



ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Papua New Guinea

Huon Peninsula Extension II

2nd August to 8th August 2023 (7 days)



Wahnes's Parotia by Tim Laman

Our extension to the Huon Peninsula takes in some of the remotest birding available, in an already distant part of the world. Here, the resplendent, cool montane forests host some rarely seen, endemic Bird-of-paradise that include Huon Astrapia, Wahnes's Parotia and the regal Emperor Bird-of-paradise. Throw in the attractive and localised Spangled Honeyeater, Macgregors Bowerbird (soon to be split as

Huon Bowerbird), *Cinnamon-browed Melidectes*, *Mottled Berryhunter* (now in its own monotypic family, endemic to New Guinea), *Pesquet's (Vulturine) Parrot*, *Tit and Fan-tailed Berrypecker* (two different families endemic to New Guinea!), *gaudy Papuan Lorikeet*, *Papuan Sitella*, *Blue-capped Ifrit* (endemic to New Guinea) and *Superb Bird-of-paradise*, and this short extension is sure to satisfy listers of both rare and remote species and families alike.

THE TOUR AT A GLANCE...

THE ITINERARY

Day 1	Port Moresby to Lae
Day 2	Lae to Wasu and the Huon Peninsula
Days 3 to 5	Huon Peninsula
Day 6	Wasu to Lae
Day 7	Lae to Port Moresby and depart

TOUR MAP...



THE TOUR IN DETAIL...

Day 1: Port Moresby to Lae. Our tour departs Port Moresby international today on a short flight to the town of Lae. Depending on today's flight schedule, we may arrive in Lae with a little light left to bird. The airport itself being a decent spot to find both Papuan Harrier and Horsfield's Bush Lark, while the grounds of our hotel are expansive and hold lots of birds, possibilities could include Pygmy Eagle, Palm Cockatoo, Buff-faced Pygmy Parrot, Pinon's Imperial Pigeon and Channel-billed Cuckoo. We will overnight in Lae, before our charter flight to Wasu in the morning.



Blue-capped Ifrit by Glen Valentine

Day 2: Lae to Wasu and the Huon Peninsula. This morning we will take a

chartered flight to the little town of Wasu on the north coast of the Huon Peninsula. Named after the French explorer Jean-Michel Huon de Kermadec, our short flight of 30 to 40 minutes will allow fabulous views of the wild and scenic Huon Peninsula mountains before we land on the grassy airstrip near Wasu. On arrival, we will head up the rough road to the Huon Birding Camp, nestled right in the heart of the best accessible montane forest in the area. This recently constructed camp is the perfect base from which to bird the Huon and is a huge jump in comfort from our previous tours to the area. Even as we are getting settled into our spacious stand up tents we are likely to start seeing our first birds and will have the remainder of the day to bird the area around the camp.



Emperor Bird-of-paradise by Tim Laman





Huon Astrapia by Tim Laman

near future, so we shall put in some time to find this unprepossessing and shy species. A further endemic that occurs in the area is Huon Catbird although we would have to be very fortunate to connect with this shy and uncommon species. While the Huon Melidectes is also endemic to these ranges, they occur at altitudes that we are unable to attain - so sightings of this species are most improbable.

The Huon Peninsula is dominated by three high mountain ranges, separated from the central spine of New Guinea. These coral limestone peaks reach a maximum altitude of over 4000masl and include the Finisterre, Saruwaged and Rawlinson Ranges. The mountains are covered in montane and subalpine forest up to an altitude of roughly 3000m before changing to alpine grassland above. The majority of our time will be spent birding the near virgin montane forests between altitudes of 1700 to 2000 metres.

Our prime targets to one side, these forests are also home to cornucopia of desirable species including the odd Pesquet's Parrot, stunning Greater Lophorina (formerly called Superb Bird of Paradise), and the poisonous and monotypic Blue-capped Ifrit. Another much wanted bird here is the bizarre Mottled Berryhunter, sole member of what is arguably the world's most difficult family to track down. The Huon forests are one of the best places to see this bird. Amongst a long list of other striking birds, possibilities include Brehm's Tiger Parrot, gaudy Papuan, Fairy, and Yellow-billed Lorikeet, Papuan King Parrot, Dusky Lory, Red-breasted Pygmy Parrot,

Days 3 to 5: Huon Peninsula. Our days in the montane forest of the Huon Peninsula will be dedicated to finding a number of species restricted to this tiny geographical area, and include three Bird-of-paradise species, a Bowerbird and a Honeyeater. We should have little trouble in finding the spectacular Huon Astrapia, indeed our first sightings are likely to come from right around our camp. Further afield we plan to visit a lek of Emperor Bird-of-paradise, and with some luck will be able to witness the males hanging upside down in their exquisite displays. Wahnes's Parotia can be a little more tricky and we shall likely have to dedicate some time to finding this astonishing species. The large Spangled Honeyeater is fortunately fairly common and most likely to be found in fruiting trees. The local sub-species of Macgregor's Bowerbird is due to be split as Huon Bowerbird in the



Mountain Kingfisher by Markus Lilje





Mountain Owlet-Nightjar by Holger Teichmann

Tit Berrypecker, Rufous-naped Bellbird, Brown-backed and Regent Whistler, Canary Flyrobin, Mountain Kingfisher (of an interesting looking taxa), Bar-tailed and Great Cuckoo-Dove, Ornate, White-bibbed and Pink-spotted Fruit Dove, Rufescent Imperial Pigeon, Garnet Robin, Papuan Sitella, Red-collared & Mountain Myzomela, Red-capped Flowerpecker, Black Monarch and Black-breasted Boatbill. A handful of drabber, but equally sought after species are also to be found, and include Streaked, Mid-mountain and Fan-tailed Berrypecker, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, localized Cinnamon-browed Melidectes, Rufous-backed, Black-throated,

and Marbled Honeyeater, Buff-faced Scrubwren, Brown-breasted Gerygone and Island Leaf Warbler. Overhead we are liable to find flocks of Great Woodswallow, Brown Falcon, and Black-mantled Goshawk. On interior forest trails we can try our luck at finding the retiring Blue-grey and Black-throated Robin, Orange-crowned Fairywren and shy ground birds like Forbe's Forest Rail, Spotted Jewel Babbler, Lesser Ground Robin and Lesser Melampitta.

As local landowners are seeing first hand the benefits of birding tourism, they are becoming more involved. They are now building viewing blinds at the display courts of Wahne's Parotia and at the bower of MacGregor's Bowerbird. There will be options to spend time in these blinds, and although close range sighting of these species are never guaranteed, should one occur it will certainly be a highlight of our time here.

Since we are now camping in the heart of the forest, we will have some excellent opportunities for nocturnal birding and both Mountain and Feline Owlet-Nightjar are quite common in the area. Hearing their strange calls in the middle of the night is one thing, although it will likely take some persistence to actually see either species. There are also pretty good chances to see Papuan Boobook and Greater Sooty Owl.

Day 6: Wasu to Lae. We will head back to Wasu for our onwards flight to Lae giving us some final spectacular views of these rugged mountains. We will have a final afternoon in Lae where there should be time for a bit of afternoon birding and to toast the success of the tour.



Red-cheeked Parrot by Holger Teichmann



Day 7: Lae to Port Moresby and depart. This morning we take a scheduled flight back to Port Moresby where the tour will conclude. For some this will be the end of their Papuan adventure, while for others there will be a little rest time before beginning our full Papua New Guinea - Birding in Paradise tour.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:

Tour dates, prices, single supplement rates, approximate flight costs and spaces available for this tour are displayed on our website. Please see under IMPORTANT NOTES below.

This includes:

- Internal charter flight from Lae to Wasu return;
- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 7;
- Bottled drinking water, tea and coffee at meals;
- All lodgings as per the itinerary;
- Ground transportation;
- Park entrance fees;
- Tips for lodge staff, porters, drivers, local communities and local guides; and
- Guiding services provided by Rockjumper tour leaders and local guides.

The tour fee does not include:

- **Any** flights (except the chartered flights from Lae to Wasu return which are included);
- Visa fees;
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Special gratuities;
- Telephone calls and
- Laundry and other items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. Single accommodation will only be possible in Lae (2 nights). There is no Single accommodation available in Wasu. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

Important Notes:

- **Evacuation Insurance is compulsory for this tour. As we are in a very remote location, the only option of evacuation in case of an emergency is via the same small aircraft. You must therefore ensure you have all necessary personal medication as there is no possibility of re-supply in the area.**
- We are staying in a very remote area, however a newly constructed birding camp has greatly enhanced the comfort of our stay here. We will be sleeping in quite spacious stand up tents that sleep two people. A raised cot will be provided but you will need to bring your own sleeping bag and pillow.
- The camp has a generator that will be run mainly around meal times. There are outlets available for charging. There are two pit toilets. You should bring your own hand sanitizer. There is a shower facility and while the generator is running it is possible to have a hot shower.
- All food and drinks will be provided while in the Huon. Meals will be basic due to the remoteness of the area and the difficulty in getting supplies. Breakfast will be mostly cereal (with powdered



milk) and biscuits, lunches will mainly consist of sandwiches (picnic lunch will be catered for while out birding) and dinner will consist of mostly rice, vegetables and tinned meat (tuna/pork/beef). Water, tea, coffee and fruit is also provided. Please note that catering for specific dietary requirements is not feasible on this tour.

- As we are in a high montane forest, there is a good chance of rain so please be prepared (full body ponchos are ideal). Be aware that the camp and most of our birding will be at roughly 1800 masl so expect chilly conditions in the evening and early morning in particular. Hiking boots are sufficient and you will not need Wellies (gum boots).
- The majority of the sites we visit are within short driving distance from our accommodation. Birding consists of easy walking along a road with diversions onto side tracks. Some days will consist of sitting in one location and waiting to see what comes into the fruit trees. There is a short hike to observe the Emperor Bird-of-paradise display area. Most of the birding is concentrated on top of the range with a maximum height of 2000 meters.
- Transportation options are very limited in the area and we are likely to be using an open truck. It is impossible to predict the conditions of the road but you should expect road conditions to be rough.
- The flight between Lae and Wasu is between 30-40 minutes each way depending on weather conditions. As we are in a small plane, weight is restricted with a baggage allowance of 10kg per person. Our hotels in Lae will allow us to leave excess equipment or luggage in storage to be collected on our return.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

a) Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is however fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing (usually 4 months before the tour.) The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates, which are also quoted in the respective fixed currency.

b) Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration a small party supplement will have to be charged.

c) Furthermore, these costs are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.

d) Lastly, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary and / or the designated Rockjumper leader/s at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.

Tiping: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader/s. If, therefore, you feel that he/they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them.

ARRIVAL and DEPARTURE DETAILS:

This tour does not include **ANY** international or domestic airfares (but does include return charter flights from Lae to Wasu). The Huon Peninsula extension will commence on day 1 and end on day 7 at Port Moresby International Airport, Papua New Guinea. **Please note: Due to the unreliable nature of the internal flights in Papua New Guinea, it is highly recommended to take a flight the day after the tour ends.**

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your **Tour Confirmation** package once the tour has been officially



confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

FLIGHTS:

Port Moresby International Airport (IATA: POM) is the main port of entry for international flights into Papua New Guinea and is serviced most reliably by Air Niugini from Brisbane, Singapore or Cairns. We will book all domestic flights of this tour on your behalf. **Please DO NOT book any flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.**

