



**PAPUA NEW GUINEA:
BIRDING ATTENBOROUGH'S PARADISE
TOUR-SPECIFIC INFORMATION**



*The sublime **Ribbon-tailed Astrapia** is always a highlight (photo Matt Prophet).*

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT PAPUA NEW GUINEA CAN BE READ [HERE](#)**TOUR OUTLINE**

This amazing, once-in-a-lifetime birding tour focuses on the multitude of endemic birds that can be found in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and this includes numerous simply spectacular birds-of-paradise (BoPs) including **Blue Bird-of-paradise, King of Saxony Bird-of-paradise, Raggiana Bird-of-paradise, Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise, King Bird-of-paradise, Queen Carola's Parotia, Ribbon-tailed Astrapia, and Princess Stephanie's Astrapia**. Plenty of other highlights will also be found on what promises to be an amazing Papua New Guinea birding tour. This is just a tiny sample of what's on offer on this tour, please refer to the [detailed itinerary](#) for further details. This tour starts and ends in Port Moresby.

DAILY ACTIVITIES, PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS, AND TOUR PACE

This [Papua New Guinea: Birding Attenborough's Paradise tour](#) requires reasonable physical fitness and good agility to bird the relatively steep slopes found here. Papua New Guinea is one of the most remote and undeveloped countries in the world, so remember you are visiting a developing country and will be staying in remote "wilderness" areas, where there are no proper sanitation facilities. Expect many things to be very different from home.

We will shift our body clocks on this tour, rising very early but sleeping early too. Most birding occurs on narrow, sometimes swampy forest trails, and other times we will bird from wider roads and tracks that are often uneven and can be slippery. On the trails care must be taken as there are trip and slip hazards from damp roots, fallen trees, boulders, and uneven and rough surfaces. [Walking sticks or hiking poles are a great idea as they provide added stability to help with balance and are compulsory for anyone who is not steady at walking, and highly recommended for everyone, no matter of ability.](#)

Most trails are graded and rated easy to moderate in terms of physical activity with not too much up and down, but at some locations they do occur at elevation (e.g., over 7,000 feet / 2,130 meters). Some walks we make will be short, e.g. ¼ of a mile (0.4 kilometers) while sometimes it may be further, such as up to 2 miles (3.2 kilometers). Our local team are excellent at helping those less physically able at getting around the trails and in position to view the birds as required. Much of our birding is carried out from our accommodation bases, so these walks can be optional if you'd like to take a rest for some of them (and there are often great birds around our accommodation). We have more than one chance for most of the birds-of-paradise (and other excellent birds) during the tour, so sitting a session out does not mean you will necessarily miss something totally.

At some locations we may spend time within small bird blinds (which are often not particularly comfortable and may entail sitting on the ground or small stools) to get close to the various birds-of-paradise's lekking/display sites (and sometimes other items of interest such as bowerbird bowers). Any minor temporary discomfort will, however, likely be well worth it.

Note that in each year the specific locations of the birds-of-paradise lek sites may change due to numerous factors beyond our control. Sometimes birds can be found displaying next to nice easy access points with very limited and simple walking, but at other times they can be further away

and take much more effort to reach, sometimes involving a walk on difficult terrain for a longer period. We will try and provide as much information ahead of each hike for each specific bird-of-paradise lek site/birding adventure to help you know what to expect and make any decisions on whether you want to miss a particular hike. When possible, we will take the easiest option, but sometimes the easiest option can also result in a fair bit of effort to reach. Sometimes at some locations we may find birds-of-paradise and other key birds in our accommodation gardens!

The information within this document and the Papua New Guinea general information linked from the top of document will hopefully help in your preparation for this tour and please do contact us if you have any requests for specific or further information. The local people here are incredibly proud of their forests and their birds, and they love to share these with us. Tourism in Papua New Guinea provides valuable income for the villagers and protects the forests for the birds and future generations.

We recommend that if you decide to join this tour (no matter your fitness level) that you work on your physical fitness prior to it, hiking up and down hills/steps is a good way to prepare.

TRANSPORTATION

We use a wide range of transport on the tour, and this will likely include (when around Port Moresby) 24-seater coaster buses and 15-seater vans limited to nine seats. We might also make use of similar vehicles when in more remote locations and likely also 4x4 vehicles (such as Toyota Hilux or similar). We require that you are fit and flexible and can maneuver yourself into these high-clearance vehicles. We ask everyone to please be aware of the amount of extra equipment they bring into the seating area of the vehicles as there will not be much room in some vehicles. Most of the roads away from the towns are rough and windy (bring motion sickness tablets if you suffer from motion sickness) and at times this can be a little uncomfortable, however it is the only way to get to some of these remote birding places, so it's worth the effort when you see the amazing birds! Please remember our seat rotation policy as detailed in the PNG general information document.

We will also take several boat trips during the tour, such as when we are on the Elavala River and Ketu River when we make our way to and from Kwatu Lodge. Accessing the boats may require climbing up or down a ladder onto/off a pier or possibly a wet landing. This will be on an open/exposed boat and the journey will take somewhere in the region of 2.5 hours. We will also use boats from the lodge to get to some specific areas for birding. Protective gear to keep bags, optics, and cameras dry is essential in case it rains during these exposed journeys, similarly you'll want to have your rain jacket, poncho, umbrella etc. with you. Protective gear for the sun will also be necessary when we're on the boats (such as hat, sunglasses, sunblock etc.).

We will make multiple domestic flights during this tour (see the "Domestic Flights" section below) as this is the best and sometimes only way to get between the best Papua New Guinean birding sites.

DOMESTIC FLIGHTS

This tour requires multiple domestic flights. The costs for these flights are not included in the tour cost. Once we confirm the tour, we will purchase flight tickets for everyone in the group at

the same time to ensure we are all on the same flights and the cost will be added to your tour balance payment that is due no later than two months prior to departure. The costs for domestic flights in PNG are higher than flying domestically in many other countries, and so the costs for domestic flights for this tour are rather expensive.

We try and use scheduled flights when possible and the baggage allowance for these flights is 35 pounds (lbs) / 16 kilograms (kgs), with 15 lbs (7kgs) for hand luggage. Occasionally, however, we need to use chartered flights organized by our team on the ground who have their own light aircraft. For these flights there are tighter and stricter restrictions on the luggage allowance as the planes are smaller. The limits on these flights are 22 lbs (10 kgs) for hold luggage and 11 lbs (5kgs) for hand luggage. Please note that excess baggage can be stored by our local team in a secure place.

Weight limits must be strictly observed, particularly for our chartered flights, where soft-sided duffle bags are better. Further details are contained within the general information for PNG.

Any overweight baggage will likely incur costs on scheduled flights and will need to be paid in cash to the airline at the airport but may not even be able to be taken on the chartered flights, so sticking to the weight allowances is very important. The small regional airlines are strict and if you come with inappropriate or excess baggage when boarding these small aircraft, your bags will be off loaded and you will be required to re-pack, thus causing undue stress on yourself, the pilot, ground operational staff, and your fellow travelers. Our ground team can store excess luggage in a secure location for times we are away from Port Moresby, and this is the recommended approach.

Note we will let you know ahead of the tour if we will be taking any chartered flights. We aim not to use chartered flights unless there are no alternatives, as they are extremely costly, more restrictive with baggage allowances, and more susceptible to weather-induced delays.

Please note the itinerary for this tour may change as a result of airline schedule changes that are beyond our control. This might result in us having to run the tour in a different order, or miss out some locations altogether.

LUGGAGE

Please pack as lightly as possible for this tour (noting the expected weight allowance of the domestic flights detailed above). A medium, soft-sided, and robust duffle bag is likely to work best for packing in the tour vehicles and on the planes we will use. We recommend a daypack is used to keep items that you wish to use daily when in the vehicle or when birding in the field. Our ground team can store excess luggage in a secure location for times we are away from Port Moresby.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Your safety and your security are our paramount concern on this Papua New Guinea birding tour, and all of our worldwide bird tours. That is why we have provided detailed information within this tour-specific information and the Papua New Guinea general information linked at the top of this document. It is essential you have read these documents (and the equally important documents linked from that document) ahead of the tour to be fully up to date on the

latest safety and security situation in Papua New Guinea. We consider PNG to be a less safe destination than most others we visit on our tours.

ACCOMMODATION

In Port Moresby we stay at the Airways Hotel (Bacchus Wing), just a five-minute drive from the international airport. The Airways Hotel offers world-class accommodation in one of the Pacific's most striking settings. The hotel offers a range of sophisticated and elegant rooms to ensure a luxurious stay, as well as a range of experiences to help you relax and wind down after your international flight and between the birding sessions in more remote areas with much more basic facilities. The hotel has a swimming pool, spa facilities and restaurants/bars.

Kiunga Guesthouse is a basic motel-like hotel in the mining and port town of Kiunga at around 213 feet (65 meters) in elevation. The bedroom and shared bathrooms are basic but functional. Here, it is hot, wet, and very humid.

Kwatu Lodge is an extremely basic wooden shack camp in the middle of the very hot and humid (wet) forest and far away from any form of civilization, with extremely basic facilities and basic tinned food. We will spend just one night here where we are submerged deep in the Papua New Guinean rainforest, an excellent base for looking for rarely seen birds. There is no electricity here, so there is no power or charging facilities. There is some solar power for basic lighting and candles are also provided. Single beds, along with bedding and a towel are provided, these have mosquito nets. Toilets are bush (pit) toilets, and washing is done in a nearby creek, or with a cold bucket shower (there are no bathrooms here and there is no hot water) – this is a real wilderness experience, for one night, but worth it for the birds on offer. There is no phone signal in this area.

Hotel Cloudlands, is about the only accommodation in Tabuli town and sits at an elevation of 1,640 feet (500 meters). It is comfortable but basic with air-conditioning and a restaurant. This is the best option for exploring the Star Mountains. This area can be very wet with rain for 9-12 months of the year.

Rondon Ridge Lodge is situated at 7,100 feet (2,165 meters) in elevation. The lodge offers a magnificent view of the Wahgi Valley and surrounding mountains, as well as overlooking beautiful gardens (often with great birds visiting). The lodge has a dining room, bar, and lounge. The lodge has over 20 rooms with modern bathrooms and warm beds (great for the chilly nights found at this elevation). Electricity is supplied by the lodge's own hydropower system which offers 24-hour electricity. The lodge offers a very limited money-changing service and the rates are not as good as those in the banks.

Kumul Lodge is one of the best-known landowner eco-tourism lodges in Papua New Guinea. It is located at 8,585 feet (2,861 meters), about an hour from Mt Hagen. The lodge offers clean but basic accommodation with private showers and toilets. Kumul Lodge has a short network of nature trails and has a wonderful birding veranda where you may even see some birds-of-paradise.

Ambua Lodge is an inspired mixture of local architecture, spectacular views, and modest luxury. The lodge consists of 30 units with private bathrooms, a large main building containing a lounge, bar, and dining room, set against pristine mountain rainforest in a spectacular mountain setting. The lodge also has two blocks of modern hotel rooms. Power is generated by the lodge's own hydroelectric power plant. The lodge is cut out along a steep ridge at 7,000 feet (2,100 meters),

so steps are involved to get between the bedrooms and dining room. Electric blankets and doonas/continental quilts are provided. Floors are tiled and may feel cold (indoor footwear useful here).

ELECTRICITY

Not all places we will visit will be connected to mains electricity supply, please see details in the “Accommodation” section above for some specifics. Note specifically there is no power at Kwatu Lodge, where we will stay for one night, so make sure you have prepared in advance for the stay there (e.g., torches, spare batteries for cameras, powerbank to charge phones etc.).

COMMUNICATIONS

In order to access PNG mobile coverage, mobile phones need to be unblocked and a PNG sim card has to be purchased. This should cost around K10 (around US\$3 in June 2023) per sim card and our team at Port Moresby will be able to assist in getting this sorted out. We should have some sort of phone service around most of our tour route, except for our time around Kwatu Lodge, which is in a very remote area. It is worth notifying family prior to departure that while staying away from Port Moresby you will have very little phone/internet connectivity.

TIPPING

Please do not give gifts to individuals in villages. If you wish to do so, please discuss this with the lodge managers who will either distribute the gifts evenly amongst the people, or they will help you contact a community leader. If you would like to take gifts for villagers, items like basic school supplies, such as exercise books and pens are more useful and appreciated, rather than candy and other trinkets. Please see the “Tipping” section in the PNG general information document, for important details.

WHAT TO BRING: CLOTHING AND OTHER ITEMS

The following is a list of useful items to bring on this Papua New Guinea birding tour and should be read in conjunction with the Papua New Guinea general information document.

1. A field guide to the region. Either of the following books are suitable.
 - a. **Birds of New Guinea: Including Bismarck Archipelago and Bougainville** – Phil Gregory (2017), Lynx Edicions. This field guide has a clear and modern layout and current take on New Guinea, but is only available as a hardback and is expensive.
 - b. **Birds of New Guinea** – Thane K Pratt and Bruce M Beehler (2014), Princeton University Press, 2nd Edition. This field guide is older (and so taxonomically a bit behind current knowledge) and more ‘arty’ than the above guide with some plates tough to follow, but is a softback and is affordable.
2. Given the limited weight allowances of our internal flights (see “Domestic Flights” section, above) and our ability to securely store baggage in Port Moresby, it may be best to leave your main luggage bag there and take a smaller bag for our trips away from the

- city.
3. Hiking pole or walking stick to help on the tracks and trails. **A walking stick is compulsory for anyone who is unsteady walking**, as we feel this is a safety issue; we don't want anyone slipping on the trails or anywhere else. Please discuss with us if you are unsure whether you will need one or not.
 4. Torch (flashlight) and/or headlamp (headtorch), and spare batteries. Essential kit for when/if there is no power in the accommodations, such as at Kwatu Lodge, where there is no power. We will also likely be setting off into the forest when it is still dark. A headlamp (headtorch) allows hands to be kept free to hold walking poles, handrails etc.
 5. High concentration DEET insect repellent, or similar.
 6. Wet wipes or similar for cleaning off hands and face, particularly likely to be useful when at Kwatu Lodge with no facilities to speak of.
 7. Anti-malarial tablets per your doctors/travel clinic recommendations.
 8. Leech socks – useful, particularly if it is wet, as is to be expected in some of the places we visit on this tour.
 9. A small personal first aid kit. See the suggested items from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [here](#).
 10. Rubber boots are considered essential footwear in the muddy conditions found in some of the lowlands and riverine areas we will be birding in, especially if there has been rain. Walking boots are likely better for the mountain birding we will be doing. A set of sandals (flip-flops) and/or trainers would be useful for walking around some of the accommodation but are not suitable for birding time (e.g. consider snake bites, mud, slips, trips, and falls, etc.).
 11. Quick-drying birding clothes (in suitable forest colors) are the best for this tour and a good selection of clothing layers (including sweater/jumper/fleece) are also recommended for time at the higher elevations where temperatures will be much lower than in the lowlands (see the “Weather/Climate” section in the general information document for further information on likely temperatures during the tour).
 12. Something warm to sleep in when in the mountains as the temperatures do drop and the basic rooms can get cold.
 13. Rain jacket (and small umbrella) as rain could fall at any time at any location.
 14. A coat/fleece for the time in the mountains when temperatures will be lower and feel cooler.
 15. Swimwear. Some of the places we stay have swimming pools.
 16. A small hand towel or wash cloth can be handy for cleaning and drying things when in the rainforest. Not essential but people do find these handy.
 17. A dry bag to keep valuable documents in such as passports, cell phones, wallets etc., as well as cameras if it rains. We consider this essential if you want to ensure your belongings stay dry. Additional dry bags or protective coverings for bags for when we take uncovered boat trips.
 18. Power bank – essential if you want to charge items on the go, note Kwatu Lodge has no power.