



TRIP REPORT

1st-7th May 2010

Your Guide : Phil Gregory, Jun MATSUI

TASTE OF NEW GUINEA TOUR 1

DAY 1 BROWN RIVER

We spent the afternoon in the Brown river area. We had a nice view of **Orange-bellied Fruit Dove**, and also saw **Emperor Fairywren** and **Common Paradise Kingfisher**.

DAY 2 VARIRATA NP.

We spent a full day at Varirata NP. We had a really great view of displaying **Raggiana BOPs** at their lek.

DAY 3 VARIRATA NP. / PAU

Visited Varirata in the morning, birding on the approach road and Boundary Trail. We had good views of **Brown-headed Paradise Kingfisher** this time.

DAY 4 MT. HAGEN, KUMUL LODGE

We arrived at Mt. Hagen just before lunch time. **Brown Sicklebill** and **Ribbon-tailed Astrapia** were on the feeders at Kumul Lodge. Thanks to Max's advice, we managed to see the elusive **Crested Satinbird**. It would have been nice to have hot shower after long travel but for some of us this was just a wish!

DAY 5 TONGA, PIGITES

Visited Tonga area early morning to get **Blue BOP**. We had an excellent view of displaying **Superb BOP** in distance. Luckily the **Blue BOP** perched on the top of the tree just before we gave up. Some of us saw **Princess Stephanie's Astrapia** at Pigites in the afternoon.

DAY 6 KAMA, LAI-MAMBIS

Another early start, we drove up a very bumpy road to see **Lesser BOP**. We also had an excellent view of an adult male **King-of-Saxony BOP** in the scope. Lynne organized a traditional mumu dinner for us.

DAY 7 TAPUKA

We stopped Tapuka on the way to Airport. We spent some fabulous time with **Blue** and **Superb BOPs** and **Yellow-breasted Bowerbird**.



Raggiana BOP



At Tonga



Kumul Lodge



Kumul Lodge

Sicklebill Safaris

Taste of Papua New Guinea Part 1

May 1-7 2010

Tour Report

Leaders: Phil Gregory & Jun Matsui

Trip List

Bold type denotes a New Guinea endemic species.

* denotes a near endemic

NL means a non-leader bird.

H means species was heard only

Names and taxonomic order follow the International Ornithological Congress (IOC) Checklist 2010 v 2.3, available as a free Excel download from www.worldbirdnames.org.

MEGAPODIDAE Mound-builders

Black-billed Brush-turkey *Talegalla fuscirostris* (H)

Heard at Varirata, where it was calling as well. A couple of the huge leaf mound nests were seen.

ANATIDAE Ducks

Wandering Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna arcuata*

10 were at the PAU ponds.

Plumed Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna eytoni*

One at the PAU on May 2, presumably the vagrant from 2009 still here.

Radjah Shelduck *Tadorna radjah*

Two flying by the road at Brown River were unexpected.

Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa*

30 at the PAU were all we saw this trip.

PODICIPIDIDAE Grebe

Australasian Grebe *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*

A couple were at the PAU, with one being on a nest.

THRESKIORNITHIDAE Ibis & Spoonbills

Australian White Ibis *Threskiornis molucca*

Three at Brown River, quite scarce here.

Straw-necked Ibis *Threskiornis spinicollis*

Four were outside the PAU; it is an erratic winter migrant here.

ARDEIDAE Herons

Eastern Great Egret *Egretta (alba) modesta*

Three at Brown River and two at the PAU.

Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia*

Two were seen at the PAU.

Pied Heron *Egretta picata*

10 were at the PAU.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta nigripes*

One was at the PAU.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus (ibis) coromanda*

About thirty birds were seen in the Port Moresby area, now split from the Western Palearctic & African Cattle Egret.

Nankeen Night Heron *Nycticorax caledonicus*

One adult was seen in flight at the PAU.

PHALACROCORACIDAE Cormorants

Little Pied Cormorant *Microcarbo melanoleucos*

A single was at the PAU.

Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*

Up to 30 at the PAU, and one over the Varirata entrance road.

ACCIPITRIDAE Hawks

Pacific Baza *Aviceda subcristata*

Two seen at Brown River on arrival day.

Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus*

Nice views at the PAU, nesting at this site.

Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus*

Good views of this attractive bird at Varirata and Brown River.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

A few near POM and Kumul Lodge, a strangely local species in PNG.

Brown Goshawk *Accipiter fasciatus*

One near Wapenamanda and a pair at Tapuka quarry, which showed very well.

* Variable (Grey) Goshawk *Accipiter (novaehollandiae) hiogaster*

Seen briefly at Varirata. The form here has now been split from the Grey Goshawk since it differs so much from the Australian species.

RALLIDAE Crakes & Rails

Chestnut Forest Rail *Rallina rubra* H

Two heard at Kumul Lodge, but sadly not responsive to the tape.

Purple Swamphen (Purple Gallinule) *Porphyrio porphyrio*

Lovely views of the black backed race *melanotus* at the PAU and Jackson's Airport, split by some.

Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa*

Three were seen at the PAU.

CHARADRIIDAE Plovers

Masked Lapwing *Vanellus miles*,

Good view at the PAU of this northern nominate race, which is an incipient species.

JACANIDAE Jacanas

Comb-crested Jacana *Irediparra gallinacea*

What a great little bird, well seen at the PAU where it was nesting.

SCOLOPACIDAE Sandpipers & Snipe

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

One was seen at the PAU on May 2.

COLUMBIDAE Pigeons & Doves

Slender-billed Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia amboinensis*

Widespread in small numbers. This is a split from the Brown Cuckoo-Dove of Australia.

* Bar-tailed (Black-billed) Cuckoo-Dove *M. nigrirostris*

Just a single in the valley near Kumul.

Peaceful Dove *Geopelia striata*

A few around the PAU.

Bar-shouldered Dove *Geopelia humeralis*

Four at the PAU.

Wompoo Fruit Dove (Pigeon) *Ptilinopus magnificus*

A couple seen up at Varirata.

Pink-spotted Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus perlatus*

A few were seen around Varirata this trip.

Beautiful Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus pulchellus* H

Heard at Varirata.

Coroneted Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus coronulatus* NL

Ryan saw what sounds like one of these lovely birds briefly at Varirata.

Orange-bellied Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus iozonus*

A few were seen around Brown River.

Purple-tailed Imperial Pigeon *Ducula rufigaster*

One of this uncommon species was seen briefly along the Boundary Track.

Pinon's Imperial-Pigeon *Ducula pinon*

Nice views of 3 singles flying over at Brown River on the first day..

Zoe's Imperial-Pigeon *D. zoeae* H

Heard at Varirata.

Torresian Imperial Pigeon *Ducula spilorrhoa*

One at the PAU on the first afternoon, split from Pied Imperial Pigeon of the west.

CACATUIDAE Cockatoos

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita* H

They sound quite different to Australian birds, with a blue periophthalmic ring, and were heard at Varirata.

PSITTACIDAE Parrots

Buff-faced Pygmy Parrot *Micropsitta pusio*

Brief but quite nice views of one along the Boundary Trail at Varirata. This aptly named genus *Micropsitta* has the world's smallest parrots.

* Coconut (Rainbow) Lorikeet *Trichoglossus (m.) haematodus*

Nice views at several sites, this form with the heavy black bars on the chest is split by the IOC as Coconut Lorikeet.

Goldie's Lorikeet *Psitteuteles goldiei*

Five flying over the Varirata approach road, and heard at Kumul.

Western Black-capped Lory *Lorius lory*

Three at Varirata..

Papuan Lorikeet *Charmosyna papou*

A few seen at Kumul this trip, with a showy melanistic morph feeding on nectar from flowers being a major highlight. This must be one of the world's most beautiful parrots, simply amazing

Plum-faced (Whiskered) Lorikeet *Oreopsittacus arfaki*

This delightful tiny lorikeet gave some brief views at Kumul.

Orange-billed Lorikeet *Neopsittacus pullicauda*

We saw just two birds of this high altitude species at Kumul, with one showing in the scope for some.

Orange-breasted Fig-Parrot *Cyclopsitta gulelmitertii*

Three at Brown River were nice to see.

Brehm's Tiger Parrot *Psittacella brehmii*

Fantastic views of this lumbering great beast at the Kumul feeders.

* Red-cheeked Parrot *Geoffroyus geoffroyi*

A few were being noisy around Varirata.

Eclectus Parrot *Eclectus roratus*

Seen nicely at Varirata, with one at the PAU being a surprise.

Papuan King Parrot *Alisterus chloropterus*

Two seen at Varirata and one below Kumul Lodge.

CUCULIDAE Cuckoos

Greater Black (Ivory-billed) Coucal *Centropus menbeki*

One was seen briefly at Brown River.

Pheasant Coucal *Centropus phasianinus*

Seen at Varirata and Brown River.

Brush Cuckoo *Cacomantis variolosus*

Often heard, and singles seen at Brown River.

Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cacomantis flabelliformis* H

Heard at Kumul. This is a montane species in NG.

Dwarf Koel *Microdynamis parva* H

One was heard along the Boundary Trail at Varirata.

White-crowned Koel *Cacomantis (Caliecthrus) leucolophus* H

We heard this very elusive cuckoo close by at Varirata.

White-eared Bronze Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx meyeri* H

Heard at Varirata.

Rufous-throated Bronze Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx ruficollis*

One was taped in for great views at Kumul, this is the high altitude bronze-cuckoo in NG.

PODARGIDAE Frogmouths

* Papuan Frogmouth *Podargus papuensis*

One at the PAU, well camouflaged in a huge rain tree, with Daniel missing it on his first check.

APODIDAE Swifts

Mountain Swiftlet *Collocalia hirundinacea*

We saw a few of this montane species near Kumul.

Uniform Swiftlet *Collocalia vanikorensis*

Seen throughout the mainland lowlands.

Glossy Swiftlet *Collocalia esculenta*

Common at Varirata, the white belly a good field character.

AEGOTHELIDAE Owlet-nightjars

Barred Owlet-nightjar *Aegotheles bennetti*

Lovely views of two at Varirata, still there from last year, with one just peeking out and the other showing much better.

CORACIIDAE Rollers

Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis*

Good views at Brown River and Varirata.

ALCEDINIDAE Kingfishers

Blue-winged Kookaburra *Dacelo leachii*

An excellent bird, seen very nicely in the POM savannas.

Rufous-bellied Kookaburra *Dacelo gaudichaud*

Seen nicely at Varirata.

Forest Kingfisher *Todiramphus macleayana*

One was seen at the PAU entrance. not common here.

Sacred Kingfisher *Todiramphus sanctus*

Just a couple were seen at the PAU.

* Yellow-billed Kingfisher *Syma torotoro* H

Sadly only herd this trip at Varirata where they were not very responsive.

* Common Paradise Kingfisher *Tanysiptera galatea*

This was vocal at Brown River and some folks got brief views of one that came in to check us out.

Brown-headed Paradise Kingfisher *Tanysiptera danae*

We eventually got onto 3 adults at Varirata, with scope views of one; this is a rare bird only found in SE PNG.

Variable Dwarf Kingfisher *Ceyx lepidus* H

Heard at Varirata, but yet again invisible this trip!

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

A couple at the PAU, including one on the first pond where they have been absent for ages.

MEROPIDAE Bee-eaters

Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops ornatus*

Quite common around Varirata.

BUCEROTIDAE Hornbills

* Blyth's Hornbill *Rhyticeros plicatus*

Two over Varirata were unusual here these days.

PTILONORHYNCHIDAE Bowerbirds & Catbirds

Archbold's Bowerbird *Archboldia papuensis*

A female was coming in at the Kumul feeders, fantastic views of a rare and restricted range montane endemic. Another was seen from the road just below.

Yellow-breasted Bowerbird *Chlamydera lauterbachii*

At least one bird was calling but elusive near Lai-Mambis, and some scrambled down to a terrific bower below a ridge near Wapenamanda, Luckily we got a nice view of one at Tapuka on the last morning

* Fawn-breasted Bowerbird *Chlamydera cerviniventris*

Good views at the PAU and Varirata. Another Cape York special otherwise.

MALURIDAE Fairywrens

White-shouldered Fairywren *Malurus alboscapulatus*

Seen well at Kumul and Varirata.

Emperor Fairywren *M. cyanocephalus*

A pair at Brown River showed quite well, a really beautiful species that is very skulking.

MELIPHAGIDAE Honeyeaters

Papuan Black Myzomela *Myzomela nigrita*

A male was at the flowering gums up at Varirata.

Mountain Myzomela *Myzomela adolphinae*

Seen well at Kama with a fine tiny male and female atop a huge gum, and a female later near Wapenamanda.

Dusky Myzomela *Myzomela obscura*

One at Varirata was unexpected.

Spotted Honeyeater *Xanthotis polygramma* NL

One was seen at Varirata by some folks, a good pick up.

* Tawny-breasted Honeyeater *Xanthotis flaviventer*

Seen and heard at Varirata this trip, otherwise only on Cape York.

Black-throated Honeyeater *Lichenostomus subfrenatus*

Brief views at Kumul, where it was vocal this trip.

Yellow-tinted Honeyeater *Lichenostomus flavescens*

Seen at the PAU, the race here (*germana*) has a curious call very similar to Fuscous Honeyeater in Far North Queensland.

Mountain Meliphaga *Meliphaga orientalis*

This small montane Meliphaga was seen near Wapenamanda.

Elegant Honeyeater *Meliphaga (gracilis) cinereifrons*

This split from Graceful Honeyeater with the large yellow ear patch, which does not give the “plik” call of FNQ birds, was seen at Varirata.

Spot-breasted (Mottle-breasted) Honeyeater *Meliphaga mimikae* NL

It sounds as if Colin saw one at Varirata, this being one of the few readily identifiable Meliphagas.

White-throated Honeyeater *Melithreptus albogularis*

Seen at Varirata.

Streak-headed Honeyeater *Pycnopygius stictocephalus*

Nice views of one at Varirata, this is a friarbird mimic.

New Guinea Friarbird (Helmeted) *Philemon (novaeguineae) buceroides*

A few at Varirata. Now again lumped with Helmeted by Clements, but split by the IOC.

Common Smoky Honeyeater *Melipotes fumigatus*

Common at Kumul, where it has the endearing habit of blushing, the facial skin going from yellow to red!

Belford's Melidectes *Melidectes belfordi*

Noisy and annoyingly common at higher levels at Kumul! One was sunbathing on the feeder, sat down for some minutes.

Ornate Melidectes *Melidectes torquatus*

Common at the Lesser BoP site at Kama and around Lai-Mambis.

Grey-streaked (Black-backed) Honeyeater *Ptiloprora perstriata*

A few were seen at Kumul.

Long-billed Honeyeater *Melilestes megarhynchus* H

Heard at Kama.

Rufous-banded Honeyeater *Conopophila albogularis*

A few were seen at the PAU.

ACANTHIZIDAE Australasian Warblers

Rusty Mouse Warbler *Crateroscelis murina*

This elusive bird was heard and glimpsed at Varirata.

Mountain Mouse Warbler *Crateroscelis robusta*

We had a couple of brief sightings at Kumul, where they often show nicely.

Large Scrubwren *Sericornis nouhuysi*

Three seen at Kumul.

Papuan Scrubwren *S. papuensis*

Heard and one seen at Kumul.

Pale-billed Scrubwren *S. spilodera*

This scarce species was seen along the Tree House Trail. The call sounds like a faint distant ambulance siren, a repetitive disyllabic *nee-naw* sound!

Yellow-bellied Gerygone *Gerygone chrysogaster*

Good views at Varirata.

Brown-breasted Gerygone *Gerygone ruficollis*

Fair views at Kumul, with a great smoky song.

Ashy (Mountain) Gerygone *Gerygone cinerea*

Great views of 3 at Pigites, showing a faint pale eye ring. Formerly called Grey Gerygone, the same as the New Zealand species, so requiring a renaming

* Green-backed Gerygone *Gerygone chloronotus*

Seen quite well at Varirata, it is always hard to get it into view.

* Fairy Gerygone *Gerygone palpebrosa*

Two showed briefly at Varirata.

CNEMOPHILINAE Satinbirds

Crested Satinbird (Bird of Paradise) *Cnemophilus macgregoriae*

A male and female at a fruiting tree below Kumul, the former a stunning vision in orange and black and always a tricky bird to get. Also especially significant as they are now moved to Cnemophilines, a new endemic family.

Loria's Satinbird (Bird of Paradise) *Cnemophilus loriae* H

Heard along the Pigites Trail. This species is also now moved to Cnemophilines, a new family.

MELANOCHARITIDAE Berrypeckers & Longbills

Black Berrypecker *Melanocharis nigra*

Good views in the forest understorey up at Varirata, with a juvenile being fed by a female and several close males.

Fan-tailed Berrypecker *Melanocharis versteri*

Heard and a female seen very briefly at Kumul.

Dwarf Longbill (Honeyeater) *Oedistoma iliolophus* H

Heard at Varirata.

PARAMYTHIIDAE Painted Berrypeckers

Tit Berrypecker *Oreocharis arfaki*

Good views of a pair of this gorgeous looking species (with the male resembling a mutant Great Tit!) along the Pigites Trail at Kumul. An endemic family too.

Crested Berrypecker *Paramythia montium*

Fantastic views of 2 at Kumul, a great bird of an endemic family.

PSOPHODIDAE Jewel-babblers & Quail-thrush

Chestnut-backed Jewel-babbler *Ptilorrhoa caerulescens* H

Heard at Varirata, a very shy and elusive species.

Painted Quail-Thrush *Cinclosoma ajax* H

Heard at Varirata, but as ever stayed out of sight.

MACHEIRIRHYNCHIDAE Boatbills

Yellow-breasted Boatbill *Machaerirhynchus flaviventer*

A female was seen nicely at Varirata.

Black-breasted Boatbill *Machaerirhynchus nigripectus*

A lovely view of one along the Pigites Trail at Kumul, a really striking bird.

CRACTICIDAE Butcherbirds & Peltops

* **Black-backed Butcherbird** *Cracticus mentalis*

Good views at the PAU. Another of the Cape York specials in Australia.

Hooded Butcherbird *Cracticus cassicus*

Good views at Varirata.

Mountain Peltops *Peltops montanus* H

Heard at Varirata.

ARTAMIDAE Woodswallows

White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus*

A few around POM.

Great Woodswallow *Artamus maximus*

Seen at Lai-Mambis and Tapuka. This is the largest of the family.

CAMPEPHAGIDAE Cuckooshrikes

Black-faced Cuckooshrike *Coracina novaehollandiae*

One at the PAU..

Large-billed (Stout-billed) Cuckooshrike *Coracina caeruleo-grisea*

Heard at Varirata, with Ryan seeing the bird eventually,

Yellow-eyed (Barred) Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina lineata*

Three at Varirata, of the very distinct NG race (*axillaris*), in which the males have little or no barring.

Boyer's Cuckooshrike *C. boyeri*

Good views at Varirata.

White-bellied Cuckooshrike *C. papuensis*

A single at the PAU on two dates and 2 at Wapenamanda at 1800m.

Common Cicadabird *Coracina tenuirostris*

Two males and a female at Varirata were a nice find.

Papuan Black Cuckooshrike (Papuan C-s) *C. melas*

A male at Varirata was calling and showed well, with a female later

Black-bellied Cuckooshrike *C. montana* H

Heard below Kumul.

Varied Triller *Lalage leucomela* H

Heard at Varirata.

PACHYCEPHALIDAE Whistlers & allies

Rufous-naped Whistler *Aleadryas rufinucha*

Nice views of this odd species at Kumul. Now shown to not belong to whistlers at all, but rather allied with the Crested Bellbird, and now about to be moved into another family.

Brown-backed Whistler *Pachycephala modesta*

This odd delicate whistler was seen below Kumul late one afternoon. It is a PNG endemic.

* Grey Whistler (Grey-headed) *Pachycephala (simplex) griseiceps*

Seen at Varirata, NG birds are often called Grey-headed Whistler. Clements splits it from the *simplex* taxon, which he calls Grey Whistler even though it's brown!

Regent Whistler *P. schlegelii*

A nice view of a female then a couple of males at Kumul, one of the most striking of the family

Black-headed Whistler *Pachycephala monacha*

Two were seen nicely near Wapenamanda.

White-bellied Whistler *P. leucogastra*

One male along the approach to Varirata, always a good bird to get, especially now it is an endemic following the split of Wallacean Whistler from the Lesser Sundas. Note the NG Field Guide lists it as Rufous Whistler, but it is obviously distinct.

Little Shrike-thrush *Colluricincla megarrhyncha* NL

Seen below Kumul by a few.

Grey Shrike-thrush *Colluricincla harmonica* H

Heard at the PAU and Varirata.

Hooded Pitohui *Pitohui dichrous*

Frequent at Varirata, where they showed nicely and were very vocal.

LANIIDAE Shrikes

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach*

Seen well near Kama, this is the black-headed race *stresemanni*.

ORIOOLIDAE Figbirds & Old World Orioles

Australasian Figbird *Sphecotheres vieilloti*

Great views of an imm. male at the PAU, the males of the SE PNG taxon *salvadorii* have a greyish chest and are much greener than the FNQ birds.

Brown Oriole *Oriolus szalayi*

Good views at the PAU and Varirata. It is an amazing mimic of a friarbird in appearance, or is it vice versa?

DICRURIDAE Drongos

Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus bracteatus carbonarius*

A few at Varirata. PNG birds of the race *carbonarius* have different calls to those in Australia. Coates splits it in his photoguide as Papuan Drongo, not to be confused with Mountain Drongo (*Chaetorhynchus*)

RHIPIDURIDAE Fantails

Willie-wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys*

Seen almost everywhere, from lowlands to hills.

Black Thicket Fantail *Rhipidura maculipectus* H

One was heard close by at Brown River, an unexpected bird on this itinerary.

Friendly Fantail *Rhipidura albolimbata*

Nice looks at Kumul.

Black Fantail *Rhipidura atra*

The species was seen well at Kumul.

Chestnut-bellied Fantail *Rhipidura hyperythra*

Nice views at Varirata with a mixed feeding flock.

MONARCHIDAE Monarchs

Mountain (Pygmy) Drongo *Chaetorhynchus papuensis*

This uncommon bird showed very well at Varirata along the Boundary Trail, with two singles, one singing well with an odd scratchy song. Genetic work shows it to be most closely related to monarchs and not drongos at all.

Leaden Flycatcher *Myiagra rubecula*

Seen near Varirata.

Shining Flycatcher *Myiagra alecto*

Two at Brown River.

Black Monarch *Monarcha axillaris*

This bizarre mimic of the male Black Fantail was seen well along the Pigites Trail, where the white on the bend of the wing showed well.

Black-faced Monarch *Monarcha melanopsis*

One at Varirata, this is a winter visitor from Australia.

Spot-winged Monarch *Monarcha guttula*

Excellent views at Varirata.

Golden Monarch *Monarcha chrysomela* H

Heard at Varirata.

Frilled Monarch *Arses telescopthalmus*

Great views of this curious endemic bird, even seeing the amazing ruff of a male at Varirata. The Frill-necked Monarch (*lorealis*) of Cape York is a recent split from Frilled, which is now a NG endemic.

CORVIDAE Crows

Grey Crow *Corvus tristis* H

Heard at Varirata on both visits, but stayed out of view.

Torresian Crow *Corvus orru*

A few seen around POM, and at Varirata.

INCERTAE SEDIS Uncertain affinities

Blue-capped Ifrita *Ifrita kowaldi*

It was very vocal this time around Kumul, with several nice sightings. This is reputedly another member of the guild of poisonous birds.

Lesser Melampitta *Melampitta lugubris* H

Very quiet and not very vocal at Kumul.

Goldenface (Dwarf Whistler) *Pachycare flavogrisea*

A male of this highly aberrant species, currently placed with whistlers, at the Varirata Boundary track. To which family does this bird really belong? Apparently it is going to be placed with the Acanthizidae, gerygones and scrubwrens.

Wattled Ploughbill *Eulacestoma nigripectus*

One was calling below Kumul near the Black-throated Robin area, and a couple of us saw a male briefly here, what a pity it was not more obliging as this is a real star bird, still of uncertain affinities.

PARADISAEIDAE Birds of Paradise

Glossy-mantled Manucode *Manucodia atra*

One at Varirata, giving a brief view only.

Ribbon-tailed Astrapia *Astrapia mayeri*

Lovely views of a several males and a couple of female plumaged birds at Kumul, the males being one of the most bizarre and spectacular of all birds. Another restricted range PNG endemic.

Princess Stephanie's Astrapia *Astrapia stephaniae*

A female showed up along the Pigites Track, and a hybrid with Ribbon-tail down by the road. This is another PNG endemic.

King of Saxony Bird-of-Paradise *Pteridophora alberti*

Excellent views of an imm. male with spiky short head wires and female-type plumage male atop a ridge at Pigites track, and female later up the trail later. Happily a late afternoon foray from the road found a gap in the mist and rain, and we saw two males, one very distant and then one much closer, with good head wires, allowing a scope view. Yay!

Superb Bird-of-Paradise *Lophorina superba*

Two males showed well down in the valley by the Blue BoP, they are scarce up here due to hunting. Then we saw two males at Tapuka quarry. A fine and truly bizarre bird, what a weird shape!

Growling (Eastern) Riflebird *P. (m.) intercedens* H

Heard at Varirata. The growling call is very different to the Western and Cape York birds and I think they should be split from Magnificent Riflebird.

Brown Sicklebill *Epimachus meyeri*

Fabulous views of a male and 4 or 5 female-plumaged birds at the Kumul feeders. The pale blue eye is very obvious when seen well. Also memorable for its amazing machine-gun like call, which we heard a number of times. One immature male was giving a weird bubbly call like a practice version of the usual call.

Magnificent Bird of Paradise *Cicinnurus magnificus* H

Distant males heard calling at Lai-Mambis and Tapuka, also along the Boundary Trail at Varirata.

Raggiana Bird of Paradise *Paradisaea raggiana*

A brilliant perched male at Varirata was the first of many birds of paradise, and we had very nice views. This species is a PNG endemic.

Lesser Bird of Paradise *Paradisaea minor*

Excellent birds at the lek at Kama, very spectacular after a slow start, and well worth the early morning bumpy ride, with 5 or 6 males and several females showing really nicely.

Blue Bird of Paradise *Paradisaea rudolphi*

A male was seen at Tomba after a long scan-search, found just as we were about to quit, allowing a very nice scope look as he perched up atop his calling post. Then unexpectedly a fine male was calling well from his song-post at Tapuka quarry, the first sighting here for some years. This is another PNG endemic BoP, classified as Vulnerable as the habitat lies in a heavily settled zone.

PETROICIDAE Australasian Robins (Flyrobins)

Ashy Robin *Heteromyias albispecularis* H

Heard at Pigites, but as elusive as ever.

Black-sided Robin *Poecilodryas hypoleuca* H

Heard at Brown River.

Black-throated Robin *Poecilodryas albonotata* H

One was heard below Kumul, near the Ploughbill area.

White-winged Robin *Peneothello sigillatus*

Coming to the feeder at Kumul Lodge this trip, with a pair a well-grown juvenile. A very attractive bird of the high altitudes.

* **White-faced Robin** *Tregellasia leucops*

This lovely clown-faced robin showed well at Varirata, otherwise being a Cape York special

Torrent Flyrobin (Flycatcher) *Monachella muelleriana*

Great views by the river below Kumul, after we were unable to check the Sepik headwaters due to a car going into the river there!

Canary Flycatcher *Microeca papuana*

A couple seen along the Pigites trail.

Lemon-bellied Flycatcher *Microeca flavigaster*

Two were seen in the savanna near Varirata.

HIRUNDINIDAE Swallows

Pacific Swallow *Hirundo tahitica*

The common NG swallow, seen as high as Mt Hagen.

MEGALURIDAE Grassbirds & allies

Papuan Grassbird *Megalurus (timoriensis) papuensis*

We saw this well above Kumul. The calls and the highland habitat are distinct from Australian birds and it is split in the Howard and Moore and new IOC Checklists.

ZOSTEROPIDAE White-eyes

Black-fronted White-eye *Zosterops atrifrons* H

Heard at Varirata, this is the common lowland and hill forest white-eye.

New Guinea White-eye *Zosterops novaeguineae*

We saw a couple of birds down in the valley below Kumul and 4 near Wapenamanda.

STURNIDAE Starlings & Mynas

Metallic Starling *Aplonis metallica*

A few were seen at Brown River.

Singing Starling *Aplonis cantoroides*

Good views at the PAU and Port Moresby, also an immature at Lai-Mambis.

Golden Myna *Mino anais*

Great looks at this lovely species at Brown River with 10 on one day.

Yellow-faced Myna *Mino dumontii*

Good views at the PAU; it has a curious frog-like call.

TURDIDAE Thrushes

Island Thrush *Turdus poliocephalus*

There were a couple at the feeders at Kumul, adults looking remarkably reminiscent of greyish male Common Blackbirds.

MUSCICAPIDAE Old World Chats & Flycatchers

Pied Chat (Pied Stonechat or Bushchat) *Saxicola caprata aethiops*

Seen nicely at Kumul.

DICAEIDAE Flowerpeckers

Red-capped Flowerpecker (Papuan Flowerpecker) *Dicaeum (pectorale) geelvinkianum*
Brief views at Varirata and the Kumul area.

NECTARINIIDAE Sunbirds

Yellow-bellied (Olive-backed) Sunbird *Nectarinia jugularis*
A couple out at Brown River were the only sighting.

PASSERIDAE Sparrows

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

The sparrow only colonized PNG since 1986, mostly since 1992, and we duly logged it in POM. PNG has only three introduced species on the mainland (this, the newly arrived Eurasian Tree Sparrow and perhaps Feral Pigeon), plus Common Myna (which hopefully may now be extirpated) on Bougainville.

(Eurasian) Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Two at the PAU, this species is a new colonist in PNG, only since 2007.

ESTRILDIDAE Finches

Mountain Firetail *Oreostruthus fuliginosus*

Some great views of a pair in the grounds of Kumul Lodge.

Grey-headed Mannikin *Lonchura caniceps*

Six were seen nicely at the PAU. It is a restricted range species only found in SE PNG.

Hooded Mannikin *Lonchura spectabilis*

Two small flocks were seen near Kumul.

MAMMALS

Spotted Cuscus *Phalanger maculatus*

One was sleeping curled up into a furry ball high in a Casuarina at Varirata, a great find.

Agile Wallaby *Macropus agilis*

One at Varirata.

BUTTERFLIES

Ulysses Swallowtail *Papilio ulysses*

The spectacular blue morpho-like swallowtail was common in lowland forests.

Bird book References

Beehler, B., Pratt T. and Zimmerman, D. (1986). *Birds of New Guinea*. Princeton.

The standard field guide for New Guinea, now long out of date and hard to find, but still essential. A new edition is in the works (2011?)

Beehler, B. and Frith C. (1998). *Birds of Paradise*. Oxford University Press.

A very thorough monograph on the family, hard to read but the modern reference on the group.

Coates B. J. (1990). *Birds of Papua New Guinea Vol. 2*. Dove Publications, Alderley.

This volume covers the birds of paradise and has some wonderful photographs. Out of print.

Coates, B. J. and Peckover, W. (2001) *Photoguide to the Birds of New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago*. Dove Publications. Incomplete but very useful.

Cooper, W. T. and Forshaw, J. M. (1977). *The birds of paradise and bowerbirds*. Collins, Sydney. A terrific work with best ever illustrations, large format in slipcase. Out of print but well worth tracking down.

Frith C. and Frith D. W. (2004) *Bowerbirds*. OUP Family series.

The standard reference, but taxonomically conservative and with rather disappointing illustrations.

Gregory, P. (2009). *Birds of New Guinea and Associated Islands*, 2nd edition. Sicklebill Publications, Kuranda. The latest and only up-to-date New Guinea species list, in IOC format and with many splits.

Restall, R. (1996). *Munias and Mannikins*. Pica Press. Useful for the group. fairly good plates.

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