

PAPUA NEW GUINEA BIRD TOUR: BIRDING ATTENBOROUGH'S PARADISE

12 – 27 AUGUST 2026 30 AUGUST – 14 SEPTEMBER 2028



Raggiana Bird-of-paradise is the national bird of Papua New Guinea (PNG) and we will look for displaying birds in Varirata National Park during our PNG birding tour.



Papua New Guinea (PNG) is undoubtedly a birder's paradise. Thirty-four birds-of-paradise (BoPs) live on the island of New Guinea, of which 31 can be found in PNG, and a large number of these are possible on this tour – get ready for sensory overload! The island is home to approximately 400 endemic bird species. Together with awe-inspiring scenery, endless rainforests, and fascinating highland societies that only made contact with the outside world in the 1930s, this makes PNG a definite must-see destination for any avid birder and nature enthusiast.

Our first birding of the tour will be at Varirata National Park and the Pacific Adventist University. Varirata is home to the beautiful Raggiana Bird-of-paradise, Growling Riflebird, Crinkle-collared Manucode, Forest Bittern, Hooded Pitohui, Brown-headed Paradise **Kingfisher**, an array of spectacular fruit doves, and much more. While at the university campus we could find the remarkable and huge Papuan Frogmouth, the localized Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, day roosting Barking Owls, and giant Blue-winged Kookaburra.

We will fly to the world famous city of Mount Hagen in the western highlands, where we base ourselves at nearby Kumul Lodge and Komange Eco Lodge, the holy grails of PNG highland birding sites. We will have our first look for stunning (but often shy) Blue Bird-of-paradise and, at Kumul's legendary feeding table, some of PNG's most spectacular birds await us in the form of Ribbon-tailed Astrapia (the adult males are surely one of the best-looking of the island's birds-of-paradise?), Brehm's Tiger Parrot, Stella's Lorikeet, Crested Satinbird, and more. The Kumul Lodge and Komange Eco Lodge areas also hold a host of other birds-of-paradise, such as Brown Sicklebill, Greater Lophorina (formerly part of the Superb Bird-of-paradise complex), King of Saxony Bird-of-paradise, and Lesser Bird-of-paradise. We will also look here for Wattled Ploughbill, Mottled Berryhunter, Blue-crowned Ifrit, Crested Satinbird, Loria's Satinbird, Lesser Melampitta, and many other incredible and highly sought-after birds.



The birds-of-paradise are all special, however **Blue Bird-of-paradise** takes it up a notch or two!



After our highland birding, we will fly west to Kiunga. Kiunga is a port town on the Fly River in the Western Province of PNG. In this remote part of the country (including the basic Kwatu Camp) we will search for a host of breathtaking special birds, including the giant Sclater's (formerly Southern) Crowned Pigeon, the bizarre Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise, the gorgeous King Bird-of-paradise, Trumpet Manucode, Little Paradise Kingfisher, a range of parrots and fruit doves, and positively glowing Flame Bowerbird!



King of Saxony Bird-of-paradise is a remarkable bird and we will focus on having good views.

From Kiunga we will head north to Tabubil, and the little-visited Star Mountains, where we will undertake our birding in the mid- and high-elevation zones. We will search for some hard-to-find and highly sought species, such as Splendid Astrapia, King of Saxony Bird-of-paradise, Greater Bird-of-paradise, Queen Carola's Parotia, Short-tailed Paradigalla, Black Sicklebill, Brown Sicklebill, and Greater Lophorina. Lots of other exciting species await us in the mountains. After this final birding we will end the tour back in Port Moresby.

This tour will give you an unforgettable experience of birding in PNG, one of the most amazing destinations in the world, providing you with a lifetime of memories of the simply gorgeous birds-of-paradise, as well as a long list of other impressive, unique, and endemic birds.

You may also like to consider our Papua New Guinea: New Britain Premium Extension -Bismarck Archipelago Birding tour. This short tour focuses on New Britain, Bismarck Archipelago, and Solomon Islands endemics, with highlights including Melanesian Megapode, Blue-eyed Cockatoo, Black-capped Paradise Kingfisher, New Britain Dwarf Kingfisher, Bismarck (New Britain) Pitta, and Golden Masked Owl.



Detailed Itinerary (16 days/15 nights)

Day 1. Arrival day in Port Moresby

Arrival in Papua New Guinea. You will be met at <u>Jackson's International Airport</u> in Port Moresby by our representative and transferred to our hotel, approximately 10.5 miles (17 kilometers) outside the city. After your arrival at the accommodation, your time is at your leisure, you may be able to get your Papua New Guinea bird list underway in the hotel grounds. We will meet for our group "welcome dinner" in the evening and discuss the plans for the exciting birding to come over the next couple of weeks.

Overnight: Bluff Inn, Port Moresby (or similar)

Day 2. Birding Varirata National Park and Pacific Adventist University

Today we will have a short drive to <u>Varirata National Park</u>, which provides splendid low- and mid-elevation birding. We will spend the majority of the day here and might be able to find, among many others, such exciting birds as **Forest Bittern**, **Barred Owlet-nightjar**, **Barking Owl**, **Brown-headed Paradise Kingfisher**, **Rufous-bellied Kookaburra**, **Blue-winged Kookaburra**, **Black Berrypecker**, and hopefully PNG's national bird, **Raggiana Bird-ofparadise**, along with two other birds-of-paradise, **Growling Riflebird** and **Crinkle-collared Manucode**.



We hope to find the rare and secretive **Forest Bittern** during our day of birding at Varirata National Park.



There are so many great birds in Varirata National Park, and some further highlights here could include Blyth's Hornbill, Beautiful Fruit Dove, Pink-spotted Fruit Dove, Orange-bellied Fruit Dove, Papuan King Parrot, Yellowish-streaked Lory, Eastern Hooded Pitta, Painted Ouail-thrush, Chestnut-backed Jewel-babbler, Goldenface, Hooded Pitohui, Rusty Pitohui, Yellow-breasted Boatbill, Frilled Monarch, Pygmy Longbill, and Papuan Scrub Robin.

In the late afternoon we will likely fit in a visit to the Pacific Adventist University campus, as it is located near our accommodation and offers a range of different birds. Here we might find species such as Radjah Shelduck, Pied Heron, Comb-crested Jacana, Papuan Frogmouth, Orange-fronted Fruit Dove, Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, Rufous-banded Honeveater, White-bellied Cuckooshrike, Black-backed Butcherbird, Singing Starling, and Grey-headed Mannikin.

Overnight: Bluff Inn, Port Moresby (or similar)



The gorgeous **Brown-headed Paradise Kingfisher** can be found hiding in the deep and dark vegetation in Varirata National Park and is one of several stunning paradise kingfishers possible on this Papua New Guinea birdwatching tour (and our New Britain extension).

Day 3. Port Moresby to Mount Hagen and Kumul Lodge birding

We transfer to the airport in Port Moresby for an early morning flight to Mount Hagen and then travel onwards to Kumul Lodge. Situated at 8,585 feet (2,861 meters), Kumul Lodge is one of the best-known landowner eco-tourism lodges in all of PNG and provides important income for many local people. The lodge also strives to protect the surrounding forested areas and our time here is sure to be a highlight of the whole tour.



At the lodge bird feeding table we can hope for some spectacular birds, such as Ribbon-tailed Astrapia (we will hope for a breeding plumage adult male), Brown Sicklebill, Brehm's Tiger Parrot, Stella's Lorikeet, Archbold's Bowerbird, Crested Satinbird, Papuan Island Thrush, Common Smoky Honeyeater, Belford's Melidectes, White-winged Robin, Chestnut Forest Rail, and more. It will be hard to pull ourselves away from the feeders, but there are so many high quality and localized species to look for in the wider area so, reluctantly, after spending time at the feeders we'll bird the nearby forest, making a start on the birds listed for Days 4-5, below.

Overnight: Kumul Lodge, Mount Hagen



The rather colorful **Stella's Lorikeet** occasionally visits the Kumul Lodge bird feeders.

Days 4 – 5. Two days of birding the Kumul Lodge area

We will have two full days (as well as time yesterday, after our arrival, and the following day ahead of our departure) birding this avian wonderland, including looking for the rare and rangerestricted Blue Bird-of-paradise and many other breathtakingly beautiful members of the birdof-paradise family, such as Ribbon-tailed Astrapia, Princess Stephanie's Astrapia, King of Saxony Bird-of-paradise, Lesser Bird-of-paradise, Magnificent Bird-of-paradise, Brown Sicklebill, Greater Lophorina, Crinkle-collared Manucode, and Magnificent Riflebird.

There are so many other amazing birds around the Kumul Lodge environs and some of the other birds that we hope to see here over the course of our visit include Papuan Harrier, New Guinea Woodcock, Chestnut Forest Rail, Goldie's Lorikeet, Yellow-billed Lorikeet, Orange-billed Lorikeet, Mountain Owlet-nightjar, Lesser Melampitta, Loria's Satinbird, Crested Satinbird, Orange-crowned Fairywren, Black-breasted Boatbill, White-winged Robin, Garnet Robin, Black-headed Whistler, Regent Whistler, Rufous-naped Bellbird, Black



Sittella, Ornate Melidectes, Grey-streaked Honeyeater, Fan-tailed Berrypecker, Eastern Crested Berrypecker, Tit Berrypecker, Mountain Firetail, Yellow-breasted Bowerbird, Torrent Flyrobin, and Torrent-lark.



Ribbon-tailed Astrapia looking straight at you is an impressive sight!



Lesser Bird-of-paradise can be found at some of the highland locations we visit on the tour.



To complement the above incredible birds, there are three additional species in the area that are monotypic families, and thus of interest to any family listers, these are therefore big targets for us while birding here and our next location. These three species are Mottled Berryhunter, Bluecapped Ifrit, and Wattled Ploughbill, we could see all three here.

If you need a rest from the mountain birding at any time, grabbing a tea or coffee (or beer!) and sitting and watching the bird feeders is never a bad choice!

Overnight (two nights): Kumul Lodge, Mount Hagen



Close views of Brown Sicklebill can be enjoyed at the bird feeders at Kumul Lodge.

Day 6. Kumul Lodge to Komange Eco Tourism Lodge

After a final morning birding in the Kumul Lodge area, looking for the birds mentioned for Days 4 - 5, above, we will venture further northwest to the Komange Eco Tourism Lodge area, our base for two nights. This is another remote landowner-owned ecolodge and, although fairly basic, will put us in a good position for some great birds and birding. In the afternoon we will make a start on the birds listed for Day 7, below.

Overnight: Komange Eco Lodge, Sirunki

Day 7. Full day birding near Komange Eco Lodge

We will spend the day birding the Mt. Komonge Ridge and the area around the Komange Eco Tourism Lodge, where our main targets will include Wattled Ploughbill, Blue-capped Ifrit, and Mottled Berryhunter, along with Lesser Melampitta and both Loria's and Crested Satinbirds (the latter three species previously and until relatively recently all considered to



belong to the birds-of-paradise family). All of these birds will likely be key targets for any family listers as all are endemic to New Guinea island (some are also found on our Indonesia, West Papua tour). If you're not a family lister you'll likely enjoy them too, as they are all unique, attractive, and very interesting birds.

Of course, we will also be looking out for more views or improved views of birds-of-paradise, including King of Saxony Bird-of-paradise, Magnificent Bird-of-paradise, Princess Stephanie's Astrapia, Ribbon-tailed Astrapia, Brown Sicklebill, Lawes's Parotia, and **Greater Lophorina.**



A gorgeous male **Princess Stephanie's Astrapia** is another huge and spectacular bird-ofparadise.

In addition to the great birds mentioned above, we will also try and find a wide range of other top birds of PNG. Some of the possibilities include Papuan Eagle, Pygmy Eagle, Gurney's Eagle, Papuan King Parrot, Goldie's Lorikeet, Stella's Lorikeet, Yellow-billed Lorikeet, Modest Tiger Parrot, Mountain Kingfisher, Belford's Melidectes, Mountain Peltops, Tit Berrypecker, Rufous-naped Bellbird, Sclater's Whistler, Regent Whistler, Brown-backed Whistler, MacGregor's Bowerbird, Torrent-lark, Canary Flyrobin, Garnet Robin, Blackthroated Robin, Papuan Treecreeper, Black Sittella, Papuan Sittella, Mountain Firetail, and Papuan Parrotfinch.

Overnight: Komange Eco Lodge, Sirunki



Day 8. Birding near Komange Eco Lodge, travel back to Kumul Lodge

After a final morning of birding around the Komange Eco Lodge area, we will transfer back to Kumul Lodge for our final night in this part of the highlands. We will likely remain flexible in our plans for today, depending on how things have gone over preceding days. If we get back to Kumul Lodge early there will again be plenty of great birds waiting for us there.

Overnight: Kumul Lodge, Mount Hagen



There is a sort of familiarity for birders from the Northern Hemisphere when seeing **Tit Berrypecker**, this attractive bird is not uncommon.

Day 9. Depart Kumul Lodge for Mount Hagen to fly to Kiunga then travel to Tabubil

Essentially a travel day as we make our way from Kumul Lodge back down to Mount Hagen. Once in the city we will take our flight west to Kiunga. From Kiunga we will drive north to Tabubil in the Star Mountains. Depending on flight schedules (and if they run to the schedule), we might have some opportunities for some roadside birding stops along the journey between Kiunga and Tabubil, and we will keep our eyes peeled from the vehicle for anything interesting.

Overnight: Hotel Cloudlands, Tabubil

Days 10 – 11. Two days birding the Star Mountains and the Tabubil area

We will have two full days to explore the wonderful Star Mountains and Tabubil area. During this time, we might encounter several birds-of-paradise such as Splendid Astrapia, Queen Carola's Parotia, the giant Black Sicklebill, and the unusual Short-tailed Paradigalla, along with chances for Greater Lophorina, Magnificent Riflebird, Glossy-mantled Manucode,



King of Saxony Bird-of-paradise, Greater Bird-of-paradise, and Magnificent Bird-of-paradise. We will endeavor to find as many of these amazing birds as possible.



At over 3.6 feet (1.1 meter) in length the **Black Sicklebill** is one huge bird-of-paradise!



Red-collared Myzomela is one of many attractive and common honeyeaters possible on our PNG birding tour.



There are lots of other targets for us while birding in the Star Mountains and Tabubil area, with some of the more interesting birds we will look for including Salvadori's Teal, New Guinea Bronzewing, Pesquet's (New Guinea Vulturine) Parrot, Dusky Lory, Striated Lorikeet, Fairy Lorikeet, Red-breasted Pygmy Parrot, Blue-collared Parrot, Shovel-billed Kookaburra, Hook-billed Kingfisher, Mountain Kingfisher, Papuan Boobook, Golden Cuckooshrike, Grey-headed Cuckooshrike, Chestnut-backed Jewel-babbler, Wallace's Fairywren, White-shouldered Fairywren, Emperor Fairywren, White-rumped Robin, Obscure Berrypecker, Piping Bellbird, Hooded Pitohui, Torrent-lark, Torrent Flyrobin, Capped White-eye, Mountain Peltops, Great Woodswallow, Mountain Honeyeater, Ornate Melidectes, Yellow-browed Melidectes, Mountain Myzomela, Red-collared Myzomela, and Loria's Satinbird.

Overnight (two nights): Hotel Cloudlands, Tabubil

Day 12. Tabubil to Kiunga

We will have a final morning birding around Tabubil in the Star Mountains, before driving south back to Kiunga. We might get started on some of the birding sites around Kiunga, time permitting (targeting some of the birds listed for Days 13 and 15, below).

Overnight: Kiunga Guesthouse, Kiunga



We can find both Little Paradise Kingfisher and Common Paradise Kingfisher (photographed here) while birding near Kwatu Camp.



Day 13. Birding Kiunga, then travel to remote and basic Kwatu Camp (by boat)

We will likely have a pre-breakfast birding trip near Kiunga town (this will largely be decided by our flight times on Day 15). During any pre-breakfast birding, we will target the species mentioned for Day 15.

After breakfast we will travel by boat up the Elavala River and its tributary, the Ketu River, until we arrive at the locally owned Kwatu Camp (this will take a few hours in the small boat). We will be birding along the way, and we might find species such as Black-billed Brushturkey, Great-billed Heron, Great Cuckoo-Dove, Sclater's Crowned Pigeon, Collared Imperial Pigeon, Pinon's Imperial Pigeon, Pink-spotted Fruit Dove, Beautiful Fruit Dove, Papuan Spine-tailed Swift, Blyth's Hornbill, Azure Kingfisher, Papuan Dwarf Kingfisher, Common Paradise Kingfisher, Palm Cockatoo, Golden Monarch, Golden Myna, Glossy-mantled Manucode, Trumpet Manucode, and Grey Crow along the way. We will also keep our eyes peeled for any raptors that may be perched up or flying around, such as White-bellied Sea Eagle.



We will seek out the ginormous **Sclater's Crowned Pigeons** while birding in the lowlands, they often roost near the basic Kwatu Camp.

In the afternoon, and the following morning, we will be birding around the camp and the wider area, where we might encounter some really exciting species such as Dwarf Cassowary, New Guinea Flightless Rail, Pygmy Eagle, Wallace's Owlet-nightjar, Starry Owlet-nightjar, Marbled Frogmouth, Papuan Hawk-Owl, Common Paradise Kingfisher, Little Paradise Kingfisher, Hook-billed Kingfisher, Blue Jewel-babbler, Painted Quail-thrush, Papuan Babbler, Glossy-mantled Manucode, Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise, and King Bird-of-paradise.





The remarkable sight of a displaying **Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise** from near Kwatu Camp.

There are plenty of other great birds here too, and we will be keeping our eyes peeled for the likes of Doria's Goshawk, Grev-headed Goshawk, Variable Goshawk, Orange-bellied Fruit Dove, Pink-spotted Fruit Dove, Palm Cockatoo, Red-cheeked Parrot, Papuan Eclectus, Dusky-cheeked Fig Parrot, Ivory-billed Coucal, Blyth's Hornbill, Eastern Hooded Pitta, Moustached Treeswift, Southern Variable Pitohui, Emperor Fairywren, Shining Flycatcher, Black-sided Robin, Frilled Monarch, Hooded Butcherbird, Cuckooshrike, Golden Cuckooshrike, White-bellied Thicket Fantail, Lowland Peltops, and Black Sunbird.

Our birding while around Kwatu Camp will be largely boat-based, though there will be areas where we can get out of the boats and walk into the forests, some of this on trails, some of it more bushwhacking. Please refer to the tour-specific information for important details about our time in this remote area.

Overnight: Kwatu Camp, Ketu River

Day 14. Kwatu Camp area birding and boat trip back to Kiunga

In the morning we will be birding the area around the Kwatu Camp, again looking for some of the birds mentioned above for Day 13.

In the afternoon we will travel downriver by boat from Kwatu Camp back to Kiunga. On arrival back in Kiunga, we will transfer the short distance back to the Kiunga Guesthouse for our final night in the area.

Overnight: Kiunga Guesthouse, Kiunga



Day 15. Birding Kiunga area and flight to Port Moresby

We will likely have time this morning before our flight back to Port Moresby for some early morning birding near Kiunga. Here, we will look for Trumpet Manucode, Glossy-mantled Manucode, Greater Bird-of-paradise, King Bird-of-paradise, and Magnificent Riflebird, along with numerous pigeons and parrots, such as Wompoo Fruit Dove, Pink-spotted Fruit Dove, Superb Fruit Dove, Beautiful Fruit Dove, Orange-bellied Fruit Dove, Dwarf Fruit Dove, Palm Cockatoo, Yellow-capped Pygmy Parrot, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Papuan Eclectus, Red-cheeked Parrot, Red-flanked Lorikeet, Black-capped Lory, Dusky-cheeked Fig Parrot, and Double-eyed Fig Parrot. Several honeyeaters can also be seen, including Meyer's Friarbird, and a wide range of other species, including multiple cuckooshrikes, Yellow-billed Kingfisher, cuckoos including Ivory-billed Coucal, Dwarf Koel, and Sahul Brush Cuckoo, and other top species, including Emperor Fairywren, Golden Monarch, Papuan Babbler, Papuan Spine-tailed Swift, Lowland Peltops, and possibly one of the flashiest birds of them all – Flame Bowerbird!

If our flight between Kiunga and Port Moresby is early in the day with no time for birding, we will make sure we fit our birding in around Kiunga on Day 13, prior to taking our boat trip to Kwatu Camp.



King Bird-of-paradise is a tiny and often hyperactive bird-of-paradise, it is also, like most of them, quite nice to look at!

We will fly from Kiunga back to Port Moresby, where we will be transferred back to our hotel for the final night of the tour.

Overnight: Bluff Inn, Port Moresby (or similar)



Golden Monarch is an attractive species and we will hope to get good views.

Day 16. Departure from Port Moresby as tour concludes

A non-birding day. You can leave at any time during the day (breakfast is the last meal provided and checkout time is 11:00hrs.). If you are continuing on our New Britain endemic birding tour, we will start that the following day.

Overnight: Not included

Please note that the itinerary cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed 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. Unreliable domestic flights may mean we need to alter the itinerary. In addition, we sometimes have to use a different international guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling or other factors.

Duration: 16 days **Group Size:** 4-8

Dates: 12 – 27 August 2026

30 August – 14 September 2028

Start: Jacksons International Airport, Port Moresby
End: Jacksons International Airport, Port Moresby

Tour Price: US\$10,440 per person sharing – based on 4 – 8 participants (2026)



US\$12,862 per person sharing – based on 4 – 8 participants (2028)

Domestic Flights: US\$1,000 per person (estimated 2026 costs)

Single Supplements: US\$990 (2026)

US\$1,221 (2028)

Price includes:

All accommodation (as described)

Meals (from dinner on Day 1 until breakfast on Day 16)

Drinking water – please bring a refillable water bottle

Expert tour leader

Local bird and wildlife guide/trackers fees

Birdwatching site entrance fees

All ground transport and tolls/taxes while on tour, including airport pick-up and drop-off

Price excludes:

Flights to/from Jacksons International Airport, Port Moresby

Domestic flights (see important note on domestic flights, below)

Visa fees (see important note on visas, below)

Departure tax

Items of a personal nature, e.g. gifts, laundry, internet access, phone calls, etc.

Any pre- or post-tour accommodation, meals, or birding/sightseeing/monument excursions

Soft/alcoholic drinks

Camera (still/video) permits if required

Personal travel insurance (ensure it specifies coverage for Papua New Guinea)

Gratuities (please see our tipping guidelines blog)

Domestic flights note:

Please note that the tour price does not include domestic flights in PNG, these are estimated to be in the region of around US\$1,000 per person (for the 2026 tour). We will book these tickets for everyone to ensure we are all on the same flights. The costs for these tickets will be added to your tour balance payment.

Please read the <u>general and tour-specific information</u> for important details on baggage allowances for this tour. You can leave excess baggage in our hotel in Port Moresby or with our local team on the ground. Similarly, when we go to the remote Kwatu Lodge for one night we can usually leave most of our luggage behind at our accommodation in Kiunga.

It is worth noting that PNG is plagued by domestic flight delays and cancellations for a variety of reasons. It goes without saying that any such issues are out of our control, but please rest assured we will do our best to try and salvage any such situation as best we can, working closely with our local team but it may mean minor or major itinerary changes.



Safety and security note:

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 (see here), but please check the advice of your own government too.

Birding Ecotours exercises extreme care in planning and coordinating its tours, and we stay alert to and avoid areas of trouble, with frequent liaison with our team on the ground. Birding Ecotours does require, however, that all birders on our PNG tours have a comprehensive travel and medical insurance policy that specifically 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. We will provide each tour participant with detailed tour information packages prior to departure, in terms of general information for Papua New Guinea and information specific to this tour. It is essential you read through these documents ahead of the tour.

Visa note:

Most people visiting PNG will require a visa, we will provide you with the documents you will need from us, and our local team ahead of you making your visa application, and we will give you up to date instructions to help in this process (see the general information documents for more details).



There are many honeyeaters possible on this PNG birding tour, some of the loudest and most boisterous are the melidectes, such as this **Yellow-browed Melidectes**.

