



A male Chuuk (or Truk) Monarch (Chris Steeman)

MICRONESIA

21 NOVEMBER – 10 DECEMBER 2013

LEADER: MARK VAN BEIRS

On our fourth tour to the little known islands of Micronesia we obtained great looks at all the possible surviving endemics. We visited the Endemic Bird Area 189 (Mariana Islands), EBA 190 (Palau), EBA 191 (Yap) and EBA 192 (the East Caroline Islands of Pohnpei and Truk). On Saipan the highlights included the smashing White-throated Ground Dove, White-headed Kingfisher, the ridiculously long-billed Nightingale Reed Warbler and the gorgeous Golden White-eye. The tiny island of Tinian produced mega views of its only endemic, the lovely Tinian Monarch, while the island of Rota gave us great looks at Guam Rail and the ultra rare Mariana Crow. The Palau archipelago yielded cooperative Palau Megapodes and attractive Palau Ground Doves, a hard to get Palau Owl, Rusty-capped Kingfisher and Giant White-eye. The tastefully-plumaged Yap Monarch was the main attraction on the tranquil island of Yap, while mountainous Pohnpei added Pohnpei Lorikeet, Pohnpei Cicadabird and Carolinian Reed Warbler to the tally. On the islands of the Truk (or Chuuk) lagoon we saw the delightful Chuuk Monarch and, after a stiff climb, the remarkable Teardrop White-eye. The much-wanted Nicobar Pigeon showed very well and a vagrant Grey-streaked Flycatcher on Palau is most probably a first for Micronesia. The non-avian climax of the tour was our fabulous snorkelling (or diving) encounter with several mightily impressive Manta Rays in the waters off Yap. Mammals were obviously thin on the ground, but all five endemic Flying Foxes showed well. Over half of the 49 endemic species (which include some still rather controversial splits) that we observed are still quite common and doing well, but sadly many of the others are under threat from the continuing destruction of their native vegetation and introduction of exotic species. No fewer than 22 (45%) of the Micronesian endemics are of conservation concern and listed by BirdLife International in the categories Extinct in the Wild (1), Critically Endangered (3), Endangered (6), Vulnerable (2) and Near Threatened (10).



A long-billed Nightingale Reed Warbler and White-headed Kingfisher (Chris Steeman)

Our small group gathered at the island of Guam, the hub of the western Pacific, after long intercontinental flights. Guam is an unincorporated territory of the United States and is the largest island of the Marianas. Sadly it doesn't hold any appeal to birders anymore since its few avian specialities have been exterminated in the mid twentieth century by the accidentally introduced Brown Tree Snake and by the extreme use of organochloric pesticides. So, we soon boarded our small plane to Saipan, where the real business started. After getting rid of our luggage, we explored different venues on this smallish, green island which had its

brief moment of fame in World War II. A leisurely drive along the trans island road gave us several Mariana Swiftlets and lots of endearing Common White Terns fluttering over the scrubby woodland. A patch of indigenous forest dotted with introduced "tangan-tangan" trees yielded lots of minute Saipan Bridled White-eyes together with Rufous Fantails and several Micronesian Myzomelas and Micronesian Starlings. We obtained great looks at the bizarre, critically endangered Nightingale Reed Warbler with its amazingly long bill and also found several very attractive Golden White-eyes clambering along thin branches with their strong orange legs. Handsome White-headed Kingfishers were easy to spot sitting on the roadside wires. The north of the island holds several World War II memorial sites to remember the many thousands that fell here in the atrocious days of June/July 1944. Superbly elegant White-tailed Tropicbirds were patrolling the infamous Suicide and Banzai Cliffs, where many hundreds of Japanese soldiers and civilians jumped to their deaths rather than being taken prisoner by the American troops. Delightful White-throated Ground Doves were regularly sighted, often in flight high over the forest (peculiar behaviour for a ground dove), but also regularly walking in the open on lawns. A colourful Mariana Fruit Dove showed all too briefly. A pond held four female Northern Pintail and a Common Moorhen and at the largest lake on the island we noted three vagrant Greater Scaup and several Intermediate and Little Egrets. We also added Brown Booby, Pacific Reef Heron, Yellow Bittern, Wandering Tattler, Ruddy Turnstone, Common Sandpiper, Brown and Black Noddies and Island Collared Dove to the list. In late afternoon a Mariana Megapode granted rather brief looks.



A magnificent Golden White-eye and White-throated Ground Dove (Chris Steeman)

The following morning, just after dawn, we gave the Mariana Megapode another try, but we only heard it in the distance. After a hearty breakfast a Cherokee plane took us to nearby Tinian island. We flew across the Saipan Channel and saw the three North Field runways, which had been used by the B-29's that dropped the nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The flight only took nine minutes and soon after arriving we birded the nearby scrubby forest. Not too long after we had excellent views of a cute Tinian Monarch, the only endemic bird of this 104 km² island. Getting good looks at this adorable and inquisitive, little critter was the main purpose of our visit. An early lunch was followed by a leisurely drive around this small island. We admired an impressive blowhole along the rocky coast, drove along one of the wide runways used in WWII, visited the remains of Japanese command posts and bunkers and looked at the pits where the A-bombs had been stored before being loaded on the *Enola Gay* and *Bockscar* Boeing-29 bombers. We saw quite a few more lovely Tinian Monarchs, had great looks at a Mariana Fruit Dove and noted a rare Japanese

Sparrowhawk. We returned to Saipan and at the airport obtained fantastic looks at two cooperative male White-throated Ground Doves.



A lovely Tinian Monarch and a Mariana Fruit Dove (Chris Steeman)

On our last day on Saipan we visited lots of different sites in the north of the island and saw a good selection of the specialities. We tried once more to lay eyes on the Mariana Megapode, but no joy. Gorgeous Golden White-eyes showed at very close range and a pair of Nightingale Reed Warblers allowed cracking looks. We had a great time observing the antics of an adult and an appealing, newly born White Tern on a bough of a roadside tree. A lake held two Northern Shoveler, five Greater Scaup, a Tufted Duck and two winter-plumaged White-winged Terns. Other interesting observations today included a Yellow Bittern eating a small rat, a Wood Sandpiper, some attractive, introduced Orange-cheeked Waxbills and an unidentified, showy shrew in the forest. In late afternoon we flew to Guam for an overnight stay and after a lazy morning we boarded the midday flight to the island of Rota.



A Saipan Bridled White-eye and a White Tern (Chris Steeman)

Upon arrival at this 85 km² small island, we drove immediately to our favourite crow stake out and within minutes obtained brilliant views of the critically endangered Mariana Crow. Four birds hovered over us and perched in the surrounding trees, allowing for great studies. This very rare corvid used to occur on Guam, but is most probably extinct there now. The only other population occurs on Rota and numbers fewer than 250 birds, so this is definitely one of the rarest crows in the world. After this successful encounter, we transferred to our hotel in the southwest of the island. We immediately went to see one of the US Fish and Wildlife experts about the current situation of the Guam Rail and we were in luck as he told us quite a few birds had been released recently. This species is extinct on Guam (courtesy of the Brown Tree Snake and introduced mammalian predators) and was introduced to the island of Rota in 1989 (and many more times since), with mixed success. An ongoing cat trapping program is trying to ensure that the population can at least maintain itself. We spent the last hour of the day gazing at a wide track in a prime Rail area, but not a sniff was had of our target. A female Philippine Brown Deer (introduced) provided a bit of consolation. Lots of distinctive Rota Kingfishers (sometimes split from Collared Kingfisher) were sitting on the roadside wires, but by far the most common bird on the island was the introduced Black Drongo.



A rare Mariana Crow and a Guam Rail (Chris Steeman)

At dawn we were strategically positioned overlooking a couple of wide tracks through grassy fields and soon we caught pretty good looks at two Guam Rails skulking along the edges. We heard others nearby and at another spot not too far away, we obtained lengthy, cracking views of this rare bird. Excellent value. A stag Philippine Brown Deer stood munching amongst bushes and several Yellow Bitterns were flying to and fro.



A Rota Bridled White-eye (Chris Steeman) and a Japanese cannon (Mark Van Beirs)

After a tasty breakfast we drove along a rough track to the higher areas of the island where some remains of original forest persist. In a stretch of indigenous woodland dotted with screw palms and Casuarinas covered in lianas and epiphytes we found a pair of lovely Rota Bridled White-eyes. These very yellow plumaged birds with their bright orange bills look quite different from the Saipan Bridled White-eye in which they used to be lumped. We also found Rufous Fantail and several attractive White-throated Ground-Doves here. Amazing numbers of Black Drongos were noted all over the island. In the middle of the day we took a bit of time off for a siesta, as we had seen all of the specialities. Later we had a look at a WWII Japanese cannon and visited the Bird Sanctuary, where a colony of Red-footed Boobies thrives. Most of the birds were white morphs but we also saw a few white tailed brown morphs. All stages of breeding were represented as we saw displaying birds, brooding adults on their egg and small and large young. Several Brown Boobies and White-tailed and Red-tailed Tropicbirds patrolled along the cliffs and a single rare Mariana Flying Fox could be scoped. A fruiting tree held a couple of smart Mariana Fruit Doves and a quick look at the grassy areas at the airport gave us four Eurasian Whimbrel.



A Rota Kingfisher at night and a Mariana Flying Fox (Chris Steeman)

At dawn we were again scanning the best area for Guam Rail, but this time no birds at all showed. We heard the distinctive calls nearby, but no rails ventured outside the tall grass this morning. Luckily we had seen it very well yesterday. On the way to breakfast we stopped at a Latte stone quarry. Here, the Chamorro, or their ancestors, unearthed impressive megaliths, which were used as housing foundations for the indigenous culture of the Marianas. After breakfast we paid a quick visit to the ponds at the Rota Resort golf course, but only Intermediate Egret and Common Moorhen showed. We again had great looks at several White-throated Ground Doves. After a visit to our favourite lookout, which produced two Mariana Crows, it was time to pack and head to the airport for the tedious flights and waits to get to the distant archipelago of the Republic of Palau.



A Citrine White-eye and Palau Flycatcher (Chris Steeman)

Our first outing took us on a leisurely drive around the southern half of hilly Babeldaob (or Babelthuap - great names!), the largest island of the Palau archipelago. We made lots of short stops at the edge of the many patches of good-looking forest and harvested a rich crop of Palau endemics like Palau Fruit Dove, Palau Swiftlet (all over and common), the very smart Rusty-capped Kingfisher, Palau Fantail, Mangrove Flycatcher, Palau Bush Warbler (with its bright orange bill) and the unobtrusive Dusky White-eye. Chinese Goshawk, White-browed Crake, Nicobar Pigeon (brief), Micronesian Imperial Pigeon, Collared Kingfisher and lots of Palau Flying Foxes were also noted. Near our lunch spot we found an Oriental Pratincole, a couple of Eastern Yellow Wagtails and 50+ Barn Swallows. The nearby sewage works gave us a much appreciated mixture of uncommon migratory species like Common Greenshank, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Long-toed Stint, Black-winged Stilt, Wood Sandpiper and Whiskered Tern. Several Nankeen Night Herons posed with the many egrets and parties of Chestnut Munias foraged in the seeding grasses. Bernard found a Grey-streaked Flycatcher, most probably a Micronesia first! Towards late afternoon we visited a patch of indigenous forest where a couple of endemic Morningbirds showed some great display. A small dam held a few Little Pied Cormorants and at dusk Palau Nightjar and several Polynesian Sheath-tailed Bats appeared. We heard the distinctive notes of a Palau Owl, but he wouldn't budge...



A Palau Flying Fox and Collared Kingfisher (Chris Steeman)

Early morning we made another try for the Palau Owl, but sadly nothing called or moved. A Buff-banded Rail and a Swinhoe's Snipe showed very nicely at our breakfast stop. In our further quest for the Palau endemics,

we took a small boat to the island of Ulong. At sea we saw Bridled, Great Crested and Black-naped Terns and after admiring the beautiful scenery of eroded, forest covered islets we reached the small, pristine island of Ulong. Our slow walk in the open beach forest produced magnificent looks at several Palau Megapodes, at immature and adult Nicobar Pigeons and at a party of exquisite Palau Ground Doves. The latter were quite shy, but one or two showed really well allowing cracking studies of this truly beautiful species. Several Morningbirds gave excellent close ups and a couple of Citrine White-eye flocks darted through the trees. Later, we had a quick look at the famous Jellyfish lake and took a walk on the island of Ngeruktabel, where an Eclectus Parrot and several very cooperative Palau Bush Warblers gave unusually great looks. We sailed slowly through the scenic Rock Islands and saw a couple of unassuming Palau Cicadabirds from the boat. At dusk we tried again for the Owl. A Palau Nightjar showed very well, but we had to do with brief flight views of the owl. Quite frustrating.



A young Nicobar Pigeon and a vagrant Grey-streaked Flycatcher (Chris Steeman)

The next day started with a sighting of a rare migrant Oriental Reed Warbler, followed by a boat trip to the southern island of Peleliu. Rocky, forest-covered islets dotted the azure blue sea and the same terns showed. On Peleliu, we birded some remaining forest patches and after a bit of searching our main target, the endemic Giant White-eye was located. This vocal species does not behave, nor look like a white-eye and is the only member of the genus *Megazosterops*. Morningbird and Palau Cicadabird were also found and then we toured the island and were shown several relics of the extremely fierce fighting that took place here in September/November 1944. A visit to some extensive Japanese underground fortifications in the limestone hills produced great views of dozens of roosting Polynesian Sheath-tailed bats. On the return boat trip we spotted a single Manta Ray. Upon our return we had another look at the sewage works, but nothing new was found. Another owling session ensued and this time success was almost complete as we had several very good looks at a Palau Owl almost hovering over us in response to his own voice. Truly marvellous! Later, a middle of the night flight took us to the island of Yap, which is part of the Federated States of Micronesia.



Palau scenery (Mark Van Beirs) and a Polynesian Sheath-tailed Bat (Chris Steeman)

We arrived at an ungodly hour, so made it to bed at the famous Manta Ray Hotel not too long before daybreak. We decided to rest and relax in the morning and after lunch on the famous boat restaurant we explored an area of farm bush on the northern coast. As soon as we arrived we started to see the ubiquitous endemic Plain White-eye. These tiny, rather dull-coloured critters were feeding in the canopy of low trees. A female Yap Cicadabird showed well in a treetop. It was obviously much larger than its Palau counterpart. A well-groomed male Yap Monarch flitted in the forest undergrowth and a bit later we also observed the stylish female. After a brief but heavy shower we located a female White-headed Ground Dove. She showed very well and looked rather similar to the White-throated Ground Dove of the Northern Marianas. In the canopy of a flowering tree a couple of endemic Olive White-eyes showed off their bright orange bills. On our first afternoon all the Yap endemics had already surrendered and we had two more full days to go...



A male Yap Monarch (Chris Steeman) and Stone Money (Mark Van Beirs)

The next morning, we walked a wide cross island trail and on our relaxed amble through farm bush interspersed with patches of indigenous forest containing different palms and screw palms we encountered many Plain White-eyes, a few Olive White-eyes with their bright orange legs and obvious orbital ring, a pair of stout Yap Cicadabirds, several classy Yap Monarchs (including young birds), a female White-headed Ground Dove, a Micronesian Imperial Pigeon and many Micronesian Starlings and Micronesian Myzomelas. Later we stopped at a lake holding a female Tufted Duck and visited a nice collection of "Stone Money". These large doughnut-shaped, carved, calcite disks can measure up to 4 meters in diameter and were brought by boat from Palau and other distant islands. Their value is based on both the stone's size and its

history and was kept high due to the difficulty and hazards involved in obtaining them. In the afternoon some of us returned to a little used track on the north side of the island. There was no pressure as we had seen the specialities. Magnificent views of males, females and a juvenile Yap Monarch were obtained as these exquisite birds performed at minimum distance. A White-browed Crake perched up, a family of Yap Cicadabirds included a begging youngster and we admired our only perched Micronesian Imperial Pigeon of the trip. A very enjoyable outing.



A glorious Manta Ray (Guido Appenzeller) and a Micronesian Imperial Pigeon (Mark Van Beirs)

Yap is very well known amongst the diving fraternity for its amazing Manta Rays. We all dearly wanted to get close views of these gently giants, so the following day we went on a snorkelling and diving (for Chris) excursion to the Manta Ridge off the northwest of the island. The area we were taken too was a well-known cleaning station for these amazing creatures. We were told to quietly float above a certain coral knoll and sure enough, soon after four enormous Manta Rays showed extremely well at very close quarters. The largest easily had a wingspan of four meters! Truly an out of this world experience! In the afternoon we took another leisurely walk along a tranquil track and again saw all five endemics well. The male Yap Monarch again made quite an impression. In the middle of the night we left peaceful Yap and flew via the hub of Guam and Truk to the little known island of Pohnpei (or Ponape). One wonders why these interisland flights have to happen in the middle of the night...?



Pohnpei Flycatcher and a Pohnpei Lorikeet (Chris Steeman)

We arrived at Pohnpei around midday under a rainy and very cloudy sky. A first exploration of this mountainous island (the highest top is 772m) took us along a quiet inland track through secondary growth and along the edge of native forest, where a splendid selection of Pohnpei endemics performed. A vibrant Caroline Islands Fruit Dove showed nicely and scores of Island Swiftlets were fluttering bat-like over the canopy. Flowers of cocopalms attracted subtly-coloured Pohnpei Lorikeets and Pohnpei Kingfishers emitted their loud, glissading calls. The young birds of the latter were especially handsome. A couple of dusky Pohnpei Fantails flitted through the undergrowth and an inquisitive, slate-coloured Pohnpei Flycatcher kept an eye on us. Several diminutive Grey-brown White-eyes showed, as did some Citrine (Caroline Islands) White-eyes and in a stretch of nice forest we were glad to encounter three endemic Long-billed White-eyes. These aberrant members of the white-eye family behaved very well, showing off their long bills. Towards late afternoon several distinctive, short-snouted Caroline Flying Foxes appeared.



A Grey-brown White-eye and a Carolinian Reed Warbler (Chris Steeman)

Next daybreak, we walked along a trail through a patch of beautiful, indigenous forest next to a roaring stream. We saw most of yesterday's endemics again, but best of all was the slate-grey male Pohnpei Cicadabird that foraged in the canopy of an epiphyte-laden tall tree. At the forest edge the three species of white-eye gave amazing close up views. In the afternoon we visited some marshy patches along the edge of a stretch of mangrove forest near the airport. A singing, near endemic Caroline Islands Reed Warbler showed extremely well at very close range. A good selection of migrant waders was feeding along the muddy margins and included Black-winged Stilt, Grey-tailed Tattler, Greater and Lesser Sand Plovers, Red-necked Stint and delicate Marsh and smart Sharp-tailed Sandpipers. Two female Northern Pintail, a very nice Pohnpei Kingfisher and several introduced Hunstein's Mannikins (from New Ireland) added to the fun.



The spectacular ruins of Nan Madol (Mark Van Beirs) and a Caroline Flying Fox (Chris Steeman)

Nan Madol is Pohnpei's most famous archeological site and was the ceremonial and political seat of the Saudeleur dynasty between the 12th and 16th century. The distinctive megalithic, basaltic ruins are constructed on a series of small artificial islands linked by a network of canals and offer an amazing sight. We visited this magnificent site on a hot and humid morning and observed an impressive Moray Eel, lots of weird-looking mudskippers and scores of fiddler crabs in and along the muddy canals. In the afternoon we toured the Sokehs peninsula which offered nice scenery and dense mangroves, but very few birds. Another visit to the airport marsh yielded more or less the same species as the day before. A Pohnpei Kingfisher performed very well and the number of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers had risen to 20!



A Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and a Grey-tailed Tattler (Chris Steeman)

On our last morning on Pohnpei we walked along a lovely trail through decent forest and observed a pair of Pohnpei Cicadabirds really well. The very distinctively-patterned female was seen devouring a large insect. Nearby, a smashing Pohnpei Kingfisher offered really good looks. On the return drive we stopped at a football field that held a Grey Plover next to lots of Pacific Golden Plovers and 50+ Ruddy Turnstones. In the afternoon we boarded the plane for the short flight to Truk (or Chuuk), where Hans left us.



A Pohnpei Kingfisher and the ubiquitous Micronesian Myzomela (Chris Steeman)

Several Pacific Black Duck were seen upon arrival and the transfer to the famous Blue Lagoon Resort took us a lot longer than expected due to the enormous potholes. This stretch must be the worst road in the whole Pacific! After checking in into the welcoming hotel, we explored the extensive grounds, where fetching Caroline Islands Ground Doves could be studied in detail as they foraged on the lawns. A male Oceanic Flycatcher – endemic -allowed close up views and several rather tame Carolinian Reed Warblers behaved as if we didn't exist. At dusk a couple of rare Truk Flying Foxes and several Polynesian Sheath-tailed Bats appeared.



A male Oceanic Flycatcher and Caroline Islands Fruit Dove (Chris Steeman)

Next morning we sailed to the nearby island of Dublon (or Tonoas). We really wanted to visit the island of Tol South, but as it was a Sunday – these islands are very religious and take Sunday rest seriously - and as the relationship with the inhabitants of Tol was not very smooth, we were advised to visit a nearby, friendly island and postpone our visit to Tol till the Monday. This suited us fine as Dublon is usually an easier place to find the much wanted Truk (or Chuuk) Monarch. After a short, but quite bumpy boat ride, we arrived at peaceful Dublon island.



Truk sunset (Mark Van Beirs) and an Island Swiftlet (Chris Steeman)

It was Sunday morning, so all the inhabitants were very nicely dressed up to go to church, while we explored the edge of the mangroves and patches of remaining native forest. We had nice looks at Citrine White-eyes and encountered lots of Micronesian Myzomelas and Micronesian Starlings. Oceanic Flycatchers showed extremely well on several occasions and after a couple of hours we located our quarry. First a female showed, not much later followed by a splendid male. We lingered in the area and obtained great looks as they flitted about in the mangrove forest. Chris focused on getting good photos and found an active nest, which both male and female attended. Magical moments! In mid afternoon we returned to the Blue Lagoon Resort and enjoyed prolonged studies of an exquisite adult Caroline Islands Ground Dove, while Oceanic Flycatchers and Carolinian Reed Warblers foraged over or on the manicured lawn. The day ended with a



very nice sunset behind the island of Tol South, our destination for tomorrow.

The view from Mount Winipot (Mark Van Beirs) and a Teardrop White-eye (Chris Steeman)

An hour's boat trip over a very calm and smooth sea made for a lovely ride and upon arrival at Tol South, we were greeted by a bunch of potential guides. We appointed a few and started to hike up the mountain to reach the remaining patch of mountain forest at the top. The stiff hike took us along steep, slippery trails, but our youngish and fit group did well and quite soon we found ourselves at the edge of the native forest on the higher slopes of 443m high Mount Winipot. A flock of Citrine White-eyes patrolled the forest edge and once in the forest we obtained great looks at two immature Island Monarchs, with their orangey plumage looking so totally different from their parents. It took a bit of time to find our first Teardrop (Great Truk) White-eyes, but then great views followed, as they showed off their orange legs, brown plumage and very distinctive teardrop patch. The final Micronesian endemic had fallen! It was the only one we really had to put in a bit of physical effort for. Several more showed very well on our walk through the lovely forest. After a while we made our way down along the slippery trail and sailed on a flat sea towards the Blue Lagoon Resort. We relaxed the rest of the day and everyone was happy. All possible, gettable endemics were in the proverbial bag.

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The stunning White-fronted Ground Dove (Chris Steeman)

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). **IOC World Bird Names**. This list is updated several times annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>.

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g. it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

Conservation threat categories and information are taken from *Threatened Birds of the World*, BirdLife International's magnificent book on the sad status of the rarest 10% of the world's avifauna, and updates on the BirdLife website: <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/home>

E = Endangered, **V** = Vulnerable, **NT** = Near Threatened, **DD** = Data Deficient.

Mariana Megapode ◊ (M Scrubfowl) *Megapodius laperouse* (EN) Nice, but brief views of one on Saipan.

Palau Megapode ◊ (P Scrubfowl) *Megapodius senex* (EN) Excellent looks at several on Ulong (Palau).

Red Junglefowl (introduced) (Feral Chicken) *Gallus gallus* Recorded on most visited islands.

Pacific Black Duck (Grey D) *Anas superciliosa* A few were seen at Truk airport.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata* Two females were seen on Saipan and a drake showed on Truk.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* Six were seen on Saipan and two females at Pohnpei airport.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* Single females were seen on Saipan and on Yap.



A Palau Megapode and a female Northern Pintail (Chris Steeman)

Greater Scaup *Aythya marila* Two drakes and three ducks were seen on a Saipan. A good record for Micronesia.

Red-tailed Tropicbird ◊ ***Phaethon rubricauda*** A few were seen at the Red-footed Booby colony on Rota.

White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus* Recorded on most islands in small numbers. So elegant.

Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis* Seen on most islands in small numbers in fairly dry places.

Nankeen Night Heron (Rufous N H) *Nycticorax caledonicus* Regular on Palau and two on Truk.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Butorides coromandus* Common on most islands.

Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia* Seen on Saipan, Rota, Palau and Truk.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* Only seen on Saipan and Palau.

Pacific Reef Heron (P R Egret) *Egretta sacra* Both dark and white morphs were noted on most islands.

Red-footed Booby *Sula sula* The colony on Rota offered quite a sight with birds in all possible stages of nesting.

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster* Small numbers were noted on Saipan and Rota.

Little Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos* A few showed well on ponds and at sea on Palau.

Chinese Sparrowhawk (C Goshawk) *Accipiter soloensis* This migrant showed briefly on Babeldaop (Palau).

Japanese Sparrowhawk *Accipiter gularis* A single bird was seen on Tinian. Obviously a migrant.

Buff-banded Rail (Banded R) *Gallirallus philippensis* Several were seen along roadsides on Palau.

Guam Rail ◊ ***Gallirallus owstoni*** Excellent views of several on one morning along a wide track on Rota.

White-browed Crake *Porzana cinerea* Nice looks at several on Palau and Yap.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* This well-known critter was only seen on Saipan and Palau.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* Seen on Saipan, Palau and Pohnpei.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* This widespread migrant was noted on every day of the tour.

Grey Plover (Black-bellied P) *Pluvialis squatarola* A single bird was found on a football field on Pohnpei.

Mongolian Plover (M Sand Plover) *Charadrius mongolus* A few were found at the Pohnpei airport puddles.

Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii* Seen on Palau and on Pohnpei.

Swinhoe's Snipe *Gallinago megala* Good views of a feeding bird near the dock on Palau.

Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* Seen on Palau and on Pohnpei.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* Very nice looks at two at the Pohnpei airport puddles.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* Four showed well at the Palau sewage works.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* Regular observations.

Grey-tailed Tattler (Siberian T) *Tringa brevipes* Excellent looks at two on Pohnpei and also noted on Truk.

Wandering Tattler *Tringa incana* Five encounters with this rock-loving migrant.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* Regular encounters.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* Many observations of this long distance migrant.

Red-necked Stint (Rufous-necked Stint) *Calidris ruficollis* Four showed well at the Pohnpei airport puddles.

Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta* Great looks of nine birds at the Palau sewage works.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata* A single on Palau, 20 on Pohnpei and a few on Truk.



A Pacific Golden Plover and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers (Chris Steeman)

Oriental Pratincole *Glareola maldivarum* Singles were noted on Palau and on Truk.

Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus* Regular in small numbers on most islands.

Black Noddy \diamond *Anous minutus* Regular in fair numbers on most islands.

White Tern (Common Fairy T) *Gygis alba* Splendidly common on all the islands of the tour. Cute young!

Greater Crested Tern (Great C T) *Thalasseus bergii* A few on Palau and a single on Truk. Thin on the ground...

Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus* Good looks at a few in the Palau archipelago.

Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana* Common in the Palau waters and a few elsewhere.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* Singles were noted on Palau, Yap and Truk.

White-winged Tern (W-w Black T) *Chlidonias leucopterus* Two were feeding over a lake on Saipan.

Rock Dove (introduced) *Columba livia* Delightfully rare. A single bird was seen on Saipan.

Island Collared Dove (introduced) (Philippine Turtle D) *Streptopelia bitorquata* Common in the Marianas.

Nicobar Pigeon \diamond *Caloenas nicobarica* Very nice looks at several on Palau. One of those must see birds.

White-fronted Ground Dove \diamond (Caroline Islands G D) *Gallucolumba kubaryi* (V) Regular excellent sightings on Truk.

White-throated Ground Dove \diamond *Gallucolumba xanthonura* Many fantastic encounters in the Marianas. A cracker.

White-headed Ground Dove \diamond *Gallucolumba yapensis* A few showed well on Yap.

Palau Ground Dove \diamond *Gallucolumba canifrons* This beauty showed very well on Palau. Eye candy!

Caroline Islands Fruit Dove \diamond *Ptilinopus ponapensis* Regular splendid observations on Pohnpei and on Truk.

Palau Fruit Dove \diamond *Ptilinopus pelewensis* Small numbers showed well on several islands of the Palau archipelago.

Mariana Fruit Dove \diamond *Ptilinopus roseicapilla* (EN) Regularly seen and heard in the Marianas.

Micronesia Imperial Pigeon \diamond (Micronesia P) *Ducula oceanica* A few were seen on Palau, Yap and Pohnpei.

Pohnpei Lorikeet \diamond (P Lory) *Trichoglossus rubiginosus* This common Pohnpei endemic regularly showed well.

Eclectus Parrot (introduced) *Eclectus roratus* We saw two of these colourful birds on Palau.

Himalayan Cuckoo *Cuculus saturatus* This migrant was briefly seen on Palau.

Palau Owl \diamond *Pyrhroglaux podargina* It took some effort, but eventually we obtained really nice looks.

Palau Nightjar *Caprimulgus phalaena* Several lovely encounters.

Palau Swiftlet \diamond *Aerodramus pelewensis* Common all over the Palau archipelago.

Mariana Swiftlet \diamond (Guam S) *Aerodramus bartschi* (EN) A dozen or so were seen on Saipan.

Island Swiftlet \diamond (Caroline Islands Swiftlet) *Aerodramus inquietus* Common on Pohnpei and on Truk.

Collared Kingfisher *Todiramphus chloris* Just a few on Palau.

White-headed Kingfisher \diamond *Todiramphus albicilla* Common and showy on Saipan. An attractive species.

Rota Kingfisher \diamond *Todiramphus orii* Common and very nicely seen on Rota.

Rusty-capped Kingfisher \diamond (Palau K) *Todiramphus pelewensis* Six sightings of this uncommon Palau endemic.

Pohnpei Kingfisher \diamond *Todiramphus reichenbachii* Regular on Pohnpei. The immatures especially are beauties.

Micronesia Myzomela \diamond (M Honeyeater) *Myzomela rubratra* Common and very visible on all the islands.

Palau Cicadabird \diamond *Coracina monacha* Three observations of this unobtrusive species.

Yap Cicadabird \diamond *Coracina nesiotis* Several excellent encounters. Much larger than the other "cicadabirds".

Pohnpei Cicadabird ◊ *Coracina insperata* Several showed well. The female looks very distinctive.



Pohnpei Lorikeets and Micronesian Starling (Chris Steeman)

Morningbird ◊ *Pachycephala tenebrosa* This well voiced, drab-looking Palau endemic showed very well.

Black Drongo (introduced) *Dicrurus macrocercus* Extremely common on Rota.

Palau Fantail ◊ *Rhipidura lepida* We noted small numbers of this handsome Palau endemic.

Rufous Fantail *Rhipidura rufifrons* Small numbers on the Marianas and on Yap.

Pohnpei Fantail ◊ *Rhipidura kubaryi* Small numbers of this very dark endemic were seen on Pohnpei.

Chuuk Monarch ◊ (Truk M) *Metabolus rugensis* (EN) Great looks at male, female and young. A fantastic species!

Yap Monarch ◊ *Monarcha godeffroyi* Regular sightings of this very smart Yap endemic. A glorious bird.

Tinian Monarch ◊ *Monarcha takatsukasae* (V) Regular eye-ball to eye-ball encounters with this cutie on Tinian.

Oceanic Flycatcher ◊ *Myiagra oceanica* Regular observations of this lovely endemic on Truk.

Palau Flycatcher ◊ (Mangrove F) *Myiagra erythrops* Quite common on all the islands of the Palau archipelago.

Pohnpei Flycatcher ◊ *Myiagra pluto* Regular sightings of this endearing Pohnpei endemic.

Mariana Crow ◊ *Corvus kubaryi* (CR) Great looks at six of these rare corvids. One of the rarest crows in the world.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* This well-known migrant was common on Palau; A few were seen on Yap.

Palau Bush Warbler ◊ *Horornis annae* Several excellent observations in the Palau forests. Not that secretive...

Oriental Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus orientalis* Three were seen on Palau. A rare migrant this far east.

Nightingale Reed Warbler ◊ *Acrocephalus luscinius* (CR) Great looks at several on Saipan. A truly remarkable bill.

Carolinian Reed Warbler ◊ (Caroline Islands R W) *Acrocephalus syrinx* Regular on Pohnpei and on Truk.

Giant White-Eye ◊ *Megazosterops palauensis* 15 showed well on Palau. The only *Megazosterops*!

Golden White-Eye ◊ *Cleptornis marchei* (CR) Fairly common on Saipan. The smartest white-eye about?

Teardrop White-Eye ◊ (Great Truk W-E) *Rukia ruki* (EN) Eight showed very well near the top of Tol South (Truk).

Long-billed White-Eye ◊ *Rukia longirostra* Great looks at a few of these Pohnpei endemics.

Saipan Bridled White-Eye ◊ *Zosterops saypani* (EN) Common in the Saipan bush.

Rota White-Eye ◊ (Rota Bridled W-E) *Zosterops rotensis* (CR) Very nice looks at two of these rare Rota endemics.

Citrine White-Eye ◊ (Caroline Islands W-E) *Zosterops semperi* Regularly seen on Palau, Pohnpei and Truk.

Plain White-Eye ◊ *Zosterops hypolais* Many of these colourless endemics in the Yap farmbrush.

Grey-brown White-Eye ◊ (Grey W-E) *Zosterops cinereus* We noted several flocks of these busy Pohnpei endemics.

Olive-coloured White-Eye ◊ (Olive/Yap W-E) *Zosterops oleagineus* A few of these brightly coloured Yap endemics.

Dusky White-eye ◊ *Zosterops finschii* Commonly encountered in the Palau forests. Endemic to Palau.

Micronesian Starling ◊ *Aplonis opaca* Many encounters on all the islands.

Grey-streaked Flycatcher *Muscicapa griseisticta* Bernard found this vagrant on Palau. A first for Micronesia?

Eurasian Tree Sparrow (introduced) *Passer montanus* Common on most of the islands, but absent from Truk.

Orange-cheeked Waxbill (introduced) *Estrilda melpoda* Nice looks at several on Saipan.

Blue-faced Parrotfinch *Erythrura trichroa* Very nice studies of one on Dublon island (Truk).

Scaly-breasted Munia (introduced) (Nutmeg M) *Lonchura punctulata* Regular on Yap.

Chestnut Munia (introduced) (Chestnut Mannikin) *Lonchura atricapilla* Several small flocks were noted on Palau.

Hunstein's Mannikin (introduced) *Lonchura hunsteini* Lovely views of several at Pohnpei airport.

Eastern Yellow Wagtail (Alaska Wagtail) *Motacilla [flava] tshutschensis* Regular observations on Palau.



Chris with a Manta Ray (Guido Appenzeller)

MAMMALS

Polynesian Rat *Rattus exulans* A single was seen on Palau.

House Rat (Black R) *Rattus rattus* Seen on several islands.

Chuuk Flying Fox (Truk F F) *Pteropus insularis* Four individuals were seen. It is heavily hunted...

Marianas Flying Fox *Pteropus mariannus* Two were seen on Rota. Decidedly rare!

Caroline Flying Fox *Pteropus molossinus* Quite common on Pohnpei.

Palau Flying Fox *Pteropus pelewensis* Common and also seen throughout the day.

Yap Flying Fox *Pteropus yapensis* Small numbers were seen on Yap.

Polynesian Sheath-tailed Bat *Emballonura semicaudata* Quite common on Palau and also seen on Truk.

Philippine Brown Deer (introduced) *Rusa marianna* Two were seen while waiting for Guam Rails on Rota.