

Waigeo and Arfak

Birding expedition

21 days/20 nights

US\$ 3,032 per person (Sorong–Manokwari)

Deposit: US\$ 760

Single room supplement: US\$ 110

We begin our Papuan bird watching adventure with a pilgrimage to Waigeo's avian delights in the Orobiai River catchment. Then follows a relaxed day's birding our local patches around Sorong. Next, we shift our attention to the Arfak Mountains, where we shall bird all relevant elevations during a single integrated trek into the remote interior. Vogelkop birding at its best!

Tour summary

Day 1 > Sorong lowlands.

Day 2-8 > Waigeo Island.

Day 9 > Sorong lowlands.

Day 10-20 > Arfak Mountains.

Day 21 > Manokwari.

Day-by-day itinerary

Day 1 > Sorong lowlands Early afternoon arrival at Sorong's DEO Airport on domestic flight from Jakarta. After lunch in town, we shall undertake a birding excursion in secondary forests south of Sorong in order to get to grips with the restricted-range Black Lory. Dinner and overnight in Sorong.

Day 2 > Waigeo Island After a hearty pre-dawn breakfast in our Sorong hotel, we shall set out first light on the three hours' speedboat ride to the mouth of the Orobiai 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'll then have the rest of the morning to slowly bird along the river toward a camp in riparian lowland forest at c. 50 m elevation. Blyth's Hornbills and colorful parrots that include Rainbow Lorikeet, Black-capped Lory, Palm and Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Red-cheeked, Great-billed 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 bird all afternoon downstream 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, Grey and Grey-headed Goshawk, Collared Sparrowhawk, White-eared Catbird, Red-throated Myzomela, Spotted, Brown-backed and Green-backed Honeyeater, Brown-headed Crow, Glossy-mantled Manucode, Red Bird of Paradise, and Yellow-eyed and New Guinea Cuckoo-shrike. 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. Jungle Hawk-Owl and Marbled Frogmouth are possibilities here on an optional nocturnal foray after dinner.

Day 3 > Waigeo Island Following an optional nocturnal stroll, we'll 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'll then take most of the morning to slowly bird up to a camp at c. 450 m elevation. After lunch here, we shall monitor one of several display courts of the Wilson's Bird of Paradise from a hide, in the dire hope of witnessing the full array of amazing display postures of this extremely sexy bird at close range. Having truly absorbed this, we shall spend the last hours of light at a display tree of Waitanta's other endemic paradisaeid, the Red Bird of Paradise, and take ample time to observe the several fine males that normally gather here, interacting with soliciting females. Following dinner an optional spotlighting session could produce Sooty Owl, Rufous Owl, Jungle Hawk-Owl, and Marbled Frogmouth.

Day 4 > Waigeo Island After an optional nocturnal walk and pre-dawn breakfast, we'll have a welcome resit or otherwise second observation session at one of the Wilson's Bird of Paradise courts. Besides, while sitting quietly in the hide, there's always a chance of a Cinnamon Ground-Dove or Pheasant Pigeon casually walking across the court, or we could attract skulkers as Red-bellied Pitta and Rusty Mouse-warbler. We'll then require the rest of the day to slowly bird to our final camp at c. 780 m elevation in the summit area of Mount Dana, taking lunch at a subsidiary camp at c. 570 m elevation. Along the way we may be rewarded with sightings of Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Hook-billed Kingfisher, Common Paradise-Kingfisher, Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, Moluccan King-Parrot, Long-tailed Buzzard, Gurney's Eagle, White-eared Catbird, Red-throated Myzomela, Long-billed and Puff-backed Honeyeater, Fairy and Yellow-bellied Gerygone, Grey Whistler, Little Shrike-thrush, Brown-headed Crow, Glossy-mantled Manucode, Lowland Peltops, Black-shouldered Cicadabird, Sooty Thicket-Fantail, Spot-winged, Golden and Frilled Monarch, Yellow-breasted Boatbill, Olive-crowned Flowerpecker, Black Berrypecker, and Green-crowned, Plumed and Pygmy Longbill. We'll also pass a court of Wilson's Bird of Paradise during mid-afternoon which we could monitor from a hide for a while. After dinner, an optional nocturnal effort could produce Jungle Hawk-Owl, Wallace's Owlet-Nightjar, and Marbled Frogmouth.

Day 5 > Waigeo Island Following an optional nocturnal stroll and pre-dawn breakfast we'll make sure to sit in a hide in front of a tended incubation mound of Bruijn's Brush-turkey at first light. We shall monitor the mound all morning in the hope of getting to grips with the mound-tending male. After lunch, we shall bird all afternoon in the vicinity of camp, spending time at water sources and at a known roosting tree of Bruijn's Brush-turkey towards dusk again. Other birds we may see here include Hook-billed Kingfisher, Pheasant Pigeon, Gurney's Eagle, the highly distinctive *steini*-subspecies of the Black Myzomela, Hill-forest Honeyeater, Beccari's and Pale-billed Scrubwren, Green-backed Gerygone, and Brown-headed Crow. Also here, there is a fine ground court of Wilson's Bird of Paradise that we could monitor from the comfort of a hide mid-afternoon. Dinner and optional spotlighting session.

Day 6 > Waigeo Island After an optional nocturnal walk and pre-dawn breakfast, we could monitor either the incubation mound of Bruijn's Brush-turkey or the lek of Wilson's Bird of Paradise, or simply bird in the vicinity of camp. After an earlier than usual lunch, we shall require the rest of the day to slowly bird down to the 450 m elevation camp again, followed by dinner and a good night's sleep.

Day 7 > Waigeo Island We could start out early with a short nocturnal foray, and after our pre-dawn breakfast, there shall be a final opportunity to spend time at a Wilson's Bird of Paradise court, or to bird in the vicinity of camp. After lunch, we shall require most of the afternoon to slowly bird down to the 50 m elevation camp again. Dinner and optional spotlighting session.

Day 8 > Waigeo Island Following an optional nocturnal foray and our usual pre-dawn breakfast, we shall bird all morning along the Orobai River towards its mouth. After lunch here we shall transfer to a tiny islet in the Dampier Strait where 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, Island Monarch, Moluccan Starling, and Lemon-bellied White-eye. Other noteworthy birds present here include Dusky Megapode, Beach Kingfisher, Violet-necked Lory, Spice and Bicolored Imperial-Pigeon, Great-billed and Striated Heron, Varied Honeyeater, and Metallic Starling. We shall proceed to Sorong in the evening for dinner and a good night's rest.

Day 9 > 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 that occur here such as Red-billed Talegalla, Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Hook-billed and Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Common and Red-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher, White-crowned and Dwarf Koel, Dusky and Black-capped Lory, Red-flanked Lorikeet, Yellow-capped Pygmy-Parrot, Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, Moluccan King-Parrot, Hooded and Red-bellied Pitta, White-eared Catbird, Meyer's Friarbird, Black-sided Robin, Glossy-mantled and Crinkle-collared Manucode, King and Magnificent Bird of Paradise, Boyer's, Grey-headed, New Guinea and Golden Cuckoo-shrike, Black Thicket-Fantail, Golden Monarch, and Golden and Yellow-faced Myna. 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'. The rest of the afternoon we shall endeavor to track down some of the more elusive species mentioned above while other goodies present here include Northern Cassowary, Long-billed Cuckoo, Palm Cockatoo, Yellow-capped Pygmy-Parrot, Pesquet's Parrot, Orange-fronted Hanging-Parrot, Cinnamon Ground-Dove, Dwarf Fruit-Dove, Western Crowned-Pigeon, Green-backed Gerygone, Blue Jewel-Babbler, Grey Crow, Lesser Bird of Paradise, Lowland Peltops, Sooty Thicket-Fantail, and Yellow-breasted Boatbill. 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. Finally, an optional nocturnal foray could produce Jungle Hawk-Owl, Papuan and Marbled Frogmouth, and Large-tailed Nightjar.

Day 10 > Arfak foothill forests Following a hearty breakfast in our Sorong hotel we shall take the early morning's flight to Manokwari's Rendani Airport and 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, wacko 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 11 > 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 hide. Having truly absorbed this, we could visit one of several known display trees of the King Bird of Paradise or simply bird in the wider vicinity of camp in search of Red-billed Talegalla, 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, and Blue Jewel-Babbler. 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, Red-bellied Pitta, Rusty Mouse-warbler, Rufous-backed Fantail, and Sooty Thicket-Fantail, if we haven't already seen them elsewhere yet. As per usual, a nocturnal walk is a possibility after dinner.

Day 12 > 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 Talegalla 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 13 > 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 14 > 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, Sclater'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 15 > 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 16 > 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 17 > 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 18 > 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 19 > 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 20 > 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 to our Manokwari hotel in the evening.

Day 21 > 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\$ 3,032 (Sorong–Manokwari) covers all costs incurred between your arrival at Sorong on trip day 1 and departure from Manokwari on day 21, insofar in congruence with the tour itinerary detailed above and our published terms and conditions (see Related links).

Related links

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