



The excellent Palau Owl hung on to become our bird-of-the-trip! (Pete Morris)

MICRONESIA

23 MARCH – 10 APRIL 2016

LEADER: PETE MORRIS

Our 2016 Micronesia tour was another epic twitch around the widely scattered group of islands in the Western Pacific which between them form Micronesia. It was, within the remit of the tour, an out and out success, with all desired endemics being seen, and seen well. The only small niggle was that just before the tour, the IOC decided to elevate two rather unimpressive 'forms' on Kosrae to full species status. Future trips to the area will therefore need to incorporate this seldom birded island in to the itinerary, further complicating logistics! That said, we survived without the extra fruit dove and the extra white-eye, and could reflect back on our impressive collection of seldom seen endem-



Mariana Fruit Dove was perhaps the pick of an impressive array of pigeons and doves (Pete Morris)

ics, with favourites including Palau Owl, Micronesian Megapode (both Palau and Mariana forms), Palau, White-throated and White-fronted Ground Doves, the rare Guam Rail, Pohnpei Lorikeet, the stunning Golden White-eye and an excellent selection of kingfishers and fruit doves to name just a few. The impact of humanity on the fragile island ecosystems was sadly evident. Of the 116 species recorded, just over 23% are species of conservation concern. One species is considered 'Extinct in the Wild' (Guam Rail), three are considered 'Critically Endangered' (Mariana Crow, Golden White-eye and Rota Bridled White-eye) and five are considered 'Endangered' (Micronesian Megapode, Mariana Swiftlet, Mariana Fruit Dove, Chuuk Monarch and Long-billed White-eye). An additional three species are considered 'Vulnerable' and fifteen species considered 'Near Threatened'. As a sad footnote, the endemic landbirds of Guam have already been obliterated (all are extinct), and although there are measures in place to try to prevent the spread of the destructive Brown Tree Snake, the survival of several species hangs in the balance!

After our long journeys (Palau is far from almost anywhere!) we assembled in Koror in the Palau Archipelago, eagerly anticipating what was to be a splendid adventure through the South Pacific. Our first day together was a full one! We set off by boat, under somewhat heavy skies, and made our way through the gorgeous Rock Islands. As we made our way past James Bond scenery, we soon started noting Black and Brown Noddies and Crested, Bridled and stunning Black-naped Terns, whilst high overhead, Nicobar Pigeons made their way to far off islands to feed, and noisy Sulphur-crested Cockatoos squawked. We soon found the bulky Micronesian Imperial Pigeon, and with rain close by, we sheltered for a while, allowing us to catch up with our first few landbirds, which included the uncommon Palau Cicadabird. As the imminent threat abated, we moved on, and headed for the tiny island of Ulong. Even before we had set foot on the island, our first Micronesian Megapode had been spotted running around on the tide line. We disembarked and made our way into the fantastic strand forest. Here more skittish Micronesian (Palau) Megapodes scurried around (including a couple of tiny juveniles) and, after a bit of a search, we found our main quarry, the tiny but delightful Palau Ground Dove. These proved a little tricky to see well, but with perseverance, we all enjoyed good views of this super little bird. Whilst searching, we stumbled across another bonus in the form of a Slaty-legged Crake, and although it took a while to pin down, we all managed some great looks at



The scenery through the Rock Islands was simply stunning... (Pete Morris)

this elusive species. A call from the canopy soon alerted us to a pair of the attractive Rusty-capped Kingfisher, one rusty-capped and one buff-capped, and we spent some time enjoying them. Nearby, the gorgeous Palau Flycatcher called away, dour Morningbirds hopped around us, strange-looking Palau Bush Warblers alerted us by their song, and delightful Palau Fantails flitted past. Above us, Micronesian Myzomelas and Dusky and Citrine White-eyes foraged on flowers, the ubiquitous Micronesian Starlings flew around, noisy Collared Kingfishers perched up, and Palau Fruit Doves, whilst common by voice, were a little elusive, though most got their first decent views.

As we left the island, delightful White-tailed Tropicbirds chased each other over the waves and we made our way back towards Koror. More delightful scenery, terns and noddies entertained, and we made our way to Ngeruktabel where we tackled the trail up to the Old German Lighthouse. This



The gorgeous Palau (or Mangrove) Flycatcher (Pete Morris)



The somewhat aberrant Giant White-eye (Pete Morris)

proved to be an easy trail (though not for our local guide!) and as well as more fruit doves and tropicbirds and an introduced Eclectus Parrot, we attained good views of numerous Palau Swiftlets and several Giant White-eyes, a rather strange looking species that one would never guess was a white-eye! We also had a few history lessons as we walked past numerous old cannons, shells and artillery stores – our first of many reminders of darker times.

With another task complete we headed back to Koror and paid a quick visit to the... water treatment works! A number of waders were present including Pacific Golden Plovers (widespread throughout the



Lovely Palau Fantails could be remarkably confiding at times (Pete Morris)

islands), (Eurasian) Whimbrels and Wood and Common Sandpipers. Our first of many Buff-banded Rails potted around the edge of the pools and numerous Palau Swiftlets skimmed low over the water.

As I mentioned, the first day was an action-packed one! Our next stop, on the main island of Babeldaob, was a quiet one, though improved views of fruit doves and numerous examples of both species of native bats were in evidence and for some, our first Palau Nightjar was found. We then shifted a few kilometres, and soon had our main target fixed in the spotlight, the superb Palau Owl. We watched this stunner for a while, and then retired for a well-earned beer and a rest!

The first day was going to be a hard act to follow! With nearly all of the birds in the bag already, we boarded our boat once again and headed through the gorgeous Rock Islands again. Many of yesterday's birds obliged again, with more Micronesian Imperial Pigeons showing well, and we spent plenty of time admiring the various noddies and terns, including gorgeous Black-naped Terns, adult and juvenile Bridled Terns fishing together, numerous stonking Crested Terns and even a couple of Little Terns, a write-in. It was a long journey to Peleliu, and we didn't bother staying long, instead opting for a return visit to the lovely Ulong Island. Here we again admired the megapodes, ground



We enjoyed many great views of terns... Crested Tern (top left), Bridled Tern (top right) and the superb Black-naped Tern (Pete Morris)

doves and the supporting cast, and, for some, a perched Nicobar Pigeon. We then made our way back to the hotel and took a break before heading out for an evening section. This time the Palau Nightjar behaved a little better, with all gaining good views, a Grey Wagtail flew over calling, and we again got some great views of the endemic Palau Owl.

On our final day in the Palau Archipelago, we spent most of the time exploring the main island of Babeldaob. We met with mixed success. We failed to find the increasingly difficult local form of White-breasted Woodswallow, but did get many great views of the Palau specialities that were by now becoming familiar. Of note were more views of the scarce Palau Cicadabird, our first White-



The scarce Micronesian Imperial Pigeon and the attractive Palau Fruit Dove (Pete Morris)

browed Crake and a vagrant Chinese Goshawk (and another raptor which got away). We also visited the impressive partly EU funded parliament buildings and had an interesting brush with the authorities for entering an un-manned reserve. It'll be a while before I'll forget the half-dressed, betel-nut chewing policeman exclaiming "what you saying about my nuts"!! All ended well though, and late that evening we took a flight to Yap, arriving at some unsociable hour.

After a fairly short night's sleep, we took it easy on our first day on Yap, essentially taking the first morning off. After lunch, we explored an area of semi-natural forest, where we began to pick up our first endemics. Plain White-eyes were particularly common, our first Yap Monarchs showed well and the local form of Rufous Fantail obliged. The first glimpses of ground doves were less than satisfactory though.

Back on track with the sleep, and having enjoyed a great dinner on the hotel's ship restaurant, we made our way the following morning along a track that traversed the island. This proved a good move as the remaining endemics soon obliged. First to fall was the somewhat starling-like Yap Cicadabird, followed by the unobtrusive and seemingly scarce Olive-coloured White-eye. Indeed we enjoyed good views of this species on two date, but only ever in the one tree! Last but not least was the spectacular White-throated Ground Dove, of which we ended up seeing many exceptionally well. It seems that most have abandoned the idea of elevating the form on Yap to specific (or even sub-specific) status as White-headed Ground Dove. Cute breeding White Terns were an added bonus!

For the rest of our time on this peaceful island we could relax somewhat. We admired the Yap money (huge stones!) and the gorgeous coastal scenery, took it easy and some even went snorkelling. Oh,



It was great to compare Grey-tailed (above) and Wandering Tattlers, virtually side by side (Pete Morris)



and we did a bit more birding too! We had plenty more opportunities to admire the Yap endemics, found a few waders around the coast including Wandering and Grey-tailed Tattlers side-by-side, Grey Plover and Greater Sandplover, and visited a reservoir which attracted a few rarities such as



Some highlights from Yap. The endemic Plain White-eye, the attractive Yap Monarch, the stunning White-throated (or White-headed) Ground Dove, and the interesting restaurant at our resort. (Pete Morris)





Examples of the old Yap stone money (Pete Morris)

Great Egret, Grey Heron (for some), Marsh Sandpiper, Long-toed Stints, Whiskered Terns and a Gull-billed Tern. We also flushed a few Swinhoe's Snipes and were surprised to see how bold the local Yellow Bitterns were, even foraging on the open mudflats.

Leaving Yap behind, we had another rather unsociable overnight journey, arriving at Saipan the following morning. We once again followed our successful recipe of taking the morning off and setting off after lunch. We opted to begin by exploring a couple of sites in the north of the island and quickly raced through a majority of the endemics! Mariana Swiftlets flitted overhead and the by-now familiar fruit dove calls soon led us to the simply superb Mariana Fruit Dove. The attractive Saipan form of Mariana Kingfisher posed in the open, Bridled White-eyes were abundant and, after a little effort,



A fine Mariana Kingfisher from Tinian (Pete Morris)



The amazing Golden White-eye, another firm favourite! (Pete Morris)

we found the stunning Golden White-eye and the impressive Saipan Reed Warbler. With the job nearly done, we indulged in a little seawatching, noting a few Wedge-tailed Shearwaters and Brown Boobies.

The following morning we took the short but scenic flight across to the adjacent Tinian Island. Finding the endemic Tinian Monarch was not too much of a challenge, and having admired several, as well as more examples of the available endemics already seen on Saipan, we set about a little exploration of this island which is synonymous with second world war history and more dark times. We even looked at where the infamous nuclear warheads that were dropped on Japan were housed, the huge airfields that dominated the north of the island and other war artefacts. Whilst reflecting back on the terrible times, we could only hope that we do not plunge back into such chaotic times again.



The endemic Tinian Monarch is pleasingly common on its tiny island home! (Pete Morris)



A blow-hole on the Tinian coast, and a superb Red-tailed Tropicbird (Pete Morris)



Back on Saipan, we really only had one piece of outstanding business and that was to find the rare Mariana form of Micronesian Megapode. The more we learned the more challenging this became! This form was actually eradicated from Saipan and the small re-introduced population, although long-established, is still tiny. To cut a long story short, we hunted high and low without success. More of the other endemics obliged, including better views of swiftlets for those that desired, and we enjoyed great views of Red-tailed and White-tailed Tropicbirds, but after much effort, we were down to the last hour when we found them! The effort we had put in was richly rewarded though as three individuals paraded in front of us. Smile all round, we headed back for beer, food and relaxation!

Another day, another island... This time we were making our way to Guam and on to Rota for what was perceived to be a high-pressure visit to find some tough birds. We picked up our cars and went to the first site where we were soon watching the critically endangered (though not too impressive) Mariana Crow. The local Rota form of Mariana Kingfisher was easy to see, and we then made our way into the mountains, flushing numerous introduced Philippine (Island) Collared Doves and Black Drongos as we went. Once in the mountains, we soon found the critically endangered Rota White-eye as well as smart Mariana Fruit Doves, Rufous Fantails and the other usual suspects! We then made our way to the other end of the island, where, driving around various grassy areas we found the re-introduced, extinct in the wild, Guam Rail! Well that wasn't too difficult!



On Rota, we soon found the local form of Mariana Kingfisher as well as Rota Bridled White-eye, Mariana Crow and Guam Rail! (Pete Morris)

The following morning we headed back out, enjoying more views of Guam Rails including an un-ringed juvenile. We also visited an impressive seabird colony where we could admire Red-tailed Tropicbirds and Red-footed and Brown Boobies cruising past at eye level. We even had time to take another look at the Mariana Crows and take a scenic look round the island before checking out of our hotel and taking lunch. That afternoon we flew to Guam for an overnight stay. It has to be said,

Guam was not our favourite island. Modernized and with no extant native birds, it was merely a place to lay our heads before heading off to Chuuk the following morning.

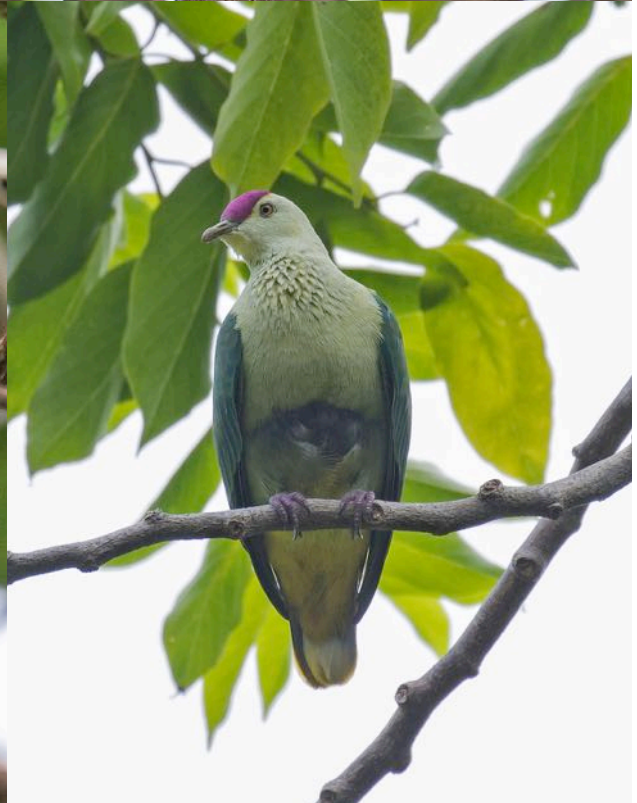
We arrived on Weno, Chuuk, mid morning, and made our way to our comfortable base right at the south end of the island. Once again we didn't have to rush around too much, so instead put our feet up, enjoyed lunch and relaxed for a while. Later that afternoon we explored the grounds of the hotel. Here we found most of what we were looking for. Widespread species such as Micronesian Myzomela and Micronesian Starling were again common, localized Island Swiftlets flitted overhead, and the lawns were covered in Ruddy Turnstones and Pacific Golden Plovers. These were joined by a stunning White-fronted Ground Dove (we went on to see several more), and we also found colourful Purple-capped Fruit Doves, cute little Oceanic Flycatchers, bold Carolinian Reed Warblers and numerous Citrine White-eyes, as well as Nankeen Night Herons and Chuuk Flying Foxes.



Birds around Chuuk included the widespread Micronesian Myzomela, Carolinian Reed Warbler and the stunning White-fronted Ground Dove (female on the left, male on the right, feeding on coconuts that we had drunk the previous day!!) (Pete Morris)

Unfortunately the weather was looking a bit breezy and unsettled, and our boat trip to the adjacent Dublon Island the following morning was choppy and not to everyone's liking! We made it over and

enjoyed a productive, if at times wet, morning on the island. Our prime target, the large and stunning Chuuk Monarch obliged for all, and we also saw the other Chuuk endemics again and some Blue-faced Parrotfinches! Having achieved what we wanted to achieve, and with the weather not looking too promising, we headed back and took some time out to relax!



Chuuk's star birds are the amazing Chuuk Monarch and the rare Teardrop White-eye. Purple-capped Fruit Dove is a recent split (Pete Morris)



The group in reflective mode at the Japanese Gun, and the edge of the atoll - the reef surrounding Chuuk Lagoon (Pete Morris)



The following day it was still looking breezy and choppy, but on the advice of our captain we donned the waterproofs and went for it. As it was, the passage over to Tol South was not too bad. We arrived at the village, appointed a few guides and began climbing. It must be said that it was not a pleasant walk, and climbing to the sufficient altitude was tough, but when we got there we were rewarded. After a few tense moments, a pair of Teardrop White-eyes showed superbly and all that was required was getting back down! We did linger a short while, gaining more views of the white-eyes and a couple more Chuuk Monarchs! We made it back down safe and sound, thanked our happy brigade of helpers and headed on our way. Thankfully the wind had calmed a little and our journey back was relatively calm and uneventful, allowing a couple of us time to revisit Dublon and admire the fine male Chuuk Monarch and some stunning White-fronted Ground Doves.

The way the flights worked out, we had another full day on Weno. This allowed for a bit of rest and relaxation, some birding around the resort and a visit to the famous Japanese Gun. A few new birds were seen, including single White-winged and Common Terns and a Bar-tailed Godwit. All the other usual suspects continued to perform for those with the inclination to look!

And so the time had come for our final flight, this time on to Pohnpei. Here, we quickly checked into the hotel, grabbed some lunch and headed for the nearest forest for once again, the concern was that we could be pushed for time, especially if the weather was poor. A couple of hours later, we'd cleaned up! The Pohnpei endemics fell quickly, and in reality we had plenty of time to enjoy them. And there were some impressive endemics amongst them. Perhaps most spectacular was the colourful Pohnpei Lorikeet, but almost as good was the attractive Pohnpei Kingfisher. The supposedly rare



Pohnpei Lorikeets were common and great to see (Pete Morris)



Some of Pohnpei's specialities included Pohnpei Kingfisher, Long-billed White-eye and Pohnpei Flycatcher (Pete Morris)

Pohnpei Cicadabird and Long-billed White-eye both showed well on a few occasions, the endemic Grey-brown White-eye was common and both Pohnpei Fantail and Pohnpei Flycatcher entertained at close range on numerous occasions! Other more widespread Caroline Island endemics such as the Purple-capped Fruit Dove and Carolinian Reed Warbler showed well, and we also found the local form of Micronesian Imperial Pigeon a couple of times and Citrine White-eye, and even admired the introduced Hunstein's Mannikin. We also had time to explore the lost city of Nan Modal, admiring the ruins as well as the lorikeets and tropicbirds, and take a scenic drive around the north of the island.

And that is about it. The story of how a Birdquest group once again overcame the difficulties of travelling around the Pacific to successfully find the Micronesian endemics once more. It's a great and seldom-visited part of the world. If you ever get the chance to visit... give it a go!



The group birding in Pohnpei's forest (Pete Morris)



The Mariana form of Micronesian Megapode. It took some finding! (Pete Morris)

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

Species which were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g. it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

Conservation threat categories and information are taken from *Threatened Birds of the World*, BirdLife International's magnificent book on the sad status of the rarest 10% of the world's avifauna, and updates on the BirdLife website: <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/home>

(EW) = Extinct in the wild, **(CR)** = Critically Endangered, **(EN)** = Endangered, **(VU)** = Vulnerable, **(NT)** = Near Threatened, **(DD)** = Data Deficient.

For polytypic species, the subspecies seen on the tour, where known, is placed in parentheses at the end of the species comment. Generally, species listed with trinomials are not currently split by the IOC.

The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). **2016. IOC World Bird List (v 6.3)**. This list is updated several times annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>. Please note, this was the current version when the report checklist was created. Some alternative names are given in parentheses.

All of our checklists are powered by our partner iGoTerra (www.igoterra.com) who provide web and mobile applications for bird and wildlife enthusiasts and businesses. Their suite of services cover observations, rankings, lists, photos and trip management tools.

Pacific Black Duck (Grey D) *Anas superciliosa* 5 seen in the marshes below the Japanese Gun on Chuuk [*pelewensis*].

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* A group of 8 were seen on Lake Susupe, Saipan.

Micronesian Megapode ◊ (Palau M) *Megapodius [laperouse] senex* (EN) See note.

Micronesian Megapode ◊ (Mariana M) *Megapodius [laperouse] laperouse* (EN) See note.



(Palau) Micronesian Megapode (above left) and the Mariana form on Saipan. Below, a recently fledged bird on Ulong Island, Palau (Pete Morris)

Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus pacificus* A few seen off the Banzai Cliffs, Saipan. All were pale phase

Red Junglefowl (introduced) *Gallus gallus* Chickens, hens and roosters everywhere!!

Red-tailed Tropicbird ◊ *Phaethon rubricauda* Some great look s on both Saipan and Rota. Stunners! [*melanorhynchos*].

White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus* Fairly widespread during the tour with many great looks [*dorotheae*].

Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis* Seen well on Yap, Saipan, Tinian and Chuuk. Often even way out on the mudflats!

Nankeen Night Heron (Rufous N H) *Nycticorax caledonicus* Common on Palau and on Chuuk [*pelewensis*].

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus* Small numbers noted on several islands, the first on Palau.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* (NL) One for some of the group on the reservoir on Yap.

Great Egret *Ardea alba* 4 at the reservoir on Yap were coming into breeding dress. Most likely of the form *modesta*.

Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia* Seen on Palau, Yap and Chuuk [nominate].

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* Seen on Palau, Yap and Saipan [*nigripes*].

Pacific Reef Heron (P R Egret) *Egretta sacra* Small numbers were seen along the coasts of most islands [nominate].



White-tailed Tropicbirds always impress, as did the inquisitive Red-footed Boobies on Rota (Pete Morris)



Red-footed Booby *Sula sula* Great views of a good number at the seabird colony on the southeast of Rota [*rubripes*].

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster* First off the Banzai Cliffs, Saipan, and great views at the seabird colony on Rota [*plotus*].

Little Pied Cormorant *Microcarbo melanoleucos* A few were seen daily around Palau [nominate].

Chinese Sparrowhawk (C Goshawk) *Accipiter soloensis* A single circling over the northwest of Babeldaob, Palau. A rarity!

Slaty-legged Crake ♦ *Rallina eurizonoides* A few good views of 1-2 birds on Ulong Island, Palau. A good bonus [nominate].

Buff-banded Rail (Banded R) *Gallirallus philippensis* Very common on Palau, especially on Babeldaob (20+ in a day!!) [*pelewensis*].

Guam Rail ♦ *Gallirallus owstoni* (EW) A few seen well on Rota. The established population here is hanging on in some areas.

White-browed Crake *Porzana cinerea* A single seen well on Palau and small numbers seen on Yap.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* See note.



Pacific Golden Plovers were quite literally everywhere, and some were coming in to fine plumage! (Pete Morris)

- Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva* Common and widespread, even on verges and gardens. Some cracking plumaged birds.
- Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola* A few on the mudflats along the north coast of Yap [nominate].
- Lesser Sand Plover (Mongolian S P)** *Charadrius mongolus* 1 on the beach at Ngatpang, Palau [*mongolus/stegmanni*].
- Greater Sand Plover** *Charadrius leschenaultii* 1 on the mudflats along the north coast of Yap [nominate].
- Swinhoe's Snipe** *Gallinago megala* See note.
- Black-tailed Godwit (Eastern B-t G)** *Limosa [limosa] melanuroides* (NT) One coming into summer plumage in Colonia, Yap.
- Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica* (NT) One in winter plumage (2cy) at the Blue Lagoon Resort, Chuuk.
- Whimbrel (Eurasian W)** *Numenius [phaeopus] phaeopus* Widespread in small numbers [*variegatus* - part of 'Eurasian'].
- Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis* One, coming into breeding plumage, was seen well on the reservoir on Yap.
- Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia* One on Palau and a few seen on Yap.
- Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola* Greatest numbers at the water treatment works at Koror, Palau. A few others noted.
- Grey-tailed Tattler (Siberian T)** *Tringa brevipes* (NT) A single on Palau and several along the coast on Yap.
- Wandering Tattler** *Tringa incana* Plenty seen well on Yap, Chuuk and Pohnpei, side-by-side with the above species on Yap!
- Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* Small numbers seen on Palau and Yap.
- Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* Seen on Yap, Chuuk and Pohnpei. Often on lawns and road verges even! [nominate].
- Long-toed Stint** *Calidris subminuta* A few seen well at a couple of sites on Yap.
- Brown Noddy** *Anous stolidus* Widespread throughout, with many great views [*pileatus*].
- Black Noddy** ◊ *Anous minutus* Also widespread throughout. Need to get your eye in with this and the previous species [*marcusii*].
- White Tern (Common Fairy T)** *Gygis alba* Another widespread and commonly seen, but delightful species [*candida*].
- Gull-billed Tern** *Gelochelidon nilotica* See note.
- Greater Crested Tern (Great C T)** *Thalasseus bergii* Widespread, with many great views [*cristatus*].
- Little Tern** *Sternula albifrons* Two seen on a log on the way to Peleliu, Palau [*sinensis*].
- Bridled Tern** *Onychoprion anaethetus* Small numbers in the Rock Islands, Palau. Great views of adults and juveniles [nominate].
- Black-naped Tern** *Sterna sumatrana* Great views around Palau, Chuuk and Pohnpei. Very smart [nominate].
- Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo* One in winter plumage (2cy) at the Blue Lagoon Resort, Chuuk [*longipennis*].
- Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida* Small numbers seen on Yap, Tinian and Saipan [*javanicus*].
- White-winged Tern (W-w Black T)** *Chlidonias leucopterus* One in winter plumage (2cy) at the Blue Lagoon Resort, Chuuk.
- Rock Dove (introduced)** *Columba livia* Very few seen.

Island Collared Dove (introduced) *Streptopelia bitorquata* See note.
 Nicobar Pigeon ◊ *Caloenas nicobarica* (NT) See note.
 White-fronted Ground Dove ◊ (Caroline Islands G D) *Alopecoenas kubaryi* (VU) Several seen brilliantly. Great bird!
 White-throated Ground Dove ◊ *Alopecoenas xanthonurus* (NT) See note.
 White-throated Ground Dove ◊ (White-headed G D) *Alopecoenas [xanthonurus] yapensis* (NT) See note.
 Palau Ground Dove ◊ *Alopecoenas canifrons* (NT) Great views of a couple on Ulong Island Palau. Great birds, though quite shy.
 Purple-capped Fruit Dove ◊ (Caroline Islands F D) *Ptilinopus ponapensis* See note.
 Palau Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus pelewensis* Very common by voice throughout. A few seen well though generally relatively shy.
 Mariana Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus roseicapilla* (EN) Quite common on Saipan, Tinian and Rota, with many seen well. Stunner!
 Micronesian Imperial Pigeon ◊ (Micronesian P) *Ducula oceanica* (NT) See note.
 Palau Owl ◊ *Pyrroglaux podargina* Brilliant views nightly on Palau. A cracker and the inevitable bird of the trip!
 Palau Nightjar ◊ *Caprimulgus phalaena* (NT) After a bit of effort we achieved some great views of this isolated species.
 Palau Swiftlet ◊ *Aerodramus pelewensis* Common and widespread throughout the Palau archipelago.
 Mariana Swiftlet ◊ (Guam S) *Aerodramus bartschi* (EN) Several seen each day on Saipan, with many good views.
 Island Swiftlet ◊ (Caroline Islands Swiftlet) *Aerodramus inquietus* Two forms noted: *rukensis* on Chuuk and *ponapensis* on Pohnpei.
 Collared Kingfisher *Todiramphus chloris* See note.
 Mariana Kingfisher ◊ (White-headed K) *Todiramphus [albicilla] albicilla* Very common on Saipan and Tinian.
 Mariana Kingfisher ◊ (Rota K) *Todiramphus [albicilla] orii* Very common and widespread on Rota. Vocally similar to *albicilla*.
 Rusty-capped Kingfisher ◊ (Palau K) *Todiramphus pelewensis* (NT) See note.
 Pohnpei Kingfisher ◊ *Todiramphus reichenbachii* (VU) Small numbers seen daily on Pohnpei. Another smart endemic!
 Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (introduced) *Cacatua galerita* A common and noisy introduction on the Palau Archipelago [*triton*].
 Eclectus Parrot (introduced) *Eclectus roratus* A few seen in the Rock Islands, Palau. Colourful! [*polychloros*].
 Pohnpei Lorikeet ◊ (P Lory) *Trichoglossus rubiginosus* (NT) Common with good numbers seen daily on Pohnpei. A cracker.
 Micronesian Myzomela ◊ (M Honeyeater) *Myzomela rubratra* See note.
 Palau Cicadabird ◊ *Coracina monacha* A female from the boat on Ngeruktabel, and a pair at the Ngardok Reserve on Babeldaob.
 Yap Cicadabird ◊ *Coracina nesiotis* See note.
 Pohnpei Cicadabird ◊ *Coracina insperata* Great views of a pair on two dates in the forest on Pohnpei.



The endemic cicadabirds... Palau Cicadabird (male, top left), Yap Cicadabird (female top right) and Pohnpei Cicadabird (female)(Pete Morris)

Morningbird ◇ *Pachycephala tenebrosa* This rather strange, drab, whistler was particularly common on Ulong Island, Palau.
Black Drongo (introduced) *Dicrurus macrocercus* A very common introduction on Rota.
Palau Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura lepida* Common, widespread and cute in the Palau Archipelago.
Rufous Fantail *Rhipidura rufifrons* Three forms seen: *versicolor* (on Yap); *saipanensis* (on Saipan and Tinian) and *mariae* (on Rota).
Pohnpei Fantail ◇ *Rhipidura kubaryi* Fairly common and small numbers seen in forested habitats daily.



The unusual Morningbird (top left), Rufous Fantail (top right) and the cute endemic Pohnpei Fantail (Pete Morris)

Chuuk Monarch ◇ (Truk M) *Metabolus rugensis* (EN) Great views on Dublon Island (including a full male) and on Tol South.
Yap Monarch ◇ *Monarcha godeffroyi* (NT) Fairly common on Yap where seen daily in small numbers.
Tinian Monarch ◇ *Monarcha takatsukasae* (VU) Very common on Tinian, with 12+ being seen on our brief visit.
Oceanic Flycatcher ◇ *Myiagra oceanica* Common at all islands visited in the Chuuk Lagoon.
Palau Flycatcher ◇ (Mangrove F) *Myiagra erythroptis* Small numbers seen daily around the Palau Archipelago. Cracker!

Pohnpei Flycatcher ◇ *Myiagra pluto* Fairly common with many great views on Pohnpei.
Mariana Crow ◇ *Corvus kubaryi* (CR) Great views of pairs at the Alaguan Bay lookout on two dates.
Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* Small numbers seen on Palau, but no others [*gutturalis*].
Palau Bush Warbler ◇ *Horornis annae* Fairly common and seen well daily on Palau. The long pale bill was unusual!
Saipan Reed Warbler ◇ *Acrocephalus hiwae* Seen well near to the Korean Monument on Saipan. Quite a bill!
Carolinian Reed Warbler ◇ (Caroline Islands R W) *Acrocephalus syrinx* Quite common on Chuuk and on Pohnpei.



Drab warblers! Palau Bush Warbler (top), Carolinian Reed Warbler (above left) and the impressive Saipan Reed Warbler (Pete Morris)

Giant White-eye ◇ *Megazosterops palauensis* (NT) Excellent views of several along the Lighthouse trail on Ngeruktabel.
Golden White-eye ◇ *Cleptornis marchei* (CR) Quite common on the north of Saipan. A real stunner!
Teardrop White-eye ◇ (Great Truk W-e) *Rukia ruki* (EN) Great views of several on Tol South, after considerable effort!
Long-billed White-eye ◇ *Rukia longirostra* (NT) Several great views of this rare and unusual white-eye on Pohnpei.
Rota White-eye ◇ (Rota Bridled W-e) *Zosterops rotensis* (CR) Excellent views of a few on Rota. Easy if you know where to look!
(Saipan) Bridled White-eye ◇ *Zosterops [conspicillatus] saypani* Common on Saipan and Tinian. Nominate form (Guam), is extinct.
Citrine White-eye ◇ (Caroline Islands W-e) *Zosterops semperi* 3 forms: nominate (Palau); *owstoni* (Chuuk) *takatsukasai* (Pohnpei).

Plain White-eye ◇ *Zosterops hypolais* (NT) Common and widespread in suitable habitat on Yap.
Grey-brown White-eye ◇ (Grey W-E) *Zosterops ponapensis* See note.
Olive-colored White-eye ◇ *Zosterops oleagineus* (NT) Seemed very scarce on Yap. Only a 2 seen in the same tree on 2 days!
Dusky White-eye ◇ *Zosterops finschii* A common and unusual looking white-eye in the Palau Archipelago.
Micronesian Starling ◇ *Aplonis opaca* See note.
Eurasian Tree Sparrow (introduced) *Passer montanus* A common and widespread introduction.
Orange-cheeked Waxbill (introduced) *Estrilda melpoda* Just a single introduced bird on Saipan.
Blue-faced Parrotfinch *Erythrura trichroa* On Palau, we heard and briefly saw *pelewensis*; several of the form *clara* on Chuuk.
Scaly-breasted Munia (introduced) *Lonchura punctulata* A common introduction on Yap.
Chestnut Munia (introduced) *Lonchura atricapilla* A common introduction on Palau.
Hunstein's Mannikin (introduced) *Lonchura hunsteini* Bizarrely, this localized species has been introduced to Pohnpei!
Eastern Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla tschutschensis* (NL) Seen by some of the group on Yap.
Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* One seen a couple of times calling in flight on Palau.



Another view of the stunning Golden White-eye (Pete Morris)



Palau Flying Fox - a common sight throughout the archipelago (Pete Morris)

MAMMALS

Polynesian Rat *Rattus exulans* Very common, especially on Palau.

House Rat (Black R) *Rattus rattus* (NL) One identified by some on Palau.

Chuuk Flying Fox (Truk F F) *Pteropus insularis* Small numbers seen on Chuuk.

Marianas Flying Fox *Pteropus mariannus* Just a few seen on Rota, mostly from the lookout.

Caroline Flying Fox *Pteropus molossinus* A few seen on Pohnpei. It has to be said the flying foxes are all quite similar.

Palau Flying Fox *Pteropus pelewensis* Common on Palau... the commonest of the flying foxes.

Yap Flying Fox *Pteropus yapensis* Just three seen on Yap.

Polynesian Sheath-tailed Bat *Emballonura semicaudata* Very common on Palau, with big numbers some evenings.

Common Bottle-nosed Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus* (NL) A group of seven seen by some off Chuuk.



There were a few interesting reptiles too... (Pete Morris)



Another White-throated Ground Dove from Yap (Pete Morris)

NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

The most up to date referenced taxonomic list referred to in the Tour Report is that of the IOC World Bird Names. (Gill, F and Donsker, D Eds). 2014. IOC World Bird Names v4.1. Available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>

Micronesian Megapode ◊ (Palau M) *Megapodius [laperouse] senex*

and **Micronesian Megapode** ◊ (Mariana M) *Megapodius [laperouse] laperouse*

We had excellent views of up to 10 Palau Megapodes on each of our visits to Ulong Island in the Rock Islands, near Palau. Mariana Megapode was somewhat more of a challenge to find, but we did eventually see them very well near to the Korean Monument on Saipan. The birds on Saipan are part of a long established but struggling re-introduced population. The two forms are somewhat different from one another and may merit specific status.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

On Palau, a single of the form *orientalis* was seen at the Ngardok Reserve on Babeldaob. On Saipan, two of the form *guami* were seen well on Lake Susupe. On Chuuk, several were seen from the Japanese Gun. This species was not historically known from Chuuk in the literature, so the subspecies involved is unclear. Could be *guami* or *orientalis*?

Swinhoe's Snipe *Gallinago megala*

On Yap, snipe seen in flight along the Trans Island track which begins a mile north of the Manta Ray Bay Hotel, and in the mature mangroves along the west coast, were assumed to be this species on range?! On plumage, there was nothing to suggest they were not!

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*

Good scope views of one at the Upper Reservoir, on Yap. It was in full winter plumage and appeared fairly heavy-billed and long-legged though did not appear that large. Not easy to assign an isolated individual to form, but since some authorities now split off the Australasian birds, this vagrant may end up as unidentified to species.

Island Collared Dove *Streptopelia bitorquata*

A common introduction on Saipan and Tinian. Many seen well. Also on Rota. The form concerned, *dusumieri*, is from the Philippines and is split off by some authors as a separate species: Philippine Collared Dove.

Nicobar Pigeon *Caloenas nicobarica*

Small numbers seen daily on Palau. Most distantly in flight, but a few decent flight views, and an immature seen on the deck on Ulong Island for some.

White-throated Ground Dove *Alopecoenas xanthonurus*

Quite common on Saipan and Tinian. Most were seen in flight, but a few perched. They seemed very similar to birds from Yap. First seen near the Korean Monument. Also a few seen in flight on Rota. See also the following entry.

White-throated (or White-headed) Ground Dove *Alopecoenas [xanthonurus] yapensis*

A cracking bird. Seen briefly at Fanif the first day, then 15+ on each of the other days, with highest concentrations along the roadside on the south west of the island. Many were very confiding. Although split by some and treated as a subspecies by others, some authorities, including the IOC, treat the birds on the two islands as the same subspecies. They do indeed look very similar!

Purple-capped Fruit Dove ◊ (Caroline Islands F D) *Ptilinopus ponapensis*

Small numbers seen daily on Chuuk, with several superb views, and seen daily on Pohnpei. Now treated as a separate species to Crimson-crowned Fruit Dove *P. porphyraceus* of Fiji, Tong and Samoa, with which it was, until recently, lumped.

Micronesian Imperial Pigeon *Ducula oceanica*

On Palau, we enjoyed good views of several around Ngeruktabel in the Rock Islands, including several perched. A couple seen in flight on Badeldaob. On Yap, where they are possibly introduced, two were seen in flight at Fanif. On both these islands the form is monacha. On Pohnpei, good views of a flying bird on a couple of occasions. Here, the form is townsendi.

Collared Kingfisher *Todiramphus chloris*

This formerly widespread species has seen widespread taxonomic revision and may yet see more in the future. We saw one taxon on this tour which is currently included in this species, namely *teraokai* the form which is fairly widespread on the Palau archipelago.

Rusty-capped (or Palau) Kingfisher *Todiramphus pelewensis*

Ended up being more common and widespread than anticipated. First seen on Ulong Island, and subsequently at most sites including the trail to the Old German Lighthouse, Peleliu and at many sites on Badeldaob. Most showed nice rusty crowns, but a few buff-crowned individuals were also seen. A really smart kingfisher!

Micronesian Myzomela (or Honeyeater) *Myzomela rubratra*

A widespread endemic which was found throughout the islands. We saw five different subspecies as follows: kobayashii (Palau Archipelago); kurodai (Yap); saffordi (Saipan, Tinian and Rota); major (Chuuk) and dichromata (Pohnpei).

Yap Cicadabird *Coracina nesiotis*

Two pairs seen well on the Trans Island track on Yap. Much bigger than Palau Cicadabird. Female distinctive, being almost orange underneath, male nearly all blackish with greyer wings. Almost starling-like, but longer-tailed, dark iris, hooked bill and greyer wings, as well as different flight and foraging behaviour. Seems to be a worthy split.

Grey-brown White-eye *Zosterops ponapensis*

Common, with good numbers seen daily on Pohnpei. Until very recently, this species was lumped in Kosrae White-eye *Z. cinereus* with the name Grey-brown White-eye being used for the enlarged species.



The somewhat unimpressive Grey-brown White-eye from Pohnpei (Pete Morris)

Micronesian Starling *Aplonis opaca*

Another widespread Micronesian species of which we noted five different subspecies as follows: orii (Palau Archipelago); kurodai (Yap); guami (Saipan, Tinian and Rota); anga (Chuuk) and ponapensis (Pohnpei).

APPENDIX 1

TOP 6 BIRDS OF THE MAIN TOUR

- 1st **PALAU OWL**
- 2nd **MICRONESIAN MEGAPODE**
- 3rd **PALAU GROUND DOVE**
- 4th **Chuuk Monarch**
- 5th **Pohnpei Lorikeet**
- 6th **Slaty-legged Crake**



Another Palau Owl... our bird of the trip (Pete Morris)



White Terns, always great to see - these were on Yap, and Buff-banded Rail from Palau (Pete Morris)





A few scenics! Bird Island on Saipan, old cannons on Ngeruktabel Island, Palau, and Nan Modal ruins, Pohnpei (Pete Morris)

