

WEST PAPUA 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, Biak 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 June 2019, we recorded 28 mammals, of which 3 are endemic of West Papua and 9 more are endemic of New Guinea. 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 June 2019](#)

We visited 4 main areas: Waigeo, Arfak Mountains, Nimbokrang and the Snow Mountains

Waigeo: We stayed 3 nights at the island. At night, Waigeo Cuscus, Northern Grey Cuscus and Striped Possum showed well in the spotlight, Beaufort's Bare-backed Fruit-bat and Common Tube-nosed were foraging in a fruiting tree next to our resort and two small caves delivered a number of Fawn Leaf-nosed Bat, Raffray's Sheat-tailed Bat, Biak Leaf-nosed Bat and a single Maggietaylor's Leaf-nosed Bat. Once, in broad daylight, a Common Echymipera crossed the road in front of the cars During a diving excursion, we did stop in a small island that hosts a colony of the distinctive race of Spectacled Flying Fox that occurs in the area, certainly very different than the one from Australia. On the way back to the resort, at dusk, a number of putative *Myotis moluccarum* were seen trawling in open see. From the ferry, between Sorong and Waigeo, Sperm Whale, Spinner Dolphin and Short-finned Pilot Whales were noted

Once in Sorong, a number of Papuan Pipistrelles were hawking around (Identified previously with a bat detector)



Striped Possum and Maggietaylor's Leaf-nosed Bat

Arfak: The main course of the trip. 7 nights in the area, very focused into see the many special birds that occur in this area. Usually the area offers good chances to see mammals but in this trip, the birds stole the show. Narrow-striped Marsupial Shrew showed up several times at the Birds-of-Paradise leks, a Feathertailed Possum stayed still enough to take a couple of photos and two Mountain Tube-nosed Fruit-bats gave great views.



Feathertailed Possum and Fawn Leaf-nosed Bat

Snow Mountains: Mammalwatching in this area is particularly tough if you stay near the road due excessive hunting. If anybody wants to find some of the best mammals of the area, a well-organized expedition deep in the forest is mandatory. I have seen New Guinea Quoll crossing the road once but in this trip, all we saw was Speckled Dasyure, which it was fairly common in the upper part of the Road, near Habemma Lake, Geoffroy's Fruit Bat forming a large colony inside a cave and the small bat hawking at dusk, around at 3400 m.a.s.l., was

probably *Nyctophilus microtis* but we couldn't confirm the identification so is not included in the list of species.



Northern Grey Cuscus and Raffray's Sheat-tailed Bat

Nimbokrang: 3 nights in the hottest place of the trip. We were treated with incredible views of the critically endangered Black-spotted Cuscus, as a young female was found next to our lodge. Bats were in evidence, with Great Flying Fox, Great and Lesser Bare-backed Fruit Bats and Diadem Leaf-nosed Bat around the lodge



Black-spotted Cuscus and Biak Leaf-nosed 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
Speckled Dasyure *Neophascogale lorentzi* NG
Narrow-striped Marsupial Shrew *Phascolosorex dorsalis* NG
Waigeo Cuscus *Spilocuscus papuensis*
Black-spotted Cuscus *Spilocuscus rufoniger* NG
Northern Grey Cuscus *Phalanger orientalis*
Striped Possum *Dactylopsila trivirgata*
Sugar Glider *Petaurus breviceps*
Feathertailed Possum *Distoechurus pennatus* 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*
Mountain Tube-nosed Fruit-bat *Nyctimene cyclotis* WP
Raffray's Sheat-tailed Bat *Emballonura raffrayana*
Diadem Leaf-nosed Bat *Hipposideros diadema*
Biak Leaf-nosed Bat *Hipposideros papua* WP
Fawn Leaf-nosed Bat *Hipposideros cervinus*
Maggietaylor's Leaf-nosed Bat *Hipposideros maggietayloriae* NG
Maluku Myotis *Myotis moluccarum*
Papuan Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus minahassae* NG
Sperm Whale *Physeter macrocephalus*
Short-finned Pilot Whale *Globicephala macrorhyncha*
Spinner Dolphin *Stenella longirostris*
Wild Boar *Sus Scrofa* I