

# PEREGRINE BIRD TOURS

## WEST PAPUA

1st - 14th June 2011

## TOUR REPORT

**LEADERS:** Chris Doughty and Iwein Mauro

Please note that in order to avoid confusion the names in the checklist were those used in the field guide *Birds of New Guinea* by Beehler, Pratt and Zimmerman. This field guide was first published in 1986 and some of the names used have been updated in recent years. To reflect this the bird names used in the tour report birdlist are those recommended in Clements Sixth Edition of *A Checklist of the Birds of the World* and the Beehler names are given in brackets.

Our trekking tour to the Arfak Mountains of West Papua produced a rich array of highly prized and much sought-after birds and also lots and lots of rain. This was the 182nd birding tour that I had led and was without doubt, the most difficult birding tour that I have ever led. The combination of rather basic camping, long hikes on very slippery, muddy and steep trails, hot humid weather in the lowlands, lots of rain, incredibly shy and skulking birds, all made for a very challenging and difficult tour. Even so, our group had the determination to complete the walks without complaints, even when it rained so hard that the track turned into mud-slides. The avian rewards of this tour were out of this world; we observed a good number of members of the most beautiful and spectacular bird family in the world, the gorgeous birds-of-paradise, along with a supporting cast of colourful pigeons, parrots, kingfishers and bowerbirds.

Following a long and arduous series of flights from Australia, we finally arrived at the harbour town of Manokwari on the northeast coast of the Vogelkop Peninsula. While waiting for our trekking permits to be processed, a little roadside birding produced Brahminy Kite, Feral Pigeon, Pacific Swallow and lots of Eurasian Tree Sparrows. We then boarded our 4 wheel-drive vehicles and we were soon on our way, a two hour drive took us to the Oransbari Peninsula, where we flushed an immature Great-billed Heron at the mouth of a small creek. From here we began our 11 day trek in the remote and rarely visited Arfak Mountains. It was a two hour walk to our first camp site situated at a height of 240 metres, in the lowlands. Birds along the way included a splendid Long-tailed Buzzard, a Stephan's Dove, a few Sulphur-crested Cockatoos and lots of Glossy Swiftlets.

We spent the next day birding around camp, a male Superb Fruit-Dove flew in a nearby tree and added much wanted colour to the predominately green forest we were birding in. A Wompoo Fruit-Dove showed briefly and we enjoyed good looks at a pair of Red-cheeked Parrots. A mixed species feeding flock added plenty of excitement as we watched Northern Fantail a very obliging Olive Flyrobin, Yellow-bellied Gerygone, Yellow-bellied and Dwarf Longbills, the weird looking Grey Crow and best of all, a superbly plumaged male Golden Monarch.

Our third day of the trek, was by far the hardest of the 11 day trek, as we climbed from 240 metres to 1,100 metres above sea level. As we climbed steadily uphill we enjoyed flight views of a majestic Gurney's Eagle, a few normally very shy Dwarf Fruit-Doves, Palm Cockatoo, Rainbow Lorikeet and several Blyth's Hornbills, whose wings made a great deal of noise, when the birds flew from tree to tree. A Red-bellied Pitta put in a brief appearance, both Papuan and New Guinea Cuckoo-shrikes reluctantly revealed themselves in the far-off canopy, while smaller passerines at

lower elevations, proved a little easier to see. These included Chestnut-bellied Fantail, Black-winged and Spot-winged Monarchs, Little Shrike-Thrush, the uncommon Black-chinned Robin, the far more obliging White-faced Robin and a pair of Pale-billed Scrubwrens. Next we saw a couple of amazingly beautiful and range restricted Masked Bowerbirds and no less than three species of birds-of-paradise, who proved very reluctant to show themselves well, Magnificent Riflebird, Magnificent Bird-of-paradise and Lesser Bird-of-paradise. On arrival in camp, we enjoyed great looks at the very impressive Vulturine Parrot.

Today we spent the whole day birding around our camp site at 1,100 metres. New birds for the tour included Slender-billed Cuckoo-Dove, the very attractive Moluccan King Parrot, a very shy Sooty Thicket-Fantail, particularly good looks at a Black Monarch, a Yellow-breasted Boatbill and an Island Leaf-Warbler. We then enjoyed tremendous looks at the very beautiful Dwarf Whistler and a supporting cast of Sclater's Whistler, both Hooded and Rusty Pitahuis, a very shy Puff-backed Honeyeater and several fairly confiding Mountain Drongos.

The following day we climbed from 1,100 metres to 1,600 metres, before making camp on the flanks of Mount Iwom. The climbing was not so arduous as the last trekking day, allowing us plenty of time for birding. As we climbed steadily up the trail a solitary Black-bellied Cuckoo-shrike, somewhat reluctantly revealed its presence in the far off canopy and a wondrous male Superb Bird-of-paradise in full breeding plumage, with blue frontal shield expanded, appeared briefly on an exposed tree stump. A small flock of foraging passerines included Perplexing and Grey-green Scrubwrens and Grey and Fairy Gerygones. Once in camp we enjoyed super looks at the very uncommon Rufescent Imperial-Pigeon and best of all, we were shown a Salvadori's Owlet-Nightjar, at its daytime roost.

We spent the next three days at the highest camp site making daily forays up the slippery slope of Mount Iwom and spending time at three palm-fringed hides, overlooking the display grounds of Western Parotia and Vogelkop Bowerbird. The hides proved very rewarding; we were indeed fortunate to observe the splendid display of the Western Patronia, where the male performed his dervish dancing and ballerina display in splendid fashion, just a few metres away from us. Witnessing this rather unbelievable, but very gripping display, must surely be one of the highlights of any birders birding career. A lucky few were present in one of the hides when the rarely observed Pheasant Pigeon walked across the clearing at the Western Parotia display site. We were all treated to the spectacle of a displaying male Vogelkop Bowerbird at the entrance to his bower, which is the largest and most ornately decorated bower, of any species of bowerbird. The bower is a cone-shaped hut-like structure some 100 centimetres high and approximately 160 centimetres in diameter, with a large oval-shaped entrance. The forecourt, directly in front of the bower, is cleared of all debris and artistically arranged with piles of bright red flowers, coal black seed pods, purple berries, shining beetle wings and dead leaves. Males go to great lengths to ensure that their displays are in prime condition, replacing old items as needed, as well as trying to outdo their neighbours by finding more spectacular decorations, and arranging them appropriately. If a male finds a rare or unusual item; the item will become a prime target for theft by neighbouring males. Females visit bowers and, depending on whether they like the "treasure trove" on display, will mate with the attendant males.

On our first foray up Mount Iwom we found a nesting pair of Ornate Fruit-Doves, enjoyed good looks at a perched White-breasted Fruit-Dove, watched a pair of Papuan Lorikeets foraging in the canopy and enjoyed close looks at a pair of Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrots excavating a nest hole. New species of passerines for us included both Black and Friendly Fantails, several very beautiful Regent Whistlers, the rather cryptic Vogelkop Scrubwren and a fairly obliging Papuan Treecreeper.

High up on the mountain, some of the eucalypts were in flower, sporting bright red blooms. No less than three species of honeyeaters were attracted to the flowers and we enjoyed good looks at Cinnamon-browed and Rufous-sided Honeyeaters and Red-collared Myzomela. In the late afternoon back at the camp site, we had the good fortune to be shown a Feline Owlet-Nightjar at its daytime roost, this has to be one of the most spectacular birds in the world and the sighting was much enjoyed by everyone. Later in the afternoon we also enjoyed very close looks at an immature Papuan Mountain-Pigeon.

A great deal of rain fell the following day, which kept us fairly close to camp, which is where we wanted to be anyway. As yesterday, when we were trudging up Mount Iwom, two of the most wanted birds of the tour, two species of birds-of-paradise, the Long-tailed Paradigalla and the Black Sicklebill, were both seen well by the camp staff, right in the camp itself. Our patience was rewarded and in the morning we enjoyed good looks at both species of birds-of-paradise. An added bonus was a beautiful Black-throated Robin, which also turned up in our camp site. In the afternoon a short foray up Mount Iwom did produce two new species of birds for the tour, a Mid-Mountain Berrypecker and the very range restricted Western Smoky Honeyeater.

Our last trek up Mount Iwom proved fairly rewarding as we trudged through the rain, in between downpours we managed to find a few new species of birds, which included a splendid Dimorphic Fantail, a rather obliging Ashy Robin, the very brightly coloured Canary Flyrobin and the extremely range restricted Vogolkop Honeyeater.

On the last morning before our descent down the mountain new birds in the camp site included the beautiful Black-breasted Boatbill and the Western Mountain White-eye. During the next two and a half days we scrambled our way back down to where our four wheel-drives vehicles were waiting for us. Few new birds were added to the list, as we were mainly pre-occupied by watching where we placed our feet and trying not to slide down the entire length of the mountain! New birds during the descent included Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Frilled Monarch and Mountain Mouse-Warbler. Some members of the group had the good fortune to be present in one of the hides when a male Magnificent Bird-of-paradise put in an appearance.

Back in Manokwari, it was good to have a warm shower, eat in a restaurant and best of all, to sleep in a real bed, but unfortunately, it was the end of the tour. We had to endure two travelling days back to Australia, which gave us plenty of time to reflect upon what had been a very special, quiet demanding and fabulous tour of New Guinea, during which we had seen some of the most beautiful birds in the world.

## SYSTEMATIC LIST

### ARDEIDAE

**Great-billed Heron** *Ardea sumatrana* We flushed an immature bird from the the mouth of a small creek on the Oransbari Peninsula, on the first day of the tour.

#### ACCIPITRIDAE

**Long-tailed Honey-buzzard** (Long-tailed Buzzard) *Henicopernis longicauda* We enjoyed very good looks at one of these individuals while trekking through the lowlands. Its recorded prey items include a variety of insects, lizards, birds and birds eggs.

**Brahminy Kite** *Haliastur indus* A common bird of coastal areas, we enjoyed a few good looks at this species, while we were in Manokwari.

**Gurney's Eagle** *Aquila gurneyi* We were very fortunate to enjoy two good sightings of this uncommon species, both were of birds in flight; one in the lowlands and one at higher altitude. John Henry Gurney (1819-1890) was a banker in Norwich, England and an amateur ornithologist who worked at the British Natural History Museum.

#### COLUMBIDAE

**Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia* A small number were observed, during our time in Manokwari.

**Slender-billed Cuckoo-Dove** (Brown Cuckoo-Dove) *Macropygia amboinensis* Observed on almost a daily occurrence, most were of birds in flight.

**Stephan's Dove** *Chalcophaps stephani* A couple observed in flight, while trekking through the lowlands. Etienne Stephan Jacquinet was the father of the French explorer Vice-Admiral Charles Hector Jacquinet (1796-1879). His brother Honore Jacquinet (1815-1887) served as ships surgeon on the same ships as his brother and he asked the French zoologist Jacques Pucheran (1817-1894) to name the dove after his father.

**Pheasant Pigeon** *Otidiphaps nobilis* One of the shyest and most difficult birds to observe in New Guinea. A lucky few had one walk across the opening in the forest, while they were in the Western Parotia hide. Tom even got a great photograph of it.

**Wompoo Fruit-Dove** *Ptilinopus magnificus* We saw this very attractive species well, both in the lowlands and in the highlands.

**Ornate Fruit-Dove** *Ptilinopus ornatus* We found a pair of these uncommon birds nesting on Mount Iwom; Tom got a great photograph of one sitting on the nest. This beautiful species is particularly shy, so we were very fortunate to find a nesting pair.

**Superb Fruit-Dove** *Ptilinopus superbus* We observed this species well on a couple of occasions, while trekking in the lowlands.

**White-breasted Fruit-Dove** *Ptilinopus rivoli* We enjoyed some good looks at this very beautiful species of fruit-dove. This is the only fruit-dove commonly encountered high in the mountains.

**Claret-breasted Fruit-Dove** *Ptilinopus viridis* Observed in the lowlands on one occasion. It is a bird with a curious range, it is found on the West Papuan Islands and on the Bismarck and Solomon Islands.

**Dwarf Fruit-Dove** *Ptilinopus nanus* Three birds observed very well, during one of the days in the lowlands. This is one of the most difficult of all the New Guinea fruit-doves to observe, as it is very small, is basically just green in colour and it also sits perfectly still for long periods of the day. So we were very fortunate to observe this species so well.

**Rufescent Imperial-Pigeon** *Ducula chalconota* We enjoyed many good looks at this high altitude species in and around our highest camp site, at the base of Mount Iwom. It is a very uncommon species and unfortunately, has been hunted to extinction in many other areas of montane forest throughout New Guinea.

**Papuan Mountain-Pigeon** *Gymnophaps albertisii* Seen daily flying overhead in small flocks, at our highest camp site at the base of Mount Iwom. We observed an immature bird particularly well in the grounds of our highest camp site. This species only nests in the

mountains but often descends to lowland hills to feed.

#### CACATUIDAE

**Palm Cockatoo** *Probosciger aterrimus* Observed mainly in flight both in the lowlands and in the highlands. On one occasion we were able to observe a bird at close quarters, which was opening a nut, with its very large bill, it has the largest bill of any species of parrot.

**Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** *Cacatua galerita* Small numbers recorded on a daily basis, during our time in lowland forest.

#### PSITTACIDAE

**Rainbow Lorikeet** *Trichoglossus haematodus* A common bird of the lowlands, we were fortunate to enjoy a pair of birds at a nest site, while trekking through the lowlands.

**Papuan Lorikeet** *Charmosyna papou* On a few occasions we were fortunate to enjoy good views of these exquisite lorikeets waving their long yellow tail streamers, as they fed in flowering trees, in the highlands.

**Yellow-billed Lorikeet** *Neopsittacus nusschenbroekii* Another highland species of lorikeet which was observed close to our highest camp site, at the foot of Mount Iwom.

**Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrot** *Micropsitta bruijnii* Seen in flight on a few occasions, but on one occasion we watched a pair of birds for quite a long time, as they were excavating a nesting site.

**Red-cheeked Parrot** *Geoffroyus geoffroyi* A common bird of the lowlands, which we saw mainly in flight, however, we were fortunate to observe a pair of perched birds.

**Moluccan King-Parrot** *Alisterus amboinensis* We enjoyed several good sightings of this attractive species of parrot, during our time in the highlands.

**Vulturine Parrot** *Pionopsitta vulturina* We were very fortunate to enjoy good perched views of this uncommon and very attractive species of parrot, on more than one occasion. This species is listed as vulnerable in 'Threatened Birds of the World', the main threat to this species is hunting for its feathers, which are used for ornamentation, particularly in ceremonial head-dresses. In more recent times this species is coming under increasing pressure, as it is now being trapped for the caged-bird trade.

#### AEGOTHELIADAE

**Feline Owlet-Nightjar** *Aegotheles insignis* This bird has to be one of the most beautiful birds in the world and it was a great treat to be shown one of these birds at its daytime roost.

**Salvadori's Owlet-Nightjar** (Barred Owlet-Nightjar) *Aegotheles affinis* A recent split from Barred Owlet Nightjar, this species is endemic to the Arfak Mountains, where judging from its call, given after dark, it is not uncommon. Conte-Adelardo Tommaso Paleotti Salvador (1835-1923) was an eminent Italian physician, author, educator and ornithologist. He was Vice-Director of the Museum of Zoology at the University of Turin, from 1879 until 1923. He was also medical officer in Garibaldi's battalion during his second 'expedition' in Sicily. His collection was donated to the Natural Science Museum of Villa Vitali. He wrote *Catalogo Sistematico Degli Uccelli di Borneo*, in 1874, and *Ornitologia della Papuasias e delle Molucche*, in 1880.

#### APODIDAE

**Glossy Swiftlet** *Aerodramus esculenta* One of the most common birds in West Papua. It was most common in the lowlands, but we also saw small numbers in the highlands.

#### ALCEDINIDAE

**Rufous-bellied Kookaburra** *Dacelo gaudichaud* We enjoyed good looks at a perched individual on our return journey, in the lowlands.

**Yellow-billed Kingfisher** *Halcyon torotoro* One bird was observed briefly, as it perched in dense cover, on one occasion, in the lowlands.

#### BUCEROTIDAE

**Blyth's Hornbill** *Aceros plicatus* Commonly encountered in the lowlands, it is one of the largest species of hornbills in the world. Edward Blyth (1810-1873) was an English zoologist and author. He was Curator of the museum of the Asiatic Society of Bengal from 1842-1864. He wrote *The Natural History of Cranes* in 1881.

#### PITTIDAE

**Red-bellied Pitta** (Blue-breasted Pitta) *Pitta erythrogaster* A bird responded to tape playback in the lowlands. It completely circled the group, but unfortunately stayed deep in cover most of the time, I saw it perched momentarily on top of a fallen log.

#### HIRUNDINIDAE

**Pacific Swallow** *Hirundo tahitica* Observed on the first day of the tour in Manokwari.

#### CAMPEPHAGIDAE

**Papuan Cuckoo-shrike** (Black-shouldered Cuckoo-shrike) *Coracina incerta* This uncommon species was observed well during the early part of the tour, while trekking through the lowlands.

**New Guinea Cuckoo-shrike** (Black Cuckoo-shrike) *Coracina melas* A fairly common lowland species which we saw well at the beginning and at the end of the trek.

**Black-bellied Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina montana* A bird of montane forest which we saw well on a couple of occasions.

#### SYLVIDAE

**Island Leaf-Warbler** *Phylloscopus poliocephalus* Another species which occurs only in montane forest; we only saw it on one occasion, it is the only *Phylloscopus* warbler that occurs in New Guinea.

#### RHIPDURIDAE

**Northern Fantail** *Rhipidura rufiventris* Observed well on a couple of occasions, in foothill forest.

**Friendly Fantail** *Rhipidura albolimbata* The only inquisitive bird in the whole of the Arfak Mountains! We saw it on a daily basis in highland forest.

**Chestnut-bellied Fantail** *Rhipidura hyperythra* This uncommon species was seen very well on a couple of occasions, while we were birding in lowland forest.

**Sooty Thicket-Fantail** *Rhipidura threnothorax* Repeated poor views of this renowned skulker, which in its own way, responded well to tape playback.

**Black Fantail** *Rhipidura atra* Commonly recorded in the higher parts of the Arfak Mountains; this is the only sexually dimorphic fantail, males looking like Black Monarchs and females, like Dimorphic Fantails.

**Dimorphic Fantail** *Rhipidura brachyrhyncha* Seen well on a couple of occasions, in the higher mountain forest, we only observed dark morph birds.

## MONARCHIDAE

- Black Monarch** *Monarcha axillaris* An uncommon bird of the forested foothills, which we saw surprisingly well on a couple of occasions. It is an unusual species of monarch, because it looks and behaves more like a fantail.
- Black-winged Monarch** *Monarcha frater* This uncommon species was seen very well on a couple of occasions; the birds that breed on Cape York, in Australia, are presumed to migrate northwards to New Guinea.
- Spot-winged Monarch** *Monarcha guttulus* A bird of lowland forest, we saw it very well on a few occasions.
- Golden Monarch** *Monarcha chrysomela* Another lowland forest species, which normally only occurs in mixed species feeding parties. We enjoyed watching a pair of these birds, on the first day of the trek.
- Friiled Monarch** *Arses telescophthalmus* An adult male put on a spectacular display for us, puffing out the feathers on its nape, while waiting for a Magnificent Bird-of-paradise to show at its display ground. The word Arses from the birds scientific name, was a Persian monarch, in the 4th century BC.
- Black-breasted Boatbill** *Machaerirhynchus nigripectus* A bird of upland forest, a single bird appeared in our highest camp site, during our last morning there.
- Yellow-breasted Boatbill** *Machaerirhynchus flaviventer* A bird of lowland forest, which we saw very well on a couple of occasions, it also occurs in coastal Queensland.

## PETROICIDAE

- Olive Flyrobin** *Microeca flavovirescens* We enjoyed a couple of very good looks at this not uncommon but inconspicuous and infrequently seen species, which occurs in lowland rainforest.
- Canary Flycatcher** *Microeca papuana* An uncommon bird of montane rainforest, which we saw well on one occasion on Mount Iwom. The name should be changed to Canary Flyrobin as this species has always been in the Australasian Robin family, not in the Old World Flycatcher family.
- White-faced Robin** *Tregellasia leucops* Observed regularly throughout the tour, usually perched on the side of a tree. This species also occurs in rainforest on Cape York, in northern Queensland.
- White-rumped Robin** *Peneothello bimaculatus* An uncommon bird of lowland forest, which was seen only once during the tour.
- Black-chinned Robin** *Poecilodryas brachyura* A range restricted species of lowland rainforest, which we saw well on a couple of occasions.
- Black-throated Robin** *Poecilodryas albonotata* An uncommon bird of highland forest which spends a great deal of its time perched motionless in the sub-canopy. This was exactly what the bird was doing, when we enjoyed our only sighting of this species, in our highest camp site
- Ashy Robin** *Heteromyias albispecularis* A bird of montane rainforest, which was seen well on a couple of occasions, on Mount Iwom.

## PACHYCEPHALIDAE

- Dwarf Whistler** *Pachycare flavogrisea* This beautiful and unusual species of whistler was observed very well in lowland forest on a couple of occasions.
- Mottled Whistler** *Rhagologus leucostigma* An uncommon and unobtrusive bird of montane forest, which was only observed on one occasion.
- Slater's Whistler** *Pachycephala soror* A common bird of the foothill forests of New Guinea,

which we saw very well on several occasions. Doctor Philip Lutley Sclater (1829-1913) was a graduate of Oxford and practised law for many years. In 1858 he was the founder and first editor of the *The Ibis*, the Journal of the British Ornithologists Union. He edited it from 1858 to 1865 and again from 1877 until 1913. He was also Secretary of the Zoological Society of London from 1860 until 1903.

**Regent Whistler** *Pachycephala schlegelii* A common bird of highland forest, which we saw well on many occasions. The adult male is particularly attractive.

**Rufous Shrike-Thrush** (Little Shrike-Thrush) *Colluricincla megarhyncha* A bird of lowland forest which we saw well on a few occasions. It is a remarkably variable bird, with 21 subspecies in New Guinea and 7 in Australia.

**Hooded Pitohui** *Pitohui dichrous* A bird which occurs at all altitudes, we saw it very well on a couple of occasions. This is a poisonous species, whose feathers and skin contain batrachotoxins, the same poison found in the skins of *Phyllobates* 'poison-arrow' frogs.

**Rusty Pitohui** *Pitohui ferrugineus* A bird of lowland rainforest, which we saw well on a couple of occasions. It also is poisonous.

#### MALURIDAE

**Wallace's Fairywren** *Sipodotus wallacii* This unobtrusive and rarely-seen species, is a bird of foothill forest and we only saw it on one occasion throughout the tour. Alfred Russell Wallace (1823-1913) was an English naturalist, evolutionary scientist, geographer and anthropologist. He went to Brazil in 1848 on a self-sustaining natural history collecting expedition. During this expedition he not only collected specimens but he also made maps of the area. His return to England was a near disaster; his ship caught fire and sank with all his specimens, and he was lucky to be rescued by a passing vessel. He also spent 8 years in the East Indies, during which he undertook about 70 different expeditions. He visited every important island in the archipelago at least once, and collected a remarkable 125,660 specimens, including more than 1,000 new species. It was during this time that he developed his theory on natural selection and later collaborated with Charles Darwin on the theory of evolution. Wallace's Line separates the Oriental and Australasian faunal regions.

#### ACANTHIZIDAE

**Mountain Mouse-Warbler** *Crateroscelis robusta* As the name would imply, this species is a bird of montane forest. One individual responded well to tape playback.

**Perplexing Scrubwren** *Sericornis virgatus* An uncommon and unobtrusive bird of foothill forest, which we saw remarkably well on a few occasions.

**Vogelkop Scrubwren** *Sericornis rufescens* Endemic to the higher forests of the Vogelkop Mountains, we saw it very well on a number of occasions.

**Grey-green Scrubwren** *Sericornis arfakianus* Yet another unobtrusive bird of montane forest, which we also saw well on a few occasions.

**Pale-billed Scrubwren** *Sericornis spilodera* An uncommon species of lowland rainforest, which we saw surprisingly well, on a few occasions.

**Fairy Gerygone** *Gerygone palpebrosa* An uncommon bird of foothill forests, which we saw well on one occasion. It also occurs in Queensland, Australia.

**Yellow-bellied Gerygone** *Gerygone chrysogaster* A common bird of lowland forest, which we saw well on a few occasions.

**Mountain Gerygone** (Grey Gerygone) *Gerygone igata* A not uncommon bird of montane forest, which we also saw well on a few occasions.

#### CLIMACTERIDAE

**Papuan Treecreeper** *Cormobates placens* An uncommon bird of montane forest, which we saw well on a couple of occasions. The other six species of this family occur only in Australia.

## MELANOCHARITIDAE

**Lemon-breasted Berrypecker** (Mid-Mountain Berrypecker) *Melanocharis longicauda* A bird of foothill and montane rainforest, which we saw on a couple of occasions.

**Yellow-bellied Longbill** *Toxorhamphus novaeguineae* A common bird of lowland rainforest, which we saw well on a few occasions.

**Dwarf Honeyeater** *Toxorhamphus iliolophus* Found from sea level to the highlands, this species is notoriously difficult to see, so we did well to see one very well, on the second day of the tour. This birds name should be changed to longbill, as it is no longer in the honeyeater family.

**Pygmy Honeyeater** *Toxorhamphus pygmaeum* Another notoriously difficult species to see, some member of the group saw this species well, close to our second camp site This birds name should also be changed to longbill, as it is no longer in the honeyeater family.

## ZOSTEROPIDAE

**Capped White-eye** (Western Mountain White-eye) *Zosterops fuscicapillus* A common bird of montane forest, which we saw well on a couple of occasions, at our highest camp site

## MELIPHAGIDAE

**Red-collared Myzomela** *Myzomela rosenbergii* A common bird of highland forest, which we saw well on the higher slopes of Mount Iwom.

**Puff-backed Honeyeater** (Puff-backed Meliphaga) *Meliphaga aruensis* Another notoriously difficult bird to see, as it normally stays hidden in dense foliage. A bird of foothill forest which we saw very well on two separate occasions.

**Rufous-sided Honeyeater** *Ptiloprora erythropleura* This range restricted species is confined to montane forest, where we saw it well on several occasions.

**Cinnamon-browed Melidectes** *Melidectes ochromelas* A bird of highland rainforest, we saw it well on a couple of occasions, on the higher slopes of Mount Iwom.

**Vogelkop Melidectes** *Melidectes leucostephes* Endemic to the higher slopes of the Vogelkop Mountains, we enjoyed good looks at a few birds on the higher slopes of Mount Iwom.

**Arfak Honeyeater** (Western Smoky Honeyeater) *Melipotes gymnops* Another species which is endemic to the higher slopes of the Vogelkop Mountains. We saw it well on a couple of occasions on Mount Iwom.

## DICRURIDAE

**Papuan Drongo** (Mountain Drongo) *Chaetorhynchus papuensis* An uncommon bird of foothill forest, which we saw well on many occasions.

## PARADISAEIDAE

**Long-tailed Paradigalla** *Paradigalla carunculata* Endemic to the Vogelkop and western Snow Mountains, this is one of the least known bird-of-paradise, it is thought to be a primitive species in which males also help to rear their young. We saw it very well on a couple of occasions at our highest camp site

**Western Parotia** *Parotia sefilata* Endemic to the highland forests of the Vogelkop and Wandammen peninsulas. We saw several females, but only one male, which fortunately put on a magnificent display for us. The display of this species is one of the ornithological

wonders of the world. It is very difficult to find adult males, as most have been shot, for their feathers. It was no surprise at all that this species was voted 'bird of the tour' by tour participants.

**Magnificent Riflebird** *Ptiloris magnificus* A not uncommon bird of lowland rainforest, which we glimpsed on a few occasions.

**Superb Bird-of-paradise** *Lophorina superba* An uncommon bird of foothill forests, an adult male showed well briefly, on one occasion.

**Black Sickbill** *Epimachus fastuosus* A decidedly uncommon bird of montane rainforest, which we saw on a few occasions in and around our highest camp site. Most sightings were of females or young males. This is the largest species of Bird-or-paradise, at 110 cm, it is larger than a pheasant! This species is classified as vulnerable in 'Threatened Birds of the World'. The main threats to this species are hunting, the tail feathers are highly prized for ceremonial decoration, and destruction of habitat for agriculture.

**Magnificent Bird-of-paradise** *Cicinnurus magnificus* An uncommon bird of montane rainforest, we saw females in the forest and a lucky few saw an adult male at its display site, from one of the palm leaf hides.

**King Bird-of-paradise** *Cicinnurus regius* An uncommon bird of lowland rainforest, which we only saw on one occasion.

**Lesser Bird-of-paradise** *Paradisaea minor* Yet another uncommon bird of lowland rainforest, we did see both males and females fairly well, on a couple of occasions.

#### PTILONORHYNCHIDAE

**Vogelkop Bowerbird** *Amblyornis inornatus* Endemic to the Vogelkop Mountains, where we saw it well on a few occasions. It is a very plain coloured bird, by far the most impressive feature of this bird, is its bower. Which must surely be one of the finest creations of any bird and one of the ornithological wonders of the world.

**Masked Bowerbird** (Flame Bowerbird) *Sericulus aureus* A recent split from Flame Bowerbird *Sericulus ardens*, this must be one of the most beautiful birds in the world. It is a pity we only glimpsed the bird on one occasion.

#### CORVIDAE

**Grey Crow** *Corvus tristis* A fairly common species which occurs from sea level, to montane rainforest. We saw a small group very well, in the lowlands, on the second day of the tour.

#### PASSERIDAE

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus* This widespread species is now very common in Manokwari. It self introduced into West Papua in 1991 and is slowly spreading eastwards.