

FIJI, SAMOA & COOK ISLANDS TOUR REPORT 2024

21 September - 2 / 7 October 2024

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Our usual tour to New Caledonia, Fiji and Samoa was not possible to run in 2024 because of the unrest and security situation on New Caledonia. However, a reduced shorter tour was possible to do, and we explored Fiji and Samoa and the Cook Islands were also visited by some of us! These islands hold many endemics with some exciting specialties! Fiji has 34 strictly speaking endemics but with Maroon Shining Parrot and Fiji Shrikebill it is 36 species really. Out of which we were targeting 33 on our tour while visiting four main islands: Viti Levu, Vauna Levu, Kadavu and Taveuni. This year we managed to see 32 endemics as the very rare Pink-billed Parrotfinch eluded us. This was the first time we included a visit to Vauna Levu for the recently split Natewa Silktail and we had excellent looks of this special bird which was also a Birdquest lifer. Naturally we also managed to see the Taveuni Silktail completing the set of silktails of the World. We also had amazing looks of the three special doves in Fiji, each of them with a striking plumage and a unique song. The male Orange Fruit Dove of Vauna Levu and Taveuni has a bright orange plumage and a mechanic clicking like song. This strange bird was voted as the bird of the trip! The Golden Fruit Dove of Viti Levu has a strangely patterned golden plumage and a short barking like song. The third one is the Velvet or Whistling Fruit Dove of Kadavu and it has the most bizarre sneeze like song and a green and yellow plumage. Apart from the special doves there are many other exciting birds like the two species of giant honeyeaters, the Black-throated and Fiji Shrikebills, the stunning Azure-crested and Chestnut-throated Flycatchers and the shy and skulking Long-legged Thicketbird just to name but a few. After birding these magical islands, we had a short flight further east to Samoa which has 8 endemics and another 5 shared with some neighbouring territories but easier to see on Samoa. The mythical Tooth-billed Pigeon is not a real possibility on a short visit although there was a sighting in March 2024. While the Samoan Island Thrush and Samoan White-eyes are only possible to see on Savaii Island with some hiking. This year we only visited the island of Upolu where we spent 3 days and saw all the possible birds we could hope for! The Mao was the definite highlight which is in the same genus as the giant honeyeaters of Fiji and the Crow Honeyeater of New Caledonia but the unique Samoan Triller and the handsome Red-headed Parrotfinch were also very special birds to see! The weather was generally kind to us although we did experience rain on the tour especially in Samoa, but this did not hamper our birding.

Our main tour started in Nadi airport and after a short flight to the Suva on the eastern side of Viti Levu our adventure begins! With our local bird guide Vili, we first visited a hilly terrain where the Long-legged Thicketbird can be found. Just a few years ago birders had to go deep inland on Viti Levu to look for this restricted bird but recently a new area was discovered by Vili and the chances

to see one of these ultra shy birds is much better now! In a few hours we managed to see four different Long-legged Thicketbirds and we were also lucky to connect with a male Shy Ground Dove. A great start with two difficult birds in the bag! But other goodies kept falling and we could admire the stunning Golden and Many-colored Fruit Dove males as they were singing, as well as both Fiji and Black-throated Shrikebills. Later we also tracked down a pair of Chestnut-throated Flycatchers and the layardi race of the Fiji Island Thrush, but our search for the much sought-after Pink-billed Parrotfinch was unsuccessful. It is a generally rare bird and there are very few recent observations. The next day we still spent the morning looking for the parrotfinch but only a pair of Slaty Monarch were new to us.

It was time to leave Viti Levu behind, and a short flight took us to Kadavu. Upon arrival we were transferred to our boat and the boat ride took us to Papageno Resort. On the boat journey we had Pacific Golden Plovers, Wandering Tattlers, Black-naped Terns and a pod of Common Bottlenose Dolphins. In the afternoon we were birding in the grounds of the hotel as well as a nearby forest trail and we managed to see all five endemics which are restricted to this island! Velvet Doves were common by voice, but it took some time to get good looks of these beauties while Crimson Shining Parrots and Kadavu Honeyeaters were easily seen in the garden. Along the forest trail Kadavu Fantails were common and we also managed to see the recently split White-throated Fiji Whistler. There was nothing else to do by sunset just to enjoy a few sundowners by the palm fringed beach! We were up very early next morning and made our way to the waterfall along the forest trail in hope to connect with the ruficeps race of the Fiji Island Thrush, but we have not had a sniff, and it was not because of the lack of trying! This race must be rather scarce on the island and perhaps only vocal at the beginning of the breeding season. In late September most resident birds have finished breeding. We were back to Nadi in the afternoon where we have visited a nearby forest patch where eventually we saw the kleinschmidti race of the Pacific Robin.

Early next morning we flew to Vauna Levu and embarked on a new territory where no Birdquest tours have been before. Upon arrival to Savusavu we made our way to the Natewa Peninsula towards Vasuratu forest. We visited a lower area of the forest with the help of some local guides. The forest trail was easy to walk and although we did not get into the habitat in the early morning hours, we were lucky to find a feeding party of Natewa Silktales very soon and enjoyed great looks of these localised birds as they were foraging on the barks in nuthatch like manor as well as exploring the dead leaf clusters like foliage-gleaners in South America. It was a great experience indeed and we could not believe these birds are now placed with fantails. While watching the silktails we heard the distinctive calls of the Orange Fruit Dove and we were soon admiring this most spectacular bird in its full glory! Wow! It was one of those 'wow' moments of birding and not only we had some special birds, but we could enjoy them for as long as we wanted! In the afternoon we tracked down some Maroon Shining Parrots of the nominate race as well as the ambigua race of Yellow-throated Fiji Whistler, the woodi race of the Polynesian Triller and the castaneopterus race of the Fiji Bush Warbler. The happy group was back to our lodge for some fine dinner and some celebratory drinks. We only had a little time next morning before our flight out of Vauna Levu but the weather was not very cooperative. We did some birding but nothing new was seen.

Our next port of call was Taveuni, the 'garden island' of Fiji where one can visit some higher ground with relative ease. Although Des Voeux Peak is only the second highest point of Fiji with its 1195 meter, the birding is great if the weather is good. The highest point in Fiji is Mount Tomanivi (Mount Victoria in old days) which is 129 meter higher. After arriving to the island, we have wasted no time and made our first visit to the Des Voeux Peak Road. As we climbed higher and higher the

weather was changing and sure enough by the time we reached some proper forest it was raining. We had a few gaps in the rain when we could do a bit of birding, and we managed to see Fiji Wattled and Yellow-billed Giant Honeyeaters and a fine male Azure-crested Flycatcher and even got glimpses of the tempesti race of Fiji Island Thrush. So overall we were happy and satisfied and returned to our lodge. Early next morning we were back to forest and this time – still in the rain and mist – we managed really good looks of the Island Thrush, tracked down several Yellow-throated Fiji Whistlers of the torquata subspecies, several Orange Doves, more Fiji Wattled and Yellow-billed Honeyeaters and eventually Fiji Streaked Fantails of the rufilateralis race, Fiji Shrikebills of the layardi race as well as Fiji Bush Warbler of the funebris race. Yet again however the best birding of the day was spending 30 minutes with feeding Taveuni Silktails. They were behaving like their smaller and shorter tailed relative on Vauna Levu with one exception. We observed them regularly going on the ground and either foraging there or behaving a bit like bird-of-paradise and showing off their iridescent plumage and their white tail. A spectacular experience again with these very special birds of Fiji! In the afternoon we visited a few sea watching points around the eastern tip of the island, but we had no firm identification on a some far flying petrels and shearwaters.

Another travel day followed, and we got back to the Namosi Road of Suva for some afternoon birding and the following last day of the Fiji part of the tour was spent in the most suitable habitats to connect with our last remaining endemic bird, the rare Pink-billed Parrotfinch. But no matter how hard we tried we had no luck with this rarity. But we had great looks of some fantastic birds again and especially enjoyed the repeated views of both Many-colored and Golden Fruit Doves, Black-throated Shrikebill and we even had views of the simus race of Fan-tailed Cuckoo as well as a pair of Pacific Robins! We heard some Shy Ground Doves again but this time we could not lure them into view. After our last day of birding, we had a late afternoon flight back to Nadi – the flight hub of Fiji airways where we have been religiously returning on this tour – and after dinner we flew to Samoa.

Arriving to Samoa in the early hours of the day and negotiating the ever-strict customs we eventually made our way to our strategically located hotel for a very short and quick rest before hitting the road pre-dawn! Once we reach our birding spot for the morning, we realized there is not going to be a dawn chorus and it did not want to get any brighter either, it was raining and raining hard! We were determined however and tried birding with variable success in the heavy rain and mist. We saw many dark blobs flying and they all turned out to be Samoan Starlings while Cardinal Myzomela and Polynesian Wattled Honeyeaters were common and conspicuous. Eventually a wet Flat-billed Kingfisher showed, and a perky Samoan Fantail was fighting the elements. We had to admit defeat and go to lower elevation where we added Samoan Whistler and Pacific Robin to the morning list. Buff-banded Rails and Pacific Golden Plovers were all along the road on our way back for breakfast and a little rest. The weather has improved by the afternoon, and we were back to the higher grounds of the island. This time everything was according to plans, and we managed to track down a showy pair of Samoan Flycatchers, also had good flight views of Blue-crowned Lorikeets and eventually found the unique Samoan Triller as well. It was not a bad day overall as we saw a fair amount of the endemic birds of the island.

The next day we spent most of our non-raining time in the Malololelei Reserve and found our missing targets. The star of the morning was the fantastic Mao as we could hear this special bird singing and we also got multiplied looks throughout the morning. It is perhaps the most wanted bird of the island and represent one of the four giant honeyeaters of the Pacific which are found from New Caledonia to Samoa. In 'normal years' one has the chance to see all four on this tour, but

this year the Crow Honeyeater of New Caledonia was not possible. Still in the forest Pacific Imperial Pigeon, the castaneiceps race of Metallic Pigeon and many Crimson-crowned Fruit Doves were seen. Out of the forest we had Flat-billed Kingfishers, fly by Blue-crowned Lorikeets while White-tailed Tropicbirds, White Terns and Brown Noddies were flying overhead. We have even located yet another Samoan Triller and after considerable search we eventually found three Red-headed Parrotfinches just when the mist and rain was rolling in again. Nevertheless, this most bluish looking parrotfinch was a great find as it could be one of the most difficult of the gettable endemics on the island. Our afternoon was pretty much rained out though Australasian Swampphen and Buff-banded Rails were seen around the hotel as well as up to 37 Cardinal Myzomelas on a flowering bush where we were hoping for Blue-crowned Lorikeets to come. Our successful day was finished in an Italian-Samoan restaurant by the port.

On the morning of our last day, we visited the Mount Fiamoe Crater rim for a spectacular early morning view of both side of the island in hope of Samoan Island Thrush but we had no success. In fact, this species is rarely recorded on Upolu and must be very localised and rare on this island. Following the splitting of the Island Thrush complex in 2024 this Samoan Island Thrush became yet another species which can really be only seen on the hike for the Samoan White-eye on Savaii Island. The clear morning however gave us many more good looks of several endemics and plenty of photography opportunities and we had yet another look of a single Red-headed Parrotfinch in better light conditions this time plus found another Samoan Triller. After a late breakfast we decided to visit the eastern part of the island and made an excursion to see the habitat of the Tooth-billed Pigeon – as our friend Vili from Fiji told us there was a recent sighting in March by him being part of the BirdLife project team looking for this species for many years now. The main tour ended in the late afternoon at Samoa airport where we said goodbye to some of the tour members while others continued to the Cook Islands!

COOK ISLANDS EXTENSION

Our optional short extension to the Cook Islands offers relaxed birding and 6 endemics such as Atiu Swiftlet, Lilac-crowned Fruit Dove, Mewing Kingfisher, Rarotonga Monarch, Cook Reed Warbler and Rarotonga Starling. We saw all these as well as Pacific Long-tailed Cuckoo, Herald Petrel, Bristle-thighed Curlew, Chattering Kingfisher and the reintroduced Kuhl's Lorikeet. After the main tour we embarked on this adventure to visit this far-flung corner of the World. We had the pleasure to cross the international dateline so we had 2nd October twice this year and after our birding in Samoa we could still do an afternoon birding in Rarotonga! The conditions were ideal for some sea watching so tried our luck on the east side of the island in the hope of a Herald Petrel. These scarce seabirds supposed to be breeding on the island and there is always chance to see them going inland. Our speculation was correct, and we saw two Herald Petrels and one of them flew inland allowing pretty good looks to us. There were hundreds of shearwaters passing by and we identified them as Short-tailed and Sooty Shearwaters. Most of them seemed to be Short-tailed but we definitely had some Sooty Shearwaters too. We also managed to see a single Buller's Shearwater, Brown Booby and two flyby Bristle-thighed Curlews! A very productive second afternoon for the 2nd of October!

Next morning we visited the Takitumu Conservation area which is the best place to see the rare Rarotonga Monarch. The owner of the land tells you the success story of the project which was set up to help and save the flycatcher, and during the walk you have very good chance to observe this rare bird. We managed to see six different birds during our time in the reserve both grey coloured adults and some orange immatures. They do not acquire the adult like plumage until the 4th

calendar year, but immature plumaged birds have been seen breeding. We had both colour-ringed and pure no ring individuals! We also managed to see several Rarotonga Starling which is the other endemic landbird of the island. The nominate race of the Lilac-crowned (Cook Island) Fruit Dove and Pacific Imperial Pigeon was also seen very well. In the afternoon we were back for more sea watching and we had 9 sightings of Herald Petrel (maybe less birds but cannot really tell) and saw the two Bristle-thighed Curlews again.

Next morning we had a late morning flight to Mangaia which is a rarely visited island with only about 400 residents. It is very different from Rarotonga being mostly flat, but it also holds two special endemic birds, the Mewing Kingfisher which is only found on this island and the Cook Reed Warbler which is also known from yet another neighbouring island (Mitiaro). After landing we made our way to our basic but adequate accommodation where we have wasted no time and managed to see both endemic birds right around our cabins. Yet again the afternoon was spent with sea watching but it was way quieter compared to Rarotonga. However, we checked many Brown Noddies in the hope of some other noddy species and some of us spotted a black-and-white shearwater (probably tropical) and we all saw a fast-flying Pterodroma but no ID was confirmed. Best of all was seeing as many as 9 Humpback Whales doing their things not far offshore. A great experience! The following morning, we walked to the Taro swamp seeing all the island endemics again and while waiting for our plain at the airport Steve spotted a flying waterfowl. It landed out of sight, and we concluded it must have been a feral Muscovy Duck as we had a glimpse of the white wing patches. However, 10 minutes later it reappeared and landed on the airfield when we could make a firm identification as being the first Australian Shelduck for the Cook Islands! It did not stay long and flew off into the sea. Our Mangaia experience ended.

A short flight took us to Atiu the last island for us on the extension with some more endemic birds! We were picked up from the airport by the Atiu Villas staff and as we slowly drove to the centre of the island, she told us all the stories we needed to hear. We even had Chattering Kingfisher and Pacific Imperial Pigeons on the drive. When we arrived at our accommodations a flowering coconut tree held lovely Kuhl's Lorikeets as well as a pair of Lilac-crowned (Cook Island) Fruit Dove of the local goodwini race was also seen. The lorikeets were reintroduced to Atiu from Rimatara (French Polynesia) just a few years ago and they are doing very well. Apparently, they were breeding birds on the island a few hundred years ago, but I am not sure if this is true. On our last full day of the Cook Island extension, we had a morning walk which produced good looks of Pacific Long-tailed Cuckoo, more Chattering Kingfishers and two Atiu Swiftlets. After breakfast we have visited the fantastic Anatakitaki cave where we had many more breeding swiftlets and could admire the fantastic formations! In the afternoon we were taken on a tour by Birdman Gorge the resident birder of the island who told us all about his conservation projects like eradicating the Common Mynas or introducing the Rarotonga Monarch to Atiu. We even saw an adult Rarotonga Monarch on the excursion and finished the day with a dinner of local food. A great way to end our Cook Island adventures!

BIRDS OF THE TOUR

1st Orange Fruit Dove

2nd Golden Fruit Dove

3rd Taveuni Silktail

4th Natewa Silktail

5th Chestnut-throated Flycatcher

BIRDS OF THE SAMOA EXTENSION

1st Mao

2nd Red-headed Parrotfinch

3rd Samoan Triller

BIRDS OF THE COOK ISLANDS EXTENSION

1st Mewing Kingfisher

2nd Atiu Swiftlet

3rd Pacific Long-tailed Cuckoo

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED

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.

FIJI & SAMOA

BIRDS

Red Junglefowl (introduced) *Gallus gallus*

White-rumped Swiftlet *Aerodramus spodiopygius*

Pacific Long-tailed Cuckoo ♦ (L-t Koel) *Urodynamis taitensis* Just one was seen by some near Uafato in Samoa.

Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cacomantis flabelliformis* The simus race was seen on Viti Levu, Fiji.

Rock Dove (introduced) (Feral Pigeon) *Columba [livia] var domestica*

Metallic Pigeon ♦ *Columba vitiensis* Nominata was seen in Fiji and *castaneiceps* race on Samoa.

Spotted Dove (introduced) *Spilopelia chinensis*

Tongan Ground Dove ♦ (Friendly G D, Shy G D) *Pampusana stairi* A male was seen well, others heard in Fiji.

Many-colored Fruit Dove ♦ *Ptilinopus perousii* Stunning bird with many sightings in Fiji! The *mariae* subspecies.

Crimson-crowned Fruit Dove ♦ *Ptilinopus porphyraceus* Near endemic. The *fasciatus* race was seen in Samoa.

Orange Fruit Dove ♦ *Ptilinopus victor* Endemic. Bird of the trip! Amazing bird, seen on Vauna Levu and Taveuni!

Golden Fruit Dove ♦ *Ptilinopus luteovirens* Endemic. Another fantastic bird, part of the trio of Fiji special Doves.

Whistling Fruit Dove ♦ (Velvet F D) *Ptilinopus layardi* Endemic. Weird call, part of the trio of Fiji special Doves.

Pacific Imperial Pigeon ♦ *Ducula pacifica* Common in Samoa – nominate.

Barking Imperial Pigeon ♦ *Ducula latrans* Endemic. Common in Fiji.

Buff-banded Rail *Hypotaenidia philippensis* Common in Samoa, the *goodsoni* race.

Australasian Swamphen (Pacific S) *Porphyrio melanotus* A few were seen in Samoa – *samoensis* race.

Masked Lapwing *Vanellus miles* The *novaeollandiae* race was seen at Kadavu airport in Fiji.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*

Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Wandering Tattler *Tringa incana*

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

White Tern (Common W T) *Gygis alba* Common in Samoa.

Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus*

Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana*

Greater Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii*

White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus*

Short-tailed / Sooty Shearwater *Ardenna tenuirostris* / *grisea* About 12 were seen on Taveuni.

Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel*

Red-footed Booby *Sula sula*

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster*

Pacific Reef Heron (P R Egret) *Egretta sacra*

White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae*

Fiji Goshawk ♦ *Accipiter rufitorques* Endemic. Several sightings in Fiji, on Viti Levu, Kadavu and Taveuni.

Swamp Harrier *Circus approximans*

Pacific Kingfisher ♦ *Todiramphus sacer* Common in Fiji. We saw the *vitiensis* and the *eximius* races.

Flat-billed Kingfisher ♦ *Todiramphus recurvirostris* Endemic. Commonly encountered in Samoa.

Crimson Shining Parrot ♦ *Prosopiea splendens* Endemic. Excellent looks on Kadavu in Fiji.

Masked Shining Parrot ♦ *Prosopiea personata* Endemic. Rather shy but many encounters on Viti Levu in Fiji.

Maroon Shining Parrot ♦ *Prosopiea tabuensis* Near endemic. Fairly common on Taveuni in Fiji.

Collared Lory ♦ *Vini solitaria* Endemic. A fast-flying colourful bird which was regularly seen in Fiji.

Blue-crowned Lorikeet ♦ *Vini australis* We only had repeated flight views in Samoa this year.

Cardinal Myzomela ♦ *Myzomela cardinalis* The *nigriventris* race was common in Samoa.

Sulphur-breasted Myzomela ♦ (Orange-breasted M) *Myzomela jugularis* Endemic. Common in Fiji.

Yellow-billed Giant Honeyeater ♦ *Gymnomyza viridis* Endemic. Rather skittish but had good looks on Taveuni.

Duetting Giant Honeyeater ♦ (G Forest H) *Gymnomyza brunneirostris* Endemic. Common on Viti Levu in Fiji.

Mao ♦ *Gymnomyza samoensis* Endemic. We had excellent look in Samoa.

Polynesian Wattled Honeyeater ♦ *Foulehaio carunculatus* It was common in Samoa.

Fiji Wattled Honeyeater ♦ *Foulehaio taviunensis* Endemic. We saw it on Vauna Levu and Taveuni in Fiji.

Kikau ◊ (Western W H) *Foulehaio procerior* Endemic. Regularly seen on Viti Levu in Fiji.

Kadavu Honeyeater ◊ (Kandavu H) *Meliphacator provocatory* Endemic. Delightfully common on Kadavu in Fiji.

Fiji Woodswallow ◊ *Artamus mentalis* Endemic. Several sightings throughout Fiji.

Australian Magpie (introduced) *Gymnorhina tibicen*

Polynesian Triller ◊ *Lalage maculosa* Many sightings throughout. See notes.

Samoa Triller ◊ *Lalage sharpei* Endemic. Several good looks on Upolu in Samoa.

White-throated Fiji Whistler ◊ *Pachycephala vitiensis* Endemic. Good looks of *kandavensis* on Kadavu in Fiji.

Yellow-throated Fiji Whistler ◊ *Pachycephala graeffii* Endemic. Several races seen, see notes.

Samoa Whistler ◊ *Pachycephala flavifrons* Endemic. Excellent looks in the Malololelei Reserve in Samoa.

Fiji Streaked Fantail ◊ *Rhipidura layardi* Endemic. We saw three races in Fiji. See notes.

Kadavu Fantail ◊ (Kandavu F) *Rhipidura personata* Endemic. Many seen on Kadavu in Fiji.

Samoa Fantail ◊ *Rhipidura nebulosa* Endemic. Commonly encountered in Samoa.

Natewa Silktail ◊ *Lamprolia klinesmithi* Endemic. Five were seen on Vauna Levu.

Taveuni Silktail ◊ *Lamprolia victoriae* Endemic. Four were seen on Taveuni.

Slaty Monarch ◊ *Mayrornis lesson* Endemic. Several excellent sightings.

Fiji Shrikebill ◊ (Lesser S) *Clytorhynchus vitiensis* Near endemic. We saw three races in Fiji. See notes.

Black-throated Shrikebill ◊ *Clytorhynchus nigrogularis* Endemic. Several great looks on Viti Levu in Fiji.

Vanikoro Flycatcher ◊ *Myiagra vanikorensis* Commonly encountered in Fiji.

Samoa Flycatcher ◊ *Myiagra albiventris* Endemic. Excellent looks of both sexes in Samoa.

Azure-crested Flycatcher ◊ (Blue-crested F) *Myiagra azureocapilla* Endemic. Two sightings on Taveuni in Fiji.

Chestnut-throated Flycatcher ◊ *Myiagra castaneigularis* Endemic. Superb looks on Viti Levu in Fiji.

Pacific Robin ◊ *Petroica pusilla* The *kleinschmidti* race was seen on Viti Levu in Fiji.

Red-vented Bulbul (introduced) *Pycnonotus cafer*

Pacific Swallow *Hirundo tahitica*

Fiji Bush Warbler ◊ *Horornis ruficapilla* Endemic. We saw four races in Fiji. See notes.

Long-legged Thicketbird ◊ (L-I Warbler) *Cincloramphus rufus* Endemic. We saw about four birds on Viti Levu!

Silvereye *Zosterops lateralis*

Fiji White-eye ◊ (Layard's W) *Zosterops explorator* Endemic. It was seen on most island in Fiji.

Polynesian Starling ◊ *Aplonis tabuensis* We saw the *vitiensis* race in Fiji and the *brevirostris* race in Samoa.

Samoa Starling ◊ *Aplonis atrifusca* Near-endemic. Common on Samoa.

Jungle Myna (introduced) *Acridotheres fuscus*

Common Myna (introduced) *Acridotheres tristis*

Fiji Island Thrush ◊ *Turdus ruficeps* Endemic. *Layardi* race was seen on Viti Levu, *tempesti* race on Kadavu.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Fiji Parrotfinch ◊ *Erythrura pealii* Endemic. Delightfully common. Great bird!

Red-headed Parrotfinch ◊ (Samoa P) *Erythrura cyaneovirens* Near-endemic. Nominate race seen on Samoa.

Red Avadavat (introduced) *Amandava amandava*

MAMMALS

Small Indian Mongoose *Urva auropunctata* Introduced. Commonly seen in Fiji.

Common Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus* A pod of 20 were seen on Kadavu in Fiji.

Oriental House Rat *Rattus tanezumi* It was seen on Kadavu and Viti Levu.

Common Samoan Flying Fox ◊ *Pteropus samoensis* Regularly seen.

Pacific Flying Fox ◊ *Pteropus tonganus* Regularly seen.

REPTILES

Pacific Bluetail Skink *Emoia caeruleocauda*

Copper-tailed Skink *Emoia cyanura*

Fiji Green Emo Skink *Emoia concolor*

BUTTERFLIES

Large Grass-yellow *Eurema hecabe sulphurata* Fiji and Samoa

Fijian Blue *Jamides candrena* Fiji

Tiny Grass Blue *Zizula hylax* Samoa

Mauve Line-blue *Petrelaea tombugensis* Samoa

Fijian Swallowtail *Papilio schmeltzi* Fiji

Great Eggfly *Hypolimnas bolina pallelescens* Fiji and Samoa

Fijian Eggfly *Hypolimnas inopinata* Fiji

Spotted Crow Eggfly *Hypolimnas antilope* Samoa

Meadow Argus *Junonia villida* Fiji

Blue Wanderer *Tirumala hamata melittula* Samoa

Fijian Crow Butterfly *Euploea leucostictos* Fiji

Long-branded Crow *Euploea algea* Fiji

Common Fijian Ringlet *Ypthima sesara* Fiji

Common Evening Brown *Melanitis leda* Fiji

SYSTEMATIC LIST – COOK ISLANDS EXTENSION

BIRDS

Australian Shelduck *Tadrona tadornoides* A female on Mangaia airport. First record for the Cook Islands!

Pacific Black Duck (Grey D) *Anas superciliosa* Two were seen on Atiu.

Red Junglefowl (introduced) *Gallus gallus*

Atiu Swiftlet ♦ *Aerodramus sawtelli* Endemic. Many great looks, also seen in the breeding cave.

Pacific Long-tailed Cuckoo ♦ (L-t Koel) *Urodynamis taitensis* We had about seven sightings on Atiu! Fairly common.

Lilac-crowned Fruit Dove ♦ *Ptilinopus rarotongensis* Endemic. Nominant on Rarotonga and *goodwini* on Atiu.

Pacific Imperial Pigeon ♦ *Ducula pacifica* Nominant was seen on Rarotonga and Atiu.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*

Bristle-thighed Curlew ♦ *Numenius tahitiensis* Two birds were seen twice on Rarotonga.

Wandering Tattler *Tringa incana*

White Tern (Common W T) *Gygis alba*

Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus*

Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana*

White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus*

Herald Petrel ♦ *Pterodroma heraldica* We counted 11 on two afternoons seawatching on Rarotonga.

Buller's Shearwater *Ardenna bulleri* One was seen on Rarotonga and one on Mangaia.

Sooty Shearwater *Ardenna grisea*

Short-tailed Shearwater *Ardenna tenuirostris*

Tropical Shearwater *Puffinus bailloni* (non-leader) One was seen on Mangaia.

Great Frigatebird *Fregata minor*

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster*

Pacific Reef Heron (P R Egret) *Egretta sacra*

Chattering Kingfisher ♦ *Todiramphus tutus* Near endemic. The *atiu* race was common on Atiu.

Mewing Kingfisher ♦ *Todiramphus ruficollaris* Endemic. Great looks on Mangaia!

Kuhl's Lorikeet ♦ (reintroduced) *Vini kuhlii* Delightfully common on Atiu. Superb bird.

Rarotonga Monarch ♦ *Pomarea dimidiata* Endemic. Six were seen on Rarotonga and one on Atiu.

Cook Reed Warbler ♦ *Acrocephalus kerearako* Endemic. Common on Mangaia.

Rarotonga Starling ♦ *Aplonis cinerascens* Endemic. Three were seen on Rarotonga.

Common Myna (introduced) *Acridotheres tristis*

MAMMALS

Humpback Whale *Megaptera novaeangliae* One was from on Rarotonga and about nine from Mangaia.

Bryde's Whale *Balaenoptera brydei* Two were seen from Rarotonga.

House Rat *Rattus rattus* One was seen on Rarotonga.

REPTILES

Pacific Bluetail Skink *Emoiacaeruleocauda*

BUTTERFLIES

Long-tailed Blue *Lampides boeticus*

Common Crow *Euploea core*

NOTES

Polynesian Triller ♦ *Lalage maculosa* Many subspecies were seen on the tour. We had the pumila on Viti Levu, soror on Kadavu, woodi on Vauna Levu and Taveuni in Fiji and the nominate maculosa in Samoa.

Yellow-throated Fiji Whistler ♦ *Pachycephala graeffii* Many subspecies seen on the tour. We had the nominate graeffii on Viti Levu, the torquata race on Taveuni and ambigua race on Vauna Levu.

Fiji Streaked Fantail ♦ *Rhipidura layardi* Many subspecies seen on the tour. We had the nominate layardi on Viti Levu, the rufilateralis race on Taveuni and erythronota race on Vauna Levu.

Fiji Shrikebill ♦ (Lesser S) *Clytorhynchus vitiensis* Many subspecies seen on the tour. We had the nominate vitiensis on Viti Levu, the brunneus race on Kadavu and the layardi race on Taveuni.

Fiji Bush Warbler ♦ *Horornis ruficapilla* Many subspecies seen on the tour. We had the nominate ruficapilla on Kadavu, the badiceps race on Viti Levu, the castaneopterus race on Vauna Levu and the funebris race on Taveuni.