



**PAPUA NEW GUINEA:
BIRDING ATTENBOROUGH'S PARADISE**

17 AUGUST - 3 SEPTEMBER 2020



© Matt Prophet 2013

Ribbon-tailed Astrapia is one of our major targets on this trip.

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is indeed a birder's paradise. Thirty-four birds-of-paradise live on the island of New Guinea, of which thirty-one can be found in Papua New Guinea, and a large number of these are possible on this tour! The island of New Guinea is home to approximately 400 endemics! Together with awe-inspiring scenery, endless rainforests, and fascinating highland societies that only made contact with the outside world in 1930, this makes Papua New Guinea a definite must-do destination for any avid birder.

We start our adventure in the tropical savanna near Port Moresby. This area holds species restricted to northern Australia and PNG, such as the remarkable and huge **Papuan Frogmouth**, **Fawn-breasted Bowerbird**, and a couple of gorgeous kingfishers, **Yellow-billed Kingfisher** and **Brown-headed Paradise Kingfisher**.

We then fly to the Mount Hagen Highlands, where we base ourselves at Kumul Lodge, the holy grail of PNG highland birding. At Kumul's legendary feeding table some of PNG's most spectacular birds await us in form of **Ribbon-tailed Astrapia** (surely one of the best-looking of the island's birds-of-paradise?), **Rufous-naped Whistler**, **Brehm's Tiger Parrot**, **Archbold's Bowerbird**, **Crested Satinbird**, and many more. The area around Mount Hagen also holds a host of other birding gems, **Brown Sicklebill**, **King of Saxony Bird-of-paradise**, and **Lesser Bird-of-paradise** among them.

Our next destination is the western lowlands around Kiunga, a port town on the Fly River in the Western Province of Papua New Guinea. In this remote part of the country we will search for a host of breathtaking specialties, including the giant **Southern Crowned Pigeon**, the bizarre **Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise** and the gorgeous and rather small **King Bird-of-paradise**, complete with snail-shell-like tail streamers!

Our next stop is the little-visited Star Mountains, where we search for some hard-to-find and highly-sought species such as **Queen Carola's Parotia**, **Greater Melampitta**, and **Shovel-billed Kookaburra**.

We then fly back east to PNG's western highlands around Tari, the capital of the Tari-Pori district. More dazzling birds await us here, like the unique **Blue Bird-of-paradise**, **Lawes's Parotia**, **Princess Stephanie's Astrapia**, **Papuan Eagle** (sometimes referred to as Papuan Harpy Eagle!), and many, many more. The Tari region is also home to the legendary Huli Wigmen, and our tour includes the opportunity to experience this very unique cultural attraction, which is certain to be a non-avian tour highlight that will live in memory for a very long time.

Finally we return to Port Moresby and spend our last day birding the nearby Varirata National Park. Varirata is home to the beautiful **Raggiana Bird-of-paradise**, **Rufous-bellied Kookaburra**, **Hooded Pitohui**, an array of spectacular fruit doves, and much more.

You may also like to consider our **West Papua: Arfak and Waigeo Birding Expedition** (3 – 14 August 2020). This tour visits the northwestern side of the island of New Guinea, being a province of Indonesia, and looks for endemic **Wilson's Birds-of-paradise**, **Red Bird-of-Paradise**, **Arfak Astrapia**, **Black Sicklebill**, **Long-tailed Paradigalla**, and more!

This tour can be combined with our two preceding Indonesia tours: **Birding Tour Indonesia: Sulawesi and Halmahera July 2020** followed by our **Birding Tour West Papua: Arfak and Waigeo Birding Expedition August 2020**.

Itinerary (19 days/18 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Port Moresby, birding around Pacific Adventist University

After your morning arrival at Port Moresby's Jacksons International Airport we will transfer to the nearby Gateway Hotel. After check-in we proceed to an afternoon of birding at the grounds of Pacific Adventist University.

Overnight: Gateway Hotel, Port Moresby

Day 2. Varirata National Park

Today we will have a short drive to Varirata National Park, which provides splendid low- and mid-elevation birding. We will spend the day here and might be able to find, among many others, such exciting birds as **Barred Owlet-nightjar**, **Pheasant Coucal**, **Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo**, **Brown-headed Paradise Kingfisher**, **Rufous-bellied Kookaburra**, **Black Berrypecker**, or, if we are lucky, even our first bird-of-paradise and Papua New Guinea's national bird, the magnificent **Raggiana Bird-of-paradise**.

Overnight: Gateway Hotel, Port Moresby

Day 3. Flight to Mount Hagen and birding around Kumul Lodge

We transfer to the airport for a flight to Mount Hagen. On arrival we will be met and transferred to Kumul Lodge. In the afternoon we will be birding around the lodge, targeting some of the birds listed below.

Overnight: Kumul Lodge, Mount Hagen

Days 4 – 5. Birding Mount Hagen

We will have two full days birding this avian wonderland, including looking for **Blue Bird-of-paradise**. Some other birds that we hope to see on Mount Hagen include **Papuan Harrier**, **Chestnut Forest Rail**, **Goldie's Lorikeet**, **Papuan Lorikeet**, **Yellow-billed Lorikeet**, **Orange-billed Lorikeet**, **Mountain Owlet-nightjar**, **Black-breasted Boatbill**, **White-winged Robin**, **Regent Whistler**, **Rufous-naped Whistler**, **Black Sittella**, **Common Smoky Honeyeater**, **Grey-streaked Honeyeater**, **Fan-tailed Berrypecker**, **Crested Berrypecker**, **Mountain Firetail**, **Yellow-breasted Bowerbird**, **Crested Satinbird**, **Ribbon-tailed Astrapia**, **King of Saxony Bird-of-paradise**, **Brown Sicklebill**, and **Lesser Bird-of-paradise**.

Overnight: Kumul Lodge, Mount Hagen

Day 6. Flight to Kiunga

We transfer back to the airport for a flight from Mount Hagen to Kiunga. We will be met and transferred to Kiunga Guesthouse. In the afternoon we'll enjoy some birding, if time permits.

Overnight: Kiunga Guesthouse, Kiunga

Days 7 – 8. Birding the Kiunga area

We will again have two full days to bird another famous PNG birding area, during which we might encounter more extraordinary species like **Long-tailed Honey Buzzard, Southern Crowned Pigeon, Collared Imperial Pigeon, Pesquet's (New Guinea Vulturine) Parrot, Blue Jewel-babbler, Emperor Fairywren, White-bellied Pitohui, Yellow-eyed Starling, Flame Bowerbird, Large Fig Parrot, Yellow-capped Pygmy Parrot, Common Paradise Kingfisher, Hook-billed Kingfisher, Glossy-mantled Manucode, Trumpet Manucode, Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise, and Greater Bird-of-paradise.**

Overnight: Kiunga Guesthouse, Kiunga

Day 9. Transfer by boat to Kwatu Lodge, birding en route and at Kwatu Lodge

In the early morning we will travel by boat up the Elavala River and its tributary, the Ketu River, until we arrive at the locally-owned Kwatu Lodge. We will be birding en route. In the afternoon we will be birding around the lodge. On this enchanting river tour and later around the lodge we might encounter the following: **New Guinea Flightless Rail, Orange-bellied Fruit Dove, Pink-spotted Fruit Dove, Palm Cockatoo, Red-cheeked Parrot, Eclectus Parrot, Ivory-billed Coucal, Blyth's Hornbill, Wallace's Owlet-nightjar, Starry Owlet-nightjar, Hooded Pitta, Moustached Treeswift, Shining Flycatcher, Black-sided Robin, Frilled Monarch, Hooded Butcherbird, Lowland Peltops, Black Sunbird, and King Bird-of-paradise.**

Overnight: Kwatu Lodge, Ketu River

Day 10. Birding around Kwatu Lodge, transfer by boat back to Kiunga

In the morning we will be birding the area around the Ekame and Kwatu lodges. In the afternoon we will travel downriver by boat back to Kiunga. We arrive in Kiunga and transfer straight to the Kiunga Guesthouse.

Overnight Kiunga Guesthouse, Kiunga

Day 11. Transfer to the Star Mountains

Today we will have a full-day road tour from Kiunga to Tabubil in the Star Mountains, birding en route.

Overnight: Hotel Cloudlands, Tabubil

Day 12. Birding the Star Mountains

For a full day we will explore this wonderful birding area, the Star Mountains. During this time we might encounter **Salvadori's Teal, Queen Carola's Parotia, Beautiful Fruit Dove, Dusky Lory, Striated Lorikeet, Red-breasted Pygmy Parrot, Orange-breasted Fig Parrot, Blue-collared Parrot, Shovel-billed Kookaburra, Golden Cuckooshrike, Chestnut-backed Jewel-babbler, Wallace's Fairywren, White-rumped Robin, Obscure Berrypecker, Capped White-eye, Mountain Peltops, Greater Melampitta, Magnificent Riflebird, and Magnificent Bird-of-paradise.**

Overnight: Hotel Cloudlands, Tabubil

Day 13. Flight to Port Moresby

We will transfer to a flight from Tabubil to Port Moresby. On arrival we will be met and transferred to our hotel.

Overnight: Gateway Hotel, Port Moresby

Day 14. Flight to Tari, birding the Ambua Gap

This morning after breakfast we will be met and transferred to the airport for a flight from Port Moresby to Tari in the Hela Province. On arrival we will be transferred to Makara Bird View Lodge. After check-in we proceed to afternoon birding around the bird-rich Ambua Gap.

Overnight: Makara Bird View Lodge, Tari

Day 15 – 16. Birding the Ambua Gap and the forests and farmland around Ambua

We will have two full days birding in the Ambua area. Maybe we will find **Forbes's Forest Rail, Papuan Lorikeet, Yellow-billed Lorikeet, Orange-billed Lorikeet, Red-breasted Pygmy Parrot, Brehm's Tiger Parrot, Painted Tiger Parrot, Papuan King Parrot, Sooty Owl, Papuan Boobook, Mountain Kingfisher, Spotted Jewel-babbler, Blue-capped Ifrit, Garnet Robin, Lesser Ground Robin, Wattled Ploughbill, Yellow-browed Melidectes, Tit Berrypecker, Great Woodswallow, Archbold's Bowerbird, Lesser Melampitta, Loria's Satinbird, Short-tailed Paradigalla, Princess Stephanie's Astrapia, Lawes's Parotia, King of Saxony Bird-of-paradise, Superb Bird-of-paradise, Black Sicklebill, Brown Sicklebill, and Blue Bird-of-paradise.** During these two days we will also visit the delightfully “birdy” farmlands of Wata and Tibiki.

Overnight: Makara Bird View Lodge, Tari

Day 17. Flight to Port Moresby

Today we will be birding in the area after breakfast, hopefully finding whatever we might have missed during the last two days. We will later transfer to the Tari airport for our flight to Port Moresby. On arrival we will be met for transfer to the Gateway Hotel.

Overnight: Gateway Hotel, Port Moresby

Day 18. Birding Varirata National Park

Today we will return to Varirata National Park for another full day of birding. Port Moresby and Varirata National Park boast more enticing species to wrap up our trip (if we haven't found them on day 2), like **Spotted Whistling Duck, Black Berrypecker, Grey-headed Mannikin, Papuan Frogmouth, Barred Owlet-nightjar, Brown-headed Paradise Kingfisher, Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Yellow-breasted Boatbill, White-bellied Whistler, Hooded Pitohui, Orange-fronted Fruit Dove, Graceful Honeyeater, Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, Crinkle-collared Manucode, and Raggiana Bird-of-paradise.** If time permits, we may also return briefly to the exciting grounds of Pacific Adventist University.

Overnight: Gateway Hotel, Port Moresby

Day 19. Varirata National Park, departure

After an early departure at 5:00 a.m. we will have one last morning's birding at Varirata National Park. After lunch you will be transferred to Port Moresby's Jacksons International Airport for your international departure flight.

Duration: 19 days

Group Size: 6 – 10

Date: 17 August – 3 September 2020

Start: Port Moresby

End: Port Moresby

Tour Price: US\$11,665 per person sharing, assuming 6 – 10 participants

Single Supplement: US\$1,155

Price Includes:

Twin share accommodation (as described above)
All meals (from evening dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 19)
Guides, including international tour leader
Airport transfers
Site entry fees
Government taxes

Price Excludes:

International flights
Domestic flights (estimated at around \$1,700)
International departure tax
VISA fees
Any meals other than those specified above
Alcoholic and soft drinks
Other services of a personal nature (e.g. laundry, fax, phone, internet etc.)
Travel insurance (ensure it specifies coverage for Papua New Guinea)

Please note that the itinerary above cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors.

Safety and Security

Papua New Guinea is a mind-boggling destination for birds, wildlife, and culture, because it is one of the world's last great, unexplored frontiers. However, frontiers can be risky places. The Australian government's travel advice provides a good outline of the types of risks in PNG ([http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/Papua New Guinea](http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/Papua%20New%20Guinea)), but please check the advice of your own government.

Birding Ecotours exercises extreme care in planning and coordinating its tours, and we stay alert to and avoid areas of trouble. Birding Ecotours does require, however, that all birders on our PNG tours have a comprehensive travel insurance policy that covers PNG. We consider it a less safe destination than most, and we need potential participants on our tours to this country to be aware of this and provide us with evidence of suitable insurance cover.