



FIJI AND SAMOA BIRDING TOUR: PACIFIC BIRDING ADVENTURE

TOUR-SPECIFIC INFORMATION



Orange Dove needs to be seen to be believed! What an incredible bird.

TOUR OUTLINE

On this Fiji and Samoa birding adventure, we explore the beautiful Melanesian country of Fiji and the Polynesian country of Samoa (formerly known as Western Samoa), where we visit the island of Upolu. More than half of the birds we expect to see on this tour are either endemic to these islands, or are Melanesian or Polynesian specials and we will visit the best birdwatching sites on Fiji and Samoa.

We start our tour by birding in Fiji, where we first visit the northeastern island of Taveuni, home of the iconic **Taveuni Silktail** and other Fijian endemic birds, before traveling back to the main island, Viti Levu. Here, we will be based in the forested mountains north of the capital city Suva, from where we seek a trio of Fiji's rarest endemic birds, **Long-legged Thicketbird**, **Pink-billed Parrotfinch**, and **Black-throated Shrikebill**. During our time on Viti Levu, we have a unique opportunity for a full-day pelagic birding tour, where we will search for petrels and shearwaters rarely seen by birdwatchers, including the mythical and Critically Endangered (BirdLife International) **Fiji Petrel**. We end our time in southern Fiji on the peaceful island of Kadavu, where we will look for four single-island endemics, including the lovely **Whistling Dove**. We end our Fiji and Samoa tour by birding Upolu, the main island of Samoa. On Upolu we will target ten Samoan endemic and near-endemic species, such as the stunning **Blue-crowned Lorikeet**, a member of a genus endemic to islands in the southern Pacific, and the **Mao**, an Endangered (BirdLife International) and prehistoric-looking honeyeater.

There are a lot of stunningly colorful and incredible birds possible on this Pacific birding tour, which combines perfectly with our New Caledonia birding tour that many people also choose to join for the iconic **Kagu**. Top highlights while birding in Fiji include the **Orange, Golden, and Whistling Doves, Collared Lory, Crimson, Masked and Maroon Shining Parrots, Yellow-billed and Duetting Giant Honeyeaters, Fiji Wattled Honeyeater, White-throated and Yellow-throated Fiji Whistlers, Taveuni Silktail, Azure-crested Flycatcher, and Fiji Parrotfinches**, all of which are Fijian endemic birds. While on Samoa, we target the near-endemic **Blue-crowned Lorikeet** and **Cardinal Myzomela**, plus the Samoan endemic **Flat-billed Kingfisher, Samoan Triller, Samoan Flycatcher, Red-headed Parrotfinch, and Mao**.

This Pacific Island birding tour may run in a different order than that advertised in the itinerary, based on the availability of internal tour flights, accommodation, and local guides. If we do have to alter the itinerary for any of the above reasons, we will visit exactly the same places, just in a different order than shown in the online itinerary. While we always plan to start in Nadi, Fiji, and end in Apia, Samoa, please confirm the order of the route with us prior to purchasing your international flight tickets for the start and end of the tour, just in case we have to deviate from our preferred routing.

DAILY ACTIVITIES, PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS, AND TOUR PACE

Our Fiji and Samoa Pacific Birding Adventure moves at a moderate pace, but we cover a lot of ground and visit four different islands (Viti Levu, Taveuni, and Kadavu in Fiji, and Upolu in Samoa). As several species are single-island endemics, we have four or five days which are mostly travel days when we fly between the islands. At other times, we will aim to maximise birding time to ensure we connect with as many target species as possible. A good example of this is the stunning trio of Fijian doves, with **Golden Dove** found only on Viti Levu, **Orange Dove** on

Taveuni, and **Whistling Dove** on Kadavu. This creates a well-paced tour, with regular travel days acting as more relaxed rest days between birding sessions. Birding will be a mix of roadside stops, open coastal habitats, gardens, parks, and walking trails or small roads through denser forest. There will be good opportunities for photography during the tour, which has been designed to allow plenty of time for watching and photographing the beautiful endemic birds on offer.

The tour is generally considered easy to moderate in terms of physical effort. While we visit the islands during the cooler dry season, daytime temperatures can still reach 84°F (29°C), particularly in Samoa (further details in the “Weather/Climate” section below). Some birding days will be physically easy and largely vehicle-based, but on several occasions we will walk around 2.5 miles (4.0 kilometres) along quiet roads or forest trails, with frequent birding stops made. On the day we explore Mount Manuka on Taveuni, there may be some uphill walking of up to one mile (1.6 kilometres), depending on when we encounter our targets. This will be taken slowly to ensure it is manageable for everyone. Walking sticks or hiking poles may be helpful for those who prefer extra stability and are essential for anyone who feels unsteady on their feet, as your safety is our top priority.

Our birding days typically begin at around 05:30 to 06:00 hrs., with either an early and basic breakfast or a boxed breakfast taken into the field. On travel days, we will likely eat at the hotel or a local café. Bird activity usually drops off during the heat of the middle of the day, when we will take a break for lunch and a chance to rest and refresh, followed by afternoon birding before our group evening dinner. Most walks will be optional, and when we are returning to the same accommodation, anyone who prefers not to join an activity will be able to stay and rest there. With no night birds to target on this tour, we do not expect to go out birdwatching after dark.

One day will include a full-day pelagic trip (around 12 hours) from Suva to search for rare seabirds of the region, involving both an early start and a late return. See the “Fiji Pelagic Birdwatching Trip” section below for more details. Although this tour involves no long drives, there are three or four days when we will spend most of the day out birding, using our vehicle as a base. On these days, we will have lunch at the vehicle rather than returning to our accommodation, and we will give you plenty of notice in advance. There are at least six flights included in the tour itinerary. Further details are provided in the “Tour Flights and Luggage” section of this document, below.

SPECIES RECORDING (BIRD LISTS AND ANIMAL LISTS)

Ahead of the tour we will email you a detailed daily itinerary complete with meeting/arrival instructions. We will provide you with a printed blank diary page within the itinerary document so that you can note down any names of birding sites that you may want to log. On the first night of the tour you will be provided with a printed version of the same itinerary. Each evening your tour leader will go through this with you to let you know any specifics to be aware of for the following day (e.g. clothes and equipment needed, breakfast time, time for leaving hotel, key target birds we will be looking for, etc.).

Attached to the itinerary document will be a bird list and list of other animals possible on the tour (or a blank list to write them in as we go). We follow the latest IOC (International Ornithological Congress taxonomy) for birds and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) for all other animals recorded during the tour so all itineraries and checklists follow these taxonomies.

Each evening we will go through the daily bird and animal lists, logging all the species from the day. The listing session is optional, we realize that some of our clients aren't fussed about the listing aspect, but others are. If you do not want to take part in the nightly bird list that is perfectly fine, but it is a useful way to remember what was seen during the day, so recommended.

Birding Ecotours leaders maintain eBird checklists from all birding activities during a tour (from unexpected roadside stops to planned birding activities). Tour leaders will share these eBird lists with all participants who use eBird, if desired. Just make sure to provide your eBird user details to the tour leader at the beginning of the tour for us to be able to do this, unfortunately we can't retrospectively go back and share past checklists after the tour. We will also provide you with an eBird trip report for the tour where we will add our photos taken on the tour and you are welcome to include your own too.

After the tour you will be emailed a PDF copy of a written trip report, this will be in the form of an illustrated daily diary and will include a complete checklist of all wildlife recorded. If the tour leader manages to get any interesting photographs these will be included in the trip report. Leader photos may also be added to our Flickr page and will be added into a "trip report gallery" which you can view, download, and share.

PASSPORT, VISA, AND ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Most visitors do not require a visa to visit **Fiji** if not staying for more than four months, including travelers from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom (UK), and Australia, but please check the Fijian immigration page for more information. You will need proof of your intended departure date and have already booked onwards travel to another country, showing you are leaving Fiji. United States, Canadian, British (UK), and Australian citizens need to have at least six month's validity remaining in their passports, evidence of funds to support yourself while in Fiji, and at least one blank page for entry and exit stamps, but please check these websites for any recent changes to ensure you are suitably covered.

All nationalities traveling to **Samoa** are not required to obtain an entry visa if staying for less than 60 days. You will need proof of your intended departure date and have already booked a ticket showing you are departing Samoa for another country. All visitors must hold a passport valid for six months or more at the point of entry into Samoa, have at least one blank page for entry and exit stamps, evidence of funds to support yourself while in Samoa, and confirmation of your accommodation while in Samoa (our guide can provide accommodation details before arrival into Samoa and please refer to the final tour itinerary document). Refer to the information here for US citizens, here for Canadian citizens, here for UK citizens, and here for Australian citizens, and please check these websites for any recent changes to ensure you are suitably covered.

Citizens of other countries not listed above should check their own governments' advice and contact their nearest embassies/consulates for up-to-date regulations and requirements. For example, while proof of vaccinations are not needed to enter either Fiji or Samoa, if you are traveling from a country listed as a Yellow Fever transmission risk you will need to show proof of vaccination.

Please make sure that you bring a photocopy of your passport with you on the tour, to be kept in a different location to your original passport, in case of loss/damage. This can be kept with other

important documents such as vaccine certificates, emergency contact details, and insurance documents. Digital copies of these saved on a “cloud” system can also be useful.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

As per our standard Terms and Conditions, we strongly recommend that you purchase comprehensive trip cancellation insurance to protect against unexpected events that might cause delays and interruptions to travel. Your insurance should also cover illness, medical issues, accidents, repatriation, loss of luggage or valuable items, flight delays/cancellations, and ideally medical evacuation included. Failure to purchase adequate insurance could be costly if something unexpected occurs. This is particularly important on a tour such as this, where we will be visiting remote islands with limited medical facilities which may require medical evacuation to larger islands or even nearby more developed countries such as Australia or New Zealand should you fall ill.

HEALTH, VACCINATIONS, AND MEDICAL CONDITIONS

We recommend you are up to date with routine vaccinations for visiting Fiji and Samoa, including measles-mumps-rubella (MMR), tetanus, diphtheria, polio, chickenpox, flu, and COVID-19. In addition, Hepatitis A is strongly recommended for all travelers, and Hepatitis B is also advised, particularly for anyone under 60. As we will be visiting rural areas, a Typhoid vaccine would be beneficial too. Malaria is not present on the islands, however, Dengue fever, Zika Virus and other insect-borne diseases, although uncommon, are present and so we recommend taking personal protective measures. These include using mosquito repellent, wearing long pants, and long-sleeved shirts, particularly at night when mosquitos and other biting insects are active. There is also a risk of Leptospirosis, particularly after heavy rain or flooding. We are not visiting during the wet season so the risk is considered low, but we recommend avoiding swimming in freshwater areas in rural regions. Please carefully read the CDC traveler advice which contains information on required vaccinations to enter Fiji, and Samoa. Please note, both Fiji and Samoa require a valid Yellow Fever Certificate if you are traveling from a region where yellow fever is present.

As per our general Terms and Conditions, we require you to notify us at the time of registering for this tour of any medical conditions that we should know about (these should include, but not be limited to, walking/mobility issues, allergies, heart conditions, diabetes, epilepsy, long-term illnesses etc.). While in Samoa we will not be far from the country’s main hospital in the capital Apia, similarly, while on Viti Levu, Fiji, we will either be close to a hospital in Nadi or Suva. During our time on the islands of Taveuni and Kadavu in Fiji, we will be located close to smaller medical facilities, however, we do make some excursions into mountainous remote areas (such as up Mount Manuka) and during these times we will be further from hospitals and medical facilities. Please make sure that you are covered with suitable medical insurance (with medical evacuation included) in case of an emergency while on the tour, because without insurance the cost for medical care is likely to be extremely high. In addition, many hospitals/medical clinics will require payment upfront for treatment and these costs could be much higher than what you might expect at home.

SAFETY, DANGEROUS ANIMALS, AND LOCAL CUSTOMS

Fiji and Samoa are generally both very safe and welcoming destinations, however, as anywhere in the world, it is advisable to be cautious and observant for the unexpected, especially in public spaces and crowded places. Crime levels are lower than in Australia, or the United Kingdom for example, but rarely, tourists can be targeted in the larger urban areas. Please keep a close watch over your possessions (e.g., bags, wallet, optics, etc.) when we are out and about in the cities of Suva, Nadi, and Apia. Stray dogs are common in remote areas and in some parks in Samoa, and we recommend avoiding contact with them. If traveling independently before or after the tour, we advise avoiding walking alone at night, keeping valuables secure, using licensed taxis (marked with yellow plates), and using ATMs located inside banks or hotels, especially in Suva, Fiji, and Apia, Samoa.

There are no large terrestrial mammals or venomous snakes or spiders to worry about, but marine life can pose a threat. Coastal waters around Fiji and Samoa are home to aggressive **Tiger** and **Bull Sharks** and venomous species such as **Blue-ringed Octopus**, **Bluebottle Jellyfish**, **Crown-of-Thorns Starfish**, **Stonefish**, and lots more. There will be several opportunities to swim or snorkel during the tour, particularly while staying on the remote islands of Taveuni and Kadavu in Fiji. We recommend following local advice before entering the water, due to the risk of strong currents, riptides, and potentially dangerous marine animals. We will be staying at dive resorts on these two islands, where staff are very knowledgeable about the waters and the amazing creatures you might see, but lifeguard presence will be limited. If you go snorkeling, make sure not to touch anything, and keep your wits about you.

During the tour, we will visit remote areas under customary village ownership, which require permission to enter (which we will arrange and will be traveling to with a local guide). While in these areas, please be respectful of local customs and traditions, especially if we are invited to attend a ceremony. Participation in kava ceremonies is common for travelers, but be aware that the drink may pose health risks (e.g. liver toxicity). Always ask permission before photographing people.

FOOD AND WATER

Filtered water is generally available at our accommodations, particularly those in the larger areas popular with tourists, such as Nadi and Apia. While out birding and visiting more rural areas it is best to only drink bottled water. An ample supply of drinking water is available throughout the tour in our vehicle, so please bring a refillable water bottle to try and reduce the amount of plastic waste generated during the tour. Ice is considered safe in high standard restaurants and hotels but should probably be avoided in rural areas or on street stalls.

Mealtimes are likely to be within normal eating hours, but these will be somewhat flexible depending on our birding/travel plans and so if you need to eat food at a specific time of day (e.g. to agree with medication you are on) you may need to bring snacks to supplement the above, such as cereal bars, protein bars, and dried fruit etc. As is inevitable with traveling to multiple different islands, we will have six or more in-tour flights during the tour (see the “Tour Flights and Luggage” section, below). While at some of the larger airports you will be able to buy snacks, but away from these places there are limited opportunities and we are unlikely to stop at convenience stores on this trip, so if you want items that are familiar, it is probably best to bring these from home.

Different dietary preferences are well catered for in Fiji and Samoa, and both local and westernized food is readily available across the islands. The food will be a mix of Western cuisine and local influences, including plenty of fresh fish, with vegetarian options readily available, making it suitable for most palates. We typically have breakfast and dinner at our accommodation, with lunch taken at a café or restaurant after morning birding. While on Kadavu, all meals will be at the resort.

CURRENCY

The official currencies are the Fijian dollar (FJD) in Fiji and the Samoan tālā (WST) in Samoa. Banknotes are available in various denominations, and both countries primarily use their local currencies for everyday transactions. While some tourist areas may accept major foreign currencies like the US dollar, paying in local currency usually offers better value. We recommend carrying some local cash for smaller purchases, especially in remote areas, to avoid poor exchange rates and/or card surcharges. Visa and Mastercard are widely accepted at hotels and in major towns and cities and can be used for drawing cash from ATMs (bank charges may apply), while use of American Express is more limited. Check with your card supplier whether you need to notify them of your trip to Fiji and Samoa, so you don't find your card doesn't work on your arrival in the country.

It will be possible to exchange or draw money at the larger airports (Nadi and Suva-Nausori Airports in Fiji, and Faleolo International Airport in Samoa), but it might be easier all round to bring cash with you from home, or sort it out at the airport before the tour. A small amount of local cash will be useful for personal purchases for items not included in the tour costs and for any gratuities. See the full list of what is/isn't included in the tour cost in the itinerary document [here](#). Remember to remain vigilant when using ATMs for your safety and security.

WEATHER/CLIMATE

Fiji and Samoa are located in the South Pacific, south of the Equator. Fiji has a warm, subtropical climate, while Samoa, being further north and closer to the Equator, has a hotter and more consistent climate year-round. Both countries experience two main seasons: a wetter summer from November to April, and a drier winter from May to October. We visit the islands during the peak of the dry season, in August and early September, when the weather is generally warm and comfortable, with lower humidity, minimal rainfall, and pleasantly cool evenings, especially along the coast. Most of our time will be spent in coastal areas, where daytime temperatures typically range from 73 to 84°F (23 to 29°C), dropping to around 63 to 73°F (17 to 23°C) at night. Sea temperatures remain consistently warm, around 82°F (28°C), providing ideal conditions for swimming and snorkeling. The risk of tropical storms during August and early September is considered low.

In Fiji, August is one of the driest months of the year, with shorter but sunnier days and average daytime temperatures of 73 to 79°F (23 to 26°C). We visit higher-elevation rainforest on the island of Taveuni, which will be cooler and more humid, with a higher chance of showers even during the drier season. On the larger island of Viti Levu, rainfall and humidity are higher in the eastern regions due to tall mountain ranges and the influence of the trade winds. We spend more time in

the east, where Suva is located, and these areas are generally wetter and support lush tropical rainforest. In contrast, the climate in Nadi in the west is drier, with more open forests.

In Samoa, the climate is hotter and more humid year-round compared to Fiji. During August and early September, rainfall is lower and temperatures are stable, with daytime highs around 84°F (29°C) and nights around 73°F (23°C). As in Fiji, heavy showers are still possible during the dry season, especially when we are birding in the forests of Malolo'leli Reserve, but these are usually brief and localized. To make the most of the cooler morning hours and peak bird activity, we will start early each day and adjust our schedule as needed based on temperature and weather conditions.

ELECTRICITY AND COMMUNICATION

The power plug sockets in both Fiji and Samoa are of Type I, which are also used in Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and other countries in the region such as Tonga, Nauru and Vanuatu. This socket only works with plug I. The standard voltage is 230 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 devices in Fiji and Samoa if the standard voltage in your country is between 220 – 240 V (as is in the UK, Europe, and most of Asia and Africa). These small deviations are considered by manufacturers. If the standard voltage in your country is in the range of 100 – 127 V (as it is in the US, Canada, and most South American countries), you will need a voltage converter. You could also consider a combined power plug adapter/voltage converter to save space.

All hotels and lodges we use have Wi-Fi, though it is only available in the public areas of the resort in Kadavu. Given the general remote areas we will be in, it is possible that the Wi-Fi may sometimes drop so expect the connection to perhaps be unstable. Phone coverage is typically good near urban areas, but will be patchy when we are on the smaller islands of Taveuni and Kadavu, or when we are birding in more remote areas such as the Suvi Basin and Malolo'leli Reserve.

TRANSPORTATION

The transportation we use during this tour varies between the islands. In general, on arrival at an airport, we will take a direct transfer to our accommodation using a minibus. Occasionally, we may travel in convoy using two smaller vehicles, which is likely on the small Fijian island of Taveuni, for example. On the peaceful Kadavu Island, Fiji, we will have a 30-minute scenic boat transfer directly from the airport to our secluded resort. This boat trip may be wet, as depending on the tide, we might need to remove our shoes and roll up our trousers to walk through ankle- or knee-deep water when boarding or disembarking. Luggage will be well accommodated and typically travels in a separate boat alongside our group, so we can sit back and enjoy arriving at the resort in style. There are also some great birds to be seen on the journey, such as **Black-naped Tern, Lesser Frigatebird, Red-footed Booby, Brown Booby, and Wedge-tailed Shearwater**.

For all birding in Samoa, the group will use a 16-seater minibus, ensuring everyone has a window seat. This vehicle will be dropped off on the first day and will remain our tour vehicle for the two or three days we are in Samoa. In Fiji, while on the large island of Viti Levu and on Taveuni, we

will use a mix of minibuses and 4x4 SUV- or Landcruiser-type vehicles. The 4x4s are necessary to access more remote rainforest, for example, when birding the Suvi Basin north of Suva for **Long-legged Thicketbird** and **Pink-billed Parrotfinch**, and when climbing Mount Manuka on Taveuni. When using 4x4s, the group will split into two vehicles traveling in convoy, one driven by the local guide and the other by your Birding Ecotours guide. At other times, such as when exploring lower elevation and coastal areas, we will travel together in a minibus. On Kadavu Island, all birding will be carried out on foot around the resort grounds and surrounding forest trails.

TOUR FLIGHTS AND LUGGAGE

This tour requires at least six in-tour flights (a return flight between Nadi and Taveuni; Nadi to Kadavu; Kadavu to Suva; Suva to Nadi; and Nadi to Apia), though the exact number will depend on the order in which we visit the islands. This is determined by flight schedules (and availability) usually announced approximately one year out from the tour (and is still subject to change at the whim of the airlines), along with accommodation availability.

The costs for the in-tour flights are not included in the main tour price. Once the tour is confirmed, we will purchase flight tickets for everyone in the group at the same time to ensure we are all on the same flights, with payment for these additional flights required once the tour is confirmed. Most of the flights are domestic within Fiji and operated by Fiji Airways, while we aim to use Qantas for the international flight between Fiji and Samoa. Please note that Fiji Airways is often strict on baggage weight allowances. If your bags are overweight at check-in, this may cause delays and added stress for you, your tour leader, and the rest of the group, so please ensure you stick to the allowances.

We will confirm the exact baggage allowance once we book the domestic tickets. You should expect a baggage allowance on Fiji Airways domestic flights of 33 lbs (15 kg) for checked baggage and 15 lbs (7 kg) for hand luggage - see [here](#) for more details. Please let us know if you are interested in flying business class, which includes an allowance for two checked bags. The international flight between Nadi, Fiji and Apia, Samoa will likely have a higher checked baggage allowance of 66 lbs (30 kg).

Please pack as lightly as possible for this tour, noting the expected weight allowance of the domestic flights, detailed above. A medium, soft-sided, and robust duffle bag is likely to work best for packing in the tour vehicles and on planes. You will be expected to load and unload your own bags into and out of vehicles and as we move around airports. We recommend a day pack to keep items that you wish to use daily when in the vehicle or when birding in the field.

FIJI PELAGIC BIRDWATCHING TRIP

This Fiji and Samoa birding tour includes an exciting pelagic trip out of Suva, the capital of Fiji, where we spend most of the day at sea searching for petrels and shearwaters, including the rarely seen and Critically Endangered (BirdLife International) Fijian endemic **Fiji Petrel**. Our boat departs Suva Harbor around sunrise and heads up to 35 nautical miles (65 kilometers) offshore into the South Pacific Ocean, aiming for the waters near Gau Island, where the **Fiji Petrel** is believed to breed.

This journey can be rough and occasionally uncomfortable, but hopefully worthwhile! **Fiji Petrels** will be in their breeding season in late August, and we will use chum and standard pelagic birding techniques to try to attract them to the boat, in addition to other possible species in the region, such as **Gould's** and **Tahiti Petrels**. After a few hours near Gau Island, we will make the return trip to Suva, arriving in the late afternoon (around 16:00 to 17:00 hrs.). Lunch, snacks, and drinks are provided on board, though we recommend bringing anything specific you might want.

Whether this pelagic trip goes ahead depends entirely on weather and sea conditions. At times, strong winds and dangerous swells may make it unsafe to go to sea. This decision will be made by our highly experienced skippers, and we rely on their final approval. Your safety is our top priority, and if conditions are not suitable, the vessel will not depart. Should our pelagic trip be cancelled entirely, we will likely spend the morning birding the sandy beach of Suva Point looking for waders, before returning to continue looking for the beautiful endemic landbirds, however, the itinerary for this day will be at the tour leader's discretion.

If you are prone to seasickness (or uncertain of how you might react on a day on the sea) we recommend you bring and take the medication as directed. If you do not think you will want to take part in the pelagic trip you will be able to remain at our accommodation and do some personal birding/relaxing etc.

ACCOMMODATION

We stay in a range of accommodation during the tour. On the smaller Fijian islands of Taveuni and Kadavu, we use beautiful beachfront dive resorts. Given the remoteness of these islands, the accommodation is good quality. Both are peaceful places to relax between birding sessions, with excellent snorkeling right on the doorstep. While on the larger Fijian island of Viti Levu, we stay at an ecolodge located next to some of the best rainforest in Fiji. This lodge is more basic than other accommodation used on the tour, but well worth it to be immersed in the diverse forest and close to our key birding sites. In Samoa, we stay in a comfortable modern hotel in Apia, the capital. Our preferred option is more upmarket than other accommodation used during the tour. Sometimes we may need to use alternative accommodation for a range of reasons, but we will provide a full list of accommodation details ahead of the tour commencing.

All accommodation used throughout the tour has private en-suite bathrooms with hot water, 24-hour electricity, Wi-Fi, and either air conditioning or a fan in all rooms. Laundry services are available throughout. We use "standard" rooms, as is typical for most group birding tours globally, and these are deemed sufficient for most participants. If you would like to upgrade to a higher standard of room, such as a "luxury" option, this may be possible in some locations depending on availability. Please note there will be an extra charge for room upgrades, and please contact us as early as possible to discuss options. Please note, given the locations we will be visiting, there is always a slim chance of power outages which may result in loss of electricity, Wi-Fi, or hot water, at least temporarily.

WHAT TO BRING:

Clothing

In Fiji and Samoa, the weather is expected to be warm to hot during the day, so lightweight, breathable clothing is recommended. Quick-drying birding clothes in suitable muted colors work best, and sun protection such as a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen are essential. Most nights will be mild, but temperatures can drop slightly when we bird higher elevation at Mount Manuka on Taveuni, so we recommend packing layers, including a sweater, or jumper. Long pants are useful not only for warmth at night, but also for protection against insects in forested areas. Although this tour is scheduled during the dry season, some tropical showers are still possible. A light, packable rain jacket or poncho is recommended, and a small travel umbrella can be useful.

Two sets of footwear are ideal - lightweight hiking boots are best for birding, while a pair of comfortable sandals, flip-flops, or trainers will be useful for walking around lodges or on travel days. Be mindful that there are at least six flights on this tour, so practical, easy-to-pack footwear is ideal alongside comfortable footwear to wear while traveling. Swimwear is advised as many accommodations have swimming pools or beachfront access.

Equipment

Binoculars are essential for all birding, and a camera is highly recommended if you plan to document your sightings (many of the Melanesian and Polynesian species are bright and beautiful!). A dry bag is also recommended to protect valuables such as passports, phones, wallets, and cameras if we encounter rain, and for our boat transfers. If you are unsteady on your feet or concerned about uneven ground, a walking stick or hiking pole is strongly recommended and may be essential for forest trails, including those in Colo-I-Suva Rainforest and Malolo'leli Reserve.

Insect repellent with high-concentration DEET or a suitable alternative is strongly advised, particularly for time spent in lowland and coastal rainforest where biting insects are common. A small hand towel or washcloth may come in handy for drying off gear or cleaning up in the field, particularly in wetter rainforest locations. Although we won't be doing night birding, a flashlight or headlamp is useful for moving around at night during our stay at the Rainforest Eco Lodge north of Suva, and in case of unexpected power outages. A small personal first aid kit is worth carrying, especially for minor cuts, blisters, or insect bites. Snorkeling gear is often available for hire at the resorts, but do bring your own if you want to ensure you can have the gear with you, particularly your own mask/goggles if you require a prescription version.

What to take on the Pelagic trip

For our pelagic trip, there are several essential items you will need to ensure your comfort and safety at sea. Most important is a waterproof outer layer, as wind blowing across the swells can generate sea spray. Regardless of the forecast, warm and layered clothing is strongly advised. Conditions can quickly change at sea, and it can become surprisingly cold, even on sunny days. Wearing multiple layers allows you to adjust your clothing as temperatures shift throughout the day. Sun protection is also important. We recommend applying sunscreen, even in overcast conditions, and wearing a hat that can be securely fastened to avoid it being blown away by the

wind. Sunglasses are highly recommended, as the glare off the ocean can be intense and uncomfortable. For footwear, waterproof hiking boots or sturdy sandals with straps (such as Teva-style sandals) are suitable options. Protective covers for your binoculars and camera equipment (e.g. a dry bag) are advised to prevent water damage.

If you are prone to seasickness, or even if you are not sure, it is highly recommended that you bring anti-seasickness medication. Seasickness can be an extremely unpleasant experience, and it's better to be prepared. Tablets such as Stugeron are commonly used, but those who are more sensitive may wish to consult a pharmacist or doctor in advance for stronger options. See [here](#) for more detailed information on what to expect and how to prepare for pelagic birding.

FIELD GUIDES

The Birds of Hawaii and the Tropical Pacific (Pratt, Bruner, and Berrett, 1989) – A good bird guide for the whole of Polynesia and Micronesia, and some of Melanesia, including Fiji and Samoa. Most species are included in the field guide, though it is not up to date due to species name and taxonomic changes. The book layout is not ideal for a field guide with the detailed description not alongside the color plates, but, the plates are nicely laid out with summary text opposite, and the illustrations are likely the best for the region, though some are a little incorrect. It is a thick guide, with less than a fifth of the book containing the useful color plates, the rest is the detailed text which is not so useful when in the field.

Birds of Hawaii, New Zealand, and the Central and West Pacific (Van Perlo, 2011) – Another good field guide covering a large region of the southern Pacific and surrounding islands. The main benefit is that it is a concise guide, and it is more up to date than other guides available for the region. Yet, the illustrations and range maps are poor, and the amount of text is very limited for each species.

SEABIRDS The New Identification Guide (Harrison, Perrow, and Larsson, 2021) – The best available field guide covering all known seabirds, with brilliant illustrations, the plates are well laid out and is comprehensive yet succinct.

USEFUL APPS AND WEBSITE RESOURCES

Merlin – an app that can help you identify birds by sight (from photos) and sound (from recordings) and is a useful tool to aid bird identification. The app is getting expanded all the time with new data and regional information so is worth keeping an eye on. We recommend downloading the Melanesia (Fiji) and Polynesia (Samoa) packs for this tour, and using it during the tour as the field guides for the region are poor.

eBird – there is a wealth of information contained on this website and the mobile app is now excellent and useful too. Photo, video, and sound galleries are available for practically every species in the world through The Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Macaulay Library.

Aves Vox – a good app that enables the downloading of bird songs and calls from the xeno-canto website onto your cell phone.

IOC World Bird List – this website contains all the latest details on the world of global bird taxonomy. You can read about newly described species, splits (creation of a new species) and lumps (deletion of a species) of existing species, and plenty of other important information.