



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**Papua New Guinea 2018: New Britain Extension**

Jul 22, 2017 to Jul 27, 2017

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



*While only a few of us saw this individual near our cabins, all of us eventually wound up with some decent views of the tiny Buff-faced Pygmy-Parrot, which was the bird of the trip for a few folks. Photo by participant Randy Beaton.*

After a scouting trip to New Britain after last year's PNG tour, this year's visit to the island marked our first official extension to this island, the largest island in the Bismarck Archipelago to the east of mainland PNG. Our 4 night stay at the wonderful Walindi Lodge at Kimbe Bay served as an excellent finale to our main tour, the lodge serving as a lovely and comfortable base from which to bird the western end of this beautiful tropical island.

Like on many tropical islands, the overall diversity of birds is quite low in comparison to mainland areas (or in this case the much larger main island of PNG), but the level of endemism is pretty high. Roughly a third of the species we saw were endemic to New Britain or the Bismarck Archipelago as a whole, or are species restricted only to these islands and the Solomon Islands to the east. The other 2/3 of the species included a handful of more widespread PNG species which we'd missed on the main tour, and which are generally much easier to see here on New Britain. And then there's also a few birds represented here by endemic subspecies, some of which may eventually get upgraded to full species in their own right. All in all, the trip netted us about 40 specialty birds for our 4 days here, most of which gave us superb views.

Our visit kicked off with a relaxing first afternoon along a forested ridge near the town of Haella. Here we met up with our first local specialties, with the sunny late afternoon light giving us superb views of the likes of Red-knobbed Imperial-Pigeon, Knob-billed Fruit-Dove, Blue-eyed Cockatoo, and Melanesian Kingfisher. The next morning saw us off to Garu WMA, one of the largest areas of intact lowland forest remaining in this part of the island. Here we tallied more endemics, including the scarce Black Honey-Buzzard, which flew directly over our heads for some awesome views. Also here we saw Pied and Violaceous coucals, both of which are endemic to the Bismarck islands, a trio of endemic New Britain Kingfishers, and had scope views of a scarce Singing Parrot thanks to a great bit of spotting by local guide Terrence. In the afternoon, we made the most of the rainy weather by heading to Numundo Cattle Farm to look for rails, tallying good views of 10 or more Buff-banded Rails, a couple of White-browed Crakes, and most incredibly, sizzling scope views of a pair of Blue-breasted Quail, all of these feeding on the gravel entrance road! We ended this day with a successful search for the rare and poorly known Golden Masked-Owl in the oil palm plantations near the lodge.

The next day was devoted to the small satellite islands in Kimbe Bay, where a handful of small island specialists make their living. Island Imperial-Pigeons moaned constantly from the canopy, Sclater's Myzomelas pursued each other through the treetops, pausing occasionally for a slurp of sweet

nectar, and a beautiful pair of Beach Kingfishers patrolled the tidal pools around the edge of Restorf Island. Island Monarch and Black-tailed Whistler were a little less cooperative, but were also spotted by most. We were also offered the chance to do some snorkeling around Restorf, which proved immensely enjoyable for all those that partook, many thanks to Walindi for providing that opportunity. And a wonderful encounter with a large pod of Spinner Dolphins made the return voyage magical!

Remnant lowland forest along the Kulu River was our destination the next morning, and it delivered big time. We kicked off with a quartet of Spotted Whistling-Ducks, a species we'd missed on the main tour, then continued by notching superb views of a tiny, brilliant New Britain Dwarf-Kingfisher, as well as a pair of Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfishers (this Black-capped form seemingly destined to be upgraded to a good species on its own). A New Britain Pitta played much harder to get, but in the end, everyone had seen at least a part of this elusive bird. In the afternoon we did a steep, sweaty hike up the Kulu Ridge for a look at a handsome pair of roosting New Britain Boobooks before making a run back to the Kulu River for some improved views of the bizarre Nicobar Pigeon. Our final morning saw us make a run back to Garu in hopes of a couple of scarcer endemics. Our hoped for targets didn't show, but clean up looks at Melanesian Scrubfowl, a good Finsch's Imperial-Pigeon, and catch-up views of Buff-faced Pygmy-Parrots all made the trip worthwhile.

Though that morning marked the official end to our birding, a late flight to Brisbane the next morning allowed us to squeeze in a few more hours of birding at Varirata the next morning, so that's what we did. We started off with a return visit to the Raggiana BoP display area in hopes of better photographic opportunities, and we were not disappointed. We were treated to a truly incredible show of displaying males showing off to a bunch of fertile females, at least one of which was impressed enough by what she saw as to allow the choice male the chance to mate. That display alone made the early morning worth it. We then made a concerted attempt to finally lay our eyes on a jewel-babbler, which almost worked, though not quite. Good looks at a Papuan Dwarf-Kingfisher were a reasonable consolation, though. Then, just before we took off, we noted a group of 5(!) Pygmy Eagles flying together, and finally, John spotted a juvenile Papuan Pitta hopping around in the open at the edge of the picnic area! Note that the final day's Varirata birds are not included in this checklist.

This was a fun and fruitful first official extension to New Britain, the first of many, I hope. Thanks to all of you for joining in the fun, and contributing to the trip's success. Thanks too, to all the wonderful folks at Walindi who made our time there so comfortable and enjoyable, with special thanks to our local guides, Terrence and David who really helped us make the most of our time there. I hope you've all enjoyed the rest of your summer, and I look forward to seeing you all on another trip someday soon.

--Jay

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#### KEYS FOR THIS LIST

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

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### BIRDS

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

**SPOTTED WHISTLING-DUCK** (*Dendrocygna guttata*) – Having missed this on the main PNG tour, it was a nice surprise to find 4 birds basking on a muddy bank of the Kulu River one afternoon. I was surprised to see how unbothered that one pair seemed to be with us standing right across the river from them.

**PACIFIC BLACK DUCK** (*Anas superciliosa*) – The only duck I was expecting to see on New Britain. Pairs of these ducks were commonly seen along ditches and in puddles in the extensive oil palm plantations.

#### Megapodiidae (Megapodes)

**MELANESIAN SCRUBFOWL** (*Megapodius eremita*) – One of our final morning's targets at Garu WMA as only a few folks had decent looks on our first visit. These fascinating birds excavate large holes in the banks of the volcanically heated stream that runs through the protected area, using the geothermal heat to incubate the eggs. In areas like this one, they nest colonially, and we saw many nest holes as we walked in in search of the birds, one of which eventually sat up in a tree allowing us great scope views.

#### Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

**BLUE-BREASTED QUAIL** (*Synoicus chinensis*) – I felt we had a good chance to see these tiny quail at Numundo Cattle Farm, but was not at all expecting to see them as well as we did! In addition to a bunch of rails and crakes feeding along the dirt road in the rain, there was also a pair of these, and we all managed to get super scope views of them as they periodically ventured out of the grass and into the open on the road edge. The quail even garnered a few top bird votes, including a first place selection from Marilynne.

#### Fregatidae (Frigatebirds)

**LESSER FRIGATEBIRD** (*Fregata ariel*) – The few frigatebirds seen offshore were all too far out to identify to species, but were either this species or Great Frigatebird.

#### Sulidae (Boobies and Gannets)

**BROWN BOOBY** (*Sula leucogaster*) – A lone distant bird flew past as we boated in Kimbe Bay en route to the islands.

#### Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

**LITTLE PIED CORMORANT** (*Microcarbo melanoleucos*) – A lone bird along the Kulu River was our only one for the extension.

#### Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

**BLACK BITTERN** (*Ixobrychus flavicollis*) – I doubt that there's an easier place to see this usually secretive species than in the oil palm plantations on New Britain. Not only are they pretty numerous there, but they're also often in the open and not at all hard to see. We probably had 10+ seen over our few days there, with no real effort on our part.

**GREAT EGRET** (*Ardea alba*) – A single bird spent some time just offshore from the lodge, and plenty of them flew in to roost for the night at the Numundo Cattle Farm.

**LITTLE EGRET** (*Egretta garzetta*) – This is supposedly a vagrant on the island, but as on the scouting trip last year, there was a single bird seen offshore from the lodge on a couple of days.

**PACIFIC REEF-HERON** (*Egretta sacra*) – At least 2 dark-morph birds and a single white-morph were regulars on the rocky jetties and the mudflats just offshore from Walindi.

**RUFIOUS NIGHT-HERON** (*Nycticorax caledonicus*) – Pretty common in the oil palm plantations, and regularly seen at dawn and dusk, usually flushing off the sides of the road.

*Pandionidae (Osprey).*

**OSPREY (AUSTRALASIAN)** (*Pandion haliaetus cristatus*) – Seen regularly around the lodge, where one bird seemed to have a regular roost in a tall casuarina tree right near the restaurant.

*Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites).*

**BLACK HONEY-BUZZARD** (*Henicopernis infuscatus*) – The partially sunny, breezy conditions at Garu on our first visit seemed to be perfect for this scarce raptor, and we had quick, unsatisfying views of one soaring over the ridge with a couple of Brahminy Kites. Luckily, later in the morning, Paul happened to be looking in the right direction and spotted it again, this time flying over the road not far from us, and we all had super looks at the boldly patterned wings of this handsome bird. [E]

**VARIABLE GOSHAWK** (*Accipiter hiogaster*) – New Britain has 5 species of *Accipiter*, 3 of which are endemic, an impressive number for such a small island. Unfortunately, this is the only species that can realistically be expected to be encountered, as all the others are rare and poorly known. This species is neither, and we saw them regularly.

**BRAHMINY KITE** (*Haliastur indus*) – The most often seen raptor on New Britain, where it is pretty common.

**WHITE-BELLIED SEA-EAGLE** (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) – A single bird was seen each of our first three days around Kimbe Bay, including one that was hanging out on Restorf Island, where the imperial-pigeons didn't seem too happy with its presence.

*Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots).*

**BUFF-BANDED RAIL** (*Gallirallus philippensis*) – A rainy afternoon seemed like the perfect time to visit the Numundo Cattle Farm in search of rails, and that certainly proved to be the case. Turning off the main highway on to the dirt entrance road to the farm, we immediately began seeing rails and crakes. At times there were as many as 6 of these feeding and bathing on the road at one time, and we probably saw at least 10 individuals altogether, including one that posed nicely for photographs atop a mound of dirt and/or manure.

**RUFIOUS-TAILED BUSH-HEN** (*Amaurornis moluccana*) – One day I'll see this skulking bird, maybe. As has happened to me numerous times before, we heard a pair calling, and drew them close in with playback, but never got them to come into view. [\*]

**WHITE-BROWED CRAKE** (*Amaurornis cinerea*) – A pair of these were among the many rails at Numundo, bathing in puddles at the edge of the road, and seen nicely through the scope. We also heard and glimpsed a couple more at an oxbow lake along the Kulu River.

*Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies).*

**WHIMBREL** (*Numenius phaeopus*) – Shorebirds were in short supply this trip, and a lone Whimbrel seen on three days in front of the lodge was the only northern breeder present on the mudflats during our stay. [b]

*Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers).*

**BLACK NODDY** (*Anous minutus*) – Numerous offshore in Kimbe Bay, with some excellent looks at several large feeding groups during our pelagic. The best views we had though, were of a lone bird perched on top of a floating piece of trash, a large foam water cooler.

**BLACK-NAPED TERN** (*Sterna sumatrana*) – Phil, a British tour guide staying on his own at the lodge, tagged along on our pelagic trip and earned his passage by spotting us our only one of these ocean-going terns. The bird showed well, as it was roosting on some rocks among a large number of Common Terns, looking much whiter than its neighbors.

**COMMON TERN** (*Sterna hirundo*) – Quite a few non-breeders were seen offshore in Kimbe Bay. The birds here are of the Palearctic breeding form, *longipennis*. [b]

**GREAT CRESTED TERN** (*Thalasseus bergii*) – Small numbers of these large, yellow-billed terns were seen during our boat trip on Kimbe Bay.

*Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves).*

**AMBOYNA CUCKOO-DOVE** (*Macropygia amboinensis*) – Heard regularly in forested areas, but we only saw one on our final morning at Garu.

**MACKINLAY'S CUCKOO-DOVE** (*Macropygia mackinlayi*) – A specialist of small, satellite islands, but even on them, somewhat unevenly distributed. For instance, they seem to be absent from Restorf Island, leaving Malumalu Island as our only site for this species. We had decent views of a single bird as we floated just offshore from the island.

**STEPHAN'S DOVE** (*Chalcophaps stephani*) – Much easier to see on New Britain than it is on mainland New Guinea. We regularly encountered these pretty doves on the gravel roads through the oil palm plantations, sometimes in fairly sizable groups.

**NICOBAR PIGEON** (*Caloenas nicobarica*) – The galip nut collectors on Restorf Island flushed a few of these large pigeons and we had acceptable views as they flew high over the water to the mainland. But folks really wanted to see this unique bird better, so we made a late afternoon visit to the Kulu River the next day, and found half a dozen more, with a couple of birds posing for scope studies. It was those looks, and first place votes from Ann and Sid, that pushed Nicobar Pigeon into a tie for bird of the trip.

**KNOB-BILLED FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus insolitus*) – Obviously a close relative of Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove of mainland PNG, as, except for that bulbous red knob on the beak, these birds look pretty similar. They also sound virtually the same. We had especially good views of these on our first afternoon at Haella. [E]

**RED-KNOBBED IMPERIAL-PIGEON** (*Ducula rubricera*) – Easily the most common pigeon on New Britain, and we saw or heard these daily, often in good numbers.

**FINSCH'S IMPERIAL-PIGEON** (*Ducula finschii*) – Scarce, and not too easy to find. We glimpsed one flying past after calling for a long period from a well-hidden perch at Haella, then heard another the next morning at Garu. But it wasn't until our final morning, back at Garu, that we finally got satisfying scope views of one in a roadside fruiting tree. [E]

**ISLAND IMPERIAL-PIGEON** (*Ducula pistrinaria*) – Fittingly, these pigeons were only seen on the small satellite islands in Kimbe Bay, where there were huge numbers of them, and their mournful "boo-hoo-hoo" calls were a constant chorus from the trees. We could even hear them from underwater while we were snorkeling!

**TORRESIAN IMPERIAL-PIGEON (YELLOWISH)** (*Ducula spilorrhoa subflavescens*) – The aptly-named "Yellowish" race is restricted to the Bismarck Archipelago and Admiralty Islands of the east coast of PNG, and it may deserve full species status. Though not as numerous as the Red-

knobbed IPs, they were still fairly common and seen in small numbers most days. [E]

#### Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

**PIED COUCAL** (*Centropus ateralbus*) – The more numerous of the two endemic coucals, or at least the more easily seen of the two. Drizzly days seemed to be the best times to see them, and we saw at least 8 of them on our final morning at Garu. [E]

**VIOLACEOUS COUCAL** (*Centropus violaceus*) – Though we heard their deep, booming voices several times, we only saw a single bird, immediately after we'd seen our first Pied Coucals along the road at Garu WMA. [E]

**PACIFIC KOEL** (*Eudynamys orientalis*) – A distant bird was calling at the Numundo Cattle Farm, and we heard another, and briefly saw a male flying across the road, on our last morning at Garu.

**CHANNEL-BILLED CUCKOO** (*Scythrops novaehollandiae schoddei*) – We surprisingly missed seeing these huge cuckoos on the main tour, so it was nice to pick one up on our first morning at Garu. It was distant, and didn't stay in sight all that long, but that distinctive "flying cross" shape is unmistakable.

**SHINING BRONZE-CUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx lucidus*) – The nominate race, which breeds in New Zealand, is a regular austral migrant to the Bismarck Archipelago, and we saw a couple of birds each along the Kulu River and at Garu. [a]

**BRUSH CUCKOO** (*Cacomantis variolosus*) – The race here, *macrocerus*, which is endemic to the Bismarck Archipelago, is grayer than many other forms, with very limited rufous on the lower belly. We heard these regularly, but never did lay eyes on one. [\*]

#### Tytonidae (Barn-Owls)

**GOLDEN MASKED-OWL** (*Tyto aurantia*) – Up until this scarce owl started showing up in the oil palm plantations near Walindi in about 2103, it was known from just a few specimens and three sightings, one in the 1960's two in the 1980's. It is still pretty poorly known, so every sighting helps to enhance our knowledge of this still enigmatic owl. We had great long looks at one on a tall stump as we were close to calling off the search for the night. Then as we finally drove away from it, Randy spotted a second bird perched right next to the road, though it flushed before we had time to stop the van. [E]

#### Strigidae (Owls)

**NEW BRITAIN BOOBOOK** (*Ninox odiosa*) – Getting to these owls took a steep, sweaty hike, but it was worth it to see these beauties roosting side by side in the shade. [E]

#### Apodidae (Swifts)

**UNIFORM SWIFTLET** (*Aerodramus vanikorensis*) – Pretty much everywhere we went on the main island there were big flocks of these flying overhead. Though there were a handful of White-rumped Swiftlets mixed in, it seems I was the only one who ever got on one.

#### Hemiprocnidae (Treeswifts)

**MOUSTACHED TREESWIFT** (*Hemiprocne mystacea*) – At least 3 of these slim, sleek, and wonderful birds were regulars in the casuarina trees above the lodge.

#### Bucerotidae (Hornbills)

**BLYTH'S HORNBILL** (*Rhyticeros plicatus*) – A few were seen daily anywhere there was a bit of good forest, including one or two right on the grounds of the lodge.

#### Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

**COMMON KINGFISHER (COBALT-EARED)** (*Alcedo atthis hispidoides*) – Not many, but we had a pair sitting on a plank bridge across one of the canals in the palm plantations, and a single bird was seen just out front of the lodge one day, too.

**NEW BRITAIN DWARF-KINGFISHER** (*Ceyx sacerdotis*) – Some good work by local guide David got us smashing views of this little gem. He had to spot it several times before we finally found one that allowed all of us long leisurely views, plus a great photography session! Part of a complex of 15 species that were once all lumped as Variable Dwarf-Kingfisher. [E]

**NEW BRITAIN KINGFISHER** (*Todiramphus albonotatus*) – I think I prefer the name White-mantled Kingfisher for this species, but whatever you call it, it is a stunning little bird. We saw what was certainly the same trio sharing a roadside tree on both of our visits to Garu. [E]

**SACRED KINGFISHER** (*Todiramphus sanctus*) – Overall pretty similar to the local version of Melanesian Kingfisher, but smaller and smaller-billed, with greener upperparts than the predominately blue of Melanesian. We saw a few of these along the Kulu River and elsewhere at inland locations.

**BEACH KINGFISHER** (*Todiramphus saurophagus*) – This large, handsome kingfisher was a big hit with the group, and ended up tied with Nicobar Pigeon for the top bird of the trip, with several selections in the top 3 including a first place choice by John. We had excellent looks at a pair of them on Restorf Island. The race found here is the nominate, white-headed form.

**MELANESIAN KINGFISHER** (*Todiramphus tristrami*) – One of the 6 species formed as the result of the split of Collared Kingfisher, and was the most often seen of the 7 kingfisher species we recorded on the island. We had multiple views daily, including a pair that were regulars on the mudflats right in front of the lodge.

**BUFF-BREASTED PARADISE-KINGFISHER (BLACK-CAPPED)** (*Tanysiptera sylvia nigriceps*) – Currently treated as a race of Buff-breasted PK, but probably deserving of full species status, this distinctive form is restricted to the Bismarck Archipelago. These birds were much quieter than they were during last year's scouting, and we heard very few, and only managed one view. Local guide David found us a pair perched in the open on a vine, across the Kulu River from our vantage point. The birds didn't stay put for long, but we all had excellent views before they vanished back into the forest.

#### Meropidae (Bee-eaters)

**RAINBOW BEE-EATER** (*Merops ornatus*) – A regular visitor in the austral winter. We had 7 birds fly over the first afternoon at Haella, then a handful more perched and feeding along the Kulu River. [a]

#### Coraciidae (Rollers)

**DOLLARBIRD** (*Eurystomus orientalis*) – Several folks saw one on the lodge grounds a couple of times, and a single bird was along the road on our second visit to Garu. The race here, *crassirostris*, is endemic to the Bismarck Archipelago.

#### Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

**ORIENTAL HOBBY** (*Falco severus*) – A lone bird sped past over our heads late on our first afternoon at Haella.

**AUSTRALIAN HOBBY** (*Falco longipennis*) – Considered a vagrant in New Britain, but the female hobby we scoped at Numundo Cattle Farm as it sat in a palm tree eating some unfortunate bird was definitely this species. I suspect the one we saw here a year ago during scouting was likely the same bird. [a]

*Cacatuidae (Cockatoos).*

**BLUE-EYED COCKATOO** (*Cacatua ophthalmica*) – Among the first of the local endemics that we encountered, and we saw fair numbers of these whenever we visited areas with decent forest. [E]

*Psittaculidae (Old World Parrots).*

**BUFF-FACED PYGMY-PARROT** (*Micropsitta pusio*) – Both Paul and Randy picked this tiny parrot as their favorite bird of the extension. Not hard to understand their choice, given the superb views they had just outside one of the cabins as they and Sid were walking towards the lodge for the afternoon outing. The rest of us caught up with okay looks on our final morning at Garu.

**ECLECTUS PARROT** (*Eclectus roratus*) – Numerous on the island, and we had good looks at these stunning birds daily.

**SINGING PARROT** (*Geoffroyus heteroclitus*) – Scarce in the areas we visit, and we almost missed this bird (again, as we dipped on last year's scouting trip), but local guide Terrence did an amazing job of spotting a male teed up on top of a distant tree at Garu. I doubt any of us will forget the exchange between Terrence and David ("It's in the damned scope") but in David's defense, it wasn't easy to see, even in the scope. But once you figured out where to look in the scope view, the bird showed up incredibly well.

**RED-FLANKED LORIKEET** (*Charmosyna placensis*) – These were around in small numbers, but were mostly seen as fast-flying flocks zipping overhead. On our last morning at Garu, we did manage some scope views of several in some roadside fruiting trees, but were unable to pick out any of the scarcer Red-chinned Lorikeets which had been reported there a couple of weeks earlier.

**PURPLE-BELLIED LORY** (*Lorius hypoinochrous*) – Pretty common wherever there was good forest, and we had some lovely looks at these brilliant birds. This species has a much harsher, less musical call than the closely related and similar looking Black-capped Lory of the PNG mainland.

**RAINBOW LORIKEET** (*Trichoglossus haematodus*) – A few small flocks of these were noted, mainly as they flew by overhead.

*Pittidae (Pittas).*

**NEW BRITAIN PITTA** (*Erythropitta gazellae*) – A very shy, difficult to see bird, but we had some reasonable success with it after some hard work. David, Gretchen, and I all saw it at different times but it was never in a clear area where everyone could see it, and it moved off before we could get others onto it. Finally, though, David relocated it at the base of a large tree, and I managed to put it in the scope. It wasn't the full bird, but just a swath of red and blue of its breast that was visible through the foliage, but that's better than I was expecting! As she had a pretty good look at it, Gretchen picked it as her favorite bird of the extension. [E]

*Meliphagidae (Honeyeaters).*

**ASHY MYZOMELA** (*Myzomela cineracea*) – Singles were seen on three different days, but the best was our first one, which we spotted bathing in a small hollow in a tree trunk right above Sid and Randy's cabin. [E]

**SCLATER'S MYZOMELA** (*Myzomela sclateri*) – A small island specialist, and these were pretty common on Restorf Island, where we had plenty of good views including a few brilliant males. Oddly scarce on Malumalu Island, and we only saw one there. [E]

**NEW BRITAIN FRIARBIRD** (*Philemon cockerelli cockerelli*) – One of the first New Britain endemics we saw, as a trio of these were hopping about in one of the tall casuarinas right above the restaurant when we first arrived at Walindi. We went on to see these every day but the boat trip day. [E]

*Campephagidae (Cuckooshrikes).*

**WHITE-BELLIED CUCKOOSHRIKE** (*Coracina papuensis sclaterii*) – A pair of these birds were seen from a fair distance on our first visit to Garu WMA. The race *sclaterii* is the one found here, and it's endemic to the Bismarck Archipelago.

**VARIED TRILLER** (*Lalage leucomela falsa*) – This race is restricted to New Britain and a couple of other small islands in the Bismarck Archipelago. We saw them pretty regularly in well-forested regions.

**COMMON CICADABIRD (COMMON)** (*Edolisoma tenuirostre heinrothi*) – Another species represented here by an endemic subspecies. We had a solitary male in some tall forest alongside the Kulu River one morning. This species is due for some splitting soon, and the Phil Gregory's field guide already has this subspecies (and several others) included as part of Melanesian Cicadabird.

*Pachycephalidae (Whistlers and Allies).*

**BLACK-TAILED WHISTLER** (*Pachycephala melanura dahli*) – Also known as Mangrove Golden Whistler. Around New Britain, this species is restricted to the smaller satellite islands such as Restorf and Malumalu, and we saw them on both.

*Dicruridae (Drongos).*

**SPANGLED DRONGO** (*Dicrurus bracteatus laeastictus*) – This subspecies is only found in the Bismarck Archipelago, and may one day be elevated to a full species; Gregory's guide already treats it as such. These were scarce this trip, and only Gretchen and I saw one flying high across the road at Garu, while we were still in the van.

*Rhipiduridae (Fantails).*

**NORTHERN FANTAIL (MELANESIAN)** (*Rhipidura rufiventris finschii*) – This race is restricted to New Britain and one other small island. Overall a much more sluggish fantail than most other species, and we even managed to get the scope on a couple of the several we saw along the Kulu River and at Garu.

**WILLIE-WAGTAIL** (*Rhipidura leucophrys*) – Pretty much ubiquitous, and seen in good numbers daily. It was somewhat surprising to see one pair had built a nest in a dead branch that Joseph had stuck out in the mudflats for the kingfishers to perch on. At high tide, the branch was surrounded by water, and the nest was out in the full sun as well. Still, I guess it was a pretty safe place to nest. [N]

*Monarchidae (Monarch Flycatchers).*

**ISLAND MONARCH** (*Monarcha cinerascens impediens*) – Our only one was a pretty uncooperative bird on Restorf Island. We saw it in flight a few times, but you had to be quick to get your bins on it while it was perched, as it never sat still for long. One of several small island "supertramp" species we encountered on the Kimbe Bay islands.

**SHINING FLYCATCHER** (*Myiagra alecto*) – A few scattered individuals, with a male seen by some on the lodge grounds, another male on Malumalu Island, and finally, a pair on our final morning at Garu.

**DULL FLYCATCHER** (*Myiagra hebetior*) – The male is similar to male Shining Flycatcher, but is duller and less crested overall, and it seems to be a more difficult species to see well. We had a few encounters, finally catching up with some good views of a male in tall forest along the Kulu River.

[E]

*Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)*

**BISMARCK CROW** (*Corvus insularis*) – A common endemic crow, seen daily throughout the tour. [E]

*Hirundinidae (Swallows)*

**PACIFIC SWALLOW** (*Hirundo tahitica*) – The default swallow here, as in mainland PNG. We saw them regularly in small numbers.

*Acrocephalidae (Reed Warblers and Allies)*

**AUSTRALIAN REED WARBLER** (*Acrocephalus australis*) – Quite a few in the tall wet grass at the Numundo Cattle Farm.

*Locustellidae (Grassbirds and Allies)*

**TAWNY GRASSBIRD (PAPUAN)** (*Megalurus timoriensis interscapularis*) – This race is endemic to the Bismarck Archipelago, where it is apparently rare and local. We had good scope views of a couple of singing birds at Numundo.

*Sturnidae (Starlings)*

**METALLIC STARLING** (*Aplonis metallica*) – Numerous throughout, with plenty of nest-building activity, including on Malumalu Island. [N]

**SINGING STARLING** (*Aplonis cantoroides*) – Mainly seen as single birds, usually independent of the large flocks of Metallic Starlings. We were speculating that the lone bird we saw at Numundo may have ended up as the prey item the Australian Hobby was ripping apart a short while later.

**LONG-TAILED MYNA** (*Mino kreffti*) – A regional endemic, found only in the Bismarck Archipelago and the Solomon Islands, and a close relative of mainland PNG's Yellow-faced Myna. Though we saw these every day but our pelagic day, they really didn't seem all that numerous. [E]

*Dicaeidae (Flowerpeckers)*

**RED-BANDED FLOWERPECKER** (*Dicaeum eximium*) – The only flowerpecker here. Though there was a male hanging around the gardens of the lodge, I'm not sure anyone ended up connecting with it. All of our other sightings came from Garu, where most, if not all of them, appeared to be females. [E]

*Nectariniidae (Sunbirds and Spiderhunters)*

**BLACK SUNBIRD** (*Leptocoma sericea caeruleogula*) – One of the more common Passerines in New Britain's forests, and we saw these birds daily.

**OLIVE-BACKED SUNBIRD** (*Cinnyris jugularis*) – Only Marilynne saw this species, on the lodge grounds on our first afternoon.

*Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)*

**HOUSE SPARROW** (*Passer domesticus*) – I wasn't aware this species had made it to New Britain yet, and I never saw this bird, but guide Joseph called it as we passed through the town of Kimbe. I did see a couple of Eurasian Tree Sparrows around the airport, but no one else noticed them. [I]

*Estrildidae (Waxbills and Allies)*

**BISMARCK MUNIA** (*Lonchura melaena*) – Also known as Buff-bellied Munia. There were loads of these in the rank grass at the Numundo Cattle Farm. [E]

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## MAMMALS

**COMMON NORTHERN CUSCUS** (*Phalanger orientalis*)

**GREATER FLYING FOX** (*Pteropus neohibernicus*)

**BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN** (*Tursiops truncatus*)

**SPINNER DOLPHIN** (*Stenella longirostris*)

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## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

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**Totals for the tour: 89 bird taxa and 4 mammal taxa**