

# Best of Papua New Guinea

## Bird Photography Tour 2025

12 Days (July 6-17, 2025)



## Enge | Mt Hagen | Kiunga | Fly River | PAU | Varirata

Join us for the **7th edition of our Papua New Guinea (PNG) Endemic Expedition**—an extraordinary journey through the pristine wilderness of this magical land. Renowned for its untouched landscapes and rich cultural heritage, PNG offers unparalleled opportunities for birdwatchers and photographers to observe its diverse avian species. This unique itinerary is meticulously crafted to maximize bird sightings, ensuring an unforgettable experience for all participants.

Since 2014, we have been successfully operating both scheduled and private tours to Papua New Guinea, building strong relationships with local landowners and operators. This Local Experience ensures that our tours are not only rich in birding opportunities but also deeply connected to the culture and communities of PNG.

Starting in Mount Hagen, nestled in the cool montane forests of the Western Highlands, we will dedicate two nights to exploring the region's biodiversity. Then, we travel to Kiunga, where the tour continues. Our time in Mount Hagen will focus on spotting iconic species such as the Blue Bird of Paradise, Lesser Bird of Paradise, and a range of other montane species, including the Ribbon-tailed Astrapia, Crested Satinbird, and Papuan Lorikeet. The lush forests are also home to rarities like the Wattled Ploughbill, Ornate Fruit-Dove, and Tiger Parrots.

As the tour progresses, we venture into lowland rainforests and wetlands, targeting species like the Twelve-wired Bird of Paradise, Flame Bowerbird, Southern Crowned Pigeon, and Kingfishers. In the Southern Lowlands and SE Peninsula, we explore Varirata National Park and PAU, with the aim of capturing iconic species such as the Raggiana Bird of

Paradise, Trumpet Manucode, Jewel Babblers, and Australasian aquatic birds.

With visits to diverse habitats—from montane forests to riverine ecosystems—this Endemic Expedition promises sightings of celestial Birds of Paradise, dazzling Fruit Doves, rare Kingfishers, and the enigmatic "poisonous" Pitohuis. Whether you're a dedicated bird photographer or a passionate birder, this carefully designed itinerary is set to inspire awe and leave you with lasting memories.



Tour Starting Place & Date: **Mount Hagen, July 6, 2025**

Tour End Place & Date: **Port Moresby, July 19, 2025**

Group Size: **6-8 + leader**

### Detailed Itinerary

#### Day 1: (July 6, 2025) – Arrival in Mount Hagen via Port Moresby

Begin your adventure in Mount Hagen, located in the Western Highlands. After arriving at Port Moresby International Airport, connect to a morning flight to Mount Hagen and transfer to Kumul Lodge. Spend the afternoon birding from the lodge veranda, where species such as Tiger Parrots, Ribbon-tailed Astrapia, Brown Sicklebill, and Friendly Fantail can be observed.

Overnight: Kumul Lodge

#### Day 2 & 3: (July 7 & 8, 2025) – Birding in Kama/Lai/Murur/Mabis Areas (Enga Province)

The birding areas of Kama, Lai, Murmur, and Mabis in Enga Province are renowned for their pristine montane habitats, offering rich birding opportunities in the highlands of Papua New Guinea. The remote nature of these areas has helped preserve an abundance of endemic and migratory bird species. The combination of lush forests, grasslands, and wetland areas supports a variety of habitats, from ground-dwelling species to canopy-dwelling birds, including some of the rarest and most striking species on the planet. This region is particularly famous for the diversity of Birds of Paradise, making it a prime destination for avid birdwatchers.

Important species: Blue Bird of Paradise, Lesser Bird of Paradise, Ribbon-tailed Astrapia, Crested Satinbird, Papuan Lorikeet, Wattled Ploughbill, Ornate Fruit-Dove, Tiger Parrot, Brown Sicklebill, Friendly Fantail.

Overnight: Kumul Lodge

#### Day 4 & 5: (July 9 & 10, 2025) – Transition to Mount Hagen

After breakfast, transfer to Mount Hagen and settle into your lodge. The region boasts a variety of habitats, including dense rainforests, montane forests, and alpine meadows, providing a haven for a rich avian diversity. The cooler climate supports numerous endemic species, including several species of the iconic Birds of Paradise. The area's mix of lowland and montane flora and fauna makes it an excellent location for





birdwatching, offering the chance to see rare and beautiful species. The afternoon will focus on birding in highland display areas to track the Blue Bird of Paradise, Lesser Bird of Paradise, Papuan Lorikeet, Belford's Melidectes, and many more.

Overnight: Mount Hagen Lodge (Two Nights)

### **Day 6: (July 11, 2025) – Transfer to Kiunga**

Fly from Mount Hagen to Kiunga, located in the lowlands of the Fly River region. Kiunga offers a dramatic contrast to the cooler highlands of Mount Hagen. This lowland area is characterized by expansive wetlands, riverine forests, and dense tropical rainforests. The biodiversity here is exceptional, with many endemic species found in these lush environments. The Fly River and surrounding areas are vital for a range of water birds and lowland species, including several stunning Birds of Paradise.

Overnight: Kiunga Guest House



### **Day 7 & 8: (July 12 & 13, 2025) – Fly River Birding Expedition**

Spend two full days exploring the Fly River and its surrounding forests. We will focus on exploring the lowland rainforests near Kiunga, offering opportunities to observe key species such as the Twelve-wired Bird of Paradise, Flame Bowerbird, Paradise Kingfishers, and other lowland specialties. The final day in Kiunga will be dedicated to capturing any missed species and revisiting hotspots to spot birds like the Southern Crowned Pigeon and Jewel Babblers.

Important species: Twelve-wired Bird of Paradise, King Bird of Paradise, Flame Bowerbird, Southern Crowned Pigeon, Paradise Kingfisher, Jewel Babbler, Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove, Great-billed Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, White-winged Robin.

Overnight: Kiunga Guest House

### **Day 9: (July 14, 2025) – Kiunga to Port Moresby – PAU Visit**

Fly back to Port Moresby and spend the afternoon at the Pacific Adventist University (PAU). The Pacific Adventist University (PAU) and its surrounding wetlands offer excellent birdwatching opportunities in Port Moresby. The campus is surrounded by lush gardens, ponds, and marshlands, creating a perfect habitat for a variety of wetland and forest species. The area is particularly rich in Australasian aquatic birds and migratory species, which thrive in the wetland ecosystems. Birders can expect to see a wide range of species, from colourful doves to elusive frogmouths, making this a prime spot for spotting a diverse array of birds within the city.

Important species: Australasian Grebe, Great Egret, Brown Goshawk, Papuan Frogmouth, Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove, Green-ringed Fruit-Dove, Pacific Black Duck, Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Masked Lapwing, Torresian Crow.



Overnight: Rain Tree Lodge or Similar

### **Day 10 & 11: (July 15 & 16, 2025) – Varirata National Park**

Varirata National Park, located in the SE Peninsula, is one of Papua New Guinea's only national wildlife reserves. Its diverse ecosystems, ranging from tropical rainforests to montane forests, make it a hotspot for birdwatching. The park's steep, undisturbed habitats are home to some of PNG's most iconic species, including several Birds of Paradise and an array of forest birds. The park's well-maintained trails and viewpoint offer great opportunities to spot elusive species that thrive in this unique highland environment. Varirata is a must-see destination for birders hoping to capture some of the country's most spectacular and endemic avian species.

Important species: Raggiana Bird of Paradise, Trumpet Manucode, Blyth's Hornbill, Brown Oriole, Jewel Babbler, Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Black-capped Lory, Hooded Pitta, Black-eared Cuckoo-Dove, Mountain Fruit-Dove.

Overnight: Rain Tree Lodge or Similar



### **Day 12: (July 17, 2025) – Departure**

After a leisurely breakfast at the lodge, you will be transferred to the airport for your international flight.

Top targets: Blue Bird of Paradise, Lesser Bird of Paradise, Ribbon-tailed Astrapia, Crested Satinbird, Papuan Lorikeet, Wattled Ploughbill, Ornate Fruit-Dove, Tiger Parrot, Brown Sicklebill, Friendly Fantail, Twelve-wired Bird of Paradise, King Bird of Paradise, Flame Bowerbird, Southern Crowned Pigeon, Paradise Kingfisher, Jewel Babbler, Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove, Great-billed Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, White-winged Robin, Australasian Grebe, Great Egret, Brown Goshawk, Papuan Frogmouth, Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove, Green-ringed Fruit-Dove,

Pacific Black Duck, Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Masked Lapwing, Torresian Crow, Raggiana Bird of Paradise, Trumpet Manucode, Blyth's Hornbill, Brown Oriole, Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Black-capped Lory, Hooded Pitta, Black-eared Cuckoo-Dove, Mountain Fruit-Dove.

**Tour Cost:**

- **USD 4,950 (Twin Share Basis)**
- Single Room Supplement: USD 650 (Subject to availability)

Some of the accommodations we will be staying in during the tour may be modest with basic facilities, but they are comfortable and ideally situated for birding and wildlife activities.

**Tour Leader:**

- An experienced guide/tour manager will accompany you throughout the trip, supported by various local guides.

Combine this tour with the  
**Manus Island Wildlife Extension** (3 nights, 4 days)  
to spot the elusive Superb Pitta and other endemics.

**Included in the Tour Cost:**

All accommodations as per the itinerary, all meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner), guide fees, ground transportation, river cruise on the Fly River, entrance fees, and land permits.

**Not Included in the Tour Cost:**

Domestic flights - Port Moresby – Mount Hagen, Mount Hagen – Kiunga, Kiunga – Port Moresby), international flight tickets, visa fees, travel insurance, additional food and drinks, and tips for guides and staff.

**Special Note:**

Papua New Guinea is one of the world's biodiversity hotspots, a destination that every nature enthusiast should visit at least once in their lifetime. However, explorers to this magical land must be prepared to face certain challenges, including:

- Potential flight cancellations or delays.
- Health risks such as malaria (ensure you take proper medication and precautions).
- Logistical issues due to the remote nature of the region.
- Unpredictable weather, as rain can occur at any time.

As a result, last-minute changes to travel plans should be expected. We recommend maintaining flexibility and a spirit of adventure to fully enjoy this extraordinary experience.