

# PEREGRINE BIRD TOURS

## PAPUA NEW GUINEA

4 – 23 August 2006

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Papua New Guinea is home to the most spectacular bird family in the world; the fabulous Birds-of-paradise. With a great deal of patience, a little skill and some luck, we were able to enjoy sightings of 15 species of birds-of-paradise, including males of all species and several species showed us their remarkable displays.

The tour started in earnest at Mt. Hagen Airport where we enjoyed good flight views of Black Kite and a female Eastern Marsh Harrier, before flying on to Kiunga. Kiunga is a typical frontier town and serves as the shipping port for the huge OK Tedi mine. It is situated on the west bank of the Fly River, in a remote part of central New Guinea near the border with Irian Jaya; it is the gateway to the third largest expanse of lowland tropical rainforest on earth. Only Amazonia and the Ituri Forest in the Congo Basin are larger in area. In the afternoon we visited the 17 kilometre post sanctuary, an area of primary lowland rainforest. The highlight here was undoubtedly observing the spectacular display of Greater Birds-of-paradise. We observed several males dancing and displaying to females in the open canopy of the forest, it was an amazing spectacle and we were very fortunate to witness it. We then watched an open area along the forest edge and highlights included Great Cuckoo-Dove, super scope views of both Pink-spotted and Orange-bellied Fruit-Doves, Zoe Imperial-Pigeon, several flocks of Papuan Mountain Pigeons, Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Lowland Peltops, Trumpet Manucode, which is a species of bird-of-paradise and best of all, good looks at the seldom seen Lesser Black Coucal.

The following morning we explored an area of grassland near the airstrip; here we saw Great Egret, Whistling and Brahminy Kites, a wintering Swamp Harrier, Palm Cockatoo, Papuan Spine-tailed Swift, Rainbow Bee-eater, White-breasted Woodswallow, Bare-eyed Crow and best of all, a small flock of Streak-headed Mannikins. In the afternoon we were sliding around in our 4-wheel drive vehicles heading along the muddy Boystown track, where, from a strategically chosen viewpoint, we watching the comings and goings of a wide variety of species. These included Variable and Grey-headed Goshawks, Stephan's Dove, Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove, Pinon Imperial-Pigeon, Dusky Lory, Red-flanked Lorikeet, Pesquet's and Eclectus Parrots, Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, Brush Cuckoo, Australian Koel, Blyth's Hornbill, Black-tipped Cuckoo-shrike, Meyer's Friarbird, Long-billed and Tawny-breasted Honeyeaters, Black Sunbird, Metallic Starling, Hooded Butcherbird and best of all, fairly distant flight views of the seldom seen Flame Bowerbird.

A full day along the Elevala River began with dozens of Greater Flying Foxes and a displaying male Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise. Along the edge of the river we saw Little Pied Cormorant, Striated Heron, a very co-operative Black Bittern, several Pacific Bazas, a couple of White-bellied Sea-Eagles and no less than three separate sightings of the main target bird of the day, the spectacular Southern Crowned-Pigeon, the largest species of pigeon in the world. We observed many species of birds flying across the river, these included Collared and Purple-tailed Imperial-Pigeons, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Orange-breasted Fig-Parrot, Channel-billed Cuckoo and Sacred Kingfisher. We enjoyed good sightings of several perched birds which included Moustached Treeswift and Golden Myna. A short walk through the seasonally flooded forest produced Spot-winged and Frilled Monarchs, Mimic Honeyeater and Yellow-bellied Longbill. A stop along the riverbank to search for the fabulous King Bird-of-paradise produced great looks at a superb full-plumaged Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher before eventually enjoying great scope views of a male King Bird-of-paradise, which left us speechless.

The following morning we returned to the Boystown track viewpoint for another morning session. We enjoyed great scope views of Beautiful Fruit-Dove, the seldom seen Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo, both male and female Black Cuckoo-Shrikes and Varied Triller. A small flock of Yellow-streaked Lories, flew overhead and we enjoyed good sightings of Emperor Fairywren and Ruby-throated and Plain Honeyeaters. In the late afternoon we returned to the 17 kilometre post sanctuary, where we walked through the lowland rainforest. There were plenty of birds but they were very hard to see. The afternoon was saved by a small mixed-species feeding party which included Yellow-bellied Gerygone, Chestnut-backed Fantail, Yellow-gaped Honeyeater and the very uncommon Wallace's Fairywren. Great spotting by our local guide Samuel, enabled us to enjoy super scope views of the seldom observed Dwarf Fruit-Dove.

We spent the early morning back at the 17 kilometre post sanctuary where we watched large numbers of Greater Birds-of-paradise displaying along with smaller numbers of Raggiana Birds-of-paradise and we also saw a small flock of Rufous Babbler. We then flew back to Port Moresby, where we did some birding at Brown River and in an area of eucalypt woodland. New birds for the trip included Australasian Grebe, Little Black Cormorant, Intermediate and Cattle Egrets, Rufous Night-Heron, Green Pygmy-goose, Pacific Black Duck, Dusky Moorhen, Masked Lapwing, Pheasant Coucal, Common and Forest Kingfishers, Tree Martin, White-shouldered Fairywren, Yellow-bellied Sunbird, the highly localised Grey-headed Mannikin, Chestnut-breasted Mannikin, Black-backed Butcherbird, Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, Magnificent Riflebird and Torresian Crow.

Before dawn the following day we flushed a Papuan Frogmouth from the road and enjoyed excellent looks at perched Large-tailed Nightjars in the vehicles headlights. At first light we watched a small group of Raggiana Birds-of-paradise display, before walking one of the excellent walking trails in Varirata National Park. Despite the shyness of New Guinea birds, we did rather well. We saw Wompoo Fruit-Dove, Greater Black Coucal, Variable Dwarf Kingfisher, no less than four sightings of the normally very uncommon Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher, a delightful Rusty Mouse-warbler,

Variable Pitohui and Black Butcherbird. In the clearing around the picnic area we added Glossy Swiftlet, Blue-winged Kookaburra, the delightful Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Boyer's, Yellow-eyed and Black-bellied Cuckoo-shrike, Hooded and Rusty Pitohui's, Papuan Flowerpecker, Black-fronted White-eye and best of all a New Guinea Eagle. On the way back to Port Moresby we stopped at an area of rice paddy where we watched a large flock of Pied Herons and added Emerald Dove and White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike to our ever growing list.

A morning flight took us to Mt. Hagan in the Western Highlands; from here the road climbed steadily, and just above the tree-line we saw our first Pied Chats. We continued on to Kumul Lodge, which at 2,850 metres is the highest lodge in Papua New Guinea and home to many high montane rainforest specialities, which are endemic to this area. The lodge has a policy of providing fruit for the birds, which means that many species can be easily seen from a verandah at the lodge. Species we saw included Papuan Lorikeet, Brehm's and Painted Tiger-Parrots, Island Thrush, Black-breasted Boatbill, White-winged Gerygone, Belford's, Smoky and Black-backed Streaked and Rufous-backed Streaked Honeyeaters, Fan-tailed and Crested Berrypeckers and three species of Birds-of-paradise, Brown Sicklebill, Ribbon-tailed Astropia and the stunning Crested Bird-of-paradise, which we saw very well. In the late afternoon we walked one of the narrow trails through the moss-encrusted oaks and southern beeches, where we saw the seldom seen Chestnut Forest-Rail, Blue-capped Ifrita, Papuan Scrubwren, Friendly Fantail, Regent and Sclater's Whistlers, Black Sittella and the delightful Mountain Firetail.

The following morning we birded around the lodge; Mountain Mouse-warbler and Large Scrubwren, were feeding on the forest floor and above us in the canopy we saw Dimorphic Fantail, Yellow Flycatcher, Black-throated Robin and Brown-backed Whistler. A pair of Rufous-naped Whistlers showed very well in the garden, and in the open grassland we enjoyed good sightings of Tawny Grassbird. In the afternoon we did some birding in the Minum Valley where we added Mountain Swiftlet, Long-tailed Shrike, Rufous-breasted Gerygone, River Flycatcher, Ornate Honeyeater, New Guinea Woodswallow, Hooded Mannikin and the very range restricted Yellow-breasted Bowerbird. There was also a surprise find of a Great Cormorant, a rare visitor to New Guinea, from Australia.

Another full day spent birding in the Minum Valley; we had only just left our vehicle and were already admiring a small flock of New Guinea White-eyes, when a stunningly plumaged Black-mantled Goshawk flew across a large open area, before disappearing into the forest. At a slightly higher elevation we came across a mixed species feeding flock which included Buff-faced Scrubwren, New Guinea Thornbill, Black Fantail, Mountain Yellow-eared Honeyeater and both male and female Tit Berrypeckers. Suddenly a Short-tailed Paradigalla flew across an open area and landed in a tree on the edge of the forest, unfortunately, as Chris found it in the telescope, the bird flew deeper into the forest, never to be seen again. A short time later a male Blue Bird-of-paradise flew across an opening and also disappeared into the forest. As we walked deeper into the mossy forest we stumbled across a small flock of Blue-faced Parrotfinches. Deep inside the forest a King-of-Saxony Bird-of-paradise could be heard displaying in the

canopy. Following a great deal of searching we enjoyed great scope views of a male bird singing high in the canopy, with its elongated head plumes swaying from side-to-side, it was a wonderful sight. We descended back to the road to find a male Stephanie's *Astrapia* in a nearby tree, which rounded the day off perfectly.

The following day we drove to the small village of Amdi where we were treated to a sing-sing with many of the villagers wearing traditional ceremonial dress, decorated with many kinds of birds-of-paradise feathers, cassowary plumes and parrot wings. We then enjoyed lunch with the villagers before driving on to Kundiawa, where we spent the night. In the grounds of the lodge we enjoyed our only sighting of Mountain Red-headed Honeyeater.

Today we drove back to the village of Amdi and did some birding in a steep sided valley, where the forest was still mainly intact. Here we enjoyed good scope views of a Brown Goshawk, followed by several perched Bar-tailed Cuckoo-Doves, Black-throated Gerygone, Black-headed Whistler and Singing Starling. However, the real highlights here were two more species of birds-of-paradise; we enjoyed super looks at a displaying Superb Bird-of-paradise and good looks at the very uncommon Magnificent Bird-of-paradise. We drove back to Kundiawa, to pick up our suitcases before driving to Mt. Hagan, where we spent the night. At Kundiawa, Chris saw a Swinhoe's Snipe flying around the airstrip.

A morning flight took us back to Port Moresby, in the afternoon we were supposed to connect with a flight which would take us to Hoskins, in New Britain. Unfortunately, the flight was cancelled and we had to overnight in Port Moresby.

Early the following morning we flew to Hoskins via Wewak and Madang, at Kimbe Bay we settled in at the very comfortable Laimo Reef Resort. In the afternoon, just outside the resort we came across a large flock of endemic Buff-bellied Mannikins. We then spent the rest of the afternoon birding along the Kulu River and enjoyed a very pleasant afternoons birding. Most of the lowlands of this part of New Britain have been transformed into sterile African Oil Palm plantations but the small tract of lowland rainforest along the Kulu River held good numbers of birds. We enjoyed good scope views of Red-knobbed and Torresian Imperial-Pigeons and the endemic Blue-eyed Cockatoo. A migrant Common Sandpiper was seen on a small jetty in the river and large flocks of White-rumped Swiftlets were flying over the river. Other birds of interest included a Rufous-tailed Bush-hen, which we watched for a long time in the scope, Eastern Black-capped Lories showed well, as did the Northern Fantail. Still more endemics were seen well, these included the very attractive Pied Coucal, New Britain Friarbird and White-backed Woodswallow.

Much of the following day was spent birding in the Garu Wildlife Management Area, which has been set aside to protect the colony nesting Melanesian Scrubfowl. We flushed several of these birds before enjoying good scope views of a bird perched in a tree. The birding proved to be hard going but we did see the endemic Violaceous Coucal and the local race of the Common Cicadabird.

The following morning we drove to Hoskins Airport, where there were Pacific Golden-Plovers on the airstrip. From New Britain we flew to Kavieng in New Ireland, for a three nights stay at the pleasant Malagan Beach Resort. In the afternoon we visited the local airport where we enjoyed great scope views of the endemic Hunstein's Mannikin. We then drove to the nearby village of Aalus, where a small boy from the village took us birding. Here we enjoyed a large flock of Lesser Frigatebirds, Osprey, White-bibbed and Red-knobbed Fruit-Doves, Red-tinted Honeyeater, and Bismarck Flowerpecker.

Leaving before dawn the following morning, we drove to Lalipass in Central New Ireland, at an altitude of 900 metres. The local landowner took us birding and we saw Collared Kingfisher, Shining Flycatcher and two highland endemics, the gorgeous New Ireland Drongo and the rarely seen Black-headed White-eye. A walk along the beach near the village of Pinicudu, in the lowlands produced a solitary Grey-tailed Tattler.

We spent the following morning birding in lowland swamp-forest close to the village of Kaut. Here we added more local endemics which included Green Pygmy-Parrot, Song Parrot and the seldom seen Bismarck Pied Monarch. We also enjoyed good looks at a pair of Mangrove Golden Whistlers. A walk along the beach produced great scope views of the very uncommon but very attractive Beach Kingfisher.

A second morning in the swamp-forest at Kaut added Superb Fruit-Dove and Little Kingfisher. Before, reluctantly bidding farewell to the land of the most beautiful birds in the world, the resplendent birds-of-paradise.

## **SYSTAMATIC LIST**

#### PRODICIPEDUIDAE

**Australasian Grebe** *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae* Seen at a disused gravel pit, not far from Brown River, near Port Moresby.

#### PHALACROCORACIDAE

**Little Black Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris* Small numbers also present at the disused gravel pit.

**Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo* Surprisingly, an adult bird was observed flying above the river in the Minum Valley, not far from Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen. Infrequently recorded in New Guinea, this species is a scarce, irregular visitor from Australia.

**Little Pied Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax melanoleucus* Small numbers present at a few wetland areas.

#### FREGATIDAE

**Lesser Frigatebird** *Fregata ariel* Good numbers present during our time in New Ireland.

#### ARDEIDAE

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba* Scattered sightings throughout the tour.

**Pied Heron** *Egretta picata* Approximately 30 birds observed at the rice paddy close to Port Moresby, these birds are non-breeding visitors, from Australia.

**Intermediate Egret** *Egretta intermedia* Small numbers present around Port Moresby

**Eastern Reef-Heron** *Egretta sacra* A dark morph bird was seen by Chris, close to Rabaul Airport, on New Britain, followed by a second sighting of a dark morph bird near the village of Kaut, on New Ireland.

**Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis* Good numbers in the Port Moresby area.

**Striated Heron** *Butorides striatus* Three birds were noted along the Elevala River, this species only occurs inland along the Fly River and its major tributaries.

**Rufous Night-Heron** *Nycticorax caledonicus* Seen on one occasion at Brown River.

**Black Bittern** *Ixobrychus flavicollis* No less than five sightings throughout the tour; the first along the Elevala River, followed by a second sighting in New Britain and three further sightings in New Ireland.

#### ANATIDAE

**Green Pygmy-goose** *Nettapus pulchellus* Small numbers present at the gravel pit, close to Brown River.

**Pacific Black Duck** *Anas superciliosa* Small numbers around Port Moresby and New Britain.

#### PANDIONIDAE

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus* Good numbers present in New Ireland.

#### ACCIPITRIDAE

**Pacific Baza** *Aviceda subcristata* Good sightings along the Elevala River, in Varirata

- National Park, New Britain and New Ireland.
- Long-tailed Buzzard** *Hemicopernis longicauda* Observed by Robert on one occasion, near Kiunga.
- Black Kite** *Milvus migrans* Many sightings throughout the tour.
- Whistling Kite** *Haliastur sphenurus* Small numbers present around Kiunga and Port Moresby.
- Brahminy Kite** *Haliastur indus* Commonly encountered throughout all lowland areas of New Guinea.
- White-bellied Sea-Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucogaster* Two along the Elevala River and a couple seen well in New Ireland, it is always a great bird to see.
- Eastern Marsh-Harrier** *Circus spilonotus* A few good sightings throughout the tour.
- Swamp Harrier** *Circus approximans* Small numbers winter in the Trans-Fly region of southern New Guinea, we observed a solitary bird very well at Kiunga Airport.
- Variable Goshawk** *Accipiter hiogaster* A few good sightings throughout the tour.
- Brown Goshawk** *Accipiter fasciatus* One bird observed in flight close to Kundiawa and on the same day we enjoyed good scope views of a perched bird, near the village of Amdi.
- Black-mantled Goshawk** *Accipiter melanochlamys* This species is endemic to the highlands of New Guinea, we saw an adult bird in flight, in the Minum Valley, close to Kumil Lodge.
- Grey-headed Goshawk** *Accipiter poliocephalus* This distinctive species of accipiter was seen well on two occasions at Kiunga.
- New Guinea Eagle** *Harpyopsis novaeguineae* Great flight views of this impressive raptor soaring briefly in Varirata National Park. This species is listed as vulnerable in 'Threatened Birds of the World'.

#### FALCONIDAE

- Oriental Hobby** *Falco severus* One bird present at Kimbe Bay, in New Britain.

#### MEGAPODIDAE

- Melanesian Scrubfowl** *Megapodius eremita* Good numbers present in the Garu Wildlife Management Area, on New Britain. Walking through the colony was quite an experience.

#### RALLIDAE

- Chestnut Forest-Rail** *Rallina rubra* A little-known forest inhabiting species of the central mountains of New Guinea. Some of us were fortunate enough to see it well at Kumil Lodge.
- Buff-banded Rail** *Gallirallis philippensis* Seen briefly by Robert, on New Ireland.
- Rufous-tailed Bush-hen** *Amaurornis moluccanus* Spectacular, prolonged scope views of a solitary bird preening along the edge of the Kulu River, near Kimbe, in New Britain. Great spotting by Dennis.

- Australian Swamphen** *Porphyrio melonotus* A few in the Port Moresby area.

- Dusky Moorhen** *Gallinula tenebrosa* Seen well in the Port Moresby area.

#### CHARADRIIDAE

- Masked Lapwing** *Vanellus miles* Good sightings in the Port Moresby area.

**Pacific Golden-Plover** *Pluvialis fulva* A small flock observed at Hoskins Airport, in New Britain.

#### SCOLOPACIDAE

**Swinhoe's Snipe** *Gallinago megala* A solitary bird was observed by Chris, as it flew around the airstrip at Kundiawa.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* Many good sightings in both New Britain and New Ireland, of recently arrived birds, from the northern hemisphere.

**Grey-tailed Tattler** *Heterosceles brevipes* Small numbers present along the beaches of New Ireland, having also recently arrived from the northern hemisphere.

#### STERNIDAE

**Great Crested Tern** *Sterna bergii* A bird in non-breeding plumage was observed well along the beach, near Kaut, in New Ireland.

#### COLUMBIDAE

**Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia* Present in Port Moresby and Mt. Hagen.

**Slender-billed Cuckoo-Dove** *Macropygia amboinensis* Many good sightings throughout the entire tour.

**Bar-tailed Cuckoo-Dove** *Macropygia nigrirostris* Mainly a bird of the higher mountains, we enjoyed good scope views at Amdi Village, near Kundiawa and again at Lalipass, in the mountains of central New Ireland.

**Great Cuckoo-Dove** *Reinwardtoena reinwardtii* A few good flight views during the tour, this species never seems to perch!

**Emerald Dove** *Chalcophaps indica* A single bird was observed in flight at the rice paddies, just outside Port Moresby.

**Stephan's Dove** *Chalcophaps stephani* Commonly encountered in the lowlands.

**Peaceful Dove** *Geopelia placida* Seen around Port Moresby.

**Southern Crowned-Pigeon** *Goura scheepmakeri* This beautiful species, is the largest pigeon in the world. They are found only in the forests of southern New Guinea and one or two satellite islands. They are rapidly becoming very rare due to excessive hunting. We enjoyed super looks at three different individuals during our boat trip along the Elevala River. This species is listed as vulnerable in 'Threatened Birds of the World'.

**Wompoo Fruit-Dove** *Ptilinopus magnificus* Seen perched on one occasion in Varirata National Park, although fairly common in the lowlands, it is seldom seen.

**Pink-spotted Fruit-Dove** *Ptilinopus perlatus* Good numbers observed around Kiunga and in Varirata National Park.

**Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove** *Ptilinopus aurantiifrons* Great scope views of a male bird, during our time at Kiunga.

**Superb Fruit-Dove** *Ptilinopus superbus* Only observed on the last day of the tour, at Kaut, in New Ireland.

**Beautiful Fruit-Dove** *Ptilinopus pulchellus* Great scope views on a couple of occasions, at Kiunga.

**White-bibbed Fruit-Dove** *Ptilinopus rivoli* Great scope views on a couple of occasions

of this stunning bird, while we were in New Ireland.

**Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove** *Ptilinopus iozonus* Great scope views around Kiunga, where it proved to be fairly common.

**Red-knobbed Fruit-Dove** *Ptilinopus insolitus* Many good scope views during our time in New Ireland.

**Dwarf Fruit-Dove** *Ptilinopus nanus* Great scope views on one occasion at Kiunga; this seldom seen bird proved to be a very attractive species.

**Red-knobbed Imperial-Pigeon** *Ducula rubricera* Daily sightings in both New Britain and New Ireland.

**Purple-tailed Imperial-Pigeon** *Ducula rufigaster* This secretive and wary species is not often seen. We were fortunate to observe a solitary bird fly across the Elevala River, very close to our boats.

**Pinon Imperial-Pigeon** *Ducula pinon* A few seen flying overhead around Kiunga. The bird is named after L. Pinon, wife of the French explorer Captain Louis Freycinet.

**Collared Imperial-Pigeon** *Ducula mullerii* Good numbers observed along the Fly River, this species roosts communally alongside the river.

**Zoe Imperial-Pigeon** *Ducula zoeae* Small flocks present during our time in Kiunga. Zoe was the wife of the French naturalist and author, Rene Lesson.

**Torresian Imperial-Pigeon** *Ducula spilorrhoa* Great scope views during our time in New Britain.

**Papuan Mountain-Pigeon** *Gymnophaps albertisii* A fairly common species which occurs mostly in the hills and mountains of New Guinea. We frequently observed this species as it flew overhead, in small flocks, during our time in Kiunga.

#### CACATUIDAE

**Palm Cockatoo** *Probosciger aterrimus* Found throughout all lowland forested areas of New Guinea, it was originally fairly common but is now uncommon, rare or absent in many areas, due to excessive hunting. We frequently observed this species in flight, during our time at Kiunga.

**Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** *Cacatua galerita* Another species which suffers from over hunting; we only recorded this species during the boat trip along the Elevala River, near Kiunga.

**Blue-eyed Cockatoo** *Cacatua ophthalmica* Endemic to New Britain, where it was common and conspicuous.

#### PSITTACIDAE

**Yellow-streaked Lory** *Chalcopsitta sintillata* A noisy flock flew overhead while we were birding on the Boystown track, near Kiunga. As with many species of lorikeets, this species is usually only seen in flight.

**Dusky Lory** *Pseudeos fuscata* A pair seen in flight on the Boystown track, near Kiunga.

**Rainbow Lorikeet** *Trichoglossus haematodus* Common and widespread throughout the lowlands of New Guinea and the islands of the Bismarck Archipelago.

**Western Black-capped Lory** *Lorius lory* Common and conspicuous in and around Kiunga.

- Eastern Black-capped Lory** *Lorius hypoinochrous* This species replaces the above species in the Bismarck Archipelago, where it is also common and conspicuous.
- Red-flanked Lorikeet** *Charmosyna placensis* Good numbers observed in flight around Kiunga, but it was much commoner in the Bismarck Archipelago, where large numbers were observed every day, including some good scope views.
- Papuan Lorikeet** *Charmosyna papou* Endemic to the montane forests along the central mountain ranges of New Guinea, we observed both colour morphs very well during our time at Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen.
- Pesquet's Parrot** *Psittichas fulgidus* This magnificent parrot is endemic to New Guinea, where it is widely distributed throughout hill and lower montane forest. Originally fairly common but now absent from many areas of suitable habitat due to excessive hunting. This is the first bird to disappear from an area following the introduction of shotguns as it is hunted for both its feathers and for food. Many of the people from the highlands value its feathers higher than that of any bird-of-paradise. We were fortunate to observe a bird that showed well in flight, while we were birding on the Boystown track, near Kiunga. This species is listed as vulnerable in 'Threatened Birds of the World'.
- Green Pygmy-Parrot** *Micropsitta finschii* Endemic to the Bismarck Archipelago and the Solomon Islands; we were fortunate to observe a small flock of this species very well as the fed in a flowering tree at Kaut, in New Ireland.
- Orange-breasted Fig-Parrot** *Cyclopsitta gulielmitertii* Small flocks of this delightful species were observed along the Elevala River and around Kiunga.
- Double-eyed Fig-Parrot** *Cyclopsitta diophthalma* Several magnificent scope observations in the Kiunga area.
- Brehm's Tiger-Parrot** *Psittacella brehmii* All species of tiger-parrots are unobtrusive and very easily overlooked. So it was great to be able to study this species in detail when it came into feed on the fruit provided for the birds at the Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen. Both males and females were often present at the feeding platform.
- Painted Tiger-Parrot** *Psittacella picta* Far less common than the above species, this is the highest altitude tiger-parrot and we were extremely fortunate to enjoy a single sighting of this species at the feeding platform at Kumil Lodge.
- Red-cheeked Parrot** *Geoffroyus geoffroyi* A common and noisy lowland species, which is seen mainly in flight. However, we did enjoy good scope views of both males and females, while birding at Kiunga.
- Song Parrot** *Geoffroyus heteroclitus* Endemic to the Bismarck Archipelago and the Solomon Islands, it is rather scarce, or even rare in the Bismarck Archipelago. We had a brief sighting of a bird perched and saw a few flying overhead, during our time in New Ireland.
- Eclectus Parrot** *Eclectus roratus* This beautiful parrot is very common throughout most lowland areas of New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago.

#### COCULIDAE

- Brush Cuckoo** *Cacomantis variolosus* Regularly observed around Kiunga and on New Ireland and many more heard.

**Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo** *Cacomantis castaneiventris* It took some time but we eventually obtained great scope views of a singing bird on the Boystown track, near Kiunga.

**Australian Koel** *Eudynamys cyanocephala* This species is a fairly common winter visitor to southern New Guinea, from breeding grounds in Australia. We enjoyed great views of both male and female birds in the Kiunga area and also heard it calling on New Britain.

**Channel-billed Cuckoo** *Scythrops novaehollandiae* A scarce non-breeding migrant from Australia, we observed a few birds very well along the Elevala River, near Kiunga.

**Violaceous Coucal** *Centropus violaceus* An uncommon endemic of New Britain and New Ireland, we were fortunate to enjoy good looks at a solitary bird in the Garu Wildlife Management Area, on New Britain.

**Greater Black Coucal** *Centropus menbeki* This very large and very shy species of ground-frequenting cuckoo, gave us a typically brief view in Varirata National Park, near Port Moresby.

**Pied Coucal** *Centropus ateralbus* We enjoyed many good sightings of this Bismarck endemic, which is far more common than the closely related Violaceous Coucal.

**Pheasant Coucal** *Centropus phasianinus* Much more co-operative than other members of the coucal family; this ground frequenting cuckoo of more open country, was observed well in the Port Moresby area.

**Lesser Black Coucal** *Centropus bernsteini* This species has a curious distribution; it is confined to the north coast of New Guinea and along the Fly River and its major tributaries, in southern New Guinea. It is by far the shiest member of the coucal family, therefore, we were very fortunate to observe a single individual very well at the 17 km post sanctuary, near Kiunga.

#### AEGOTHELIDAE

**Mountain Owlet-Nightjar** *Aegotheles albertisi* Endemic to the mountains of New Guinea; we enjoyed very close views of this seldom seen species, in the spotlight at Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen. It was one of the most memorable experiences of the trip.

#### PODARGIDAE

**Papuan Frogmouth** *Podargus papuensis* One of these birds was sat in the middle of the road, pre-dawn, just outside Varirata National Park, near Port Moresby.

#### CAPRIMULGIDAE

**Papuan Nightjar** *Eurostopodus papuensis* Once again, a couple of birds of this scarce species were observed on the road, pre-dawn, near Kiunga.

**Large-tailed Nightjar** *Caprimulgus macrurus* Yet again, we enjoyed super close observations of a couple of birds of this species, on the road, pre-dawn, just outside Varirata National Park, near Port Moresby.

## APODIDAE

- Glossy Swiftlet** *Aerodramus esculenta* This is an abundant species throughout Papua New Guinea, with the exception of the Trans-Fly region, where it is absent.
- Mountain Swiftlet** *Aerodramus hirundinaceus* This species proved to be fairly common around Kumil Lodge, where it was seen daily.
- White-rumped Swiftlet** *Aerodramus spodiopygius* Good numbers present along the Kulu River, near Kimbe, in New Britain.
- Uniform Swiftlet** *Aerodramus vanikorensis* This well named species is a common bird of the lowlands and lower hills of New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago.
- Papuan Spine-tailed Swift** *Mearnsia novaeguineae* An uncommon bird of the lowlands of New Guinea, we saw it well on a couple of occasions in the Kiunga area.

## HEMIPROCNIDAE

- Moustached Treeswift** *Hemiproctne mystacea* Good observations along the Elevala River, near Kiunga and great scope views of perched birds on New Britain and New Ireland. This spectacular species is by far the largest of the treeswifts.

## ALCEDINIDAE

- Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis* Seen on a couple of occasions in the Port Moresby area and observed particularly well along the beach in New Ireland. The New Ireland subspecies *hispidoides* is the furthest east this species ranges.
- Little Kingfisher** *Alcedo pusilla* This species is reported to be fairly common on mainland New Guinea, where we failed to find it and uncommon in the Bismarck Archipelago, where we saw it very well, close to Kaut, in New Ireland.
- Variable Dwarf Kingfisher** *Ceyx lepidus* This shy and unobtrusive forest kingfisher was seen briefly by Chris in Varirata National Park, near Port Moresby.
- Blue-winged Kookaburra** *Dacelo leachii* Found throughout southern New Guinea and northern Australia, we saw this huge species of kingfisher very well, in Varirata National Park, near Port Moresby.
- Rufous-bellied Kookaburra** *Dacelo gaudichaud* This beautiful, small kookaburra was seen very well in the scope, in the Kiunga area.
- Forest Kingfisher** *Todirhamphus macleayi* Found throughout open forest of southern New Guinea, we saw it well in the Port Moresby area.
- Collared Kingfisher** *Todirhamphus chloris* In New Guinea this species only occurs along the south coast and in the Bismarck Archipelago. We saw it well on a few occasions on New Ireland.
- Beach Kingfisher** *Todirhamphus saurophaga* Only occurs at a few localities along the coast of Papua New Guinea and becomes far more common and widespread on the Bismarck Archipelago. We enjoyed good scope views of this very attractive species of kingfisher, along the beach at Kaut, on New Ireland.
- Sacred Kingfisher** *Todirhamphus sanctus* A very common non-breeding summer visitor from Australia.
- Yellow-billed Kingfisher** *Syma torotoro* We enjoyed great scope views of a solitary individual in Varirata National Park, near Port Moresby. The scientific epithet is an onomatopoeic New Guinea aboriginal name for this species.

**Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher** *Tanysiptera danae* Endemic to southeastern New Guinea, amazingly we enjoyed four separate sightings of this scarce species, during our days birding in Varirata National Park, near Port Moresby.

**Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher** *Tanysiptera sylvia* This very beautiful species of kingfisher, breeds in northeastern Queensland and in southeastern Papua New Guinea. The Australian race *sylvia* breeds in Australia and winters in small numbers in southern New Guinea, where it is considered scarce. Therefore, we were very fortunate to enjoy great scope views of the Australian race along the bank of the Elevala River, while searching for the King Bird-of-paradise, both of which, we saw extremely well.

#### MEROPIDAE

**Rainbow Bee-eater** *Merops ornatus* Mainly a non-breeding summer visitor from Australia, huge numbers were present at this time of year. On New Ireland we saw large flocks heading southwards, to their breeding grounds in Australia.

#### CORACIIDAE

**Common Dollarbird** *Eurystomus orientalis* A resident breeding species in New Guinea, with a very large influx of birds from Australia during the Austral winter (April-October). It was particularly common along the Elevala River.

#### BUCEROTIDAE

**Blyth's Hornbill** *Aceros plicatus* An indicator of big fig trees and low hunting levels. Good numbers were observed along the Elavala River and smaller numbers were present in the Bismarck Archipelago, otherwise there was only a few birds in the Kiunga area.

#### HIRUNDINIDAE

**Pacific Swallow** *Hirundo tahitica* Small numbers, especially around towns and airports.  
**Tree Martin** *Hirundo nigricans* This Australian species is a non-breeding migrant, occurring in large flocks during the Austral winter (April-October). We observed a few birds in the Port Moresby area.

#### CAMPHEPHAGIDAE

**Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina novaehollandiae* This species is a non-breeding visitor from Australia, migrating to New Guinea during the Austral winter (April-October). Robert saw one in the grounds of our hotel, in Port Moresby.

**Stout-billed Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina caeruleogrisea* An uncommon species which is widely distributed throughout the hills and lower mountains of New Guinea. Dennis observed this species briefly in Varirata National Park, near Port Moresby.

**Yellow-eyed Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina lineata* We enjoyed good looks in Varirata National Park, near Port Moresby and again on the island of New Ireland.

**Boyer's Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina boyeri* A fairly common species, we observed a pair very well in Varirata National Park, near Port Moresby.

**White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina papuensis* A bird of open forest, we recorded it on the outskirts of Port Moresby and it proved to be fairly common on both New Britain and New Ireland.

**Common Cicadabird** *Coracina tenuirostris* Both males and females showed well on New Britain and New Ireland, where they are represented by the resident endemic race *heinrothi*.

**Black-tipped Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina schisticeps* The common cuckoo-shrike around Kiunga, where one or two pairs were seen on most days.

**Black Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina melas* Great looks at both male and female birds around Kiunga and Port Moresby.

**Black-bellied Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina montana* Endemic to the mountains of New Guinea, we observed a male bird briefly in Varirata National Park, near Port Moresby.

**Varied Triller** *Lalage leucomela* A fairly common species which occurs throughout forested areas in the southern half of New Guinea.

#### TURDIDAE

**Island Thrush** *Turdus poliocephalus* An oriental species which has spread its distribution to New Guinea, where it is confined to the highest forests, just below the snow line. It proved to be common at Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen.

#### SYLVIIDAE

**Australian Reed-Warbler** *Acrocephalus australis* This Australian species is widely distributed throughout New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago, but is extremely localised, only occurring in isolated areas. This species was present in the grounds of our beach resort, in Kimbe Bay, on New Britain.

**Tawny Grassbird** *Megalurus timoriensis* Proved to be common in the grasslands around Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen.

#### MUSCICAPIDAE

**Pied Chat** *Saxicola caprata* Another oriental species which reaches the southern limit of its range in New Guinea. It is a common bird of montane grasslands throughout the central mountain range of New Guinea. It proved to be common in the grasslands around Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen.

#### RHIPIDURIDAE

**Northern Fantail** *Rhipidura rufiventris* Found throughout the lowlands of New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago. We failed to find it on the mainland but commonly encountered it, in both New Britain and New Ireland.

**Willie-wagtail** *Rhipidura leucophrys* Perhaps, the only tame bird in Papua New Guinea! We recorded it on most days of the tour.

**Friendly Fantail** *Rhipidura albolimbata* Endemic to the mountains of New Guinea, this common species is widely distributed throughout the central mountain ranges. It was a conspicuous bird at Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen. One of New Guinea's

few confiding species; apparently, it jumps too quickly, to be shot by catapult!

**Black Fantail** *Rhipidura atra* Endemic to the mountains of New Guinea, this fairly common species is widespread on the central mountain ranges. We saw it well in the Minum Valley, near Kumil Lodge.

**Dimorphic Fantail** *Rhipidura brachyrhyncha* Endemic to the mountains of New Guinea, where it is fairly scarce. We enjoyed a brief sighting of this species at Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen.

**Chestnut-backed Fantail** *Rhipidura rufidorsa* A pair of this species were observed in a mixed species feeding flock at the 17 km post sanctuary, near Kiunga.

#### MONARCHIDEA

**Spot-winged Monarch** *Monarcha guttulus* This widespread but difficult to observe species, was observed in seasonally flooded forest along the Elevala River, near Kiunga.

**Bismarck Pied Monarch** *Monarcha verticalis* This scarce species is endemic to the Bismarck Archipelago, it is always unobtrusive and easily missed. Therefore, we were very fortunate to enjoy a good sighting close to Kaut, on New Ireland.

**Golden Monarch** *Monarcha chrysomela* This dazzling species was first observed at the village of Aalus, on the Elevala River, near Kiunga. It proved to be much more common on the Bismarck Archipelago, where we saw it daily.

**Friiled Monarch** *Arses telescopthalmus* A fairly common and widespread species which we saw well in seasonally flooded forest along the Elevala River, near Kiunga and in Varirata National Park, near Port Moresby.

**Shining Flycatcher** *Myiagra alecto* This species is widely distributed in mangroves, and woodland bordering rivers and swamps. We observed this fairly common species on a few occasions, along the Elevala River and in both New Britain and New Ireland.

**Black-breasted Boatbill** *Machaerirhynchus nigripectus* Endemic to the mountains of New Guinea, this fairly common species is widespread throughout the central mountain ranges. It proved to be common at Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen.

#### PETROICIDAE

**River Flycatcher** *Monachella muelleriana* Endemic to New Guinea and New Britain. It frequents fast-flowing rivers and streams scattered with boulders. It occurs mainly in the hills and lower mountains, it is present in some lowland areas but is much less common there. We enjoyed good looks at this very beautiful bird along the river that runs through the Minum Valley, near Kumil Lodge.

**Lemon-bellied Flycatcher** *Microeca flavigaster* Patchily distributed in Papua New Guinea, occurring mainly in the south, with relict populations in the north. We saw it very well in eucalypt woodland in Varirata National Park, near Port Moresby.

**Yellow Flycatcher** *Microeca papuana* Endemic to the mountains of New Guinea. This fairly common species is distributed widely throughout the central mountain ranges. We enjoyed a couple of good sightings at Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen.

**Black-throated Robin** *Poecilodryas albonotata* Endemic to the mountains of New Guinea. It is widespread throughout the central mountain ranges. This uncommon species was seen well on a couple of occasions at Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen.

**White-winged Robin** *Peneothello sigillatus* Endemic to the central ranges of New Guinea, it inhabits moss forest between 2400-3900m. This common species was seen very well on several occasions at Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen.

#### PACHYCEPHALIDAE

**Rufous-naped Whistler** *Aleadryas rufinucha* Endemic to the mountains of New Guinea,

where it is widespread throughout the central mountain ranges. It is not uncommon, but it is very shy and infrequently seen. Surprisingly, we watched a pair of birds feeding on the lawn at Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen.

**Brown-backed Whistler** *Pachycephala modesta* Endemic to the mountains of New Guinea, it is widely distributed throughout the central mountain ranges. This common species was observed on several occasions at Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen.

**Sclater's Whistler** *Pachycephala soror* Endemic to the central mountain ranges of New Guinea, this fairly common species was observed on one occasion at Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen.

**Mangrove Golden Whistler** *Pachycephala melanura* A pair of this locally common species was observed in a mixed species feeding flock in coastal swamp forest at Kaut, on New Ireland.

**Regent Whistler** *Pachycephala schlegelii* This stunning, high montane speciality, proved to be common at Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen.

**Black-headed Whistler** *Pachycephala monacha* Endemic to the mountains of New Guinea, this species is very patchily distributed throughout the central mountain ranges. We enjoyed a few good looks at this scarce species, at Amdi Village, near Kundiawa.

**Hooded Pitohui** *Pitohui dichrous* Endemic to New Guinea, it is widely distributed throughout the forested hills and lower mountains. This fairly common species was quite common in Varirata National Park and around the village of Amdi, near Kundiawa. The feathers of pitohui's have recently been found to be highly poisonous.

**Rusty Pitohui** *Pitohui ferrugineus* Endemic to New Guinea, where it is widely distributed in the lowlands and hills up to about 1000m. We observed this species well in Varirata National Park, near Port Moresby and again around the village of Ambi, near Kundiawa.

**Variable Pitohui** *Pitohui kirhocephalus* Endemic to New Guinea, where it occurs throughout most lowland rainforest, with the exception of the southern Trans-Fly region. Surprisingly, we only observed this common species on one occasion, in Varirata National Park, near Port Moresby.

#### POMATOSTOMIDAE

**Rufous Babbler** *Turdoides subrufus* Several of these rather shy endemics were seen well on the forest trail at the 17 km. post sanctuary, near Kiunga.

#### CINCLOSOMATIDAE

**Blue-capped Ifrita** *Ifrita kowaldi* Endemic to the central mountain ranges of New Guinea. Chris saw this uncommon species at Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen. The taxonomy of this species is uncertain, it is probably better to treat it as a monotypic family. The uncertainty, regarding taxonomy is reflected in its scientific name: *ifrita*, which is Arabic for spirit.

#### MALURIDAE

**Wallace's Fairywren** *Sipodotus wallacii* A small, arboreal fairywren, which does not cock its tail. A scarce bird, it is mainly a foothill and lower hill-forest speciality. We were very fortunate to find a family party amongst a mixed species feeding flock, in the 17 km. post sanctuary, near Kiunga.

**White-shouldered Fairywren** *Malurus alboscapulatus* The only grassland fairywren in New Guinea, it is much easier to see than its forest-inhabiting cousins. We saw it very well on a few occasions.

**Emperor Fairywren** *Malurus cyanocephalus* We enjoyed good looks at this uncommon species, on one occasion along the Boystown track, at Kiunga.

#### ACANTHIZIDAE

**Rusty Mouse-Warbler** *Crateroscelis murina* Surprisingly, this common species was only observed on one occasion; we enjoyed good close looks at a male bird creeping around on the forest floor in Varirata National Park, near Port Moresby.

**Black-backed Mouse-Warbler** *Crateroscelis nigrorufa* Mauge saw this uncommon species at Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen.

**Mountain Mouse-Warbler** *Crateroscelis robusta* Good numbers present in the mossy forest around Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen.

**Large Scrubwren** *Sericornis nouhuysi* Endemic to the mountains of New Guinea, it is widespread throughout the central ranges and was common around Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen.

**Buff-faced Scrubwren** *Sericornis perspicillatus* Endemic to the mountains of New Guinea, it is also widespread throughout the central mountain ranges, Chris saw one briefly in the Minum Valley, near Kumil Lodge.

**Papuan Scrubwren** *Sericornis papuensis* This species is also endemic to the mountains of New Guinea. It is also widespread throughout the central mountain ranges and was common around Kumil Lodge.

**New Guinea Thornbill** *Acanthiza murina* Endemic to the central ranges of eastern and central New Guinea, between 1,900 and 3,700 metres. We saw this uncommon species very well in the Minum Valley, near Kumil Lodge.

**Black-throated Gerygone** *Gerygone palpebrosa* A widespread New Guinea species, mainly confined to hill forest. Chris saw a pair of birds briefly at Amdi Village, near Kundiawa.

**Yellow-bellied Gerygone** *Gerygone chrysogaster* Endemic to New Guinea, it is common throughout lowland rainforest. We saw it on only one occasion, in a

mixed species feeding flock at the 17 km. post sanctuary, near Kiunga

**Rufous-breasted Gerygone** *Gerygone ruficollis* Endemic to the mountains of New Guinea, it is widely distributed throughout the central ranges. It proved to be fairly common in the Minum Valley, near Kumil Lodge and the Amdi Village, near Kundiawa.

#### NEOSITTIDAE

**Black Sittella** *Neositta miranda* Endemic to the central mountain ranges of Papua New Guinea, where it inhabits upper montane forest between 2,000 and 3,700 metres. Rare and elusive, we were very fortunate to enjoy good looks at this nuthatch-like species at the Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen.

#### NECTARINIDAE

**Black Sunbird** *Leptocoma sericea* Regularly observed at Kiunga, Varirata National Park, New Britain and New Ireland.

**Yellow-bellied Sunbird** *Cinnyris jugularis* Small numbers observed around Port Moresby and throughout the Bismarck Archipelago.

#### MELANOCHARITIDAE

**Fan-tailed Berrypecker** *Melanocharis versteri* Endemic to the mountains of New Guinea, where it is widespread throughout the central mountain ranges. We saw both male and females very well, at Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen.

**Yellow-bellied Longbill** *Toxorhamphus novaeguineae* A fairly common bird of the forested hills and lowlands of New Guinea. We saw it on one occasion, amongst a mixed species feeding flock, in seasonally flooded forest along the Elevala River, near Kiunga.

#### PARAMYTHIIDAE

**Tit Berrypecker** *Oreocharis arfaki* Endemic to the mountains of New Guinea, where it is widespread throughout the central mountain ranges. This very attractive species was observed well in the Minum Valley, near Kumil Lodge.

**Crested Berrypecker** *Paramythia montium* Endemic to the high mountains of New Guinea, where it inhabits upper montane forest and alpine thickets from around 2,500 metres, up to the timber line. We enjoyed great looks at this very attractive species in the grounds of Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen.

#### DICAEIDAE

**Papuan Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum geelvinkianum* Endemic to New Guinea, where it is a fairly common bird throughout all forested areas, we observed it in Varirata National Park near Port Moresby and in the Minum Valley, near Kumil Lodge.

**Bismarck Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum eximium* This common species is endemic to the Bismarck Archipelago, we saw it every day during our time on New Ireland.

#### ZOSTEROPIDAE

**Black-fronted White-eye** *Zosterops minor* A hill forest species, widely distributed throughout the mainland ranges. It is a fairly common species, which we observed very well in Varirata National Park, near Port Moresby.

**Black-headed White-eye** *Zosterops hypoxanthus* Endemic to the Bismarck Archipelago, it inhabits mainly rainforest of the hills and mountains. It is very scarce in the

lowlands but becomes much commoner at higher elevations. We saw a small flock at Lalipass, central New Ireland, at an elevation of 900 metres.

**New Guinea White-eye** *Zosterops novaeguineae* Endemic to New Guinea, where it is confined to the eastern mountains of Papua New Guinea and the lowlands of the southern Trans-Fly region. We saw a large flock very well in the Minum Valley, near Kumil Lodge.

#### MELIPHAGIDAE

**Long-billed Honeyeater** *Melilestes mearnsi* An inconspicuous and infrequently seen rainforest inhabitant of the lowlands, hills and lower mountains. We were very fortunate to observe this species well, on a couple of occasions, on the Boystown track, near Kiunga.

**Ashy Honeyeater** *Myzomela cineracea* Endemic to New Britain, this common species inhabits primary forest, secondary growth and flowering shrubs and gardens. Dennis saw this species in the grounds of our beach resort at Kimbe Bay, on New Britain.

**Ruby-throated Honeyeater** *Myzomela eques* Widely distributed throughout the lowlands except, apparently, for much of the southern Tran-Fly region. A scarce species, which is normally only observed at flowering trees. We were very fortunate to observe a couple of birds very well, in a flowering tree on the Boystown track, near Kiunga.

**Red-tinted Honeyeater** *Myzomela cruentata* Widely distributed throughout New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago. It is mainly an uncommon species, becoming more common in the lowlands and hill forests of New Ireland, where we observed it on several occasions.

**Mountain Red-headed Honeyeater** *Myzomela adolphinae* Endemic to the mountains of eastern and far western New Guinea. This uncommon species is nomadic, as it moves around in search of flowering trees. We were fortunate to observe this species in a flowering tree in the grounds of our lodge at Kundiawa.

**New Britain Red-headed Honeyeater** *Myzomela erythromelas* Endemic to New Britain, where it is locally fairly common. Dennis saw this species in the Garu Wildlife Management Area.

**Mountain Yellow-eared Honeyeater** *Meliphaga orientalis* Endemic to the mountains of New Guinea, where it is widely distributed throughout the central mountain ranges. We observed this fairly common species in the Minum Valley, near Kumil Lodge.

**Mimetic Honeyeater** *Meliphaga analoga* Endemic to New Guinea, it is the common *meliphaga* and occurs throughout most forested areas, we saw it well on several occasions.

**Yellow-gaped Honeyeater** *Meliphaga flavirictus* Endemic to New Guinea, where it is

widely distributed throughout forested areas of the north and west. We observed this species well on one occasion at the 17 km. post sanctuary, near Kiunga.

**Rufous-banded Honeyeater** *Conopophila albogularis* An Australian species, it is patchily distributed mainly along the southern coastline, along the Fly River and the Sepik River, in the north. We enjoyed good looks at this species at Brown River, near Port Moresby.

**Tawny-breasted Honeyeater** *Xanthotis flaviventer* This common species is found throughout all forested areas of New Guinea. We saw it very well on a few occasions in the Kiunga area.

**Plain Honeyeater** *Pycnopygius ixoides* Generally considered rare, however, it is very inconspicuous and easily overlooked and is almost certainly under recorded. We saw it well on a couple of occasions on the Boystown track, near Kiunga.

**Streak-headed Honeyeater** *Pycnopygius stictocephalus* Endemic to New Guinea, where it frequents canopy forest throughout the lowlands and hills. We observed this uncommon species very well on a couple of occasions around Kiunga.

**Meyer's Friarbird** *Philemon meyeri* Endemic to New Guinea, where it is widely distributed throughout the lowlands and hills. We observed this moderately common honeyeater on a few occasions on the Boystown track, near Kiunga.

**Helmeted Friarbird** *Philemon buceroides* A very common species throughout all lowland and hill areas of New Guinea.

**New Britain Friarbird** *Philemon cockerelli* Endemic to New Britain, where it is common in all forested areas, we saw it well on several occasions.

**Black-backed Streaked Honeyeater** *Ptiloprora perstriata* Endemic to the mountains of New Guinea, where it is patchily distributed throughout the central mountain ranges. This species was very common at Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen.

**Rufous-backed Streaked Honeyeater** *Ptiloprora guisei* Endemic to the mountains of eastern New Guinea, where it replaces the above species, at a slightly lower altitude. One or two birds were observed at Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen.

**Belford's Honeyeater** *Melidectes belfordi* Endemic to the central mountain ranges of New Guinea, where it is widely distributed. This species was very common in the forests around Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen.

**Ornate Honeyeater** *Melidectes torquatus* Endemic to the mountains of New Guinea, where it is fairly common in a very narrow altitudinal range between 1,200 and 1,700 metres. We saw it very well in the Minum Valley, near Kumil Lodge and around the village of Amdi.

**Smoky Honeyeater** *Melipotes fumigatus* Endemic to the central mountain ranges of New Guinea. This species was very common in the forests around Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen

#### ORIOLIDAE

**Brown Oriole** *Oriolus szalayi* Endemic to New Guinea, where it is widespread throughout. We saw it well around Kiunga and Port Moresby.

#### LANIIDAE

**Long-tailed Shrike** *Lanius schach* An oriental species that reaches the southern edge of its range in New Guinea. Where it is a bird of open grassland and gardens between 1,100 and 2,650 metres, in the central mountain ranges. It proved to be common in grassland in the Minum Valley, near Kumil Lodge.

#### DICRURIDAE

**New Ireland Drongo** *Dicrurus megarhynchos* Endemic to New Ireland, where it is common and widespread throughout all forested areas, from sea level, up to 1,800 metres. We observed this very attractive species very well at Lalipass, in central New Ireland, at an altitude of 900 metres.

**Spangled Drongo** *Dicrurus bracteatus* A common and widespread species throughout New Guinea and New Britain.

#### ARTAMIDAE

**White-backed Woodswallow** *Artamus monachus* Endemic to the Bismarck Archipelago, where it frequents dead trees in clearings and along the edge of the forest. It is fairly common in the hills and uncommon in the lowlands. We saw it very well in the scope at Kulu River, near Kimbe, in New Britain.

**New Guinea Woodswallow** *Artamus maximus* Endemic to the mountains of New Guinea, where it is common throughout all mountain ranges. We recorded it on a couple of occasions at Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen.

**White-breasted Woodswallow** *Artamus leucorhynchus* A widespread and common species throughout the lowlands of New Guinea.

#### CRACTICIDAE

**Lowland Peltops** *Peltops blainvillii* Endemic to New Guinea, where it occurs throughout the forested lowlands. We saw it only once, at the 17 km, post sanctuary, near Kiunga.

**Hooded Butcherbird** *Cracticus cassicus* We saw large numbers of this common bird, which occurs throughout all forested areas of New Guinea.

**Black-backed Butcherbird** *Cracticus mentalis* This species occurs in the southern Trans-Fly region and along the southeast coast, around Port Moresby. We enjoyed good looks at this species in the Port Moresby area.

**Black Butcherbird** *Cracticus quoyi* Thinly distributed throughout much of New Guinea,

Chris saw a single bird in Varirata National Park, near Port Moresby.

#### PARADISAEIDAE

**Crested Bird-of-paradise** *Cnemophilus macgregorii* Endemic to the high mountains of the eastern half of New Guinea, where it is patchily distributed. Shy and inconspicuous, it inhabits upper montane forest and subalpine shrubbery. We enjoyed super close looks at both male and female birds, at Kumil Lodge, near

Mt.

Hagen. This species was voted 'Bird of the Trip'.



- Trumpet Manucode** *Manucodia keraudrenii* A few seen well around Kiunga, including scope views of their hackles and wispy horns.
- Short-tailed Paradigalla** *Paradigalla brevicauda* Endemic to the mountains of central New Guinea, where it is patchily distributed, it is an uncommon inhabitant of montane forest. We observed a bird fly across a large clearing in the Minum Valley, near Kumil Lodge. Unfortunately, the bird only perched momentarily, before dropping into thick cover.
- Ribbon-tailed Astrapia** *Astrapia meyeri* Endemic to Papua New Guinea, where it is only found in a small area in the highland provinces. It inhabits upper montane forests, occurring from 2,450 to 3,440 metres. Fortunately it is common within its restricted range, we enjoyed many good looks at mostly female and immature birds. But we did see one splendid adult male. All the sightings occurred at Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen. This was the last bird-of-paradise to be discovered.
- Stephanie's Astrapia** *Astrapia stephaniae* Endemic to the central ranges of eastern Papua New Guinea, this uncommon species inhabits montane forest between 1,500 and 2,450 metres. Just below the altitudinal range of the previous species. We enjoyed a single sighting of an adult bird in the Minum Valley, near Kumil Lodge.
- King-of-Saxony Bird-of-paradise** *Pteridophora alberti* Endemic to the central mountain ranges of New Guinea, this fairly common species is widely distributed throughout mossy mountain forest, mainly between 1,800 to 2,500 metres. We enjoyed super looks at a male and a female in the Minum Valley, near Kumil Lodge. We very much enjoyed watching a male sitting in the top of a moss encrusted tree, singing loudly as it simultaneously twisted its occipital plumes in all directions.
- Magnificent Riflebird** *Ptiloris magnificus* Seen briefly at Brown River and Varirata National Park, near Port Moresby.
- Superb Bird-of-paradise** *Lophorina superba* Endemic to the mountains of New Guinea, this common species is widely distributed throughout the central ranges. It inhabits lower montane forest from 1,000 to 2,300 metres. We enjoyed very good scope views of displaying males at Amdi Village, near Kundiawa.
- Brown Sicklebill** *Epimachus meyeri* Endemic to the central ranges of eastern and central New Guinea, where it is patchily distributed throughout montane forest. Both males and females of this fairly common species were observed very well at Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen. In the Minum Valley we heard the distinctive and

far carrying machinegun call of this species.

**Magnificent Bird-of-paradise** *Cicinnurus magnificus* Endemic to New Guinea, where it occurs mainly in the hills and lower mountains mainly between 400 and 1,600 metres. Although a fairly common species, it is very seldom seen and we were very fortunate to enjoy fairly distant, but very good looks at a male bird, close to Amdi Village, near Kundiawa.

**King Bird-of-paradise** *Cicinnurus regius* Endemic to New Guinea, where it is widespread throughout lowland rainforest, with the exception of the southern Trans-Fly Region. We enjoyed superb, close scope views of a displaying male, showing off his bright red plumage, complete with green spirals on his tail-wires. This was one of the most bizarre and beautiful birds of the tour.

**Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise** *Seleucidis melanoleuca* Endemic to New Guinea, where it has two isolated populations. In the north, it is found along the Ramu and Sepik River Basins. In the south, along the southeast coastline and along the Fly River Basin. It is an uncommon inhabitant of swamp forest, especially forest with sago palms and pandanus. We enjoyed watching a male bird displaying from his display perch in swamp forest, along the Fly River, not far from Kiunga.

**Greater Bird-of-paradise** *Paradisaea apoda* Endemic to southwestern New Guinea, occurring just inside the border of Papua New Guinea where it meets the range of Raggiana Bird-of-paradise. We enjoyed fantastic views of males in full display at the lek at the 17 km. post sanctuary, near Kiunga. It really was a spectacular performance. The scientific name *apoda* (no feet) refers to the first birds-of-paradise that were transported from new Guinea to Europe without their feet. This led to theories of a completely aerial life, floating in paradise, and hence the family name!

**Raggiana Bird-of-paradise** *Paradisaea raggiana* Endemic to Papua New Guinea, where it inhabits the rainforested lowlands, hills and lower mountains of the southern two-thirds of the country. We saw it well on a few occasions. The species is named after Marchese Francesco Raggi, an Italian naturalist and collector, who was active in New Guinea in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Blue Bird-of-paradise** *Paradisaea rudolphi* Endemic to Papua New Guinea, this fairly common species inhabits lower montane oak forests in a narrow altitudinal range between 1,100 and 2,000 metres, in the central mountain ranges. Unfortunately, we only saw this species in flight, while birding in the Minum Valley, near Kumil Lodge. This species is listed as vulnerable in 'Threatened Birds of the World'.

#### PTILONORHYNCHIDAE

**Flame Bowerbird** *Sericulus aureus* Endemic to western, northern and southern New Guinea, where it is an uncommon and shy inhabitant of lowland rainforest. We saw both males and females flying over the Boystown track, near Kiunga.

**Yellow-breasted Bowerbird** *Chlamydera lauterbachii* Endemic to northern New Guinea where it is patchily distributed in the lowlands and lower to mid-

mountains. We enjoyed very good looks at this species in the Minum Valley, near Kumil Lodge.

**Fawn-breasted Bowerbird** *Chlamydera cerviniventris* Patchily distributed throughout coastal areas of New Guinea. We observed a few birds in the Port Moresby area.

#### CORVIDAE

**Bare-eyed Crow** *Corvus tristis* Endemic to New Guinea, we saw two small flocks in the Kiunga area. This aberrant species of crow is very unusual in its plumage, in its habits and the call is also very unusual.

**Torresian Crow** *Corvus orru* Mainly confined to coastal areas of New Guinea, we observed this common species on many occasions.

#### STURNIDAE

**Metallic Starling** *Aplonis metallica* A common bird of lowland forested areas, we observed many large flocks of this species, throughout the tour.

**Singing Starling** *Aplonis cantoroides* A common bird of northern and southeastern coastal areas. We observed large numbers in the Port Moresby area and in the Bismarck Archipelago.

**Yellow-faced Myna** *Mino dumontii* A common and widespread species which occurs throughout New Guinea.

**Golden Myna** *Mino anais* Endemic to New Guinea, where it is widely distributed in forested areas. We only observed this species on one occasion, along the Elevala River, near Kiunga.

#### PASSERIDAE

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* This introduced species has recently become established in Port Moresby. It is probable that it has arrived in Port Moresby from ships, which have sailed from ports on the east coast of Australia, where this species is abundant.

#### ESTRILDIDAE

**Mountain Firetail** *Oreostruthus fuliginosus* Endemic to the high mountains of New Guinea, where it is patchily distributed along the forest edge bordering alpine grassland. We enjoyed really good looks at this beautiful bird at Kumil Lodge, near Mt. Hagen.

**Blue-faced Parrotfinch** *Erythrura trichroa* Mainly a bird of the mountains, we enjoyed good close looks at a small flock of birds in the Minum Valley, near Kumil Lodge.

**Streak-headed Mannikin** *Lonchura tristissima* Endemic to New Guinea, this uncommon species occurs along narrow grass fringes of streams or roads through forested areas. We observed a small flock at Kiunga Airport, they were of the race *leucosticte*, in the past, this race has been considered a full species, but at the moment, it is now considered only a race.

**Grey-headed Mannikin** *Lonchura caniceps* Endemic to southeastern New Guinea, where it is patchily distributed in grassland and savanna. We observed a small

number just outside Port Moresby.

**Hooded Mannikin** *Lonchura spectabilis* Endemic to New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago. In Papua New Guinea it occurs along the Sepik River and the central portion of the central mountain range. We enjoyed very good looks at a couple of large flocks in the Minum Valley, near Kumil Lodge.

**Chestnut-breasted Mannikin** *Lonchura castaneothorax* Patchily distributed along coastal areas of New Guinea, we observed a small flock in grassland not far from Port Moresby.

**Hunstein's Mannikin** *Lonchura hunsteini* Endemic to New Ireland, we saw many small flocks, feeding in grassland throughout the island. Named after C. Hunstein who was the German administrator of German New Guinea from 1885 until his death in 1888.

**Buff-bellied Mannikin** *Lonchura melaena* Endemic to New Britain, we enjoyed watching a couple of large flocks at Kimbe.

## MAMMALS

**New Guinea Pademelon** *Thylogale browni* Endemic to New Guinea, one or two were observed along the entrance road to Varirata National Park, just before dawn.

**Painted Ringtail** *Pseudochirulus forbesi* Endemic to montane forests of Papua New Guinea. A solitary animal was observed briefly on the feeding platform at Kumil Lodge, unfortunately, it scampered away when the lights were turned on.

**Rothschild's Woolly-rat** *Mallomys rothschildi* Endemic to New Guinea, this species occurs all along the central mountain range of the island. It was a common visitor to the feeding platform at Kumil Lodge, it is one of the largest species of rats in the world.

**Bismarck Flying Fox** *Pteropus capistratus* Endemic to the Bismarck Archipelago, we observed this species on many occasions in both New Britain and New Ireland, we often found odd individuals flying around during the day.

**Greater Flying Fox** *Pteropus neohibernicus* Endemic to New Guinea, this species is widespread throughout the mainland. It is the largest bat in New Guinea and has the largest wingspan of any bat in the world. Large numbers of this species were observed flying in large flocks in the early morning near Kiunga.