



## PAPUA NEW GUINEA WITH A DIFFERENCE TOUR REPORT 2024

29 April - 14 / 19 / 24 May 2024

BY MARK VAN BEIRS

On Birdquest's (and my) eighth tour to the more remote parts of the wonderful, but challenging country of Papua New Guinea, we assembled a fantastic assortment of rarely seen, extraordinary birds. No fewer than five species of, what must be the best bird family in the world, the Birds-of-paradise, can only be seen on this tour, next to a wide array of pigeons and doves, parrots, kingfishers, honeyeaters, berrypeckers, cuckooshrikes, whistlers, fantails, monarchs and robins. Because of boat issues the tour had to be run earlier in the year than usual, which, unexpectedly, resulted in very little response to tape, less or no display of several birds-of-paradise and, sadly, no Fire-maned Bowerbird at its classic spot. But most of the other specialities performed really well. The island of Manus gave us a glorious Superb Pitta, cracking Manus Dwarf Kingfishers, Manus Boobook, Manus Fantail and several lovely Admiralty Spotted Cuscuses. New Ireland produced goodies like Paradise Drongo, New Ireland Boobook and New Ireland Dwarf Kingfisher. On our very enjoyable cruise via the tiny islet of Tench we observed Nicobar Pigeons, lots of Black Noddies and Red-footed Boobies, and ethereal White Terns, while the rarely visited island of Mussau added Mussau Fantail and Mussau Monarch to the tally. New Hanover Mannikins showed well on their namesake island. Another boat took us to Fergusson Island in the D'Entrecasteaux Archipelago where Curl-crested Manucode and Goldie's Bird-of-paradise showed brilliantly, next to playful pods of Long-beaked Common Dolphins. In the highlands of the Huon peninsula, we admired amazing numbers of gaudy Wahnes's Parotias and extravagant Huon Astrapias next to Emperor Bird-of-paradise, Forbes's Forest Rail, Pesquet's Parrot, MacGregor's Bowerbird, Spangled Honeyeater and Mottled Berryhunter. The final port of call was the lovely Keki Lodge, in the Adelbert Mountains, where the bowerbird didn't show, but where Papuan Eagle, Gurney's Eagle and Lesser Bird-of-paradise enlivened our long scanning sessions. The logistics went unusually smooth this year. Most flights ran on time although there was a serious shortage of kerosine in the country, which made that more than half of the domestic flights were cancelled on a daily basis. A frightening aspect, but luckily, we were never affected. Our very international group took it all in good stride and were ready for any hurdle that came their way.

The tour started on the island of Manus, which we reached after a smooth, uneventful flight from Port Moresby. Manus is the main island of the Admiralty Archipelago, situated far offshore straight north of the Huon Peninsula. We checked into a welcoming seaside hotel and after a tasty lunch we met our drivers and local guide. Not much later we were already walking in a beautiful stretch of primary forest, where it didn't take too long to observe a cracking Superb Pitta. This is usually the hardest Manus endemic to connect with, but excellent local knowledge sure helped. We all had excellent views

of this magnificent species as it sat on a branch in the subcanopy and on a little outcrop lower down. We also found Island Imperial Pigeon, Papuan Eclectus, Coconut Lorikeet and Metallic and Singing Starlings.

The next morning, we tried again for the pitta, but this time it didn't want to play and it remained a voice in the forest. We realized we had been really lucky. Our man on the spot had built a hide overlooking a stretch of a clear forest stream, where we managed to admire a female of the always hard to see Manus Dwarf Kingfisher. Another great endemic in the proverbial bag! On our walk we also observed the very recently split Manus Brush Cuckoo, Manus Cuckooshrike, Bismarck Whistler, Shining Flycatcher, Bismarck White-eye and Sahul Sunbird. In the afternoon, after a really heavy shower, we walked along a quiet back road where wider vistas over the forest gave us scope views of a foraging Meek's Pygmy Parrot, next to Moustached Treeswift, Glossy, White-rumped and Uniform Swiftlets, Amboyna Cuckoo-Dove, Variable Hawk, Bismarck Black Myzomela, the very noisy Manus Friarbird, Admiralty Cicadabird and a not very cooperative Manus Monarch. In town we saw a Tree Sparrow and learnt that the first sighting of this widespread species had occurred only a year ago. After dinner we went in search of creatures of the night. We obtained perfect looks at a cracking Manus Boobook and found several smart Admiralty Spotted Cuscuses next to several intriguing lizards and geckos.

Our boat trip to the rather distant offshore island of Tong was a very pleasant outing. The sea was a real mirror, so it only took a little over an hour to cover the c35 km of ocean in our bananaboat. Almost no birds entertained us on the journey, except for a few Lesser Frigatebirds. We walked around this peaceful, coconut palm-covered island and soon had brilliant views of the much-wanted Manus (Rufous) Fantail. We observed this delightful species everywhere on the island, so we asked ourselves why they did disappear from the mainland of Manus? Several Yellow-bibbed Fruit Doves and Island Monarchs showed well, but it took a while to find the distinctive white-tailed form of Manus (Pied) Monarch (coultasi). The most common bird on the island was the diminutive Bismarck Black Myzomela. We also found Osprey, Brahminy Kite, Common Sandpiper and Melanesian Kingfisher. The return boat trip was also very swift. In the afternoon we returned to the kingfisher hide in the forest, where the female Manus Dwarf Kingfisher showed well. We also added Sacred Kingfisher and Northern Fantail to the tally.

Another morning in the beautiful forest didn't really produce anything new. We only heard the Superb Pitta, but obtained fantastic views of both male and female Manus Dwarf Kingfishers as they were feeding small lizards to their young. A terrific experience. A MacKinlay's Cuckoo-Dove showed well and most of the other Manus endemics appeared on the day list. In the afternoon we explored the nearby coastline and the surroundings of the enormous WW II airport and picked up new birds like Pacific Golden Plover, Eurasian Whimbrel, Ruddy Turnstone and Oriental Dollarbird. Dozens of White-rumped Swiftlets showed very well as they flitted below us at one of the bridges.

The following morning a swift and efficient flight took us straight to Kavieng, in northern New Ireland. Upon arrival we were welcomed by our host, but before driving halfway south down the famous Boluminsky highway, we had a good look at the localized, endemic Mottled (or Hunstein's) Mannikins, which make a living in the tall grasses of the airport area. Several hours later we were having lunch in our delightful seaside resort. In the afternoon we explored the surroundings and scoped our first New Ireland endemics: the secretive New Ireland Dwarf Kingfisher and the marvellous Paradise (or Ribbon-tailed) Drongo, which must surely be one of the best of the usually modestly-clad drongo family. We also obtained good looks at Bismarck endemics like White-necked Coucal, Knob-billed Fruit Dove, Bismarck Crow and Long-tailed Myna. We heard the distinctive song of a Bismarck Pitta emanate from a steep, densely vegetated slope and added Purple-bellied Lory, Willie Wagtail and Great Flying Fox to the list. A nightwalk didn't produce anything, as it soon started raining.

Dawn found us on the forested slopes of the submontane Lelet plateau. On our walk along the wide track, we found several Bismarck endemics including splendidly displaying Pied Cuckoo-Doves, Finsch's Imperial Pigeon, the still undescribed Bismarck Flyrobin and Red-banded Flowerpecker. We also noted Bar-tailed Cuckoo-Dove, Papuan Mountain Pigeon, Blyth's Hornbill, Song Parrot, Red-flanked and Red-chinned Lorikeets, Red Myzomela, Varied Triller and Golden Monarch. We returned to base for lunch and in the afternoon, we visited our faithful stake out for Forbes's (or New Ireland) Mannikins and they didn't disappoint. We obtained excellent views of these New Ireland endemics at close range. A walk in the forest near our lodge didn't yield anything new. After dinner we had to work quite hard before we managed to get a cracking New Ireland Boobook in the torch beam... great stuff!

Another morning on the Lelet Plateau gave us the same selection of birds, but we managed to add several goodies to the tally. At a viewpoint we observed an excellent assortment of doves and pigeons, which included the Bismarck endemic Black Imperial Pigeon, the smart-looking White-bibbed Fruit Dove and a Metallic Pigeon. Four Bismarck Hanging Parrots shot past and landed in a distant tree offering fair scope views. A late migrant Oriental Cuckoo posed beautifully and a male Velvet Flycatcher played hide and seek in the dense undergrowth. Higher up we identified a couple of New Ireland Myzomelas amongst many Red Myzomelas in a flowering tree. In the afternoon we birded the surroundings of our guesthouse. Several Bismarck Pittas were calling not too far away in impenetrable habitat, but they remained a voice, sadly.

On our final morning on New Ireland, we checked a nearby cross island road. The surroundings had been logged c10 years ago, so some birds had returned to the devastated habitat. A couple of Yellowish Imperial Pigeons flew past and Paradise Drongos showed well. We also checked a secluded gully through beautiful forest where we were hoping to find a Bismarck Pitta, but no joy. We did hear one on a nearby densely forested steep slope, and although we were able to get quite close to it, the bird disappeared. An Osprey could be admired as it was bathing at the mouth of a stream in front of the guesthouse. After lunch we say our goodbyes to our genial hosts, drove to Kavieng and boarded the lovely, efficiently run

PNG Explorer. Just after a tasty dinner a Green Turtle was found just next to the boat. We started sailing in the early evening to the distant island of Tench.

At dawn we arrived at this tiny island and soon we were on land amongst old friends. About 50 people live on this seabird paradise and we were glad to see so many happy faces after a gap of six years. The main target on Tench is the rare and very localized Atoll Starling. It took a while before we all had good looks at this pale eyed speciality as it foraged in the canopy. On our wanderings we encountered thousands of nesting and displaying Black Noddies, hundreds of Red-footed Boobies of two morphs, dozens of Great Frigatebirds and small numbers of Brown Boobies, Brown Noddies, elegant White-tailed Tropicbirds, delightful White Terns, Pacific Imperial Pigeons, Bismarck Black Myzomelas and Island Monarchs. We had regular encounters with Melanesian Megapodes and also found several Nicobar Pigeons. The numbers of this peculiar pigeon had not built up yet (most arrive in June/July), but we had great looks at half a dozen birds. A single Wedge-tailed Shearwater was noted offshore and several Tree Sparrows were foraging amongst the houses. We learnt that they had suddenly arrived in 2023. After a break on our boat in the heat of the day we returned to this very special place and just enjoyed strolling amongst the thousands of birds. In late afternoon we returned to our vessel and soon started sailing towards the island of Mussau. The wind had come up a bit, so the sea was rather choppy.

We arrived at the south coast of little visited Mussau at dawn while it was raining cats and dogs. Eventually we managed to set foot on land and after the usual palavering we walked inland along an old logging road. We were told Malaysian companies were logging most of the island at the moment... incredibly sad. Luckily small areas of forest were still standing and these soon provided us with excellent looks at the endemic Mussau Monarch and the endemic Mussau Fantail. The latter is a really smart bird with its white forecrown and moustachial stripe. We searched hard for the Mussau Flycatcher, but in vain. Of the rare Mussau Triller, which only lives in primary forest at higher altitude not a sniff either, of course. We walked quite a few sweaty kilometres inland to try to get a bit of altitude. Other interesting species on our walk included MacKinlay's Cuckoo-Dove, Yellow-bibbed Fruit Dove, Finsch's Pygmy Parrot, lots of Bismarck Black Myzomelas, Island Leaf Warbler (race *matthiae*), Russet-tailed Thrush and Blue-faced Parrotfinch. In late afternoon we returned to our boat and enjoyed a tasty dinner. As dusk was falling several good-sized flocks of Nicobar Pigeons were flying over the mangroves to their roosts. After dinner we started sailing south towards the island of New Hanover.

We noted lots of Common Terns and a few Black-naped and Great Crested Terns before we arrived at our favourite village on New Hanover. We hadn't visited this island for at least 12 years, as the local Mannikin was then lumped into Mottled Mannikin. Recently however, the race on New Hanover had been resurrected as an endemic species, so we needed to go out of our way to see it. Upon arrival in the village along the coast, we soon found our target in the grassy glades between the houses. It started raining, but we still managed to get excellent views of this little beauty. At least 40 birds were seen. We explored a bit further and found new species like Finsch's Pygmy Parrot, Grey-capped Cicadabird and Golden-headed Cisticola. But then the rain became quite heavy, so we returned to our cozy boat and soon started sailing back to Kavieng.

The following morning, we first flew from Kavieng to Port Moresby and then onwards to the town of Alotau, situated at the extreme eastern tip of mainland Papua New Guinea. The flights went all very smoothly, so we managed to go birding in late afternoon in an area of secondary growth near town. A pair of smart Pacific Bazas allowed good scope views. A couple of impressive Palm Cockatoos flew past at close range, eliciting "wows" from the group. We also picked up a selection of quite widespread species like Black Kite, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Red-cheeked Parrot, the dainty White-shouldered Fairywren, Brown-backed and Streak-headed Honeyeaters, White-breasted Woodswallow, Torresian Crow and Red-capped Flowerpecker.

A smart Silver-eared Honeyeater was observed in the garden of our hotel at dawn. In the early morning, we boarded our old, but faithful boat, which soon took us east along the length of Milne Bay towards the D'Entrecasteaux Islands. Some very playful Long-beaked Common Dolphins put on a remarkable show and we also picked up several Wedge-tailed Shearwaters. Near the coast of Normanby we visited a small, uninhabited island, where we clambered to the better forest on top. High winds sabotaged our birding as the Louisiade White-eyes only showed themselves briefly. We obtained good looks at Mangrove Golden Whistler and at the recently split Louisiade Fantail (from Australian Rufous Fantail). Islet Kingfisher and Varied Honeyeaters were also noted and hundreds of Torresian Imperial Pigeons and Rainbow Bee-eaters came to roost on the island. A majestic White-bellied Sea Eagle sailed slowly over. After dinner in the lee of the island, we sailed onwards to the east coast of Fergusson Island, which we reached in the middle of the night.

At dawn we were all eager to go on land as two endemic Birds-of-paradise were waiting for us here. We soon obtained excellent views of the rather unusual-looking Curl-crested Manucode, whose wonderful calls emanated through the forest. Several birds showed beautifully. The Goldie's Birds-of-paradise didn't seem to be fully displaying yet, as we waited at the classic display site in vain. We then started to wander a bit and soon heard a couple of males call from the highest canopy. Several females showed quite well, but only a couple of us managed to observe the male. We kept on searching, but sadly no more Goldie's. Good numbers of strange-looking Channel-billed Cuckoos sat about rather unconcernedly. Other birds that we found today included Superb Fruit Dove, Pinon's Imperial Pigeon, New Guinea Friarbird, Tawny-breasted and Puff-backed Honeyeaters, Large-billed Gerygone, Pygmy Longbill, Variable Shrikethrush and Black-faced Monarch. The lowland rainforest was quite hard work, as there had been heavy rains recently, making the walking through the abundant mud quite a chore.

Next morning we returned to the lowland rainforest of Fergusson Island and finally obtained excellent scope looks at a male Goldie's Bird-of-paradise. Wow, what a cracker. Mission accomplished. We had great views again of several Curl-

crested Manucodes, whose beautiful calls could be heard all over the place during our visit. Sadly, the Islet Kingfisher didn't want to show at all. We returned to the boat around midday and soon started our return journey towards Alotau. Several pods of Long-beaked Common Dolphins and a single Great Egret entertained us on the otherwise uneventful boat trip.

We arrived at Alotau harbour very early in the morning. At the airstrip we noted several Australian Pratincoles, lots of Eastern Cattle Egrets, 20+ Black Kites and a few Chestnut-breasted Mannikins. The rest of the day was mainly spent travelling, as we first flew from Alotau to Port Moresby, where two participants left us, and then onwards to Lae, where we arrived in the early evening, welcomed by our old friend Cheyne.

While waiting for the plane at Lae airport, we observed a Papuan Harrier, many Black Kites and several displaying Singing Bush Larks. After checking in and getting weighed, a De Havilland Islander took the group over the mountains of the Huon to the little airstrip of Wasu, situated on the north coast of the Huon Peninsula. The flight was marvellous, as we could see how pristine many areas of the highlands still are. Upon arrival at Wasu, we first did a bit of shopping and soon we were on our way in a sturdy 4x4 to Cheyne's Camp, situated at c1,600m altitude near submontane, mossy forest. While Cheyne and his crew were setting up the tents and organizing things, we went birding and found a nice selection of goodies in the heat of the day. A fabulous male Huon *Astrapia* showed quite well, as did a lovely, Huon endemic Spangled Honeyeater. We also noted Mountain Swiftlet, Great Cuckoo-Dove, Ornate Fruit Dove, beautiful Stella's Lorikeets, Long-billed Honeyeater, Buff-faced Scrubwren, a splendid Blue-capped Ibis and White-rumped Robin. We returned to camp for a late lunch and in the afternoon drove down to visit a display area of Emperor Bird-of-paradise. We soon heard their delightful calls, but it took a while before most of us got views of a male. There were obviously no females around, so there was no display of any kind, sadly. An after-dinner walk produced a heard only Papuan Boobook.

Our first full day in the mountains of the Huon started with heavy rain, but luckily this soon abated and in the surroundings of the camp we found amazing numbers of both Huon *Astrapias* and Wahnes's Parotias. We obtained scope views of males and females of both species. A pity the light was rather poor, so the delicate colours of the male *Astrapia* didn't really materialize. The male Parotias showed well and we were able to admire the six head wires, the glowing breast shield, the orange frontal bit and the blue eye... wow... terrific stuff. The females also performed well, showing off their more modest attire. At a viewpoint over a forest-lined valley we observed Rufescent Imperial Pigeon, Brown Falcon and raucous, but colourful Pesquet's Parrots. Nearby we also located goodies like White-eared Bronze Cuckoo, Mountain Kingfisher, Black-bellied Cuckooshrike, Friendly Fantail and Slaty Robin. At lunch the skies started darkening and it rained hard the whole afternoon, making birding impossible.

The following morning found us on our favourite trail leading through splendid mossy forest in the Huon. A fruiting tree gave us excellent looks at a MacGregor's Bowerbird, the local form of which is sometimes split off as Huon Bowerbird. We had a fun contest with a flufftail-like Forbes's Forest Rail and observed a whole range of interesting species like Rufous-backed and Long-billed Honeyeaters, Mountain and Red-collared Myzomelas, Mid-mountain and Fan-tailed Berrypeckers, Black-breasted Boatbill, the much-wanted Mottled Berryhunter, Brown-backed Whistler, Canary Flyrobin, Black-throated Robin, Papuan Grassbird and Black-fronted White-eye. Just after lunch we revisited the Emperor Bird-of-paradise area, but nothing was happening. In late afternoon we picked up a few more birds including Cinnamon-browed Melidectes and Black Fantail.

On our last morning in the Huon, we investigated another trail through nice habitat and saw more Huon *Astrapias* and Wahnes's Parotias. We also noted a smart Regent Whistler, next to many already observed species. We then packed up, drove down to the airstrip at Wasu and flew over the mountains of the Huon to the airport at Lae. We had a relaxed afternoon at our hotel in Lae for a big clean up. A walk in the extensive hotel grounds produced good looks at Orange-bellied Fruit Dove, Pinon's Imperial Pigeon, lots of Torresian Imperial Pigeons, Hooded Butcherbird and Yellow-faced Myna.

A smooth, unexciting flight took us to Port Moresby, where we said goodbye to two participants. Because of a flight change, we ended up with some spare time in the Port Moresby area, so we visited the nearby Pacific Adventist University grounds in the afternoon. It is always delightful to wander about the waterlily covered ponds and the lovely gardens where birds are not harassed and behave totally different from anywhere else in New Guinea. The highlight was a terrific Papuan Frogmouth that posed so very nicely for us. An adult and a recently fledged youngster could be studied at length through the scope. A smart-looking Comb-crested Jacana obliged, as did a Collared Sparrowhawk. We also obtained excellent views of several Fawn-breasted Bowerbirds. Good numbers of Pacific Black Duck were about, and we found other goodies like Peaceful and Bar-shouldered Doves, Dusky Moorhen, Australasian Swamphen, Masked Lapwing, Little Black Cormorant, Australian White Ibis, Nankeen Night Heron, Pied Heron, Great and Plumed Egrets, Black-backed Butcherbird, Australasian Figbird and Grey-headed Mannikin.

Next day, for the first time on this tour, our flight was delayed – by five hours – so we arrived at Madang around noon. Luckily our man on the spot was waiting for us and after lunch and a bit of shopping we were on our way to the Adelbert Mountains. The road leading into the mountains had been neglected over the past years, so we ended up walking the final two kilometres to the Keki Lodge just as it was getting dark. We settled in while listening to the sounds of the nightbirds.

As the sun was peeping over the horizon, we were already scanning the surrounding forest edge, the fruiting trees and the huge emergent trees for our main quarry, the Fire-maned Bowerbird. We scanned throughout the day, but not a sniff was had of this Keki speciality. After several hours we were lucky enough to spot a large eagle sitting in a distant big tree but couldn't discern its head at first. Eventually it showed and it turned out to be a cracking Papuan Eagle... a bit of

consolation. Lesser Birds-of-paradise were calling the whole time from the surrounding forest, but only showed once. It was obviously too early in the season for display. A flowering tree gave us great looks at Papuan Black, Red and Ruby-throated Myzomelas, Spotted and Forest Honeyeaters, Obscure and Black Berrypeckers and Spectacled and Pygmy Longbills. What a productive tree!!! We also observed goodies like Dwarf Koel, Black-capped Lory, Plain Honeyeater, Mountain Peltops, Barred and Boyer's Cuckooshrikes, Black-browed Triller, Grey Crow and Papuan White-eye. A nightwalk easily produced excellent looks at a Marbled Frogmouth and at a delightful Papuan Boobook.

The following morning found us again at the viewpoint hoping for more luck, but no bowerbird materialised during our long vigil. A lucky soul saw a Long-tailed Honey Buzzard and we all admired an immature Gurney's Eagle being mobbed by a flock of Grey Crows. As there were still several forest birds that we wanted to see, we ventured into the forest for a short while. The only bird of note was a Banded Yellow Robin, that sadly only showed to the leader. Collared Brushturkeys were calling incessantly, but kept in hiding, as usual.

On our final morning, we made an extra effort scanning for the bowerbird like crazy, but to no avail, we had to admit defeat. Was it the time of year, or was it the famous fig tree that was dying, we'll never know? The only additions to the list were Zoe's Imperial Pigeon, Mimic Honeyeater and Ochre-collared Monarch. In mid-morning we started walking down the mountains to where the 4x4 vehicle was parked. We said goodbye to our gracious hosts and soon we were on our way to Madang, where a hot shower was waiting. A short walk in the gardens of the hotel gave us several Varied Honeyeaters and then we all got ready for the long flights home.

## SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

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).

The species names and taxonomy used in the bird list follows Gill, F., Donsker, D., & Rasmussen, P.(Eds). **2024. IOC World Bird List (v14.1)**.

Where the subspecies seen is/are known, these are often given in parentheses at the end of the species comment.

## BIRDS

**Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa***

**Collared Brushturkey ◊ (Brown-collared B) *Talegalla jobiensis*** Heard only.

**Melanesian Megapode ◊ *Megapodius eremita*** Great looks on Tench.

**Orange-footed Scrubfowl *Megapodius reinwardt*** Heard only.

**Marbled Frogmouth ◊ *Podargus ocellatus*** Excellent views at Keki.

**Papuan Frogmouth ◊ *Podargus papuensis*** An adult and a fledgling at the PAU near Port Moresby.

**Moustached Treeswift *Hemiprocne mystacea*** Regular observations of this elegant beauty.

**Glossy Swiftlet *Collocalia esculenta***

**Mountain Swiftlet ◊ *Aerodramus hirundinaceus***

**White-rumped Swiftlet *Aerodramus spodiopygius*** Many encounters at close range.

**Uniform Swiftlet *Aerodramus vanikorensis***

**White-necked Coucal ◊ (Pied C) *Centropus ateralbus*** Nice looks on New Ireland.

**Ivory-billed Coucal ◊ (Great Black C) *Centropus menbeki*** Heard only.

**Pheasant Coucal *Centropus phasianinus***

**Dwarf Koel ◊ (Black-capped K) *Microdynamis parva*** Scope views at Keki.

**Pacific Koel ◊ *Eudynamis orientalis*** Heard only.

**Channel-billed Cuckoo *Scythrops novaehollandiae*** Regular encounters with this unusual looking creature.

**White-eared Bronze Cuckoo ◊ *Chrysococcyx meyerii*** Very nice in the Huon.

White-crowned Cuckoo ◊ (W-c Koel) *Cacomantis leucolophus* Heard only.

Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo ◊ *Cacomantis castaneiventris*

Manus Brush Cuckoo *Cacomantis blandus* Excellent views of this recent split on Manus.

Brush Cuckoo *Cacomantis variolosus*

Oriental Cuckoo *Cuculus optatus* Scope views of this rarely seen migrant on New Ireland.

Rock Dove (introduced) *Columba livia*

Metallic Pigeon *Columba vitiensis*

Amboyna Cuckoo-Dove ◊ *Macropygia amboinensis*

Bar-tailed Cuckoo-Dove ◊ (Black-billed C-D) *Macropygia nigrirostris*

MacKinlay's Cuckoo-Dove ◊ (Spot-breasted C-D) *Macropygia mackinlayi*

Great Cuckoo-Dove ◊ (Long-tailed C-D) *Reinwardtoena reinwardti*

Pied Cuckoo-Dove ◊ *Reinwardtoena browni* Very nice display in the highlands of New Ireland.

Stephan's Emerald Dove (S Ground Dove) *Chalcophaps stephani*

Peaceful Dove *Geopelia placida*

Bar-shouldered Dove ◊ *Geopelia humeralis*

Nicobar Pigeon ◊ *Caloenas nicobarica* Great looks at a handful on Tench. The numbers hadn't arrived yet.

Wompoo Fruit Dove (Magnificent F D) *Ptilinopus magnificus* Heard only

Ornate Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus ornatus*

Superb Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus superbus*

White-bibbed Fruit Dove ◊ (White-breasted F D) *Ptilinopus rivoli*

Yellow-bibbed Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus solomonensis*

Claret-breasted Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus viridis* Heard only.

Orange-bellied Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus iozonus*

Knob-billed Fruit Dove ◊ (Red-knobbed F D) *Ptilinopus insolitus*

Pacific Imperial Pigeon ◊ *Ducula pacifica*

Red-knobbed Imperial Pigeon ◊ *Ducula rubricera*

Finsch's Imperial Pigeon ◊ *Ducula finschii* Nice views in the highlands of New Ireland.

Rufescent Imperial Pigeon ◊ *Ducula chalconota* Good looks in the Huon Mountains.

Island Imperial Pigeon ◊ (Grey I P) *Ducula pistrinaria*

Pinon's Imperial Pigeon ◊ *Ducula pinon*

Black Imperial Pigeon ◊ (Bismarck I P) *Ducula melanochroa* Excellent views in the highlands of New Ireland.

Zoe's Imperial Pigeon ◊ *Ducula zoeae*

Torresian Imperial Pigeon *Ducula spilorrhoea*

Yellowish Imperial Pigeon ◊ (Yellow-tinted I P) *Ducula subflavescens*

Papuan Mountain Pigeon ◊ *Gymnophaps albertisii*

Forbes's Forest Rail ◊ *Rallidula forbesi* A fair showing in the Huon mountains.

Buff-banded Rail *Hypotaenidia philippensis*

Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa*

Australasian Swampphen *Porphyrio melanotus*

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*

Masked Lapwing *Vanellus miles*

Comb-crested Jacana *Irediparra gallinacea*

Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Australian Pratincole *Stiltia Isabella* Several were noted at Alotau airport.

White Tern (Common W T) *Gygis alba* Small numbers could be admired on the island of Tench.

Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus*

Black Noddy *Anous minutus*

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana*

Greater Crested Tern (Crested T) *Thalasseus bergii*

White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus* Several showed well on the island of Tench.

Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Ardenna pacifica*

Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel*

Great Frigatebird *Fregata minor*

Red-footed Booby *Sula sula* Very common on Tench Island. Two morphs were seen.

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster*

Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*

Australian White Ibis *Threskiornis molucca*

Nankeen Night Heron *Nycticorax caledonicus*

Pacific Reef Heron *Egretta sacra*

Pied Heron ◊ *Egretta picata*

Striated Heron (Green-backed H) *Butorides striata* Heard only.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus*

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Plumed Egret *Ardea plumifera*

Osprey (Eastern O) *Pandion [haliaetus] cristatus*

Pacific Baza (Crested Hawk) *Aviceda subcristata*

Long-tailed Honey Buzzard ◊ (L-t Buzzard) *Henicopernis longicauda* Non Leader.

Papuan Eagle ◊ (New Guinea Harpy Eagle) *Harpyopsis novaeguineae* A rather distant perched bird was scoped at Keki.

Gurney's Eagle ◊ *Aquila gurneyi* An immature was harassed by Grey Crows at Keki.

Variable Goshawk ◊ (Varied G) *Accipiter hiogaster*

Collared Sparrowhawk *Accipiter cirrocephalus* Scope views of a perched bird at the PAU.

Papuan Harrier ◊ *Circus spilothorax*

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

**Brahminy Kite** *Haliastur indus*

**White-bellied Sea Eagle** *Ichthyophaga leucogaster*

**Manus Boobook** ◊ (M Hawk Owl) *Ninox meeki* Excellent looks on Manus.

**Papuan Boobook** ◊ *Ninox theomacha* Great views at Keki.

**New Ireland Boobook** ◊ (Bismarck Hawk Owl) *Ninox variegata* Nice views, eventually at the Rubio Plantation.

**Blyth's Hornbill** ◊ (Papuan H) *Rhyticeros plicatus*

**Oriental Dollarbird (Common D)** *Eurystomus orientalis*

**Rufous-bellied Kookaburra** ◊ *Dacelo gaudichaud* Heard only.

**Islet Kingfisher** ◊ *Todiramphus colonus*

**Melanesian Kingfisher** ◊ *Todiramphus tristrami*

**Beach Kingfisher** ◊ *Todiramphus saurophagus*

**Sacred Kingfisher** *Todiramphus sanctus*

**Yellow-billed Kingfisher** ◊ *Syma torotoro* Heard only.

**Mountain Kingfisher** ◊ *Syma megarhyncha* Excellent scope views of the race *sellamontis* in the Huon.

**Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

**Manus Dwarf Kingfisher** ◊ *Ceyx dispar* Perfect looks at male and female on Manus. Wow.

**New Ireland Dwarf Kingfisher** ◊ *Ceyx mulcatus* Nice views at the Rubio Plantation.

**Blue-tailed Bee-eater** *Merops philippinus*

**Rainbow Bee-eater** *Merops ornatus*

**Brown Falcon** *Falco berigora* Several were seen in the Huon.

**Palm Cockatoo** ◊ *Probosciger aterrimus* Great encounters near Alotau.

**Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** *Cacatua galerita*

**Pesquet's Parrot** ◊ (Vulturine P) *Psittrichas fulgidus* Regular in the Huon mountains.

**Meek's Pygmy Parrot** ◊ *Micropsitta meeki* Good looks on Manus and on Mussau.

**Finsch's Pygmy Parrot** ◊ (Green P P) *Micropsitta finschii*

**Papuan Eclectus** ◊ *Eclectus polychloros*

**Red-cheeked Parrot** *Geoffroyus geoffroyi*

**Song Parrot** ◊ (Singing P) *Geoffroyus heteroclitus*

**Red-flanked Lorikeet** ◊ *Hypocharmosyna placensis*

**Stella's Lorikeet** ◊ *Charmosyna stellae* Licking flowers in the Huon. A real beauty.

**Red-chinned Lorikeet** ◊ *Vini rubrigularis*

**Purple-bellied Lory** ◊ (Eastern Black-capped L) *Lorius hypoinochrous*

**Black-capped Lory** ◊ (Western B-c L) *Lorius lory*

**Coconut Lorikeet** *Trichoglossus haematodus*

**Bismarck Hanging Parrot** ◊ *Loriculus tener*

**Papuan Pitta** ◊ *Erythropitta macklotii* Heard only.

**Bismarck Pitta** ◊ *Erythropitta novaehibernicae* Heard only.

**Superb Pitta** ◊ *Pitta superba* A marvelous observation in the forest on Manus. Spectacular!!



Huon Catbird ◊ *Ailuroedus astigmaticus* Heard only.

MacGregor's Bowerbird ◊ *Amblyornis macgregoriae* Great looks at one in a fruiting tree in the Huon Mountains.

Fawn-breasted Bowerbird ◊ *Chlamydera cerviniventris*

White-shouldered Fairywren ◊ *Malurus alboscapulatus*

Rufous-backed Honeyeater ◊ *Ptiloprora guisei*

Brown-backed Honeyeater ◊ *Ramsayornis modestus*

Long-billed Honeyeater ◊ *Melilestes megarhynchus*

Spangled Honeyeater ◊ *Melipotes ater* This lovely Huon endemic showed regularly.

Plain Honeyeater ◊ *Pycnopygius ixoides*

Streak-headed Honeyeater ◊ *Pycnopygius stictocephalus*

Ruby-throated Myzomela *Myzomela eques*

Red Myzomela ◊ (Red-tinted Honeyeater) *Myzomela cruentata*

Papuan Black Myzomela ◊ *Myzomela nigrita*

New Ireland Myzomela ◊ (Olive-yellow M) *Myzomela pulchella* Several encounters in the New Ireland highlands.

Mountain Myzomela ◊ *Myzomela adolphinae*

Bismarck Black Myzomela ◊ (Ebony M) *Myzomela pammelaena*

Red-collared Myzomela ◊ *Myzomela rosenbergii*

New Guinea Friarbird ◊ *Philemon novaeguineae*

Manus Friarbird ◊ (White-naped F) *Philemon albitorques* Common and very vocal on Manus.

Spotted Honeyeater ◊ *Xanthotis polygrammus* Scope views of this beauty at Keki.

Tawny-breasted Honeyeater ◊ *Xanthotis flaviventer*

Silver-eared Honeyeater ◊ *Lichmera alboauricularis*

Puff-backed Honeyeater ◊ (P-b Meliphaga) *Meliphaga aruensis*

Forest Honeyeater ◊ (F White-eared Meliphaga) *Microptilotis montanus* Good looks at Keki.

Mountain Honeyeater ◊ (M Meliphaga) *Microptilotis orientalis*

Scrub Honeyeater ◊ (S White-eared Meliphaga) *Microptilotis albonotatus* Heard only.

Mimic Honeyeater ◊ (M Meliphaga) *Microptilotis analogus*

Varied Honeyeater *Gavicalis versicolor*

Cinnamon-browed Melidectes ◊ *Melidectes ochromelas*

Rusty Mouse-warbler ◊ *Origma murina*

Buff-faced Scrubwren ◊ *Aethomyias perspicillatus*

Green-backed Gerygone ◊ *Gerygone chloronota* Heard only.

Large-billed Gerygone ◊ *Gerygone magnirostris*

Brown-breasted Gerygone ◊ *Gerygone ruficollis* Heard only.

Obscure Berrypecker ◊ *Melanocharis arfakiana* All too brief looks in a flowering tree at Keki.

Mid-mountain Berrypecker ◊ *Melanocharis longicauda*

Black Berrypecker ◊ *Melanocharis nigra*

Fan-tailed Berrypecker ◊ *Melanocharis versteri*

**Spectacled Longbill** ◊ *Oedistoma iliolophus*

**Pygmy Longbill** ◊ *Oedistoma pygmaeum* Scope views of this tiny bird on Fergusson and at Keki.

**Black-breasted Boatbill** ◊ *Machaerirhynchus nigripectus*

**White-breasted Woodswallow** *Artamus leucorhynchus*

**Great Woodswallow** ◊ (New Guinea W) *Artamus maximus*

**White-backed Woodswallow** ◊ (Bismarck W) *Artamus insignis*

**Mountain Peltops** ◊ *Peltops montanus*

**Black-backed Butcherbird** ◊ *Cracticus mentalis*

**Hooded Butcherbird** ◊ *Cracticus cassicus*

**Mottled Berryhunter** ◊ *Rhagologus leucostigma* Male and female performed well in the Huon Mountains.

**Hooded Cuckooshrike** ◊ *Coracina longicauda* Heard only.

**Barred Cuckooshrike (Yellow-eyed C)** *Coracina lineata*

**Boyer's Cuckooshrike** ◊ *Coracina boyeri*

**White-bellied Cuckooshrike** *Coracina papuensis*

**Manus Cuckooshrike** ◊ *Coracina ingens*

**Black-bellied Cuckooshrike** ◊ *Edolisoma montanum*

**Grey-capped Cicadabird** ◊ *Edolisoma remotum*

**Admiralty Cicadabird** ◊ *Edolisoma admiralitatis*

**Black-browed Triller** ◊ *Lalage atrovirens*

**Varied Triller** *Lalage leucomela*

**Rufous-naped Bellbird** ◊ *Aleadryas rufinucha* Heard only.

**Brown-backed Whistler** ◊ *Pachycephala modesta*

**Grey Whistler** *Pachycephala simplex*

**Bismarck Whistler** ◊ *Pachycephala citreogaster*

**Mangrove Golden Whistler** ◊ (Black-tailed W) *Pachycephala melanura* Good looks on Duchess Islet in the D'Entrecasteaux Archipelago.

**Regent Whistler** ◊ *Pachycephala schlegelii*

**Variable Shrikethrush** ◊ *Colluricincla fortis*

**Australasian Figbird (Green F)** *Sphecotheres vieilloti*

**Northern Variable Pitohui** ◊ *Pitohui kirhocephalus* Heard only.

**Brown Oriole** ◊ *Oriolus szalayi* Heard only.

**Spangled Drongo** *Dicrurus bracteatus*

**Paradise Drongo** ◊ (Ribbon-tailed D) *Dicrurus megarhynchus* Regular sightings of this spectacular New Ireland endemic.

**Willie Wagtail** *Rhipidura leucophrys*

**Northern Fantail** ◊ *Rhipidura rufiventris*

**Black Fantail** ◊ *Rhipidura atra*

**Friendly Fantail** ◊ *Rhipidura albolimbata*

**Mussau Fantail** ◊ *Rhipidura matthiae*

**Manus Fantail** ◊ (Admiralty Rufous F) *Rhipidura semirubra*

**Louisiade Fantail** *Rhipidura louisiadensis* Good looks at this recently split form on Duchess island in the D'Entrecasteaux Archipelago.

**Black Monarch** ◊ *Symposiachrus axillaris*

**Spot-winged Monarch** ◊ *Symposiachrus guttula* Heard only

**Manus Monarch** ◊ (Admiralty Pied M) *Symposiachrus infelix*

**Mussau Monarch** ◊ *Symposiachrus menckei* Very nice looks at this marvelous species on Mussau.

**Island Monarch** ◊ *Monarcha cinerascens*

**Black-faced Monarch** *Monarcha melanopsis*

**Golden Monarch** ◊ *Carterornis chrysomela*

**Ochre-collared Monarch** ◊ (Rufous-collared M) *Arses insularis*

**Shining Flycatcher** *Myiagra alecto*

**Velvet Flycatcher** ◊ *Myiagra eichhorni* A rather poor performance on New Ireland.

**Grey Crow** ◊ (Bare-eyed C) *Corvus tristis*

**Torresian Crow** *Corvus orru*

**Bismarck Crow** ◊ (Island C) *Corvus insularis*

**Blue-capped Ifrit** ◊ (B-c Ifrita) *Ifrita kowaldi* Several excellent observations of this poisonous species in the Huon Mountains.

**Curl-crested Manucode** ◊ *Manucodia comrii* Fantastic views of this restricted range species on Fergusson.

**Huon Astrapia** ◊ *Astrapia rothschildi* Many close encounters with this lovely Huon endemic.

**Wahnes's Parotia** ◊ *Parotia wahnesi* Regular sightings of males and females of this exquisite species.

**Greater Lophorina** ◊ *Lophorina superba*

**Growling Riflebird** ◊ (Eastern R) *Ptiloris intercedens* Heard only.

**Magnificent Bird-of-paradise** ◊ *Diphyllodes magnificus* Heard only.

**Lesser Bird-of-paradise** ◊ *Paradisaea minor*

**Goldie's Bird-of-paradise** ◊ *Paradisaea decora* Scope views of a male on Fergusson. No display yet.

**Emperor Bird-of-paradise** ◊ *Paradisaea guilielmi* Several secretive males showed in the Huon.

**Canary Flyrobin** ◊ (C Flycatcher) *Devioeca papuana*

**Bismarck Flyrobin** ◊ *Microeca sp. nov.*

**Black-throated Robin** ◊ *Plesiodryas albonotata*

**Slaty Robin** ◊ (Blue-grey R) *Peneothello cyanus*

**White-rumped Robin** ◊ *Peneothello bimaculata*

**Banded Yellow Robin** ◊ (Olive Yellow R) *Gennaeodryas placens*

**Singing Bush Lark** (Australasian B L) *Mirafra javanica*

**Pacific Swallow** *Hirundo tahitica*

**Tree Martin** *Petrochelidon nigricans* Non leader.

**Island Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus poliocephalus*

**Papuan Grassbird** ◊ *Cincloramphus macrurus*

**Golden-headed Cisticola** (Bright-capped C) *Cisticola exilis*

**Black-fronted White-eye** ◊ *Zosterops chrysolaeus*

**Bismarck White-eye** ◊ (Black-headed W-e) *Zosterops hypoxanthus*

**Papuan White-eye** ◊ (New Guinea W-e) *Zosterops novaeguineae*

**Louisiade White-eye** ◊ *Zosterops griseotinctus*

**Metallic Starling** *Aplonis metallica*

**Singing Starling** ◊ *Aplonis cantoroides*

**Atoll Starling** ◊ *Aplonis fadensis* Regular sightings of this restricted range species on Tench.

**Yellow-faced Myna** ◊ *Mino dumontii*

**Long-tailed Myna** ◊ (Melanesian M) *Mino kreffti*

**Russet-tailed Thrush** ◊ *Zoothera heinei* Brief looks at a couple on Mussau.

**Red-capped Flowerpecker** ◊ *Dicaeum geelvinkianum*

**Red-banded Flowerpecker** ◊ (Bismarck F) *Dicaeum eximium*

**Black Sunbird** ◊ *Leptocoma aspasia*

**Sahul Sunbird** *Cinnyris frenatus*

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

**Grey-headed Mannikin** ◊ *Lonchura caniceps*

**Forbes's Mannikin** ◊ (New Ireland M) *Lonchura forbesi* Scope views of several in southern New Ireland.

**Mottled Mannikin** ◊ (Mottled Munia) *Lonchura hunsteini* Several showed well at Kavieng (New Ireland).

**New Hanover Mannikin** ◊ *Lonchura nigerrima* This recent IOC split showed very well on New Hanover.

**Chestnut-breasted Mannikin** *Lonchura castaneothorax*

**Buff-bellied Mannikin** ◊ (Bismarck M) *Lonchura melaena*

**Blue-faced Parrotfinch** *Erythrura trichroa*

## **MAMMALS**

**Admiralty Spotted Cuscus** *Spilocuscus kraemeri* Several marvelous encounters on a nightwalk on Manus.

**Long-beaked Common Dolphin** *Delphinus capensis* Incredible heartwarming observations in the D'Entrecasteaux Seas.

**Admiralty Flying Fox** *Pteropus admiralitatum*

**Great Flying Fox** (Bismarck F F) *Pteropus neohibernicus*

**Brown Rat** *Rattus norvegicus*



*White Tern (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*female Wahnes's Parotid (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Varied Triller (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Eurasian Tree Sparrows (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Our flight to Huon (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*The PNG Explorer (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Purple-bellied Lory (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Red-flanked Lorikeet (image by Mark Van Beirs)*





*Red-footed Booby (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Rhododendron flowers at Kiki (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Pacific Imperial Pigeon (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Pacific Black Duck (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Osprey (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



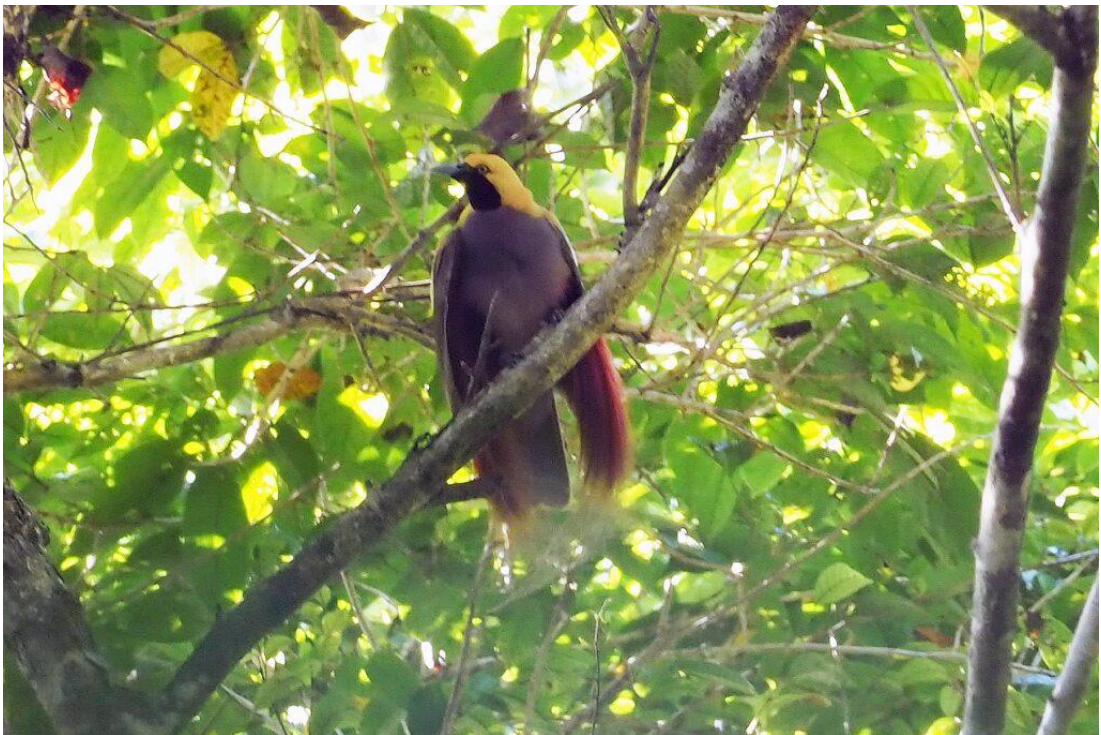
*Nocturnal lizard sp on Manus (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Nicobar Pigeon (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Manus Rufous Fantail (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Goldie's Bird-of-paradise (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Brown Booby (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



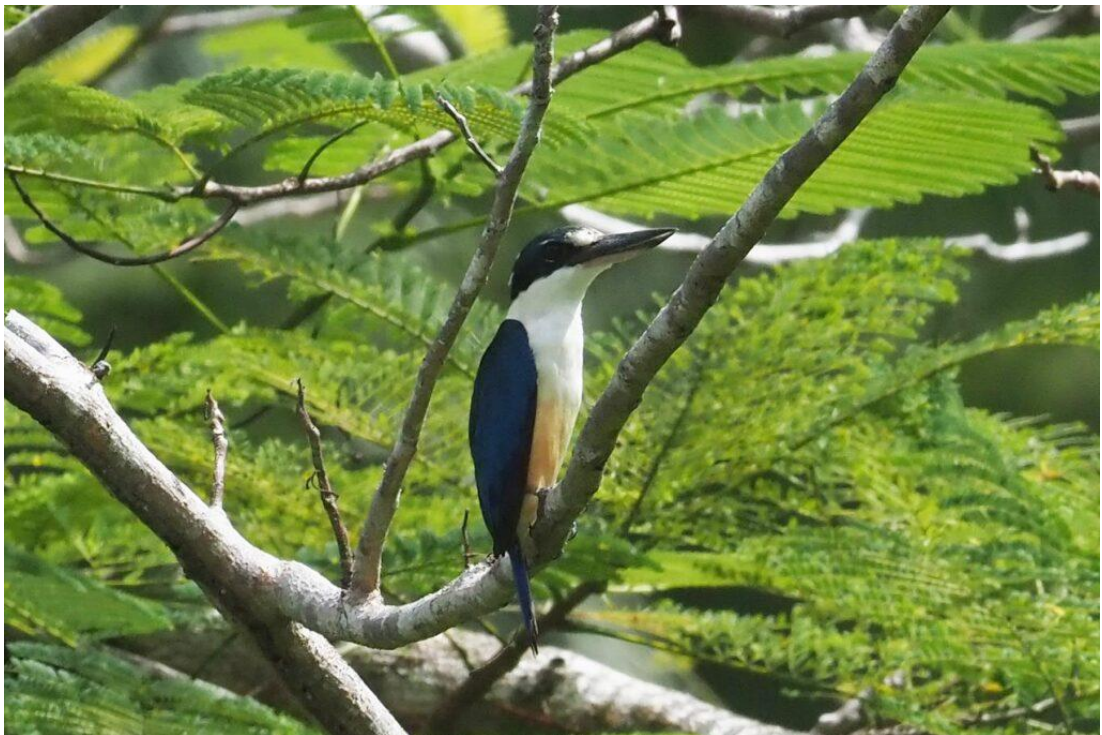
*Channel-billed Cuckoo (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Great Egret (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Manus Spotted Cuscus (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Melanesian Kingfisher (image by Mark Van Beirs)*





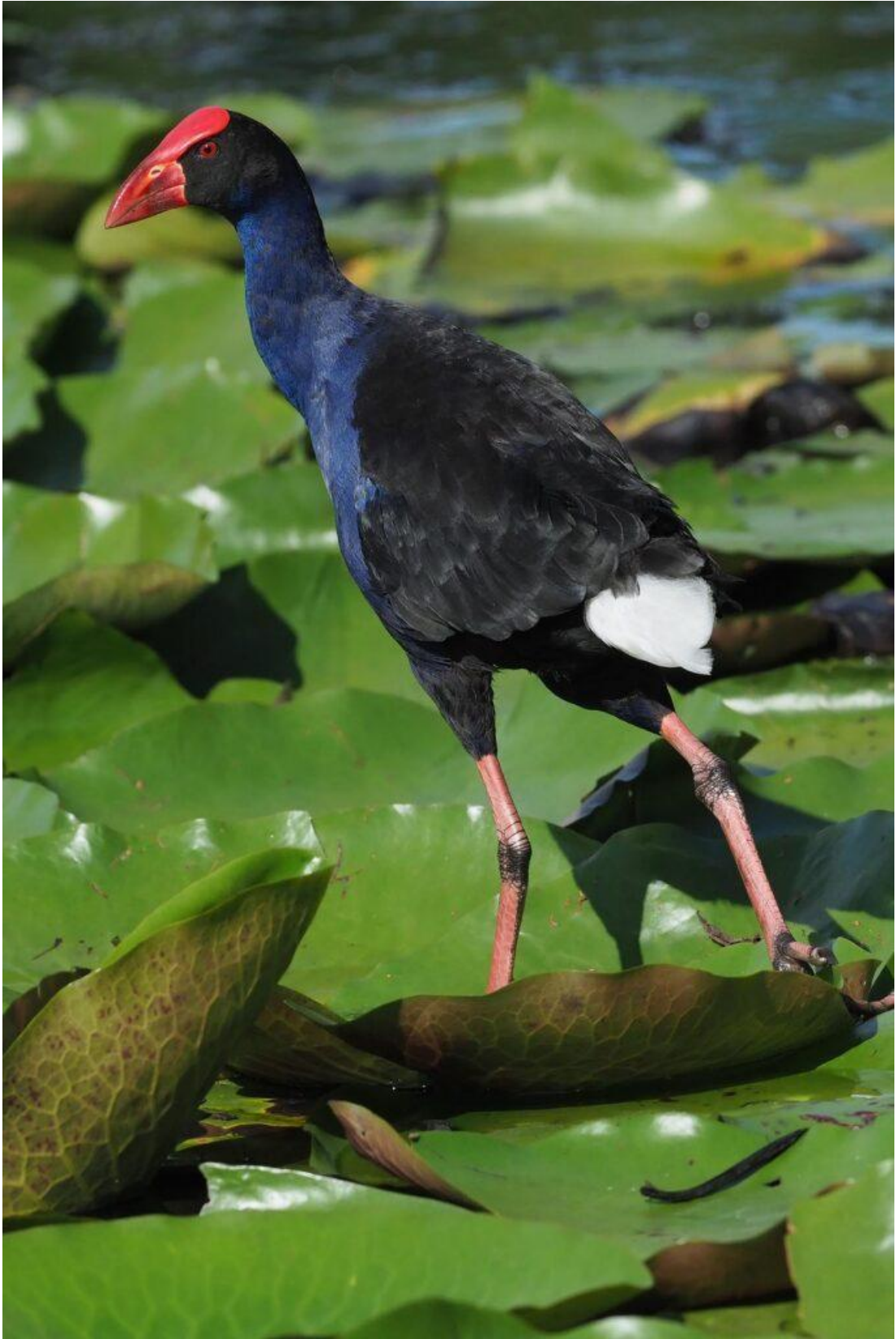
*Island Imperial Pigeon (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



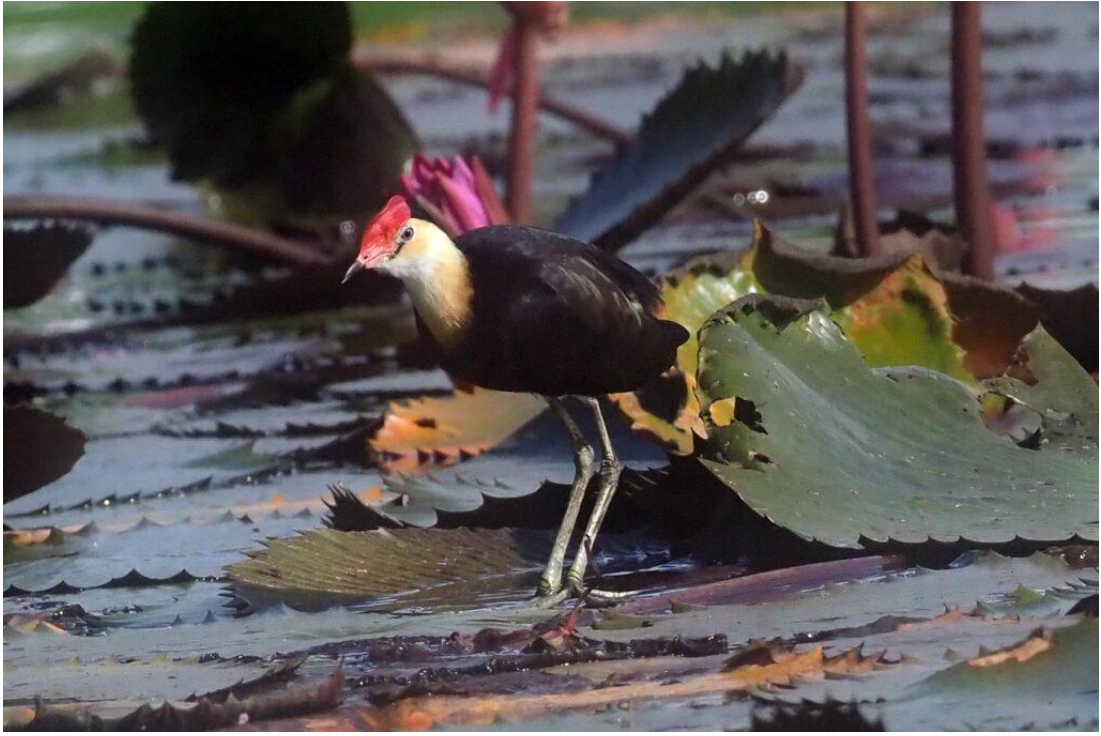
*Dwarf Koel (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Barred Cuckooshrike (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Australasian Swamphen (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Comb-crested Jacana (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*female Huon Astrapia (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Masked Lapwing (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*The group on Fergusson Island (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Pied Heron (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Mountain Kingfisher (image by Mark Van Beirs)*

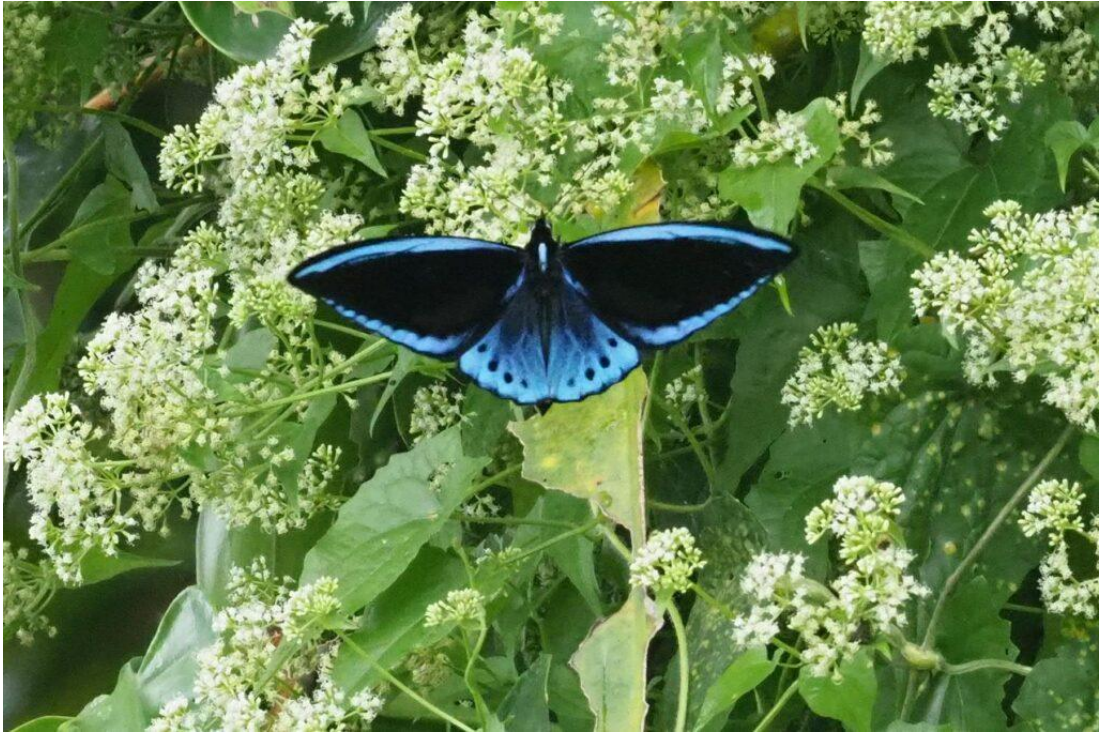


*Manus Boobook (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Forbes's Mannikin (image by Mark Van Beirs)*





*Blue Birdwing (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Atoll Starling (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*female Great Frigatebird (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Fruit Bat sp on Tench (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*female Manus Dwarf Kingfisher (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*New Hanover Mannikin (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Plumed Egret (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



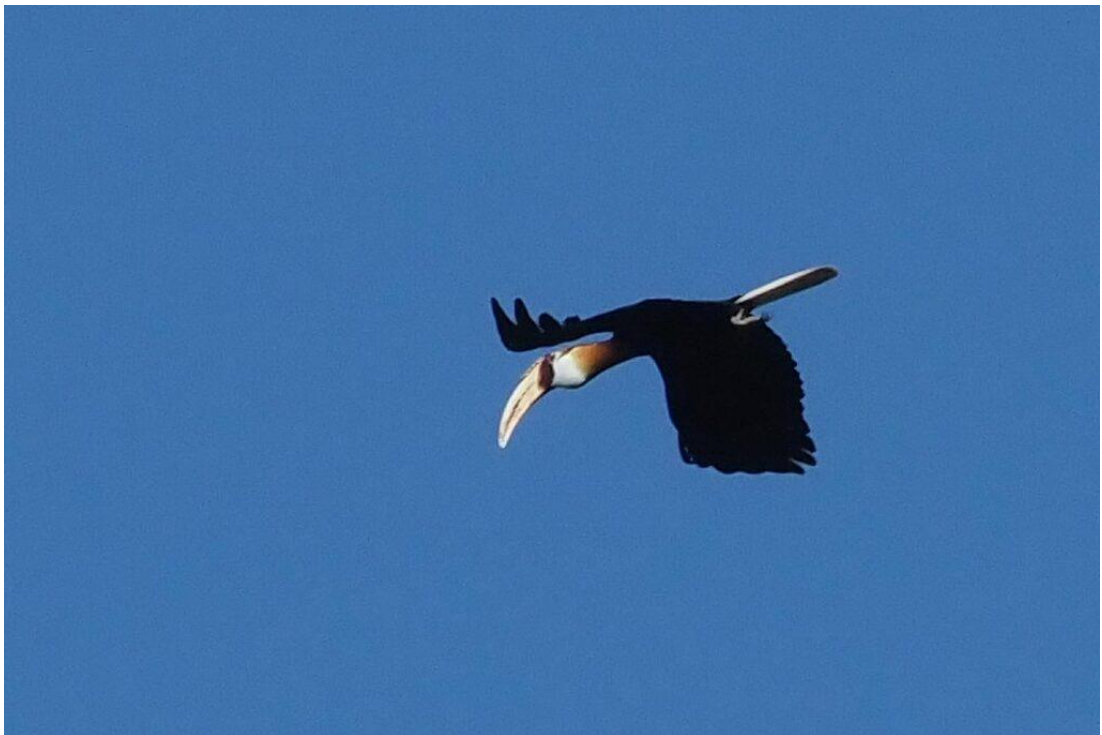
*Coconut Lorikeet (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Manus Spotted Cuscus (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



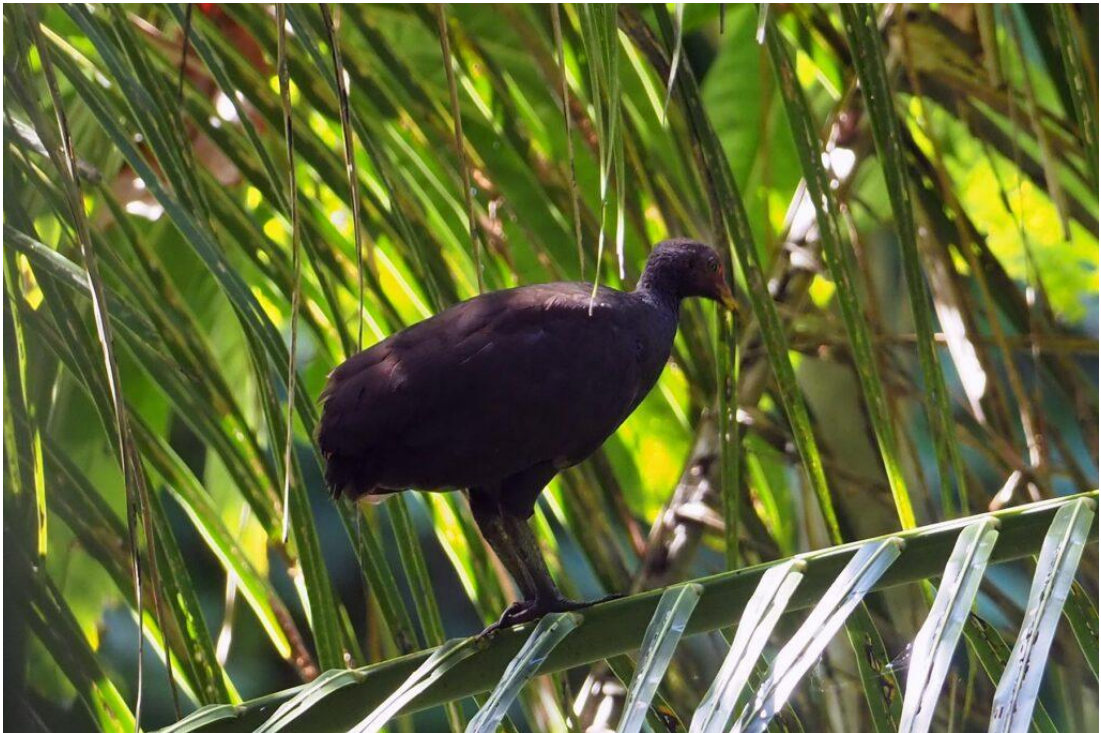
*male Manus Dwarf Kingfisher (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Blyth's Hornbill (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*New Ireland Boobook (image by Mark Van Beirs)*

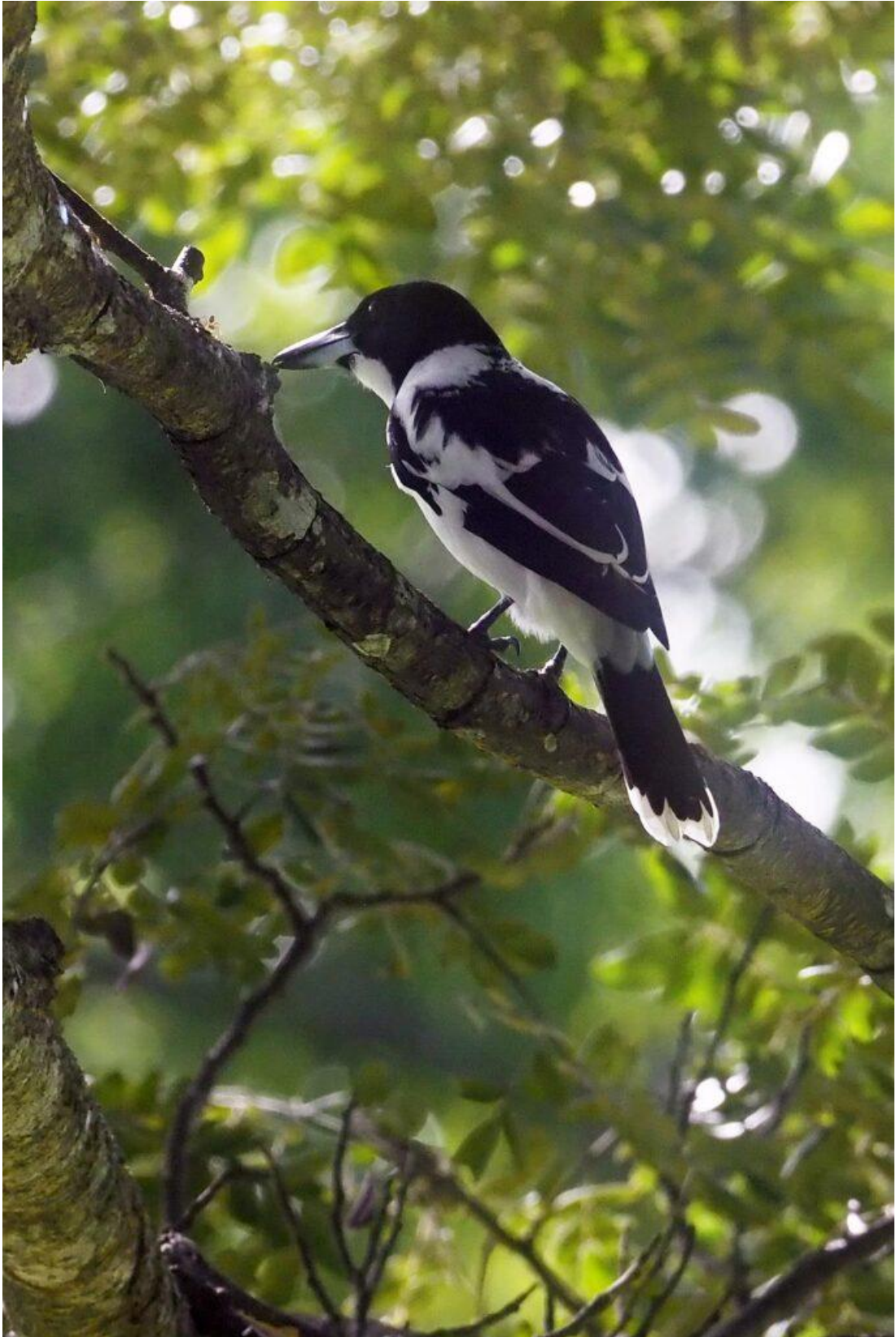


*Melanesian Megapode (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Fawn-breasted Bowerbird (image by Mark Van Beirs)*





*Black-backed Butcherbird (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Gecko sp on Manus (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*sunrise at Manus (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Papuan Frogmouths (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Spangled Honeyeater (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Sahul Sunbird (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Manus Brush Cuckoo (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



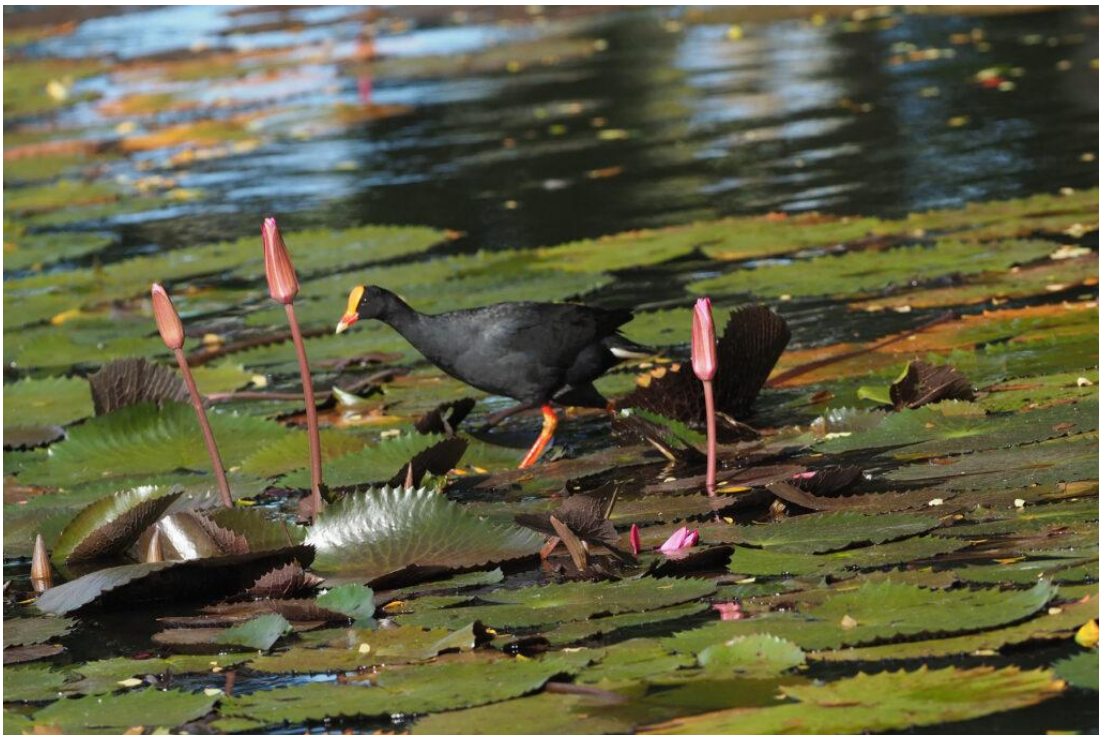
*Black Noddy (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Papuan Boobook (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Knob-billed Fruit Dove (image by Mark Van Beirs)*

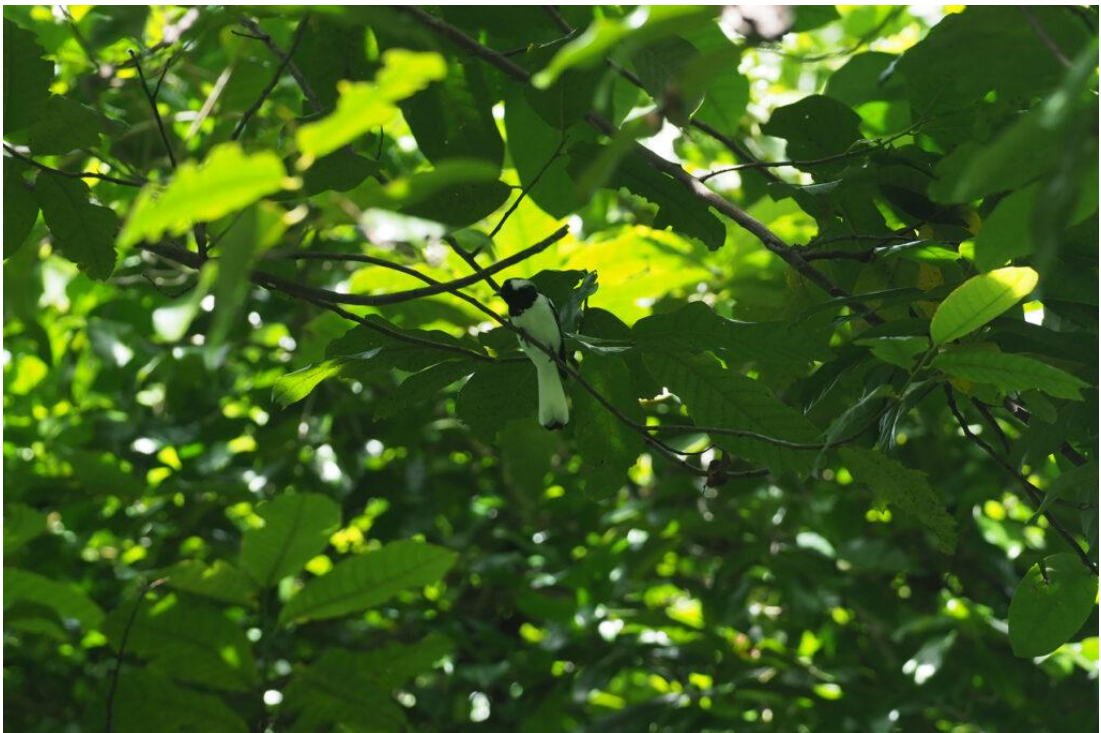


*Dusky Moorhen (image by Mark Van Beirs)*





*Curl-crested Manucode (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*Admiralty Pied Monarch (image by Mark Van Beirs)*



*MacGregor's Bowerbird (image by Peter Maaskant)*