus*) – While the rest of us were watching the Little Ringed Plovers below Tabubil, Greg was photographing a bronze-cuckoo on the other side of the road. Our first thought was it was White-eared, but a closer look at the blown up photo showed it was this migrant species. The rest of us caught up with one our last day, among a group of other Austral migrants along the Varirata approach road.
- RUFOUS-THROATED BRONZE-CUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx ruficollis*) – One was calling across the ravine from the helipad at Ambua one afternoon, but we couldn't lure it across to our side. But the next day during the afternoon break, three of them (presumably a pair with a juvenile) turned up in a caterpillar-laden tree right above my cabin and spent the next couple of hours or more there showing off. Linda and Sally also saw one from the porch at Kumul. [E]
- WHITE-EARED BRONZE-CUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx meyerii*) – Martha spotted one feeding in a nearby tree as we watched for parotias at Dablin Creek, and we had some of my best views yet of this species as it moved slowly through the canopy for the next few minutes. [E]
- LONG-BILLED CUCKOO** (*Rhamphomantis megarhynchus*) – A scarce and still poorly known species. Jenny spotted this one from the mound along Boystown Road, a young male looking very much like a Tawny-breasted Honeyeater. [E]
- DWARF KOEL** (*Microdynamis parva*) – Heard singing at quite a distance from the mound at Boystown Road. [E]
- AUSTRALIAN KOEL** (*Eudynamis cyanocephalus*) – Quite a few were heard in the Kiunga region, but we only saw a couple of these as we motored along the Elevala River.
- CHANNEL-BILLED CUCKOO** (*Scythrops novaehollandiae*) – Two different pairs of these massive cuckoos were well seen as they flew overhead during our boat trip.
- GREATER BLACK COUCAL** (*Centropus menbeki*) – The deep voice of this shy canopy coucal was heard booming from a dense vine tangle along Boystown Road. [E]
- PHEASANT COUCAL** (*Centropus phasianinus*) – Not uncommon in the savanna region around Port Moresby, and we saw several at PAU and along the Varirata approach road.
- LESSER BLACK COUCAL** (*Centropus bernsteini*) – Super looks at one of these skulking birds as it sat perched atop a roadside shrub at Km 17. Every few seconds the bird would call, bowing its head and raising its tail with every low, hollow hoot. Another was seen along the river near Kwatu

Lodge. [E]

Strigidae (Owls)

JUNGLE BOOBOOK (*Ninox theomacha*) – Regularly heard at night around the cabins at Ambua, where we also tracked one down for some superb views. I also heard one from my cabin at Kumul Lodge, the first time I've heard one at the lodge. [E]

Aegothelidae (Owlet-Nightjars)

MOUNTAIN OWLET-NIGHTJAR (*Aegotheles albertisi*) – Several of us heard this bird calling behind the Kumul Lodge cabins late one night. [E]

BARRED OWLET-NIGHTJAR (*Aegotheles bennettii*) – Though this bird wasn't in its usual roost hole at Varirata, I spotted it sitting in the opening of another hollow tree a ways up the track and we had some fine views of it as it dozed in the sunshine. [E]

Podargidae (Frogmouths)

PAPUAN FROGMOUTH (*Podargus papuensis*) – A couple of students at PAU helped us to track down a pair of these odd birds roosting near the basketball court. We might have found them on our own, but they are so well camouflaged that we could just as well have missed them.

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

ARCHBOLD'S NIGHTJAR (*Eurostopodus archboldi*) – The thick fog we had above Ambua the night we went out looking for this bird meant that we had to get a bit closer to the rocky cliff face than is ideal for viewing this bird, but we still managed reasonable scope views of this scarce species, only the second time I've seen this bird. [E]

LARGE-TAILED NIGHTJAR (*Caprimulgus macrurus*) – Greg and I saw one as it flushed up from the roadside at dusk on our way back up after the "negotiations" below Ambua.

Apodidae (Swifts)

PAPUAN NEEDLETAIL (*Mearnsia novaeguineae*) – Kind of looks like a short-tailed, dingier version of Glossy Swiftlet, a species it seems to replace in the Kiunga lowlands, which is the only site we saw this species. [E]

GLOSSY SWIFTLET (*Collocalia esculenta*) – Pretty common over much of the country and seen most days from low elevations right up to the high mountains. This swift often flies quite low and offers nice dorsal views regularly, a very unswiftlike behavior.

MOUNTAIN SWIFTLET (*Aerodramus hirundinaceus*) – The common brownish swift at high elevations, replacing the next swift at elevations above about 4600'. The two aren't really separable in the field, so we really are just identifying these based on elevation. [E]

UNIFORM SWIFTLET (*Aerodramus vanikorensis*) – The lower elevation brownish swift. Common at Kiunga, Tabubil, and Varirata. Katherine championed the swiftlets as a group as her favorite birds since they were always around, easy to see, and mostly ignored by the rest of us. Nice to see them getting some recognition!

Hemiprocnidae (Treeswifts)

MOUSTACHED TREESWIFT (*Hemiproctus mystacea*) – Some years we struggle to get one pair of these, but this was not a year like that. We saw these elegant birds on 5 days, starting with a pair along the Varirata entrance road, then on three consecutive days around Kiunga. Finally we had nice views of a pair of perched birds just below Ambua, where I've seen them just once before.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

AZURE KINGFISHER (*Ceyx azureus*) – We spotted one of these brilliant little kingfishers along the Ketu River just as we were getting back aboard the boat for the return journey to Kiunga. I spotted another above the creek along the Circuit Track at Varirata, though it only stayed put long enough for one or two others to see it.

VARIABLE DWARF-KINGFISHER (*Ceyx lepidus*) – This small, long-billed kingfisher can be a real challenge to see, but after hearing a couple flying around inside the forest near Kwatu Lodge, we used a little playback to bring them back, and one perched out where we could get awesome scope views of it.

BLUE-WINGED KOOKABURRA (*Dacelo leachii*) – We missed this species on our first visit to Varirata, but found a couple on the second visit, including a nice perched bird at the Varirata Lookout.

RUFOUS-BELLIED KOOKABURRA (*Dacelo gaudichaud*) – This beautiful kookaburra is quite common in the lowlands and lower hill forest, and we had several excellent sightings at Varirata and around Kiunga. [E]

SHOVEL-BILLED KOOKABURRA (*Clytoceyx rex*) – We were so close with this one, but it just refused to emerge from its hidden perch in the foothill forest at Ok Menga. [E*]

FOREST KINGFISHER (*Todiramphus macleayi*) – Martha spotted one sitting above the road on our second visit to Varirata, and we got some nice looks at it and its mate in the savannah habitat they prefer. Though Austral migrants do occur here, these birds appeared to be of the blue-backed resident nominate race.

SACRED KINGFISHER (*Todiramphus sanctus*) – Pretty common and widespread from lowlands right up to Ambua. The most interesting sighting was at PAU, where we watched one being vigorously attacked by a pair of Willie-Wagtails for some unknown reason.

HOOK-BILLED KINGFISHER (*Melidora macrorrhina*) – Heard a couple of times in the late afternoon at Km 17, but completely unresponsive, which isn't uncommon. [E]

YELLOW-BILLED KINGFISHER (*Syma torotoro*) – This beauty showed well on both of our visits to Varirata, and we also had a fine view of one inside the forest at Kwatu Lodge. One of a handful of PNG specialties that also occurs in the extreme NE of Australia on Cape York.

MOUNTAIN KINGFISHER (*Syma megarhyncha*) – The highland equivalent of the preceding species. We heard it a couple of times at Ambua. [E]

COMMON PARADISE-KINGFISHER (*Tanysiptera galatea*) – It took some persistence to find this one along the muddy, leech-infested "Death Adder Trail" near Kwatu Lodge, but it was worth it as we had fabulous scope views of one after some hard searching. [E]

BROWN-HEADED PARADISE-KINGFISHER (*Tanysiptera danae*) – The most readily seen of the paradise-kingfishers, and usually fairly easy to find at Varirata. Sally spotted our only one there on our first visit, and it sat for some super scope looks as well as a few photos. [E]

Meropidae (Bee-eaters)

RAINBOW BEE-EATER (*Merops ornatus*) – Numbers seemed to be increasing during our stay, as more migrants poured in from Australia. We saw a handful on our first visit to Varirata, then several good-sized flocks at the Lesser BoP site below Kumul and a quite a few more on our return trip to Varirata.

Coraciidae (Rollers)

DOLLARBIRD (*Eurystomus orientalis*) – Especially numerous along the rivers during our boat trip, where they sit up high and out in the open and cause folks to raise their binoculars over and over again in hopes that it's another species.

Bucerotidae (Hornbills)

BLYTH'S HORNBILL (*Aceros plicatus*) – These massive birds are always impressive to see, and we were impressed regularly. We first saw a pair flying over the valley near Dablin Creek, then had them daily around Kiunga, and finished with excellent scope views of about a dozen from the Varirata Lookout, the most I'd ever seen there.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

AUSTRALIAN KESTREL (*Falco cenchroides*) – A lone bird was hanging around the Kiunga airport. Though there is a resident race of this species, the one we saw was of the migrant nominate form from Australia.

BROWN FALCON (*Falco berigora*) – Nice views of one flying over the Lai River with a prey item in its talons, then alighting on the rugged hill above the river to consume its lunch. The local Pacific Swallows didn't seem too happy about this bird's presence.

Cacatuidae (Cockatoos)

PALM COCKATOO (*Probosciger aterrimus*) – About half a dozen along the Elevala River including one that perched in a bare tree right overhead with its impressive crest erected to full effect.

SULPHUR-CRESTED COCKATOO (*Cacatua galerita*) – I don't recall ever having any really close, but we saw small numbers regularly at the lower elevation sites.

Psittaculidae (Old World Parrots)

PESQUET'S PARROT (*Psittirichas fulgidus*) – Jimmy came charging up the hill at Ok Menga to let us know one of these rare parrots was heading our way, just in time for us to pick it up with our bins before it came directly over our heads, showing off its distinctive, vulture-like shape and red underwing before disappearing over the hill. Fantastic! [E]

YELLOW-CAPPED PYGMY-PARROT (*Micropsitta keiensis*) – Heard often around Kiunga, and we did have several sightings of tiny specks flying overhead. We also had a pretty reasonable view of one flying by at KM 17 where we could even make out some color, and I briefly scoped one at Boystown Road that a couple of folks got quick looks at before it disappeared. [E]

RED-BREASTED PYGMY-PARROT (*Micropsitta bruijnii*) – We did far better with this species, which surprised us by turning up in the fruiting tree at Ambua one morning. The bird, a female, worked methodically through the bare branches of the tree, allowing us all to get prolonged scope views of her. A male would have been nice, but you just can't complain when you get pygmy-parrot views like that!

PAPUAN KING-PARROT (*Alisterus chloropterus*) – Several folks had pretty nice looks at a male that flew right over our heads as we watched the Ambua fruiting tree one morning. Our only other sighting was a brief glimpse of a pair flying away in the Tari Valley. [E]

ECLECTUS PARROT (*Eclectus roratus*) – Quite a few flying over the Kiunga region, with a few also at Varirata. As usual, most, if not all were seen only in flight, and most were males, a couple of which we saw in great light.

RED-CHEEKED PARROT (*Geoffroyus geoffroyi*) – Numerous in the lowlands around Kiunga, but very few at Varirata this year, where they are usually quite common.

BLUE-COLLARED PARROT (*Geoffroyus simplex*) – The upper elevation replacement of the preceding species. Whereas the Red-cheeked Parrot is pretty easy to see, this one is not, generally only seen in high-flying flocks passing overhead with their tinkling sleigh bell calls the best way to identify them. That said, the flocks that passed over us at Dablin showed pretty well, though I'm still hoping one day to see some color. [E]

BREHM'S TIGER-PARROT (*Psittacella brehmii*) – A couple of tiger-parrots that we saw poorly along the trails above Ambua appeared to be this species. Unequivocal were the ones that delighted us at the feeders at Kumul. [E]

YELLOW-BILLED LORIKEET (*Neopsittacus musschenbroekii*) – Pretty numerous in the highlands, especially around Ambua where plenty flew over and a few perched for some nice looks. [E]

ORANGE-BILLED LORIKEET (*Neopsittacus pullicauda*) – We saw only one definite one, though some of the other lorikeet flyovers in the highlands were likely this species. The one we did see though showed beautifully, perched up atop a dead tree just below the Tari Gap. A bit smaller than the similar Yellow-billed Lorikeet and occurs mainly at higher elevations. [E]

ORANGE-BREASTED FIG-PARROT (*Cyclopsitta guillemittii*) – Quite numerous in the lowlands around Kiunga and on up to Tabubil, and we had plenty of nice studies of these lovely little parrots. [E]

DOUBLE-EYED FIG-PARROT (*Cyclopsitta diophthalma*) – We heard a few flying around, but our only good look was a scope view of a female from the mound along Boystown Road.

LARGE FIG-PARROT (*Psittaculirostris desmarestii*) – Jenny was the only one to see this species perched along the Ketu River when she stayed back while we chased paradise-kingfishers on the muddy track near Kwatu Lodge. [E]

RED-FLANKED LORIKEET (*Charmosyna placentis*) – We don't always get to see these small lorikeets perched, so it was great to get such good views of a group that stopped in at a roadside tree beside the mound on Boystown Road. Topping that, we had better views of a pair feeding in some canopy flowers in superb light the same afternoon at Km 17! [E]

JOSEPHINE'S LORIKEET (*Charmosyna josefinae*) – A group of 7 surprised us when they screamed across the road at Dablin Creek before whipping through the clearing and vanishing into the forest. Too bad they were too fast for everyone to get on them. This was a new bird for me, and one I hadn't even been expecting here. [E]

PAPUAN LORIKEET (*Charmosyna papou*) – These stunning lorikeets were seen regularly in the highlands, including one black morph bird that flew over at Ambua. Our best sighting was at Kumul, where one paid multiple visits to a flowering Schefflera plant just off the balcony one afternoon. Note that the guide has split this species and calls the one we saw Stella's Lorikeet. [E]

YELLOW-STREAKED LORY (*Chalcopsitta scintillata*) – As is often the case, we only saw these birds in flight several times at Kiunga, though we were able to see some color, and their shape is pretty distinctive, too. [E]

BLACK-CAPPED LORY (*Lorius lory*) – Numerous good looks at these flashy parrots, especially on our second visit to Varirata when we got scope views of one investigating a potential nesting cavity. [E]

RAINBOW LORIKEET (COCONUT) (*Trichoglossus haematodus nigrogularis*) – The default lorikeet at the lower elevation sites. Particularly numerous around Varirata where there were plenty of flowering Eucalyptus trees for them.

Pittidae (Pittas)

HOODED PITTA (*Pitta sordida*) – One was calling along the "Death Adder Trail" near Kwatu Lodge. [*]

Ptilonorhynchidae (Bowerbirds)

- WHITE-EARED CATBIRD** (*Ailuroedus buccoides*) – A halfway decent view of one flying across the road at the Boystown Road mound was better than we usually get, as this shy bird generally stays well out of sight. [E]
- ARCHBOLD'S BOWERBIRD** (*Archboldia papuensis*) – Quick views of a pair of this cloud forest bowerbird along Joseph's new trails at Ambua. This was my first time seeing a male of this elusive species. [E]
- MACGREGOR'S BOWERBIRD** (*Amblyornis macgregoriae*) – The one that showed up in the fruiting tree in the waning minutes of our time at Ambua was a nice catch up bird for most of us who'd missed one on the trails above the lodge. Joseph also showed us a nice maypole bower of this species on his new trails. [E]
- FLAME BOWERBIRD** (*Sericulus aureus*) – A few folks missed the male on our first visit to Boystown Road, but we all had super looks at this gorgeous bird on our second try as one flew over at fairly close quarters. [E]
- YELLOW-BREASTED BOWERBIRD** (*Chlamydera lauterbachi*) – One put in a few appearances at a reliable spot near the Lai River below Kumul Lodge. [E]
- FAWN-BREASTED BOWERBIRD** (*Chlamydera cerviniventris*) – Good looks at several at PAU, where they are quite numerous and easy to see.

Climacteridae (Australasian Treecreepers)

- PAPUAN TREECREEPER** (*Cormobates placens*) – We heard this scarce species along Joseph's new trails above Ambua, but we just couldn't draw it in to us. [E]

Maluridae (Fairwrens)

- WHITE-SHOULDERED FAIRYWREN** (*Malurus alboscapulatus*) – We had plenty of great looks at these lovely birds at a number of sites, starting at Sogeri, then again at Dablin Creek and in the Tari Valley. [E]

Meliphagidae (Honeyeaters)

- PLAIN HONEYEATER** (*Pycnopygius ixoides*) – Plain it is, with no conclusive field marks to nail down the ID. But we had some great close views, along with vocalizations to help clinch it, at the Boystown Road mound. [E]
- MARbled HONEYEATER** (*Pycnopygius cinereus*) – Some pretty good looks at several in Casuarina trees at the Lai River bridge, and a couple more the next day on the Tonga Blue BoP track. [E]
- STREAK-HEADED HONEYEATER** (*Pycnopygius stictocephalus*) – Oddly most of us never laid eyes on this species, which we heard a few times (and one was seen by Jenny) in the Kiunga region. [E]
- MOUNTAIN MELIPHAGA** (*Meliphaga orientalis*) – A couple of Meliphaga honeyeaters at the Lai River bridge were identified as this species, mainly as there are no other Meliphaga likely at this high elevation. The new field guide has helped clarify Meliphaga identification, but it is still bloody difficult! [E]
- SCRUB HONEYEATER** (*Meliphaga albonotata*) – The white ear patch makes this one pretty straightforward. We saw a number of them around Tabubil. [E]
- PUFF-BACKED HONEYEATER** (*Meliphaga aruensis*) – One inside the forest at Km 17 was the only one I felt certain about, though we could have seen others. The large size and stout bill seemed a good fit for this species, and the ear spot seemed quite elongated in comparison to the common Mimic Honeyeaters we also saw. [E]
- MIMIC HONEYEATER** (*Meliphaga analoga*) – Several in the forest the first day at Varirata. Apparently the common Meliphaga, though it looks pretty much like all the others. [E]
- ELEGANT HONEYEATER** (*Meliphaga cinereifrons cinereifrons*) – We worked the Meliphaga honeyeaters a bit harder on our second visit to Varirata, and managed to gain some confidence with this species. We had excellent views of a couple along the edge of the picnic site, and their slight build, slender bill, and rather crescent-shaped ear patch made them seem relatively easy to ID in this tough group. [E]
- YELLOW-GAPED HONEYEATER** (*Meliphaga flavirictus*) – I saw a Meliphaga at Dablin that I thought might be this species, then Jimmy scoped one a couple of minutes later in the same area that he claimed was this species. Several folks saw it in the scope, though I wasn't one of them. The broad yellow gape and small ear patch are supposed to be key, but these things are relative, and I reckon it takes a lot of experience seeing these birds to gain any confidence in calling them. [E]
- BLACK-THROATED HONEYEATER** (*Lichenostomus subfrenatus*) – Great views of at least three birds in the canopy of roadside forest below the Tari Gap. We also heard plenty of them vocalizing on the following afternoon usually a tough bird to see well. [E]
- OBSCUR HONEYEATER** (*Lichenostomus obscurus*) – Like the previous species, this can also be a toughie to get a good look at. Our views along Boystown Road weren't as good as our looks at the Black-throated, but they were pretty reasonable for this bird. [E]
- RUFIOUS-BANDED HONEYEATER** (*Conopophila albogularis*) – Just a few were seen at PAU this year, the only site we generally encounter them.
- BLACK MYZOMELA** (*Myzomela nigrita*) – Seen on both visits to Varirata, with good scope views of one at the picnic area on the first visit, and several in flowering Eucalyptus trees along the entrance road on the second. [E]
- MOUNTAIN MYZOMELA** (*Myzomela adolphinae*) – We finally caught up with this species on the last day, when we had superb scope views of a singing male along the Varirata entrance road. [E]
- RED-COLLARED MYZOMELA** (*Myzomela rosenbergii*) – Dave spotted our first along the road below the Tari Gap, though that gorgeous male might have cost us the Lemon-breasted Berrypecker I'd picked out at the same time. We had a few more sightings of this species around Ambua, which was great, as it is never a guaranteed sighting. [E]
- WHITE-THROATED HONEYEATER** (*Melithreptus albogularis*) – Numerous in the Eucalyptus savannah zone along the Varirata approach road.
- HELMETED FRIARBIRD (NEW GUINEA)** (*Philemon buceroides novaeguineae*) – A common and widespread bird of the lowland areas, though I felt like we saw fewer than usual this trip. This taxon is sometimes treated as a separate species from the Australian forms.
- TAWNY-BREASTED HONEYEATER** (*Xanthotis flaviventris*) – Seen a number of times in the Kiunga and Tabubil regions, with several excellent views including the first pair we found perched in a dead tree at Ok Menga.
- LONG-BILLED HONEYEATER** (*Melilestes megarhynchus*) – Singles were seen on three different days at Tabubil and Kiunga, though I think several of us, me included, never got a look at one. This is generally a pretty elusive bird, so this wasn't too surprising. [E]
- SMOKY HONEYEATER** (*Melipotus fumigatus*) – Numerous in the highland forests, and always fun to watch at Kumul's feeders where we can actually witness them "blushing" as the bare skin around their eyes changes from yellow to bright red in an instant. [E]
- BELFORD'S MELIDECTES** (*Melidectes belfordi*) – Very common, noisy, and conspicuous in the cloud forests at the Tari Gap and around Kumul Lodge. [E]

YELLOW-BROWED MELIDECTES (*Melidectes rufocrissalis*) – Replaces the Belford's at slightly lower elevations. This one was seen often around the lodge at Ambua, as well as at the Blue BoP site at Tonga and at Dablin Creek. [E]

ORNATE MELIDECTES (*Melidectes torquatus*) – This fancy species occurs mostly below the elevational range of the Yellow-browed, with some overlap. We had wonderful scope views at Dablin Creek, then again at the Lesser BoP site below Kumul. [E]

RUFIOUS-BACKED HONEYEATER (*Ptiloprora guisei*) – This and the next species are very similar and also mostly sort out by elevation, with this one occurring at slightly lower elevations. We saw just a single bird this trip, from the parking lot at Ambua Lodge. [E]

BLACK-BACKED HONEYEATER (*Ptiloprora perstriata*) – Pretty numerous in the highland cloud forests, with loads up around the Tari Gap, and some great looks especially at the ones feeding on the orange tubular flowers in the Kumul Lodge gardens. [E]

Acanthizidae (Thornbills and Allies)

GOLDENFACE (*Pachycare flavogriseum*) – This bird has bounced around a bit taxonomically, and was placed with the whistlers for a long time (and formerly known as Dwarf Whistler). It is now placed here with the Australian warblers (thornbills, gerygones, etc). It's an inconspicuous bird, often tagging along with mixed flocks of fantails, gerygones, and monarchs at Varirata, and we saw it on both visits there. The second sighting was better as the bird sat above us singing for long enough that we could all get a pretty decent view. [E]

RUSTY MOUSE-WARBLER (*Crateroscelis murina*) – It usually takes several attempts at these shy birds to get everyone a view, and such was the case this year, as each attempt led to one or two more folks seeing one. By the last encounter in Varirata, I think most of us had at least some kind of a view. [E]

MOUNTAIN MOUSE-WARBLER (*Crateroscelis robusta*) – Common at high elevations, but like its congener above, this is another elusive bird. Luckily there was one skulking around below the feeders at Kumul that gave us all excellent long views. Prior to this we had pretty reasonable looks at a pair in the forest at the Tari Gap. [E]

LARGE SCRUBWREN (*Sericornis nouhuysi*) – Pretty common in the highland forests. We saw them well several times above Ambua where they occur together with the similar Papuan Scrubwren. This one is a bit larger with a distinctly rufous face. [E]

BUFF-FACED SCRUBWREN (*Sericornis perspicillatus*) – This common scrubwren occurs at slightly lower elevations than Large and Papuan scrubwrens, and is fairly common right around Ambua Lodge. The buffy face with the contrasting gray crown is a good field mark, as are their contact call notes, which sound a lot like subdued House Sparrows. We also had these at the Tonga Blue BoP site. [E]

PAPUAN SCRUBWREN (*Sericornis papuensis*) – Numerous in the cloud forests, where we saw them a number of times at the Tari Gap. Pretty nondescript, but they do have a more obvious eye ring than the similar Large Scrubwren. [E]

PALE-BILLED SCRUBWREN (*Sericornis spilodera*) – The streaky throat and pale bill of this scrubwren make it pretty easy to identify, and it occurs at much lower elevations than the other species. We saw this one with mixed flock of fantails, monarchs, and gerygones on both our visits to Varirata. [E]

MOUNTAIN GERYGONE (*Gerygone cinerea*) – According to the new field guide, DNA studies have shown this bird to be an *Acanthiza* thornbill, not a gerygone at all, so watch for it to change names in the future. The guide calls it Grey Thornbill. We encountered several small parties of these birds in the cloud forests at the Tari Gap. [E]

GREEN-BACKED GERYGONE (*Gerygone chloronota*) – Heard a few times at Dablin Creek and Varirata, and a few folks spotted one moving through with a brown and black flock (pitohuis, cuckooshrikes, etc) on our final day at Varirata.

FAIRY GERYGONE (*Gerygone palpebrosa*) – Only a couple of folks got on a lovely male that was traveling in a good mixed flock on our first day's visit to Varirata.

YELLOW-BELLIED GERYGONE (*Gerygone chrysogaster*) – A pretty common lowland bird, and seemingly one of the core members of the small bird flocks in lowlands forest. We saw and heard them regularly at Varirata and the Kiunga region. [E]

LARGE-BILLED GERYGONE (*Gerygone magnirostris*) – Pretty brief views of a pair chasing each other around through the riverside vegetation along the Elevala River as we floated back towards Kiunga.

BROWN-BREASTED GERYGONE (*Gerygone ruficollis*) – A common voice in the gardens of the Tari Valley, and we had some fine views of a couple moving with a group of leaf-warblers and white-eyes there. [E]

Pomatostomidae (Pseudo-Babblers)

NEW GUINEA BABBLER (*Pomatostomus isidorei*) – Sneaky, but a group of 5+ birds at Km 17 gave good views to most of us. [E]

Cnemophilidae (Satinbirds)

LORIA'S SATINBIRD (*Cnemophilus loriae*) – I rarely see males of this species, but the females are regular visitors to the fruiting trees at Ambua, and we had some great views of a couple there. This and the next species (along with Yellow-breasted Satinbird) were all until recently treated as BoPs, but the three now make up a separate family. [E]

CRESTED SATINBIRD (*Cnemophilus macgregorii*) – A fairly long wait at a favored fruiting tree ultimately paid off when a handsome male flew in and spent the next several minutes showing off as he bounced around the tree picking out the ripest berries. This was by far my most satisfying view of this stunning bird and my overall favorite bird of the tour. [E]

Melanocharitidae (Berrypeckers and Longbills)

OBSCURE BERRYPECKER (*Melanocharis arfakiana*) – This may be harder to understand, but this one was my second favorite. Though I've seen this species a few times, I'd never had the kind of look that left me feeling like I really took in all the field marks. On this visit to Dablin Creek, we had long scope studies of a pair that hung around in a nearby fruiting tree, and I felt that I finally was able to really familiarize myself with this species, and see that it isn't nearly as dull and boring as the name might suggest. Plus it's a pretty rare and poorly known bird, which also counts for something. [E]

BLACK BERRYPECKER (*Melanocharis nigra*) – We had some excellent looks at both sexes of this one in the forest at Varirata NP on both of our visits. We also had a nice view of a female building a beautiful little cup nest a couple of meters off the ground near the mound along Boystown Road. [EN]

FAN-TAILED BERRYPECKER (*Melanocharis versteri*) – Scarce this trip, with only two brief sightings of males, both on the same day in the Tari Gap cloud forest. [E]

SPOTTED BERRYPECKER (*Melanocharis crassirostris*) – Another sighting I was pretty pleased with, as I'd never seen this species before. We had a few sightings of a male at the fruiting trees at Ambua, though it had us confused at first as the bird seemed much grayer and paler than the book shows. The male of this species is actually unspotted, and not as distinctive as the female, but the long bill and typical berrypecker pectoral tufts helped clinch this ID. [E]

YELLOW-BELLIED LONGBILL (*Toxorhamphus novaeguineae*) – Mostly just heard in the Kiunga region, though a few folks had fleeting glimpses of one at Km 17. [E]

SLATY-CHINNED LONGBILL (*Toxorhamphus poliopterus*) – Joseph spotted one feeding in the crotch of a large tree as we watched a big feeding flock move along next to the Ambua entrance road one afternoon. It stayed put long enough for all of us to see extremely well; by far my best view of this species.

SPECTACLED LONGBILL (*Oedistoma iliolophus*) – Formerly called Dwarf Longbill. We heard this species along the creek on Varirata's Circuit Track several times, but never picked up so much as a hint of movement. [E]

Paramythiidae (Tit Berrypecker and Crested Berrypecker)

TIT BERRYPECKER (*Oreocharis arfaki*) – Strangely absent from Ambua's fruiting trees this visit, but we ran into a nice little flock one afternoon just below the Tari Gap and got some great scope views of a male a couple of times, closing out this small family for us (unless you follow the new guide's splitting of the next species). [E]

CRESTED BERRYPECKER (*Paramythia montium*) – A couple of these lovely birds gave us a great show as they fed on a fruiting *Schefflera* next to the road while we waited for the King-of-Saxony to make an appearance. [E]

Cinclosomatidae (Quail-thrushes and Jewel-babblers)

SPOTTED JEWEL-BABBLER (*Ptilorrhoa leucosticta*) – We came close with this one above Ambua, and actually thought we had one, but it turned out to be a dasyure that responded to the recorder I had hidden under some fern fronds. The calls we heard were definitely the jewel-babbler though. [E]

BLUE JEWEL-BABBLER (*Ptilorrhoa caerulea*) – We did marginally better with this species along Boystown Road, with most of us getting okay views of one that flew across the trail a couple of times. [E]

CHESTNUT-BACKED JEWEL-BABBLER (*Ptilorrhoa castanonota*) – Our best jewel-babbler experience came with this species on our last day at Varirata, when we encountered a responsive pair of singing birds just across the creek. Still, the views ranged across the group from excellent to not at all, which is rather typical for a jewel-babbler encounter. [E]

Machaerirhynchidae (Boatbills)

BLACK-BREASTED BOATBILL (*Machaerirhynchus nigriceps*) – This little beauty was recorded daily at Ambua, and we had some excellent looks at them, especially that one near the fruiting tree on our last morning. [E]

YELLOW-BREASTED BOATBILL (*Machaerirhynchus flaviventer*) – I felt something hit my arm while we were watching a mixed flock at Varirata, I looked down to see a small blob of bird dropping there, then immediately looked up into the vent of this little guy. First time I've found a bird by being pooped on.

Artamidae (Woodswallows)

GREAT WOODSWALLOW (*Artamus maximus*) – Quite common in the highlands, with the regulars at Ambua being the most entertaining. On our final cool morning there, a dozen of them cozied up together on a bare branch above the cabins, occupying an incredibly small space for so many birds. [E]

WHITE-BREASTED WOODSWALLOW (*Artamus leucorhynchus*) – Best seen at PAU our first afternoon, with 5 or 6 birds hanging around near the ponds.

Cracticidae (Bellmagpies and Allies)

MOUNTAIN PELTOPS (*Peltops montanus*) – A pair at Dablin Creek were the only ones we saw. These birds gave us good looks, and the peltops tree became a landmark for describing the locations for subsequent birds we saw. [E]

LOWLAND PELTOPS (*Peltops blainvillii*) – Nice views of a pair from the mound at Boystown Road. Besides the obvious elevational difference, the two species can best be separated by calls (this one clicks, Mountain twitters), and by the white patch on the cheek, which extends above the eye in the Mountain Peltops but not in this species. [E]

BLACK-BACKED BUTCHERBIRD (*Cracticus mentalis*) – This species is found primarily in savannah habitats; we saw a few at PAU and along the Varirata entrance road.

HOODED BUTCHERBIRD (*Cracticus cassicus*) – And this one is mainly in rainforest, though they do overlap with Black-backed in some areas. We saw them well at Varirata and in the Kiunga region. [E]

BLACK BUTCHERBIRD (*Cracticus quoyi*) – Good views of several at Dablin Creek, and we also had one at Ambua.

Campephagidae (Cuckooshrikes)

STOUT-BILLED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina caeruleogrisea*) – One of these huge cuckooshrikes was seen from the parotia viewpoint at Dablin Creek, and a pair gave nice views as we waited for Superb BoP to show up in the Tari Valley. [E]

HOODED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina longicauda*) – We heard several one morning near the Tari Gap, but couldn't spot one despite some serious effort. [E]

BARRED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina lineata*) – A quartet of these birds with a brown and black flock our first morning at Varirata, were our only ones of the trip. Note that it is only the female that is barred below.

BOYER'S CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina boyeri*) – A small party of these were regulars around the picnic clearing at Varirata, and we saw them several times around Kiunga as well. This and the Stout-billed are the only NG cuckooshrikes with cinnamon wing linings. [E]

BLACK-FACED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina novaehollandiae*) – A few birds along the Fly River during our boat trip were migrants from Australia.

WHITE-BELLIED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina papuensis papuensis*) – Fairly common in rather open habitats. We had several good views in the Eucalyptus savannah en route to Varirata and at the Lai River bridge.

GOLDEN CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Campochaera sloetii*) – In what is otherwise a pretty homogeneous group of birds, this stunner really stands out. Jan spotted our first one at Dablin Creek and over the next few days we had several fabulous looks at these gorgeous birds. I'm quite sure I heard some on our last day at Varirata, too, which would be my first record there. [E]

VARIED TRILLER (*Lalage leucomela*) – Seen only along the entrance road to Varirata (both visits) where we had good views of both sexes.

BLACK-BELLIED CICADABIRD (*Edolisoma montanum*) – We finally caught up with this highland cuckooshrike along the Pigites Track at Kumul, and got nice views of a pair as we waited in vain for the King-of-Saxony BoP to show up. Note that the male and female are mislabeled in the new field guide. [E]

COMMON CICADABIRD (*Edolisoma tenuirostre*) – Several sightings beginning with a female along the Varirata entrance road our first visit, with a pair in the same area on the 2nd visit. We also saw single males at Tari and along Boystown Road. All of our sightings were certainly of the Austral migrant form (nominant race) but the one along Boystown Road may well have been of the resident race *aruense*, though that is tough to differentiate in the field.

GRAY-HEADED CICADABIRD (*Edolisoma schisticeps*) – Pretty common and seen most days around Tabubil and Kiunga, with exceptional views at Dablin Creek. Another species named for the female, as the male is entirely gray. [E]

BLACK CICADABIRD (*Edolisoma melan*) – Seen only at Varirata where we had nice looks at a pair with a brown and black flock on both of our visits. [E]

Neosittidae (Sittellas)

BLACK SITTELLA (*Daphoenositta miranda*) – This is not a species I've seen often, so it was a nice surprise when we came across a group of 4 birds as soon as we stepped out of the bus at the new trails beyond the Tari Gap. We then had even better views a couple of days later at perhaps the same group of birds as they fed directly overhead along on of the trails. [E]

Pachycephalidae (Whistlers and Allies)

WATTLED PLOUGHBILL (*Eulacestoma nigropectus*) – This one can be tough but we had no trouble this trip. We heard one calling from along the road below the Tari Gap and lured it in easily. It sat for a couple of minutes in a small roadside shrub, giving us all excellent views of its fleshy bubblegum pink wattles. The new field guide has separated this bird out into its own family, though it is certainly closely related to the whistlers. [E]

RUSTY PITOHUI (*Colluricincla ferruginea*) – A pair at Km 17 and a single bird with the brown and black flock on our final day at Varirata. We had reasonable views of both, but as is usual, they weren't out in the open for long. [E]

RUFOUS SHRIKE-THRUSH (*Colluricincla megarhyncha*) – Heard often throughout, though most folks didn't get a look at one until our final couple of days when we had decent views of a pair at Tonga and then again at Varirata. A likely candidate to be split into several species someday. I believe the Varirata birds are of the race *despecta*, while the ones heard around Kiunga would have been the nominant race. Not so sure about the ones at Tonga, but I'd guess they were *tappanbecki*. Possibly some armchair ticks ahead!

GRAY SHRIKE-THRUSH (*Colluricincla harmonica*) – Seen only along the Varirata entrance road where we had decent looks on both visits.

REGENT WHISTLER (*Pachycephala schlegelii*) – We saw this gorgeous whistler regularly around the Tari Gap and at Kumul Lodge, and had plenty of excellent looks at both sexes, plus a juvenile bird being fed by a female along the new trails above Ambua. [E]

SCLATER'S WHISTLER (*Pachycephala soror*) – Replaces the Regent Whistler at slightly lower elevations. We had a couple of nice encounters with this species along the entrance road to Ambua Lodge and at the Tonga Blue BoP site. [E]

BROWN-BACKED WHISTLER (*Pachycephala modesta*) – Another highland whistler. We saw just a few at Ambua and Kumul. [E]

GRAY WHISTLER (GRAY-HEADED) (*Pachycephala simplex griseiceps*) – A pair showed well with a small flock that included a pair of Olive Flyrobins and a Frilled Monarch along the road near the Raggiana BoP lek on our first visit to Varirata.

WHITE-BELLIED WHISTLER (*Pachycephala leucogastra*) – We finally tracked this local specialty down on our final day at Varirata, though we did have to make a second attempt on our way out of the park in order to obtain really good views of them. A milestone bird for Greg, who tallied his 5700th species with this one. Congrats Greg! [E]

BLACK-HEADED WHISTLER (*Pachycephala monacha*) – Quite common in Casuarina trees in intermontane valleys. We had some excellent looks at a couple in the Tari Valley and another at the Lai River bridge. [E]

MOTTLED WHISTLER (*Rhagologus leucostigma*) – We heard the distinctive song once behind the cabins at Ambua, and then a persistently singing bird up the road from the lodge the same day, but neither bird showed itself. The new field guide moves this bird into its own family and calls it Mottled Berryhunter. [E*]

Oreoicidae (Australo-Papuan Bellbirds)

RUFOUS-NAPED BELLBIRD (*Aleadryas rufinucha*) – A former whistler, now aligned with the Crested Bellbird of Australia and the Crested Pitohui (Piping Bellbird) of PNG in their own family. We had this one at both Ambua and Kumul, with especially good views at the latter site, where an adult and a very rusty juvenile were regulars around the gardens. [E]

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LONG-TAILED SHRIKE (*Lanius schach stresemanni*) – Great views of one on a roadside power line as we drove to the Ambua airport, then three birds the next day at the Yellow-breasted Bowerbird site below Kumul the next day. This race is endemic to PNG.

Oriolidae (Old World Orioles)

HOODED PITOHUI (*Pitohui dichrous*) – Taxonomy of the pitohuis is still in some flux, though it seems only this species and the next are true pitohuis, famous for their toxicity, while the others are more closely aligned with the shrike-thrushes. The new field guide keeps all of the pitohuis (except Crested, as noted above) in the whistler family, while they are aligned with the orioles here. Time will tell which treatment is correct. In any case, we had plenty of excellent looks at these birds at Varirata. [E]

VARIABLE PITOHUI (*Pitohui kirhocephalus*) – Always elusive, though quite vocal. We heard them a couple of times at Km 17. The new guide splits this into three species, with the one we recorded being Southern Variable Pitohui, *P. uropygialis*. [E]

BROWN ORIOLE (*Oriolus szalayi*) – A pretty common bird of lowlands, and we saw them often at Varirata and Kiunga primarily. [E]

AUSTRALASIAN FIGBIRD (*Sphecotheves vieillotii*) – Pretty local in PNG, and on our route usually seen only at PAU where they are fairly common; we saw about 10 of them there. The race here, *salvadorii*, is endemic to PNG.

Dicruridae (Drongos)

SPANGLED DRONGO (*Dicrurus bracteatus*) – Seen mainly at Kiunga, with a few birds also at Varirata, though they weren't as conspicuous as they often are.

Rhipiduridae (Fantails)

PYGMY DRONGO-FANTAIL (*Chaetorhynchus papuensis*) – Heard only along the Circuit Track at Varirata. Formerly treated as a drongo, now placed with the fantails, but a unique bird either way. [E]

BLACK FANTAIL (*Rhipidura atra*) – Dave spotted the only one we saw, a male, along one of Joseph's new trails across the Tari Gap. [E]

NORTHERN FANTAIL (*Rhipidura rufiventris*) – Poor views of one at Dablin Creek. We had some confusion with the songs of this species and Rusty Mouse-Warbler, with the warbler responding to my recordings of the fantail at one point.

- SOOTY THICKET-FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura threnothorax*) – Heard only at Boystown Road. I have yet to see this elusive species to my satisfaction. [E]
- WHITE-BELLIED THICKET-FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura leucothorax leucothorax*) – The easiest of the the three thicket-fantails to see, though that's not saying much as it is still bloody difficult. This visit we only heard a few along the Elevala River. [E*]
- WILLIE-WAGTAIL** (*Rhipidura leucophrys*) – No problems at all seeing this one, and we had at least one sighting every day of the trip. I'm still wondering why that pair at PAU were going after that Sacred Kingfisher so vigorously.
- RUFOUS-BACKED FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura rufidorsa*) – Tricky to see well in lowland forest, though we managed a couple of decent views along Boystown Road and on the trail behind Kwatu Lodge. [E]
- DIMORPHIC FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura brachyrhyncha*) – Surprisingly just one in the Ambua area, and that one didn't show that well, so we were pleased to improve our views when we came across a couple more along the Pigites Track at Kumul. All three of our birds were of the dar morph, with the rufous-tipped tail, whereas I usually see more of the gray-tailed pale morph. [E]
- FRIENDLY FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura albolimbata*) – The common fantail of the highland forests, and we saw these birds daily and often at Ambua and Kumul. [E]
- CHESTNUT-BELLIED FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura hyperythra*) – A common member of mixed species flocks at Varirata, and we had excellent looks at these charming little birds on both of our visits there. [E]

Monarchidae (Monarch Flycatchers)

- BLUE-CAPPED IFRITA** (*Ifrita kowaldi*) – Another in a long line of PNG oddities, and another species that has bounced around taxonomically. Here included with the monarchs, though the field guide has separated it out into its own monotypic family. We had numerous fantastic views of these endearing, nuthatch-like birds at Ambua and Kumul. This was Martha's 3500th world bird! Congrats Martha. [E]
- GOLDEN MONARCH** (*Carterornis chrysomela*) – A pair of these gorgeous monarchs showed well near the mound at Boystown Road. [E]
- BLACK-FACED MONARCH** (*Monarcha melanopsis*) – Our only one was a lone bird with a mixed flock at the edge of the forest in Varirata on our first visit. This attractive bird is a migrant from Australia.
- BLACK MONARCH** (*Symposiachrus axillaris*) – We heard one at the Tonga Blue BoP site, but it refused to come out in the open. [E]
- SPOT-WINGED MONARCH** (*Symposiachrus guttula*) – Singles of this species were seen on three occasions, always with mixed flocks. We had one on each of our visits to Varirata (with very good views the second time) and another along the trail behind Kwatu Lodge. [E]
- FRILLED MONARCH** (*Arses telescopthalmus*) – Fairly common in lowland forests and seen in all the same flocks as the preceding species, though we saw more of these. [E]
- TORRENT-LARK** (*Grallina bruijni*) – A shy and often difficult bird to see though they came easy this trip. We saw two or three birds each at Dablin Creek, Ok Menga, and along the Lai River with some excellent views, including through the scope. [E]
- LEADEN FLYCATCHER** (*Myiagra rubecula*) – Nice looks at a lone female along the Varirata entrance road on our second visit. Though Austral migrants do occur in PNG, the one we saw was probably one of the resident race papuana.
- SHINING FLYCATCHER** (*Myiagra alecto*) – Regular in riverine forest in the lowlands. Our only ones were along the Elevala River where we had decent views of both sexes, including a couple of males engaged in a territorial squabble, chasing each other back and forth along the riverbank.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

- GRAY CROW** (*Corvus tristis*) – Seen a few times at lower elevations, including a flock of 10 birds along the road from Kiunga to Tabubil and another 8 at Varirata on our final day. [E]
- TORRESIAN CROW** (*Corvus orru orru*) – Numerous in the Port Moresby region.

Paradisaeidae (Birds-of-Paradise)

- TRUMPET MANUCODE** (*Phonygamus keraudrenii*) – The manucode with the wispy crest feathers, and the wonderful call (imitated so well by the folks that caught cold during the trip;-) We had several good scope views around Kiunga, mainly along Boystown Road.
- CRINKLE-COLLARED MANUCODE** (*Manucodia chalybatus*) – The one with the crinkly looking breast feathers and the bumpy head. We had decent views of a couple at Boystown Road and another pair along the Varirata Lookout Trail on our final day. I was particularly pleased to get a recording of this pair, one of which gave a call note that sounded a lot like that of a Common Grackle. [E]
- GLOSSY-MANTLED MANUCODE** (*Manucodia ater*) – The one that sounds like a tuning fork. Many manucodes went unidentified as it usually takes areally good look, but we did see a few of these around Kiunga, and then had our best views of a couple chasing each other around along the Varirata entrance road as we left the park on our final day. [E]
- KING-OF-SAXONY BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Pteridophora alberti*) – We wound up seeing only one well, but that one was a spectacular male that we watched through the scope for a long time, near the Tari Gap. A few days later a truck driver stopped to show us an injured male he had captured and was taking home with him to Mount Hagen. Sad to see such a beautiful creature in such sad shape, but it was cool to see those weird head plumes up close. Jan's choice for bird of the trip. [E]
- CAROLA'S PAROTIA** (*Parotia carolae*) – This species seemed to be in decline at the traditional spot at Dablin Creek in recent years, so it was pleasing to encounter quite a few of them, including at least 2 subadult males, one with a good set of wires on his head, one without. We also saw an adult male or two and several females, for a fine selection of these neat BoPs. Best of all, we had scope views and excellent viewing conditions, neither of which are guaranteed here. [E]
- LAWES'S PAROTIA** (*Parotia lawesii*) – Fine views of females at the Ambua fruiting tree, but no males were around during our stay. [E]
- TWELVE-WIRED BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Seleucidis melanoleucus*) – Missing the male of this showy species hurt a bit, but the hot, sunny, and very dry weather during our boat trip could have had a hand in this. We did manage a quick look at a female so at least we saw one. [E]
- SUPERB BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Lophorina superba*) – We'd seen quite a few females at both Dablin Creek and Ambua Lodge before we dropped down into the Tari Valley and stopped in at a local garden to watch for a male, and he did not disappoint! We enjoyed an amazing display as the male sat on an open perch, with his turquoise breast shield fully extended; he even raised his cape a few times, the first time I'd seen that! Overall it was a memorable performance from a fine BoP. [E]
- MAGNIFICENT RIFLEBIRD** (*Ptiloris magnificus*) – This is the one found in the west, with the liquid wolf whistle call. We had one fly across the Boystown Road a couple of times but couldn't find it on a perch.
- MAGNIFICENT RIFLEBIRD (GROWLING)** (*Ptiloris magnificus intercedens*) – And this is the growling type we heard at Varirata. Based on these extreme vocal differences alone, these are almost certainly separate species (the field guide treats them as such). We found a responsive subadult male along the Varirata approach road that showed really well for all of us on our first visit to the park. [E]
- BLACK SICKLEBILL** (*Epimachus fastosus*) – Heard at extreme distance below Ambua Lodge. [E*]

- BROWN SICKLEBILL** (*Epimachus meyeri*) – We saw quite a few females both above Ambua and at Kumul Lodge, where they show wonderfully at the feeders, but we never connected with a male. We did get to hear the machine-gun rattle of calling males a couple of times though. Quite an incredible sound. [E]
- SHORT-TAILED PARADIGALLA** (*Paradigalla brevicauda*) – A single bird at the Ambua fruiting trees put on quite a show for us on two mornings. Always a scarce species, and the Ambua grounds always seems like the most reliable place for it. [E]
- STEPHANIE'S ASTRAPIA** (*Astrapia stephaniae*) – A female or two were daily visitors to the Ambua fruiting trees, with others seen in the Tari Gap and a single along the Pigites Track at Kumul. [E]
- RIBBON-TAILED ASTRAPIA** (*Astrapia mayeri*) – Long-tailed males were a bit elusive this trip, but we did manage to see a couple. Our first, and perhaps the one with the most impressive tail, was scoped as it sat in a distant tree top at the Tari Gap. Jenny also got to see another from the Kumul Lodge porch as the rest of us were slogging up to the Blue BoP site. Despite the scarcity of fully-plumed males, folks were obviously impressed with this showy bird as it tied for second in the bird of the trip voting. [E]
- KING BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Cicinnurus regius*) – This tiny BoP can be tough to see as it likes to call from dense vine tangles in the canopy. On the other hand, it also often sits in one place for a long time, so once you do locate one, there is often enough time to scope it and get long, satisfying views. This was certainly our experience, as local guide Jimmy found one in the same vine tangle as it was using last year along the trail to the Greater BoP lek, and we all had great scope studies, which sure beat the view of that dead one hanging from the bus's rear view mirror! Lynda chose the King as her top bird of the tour. [E]
- MAGNIFICENT BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Cicinnurus magnificus*) – Males are always tough to come by, and this year was no exception as we had to be satisfied with several brief views of females both at Dablin Creek and the Lai River bridge. [E]
- BLUE BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Paradisaea rudolphi*) – A fine female in the Ambua fruiting tree was a real treat, especially since there were no accessible males in the Tari Valley this year. There were a couple below Kumul however, and a steep walk above the village of Tonga got us cracking eye level views of a close male perched in an emergent tree! This handsome bird tied the RT *Astrapia* for second place in voting and was Sally's top choice. [E]
- LESSER BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Paradisaea minor*) – An early start to a new site below Kumul paid off with some great scope studies of this, our final new BoP of the trip, though I think we were a bit lucky as there was only a single male present, though I was told there were 10-15 a week or so earlier. [E]
- RAGGIANA BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Paradisaea raggiana*) – There wasn't a whole lot of activity on the long-used lek at Varirata, but we did manage to get nice looks at one male there, a nice introduction to this showy group of birds! On our return visit to the park, we found a couple of other males displaying vigorously right near the picnic area. I'll be more than a little happy if they continue to use this area to display! Also seen in flight over the Elevala River. [E]
- GREATER BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Paradisaea apoda*) – The wonderful lek at Km 17 was active again, and we were treated to a nice performance by a couple of males displaying while a female or two watched on. This and the preceding species hybridize in the Kiunga region, and at least one or two of the males we saw appeared to be hybrids, though at least one of the males looked pretty pure-blooded as well. [E]
- LESSER MELAMPITTA** (*Melampitta lugubris*) – Though common in the highlands, and often quite vocal, this bird can be quite a pain to see well, as our experiences certainly attest. Overall we found very little response to playback from these birds, and the one that did respond was only seen by Greg and Lynda before it lost interest. [E]

Petroicidae (Australasian Robins)

- TORRENT FLYCATCHER** (*Monachella muelleriana*) – Singles on both our visits to Ok Menga never stuck around long enough for everyone's benefit, but we made up for that at the Lai River where we had super views of these attractive birds. [E]
- LEMON-BELLIED FLYCATCHER** (*Microeca flavigaster*) – Regular in the Eucalyptus savannah zone en route to Varirata, and we had good looks at a pair on each of our visits.
- OLIVE FLYROBIN** (*Microeca flavovirescens*) – We don't always encounter this inconspicuous bird and it had been a while since I'd seen one, so it was great to find a pair at Varirata just as we got off the bus at the Raggiana BoP lek, moving with Gray Whistlers and a Frilled Monarch or two. Surprisingly we had another pair on our second visit, this time at the bottom end of the Circuit Track. [E]
- CANARY FLYCATCHER** (*Microeca papuana*) – Not too many this trip, but we had a few nice encounters with these cute little birds in the highland forests at the Tari Gap. The new book calls this bird Papuan Flycatcher. [E]
- GARNET ROBIN** (*Eugerygone rubra*) – Not always easy to see but we managed some pretty decent looks at a pair (the female was more obliging) in a vine tangle above one of Joseph's new trails above Ambua. We had another couple of birds along the Pigites Track at Kumul, with a subadult male showing quite well that time. [E]
- WHITE-FACED ROBIN** (*Tregellasia leucops*) – Several excellent looks at these colorful robins on both visits to Varirata.
- BLACK-SIDED ROBIN** (*Poecilodryas hypoleuca*) – Usually a tricky bird to see well, but we had exceptional luck with a pair on the "Death Adder Trail" near Kwatu Lodge. They responded well and then one sat where we could actually see it for long enough to drink it all in! Easily one of my most satisfying views of this bird. [E]
- BLACK-THROATED ROBIN** (*Poecilodryas albonotata*) – A persistently singing bird at the Tari Gap just wouldn't budge and we couldn't move any closer, so we had to call a stalemate. Another along the Pigites Track moved away after playback. [E*]
- WHITE-WINGED ROBIN** (*Peneothello sigillata*) – Easy to see and quite confiding in the Kumul Lodge gardens. [E]
- WHITE-RUMPED ROBIN** (*Peneothello bimaculata*) – Another tough robin, though several of us had pretty good looks after I spotted a singing bird deep in the forest along the Dablin Creek Road. [E]
- BLUE-GRAY ROBIN** (*Peneothello cyanus*) – Great looks at a pair along the entrance road at Ambua as they tailed along with a big feeding flock right next to the road. Another was seen beside the parking lot the next morning. [E]
- ASHY ROBIN** (*Heteromyias albispecularis*) – Another toughie from the highland forests, though at least a couple of folks had a look at one above the Tari Gap. We heard a few others but as usual they kept their distance. Note that this is called Black-capped Robin in the new field guide. [E]
- NORTHERN SCRUB-ROBIN** (*Drymodes superciliaris*) – One or two were heard along the Varirata Lookout Track on our final day. [*]

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

- PACIFIC SWALLOW** (*Hirundo tahitica*) – Pretty common throughout, and the only expected swallow in most of the country.

Phylloscopidae (Leaf-Warblers)

- ISLAND LEAF-WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus poliocephalus*) – Some fine views of several in the Tari Valley.

Locustellidae (Grassbirds and Allies)

TAWNY GRASSBIRD (*Megalurus timoriensis*) – Common and seen regularly and well in the high elevation grasslands. PNG birds are sometimes treated as a separate species, Papuan Grassbird, *M. macrurus* with the higher elevation birds of the subspecies *alpinus* (like many of the ones we saw) perhaps yet another species. Watch for taxonomic updates in the future.

Zosteropidae (White-eyes, Yuhinas, and Allies)

BLACK-FRONTED WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops minor*) – Decent views of this white-eye on our first day at Varirata. We also had a flock of white-eyes at the Lesser BoP site, which I was expecting to be New Guinea WE, the only species I'd had here previously, so I was surprised when I scoped them to see they had no eye rings and a sharply demarcated yellow throat. They were clearly the northern form of this species, which the new guide treats as a separate species, Green-fronted White-eye, *Z. minor* (with this species being renamed *Z. atrifrons*). [E]

CAPPED WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops fuscicapilla*) – Quick views of a few at Dablin Creek, then much better looks at them near Ambua. [E]

NEW GUINEA WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops novaeguineae*) – A few small parties of white-eyes at Tonga were this species, which we eventually saw well on our walk back down the hill. [E]

Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)

PIED BUSHCHAT (*Saxicola caprata*) – Quite common in the highlands, with Katherine getting us our best view of all when she spotted one next to the helicopter pad at Ambua.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

ISLAND THRUSH (*Turdus poliocephalus*) – A few sightings each in the Tari Gap grasslands and at Kumul, where they are sporadic visitors to the feeders.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

METALLIC STARLING (*Aplonis metallica*) – Quite a few our first day at PAU, drinking from and bathing in the eavestroughs of one of the buildings. We also saw several big flocks along the Fly River as they flew low over the water and dipped in on the wing. Jimmy said this is a regular behavior but I don't recall ever seeing this before.

SINGING STARLING (*Aplonis cantoroides*) – It looked like we were going to miss this one until we spotted one perched in a dead tree as we waited for our flight in the Tari airport "departure lounge". It was later joined by two others. This is the highest I've ever seen these birds, and I was a bit surprised to encounter them here.

YELLOW-FACED MYNA (*Mino dumontii*) – As usual this was one of the first PNG endemics we saw, with half a dozen birds showing well on our first afternoon at PAU. We went on to see them pretty much every day except in the highlands. [E]

GOLDEN MYNA (*Mino anais*) – Much scarcer than the preceding species. Our only ones were seen on the day of our boat trip, with several flying over the Elevala River, then fabulous views of a pair behind Kwatu Lodge. [E]

Dicaeidae (Flowerpeckers)

RED-CAPPED FLOWERPECKER (*Dicaeum geelvinkianum*) – One of the most widespread birds in PNG, perhaps second only to Willie-Wagtail. We saw or heard these tiny critters on almost every day of the trip, and at every site we visited.

Nectariniidae (Sunbirds and Spiderhunters)

BLACK SUNBIRD (*Leptocoma sericea*) – Pretty common around Kiunga, though it always seems difficult to see the colors really well. These birds are quite iridescent and attractive when seen in good light.

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

AUSTRALASIAN PIPIT (AUSTRALIAN) (*Anthus novaeseelandiae australis*) – Nice looks at three birds as they strolled in the grassy verges of the runway at the Tari airport.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – A few around Port Moresby but it really seems like the next species is the dominant sparrow in PNG now. [I]

EURASIAN TREE SPARROW (*Passer montanus*) – It's amazing how fast these birds have spread across the country. They first showed up in small numbers in about 2003 and in the past few years the population has exploded, and they are now abundant in Port Moresby, Kiunga, and Tabubil, among other places. [I]

Estrildidae (Waxbills and Allies)

MOUNTAIN FIRETAIL (*Oreostruthus fuliginosus*) – Quick views of a pair flying across the road below the Tari Gap, then excellent looks at a lone bird just below the lodge at Kumul. [E]

BLUE-FACED PARROTFINCH (*Erythrura trichroa*) – A calling bird at Tonga circled us a couple of times but stayed well out of sight. [*]

GRAND MUNIA (*Lonchura grandis*) – A side trip to Sogeri and the Kokoda Track Monument after our first visit to Varirata hit pay dirt quickly when Greg spotted a quintet of these scarce large-billed munias teed up atop a shrub. I'd looked for this species here a number of times but this was the first time I've seen it! [E]

HOODED MUNIA (*Lonchura spectabilis*) – The common munia of highland regions. We saw them especially well as we waited for our flight at the Tari airport. [E]

GRAY-HEADED MUNIA (*Lonchura caniceps*) – Twenty or more of these were with the Grand Munias at Sogeri. [E]

CHESTNUT-BREASTED MUNIA (*Lonchura castaneothorax*) – Three or four birds sat atop a Eucalyptus tree along the Varirata approach road on the final day of the tour.

MAMMALS

SPECKLED DASYURE (*Neophascogale lorentzii*) – A couple along the trails above the Tari Gap. I'm not sure of that one that appeared right beside my speaker as it broadcast the call of Spotted Jewel-Babbler was trying to find the bird, or if it was just a coincidence, but it was a memorable moment, especially as we were all expecting the jewel-babbler to emerge after we'd initially seen the movement near the speaker. [E]

GREATER FLYING FOX (*Pteropus neohibernicus*) – A large number flew over the Fly River in the early morning light, and we saw another bunch roosting in a tall tree alongside the Elevala River during the boat trip.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 303 bird taxa and 2 mammal taxa