



**INDONESIA: WEST PAPUA –
BIRDS-OF-PARADISE AND ENDEMICS OF THE
ARFAKS AND WAIGEO**

01 – 12 AUGUST 2023



Wilson's Bird-of-paradise is often considered one of the best-looking birds in the world!

New Guinea is a geographic rather than political term that refers to the main island in the region. The western half of the island of New Guinea comprises the Indonesian provinces of West Papua (Papua Barat) and Papua, collectively once called West Irian or Irian Jaya; the eastern half of the main island of New Guinea comprises the country of Papua New Guinea. We will be based in West Papua for this exhilarating, small-group birding adventure. Aside from the large landmass of New Guinea, the New Guinea region includes numerous small islands (some part of Indonesia and others part of Papua New Guinea), and we will visit one of these areas: Waigeo, part of the Raja Ampat Archipelago in West Papua (also known as the Northwestern Islands).

Approximately 680 bird species have been recorded from West Papua, from slightly more than 700 for the whole New Guinea region. Some 550 species are considered breeding residents, with 279 New Guinea endemics (found in Indonesia and/or Papua New Guinea) and at least an additional 42 endemics found only in West Papua. There are also over 115 Palearctic and Australian migrant species and a range of seabirds which spend some of their time in West Papua.

This tour will begin in the town of Manokwari, situated on the north-eastern tip of West Papua's Bird's Head (or Vogelkop) Peninsula where we could get our tour started with the gorgeous **Lesser Bird-of-paradise**, this area is usually great for **Blyth's Hornbill** and numerous fruit doves. We will travel to the nearby Arfak Mountains, where we will search for a fabulous series of birds, renowned in birders' circles as the "Vogelkop Endemics", such as **Western Parotia**, **Arfak Astrapia**, **Crescent-caped Lophorina** (formerly part of the Superb Bird-of-paradise complex), **Long-tailed Paradigalla**, **Arfak Catbird**, **Vogelkop Melidectes**, and **Vogelkop Bowerbird**.



Western Parotia, yet another great bird-of-paradise. Watching these birds doing their ballet dancing display is incredibly impressive.

We can also find more widespread birds-of-paradise (BoPs) here too, such as **Black Sicklebill**, **Black-billed Sicklebill**, **Magnificent Bird-of-paradise**, **Trumpet Manucode**, and **Crinkle-collared Manucode**.

There are numerous other simply breathtaking and highly sought-after birds possible in the Arfak mountains and just a few of these include **Spotted Jewel-babbler**, **Blue Jewel-babbler**, **Masked Bowerbird**, **Pesquet's (New Guinea Vulturine) Parrot**, **Moluccan King Parrot**, **Modest Tiger Parrot**, **White-striped Forest Rail**, **Feline Owlet-nightjar**, **Mountain Owlet-nightjar**, **Papuan Boobook**, **Tit Berrypecker**, **Mottled Berryhunter** (a monotypic family), **Papuan Treecreeper**, **Papuan Logrunner**, **Grey-banded Mannikin**, **Papuan Grassbird**, **Drongo Fantail**, **Goldenface**, and **Lesser Melampitta**.

The second leg of our tour takes us to Sorong, on the opposite side of the Bird's Head Peninsula where we might find **King Bird-of-paradise**, **Magnificent Riflebird**, **Red-breasted Paradise Kingfisher**, and **Blue-black Kingfisher**, and then to one of the Raja Ampat Islands, Waigeo. Here we will search for endemic **Wilson's Bird-of-paradise**, **Red Bird-of-paradise**, and **Glossy-mantled Manucode**. **Wilson's Bird-of-paradise** is often considered one of the best-looking birds on the planet, and so we will look forward to making our own judgments on this. Again, there are numerous other species high on our 'wanted' list, including **Western Crowned Pigeon** (a seriously impressive bird that will rival the birds-of-paradise for 'bird of the trip' if we find them), plus the likes of **Hook-billed Kingfisher**, **Rufous-bellied Kookaburra**, **Yellow-billed Kingfisher**, **Papuan Dwarf Kingfisher**, **Common Paradise Kingfisher**, **Beach Kingfisher**, **Papuan Hawk-Owl**, **Marbled Frogmouth**, **Papuan Frogmouth**, **Palm Cockatoo**, **Eclectus Parrot**, **Great-billed Parrot**, **Raja Ampat Pitohui**, **Hooded Pitta**, **Papuan Pitta**, and **Brown-headed Crow**.



A huge bird, Western Crowned Pigeon is sure to impress on Waigeo.

Immediately prior to this West Papua tour, you could join our **Indonesia: Sulawesi and Halmahera – Spectacular Endemic Birding** tour looking for (Wallace's) **Standardwing** and (Halmahera) **Paradise-crow** (these are two endemic birds-of-paradise), plus **Maleo**, **Ivory-breasted Pitta**, **North Moluccan Pitta**, **Sulawesi Pitta**, **Purple-bearded Bee-eater**, **Green-backed Kingfisher**, **Lilac Kingfisher**, **Scaly-breasted Kingfisher** (with over 15 kingfisher species actually possible on this tour!), **Moluccan Owlet-nightjar**, **Knobbed Hornbill**, **Hylocitrea** (a monotypic family), **Malia**, **Geomalia**, and a multitude of more, exciting endemics.

Furthermore, you could follow this tour with our **New Britain** and with our **Papua New Guinea: Birding Attenborough's Paradise** tour where we will see numerous birds-of-paradise and other exceptional birds, most different to what will be seen on the West Papua tour, such as **Blue Bird-of-paradise**, **Raggiana Bird-of-paradise**, **King of Saxony Bird-of-paradise**, **Ribbon-tailed Astropia**, and **Princess Stephanie's Astropia** to name a few of the stunners, plus **Blue-capped Ifrit** and **Wattled Ploughbill** (two more monotypic families), plus other gorgeous endemics!

Additionally, we also offer an extension to the endemic-rich, amazing satellite islands of Biak, Numfor, and Kofiau where we look for island endemics such as **Biak Paradise Kingfisher**, **Numfor Paradise Kingfisher**, **Kofiau Paradise Kingfisher** and many more key, range-restricted species (please email us or fill out the contact form [here](#) to request information).

Itinerary (12 days/11 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Manokwari

Arrival at Rendani Airport in Manokwari during the day, where you will be met and taken to your nearby hotel for the remainder of the day at leisure. We will meet for a group evening meal together as the anticipation builds for the exciting birds and adventure awaiting us.

Overnight: Manokwari

Day 2. Birding near Manokwari, travel to and birding in the Arfak Mountains

We will get the tour under way with some great birds near Manokwari, such as **Pacific Baza**, **Claret-breasted Fruit Dove**, **White-bibbed Fruit Dove**, **Pinon's Imperial Pigeon**, **Collared Imperial Pigeon**, **Zoe's Imperial Pigeon**, **Papuan Mountain Pigeon**, **Blyth's Hornbill**, **Eclectus Parrot**, **Black-capped Lory**, **Lowland Peltops**, and **Hooded Butcherbird**. We may even find our first bird-of-paradise of the trip, the beautiful **Lesser Bird-of-paradise**.

Around mid-morning we will leave the city and travel into the Arfak Mountains, our base for the next four days. On the lower slopes of the mountain we might again have a chance to spot **Lesser Bird-of-paradise** and even **Trumpet Manucode**, a rather unusual crow-like bird-of-paradise (both of these sometimes get up to the area of our accommodation). What the manucodes lack in looks, they make up with their voices. The afternoon will be spent birding the forest near our accommodation, where we may see some of the birds given for days 3 to 5.

Overnight: Arfak Mountains (mid-elevation)



*There is a good chance that **Lesser Bird-of-paradise** will be the first BoP of the tour.*



*There is only one hornbill in West Papua, though it is a gorgeous one – **Blyth's Hornbill**.*

Days 3 - 5. Birding in the Arfak Mountains

We have three full days (in addition to the afternoon of day 2 and the morning of day 6) to explore what is arguably *the* premier birding region in West Papua, the Arfak Mountains. This

area supports several endemic bird species and a number of other species with restricted ranges, including several stunning birds-of-paradise.

Over the course of our stay on the mountain we will focus our attention on the birds-of-paradise and bird our way around them. This tactic works really well and gives us great opportunities for viewing the birds-of-paradise on their lek sites and also picking up numerous other exciting birds along the way. We will spend a few nights in a basic yet comfortable ‘village’ at the mid-elevation on the mountain, after which we will head up (on foot) to the high-elevation zone for a night in a basic camp (see notes on accommodation at the end of the itinerary). Those not wishing to make the hike will be able to stay in the village and will be suitably looked-after by our excellent support staff with further birding opportunities in that zone! The exact day-to-day routine over these few days will be dictated by the location of the birds-of-paradise lek sites, but a bird-filled time is to be expected, the birding here is seriously exciting.

Around our village base in the mid-elevation zone we will look for **Magnificent Bird-of-paradise** which may be seen on his court, displaying, in sequence his iridescent, carmine back, dark-green breast shield, and sulfur-yellow cape before jerkily dancing up and down a vertical sapling, while quivering his cocked, sickle-shaped central tail feathers.



Magnificent Bird-of-paradise may be seen in the Arfak Mountains.

Also, around our village we will look for the additional exciting bird-of-paradise trio of **Western Parotia**, **Black-billed Sickiebill**, and **Crescent-caped Lophorina**. The male of the **Western Parotia** performs a bizarre side-step dance on the floor of their display courts, while their flank

plumes are spread to form a circular skirt, with their six, wiry, antenna-like nape feathers directed forward. **Black-billed Sicklebill** is also found in this zone; quite a large bird, they spend a lot of time in the mid-canopy, but drop down to exposed display perches early in the morning when we have a good chance to view them well. One of the most-interesting though, is the **Crescent-caped Lophorina** (formerly part of the Superb Bird-of-paradise complex). This bird is mesmerizing when displaying and we will hope for a repeat performance witnessed on previous tours. The male's fixed, delta-shaped, iridescent, blue-green breast-shield (with elongated side feathers making it protrude way beyond its chest) and its expandable hind neck cape combine to give this bird a really strange look, but one you (or the female birds) can't take your eyes off!

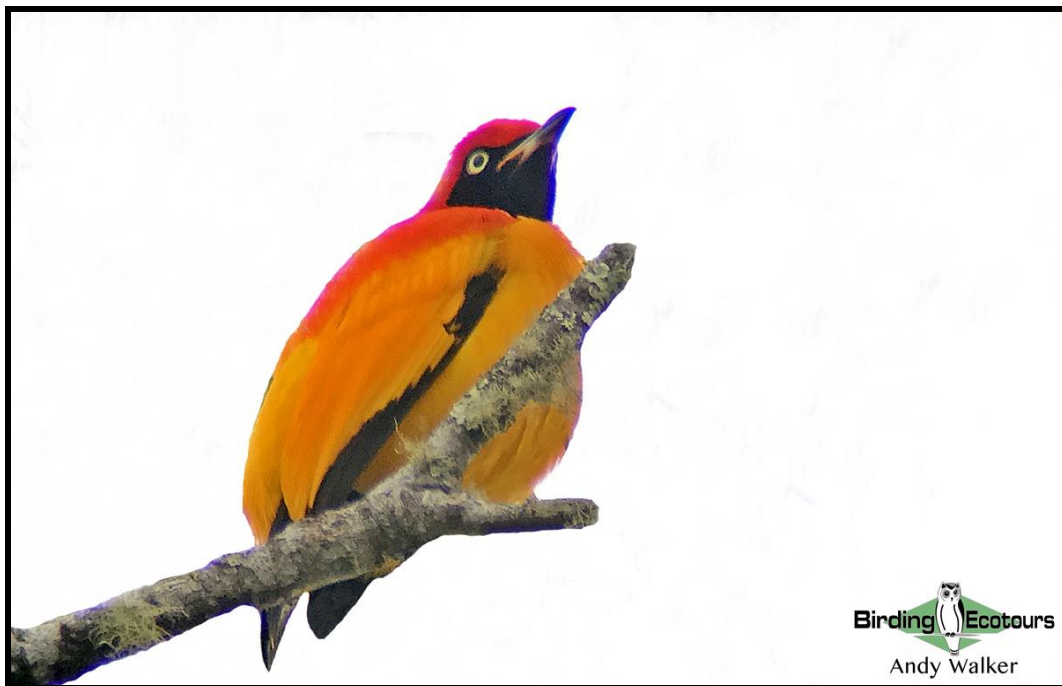
Of all the endemic birds of the regions, one of the most famous ones (though not the most beautiful!) must be **Vogelkop Bowerbird** – the world's greatest avian architect. Males of this amazing species build a roofed house-like maypole (tented) bower construction at the base of a tree sapling, inside and in front of which they place colorful berries, flowers, and insect parts to attract females, a true sight to behold for the female, and us!



*The impressive bower of the **Vogelkop Bowerbird** is something pretty special, even if the bird is rather drab – what it lacks in good looks it certainly makes up for in architectural ability!*

Other potential interesting birds of this area may include **Spotted Jewel-babbler**, **White-striped Forest Rail**, **Pesquet's (New Guinea Vulturine) Parrot**, **Arfak Catbird**, **Arfak Honeyeater**, **Vogelkop Melidectes**, **Vogelkop Scrubwren**, **Vogelkop Whistler**, **Papuan Eagle**, **Black-mantled Goshawk**, **Masked Bowerbird** (the colors on this one need to be seen to be believed!), **Moluccan King Parrot**, **Red-breasted Pygmy Parrot**, **Black-capped Lory**, **Papuan Lorikeet**,

Ivory-billed Coucal, White-crowned Cuckoo, Dwarf Koel, Drongo Fantail, Papuan Mountain Pigeon, White-bibbed (Mountain) Fruit Dove, Red-collared Myzomela, Papuan Black Myzomela, Rufous-sided Honeyeater, Northern Variable Pitohui, Hooded Pitohui, White-shouldered Fairywren, Papuan Parrotfinch, Wattled Brushturkey, Slater's Whistler, Regent Whistler, Rufous-naped Bellbird (formerly called Rufous-naped Whistler but moved from that family to a new family called Australo-Papuan bellbirds), Goldenface, Mountain Peltops, Black-breasted Boatbill, Papuan Treecreeper, Papuan Sittella, Green-backed Robin, Black-throated Robin, Slaty Robin, Garnet Robin, Lesser Ground Robin, and, if we are lucky, Feline Owlet-nightjar or Mountain Owlet-nightjar.



*The colors on this **Masked Bowerbird** really need to be seen to be believed, this is one insanely colorful bird! Its bower is nowhere near as impressive as the **Vogelkop Bowerbird** (above), but when it looks like this, it probably doesn't matter to the female!*

Depending on timing and road conditions, we might also be able to take our 4x4 vehicles to an open area home to the extremely range-restricted endemic **Grey-banded Mannikin**, a beautiful bird. Other birds possible in this area include **Torrent-lark, Papuan Grassbird, Great Woodswallow, Pale-vented Bush-hen, and Grey Wagtail.**

Our time in the high-elevation zone (almost 6,550 feet/2,000 meters) will focus on a range of different species, including three new birds-of-paradise, two of which are endemic, the little-known **Arfak Astrapia** and **Long-tailed Paradigalla** (the latter rediscovered as recently as 1989!), as well as the more widespread **Black Sickbill**, with its magnificent tail, which can be 31 inches (80 centimeters) long and its ability to turn itself into assorted shapes; the cobra move is particularly noteworthy! All three of these birds are incredibly unique and well worth the hike!

Our time will be focused on finding the above three great birds-of-paradise but we will also be in the zone for plenty of other exciting birds and we will hope to also see the likes of **Lesser Melampitta**, **Brehm's Tiger Parrot**, **Modest Tiger Parrot**, **Bronze Ground Dove**, **Crested Berrypecker**, **Orange-crowned Fairywren**, **Obscure Berrypecker**, **Fan-tailed Berrypecker**, **Tit Berrypecker**, **Mottled Berryhunter** (a monotypic family endemic to New Guinea), **Papuan Logrunner**, **Ashy Robin**, **Smoky Robin**, **Black-throated Robin**, **Canary Flyrobin**, **Cinnamon-browed Melidectes**, **Arfak Honeyeater**, **Papuan Treecreeper**, **Papuan Parrotfinch**, **Mountain Mouse-warbler**, **Red-collared Myzomela**, **Vogelkop Owlet-nightjar**, and **Papuan Boobook**, among, as always, so many others.

Overnight: Arfak Mountains (two nights mid-elevation and one night high-elevation)



Brehm's Tiger Parrot is a possibility in the higher elevations of the Arfaks (photo Matt Prophet).

Day 6: Arfak Mountains to Manokwari

We will have a final morning birding in the Arfak Mountains mopping up species mentioned above, or maybe taking one last look at our favorite birds-of-paradise of this area for the final time. After our final lunch in the village we will bid a fond farewell to our hosts and we will then descend off the mountain, before returning back to Manokwari for a welcome night in our comfortable hotel.

Overnight: Manokwari

Day 7. Manokwari to Sorong

We will take a short flight in the morning between Manokwari and Sorong where we will check into our very comfortable hotel for the night. In the afternoon after the heat of the day wanes we will venture into the mangroves where we hope to find **Blue-black Kingfisher**, **Azure Kingfisher**, **Little Kingfisher**, **Barred Rail**, **Black Bittern**, **Collared Imperial Pigeon**, **Little Bronze Cuckoo**, **Moustached Treeswift**, **Orange-fronted Fruit Dove**, and **Orange-breasted Fig Parrot**.

Overnight: Sorong

Day 8. Sorong to Waigeo

An early start today will see us birding in some forest near Sorong where we could extend our bird-of-paradise list in the form of the raucous **Magnificent Riflebird** and the bizarre, delightful, and rather small **King Bird-of-paradise**. There are many other incredible birds possible here too, and one of the most highly sought-after of these is **Red-breasted Paradise Kingfisher** which we will look for today. Other quality birds here include **Papuan Pitta**, **Hooded Pitta**, **Blyth's Hornbill**, **Palm Cockatoo**, **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo**, **Red-cheeked Parrot**, **Coconut Lorikeet**, **Black Lory**, **Moluccan King Parrot**, **Large Fig Parrot**, **Yellow-billed Kingfisher**, **Blue-black Kingfisher**, **Red-billed Brushturkey**, **Golden Cuckooshrike**, **Brown Oriole**, **Dwarf Fruit Dove**, **Pink-spotted Fruit Dove**, **Superb Fruit Dove**, **Orange-bellied Fruit Dove**, **Wompoo Fruit Dove**, **Frilled Monarch**, **Rusty Pitohui**, **Lowland Peltops**, and **Long-tailed Honey Buzzard**. Plus, **Lesser Bird-of-paradise** is also present in this area.



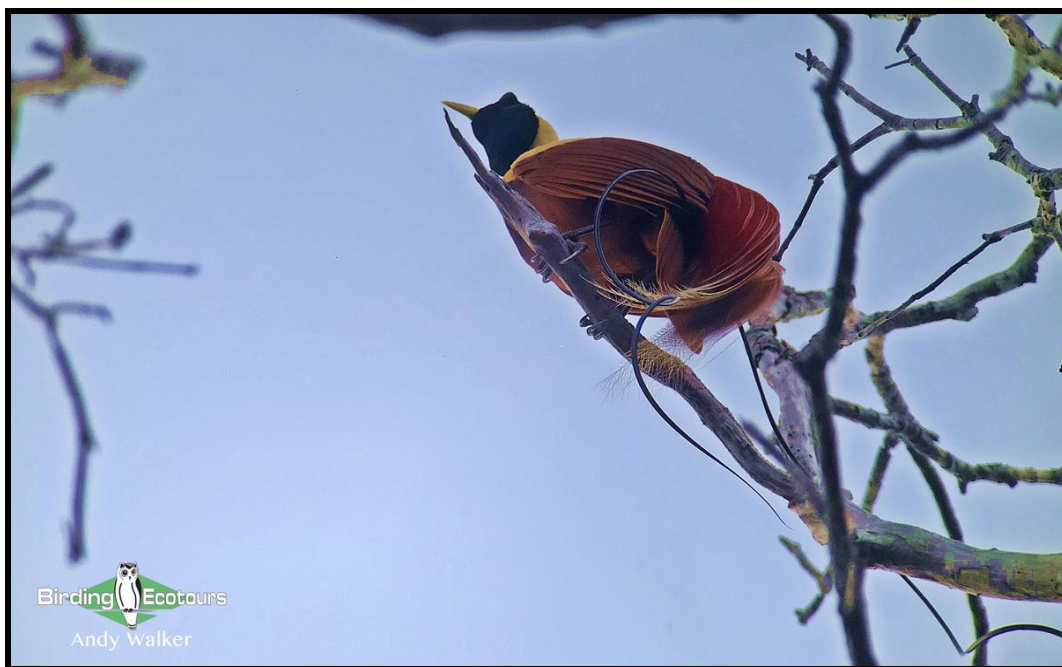
King Bird-of-paradise is a beautiful BoP, and we will hope for some great views at their lek site.

After lunch and checking out of our hotel, we will transfer by ferry from Sorong to Waigeo Island across the Indonesian Dampier Strait (sometimes also known as Augusta's Strait). During the two-to-three-hour ferry ride we will look out for pelagic species like **Pomarine Jaeger**, **Lesser Frigatebird**, **Great Frigatebird**, **Brown Booby**, **Bulwer's Petrel**, **Streaked Shearwater**, **Wedge-tailed Shearwater**, **Matsudaira's Storm Petrel**, **Black Noddy**, **Common Tern**, **Great Crested Tern**, **Black-naped Tern**, and **Bridled Tern**. On arrival at Waigeo Island we will likely see **White-breasted Woodswallow** and **Singing Starling** in the harbor. We will then drive the short distance to our picturesque and secluded beachside dive resort where we will check in for the next few nights. As we take the short ride between the harbor and our resort, we might spot **Eclectus Parrot**, **Red-cheeked Parrot**, **Pacific Baza**, **Claret-breasted Fruit Dove**, **Black Sunbird**, **Oriental Dollarbird**, **New Guinea Friarbird**, **Moluccan Starling**, and **Rufous-bellied Kookaburra** along the way. The birding in Waigeo is great!

Overnight: Waigeo Island

Days 9 - 10. Birding on and around Waigeo Island

Waigeo, where we will be based for the next two days, is the largest island in the Raja Ampat Archipelago, comprising over 1,500 small islands, cays, and shoals and located off the northwest tip of the Bird's Head Peninsula. These islands are home to two endemic birds-of-paradise, the exquisite **Wilson's Bird-of-paradise** with its bright, cerulean-blue, bare crown, crisscrossed by fine black lines (considered by many as the best-looking bird on the planet – see the front cover of this itinerary for an idea of how stunning this bird is) and the crimson-plumed rather slick-looking **Red Bird-of-paradise**. We will look for both of these species while on Waigeo.



Endemic to Waigeo, Red Bird-of-paradise is yet another interesting BoP with its wire-like tail projections. We will visit a lek site of this bird while on the island.

Waigeo Brushturkey (a stunning bird too) was recently rediscovered, but this island endemic is a very tough bird and is unlikely to be found on this tour – if you'd like to try for this very difficult range-restricted species please talk to us about a possible expedition extension to look specifically for it after the tour).

Other birding highlights on these islands include **Hook-billed Kingfisher**, **Common Paradise Kingfisher**, **Western Crowned Pigeon** (an absolutely ginormous bird), **Pheasant Pigeon**, **Palm Cockatoo**, and **Great-billed Parrot**. We will also hope to get good views of yet another bird-of-paradise while in this region – **Glossy-mantled Manucode**. These birds have elongated tracheas which serve to magnify their voice!



*We see some amazing kingfishers on this tour and **Common Paradise Kingfisher** is one beautiful example of the family.*

During our time on Waigeo we also hope to encounter, among a multitude of others, **Papuan Pitta**, **Hooded Pitta**, **Rufous-bellied Kookaburra**, **Yellow-billed Kingfisher**, **Papuan Dwarf Kingfisher**, **Blyth's Hornbill**, **New Guinea Friarbird**, **Southern Variable Pitohui**, **Raja Ampat Pitohui**, **Hooded Butcherbird**, **Black Butcherbird**, **Marbled Frogmouth**, **Papuan Frogmouth** (often right outside the resort dining room at night!), **Papuan Boobook**, **Dusky Megapode**, **Pygmy Eagle**, **Gurney's Eagle**, **Red-necked Crake**, **New Guinea Bronzewing**, **Moustached Treeswift**, **Moluccan King Parrot**, **Brown-headed Crow**, **Tawny-breasted Honeyeater**, **Green-backed Honeyeater**, **Long-billed Honeyeater**, **Black-sided Robin**, **Golden Monarch**, **Spot-winged Monarch**, **Frilled Monarch**, **Beautiful Fruit Dove**, **Purple-tailed Imperial Pigeon**, and **Stephan's Emerald Dove**.

We will have early-morning and late-afternoon birding sessions in the forest and the late-morning and early-afternoon will be at your leisure around the resort where you can sit and enjoy

the view, maybe even with **Palm Cockatoos** feeding above your heads! Or you can take some time to snorkel in the reef right outside our rooms; the coral reef and various fish and sea-life present here is remarkable and well worth an underwater experience.

One of our afternoons while here, we will take a boat into Kabui Bay to look for **Spice Imperial Pigeon, Pied Imperial Pigeon, Metallic Pigeon, White-bibbed Fruit Dove, Beach Kingfisher, Violet-necked Lory, Great-billed Heron, Dusky Megapode, Raja Shelduck, Island Monarch, Common Paradise Kingfisher, Varied Honeyeater, Arafura Fantail, Moluccan Starling, and White-bellied Sea Eagle**, ending with sunset and watching the huge **Great-billed Parrots** coming in to roost.

Overnight: Waigeo Island



*The rather large **Palm Cockatoo** can often be found around our accommodation.*

Day 11. Birding on Waigeo and travel to Sorong

We will have a final morning on Waigeo, where we will search for more of the species mentioned above, maybe again enjoying the otherworldly **Wilson's Bird-of-paradise**. We will take the afternoon ferry back to Sorong, where we will enjoy a farewell dinner, a good rest, and the difficult task of deciding on a 'bird of the trip', not an easy choice!

Overnight: Sorong

Day 12. Departure from Sorong

Time at leisure and departure from Sorong.

Overnight: Not included

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

Duration: 12 days
Group Size: 4 - 8
Dates: 01 - 12 August 2023
Start: Manokwari, West Papua, Indonesia
End: Sorong, West Papua, Indonesia
Prices: US\$7,555 per person sharing – based on 4 - 8 participants (2023)
Single Supplements: US\$621 (2023)

Price includes:

All accommodation (as described, including camping equipment (e.g. sleeping bags etc.) for night at the top of the mountain)
Meals (from dinner on day 1 until breakfast on day 12)
Drinking water – please bring a refillable water bottle
Expert tour leader
Local bird and wildlife guide/trackers/porters fees
Birdwatching site entrance fees and travel permits
All ground transport and tolls/taxes while on tour, including airport pick-up and drop-off

Price excludes:

Flights to Manokwari/from Sorong
Domestic flight (Manokwari to Sorong – we can book this for you and add it to your tour balance to ensure everyone is on the same flight!)
Visa fees if visa required
Departure tax
Items of a personal nature, e.g. gifts, laundry, internet access, phone calls, snorkeling equipment hire, excess luggage charges for internal flights, extra porter help (e.g. with walking or extra baggage carrying support) etc.
Any pre- or post-tour accommodation, meals, or birding/sightseeing/monument excursions
Soft/alcoholic drinks
Camera (still/video) permits
Personal travel insurance
Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))

Physical Toughness:

Reasonable physical fitness and good agility are required to bird the relatively steep slopes here, though with the support of our excellent local porters we can help get you safely to the more difficult spots in most cases. The hike to the top of the mountain and subsequent camping trip is not compulsory, those wishing to stay behind in the village are able to do so and will be looked after suitably. Please read the important information on the '[General Information](#)' tab about this tour on the website and please ask us for any extra information you require, we are happy to help.