

Easy Papua Birding expedition

21 days/20 nights

From € 3,861

Deposit: € 965

Single room supplement: € 133

This three week's bird watching adventure essentially is a condensed version of our 'Best of Papua' birding expedition, scouring off the roughest edges and focusing especially on birds of paradise. We thus visit only easily accessible 'continental' birding sites that require minimal hiking effort: the Baliem Valley, Lake Habbema alpine plateau and Ibele Valley upper montane cloud-forests in the Snow Mountains near Wamena, lowland forest and Lake Sentani in the northern lowlands near Jayapura, the Mount Indon area of the Arfak Mountains, lowland forest near Sorong, tantalizing Waigeo Island, and a Dampier Strait atoll. When combined with our 'Oceanic Papua' pre-tour extension, this expedition provides opportunities for seeing more Papua endemics than any other bird tour advertized on the web today.

When?

Possible year-round, though we only recommend the region's drier period, normally lasting from May through to October, in order to make the most of this splendid bird watching tour.

Scheduled departures

Please enquire for details on our upcoming departures.

Physical toughness

Reasonable physical fitness and good agility are required for this tour.

Tour summary

Day 1 > Baliem Valley cultivations.

Day 2-5 > Lake Habbema alpine plateau and Ibele Valley upper montane cloud-forests.

Day 6-9 > Northern lowlands.

Day 10 > Lake Sentani and Arfak montane forests.

Day 11-14 > Arfak montane forests.

Day 15 > Sorong lowlands.

Day 16-19 > Waigeo Island.

Day 20 > Dampier Strait atoll.

Day 21 > Sorong lowlands.

Day-by-day itinerary

Day 1 > Baliem Valley cultivations Early morning's arrival at Jayapura's Sentani Airport on domestic flight from Jakarta, and onward connecting flight to Wamena, the administrative and transportation hub of the up to 20 km wide and more than 80 km long Grand Baliem Valley of the Snow Mountains. The short, one-hour hop lifts us across the vast expanses of lowland floodplain forest of the 'Meervlakte' with its myriad of meandering rivers, along the precipitous northern scarp of the Snow Mountains, finally into the beautifully landscaped Grand Baliem upland valley at a chilly 1,500 m above sea level. Following lunch, we shall bird the rest of the afternoon in cultivations, grasslands and patchy open woodland in the Baliem Valley. Our main target is the endemic Black-breasted Munia, while other birds inhabiting the open country here include Blue-breasted Quail, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Brahminy Kite, Papuan Harrier, Variable Goshawk, Brown Falcon, White-shouldered Fairywren, Ornate Melidectes, Smoky Honeyeater, Buff-faced Scrubwren, Mountain and Brown-breasted Gerygone, White-eyed Robin, Golden Whistler, Superb Bird of Paradise, Stout-billed Cuckoo-shrike, Pied Bushchat, Golden-headed Cisticola, Capped White-eye, Island Leaf-Warbler, Tawny Grassbird, and Red-capped Flowerpecker. Dinner and a good night's rest in Wamena.

Day 2 > Lake Habbema alpine plateau Following a pre-dawn breakfast in our Wamena hotel we shall drive out for three hours along a new road to the magnificent Lake Habbema alpine plateau at c. 3,200 m elevation. Here, above the timberline in the shadow of Peak Trikora, we shall start our exploration of the Snow Mountains

proper by mid-morning with a gentle walk along the lake shore as we slowly adjust to the altitude. A thorough scan of the lake itself could produce Salvadori's and Grey Teal, Pacific Black Duck, and Eurasian Coot, while Spotless Crake is common along the marshy lake shore. Other goodies we may come across in the surrounding scrubby hillocks include Orange-billed Lorikeet, Papuan Harrier, Brown Falcon, Australian Kestrel, Orange-cheeked Honeyeater, Short-bearded Melidectes, Papuan Thornbill, Lorentz's Whistler, and Crested Berrypecker. After enjoying a packed lunch while overlooking the lake, we shall have the entire afternoon to bird through grasslands and shrubbery toward our camp near the 3,225 m pass into the Ibele Valley. En route, it should not take long before we spot our first Papuan Grassbird, Alpine Pipit, or colorful flock of Snow Mountain Munias, but to find the secretive Snow Mountain Quail we may need to persevere. After dinner at camp a nocturnal foray could produce Archbold's Owllet-Nightjar, Archbold's Nightjar as well as roding New Guinea Woodcock. Overnight at camp.

Day 3 > Lake Habbema alpine plateau Today we shall direct our efforts to the heathy hills above camp. The open stands of *Libocedrus*-pines and associated shrubberies here constitute the preferred habitat of the delightful MacGregor's 'Bird of Paradise' and early morning is the best time to get to grips with this star bird. Observing *Macgregoria* here, in what ranks as some of the finest mountain scenery this side of the Himalayas, is an unforgettable experience, regardless of whether this enigmatic taxon is a bird of paradise or a member of the honeyeater family. Other noteworthy species in this habitat and the scattered pockets of closed forest here include Whiskered and Orange-billed Lorikeet, Brehm's and Painted Tiger-Parrot, Red-collared Myzomela, Black-throated, Orange-cheeked, Black-backed and Smoky Honeyeater, Sooty and Short-bearded Melidectes, Mountain Mouse-warbler, Large Scrubwren, Papuan Thornbill, Greater Ground-robin, Garnet and Alpine Robin, Lorentz's Whistler, Great Wood-swallow, Friendly Fantail, and Mountain Firetail. After lunch at camp, we have an entire afternoon to track down some of the more elusive species mentioned above. Dinner and overnight at camp.

Day 4 > Ibele Valley upper montane cloud-forests We shall take a packed lunch and bird an entire day in the excellent cloud-forest below the pass in the uppermost stretches of the Ibele Valley. Birds we shall look out for specifically here are the hyper-elusive Archbold's Bowerbird and the gorgeous Splendid Astrapia, while other goodies present include Rufous-throated Bronze-Cuckoo, Papuan, Whiskered and Yellow-billed Lorikeet, Brehm's and Modest Tiger-Parrot, White-bibbed Fruit-Dove, Papuan Mountain Pigeon, Chestnut Forest-Rail, Black-mantled Goshawk, Papuan Treecreeper, Orange-crowned Fairywren, Olive-streaked and Black-backed Honeyeater, Belford's Melidectes, Papuan Scrubwren, Greater and Lesser Ground-robin, Canary Flyrobin, Garnet, Alpine, Black-throated and White-winged Robin, New Guinea Logrunner, Varied and Black Sittella, Rufous-naped and Regent Whistler, Black Pitohui, Lesser Melampitta, Loria's and Crested Bird of Paradise, Brown Sicklebill, Mountain Peltops, Hooded Cuckoo-shrike, Dimorphic Fantail, Wattled Ploughbill, Black-breasted Boatbill, Fan-tailed, Tit and Crested Berrypecker, and Mountain Firetail. During part of this excursion we will be birding along a fast-flowing stream along which Torrent-lark is regularly seen. Dinner and overnight at camp.

Day 5 > Ibele Valley upper montane cloud-forests We have a final morning to search for some of the more elusive Snow Mountains specialties already listed above, and following lunch at camp we shall drive back to Wamena for dinner and a good night's rest.

Day 6 > Northern lowlands Having touched ground at Jayapura's Sentani Airport on the first morning's flight from Wamena, we shall have an earlier than usual lunch in town and drive out for two hours to our drop-off point west of the Cyclops Mountains. From here we shall require most of the afternoon to slowly bird toward our secluded Muaib jungle camp at 25 m elevation in pristine alluvial primary forest. Along the walk, wacko Blyth's Hornbills, majestic Palm and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, and noisy Brown, Dusky and Black-capped Lories and Rainbow Lorikeets may fly overhead as we familiarize ourselves with some of the common or more conspicuous interior forest birds here: Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Common Paradise-Kingfisher, Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo, Slender-billed and Great Cuckoo-Dove, Stephan's Dove, Wompoo, Pink-spotted, Superb, Beautiful and Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove, Purple-tailed, Pinon and Banded Imperial-Pigeon, Tawny-breasted Honeyeater, New Guinea Friarbird, Fairy and Yellow-bellied Gerygone, Rufous Babbler, Little Shrike-thrush, Variable and Rusty Pitohui, Grey Crow, Glossy-mantled Manucode, Black Butcherbird, Brown Oriole, Black-browed Triller, Northern Fantail, Spangled Drongo, Spot-winged, Golden and Rufous-collared Monarch, and Yellow-faced Myna. After dinner at camp, a nocturnal foray in the vicinity could produce both Jungle and Papuan Hawk-Owl as well as Barred Owllet-Nightjar, Marbled Frogmouth, and the little-known Papuan Nightjar. Overnight at camp.

Day 7 > Northern lowlands Wake up to another day's birding in paradise as we shall be spending most of 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, Brown-collared Talegalla, New Guinea Megapode, Cinnamon Ground-Dove, Thick-billed Ground-Pigeon, 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 Variable Dwarf, Blue-black and Hook-billed Kingfisher, Little Bronze-Cuckoo, Greater Black Coucal, Buff-faced Pygmy-Parrot, Double-eyed and Salvadori's Fig-Parrot, New Guinea Bronzewing, Coronated Fruit-Dove,

Collared Imperial-Pigeon, Long-tailed Buzzard, Grey-headed Goshawk, Hooded and Red-bellied Pitta, White-eared Catbird, Tawny Straightbill, Yellow-gaped, Plain and Streak-headed Honeyeater, Meyer's Friarbird, Rusty Mouse-warbler, Large-billed Gerygone, Black-sided Robin, Blue Jewel-Babbler, Brown-headed Crow, Jobi Manucode, Lowland Peltops, Boyer's, New Guinea and Golden Cuckoo-shrike, Sooty and White-bellied Thicket-Fantail, Rufous-backed Fantail, Rufous and Hooded Monarch, Yellow-breasted Boatbill, Golden Myna, Black Berrypecker, and Green-crowned, Plumed and Pygmy Longbill. 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 Brown-collared Talegalla feeding on the forest floor. By late afternoon we could return to the Lesser Bird of Paradise display tree for another observation session, or we could bird along one of the broader rivers which could produce Papuan Swiftlet among abundant Glossy and Uniform Swiftlets, as well as Papuan Spinetail and Moustached Treeswift together with at times spectacular evening flights of the various parrot species. Overnight at camp.

Day 8 > Northern lowlands Today we could have a welcome resit at the bird of paradise display sites or simply bird in search of some of the more elusive species mentioned above. Other sought-after birds that have been recorded here include the rare Shovel-billed Kookaburra, Pesquet's Parrot and New Guinea Eagle. We could also monitor known nest mounds of the Brown-collared Talegalla from the comfort of a hide if this at times infuriatingly wary species eluded us thus far, spend time near 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 getting to grips with the secretive New Guinea Flightless Rail. Overnight at camp.

Day 9 > Northern lowlands We have a final morning to look for some of the most elusive species listed above, and after 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.

Day 10 > Lake Sentani and Arfak montane forests Dawn shall see us birding the grasslands and patchy secondary forests around 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 Blue-breasted Quail, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Channel-billed Cuckoo, Pheasant Coucal, Orange-fronted and Orange-bellied Fruit Dove, Buff-banded Rail, Rufous-tailed Bush-hen, Purple Swamphen, Dusky Moorhen, Comb-crested Jacana, Whistling Kite, Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, White-shouldered Fairywren, Meyer's Friarbird, Glossy-mantled Manucode, Crimson Finch, and Chestnut-breasted Munia. We shall then transfer to Sentani Airport to catch the first morning's flight to Manokwari. After a quick lunch in town, we shall set out on the three hours' drive by 4WD-vehicle to our host village at 1,700 m elevation in the Mount Indon area of the Arfak Mountains. Here we shall start our exploration of these fabled mountains by early afternoon with a gentle introduction to the commoner or more conspicuous species of the garden clearings: Fan-tailed Cuckoo, White-eared Bronze-Cuckoo, Whiskered and Yellow-billed Lorikeet, Slender-billed and Black-billed Cuckoo-Dove, White-bibbed Fruit-Dove, Red-collared Myzomela, Rufous-sided Honeyeater, Vogelkop Melidectes, Western Smoky Honeyeater, Mountain and Brown-breasted Gerygone, Sclater's Whistler, Superb Bird of Paradise, Black and Friendly Fantail, Capped White-eye, Olive-crowned Flowerpecker, and Lemon-breasted Berrypecker. A nocturnal excursion after dinner could produce Sooty Owl, Jungle Hawk-Owl, and Large and Mountain Owlet-Nightjar. Overnight in village residence.

Day 11 > Arfak montane forests Following a hearty pre-dawn breakfast, we shall proceed 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 this beautiful species' full array of display postures at close range from a palm-frond hide. Other birds often in evidence around the courts include Cinnamon Ground-Dove, Spotted Catbird, Rusty Mouse-warbler, Pale-billed Scrubwren, and Green-backed Robin. In adjacent tracts of secondary forest we may see Long-billed and Marbled Honeyeater, Perplexing and Grey-green Scrubwren, Yellow-legged Flyrobin, Blue-grey Robin, Goldenface, Mountain Peltops, Black-shouldered Cicadabird, Black and Black-winged Monarch, Black-fronted White-eye, and Island Leaf-Warbler. After lunch back at our village abode, 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. We shall spend the last hours of light birding around the garden clearings where we may be rewarded with sightings of Pygmy, Fairy and Josephine's Lorikeet, Blue-collared Parrot, Pesquet's Parrot, Metallic Pigeon, Long-tailed Buzzard, Vogelkop Melidectes, Mountain Peltops, Long-tailed Paradigalla, and Blue-faced and Papuan Parrotfinch. Dinner and overnight in village residence.

Day 12 > Arfak montane forests We shall take a packed lunch and 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: Black and Black-billed Sickbill and Arfak Astrapia. Most of the track follows gently-sloping ridgetop cloud-forest but we shall also be traversing some more difficult terrain along two streamlets with pockets of dense thickets that hold day-time roosts of both Large and Mountain Owlet-Nightjar. Other goodies we may come across along the loop include Rufous-throated Bronze-Cuckoo, Papuan Lorikeet, Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrot, Brehm's and Modest Tiger-Parrot, Mountain Swiftlet, Shining Imperial-Pigeon, Papuan Mountain Pigeon, White-striped Forest-Rail, Black-mantled and Meyer's Goshawk, New Guinea Eagle, Papuan Treecreeper,

Vogelkop Bowerbird, Orange-crowned Fairywren, Olive Straightbill, Black-throated Honeyeater, Cinnamon-browed Melidectes, Mountain Mouse-warbler, Vogelkop Scrubwren, Lesser Ground-robin, Canary Flyrobin, Garnet, Black-throated, Smoky and Ashy Robin, New Guinea Logrunner, Spotted Jewel-Babbler, Varied Sittella, Mottled, Rufous-naped and Regent Whistler, Black Pitohui, Lesser Melampitta, Great Wood-swallow, Black-bellied Cuckoo-shrike, Dimorphic Fantail, Black-breasted Boatbill, and Fan-tailed and Tit Berrypecker. Dinner and overnight in village residence.

Day 13 > Arfak montane forests Today we shall bird the first hour of light around the garden clearings and then spend some time again at the parotia display courts, which besides the not-to-be-missed display performances of the parotias themselves, also provide a reasonable chance of seeing otherwise highly retiring species as Wattled Brush-turkey and Bronze Ground-Dove casually walking across the courts in search of parotia faeces containing undigested fruit items. Following lunch, 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 at one of its formidable so-called roofed maypole bowers present in the area. Dinner and overnight in village residence.

Day 14 > Arfak montane forests We have a final day to search for some of the more elusive Arfak specialties already mentioned above, and shall drive back to Manokwari in the late afternoon for dinner and a longer than usual night's rest.

Day 15 > Sorong lowlands We shall enjoy a late breakfast and transfer to Manokwari's Rendani Airport to catch the mid-morning's flight to Sorong. After lunch in town, we shall drive out to a vantage point, primarily in order to come to grips with the restricted-range Black Lory. Other noteworthy species we may see here include Dusky Lory, Palm Cockatoo, Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, Papuan Needle-tail, Papuan Frogmouth, Orange-fronted and Orange-bellied Fruit Dove, Long-tailed Buzzard, Grey Crow, Glossy-mantled Manucode, Lowland Peltops, Golden Cuckoo-shrike, Golden and Yellow-faced Myna, Olive-crowned Flowerpecker, and Streak-headed Munia. Dinner and overnight in Sorong.

Day 16 > Waigeo Island After a hearty dawn breakfast in our Sorong hotel, we shall set out early morning on the three hours' speedboat ride to the mouth of the Orobai River on Waigeo. Here, water birds as Radjah Shelduck, Little Pied Cormorant, Great-billed and Striated Heron, and Australian Ibis tend to occur year-round on tidal mudflats and in secondary mangroves, alongside a selection of migrant Palearctic waders in season, which usually includes a few Grey-tailed Tattler. Other birds we may encounter here include Little, Beach and Sacred Kingfisher, Large-billed Gerygone, and Torresian Crow. We shall then have the rest of the morning to slowly bird along the river toward our camp in riparian lowland forest at c. 50 m elevation. Blyth's Hornbills and colorful parrots, including Rainbow Lorikeet, Black-capped Lory, Palm and Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Red-cheeked and Eclectus Parrot, fly overhead as we acquaint ourselves with the vocally or behaviorally conspicuous subset of the forest avifauna: Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Brush Cuckoo, Slender-billed and Great Cuckoo-Dove, Stephan's Dove, Wompoo, Superb and Beautiful Fruit-Dove, Purple-tailed and Pinyon Imperial-Pigeon, Mimic and Tawny-breasted Honeyeater, New Guinea Friarbird, Variable and Rusty Pitohui, Hooded and Black Butcherbird, Brown Oriole, Northern Fantail, Spangled Drongo, and Yellow-faced Myna. Following lunch at camp, we shall probably end up spending most of the afternoon at a popular display tree of the fabled Red Bird of Paradise, and take ample time to observe the up to eight plumed males that normally gather here, interacting with soliciting females. After dinner back at camp, a nocturnal foray in the vicinity may produce Sooty Owl, Jungle Hawk-Owl, and Marbled Frogmouth. Overnight at camp.

Day 17 > Waigeo Island We shall enjoy our breakfast while listening to the developing dawn chorus, which here invariably includes Hook-billed Kingfisher, Rusty Mouse-warbler, Olive Flyrobin, Black-sided Robin, and Variable and Rusty Pitohui among others. We shall then proceed to an area where several display courts of the Wilson's Bird of Paradise are located, in the hope of witnessing the full array of amazing display postures of this nearly mythical bird at close range from the comfort of a well-appointed palm-frond hide. Following lunch, we shall bird all afternoon along the river where we may see Azure Kingfisher, Variable Dwarf Kingfisher, Yellow-capped Pygmy-Parrot, Great-billed Parrot, Moustached Treeswift, New Guinea Bronzewing, Pink-spotted, Claret-breasted, Orange-bellied and Dwarf Fruit-Dove, Red-necked Crake, Long-tailed Buzzard, Variable and Grey-headed Goshawk, Collared Sparrowhawk, Gurney's and Little Eagle, Red-throated Myzomela, Spotted, Brown-backed and Green-backed Honeyeater, Brown-headed Crow, Glossy-mantled Manucode, Red Bird of Paradise, Yellow-eyed and New Guinea Cuckoo-shrike, and Slender-billed Cicadabird. Incubation mounds of the Dusky Megapode are scattered everywhere throughout the flat bottom-valley lowland forests here, and it should not take long before we feast our eyes on a couple of Western Crowned-Pigeons as they break the relative silence with their clapping wing beats to alight in nearby tall forest trees. Dinner and overnight at camp.

Day 18 > Waigeo Island Today we shall have a second observation session at one of the Wilson's Bird of Paradise courts. Other species often visiting the courts here include Cinnamon Ground-Dove, Pheasant Pigeon, Red-bellied Pitta, Rusty Mouse-warbler, and Pale-billed Scrubwren, and with all the luck in the world, we may even be treated to a wandering endemic Bruijn's Brush-turkey casually walking across. After lunch, there shall be another opportunity to monitor either Wilson's or Red Bird of Paradise or we could simply bird in the vicinity where we may be rewarded with sightings of Variable Dwarf Kingfisher, Rufous-bellied Kookaburra,

Hook-billed Kingfisher, Common Paradise-Kingfisher, Little Bronze-Cuckoo, Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, Moluccan King-Parrot, White-eared Catbird, Long-billed and Puff-backed Honeyeater, Fairy and Yellow-bellied Gerygone, Olive Flyrobin, Grey Whistler, Little Shrike-thrush, Brown-headed Crow, Glossy-mantled Manucode, Lowland Peltops, Sooty Thicket-Fantail, Spot-winged, Golden and Frilled Monarch, Yellow-breasted Boatbill, Olive-crowned Flowerpecker, Black Berrypecker, and Green-crowned, Plumed and Pygmy Longbill. Dinner and overnight at camp.

Day 19 > Waigeo Island There shall be ample opportunity to spend rewarding time with the Wilson's and Red Birds of Paradise again today, or we shall simply bird the wider vicinity in search of some of the more elusive species already listed above, with lunch somewhere in between. Dinner and overnight at camp.

Day 20 > Dampier Strait atoll We shall slowly bird our way along the river toward its mouth and transfer to a tiny atoll in Dampier Strait. After lunch here, we shall have a relaxed afternoon's birding in search of regional small island specialists like the *prasinorrhous*-subspecies of White-bibbed Fruit-Dove, Olive Honeyeater, Island Whistler, Rufous Fantail, and Lemon-bellied White-eye. Other noteworthy resident species here include Dusky Megapode, Beach Kingfisher, Spice Imperial-Pigeon, Varied Honeyeater, and Metallic Starling. In addition, Violet-necked Lory, Great-billed Parrot, Bicolored Imperial-Pigeon, Great-billed Heron, Island Monarch, and Moluccan Starling have been recorded on occasion. We shall proceed to Sorong in the evening for dinner and a good night's rest.

Day 21 > Sorong lowlands If need be, dawn shall see us gathered at a vantage point outside Sorong in pursuit of Black Lory. Otherwise, we shall enjoy a late breakfast and transfer to Sorong's DEO Airport for the mid-morning's flight to Jakarta.

What the tour fare includes

The individual expedition fare of € 3,861 covers all costs incurred between your arrival at Jayapura on trip day 1 and departure from Sorong on day 21, insofar in congruence with the tour itinerary detailed above and our published terms and conditions (see Related links).

Related links

Browse our terms and conditions from the PE web site through the following link

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

Download our terms and conditions in handy PDF-format from the PE web site through the following link

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