

Amazing Arfak

Birding expedition

12 days/11 nights

From € 1,532

Deposit: € 385

Single room supplement: € 18

This birding expedition focuses exclusively on the isolated and rugged Arfak Mountains in the eastern sector of the Bird's Head Peninsula near the provincial capital Manokwari. Bound to become the premier birding destination in Papua, the Arfaks support all presently described Vogelkop endemics and provide straightforward access to largely untouched foothill, hill and montane forests that support a wonderfully diverse avifauna. Join us now on this Arfak birding adventure of a lifetime, covering all relevant elevations and habitats required to come to grips with nine out of ten Vogelkop endemics, on a single integrated trek into the wild interior.

When?

Possible year-round, but most certainly best between April and October.

Scheduled departures

Please enquire for details on our monthly departures.

Physical toughness

Good physical fitness and agility are required for this tour which plies some challenging terrain.

Tour summary

Day 1-11 > Arfak Mountains.

Day 12 > Manokwari.

Day-by-day itinerary

Day 1 > Arfak foothill forests Morning arrival at Manokwari's Rendani Airport on overnight's domestic flight from Jakarta. After a quick lunch in town, we shall set out on the two hours' drive by chartered vehicle to our drop-off point on the Oransbari Peninsula. From here, we shall require most of the afternoon to slowly bird toward a camp at 200 m elevation in primary foothill forest along a refreshing stream. All along the walk, wacky Blyth's Hornbills, colorful Dusky Lorries and Rainbow Lorikeets, majestic Palm and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, and noisy Red-cheeked and Eclectus Parrots fly overhead as we familiarize ourselves with the common or more conspicuous forest interior birds: Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo, Slender-billed and Great Cuckoo-Dove, Wompoo, Superb and Beautiful Fruit-Dove, Purple-tailed and Pinon Imperial-Pigeon, Tawny-breasted Honeyeater, New Guinea Friarbird, Little Shrike-thrush, Variable and Rusty Pitohui, Hooded and Black Butcherbird, Brown Oriole, Northern Fantail, Spangled Drongo, Spot-winged and Frilled Monarch, Yellow-faced Myna, Black Berrypecker, and Green-crowned Longbill. The final hours of light may still see us birding in the vicinity of camp, where we stand an excellent chance of seeing avian delights as Black-capped Lory, Double-eyed and Large Fig-Parrot, Western Crowned-Pigeon, Hook-billed Kingfisher, Common Paradise-Kingfisher, Moluccan King-Parrot, Wallace's Fairywren, and Magnificent, King and Lesser Bird of Paradise. If we are really lucky, we may also hear and see the sought-after Shovel-billed Kookaburra here toward dusk. A nocturnal foray after dinner could produce Sooty Owl, Jungle Hawk-Owl, Wallace's Owlet-Nightjar, and Marbled Frogmouth. Overnight at camp.

Day 2 > Arfak foothill forests We shall take our breakfast as the dawn chorus develops, and proceed to an area where several display courts of the Magnificent Bird of Paradise are located, in the hope of witnessing the full array of amazing display postures of this beautiful species at close range from a well-appointed palm-frond hide. Having truly absorbed this, we shall visit one of several known display trees of the King Bird of Paradise, and it should not take long before we come to grips with this little gem, in fact the smallest of all paradisaeids, which 19th century naturalist A. R. Wallace so amiably described as 'a wanton waste of extreme beauty'. The rest of the morning we shall bird in the wider vicinity of camp in search of Red-billed Tulegalla, White-crowned and Dwarf Koel, Yellow-capped Pygmy-Parrot, New Guinea Bronzewing, Cinnamon Ground-Dove, Western Crowned-Pigeon, White-eared Catbird, Long-billed Honeyeater, Black-sided Robin, and Rufous Babbler. After lunch we shall spend most of the afternoon in a gully where we could be rewarded with sightings of Variable

Dwarf Kingfisher, Thick-billed Ground-Pigeon, Red-bellied Pitta, Rusty Mouse-warbler, Painted Quail-thrush, Blue Jewel-Babbler, Rufous-backed Fantail, and Sooty Thicket-Fantail. Dinner and overnight at camp.

Day 3 > Arfak foothill and hill forests This morning we shall ascend along a ridge that supports a display tree of the Lesser Bird of Paradise where several fine adult males usually gather. We shall take ample time to observe the full array of displays and interactions at the lek. Besides, while sitting quietly in the forest here, there's always a chance of a Northern Cassowary, Red-billed Talegalla or Pheasant Pigeon casually walking by. Having truly absorbed what may well rank among Earth's greatest natural spectacles, we shall probably require the rest of the day to bird uphill toward a camp at 1,100 m elevation, enjoying a packed lunch en route. Mixed insectivore feeding flocks along the way usually include Pale-billed Scrubwren, Goldenface, Grey and Sclater's Whistler, Variable and Hooded Pitohui, Magnificent Bird of Paradise, Yellow-eyed and Grey-headed Cuckoo-shrike, Chestnut-bellied and Northern Fantail, Pygmy and Spangled Drongo, Black-winged, Spot-winged, Golden and Frilled Monarch, Yellow-breasted Boatbill, Black-fronted White-eye, Black Berrypecker and Green-crowned Longbill. Everywhere in these hills resound the songs and calls of Red-billed Talegalla, Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, White-crowned and Dwarf Koel, Pheasant Pigeon, Green-backed Gerygone, Olive Flyrobin, Black-chinned Robin, Northern Scrub-Robin, Chestnut-backed Jewel-Babbler, Rusty Whistler, Little Shrike-thrush, Crested Pitohui, Crinkle-collared Manucode, and Magnificent Riflebird. After dinner at camp, a nocturnal stroll in the vicinity could produce Sooty Owl, the distinctive mid-montane *affinis*-subspecies of Barred Owllet-Nightjar, and Marbled Frogmouth. Overnight at camp.

Day 4 > Arfak hill forests We shall bird all day in the excellent ridgetop hill forest around camp. In good weather, New Guinea Eagle can often be heard here around the crack of dawn, and with luck we may be able to track down this awesome bird, calling persistently from the crown of an emergent forest tree down-slope. Several bowers of the gorgeous Masked Bowerbird are to be found here and we could monitor one of these from a well-appointed palm-frond hide early morning in order to get those much-wanted close-up views of this otherwise habitual canopy-dweller. And while sitting quietly in the forest here we may well attract skulking Red-billed Talegalla, Red-bellied Pitta, Rusty Mouse-warbler, White-rumped Robin, Northern Scrub-Robin, and Chestnut-backed Jewel-Babbler. Flowering trees around camp often attract colorful Fairy, Josephine's and Papuan Lorikeets, diminutive Red, Mountain and Black Myzomelas, and sometimes Vogelkop Melidectes. Additional species that we shall look out for here after lunch include Blue-collared and Pesquet's Parrot, Spotted Catbird, Hill-forest Honeyeater, White-faced Robin, Vogelkop Whistler, Black-billed Sicklebill, Mountain Peltops, Stout-billed Cuckoo-shrike, Black-shouldered Cicadabird, Black Monarch, Black Fantail, Capped White-eye, and Island Leaf-Warbler. Dinner and overnight at camp.

Day 5 > Arfak hill and montane forests Today, we shall require most of the morning to bird uphill toward our final camp at 1,600 m elevation in stunning ridgetop cloud-forest. As we gradually shift to higher ground and enter montane forest we shall start hearing Fan-tailed Cuckoo, White-eared Bronze-Cuckoo, Black-billed Cuckoo-Dove, White-bibbed Fruit-Dove, Shining Imperial-Pigeon, Papuan Treecreeper, Vogelkop Bowerbird, Marbled, Rufous-sided and Western Smoky Honeyeater, Mountain Mouse-warbler, Perplexing, Vogelkop and Grey-green Scrubwren, Mountain and Brown-breasted Gerygone, Canary Flyrobin, Blue-grey and Green-backed Robin, Spotted Jewel-Babbler, Rufous-naped, Sclater's and Regent Whistler, Black Pitohui, Superb Bird of Paradise, and Friendly and Dimorphic Fantail. After lunch at camp, we shall monitor a nearby display court of the Western Parotia from a well-appointed palm-frond hide. The wacko ballet performance of the court-tending male of this species simply has to be witnessed to be believed, and invariably ranks as the highlight of a birding trip to the Arfaks. Dusk shall see us standing in a tree-fall gap in anticipation of roding New Guinea Woodcock, while Sooty Owl, Jungle Hawk Owl, and Large and Mountain Owllet-Nightjar all are possible here on a nocturnal excursion after dinner. Overnight at camp.

Day 6 > Arfak montane forests We shall have our hearty breakfast while enjoying the developing dawn chorus, here including Vogelkop Scrubwren, Ashy Robin, and especially Regent Whistler, a powerful and varied songster. The first hour of light we shall bird around the tree-fall gaps near camp where we hope to attract the sought-after Long-tailed Paradigalla and where many species actively forage into the open. Here and in surrounding tracts of primary montane forest we may see Pygmy, Papuan, Whiskered and Yellow-billed Lorikeet, Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrot, Red-collared Myzomela, Vogelkop Melidectes, Mottled Whistler, Great Wood-swallow, Mountain Peltops, Black-breasted Boatbill, Capped White-eye, and Lemon-breasted, Fan-tailed and Tit Berrypecker. We could then spend some time at the Parotia display court again, which besides the not-to-be-missed display performances of the parotias themselves, also provides a reasonable chance of seeing otherwise highly retiring species as Wattled Brush-turkey, Bronze Ground-Dove, and White-striped Forest-Rail casually walking across the courts. After lunch at camp, we shall search for species likely to elude us for a while or for which better views may be desirable: Rufous-throated Bronze-Cuckoo, Modest Tiger-Parrot, Papuan Mountain Pigeon, White-striped Forest-Rail, Vogelkop Bowerbird, Lesser Ground-robin, Garnet, Black-throated and Ashy Robin, New Guinea Logrunner, Spotted Jewel-Babbler, Varied Sittella, Black Pitohui, Lesser Melampitta, Long-tailed Paradigalla, Black and Black-billed Sicklebill, Arfak Astrapia, and Black-bellied Cuckoo-shrike. Dinner and overnight at camp.

Day 7 > Arfak montane forests Following a hearty pre-dawn breakfast we shall climb to a high point at 2,100 m, soliciting sightings of Dwarf Cassowary, Wattled Brush-turkey, Mountain Swiftlet, Cinnamon-browed Melidectes, Black-throated Honeyeater, Smoky Robin, Black and Black-billed Sicklebill, and Arfak Astrapia as

we stroll through utterly stunning cloud-forests, swathed in mosses and epiphytes. Numerous so-called roofed maypole bowers of the Vogelkop Bowerbird — nothing less than the most complex and largest structures known in the avian world — are scattered throughout the forests here, and there will also be ample opportunity to get up close and personal with this highly entertaining species from a well-appointed palm-frond hide. Other goodies we may catch up with here include Brehm's Tiger-Parrot, Bronze Ground-Dove, Ornate Fruit-Dove, Black-mantled Goshawk, Orange-crowned Fairywren, Olive Straightbill, Mountain Mouse-warbler, Black-throated Robin, and Spotted Jewel-Babbler. We shall have snacks and lunch underway and likely return to camp in the evening only. Dinner and overnight at camp.

Day 8 > Arfak montane forests We have an entire day to capitalize on some of the more elusive montane Arfak specialties already mentioned above, with lunch in between. Dinner and overnight at camp.

Day 9 > Arfak montane and hill forests Following an early morning's birding, we shall require the rest of the morning to slowly bird down to the 1,100 m camp again. After lunch here we shall have an entire afternoon to track down some of the more elusive hill forest species already mentioned above. Dinner and overnight at camp.

Day 10 > Arfak hill and foothill forests We shall enjoy an early morning's birding around the 1,100 m camp, and then require most of the day to slowly bird down to the 200 m camp again, enjoying a packed lunch en route. Dinner and overnight at camp.

Day 11 > Arfak foothill forests After a final morning's birding in foothill forests around the 200 m camp and lunch on site, we shall require most of the afternoon to slowly bird down to our pick-up point where vehicles await us to transport us to our Manokwari hotel in the evening for dinner and a longer than usual night's rest. Alternatively, if you stay on for our 'Anggi Giji basin' extension we shall drive for two hours to Ransiki instead and stay the night there.

Day 12 > Manokwari We shall enjoy a late breakfast and transfer to Manokwari's Rendani Airport for the mid-morning's flight to Jakarta.

What the tour fare includes

The individual expedition fare of € 1,532 covers all costs incurred between your arrival at Manokwari on trip day 1 and departure from Manokwari on day 12, insofar in congruence with the tour itinerary detailed above and our published terms and conditions (see Related links).

Related links

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