ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Papua New Guinea

New Britain Extension II

13th July to 17th July 2022 (5 days)



Melanesian Megapode by Jonathan Rossouw

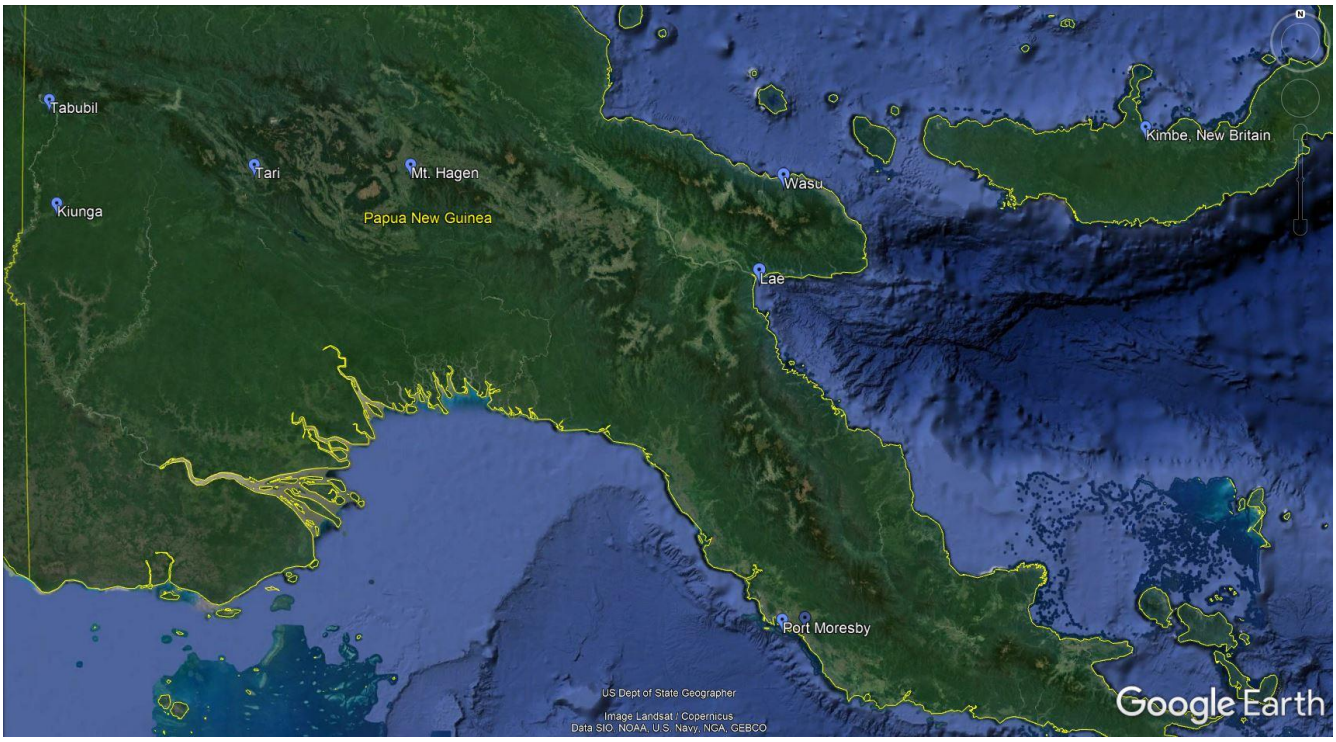
The beautiful and little-explored island of New Britain is situated in the warm Bismarck Sea just to the north of mainland New Guinea. It forms part of the string of volcanic islands known as the Bismarck Archipelago. Famous amongst birders for its amazing forests and wealth of very special and localised endemics, our New Britain extension affords us a fantastic opportunity for some great birding, fabulous scenery, brilliant snorkelling and excellent accommodation and food.

THE TOUR AT A GLANCE…

THE ITINERARY

Day 1	**Port Moresby to New Britain**
Day 2 to 4	**New Britain**
Day 5	**New Britain to Port Moresby**

TOUR MAP



THE TOUR IN DETAIL…



Finsch's (Growling) Imperial Pigeon by Glen Valentine

Day 1: Port Moresby to New Britain. New Britain is the largest island of the Bismarck Archipelago and supports many seldom-seen endemics for which we will be searching. Situated between the Bismarck and Solomon Seas, this narrow mountainous island is over 600km (375 miles) long, but only 80km (50 miles) at its widest. The fertile, exploited volcanic soils of the eastern portion of the island present a striking contrast to the western half, where Western influences began mostly during and after the Second World War. Today we will take a connecting flight to the city of Hoskins in West New Britain and begin our exploration of the wide variety of habitats on the island.

From Hoskins, it is an hour's drive to our hotel in Kimbe Bay. This is primarily a dive resort, but is conveniently located for exploring the most accessible birding sites of the region. If time permits, we may commence our birding around the lodge gardens where possibilities include Sacred and Common Kingfishers, New Britain Friarbird, Shining Flycatcher, Black and Olive-backed Sunbirds, Red-banded Flowerpecker and Variable Goshawk.

Days 2 to 4: New Britain and surrounding islands. Over the next three days, we will bird several forest sites and reserves from our Kimbe Bay base. All of New Britain's lowland endemics can be found at these sites along with more widespread but no less desirable and eye-catching species.

We will spend time in forested habitats searching for such specialities as Black Honey Buzzard, the scarce White-mantled Kingfisher, spectacular Black-capped Paradise Kingfisher, tiny New Britain Dwarf Kingfisher, recently split Melanesian Kingfisher, huge Violaceous and distinctive White-necked Coucals, Black-tailed Monarch, active Ashy and Black-bellied Myzomelas, the attractive Red-banded Flowerpecker, Velvet Flycatcher, Long-tailed Myna, White-rumped Swiftlet and Bismarck Crow. Other more widespread species we hope to encounter include Pacific Baza, Moustached Treeswift, Shining Bronze, Channel-billed and Brush Cuckoos, Rainbow Bee-eater, magnificent Blyth's Hornbill, White-



Golden Masked Owl by Glen Valentine



Black-capped Paradise Kingfisher by Markus Lilje

bellied and Barred Cuckooshrikes, Northern Fantail and Varied Triller. We will be sure to spend some time searching for Melanesian Megapode at their breeding colonies amongst the volcanically heated soil in the forest at Garu Forest Reserve. Nicobar Pigeons can often be found feeding in forest patches and we hope to be able to visit a roosting site of New Britain Boobooks.

Columbids and Psittacids are well represented on the island and include the more widespread Bar-tailed and Amboyna Cuckoo-Doves, Stephan's Emerald Dove, Superb Fruit Dove, minuscule Buff-faced Pygmy Parrot, Eclectus Parrot and Red-flanked Lorikeet. Of the endemics, we will be looking for Red-knobbed, Black, Yellowish and Finsch's Imperial Pigeons, elusive Pied Cuckoo-Dove, Knob-billed Fruit Dove, Blue-eyed Cockatoo, gaudy Purple-bellied Lory, scarce Song Parrot, Red-chinned Lorikeet and Bismarck Hanging Parrot.

Many rare and little known species inhabit the lowland forests of New Britain and some particularly poorly known species that we have at least a chance of encountering are Pink-legged Rail, Bismarck Kingfisher, Bismarck Pitta and perhaps even Slaty-mantled Goshawk or New Britain Sparrowhawk. Of greatest interest is the chance to look for the almost mythical Golden Masked Owl. In 2015 we were the first tour group to see this species that had been essentially lost to science, but with increased knowledge of the birds we now stand a very reasonable chance of encountering one in the Kimbe area during nocturnal explorations.

More open habitats are worth exploring as well and it is here that we will search for the endemic Buff-bellied Mannikin, along with Buff-banded Rail, King Quail, Australian Reed Warbler and the interesting local form of Papuan Grassbird.

One of the days we will embark on a half day boat trip into Kimbe Bay, our objective being to visit some of the smaller islets for the island endemics and specialities. These include MacKinlay's Cuckoo-Dove, Island Imperial Pigeon, Beach Kingfisher, Island Monarch, Mangrove Golden Whistler, Sclater's Myzomela and the beautifully adorned Nicobar Pigeon, while White-bellied Sea Eagle and Eastern Osprey may be spotted soaring overhead.

During our journey to and from the islands, we may also encounter Lesser Frigatebirds, Brown Booby, Black



Violaceous Coucals by Gareth Robbins



New Britain Boobook by Markus Lilje

and Brown Noddies and a variety of terns, including Bridled, Greater Crested, Black-naped, Common and Roseate. Exposed mudflats near our accommodation could yield Whimbrel, Grey-tailed Tattler, Greater Sand Plover or Pacific Reef Heron.

After what promises to be a very productive and exciting morning's birding, we then have the added opportunity to don masks, snorkels and flippers and partake in some excellent snorkelling off Restorf Island. The crystal clear ocean here is a deep turquoise blue and teems with the most elaborately coloured fish one could ever imagine. Over 800 species of fish are known from Kimbe Bay along with more than half of the world's hard coral species! We will head back to shore around mid-day for lunch. The afternoon will be spent back at one of the forest localities in search of any species we may not yet have seen.

Day 5: New Britain to Port Moresby. After breakfast, we will depart our lodge and drive back to Hoskins for our return flight to Port Moresby.

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:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 5;
- Bottled drinking water, tea and coffee at meals;
- All lodgings as per the itinerary;
- Ground and water 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;
- 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. 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:

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.

Tipping: 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. The New Britain extension will commence on day 1 and end on day 5 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 an afternoon or evening departure flight on the final day of the tour, or a morning flight the day after.**

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.**