Full Detailed Itinerary - Pacific Islands: New Caledonia, Fiji, Vanuatu, and Samoa

Day 1: Arrival in New Caledonia

After arrival in Noumea, the capital of New Caledonia, we will do some local birding at in the nearby gardens, or maybe make a foray up to Mt Khoggis, where we may encounter the super-intelligent tool-using New Caledonian Crow, White-bellied Goshawk and maybe the stunning Cloven-feathered Dove. Five nights in Noumea.

Days 2-5: New Caledonia

We have four full days to find the incredible Kagu, and other cool endemics of New Caledonia. White-bellied Goshawk, Cloven-feathered Dove, Goliath Imperial-Pigeon, Horned Parakeet, New Caledonian Lorikeet, New Caledonian Myzomela, New Caledonian friarbird, Barred Honeyeater, Yellow-bellied Robin, New Caledonian Whistler, New Caledonian Crow, New Caledonian Cuckooshrike, Striated Starling, Green-backed White-eye and Red-throated Parrotfinch. The critically endangered Crow Honeyeater and New Caledonian Grassbird are much more difficult, and we will put in a huge effort to try see these gems. The first morning we will visit the famous Riviere Blue NP to find the funky flightless Kagu and many of the other endemics. We will also visit Farino and some other inland sites for birds that don't give up easily. So long as the conditions permit, we shall use a short flight to visit the Loyalty Islands to seek out the extremely local white-eyes: the abundant Small Lifou and rarer Large Lifou White-eyes. On another day we head to Ouvea for the local Ouvea Parakeet (similar to the Horned Parakeet!). If we are lucky some shore-based sea-watching may reveal Tahiti or Gould's Petrels. If the key target birds fall quickly that again leaves us an opportunity for some optional snorkeling in New Caledonia. The worlds largest underwater NP, three times the size of Germany surrounds this tropical paradise. If you don't want to bring your own gear, it can be rented on site for reasonable cost.

Day 6: New Caledonia to Fiji (Nadi)

We have the morning to again explore part of New Caledonia before we fly to Fiji (Nadi) for an overnight stay.

Day 7: Fiji (Viti Levu to Kandavu)

This morning we take the hop flight to the island paradise of Kandavu. We will be picked up and transferred to our lodge on this sleepy but forest-cloaked island that has four stunning endemics all to itself. The lodge's lush gardens are excellent for birding and the nearby reef a great local snorkeling spot. We spend the afternoon starting our birding in earnest – luckily right in the lodge gardens!

Day 8: Fiji (Kandavu)

Kandavu has four endemic bird species: Crimson Shining-Parrot, Kandavu Fantail, Velvet Dove and Kandavu Honey-eater and we hope to catch up with them quickly as they all occur in the lodge's gardens and adjacent forest. But the island also has many other good Fiji endemics such as Peale's Imperial-Pigeon,

Collared Lory, Slaty Monarch and Orange-breasted Myzomela and depending on what we still need we will target these too. However, for those that choose, there is plenty of time here for both birding and some incredible options for snorkeling (costs not included) in the late afternoon, which our resort specializes in.

Day 9: Fiji (Kandavu to Tavueni)

The morning around the resort can be used up either by some snorkeling or light birding before we pack up and return to the airport and fly to the paradise that is Taveuni in the north, perhaps the most idyllic of the Fijian islands. We will be picked up and whisked away to our seaside resort and may have some time for some late afternoon birding. The house reef here was impacted by the Tsunami, but reef fish persist if that's what you prefer to do with your afternoon. Day 10. Fiji (Tavueni) We have one full day to bird this spectacular place and we will start early and with a packed breakfast. Using a 4×4 we ascend the spectacular nearby Des Vogues peak where will be stationed in the higher altitude mountains at dawn. Here we aim to find the marvelous blue spangled-gem Tavueni Silktail (it's origins still of some dispute), noisy and glorious Red Shining-Parrot, omnipresent Fiji Goshawk, Fiji Bush-warbler, Fiji White-eye, gargantuan Yellow-billed Honeyeater, and if we are lucky the spectacular Orange Dove. We head back down to the lodge for lunch and then back out again for an afternoon session in some lowland forests that give us a better shot at Orange and Many-coloured Doves, or any of the endemics we may have missed.

Day 10. Fiji (Tavueni)

We have one full day to bird this spectacular place and we will start early and with a packed breakfast. Using a 4×4 we ascend the spectacular nearby Des Vogues peak where will be stationed in the higher altitude mountains at dawn. Here we aim to find the marvelous blue spangled-gem Tavueni Silktail (it's origins still of some dispute), noisy and glorious Red Shining-Parrot, omnipresent Fiji Goshawk, Fiji Bush-warbler, Fiji White-eye, gargantuan Yellow-billed Honeyeater, and if we are lucky the spectacular Orange Dove. We head back down to the lodge for lunch and then back out again for an afternoon session in some lowland forests that give us a better shot at Orange and Many-coloured Doves, or any of the endemics we may have missed.

Day 11: Fiji (Taveuni – Suva)

An early morning flight takes us to Nadi, and then we head to the opposite side of Viti Levu to Suva, where a short drive will have us in a forested valley with many of Fiji's main island endemics nearby. With luck we may get Masked Shining-Parrot, Golden Dove or another of Viti Levu's standout endemics before dinner. ?

Days 12-13: Fiji (Viti Levu)

Much of the island is unfortunately deforested, but we make our way to the best remaining patches of mid-altitude forest in the highlands. Here we will try track down the remainder of the available Fijian endemics. One of the main skulkers is the noisy but very inconspicuous Long-legged Warbler. Although views of this bird are never garuanteed, we will keep plugging away to try get it. The improbable Golden Dove and Masked Shining Parrot will be sought after if we did not catch up with them yesterday, as will Sulphur-breasted Myzomela, Kikua (split from Wattled Honey-eater) and Pacific Robin. Two birds that will require a concerted effort to see will be the snazzy-looking Black-faced Shrikebill, and the immaculate and rare Pink-billed Parrotfinch. Although both birds are extremely rare, they still persist and we have decent chances for them.

Day 14: Departure (Samoa Post-tour Extension Begins)

Today we make our way to the Nadi airport, either for flights home, or to enjoy the Samoa extension.

Vanuatu Extension (Pre-tour)

Day 1: Arrival in Vanuatu (Luganville, Espiritu Santo)

The extension begins on the outer-lying island of Espiritu Santo. You need to arrive here by this afternoon.

Days 2-3: Loru and Valthe Conservation Areas

Not only is Espiritu Santo the best island for Vanuatu endemics, these conservation areas hold the best remaining tracts of lowland forest on the island group. Our time here will be spent chasing down the rarest of Vanuatu's endemics in form of the red-headed Vanuatu Scrubfowl and spiffy-looking Chestnut-bellied Kingfisher. If we are very lucky the Vanuatu Honeyeater may have wandered to lower elevations as they did the last time we visit Valthe, but we will not count on that. Other endemics we will need to find include the stunning Buff-bellied Monarch, noisy Melanesian Whistler, and yellow-speckled-emerald Tanna Fruit-Dove. Other localized specialties include Mackinlay's Cuckoo-Dove, Pacific Imperial-Pigeon and Red-crowned Fruit-Dove.

Day 4: Departure

We return to Luganville and jet off for New Caledonia, where our Pacific ramblings continue.

Samoa Extension (Post-tour)

Day 1: Apia, Samoa

After arrival at Apia, we will make the short drive into the capital and onto the hill forest above the town, where some great endemics will be awaiting us upon our arrival.

Days 2-3: Western Samoa

We will bird in both the extensive le Pupu-Pu'e NP and the valley down into the Vaisagno watershed. Our targets include the endemic Mao (a weird large spectacular honeyeater), Samoan Wattled Honeyeater, Flat-billed Kingfisher, Samoan Fantail, Samoan Monarch, the rare and temperamental Samoan Triller, and Samoan Starling. Blue-crowned Lorikeet is common here, and Red-headed Parrotfinch occur, but they do not like landing much and so we will need to be lucky to connect with them. If we have been lucky with the birds, and the tides work for us, we can take a swing by the Palolo Deep Marine reserve one afternoon which has fantastic shallow reefs and snorkeling kit for hire. If we've seen parrotfinches, we may as well try add some parrotfish too. The local birding is good for those that prefer to keep their feathers dry.

Day 4: Departure

After some local birding around the lodge we arrange for transfers to the Apia airport for departures. For those that want to extend their stay, speak to the office as there may be a possibility to head to Savai'i for the Samoan White-eye.
?

Toll free from the USA & Canada: (800) 348-5941

International number: +1-409-515-9110

Toll free from the UK: +0800-046-5654

Email: info@tropicalbirding.com