



# ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

## **Southwest Pacific Islands** **New Caledonia, Fiji, Vanuatu and Samoa** *10<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> July 2016 (19 Days)* **Trip Report**



Whistling Fruit Dove by Rich Lindie

**Trip report compiled by Tour Leaders: David Hoddinott & Rich Lindie**



## Tour Summary

This year's tour to the friendly islands of New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji and Samoa proved that not only is the region a mega birding hotspot, things are rapidly improving in the tourism and travel sector. Indeed, we experienced very little of the once notorious flight delays that plagued the region, dined in several fine restaurants, and lived it up in some truly wonderful accommodations. The birds, of course, were as spectacular as always, and our exploits secured us great sightings of no less than 79 of the region's endemics, including such megas as Kagu, Horned Parakeet, Golden Fruit Dove, Cloven-feathered Dove, Crow Honeyeater, Vanuatu Kingfisher, Maroon Shining Parrot, a slough of honeyeaters, Silktail, Long-legged Thicketbird and Large Lifou White-eye!



Kagu by David Hoddinott

Our south-west Pacific islands birding bonanza pretty much began the moment we hit the road on the dynamic little French island of New Caledonia. I'm excluding the few hours before, not only because we did nothing more than make our way from a dark (and cold) Sydney to the skies over the Pacific, but also because several of us were barely present until we hit the runway north of Noumea, despite several good cups of coffee!

Just a two-hour hop from mainland Aussie and geared towards tourism, it was immediately a wonderful surprise to find that the island wasn't the overcrowded and chaotic 'resort' that some had anticipated. Indeed, we were on the open road spotting hunting Whistling Kites and Silver-rumped Swiftlets within just a matter of minutes of our arrival, and all amidst some fairly vast countryside



Horned Parakeet by Rich Lindie

In the organized and very neat little town of Noumea itself, we took a brief stop at our hotel before heading straight down to a patch of coastal scrub and mangrove where one of the first birds to put in an appearance was a Grey-eared Honeyeater, not far from a flock of Common Waxbills. Being a bit 'flighty', our first views of the honeyeater were to be improved on in a short while but we had certainly begun our birding exploration in earnest and we set off into the nearby coastal scrub with much excitement, bagging several Silvereye, Green-backed White-eye, Grey Fantail, Fan-tailed Gerygone, Welcome Swallow, Rufous Whistler and Long-tailed Triller in short succession thereafter. Exploring the mangroves, we came up trumps with Nankeen Night Heron at the eleventh hour, only to spot a couple more on our drive back to the hotel





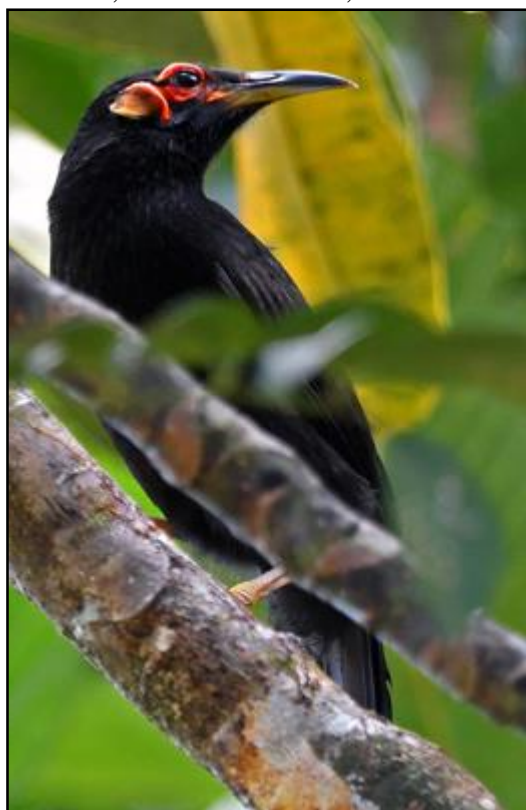
a short while later. Needless to say, a delectable dinner that evening rounded off a great first day.

Home to a long list of great endemics, the island has remarkably few birders who make the trip out there but we were thoroughly excited to have the park's main birding hotspot entirely to ourselves for the following day. Indeed, arriving there just before dawn, and casually exploring the park's network of trails and roads by ourselves for an entire day, we felt as though we had stepped into a forgotten world. Having said that, the complete lack of a dawn chorus had us wondering if the birds had also forgotten these forests until the action started to rain. Our first



**Goliath Imperial Pigeon by Rich Lindie**

significant sighting was of a gorgeous Horned Parakeet but our minds were naturally focused on the principle bird attraction of the island and the park - the incomparable Kagu. Fortunately, we were not disappointed, finding a group of three of these magical and inquisitive birds not long after our arrival in the central section of the park. Thereafter, we enjoyed one fantastic endemic after another until we had just one major target left by late afternoon. The full list included such treasures as White-bellied Goshawk (despite a treacherous bridge-crossing), Cloven-feathered Dove, Goliath Imperial Pigeon, New Caledonian Parakeet, New Caledonian Myzomela, New Caledonian Friarbird, Barred Honeyeater, South Melanesian Cuckooshrike, New Caledonian Cuckooshrike, New Caledonian Whistler, Streaked Fantail, Southern Shrikebill, New Caledonian Crow, Yellow-bellied Flyrobin,



**Crow Honeyeater by Rich Lindie**

Striated Starling and Red-throated Parrotfinch! The much-wanted Crow Honeyeater the glaring exception, of course. Then, as if waiting to ensure its position in the curtain-closingshow, one honking-big individual showed up for all and sundry to enjoy - a lifer for everyone but our local guide!

For our third morning, we found ourselves once again taking a short island-hop - this time to the island of Lifou. Despite having only flown a hundred kilometers across the bay, it felt more like we had stepped way back in time, and it wasn't long before we were forced into the 'island-time' that we would become so accustomed to for the remainder of the tour.

Feeling much like we'd stepped back in time rather than just a hundred kilometers across the bay, we soon found ourselves forced into the 'island-time' to which we would become so accustomed for the remainder of the tour. Despite this, we piled into our ultra-mini-vans and shot off into the middle of the island for our next birding adventure without any significant loss of time. Once there, we also wasted no time in beginning our birding



explorations. On the edge of the forest, we found several Sacred Kingfishers, our first of many Small Lifou White-eyes and a few Striated Starlings before into the shade of the forest, where a little effort produced great close-ups of a pair of Large Lifou White-eyes - our major target for the day. With that in the bag so early, we then enjoyed a little more time on the edge of the forest, seeing more Small Lifou White-eyes, Cardinal Myzomelas, New Caledonian Friarbirds, a wonderfully showy Red-bellied Fruit Dove and South Melanesian Cuckooshrike before heading to lunch at a beautiful beach resort nearby.

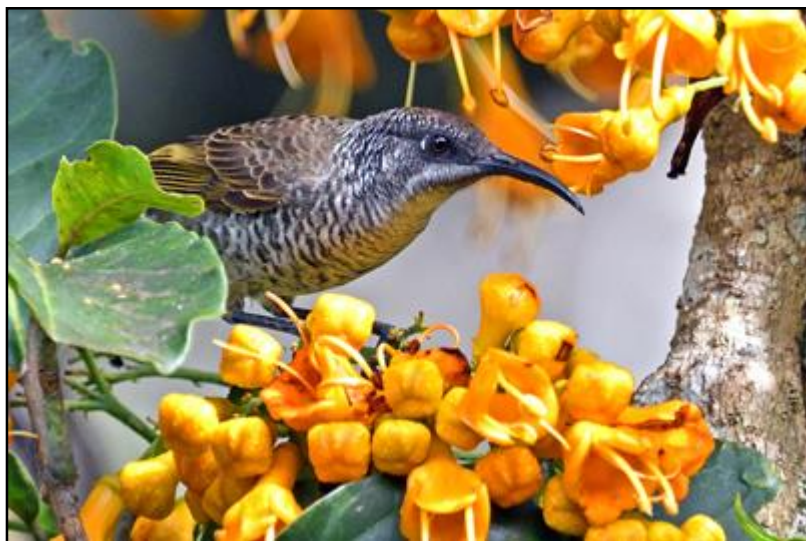
Bound to our late afternoon flight schedule, we then spent several hours relaxing around our resort before heading back to the forest for one last birding stint, where we enjoyed further great views of Red-bellied Fruit Doves and Cardinal Myzomelas, as well as several Metallic Pigeons.

For our final day on New Caledonia, we made our way directly to Parc des Grandes Fugueres, north-west of the airport. Serving more as a 'catchup' day, we had plenty of time to enjoy repeat views of many of the island's great endemics. In fact, a very leisurely couple of hours spent around our lunch spot resulted in wonderful views of over a dozen of the region's endemics, including Barred Honeyeater, New Caledonian Friarbird, South Melanesian Cuckooshrike, Streaked Fantail, Melanesian Flycatcher, New Caledonian Crow and Yellow-bellied Flyrobin. Further down the road, outside the reserve, we whiled away the latter part of the day with further views of Horned Parakeet, several impressive Cloven-feathered Doves and Red-throated Parrotfinch, among others - not a bad finale to the first leg of our Pacific adventure!

Day five of our journey was the first of several days that consisted mostly of travel. Leisurely travel though, I might add. Indeed, two short flights and a great deal of enjoyable chit chat later and we found ourselves on the evocative shores beside our home on Espiritu Santo, Vanuatu.



White-bellied Goshawk by Rich Lindie



Barred Honeyeater by Rich Lindie

The following morning, those who were able to escape the seductive allure of our lodge and its surroundings found themselves on an early ride to a nearby forest for our first birding adventure in Vanuatu. Flushing a few Eastern Barn Owls along the way, we arrived on the edge of the forest in the wee hours of the morning, to find a feeding flock of gorgeous Coconut Lorikeets feeding in a small fruiting tree, before pushing on to the start of a nearby trail. One of the first birds to catch our eye was a fantastic Buff-bellied Monarch - the first of many of these beauties we would encounter that morning. One by one, several of our other targets followed suit, albeit with a little effort and enticement on our part, including a handsome





Vanuatu Kingfisher that posed for 'scope views, Pacific Imperial Pigeon, Cardinal Myzomela, Melanesian Whistler and Tanna Fruit Dove. Many of us also appreciated much-improved views of Southern Shrikebill, an individual of which came in for notably close inspection! All in all, we had covered more than a couple of kilometers by lunch time so, in light of this and our rapid birding success, we all opted to return to our beachside lodge for a relaxed afternoon and another scrumptious meal prepared by our gracious hosts.

Reports of Palm Lorikeet in some nearby woodland caused for an early morning scouting session in the vicinity of the lodge. Unfortunately, the only individual spotted flew off before anyone but myself managed to obtain a view. Time wasn't on our side either, as we were bound by the only scheduled flight back to Port Vila - at 9am! A little disappointed, we were nonetheless very happy with our stay in northern Vanuatu and soon forgot about our single misfortune - much aided by the sight of yet another wonderful beach-side resort, and a lunchtime

menu loaded with delicious seafood options. Indeed, we relaxed like the rest of the hotel's patrons for much of the afternoon, enjoying our surroundings thoroughly before setting out for a short walk around some nearby farmland and scrub. It was then that I think many of us realized that although flight schedules were to place us with much extra time on our hands, a little downtime at our generally great lodgings was never going to hurt!



**Cloven-feathered Dove by Rich Lindie**



**Melanesian Flycatcher by Rich Lindie**

Continuing on a theme, we enjoyed a relatively late breakfast the following morning, before departing for the airport for our flight to Nadi, and the start of our adventures in friendly Fiji. Just one hitch, however...the flight had been delayed by several hours! Scrambling to work with what we had been given, we soon organized a vehicle, a spot to store our luggage, and a driver-cum-guide with more than a wicked sense of humor to whisk us around the island and its sights, in what turned out to be a pretty enjoyable half day. Highlights of that fun-filled day were seeing sides to the island that few tourists do, Blue-faced Parrotfinch - a first for Rockjumper in the region, one of the world's smallest museums and some genuinely fun encounters with some friendly locals.

Despite our very late arrival the night before, another mid-morning flight (to Taveuni) meant that we were still able to get in a good night's rest before



beginning our exploration of Fiji in earnest. Furthermore, for the remainder of the day we did little more than stroll around some local farmland where new birds were seemingly all around. Highlights of our stroll included our first Barking Imperial Pigeons, a couple of handsome Fiji Goshawks, showy Maroon Shining Parrots, Sulphur-breasted Myzomelas, Fiji Woodswallow and Slaty Monarchs - not a bad haul for a couple of hours!

Day 2 on the gorgeous island of Taveuni was filled with an even greater abundance of quality, even if it did begin with one of the earlier starts on the tour. The start was, of course, necessary for a timely arrival at our birding destination - the famed Des Voeux peak. Arriving right around dawn, we began our slow walk down from the peak, passing first through low scrub and stunted trees, and ending near the bottom of the mountain where taller forest and stunning vistas dominated. Along the way we found not one but several Silktails, more obliging Maroon Shining Parrots, Fiji Wattled Honeyeater, Yellow-billed Honeyeater, Polynesian Triller, Fiji Whistler, Fiji Shrikebill, dazzling Azure-crested Flycatchers, a confiding but active Pacific Robin, Fiji White-eyes, Polynesian Starlings, a few shy Island Thrushes, Many-coloured Fruit Doves, Fiji Parrotfinches and several species we had seen the day before - a list that includes much of the island's endemics! The one glaring exception, however, being Orange Fruit Dove. Unfortunately, despite a concerted effort at alternative sites that afternoon, as well as throughout the remainder of our time on the island, we failed to find this species, likely confirming fears that the species had suffered a major decline in numbers as a result of the previous year's cyclone.



**Vanuatu Kingfisher by David Hoddinott**

The following morning we traded mountain slopes and forest for a boat trip, out to the depths along the western edge of the island. Once there, our main quarry - Tahiti Petrel - didn't take long to put in a couple of stellar appearances, whilst our journey out, along the coast, produced sightings of White-tailed Tropicbird, Red-footed and Brown Boobies, Brown and Black Noddies, Bridled Tern and even a Buller's Shearwater for great measure!



**Tanna Fruit Dove by David Hoddinott**

That wasn't all our day had in store for us, however, as we made our way around the island to several new birding sites, gathering further views of several of the island's great endemics and specialties.





Having found a couple of spectacular Collared Lories near our accommodation the evening before, we were delighted to find that they had returned that evening for us to enjoy yet further close-ups, not to mention relieved for those who had missed them the day before.

One final attempt to find Orange Fruit Dove was, as alluded to earlier, unsuccessful but by then, rather unsurprising, though we left the island in very high spirits and excited for the next leg of our journey.

That afternoon, after lunch and a rest at our now-familiar home away from home in Nadi, we strolled around the grounds and found a confiding flock of Fiji Parrotbills, an equally showy Metallic Pigeon, and our only Red Avadavats of the trip. We also managed to do a little birding and stouling simultaneously but those antics will have to remain unmentioned in this version of the report.



**Fiji Parrotfinch by Rich Lindie**

An earlier-than-usual flight the next morning saw us on the ground in Kadavu with more than enough time to grab some birding before lunch. Not only was it enough time for our first birding session on the island, it was enough for us to find all four of our targets on the island! The first to fall of these was the superb Crimson Shining Parrot - a pair of which was spotted near a sports field not far from the airport.



**Many-colored Fruit Dove by Rich Lindie**

Next up was an incredibly cooperative Whistling Dove, which we watched for prolonged periods through the scope, and even managed to photograph before walking away without flinch from the bird! The dove was followed very shortly by Kadavu Fantail and indeed had actually put in its first appearance before we were done with the dove. The final species to come forth was Kadavu Honeyeater, and whilst it took a little effort, we all ended up with really great views before heading back to the beach for our transfer across the bay to more wonderful beach-side rooms.

Only a couple of us headed out after lunch, while the rest of us either enjoyed our surroundings or spent a little time photographing a gathering of Many-coloured Fruit Doves in the lodge grounds.

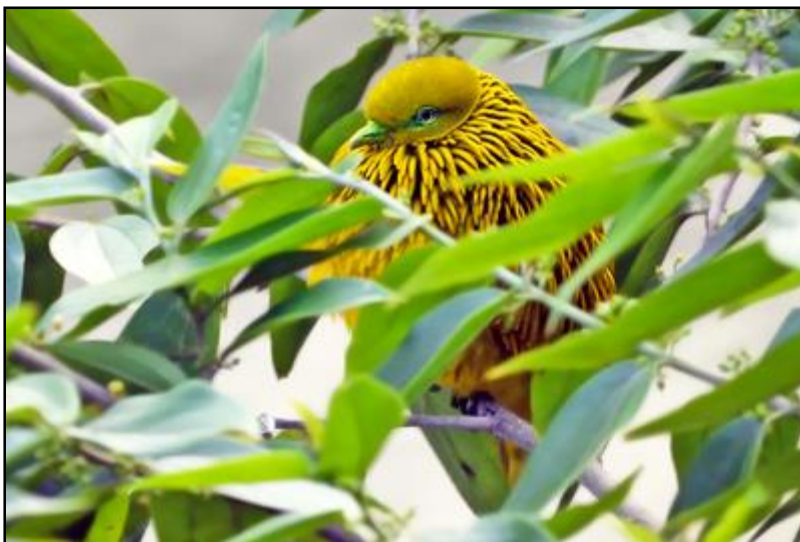
We left for the airport the following day a little earlier than originally planned, hoping to cash in on a little tip from one of the hotel staff members about a snake that had been visiting a nearby village. Luck was on our side and, as we had hoped and predicted, there was a gorgeous Pacific Boa



resting in a tree not far from the shore.

Two short 'hops' later, and we found ourselves on the island of Suva, where we ended up at a bustling Chinese restaurant before making our way to our tranquil lake-side accommodation with just enough time to find our first of the island's endemics - Giant Honeyeater.

Despite our early start the next morning, our replacement third driver pitched up in time, and it was without any adieu that we headed for the hills in the interior of the island. With a drive time of almost three hours, it was a little after sunrise when we found ourselves birding it up, seeing Black-throated Shrikebill not long after - the first of two major targets in the bag before breakfast was over! Naturally, it took a little longer to find Long-legged Thicketbird but, once we did, a little hard work and perseverance paid off with a couple of sightings of this rare little bird.



**Golden Fruit Dove by Rich Lindie**

Our afternoon followed about the same pattern of success, albeit at the last minute, when Dave spotted yet another of our major targets on the island - the rather strange-looking Golden Fruit Dove - just below one of our cabins!



**Flat-billed Kingfisher by Rich Lindie**

For our final morning in the area, some of the group enjoyed a little lie-in, whilst others had final looks at some gorgeous Masked Shining Parrots and a female Golden Fruit Dove, before we all departed for our flight to Nadi.

The small island nation of Samoa was the final stop in our Pacific birding journey. To get there, we once again passed through the terminals of Nadi airport, this time bound for Apia, on Upolu Island. Once there, we climbed into our mini-van and made our way to a seafood restaurant on the edge of town, via an unplanned detour for Pacific Golden Plovers. It wasn't long thereafter that we found ourselves in the hills above town, and birding around our well-appointed accommodation. There, from the restaurant balcony itself, we watched White-tailed Tropicbirds, White Terns, hundreds of flying foxes, Cardinal Myzomelas, Crimson-crowned Fruit Dove and Polynesian Wattled Honeyeaters, whilst the surrounding greenery yielded Red-headed Parrotfinch, Samoan Flycatcher, Samoan Fantail, Samoan Whistler, Blue-crowned Lorikeet and Flat-billed Kingfisher!





The next morning, we drove down the hill again, and onward towards O Le Pupu-Pu'e National Park. En route, we were very thrilled to find a few perched Blue-crowned Lorikeets on the edge of town, followed by a seemingly endless stream of Buff-banded Rails by the road-sides. In the park itself, we enjoyed several views of Flat-billed Kingfisher, as well as further sightings of several endemic birds seen the day before, including Crimson-crowned Fruit Dove, Samoan Whistler and Samoan Fantail. Unfortunately, there were no Samoan Trillers about.

Around midday, we made our way down to a restaurant overlooking a beautiful stretch of coastline, where we enjoyed a delicious meal and a spot of ocean-watching that yielded both Brown and Red-footed Boobies, and yet more White-tailed Tropicbirds. The afternoon then saw us exploring a bit more of the coastline and an alternative route back to our accommodation on the hill.

Wanting to re-find Moa for those who had missed it earlier, we left our lodge with a little extra time to bird, before making our way to the airport. Unfortunately, we were unable to find this tricky bird but did get to see a Buff-banded Rail feeding on bananas, eight feet up in a tree! Thereafter, our transfer to Sydney, via Nadi one last time, went without hitch nor hassle, and the group found themselves soon bidding farewell from what must have been one of the most successful and enjoyable trips ever run to the region!



**Pacific Robin by Rich Lindie**



## Annotated List of Birds recorded

**Total species recorded: 148 (including a fabulous 79 endemics!)**

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows the IOC 6.2 list of: Gill, F. and Wright, M. Birds of the World: Recommended English Names. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press

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

E = Endangered, V = Vulnerable, NT = Near Threatened, DD = Data Deficient. See Birdlife International.

### Ducks, Geese & Swans Anatidae

**Pacific Black Duck** *Anas superciliosa pelewensis*

Two pairs of this generally widespread species were seen on a roadside pond near Parc Des Grandes Fougères, New Caledonia.

### Megapodes Megapodiidae

**Vanuatu Megapode** *Megapodius layardi* (VU)

Notably shy and elusive, some glimpsed one dashing across a clearing at Loru. Heard and an active nest found within the Loru Protected Area.

### Pheasants & Allies Phasianidae

**Wild Turkey** *Meleagris gallopavo*

**Introduced.** Good numbers foraging in fields of the flat farmlands of New Caledonia.

**Red Junglefowl** *Gallus gallus*

**Introduced.** Seen and heard on Santo, Vanuatu.

### Petrels, Shearwaters Procellariidae

**Tahiti Petrel** *Pseudobulweria rostrata trouessarti* (NT)

We enjoyed good views of 8 birds during our boat-trip off Taveuni, Fiji.

**Buller's Shearwater** *Ardenna bulleri*

One was seen fairly well during our boat trip off Taveuni, Fiji. We even managed to get photographs of it.

### Tropicbirds Phaethontidae

**White-tailed Tropicbird** *Phaethon lepturus dorotheae*

One was seen during our pelagic boat trip off Taveuni, Fiji.

Fabulous views of several as they sailed back and forth over the forest below our lovely lodge on Upolu, Samoa.

### Hérons, Bitterns Ardeidae

**Nankeen Night Heron** *Nycticorax caledonicus caledonicus*

Several adults seen well within mangroves on New Caledonia.

**White-faced Heron** *Egretta novaehollandiae*

Small numbers (2-8) observed on New Caledonia and Viti Levu, Fiji. Small numbers on Taveuni and at least one on Kadavu, only recently recorded for the island.

**Pacific Reef Heron** *Egretta sacra sacra*

Several both dark and pale morphs were seen on Vanuatu. The nominate form was regularly seen in small numbers on all the islands visited in Fiji and Samoa. Mainly dark morphs recorded.





### **Frigatebirds Fregatidae**

#### **Great Frigatebird**

*Fregata minor palmerstoni*

One female was seen during our pelagic boat trip off Taveuni, Fiji

At least one adult male soaring over the southeastern point of Upolu, Samoa and a further three with large numbers of other seabirds off the southern tip of the Alepata Islands.

#### **Lesser Frigatebird**

*Fregata ariel ariel*

Several seen nicely off Taveuni and smaller numbers seen off Kadavu, Fiji.

### **Gannets, Boobies Sulidae**

#### **Red-footed Booby**

*Sula sula websteri*

Both white and brown morphs were common off Taveuni, Fiji with circa 15 counted in a most exciting fishing flock during our boat trip and circa 20 off the Alepata Islands, southeast Upolu, Samoa.

#### **Brown Booby**

*Sula leucogaster plotus*

Several birds were seen very well during our pelagic boat trip off Taveuni, Fiji.

1-3 seen daily off Taveuni and Kandavu, Fiji and circa a couple off the Alepata Islands, south-east Upolu, Samoa.

### **Cormorants, Shags Phalacrocoracidae**

#### **Little Pied Cormorant**

*Microcarbo melanoleucos*

Eight seen very well in some mangroves at dusk on New Caledonia

### **Kites, Hawks & Eagles Accipitridae**

#### **Brown Goshawk**

*Accipiter fasciatus vigilax*

Several individuals of this endemic subspecies observed on New Caledonia.

#### **White-bellied Goshawk**

*Accipiter haplochrous* (NT)

Superb looks at one at Riviere Bleu and another in Parc National Grandes Fougères, New Caledonia.

#### **Fiji Goshawk**

*Accipiter rufitorques*

Frequently seen on all three of the islands we visited in Fiji and most common on Taveuni

#### **Swamp Harrier**

*Circus approximans*

Widespread and common on New Caledonia, Santo, Vanuatu and throughout Fiji.

#### **Whistling Kite**

*Haliastur sphenurus*

Common on New Caledonia with as many as ten counted on one day, invariably in open, lightly wooded country.

### **Kagu Rhynochetidae**

#### **Kagu**

*Rhynochetos jubatus* (EN)

The sole member of its family, we enjoyed several prolonged encounters with this attractive and most fascinating species. During our one-day in the Parc de La Rivière Bleu we counted circa 5 birds. According to the reserve ranger who accompanied us, the population in this reserve is now at circa 700-800 and the total New Caledonia population is circa 2000 and increasing annually. All of which is exciting, wonderful news as this species was almost mythical in the early 1980s.

### **Rails, Crakes & Coots Rallidae**

#### **Buff-banded Rail**

*Gallirallus philippensis*

Moderately commonly on Santo, Vanuatu; just one on Kadavu, Fiji – presumably the introduced mongoose has done for this species on Viti Levu and amazingly commonly on Upolu, Samoa where we counted over 100 on one day. The latter observation perhaps emphasizes what the Rallid fauna of these islands must once have been prior to the influence of hominids. David Steadman's



documentation of subfossil birds in the Pacific Islands suggests there may have previously been as many 1,000 flightless and near flightless rails inhabiting these oceanic islands.

**Australasian Swamphen** *Porphyrio melanotus*

Common in open country on New Caledonia.

*NOTE: The IOC now splits the Purple Swamphen into six species.*

### **Plovers Charadriidae**

**Masked Lapwing** *Vanellus miles*

We enjoyed good scope views of a pair at the airstrip on the island of Kadavu, Fiji

**Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva*

Fairly common on Upolu, Samoa. Presumably early return migrants.

### **Sandpipers, Snipes Scolopacidae**

**Wandering Tattler** *Tringa incana*

One of these migrants was seen on New Caledonia where we enjoyed great scope views

**Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*

We enjoyed good views of a flock of 10 on Upolu, Samoa.

### **Gulls, Terns & Skimmers Laridae**

**Brown Noddy** *Anous stolidus pileatus*

Small numbers seen during our boat trip off Taveuni, Fiji and over the forest of Upolu, Samoa. Large numbers also observed with many other seabirds off the southeast corner of the Alepata Islands, Upolu, Samoa.

**Black Noddy** *Anous minutus subsp?*

We had at least 20 during our pelagic trip off Taveuni, Fiji.

**White Tern** *Gygis alba candida*

One of the highlights of the tour; this charismatic species was seen flying over the forest below our lodge on Upolu, Samoa.

**Silver Gull** *Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae forsteri*

Common along the Nouméa waterfront, New Caledonia.

**Greater Crested Tern** *Thalasseus bergii cristatus*

Small numbers were seen off Taveuni, Fiji

**Bridled Tern** *Onychoprion anaethetus anaethetus*

Several were seen during our boat trip off Taveuni, Fiji.

### **Pigeons, Doves Columbidae**

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

Ubiquitous.

**Metallic Pigeon** *Columba vitiensis*

Several fine observations, especially on New Caledonia. We observed the following subspecies: *hyponochroa* (New Caledonia), *leopoldi* (Santo, Vanuatu), *vitiensis* (Fiji)

**Spotted Dove** *Spilopelia chinensis*

**Introduced.** Common on New Caledonia and small numbers observed on Fiji

**Mackinlay's Cuckoo-Dove** *Macropygia mackinlayi mackinlayi*

Good looks at eight on Santo, Vanuatu.

**Pacific Emerald Dove** *Chalcophaps longirostris sandwichensis*

Regular good looks including one on Lifou; one on Efate; as many as ten feeding on an unknown food source within the Loru Protected Area, Santo, Vanuatu and many more seen during the drive to and from and in the grounds of our lovely accommodations on Santo.





**Tanna Fruit Dove***Ptilinopus tannensis*

One was seen very well in an area of lowland forest, Santo, Vanuatu where hunting appeared to be minimal.

**Many-coloured Fruit Dove***Ptilinopus perousii*

Many fabulous encounters on Fiji where we observed several tamely attending a fruiting Fig *Ficus* sp (subspecies *mariae*). Smaller numbers of the subspecies *perousii* were observed on Upolu, Samoa.

**Crimson-crowned Fruit Dove***Ptilinopus porphyraceus fasciatus* (VU)

Fairly common on Upolu, Samoa where we enjoyed great views

**Red-bellied Fruit Dove***Ptilinopus greyi*

Wonderfully common on Lifou and throughout Santo, Vanuatu.

**Golden Fruit Dove***Ptilinopus luteovirens*

We were treated to fine views of a superb male and female at our attractive lodge on Viti Levu, Fiji.

**Whistling Fruit Dove***Ptilinopus layardi* (NT)

This surprisingly elegant and lovely species took a while to find but in the end we enjoyed fine scope views of a male on Kadavu.

**Cloven-feathered Dove***Drepanoptila holosericea* (NT)

We enjoyed exceptional views of one at Riviere Bleu and at least six of these exquisite birds within the Parc National Grandes Fougères, New Caledonia.

**Pacific Imperial Pigeon***Ducula pacifica pacifica*

Notably common on Santo, Vanuatu and Upolu, Samoa.

**Barking Imperial Pigeon***Ducula latrans*

Common throughout the three Fijian islands we visited.

**Goliath Imperial Pigeon***Ducula goliath* (NT)

Fabulous views of this magnificent beast at the Parc de La Rivière Bleue, New Caledonia.

**Barn Owls Tytonidae****Eastern Barn Owl***Tyto delicatula interposita*

One was seen in farmland during a predawn drive on Santo, Vanuatu and at least two were seen as we drove, early one morning into the interior of Viti Levu, Fiji.

**Swifts Apodidae****Glossy Swiftlet***Collocalia esculenta*

Common on New Caledonia (*albidior*) and Santo, Vanuatu (*uropygialis*)

**White-rumped Swiftlet***Aerodramus spodiopygius*

Seen on all the islands we visited: *leucopygius* New Caledonia; *epiensis* Santo, Vanuatu; *assimilis* Fiji; *spodiopygius* Samoa.

**Uniform Swiftlet***Aerodramus vanikorensis*

Common on Santo, Vanuatu

**Kingfishers Alcedinidae****Vanuatu Kingfisher***Todiramphus farquhari* (NT)

This handsome species showed very well within the Loru Protected Area on Santo, Vanuatu where we obtained great scope views.

**Collared Kingfisher***Todiramphus chloris*

Moderately common on Santo, Vanuatu (*santoensis*) and Taveuni and Viti Levu, Fiji (*vitiensis*) and Kadavu, Fiji (*eximius*).

**Sacred Kingfisher***Todiramphus sanctus canacorum*

Common on New Caledonia. We also observed circa 5 of the subspecies *macmillani* on Lifou.



**Flat-billed Kingfisher***Todiramphus recurvirostris*

Delightfully common on Upolu, Samoa.

**Parrots Psittacidae****Coconut Lorikeet***Trichoglossus haematodus deplanchii*

Common on New Caledonia. On Santo, Vanuatu it was also common with good numbers encountered daily.

*NOTE: Rainbow Lorikeet has now been split into seven species.***Collared Lory***Phigys solitarius*

Common on all three Fijian islands visited but it was not until our last day on Viti Levu that we enjoyed really good, close views of this striking endemic.

**Blue-crowned Lorikeet***Vini australis*

Eight seen on Upolu Samoa where we managed great scope views of two

**Crimson Shining Parrot***Prosopeia splendens*

Fabulous views of several right on the beach in native gardens with scattered trees. A few were subsequently 'scoped during our very bird-rich morning on Kadavu.

**Masked Shining Parrot***Prosopeia personata* (NT)

Great looks at this impressive species on Viti Levu, Fiji where we encountered it regularly around our lodge.

**Maroon Shining Parrot***Prosopeia tabuensis*

Regular seen and most attractive on Taveuni, Fiji.

**Horned Parakeet***Eunymphicus cornutus* (VU)

An excellent 'scope study of a pair at the entrance to the Parc de La Rivière Bleue and several more seen at Parc Des Grandes Fougères, New Caledonia

**New Caledonian Parakeet***Cyanoramphus saisseti* (NT)

Good 'scope views of just one in Parc de La Rivière Bleue, New Caledonia

**Honeyeaters Meliphagidae****New Caledonian Myzomela***Myzomela caledonica*

Six of these striking birds were seen well in flowering forest trees on New Caledonia

**Cardinal Myzomela***Myzomela cardinalis*Common, noisy and conspicuous on Lifou (*lifuensis*), small numbers on Santo, Vanuatu (*tenuis*) and notably common on Upolu, Samoa (*nigriventris*)**Sulphur-breasted Myzomela***Myzomela Myzomela jugularis*

Great looks at this lovely endemic on all three islands visited in Fiji.

**Grey-eared Honeyeater***Lichmera incana*Common on New Caledonia (*incana*), Lifou (*poliotis*) and Santo, Vanuatu (*griseoviridis*)**Kadavu Honeyeater***Xanthotis provocator*

Several observed feeding on flowers in the canopy of coastal forest on Kadavu. A wonderful specific name.

**New Caledonian Friarbird***Philemon diemenensis*

Small numbers seen in forest on New Caledonia.

**Polynesian Wattled Honeyeater***Foulehaio carunculatus*

Commonly seen on Upolu, Samoa

*NOTE: Wattled Honeyeater has recently been split into three species by IOC, Polynesian Wattled Honeyeater, Fiji Wattled Honeyeater and Kikau***Fiji Wattled Honeyeater***Foulehaio taviunensis*

Commonly encountered on Taveuni, Fiji.

**Kikau***Foulehaio procerior*

Common on Viti Levu, Fiji





**Yellow-billed Honeyeater***Gymnomyza viridis*

After some effort, several were seen well on Taveuni, Fiji

NOTE: This species has recently been split from Giant Honeyeater by IOC

**Giant Honeyeater***Gymnomyza brunneirostris*

The name is a bit of a misnomer. Several seen very well at our lodge on Viti Levu, Fiji and also heard commonly in the central highlands

**Mao***Gymnomyza samoensis* (EN)

Two of this very vocal species were seen briefly on Upolu, Samoa

**Crow Honeyeater***Gymnomyza aubryana* (CR)

We enjoyed fabulous views of one of this now critically endangered species. We were told that this species is now confined to the Parc de La Rivière Bleue and that only circa 150 birds exist.

**Barred Honeyeater***Glycifohia undulata*

A total of five were seen nicely in Macqui at the edge of the Parc de La Rivière Bleue and several more at Parc Des Grandes Fougères, New Caledonia.

**Australian Warblers Acanthizidae****Fan-tailed Gerygone***Gerygone flavolateralis*

Small numbers seen on New Caledonia (*flavolateralis*), Lifou (*lifuensis*) and Santo, Vanuatu (*corriae*) Much more frequently heard than seen

**Woodswallows, Butcherbirds and allies Artamidae****White-breasted Woodswallow***Artamus leucorhynchus melaleucus*

Widespread and common on New Caledonia and Santo and Efate, Vanuatu (*tenuis*)

**Fiji Woodswallow***Artamus mentalis*

Common on Viti Levu, Taveuni and Kadavu, Fiji including right at Nadi airport

**Australian Magpie***Gymnorhina tibicen*

Introduced. Several seen on Taveuni, Fiji

**Cuckooshrikes Campephagidae****South Melanesian Cuckooshrike***Coracina caledonica*

Small numbers of this impressive bird were seen on Lifou (*lifuensis*), New Caledonia (*caledonica*) and Santo, Vanuatu (*thilenii*).

**New Caledonian Cuckooshrike***Coracina analis* (NT)

Good views of several individuals within the Parc de La Rivière Bleue, New Caledonia.

**Polynesian Triller***Lalage maculosa*

Common on Fiji: Taveuni (*mixta*), Kadavu (*soror*), Viti Levu (*pumila*), and notably common on Upolu Samoa (*maculosa*).

**Long-tailed Triller***Lalage leucopyga*

Modest numbers seen on Lifou (*simillima*), New Caledonia (*montrosieri*) and Santo, Vanuatu (*albiloris*).

**Whistlers and Allies Pachycephalidae****Melanesian Whistler***Pachycephala chlorura intacta*

Notably common on Santo, Vanuatu where it was very common and relatively easy to observe.

NOTE: Very recently split from New Caledonian Whistler by IOC

**New Caledonian Whistler***Pachycephala caledonica*

Common on New Caledonia

**Fiji Whistler***Pachycephala graeffii*

Small numbers were recorded on Taveuni (*torquata*), Kadavu (*kadavuensis*) and Viti Levu (*optata*), (Fiji).



**Samoan Whistler***Pachycephala flavifrons*

A few seen including one very striking male on our last morning on Upolu, Samoa.

**Rufous Whistler***Pachycephala rufiventris xanthebraea*

Several seen away from moist forest on New Caledonia, with good sightings at Ouemo Mangroves and again at Parc Des Grandes Fougères.

**Fantails Rhipiduridae****Grey Fantail***Rhipidura albiscapa*

Common on New Caledonia and Lifou (*bulgeri*) and Santo, Vanuatu (*brenchleyi*).

**Streaked Fantail***Rhipidura verreauxi*

Common in forest on New Caledonia, Lifou (*verreauxi*), Santo, Vanuatu (*spilodera*), Taveuni (*rufilateralis*) and Viti Levu (*layardi*) (Fiji)

**Kadavu Fantail***Rhipidura personata* (NT)

Regular in the forest on Kadavu. A distinctive song

**Samoan Fantail***Rhipidura nebulosa*

Small numbers seen and heard on Upolu, Samoa

**Silktaill***Lamprolia victoriae* (NT)

Exceptional views of this very intriguing and rather lovely bird. At least three very confiding birds were encountered along De Voux's Peak road. The taxonomic position of this species appears to be still in a state of flux. At various times it has been considered to be part of the Monarch Flycatchers (Monarchidae), has recently been placed with the Fantails (Rhipiduridae) and is probably best placed in a separate family together with the fairly closely related Pygmy Drongo of New Guinea.

**Monarchs Monarchidae****Slaty Monarch***Mayornis lessoni lessoni*

Good looks at this distinctive genus on Taveuni and later on Viti Levu, Fiji. Behaves and looks somewhat like a New World gnatcatcher.

**Buff-bellied Monarch***Neolalage banksiana*

This attractive endemic (and monotypic genus) showed nicely in forest on Santo, Vanuatu.

**Southern Shrikebill***Clytorhynchus pachycephaloides pachycephaloides*

Seen very nicely on New Caledonia and Vanuatu

**Fiji Shrikebill***Clytorhynchus vitiensis*

Excellent looks at this unobtrusive species on Taveuni (*layardi*), Fiji.

**Black-throated Shrikebill***Clytorhynchus nigrogularis* (VU)

Superb looks of several of this striking looking and wonderful vocalist in the interior of Viti Levu, Fiji.

**Melanesian Flycatcher***Myiagra caledonica*

Small numbers seen New Caledonia (*caledonica*) and somewhat more common on Santo, Vanuatu (*marinae*).

**Vanikoro Flycatcher***Myiagra vanikorensis rufiventris*

Commonly seen on all three Fijian islands including *kandavensis* on Kadavu.

**Samoan Flycatcher***Myiagra albiventris* (NT)

Superb views of several of these great looking birds. It's not difficult to see why they are sometimes referred to as Broadbills.

**Azure-crested Flycatcher***Myiagra azureocapilla*

This lovely endemic showed well on Taveuni (*azureocapilla*) and Viti Levu (*whitneyi*), Fiji.

**Crows & Jays Corvidae****New Caledonian Crow***Corvus moneduloides*

Four seen in the Parc de La Rivière Bleue, New Caledonia where they were observed and photographed probing in dead wood with a fine stick. Moderately common at the Parc des Grandes



Fougères, New Caledonia

### Australasian Robins: Petroicidae

**Yellow-bellied Flyrobin** *Microeca flaviventris*

Wonderfully common and confiding within the Parc de La Rivière Bleue, New Caledonia.

**Pacific Robin** *Petroica multicolor kleinschmidti*

We saw this delightful species in the highlands of Taveuni and Viti Levu, Fiji.

### Bulbuls Pycnonotidae

**Red-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus cafer*

**Introduced.** This species was very uncommon on New Caledonia but abundant on Viti Levu, Fiji and Upolu, Samoa.

### Swallows & Martins Hirundinidae

**Pacific Swallow** *Hirundo tahitica subfusca*

Common on Santo, Vanuatu and all three islands visited in Fiji.

**Welcome Swallow** *Hirundo neoxena*

One was seen at Ouemo Mangroves, New Caledonia.

### Cettia Warblers and allies Cettiidae

**Fiji Bush Warbler** *Horornis ruficapilla*

Good looks at this sometime secretive species on the Fijian islands: Taveuni (*funnebris*), and brief looks on Viti Levu (*badiceps*).

**Long-legged Thicketbird (Warbler)** *Megalurulus rufus rufous* (EN)

Seen by all but one of the group and heard by all in the lovely montane forest of the interior of Viti Levu. The birds we saw were surprisingly bright chestnut-brown.

### White-eyes Zosteropidae

**Fiji White-eye** *Zosterops explorator*

Common but not always easy to see on all three Fijian islands that we visited.

**Vanuatu White-eye** *Zosterops flavifrons perplexus*

Common on Santo, Vanuatu and in the gardens of our attractive hotel on Efate (*efatensis*).

**Small Lifou White-eye** *Zosterops minutus*

Common in the forests and gardens of Lifou.

**Green-backed White-eye** *Zosterops xanthochroa*

Common on New Caledonia

**Silvereye** *Zosterops lateralis*

Regular seen in scrub and secondary forest on New Caledonia (*griseonota*), Lifou (*nigrescens*), Santo and Efate, Vanuatu (*vatensis*), and Taveuni, Kadavu and Viti Levu, (*flaviceps*) Fiji.

**Large Lifou White-Eye** *Zosterops inornatus*

After some effort we all enjoyed great views of this tricky species in the forest of Lifou.

### Starlings, Rhabdornis Sturnidae

**Striated Starling** *Aplonis striata*

Small numbers were found on New Caledonia (*striata*) and Lifou (*attonitens*).

**Polynesian Starling** *Aplonis tabuensis*

Regularly seen in modest numbers on Taveuni, Kadavu and Viti Levu in Fiji (*vitiensis*) and Upolu, Samoa (*brevirostris*).





**Samoan Starling***Aplonis atrifusca*

A very common and large, striking endemic on Upolu, Samoa

**Jungle Myna***Acridotheres fuscus***Introduced.** This species was common on Taveuni and Viti Levu, Fiji and on Upolu, Samoa.**Common Myna***Acridotheres tristis***Introduced.** This species was common to abundant on all the islands we visited.**Thrushes Turdidae****Island Thrush***Turdus poliocephalus*Although a widespread species and at some locations quite common it appears to be declining radically on many of the islands of the Pacific. We observed it fairly commonly on the upper slopes of Des Voeux Peak, Taveuni (*tempesti*) and Viti Levu (*layardi*), Fiji.**Old World Sparrows Passeridae****House Sparrow***Passer domesticus*

Common around human habitation on New Caledonia and Vanuatu.

**Waxbills, Munias & Allies Estrildidae****Common Waxbill***Estrilda astrild***Introduced.** Several flocks were seen on New Caledonia in scrub near Noumea.**Red Avadavat***Amandava amandava***Introduced.** One small flock seen near the airport on Viti Levu Fiji**Red-throated Parrotfinch***Erythrura psittacea*

Great looks at this attractive endemic on New Caledonia especially in rank grasses near the Parc des Grandes Fougères.

**Red-headed Parrotfinch***Erythrura cyaneovirens cyaneovirens*

Small number regularly seen on Upolu, Samoa

**Fiji Parrotfinch***Erythrura pealii*

Delightfully common on Viti Levu especially along the roadside in the mountains and also on Taveuni.

**Chestnut Munia***Lonchura atricapilla***Introduced.** A nice flock of this introduced species was seen on Santo, Vanuatu.**MAMMALS****Small Indian Mongoose***Herpestes auropunctatus***Introduced.** Just one was seen on Viti Levu, Fiji. An appalling and most deplorable introduction.**Samoan Flying Fox***Pteropus samoensis*

Small numbers seen well from our lodge on the forested slopes of Upolu, Samoa

**Tonga Flying-Fox***Pteropus tonganus*

Common on Santo, Vanuatu, Taveuni and Viti Levu, Fiji and Upolu, Samoa

**Vanuatu Flying Fox***Pteropus anetianus*

Several groups showed well on Santo, Vanuatu.

**Hump-backed Whale***Megaptera novaeangliae*

Several seen blowing off Taveuni, Fiji.

**Rusa (Javan/Timor) Deer***Cervus timorensis***Introduced.** One was noted as we drove to the airport in central New Caledonia.

---

## REPTILES

**Samoan Blue-tailed Skink***Emoia impar*

One or two seen on Upolu, Samoa

**Bronze Skink sp**

Seen on New Caledonia

**Pacific Blue-tailed Skink***Emoia caeruleocaud*

Seen on New Caledonia

**Gecko cf***Eurydactylodes vieillardii*

New Caledonia

**Northern House Gecko***Hemidactylus frenatus*

Ubiquitous

**Banded Iguana***Brachylophus fasciatus*

Fabulous close encounters with a male on Kadavu.

**Bibron's Bevel-nosed Boa (Pacific Boa)** *Candoia bibroni bibroni*

We enjoyed splendid views of an adult on the island of Kadavu.

---

**Rockjumper Birding Ltd**

**Labourdonnais Village**

**Mapou**

**Mauritius**

**Tel (USA & Canada) toll free: 1-888-990-5552**

**Email: [info@rockjumperbirding.com](mailto:info@rockjumperbirding.com)**

**Alternative email: [rockjumperbirding@yahoo.com](mailto:rockjumperbirding@yahoo.com)**

**Website: [www.rockjumperbirding.com](http://www.rockjumperbirding.com)**

