



WEST PAPUA: ARFAK AND WAIGEO BIRDING EXPEDITION

16 - 27 NOVEMBER 2017



Lesser Bird-of-paradise (photo Matt Prophet) is one of our targets on this trip.

West Papua has 322 of the endemics of the island of New Guinea (94 %), compared to Papua New Guinea's 294 (86 %). West Papua is also considered the safer alternative to PNG for seeing birds-of-paradise.

Our Birding Tour West Papua will begin in the town of Manokwari, situated on the north-eastern tip of New Guinea's Bird's Head, or "Vogelkop", Peninsula. From here we will travel straight through for five nights in the nearby Arfak Mountains, where we will search for a fabulous series of birds, renowned in birders' circles as the "Vogelkop endemics". The second leg of our birding adventure takes us to Sorong, on the opposite side of the Bird's Head Peninsula, for a relaxed afternoon's birding outside the town. Then we will spend three days in the spectacular Raja Ampat Islands off Sarong on Waigeo, one of this archipelago's four major islands. On our return journey to Sorong we will stop for a few hours on a tiny atoll in Dampier Strait for birding, searching for regional island specialties.

Please note that the detailed itinerary below cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads or birding sites, and the discretion of the guides and other factors.

Itinerary (12 days/11 nights)

Days 1 – 5. Arfak Mountains

After arriving in the morning in Manokwari on the north-eastern tip of the famous Vogelkop Peninsula, on an overnight flight from Jakarta or another international airport in Indonesia, we will travel immediately to the Arfak Mountains, where we will arrive around midday and will be based for five nights.

Arguably Papua's premier birding region, the Arfaks support nine endemic bird species (and a further 11 species with restricted ranges), of which the most famous must be the **Vogelkop Bowerbird** – the world's greatest avian architect. Males of this amazing species build a roofed house-like construction at the base of a sapling tree, inside and in front of which they place colorful berries, flowers, and insect parts to attract females. You will also see the exciting **Western Parotia**, the males of which perform a bizarre side-step dance on the floor of their display courts, while their flank plumes are spread to form a circular skirt, with their six wiry antenna-like nape feathers directed forwards. Two other endemic birds-of-paradise are commonly seen here at higher altitudes (almost 2,000 m) – the little-known **Arfak Astrapia** and **Long-tailed Paradigalla** (rediscovered in 1989), as well as the more widespread **Black Sicklebill** with its 80 cm-long tail. Lower down, the **Magnificent Bird-of-paradise** may be seen on his court, displaying, in sequence, his iridescent carmine back, dark green breast shield, and sulphur-yellow cape, before jerkily dancing up and down a vertical sapling, while quivering his cocked sickle-shaped central tail feathers. Up to seven species of robins may be seen on the mountain trails, among many other families, as well as the **Spotted Jewel-babbler**, and, if you are lucky, a **Feline** or a **Mountain Owlet-nightjar**.

Other wonderful birds, most of them endemic or range-restricted, which we hope to find in the Arfaks include **Superb Bird-of-paradise**, **Papuan Mountain Pigeon**, **Red-collared Myzomela**, **Rufous-sided Honeyeater**, **Vogelkop Melidectes**, **Arfak Honeyeater**, **Northern Variable Pitohui**, **Vogelkop Scrubwren**, **Papuan Parrotfinch**, **Papuan Boobook**, **Wattled Brushturkey**, **White-striped Forest Rail**, **Trumpet Manucode**, **Papuan Black Myzomela**, **Vogelkop Whistler**, **Papuan Eagle**, **Papuan Lorikeet**, **Papuan**

Treecreeper, Papuan Logrunner, Papuan Sittella, and Smoky Robin, among, as always, so many others.

Overnight: community guest house

Day 6. Arfak Mountains, transfer to Manokwari

We will be spending yet another day birding in the Arfak Mountains, searching for any specialties of this magnificent area we may have missed so far. In the late afternoon we will drive back to Manokwari.

Overnight: Manokwari Hotel

Day 7. Transfer to Sorong, birding the Sorong area

Today we will take a morning flight from Manokwari to Sorong on the far north-western edge of the Vogelkop Peninsula. After arrival and lunch we will spend the afternoon birding the lowlands and foothills surrounding Sorong, covered with excitingly bird-rich selectively-logged and primary rainforests.

Our major targets here are three range-restricted species, which do not occur on Waigeo Island, namely **Red-breasted Paradise Kingfisher** (restricted to West Papua and the north-eastern coast of Papua New Guinea), **Red-billed Brushturkey** (restricted to the Indonesian provinces of Papua and West Papua), and **Black Lory** (endemic to West Papua).

We will also keep our eyes open for other interesting birds in this area, including three bird-of-paradise species, namely **Magnificent Riflebird** and **King** and **Lesser Birds-of-paradise**, the endemic **Moluccan King Parrot**, **Red-bellied** and **Hooded Pittas**, **Black Cicadabird**, and, on a night outing, hopefully **Large-tailed** and **Papuan Nightjars**, **Papuan Frogmouth**, and **Papuan Boobook**.

Overnight: Sorong hotel

Days 8 - 10. Waigeo Island

In the morning of Day 8 we will transfer by speedboat from Sorong to Waigeo Island across the Indonesian Dampier Strait (sometimes also known as Augusta's Strait). During the three-hour ride we will look out for pelagic species like **Pomarine Skua**, **Lesser Frigatebird**, **Bulwer's Petrel**, **Streaked** and **Wedge-tailed Shearwaters**, and **Matsudaira's Storm Petrel**.

Waigeo, where we will be based for three nights, is the largest island in the Raja Ampat Islands, an archipelago comprising over 1,500 small islands, cays, and shoals, located off the northwest tip of the Bird's Head Peninsula. These islands are the home of three endemics, comprising the exquisite **Wilson's Bird-of-paradise** with its bright cerulean-blue, bare crown, criss-crossed with fine black lines, the crimson-plumed **Red Bird-of-paradise**, and the recently re-discovered **Waigeo Brushturkey** (unfortunately a very tough bird, which may not easily be found). Other birding highlights on these islands include **Western Crowned Pigeon** (one of the trio of New Guinea crowned pigeons - the world's largest pigeons), **Pheasant Pigeon**, **Palm Cockatoo**, and **Great-billed Parrot**.

During our time on Waigeo we also hope to encounter, among a multitude of others, **Blyth's Hornbill**, **New Guinea Friarbird**, **Southern Variable** and **Raja Ampat Pitohuis**, **Hooded** and **Black Butcherbirds**, **Marbled Frogmouth**, **Dusky Megapode**, **Pygmy** and **Gurney's Eagles**, **Red-necked Crake**, **New Guinea Bronzewing**, **Moustached Treeswift**, **Moluccan King Parrot**, **Brown-headed Crow**, and **Glossy-mantled Manucode**.

Overnight: Waigeo Island

Day 11. Transfer to Dampier Strait atoll and to Sorong

On our transfer back to Sorong we will make a serious birding stop on one of the tiny atolls

in the Dampier Strait. We'll have lunch there and then enjoy our afternoon search for a number of regional small island specialties, including the *prasinorrhous* subspecies of **White-bibbed Fruit Dove**, **Olive Honeyeater**, **Island Whistler**, **Rufous Fantail**, and **Lemon-bellied White-eye**.

Other species we might be able to find here include **Dusky Megapode**, **Beach Kingfisher**, **Spice Imperial Pigeon**, **Varied Honeyeater**, and **Metallic Starling**. If we are lucky we also might encounter **Violet-necked Lory**, **Great-billed Parrot**, **Pied Imperial Pigeon**, **Great-billed Heron**, **Island Monarch**, and **Moluccan Starling**.

Toward evening we will continue to Sorong for our farewell dinner and a good night's rest.

Overnight: Sorong hotel

Day 12. Departure

After breakfast we will transfer to Sorong's airport for the first morning flight to Jakarta or to other international airports in Indonesia for our flights home.

Duration:	12 days
Limit:	4 - 8
Date:	November 16 – 27, 2017
Start:	Manokwari
End:	Sorong
Price:	US\$5855 per person sharing, based on 4 - 8 participants
Single supplement:	US\$470

Price includes:

Lodging

Meals

Expert bird guide during the entire trip

Private transportation during the tour (except for the flight from Manokwari to Sorong, which will hopefully cost between €325 and €426 per person)

Transfers to and from the airport

Price excludes:

All flights

Personal and medical insurance

Tips

Items of a personal nature, such as extra drinks, snacks, alcoholic beverages, laundry, souvenirs, etc.

Physical toughness

Reasonable physical fitness and good agility are required to bird the relatively steep slopes here.