

Birding in Southern Region of Waigeo Island and Klasow Valley of Indonesia

by Charles Roring

for Vacation Indonesia Tours

Introduction

From 7 to 12 November 2023, I had the opportunity to guide four Finnish tourists for birdwatching tour in Raja Ampat and Klasow valley. They were Lauri Mikkola, Marjo Mikkola, Hannele Heino and Raija Teider.

Their trip was organized by Mr. Darwin Sumang, the founder and owner of Vacation Indonesia Tours (VIT Tours).

Our main target was to see birds of paradise such as Red Bird of Paradise, Wilson's Bird of Paradise, Lesser Birds of Paradise, King Bird of Paradise, Magnificent Riflebird, as well as other tropical birds of New Guinea including Golden Myna, Red-breasted Paradise Kingfisher and Shining Flycatcher.



7 November 2023

I met them in Sorong city. They took a night flight of Batik Air ID 7797 from Jakarta that landed at Domine Eduard Osok (DEO) Airport at around 06:10 morning time. Two airport taxis brought us to ferry harbor where we continued our next trip by fast passenger ferry to Waisai harbor of Raja Ampat. We started our birding activity when we had reached Waigeo island. I informed the driver who took us to Raja Ampat Dive Resort to stop along the way whenever we saw birds. We had to stop several times to see Brahminy Kite and Moustached Treeswift. We checked into the resort at around 13:00. Some Willie Wagtail were playing around the shrub plants at the frontyard of the resort. That's already a lunch time. First a walked to a tree where there was Papuan Frogmouth. After having lunch, we walked along the boardwalk of the resort to find Papuan Frogmouths that liked to sleep in trees of the resort. We found one. After that we took a rest. At around 16:00 we continued our birding activity again. We did not go out of the complex area of the resort. We walked to the jetty and watched birds using binoculars and spotting scope. We saw Common Sandpiper, Great-crested Tern, Australasian Osprey, Lesser Frigatebird, Beach Kingfisher, Pied Imperial Pigeon, Pinon Imperial Pigeon, Spice Imperial Pigeon, and Brown Oriole. After dinner, we slept early.



8 November 2023

We had breakfast at 07:00. After that we walked around, still at the frontyard of the resort, to look for birds such as Helmeted Friarbird, Mimic Meliphaga, Brown Oriole, and Shining Flycatcher. Our tour participants also like butterflies, we saw some of them including a female Priamus Birdwing Butterfly. We continued our birding walked by walking up wooden stairs to the road behind the resort. There, we saw

several interesting species including Glossy-mantled Manucode, Coconut Lorikeet, and Eclectus Parrot and Red-cheeked Parrot. When the weather was getting hotter, we returned to the resort and continued our activity watching butterflies.

At around 16:00, we continued birding again. This time, we watched birds from the jetty near dive center of Raja Ampat Dive Resort. We saw Pied Imperial Pigeon, Metallic Starling, Pinon Imperial Pigeon, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Common Sandpiper and Helmeted Friarbird.

When the surrounding temperature had been cooler, we walked to the road behind the resort to watch more birds. There, we saw Eclectus Parrot, Shining Flycatcher, Hooded Butcherbird, Palm Cockatoo, Yellow-faced Myna, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Glossy-mantled Manucode, Olive-crowned Flowerpecker, Olive-backed Sunbird, Blyth's Hornbill, Coconut Lorikeet, Pinon Imperial Pigeon, Helmeted Friarbird, and Red-cheeked Parrot. At around 18:00, the temperature had been cooler. We could see more Eclectus Parrot flying low around us.

We returned to the resort when our surroundings were getting darker.



9 November 2023

We woke up early at 04:00 to have early morning breakfast. At 04:30, we left our resort by a 4WD pick-up truck for birding site deep in the forest of Waigeo island. Our car slowly climbed steep slopes of southern Waigeo island. It took around 30 minutes to reach the birding site. We still had to continue our adventure that morning by hiking up the steep slopes of the rainforest to the lek of Red Bird of Paradise. We watched the birds for around 30 minutes and then walked down the steep slopes again to the main road. We continued our morning activity to the site of Wilson's Bird of Paradise. At first hide, the bird did not land

on his playing ground although we could hear him calling his female mating partner for the whole morning. We moved to another site of the Wilson's Bird of Paradise. This time, we were lucky. The paradise bird landed on his display ground. Everybody was happy to see him.



When we left the hide, we tried to find Common Paradise Kingfisher. I played his calls from the sound recordings stored in my cell phone. He kept on sitting inside dense branches. So, we left him. Back to the resort, we had lunch and relaxed at the beach. Some of the tour participants enjoyed swimming. In the afternoon at 15:00, we had a birding tour by the 4WD pick-up truck again. This time we went to the forest in the southern area of Waisai's airport. First, we checked the nearby water channel. There, we saw two Little Egret. Because the temperature was still high, we stayed under the shadow of trees to watch birds that were flying over the hills. We saw some including Brahminy Kite, Gurney's Eagle, and Eclectus Parrot. We moved to hill areas to look for Radjah Shelduck at a stream. We did not find one. So, we had a tour around the hill and then down to the coastal area to the bridge at the southern end of the airport's runway. There we saw Red-cheeked Parrot, Shining Flycatcher and Great-billed Parrot. Common Sandpiper and Whimbrel were seen walking on the big stones at the riverside and the beach. Pacific Swallow and Glossy Swiftlet flew around us. We returned to our resort again at around 06:30. On the way, we stopped for a while to watch Rufous-bellied Kookaburra that was sitting on electrical line.



10 November 2023

After breakfast, we left our resort by speedboat. The coastal scenery of Waigeo island looked so beautiful. We crossed the sea by fast passenger ferry to Sorong city again. We had lunch at Solaria resto in Ramayana Mall. After a short stop at Mega Mall to buy fruits, we continued our trip by 4WD car to Klasow valley. We arrived at around 15:00 local time. We walked to Malagufuk village for around two hours because we



stopped several times to watch Red-breasted Paradise Kingfisher, Orange-bellied Fruit Dove and Golden Myna and Wompoo Fruit Dove.

We heard the calls of King Bird of Paradise and Magnificent Riflebird but we could not see them. Suddenly it started to rain. We reached the village at around 17:00. We were able to see Blyth's Hornbill, Pinon

Imperial Pigeon, and Black Lory flying in the air. Our dinner was stir-fried vegetables, fried chicken in black sweet soy sauce, green vegetables, mango, watermelon and papaya.

11 November 2023

We woke up early in the morning at 04:30, had tea, coffee and some biscuits as well as fried noodle. We walked to the birding site of Magnificent Riflebird at 05:00 and reached the place in thirty minutes. We watched the bird for around 1 hour and then continued our trip to the site of Lesser Birds of Paradise. When we reached the lek, we did not see them. We walked around to find one. A local guide who accompanied us saw one bird sitting at high branch. It was quite difficult for mw to aim my binoculars and tripod at the paradise bird. The tour participants could see them. In less then two minutes, the Lesser Bird of Paradise hopped to another branch with densed twigs and leaves. We could not watch him properly. We were hopeless. We walked to the other side of the tree. Before we left for the site of King Bird of Paradise, I played the sound record of the Lesser Birds of Paradise to attrack him. Fortunately, he came and landed on the vine that was hanging down the ficus tree in front of us. He was around fifteen meters above us but in open area. All of us could see him well. Everyone took some pictures of the paradise bird.

We walked for around twenty five minutes to the site of King Bird of Paradise. There we watched the paradise bird from a watching tower built by local villagers. We spent around one hour in the area and then returned to the village to have lunch.

At 13:00, we walked slowly back to main road. There were butterflies that were flying around. We stopped to take pictures of them. Some of them were Silky Owl Butterfly and New Guinea Clipper butterfly.



We returned to Sorong city by 4wd pick-up truck. At around 17:00 we reached Swissbel Hotel. We enjoyed dinner at 19:00 and then took an early rest.

12 November 2023

I organized the transfer of our tour participants to airport at 08:30. The Domine Eduard Osok (DEO) Airport of Sorong city was quite busy in the morning. Arriving at the airport, I said goodbye to our Finnish guests hoping that they would have a nice flight to Jakarta and then back to their home country in Finland..

