



**PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

**GENERAL INFORMATION**



*We will look for **King of Saxony Bird-of-paradise** at several locations during the tour (photo Ian Merrill).*

## OUR PAPUA NEW GUINEA BIRDING TOURS

We have two extremely exciting set departure Papua New Guinea (PNG) birding tours, both focusing on the different endemic and special birds found in each region, and particularly the outrageous collection of birds-of-paradise that can be found here. Our Papua New Guinea birding tours are as follows:

1. **Papua New Guinea: Birding Attenborough's Paradise**. This tour visits the Papua New Guinea "mainland" of New Guinea island (the eastern half of the giant landmass), where we concentrate our birding at several sites, including Varirata National Park, Mount Hagen (including Rondon Ridge Lodge and Kumul Lodge), Tari Gap (Ambua Lodge), Kiunga, Tabubil (the Star Mountains), and Ketu River.
2. **Papua New Guinea: New Britain Premium Extension – Bismarck Archipelago Birding**. This tour is based at the excellent Walindi Plantation Resort in the West New Britain Province of Papua New Guinea, situated to the east of the island of New Guinea.

Both Papua New Guinea birding tours start and end in Port Moresby, the capital of PNG. Papua New Guinea has a whopping bird list of around 900 species, including over 100 endemics! Our set departure tours each focus on finding the endemics and specials of each area we visit. Birds-of-paradise are the obvious targets on our PNG "Attenborough tour" and include great birds like **Blue Bird-of-paradise**, **King of Saxony Bird-of-paradise**, **Princess Stephanie's Astrapia**, **Ribbon-tailed Astrapia**, **Queen Carola's Parotia**, and PNG's national bird, **Raggiana Bird-of-paradise**. Other top targets on this birding tour include **Wattled Ploughbill**, **Blue-capped Ifrit**, **Mottled Berryhunter**, and **Loria's Satinbird**. Our New Britain birding tour searches for New Britain, Bismarck Archipelago, and Solomon Islands endemics. Some of the many possible highlights from this short tour include **Melanesian Megapode**, **Blue-eyed Cockatoo**, **Black-capped Paradise Kingfisher**, **Bismarck (New Britain) Pitta**, and **Golden Masked Owl**. Both tours also feature a myriad of colorful pigeons, fruit doves, parrots, and kingfishers.

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. Birding Ecotours exercises extreme care in planning and coordinating its tours and we consider Papua New Guinea to be a less safe destination than most of our other global bird tour offerings, and we need potential participants on our tours to the country to be aware of this. We have put together in-depth information to help give you the most up to date information possible for the region. The information here is general to both of our Papua New Guinea birding tours and we have also prepared some additional tour-specific information for each of the above tours.

## INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Given the frequent delays and almost constant changes to domestic flight schedules experienced in Papua New Guinea, we recommend you book your international departure flight out of the country at least 24 hours after the tour conclusion time/date. The reason for this is just in case our final domestic flight of the tour is changed/delayed, and we don't make it back to Port Moresby when expected. Delays and cancellations on domestic flights are commonplace here (and we obviously have zero control over this), and the safest option is to spend a final night in our very comfortable hotel in Port Moresby. If we do make it back in time you can enjoy the many facilities the hotel has to offer, but if we don't make it back in time then you will have a

window of time to get back to the city to make your onward flight connections. See the “Domestic/Internal Flights” section in this document, below, and also in the tour-specific information. Also see the “Accommodation” section in the tour-specific information.

### **ITINERARY AND SPECIES RECORDING (BIRD LISTS AND ANIMAL LISTS)**

Ahead of our Papua New Guinea and New Britain birdwatching tours we will email you a detailed daily itinerary (along with arrival instructions) and we will provide you with a printed version of this itinerary on your arrival into Port Moresby, the capital of the country and where both of our PNG bird tours start.

We will provide you with a bird list and list of other animals possible on the tour (or a blank sheet to write in any interesting wildlife sightings). At Birding Ecotours we use the latest International Ornithological Congress (IOC) taxonomy for birds, and for all other wildlife recorded we follow the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) taxonomy, so all our itineraries and checklists follow these taxonomies. We will complete eBird checklists for all birdwatching time during the tour and these can be shared with all participants who use eBird, if desired. Please provide your eBird user details to us at the beginning of the tour so we are able to do this.

Each evening, after we’ve finished our birding for the day, we will go through the daily bird and animal list, noting all the species recorded. The list session is of course optional, we know that some of you are not fussed about the bird listing aspect of the trip, but others very much are. At this time we will also go through the plans for the following day by providing you with information on what clothes and equipment will be needed, when we will be having breakfast, departure time from the hotel, and key target species we will be looking for, etc.

Once the tour is completed, we will email you a PDF copy of an illustrated trip report. This will include a complete checklist of all wildlife recorded during the tour and if we are able to get any interesting bird, animal, or landscape photographs these will be included in the trip report and will also, at a later date, be added to our new Flickr page.

### **PASSPORT, VISA, AND LOCAL LAWS**

All nationalities are required to obtain a tourist visa before visiting Papua New Guinea. Currently (as of June 2023) a visa on arrival (VOA) is not available. Certain nationalities can apply for a tourist visa online for US\$50 per person. There are options for visitor e-visas for 30 days and 60 days. The visa application should be made through this PNG Immigration and Citizenship Authority (ICA) official website only. The visa processing time is at least 15 days and usually takes longer than advertised, so it is recommended you start the process at least 2 months prior to departure. Currently, the visa application requires you submit the following supplementary information, though this may change without warning, so please double-check the exact requirements on the aforementioned website when applying:

1. Copy of passport biometric page.
2. Covid-19 medical clearance certificate (proof of vaccination).
3. Cover letter, detailing purpose of visit, areas to be visited, accommodation to be used, and contact details when in PNG. We will provide everyone with this letter.

4. Evidence of funds (e.g., bank statement).
5. Completed Covid-19 supplementary health form (an old and outdated form available to download as a PDF that will allow you to edit with your personal information).

It is likely that you will have to show proof of onward travel on arrival in Papua New Guinea (or before you are even allowed to board your flight to get there). Please make sure that you have all the necessary documents required (and printed) and please [contact us](#) if you have any questions. Please talk to your local embassy, consulate, or immigration office as they will be aware of any recent changes that we may be unaware of, and the [official ICA e-visa website](#) will be the best source of information. Papua New Guinea has some very strict laws, please read the full list of [local laws](#) as detailed on your government website (please also note the important information in the “Things to Buy” section in this document).

Note that depending on your route to PNG you might need to adhere to visa regulations of other countries, such as Australia or other destinations visited.

Please make sure that you bring a photocopy of your passport with you on the tour, this can be kept with other important documents like vaccine certificate, emergency contact details, and insurance documents.

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

As stated in our standard [Terms & Conditions](#), we strongly recommend that you purchase comprehensive trip cancellation insurance to protect against unexpected events that might cause delays and interruptions to travel. This insurance should also cover illness, medical issues, accidents, repatriation, loss of luggage or any valuable items, and flight delays/cancellations, etc.

Above our standard T&Cs, Birding Ecotours requires 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 provide us with evidence of suitable insurance cover.

## CRIME AND SAFETY

Please read the latest extremely important information on crime, safety, and security from the following three key official government resources. Your safety is our paramount concern on all of our birding tours, however in Papua New Guinea we require everyone to be fully up to speed on possible safety issues:

1. The United Kingdom government foreign advice on travel in PNG, [here](#).
2. The Australian government foreign advice on Smart Traveler for people thinking about visiting Papua New Guinea, [here](#).
3. The United States of America government foreign travel advice specific to PNG, [here](#).

The risk of violent crime, carjackings, home invasions, armed robberies, and sexual assault in Papua New Guinea is high, particularly (but not limited to) the capital of Port Moresby and other cities such as Lae and Mt Hagen. Criminals often use 'bush knives' (machetes) and guns. Always be alert to your surroundings and avoid going out after dark. Civil disorder and criminal activity have occurred at tourist resorts. Keep doors and windows locked, including when travelling by

vehicle and leave non-essential valuables at home (e.g., jewelry etc.).

Civil unrest and violent inter-group and tribal conflict is common and can increase without warning. Avoid protests, demonstrations, political rallies, and areas where tribal fighting is taking place. Criminal groups operate in remote areas of Papua New Guinea, particularly in the Highlands, including across provincial borders and in areas around logging, mining, oil, and gas sites. Check security conditions and tensions by monitoring the media and local security reports before travelling to new areas. Pay close attention to your personal security, your surroundings, and follow heightened security measures. Avoid high-risk areas and activities and consider using private security and listen to the advice of your local team. Police presence is limited outside of the capital, Port Moresby, and police may be unable to assist due to limited resources.

Piracy is active in the waters surrounding Papua New Guinea. Travelers by boat should reconsider travel to the Bismarck and Solomon Seas along Papua New Guinea's north and eastern coasts. Keep a watch of the [Live Piracy Report](#), published by the International Maritime Bureau.

Travelers should exercise caution when traveling in remote areas of Papua New Guinea due to the presence of unexploded ordnance left over from World War II. Do not touch any unknown metal objects you may come across in case they are unexploded ordnance.

Do not use local taxis or buses, known as public motor vehicles or PMVs. Travel with guides from a reputable tour company, particularly if you plan on hiking. Avoid walking or driving at night. Do not physically resist any robbery attempt.

If you take reasonable care and common sense, you are most unlikely to experience anything other than friendliness and hospitality. Situational awareness is the key to keeping you and your belongings safe.

## HEALTH AND PESTS

Please consult your local travel clinic or doctor regarding vaccine requirements before your tour to Papua New Guinea. We recommend doing this around two months prior to the tour start date so that any vaccine courses can be completed in time.

Yellow Fever is not present in Papua New Guinea, however, there is a certificate requirement for anyone arriving in the country from countries with a risk of Yellow Fever transmission (including layovers in these countries of over twelve hours). Please refer to the World Health Organization's list of countries where Yellow Fever transmission is possible, [here](#).

Please make yourself familiar with the Papua New Guinea Covid-19 vaccination entry requirements ahead of the tour, useful information can be found [here](#). You will need to provide official evidence of being vaccinated in order to get your visa.

Everyone visiting Papua New Guinea should be up to date with standard vaccinations and boosters, like Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR) and Diphtheria-Tetanus-Polio. Most people should be vaccinated for Hepatitis A, Tetanus, and Typhoid. Some people should be vaccinated for Cholera, Hepatitis B, Japanese Encephalitis, Rabies (Bat Lyssavirus), and Tuberculosis.

Please refer to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) website [here](#), for further information on vaccines and how to stay healthy in Papua New Guinea. Another great source of

data is the “[Travel Health Pro](#)” website which provides information on Papua New Guinea including New Britain and can be seen [here](#). Both these linked webpages are worth studying ahead of joining the tour.

Malaria is a serious illness caused by infection of red blood cells with a parasite called Plasmodium. The disease is transmitted by mosquitoes which predominantly feed between dusk and dawn. There is a high risk of malaria in Papua New Guinea (including New Britain) below 5,900 feet (1,800 meters) and there is low to no risk above 5,900 feet, (1,800 meters). Awareness of risk and bite avoidance is recommended at higher elevations while one of the following antimalarials is recommended for while at lower elevations (Larium not recommended for those doing any diving in New Britain), but please seek further medical specialist advice:

1. Atovaquone/Proguanil
2. Doxycycline
3. Mefloquine

Other insect- (or tick-) borne bites can lead to Dengue, Zika, Ross River virus disease, Chikungunya, Leishmaniasis, Scrub (Bush) Typhus (a rash from [Chiggers](#)) so these are all worth being aware of. Insect repellent with a high DEET content is highly recommended for most of the areas we visit in Papua New Guinea (DEET works against both ticks and mosquitoes).

Contaminated water can lead to Leptospirosis and Schistosomiasis so care should be taken to avoid any potentially contaminated water and adjacent areas (such as if wading, swimming, bathing, or washing clothes in freshwater streams, rivers, or lakes). Diarrheal diseases are not as common in Papua New Guinea as they are in nearby countries such as Indonesia, but it is possible you may get some sort of stomach illness during the tour. Airborne and droplet transmitted diseases such as Avian/Bird Flu and Hantavirus are present in the country.

We recommend that any scratches from plants (see the “Dangerous Animals and Plants” section below) or bites from insects should be cleaned, treated with antiseptic cream/wipes, and covered quickly to reduce the chance of any unpleasant infection.

Sunscreen (rated SPF 30+) should be used frequently, and a sunhat should be worn to protect from the sun’s powerful rays, with sunglasses used to help prevent glare. A plentiful intake of water (please bring a reusable water bottle, which we can fill daily with safe drinking water) is also essential to maintain hydration. The standard of health services in Papua New Guinea is lower than what you will be familiar with at home, or absent altogether. Bringing a supply of commonly required medicines and creams, etc., can be useful and efficient. The CDC website provides a list of suggested items to pack that may help on your trip to Papua New Guinea [here](#).

Papua New Guinea sits along the ‘Ring of Fire’ in the Pacific. Volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and tsunamis are possible. Seismic and volcanic activity is most likely to occur in Kimbe in West New Britain province, of the areas we visit. Mount Ulawun Volcano, on the island of New Britain, erupted three times in 2019 causing airport closures and a brief eruption occurred in June 2022. The tropical cyclone season usually runs from November to May and our tours should avoid this period. The [World Meteorological Organization](#) (WMO) and [Australian Bureau of Meteorology](#) provide updates on severe weather situations. Flooding and landslides can occur, especially in rural areas, and coastal areas experience monthly [King Tides](#), which may cause localized coastal floods.

Please also be sure to check the “Dangerous Animals and Plants” section below.

## WEATHER/CLIMATE

Papua New Guinea, including the province of New Britain, has a tropical climate. In the lowlands and coastal areas, the temperature will be hot and in the range of 75 – 95 °F (24 – 35 °C) with high humidity. In the highlands, temperatures are cooler, with a temperature range of 54 – 82 °F (12 – 28 °C), with less humidity to be expected. Mornings are usually generally fine and sunny with some clouds building up through the day, with afternoon and evening rain occurring frequently.

Our tours take place in what is described as the dry season, but the reality is that the seasons are difficult to distinguish. Weather in Papua New Guinea is generally very localized, and PNG does not usually experience frontal weather as is common in more temperate areas or a monsoon season as is common in other tropical areas.

The sun is strong year-round, and care should be taken to remain hydrated and use sun protection. Rain is possible at any time, at any location, so rain gear and an umbrella will be essential. A dry bag is also recommended for protecting optics, electrical equipment/cameras, and important documents (see the “What to Bring: Clothing” and “What to Bring: Other Items” sections below and in the tour-specific information).

## MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Please make sure you are suitably covered with comprehensive medical insurance in the instance of any emergency situation while on our Papua New Guinea bird tours. Without insurance, the cost for medical care is likely to be very high. As detailed in Birding Ecotours’ general [Terms & Conditions](#), we require you to notify us when signing up for this tour of any medical conditions that we should be aware of. The sort of things we should know about include, but are not limited to, any walking/mobility issues, diabetes, epilepsy, food and medicinal allergies, heart conditions, and long-term illnesses etc.

All of the places we are birding in during the tour are very remote and without many medical facilities. In the case of medical treatment being required, this might necessitate flying to a different island (or country, such as Australia) with suitable medical facilities, the costs for this sort of situation can be extremely expensive (requiring extra flights etc.) and so you must be suitably covered for any eventuality.

## DANGEROUS ANIMALS AND PLANTS

Papua New Guinea conjures up dreams of a tropical paradise full of incredible birds-of-paradise, which it is, but there are also quite a few less enjoyable (to many people) animals living inside the forest and other natural habitats (like mangroves), and some of these include **Saltwater Crocodile**, many poisonous snakes (such as **Smooth-scaled Death Adder**, **Coastal Taipan**, and **Papuan Blacksnake**), potentially dangerous birds, such as the cassowaries, and even some poisonous birds like **Hooded Pitohui**. Simply touching the feathers of a pitohui is enough to make your hands feel like they are on fire, but if you ingest a bit of the batrachotoxin, the poison stops your sodium channels from working, leading to paralysis and even death. [Recently published exciting studies](#) have also identified several other poisonous birds in PNG, such as **Regent Whistler** and **Rufous-naped Bellbird**, while **Blue-capped Ifrit** has been known to be

poisonous for some time. These poisonous birds are all possible on our main Papua New Guinea bird tour.

There are many dangerous creatures in the oceans of the region, including the **Red Lionfish**, **Australian Box Jellyfish** (Sea Wasp), and “**Blue-ringed Octopus**” (its venom is 1,000 times more powerful than cyanide!), **Banded Sea Krait**, and plenty more. If you go snorkeling in New Britain, make sure not to touch anything, keep your wits about you, and listen to any advice given by our local experts.

All wildlife should be viewed from a safe distance to prevent disturbance and care should be taken when walking in the forest, particularly where you put your hands and feet when moving through vegetation. A wide range of “creepy crawlies” are to be expected throughout PNG, such as biting or stinging scorpions, spiders, ants, rove beetles, ticks, centipedes, wasps, cockroaches, and mosquitoes, etc. Before you put your boots on in the morning, please check there is nothing hiding inside of them.

Our PNG birdwatching tours take place during the dry season and therefore the chance of coming across **Leeches** should be lower than at other times of the year. They are an annoyance rather than being a real health issue, though we acknowledge they can cause angst for many of you! Insect repellent sprayed on shoes and ankles can help to keep them at bay (as well as being great for reducing issues with other annoying creatures such as ticks, mosquitoes, and chiggers). “Leech socks” can be worth having within your luggage, should we hit an unusually wet period or area during the tour. Leech socks can be purchased fairly easily online, though tucking your trousers (pants) into your socks can have a similar result.

Many tropical plants are protected by rather ghastly spikes, needles, or sharp thorns so that they don't become food to a wide range of animals. Sometimes these appendages are used to help pull themselves through other plants to reach the canopy and the sunlight required for their continued existence. These projections can be rather painful if they pierce the skin and can catch and rip clothing. Please do not just grab plants without checking for any potentially sharp or painful spikes etc., this is also a good way of reducing the chance of getting ant, spider, and snake bites.

## FOOD AND DRINK, INCLUDING WATER

In most major centers, the public water supply is treated and is comparable to World Health Organization standards. At some of the remote lodges we visit water sources vary. Bottled water is sold at the remote lodges (please bring a reusable water bottle to help us reduce the amount of plastic waste generated during the tour). An excellent beer is locally produced, and a good variety of imported wines are plentiful.

Coffee and tea are commonly found across the country and are considered some of the best in the world. Note that they are usually not of the taste/standard familiar in the west, so if you have particular preferences for hot drinks, it would be worth bringing your own supply of teabags or coffee with you. Note that getting fresh milk is not often possible, powdered milk or UHT might be possible in some places, but shouldn't be taken for granted. Most coffee comes in a 3-in-1 packet containing coffee, powdered milk, and sugar and is not to everyone's taste as they are usually very sweet!

Mealtimes are likely to be somewhat flexible depending on our birding or travel plans for the day and so if you need to eat food at a specific time of day (e.g., to accompany any medication you



are on) we recommend that you bring snacks to supplement the meals, such as cereal bars/protein bars, dried fruit etc. Meats, fish, vegetables, and tropical fruits are served Australian style. Vegetarian meals can be provided (please give us plenty of notice of any dietary requirements), but some other special meal requests are not available as the meals are table d'hote / set menus. Local food is made up of bland starchy foods with very little protein and to a western palate, not particularly appetizing.

If you have any dietary requirements or food allergies, please let us know when you book the tour, so we can advise whether it will be suitable for you and so that we can make sure we can notify the people who will be preparing meals ahead of time.

## CURRENCY AND MONEY

The Kina (PGK or K) “kee-nah” is the currency of Papua New Guinea and is divided into 100 toea (t) “toy-ya”. Banknotes come in denominations of K2, K5, K10, K20, K50, and K100, and coins in 5t, 10t, 20t, 50t, K1, and K2.

You should be able to get Kina from exchange counters in many international airports before your trip, or from your bank/travel agent prior to travel. Alternatively, there is an ATM (as well as a currency exchange counter) at the international airport in Port Moresby accessible after your arrival in the country (before you go through immigration). Please note that it has been known for foreign exchange counters at airports to run out of Kina, so it is recommended that you order Kina from your local foreign exchange or from your local bank well in advance of departure, and it is also recommended that you try to get small denominations such as K2, K5, and K10 and avoid K20 denominations and upwards.

Note that bank charges are likely to apply with using ATMs away from your home country. You may need to notify your card supplier about your trip, so you do not find a block on your card preventing its use.

Our resort on New Britain (Walindi Plantation Resort), accepts Australian Dollars (AUD/AU\$), US Dollars (USD/US\$), Euros (Euro), and Kina as well as all major credit cards (Mastercard, Visa, and American Express). There is no surcharge for credit card payments made at the resort.

International credit cards are accepted at most major hotels we visit on the PNG mainland. Visa, Mastercard, and American Express are accepted at Ambua Lodge and Rondon Ridge for example, but will attract a 4% administration fee.

When we are away from Port Moresby it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to get money out of ATMs as we will be in remote areas without such facilities and we may not be visiting these areas during banking hours.

## ELECTRICITY

In Papua New Guinea the power plug sockets are of Type I mainly used in Australia, New Zealand, China, the South Pacific, and Argentina. This socket only works with plug I. The standard voltage is 240 volts (V), and the standard frequency is 50 hertz (Hz). Further details (and photos) can be found [here](#).

Adaptors are likely to be needed for some visitors from overseas, you may also need a voltage

converter and should be careful with certain appliances that utilize different frequencies. You can use your electric appliances in Papua New Guinea, if the standard voltage in your country is in between 220 – 240 V (as is in the UK, Europe, Australia, and most of Asia and Africa). Manufacturers take these small deviations into account. If the standard voltage in your country is in the range of 100 – 127 V (as is in the US, Canada, and most South American countries), you will need a voltage converter in Papua New Guinea. You could also consider a combined power plug adapter/voltage converter to save space.

Some places we visit on our PNG birding tours may not be on 24-hours mains electricity and some don't have any form of power. Please refer to tour-specific information.

## DOMESTIC/INTERNAL FLIGHTS

Both of our Papua New Guinea bird tours require domestic flights as this is the only way to get around this large country with a poor and potentially unsafe road network. We usually use scheduled flights (e.g., Air Niugini and Airline Papua New Guinea), but occasionally use chartered flights organized by our local team on the ground. Please refer to the tour-specific documents for further details, including important information on baggage allowance for these flights. We will let you know if your tour will make use of any chartered flights so you can adjust your weight allowances accordingly.

Domestic flights are frequently delayed and cancelled by the local airlines (mainly due to poor weather conditions or “operational” reasons), so patience is required as we will try and work around delays and sort out replacement flights if needed. Flight schedule changes are a common daily occurrence. It goes without saying that any flight delays and cancellations (and any costs associated with changes) are beyond our control, though we will endeavor to get issues resolved as quickly as possible.

Baggage allowance on domestic scheduled flights is usually 35 pounds (lbs) / 16 kilograms (kgs) and on the chartered flights it will be 22 lbs (10 kgs). Hand luggage for domestic scheduled flights will be limited to 15 lbs (7kgs) but for chartered flights the limit will be 11 lbs (5kgs). 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 on our main PNG birding tour (if we use them) where soft-sided duffle bags are required rather than large hard cases. Further details are contained within the tour-specific information for each tour.

Please keep your boarding passes and luggage tracking tags given to you by the airline with you when you depart the plane and the airport, because you may need to show these when exiting the airport with your bags, so security personnel are happy you are only removing your own bags.

Given the high potential for domestic flight delays, we recommend you postpone your international departure from Papua New Guinea by 24 hours after the tour conclusion time and date. This will reduce the risk of missing an international flight due to a delay or cancellation of a domestic flight, as detailed in the “International Flight Arrival and Departure” section of this document, above.

## WHAT TO BRING: CLOTHING

Loose, lightweight field clothing with green, brown, or dark colors works best while we are

birding in the forest. Sand and khaki-type colors are fine for when birding coastal areas. Please avoid bright colors for birding time, for example no pale colors in forests and no white, red, orange etc. anywhere during birding time.

Given the potential insect issues in the forest (and strong tropical sun), we suggest trousers/long pants and long-sleeved shirts (these can be rolled up should you get too hot) for all birding activities. Some people may be more comfortable wearing shorts at the coastal sites, though again please be aware of biting insects, spiky plants, and the sun which can all result in lots of discomfort.

If you are joining our main [Papua New Guinea birding tour](#), you will need to bring some warmer clothes due to higher elevations visited. Nighttime temperatures can drop during the time of our visit to [New Britain](#), so a warm sweater/jumper/throwover could be useful here too.

Although we will be birding during the dry season in Papua New Guinea/New Britain, rain is always a possibility, so light rain gear (and a small umbrella) is always worth having as a back-up.

Casual and informal dress is appropriate for the hotels/accommodation we use on these tours. Sunglasses, sunhat, and sunscreen (rated SPF 30 or higher) are essential. It should be noted that Papua New Guineans will be offended by ladies with uncovered upper thighs, and we ask that you respect local customs, so please no bikinis or tight, revealing clothing in public areas.

Lightweight walking boots are recommended for both of our Papua New Guinea tours as they give extra ankle support while walking (necessary given some of the trails we will be birding on) and added protection against animal stings/bites (e.g., potential snake issues). A pair of sandals (flip-flops) or trainers (tennis shoes) can be useful for when in vehicles and when walking between your room and restaurant in the hotels. Rubber boots are recommended for our PNG main tour, where we will be birding in wet lowland areas.

Laundry service is available at several of our accommodations on the PNG and New Britain tours. Laundry at most locations, particularly the remote locations, is line dried and so sufficient time (24 hours) should be factored in for drying time.

Please refer to the tour-specific documents for further important information on clothing.

## WHAT TO BRING: OTHER ITEMS

**Do not forget:** Binoculars, camera, field guide (see “Books” section below), flashlight (torch – e.g. headtorch), spare batteries, power bank, converter plugs, plug adaptors, chargers, prescription drugs (please bring the generic names for these drugs with you), toiletries, prescription glasses (and a spare pair), insect repellent, sunscreen, sunglasses, alarm clock, money pouch, hiking poles/walking sticks, suggested medical kit (see [here](#)), and daypacks.

Our tour leader will have a communal telescope for use during the tour. The communal scope will allow everyone opportunities to look at birds briefly on a rotation basis. If you like to take “digi-scope/phone-scope” photographs through a scope, or you would like to take prolonged scope views of the birds, please bring your own scope to do so, the communal scope will be for everyone to look at the birds but not for photography. We will likely make limited use of the scope on this tour.

Some additional items to remember to bring include important travel documents, passport, cash (or ATM/credit cards to draw money), proof of vaccinations, and your travel or health insurance cards – photocopies of all can be carried by the tour leader in case of emergency.

Bringing a couple of different colored pens along with a 12-inch (30 centimeter) ruler can make the checklist session easier to follow.

Please refer to the tour-specific documents for further information of items to bring on the individual tours. Additional details on what to bring on a birding tour can be seen on our informative blog post [here](#).

## LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

Papua New Guinea has more indigenous languages than any other country, over 800, but most languages have fewer than 1,000 speakers. The most widely spoken native language is Enga, with around 200,000 speakers! There are four languages in Papua New Guinea with some statutory recognition, these being English, Tok Pisin, Hiri Motu, and sign language. English is the language of government and the education system but is not spoken widely. The primary lingua franca of the country is Tok Pisin, commonly known as New Guinean Pidgin or Melanesian Pidgin which is derived from English, German, and indigenous languages, with the occasional Spanish, Dutch, and Portuguese words thrown in! [This website](#) provides a translation of many words ordered alphabetically and is a useful resource. A few words that may be helpful:

1. Good morning = “Monin”
2. Goodnight = “Gut nait”
3. How are you = “Yu stap gut”
4. I am fine = “Mu stap gut”
5. Thank you = “Ten kyu”
6. No = “Nogat”
7. Yes = “Ya”
8. Food = “Kai Kai”
9. Money = “Mani”
10. Man or male = “Man”
11. Woman or female = “Meri”
12. Water = “Wara”
13. Can I take a photo = “Inap mi kisim poto”
14. I do not understand = “Mi no klia gut”
15. Speak slowly = “Tok isi”

When you experience the unexpected, please be patient. In Papua New Guinea, anger, displeasure, or irritability do not increase your chances of obtaining positive results. Such expressions of displeasure often produce the opposite effect. Please remain patient as it is a waste of time complaining about things, and please relax with the knowledge that our team are working hard behind the scenes to make things right as quickly as possible.

## VILLAGE VISITS, CULTURAL DISPLAYS, AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Except in the case of planned performances, always remember to ask before taking a photograph

of a particular individual. Sometimes the individual may request payment, in this case it is not recommended you pay for the photograph, or take it. Other opportunities are likely to arise at no cost. Payment for photos encourages commercialization and inhibits the spontaneous nature of what you are likely to want to photograph. A general fee is paid to each village we visit to assist the local economy to the benefit of the whole community with a fairer spread of income.

We are likely to walk through local people's land, gardens, and living areas during our PNG tours. Sometimes access may be denied unexpectedly for reasons beyond our control, such as a death in the village or a tribal dispute. There may be no prior notice of their need for privacy and cancelled access. Please don't become upset or angry with your leader, local guides, drivers, or the villagers themselves, even though we acknowledge you might be disappointed. Alternative plans will be put together as soon as possible by your local team.

Please do not give gifts to individuals in villages, this is a really important point. If you would like to bring gifts for people, the schools are always under-funded, so school supplies are always in demand. Please refer to the "Tipping" section below.

## THINGS TO BUY

Art and handicrafts from Papua New Guinea are world renowned and are a vital industry to local people in the South Pacific. Various items can be purchased from a wide range of locations, such as the villages we visit and the accommodation we stay in. In general, the prices are the prices, and it is considered impolite to barter or haggle over prices beyond a second price.

Please note that it is illegal to export the feathers of the birds-of-paradise and by buying or accepting gifts of birds-of-paradise feathers you will encourage the hunting of these rare and beautiful birds. Papua New Guinean and Australian laws are extremely strict about the export or import of all endangered species. Please do not buy or accept these feathers and be advised that you will be prosecuted if you are caught trying to take them out of the country.

## TIPPING

For our tours of 4-10 guests, as we take on our set departure tours, the following is a tipping guidance note from our team on the ground. You are not obligated to tip in Papua New Guinea; however, it is appreciated in the tourism and hospitality sectors but totally at your discretion. Tipping can, unfortunately, often cause jealousies and creates expectations that ultimately do more harm than the good that was initially intended by the gesture. To address this, we make the following humble requests:

1. Please do not pay individuals for taking their photo, there will be many opportunities for a similar or better photo on your trip.
2. Please do not tip our ground staff for informal talks or demonstrations.
3. Please do not tip villagers for demonstrations or sing-sings as we have a payment arrangement with them for their performances. Purchasing a small artifact or souvenir is appropriate (see notes on this in the "Things to Buy" section, above).
4. We discourage handing out of gifts to individuals or villages as this encourages begging, something you will notice does not exist in this country. But please see the "Village Visits, Cultural Displays, and Photography" section above.

- In the lodges, please do not tip porters, waiters, or bar staff. Tips for all staff should be placed in the “Tip Box” located in each lodge. This will then be distributed equally among all staff at their next pay period.

For groups staying for 2-3 nights at the lodges (e.g., including, but not limited to, Ambua Lodge and Rondon Ridge Lodge), we suggest the following amounts for your stay (recommended amounts are for your entire stay and not per night).

- Lodge staff, K40 per guest per lodge (this is distributed to all lodge staff including drivers and guides, with the exception of Rondon Ridge drivers and guides)
- Port Moresby and Mount Hagen (Rondon Ridge) tour drivers (K10) and tour/bird guides (K15) per guest.
- Other tour drivers (K10) and other tour/bird guides (K15) per guest.
- It is not necessary to tip guides and drivers for transfers only.

Note that the Mt Hagen tours are not operated by Rondon-based drivers/guides so should be tipped individually. The suggested amount could be deducted from the Lodges’ staff amount. The same applies in the other areas we visit on the tour.

We appreciate your help in preserving the culture and nature of the PNG people, thus far, little touched by the many unpleasant events associated with other developing countries.

Please ask us if you’d like more information or clarity on the above.

## BOOKS

**Birds of New Guinea: Including Bismarck Archipelago and Bougainville** – Phil Gregory (2017), Lynx Edicions. [*Unfortunately, there is only a hardback version of this book, and it might now be out of print according to some book seller websites*].

**Birds of New Guinea** – Thane K Pratt and Bruce M Beehler (2014), Princeton University Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.

Other specific interest books include:

**A Handbook of New Guinea’s Marsupials and Monotremes** – James I Menzies (2011), University of Papua New Guinea Press.

**Bats of Papua New Guinea** – Frank J Bonaccorso (2000), Conservation International Tropical Field Guides.

**A Guide to the Snakes of Papua New Guinea** – Mark O’Shea (1996), Independent Publishing.

**Field Guide to the Dragonflies of New Guinea/Buku Panduan Lapangan Capung Jarum untuk Wilayah New Guinea** – Albert G Orr and Vincent J Kalkman (2015), Nederlandse Vereniging voor Libellenstudie.

**A Field Guide to Tropical Reef Fishes of the Indo-Pacific: Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam** – Gerald R Allen (2020), Tuttle Publishing, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition.

## SOUND RECORDINGS

A wide range of bird songs and calls from Papua New Guinea (and including New Britain) can be downloaded from the excellent [xeno-canto](#) website. Many species recordings can now also be found on [eBird](#) species pages, where video clips can also be viewed.

## USEFUL WEBSITE RESOURCES AND APPS

[Aves Vox](#) – an app enabling you to download bird songs from the great [xeno-canto](#) website onto your cell phone.

[eBird](#) – loads of information that is easy to gather on your cell phone or other devices such as tablet and computer. Sound, photo, and video galleries exist for almost every species in Papua New Guinea and New Britain via the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's [Macaulay Library](#).

[IOC World Bird List](#) – the website gives all the latest information on world bird taxonomy according to the scientific body that we at Birding Ecotours follow. You can learn about species that have been newly described, any recent and past splits (creation of a new species, which is happening a lot in Indonesia) and lumps (deletion of a species) of existing species, and plenty of additional useful information.



*Magnificent Bird-of-paradise, always a visual treat!*