

## **Birding in Raja Ampat, Sorong and Arfak Mountains of Manokwari**

**Guests: Paige and Bruce Harvey**

**Guide: Charles Roring**

I flew to Makassar on 5 July 2019 with a plan on the next day (6 July 2019) to meet Mr. and Mrs. Harvey at Hasanuddin International Airport for birding in Ramang-ramang of South Sulawesi province. Unfortunately, their flight was cancelled. They arrived much later in the evening at 18.00. I could only organized their dinner at Kota Daeng restaurant. We returned to the airport and stayed for a few hours at Ibis Budget hotel located inside the passenger terminal of Sultan Hasanuddin International Airport.

### **7 July**

We flew by Bombardier CRJ 1,000 operated by Garuda. It was an Indonesian national flag carrier. Our destination was Sorong city. We arrived at Domine Eduard Osok Airport at 06.30 local time. After a short stop at Swissbel Hotel for breakfast, we headed to Pelabuhan Rakyat. From this harbor, we continued our trip by fast passenger boat to Waisai town. Arriving at the harbor, we continued our trip by car to Raja Ampat Dive Resort (RADR).

We had our lunch and took a rest for a while. At 15.00, I guided Ms. Harvey on a birding walk along the beach and then along the main road of South Waigeo area. Some Blyth's Hornbills flew away from a tall tree when we were walking under its branches. Perhaps they were surprised by our presence. When we reached the rock cliff, we saw a Brahminy Kite flying fast chased by a Willie Wagtail. The predator might have stolen the Willie Wagtail's baby.

We arrived at a white sandy beach and turned left to a path that connected the beach with the main road. Here, along the main road, we saw Eclectus Parrot, Sulphur Crested Cockatoo, Oriental Dollarbird, and Helmetted Friarbird.

## **8 July**

We woke up at 04.00 to make preparation and had some breakfast. The restaurant had prepared some fruits, bread, and hot water for us to make tea or coffee. Local villagers, Evert and Daniel came to pick us up by a small motorized wooden boat. We left the resort for their land located further to the south of Waigeo. It took around fifteen minutes for us to reach their land. We landed safely on a narrow beach located between two hills. From that beach, we went hiking for one and a half hours to the lek of Red Bird of Paradise. It was a long walk deeper into the jungle. We saw some millipede a long the way. As soon as we arrived at the lek, the rain started to fall. Initially, we were quite upset with the weather condition.

We could see thick clouds were moving above our heads. But we were determined to watch the paradise birds birds. Some had started calling their female counterparts. Twenty to thirty minutes later, the rain stopped for a while. The male Red Birds of Paradise started to show off their beauty by performing courtship danced in front of some females that were sitting at the nearby branches. They were dancing and hopping in top branches when the rain fell again. But it was not long. The paradise birds danced until 09.00. We left the birding ground and walked back to the beach. We heard the sounds of Common Paradise Kingfisher, Yellow-billed Kingfisher. Unfortunately, we could not see them. After walking for around thirty minutes, we stopped under a tree whose branches and twigs were full of small red fruits. There we saw Beautiful Fruit Dove, Hooded Butcherbird, Claret-breasted Fruit Dove, Blyth's Hornbill and Red Bird of Paradise. They flew to the tree and ate its fruits.

Reaching the beach, we returned to the resort by boat again and took a rest. In the afternoon, we did some birding trip by car along the road next to the airport. We saw Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Pinon Imperial Pigeon, Blyth's Hornbill, Yellow-faced Myna, and Eastern Osprey. Back to the beach, we saw Pacific Swallow, Moustached Treeswift, and Sacred Kingfisher.

## **9 July**

We went scuba diving at an uninhabited small island near Friwen. We were in the water for 1 hour going down to a depth of approximately 18 meters. While diving, we saw a lot of species of fish including anemonefish, jackfish, sweetlips, and humphead wrasse. After that we did a tour by boat to Kabui bay where we watched Spice Imperial Pigeon, Singing Starling, Olive backed Sunbird, Torresian Crow, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Lesser-crested Tern, Sooty Tern, Lesser Frigatebird, Beach Kingfisher, Brahminy Kite, and Little-pied Cormorant.

## **10 July**

We planned to watch Wilson's Bird of Paradise. Unfortunately, it rained all night until morning. So, we cancelled it. We went by car to the birding site of Raflow Resort. There we saw a large group of Lesser Frigatebird in the middle of the sea. We also see Crested Tern, Willie Wagtail, Hooded Butcherbird, Pinon Imperial Pigeon, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Eclectus Parrot, Mimic Melidectes, Pied Imperial Pigeon, Palm Cockatoo, Grey-headed Goshawk, and Dusky Scrubfowl. After lunch, we checked out of Raja Ampat Dive Resort and returned to Sorong city by fast ferry boat.

## 11 July

We did morning bird trip to suburban area of Sorong city. There, we watched Blackwing Monarch, Black-capped Lory, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Boyer's Cuckooshrike, Yellow-faced Myna, Rainbow Lorikeet, Channel-billed Cuckoo, Female Black-Sunbird, Pinon Imperial Pigeon, Streaked-headed Munia. I heard the calls of Hooded Butcherbird and I imitated them by my mouth. The bird walked closer toward I, Ms. Paige Harvey and our driver Pak Haji. But he stopped behind the roadside. He was reluctant to come out to the cleared area of the road. Suddenly, we saw the Hooded Butcherbird flying fast and low across the road in front of us. I was not able to take pictures of him. At 09.00 we drove slowly down the slopes and stopped for a while to take pictures of the Palm Cockatoo that was sitting on a branch of a tree of a cliff on the left of us. Our birding trip to suburban area of Sorong city was greatly enhanced by the use of a Celestron ED lens spotting.

In the afternoon, we went birding in the mangrove area of Sorong regency. There, we saw Little Egret, a large group of Metallic Starling, Pacific Swallow, and Rainbow Bee-eater. We also saw a spotted dove which was not native of New Guinea land. There was a group of mannikin that we could not identify.

## **12 July**

After having breakfast, we left our hotels in Sorong for Domine Eduard Osok airport. We flew by Sriwijaya to Manokwari. It took around 50 minutes to reach it. It was a pleasant flight and we landed safely. We continued our trip to Arfak mountains by a 4WD car. We needed around 2 hours to reach our destination which is a guesthouse in Mount Soyti of Arfak range. During an afternoon birdwalk along the main road, we saw some interesting birds such as Western Smoky Honeyeater, Black-fronted White Eye and Friendly Fantail. Vogelkop Melidectes was calling from behind the trees. Unfortunately, we could not see him.

## **13 July**

We went hiking to the lek of Western Parotia (*Parotia sefilata*). We left the guesthouse at 05.20. In less than five minutes after we sat inside our birding hut, a female Superb Bird of Paradise landed. We watched it quietly. Local villager had put a big red pandanus fruit near the dancing ground of Western Parotia to attract birds. A Black-eared Catbird landed on the fruit forcing the small Superb BOP to fly away. Male Western Parotia arrived on his dancing ground. He picked up the fallen leaves and twigs that made his "stage" dirty. He did some dancing rehearsal. After that he jumped to a hanging vine, walking up to the nearby tree and sat on a branch of above his dancing ground. He began calling his female counterparts. Two came and landed directly to the fruit and started to eat its grain. The male Parotia chased them for mating but they refused to obey. They flew away.

Later a couple of Black Sicklebill came. It was a mother and a big daughter. She picked up the grains from the fruits and fed them to her daughter. I made some pictures of them and also of the Western Parotias that were hopping from one branch to another. We watched them until 09.00 and then slowly walked down the slope of Mount Soyti to the guesthouse. We took a rest for a few hours and then had lunch.

In the afternoon at 14.00, we did a short hiking to watch Vogelkop Bowerbird. He came down to his bower and rearrange colorful articles that he had collected from the forest and the nearby village. We were quite sad to see that this bird also collected plastic bottle cap and water cup. It was an important message for all of us to reduce the use of plastics in our daily life activities. We still did a short birding walk where we saw Grey Thornbill, Capped White Eye, a male Mountain Fruit Dove. Back to the guesthouse, we still stood outside to observe the surrounding trees and shrub plants to find interesting birds. Right in front of the guesthouse, we saw female Western Parotias eating fruits of Besuwe trees.

## **14 July**

This morning I did not accompany Mr. and Mrs. Harvey to watch Magnificent Birds of Paradise. I was tasked to contact our driver and also the Swissbel Hotel in Sorong to check the safe box in the hotel room which they had stayed in Sorong. Mrs. Harvey forgot to take her wallet and money. Later, in my phone conversation with our driver, he informed me that he and the staff from the hotel had opened the box and found the wallet and the money. They will be returned to The Harveys when they fly back to Sorong city again.

I made some photos of a birdwing butterfly, Green-backed Robin, and Spectacled Longbill.

### **15 July**

We woke up at 04.30 and made preparations. We left Soyti guesthouse at 05.00 for the feeding ground of Black Sicklebill. We only saw a few male and female Western Parotia and one Blue Grey Robin. At 14.00 we went hiking to the display ground of Vogelkop Bowerbird. He landed on his bower and started to arrange orange flowers and small black articles. Mrs. Harvey made a long video of the bird using her cell phone that she had attached to her spotting scope. Back to the guesthouse we saw a female Black Fantail hopping on the branches of trees.

### **16 July**

We went hiking again early in the morning to the dancing ground of Western Parotia. The male one had been sitting on a branch of a tree calling for his female counterparts. At the red fruit that was put by local villager next to the dancing site, several birds came to eat its grain. Female Superb Bird of Paradise, Black-eared Catbird, Female and Male Western Parotia. There was another species which I saw for the first time. It was Long-tailed Paradigala. He was on the red fruit for around two minutes eating its grain. I was able to take some good pictures of the paradise bird. After lunch we returned to Manokwari city again by 4wd car. At night we had delicious dinner at Inggandi restaurant.

## **17 July**

I woke up early in the morning at 04.30. After making some preparation, I went to Swissbel hotel where Mr. and Mrs. Harvey stayed. At 05.00, I organized their transfer to Rendani airport of Manokwari. Wishing their safe flight back to their home in their United States, I said Good Bye to them.

## **Birds Seen**

1. Blyth's Hornbill
2. Willie Wagtail
3. Brahminy Kite
4. White-bellied Sea Eagle
5. Eastern Osprey
6. Grey-headed Goshawk
7. Long-tailed Buzzard
8. Eclectus Parrot
9. Palm Cockatoo
10. Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
11. Rainbow Lorikeet
12. Black-capped Lory
13. Moluccan King Parrot
14. Dollarbird
15. Helmeted Friarbird
16. Hooded Butcherbird
17. Black butcherbird
18. Pinon Imperial Pigeon
19. Spice Imperial Pigeon
20. Pied Imperial Pigeon
21. Beautiful Fruit Dove
22. Brown Cuckoo Dove
23. Claret-breasted Fruit Dove
24. Glossy Swiftlet

25. Pacific Swallow
26. White-breasted Woodswallow
27. Red Bird of Paradise
28. Mimic Meliphaga
29. Rufous-bellied Kookaburra
30. Sacred Kingfisher
31. Collared Kingfisher
32. Beach Kingfisher
33. Little Pied Cormorant
34. Sooty tern
35. Lesser-crested Tern
36. Grey backed Tern
37. Eastern-reef Egret
38. Moustached Treeswift
39. Dusky Scrubfowl (seen by Charles)
40. Yellow capped Pygmy Parrot
41. Lesser Frigatebird
42. Singing Starling
43. Torresian Crow
44. Olive-backed Sunbird (seen by Charles)
45. Black sunbird
46. Striated Heron
47. Shining Flycatcher
48. Channel billed cuckoo
49. Yellow-faced Myna
50. Brown Oriole
51. Golden Monarch
52. Streaked headed Mannikin
53. Hooded Pitta
54. Spangled Drongo
55. Red-collared Myzomela
56. Lesser Black Coucal
57. Rainbow Bee-eater
58. Spotted Dove
59. Metallic Starling
60. Little Egret
61. Chestnut-breasted Mannikin (juvenile)
62. Black-fronted White Eye
63. Western Smoky Honeyeater
64. Mountain Fruit Dove

65. Friendly Fantail
66. Western Parotia
67. Superb Bird of Paradise (female)
68. Black Sicklebill (mother feeding daughter with red fruits)
69. Black-eared Catbird
70. Orange-bellied Fruit Dove
71. Capped White Eye
72. Green-backed Robin
73. Blue Grey Robin
74. Spectacled Longbill
75. Long-tailed Paradigala
76. Black Fantail

### **Insect**

Birdwing Butterfly Ornithoptera tithonus

### **Reptile**

Soa-soa Lizard of Waigeo

### **Reef Fish**

Anemonefish

Butterflyfish

Parrotfish

Moorish Idol

Sweetlips

Jackfish, and etc.