

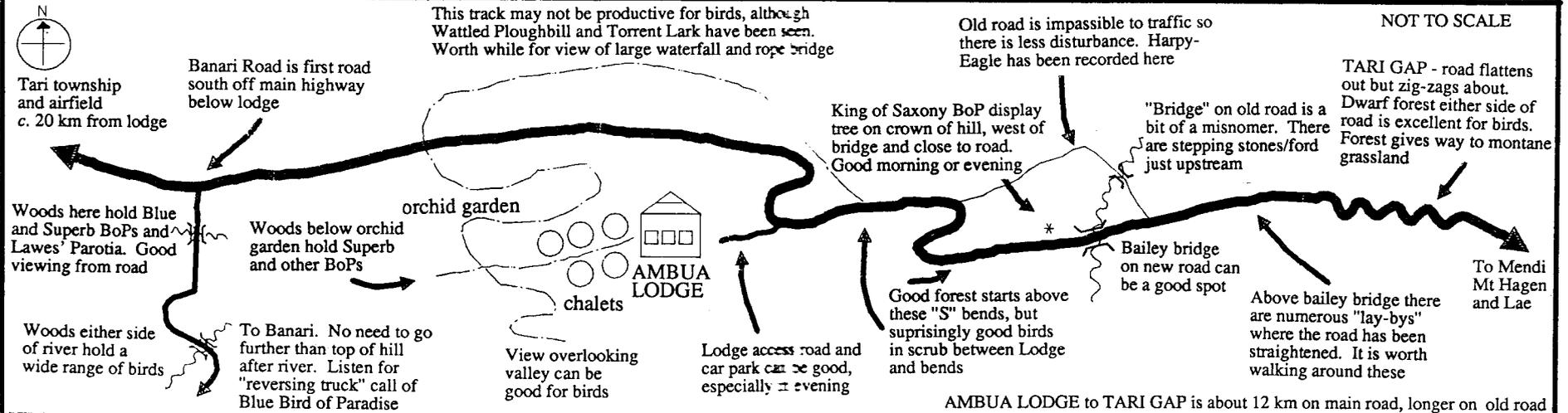
TARI BASIN (c. 1700 m)
INCL. TOWN AND AIRSTRIP

Black-shouldered Kite
Black Kite
Waders (on airfield)
Richard's Pipit
Long-tailed Shrike
Black-headed Whistler
New Guinea White-Eye } check
Western White-Eye }
Raggiana Bird of Paradise

BIRD WATCHING at AMBUA LODGE by Roger KI Hicks

ROAD ABOVE BAILEY BRIDGE
(open forest)

Black-mantled Goshawk	Black Monarch
Little Red Lorikeet	Dwarf Cassowary
Plum-faced Lorikeet	Brown Falcon
Orange-billed Lorikeet	Goldie's Lorikeet
Papuan Lorikeet	Mountain Nightjar
Ribbon-tailed Astrapia	Logrunner
King of Saxony BoP	Papuan Scrub-Wren
Brown Sicklebill	Tit Berrypecker
White-winged Robin	Archbold's Bowerbird
Grey Wagtail	
Tawny Grassbird	
Fan-tailed Berrypecker	
Lesser Melampitta	
Chestnut Forest-Rail	} identify with care
Forbes' Forest-Rail	



BANARI ROAD (c. 1900 m)

Blue BoP
Black Sicklebill
Superb BoP
Lawes' Parotia
Papuan King Parrot
Blue-collared Parrot
Hooded Mannikin
Hooded Cuckoo-Shrike
Black-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike
Stout-billed Cuckoo-Shrike
Island Warbler
Long-tailed Shrike
Black Butcherbird
Macgregor's Bowerbird

GROUNDS OF AMBUA LODGE (c. 2200 m)

At least 7 Birds of Paradise

Lawes' Parotia	Blue-grey Robin
Ribbon-tailed Astrapia	Black-throated Robin
Brown Sicklebill	Papuan Lorikeet
Short-tailed Paradigalla	Varied Sitella
Buff-tailed Sicklebill	Black Sitella
Blue BoP	Black Fantail
Superb BoP	Dimorphic Fantail
Loria's BoP	Friendly Fantail
Blue-faced Parrot-Finch	Mountain Peltops
Torrent Flycatcher	White-breasted Fruit-Dove
Torrent Lark	Hooded Cuckoo-Shrike
Salvadori's Teal	Orange-crowned Fairy-Wren
Rufous-naped Whistler	Mottled Whistler
Papuan Boobook - usually in tree between chalets 9 & 11	

ROAD BELOW BAILEY BRIDGE

(forest trees closer together)

Mountain Mouse-Warbler	King of Saxony BoP
Ashy Robin	Ribbon-tailed Astrapia
Canary Flycatcher	Brown Sicklebill
Black-breasted Boatbill	Macgregor's Bowerbird
Sclater's Whistler	Grey Wagtail
Regent Whistler	Canary Flycatcher
Brown-backed Whistler	Brown-breasted Gerygone
Blue-capped Ifrita	Grey Gerygone
Belford's Melidectes	Common Smoky Honeyeater

TARI GAP (c. 2900 m)

Tiger Parrots
Mountain Firetail
Crested BoP
King of Saxony BoP
Ribbon-tailed Astrapia
Brown Sicklebill
Macgregor's Bowerbird
Archbold's Bowerbird
Crested Berrypecker
New-Guinea Harpy-Eagle
Alpine Pipit (rare)
Brown Quail
Red-collared Myzomela
Grey-streaked Honeyeater
Sooty Melidectes
Belford's Melidectes

A WEEKEND IN TARI

ROGER K. HICKS AND JENNY H. HICKS

The Tari area, in the Southern Highlands Province, is the home of some of the stranger and more spectacular of PNG's birds. With the opening of Ambua Lodge, in early 1986, it has acquired a reputation as one of the top birding locations in the world. Bird tours, from all over, visit the lodge and an extensive list of species, including 13 birds of paradise, have been recorded. A booklet detailing the species to be seen in the area, written by Brian Finch and updated by Cliff & Dawn Frith and Nick Gardner, is available from the lodge. Although several members of the PNGBS have visited the area, and stayed at the lodge, little has appeared in the PNGBS publications.

Ambua Lodge lies at about 2200 m on the edge of the inhabited, and cultivated Tari basin and unspoilt moss forest. The township of Tari lies 700 m lower while the forest above the lodge extends to the grassland of Tari Gap at 2800 m. Within this altitude range can be found a wide variety of birds and nearly every species seen will be a PNG endemic.

We visited Ambua Lodge on an Air Niugini weekender package in early October 1987. It was the first time this year that we had been away on our own and with due deference to PNGBS members it made a very nice change. We arrived in Tari before mid-day and were transported to the lodge. The bird-watching was delayed by lunch and then heavy rain but later we found a fruiting tree in the woods below the orchid garden which was attracting several birds of paradise. Over the weekend we watched this tree for about 8 hours and recorded the following feeding on the ripe black berries; an adult and juvenile Short-tailed Paradigalla; a female Blue Bird of Paradise; a female Lawes' Parotia; male and female Superb Bird of Paradise; male and female Loria's Bird of Paradise. Female Brown Sicklebill and Ribbon-tailed Astrapia were seen nearby. An impressive complement of birds, and all within the lodge grounds.

Early on Saturday morning we got a lift up to the Gap and began walking down to the lodge. In the low scrub bordering the grassland we watched a female Crested Bird of Paradise feeding on small berries and a pair of Crested Berrypeckers feeding in the next bush. The machine-gun-like call of a male Brown Sicklebill could be heard almost continuously while a female was watched foraging along moss-covered branches. Lower down in open moss forest the "radio-static" call of a male King of Saxony Bird of Paradise was heard and he was eventually located displaying in the top of a tree with his "antennae" waving in all directions, an unforgettable sight. Our stroll down the hill became a sprint through heavy rain and we arrived at the lodge soaked to the skin. The log fire of the bar/lounge was most welcoming.

On Sunday we went below the lodge and saw Superb Bird of Paradise and numerous Island Leaf Warblers but neither the hoped for Black Sicklebill nor male Blue Bird of Paradise. The remainder of the day we spent in the grounds of Ambua. A Torrent-Lark was seen near the spectacular waterfall, across the road from the lodge. A pair of Varied Sitella foraged on the trunks of trees along the driveway and a female Macgregor's Bowerbird was seen in the wood below the orchid garden.

Only a few of the species we recorded this weekend are mentioned above. Our list is presented below, but a dedicated bird watcher could add many to that over a long weekend. For any bird-watcher visiting PNG this area must be high on the list of places to visit. Nowhere else in the country is it possible to find so many endemic species which are so readily accessible. For example we saw ten species of bird of paradise in our first 24 hours. For "non-birders" there is the intriguing culture of the Huli wigmen, the inhabitants of the Tari basin, who use bird of paradise feathers in their head-dresses. It is a fascinating destination, whatever your interest.

Species list. h = heard only

New Guinea Harpy-Eagle (h), Little Curlew, Black-billed Cuckoo-Dove, White-breasted Fruit-Dove, Papuan Mountain Pigeon, Dusky Lory, Rainbow Lorikeet, Papuan Lorikeet, Yellow-billed Lorikeet, Tiger-Parrot sp., Rufous-throated Bronze-Cuckoo, Papuan Boobook, Mountain Swiftlet, Glossy Swiftlet, Pacific Swallow, Long-tailed Shrike, Pied Chat, Island Thrush, Tawny Grassbird, White-shouldered Fairy-Wren, Large Scrub-Wren, Buff-faced Scrub-Wren, Black Fantail, Friendly Fantail, Canary Flycatcher, Black-throated Robin, White-winged Robin, Blue-grey Robin, Fan-tailed Berrypecker, Crested Berrypecker, Red-collared Myzomela, Grey-backed Streaked Honeyeater, Belford's Melidectes, Yellow-browed Melidectes, Common Smoky Honeyeater, Hooded Mannikin, Mountain Firetail (h), Torrent-Lark, Great Wood-Swallow, Macgregor's Bowerbird, Crested Bird of Paradise, Loria's Bird of Paradise, Short-tailed Paradigalla, Brown Sicklebill, Ribbon-tailed Astrapia, Stephanie's Astrapia, Lawes' Parotia, King of Saxony Bird of Paradise, Blue Bird of Paradise.

The illustration on the centre pages is a birder's map of the Tari Gap area.

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FIELD GUIDES INC. TOUR OF PNG 1986

Field Guides Inc. arrange annual bird-watching tours to PNG. Brett Whitney, the tour leader, has supplied the PNGBS with a 16 page annotated list of the species recorded on the 1986 tour. Some of the tour highlights and interesting observations have been extracted from the list and are presented here. The full list is held in the PNGBS library.

Field Guides Inc. were in PNG for four weeks from 11/8/86 - 7/9/86. Nearly 350 species of birds were recorded, including 24 birds of paradise and several rarely seen species.

PROVINCE ABBREVIATIONS: Cen = Central; Eng = Enga; = Eastern Highlands; Mor = Morobe; NCD = National Capital District; SHP = Southern Highlands; WHP = Western Highlands. [Note: we have been unable to locate Ilaru Pass - Eds.]

- DWARF CASSOWARY *Casuarius bennetti*
Pair seen on track at Baiyer River Sanctuary (WHP).
- BLACK-MANTLED GOSHAWK *Accipiter melanochlamys*
At Mt. Kaindi (Mor), Wapenamanda (Eng) and Tari (SHP).
- MEYER'S GOSHAWK *Accipiter meyerianus*
One Moitaka settling ponds (NCD), and one Lae (Mor). Both dark morphs.
- NEW GUINEA HARPY-EAGLE *Harpyopsis novaeguineae*
Two sightings. one soaring bird at Ilaru Pass. At Wapenamanda Gorge (Eng) an adult was seen reaching into a mossy cavity, attempting to extract something. Eventually it gave up and began to consume a cuscus that it had apparently already captured.
- CHESTNUT FOREST RAIL *Rallina rubra*
A pair in cloud forest near Tari Gap (SHP), duetting loudly.
- LITTLE RED LORIKEET *Charmosyna pulchella*
Possible nest in thick moss on the underside of a heavy limb, at Trauna Ridge (WHP).
- PAPUAN LORIKEET *Charmosyna papou*
Possible nest in thick moss on underside of a limb at c 2150 m, above Ambua Lodge, Tari (SHP).
- ORANGE-BILLED LORIKEET *Neopsittacus musschenbroekii*
Pair working on a cavity 3.5 m up in a diameter trunk, possibly a nesting cavity, at 2125 m on Mt Kaindi (Mor).