

FIELD REPORT

PAPUA NEW GUINEA HIGHLIGHTS

JULY 19–AUGUST 1, 2022



Flame Bowerbird © Max Breckenridge

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Our first full day in New Guinea began in typical fashion with a slight delay and change of plans, but nevertheless, we were soon on our way to the fabulous Varirata National Park. PNG's only national park is less than an hour outside of Port Moresby, and the drive up is particularly scenic. Starting in the main picnic area, we were soon ticking off some of the locals as they perched up in some of the stately *Podocarpus* trees. Hooded Butcherbirds serenaded us alongside chortling Brown Orioles with Red-cheeked Parrots and Pink-spotted Fruit-Dove adding some color. A well staked out Barking Owl staring back at us from its eye level perch was much appreciated before we got ourselves in position for the star of the show. The frenzied honking and crowing soon gave way to a host of incredible Raggiana Birds-of-Paradise displaying for an inquisitive female right above our heads!

After this spectacle we spent an enjoyable few hours walking through the excellent hill forest Varirata has to offer. Birding is often hit-and-miss in the rainforest, but a few mixed flocks provided a good selection of species. Our second bird-of-paradise for the day would be a male Growling Riflebird giving close views as he flew around us with his distinctive "whooshing" wing beats. Spot-winged and Frilled Monarchs danced around, while Rusty Mouse-Warblers hopped along the track ahead of us, and we had good looks at several Hooded Pitohui—the poison bird!

A calculated strike into the forest after lunch was quickly successful when a stunning Brown-headed Paradise Kingfisher flew into view allowing for excellent walkaway views. Another mixed flock gave us Rusty Pitohui and a pair of Black Cicadabirds while a calling Painted Quail-thrush taunted us from the slope above. The entrance road to Varirata passes through some lovely *Eucalyptus* and *Banksia* woodland interspersed with rainforest gullies. At a stop along the road, we were treated to some lively birding—Barred and White-bellied cuckooshrikes moved through the trees as Lemon-bellied Flycatchers called incessantly and a pair of range-restricted White-bellied Whistlers showed well. Some flowering mistletoe and *Banksia* attracted White-throated Honeyeaters and a striking Papuan Black Myzomela. Some scanning over the trees revealed Streak-headed Honeyeater, a pair of Yellow-faced Mynas, and our third bird-of-paradise for the day—Glossy-mantled Manucode. It had been an excellent first day!



The star of Varirata NP, Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher, proved to be straightforward for us © M Breckenridge.

We had a seamless transfer from Port Moresby to Kiunga—not always a guarantee! We were soon in the steamy lowlands of the Western Province, characterized by endless lowland forest, snaking rivers, friendly locals, and lots of birds.

The afternoon session was indeed a steamy outing, but very fruitful. It began with scope views of a ridiculous male King Bird-of-Paradise and ended with a cacophony of regal Greater Birds-of-Paradise cavorting overhead.



One of several male Greater Birds-of-Paradise north of Kiunga. They call from concealed perches under the canopy until a female appears and they all rush to a dead tree to display in the open! © M Breckenridge.

Our full day exploring the lowland forest surrounding Kiunga started poorly with a delayed departure and persistent rain. Changing tack, we headed back through town to the airstrip and were soon enjoying a large flock of white-bellied Crimson Finches and at least 10 Black Mannikins. Both finches are rare here, usually only found further south, but flooding had forced them to find dry grass along the airstrip. As the rain was lifting, we ventured back out of town and enjoyed an excellent session along the Boystown Rd. Gray-headed Goshawk and a close trio of Long-tailed Honey-Buzzards were drying off next to the road. A quick flyover and we came to a screeching halt, piling out of the van to scope up a scorching male Flame Bowerbird! He sat up in a tree (possibly above his bower in the forest below) for several minutes allowing fantastic looks at this major target bird. Walking on from here, we pulled up some more fantastic birds. First up were a pair of gorgeous Golden Monarchs, then a unique Lowland Peltops perched close by, a big party of charismatic Papuan Babblers then appeared, before, with a bit of work, we convinced a pair of electric Emperor Fairywrens into view. It proved to be some classic lowland birding.

Afternoon sessions in the rainforest can be slow at times, but we added a few more of the locals with Lesser Black Coucal, Trumpet Manucode, Yellow-bellied Longbill, and Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove.

Our big day on the river beckoned, and we were on the boats before sunrise. It is a fantastic experience skimming up the mighty Fly River before edging along the backwaters of the Elevara and Ketu rivers. Good numbers of parrots, pigeons, and raptors were seen from the boat, including the crazy Palm Cockatoo; a pair of Yellow-streaked Lorikeets; Pinon's and Purple-tailed imperial-pigeons overhead; and stunning White-bellied Sea-Eagles and Pacific Bazaras looking to snatch a feed in the canopy. We eventually reached our first landing for the day. Disembarking can be an ordeal at times, but with the water level high and some speedily fashioned handrails we were off! A short walk through the thick

rainforest led us to a hide carefully constructed from palm fronds. Once inside, we didn't have to wait long at all before the star of the show appeared. A blazing male Flame Bowerbird materialized and spent the next ten minutes tending to his bower—truly one of the great birds of the world. After dragging ourselves away, we returned to the boat, but not before jaggng a couple of quality birds on the way. First up was a songful but cautious Blue Jewel-babbler on the forest floor, before Glen beckoned to us. There in the scope was a bird that can take years to find—the highly secretive and nocturnal Hook-billed Kingfisher.

Back in the boats for a short trip to Kwatu, where we had lunch and fawned over the domesticated baby Southern Cassowary ('Biscuit') that resides there. There was, of course, still a major target left for the day. A quick excursion further upstream brought us to a large tree where on a low branch sat a regal Sclater's Crowned-Pigeon on its nest. With the pressure off, we enjoyed a leisurely trip back downstream to Kiunga. Along the way we enjoyed a nesting Papuan Frogmouth, giant Blyth's Hornbills, Boyer's Cuckooshrike, many Glossy-mantled Manucodes, close looks at Papuan Spinetailed Swifts mixing with Uniform Swiftlets over the river, and countless Dollarbirds.



Stunning lowland, riverine forest beside the Elevara River. Home to Flame Bowerbird, Hook-billed Kingfisher, Blue Jewel-babbler, and so much more © M Breckenridge.

Our charter flight to Tari was scheduled for 10 AM this morning, so we made one last visit to 'Bowerbird Hill' on the Boystown Rd. It proved to be a good call as it was very birdy. The big highlight was good looks at a pair of elusive Wallace's Fairywren and another Flame Bowerbird—this time a young male or female perched up. Back in time for our very pleasant flight in the PAC-750 with Bob, landing in Tari just before 11 AM. We were met by the staff from Ambua Lodge at the airport, including our guide Paulus. Soon we were winding our way uphill along the Central Highland Hwy, past Pied Bushchats and Long-tailed Shrikes, to the wonderful Ambua Lodge.

It was a quiet afternoon for birds as we familiarized ourselves with the beautifully tended grounds. It wasn't without new birds though, as we had great looks at some beautiful Papuan King Parrots, Yellow-billed Lorikeets, and the resident Smoky Honeyeaters, as well as a bonus Macgregor's Bowerbird and female Loria's Satinbird—a representative of one of several families, endemic to PNG, that we would see over the following days.



The insane Ribbon-tailed Astrapia - a difficult bird to fit into a single frame! © M Breckenridge.

Our first full day in the highlands exceeded expectations. A short drive uphill from the lodge remain good sections of intact forest full of birds. Below the Tari Gap we spent an enjoyable morning session close to the main road. The new birds came thick and fast with first bird of the day being the splendid male King-of-Saxony Bird-of-Paradise perched up! His strange insect-like rasping call and extravagant head plumes were well received. Next to the road we found male Regent Whistler, Black-throated Robin, and Rufous-backed and Black-throated honeyeaters, as well as some friendly Hooded Munias and conspicuous Papuan Grassbird. A short walk off the road and we were soon birding in the stunning elfin forest the highlands are famous for. We scored several quality birds including male Brown Sicklebill with his machine-gun call, a pair of the unique Wattled Ploughbill, a party of scarce Orange-crowned Fairywrens and excellent views of the strange Lesser Melampitta bobbing emphatically in a fern as he called! Back down to the road, but not before scoring views of the incessant Rufous-throated Bronze-Cuckoo, the good birding continued. Down a short track, we pulled in bird after bird, starting with Brown-backed Whistler and Fan-tailed Monarch before a pair

of the monotypic and songful Mottled Berryhunter put in an appearance! If that weren't good enough, a male Ribbon-tailed Astrapia clattered in and performed several stunning flybys before perching up in front of us. It had been an incredible introduction to highland birding in PNG.

Back down to the lodge for a fantastic lunch served in the dining room, which showcases the stunning views below Ambua Lodge. A considerable downpour delayed afternoon proceedings somewhat, but we eventually made it back up towards Tari Gap. We did well despite the dim conditions, seeing the monotypic, nuthatch-like Blue-capped Ifrita and both Mid-mountain and Fan-tailed berrypeckers, as well as raucous Belford's Melidectes, Brown-breasted Gerygone, and close looks at an uncommon Modest Tiger-Parrot feeding.

The next day we ventured further uphill to Tari Gap itself. The fog soon cleared, and we were able to bird the trails. A pair of furtive Mountain Mouse-Warblers were kind enough to show themselves, contrasting male and female Papuan Lorikeets perched up, and noisy Black-breasted Boatbills buzzed in the trees above. Along the main road we scored great looks at a delightful Mountain Firetail, a Peregrine Falcon zipped over, and a couple of Red-collared Myzomelas popped up for us. Back below the gap we continued with a trio of Blue-gray Robin, a pair of shy Sclater's Whistlers, singing Papuan Flycatcher, a flock of cute Tit Berrypeckers and some smart Black-bellied Cicadabirds.



The ethereal grounds and views from Ambua Lodge looking towards Tari
© M Breckenridge.

In the afternoon we spent our final session along the Central Highlands Highway. It was highlighted by a memorable sighting of a family party of the scarce Black Sittella cooperatively nest-building. Watching them each fly across the road before returning to the small cup nest, forming with each foray, was a joyous experience.



Brehm's Tiger-Parrot surveying the feed table at Kumul Lodge
© M Breckenridge.

We bade our farewells to the fantastic Ambua Lodge and were promptly transported to Tari Airport for our short and scenic charter flight to the capital of the highlands—Mount Hagen. Here we were met by the staff from Kumul Lodge and transferred uphill into Enga Province across which border the lodge shortly lies.

The feed table at Kumul is renowned and conveniently located right outside the restaurant window, ensuring it was a constant distraction during our mealtimes. We enjoyed fantastic looks at an array of confiding visitors during our brief stay—

Stephanie's and Ribbon-tailed astrapias shimmered, female Brown Sicklebills gulped back fruit like dainty toucans, and sweet Brehm's Tiger-Parrots quietly munched, while boisterous Belford's Melidectes and Smoky Honeyeaters tussled, quiet Island Thrush and White-winged Robins kept to the fringes, and a pair of the usually skulking Rufous-naped Bellbird delighted.

Local guide Wilson joined us for our first full day, with an early mission for Lesser Bird-of-Paradise on the agenda. A steep and rocky road eventually led us to the charming village of Kama, downhill and to the north of Kumul Lodge. The local villagers here are incredibly welcoming and friendly, eagerly pointing out the local birds. While waiting in position for the male Lesser BOP to make an appearance, we enjoyed the stunning valley landscape before us and a great selection of other species. Black-headed Whistlers and a Sepik-Ramu Shrikethrush were both heard before allowing good views; flocks of New Guinea White-eyes fed in the casuarinas; a scarce Long-billed Honeyeater was a good sighting as it probed along tree branches; Elfin Myzomela and Red-capped Flowerpeckers were feeding in flowering mistletoe; while Mountain Meliphagas perched up and a Yellow-breasted Bowerbird snuck through. The male Lesser BOP soon showed up, his brilliant tail and gold mantle sparkling in the morning light. Unfortunately, we could not find his perch and had to settle for close flight views. We departed Kama, not before purchasing some of the local wares, and made our way back towards Kumul. En route we stopped at a bridge over the Lai River where several Torrent Flycatchers showed very well.



White-winged Robin proved to be confiding around Kumul Lodge
© M Breckenridge.

In the afternoon we visited Murmur Pass, where we spent a very pleasant stationary session looking over a clearing on one of the many forested slopes. Here a male King-of-Saxony Bird-of-Paradise announced himself, and we had nice looks at a male Loria's Satinbird, smart Red-collared Myzomela, Papuan Lorikeets, a male Brown Sicklebill, calling Fan-tailed Cuckoo, and Papuan Mountain-Pigeons in display flight.

Our time in the highlands had sadly come to an end, but not before one final mission. Driving back downhill from Kumul Lodge we wound our way down the valley to one of the many WWII era metal bridges over the river. Across the bridge and up a steep rocky driveway, we found ourselves stationed in the backyard of a local family's home. Before we even had a chance to setup the scope, there it was! On top of that dead stick uphill! One of the more unique birds-of-paradise, the unbelievable Blue Bird-of-Paradise! A stunning male was perched up, watching over the valley below him. He didn't hang around for long, but a bit of calling led us to his secondary perch, and we soon had him again, allowing for more prolonged views of this incredible bird. We were very fortunate to have located him so quickly and to have such extended views of this incomparable emblem of New Guinea's birdlife.

Another seamless transfer had us back down from Mount Hagen into the warm, caressing sea breeze of Port Moresby and the very comfortable Airways Hotel. It had been a memorable and action-packed foray into PNG. The majesty of this place and the surprises it has in store are unrivaled and more than worth the effort of getting here.

Thanks are in order for all the local contacts without whom this tour would not be possible: Leonard, Samuel, Glen, Edmund, Paulus, and Wilson; all the staff, drivers, and security; the office staff at VENT, particularly Penny for her tireless efforts coordinating a complex tour; and of course to you, the participants.



A typically stunning scene from the highlands of Papua New Guinea. This is the Blue Bird-of-Paradise site at Tonga near Kumul Lodge
© M Breckenridge

ITINERARY

Date	Locations
Thursday 21 st Jul	AM: BNE-POM
Friday 22 nd Jul	AM: Varirata National Park PM: Varirata National Park – eucalyptus woodland
Saturday 23 rd Jul	AM: POM-UNG PM: Kiunga – Tabubil Rd (Km17)
Sunday 24 th Jul	AM: Kiunga – Drimgas Rd, Kiunga Airstrip, Boystown Rd PM: Kiunga – Drimgas Rd
Monday 25 th Jul	AM: Boat trip – Fly River, Elevata River PM: Boat trip – Ketu River, Kwatu
Tuesday 26 th Jul	AM: Kiunga – Boystown Rd, UNG-TIZ PM: Ambua Lodge
Wednesday 27 th Jul	AM: Central Highlands Hwy – below Tari Gap PM: Central Highlands Hwy – below Tari Gap

Thursday 28 th Jul	AM: Central Highlands Hwy – Tari Gap, below Tari Gap PM: Central Highlands Hwy – below Tari Gap
Friday 29 th Jul	AM: TIZ-HGU PM: Kumul Lodge
Saturday 30 th Jul	AM: Kama PM: Murrur Pass
Sunday 31 st Jul	AM: Tonga, Kumul Lodge PM: HGU-POM



The mighty Fly River near Kiunga. Australasia's equivalent of the Amazon. Hundreds of kilometers of rainforest stretch away on both sides
© M Breckenridge.

KEY

- ^H – Heard only
- ^L – Leader only
- ^I – Introduced species
- ^E – Species is endemic to New Guinea (PNG & West Papua)
- ^e – Species is endemic to Australasia (Australia, New Zealand, New Guinea, Oceania)

BIRDS

Species total: 226

Heard only: 21

Leader only: 3

MEGAPODES (*Megapodiidae*)

Black-billed [Yellow-legged] Brushturkey ^{EH} (*Talegalla fuscirostris*) – Heard at most locations in the lowlands (Varirata NP, Kiunga). Notoriously difficult to see.

PIGEONS & DOVES (*Columbidae*)

Amboyna Cuckoo-Dove (*Macropygia amboinensis*) – Singles heard and seen at Varirata NP and around Kiunga.

Black-billed Cuckoo-Dove^{EH} (*Macropygia nigrirostris*) – Heard only at Ambua, but some likely individuals observed in flight.

Great Cuckoo-Dove (*Reinwardtoena reinwardti*) – Some brief flight views before an excellent study of several individuals in the grounds of Ambua Lodge, including display flights.

Stephan's Dove (*Chalcophaps stephani*) – Heard and seen briefly at Varirata NP.

Peaceful Dove (*Geopelia placida*) – Single seen at the Airways Hotel.

Pheasant Pigeon^H (*Otidiphaps nobilis*) – Heard only along the main track at Varirata NP.

Sclater's Crowned-Pigeon^E (*Goura sclateri*) – Close and uninterrupted views from the boat of this magnificent bird sitting on its nest overhanging the Ketu River near Kiunga.

Wompoo Fruit-Dove^e (*Ptilinopus magnificus*) – Heard in the lowland forests around Kiunga before some decent looks at a single on the Boystown Rd.

Pink-spotted Fruit-Dove^E (*Ptilinopus perlatus*) – Common in the lowlands and hills. Singles observed at Varirata NP and around Kiunga.

Superb Fruit-Dove (*Ptilinopus superbus*) – Singles observed around Kiunga.

Beautiful Fruit-Dove^E (*Ptilinopus pulchellus*) – Heard frequently around Kiunga with great looks at a single male.

White-breasted [Mountain] Fruit-Dove (*Ptilinopus rivoli*) – Brief views of a single female at Kumul Lodge.

Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove^E (*Ptilinopus iozonus*) – Common in the lowlands. Singles observed around Kiunga.

Purple-tailed Imperial-Pigeon^E (*Ducula rufigaster*) – Close flight views of a single over the Elevata River near Kiunga.

Pinon's Imperial-Pigeon^E (*Ducula pinon*) – Singles observed along the rivers near Kiunga.

Collared Imperial-Pigeon^E (*Ducula mullerii*) – Singles observed along the rivers near Kiunga.

Zoe's Imperial-Pigeon^E (*Ducula zoeae*) – Singles observed at Varirata NP and around Kiunga.

Torresian Imperial-Pigeon^e (*Ducula spilorrhoa*) – Singles observed in flight around Port Moresby.

Papuan Mountain-Pigeon^E (*Gymnophaps albertisii*) – Common overhead in the highlands. Good views along the Elevata River near Kiunga and at Murrumbidgee Pass near Kumul Lodge.



An extravagant Sclater's Crowned-Pigeon peers down from its nest © M Breckenridge.

CUCKOOS (*Cuculidae*)

Greater Black Coucal ^E (*Centropus menbeki*) – Brief views of a single on the road at Varirata NP.

Lesser Black Coucal ^E (*Centropus bernsteini*) – Good scope views of a calling individual on the Drimgas Rd near Kiunga.

Pheasant Coucal ^H (*Centropus phasianinus*) – Heard along the entrance road at Varirata NP.

Pacific Koel ^H (*Eudynamis orientalis*) – Heard each day around Kiunga.

Channel-billed Cuckoo (*Scythrops novaehollandiae*) – Singles observed along the rivers near Kiunga.

Rufous-throated Bronze-Cuckoo ^E (*Chrysococcyx ruficollis*) – Good views of a calling individual below Tari Gap. Heard most days in the highlands.

White-crowned Koel [Cuckoo] ^{EH} (*Cacomantis leucolophus*) – Heard around Kiunga.

Fan-tailed Cuckoo ^e (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*) – Good views of a calling individual at Murrumbidgee Pass near Kumul Lodge.

Brush Cuckoo (*Cacomantis variolosus*) – Singles heard at several locations with at least two birds observed.

FROGMOUTHS (*Podargidae*)

Papuan Frogmouth ^e (*Podargus papuensis*) – Great looks at a bird on its nest along the Ketu River near Kiunga. Two birds heard each night while staying at Ambua Lodge.

OWLET-NIGHTJARS ^e (*Aegothelidae*)

Feline Owlet-Nightjar ^{EH} (*Aegotheles insignis*) – Single heard briefly one morning and evening at Kumul Lodge.

Barred Owlet-Nightjar ^E (*Aegotheles bennettii*) – Great looks at an individual peaking out of a hollow at Varirata NP.

SWIFTS (*Apodidae*)

Papuan Spinetailed Swift ^E (*Mearnsia novaeguineae*) – Common around Kiunga.
Glossy Swiftlet (*Collocalia esculenta*) – The default swiftlet throughout the trip.
Mountain Swiftlet ^E (*Aerodramus hirundinaceus*) – Good looks at several individuals mixed with Glossy Swiftlets at Ambua Lodge and Kumul Lodge.
Uniform Swiftlet (*Aerodramus vanikorensis*) – Good looks at small numbers along the rivers near Kiunga.

TREESWIFTS (*Hemiprocnidae*)

Moustached Treeswift (*Hemiprocne mystacea*) – Flight views of a pair along the Boystown Rd near Kiunga.

RAILS, GALLINULES & COOTS (*Rallidae*)

Forbes's Rail ^{EH} (*Rallina forbesi*) – A couple of these forest rails were heard at Murmur Pass near Kumul Lodge.
Spotless Crake ^H (*Zapornia tabuensis*) – At least one individual calling from a wetland near Kumul Lodge.

PLOVERS & LAPWINGS (*Charadriidae*)

Masked Lapwing (*Vanellus miles*) – Individuals observed on the airstrips at Daru and Port Moresby.

HERONS, EGRETS & BITTERNES (*Ardeidae*)

Great Egret (*Ardea alba*) – Individuals at Daru and along the Fly River.
[Eastern] Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis [coromandus]*) – Common around Port Moresby.
Striated [Little] Heron (*Butorides striata*) – An individual seen well on the Ketu River near Kiunga.

HAWKS, EAGLES & KITES (*Accipitridae*)

Black-winged Kite (*Elanus caeruleus*) – An individual seen from the van while driving between Mount Hagen and Kumul Lodge.
Long-tailed Honey-Buzzard ^E (*Henicopernis longicauda*) – Great looks at several individuals around Kiunga.
Pacific Baza (*Aviceda subcristata*) – A couple of individuals along the rivers near Kiunga.
New Guinea Eagle ^{EH} (*Harpyopsis novaeguineae*) – A distant individual heard only at Kumul Lodge making its distinctive and far-carrying “BOCK” call at dusk and before dawn.
Pygmy Eagle (*Hieraaetus weiskei*) – Brief views of individual flying over the driveway at Ambua Lodge.
Papuan Marsh-Harrier ^E (*Circus spilothorax*) – A single observed over the Mount Hagen airstrip.
Variable Goshawk (*Accipiter hiogaster*) – Individuals observed around Kiunga.
Black-mantled Goshawk ^{EL} (*Accipiter melanochlamys*) – A single bird seen by the leader perched on one of the cabins at Ambua Lodge.
Gray-headed Goshawk ^E (*Accipiter poliocephalus*) – Good looks at a couple of individuals around Kiunga.
Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*) – Common around Mount Hagen and a couple in Port Moresby.
Whistling Kite ^o (*Haliastur sphenurus*) – A single bird along the Elevata River near Kiunga.
Brahminy Kite (*Haliastur indus*) – The common raptor. Seen most days in the lowlands and highlands.

White-bellied Sea-Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) – A couple of individuals seen well along the rivers near Kiunga.

OWLS (*Strigidae*)

Rufous Owl ^{EH} (*Ninox rufa*) – A single heard one morning at Ambua Lodge.

Barking Owl (*Ninox connivens*) – Fantastic views of a roosting individual at Varirata NP.



A quizzical stare from the Varirata NP Barking Owl © M Breckenridge.

HORNBILLS (*Bucerotidae*)

Blyth's Hornbill (*Rhyticeros plicatus*) – Great looks at several individuals along the rivers near Kiunga.

KINGFISHERS (*Alcedinidae*)

Azure Kingfisher (*Ceyx [Alcedo] azureus*) – A single observed along the entrance road at Varirata NP.

Papuan Dwarf-Kingfisher ^{EH} (*Ceyx solitarius*) – Singles heard only in the forest at Varirata NP and around Kiunga.

Rufous-bellied Kookaburra ^E (*Dacelo gaudichaud*) – Individuals seen well at Varirata NP and around Kiunga.

Sacred Kingfisher (*Todiramphus sanctus*) – A few individuals observed in the highlands, including at Ambua Lodge.

Hook-billed Kingfisher ^E (*Melidora macrorrhina*) – Excellent views of an individual in the riverine forest near Kiunga expertly found by our local guide Glen. An almost impossibly difficult bird to find as they hunt nocturnally and call from dense canopy during the day.

Yellow-billed Kingfisher ^{EH} (*Syma torotoro*) – Individuals heard at Varirata NP and around Kiunga.

Mountain Kingfisher ^{EH} (*Syma megarhyncha*) – A single bird heard at Ambua Lodge and Tonga near Kumul Lodge.

Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher ^E (*Tanysiptera danae*) – Excellent scope views of an adult male in the forest at Varirata NP.

BEE-EATERS (*Meropidae*)

Rainbow Bee-eater (*Merops ornatus*) – A few individuals observed along the entrance road at Varirata NP and at Kama near Kumul Lodge.

ROLLERS (*Coraciidae*)

Dollarbird (*Eurystomus orientalis*) – Probably the commonest bird along the rivers near Kiunga. Also seen along the entrance road at Variata NP. Known locally as the “Kinabird”.



One of the more regularly seen kingfishers, Rufous-bellied Kookaburra (left), and one of the least – Hook-billed Kingfisher (right)
© M Breckenridge.

FALCONS & CARACARAS (*Falconidae*)

Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) – A single bird observed in flight over the Tari Gap – hard to determine which subspecies it was from the views.

COCKATOOS (*Cacatuidae*)

Palm Cockatoo[°] (*Probosciger aterrimus*) – Singles observed along the rivers near Kiunga.

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo[°] (*Cacatua galerita*) – Several small flocks observed along the rivers near Kiunga.

OLD WORLD PARROTS (*Psittaculidae*)

Papuan King-Parrot^E (*Alisterus chloropterus*) – Great views of a pair at Ambua Lodge.

Eclectus Parrot (*Eclectus roratus*) – Common along the rivers near Kiunga. At least one in flight at Varirata NP also.

Red-cheeked Parrot (*Geoffroyus geoffroyi*) – Common in the lowlands and hills.

Brehm's Tiger-Parrot^E (*Psittacella brehmii*) – A stalwart at the Kumul Lodge feeders.

Modest Tiger-Parrot^E (*Psittacella modesta*) – Great looks at a single female feeding next to the road below Tari Gap near Ambua.

Orange-breasted Fig-Parrot^E (*Cyclopsitta gulemitertii*) – Singles observed in flight around Kiunga.

Double-eyed Fig-Parrot[°] (*Cyclopsitta diopthalma*) – Singles observed in flight around Kiunga.

Red-flanked Lorikeet (*Hypocharmosyna placentis*) – Good numbers around Kiunga.

Papuan [Stella's] Lorikeet^E (*Charmosyna papou*) – Regularly encountered throughout the highlands with several views of perched birds. A stunningly dimorphic and long-tailed lorikeet.

Yellow-billed Lorikeet ^E (*Neopsittacus musschenbroekii*) – The common lorikeet in the highlands.

Several good views, particularly at Ambua Lodge.

Orange-billed Lorikeet ^{EL} (*Neopsittacus pullicauda*) – A pair seen by the leader at Kumul Lodge.

Black-capped Lory ^E (*Lorius lory*) – The common large lorikeet of the lowlands. Seen well around Kiunga.

Dusky Lory ^E (*Pseudeos fuscata*) – Flight views of a flock of 14 over the Fly River near Kiunga.

Yellow-streaked Lory ^E (*Chalcopsitta scintillata*) – Good views from the boat of a pair feeding with Coconut Lorikeets on the Fly River near Kiunga.

Goldie's Lorikeet ^E (*Glossoptila goldiei*) – Great scope views of a pair with others flying around, one morning just up the road from Kumul Lodge – an unexpected find of this nomadic highland lorikeet.

Coconut Lorikeet (*Trichoglossus haematodus*) – The common lorikeet throughout.

PITTAS (*Pittidae*)

Hooded Pitta ^H (*Pitta sordida*) – A single bird heard along the Boystown Rd near Kiunga.



The unparalleled vibrancy of a male Flame Bowerbird is a breathtaking sight © M Breckenridge.

BOWERBIRDS ^e (*Ptilonorhynchidae*)

MacGregor's Bowerbird ^E (*Amblyornis macgregoriae*) – A single female observed at Ambua Lodge.

Flame Bowerbird ^E (*Sericulus ardens*) – We had an incredibly fortunate run of observations concerning this enigmatic species. We started with great scope views of a male along the Boystown Rd before the unforgettable experience of watching a male work on his bower from the hide near Kwatu and finished off with views of a female (or young male) on our final outing along the Boystown Rd – all in the Kiunga area.

Yellow-breasted Bowerbird ^E (*Chlamydera lauterbachii*) – Brief views of an individual at Kama near Kumul Lodge and another heard only.

FAIRYWRENS ^e (*Maluridae*)

Wallace's Fairywren ^E (*Sipodotus wallacii*) – Fantastic looks at a pair of this scarce species as they moved between trees along the Boystown Rd near Kiunga. A very unexpected encounter.

Orange-crowned Fairywren ^E (*Clytomyias insignis*) – Two separate parties of this bamboo-specialist encountered below Tari Gap near Ambua Lodge.

Campbell's Fairywren ^{EH} (*Chenorhamphus campbelli*) – One of New Guinea's rarest birds, a party have recently been discovered close to Kwatu Lodge near Kiunga. We were fortunate enough to hear them call from the thick rainforest undergrowth.

Emperor Fairywren ^E (*Malurus cyanocephalus*) – Excellent views of a small party along the Boystown Rd near Kiunga. The electric blue male with his strange, warbling call is a true showstopper.

White-shouldered Fairywren ^E (*Malurus alboscapulatus*) – Good looks at a party next to the road below Tari Gap near Ambua on two occasions.

HONEYEATERS (*Meliphagidae*)

Mountain Meliphaga [Honeyeater] ^E (*Microptilotis orientalis*) – Good views of a pair at Kama near Kumul Lodge.

Elegant Honeyeater ^E (*Microptilotis cinereifrons*) – Individuals observed at Varirata NP.

Black-throated Honeyeater ^E (*Caligavis subfrenata*) – Good views of several birds below Tari Gap near Ambua Lodge. Heard around Kumul Lodge.

Ornate Melidectes [Honeyeater] ^E (*Melidectes torquatus*) – Several birds observed at Kama near Kumul Lodge.

Belford's Melidectes ^E (*Melidectes belfordi*) – Common and boisterous in the upper highlands at Tari Gap and around Kumul Lodge.

Yellow-browed Melidectes ^E (*Melidectes rufocrissalis*) – The dominant melidectes at Ambua Lodge, but most individuals probably not pure as they hybridise with Belford's Melidectes here.

[Common] Smoky Honeyeater ^E (*Melipotes fumigatus*) – Pleasingly common in the highlands at all sites. Affectionately referred to as "Smoky Joe".

Long-billed Honeyeater ^E (*Melilestes megarrhynchus*) – We were fortunate to jag an individual of this scarce species at Kama near Kumul Lodge.

Papuan Black Myzomela ^E (*Myzomela nigrita*) – Great looks at a pair feeding in flowering mistletoe along the entrance road at Varirata NP.

Elfin [Mountain] Myzomela ^E (*Myzomela adolphinae*) – Good looks at several individuals at Kama near Kumul Lodge.

Red-collared Myzomela ^E (*Myzomela rosenbergii*) – Slightly distant views of several individuals at Tari Gap near Ambua and Murmur Pass near Kumul Lodge.

Rufous-backed Honeyeater ^E (*Ptiloprora guisei*) – Several individuals below Tari Gap near Ambua and Murmur Pass near Kumul Lodge.

Gray-streaked Honeyeater ^E (*Ptiloprora perstriata*) – A couple of individuals below Tari Gap near Ambua.

White-throated Honeyeater ^e (*Melithreptus albogularis*) – Nice looks at several birds feeding in flowering *Banksia dentata* along the entrance road at Varirata NP.

Tawny-breasted Honeyeater ^e (*Xanthotis flaviventer*) – Singles seen briefly around Kiunga.

Helmeted [New Guinea] Friarbird (*Philemon buceroides [novaeguineae]*) – Fairly common at Varirata NP and around Kiunga.



An upland specialty, the Rufous-backed Honeyeater (left), and a pair of White-throated Honeyeaters (right) from Varirata NP
© M Breckenridge.

THORNBILLS & ALLIES (*Acanthizidae*)

Rusty Mouse-Warbler ^E (*Crateroscelis murina*) – A pair seen along the track at Varirata NP.

Mountain Mouse-Warbler ^E (*Crateroscelis robusta*) – Good looks at a number of individuals at Tari Gap and around Kumul Lodge.

Large Scrubwren ^E (*Sericornis nouhuysi*) – Several birds observed around Kumul Lodge.

Buff-faced Scrubwren ^E (*Sericornis perspicillatus*) – Several birds observed at Ambua Lodge and Tonga near Kumul Lodge.

Papuan Scrubwren ^E (*Sericornis papuensis*) – A pair observed below Tari Gap near Ambua.

Green-backed Gerygone [°] (*Gerygone chloronota*) – A couple of individuals heard and seen briefly along the track at Varirata NP.

Fairy Gerygone [°] (*Gerygone palpebrosa*) – At least two individuals observed along the track at Varirata NP.

Yellow-bellied Gerygone ^E (*Gerygone chrysogaster*) – Singles observed at Varirata NP and around Kiunga.

Brown-breasted Gerygone ^E (*Gerygone ruficollis*) – Several individuals observed below Tari Gap near Ambua and Tonga near Kumul Lodge. The only gerygone in the highlands.

PSEUDO-BABBLERS [°] (*Pomatostomidae*)

Papuan Babbler ^E (*Pomatostomus isidorei*) – A large party of this shy, communal species was enjoyed as they crossed the Boystown Rd near Kiunga one-by-one.

QUAIL-THRUSHES & JEWEL-BABBLERS [°] (*Cinclosomatidae*)

Painted Quail-thrush ^{EH} (*Cinclosoma ajax*) – Heard frustratingly close at Varirata NP, but refused to show.

Blue Jewel-babbler ^E (*Ptilorrhoa caerulescens*) – Slightly obscured, but decent views of a singing male in the riverine forest at Kwatu near Kiunga.

CUCKOO-SHRIKES (*Campephagidae*)

Barred [Yellow-eyed] Cuckooshrike [°] (*Coracina lineata*) – Good views of a pair along the entrance road at Varirata NP.

Boyer's Cuckooshrike ^E (*Coracina boyeri*) – Distant views of a pair along the Elevata River near Kiunga.

Black-faced Cuckooshrike (*Coracina novaehollandiae*) – A large flock seen distantly at the Kiunga Airstrip.

White-bellied Cuckooshrike (*Coracina papuensis*) – Singles observed along the entrance road at Varirata NP.

Golden Cuckooshrike ^{EH} (*Campochaera sloetii*) – A pair of calling birds refused to show along the Drimgas Rd near Kiunga.

Varied Triller ^e (*Lalage leucomela*) – Seen and heard at various locations throughout.

Black-bellied Cicadabird ^E (*Edolisoma montanum*) – Several individuals observed below Tari Gap near Ambua.

Gray-headed Cicadabird ^E (*Edolisoma schisticeps*) – Singles observed around Kiunga.

Black Cicadabird ^E (*Edolisoma melas*) – Good views of a pair at Varirata NP.

SITTELLAS ^e (*Neosittidae*)

Black Sittella ^E (*Daphoenositta miranda*) – An absolute highlight was finding a small party (4) of these scarce highland sittellas cooperatively nest-building below Tari Gap near Ambua.

PLOUGHBILL ^E (*Eulacestomatidae*)

Wattled Ploughbill ^E (*Eulacestoma nigropectus*) – Fantastic views of an inquisitive pair were had below Tari Gap near Ambua. Two separate individuals were observed nearby the following day. The only member of its monotypic family.

AUSTRALO-PAPUAN BELLBIRDS ^e (*Oreoicidae*)

Rufous-naped Bellbird ^E (*Aleadryas rufinucha*) – Singles of this skulker observed around Ambua and Kumul Lodge, including a confiding pair around the feed table at the latter.

Piping Bellbird ^{EH} (*Ornorectes cristatus*) – At least one individual heard at Varirata NP. A notoriously vocal, but difficult bird to find.

TIT & CRESTED BERRYPECKERS ^E (*Paramythiidae*)

Tit Berrypecker ^E (*Oreocharis arfaki*) – A couple of small flocks observed below Tari Gap near Ambua.

WHISTLERS & ALLIES (*Pachycephalidae*)

Rusty Pitohui ^E (*Pseudorectes ferrugineus*) – A few small flocks observed at Varirata NP and around Kiunga.

White-bellied Pitohui ^{EH} (*Pseudorectes incertus*) – Heard calling from thick forest while on the river around Kiunga.

Variable Shrikethrush ^E (*Colluricincla fortis*) – A couple seen briefly along the track at Varirata NP.

Sepik-Ramu Shrikethrush ^E (*Colluricincla tappenbecki*) – Good looks at a calling individual at Kama near Kumul Lodge.

Regent Whistler ^E (*Pachycephala schlegelii*) – Great looks at several males below Tari Gap near Ambua. At one point we had two or three males in a territorial battle, vocalising and performing an amazing, agitated display.

Sclater's Whistler ^E (*Pachycephala soror*) – A pair seen briefly below Tari Gap near Ambua.

Brown-backed Whistler ^E (*Pachycephala modesta*) – A couple of pairs observed below Tari Gap near Ambua.

White-bellied Whistler ^E (*Pachycephala leucogastra*) – A pair seen well in the eucalypt forest along the entrance road at Varirata NP. The lowland counterpart of Black-headed Whistler.

Black-headed Whistler ^E (*Pachycephala monacha*) – At least a pair around Kama near Kumul Lodge.

OLD WORLD ORIOLES (*Oriolidae*)

Hooded Pitohui ^E (*Pitohui dichrous*) – Good numbers of this smart-looking species in the forest at Varirata NP.

Brown Oriole ^E (*Oriolus szalayii*) – Commonly seen and heard at Varirata NP and around Kiunga.

BOATBILLS ^e (*Machaerirhynchidae*)

Black-breasted Boatbill ^E (*Machaerirhynchus nigrioectus*) – Multiple vocal and confiding individuals below Tari Gap near Ambua.

WOODSWALLOWS, BELLMAGPIES & ALLIES (*Artamidae*)

Great Woodswallow ^E (*Artamus maximus*) – Observed each day at Ambua Lodge where the staff handfeed them moths each morning in the carpark!

White-breasted Woodswallow (*Artamus leucorhynchus*) – A few individuals observed in the lowlands.

Lowland Peltops ^E (*Peltops blainvillii*) – Great looks at two different birds perched up along the Boystown Rd near Kiunga.

Hooded Butcherbird ^E (*Cracticus cassicus*) – Vocal and conspicuous at Varirata NP and along the river near Kiunga.

Black Butcherbird ^e (*Cracticus quoyi*) – A single bird scope up at Ambua Lodge.

MOTTLED BERRYHUNTER ^E (*Rhagologidae*)

Mottled Berryhunter ^E (*Rhagologus leucostigma*) – Good views were had of a pair of this monotypic species below Tari Gap near Ambua. Its beautiful song was heard here and at Murrumbidgee Pass near Kumul Lodge.

FANTAILS (*Rhipiduridae*)

Willie Wagtail (*Rhipidura leucophrys*) – “William” was observed every day of the trip.

Dimorphic Fantail ^E (*Rhipidura brachyrhyncha*) – A single bird observed at Kumul Lodge along one of the trails.

Friendly Fantail ^E (*Rhipidura albolimbata*) – Omnipresent in the forests of the highlands.

Chestnut-bellied Fantail ^E (*Rhipidura hyperythra*) – A pair observed along the track at Varirata NP.

DRONGOS (*Dicruridae*)

Spangled Drongo (*Dicrurus bracteatus*) – Singles observed at Varirata NP and around Kiunga.

BIRDS-OF-PARADISE (*Paradisaeidae*)

Trumpet Manucode ^e (*Phonygammus keraudrenii*) – A couple of birds seen distantly on the river near Kiunga. Several others heard.

Crinkle-collared Manucode ^E (*Manucodia chalybatus*) – A single seen briefly in the forest at Varirata

NP.

- Glossy-mantled Manucode ^E (*Manucodia ater*) – Good looks at a single perched up at Varirata and commonly seen along the rivers near Kiunga.
- King-of-Saxony Bird-of-Paradise ^E (*Pteridophora alberti*) – We were treated to a number of excellent views of males while in the highlands.
- Lawe's Parotia ^E (*Parotia lawesii*) – Good looks at a single female in the gardens at Ambua Lodge.
- Twelve-wired Bird-of-Paradise ^E (*Seleucidis melanoleucus*) – Unfortunately brief views of a male and female along the river near Kiunga.
- Greater Lophorina [Superb Bird-of-Paradise] ^E (*Lophorina superba*) – A female seen each day at Ambua Lodge and excellent scope views of a calling male at Tonga near Kumul Lodge.
- Magnificent Riflebird ^e (*Ptiloris magnificentus*) – Several males calling in forest along the Dringgas Rd near Kiunga with a female observed.
- Growling Riflebird ^E (*Ptiloris intercedens*) – Exhilarating views of a male along the track at Varirata NP as he flew around us with his loud, rustling wingbeats.
- Brown Sicklebill ^E (*Epimachus meyeri*) – Great looks at a number of males and females across the highlands, including the feed table at Kumul Lodge.
- Stephanie's Astrapia ^E (*Astrapia stephaniae*) – Good looks at a few individuals at Ambua and Kumul Lodges.
- Ribbon-tailed Astrapia ^E (*Astrapia mayeri*) – Fantastic looks at a number of spectacular adult males across the highlands. Their noisy flight and trailing streamers overhead is quite something.
- King Bird-of-Paradise ^E (*Cicinnurus regius*) – Great scope views of a male on his display perch under the canopy of the forest near Kiunga.
- Blue Bird-of-Paradise ^E (*Paradisaea rudolphi*) – One of the highlights of the trip spending a session with a male at Tonga near Kumul Lodge on our final morning.
- Lesser Bird-of-Paradise ^E (*Paradisaea minor*) – Good flight views of a spectacular male and several females/young males at Kama near Kumul Lodge.
- Raggiana Birds-of-Paradise ^E (*Paradisaea raggiana*) – Up to 12 males displaying above our heads at Varirata NP was a fantastic way to kick off the tour.
- Greater Birds-of-Paradise ^E (*Paradisaea apoda*) – After a bit of a struggle we were able to watch a number of males overhead in the forest near Kiunga.



A ridiculous female Brown Sickbill from the feed table at Kumul Lodge © M Breckenridge.

IFRITA^E (*Ifritidae*)

Blue-capped Ifrita^E (*Ifrita kowaldi*) – Good looks at several of these strange, nuthatch-like birds below Tari Gap near Ambua.

MONARCH FLYCATCHERS (*Monarchidae*)

Golden Monarch^E (*Carterornis chrysomela*) – Great repeat views of a couple of pairs around Kiunga.
A cracker of a bird.

Fan-tailed Monarch^E (*Symposiachrus axillaris*) – Good looks at a pair below Tari Gap near Ambua.

Spot-winged Monarch^E (*Symposiachrus guttula*) – At least two individuals observed along the track at Varirata NP.

Frilled Monarch^E (*Arses telescopthalmus*) – Several individuals at Varirata NP and around Kiunga.

Leaden Flycatcher^e (*Myiagra rubecula*) – A pair of these Australian migrants in the eucalypt woodland along the entrance road at Varirata NP.

Shining Flycatcher (*Myiagra alecto*) – A number of males and females observed along the rivers near Kiunga.

MELAMPITTAS^E (*Melampittidae*)

Lesser Melampitta^E (*Melampitta lugubris*) – Great, close views of a calling bird in the forest below Tari Gap near Ambua. He did circles around us before popping up into a fern where he bobbed emphatically each time he called.

SHRIKES (*Laniidae*)

Long-tailed Shrike (*Lanius schach*) – Regularly seen around disturbed habitat in the highlands. A widespread species, but with a somewhat isolated population in PNG.

CROWS, JAYS & MAGPIES (*Corvidae*)

Gray Crow ^E (*Corvus tristis*) – A few small groups at Varirata NP and around Kiunga.

Torresian Crow (*Corvus orru*) – A few around Port Moresby.

SATINBIRDS ^E (*Cnemophilidae*)

Loria's Satinbird ^E (*Cnemophilus loriae*) – A couple of females observed around Ambua and good scope views of a male at Murrumbidgee Pass near Kumul Lodge.

BERRYPECKERS & LONGBILLS ^E (*Melanocharitidae*)

Black Berrypecker ^E (*Melanocharis nigra*) – A couple of individuals at Varirata NP.

Mid-mountain Berrypecker ^E (*Melanocharis longicauda*) – A few of these subtle birds below Tari Gap near Ambua.

Fan-tailed Berrypecker ^E (*Melanocharis versteri*) – Good looks at a few individuals below Tari Gap near Ambua.

Yellow-bellied Longbill ^E (*Toxorhamphus novaeguineae*) – Brief views of a few individuals around Kiunga.

Slaty-chinned Longbill ^E (*Toxorhamphus poliopterus*) – A pair of this scarce species observed feeding on mistletoe at Ambua Lodge.



A pair of Belford's Melidectes from Kumul Lodge © M Breckenridge.

AUSTRALASIAN ROBINS (*Petroicidae*)

Lesser Ground-Robin ^E (*Amalocichla incerta*) – Short but clear views of a calling individual in the elfin forest below Tari Gap near Ambua.

Torrent Flycatcher ^E (*Monachella muelleriana*) – Good looks at up to five individuals around the bridge over the Lai River near Kumul Lodge. *Monachella muelleriana*

Lemon-bellied Flycatcher [°] (*Microeca flavigaster*) – Vocal and common in the eucalypt forest along the entrance road at Varirata NP.

Papuan Flycatcher ^E (*Microeca papuana*) – Several birds seen well along the road below Tari Gap near Ambua.

White-faced Robin [°] (*Tregellasia leucops*) – A single seen briefly along the track at Varirata NP.

Black-sided Robin ^{EH} (*Poecilodryas hypoleuca*) – A denizen of the thick riverine forest around Kiunga – a single calling from cover near Kwatu.

Black-throated Robin ^E (*Poecilodryas albonotata*) – A couple seen each day below Tari Gap near Ambua.

White-winged Robin ^E (*Peneothello sigillata*) – Resident and confiding around Kumul Lodge.

Blue-gray Robin ^E (*Peneothello cyanus*) – A trio seen well along the track below Tari Gap near Ambua.

Ashy Robin ^{EH} (*Heteromyias albispecularis*) – A single bird calling away at Murrumbidgee Pass, but unfortunately unable to be coaxed into view.

GRASSBIRDS & ALLIES (*Locustellidae*)

Papuan Grassbird ^E (*Cincloramphus macrurus*) – Several vocal and conspicuous birds in roadside grass around Tari Gap near Ambua.

SWALLOWS (*Hirundinidae*)

Pacific Swallow (*Hirundo tahitica*) – Small numbers seen throughout the trip.

LEAF WARBLERS (*Phylloscopidae*)

Island Leaf Warbler (*Phylloscopus poliocephalus*) – A couple of individuals at Ambua Lodge and Tonga near Kumul Lodge.

WHITE-EYES, YUHNAS & ALLIES (*Zosteropidae*)

New Guinea White-eye ^E (*Zosterops novaeguineae*) – Good numbers around Kama near Kumul Lodge, seen well.

STARLINGS (*Sturnidae*)

Metallic Starling (*Aplonis metallica*) – Common along the rivers near Kiunga.

Singing Starling [°] (*Aplonis cantoroides*) – Small numbers around Port Moresby.

Yellow-faced Myna ^E (*Mino dumontii*) – Fairly common in the lowlands, with good looks at Varirata NP and around Kiunga.

Golden Myna ^E (*Mino anais*) – Great looks at two pairs along the Elevala River near Kiunga.

THRUSHES & ALLIES (*Turdidae*)

Island Thrush (*Turdus poliocephalus*) – A stalwart of the feed table at Kumul Lodge with several individuals usually in attendance – not seen elsewhere.

OLD WORLD FLYCATCHERS (*Muscicapidae*)

Pied Bushchat (*Saxicola caprata*) – Common in disturbed habitat across the highlands.

FLOWERPECKERS (*Dicaeidae*)

Red-capped Flowerpecker ^E (*Dicaeum geelvinkianum*) – Singles seen and heard most days of the trip, with good views at Kiunga and near Kumul Lodge.

SUNBIRDS & SPIDERHUNTERS (*Nectariniidae*)

Black Sunbird (*Leptocoma aspasia*) – A couple of individuals around Kiunga.



Hooded Munia and a pair of Great Cuckoo-Doves from Ambua Lodge © M Breckenridge.

WAXBILLS & ALLIES (*Estrilididae*)

Mountain Firetail ^E (*Oreostruthus fuliginosus*) – Great looks at an individual feeding next to the road at Tari Gap.

Crimson Finch ^e (*Neochmia phaeton*) – Great views of a flock (20) at the Kiunga Airstrip. In PNG these are the white-bellied form.

White-spotted Munia ^E (*Mayrimunia leucosticta*) – An immature bird was seen well at the Kiunga Airstrip, plus a distant flock.

Hooded Munia ^E (*Lonchura spectabilis*) – Small numbers observed each day in the highlands.

Black Munia ^E (*Lonchura stygia*) – Up to 10 individuals observed at the Kiunga Airstrip. Usually a scarce species restricted to the Trans-Fly savannah, local flooding had forced them to take up residence on the airstrip.

Blue-faced Parrotfinch ^L (*Erythrura trichroa*) – Brief views of a single by the leader at Ambua Lodge.

OLD WORLD SPARROWS (*Passeridae*)

Eurasian Tree Sparrow ^I (*Passer montanus*) – Small numbers throughout the trip around cities/towns.

WAGTAILS & PIPTS (*Motacillidae*)

Australasian Pipit ^e (*Anthus novaeseelandiae*) – Singles on the airstrip at Tari.

MAMMALS

FLYING FOXES & OLD WORLD FRUIT BATS (*Pteropodidae*)

Big-eared Flying Fox ^E (*Pteropus macrotis*) – Singles flying over the river near Kiunga in the morning. One of the standard flying foxes of the lowlands.

FLESH-EATING MARSUPIALS (*Dasyuridae*)

Speckled Dasyure ^E (*Neophascogale lorentzi*) – Good lucks at several conspicuous individuals below Tari Gap near Ambua and on the feed table at Kumul Lodge!

PHALANGERS (*Phalangeridae*)

Silky Cuscus ^E (*Phalanger sericeus*) – One or two observed in a fruiting tree at the entrance gate to Ambua Lodge one night.



A Speckled Dasyure investigating the feed table at Kumul Lodge. A very inquisitive and unperturbed carnivorous marsupial
© M Breckenridge.

REPTILES

CROCODILES (*Crocodylidae*)

New Guinea Crocodile ^E (*Crocodylus novaeguineae*) – A decent-sized (~1.5 m) individual seen basking on some river debris near Kiunga.