



Ecotourism Melanesia

Discover Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

EM8 INTREPID BIRDING EXPEDITION

FOR INDEPENDENT TRAVELLERS AND SMALL GROUPS

20 nights Crater Mountain, Lakekamu Basin, Normanby Island
with optional extension 3 nights Kikori delta

This trip is designed for bird watchers who have already been around the traps of PNG's better-known birding locations and are prepared to rough it and hoof it a little in order to explore some more remote bird habitats.

The Intrepid Birding Expedition offers three contrasting environments (four if you take the extension to Kikori) that between them host over 500 bird species:

- sub-tropical montane forest (Crater Mountain)
- riverine tropical lowlands (Lakekamu Basin)
- coastal marine (Normanby Island)
- estuarine delta (Kikori)

The expedition is fully resourced with all bird guides, equipment and catering supplied at each location. Although the package is unescorted (ie there is no company rep to travel with you throughout the tour), we have a local tour coordinator at each destination (Goroka, Wau, Alotau and Kikori) who makes all the local arrangements. The local tour coordinator leads that leg of the expedition together with a local bird guide and sufficient porters to carry all the gear. The overall program is coordinated and monitored from our Port Moresby office and we provide a mobile satellite phone that enables you to keep in touch. Equipment and supplies are packed in Port Moresby for each sector of the expedition and forwarded to our local tour coordinator at each location ahead of your arrival.

The 20 nights itinerary can be truncated to 13 nights by skipping the Normanby Island trip - this is quoted separately below. Both the 20 nights and 13 nights itineraries will connect with Air Niugini's weekly flights from Singapore and other Asian destinations, as well as daily flights from Australia. Other variations of this program such as 13 nights Crater Mountain with Normanby Island or 13 nights Lakekamu Basin with Normanby Island are possible but require customised quotations.

PACKAGE COST*: (per person, twin share, does not include airfares)

	Group of 1	Group of 2	Group of 3**	Group of 4	Group of 5-6**	Group of 7-8**	Group of 9-10**
20 nights core package	PGK 57,214	PGK 37,071	PGK 27,881	PGK 22,857	PGK 21,743	PGK 18,392	PGK 18,094
13 nts Crater/Lakekamu only	PGK 41,500	PGK 26,857	PGK 20,548	PGK 16,964	PGK 16,743	PGK 14,237	PGK 14,233**
3 nts Kikori extension	PGK 6000	PGK 4000	PGK 3000	PGK 2500	PGK 2250	PGK 2000	PGK 1750

*rates are quoted in our local currency PNG Kina (PGK). To calculate quotes in other currencies, use the exchange rates shown on our website home page www.em.com.pg

**based on twin share plus one single for odd-numbered groups

PACKAGE ADD-ONS (per person)	
Single supplement 20 nights***	PGK 2800
Single supplement 13 nights****	PGK 2000
Hotel meal package 20 nights*****	PGK 550
Hotel meal package 13 nights*****	PGK 425
Extra night Gateway Hotel) - room only (single or twin)	PGK 400 per room
Extra night hotel meal package (Dinner + Breakfast only)	PGK 125

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***Single supplement for the 20 nights core package includes guaranteed single room at Bird of Paradise Hotel (1 night and 1 day room), Pine Lodge (1 night) and Gateway Hotel (2 nights), guaranteed single tent for all camping nights and *possible* single room at village guest houses if available.

****Single supplement for the 13 nights truncated package includes guaranteed single room at Bird of Paradise Hotel (1 night and 1 day room), Pine Lodge (1 night) and Gateway Hotel (1 night), guaranteed single tent for all camping nights and *possible* single room at village guest houses if available.

*****20 nights meal package and 13 night meal package includes any and all hotel breakfasts, hotel lunches and hotel dinners marked as pay-as-you-go (PAYG) in the itinerary. Meal package breakfast includes cereal, toast, fruit, tea/coffee, juice and a hot dish (eg omelette or bacon and eggs). Meal package lunch includes two courses (soup and mains or mains and dessert) with one beer or two soft drinks. Dinner includes 3 courses (soup or starter, mains and dessert) with one beer or one glass of wine or two soft drinks. Any food or drinks over and above these inclusions are to be settled by the consumer directly with the hotel. Spirits or mixed drinks are not included in the meal package. Meals and drinks are included in the package on a use-it-or-lose it basis - there is no refund for meals, parts of meals, or drinks not consumed.

PACKAGE INCLUSIONS (20 nights core package):

- meet/greet/assist at Port Moresby airport
- information kit with local maps and tourist information
- arrival gift and souvenir PNG birding polo shirt
- all meet/greet/transfers at provincial airports
- Goroka half day tour by private vehicle with packed lunch
- 1 night twin-share premier room at Bird of Paradise Hotel, Goroka (or Pacific Gardens Hotel) - room only
- return freight-and-fares flights Goroka-Crater Mountain-Goroka
- 3 nights twin-share accommodation at Heroana village guest house, Crater Mountain (includes meals and clean drinking water)
- 2 nights single-tent bush camping, Crater Mountain (includes camp rations and all equipment and clean drinking water)
- 2 nights twin-share accommodation at Maimafu village guest house, Crater Mountain (includes meals and clean drinking water)
- daily birding excursions in the Crater Mountain area with local nature guides and porters
- shared day room and bistro lunch at Bird of Paradise Hotel (pay as you go for bar drinks)
- road transfer from Goroka to Bulolo by private vehicle
- 1 night twin share accommodation at Pine Lodge, Bulolo (includes set-menu dinner and breakfast, pay as you go for bar drinks)
- road transfer from Bulolo to Wau
- light aircraft charter flight from Wau to Tekadu
- 1 night Tekadu village guest house, Lakekamu Basin (includes meals and clean drinking water)
- 2 nights Kakoro village guest house, Lakekamu Basin (includes meals and clean drinking water)
- 1 night riverside camp, Kunimaipa River, Lakekamu Basin (includes camp rations and clean drinking water)
- daily birding excursions in the Lakekemu Basin area with local nature guides and porters
- chartered open motor boat for river travel from Kakoro to Terapo Bridge
- road transfer by private vehicle from Terapo Bridge to Port Moresby (includes packed lunch)
- 2 nights twin-share premier room at the Gateway Hotel, Port Moresby (or equivalent alternative, room only) - Day 13 and Day 20
- water transfer from Alotau to Normanby Island by chartered workboat with lunch (includes life jackets)
- welcome sing-sing at Normanby Island
- 5 nights twin-share accommodation at Sibonai village guest house, Sewa Bay, Normanby Island (includes meals and clean drinking water)
- 1 night single-tent camping in forest hut, Normanby Island (includes camp rations and all equipment)
- daily birding excursions in the Sewa Bay area with local nature guides and porters
- water transfer from Normanby Island to Alotau by chartered banana boat (includes life jackets)
- services of a local tour coordinator at each destination
- all behind-the-scenes expenses (positioning of staff and equipment, despatch of supplies, transit accommodation for support staff, return-to-base costs for chartered vehicles, boats, aircraft)
- daily tour monitoring and reconfirmations from our Port Moresby office
- mobile satellite hire for 24-hour telephone help (ph 686 8917)

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PACKAGE INCLUSIONS (3 nights Kikori extension):

- 2 nights twin-share star accommodation at Delta Lodge, Kikori, includes set-menu meals (OR 1 night Delta Lodge and 1 night Sirebi River camping with camp meals)
- 2 half-day birding excursions around Kikori and 1 full day Sirebi River excursion OR 1 half-day birding excursion around Kikori and 1.5 days Sirebi River excursion
- Sirebi River trip includes boat hire, fuel, crew, single-tent camping equipment, drinking water
- 1 night twin-share premier room at Gateway Hotel, Port Moresby (room only)

EXCLUSIONS:

international and domestic airfares

tips (not essential, but appreciated for exceptional service)

souvenirs and items of a personal nature

bar drinks and between-meal snacks

any meals marked as PAYG or otherwise not specified as being included

GENERIC ITINERARY:

DAY 1

PORT MORESBY / GOROKA

If you are arriving on an early morning international flight, Ecotourism Melanesia staff will meet you on arrival (look for somebody holding a sign with your name on it when you exit the Customs Hall, otherwise wait by the Avis Rent A Car counter and our guide will find you there).

First up our guide will help you check in for your connecting flight to Goroka and then take you up to the Airways Hotel for a tropical buffet breakfast (pay as you go), returning to the airport in time to board your flight.

09:15 **Air Niugini flight PX960** departs for Goroka.

10:25 You will be met on arrival in Goroka by our local guide - look for somebody holding a sign with your name. The guide will transfer you to your hotel for check-in. The hotel is only a two minute drive from the airport.

11:30 Make an early start to your half day tour of Goroka and district. A packed lunch is provided to eat en route. (Note: Same day connection through to Crater Mountain is not possible as Crater Mountain flights only operate early mornings due to weather patterns).

The half day tour of Goroka begins with a familiarisation drive around Goroka and surrounds, then you'll stop and visit the JK McCarthy Museum of highlands culture, and the Raun Raun drama theatre where you will be treated to a short performance of a social awareness skit on HIV/AIDS or domestic violence. Venturing further out of town you'll pay a visit to a smallholder coffee block and learn how coffee underpins the rural economy in the highlands.

Continuing northwest along the Highlands Highway and up a series of steep hairpin bends brings you to the Daulo Pass, a high-altitude biodiversity hotspot. Visible from your vehicle through the swirling mists is a magnificent variety of flowering trees and non-flowering ferns and palms, bubbling brooks and tiny waterfalls. Children sell fresh flower garlands on the roadside. A little further is the rugged high-montane terrain of the Chimbu Province featuring amazing vegetable gardens growing on impossibly steep ridges.

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Descending by the same route to the Asaro Valley you will make a stop at Asaro village, home of the famed Asaro mudmen. These people have a tradition of crafting fierce looking clay helmets worn during tribal fights in the olden days to frighten the enemy. The helmets are also worn for traditional dancing and drama demonstrating how their ancestors stalked enemy tribes. You'll be shown how the clay helmets are made and used, and you'll be treated to a performance.

18:00 Return to hotel

Overnight Bird of Paradise Hotel, Goroka (premier room, accommodation only).

NB Dinner and breakfast at this hotel are not included in the tour package (ie these meals are pay-as-you-go or PAYG - the hotel accepts major credit cards, travellers cheques and local currency). The hotel has two eateries - a bistro/pizzeria with daily specials and a formal restaurant with a la carte dining on weekdays and a full buffet on weekends. There is a good Chinese restaurant across the street. Groceries for self-catering can be purchased from the small supermarket opposite the hotel which closes at 18:30.

DAY 2

GOROKA / CRATER MOUNTAIN

05:00 Early breakfast and check out (you can store extra luggage at the hotel).
06:00 The hotel will transfer you to the MAF terminal at Goroka airport for your flight to Heroana on the eastern side of the Crater Mountain Wildlife Management Area. This is a "freight and fares" flight that does not operate to a fixed schedule but will depart about 7am weather permitting. The aircraft goes around the rural airstrips stopping to pick up and drop off passengers according to demand. Our local tour coordinator will be waiting for you at the MAF terminal together with your expedition supplies.
Flight time to Heroana is 40 minutes.

On arrival, settle in at the Heroana village guest house and then take your first birding foray into the forest.

Crater Mountain Wildlife Management Area (6°35'S 145° 05'E) is a spectacular montane environment, a series of peaks around an ancient volcanic caldera on the border of the Eastern Highlands and Chimbu provinces. The WMA is only sparsely populated - the local tribes people live in tiny hamlets on scattered ridge tops and have little impact on the huge area of lush sub-tropical rainforest in the valleys that surround them. Traditional land owners with assistance from the Research and Conservation Foundation www.rcf.org.pg have declared the Crater Mountain caldera a Wildlife Management Area, which allows for sustainable use of the forest resources by local tribes people while prohibiting commercial harvesting by outsiders. The forests of Crater Mountain are exceptionally diverse. One study identified 228 tree species in one hectare which is twice the diversity found in Queensland rainforests and only surpassed by three other tree flora diversity studies worldwide - all in South America. Locals originally hoped that declaring the WMA would attract eco-tourists to Crater Mountain but of the mere 600 outsiders who have visited in the past 20 years (yes, that's an average of only 30

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visitors per year!) most of them have been biology researchers. There are now more than 50 peer-reviewed publications based on research in the Crater Mountain WMA as well as 5 PhD theses, 5 MSc theses and 12 honours theses. The average researcher stays 4 months in the area and spends about USD10,000 on land access fees, accommodation and food at village guest houses and casual wages for local field assistants, so the locals are more than happy with their lot.

The Crater Mountain Wildlife Management Area offers splendid opportunities for bird watching. A variety of species inhabit the caldera at different altitudes from 1400-2000 metres. Biologists conducting nature research in the area and probably staying at the same guest house as you may be available to provide briefings on current research projects. Needless to say, local villagers who act as guides for our birding visits are quite experienced in effective bird observation techniques, having participated in detailed animal behaviour studies involving "hiding" in camouflaged tents for hours on end.

Of particular interest around Crater Mountain are the three species of megapodes (see below) that build huge nests up to ten metres in diameter and up to two metres high. The nest mounds are made of leaves and twigs from the forest floor that these flightless birds kick together to create what are apparently the largest structures created by any animal in the world. As the vegetation composts it releases heat which incubates the eggs - fascinating! Local people have always included megapode eggs in their diet and studies are being undertaken to determine sustainable harvesting levels and possible sale of excess eggs at markets in Goroka for cash income.

Crater Mountain WMA is located in a high-rainfall belt that stretches across the southern side of the central ranges to Tabubil. Regardless of the time of year you can expect daily downpours here so bring a novel to read because the actual dry time available for birding may be as little as half of what is programmed here.

Bird list for Crater Mountain (still being compiled - see "Birds of New Guinea"):

Wattled Brush Turkey, Brown-Collared Talegalla, New Guinea Megapode (these are three sympatric species of mainland megapode),

Overnight Heroana village guest house (includes meals - a mixture of local food and imported supplies, and clean drinking water). Sleeping bags and all other additional equipment (lamps, bed nets etc) are also supplied.

NB Crater Mountain WMA is well above the 300m ceiling for Anopheles mosquitoes that carry malaria but there are plenty of other harmless but annoying bugs attracted to your guest house lamps that bed nets are important for keeping out, for comfort's sake.

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- DAY 3** **CRATER MOUNTAIN**
Full day birding in the Heroana forest.
- Overnight Heroana village guest house (includes meals)
- DAY 4** **CRATER MOUNTAIN**
Commence a 3 day bird-a-thon around the north-east quadrant of Crater Mountain WMA from Heroana to Maimafu village on the northern side of the caldera. Your guides will lead a leisurely hike along forest trails and of course huffing and puffing up and over a few ridge lines, pointing out flora and fauna en route and occasionally bumping into local people on the way to and from their gardens.
About 6 hours walking is involved today, interspersed with birding stops, rest stops and visits with the locals. Tonight you will camp in a fairly basic bush hut used by field researchers, adjacent to a small crater lake at the bottom of the caldera. This is an avian hotspot that you will talk about for years to come so be prepared for birding bliss ... unless you get washed out by rain!
- Overnight bush hut at crater lake (includes camp-style meals)
- DAY 5** **CRATER MOUNTAIN**
Full day birding around the crater lake.
- Overnight bush hut at crater lake (includes camp-style meals)
- DAY 6** **CRATER MOUNTAIN**
Continue your bird-a-thon around the Crater Mountain caldera, arriving at Maimafu village late in the afternoon.
- Overnight Maimafu village guest house (includes meals)
- DAY 7** **CRATER MOUNTAIN**
Full day birding around Maimafu. This is also a buffer day in case your hike from the crater lake is slowed due to wet weather ☹ or extremely good birding ☺
- Overnight Maimafu village guest house (includes meals)
- DAY 8** **CRATER MOUNTAIN / GOROKA / BULOLO**
08:00 (approx) your MAF flight departs Maimafu for Goroka, arriving late morning (it may not be a direct flight if there are stops at other rural airstrips - you may even transit Heroana again).
On arrival in Goroka you will transfer to the hotel where a day room is made available for you to take a hot shower and feel human again ☺ before taking lunch in the bistro/pizzeria (included).
13:00 Commence your road transfer from Goroka to Wau/Bulolo. This is a six hour drive so it will be important to depart by 1pm at the latest in order to avoid driving at night. Depending on the size of your group you'll travel by 4WD double-cab light utility with your gear in the back, or a 15-seater mini bus. You'll be accompanied by a driver, driver's assistant, and our Goroka-based tour coordinator.

1900 Arrive Bulolo and check in at Pine Lodge, a 3 star hotel servicing mainly the employees and contractors of Harmony Gold which has the mining lease for the nearby Hidden Valley gold deposit.

Overnight Pine Lodge, Bulolo (includes dinner and breakfast)

DAY 9

BULOLO / WAU / LAKEKAMU BASIN (TEKADU)

0600 Breakfast

0700 Check out of Pine Lodge and transfer by road only 20 minutes to Wau. (Wau is a larger town than Bulolo but without the advantage of a decent hotel like Pine Lodge).

At Wau airstrip, a chartered light aircraft is waiting to fly you, your guide and your camping supplies over the Owen Stanley Range and roughly parallel with the less-than-famous Bulldog Track down to the tiny village of Tekadu at an altitude of about 800 metres. This village is located adjacent to the Avi Avi River which is the dominant water course in this area.

On arrival at Tekadu, leave your gear at the village guest house and spend the rest of the day birding along the banks of the Avi Avi river.

Overnight village guest house, Tekadu (includes local-style food and camp rations). The standard of the village guest house will be similar to Heroana and Maimafu at Crater Mountain. Local food provided includes sago, cassava, sweet potato, taro, cooked bananas, yams and a variety of greens.

The Lakekamu Basin is a 2500 square kilometre area of pristine alluvial rainforest that includes parts of the inland mountains of Morobe province and vast expanses of swamp lowland plains of the Gulf province. The Basin is a biodiversity hotspot that serves as a refuge for numerous threatened and endemic species of plants and animals. Efforts are being made to protect the area under an integrated conservation and development project similar to Crater Mountain, supported by Conservation International. The main thrust of the project is to promote sustainable socio-economic opportunities for the locals while conserving the natural resources.

Surveys by Dr Bruce Beehler (co-author of "Birds of New Guinea") have identified nearly 200 species of bird within the Lakekamu Basin and other studies have found 20 species of fish, 70 species of amphibians and reptiles, 24 mammals and 450 plant species.

Bird list for Lakekamu Basin (still being compiled - see "Birds of New Guinea"):

Great Southern Cassowary, Gurney's Eagle, Buff-faced Pygmy Parrot, Great-billed Heron, Clinging Goby, Eclectus Parrot, Greater Streaked Lory, Large Fig-Parrot, Paradise Kingfisher, Black Long-tailed Bird of Paradise,

DAY 10

LAKEKAMU BASIN (KAKORO)

Today a full day bird-a-thon from Tekadu to Kakoro, a small gold mining village. The footpath between the two villages is not well trodden because the human population is sparse in this area and there is not much foot traffic. The bird life along the foot track is mainly undisturbed. Normally a three to four

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hour walk, your guide will lead a leisurely pace with many stops for observing bird species. Other animals like wallabies and cuscus can be seen.
Allow some down-time for rainfall.

Overnight Kakoro Guest House (marginally more upmarket than Tekadu, includes meals)

DAY 11

LAKEKAMU BASIN (KAKORO)

Full day birding around Kakoro. Local guides know nesting spots that they will lead you to.

Allow some down-time for rainfall.

Overnight Kakoro Guest House (marginally more upmarket than Tekadu, includes meals)

DAY 12

LAKEKAMU BASIN (KUNIMAIPA RIVER)

Today, board a local style "banana boat" (a large fibreglass dinghy with an outboard motor) and commence the river journey downstream, with one overnight camp en route to study river birds. From Kakoro, your boat follows the Kunimaipa River downstream to its confluence with the Tiveri River. The combined Tiveri and Kunimaipa Rivers form the Lakekamu River down to the sea. Today after only 2 hours boating you'll disembark at the Kurai Hills, a ridge of low hills (1000m) that run parallel to the Kunimaipa River just before its junction with the Tiveri River. The Kurai Hills are a contrast to the rest of the surrounding terrain which is flat floodplains. Here you will spend the rest of the day bird watching in two distinct habitats: riverine and wooded hills. The area is uninhabited and pristine.

Overnight riverside camp, Kunimaipa River.

DAY 13

LAKEKAMU BASIN / PORT MORESBY

After early morning birding, board your banana boat again for a fairly long run (5 hours) downstream to the Port Moresby-Malalaua highway at Terapo Bridge, arriving mid afternoon. Disembark from your banana boat, farewell your Lakekamu Basin guides and board a waiting vehicle for the drive to Port Moresby (3 hours).

Overnight Gateway Hotel, Port Moresby (room only)

DAY 14

PORT MORESBY / ALOTAU / NORMANBY ISLAND

If truncating the tour to 13 nights, today you will fly out of Port Moresby to your international destination. If you are booked on an afternoon departure, a morning bird watching trip to Variarata National Park (see Day 21) or Goldie River (see Day 24) can be arranged.

0430 Transfer on the hotel shuttle bus to the domestic terminal.

0600 **Air Niugini flight PX154** departs for Alotau.

0700 Arrive at Alotau's Gurney Airport and you are met by our local tour coordinator. Transfer by road to Alotau town. You'll be shown around town - the fresh food market is a great stop - and end up at the small vessels jetty where a "workboat" is fuelled up and waiting for you. A workboat is a small passcarga vessel, locally hand made from local timbers, and usually about 6 to

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10 metres in length. The boat has been chartered to take you across to Sewa Bay on Normanby Island, which is a sea bird hotspot. Packed lunch is provided on board. During the 3 hour trip the crew will troll a line out the back and you may even end up having some fresh mackerel as well.

1400 Arrive Sewa Bay - you will be treated to a traditional sing-sing welcome and have time to settle in at Sibonai village guest house before taking an afternoon familiarisation walk around the area to get your bearings.

Overnight Sibonai Guest House, Sewa Bay, Normanby Island (includes meals)

Normanby Island, part of the D'Entrecasteaux group, is the closest large island to Alotau. Sewa Bay, on the western coast of Normanby, is a natural harbour with diverse marine and terrestrial bird species. Sibonai village in Sewa Bay has a basic guest for visitors and bird watching excursions are based here. Local guides have received some training in species identification from visiting bird experts.

Bird list for Normanby Island (compiled by Thane Pratt, co-author of Birds of New Guinea, in 2003):

Great Frigatebird, Lesser Frigatebird, Brown Booby, Great-billed Heron, Great Egret, Eastern Reef-Egret, Black Bittern, Osprey, Pacific Baza, Black Kite, Brahminy Kite, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Grey Goshawk, Peregrine Falcon, Common Scrubfowl, Bush-hen, Beach Stone-curlew, Lesser Golden Plover, Mongolian Plover, Large Sand-Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Whimbrel, Grey-tailed Tattler, Common Sandpiper, Common Tern, Black-naped Tern, Sooty Tern, Bridled Tern, Crested Tern, Brown Noddy, Black Noddy, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Emerald Ground-Dove, Stephan's Ground-Dove, Nicobar Pigeon, Wompoo Fruit-Dove, Pink-spotted Fruit-Dove, Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove, Superb Fruit-Dove, Claret-breasted Fruit-Dove, Grey Imperial Pigeon, Pinon Imperial Pigeon, Zoe Imperial Pigeon, Pied Imperial Pigeon, Western Black-capped Lory, Sulfur-crested Cockatoo, Double-eyed Fig-parrot, Red-cheeked Parrot, Eclectus Parrot, Brush Cuckoo, Malay Bronze-Cuckoo, Dwarf Koel, Channel-billed Cuckoo, Pheasant Coucal, Papuan Bookook, Marbled Frogmouth, Large-tailed Nightjar, Uniform Swiftlet, Glossy Swiftlet, Collared Kingfisher, Sacred Kingfisher, Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Mountain Kingfisher, Dwarf Kingfisher, Little Kingfisher, Azure Kingfisher, Rainbow Bee-eater, Dollarbird, Blyth's Hornbill, Pacific Swallow, Red-rumped Swallow, Grey-headed Cuckoo-shrike, Varied Triller, Golden-headed Cisticola, Large-billed Gerygone, Rufous Fantail, Northern Fantail, Willie Wagtail, Black-faced Monarch, Spot-winged Monarch, Golden Monarch, Leaden Flycatcher, Satin Flycatcher, Shining Flycatcher, Mangrove Golden Whistler, Grey Whistler, Little Shrike-thrush, Papuan Berrypecker, Black Sunbird, Yellow-bellied Sunbird, Black-fronted White-eye, Louisiades White-eye, Dwarf Honeyeater, Pygmy Honeyeater, Papuan Black Myzomela, Puff-backed Meliphaga, Varied Honeyeater, Tawny-Breasted Honeyeater, Helmeted Friarbird, Brown-backed Honeyeater, Singing Starling, Metallic Starling, Spangled Drongo, White-breasted Wood-swallow, Great Wood-swallow, Hooded

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another 30 minutes along sealed feeder road. The park and the surrounding country is set on a region of uplifted igneous intrusive rock complexes which rises to an elevation of 800-1000m above sea-level, and is like a natural border marking where the dry savannah scrublands of coastal Port Moresby end, and the mid-montane forests and grasslands of the Sogeri plateau begin. Birdlife at Variarata is prolific. There is a mixture of upland as well as lowland species. There are side tracks that lead to particular spots where certain types of birds can be observed. The splendid Raggiana birds of paradise can be observed performing their conspicuous courtship dance from one of these side-tracks.

Bird list for Variarata National Park:

Beautiful Fruit Dove, Black Kite, Brahminy Kite, Whistling Kite, Variable Goshawk, New Guinea Eagle, Gurney's Eagle, Brown Falcon, Peregrine Falcon, Chestnut Forest Rail, Forbes's Forest Rail, Buff Banded Rail, Japanese Snipe, Great Cuckoo Dove, Brown Cuckoo Dove, Bar Tailed Cuckoo Dove, Stephen's Dove, New Guinea Bronzewing, Papuan Lorikeet, Whiskered Lorikeet, Yellow Billed Lorikeet, Brehm's Tiger Parrot, Papuan Boobook, Sooty Owl, Mountain Night Jar, Archbold's Owlet Night Jar, Mountain Owlet Night Jar, Glossy Swiftlet, Blue Winged Kookaburra, Marbled Frogmouth, Brown Headed Paradise Kingfisher, Lemon Bellied Flycatcher, Magnificent Bird of Paradise, Raggiana Bird of Paradise, Alpine Pipit, Spotted Jewel Bubbler, Painted Quail Thrush, Logrunner, Blue Capped Ifrita, White Shouldered Fairy Wren, Orange Crowned Fairy Wren, Mountain Mouse Warbler, Papuan Scrub Wren, Large Scrub Wren, New Guinea Thornbill, Brown Breasted Gerygone, Dimorphic Fantail, Spangled Drongo, Friendly Fantail, Black Monarch, Black Breasted Boatbill, Canary Flycatcher, Mountain Robin, Greater Ground Robin, White Faced Robin, Regent Whistler, Lorentz's Whistler, Rufous Naped Whistler, Crested Pitohui, Belford's Honeyeater, Sooty Honeyeater, Short Bearded Honeyeater, Orange Checked Honeyeater, Streaked Berrypecker, Tit Berrypecker, Hooded Mannikin, Metallic Starling, Mountain Firetail, Crested Bird of Paradise.

Return to the city in time to check in for your international flight.

OR

EXTEND TO KIKORI DELTA

DAY 21

PORT MORESBY / KIKORI

Morning flight Port Moresby to Kikori via Kerema (departure time varies with day of the week).

On arrival in Kikori, staff from Delta Lodge will meet you and walk with you a short distance to the lodge. Have a late breakfast or lunch at the lodge (included).

Kikori is an emerging Ecotourism destination unique in Papua New Guinea. In size, the Kikori River delta is second only to the Fly River delta and consists of a myriad of small mud, grass and

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mangrove islands separated by slow-moving fingers of outflow from the Kikori River, which has its origins in the Southern Highlands. The delta is a supercharged nursery for all manner of fish, crabs, birds and crocodiles. Fishing in quiet backwaters for barramundi, mangrove jack and black bass is superb here and edible mud crabs abound. With so much fish available in the shallow water, there is a huge bird population including herons, cranes, hornbills, parrots, cassowaries, cockatoos and honeyeaters.

Kikori is a high rainfall area year-round and you can expect at least an hour or two of heavy rain every day here, usually during the afternoons. Despite all efforts to stay dry using raincoats, umbrellas and tarpaulins in your open motor boat, you are likely to get very wet at some stage during your visit. Be prepared! However the weather is tropical warm so you won't feel cold and on arrival back at the lodge you can change into a set of dry clothes and dry your wet things under the ceiling fan in your room. Mosquitoes are a problem at night around Kikori so there will not be any evening excursions. Bring insect repellent.

After lunch you'll be taken on an exploratory nature tour of the Kikori delta area by motor boat, going ashore in several places to take guided walks to view bird life in a variety of terrestrial habitats, including freshwater river, saline delta, tidal mudflats, swamp, mangroves and alluvial rainforest.

Overnight Delta Lodge, Kikori (includes all meals)

DAY 22

KIKORI (SIREBI RIVER SAFARI)

This excursion can be taken as a day trip or an overnight camping trip. If you make it a day trip your boat will turn back at midday and commence the faster journey downstream back to Kikori, arriving (maybe wet!) in the late afternoon.

If you would like to make it an overnight trip your guide can take you much further upstream, away from civilisation and into the most pristine areas. If overnighing you will each sleep in your own one-man tent erected inside a village hut. The tent is impervious to insects. Inflatable mattress, sleeping bag and other basic camping equipment are supplied. Catering is organised by Delta Lodge, but there will be an opportunity to try village foods such as sago, fruit and dried fish. Two or three guides from Delta Lodge will accompany you and overnight with you in the village.

Overnight Delta Lodge OR Sirebi River camp. Includes set-menu or camp-style meals.

The Sirebi River is a biodiversity hotspot in a remote area with very few isolated villages. Your open motor dinghy will take you up the Kikori River for about one hour to Waira village which is located at the confluence of the Kikori and Sirebi rivers. Turning off to the right into the Sirebi River your motor boat will take you far upstream to a point where lowland savannah gives way to verdant rainforest which lines the high river banks. Looking up

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from your vantage point in the middle of the river you are able to observe a rich kaleidoscope of flora and fauna that is rarely disturbed by the presence of humans, guaranteed to be unlike anything you have never seen before. The Sirebi River is one of the last untouched river systems in Papua New Guinea and Ecotourism Melanesia is the only tour company to have made any moves to bring visitors into the area.

DAY 23

KIKORI / PORT MORESBY

0600 Break camp and commence return journey down the Sirebi River. (If you have overnighted at Delta Lodge, a half day birding excursion will be provided instead).

1100 Arrive back at Delta Lodge in time for lunch.

Afternoon flight from Kikori to Port Moresby via Kerema (departure time varies with day of the week).

On arrival in Port Moresby, transfer to your hotel.

Overnight Gateway Hotel, Port Moresby (room only)

DAY 24

PORT MORESBY / FLY OUT

0400 Half day birding excursion with local bird guide to Goldie River or Brown River. Includes packed breakfast and picnic lunch with optional stops at the Bomana War Cemetery, Schwimmer Drome war relics display and the botanical gardens bird aviary if time allows before your flight. Adjacent to the botanical gardens is the University bookshop which has a rare books section with second-hand titles on PNG flora and fauna that you may wish to stop and browse.

Return to the airport in time to check in for your international flight.

TRIP NOTES:

1. All birding excursions and components thereof (meals, sightseeing or other programmed activities) form an integral part of this package on a use-it-or-lose-it basis. There is no part refund available for excursions, meals or activities not availed of by whim. For example if you choose to stop at a hotel or restaurant for a pay-as-you-go-lunch instead of consuming a picnic lunch provided or proposed to be provided as part of this package, no refund for the un-used picnic lunch is available. Likewise if you feel tired and decide to skip one of the programmed birding excursions, no reimbursement for the un-used trip is available.
2. Needless to say we cannot control the weather. If any programmed birding excursion is cancelled by either you or our guide for safety or comfort reasons in view of inclement weather we are unable to provide any refund for this un-used component of the tour because in most cases we are required to pre-pay for vehicle hire, guide time and catering and we are unable to obtain refunds on these services if un-used. If you tour during the wet season between November and April you have a higher probability of at least one excursion being cancelled due to rain. However during the wet season most rain falls at night.
3. The 20 nights itinerary can be truncated to 13 nights by skipping the Normanby Island trip - this is quoted separately below. Both the 20 nights and 13 nights itineraries will connect with Air Niugini's weekly flights from Singapore and other Asian destinations, as well as daily flights from Australia. Other variations of this program such as 13 nights Crater Mountain with Normanby Island or 13 nights Lakekamu Basin with Normanby Island are possible but require customised quotations.
4. The Kikori extension can also be extended with extra nights. The Sirebi River excursion would allow better time for bird watching if an extra night could be added at the river camp.

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