

## Arfak and northern lowlands

### Birding expedition

#### 12 days/11 nights

#### Please enquire for an up-to-date quote

We begin our West Papuan birding adventure in the town of Manokwari, situated on the northeastern tip of New Guinea's Bird's Head or Vogelkop Peninsula. We will travel straight through to the nearby Arfak Mountains where we shall be based for four nights in search of an entire suite of so-called 'Vogelkop' endemics. The second leg of our birding adventure takes us to the northern lowlands near Jayapura. Upon arrival here, we will first be birding in open country around Lake Sentani where we foremost hope to find two rare and localized grassland finches. Early next morning, we set out to our secluded Muaib jungle camp in pristine alluvial lowland forest for a five days' exploration of its rich and colorful lowland forest avifauna. A man-sized cassowary, two megapodes, seven dazzling forest kingfishers, a profusion of parrots, the world's largest pigeon, and a whopping six species of bird-of-paradise await the intrepid and careful observer here.

#### When?

Possible year-round, but most certainly best from June to November.

#### Scheduled departures

Please enquire for details on our upcoming departures.

#### Physical effort

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

#### Tour summary

Day 1 > Manokwari and Arfak montane forests.

Day 2-4 > Arfak montane forests.

Day 5 > Arfak montane forests and Manokwari.

Day 6 > Manokwari, Sentani and Lake Sentani.

Day 7 > Sentani and northern lowlands.

Day 8-10 > Northern lowlands.

Day 11 > Northern lowlands and Sentani.

Day 12 > Sentani.

#### Tour description

**Day 1 > Manokwari and Arfak montane forests** Morning arrival at Manokwari's Rendani Airport on overnight domestic flight from Jakarta or alternative gateway. We shall soon set out on the two hours' drive by chartered 4WD-vehicle to a community-owned guest house located at c. 1,600 m elevation in the Mount Indon area of the Arfak Mountains. Here we shall start our exploration of these fabled mountains after a packed lunch with a gentle introduction to the commoner or more conspicuous species of the garden clearings and roadside tree-gaps: Variable Goshawk, Sultan's and Bar-tailed Cuckoo-Dove, Mountain Fruit Dove, Papuan Mountain Pigeon, White-eared Bronze Cuckoo, Chestnut-breasted and Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Plum-faced and Yellow-billed Lorikeet, Red-collared Myzomela, Rufous-sided and Western Smoky Honeyeater, Vogelkop and Ornate Melidectes, Vogelkop Scrubwren, Brown-breasted Gerygone, Grey Thornbill, Mid-mountain Berrypecker, Black-breasted Boatbill, Sclater's Whistler, Black and Friendly Fantail, Western Parotia, Blue-grey Robin, Canary Flyrobin, Island Leaf Warbler, Capped and New Guinea White-eye, Olive-crowned Flowerpecker, and Streak-headed Munia. Other goodies we may come to grips with here include Long-tailed Honey Buzzard, Metallic Pigeon, Pesquet's Parrot, Pygmy, Fairy and Josephine's Lorikeet, Blue-collared Parrot, Spotted Berrypecker, Long-tailed Paradigalla, Superb Bird-of-paradise, and both Blue-faced and Papuan Parrotfinch. A nocturnal excursion after dinner could produce Greater Sooty Owl, Papuan Boobook, and Feline and Mountain Owllet-nightjar. Overnight in community guest house.

**Day 2 > Arfak montane forests** After a pre-dawn breakfast, we shall monitor nearby display courts of the Western Parotia from well-appointed palm-frond hides. 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. Besides the not-to-be-missed display performances of the parotias, the hides potentially also offer an intimate window of observation into the secretive lives of habitual ground-dwellers as Wattled Brushturkey, White-striped Forest Rail, Cinnamon and Bronze Ground Dove, Mountain Mouse-warbler, Spotted Jewel-babbler, Ashy and Green-backed Robin, and Lesser Ground Robin. Following lunch back at the guest house, there shall be further opportunities to spend potentially rewarding time with the parotias, or to get up close and personal with the highly entertaining Vogelkop Bowerbird from one of the palm-frond hides set up in front of its formidable so-called roofed maypole bowers in the area. The last hours of light shall see us birding around the garden clearings. Dinner and overnight in community guest house.

**Day 3 > Arfak montane forests** Following a hearty nocturnal breakfast, we shall proceed pre-dawn to an area of secondary forest where numerous display courts of the Magnificent Bird-of-paradise are to be found. Here we stand an excellent chance of witnessing the full array of display postures of this beautiful species at close range from well-appointed palm-frond hides. Other birds often in evidence around the courts here include Cinnamon Ground Dove, Arfak Catbird, Rusty Mouse-warbler, Pale-billed Scrubwren, Green-backed Robin, and Trumpet Manucode. In adjacent tracts of primary forest we may see White-striped Forest Rail, Wallace's Fairywren, Red, Papuan Black and Mountain Myzomela, Marbled, Long-billed and Mountain Honeyeater, Goldenface, Perplexing and Grey-green Scrubwren, Fairy Gerygone, Dwarf and Yellow-bellied Longbill, Chestnut-backed Jewel-babbler, Mountain Peltops, Vogelkop and Sclater's Whistler, Little Shrikethrush, Hooded Pitohui, Drongo Fantail, Black, Black-winged and Frilled Monarch, White-rumped and White-faced Robin, Yellow-legged Flyrobin, Papuan Scrub Robin, and Black-crowned White-eye. After a packed lunch on site, there shall be further opportunities to spend potentially rewarding time with the Magnificent Bird-of-paradise, or we could continue our search of the vicinity for some of its more elusive species already mentioned above. Dinner and overnight in community guest house.

**Day 4 > Arfak montane forests** After a pre-dawn breakfast, we shall bird all day along a loop ascending to a high point at c. 2,000 m elevation in search of three potentially highly elusive species of bird-of-paradise present here: Arfak Astrapia and Black and Black-billed Sicklebill. Most of the trail follows gently-sloping ridgetop cloud-forest but we shall also be traversing some challenging and steep terrain. Other goodies we may come across along the loop include Wattled Brushturkey, New Guinea Eagle, Ornate Fruit Dove, Rufescent Imperial Pigeon, Rufous-throated Bronze Cuckoo, Red-breasted Pygmy Parrot, Papuan Lorikeet, Brehm's and Modest Tiger Parrot, Vogelkop Bowerbird, Papuan Treecreeper, Orange-crowned Fairywren, Olive Straightbill, Black-throated Honeyeater, Cinnamon-browed Melidectes, Mountain Mouse-warbler, Papuan Logrunner, Fan-tailed and Tit Berrypecker, Spotted Jewel-babbler, Mottled Berryhunter, Black-bellied Cicadabird, Papuan Sittella, Rufous-naped Whistler, Black Pitohui, Regent Whistler, Dimorphic Fantail, Lesser Melampitta, Ashy, Black-throated, Smoky and Garnet Robin, and Lesser Ground Robin. We shall enjoy a packed lunch in a natural forest clearing in which Archbold's Nightjar has been found to nest, and where Black-mantled and Meyer's Goshawk, Collared Sparrowhawk, Mountain Swiftlet, and Great Woodswallow may be seen flying overhead. Dinner and overnight in community guest house.

**Day 5 > Arfak montane forests and Manokwari** Following a pre-dawn breakfast, there shall be a final opportunity for an observation session at either the Vogelkop Bowerbird, Western Parotia or Magnificent Bird-of-paradise, or we could bird in the wider vicinity in search of some of the more elusive species already mentioned above. After lunch back at the guest house and a final afternoon's birding, we shall drive back to Manokwari in the late afternoon. Dinner and overnight in Manokwari hotel.

**Day 6 > Manokwari, Sentani and Lake Sentani** After breakfast in our Manokwari hotel, we shall transfer to Manokwari's Rendani Airport for the first morning flight to Sentani, where the airport of Jayapura is located. We shall soon be birding the grasslands and patchy secondary forests around nearby Lake Sentani, where we foremost hope to come to grips with two rare and localized grassland finches: Grand and Hooded Munia. Other noteworthy birds present in the scenic open country here include Brown and King Quail, Black Bittern, Pygmy Eagle, Whistling and Brahminy Kite, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Buff-banded Rail, Pale-vented Bush-hen, Australasian Swamphe, Dusky Moorhen, Comb-crested Jacana, Orange-fronted and Orange-bellied Fruit Dove, Lesser Black and Pheasant Coucal, Channel-billed Cuckoo, Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, White-shouldered Fairywren, Streak-headed and Tawny-breasted Honeyeater, Meyer's and New Guinea Friarbird, Mimic Honeyeater, Large-billed Gerygone, White-bellied Cuckooshrike, Willie Wagtail, Glossy-mantled Manucode, Papuan Grassbird, Golden-headed Cisticola, Pied Bush Chat, Crimson Finch, and Chestnut-breasted Munia. After lunch in town, we have an entire afternoon to look for some of the more elusive species already mentioned above. Dinner and overnight in Sentani hotel.

**Day 7 > Sentani and northern lowlands** We shall enjoy a nocturnal breakfast in our Sentani hotel and set out on the two-hour's drive to our drop-off point west of the Cyclops Mountains. After arrival here around dawn, we shall bird all day toward our secluded Muaib jungle camp at c. 10 m elevation in pristine alluvial primary forest, enjoying a packed lunch en route. Along the walk, wacko Blyth's Hornbills, majestic Palm and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, and noisy Brown, Dusky and Black-capped Lories and Coconut Lorikeets may fly overhead as we familiarize ourselves with some of the common or more conspicuous forest birds here: Variable Goshawk, Sultan's and Great Cuckoo-Dove, Stephan's Emerald Dove, Wompoo, Pink-spotted, Superb, Beautiful and Orange-bellied Fruit Dove, Pinon's and Zoe's Imperial Pigeon, Brush Cuckoo, Rufous-bellied Kookaburra,

Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Tawny-breasted Honeyeater, New Guinea Friarbird, Mimic and Puff-backed Honeyeater, Yellow-bellied and Fairy Gerygone, Lowland Peltops, Black Butcherbird, Grey-headed Cicadabird, Black-browed Triller, Grey Whistler, Little Shrikethrush, Northern Variable Pitohui, Brown Oriole, Spangled Drongo, Northern Fantail, Spot-winged, Golden and Ochre-collared Monarch, Shining Flycatcher, Grey Crow, Glossy-mantled Manucode, Metallic Starling, Yellow-faced Myna, and Red-capped Flowerpecker. Scarcer or unobtrusive species we may encounter en route include Long-tailed Honey Buzzard, Collared Sparrowhawk, Purple-tailed Imperial Pigeon, Dwarf Koel, Little Bronze Cuckoo, White-crowned Cuckoo, Common Paradise Kingfisher, Orange-fronted Hanging Parrot, Red-flanked Lorikeet, Emperor Fairywren, Green-backed Plain, Streak-headed and Long-billed Honeyeater, Rusty Mouse-warbler, Large-billed Gerygone, Papuan Babbler, Black Berrypecker, Dwarf, Pygmy and Yellow-bellied Longbill, Yellow-breasted Boatbill, Black Cicadabird, Rusty Pitohui, Hooded Monarch, Black-sided Robin, and Lemon-bellied Flyrobin. After dinner at camp, a nocturnal foray in the vicinity could produce Rufous Owl, Papuan Boobook and Hawk-Owl, Marbled and Papuan Frogmouth, Barred Owllet-nightjar, and Papuan Nightjar. Overnight at camp.

**Day 8 > Northern lowlands** Wake up to a true day's birding in paradise as we shall be spending this morning at known display sites of consecutively the Twelve-wired, Lesser and King Bird-of-paradise, soliciting sightings of the more mobile Pale-billed Sicklebill in between. Moreover, while sitting quietly in the forest, admiring the full array of display postures of these most magnificent of feathered life forms, we also stand an excellent chance of seeing other hot stuff like Northern Cassowary, Collared Brushturkey, New Guinea Megapode, Thick-billed Ground Pigeon, Cinnamon Ground Dove, or Victoria Crowned Pigeon casually walking by. After lunch at camp, we shall bird all afternoon in the vicinity in search of more goodies like Grey-headed Goshawk, New Guinea Bronzewing, Coronated Fruit Dove, Collared Imperial Pigeon, Greater Black Coucal, Long-billed Cuckoo, Hook-billed and Blue-black Kingfisher, Papuan Dwarf Kingfisher, Buff-faced Pygmy Parrot, Double-eyed and Salvadori's Fig Parrot, Papuan and Hooded Pitta, Tan-capped Catbird, Tawny Straightbill, Meyer's Friarbird, Yellow-gaped Honeyeater, Pale-billed Scrubwren, Blue Jewel-babbler, Boyer's and Golden Cuckooshrike, Sooty and White-bellied Thicket Fantail, Rufous-backed Fantail, Rufous Monarch, Brown-headed Crow, Jobi Manucode, Olive Flyrobin, and Golden Myna. Moreover, as we roam more widely in these dark forests, it should not take long before we feast our eyes on a party of Victoria Crowned Pigeons, or surprise a pair of Collared Brushturkey feeding on the forest floor. Late afternoon shall see us gathered at an open spot in riverine forest in anticipation of Moustached Treeswift, Three-toed Swiftlet and Papuan Spine-tailed Swift among often abundant Glossy and Uniform Swiftlets, besides at times spectacular evening flights of hornbills and parrots. Breakfast, lunch, dinner and overnight at camp.

**Day 9 > Northern lowlands** Today we could have a resit at the bird-of-paradise display sites or simply bird in search of some of the more elusive species already mentioned above. We could monitor known incubation mounds of the Collared Brushturkey from the comfort of a palm-frond hide, spend time near suitable fruit-dropping trees to seek prolonged views of Northern Cassowary, work stretches of small forest streams for the rare Forest Bittern, or just sit quietly at the edge of sago-swamp in the dire hope of coming to grips with the secretive New Guinea Flightless Rail. Other sought-after birds that have been recorded here include the rare New Guinea Eagle, Shovel-billed Kookaburra, and Pesquet's Parrot. Breakfast, lunch, dinner and overnight at camp.

**Day 10 > Northern lowlands** We have an entire day to capitalize on some of the most elusive northern lowlands specialties already mentioned above. Breakfast, lunch, dinner and overnight at camp.

**Day 11 > Northern lowlands and Sentani** After breakfast we have a final morning to bird in the vicinity of camp. Following an earlier than usual lunch at camp, we shall slowly bird back to our pick-up point where vehicles stand by to transport us to Sentani. Dinner and overnight in Sentani hotel.

**Day 12 > Sentani** We shall enjoy breakfast in our Sentani hotel and transfer to Sentani Airport for the first morning flight to Jakarta or alternative destination.

### Related links

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<http://www.PapuaExpeditions.com/conditions.html>