



## SOUTH WEST PACIFIC ODYSSEY

6 – 23th April 2016

### SYSTEMATIC LIST

The taxonomy and English names used in this checklist generally follows the recommendations of the *International Ornithologists' Union's World Bird List* with revisions made where an alternative name/taxonomy is considered more appropriate.

This systematic list was compiled by Chris Collins (based on the figures agreed at the nightly logs) and includes all species recorded between departing Tauranga, New Zealand and arriving at Kokopo, New Britain.

Accurately counting seabirds at sea is extremely difficult (eg as one can never be sure which birds are following or revisiting the ship), so the system outlined below was adopted, with this also used for the more numerous land birds:

1-10 = actual number seen

11-100 = A

101-1,000 = B

1,001-10,000 = C

10,001-100,000 = D

Non-native introductions are shown in brackets.

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### BIRDS

#### **Pacific Black Duck** *Anas superciliosa*

A low A was logged on the zodiac cruise on 19 April whilst cruising the channels around Vakao and Barora Fa Islands, Santa Isabel archipelago with the only other sighting being a single bird on Shortland (21 April).

#### **Melanesian Scrubfowl** *Megapodius eremita*

A total of three were seen with a lone bird during the shore excursion on Vakao and Barora Fa, Santa Isabel archipelago (19 April) and two individuals on 21 April on Shortland. This species was also heard on Makira (17 April).

#### **[California Quail** *Callipepla californica*]

A lone individual of this successful introduction on Norfolk Island was logged on 10 April.

**[Red Junglefowl *Gallus gallus*]**

This introduced species is well established on Norfolk Island with A logged (10 April).

It is worth noting that although the Australians regard these birds as 'tickable' as Red Junglefowls, many birds seem to be closer to feral chickens.....

**Little Penguin *Eudyptula minor***

Three birds were seen shortly after leaving the wharf at Tauranga on 6 April.

**Snowy Albatross *Diomedea exulans***

A bird which showed characters of this form/species was seen not far from the Three Kings Islands off northern New Zealand on 8 April.

**Gibson's Albatross *Diomedea gibsoni***

At least four birds showing characteristics of this form/species were seen in the Hauraki Gulf (7 April) with six seen the following day around the Three Kings.

**Campbell Albatross *Thalassarche impavida***

Six were seen in the Hauraki Gulf (7 April) with two noted the following day whilst cruising north from the Three Kings Islands. The characteristic honey-coloured eyes of this form/species were seen on many of these birds.

**White-capped Albatross *Thalassarche steadi***

A total of five birds were logged in the Hauraki Gulf (7 April) and the following day (north from the Three Kings Islands), with the birds considered to be this form/species of 'Shy' albatross.

**Buller's Albatross *Thalassarche bulleri***

A single individual was seen on 7 April not long after sailing from the Hauraki Gulf.

**Beck's Petrel *Pseudobulweria becki***

One of the major specialities of the voyage, with about six individuals of this extremely poorly known species being seen off New Ireland on 22 April. The first of these was on a chum slick offshore from Cap St George, with others seen late in the afternoon whilst cruising closer to the headland.

**Tahiti Petrel *Pseudobulweria rostrata***

This species was seen on an almost daily basis from 9-15 April inclusive (day south of Norfolk Island – day south of Santa Ana Island) with A logged on four dates and single figure counts on three other days.

**Grey-faced Petrel *Pterodroma gouldi***

This species was seen on a daily basis between the Hauraki Gulf and a day south of Norfolk Island (6-9 April) with the highest count being a low B on 8 April (northwards from the Three Kings Islands).

**Providence Petrel *Pterodroma solandri***

This species is not recorded annually on the SWPO, however, two individuals were seen on the sea day between Norfolk Island and New Caledonia (11 April).

**Kermadec Petrel *Pterodroma neglecta***

A total of seven birds were recorded between the Three Kings Islands and the sea day south of New Caledonia (8-10 April).

**White-necked Petrel *Pterodroma cervicalis***

Six birds were recorded whilst cruising north from the Three Kings Islands (8 April) with the same number noted the following day.

**Cook's Petrel** *Pterodroma cookii*

This species has generally finished breeding, with most birds having left their New Zealand breeding grounds, by the time the SWPO starts, although three were logged in the Hauraki Gulf (7 April) with two the following day as the ship cruised north from the Three Kings Islands.

**Gould's Petrel** *Pterodroma leucoptera*

Seen on five dates between the Three Kings Islands (8 April) and northern New Caledonia (14 April). The highest count was north of Norfolk Island (10 April) when a high A was logged.

**Black-winged Petrel** *Pterodroma nigripennis*

Encountered on a daily basis from the Three Kings Islands (8 April) until a day north of Norfolk Island (11 April) with A logged on the first three days.

**Fairy Prion** *Pachyptila turtur*

B was logged in the evening after leaving Tauranga (6 April) with a low A the following day in the Hauraki Gulf.

**Bulwer's Petrel** *Bulweria bulwerii*

The only sighting was a lone bird on 22 April as the ship sailed towards Cap St George, New Ireland.

**Black Petrel** *Procellaria parkinsoni*

The first sightings were in the Hauraki Gulf (7 April) with five birds noted. There were then daily records for the subsequent four days with the highest count being the sea day near the Three Kings where a high A was logged.

**Streaked Shearwater** *Calonectris leucomelas*

Somewhat unexpectedly a lone bird was seen whilst cruising from Makira to Guadalcanal on 17 April. More typically, a low A was then logged as the ship sailed towards Cap St George, New Ireland (22 April).

**Flesh-footed Shearwater** *Puffinus carneipes*

This species was uncharacteristically uncommon with a lone bird in the Hauraki Gulf (7 April) and another near Cap St George (22 April) being the only sightings.

**Wedge-tailed Shearwater** *Puffinus pacificus*

This was amongst the most frequently encountered species on the voyage with sightings on 13 dates. The first records were a day south of Norfolk Island (9 April) and birds were then seen on an almost daily basis for the rest of the expedition. On the majority of dates, a high A or B was logged, with single figure counts on only two occasions.

**Buller's Shearwater** *Puffinus bulleri*

Only seen in the Hauraki Gulf on 7 April where a low C was recorded and the following day (cruising north from the Three Kings) when a low A was logged.

**Short-tailed Shearwater** *Puffinus tenuirostris*

This species was seen on eleven dates between a day south of Norfolk Island (9 April) and Cap St George, New Ireland (22 April). The numbers seen on the first of these dates were spectacular with hundreds of birds passing the ship every minute in the late afternoon. It was difficult to accurately estimate the numbers of individuals involved but the general consensus was that about 50,000 birds were seen over the course of three hours.

**Fluttering Shearwater** *Puffinus gavia*

A low B was logged as the ship headed north from Tauranga in the afternoon of 6 April.

**Little Shearwater** *Puffinus assimilis*

Only recorded on three dates with one bird in the Hauraki Gulf on 7 April and five not far from Norfolk Island (9-10 April).

The birds seen around Norfolk Island were presumably of the race *assimilis* which breeds on Norfolk Island. It is interesting to note that according to Margaret Christian who wrote the field guide to the birds of the island, there are summer and winter breeding populations which vary so markedly in size that they require different size leg rings !!

Further south, the bird was presumably of the subspecies *haurakiensis* which, as its name suggests, breeds in the Hauraki Gulf.

**Atoll ("Tropical") Shearwater** *Puffinus (bailloni) dichrous*

Somewhat unexpectedly, the only sightings were a lone bird whilst cruising between Makira and Guadalcanal (17 April) and two the following day between Guadalcanal and Barora Fa.

Although the Audubon's/Little/Tropical Shearwater complex has recently been split by several authorities, it seems clear that the situation has not been fully resolved, as there are plumage differences between some of the different populations, winter and summer breeders on the same island etc. The name 'Atoll shearwater' has, therefore, been used to describe the birds seen on this voyage, ie to differentiate them from those in the Indian Ocean, however, even this is undoubtedly a simplification of the situation.

**Wilson's Storm-petrel** *Oceanites oceanicus*

This species was observed on seven dates during the voyage. All counts were in single figures with the exception of the sea day cruising north from the Three Kings when a low A was logged.

Most of the birds seen were flying strongly in a northerly directions and were presumably migrants heading for the Northern Hemisphere.

**White-faced Storm-petrel** *Pelagodroma marina*

The only sightings were two birds as we cruised north from the Hauraki Gulf (7 April) and three the following day off the Three Kings Islands.

**New Zealand Storm-petrel** *Fregatta maorianus*

Oiling in the outer Hauraki Gulf for this species proved highly successful with about eight birds on our slick. There were then sightings throughout the rest of the day as the ship cruised north, with a total of twenty five individuals being logged. This is the highest number recorded on any SWPO voyage and suggests the species is seemingly recovering following the clearance of introduced pests from the Hauraki Gulf islands.

**"Solomon Band-rumped Storm-petrel"** *Oceanodroma sp.*

Eight birds which resemble Band-rumped Storm-petrel were seen and photographed a day south of Santa Ana. It is interesting to note that this is at least the fourth time that similar looking birds have been recorded in this general area on SWPO expeditions (ie off the northern New Caledonian coastline or in the Solomon Sea).

Given Band-rumped Storm-petrel is only known to breed in three parts of the Northern Pacific and according to Onley and Scofield (*Albatrosses, Petrels and Shearwaters of the World*) is unknown in the south-west Pacific, it seems highly likely that there is an unknown breeding population somewhere in the general area of New Caledonia or the southern Solomon Islands.

As Band-rumped Storm-petrel has now been split into several species in the Atlantic, if the same approach is adopted for the various populations in the Pacific, it seems quite possible that the birds being seen on the SWPO are an undescribed taxon.....

**Common Diving-petrel** *Pelecanoides urinatrix*

Good numbers were seen in the Hauraki Gulf on 7 April (B) with A logged the previous evening offshore from Tauranga.

**Red-tailed Tropicbird** *Phaethon rubricauda*

The first sightings were a day south of Norfolk Island (9 April: 5), with birds then seen on three of the subsequent four days. The highest numbers were recorded around Norfolk Island on 10 April where a low A was logged.

**White-tailed Tropicbird** *Phaethon lepturus*

This species was seen on four dates during the second half of the expedition with a total of ten birds being recorded.

**Great Frigatebird** *Fregata minor*

Although many of the more distant frigatebirds seen during the voyage were not identified to species, there were confirmed sightings of Great Frigatebird on four dates with the first sightings (3 birds) being off Norfolk Island on 10 April.

**Lesser Frigatebird** *Fregata ariel*

This species was seen on five dates between 14-22 April with the first sighting being a lone bird off the northern end of New Caledonia.

**Masked Booby** *Sula dactylatra*

This species was recorded on six dates during the voyage with the largest numbers (A) recorded close to Norfolk Island (10 April).

It is worth noting that the birds which breed on Norfolk Island are 'Tasman Boobies' which may eventually be treated as a full species given there are structural and plumage differences from other populations. These birds also have dark eyes unlike those seen later in the voyage which had yellow eyes.

**Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster*

This species was encountered on seven dates between northern New Caledonia and New Ireland (14-22 April) with A logged on three occasions.

**Red-footed Booby** *Sula sula*

Seen on six dates between 11-22 April (New Caledonia-New Ireland) with the highest count being off northern New Caledonia where a very low B (ie 100+ individuals) was recorded.

**Australian Gannet** *Morus serrator*

This species was recorded daily for the first three days of the expedition with the highest count being in the Hauraki Gulf (7 April) when B was logged with several hundred individuals breeding on the Maori Rocks.

**Pied Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax varius*

The only records were shortly after the *Spirit of Enderby* left the wharf at Tauranga (6 April) where there is a small colony of this species (low A) and the following day around the Maori Rocks where a lone bird was seen.

**Little Pied Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*

Two birds were observed on the trip to Riviere Bleue on New Caledonia (12 April).

**Eastern Great Egret** *Ardea modesta*

Three birds were seen not far from the wharf at Tauranga (6 April) and a single individual was logged on the Shortland Islands excursion on 21 April.

**White-faced Heron** *Egretta novaehollandiae*

Recorded on Norfolk Island (10 April: 1) and on New Caledonia (12 April: 6).

**Pacific Reef Heron** *Egretta sacra*

Seen on six dates/islands between New Caledonia and Shortland with a total of twenty individuals being logged.

**Striated Heron** *Butorides striata*

The only sightings were a lone bird at Barora Fa (19 April) and three at Shortland (21 April).

**Rufous Night-Heron** *Nycticorax caledonicus*

This species was seen on Makira (17 April) and two days later at Barora Fa with single individuals being recorded on both occasions.

**Eastern Osprey** *Pandion cristatus*

This species was seen in small numbers on three of the islands visited in the Solomons, namely Santa Ana (16 April), Barora Fa (19 April) and Shortland (21 April) with a total of six birds being logged.

**Pacific Baza** *Aviceda subcristata*

The only sighting on the expedition was a lone bird on Shortland (21 April).

**Whistling Kite** *Haliastur sphenurus*

This species was seen on both days on New Caledonia with a very low A (ie just over 10 individuals) recorded on the excursion to Riviere Bleue (12 April) and three the following day on the trip to Mount Koghi.

**Brahminy Kite** *Haliastur Indus*

This species was seen on four of the landings in the Solomons, although all counts were in low single figures with the highest number being on Santa Ana (16 April) where three individuals were logged.

**Sanford's (Solomon Islands) Sea-Eagle** *Haliaeetus sanfordi*

This impressive Solomon Islands endemic was seen on four islands with up to four birds at Shortland (21 April) including a reasonably obliging perched individual.

**Variable Goshawk** *Accipiter hiogaster*

A lone bird was seen during the Shortland zodiac cruise (21 April).

**Pied Goshawk** *Accipiter albogularis*

This species is endemic to the Solomons with sightings on three of the islands visited (Makira, Guadalcanal and Kolombangara) and six individuals logged.

**New Caledonia Goshawk** *Accipiter haplochrous*

This species can often be tricky to find but was seen on both excursions on New Caledonia with single individuals at Riviere Bleue (12 April) and at Mount Koghi (13 April).

**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*

A lone bird was seen during the trip to Riviere Bleue (12 April).

**Woodford's Rail** *Nesoclopeus woodfordi*

This extremely poorly known endemic was heard but not seen during the excursion to Mount Austin, Guadalcanal (18 April).

**Kagu** *Rhynochetos jubatus*

This species is always one of the major landbird highlights of the expedition with at least six birds well seen at Riviere Bleue, New Caledonia on 12 April.

**Variable Oystercatcher** *Haematopus unicolor*

Another species which was only seen as the ship sailed from Tauranga (6 April) with several dozen individuals roosting on the wharf.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

A lone bird on Shortland was the only record on the expedition (21 April).

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*

This species was recorded on two islands in the Solomons with two birds on Barora Fa (19 April) and three on Shortland (21 April).

**Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis*

Two birds were seen along the shoreline on Shortland (21 April).

**Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica*

Two birds were seen flying by as the ship cruised north from the Hauraki Gulf (7 April).

**Silver Gull** *Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae*

This species was reasonably numerous (A) around the harbours of Tauranga (6 April) and Noumea, New Caledonia (12-13 April) with the only other sightings being around the Maori Rocks in the Hauraki Gulf (7 April) where similar numbers were recorded.

It is worth noting that until recently the birds in New Zealand were regarded as an endemic species, Red-billed Gull, but both the Birdlife International Illustrated Checklist and the *International Ornithologists' Union's World Bird List* now lump them with Silver Gull.

**Kelp Gull** *Larus dominicus*

The only records were around Tauranga (6 April) with a low A logged.

**Brown Noddy** *Anous stolidus*

This species was first seen on the first sea day north of Noumea (14 April). It was then recorded on six subsequent dates with the highest counts recorded off Makira (17 April) and Shortland (21 April) where B was logged.

**Black Noddy** *Anous minutes*

This species was encountered on a regular basis between Norfolk Island (10 April) and Kokopo, New Britain (23 April) with B logged on five occasions.

**Grey Ternlet** *Procelsterna albivitta*

This species is regular at the Maori Rocks in the Hauraki Gulf and also breeds around Norfolk Island. A low A was logged at the Maori Rocks (7 April) with six birds then seen off Norfolk Island (10 April).

**White Tern** *Gygis alba*

This species breeds on Norfolk Island and a high A (ie approaching 100 individuals) was logged there (10 April) with lower counts on the previous and subsequent days. The only other sightings were off Santa Ana (15 April) and Cap St George, New Ireland (22 April).

**Sooty Tern** *Onychoprion fuscata*

This widespread species was seen on an almost daily basis (eight dates) between a day south of Santa Ana Island (14 April) and arriving in Kokopo (23 April).

**Grey-backed Tern** *Sterna lunata*

This species rarely approaches ships although birds were seen on two dates with at least one bird between Makira and Guadalcanal (17 April) and two off Cap St George, New Ireland (22 April).

**Bridled Tern** *Onychoprion anaethetus*

This tropical tern was only encountered on three dates during the final days of the expedition with the highest count being off Shortland where a low B was logged (21 April).

**White-fronted Tern** *Sterna striata*

Only seen as the ship sailed from Tauranga on 6 April where a low A was logged.

**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*

This species was only recorded during the latter stages of the expedition with sightings off Barora Fa and Kolombangara (19-20 April) with a low A logged on both dates.

**Great Crested Tern** *Sterna bergi*

This species was seen close to the majority of islands between New Caledonia and New Britain (with sightings on seven dates) with the highest count being offshore from New Caledonia where a low A was logged.

**Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus*

The only sighting was a lone bird on the sea day south of Santa Ana (15 April).

**Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus*

The only record was a single individual not long after leaving Noumea, New Caledonia (13 April).

**Long-tailed Skua** *Stercorarius longicaudus*

Three birds were logged off Cap St George, New Ireland ((22 April) with the only other sighting being a single bird the previous day.

**[Spotted Dove** *Streptopelia chinensis*]

This Asian introduction was seen on New Caledonia, with A recorded on both 12 and 13 April.

**Mackinlay's Cuckoo-dove** *Macropygia mackinlayi*

This species is reasonably widespread in the Solomon Islands and was seen on Santa Ana, Guadalcanal and Kolombangara. The highest count was on the last of these islands, where a low A was logged (20 April).

**Pacific Emerald Dove** *Chalcophaps longirostris*

The only sighting was a lone individual on the trip to Riviere Bleue, New Caledonia on 12 April.

**Nicobar Pigeon** *Caloenas nicobarica*

A lone individual was seen in flight during the zodiac cruise at Shortland, on 21 April.

**Silver-capped Fruit-dove** *Ptilinopus richardsii*

This species is endemic to Rennell, Santa Ana and a few other islets and we found it to be fairly common with A logged on Santa Ana on 16 April.

**Yellow-bibbed Fruit-Dove** *Ptilinopus solomonensis*

Two birds showed well on the excursion on Makira on 17 April.

**Claret-breasted Fruit-Dove** *Ptilinopus viridis*

Another range-restricted fruit-dove which was seen on Guadalcanal (18 April: 5), Kolombangara (20 April: 4) and Shortland (21 April: 1).

**White-headed Fruit-Dove** *Ptilinopus eugeniae*

Endemic to Makira, Santa Ana and a few other islets, this species was seen very well during our landing on Santa Ana (16 April) with another individual found the following day on Makira.

**Cloven-feathered Dove** *Drepanoptila holosericea*

This fancy New Caledonian endemic is not seen on all SWPO visits to Riviere Bleue, however, we had some outstanding views of a calling bird during our excursion to the park (12 April) with another seen the following day at Mount Koghi.



**Red-knobbed Imperial-pigeon** *Ducula rubricera*

This impressive looking pigeon was seen on all the islands visited in the Solomons between Makira and Shortland with the highest count being on Makira where A was logged on 17 April.

**Island Imperial-pigeon** *Ducula pistrinaria*

This nomadic species was seen on Santa Ana, Makira, Barora Fa and Shortland with A logged on three occasions.

**New Caledonian Imperial-pigeon** *Ducula goliath*

A lone bird was recorded at Riviere Bleue on 12 April, with another logged the following day at Mount Koghi.

**Pale Mountain Pigeon** *Gymnophaps solomonensis*

Six of these distinctive pigeons were seen on Kolombangara on 20 April.

**Ducorps' Cockatoo** *Cacatua ducorpsii*

This species was first seen at Mount Austin, Guadalcanal (18 April) with six birds being recorded. On all of the subsequent landings in the Solomon Islands (ie Barora Fa, Kolombangara and Shortland), it was also seen with A logged on two occasions.

**Cardinal Lory** *Chalcopsitta cardinalis*

This brilliantly coloured parrot was seen on Makira, Guadalcanal, Barora Fa and Shortland with A logged on the latter two islands.

**Coconut ("Rainbow") Lorikeet** *Trichoglossus haematodus*

This species was first recorded in Noumea, New Caledonia (12 April: A), and was also seen on four islands in the Solomons with A logged on almost all dates.

**Yellow-bibbed Lory** *Lorius chlorocercus*

A Solomon Islands endemic recorded on the shore excursion to Mount Austin, Guadalcanal (18 April) where a lone individual was seen.

**Finsch's Pygmy-parrot** *Micropsitta finschii*

Although this species is reasonably numerous in the Solomons, its tiny size can make it difficult to spot, however, it was seen on both Makira and Guadalcanal (17-18 April) with a total of five individuals being logged.

**Horned Parakeet** *Eunymphicus cornutus*

This New Caledonian endemic was heard at Riviere Bleue (12 April) but unfortunately the only views were as the birds flew off.

**New Caledonian Parakeet** *Cyanoramphus saissetti*

Another species which is not seen on every visit to Riviere Bleue but everyone had some excellent looks during the visit to this fantastic Regional Park (12 April) with four birds being logged. It is worth noting that in the recently published Birdlife Illustrated Checklist, this species has been 'lumped' with the Red-crowned Parakeet (of New Zealand) and the Norfolk Island Parakeet, although this proposal has not been accepted by other 'authorities'.

**Norfolk Island Parakeet** *Cyanoramphus cookii*

At least five individuals were seen during the shore excursion on Norfolk Island (10 April).

[**Crimson Rosella** *Platycercus elegans*]

This introduced species is common on Norfolk Island and A was logged there on 10 April.

**Singing Parrot** *Geoffroyus heteroclitus*

Seen on both Guadalcanal and Barora Fa (18-19 April) with a total of three birds recorded.

**Eclectus Parrot** *Eclectus roratus*

Another beautiful bird which was recorded on Makira, Barora Fa and Shortland (17, 19 and 21 April) although it was only on Makira that the count was higher than modest single figures.

**Pacific Koel** *Eudynamys orientalis*

This species was heard but not seen on both Barora Fa and Shortland (19 and 21 April).

**Buff-headed Coucal** *Centropus milo*

This raucous Coucal, which is endemic to the Solomon Islands, makes an almost mammalian-like call and a presumed pair were seen well during the morning excursion to Mount Austin, Guadalcanal (18 April). A couple of days later, another individual was found on Kolombangara.

**Glossy Swiftlet** *Collocalia esculenta*

This species was seen in reasonable numbers on the two days ashore on New Caledonia (12-13 April) and then on five islands visited in the Solomons with A logged on each occasion.

**White-rumped Swiftlet** *Aerodramus spodiopygius*

Only recorded in very low numbers in New Caledonia (12-13 April).

**Uniform Swiftlet** *Aerodramus vanikorensis*

Seen on four of the islands visited in the Solomons, with A logged on most occasions.

**Moustached Treeswift** *Hemiprocne mystacea*

This impressive bird was seen at Mount Austin, Guadalcanal (18 April) and then three days later on Shortland with three birds recorded on each island.

**Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

A single individual of the race *salomonensis* were seen on Barora Fa on 19 April. These birds differ markedly from the birds in Europe having blue ear-coverts and richer purple-blue upperparts and surely warrant further taxonomic study.

**Ultramarine Kingfisher** *Todirhamphus leucopygius*

A pair of this tricky and always much desired Solomon Islands endemic were seen extremely well at Mount Austin, Guadalcanal on 18 April. The following day another two birds were seen in the mangroves on Barora Fa.

**Pacific Kingfisher** *Todirhamphus sacer*

Following the recent decision to split 'Collared Kingfisher' into multiple species, two Pacific Kingfishers were seen on the expedition with lone birds on both Santa Ana and Makira (16-17 April).

**Melanesian Kingfisher** *Todirhamphus tristrami*

Another 'new' species from what was previous Collared Kingfisher with birds seen on Guadalcanal (18 April: 2), Kolombangara (20 April: 2) and Shortland (21 April: 1).

**Beach Kingfisher** *Todirhamphus saurophaga*

This species was first recorded on Santa Ana (16 April: 1) with four birds then seen three days later during the zodiac cruise around the channels between the ship and Barora Fa. The final sighting was a lone bird on Shortland (21 April).

**Sacred Kingfisher** *Todirhamphus sanctus*

Four birds were recorded during the landing on Norfolk Island (10 April) with a further individual seen during the Mount Koghi excursion on New Caledonia (13 April).

**Dollarbird** *Eurystomus orientalis*

A low A was logged on Makira (17 April) with single figure counts on both subsequent days on Guadalcanal and Barora Fa.

**Blyth's Hornbill** *Aceros plicatus*

One of the highlights of the expedition was the spectacular number of hornbills found in a fruiting tree during the zodiac cruise at Barora Fa (19 April) with an estimated fifty individuals seen. This species was also recorded in smaller numbers on both the previous and subsequent days (ie Guadalcanal and Kolombangara).

**New Caledonia Myzomela** *Myzomela caledonica*

The first of six species of Myzomela recorded on the voyage with six birds logged at Riviere Bleue on 12 April and two the following day at Mount Koghi.

**Cardinal Myzomela** *Myzomela cardinalis*

The only record of this species was a lone bird on Makira on 17 April.

**Red-capped Myzomela** *Myzomela lafargei*

Restricted to a few islands in the northern Solomons, this species was well seen on the landing on Shortland with four individuals being recorded (21 April).

**Crimson-rumped (Yellow-vented) Myzomela** *Myzomela eichhorni*

A relatively scarce and range-restricted Solomons endemic, with a low A logged on Kolombangara on 20 April.

**Black-headed Myzomela** *Myzomela melanocephala*

Endemic to some of the islands in the central Solomons, a lone individual was seen at Mount Austin, Guadalcanal on 18 April.

**Sooty Myzomela** *Myzomela tristrami*

Seen in reasonable numbers on both Santa Ana and Makira (16-17 April) with A logged on both islands.

**Dark-brown ("Grey-eared) Honeyeater** *Lichmera incana*

This species is more readily found in scrubby and urban habitats than in the forest at Riviere Bleue with four seen there (12 April) and a low A logged the following day at Mount Koghi.

**Barred Honeyeater** *Phylidonyris undulata*

Like the previous species, this endemic is usually more numerous at Mount Koghi than Riviere Bleue with a low A logged at the latter site and six the previous day at Riviere Bleue.

**New Caledonian Friarbird** *Philemon diemenensis*

This endemic was well seen on the excursion to Riviere Bleue on New Caledonia (12 April: 2) with another found the following day at Mount Koghi.

**San Cristobal Melidectes** *Meliarchus sclateri*

This impressive honeyeater which is endemic to Makira was seen very well during our shore excursion with at least six individuals recorded.

**Norfolk Island Gerygone** *Gerygone modesta*

This Norfolk Island endemic is reasonably numerous and a low A was logged on 10 April.

**Fan-tailed Gerygone** *Gerygone flavolateralis*

Approximately eight individuals were seen on New Caledonia during the excursion to Riviere Bleue (12 April) with two more noted the following day at Mount Koghi.

**White-breasted Woodswallow** *Artamus leucorhynchus*

This species is generally only encountered in more 'open country' habitats on New Caledonia with six birds being seen during the trip to Riviere Bleue on 12 April and another one the following day at Mount Koghi.

**Southern Melanesian Cuckooshrike** *Coracina caledonica*

At least six birds were seen at Mount Koghi on 13 April.

It is worth noting that until relatively recently the birds on New Caledonia were lumped with those in the Solomon Islands, however, these have now been split into two species by most 'authorities'.

**Yellow-eyed Cuckooshrike** *Coracina lineata*

This cuckooshrike was seen on Makira, Barora Fa and Kolombangara (17, 19 and 20 April) with the highest count being four birds on the latter island.

**White-bellied Cuckooshrike** *Coracina papuensis*

As with the above species, this cuckooshrike was only seen in the Solomons with a lone bird logged at Mount Austin, Guadalcanal (18 April) and then four birds on both Barora Fa and Shortland.

**New Caledonian Cuckooshrike** *Coracina analis*

This New Caledonian endemic is generally only seen in small numbers at Riviere Bleue and 2016 was no exception with only a single individual recorded on 12 April.

**Cicadabird** *Coracina tenuirostris*

Only seen on Guadalcanal (18 April) with four individuals at Mount Austin.

**Makira Cicadabird** *Coracina solomonis*

This Makira endemic was seen in reasonable numbers during our shore excursion with six individuals recorded.

**Solomon Islands Cuckooshrike** *Coracina holopolia*

On previous SWPO expeditions, this species has generally been the least frequently encountered cuckooshrike in the Solomons but 2016 was something of an exception with a pair seen during the excursion to Mount Austin on 18 April and two birds sighted the following day at Barora Fa.

**Long-tailed Triller** *Lalage leucopyga*

Four individuals were seen at Riviere Bleue, New Caledonia on 12 April with eight subsequently seen on Makira (17 April).

**Norfolk Island Whistler** *Pachycephala (pectoralis) xanthoprocta*

A low A was logged on Norfolk Island on 10 April.

Although currently included within the Golden Whistler complex, the unique (and extremely drab) plumage of this endemic form certainly warrants further study and it is surely only a matter of time before it is given specific status.

**Oriole Whistler** *Pachycephala orioloides*

This species was seen on Santa Ana (16 April: 7), Makira (17 April: 2) and Kolombangara (20 April: 2).

**New Caledonian ("Melanesian") Whistler** *Pachycephala caledonica*

This localised species is generally found in more forested areas than the next species (ie Rufous Whistler) and at least eight birds were recorded at Riviere Bleue, New Caledonia on 12 April with a further two recorded the following day at Mount Koghi.

**Rufous Whistler** *Pachycephala rufiventris*

Two birds were seen during the shore excursion to Riviere Bleue, New Caledonia (12 April) with another individual recorded the following day at Mount Koghi.

**Spangled Drongo** *Dicrurus bracteatus*

Two birds were seen on Makira (17 April).

This form is endemic to Makira and it has been suggested (eg Dutson: *Birds of Melanesia*) that it could be regarded as an endemic species given it has plumage, structural, call and habit differences from other Spangled Drongos.

**Willie-wagtail** *Rhipidura leucophrys*

Seen on five islands in the Solomons with A logged on four occasions.

**White-winged Fantail** *Rhipidura cockerelli*

This fantail seems to be considerably rarer than some other species in the same family but we had some nice looks at a lone bird during the excursion on Kolombangara (20 April).

**Grey Fantail** *Rhipidura fuliginosa*

This reasonably widespread fantail was recorded on both Norfolk Island (10 April: low A) and New Caledonia.

**Streaked Fantail** *Rhipidura spilodera*

This localised fantail (which is only found on New Caledonia and Vanuatu) was found at Riviere Bleue (12 April: low A) and Mount Koghi (13 April: 2).

**Rufous Fantail** *Rhipidura rufifrons*

This species was seen in reasonable numbers on Santa Ana (where there is an endemic subspecies) with a low A logged (16 April). The following day five birds were seen on Makira.

**Southern Shrikebill** *Clytorhynchus pachycephaloides*

Somewhat unexpectedly, this regional endemic (which is only found on New Caledonia and Vanuatu) was only heard at Riviere Bleue National Park on 12 April but the following day three birds were seen at Mount Koghi.

**Chestnut-bellied Monarch** *Monarcha castaneiventris*

This Solomons endemic was seen on Santa Ana, Makira, Guadalcanal and Barora Fa, although with the exception of Mount Austin, Guadalcanal when a low A was logged, all other counts were in single figures.

**White-capped Monarch** *Monarcha richardsii*

This monarch is only found in the New Georgia group of islands (within the Solomons) and two individuals were seen on 20 April during our shore excursion on Kolombangara.

**White-collared Monarch** *Monarcha viduus*

Another localised endemic which is only found on Makira, Santa Ana and one other island and was seen on both shore excursions with eight individuals logged on Santa Ana (16 April) and a further bird the following day on Makira.

**Bougainville Monarch** *Monarcha erythrostictus*

This handsome species is endemic to Bougainville, Buka, Shortland and Fauro islands and a lone bird was well seen on the shore excursion on Shortland (21 April).

**Solomons Monarch** *Symposiachrus barbatus*

This slightly more widespread Solomon endemic was seen on the excursion on Barora Fa (19 April).

**Steel-blue Flycatcher** *Myiagra ferrocyanea*

This Solomon Islands endemic was seen on Guadalcanal (18 April: 4), Barora Fa (19 April: 2), Kolombangara (20 April: 2) and Shortland (21 April: 2).

**Makira Flycatcher** *Myiagra cervinicauda*

Four individuals were seen on Makira on 17 April. Despite its name (ie implying it is a single island endemic), this species also occurs on Santa Ana and Ugi.

**Melanesian ("New Caledonian") Flycatcher** *Myiagra caledonica*

This species was seen at Riviere Bleue, New Caledonia (12 April: 5) and Mount Koghi (13 April: 2).

**New Caledonian Crow** *Corvus moneduloides*

This species can be moderately tricky to find at Riviere Bleue but we were fortunate to see three individuals there (12 April). The following day, at least twelve birds were seen at Mount Koghi.

It is worth noting that this species is often regarded as one of the most intelligent species of bird in the world and they are regularly recorded using sticks as tools to help find food. One of the individuals seen at Riviere Bleue was photographed carrying a stick.

**White-billed ("Guadalcanal") Crow** *Corvus woodfordi*

This corvid can be extremely elusive at Mount Austin, Guadalcanal and was only heard there (18 April), however, the following day, a low A was recorded at Barora Fa.

**Norfolk Robin** *Petroica multicolor*

This handsome species was seen in decent numbers during the excursion on Norfolk Island with a low A logged (10 April).

The taxonomy of this bird has changed twice in recent years, as it was originally considered a subspecies of Scarlet Robin. Subsequently it was included within Pacific Robin, however, the birds on Norfolk Island have now been given specific status and it is thus a single island endemic.

**Yellow-bellied Robin** *Eopsaltria flaviventris*

A low A of this New Caledonian endemic was logged at Riviere Bleue (12 April) with two individuals seen the following day at Mount Koghi.

**Welcome Swallow** *Hirundo neoxena*

This species is reasonably common on Norfolk Island (10 April) with a low A logged. The only other sightings were at Tauranga where similar numbers were seen as the ship departed (6 April).

**Pacific Swallow** *Hirundo tahitica*

Seen on Santa Ana, Makira, Guadalcanal, Barora Fa and Shortland with single figure counts or a low A logged on each island.

**[Red-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus cafer*]

This Asian introduction was seen around Noumea, New Caledonia on both 12 and 13 April.

**[Blackbird** *Turdus merula*]

A reasonably successful introduced species on Norfolk Island where a low A was recorded on 10 April.

**[Song Thrush** *Turdus philmelos*]

Like Blackbird, this species was introduced to Norfolk Island and a lone individual was logged on 10 April.

**New Caledonian Grassbird** *Megalurulus mariei*

Although this endemic is regarded as 'locally common' it is notoriously difficult to see well, however, we had some fantastic views at Mount Koghi (13 April) with two birds only inches away from some of the group. Undoubtedly, one of the more unexpected and memorable sightings of the entire expedition.

**Yellow-throated White-eye** *Zosterops metcalfei*

Six of these range-restricted white-eyes were seen on Barora Fa on 19 April, although it appeared to be somewhat more numerous on Shortland with a low A logged there on 21 April.

**Solomon Islands White-eye** *Zosterops rendovae*

This slightly confusingly named white-eye is only found on the New Georgia group of islands (including Kolombangara) within the Solomons archipelago. During our shore excursion reasonable numbers were logged with a low A on 20 April.

**Green-backed White-eye** *Zosterops xanthochrous*

This New Caledonian endemic is reasonably common and a low A was recorded on both excursions on the island (12-13 April).

**Slender-billed White-eye** *Zosterops tenuirostris*

This Norfolk Island endemic was seen extremely well with A logged during our shore excursion on 10 April.

**Silver-eye** *Zosterops lateralis*

This species is not uncommon on both Norfolk Island and New Caledonia and was recorded on all days whilst ashore on both of these islands.

**Metallic Starling** *Aplonis metallica*

Seen on all islands we visited in the Solomons with the exception of Barora Fa with A logged on each occasion.

**Singing Starling** *Aplonis cantoroides*

This species was recorded on Santa Ana (16 April: 6) and Barora Fa (19 April: 4).

**Brown-winged Starling** *Aplonis grandis*

This Solomon Islands endemic species is reasonably reliable at Mount Austin, Guadalcanal with a low A logged on 18 April. A lone bird was then seen the following day (Barora Fa) with six birds also recorded on Kolombangara (20 April).

Despite its name, the diagnostic pale brown primaries can, on occasions, be moderately difficult to see when birds are perched.

**San Cristobal Starling** *Aplonis dichroa*

At least six individuals of this localised endemic were seen on Makira on 17 April.

**Striated Starling** *Aplonis striata*

This New Caledonian endemic is not particularly common at Riviere Bleue and only a lone individual was recorded there on 12 April, with a further two birds logged the following day at Mount Koghi.

**Long-tailed Myna** *Mino kreffti*

This myna (which has recently been split into two species – Long-tailed and Yellow-faced with the latter now regarded as a Papua New Guinea endemic) was seen at Mount Austin, Guadalcanal (18 April: low A), Barora Fa (19 April: low A), Kolombangara (20 April: low A) and Shortland (21 April: 5).

[**Common Myna** *Acridotheres tristis*]

This Asian introduction was reasonably numerous on New Caledonia (12-13 April) and in Honiara, Guadalcanal (18 April) with A recorded on all three dates.

[**European Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*]

This introduced species is common on Norfolk Island with A logged during the shore excursion (10 April).

**Midget Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum aeneum*

This Solomons endemic is not uncommon at Mount Austin, Guadalcanal with A recorded (18 April). Similar numbers were then seen the following day at Barora Fa, with the final sightings during the excursion on Shortland (21 April).

**Mottled Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum tristrami*

This Makira endemic was well seen during our shore excursion on the island with four individuals logged (17 April).

**Olive-backed Sunbird** *Cinnyris jugularis*

Seen in small numbers on Guadalcanal (18 April: 2), Barora Fa (19 April: 1), Kolombangara (20 April: 3) and Shortland (21 April: 1).

**Chestnut-breasted Munia** *Lonchura castaneothorax*

A lone bird was seen whilst returning to the ship from the excursion to Mount Koghi (13 April).

[**European Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*]

Another introduction on Norfolk Island with a low A logged (10 April).

[**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*]

Another common introduction which was seen on Norfolk Island (10 April) and both days ashore in New Caledonia (12-13 April).

**Red-throated Parrotfinch** *Erythrura psittacea*

As usual, this New Caledonian endemic was only seen in small numbers at Riviere Bleue with six birds recorded on 12 April and a lone male the following day at Mount Koghi.



## CETACEANS

### **Sperm Whale** *Physter macrocephalus*

Sperm Whales were seen on two dates with two animals on 10 April (off Norfolk Island) and a low A logged in the late afternoon off Mono Island, a small islet not far from Shortland (21 April).

### **Bryde's Whale** *Balaenoptera edeni*

There were multiple sightings as the ship cruised up the eastern coast of North Island after leaving the Hauraki Gulf (7 April) with A logged.

### **Short-finned Pilot Whale** *Globicephala macrorhynchus*

Seen on two widely spaced dates with A logged near Norfolk Island (10 April) and similar numbers as the ship approached Cap St George, New Ireland (22 April).

### **False Killer Whale** *Pseudorca crassidens*

A pod thought to number about eight individuals was seen on the sea day south of Norfolk Island (9 April).

### **Blainville's Beaked Whale** *Mesoplodon densirostris*

Two small pods, each of which was thought to contain about three individuals, were seen on the sea day south of Norfolk Island (9 April).

### **Beaked Whale sp**

As well as the sightings described above, beaked whales were also seen on a further three days but none of these were identified to species, although it is thought at least some of them were also probably Blainville's Beaked Whales.

### **Dwarf Sperm Whale** *Kogia sima*

Three were seen on the afternoon of 21 April following the morning visit to Shortland.

### **Bottlenose Dolphin** *Tursiops truncatus*

Six animals were seen offshore from Norfolk Island (10 April).

### **Short-beaked Common Dolphin** *Delphinus delphis*

A fairly large pod (A) was seen in the outer Hauraki Gulf on 7 April.

### **Spinner Dolphin** *Stenella longirostris*

This species is usually the most frequently encountered dolphin on the SWPO, however, on this occasion it was only definitely seen on the afternoon of 21 April following the morning visit to Shortland.

### **Striped Dolphin** *Stenella coeruleoalba*

Seen on two occasions with one pod on the sea day south of Norfolk Island (9 April) and another group in the afternoon after the visit to Mount Austin, Guadalcanal (18 April).

### **Pantropical Spotted Dolphin** *Stenella attenuate*

This species is not encountered every year but there were two confirmed sightings with one pod on the afternoon of 18 April (following the visit to Mount Austin, Guadalcanal) and another after the landing on Shortland (21 April).

### **Fraser's Dolphin** *Lagenodelphis hosei*

A pod of these distinctive dolphins were seen not far from Cap St George, New Ireland (22 April).