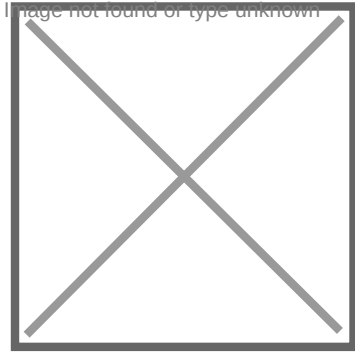


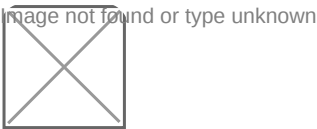


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Papua New Guinea's Birds of Paradise and Culture

Prix: **14735€**

Dates: **du 19 Sep 2023 au 4 Oct 2023**

Guide:

Descriptif

Papua New Guinea is one of the wildest and least explored regions on earth. Its astonishingly rich avifauna includes nearly 400 endemic species, amongst them the exquisite birds-of-paradise. This group of birds forms one of the principal objectives of this 16-day birdwatching tour. Starting in the capital Port Moresby, our tour visits Varirata National Park, Rondon Ridge, Karawari Lodge and finally the world-famous Ambua Lodge, encountering en route a wonderful variety of birds including many of the unique and fantastically plumaged birds-of-paradise. The lodge is situated at Tari Gap in the central highlands, home of the Huli tribe, or 'wigmen', known for their ornate ceremonial wigs, and dances and songs fashioned on the mating rituals of the birds-of-paradise.

New Guinea is the world's second largest island and lies in the south-west Pacific to the north of Australia. The island is divided between two countries: Papua New Guinea (PNG) in the east and Indonesia in the west. It is one of the wildest and least explored regions on Earth, with some 90% of the country still covered in forest. It has the richest avifauna of any island, with more than 360 endemic species, including the majority of the birds-of-paradise, perhaps the most extraordinary of all the world's bird families. Although their remarkable displays are often shown on television, to watch them in the field is a priceless experience of a lifetime. In addition, the island holds a wonderful and varied assembly of pigeons, parrots and kingfishers, not to mention gorgeous jewel-babblers and fairywrens, as well as stunning species such as Red-bellied Pitta, Flame Bowerbird and Golden Monarch. New Guinea is also home to seven endemic bird families and we may see species from all seven during our time here. Raptors are not numerous, but we have a chance of observing one of the most magnificent, the New Guinea Harpy Eagle.

We begin our holiday in Port Moresby, where we will spend the afternoon exploring the grounds of the Pacific Adventist University. Comprising a mosaic of dry woodland, gallery forest and small water bodies, the grounds provide a perfect introduction to the Australo-Papuan bird families that we are likely to encounter; Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, White-shouldered Fairywren, Black-backed Butcherbird and a variety of honeyeaters are all possible here. The following day we will visit the eucalypt and evergreen forests of Varirata National Park in the nearby foothills, where we can hope to see such specialities as Brown-headed Paradise-kingfisher and Raggiana Bird-of-paradise, along with a plethora of fruit-doves, cuckooshrikes and flycatchers.

From Port Moresby we fly to the Western Highlands for a 3-night stay at Rondon Ridge Lodge, one of PNG's premier lodges. Birding in the high-altitude forest near the lodge, we have an excellent chance of seeing some of PNG's most iconic species, such as both Black and Brown Sicklebills, Princess Stephanie's Astrapia and Blue, Superb and King of Saxony Birds-of-paradise, not to mention Loria's Satinbird and Wattled Ploughbill. Our stay will include a visit to Kumul Lodge, famous for its bird feeding table where species such as Brown Sicklebill, Ribbon-tailed Astrapia, Brehm's Tiger-parrot and Belford's Melidectes are among the many species seen; there will also be an opportunity to learn about the culture and traditions of the local Melpa people.

Next, we relocate to the vast lowland rainforests that surround the Karawari River for a 3-night stay in a wonderful lodge boasting spectacular views of the seemingly endless forest. Exploring the area through a mix of walks and boat rides, we are likely to encounter a very different array of species, with Eclectus Parrot, Southern Cassowary and three birds-of-paradise amongst the highlights, including the fabulous 'pole-dancing' Twelve-wire Bird-of-paradise.

We then return to the highlands, flying to Tari for the grand finale of the tour — three nights at the incomparable Ambua Lodge. Here we can again feast our eyes on several species of birds-of-paradise, including Ribbon-tailed Astrapia and Lawe's Parotia, as well as a host of other interesting species such as Brehm's Tiger-parrot, Eastern Crested Berrypecker, Blue-capped Ifrit, Mountain Firetail and

Orange-crowned Fairywren. The lodge is positioned at Tari Gap in the central highlands and is home to people from one of the most immediately recognisable cultures in Papua New Guinea, the 'Huli wigmen'. A proud, flamboyant tribe — known for their ornate ceremonial wigs, and dances and songs fashioned on the mating rituals of the birds-of-paradise — an encounter with the Huli tribespeople will be a truly fascinating experience.

All too soon we must return to Port Moresby where we will spend a final evening together before flying back to London, via Singapore, after what promises to be an exciting and memorable adventure.

Highlights

- Displaying birds-of-paradise
- See over a dozen species of these exotic birds
- Wild & rugged landscapes
- Tropical butterflies & extraordinary flora
- Glimpses of ancient, almost stone-age culture in rural areas
- Meet the Huli 'wigmen'
- Enjoy the adventure of travelling in a country with many unexplored areas
- Expertly escorted by an experienced Naturetrek ornithologist

Responsible Destination

Contacteur Carine

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Présente du lundi au vendredi de 09h à 18h et le samedi de 09h à 17h.

Dates & Prix

Prix : **14735** euros par personne

Supplément single: **1505** euros

du 19 Sep 2023 au 4 Oct 2023

Durée: **16 jours / 15 nuits**

Ce prix comprend

Flights from London

- Accommodation: We stay in comfortable lodges. All rooms have private facilities.
- Food: All meals are included in the price.

* These tours are operated by Naturetrek (ABTA Y6206) for which Nature et Terroir acts as agent.

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Journalier

Itinerary

Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather & other local considerations can necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available.

Day 1-2

In flight

We depart from London Heathrow on an overnight scheduled flight to Singapore where we connect with another overnight flight, crossing more time zones, to Port Moresby, arriving early the following morning.

Day 3

Port Moresby

From the international airport we will transfer to the nearby multi awardwinning Airways Hotel. After lunch we will travel to the grounds of the Pacific Adventist University (PAU), a well-known birding site about 30 minutes' drive from the hotel. PAU, set in a landscape of dry woodland typical of the Port Moresby area, has small patches of riparian vegetation, open spaces and a number of waterbodies. Here we will be introduced to some Australo-Papuan bird families through species such as Black-backed Butcherbird, Fawn-breasted Bowerbird, White-shouldered Fairywren, Helmeted Friarbird and Rufousbanded and Yellow-tinted Honeyeaters. We will also search for Red-cheeked Parrot, Papuan Frogmouth, Blue-winged Kookaburra and Yellow-faced Myna, among others. The ponds should provide a variety of waterbirds such as Pied Heron, Nankeen Night Heron, Little Black Cormorant, Plumed and Wandering Whistling Ducks, Dusky Moorhen and Comb-crested Jacana.

Day 4

Varirata National park

This morning we will leave early for a full day's birding in Varirata National Park, an hour's drive away in the foothills, up to 800m. Varirata was PNG's first national park and provides an excellent introduction to birding in New Guinea forest. Indeed, it is one of the premier sites in the country with a long list of species, somewhat surprisingly considering how close it is to Port Moresby. There are a variety of habitats and a series of good trails will take us into the wetter evergreen hill forest. We should see a selection of fruit-doves, cuckooshrikes, kingfishers, honeyeaters, Australasian warblers and flycatchers of various families. The avifauna will be excitingly unfamiliar and could include an endemic New Guinea family, the berrypeckers and longbills (Melanocharitidae), as well as pitohuis, jewel babblers, gerygones, monarchs, whistlers and myzomelas. The early start will improve our chances of seeing a displaying Raggiana Bird-of-paradise, an iconic lekking species that is PNG's national bird. Other possible bird of paradise species (Paradisaeidae being a target family for the tour) today are Growling Riflebird (recently split from the more widespread Magnificent Riflebird) and the Crinkle-collared Manucode, a less flamboyant, somewhat crow-like species. We will also search for some rarer, or simply shyer, possibilities such as Yellow-legged Brushturkey, Barred Owlet-Nightjar (at roost), Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher, Chestnut-backed Jewel Babbler and Painted Quail-Thrush. The night will again be spent at Airways Hotel.

Day 5

Rondon Ridge

Today we depart Central Province and fly from Port Moresby to Mount Hagen in the Western Highlands Province. We will be staying for three nights at Rondon Ridge Lodge, one of PNG's premier lodges, located on Mount Kuta and overlooking Wahgi Valley, which has some of the oldest evidence of agriculture anywhere in the world. The lodge is just less than an hour's drive from the airport and we will be accommodated in separate units from where we can enjoy some of the bird-watching available in the surrounding grounds. The cool conditions will be quite a contrast to Port Moresby, (Rondon Ridge is at 2100m), as will be the bird assemblage. En route to Rondon Ridge we will visit the mud men at Polga Village. The greatest change within the Melpa people has been the suppression of inter-group warfare. The traditional cultural values which placed importance on battle skills, sorcery and ritual cult knowledge have given way to more material prestige, however, many of the old customs are still practiced and an encounter with the Papua New Guinea Mud Men will be a truly unforgettable experience. There are trails in the surrounding forest and close by the lodge may be found Superb Bird-of-paradise, Brown Sicklebill, Princess Stephanie's Astrapia, MacGregor's Bowerbird, Red-collared and Mountain Myzomelas, Common Smoky Honeyeater and Yellow-browed Melidectes.

Day 6

Rondon Ridge

We will spend a full day birding in the high altitude forest behind Rondon Ridge. Possible species near the lodge, in addition to those mentioned above, include Mountain Fruit-Dove, Goldie's Lorikeet, Orange-crowned Fairywren, Yellow-streaked Honeyeater, Blackbreasted Boatbill, Loria's Satinbird, Friendly and Dimorphic Fantails, Wattled Ploughbill, Blue-capped Ifrita, Black Pitohui, Blue-faced Parrotfinch and the elusive and taxonomically enigmatic Mottled Berryhunter (now a monotypic family, Rhagologidae). We will also search for skulking terrestrial species such as Forbe's Forest-Rail, Lesser Melampitta and Lesser Ground Robin. Further afield we may increase our bird-of-paradise species list with Black and Black-billed Sicklebills, King of Saxony Bird-of-paradise (with its extraordinary head plumes) and Short-tailed Paradigalla. Loria's Satinbird, along with Crested and Yellow-breasted Satinbirds, was considered a bird of paradise but the three species are now considered to belong to an endemic New Guinea family, the Cnemophilidae. Which is even more reason to want to see one. At night we may search the lodge grounds for nocturnal species such as Papuan Boobook and Large-tailed Nightjar.

Day 7

Kumul Lodge

Today we will travel to Kumul Lodge for a half-day bird tour, prior to spending the afternoon visiting a village of the Melpa People. Kumul Lodge is famous for a bird-feeding table that attracts Brehm's Tiger-Parrot, Princess Stephanie's and Ribbontailed Astrapias, Brown Sicklebill, Belford's Melidectes and Common Smoky Honeyeater, among others. This provides excellent photographic opportunities. The lodge gardens also hold other montane species (the lodge is at 2860m), including Crested Satinbird, Island Thrush, Grey-streaked Honeyeater and White-winged Robin. Crested Berrypecker, which belongs to yet another endemic New Guinea family, the Painted berrypeckers (Paramythiidae), may be found near the lodge. Calaby's Pademelon (a small forest wallaby) is also occasionally seen on the lodge lawns and Speckled Dasyure (a small carnivorous marsupial) sometimes visits the feeding table during the day.

From Kumul Lodge we shall visit the Melpa People, one of the last large groups to be brought into the world community, with the area not discovered by the outside world until 1934. In many ways the lifestyle in this area of Papua New Guinea remains relatively unchanged today. These people were among the world's first horticulturists and even today sweet potato gardening is the basis for many things in the area, such as trade. Pigs are a sign of wealth among the Melpa people and it is not uncommon to see women looking after the family pigs and tending to their sweet potato gardens.

The Melpa people are referred to as pre-adapted to capitalism, demonstrating a form of ebullient materialism. Their leaders are mankind's quintessential entrepreneurs, amassing wealth in extended systems of ceremonial exchange, called moka or tee. Ceremonial exchanges became the measure of a man and men begged and borrowed from their clansmen to sponsor a great moka or tee ceremony. The bigger the presentation,

the bigger the man. Trade partners accepted gifts, only to become obliged to reciprocate in the future. However the trick with moka or tee is the need to return an equal amount plus more. It is a system of incremental exchange, not of balance. People are locked into escalating relations of generosity and debt.

Day 8-10 Karawari Lodge

We leave the mountains and fly to Karawari Lodge in the lowlands of East Sepik Province. Karawari Lodge is situated on a ridge overlooking the Karawari River, a tributary of the Sepik. We will stay for three nights in cabins overlooking the river and a vast expanse of lowland forest. Bird species we may expect to see around the lodge include Blyth's Hornbill, Eclectus Parrot, Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Lowland Peltops, Black-browed Triller, Black Sunbird, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo and the fantastic Palm Cockatoo. A boat will be used to access birding sites and for birding along the river and some creeks.

The Karawari River is a good location for White-bellied Sea Eagle, Brahminy Kite, Oriental Dollarbird, Great-billed Heron, Azure Kingfisher, Red-cheeked Parrot and Pinon's Imperial Pigeon and riparian birds such as Shining Flycatcher and Green-backed Gerygone. But our target species along the river will be Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise, which we hope to see at its display site. We will also venture into the forest. Lowland swamp forest is the home of the magnificent Victoria Crowned Pigeon, Wompoo and Orange-bellied Fruit-Doves, Hooded Pitta, New Guinea Scrubfowl, Whitebellied Thicket Fantail and Ivory-billed Coucal. The nearby hill forest has Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Blue Jewel Babbler, Rusty Pitohui, Ochre-collared Monarch and King Bird-of-paradise. We may also search for secretive and/or uncommon species such as Northern Cassowary, New Guinea Flightless Rail, New Guinea Harpy-Eagle and Magnificent Riflebird. At night we will have the opportunity to spotlight around the lodge for species such as Papuan Frogmouth, as well as a variety of geckos and frogs.

Day 11 Tari

Today we fly to Tari, passing over an impressive and rugged limestone landscape en route. Tari is a small town in the cultivated Central Highlands, and we drive from there into the mountains to the incomparable Ambua Lodge, situated at an elevation of 2100m in the Southern Highlands Province. Cloud forest surrounds the Lodge and continues up to Tari Gap at 2800m. At Ambua we stay in comfortable chalets built in traditional highlands style overlooking the forest and Tari Valley. In a land of extreme contrasts, this comfortable tourist complex provides one of the most startling. Just eighty years ago these highlands were thought to be uninhabited, then a chance discovery by gold miners searching for new sites revealed nearly a million people living a stoneage existence in the hills. Catapulted into the 21st century, these people found the complexities of the outside world difficult to comprehend, yet a mere two generations later many of their descendants are now fully integrated into modern PNG society and fulfilling jobs such as flying aircraft and operating computers. Despite the advances, this remains a remote and isolated area, renowned as being the best place for observing birds-of-paradise. After checking in at the lodge for three nights we will start our exploration of the magnificent forest nearby.

Day 12-13 Ambua Lodge

Surrounded by moss-covered montane forests, and often wreathed in atmospheric mist, Ambua epitomises every birdwatcher's ideal place to stay. Ten or more representatives of the Paradisaeidae can be found in the forests and it is certain that our two full days here will go all too quickly as we observe Ribbon-tailed Astropia, Brown Sicklebill, King of Saxony Bird-of-paradise and other members of this wonderful family, as well as a host of other interesting species such as Brehm's Tiger-Parrot, Whitewinged and Black-throated Robins, Blue-capped Ifrit, Crested Berrypecker, Archbold's Bowerbird, and possibly even Chestnut or Forbe's Forest-Rails. With the distribution of many PNG species dictated by altitude we will explore each different level of forest to ensure the widest range of birds. Lower down, in the tall mid-altitude forest we may add Princess Stephanie's Astropia, Loria's Satinbird, Papuan Treecreeper and Mountain Firetail. In the immediate surroundings of the lodge, Ornate and Mountain Fruit-Doves, Slaty Robin, Wattled Ploughbill and Yellow-browed Melidectes may be seen, while Great Woodswallow and Mountain Peltops perch on the roof of the buildings. Speckled and Narrow-striped Dasyure visit the lodge grounds and at night we may also look for species such as Sooty Owl, Papuan Boobook, Archbold's Nightjar and the somewhat mammalian-looking Feline Owllet-nightjar. The Tari Valley is the home of the Huli tribe or "wigmen" who paint their faces and wear exotic wigs made from their own hair, decorated with plumes from birds of paradise, cassowaries and parrots. Although these adornments are only worn for special ceremonies we shall take time to visit the local tribesmen and learn about the various styles of wigs and the cultural significance of each.

Day 14 Port Moresby

After a final early morning around Ambua lodge, we drive down to Tari for our return flight back to Port Moresby. If time permits in Port Moresby we may have the opportunity for some afternoon birding but much depends on the timing of the flight. Once again we will overnight at Airways Hotel.

Day 15 In flight

This morning we depart from Port Moresby international airport and fly to Singapore as the first leg of our homeward journey.

Day 16 London

After our flight via Singapore we will arrive back at Heathrow after a truly memorable tour.

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Quelques photos...

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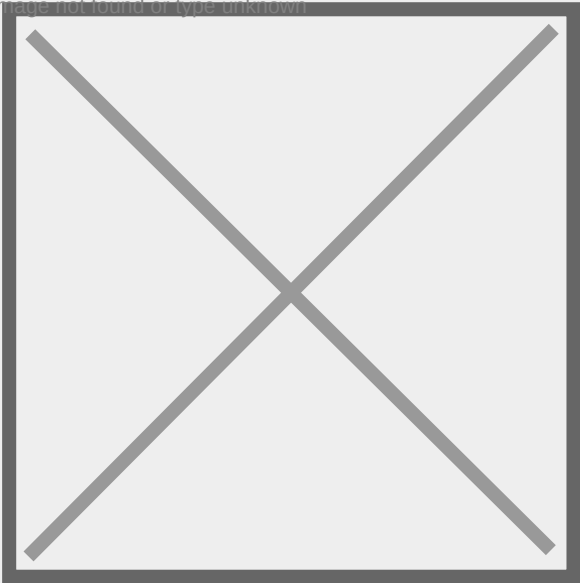


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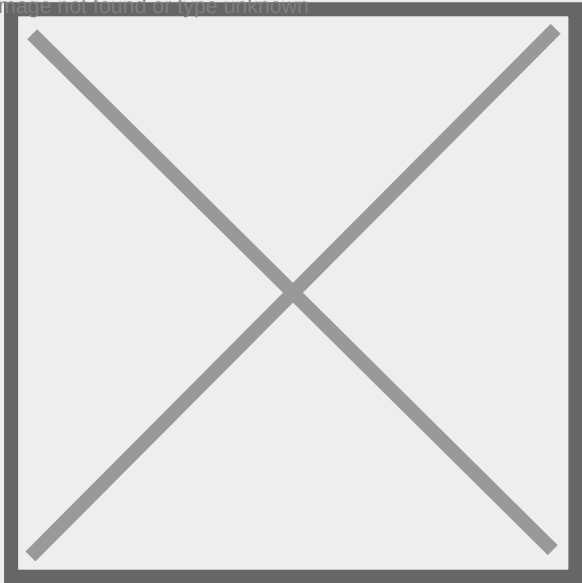


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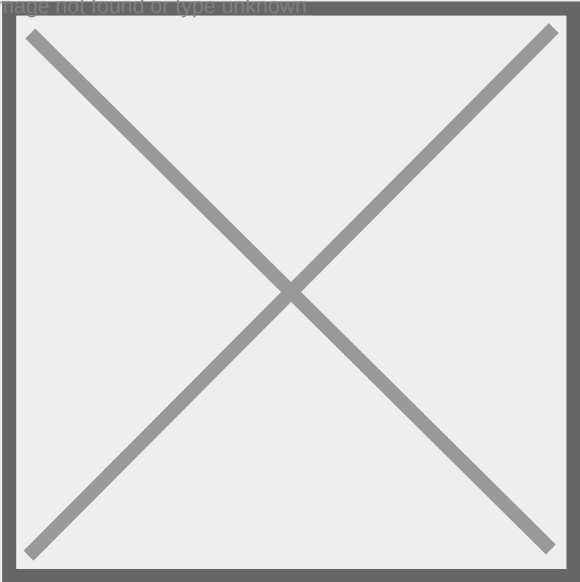


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