



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**Papua New Guinea 2019**

Jul 2, 2019 to Jul 20, 2019

Jay VanderGaast

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



*One of the first sights of the tour was a lek of Raggiana Birds-of-Paradise in Varirata National Park. These wonderfully showy birds have been in the park at this site for many years, and it's a great way to begin a tour full of splendid performers. Photo by guide Jay VanderGaast.*

Papua New Guinea provides simultaneously one of the most frustrating birding experiences in the world, and one of the most rewarding. Though the rewards of birding here are incredible--a simple riffle through the plates in the field guide is all that's needed to get an idea of all the mouth-watering possibilities--the frustration is not always appreciated. It is the frustration, after all, that makes the rewards all that much sweeter! As on every tour here, we experienced both aspects on a daily basis, though I'll only be highlighting the rewards we reaped here.

We kicked things off, as always, in the Port Moresby region, on the grounds of PAU, and at the fabulous Varirata NP. One of the undisputed highlights of that first couple of days was being able to observe several showy male Raggiana Birds-of-Paradise (henceforth BoPs) displaying at their long-used lekking area in the park. I think if we hadn't seen anything else of note that day, most would still have considered it an amazing day. But we did see more, with things like Zoe's Imperial-Pigeon, Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Papuan Dwarf-Kingfisher, Brown-headed Paradise Kingfisher, Barred Owllet-Nightjar, White-eared Bronze-Cuckoo, Hooded Pitohui and nesting Rusty Pitohui, and various honeyeaters, gerygones, and monarchs all contributing to make it a most memorable visit indeed. Our return trip to the park near the end of the trip was cut short by a delayed flight, but we still made the most of it, with fabulous views of Greater Black Coucal in the scope, a male Superb Fruit-Dove (also scoped), the odd little Drongo Fantail, and comical White-faced Robins all coming through to make our afternoon there worthwhile.

After our initial two days around Port Moresby, we headed west for the next week, birding at two venues near the country's western border, the drizzly foothill forests around Tabubil, and the steamy lowland forests at Kiunga. After a typically wet and foggy first day at Tabubil, the weather changed and the rest of our time in the west, and indeed most of the remainder of our time in PNG, was hot and sunny, making for some ideal viewing conditions, but putting a damper on bird activity overall. Still, the rewards were many and varied. At Ok Menga, we enjoyed a lone Salvadori's Teal on a boulder along the river, superb views of the bizarre, huge Pesquet's Parrot, a pair of Wallace's Fairywrens and a Rufous-backed Fantail in a mixed feeding flock along the road, a gorgeous pair of Golden Cuckooshrikes hunkered down nearby in the rain, and several female Magnificent BoPs, though the males gave us the slip this year. At Dablin Creek, we saw good numbers of Carola's Parotia, including several males with a full set of 6 wires, and had incredible scope studies of a group of colorful Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrots gleaning the branches of a nearby tree. And in Tabubil itself, rare scope views of a Papuan Hanging-Parrot just outside of our rooms were well worth interrupting our siesta for.

Meanwhile in the Kiunga region, we took a couple of boat trips along the Fly and Elevala Rivers, and birded traditional locales such as Boystown Road and Km 17, and we also visited a brand new birding trail along the Drimgas Road, that gave us a tantalizing glimpse of what the forest here has to offer. There were too many highlights to list them all here, but among them, standouts included the magnificent Sclater's Crowned-Pigeon perched quietly along the Elevala River, a flock of 51 enormous Blyth's Hornbills winging across the Fly River at dusk, stunning views of a Palm Cockatoo, with its spiky crest fully erect, along the new trail, a calling male Magnificent Riflebird, also at the new trail, and wonderful looks at a well-lit, fully in the open, male King Bird-of-Paradise along the km 17 trail.

The sunny weather followed us for the first few days in the highlands, though the good lighting was a welcome change from the wet and dreary conditions we often encounter here. We started off at the rustic Kumul Lodge, an excellent base for exploring habitats at various elevations. Birds-of-Paradise were among the big draws here, and we had some superb sightings of several, from a displaying male Lesser BoP at Kama to an unbelievably close and well-lit male Blue BoP at Tonga. Ribbon-tailed *Astrapia* delighted us at the feeders, despite the lack of any full-plumed males, and a long-tailed male Brown Sicklebill was much-appreciated at Murmur Pass. The supporting cast here was also superb: a shy, and rarely seen Bronze Ground-Dove that we all saw incredibly well; an unusually cooperative Feline Owlet-Nightjar in the forest at dusk; brilliant Orange-billed, Plum-faced, and Goldie's lorikeets; the local Yellow-breasted Bowerbird; a stunning male Crested Satinbird right behind our cabins; gorgeous Crested and Tit berrypeckers; a pair of unique Mottled Berryhunters (in their very own family) at a fruiting tree at Murmur Pass; an endearing family of equally unique Blue-capped Ifrits; and a surprisingly cooperative Lesser Melampitta.

Birding was tougher at our other highland venue, Rondon Ridge, but there, too, there were some memorable moments. Full-plumed males of both King-of-Saxony BoP and Stephanie's *Astrapia* at the ridge top were absolutely breath-taking, with both birds hanging around for long periods in fantastic viewing conditions. Several Greater Lophorinas lower down likewise offered unbeatable views as they fed in the numerous fruiting trees near the lodge. Daily views of the usually tricky Madaras's Tiger-Parrot were most welcome, as were pretty decent views of the shy MacGregor's Bowerbird (not to mention the beautiful ridgetop bower we saw). Yellow-streaked Honeyeater, a local specialty, played hard to get, but came through in the end, the usually skulking Lesser Ground-Robin didn't play hard to get at all, for a change, though it responded too quickly, and a male Wattled Ploughbill finally made an appearance for most of us. Oh, and we had what were my best-ever looks at a party of elusive Orange-crowned Fairywrens! All in all, I'd say our time in the highlands was a smashing success!

This trip had more than the usual array of challenges, especially due to the cold and congestion that affected most of us (me included) through much of the trip, but it could have been a whole lot worse if I hadn't had such an upbeat, delightful group of birders along for the ride. It was a great pleasure sharing both the frustration and the rewards (but mostly the rewards) with all of you, and I most definitely look forward to traveling with you all again one day. Till then, good birding to all!

-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)*

**PLUMED WHISTLING-DUCK** (*Dendrocygna cytoni*) – A down year for whistling-ducks, as this was the only species we saw, and we had just three on our first visit, and only a single bird on the second.

**RADJAH SHELDUCK** (*Radjah radjah*) – On the other hand, there were more of these handsome ducks around than I've ever seen before, mainly in the new rice paddies along the main road. They were easily in the double digits for the first time ever here.

**SALVADORI'S TEAL** (*Salvadorina waigiensis*) – This bird must have been behind a rock all along at Ok Menga, as after quite a long period of scanning, Steve calmly announced that he had one, and there it was on a rock not far below our vantage point. We all got pretty good views of it, but it would have been nicer if it had stuck around a little longer. [E]

**PACIFIC BLACK DUCK** (*Anas superciliosa*) – As always, there were loads of these at PAU.

**GRAY TEAL** (*Anas gracilis gracilis*) – A pair of these nondescript ducks were snoozing on the grass next to one of the PAU ponds on our first visit there. Rather scarce here, and my first records of Gray Teal at PAU came just last year, I think.

### *Megapodiidae (Megapodes)*

**YELLOW-LEGGED BRUSHTURKEY** (*Talegalla fuscirostris*) – Heard a bunch of times in the lowlands, but we never even got close. [E\*]

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

**BROWN QUAIL** (*Synoicus ypsilophorus*) – Val had a couple of these scurry across her patio during an afternoon break at Rondon Ridge, but we were unable to track them down in the nearby gardens the next day.

### *Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)*

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) – A couple of birds in Port Moresby on the first day were all we had. [I]

**AMBOYNA CUCKOO-DOVE** (*Macropygia amboinensis*) – These birds occur pretty much everywhere in the country, and we had a number of sightings from the lowlands right on up to the Kumul Lodge area.

**BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO-DOVE** (*Macropygia nigrirostris*) – Mainly a bird of montane forest, though I have also encountered this species in the lowlands. This trip we had daily views of them at Rondon, particularly around the fruiting trees. [E]

**BRONZE GROUND-DOVE** (*Alopecoenas beccarii*) – A very shy and difficult bird to see normally, but we had incredible views of a male as he fed in the clearing at Murmur Pass, and even posed long enough for scope views at one point! Prior to this, I had only ever seen this species at Kumul's feeders.

**PEACEFUL DOVE** (*Geopelia placida*) – The Port Moresby region is the only place for this species on the tour, and we found small numbers on the campus at PAU.

- PHEASANT PIGEON** (*Otidiphaps nobilis*) – Heard both at Varirata and near Tabubil, but I guess I'll have to wait for yet another trip before I finally lay eyes on one of these. [E\*]
- SCLATER'S CROWNED-PIGEON** (*Goura sclateri*) – We generally rely on our local guides to spot this fabulous large pigeon along the Elevala River, so I was more than a little pleased to have been the one to find it this trip. But, credit where credit is due-- I likely would not have seen it if the guides hadn't pulled up for a kookaburra they'd spotted, plus, they were the ones that refund the bird after it flushed while we were trying to get everyone on it. Luckily it stuck to the second perch for some long, satisfying views. [E]
- WOMPPOO FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus magnificus*) – Only a couple of us saw our only one on our first visit to Varirata, as it turned up at an inopportune time, just as we had located a paradise-kingfisher. The kingfisher was the right choice to focus on.
- PINK-SPOTTED FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus perlatus*) – Overall I thought fruit-dove numbers were lower than usual this trip, and while this species was still one of the more numerous, and we had some great looks, they didn't come quite as easily as they usually do. [E]
- ORANGE-FRONTED FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus aurantiifrons*) – We had roughly half a dozen of these on our first afternoon at PAU, which is usually the only place we see this lovely species. [E]
- SUPERB FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus superbus*) – Kathy spotted a distant, perched male at Dablin Creek, but no sooner did I scope it than it took off before anyone else got a look. Luckily, our only other one, also a male, was so much more cooperative, sitting out in the open for a long time on our second visit to Varirata.
- BEAUTIFUL FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus pulchellus*) – We had a few nice looks at these small fruit-doves at Tabubil and in the lowland forests around Kiunga. [E]
- WHITE-BREASTED FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus rivoli*) – Just one sighting of a male along the trails at Rondon Ridge. The views were pretty good, though the bird never stayed in view for more than a few seconds. [E]
- ORANGE-BELLIED FRUIT-DOVE** (*Ptilinopus iozonus*) – A trio of these were perched with the Orange-fronted Fruit-Doves at PAU on our first afternoon, and we saw a few more around Varirata and Kiunga. [E]
- PURPLE-TAILED IMPERIAL-PIGEON** (*Ducula rufigaster*) – The new lowland trail along the Drimgas Road at Kiunga came through with a couple of new sightings, including excellent scope views of our only one of these handsome pigeons. [E]
- PINON'S IMPERIAL-PIGEON** (*Ducula pinon*) – Small numbers were seen daily around Kiunga, with a couple of nice scope studies. [E]
- COLLARED IMPERIAL-PIGEON** (*Ducula mullerii*) – Generally the most numerous imperial-pigeon along the Fly and Elevala rivers, which is the only place we usually see these birds. Though there were still quite a few seen, the numbers seemed to be way down from most of my previous tours here. [E]
- ZOE'S IMPERIAL-PIGEON** (*Ducula zoeae*) – Seen mainly in the lowlands around Kiunga, though that first bird at Varirata was arguably the best, as it posed obligingly for a long photography session. [E]
- TORRESIAN IMPERIAL-PIGEON** (*Ducula spilorrhoa*) – A couple of pairs on the first afternoon at PAU was all for the trip, until we revisited PAU after the extension and saw a few more.
- PAPUAN MOUNTAIN-PIGEON** (*Gymnophaps albertisii*) – Despite the name, we saw these pigeons in the lowlands as much as in the highlands. Almost always in good-sized flocks, and we had a couple of flocks of about 80+ birds at Tabubil and Rondon Ridge. [E]

#### Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

- GREATER BLACK COUCAL** (*Centropus menbeki*) – Glimpsed a few times along the Elevala River, which was frustrating, but nothing unusual for this massive, but skulking species. The scope views we had of a pair of calling birds late in the afternoon at Varirata were exceptional, and easily my best views ever of this bird. [E]
- LESSER BLACK COUCAL** (*Centropus bernsteini*) – A calling pair along the road at Km 17 near Kiunga refused to show themselves. [E\*]
- PHEASANT COUCAL** (*Centropus phasianinus*) – Oddly scarce, and we only had brief views of a single bird in the savanna area along the road into Varirata.
- DWARF KOEL** (*Microdynamis parva*) – A calling male perched above the observation mound along Boystown Road gave us long, satisfying scope views. [E]
- PACIFIC KOEL (AUSTRALIAN)** (*Eudynamis orientalis cyanocephalus*) – Mostly seen as single birds flying across the river during our boat trips, but we did also have great scope views of a female perched across from the Boystown Road mound. We might have passed it off as the Dwarf Koel, which was still calling nearby, but luckily someone took the time to check it out and see that it was different!
- CHANNEL-BILLED CUCKOO** (*Scythrops novaehollandiae*) – This massive cuckoo is a winter migrant from Australia, and occurs in varying numbers from year to year. We didn't see great numbers, but we had a few good sightings of them flying past over the rivers during our boat trips.
- LONG-BILLED CUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx megarhynchus*) – A scarce and fairly poorly known cuckoo. We heard a couple of unresponsive birds along Boystown Road, then had rather poor views of a backlit bird perched along the Ketu River. The long-billed profile was distinctive though. [E]
- RUFOUS-THROATED BRONZE-CUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx ruficollis*) – Nice close looks at a pair of these highland cuckoos around the fruiting tree clearing on our first afternoon at Rondon. [E]
- WHITE-EARED BRONZE-CUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx meyerii*) – A very close female gave us great looks along the start of the Kauri Treehouse Track at Varirata. I'm sure this was my first record of this species in the park, and it was certainly Leonard's, who claimed it was a lifer for him! Later we also saw a male at Dablin Creek, and another at the new site above Ok Menga. [E]
- LITTLE BRONZE-CUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx minutillus*) – Our lone sighting was of a calling bird during our lunch stop at the rustic Kwatu Lodge.
- WHITE-CROWNED KOEL** (*Cacomantis leucolophus*) – In the past this species used to give me a lot of trouble, and it took me several trips to finally get a satisfactory look at one, but it seems like my luck has changed since then, and I've had several good views since, including on this trip, where we had nice scope views of one at the new birding site at Ok Menga. [E]
- CHESTNUT-BREASTED CUCKOO** (*Cacomantis castaneiventris*) – We had a couple of close, calling birds at Ok Menga, but just couldn't track them down to their perches. [\*]
- FAN-TAILED CUCKOO** (*Cacomantis flabelliformis excitus*) – Not uncommon in the highlands, where we heard them regularly and had lots of great views at a couple of birds that enjoyed hanging around the garden clearing at Murmur Pass.
- BRUSH CUCKOO** (*Cacomantis variolosus*) – We heard a lot of these before we finally tracked one down along the runway at Kiunga.

#### Podargidae (Frogmouths)

- MARBLED FROGMOUTH** (*Podargus ocellatus*) – A calling bird at dusk at the new lowland forest site near Kiunga refused to be lured out of the forest and into view. [\*]

**PAPUAN FROGMOUTH** (*Podargus papuensis*) – One of these was calling at the same time and place as the Marbled Frogmouth, but also refused to come out. But when a weird, mammalian screech was heard behind us, I turned and scanned the trees with my torch, and noticed a suspicious-looking clump of leaves, which turned out to be one of these. The lack of eyeshine on these birds always amazes me, given their resemblance to potoos. On our return visit to PAU after the New Britain extension, we targeted these birds, as folks wanted a better view, and after about 20 minutes of scouring the large rain trees, we finally spotted a pair snuggled up high in the canopy.

*Aegothelidae (Owlet-nightjars).*

**FELINE OWLET-NIGHTJAR** (*Aegotheles insignis*) – After striking out with the New Guinea Woodcock at dusk at Kumul, we made up for it by tracking down one of these elusive birds, mostly thanks to John, whose sharp eyes picked out a shadow flitting overhead, and then got me to direct my torch in the right direction to locate the bird perched above 20 feet above our heads. It was too bad that it was facing away from us, though we could make out the whiskers when it glanced our way just before taking off. [E]

**MOUNTAIN OWLET-NIGHTJAR** (*Aegotheles albertisi*) – The yapping dog calls of this small bird were heard at the same time and place as we had our Feline ON. [E\*]

**BARRED OWLET-NIGHTJAR** (*Aegotheles bennettii*) – Pretty much everyone that sees this species sees the very same ones at Varirata, as a couple of these birds have gotten quite accustomed to birders at the park, and simply peer out of their roost holes while numerous people ogle and click away with their cameras. These are the same ones we saw, though a third bird we found in another area of the park was maybe a little less famous. [E]

*Apodidae (Swifts).*

**PAPUAN SPINETAILED SWIFT** (*Mearnsia novaeguineae*) – Seen daily in the lowlands around Kiunga. Very differently shaped than Glossy Swiftlet, which is similarly glossy blue on the black, and which seems to be mostly absent in the Kiunga region. [E]

**GLOSSY SWIFTLET** (*Collocalia esculenta*) – Seen pretty regularly in the highlands, though mostly in fairly small numbers.

**MOUNTAIN SWIFTLET** (*Aerodramus hirundinaceus*) – Essentially impossible to tell apart from the next species in the field, so elevation is really the only way to identify this species, which, unsurprisingly, replaces Uniform Swiftlet at higher elevations. [E]

**UNIFORM SWIFTLET** (*Aerodramus vanikorensis*) – Especially numerous around Tabubil and along the rivers during the boat trips.

*Hemiprocnidae (Treeswifts).*

**MOUSTACHED TREESWIFT** (*Hemiprocne mystacea*) – We may not have gotten the hoped-for male Twelve-wired BoP on our second boat trip, but our only pair of treeswifts were a pretty nice consolation prize.

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

**BUFF-BANDED RAIL** (*Gallinallus philippensis*) – On the afternoon we returned from New Britain, we were about to leave PAU when Leonard texted me that there were some rails in the rice fields along the main road. It took us a couple of tries to find the right location, but once we did, we great views of 7 of these birds feeding out in the open.

**DUSKY MOORHEN** (*Gallinula tenebrosa*) – Only at PAU, where there were small numbers hanging around the ponds.

**AUSTRALASIAN SWAMPHEN** (*Porphyrio melanotus melanopterus*) – Also only at PAU and in the nearby rice paddies, where there were quite a few of them.

**RUFOUS-TAILED BUSH-HEN** (*Amaurornis moluccana*) – Heard along the runway at Kiunga, but stayed well out of sight. Though I've heard these plenty of times, I have yet to actually see one. [\*]

**WHITE-BROWED CRAKE** (*Amaurornis cinerea*) – A pair of these showed well at the same place as the Buff-banded Rails, making up for the 2 BB Rails we missed (Leonard and his group saw 9 of them).

*Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings).*

**MASKED LAPWING (MASKED)** (*Vanellus miles miles*) – Fairly numerous around PAU and the adjacent rice paddies, with at least one active nest beside one of the PAU ponds (and an aggressive male that nearly hit an oblivious me when I walked near the nest). [N]

*Jacanidae (Jacanas).*

**COMB-CRESTED JACANA** (*Irediparra gallinacea*) – Just a handful of birds, including some young, around the PAU ponds.

*Turnicidae (Buttonquail).*

**RED-BACKED BUTTONQUAIL** (*Turnix maculosus*) – Pretty decent looks at a pair we flushed by walking through the short grass adjacent to the Kiunga airport runway. In fact, I've never seen them any better than this.

*Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags).*

**LITTLE PIED CORMORANT** (*Microcarbo melanoleucos*) – Just one bird was noted at PAU among the many Little Black Cormorants, and only on our return visit after we got back from New Britain.

**LITTLE BLACK CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*) – As always, a bunch of these were arriving at their overnight roost next to the PAU ponds.

*Ardeidae (Hérons, Egrets, and Bitterns).*

**GREAT EGRET (AUSTRALASIAN)** (*Ardea alba modesta*) – Mainly at PAU, but there were also a handful along the Elevala River.

**INTERMEDIATE EGRET** (*Ardea intermedia*) – Small numbers at PAU and in the rice paddies. Best separated from the preceding species by size and the gape line, which stops under the eye on this one.

**PIED HERON** (*Egretta picata*) – Also seen only around PAU, with a single bird in the rice paddies on the first visit, then quite a few there and around the ponds (mainly subadult birds) as we passed by en route to Varirata and on our second visit to PAU.

**CATTLE EGRET (EASTERN)** (*Bubulcus ibis coromandus*) – I think this was probably the first bird for most of us in PNG, as large numbers of them were seen from the plane when we first landed. Elsewhere only seen around PAU and the rice paddies.

**RUFOUS NIGHT-HERON** (*Nycticorax caledonicus*) – A number of these handsome herons roost regularly in a large rain tree at PAU, though they can be surprisingly difficult to see despite the rather open canopy. But, as we saw, once you find the first one, you start noticing more and more of them hidden high in the foliage.

*Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills).*

**AUSTRALIAN IBIS** (*Threskiornis molucca*) – A single bird was at PAU on our first visit, then about 10 of them on our return visit after the New Britain extension.

*Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)*

**LONG-TAILED HONEY-BUZZARD** (*Henicopernis longicauda*) – Given our good fortune with this species, it may seem hard to believe that we sometimes struggle to get just one. This year we saw a total of 8 birds on 5 different days, with best views coming at Tabubil, where we had some decent scope studies of a couple of perched birds. [E]

**PACIFIC BAZA** (*Aviceda subcristata*) – Nice views of a single perched bird along the creek trail on our first morning at Varirata, but seeing a total of 8 birds along the Elevala River one morning was pretty sweet, especially given that one of the birds was performing an undulating display flight directly over the river.

**PYGMY EAGLE** (*Hieraaetus weiskei*) – One soared pretty much directly overhead as we watched the Lesser BoP at Kama, but as it came from behind us, our views were pretty much just of it soaring directly away from us. [E]

**VARIABLE GOSHAWK** (*Accipiter hiogaster*) – Seen only in the Kiunga region, where we had one or two daily, including one bird perched in exactly the same place, in the exact same position, on two consecutive mornings along the Elevala River.

**BLACK-MANTLED GOSHAWK** (*Accipiter melanochlamys*) – An uncommon smallish Accipiter of highland forests, and easily missed on any given tour, so seeing two of them was pretty good, even if neither sighting was especially wonderful. We had quick looks at a bird that buzzed by overhead as we birded around the smoke house clearing at Kumul, then again a few days later as we hiked up towards the ridge on our final morning at Rondon Ridge. [E]

**GRAY-HEADED GOSHAWK** (*Accipiter poliocephalus*) – Singles of these beautiful raptors were seen on three consecutive days at Tabubil and Kiunga, with scope views of one at the new Ok Menga site being our best. The next day at the Boystown Road mound we had one land almost directly overhead, though it took off quickly once it registered our presence. Finally, Lorna spotted one sitting atop a riverside tree along the Elevala River. [E]

**BLACK KITE (BLACK)** (*Milvus migrans affinis*) – Aside from a few birds in the Port Moresby area, we saw these only in the highlands, where they are pretty abundant. Rondon Ridge has even got them coming to their newly installed feeders now.

**WHISTLING KITE** (*Haliastur sphenurus*) – A couple of birds were patrolling the grassy runway verges at the Kiunga air strip.

**BRAHMINY KITE** (*Haliastur indus*) – Common and widespread, though there seemed to be few around Tabubil.

**WHITE-BELLIED SEA-EAGLE** (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) – Great views of three birds during our full day boat trip, with John picking out the first one circling high over the river.

*Strigidae (Owls)*

**PAPUAN BOOBOOK** (*Ninox theomacha*) – Our nightbird session at the new lowland forest site along the Drimgas Road started off strong, with great looks at one of these small owls that popped in shortly after dusk. It was to be the only one we saw on the trip, though we also heard one at Rondon Ridge. [E]

*Bucerotidae (Hornbills)*

**BLYTH'S HORNBILL** (*Rhyticeros plicatus*) – Numbers of this impressive, large bird were pretty low overall until that flock of 51 of them flew across the Fly River at dusk!

*Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)*

**PAPUAN DWARF-KINGFISHER** (*Ceyx solitarius*) – Leonard is pretty phenomenal at spotting these elusive small kingfishers, and he did it again this year, resulting in some smoking scope views of one on our first morning at Varirata!

**BLUE-WINGED KOOKABURRA** (*Dacelo leachii*) – A single bird perched out in the open at the Varirata Lookout was our only one until the very last day of the trip when we had another lone bird on our follow-up visit to PAU.

**RUFOUS-BELLIED KOOKABURRA** (*Dacelo gaudichaud*) – An absolutely stunning large kingfisher, seen beautifully on our first visit to Varirata, then again a couple of times around Kiunga. [E]

**FOREST KINGFISHER** (*Todiramphus macleayii*) – We tracked down a trio of these in the savanna along the entrance road to Varirata. Though winter migrants from Australia are also found here, these blue-backed birds belonged to the resident, nominate race.

**SACRED KINGFISHER** (*Todiramphus sanctus*) – Occurs here as a winter migrant from Australia. We had singles in the Tabubil area, along the Elevala River, and on the entrance road to Varirata.

**HOOK-BILLED KINGFISHER** (*Melidora macrorrhina*) – As ever, a tough bird to see, though it is relatively common by voice. We heard them a few times at Ok Menga and around Kiunga. [E\*]

**YELLOW-BILLED KINGFISHER** (*Syma torotoro*) – These aren't usually all that hard to see, and we struggled a bit more than usual, though we still came away with nice scope studies of one from the mound on Boystown Road.

**MOUNTAIN KINGFISHER** (*Syma megarhyncha*) – The highland replacement of the preceding species, and usually a lot tougher to see. Our only record was of a calling bird at Rondon Ridge that kept its distance. [E\*]

**COMMON PARADISE-KINGFISHER** (*Tanysiptera galatea*) – A bit flighty, and it took some stealthy tracking on our part to get a look, but we ultimately nailed some fine scope views of this beauty along the muddy trail near Kwatu Lodge. [E]

**BROWN-HEADED PARADISE-KINGFISHER** (*Tanysiptera danae*) – Superb studies of this gorgeous Varirata specialty on our first morning at the park. [E]

*Meropidae (Bee-eaters)*

**RAINBOW BEE-EATER** (*Merops ornatus*) – Though there are a couple of small breeding populations in PNG, including around Port Moresby, bee-eaters mainly occur here as an Austral winter migrant, and I believe all the ones we saw, both at Varirata and on the north slope at the Lesser BoP site, were migrants.

*Coraciidae (Rollers)*

**DOLLARBIRD** (*Eurystomus orientalis*) – A similar situation to the bee-eaters, with an uncommon breeding population generally outnumbered by Austral winter migrants, though in this case, there are different subspecies involved. We likely saw both subspecies, but we never really looked carefully enough at them. Aside from our first one on the PAU grounds, all of our many records came in the Kiunga region.

*Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)*

**BROWN FALCON** (*Falco berigora*) – Good scope views of a perched bird near the Lai River on our way back up to Kumul Lodge.

*Cacatuidae (Cockatoos)*

**PALM COCKATOO** (*Probosciger aterrimus*) – We'd had a series of so-so views of this spectacular bird around Kiunga, but not the satisfying looks everyone was hoping for; that is, until we visited a brand new birding trail along the Drimgas Road. There we tracked one down as it sat atop a palm tree (appropriately) and got amazing scope views as it raised and lowered its impressive crest, and posed for an extensive photo session.

**SULPHUR-CRESTED COCKATOO** (*Cacatua galerita*) – Not quite as numerous as they are in Australia, but still a pretty common bird, and we had a couple at Varirata as well as small numbers along the rivers near Kiunga.

*Psittaculidae (Old World Parrots)*

**PESQUET'S PARROT** (*Psittarchas fulgidus*) – A unique, scarce parrot which is sometimes placed in a separate family along with the vasa parrots of Madagascar. The road above the Ok Menga hydro intake has turned out to be one of the most reliable sites for this species, and we had some great looks at them both in flight, and perched in a rather distant fruiting tree. [E]

**RED-BREASTED PYGMY-PARROT** (*Micropsitta bruijnii*) – None of the pygmy-parrots are especially easy to see, so it was great to get such amazing views of about 10 of these colorful, tiny parrots as they foraged on a tree trunk along the Dablin Creek road.

**ECLECTUS PARROT** (*Eclectus roratus*) – A pretty common large parrot of lowlands and foothills, and we had numerous good views of them, particularly along the rivers at Kiunga.

**RED-CHEEKED PARROT** (*Geoffroyus geoffroyi*) – Another common, widespread parrot, which we saw numerous times, especially at Varirata and around Kiunga.

**BLUE-COLLARED PARROT** (*Geoffroyus simplex*) – A flock of these flew by low enough for us to get an accurate count (there were 13), but not in good enough light for us to see any color, and that's always been my experience with these birds. In fact, this flock at Dablin Creek was among the best views I've yet had of them! [E]

**BREHM'S TIGER-PARROT** (*Psittacella brehmii*) – All the tiger-parrots are rather inconspicuous, but this species is the easiest one to see, thanks to the feeders at Kumul, which attract a bunch of these in. We also saw some "wild" ones at Murmur Pass. [E]

**MADARASZ'S TIGER-PARROT** (*Psittacella madaraszii*) – A single bird along the Tonga Trail was poorly seen, and only by John and me, but we were in luck, as the fruiting trees just above the lodge at Rondon Ridge were attracting in a pair of them, and we had numerous good, close studies of them there. [E]

**YELLOW-BILLED LORIKEET** (*Neopsittacus musschenbroekii*) – Very similar to the next species, which mainly occurs at higher elevations, though they overlap extensively. We had a few of these along the road below Kumul Lodge, as well as a flock of 10 or more at Rondon Ridge. [E]

**ORANGE-BILLED LORIKEET** (*Neopsittacus pullicauda*) – Our only sightings were in the garden clearing at Murmur Pass, where we had excellent scope views of them feeding among the low weeds on the far side of the clearing. [E]

**ORANGE-BREASTED FIG-PARROT** (*Cyclopsitta gulielmitertii*) – Commonly seen in small groups around the Tabubil and Kiunga regions. There is some support for splitting this variable species into 4 different species, with this one (subspecies *fuscifrons*) falling into the Dusky-cheeked Fig-Parrot group. [E]

**PLUM-FACED LORIKEET** (*Oreopsittacus arfaki*) – A tiny, highland lorikeet which can be tough to track down, but we had several excellent looks at these delightful little birds as they scrambled around in flowering trees in the vicinity of Kumul Lodge. [E]

**RED-FLANKED LORIKEET** (*Charmosyna placentis*) – The common small lorikeet of the lowland regions around Kiunga, and we had a bunch of them perched near the mound along Boystown Road. [E]

**PAPUAN LORIKEET** (*Charmosyna papou*) – Scarce this trip, and our views weren't all that great, though we had a few whiz by overhead at Murmur Pass. [E]

**YELLOW-STREAKED LORY** (*Chalcopsitta scintillata*) – Mostly seen during our boat rides along the Elevala River, though our best views were of a perched pair near the mound on Boystown Road. [E]

**BLACK-CAPPED LORY** (*Lorius lory*) – Numerous both at Varirata and in the Kiunga region, and we had plenty of good views of these handsome birds. [E]

**GOLDIE'S LORIKEET** (*Psittuteles goldiei*) – A flock of 23 birds went by overhead at the Lesser BoP site, but weren't seen especially well, but that was remedied at Murmur Pass where we found a perched pair nearby and enjoyed some long scope views of them. [E]

**RAINBOW LORIKEET (COCONUT)** (*Trichoglossus haematodus nigrogularis*) – Rainbow Lorikeet was just split into 6 different species in the latest taxonomic updates (too late to change here), so this is now a good species, Coconut Lorikeet (*Trichoglossus haematodus*). They are common and widespread around PNG and we saw them regularly.

**PAPUAN HANGING-PARROT** (*Loriculus aurantiifrons*) – An afternoon siesta at Cloudlands Hotel in Tabubil was interrupted by the discovery of one of these hard-to-see small parrots perched just behind the hotel. Those that managed to rouse themselves in time were treated to excellent scope looks of a male, thanks to our local guides! [E]

*Pittidae (Pittas)*

**PAPUAN PITTA** (*Erythropitta macklotii*) – We heard one along the Elevala River, but couldn't disembark to give it an honest effort. [E\*]

**HOODED PITTA** (*Pitta sordida*) – We did give these an honest effort a couple of times but they still resulted in heard-only status. [\*]

*Ptilonorhynchidae (Bowerbirds)*

**MACGREGOR'S BOWERBIRD** (*Amblyornis macgregoriae*) – In addition to seeing a fantastic bower along the ridge-line above Rondon Ridge Lodge, we also connected with 4 birds in a fruiting tree on our final morning there, though they were surprisingly tricky to see well despite the meager foliage in the tree! [E]

**YELLOW-BREASTED BOWERBIRD** (*Chlamydera lauterbachii*) – A couple of birds put in appearances as we waited for the Lesser BoP to show, and John and I saw another bird near the rooms at Rondon Ridge. [E]

**FAWN-BREASTED BOWERBIRD** (*Chlamydera cerviniventris*) – Quite common in the savanna around Port Moresby, and especially easy to see at PAU, where they are numerous. As usual, we also got looks at one bird's neatly-constructed single avenue bower at PAU.

*Maluridae (Fairywrens)*

**WALLACE'S FAIRYWREN** (*Sipodotus wallacii*) – More arboreal than most other fairywrens. We had a very cooperative pair showing well along the road above Ok Menga. [E]

- ORANGE-CROWNED FAIRYWREN** (*Clytomyias insignis*) – A difficult to see bird of highland forest, where it frequents dense patches of scrambling bamboo. I have seen these birds a few times before, but never as well as we did on this trip. We heard them a couple of times on our way up to the top of Rondon Ridge, but they stayed frustratingly out of sight. Luckily, they made a close pass through the clearing at the top, and several of the birds made the mistake of popping out onto open perches and allowing us to see them, briefly, but beautifully! [E]
- EMPEROR FAIRYWREN** (*Malurus cyanocephalus*) – Another often frustrating, elusive fairywren. This species gave a few tantalizing glimpses in the riverside vegetation along the Elevala River, but was seen substantially better the following morning in the scrubby areas along the Kiunga airstrip. [E]
- WHITE-SHOULDERED FAIRYWREN** (*Malurus alboscapulatus*) – The only easy fairywren in the country, and, as usual, we had several excellent sightings in scrubby clearings, mainly in the highlands, though we saw our first ones at Dablin Creek. [E]
- Meliphagidae (Honeyeaters)*
- PLAIN HONEYEATER** (*Pycnopygius ixoides*) – Just one sighting of a lone bird in a fruiting tree at Varirata, though that bird showed nicely. The bird we saw belongs to the subspecies *finschi*, which is distinct from all other subspecies in that it is rufous brown in coloration compared to the duller, gray-brown of all other races. [E]
- MARBLED HONEYEATER** (*Pycnopygius cinereus*) – A somewhat local species of highland areas. Our only views were of a couple of birds along the Tonga Trail. [E]
- STREAK-HEADED HONEYEATER** (*Pycnopygius stictocephalus*) – Very similar in color and shape to both Brown Oriole and friarbirds, and could be overlooked, if it weren't for their loud, distinctive song. We had brief looks at one at PAU, then ran into these most days around Kiunga. [E]
- MOUNTAIN MELIPHAGA** (*Meliphaga orientalis*) – The Meliphaga honeyeaters provide the most challenging identification issues in all of PNG, and positive identification is not always possible. This bird is one of the easier ones, given that it mostly occurs above the elevational range of other species. We had some excellent studies of a couple of birds at the Lesser BoP site, noting the small size, slender bill, and small yellow ear patch. I believe the only other species to occur here is the larger, white-eared, Scrub Honeyeater. [E]
- MIMIC HONEYEATER** (*Meliphaga analoga*) – In general, this is one of the more common species, and one of the most easy to see. We had a few good views at Varirata, where there are at least a couple of other Meliphagas, though all the ones we saw well seemed to fit this species. [E]
- BLACK-THROATED HONEYEATER** (*Caligavis subfrenata*) – Can be common in the highlands when the right trees are in flower, and this year there were some, mainly at Murrum Pass, where we had excellent, repeated views of several at a very active flowering tree. [E]
- OBSCURE HONEYEATER** (*Caligavis obscura*) – The lowland counterpart to the above species. This one is generally pretty hard to observe, but we had clear views of one that perched briefly in the open near the mound on Boystown Road. [E]
- ORNATE MELIDECTES** (*Melidectes torquatus*) – A large, fancy honeyeater, this species is always a treat to see, and we were treated to pretty good views at the Lesser BoP site, then saw them even better as they fed at a fruiting Schefflera tree at Rondon Ridge. [E]
- BELFORD'S MELIDECTES** (*Melidectes belfordi*) – The common highland Melidectes, and very easy to see at Kumul Lodge, where it is noisy and conspicuous. [E]
- YELLOW-BROWED MELIDECTES** (*Melidectes rufocrissalis*) – Occurs at slightly lower elevations than the Belford's, but with some overlap and hybridization. This is the common Melidectes at Rondon, though we first saw them below Kumul Lodge. [E]
- YELLOW-TINTED HONEYEATER** (*Ptilotula flavescens*) – Primarily an Australian species; in PNG found only in the savanna regions along the coast in the Port Moresby area. We found a pair of these at PAU on our second visit there.
- RUFIOUS-BANDED HONEYEATER** (*Conopophila albogularis*) – Numerous at PAU, where we saw a bunch on both of our visits. Also a common species of northern Australia, though this one is much more widespread in PNG than the preceding bird.
- SMOKY HONEYEATER** (*Melipotus fumigatus*) – Abundant and easy to see in the mountains, and they almost get annoying after a while, as they always seem to be in the way when you're looking for scarcer species. Despite that, they are a lot of fun to watch at Kumul's feeders, where it's easy to see them "blushing". [E]
- PAPUAN BLACK MYZOMELA** (*Myzomela nigrita*) – A good trip for them at Varirata, where they are often scarce or absent. We saw at least a half a dozen of them on our first visit to the park, so apparently their preferred flowers were in bloom. [E]
- ELFIN MYZOMELA** (*Myzomela adolphinae*) – Val spotted our first, a male, along the Varirata entrance road, where they are uncommon and not always present. They are more numerous at higher elevations, and we saw a handful of these at both Kumul and Rondon. Old names included Mountain Red-headed Myzomela, a name that continues to cause confusion with Red-headed Myzomela (a mangrove bird) judging by the number of inland records of the latter species in Ebird! [E]
- RED-COLLARED MYZOMELA** (*Myzomela rosenbergii*) – These striking birds were pretty common and easily seen in the highlands, and we had pretty good numbers of them daily. [E]
- GREEN-BACKED HONEYEATER** (*Glycichaera fallax fallax*) – A drab, inconspicuous, and easily overlooked small honeyeater which actually more resembles a gerygone, though the honeyeater's pale eyes are distinctive. We had great scope looks at a couple in a fruiting tree in the picnic area at Varirata.
- YELLOW-STREAKED HONEYEATER** (*Ptiloprora meekiana*) – Rondon Ridge is the only place I've ever encountered this scarce species, and again, that's where we got them. It took some effort to finally get a good look, but we finally prevailed on our final morning at Rondon.
- RUFIOUS-BACKED HONEYEATER** (*Ptiloprora guisei*) – Similar to the next species, but occurs at slightly lower elevations. These were very common and seen easily at the clearing at Murrum Pass. We also had a few birds at the clearing on the top of Rondon Ridge. [E]
- GRAY-STREAKED HONEYEATER** (*Ptiloprora perstriata*) – Fewer than usual around Kumul Lodge, as the orange honeysuckle-like flowers they favor were scarce there this time around. Still we saw a few birds in what little honeysuckle remained. [E]
- WHITE-THROATED HONEYEATER** (*Melithreptus albogularis*) – Numerous in the eucalyptus savanna along the entrance road to Varirata.
- TAWNY-BREASTED HONEYEATER** (*Xanthotis flaviventris*) – A widespread species, and we saw them a number of times around Tabubil and Kiunga, as well as at Varirata. There are a bunch of subspecies of this thing, and we saw 2 (at least) with *giulianettii* at Varirata and another (perhaps *rubiensis*) in the west.
- SPOTTED HONEYEATER** (*Xanthotis polygrammus*) – An uncommon honeyeater of hill forest which we've seen only occasionally in the past, but which is regular around Tabubil. We had one each at Dablin Creek and the new site above Ok Menga, which seems to be a reliable place for this attractive species. [E]
- HELMETED FRIARBIRD (NEW GUINEA)** (*Philemon buceroides novaeguinae*) – Common and widespread except in the highlands, and we saw them often. Helmeted Friarbird is sometimes split into 3 species, with this being New Guinea Friarbird, a PNG endemic. The other forms would

include "Hornbill Friarbird" of NE Queensland, and "Helmeted Friarbird" of Australia's Northern Territory and the Lesser Sundas. This latter form could be split further into 3 different species, with the Sunda form and 2 different Australian taxa. It's all very complicated isn't it?

#### *Acanthizidae (Thornbills and Allies)*

**GOLDENFACE** (*Pachycare flavogriseum*) – A fine bird, but often a real pain in the butt, as it was this time. We heard one with a mixed flock on our second visit to Varirata, but it stayed high in the canopy and out of sight. [E\*]

**RUSTY MOUSE-WARBLER** (*Crateroscelis murina*) – Heard regularly at Varirata and around Tabubil, but we never found a cooperative one. [E]

**MOUNTAIN MOUSE-WARBLER** (*Crateroscelis robusta*) – The montane replacement of the preceding species, this bird is likewise vocal but often tricky to see, though we fared better with these, seeing them well a few times around Kumul. [E]

**LARGE SCRUBWREN** (*Sericornis nouhuysi*) – A small group of these were seen a few times right in the gardens of Kumul Lodge, where they are the default nondescript little brown bird. [E]

**BUFF-FACED SCRUBWREN** (*Sericornis perspicillatus*) – Occurs mainly below the elevational range of both Large and Papuan scrubwrens. We saw these first along the Tonga Trail, then encountered them regularly at Rondon Ridge. [E]

**PAPUAN SCRUBWREN** (*Sericornis papuensis*) – One or two were hanging around near the cabins at Kumul, and we heard their distinctive song, but never laid eyes on them. [E\*]

**PALE-BILLED SCRUBWREN** (*Sericornis spilodera*) – A constant tail-wagger, this scrubwren is one of the most distinctive birds in the genus. We saw a single bird probing in dead leaf clusters as it traveled with a mixed flock at Varirata. [E]

**GREEN-BACKED GERYGONE** (*Gerygone chloronota*) – Pretty nondescript, but with a lovely, unique song. We heard this bird at Varirata, and had pretty good looks at a combative pair from the mound at Boystwon Road.

**FAIRY GERYGONE** (*Gerygone palpebrosa*) – Overall gerygones are pretty unspectacular-looking birds, but this one is the exception to the rule, the male being quite a striking bird. We saw this species with mixed feeding flocks on both our visits to Varirata.

**YELLOW-BELLIED GERYGONE** (*Gerygone chrysogaster*) – A common member of mixed flocks in lowland and lower elevation hill forest, and we saw and heard them a few times in the Kiunga region and at Varirata, though for a bird with this name, you'd expect it to show a lot more yellow below! [E]

**LARGE-BILLED GERYGONE** (*Gerygone magnirostris*) – This gerygone mainly inhabits areas near water, and our only sightings came along the Elevala River during our boat trips.

**BROWN-BREASTED GERYGONE** (*Gerygone ruficollis*) – A common highland species with a lovely, tinkling song. We saw these birds regularly at both highland venues. [E]

#### *Cnemophilidae (Satinbirds)*

**LORIA'S SATINBIRD** (*Cnemophilus loriae*) – This former bird-of-paradise is fairly common in the highlands, and we saw a handful, always at fruiting trees. Our first was a glossy male along the roadside below Kumul Lodge, where we stopped to track down Tit Berrypeckers. Males were also seen on each of our visits to Murrumbidgee Pass. [E]

**CRESTED SATINBIRD** (*Cnemophilus macgregorii*) – A Kumul Lodge specialty, and though we often see the female here, the spectacular male is less often encountered. I think Kathy and Steve saw this one first, just before lunch one day, and we hurried out to find it in some fruiting trees just behind the cabins. This was one of the most cooperative males I've yet seen here, and we all enjoyed lengthy views of this beauty, and I'm hoping there were some good photos taken, too! [E]

#### *Melanocharitidae (Berrypeckers and Longbills)*

**BLACK BERRYPECKER** (*Melanocharis nigra*) – Pretty common in lowland and lower hill forest, and we had a few records. We saw these on both visits to Varirata, but our best view was of that female on a beautiful cup nest with 2 eggs, just over the new trail along the Dringgas Road. [EN]

**FAN-TAILED BERRYPECKER** (*Melanocharis versteri*) – Seen daily in the highlands, with especially good looks at several around the fruiting trees at Rondon Ridge. [E]

**YELLOW-BELLIED LONGBILL** (*Toxorhamphus novaeguineae*) – A common bird by voice in the lowland forest, but often a pain to see well. I think John was the only one to get on a vocal bird near the start of the Dringgas Road trail. [E]

**SPECTACLED LONGBILL** (*Oedistoma iliolophus*) – This one can also be a pain to see, though I hear them on almost every visit to Varirata. This trip we had a single bird on our second visit to Varirata, though only Val and John managed to lay eyes on it. [E]

#### *Paramythiidae (Tit Berrypecker and Crested Berrypecker)*

**TIT BERRYPECKER** (*Oreocharis arfaki*) – This and the next species make up a very small, endemic family despite the fact that they don't resemble each other in any way, other than they are both gorgeous birds. We made a stop along the roadside below Kumul where these birds are almost always present in some fruiting trees, and were rewarded with some great looks at these handsome birds. Our only other sightings were of a pair that same afternoon at Murrumbidgee Pass. [E]

**CRESTED BERRYPECKER** (*Paramythia montium*) – We cut it pretty close with this bird, and were forced to target them on our final morning at Kumul Lodge. But it was a fine farewell bird, and we had amazing views of one feeding in a fruiting Schefflera just off the lodge's viewing deck. [E]

#### *Cinlosomatidae (Quail-thrushes and Jewel-babblers)*

**CHESTNUT-BACKED JEWEL-BABBLER** (*Ptilorrhoa castanonota*) – The canceled flight from Mt Hagen to Port Moresby really hurt our chances with this species, which I had planned to target in the early morning at Varirata. We did make a valiant effort when we finally got to the park in the afternoon, and we were pretty darned close to seeing one, but in the end it just wouldn't show itself and we had to be content with hearing it, and certainly being seen by the bird. [E\*]

#### *Machaerirhynchidae (Boatbills)*

**BLACK-BREASTED BOATBILL** (*Machaerirhynchus nigripectus*) – These handsome little tody-flycatcher look-alikes were encountered a few times both at Kumul and Rondon Ridge. [E]

**YELLOW-BREASTED BOATBILL** (*Machaerirhynchus flaviventer*) – A regular member of mixed feeding flocks at Varirata, and we saw them on both of our visits to the park. These two birds make up the entirety of the boatbill family of birds.

#### *Artamidae (Woodswallows)*

**GREAT WOODSWALLOW** (*Artamus maximus*) – Replaces the similar White-breasted Woodswallow at higher elevations, where it can be locally common. We saw a number of these at Tabubil, mainly in the town itself, but with a couple of birds at the Ok Menga hydro intake, including one



perched on the crane, devouring a large, bright orange moth. [E]

**WHITE-BREASTED WOODSWALLOW** (*Artamus leucorhynchus*) – Unbelievably we actually missed this common lowland bird on the main tour, but managed to find a couple of them at PAU on our return visit after the extension.

*Cracticidae (Bellmagpies and Allies)*

**MOUNTAIN PELTOPS** (*Peltops montanus*) – The two peltops species are very similar in plumage and behavior, and are most easily told apart by elevation and their distinctive calls. This species gives a high-pitched twittering call (as compared to Lowland's clicking sound). We heard and saw these regularly around Tabubil. [E]

**LOWLAND PELTOPS** (*Peltops blainvillii*) – And this is the one that occurs around Kiunga, where we saw and heard one at the mound on Boystown Road, and saw a couple of others perched up along the Elevala River. [E]

**BLACK-BACKED BUTCHERBIRD** (*Cracticus mentalis*) – The common butcherbird of savanna areas around Port Moresby. We saw several of these on our first afternoon at PAU.

**HOODED BUTCHERBIRD** (*Cracticus cassicus*) – Common in lower elevation forests, and seen regularly in the Kiunga region, though our first was at Varirata. [E]

**BLACK BUTCHERBIRD** (*Cracticus quoyi*) – Quite common and easy to see around Tabubil. The birds out this way have very unique, melodic vocalizations, which seem to differ from those of other populations. Could be more than one species involved here.

*Campephagidae (Cuckooshrikes)*

**STOUT-BILLED CUCKOOSHRIKE** (*Coracina caeruleogrisea*) – Not so great views of a pair high in the canopy along the trails at Rondon Ridge. [E]

**BARRED CUCKOOSHRIKE** (*Coracina lineata*) – Aka Yellow-eyed Cuckooshrike. We saw this on both visits to Varirata, with best views of a female on the second visit. In the widespread PNG race *axillaris*, only the female is barred below, with the male being solid gray.

**BOYER'S CUCKOOSHRIKE** (*Coracina boyeri*) – Common throughout the lower elevation regions, and we often saw these in groups of 3-5 birds in noisy groups. I don't recall if anyone noted the rufous underwings, a feature shared only with the Stout-billed Cuckooshrike. [E]

**BLACK-FACED CUCKOOSHRIKE** (*Coracina novaehollandiae*) – A winter migrant from Australia (though there is a small breeding population in the Port Moresby region). Our only sighting was of a couple of birds in the scrub adjacent to the Kiunga air strip.

**WHITE-BELLIED CUCKOOSHRIKE** (*Coracina papuensis papuensis*) – A common and conspicuous bird of open habitats at almost all elevations. We had relatively few, but got good looks at PAU, along the Varirata entrance road, and near the Lai River below Kumul.

**GOLDEN CUCKOOSHRIKE** (*Campochaera sloetii*) – These gorgeous birds provide a nice departure from the predominately monochrome colors of most cuckooshrikes. We had excellent scope views of a pair at Ok Menga on both our visits there, then had a few along the Elevala River, and a final bird at the start of the Dringas Road trail. All in all a pretty good showing for this species. [E]

**VARIED TRILLER** (*Lalage leucomela*) – Singles were seen on 4 days, mainly around Kiunga, but with our initial sighting at Tabubil.

**BLACK-BELLIED CICADABIRD** (*Edolisoma montanum*) – We only saw one pair, but our views couldn't have been better, as the birds, particularly the male, popped out into a nearby tree at nearly eye level in front of our viewing spot at Murrumbidgee Pass! Easily my best views of these handsome birds. [E]

**COMMON CICADABIRD** (*Edolisoma tenuirostre*) – Our only one was a lone female along the Varirata entrance road on our first visit to the park. This species is comprised of numerous subspecies, and the taxonomy is uncertain, as there may be more than one species involved in the complex. We saw either the race *muellerii*, which may be a resident form, or the nominate, which may be a winter visitor from Australia, though these two may be better treated as a single subspecies. Complex indeed!

**GRAY-HEADED CICADABIRD** (*Edolisoma schisticeps*) – Common and easily seen in the Tabubil and Kiunga regions, where we saw them almost daily. [E]

**BLACK CICADABIRD** (*Edolisoma melan*) – Our only one was a male with a mixed flock at Varirata on our first visit to the park. [E]

*Eulacestomatidae (Ploughbill)*

**WATTLED PLOUGHBILL** (*Eulacestoma nigropectus*) – Somewhat mixed results with this bizarre specialty. We found one along the trails on our final morning at Kumul, but it was a dull, brownish juvenile. In fact, it looked more like a scrubwren until we got a good look at its bill, which left no doubt that it was a ploughbill. Good enough to count, but not really the kind of view one wants of such a cool bird. So, we continued to search for it at Rondon, and eventually, on our hike down from the ridge, we did manage to locate an adult male. But while I think everyone got a look, the views varied from awesome to so-so. Not the ideal result, but at least we did see the bird. [E]

*Pachycephalidae (Whistlers and Allies)*

**RUSTY PITOUI** (*Pseudorectes ferrugineus*) – Another in a long list of birds that can be a real problem to see well, but it wasn't much of an issue this trip, thanks to us finding one working on a nest on our first visit to Varirata. The bird made multiple visits to the nest, allowing us to each take a turn in watching it add material to the structure. I don't think I've ever had a better view than this. [EN]

**WHITE-BELLIED PITOUI** (*Pseudorectes incertus*) – Heard a few times calling from dense vegetation along the Elevala River, but each time we tried to call them in, they seemed to flee in the opposite direction, which isn't unusual in my experience with these birds. [E\*]

**GRAY SHRIKETHRUSH** (*Colluricincla harmonica*) – Heard on our first afternoon at PAU, but with all the new birds around, it kind of got lost in the shuffle. [\*]

**LITTLE SHRIKETHRUSH** (*Colluricincla megarhyncha*) – Though it was not a part of the recent taxonomy updates, there is a proposal afoot to split this species into 7 (at least) species, which means it's a good idea to keep track of subspecies seen. Though we heard others, the only ones we saw were at the Blue BoP viewing site along the Tonga Trail. The range limits of the different forms aren't 100% clear, but I believe the race at this site would be *tappenbecki*, which is slated to be split off with a couple of other forms as Sepik-Ramu Shrikethrush. We did hear Little Shrikethrush at Rondon Ridge as well, but from the available information, I can't work out what subspecies this might be.

**BLACK PITOUI** (*Melanorectes nigrescens*) – Last year these were very vocal at Rondon Ridge, and we heard them almost daily there. This year they were quiet, but we still managed a couple of good looks at females on two different days. [E]

**REGENT WHISTLER** (*Pachycephala schlegelii*) – Not as conspicuous as they usually are at Kumul, but we had a few nice sightings of this gorgeous whistler both there and up near the ridge top at Rondon. [E]

**SCLATER'S WHISTLER** (*Pachycephala soror*) – Tough this trip, and the only one we tracked down was on an afternoon walk at Rondon that only a couple of people joined me for. The bird was a male and it popped out several times, but each appearance was very brief, and I'm not sure anyone had a really satisfying look. [E]

**BROWN-BACKED WHISTLER** (*Pachycephala modesta*) – Pretty quiet for a whistler, and I rarely hear these birds sing, but we still managed a few nice looks at them feeding in the canopy of highland forest both at Kumul and Rondon. [E]

**GRAY WHISTLER (GRAY-HEADED)** (*Pachycephala simplex griseiceps*) – Regularly follows mixed flocks in hill forest, such as at Varirata, where we had a single bird on each of our visits to the park.

**BLACK-HEADED WHISTLER** (*Pachycephala monacha*) – Pretty common in areas of gardens with lots of casuarina trees, though it took us a few tries before we finally tracked down a pair along the road downslope from Kumul Lodge. [E]

*Rhagologidae (Mottled Berryhunter).*

**MOTTLED BERRYHUNTER** (*Rhagologus leucostigma*) – As this species is now in its own family, it has become a big target for many birders, and though it is not uncommon, it can be a real tough bird to see well. Luckily, this was not the case this trip, as we had excellent scope looks at both sexes (with the female being more distinctive) as a pair made several return visits to a fruiting tree across the clearing from our vantage point at Murrumbidgee Pass. The female even turned up much closer in another tree right next to our spot, so some, at least, also enjoyed much closer views of her. [E]

*Oreoicidae (Australo-Papuan Bellbirds).*

**RUFOUS-NAPED BELLBIRD** (*Aleadryas rufinucha*) – Formerly considered to be a whistler, but now aligned with two other species (Australia's Crested Bellbird, and Piping Bellbird, which was formerly thought to be a pitohui) in a three species family. This is a common bird of highland forests, and we saw them regularly, mostly at Kumul Lodge where several birds are often seen around the cabins. [E]

**PIPING BELLBIRD** (*Ornorectes cristatus*) – I hear the incredible voice of this bird on almost every visit to PNG, but I have only laid eyes on one. That didn't change this trip, as we only heard one calling on our second visit to the park. [E\*]

*Laniidae (Shrikes).*

**LONG-TAILED SHRIKE (NASUTUS GROUP)** (*Lanius schach stresemanni*) – The only member of this family (other than a couple of stray Brown Shrikes) to occur on the Australian side of Wallace's Line. We saw several in open country below Kumul and one at Rondon Ridge. Worth noting that this is an endemic subspecies, *stresemanni*, in case of potential splitting in the future.

*Oriolidae (Old World Orioles).*

**HOODED PITOHI** (*Pitohui dichrous*) – This is the famous "poisonous" pitohui, which has toxins in its skin and feathers. These were pretty easily seen at Varirata, where we had them on both visits. [E]

**VARIABLE PITOHI** (*Pitohui kirhocephalus*) – Another poisonous pitohui, and always a pain to see. We heard them near Kiunga. For your information, this is one of the species impacted by the recent taxonomic updates, and is now known as Southern Variable Pitohui (*Pitohui uropygialis*). [E\*]

**BROWN ORIOLE** (*Oriolus szalayi*) – We recorded fewer than usual, and heard more than we saw, but we did get a few good looks at these in the west, particularly around Tabubil. [E]

**AUSTRALASIAN FIGBIRD** (*Sphecotheres vieilloti*) – Local in the country, and we saw them only at PAU. Represented here by the endemic subspecies *salvadorii*.

*Dicruridae (Drongos).*

**SPANGLED DRONGO** (*Dicrurus bracteatus*) – Seen mainly around Kiunga, where we had them daily, with a few birds also at Varirata. Presumably all of our birds belonged to the endemic, resident subspecies *carbonarius*, which has been proposed as a good species separate from Australian forms, which do winter in the Trans-Fly lowlands of PNG.

*Rhipiduridae (Fantails).*

**DRONGO FANTAIL** (*Chaetorhynchus papuensis*) – One of the highlights of our return visit to Varirata was the incredible view we had of this interesting bird, which was long considered a drongo, but is now included in the fantail family. In the past I have found them to be a bit flighty and elusive, but our bird this year hung around in the open for a long time, allowing us long, unobstructed views, easily my best ever. [E]

**BLACK FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura atra*) – Pretty common in montane areas, though usually stays within dense vegetation and not an especially easy fantail to see. We recorded them at Dablin Creek, along the Tonga Trail, and at Rondon, and I think most folks managed to see at least one reasonably well. [E]

**SOOTY THICKET-FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura threnothorax*) – Thicket-fantails, as their name implies, are birds of dense vegetation, rarely sitting out in the open, and any view of a thicket-fantail is something of a victory. Thus our view of one flying across the road in front of us at Ok Menga qualifies as a major win. [E]

**WHITE-BELLIED THICKET-FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura leucothorax leucothorax*) – I must admit I'm getting a little tired of all the taunting and teasing from these birds around Kiunga, where we heard plenty of them but failed to get a win. [E\*]

**WILLIE-WAGTAIL** (*Rhipidura leucophrys*) – The fact that we failed to record this species on one day says more about our lack of effort that day than anything about its distribution or abundance. These birds are virtually everywhere.

**RUFOUS-BACKED FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura rufidorsa*) – One with a mixed-species flock at Ok Menga showed fairly well for most. [E]

**DIMORPHIC FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura brachyrhyncha*) – A few records each at Kumul and Rondon, with the best views coming from the clearing at the top of Rondon Ridge, where a pair offered up some close, clear views. Interesting that every one of our birds (about 8 in total) were of the "dark" morph, with the rufous-tipped dark tail. [E]

**FRIENDLY FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura albolimbata*) – One of the iconic highland species, seemingly in every flock, and usually one of the easiest to see. We saw them daily in the highlands, and many of them were indeed friendly! [E]

**CHESTNUT-BELLIED FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura hyperythra*) – Seems to be one of the nuclear species for mixed flocks at Varirata, and we had several of these lovely, active little birds on each of our visits. [E]

*Ifritidae (Ifrita).*

**BLUE-CAPPED IFRITA** (*Ifrita kowaldi*) – Another bizarre PNG special, so unique as to warrant its own family. We had some great looks at several that frequented the gardens around Kumul Lodge, and poorer views of a pair at the top of Rondon Ridge. [E]

*Monarchidae (Monarch Flycatchers).*

**BLACK-FACED MONARCH** (*Monarcha melanopsis*) – These handsome monarchs are winter visitors from their Australian breeding grounds. We saw just one, with a mixed flock, on our first visit to Varirata.

- FAN-TAILED MONARCH** (*Symphysichrus axillaris*) – Heard a few times at Rondon, but it was tough to pin down, and I think only John managed a look at this one. [E]
- SPOT-WINGED MONARCH** (*Symphysichrus guttula*) – At least three of these were seen well as they worked the lower levels of the forest while foraging with a mixed flock at Varirata. [E]
- FRILLED MONARCH** (*Arses telescopthalmus*) – Another regular follower of mixed flocks at Varirata, and we had these on both of our visits there, as well as a couple of sightings in the forests around Kiunga. [E]
- SHINING FLYCATCHER** (*Myiagra alecto*) – Common along the rivers in the lowlands, where oddly, we saw mostly females this trip. Seems most years we see far more males.
- Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)*
- GRAY CROW** (*Corvus tristis*) – Our first were very distant ones perched on a ridgetop near Tabubil (thank goodness for scopes). Our only other sighting was a marginally closer bird seen from the Boystown Road mound. [E]
- TORRESIAN CROW** (*Corvus orru orru*) – Common in the savanna regions around Port Moresby.
- Paradisaeidae (Birds-of-Paradise)*
- TRUMPET MANUCODE** (*Phonygamus keraudrenii*) – We heard plenty of their retching calls in the Kiunga lowlands, but saw just one bird from the mound on Boystown Road.
- CRINKLE-COLLARED MANUCODE** (*Manucodia chalybatus*) – We fared better with this one, seeing several around Kiunga, then getting good scope looks at one at the Kama Lesser BoP site. The bumpy head is a good feature to eliminate the other two possible species which both have smoothly rounded heads. [E]
- GLOSSY-MANTLED MANUCODE** (*Manucodia ater*) – Numerous around Kiunga, and heard and seen often. Most of the manucodes seen along the rivers on the boat trips were this species. We also regularly heard their songs, which sound a lot like the sound of a tuning fork. [E]
- KING-OF-SAXONY BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Pteridophora alberti*) – Though we saw a male at Murmur Pass, he didn't have a fully grown set of antennae, so, while he was beautiful, he wasn't as impressive as he could have been. Luckily, we had another male at the top of Rondon Ridge, and not only did he have an incredibly long pair of antennae, he stuck around for a long time, giving us numerous excellent scope views as he sat and performed his "sizzling bacon" call just above us. Some folks even got to see the lime-green mouth lining! A truly impressive bird. [E]
- CAROLA'S PAROTIA** (*Parotia carolae*) – Our first day at Tabubil was quite gray and drizzly, so the lighting wasn't as good as we were hoping. Still, despite the challenging conditions, we came away with some pretty decent looks at this area specialty, tallying about a dozen of them in a variety of plumages, including a couple of adult males, and several subadults that still retained much female-type plumage, but also showed the wires atop their heads. [E]
- LAWES'S PAROTIA** (*Parotia lawesii*) – John spotted a female at a fruiting Schefflera at Rondon, but it took off as he was trying to get the rest of us on it. Later the same day we heard another up on the trails, but were unable to bring it into view. [E]
- TWELVE-WIRED BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Seleucidis melanoleucus*) – Bum luck with this one, as despite being on-site at the display perch at the best times of day, the male just never showed up. We did however, get several good views of females. [E]
- GREATER LOPHORINA** (*Lophorina superba*) – The name might suck, but this is an incredible bird, and we were wowed by them plenty of times both below Kumul and at Rondon. The birds at Rondon were especially cooperative, and we had some stellar looks at these little beauties at the fruiting trees, and really got to appreciate their glowing turquoise shields and the lax feathers that form their cape. [E]
- MAGNIFICENT RIFLEBIRD** (*Ptiloris magnificus magnificus*) – The new trail along the Dringgas Road seems to be the best spot I've yet encountered for this species, as there were a few birds calling loudly there, and most of us got pretty good looks at one of the males. The voice of this one is so different from the next species that it's hard to believe they were considered to be the same species until only about a year ago!
- GROWLING RIFLEBIRD** (*Ptiloris intercedens*) – Heard regularly at Varirata, and while we never really got close to a calling male, we did have fine looks at a female on our first visit to the park. [E]
- BROWN SICKLEBILL** (*Epimachus meyeri*) – It's been a few years now since a male of this species has shown up at Kumul's feeders, but the females were still coming, and they are really something, too, arguably more striking than the male, really. We were also fortunate to get a male at Murmur Pass (though it was completely silent) and to get such amazing scope views of it, too! That is an impressively long tail on that bird! [E]
- STEPHANIE'S ASTRAPIA** (*Astrapia stephaniae*) – I tried to string one at Murmur Pass, but just couldn't turn a female-plumaged astrapia into this species. But no matter, as we had several at Rondon Ridge, beginning with an incredibly close young male at a fruiting Schefflera near the lodge, followed by a pair that stuck around the clearing on the ridge top for a good long while. This male had full, flowing tail plumes and was a real show-off, which we were quite happy about! [E]
- RIBBON-TAILED ASTRAPIA** (*Astrapia mayeri*) – Common around Kumul Lodge, including at the feeders, though the only adult male there had a pretty short tail, perhaps only about a foot in length. Still an incredibly gorgeous bird though. We did see a male at Murmur Pass that had a longer tail, maybe double that of the feeder bird, but even that is only about half the length of a full-plumed bird. It seems really variable from year to year as to what condition their tails are in, as I've had everything from full-tailed birds to males with no white tail plumes at all. [E]
- KING BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Cicinnurus regius*) – Conditions were pretty near perfect for seeing this bird on its display perch along the Km 17 trail, and it sure did not disappoint. After a fairly brief wait below his display tree, we soon had him in our sights, and I can honestly say I've rarely had better lighting conditions or a clearer view of this smashing little BoP! [E]
- MAGNIFICENT BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Cicinnurus magnificus*) – We heard plenty of males calling at Dablin Creek, Ok Menga, and Kama, but never managed to see a male, though we had several decent looks at females, particularly at one in a fruiting tree at Kama. This seems to often be the case with this species, though every once in a while you get lucky and get a good male. [E]
- BLUE BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Paradisaea rudolphi*) – I forgot to ask everyone for their list of their top birds of the tour, but I suspect this one would have gotten more than a few votes. After a breathless struggle up the steep Tonga Trail (made harder by the awful cold and chest congestion that swept through the group), we were ultimately rewarded with eye-popping views of the male perched in perfect light below us! I was even blown away, and I've seen plenty of these things! The female that turned up at the fruiting trees at Rondon wasn't too shabby either. [E]
- LESSER BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Paradisaea minor*) – Another one that put on a great show, even if he was all alone. This may just be a backyard bird for Wendy and Tatai, but it is a magnificent creature nonetheless, and so well-behaved! [E]
- RAGGIANA BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Paradisaea raggiana*) – As is usually the case, this was our first bird-of-paradise, and once again these birds put on an amazing show for us at their long-used lek at Varirata. What better way to kick off a tour but with long, unobstructed views of these stunning birds in full display? I just never get tired of watching these guys do their thing. [E]

**GREATER BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Paradisaea apoda*) – These guys didn't quite give us the same show as the Raggianas, and there were a few too many hybrids around, but there were at least a couple of what appeared to be male Greaters untainted by Raggiana blood among the hybrids, and they showed well enough even if we didn't really get a good display show. [E]

*Melampittidae (Melampittas)*

**LESSER MELAMPITTA** (*Melampitta lugubris*) – This is one of those skulking terrestrial forest birds that a guide expects to invest a lot of time in, perhaps without the reward of a sighting, so it was really sweet that we all got exceptionally good views of this species on our very first serious attempt! [E]

*Petroicidae (Australasian Robins)*

**LESSER GROUND-ROBIN** (*Amalocichla incerta*) – The first line of the above account also applies to this species, another highland inner forest ground-skulker. But surprisingly, this bird responded so quickly, and so well, that we almost weren't prepared when it popped out fully in the open next to the trail at Rondon Ridge! It didn't stay there for long, but it was in sight just long enough for the views to count as crippling! [E]

**TORRENT FLYCATCHER** (*Monachella muelleriana*) – Easy to find, easy to see, and simply beautiful, what's not to like about these birds? We had them along the rivers at Ok Menga and below Kumul Lodge. [E]

**LEMON-BELLIED FLYCATCHER** (*Microeca flavigaster*) – Regular in the savanna region along the Varirata entrance road, where we saw a couple on our first visit.

**OLIVE FLYROBIN** (*Microeca flavovirescens*) – Easily overlooked, as they're often quiet and don't draw a lot of attention to themselves. We had great looks at a pair along the road at Ok Menga, my first time seeing them in this region. [E]

**PAPUAN FLYCATCHER** (*Microeca papuana*) – I prefer the old name of Canary Flycatcher, but apparently I don't get a vote in this. Whatever you call it, we saw just one on our final morning at Kumul Lodge. [E]

**GARNET ROBIN** (*Eugeryone rubra*) – Heard at Kumul, heard at Rondon, and it ignored us in both places. [E\*]

**WHITE-FACED ROBIN** (*Tregellasia leucops*) – On the list of targets to track down on our second visit to Varirata, and the first bird to be struck from that list, as we got some great views of these delightful little robins along the Circuit Track.

**BLACK-SIDED ROBIN** (*Poecilodryas hypoleuca*) – We only heard one, along Boystown Road, and it stayed resolutely inside a dense tangle of vegetation. [E\*]

**BLACK-THROATED ROBIN** (*Poecilodryas albonotata*) – Fantastic looks at this handsome robin, on our first afternoon at Rondon, where it hung around the clearing with all the fruiting trees for a good long while. [E]

**WHITE-WINGED ROBIN** (*Peneothello sigillata*) – Common and easy to see around Kumul, with several, including some juveniles, hanging right around the lodge gardens. [E]

**WHITE-RUMPED ROBIN** (*Peneothello bimaculata*) – When a pair of Aussie birders told us they'd seen this species well at Tabubil, my first thought was that maybe we hadn't tried hard enough for the ones we heard there. Then they told me how long it took them to get a sighting, and I realized my first thought was correct. But then again, we don't have several hours to try to track down just one species! [E\*]

**BLUE-GRAY ROBIN** (*Peneothello cyanus*) – Two or three birds were hanging around the edges of the fruiting tree clearing at Rondon, but were trickier to get a look at than the Black-throated Robin that was also there. But we all ended up with fleeting, but extremely close views when a pair of birds barreled out of the forest and almost ran into us as they were so intent on chasing each other. [E]

**ASHY ROBIN** (*Heteromyias albispecularis*) – Up until a couple of years back, when a pair of these birds began turning up in the garden clearing at Murrumbidgee Pass, this was an incredibly difficult species to see. Now we just expect that we will get good looks, and we certainly did this trip. [E]

*Hirundinidae (Swallows)*

**PACIFIC SWALLOW** (*Hirundo tahitica*) – The only regularly occurring swallow through most of the country, and the only species we ever see. Often among the first birds one sees in PNG, as there are plenty of them at the airport.

*Phylloscopidae (Leaf Warblers)*

**ISLAND LEAF WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus maforensis*) – Common in the highlands, with most of our records coming from Rondon Ridge, where an active party of them were regular around the fruiting tree clearing.

*Locustellidae (Grassbirds and Allies)*

**TAWNY GRASSBIRD** (*Megalurus timoriensis*) – We talked a bit about this highland bird being split from Tawny Grassbird populations in Australia and elsewhere, and it has finally happened, giving the island another endemic species. We saw a couple in scrubby fields at Kama and elsewhere below Kumul Lodge.

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

**BLACK-FRONTED WHITE-EYE** (*Zosterops minor*) – These beautiful white-eyes are quite common at Varirata, though not always easy to see. We did have several good looks though, including fine scope views of a pair sitting quietly in the canopy, preening. [E]

**CAPPED WHITE-EYE** (*Zosterops fuscicapilla*) – A couple of big, busy flocks of these passed by a few times at Dablin Creek, foraging briefly in the same roadside fruiting tree several times. But, they never settled for long, and were not especially easy to see, though I think most got some kind of look at them. [E]

**NEW GUINEA WHITE-EYE** (*Zosterops novaeguineae*) – White-eyes were seen daily in the highlands both below Kumul Lodge and at Rondon, and all appeared to be the same type, which we believe is this species. There has been a fair bit of confusion surrounding these, though, as I have seen a couple of different types in the region, and it isn't completely clear which species these birds pertain to. For now, we're calling them New Guinea WE, but that could change in the future as more is learned about these birds. [E]

*Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)*

**PIED BUSHCHAT** (*Saxicola caprata*) – Common and widespread in open, scrubby habitat in the highlands, where they were seen daily.

*Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)*

**ISLAND THRUSH** (*Turdus poliocephalus*) – A couple of these were regulars at the fruit feeders at Kumul, the only place we saw them.

*Sturnidae (Starlings)*

**METALLIC STARLING** (*Aplonis metallica*) – Mainly around Kiunga, where loads of these were seen at dawn and dusk, winging low over the Fly and Elevala rivers, occasionally skimming the water's surface, either to drink, or bathe on the wing. We also saw a handful of these at PAU.

**SINGING STARLING** (*Aplonis cantoroides*) – For folks on the extension, these were the final new species of the tour, as we had to wait until getting into the departure area of the international airport before we finally found some, at their usual place on the jet bridge. I suspect John got them here too, if he was looking.

**YELLOW-FACED MYNA** (*Mino dumontii*) – Pretty common and widespread at lower elevations, and we saw plenty of them. [E]

**GOLDEN MYNA** (*Mino anais*) – Only seen along the Elevala River, where we had several pairs, but never one in really nice light. [E]

*Dicaeidae (Flowerpeckers)*

**RED-CAPPED FLOWERPECKER** (*Dicaeum geelvinkianum*) – These tiny birds can turn up at pretty much any of the sites we visit on this tour, and we usually record them on the majority of days. Our records this trip came mainly from the Kiunga region and the highlands. Though most were flyovers, or brief perched views, we did have a few good sightings sprinkled in as well.

*Nectariniidae (Sunbirds and Spiderhunters)*

**BLACK SUNBIRD** (*Leptocoma sericea*) – A common bird of the lowlands around Kiunga. If any of you got a nice look at a male in good light, you'll know that the name is something of a misnomer, as they are really glossy and colorful.

**OLIVE-BACKED SUNBIRD** (*Cinnyris jugularis*) – A couple of these were in the low scrub along the Kiunga air strip. The subspecies *frenatus* is the one found here in PNG, which is worth noting as this is another species that could be split into several in the coming years.

*Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)*

**AUSTRALASIAN PIPIT (AUSTRALIAN)** (*Anthus novaeseelandiae australis*) – Our only ones were a few birds on the verges of the runway at the airport in Mt Hagen. Sadly we weren't able to find the other airport specialty here, the harrier, which has just been split off as a good species, too.

*Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)*

**HOUSE SPARROW** (*Passer domesticus*) – A few birds at Mt Hagen airport were the only ones we saw. In many other areas of the country, it seems the much more recently established Eurasian Tree Sparrow has managed to push these birds out. [I]

**EURASIAN TREE SPARROW** (*Passer montanus*) – Common and widespread in urban areas all over the country. First records date back to about 2006 in Port Moresby, and as recently as in 2013, our tour found only 3 birds at the airport, and another 2 at Tabubil (first records there, I think!). [I]

*Estrildidae (Waxbills and Allies)*

**MOUNTAIN FIRETAIL** (*Oreostruthus fuliginosus*) – A couple of birds at Kumul Lodge were seen daily around the gardens and parking area. [E]

**CRIMSON FINCH** (*Neochmia phaeton*) – About a half a dozen of these were in the scrubby fields along the Kiunga region, only the second time I've seen this species in the country.

**HOODED MUNIA** (*Lonchura spectabilis*) – In the highland regions we visit, this is the only likely munia to be seen, and we had them daily in the Kumul region. [E]

**GRAY-HEADED MUNIA** (*Lonchura caniceps*) – Restricted to the eastern end of the island, and the common munia species in the Port Moresby region. We had quite a large flock of them (50+) at PAU. [E]

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## MAMMALS

**LOWLAND RINGTAIL POSSUM** (*Pseudocheirus canescens*) – The possum we saw along the Drimgas Road while trying to get a look at a frogmouth seems to have been this version of a Ringtail Possum.

**GREATER FLYING FOX** (*Pteropus neohibernicus*) – Lots of these huge bats were flying over at dawn and dusk during our boat rides on the Fly and Elevala rivers.

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## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

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**Totals for the tour: 278 bird taxa and 2 mammal taxa**