



Field Guides Tour Report
Papua New Guinea 2014

Jul 6, 2014 to Jul 24, 2014
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Just part of the huge group of Blyth's Hornbills we came across along the Elevala River, each of these birds nearly three feet long! (Photo by participant Peter Gasson)

There's no two ways about it: birding in Papua New Guinea can be a frustrating experience. No other country I've visited has such a large number of scarce, elusive, and downright difficult to see species as does PNG. But with great frustration comes great reward: PNG also has more amazing, unique, and simply spectacular species than most countries on this planet, and it is this fact that makes PNG such an incredible place to bird! On the 2014 PNG tour we experienced the frustration at times, but we also experienced elation with every encounter with one of PNG's many beautiful birds.

As always, our tour started off in the capital city of Port Moresby, and our birding kicked off at the lovely grounds of the Pacific Adventist University (PAU). The park-like grounds of the campus offered up a number of waterbirds at the ponds, including 60 Plumed Whistling-Ducks, apparently the largest number ever recorded in the country! We also added our first PNG endemics here in the form of Yellow-faced Myna, Brown Oriole, and Gray-headed Munia, as well as an assortment of other interesting birds. A trio of Papuan Frogmouths above the basketball court were a big hit, as was the beautifully constructed bower of Fawn-breasted Bowerbird (as well as the birds themselves). A trio of massive Channel-billed Cuckoos that flew past, and a close perched Variable Goshawk were among the other birds to make our first afternoon outing a great success.

Next morning saw us making our first of 2 visits to Varirata National Park, probably my favorite birding spot in the country. Along the entrance road, we ran into our first birds-of-paradise of the trip, with Glossy-mantled Manucodes narrowly beating out a couple of female Raggiana for the first bird-of-paradise of the tour. Later we caught up with fully adorned males at the lek, with one male sitting out for photos for quite some time. A scope view of a miniscule Buff-faced Pygmy-Parrot was among the most unexpected moments of the day, and a flowering tree full of Black Myzomelas, Dwarf Honeyeaters, and a couple of rare Red-throated Myzomelas, all seen well in the scope, was likewise a nice surprise.

Our next stop was in the steamy lowlands of the Fly River region in the far west of PNG. In the region around our base in Kiunga, we tracked down numerous lowland rainforest species that we weren't to see elsewhere on the tour. These included several birds-of-paradise, and we enjoyed an exciting visit to the Greater Bird-of-paradise lek at KM 17, where we enjoyed the sight of several males displaying vigorously to a couple of interested females. A displaying male King Bird-of-paradise along the trail was a bonus here! During our boat trip up the Fly River and on to the smaller Elevala, riverside views of two different male Twelve-wired Birds-of-paradise were just one of the highlights, which also included long looks at a pair of Southern Crowned-Pigeons, a huge flock of 50+ Blyth's Hornbills, Common Paradise-Kingfisher, the scarce White-bellied Pitohui, and a bunch of adorable Orange-breasted Fig-Parrots. And a fantastic morning along Boystown Road got us a pair of gorgeous little Emperor Fairywrens, a rare Long-billed Cuckoo, and a couple of birds worthy to become #3000 on the world lists of Terry and Rhys: a lovely male Golden Monarch and the spectacular Flame Bowerbird, respectively.

Tabubil was next up, and it was typically foggy and rainy, making birding a challenge, but we persevered and tallied some of the main specialties of the region. Our patience at Ok Menga was rewarded when a Salvadori's Teal appeared on some rocks amid the rapids, while at Dablin Creek we needed even greater patience as the dense fog presented a real challenge. But with time birds began to emerge from the foggy surrounds, and we enjoyed a stellar showing from a quartet of displaying Torrent-Larks, beautiful views of a trio of glowing Golden Cuckooshrikes, and a reasonable encounter with a couple of females, and a distant male, Carola's Parotia.

Heading into the highlands, we first made an abbreviated (due to weather and airlines) stop at Kumul Lodge where we raced the setting sun to find our main targets, getting most thanks to the excellent feeders. A female Crested Satinbird and a confiding Mountain Firetail (thanks to Brooke's sharp eyes) were among the non-feeder birds we found there. Fortunately, we had plenty of time at Ambua, and excellent weather, which made up nicely for what we missed at Kumul. The birds-of-paradise performed well, and we had decent looks at the big money birds: King-of-Saxony, Superb, and Blue birds-of-paradise, and both astrapias (that male with the 4-foot tail was phenomenal!), but there were also many supporting stars that made the visit one of my best ever. A feisty Short-tailed Paradigalla jealously guarding a choice fruiting bush near the cabins; a female Madarasz's Tiger-Parrot feeding quietly above us in the forest; the most responsive and cooperative Spotted Jewel-Babbler I've ever seen; a gorgeous male Garnet Robin that showed well for all: these were just a few of the many wonderful moments during our time here. And that afternoon walk on the Waterfall Trail deserves mention, too, as it was just an incredibly beautiful and memorable experience!

We finished off back at Port Moresby with a visit to the coastal village of Lea Lea, which didn't meet our expectations but did produce a few nice birds like White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Pacific Reef-Egret, and the local Silver-eared Honeyeater. Then we had a final visit to Varirata which started slowly but finished big, with multiple feeding flocks and some excellent birds: Doria's Goshawk, Pygmy Drongo-Fantail, Barred Cuckooshrike, Goldenface, White-faced Robin, Variable Dwarf-Kingfisher, etc. It really was a fantastic finish to a fun trip.

Thanks so much to all of you for joining me on my return to this fascinating country, and for making it such a joy to lead. It's always great when a group gels so well and has so much fun together, and it makes my job just that much more fun. Your patience and understanding when things didn't go quite right also eased things along, so many thanks for that, too. I hope I'll have the chance to do another tour with each of you before too long! Until next time...

--Jay

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

Casuariidae (Cassowaries)

SOUTHERN CASSOWARY (*Casuarius casuarius*) – No cassowaries were seen, but we did see some very fresh tracks of this species in the mud along the Elevala River.

DWARF CASSOWARY (*Casuarius bennetti*) – And the poop from this species was all over the Garies Lookout Track at Varirata, not to mention the pile we saw in the forest at Ambua.

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

PLUMED WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna eytoni*) – A big flock of 60 birds at PAU was a surprise, as I'd never had them in PNG before, and this appears to be the biggest number ever recorded here.

WANDERING WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna arcuata*) – This is usually numerous at PAU, but we could only find one roosting on the shore among a bunch of Pacific Black Ducks.

RADJAH SHELDUCK (*Tadorna radjah*) – Good scope views of a pair of these lovely ducks at PAU, which have become much more reliable here recently.

SALVADORI'S TEAL (*Salvadorina waigiuiensis*) – It took a bit of a wait, but we ultimately got super scope views of one along the Ok Menga (Ok means "river"). I think a couple of folks got some pretty good photos too. [E]

PACIFIC BLACK DUCK (*Anas superciliosa*) – Lots at PAU and a few at Lea Lea.

Megapodiidae (Megapodes)

BLACK-BILLED BRUSH-TURKEY (*Talegalla fuscirostris*) – Heard daily at Kiunga, and we heard one running through the forest at Varirata (Leonard saw it dash across the track), where we also saw a large active nest mound. [E*]

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

AUSTRALASIAN GREBE (*Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*) – A pair with a recently fledged juvenile on the PAU ponds. [N]

Fregatidae (Frigatebirds)

LESSER FRIGATEBIRD (*Fregata ariel*) – Four frigatebirds seen offshore along the road to Lea Lea were too far off to identify to species, but this one is the most likely.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

LITTLE BLACK CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*) – We counted 50+ birds on the PAU ponds.

LITTLE PIED CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*) – Three or four among the flocks of Little Blacks at PAU.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT EGRET (AUSTRALASIAN) (*Ardea alba modesta*) – One at PAU, and a few along the Fly and Elevala Rivers.

INTERMEDIATE EGRET (*Mesophoyx intermedia*) – About 10 our first afternoon at PAU, then a few others scattered at various lowland locations.

PACIFIC REEF-HERON (*Egretta sacra*) – Good views of a couple of dark morph birds along the coast west of Port Moresby.

PIED HERON (*Egretta picata*) – Roughly ten of these striking herons showed well at the 3rd pond at PAU.

CATTLE EGRET (ASIAN) (*Bubulcus ibis coromandus*) – Other than the big flock adjacent to the zoo across from PAU, there were very few of these about. But then again, there aren't many cows either.

RUFIOUS NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax caledonicus*) – An adult and a juvenile were seen at PAU, then we had very nice looks at another adult along the Elevala River.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

AUSTRALIAN IBIS (*Threskiornis moluccus*) – Two birds at the 3rd pond at PAU.

STRAW-NECKED IBIS (*Threskiornis spinicollis*) – One or two among the Cattle Egrets in the field adjacent to the zoo.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE (*Elanus caeruleus wahgiensis*) – A fairly scarce bird in PNG. We saw one from the van as we raced from Mt Hagen to Kumul, as we tried to arrive at the lodge before dark.

LONG-TAILED HONEY-BUZZARD (*Henicopernis longicauda*) – We did pretty well with this species, getting good views of three different birds, one each at Boystown Road, along the road to Tabubil, and at Dablin Creek. We saw the second one well enough to note that it had a small lizard in its talons! [E]

PACIFIC BAZA (*Aviceda subcristata*) – Some lovely views of a pair of these lovely hawks at Km 17, including scope views of them perched in a palm.

EASTERN MARSH-HARRIER (PAPUAN) (*Circus spilonotus spilothorax*) – No sooner had I announced that we should keep watch for this species at the Tari Gap when Rhys spotted a gorgeous apparent subadult male that made a close flyby giving us awesome views. Another subadult male the next day appeared to be a different bird. This distinctive form is generally treated as a good species by Australian ornithologists, and expect Clements to catch up soon! [E]

VARIABLE GOSHAWK (*Accipiter hiogaster*) – We saw this common *Accipiter* a few times, but none better than our first one, a close perched bird our first afternoon at PAU.

BROWN GOSHAWK (*Accipiter fasciatus*) – One circled overhead a few times as we searched for Black-headed Whistler in the Tari valley.

BLACK-MANTLED GOSHAWK (*Accipiter melanochlamys*) – We had brief but excellent looks at a juvenile that burst out of the forest and dashed across the road just above Ambua Lodge on our final afternoon there. [E]

GRAY-HEADED GOSHAWK (*Accipiter poliocephalus*) – Just one along the Elevala River, perched high in some dead branches. [E]

DORIA'S GOSHAWK (*Megatriorchis doriae*) – A scarcely seen raptor. One flew in and landed nearby as we descended the Garies Lookout track at Varirata the last day. It almost immediately took off again, then landed briefly once more before disappearing for good. Several of us had good views of it in flight, seeing the long tail with numerous bands that separates it from the similar Long-tailed Honey-Buzzard, and Peter had a good look at its face, noting the dark patch over the eyes that is also a key point in telling the two species apart. [E]

BLACK KITE (BLACK) (*Milvus migrans affinis*) – Small numbers in the Port Moresby region and plenty around Mt Hagen.

WHISTLING KITE (*Haliastur spheurnus*) – A little more numerous around Port Moresby than the Black Kite. An active nest was at PAU. [N]

BRAHMINY KITE (*Haliastur indus*) – Quite widespread and missed only on our first day at Kiunga. An apparently active nest was in the picnic area at Varirata on our first visit, though the birds weren't in attendance there on our return. [N]

WHITE-BELLIED SEA-EAGLE (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) – Good looks at one of these large eagles as it flew over the mangroves along the road to Lea Lea.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

BUFF-BANDED RAIL (*Gallirallus philippensis*) – A rainy afternoon at Ambua was brightened by a pair feeding (and copulating!) for a lengthy period in the lawn among the cabins. We then heard one squeal and saw it dash across an opening in the Tari Valley, and I was duped by a dog that did a remarkable imitation, especially given that it was hidden among the reeds in a roadside ditch! I truly expected the kids that jumped into the ditch to come out holding a rail, not a skinny puppy! Oops!

RUFIOUS-TAILED BUSH-HEN (*Amauornis moluccana*) – One called in response to the roar of a plane taking off along the runway at Kiunga. [*]

PURPLE SWAMPHEN (AUSTRALASIAN) (*Porphyrio porphyrio melanopterus*) – A dozen or so around the PAU ponds, and three at the small pond en route to Lea Lea. Watch for this species to be split up into several someday soon.

DUSKY MOORHEN (*Gallinula tenebrosa*) – A handful at the PAU ponds.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

MASKED LAPWING (*Vanellus miles miles*) – Several birds on the PAU grounds included some very young downy chicks. A couple were also seen on the runway at the Port Moresby airport. [N]

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER (SOUTHERN) (*Charadrius dubius dubius*) – Half a dozen birds on the gravel pad at the usual site for them along the Kiunga-Tabubil Road. This race occurs from New Guinea on up to the Philippines, and could be specifically distinct from northern breeding populations.

Jacaniidae (Jacanas)

COMB-CRESTED JACANA (*Irediparra gallinacea*) – Just a few at the PAU ponds.

Turnicidae (Buttonquail)

RED-BACKED BUTTONQUAIL (*Turnix maculosus*) – Hal had the bead on these birds at Kiunga, nearly stepping on one that had sat tight when a couple of us walked within a meter of the same spot seconds before. He then flushed a second one as we walked back along the airstrip. No surprise Hal saw them better than anyone else did!

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

CASPIAN TERN (*Hydroprogne caspia*) – One seen flying offshore at Lea Lea.

GREAT CRESTED TERN (*Thalasseus bergii cristatus*) – Half a dozen birds were roosting on a sandbar just offshore at Lea Lea.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – A few around Port Moresby. [I]

SLENDER-BILLED CUCKOO-DOVE (*Macropygia amboinensis*) – The most common cuckoo-dove seen, with especially good views at Varirata NP, where we had a pair on the road, and another along the creekside trail that showed well.

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO-DOVE (*Macropygia nigrirostris*) – Mostly at higher elevations than the preceding species. We had a few flybys in the Ambua region, but never well enough to see the barred tail of this species. [E]

GREAT CUCKOO-DOVE (*Reinwardtoena reinwardtii*) – Occurs at both high and low elevations. We had a brief look at one perched at the entrance to the Km 17 Greater BOP site, then a good view of one that flew across the Elevala River ahead of the boat. Harlan and Peter both saw one in the fruiting trees near the cabins at Ambua. [E]

STEPHAN'S DOVE (*Chalcophaps stephani*) – Pretty decent looks at one that flew low across the Fly River early on during our boat trip.

PEACEFUL DOVE (*Geopelia placida*) – About half a dozen were seen our first afternoon at PAU.

BAR-SHOULDERED DOVE (*Geopelia humeralis*) – Less common than the preceding species at PAU, but we had nice looks at a group of 4 birds.

SOUTHERN CROWNED-PIGEON (*Goura scheepmakeri*) – Always one of the big targets during the boat trip up the Elevala River, and we avoided the anxiety by finding a pair early on, then enjoyed long looks at them as they moved around in the open branches of a riverside tree. One of the overall favorites of the trip (tied for third place), and Hal's choice as his personal favorite. [E]

WOMPOO FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus magnificus*) – Heard far more often than seen, though some folks had a quick look at a perched bird near the flowering tree on our first visit to Varirata NP, and another was seen by some during the boat trip.

PINK-SPOTTED FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus perlatus*) – Fruit-dove numbers were generally lower than usual in my opinion, but this species was the most numerous, as is usually the case. We had lots of good views in the lowlands, perhaps none better than of that one perched out in the sun as we were about to leave Varirata on the last afternoon. [E]

BEAUTIFUL FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus pulchellus*) – This is sometimes a tough species to see well, but we had exceptional luck with them, getting great views numerous times at Kiunga and Varirata. The two separate pairs in the two fruiting fig trees at Varirata our last day were especially memorable, not to mention beautiful! [E]

ORANGE-BELLIED FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus iozonus*) – Not as many as I'm used to seeing, but we had some nice studies of these ones along Boystown Road where several perched up in a nearby dead tree. [E]

DWARF FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus nanus*) – Our only ones were a pair that flew across the Elevala River, identifiable mainly by their tiny size, and the fact that they were green. [E]

PURPLE-TAILED IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula rufigaster*) – This was the scarcest of the imperial-pigeons this trip, but we managed nice views of two separate birds along the Elevala River, the first from the boat, the second while we were inside the forest. [E]

PINON IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula pinon*) – Seen only in the Kiunga region, where we had them daily in small numbers. Best views were of a pair scoped in a fruiting tree near the entrance to the km 17 Greater BOP site. This is the one with the white tail band and the Cleopatra eye makeup. [E]

COLLARED IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula mullerii*) – The only other imperial-pigeon with a white tail band, this species seems restricted to areas immediately adjacent to the larger rivers, but they are common there, and we easily saw about 75-100 of them along the Fly and Elevala rivers. [E]

ZOE IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula zoeae*) – Also seen only in the Kiunga region in small numbers daily. This was the robust pigeon we saw calling and displaying at Boystown Road. [E]

TORRESIAN IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula spilorrhoa*) – Resident numbers of this species are probably bolstered by migrants from northern Australia, but it's probably not possible to say whether we saw migrants or residents. We had about 10 birds our first afternoon at PAU, and a single in a large flock of Collared IPs along the Fly River.

PAPUAN MOUNTAIN-PIGEON (*Gymnophaps albertisii*) – Despite the name, this species is also numerous away from the mountains. We saw big flocks on several days around Kiunga, and actually encountered fewer in the mountains. Most impressive was the one at km 17 that dropped down onto the trail about 20 feet ahead of the group and few there for a couple of minutes. New Guinea birds almost never do that! [E]

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

WHITE-CROWNED KOEL (*Cacomantis leucolophus*) – We managed to coax a calling bird into flying across the road at the Boystown Road mound. This was the first time I ever laid eyes on one of these birds. Next time maybe I'll see the white crown! [E]

BRUSH CUCKOO (*Cacomantis variolosus*) – This dull cuckoo is pretty widespread, and we had numerous sightings- at PAU, Kiunga, and around Ambua.

CHESTNUT-BREASTED CUCKOO (*Cacomantis castaneiventris*) – A distant bird was calling on our last day at Varirata. [*]

FAN-TAILED CUCKOO (*Cacomantis flabelliformis excitus*) – Ambua guide Joseph found one just outside the restaurant one day after lunch, and he showed it to the folks that were still around, about half the group. This taxa is apparently restricted to the New Guinea highlands, and has been considered for elevation to full species rank.

RUFOUS-THROATED BRONZE-CUCKOO (*Chrysococcyx ruficollis*) – We had a pair calling across the Tari Gap on an otherwise quiet sunny morning. They did respond to playback, but didn't show well for long before they flew off across the canopy. [E]

WHITE-EARED BRONZE-CUCKOO (*Chrysococcyx meyeri*) – A distant heard bird at Dablin Creek. Even if it had been closer, the fog probably would have prevented us seeing it! [E*]

LITTLE BRONZE-CUCKOO (*Chrysococcyx minutillus*) – The only one we saw was along Boystown Road, sitting right next to our only Long-billed Cuckoo!

LONG-BILLED CUCKOO (*Rhamphomantis megarhynchus*) – Quite scarce and poorly known. We had nice scope views of a singing male from the mound at Boystown Road. [E]

DWARF KOEL (*Microdynamis parva*) – Another vocal but elusive cuckoo. We saw a male of this species sitting on a dead branch above the canopy along the Elevala River. [E]

AUSTRALIAN KOEL (*Eudynamis cyanocephalus*) – Quite vocal in the Kiunga region, and we saw a few at km 17 and along the Elevala River.

CHANNEL-BILLED CUCKOO (*Scythrops novaehollandiae*) – Good views of 3 of these huge cuckoos flying over the PAU grounds on our first afternoon. Our only other one was a single along the Fly River. This species migrates north from Australia during the Austral winter.

GREATER BLACK COUCAL (*Centropus menbeki*) – Despite its size, this large canopy cuckoo can be very tough to actually see. We saw (mostly)

the back end of one as it disappeared into the canopy over the trail at km 17, but that was about it. [E]

PHASANT COUCAL (*Centropus phasianinus*) – A fairly common species in the savannas around Port Moresby. We saw several en route to/from Varirata, including an immature bird that crept around in an open burnt area just next to the road.

Tytonidae (Barn-Owls)

SOOTY OWL (GREATER) (*Tyto tenebricosa arfaki*) – I must admit that I'm not a big fan of the way these birds are disturbed so that we can see them, but if it keeps the locals interested in protecting the birds, I guess I can live with it. In any case, we had excellent views of a pair in the Tari Valley. [E]

Strigidae (Owls)

JUNGLE BOOBOOK (*Ninox theomacha*) – A calling bird behind the Cloudlands Hotel in Tabubil refused to show itself, but the pair at Ambua was much more obliging, calling nightly around the cabins and showing themselves readily on our first night there. [E]

Aegothelidae (Owlet-Nightjars)

FELINE OWLET-NIGHTJAR (*Aegotheles insignis*) – So close! We followed this one around for a while at Kumul, but just couldn't locate it in the canopy. I thought I saw its eyeshine once, but that's all I could get. Still one of my most-wanted PNG birds. [E*]

MOUNTAIN OWLET-NIGHTJAR (*Aegotheles albertisi*) – This one started calling as we were giving up on the Feline O-N and headed back to the lodge. A fleeting shadow of it flying across the road was all we got, though. [E*]

BARRED OWLET-NIGHTJAR (*Aegotheles bennettii*) – The best way to see any owlet-nightjar is on a day roost, and the day roost of this species at Varirata has been good for a long time now. We had nice views of one peering out of a hollow tree at us. [E]

Podargidae (Frogmouths)

PAPUAN FROGMOUTH (*Podargus papuensis*) – A trio of these massive frogmouths was roosting right above the very noisy basketball court at PAU.

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

ARCHBOLD'S NIGHTJAR (*Eurostopus archboldi*) – On all my previous visits to Ambua, nights were generally rainy and this bird never seemed to be present. This time we had a wonderful clear night, and found this bird easily at a quarry along the road above the lodge. [E]

Apodidae (Swifts)

PAPUAN NEEDLETAIL (*Mearnsia novaeguineae*) – A few in the Kiunga region, where the somewhat similar Glossy Swiftlet seems to be mostly absent. [E]

GLOSSY SWIFTLET (*Collocalia esculenta*) – Quite numerous at a bunch of sites, including Varirata, Tabubil, and around Ambua Lodge. Often flies quite low, so we got some great close looks at them.

MOUNTAIN SWIFTLET (*Aerodramus hirundinaceus*) – Fairly numerous in the highlands around Ambua. [E]

UNIFORM SWIFTLET (*Aerodramus vanikorensis*) – Lots in most of the lower elevation regions, with good numbers especially around Tabubil.

Hemiprocidae (Treeswifts)

MOUSTACHED TREESWIFT (*Hemiprocne mystacea*) – A poor view of a single bird in flight along the entrance road to Varirata NP, then much better looks at a perched pair along the Elevala River.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

COMMON KINGFISHER (*Alcedo atthis*) – Rhys was the only one to see this species along the Fly River during our boat trip.

VARIABLE DWARF-KINGFISHER (*Ceyx lepidus*) – Local guide Leonard is an ace at spotting these difficult little birds, and he proved it once again by picking one out along the Circuit Track at Varirata, and getting us all a super scope view of this very long-billed kingfisher.

BLUE-WINGED KOOKABURRA (*Dacelo leachii*) – Fairly common in the savanna regions around Port Moresby.

RUFIOUS-BELLIED KOOKABURRA (*Dacelo gaudichaud*) – We started with a perched roadside pair along the Varirata entrance road, then had a few more sightings of this striking kingfisher in the Kiunga region. [E]

FOREST KINGFISHER (*Todiramphus macleayi*) – Good views of one along the Varirata entrance road. This was likely one of the resident birds which reside in the savanna regions of the southeast, rather than a migrant from Australia.

SACRED KINGFISHER (*Todiramphus sanctus*) – Seen in small numbers at several sites, from the lowlands around Kiunga right up to Tari.

HOOK-BILLED KINGFISHER (*Melidora macrorrhina*) – Always elusive. We heard one along the Elevala River, but it showed no sign of any interest in a recording and stayed well away from us. [E*]

YELLOW-BILLED KINGFISHER (*Syma torotoro*) – After hearing these birds at Varirata and along the road up to Tabubil, we finally caught up with this bird when we spotted one sitting just over the Circuit Track at Varirata.

MOUNTAIN KINGFISHER (*Syma megarhyncha*) – A larger version of the preceding species, with a black mark on top of the upper mandible. We had a responsive bird along the Ambua entrance road shortly after we arrived, and had a nice scope view of it before it vanished. I've heard this species several times on past tours, but this was the first time I'd ever seen one! [E]

COMMON PARADISE-KINGFISHER (*Tanysiptera galatea*) – Nearly always a difficult bird to track down, but we did pretty well this trip, getting several excellent looks at a calling bird in flooded forest along the Elevala River. [E]

BROWN-HEADED PARADISE-KINGFISHER (*Tanysiptera danae*) – Generally much easier to find than the preceding species. We had superb views of one on each of our visits to Varirata NP. [E]

Meropidae (Bee-eaters)

RAINBOW BEE-EATER (*Merops ornatus*) – Good numbers of these elegant birds were present in the savanna areas around Varirata and Port Moresby.

Coraciidae (Rollers)

DOLLARBIRD (*Eurystomus orientalis*) – A few in the Varirata area, but most numerous along the rivers in Kiunga region, where, at today's exchange rate, I figure we saw about 200 Kina's worth.

Bucerotidae (Hornbills)

BLYTH'S HORNBILL (*Aceros plicatus*) – Seeing two groups of three birds on our first visit to Varirata was something of a surprise, as hornbills are quite scarce there nowadays. Even more surprising and exciting was encountering a flock of at least 50 of these huge beasts in a fruiting tree along the Elevala River. The whoosh of their wings as they flushed out of the trees was fantastic!

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

AUSTRALIAN HOBBY (*Falco longipennis*) – It took considerable time to nail down the identification of this bird, but we had ample time as I could study it through the scope (sans tripod) from the "departure lounge" at the Tari airport. Eventually the light improved enough to see some color and clinch the ID.

BROWN FALCON (*Falco berigora*) – One flew overhead on our first afternoon at PAU, and another was seen in passing perched on a roadside wire near Mt Hagen.

Cacatuidae (Cockatoos)

PALM COCKATOO (*Probosciger aterrimus*) – Inexplicably scarce this trip, with just a fleeting look at one along Boystown Road, and somewhat better views of another in the late afternoon along the Elevala River.

SULPHUR-CRESTED COCKATOO (*Cacatua galerita*) – Small numbers daily at Kiunga and Varirata. Birds here belong to the PNG resident race *C. g. triton*.

Psittacidae (Parrots)

YELLOW-STREAKED LORY (*Chalcopsitta sintillata*) – A few in the Kiunga region, mainly in flight, though we had scope looks at a pair from the mound on Boystown Road. [E]

RAINBOW LORIKEET (COCONUT) (*Trichoglossus haematodus nigrogularis*) – Pretty widespread and seen at a number of sites, starting with about 20 our first afternoon at PAU. This subspecies may soon be split off as Coconut Lorikeet.

GOLDIE'S LORIKEET (*Psitteuteles goldiei*) – A group of 6 or 7 flew low over the road near Seven Corners below the Tari Gap. [E]

BLACK-CAPPED LORY (*Lorius lory*) – These gorgeous lories were seen regularly, with the best views coming our last day at Varirata, when we had a pair fly in and perch nearby, perhaps looking to inspect a nest hole in a dead tree just behind us. [E]

RED-FLANKED LORIKEET (*Charmosyna placentis*) – Several small flocks whizzed by overhead along Boystown Road, which is pretty typical of our views of this species. [E]

PAPUAN LORIKEET (*Charmosyna papou*) – This bird would be stunning without a long tail, but those elongated tail plumes make it even more spectacular. And then there is that amazing black morph... wow! We had fantastic looks at both color morphs along the road above Ambua, and this species earned enough votes to put it into a three way tie for third place for bird of the trip. [E]

YELLOW-BILLED LORIKEET (*Neopsittacus musschenbroekii*) – A pair in a fruiting tree above the Ambua gift shop gave nice views for our first encounter, and we had several more sightings over the next couple of days there. [E]

ORANGE-BILLED LORIKEET (*Neopsittacus pullicauda*) – Generally occupies higher elevation regions than the similar (though larger) Yellow-billed, but there is considerable overlap in their ranges, and we saw both species regularly around Ambua. This one was scarcer, but we had a couple of nice views of perched birds along the road and the Waterfall Trail. [E]

YELLOW-CAPPED PYGMY-PARROT (*Micropsitta keiensis*) – A few "sightings" in the Kiunga region, though they all amounted to nothing more than a black dot zipping by overhead. [E]

BUFF-FACED PYGMY-PARROT (*Micropsitta pusio*) – One of the big highlights of the first day at Varirata. I heard this one flying overhead, then managed to pick it up and watched it drop into a treetop below our roadside vantage point. Luckily it perched in a small opening in the canopy, and then stayed put long enough for us all to get excellent scope views! All the pygmy-parrots are tough to see well, so this was a real treat. [E]

RED-BREASTED PYGMY-PARROT (*Micropsitta bruijnii*) – Samuel located one feeding at Dablin Creek, and we managed to scope it, but only the first person in line, Peter, was able to see it before it crawled off into the foliage never to be seen again.

ORANGE-BREASTED FIG-PARROT (*Cyclopsitta guiliemitertii*) – These cute little guys are always a delight to see. We had a group of about 20 feeding in fruiting trees right next to Kwatu Lodge, easily our best view, though we had a few other sightings in the region too. [E]

DOUBLE-EYED FIG-PARROT (*Cyclopsitta diophthalma*) – Gorgeous scope studies of several of these lovely small parrots from the mound at Boystown Road.

LARGE FIG-PARROT (*Psittaculirostris desmarestii*) – I'm sure no one was blown away by our look at this bird, but it actually showed quite well when it first flew across in front of the boat, and the views of it after it perched were okay, too. Believe it or not, this was the best view I've ever had at this scarce species. [E]

BREHM'S TIGER-PARROT (*Psittacella brehmii*) – The only easy tiger-parrot, as all the species are rather quiet and retiring. This species has become accustomed to the feeders at Kumul, though, where they are pretty much a certainty nowadays. We had great looks at a pair of them. [E]

MADARASZ'S TIGER-PARROT (*Psittacella madaraszii*) – Any tiger-parrot that isn't a Brehm's is considered a bonus bird; I can count the non-Brehm's I've seen in all my trips on one hand! We had fantastic views of a female of this scarce species along the Waterfall Trail at Ambua. It was only my second encounter with this species, and my best look, and consequently, my favorite bird of the trip! [E]

RED-CHEEKED PARROT (*Geoffroyus geoffroyi*) – A very common lowland bird, with good numbers both at Varirata and Kiunga.

BLUE-COLLARED PARROT (*Geoffroyus simplex*) – Unlike its congener, the Red-cheeked Parrot, this species is a tough one to see other than in high flying flocks. Our only encounter was with one such flock that we heard on our foggy morning at Dablin Creek. [E*]

ECLECTUS PARROT (*Eclectus roratus*) – Seen in small numbers in the lowlands. Most of our sightings were of single birds, often lone males, though we did have a couple of nice looks at the red females as well.

PAPUAN KING-PARROT (*Alisterus chloropterus*) – A widespread but generally scarce species, and much harder to see than the Australian King-Parrot. We had a flyby pair at Boystown Road, another flyby pair at the Blue BOP sight near Tari, and then a single bird (another flyby) on our last morning at Varirata. [E]

PAPUAN HANGING-PARROT (*Loriculus aurantiifrons*) – This was my best look ever at this species, but that's not saying much. The two we "saw" at Boystown Road were nothing more than tiny, parrot-shaped blobs whizzing past. [E]

Pittidae (Pittas)

HOODED PITTA (*Pitta sordida*) – Heard a few times around Kiunga, and Agnes had a brief view of one that dashed across the trail in response to playback at km 17.

RED-BELLIED PITTA (*Pitta erythrogaster*) – We were close in the flooded forest along the Elevala, but just couldn't get this one into view. [*]

Ptilonorhynchidae (Bowerbirds)

WHITE-EARED CATBIRD (*Ailuroedus buccoides*) – Another on a long list of super-skulkers in PNG. We heard this sneaky bird a couple of times around Kiunga. [E*]

MACGREGOR'S BOWERBIRD (*Amblyornis macgregoriae*) – Our lone sighting was of a female perched low in the understory as we went looking for the jewel-babbler along the trail just off the parking lot at Ambua. [E]

FLAME BOWERBIRD (*Sericulus aureus*) – This was a pretty fine sighting compared to most of my previous ones. The male that flew past the mound at Boystown Road was quite close, and showed beautifully as it did a slow pass across the road. We later had a distant perched female, and the next day another female flew across the Elevala River ahead of the boat. Rhys chose this as his favorite bird of the trip, not just for its dazzling looks, but also as it was his 3000th world bird! Congrats Rhys. [E]

FAWN-BREASTED BOWERBIRD (*Chlamydera cerviniventris*) – Pretty dull compared to some of the other bowerbirds, and the bird itself, though common at PAU, was probably less memorable than the wonderful bower we saw there.

Maluridae (Fairywrens)

WALLACE'S FAIRYWREN (*Sipodotus wallacii*) – I heard one with a mixed flock along Varirata's Circuit Track, but I believe Rhys was the only one to pick this species out of the swarm of activity. [E]

EMPEROR FAIRYWREN (*Malurus cyanocephalus*) – Fairywrens are a pretty wonderful bunch of birds, but this species is among my favorites. The female is just splendid, and the blue male is a pretty fine bird himself. We had nice views of a responsive pair along Boystown Road, as well as the male of a pair (one of several heard) along the Elevala River. [E]

WHITE-SHOULDERED FAIRYWREN (*Malurus alboscapulatus*) – Seen daily in the Tari region, including some right by the cabins at Ambua and a pair in the "departure lounge" at the Tari airport. Note the females of the subspecies found here are virtually identical to the males (perhaps a tad duller). [E]

Meliphagidae (Honeyeaters)

PLAIN HONEYEATER (*Pycnopygius ixoides*) – The field guide claims that this species has no field marks, but does the lack of field marks qualify as a field mark itself? Quite a paradox, eh? We saw this aptly name honeyeater along Boystown Road. [E]

MARBLED HONEYEATER (*Pycnopygius cinereus*) – Nice views of a pair of these at the Blue BOP site near Tari. [E]

STREAK-HEADED HONEYEATER (*Pycnopygius stictocephalus*) – This large honeyeater can look quite a lot like a Brown Oriole or a friarbird, if it weren't for that white malar stripe. We saw these birds a few times in the Kiunga region. [E]

SCRUB HONEYEATER (*Meliphaga albonotata*) – This genus of honeyeaters provides the biggest ID challenge in PNG, and makes Empid ID seem like child's play. This is one of the more straightforward ones, the white ear patch eliminating most of the species right off the bat. We had good looks at a couple behind the hotel in Tabubil. [E]

MIMIC HONEYEATER (*Meliphaga analoga*) – I'm not quite as confident with this species, but the larger of the two species we saw at the flowering tree in Varirata looked good for this one. [E]

GRACEFUL HONEYEATER (ELEGANT) (*Meliphaga gracilis cinereifrons*) – This was the smaller, slimmer-billed *Meliphaga* at Varirata. Note this taxa is sometimes considered a species separate from Graceful Honeyeater of Australia, and is then known as Elegant Honeyeater. [E]

BLACK-THROATED HONEYEATER (*Lichenostomus subfrenatus*) – This can be a difficult honeyeater to get a good look at, though that wasn't our experience this trip. We found a pair at a flowering tree near the Tari Gap, and ended up with excellent views of the two of them. [E]

OBSCURE HONEYEATER (*Lichenostomus obscurus*) – The lowland version of the preceding species. This one eluded us though we heard it along Boystown Road. [E*]

VARIED HONEYEATER (*Lichenostomus versicolor*) – A bonus bird from our afternoon trip out to Lea Lea. We had a pair of them in the roadside mangroves along the way.

YELLOW-TINTED HONEYEATER (*Lichenostomus flavescens*) – Tim spotted our lone one, sitting on a roadside power line next to the entrance gate at PAU.

RUFIOUS-BANDED HONEYEATER (*Conopophila albogularis*) – Fairly common around the ponds at PAU, with a couple also at Lea Lea, and a single at the Kokoda Track monument.

RED-THROATED MYZOMELA (*Myzomela eques*) – Quite a scarce Myzomela, but we had excellent scope views of one or two at the flowering tree at Varirata, then had another in a small flock at Dablin Creek. [E]

BLACK MYZOMELA (*Myzomela nigrita*) – Good numbers on our first visit to Varirata, with about a dozen buzzing around the flowering tree at Varirata giving good scope views. Also seen on our second visit to the park. [E]

GREEN-BACKED HONEYEATER (*Glycichaera fallax fallax*) – An obscure and easily overlooked species. We had great looks at a pair with a mixed flock along the Gare's Lookout Track on our last afternoon at Varirata.

SILVER-EARED HONEYEATER (*Lichmera alboauricularis*) – A mainly coastal honeyeater that we usually only see in the Port Moresby region. We had a handful in the mangroves and coconut palms around the village of Lea Lea. [E]

WHITE-THROATED HONEYEATER (*Melithreptus albogularis*) – Quite numerous in the savanna habitat along the Varirata NP entrance road. We saw 20 or more on our initial visit to the park.

MEYER'S FRIARBIRD (*Philemon meyeri*) – Heard only along Boystown Road. [E*]

HELMETED FRIARBIRD (NEW GUINEA) (*Philemon buceroides novaeguineae*) – Pretty widespread and numerous at least at the lower elevation sites.

TAWNY-BREASTED HONEYEATER (*Xanthotis flaviventer*) – Never seems to be numerous, but quite widespread at lower elevations, and we saw them a bunch of times.

LONG-BILLED HONEYEATER (*Melilestes megarrhynchus*) – One in the morning and two in the afternoon at Dablin Creek were a bit elusive, but ultimately seen fairly well by most of us. [E]

- SMOKY HONEYEATER** (*Melipotes fumigatus*) – One of the most common and conspicuous species in the highland forests. If it wasn't for their endearing habit of blushing, I imagine folks would get pretty tired of them. [E]
- BELFORD'S MELIDECTES** (*Melidectes belfordi*) – Noisy and generally pretty common in the highlands, mainly above the range of the next species. [E]
- YELLOW-BROWED MELIDECTES** (*Melidectes rufocrissalis*) – Fairly common around the lodge at Ambua. We also scoped a distant one at Dablin Creek, which was the first time I'd seen this bird there. [E]
- ORNATE MELIDECTES** (*Melidectes torquatus*) – A pretty distant pair in a fruiting Schefflera at Dablin Creek sat long enough for everyone to get a first scope view. [E]
- RUFIOUS-BACKED HONEYEATER** (*Ptiloprora guisei*) – Seen in small numbers in the vicinity of Ambua Lodge. [E]
- BLACK-BACKED HONEYEATER** (*Ptiloprora perstriata*) – Very similar to the preceding species, but generally at slightly higher elevations. We had a few our one afternoon at Kumul, then saw them regularly up around the Tari Gap as well. [E]

Acanthizidae (Thornbills and Allies)

- GOLDENFACE** (*Pachycare flavogriseum*) – Formerly thought to be a whistler, and was called Dwarf Whistler, but now placed in the same family as scrubwrens, gerygones and thornbills, based in part on its similar nest architecture! We had good looks at a pair of these brilliant birds in a mixed flock during our afternoon foray onto the Gare's Lookout Track at Varirata. [E]
- RUSTY MOUSE-WARBLER** (*Crateroscelis murina*) – After being snubbed by our first few, we finally found a reasonably cooperative bird along the Gare's Lookout Track. Even so, only Brooke and Peter got good looks at it before it lost interest. [E]
- MOUNTAIN MOUSE-WARBLER** (*Crateroscelis robusta*) – For most of us a heard only bird, though Tim saw one pop up onto a nearby mossy log as we were calling in the logrunners above Ambua. [E]
- LARGE SCRUBWREN** (*Sericornis nouhuysi*) – Quite common and easily seen in the Tari Gap forests. The reddish face is quite noticeable and a good mark for this species. [E]
- BUFF-FACED SCRUBWREN** (*Sericornis perspicillatus*) – Generally occurs at slightly lower elevations than the other two scrubwrens, and this is the one most likely to be found right around Ambua Lodge. The contrast of the buffy face with the gray crown easily separates this one from Large Scrubwren. Also, their chip notes reminded me somewhat of House Sparrows. [E]
- PAPUAN SCRUBWREN** (*Sericornis papuensis*) – Quite common in the high elevation forest in the Tari Gap, where they occur with the Large Scrubwren. [E]
- PALE-BILLED SCRUBWREN** (*Sericornis spilodera*) – A few folks saw this one with a mixed flock along the Circuit Track at Varirata. [E]
- MOUNTAIN GERYGONE** (*Gerygone cinerea*) – We don't always get this species, so I was somewhat surprised to run into them several times over the first couple of days at Ambua, starting with a group of 10 or more along the driveway on our first outing there. [E]
- GREEN-BACKED GERYGONE** (*Gerygone chloronota*) – We'll have to take that green back on faith, though we had a good view of the underparts of one at Dablin Creek!
- FAIRY GERYGONE** (*Gerygone palpebrosa*) – The male is pretty flashy as gerygones go. We had excellent looks at a male with our large mixed flock on the Gare's Lookout Track our last day.
- YELLOW-BELLIED GERYGONE** (*Gerygone chrysogaster*) – Often one of the nuclear species in lowland mixed flocks. We had excellent looks at a pair in flooded forest along the Elevala River, and another pair along Varirata's Circuit Track, and we heard them several other times. [E]
- BROWN-BREASTED GERYGONE** (*Gerygone ruficollis*) – A few nice sightings in the Tari Valley as we watched and waited for BOPs to appear. [E]

Pomatostomidae (Pseudo-Babblers)

- NEW GUINEA BABBLER** (*Pomatostomus isidorei*) – We had a particularly good encounter with a noisy and curious bunch of these birds in the flooded forest along the Elevala River, where they seemed to be moving with a group of White-bellied Pitohuis. [E]

Orthonychidae (Logrunners)

- NORTHERN LOGRUNNER** (*Orthonyx novaeguineae*) – One of a number of super skulkers of the highland forests. We found a pretty responsive pair near the Tari Gap and most of the group got pretty nice views of them there. [E]

Cnemophilidae (Satinbirds)

- LORIA'S SATINBIRD** (*Cnemophilus lorae*) – A female, likely the same one each time, was present several times in the fruiting tree by the cabins at Ambua. [E]
- CRESTED SATINBIRD** (*Cnemophilus macgregorii*) – Good views of a female near the lodge at Kumul, a good pick up with our limited time there. Nowhere near as flashy as the male, but that oddly bumpy head gives this bird a pretty distinctive look. [E]

Melanocharitidae (Berrypeckers and Longbills)

- OBSCURE BERRYPECKER** (*Melanocharis arfakiana*) – Nothing very distinctive about this species. We saw one in a small mixed flock at Dablin Creek. [E]
- BLACK BERRYPECKER** (*Melanocharis nigra*) – Inexplicably missed on our first visit to Varirata, though we made up for this with several sightings on our second visit to the park. [E]
- LEMON-BREASTED BERRYPECKER** (*Melanocharis longicauda*) – A few sightings in roadside vegetation around the Bailey Bridge above Ambua. The only ones I recall were all females. [E]
- FAN-TAILED BERRYPECKER** (*Melanocharis versteri*) – We saw a few of these in the Tari Gap region, including some glossy blue-black males, which are pretty showy compared to most other berrypeckers. [E]
- YELLOW-BELLIED LONGBILL** (*Toxorhamphus novaeguineae*) – Heard several times in the Kiunga region. Our only sighting, for a few of us anyway, was a rapidly moving bird in the understory of the flooded forest along the Elevala River. [E]
- DWARF HONEYEATER** (*Oedistoma iliophum*) – This and the next species are not honeyeaters at all, and should be known as Dwarf and Pygmy longbills, respectively. We had amazingly good scope views of a few, as they repeatedly visited the same flower cluster in the canopy at Varirata. The scope view was definitely a first for me, and the looks were my best by far. [E]
- PYGMY HONEYEATER** (*Oedistoma pygmaeum*) – These tiny longbills were one of the final new species for the tour; at least three of them were

working through the outer foliage of the fruiting fig tree in the picnic area at Varirata. Once again, these were among my best views ever of this tough to see species. [E]

Paramythiidae (Tit Berrypecker and Crested Berrypecker)

TIT BERRYPECKER (*Oreocharis arfaki*) – These fine birds were regular visitors to the fruiting tree above the cabins at Ambua, and we had plenty of excellent views. [E]

CRESTED BERRYPECKER (*Paramythia montium*) – We saw this gorgeous species beautifully in a fruiting *Schefflera* along the road at the Tari Gap. [E]

Cinclosomatidae (Quail-thrushes and Jewel-babblers)

PAINTED QUAIL-THRUSH (*Cinclosoma ajax*) – One heard along the creek at Varirata on our first visit. [E*]

SPOTTED JEWEL-BABBLER (*Ptilorrhoa leucosticta*) – On past trips, this jewel-babbler has given me more trouble than the other two species, so it was nice to have the opposite experience this trip. We had two encounters on the same day, first in the forest adjacent to the Ambua parking lot, where a couple of folks saw one well, then in the afternoon along the Waterfall Trail, where an extremely responsive bird flew in and landed briefly a couple of meters away, giving most of us super looks! [E]

BLUE JEWEL-BABBLER (*Ptilorrhoa caerulescens*) – Acceptable if not terribly satisfying views of a couple that flew across the km 17 trail in response to playback. [E]

CHESTNUT-BACKED JEWEL-BABBLER (*Ptilorrhoa castanonota*) – Heard at Dablin Creek and Varirata, but we just couldn't get one in view. [E*]

Machaerirhynchidae (Boatbills)

BLACK-BREASTED BOATBILL (*Machaerirhynchus nigripectus*) – These superb little birds put on a great show next to the road at Seven Corners at Ambua. They look so much like tody-flycatchers- an incredible case of convergent evolution. [E]

YELLOW-BREASTED BOATBILL (*Machaerirhynchus flaviventer*) – Wonderful looks, including scope studies of one, on our second visit to Varirata.

Artamidae (Woodswallows)

GREAT WOODSWALLOW (*Artamus maximus*) – Numerous both around Tabubil and Ambua, where they liked to huddle on the thatched roof. One at Ambua also did some passable imitations of things like Blue-gray Robin and Fan-tailed Cuckoo, among others. [E]

WHITE-BREASTED WOODSWALLOW (*Artamus leucorhynchus*) – Half a dozen were roosting in a dead tree above the ponds at PAU, and others were seen around Kiunga and Port Moresby, with a surprisingly large number flying over the Raintree Lodge just before dusk one evening.

Cracticidae (Bellmagpies and Allies)

MOUNTAIN PELTOPS (*Peltops montanus*) – Nice scope views of one at Dablin Creek, once the fog cleared out. Terry and I also saw one from the helicopter pad at Ambua. [E]

LOWLAND PELTOPS (*Peltops blainvillii*) – Two pairs along the Elevala River and Ketu Creek showed well, especially that close pair at Kwatu Lodge. The family to which the peltops currently belong, Cracticidae, is sometimes subsumed into the Artamidae, the woodswallows. Behaviorally, these birds do seem to be more similar to woodswallows than to butcherbirds; perhaps they provide a link between the two subfamilies. [E]

BLACK-BACKED BUTCHERBIRD (*Cracticus mentalis*) – Common in the savannas around Port Moresby.

HOODED BUTCHERBIRD (*Cracticus cassicus*) – More of a forest bird than the preceding species, and there is an obvious shift as one comes through the savanna zone en route to Varirata from Black-backed to Hooded butcherbird, though there is overlap in that transitional zone. We saw plenty of these at the park, as well as around Kiunga. [E]

BLACK BUTCHERBIRD (*Cracticus quoyi*) – Heard and/or seen at Kiunga, Tabubil, and Ambua. The Tabubil birds have a unique musical song, not heard from other birds, and are likely a different subspecies than the Ambua birds, (and the Kiunga ones?). One bird at Ambua was seen eating a lizard along the path to the cabins.

Campephagidae (Cuckooshrikes)

STOUT-BILLED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina caeruleogrisea*) – Tim and Peter saw one of these massive cuckooshrikes when they took a stroll up the hill at Dablin Creek. The rest of us caught up with a very friendly pair at the Blue BOP site near Tari, then we also saw one in our large cuckooshrike flock on the Gare's Lookout Track at Varirata. [E]

HOODED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina longicauda*) – Three of these large and striking cuckooshrikes showed well in the ravine behind the cabins at Ambua, during our walk along the Waterfall Trail. [E]

BARRED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina lineata*) – Aka Yellow-eyed Cuckooshrike. Our final of a dozen species of cuckooshrikes (we missed only the Common Cicadabird). Several were with the cuckooshrike flock on the Gare's Lookout Track.

BOYER'S CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina boyeri*) – Quite common at Varirata, where we saw about 7 on our first visit, then several small parties on the second, with a few among the Gare's Lookout flock. We also had a pair along the Elevala River. [E]

BLACK-FACED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina novaehollandiae*) – A lone bird that flew past on our first afternoon at PAU was surprisingly our only one. Hard to say whether this was one of the small population of resident breeders in the Port Moresby area, or a winter migrant from Australia.

WHITE-BELLIED CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Coracina papuensis papuensis*) – Nice views of a single along the entrance road to Varirata on our first visit, and then two flybys in the same area on the second visit.

GOLDEN CUCKOOSHRIKE (*Campochaera sloetii*) – In a family of mainly monochrome species, these brilliant yellow birds really stand out! And we had standout views on two occasions, first along the road from Kiunga up to Tabubil, then with a quartet of perched birds at eye level at Dablin Creek. [E]

VARIED TRILLER (*Lalage leucomela*) – A distant male along the road to Tabubil was not too satisfying, but we had much better views of another male with the Gare's Lookout cuckooshrike flock on our last afternoon.

BLACK-BELLIED CICADABIRD (*Edolisoma montanum*) – Likely the same group of 5, with at least 2 of each sex, showed very well as they fed in roadside trees above the Bailey Bridge on two consecutive days. [E]

PAPUAN CICADABIRD (*Edolisoma incertum*) – Formerly called Black-shouldered Cuckooshrike. We saw a single male as we began the steep walk up the Dablin Creek road, just before the fog set in. [E]

GRAY-HEADED CICADABIRD (*Edolisoma schisticeps*) – Fairly common around Kiunga, where we heard and saw them on 4 days, with some excellent looks at both the gray males and the gray-headed, rusty brown females. [E]

BLACK CICADABIRD (*Edolisoma melan*) – We finally caught up with this one in our first flock (with the pitohuis) along Varirata's Circuit Track on our last day. This flock had both a black male and a rusty brown female. In the afternoon we also saw another female with the cuckooshrike flock on the Gare's Lookout Track. [E]

Pachycephalidae (Whistlers and Allies)

RUSTY PITOHI (*Colluricincla ferruginea*) – A good tour for this species. We started with acceptable views at km 17, improved on those with some pretty nice views at Ok Menga, then got excellent looks at several with various mixed flocks on our last day at Varirata! Nice to be able to see the white eyes so well! [E]

WHITE-BELLIED PITOHI (*Colluricincla incerta*) – A rather scarce species of lowland forest. We had some nice looks at a flock moving with a bunch of New Guinea Babblers in the flooded forest along the Elevala River. [E]

RUFIOUS SHRIKE-THRUSH (*Colluricincla megarhyncha*) – This species is due for some taxonomic revision, and may be split into 6+ species by the time it's all worked out. We had them on both visits to Varirata and also saw a single bird in the mixed flock near the start of Ambua's Waterfall Trail.

GRAY SHRIKE-THRUSH (*Colluricincla harmonica*) – Heard only, from our rooms in Port Moresby on our final morning. [*]

REGENT WHISTLER (*Pachycephala schlegelii*) – I really like the whistlers, and this is one of my favorites. The male is a real stunner, and we had some excellent looks at males along the road above Ambua. Our first, though, was a female at Kumul. [E]

SCLATER'S WHISTLER (*Pachycephala soror*) – A male at Dablin Creek was a leader only bird, so it was good to pick up this uncommon whistler along the Waterfall Trail at Ambua. [E]

BROWN-BACKED WHISTLER (*Pachycephala modesta*) – Fairly common along the road above Ambua, and we saw them regularly with mixed flocks there. A rusty crowned bird we saw one afternoon caused a bit of confusion, though we eventually figured out it was a juvenile. [E]

GRAY WHISTLER (GRAY-HEADED) (*Pachycephala simplex griseiceps*) – One of the final new birds of the trip; one was with the big cuckooshrike flock at Varirata.

WHITE-BELLIED WHISTLER (*Pachycephala leucogastra*) – This species was originally treated as a race of Rufous Whistler though but thankfully that nonsense has been set right! We had awesome looks at a male along the Varirata entrance road, and I was happy to (finally) get a good recording of its song. Should make finding it on future tours a bit easier! [E]

BLACK-HEADED WHISTLER (*Pachycephala monacha*) – These were surprisingly difficult to find in the Tari valley this trip, though we did finally get a nice close one along the road. [E]

MOTTLED WHISTLER (*Rhagologus leucostigma*) – A good bird to pick up as some authorities are proposing that this bird gets split into its own monotypic family Rhagologidae, and is then called Mottled Berryhunter. We had excellent views of a pair along the road near the makara Bird Lodge. [E]

RUFIOUS-NAPED WHISTLER (*Alcedryas rufinucha*) – This odd whistler spends a fair bit of time on the ground, unlike all the other whistlers. We had a couple of good encounters with these along the Highlands Highway above Ambua. [E]

CRESTED PITOHI (*Ornorectes cristatus*) – This bird has got one of the coolest calls in the country, and we not only heard one calling nearby along the creek at Varirata, but some of us also got pretty good views of it, a first time for me, despite hearing them pretty much every time I've been to Varirata! [E]

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LONG-TAILED SHRIKE (*Lanius schach stresemanni*) – Scarce this trip, though we finally did snag a pair on our way down to the Tari airport for our return flight to Port Moresby. This race is endemic to PNG.

Oriolidae (Old World Orioles)

HOODED PITOHI (*Pitohui dichrous*) – The genus Pitohui, the true poisonous pitohuis, now only contains this and the next species (though Variable could soon be split into 3 species). We had excellent views of this one with several flocks on both visits to Varirata. The toxins in these birds' skin and feathers is thought to come from Choresine beetles which the birds consume. [E]

VARIABLE PITOHI (*Pitohui kirhocephalus*) – Heard several times around the Kiunga region. If split, this would be the Southern Variable Pitohui, *P. uropygialis*. [E*]

BROWN ORIOLE (*Oriolus szalayi*) – As usual one of the first PNG endemics that we come across, though I think that first one at PAU may actually have been beat out by Yellow-faced Myna this year! Still, we saw plenty of these daily in the lowlands. [E]

AUSTRALASIAN FIGBIRD (*Sphecotheres vieilloti*) – Only at PAU, where we saw about 10 of these odd birds. These birds belong to the endemic race *salvadorii*.

Dicruridae (Drongos)

SPANGLED DRONGO (*Dicrurus bracteatus carbonarius*) – Seen regularly at Varirata and around Kiunga. Despite there being two taxa of Spangled Drongo on our checklist, I believe all the ones we were seeing were of this resident taxon (Papuan Spangled Drongo).

Rhipiduridae (Fantails)

PYGMY DRONGO-FANTAIL (*Chaetorhynchus papuensis*) – This odd little bird, currently treated as a member of the fantail family, formerly considered a drongo, is a potential candidate to be moved into another monotypic family. We had a responsive bird with a mixed flock at Varirata which showed very well for most of us. [E]

BLACK FANTAIL (*Rhipidura atra*) – We met up with a couple of pairs of this highland fantail, and while everyone got good views of at least one of the two males, only a couple of folks managed to see the rusty females, which I have still not seen well. [E]

SOOTY THICKET-FANTAIL (*Rhipidura threnothorax*) – Heard near Kwatu Lodge, but, as usual, stayed well out of sight. [E*]

WHITE-BELLIED THICKET-FANTAIL (*Rhipidura leucothorax leucothorax*) – We heard a bunch of these: one at km 17, one at Dablin Creek, several along the Elevala River, but we never found one that showed even the remotest interest in showing itself. [E*]

WILLIE-WAGTAIL (*Rhipidura leucophrys*) – We somehow actually managed to miss this common species on our first day at Kiunga!

DIMORPHIC FANTAIL (*Rhipidura brachyrhyncha*) – I've mostly seen the gray-tailed morph of this species on past trips, so it was nice that both of

- ours, on different parts of the Highlands Highway, were of the rufous-tailed morph. [E]
- FRIENDLY FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura albolimbata*) – Not just friendly, but common too. Harlan spotted our first pair below the feeders at Kumul, then we went on to see them daily, and with pretty much every mixed flock, at Ambua. [E]
- CHESTNUT-BELLIED FANTAIL** (*Rhipidura hyperythra*) – Though we only saw one on our first visit to Varirata, they were fairly numerous on our second visit, and seen well with several of the mixed flocks we encountered. [E]
- Monarchidae (Monarch Flycatchers)*
- BLUE-CAPPED IFRITA** (*Ifrita kowaldi*) – Yet another PNG bird that has been moved around from family to family as no one seems to know just what the heck it is! Though now placed with the monarchs, this bird is odd enough (and poisonous, too, like the pitohuis!) that it could end up in its own monotypic family! We saw them well a bunch of times at Ambua. [E]
- GOLDEN MONARCH** (*Carterornis chrysomela*) – We only had one, but that was enough for Terry, who claimed this stonking male as the 3000th species on her life list (and her trip favorite), shortly after hubbie Rhys got his 3000th in the form of Flame Bowerbird! [E]
- BLACK-FACED MONARCH** (*Monarcha melanopsis*) – Our only one was with a mixed flock in the flooded forest along the Elevala River. It wasn't a particularly cooperative flock, and only a couple of folks got onto this bird, which is a winter migrant from Australia.
- BLACK MONARCH** (*Symphysichrus axillaris*) – A pair of these showed exceptionally well, the best I've ever seen them, along one of the muddy trails near the Bailey Bridge above Ambua. Interestingly they showed a strong preference for the Pandanus trees, moving from one to the next, and rarely perching in any other sort of tree. [E]
- HOODED MONARCH** (*Symphysichrus manadensis*) – One was with the same flock as the Black-faced Monarch, and like it, wasn't very friendly, so only Hal and I managed to see it. [E]
- SPOT-WINGED MONARCH** (*Symphysichrus guttula*) – Missed completely on our first visit to Varirata, when flocks were scarce, but we picked up at least three of them with varied flocks on our final day follow up. [E]
- FRILLED MONARCH** (*Arses telescophthalmus*) – This species made up the bulk of our monarch sightings, with great encounters on three days, with both males and females seen very well on at least a couple of occasions. We saw them twice in the Kiunga area, then had a couple of different pairs on our final visit to Varirata. [E]
- TORRENT-LARK** (*Grallina bruijnii*) – Unlike the closely related Magpie-lark of Australia, this species is quite shy and can be very tough to see well. Happily, this wasn't our experience, as we watched a quartet of them land on the road uphill from us at Dablin Creek and then proceed to display and chase each other around. By far my best experience with this bird! [E]
- LEADEN FLYCATCHER** (*Myiagra rubecula*) – A lone bird was seen by some in the savanna habitat along the Varirata entrance road on our first visit.
- SHINING FLYCATCHER** (*Myiagra alecto*) – Several nice views of both the shining black males and the striking rufous, black, and white females along the Elevala River.
- Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)*
- GRAY CROW** (*Corvus tristis*) – These odd bare-faced crows were seen a couple of times in the Kiunga/Tabubil region, including a very dark bird near Tabubil, and we also saw a half dozen our last day at Varirata. [E]
- TORRESIAN CROW** (*Corvus orru orru*) – Quite numerous in the Port Moresby savanna region.
- Paradisaeidae (Birds-of-Paradise)*
- TRUMPET MANUCODE** (*Phonygammus keraudrenii*) – I can only think that the person who named this bird for its calls was seriously tone deaf! We recorded these daily in the Kiunga region, with some good views along Boystown Road on a day when we saw all three species well!
- CRINKLE-COLLARED MANUCODE** (*Manucodia chalybatus*) – The scarcest of the three manucodes, but we saw a couple of these bumpy headed birds well along Boystown Road and at Dablin Creek. [E]
- GLOSSY-MANTLED MANUCODE** (*Manucodia ater*) – Great scope views along the Varirata entrance road on our first visit, and recorded most days in the Kiunga region. [E]
- KING-OF-SAXONY BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Pteridophora alberti*) – It was a tough trip for this species, as the usual male above Ambua was not that reliable and when we finally did see him, he was further from the road than I'd seen on past visits, plus he didn't stick around for long. Still, that brief encounter was wonderful enough to earn him Agnes's vote as the best bird of the trip. Oh, and we did see a bunch of females, as well as an immature male, too. [E]
- CAROLA'S PAROTIA** (*Parotia carolae*) – The fog at Dablin Creek hindered us with this bird, but when it finally lifted late in the morning, we got nice views of a couple of females moving through the canopy with some Greater BOPs. On our return visit that afternoon, we also scoped a distant male, getting just enough time for a quick view each before the fog swallowed him up again. [E]
- LAWES'S PAROTIA** (*Parotia lawesii*) – A female put in a couple of appearances at the Ambua fruiting tree, but the only male was seen by just a couple of folks as we searched for Black Sicklebill on our way to the Tari airport. [E]
- TWELVE-WIRED BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Seleucidis melanoleucus*) – Fantastic looks at two different males on display perches, one on either side of the Fly River on our way upstream, with one of the males also showing on the way back down. The wires were even visible, despite the lack of scope views, though we weren't close enough to count if there were indeed 12 of them. [E]
- SUPERB BIRD-OF-PARADISE** (*Lophorina superba*) – It's kind of surprising that this one didn't get any votes for bird of the trip given the fantastic show it put on for us in the Tari Valley! If only that nearby female had gone up to see him; I think then he would have earned a few nods. [E]
- MAGNIFICENT RIFLEBIRD** (*Ptiloris magnificus*) – Heard only along Boystown Road and during the boat trip. This is the nominate race which sounds very different from the next taxon, as well as from the subspecies *alberti* from northern Australia. [*]
- MAGNIFICENT RIFLEBIRD (GROWLING)** (*Ptiloris magnificus intercedens*) – The upcoming new field guides for PNG will both have this form split as a separate species, and for good reason. They sound nothing like the other current subspecies. We had a hard time with this one, hearing it multiple times on our second visit to Varirata, but only getting a few fleeting looks at females or no looks at all for some. [E]
- BROWN SICKLEBILL** (*Epimachus meyeri*) – Super looks at females at the Kumul feeders as usual. We also had a quick look at a nice long-tailed male, and heard his impressive machine gun rattle, up near the Bailey Bridge. [E]
- SHORT-TAILED PARADIGALLA** (*Paradigalla brevicauda*) – An aggressive one was at a fruiting tree by the lower cabins at Ambua, chasing off astrapias, Smoky Honeyeaters, etc. It was also pretty approachable, and offered up a couple of excellent photographic sessions. [E]

STEPHANIE'S ASTRAPIA (*Astrapia stephaniae*) – With all the logging disturbance around the traditional territory along the Highlands Highway, getting a male of this species is a bit of a crapshoot nowadays. But among the regular females at the Ambua fruiting tree, most folks did get a good look at a male as well. [E]

RIBBON-TAILED ASTRAPIA (*Astrapia mayeri*) – First seen at the Kumul feeders, where the only males was a stumpy tailed thing, that looked spectacular nonetheless. But they are far more impressive with the long tail plumes, and we had a few fantastic sightings of males with tail plumes approaching 4 feet in length- a real show-stopper! By a narrow margin, this was voted the top bird of the trip, courtesy of a first place vote from Brooke and a couple of 2nd place votes. [E]

KING BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Cicinnurus regius*) – This bird was the fave pick by both Tim and Peter, easing it into 2nd place in bird of the trip voting. Samuel had us waiting for some time just short of the Greater BOP lek at Km 17, listening as one of these slowly worked its way to a favored vine tangle over the trail. The bird finally arrived overhead, where he was still tricky to see, but thanks to Samuel's persistence and skill, we had fabulous scope studies of this tiny BOP. [E]

MAGNIFICENT BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Cicinnurus magnificus*) – The disembodied voice of one of these birds emanated from the dense fog at Dablin Creek. [E*]

BLUE BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Paradisaea rudolphi*) – A beautiful male (and a couple of females for some), sang from his traditional song perch for a long time in the Tari valley. With the foggy conditions that prevailed for several days leading up to our visit, this bird had been pretty hard to see, so I feel we were pretty lucky to get a clear morning to look for him. [E]

RAGGIANA BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Paradisaea raggiana*) – As usual, our first BOP (discounting the manucodes, of course), seen amazingly well at the traditional lek at Varirata. We had a male perched fairly low and close for a nice extended view, though photography was a bit tricky due to backlighting and various small branches in the way. Still, we were all pretty pleased with our looks at this impressive BOP. [E]

GREATER BIRD-OF-PARADISE (*Paradisaea apoda*) – A great show at the Km 17 lek, with a handful of males displaying vigorously to a couple of visiting females. Most of the birds we saw appeared to be pure Greaters, though one or two looked like they had a little Raggiana blood in them too. [E]

LESSER MELAMPITTA (*Melampitta lugubris*) – Pretty good response, and a reasonable view, of one along the hacked over "Benson's Trail" above Ambua. The bird stayed pretty much in the shadows, but it is solid black and doesn't look too much different in direct sunlight! The two melampittas are candidates to be split into a new family: Melampittidae. [E]

Petroicidae (Australasian Robins)

TORRENT FLYCATCHER (*Monachella muelleriana*) – Just one pair along the river at Ok Menga, providing us with something to look at as we awaited the appearance of Salvadori's Teal. [E]

LEMON-BELLIED FLYCATCHER (*Microeca flavigaster*) – Nice looks at a couple of birds in the savanna zone along the Varirata entrance road.

CANARY FLYCATCHER (*Microeca papuana*) – These cute little flycatchers showed up in a few mixed flocks in the highland forests at Ambua. [E]

GARNET ROBIN (*Eugerygone rubra*) – This can be a difficult species to see well, so that gorgeous male that everyone got on along Ambua's Waterfall Trail was a real treat, and by far the best one i've seen in ages! Harlan chose this as his favorite of the trip. [E]

WHITE-FACED ROBIN (*Tregellasia leucops*) – A charming pair along the Circuit Track at Varirata gave everyone an eyeful.

BLACK-SIDED ROBIN (*Poecilodryas hypoleuca*) – Typically elusive, this bird was heard only along Boystown Road. [E*]

BLACK-THROATED ROBIN (*Poecilodryas albonotata*) – Amazing looks at one sat out in the sunlight in our wonderful mixed flock near the start of the Waterfall Trail at Ambua. [E]

WHITE-WINGED ROBIN (*Peneothello sigillata*) – Our first showed nicely in the lawn next to the feeders at Kumul, and we saw them almost daily along the road above Ambua as well. [E]

WHITE-RUMPED ROBIN (*Peneothello bimaculata*) – We were close, but this singing bird stayed out of sight at Dablin Creek. [E*]

BLUE-GRAY ROBIN (*Peneothello cyanus*) – A few sightings at Ambua, but our only full group one was the best, as a bird perched on a wire, then dropped to the middle of the road, at the entrance to the Makara Bird Lodge. [E]

ASHY ROBIN (*Heteromyias albispecularis*) – Always tough, and as usual heard only at Ambua. [E*]

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

PACIFIC SWALLOW (*Hirundo tahitica*) – The only regularly seen swallow on the tour. We had them most days, including a pair with a nest under the roof of the common area at the Cloudlands Hotel. [N]

TREE MARTIN (*Petrochelidon nigricans*) – Though this does occur in PNG, our only sightings were of a few from the departure lounge at Brisbane Airport.

Phylloscopidae (Leaf-Warblers)

ISLAND LEAF-WARBLER (*Phylloscopus poliocephalus*) – A tricky genus to identify in Eurasia, but luckily there is just one species here! We had superb views of our first, a pair that fed low in the shrubbery along the Ambua entrance road, in the company of a party of Mountain Gerygones.

Locustellidae (Grassbirds and Allies)

TAWNY GRASSBIRD (*Megalurus timoriensis*) – Quite common and easy to see in the Tari Gap grasslands. This taxon is generally split as Papuan Grassbird, as they are quite distinct from the true Tawny Grassbird of Australia.

Zosteropidae (Yuhinas, White-eyes, and Allies)

BLACK-FRONTED WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops minor*) – A big mixed flock of some 40-50 white-eyes at Dablin Creek contained at least a handful of these birds, distinguished by having a yellow throat contrasting sharply with the white breast. [E]

CAPPED WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops fuscicapilla*) – The majority of the white-eye flock at Dablin was made up of this yellow-bellied species. We also had nice looks at a pair in the Tari Valley. [E]

Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)

PIED BUSHCHAT (*Saxicola caprata*) – Quite common around Tabubil, and in the highland areas around Mt Hagen and Tari. We also saw one or two birds in the lowlands en route to Lea Lea.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

ISLAND THRUSH (*Turdus poliocephalus*) – A couple showed well at the Kumul feeders, and we also saw one along the road near the Tari Gap.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

METALLIC STARLING (*Aplonis metallica*) – Quite common in the Kiunga region, with an immature bird also seen at the Mt Hagen airport.

YELLOW-EYED STARLING (*Aplonis mystacea*) – Outnumbered by the preceding species, which is somewhat longer-tailed. We saw a few along Boystown Road, as well as some mixed in with a big flock of Metallic Starlings along the Elevala River, but I'm not sure anyone ever made out the yellow eyes. [E]

SINGING STARLING (*Aplonis cantoroides*) – Only two of these stocky, orange-eyed starlings were seen our first afternoon at PAU.

YELLOW-FACED MYNA (*Mino dumontii*) – Also seen initially at PAU, then every day in the Kiunga region and again on our return to Port Moresby. [E]

GOLDEN MYNA (*Mino anais*) – Much less common than the preceding myna. We only saw this flashy species along the Elevala River, where Tim spotted our first of three pairs on our way in to Kwatu Lodge. [E]

Dicaeidae (Flowerpeckers)

RED-CAPPED FLOWERPECKER (*Dicaeum geelvinkianum*) – Numerous and very widespread. We recorded this species nearly daily, from the lowland forest at Kiunga right on up to the grounds of Ambua Lodge.

Nectariniidae (Sunbirds and Spiderhunters)

BLACK SUNBIRD (*Leptocoma sericea*) – Fairly common around the Kiunga region, though they don't look like much unless you see them in bright sunlight.

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

AUSTRALASIAN PIPIT (AUSTRALIAN) (*Anthus novaeseelandiae australis*) – Up to 4 birds were seen feeding along the grassy verges of the runway at the Tari airport.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – Fairly common around Port Moresby, with a few birds also at Mt Hagen airport. [I]

EURASIAN TREE SPARROW (*Passer montanus*) – First recorded in PNG in about 2003 and since then has pretty much exploded in population. Phil seemed pretty surprised to see a couple near Tabubil last year, but now they were numerous around town, as well as in Port Moresby, and there were also a few seen around Kiunga. [I]

Estrildidae (Waxbills and Allies)

MOUNTAIN FIRETAIL (*Oreostruthus fuliginosus*) – I think we're all still wondering how Brooke spotted that one feeding quietly on the other side of the fence along the Kumul driveway, but we're glad she did, as it showed wonderfully, and our only other one above Ambua was not quite so cooperative. [E]

BLUE-FACED PARROTFINCH (*Erythrura trichroa*) – Parrotfinches heard at the parking lot at Kumul were likely this species, but apparently the Papuan Parrotfinch has similar calls, so who can say for sure. Another parrotfinch that called and flew past on the far side of the Tari Gap looked pretty stocky, and may well have been Papuan. [*]

HOODED MUNIA (*Lonchura spectabilis*) – A couple of distant birds in the grasslands by Kumul were followed by several excellent sightings of this dapper little bird around Ambua and Tari. [E]

GRAY-HEADED MUNIA (*Lonchura caniceps*) – A flock of 20 didn't really cooperate at PAU, so we made a visit to the Kokoda Track monument on our last afternoon specifically to try and see these birds. Success was ours when a flock of 15 or so flew in and landed in the top of some shrubs, where we could get some good scope views. For some folks, this was probably the final lifer of the tour. [E]

MAMMALS

PYGMY RINGTAIL POSSUM (*Pseudocheirus mayeri*) – The beautiful small possum we spotted alongside the road as we drove up to the Archbold's Nightjar spot was this species, I believe. I haven't actually been able to check the New Guinea mammal guide to confirm, but with Peter's excellent photos, we should be able to nail it down for certain.

GREATER FLYING FOX (*Pteropus neohibernicus*) – A couple of roost trees full of these large bats along the Elevala River.

BLACK-TAILED GIANT RAT (*Uromys anak*) – One of these monster rats visited the Kumul feeders after dark.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

In addition to the birds and mammals, we had a handful of cold-blooded creatures, including a monitor lizard along the river near Kwatu Lodge (possibly Mangrove Monitor, *Varanus indicus*), probably two species of water dragons (one along Ketu Creek, the other seen on a boulder in the middle of the rushing river at Ok Menga), and an interesting tree frog on the fence at the Tari airport. Oh, and there were those bronzy skinks along the walkway at Ambua. If anyone has found out anything about any of these, I'd be happy to hear about it.

Finally, as requested, here is Terry's humiliating, but funny poem about our puppy/rail at Tari! I've come to the conclusion that the first sound we heard was the puppy eating a rail; it's the only explanation that allows me to save face... :-)

DOGGEREL

Our PNG leader is named Jay

We were birding hard one sunny day,

When from a ditch called a rail.

Much to Jay's chagrin,

Two kids jumped in,

And pulled out a puppy dog by the tail.

Totals for the tour: 303 bird taxa and 3 mammal taxa