

Field Guides Tour Report
PAPUA NEW GUINEA 2012

Jun 27, 2012 to Jul 15, 2012
Phil Gregory



A quartet of bright and beautiful local girls add a splash of color to the group photo, standing out amidst the muted field dress of the tour participants. (Photo by guide Phil Gregory)

The small group Field Guides tour of PNG 2012 went there over the general election, always a more than usually interesting time, but happily we encountered no problems and even our flights worked out well, barring a late arrival then a 2-hour delay on the day we left the country. We had a diverse and keen group interested in the culture as well as the birds, which was nice. The staff at our hotel in Port Moresby were very welcoming, and next day the Raggiana Birds-of-Paradise up at Varirata gave a nice show, with a supporting cast including Barred Owlet-Nightjar, Beautiful Fruit-Dove, Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher and White-bellied Whistler, all showing really well.

Ambua had just had a lot of heavy rain again, but expert local guide Joseph and the fruiting tree in the lodge grounds were ready for us, and we swiftly got onto Brown Sicklebill, Princess Stephanie's Astrapia, Lawes's Parotia, Short-tailed Paradigalla, Blue BoP, Superb BoP, and a bonus of Loria's Satinbird (now promoted out of the birds-of-paradise into a new family). Not bad for the first couple of hours, and the rain held off!

Next day we went up to below the Tari Gap area, getting above the fog-shrouded lodge, and had wonderful looks at the bizarre male King-of-Saxony BoP, some really good Ribbon-tailed Astrapias, and even a good male Princess Stephanie's Astrapia despite the roadworks and logging at this site. Wattled Ploughbill with pink face paddles was another great bird, and male Regent Whistlers were uncommonly accommodating this trip, whilst a Lesser Melampitta circumnavigated us and

showed quite well.

Next morning luckily enough the dawn came cold and clear, so we went for the male Blue Bird-of-Paradise and we quickly got onto great looks of him at his song post, with Marbled Honeyeater, Capped White-eye, and Island Leaf-Warbler showing nicely too. The Sooty Owl also came good, and we enjoyed the visit there. A Black Sicklebill back at the lodge was a nice bonus too.

This year we very sensibly flew direct from Ambua to Kiunga, avoiding the angst of trying to fly into fog-shrouded Tabubil. Things in PNG are seldom straightforward, and in Kiunga we had some vehicle challenges while the lodging had some water issues and could use a bit of sprucing up (we're hoping for next year!), but we made the best of it and managed some very nice birds.

On our boat trip day, the rain was pretty unrelenting and much of the morning was really a write-off, but we did make a comeback with a great male King BoP at his lek, salvaged a Twelve-wired BoP, had a cooperative Common Paradise-Kingfisher, saw some wonderful Blyth's Hornbills, Palm Cockatoo and a flock of the rare Yellow-eyed Starlings.

A male Flame Bowerbird was seen twice, though our guide's first directions were somewhat problematic, and we managed displaying Grey-headed Goshawk and Trumpet Manucode here. We also had a good performance at the Km 17 lek late one afternoon. Interestingly, what was a hybrid swarm in 2010 has now been rejuvenated and we had some pretty good-looking male Greater BoP's moonwalking.

Tabubil was for once dry and we enjoyed good conditions here, though the Ok Ma Bridge which collapsed when we were here last trip is still unrepaired. Good birds included 3 Salvadori's Teal, Doria's Goshawk, the very striking local taxon of Little Ringed Plover, a late afternoon Pesquet's Parrot, great views of Yellow-capped Pygmy-Parrot, plus White-eared Bronze-Cuckoo, Carola's Parotia, Magnificent BoP, Obscure Berrypecker, and Mountain Peltops.

After a flight across in fine conditions, (the rumored liquidation of Airlines PNG fortunately being just a rumor), Kumul Lodge was a second opportunity for some of the high altitude specials, and the feeders there came good with great views of Brown Sicklebill and once again the shortest-tailed adult male Ribbon-tailed Astrapia I've ever seen, plus Brehm's Tiger-Parrot and very obliging Archbold's Bowerbird and Mountain Firetail. Other good birds were 3 Crested Berrypeckers with crests erect, Yellow-breasted Bowerbird, a bonus Torrent-lark, a big flock of New Guinea White-eyes and best of all a Feline Owlet-Nightjar after we had been down to hear a New Guinea (Dusky) Woodcock roding at dusk.

Then it was back (almost on time!) to Port Moresby and a trip out to the PAU for some nice easy birding--it gives you a totally false impression of what birding in PNG is like!--and fine views of a flock of 47 vagrant Plumed Whistling-Ducks, a pair of Papuan Frogmouths, Common Kingfisher, and a neat bower of Fawn-breasted Bowerbird.

The finale was Varirata with Growling (Magnificent) Riflebird showing all too briefly, a wonderful immature Doria's Goshawk perched up for scope views, the very distinctive Dwarf Whistler, Yellow-billed Kingfisher at long last, and a terrific clown-faced White-faced Robin. The departure day morning saw us score Silver-eared Honeyeater as a last lifer before shopping at the amazing PNG Art warehouse.

Thanks to Teresa at FG HQ for good logistics, and to local guides Leonard, Ben, Joseph, Samuel, Edmund, and Max 1 and Max 2, who all gave a lot to the trip and were ace spotters and assistants. Thanks also to the group for coming and coping so well with the various tribulations, to Larry for sharing his scope and to everyone for an enjoyable and stimulating trip. Safe travels and hope to meet up again at some point.

--Phil

For more information about this tour, including future departures, visit our website at **www.fieldguides.com**. And to see this same triplist online, go to **<http://www.fieldguides.com/triplists/png12aLIST.pdf>** and you will find the list in its entirety.

KEYS FOR THIS LIST

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

BIRDS

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

PLUMED WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna eytoni*) – A flock of 47 at the PAU were a great surprise, this was formerly a vagrant to New Guinea.

WANDERING WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna arcuata*) – Just 10 at the PAU.

RADJAH SHELDUCK (*Tadorna radjah*) – Two seen twice in flight at or near the PAU.

SALVADORI'S TEAL (*Salvadorina waigiensis*) – Great looks at 3 birds at the Ok Menga intake, this year the river was low enough for the boulders to show. [E]

PACIFIC BLACK DUCK (*Anas superciliosa*) – A few at the PAU.

Megapodiidae (Megapodes)

BLACK-BILLED BRUSH-TURKEY (*Talegalla fuscirostris*) – Heard as Varirata and the Elevala, and huge nest mounds were seen at both sites. [E*]

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

BROWN QUAIL (*Coturnix ypsilophora*) – Some folks saw one en route to Varirata and up at the Tari gap, and it was calling at Max's orchid garden.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

AUSTRALASIAN GREBE (*Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*) – Six at the PAU included two juveniles.

Fregatidae (Frigatebirds)

GREAT FRIGATEBIRD (*Fregata minor*) – A male over Ela Beach in calm conditions on the first afternoon was a surprise.

LESSER FRIGATEBIRD (*Fregata ariel*) – Three over Ela Beach on the very first afternoon.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

LITTLE BLACK CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*) – A few at the PAU.

LITTLE PIED CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*) – One at the PAU.

Anhingidae (Anhingas)

AUSTRALASIAN DARTER (*Anhinga novaehollandiae*) – One at the PAU and one white-breasted immature along the Elevala.

Ardeidae (Heron, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT EGRET (AUSTRALASIAN) (*Ardea alba modesta*) – Quite a few along the Elevala this year, and a couple at the PAU.

INTERMEDIATE EGRET (*Mesophoyx intermedia*) – One at Tabubil was unusual, then a few at the PAU.

LITTLE EGRET (LITTLE) (*Egretta garzetta nigripes*) – Only seen at the PAU (1) and once along the Fly R.

PIED HERON (*Egretta picata*) – Just a handful at the PAU.

CATTLE EGRET (ASIAN) (*Bubulcus ibis coromandus*) – As always, a few around the Port Moresby area, of the eastern race which is split by the IOC.

RUFIOUS NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax caledonicus*) – Two over our lodge in POM, then one adult along the Elevala and an adult and imm. at the PAU.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

AUSTRALIAN IBIS (*Threskiornis molucca*) – One at the PAU, and some folks saw a couple by the entrance late one afternoon.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

PACIFIC BAZA (*Aviceda subcristata*) – A few at Kiunga, with some great looks.



The Tari Valley, highland home of the famous Huli Wigmen, is also home to this Sooty Owl, which gave us a wonderful showing as it glided from its day roost in a hollow tree. (Photo by guide Phil Gregory)

LONG-TAILED HONEY-BUZZARD (*Henicopernis longicauda*) – Just a single, over the Kiunga airstrip in the mid-day heat and making that long hot slog worthwhile. [E]

BLACK KITE (BLACK) (*Milvus migrans affinis*) – Common around Mt Hagen and a few around POM, very local in PNG.

WHISTLING KITE (*Haliastur spheerulus*) – Only at the PAU with none seen at Kiunga this tour.

BRAHMINY KITE (*Haliastur indus*) – Small numbers at Kiunga, below Kumul and near POM.

WHITE-BELLIED SEA-EAGLE (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) – Three birds on the river trip day included two fine adults.

EASTERN MARSH-HARRIER (PAPUAN) (*Circus spilonotus spilothorax*) – One over at the Tari Gap was a lucky pick up. Split by most authorities these days as Papuan Harrier. [E]

VARIABLE GOSHAWK (*Accipiter hiogaster*) – A pair along the Boystown Road showed well, and one flew over at the Flame Bowerbird site.

BROWN GOSHAWK (*Accipiter fasciatus*) – One near Varirata, then a pair near Tari en route to Ambua.

GRAY-HEADED GOSHAWK (*Accipiter poliocephalus*) – A fine pair were displaying at the Flame Bowerbird site, with pigeon-like rises then dives in slow flapping flight. One bedraggled bird was also along the Elevala in the rain, and another distant on a ridge at Km 74. [E]

DORIA'S GOSHAWK (*Megatriorchis doriae*) – Amazingly enough we had an adult of this rare bird fly over at Dublin Creek, then a fantastic view of an immature with a whitish head with some dark flecks by the eye, and white underparts finely streaked dark along the boundary track at Varirata, near the old nest site. Greyish cere and dull yellow legs. [E]

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

AUSTRALIAN KESTREL (*Falco cenchroides*) – One at Kiunga then another at Tabubil, it's a scarce winter migrant from Australia.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

RED-NECKED CRAKE (*Rallina tricolor*) – Heard at Dublin Creek and then at Ok Menga, but as ever unseen. [*]

PURPLE SWAMPHEN (AUSTRALASIAN) (*Porphyrio porphyrio melanopterus*) – Great looks at the PAU, may well be a split as Pacific Swampphen.

DUSKY MOORHEN (*Gallinula tenebrosa*) – Three at the PAU.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

MASKED LAPWING (*Vanellus miles miles*) – Just a few at the PAU.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER (SOUTHERN) (*Charadrius dubius dubius*) – Fine views of one with a huge yellow eye ring and pink base to the bill at Km 120. This form does not have a non-breeding dress and badly needs taxonomic review.

Jacaniidae (Jacanas)

COMB-CRESTED JACANA (*Irediparra gallinacea*) – Great views of 5 at the PAU, a superb little bird.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

DUSKY WOODCOCK (NEW GUINEA) (*Scolopax saturata rosenbergii*) – One was heard giving the strange croaking flight call at Max's garden at 1845, but we could not see it; interesting that they are displaying at this time of the year. [E*]

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

GREAT CRESTED TERN (*Thalasseus bergii cristatus*) – Three off Ela Beach harbor were unexpected.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – Personally I think the birds in POM and Hagen are racing pigeons, and I doubt this bird is really established in PNG. [I]

SLENDER-BILLED CUCKOO-DOVE (*Macropygia amboinensis*) – Good looks at Varirata and below Kumul Lodge.

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO-DOVE (*Macropygia nigrirostris*) – Seen in flight at Varirata and nicely below Kumul Lodge, the barred tail is a good field character along with the smaller size and more rusty appearance than Slender-billed Cuckoo-Dove. The IOC name is Bar-tailed Cuckoo-Dove. [E]

GREAT CUCKOO-DOVE (*Reinwardtoena reinwardtii*) – I called one in up at the Tari Gap, it came flying right over then then gave the swooping and climbing display flight. Another showed briefly at Ok Menga. [E]

STEPHAN'S DOVE (*Chalcophaps stephani*) – One flashed across along a Boystown road trail.

PEACEFUL DOVE (*Geopelia placida*) – A few at our lodge in POM and at the PAU, it is very local in PNG.

BAR-SHOULDERED DOVE (*Geopelia humeralis*) – One at the PAU, another very local bird here.

CINNAMON GROUND-DOVE (*Gallicolumba rufigula*) – One was heard giving the quiet purring call at the start of the Boundary Track at Varirata, unusual up here and as always impossible to see. [E*]

THICK-BILLED GROUND-PIGEON (*Trugon terrestris*) – One was heard in thick forest along the Drimgas Road, and I think we heard another up at Varirata, it's an amazingly elusive but widespread species, and I have still only ever seen it once! [E*]

WOMPPOO FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus magnificus*) – Lovely views of this spectacular dove up at Varirata on both trips.

PINK-SPOTTED FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus perlatus*) – Very sparse this trip, we saw a handful at Varirata and again at Kiunga. [E]

SUPERB FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus superbus*) – Seen twice at Varirata where it was often calling, but both were basically flying away, always hard to see well.

BEAUTIFUL FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus pulchellus*) – A lovely perched one at Varirata, and it was vocal both there and Kiunga where we had a couple of fly-bys. [E]

WHITE-BREASTED FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus rivoli*) – One male up at Ambua showed well, as did the female earlier. [E]

ORANGE-BELLIED FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus iozonus*) – Just a few of 2 races, pseudohumeralis with the maroon shoulder bar at Kiunga and finschii at Varirata. [E]

DWARF FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus nanus*) – One flew over the Elevala, a tiny little dove that is always hard to find. [E]

PINON IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula pinon*) – Nice looks at Kiunga of this large pigeon, this is the race rubiensis. [E]

COLLARED IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula mullerii*) – Small numbers upriver at Kiunga, where we had about 50. Very much a specialist of riverine forest. [E]

ZOE IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula zoeae*) – Some good looks around Kiunga, where one was carrying nest material. [E]

TORRESIAN IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula spilorrhoa*) – One flew over at the PAU and we saw one earlier from the bus near there.

PAPUAN MOUNTAIN-PIGEON (*Gymnophaps albertisii*) – Small numbers from Kiunga and Ambua, where it was seen perched up nicely. [E]

Cacatuidae (Cockatoos)

PALM COCKATOO (*Probosciger aterrimus*) – Fair views of 5 birds along the Elevala, but the wet conditions were not conducive to them sitting out.

SULPHUR-CRESTED COCKATOO (*Cacatua galerita*) – Seen (and heard!) nicely at Varirata and Kiunga.

Psittacidae (Parrots)

YELLOW-STREAKED LORY (*Chalcopsitta sintillata*) – Good views of this big dark-headed parrot with the raspy voice at Kiunga. [E]

DUSKY LORY (*Pseudeos fuscata*) – A couple of flybys at Kiunga and heard at Ok Menga. [E]

RAINBOW LORIKEET (COCONUT) (*Trichoglossus haematodus nigrogularis*) – New Guinea birds are often now split as Coconut Lorikeet, the plumage is pretty distinct from the Australian birds. They are quite common in the lowlands and we saw them well at Kiunga.

GOLDIE'S LORIKEET (*Psittuteutes goldiei*) – Two zipped over at Kumul, a dreadful view! There was little blossom about this trip thus few lorikeets. [E]

BLACK-CAPPED LORY (*Lorius lory*) – These were noisy and widespread, with nice views up at Varirata. The distinctive race somu was the yellow-winged taxon in the west. [E]

RED-FLANKED LORIKEET (*Charmosyna placentis*) – Flight views at Kiunga where they were widespread but elusive. [E]



The name "Beautiful Fruit-Dove", while appropriate for this bird, seems to imply that other fruit-doves are not so attractive, but nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, this is just one of 6 beautiful fruit-doves we saw on this tour! (Photo by guide Phil Gregory)

- PAPUAN LORIKEET** (*Charmosyna papou*) – They showed quite nicely up at Ambua, it really is one of the most beautiful of all the parrots. Also seen flying at Kumul. [E]
- YELLOW-BILLED LORIKEET** (*Neopsittacus musschenbroekii*) – Quite common at Ambua with 3 seen below Kumul. [E]
- PESQUET'S PARROT** (*Psittichas fulgidus*) – This was a great late pm find at Ok Menga, with one perched up high on a ridgetop, looking remarkably like an imperial pigeon initially until we saw the distinctive head shape, a great bird that is becoming rare due to hunting. [E]
- YELLOW-CAPPED PYGMY-PARROT** (*Micropsitta keiensis*) – Flyover dust specks at Kiunga, if you've got floaters you've already seen it! However, we then got a terrific view of one foraging like a nuthatch along branches up at Dablin Creek where this species overlaps with Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrot. This genus is the world's smallest parrots, not much bigger than your thumb! [E]
- BUFF-FACED PYGMY-PARROT** (*Micropsitta pusio*) – Heard at Varirata and close by too, but impossible to see in the huge dense tree. [E*]
- ORANGE-BREASTED FIG-PARROT** (*Cyclopsitta gulielmitertii*) – Seen at Km 97, Dablin Creek and Kiunga, and usually in groups of 3-5 birds. [E]
- DOUBLE-EYED FIG-PARROT** (*Cyclopsitta diophthalma*) – Several flyovers along the Boystown Road.
- LARGE FIG-PARROT** (*Psittaculirostris desmarestii*) – One flew over the boat up along the Elevala, a large fat-headed fig-parrot with a quite distinct call, but very hard to see at rest. [E]
- BREHM'S TIGER-PARROT** (*Psittacella brehmii*) – Brief looks at Tari Gap, then 3 or 4 lumbering about on the feeders at Kumul, less than usual there. [E]
- RED-CHEEKED PARROT** (*Geoffroyus geoffroyi*) – Common and noisy from Varirata to Kiunga, their range of calls is surprisingly varied. Some good views both at rest and in flight.
- BLUE-COLLARED PARROT** (*Geoffroyus simplex*) – Several flocks flew over up at Dablin Creek, as always at cloud-base height, but we did see 3 well enough to see the typical short square-tailed Geoffroyus shape. The fantastic beautiful tinkling call is like sleigh-bells, and it is a species I have only ever seen perched a handful of times. [E]
- ECLECTUS PARROT** (*Eclectus roratus*) – Good views at Varirata then at Kiunga where it was widespread.
- PAPUAN KING-PARROT** (*Alisterus chloropterus*) – Heard at Varirata and Ambua. [E*]
- PAPUAN HANGING-PARROT** (*Loriculus aurantiifrons*) – We had 3 separate sightings this trip, two along the Boystown Road and one at Ok Menga, sadly all bulleting over with raspy "tseit-tseit" calls. It's an uncommon and elusive species. [E]

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

- WHITE-CROWNED KOEL** (*Cacomantis leucolophus*) – A great perched view of one up at Varirata that came in to the tape, and heard at Dablin Creek, always a tough bird to actually see. [E]
- BRUSH CUCKOO** (*Cacomantis variolosus*) – Seen well at Ok Menga on both afternoons there.
- CHESTNUT-BREASTED CUCKOO** (*Cacomantis castaneiventris*) – One flew over us at Ok Menga, then a good view of one perched up near the Sepik Headwaters.
- FAN-TAILED CUCKOO** (*Cacomantis flabelliformis excitus*) – One flew in at the Tari Gap, then heard at Kumul Lodge. It's a distinctive montane isolate here in NG.
- RUFIOUS-THROATED BRONZE-CUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx ruficollis*) – Heard up at Ambua but did not come in. [E*]
- WHITE-EARED BRONZE-CUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx meyeri*) – A great view of one at Ok Menga that took ages to locate in the foliage, then flew and sat out quite openly. The host species are still uncertain for this widespread bird. [E]
- LITTLE BRONZE-CUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx minutillus*) – Heard briefly along the Boystown Road in the rain. [*]
- DWARF KOEL** (*Microdynamis parva*) – Heard at Varirata but in tall dense forest to impossible to see, though it did actually fly over us! [E*]
- AUSTRALIAN KOEL** (*Eudynamis cyanocephalus*) – Males and a dark-capped female were seen at Kiunga along the river and the Boystown Road.
- CHANNEL-BILLED CUCKOO** (*Scythrops novaehollandiae*) – Two of this great prehistoric looking cuckoo along the Elevala, where it was quite vocal at the King BoP site too. it's a winter migrant from Australia here.
- GREATER BLACK COUCAL** (*Centropus menbeki*) – Heard along the rivers at Kiunga. [E*]
- PHEASANT COUCAL** (*Centropus phasianinus*) – Seen well at Varirata and the PAU.
- LESSER BLACK COUCAL** (*Centropus bernsteini*) – Heard at Km 17. [E*]

Tytonidae (Barn-Owls)

SOOTY OWL (GREATER) (*Tyto tenebricosa arfaki*) – This took a little while to emerge from its roost hole, the new post-2010 refined technique of scratching with a long pole is much better than bashing the trunk! This bird earns the landowners hundreds of kina per year and we had a great flight view. [E]

Strigidae (Owls)

JUNGLE HAWK-OWL (*Ninox theomacha*) – Irritating, we tried several nights at Ambua and I got it in the spotlight one night after about 45 minutes, but some folks did not make it out and subsequent efforts failed. Rained out at Kiunga too. One of my pet hates is the confusing Clements name for the Papuan Boobook, a long -established and entirely appropriate name which avoids confusion with *Surnia* and *Uroglaux* hawk owls. [E]

Aegothelidae (Owlet-Nightjars)

FELINE OWLET-NIGHTJAR (*Aegotheles insignis*) – Well Hallelujah, I had not actually seen this thing since 2003, though we quite often get to hear it at Ambua. Our first night's effort at Kumul failed miserably, but the second night we heard it call close by as we came up out of the forest, and my second tape cut lured it close for a spotlight look at it sat on a looping vine for some minutes. We tried again for those who were not present on the trek, but it had gone quiet. [E]

BARRED OWLET-NIGHTJAR (*Aegotheles bennettii*) – I was again pleasantly surprised that the two old faithfuls from previous years were still on site at Varirata. The first showed about 10%, but the second was much better! [E]

Podargidae (Frogmouths)

PAPUAN FROGMOUTH (*Podargus papuensis*) – Boy we struggled for the bird this trip, it was missing at all the usual sites but we finally got a fine pair at the PAU, where the lady householder came out and showed us where they had moved to now their favourite tree is no more!

Apodidae (Swifts)

PAPUAN NEEDLETAIL (*Mearnsia novaeguineae*) – Small numbers at Km 17 and again at Kiunga, it seems to replace Glossy Swiftlets over the big river systems. Needleetails are the genus *Chaetura* from Asia, so this is yet again a misleading Clements coinage. [E]

GLOSSY SWIFTLET (*Collocalia esculenta*) – Quite common in the hills, and active even in heavy rain.

MOUNTAIN SWIFTLET (*Aerodramus hirundinaceus*) – Lots at Ambua and a few at Kumul. [E]

UNIFORM SWIFTLET (*Aerodramus vanikorensis*) – Widespread in the lowlands.

Hemiprocnidae (Treeswifts)

MOUSTACHED TREESWIFT (*Hemiprocne mystacea*) – Great looks at a pair at Kiunga, we saw remarkably few this trip.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

COMMON KINGFISHER (*Alcedo atthis*) – One in the scope at the PAU was a nice find.

AZURE KINGFISHER (*Ceyx azureus*) – Heard up at Varirata as it shot through the forest by the creek. [*]

BLUE-WINGED KOOKABURRA (*Dacelo leachii*) – Great views of several individuals at Varirata.

RUFOUS-BELLIED KOOKABURRA (*Dacelo gaudichaud*) – Great views of pair along the Boystown Road, also along the Elevala, and very vocal at Varirata. [E]

SHOVEL-BILLED KOOKABURRA (*Clytoceyx rex*) – Heard late pm at Ok Menga, but way off in the forest. [E*]

FOREST KINGFISHER (*Todiramphus macleayii*) – Uncommon in PNG, we had a couple along the road to Varirata, then one at the PAU.

SACRED KINGFISHER (*Todiramphus sanctus*) – Only very small numbers this trip, mainly from the Elevala and one at Ambua. It's an Australian migrant here.

HOOK-BILLED KINGFISHER (*Melidora macrorrhina*) – Heard up at Kwatu in the daytime and near Km 17, but as ever very hard to find. [E*]

YELLOW-BILLED KINGFISHER (*Syma torotoro*) – Heard at Varirata, then a flyover one at Boystown Road before Ellen got us onto one I had taped in at Varirata just as we were leaving. A great little bird.

MOUNTAIN KINGFISHER (*Syma megarhyncha*) – Heard up at Ambua but way off in the forest. [E*]

COMMON PARADISE-KINGFISHER (*Tanysiptera galatea*) – Thankfully this was quite well behaved this year despite the wet conditions, and we had fine scope views along the Elevala. [E]

BROWN-HEADED PARADISE-KINGFISHER (*Tanysiptera danae*) – My aim these days is to get them without using tape, they sit quietly and can often be picked up by the bright red breast. They were quite vocal up at Varirata, and we got

one very nicely after almost no taping! It's an endemic to SE PNG and this is the only place I have ever seen them. [E]
BUFF-BREASTED PARADISE-KINGFISHER (*Tanysiptera sylvia*) – Leonard got one in the scope at Varirata and I checked it out, but it moved off before we could get anyone onto it. Samuel thought a calling bird at Ok Menga was this species, but it sounded rather like Black Pitohui and was definitely not the kingfisher.

Meropidae (Bee-eaters)

RAINBOW BEE-EATER (*Merops ornatus*) – Small numbers at Varirata and Kiunga.

Coraciidae (Rollers)

DOLLARBIRD (*Eurystomus orientalis*) – Usually common in the lowlands and hills but scarcer this trip, we saw them nicely at Varirata and Kiunga.

Bucerotidae (Hornbills)

BLYTH'S HORNBILL (*Aceros plicatus*) – Who can forget those whooshing wing beats? These immense spectacular creatures were seen really well along the Elevala and up at Km 74.

Pittidae (Pittas)

HOODED PITTA (*Pitta sordida*) – Heard at Kiunga. [*]

Ptilonorhynchidae (Bowerbirds)

WHITE-EARED CATBIRD (*Ailuroedus buccoides*) – One was heard quite close by along the Boundary Track and actually flew right over us, always very hard to see well. [E]

SPOTTED CATBIRD (*Ailuroedus melanotis*) – Heard in the forest at Km 17, but they are almost impossible to see in PNG. [*]

ARCHBOLD'S BOWERBIRD (*Archboldia papuensis*) – A fine female came in the fruiting tree at the Tari Gap, then another was on the feeders at Kumul Lodge. It's rare high-altitude species and this is a great site for it. This is the race *sanfordi*. [E]

MACGREGOR'S BOWERBIRD (*Amblyornis macgregoriae*) – One came briefly into the fruiting tree at the Tari Gap, and we saw the remnants of a maypole bower there where a tree had been felled on top of the bower! [E]

FLAME BOWERBIRD (*Sericulus aureus*) – This caused us a lot of effort- a fine male flew by on the first day but Edmund's shout and pointing overhead was totally misleading as it was right in front of us and many folks missed it as a result. Next day a male came into a fruiting Schefflera but was partly buried much of the time and some folks still dipped. Darn ! [E]

YELLOW-BREASTED BOWERBIRD (*Chlamydera lauterbachii*) – This high-altitude species is a Kumul area special and we got nice scope views early one morning, though possible election-related troubles stopped us going to the bower site. [E]

FAWN-BREASTED BOWERBIRD (*Chlamydera cerviniventris*) – Good views at Varirata and the PAU, with a fine rather tall single avenue bower as well.

Maluridae (Fairywrens)

WHITE-SHOULDERED FAIRYWREN (*Malurus alboscapulatus*) – Seen at Ambua and Kumul, the Ambua birds have the sexes alike whereas the Kumul ones have females with white bellies and short supercilia, it is very odd to have a species with such variable sexual dimorphism. [E]

EMPEROR FAIRYWREN (*Malurus cyanocephalus*) – Only heard in the rain up the Elevala, road clearance seems to have disturbed them at our usual site. [E]

Meliphagidae (Honeyeaters)

PLAIN HONEYEATER (*Pycnopygius ixoides*) – A fine view of one of this incredibly undiagnostic species along the Boystown Road. it sure is aptly named. [E]

MARbled HONEYEATER (*Pycnopygius cinereus*) – One of these uncommon birds was seen quite well at the Blue BoP site at Ambua. [E]



Honeyeaters are an incredibly diverse group in PNG. One of the most interesting ones is the Smoky Honeyeater, which has the unique habit of blushing, its yellow facial skin flushing to a bright red in an instant when the bird is agitated. This bird seems to be in a state of blush somewhere in between calm and full agitation. (Photo by guide Phil Gregory)

- STREAK-HEADED HONEYEATER** (*Pycnopygius stictocephalus*) – Some good views this trip, at Varirata and then Kiunga, one of the "Friarbird mimics" along with Brown Oriole. [E]
- MOUNTAIN MELIPHAGA** (*Meliphaga orientalis*) – One up at Dablin Creek, readily told by the small yellow ear spot and the altitude at 850m. [E]
- SCRUB HONEYEATER** (*Meliphaga albonotata*) – One was drinking at a tree hollow at the same site as the Mountain Meliphaga, easily told by the white ear spot. [E]
- MIMIC HONEYEATER** (*Meliphaga analoga*) – A great look at what may well be this species at Boystown Road, Dan even got a decent photo. This genus is one of the hardest on the planet to identify to species, with taxonomy and field characters uncertain and voice poorly known. Most tour companies conveniently see one of each on their tours! [E]
- GRACEFUL HONEYEATER (ELEGANT)** (*Meliphaga gracilis cinereifrons*) – Ah, now the Meliphagas at Varirata with the big pale ear spots are actually not Graceful but this recently split taxon Elegant Honeyeater *M. cinereifrons*, only the woefully outdated Clements still hasn't picked up on this yet. It's one of the few readily identified taxa in the genus too. [E]
- BLACK-THROATED HONEYEATER** (*Lichenostomus subfrenatus*) – Seen briefly in flight up at the Tari Gap, and singing well there. [E]
- OBSCURE HONEYEATER** (*Lichenostomus obscurus*) – Heard at Boystown Road and Km 74 but as ever elusive. [E*]
- YELLOW-TINTED HONEYEATER** (*Lichenostomus flavescens*) – Nice looks at the PAU, this is the taxon *germanus*.
- RUFIOUS-BANDED HONEYEATER** (*Conopophila albogularis*) – Seen in Port Moresby, and then at the PAU.
- MOUNTAIN MYZOMELA** (*Myzomela adolphinae*) – One singing and seen briefly below Kumul Lodge. None at Varirata this year. [E]
- RED-COLLARED MYZOMELA** (*Myzomela rosenbergii*) – Seen at Ambua Lodge, the male is an eye-catching thing, then a male and a female with two juvs. below Kumul Lodge. [E]
- SILVER-EARED HONEYEATER** (*Lichmera alboauricularis*) – Once again the last tick of the trip, seen well by PNG Art as we went to the airport. [E]
- WHITE-THROATED HONEYEATER** (*Melithreptus albogularis*) – A few at the Varirata approach.
- MEYER'S FRIARBIRD** (*Philemon meyeri*) – Heard along Boystown Road. [E*]
- HELMETED FRIARBIRD (NEW GUINEA)** (*Philemon buceroides novaeguineae*) – Widespread in the lowlands, this is New Guinea Friarbird *P. novaeguineae*, quite distinct from Helmeted in calls and morphology. It always used to be split by the dreaded Clements, but it was then oddly demoted. We saw two taxa, *P. b. brevipennis* with a bill knob in the south and presumably *P. b. jobiensis* without a bill knob below Kumul.
- TAWNY-BREASTED HONEYEATER** (*Xanthotis flaviventer*) – We got to see this at Dablin and heard it at all the lowland sites.
- LONG-BILLED HONEYEATER** (*Melilestes megarhynchus*) – Only heard at Boystown Road and Dablin this trip. [E*]
- SMOKY HONEYEATER** (*Melipotes fumigatus*) – The blushing honeyeater was seen well at Ambua and Kumul. [E]
- BELFORD'S MELIDECTES** (*Melidectes belfordi*) – Bel Mels are liked by clients, being big, noisy and obvious, the very reason tour leaders hate 'em! That said, great looks at Kumul on the feeders with a juvenile driven off by adults and lacking the blue facial skin. [E]
- YELLOW-BROWED MELIDECTES** (*Melidectes rufocrissalis*) – Quite common at Ambua, just as noisy as its cousin. [E]
- ORNATE MELIDECTES** (*Melidectes torquatus*) – A nice look at two near the Sepik Headwaters. [E]
- RUFIOUS-BACKED HONEYEATER** (*Ptiloprora guisei*) – A couple showed well at Ambua, this is a PNG endemic oddly enough. [E]
- BLACK-BACKED HONEYEATER** (*Ptiloprora perstriata*) – The Grey-streaked Honeyeater was seen at Ambua then very well on orange blossoms at the Kumul feeders. [E]

Acanthizidae (Thornbills and Allies)

- RUSTY MOUSE-WARBLER** (*Crateroscelis murina*) – Heard at Varirata and Tabubil, and seen briefly at the former site. This a great mimic but it usually only gives variations of the "hard to see" whistles. [E]
- MOUNTAIN MOUSE-WARBLER** (*Crateroscelis robusta*) – A couple of good sightings at Kumul. [E]
- LARGE SCRUBWREN** (*Sericornis nouhuysi*) – Seen at Ambua and Kumul, the reddish throat is distinctive. [E]
- BUFF-FACED SCRUBWREN** (*Sericornis perspicillatus*) – One was seen along the Ambua approach road. [E]
- PAPUAN SCRUBWREN** (*Sericornis papuensis*) – Good looks at Tari Gap, where they start to sing in the late afternoon. [E]

MOUNTAIN GERYGONE (*Gerygone cinerea*) – Lucky here as all except Phil got a couple of this scarce species at the Tari Gap, then we all had another along the Lodge approach next morning. The song is very like Brown-breasted Gerygone but seems a bit faster and less descending. [E]

GREEN-BACKED GERYGONE (*Gerygone chloronota*) – Quite good looks at one high in Casuarinas at Varirata, and heard at most lowland sites.

FAIRY GERYGONE (*Gerygone palpebrosa*) – A well-marked black-throated male was at Varirata with a mixed flock.

YELLOW-BELLIED GERYGONE (*Gerygone chrysogaster*) – These were quite common in the lowland forests and members of all the bird flocks. [E]

BROWN-BREASTED GERYGONE (*Gerygone ruficollis*) – Seen at Ambua and heard at Kumul, the smoky descending song is the best thing about it. [E]

Pomatostomidae (Pseudo-Babblers)

NEW GUINEA BABBLER (*Pomatostomus isidorei*) – This showed nicely at Kiunga where noisy groups were seen twice and came in to investigate the taped calls. The first flock was about 10 birds and they bounced about in the mid-stratum for ages. [E]

Cnemophilidae (Satinbirds)

LORIA'S SATINBIRD (*Cnemophilus loriae*) – Good looks at Ambua, now promoted out of bop's and into a new endemic family. [E]

CRESTED SATINBIRD (*Cnemophilus macgregorii*) – We saw a fine orange and black male below Tari Gap, a real eye-ful. Like Loria's Satinbird, now promoted out of Bop's and into a new family. [E]



Belford's Melidectes is among the largest and most garrulous of the honeyeaters. In highland regions such as at Kumul Lodge, their loud calls are a regular feature of the soundtrack of the forest. (Photo by guide Phil Gregory)

Melanocharitidae (Berrypeckers and Longbills)

OBSCURE BERRYPECKER (*Melanocharis arfakiana*) – Two up at Dablin Creek in trying conditions, calling close by and showing briefly. Still only known from 4 specimens, but actually not uncommon in this area and at a handful of other sites, it's an overlooked cryptic species. Berrypeckers and longbills comprise an endemic family here. [E]

BLACK BERRYPECKER (*Melanocharis nigra*) – Seen at Varirata where a male was quite obliging. [E]

LEMON-BREASTED BERRYPECKER (*Melanocharis longicauda*) – It doesn't have a Lemon-breast, so why change from Mid-mountain Berrypecker? A couple of females showed very well below the Bailey Bridge. [E]

FAN-TAILED BERRYPECKER (*Melanocharis versteri*) – Quite good views above Ambua and at Kumul where a male showed nicely. [E]

YELLOW-BELLIED LONGBILL (*Toxorhamphus novaeguineae*) – Frustrating, they sang close by but just refused to show properly at Kiunga and the Elevala. [E]

DWARF HONEYEATER (*Toxorhamphus iliolophus*) – Seen nicely feeding on Loranthus blossoms at Varirata. Note it was moved out of Honeyeaters years ago, but Clements is once again hopelessly outdated. [E]

PYGMY HONEYEATER (*Toxorhamphus pygmaeum*) – This was heard clicking away at the Varirata entrance gate and most folks got a look at NG's smallest bird, the penultimate trip tick. The same comments apply re Honeyeaters as above! [E]

Paramythiidae (Tit Berrypecker, Crested Berrypecker)

TIT BERRYPECKER (*Oreocharis arfaki*) – Males and females showed nicely at Ambua Lodge. An endemic family too. [E]

CRESTED BERRYPECKER (*Paramythia montium*) – Good views of the beautiful high-altitude species at Tari Gap, and again at Kumul, where a party of 3 included birds that kept raising their crests, something you rarely see. It's a member of an endemic family, along with Tit-Berrypecker. [E]

Cinclosomatidae (Quail-thrushes and Jewel-babblers)

PAINTED QUAIL-THRUSH (*Cinclosoma ajax*) – Heard at Varirata, one of the trio of major skulkers here that take much work and luck to get. [E]

SPOTTED JEWEL-BABBLER (*Ptilorrhoa leucosticta*) – Another mega-skulker, we heard it at Ambua as we were leaving. [E*]

BLUE JEWEL-BABBLER (*Ptilorrhoa caerulescens*) – These jewel-babblers always take a long time to get onto and the two attempts at Kiunga were both unsuccessful, unluckily one crossed a very nice open track just as we were taking position, having been singing for ages. [E*]

CHESTNUT-BACKED JEWEL-BABBLER (*Ptilorrhoa castanonota*) – Another of the Varirata skulkers, this time one very responsive bird twice flew across the track once brushing right by my head! Better than nothing but a shame it didn't land in view. [E]

Machaerirhynchidae (Boatbills)

BLACK-BREASTED BOATBILL (*Machaerirhynchus nigripectus*) – Great views of this striking species at Ambua, now in a new family too. [E]

YELLOW-BREASTED BOATBILL (*Machaerirhynchus flaviventer*) – A male was seen well along the Lookout Track at Varirata.

Artamidae (Woodswallows)

GREAT WOODSWALLOW (*Artamus maximus*) – Great looks at Ambua, huddling in endearing fashion. Also seen at Tabubil as we were leaving. [E]

WHITE-BREASTED WOODSWALLOW (*Artamus leucorhynchus*) – A few around Port Moresby with a great huddling group at the PAU.

Cracticidae (Bellmagpies and Allies)

MOUNTAIN PELTOPS (*Peltops montanus*) – Oddly we again saw none at Ambua this time, but we did get 3 at Dablin. [E]

LOWLAND PELTOPS (*Peltops blainvillii*) – Seen nicely twice on the river trip, thanks Larry! [E]

BLACK-BACKED BUTCHERBIRD (*Cracticus mentalis*) – Fine views at the PAU and Varirata, it's otherwise a Cape York special.

HOODED BUTCHERBIRD (*Cracticus cassicus*) – A good singer, and seen well at Varirata and Kiunga. [E]

BLACK BUTCHERBIRD (*Cracticus quoyi*) – Seen well at Ambua this trip.

Campephagidae (Cuckoo-shrikes)

BLACK-FACED CUCKOO-SHRIKE (*Coracina novaehollandiae*) – Seen a couple of times near Varirata and at the PAU.

STOUT-BILLED CUCKOO-SHRIKE (*Coracina caeruleogrisea*) – A fine male at Varirata on the first day. [E]

BARRED CUCKOO-SHRIKE (*Coracina lineata*) – Only heard at Varirata this trip. [*]

BOYER'S CUCKOO-SHRIKE (*Coracina boyeri*) – Good views of small numbers in the hills and lowlands, starting at Varirata. [E]

WHITE-BELLIED CUCKOO-SHRIKE (WHITE-BELLIED) (*Coracina papuensis papuensis*) – Just a couple seen near Varirata.

CICADABIRD (*Coracina tenuirostris*) – A male at Varirata was a good trip bird.

PAPUAN CUCKOO-SHRIKE (*Coracina incerta*) – There was one at the Sooty Owl site, and another at Dablin Creek. This is the Black-shouldered Cicadabird of the IOC and my checklist, Black-shouldered Cuckooshrike in the NG field guide. Why Clements had to confuse it with a meaningless name is baffling. [E]

GRAY-HEADED CUCKOO-SHRIKE (*Coracina schisticeps*) – We saw this at Dablin, including the distinctive rusty color female. [E]

NEW GUINEA CUCKOO-SHRIKE (*Coracina melas*) – The Curse of Clements strikes again- Papuan Black Cuckooshrike works well and there are at least 9 other cuckooshrikes in NG! We saw a pair at Varirata on the first day. [E]

BLACK-BELLIED CUCKOO-SHRIKE (*Coracina montana*) – Very nice views of this striking species at Ambua. [E]

GOLDEN CUCKOO-SHRIKE (*Campochaera sloetii*) – We had nice views near Kiunga and at Dablin, a really stunning species that is more like a minivet than a cuckooshrike. [E]

VARIED TRILLER (*Lalage leucomela*) – Seen nicely at Varirata.

Neosittidae (Sittellas)

BLACK SITTELLA (*Daphoenositta miranda*) – A flock of 6 of this uncommon montane endemic were near the fruiting tree at the Tari Gap, and fed quite close by on a couple of occasions, flying across then coming back. The juv. is all black

with dull greyish-black legs and feet. [E]

Pachycephalidae (Whistlers and Allies)

MOTTLED WHISTLER (*Rhagologus leucostigma*) – One by the fruiting tree at Ambua Lodge showed briefly and was heard several times, the song is very clear and sweet. [E]

DWARF WHISTLER (*Pachycare flavogriseum*) – No longer a whistler but seemingly an Acanthizid, placed at the end of gerygones and thornbills. We saw one high in the canopy at the Boundary Trail, where two birds came in to the tape but were very hard to see. Also heard on the Lookout Trail. [E]

RUFIOUS-NAPED WHISTLER (*Aleadyras rufinucha*) – This odd bird showed quite well at Ambua and Kumul but seemed in very low numbers this time. Quite unlike other whistlers and now placed at the very end of the family pending further study. [E]

BROWN-BACKED WHISTLER (*Pachycephala modesta*) – Good looks at this PNG endemic at Ambua. [E]

GRAY-HEADED WHISTLER (*Pachycephala griseiceps*) – This delicate flycatcher-like whistler was seen at Varirata.

SCLATER'S WHISTLER (*Pachycephala soror*) – Only heard at Ambua this trip. [E*]

REGENT WHISTLER (*Pachycephala schlegelii*) – Seen at Ambua and Kumul with good looks at the striking male. [E]

BLACK-HEADED WHISTLER (*Pachycephala monacha*) – Seen in the Tari valley and then heard at Dablin and below Kumul Lodge. [E]

WHITE-BELLIED WHISTLER (*Pachycephala leucogastra*) – We got nice views of a sub-adult male with a greyish mottled throat, singing well at Varirata. Endemic to SE PNG and formerly bizarrely lumped with Rufous Whistler despite neither sex being anything like that species. [E]

RUFIOUS SHRIKE-THRUSH (*Colluricincla megarhyncha*) – Ah, this complex of 28 taxa is expected to be split into maybe as many as six species; we saw what is presumably *C. m. neos* at Varirata, *C. m. atra* at Ambua and tentatively *C. m. maeandrina* at Kiunga. Which groups these belong with is as yet undetermined but they do differ vocally.

GRAY SHRIKE-THRUSH (*Colluricincla harmonica*) – Heard in Port Moresby on the last morning. [*]

HOODED PITOUI (*Pitohui dichrous*) – Good views of them at Varirata, this is the famous poison bird and it is now apparently placed in Oriolidae! It bears a remarkable likeness to Orchard Oriole of the Icteridae! [E]

RUSTY PITOUI (*Pitohui ferrugineus*) – Heard at Varirata. [E*]

VARIABLE PITOUI (*Pitohui kirhocephalus*) – Heard at Kiunga, but once again this year kept out of sight. [E*]

BLACK PITOUI (*Pitohui nigrescens*) – A musical singer at Ok Menga sure sounded quite like this species, it seems a very low altitude for it but may be correct as Carola's Parotia is also here. [E*]

WATTLED PLOUGHBILL (*Eulacestoma nigropectus*) – I wonder which family this really belongs in? We had great close views of a silent male at Ambua in the scrambling bamboo, a good pick up of a very strange bird. [E]

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LONG-TAILED SHRIKE (*Lanius schach stresemanni*) – Seen well at Ambua and near Kumul. This black-headed highland endemic race is a possible split.

Oriolidae (Old World Orioles)

BROWN ORIOLE (*Oriolus szalayi*) – The friarbird mimic, quite common in the hills and lowlands and with a good voice. [E]

AUSTRALASIAN FIGBIRD (*Sphecotheres vieilloti*) – Another Port Moresby area savanna special the rather distinctive local race *salvadorii* having a grey throat and upper chest. Oddly, it's not listed in Clements.

Dicruridae (Drongos)

SPANGLED DRONGO (*Dicrurus bracteatus carbonarius*) – Birds of the endemic race *carbonarius* up at Varirata could well be a split from migrants from Australia, which is what I think we saw at Kiunga. The voices are quite distinct and they have differences in bill feathering.

Rhipiduridae (Fantails)

NORTHERN FANTAIL (*Rhipidura rufiventris*) – A single was seen up at Dablin.

WILLIE-WAGTAIL (*Rhipidura leucophrys*) – Very widespread, from lowlands to mountains, we even had one at Max's orchid garden at about 2600m

FRIENDLY FANTAIL (*Rhipidura albolimbata*) – Good looks at Ambua and Kumul. [E]

CHESTNUT-BELLIED FANTAIL (*Rhipidura hyperythra*) – Seen nicely at Varirata where it is a core member of mixed species flocks. [E]

WHITE-BELLIED THICKET-FANTAIL (*Rhipidura leucothorax leucothorax*) – Skulking but quite vocal, we heard it at Kiunga and got brief views at Dablin. [E]

BLACK FANTAIL (*Rhipidura atra*) – This was heard at Kumul. [E*]

DIMORPHIC FANTAIL (*Rhipidura brachyrhyncha*) – Seen nicely above Ambua and heard below Kumul. [E]

RUFOUS-BACKED FANTAIL (*Rhipidura rufidorsa*) – A great view of one at Kwatu, being unusually confiding. [E]

Monarchidae (Monarch Flycatchers)

GOLDEN MONARCH (*Carterornis chrysomela*) – Seen at Boystown Road, where we finally got a male in the scope after glimpsing one earlier. [E]

BLACK-FACED MONARCH (*Monarcha melanopsis*) – One up at Varirata was a good find of a winter migrant from Australia.

BLACK MONARCH (*Symposiachrus axillaris*) – Heard at Ambua but no-one got a sighting. [E*]

SPOT-WINGED MONARCH (*Symposiachrus guttula*) – Seen quite well by most at Varirata on the last morning. [E]

FRILLED MONARCH (*Arses telescopthalmus*) – Nice looks at Varirata and then near Kiunga, the male has a conspicuous white ruff with blue eye wattle. [E]

TORRENT-LARK (*Grallina bruijnii*) – A female at the Sepik Headwaters was a great find as we had dipped at Ambua, Ok Menga and Dablin. This was the first time I've seen it at this site as well. They really are very like forktails in pattern and behaviour. [E]

SHINING FLYCATCHER (*Myiagra alecto*) – Seen along the Elevala River.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

GRAY CROW (*Corvus tristis*) – Sparse, just a couple at Varirata and two sightings from Kiunga and Ok Menga of this strange frugivorous forest crow with the yelping calls. [E]

TORRESIAN CROW (TORRESIAN) (*Corvus orru orru*) – Quite common around Port Moresby out by the piggeries at 17-mile.

Paradisaeidae (Birds-of-paradise)

GLOSSY-MANTLED MANUCODE (*Manucodia ater*) – A few over the Elevala and one in its odd slow butterfly glide display along the Boystown Road. The rising tuning fork call note is characteristic. [E]

CRINKLE-COLLARED MANUCODE (*Manucodia chalybatus*) – Excellent looks along the Boystown Road this year, the bumps on the head are a good character. [E]

TRUMPET MANUCODE (*Phonygamus keraudrenii*) – We heard and glimpsed the taxon *P. k. purpureoviolaceus* at Varirata, which has a querulous musical rising "wooo-oo" note, quite unlike the harsh retching note of *P. k. jamesii* at Kiunga, which we saw doing the droop wing display as it called. I think there are several species in this complex.

SHORT-TAILED PARADIGALLA (*Paradigalla brevicauda*) – Great views again of one at Ambua, complete with yellow butterfly shape at the base of the bill. [E]

RIBBON-TAILED ASTRAPIA (*Astrapia mayeri*) – Great looks at some resplendent males above the Bailey Bridge. Fine views of female/imms. at Kumul, with a very short tailed adult male again there, with the tail about half the normal length. A really incredible bird, only described in 1939 from tail feathers collected by missionaries. Endemic to PNG. [E]

PRINCESS STEPHANIE'S ASTRAPIA (*Astrapia stephaniae*) – Good looks at female-plumaged birds at Ambua, and a single good plumage male at the remains of their lek site, which is sadly now being logged. They resemble giant paradise-whydahs in flight! Endemic to PNG. [E]

CAROLA'S PAROTIA (*Parotia carolae*) – Several quite vocal female-plumaged birds were at Dablin Creek at a fruiting tree, though they were hard to pin down, and it was heard at Ok Menga. [E]



Of course the star attractions of PNG are the birds-of-paradise, and this tour nets a healthy 20+ species of them. They're generally difficult to photograph, but at least the aptly-named Brown Sickiebill, like this blue-eyed female, visits the Kumul Lodge feeders from time to time. (Photo by guide Phil Gregory)

LAWES'S PAROTIA (*Parotia lawesii*) – Fine views of females and imms. at the fruiting tree by Ambua Lodge, they have a singularly flat-headed shape. [E]

KING-OF-SAXONY BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Pteridophora alberti*) – A splendid singing male above the Bailey Bridge who performed beautifully after we first saw him foraging deep in bushes by the road, and multiple views of f/imm. birds. [E]

MAGNIFICENT RIFLEBIRD (*Ptiloris magnificus*) – Heard along Boystown Road, this species has become very hard to see these days, so a flyby female plumaged bird on our second visit was quite a lucky sighting.

MAGNIFICENT RIFLEBIRD (GROWLING) (*Ptiloris magnificus intercedens*) – The Growling Riflebird was heard at Varirata and we saw a female plumage bird briefly on the first visit. Some of us also got brief looks at a calling male along the Boundary Track on the last day, but he was very shy and once he'd peeked at us that was it. [E]

SUPERB BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Lophorina superba*) – Good views of a couple of males below Ambua, what a weird shape this bird has, and nice female plumaged ones at the Lodge. A female-plumaged bird at Dablin was unusual there. [E]

BLACK SICKLEBILL (*Epimachus fastuosus*) – A fine orange-eyed female came into the fruiting tree at Ambua one afternoon, the bill is clearly less decurved than that of Brown Sicklebill too. Great to have nice looks at what is quite a difficult bird these days. [E]

BROWN SICKLEBILL (*Epimachus meyeri*) – A few females at Ambua, and likewise on the feeders at Kumul, where they toss fruit into the air and catch it before swallowing, showing a bright yellow-orange gape. An immature male also came in and was pursuing a female here, with a strange nasal "nyah" call. [E]

MAGNIFICENT BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Cicinnurus magnificus*) – A female-plumaged bird was seen by most of us at Dablin, then again at Ok Menga where they were quite vocal. [E]

KING BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Cicinnurus regius*) – Great views of the fiery red and white male at his song tree near Kwatu, where he was performing despite the wet conditions earlier. One of the birds of the trip for sure. [E]

TWELVE-WIRED BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Seleucidis melanoleucus*) – The wet weather meant no males to be seen along the Fly River and I was expecting to dip, but Larry found us a fine female-plumaged bird sat up at mid-day along the Elevala. Some consolation anyway [E]

LESSER BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Paradisaea minor*) – The lek at Kama was out of reach for us due to bad roads/ election problems/ unpaid bills, but fortunately a site in Casuarinas across the valley near Tomba holds a few birds, and we luckily got nice scope looks at a fine male sat right out for some time. [E]

GREATER BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Paradisaea apoda*) – We had the lek going sporadically at Km 17 late one afternoon with at least 5 pretty good looking male Greater BoP's showing off, with a couple of hybrids hanging about. Various female -plumaged birds were seen around Kiunga too, and a hybrid male Raggiana x Greater flew across at km 17. [E]

RAGGIANA BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Paradisaea raggiana*) – A nice show with some 5 males at the lek at Varirata. Also seen at Kiunga and up along the Elevala, mostly females. Dan had some nice lek viewing on the last morning too when we sent him off with Ben to view them. This is the national bird and curiously enough also a PNG endemic. [E]

BLUE BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Paradisaea rudolphi*) – A nice female-plumage bird at Ambua. A male called and showed well from his song post near Benson's place too, giving great scope view quite close by and bugling away across the valley to another male downslope. This is a quite rare and restricted range species endemic to a narrow and heavily-settled height band in PNG. One of the birds of the trip and Sandra's most wanted species. [E]

LESSER MELAMPITTA (*Melampitta lugubris*) – I was able to lure a female into circling completely around us and showing quite well at the Tari Gap. Interesting that the dark eyed females also give the click call. Two birds were calling to each other close by at Kumul, one giving the click call answered by a shorter pop type note, presumably a male and female. I am sure these are incorrectly placed in Paradisaeidae, Incertae Sedis is better till we know what they are. [E]

GREATER MELAMPITTA (*Melampitta gigantea*) – One began calling in the steep limestone country by the Ok Menga tunnel late one afternoon, it was good to even hear this rare mega-skulker of the karst formations. [E]

Petroicidae (Australasian Robins)

LESSER GROUND-ROBIN (*Amalocichla incerta*) – Heard up at Tari Gap but not responsive this trip. [E*]

TORRENT FLYCATCHER (*Monachella muelleriana*) – Lovely views at Ok Menga, and the Sepik headwaters, a very striking species aka Torrent Flyrobin. [E]

LEMON-BELLIED FLYCATCHER (*Microeca flavigaster*) – Seen at Varirata, and also the strange bright yellow birds at Dablin Creek that may be an undescribed taxon. It was good to get some shots of these birds this trip.

OLIVE FLYROBIN (*Microeca flavovirescens*) – Sandra found us this uncommon bird along the Boundary Trail and it sat out quite well. [E]

CANARY FLYCATCHER (*Microeca papuana*) – Seen nicely near Ambua, the orange legs and feet are quite striking. [E]
GARNET ROBIN (*Eugeryone rubra*) – Heard at Ambua. [E*]
WHITE-FACED ROBIN (*Tregellasia leucops*) – Nice views of one along the Lookout Trail, it eventually came quite close and we admired the clown face and bright orange legs.
BLACK-SIDED ROBIN (*Poecilodryas hypoleuca*) – This kept well out of sight as usual at Kiunga, it can be a real devil to see well. [E*]
BLACK-THROATED ROBIN (*Poecilodryas albonotata*) – Seen very well at the Tari Gap and near Ambua Lodge, and I think some folks saw one below Kumul. [E]
WHITE-WINGED ROBIN (*Peneothello sigillata*) – Tame and confiding at Kumul, and also seen briefly by the wrecked container at the Tari Gap. [E]
WHITE-RUMPED ROBIN (*Peneothello bimaculata*) – Heard at Dablin Creek, and I think Sandra saw it fly across the track. [E*]
BLUE-GRAY ROBIN (*Peneothello cyanus*) – A great view of one by the Bailey Bridge, and again by Ambua Lodge. [E]
ASHY ROBIN (*Heteromyias albispecularis*) – Heard by the fruiting tree across the Tari Gap, but always very hard to see. [E*]
NORTHERN SCRUB-ROBIN (*Drymodes superciliaris*) – Heard at Varirata, the third of the mega-skulkers here, and seldom seen well.

Eupetidae (Rail-babbler and Ifrita)

BLUE-CAPPED IFRITA (*Ifrita kowaldi*) – A group favorite and we did well for this oddity, which creeps along branches and picks over lichens. No-one knows what family it belongs to, it has been placed in various groups and basically remains Incertae Sedis. It is also a poisonous bird a bit like pitohuis, certainly an important species to see on a New Guinea trip and we did nicely for them at both Ambua and Kumul. [E]

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

PACIFIC SWALLOW (*Hirundo tahitica*) – Small numbers in the lowlands.

Phylloscopidae (Leaf-Warblers)

ISLAND LEAF-WARBLER (*Phylloscopus poliocephalus*) – Seen very well singing near Benson's place at Ambua, also seen below Kumul Lodge.

Locustellidae (Grassbirds and Allies)

TAWNY GRASSBIRD (*Megalurus timoriensis*) – Now split as Papuan Grassbird, much larger than Tawny, with montane habitat and different song. We had quite good views at Tari Gap and then near the Sepik Headwaters.

Zosteropidae (Yuhinas, White-eyes, and Allies)

BLACK-FRONTED WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops minor*) – We did manage quite good views on the last afternoon at Varirata. [E]

CAPPED WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops fuscicapilla*) – Nice looks at this montane species with the yellow underparts below Ambua Lodge, aka Western Mountain White-eye. [E]

NEW GUINEA WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops novaeguineae*) – An unusually large flock of 30+ was foraging at Tomba below Kumul Lodge, with more again near Anjiwalya, they showed nicely. [E]

Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)

PIED BUSHCHAT (*Saxicola caprata*) – Seen at Port Moresby, Ambua area and Kumul, a wide-ranging species in NG. This is the taxon aethiops.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

ISLAND THRUSH (*Turdus poliocephalus*) – Great looks at Kumul and also up at the Tari Gap. Young birds sure look different to the adults, we saw one being fed at Kumul. I think there may be two taxa involved, *T. p. versteegi* at Tari and *T. p. erebus* at Kumul.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

METALLIC STARLING (*Aplonis metallica*) – Common along the river at Kiunga, with a nest colony by the airstrip there.

YELLOW-EYED STARLING (*Aplonis mystacea*) – This rare species was a very good find as we came back down the Elevala, where at least 5 birds were with some Metallic Starlings. The juv. is whitish below but seems less well streaked than Metallic juv. it has a greyish head and also a yellow eye. [E]

SINGING STARLING (*Aplonis cantoroides*) – Seen well at Ela Beach where we had a sizeable flock of 30, also at Jackson's Airport in POM and the PAU.

YELLOW-FACED MYNA (*Mino dumontii*) – Great croaking voice, we saw them at Varirata and Kiunga, it's usually one of the first endemics we see. [E]

GOLDEN MYNA (*Mino anais*) – We saw a couple of the race *M. a. robertsoni* along the Elevala. Always in small numbers and generally sparse. [E]

Dicaeidae (Flowerpeckers)

RED-CAPPED FLOWERPECKER (*Dicaeum geelvinkianum*) – Seen at several lowland sites with some good looks at Varirata and Kiunga.

Nectariniidae (Sunbirds and Spiderhunters)

BLACK SUNBIRD (*Leptocoma sericea*) – Very striking if seen well, we saw them at Kiunga with both males and females showing nicely, after an early find of a male at Ela beach.

OLIVE-BACKED SUNBIRD (*Cinnyris jugularis*) – One female at Kiunga airstrip on that hot mid-day walk we did.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – A few around Port Moresby and Mt. Hagen, it has colonized since 1992. [I]

EURASIAN TREE SPARROW (*Passer montanus*) – Another new colonist, this one since 2007, doubtless via container ships. We saw it at Ela Beach, Jackson's Airport and then quite unexpectedly as a new arrival in Kiunga. [I]

Estrildidae (Waxbills and Allies)

MOUNTAIN FIRETAIL (*Oreostruthus fuliginosus*) – Great views of a male up at the Tari Gap, it's a striking and quite scarce finch of the montane zones. Then a pair showed very well at Kumul Lodge too. [E]

BLUE-FACED PARROTFINCH (*Erythrura trichroa*) – Heard at Kumul. [*]

HOODED MUNIA (*Lonchura spectabilis*) – Nice views at Ambua and again near Kumul. [E]

GRAY-HEADED MUNIA (*Lonchura caniceps*) – A small flock at the PAU gave quite nice looks, it's endemic to SE PNG. [E]

MAMMALS

SPECKLED DASYURE (*Neophascogale lorentzii*) – We saw one above Ambua, and some saw another later, we usually see this small diurnal carnivore at some point. [E]

COMMON NORTHERN CUSCUS (*Phalanger orientalis*) – A dead individual in Varirata had had its head removed, presumably by an accipiter.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Some nice butterflies were seen on the trip and we should have a photo archive that can hopefully lead to some identifications being made. The standard ref. is Parsons, M (1999) *The Butterflies of Papua New Guinea*, Academic Press. This has been remaindered and might be available at something way below the original very high price.

Species we saw included:

Ulysses Swallowtail

Pearl Owl

Ornithoptera priamus

Trip favorites amongst the birds were hard to pick but the paradisaeids figured large with the Raggiana and then Greater Bird-of-Paradise lek displays being huge highlights, along with the King Bird of Paradise at his display ground, plus the amazing King-of-Saxony and those stunning Brown Sicklebills, Princess Stephanie's and Ribbon-tailed *Astrapias*. The Blue BoP also made a good showing this year and was a trip highlight for several folks.

Salvadori's Teal was a great sight, as was finally getting a Feline Owlet-nightjar to show, just sorry not everyone was there to enjoy it. Lesser Melampitta was another favorite, as was Fawn-breasted Bowbird with its bower, the Yellow-billed

Kingfisher which took so long to come this year, the male Crested Satinbird and the first time in years we have had a really good look at Yellow-capped Pygmy-Parrot. Glossy Swiftlet was also admired, the habit of flying in heavy rain is truly odd.

Kumul Lodge was enjoyed for its striking architecture, friendly staff, great bird feeding table and the amazing orchid Garden developed by Max Mal, whilst the subalpine grasslands of the Tari Gap are always a terrific sight. Our new hotel in Port Moresby is also a keeper with great staff who looked after us very well, and even got our footwear cleaned ready for Oz customs.

Totals for the tour: 302 bird taxa and 2 mammal taxa