Indonesia

Remote West Papua Islands Cruise

Buru Island Extension



Wilson's Bird-of-paradise by Glen Valentine

Our fabulous and exhilarating Remote West Papuan Island cruise sets out to explore a myriad of isolated islands in this exceptionally beautiful part of Indonesia. We start the trip in Sorong, West Papua, where extensive lowland forests support spectacular New Guinea endemics like Magnificent and King Birds-of-paradise, Red-breasted Paradise Kingfisher, Blue-black Kingfisher a bounty of beautiful fruit doves, dozens of honeyeaters and the localised Black Lory. Thereafter, we board our vessel and enter the Raja Ampat Islands just west of mainland New Guinea. Here, we'll seek out a vast array of further little-known and rare species with extraordinary gems including Red and Wilson's Birds-of-paradise (regarded by many as the most spectacular bird on earth!), Waigeo Shrikethrush, Raja Ampat Pitohui, Western Crowned Pigeon and Island Whistler, while enjoying several snorkelling opportunities in the planet's most pristine and prolific coral reefs. We then cross Lydekker's Line, entering Wallacea where the island of Kofiau supports Kofiau Paradise Kingfisher and Kofiau Monarch, two species that have still only been seen by a handful of birders globally! Crossing the Halmahera Sea westwards towards Obi, we stand a chance at seeing some rare cetaceans and unusual seabirds, while the endemic-rich and seldom-birded island of Obi in the northern Moluccas harbours such delicacies as Carunculated Fruit Dove, Moluccan (Obi) Woodcock and Obi Paradise-crow among many others before moving southwards to the much

larger island of Seram in search of an array of incredibly exciting endemics such as Salmon-crested Cockatoo, Lazuli Kingfisher, Purple-naped Lory, Seram Boobook and Long-crested Myna to mention but a few. To end the tour, the small island of Boano offers a final selection of fine Indonesian endemics that includes the little-known Boano Monarch before we arrive in Ambon where the tour concludes.

Our Buru Extension explores a beautifully forested island hosting 20 currently recognised endemic species plus several very distinctive, endemic subspecies and localised regional endemics. Some of Buru's most prized species include Buru Green Pigeon, Buru Racket-tail, Moluccan Masked Owl, Buru Boobook, Buru Dwarf Kingfisher, Buru Thrush, Buru Monarch, Buru Cuckooshrike, Buru Honeyeater and Tawny-backed Fantail among many others, and if we are very lucky, we may even find the strange, once mythical and reputedly nocturnal Black-lored Parrot! Before the tour is finally over, we will have a chance to search for some birds on Ambon, targeting the endemic Ambon White-eye and an evening excursion to Haruku Island for the amazing spectacle of Moluccan Megapodes attending their breeding area.

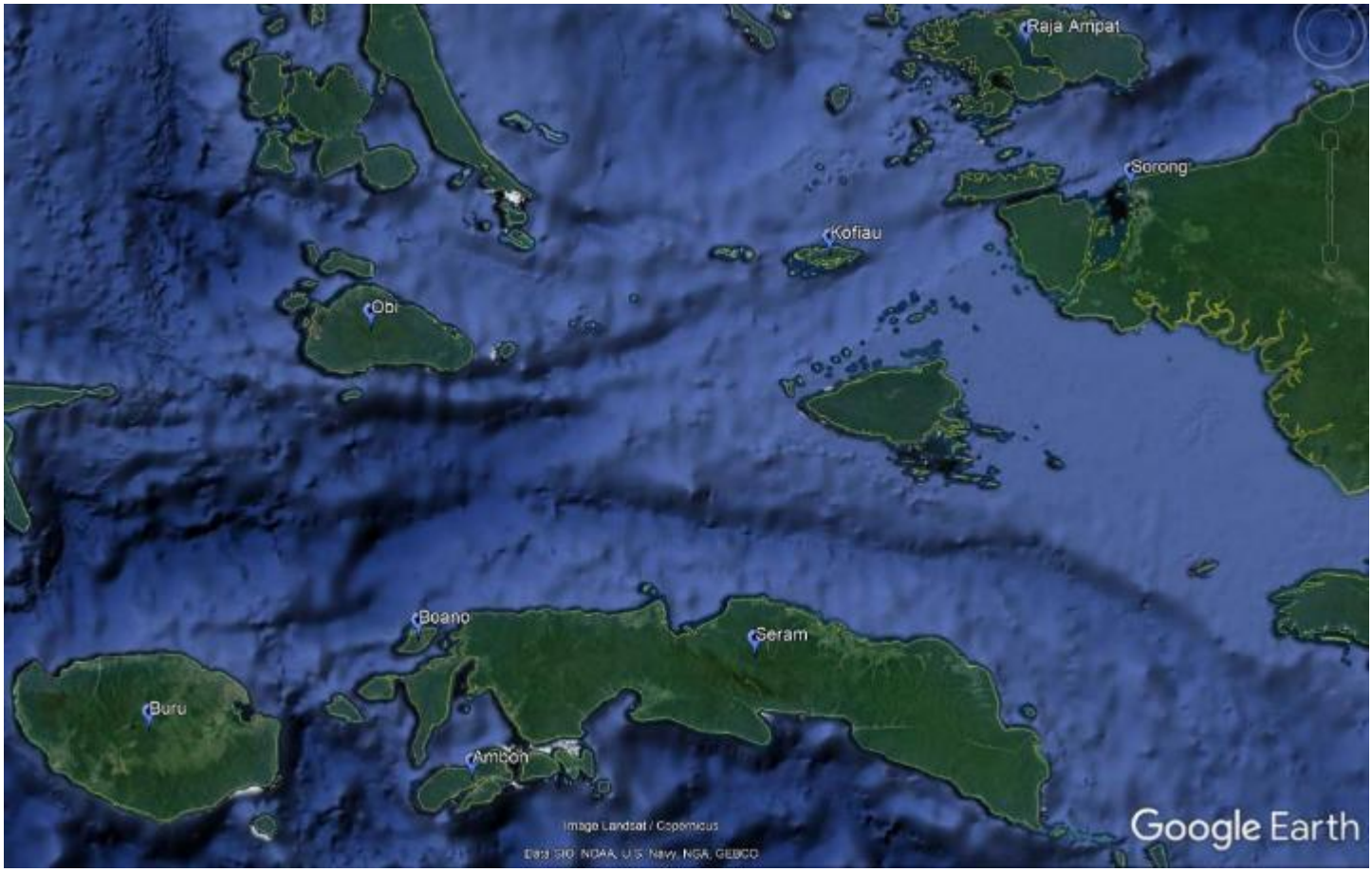
Itinerary & Map

RWPI Cruise

Day 1	**Arrival in Ambon, cruise towards Boano Island**
Day 2	**Boano Island, cruise towards Seram Island**
Days 3 & 4	**Seram Island**
Day 5	**Seram Island, cruise towards Obi Island**
Day 6	**Obi Island**
Day 7	**Obi Island, cruise towards Kofiau Island**
Day 8	**Kofiau Island; snorkelling off Mansuar Island, cruise towards Merpati Island**
Day 9	**Kri to Waigeo via Mioskon Island**
Day 10	**Kari Raja Islands & Waigeo Island**
Day 11	**Waigeo Island**
Day 12	**Arrival in Sorong, Malagufuk area & Sorong Mangroves or TWA Forest**
Day 13	**Tamrau Lowlands/Malagufuk area on Vogelkop (Bird's Head) & Sorong Mangroves or TWA Forest Reserve**
Day 14	**Sorong & final departure**

Buru Island Extension

Day 1	**Arrival in Ambon, flight to Buru Island**
Days 2 to 4	**Buru Island**
Day 5	**Buru Island, flight to Ambon & Haruku Island**
Day 6	**Ambon Island & final departure**



Birding sites in detail

RWPI Cruise

Tamrau Lowlands/Malagufuk area of the Vogelkop (Bird's Head). Located on the extreme western tip of New Guinea, Vogelkop offers encounters with several exciting New Guinea species. We'll spend two consecutive mornings birding along a road at the edge of extensive lowland rainforest and, once the morning warms up, along a well-constructed boardwalk inside the forest. The lowland forest habitat and birding here is some of the very best on the entire island and makes for a brilliant morning's birding!



Blue-black Kingfisher by Lev Frid

At dawn, we'll keep an eye out at the forest edge for Pacific Baza, Grey-headed Goshawk, Long-tailed Honey Buzzard, a wonderful range of fruit doves including Wompoo, Superb, Pink-spotted, Beautiful, Orange-bellied and Dwarf Fruit Doves, an outside chance of Coroneted Fruit Dove, as



Red-breasted Paradise Kingfisher by Paul Varney

well as Pinon's and Zoe's Imperial Pigeons, Blyth's Hornbill, Palm and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, the uncommon and localized Black Lory (virtually endemic to Vogelkop), Black-capped Lory, the radiant Papuan Eclectus, Red-flanked Lorikeet, Large and Double-eyed Fig Parrots, Papuan Spinetail, Grey Crow, Brown Oriole, Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Sultan's Cuckoo-Dove, Sahul Brush Cuckoo, the impressive Channel-billed Cuckoo, the furtive, Black-billed Coucal, nomadic Papuan Mountain Pigeon, Uniform and Glossy Swiftlets, Red-cheeked Parrot, the tiny Yellow-capped Pygmy Parrot, Green-backed Gerygone, brilliant Golden and Frilled Monarchs, Black and Olive-backed Sunbirds, Metallic Starling, Yellow-faced and Golden Mynas, the localised Black-browed Triller, Black Cicadabird, Grey-headed, Boyer's and the gorgeous and vocal Golden Cuckooshrikes, Spotted, Green-backed, Plain, and outrageous Long-billed Honeyeaters, Ruby-throated Myzomela, Lowland Peltops and Olive-crowned Flowerpecker. Birds-of-paradise are fairly well represented on mainland New Guinea, and we'll stand chances of Magnificent Riflebird (more likely heard than seen), the scarce and shy Twelve-wired, Lesser and Magnificent Birds-of-paradise and Glossy-mantled and Trumpet Manucodes. If we are extremely fortunate, we may even encounter the very rare and declining Pesquet's (Vulturine) Parrot squawking by overhead or the extremely scarce Streak-headed Mannikin feeding in seeding grasses at the forest edge.



Magnificent Bird-of-paradise by Glen Valentine

Exploration of the boardwalk and forest trails may turn up noisy flocks of Papuan Babbler, Southern Variable Pitohui, the rare Wallace's Fairywren, Pacific and scarce Dwarf Koels, the vociferous but shy and elusive White-crowned Cuckoo (Koel), the sneaky Rusty Mouse-warbler, Purple-tailed Imperial Pigeon, the wonderfully vocal Hooded and Black Butcherbirds, Shining Flycatcher (Monarch), Rufous-backed Fantail, the secretive Black-sided Robin, ultra-skulky Sooty Thicket Fantail, Spot-winged Monarch, the rare and extremely shy Blue Jewel-babbler, a variety of



King Bird-of-paradise by Lev Frid

honeyeaters like Mimic, Puff-backed, Scrub and Tawny-breasted Honeyeaters, as well as the very rare Yellow-gaped Honeyeater and little-known Tawny Straightbill. In the forest interior, we'll also be seeking out some of the star birds of the West Papuan lowlands such as the incredible King Bird-of-paradise, magnificent Red-breasted Paradise Kingfisher, the rare and once-mythical Blue-black Kingfisher, Papuan Dwarf Kingfisher, Papuan Pitta and with immense fortune perhaps even the almost-impossible-to-see Red-billed Brushturkey or Northern Cassowary.

TWA Forest Reserve. Situated very close to Sorong lies the forest reserve of TWA, protecting a fragment of remaining lowland forest that is very easily accessible from Sorong and therefore makes for a worthwhile excursion should we have time one afternoon or on the last morning. Many of the same species mentioned for the Tamrau Lowlands also occur at TWA except for some of the rarer ones due to TWA's smaller size and lack of primary forest. The reserve is however an excellent place to see specialties like Black-browed Triller, Olive-crowned Flowerpecker, Streak-headed Mannikin, Trumpet Manucode, Yellow-faced and Golden Mynas, Lowland Peltops, Yellow-billed Kingfisher and a variety of honeyeaters, including the scarce Green-backed Honeyeater.

Sorong Mangroves. Our recent surveys have shown that a few very special birds occur in the extensive mangroves that surround much of the Sorong coastline. We'll make at least one trip into the mangroves that are easily accessed by means of raised, gravel roads and boardwalks. Here, we hope to lay eyes on the shy and unobtrusive Blue-black and Little Kingfishers, Collared Imperial Pigeon, the sumptuous Emperor Fairywren, Black Butcherbird, New Guinea Friarbird, Orange-fronted Fruit Dove, Brown-backed Honeyeater, Little Bronze Cuckoo, White-bellied Cuckooshrike, Glossy-mantled Manucode and Large-billed Gerygone. Barred and Buff-banded Rails are even possible and we've also previously encountered further unexpected species such as Black and Cinnamon Bitterns and White-browed Crake here over the years.



Claret-breasted Fruit Dove by Paul Varney

Mioskon Island. Mioskon or Bat Island as it is seen on many maps of



Violet-necked (Scaled) Lory by Glen Valentine

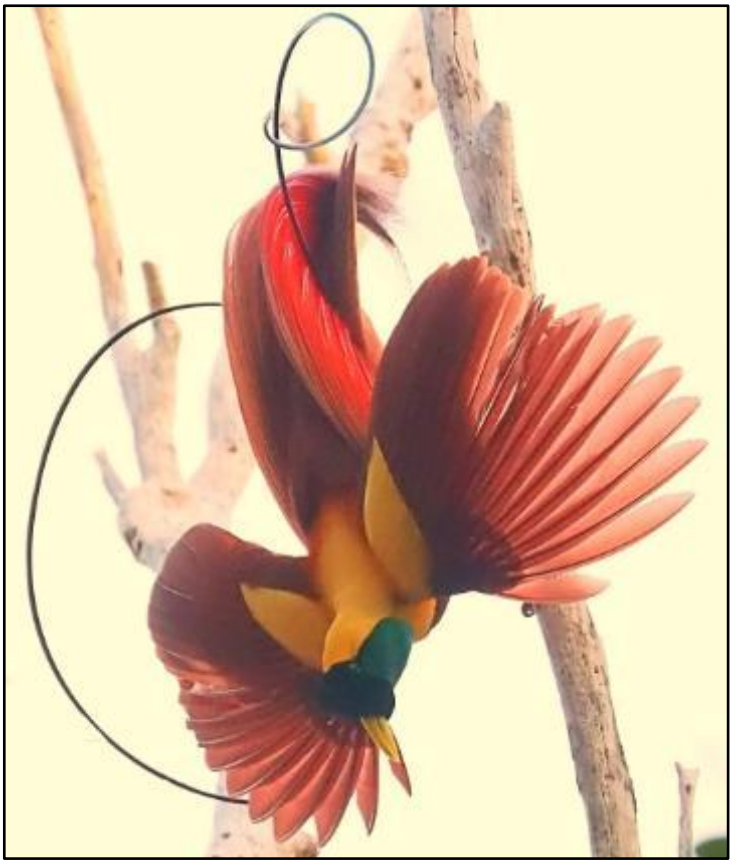
the region is justifiably known for its staggeringly large population of roosting Spectacled Flying Fox. Numbering in the hundreds of thousands, all crammed tightly onto this tiny island, we'll witness the emergence of these huge bats as dusk commences when they'll leave the sanctuary of the island to head off into the night towards the larger, neighbouring island of Waigeo, where large fruiting trees abound. A mind-blowing sight to behold, this will undoubtedly be one of the most impressive spectacles of the entire tour!

Waigeo, Kris and Kari Raja Islands. On our first morning in the area, we will make an early start with a pre-dawn landing on the south coast of Waigeo. Awaiting vehicles will then drive us inland along a wonderfully forested track to a series of hides/blinds especially erected to permit us to observe one of the most beautiful birds on Earth – displaying Wilson's Bird-of-paradise! No longer do we have to climb a brutally steep hill for three hours to sit and hope that this remarkable bird attends just one display lek located on a steep hillside as was the case in the past (neighbouring Batanta Island). We will permit ourselves plenty of time to relax and really enjoy this fabulous bird, and for the photographers amongst us, this will be the opportunity of a lifetime! To sit in the hides watching these gorgeous birds, while Blyth's Hornbills and Sulphur-crested and Palm Cockatoos call overhead along with a supporting cast of imperial pigeons, fruit doves, Common Paradise Kingfishers, Rusty and Raja Ampat Pitohuis, Black and Hooded Butcherbirds and Rusty Mouse Warbler all vocalizing, duetting and bouncing around in the surrounding forest, is a fabulously evocative experience and certainly one of the major highlights of this entire tour. Once we are fully satiated with the Wilson's Bird-of-paradise, we will spend the rest of the morning birding along a lovely, forested road with little or no traffic to disturb us. Here we will be targeting the scarce and strangely range-restricted and patchily distributed Brown-headed Crow, as well as the recently described Waigeo Shrikethrush and the vociferous and common but shy Raja Ampat Pitohui. As the day heats up and bird activity diminishes, we will retreat to the coolness and comfort of our ship, affording us an opportunity to rest, relax, clean up and reflect on what should have been a very special morning indeed!



Waigeo Spotted Cuscus by Glen Valentine

For the remainder of our time in the Raja Ampats we have seemingly endless



Red Bird-of-paradise by Glen Valentine

options thanks to the flexibility of our vessel, enabling us to explore a range of small, offshore islands and habitats, as well as other parts of the extensive Waigeo Island.

Our second morning will also be spent on Waigeo with a pre-dawn owling option where we stand a good chance of seeing Papuan Boobook and Papuan and Marbled Frogmouths and with a hefty dose of luck, the rare and elusive Wallace's Owlet-nightjar. At dawn we will visit a display tree for the spectacular Red Bird-of-paradise. Positioning ourselves at dawn on the wooden benches that have been perfectly built near the base of this tree, we'll patiently wait for our quarry to perform and the show to begin. We hope to obtain amazing views and photographs of these stunning birds as they call and display in the branches above us, as is almost always the case. Other top-quality species that we might encounter this morning after we are completely satisfied with our Red Bird-of-paradise experience include Papuan Dwarf and Hook-billed Kingfishers, Black Berrypecker, Golden, Frilled and Spot-winged Monarchs, Grey Whistler, Spotted, Tawny-breasted, Mimic, Puff-backed and Long-billed Honeyeaters, Pale-billed Scrub Wren, Yellow-breasted Boatbill, Spectacled (Dwarf) and Pygmy Longbills, Olive Flyrobin, Moustached Treeswift, Great and Sultan's Cuckoo-Dove, Palm Cockatoo, Black-sided Robin and even an outside chance for very rare and seldom-seen species like Western Crowned Pigeon, White-eared Catbird and New Guinea Bronzewing.

An afternoon will be spent cruising through the scenically spectacular Kari Raja Islands by means of our accompanying speed-boats. Here, the limestone karst formations rise out of the water creating a myriad of small islands that make for a memorable and relaxing experience. Visually this is a wonderful way to spend the afternoon and we will also have excellent chances at finding a few noteworthy birds such as Spice Imperial Pigeon, Violet-necked Lory (possibly split in future as Scaled Lory), Beach Kingfisher, Pacific Reef Heron, Osprey, Lesser Frigatebird, Glossy-mantled Manucode, New Guinea Friarbird and White-bellied Sea Eagle with the impressive but scarce Great-billed Heron being a distinct possibility. Recently, we've discovered a reliable site to see the



Western Crowned Pigeon by Lev Frid



Kofiau Paradise Kingfisher by Glen Valentine

rare and bizarre Nicobar Pigeon. Positioning ourselves at the edge of a small island, we hope to see several (over 40 individuals in 2024!) of these impressive pigeons flying in to roost at dusk when their short and strikingly pure white tails are extremely obvious.

On another afternoon we will move over to the small island of Kris, which is well known in diving circles as a spectacular underwater site. We will have an opportunity to enjoy some memorable snorkelling in this area before heading onto the island itself for its avian specialty, the Dusky Megapode. This species can be difficult to connect with in other parts of its range as they are generally rather shy, however at Kris they are somewhat used to the presence of people making them a bit easier to observe. During our afternoon stroll through the dive resort grounds, we may also find the localized Waigeo Spotted Cuscus and roosting Big-eared Flying Foxes, as well as Common Paradise Kingfisher, Glossy-mantled Manucode, Hooded Butcherbird and Variable Goshawk.

Merpati Island. We have the unique opportunity to explore the wonderful and idyllic island of Merpati. We have special permission to land on, and walk around this small "restricted access" island where a number of 'supertramp' species can be found such as Violet-necked (Scaled) Lory, Olive and Varied Honeyeaters, Supertramp Fantail, Moluccan Starling, Lemon-bellied White-eye and the most special species of all, the incredibly localized and little-known Island Whistler. We'll also scan the shoreline for Beach Stone-curlew (Thick-knee) that we've encountered here on several occasions, before cruising the very short distance to the neighbouring island of Mansuar where we'll have the opportunity to enjoy some of the most mind-blowing snorkelling on Earth along one of the planet's finest tropical reefs.



Raja Ampat Scenery (Kari Raja Islands) by Glen Valentine



Papuan Frogmouth by Paul Varney

Kofiau. This tiny island is located almost half-way between the Raja Ampats and the southern tip of Halmahera. The island has been virtually unexplored by birders over the last century, other than recent visits by Rockjumper during our West Papuan Islands Cruises. The island hosts two known endemics: the spectacular Kofiau Paradise Kingfisher and the black-and-white Kofiau Monarch, as well as several other exciting species and subspecies and will make for an exhilarating birding experience.

Jared Diamond and David Bishop were the first field biologists to explore this island back in the mid 1980's and their work has been published in a scientific journal. Our recent trips have also been able to find the two fabulous endemics – Kofiau Paradise Kingfisher and Kofiau Monarch, so our chances of seeing these two incredibly range-restricted birds are excellent.

In addition to these specialties, we will also keep a lookout for a good variety of other quality species that include Spotted Kestrel, Spectacled Imperial Pigeon, Variable Goshawk, the gorgeous Claret-breasted Fruit Dove, the island form of White-bibbed Fruit Dove (recently split by some authorities as Moluccan or Small Island Fruit Dove), the gaudy Violet-necked (Scaled if split) Lory, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, the migrant Channel-billed Cuckoo, Sacred Kingfisher, Oriental Dollarbird, Eastern (Papuan) Hooded Pitta, White-bellied Cuckooshrike, New Guinea Friarbird, Sahul Cicadabird, Black-browed Triller, Large-billed Gerygone, (Papuan) Northern Fantail, (Halmahera) Spangled Drongo, Great-billed and Red-cheeked Parrots, Papuan Eclectus, the miniscule Yellow-capped Pygmy Parrot, Black and Sahul Sunbirds, Black-faced Munia, Little Bronze Cuckoo, Torresian Crow and Olive-crowned Flowerpecker. On our 2017 trip we were delighted to find three almost unknown raptor species for Kofiau and these were Pygmy Eagle, Grey-faced Buzzard and Chinese Sparrowhawk, which again emphasizes the lack of ornithological surveying in this remote corner of the globe and highlights the potential for further exciting discoveries.



Melon-headed Whale by Lev Frid

Sea-watching between Sorong and Waigeo, Waigeo and Kofiau, Kofiau and Obi, Seram and Boano and Boano to Ambon. Although the tropical seas in this part of the world, as is the case throughout most of the



Carunculated Fruit Dove by Glen Valentine

tropics, is generally quiet with little or no activity both bird and mammal-wise, we will nonetheless spend a fair amount of time scanning the ocean during all of our crossings over the course of the tour. We will be sailing through waters that are very rarely visited by birders, which makes these crossings extremely exciting indeed. Some of the seabirds we will be looking out for include Bulwer's Petrel, Streaked Shearwater, Great and Lesser Frigatebirds, Parasitic and Pomarine Jaegers, Brown Booby, and a great variety of terns including Black-naped, Bridled and Sooty Terns and Brown Noddy. We should also encounter large numbers of Red-necked Phalarope wintering on these seas, indeed quite a sight to behold! In previous year's visits we have had some exciting surprises though that have included Christmas Frigatebird, Masked and Abbott's Boobies, Tahiti Petrel, Wedge-tailed Shearwater, Black Noddy, Aleutian Tern, Long-tailed Jaeger and Indonesia's first Beck's Petrel. Once again, we'll give it our best shot! Cetaceans are even less known, and we will attempt to find and identify as many of these magnificent mammals as possible in what is a virtually unknown region for this group. The most common species seem to be Indo-pacific Bottlenose, Spinner and Pantropical Spotted Dolphins and Short-finned Pilot Whales, while the list of species possible and which we've encountered in these waters over the years is rather impressive indeed and includes the likes of Blue, Sperm, Melon-headed and the recently described Omura's Whales, Dwarf and Pygmy Sperm Whales, Fraser's, Common Bottlenose, Risso's and Rough-toothed Dolphins, False and Pygmy Killer Whales and Blainville's and Cuvier's Beaked Whales. We would be extremely fortunate though to see one or more of these species, but we'll certainly be on the lookout!

Obi Island. Aside from early collectors and a team of students who spent several weeks on the island, very few birding groups have ever visited the island of Obi until 2016 when our first tour took place.

Located in the Northern Moluccas, Obi hosts two very special and poorly known endemics: the peculiar Carunculated Fruit Dove, and very recently rediscovered Moluccan (Obi) Woodcock. We will attempt to track down both of these mega-endemics in addition to a suite of other specials such as Blue-and-white Kingfisher, Violet-necked Lory, the rare and declining Chattering Lory (the endemic, yellow-backed subspecies on Obi!), Red-flanked Lorikeet, Scarlet-breasted, Superb and Black-naped Fruit Doves, Cinnamon-bellied and Spectacled Imperial Pigeons, Oriental Hobby, Spotted (Indonesian) Kestrel, the low-density Pygmy Eagle, the rare Rufous-necked Sparrowhawk, Variable Goshawk, the



Moluccan (Obi) Woodcock by Bob Martin



Obi Paradise-crow by Paul Varney

retiring North Moluccan Pitta, the rare and shy Moluccan Dwarf Kingfisher, the recently-described and endemic Reddish-tinged Myzomela and Obi Cicadabird, the endemic subspecies of Bacan Myzomela (previously a high-altitude specialist that's only come onto the radar in 2023!), Black-chinned and Cinnamon-breasted (Obi) Whistlers, the handsome Rufous-bellied Triller, the peculiar Obi Paradise-crow (an odd, manucode-like bird-of-paradise), Moluccan Monarch, Moluccan Flycatcher, Hair-crested (Obi Spangled if split) Drongo, Obi Golden Bulbul, (Obi) Northern Fantail, Sahul and Black Sunbirds and Halmahera Flowerpecker.

There's even a slim chance of hearing or if extremely fortunate, seeing either Red-necked Crake or Bare-eyed Rail in the swampy lowlands, both very rarely encountered forest interior denizens. We will also have one evening to spend a bit of time trying to find Barking Owl (a scarce species on Obi), Moluccan Scops Owl, and Large-tailed Nightjar, while Spectacled Flying Foxes will be a constant feature at dawn and dusk, together with several other bats such as Moluccan Naked-backed Fruit Bat and the miniscule Diadem Leaf-nosed Bat.

Seram Island. Anchoring and landing at Sawai, we will explore the rather large, mountainous island of Seram. Much of the area we will be birding during our time on Seram is within the important conservation area of Manusela National Park, which encompasses Seram's highest mountain Gunung Binaia at 3 057m. We'll be birding along an impressive road that crosses the island from north to south and ascends to about 1 250m in elevation, thereby permitting us a chance for a very large percentage of Seram's endemic birds, including some of its very poorly known high elevation specialties.

Some of Seram's most desirable endemics include the likes of the spectacular and severely threatened Salmon-crested Cockatoo, the strikingly unique Long-crested Myna, Violet Crow, the brilliant Lazuli Kingfisher and the highly endangered Purple-naped Lory but the list of Seram endemics, near endemics and other range-restricted specialties is indeed impressive. In the lowland forest zone these include the stunning Red Lory, Moluccan Swiftlet, Moluccan Cuckooshrike, Pale Cicadabird, the very rarely encountered and recently split South Moluccan Cicadabird, Seram Golden Bulbul, (Seram) Spangled Drongo, Grey-collared (Seram) Oriole, Seram Imperial Pigeon, Amboyna Cuckoo-Dove, Seram



Cinnamon-breasted (Obi) Whistler by Glen Valentine



Long-crested Myna by Glen Valentine

Friarbird, Moluccan Flycatcher, Moluccan King Parrot, Claret-breasted Fruit Dove, South Moluccan Sunbird and Ashy Flowerpecker. Other highlights in the lowlands could include several more widespread but nonetheless interesting species such as Pacific Baza, Common Emerald Dove, Great-billed and Red-cheeked Parrots, Moluccan Eclectus, Coconut Lorikeet, Metallic and Moluccan Starlings, Moluccan Monarch and the migratory Grey-streaked Flycatcher.

Most of our time on Seram will however be spent in the mountains where the bulk of the island's difficult and least known species occur. Many of them only regularly occur at higher elevations above 1 500m, however with no access to this elevation we will need to keep a careful lookout and listen for these high-altitude species like Blue-eared Lory, Seram Honeyeater, Seram Bush Warbler and Grey-hooded White-eye at the highest pass along the Trans Seram "Highway". Many other quality species also occur here, and we have high hopes of finding the rare and endemic Purple-naped Lory, which has been extensively trapped here for many years due to it being such a prized species in the cage bird trade. Drab and Wakolo (Seram) Myzomelas, the extremely scarce Rufous-necked Sparrowhawk, Seram Mountain Pigeon, Moluccan Cuckoo, Island Leaf Warbler (possibly split as Seram Leaf Warbler in future), the seldom-seen Moluccan Dwarf Kingfisher, Streak-breasted Fantail, the scarce and unobtrusive Cinnamon-chested Flycatcher, Drab and Yellow-throated (the white-throated subspecies here!) Whistlers, Turquoise Flycatcher, Seram White-eye and the extremely uncommon and elusive Rufescent Dark-eye are some of the other targets we'll be after during our mornings in Seram's montane forests. We would need an extraordinary dose of fortune though to see all the above-mentioned species as there are several rare and elusive Seram mountain denizens mentioned in that list, but we'll certainly try our best to find as many of them as possible. We will also require a similar amount of luck to come across the near-mythical Seram Thrush, which is a high-altitude species about which very little is known.

Nocturnal species that will be on our radar include the endemic Seram Boobook, the very rare (especially on Seram) and little-known Moluccan Masked Owl and Moluccan Scops Owl. We are also likely to encounter the introduced Northern Common Cuscus during our nighttime forays and also stand a chance of seeing the scarce Common Spotted Cuscus. A number of large and impressive flying foxes and medium-sized fruit bats, many of which are endemic to the Moluccas will also be encountered



Seram Boobook by Glen Valentine



Moluccan King Parrot by Paul Varney

and we'll try our best to speciate these where possible. These could include South Moluccan, Seram and Temminck's Flying Foxes, the common and massive Black-bearded Flying Fox and Moluccan and Greenish Naked-baked Fruit Bats.

During our time at Seram we will also use our small, speed-boats to visit a tern roost on an exposed sandbar. As many as ten different species of tern have been recorded in this bay, although Common and Greater Crested are the only regular species here. However, of particular interest is the occasional presence of one (but perhaps a few more in certain years) of the critically endangered Chinese Crested Tern, which has over-wintered before in this area. We would need to have a huge amount of luck though to see this much-wanted species since only a single individual has ever been seen here at any given time and its presence seems to be intermittent with it being notably absent some years. We will give it our best shot!

Boano Island. Once ashore, we'll begin our search for the little-known Boano (Black-chinned) Monarch. We have the entire day in which to seek out this endemic species, which has only recently been rediscovered. Other species such as Island Monarch and Northern Fantail (here a likely future split as Seram Fantail) can also be found, along with the migratory and rather skulking Gray's Grasshopper Warbler. We'll likely also see our first gorgeous Claret-breasted Fruit Dove, Metallic Starling, Moluccan Flycatcher, Ashy Flowerpecker and South Moluccan Sunbird of the trip. Osprey, White-bellied Sea Eagle and Pacific Reef Heron often appear around the jetty at the end of the morning and if there's time we'll embark on our first of many snorkelling opportunities along the beautiful reef at the edge of the adjacent, small island of Nusatea.



Salmon-crested Cockatoo by Paul Varney

Buru Extension



Buru Flowerpecker by Lev Frid

Buru Island. Buru is an oval-shaped, non-volcanic island that encompasses some 8 500 km^2. This island is the third largest of the Maluku Islands after Halmahera and Seram. Once a political prison island, Buru has until recently been very difficult to visit, especially for a birder wandering around with binoculars! Happily, all that has changed, and Buru is now a fabulous destination for the adventurous world-birder. Much of eastern Buru is relatively flat and, unfortunately, as is so often the case in the tropical lowlands, much of this area has been cleared and converted into farmland. We will therefore concentrate our attentions on the central and mountainous western half of the island where large expanses of relatively pristine montane forest remain, although large-scale logging in many areas continues to impoverish the island's forests.

Our birding on Buru will focus on both the lowland and highland forest areas and each of these core areas support a different suite of specialties. In the lowlands, near the town of Bara we will visit a remnant area of lowland forest where we will target such gems as the pied Buru Monarch, Buru Golden Bulbul with its lovely, liquid song, (Buru) Spangled Drongo, Black-faced (Buru) Friarbird, Black-eared (Buru) Oriole, South Moluccan Pitta, the extremely scarce and shy Buru Dwarf Kingfisher, South Moluccan Sunbird and Buru (Flame-breasted) Flowerpecker. This is also one of the only known accessible areas on the island for the rare Buru Green Pigeon, which usually requires much patience, careful scanning, and a fair dose of luck to find.

Here we may also find Amboyna Cuckoo-Dove, Variable Goshawk, Osprey, Black Eagle, Superb and Claret-breasted Fruit Doves, Spectacled Imperial Pigeon, Dusky Megapode (occasionally split off as Forsten's Megapode), Coconut Lorikeet, Red-cheeked Parrot, Moluccan Cuckoo, Pacific Koel, Lesser Coucal, Moluccan Swiftlet, Moustached Treeswift, Pale Cicadabird (a Moluccan endemic), Moluccan Flycatcher, (Buru) Northern Fantail, Black Sunbird and Black-faced Munia.



Moluccan Masked Owl by Glen Valentine

With the aid of four-wheel-drive vehicles and some rather early starts, we will venture along a well-made logging track into some fine upland



Buru Golden Bulbul by Glen Valentine

forest that may take us to the highest currently accessible elevation on Buru at 1 400m (4600ft). Here, amidst some truly lovely forest, we will search for some of the least known birds in all of Wallacea: These include Buru Mountain Pigeon, Buru Racket-tail, South Moluccan Pitta, Wakolo Myzomela (the sub-species on Buru likely to be split as Buru Myzomela), the scarce and nomadic Buru Honeyeater, White-naped Monarch, the low-density Buru Cuckooshrike, Buru White-eye, the dapper Tawny-backed Fantail, shy and elusive Buru Thrush, scarce Buru Dwarf Kingfisher, Island Leaf Warbler (likely to be split as Buru Leaf Warbler), Streak-breasted Jungle (Warbling) Flycatcher, the unobtrusive and scarce Cinnamon-chested Flycatcher, Buru Bush (Grasshopper) Warbler, Yellow-throated and Drab Whistlers and Buru Flowerpecker.

During nocturnal forays we will attempt to find two rare and little-known owls – Moluccan Masked Owl and the deep-forest dwelling Buru Boobook, while other possibilities include the lovely Moluccan Scops Owl and Large-tailed Nightjar.

Buru is also known for its rarities that include the almost unknown Blue-fronted Lorikeet (seen for the first time in many years in 2014 but not again!), the once mythical Madanga that suddenly became gettable for two years during 2016 and 2017 when a pair became accessible on a nearby ridge-top but has subsequently disappeared from the area and the Black-lored Parrot (previously an impossible-to-see species that was only recently observed in the wild for the first time, is thought to be largely nocturnal but has now become targetable due to increased knowledge of the species' behaviour and accessible localities). Although it is unfortunately currently impossible to access the elevation and habitat for the lorikeet and the Madanga that are both restricted to the highest elevation, stunted, moss-draped and completely inaccessible "elfin forest" that cloaks Buru's highest mountains, we will try our very best to track down the Black-lored Parrot. Although we are likely to hear them squawking from the depths of the dense forest at dusk, we still require a huge amount of luck, perseverance and skill to see this very rare and little-known Buru endemic.

Besides the huge number of endemic species on Buru, there are also plenty of more widespread species that we may encounter during our time on the island and these include Pacific Baza, Black Eagle, Variable Goshawk, Metallic (White-throated) Pigeon, Great Cuckoo-Dove, Common Emerald Dove, White-bibbed (Moluccan/Small Island) Fruit Dove, Little Bronze Cuckoo, the Austral-migrant Channel-billed Cuckoo, Oriental Dollarbird, Common Paradise Kingfisher, Spotted Kestrel, the miniscule Red-breasted Pygmy Parrot, Red Lory, Moluccan Eclectus, Great-



Buru Dwarf Kingfisher by Paul Varney



Buru Thrush by Lev Frid

billed Parrot, Moluccan King Parrot, Collared Kingfisher, Torresian Crow, Warbling White-eye and Moluccan Starling.

The Namlea Airport has recently become a fairly reliable wintering site for Oriental Plover, a long-distance migrant that exclusively breeds in remote parts of Mongolia and almost exclusively winters in northern, central and western Australia. A difficult species to connect with anywhere on the planet unless you visit very specific

Ambon Island. We expect to have ample time to bird a remnant patch of forest to search for the endemic Ambon White-eye, in addition to further chances for species such as Claret-breasted Fruit Dove, Moluccan Flycatcher, Moluccan Monarch, (Seram) Northern Fantail, Island Monarch, Moluccan Cuckoo, Lazuli Kingfisher, Seram Golden Bulbul and Ashy Flowerpecker. A nearby lake could harbour a few new species that could include something rare, interesting or unusual.

Haruku Island. From Ambon, we'll embark on a short boat (water taxi) trip to the nearby, offshore island of Haruku. This is a very special and exciting excursion indeed as we spend the early evening waiting patiently for the rare and extremely localised Moluccan Megapode (Scrubfowl) to reveal themselves at their warm, humid, sandy nesting grounds. After what will hopefully be a successful and thrilling outing, we will return by boat to Ambon to our very comfortable hotel nearby.



Moluccan Megapode by Lev Frid

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Moderate, suitable for most birding / wildlife interest levels. Many early starts & late endings to the day since the tour operates during the austral summer. Several night birds to be found. Hot & humid conditions throughout, coupled with low-density birding. Most island birding sessions are optional, so one can stay on the vessel and relax instead.
Birding Ease		Mostly moderate but varying from challenging at times to easy & rewarding. Many target species do show well. However, mostly forested habitat coupled with low density means that birding can be slow / challenging. Several species are scarce / shy, which requires patience & perseverance to find.
Accommodation		Comfortable to very comfortable. The rooms on the ship are somewhat on the small side with limited storage room. Otherwise, everything on board is extremely comfortable & well organised.
Walking / Trails		Light-to-moderate walking & hiking. One never has to walk far but we will be on our feet for many hours. Accessible vehicles & chairs will never be far away. Most walking is along tracks & roads that are either mostly flat or downhill. There is one demanding walk to the Red Bird-of-paradise display lek. The trail is around half a mile in length, ascending quite steeply at first, more gradually thereafter. There are railings on one side for support as well as plenty of help at hand from local guides/scouts. Anyone with reasonable fitness / physical ability will manage just fine.
Vehicles / Roads		Mostly short drives, but some rough tracks that are only accessed by 4x4 vehicles. Drives vary in length from 15 to 90 minutes on the main tour. Driving distance, length & terrain is more challenging on the Buru Extension with some long (2 ½ hour) drives along rough, 4x4 tracks.
Photography		Ranges from very good to challenging, depending on habitat & situation. Some dedicated hides at bird-of-paradise display leks provide for superb photography. Mostly rewarding / worthwhile.
Annoyances		Hot & humid conditions throughout, except for a few sessions in the highlands of Seram & Buru when it will be more pleasant. Some rain is to be expected but will usually occur overnight. Very few mosquitoes, leeches or biting insects of any kind.

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 lunch on day 14 on the RWPI Cruise;
- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 6 of the Buru Island Extension;
- Bottled or purified drinking water;
- All lodgings aboard our liveaboard vessel (11 nights) and in Sorong (2 nights);
- All lodgings on the Buru Island Extension;
- Ground transportation at various island stops during the tour;
- Internal flights on the Buru Island Extension (return from Ambon to Buru Island, does not include baggage)*;
- All reserve entrance fees and landing permits;
- Local landowner fees;
- West Papua police travel permits;
- All guiding services;
- Tips for local guides, drivers and services.

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- ANY flights *(except those specifically noted above);
- Checked baggage costs on all internal flights;
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Camera fees;
- Optional excursions;
- 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.**
- **The cruise costs are subject to major foreign exchange fluctuations and unforeseen increases in tour related costs (especially the price of fuel) and may have to be adjusted as a result. You will be notified by email if fuel surcharges, or other price adjustments need to be implemented. Furthermore, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary due to unforeseen circumstances, but please be aware that we will attempt to stick as close to the original program as possible.**
- **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.**

- Our time off the ship includes boat cruises and light-to-moderate walking and hiking in refuges and preserves. Physical demands will be easy to moderate, but please bear in mind that our land excursions may involve a moderate amount of walking and standing. We emphasize that no one will be subjected to physical demands that exceed their capabilities. All walking will be done at a slow pace. If you have any physical limitations or medical conditions of any sort, please do let the Rockjumper office know in advance.
- We will be birding in some remote areas well away from modern medical facilities.
- Your trip to Indonesia will be a moderately paced, but full travel experience in which birding activities are combined with relaxing cruise time. This trip offers considerable exposure to a seldom-visited part of the world, but with a clear emphasis on observing as many of the region's endemic and special birds as possible, as well as enjoying the scenic wonders of the islands we'll be visiting.
- Most days in the lowlands will be hot, humid and sunny, but overcast conditions are frequent and some rain, heavy at times, can be expected in the afternoons and overnight. In montane areas it will range from very cool to warm. Humidity levels in the lowlands are often rather high.
- There will be several scheduled opportunities (usually around 5 or 6 opportunities) for swimming and snorkelling at select sites along the cruise route. Our vessel is fully equipped with fins, masks, and snorkels free of charge. Participants who prefer to bring their own equipment are welcome to do so but should be aware of the weight this adds to their luggage. The snorkelling opportunities and quality of reefs during this tour are some of the very best on Earth!
- With early starts, some long days in the field are to be expected. However, there will be plenty of options in this regard for those who want to stay out late or leave very early for night birding or for those who'd like to leave later and return earlier to the vessel.
- A daily laundry service is available on the liveaboard.

Arrival and Departure Details

The Remote West Papua Island Cruise will depart from Pattimura Airport (IATA: AMQ), Ambon on day 1. The cruise will conclude at Sorong Airport (IATA: SOQ) on day 14.

[1]Guests not continuing with the Buru Extension will remain on the liveaboard for breakfast and lunch before making their way to the airport for their onward flights home.

[2]Guests continuing with the Buru Extension will depart early, transferring to the airport for a flight from Ambon to Buru (these flights will be booked by the local agent) and we will continue birding as soon as we arrive in Buru.

The flights to and from Buru vary from year to year, precise logistics will be confirmed closer to the tour departure. If flights logistics preclude this option, we will instead use an overnight ferry.

The Buru extension will conclude after lunch on day 6 with a transfer to Pattimura Airport, Ambon (IATA: AMQ), for your onward flights home.

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.

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.