

Irian Jaya (West Papua) 29/04 – 12/06/2009

Introduction:

This report is based on a birding trip to Irian Jaya done by my wife Erma and myself. We entirely organized this trip on our own, with contact addresses in Sorong and Manokwari only. As we knew about a few sites, we just went and looked what we could organize. As Erma is native from Java and as I also speak Bahasa Indonesia O.K. this was usually possible, but time consuming. We found it very difficult to receive good and helpful information before leaving Germany.

Flights:

We flew from Frankfurt via Kuala Lumpur to Jakarta (875 Euro). After a night in a hotel near the Airport (FM7 Resort Hotel, 40 Euro p.p. – good) we continued with Merpati via Makassar to Sorong (2.200.000 Rp p.p.). The tickets were bought through Ermas sister.

All other tickets were bought from destination to destination to keep us flexible, without any problems and without having to wait more than 4 days for a flight.

Sorong – Manokwari with Merpati (750000 Rp. p.p. – 60 Euro)

Manokwari – Biak with a Pelni Ship (7 hours, 35000 Rp. p.p. economy)

Biak – Sentani with Garuda (820000 Rp p.p.)

Sentani – Wamena with Trigana Air (820000 Rp p.p.) – old and run down aircraft

Wamena – Sentani with Trigana Air (450000 Rp p.p.)

Sentani – Solo with Garuda (via Biak, Makassar, Jakarta .2600.000 Rp p.p.)

Ground transport:

The roads (sealed or unsealed) are usually served by very cheap public minibuses called Bemos. If there are no Bemos leaving (or not early enough) for your destination, you can charter taxis or motorbike taxis (ojek), which we did frequently. Always bargain and negotiate a price before leaving. A early morning hotel pick-up is usually no problem.

Visa:

European visitors can obtain a 1 month visa at the airport. I have got a 2 months social visa because of my family relations.

Once in West-Papua you do have to report to the Police to receive a permit (surat jalan) to visit the places of your interest. List all places/cities you are intending to go to and carry a passport photo. This permit you have to get stamped in every city at a police station. Quite a hassle but at least its free and the police is friendly and helpful. Nobody ever checked my permit, but you never know ! To have one for Wamena or any remoter places seems important.

Food and accomodation:

In towns like Sorong, Manokwari, Biak, Sentani and Wamena a rich variety of excellent Indonesian food is available for 1 to 3 Euro. Its more expensive than on other Indonesian Islands but still very good value. In Wamena everything is at least twice as expensive as in coastal Papua.

Many foodstalls do open only late evening/night.

Some of our favorite dishes are: Soto Ayam, Soto Makassar, Tongseng Kambing, Pecel Lele, Kepala Ayam, Rempelau Hati, Masakan Padang or Tempe/Tahu goreng.

To remote sites or villages you have to carry all your food which you might be able to stock up with local products. Usually you have to pay someone to cook for you (50000Rp per day).

For hotels we paid between 20 and 35 US for a double room with breakfast. You can also find cheaper ones (No aircon and dirtier).

We stayed at: (prices for a double room)

Sorong: Hotel Waigeo, 300.000 Rp – O.K., friendly.

Manokwari: Hotel Billy, 250.000 Rp (special price!) – excellent !

Biak: Hotel Arumbai, 267.000 Rp – O.K., service could be better.

Biak: Hotel Intsia, 315.000 Rp incl. 3 good meals - room O.K., very friendly, relaxed.

Sentani: Hotel Tahara, 270.000 Rp – good enough, sometimes smelly.

Sentani: Hotel Ratna Keyko, 280.000 Rp – much better, friendly, clean, nice terrace.

Wamena: Café Pondok Pelangi, 250.000 Rp (bargained) – homestay, helpful, quiet

Money:

You can find ATM's in all towns. Normally you can only take 1-2 Million Rp. per day.

We only managed once, with difficulties, to pay with our credit card, even though it officially offered in Super Markets or Ticket Offices.

You probably can exchange Traveller Cheques, but on a lower rate. Carry some cash dollars.

The time we were there one US-Dollar was about 1.000.000 Rp and one Euro was 1.400.000 Rp.

Language:

Even in remote areas we found that everybody speaks Bahasa Indonesia. We were actually surprised that we were able to communicate with the elderly Dani people for ex.. In our opinion it is difficult to get along without at least some basic knowledge of Bahasa, but possible of course. Surely it makes things easier and meeting people more interesting and probably also helps to keep your expenses down. The guides Jamil, Zeth, Yoris W. and Joris Stefano Omkarsba speak English.

Climate:

We found the climate in coastal areas extremely humid and hot, making long and steep hikes exhausting. Rain can occur any time of year. On our time of visit only very few half days were spoiled by rain. Nights in the mountains are quite chilly, so carry a warm enough sleeping bag and some warm and waterproof clothes.

Equipment and books:

We used "Birds of New Guinea" by Beehler, Pratt and Zimmermann as a Field Guide. I heard that it's sold out at the moment. We also used the rather old reports by John Hornbuckle (1991) and Roger Ahlman (1996) and Birding Indonesia by Paul Jepson.

Health and safety:

Malaria is very widespread, esp. on the coast. All locals we have met seemed to have had this disease. Use a high deed repellent and wear long armed shirts, at least in the mornings and evenings, despite the heat. Pale colored clothes seem to attract mosquitos less. Try to avoid bites in cities and villages. Carry a mosquitonet. Consider to take anti-malaria pills.

The sun is very intense, so use sun cream or sun blocker.

A big problem was falling on steep, wet and slippery trails. Walk slowly and with care.

We never had any problems with our stomach. We drank bottled or cooked water.

We found all places we visited totally safe and never heard about any incident or even theft. But still keep your eyes open. Keep out of the way of drunk people.

People are generally very friendly, helpful and honest (hardly any cheating).

A strong torch is recommended, for nightbirds and because often there is no electricity in the villages. Candles are a good idea too.

Our Guides:

Joris Stefano Omkarsba: Sorong. ecopapua@yahoo.com, 0062-951-324649.

Organized our Raja Ampat trip. Does not work as a guide usually, but might be contacted and asked to help for a donation. Speaks good English. A very active conservationist !!!

Zeth Wonggor: Siyoubrig/Mokwam zethwonggor@yahoo.com, mobilephone: 08135-6001168 (his daughter). Fantastic guide !!! Tries to establish eco-tourism and to save the forests. Runs a guesthouse.

Yoris R. Wanggai: Manokwari. yoris_tours@yahoo.com, Can organize and guide a tour for you, but is no real birder himself.

Jamil: Nimbokrang II. Mobile phone 0852 54332796. Very good guide and nice guy. Stayed in his home.

Useful addresses :

Bapak Benny: Biak. Office at Hotel Arumbai. Mobile phone: 0852-44940860.

Knows where to go birding and can organize a driver who does know the birding spots too.

Papuan Bird Club: can organize and guide rather expensive birdwatching trips. They can contact Zeth.

Wamena: **Robert** (ph. 08134-4338905) and **Figo** (ph. 08124-8150677) are friendly and reliable drivers who travel to Pass Valley most early mornings. Picked us up at our Hotel and from the road on their way back to Wamena in the afternoon/at noon.

Labi: Our driver to Lake Habbema (ph. 08124-8531345)

Jonas: a possible guide for Habbema trek, whom we meet too late. Phone: 08524-

4220825

Birding sites:

01/05/2009 Sorong, Hutan Lindung km 14

Catch the Bemo's B and H to get to Hutan Lindung (30-45 min). We walked into the forest left side from the main road. Not too exciting, but an introduction and we had the time. Easy to catch transport back.

1 Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove

f Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove

f Rainbow Lorikeet

2 Eclectus Parrot

6 Sulphur-crested Cockatoo

2 Black Lory

f Red-cheeked Parrot

f Double-eyed Fig-Parrot

Glossy Swiftlet

1 Shining Flycatcher

4 Papuan (Olive-crowned) Flowerpecker

fc Yellow-bellied Sunbird

3 Black Sunbird

2 Mimic Meliphaga

2 Yellow-faced Myna

fc Singing Starling

Birds Batanta 3 - 7/ 05/2009

To visit the Islands of Batanta, Waigeo and Salawati properly you have to charter a longboat. You may also visit places on those islands with regular transport. If you do not have a contact address, someone to help you, you have to look for a longboat yourself at the Jetty in Sorong. Make sure the boat is in a good condition and the captain is a serious person. Bring all food and water for yourself and the crew. Bargain for a fair price. We paid 6 million Rupias (600 US) for 6 days/5 nights including fuel, captain and helper, for our longboat. But this was more or less organised by Joris from Eco Papua, an environmental partner organisation of Oro Verde Rainforest Organisation in Germany, which I had contacted beforehand and who support a project on Batanta. On Waigeo we stayed with Joris' sister in Yenwarpnor for 1 night (150.000). We spend half day birding with Guide Yusef (Nico was not available) who really is a nice guy but does not know birds very well. Tried hard for Crowned Pigeon but could not find it. But was still good birding. We paid him 75.000 Rp. Visited nearby village of Sawinggrai for an afternoon/evening to see the Red Bird-of-Paradise. Someone from the village guided us (150.000 Rp) to a lek, where we had good looks at these island endemics. But hard to sit quietly with 1000 of mossies around you.

Continued to Joris' village called Jensarray (opposite Waigeo) where we stayed in his house for 2 nights. Slept on the floor like always. And like always Joris found someone to cook for us the food we brought. Usually we paid 50.000 Rp per day for that service. Did some birding around the village, in nearby mangroves and in Joris' cacao garden, which was quite productive.

Went on to Wai Lebed, the place to see Wilson's BoP. They do have a kind of guesthouse outside their village, but made new prices which were ridiculous. Spend hours discussing with the village chiefs, until they finally agreed to a lower price which still was more than enough. Paid almost 1million for 2 nights (the 2 of us), guide to the Wilson lek, donation for the village and the forest owner, donation to keep the guest house and a cook.

The climb to the lek is very steep (from sea level to 1100m altitude!!!) and exhausting but well worth the effort. Had excellent looks at those incredible birds displaying!! Our guide Yahuda (his father Anton Dai already passed away) was one hour late in the morning so we could leave only past 5 am and had to hurry up that hill. To be honest, we almost gave up and I think for a minor bird we might have not made it.

1: Jensarray 2: Wai Lebed

fc Radjah Shelduck 1

1 Pheasant Pigeon 2

2 Brown Cuckoo-Dove 1
2 Superb Fruit-Dove 1
2 **Pink-spotted Fruit-Dove** 1
2 **Dwarf Fruit-Dove** 1
fc **Spice Imperial Pigeon** 1 2
f **Pinon Imperial Pigeon** 1 2
4 **White-throated Pigeon** 1 2
f Rainbow Lorikeet
fc Eclectus Parrot
fc Sulpher-crested Cockatoo
5 **Palm Cockatoo** 1 2
f Red-cheeked Parrot 2
1 **Rufous-bellied Koukaburra** 1
1 Azure Kingfisher 1
fc Dollarbird
c Blyth Hornbill
2 **Papuan Boobook (Jungle Hawk Owl)** 2
f Moustached Tree-Swift
Glossy Swiftlet
1 **Blue-breasted Pitta** 1
3 **Hooded Pitta** 1
f White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike 1
1 Rufous Fantail 1
3 **Northern Fantail** 1 2
1 **White-bellied Thicket-Fantail** 1
2 **Frilled Monarch** 1
f Shining Flycatcher 1
2 **Olive Flycatcher** 2
1 Grey Wagtail 2
f Yellow-bellied Sunbird 1
f Mimic Meliphaga
fc **Helmeted (Papuan) Friarbird** 1 2
3 Yellow-faced Myna 2
4 **Wilson's Bird-of-Paradise** 2
fc **Glossy-mantled Manucode** 1 2
Metallic Starling
1 Spangled Drongo 1
fc **Hooded Butcherbird**
fc Torresian Crow
Birds Waigeo 2 - 3/05/2009
1: Sawinggrai 2: Yenwarpnor
1 Common Scrubfowl 2
f Lesser Frigatebird
1 Eastern Reef Heron
4 White-bellied Sea-Eagle
1 Brahminy Kite
1 Stephans Dove 1
1 **Claret-breasted Fruit-Dove**
f Pinon Imperial Pigeon
6 Molocan Red Lory 2
f Rainbow Lorikeet 2
2 **Western Black-capped Lory** 2
fc Eclectus Parrot
fc Sulpher-crested Cockatoo
f Double-eyed Fig-Parrot 2
1 **Yellow-billed Kingfisher** 2
f Blyth Hornbill
3 Rainbow Bee-Eater 1
Glossy Swiftlet

fc Moustached Treeswift
 1 Papuan Frogmouth 1
 1 **Black (New Guinea) Cuckoo-Shrike** 2
 Willie Wagtail
 3 Shining Flycatcher 1 2
 4 **Rusty Pitohui** 2
 2 **Variable Pitohui** 2
 f Papuan (Olive-crowned) Flowerpecker
 1 **Yellow-bellied Longbill** 2
 1 **Red-throated Myzomela** 2
 f Mimic Meliphaga
 1 **Spotted HE** 2
 1 **Long-billed HE** 1
 4 **Red Bird-of-Paradise** 1
 2 Glossy-mantled Manucode 1
 Singing starling
 fc Hooded Butcherbird
 1 **Brown-headed Crow** 1

Mokwam\Siyoubbrig village 10 -14/05/2009

Organised a 4-wheel drive car through Yoris R. Wanggai who runs a small one man tourist agency in Manokwari. Paid 900.000 Rp for the 2 hours (direct) drive up the mountains to carry ourselves and food for 5 days to Siyoubbrig village near Mokwam in the Arfak Mountains at 1500m altitude. Did some birding stops on the way, whenever the habitat looked promising. In Siyoubbrig we asked for Zeth Wonggor, who fortunately was there and available. Zeth has a simple guest house at the edge of the village towards the forest. Stayed a couple of nights there and went birding with Zeth, who knows the birds (and their voices) and places to find them very well. Our best guide of the trip !! He has also build some hides for BOP's and the Vogelkop Bowerbird. Also spend a rather uncomfortable night higher up (recommended) at about 2000m. Zeths wife cooked 3 meals a day for us. You can take a bath in the nearby river. We paid him about 600.000 Rp. per day for everything. Zeth is trying to conserve the forests by sharing his fees with the village and the owners of the forests. In fact you pay bit extra for it, which is a good idea and working well. Other villages around might be interested to copy his ideas. These mountains hold a fantastic rich birdlife with high endemism. A must !!! for every birder !

On our way back we walked 2 km to a bigger road with more frequent traffic and took a Bemo back to Manokwari.

1 **Black-mantled Goshawk**
 1 **Cinnamon Ground-Dove**
 c Brown Cuckoo-dove
 c **Black-billed Cuckoo-Dove**
 f **White-breasted Fruit-Dove**
 2 Superb Fruit-Dove
 3 **Papuan Mountain Pigeon**
 1 **Rufescent Imperial Pigeon**
 15 **Plum-faced Lorikeet**
 6 **Yellow-billed Lorikeet**
 f **Blue-collared Parrot**
 2 **Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrot**
 2 **Modest Tiger-Parrot**
 3 **White-eared Bronze-cuckoo**
 1 Blyths Hornbill
 2 **Mountain Owlet-Nightjar**
 c Glossy Swiftlet
 3 **Spotted Jewel-Babbler**
 2 **Papuan Logrunner**
 3 **Black-shouldered Cuckoo-Shrike**
 8 **White-shouldered Fairy-Wren**

3 Orange-crowned Fairy-Wren
f Brown-breasted Gerygone
2 Island Leaf-Warbler
3 Grey Gerygone
5 Mountain Mouse-Warbler
c Vogelkop Scrub-Wren
3 Perplexing Scrub-Wren
2 Large Scrub-Wren
4 Black Fantail
c Friendly Fantail
2 Black Monarch
f Blue-grey Robin
2 Smoky Robin
1 White-faced Robin
2 Green-backed Robin
1 Ashy Robin
1 Garnet Robin
1 Canary Flycatcher
fc Black-breasted Boatbill
1 Dwarf Whistler
4 Sclaters Whistler
2 Regent Whistler
2 Vogelkop Whistler
5 Rufous-naped Whistler
4 Tit Berrypecker
2 Mid-Mountain Berrypecker
5 Fan-tailed Berrypecker
10 Western Mountain White-Eye
5 Varied Sitella
2 Papuan Treecreeper
8 Rufous-sided Honeyeater
1 Dwarf HE (Longbill)
f Mountain Red-headed Myzomela
fc Red-collared Myzomela
2 Mountain Meliphaga
2 Tawny-breasted HE
c Western Smoky HE
1 Common Smoky HE ???
3 Vogelkop Melidectes
1 Cinnamon-browed Melidectes
1 Long-billed HE
2 Marbled HE
2 Blue-faced Parrotfinch
2 Vogelkop Bowerbird
1 Black Sicklebill
1 Buff-tailed Sicklebill
6 Western Parotia
2 Superb Bird-of-Paradise
4 Magnificent BoP
1 Long-tailed Paradigalla

Oransbari\Watariri 15 -16/05/2009

Took a Bemo (2-3h, 30000 Rp. p.P.) to Oransbari/Watariri village, direction Ransijki. Once there we asked for Simon Ullo, who is the village chief (kepala desa). One our later we went with him and Obet to a simple hut in the forest. Walked bit more than 2 hours slightly uphill, crossing a river 3 times. Stayed overnight in the hut and birded around. Ok, but Simon did not know the birds very well and was kind of too hectic when he wanted to show as a bird. Probably it is possible to see many more species around than we did. Went back next afternoon and waited 2 hours for transport back. Payed 100.000 Rp for his guidance per day, 100.000 Rp. for the night and 150.000

for the village. In total 450.000 Rp.. When back in his village he asked for much more money than we had negotiated the day before, which we refused to pay.

1 Rufous-tailed Imperial Pigeon

1 Great Cuckoo-Dove

2 White-throated Pigeon

f Rainbow Lorikeet

f Sulpher-crested Cockatoo

fc Eclectus Parrot

3 Papuan Nightjar

c Glossy Swiftlet

1 Blue-black Kingfisher

fc Blyths Hornbill

2 Brown Oriole

f Grey-headed Cuckoo-Shrike

1 Olive Flycatcher

2 Frilled Monarch

1 Grey Whistler

f Northern Fantail

5 Lesser Bird-of-Paradise

4 King Bird-of-Paradise

Biak/Warafri 19 - 20/05/2009

Easy birding. Not too many species, but some good ones to see on Biak. Excellent early morning birding around Warafri, after driver Udin (organized through Benny) had picked us up 4:30 am at our Hotel. But no Biak Red Lorys ! Paied him 300.000 Rp until 1.30 pm I think !?

Also went birding east of Kota Biak. Past the junction leading north. OK.! Got there by ojek. Return 40.000 Rp. p.P..

1 Long-tailed Buzzard

2 Brown Cuckoo-Dove

2 Yellow-bibbed Fruit-Dove

2 Fruit-Dove spec.

fc Red-cheeked Parrot

f Eclectus Parrot

2 Geelving Pygmy-Parrot

1 Brush Cuckoo

4 Biak Paradise Kingfisher

c Glossy Swiftlet

f Rainbow Bee-Eater

2 Dollarbird

fc Pacific Swallow

6 Black-browed Triller

fc Emperor Fairy-Wren

2 Yellow-bellied Gerygone

f Northern Fantail

1 Shining Flycatcher

2 Biak Black Flycatcher

1 Biak Monarch

2 Golden Monarch

f Papuan (Red-crowned) Flowerpecker

f Yellow-bellied Sunbird

2 Biak White-Eye

c Long-tailed Starling

fc Metallic Starling

3 Spangled Drongo

f Hooded Butcherbird

Nimbokrang 2, 24 - 27/05/09

Jalan Korea = 1, km 8 = 2, Nimbokrang = 3

Nimbokrang is a transmigration settlement, about 3 hours by public transport away from Sentani, from where you have access to some good lowland forest. To get

there, catch a Bemo (20.000 Rp p.P) from the Sentani Bus Terminal towards Genyem. Telling the bus driver your destination, he will drop you off at a junction (straight to Genyem, right to Nimbokrang) where you can find ojek drivers to carry you to Jamil's house. Everybody seems to know him. Jamil is living in the quite pleasant village of Nimbokrang 2. There is no need to bring lots of food with you, as Jamil's wife will prepare delicious food for you. There are small shops in Nimbokrang to buy things, but no big choice. We carried things like coffee, milk powder and biscuits from Sentani.

In Jamil's house there is one double bed in a separated room available if you are lucky like us, to be the only guests. If not, Jamil will find a place for you to sleep on the floor.

We spend 4 beautiful days birding with Jamil and his native friend Danci. Every mornings and afternoons we went by motorbike to different birding spots. Birded intensively Jalan Korea, a forest at a higher altitude (km 8, very hard finding your place through the forest and badly bitten by wild bees!!) which holds goodies like Vulturine Parrot, and also around the village.

Excellent birding, despite we missed few species like Hook-billed and Shovel-billed Kingfishers. Jamil could also guide you to a place deeper in the forest, where you might find Crowned Pigeon and Cassowary. But it's a long hike.

For 3 nights, 4 days we paid in total 2.050.000 Rp. Per day it costs 250.000 Rp for Jamil, 150.000 for Danci, 50.000 for the motorbike, 75.000 for accomodation and food. In addition we paid 100.000 for the owner of the forest for the length of our stay.

1 Brown-collared Brush-Turkey 2

1 Brown Quail 3

1 King Quail 1 (heard)

2 Grey Goshawk 1 3

f Brahminy Kite

1 New Guinea Harpy Eagle 1

1 Stephans Dove 1

f Brown Cuckoo-Dove

1 Wompoo Fruit-Dove 1

1 Pink-spotted Fruit-Dove 1

6 Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove 1

2 Coroneted Fruit-Dove 1

2 Zoe Imperial Pigeon 1

1 Collared Imperial Pigeon 1

c Pinon Imperial Pigeon

fc Western Black-capped Lory 1

15 Dusky Lory 1

4 Brown Lory 1

c Rainbow Lorikeet

f Red-flanked Lorikeet (heard) 1

1 Papuan King Parrot (heard) 2

fc Eclectus Parrot

c Red-cheeked Parrot

fc Sulpher-crested Cockatoo

1 Vulturine Parrot 2

2 Buff-faced Pygmy-Parrot 3

f Double-eyed Fig-Parrot 1

f Salvadoris Fig-Parrot 1

3 Brush-Cuckoo 3

2 Lesser Black Coucal 3

1 Greater Black Coucal 1

f Hook-billed Kingfisher (heard) 1

1 Yellow-billed KF (heard) 1

4 Rufous-bellied Kookaburra 1

2 Sacred KF 1 2

c Dollarbird

c Rainbow Bee-Eater
 c Blyths Hornbill
 c Glossy Swiftlet
 c **Uniform Swiftlet**
 3 **Papuan Spine-tailed Swift** 1
 c Pacific Swallow
 1 **Blue Jewel-Babbler** 2 (Erma)
 3 White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike 3
 2 **Boyers Cuckoo-shrike** 1
 2 Cicadabird 1
 2 Black Cuckoo-Shrike 1
 1 **Golden Cuckoo-Shrike** 1
 f Black-browed Triller
 f Emperor Fairy-Wren 1
 f Golden-hesded Cisticola 3
 1 Large-billed gerygone 1
 f Yellow-bellied Gerygone
 f Rusty Mouse-warbler 2 (heard)
 fc Willie Wagtail
 1 **Sooty Thicket-Fantail** 2
 2 White-bellied Thicket-Fantail 1
 fc Northern Fantail
 1 Rufous-backed Fantail (heard)
 1 Frilled (Rufous-collared) Monarch 1 (heard)
 f Golden Monarch 1
 2 Shining Flycatcher 3
 1 **Lowland Peltops** 1
 1 **Black-sided Robin** 1
 2 **Yellow-legged Flycatcher** 1
 2 Grey Whistler 1
 fc Little Shrike-Thrush 1
 fc Red-crowned Flowerpecker 1
 f Black Sunbird
 c Yellow-bellied Sunbird
 1 Dwarf HE (Longbill) 2
 2 **Yellow-gaped HE** 3
 1 Long-billed HE 1
 2 **Streak-headed HE** 1
 2 **Plain HE** 1
 f **Meyers Friarbird** 1
 fc Helmeted Friarbird 1
 5 **Streak-headed Mannikin** 1 3
 f Spangled Drongo
 4 Yellow-faced Myna 1
 5 Lesser Bird-of-Paradise 2
 1 **Magnificent Riflebird** 2
 2 **Pale-billed Sicklebill** 1
 2 King Bird-of-Paradise 1
 1 **Twelve-wired Bird-of-Paradise** 1
 1 Jobi Manucode 1
 3 Glossy-mantled Manucode 1
 fc Metallic Starling
 8 Brown-headed Crow 1
 5 **Grey Crow** 1

Baliem Valley 29/05 – 07/06/2009

Wamena is the starting point for the famous Baliem Valley and surrounding mountains. It holds lots of good and endemic species. As we did not have any contact address in Wamena, we desperatly tried to organize a hike to Lake Habbema ourselves. But despite searching for days, we could not find a single trustable guide.

On the streets, so called guides offered us their services, but asked for far to much money and did not seem reliable to us. We were not sure if they even knew the way, not to talk about the birds. Just the day before we left we met a guide named Jonas who seemed OK, but too late for us. Birded around other places instead.

a.) Pass Valley and road to Pass Valley: Spent 2 nights in the comfortable and fully equiped missionary guesthouse (cheap). Birded on muddy trails but did not manage to get deep into the forest cause we would have needed rubber boots. Also birded along the roads around Pass Valley. Not too exciting! To get there by public transport (about 50.000 Rp) asked around or try the phone numbers mentioned. They leave early, between 4 and 5 am.

b.) The road between Wamena and Pass Valley was much better. Took the same transport/Bemo and got dropped off at km 45, where the car has to cross a river (Torrent Lark) and walked back. Entered the forest a bit whenever possible, for ex. near the river. The Bemo just picked us up on his way back to Wamena as arranged before. The drivers were very nice guys!

c.) Baliem Valley Resort. Took an early morning ojek (100.000 p.P) to this beautiful but expensive resort hotel, up a steep and partly rough road. Birded around the resort and on the walk back to Wamena. Caught a transport back once we reached a bigger road with cars passing by. Birds were not really special, but did it on our first day as an introduction.

d.) Lake Habbema. Despite Lake Habbema was still officially closed for tourists and the Police had told us that we needed to go with the company of some policemen only, we just went. Asked around about the security situation before (no problems since long) we finally chartered a 4-wheel drive car for a day for 300 Dollars!! Of corse we do not want to ask you to do the same, but the situation might have changed and it might be allowed to go there anyway now. Most drivers asked for even much more money !!! or would not go. Got picked up 4:30 am, passed 2 closed police check-points before we made several birding stops. Spend few hours around Lake Habbema, surrounded by wonderful and high (more than 5000m altitude!) mountain scenery. Then slowly birded the road back, between 3850m and around 2500m altitude. Did not find a way down to the edge of the lake. Birds were abundant ! Maybe the best day birding of the trip !! Were so happy we managed to get there in the end, although a 4 day trek would have been better. Lake Habbema would also have been a beautiful place to stay overnight! But our driver refused because of the cold.

Of corse there is more to see than birds in Baliem Valley. We often met very friendly tribal people like the Dani when birding.

1 = Lake Habbema incl. roadside 2 = Baliem Valley Resort - Wamena

3 = Pass Valley 4 = km 42 -45 road to

Pass Valley

1 Snow Mountain Quail 1

2 Brown Falcon 3

4 Papuan Harrier 2

15 Buff-banded Rail 4 2

1 Spotless Rail 1

f Eurasian Coot 1

2 Bush-Hen 4

2 Lewins Rail 4

4 Papuan Lorikeet 1

25 Orange-billed Lorikeet 1 4

1 Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo 3

1 Mountain Nightjar 1

fc **Mountain Swiftlet**

c Glossy Swiftlet

5 Great Wood-Swallow 4

15 Island Thrush 1

c White-shouldered Fairy-Wren

2 Tawny Grassbird 1 2

f Grey Gerygone 3

f Mountain Mouse-Warbler 1 3
 fc Island Leaf-Warbler 1 3 4
f Papuan Scrub-Wren 1
2 Buff-faced Scrub-Wren 1
1 Dimorphic Fantail 4
 2 Black Fantail 3
 fc Friendly Fantail
 2 Black Monarch 4
3 Mountain Peltops 3 4
 c Pied Bushchat
2 White-winged Robin 1
 2 Canary Flycatcher 3
 f Black-breasted Boatbill 3 4
12 Alpine Pipit 1
 fc Common Golden Whistler 1 2 3
 1 Sclaters Whistler 4
 1 Regent Whistler 4
3 Lorentzs Whistler 1
 c Red-crowned Flowerpecker
2 Streaked Berrypecker 4
 2 Fan-tailed Berrypecker 3
2 Black Berrypecker 3
 2 Mid-Mountain Berrypecker 3
 f Western Mountain White-Eye 2 3 4
6 Black Sitella 1
 4 Varied Sitella 4
2 Grey-streaked HE 1
1 Slaty-chinned Longbill 3
 c Red-collared Myzomela
2 Black-throated HE 1
4 Orange-cheeked HE 1
 c Common Smoky HE
 c Belfords Melidectes
3 Sooty Melidectes 1
 f Ornate Melidectes 2
5 Mountain Firetail 1
15 Western Alpine (Snow Mountain) Mannikin 1
 c Black-breasted Mannikin
1 Short-tailed Paradigalla 4
1 Torrent-Lark 4

Sentani

1 = Lake Sentani 2 = Cyclops Mountains, Pos 7 - Waterfall

As we spent several days in Sentani anyway, organizing our flights, we walked 3 mornings along this lovely lake. Either caught a regular Bemo from the bus terminal in Sentani or went by ojek (30min drive, 30-40.000 Rp), that we organized the day before. Birded the road around and behind a village called Dolo Lama (road to Genyem). Villages, gardens and secondary forest. Easy to catch transport back. Also took an ojek (5.000) to a place uphill near Sentani called Pos 7 and walked, following a stream, towards a waterfall. Only walked as long the path was visible, but you may continue hopping from rock to rock in the riverbed. Walked back along some grasland to our hotel. Saw some good species like a Harpy Eagle sitting on a branch above the stream.

3 Black Bittern 1
 1 New Guinea Harpy Eagle 2
 2 Grey Goshawk 1 2
 f Brahminy Kite 1
 2 Little Eagle 2
1 Bare-eyed Rail 2
 2 Lesser Black Coucal 2

1 Boyers Cuckoo-Shrike 1
8 Brown Oriole 2
4 Emperor Fairy-Wren 1
f Golden-headed Cisticola 1
f Willie Wagtail 1
5 **Torrent Flycatcher** 2
2 **Hooded Pitohui** 1 2
f Little Shrike Thrush
fc Red-crowned Flowerpecker
f Black Sunbird 1
f Mimic Meliphaga
fc Helmeted Friarbird
2 Meyers Friarbird 1
2 Crimson Finch 2
15 Chestnut-breasted Mannikin 2
2 **Hooded Mannikin** 1
4 Glossy-mantled Manucode 1
1 **Jobi Manucode** 1
fc Tree Sparrow
c = common fc = fairly common f = few **birds seen first time in my life**
Ralf Jahraus, Jahnstrasse 66, 76571 Gaggenau, Germany
Mail: ralf.jahraus@gmx.deTrip report