



Inala's Papua New Guinea 26 June – 7 July 2024

Updated by Dr Tonia Cochran, Inala Nature Tours 2 February 2023.



Stephanie's Astrapia. Photo: G. Jones

ITINERARY OUTLINE:

- Day 0. Tue 25 June 2024. Arrive Cairns (recommended)
- Day 1. Wed 26 June 2024. Fly Cairns to Mt Hagen via Port Moresby. Transfer to Rondon Ridge
- Day 2. Thu 27 June 2024. Birding around Rondon Ridge
- Day 3. Fri 28 June 2024. Community-run lodge in Enga Province. Rondon Ridge
- Day 4. Sat 29 June 2024. Birding around Rondon Ridge
- Day 5. Sun 30 June 2024. Birding in local villages in the valley. Rondon Ridge
- Day 6. Mon 1 July 2024. Rondon Ridge to Mt Hagen to Karawari in the Eastern Sepik region.
- Day 7. Tue 2 July 2024. Birding in the Karawari area
- Day 8. Wed 3 July 2024. Birding and cultural activities, Karawari area
- Day 9. Thu 4 July 2024. Birding and cultural activities, Karawari area
- Day 10. Fri 5 July 2024. Fly Karawari to Kum Mountain via Mt Hagen. Rondon Ridge.
- Day 11. Sat 6 July 2024. Rondon Ridge.
- Day 12. Sun 7 July 2024. Fly Rondon Ridge to Cairns via Port Moresby.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The island of Papua New Guinea (PNG) has one the richest and most varied avifauna in the world. Over 700 species of birds have been identified here so far, including around 580 land and freshwater species, 40 sea birds and 90 migrants from countries to the North and South.

OVERVIEW:

The passerines include cuckoo-shrikes and trillers, shrikes, thrushes, logrunners, babblers, warblers, fairy-wrens, fantails, monarchs and robins, whistlers and pitohuis, honeyeaters, finches, starlings, mynahs, orioles, drongos, wood swallows, butcherbirds, bowerbirds and Birds of Paradise. Thirty-eight of the 43 known species of Bird of Paradise are found in Papua New Guinea. The extent of the millinery trade of the last century significantly affected the populations of these beautiful birds and as a result, all species of Bird of Paradise in Papua New Guinea are now protected. The non-perching birds we should see include birds of prey, megapodes, pigeons and doves, cuckoos and coucals, owls and frogmouths, lories and lorikeets, parrots, cockatoos, kingfishers and hornbills,

During this tour we will stay at two renowned birding destinations; Rondon Ridge located in the PNG Highlands, and Karawari Lodge in the lowlands. While predominantly a birding trip, we will also be on the lookout for any mammals and interesting flora (particularly interesting Gondwanan species) including orchids.



Raggiana Bird of Paradise

Blue-capped Ibrit

Rufous-bellied Kookaburra

Regent Whistler

Photos: G. Jones

Tour leader: Angus McNab (Inala Nature Tours) with local PNG guides at each location

DETAILED ITINERARY:

B- breakfast, L- lunch and D-dinner.

Day 0. Tuesday 25 June 2024. Arrive Cairns (recommended)

Based on the 2023 tour, the best option is to depart from Cairns, Australia, and we recommend arriving in Cairns today so that we can meet tomorrow morning at the Cairns International Airport for our departure to Port Moresby and onto our flight to Mt Hagen.

Accommodation: none (Although accommodation is not included in tour price, we would be pleased to organise this for you if required). **Meals included:** none



Day 1. Wednesday 26 June 2024. Cairns to Mt Hagen and Rondon Ridge.

Meet at Cairns Airport for our flight to Mt Hagen via Port Moresby. (Cost of flights not included). Meeting time will likely be 5 am. On our arrival at Mount Hagen, we will be transferred to our accommodation in the Western Highlands Province of PNG. Rondon Ridge is located at an elevation of 2,164 metres (7,100 feet) above sea level on the outer fringes of the Kubor Range with panoramic views of the Wahgi Valley below where there is some of the oldest evidence of agriculture. arrival at Mount Hagen we will

be transferred to our accommodation in the Western Highlands Province of PNG. Rondon Ridge is located at an elevation of 2,164 metres (7,100 feet) above sea level on the outer fringes of the Kubor Range with panoramic views of the Wahgi Valley below where there is some of the oldest evidence of agriculture.

Guests are accommodated in tastefully appointed rooms with warmed king beds for those fresh highland nights, with modern en suite bathrooms. The facility has eco-friendly electricity, provided by its own hydroelectric power plant that generates clean, natural energy from a nearby mountain stream.

Accommodation: Rondon Ridge (en suite rooms). **Meals included:** D.

Days 2 – 5. Thursday 27 to Sunday 30 June 2024 inclusive. Rondon Ridge.

We will spend four full days birding in the high-altitude forests around Rondon Ridge and adjoining ranges. Over 180 species of birds have been recorded in these rainforests, including ten species of Bird of Paradise. The surrounding area is pristine rainforest and home to numerous orchid species. The lodge has hours of walking trails providing ample opportunity to explore the unique ecology of this area. Close to the lodge we will look for Macgregor's Bowerbird, Brown Sicklebill, Stephanie's Astrapia and the Superb



Bird of Paradise amongst many others. Further afield is the Black Sicklebill, the Buff-tailed Sicklebill, King of Saxony Bird of Paradise and the Short-tailed Paradigalla to name a few. We will also spend a day visiting another nearby community-run Lodge, just across the border in Enga Province which is famous for its Bird of Paradise sightings. Species we can see here include Belford's Melidectes, Ribbon-tailed Astrapia, Brown Sicklebill and Brehm's Tiger Parrots. Regent Whistlers, Eastern Crested Berrypeckers, and Rufous-naped Bellbirds can be seen feeding in the trees, and White-winged Robin is also a regular here. On another day we will travel to a local village to look for Raggiana Bird-of-paradise (the national bird of Papua New Guinea and the species featured on the country's flag).

Accommodation: Rondon Ridge (en suite rooms) as for night 1. **Meals included:** B, L, D each day.

Day 6. Monday 1 July 2024. Rondon Ridge-Mt Hagen-Karawari in the Eastern Sepik region.

This morning after breakfast, we will transfer from Rondon Ridge to Mt. Hagen airport where we will take a charter flight (price included in tour) to Karawari in the Eastern Sepik Province of PNG. Our accommodation is in one of the most remote and unspoilt destinations in Papua New Guinea. Inspired by local architecture and built with traditional materials, the lodge provides modern comforts. The lodge's private airstrip and the Karawari River are the only way in or out. The transfer from Karawari airstrip to Karawari Lodge is by boat - the only practical means of transport in this extremely isolated part of the world where stilted villages line the edges of flooded waterways and dugout canoes are the primary mode of transport. There are no roads, no shops and no phones. The Sepik River inhabitants live completely off the land, weaving baskets for catching fish, and gathering, preparing and cooking their staple food from the Sago Palm. Karawari Lodge is perched on a ridge 300 metres (985 feet) above the Karawari River with a spectacular view over hundreds of kilometres of dense tropical lowland rainforest. This afternoon we will bird in the area around the lodge before settling into our rooms at the lodge.

Accommodation: Karawari Lodge (en suite rooms). Guests are accommodated in cottages built out of local bush materials and inspired by traditional architecture. Despite its remoteness, the lodge has modern en suite bathrooms, 220V electricity, hot & cold water, comfortable mosquito-netted beds, ceiling fans, and a breezy veranda - all make for a welcome sanctuary after a day's exploration. **Meals included:** B, L, D



Days 7 – 9. Tuesday 2 to Thursday 4 July 2024 inclusive. Karawari area.

The tropical lowland rainforest around the lodge is one of earth's most complex of habitats, housing an immense variety of flora and fauna including an amazing 229 different bird species. We will spend two full days birding in this area, searching for the area's three birds of paradise, the King, Twelve-Wire and the Magnificent Riflebird and other lowland, rainforest and freshwater birds - particularly parrots, including lorikeets, Eclectus, Palm Cockatoos and Edwards-Fig Parrot. Papuan frogmouth, owls, birds of prey, bowerbirds, and a variety of honeyeaters are also found in this area. During this time there will also be an opportunity to visit some nearby local villages where we will be privileged see some of the traditional dances and learn about some of the traditional ceremonies and sacred buildings etc. There will also be an opportunity to purchase some hand-made artefacts directly from the villagers. This is a seldom offered and truly memorable experience.

Accommodation: Karawari Lodge (en suite rooms). **Meals included:** B, L, D each day.

Day 10. Friday 5 July 2024. Karawari – Mt Hagen and Rondon Ridge.

This morning after breakfast we will transfer from Karawari Lodge to the airstrip for our charter flight back to Mt Hagen (cost included in tour price). On our arrival at Mt Hagen, we will transfer back to Rondon Ridge

Accommodation: Rondon Ridge (en suite rooms). **Meals included:** B, L, D.

Day 11. Monday 24 June 2024. Rondon Ridge.

We will spend the day around Rondon Ridge to target species we might have missed or reconnect with some of our favourites for photos. This is our final opportunity to search for our last views of Highlands Birds of Paradise and other local birds.

Accommodation: Rondon Ridge (en suite rooms). **Meals included:** B, L, D.

Day 12. Sunday 7 July 2024. Rondon Ridge to Port Moresby to Cairns.

This morning we will be transferred from Rondon Ridge to Mt Hagen for our International flight back to Cairns. We recommend the group book on the same flight from Mt Hagen to Cairns. We will advise guests of the Air Niugini flight numbers once the airline's schedule is confirmed. (Flight cost not included in the tour price). If necessary, we will be transferred to an airport hotel during the waiting period at Port Moresby where we can relax by the pool and purchase lunch, snacks etc. The tour arrangements finish at Cairns airport.

Accommodation: none. **Meals included:** B.

Please note: We recommend that you plan to stay in Cairns both tonight and tomorrow night (7 + 8 July 2024) in case the flight schedules out of PNG change. Please do not plan for any international connecting flights during this time.



Short-tailed Paradigalla. Photo: G. Jones



Orange-crowned Fairy-wren. Photo: G. Jones

The tour arrangements finish here.

Further Information:

Group size: 6-8 participants + Inala leader + local guide

Tour Price: AU\$13,860 per person twin share. **Single supplement:** AU\$2,240.

Additional accommodation can be booked on your behalf in Cairns if required. Please let us know.

Inclusions: Accommodation for each night of the tour, specialist guiding and transport for day and night tours as outlined in the itinerary, all meals (B, L, D) and activities outlined in the itinerary and National Park entry fees. Also includes return charter flights between Mt Hagen/Karawari (days 6 and 10). (These prices are based on the current rate of GST and may need to be adjusted if there are significant changes.)

Exclusions: International Air Niugini (Cairns-Port Moresby-Mt Hagen flights on days 1 and 12), domestic flights to and from Cairns, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages and expenses of a personal nature (snacks, travel insurance, internet, laundry, tips etc).

PLEASE NOTE:

- Whilst we aim to follow the itinerary as planned, please note that the itinerary provided should only be used as a guideline. Depending on individual trip circumstances, weather and local information, the exact itinerary may not be strictly adhered to. The guides reserve the right to make changes to the itinerary as they see fit. Expect the unexpected!
- **Charter flights:** It is important for you to realize that, for charters a) Departure times (both going and returning) can change at the last minute. b) Your flight may be advertised as non-stop. However, the operator may legally change the routing and make intermediate stops at the last minute. c) The charter operator may legally substitute types of aircraft at the last minute. Charter aircraft are generally not as comfortable as the scheduled aircraft.
- **Luggage:** Due to the size of the planes on the internal charter flights between lodges, the **maximum baggage allowance** is 10kg (22 pounds) per person check-in and 5kg (11 pounds) of carry-on per person. Large, hard sided suitcases are not permitted on charter aircraft, and it is not possible to buy extra weight if the charter is full. The dimensions of the main bag should not be more than **35cm x 81cm** or **14 inches x 32 inches** and will be carried in the cargo pod. Space in the pod is the main restriction.
- A reasonable level of fitness is required for this tour, particularly around Rondon Ridge and the highlands where walking can be steep and muddy (depending on weather conditions). However, alternative options may be available for less arduous walks if required.
- For much of this tour we will be in a wonderful yet remote part of the world. Most of the roads are unsealed and rough. If you have medical conditions or health concerns, it is important you make us aware of these in advance of this.
- [Click here for a separate online doc that answers many of the frequently asked questions about Small Group Tours](#)

Map showing the main areas outlined in the tour in relation to Port Moresby:

