Papua New Guinea

New Britain Extension I

29th May to 2nd June 2024 (5 days)



Golden Masked Owl by Lev Frid

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.

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.

Itinerary & Map

Day 1	**Port Moresby to New Britain**
Days 2 to 4	**New Britain**
Day 5	**New Britain to Port Moresby and depart**



Birding sites in detail



Finsch's (Growling) Imperial Pigeon by Glen Valentine

Kimbe Bay & surrounds. We will spend our time birding 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. The lodge gardens offer Sacred and Common Kingfishers, New Britain Friarbird, Shining Flycatcher, Black and Olive-backed Sunbirds, Red-banded Flowerpecker and Variable Goshawk.

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-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.



New Britain Dwarf Kingfisher by Lev Frid

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.



Violaceous Coucal by Lev Frid

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.

Kimbe Bay islets. 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 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!

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease	■ ■ ■	An easy tour.
Birding Ease	■ ■ ■	Moderate, a number of canopy species. Some difficult target species.
Accommodation	■ ■ ■	Very good. Comfortable lodge for the entire extension.
Walking / Trails	■ ■ ■	Mostly birding on roads through the rain forest. Some trails with uneven ground. Optional tough hike if time permits.
Vehicles / Roads	■ ■ ■	Driving is limited. Boat trip is normally on very calm seas within a protected bay.
Photography	■ ■ ■	Reasonable, typical rain forest conditions of variable light and frequent rain.
Annoyances	■ ■ ■	Rain to be expected, some trails can get a little muddy.

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 5;
- 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 made 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.**

Arrival and Departure Details

The New Britain extension will commence on day 1 and end on day 5 at Port Moresby International Airport, Papua New Guinea. 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. The following website provides detailed information about visa eligibility and assistance with online applications options where viable: Visa HQ for Travel

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