

Amazing Arfak Birding expedition

12 days/11 nights

US\$ 1,447 per person (Manokwari–Manokwari)

Deposit: US\$ 360

Single room supplement: US\$ 44

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 bird watching adventure of a lifetime, covering all relevant elevations on a single integrated trek into the wild interior.

Tour summary

Day 1-11 > Arfak Mountains.

Day 12 > Manokwari.

Day-by-day itinerary

Day 1 > Arfak foothill forests Early morning's arrival at Manokwari's Rendani Airport on domestic flight from Jakarta. We shall soon set out on the two hours' drive by 4WD-vehicle to our drop-off point on the Oransbari peninsula. After an earlier than usual lunch here, we shall require most of the day to slowly bird toward a camp at 180 m elevation in primary foothill forest along a fast-flowing 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, Rufous Babbler, 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 and Emperor Fairywren, and Magnificent, King and Lesser Bird of Paradise. A nocturnal foray after dinner could produce Jungle Hawk-Owl, Wallace's Owlet-Nightjar, and Marbled Frogmouth.

Day 2 > Arfak foothill forests We could start out early with an optional short nocturnal excursion and shall take our breakfast as the dawn chorus develops. We shall then proceed to an area where several display courts of the Magnificent Bird of Paradise are located, in the hope to witness the full array of amazing display postures of this beautiful species at close range from a palm-frond hide. Having truly absorbed this, we shall visit one of numerous 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'. The rest of the morning we shall bird in the wider vicinity of camp in search of Red-billed Tategalla, White-crowned and Dwarf Koel, Yellow-capped Pygmy-Parrot, New Guinea Bronzewing, Cinnamon Ground-Dove, Thick-billed Ground-Pigeon, Western Crowned-Pigeon, White-eared Catbird, Long-billed Honeyeater, Black-sided and Torrent Robin, Blue Jewel-Babbler, and Glossy-mantled Manucode. After lunch we shall spend most of the afternoon in a gully where we could be rewarded with sightings of Azure Kingfisher, Variable Dwarf Kingfisher, Thick-billed Ground-Pigeon, Hooded and Red-bellied Pitta, Rusty Mouse-warbler, Rufous-backed Fantail, and Sooty Thicket-Fantail, if we haven't already seen them elsewhere. As per usual, a nocturnal walk is a possibility after dinner.

Day 3 > Arfak foothill and hill forests After an optional nocturnal foray and pre-dawn breakfast, 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 Tategalla 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 1,150 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 and Trumpet Manucode, and Magnificent Riflebird. With luck, we may still hear and see the sought-after Shovel-billed Kookaburra near camp toward dusk, while a nocturnal stroll after dinner could produce Sooty Owl, the distinctive mid-montane *affinis*-subspecies of Barred Owlet-Nightjar, and Marbled Frogmouth.

Day 4 > Arfak hill forests Following an optional nocturnal excursion and pre-dawn breakfast, we shall focus on getting to grips with Shovel-billed Kookaburra again at dawn. Next we shall monitor nearby display courts of the Western Parotia from comfortable 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 a highlight of a birding trip to the Arfaks. Having truly absorbed this, we shall spend the rest of the day birding around camp where we may be rewarded with sightings of some of the more elusive and skulking hill forest species mentioned above. 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 around camp include Blue-collared and Pesquet's Parrot, Masked Bowerbird, Spotted Catbird, Hill-forest Honeyeater, White-rumped and White-faced Robin, Vogelkop Whistler, Crinkle-collared Manucode, Black-billed Sicklebill, Superb Bird of Paradise, Mountain Peltops, Stout-billed Cuckoo-shrike, Black-shouldered Cicadabird, Black Monarch, Black Fantail, Capped White-eye, and Island Leaf-Warbler. Dinner and optional nocturnal walk.

Day 5 > Arfak hill and montane forests After an optional nocturnal walk and our usual pre-dawn breakfast we shall bird all morning in the ridgetop forest around camp. Several bowers of the gorgeous Masked Bowerbird are located near camp and we could monitor these from a 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. After an earlier than usual lunch at camp, we shall require the rest of the day to bird uphill toward our final camp at 1,700 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, Slater's and Regent Whistler, Black Pitohui, and Friendly and Dimorphic Fantail. In case of dry weather, we should still be able to watch the evening display of the adult male Black Sicklebill above camp. 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 Owlet-Nightjar all are possible on an optional nocturnal excursion after dinner.

Day 6 > Arfak montane forests Depending on last night's results, the weather and our morale, we could start out early with an optional short nocturnal excursion. We shall have our hearty breakfast while enjoying the developing dawn chorus including Vogelkop Scrubwren, Ashy Robin, and especially Regent Whistler, a powerful and varied songster. We shall bird the first hour of light 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 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. There is also a territory of the New Guinea Eagle in the immediate vicinity, and with luck we may track down this awesome species with moderate effort here. The rest of the morning, 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, 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-billed Sicklebill, Arfak Astrapia, and Black-bellied Cuckoo-shrike. Following lunch we'll have the rest of the day to seek out these most-wanted montane birds at known haunts or otherwise. 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 amazing species from the comfort of a palm-frond hide. After dinner we could try our luck again at spotlighting some of the above mentioned nocturnal species present here.

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, Chestnut Forest-Rail, 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. 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 return to camp by mid-afternoon only, but in time for another observation of the evening display of the Black Sicklebill and New Guinea Woodcock watch at dusk, if the weather allows. Dinner and optional spotlighting.

Day 8 > Arfak montane forests After an optional nocturnal foray and our usual pre-dawn breakfast we could spend some time at nearby 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. In season, Wattled Brush-turkey may deliver its striking display call from an incubation mound near camp, and we could monitor the mound from a palm-frond hide. Following lunch, we shall have a final afternoon to seek out some of the more elusive montane species mentioned above. Dusk could see us back at camp for another New Guinea Woodcock watch in a tree-fall gap followed by dinner and optional nocturnal walk.

Day 9 > Arfak montane and hill forests Following a hearty pre-dawn breakfast we shall require most of the morning to slowly bird down to the 1,150 m camp. After lunch here we shall have an entire afternoon to track down some of the more elusive hill forest species already mentioned above. If necessary, we could take our chances again on Shovel-billed Kookaburra toward dusk, while a nocturnal excursion after dinner is a possibility as ever.

Day 10 > Arfak hill and foothill forests After an optional nocturnal stroll and our usual pre-dawn breakfast we shall enjoy a final morning's birding around the 1,150 m camp. Following an earlier than usual lunch, we shall require most of the afternoon to slowly bird down to the 180 m camp. Dinner and optional spotlighting session.

Day 11 > Arfak foothill forests Following a hearty pre-dawn breakfast we shall enjoy a final morning's birding in foothill forest around the 180 m camp. After lunch we shall require most of the afternoon to slowly bird down to our pick-up point where 4WD-vehicles await us to transport us back to Manokwari for dinner and a good night's rest. Alternatively, if you stay on for our 'Anggi Giji basin' extension we shall drive for two hours to Ransiki instead and spend the night there.

Day 12 > Manokwari After breakfast in our Manokwari hotel we shall report at Rendani Airport for the mid-morning's flight to Jakarta.

What the tour fare includes

The individual expedition fare of US\$ 1,447 (Manokwari–Manokwari) 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).

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