Papua New Guinea

Huon Peninsula Extension



Wahne'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.

Itinerary & Map

Day 1	**Port Moresby to Lae**
Day 2	**Lae to Huon Peninsula via Wasu**
Days 3 & 4	**Huon Peninsula**
Day 5	**Wasu to Lae**
Day 6	**Lae to Port Moresby and depart**



Birding sites in detail

Lae. Lae airport is 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.



Blue-capped Ifrit by Glen Valentine

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 trickier, 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 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.



Huon Astrapia by Lev Frid

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,



Pesquet's Parrot by Lev Frid

Red-breasted Pygmy Parrot, 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 sightings of this 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.



Emperor Bird-of-paradise by Tim Laman

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Difficult. This a Mega style tour designed for the dedicated lister and serious birder. Not suitable for dedicated or avid photographers; inexperienced birders; or anyone with mobility or health challenges.
Birding Ease		Demanding. Bird density is low, many visuals are high in the canopy. A number of difficult target species.
Accommodation		Reasonable. Stand up tents and a good hotel.
Walking / Trails		Mostly narrow trails inside forest, can be very muddy after rain.
Vehicles / Roads		Difficult. Dirt roads that can be very muddy or bumpy, conditions may require the use of open bed trucks.
Photography		Limited, worthwhile for record shots mostly.
Annoyances		Expect rain, muddy trails, chilly montane temperatures and biting insects.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 6;
- Internal flights from Lae to Wasu return;
- Bottled drinking water, tea and coffee at meals;
- All lodgings;
- All ground transportation during the tour;
- All reserve entrance fees;
- All guiding services;
- Tips for local guides, drivers and services.

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- ANY flights (except as stated above);
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Optional excursions & activities;
- Special gratuities;
- Telephone calls, 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.

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 you feel that they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them at your discretion.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is 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. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes may need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

- 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 normally sufficient and you should 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, but fairly difficult hike to observe the Emperor Bird-of-paradise display area.
- Trails can be muddy and difficult to walk on after heavy rains. A walking/hiking stick might be beneficial.
- 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.

Arrival and Departure Details

Day 1 is set aside for an internal flight from Port Moresby International Airport to Lae. The tour will conclude after a return a flight from Lae to Port Moresby on day 6. If you are departing on an international flight from Port Moresby at the end of the Huon tour, 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.

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.

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements.

DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.