

Explore Waigeo and Arfak Outdoors expedition

10 days/9 nights

Please enquire for an up-to-date quote

We begin our West Papuan outdoors adventure with a relaxed afternoon's hiking 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' exploration of the natural wonders 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 for a spot of snorkeling, leisurely walking or beach relaxation. 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 exquisite selection of New Guinea montane wildlife 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 > 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 7-8 > Arfak montane forests.

Day 9 > Arfak montane forests and Manokwari.

Day 10 > 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. After an early lunch in town, we shall drive out by chartered vehicle for 30 minutes along a road winding into the surrounding foothills. Here we shall enjoy a relaxed walk through selectively logged rainforest. Dusk shall see us gathered at an open vantage point to witness evening flights of hornbills and parrots. Dinner and overnight in Sorong hotel.

Day 2 > Sorong and Waigeo Island After a hearty dawn breakfast in our Sorong hotel, we shall set out on the three hours' chartered speedboat ride across Dampier Strait to Waigeo. We will call in at both a Christian and a Muslim fishing village before proceeding to the mouth of the Orobai River for lunch. Here we may be entertained by large water birds as Raja Shelduck and Great-billed Heron on tidal mudflats and in secondary mangroves. We shall then slowly hike along the river toward our camp in riparian lowland forest at c. 50 m elevation. Majestic hornbills and colorful parrots may fly overhead as we acquaint ourselves with some of the more conspicuous forest birds. The final hours of light will see us gathered at 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 bring us up close with a weird-looking Marbled Frogmouth or cuddly marsupials like the Striped Possum or the endemic and endangered Waigeo Cuscus. Overnight at camp.

Day 3 > Waigeo Island We shall enjoy our breakfast while listening to the developing dawn chorus and hike 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 well-appointed palm-frond hides. Following lunch back at camp, we have an entire afternoon to hike along the

scenic river. Dinner and overnight at camp.

Day 4 > Waigeo Island After breakfast we shall hike all day along a loop covering an array of bottom-valley and foothill forests, enjoying a packed lunch along the way. Incubation mounds of the Dusky Megapode are scattered everywhere throughout the flat bottom-valley forests here, and it should not take long before we feast our eyes on a couple of Western Crowned Pigeons as they lift off with clapping wing beats from the forest floor to alight in nearby emergent trees. Dinner and overnight at camp.

Day 5 > Waigeo Island, Dampier Strait atoll and Sorong Following breakfast we shall slowly hike our way along the river toward its mouth and transfer to a tiny atoll in Dampier Strait. After lunch here, we shall enjoy a spot of snorkeling on the surrounding reefs, or a leisurely hike around the islet which holds an important day-roost of flying-foxes and high densities of a number of so-called 'supertramp' bird species thriving on such tiny and species-poor islands. We shall proceed to Sorong in the late afternoon. 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. After a packed lunch at the guest house, there will be ample time 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 iconic so-called roofed maypole bowers in the area. After dinner back at the guest house, a nocturnal foray in the vicinity could bring us up close with a weird-looking Feline Owlet-nightjar or cuddly marsupials like D'Albertis and Arfak Ringtail. Overnight in community guest house.

Day 7 > Arfak montane forests Following breakfast we shall hike all day along a loop ascending to a high point at c. 2,000 m elevation where there is a largish natural clearing on a broad ridgetop with a peculiar 'subalpine' flora featuring rhododendrons, terrestrial orchids and pitcher plants. Most of the trail follows gently-sloping ridgetop forest but we shall also be traversing some challenging and steep terrain. As we gradually reach higher ground, the forest changes into a distinctive, stunted Kruppelholz-formation with gnarled trunks and branches heavily draped in epiphytic moss and ferns; an eerie environment often shrouded in clouds, where occasionally past-fluttering elves wouldn't look unbecoming at all. This is the realm of the Black Sickbill, the adult male of which sports a pair of incredibly long ornamental central tail feathers. In former days, the coastal Biak peoples treasured these plumes above those of all other birds-of-paradise for use in their ceremonies and rituals, and hence black sickbill skins were a valuable trade item of highland-oriented Hattam, Meyah and Sougb tribal groups who effectively controlled the species' montane forest habitat in the area. Probably as a result of the high historical hunting pressure, the sickbills remain wary of humans today, but with some perseverance and a little luck, we should still be able to track down this stunning species. We shall have lunch in the ridgetop clearing where magnificent views of the summit of Mount Indon are to be enjoyed in good weather. On our way down again, we shall be passing several artsy-craftsy bowers of the Vogelkop Bowerbird, and we shall certainly also go and marvel at an incubation mound of the Wattled Brushturkey, the only member of the megapode family that is truly adapted to montane habitats. Dinner and overnight in community guest house.

Day 8 > Arfak montane forests After a hearty pre-dawn breakfast, we shall hike 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. After lunch back at the guest house, we shall monitor nearby display courts of the area's only other terrestrially displaying bird-of-paradise, the Western Parotia, again from 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 trip to the Arfaks. Dinner and overnight in community guest house.

Day 9 > Arfak montane forests and Manokwari Following breakfast and a final morning excursion, we shall take lunch at the guest house and drive back to Manokwari in the afternoon. Dinner and overnight in Manokwari hotel.

Day 10 > 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>