

WEST PAPUA OCTOBER 2019

New Guinea is one of the most exciting places on earth, in terms of biodiversity. The Indonesian part of the island, West Papua, with an incredible number of wildlife hotspots, hosts some of the most bizarre mammals of the planet, such as Dingiso or Western Long-beaked Equidna. This trip covered the main birding localities with two exceptions, the Snow Mountains and Numfor, but since we recorded an interesting number of mammals, I decided to write-up a short trip report to post in Mammalwatching.com. Though our trip was bird-focussed, we tried to include as many mammals as possible. This report gives you an idea of what can be seen with a little bit of effort. Obviously, a mammal-orientated trip here would yield far more bats, and rodents and more precious jewels, like Tree Kangaroos.

West Papua is home to 250 mammals, 123 of which are endemic. Aside of this, few taxons are awaiting to be described and there is a chance to find undescribed species for science. The status of many is not well-known, though over the past five years, I've made numerous visits this part of Indonesia and gained more knowledge on what is possible to see. On the three week visit in October 2019, we recorded 35 mammals, of which 3 are endemic of West Papua and 13 more are endemic of New Guinea. Aside of this, one *Pipistrellus* and one *Miniopterus* could not be identify down to species level. Many of the species are threatened due to high hunting pressure, for food.

The bird report, available below, includes the mammal list recorded by the group (Although not all my personal sights), and photos of several of these. For a more detailed account on the mammals, below is a summary:

[West Papua October 2019](#)

We visited 5 main areas: Biak, Nimbokrang, Wasur, Arfak and Waigeo

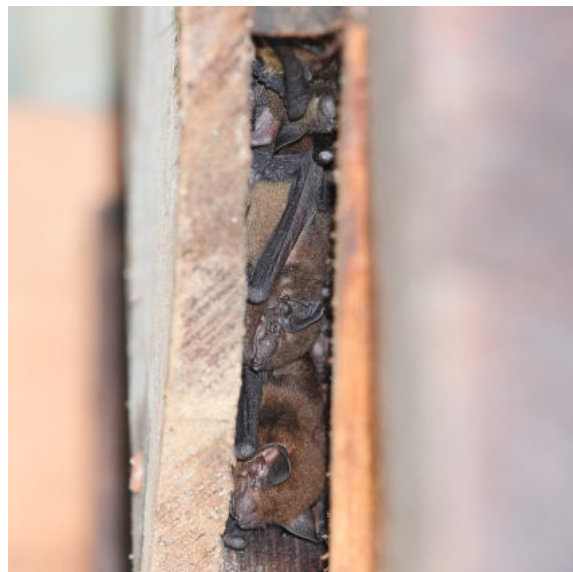
Biak: 2 nights in the island and very little time spent out at night delivered several sights of an unidentified *Nyctimene* (Contra Flannery et. al. and few other reports that assume that *Nyctimene cyclotis* is the only *Nyctimene* in the island, nowadays this affirmation is considered doubtful and the superficially similar bats to *Nyctimene cyclotis* might represent a sister but undescribed species). On the other hand, a short visit to a nearby cave delivered Beaufort's Bare-backed Fruit-bat, Golden-tipped Bat, Biak Leaf-nosed Bat, Dark Sheat-tailed Bat, Temminck's Trident Bat, and a

Miniopterus that I couldn't identify down to species level.



Beaufort's Bare-backed Fruit-bat and Golden-tipped Bat

Wasur: 2 nights here, spending around 4 hours at night, mostly along the road. Brown Pademelon was seen several times but as usual, difficult to photograph. At night, a couple of Northern Brown Bandicoots crossed the road, Grassland Melomys was seen well and some large fruiting trees attracted many Greater Bare-backed Fruit-bats.



Papua Grassland Melomys and *Pipistrellus* sp.

Nimbokrang: 3 nights here. At night, bats stole the show, with Greater and Lesser Bare-backed Fruit-bats, Great Flying Fox and Diadem Leaf-nosed Bat. A Long-nosed Echymipera was a nice surprise but I failed to take a photo, meanwhile few Northern Grey Cuscus showed well in the spotlight. At daytime, a young Common Spotted Cuscus was roosting in a large ficus tree, a Brown Pademelon was a brief but nice surprise and we found few *Pipistrellus* roosting that we could not identify them down to species level.



Northern Grey Cuscus and Lesser Bare-backed Fruit-bat

Arfak: 5 nights here. At daytime, both Red-bellied and Narrow-striped Marsupial Shrews popped up at the Birds-of-Paradise leks. At night, things got fun, with Vogelkop and Reclusive Ringtail Possums and a superb Ground Cuscus.



Vogelkop Ringtail Possum and Ground Cuscus

Waigeo: During the cross from Sorong, few Indo-pacific Bottle-nosed Dolphins were seen. Once in Waigeo, nights were specially productive, with Waigeo and Northern Grey Cuscuses, Striped Possum and Sugar Glider foraging near the lodge, a family of Common Echymipera crossing the road, Black-tailed Melomys showing well in a small fruiting tree and a huge mass of fruiting and flowering trees hosting Spectacled Flying Fox, Common Tube-nosed Fruit-bat and Common Blossom Bats. One night, a Broad-eared Horseshoe Bat was hunting near my cabin. At daytime, some small caves delivered Raffray's Sheat-tailed Bats and Fawn Leaf-nosed Bats.



Striped Possum and Raffray's Sheat-tailed Bat

Systematic List

West Papua endemics are indicated with a WP. New Guinea endemics are indicated with a NG Introduced species are indicated with an I

LIST OF MAMMALS RECORDED

Common Echymipera *Echymipera kalubu* NG

Long-nosed Echymipera *Echymipera rufescens*

Northern Brown Bandicoot *Isodon macrourus*

Red-bellied Marsupial Shrew *Phascosorex doriae* NG

Narrow-striped Marsupial Shrew *Phascosorex dorsalis* NG

Waigeo Cuscus *Spilocuscus papuensis* WP

Common Spotted Cuscus *Spilocuscus maculatus*

Northern Grey Cuscus *Phalanger orientalis*

Ground Cuscus *Phalanger gymnotis* NG

Vogelkop Ringtail Possum *Pseudochirulus schlegeli* WP

Reclusive Ringtail Possum *Pseudochirops coronatus* NG

Striped Possum *Dactylopsila trivirgata*

Sugar Glider *Petaurus breviceps*

Brown's Pademelon *Thylogale browni* NG

Dusky Pademelon *Thylogale brunii* NG

Greater Flying Fox *Pteropus neohibernicus*

Spectacled Flying Fox *Pteropus conspicillatus*

Beaufort's Bare-backed Fruit-bat *Dobsonia beauforti*

Greater Bare-backed Fruit-bat *Dobsonia magna* NG

Lesser Bare-backed Fruit-bat *Dobsonia minor* NG

Geoffroy's Rousette *Rousettus amplexicaudatus*

Common Tube-nosed Fruit-bat *Nyctimene albiventer*

Common Blossom Bat *Syconycteris australis*

Broad-eared Horseshoe Bat *Rhinolophus euryotis* NG

Raffray's Sheat-tailed Bat *Emballonura raffrayana*

Dark Sheat-tailed Bat *Mosia nigrescens*

Temminck's Trident Bat *Aselliscus tricuspidatus*

Diadem Leaf-nosed Bat *Hipposideros diadema*

Biak Leaf-nosed Bat *Hipposideros papua* WP

Fawn Leaf-nosed Bat *Hipposideros cervinus*

Maluku Myotis *Myotis moluccarum*

Golden-tipped Bat *Phoniscus papuanus*

Lesser Papuan Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus papuanus* NG

Grassland Melomys *Melomys lutillus* NG

Black-tailed Melomys *Melomys rufescens* NG