

# Birding Ecotours



## **BIRDING TOUR INDONESIA: WEST PAPUA AND SOUTHWEST PAPUA – BIRDS-OF-PARADISE AND ENDEMIC BIRDS OF THE ARAFAK MOUNTAINS AND WAIGEO ISLAND**

**31 JULY – 11 AUGUST 2025**



*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 Southwest Papua (Papua Barat Daya), 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 Southwest and 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 Southwest Papua (also known as the Northwestern Islands).

Approximately 680 bird species have been recorded from Southwest and West Papua, from slightly more than 900 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 Southwest and West Papua. There are also over 115 Palearctic and Australian migrant species and a range of seabirds which spend some of their time in the region.

This Papuan bird tour will begin in the town of Manokwari, situated on the northeastern tip of West Papua's Bird's Head (or Vogelkop) Peninsula, where we could get our tour started with the huge **Blyth's Hornbill** and numerous gorgeous fruit doves. We will travel to the nearby Arfak Mountains, where we will search for a fabulous suite 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**. 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**.



*Watching **Western Parotia** undertaking their ballet dancing display is incredibly impressive.*

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 the Klasow Valley and Raja Ampat Islands, and specifically Waigeo Island. During our time in this area we will search for **Wilson's Bird-of-paradise**, **Red Bird-of-paradise**, **King Bird-of-paradise**, **Magnificent Riflebird**, 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 **Blue-black Kingfisher**, **Hook-billed Kingfisher**, **Rufous-bellied Kookaburra**, **Yellow-billed Kingfisher**, **Papuan Dwarf Kingfisher**, **Common Paradise Kingfisher**, **Red-breasted Paradise Kingfisher**, **Beach Kingfisher**, **Papuan Hawk-Owl**, **Marbled Frogmouth**, **Papuan Frogmouth**, **Palm Cockatoo**, **Papuan Eclectus**, **Great-billed Parrot**, **Black Lory**, **Raja Ampat Pitohui**, **Eastern Hooded Pitta**, **Papuan Pitta**, and **Brown-headed Crow**.



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

Immediately prior to this New Guinea birding tour, you could join our **Birding Tour 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, Sulawesi 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, in some years you could combine this Papuan birdwatching tour with our **Birding Tour 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 this Southwest and West Papua tour, such as **Blue Bird-of-paradise, Raggiana Bird-of-paradise, King of Saxony Bird-of-paradise, Ribbon-tailed Astrapia, and Princess Stephanie's Astrapia** to name a few of the stunners, along with **Blue-capped Ifrit and Wattled Ploughbill** (two more monotypic families), plus so many other gorgeous endemics it's difficult to know where to start with the highlights!

Additionally, we also offer a tour to the endemic-rich, amazing satellite islands of Biak, Numfor, and Kofiau where, on our **Stunning Paradise Kingfishers and Small-Island Endemics** tour to the three islands, we look for small-island endemics, such as **Biak Paradise Kingfisher, Numfor Paradise Kingfisher, Kofiau Paradise Kingfisher**, and many more key, range-restricted species, such as **Numfor Leaf Warbler, Kofiau Monarch, and Biak Myzomela**.

## Detailed 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: Aston Nui Manokwari Hotel and Conference Centre, 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, Papuan Eclectus, Black-capped Lory, and Hooded Butcherbird**.

Around the middle of the 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 have a chance to spot **Trumpet Manucode**, a rather unusual crow-like bird-of-paradise and along the way we might spot other species, such as **Lowland Peltops, Northern Variable Pitohui, New Guinea Friarbird, and Boyer's Cuckooshrike**. The afternoon will be spent birding in the forest near our accommodation, where we may see some of the birds listed for Days 3 to 5.

Overnight: Arfak Mountains (mid-elevation)



*Wompoo Fruit Dove is one of many fruit doves possible on this great Papuan birding tour.*



*There is only one hornbill (**Blyth's Hornbill**) in New Guinea, though it is a spectacular one.*

### **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 numerous 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 their display sites. This tactic works well and gives us great opportunities for viewing the birds-of-paradise on their lek sites, as well as then also picking up numerous other exciting birds along the way. We will spend a few nights in a basic yet comfortable 'village' at 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 the tour-specific information about this, accessed from the general information tab on the tour page). Those tour participants not wishing to make the hike higher up the mountain 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.*

Around the village we will look for the additional exciting bird-of-paradise trio of **Western Parotia**, **Black-billed Sicklebill**, 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 males' 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 strange look, but one you (or the female birds) cannot take your eyes off!

Of all the endemic birds of the region, 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 interesting birds possible in this area may include **Pheasant Pigeon, 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, Sclater'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, and now known to be a poisonous bird!), **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 the male **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 be able to take our 4x4 vehicles to an open area that is home to the extremely range-restricted endemic **Grey-banded Mannikin**, which is a beautiful bird. Other species 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 Sicklebill**, with its magnificent tail, which can be 31 inches (80 centimeters) long, with an 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 tough hike!



Our time here 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 at mid-elevation and one night at high-elevation)



*The attractive **White-bibbed (Mountain) Fruit Dove** will be a target while birding the Arfak Mountains.*

### **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 the mountain, before retuning back to Manokwari for a welcome night in our comfortable hotel.

Overnight: Aston Nui Manokwari Hotel and Conference Centre, Manokwari

### Day 7. Manokwari to Sorong

We will take a short flight in the morning between Manokwari and Sorong where we will then 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**, **Little Bronze Cuckoo**, **Moustached Treeswift**, **Orange-fronted Fruit Dove**, **Collared Imperial Pigeon**, **Orange-breasted Fig Parrot**, and **Emperor Fairywren**.

Overnight: Swiss-Belhotel International, Sorong (or similar)

### Day 8. Sorong to Waigeo with morning Klasow Valley (Malagufuk) birding

A very 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 we will look for include **Papuan Pitta**, **Eastern Hooded Pitta**, **Blyth's Hornbill**, **Pesquet's (New Guinea Vulturine) Parrot**, **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**.



*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 fast ferry from Sorong to Waigeo Island (in an air-conditioned cabin) across the Indonesian Dampier Strait (sometimes also known as Augusta's Strait). 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 car ride between the harbor and our resort, we might spot **Papuan Eclectus**, **Red-cheeked Parrot**, **Pacific Baza**, **Claret-breasted Fruit Dove**, **Black Sunbird**, **Oriental Dollarbird**, **New Guinea Friarbird**, **Moluccan Starling**, **Beach Kingfisher**, and **Rufous-bellied Kookaburra** along the way.

Overnight: Raja Ampat Dive Resort, 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 below and 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 species while on Waigeo.



*The astounding Wilson's Bird-of-paradise is always a top target and highly anticipated species.*

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**.



*Endemic to Raja Ampat, **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.*



***Glossy-mantled Manucode** is yet another bird-of-paradise we will be looking for on the tour.*

During our time on Waigeo we also hope to encounter, among a multitude of others, **Papuan Pitta, Eastern Hooded Pitta, Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Papuan Dwarf Kingfisher, Blyth's Hornbill, New Guinea Friarbird, Southern Variable Pitohui, Raja Ampat Pitohui, Waigeo Shrikethrush, 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, 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.



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

On 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, Claret-breasted Fruit Dove, White-bibbed Fruit Dove, Beach Kingfisher, Violet-necked Lory, Great-billed Heron, Dusky Megapode, Radjah Shelduck, Island Monarch, Common Paradise Kingfisher, Varied Honeyeater, Arafura Fantail, Moluccan Starling, and White-bellied Sea Eagle.**

Overnight: Raja Ampat Dive Resort, Waigeo Island



We see some amazing kingfishers on this tour, like this *Common Paradise Kingfisher*.



A tiny dove, we will keep our eyes peeled for the attractive *Claret-breasted Fruit Dove*.

### 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 fast 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 out here!

Overnight: Swiss-Belhotel International, Sorong (or similar)

### Day 12. Departure from Sorong

Time at leisure and departure from Sorong. Hotel check out is at 12 noon.

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.*

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| <b>Duration:</b>   | 12 days  |
| <b>Group Size:</b> | 4 - 8  |
| <b>Dates:</b>      | 31 July – 11 August 2025   |
| <b>Start:</b>      | Manokwari, West Papua, Indonesia   |
| <b>End:</b>        | Sorong, Southwest Papua, Indonesia   |
| <b>Prices:</b>     | US\$9,075 per person sharing, which includes the domestic flight (Manokwari – Sorong) during the tour – based on 4 - 8 participants (2025) |

**Single Supplements:** US\$910 (2025)

#### Price includes:

All accommodation (as described, including camping equipment (e.g. sleeping bags etc.) for night at the top of the mountain)

Domestic flight between Manokwari and Sorong during the tour

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

Fast ferry in air-conditioned cabin (Sorong – Waigeo – Sorong)

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

**Price excludes:**

Flights into Manokwari and out of Sorong

Visa fees if visa required

Departure tax if required

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 if required

Personal travel insurance

Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))

**Important Information:**

Please carefully read the tour-specific and Indonesia general information documents [here](#) for lots of details about this exciting tour, including information on accommodation and about the physical toughness and fitness levels required to fully take part in this remote Indonesian tour (as well as much more essential reading). You can access these documents via the ‘general information tab’.