



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

**22 AUGUST – 07 SEPTEMBER 2024
17 AUGUST – 02 SEPTEMBER 2025**



Raggiana Bird-of-paradise is one of our major targets on this trip (photo Matt Prophet).

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 will be in the western lowlands around Kiunga, a port town on the Fly River in the Western Province of PNG. In this remote part of the country (including Kwatu Lodge) we will search for a host of breathtaking specials, including the giant **Sclater's** (formerly Southern) **Crowned Pigeon**, the bizarre **Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise**, the gorgeous **King Bird-of-paradise**, and positively glowing **Flame Bowerbird**!



King Bird-of-paradise is sure to delight and is an example of a stunning and colorful bird-of-paradise (check out those snail-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**.

After the Star Mountains, we will fly to the Mount Hagen Highlands, where we base ourselves at Rondon Ridge Lodge and Kumul Lodge, the holy grails of PNG highland birding sites. We will have our first look for **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** (surely one of the best-looking of the island's birds-of-paradise?), **Brehm's Tiger Parrot**, **Archbold's Bowerbird**, **Crested Satinbird**, and more. The Mount Hagen area also holds a host of other bird-of-paradise

gems 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**.



*The sublime **Ribbon-tailed Astrapia** – one of many gorgeous birds-of-paradise that we will enjoy on this very special tour, which one will be your favorite (photo Matt Prophet)?*

After our birding at Mount Hagan, we will explore some of the areas around Port Moresby, such as Varirata National Park. Varirata is home to the beautiful **Raggiana Bird-of-paradise**, **Hooded Pitohui**, an array of spectacular fruit doves, and much more. Other species to be found around the city include the remarkable and huge **Papuan Frogmouth**, the localized **Fawn-breasted Bowerbird**, and several gorgeous kingfishers such as **Blue-winged Kookaburra**, **Yellow-billed Kingfisher**, and **Brown-headed Paradise Kingfisher**.

Our final birding of this tour will see us fly to 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 more staggering birds. The Tari region is also home to the legendary Huli Wigmen, and our tour includes the opportunity to experience this unique cultural attraction.

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 (17 days/16 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Port Moresby

After your morning arrival at Port Moresby's Jacksons International Airport, we will transfer to the nearby Airways Hotel. After check-in we proceed to an afternoon of introductory Papuan birding at the grounds of Pacific Adventist University. This part of New Guinea has a feel of being in northeast Australia and we might find a wide-range of species here such as **Comb-crested Jacana**, **Radjah Shelduck**, **Torresian Imperial Pigeon**, **Pied Heron**, **Nankeen Night Heron**, **Papuan Eclectus**, **Blue-winged Kookaburra**, **Fawn-breasted Bowerbird**, **Yellow-faced Myna**, and if we are lucky, **Glossy-mantled Manucode** – potentially our first bird-of-paradise, of many, on this exciting tour.

Overnight: Airways Hotel, Port Moresby



Blue-winged Kookaburra is found in arid areas on New Guinea.

Day 2. Flight to Kiunga

This morning we will transfer back to the airport for a flight from Port Moresby to Kiunga. We will be met and transferred to Kiunga Guesthouse along the remote Fly River. In the afternoon we will enjoy some birding, if time permits, making a start on the birds listed for Day 3.

Overnight: Kiunga Guesthouse, Kiunga

Day 3. Birding the Kiunga area

Kiunga is surrounded by vast tracts of swamp forest and spectacular lowland rainforest. Several birds-of-paradise can be found here, including **Greater Bird-of-paradise**, **Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise**, **Trumpet Manucode**, and **Glossy-mantled Manucode**.



The Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise is an impressive-looking bird, even by BoP standards!

Some other pretty impressive birds also occur here too and will form the focus of our attention, namely **Sclater's Crowned Pigeon**, **Flame Bowerbird**, **New Guinea Flightless Rail**, **Large Fig Parrot**, **Little Paradise Kingfisher**, **White-bellied Pitohui**, and **Yellow-eyed Starling**.

Yet more highlights from this area could include **Forest Bittern**, **Long-tailed Honey Buzzard**, **Collared Imperial Pigeon**, **Palm Cockatoo**, **Pesquet's (New Guinea Vulturine) Parrot**, **Red-cheeked Parrot**, **Dusky-cheeked (Orange-breasted) Fig Parrot**, **Yellow-capped Pygmy Parrot**, **Long-billed Cuckoo**, **Hooded Pitta**, **Papuan Pitta**, **Blue Jewel-babbler**, **Emperor Fairywren**, **Common Paradise Kingfisher**, **Hook-billed Kingfisher**, and **White-spotted Mannikin**.

Overnight: Kiunga Guesthouse, Kiunga



Flame Bowerbird is one of those birds that stops you in your tracks (photo Wako Napasu)!

Day 4. 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, and we might find **Black-billed Brushturkey, Great-billed Heron, Great Cuckoo-Dove, Sclater's Crowned Pigeon, Beautiful Fruit Dove, Papuan Spine-tailed Swift, Blyth's Hornbill, Azure Kingfisher, Papuan Dwarf Kingfisher, Common Paradise Kingfisher, Palm Cockatoo, Golden Monarch, Golden Myna, and Grey Crow.**

In the afternoon, and the following morning, we will be birding around the lodge 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, Hook-billed Kingfisher, Blue Jewel-babbler, Painted Quail-thrush, Papuan Babbler, Glossy-mantled Manucode, Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise, and King Bird-of-paradise.**

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

Overnight: Kwatu Lodge, Ketu River



Common Paradise Kingfisher is yet another gorgeous bird we can expect to see during the tour.

Day 5. 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 looking for some of the birds mentioned above. In the afternoon we will travel downriver by boat back to Kiunga. On arrival in Kiunga we will transfer to the Kiunga Guesthouse.

Overnight Kiunga Guesthouse, Kiunga

Day 6. 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, during which time we might see **Long-tailed Honey Buzzard**, **Grey Crow**, **Papuan Mountain Pigeon**, **Amboyna Cuckoo-Dove**, **White-crowned Cuckoo**, **New Guinea Friarbird**, **Glossy Swiftlet**, and **Moustached Swiftlet**.

Overnight: Hotel Cloudlands, Tabubil

Day 7. Birding the Star Mountains

For a full day we will explore the wonderful Star Mountains (Tabubil area). During this time, we might encounter a couple of new birds-of-paradise such as the ballet-dancing **Queen Carola's Parotia** the giant **Black Sicklebill**, and the unusual **Short-tailed Paradigalla** to go with further opportunities for **Greater Lophorina**, **Magnificent Riflebird**, **Greater Bird-of-paradise**, and **Magnificent Bird-of-paradise**.

There are lots of other targets for us here with some of the more interesting birds likely to include **Salvadori's Teal**, **New Guinea Bronzewing**, **Pesquet's** (New Guinea Vulturine)

Parrot, Dusky Lory, Striated Lorikeet, Red-breasted Pygmy Parrot, Blue-collared Parrot, Shovel-billed Kookaburra, Hook-billed Kingfisher, Mountain Kingfisher, Papuan Boobook, Golden Cuckooshrike, Chestnut-backed Jewel-babbler, Wallace's Fairywren, White-rumped Robin, Obscure Berrypecker, Piping Bellbird (formerly called Crested Pitohui and part of the whistler family, but recently moved to a new family called Australo-Papuan bellbirds), **Hooded Pitohui, Capped White-eye, Mountain Peltops, Mountain Honeyeater, Ornate Melidectes, Yellow-browed Melidectes, Loria's Satinbird, and Greater Melampitta.**

Overnight: Hotel Cloudlands, Tabubil



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

Day 8. Flight to Port Moresby

We will take an early morning trip to check out sites for both **Greater Bird-of-paradise** and **King Bird-of-paradise**. We will then transfer to a flight from Tabubil to Port Moresby. On arrival we will be met and transferred to our hotel in the city.

Overnight: Airways Hotel, Port Moresby

Day 9. Flight to Mount Hagen and birding around Rondon Ridge Lodge

We transfer to the airport for a flight to Mount Hagen. On arrival we will be met and transferred along the scenic mountain road to Rondon Ridge Lodge. The lodge is nestled on the edge of the Waghi Valley above the city of Mount Hagen at around 7,100 feet (2,150 meters), offering a stunning vista of the surrounding highland-style houses and gardens, set amongst the green

rolling hills and forest. We should have a good proportion of the day birding in the area around the lodge which has a trail network on its doorstep and great birds in the garden. We will start our pursuit of the stunning **Blue Bird-of-paradise** while we are in this area, along with **Greater Lophorina** and many other key target birds.

Overnight: Rondon Ridge Lodge, Mount Hagen



*We will be looking out for **Blue Bird-of-paradise** in the Mount Hagen Highlands.*

Day 10. Rondon Ridge Lodge to Kumul Lodge

We will transfer between Rondon Ridge Lodge and Kumul Lodge today. 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**, **Brown Sicklebill**, **Brehm's Tiger Parrot**, **Archbold's Bowerbird**, **Crested Satinbird**, **Island Thrush**, **Crested Berrypecker**, **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.

Overnight: Kumul Lodge, Mount Hagen

Day 11. Birding Mount Hagen

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



Magnificent Bird-of-paradise, one of over ten species of bird-of-paradise possible in the Mount Hagen area; we are sure to enjoy our time here!

There are so many other amazing birds around the Mount Hagen 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**, **Papuan Lorikeet**, **Yellow-billed Lorikeet**, **Orange-billed Lorikeet**, **Mountain Owlet-nightjar**, **Lesser Melampitta**, **Loria's Satinbird**, **Crested Satinbird**, **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**, **Crested Berrypecker**, **Tit Berrypecker**, **Mountain Firetail**, **Yellow-breasted Bowerbird**, **Torrent Flyrobin**, and **Torrent-lark**. To complement the above, there are also three additional species in the area that are all monotypic families, so of interest to any family listers. These three are **Mottled Berryhunter**, **Blue-capped Ifrit**, and **Wattled Ploughbill**, we could see all three here.

Overnight: Kumul Lodge, Mount Hagen



Blue-capped Ifrit is a really interesting bird – it is actually poisonous and has recently been elevated to monotypic family status (photo Matt Prophet).



The gorgeous Tit Berrypecker is an endemic found in montane mossy forest and always a highlight bird.

Day 12. Birding Mount Hagen then travel back to Port Moresby

After our final birding session around Kumul Lodge, looking for any of the birds listed above, we will make the journey back down to Mount Hagen before getting our flight back to Port Moresby.

Overnight: Airways Hotel, Port Moresby

Day 13. 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**, and hopefully PNG's national bird, **Raggiana Bird-of-paradise** along with another bird-of-paradise, **Growling Riflebird**.



***Brown-headed Paradise Kingfisher** is an uncommon and localized endemic of southeast Papua New Guinea and we will be looking for this species early in the tour (photo Matt Prophet).*

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

Overnight: Airways 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 Hela Province. On arrival we will be transferred to Ambua Lodge. After check-in we will spend the afternoon birding around the bird-rich Ambua Gap, another of PNG's famous birding spots (if not, historically, *the* most famous) and featured in many a wildlife documentary.

Overnight: Ambua 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 (such as at Tari Gap, Tari Valley, and the delightfully "birdy" farmlands of Wata and Tibiki) looking for new species and trying to improve our views of others from the first two weeks of this exciting and bird-filled tour. Over 220 bird species have been recorded from this area, including 13 species of birds-of-paradise, and in this regard, we will be on the lookout for **Lawes's Parotia**, **Short-tailed Paradigalla**, **Princess Stephanie's Astrapia**, **Ribbon-tailed Astrapia**, **King of Saxony Bird-of-paradise**, **Greater Lophorina**, **Black Sicklebill**, **Brown Sicklebill**, and **Blue Bird-of-paradise**.



King of Saxony Bird-of-paradise not only has an amazing name, it also has a very distinct plumage. We will look for this species at several locations during the tour (photo Ian Merrill).

Further potential highlight birds here could include **Forbes's Forest Rail**, **Papuan Lorikeet**, **Yellow-billed Lorikeet**, **Orange-billed Lorikeet**, **Red-breasted Pygmy Parrot**, **Brehm's Tiger Parrot**, **Painted Tiger Parrot**, **Modest Tiger Parrot**, **Madarasz's Tiger Parrot**, **Papuan King Parrot**, **Greater Sooty Owl**, **Papuan Boobook**, **Archbold's Nightjar**, **Mountain**

Kingfisher, Spotted Jewel-babbler, Blue-capped Ifrit, Garnet Robin, Black-throated Robin, Lesser Ground Robin, Wattled Ploughbill, Belford's Melidectes, Yellow-browed Melidectes, Tit Berrypecker, Crested Berrypecker, Great Woodswallow, Archbold's Bowerbird, MacGregor's Bowerbird, Lesser Melampitta, Loria's Satinbird, Long-tailed Shrike, Black Sittella, Papuan Treecreeper, Papuan Grassbird, Canary Flyrobin (Papuan Flycatcher), and Papuan Logrunner.



Brehm's Tiger Parrot can be seen in the mountains on the tour (photo Matt Prophet).

The Tari region is also home to the legendary Huli Wigmen, and our tour includes the opportunity to experience this unique cultural attraction and is something not to be missed and will definitely not be forgotten!

Overnight: Ambua Lodge, Tari

Day 17. Flight to Port Moresby and tour concludes

We will transfer to Tari airport for our morning flight back to Port Moresby. Our tour will conclude on arrival in Port Moresby and you will be able to get your international flight home in the late afternoon or early evening.

Overnight: Not included

Please note that the itinerary 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. In addition, we sometimes have to use a different international guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling.

Duration: 17 days

Group Size: 6 - 10

Dates: 22 August - 07 September 2024
17 August - 02 September 2025

Start: Jacksons International Airport, Port Moresby

End: Jacksons International Airport, Port Moresby

Prices: US\$14,565 per person sharing – based on 6 - 10 participants (2024)
US\$16,165 per person sharing – based on 6 - 10 participants (2025)

Single Supplements: US\$1,415 (2024)
US\$1,570 (2025)

Price includes:

All accommodation (as described)
Meals (from lunch on Day 1 until breakfast on Day 17)
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
Visa fees
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 prices do not include domestic flights in PNG. How and where to book these flights and the exact flight numbers needing to be booked will be provided closer to the time of the tour and we may be able to buy these flights for you in advance to ensure everyone is on the same/correct flights.

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.

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 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 a detailed tour information package prior to departure.