

Waigeo and Arfak

Birding expedition

11 days/10 nights

Please enquire for an up-to-date quote

We begin our West Papuan birding adventure with two relaxed introductory excursions outside the town of Sorong, situated on the westernmost tip of New Guinea's Bird's Head or Vogelkop Peninsula. Next morning, we set off on a four days' 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. We then shift our attention to the Arfak Mountains near Manokwari, on the opposite side of the Bird's Head, where we shall be based for four nights in search of an entire suite of so-called 'Vogelkop' endemics.

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 > Sorong and Sorong lowlands.

Day 2 > Sorong and Waigeo Island.

Day 3-4 > Waigeo Island.

Day 5 > Waigeo Island, Dampier Strait atoll and Sorong.

Day 6 > Sorong, Manokwari and Arfak montane forests.

Day 7-9 > Arfak montane forests.

Day 10 > Arfak montane forests and Manokwari.

Day 11 > Manokwari.

Tour description

Day 1 > Sorong and Sorong lowlands Morning arrival at Sorong's DEO Airport on overnight domestic flight from Jakarta or alternative gateway. We shall soon drive out by chartered vehicle for 30 minutes along a road winding into the surrounding foothills. Here we shall bird the rest of the morning through selectively logged rainforest along the road, making incursions into the forest as necessary in search of our main targets: the restricted-range Red-billed Brushturkey, Red-breasted Paradise Kingfisher and Black Lory. Other noteworthy species present here include Pacific Baza, Long-tailed Honey Buzzard, Pygmy Eagle, Variable and Grey-headed Goshawk, Pink-spotted, Claret-breasted, Orange-bellied and Dwarf Fruit Dove, Pinon's and Zoe's Imperial Pigeon, Greater and Lesser Black Coucal, Dwarf Koel, Little Bronze Cuckoo, White-crowned and Brush Cuckoo, Papuan Spine-tailed Swift, Hook-billed Kingfisher, Common Paradise Kingfisher, Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Blyth's Hornbill, Palm and Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Pesquet's Parrot, Orange-fronted Hanging Parrot, Yellow-capped Pygmy Parrot, Dusky Lory, Coconut Lorikeet, Black-capped Lory, Red-flanked Lorikeet, Red-cheeked and Eclectus Parrot, Moluccan King Parrot, Double-eyed and Large Fig Parrot, Papuan and Hooded Pitta, Wallace's and Emperor Fairywren, Green-backed, Plain, Streak-headed and Tawny-breasted Honeyeater, New Guinea Friarbird, Long-billed, Mimic, Yellow-gaped and Puff-backed Honeyeater, Rusty Mouse-warbler, Yellow-bellied, Green-backed and Fairy Gerygone, Papuan Babbler, Yellow-bellied Longbill, Lowland Peltops, Black and Hooded Butcherbird, Boyer's Cuckooshrike, Grey-headed and Black Cicadabird, Golden Cuckooshrike, Black-browed Triller, Grey Whistler, Little Shrikethrush, Southern Variable Pitohui, Brown Oriole, Spangled Drongo, Northern Fantail, Spot-winged, Golden and Frilled Monarch, Shining Flycatcher, Grey Crow, Glossy-mantled and Trumpet Manucode, Magnificent Riflebird, Magnificent, King and Lesser Bird-of-paradise, Metallic Starling, Yellow-faced and Golden Myna, Olive-crowned Flowerpecker, and Streak-headed Munia. Following lunch in town, we have an entire afternoon to look for some of the more elusive species already mentioned above. Dusk shall see us gathered at an open vantage point to witness

evening flights of hornbills and especially parrots, which usually include the Black Lory. Finally, an optional nocturnal foray here could produce Papuan Boobook, Marbled and Papuan Frogmouth, and Papuan and Large-tailed Nightjar. Dinner and overnight in Sorong hotel.

Day 2 > Sorong and Waigeo Island After a dawn breakfast in our Sorong hotel, we shall set out on the three hours' chartered speedboat ride across Dampier Strait to Waigeo. En route we may be rewarded with sightings of Lesser Frigatebird, Brown Booby, Greater and Lesser Crested Tern, Bridled, Black-naped and Common Tern as well as Matsudaira's Storm Petrel, Streaked and Wedge-tailed Shearwater, Bulwer's Petrel, Red-necked Phalarope, Brown and Black Noddy, and Pomarine Skua in season. We shall enjoy a packed lunch at the mouth of the Orobiai River on Waigeo where water birds as Raja Shelduck, Australian White Ibis, Striated and Great-billed Heron, Pacific Reef Heron, and Little Pied Cormorant occur year-round alongside a selection of migrant Palearctic waders, usually including a few Grey-tailed Tattler. Other birds we may encounter here include Beach, Sacred and Little Kingfisher, Large-billed Gerygone, Willie Wagtail, Shining Flycatcher, and Torresian Crow. We shall then slowly bird along the river toward our camp in riparian lowland forest at c. 50 m elevation. Blyth's Hornbills and colorful parrots, including Palm and Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Coconut Lorikeet, Black-capped Lory and Eclectus Parrot, may fly overhead as we acquaint ourselves with the vocally or behaviorally conspicuous subset of the forest avifauna: Sultan's and Great Cuckoo-Dove, Stephan's Emerald Dove, Wompoo, Superb and Beautiful Fruit Dove, Purple-tailed and Pinon's Imperial Pigeon, Brush Cuckoo, Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Tawny-breasted Honeyeater, New Guinea Friarbird, Mimic Honeyeater, Hooded Butcherbird, Rusty Pitohui, Brown Oriole, Spangled Drongo, Northern Fantail, and Yellow-faced Myna. The final hours of light we shall devote to a popular display tree of the fabled Red Bird-of-paradise, taking 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 could produce Rufous Owl, Papuan Boobook, Marbled Frogmouth, and Large-tailed Nightjar. Overnight at camp.

Day 3 > Waigeo Island Following a pre-dawn breakfast, we shall 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. Other species often visiting the courts here include Cinnamon Ground Dove, Pheasant Pigeon, Papuan 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 Brushturkey casually walking across. After lunch back at camp, we shall bird all afternoon in the wider vicinity, primarily in search of the Western Crowned Pigeon, and it should not take long before we feast our eyes on a couple of these most majestic of pigeons as they flush up with clapping wing beats from the forest floor to alight in nearby tall forest trees. Other goodies we may come to grips with here include Dusky Megapode, Long-tailed Honey Buzzard, Pygmy and Gurney's Eagle, Variable and Grey-headed Goshawk, Collared Sparrowhawk, Red-necked Crake, New Guinea Bronzewing, Pink-spotted, Claret-breasted, Orange-bellied and Dwarf Fruit Dove, White-eared and Little Bronze Cuckoo, Moustached Treeswift, Hook-billed Kingfisher, Common Paradise Kingfisher, Papuan Dwarf Kingfisher, Azure Kingfisher, Yellow-capped Pygmy Parrot, Great-billed Parrot, Moluccan King Parrot, White-eared Catbird, Ruby-throated Myzomela, Green-backed, Spotted, Long-billed, Brown-backed and Puff-backed Honeyeater, Yellow-bellied, Green-backed and Fairy Gerygone, Black Berrypecker, Dwarf, Pygmy and Yellow-bellied Longbill, Yellow-breasted Boatbill, Lowland Peltops, Black Butcherbird, Barred Cuckooshrike, Common and Black Cicadabird, Grey Whistler, Little Shrikethrush, Raja Ampat Pitohui, Sooty Thicket Fantail, Spot-winged, Golden and Frilled Monarch, Brown-headed Crow, Glossy-mantled Manucode, Red Bird-of-paradise, Black-sided Robin, Olive Flyrobin, and Olive-crowned Flowerpecker. Dinner and overnight at camp.

Day 4 > Waigeo Island Today there shall be further opportunities to spend potentially rewarding time with the Wilson's and Red Bird-of-paradise, or we could simply bird in the wider vicinity in search of some of the more elusive species already mentioned above. Breakfast, lunch, dinner and overnight at camp.

Day 5 > Waigeo Island, Dampier Strait atoll and Sorong After breakfast there shall be a final opportunity for an observation session at either the Wilson's or Red Bird-of-paradise. Or we could slowly bird our way back earlier 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 Moluccan Fruit Dove, Olive Honeyeater, Island Whistler, Arafura Fantail, and Lemon-bellied White-eye. Other noteworthy resident species here include Dusky Megapode, Spice Imperial Pigeon, Beach Kingfisher, Varied Honeyeater, and Metallic Starling. In addition, Great-billed Heron, Beach Stone-curlew, Pied Imperial Pigeon, Violet-necked Lory, Great-billed Parrot, Island Monarch, and Moluccan Starling have been recorded on occasion. We shall proceed to Sorong in the early evening. Dinner and overnight in Sorong hotel.

Day 6 > Sorong, Manokwari and Arfak montane forests We shall enjoy breakfast in our Sorong hotel and transfer to Sorong's DEO Airport for the first morning flight to Manokwari. 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 Owlet-nightjar. Overnight in community guest house.

Day 7 > 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 8 > 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 9 > 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 10 > 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 11 > Manokwari We shall enjoy breakfast in our Manokwari hotel and transfer to Manokwari's Rendani Airport for the first morning flight to Jakarta or alternative destination.

Related links

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