

Waigeo, Arfak and Geelvink Islands

Birding expedition

18 days/17 nights

From € 3,334

Deposit: € 835

Single room supplement: € 120

We begin our Papuan birding adventure with a relaxed afternoon's birding outside Sorong, on the westernmost tip of New Guinea's Bird's Head Peninsula. Next morning, we set off on a four day's pilgrimage to the avian delights of Waigeo Island in the fabled Raja Ampat archipelago off Sorong. On the return journey to Sorong, we shall spend ample time on a tiny atoll in Dampier Strait, in pursuit of regional small island specialists here. Then follows an entire day's birding our local patches around Sorong. Next we shift our attention to the Arfak Mountains near Manokwari, on the opposite side of the Bird's Head, where we shall be based for six days in search of an entire suite of montane Vogelkop endemics here. The final leg of our birding expedition, devotes five days to the profusion of endemics inhabiting the deep water islands of Numfor and Biak in Papua's famed Geelvink or Cenderawasih Bay. The ultimate Vogelkop and Geelvink birding trip!

When?

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

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 > Sorong lowlands.

Day 2-4 > Waigeo Island.

Day 5 > Dampier Strait atoll.

Day 6 > Sorong lowlands.

Day 7-12 > Arfak Mountains.

Day 13 > Numfor Island.

Day 14 > Numfor Island and Kota Biak.

Day 15-17 > Biak Island.

Day 18 > Kota Biak.

Day-by-day itinerary

Day 1 > Sorong lowlands Midday arrival at Sorong's DEO Airport on early morning's domestic flight from Jakarta. 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 Needletail, 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 2 > 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 3 > 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 Crane, 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 4 > 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 5 > 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 6 > Sorong lowlands After a hearty nocturnal breakfast in our Sorong hotel we shall set out on the two hours' drive by chartered 4WD-vehicle to our drop-off point in secondary alluvial lowland forest where we should arrive at dawn in order to witness the display of the adult male Twelve-wired Bird of Paradise. Having truly absorbed this, we shall bird the wider vicinity during the morning in search of a fine selection of other goodies present here such as Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Hook-billed and Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Common Paradise-Kingfisher, Long-billed Cuckoo, White-crowned and Dwarf Koel, Dusky Lory, Red-flanked Lorikeet, Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, Hooded and Red-bellied Pitta, Meyer's Friarbird, Glossy-mantled Manucode, King Bird of Paradise, Grey-headed and Golden Cuckoo-shrike, and White-bellied Thicket-Fantail. Following lunch in town, we shall set out on the 45 minutes' drive by chartered 4WD-vehicle to our drop-off point in primary and selectively logged foothill forest. Here we shall visit one of several known display trees of the King Bird of Paradise, and it should not take long before we get 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'. Other target species here are the relatively common yet infuriatingly wary Red-billed Talegalla, the gorgeous Red-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher, and the Crinkle-collared Manucode, while more goodies present include Northern Cassowary, Little Bronze-Cuckoo, Black-capped Lory, Palm Cockatoo, Yellow-capped Pygmy-Parrot, Pesquet's Parrot, Orange-fronted Hanging-Parrot, Papuan Needletail, Cinnamon Ground-Dove, Dwarf Fruit-Dove, White-eared Catbird, Green-backed Gerygone, Grey Crow, Magnificent Riflebird, Lesser Bird of Paradise, Lowland Peltops, Boyer's and New Guinea Cuckoo-shrike, Black-browed Triller, Sooty Thicket-Fantail, Golden Monarch, Golden and Yellow-faced Myna, and Streak-headed Munia. Dusk shall see us gathered at an open vantage point to witness evening flights of hornbills and especially parrots, which usually include the restricted-range Black Lory. Dinner and overnight in Sorong.

[Page 2 of 4] *Be green, leave it on the screen!*

Day 7 > Arfak montane forests 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 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 8 > 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 9 > 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 Sicklebill 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 10 > 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 11 > Arfak montane forests We have an entire day to capitalize on some of the more elusive Arfak specialties already mentioned above, with lunch in between. Dinner and overnight in village residence.

Day 12 > Arfak montane forests After a final morning's birding and lunch back at our village abode, we shall drive back to Manokwari in the afternoon for dinner and a good night's rest.

Day 13 > Numfor Island After breakfast in our Manokwari hotel we shall set out first light on the c. four hour's chartered speedboat ride to Numfor Island. We could stop en route on the tiny off-shore Manem Islet, where small island specialists as Island Whistler and Island Monarch occur. Once on Numfor, the main focus of our attention shall of course be the delightful Numfor Paradise-Kingfisher and the distinctive *maforensis*-subspecies of Island Leaf-Warbler, both of which are usually readily located. Other interesting birds we may see here include Black-winged Lory, Yellow-bibbed Fruit-Dove, Biak Flycatcher and Long-tailed Starling. Dinner and overnight in village residence.

Day 14 > Numfor Island and Kota Biak We shall bird all morning on Numfor and transfer to Kota Biak again after lunch. Dinner and a good night's rest in Kota Biak.

Day 15 > Biak Island Following a hearty pre-dawn breakfast in our Kota Biak hotel we shall set out on the two hour's drive to our host village in northern Biak. Here we shall have a relaxed morning's birding around a couple of forest clearings where we could be rewarded with sightings of Brush Cuckoo, Little Bronze-Cuckoo, Black-winged Lory, Red-fronted Lorikeet, Red-cheeked and Eclectus Parrot, Moustached Treeswift, Yellow-bibbed and Claret-breasted Fruit-Dove, Spice Imperial-Pigeon, Pacific Baza, Long-tailed Buzzard, Variable Goshawk, Gurney's Eagle, Emperor Fairywren, Dusky Myzomela, Hooded Butcherbird, Slender-billed Cicadabird, Black-browed Triller, Biak and Shining Flycatcher, Metallic and Long-tailed Starling, Biak White-eye, and Red-capped Flowerpecker. After lunch back at our village abode, we shall spend the rest of the day along a creek, where with a good dose of luck, we may still find the world's largest pigeon: the glorious Victoria Crowned-Pigeon. Evening shall see us gathered at a vantage point in anticipation of evening flights of parrots, which may still include a few Black-capped Lory, here of the distinctive yet heavily persecuted *cyanauchen*-subspecies. A nocturnal foray after dinner could produce the rarely seen Biak Scops Owl as well as Papuan Frogmouth and Large-tailed Nightjar. Overnight in village residence.

Day 16 > Biak Island First light shall see us birding around the clearings, which often prove to be the best place to come to grips with the shy and secretive Biak Coucal. We shall then spend an entire morning along a trail running through a mixture of secondary growth and tall primary forest. Delightful Biak Paradise-Kingfishers and Hooded Pittas, the latter of the distinctive *rosenbergii*-subspecies here, call everywhere in these forests. But to see the wary Biak Megapode, diminutive Geelvink Pygmy-parrot, and scarce Biak Gerygone and Biak Monarch, we shall need to persevere. After lunch we shall spend the rest of the day along the creek again, where we further may come across Emerald Dove, Little Shrike-thrush, Northern Fantail, and Golden Monarch, all represented by strikingly distinctive endemic subspecies here. Dinner and overnight in village residence.

Day 17 > Biak Island We have a full day to concentrate on finding those species likely to elude us for a while. We could monitor known incubation mounds of the Biak Megapode, bird along the creek for Victoria Crowned-Pigeon, and invariably spend much time scrutinizing mixed insectivore feeding flocks, with lunch somewhere in between. In the evening we shall transfer to Kota Biak for dinner and a longer than usual night's rest.

Day 18 > Kota Biak We shall enjoy a late breakfast and transfer to Kota Biak's Frans Kaisepo Airport for the mid-morning's flight to Jakarta.

What the tour fare includes

The individual expedition fare of € 3,334 covers all costs incurred between your arrival at Sorong on trip day 1 and departure from Kota Biak on day 18, 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>

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