

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

AUGUST 5 – 26, 2010*

BENSBACH EXTENSION

AUGUST 25-30, 2010*

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**Please note that tour dates differ slightly from those that appear in the 2010 tour catalog*

Thunder rumbles across the heavens; the atmosphere is still and pensive. Suddenly there is a break in the gathering clouds and a shaft of late afternoon sun chances upon a huge and ancient tree, transforming what seemed moments before a mere shadow into a creature of unparalleled beauty. As if animated by the hands of the gods, a bird-of-paradise takes wing; its exquisite velvet black plumage embellished with patches of iridescence and its elongated, ribbon-white feathers flared outward against the darkening sky. This is New Guinea, the home of a family of birds of such beauty and complexity that they defy simple description. When explorers first brought back the legless skins of these fabulous birds, recipients took them to be wanderers from a celestial paradise, an idea that persisted for over 200 years. During this tour you will have the perfect opportunity to investigate these claims for yourself.

New Guinea, albeit the second largest island in the world, is in reality an island-continent. This still wild, sparsely inhabited, and somewhat mystical land hosts more than 700 species of birds, the world's richest island avifauna, nearly half of which are found nowhere else on earth. While the extraordinary birds-of-paradise are the finest jewels in New Guinea's ornithological crown, there is so much else to attract the birdwatcher—huge, flightless cassowaries; strange mound builders; a gorgeous array of doves, parrots and kingfishers; exquisite fairywrens; and fascinating bowerbirds. Interesting mammals include numerous, little-known marsupials in addition to some spectacular and weird reptiles and amphibians, and a wondrous plethora of butterflies, including the spectacular bird-wings.

The Bismarck Archipelago is wholly included within the territory of Papua New Guinea and contains a myriad of gorgeous coral fringed, forest-covered islands. Nearly all of them support at least one endemic species of bird. By far, the richest of these islands is New Britain. This island is rarely visited by birders; however, our leader David Bishop lived here for four years undertaking field research on volcano-nesting Scrubfowl. During our time in West New Britain, we will stay at Walindi Plantation, one of the most delightfully appointed dive resorts, located right on the doorstep of some of the very finest coral reefs to be found anywhere in the world. As if this weren't enough, tropical lowland and hill forests, just brimming with birds, surround the plantation, including such spectacular species as Dwarf Cassowary; 15 species of pigeons and doves; seven kingfishers, including the extraordinary Black-backed Paradise-Kingfisher; Blue-eyed Cockatoo; sensational Eastern Black-capped Lories right in the trees around our chalets; and a host of nifty monarchs,

fantails, myzomelas, and munias. And then there is always something special. Perhaps we'll find the elusive Golden Owl, or the virtually unknown Talasea Thrush.

Following the success of our 2009 tour we are again returning to Bensbach Lodge and the magnificent TransFly Region. Our flight takes us to a vast and seemingly limitless mosaic of swamps, grasslands, paperbark woodlands and monsoon rainforest which literally teems with birds and other wildlife. Very remote and located in the extreme south-east corner of the country and only accessible by smaller aircraft, the attractive Bensbach Lodge will be our home for three nights on this very special addition to our tour of Papua New Guinea. Bensbach Lodge is located right on the banks of the lovely river of the same name and provides birders and naturalists with an incomparable opportunity to explore an exciting range of habitats, many of them from the comfort of a specially designed flat-bottomed river boat replete with an 'eskie' of cold drinks and a delicious luncheon. The Bensbach is home to several birds and beasts not found anywhere else on our planet including the spectacular Spangled Kookaburra, Fly River Grassbird and Black and Gray-crowned munias. It is also home to vast numbers of waterbirds including flocks of Australian Pelicans, sometimes thousands of Royal Spoonbills, and huge numbers of egrets and ibis. The Bensbach is undoubtedly THE best place in the world to see the enormous Great-billed Heron as well as the spectacular Black-necked Stork, Australian Bustard, Brolga, and Magpie Goose together with a wonderful coterie of woodland specialties such as Southern Cassowary, Black-billed Brush-turkey, New Guinea Harpy Eagle, Palm Cockatoo, with a bit of luck Masked Owl, the jewel-like Noisy Pitta and large numbers of agile wallabies. If you are a photographer this is the place for you!

This VENT itinerary, carefully devised, and based on an unparalleled 33 years of tours and research expeditions, will give you the finest opportunity to see an excellent cross-section of Papua New Guinea's wildlife and introduce you to its exceptional culture. It will be a true wilderness experience, BUT with all the comforts and trappings of civilization. Join us then for what is widely regarded as the finest of all bird tours to Papua New Guinea.

August 5-7, Days 1-3: Travel to Brisbane, Australia; Flight to Port Moresby. Qantas Flight 16 is scheduled to depart Los Angeles on August 5 at 11:20 p.m., cross the International Dateline and arrive in Brisbane at 6:10 a.m. on August 7. Upon arrival and clearing customs, please make your way through the airport and connect with Air Nuigini Flight 6 which is scheduled to depart at 9:30 a.m. and arrive in Port Moresby at 12:30 p.m. (all times and flights subject to change).

Upon arrival in Port Moresby, a representative of our ground operator will meet with the group and transport us to the hotel. If time permits, our tour will begin this afternoon with a visit to the nearby Pacific Adventist College, which hosts a couple of very bird-rich freshwater pools in addition to a good selection of savanna woodland specialties including Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove, Pheasant Coucal, Singing Starling, Yellow-tinted and Rufous-banded honeyeaters, the very localized endemic Gray-headed Munia, Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, and Black-backed Butcherbird.

NIGHT (August 7): Airways Hotel, Port Moresby

August 8, Day 4: Varirata National Park. As will be the case throughout most of the tour, we must arise early on this morning for the hour long drive to one of PNG's few national parks. Varirata National Park is located at an elevation of 2,953 feet (900m) within a mosaic of fine eucalypt savanna woodland and monsoon and moist tropical hill forest. These habitats host a wide range of species, including a number of very special but often extremely elusive endemics. Our birding will commence along a road that forms the ecotone between two major habitat types before we enter an excellent trail system within the relative cool of the wetter forest. With a little bit of luck, we should find the enormous Papuan Frogmouth *en route* to the park and perhaps a pair of Large-

tailed Nightjars, which regularly hunt along the road. Marbled Frogmouth, although decidedly noisy, is very shy and difficult to see. However, just listening to the “wild” calls of this species, in addition to other such dawn songsters as Hook-billed Kingfisher and Black-billed Brush-turkey, is a magical experience.

Immediately after breakfast and before the sun is too high, we’ll seek out a display tree of the fabulous Raggiana Bird-of-paradise. Just hearing the frenetic calls of these birds displaying is enough to set our pulses racing. Seeing them in real life defies description. But there is so much else to see here too: forest wallabies, giant bird-wing butterflies, and some truly cosmic birds. Some of the species we may encounter here include Long-tailed Buzzard; Black-billed Brush-turkey (very vocal but tough to see); Amboina Cuckoo-Dove; Wompoo, Beautiful, and Orange-bellied fruit-doves; Zoe and Purple-tailed imperial-pigeons; the gorgeous Black-capped Lory; Red-cheeked and Eclectus parrots; Brush and Chestnut-breasted cuckoos; Pheasant Coucal; Glossy Swiftlet; Rufous-bellied and Blue-winged kookaburras; White-bellied, Boyer’s and Black cuckoo-shrikes; Rusty Mouse-Warbler (a delightful songster); Pale-billed Scrubwren; Green-backed Gerygone; Lemon-bellied and Olive flycatchers; White-faced Robin; Little Shrike-Thrush; Hooded Pitohui (the poison bird!); Black Berrypecker; Papuan Flowerpecker; Black-fronted White-eye; Slaty-chinned and Gray-bellied longbills; Red-throated, Papuan Black, and Red myzomelas (especially if we find a flowering tree); Puff-backed Meliphaga; Tawny-breasted and Spotted honeyeaters; Brown Oriole; Spangled Drongo; Hooded Butcherbird; and Gray Crow. The perky Yellow-billed Kingfisher and—with a bit of luck—Azure and Variable Dwarf kingfishers are possible. We may also see the Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher—a poorly named gem, this is one of **the** top birds of any New Guinea tour. Dwarf Cassowary is also a resident but is very wary, so being quiet on the trails is critical.

Varirata harbors an astonishing array of PNG’s most alluring but elusive specialties, many of which are ground-birds. With a bit of luck and judicious use of the extensive sound library of our leader, David Bishop, we should be able to lure a few of these species into view. Species include Coronated Fruit-Dove, Thick-billed Ground-Pigeon (very rare), Pheasant Pigeon, Cinnamon and White-bibbed ground-doves (both extremely shy and rarely responsive to tapes), Blue-breasted Pitta, the sumptuous Painted Quail-thrush, Chestnut-backed Jewel-babbler (seeing any of these species is a red-letter day!), Northern Scrub-Robin, Crested Pitohui, White-eared Catbird, and Eastern Magnificent Riflebird. Mixed species flocks are very much a part of Varirata’s ecology and the lovely song of the Yellow-bellied Gerygone should lead us to our first insectivore flock. These flocks contain such species as Fairy Gerygone; Chestnut-bellied Fantail; Black-faced, Spot-winged, and the very handsome Frilled monarchs; Yellow-breasted Boatbill; the dramatic sounding Dwarf Whistler; and notably dull-looking Gray Whistler. The second flock type we may encounter is known as a “black-and-brown” flock because of the dominant colors of its members: Black Cuckoo-shrike, Frilled Monarch, Little Shrike-Thrush, Rusty and Hooded pitohuis, Magnificent and Raggiana’s bird-of-paradise, Eastern Magnificent Riflebird, and Crinkle-collared Manucode.

NIGHT: Airways Hotel, Port Moresby

August 9, Day 5: Flight to Hoskins in West New Britain. Early this morning we will fly from Port Moresby and wing our way out across the coral sea to New Britain, the second largest island in the South-west Pacific after New Guinea. This fascinating, lovely tropical island supports a rich and distinctive fauna and flora and we should begin seeing some of these birds the moment we step off the aircraft at Hoskins airport. Despite our drive along the north coast of West New Britain taking us mainly through oil palm plantations, remnant patches of secondary forest still hold a few species of interest such as Brahminy Kite, raucous Blue-eyed Cockatoos, Red-knobbed Imperial-Pigeon, and Glossy Swiftlet. We will make a number of stops *en route* to our accommodations at the very lovely Walindi Plantation.

Originally set up as a coconut plantation, Walindi is now one of the finest dive resorts in the South-west Pacific. Thus in addition to some fine lowland birding, there will be, for those who wish the option, snorkeling or scuba

diving on Walindi’s spectacular coral reef. After lunch we will commence our exploration of this island’s fascinating birdlife.

NIGHT: Walindi Plantation Resort, West New Britain

August 10-11, Days 6-7: West New Britain. During our time on New Britain, we will concentrate our attentions upon the magnificent, tall lowland and hill forests of the island's north coastal plain. All the lowland and foothill species recorded from New Britain, including a number of very special endemics, can be found in the forests of the nearby Garu Wildlife Management Area. Much of our time will be spent birding here along forested roads and tracks. However, as the day warms up, we will enter the forest along narrower, shady trails to look for some of the island's more secretive species. Birds we may encounter include Dwarf Cassowary (extremely skulking); New Britain Honey-Buzzard; New Britain Sparrowhawk (rare); Slaty-backed and Variable goshawks; Oriental Hobby; Pink-legged Rail (common but an extremely secretive deep forest inhabitant); Red-knobbed, White-breasted, and Superb fruit-doves; Red-knobbed, Bar-tailed and Blue-Black imperial-pigeons; Black-billed, Amboina, and Giant Pied cuckoo-doves; Stephan's Ground-Dove; New Britain Bronzewing (an extremely shy endemic); Eastern Black-capped Lory (a spectacular parrot, its strange donkey-like braying call is often the first indication of its presence); Red-flanked and, if we are lucky, Red-chinned lorikeets; Buff-faced Pygmy-Parrot; Blue-eyed Cockatoo (an abundant and raucous endemic); Eclectus and Singing parrots; New Britain Hanging Parrot (rare); Channel-billed Cuckoo; the weird, endemic Violaceous and Pied coucals; New Britain Boobook; perhaps if we are very lucky, the gorgeous Golden Owl; Uniform Swiftlet; Bismarck, Variable Dwarf, White-marked, and Black-backed Paradise kingfishers; Blyth's Hornbill; Blue-breasted Pitta (a real gem, but a great skulker like all members of its family); Common Cicadabird; Rufous-faced Thicket Warbler; Northern Fantail; New Britain Pied Monarch; Lesser and Shining flycatchers; New Britain Flowerpecker; Black-headed White-eye; Black Sunbird; New Britain Friarbird; Dusky Myzomela; the gorgeous Black-and-Carmine Myzomela; and the uncommon, Black-bellied Munia.

On the morning of Day 7, we will take a boat out into Kimbe Bay and search among tiny forested islands for the rarely seen and globally threatened Nicobar Pigeon. In the past we have found as many as 30 birds here in addition to White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Gray Imperial-Pigeon (100+), Yellow-bibbed Fruit-Dove, Beach Kingfisher, Island Monarch (rare), Mangrove Golden Whistler and Sclater's Myzomela (very common). Possible seabirds include Brown Booby; Lesser and Greater frigatebirds; and Black-naped, Bridled, Greater and Lesser Crested terns. We can also visit Restoffen Island, where we will be able to examine close-up one of the most beautiful and diverse coral reefs on our planet.

NIGHTS: Walindi Plantation Resort, West New Britain

August 12, Day 8: Fly Hoskins to Port Moresby. This morning after some final birding we will fly back to Port Moresby. If time permits, this afternoon we will visit the very attractive Papua New Guinea House of Parliament which is built in a stylistic form resembling a Sepik Haus Tamburan and visit a very well supplied artifact store.

NIGHT: Airways Hotel, Port Moresby

August 13-14, Days 9-10: Tabubil. On the morning of August 13, we will fly from Port Moresby to Tabubil where the attractive Cloudlands Hotel will be our home for the next two nights.

Our route takes us over the third largest remaining area of lowland forest on our planet (after the Amazon of South America and Ituri Forest of Central Africa). The sight of such an enormous, rarely explored, and still pristine forest wilderness extending out to the horizon cannot help but add to the allure of our next destination and will surely touch a core within each of us.

The Tabubil area, located at 3,937 feet (1,200 m.) in the foothills of the Star Mountains, provides an opportunity to explore a variety of different elevations and subtly different forest habitat types. However, this is one of the wettest areas in the world, so be warned; we will almost certainly encounter some rain. Some of the birds we may see include Black-mantled Goshawk; New Guinea Harpy Eagle; Oriental Hobby; Blue-collared Parrot (usually flying very high, giving their lovely, distinctive song); Streaked, Little Red, Pygmy, and perhaps

Josephine's lorikeets (this will be our only chance to see all four of these fast flying nectar-eaters); Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrot (a new subspecies has recently been discovered in the Tabubil area and it is quite common); Dusky Lory; Ornate Fruit-Dove; Dwarf Koel; Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo; Mountain Yellow-billed Kingfisher; Torrent Flycatcher; Torrent Lark; Great Woodswallow; White-faced and White-rumped robins; White-eyed Robin (tough!); Dwarf and Rusty whistlers; Mountain Red-headed Myzomela; Obscure Honeyeater; the very poorly known Obscure Berrypecker; Carola's Parotia (very difficult); Magnificent and Greater birds-of-paradise; and Crinkle-collared Manucode. With extreme luck we may hear and possibly even see the Great Melampitta, which spends much of its life partially underground in limestone karst sinkholes.

NIGHTS: Cloudlands Hotel, Tabubil

August 15, Day 11; Drive from Tabubil to Kiunga. This morning we will depart very early in order to arrive in the foothills shortly after dawn. Set in the midst of a vast area of pristine lowland forests, the hills one encounters as you head north from Tabubil to Kiunga are very poorly known and promise some exciting birding. We probably have our best chance here for the incredible black and red Pesquet's or Vulturine parrots. We will do our best to find a flowering tree as they act as magnets drawing in large numbers of lorikeets and honeyeaters. If we are lucky some of the species we may see include Red-flanked, Little Red, Striated and perhaps the miniscule Pygmy lorikeets; the elusive Obscure Honeyeater; Red-throated, Red and Papuan Black myzomelas; and Spotted Honeyeater as well as a host of more common species including several of the confusing meliphaga species. Foothill forests in New Guinea are often the domain of several species occupying rather patchy distributions along a very narrow altitudinal band. As mentioned earlier, this area is very poorly known; however, some of the species we might encounter include Large Fig-Parrot, Shovel-billed Kingfisher—an extraordinary bird, and the very rarely encountered Banded Yellow Robin. As we continue, we will also seek out the gorgeous but very localized Golden-backed Whistler before finally arriving in the late afternoon.

Although located within a frontier township, the Kiunga Guest House provides us with astonishingly comfortable, air-conditioned accommodations in addition to generous, tasty, well-prepared meals and free laundry. From here we will venture out along the main Tabubil Mine Road and associated side roads and trails into the forest. We will also take extensive boat trips along the Fly River and its tributary the Elevara.

NIGHT: Kiunga Guest House

August 16-19, Days 12-15: Kiunga Area. We have visited the lowland forests of the Kiunga area annually (sometimes twice a year) since 1986. Each year, new and exciting, little-known species have been added to the mouth-watering list of species for this area. What will we find in the year 2010? Perhaps we will be lucky and finally encounter the enigmatic Forest Bittern (recently discovered here by our local guide); the poorly known Little Paradise-Kingfisher—as we did brilliantly on our 2009 VENT tour; the scintillating electric-colored Blue-black Kingfisher; or that most elusive of species, the Broad-billed Fairywren.

Some of the species we may encounter include Southern Cassowary (present but difficult to see); Crested Hawk (Baza); Long-tailed Buzzard; Gray-headed and Variable goshawks; Orange-legged Scrubfowl; Black-billed Brush-turkey (very tough); Rufous-tailed Bush-hen; Great Cuckoo-Dove; Stephan's Ground-Dove; Thick-billed Ground-Pigeon (very difficult to see); Greater Streaked, and the handsome Western Black-capped lorries; Palm Cockatoo (a truly magnificent giant); Yellow-capped Pygmy-Parrots (no doubt leading us a merry dance as always!); both Orange-breasted and Double-eyed fig-parrots; Eclectus Parrot; possibly the endangered and very impressive Vulturine Parrot; White-crowned and Dwarf koels; Greater Black Coucal; Moustached Treeswift; Rufous-bellied Kookaburra; Blyth's Hornbill (still common here); with a fair bit of luck, both Red-bellied (Blue-breasted) and Hooded pittas; Black-shouldered, Gray-headed, and the fabulous Golden cuckoo-shrikes; possibly the extremely elusive Painted Quail-thrush; Spot-winged, the uncommon Hooded, Golden, and possibly Black-winged monarchs; Black-sided Robin; Variable, Hooded, Rusty, and the extremely localized White-bellied pitohuis; Long-billed Honeyeater; and Yellow-bellied Longbill. On previous tours we have enjoyed superb views of the rarely seen Gurney's Eagle, Large Fig-Parrot, Hook-billed Kingfisher and Blue Jewel-babbler. We may also see Purple-tailed, Pinon, Collared, and Zoe imperial-pigeons. One of the major

prizes of these forests, the Southern Crowned Pigeon is the world's largest species of pigeon and is still moderately common in this area. We should see a veritable rainbow of fruit-doves including Wompoo, Pink-spotted, Ornate, Orange-fronted, Beautiful, Orange-bellied, and Dwarf. Cuckoos include Brush, Chestnut-breasted, and the rare and little-known Long-billed Cuckoo, which we have seen on our last six visits to Kiunga. Kingfishers include Common Paradise-Kingfisher, Azure, Little, Variable Dwarf, and the frustratingly vocal but difficult to see Hook-billed Kingfisher. With a bit of luck we should see all three thicket fantails, in addition to the songful Rufous-backed Fantail. The rare Great-billed Heron is occasionally seen along the Elevara River. We may also see the rather uncommon Wallace's Fairywren as well as the truly cosmic cobalt-blue Emperor Fairywren. Views of these gems continue to live in the dreams of all participants forever!

If we can find an appropriate flowering tree, we should see a nice selection of myzomelas, several meliphagas busily competing with Meyer's Friarbird, and Plain and Streak-headed honeyeaters. Other species we will be looking for include White-spotted Munia (Mannikin), a rather nomadic species; possibly Yellow-eyed Starling (we found a spectacular colony on our 2005 tour!); Golden and Yellow-faced mynas; and the dapper Lowland Peltops. Flame Bowerbird is one of the area's most sought after species—on previous tours we have been treated to several sensational views of this spectacular bird, so do be alert!

Then there are the birds-of-paradise. Glossy-mantled and Trumpet manucodes are both common, but can take some work to see well. We should also be able to show you the entire dawn display sequence of the Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise. King Bird-of-paradise is an unbelievable gem—the intensity of its calls and its red color have to be witnessed to be believed and again we should be able to view one at its display tree. We will also hear and with some luck see the distinctive sounding, nominate form of Magnificent Riflebird and witness a display tree full of cavorting adult male Greater and Raggiana birds-of-paradise.

NIGHTS: Kiunga Guest House

August 20, Day 16: Fly from Kiunga to Ambua Lodge. Depending on flight schedules and the weather, we will have a final morning's birding before flying to Tari in the Southern Highlands and the lovely Ambua Lodge. Without doubt, Ambua Lodge is one of the finest and most superbly appointed birding/natural history lodges ever located within a tropical forest. Built at 6,800 feet and tucked away in the folds of beautiful moss-forested slopes, it presents us with the opportunity to see as many as 16 species of birds-of-paradise in addition to many, many other wonderful and very special montane species of birds. From your bedroom window, it is possible to watch the little known Short-tailed Paradigalla at its nest, or sit entranced at the luncheon table as a Black-throated Robin snatches insects from the forest edge. For three nights and two very full days we will treat ourselves to this once-in-a-lifetime experience.

NIGHT: Ambua Lodge

August 21-22, Days 17-18: Ambua Lodge. For these two days, we will cover a wide range of elevations, terrain, and habitats. We will explore the alpine grassland of the Tari Gap at 9,200 feet and follow narrow but exquisitely constructed trails within a fairy-tale environment of gnarled, moss-festooned trees, liberally decorated with orchids, lichens, and some really beautiful fungi. We will also see the Tari Valley, a land of hidden wood-lots, secret passageways, ancient ditches, and a proud people. Here we will encounter some of Earth's most accomplished creations such as the gigantic New Guinea Harpy Eagle which resides on these slopes (but getting to see it, well...); Salvadori's Teal, an endangered species which we have seen superbly on recent tours and completely missed on others; deep forest denizens such as the gorgeous Chestnut (now rare) and Forbes's forest-rails; Great Cuckoo-Dove; White-breasted Fruit-Dove; the rare Rufescent Imperial-Pigeon; and displaying Papuan Mountain-Pigeons. Lorikeets include Goldie's, Papuan, Plum-faced, Yellow-billed, and Orange-billed—all of them gems. Spotted Jewel-babbler is one of **the** top birds of any trip. With luck we may find the engaging Garnet, Black-faced, Black-throated, White-winged, Blue-gray and White-eyed robins, as well as Lesser Ground-Robin. Whistlers abound here and include Mottled (rare), Sclater's, Regent, Brown-backed, Black-headed, and Rufous-naped. Other birds we may encounter include four species of rather retiring tiger-parrots; Papuan King-Parrot; Fan-tailed Cuckoo and Rufous-throated Bronze-Cuckoo; Papuan Boobook;

Mountain Swiftlet; Mountain Yellow-billed Kingfisher; Hooded and Black-bellied cuckoo-shrikes; Long-tailed Shrike; Pied Chat; Island Thrush; New Guinea Logrunner; Lesser Melampitta; Blue-capped Ifrita; Island Leaf-Warbler; perhaps Orange-crowned Fairywren; Mountain Mouse-Warbler; four species of diminutive scrubwren; the misnamed Brown-breasted Gerygone; Dimorphic and Black fantails; the very handsome Black-breasted Boatbill; Canary Flycatcher; Black Pitohui; the peculiar-looking Wattled Ploughbill; Papuan Treecreeper; Varied and Black sittellas; Mid-mountain and Fan-tailed berrypeckers; Western Mountain White-eye; Hooded Munia (Mannikin); Mountain Firetail; Torrentlark; Mountain Peltops; Great Woodswallow; Black Butcherbird; and with luck, Archbold's and MacGregor's bowerbirds. But it is the birds-of-paradise that hold sway in the fastness of the montane forests and with a bit of luck we should be treated to lingering studies of such unbelievable creations as Brown Sicklebill—the sound of its “machine-gun” advertising call is deafening; Stephanie's *Astrapia*; the gorgeous Ribbon-tailed *Astrapia*; the truly extraordinary King-of-Saxony; the oh-so-lovely Blue Bird-of-paradise, not to mention Superb and Loria's birds-of-paradise and the peculiar Short-tailed *Paradigalla*. With an enormous piece of luck we may also encounter the very rarely seen Buff-tailed Sicklebill as we did on our 2009 tour!

NIGHTS: Ambua Lodge

August 23, Day 19: Fly to Mt. Hagen and Drive to Kumul Lodge. This morning we will take a flight to Mt. Hagen, the main township of the anthropologically famous Waghi Valley. This huge valley in the heart of PNG's central cordillera supports a relatively large population of people that were completely unknown to the outside world until 1933 when a kiap patrol and prospecting group stumbled onto them. For a fascinating documentary account, try and see the film “First Contact.” It is quite impressive. From Mt. Hagen township, we will drive westwards high into the mountains to the beautifully located Kumul Lodge. Our 2006 tour was the first VENT tour to visit this site and we were so pleased with what we found, that we decided to make it a permanent inclusion on our PNG schedule. It is a little rustic and can be a little cool at night—the elevation is a little over 9,000 feet, so it will be **important to travel with some warm clothing.**

NIGHT: Kumul Lodge

August 24, Day 20: Kumul Lodge. Kumul Lodge is a delightfully friendly place set right in the heart of New Guinea's upper montane forest. It is also the only place in New Guinea where there are regularly provisioned bird/mammal feeders. The scene on our first morning at Kumul Lodge can quite simply be astonishing. So many weird, wonderful and exotic birds attend the feeder that we will find it difficult to drag ourselves away for several hours. And the photographic opportunities are fabulous! We have two full days here to explore the grounds of the lodge and the adjacent trails. We will also travel further afield to explore different elevations and habitats, which give us the chance of several species we have previously not been able to see on tour. Some of the birds we may encounter in and around Kumul Lodge include Chestnut Forest-Rail—this delightful sprite can be remarkably confiding and it is now very difficult above Ambua; Black-mantled Goshawk—always scarce; White-breasted Fruit-Dove; and Papuan Mountain-Pigeon. Lorikeets include Goldie's, Papuan, Plum-faced, Yellow-billed, and Orange-billed—all of them gems. We have good chances to see Black-throated, White-winged and Blue-gray robin, as well as Lesser Ground-Robin, one of the most hauntingly ethereal songsters of these forests. Whistlers abound here and include Sclater's, Regent, Brown-backed, Black-headed, and Rufous-naped. The handsome Tit and Crested berrypeckers which comprise New Guinea's sole endemic family are usually quite common here. With a bit of luck we should see the spell-binding white tail plumes of the Ribbon-tailed *Astrapia*, not to mention a bevy of honeyeaters including a number of very demonstrative species such as the gigantic Belford's *Melidectes* and glowing Red-collared *Myzomela*.

Other birds we may encounter include two species of rather retiring tiger-parrots—Brehm's and the uncommon Painted; Papuan King-Parrot; Fan-tailed Cuckoo and Rufous-throated Bronze-Cuckoo; Mountain Nightjar—this is a great place to see this scarce species; Mountain Swiftlet; Hooded and Black-bellied cuckoo-shrikes; Long-tailed Shrike; Pied Chat; Island Thrush; Blue-capped Ifrita; Island Leaf-Warbler; perhaps Orange-crowned Fairywren; Mountain Mouse-Warbler; the misnamed Brown-breasted Gerygone; Dimorphic and Black fantails; the very handsome Black-breasted Boatbill; Canary Flycatcher; Black Pitohui; the peculiar-looking Wattled

Ploughbill; Varied and Black sittellas; Mid-mountain and Fan-tailed berrypeckers; Hooded Munia (Mannikin); Mountain Firetail; with luck Torrentlark; Mountain Peltops; Great Woodswallow; and Black Butcherbird. But it is the birds-of-paradise that hold sway in the fastness of the montane forests and with a bit of luck we should be treated to lingering studies of such unbelievable creations as Brown Sicklebill—the sound of its “machine-gun” advertising call is deafening and the gorgeous Ribbon-tailed Astrapia. Seeing the intensely colored Crested Bird-of-paradise bounding along the track in front of us always grabs a birder’s attention and this is a great place to encounter this species. **This is a photographer’s paradise—beware!**

NIGHT: Kumul Lodge

August 25, Day 21: Morning Birding; Afternoon Drive to Mt. Hagen; Flight to Port Moresby or Begin Bensbach Extension. This morning we will set out early for an attractive hidden valley where we may be treated to the courtship display of a group of male Lesser Birds-of-paradise. Other specialties of the area include Yellow-breasted Bowerbird, the dapper Torrent Flycatcher and lovely Ornate Honeyeater. We will return to Kumul Lodge in time for lunch before driving back to Mt. Hagen.

Participants not continuing on the Bensbach Extension will catch an afternoon flight to Port Moresby and spend the night. Those continuing on the Extension will begin with an overnight in the Mt. Hagen area (see below).

NIGHT: Airways Hotel, Port Moresby

August 26, Day 22: Flight from Port Moresby to Cairns or Brisbane; Departures for Home. This morning, participants have a choice of flying to Cairns on Air Niugini Flight 90 (scheduled to depart at 9:30 a.m. and arrive at 10:55 a.m.) or to Brisbane on Air Niugini Flight 3 (scheduled to depart at 8:15 a.m. and arrive at 11:10 a.m.). Both flights enable connections with an afternoon flight to Sydney and flights to the USA (times and flights subject to change). Please inform the VENT office of your preference between Cairns & Brisbane no later than June 1, 2010 (see **AIR INFORMATION** section below).

Participants wanting to spend additional time in Australia and/or avoid the risk of misconnecting should consider spending the night in Cairns, Brisbane or Sydney and departing for home on or after August 27. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with these arrangements.

BENSBACH EXTENSION AUGUST 25-30, 2010

August 25, Day 1: Dinner and Overnight in Mt. Hagen. We will have dinner and spend the night in Mt. Hagen.

NIGHT: Rondon Ridge, Mt. Hagen

August 26, Day 2: Flight from Mt. Hagen to Bensbach. This morning we will take a charter flight south and westwards. Gradually emerging from the confines of the vast highland valleys and their surrounding mountains, we will gradually descend to the vast lowland underbelly of New Guinea known as the TransFly. This is an immense region within a notably drier, more monsoonal climate that supports an entrancing mosaic of monsoon forests and savannah woodland bisected by meandering rivers and associated and little explored freshwater swamps. The TransFly is home to an exciting fauna and flora quite unlike the rest of this enormous ‘island.’ Our

home for the next three nights will be the attractive Bensbach Lodge, located almost within ‘cooeee’ distance from the Papua (Indonesian) border.

NIGHT: Bensbach Lodge

August 27-28, Days 3-4: Bensbach Lodge. Over these two days we will explore this enormously vast and sparsely occupied region both on foot and from the comfort of flat-bottomed boats replete with an 'eski' for cooling our drinks. From the verandah of the lodge we may see and will certainly hear one of our most sought after birds, the handsomely marked Spangled Kookaburra, endemic to the southern TransFly and Aru Islands. Wandering around the lodge and exploring the nearby mix of savannah and monsoon woodland, we should encounter a good range of species including Orange-footed Scrubfowl, Orange-breasted and Double-eyed fig-parrots, Red-winged Parrot, Channel-billed Cuckoo, Fairy Gerygone, Beccari's Scrubwren, Yellow Oriole, Noisy Friarbird and White-spotted Munia.

Out on the water we will head downstream to explore the array of swamps and marshes that harbor a wonderfully exciting plethora of birds and other wildlife. One of our primary targets will be to locate the little known Fly River Grassbird whose entire known world distribution is a tiny area of sedge-beds both here at Bensbach and at one other site further upstream near Lake Daviumbu. We should also be especially alert to the presence of any Munias (Manikins), as such flocks may include the rather rare and also very poorly known Gray-crowned and Black munias. At this time of the year, with many of the wetlands drying out, birds are often concentrated in dense mixed flocks and can include large numbers of Magpie Geese and hopefully Spotted Whistling-Ducks; the globally threatened Black-necked Stork – this species nests here; four species of egret; large roosts of the attractive Rufous Night-Heron; Black Bittern; sometimes enormous flocks of Royal Spoonbills; if we are very lucky Yellow-billed Spoonbill which David Bishop discovered here in the '90s – a first for New Guinea; three species of ibis; the enormous Great-billed Heron – most likely seen along the more heavily wooded section of the river; at suitable junctures we will drift to the side of the river and walk out onto the seemingly endless plains, where we may encounter Wedge-tailed Eagle and its primary prey, the attractive Agile Wallaby; the huge Australian Bustard; large numbers of Australian Pratincoles and newly arrived Little Whimbrel, along with a good selection of other migrant shorebirds and groups of oh-so-elegant Brolga (Crane).

Bensbach has a big bird list including some very difficult and highly sought after species. In addition to the TransFly endemics mentioned above, we will also search for the gigantic Southern Cassowary, Black-billed Brush-turkey, New Guinea Harpy Eagle, Palm Cockatoo, Noisy Pitta and with a great deal of luck, a day-time roosting Masked Owl. We will also go out at night spot-lighting. Some of the species we may encounter include Large-tailed and White-throated nightjars, Barred and possibly Australian owlet-nightjars, Southern Boobook, Barking Owl, Marbled and Papuan frogmouths, and some mouthwatering mammals including bronze quoll, long-nosed echymipera, gray dorcopsis, feather-tailed possum, Southern common possum and white-tailed giant rat.

Bensbach will undoubtedly provide us with some very exciting birding and other wildlife experiences; the species listed above are merely the tip of the tropical 'iceberg'!

NIGHTS: Bensbach Lodge

August 29, Day 5: Return to Port Moresby. After a final morning of birding, we will fly back to Mt. Hagen in time to connect with our Air Niugini flight to Port Moresby, where we will enjoy a farewell dinner and spend the night.

NIGHT: Airways Hotel, Port Moresby

August 30, Day 6: Flight from Port Moresby to Cairns or Brisbane; Departures for Home. This morning participants have a choice of flying to Cairns on Air Niugini Flight 90 (scheduled to depart at 9:30 a.m. and arrive at 10:55 a.m.) or to Brisbane on Air Niugini Flight 3 (scheduled to depart at 8:15 a.m. and arrive at 11:10 a.m.). Both flights enable connections with an afternoon flight to Sydney and flights to the USA (times and flights subject to change). Please inform the VENT office of your preference between Cairns & Brisbane no later than June 1, 2010 (see **AIR INFORMATION** section below).

Participants wanting to spend additional time in Australia and/or avoid the risk of misconnecting should consider spending the night in Cairns, Brisbane or Sydney and departing for home on or after August 31. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with these arrangements.

NOTE: *Papua New Guinea is ‘special’ and one of the most exciting places on earth. However, the internal airline schedules change frequently. This itinerary is subject to change dependant on the existing internal air schedules, which may affect the order of the day-to-day activities. Please be assured that the focus of the tour will stay the same and you will still visit all of the same areas.*

TOUR SIZE: Papua New Guinea (main tour) will be limited to 12 participants. The Bensbach Extension will be limited to 8 participants.

TOUR LEADERS: The Papua New Guinea tour (main tour) will be led by Dion Hobcroft & David Bishop. The Bensbach Extension will be led by Dion Hobcroft.

Dion Hobcroft has been working for VENT since 2001. He has led tours to Australia, New Guinea, New Zealand, Bhutan, India, Southwest Pacific, Cambodia, Thailand, China, Japan, Russia, Alaska, and the Antarctic. In 2007 alone Dion showed more than 2,000 species of birds to VENT clients. His informative, relaxed, and educational nature, combined with sharp eyes and ears, has established Dion as a favorite of many tour participants. His fieldwork for over 30 years on birds and other terrestrial vertebrates has allowed him to amass an extraordinary knowledge of the biodiversity in the Asia-Pacific region. Born in Tasmania and based in Sydney, Dion has traveled widely throughout Australia listing over 760 species, placing him in the top echelons of Australian birders. He is very tuned-in to the songs of bird species in the Asia-Pacific region, and specializes in rare and elusive species. He is delighted to show these skulking rarities to his travel companions. Dion has published several papers on field ornithology, served on national and state rare bird committees, managed *Birdline NSW*, run introduction to ornithology courses for Sydney University, and, before he traveled so continuously, was a popular speaker with various natural history societies. Dion has worked for many research and government agencies ranging from the Antarctic Division, Department of Environment NSW, Agriculture Protection WA, Taronga Zoo, Australian Museum, and the Queensland Department of Primary Industry. Dion lives in Sydney with his wife Lise, and two young children, Grace (age 8), and Daniel (age 4).

David Bishop loves his vocation and cannot imagine anything better than exploring wild and beautiful places in Asia and the Pacific in the company of friends and clients. He has spent much of the past 33 years studying the birds and natural history of the Oriental region, in addition to New Guinea, the Southwest Pacific, and most recently Central Asia. David was once a police officer amid the streets of London’s West End, but has emerged as an acknowledged authority on the birds of these exotic regions. His enthusiasm for these places and their birds is contagious. This, along with his skills in locating wildlife, sharing what he sees with others, and conversing with local people in their native language, ensures you the very finest quality tour. David has undertaken a number of expeditions to survey the birds and other wildlife of previously unexplored regions throughout New Guinea (largely together with Jared Diamond) and the Oriental Region. This has resulted in a number of exciting discoveries and rediscoveries including the incomparable Wallace’s Standardwing, a bizarre bird-of-paradise. Some of the results of this work, together with observations gained during the VENT tours he leads, have been published in the scientific and semi-popular literature to which David is a regular contributor. In July 1997, David, together with Brian Coates, published *A Guide to the Birds of Wallacea (Sulawesi, the Moluccas, and Lesser Sundas)*, and David is currently working on other book projects. David lives with his wife and daughter (his son currently resides in England) in the attractive university town of Armidale, NSW, Australia.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for Papua New Guinea (main tour) is **\$13,595** per person based on double occupancy and will include all meals from lunch on Day 3 through dinner on Day 21, lodging as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation, the flight from Brisbane into Port Moresby, the flight from Port Moresby to Cairns or Brisbane (see **AIR INFORMATION** section below), all internal commercial & charter flights, and

guide services provided by the tour leaders. The tour fee does not include airfare from your home to Brisbane, return from Cairns or Brisbane, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, telephone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

When comparing trip costs with other tour companies, please consider that our tour fee includes the air from Brisbane to Port Moresby, all internal air within Papua New Guinea and the air from Port Moresby to Cairns or Brisbane. This represents a considerable savings as it includes several flights and a good deal of additional expense if you were to pay it separately.

The single supplement for Papua New Guinea (main tour) is **\$1765**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

The fee for Papua New Guinea (main tour) combined with the Bensbach Extension is **\$15,995** per person based on double occupancy and will include all meals from lunch on Day 3 of the main tour through dinner on Day 5 of the Bensbach Extension, lodging as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation, the flight from Brisbane into Port Moresby, the flight from Port Moresby to Cairns or Brisbane (see **AIR INFORMATION** section below), all internal commercial & charter flights, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. The tour fee does not include airfare from your home to Brisbane, return from Cairns or Brisbane, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, telephone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for Papua New Guinea (main tour) combined with the Bensbach Extension is **\$2025**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you. Note that the Bensbach Lodge only has 7 rooms available for tour participants and singles may be asked to share. If so, you will be provided with the appropriate credit.

TOUR REGISTRATION FOR PAPUA NEW GUINEA (MAIN TOUR): To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit is **\$500** per person. If you prefer to pay your deposit by check, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. The VENT registration form should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office.

A second deposit of **\$2,000** per person will be due 180 days prior to departure and apply towards the balance of the main tour. Full payment of the tour fees for both tours is due 120 days prior to the tour departure date.

CANCELLATION POLICY FOR PAPUA NEW GUINEA (MAIN TOUR): Refunds are made according to the following schedule: If cancellation is made 180 days or more before the departure date, any monies paid less **\$500** is refundable. If cancellation is made between 180 and 120 days before the departure date, the total deposit to date less **\$1000** is refundable. If cancellation is made fewer than 120 days before the departure date, no refund is available. *We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself.*

If you cancel:

180 days or more before departure
Between 180 and 120 days before departure
Fewer than 120 days before departure date

Your refund will be:

Any monies paid less the \$500 deposit
Total deposit to date less \$1000
No refund available.

TOUR REGISTRATION FOR BENSBACH EXTENSION: To register for this pre-trip, please contact the VENT office. The deposit is **\$500** per person. If you prefer to pay your deposit by check, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the

time of registration. The VENT registration form should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office.

CANCELLATION POLICY FOR BENSBACH EXTENSION: Cancellation penalties and refunds are based on the following schedule: if cancellation is made 120 days or more before the tour departure date, a cancellation fee of **\$250** per person will be charged unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be **\$100** per person. If cancellation is made fewer than 120 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre-trip and post-trip extensions. ***We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance for your protection.***

<u>If you cancel:</u>	<u>Your refund will be:</u>
120 days or more before departure date	Your deposit minus \$250*
Fewer than 120 days before departure date	No refund available

*Unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be \$100 per person.

EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES: In the erratic global financial markets of today, it is difficult to predict foreign currency exchange rates over the long term or at the time of operation of a tour or cruise departure. Tour prices are based upon the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If exchange rates change drastically, it may be necessary to implement a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges are passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES: In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this departure. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE: A brochure and application form for optional coverage for baggage, illness, and trip cancellation can be obtained through the VENT office. **We strongly recommend that you purchase trip cancellation insurance as soon as possible to protect yourself against losses due to accidents or illness. VENT recommends Travel Insured International as our preferred insurance provider.** Check with your insurance agent regarding coverage you may presently have via other insurance policies that may cover illness during your trip. **Waiver for pre-existing conditions is available; however, stipulations apply, usually requiring the purchase of the insurance soon after registering.** Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as work-related cancellation, medical upgrade, and a “Cancel for Any Reason” clause among others. **Contact Travel Insured International prior to registration for details.** Not all insurance providers provide the same levels of coverage. If you purchase insurance through a company other than Travel Insured International, please be advised that rules and stipulations may be different.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please read your itinerary carefully to see whether or not your tour/cruise requires MANDATORY Medical Insurance which covers you for emergency evacuation/repatriation during the trip. This coverage is included in the Worldwide Trip Protector plan offered by Travel Insured International. If you do not choose to purchase the insurance through Travel Insured International, you will need to do so through

another insurance provider. A good website for information and acquisition of emergency evacuation/repatriation insurance is: www.insuremytrip.com.

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund.

California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.

AIR INFORMATION: Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements.

BAGGAGE LIMITS: All tour participants are asked to limit their baggage as closely as possible to twenty-five pounds per person. While we recognize this is not easy (especially if you carry a spotting scope—**which we encourage you to do**), it is very important that participants are aware that there are absolute limitations on the total weight the aircraft is physically able to lift off the ground. In part we have reduced this problem by utilizing flights with larger aircraft and chartering our own aircraft, but even then there are limits on how much the aircraft can lift. If we exceed those weight limitations, some of the baggage will have to be jettisoned and arrangements made to have that baggage sent on to the next destination as soon as possible, but this may be a hassle.

Ideally, everything should be packed in plastic bags within soft bags that will fit easily into the small-to-medium aircraft we will be using in Papua New Guinea. However, **while we do encourage you to travel as light as possible, you should not do so to the point of discomfort or inconvenience. For example, it is better to bring your scope with you rather than leave it behind. In general we do not encounter too many difficulties. This is greatly helped by chartering our own aircraft, the wide-spread availability of inexpensive 24-hour laundry services at all of the places we stay and the helpfulness and understanding nature of VENT's wonderful clients.**

CLIMATE: During the tour you will experience a wide range of temperatures and climate, from the 70s and high 80s in the lowlands (where it is also rather humid), to the 40s and 50s at higher elevations. Please note that at Kumul Lodge it may get down to a freezing point occasionally at night. We will almost certainly encounter some rain, possibly heavy.

CLOTHING: Lightweight field clothing is recommended for the lowlands, preferably in muted, drab colors, **NOT bright white, yellow, red, washed out or faded blue or khaki (both of which look startlingly bright)**. Dark, muted colors help prevent startling the birds, especially when we are in the forests. This includes several pairs of pants and cool, comfortable shirts. Long-sleeved shirts, a hat, and sunglasses are recommended for protection from the sun and mosquitoes. Long socks are very useful, so that you can tuck your pants in and further avoid biting insects. A warm sweater is essential for the highlands. **Raingear** is also essential, including waterproof pants which are very useful in case we encounter rain while in a boat. Dress will be casual, although you may prefer something slightly dressier for the hotel in Port Moresby.

LAUNDRY: Excellent 24-hour laundry facilities are available at all locations at which we stay except Kumul Lodge. At Kiunga and Walindi, laundry facilities are included in the price of our accommodations. Tour participants have commented that as a result of the availability of such facilities, they found it unnecessary to carry as many clothes with them as on other tours.

Although there will be few, if any, really rigorous walks, we may encounter some mud, slippery surfaces, and stony ground. Add to that the fact that you are on your feet for much of the day and it is **most important** that you provide suitable protection and support for your feet and ankles. Lightweight (Goretex or some similar material) but robust boots (hiking boots) that come up to the ankle and have a good lug-sole are ideal. Many people are apprehensive that these will be too heavy; this is not true. The protection, grip, and day-long comfort such boots afford is far superior to the seemingly comfortable sneakers/training shoes. Some years we encounter quite a bit of mud such as in the lowland forests around Kiunga, and those who brought rubber boots (Wellingtons) found them advantageous. Based on our 2001 experience, rubber boots are very useful but based on our 2002 experience they were unnecessary. In view of the heavy weight of rubber boots we recommend that

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you either bring hiking boots (best) or rubber boots (can get very hot), but NOT both. On our 2007 tour we found a further alternative and that was to stick with regular hiking boots but to purchase inexpensive rubber boots in Kiunga where they are most likely to be useful.

CURRENCY: Papua New Guinea Kina (KA); exchange facilities are available through trade banks. American Express and Visa are the most widely accepted credit cards. Travelers' checks are accepted by most shops.

DOCUMENTS: A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Port Moresby and a visa for Papua New Guinea are required for United States citizens. Non-U.S. citizens should check with their consulate or embassy for instructions. **Your visa for Papua New Guinea may be obtained upon arrival at Port Moresby. When obtaining your visa, please do not mention anything about bird-watching as this may be construed as research and entry to PNG will be barred.** For assistance in procuring your Papua New Guinea visa, you may wish to contact Pinnacle Travel Document Systems (www.traveldocs.com on the web or 888-838-4867 by phone), a company which handles visa procurement.

A **MULTIPLE ENTRY Australian tourist visa** is required for all participants on the Papua New Guinea tour from the following countries: Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong SAR, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Vatican City.

An Australia visa will be issued for you electronically through our offices at no extra charge. You need only send us a legible copy of the picture page of your passport at least a month prior to departure. If your nationality is not mentioned above, you should check with your consulate/embassy for instructions.

EQUIPMENT: You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good repair, along with a belt or day pack (good for carrying books, sunscreen, extra film, etc.). Your leaders will have Leica spotting scopes; but if you have a spotting scope and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so. We will be birding from roadsides or open trails for much of the time, and a scope can be very useful for seeing such treetop birds as the birds-of-paradise. Other items to bring include a flashlight or headlamp, camera, extra batteries, water bottle or small canteen, alarm clock, handy wipes, wash cloth, towel and umbrella (the latter is very useful and should be carried at all times). You should also have a supply of personal medication such as aspirin, a good cortisone cream, etc. As a precaution, it is a good idea to pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items, medications, and travel documents in your airline carry-on bag.

HEALTH: Sanitary conditions in most restaurants and hotels in Papua New Guinea are up to Western standards. Virtually all hot, freshly cooked food should be safe; but peel fresh fruit and raw vegetables before eating, make sure meat is cooked thoroughly, and assume the water is unsafe unless informed otherwise by your leader. Hepatitis-A immunization is recommended as is typhoid for Papua New Guinea. Malaria is present in Papua New Guinea but as yet it is not a serious problem. Options for malaria prophylaxis include Mefloquine (Lariam), Malarone, and Doxycycline. These medications are available by prescription only. Please consult your physician or local travel clinic for recommendations.

Chiggers, mosquitoes, and other insects can be a problem. We have found that regular use of Cutters or OFF in lotion form, in combination with pump-action OFF, are most effective. We recommend that you bring one bottle of each. Please, no aerosol cans!

If you are taking prescription medication or over-the-counter medicine, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

As standard travel precautions, you should always be up to date with tetanus shots, and strongly consider

inoculations against Hepatitis types A and B.

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta. The CDC operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line 877-FYI-TRIP (394-8747) or you can check their website at www.cdc.gov/travel. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html (click on travel health).

MISC: Electricity - 220 volts, 50 cycles
Language - Melanesian Pidgin, English and Motu
Time - 14½ and 15 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time

SUGGESTED READING: Our website at www.ventbird.com offers an affiliated online store that carries a wide variety of items for birding and nature lovers, including over 6,000 books. A portion of the sales from the store benefits the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. You might also want to visit such other online stores as www.amazon.com, and for those out-of-print and hard-to-find titles, www.abebooks.com, or www.buteobooks.com, which specializes in ornithology books.

Specifically for the Asia/Pacific region, we recommend this website for books that are difficult to find or out of print, <http://www.andrewisles.com/AndrewIsles/>.

Beehler, B., T. K. Pratt, and D. Zimmerman. *Birds of New Guinea*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986.
This is the recommended field guide for this tour. However, this book is currently out of print and very difficult to obtain.

Caulfield, C. *In the Rainforest—Report from a Strange, Beautiful, Imperiled World*. University of Chicago Press, 1986 (reprint).

Coates, B.J. *Birds of Papua New Guinea*, Vol. I and II. Australia: Dove Publications, 1990. Out of print. A large, spectacularly illustrated (photographs) in-depth account on all birds recorded from Papua New Guinea. Includes the only reasonably accessible information on birds of New Britain, Bismarck Archipelago, and North Solomons.

Coates, B.J. & W. Peckover. Alderley, Brisbane. Dove Publications, 2001. *A Photographic Guide to the Birds of New Guinea*. **An excellent new guide and one that nicely supplements the field guide. This book provides the only ID information on the birds of New Britain.**

Cooper, W.T. and J.M. Forshaw. *The Birds of Paradise and Bower Birds*. Boston: Godine, 1972. A marvelous over-sized volume that effectively brings together what is known of each species, accompanied by indescribably beautiful illustrations. Out-of-print.

Diamond, J.M. *Avifauna of the Eastern Highlands of New Guinea*. Publication of the Nuttall Ornithological Club, No.12, 1972. A scientific, ecological treatment of most of Papua New Guinea's highland birds, with information on elevation distribution, voice, and related species groups for many species.

Diamond, J. M. *Guns, Germs and Steel*. 1997. W. W. Norton & Company, New York. This is the famous Pulitzer prize-winning book that should be compulsory reading for every man, woman and child on our planet.

Flannery, T. *Mammals of New Guinea*. Rev. ed. Cornell University Press, 1995. Update of the 1990 edition from Robert Brown & Associates, Queensland, Australia.

Frith, C. & B. Beehler. *The Birds of Paradise: Paradisaeidae (Bird Families of the World Series, Vol. 6)*. Oxford University Press, 1998. A spectacularly detailed account of everything that is known about the birds-of-paradise. One of the finest bird books of its genre.

McKay, R.D. *New Guinea*. Amsterdam: Time-Life International, 1976. Lots of good general information on Papua New Guinea.

McKinnon, R., Carillet, J-B. & D. Starnes. *Papua New Guinea & Solomon Islands Travel Guide*. Lonely Planet Guides. Melbourne. 2008.

Paijmans, K. *New Guinea Vegetation*. Australia: C.S.I.R.O. in association with the Australian National University Press, 1976. An excellent introduction to the vegetation communities of Papua New Guinea.

Pizzey, G. *The Graham Pizzey & Frank Knight Field Guide to the Birds of Australia*. Angus & Robertson, Sydney. 2004. Also Princeton: Princeton, University Press.

“Papua New Guinea: Nation in the Making; Journey Through Time.” *National Geographic* (August 1982).

TIPPING: As noted in our itineraries, tipping (restaurants, porters, drivers, and local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your VENT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. **We emphasize that such tips are not expected and are entirely optional.**

RESPONSIBILITY: Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc. (VENT) and/or its Agents act only as agents for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motor coach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT and its agents can accept no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. The right is reserved to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute leaders on any tour. When this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members. No refund will be made for any unused portion of the tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. The prices of the tours are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on December 30, 2009 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change therein. The right is reserved to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely. The airlines concerned and their agents and affiliates are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their aircraft. The passenger ticket in use by said airlines, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the airlines and the purchaser of these tickets and/or passenger. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for these tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airline Reporting Corporation.