



The male Orange Fruit Dove is one of those totally surreal, must see birds (Mark Van Beirs)

NEW CALEDONIA & FIJI with VANUATU and SAMOA extensions

21 OCTOBER – 9 NOVEMBER 2018

LEADER: MARK VAN BEIRS

The unique Orange Fruit Dove was the undisputed highlight of our very enjoyable foray to the Melanesian islands of Vanuatu and New Caledonia and the Polynesian islands of Fiji and Samoa. These little dots sprinkled about in the western Pacific Ocean hold an amazing variety of endemics and specialities and on our recent trip we managed to see the majority of these. The best birds of the main tour, which covered New Caledonia and Fiji, included the gorgeous Cloven-feathered Dove, the magnificent Kagu and the terrific Golden Fruit Dove. The Vanuatu pretrip will be remembered for Tanna Fruit Dove, the adorable Buff-bellied Monarch, Vanuatu Megapode and the retiring Vanuatu Kingfisher, while the Samoa extension gave us splendours like Mao, Red-headed Parrotfinch, Blue-crowned Lorikeet and Samoan Whistler. The large island of New Caledonia is a mixture of French and Melanesian cultures, where the fantastic and much-wanted Kagu makes a living. As it is the only representative of its family, we were all very keen to get to grips with this very unusual-looking species. Our day trips to two of the Loyalty Islands added several rare and little known endemics to the tally. The Fiji archipelago exudes a very different feeling and pride of place must go to the three amazing Fruit Doves that make a living on the different islands. Australasia is pigeon and dove heaven, but Fiji definitely is the capital, as it holds the best looking, most attractive species. 147 bird taxa were seen on this very enjoyable tour.



The Vanuatu Megapode doesn't always pose like this; the Buff-bellied Monarch is a real cutie (Mark Van Beirs)

The Vanuatu pre-tour extension started in mid-morning at our hotel in Luganville, the hub of the island of Espiritu Santo (usually just called Santo). The little-known archipelago of Vanuatu contains 86 islands and is situated in the western Pacific, to the southeast of the Solomon Islands and to the northeast of New Caledonia. Most of the endemic birds of Vanuatu can be found on the island of Santo, but it takes a major camping expedition to get several of the highland specialities and on this tour we confined ourselves to the lowlands. We drove to the northeast, passing large coconut plantations and fields dotted with cattle. Several Pacific Kingfishers (a recent split in the Collared Kingfisher complex) were sitting on the wires, half a dozen Buff-banded Rails were crossing the tracks and introduced Indian Mynas were everywhere. The Loru Conservation Area is an extensive tract of protected lowland rainforest and escorted by two local guides we explored several trails leading through this nice woodland. Melanesian Whistlers were singing all around us, and were eventually seen. Luckily, it didn't take too long to find one of our main targets here, the unobtrusive and retiring Vanuatu Megapode. We flushed a bird from the trail and managed terrific scope views as it had

landed on an obvious bough in the open canopy. Its red face, sooty black plumage and bright yellow legs could be studied in detail! Another corker was the very smart, endemic Buff-bellied Monarch, several of which flitted through the mid canopy. This beauty was a really important bird to get to grips with, as it is placed in its own genus (*Neolalage*). A MacKinlay's Cuckoo-Dove performed very well and several Pacific Emerald Doves flushed from the forest floor. Growling Pacific Imperial Pigeons kept to the canopy and in the undergrowth both Grey and Streaked Fantails showed well. We heard several feral Red Junglefowl and a distant Vanuatu Kingfisher. While munching our picnic a Swamp Harrier flew over, Glossy Swiftlets flitted about and a flock of Coconut Lorikeets screeched past. Then the skies opened and while sheltering a South Melanesian Cuckooshrike sat up for excellent looks as it was enjoying its shower. Several endemic Vanuatu White-eyes and Silvereyes kept us company, but stayed in the canopy, so the views could have been better. Impressive Vanuatu Flying Foxes regularly flew over the forest. We waited and waited, but the rain didn't relent, so eventually we drove to base.



This male Melanesian Flycatcher obliged so well; White-breasted Woodswallows are very social birds (Mark Van Beirs)

We returned early in the morning to the Loru Conservation Area, but sadly it rained quite heavily for a good part of the morning. It took a really long time before we nailed the much-wanted Vanuatu (or Chestnut-bellied) Kingfisher. We heard several, but they kept their distance and flew off at the slightest disturbance. Rather unusual behaviour in view of previous experiences! In the end we managed to scope this endemic as it perched high in a dense bit of canopy. In between the showers we had great looks at several adorable Buff-bellied Monarchs as they foraged in the mid canopy waving their tail about. An endemic Tanna Fruit Dove was scoped, but the light was really awful. Melanesian Whistlers called all over the forest and a nice male Melanesian Flycatcher obliged. A Vanuatu Megapode showed briefly as did a Shining Bronze Cuckoo. We enjoyed an excellent lunch at a seaside resort and afterwards explored its surroundings, where Pacific Reef Heron and lots of Pacific Kingfishers (of the distinctive race *santoensis*) were noted. Cardinal Myzomelas and lots of Vanuatu White-eyes and Silvereyes were found in the gardens and a party of Chestnut Munias were feeding on the roadside. A couple of White-breasted Woodswallows were also seen and a short recce of a disused WWII airfield gave us cracking scope views of a smart Red-bellied Fruit Dove, before the skies opened again.



Obtaining scope views of a Vanuatu Imperial Pigeon was a real bonus; Grey Fantails respond very well to pishing (Mark Van Beirs)

On our final morning on the island of Santo we explored a range of forested hills in the centre of the island and although we couldn't reach high enough altitudes for the montane specialties, we enjoyed our sunny and much appreciated dry visit. We walked along a track and were shown a nice trail through beautiful forest, where we heard the deep booming call of the retiring Vanuatu Imperial Pigeon. Not much later we managed to point the scope at this rarely seen endemic as it sat perched high in the open canopy and could discern the grey and rufous plumage and the bright yellow eye. Excellent stuff! We also scoped a cracking endemic Tanna Fruit Dove (we had only managed bad views before) and regularly encountered cute Buff-bellied Monarchs. We heard and glimpsed a Vanuatu Kingfisher and heard many Melanesian Whistlers. There were lots of Red-bellied Fruit Doves about and an Island Thrush was seen by several participants as it flushed from the track. We returned to Luganville and in late afternoon took the flight to the main island of Efate, where we stayed overnight.

The main tour started in Nouméa, the capital of the large island of New Caledonia. It sure felt as if we were visiting one of France's Mediterranean towns. We welcomed three new faces and drove to the famous Parc Provinciale de la Rivière Bleue for an introductory bout of birding. Because of the ongoing school holidays there were lots of people in the park, so we confined ourselves to the southern section around the headquarters and a nearby nice patch of rainforest. While munching our picnic we picked up our first endemics as Barred Honeyeater and New Caledonian Friarbird were visiting a nearby flowering tree. The highlight of the visit was without a doubt our first encounter with the amazing New Caledonian Crow, now considered to be the most intelligent bird on our planet! This small forest crow showed well and uttered its distinctive calls at close range. A New Caledonian Parakeet was scoped and a gorgeous New Caledonian Myzomela performed in a flowering bush. A Crow Honeyeater flew past, sadly only offering the shortest of looks. We heard the lovely bubbling song of the endemic Goliath Imperial Pigeon emanate from a forested valley. Modestly-clad Grey-eared Honeyeaters were everywhere and very noisy. A pair of Southern Shrikebills showed exceedingly well as did a Shining Bronze Cuckoo. Glossy and White-rumped Swiftlets flitted overhead and a pair of tiny Fan-tailed Gerygones gave very nice views. We also noted a couple of introduced Javan Rusa Deer. The drives to and from the park gave us White-faced and Pacific Reef Herons, Silver Gull and introduced Spotted Doves. We ended the day with a very nice dinner along Nouméa's seafont.



The subtly plumaged Barred Honeyeater is endemic to New Caledonia (Mark Van Beirs)



The spectacular Kagu posed ever so well; the endemic Goliath Imperial Pigeon has an unusually attractive song (Mark Van Beirs)

The highlight of our full day in the Parc de la Rivière Bleue was of course our encounter with the magical Kagu. It took a while before we found the first one, but then we located three of these night heron sized birds. We saw them really well at close range, as they foraged slowly and unconcerned on the forest floor. It is now proven that this unique species' closest relative is the incomparable Sunbittern from the Neotropics! The Kagu is of course a very important bird for the bird family collectors, as it belongs in its own family, the Rhynochetidae. On our wanderings through the beautiful rain forest, which is dotted with giant Kauri trees (genus *Agathis*) we had excellent encounters with a range of other New Caledonian endemics. We scoped a terrific Goliath Imperial Pigeon while enjoying its lovely song and observed several attractive Horned Parakeets as they fed in the canopy. A modestly plumaged New Caledonian Cuckooshrike was warming itself in the morning sun rays and a very obliging New Caledonian Crow allowed eye-ball to eye-ball looks. We also had cracking views of New Caledonian Myzomela, Grey-eared Honeyeater, smart Barred Honeyeaters and tiny Green-backed White-eyes. The vociferous New Caledonian Friarbird was easily the most obvious bird in the forest. A glimpse of a Crow Honeyeater was really frustrating and a Striated Starling only showed briefly. Outside the forest we added Little Pied and a rare Great Cormorant, Whistling Kite and Sacred Kingfisher to the tally.



The New Caledonian Friarbird is the most vociferous bird of the New Caledonian forests; the New Caledonian Crow has become famous for its amazing intelligence (Mark Van Beirs)

Our day trip to the small island of Ouvéa, which belongs to the Loyalty Islands, started at the Nouméa city airport of Magenta, from where we flew east-northeast to this elongated stretch of elevated coral reef. Upon arrival we organized our vehicles and drove straight to the best area for the endemic, attractively-patterned Ouvéa Parakeet. The road took us along sparkling turquoise seas lapping bright white sandy beaches. At the edge of “Le Grand Forêt” our lady on the spot welcomed us warmly and it didn’t take too long to locate a couple of these rare parakeets as they were sheltering from the heat in the shade of the forest. We obtained fair views, but they remained in the forest and didn’t want to come out in the gardens to feed on the ripening papayas or mangoes. The population is estimated at about 2,000 birds and seems to be stable for the time being. We also encountered Brown Goshawk, lots of Sacred Kingfishers (70+ for the day), Long-tailed Triller and several Striated Starlings. We did a bout of seawatching from a nearby headland, where we observed quite a few Wedge-tailed Shearwaters, a couple of Short-tailed Shearwaters, a single Tahiti Petrel, some Black Noddies and several Bridled Terns. We made a short stop at the “Monument to the 19”, which commemorates the death of 19 Kanaks during the upheavals of 1988. In the early evening we returned to Nouméa.



The island of Lifou is a tropical paradise (Mark Van Beirs)

Another day, another island. Lifou is a fair-sized island belonging to the Loyalty Archipelago, which is situated to the east of New Caledonia and holds two endemics and a couple of other specialities. On our day trip we flew to this thinly populated chunk of land and explored its extensive scrubby woodland. Endemic Small Lifou White-eyes were easily found and we also regularly encountered the smart Cardinal Myzomela (restricted to Vanuatu, the Loyalty Islands, Temotu and the islands of Rennell and Makira in the Solomons) and the attractive Red-bellied Fruit Dove (endemic to Vanuatu, the Loyalty islands and Temotu). Typically, the endemic Large Lifou White-eye took a while longer to find, although we heard it regularly in the dense evergreen forest. In the end most of us obtained some kind of a view of this large and rather sneaky white-eye. Metallic Pigeons showed regularly and the distinctive endemic race of the Silvereye (*melanops*) performed very nicely. We also saw lots of White-breasted Woodswallows and a few Pacific Swallows. We enjoyed a tasty lunch in a seaside restaurant and in late afternoon returned to the Lifou airstrip, where an Eastern Barn Owl was patrolling the grassy edges. Some 35 Pacific Golden Plovers were also noted. We flew to Nouméa and in the early evening drove north to our hotel in the hills near the beautiful Parc des Grandes Fougères.



The smart White-bellied Goshawk is endemic to New Caledonia (Mark Van Beirs)

The rolling hills in this part of the island are covered in treefern-dotted, scrubby woodland and open fields, while the Parc des Grandes Fougères protects a splendid area of native rainforest. On our final day in New Caledonia, we birded a mosaic of habitats and targeted the remaining endemics. As soon as we got out of our vehicles, we heard the distinctive soporific song of the endemic Cloven-feathered Dove and soon had our scopes pointed at this extremely smart bird. We could discern its fluffy white legs and very attractive yellow and green plumage. An immature White-bellied Goshawk perched up in a tall tree in a garden and allowed excellent scope views, till we heard a gunshot and saw the poor bird fall to the ground. The owner of the garden had just shot it in front of our eyes. We couldn't believe what had happened, and later that morning reported this disgraceful incident to the local authorities. So very sad and so totally unnecessary! We continued birding in rather low spirits for a while. Several Yellow-bellied Flyrobins performed nicely and we also scoped a cracking adult White-bellied Goshawk. In a patch of tall grasses, ferns and scrub we

listened to the characteristic churring notes of the endemic New Caledonian Thicketbird, but only two of us managed to see this little-known bird. We returned for lunch at our lovely hotel, had a bit of a break and in the afternoon we returned to the same spot. After quite a bit of patient waiting, most of us obtained fair views of the extreme skulking Thicketbird as it hopped from cover to cover. We also found Australasian Swamphen, Goliath Imperial Pigeon, Black-faced Cuckooshrike, Rufous Whistler and Common Waxbill.

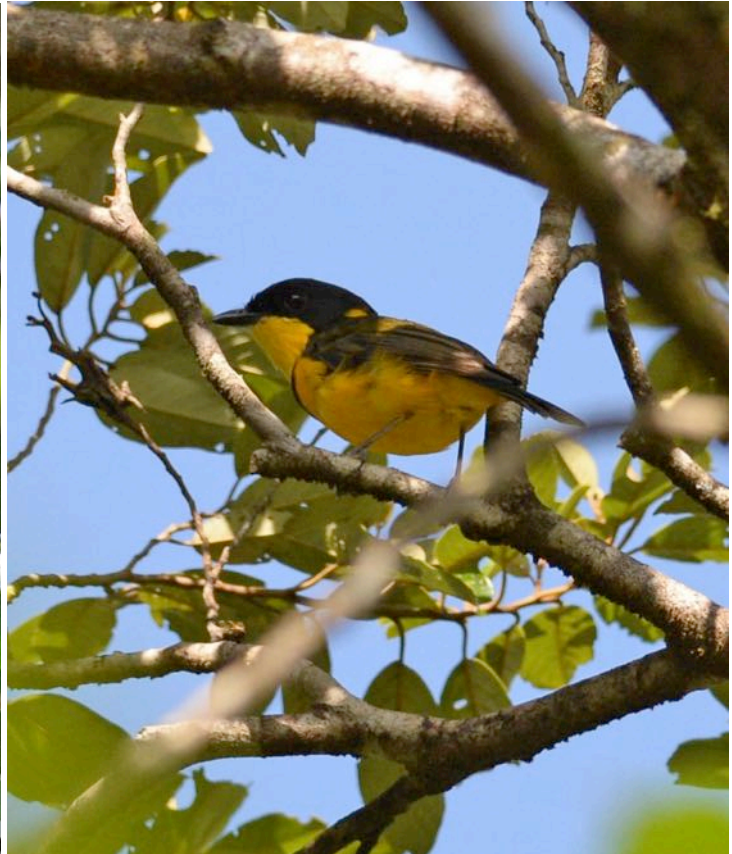


The unusual Cloven-feathered Dove is placed in its own genus; the Rufous Whistler also occurs in Australia (Mark Van Beirs)

A travelling day followed as we flew from New Caledonia via Fiji's main island Viti Levu to the delightful island of Taveuni. The domestic flight in a Twin Otter took us over turquoise blue seas, famous for their beautiful pearls. Upon arrival at Taveuni we transferred to our beachside hotel and an initial exploration gave us Pacific Kingfisher (of the distinctive race *vitiensis*), Vanikoro Flycatcher, three Wandering Tattlers and many introduced Jungle Mynas. A bout of seawatching added a selection of seabirds including Brown and Red-footed Boobies, Lesser Frigatebird and Greater Crested and Black-naped Terns. Dozens of impressive Pacific Flying Foxes were circling over an offshore islet.



On Taveuni we observed the distinctive vitiensis race of the Pacific Kingfisher; Vanua Levu scenery (Mark Van Beirs)



The male Azure-crested Flycatcher is a real gem; Fiji Whistlers are easier to hear than to see (Mark Van Beirs)

We spent our first Taveuni morning on the lush forested slopes of the Des Voeux Peak (1,195m), the second highest top of the island. Pride of place must definitely go to two of the most attractive and much-wanted Taveuni endemics. A winding narrow forest trail took us to a territory of the fabulous Taveuni Silktail. It took a while before everyone had good views, but eventually we were all very happy with the great looks at this exquisite species. The metallic spangles on the head and the breast and the shining white rump and tail could be admired as a pair posed at eye level in the dense undergrowth. The systematics of this taxon have now been solved and this species (together with its sister species from Vanua Levu, the Natewa Silktail, have now been placed in the Fantail family (Rhipiduridae). The other highlight of our visit was the amazing Orange Fruit Dove. The male really is a magnificent piece of art, with his bright orange plumage and mossy green head. We obtained excellent views of this surreal bird as it was singing in the canopy. The song is very unusual for a dove and sounds more like an insect sound. We also saw the more modestly plumaged female. Several attractive Maroon Shining Parrots (endemic to Taveuni) played about in the area and Barking Imperial Pigeons were regularly recorded. We found a perched Fiji Goshawk and saw several Collared Lories fly past. A gorgeous Sulphur-breasted Myzomela showed brilliantly. This Fiji endemic must be the best-looking member of the genus. Several noisy Fiji Wattled Honeyeaters were foraging in the moss-draped forest, Polynesian Trillers were regularly encountered and a couple of Fiji Shrikebills played hide and seek in the canopy. Some Fiji White-eyes flitted through the trees and an Island Thrush (of the Taveuni race *tempesti*) flew past. We heard several Fiji Bush Warblers and a couple of Yellow-billed Honeyeaters. On the drive down from the mountain, we flushed several feral Red Junglefowl and a couple of introduced Australian Magpies. In the afternoon we explored the surroundings of our hotel and found Pacific Black Duck, Dusky Moorhen (heard only), a trio of endemic Fiji Woodswallows and many, very well behaved Vanikoro Flycatchers.



Observing a male Orange Fruit Dove gave us a real kick; the Barking Imperial Pigeon inhabits the canopy of all Fijian forests (Mark Van Beirs)

Another morning on the forested flanks of the Des Voeux Peak added terrific views of the gorgeous Azure-crested Flycatcher, which, with the splitting off of the form on Viti Levu and Vanua Levu (Chestnut-throated Flycatcher) is now considered a Taveuni endemic. Male and female of this beauty showed very well. We scoped a delightful male Many-coloured Fruit Dove and admired another male Orange Fruit Dove. A vociferous male Fiji Whistler allowed good looks at his yellow throat. A subtly-coloured Fiji Bush Warbler moved slowly about in the undergrowth, whilst regularly emitting its distinctive song. Several Polynesian Starlings favoured the tops of dead trees. We found an occupied eyrie of a Fiji Goshawk and could study the attending pair at length. The size difference between male and female was very obvious to see. A bright red flowering tree was visited by many Fiji Wattled Honeyeaters, but we only heard the ebullient song of the Yellow-billed (or Chattering Giant) Honeyeater. In late afternoon a diving boat took us offshore into the Somo Somo Strait, where we observed several Brown Boobies and dozens of Black Noddies. We also encountered several dense flocks of migrating Sooty Shearwaters. Best of all were the two Collared Petrels, which were a bit distant, but the photographs showed the diagnostic features of this localized gadfly petrel.



On the boat trip off Taveuni we encountered hundreds of Sooty Shearwaters (Mark Van Beirs)

On our last morning on Taveuni we returned to the hills to try to complete our set of Taveuni endemics. And indeed, as soon as we arrived, we heard the lively calls of the Yellow-billed (or Chattering Giant)

Honeyeater. Minutes later two showed quite well in the canopy, allowing us to discern their green plumage and obvious decurved, yellow bill. And then the clouds opened and it continued raining for most of the morning. During one of the short dry spells we observed two Fiji Parrotfinches, but the birds didn't really cooperate. A Taveuni Silktail performed well in the drizzle and a cracking male Orange Fruit Dove gave very nice, final looks. We again admired a male Azure-crested Flycatcher and some close Fiji Woodswallows. After a hearty lunch at our friendly hotel, we boarded a Twin Otter that took us to Nadi, the airline hub of Fiji. As our flight to Kadavu was only in the late morning, we enjoyed a leisurely breakfast, before making our way to the domestic terminal. Several Fiji Parrotfinches were seen, next to introduced Red-vented Bulbuls. A short flight in a Twin Otter took us southeast to the relaxed, thinly populated island of Kadavu. Upon arrival two boats took us to a sheltered bay on the north coast where the famous Papageno Resort is situated. Several Greater Crested and Black-naped Terns escorted us on the journey. Our gracious hosts welcomed us warmly and after a delicious lunch, we birded the lush gardens and the nearby vegetable plots. A category 1 cyclone, named Keni, had done some serious damage in April 2018 and many of the trees showed broken branches and split trunks. Endemic, noisy Kadavu Honeyeaters were easy to see in the flowering bushes and a couple of endemic Kadavu Fantails showed well at the forest edge. A pair of delightful Slaty Monarchs looked for all the world like New World gnatcatchers and gave a terrific show at close range. We ventured a bit into the forest where a male Whistling Dove was discovered high in the canopy. As there was quite a wind blowing, the scope views were a bit intermittent, but eventually we all got magnificent views of this very smart Kadavu endemic. We then waited for a while at one of the more open areas, and soon enough we heard and saw several endemic Crimson Shining Parrots fly past. After a bit of positioning we obtained excellent scope looks at this gorgeous species. We found several feeding in fruiting bushes and could admire their foraging technique. The final endemic was in the proverbial bag! We stood about and had more good looks at more widespread Fiji endemics. A pair of superb Many-coloured Fruit Doves were seen displaying in a bare tree and Barking Imperial Pigeons wanted to be seen well. Ever so handsome Collared Lories were feeding on the flowers of a Schefflera tree and several modestly-clad Polynesian Starlings were sitting about in the nearby treetops. The day ended with a fine dinner at this very special place far away from everywhere. The owners obviously loved Mozart's "Magic Flute" to name this lovely resort after one of its main characters. We fell asleep to the sound of gently lapping waves.



The Fiji endemic Slaty Monarch looks like a New World Gnatcatcher; the Kadavu Fantail has an unusually loud song (Mark Van Beirs)

A bit of seawatching at dawn gave us a couple of distant Tahiti Petrels and several Red-footed Boobies, while a Grey Plover was foraging on the muddy shore. We spent our final hours at the beautiful Papageno resort in the gardens and along a nice forest trail and had good looks at all four Kadavu endemics again. The Kadavu Fantail and the Kadavu Honeyeater performed well, Crimson Shining Parrots sat at the forest edge and a male Whistling Fruit Dove was hiding in the canopy. A Fiji Shrikebill flitted through the mid canopy and then it was already time to leave this little paradise. On the boat trip to the airport we were entertained by a pod of playful Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphins. We flew to the hub of Nadi, where we had to wait some

hours for our flight to Suva, situated at the eastern side of the island of Viti Levu. Colourful Fiji Parrotfinches and introduced Red Avadavats and Red-vented Bulbuls kept us busy in the airport area.



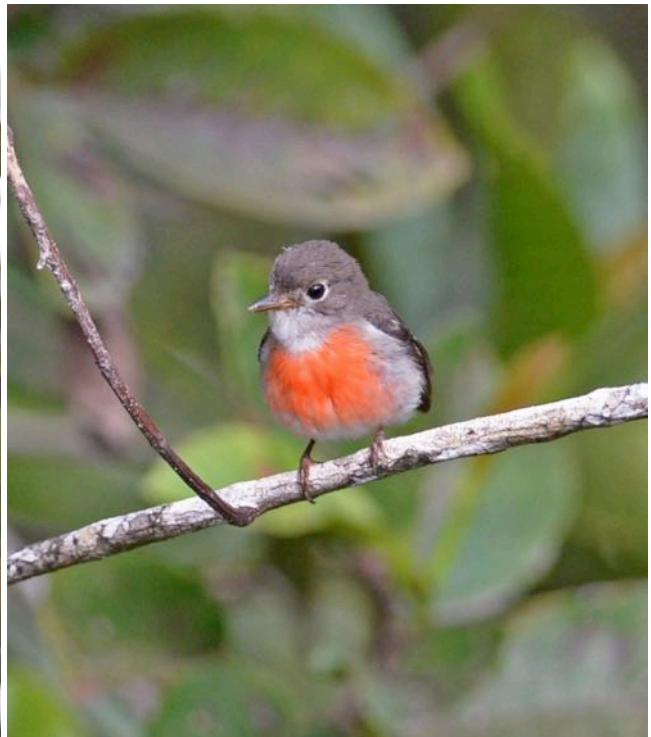
The male Golden Fruit Dove is a real gem (tour participant John Clark)

Our first birding on Viti Levu took us to a quiet back road in the forested hills behind Suva. One of the first birds we saw, was a terrific male Golden Fruit Dove. It shot across the track, and after a bit of scanning we found this magnificent endemic perched up in a high tree, where we scoped it for excellent views. What a cracker! Several bright endemic Masked Shining Parrots were flying about and eventually allowed good looks too. The flowering African Tulip Trees attracted good numbers of Western Wattled Honeyeaters (or Kikaus) and the loud bubbling song of Giant Honeyeaters was regularly heard. These large endemics kept to the treetops and were quite hard to see well. We could hear the distinctive song of a Black-throated Shrikebill on the other side of the river and a brief touch on the mp3 player soon brought a splendid male of this often hard to see, smart Fiji endemic close. We found several very attractive Chestnut-throated Flycatchers (recently split from Azure-crested) playing hide and seek in the mid canopy. A male Fiji Whistler showed its all yellow underparts and we heard a Fan-tailed Cuckoo in the distance. We returned to the hills after a break at midday and found a family party of adorable Pacific Robins in a forest glade. Several swift, introduced Small Indian Mongooses were seen on our walks. In the early evening, some participants were lucky enough to observe a large, 1, 5m long Yellow-lipped (or Banded) Sea Krait in the garden of the hotel!



This impressive Yellow-lipped Sea Krait was found in the hotel garden at Suva (tour participant John Clark)

Our day in the hills of eastern Viti Levu with a local expert was good fun, but not really a great success. The two remaining Viti Levu endemics, Long-legged Thicketbird and Pink-billed Parrotfinch are very difficult to get to grips with at the best of times. We were taken to two territories of Long-legged Thicketbird and we spent a lot of time in secluded gullies, but, we only heard the song and the alarm calls of this inveterate skulker. None of us ever so any movement, alas. The birds really behaved like ghosts! A couple of Island Thrushes of the race *layardi* flitted through while we were patiently waiting. We also patrolled a forested valley, where the parrotfinch is regularly recorded, but because of lack of time (we had a plane to catch), we could only give it a couple of hours. We did obtain cracking, jaw-dropping scope looks at male and female



The male Black-throated Shrikebill performed very well, as did this lovely Pacific Robin (Mark Van Beirs)

Golden Fruit Dove and had fantastic views of a male Black-throated Shrikebill. While driving along the gravel roads we flushed quite a few Metallic Pigeons and dozens and dozens of Fiji Parrotfinches and Red

Avadavats. Good numbers of Fiji Woodswallows were perched on the roadside wires. In late afternoon we picked up our luggage at the hotel and drove to Suva airport, where we caught a plane to Nadi.

The day started with a cracking male Fiji Parrotfinch foraging on the lawn of our hotel. As we had seen all the available endemics that occur in western Viti Levu, we enjoyed a more leisurely day in the Nausori highlands in the hinterland of Nadi. The only remaining stretch of forest is found along the ridge of the hill range. All the rest has been transformed to pasture or agricultural land. We encountered a good selection of Viti Levu specialities on our walks through the forest. We obtained our best views to date of a Giant Honeyeater, which posed so well in the open for excellent scope views. We saw several subtly beautiful female Golden Fruit Doves and found both Southern Shrikebill and a lovely female Black-throated Shrikebill. An eyrie of a Fiji Goshawk was located in an open tree which allowed very nice scope views of the brooding female. Fiji Woodswallows were regularly seen perched on roadside wires.



Buff-banded Rails were especially common in Samoa (Mark Van Beirs)

On our final morning in Fiji, we explored an area of mangrove and fishponds near Nadi, where we had an entertaining couple of hours. The only new birds for the list were Ruddy Turnstone and Striated Heron (heard only). Several Pacific Golden Plovers were about, next to some common Fiji endemics. Around midday we finally flew to Samoa, where it rained heavily. On the drive to our hotel we noted several Buff-banded Rails

and lots of Pacific Golden Plovers foraging on the lawns of even quite small gardens. We were surprised to see an inordinate number of very well-built churches...



Our first endemics on Samoa were Samoan Whistler and Samoan Starling (Mark Van Beirs)

The following day started with low clouds and continuous rain, but that didn't deter us from visiting the Botanical Gardens and the adjoining Vailima Nature Reserve. We easily picked up our first Samoan endemics in the form of Samoan Starling and Samoan Whistler. Regional specialities like Crimson-crowned Fruit Dove, Pacific Imperial Pigeon, Cardinal Myzomela, noisy Polynesian Wattled Honeyeaters and distinctive Polynesian Starlings sat up for good views. Overhead we noted several graceful White-tailed Tropicbirds, lots of Brown Noddies and quite a few superbly elegant White Terns. Amazing numbers of Buff-banded Rails were scuttling about. Another heavy rain shower forced us to search shelter in the Robert Louis Stevenson museum. We met a local biologist who told us the sad story of the last sighting of the fabled Tooth-billed Pigeon. In the afternoon it luckily remained dry, as we explored a forest reserve in the central hills of Upolu, where the endemic Flat-billed Kingfisher performed very well. Some of the birds we saw were quite buff below, while others were bright white. We heard the distinctive song of the endemic Mao, a large dark honeyeater of the canopy and in the course of the afternoon we obtained several good looks at this scarce speciality. A smart male Samoan Flycatcher played a bit hard to get in the canopy, but eventually we all managed decent looks. We spent a bit of time at a nice viewpoint looking over Apia and the northern coast of Upolu. Several swift flying, colourful Blue-crowned Lorikeets were noted overhead, and with a bit of persistence we managed to scope them briefly a couple of times. In the evening the hotel had organised a special Samoan buffet and a cultural dance show, which we thoroughly enjoyed.



The Flat-billed Kingfisher and the Samoan Flycatcher are two of the more colourful Samoan endemics (Mark Van Beirs)

Early in the morning we drove to the coast, where we tried to organize a visit to an offshore island, where the Tongan Ground Dove is reputed to be fairly easy to see, but a combination of bad weather, an absent, overseas chief, a defect boat engine, lack of time and stricter visiting rules, made our impromptu visit quite impossible. On our drive we noted an Eastern Barn Owl perched on a roadside wire and as soon as the sun got up we recorded more than a hundred Buff-banded Rails scurrying along the road. A couple of Australasian Swampheens and several Flat-billed Kingfishers provided more entertainment. Instead we visited the nice and quiet O Le Pupu-Pu'e National Park, where we found a good selection of Samoan endemics. Best of all was a Samoan Triller, that sadly only showed itself briefly. A pair of smart Samoan Flycatchers obliged much better. We returned to our hotel for lunch and a bit of packing. A final visit to the Botanical Gardens gave us excellent looks at a foraging Red-headed Parrotfinch and at Samoan Fantail. This happily completed the tally of possible Samoan endemics. The Parrotfinch performed splendidly as it was foraging at very close range on the trunk of a large forest tree making small scrapes in the bark and picking up little titbits. A pair of rather modestly-plumaged Samoan Fantails circled us inquisitively for a while, allowing pretty good looks. Upon returning the group parted ways to different corners of the globe, rich in memories and new experiences.



Bathing introduced Jungle Mynas (Mark Van Beirs)



The Red-headed Parrotfinch is a real gem (Mark Van Beirs)

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). **IOC World Bird Names**. This list is updated several times annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>.

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

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

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

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>

CR = Critically Endangered, **EN** = Endangered, **VU** = Vulnerable, **NT** = Near Threatened, **DD** = Data Deficient.

BIRDS

Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa* Regular encounters.
Vanuatu Megapode ◊ *Megapodius layardi* VU Excellent scope views of this usually difficult Vanuatu endemic.
Red Junglefowl (introduced) (Feral Chicken) *Gallus gallus* A few encounters.
Collared Petrel ◊ *Pterodroma brevipes* VU Two showed quite distantly on our Taveuni boat trip.
Tahiti Petrel ◊ *Pseudobulweria rostrata* NT Several were seen, but always rather distantly.
Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Ardenna pacifica* Small numbers were noted on sea watches.
Short-tailed Shearwater *Ardenna tenuirostris* A few observations only.
Sooty Shearwater *Ardenna grisea* NT Hundreds were seen migrating off Taveuni.
White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus* Fairly common on Upolu (Samoa).
Nankeen Night Heron (Rufous N H) *Nycticorax caledonicus* A single bird showed briefly on New Caledonia.
Striated Heron *Butorides striata* (H) One was heard in an area of mangrove on Viti Levu (Fiji).
White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae* Regular throughout.
Pacific Reef Heron (P R Egret) *Egretta sacra* Both morphs showed well.
Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel* Regular encounters.
Red-footed Booby *Sula sula* Pale morph birds were observed off Taveuni and Kadavu.



Brown Booby (Mark Van Beirs)

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster* Nice sightings on Taveuni.
Little Pied Cormorant *Microcarbo melanoleucos* Several were found on New Caledonia.
Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* A single bird was seen at the Parc de la Rivière Bleue (New Caledonia).
Brown Goshawk *Accipiter fasciatus* Several observations on New Caledonia and in The Loyalties.
White-bellied Goshawk ◊ (New Caledonian G) *Accipiter haplochrous* NT Three nice observations. Poor youngster!
Fiji Goshawk ◊ *Accipiter rufitorques* 12 excellent encounters with this Fijian endemic. Two eyries were found.
Swamp Harrier *Circus approximans* Regular on Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Fiji.
Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus* Six observations on New Caledonia.
Kagu ◊ *Rhynchotus jubatus* EN One of the highlights of the tour! Mega looks on New Caledonia.
Buff-banded Rail *Gallirallus philippensis* Regular, but especially abundant on Samoa.
Australasian Swamphen (Pacific S) *Porphyrio melanotus* A few were found on New Caledonia and Samoa.
Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa* (H) We heard the distinctive call on Taveuni (Fiji).



Fiji Goshawk; Kagu (Mark Van Beirs)

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* Regular. Good fun to see them forage in small gardens on Samoa.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* A single bird was seen on Kadavu (Fiji).

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* Several encounters with this well-known migrant.



Pacific Golden Plover (Mark Van Beirs); Greater Crested Terns (tour participant John Clark)

Wandering Tattler *Tringa incana* A few were seen on Taveuni (Fiji) and on Samoa.

Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus* Fairly common on Samoa.

Black Noddy *Anous minutus* Abundant at sea in Fiji.

White Tern (Common W T) *Gygis alba* Regular over the Samoan forests. So very elegant.

Silver Gull *Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae* Fairly common around Nouméa. Also one on Viti Levu (Fiji).

Greater Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii* Regular.

Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus* Three were noted while seawatching on Ouvéa.



Many-colored Fruit Dove (Mark Van Beirs); Whistling Dove (tour participant John Clark)

Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana* Several encounters.

Rock Dove (introduced) (Feral Pigeon) *Columba livia*

Metallic Pigeon ◊ *Columba vitiensis* Regular encounters on New Caledonia, Fiji and Vanuatu. See Note.

Spotted Dove (introduced) *Spilopelia chinensis*

MacKinlay's Cuckoo-Dove ◊ *Macropygia mackinlayi* Several excellent sightings on Vanuatu.

Pacific Emerald Dove (P Green-winged Pigeon) *Chalcophaps longirostris* Several on Santo and New Caledonia.

Tanna Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus tannensis* Scope views of this very nice Vanuatu endemic.

Many-colored Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus perousii* Great looks on all three visited islands in Fiji. See Note.

Crimson-crowned Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus porphyraceus* Regular on Samoa.

Red-bellied Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus greyi* Several showed well on Vanuatu and in the Loyalty Islands.

Orange Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus victor* THE BIRD OF THE TRIP. A truly amazing species!

Golden Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus luteovirens* Another cracker that showed very well on Viti Levu (Fiji).



White-rumped Swiftlet; Flat-billed Kingfisher (Mark Van Beirs)

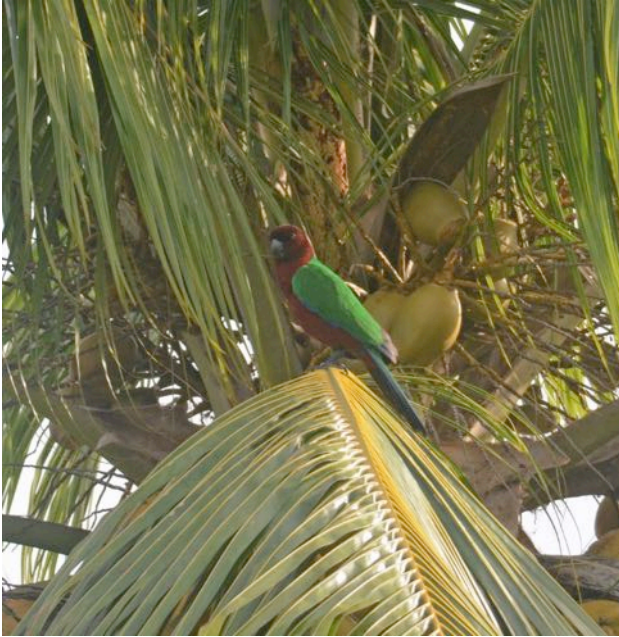
Whistling Fruit Dove ◊ (Velvet F D) *Ptilinopus layardi* NT This beauty is endemic to Kadavu, where we saw it well.
Cloven-feathered Dove ◊ *Drepanoptila holosericea* NT This unusual New Caledonia endemic performed splendidly.
Pacific Imperial Pigeon ◊ *Ducula pacifica* Good looks on Vanuatu and Samoa.
Barking Imperial Pigeon ◊ *Ducula latrans* Common on Fiji.
Vanuatu Imperial Pigeon ◊ (Baker's I P) *Ducula bakeri* VU A couple of nice scope observations in the Vanuatu hills.
Goliath Imperial Pigeon ◊ (New Caledonian I P) *Ducula goliath* NT Regular on New Caledonia. A terrific call.
Shining Bronze Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx lucidus* Several sightings on Vanuatu and on New Caledonia.



Crimson Shining Parrot (Mark Van Beirs)

Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cacomantis flabelliformis* (H) We heard it a couple of times in Fiji.

Eastern Barn Owl ◇ *Tyto javanica* One was hunting at Lifou airport and one showed before dawn on Samoa.
Glossy Swiftlet *Collocalia esculenta* Common on Vanuatu and New Caledonia.
White-rumped Swiftlet *Aerodramus spodiopygius* Common on Fiji and Samoa and regular on New Caledonia.
Uniform Swiftlet *Aerodramus vanikorensis* Fairly common on Vanuatu.
Vanuatu Kingfisher ◇ (Chestnut-bellied K) *Todiramphus farquhari* NT Nice looks at this Vanuatu endemic.
Pacific Kingfisher ◇ *Todiramphus sacer* Common on Vanuatu and on the three Fijian islands. See Note.
Sacred Kingfisher *Todiramphus sanctus* A few on New Caledonia. Abundant on Ouvéa and Lifou. See Note.
Flat-billed Kingfisher ◇ *Todiramphus recurvirostris* Regular, excellent looks at this Samoan endemic.
Crimson Shining Parrot ◇ *Prosopiea splendens* VU This Kadavu (Fiji) endemic showed brilliantly.



Maroon Shining Parrot; Collared Lory (Mark Van Beirs); Sulphur-breasted Myzomela (tour participant John Clark)



Masked Shining Parrot ◊ *Prosopeia personata* **NT** Regular on Viti Levu (Fiji), to which it is endemic.
Maroon Shining Parrot ◊ (Red S P) *Prosopeia tabuensis* Many excellent sightings on Taveuni (Fiji).
Horned Parakeet ◊ *Eunymphicus cornutus* **VU** Just a few in the Parc de la Rivière Bleue (New Caledonia).
Ouvea Parakeet ◊ (Uvea P) *Eunymphicus uvaensis* **VU** Good looks at three on Ouvéa. See Note.
New Caledonian Parakeet ◊ *Cyanoramphus saisseti* Just a few sightings in the Parc de la Rivière Bleue.
Blue-crowned Lorikeet ◊ *Vini australis* Pretty nice views on Samoa. Usually in flight, but also perched.
Collared Lory ◊ *Phigys solitarius* Regular on Fiji. Best looks were obtained on Kadavu.
Coconut Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus* Regular on Vanuatu and New Caledonia.
New Caledonian Myzomela ◊ *Myzomela caledonica* Cracking looks at this lovely New Caledonian endemic.
Cardinal Myzomela ◊ *Myzomela cardinalis* Regular on Vanuatu, Lifou and Samoa. See Note.
Sulphur-breasted Myzomela ◊ (Orange-breasted M) *Myzomela jugularis* Many very nice encounters in Fiji.
Grey-eared Honeyeater ◊ (Dark-brown H) *Lichmera incana* Noisy and boisterous on New Caledonia. See Note.



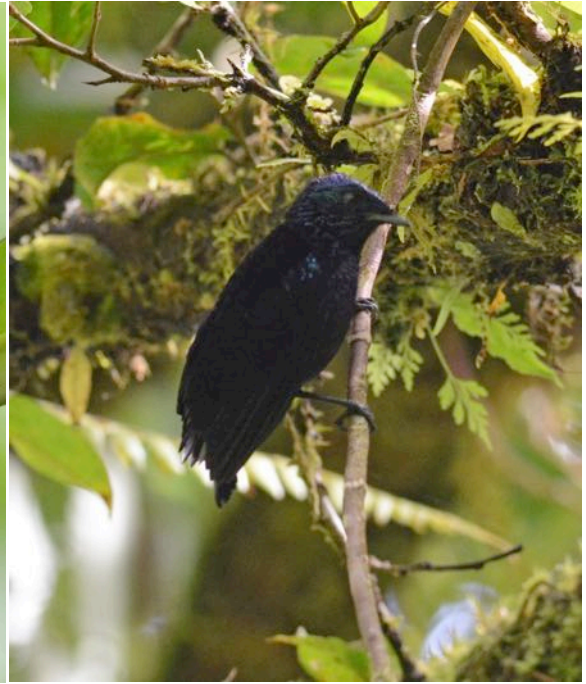
Kadavu Honeyeater; Polynesian Wattled Honeyeater (Mark Van Beirs)

Kadavu Honeyeater ◊ (Kandavu H) *Xanthotis provocator* Obliging at our Kadavu hotel (Fiji).
New Caledonian Friarbird ◊ *Philemon diemenensis* A fairly common, raucous New Caledonia endemic.
Polynesian Wattled Honeyeater ◊ *Foulehaio carunculatus* A regularly encountered inhabitant of Samoa. See Note.
Fiji Wattled Honeyeater ◊ (Northern W H) *Foulehaio taviunensis* Common and rowdy on Taveuni. See Note.
Kikau ◊ (Western W H) *Foulehaio procerior* Regularly seen and heard in the forests of Viti Levu (Fiji). See Note.
Yellow-billed Honeyeater ◊ *Gymnomyza viridis* Great views, in the hills of Taveuni. See Note.
Giant Honeyeater ◊ *Gymnomyza brunneirostris* Super views of this Viti Levu endemic. See Note.
Mao ◊ *Gymnomyza samoensis* Excellent observations of this Samoan endemic in the forests of Upolu.
Crow Honeyeater ◊ *Gymnomyza aubryana* **CR** Several all too brief sightings at La Rivière Bleue (New Caledonia).
Barred Honeyeater ◊ *Glycifohia undulata* Terrific looks in the New Caledonian scrub, to which it is endemic.
Fan-tailed Gerygone ◊ *Gerygone flavolateralis* Heard on Vanuatu and regularly seen on New Caledonia.
White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus* Fairly common and obvious on Vanuatu and New Caledonia.
Fiji Woodswallow ◊ *Artamus mentalis* This Fiji endemic was easy to spot on Taveuni and Viti Levu.



New Caledonian Myzomela (Mark Van Beirs)

- Australian Magpie (introduced) *Gymnorhina tibicen*** Several family parties were noted in the Taveuni forests.
- Black-faced Cuckooshrike *Coracina novaehollandiae*** A male was observed in the Parc des Grandes Fougères.
- South Melanesian Cuckooshrike** ♦ ***Coracina caledonica*** Hard to miss on Vanuatu and New Caledonia. See Note.
- New Caledonian Cuckooshrike** ♦ ***Edolisoma anale* NT** A single scope sighting on New Caledonia.
- Polynesian Triller** ♦ ***Lalage maculosa*** Fairly common and easy to spot on Fiji and Samoa. See Note.
- Samoan Triller** ♦ ***Lalage sharpei* NT** A single sighting of this retiring Samoan endemic on Upolu.
- Long-tailed Triller** ♦ ***Lalage leucopyga*** Small numbers were noted on Vanuatu and New Caledonia.
- Melanesian Whistler** ♦ ***Pachycephala chlorura*** Common by voice on Vanuatu and the Loyalty islands. See Note.
- New Caledonian Whistler *Pachycephala caledonica*** Several nice sightings on New Caledonia.
- Fiji Whistler** ♦ (White-throated F W) ***Pachycephala [vitiensis] vitiensis*** A single at the Kadavu hotel. See Note.
- Fiji Whistler (Yellow-throated F W) *Pachycephala [vitiensis] graeffii*** Regular on Taveuni and Viti Levu. See Note.
- Samoan Whistler** ♦ ***Pachycephala flavifrons*** Excellent encounters in the Upolu forests.
- Rufous Whistler *Pachycephala rufiventris*** Very nice looks in the Parc des Grandes Fougères (New Caledonia).
- Grey Fantail *Rhipidura albiscapa*** A few observations on Vanuatu and New Caledonia.
- Streaked Fantail** ♦ ***Rhipidura verreauxi*** Fairly common on Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Fiji. See Note.



Samoan Fantail; Taveuni Silktail (Mark Van Beirs)

Kadavu Fantail ◊ (Kandavu F) *Rhipidura personata* NT Great sightings in the hotel gardens on Kadavu.

Samoan Fantail ◊ *Rhipidura nebulosa* The final bird of the tour. Good looks in the Botanical Gardens on Upolu.

Taveuni Silktail ◊ *Lamprolia victoriae* NT Several fine observations on Taveuni, but usually in the rain. See Note.

Slaty Monarch ◊ *Mayrornis lessoni* Splendid looks on Kadavu and Viti Levu (Fiji). Very gnatcatcher-like.

Buff-bellied Monarch ◊ *Neolalage banksiana* One of the glories of Vanuatu. Several superb observations.



Southern Shrikebill; New Caledonian Crow (Mark Van Beirs)

Southern Shrikebill ◊ *Clytorhynchus pachycephaloides* Heard on Vanuatu and seen on New Caledonia. See Note.

Fiji Shrikebill ◊ (Lesser S) *Clytorhynchus vitiensis* Regularly seen on all three visited Fijian islands.

Black-throated Shrikebill ◊ *Clytorhynchus nigrogularis* NT Excellent looks at this cracker on Viti Levu (Fiji).

Melanesian Flycatcher ◊ (N C Flycatcher) *Myiagra caledonica* Regular on Vanuatu and New Caledonia. See Note.

Vanikoro Flycatcher ◊ *Myiagra vanikorensis* One of the more common indigenous birds on Fiji. Inquisitive.

Samoan Flycatcher ◊ *Myiagra albiventris* NT Several very nice observations of this Samoan endemic.



Vanikoro Flycatcher (Mark Van Beirs)

Azure-crested Flycatcher ◊ **(Blue-crested F)** *Myiagra azureocapilla* NT Fantastic looks at this beauty on Taveuni.

Chestnut-throated Flycatcher ◊ *Myiagra castaneigularis* Several excellent encounters on Viti Levu. See Note.

New Caledonian Crow ◊ *Corvus moneduloides* Curious and quite showy in the New Caledonian forests.



Yellow-bellied Flyrobin; Striated Starling (Mark Van Beirs)

Yellow-bellied Flyrobin ♦ (Y-b Robin) *Microeca flaviventris* Great looks at this NC endemic in the Farino area.

Pacific Robin ♦ *Petroica pusilla* Very nice views of this cutie on Viti Levu.

Red-vented Bulbul (introduced) *Pycnonotus cafer* Abundant on Fiji and Samoa. Just a handful on New Caledonia.

Pacific Swallow *Hirundo tahitica* Small numbers were noted on Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Fiji.

Fiji Bush Warbler ♦ *Horornis ruficapilla* Several excellent encounters on Taveuni and Viti Levu. See Note.

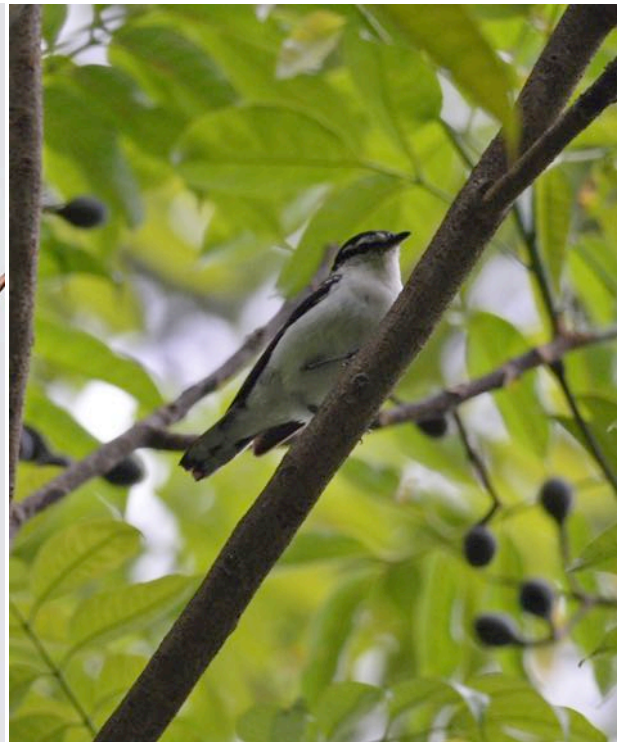
New Caledonian Thicketbird ♦ (N C Grassbird) *Cincloramphus mariae*...Good looks for most at this mega skulker.

Long-legged Thicketbird ♦ (L-l Warbler) *Cincloramphus rufus* EN (H) No luck. It remained a voice ...

Fiji White-eye ♦ *Zosterops explorator* Regularly seen on all three visited Fijian islands.

Vanuatu White-eye ♦ (Yellow-fronted W-e) *Zosterops flavifrons* Common on Santo (Vanuatu). See Note.

Small Lifou White-eye ♦ *Zosterops minutus* Common in the Lifou woodlands.



Polynesian Starling; Polynesian Triller (Mark Van Beirs)

Green-backed White-eye ◇ *Zosterops xanthochroa* Fairly common in the New Caledonian forests.

Silveryeye *Zosterops lateralis* Different looking races showed well on Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Fiji. See Note.

Large Lifou White-eye ◇ *Zosterops inornatus* This hard to see well Lifou endemic eventually showed.

Striated Starling ◇ *Aplonis striata* Regular on New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands, to which it is endemic.

Polynesian Starling ◇ *Aplonis tabuensis* Regularly observed on the Fijian islands and on Samoa. See Note.

Samoan Starling ◇ *Aplonis atrifusca* The most easily observed Samoan endemic.

Jungle Myna (introduced) *Acridotheres fuscus* Abundant on Fiji and Samoa.

Common Myna (introduced) *Acridotheres tristis* Seen in numbers on most days of the tour.

Island Thrush *Turdus poliocephalus* Seen on the Fijian islands of Taveuni (race *tempesti*) and Viti Levu (*layardi*).

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* Regular on New Caledonia.

Common Waxbill (introduced) *Estrilda astrild* Several flocks were noted on New Caledonia.

Red Avadavat (introduced) *Amandava amandava* Common on Viti Levu (Fiji). All birds were in non-breeding attire.

Red-throated Parrotfinch ◇ *Erythrura psittacea* Brief views only in the Parc des Grandes Fougères. Usually easy!

Red-headed Parrotfinch ◇ (Samoan P) *Erythrura cyaneovirens* NT Stupendous studies of a foraging bird on Upolu.

Fiji Parrotfinch ◇ *Erythrura pealii* Common and so attractive.

Chestnut Munia (introduced) *Lonchura atricapilla* Common on Santo (Vanuatu).

Chestnut-breasted Mannikin (introduced) *Lonchura castaneothorax* A few on Vanuatu and on New Caledonia.



Red-headed Parrotfinch; Red Avadavat (Mark Van Beirs)



Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin (tour participant John Clark); Parc des Grandes Fougères scenery (tour participant Cathy Goswell)

MAMMALS

Small Indian Mongoose (introduced) *Herpestes auropunctatus* Several observations on Fiji. Also on Vanuatu.

Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops aduncus* A small pod showed brilliantly off Kadavu.

Javan Rusa (introduced) (Timor Deer) *Rusa timorensis* A couple were seen at the Parc de la Rivière Bleue.

Vanuatu Flying Fox *Pteropus anetianus* Regular on Vanuatu.

Samoan Flying Fox *Pteropus samoensis* Small numbers were seen on Samoa.

Pacific Flying Fox (Tonga F F) *Pteropus tonganus* Common and quite noisy on Fiji.

REPTILES

Yellow-lipped Sea Krait (Banded Sea Krait) *Laticauda colubrina* (NL) A 1, 5 m long individual showed on Viti Levu.

Pacific Black Skink *Emoia nigra* Several were seen on Upolu (Samoa)



Seawatching on Ouvéa (tour participant Cathy Goswell)



The marvellous Papageno resort on Kadavu (tour participant Cathy Goswell)



Pacific Black Skink; Ouvea Parakeet (Mark van Beirs)

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 List (v8.2).

Metallic Pigeon *Columba vitiensis*

We saw the following subspecies: *hypoenochoa* (New Caledonia), *vitiensis* (Fiji) and *castaneiceps* (Samoa)

Many-coloured Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus perousii*

We saw the race *mariae* on Fiji.

Pacific Kingfisher *Todiramphus sacer*

We saw the following subspecies: *santoensis* (Santo, Vanuatu), *eximius* (Kadavu, Fiji) and *vitiensis* (Taveuni and Viti Levu, Fiji).

Sacred Kingfisher *Todiramphus sanctus*

We saw the race *canacorum* on New Caledonia and *macmillani* on Ouvéa and Lifou.

Ouvea Parakeet *Eunymphicus uvaeensis*

Used to be lumped with Horned Parakeet of mainland New Caledonia.

Cardinal Myzomela *Myzomela cardinalis*

We saw the following subspecies: *tenuis* (Santo, Vanuatu), *lifuensis* (Loyalty Islands, New Caledonia) and *nigriventris* (Samoa).

Grey-eared Honeyeater *Lichmera incana*

The nominate form was common on New Caledonia.

Polynesian Wattled Honeyeater *Foulehaio carunculatus*

Following the split of Fiji Wattled Honeyeater (*F. taviunensis*) the form on Samoa became Polynesian Wattled Honeyeater (*F. carunculatus*).



The group at the Parc des Grandes Fougères (tour participant Cathy Goswell)

Fiji Wattled Honeyeater *Foulehaio taviunensis*

Fiji Wattled Honeyeater is split from [Polynesian] Wattled Honeyeater (*F. carunculatus*). It is also called Northern Wattled Honeyeater.

Kikau *Foulehaio procerior*

Kikau is split from [Polynesian] Wattled Honeyeater (*F. carunculatus*). It is also called Western Wattled Honeyeater.

Yellow-billed Honeyeater *Gymnomyza viridis*

It was split from Giant Forest Honeyeater (*Gymnomyza brunneirostris*) as it differs in behaviour, vocalisations and genetics. It is also called Chattering Giant Honeyeater

Giant Honeyeater *Gymnomyza brunneirostris*

Following the split of Yellow-billed Honeyeater the English name is under revision. It is also called Duetting Giant Honeyeater.

South Melanesian Cuckooshrike *Coracina caledonica*

We saw the *thilenii* race on Santo (Vanuatu), *lifuensis* (Lifou, Loyalty Islands, New Caledonia) and the nominate race on mainland New Caledonia.

Polynesian Triller *Lalage maculosa*

We saw the following races: *mixta* (Taveuni, Fiji), *soror* (Kadavu, Fiji), *pumila* (Viti Levu, Fiji) and *maculosa* on Samoa.

Melanesian Whistler *Pachycephala chlorura*

We saw the *intacta* race on Santo (Vanuatu) and the *littayei* race on the Loyalty Islands (New Caledonia). The form on New Caledonia has been split off as New Caledonian Whistler *P. caledonica*.

Fiji Whistler (White-throated Fiji Whistler) *Pachycephala kandavesis*

Currently this distinctive white throated form on Kadavu is lumped with Fiji Whistler *P. vitiensis*, but as it is the only one with a white throat in the archipelago and it is vocally different, this is a very likely candidate for being a separate species.

Fiji Whistler (Yellow-throated Fiji Whistler) *Pachycephala vitiensis*

We saw the following subspecies: *torquata* (Taveuni, Fiji) and *graeffii* (Viti Levu, Fiji).

Streaked Fantail *Rhipidura verreauxi*

We saw the following races: *spilodera* (Santo, Vanuatu), nominate (New Caledonia), *rufilateralis* (Taveuni, Fiji) and *layardii* (Viti Levu, Fiji).

Taveuni Silktail *Lamprolia victoriae*

The taxonomic position of this glorious species is still in flux. It used to be considered part of the Monarch Flycatchers (Monarchidae) and has recently been placed with the Fantails (Rhipiduridae). The closely related form on Vanua Levu has now been split off as a separate species: Natewa Silktail *Lamprolia klinesmithi*.

Southern Shrikebill *Clytorhynchus pachycephaloide*

We heard the *grisescens* race on Santo (Vanuatu) and saw the nominate form on New Caledonia.

Melanesian Flycatcher *Myiagra caledonica*

We saw the following races: *marinae* (Santo, Vanuatu), the nominate form (mainland New Caledonia) and *viridinitens* (Loyalty Islands, New Caledonia).

Chestnut-throated Flycatcher *Myiagra castaneigularis*

This is a recent split from Azure-crested Flycatcher *Myiagra azureocapilla*.

Fiji Bush Warbler *Horornis ruficapilla*

We recorded the following races: *funebri* (Taveuni, Fiji), the nominate form on Kadavu (Fiji) and *badiceps* (Viti Levu, Fiji).

Vanuatu White-Eye *Zosterops flavifrons*

We saw the *brevicauda* race on Santo (Vanuatu).

Silvereye *Zosterops lateralis*

A highly variable species. We saw the following races: *tropicus* (Santo, Vanuatu), *nigrescens* (Ouvéa, Loyalty Islands, New Caledonia), *melanops* (Lifou, Loyalty Islands, New Caledonia), *griseonota* (mainland New Caledonia) and *flaviceps* (Fiji).

Polynesian Starling *Aplonis tabuensis*

We saw the race *vitiensis* on Fiji and the race *brevirostris* on Samoa.

APPENDIX 1: overall results of the 'Bird of the tour' contest**New Caledonia & Fiji**

1 Orange Dove	25 points
2 Cloven-feathered Dove	20
3 Kagu	18
Golden Dove	18
5 Crimson Shining Parrot	8

Vanuatu

1 Tanna Fruit Dove	17
2 Buff-bellied Monarch	14
Vanuatu Megapode	14
4 Vanuatu Kingfisher	12
5 Vanuatu Imperial Pigeon	9

Samoa

1 Mao	28
2 Red-headed Parrotfinch	20
3 Blue-crowned Lorikeet	17
4 Samoan Whistler	12
5 Samoan Flycatcher	7



White-bellied Goshawk (Dana Gardner/Michael Chinn)

APPENDIX 2: The very sad White-bellied Goshawk incident

On the 28th of October we were birding at the Refugio de Farino near the Parc des Grandes Fougères. We managed to scope an immature White-bellied Goshawk in a large tree in a local garden. While admiring this endemic, protected species, we suddenly heard a shot and saw the poor bird drop dead in front of our eyes. Tour participant John Clark managed to document this very sad event. The local authorities have been provided with a dossier containing all the details and we hope the perpetrator will be prosecuted.





A Fiji sunset (Mark Van Beirs)