

Mammalwatching Trip Notes

West Papua: August 1 - 15, 2022

John Rogers and Neil Broekhuizen (birding)

Guide: Carlos Bocos (BirdTour Asia)



Long-tailed Pygmy Possum, Arfaks

Itinerary

15 days in West Papua with 26 mammals including 12 marsupials. Sorong, Malagafuk, Waigeo and the Arfaks.

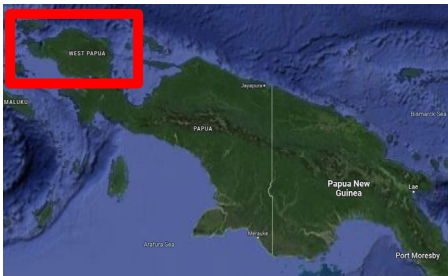
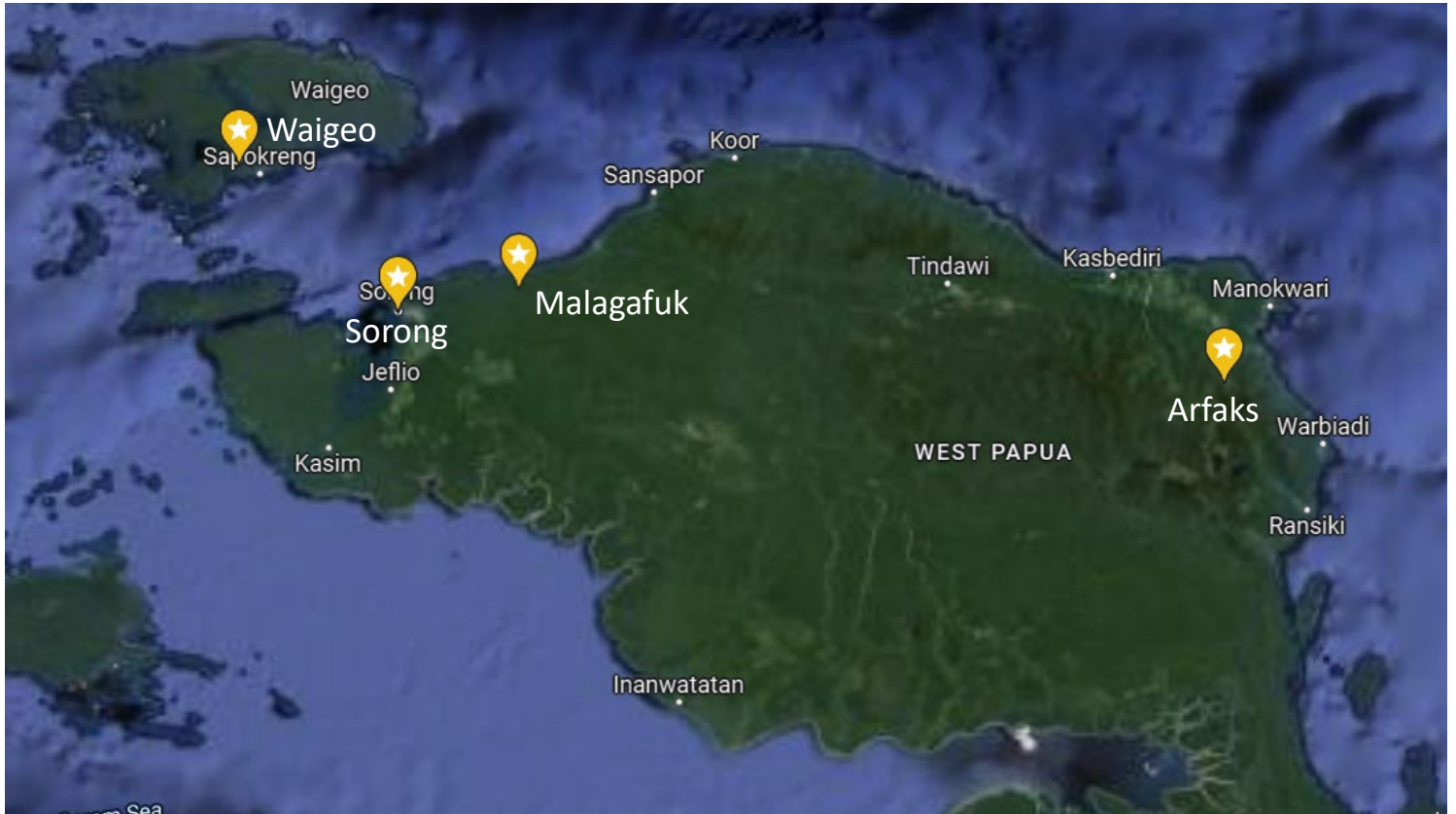
1 August – Sorong mangroves

2-4 August – Malagafuk

4-7 August – Waigeo island

7-15 August – Arfak Mountains

Locations



Sorong

Came off the plane and straight to mangroves and a brief visit to some secondary forest just outside of Sorong, no mammals seen.

Malagafuk

Fantastic lowland forest. Two nights was too short, especially with one night being effectively rained out. **Common Echymipera (Spiny Bandicoot)** and **Great Flying Fox** are both regular around the village. **Brown Forest Wallaby** was seen at least several times from the paths/boardwalk. The rufous colored **Long-nosed Echymipera** was seen only once from the boardwalk. **Bruijn's Brush Mouse** was picked up in the thermal and remained totally stationary

allowing photos to be taken (Carlos has confirmed that this greyish species is indeed *bruijnii* contrary to image in checklist of the mammals of the world). Unfortunately, we did not have the time to do a nocturnal foray on the long path into the hills behind the village.

Waigeo

We caught the ferry across to Waigeo from Sorong and had a mixed pod of **Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin** and **Short-finned Pilot Whale** as we approached the island. It is a beautiful location with wonderful snorkeling. The resort was nice, with the mammalwatching getting off to a flying start with a **Pacific (Polynesian) Rat** in my room (and could be smelt for the whole time there...). **Waigeo Spotted Cuscus** was a very welcome find in a tree above the hotel our first night. **Northern Common Cuscus** was low in a tree during the day off the West Waigeo logging trail - of course during one of the very few moments I did not have my camera readily available.

The trail that heads inland from the road above the resort gave us a productive evening with a **Torresian Striped Possum** and a **Black-tailed Melomys** feeding in a tree.

We had a pod of dolphins close to the resort, and it took us a while to work out that it contained both **Indo-Pacific Bottlenose** (at least 2) and **Australian Humpback Dolphins** (at least 3).

The large **Beaufort's** and **Moluccan (Greater) Naked-Backed Fruit-Bats** appeared quite common (the brown-backed Beaufort's was around the resort and the black-backed Greater were on the former logging road). Carlos also took us to a cave with many **Fawn-colored Leaf Nosed Bats**.

Arfaks

We had a whole week in the Arfaks, flying into Manokowri, then driving up the road (2 hours) to a series of villages (in order Meybri, Mingre, Soyubri) and then hiking up for two nights to the "German" camp above Soyubri. One afternoon we drove to the high grasslands (birding - to see the endemic Grey-banded Mannikin) although this added no new mammals. Our local guides were superb and very keen on finding all "cuscus" (which includes possum species) as they apparently taste great! They were less impressed (nonplussed?) with Carlos finding bat species.

Our spotlighting from Soyubri gave us our only **Arfak Ringtail Possum**, getting a brief but decent view of one before it vanished into thick foliage. Our night walks from the German camp were excellent for **Stein's Cuscus** with 3 sightings of at least 4 individuals. We also had very good views of a **Long-tailed Pygmy-Possum**. **Vogelkop Mountain Rat** was around the campsite, with one being caught by the local guides.

The better food and more comfortable beds at Mingre were much appreciated for our 4 nights there. **Large New Guinea Spiny Rat** could be seen at the accommodation (they seem to live between the ground and first floors and sometimes appeared during the day). We went out all 4 nights with the highlight being our night walk (from Meybri) with first a **(Papuan) Sugar Glider** and then the sought-after

higher altitude **Long-fingered Striped Possum** (Triok). Somehow our young guide had known to focus on the tree with the Triok (despite Carlos and myself seeing nothing with the thermals) and he spotted this one very low (after we had already moved on – a quick run back to see it before it retreated into high foliage). **Southern Blossom Bat** was also quite common and approachable that night.

Our final night walk at lower altitude gave Carlos his only lifer of the trip with a group of night-roosting **Papuan Long-Eared Bat** (*Nyctophilus microtis*) huddled together on a tree-trunk. However, the best was saved for last when on the last day Carlos found a **D’Alberti’s Ringtail Possum** during the day. My camera timing remained impeccable with the camera deciding to fog up at that very moment, with Neil being called upon to hastily photograph the diurnal mammal!

MAMMAL LIST

- | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Common Echymipera
(Common Spiny Bandicoot) | <i>Echymipera kalubu</i> | Malagafuk |
| 2. Long-nosed Echymipera
(Long Nosed Spiny Bandicoot) | <i>Echymipera rufescens</i> | Malagafuk |
| 3. Long-tailed Pygmy Possum | <i>Carcartetus caudatus</i> | Arfaks |



Long-tailed Pygmy Possum, Arfaks

- | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|--------|
| 4. Stein's Cuscus | <i>Phalanger vestitus</i> | Arfaks |
|-------------------|---------------------------|--------|



Stein's Cuscus with young, Arfaks

- 5. Northern Common Cuscus
- 6. Waigeo Spotted Cuscus

Phalanger orientalis
Spilocuscus papuensis

Waigeo and Arfaks
 Waigeo



Northern Common Cuscus, Waigeo, Arfaks



Waigeo Spotted Cuscus, Waigeo

- 7. Arfak (Vogelkop) Ringtail Possum

Pseudochirulus schlegeli

Arfaks



Arfak Ringtail Possum, Arfaks

8. D'Alberti's Ringtail Possum *Pseudochirops albertisii* Arfaks



D'Alberti's Ringtail Possum, Arfaks (N. Broekhuizen photo)

9. Long-fingered Striped Possum *Dactylopsila palpator* Arfaks
 10. Torresian Striped Possum *Dactylopsila trivirgata* Arfaks
 11. (Papuan) Sugar Glider *Petaurus breviceps* Arfaks



Sugar Glider, Arfaks



a bedraggled Vogelkop Mountain Rat, Arfaks

12. Brown Forest Wallaby *Dorcopsis muelleri* Malagafuk
 13. Large New Guinea Spiny Rat *Rattus praetor* Arfaks
 14. Vogelkop Mountain Rat *Rattus arfakensis* Arfaks
 15. Pacific Rat *Rattus exulans* Waigeo
 (Polynesian Rat)
 16. Black-tailed Melomys *Melomys rufescens* Waigeo

17. Bruijn's Brush Mouse

Pogomelomys bruijnii

Malagafuk



Bruijn's Brush Mouse, Malagafuk

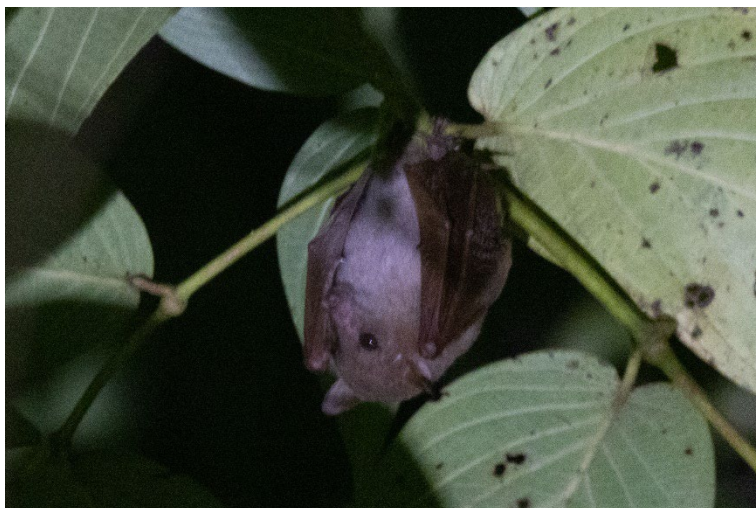


Black-tailed Melomys, Waigeo

18. Southern Blossom Bat

Syconycteris australis

Arfaks



Southern Blossom Bat, Arfaks

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| 19. Moluccan Naked-backed Fruit Bat (Greater) | <i>Dobsonia moluccensis (magna)</i> | Waigeo |
| 20. Beaufort's Naked-backed Fruit Bat | <i>Dobsonia beauforti</i> | Waigeo |
| 21. Great Flying Fox | <i>Pteropus neohibernicus</i> | Malagafuk |
| 22. Fawn-colored Leaf Nosed Bat | <i>Hipposideros cervinus</i> | Waigeo |
| 23. Papuan Long-eared Bat | <i>Nyctophilus microtis</i> | Arfaks |



Fawn Colored Leaf Nosed Bat, Waigeo



Papuan Long-eared Bats at night roost, Arfaks

- 24. Short-finned Pilot Whale *Globicephala macrorhynchus* Waigeo
- 25. Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops aduncus* Waigeo
- 26. Australian Humpback Dolphin *Sousa sahalensis* Waigeo



Waigeo -

record shot Short Finned Pilot Whale



Indo-Pacific Bottlenose (left), Australian Humpback Dolphin (right)



Indo-Pacific Bottlenose (left), Australian Humpback Dolphins (right two) with long beak showing clearly in far right

BIRDS

Many highlights amongst 251 species – amazing displays of the birds of paradise and Vogelkop Bowerbird; seeing all the Arfak endemics including the sought after Long-tailed Paridigalla and finally an Arfak Astrapia; all the Waigeo endemics (except the brush turkey); Western Crowned, Pheasant and Thick-billed Ground Pigeons; a very impressive array of endemic parrots, fruit-doves and kingfishers.

SNAKES

Only one snake species seen, believed to be Green Tree Snake (with blue and white coloration) on the West Waigeo logging road.