

Papua – June/July 2009

Nimbokrang, Wamena, Biak & Wasur

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Introduction

Rob Tizard and I visited Indonesian Papua (Irian Jaya) in June/July 2009 for an extremely enjoyable three week bird-filled bonanza. For me this trip was a bit of a compliment to an earlier trip I made in 2008, which is described in a trip report posted to www.travelingbirder.com. We concentrated on two sites together – Nimbokrang and then Wamena/Habema – plus a short trip to Biak, which for me was largely an attempt to see stuff I missed there on the 2008 trip. I then continued alone to Merauke and Wasur National Park in the far south-east of Papua; a seldom visited but amazing site.

In total we recorded just under 300 species of birds (almost half the birds of Papua!), with many highlights including: Greater, Lesser & King-of-Saxony Bird-of-Paradise, Brown Sicklebill and Splendid Astrapia, Crested Satinbird ('Crested Bird-of-Paradise'), Macgregor's 'Honeyeater-of-Paradise', Archbold's Bowerbird, Victoria Crowned-pigeon, Southern Cassowary, Logrunner, Painted Quail-thrush, Greater Ground-robin, Blue Jewel-babbler, Biak Monarch, Papuan Whipbird, Sooty Whistler, Marbled Frogmouth, Forest Bittern, 25 species of parrot, 24 honeyeaters, 14 kingfishers and many many more!

As with my previous Papua trip report, I have tried to include as much practical information as possible for birders considering visiting the area independently. Where information overlaps with my earlier report, or other recently published reports, I have written less. Where things we did differed from the 'norm' I have tried to give more information. Starting and finishing in Jakarta, our itinerary went like this:

June 25 th	Fly overnight Jakarta-Jayapura
June 26 th – 30 th	Arrive morning of 26 th and transfer to Nimbokrang for four nights.
June 30 th	Late night back to Sentani, in order to get early flight.
July 1 st	Morning flight to Wamena , local birding and overnight Wamena
July 2 nd – 7 th	Early morning drive to Lake Habema , then five nights camping.
July 7 th	Overnight Wamena, in order to get early flight.
July 8 th	Morning connecting flights from Wamena to Biak via Sentani.
July 8 th – 11 th	Two days/nights birding in Biak
July 11 th	Nick on morning flight from Biak to Merauke via Sentani, Rob back to Jakarta.
July 11 th – 15 th	Four days/nights in Merauke/Wasur National Park
July 15 th	Morning flight back to Sentani. Fell asleep for rest of day!
July 16 th	Morning flight Sentani to Jakarta.

General logistics

We booked our flights Jakarta-Jayapura (Lion, Rp 1,649,000) and Jayapura-Jakarta (Lion, Rp 1,449,000) through *Vayatour* in Bogor (Tel: +62-251-356861; Fax +62-251-356865; www.vayatour.com). We then booked all the 'internal' Papua flights through *Putra Papua Tours* in Wamena (see below for details). Through them we booked: Jayapura-Wamena-Jayapura (Trigana; Rp 1,500,000 return); Jayapura-Biak (Merpati; Rp 800,000); Biak-Jayapura-Merauke (Merpati; Rp 1,900,000), and; Merauke-Jayapura (Merpati; Rp 1,100,000). We transferred all of the money for these flights to them by bank transfer in advance, together with the money for our booking in Wamena/Habema. They then sent the first ticket to our hotel in Sentani when we arrived there from Nimbokrang, and handed over all the rest later.

When we first arrived in Sentani (the location of Jayapura Airport, 40 km outside the city) we went straight to the police station 10 mins from the airport (ask for 'Kantor Polsec Sentani') in order to obtain the necessary travel permits or '*Surat Jalan*'. You need one for each destination (or specifically, each *District* you will visit), so we got letters for Nimbokrang, Wamena, Biak and Merauke. We gave them the dates, photocopies of our passports and passport photos for each letter, and they prepared the letters. They

processed these very efficiently and without question, and asked for no money, so we tipped the guy Rp 50,000 anyway as he'd been so helpful. Getting all the letters in one hit like this is very convenient, as it means no more visits to the police. For Wamena we were advised by Putra Papua Tours to state our destination as 'Wamena' only and to make no mention of Lake Habema; this we did.

All in (Jakarta-to-Jakarta) this trip probably cost us in the region of USD \$2,500 each, with Wamena/Habema being the most expensive destination and Wasur proving to be the cheapest. Many of the costs incurred are fixed (e.g. car/boat hire, guides etc) so the more people on your trip, the more ways you can split them. Others, like flights etc, you'll need to pay each. Please feel free to contact me if you need more detailed information on costs.

Nimbokrang

Getting to and from this site is pretty well covered in other trip reports. The guide of choice is a long-time Javanese resident called Pak Jamil, and the best way to contact him in advance is by text/sms message to his mobile phone (+62 852 5433 2796). He speaks and understands some English, so as long as you keep the messages simple he should understand (just get your arrival date and time clear, and how many days you will stay). I contacted him well in advance, worked out when he was free, and booked our stay. He offered to arrange a car to meet us at the airport, which took us to Nimbokrang via the police station in Sentani.

In Nimbokrang Pak Jamil offered us the front room of his house (probably only likely if your group is small!), and his wife provided us with a constant supply of nice food. As there were only two of us, getting around was also straightforward; we just rode on the back of Pak Jamil's bike and that of his assistant Pak Dance ('Dante' or 'Danche'). We didn't ask what all of this was going to cost us in advance but when we offered to pay at the end Pak Jamil presented us a beautifully itemised bill explaining everything and very reasonable in price, so we were happy.

We used the same car that brought us from Sentani to drop us back there (we arranged this with the car when he dropped us in Nimbokrang). In Sentani we stayed the night in the Hotel Ratna which was near the airport, clean and relatively cheap at around Rp 250,000 for a twin.

Birds & birding areas

This was my second trip to Nimbokrang, but the last had only been for a couple of days, so there were still plenty of new birds for me. We arrived around lunch-time and after taking a look at the roosting Papuan Frogmouths in Jamil's back garden, we headed to the patch of forest at the end of Jamil's road. We soon came across a nice big fruiting fig tree with lots of pigeons and several manucodes (Jobi and Glossy-mantled). The same tree also gave us our only sighting of Golden Cuckooshrike. While we were watching pigeons Dance (Jamil's assistant) spotted a Northern Cassowary just alongside the path further up the trail but by the time we got there all we could hear was its footsteps as it made it way off into the forest! Our only consolation prize was Double-eyed Fig-parrot shortly later.

The next morning we started early along Jalan Korea with a displaying Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise, quickly followed by a displaying Pale-billed Sicklebill! Other good birds in this area included nice views of Black-sided Robin and a brief fly-by from a Blue-and-black Kingfisher. We spent the rest of the day around Jalan Korea adding plenty of other nice birds including Cinnamon Ground-dove, Brown Lory, Dwarf Koel, Plain Honeyeater and Meyer's Friarbird.

The next morning we headed to 'Km 8' to try for some different species. Not too far from the road we entered a marshy area of forest and saw two Shovel-billed Kingfishers in quick succession, including one that Rob was able to get some amazing photos of. This species can be pretty hard to see so we were very happy with this. We continued onwards, heading down into the valley hoping for a possible sighting of Victoria Crowned Pigeon. We didn't get the pigeon but did briefly see a Wompoo Fruit-dove followed quite closely by a very nice pair of Blue Jewel Babbler; the latter being one of our main targets at Nimbokrang. We also chased around calling King BoP, Hooded Monarch and Yellow-billed Kingfisher, but none of them gave us a decent look. Good birds that we did managed to see around Km 8 included: Doria's Goshawk, Purple-tailed & Zoe Imperial Pigeon, Salvadori's Fig-parrot, Yellow-bellied Longbill, Green-backed Gerygone and Golden Myna. Later in the evening we tried the forest patch near Jamil's house again and

after watching Lesser Bird of Paradise at a display tree we had a near miss with the crowned pigeon, just catching one flying out of a tree.

Cassowary became the objective for our next morning as we headed into the flat swampy forest accessed from further along Jalan Korea. There were plenty of fresh tracks everywhere, but this species proved as frustrating and elusive as ever and we didn't see one. We did however disturb a beautiful Victoria Crowned-pigeon from the ground which flew obligingly to low branch giving us great views. In the evening we tried Km 8 again, looking for King BoP, but none wanted to come and display and we had to settle for Sooty Thicket-fantail as the highlight plus a nice view of a Papuan Nightjar from the road on our way back.



Blue-and-Black Kingfisher



Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise



Cassowary footprints!

On our final day we opted to stake out a fruit tree we'd found the day before under which there were lots of fresh cassowary tracks. We gave it a couple of hours from before light, but no sign of any visiting birds. We did managed to see a nice Greater Black Coucal, but that was it. Abandoning the cassowary chase again we headed back to the side trails off Jalan Korea to try and get a better look at Blue-and-black Kingfisher, which after a couple of hours of wandering around we finally did. We also got a nice view of White-eared Catbird in the same area. In the afternoon I headed back to the cassowary trail to see if wandering around on my own was any better, while Rob headed to try for King BoP again. We both missed our targets, but Rob got nice views of Brown-necked Crow and I saw another Greater Black Coucal. After admitting defeat with the cassowary we resolved to spend our last evening trying to see Hook-billed Kingfisher. We tried a couple of places around dusk where we'd heard them calling, but it was at the forest patch near Jamil's house that we finally caught up with one and got a decent look by spotlight. Ending on that note we said our goodbyes and caught our ride back to Sentani the same night.



Shovel-billed Kingfisher



Victoria Crowned Pigeon

Birds recorded at Nimbokrang

- 1 **(Northern Cassowary)** (*Casuarius unappendiculatus*) Dipped again, but twice got very close, including in the forest patch near Pak Jamil's house, where Dance saw one while only standing only a few metres away from us!
- 2 **Intermediate Egret** (*Egretta intermedia*) The commonest egret throughout
- 3 **Glossy Ibis** (*Plegadis falcinellus*) One seen in fields near Nimbokrang village. An unusual sighting in the north.
- 4 **Brahminy Kite** (*Haliastur indus*) Pretty common.
- 5 **Grey Goshawk** (*Accipiter novaehollandiae*) Seen several times.
- 6 **Doria's Goshawk** (*Megatriorchis doriae*) A nice close-range fly-past at Km 8.
- 7 **(Brown-collared Brush-turkey)** (*Talegalla jobiensis*) Not seen, but heard calling in swampy forest off Jl. Korea.
- 8 **(Plain Bush-hen)** (*Amaurornis olivacea*) Heard calling a few times, but not actually seen.
- 9 **Slender-billed Cuckoo-Dove** (*Macropygia amboinensis*) A few times.
- 10 **Emerald Dove** (*Chalcophaps indica*) Seen a couple of times.
- 11 **Cinnamon Ground-Dove** (*Gallinolumba rufigula*) A single bird flushed from a path just off Jl. Korea.
- 12 **Victoria Crowned-Pigeon** (*Goura victoria*) Great views of a low-perched bird just off Jl. Korea. Another seen briefly in the forest patch near Pak Jamil's house.
- 13 **Wompoo Fruit-Dove** (*Ptilinopus magnificus*) Heard and seen once in the forested valley below Km 8.
- 14 **Coroneted Fruit-Dove** (*Ptilinopus coronulatus*) Seen 2-3 times around Jl. Korea.
- 15 **Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove** (*Ptilinopus iozonus*) Probably the commonest pigeon in the area.

- 16 **Dwarf Fruit-Dove** (*Ptilinopus nanus*) Seen twice around Jl. Korea.
- 17 **Purple-tailed Imperial-Pigeon** (*Ducula rufigaster*) Seen once at Km 8.
- 18 **Pinon Imperial-Pigeon** (*Ducula pinon*) A few times around Jl. Korea.
- 19 **Zoe Imperial-Pigeon** (*Ducula zoeae*) Seen a few times at Km 8.
- 20 **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** (*Cacatua galerita*) Seen and heard quite often.
- 21 **Brown Lory** (*Chalcopsitta duivenbodei*) A pair seen from a side trail off Jl. Korea.
- 22 **Rainbow Lorikeet** (*Trichoglossus haematodus*) Seen and heard a few times in flight.
- 23 **Black-capped Lory** (*Lorius lory*) A few times, including in flight.
- 24 **Double-eyed Fig-Parrot** (*Cyclopsitta diophthalma*) A single bird seen in the forest patch near Pak Jamil's house.
- 25 **Salvadori's Fig-Parrot** (*Psittaculirostris salvadorii*) Several times around Km 8.
- 26 **Red-cheeked Parrot** (*Geoffroyus geoffroyi*) Seen and heard a few times.
- 27 **Eclectus Parrot** (*Eclectus roratus*) A few times.
- 28 **Brush Cuckoo** (*Cacomantis variolosus*) Commonly heard.
- 29 **Little Bronze Cuckoo** (*Chrysococcyx minutillus*) A single bird along Jl. Korea.
- 30 **Dwarf Koel** (*Microdynamis parva*) A pair seen from a side trail off Jl. Korea.
- 31 **Asian Koel** (*Eudynamis scolopaceus*) A single bird seen at Km 8.
- 32 **Greater Black Coucal** (*Centropus menbeki*) Seen twice in mature forest off Jl. Korea.
- 33 **Lesser Black Coucal** (*Centropus bernsteini*) Seen a few times in open grass and scrub areas.
- 34 **Papuan Frogmouth** (*Podargus papuensis*) A pair seen roosting just behind Pak Jamil's house. Heard regularly at night elsewhere.
- 35 **Papuan Nightjar** (*Eurostopodus papuensis*) A bird seen well at dusk around Km 8.
- 36 **Large-tailed Nightjar** (*Caprimulgus macrurus*) Commonly heard at night around Nimbokrang.
- 37 **Papuan Needletail** (*Mearnsia novaeguineae*) A few seen along Jl. Korea.
- 38 **Glossy Swiftlet** (*Collocalia esculenta*) Common.
- 39 **Moustached Treeswift** (*Hemiprocne mystacea*) Seen a few times.
- 40 **Variable Kingfisher** (*Ceyx lepidus*) Seen once off Jl. Korea.
- 41 **Rufous-bellied Kookaburra** (*Dacelo gaudichaud*) Seen and heard quite often around Jl. Korea.
- 42 **Shovel-billed Kookaburra** (*Clytoceyx rex*) Excellent views twice in quick succession in a boggy bit at Km 8.
- 43 **Blue-black Kingfisher** (*Todiramphus nigrocyaneus*) Seen briefly once, then a pair well, in forest off Jl. Korea.
- 44 **Sacred Kingfisher** (*Todiramphus sanctus*) Pretty common in open habitat.
- 45 **Hook-billed Kingfisher** (*Melidora macrorrhina*) Heard often, but it took a few days, a tape and a spotlight before we saw one well on our last evening!
- 46 **Yellow-billed Kingfisher** (*Syma torotoro*) Heard a couple of times at Km 8.
- 47 **Rainbow Bee-eater** (*Merops ornatus*) Pretty common in open country.
- 48 **Dollarbird** (*Eurystomus orientalis*) Common in open country.
- 49 **Blyth's Hornbill** (*Aceros plicatus*) Seen regularly around Jl. Korea.
- 50 **Long-billed Honeyeater** (*Melilestes megarhynchus*) Heard a few times, seen well once near Nimbokrang village.
- 51 **Plain Honeyeater** (*Pycnopygius ixoides*) Seen and photographed once from Jl. Korea.
- 52 **Meyer's Friarbird** (*Philemon meyeri*) Seen a couple of times from Jl. Korea.
- 53 **Helmeted Friarbird** (*Philemon buceroides*) Seen a couple of times around Jl. Korea.
- 54 **Boyer's Cuckoo-shrike** (*Coracina boyeri*) Seen at a fruiting tree in the forest patch near Pak Jamil's house.
- 55 **Cicadabird** (*Coracina tenuirostris*) Seen a couple of times around Jl. Korea.
- 56 **Golden Cuckoo-shrike** (*Campochaera sloetii*) A pair seen in the forest patch near Pak Jamil's house.
- 57 **Black-browed Triller** (*Lalage atrovirens*) 2-3 times around Jl. Korea.
- 58 **Brown-headed Crow** (*Corvus fuscicapillus*) Heard calling a few times from Jl. Korea, and seen well once.
- 59 **Grey Crow** (*Corvus tristis*) A small flock seen once along Jl. Korea.
- 60 **Golden Monarch** (*Monarcha chrysomela*) A couple of times at Jl. Korea.
- 61 **Rufous-collared Monarch** (*Arses insularis*) A pair seen from a side trail off Jl. Korea.
- 62 **Hooded Monarch** (*Monarcha manadensis*) Heard calling and seen briefly (flying away!) in forest below Km 8.
- 63 **Shining Flycatcher** (*Myiagra alecto*) Commonly seen and heard.
- 64 **Pacific Swallow** (*Hirundo tahitica*) Pretty common.
- 65 **Tree Martin** (*Petrochelidon nigricans*) A few near Sentani.
- 66 **Golden-headed Cisticola** (*Cisticola exilis*) In agricultural areas around Nimbokrang Village.
- 67 **Northern Fantail** (*Rhipidura rufiventris*) Seen and heard a few times.
- 68 **Willie-wagtail** (*Rhipidura leucophrys*) Seen a few times in open habitat.
- 69 **Sooty Thicket-Fantail** (*Rhipidura threnothorax*) Seen in forest off Km 8.
- 70 **White-bellied Thicket-Fantail** (*Rhipidura leucothorax*) Pretty common around Jl. Korea.
- 71 **Black-sided Robin** (*Poecilodryas hypoleuca*) Nice views of a couple of birds from a side trail off Jl. Korea.
- 72 **Grey Whistler** (*Pachycephala simplex*) Heard off Jl. Korea, but not seen.
- 73 **Rufous Shrike-Thrush** (*Colluricincla megarhyncha*) Commonly heard, and seen well a few times from Jl. Korea.
- 74 **Rusty Pitohui** (*Pitohui ferrugineus*) Flocks of several birds seen on a couple of occasions off Jl. Korea.

- 75 **Rufous Babbler** (*Turdoides subrufa*) Seen from a side trail off Jl. Korea.
- 76 **Blue Jewel-Babbler** (*Ptilorrhoa caerulescens*) A pair seen really well in the valley below Km 8. Awesome birds!
- 77 **White-shouldered Fairywren** (*Malurus alboscapulatus*) 2-3 times, including Km 8.
- 78 **Emperor Fairywren** (*Malurus cyanocephalus*) Seen a few times in forest edge scrub. Nice bird!
- 79 **Rusty Mouse-Warbler** (*Crateroscelis murina*) A roosting bird disturbed and spotlighted at night in the forest patch near Pak Jamil's house.
- 80 **Green-backed Gerygone** (*Gerygone chloronota*) Seen once in a mixed flock at Km 8.
- 81 **Yellow-bellied Gerygone** (*Gerygone chrysogaster*) Seen from a side-trail off Jl. Korea.
- 82 **Black Sunbird** (*Leptocoma sericea*) Seen a few times.
- 83 **Olive-backed Sunbird** (*Cinnyris jugularis*) Pretty common.
- 84 **Yellow-bellied Longbill** (*Toxorhamphus novaeguineae*) Seen once in a mixed flock at Km 8.
- 85 **Spangled Drongo** (*Dicrurus bracteatus*) Seen and heard quite often.
- 86 **Lowland Peltops** (*Peltops blainvillii*) Seen from a side trail off Jl. Korea.
- 87 **Black Butcherbird** (*Cracticus quoyi*) Heard calling around Jl. Korea, but not seen.
- 88 **Glossy-mantled Manucode** (*Manucodia ater*) Seen a few times around Jl. Korea.
- 89 **Jobi Manucode** (*Manucodia jobiensis*) Seen at a fruiting tree in the forest patch near Pak Jamil's house.
- 90 **Pale-billed Sicklebill** (*Epimachus bruijnii*) A displaying male seen from a side trail off Jl. Korea one morning.
- 91 **(King Bird-of-Paradise)** (*Ciccinnurus regius*) Heard calling from Jl. Korea, and Km 8, but not actually seen.
- 92 **Twelve-wired Bird-of-Paradise** (*Seleucidis melanoleucus*) Males seen displaying just off Jl. Korea, females seen at a couple of times off Jl. Korea.
- 93 **Lesser Bird-of-Paradise** (*Paradisaea minor*) Heard often, females and young males seen at a display tree in the forest patch near Pak Jamil's house.
- 94 **White-eared Catbird** (*Ailuroedus buccoides*) Seen once (attracted to a tape) in forest just off Jl. Korea.
- 95 **Golden Myna** (*Mino anais*) Seen in forest around Km 8.
- 96 **Crimson Finch** (*Neochmia phaeton*) A pair of birds seen around the police station in Sentani. Maybe escapes?
- 97 **Streak-headed Munia** (*Lonchura tristissima*) Seen in farmland around Nimbokrang village.

Wamena & Lake Habema

For our trip to the famed Snow Mountains we took the advice of Papua Bird Club and booked our visit through *Putra Papua Tours* in Wamena (Tel: +62 969 31540; Fax: +62 969 31900). This outfit is run by a long-time resident of Wamena, originally from Medan in North Sumatra, Pak Edison. They have a website (www.putrapapuatours.com) and respond quickly to email (info@putrapapuatours.com) or sms/text (+62 813 4414 5427). They don't have any particular bird guides, but this seems to be the case with most operators, and we were not bothered.

Our plan we put to them was to get a ride from Wamena up to Lake Habema, and then to birdwatch our way back down the road. Several trip reports had noted how much potential the road-side forest seemed to hold and so we figured we would investigate. While sites along the Ibele trek (which birders more commonly take) were well known, we hoped we'd be able to find it all ourselves somewhere, and the advantage of birding along a road, and not having the pressure of covering any particular distance each day would be nice.

Plan A was to spend 6 days/5 nights on the road, keeping the car with us all the time. But through a mix up in communication that was my fault, our hosts thought we only wanted dropping at the top, and picking up six days later! When I re-read the emails they had sent, it was actually obvious that this is what they had thought we required, but I had not picked up on it. We quickly fixed this by opting to camp at the top for three nights (at Pondok 3) and then having the car come up for a day to pick us up and move our camp further down the road for the last two nights. This required us to pay a bit more for the extra car pick up, as it hadn't been budgeted, but once settled the arrangement worked out just fine, and ended up considerably cheaper than keeping the car throughout (they told us what that actually would have cost!).

On our first day in Wamena we arrived in the morning and were not due to head up to Habema until the next morning, so in the afternoon Pak Edison arranged for a car to take us to the area around the Baliem Valley Resort (www.baliem-valley-resort.de) near Wamena, where there are some small forest patches. We also visited this area again on our last night. For our first and last night in Wamena we stayed in the Baliem Pilamo Hotel (clean and cheap), and for the rest of the time we camped in a tent we had brought with us.

Pak Edison quoted us an all inclusive price for our visit (aside from the slight mix-up over cars) and he stayed true to his word. We didn't pay for a thing from the time we arrived at the airport until we left! For a

very reasonable price they covered cars, porters, cooks, food, our hotel and restaurant bills in Wamena, fees to the police, army and local villages etc etc. Both Edison and his Sumatran assistant Pak Antoni, who accompanied us throughout, spoke excellent English, so communication would not be a problem for anyone. I would really recommend these guys. There was no arguments over costs and no hidden extras, they were perfectly accommodating, logistically everything went without a hitch, and they also booked all of our internal flights at cost. The total package cost they charged us was also very competitive, compared to what others have paid. They noted all the places we camped and walked looking for birds too, so if anyone wanted to go back and copy any of our arrangements they would know where to go.

Birds & birding areas

Our first afternoon and evening was spent birding around the Baliem Valley Resort. This fancy hotel is about 40 mins drive from Wamena and both the approach to it through wet grassland, and the area around it with scrub and a small patch of forest made for quite interesting birding. On the way we encountered our first Black-breasted Munia and other species seen around the hotel included Golden Whistler, Ornate Melidectes, Buff-faced scrub-wren and Great Woodswallow. Driving back across the wet grasslands at dusk we flushed what may well have been Lewin's Rail, but it didn't stick around long enough for us be sure.

Next morning we headed up towards Lake Habema with our equipment and crew loaded in the back of the 4x4 jeep. While we drove up we tried to scout a location to camp on our way back down. When we entered the area of roadside forest that later became the location for our second camp we stopped and walked for a couple of hours. There were lots of birds about and we were soon ticking away. As we were watching one mixed flock pass alongside the road I suddenly spotted a Papua Whipbird in the undergrowth below the flock. It wasn't clear to me if the bird was with the flock, or was simply disturbed by it, but after a brief close range view it disappeared not to be seen again. This was the only time we saw this species, which remains largely unknown in Papua, despite spending more time in the same area when we descended.

Next we moved a bit further up the road and stopped again near a clearing and pond along the dry forested ridge that the road follows next. This site supported quite a different set of birds, matching the distinctly different habitat. Here we saw our first Orange-billed and Plum-faced Lorikeets, Belford's Melidectes and Brehm's Tiger Parrot. This was also the first, and only time, we saw Brown Sicklebill but the view was a good one of a cracking male in trees bordering the pond. The fruit bushes of the clearing also held a nice Spenidid Astrapia that gave excellent views. As I was sat watching the clearing I then saw a largish, long-tailed black bird with yellow wing flashes and a shaggy yellow crest fly in and start feeding in the open. This was Archbold's Bowerbird, but unlike the illustrated description of birds in the Snow Mountains this one had the full yellow crest said to only be present in birds from elsewhere. This sighting left me a bit confused, not helped by the fact Rob didn't see it at all! We resolved to check this site out again on the way down.



Black-breasted Munia



Plum-faced Lorikeet

We continued the drive up all the way to Lake Habema and then decided to pitch our camp a bit further back at Pondok 3. Our team were not actually familiar with the name 'Pondok 3' but we figured out which hut

(‘pondok’) it must mean from the descriptions in trip reports. The hut lies at the head of the foot trail to Ibele, which drops steeply off the side of the road just as it enters the Habema valley. Our team set off back to pitch camp and we opted to walk down to Lake Habema first and then back on our own. This arrangement got us Salvadori’s Teal with ease (closest duck to the lakeside when I arrived!) and then over the period of the next couple of hours added us Papuan Grassbird, Snow Mountain Partridge, Snow Mountain Munia, Alpine Pipit and various of the high altitude honeyeaters. Later in the evening we took a walk over to the start of the Ibele trek at dusk and got our first views of a very obliging New Guinea Woodcock as it flew around, landed repeatedly and then perched on a dead tree branch in the open! Absolutely no sight or sound of Archbold’s Nightjar however, a theme that was set to continue everywhere we tried!

The next day we opted first to walk back towards the lake, following the roadside forest to look for Macgregor’s ‘Honeyeater-of-Paradise’ (a bad tactic in retrospect, as they subsequently proved easy at the top of the Ibele trek). This got us more views of Snow Mountain Partridge, pipit, grassbird etc, but not a lot else apart from a nice view of Australian Kestrel. After abandoning this we started to explore the start of the Ibele trek and were immediately rewarded with great views of Macgregor’s ‘HoP’! We then spent pretty much all of the next 2 ½ days in the area between the road and the stream (about 1 km down). This general area is absolutely superb for birding and by the time we moved on we had seen such goodies as Northern Logrunner, Chestnut Forest-rail, Wattled Plougbill, Blue Ifrita, Sooty Whistler (a brief encounter with this little known species), Crested Bird of Paradise (including a spectacular male on one occasion, but mostly sightings of female type birds), lots of Lesser Melampitta views, a pair of Torrent Lark feeding along the stream, White-winged Robin and Brehm’s and Painted Tiger-parrot.

For our move to lower altitudes we decided to set off on foot and let the car meet us on the way down around lunch time. The first part of the road climbs from Pondok 3 and it’s a bit of a killer in the thin air. However the birding got very good at about the highest point of the road when we had Sooty Melidectes, plenty of Mountain Robins, Macgregor’s BoP again, Crimson Firetails on the road and Modest Tiger Parrot. We also tried a tape here for Greater Ground Robin, having had no response over the past few days on the Ibele trail. To our surprise one called back immediately from the scrubby undergrowth of the dry open forest, and inside of a few minutes it had hopped straight over and gave us superb views as it hopped on and off of fallen logs in full sunlight! We could still hear the bird calling from far above us after we began descending again!



Macgregor’s ‘Bird-of-Paradise’



Lesser Melampitta

After quite a lot of walking we emerged at the pond at which we had stopped on the way up. As we approached Rob saw a female type Archbold’s Bowerbird fly across the road and minutes later he got us on the same male bird I had seen on the way up; black with yellow wing flashes and a yellow crest. It called a couple of times then flew across the road into thick cover not to be seen again. I decided to head into the forest after it, and while I didn’t see the male again, I did have a female type bird fly right past me in the forest; a more brown toned bird with buffish coloured wing flashes (rather than yellow) and no crest. We also heard Brown Sicklebill here again, but didn’t see it. After this we headed down by car to the spot we’d

picked for our second camp. In the evening we took a walk around trying to scout out options for finding King-of-Saxony BoP the next morning. We could see a nicely forested valley below the road, and some local hunters we spoke to said our target was present there, so after we found what appeared to be a small trail down we waited until the next day to explore it.



Wattled Ploughbill



Greater Ground-robin

Setting off early we made our way to the trail head, then down along it. It wasn't especially clear at first with many small paths crossing it, but it soon became clearer and the forest condition got better and better. As we neared the valley bottom we heard King-of-Saxony BoP calling so we knew things were looking good. At the bottom we found a rocky stream bed with no water – ideal for walking silently along – and within a few minutes we found our first BoP singing from an exposed branch high above the stream. Very nice and my 1000th Indonesian tick! Other good birds seen at this altitude (in the valley and along the road) included Blue-grey Robin, Goldie's Lorikeet, White-breasted Fruit-Dove and Papuan Mountain-Pigeon, Madarasz's Tiger-Parrot, Papuan Boobook (several calling at night), Stout-billed & Black-bellied Cuckoo-shrike, Lesser Ground-Robin, Rufous-naped Whistler, Lorentz's Whistler, Slaty-chinned Longbill, Mountain Peltops and Superb Bird-of-Paradise (a female, once).



Goldie's Lorikeet



Papuan Harrier

On our last morning we got the car to drop us further back up the road and we then walked back down, completing a full walk of the road! We then headed back to Wamena and after a welcome wash we headed back to the Baliem Valley Resort for our last evening. This got us Papua Harrier on the way, but didn't add anything else new. Early the next morning we said our goodbyes and headed to Biak via a flight to Sentani.



The road from Wamena to Lake Habema, showing location of camp sites (GPS track log of road from MdB).

Birds recorded Wamena/Habema

- 1 **Salvadori's Teal** (*Salvadorina waigiuiensis*) One seen well near the shore of Lake Habema. More probably present.
- 2 **Snow Mountain Quail** (*Anurophasis monorthonyx*) Several flushed and a couple seen well on the ground in grassland between Pondok 3 and Lake Habema.
- 3 **Eastern Marsh-Harrier** (*Circus spilonotus*) Aka Papuan Harrier. An adult female and a juvenile seen at close range near Wamena town.
- 4 **Australian Kestrel** (*Falco cenchroides*) A single bird seen from Pondok 3.
- 5 **Chestnut Forest-Rail** (*Rallina rubra*) A pair seen in moss forest near the top of the footpath to Ibele.
- 6 **Eurasian Coot** (*Fulica atra*) A few present on Lake Habema.
- 7 **Dusky Woodcock** (*Scolopax saturata*) Aka. New Guinea Woodcock. A bird seen repeatedly at the top of the trail to Ibele below Pondok 3. Seen in flight, on the ground and perched on a dead tree!
- 8 **Black-billed Cuckoo-Dove** (*Macropygia nigrirostris*) Seen in the forest valley below Camp 2
- 9 **Great Cuckoo-Dove** (*Reinwardtoena reinwardtii*) A pair seen in the forest valley below Camp 2.
- 10 **White-breasted Fruit-Dove** (*Ptilinopus rivoli*) Seen in forest by the track just above Camp 2.
- 11 **Papuan Mountain-Pigeon** (*Gymnophaps albertisii*) Seen quite commonly in forest near Camp 2.
- 12 **Goldie's Lorikeet** (*Psittuteles goldiei*) Pretty common in forest around Camp 2.
- 13 **Papuan Lorikeet** (*Chamosyna papou*) Black-morph birds seen regularly in forest low down on the track.
- 14 **Plum-faced Lorikeet** (*Oreopsittacus arfaki*) Common in forest high up along the track and below Pondok 3.
- 15 **Yellow-billed Lorikeet** (*Neopsittacus musschenbroekii*) Seen a couple of times from the track high up.
- 16 **Orange-billed Lorikeet** (*Neopsittacus pullicauda*) Common in forest high up on the track and around Pondok 3.
- 17 **Painted Tiger-Parrot** (*Psittacella picta*) Seen once in moss forest at the start of the Ibele path below Pondok 3.
- 18 **Brehm's Tiger-Parrot** (*Psittacella brehmii*) Seen a few times from high up on the track and below Pondok 3.
- 19 **Modest Tiger-Parrot** (*Psittacella modesta*) Seen once from the track between Pondok 3 and the pond.
- 20 **Madarasz's Tiger-Parrot** (*Psittacella madaraszii*) Seen only once in the forest valley below Camp 2.
- 21 **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*) Seen two times from the track between the pond and Camp 2.
- 22 **Jungle Hawk-Owl** (*Ninox theomacha*) Aka Papuan Boobook. Several calling at night around Camp 2. Seen once.
- 23 **Glossy Swiftlet** (*Collocalia esculenta*) Common, including the very cool montane *erwini* race.
- 24 **Mountain Swiftlet** (*Aerodramus hirundinaceus*) Common high up.
- 25 **Mountain Kingfisher** (*Syma megarhyncha*) Seen once in forest along the track near Camp 2.
- 26 **Red-collared Myzomela** (*Myzomela rosenbergii*) Very common.
- 27 **Black-throated Honeyeater** (*Lichenostomus subfrenatus*) Seen only once, but probably heard more.
- 28 **Orange-cheeked Honeyeater** (*Oreornis chrysogenys*) Common high up at the tree-line.
- 29 **Black-backed Honeyeater** (*Ptiloprora perstriata*) Seen quite a few times at all altitudes.
- 30 **Sooty Melidectes** (*Melidectes fuscus*) Seen only once near the highest point on the track.
- 31 **Short-bearded Melidectes** (*Melidectes nouhuysi*) Common in forest and forest-edge high up.
- 32 **Belford's Melidectes** (*Melidectes belfordi*) Pretty common in dry forest around the middle of the track.
- 33 **Ornate Melidectes** (*Melidectes torquatus*) Seen a couple of times near the Baliem Resort Hotel.
- 34 **Smoky Honeyeater** (*Melipotes fumigatus*) Common at all altitudes.
- 35 **Macgregor's Honeyeater** (*Macgregoria pulchra*) Aka. Macgregor's Bird-of-Paradise. Birds seen regularly at the top of the Ibele path near Pondok 3, also seen along the track near the highest point.

- 36 **Crested Satinbird** (*Cnemophilus macgregorii*) Aka. Crested Bird-of-Paradise. Females and perhaps immature males seen a couple of times in mossy forest at the start of the Ibele path below Pondok 3. A spectacular adult male seen once in the same location. Nice looking bird!
- 37 **Stout-billed Cuckoo-shrike** (*Coracina caeruleo-grisea*) Seen two times in forest along the track near Camp 2.
- 38 **Black-bellied Cuckoo-shrike** (*Coracina montana*) Seen two times in forest along the track quite low down.
- 39 **Black-breasted Boatbill** (*Machaerirhynchus nigripectus*) Seen near Camp 2 a few times.
- 40 **Island Leaf-Warbler** (*Phylloscopus poliocephalus*) Pretty common low down.
- 41 **Tawny Grassbird** (*Megalurus timoriensis*) Aka. Papuan Grassbird. Seen a few times in grassland between Pondok 3 and Lake Habema.
- 42 **Pied Bushchat** (*Saxicola caprata*) Pretty common around Wamena town.
- 43 **Island Thrush** (*Turdus poliocephalus*) Very common high up around grassland.
- 44 **Friendly Fantail** (*Rhipidura albolimbata*) Very common.
- 45 **Black Fantail** (*Rhipidura atra*) 2-3 times in forest around Camp 2.
- 46 **Dimorphic Fantail** (*Rhipidura brachyrhyncha*) A couple of times low down on the track.
- 47 **Greater Ground-Robin** (*Amalocichla sclateriana*) A single bird calling in the undergrowth of dry forest at the highest point of the track above Pondok 3. Attracted to tape playback gave amazing views.
- 48 **Lesser Ground-Robin** (*Amalocichla incerta*) Heard regularly low down, especially in the valley below Camp 2.
- 49 **Canary Flycatcher** (*Microeca papuana*) A few times in forest near Camp 2.
- 50 **Alpine Robin** (*Petroica bivittata*) Aka. Mountain Robin. Pretty common along high sections of the track.
- 51 **White-winged Robin** (*Peneothello sigillata*) Seen quite often from the track high up, and in the below Pondok 3.
- 52 **Blue-gray Robin** (*Peneothello cyanus*) Seemed quite common in forest low down around Camp 2.
- 53 **Rufous-naped Whistler** (*Aleadryas rufinucha*) Seen a couple of times in forest near Camp 2.
- 54 **Golden Whistler** (*Pachycephala pectoralis*) The very nice looking Baliem valley race. Seen well around the Baliem Resort Hotel.
- 55 **Lorentz's Whistler** (*Pachycephala lorentzi*) Regularly seen in dry forest high up on the track.
- 56 **Sooty Shrike-Thrush** (*Colluricincla umbrina*) Aka. Sooty Whistler. A single bird seen in mossy forest at the start of the Ibele path below Pondok 3.
- 57 **Wattled Ploughbill** (*Eulacestoma nigropectus*) Great views in moss forest at the start of the Ibele path.
- 58 **Capped White-eye** (*Zosterops fuscicapilla*) Aka. Western Mountain White-eye. Seen a few times near Camp 2.
- 59 **Northern Logrunner** (*Orthonyx novaeguineae*) Aka New Guinea Logrunner. A pair seen in mossy forest at the start of the Ibele path below Pondok 3. Mega birds.
- 60 **Papuan Whippbird** (*Androphobus viridis*) A single bird seen in forest near the track above Camp 2 in the understory but seemingly associating with a mixed flock.
- 61 **Blue-capped Ifrita** (*Ifrita kowaldi*) Seen once in the mossy forest at the start of the Ibele track below Pondok 3.
- 62 **White-shouldered Fairywren** (*Malurus alboscapulatus*) A few times.
- 63 **Mountain Mouse-Warbler** (*Crateroscelis robusta*) Heard a few times around Camp 2.
- 64 **Large Scrubwren** (*Sericornis nouhuysi*) A few times in forest below Pondok 3.
- 65 **Buff-faced Scrubwren** (*Sericornis perspicillatus*) The commonest scrubwren in forest low down around Camp 2. Also seen near the Baliem Resort Hotel.
- 66 **Papuan Scrubwren** (*Sericornis papuensis*) Common in the forest at the top of the Ibele path below Pondok 3.
- 67 **Papuan Thornbill** (*Acanthiza murina*) A few times in the forest at the top of the Ibele path below Pondok 3.
- 68 **Mountain Gerygone** (*Gerygone cinerea*) Seen a couple of times in forest high up.
- 69 **Brown-breasted Gerygone** (*Gerygone ruficollis*) Seen regularly in forest around Camp 2.
- 70 **Black Sittella** (*Neositta miranda*) Groups of birds seen a couple of times from the path high up and low down.
- 71 **Papuan Treecreeper** (*Cormobates placens*) Seen 2-3 times low down near Camp 2.
- 72 **Fan-tailed Berrypecker** (*Melanocharis versteri*) Seen a couple of times in the forested valley below Camp 2.
- 73 **Spotted Berrypecker** (*Melanocharis crassirostris*) A female seen once from the track high up close to Pondok 3.
- 74 **Slaty-chinned Longbill** (*Toxorhamphus poliopterus*) Seen once in forest near Camp 2.
- 75 **Tit Berrypecker** (*Oreocharis arfaki*) Heard and briefly seen a few times, seen well only once!
- 76 **Crested Berrypecker** (*Paramythia montium*) Pretty common high up.
- 77 **Olive-crowned Flowerpecker** (*Dicaeum pectorale*) A few times low down on the track.
- 78 **Torrent-Lark** (*Grallina bruijini*) A pair seen well perched and feeding along the stream reached by descending the Ibele path from Pondok 3.
- 79 **Great Woodswallow** (*Artamus maximus*) Seen once, near the pond, and again at the Baliem Resort.
- 80 **Mountain Peltops** (*Peltops montanus*) Seen once in forest near Camp 2.
- 81 **Splendid Astrapia** (*Astrapia splendidissima*) Seen quite often at all altitudes, mostly females, but a couple of males seen well twice.
- 82 **King-of-Saxony Bird-of-paradise** (*Pteridophora alberti*) Several birds calling and one seen well calling from the top of a tree in the forested valley below Camp 2. A female and a young male also seen separately in the same location later.
- 83 **Superb Bird-of-Paradise** (*Lophorina superba*) Heard and a female seen once near Camp 2.

- 84 **Brown Sicklebill** (*Epimachus meyeri*) A cracking male seen very well once near the pond, and not seen again!
- 85 **Lesser Melampitta** (*Melampitta lugubris*) Pretty common in suitable dark, damp forest at all altitudes.
- 86 **Archbold's Bowerbird** (*Archboldia papuensis*) Males, with a full yellow crest seen twice at the pond. Once feeding in the open in low bushes. Females/young males (without a crest) seen on two occasions in the same location. Heard calling here also.
- 87 **Alpine Pipit** (*Anthus gutturalis*) Quite common around Pondok 3 and upper sections of the track.
- 88 **Mountain Firetail** (*Oreostruthus fuliginosus*) Seen most often along the track near the highest point. Also in forest below Pondok 3.
- 89 **Black-breasted Munia** (*Lonchura teerinki*) Flocks seen a few times around Wamena town.
- 90 **Snow Mountain Munia** (*Lonchura montana*) Small flocks a few times between Pondok 3 and Lake Habema.

Biak

This was my second trip to Biak, and Rob's first, so for me was a mission to see the things I missed last time: the coucal, the monarch and the scrubfowl. We again concentrated around the two sites described in my previous trip report, but explored a bit further along both roads and wandered further down side trails. We stayed at the Hotel Arumbai in the town centre (Tel: +62-981-21835; Fax: +62-981-22501; www.arumbaihotel.com; around Rp 250,000/night), and hired Pak Simon again as a driver (+62 852 4462 6675). While you can probably get a car for less, I like the guy, and the few extra dollars are well compensated by not having to explain the art of birdwatching to the uninitiated!

Our first afternoon was spent at Site 2, where we quite quickly saw most of the 'regular' endemics including Long-tailed Starling, Biak Black Flycatcher, Biak Paradise-kingfisher and Biak Lory, but no monarch or coucal. Next morning we resumed at the same location, and again no sign of the monarch or the coucal. We did get nice views of Geelvink Pygmy-parrot, however, and I was lucky to get a brief look at a Bare-eyed Rail in a swampy bit of forest just off the road. That evening we tried the nearer site, Site 1, where Biak Monarch has also been seen recently. This didn't produce the monarch for us, but we did finally get an excellent view of a Biak Coucal after we disturbed one from ground-level undergrowth near the road, and got to watch as it made its way up a tree at the forest edge before disappearing back into the canopy beyond.



Geelvink Pygmy Parrot



Golden Monarch

Next morning we were back once again at Site 2. We started around the area of the owls (that we didn't see on this trip) and tried many side trails. We both managed further sightings of the coucal but by almost noon still no monarch. We moved a bit further along the road and tried another side trail, probably our last of the morning, and this time struck lucky; we stumbled onto a family party of Biak Monarch with two young birds. Delighted (and relieved!) we stayed and watched the birds for ages as they didn't seem to want to move far away. After about half an hour, we suddenly became aware that there was something walking along the ground under them; a 'Biak' Scrubfowl! Double whammy! After all this action our last evening along the road at Site 1 was a much more relaxed affair, simply making the most of the nice views of the pigeons that can be had here, and adding Biak Gerygone in the road-side scrub.



Biak Black Flycatcher



Biak Monarch

In between birding we also drove around a bit looking for other interesting places. One area that did look quite promising was a road loop that heads around the extreme east end of the island and can be seen clearly on Google Earth. This passed alongside some quite nice looking forest and then entered a strange flooded area apparently caused by a tsunami some years ago. This was followed by a large area of mangrove. All of these areas could be interesting to explore some more.

Birds recorded on Biak

- 1 **Dusky Scrubfowl** (*Megapodius freycinet*) Aka. Biak Scrubfowl. A single bird seen walking quietly by at close range while we were stopped admiring Biak Monarch!
- 2 **Intermediate Egret** (*Egretta intermedia*) A few seen around the place.
- 3 **Striated Heron** (*Butorides striata*) A few seen in the swampy bit near Site 2.
- 4 **Pacific Baza** (*Aviceda subcristata*) Seen a couple of times at Site 2.
- 5 **Long-tailed Honey-Buzzard** (*Henicoperinis longicauda*) A single bird seen perched in forest at Site 2.
- 6 **Brahminy Kite** (*Haliastur indus*) A few in coastal areas.
- 7 **Grey Goshawk** (*Accipiter novaehollandiae*) Seen once at Site 2.
- 8 **Bare-eyed Rail** (*Gymnocrex plumbeiventris*) A single bird seen in a swampy bit of forest just off the road at Site 2.
- 9 **Plain Bush-hen** (*Amaurornis olivacea*) Heard calling a couple of times.
- 10 **Slender-billed Cuckoo-Dove** (*Macropygia amboinensis*) Seen a couple of times at Site 2.
- 11 **Great Cuckoo-Dove** (*Reinwardtoena reinwardtii*) A few fly-by's at Site 2
- 12 **Stephan's Dove** (*Chalcophaps stephani*) Seen a few times along the road at Site 1 and Site 2.
- 13 **Yellow-bibbed Fruit-Dove** (*Ptilinopus solomonensis*) Seen at both Site 1 and Site 2.
- 14 **Claret-breasted Fruit-Dove** (*Ptilinopus viridis*) Pretty common at both sites.
- 15 **Spice Imperial-Pigeon** (*Ducula myristicivora*) Seen at both sites, but most easily at Site 1 near dusk.
- 16 **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** (*Cacatua galerita*) Quite commonly seen and heard at both sites.
- 17 **Black-winged Lory** (*Eos cyanogenia*) Often seen in flight, but also seen perched at Site 2.
- 18 **Rainbow Lorikeet** (*Trichoglossus haematodus*) Aka. Shawl-covered Lorikeet. Seen flying over a couple of times.
- 19 **Black-capped Lory** (*Lorius lorry*) 2 flew over the road at Site 2
- 20 **Geelvink Pygmy-Parrot** (*Micropsitta geelvinkiana*) Seen about three times, at both sites. Seemed to be attracted by squeaking noises!
- 21 **Red-cheeked Parrot** (*Geoffroyus geoffroyi*) Seen and heard a few times at both sites.
- 22 **Eclectus Parrot** (*Eclectus roratus*) Heard and seen quite regularly.
- 23 **Brush Cuckoo** (*Cacomantis variolosus*) Heard a few times.
- 24 **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** (*Chrysococcyx lucidus*) A single bird seen and photographed alongside the road at Site 2.
- 25 **Biak Coucal** (*Centropus chalybeus*) Seen well three times. Once at Site 1, and twice at Site 2. Also heard calling several times at Site 2.
- 26 **Papuan Frogmouth** (*Podargus papuensis*) Heard calling in forest at Site 2 at night.
- 27 **Large-tailed Nightjar** (*Caprimulgus macrurus*) Calling in forest at Site 2 at sunset.
- 28 **Glossy Swiftlet** (*Collocalia esculenta*) Common.
- 29 **Uniform Swiftlet** (*Aerodramus vanikorensis*) Commonly seen.
- 30 **Moustached Treeswift** (*Hemiprocne mystacea*) Seen once or twice.
- 31 **Sacred Kingfisher** (*Todiramphus sanctus*) Pretty common in open country.

- 32 **Biak Paradise-Kingfisher** (*Tanysiptera riedelii*) Seen and heard quite a few times from forest trails off the road at Site 2. Seen once at Site 1.
- 33 **Rainbow Bee-eater** (*Merops ornatus*) A few times in open country.
- 34 **Dollarbird** (*Eurystomus orientalis*) A couple of times in open country.
- 35 **Dusky Myzomela** (*Myzomela obscura*) Seen once along forest edge at Site 1.
- 36 **Cicadabird** (*Coracina tenuirostris*) Seen twice along the road at Site 2.
- 37 **Black-browed Triller** (*Lalage atrovirens*) Seen a couple of times.
- 38 **Torresian Crow** (*Corvus orru*) Seen at Site 2.
- 39 **Biak Monarch** (*Monarcha brehmii*) Awesome. A family of four found after much searching. Contender for bird of the trip! Found along a side trail off the main road at Site 2.
- 40 **Golden Monarch** (*Monarcha chrysomela*) Seen at both sites on several occasions.
- 41 **Biak Flycatcher** (*Myiagra atra*) Seen and heard quite often at both sites (but mostly Site 2).
- 42 **Shining Flycatcher** (*Myiagra alecto*) Pretty common by voice, seen less frequently at both sites.
- 43 **Pacific Swallow** (*Hirundo tahitica*) Seen quite often.
- 44 **Northern Fantail** (*Rhipidura rufiventris*) Seen and heard commonly in forest at both sites.
- 45 **Willie-wagtail** (*Rhipidura leucophrys*) Regularly seen in open country.
- 46 **Biak White-eye** (*Zosterops mysorensis*) Seen only once in poor scrub at Site 1.
- 47 **Emperor Fairywren** (*Malurus cyanocephalus*) Seen in forest and forest edge at Site 2.
- 48 **Biak Gerygone** (*Gerygone hypoxantha*) Seen by Rob in forest off the road at Site 2.
- 49 **Black Sunbird** (*Leptocoma sericea*) Common.
- 50 **Olive-backed Sunbird** (*Cinnyris jugularis*) Common.
- 51 **Red-capped Flowerpecker** (*Dicaeum geelvinkianum*) Seen along roads at both sites.
- 52 **Spangled Drongo** (*Dicrurus bracteatus*) A few times.
- 53 **Hooded Butcherbird** (*Cracticus cassicus*) Seen and heard often at both sites.
- 54 **Metallic Starling** (*Aplonis metallica*) Seen regularly at both sites.
- 55 **Long-tailed Starling** (*Aplonis magna*) Seen regularly at both sites.
- 56 **Sooty-headed Bulbul** (*Pycnonotus aurigaster*) Once at Site 1. Presumably an escape.
- 57 **Eurasian Tree Sparrow** (*Passer montanus*) Common around town and airport.

Merauke & Wasur National Park

Wasur National Park is a vast area of forest, swamp forest, savannah and wetland in the far south-east corner of Papua. It is bordered by the sea to the south and PNG to the east and is as far away as you can get from Jakarta while staying in Indonesia! It lies within the Trans-Fly region of New Guinea and both the habitat and birds have much in common with northern Australia only 200 km to the south. The site is very seasonal, with both a pronounced wet and dry season, and a pronounced bird migration season to match. The dry season starts from around late-June/July and runs for a few months. This is the time that Australian migrants peak also. Before July getting around in the interior of the park can be very difficult as vast areas become flooded. From June/July things start drying out and access becomes easier. By August/September the place is pretty dry and even the most remote corners of the park can be visited by trail bike or 4x4. My visit was a bit early for easy access to the remote savannahs and wetlands, and so for this reason I decided to concentrate more on forest birds and regional resident specialities, and resolved to simply come back in September or October to see the full range of savannah and waterbird migrants!

I'd wanted to visit this area for a long time, however I could find almost no information on the region in advance, and only one short trip report which gave no site or logistic information. As the region is dominated by a National Park, I decided I would simply present myself at the park office and see what I could arrange from there. I was hoping that they might be able to put me in touch with a local guide who could take me around. I managed to find the mobile phone number of one of the park staff before I arrived from an Indonesia friend, and so sent an sms from Biak to announce my impending arrival. Somewhat to my surprise my contact, Pak Yarman, immediately volunteered to meet me at the airport! From there he drove me to the nearby park office and within a couple of hours of diplomatic chatting, including to the park head, I was fully equipped with all the letters of permission ('*simaksi*') to enter the park, an offer to be driven to one of the national park outposts at Ndalir, plus an offer of accommodation, food and a guide! After a night at Ndalir my hosts offered to drive me around to another park outpost near Wasur village where the habitat and birding might be different. After a night at the Wasur post, my hosts next offered to take me camping right into the forest near Yanggandur, and duly provided all the food, equipment and porters we might need! After three days of this they drove me back to town and set me up for my last night in a cheap boarding

house next to the airport and said farewell! In three days the only money the park asked from me was Rp 17,000 (less than \$2) for the official cost of the Simaksi and stamp, and that was it!! In the end I did offer some money to two of the guys that had helped me the most (\$20 each) and I offered to fill the car up with gas once, and bought everyone dinner in a cheap restaurant twice. While it was probably the understanding that I would offer something, the subject was never even hinted at. This was real hospitality by the park.



Merauke and Wasur National Park. Detail of blue boxes below.



Detail of Ndair Post area



Detail of Yanggandur Camp area

While there I talked a bit with the park guys about what anyone else turning up to go birdwatching at Wasur should do, and they said that anyone should simply contact the park office (in advance, or on arrival) and they would help make all arrangements. The park office address is: Jalan Garuda Leproseri No. 3, Mopah Lama, Merauke, 99611, Papua, Indonesia (Tel: +62-971-325407; Email: info@wasur.com). The two contacts I made were: Pak Yarman: +62-811-488-672 & Pak Amin: +62-812-488-8680. Both Pak Yarman and Pak Amin are heads of sections of the park, and so are well placed to make any arrangements required. Of the two I would recommend contacting Pak Amin the most. He was genuinely enthusiastic about birdwatching, kept his own list, enjoyed getting out into wild habitat and knew lots of sites. Pak Yarman was also incredibly helpful to me, but is perhaps a bit less knowledgeable about birds and a bit less enthusiastic about getting out into mosquito infested swamps!

I spent most of my time in Wasur staying at National Park outposts which are pretty basic (the floor), so a sleeping mat and mosquito net are useful. I also camped one night in the forest, using an old wooden shelter for cover so again the mat and mosquito net sufficed. For my last night I stayed in a small hotel/boarding house right next to the airport. It didn't seem to have a sign outside so its hard giving directions to it! It was about the fourth or fifth house along on the left along the road that lead into town away from the airport. It was very clean and the owners very hospitable, plus it was only Rp 150,000 a night, and within 2 mins walking distance of the airport (and close to the park HQ too).

Birds and birding areas

Wasur is bird paradise! There are birds everywhere. My first couple of days and first night were spend at Ndalir, about an hour from Merauke along the coastal road (track). The variety of habitat made for a constant supply of birds. In front of Ndalir is a large expanse of tidal mudflat and sand that held large numbers of migrant waders and waterbirds. Directly behind Ndalir are areas of Mangrove, open 'melaleuca' or paper-bark forest (savannah-like forest dominated by one tree species with an undergrowth dominated by grasses), thickets of dense monsoon forest, open wetlands and reedbeds. Around the village and coastal road there are also areas of scrub and dry grassland. I birdwatched from dawn to dusk without stopping and after a day and a half was still adding new species at a rapid rate. I Found the melaleuca, monsoon forest patches and mangrove particularly productive, with some great mixed species flocks including honeyeaters and flycatchers, including Black-faced and Rufous Monarch, Mangrove Fantail, Fairy Gerygone, Beccari's Scrub-wren, and some of the regional honeyeaters such as White-throated, Rufous-banded and Brown-backed. This is also where I first encountered the impressively large Blue-winged Kookaburra.

Around the wetland areas I saw plenty of ibis and had one close encounter with a impressive Black-necked Stork. Wetland bird numbers were just starting to build at the time of my visit, so there were not yet large numbers of ducks and Magpie Geese. My hosts told me that the best sites for these, and also for open savannah species such as Australian Bustard and Brolga, were deeper into the park. They gave me the option to try and reach some of these areas, despite the access potentially being difficult (talk of walking through waist deep water and horses came up!). Instead I decided to leave wetlands and savannahs to another trip and to head inland to more dry forest to try for some of the other stuff on my 'most wanted' list including Greater BoP, Southern Cassowary, Southern Crowned Pigeon and several other forest species.

After Ndalir my hosts drove me back to Merauke and from there we headed to the park outpost at Wasur Village. This outpost is at the border of the park where the main (and only) road enters the park heading for the PNG border at the town of Sota. The post is only around 20 mins from the airport/park office. The area around the Wasur post is dominated on the park side by Melaleuca forest with many pools and ponds. Outside the park the land is dominated by open grassland, scrub and some cultivation. In the morning I took a short walk along the road and added a few new species in the melaleuca, but then opted to explore some of the areas outside the park in the hope of adding some open country species, in particular the regionally endemic munias and Little Corella. This didn't go as well as I'd hoped, and despite finding a few flocks of Crimson Finch I failed to find a single munia or corella. It seemed the area I was exploring had recently harvested all of its rice, so all I could find were uninviting flooded stubble fields. At another time I imagine the same area could be much more productive. After abandoning the scrub and grassland I caught a ride back to the Wasur post where my hosts had offered to take me camping to a big patch of monsoon forest in the interior of the park. We caught a ride in a park jeep to the drop off point and then walked around 3km through open melaleuca forest until we got to the forest. A little way into the forest we came across an old clearing with some huts and shelters and a few crops being grown. This was our home for the next day and a half.

As soon as we arrived we could hear the calls of Greater Bird-of-Paradise from all around the clearing, and it didn't take long to get great views of the distinct females and several young males. The clearing also proved to be a great place to see parrots and after a while I'd also added Black Cockatoo, Dusky Lory, Rainbow and Red-flanked Lorikeet. In the late afternoon we headed out to explore some of the small trails into the forest. It wasn't long before we started seeing cassowary tracks so I knew I was in the right place. Having dipped Northern Cassowary at Nimbokrang I was pretty keen to see Southern Cassowary here. Wasur had a massive advantage over Nimbokrang for stalking cassowary in that it was much drier and so you could move about

almost silently (no wading through mud and water!). Within about an hour I'd had my first brief encounter, a split second view of a bird's head in thick undergrowth. While I very happy with this, I wasn't satisfied yet! No more encounters with Cassowary that evening, but I did manage to get another species very high up on my hit list, Painted Quail-thrush. This species is largely unknown on the Indonesian side of New Guinea but I figured the location and habitat should be about right and so repeatedly played a tape to see if I could coax one into calling back, and I got lucky! The call wasn't identical to the one I was playing, so I quickly made a recording and switched to that. Before long the bird went silent, and a few seconds later I spotted it making its way along the floor towards me, amazing views of a fine looking male from only a few metres away followed. Later that evening we tried for owls around the clearing but nothing much wanted to play with us; just Papuan Frogmouth and distant Barking Owl.



'Melaleuca' Forest



Accommodation in the forest near Yanggandur

In the morning we tried another site about 4 km away from our camp where some local hunters we met said there was Southern Crowned Pigeon. The site was monsoon forest along a muddy stream, merging into full-on swamp forest. After a couple of hours of crawling around in this we'd come across hundreds of cassowary tracks and had a few near misses with the birds themselves, but no crowned pigeon. We did flush a beautiful rufous-phase Marbled Frogmouth onto a low branch where it sat for two minutes only metres away from us. This was a real treat as this is not an easy species to see anywhere. Next we decided to head back to our original forest patch and I set out on my own along a small forest stream where the hunters said crowned pigeon are occasionally seen. Again no pigeon this time, but I did get a very close encounter with a Forest Bittern, flushed up from the stream onto a low branch. This was an unexpected encounter with a bird that is extremely hard to see in Indonesia (or anywhere, come to that!). About an hour later, along the same stream, I then had the encounter with a cassowary that I'd been hoping for when I disturbed a 5 ft high monster of an adult from the stream and watched it as it stalked carefully away into the forest in full view. Amazing.

In the afternoon we headed back to town by catching a ride on a passing truck, and adding Spangled Kookaburra and Australian Magpie from the back of it as we passed along the road lined by flooded melaleuca forest! Back in town I took a walk around some scrubby grassland near the airport in the evening in a last ditch attempt to add the munias, but dipped again. Next morning I flew out on the one daily Merpati flight thanking my hosts for their hospitality, reeling with all the birds I'd seen and vowing to come back again for the ones I'd missed. I would thoroughly recommend adding Wasur onto a Papua itinerary if you are coming this way!

Birds recorded Merauke and Wasur

- 1 **Southern Cassowary** (*Casuarus casuarius*) One seen briefly, and another 5 ft giant of an adult seen well walking away from a small forest stream; in the forest patch near Yanggandur, where many tracks were present.
- 2 **Wandering Whistling-Duck** (*Dendrocygna arcuata*) A flock seen flying over the marsh behind Ndalir.
- 3 **Orange-footed Scrubfowl** (*Megapodius reinwardt*) Seen and heard quite frequently in forest around both Ndalir and Yanggandur.
- 4 **Australian Pelican** (*Pelecanus conspicillatus*) Several on the mudflats at Ndalir.

- 5 **Little Black Cormorant** (*Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*) Seen several times within the park.
- 6 **Little Pied Cormorant** (*Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*) Seen once within the park.
- 7 **Black Bittern** (*Ixobrychus flavicollis*) Several flushed from the roadside near Kampung Wasur.
- 8 **Forest Bittern** (*Zonerodius heliosylus*) A single bird flushed up onto a low tree branch from a small forest stream within the closed-canopy forest patch near Yanggandur. An unexpected but very nice sighting of a rarely seen bird.
- 9 **Great Egret** (*Ardea alba*) Seen frequently on small pools and streams inside and outside the park.
- 10 **Intermediate Egret** (*Egretta intermedia*) Probably the commonest egret, both inside and outside the park.
- 11 **Little Egret** (*Egretta garzetta*) Seen numerous times inside and outside the park (mostly outside).
- 12 **Pied Heron** (*Egretta picata*) Very common around Ndalir.
- 13 **Striated Heron** (*Butorides striata*) Seen several times in suitable habitat both inside and outside the park.
- 14 **Rufous Night-Heron** (*Nycticorax caledonicus*) One evening fly-past at Ndalir.
- 15 **Glossy Ibis** (*Plegadis falcinellus*) Lots present, especially around Ndalir.
- 16 **Australian Ibis** (*Threskiornis molucca*) Lots present, especially around Ndalir.
- 17 **Royal Spoonbill** (*Platalea regia*) Only seen once, flying past the post at Ndalir.
- 18 **Black-necked Stork** (*Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*) One flushed from open marshland behind Ndalir.
- 19 **Pacific Baza** (*Aviceda subcristata*) Seen a couple of times near the Wasur Post.
- 20 **Whistling Kite** (*Haliastur sphenurus*) Seen frequently around the marshland behind Ndalir, and a few other places.
- 21 **Brahminy Kite** (*Haliastur indus*) Common inside and outside the park.
- 22 **White-bellied Sea-Eagle** (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) Great views of these birds fishing around Ndalir.
- 23 **Swamp Harrier** (*Circus approximans*) Two birds seen quartering over grassland near Merauke town.
- 24 **Grey Goshawk** (*Accipiter novaehollandiae*) Seen a couple of times inside the park.
- 25 **Spotless Crake** (*Porzana tabuensis*) Two birds seen at dusk feeding along drainage ditches within grassland just outside the park near Ndalir. An unexpected sighting of a bird normally more common in the uplands.
- 26 **Purple Swampphen** (*Porphyrio porphyrio*) Seen several times in the reed beds behind Ndalir.
- 27 **Masked Lapwing** (*Vanellus miles*) Very common within the park.
- 28 **Pied Stilt** (*Himantopus leucocephalus*) Very common around Ndalir (hundreds of them).
- 29 **Whimbrel** (*Numenius phaeopus*) Two seen on the mudflats at Ndalir.
- 30 **Australian Pratincole** (*Stiltia isabella*) Seen several times around Merauke and on the beach at Ndalir.
- 31 **Little Tern** (*Sternula albifrons*) Several present on the mudflats at Ndalir.
- 32 **Black-naped Tern** (*Sterna sumatrana*) Common around Ndalir.
- 33 **Great Crested Tern** (*Thalasseus bergii*) Numerous around Ndalir.
- 34 **Bar-shouldered Dove** (*Geopelia humeralis*) Seen often within melaleuca swamp forest.
- 35 **Dwarf Fruit-Dove** (*Ptilinopus nanus*) Seen once in the forest patch near Yanggandur.
- 36 **Pied Imperial-Pigeon** (*Ducula bicolor*) A couple seen in flight once.
- 37 **Palm Cockatoo** (*Probosciger aterrimus*) Seen several times around the forest patches north of Yanggandur.
- 38 **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** (*Cacatua galerita*) Seen several times both inside and outside the park.
- 39 **Yellow-streaked Lory** (*Chalcopsitta sintillata*) Aka. Greater Streaked Lory. A pair seen fly over behind Ndalir.
- 40 **Dusky Lory** (*Pseudeos fuscata*) A pair briefly in a dead tree from the forest clearing near Yanggandur.
- 41 **Rainbow Lorikeet** (*Trichoglossus haematodus*) Commonly seen within the park.
- 42 **Red-flanked Lorikeet** (*Charmosyna placentis*) A pair sat in a dead tree at the forest clearing near Yanggandur.
- 43 **Orange-breasted Fig-Parrot** (*Cyclopsitta gulelmitertii*) Very common through the melaleuca forest.
- 44 **Red-cheeked Parrot** (*Geoffroyus geoffroyi*) Seen several times within the park.
- 45 **Eclectus Parrot** (*Eclectus roratus*) Seen often within the park.
- 46 **Red-winged Parrot** (*Aprosmictus erythropterus*) Two birds seen within melaleuca forest near Yanggandur.
- 47 **Brush Cuckoo** (*Cacomantis variolosus*) Heard a few times.
- 48 **Pheasant Coucal** (*Centropus phasianinus*) Commonly seen both inside and outside the park.
- 49 **(Barking Owl)** (*Ninox connivens*) Several heard calling around the Wasur post, but not actually seen.
- 50 **Marbled Frogmouth** (*Podargus ocellatus*) A superb rufous phase bird flushed (from the ground?) during the day and sat for several minutes on a low branch, in the forest patch north of Yanggandur.
- 51 **Papuan Frogmouth** (*Podargus papuensis*) Heard often at night.
- 52 **Large-tailed Nightjar** (*Caprimulgus macrurus*) Heard often at dusk.
- 53 **Glossy Swiftlet** (*Collocalia esculenta*) Common.
- 54 **Little Kingfisher** (*Alcedo pusilla*) A single bird seen along a small forest stream within the forest patch near Yanggandur. The blue coloured parts were so dark as to almost look black, giving the bird an unusual almost black-and-white appearance.
- 55 **Blue-winged Kookaburra** (*Dacelo leachii*) Heard several times inside the park, seen well in the marshland and melaleuca behind Ndalir.
- 56 **Spangled Kookaburra** (*Dacelo tyro*) Seen only once from the roadside near Yanggandur.
- 57 **Rufous-bellied Kookaburra** (*Dacelo gaudichaud*) Seen a couple of times behind Ndalir.
- 58 **Forest Kingfisher** (*Todiramphus macleayii*) Very common in swamp forest behind Ndalir.
- 59 **Sacred Kingfisher** (*Todiramphus sanctus*) Common throughout.

- 60 **Yellow-billed Kingfisher** (*Syma torotoro*) Heard a couple of times in forest near Yanggandur.
- 61 **Rainbow Bee-eater** (*Merops ornatus*) Seen a few times in open country.
- 62 **Dollarbird** (*Eurystomus orientalis*) Seen often in open country.
- 63 **Dusky Myzomela** (*Myzomela obscura*) Seen once behind Ndalir.
- 64 **Red-headed Myzomela** (*Myzomela erythrocephala*) Seen once in melaleuca behind Ndalir.
- 65 **Mimic Honeyeater** (*Meliphaga analoga*) Quite common within melaleuca forest, especially around Ndalir.
- 66 **Graceful Honeyeater** (*Meliphaga gracilis*) Seen several times within melaleuca behind Ndalir. Seen feeding with Mimic Honeyeater which allowed for an easy comparison!
- 67 **Tawny-breasted Honeyeater** (*Xanthotis flaviventer*) Quite common within melaleuca forest.
- 68 **White-throated Honeyeater** (*Melithreptus albogularis*) Seen several times behind Ndalir and again once at Yanggandur. Usually within melaleuca.
- 69 **Little Friarbird** (*Philemon citreogularis*) A family party passed through melaleuca forest behind Ndalir.
- 70 **Noisy Friarbird** (*Philemon corniculatus*) Groups seen quite often in melaleuca forest near Yanggandur.
- 71 **Brown-backed Honeyeater** (*Ramsayornis modestus*) Seen several times in melaleuca forest behind Ndalir.
- 72 **Rufous-banded Honeyeater** (*Conopophila albogularis*) Seen once at the edge of a dense forest behind Ndalir.
- 73 **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike** (*Coracina papuensis*) Seen several times within the park.
- 74 **Cicadabird** (*Coracina tenuirostris*) Seen a couple of times within the park.
- 75 **Varied Triller** (*Lalage leucomela*) A bird seen once in melaleuca forest behind Ndalir.
- 76 **Black Cuckoo-shrike** (*Campephaga flava*) Seen once in dense forest behind Ndalir, then twice more in the Yanggandur forest patch.
- 77 **Torresian Crow** (*Corvus orru*) Seen a couple of times inside the park.
- 78 **Rufous Monarch** (*Monarcha rubiensis*) Seen once in mangrove behind Ndalir as part of a big mixed flock.
- 79 **Black-faced Monarch** (*Monarcha melanopsis*) An immature bird seen in mangrove behind Ndalir associating with a large mixed species flock.
- 80 **Leaden Flycatcher** (*Myiagra rubecula*) Seen several times in melaleuca forest behind Ndalir.
- 81 **Broad-billed Flycatcher** (*Myiagra ruficollis*) Seen once in mangrove behind Ndalir, as part of a big mixed flock.
- 82 **Shining Flycatcher** (*Myiagra alecto*) Seen in mangrove behind Ndalir, as part of a large mixed species flock.
- 83 **Pacific Swallow** (*Hirundo tahitica*) Common.
- 84 **Tree Martin** (*Petrochelidon nigricans*) Very common.
- 85 **Golden-headed Cisticola** (*Cisticola exilis*) Seen a few times in open wet grassland habitat.
- 86 **Clamorous Reed-Warbler** (*Acrocephalus stentoreus*) Common around the marshland behind Ndalir.
- 87 **Northern Fantail** (*Rhipidura rufiventris*) Seen a couple of times at both Ndalir and Yanggandur.
- 88 **Willie-wagtail** (*Rhipidura leucophrys*) A few times in open country.
- 89 **Black Thicket-Fantail** (*Rhipidura maculipectus*) Seen and heard a few times behind Ndalir.
- 90 **Mangrove Fantail** (*Rhipidura phasiana*) Seen well once in mangrove behind Ndalir. Similar to a Northern Fantail, but paler with a white eye-brow.
- 91 **Lemon-bellied Flycatcher** (*Microeca flavigaster*) Pretty common in melaleuca forest behind Ndalir. Also seen near Yanggandur.
- 92 **White-faced Robin** (*Tregellasia leucops*) Two birds seen in the mangrove behind Ndalir, associating with the large mixed species flock seen there. This is an extreme lowland record of a species more numerous in hill forest.
- 93 **Grey Whistler** (*Pachycephala simplex*) Seen once in melaleuca forest behind Ndalir.
- 94 **Rufous Shrike-Thrush** (*Colluricincla megarhyncha*) Seen and heard once from the road near the Wasur post.
- 95 **Grey Shrike-Thrush** (*Colluricincla harmonica*) A pair seen well from the road next to the Wasur post.
- 96 **Grey-crowned Babbler** (*Pomatostomus temporalis*) Nosiy parties seen once behind Ndalir and a couple of times in melaleuca near Yanggandur.
- 97 **Painted Quail-Thrush** (*Cinclosoma ajax*) An adult male responded to a tape by calling back, then was attracted to within a few metres by tape playback. Great looking bird!
- 98 **Blue Jewel-Babbler** (*Ptilorrhoa caerulescens*) Heard calling a couple of times.
- 99 **White-shouldered Fairywren** (*Malurus alboscapulatus*) Seen in wet grassland at several locations, both inside and outside the park.
- 100 **Beccari's Scrubwren** (*Sericornis beccarii*) Seen once in dense forest behind Ndalir. Probably more heard.
- 101 **Fairy Gerygone** (*Gerygone palpebrosa*) A family party seen in mangrove just behind the Ndalir post.
- 102 **Large-billed Gerygone** (*Gerygone magnirostris*) Seen a few times in the swamp forest behind Ndalir.
- 103 **Mangrove Gerygone** (*Gerygone levigaster*) Seen in mangrove behind the Ndalir post.
- 104 **Black Sunbird** (*Leptocoma sericea*) Seen a few times.
- 105 **Olive-backed Sunbird** (*Cinnyris jugularis*) Common.
- 106 **Pygmy Honeyeater** (*Toxorhamphus pygmaeum*) A pair seen in mangrove just behind Ndalir. Calling constantly!
- 107 **Olive-crowned Flowerpecker** (*Dicaeum pectorale*) Seen a few times near Ndalir.
- 108 **Brown Oriole** (*Oriolus szalayi*) A family party seen in melaleuca behind Ndalir.
- 109 **Green Oriole** (*Oriolus flavocinctus*) Aka. Yellow Oriole. A family group seen from the clearing within the forest patch near Yanggandur.

- 110 **Spangled Drongo** (*Dicrurus bracteatus*) Quite common within the park.
- 111 **Magpie-Lark** (*Grallina cyanoleuca*) Seen once at the edge of the marshland behind Ndalir.
- 112 **Black-backed Butcherbird** (*Cracticus mentalis*) A group seen once at the edge of melaleuca behind Ndalir.
- 113 **Black Butcherbird** (*Cracticus quoyi*) A group seen well behind Ndalir.
- 114 **Australasian Magpie** (*Gymnorhina tibicen*) Seen once from the roadside near Yanggandur.
- 115 **Glossy-mantled Manucode** (*Manucodia ater*) Seen quite regularly within the park, both within melaleuca and more dense forest.
- 116 **Greater Bird-of-Paradise** (*Paradisaea apoda*) Heard calling often within the forest patches near Yanggandur. Females seen on several occasions and young males seen twice.
- 117 **Spotted Catbird** (*Ailuroedus melanotis*) Heard calling regularly within the monsoon forest patches near Yanggandur. Seen well early in the morning on one occasion. The Wasur population of this species is unusual in that elsewhere in Papua this is a montane species.
- 118 **Fawn-breasted Bowerbird** (*Chlamydera cerviniventris*) Seen several times around Ndalir, and once near the Yanggandur forest patches.
- 119 **Crimson Finch** (*Neochmia phaeton*) Small groups seen along the roadside near the Wasur Post, also a group seen once within the marshland behind Ndalir.

Thanks

Thanks go to the ever helpful Maria and Untu of Papua Bird Club for useful information and contacts (info@papuabirdclub.com; papuabirdclub@hotmail.com; www.papuabirdclub.com). If anyone is considering visiting Papua and doesn't want to try it all on their own, I'd thoroughly recommend PBC.

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All photos (apart from the two non-bird Wasur ones!) are copyright Rob Tizard. Please contact Rob direct if you want to reproduce any of them.

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A Google Earth file (.kmz file) showing all locations mentioned is available on request. Some recordings we made (like Biak Monarch) are now also available via Xeno Canto.