

# PAPUA NEW GUINEA HIGHLIGHTS

JULY 26-AUGUST 8, 2018

## WEST NEW BRITAIN

AUGUST 8-13, 2018

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*New Guinea is the second largest island in the world after Greenland. This wild, sparsely inhabited and mystical land hosts more than 780 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 birder—huge, flightless cassowaries; strange mound building megapodes; a fantastic array of doves, parrots and kingfishers; exquisite fairywrens; and fascinating bowerbirds. Interesting mammals include little-known marsupials like tree kangaroos and egg laying monotremes like the rare New Guinea Echidna. In addition to some spectacular reptiles and amphibians, there is a plethora of butterflies, including the spectacular Birdwings, the world's largest butterflies and brilliant blue Ulysses Swallowtail. New Guinea will always remain a beacon to attract the natural historian, no matter what their interest, fascinated by the extraordinary diversity of life nurtured by rugged terrain and tropical climate.*

*This tour takes in a fabulous cross-section of habitats from flat lowland jungle and eucalyptus woodlands to dripping cloud forest, allowing us to encounter an excellent variety of birds. Birding is not easy in the giant rainforests that predominate, yet with patience and persistence, we will connect with some of the most exceptional birds on the face of the planet.*

*New Britain is the largest of the Melanesian islands in the Bismarck Archipelago. It has a unique bird fauna, reflecting the fact that it has never been in contact with mainland New Guinea, allowing colonizing species to evolve in isolation. It is a superb coral fringed, forest-covered island dominated by volcanoes, some of which are active. The forests support an amazing biomass of birds, many spectacular, raucous and conspicuous. It will be impossible to miss such species as the Brahminy Kite, Blue-eyed Cockatoo, Eclectus Parrot, Blyth's Hornbill and Purple-bellied Lory.*

*Other special birds we may see include Melanesian Scrubfowl; Blue-breasted Quail; Spotted Whistling-Duck; Black Bittern; New Britain Buzzard; White-browed Crake; Pacific Baza; Variable Goshawk; Rufous-tailed Bush-hen; Stephan's Dove; Knob-billed and Superb fruit-dove; Red-knobbed, Finsch's, Yellowish and Black imperial-pigeons; Violaceous and Pied coucals; New Britain Boobook; Moustached Treeswift; New Britain Dwarf and New Britain Kingfisher; Black-backed Paradise-Kingfisher; Red-flanked Lorikeet; Buff-faced Pygmy-Parrot; Bismarck Red-bellied Pitta; New Britain Friarbird; Ashy Myzomela; Black-and-Carmine Myzomela; Black-tailed Monarch; Shining and Velvet flycatcher; Long-tailed Myna; Bismarck Crow; Black Sunbird; Bismarck Flowerpecker; and Bismarck Munia.*

*An excursion to small islands in Kimbe Bay allows access to another suite of special birds—the so-called “supertramps” that cannot find a niche on the large islands, but do well on tiny satellite islands. This includes the unusual Nicobar Pigeon, Island Imperial-Pigeon, Mackinlay’s Cuckoo-Dove, Beach Kingfisher, Island Monarch, Mangrove Golden Whistler and Sclater’s Myzomela. If sea conditions are suitable, we may try for the rare Beck’s Petrel and Heinroth’s Shearwater. We can also do some snorkeling on beautiful tropical coral reefs with an abundance and diversity of reef fish.*

*More widely distributed species include Pacific Black Duck; Little Pied Cormorant; Rufous Night-Heron; Pacific Reef-Heron; Brown Booby; Lesser Frigatebird; Purple Swamphen; Buff-banded Rail; White-bellied Sea-Eagle; Brush Cuckoo; Sacred, Collared and Common kingfisher; Rainbow Bee-eater; Slender-billed Cuckoo-Dove; Uniform and White-rumped swiftlet; Pacific Swallow; White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike; Cicadabird; Spangled Drongo; Metallic and Singing starlings; Willie Wagtail; and Northern Fantail.*

*Rare birds we sometimes have luck encountering include Beach Thick-Knee, Pied Cuckoo-Dove, Bronze Ground-Dove, Golden Masked-Owl, Webster’s Kingfisher, Oriental Hobby, Singing Parrot, Green-fronted Hanging-Parrot or the enigmatic Bismarck Woodswallow. Throw in some migrant shorebirds and tropical terns and you can see an impressive range of birds in New Britain in real comfort at Walindi Plantation Resort, one of the most delightfully appointed dive resorts to be found anywhere in the world. Our carefully devised itinerary will give you the finest opportunity to see an excellent cross-section of New Britain’s birdlife with all the comforts and trappings of civilization.*

**July 26-28, Days 1-3: Travel to Brisbane, Australia; Flight to Port Moresby.** Participants should arrange to depart the USA on or before July 26, cross the International Dateline and arrive in Brisbane no later than the early morning of July 28. Upon arrival and clearing customs, please make your way through the airport and connect with Air Niugini Flight 6 which is scheduled to depart at 9:45 a.m. and arrive in Port Moresby at 12:55 p.m. (subject to change). Please note that it is necessary to present a copy of your electronic air ticket, which will be provided by the VENT office, to apply for your tourist visa in Port Moresby and board the plane.

Participants wanting to avoid the risk of misconnecting should consider arriving in Port Moresby or Brisbane on or before July 27 and spending the night. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with any additional lodging arrangements.

Upon arrival in Port Moresby, you’ll be transferred to our fabulous hotel before a visit to either the Pacific Adventist University grounds or the Parliament House Gardens to take in a cross-section of birds. We are likely to see Torresian Imperial-Pigeon, Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, White-breasted Woodswallow, Figbird, Rufous-banded and Yellow-tinted honeyeater and with luck, maybe a Blue-winged Kookaburra or Forest Kingfisher.

NIGHT (July 28): Airways Hotel, Port Moresby

**July 29, Day 4: Varirata National Park.** As will be the case throughout most of the tour, we must arise early this morning for the hour-long drive to one of PNG’s few national parks. Varirata National Park is located at an elevation of 3,000 feet (900m) within a mosaic of eucalypt savanna woodland and monsoon, 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 more 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 Brushturkey, is a magical experience.

We will 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. There is so much else to see here too: forest wallabies, giant birdwing butterflies, and some truly fabulous birds. Some of the species we may encounter here include Long-tailed Buzzard; Black-billed Brushturkey (very vocal but tough to see); Slender-billed Cuckoo-Dove; Wompoo, Beautiful, Pink-spotted 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 Yellow-eyed cuckoo-shrikes; Black Cicadabird; Rusty Mouse-Warbler (a delightful songster); Pale-billed Scrubwren; Green-backed Gerygone; Lemon-bellied and Olive flyrobin; White-faced Robin; Little Shrike-Thrush; Hooded Pitohui (the poison bird!); Black Berrypecker; Red-capped 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); Mimic and Eastern Graceful 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 gem, this is always a great bird to see, though not easy. Dwarf Cassowary is also a resident but is very wary and rarely encountered, 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 use of the extensive sound library of the leader, we should be able to lure a few of these species into view. Genuine skulkers include Pheasant Pigeon, Cinnamon Ground-Dove, Red-bellied Pitta, Painted Quail-thrush, Chestnut-backed Jewel-babbler, Papuan Scrub-Robin, Piping Bellbird and White-eared Catbird.

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 Goldenface; and notably dull 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: Little Shrike-Thrush, Rusty and Hooded pitohuis, Raggiana Bird-of-paradise, Eastern Magnificent Riflebird and Crinkle-collared Manucode.

NIGHT: Airways Hotel, Port Moresby

**July 30, Day 5: Fly Port Moresby to Kiunga.** This morning we will fly west and northward to the frontier township of Kiunga, located on the north bank of the mighty Fly River. Our route takes us over a vast wilderness of pristine woodlands before giving way to the third largest remaining area of lowland rainforest 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. 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. 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 tributaries, the Elevara and Ketu.

NIGHT: Kiunga Guest House, Kiunga

**July 31-August 1, Days 6-7: 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. In 2014 we were lucky and encountered the enigmatic Forest Bittern. There is a chance for the poorly known Little Paradise-Kingfisher or perhaps we will find that most elusive of species, the Campbell's Fairywren.

Some of the species we hope to encounter include Southern Cassowary (present but difficult to see); Pacific Baza; Long-tailed Buzzard; Gray-headed and Variable goshawks; Black-billed Brushturkey (typically heard only);

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Rufous-tailed Bush-hen; Great Cuckoo-Dove; Stephan's Dove; Thick-billed Ground-Pigeon (very difficult to see); Greater Streaked and the handsome Black-capped lorries; Palm Cockatoo (a truly magnificent giant); Yellow-capped Pygmy-Parrots; both Orange-breasted and Double-eyed fig-parrots; Eclectus Parrot; possibly the endangered and very impressive Pesquet's (Vulturine) Parrot; White-crowned and Dwarf koels; Greater and Lesser Black coucal; Moustached Treeswift; Rufous-bellied Kookaburra; Blyth's Hornbill (still common here); with a fair bit of luck, both Red-bellied and Hooded pittas; Gray-headed and the fabulous Golden cuckoo-shrikes; possibly the extremely elusive Painted Quail-thrush; Spot-winged, the uncommon Hooded and brilliant Golden monarchs; Black-sided Robin; Southern Variable, Rusty, and the 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. Recently the once good populations have begun to decline, although we will try very much to find this exceptional species. 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 several visits to Kiunga. Kingfishers include Common Paradise-Kingfisher, Azure, Variable Dwarf, and the frustratingly vocal but difficult to see Hook-billed Kingfisher. With a bit of luck we could see White-bellied and Sooty 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 beautiful cobalt-blue Emperor Fairywren.

If we can find an appropriate flowering tree, we should see a nice selection of honeyeaters including several myzomelas and meliphagas. Typically they will be busily competing with Meyer's Friarbird, and Plain, Streak-headed and the elusive Obscure honeyeaters. Other species we will be looking for include White-spotted Munia, a rather nomadic species; possibly the poorly known Yellow-eyed Starling; 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 but it remains an overall elusive species.

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 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 Western Magnificent Riflebird and witness a display tree full of cavorting adult male Greater and Raggiana birds-of-paradise.

NIGHTS: Kiunga Guest House, Kiunga

**August 2, Day 8: Fly to Ambua Lodge.** With our stay at Kiunga drawing to a close this morning, we will take a charter flight into the mountains, directly to Ambua Lodge in the Tari Valley. It will be like arriving in another country!

Without doubt, Ambua Lodge is the most comfortable lodge located within a tropical forest in New Guinea. 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 10 species of birds-of-paradise in addition to 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, Tari Valley

**August 3-4, Days 9-10: Ambua Lodge.** During our time based at Ambua Lodge, we will cover a wide range of elevation, 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 may encounter some of New Guinea's most elusive birds such as the gigantic New Guinea Eagle, Salvadori's Teal (an endangered species), deep forest denizens such as the gorgeous Chestnut (now rare) and Forbes's forest-rails, Great Cuckoo-Dove, Mountain 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, Ashy, Black-throated, White-winged and Blue-gray robins, as well as Lesser Ground-Robin. Whistlers abound here and include Sclater's, Regent, Brown-backed and Black-headed. Recently the scarce Mottled Whistler, now Berryhunter, has been placed in its own family whilst the Rufous-naped Whistler is now in a separate family with the Piping Bellbird and the Crested Bellbird (of the Australian deserts.)

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 Kingfisher; Hooded Cuckoo-shrike and Black-bellied Cicadabird; Long-tailed Shrike; Pied Chat; Island Thrush; New Guinea Logrunner; Lesser Melampitta; Blue-capped Ifrita (now also elevated to its own unique family); Island Leaf-Warbler; White-shouldered and perhaps Orange-crowned fairywren; Mountain Mouse-Warbler; three species of diminutive scrubwrens; the Brown-breasted Gerygone; Gray Thornbill; Dimorphic, Friendly and Black fantails; the very handsome Black-breasted Boatbill; Canary Flycatcher; Black Pitohui; the peculiar-looking and scarce Wattled Ploughbill (another bird from New Guinea recently elevated to its own family); Papuan Treecreeper; Varied and Black sittellas; Mid-mountain and Fan-tailed berrypeckers; Western Mountain and New Guinea white-eye; Hooded Munia; Mountain Firetail; Torrentlark; Mountain Peltops; Great Woodswallow; Black Butcherbird; and with luck, the elusive Archbold's and MacGregor's bowerbirds.

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 lengthy studies of such unbelievable species as Brown Sicklebill, the sound of its "machine-gun" advertising call is impressive; Black Sicklebill with its sonic whipping call; Stephanie's Astrapia; the gorgeous Ribbon-tailed Astrapia; the truly extraordinary King-of-Saxony; the lovely Blue Bird-of-paradise; hopefully Superb Bird-of-paradise and Lawe's Parotia; and the peculiar Short-tailed Paradigalla. Very difficult to see but present is the Buff-tailed Sicklebill. Two further endemic New Guinea bird families are represented in Tari by the Satinbirds (Loria's and Crested) and the Painted Berrypeckers (Crested and Tit). We have a chance to see some and hopefully all of these.

NIGHTS: Ambua Lodge, Tari Valley

**August 5, Day 11: Fly to Mt. Hagen; Drive to Kumul Lodge.** This morning we will take a special charter flight to Mt. Hagen, the main town 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 upon them. For a fascinating documentary account, try and see the impressive film "First Contact." From Mt. Hagen township, we will drive westwards high into the mountains to the beautifully located Kumul Lodge. It is a little rustic and can be 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, Mt. Hagen

**August 6, Day 12: 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 is a regularly provisioned bird feeder. 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. The photographic opportunities are fabulous! We have two 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 both Chestnut and Forbe's forest-rail, Black-mantled Goshawk (scarce), New

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Guinea Woodcock, Mountain Fruit-Dove, and Papuan Mountain-Pigeon. The handsome Tit and Crested berrypeckers which comprise a New Guinea endemic family are definitely possible and occasionally we have found the localized Streaked Berrypecker in the valley. 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 yodeling Belford's *Melidectes*, excitable Smoky Honeyeater and glowing Red-collared *Myzomela*.

Also present are the elusive Bronze Ground-Dove, two species of rather retiring tiger-parrots—Brehm's and the uncommon Painted; five species of lorikeet (Papuan, Plum-faced, Orange-billed, Yellow-billed and in the lower valley sometimes Goldie's); Rufous-throated Bronze-Cuckoo; Mountain Nightjar (scarce); Mountain Swiftlet; Long-tailed Shrike; Pied Chat; Island Thrush; Blue-capped Ifrita; Regent, Brown-backed and Black-headed whistlers; Rufous-naped Bellbird; Island Leaf-Warbler; Mountain Mouse-Warbler; Papuan and Large scrubwrens; Brown-breasted Gerygone; Dimorphic and Black fantails; the very handsome Black-breasted Boatbill; Canary Flycatcher; Black Pitohui; the peculiar-looking Wattled Ploughbill; Mid-mountain and Fan-tailed berrypeckers; Hooded Munia; Mountain Firetail; with luck Torrentlark; Great Woodswallow; and Lesser Melampitta. If the road into the lower valley is suitable we can explore down to the Lai River, a good site for Torrent Flycatcher, Marbled Honeyeater, Mountain Meliphaga, Yellow-breasted Bowerbird and Ornate *Melidectes*. If road access is possible, we can visit the display site of the Lesser Bird-of-Paradise.

Kumul has recently become the best place to see the extraordinary Brown Sicklebill and the gorgeous Ribbon-tailed *Astrapia*. Seeing the intensely colored orange male Crested Satinbird feeding quietly in a fruiting tree will undoubtedly grab a birder's attention and this is a good place to encounter this scarce and inconspicuous species. At night it is possible to search for Mountain Owlet-Nightjar and Papuan Boobook. Over the years we have also sighted a few mammals including Speckled *Dasyure*, Black-tailed *Antechinus*, Raffray's Bandicoot, Calaby's Pademelon, the Black-tailed Giant-Rat, Pygmy Ringtail and Silky Cuscus. Kumul Lodge is indeed a photographer's paradise—beware!

NIGHT: Kumul Lodge, Mt. Hagen

**August 7, Day 13: Morning Birding; Return to Port Moresby.** After some final birding, we will return to Mt. Hagen in time to catch our commercial flight to Port Moresby, where we will enjoy dinner and spend the night.

NIGHT: Airways Hotel, Port Moresby

**August 8, Day 14: Flight from Port Moresby to Brisbane or Cairns and Departures for Home; or Continue on West New Britain Extension.** This morning, participants continuing on the West New Britain Extension will fly to Hoskins on an early flight (see detailed itinerary below).

Participants not continuing on West New Britain have a choice between flying to Brisbane on Air Niugini Flight 3 (scheduled to depart at 6:15 a.m. and arrive at 9:25 a.m.) or Cairns on Air Niugini Flight 90 (scheduled to depart at 9:30 a.m. and arrive at 10:55 a.m.). These will enable a connection with flights to various destinations. Please inform the VENT office of your preference between Cairns and Brisbane no later than May 25, 2018 (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 9. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with these arrangements.

## **WEST NEW BRITAIN**

### **AUGUST 8-13, 2018**

**August 8, Day 1: Flight to Hoskins in West New Britain.** Today we will fly from Port Moresby and wing our way out across the sea to New Britain, the second largest island in the Southwest 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 Uniform Swiftlet. It is a one hour drive to our excellent accommodations at Walindi Plantation Resort.

Originally set up as a coconut plantation, Walindi is now one of the finest dive resorts in the Southwest Pacific. Thus in addition to some fine lowland birding, there will be, for those who wish the option, snorkeling 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 9-11, Days 2-4: 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 Melanesian Scrubfowl; New Britain Buzzard; Variable Goshawk; Oriental Hobby; Pink-legged Rail (secretive deep forest inhabitant); Knob-billed, White-breasted, and Superb fruit-doves; Red-knobbed, Finsch's, Yellowish and Black imperial-pigeons; Slender-billed and Pied cuckoo-doves; Stephan's Dove; New Britain Bronzewing (rare); Purple-bellied Lory (a spectacular parrot, its strange donkey-like braying call is often the first indication of its presence); Red-flanked Lorikeet; Buff-faced Pygmy-Parrot; Blue-eyed Cockatoo (a raucous endemic); Eclectus and Singing parrots; Green-fronted 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 Masked-Owl; White-rumped Swiftlet; Common, New Britain Dwarf, White-mantled, Sacred and Collared kingfishers; Black-backed Paradise-Kingfisher; Dollarbird and Rainbow Bee-eater; Blyth's Hornbill; Pacific Swallow; Bismarck Red-bellied Pitta (a great skulker like all members of its family); Common Cicadabird and White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike; Rusty Thicketbird (scarce); Northern Fantail and Willie Wagtail; Spangled Drongo; Black-tailed Monarch; Velvet and Shining flycatchers; New Britain Flowerpecker; Black-headed White-eye; Black and Olive-backed sunbird; New Britain Friarbird; Ashy Myzomela; the gorgeous Black-and-Carmine Myzomela; Long-tailed Myna; Metallic and Singing starling; Bismarck Crow; and the uncommon Buff-bellied (Bismarck) Munia.

A visit to a nearby cattle ranch has turned up some interesting birds on recent visits including King (Blue-breasted) Quail, White-browed Crake, Buff-banded Rail, Yellow Bittern, Golden-headed Cisticola, Australian Reed-Warbler, Papuan Grassbird and Tree Martin.

On the morning of Day 3 or 4, 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, Island Imperial-Pigeon, Mackinlay's Cuckoo-Dove, Beach Kingfisher, Island Monarch, Black-tailed (Mangrove Golden) Whistler and Sclater's Myzomela. Possible seabirds include Brown Booby; Lesser Frigatebird; and Black-naped, Bridled and Greater Crested terns. If sea conditions permit, we may be able to go out wide into Kimbe Bay and try and chum for Heinroth's Shearwater, Wedge-tailed Shearwater, the scarce Beck's Petrel, and even the occasional Wilson's Storm-Petrel. We can also visit Restoff

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and possibly Kimbe Islands (seas permitting), 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 5: Flight from Hoskins to Port Moresby.** Today after some final birding, we will fly back to Port Moresby.

NIGHT: Airways Hotel, Port Moresby

**August 13, Day 6: Flight from Port Moresby to Cairns or Brisbane; Departures for Home.** This morning participants have a choice of flying to Brisbane on Air Niugini Flight 3 (scheduled to depart at 6:15 a.m. and arrive at 9:25 a.m.) or Cairns on Air Niugini Flight 90 (scheduled to depart at 9:30 a.m. and arrive at 10:55 a.m.). These will enable a connection with flights to various destinations. Please inform the VENT office of your preference between Cairns and Brisbane no later than May 25, 2018 (see **AIR INFORMATION** section below).

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***NOTE: Papua New Guinea is very ‘special’ and one of the most exciting places on earth. However, the internal airline schedules change frequently. This itinerary is subject to change, dependent 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. It is also important to realize that security can be an issue and participants are recommended to not go birding on their own and follow the instructions of the leader.***

**TOUR SIZE:** Each section will be limited to 8 participants.

**TOUR LEADER:** Dion Hobcroft

**Dion Hobcroft** has been working for VENT since 2001. He has led many tours (more than 160) to Australia, New Guinea, New Zealand, Bhutan, Indonesia, India, China, Southwest Pacific, Philippines, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Japan, Russia, Alaska, Tanzania, Uganda, Madagascar, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and the Antarctic. In 2007 and 2013–2017 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 40 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 Australasia, listing over 1,200 species, placing him in the top echelons of the region’s 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 children, Grace (age 16) and Daniel (age 12).

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** When comparing trip costs with other tour companies, please consider that our tour fees include the airfares from Brisbane to Port Moresby and all internal air within Papua New Guinea, including charter flights that save a lot of time and avoid day-long drives through areas with some security risks. 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 fee for Papua New Guinea Highlights is **\$13,695** per person based on double occupancy and will include all meals from dinner on Day 3 through dinner on Day 13, 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 **Day 14** description above), all internal commercial and charter flights, and guide services provided by the tour leader. The tour fee does not include airfare from your home to Brisbane and return from Brisbane or Cairns, 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 Highlights is **\$1,575**. 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 West New Britain is **\$4,095** per person based on double occupancy and will include all meals from breakfast on Day 1 through dinner on Day 5, lodging as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation, the commercial flights between Port Moresby and Hoskins, and guide services provided by the tour leader. The tour fee does not include airfare between your home and Port Moresby (flights between Brisbane/Cairns and Port Moresby are included with the Papua New Guinea fee-see above), 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 West New Britain is **\$490**. 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.

**REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT:** To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The initial deposit for this tour is **\$500** per person per section. If you would like to pay your initial deposit by check, money order, or bank transfer, 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 the initial deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made with American Express, MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. The VENT registration form (available from the VENT office or by download at [www.ventbird.com](http://www.ventbird.com)) should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office.

For Papua New Guinea Highlights, 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.

**PAYMENTS:** Initial tour deposits may be made by American Express, MasterCard, Visa, check, money order, or bank transfer. All other tour payments, including second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc., must be made by check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to the tour departure date.

**CANCELLATION POLICY FOR PAPUA NEW GUINEA HIGHLIGHTS:** 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.

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Upon cancellation of the transportation or travel services, where you, the customer, are not at fault and have not cancelled in violation of the terms and conditions of any of the contract for transportation or travel services, all sums paid to VENT for services not received by you will be promptly refunded by VENT to you unless you otherwise advise VENT in writing.

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.

**CANCELLATION POLICY FOR WEST NEW BRITAIN:** 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:** **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 (800-243-3174 or [www.travelsinsured.com](http://www.travelsinsured.com)) 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.

**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. ***Please be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket***

*to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be responsible for any air ticket penalties.*

**BAGGAGE LIMITS:** All tour participants are asked to limit their baggage as closely as possible to forty pounds per person. While we recognize this is not easy (especially if you carry a spotting scope—**which we strongly 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 not be possible. VENT will likely be asked to provide the charter flight operators with each participant's body weight before we arrive and this can sometimes lift the baggage allowance possible.

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. 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 or red.** 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, warm hat and thin gloves are essential for the highlands. **Raingear and an umbrella** are also essential, including waterproof pants which are very useful in case we encounter rain while in a boat. Dress will be casual. A perennial issue is rubber boots and I recommend bringing a pair as they are often extremely useful at Kiunga where mud is abundant, especially if the river level is low. Sometimes these can be purchased in Kiunga but they generally do not have large shoe sizes or are sometimes sold out or closed up if we arrive on a weekend!

**LAUNDRY:** Excellent 24-hour laundry facilities are available at all locations where we stay. 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 uneven terrain and possibly 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 (Gore-Tex or some similar material) but strong 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.

**CURRENCY:** Papua New Guinea Kina (KA); exchange facilities are available through trade banks and at the airports in Brisbane and Cairns. Visa/MasterCard are the most widely accepted credit cards. I typically change my money at the airport in Port Moresby as it is difficult to do once we leave this location.

**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.

U.S. citizens can obtain their tourist visa upon arrival at Port Moresby at no charge (as of 2017.) A paper copy of your electronic air ticket, which will be provided by the VENT office, must be presented. It is also possible to get your visa issued in the USA by the Papua New Guinea consulate.

A **MULTIPLE ENTRY Australian tourist visa** is required for all participants. Upon your request, this visa will be issued for you electronically by the VENT office at no extra charge. You need only to send us a legible copy of the picture page of your passport at least a month prior to the tour's departure. Non-U.S. and non-Canadian citizens should check with your local Australian consulate/embassy for instructions.

**EQUIPMENT:** You should pack a pair of binoculars that are in good condition, along with a belt or day pack (good for carrying books, sunscreen, camera, etc.). Your leader will have a spotting scope; 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, 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 and typhoid immunizations are recommended 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 "Cutter" or "OFF!" in lotion form, in combination with pump-action "OFF!" are most effective. We recommend that you bring one bottle of each. Please make sure you spray away from the bus and other participants.

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 800-CDC-INFO (232-4636) or you can check their website at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://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](http://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

**INTERNET:** Wi-Fi is available at the Airways Hotel in Port Moresby and Walindi Plantation.

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** As with anywhere in the tropics, especially inside the forest, photography, especially of birds, is never easy. However, there will be some very worthwhile opportunities such as at the Pacific Adventist University ponds, along roadsides within the forest and especially at the fantastic bird feeder at Kumul Lodge.

**SUGGESTED READING:** A number of traditional booksellers and online stores list excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources that will help prepare you for this tour. We recommend [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) which has a wide selection; [www.buteobooks.com](http://www.buteobooks.com) and [www.nhbs.com](http://www.nhbs.com) which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

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 book is currently out of print, has been revised into a second edition (see below) and is 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 guide which nicely supplements the field guide also covering 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.

Dutson G. *Birds of Melanesia*. 2011. Christopher Helm, London. Covers all of the birds we will see in New Britain. Useful if you plan to explore the Solomons, Vanuatu and New Caledonia.

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.

**Gregory, P. *Birds of New Guinea (including Bismarck Archipelago and Bougainville)* Lynx Edicions 2017.** Finally a field guide that covers all of the sites we are visiting in one volume. An excellent book to get for this tour.

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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.

Paijijmans, 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).

**Pratt, T.K and Beehler, B.M. *Birds of New Guinea-Second Edition*. Princeton Field Guides 2014. The long awaited release of this completely revised and re-illustrated field guide has come.** An excellent book to get for this tour but does not cover New Britain.

**TIPPING:** Tipping (restaurant staff, porters, drivers, 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 tips are not expected and are entirely optional. Tips should be given directly to your tour leader; they should not be sent to the VENT office.

**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 October 10, 2017 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.