



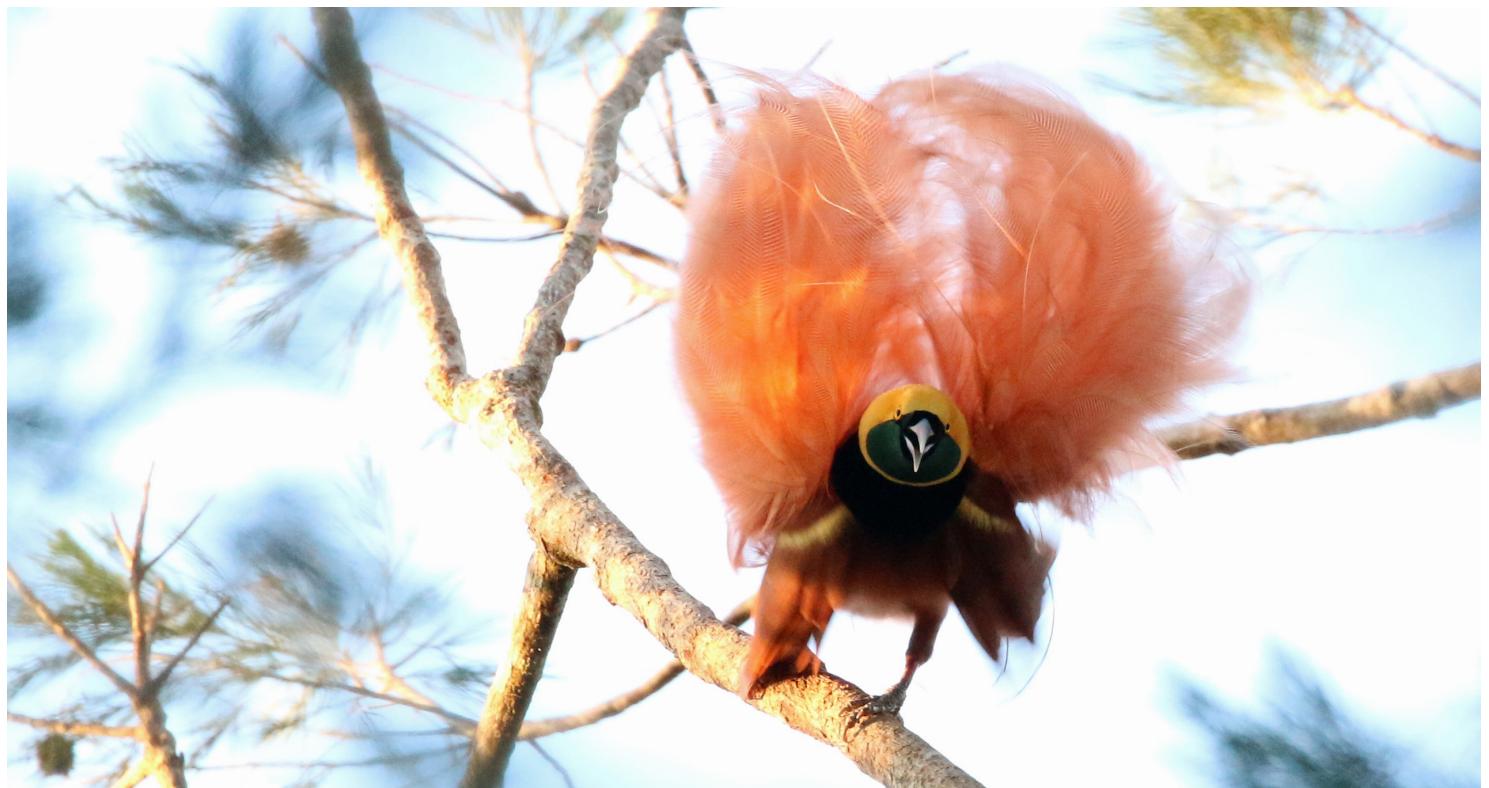
Field Guides Tour Report

Papua New Guinea 2018

Jul 5, 2018 to Jul 22, 2018

Jay VanderGaast & Doug Gochfeld

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



This Raggiana Bird-of-Paradise (the national emblem of Papua New Guinea) put on a spectacular show for us at Varirata National Park on our final day of the tour.
Photo by participant Randy Beaton.

Papua New Guinea. It's one of the final frontiers of nature discovery, as well as a bottomless well of new experiences, even for those who have traveled through it many times. This year's Papua New Guinea (PNG) tour didn't disappoint this expectation one bit, with new birds, old birds in new places, and even a new location!

We didn't waste much time getting down to business after our flight from Brisbane, Australia, to the capital of PNG, Port Moresby. We took a late afternoon trip out to the west of the capital, ending up at the small coastal village of Lea Lea, where we found the coastal mangrove obligate endemic Silver-eared Honeyeater, a couple of Varied Honeyeaters, and a hodgepodge of shorebirds and tern species that we only encountered here, including both Lesser and Greater Crested Terns, Greater Sand-Plover, Gray-tailed Tattler, and Bar-tailed Godwit. We started off our first full day in PNG by waking dark and early to get out to Varirata National Park at sunrise. This National Park is the true jewel in the crown of PNG's open-to-the-public areas, and we got a few really excellent birds despite the howling wind and bright sun which conspired with each other to make the forest birding quite difficult. Sooty Thicket-Fantail, Barred Owlet-Nightjar, Dwarf Koel, Papuan Dwarf-Kingfisher, and Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher were a few of the big highlights during this first go around at Varirata. On our way back to Port Moresby, we stopped for a couple of hours at the campus of Pacific Adventist University, which gave us access to a nice assortment of waterfowl, including Green Pygmy-Goose and Gray Teal, which are fairly low density species in the region. Other big highlights here were cracking views of Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove, Papuan Frogmouth, Fawn-breasted Bowerbirds, and the common but snappy-looking Pied Herons.

We then left the capital behind for the remote western reaches of the country, with our first stop being in the foothills around the (gold and copper) mining town of Tabubil. Our 24 hours of birding the Tabubil area (between Ok Menga and Dablin Creek) were exceptionally productive, delivering Pesquet's Parrot (formerly known as Vulturine Parrot), Spotted Honeyeater, Great Woodswallow, Pygmy Longbill, Golden Monarch, displaying Pacific Baza and Variable Goshawk, the recently discovered and still poorly known Obscure Berryecker, a Carola's Parotia, and an excellent pair of Salvadori's Teal on our way out. We even had a magical nocturnal experience with Marbled Frogmouth during our early evening birding. After our morning birding at Dablin Creek and Ok Menga, we moved down the road south to Kiunga, the main inland port along the mighty Fly River. Our action-packed morning at Boystown Road was highlighted by an exceptionally cooperative pair of Flame Bowerbirds feeding in a Schefflera tree and a raucous pair of Palm Cockatoo. This great first day in Kiunga continued with an afternoon exploration of the forest at KM17, which produced a fantastic view of

a male King Bird-of-Paradise, a trio of boisterously displaying Greater Bird-of-Paradise, and a post-dusk viewing of the very rarely seen Wallace's Owlet-Nightjar!

Our second day in Kiunga consisted of an all-day boat ride, and we were breezing up the Fly River before sunrise to arrive at a Twelve-wired Bird-of-Paradise display perch at dawn. Once daylight came in beneath the high overcast skies, we did indeed see a male visit the perch and surrounding trees for a while, though it never went into a full-throated display. The scenery and atmosphere make any day on the Elevala River and its tributaries a wonderful way to spend a day, whether or not you're into birds. However, being birders, we didn't have to place all of our joy eggs in the landscape and scenery basket. Fruit-Doves and pigeons were conspicuous during our journey, and we had quite a few Blyth's Hornbills, and another set of great Palm Cockatoos as well. Some of the species highlights were Southern (now split to Slater's) Crowned-Pigeon, Great-billed Heron, Yellow-eyed Starling, Golden Myna, Black-sided Robin, Large Fig-Parrot, and a spectacular adult Common Paradise-Kingfisher.

After a final morning around Kiunga (which included good views of Meyer's Friarbird, Long-billed Honeyeater, and Australian Pratincole), we got on a plane and traversed the skies above hundreds of miles of pristine lush rainforest on our way to the legendary Highlands Region of New Guinea. Our first three days in the Highlands were spent based out of Kumul Lodge, north of Mount Hagen, at just under 9,000 feet in elevation. This fantastic lodge is perched atop a hill amid an ethereal cloud forest, and it gave us easy access to an array of species that are only available at some of the highest elevations on the island. We were surrounded by the constant clanging sounds of Belford's Melidectes and the ever changing faces of Smoky Honeyeaters. In addition to these two fairly common species, the lodge grounds (including fruit feeders) gave us regular views of Brehm's Tiger-Parrots and Island Thrushes, in addition to plenty of sightings of Rufous-naped Bellbird, Regent Whistler, White-winged Robin, the gaudy Ribbon-tailed Astrapia, and the (tastefully) painted-by-numbers canvass that is Crested Berryecker. Excursions over our stay here netted Blue and Lesser Birds-of-Paradise, good numbers of Greater Superb Birds-of-Paradise, Pygmy Eagle, Ornate Melidectes, Plum-faced Lorikeet, Painted Tiger-Parrot, Crested Satinbird, and Lesser Melampitta. Our dusk and evening excursion gave us a New Guinea Woodcock flying over a forest clearing, and a Mountain Owlet-Nightjar flying around nearby.

Our second site in the Highlands this year was a new and last-second addition to the itinerary: Rondon Ridge, a luxurious eco-lodge located on the slopes of the mountains south of Mount Hagen. We settled into Rondon, where we would be entirely on foot for our final four nights in the mountains. We worked around daily afternoon rain showers (of intensities varying from light drizzle to Genesis-level deluge), and excellent high-end, locally produced meals, to accrue a diverse list of mid-level and high elevation highlights. In the lower forests around the lodge we connected with Hooded Cuckooshrike, Black Pitohui, Black-throated Robin, Loria's Satinbird, MacGregor's Bowerbird, Stephanie's Astrapia, Yellow-browed Melidectes, Mid-mountain Berryecker, Mountain Mouse-Warbler, the taxonomically unsettled Little Shrikethrush, and the difficult-to-find Yellow-streaked Honeyeater. The views of Greater Superb Bird-of-Paradise (now known as Greater Lophorina!) near the lodge buildings were superb indeed. Hikes to the higher reaches gave us Short-tailed Paradigalla, Mountain Kingfisher, an exceptionally good look at the bizarre and wonderful Wattled Ploughbill, and brief view (for some) of a Black Sicklebill.

We rounded our tour off with a final full day around Varirata, and this time the birding conditions were much better than they were on our first visit to the park! A calm and clear morning gave us the opportunity to see a displaying male Raggiana Bird-of-Paradise right off the bat, and the hits kept coming, with mixed flocks that included Goldenface, Pale-billed Scrubwren, White-faced Robin, and Chestnut-bellied Fantail, a great view of Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo, Olive Flyrobin, Growling Riflebird, a couple of (well-spotted by Jay) Dwarf Fruit-Doves, and perhaps the highlight of the day, an exceedingly cooperative Forest Bittern, which our long-time local guide Leonard had only seen a handful times out of hundreds of visits to the park!! On the way out of the park, we had a magical golden hour, with Barking Owl, White-bellied Whistler, Leaden Flycatcher, Great Cuckoo-Dove, a perched female Eclectus Parrot (we had mostly been seeing males), and a surprise sighting of the very rarely seen Papuan Hanging-Parrot, making for a truly incredible final hour of birding!

This year's tour was a fantastic trip to a wondrous place, and it went off safely, joyously, and essentially without a hitch. Our various local guides: Leonard, Edward, Max, and Joseph welcomed us into their worlds and made everything smooth sailing for us, for which we are (as always) very grateful. Of course, the birds were great, but what really made this trip special was how cohesive (and FUN!!) of a group it was. A huge thanks to all of you for making it such a phenomenal trip to the other side of the world--having you all as traveling companions was truly a joy for both Jay and myself. Until next we meet, somewhere in this big and brilliant world of birds!

-Doug

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*) – A handful were associating with the more numerous Wandering Whistling-Ducks on the second lake at PAU.

WANDERING WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna arcuata*) – About three dozen on the second lake at PAU.

GREEN PYGMY-GOOSE (*Nettapus pulchellus*) – A scarce bird in most birdable places in the country, so a nice pickup at PAU.

SALVADORI'S TEAL (*Salvadorina waigiensis*) – YES!! Fourth time was a charm with this singularly special endemic at Ok Menga. We found a pair on some rocks near the hydro power station as we were leaving Tabubil to head to Kiunga- a worthwhile 7 minute detour if ever there was one! [E]

PACIFIC BLACK DUCK (*Anas superciliosa*) – Around 80 individuals at PAU.

GRAY TEAL (*Anas gracilis gracilis*) – Another PAU-only duck, this species has become more frequent here in recent years.

Megapodiidae (Megapodes)

YELLOW-LEGGED BRUSHTURKEY (*Talegalla fuscirostris*) – Heard only on both of our visits to Varirata. Unlike their Australian counterparts, these are very difficult to see despite their frequent and raucous vocalizations. This is a very standard behavioral dichotomy- in species (or two closely related species) that occur in both New Guinea and Australia, the birds in the former are almost without exception much more wary. [E*]

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

AUSTRALASIAN GREBE (*Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*) – Brief looks by a couple of folks at PAU.

Fregatidae (Frigatebirds)

LESSER FRIGATEBIRD (*Fregata ariel*) – At least four of these were kiting around in the wind off shore to the west of Port Moresby on our first afternoon.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

LITTLE PIED CORMORANT (*Microcarbo melanoleucus*) – A couple at PAU.

LITTLE BLACK CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*) – Plenty at PAU, including roosting in a tree overhead before we realized we might not be standing in the best location.

Ardeidae (Herns, Egrets, and Bitterns)

FOREST BITTERN (*Zonerodius heliosylus*) – Undoubtedly one of the most exciting sightings of the tour, coming during a lull in activity on the final afternoon at Varirata. This was only the seventh time Leonard had ever laid eyes on this species in Varirata, despite having been to the park hundreds of times. Not only did we get to see this normally retiring phantom of the forests, but it perched in the open on top of a dead snag, and we were able to view it perfectly through the perforated umbrella of forest canopy that was between it and us without disturbing it. This one was definitely equal parts cool bird and cool experience.

GREAT-BILLED HERON (*Ardea sumatrana*) – Most people don't go to New Guinea for the ardeids, but between this and the last species, we got a couple of whoppers. We ran across one or two of this species, which we encounter less than annually, on our boat ride along the Elevala River. It's a big bird to start with, but its bill is truly impressive.

GREAT EGRET (AUSTRALASIAN) (*Ardea alba modesta*) – A couple at PAU, where they presented an excellent opportunity to compare them with the superficially similar and more numerous Intermediate Egret. We also had a few along the rivers around Kiunga.

INTERMEDIATE EGRET (*Ardea intermedia*) – A few at PAU, where we got to compare their shorter, stouter neck, shorter bills, and shorter gapes with the larger Great Egrets.

PACIFIC REEF-HERON (*Egretta sacra*) – We saw one of these as we were driving out to Lea Lea just outside Port Moresby. We spotted it while in a traffic circle, and so were able to go around one more time and pull off to get good looks!

PIED HERON (*Egretta picata*) – We saw a few more than usual, perhaps 20 in all, of these very snappy looking herons at PAU. Always a crowd pleaser.

CATTLE EGRET (EASTERN) (*Bubulcus ibis coromandus*) – Widespread in the settled lowlands, though we only encountered them around Port Moresby. Lots around some wet fields and ponds just outside PAU, and scattered around the runway-side fields at POM.

RUFOUS NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax caledonicus*) – 5 or more roosting in their usual roost tree at PAU. The tree was much less leaved out than usual, making these much more straightforward to observe than is often the case. We also had a couple flying down the Fly River before dawn and up the river after dusk.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE (ASIAN) (*Elanus caeruleus wahgiensis*) – Some saw a perched bird along the road on the way up to Rondon, just a few minutes before we got to the front gate.

LONG-TAILED HONEY-BUZZARD (*Henicopernis longicauda*) – The lead boat got to see one of these during our boat ride in the vicinity of the junction of the Elevala and Ketu Rivers. **[E]**

PACIFIC BAZA (*Aviceda subcristata*) – Good views around Ok Menga, including some most excellent examples of their acrobatic swooping, stooping, display flights by several birds right over our heads.

PYGMY EAGLE (*Hieraetus weiskei*) – One flew in low overhead at Kama while the Lesser BoP was in the middle of displaying. We got some great views of this distinctively shaped hawk as it coasted slowly over before dropping down into the valley. **[E]**

EASTERN MARSH-HARRIER (PAPUAN) (*Circus spilonotus spilothorax*) – Some folks laid eyes on one or both of a pair of these over the runways while we were waiting for our flight in the departure terminal at the Mount Hagen airport. **[E]**

VARIABLE GOSHAWK (*Accipiter hiogaster*) – A crisp adult flew through PAU and then got assaulted and escorted off the premises by a Black-backed Butcherbird. We then had a displaying bird overhead at the Ok Menga dam on our second visit there.

BROWN GOSHAWK (*Accipiter fasciatus*) – Nice views of perched birds on the wires along the road out to Lea Lea on our first afternoon, and then a pair on the way back from Kama, and one at Sogeri on our final evening.

BLACK-MANTLED GOSHAWK (*Accipiter melanochlamys*) – Joseph spotted one as it flew through the mist and over us at the clearing on the ridge at Rondon, briefly landed a couple of times, and then took off down the hill and out of sight. The next day Jay saw one breeze through one of the lower clearings, and it vocally responded to playback, but didn't come back in. **[E]**

BLACK KITE (BLACK) (*Milvus migrans affinis*) – Around Port Moresby we had a few along the coastal road towards Lea Lea, and one at PAU. In the Highlands, however, they were truly abundant.

WHISTLING KITE (*Haliastur sphenurus*) – Our only one was an immature bird circling over the road out of Varirata as we left the park after our first visit there.

BRAHMINY KITE (*Haliastur indus*) – Widespread, from the coastal shore of Port Moresby, to the foothills of Varirata and Tabubil, the lowland rainforest around the Fly River, and the Highlands around Mount Hagen.

WHITE-BELLIED SEA-EAGLE (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) – Good views of a single bird on our boat ride along the Elevala River.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

BUFF-BANDED RAIL (*Gallirallus philippensis*) – This bugger got exceptionally close to us on our way back from Kama, but we couldn't lay eyes on it beyond some brief blurs and moving grass. **[*]**

NEW GUINEA FLIGHTLESS RAIL (*Megacrex inepta inepta*) – Heard only at the blind created just for this species along the Elevala River. Unfortunately the Sage harvesting had preceded us by just a bit more than would've been ideal for this species to be reliably visible.

AUSTRALASIAN SWAMPHEN (*Porphyrio melanotus melanopterus*) – These goofballs were friskily frolicking all over the place at PAU.

DUSKY MOORHEN (*Gallinula tenebrosa*) – A few at PAU.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER (*Pluvialis squatarola*) – Three of these at Lea Lea.

MASKED LAPWING (MASKED) (*Vanellus miles miles*) – Very fun birds, and best seen around PAU.

GREATER SAND-PLOVER (*Charadrius leschenaultii*) – A half dozen or so of these were a nice surprise on the sandbar at Lea Lea mixed in with the terns and other shorebirds.

Jacanidae (Jacanas)

COMB-CRESTED JACANA (*Irediparra gallinacea*) – Quite a few of all ages and in all stages of life at PAU, from fluffy youngsters to awkward looking adolescents and fully-wattled adults.

Scopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

WHIMBREL (SIBERIAN) (*Numenius phaeopus variegatus*) – A couple were briefly on the sandbar at Lea Lea before taking flight to the west, revealing their white back streaks which allowed us to identify them as this, the expected subspecies.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT (*Limosa lapponica*) – One or two were out on the sandbar at Lea Lea with the hodgepodge of terns and other shorebirds.

NEW GUINEA WOODCOCK (*Scolopax rosei*) – A nice post-dusk experience with one of these as it flew over a forest clearing below Kumul, calling loudly and showing off its distinctive shape and structure. [E]

GRAY-TAILED TATTLER (*Tringa brevipes*) – Another member of the fun ragtag group of miscellaneous shorebirds at Lea Lea, we got some reasonable scope views of this Asian version of tattler.

Glareolidae (Pratincoles and Coursers)

AUSTRALIAN PRATINCOLE (*Stiltia isabella*) – A couple on the runway at the airport in Kiunga just before we skedaddled from town.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

GULL-BILLED TERN (*Gelochelidon nilotica*) – One with the Common Terns off of the mangroves west of Port Moresby, and then almost 60 at Lea Lea!

COMMON TERN (LONGIPENNIS) (*Sterna hirundo longipennis*) – Often scarce at this time of year, we had about ten foraging just off the mangroves on the way out to Lea Lea, and then another couple out at Lea Lea itself. Presumably (and apparently, judging by plumage) young birds that were born last summer or the summer before, which didn't bother returning to the breeding grounds in East Asia, where the vast majority of this species should be right now.

GREAT CRESTED TERN (*Thalasseus bergii cristatus*) – We saw more than a dozen of these large, shaggy crested, yellow-billed terns in the tern flock out at Lea Lea.

LESSER CRESTED TERN (*Thalasseus bengalensis torresii*) – We saw four or five of these at Lea Lea. A generally sparsely distributed bird along the tour route, and the first time either Jay or Doug had ever seen it here.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – We came ever so close to missing this species, but an unfortunate few managed some glimpses on our first afternoon as we drove through Port Moresby. [I]

AMBOYNA CUCKOO-DOVE (*Macropygia amboinensis*) – These most often are seen in flight, but we had some perching really nicely at Varirata, for some great scope views that allowed us to see all the finer plumage details and iridescence around the head and nape. We then continued to get good looks at these throughout the rest of the tour, so much so that we basically stopped looking at them!

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO-DOVE (*Macropygia nigrirostris*) – By far the scarcer, and less widespread, of the two macropygia species that we encounter on our route, though they were reasonably common around Rondon, where we got good looks at several. [E]

GREAT CUCKOO-DOVE (*Reinwardtoena reinwardti*) – One showed off its slow, loping flight at Ok Menga, and we had to wait another ten days before we caught up with it again, on our final evening along the entrance road to Varirata (3 individuals in one spot!). [E]

STEPHAN'S DOVE (*Chalcophaps stephani*) – We had at least three flyby encounters around Kiunga- one at Boystown Road and two along the rivers. This is the way we typically see this otherwise species, which is otherwise virtually never seen by birders on the main island of New Guinea.

PEACEFUL DOVE (*Geopelia placida*) – A few around Port Moresby.

BAR-SHOULDERED DOVE (*Geopelia humeralis*) – A few at PAU.

SOUTHERN CROWNED-PIGEON (*Goura scheepmakeri*) – The crowned-pigeons have undoubtedly one of the best hairdos of anything in the animal kingdom. The boys showed us one in all its mohawky glory sitting on a nest along the Elevala River, and we were able to see it well enough that we could narrow the subspecies down to Sclater's. We also heard the deep and resonant hooting of one the next day, on our second visit to Boystown Road. [E]

WOMPOO FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus magnificus*) – A couple of good scope views of this huge and iconic fruit-dove at Varirata, where we also got to hear it give its wompoos.

PINK-SPOTTED FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus perlatus*) – We saw the majority around Kiunga, where it may be the most common of the fruit-doves. We also had a few during our second visit to Varirata. [E]

ORANGE-FRONTED FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus aurantiifrons*) – Excellent views of this straight up stunner at PAU. [E]

SUPERB FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus superbus*) – A few around Varirata, including a neckbreaker perched in the canopy of a fruiting tree directly overhead in the forest. We also had some brief views at Boystown Road and along the rivers, though this seems to be one of the more skittish of the fruit-doves.

BEAUTIFUL FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus pulchellus*) – Seen very well from the mound at Boystown Road multiple times, including in the Flame Bowerbird tree. [E]

WHITE-BREASTED FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus rivoli*) – This high elevation fruit-dove was frustrating for us, with at least three views in situations where either the light was suboptimal or the bird was largely obscured by its habitat. [E]

ORANGE-BELLIED FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus iozonus*) – Common in the Kiunga area, especially around the rivers, where it may have outnumbered Pink-spotted. We also got good scope views on our final visit to Varirata. [E]

DWARF FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus nainus*) – Jay pulled out a pair of these during some scouting around during lunchtime on our final day at Varirata, and we were able to not only drink in these very cool and diminutive doves, but share it with a few parties of local non-birding visitors, who got a big kick out of it! [E]

PURPLE-TAILED IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula ruficaster*) – Seen in flight a few times during the boat trip and during our second visit to Boystown Road, but then on our final visit to Varirata we had excellent views of an atypically obliging pair that sat on open branches over the trail

for a couple of minutes. [E]

PINON'S IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula pinon*) – Fairly common around Kiunga, and we got very good looks at K17 and on the boat trip. [E]

COLLARED IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula mullerii*) – Several seen on the boat trip, though none of the large flocks that sometimes dominate the skies (perhaps because of the recently high water level on the rivers). [E]

ZOE IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula zoeae*) – We messed around with subpar experiences at first, with a quick flyby as we entered Varirata, one heard loudly during our first visit to the Raggiana lek, and a couple of fly-throughs at Ok Menga. However, once we got to the lowlands around Kiunga, our luck with the species dramatically improved, and we had quite a few good views of them in several contexts. Chris was especially tickled by those striped pantaloons, and this species easily made it into his top 3 birds of the trip. [E]

TORRESIAN IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula spilorrhoa*) – A few of these huge white pigeons around the mangroves west of Port Moresby, and at Lea Lea.

PAPUAN MOUNTAIN-PIGEON (*Gymnophaps albertisii*) – Our first were in a few good-sized flocks along the entrance road to Varirata, and we continued to intermittently see this species throughout the tour, even down on the Elevala River, a habitat as far away from the mountains as you can get. [E]

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

GREATER BLACK COUCAL (*Centropus menbeki*) – Heard only at the rail hide during our day on the rivers. [E*]

LESSER BLACK COUCAL (*Centropus bernsteini*) – Heard only at K17 and the Twelve-wire BoP site in Kiunga. [E*]

PHEASANT COUCAL (*Centropus phasianinus*) – A few hopping around in the open at PAU were great, and we only encountered them a couple of more times: at Boystown Road and at Sogeri.

DWARF KOEL (*Microdynamis parva*) – Heard only during our first visit to Varirata, but we remedied that very early on in our second visit, with a very responsive one of these sharply marked cuckoos. [E]

PACIFIC KOEL (AUSTRALIAN) (*Eudynamys orientalis cyanocephalus*) – Heard in several places, but our best views were from the boat along the Elevala River, especially on the return trip in the late afternoon.

RUFOUS-THROATED BRONZE-CUCKOO (*Chrysococcyx ruficollis*) – Seen several times around the lower forests at Rondon Ridge, including excellent views on at least two occasions. [E]

WHITE-EARED BRONZE-CUCKOO (*Chrysococcyx meyerii*) – Great views of a responsive one on our first evening at Ok Menga. [E]

LITTLE BRONZE-CUCKOO (*Chrysococcyx minutillus*) – A very nice and vocal pair courting and cavorting around the mound on Boystown Road!

CHESTNUT-BREASTED CUCKOO (*Cacomantis castaneiventris*) – A great auditory experience with a bird that we were also able to scope at close range during our final visit to Varirata. It kept its face hidden behind some leaves most of the time, but the rest of the chestnut body was in full view.

FAN-TAILED CUCKOO (*Cacomantis flabelliformis excitus*) – Reasonable views at Murmur Pass for everyone, and for Jay's group on the final morning at Rondon.

BRUSH CUCKOO (*Cacomantis variolosus*) – Perched motionless for up to half an hour shortly after our arrival at Cloudlands, and then we also had it on a couple of occasions at Rondon.

Strigidae (Owls)

RUFOUS OWL (*Ninox rufa*) – Heard hooting in the distance at Rondon while we were out playing around with Owlet-Nightjars, but we never could entice it to come on in and show itself. [I*]

BARKING OWL (*Ninox connivens*) – Leonard surprised us with a great pair that he had recently found in the Eucalyptus savanna along the entrance road to Varirata late on our final afternoon. The placement of these birds ended up being very fortuitous for reasons aside from the owls too, as this stop ended up being a truly grand finale, with an exciting flurry of great birds consistently diverting our attention from the location's stated owl mission.

PAPUAN BOOBBOOK (*Ninox theomacha*) – First encountered at Cloudlands, where we heard them pre-dawn and some folks saw its eyeshine in the distance. We also heard them while owling on the way out of K17 in Kiunga. [E*]

Podargidae (Frogmouths)

MARBLED FROGMOUTH (MARBLED) (*Podargus ocellatus ocellatus*) – We had a truly great experience with one of these at Ok Menga. We got to hear it practice a wide variety of its vocal repertoire and then found in the spotlight for some cracking close views (it more than filled the frame in the telescope).

PAPUAN FROGMOUTH (*Podargus papuensis*) – These well-camouflaged monsters look like characters out of Where the Wild Things Are, and this time around the wild things (three of them!) were at PAU.

Aegothelidae (Owlet-nightjars)

FELINE OWLET-NIGHTJAR (*Aegotheles insignis*) – The English language doesn't contain superlatives that sufficiently describe how amazingly good our experience was with this species at Rondon Ridge. After finding a responsive one that just wouldn't come very close, we headed back downhill. At our second spot, we found another one that seemed to be interested, and it eventually surprised us all by calling from directly over our heads, and sure enough, there it was, perched on the lowest branch directly over the trail. It then stayed put there, and occasionally did some almost comical shimmying from side to side. The patterning of the underparts, the whiskers, the eyelashes, the behavior, and the general difficulty of seeing the species (this was Jay's visual lifer) made this one of the most popular choices in peoples' top 3 lists at the end of the tour. Sally even said that it was one of her favorite individual bird sightings ever. [E]

WALLACE'S OWLET-NIGHTJAR (*Aegotheles wallacii*) – A very poorly known and fairly seldom-seen species, we took advantage of a dry and still evening during our visit to K17, and stuck around to try and entice one of these to come out and play. After we heard it give a couple of series of alarm calls in response to some larger owl tape, Jay pulled a miracle off and somehow found it perched in the forest well off the trail, with only about two tiny windows through which to see it in the entire forest.

MOUNTAIN OWLET-NIGHTJAR (*Aegotheles alburtisi*) – We had one of these in the forest below Kumul during our first attempt for Feline Owlet-Nightjar. [E]

BARRED OWLET-NIGHTJAR (*Aegotheles bennettii*) – A good view of one of these looking very mammalian as it stared at us from inside its roost hole at Varirata. [E]

Apodidae (Swifts)

PAPUAN SPINETAILED SWIFT (*Mearnsia novaeguineae*) – The first ones were seen from the bus on the way into Kiunga, but we quickly improved our views of this species, as it seemed to be very good, perhaps better than usual, for these distinctively-shaped swifts. We had a few of them as our constant companions at Boystown Road, including some very cool vocalizations, and then we had a good hit of them along the various rivers during our boat trip. [E]

GLOSSY SWIFLET (*Collocalia esculenta*) – Varirata to start (and end) with, and then in several places around Tabubil. They were absent from the lowlands of Kiunga, but then we started picking a few up again in the highlands, including right around the lodge at Kumul.

MOUNTAIN SWIFLET (*Aerodramus hirundinaceus*) – We did scrutinize all of the dark swiftlets which we encountered at higher elevations, but we never found any that were compellingly different from what one would expect from a Mountain Swiftlet. Presumably most or all of the *Aerodramus* that we encountered in the highlands were of this species, though this group of birds is still very mysterious and poorly known (especially for how widespread they are). [E]

UNIFORM SWIFLET (*Aerodramus vanikorensis*) – The presumptive *aerodramus* in the lowlands, we saw swiftlets that were mostly or all of this species in Varirata, Tabubil, and Kiunga. As with the previous species, separation of these from other similar (and apparently much rarer) species is extremely difficult, and there aren't many (any?) field-useable characteristics known to be diagnostic

Hemiprocnidae (Treeswifts)

MOUSTACHED TREESWIFT (*Hemiprocne mystacea*) – Phenomenal birds, and part of one of the objectively best bird families in existence. We got a full experience with these at Ok Menga, as they perched, flew around, attacked an interloping Pacific Baza, and did a whole bunch of talking. We then had some in Kiunga, both at Boystown Road and along the Elevala River, which was just fine, since one can never have enough of these awesome beasts.

Bucerotidae (Hornbills)

BLYTH'S HORNBILL (*Rhyticeros plicatus*) – It is heartening to see such a high density of large, and presumably tasty, birds in a land where birds were historically (and still are to some degree) hunted for sustenance. Good numbers along the river, and then a few on our final morning at Varirata. One of the most impressive features of these birds, re-iterated by Sid during our top 3 rundown, is the noise level of their wingbeats as they pass over. When there are many of them flying at once, the wing noise alone can be cacophonous.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

COMMON KINGFISHER (*Alcedo atthis*) – Brief views of a couple of these along the Elevala.

AZURE KINGFISHER (*Ceyx azureus*) – Good views of one or two individuals along the stream in the forest at Varirata.

PAPUAN DWARF-KINGFISHER (*Ceyx solitarius*) – These adorable tiny kingfishers of the forest can be very frustrating to try and see, but we did get some reasonable views during our first visit to Varirata.

BLUE-WINGED KOOKABURRA (*Dacelo leachii*) – Fairly widespread in the Port Moresby region, and we got some brilliant views of these charismatic giant kingfishers.

RUFOUS-BELLIED KOOKABURRA (*Dacelo gaudichaud*) – Brief views at Varirata and Ok Menga. [E]

SHOVEL-BILLED KOOKABURRA (*Clytoceyx rex*) – It was very cool to hear the symphony of them near dusk at Ok Menga, but it was also very frustrating to not properly see them, as they remained tucked into the dense internal forest canopy. [E*]

FOREST KINGFISHER (*Todiramphus macleayii*) – Along the entrance road to Varirata on our first morning.

SACRED KINGFISHER (*Todiramphus sanctus*) – Seen at PAU and then a couple of times each at Ok Menga and during the boat trips.

HOOK-BILLED KINGFISHER (*Melidora macrorrhina*) – A Hook-billed Kingfisher orchestra was on hand for our dusk vigil at KM17 in Kiunga, and we also heard them each of the next two days- along the Elevala River and at Boystown Road. [E*]

YELLOW-BILLED KINGFISHER (*Syma torotoro*) – What a cool and cute looking bird! We got good scope views of one perched high in a casuarina on our first visit to Varirata, and then got another couple during our final visit to Boystown Road.

MOUNTAIN KINGFISHER (*Syma megarhyncha*) – A phenomenally responsive bird on the slopes of Rondon Ridge on our final morning. It perched in what should have been a completely obscured spot, except that Jay quickly found an angle for us to stare through the leaf clutter and lay eyes on this Yellow-billed lookalike. [E]

COMMON PARADISE-KINGFISHER (*Tanysiptera galatea*) – Dang what a cool bird! This gaudy paradise-kingfisher was very cooperative during one of our dedicated kingfisher seeking hikes along the river. We got to watch it calling out in the open, and seeing its entire body, including that ridiculous tail, vibrate as it called was a big hit with everyone. [E]

BROWN-HEADED PARADISE-KINGFISHER (*Tanysiptera danae*) – An incredible spot by Sid of one of these while it was sitting still and buried in the darkness of the forest at Varirata. [E]

Meropidae (Bee-eaters)

RAINBOW BEE-EATER (*Merops ornatus*) – These austral migrants from Australia were seen at Varirata, in the lowlands, and in a few good-sized flocks around Kama in the highlands.

Coraciidae (Rollers)

DOLLARBIRD (*Eurystomus orientalis*) – Views of a couple along the entrance road to Varirata on our first visit, but we really got into numbers of these along the rivers during our boat trip.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

AUSTRALIAN KESTREL (*Falco cenchroides*) – Seen from the bus on the return trip from our first visit to Varirata.

BROWN FALCON (*Falco berigora*) – A cool experience near Walya, north of Kumul, was one of these bulky raptors hunting over a recently cleared hillside, much to the dismay of the local Willie-Wagtail populace.

Cacatuidae (Cockatoos)

PALM COCKATOO (*Probosciger aterrimus*) – What an awesome species. We got looks at one, which became a pair, along the sidetrack off of Boystown Road, and then we had another great study of a very vocal individual along the Elevala River, right where the White-bellied Sea-Eagle was. It was so great that Paul, Gretchen, and Sid all placed it in their top three birds of the tour!

SULPHUR-CRESTED COCKATOO (*Cacatua galerita*) – One of these monsters flew by below us at the Varirata lookout on our first visit to the park, and then we were entertained by their antics along the Elevala and Ketu Rivers in Kiunga. Along the Elevala we had an especially entertaining show of a pair that seemed to be in love.

Psittaculidae (Old World Parrots)

PESQUET'S PARROT (*Psittichas fulgidus*) – Fantastic!! We had three individuals--a singleton which John superhumanly spotted, and a pair--at Ok Menga. We had scope views of all of them feeding and being their generally bizarre selves, and the lone bird eventually gave a great flyby over the adjacent valley, showing off its unique wing pattern and flight style, all the while giving its gratuitously loud raspy honking calls. [E]

YELLOW-CAPPED PYGMY-PARROT (*Micropsitta keiensis*) – A few of these were talkatively flying over and around during our visits to Boystown Road, though as per usual they didn't perch very cooperatively. [E]

BUFF-FACED PYGMY-PARROT (*Micropsitta pusio*) – Heard only a couple of times on our second trip to Varirata. [E*]

PAPUAN KING-PARROT (*Alisterus chloropterus*) – We had some briefly seen flyovers on our first visit to Varirata, and then heard them in a couple of locations on our second visit to the park. [E]

ECLECTUS PARROT (*Eclectus roratus*) – These raucous parrots are always fun to see, regardless of how many times you encounter them. Our first view in the dawn sunlight along the entrance road to Varirata was fairly magical, and our view of a perched female in the same area on the final day was also quite memorable!

RED-CHEEKED PARROT (*Geoffroyus geoffroyi*) – Stellar views of a pair on our first afternoon driving to the west. They were common in all of our lowland birding venues, notably Boystown Road and Varirata.

BLUE-COLLARED PARROT (*Geoffroyus simplex*) – We heard their ringing sleigh bell-like vocalizations as they flew very high overhead at Ok Menga. [E]

PAINTED TIGER-PARROT (*Psittacula picta*) – A nice surprise was a blue-cheeked female feeding in the clearing below the lodge at Kumul during our first afternoon visit there. This high elevation tiger-parrot is a scarce one, and we encounter it less than annually. [E]

BREHM'S TIGER-PARROT (*Psittacula brehmi*) – Kumul remains THE best place in the world to see this species, and we enjoyed their greedy antics at the fruit feeder there. At least one individual would grab a piece of fruit almost the size of its body and drag it off the feeder and fly into the forest to work on it out of the sight of our judgmental eyes. [E]

MODEST TIGER-PARROT (*Psittacula modesta*) – A brief, but good, sighting at Murmur Pass of a nice male. Fortuitous timing, as it moved on in short order and didn't come back. [E]

YELLOW-BILLED LORIKEET (*Neopsittacus musschenbroekii*) – Two were perched in the lower clearing at Kumul, a rather high elevation for the species. We then had them on most days around Rondon. [E]

ORANGE-BILLED LORIKEET (*Neopsittacus pullicauda*) – We had looks at these several times at Murmur Pass. [E]

ORANGE-BREASTED FIG-PARROT (*Cyclopsitta gulielmitertii*) – A couple of brief sightings at Ok Menga, but excellent views of quite a few at Boystown Road, and then a few flying over at various points during our boat trip. [E]

DOUBLE-EYED FIG-PARROT (*Cyclopsitta diophthalma*) – Lots of them around Boystown Road, and we did finally get some out in the open for good scope views on a couple of occasions.

LARGE FIG-PARROT (*Psittaculirostris desmarestii*) – We got one of these feeding in the center of a large fruit tree along the Elevala River during our boat trip. [E]

PLUM-FACED LORIKEET (*Oreopsittacus arfaki*) [E]

RED-FLANKED LORIKEET (*Charmosyna placensis*) – A couple of flybys on our first afternoon at Ok Menga, and then fairly common at Boystown Road. [E]

PAPUAN LORIKEET (*Charmosyna papou*) – Some brief flybys (including a couple of dark morphs) at Murmur Pass, Kumul, and Rondon were our only experiences with these large, long-tailed lorikeets. [E]

YELLOW-STREAKED LORY (*Chalcopsitta scintillata*) – A few flying around at Boystown Road. [E]

BLACK-CAPPED LORY (*Lorius lory*) – Scattered around Ok Menga and at various locations around Kiunga. [E]

GOLDIE'S LORIKEET (*Psitteuteles goldiei*) – A few flybys at Ok Menga. [E]

RAINBOW LORIKEET (COCONUT) (*Trichoglossus haematodus nigrogularis*) – Around Varirata, and quite a few flying around at Kama.

PAPUAN HANGING-PARROT (*Loriculus aurantiifrons*) – A big surprise were a couple of these tiny parrots on one of our final birding stops of the tour, along the entrance road to Varirata. This is so infrequently encountered by groups that it was a lifer for Jay! [E]

Pittidae (Pittas)

HOODED PITTA (*Pitta sordida*) – Great listens and some brief views at K17. We saw it fly across the trail multiple times, and some folks were able to see it skulking through the forest just before each of those fly-throughs.

Ptilonorhynchidae (Bowerbirds)

BLACK-EARED CATBIRD (*Ailuroedus melanotis melanotis*) – We heard their raucous calls at a few spots along Boystown Road and at K17. As is the norm however, it never felt like we were close to seeing them. [*]

MACGREGOR'S BOWERBIRD (*Amblyornis macgregoriae*) – Most of the group got at least some view of this bird in the treetops on the lower slopes at Rondon, and some had very good views of a male with its yellow crest visible. [E]

FLAME BOWERBIRD (*Sericulus aureus*) – Holy flaming smokes did we have a great experience with this ball of fire!! We usually pick it up along Boystown Road, but often it is seen as just a flyby, or perching very briefly in the distance. This year, we had it fly across the road...and then into a fruiting Schefflera tree, where it fed for a few minutes, giving great scope views to all. It returned to the tree twice more, even being joined at points by a female and a subadult male. Simply phenomenal. [E]

YELLOW-BREASTED BOWERBIRD (*Chlamydera lauterbachi*) – The foothill and lower montane bowerbird, we had good views at and on the way back from Kama, and Doug and Ann had a vocal one around the cabins at Rondon during the final late morning there. [E]

FAWN-BREASTED BOWERBIRD (*Chlamydera cerviniventris*) – We got our best views of these at PAU and Sogeri, though we also had a few saying farewell to us from the flowering tree over the driveway of the lodge in Port Moresby on everyone's departure morning.

Maluridae (Fairywrens)

EMPEROR FAIRYWREN (*Malurus cyanocephalus*) – We had a male flitting around in the undergrowth along Boystown Road, and it seemed satisfied to simply shoot across the road without stopping on the edge. [E]

WHITE-SHOULDERED FAIRYWREN (*Malurus alboscipulatus naimii*) – The easy-to-see fairywren in New Guinea, it inhabits open areas from the lowlands up into the highland valleys. We saw two phenotypes, likely representing two different subspecies- one of these taxa has sexual monomorphism, where females in the other one have white underparts, as opposed to the uniform and concolorous black of the male.

WHITE-SHOULDERED FAIRYWREN (*Malurus alboscopulatus kutubu*)

Meliphagidae (Honeyeaters)

PLAIN HONEYEATER (*Pycnopygius ixoides*) – Some views at Ok Menga, but even better views at Boystown Road. [E]

MARBLED HONEYEATER (*Pycnopygius cinereus*) – Good views at a couple of spots along the road to the north of Kumul. [E]

STREAK-HEADED HONEYEATER (*Pycnopygius stictocephalus*) – Varirata and Boystown Road. [E]

SCRUB HONEYEATER (*Meliphaga albonotata*) – We heard a bunch of these chipping outside the airport in Tabubil, and then there was one around the cabins at Rondon Ridge one afternoon that a couple of people were around to see. [E]

MIMIC HONEYEATER (*Meliphaga analoga*) – Good views of and listens to this meliphaga on our first visit to Varirata. [E]

GRACEFUL HONEYEATER (*Meliphaga gracilis gracilis*) – Good studies of these all around the mound at Boystown Road.

ELEGANT HONEYEATER (*Meliphaga cinereifrons cinereifrons*) – It was windy as all get out on our first visit to Varirata, so we didn't get many proper looks at meliphagas, but during our final visit they were abundant throughout. [E]

BLACK-THROATED HONEYEATER (*Caligavis subfrenata*) – Chris and Sally got on one of these at Murmur Pass, and we saw one of them shooting around the trees as it sang at Kumul, but aside from those two encounters, we had just heard-onlys around Kumul and Rondon. [E]

OBSCURE HONEYEATER (*Caligavis obscura*) – A couple were calling and singing at the mound on Boystown, and we even had one perch in view a couple of times--a rare experience for this species, which is usually difficult to get good views of perched. [E]

ORNATE MELIDECTES (*Melidectes torquatus*) – This intricately patterned melidectes was seen at several mid-elevation locations, including great views at Kama and the next day along the Highlands Highway north of Kumul. [E]

BELFORD'S MELIDECTES (*Melidectes belfordi*) – The common high elevation melidectes, it was the most conspicuous species at Kumul, where its loud and varied vocalizations make up a significant portion of the soundscape. [E]

YELLOW-BROWED MELIDECTES (*Melidectes rufocrissalis*) – Seen quite a few times around Rondon. [E]

VARIED HONEYEATER (*Gavicalis versicolor versicolor*) – A couple of these big and strikingly plumaged honeyeaters during our visit to Lea Lea.

RUFOUS-BANDED HONEYEATER (*Conopophila albogularis*) – Very common and confiding at both Lea Lea and PAU.

SMOKY HONEYEATER (*Melipotes fumigatus*) – Everyone remembers their first Smoky Honeyeater (almost undoubtedly at the feeders at Kumul), but they became so much a part of our daily lives in the highlands that it's a good bet most folks don't remember their last one! [E]

LONG-BILLED HONEYEATER (*Melilestes megarhynchus*) – Cloudlands for some, but then Boystown Road for everyone. [E]

PAPUAN BLACK MYZOMELA (*Myzomela nigrita*) – Ok Menga and during our final visit to Varirata. [E]

ELFIN MYZOMELA (*Myzomela adolphinae*) – A brief view of a female along the Varirata entrance road, but then quite a few around Kama and Rondon, though at Rondon they were outnumbered in a big way by the next species. [E]

RED-COLLARED MYZOMELA (*Myzomela rosenbergii*) – The single most common passerine at Rondon Ridge, where they noisily filled up the canopy of most of the forest. [E]

YELLOW-STREAKED HONEYEATER (*Ptiloprora meekiana*) – We had this scarce ptiloprora on a couple of days at Rondon, though it didn't make it easy. [E]

RUFOUS-BACKED HONEYEATER (*Ptiloprora guisei*) – Murmur Pass and at the lower elevations of the forest above Rondon. [E]

GRAY-STREAKED HONEYEATER (*Ptiloprora perstriata*) – Common at Kumul. [E]

SILVER-EARED HONEYEATER (*Lichmera alboauricularis*) – Eventually got some excellent looks at this mangrove specialist endemic on our first afternoon at Lea Lea. [E]

WHITE-THROATED HONEYEATER (*Melithreptus albogularis*) – Along the Varirata entrance road on both of our visits.

TAWNY-BREASTED HONEYEATER (*Xanthotis flaviventer*) – A handful on our first visit to Varirata, and many at Ok Menga, Boystown Road, and along the rivers.

SPOTTED HONEYEATER (*Xanthotis polygrammus*) – A couple were working the canopies of some of the trees along the roadside during our first visit to Ok Menga. [E]

MEYER'S FRIARBIRD (*Philemon meyeri*) – This species came good on our second visit to Boystown Road. [E]

HELMETED FRIARBIRD (NEW GUINEA) (*Philemon buceroides novaeguineae*) – Excellent views of a very cooperative bird at PAU, quite a few in the Tabubil and Kiunga regions, and a few east of Moresby on our final day.

Acanthizidae (Thornbills and Allies)

GOLDENFACE (*Pachycore flavogriseum*) – Very vocal and responsive, but shockingly difficult to see up in the canopy. Most people eventually good looks at this tiny arboreal nugget of gold. [E]

RUSTY MOUSE-WARBLER (*Crateroscelis murina*) – Heard very well on our visits to Varirata as well as at Dablin Creek and Ok Menga. [E]

MOUNTAIN MOUSE-WARBLER (*Crateroscelis robusta*) – A reasonable amount of folks saw this skulking but loud forest dweller over the course of four observations scattered around the highlands. [E]

LARGE SCRUBWREN (*Sericornis nouhuysi*) – These were the scrubwrens we saw at the higher elevations, at Kumul. Just after a rainstorm one evening there was a flock of four or five very obligingly foraging in the tree right outside the lodge building, allowing for excellent and lengthy views. [E]

BUFF-FACED SCRUBWREN (*Sericornis perspicillatus*) – Very common in the forests at Rondon Ridge. [E]

PALE-BILLED SCRUBWREN (*Sericornis spilodera*) – A few of these very distinctive scrubwrens were along the Gary's Lookout trail on our final visit to Varirata. [E]

GRAY THORNBILL (*Acanthiza cinerea*) – Formerly called Mountain Gerygone, these frenetic, bite-sized nuggets were seen at Rondon a couple of times. [E]

GREEN-BACKED GERYGONE (*Gerygone chloronota*) – We heard their adamant up-and-down songs in several locations, and early in our first morning we got an atypically excellent view of this species which usually stays up in the high canopy.

FAIRY GERYGONE (*Gerygone palpebrosa*) – The most sharply dressed gerygone in all the land, we got good views of the boldly patterned males at both Varirata and Ok Menga.

YELLOW-BELLIED GERYGONE (*Gerygone chrysogaster*) – We frequently heard these common small-bird flock leaders in the lowlands, and were able to zero in visually on a few around the rail blind along the river. [E]

BROWN-BREASTED GERYGONE (*Gerygone ruficollis*) – Seen well by all just up the road from Kumul, and then seen by several folks at Rondon.

[E]

Cnemophilidae (Satinbirds)

LORIA'S SATINBIRD (*Cnemophilus loriae*) – Seen moving among a mixed flock on our first visit to the forest at Rondon. [E]

CRESTED SATINBIRD (*Cnemophilus macgregorii*) – Females on a couple of days at Kumul. [E]

Melanocharitidae (Berry-peckers and Longbills)

OBSCURE BERRYPECKER (*Melanocharis arfakiana*) – Reasonable scope views of this poorly known species at Dablin Creek. [E]

BLACK BERRYPECKER (*Melanocharis nigra*) – Varirata, where we had our best views on our second visit, and Boystown Road. [E]

MID-MOUNTAIN BERRYPECKER (*Melanocharis longicauda*) – Fairly common in the woods above the lodge at Rondon Ridge. [E]

FAN-TAILED BERRYPECKER (*Melanocharis versteri*) – Our best views of this, including the distinctively blue-green-colored male were right at the lodge at Rondon Ridge. [E]

YELLOW-BELLIED LONGBILL (*Toxorhamphus novaeguineae*) – Boystown Road. [E]

SLATY-CHINNED LONGBILL (*Toxorhamphus poliopterus*) – A few sightings of very flighty birds around Rondon, where it was heard not infrequently. [E]

SPECTACLED LONGBILL (*Oedistoma iliophorus*) – Heard a couple of times on both of our mornings at Varirata. [E*]

PYGMY LONGBILL (*Oedistoma pygmaeum*) – A very fun experience with a group of these tiny (less than 3 inches long!) things at Ok Menga. They're bite sized balls of energy, and they never stop moving! [E]

Paramythiidae (Tit Berrypecker and Crested Berrypecker)

TIT BERRYPECKER (*Oreotharis arfaki*) – A small flock in the treetops at Murmur Pass. [E]

CRESTED BERRYPECKER (*Paramythia montium*) – We saw these exceptionally slick looking birds every day at Kumul, including some really excellent views. They are one of two species in their family, and always a big target for us. [E]

Cinclosomatidae (Quail-thrushes and Jewel-babbler)

PAINTED QUAIL-THRUSH (*Cinclosoma ajax*) – A couple of individuals giving their high-pitched single-note call/song on both of our visits to Varirata. [E]

CHESTNUT-BACKED JEWEL-BABBLER (*Ptilorrhoa castanonota*) – We had a true jewel-babbler experience with this species on our first visit to Varirata. It came ever so close singing and calling very loudly (including some very cool vocalizations), but not one of us so much as saw a blur of movement from it. [E]

Machaerirhynchidae (Boatbills)

BLACK-BREASTED BOATBILL (*Machaerirhynchus nigripectus*) – What a cutie! Good looks at clearing in the ethereal cloud forest at Kumul, and then another couple at the foggy ridge top at Rondon. [E]

YELLOW-BREASTED BOATBILL (*Machaerirhynchus flaviventer*) – Most folks connected with this one at Ok Menga.

Artamidae (Woodswallows)

GREAT WOODSWALLOW (*Artamus maximus*) – We first had these highland-dwelling woodswallows around Tabubil, with the best views there coming at the Ok Menga hydro intake and at Cloudlands. [E]

WHITE-BREASTED WOODSWALLOW (*Artamus leucorynchus*) – A couple of cuddly pairs at Lea Lea and one gliding around at PAU were our first, and we didn't connect with any more good views until our very last birding stop of the tour, at Sogeri.

Cracticidae (Bellmagpies and Allies)

MOUNTAIN PELOPS (*Peltops montanus*) – Our first peltops were of this species around Tabubil, where we saw a few across multiple locations, with up to a half a dozen at Dablin Creek. [E]

LOWLAND PELOPS (*Peltops blainvillii*) – A few around Boystown Road and another one seen by a few while on the return leg of our boat excursion. [E]

BLACK-BACKED BUTCHERBIRD (*Cracticus mentalis*) – Some good ones at PAU, including one which not-so-nicely escorted a Variable Goshawk off the premises.

HOODED BUTCHERBIRD (*Cracticus cassicus*) – Brief views for some, but plenty of audio for all, on our first morning in the forest at Varirata. Then some views at both Boystown Road and along the Elevala River. [E]

BLACK BUTCHERBIRD (*Cracticus quoyi*) – Heard at Ok Menga and Varirata. [*]

Campephagidae (Cuckooshrikes)

STOUT-BILLED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina caeruleogrisea*) – Good views of a couple of these largest of the cuckooshrikes on our first visit to Varirata, and then another seemingly diminutive one that stirred some debate at Ok Menga. [E]

HOODED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina longicauda*) – Very good experience with five very noisy ones in the forest at Rondon. [E]

BARRED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina lineata*) – We finally caught up to these widespread cuckooshrikes on the final day at Varirata.

BOYER'S CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina boyeri*) – A few around Varirata, and spread thinly across all of our lowland locations between Tabubil and Kiunga. [E]

BLACK-FACED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina novaehollandiae*) – Huge numbers around Port Moresby on our first couple of days. These were migrant flocks consisting of birds that breed in Australia and then spend the Austral winter in New Guinea.

WHITE-BELLIED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina papuensis papuensis*) – PAU and then a couple of singles later on in the tour.

GOLDEN CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Campochaera sloetii*) – We ran into this uniquely colored cuckooshrike at Ok Menga and along the Elevala River. [E]

VARIED TRILLER (*Lalage leucomela*) – Repeated good views at Boystown Road, and then a few seen on the final visit to Varirata.

BLACK-BELLIED CICADABIRD (*Edolisoma montanum*) – We got scope views of three of these endemics that were up on the ridge at Rondon. [E]

PAPUAN CICADABIRD (*Edolisoma incertum*) – A pair of these endemics were our eleventh hour bird during our second visit to Ok Menga, just as we were about to leave. [E]

GRAY-HEADED CICADABIRD (*Edolisoma schisticeps*) – A group of 3 at Dablin Creek stuck around long enough for most people to attain scope views. [E]

BLACK CICADABIRD (*Edolisoma melan*) – A pair during our final visit to Varirata. [E]

Eulacestomatidae (Ploughbill)

WATTLED PLOUGHBILL (*Eulacestoma nigropectus*) – Heard only a few times at Rondon, but we eventually got exceptional views of a very responsive individual as we came back down from the ridge at Rondon. [E]

Pachycephalidae (Whistlers and Allies)

RUSTY PITOHUI (*Colluricincla ferruginea*) – A couple of loud family groups of these pale-eyed, rusty brown birds which are now classified as whistlers, rather than with the rest of the Pitohuis. [E]

LITTLE SHRIKETHRUSH (*Colluricincla megarhyncha*) – This "species" is one that will almost certainly be broken up into several species. We saw or heard it in several locations, representing perhaps two or three different taxa. We heard it at Varirata, heard it at Kama, heard it at the TNT office in Mount Hagen, and heard it and saw it multiple times at Rondon Ridge.

BLACK PITOHUI (*Melanorectes nigrescens*) – Very vocal in the lower forests around Rondon Ridge, and seen by a few folks on a couple of occasions. [E]

REGENT WHISTLER (*Pachycephala schlegelii*) – One of the high elevation whistlers, we saw them well around Kumul several times, and then also had them in the same location as Sclater's Whistler just below the ridge at Rondon, which made for a very interesting comparison. [E]

SCLATER'S WHISTLER (*Pachycephala soror*) – We had these several times around Rondon. [E]

BROWN-BACKED WHISTLER (*Pachycephala modesta*) – The most widespread forest whistler of high elevations. It took a few days for us to get our first, but thereafter we seemed to encounter them with just about every one of the frustrating canopy feeding flocks we ran into in the forests of the highlands. [E]

GRAY WHISTLER (GRAY-HEADED) (*Pachycephala simplex griseiceps*) – Spotted by Paul and seen by all on our first trip to Varirata, right at the Thicket-Fantail spot. We had a few more scattered throughout the park on our final day there as well.

WHITE-BELLIED WHISTLER (*Pachycephala leucogastra*) – Our final new bird added to the trip list, we got good views of one of these at the top of a casuarina as we left Varirata for the final time. [E]

BLACK-HEADED WHISTLER (*Pachycephala monacha*) – A pleasant surprise was a pair of these during our second visit to Ok Menga, and we also connected with them at Kama, which is a more classic spot for us to encounter them. [E]

Rhagologidae (Mottled Berryhunter)

MOTTLED BERRYHUNTER (*Rhagologus leucostigma*) – Frustratingly a heard only for most folks. We heard these at both Murmur Pass and Rondon Ridge (repeatedly), but as is typical for this species, they remained elusive for our eyeballs. Randy got a brief view of one during our final full day at Rondon, and then a few folks saw what was likely one blast in and disappear into a vine tangle right in front of the group the next day, never to re-emerge. [E]

Oreoicidae (Australo-Papuan Bellbirds)

RUFOUS-NAPE BELLBIRD (*Aleadryas rufinucha*) – Great views of very confiding adults and interestingly plumaged youngsters at Kumul, and also encountered at a couple of other locations including at Rondon. [E]

PIPING BELLBIRD (*Ornorectes cristatus*) – Formerly known as Crested Pitohui. The norm for experiences with this species is to hear their incessant, metronomic call without seeing the source. We stuck to this script by hearing it very well at close range at Ok Menga without coming close to laying eyes on it. [E]

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LONG-TAILED SHRIKE (NASUTUS GROUP) (*Lanius schach stresemanni*) – This snappy looker is the only shrike we see in the country, and it was fairly widespread in open areas in the highlands, including adjacent to the lodge at Rondon Ridge.

Oriolidae (Old World Orioles)

HOODED PITOHUI (*Pitohui dichrous*) – A snappy looking brown and black species, we saw several of these on our first morning walk through Varirata, and then a bunch more on our final visit there as well. It was one of the few species that showed as well during our first visit as it did on our final visit. [E]

VARIABLE PITOHUI (*Pitohui kirhocephalus*) – Heard only during our second visit to Ok Menga, and then at our land-birding site along the Ketu River. [E]

BROWN ORIOLE (*Oriolus szalayi*) – A few of this endemic oriolus on our first and last mornings at Varirata, a couple around Tabubil, and plenty around Kiunga. [E]

AUSTRALASIAN FIGBIRD (*Sphecotheres vieilloti salvadorii*) – This is the PNG endemic subspecies of this widespread Australian species, and we saw quite a few of them at PAU.

Dicruridae (Drongos)

SPANGLED DRONGO (*Dicrurus bracteatus*) – Quite a few around Varirata, and smaller numbers at the other lowland birding sites around Kiunga.

Rhipiduridae (Fantails)

BLACK FANTAIL (*Rhipidura atra*) – A pair at Dablin Creek played fairly hard to get, though most folks caught at least a glimpse of the rusty-colored female. [E]

NORTHERN FANTAIL (*Rhipidura rufiventris*) – Our evening visit to the road at Ok Menga produced brief views of one of these.

SOOTY THICKET-FANTAIL (*Rhipidura threnothorax*) – Awesome!! We saw this usually very skulky, almost phantom-like, bird on our first morning at Varirata. We eventually got excellent views of it, and got to watch and hear it sing very loudly and out in the open at close range. What a coup! [E]

WHITE-BELLIED THICKET-FANTAIL (*Rhipidura leucothorax leucothorax*) – Heard only at a couple of places along the Ok Menga road. [E]

WILLIE-WAGTAIL (*Rhipidura leucophrys*) – Will he or won't he? He always will.

RUFOUS-BACKED FANTAIL (*Rhipidura rufidorsa*) – A nice pickup in a feeding flock on our first visit to the road at Ok Menga. [E]

DIMORPHIC FANTAIL (*Rhipidura brachyrhyncha*) – Most folks got at least some view of this species over the course of a few encounters around Rondon Ridge, especially up at the clearing. [E]

FRIENDLY FANTAIL (*Rhipidura albolimbata*) – One of the more conspicuous species the high elevation forests. [E]

CHESTNUT-BELLIED FANTAIL (*Rhipidura hyperythra*) – We ran into mixed flocks containing these on our final day at Varirata. [E]

Ifritidae (Ifrita)

BLUE-CAPPED IFRITA (*Ifrita kowaldi*) – What a cool bird! It's easy to see why this chunky somewhat nuthatch-like passerine is in its own family. Their rubber ducky/squeaky toy sounds were a delightful accompaniment to their rich browns and blue. [E]

Monarchidae (Monarch Flycatchers)

GOLDEN MONARCH (*Carterornis chrysomela*) – What a spectacular bird! We got excellent views of a couple of them at the viewpoint along the road at Ok Menga. [E]

FANTAILED MONARCH (*Sympoiachrus axillaris*) – A few of these, also known as Black Monarch, were encountered in the lower forests at Rondon. [E]

SPOT-WINGED MONARCH (*Sympoiachrus guttula*) – Near the rail blind and at Varirata. [E]

FRILLED MONARCH (*Arses telescopthalmus*) – Our first ones were on our first visit to Varirata, with the first encounter being with a male and its big white neck cushion. [E]

LEADEN FLYCATCHER (*Myiagra rubecula*) – We managed to keep this one off the list until our penultimate birding stop, where we had a couple of pairs of these very sexually dimorphic flycatchers. The consensus seemed to be that the orange and blue-gray females were prettier than the matte black and dark gray males.

SHINING FLYCATCHER (*Myiagra alecto*) – These were hanging out very low along the water's edge during our boat trips.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

GRAY CROW (*Corvus tristis*) – Some distant birds flying around and perching on various hillsides across the river at a couple of vantage points around Ok Menga, and a few on the boat ride, but our best views were on our final day at Varirata, where we also got to hear them gregariously giving their decidedly un-corvidlike calls. At one point they all went into a tizzy and started giving the business to a poor unidentified hawk as it blasted through the forested ridge. [E]

TORRESIAN CROW (*Corvus orru orru*) – Common in the lowlands around Port Moresby.

Paradisaeidae (Birds-of-Paradise)

TRUMPET MANUCODE (*Phonygammus kerawrenii*) – A few around Boystown Road and the Elevala River.

CRINKLE-COLLARED MANUCODE (*Manucodia chalybatus*) – We heard a nicely calling male at Varirata, and some folks saw one flash over through the canopy nearby. [E]

GLOSSY-MANTLED MANUCODE (*Manucodia ater*) – Seen at Boystown Road, and heard on our final visit to Varirata. [E]

KING-OF-SAXONY BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Pteridophora alberti*) – Good scope views through the mist at the clearing above Rondon Ridge, where we also got to see those absurd head plumes trailing behind as it bounced overhead between perches. A king indeed! [E]

CAROLA'S PAROTIA (*Parotia carolae*) – A bit frustrating at Dablin Creek this year, with an exceptionally fleeting experience with a male and then a mediocre experience with a female that was burying herself while feeding in a fruiting tree. [E]

TWELVE-WIRED BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Seleucidis melanoleucus*) – A male around a display perch along the Elevala River, and a couple of brief views of brown female types flying over the river at various points. [E]

GREATER SUPERB BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Lophorina superba*) – We kept getting better and better experiences with this species through the tour. We had them at Kama and at several locations along the road near Kumul, and then truly spectacular looks at a male feeding low in a fruit tree at point blank range at Rondon. [E]

MAGNIFICENT RIFLEBIRD (*Ptiloris magnificus magnificus*) – A couple of these were around Ok Menga, with some reasonable in-flight views and a very good audial experience.

GROWLING RIFLEBIRD (*Ptiloris intercedens*) – We heard some good examples of growling on our first trip to Varirata, and a few folks had brief views of females or immature males. [E]

BLACK SICKLEBILL (*Epimachus fastosus*) – Frustratingly brief views of a male in the subcanopy of the large trees at the edge of the clearing atop Rondon Ridge, but it quickly departed, never to be seen again. [E]

BROWN SICKLEBILL (*Epimachus meyeri*) – Lots of views of a couple of female-types that were regularly coming into the Kumul feeders, and a displaying male flying all around at Murmur Pass. [E]

SHORT-TAILED PARADIGALLA (*Paradigalla brevicauda*) – A great male feeding in a Schefflera tree on our final morning hike at Rondon. [E]

STEPHANIE'S ASTRAPIA (*Astrapia stephaniae*) – A female at Murmur Pass, and then several times around Rondon. [E]

RIBBON-TAILED ASTRAPIA (*Astrapia mayeri*) – The bullies of the feeders at Kumul. We even had a reasonably mature male with pretty good white tail streamers. We got a kick out of the wing and tail noise produced when they fly, which often allowed us to detect them as they were incoming missiles targeting some other delightful bird which we were already watching. Despite this sometimes deplorable behavior, their iridescent faces were still a delight to have around. [E]

KING BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Cicinnurus regius*) – Excellent views of a male in the subcanopy near a display area at K17. We had already had one look at this guy, and then Paul spotted him coming back a few minutes later- after clambering up an exposed vine it settled in on another perch in the subcanopy that was happily in the open, and we were able to ogle it as it preened. Those concentric circles at the end of its tail plumes are truly something. [E]

MAGNIFICENT BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Cicinnurus magnificus*) – Their calls are fairly common around foothill forest, especially with second-growth, but we typically hear many more than we see. Views this year consisted of a good scope view of a female or an immature male at Ok Menga, and then a surprisingly clear, but sadly brief, view of an adult male atop a flowering tree at Dablin Creek. However, even this atypically in-the-open view would be eclipsed near Kumul Lodge a few days later, when a boldly yellow male flew into a fruiting tree we were watching and then foraged for a few minutes, allowing for excellent scope views of this gorgeous beast. Magnificent indeed. [E]

BLUE BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Paradisaea rudolphi*) – Gretchen spotted a male teed up in a Casuarina tree across the river near Kumul. We got some stellar scope views before it decided to fly directly at us and over our head, giving us a mindbogglingly good flight view. [E]

LESSER BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Paradisaea minor*) – A good show by the male at Kama and a couple of attendant females. [E]

RAGGIANA BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Paradisaea raggiana*) – Not much going on at the lek during our first visit to Varirata, though we had a great adult male perched up in the open on our first evening at Ok Menga. Luckily, our second visit to Varirata produced a very active displaying male. [E]

GREATER BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Paradisaea apoda*) – A great display by several males at KM17 at Kiunga. Tons of vocalizations from these guys in the forest there as well. [E]

Melampittidae (Melampittas)

LESSER MELAMPITTA (*Melampitta lugubris*) – An experience that was both frustrating and fulfilling in the forest at Kumul, which is fairly typical for this retiring species. We also had at least three individuals encircling us at the clearing above Rondon Ridge, though despite their proximity we never did lay eyes on them. [E]

Petroicidae (Australasian Robins)

LESSER GROUND-ROBIN (*Amalocichla incerta*) – Heard on the way down from the ridge top at Rondon. [E*]

TORRENT FLYCATCHER (*Monachella muelleriana*) – We had these at a couple of spots along the river at Ok Menga. [E]

LEMON-BELLIED FLYCATCHER (*Microeca flavigaster*) – This appropriately-named cutie was one of the first species we saw on our first excursion to Varirata. They're pretty closely tied to the savanna habitat, so the ones along the entrance road were the only ones we saw of the tour.

OLIVE FLYROBIN (*Microeca flavovirescens*) – A nice surprise on our way down the treehouse trail at Varirata during the afternoon of our second visit. [E]

PAPUAN FLYCATCHER (*Microeca papuana*) – Seen at Murmur Pass, Kumul, and Rondon Ridge. It is one of the less shy birds in the high elevation forests, so we got repeated good views of the species and its bright legs! [E]

GARNET ROBIN (*Eugerygone rubra*) – Heard singing from the canopy in front of us at the clearing above Rondon Ridge, but we never could lay eyes on it, perhaps in large part due to the fog. [E*]

WHITE-FACED ROBIN (*Tregellasia leucops*) – Nice views of this very active robin during our second visit to Varirata.

BLACK-SIDED ROBIN (*Poecilodryas hypoleuca*) – Reasonably good views in the woods near the rail blind. [E]

BLACK-THROATED ROBIN (*Poecilodryas albonotata*) – Very nice looks at Rondon. [E]

WHITE-WINGED ROBIN (*Peneothello suggillata*) – Seen frequently in the gardens and forest edge around Kumul. [E]

BLUE-GRAY ROBIN (*Peneothello cyanus*) – This was heard on several occasions, at both Murmur Pass and Rondon Ridge. [E*]

ASHY ROBIN (*Heteromyias albicularis*) – One flitting around the clearing at Murmur Pass. [E]

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

PACIFIC SWALLOW (*Hirundo tahitica*) – The go-to swallow throughout PNG.

Phylloscopidae (Leaf Warblers)

ISLAND LEAF WARBLER (*Phylloscopus maforensis*) – We got some very excellent looks at this down low, the lone phylloscopus on our list, along the road north of Kumul, at the Blue BoP site. We then would be led to mostly forget about that sighting when it became the second most common (after Red-collared Myzomela) passerine in the lower forests of Rondon. At Rondon they were numerous, but often frustrating, given that they spend most of their time so high in the canopy.

Locustellidae (Grassbirds and Allies)

TAWNY GRASSBIRD (*Megalurus timoriensis*) – Some real good views of birds in full-throated song at Kama, and then just up the road from Kumul.

Zosteropidae (White-eyes, Yuhinas, and Allies)

BLACK-FRONTED WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops minor*) – Brief views of a bird or two feeding on the distant flowering tree at Dablin. [E]

NEW GUINEA WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops novaeguineae*) – The birds we saw at Rondon could well have been this species, though white-eye taxonomy in New Guinea is far from settled. [E]

Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)

PIED BUSHCHAT (*Saxicola caprata*) – Common in open areas in the highlands.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

ISLAND THRUSH (*Turdus poliocephalus*) – Common at Kumul.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

METALLIC STARLING (*Aplonis metallica*) – Many in the Kiunga area, and especially abundant along the rivers.

YELLOW-EYED STARLING (*Aplonis mystacea*) – A few mixed in with Metallic Starlings along the river. We had a good look at a group of four perched in a dead tree on our way back to Kiunga. [E]

SINGING STARLING (*Aplonis cantoroides*) – A handful around Lea Lea and one quick flyby at PAU. Then mixed into the starling spectacle along the rivers during our boat trip.

YELLOW-FACED MYNA (*Mino dumontii*) – Some excellent views at PAU, and then a bunch around Ok Menga on our first evening there, when we got the full aural experience. [E]

GOLDEN MYNA (*Mino anais*) – Very good views of this specialty along the Elevala River. [E]

Dicaeidae (Flowerpeckers)

RED-CAPPED FLOWERPECKER (*Dicaeum geelvinkianum*) – Widespread throughout the country, we started seeing them on our first trip to Varirata, and we saw them every day thereafter.

Nectariniidae (Sunbirds and Spiderhunters)

BLACK SUNBIRD (*Leptocoma sericea*) – Very common in the lowlands around Kiunga.

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

AUSTRALASIAN PIPIT (AUSTRALIAN) (*Anthus novaeseelandiae australis*) – We finally came up with a number of these as we waited for our flight at the Mount Hagen airport.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – A few here and there around Port Moresby. Just a couple at PAU, where this introduced species have for the most part been swamped out by another introduced species in Eurasian Tree Sparrows. [I]

EURASIAN TREE SPARROW (*Passer montanus*) – Common in all major settled areas. [I]

Estrildidae (Waxbills and Allies)

MOUNTAIN FIRETAIL (*Oreostruthus fuliginosus*) – Real nice views of several of these high elevation specialists at Kumul. [E]

BLUE-FACED PARROTFINCH (*Erythrura trichroa*) – Reasonable views of a trio at the clearing at Murmur Pass, though they mostly would disappear, as Parrotfinches do, into the low weedy vegetation for long periods of time. We then encountered parrotfinches at multiple locations around Rondon, but they were always either brief views or birds that we heard without seeing. These were presumably Blue-faced as well, rather than the much rarer, but very similar and poorly known Papuan Parrotfinch.

HOODED MUNIA (*Lonchura spectabilis*) – The high elevation munia, these proved flighty and frustrating in the highlands until we got to Rondon. The largest flocks were seen on the road up to and down from Rondon, though they were around the lodge grounds in small numbers as well. [E]

GRAY-HEADED MUNIA (*Lonchura caniceps caniceps*) – A flock of around a dozen were playing hard to get in the grasses at PAU, but we all got very good views, in the nice late afternoon light at Sogeri.

MAMMALS

SPECKLED DASYURE (*Neophascogale lorentzii*) – A brief view of a very active one clambering through the trees at the clearing at Kumul. [E]

GREATER FLYING FOX (*Pteropus neohibernicus*) – We saw them at a day roost along the Elevala River during our boat trip. Later that evening, as we were making our way back to Kiunga via the Fly River, we got to watch dozens of them as they woke up and flew in various directions over the river, heading out to nocturnally forage and do whatever else it is that flying-foxes do when they're not lazily hanging upside down from trees.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 312 bird taxa and 2 mammal taxa