



WILDLIFE AND TRIBES OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA



**Stewart
McPherson** 
Natural History Tours

From the capital of Port Moresby, we travel to the Southern Highlands of the Western Highlands Province in search of New Guinea's most iconic animals, its Birds of Paradise, as well as its rich montane forests and the alpine orchid species that inhabit them. Based out of our comfortable, locally-run lodge to maximise comfort and exploration time, we make daily journeys to different highland destinations, both to target specific birds and plants, as well as to simply explore, discover and enjoy, always in the company of guides hired from the local tribes and traditional landowners. We also have a rare visit to villages of the Huli (Haroli) people – one of the most famous tribes of Papua New Guinea – notorious for their wigmen, whose spectacular and elaborate wigs and headdresses that often incorporate feathers, flowers and leaves. The Huli were not known to the outside world until November 1934 and still have an inclusive kinship system.

START POINT:	Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.
END POINT:	Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.
DATES:	September 2017
IDEAL GROUP SIZE:	8 to 10 tourists, plus Stewart McPherson as expedition leader.

Cost per person: \$4711.00 per person Twin share – Land only
Single Supplement on request



ITINERARY

Day 1: A gentle start to the expedition, with a visit to Port Moresby Nature Park (formally the National Botanic Gardens). A well maintained and ethical zoological park and conservation project where we can see animals that we may be less likely to encounter during the rest of our itinerary, namely: tree kangaroos, cuscus, cassowaries, hornbills, and a several Bird of Paradise (BoP) species. Recent successes include the Crinkle Collared Manucode BoP - the Port Moresby Nature Park is the only place in the world currently breeding this species. Fawn-breasted Bowerbirds are often seen up close and personal. We may also see Grey Dorcopsis Wallabies. Overnight in hotel in Port Moresby and dinner in local restaurant.



Day 2: Transfer from Port Moresby to your lodge at 2400 metres elevation in the Western Highlands Province. If daylight permits, go in search of birdlife and orchids around the lodge. Overnight and dinner in lodge.

Day 3: An early breakfast is followed by a 5am transfer to a birding site near Rondon. Over 150 species of birds are known from the region, including 11 BoP, over a dozen honeyeaters, as well as white-eye, whistlers, flycatchers, fantails, warblers, wrens, cuckoo-shrike and over 15 types of parrot. Return to the lodge for a late lunch before descending to a lower altitude to glimpse the Superb BoP during its evening display.



Day 4: Dedicated to the stunning Raggiana BoP, today begins with an hour's morning drive to the birding site, which sometimes hosts Superb and Magnificent BoP also, along with trumpet manucode, Jobi manucode and helmeted friarbird. Other birds of interest include yellow breasted bower bird, rainbow lorikeet, doubled eyed pygmy parrot, clamorous reed warbler, white shoulder fairy wren, great wood swallow, little grass bird, dollar bird, purple swamp hen and hooded pitohui. The pitohui is one of the few known poisonous birds, with batrachotoxin present in its skin and feathers! After lunch, we visit Kumul Lodge, whose garden visitors include BoP like the Ribbon-tailed Astrapia, but also the beautiful if ballsy tiger parrot. Overnight and dinner in lodge.

Day 5: An early morning start to climb towards the summit of Mount Hagen to view orchids and

excellent birding opportunities in the alpine zone. Though potentially strenuous on account of the altitude, the trail is safe and well marked. Participants who are not up to the ascent may explore the lower parts of the trail at their leisure. Return to the lodge in time for dinner.

Day 6: An early start to the stomping grounds of the stunning Blue BoP. Other species seen here include the King of Saxony BoP and nine other more irregular BoP visitors. Once satisfied, explore the local forest and roadsides for orchids on your leisurely return to base. Overnight and dinner in lodge.

Day 7: A visit to the Baiyer River with the intention of seeing the Lesser Bird of Paradise come tea-time. In the intervening period, explore the local reserve for orchids and other birds species, which may include hooded pitohui, Zoë's imperial pigeon, trumpet manucode, Jobi manucode, southern baza, helmeted friarbird, great egret, white shouldered fairy wren, yellow breasted bower bird, sulphur-crested cockatoo, the imposing Blyth's hornbill, black winged kite and black kite. Overnight and dinner in lodge.

Day 8: Transfer to Port Moresby and check-in to hotel by early afternoon. Thereafter, transfer to the Botanical Garden to enjoy the collection of local and imported orchid species. Overnight in hotel. Dinner in local restaurant.

Day 9: A whole day visit to Varirata National Park in search of local birds and lowland orchids. A number of BoP have been recorded here, including the growling riflebird, Raggiana BoP, as well as frogmouths, kingfishers and bower birds. Overnight in hotel. Dinner in local restaurant.

Day 10 and 11: We travel to a Huli Village. Soon after arriving, the Huli Headman will greet us. We may see a tribal dance or a warrior display, and will be shown the Huli's prized wigs and headdresses, and some of the Huli's elaborate costumes and ritual dances. If we are lucky, we may be able to attend a pig feast during our visit. We will be show around the village, and glimpse the Huli's traditional hunter-gatherer way of life, and hear of their long distance trading journeys to and from the highlands. Each visit is different, and activities are spontaneous to some degree, depending upon the Huli's wishes. Overnight in a local hotel. Dinner in a local restaurant.





Day 12: Transfers back to Port Moresby airport for international departures after lunchtime.

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EASY/MODERATE: Anyone with a normal level of health and stamina, capable of walking two or three kilometres across flat terrain will be able to complete this expedition. Most activities involve short walks with guides, however the itinerary does include an optional trek up the slopes of Mount Hagen which can be regarded as strenuous by some. Alternate activities are available in the lowlands that do not involve climbing for those who do not wish to ascend Mount Hagen. The overwhelming majority of healthy adults succeed in climbing Mount Hagen.

ACCOMMODATION: Comfortable local hotels that are the equivalent of 2 to 3 STAR accommodation by international ratings standards. When in the lowlands, all hotels used have air conditioning. Single supplement is available on request.