



Ecotourism Melanesia

Discover Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

EM31 MAINLAND NEW GUINEA BIRDWATCHING TOUR

FOR INDEPENDENT TRAVELLERS AND SMALL GROUPS

20 nights Kiunga, Tabubil, Mt Hagen, Minj, Goroka, Madang, Port Moresby with optional extension 3 nights Kikori delta

This is the "grand tour" of accessible bird watching sites on the eastern half of mainland New Guinea (ie in Papua New Guinea territory).

The tour is designed for serious ornithologists who are happy to stay in some lower standard hotels and lodges in order to be closer to the action. On this tour, all birding sites are within close proximity of the accommodation or vehicle drop-off point at each location, and no arduous jungle trekking is involved.

The core package is 20 nights but can be shortened by skipping one or more stops as long as domestic flights connect and the clockwise direction of movement is maintained. For example, you could skip Tabubil and fly direct from Kiunga to Mt Hagen, skip Minj and drive direct from Mt Hagen to Goroka, or skip Madang and fly direct from Goroka to Port Moresby.

If you have time up your sleeve, extra nights can be taken at any stop, and the 3 nights extension to Kikori delta in the Gulf Province is highly recommended. Kikori is an emerging birding destination not yet over-run by other bird watchers and has a wide variety of estuarine species not observable elsewhere on this tour.

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 54,929	PGK 32,357	PGK 25,048**	PGK 20,179**	PGK 18,843**	PGK 15,857**	PGK 14,159**
3 nts Kikori extension	PGK 6000	PGK 4000	PGK 3000	PGK 2500	PGK 2250	PGK 2000	PGK 1750
Extra night at any stop with extra full day birding trip	PGK 2500	PGK 1850	PGK 1450	PGK 1100	PGK 1000	PGK 900	PGK 800

*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 5000
Single supplement extra night	PGK 250
Hotel meal package 20 nights***	PGK 1350
Hotel meal package extra night (dinner only)	PGK 75
Extra night Port Moresby (best available 3 or 4 star accommodation at time of booking) - room only	PGK 250 pp twin share PGK 450 pp single share

***20 nights meal package includes 3 hotel breakfasts, 9 hotel lunches and 10 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.

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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
- 3 nights 1.5 star accommodation at Ekame Wildlife Lodge, Kiunga includes river transfers, camp-style meals, drinking water, unlimited fresh fruit, birding excursions,
- 1 night 2.5 star accommodation at Kiunga Guest House, room only
- 2 nights 2.5 star accommodation at the Hotel Cloudlands in Tabubil, room only
- 3 nights 1.5 or 2 star forest lodge accommodation in Mt Hagen area (Kumul Lodge, Magic Mountain Eco-Hideaway or Kuta Ridge Forest Lodge, as available), includes set-menu dinners, drinking water, unlimited fresh fruit
- 1 night 2 star accommodation at Minj Hotel, room only
- 1 night 3.5 star accommodation at Bird of Paradise Hotel, Goroka, room only
- 1 night 1.5 star accommodation at Kaveve Forest Lodge, Goroka, including set-menu meals, drinking water, unlimited fresh fruit, birding excursions
- 3 nights 3 star accommodation at the Jais Aben Beach Resort in Madang, room only
- 3 nights 1.5 star accommodation at Keki Lodge, including road transfers, set-menu meals, drinking water, unlimited fresh fruit, birding excursions
- 2 nights 4 star accommodation at the Gateway Hotel, Port Moresby, room only (or equivalent alternative)
- daily birding excursions and touring as specified in itinerary, with trained nature guide assisted by driver and assistant guides as required, driving a vehicle appropriate to the terrain. Catering for morning excursions includes packed breakfast, bottled water and fruit. Catering for full day excursions includes packed breakfast and packed or catered lunch as stated in itinerary plus bottled water, fresh fruit. Catering for afternoon excursions includes bottled water, fruit, tea/coffee flask and cookies, muffins or sandwiches and a bottle of wine if you are good ☺. A first aid kit and some wet weather gear is carried in the tour vehicle (rain ponchos, umbrellas, tarpaulins) but bring your own binoculars and bird books.
- Village tour, traditional style lunch and sing-sing performance at Mt Hagen and Madang
- Visit to Asaro Mudmen near Goroka
- Daily tour monitoring and reconfirmations from our Port Moresby office
- 24-hour telephone help (ph 686 8917)

NB Star ratings given are only an approximate guide to the standard of accommodation in each location, on a scale of 1 to 5. There is no official rating system for hotels in Papua New Guinea at this time.

PACKAGE INCLUSIONS (3 nights Kikori extension):

- 2 nights 2.5 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, camping equipment, drinking water

EXCLUSIONS:

international airfares
tips (not essential, but appreciated for exceptional service)
souvenirs and items of a personal nature
bar drinks and between-meal snacks
any meals not specified as being included
domestic flights

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GENERIC ITINERARY:

DAY 1

PORT MORESBY / KIUNGA

If you are arriving on an early morning international flight, Ecotourism Melanesia staff will meet you on arrival and take you for breakfast at the Airways Hotel (pay-as-you-go or PAYG) then assist you to check in for your morning flight to Kiunga (Airlines PNG). If you have already arrived in Port Moresby the day before, our staff will arrange to meet you at your hotel and transfer you to the airport to check in.

On arrival at Kiunga airport you will be met at the small terminal by our local birding guide (details supplied upon confirmation of your tour) and transferred to the Kiunga Guest House for lunch (PAYG) and then to the Kiunga town wharf alongside the Fly River. Here you will board a motorised dinghy and ride an hour up the Fly River before turning up the Elevala River, a tributary of the Fly, and journey another hour before arriving at Ekame Wildlife Lodge.

Ekame Wildlife Lodge is located some 50 kilometres east of Kiunga and the river journey takes two hours. The Lodge was specially built to accommodate nature lovers and is made of bush materials in local style with comfortable bedding and out-back bathroom. Facilities are very basic (no electricity), but you will not have time to notice when there is so much wildlife to be seen. However it does rain frequently here so bring a novel to read during the afternoon downpours.

The Lodge is located in a biodiversity hotspot where dozens of plant, bird and other animal species can be viewed during each foray into surrounding habitats including the river, tundra, savannah, swamp and rainforest. There are established bird watching trails passing by known species of interest, and also raised viewing platforms where you can sit tight and observe ground birds. You can also cruise up and down the nearby Ketu River in a canoe or boat and see riverbank life including aquatic birds and larger animals like wallabies and cassowaries that come down to drink. Nocturnal wildlife viewing will be possible if weather permits - bring your own torch/flashlight and batteries.

Bird list for Ekame Wildlife Lodge (incomplete):

Azure Kingfisher, Blackberry Pecker, Black-billed Brush-Turkey, Black-sided Robin, Blue-breasted Pitta, Blue-jewel Babbler, Broad-billed Fairy-wren, Common Paradise Kingfisher, Crested Pitohui, Crinkle-collared Manucode, Curl Crested Manucode, Dwarf Honeyeater, Dwarf Kingfisher, Emperor Fairy-wren, Flame Bower Bird, Forest Bittern, Frilled Monarch, Graceful Meliphaga, Greater Bird of Paradise, Grey-headed Goshawk, Hooded Pitta, Hook-billed Kingfisher, King Bird of Paradise, Little Kingfisher, Little Paradise Kingfisher, Little-shrike Thrush, Long-billed Honeyeater, Magnificent Riffle Bird of Paradise, New Guinea Flightless Rail, New Guinea Thornbill, Puff-backed Meliphaga, Raggiana Bird of Paradise, Rufous Babbler, Rufous-back Fantail, Rufous-billed Kookaburra, Rusty Mouse-warbler, Rusty Pitohui, Sacred Kingfisher, Shining Flycatcher, Sooty-thicket Fantail, Southern Cassowary, Southern Crowned Pigeon, Spangled Drongo, Spot-winged Monarch, Stephan's Ground-dove, Tawny-breasted Honeyeater, Trumpet Manucode, Twelve Wired Bird of Paradise, Vulturine Parrot, White

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*Bellied Potohui, Yellow-bellied Gerygone, Yellow-billed Longbill,
Yellow-capped Pygmy Parrot*

Overnight Ekame Wildlife Lodge (includes camp-style meals). Bring your own favourite sleeping bag or Ecotourism Melanesia can lend you one at no charge.

DAY 2

KIUNGA
Birding at Ekame Wildlife Lodge

DAY 3

KIUNGA
Birding at Ekame Wildlife Lodge

DAY 4

EKAME / KIUNGA
Morning boat transfer from Ekame to Kiunga.
1200 Lunch at Kiunga Guest House (pay-as-you-go)
1300 Afternoon birding in the Kiunga area, including the well known KM17 site.
Includes vehicle, bird guide and afternoon tea.

Overnight Kiunga Guest House (motel-style ensuite accommodation, room only, pay-as-you-go for meals, cash or card).

*Bird list for Kiunga and Tabubil areas (incomplete):
Intermediate Egret, Long-tailed Buzzard, Brahminy Kite, Whistling Kite, Bat Hawk, Great Cuckoo Dove, Victoria's Crowned Pigeon, Blue Eyed Cockatoo, Southern Cassowary, Black Billed Brush Turkey, Common Scrub Fowl, Darter, Little Black Cormorant, Black Bittern, Forest Bittern, Rufous Night Heron, Striated Heron, Cattle Egret, Little Egret, Great Billed Heron, Green Pygmy Goose, Wandering Whistling Duck, Brown Goshawk, Coloured Sparrow Hawk, Grey Heated Goshawk, Grey Goshawk, Black Winged Kite, Australian Kestrel, Crested Hawk, Long tailed Buzzard, Doria's Hawk, Little Eagle, Gurney's Eagle, White Billed Sea Eagle, New Guinea Harpy Eagle, Oriental Hobby, Red Necked Rail, Bare Eyed Rail, New Guinea Flightless Rail, Bush hen, Common Sandpiper, Common Tern, New Guinea Bronzewing, Thick Billed Ground Pigeon, Emerald Ground Dove, Stephan's Ground Dove, Bar shouldered Dove, Southern Crowned Pigeon, Pheasant Pigeon, Cinnamon Ground Dove, White Bibbed Ground Dove, Great Cuckoo Dove, Black Billed Cuckoo Dove, Brown Cuckoo Dove, Beautiful Fruit Dove, Ornate Fruit Dove, Wompoo Fruit Dove, Pink-spotted Fruit Dove, Orange Bellied Fruit Dove, Superb Fruit Dove, Dwarf Fruit Dove, Zoe Imperial Pigeon, Purple Tailed Imperial Pigeon, Papua Mountain Pigeon, Collard Imperial Pigeon, White Throated Pigeon, Red Flanked Lorikeet, Western Black Capped Lory, Dusky Lory, Rainbow Lorikeet, Papuan King Parrot, Eclectus Parrot, Greater Streaked Lorry, Red Cheeked Parrot, Vulturine Parrot, Sulphur-crested cockatoo, Palm Cockatoo, Yellow-capped Pygmy Parrot, Large Fig Parrot, Double-eyed Fig Parrot, White-caned Bronze Cuckoo, Malay Bronzed Cuckoo, Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo, Brush Cuckoo, Long-billed Cuckoo, Dwarf Koel, Common Koel, Oriental Cuckoo, White Crown Koel, Channe-billed Cuckoo, Lesser Black Coucal, Greater*

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Black Coucal, Little Paradise Kingfisher, Common Paradise Kingfisher.

DAY 5

KIUNGA / TABUBIL

0400 Depart on a full day birding trip along the Kiunga-Tabubil road. Beginning with the sunrise chorus at KM17, your vehicle will make multiple stops at birding sites en route from Kiunga to Tabubil, turning the usual three hour drive into a full day excursion, arriving late afternoon. The road is sealed in part, but mainly unsealed, and carries a slow but steady stream of heavy vehicle traffic to and from the Ok Tedi mine near Tabubil. Amazingly, some of PNG's best birding spots are located only five minutes walk from the roadside. Birds are so resilient, aren't they? Catering today includes packed breakfast, picnic lunch and plenty of cold drinks.

Overnight Hotel Cloudlands, Tabubil (room only - pay as you go for meals and drinks, cash or card)

Hotel Cloudlands is a 2.5 star hotel located within Tabubil township, adjacent to the bowls club and recreation centre. Rooms are both cooled and heated to accommodate the daily fluctuations in temperature. The restaurant serves a variety of western, Asian and PNG-style cuisine.

Tabubil is a neat and tidy mining town where everything runs like clockwork due to the pervasive influence of Ok Tedi Mining Limited (OTML), the company that employs most of the wage earners in the town and owns most of the houses and office buildings. The company runs the airport, maintains the roads and coordinates town services including electricity, water and garbage collection. Without OTML, Tabubil would be a ghost town.

The open cut mine itself is located on Mt Fubilan about an hour's drive (steep climb) to the north west of Tabubil, at such a high altitude of 6600 metres that it is usually covered in cloud and cannot be seen from the town.

As the copper mine has a limited life span, OTML is very involved in helping local people to develop alternative economic activities towards the goal of sustaining the community after the closure of the mine. Apart from the obvious huge open pit created by the decapping of Mt Fubilan, the rest of the Star Mountains area is largely virgin forest and populations of native birds thrive in the area, making bird watching and other nature-based activities ideal attractions for tourists. Local nature guides have been assisted by OTML to receive training in bird guiding and the best birding spots have been surveyed.

Tabubil, Mt Hagen and other parts of the highlands are high rainfall areas year-round but November to April are the wettest months. However, rain usually falls in the late afternoons and evenings and should not excessively curtail birding excursions but be prepared for at least one outing to be modified or abandoned at short notice due to torrential rain.

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DAY 6

TABUBIL

0400 Depart for an early morning birding excursion around Tabubil with packed breakfast.

0900 Return to hotel for rest. It often rains at this time of the day and is a good time to lie low.

1300 After lunch (PAYG), a full afternoon birding excursion further afield into the Star Mountains (highland species) OR Ok Tedi River Valley (lowland species).

Overnight Hotel Cloudlands, Tabubil (room only - pay as you go for meals and drinks, cash or card)

DAY 7

TABUBIL / MT HAGEN

0400 Depart for an early morning birding excursion around Tabubil with packed breakfast, then transfer to the airport in time for your late morning flight from Tabubil to Mt Hagen (exact flight times vary with the day of the week).

Our local guide will meet you on arrival and transfer you to the Highlander Hotel for lunch (PAYG) before continuing on to your forest accommodation.

Depending on availability at time of booking, you will be booked in at Kumul Lodge, Magic Mountain Eco-Hideaway or Kuta Ridge Forest Lodge, and then commence your afternoon birding excursion with local bird guide around the Mt Hagen area.

Overnight best available forest lodge, Mt Hagen (minimum 1.5 star ensuite bungalow, includes set-menu dinner)

Bird list for Mt Hagen (still being compiled):

Long-tailed Buzzard, Brahminy Kite, Whistling Kite, Papuan Harrier, Wattled Bush Turkey, Pheasant Pigeon (Baiyer River), Victoria's Crowned Pigeon (Baiyer River), Dusky Lony, Goldie's Lorikeet (Baiyer River)

DAY 8

MT HAGEN

0400 Depart on a full day birding excursion around Mt Hagen with packed breakfast. Our local bird guide will take you to one or more birding spots around Kumul Lodge, Magic Mountain, Baiyer River, Kuta Ridge or other locations depending on species of interest to you.

Mid-morning, transfer to a local village for a village tour, colourful sing-sing performance and traditional style lunch, then resume birding in the afternoon until sundown.

Overnight best available forest lodge, Mt Hagen (minimum 1.5 star ensuite bungalow, includes set-menu dinner)

DAY 9

MT HAGEN

0400 Depart on a second full day birding excursion around Mt Hagen with packed breakfast and picnic lunch. Birding locations can be negotiated with your guide.

Overnight best available forest lodge, Mt Hagen (minimum 1.5 star ensuite bungalow, includes set-menu dinner)

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DAY 10

MT HAGEN / MINJ

0400 Early morning birding foray with packed breakfast followed by road transfer from Mt Hagen to Minj (2 hours) and check in at Minj Hotel (formerly Tribal Tops Inn) in time for lunch (PAYG).

1300 Afternoon birding trip to the nearby Kubor Range. This will not involve extensive hiking but rather short walks into different habitats with your guides. Nesting sites of bird of paradise species and possibly bower birds will be observed. Birding continues until sundown.

Overnight Minj Hotel (2 star ensuite budget motel-style accommodation, room only)

The Minj Hotel is a small licensed hotel with 12 rooms built in the style of native bungalows. Minj itself is a small town situated 70km from Mt Hagen and 55 km from Kundiawa. Surrounded by the Bismarck Range to the north and the Kubor Range to the south, Minj lies at an altitude of 1700 metres and enjoys mainly sunny days with cool crisp nights.

Bird list for Minj: still being compiled

DAY 11

MINJ / GOROKA

0400 Early morning birding foray with packed breakfast followed by road transfer from Minj to Goroka (6 hours) via the Highlands Highway, through the scenic Chimbu province.

1200 A stop will be made at the Kundiawa Hotel for lunch (PAYG).

1600 Just before arriving in Goroka town you will stop at Asaro village to pay a visit to the famous Asaro Mudmen. These people have a tradition of crafting fierce looking clay helmets worn during tribal fights in the old days to frighten the enemy. You'll be shown how the clay helmets are made and worn, and you'll be treated to a dance and drama performance demonstrating how their ancestors stalked enemy tribes.

1730 On arrival in Goroka, your driver will take you for a short turn around places of interest before checking you in at your hotel.

Overnight Bird of Paradise Hotel, Goroka (room only, PAYG for meals).

This 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 12

GOROKA

Enjoy a lie-in this morning, and have a leisurely breakfast at the hotel (PAYG).

1000 Check out of the hotel and transfer one hour out of town to Kaveve Forest Lodge in time for lunch (included).

Spend the rest of the day birding around this secluded forest hideaway. At night, lie in bed and listen to the sounds of the forest.

Overnight Kaveve Forest Lodge, Goroka (twin-share rooms with common

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facilities - includes set-menu lunch, dinner and breakfast).

Bird list for Kaveve Forest Lodge: still being compiled.

DAY 13

GOROKA / MADANG

0400 Early morning birding around Kaveve Forest Lodge.

0700 Breakfast at the lodge and check out. Today you will transfer by road to Madang. The drive normally takes 5 hours but you will stop at some birding sites en route so expect to arrive in Madang late afternoon. A picnic lunch is provided en route, and it is also possible to buy fresh fruit and roasted vegetables (corn, sweet potato etc) from roadside stalls.

On arrival in Madang, your driver will take you for a short turn around the town before heading 20 minutes out of town to your accommodation.

Overnight Jais Aben Beach Resort, Madang (deluxe bungalow, room only - pay as you go for meals and drinks)

DAY 14

MADANG (JAIS ABEN RESORT)

0400 Depart with packed breakfast for a half day birding excursion to the Kau Wildlife Management Area.

1200 Return to Jais Aben Resort for lunch (PAYG)

In the afternoon, enjoy the beach and water activities at the resort and informal bird watching (without guide) in the mangroves and coconut plantation around the resort. Parrots are plentiful in the plantation.

Overnight Jais Aben Beach Resort, Madang (deluxe bungalow, room only - pay as you go for meals and drinks)

Bird list for Madang (still being compiled):

Intermediate Egret, Long-tailed Buzzard, Brahminy Kite, Whistling Kite, Red Legged Brush Turkey, Great Cuckoo Dove, Victoria's Crowned Pigeon, Peaceful Dove, Zoe Imperial Pigeon, Palm Cockatoo, Blue Eyed Cockatoo, Biak Rd Lory

DAY 15

MADANG (JAIS ABEN RESORT)

Another lie-in this morning and enjoy breakfast by the pool or on the beach (PAYG).

0900 Depart by boat for a morning of observing sea birds in the mangroves and rocky areas along the shore adjacent to the resort.

1300 Return to the resort for lunch (PAYG)

1500 Travel by small boat to the tiny offshore islands in Madang harbour to view sea bird nesting sites.

1800 Return to resort.

Overnight Jais Aben Beach Resort, Madang (deluxe bungalow, room only - pay as you go for meals and drinks)

DAY 16

MADANG (KEKI LODGE)

0400 Depart on a full day birding excursion along the Madang North Coast Road

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- a selection of locations including Alexishafen, Wasab River and Udisis/Barem forest. Includes packed breakfast.

1100 Arrive at Udisis village for traditional-style lunch and performance by the Wadug Theatre Group.

The Wadug Theater Group consists of village youth who have researched the very old traditions of their area and produced a dance and drama routine that showcases the old culture. Their costumes are 100% traditional with not a skerrick of raffia or cloth, and apart from custom dancing they also role-play traditional activities such as courtship behaviour, bride price payment and wedding ceremony, and the initiation of boys into manhood. You'll learn about the tribal traditions and also have a lot of laughs as the youth portray the funny side of their ancestors' ways.

1400 Continue along the North Coast and turn inland towards Keki, arriving
1600 Arrive Keki in time for some late afternoon bird watching.

Overnight Keki Lodge (1 star basic accommodation with outdoor bathroom, includes set-menu meals.)

Bird list for Keki Lodge (still being compiled - the lodge owner claims about 80 species have been noted):

Fire-mane Bowerbird, Black Cassowary, Lesser Bird of Paradise, Hornbill, Palm Cockatoo, Kingfisher, King Bird of Paradise, Common Paradise Kingfisher, Dwarf Kingfisher, Dusky Lory, Black Lory, Red-cheeked Parrot, Common Koel, Long-tailed Buzzard, Black Kite, Brahminy Kite, Collared Sparrowhawk, Wompoo Fruit Dove, Beautiful Fruit Dove, Orange Bellied Fruit Dove, Spot-winged Monarch, Shining Flycatcher, Yellow-breasted Boatbill.

DAY 17

MADANG (KEKI LODGE)

Full day birding at Keki Lodge (includes set-menu meals). At night, lie in bed and listen to the sounds of the forest.

DAY 18

MADANG (KEKI LODGE)

Full day birding at Keki Lodge (includes set-menu meals).

DAY 19

MADANG / PORT MORESBY

0600 Depart Keki for the 3 hour road trip to Madang airport to check in for your flight to Port Moresby (time varies with day of the week).

Ecotourism Melanesia staff will meet you on arrival in Port Moresby and assist you to check in at the Gateway Hotel in time for lunch (PAYG).

1300 Afternoon birding trip to Laloki River and Pacific Adventist University campus area OR botanical gardens bird aviary (closes at 1630).

Bird list for Port Moresby area (still being compiled):

Intermediate Egret, Long-tailed Buzzard, Brahminy Kite, Whistling Kite, Papuan Harrier, Variable Goshawk, New Guinea Eagle, Yellow Legged Bush Turkey (Riverine areas), Red Necked

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Crake (riverine areas), Bare Eyed Rail, Buff Banded Rail, Purple Swamp hen, Comb Crested Jacana, Beach Stone Curlew, Little Ringed Plover, Swinhoe's Snipe, Sandpiper group, Whiskered Tern, Common Tern, Bridled Tern, Brown Noddy, Stephen's Dove (riverine areas), Emerald Dove (riverine areas), New Guinea Bronzewing (riverine areas), Cinnamon Ground Dove (riverine areas), Thick Billed Ground Dove (riverine areas), Orange Bellied Fruit Dove, Buff Faced Pygmy Parrot, Large Fig Parrot (upper riverine areas)

Overnight Gateway Hotel, Port Moresby (room only - pay as you go for meals and drinks, cash or card)

DAY 20

PORT MORESBY (VARIARATA)

0400 Depart on a full day birding excursion with local bird guide to Variarata National Park. Includes packed breakfast and picnic lunch.

Variarata National Park is located on the Sogeri Plateau above Port Moresby. A 45 minute drive up the winding main road from the city brings you to the turnoff to the national park which is 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 (still being compiled):

Raggiana Bird of Paradise, 4 to 5 species of fairy-wrens, 4 to 5 species of monarchs, the gigantic blue-winged kookaburra, and many other species.

Overnight Gateway Hotel, Port Moresby (room only - pay as you go for meals and drinks, cash or card)

DAY 21

PORT MORESBY / FLY OUT [or extend to Kikori delta](#)

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.

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

OR

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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 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 dinghy, 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 environments. If overnighting 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

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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 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.

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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 between November and April you have a higher probability of at least one excursion being cancelled due to rain.
3. The core itinerary can be shortened by skipping one of the programmed stops but The Kikori extension can also be extended with extra nights at the same rate as extra nights at other stops on the tour. The Sirebi River excursion would allow better time for bird watching if an extra night could be added at the river camp.
4. The core package is 20 nights but can be shortened by skipping one or more stops as long as domestic flights connect and the clockwise direction of movement is maintained. For example, you could skip Kiunga and fly direct to Tabubil, skip Tabubil and fly direct from Kiunga to Mt Hagen, skip both Kiunga and Tabubil and fly direct from Port Moresby to Mt Hagen, skip Minj and drive direct from Mt Hagen to Goroka, or skip Madang and fly direct from Goroka to Port Moresby. Likewise it is possible to shorten individual stops that have two or more nights by cutting out one day of birding eg at Kiunga, Tabubil, Mt Hagen, Madang (Jais Aben) or Madang (Keki Lodge), or add extra nights at any locations according to your birding interests. Only reversing the direction of the itinerary (ie travelling counter-clockwise) is not permitted as this upsets the logistical structure of the tour and invalidates the costing formula. Please request a customised quotation if you require arrangements that depart significantly from the basic structure of this tour package.