



WESTERN PACIFIC ODYSSEY

26th March - 12th April 2013

SYSTEMATIC LIST

The taxonomy and English names used in this checklist generally follow *The Clements Checklist of the Birds of the World* by James Clements 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 Lyttelton and the evening before arriving at Kavieng.

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 has been 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.

NB: This itinerary was a 'shorter' version of this voyage, for the full voyage, please also see the 2012 and previous years lists and reports. Please also note, this year sailed from South Island, rather than North, and as a result more 'southern' species were seen than normal. The next departure is scheduled for 2015, and will be the full itinerary, from New Zealand to Japan.

To see some excellent **photos** from this year's voyage on the web, please visit

johnjemi.blogspot.hk (taken by John & Jemi Holmes)

pelagicodyssey.ca (taken by Kirk Zufelt)

BIRDS

Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa*

A low A was logged on Kolombangara on 9 April.

[Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*]

This introduction was seen in reasonable numbers on Norfolk Island (30 March) with a low A being recorded.

Melanesian Scrubfowl *Megapodius eremita*

Two birds were seen during the shore excursion on Kolombangara (9 April).

[California Quail *Callipepla californica*]

A reasonably common introduction on Norfolk Island where A was logged on 30 March.

[Red Junglefowl *Gallus gallus*]

Another well established introduced species on Norfolk Island with B recorded (30 March).

Little Penguin *Eudyptula minor*

Two individuals were seen whilst cruising north up the eastern side of South Island (26 March), with a further bird recorded the following day.

Gibson's Albatross *Diomedea gibsoni*

A total of five birds showing characteristics of this form/species were seen between 26-29 March (South Island – sea day north of Norfolk Island).

Southern Royal Albatross *Diomedea epomophora*

Two individuals were recorded whilst cruising north up the eastern side of South Island (26 March).

Northern Royal Albatross *Diomedea sanfordi*

This species was found on each of the first three days of the expedition, with the highest count being off the eastern side of South Island (26 March), where a low A was logged.

Campbell Albatross *Thalassarche impavida*

Somewhat unexpectedly, the only confirmed sighting of the expedition was a lone bird on 28 March (west of North Island).

White-capped Albatross *Thalassarche steadi*

Seen in reasonable numbers on the first two days of the voyage, with A recorded on 26 March and B the following day.

Salvin's Albatross *Thalassarche salvini*

A low A was logged whilst sailing up the eastern side of South Island (26 March).

Buller's Albatross *Thalassarche bulleri*

A total of eight individuals were recorded on the first two days (26-27 March).

Northern Giant Petrel *Macronectes halli*

Two birds were seen on 26 March (off the eastern side of South Island).

Cape Petrel *Daption capense*

A low A was logged on 26 March (offshore from South Island), with a single bird then recorded the following day.

Beck's Petrel *Pseudobulweria becki*

At least five individuals of this extremely poorly known species were seen off New Ireland on 11 April. The first sighting was a lone individual which approached our chum slick off Cap St George in the early morning. Although it disappeared reasonably quickly, the characteristic flight with tight turns over the

chum could be observed. Later in the day, at least four more individuals were seen as the *Spirit of Enderby* cruised north up the coast of New Ireland.

Tahiti Petrel *Pseudobulweria rostrata*

This species was seen on an almost daily basis from 31 March - 5 April (day north of Norfolk Island - day south of Rennell Island), with A logged on three dates and single individuals sighted on most other days. The only other sightings were off New Ireland (11 April: low A) and a lone bird whilst cruising from Makira to Guadalcanal (7 April).

Grey-faced Petrel *Pterodroma gouldi*

Seen on daily basis between North Island and Norfolk Island (28-30 March), with A logged on the first two dates and two birds as the ship approached Norfolk Island.

Providence Petrel *Pterodroma solandri*

This species is not recorded annually on the WPO, however, a total of five individuals were seen in 2013, with the first of these on 29 March (north of North Island). Two days later, another lone individual was spotted on the sea day north of Norfolk Island, with the final sightings being three birds on 4 April (north of New Caledonia).

It is worth noting that the last of these sightings were amongst the most northerly records of any WPO expedition.

Kermadec Petrel *Pterodroma neglecta*

A total of six individuals were logged between 28-31 March (north of North Island - day north of Norfolk Island) with the highest number (three birds) being on 29 March.

Herald Petrel *Pterodroma heraldica*

The first WPO record of this species was in 2012 when two birds were sighted a little to the north of North Island. Curiously, there was a further sighting in broadly the same area in 2013 with a single bird on 29 March.

White-necked Petrel *Pterodroma cervicalis*

There were sightings on three dates, with the highest count being a low A which was logged on 29 March (north of North Island). A total of four birds were then sighted on the subsequent two days.

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 WPO starts. A low A was, however, logged on 28 March, as the ship cruised north up the western side of North Island.

Gould's Petrel *Pterodroma leucoptera*

Seen on a daily basis between 31 March-3 April (day north of Norfolk Island - day 1 to Rennell) with the highest counts being around the southern end of New Caledonia (1-2 April) where B was logged.

Collared Petrel *Pterodroma brevipes*

A total of seven dark or intermediate phase Collared Petrels were recorded on the expedition, with the first sighting being on 31 March (sea day north of Norfolk Island). The only other records were on 2 April (off New Caledonia coastline), when an impressive total of six birds were logged.

Magnificent Petrel *Pterodroma (brevipes) magnificens*

A bird considered to be this form/species was photographed on 4 April (north of New Caledonia) with a second individual on the same day also probably being this taxon.

Black-winged Petrel *Pterodroma nigripennis*

Encountered on a daily basis from the western side of North Island (28 March) until the New Caledonian coastline (1 April), with A logged on the first four of these dates.

Fairy Prion *Pachyptila turtur*

A total of nine birds were logged off the southern end of North Island (27 March).

White-chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis*

Recorded on the first three days of the expedition, with the highest count being off South Island (26 March) where a low A was logged on 26 March.

Black Petrel *Procellaria parkinsoni*

Five birds were seen on 29 March (north of North Island).

Westland Petrel *Procellaria westlandica*

With the route of WPO 2013 taking us up the western side of North Island and thus closer to the breeding grounds of this vulnerable species (west coast of South Island), there were a reasonable number of records, with three birds on 26 March and a low A logged the following day.

Streaked Shearwater *Calonectris leucomelas*

This species is sometimes seen off New Ireland and on WPO 2013 we logged five birds there on 11 April.

Flesh-footed Shearwater *Puffinus carneipes*

This species was recorded on five widely spaced dates during the voyage, with the highest count on 27 April (Cook Straight and Tasman Bay) where a low A was logged. All other daily totals were of either one or two individuals.

Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus pacificus*

This was the most frequently encountered seabird on the expedition, with almost daily sightings from just south of Norfolk Island (30 March) onwards.

On most dates, A or B was logged, with the highest count being off the New Caledonian coast (3 April) when C (ie at least 1,000 birds) was recorded.

Buller's Shearwater *Puffinus bulleri*

This New Zealand breeder was recorded in reasonable numbers on the first four days of the expedition with the highest count being in the Cook Straight and Tasman Bay region (27 March) where a low B was logged.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

Only seen on the first two days of the voyage with A logged on both occasions.

Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris*

This species was recorded on 7 dates, although most birds were recorded between Norfolk Island and the northern end of New Caledonia (31 March-4 April) when A or B was logged on a daily basis.

Hutton's Shearwater *Puffinus huttoni*

This species was recorded on the first two days of the expedition (26-27 March), with A logged on both occasions. Although this was a new species for the WPO, this was no real surprise given the entire population breeds in the mountains of South Island and 2013 was the first occasion when the voyage had started there.

Fluttering Shearwater *Puffinus gavia*

Like the previous species, Fluttering Shearwaters were only recorded on the first two days of the expedition (26-27 March).

Little Shearwater *Puffinus assimilis*

The only records of this species were close to Norfolk Island (30 March) when a low A was logged. Presumably these birds were 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. Given recent work on some species of storm-petrel has led to winter and summer breeding populations of seemingly identical looking birds being split, given the size difference in the Norfolk Island shearwaters, further studies are surely required.

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

The only sightings of this interesting taxon were off the northern end of New Caledonia on 4 April. 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.

Heinroth's Shearwater *Puffinus heinrothi*

A total of four individuals were logged, with one off Bougainville on 10 April and three the following day offshore of New Ireland.

Although this species is generally only recorded in relatively small numbers, the number seen on WPO 2013 was certainly below average and whilst it is merely speculation, it does seem possible that this had something to do with the significantly increased seawater temperatures in the area which were reportedly 3-5°C above normal.

Wilson's Storm-petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*

This species was seen on six dates, with most day counts being in single figures, although a low A was logged off northern New Caledonia on 4 April.

White-faced Storm-petrel *Pelagodroma marina*

A total of seven birds were recorded whilst cruising up the western side of North Island (27-28 March).

White-bellied Storm-petrel *Fregatta grallaria*

Although it is not known to breed on Norfolk Island, this species has now been recorded on several occasions (on WPO expeditions) relatively close to the island and the trend continued in 2013 with a single bird on 30 March.

Polynesian Storm-petrel *Nesofregatta fuliginosa*

On recent WPOs, this species has been found with a degree of regularity off the northern end of New Caledonia and in 2013 there were four sightings in this area on the morning of 4 April.

Unfortunately, this species seems to have very little interest in chum slicks and all birds were sighted off the bows of the ship. Despite immediately 'chasing' one of these in the *Spirit of Enderby*, it soon disappeared demonstrating the challenge of seeing this species well.

Band-rumped Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma castro*

One of the biggest surprises of WPO 2013 was the seven Band-rumped Storm-petrels off the coast of New Caledonia (3-4 April), with at least one of the birds being well photographed.

These sightings continue the trend which started on WPO 2011 and there now seems little doubt that this species is not uncommon in New Caledonian waters at certain times of year. According to Onley and Scofield, this species had never been recorded in the south-west Pacific south of the Equator when they published their seabird book in 2007, so these records are a highly significant range extension.

It is interesting to speculate where these birds originate from and whether there might be a local breeding population given the closest known breeders are on Hawaii and Japan !!!

Leach's Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

A lone bird was seen off New Ireland on 11 April.

Common Diving-petrel *Pelecanoides urinatrix*

Only recorded on the first two days of the voyage (26-27 March), with the higher count being on 27 March when B was logged in the Cook Straight and Tasman Bay.

Red-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon rubricauda*

Birds were recorded on a daily basis between 28-31 March inclusive. On the first of these dates (when three birds were seen), the *Spirit of Enderby* was west of North Island, although this species is considered to be only a vagrant in New Zealand waters.

White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus*

A total of nine White-tailed Tropicbirds were recorded across seven days, with the first sighting being a lone bird on the sea day between Norfolk Island and New Caledonia (1 April) and the final record off New Ireland ten days later.

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 six dates, with the first sighting (3 birds) being off Norfolk Island on 30 March and the final record offshore from New Ireland on 11 April.

Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel*

This species was only recorded during the second half of the trip, with birds seen on eight dates between 1-11 April (New Caledonia coastline - New Ireland). As with Great Frigatebird, all counts were in low single figures, although plenty of distant and thus unidentified frigatebirds were also seen.

Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra*

This species was recorded on five dates during the voyage. The largest numbers (low B) were recorded close to Norfolk Island (30 March), with all other counts being in single figures.

It is worth noting that the birds on Norfolk Island are 'Tasman Boobies' and these may eventually be treated as a full species given there are structural and plumage differences from other populations.

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster*

Only encountered during the second half of the expedition, with records on six dates between New Caledonia and New Ireland (3-11 April). The highest count was off Bougainville where A was logged on 10 April.

Red-footed Booby *Sula sula*

This tropical Booby was also only recorded during the second part of the voyage, with the first sightings being off southern New Caledonia (1 April), when a high A was logged. It was then recorded on the majority of days until New Ireland (11 April).

Australian Gannet *Morus serrator*

A total of eight birds were seen across the first three days of the expedition (26-28 April).

Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*

For the second year in succession, there were records of this species on Norfolk Island (30 March: 8) where this species was, until recently, considered to be a vagrant.

Spotted Shag *Phalacrocorax punctatus*

Four birds were recorded shortly after the ship left Lyttelton on 26 March.

Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax varius*

The only records on the voyage were during the shore excursion to Riviere Bleue on New Caledonia (2 April) where four birds were logged.

White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae*

Recorded on Norfolk Island (30 March: A) and on New Caledonia (2 April: 2).

Pacific Reef Heron *Egretta sacra*

Seen on four dates, with one bird on New Caledonia (2 April) and a total of five individuals during the landings on Rennell (6 April: 1), Makira (7 April: 1) and Kolombangara (9 April: 3).

Striated Heron *Butorides striatus*

The only sightings were single birds on Makira (7 April) and Kolombangara (9 April).

Australian Ibis *Threskiornis molucca*

This species is reasonably common on Rennell, with A logged on 6 April.

Royal Spoonbill *Platalea regia*

A vagrant was seen on Norfolk Island (30 March).

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

This species was seen in small numbers on Makira (7 April: 3) and Kolombangara (9 April: 2). The only other records were on New Caledonia where there were two sightings.

It is worth noting that some authorities now split the Osprey and if this proposal is followed, the birds seen on the WPO would be Eastern Ospreys.

Pacific Baza *Aviceda subcristata*

Somewhat surprisingly, the only sighting of the expedition was a lone bird on Makira on 7 April.

Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus*

This species was only seen on New Caledonia, with five birds recorded on 2 April during the shore excursion to Riviere Bleue.

Brahminy Kite *Haliastur Indus*

This species was seen on three of the four landings in the Solomons (none on Rennell) with a total of ten individuals logged.

Solomon Islands Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus sanfordi*

This Solomon Islands endemic was seen on two islands, with an impressive total of seven birds at Mount Austin on Guadalcanal (8 April) and two the following day on Kolombangara.

Brown Goshawk *Accipiter fasciatus*

There were two sightings of this species on Rennell on 6 April.

Pied Goshawk *Accipiter albogularis*

This species is endemic to the Solomon Islands and birds were seen on Makira (7 April: 3), at Mount Austin, Guadalcanal (8 April: 2) and on Kolombangara (9 April: 1).

Australian Kestrel *Falco cenchroides*

A single individual was seen on Norfolk Island (30 March).

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

A lone bird was seen at sea off the coast of New Ireland on 11 April.

Woodford's Rail *Nesoclopeus woodfordi*

This extremely poorly known endemic was heard at Mount Austin (8 April) but, unfortunately, was not seen.

Roviana Rail *Gallirallus rovianae*

Three individuals of this highly localised and much sought after Solomon Islands endemic were seen on Kolombangara (9 April), with one bird showing particularly well in Hambere village.

Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*

A low A was logged on Norfolk Island (30 March).

Kagu *Rhynochetos jubatus*

This species is always one of the major landbird highlights of the WPO and at least ten birds were seen at Riviere Bleue, New Caledonia on 2 April.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*

A low A was logged on both Norfolk Island (30 March) and Kolombangara, with the only other records being ten birds which flew past the ship on 11 April whilst cruising north up the eastern side of New Ireland.

Lesser Sandplover *Charadrius mongolus*

A low A was recorded near the landing site on Norfolk Island (30 March).

Wandering Tattler *Heterosceles incanus*

Five were found feeding along the shoreline near the landing site on Norfolk Island on 30 March.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Two birds on Norfolk Island (30 March) were the only records on the expedition.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

A reasonably common species on Norfolk Island, with a low A logged on 30 March.

Red-billed Gull *Chroicocephalus scopulinus*

This New Zealand endemic was only seen in Lyttelton (25 March).

Silver Gull *Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae*

This species was reasonably numerous (A) around the harbour in Noumea, New Caledonia on 2 April.

Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus*

A was logged on both 26 and 27 March whilst cruising offshore from New Zealand.

Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus*

This species was first seen on the sea day south of Norfolk Island (29 March) and last recorded off Bougainville on 11 April, with sightings on a total of nine days.

Black Noddy *Anous minutes*

Seen on an almost daily basis between Norfolk Island (30 March) and the New Ireland coastline (11 April) with sightings on nine dates. The highest counts were around Norfolk Island and coastal New Caledonia (3 April), where B was logged.

Grey Ternlet *Procelsterna albivitta*

This species breeds on Norfolk Island and a low A was recorded there on 30 March. Somewhat surprisingly, the only other sighting of the expedition was a lone bird the previous day whilst cruising north towards the island.

White Tern *Gygis alba*

Good numbers of this species breed on Norfolk Island with a low B logged there on 30 March and single figures counts on the preceding and subsequent sea days. The only other sightings were close to Rennell Island, with one bird logged on 5 April and eight the following day.

Sooty Tern *Onychoprion fuscata*

This widespread species was recorded on six days during the second half of the expedition. Birds were seen on the majority of dates between northern New Caledonia (4 April) and New Ireland (11 April), with the highest count being on the last of these days when a low B was logged.

Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus*

A similar pattern to the previous species, with the first sightings on 3 April (cruising north along the New Caledonia coastline) and the final record on the last sea day of the expedition, ie off New Ireland.

Fairy Tern *Sternula nereis*

Three birds were seen as the ship departed New Caledonia on the afternoon of 2 April.

Black-fronted Tern *Chlidonias albostrigatus*

Single birds were seen on 26 and 27 March whilst cruising along the New Zealand coastline.

White-fronted Tern *Sterna striata*

This New Zealand endemic was only seen on 26 March whilst cruising up the eastern side of South Island.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

A lone bird off the coast of Bougainville (10 April) was the only record of the expedition.

Great Crested Tern *Sterna bergi*

This species was seen close to the majority of islands between New Caledonia and New Ireland (with sightings on six dates), with the highest count near Noumea where five birds were logged (2 April). On all days when this species was recorded, counts were in low single figures.

South Polar Skua *Stercorarius maccormicki*

A pale phase individual was seen off New Ireland (11 April). As with most WPO Skua sightings, the bird appeared to be migrating north.

Brown Skua *Stercorarius antarcticus*

Although this species was new for the WPO in 2012, there were two sightings in 2013, with the first being off South Island on 26 March. Five days later, another individual was seen on the sea day between Norfolk Island and New Caledonia.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

A total of nine 'Poms' were seen during the voyage, with seven of these being sighted off New Ireland on 11 April. The other records were the previous day (off Bougainville) and on 5 April on the sea day south of Rennell Island.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

This species was seen on four widely spaced dates during the voyage, with only single individuals being recorded on each occasion.

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

The most frequently recorded Skua in terms of the number of birds sighted and dates, with eleven individuals seen across seven days.

Although most birds were recorded on the first four days of the expedition (seven individuals), there were then odd sightings during the transit through the Solomons and off New Ireland.

[Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*]

This Asian introduction was seen on New Caledonia, with A recorded on 2 April.

Mackinlay's Cuckoo-dove *Macropygia mackinlayi*

This species can be found on the four islands the WPO visits in the Solomons and birds were recorded on all landings in the archipelago, with the highest count being on Rennell (5 April) where a low A was logged. On the other three days, there were only single figure counts.

Pacific Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps longirostris*

The only sightings of the voyage were three individuals on Norfolk Island on 30 March.

Superb Fruit-dove *Ptilinopus superbus*

A lone bird on Kolombangara (9 April) was the only record on the expedition.

Yellow-bibbed Fruit-dove *Ptilinopus solomonensis*

Four of these handsome fruit-doves were seen on Makira (7 April).

Silver-capped Fruit-dove *Ptilinopus richardsii*

This species is endemic to Rennell and a few nearby islets, however, it is fairly common with A recorded on 6 April.

Claret-breasted Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus viridis*

Another range-restricted fruit-dove which was seen on Guadalcanal (8 April: 6) and Kolombangara (9 April: A).

Cloven-feathered Dove *Drepanoptila holosericea*

This endemic Dove is often missed at Riviere Bleue, however, we had prolonged views of a perched bird on 2 April, with this being one of the major highlights of our time at this fantastic National Park.

Pacific Imperial-pigeon *Ducula pacifica*

This species was only seen on Rennell (6 April), where eight were recorded.

Red-knobbed Imperial-pigeon *Ducula rubricera*

This impressive looking pigeon was seen in reasonable numbers on Makira, Guadalcanal and Kolombangara (7-9 April), with A logged on both Makira and Kolombangara and three on Guadalcanal.

Island Imperial-pigeon *Ducula pistrinaria*

This nomadic species was seen on Kolombangara (9 April), where three birds were recorded.

Chestnut-bellied Imperial-pigeon *Ducula brenchleyi*

This poorly-known species is endemic to just three islands in the Solomons (plus a few islets) but can be reasonably common around Anuta, with three birds seen during the shore excursion on Makira on 7 April.

New Caledonian Imperial-pigeon *Ducula goliath*

Three individuals were logged at Riviere Bleue on 2 April.

Ducorps' Cockatoo *Cacatua ducorpsii*

This species was seen at Mount Austin, Guadalcanal on 8 April (4 birds) and the following day on Kolombangara where A was logged.

Cardinal Lory *Chalcopsitta cardinalis*

This brilliantly coloured parrot was seen on Makira, Guadalcanal and Kolombangara, with low single figure counts on the first two islands and A on Kolombangara.

Coconut ("Rainbow") Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus*

This species was reasonably common in downtown Noumea, New Caledonia (2 April), with a few birds also seen on the excursion to Riviere Bleue. It was also seen on Kolombangara (9 April: A).

Yellow-bibbed Lory *Lorius chlorocercus*

A Solomon Islands endemic which was seen on Makira, Guadalcanal and Kolombangara (7-9 April), with the highest count being on Kolombangara where A was logged.

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 Rennell and Makira, with the higher count being on Rennell, where five birds were recorded (6 April).

Horned Parakeet *Eunymphicus cornutus*

This New Caledonian endemic can be tricky to find at Riviere Bleue, however, four birds were recorded on 2 April.

New Caledonian Parakeet *Cyanoramphus saissetti*

Another species which is not seen on every WPO but four birds were logged on the visit to Riviere Bleue on 2 April.

Norfolk Island Parakeet *Cyanoramphus cookii*

As its name suggests, this species is endemic to Norfolk Island, although it is clearly closely related to the Red-crowned Parakeet of New Zealand and the New Caledonian Parakeet. During our shore excursion on 30 March, we had some fantastic views, with one bird in particular showing extremely well.

[**Crimson Rosella** *Platyercus elegans*]

A common introduction on Norfolk Island with A logged on 30 March.

It is worth noting that it is now thought this species is directly competing with the critically endangered Norfolk Island Parakeet and Crimson Rosellas are now being culled on the island.

Singing Parrot *Geoffroyus heteroclitus*

Seen on Rennell, Guadalcanal and Kolombangara, with the highest count being on Rennell (6 April), where six were recorded.

Eclectus Parrot *Eclectus roratus*

Another beautiful bird which was recorded on Makira and Kolombangara (7 and 9 April). Although a low A was logged on Makira, only a lone bird was spotted on Kolombangara.

Shining Bronze-cuckoo *Chrysococcyx lucidus*

A single bird on Rennell was the sole sighting of the expedition (6 April).

Pacific Koel *Eudynamis orientalis*

This species was heard on several occasions on both Guadalcanal and Kolombangara (8-9 April) but was not seen.

Buff-headed Coucal *Centropus milo*

This raucous Coucal, which is endemic to the Solomon Islands, makes an almost mammalian-like call and was seen at Mount Austin, Guadalcanal (8 April), with three logged during the morning excursion. The following day, a similar number were seen on Kolombangara.

Guadalcanal Boobook *Ninox granti*

This tricky endemic was heard shortly before dawn during the excursion to Mount Austin (8 April).

Glossy Swiftlet *Collocalia esculenta*

This species was seen in reasonable numbers on New Caledonia (2 April) and then on all the islands visited in the Solomons, with A or B logged on each island.

White-rumped Swiftlet *Aerodramus spodiopygius*

A was logged on New Caledonia on 2 April.

Uniform Swiftlet *Aerodramus vanikorensis*

Seen on Rennell, Makira and Guadalcanal (6-8 April), with A logged on each island.

Moustached Treeswift *Hemiprocne mystacea*

This impressive bird was seen on both Rennell (6 April: 3) and Kolombangara (9 April: A).

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

A lone bird of the race *salomonensis* was seen on Kolombangara on 9 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*

An incredibly obliging pair of this tricky and always much desired Solomon Islands endemic were found at Mount Austin, Guadalcanal (8 April) giving us the most prolonged views of any WPO expedition.

Collared Kingfisher *Todirhamphus chloris*

Three birds were logged on Rennell on 6 April.

Beach Kingfisher *Todirhamphus saurophaga*

Three birds were seen from the zodiacs at Makira (7 April), with two individuals a couple of days later on Kolombangara.

Sacred Kingfisher *Todirhamphus sanctus*

This widespread species was seen on Norfolk Island (30 March: 3) and New Caledonia (2 April: 2), as well as on Makira and Kolombangara, where single individuals were found (7 and 9 April).

Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis*

Only recorded on Guadalcanal (8 April), where two birds were seen.

Blyth's Hornbill *Aceros plicatus*

Reasonable numbers of this spectacular bird were seen at Mount Austin, Guadalcanal on 8 April (A), with three the following day on Kolombangara.

New Caledonia Myzomela *Myzomela caledonica*

The first of five species of Myzomela recorded on the voyage, with A logged at Riviere Bleue on 2 April.

Cardinal Myzomela *Myzomela cardinalis*

This species was only seen on Rennell where it is common (6 April: A).

Yellow-vented Myzomela *Myzomela eichhorni*

This range-restricted Solomon Island endemic is generally relatively scarce on Kolombangara, however, we had multiple good looks in 2013 with A logged on 9 April.

Black-headed Myzomela *Myzomela melanocephala*

Endemic to some of the islands in the Central Solomons, eight individuals were seen at Mount Austin, Guadalcanal on 8 April.

Sooty Myzomela *Myzomela tristrami*

Restricted to Makira and a few nearby islands, this species was reasonably numerous (A) during our shore excursion on 7 April.

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

This species is more readily found in scrubby/urban habitats than in the forest at Riviere Bleue, so the only sightings were around the wharf at Noumea, where two birds were seen on 2 April.

Barred Honeyeater *Phylidonyris undulata*

This endemic is not uncommon in suitable habitat on New Caledonia, with A logged at Riviere Bleue on 2 April.

New Caledonian Friarbird *Philemon diemenensis*

This endemic was seen on the excursion to Riviere Bleue on New Caledonia (2 April), with seven birds recorded.

San Cristobal Melidectes ("Makira Honeyeater") *Melidectes sclateri*

This bizarre-looking honeyeater is restricted to Makira, but somewhat disappointingly proved hard to find on this occasion, with only four individuals located (7 April).

Norfolk Island Gerygone *Gerygone modesta*

A reasonably common bird on Norfolk Island, this endemic was well seen, with a low A logged on 30 March.

Fan-tailed Gerygone *Gerygone flavolateralis*

Seen in reasonable numbers on New Caledonia, with A recorded during the excursion to Riviere Bleue on 2 April.

Rennell (Fan-tailed) Gerygone *Gerygone (flavolateralis) citrina*

A reasonably numerous bird on Rennell, with A logged during the shore excursion on 6 April. Although this bird is generally lumped with the Gerygones on New Caledonia (and not treated as a Rennell endemic), the songs are different and visually it is also quite distinct, eg pale eyes and a mainly yellow breast, compared with the birds on New Caledonia which have dark eyes and less yellow on the underparts.

White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus*

This species is generally only encountered in more 'open country' habitats on New Caledonia, with six birds seen on the trip to Riviere Bleue on 2 April.

Southern Melanesian Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina caledonica*

Four birds were seen at Riviere Bleue, New Caledonia on 2 April.

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

Northern Melanesian Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina welchmani*

Four individuals were seen on Kolombangara (9 April).

Yellow-eyed Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina lineata*

This Cuckoo-shrike was the most frequently encountered during our shore excursions in the Solomon Islands and was seen on all the islands which were visited. Six birds were logged on both Rennell and Kolombangara (6 and 9 April), with four on Makira and a low A at Mount Austin on Guadalcanal (7-8 April).

White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina papuensis*

As with the above species, this Cuckoo-shrike was only seen in the Solomons, with four at Mount Austin, Guadalcanal (8 April) and A on Kolombangara (9 April).

New Caledonian Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina analis*

A lone individual of this New Caledonian endemic was seen at Riviere Bleue on 2 April.

Cicadabird *Coracina tenuirostris*

Only seen on Kolombangara, where a single bird was recorded (9 April).

Makira Cicadabird *Coracina salomonis*

Four individuals of this recent split were seen on Makira on 7 April.

Solomon Islands Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina holopolia*

This species is frequently missed at Mount Austin on Guadalcanal, however, two birds were seen very well by many of the group on 8 April.

Long-tailed Triller *Lalage leucopyga*

Two individuals were seen at Riviere Bleue, New Caledonia (2 April), with the only other sightings being on Makira (7 April), where a low A was noted.

Norfolk Island ("Golden") Whistler *Pachycephala [pectoralis] xanthoprocta*

This extremely distinctive bird, which surely warrants species status, was recorded on our Norfolk Island shore excursion (30 March), with a minimum of four birds being seen.

Oriole ("Golden") Whistler *Pachycephala orioloides*

Two birds were seen on Makira (7 April), with one the following day on Guadalcanal. Oriole Whistlers were also heard on Kolombangara (9 April) but not seen.

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

This endemic is generally found in more forested areas than the next species (ie Rufous Whistler) and A was logged at Riviere Bleue, New Caledonia on 2 April.

Rufous Whistler *Pachycephala rufiventris*

The only record was during the shore excursion to Riviere Bleue, New Caledonia, where two individuals were seen (2 April).

Willie-wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys*

Seen on Makira (7 April: 2), Guadalcanal (8 April: 1) and Kolombangara (9 April: 2).

Rennell Fantail *Rhipidura rennelliana*

This species is endemic to Rennell and was seen well during the shore excursion on 6 April, with a low A logged.

Grey Fantail *Rhipidura fuliginosa*

A reasonably common and conspicuous bird on Norfolk Island, where A was recorded on 30 March. Three birds were also seen on the shore excursion to Riviere Bleue on New Caledonia (2 April).

Streaked Fantail *Rhipidura spilodera*

Another New Caledonian endemic which was well seen at Riviere Bleue (2 April: low A).

Rufous Fantail *Rhipidura rufifrons*

This species was only found on Makira and Guadalcanal, with four birds on 7 April and two the following day at Mount Austin.

Southern Shrikebill *Clytorhynchus pachycephaloides*

A lone individual of this regional endemic (which is only found on New Caledonia and Vanuatu) was seen at Riviere Bleue National Park on 2 April.

Rennell Shrikebill *Clytorhynchus hamlini*

This Rennell endemic is common (A) and was seen very well during our shore excursion on 6 April.

Chestnut-bellied Monarch *Monarcha castaneiventris*

A Solomon Islands endemic which was seen on both Makira (7 April: low A) and at Mount Austin, Guadalcanal (8 April: 2).

White-capped Monarch *Monarcha richardsii*

This Monarch is only found in the New Georgia group of islands (within the Solomons) and there were multiple excellent views on WPO 2013, with A logged on 9 April during our landing on Kolombangara.

White-collared Monarch *Monarcha viduus*

This is another very range restricted Monarch (which in this case is endemic to Makira) and one individual was seen on 7 April.

Kolombangara Monarch *Symposiachrus browni*

Another range restricted endemic, however, this species was only heard on Kolombangara on 9 April.

Steel-blue Flycatcher *Myiagra ferrocyanea*

This Solomon Islands endemic was seen on Guadalcanal (8 April: A) and Kolombangara (9 April: 2).

Makira Flycatcher *Myiagra cervinicauda*

Another highly localised species, with one bird being seen on the shore excursion on 7 April.

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

This species was seen at Riviere Bleue, New Caledonia (2 April: 8) and also on Rennell (6 April: 3).

The calls of the birds on the two islands are different and there are also some plumage differences, so this is another instance where further taxonomic work is certainly required.

New Caledonia Crow *Corvus moneduloides*

This New Caledonian endemic is one of the few birds known to use tools (sticks in the case of this species). It can be difficult to locate at Riviere Bleue, however, three were found in the forest at Riviere Bleue on 2 April.

Pacific Robin *Petroica multicolor*

A relatively recent split from the more widespread Scarlet Robin of mainland Australia, this species was seen in reasonable numbers on Norfolk Island, with seven individuals logged on 30 March.

Yellow-bellied Robin *Eopsaltria flaviventris*

This New Caledonian endemic is reasonably numerous at Riviere Bleue National Park, with A logged (2 April).

Welcome Swallow *Hirundo neoxena*

This species is reasonably common on Norfolk Island (30 March) with A logged, although four birds were also recorded at sea on 27-28 March.

Pacific Swallow *Hirundo tahitica*

Seen on Makira, Guadalcanal and Kolombangara, with A logged on each island.

[Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer*]

This Asian introduction is reasonably common around Noumea, with seven individuals recorded on 2 April.

[Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula*]

Four of these introduced Thrushes were seen on Norfolk Island on 30 March.

Island Thrush *Turdus poliocephalus*

The only island on the WPO itinerary where this highly variable species can be found is Rennell, with the birds resembling 'mini Blackbirds'. During our shore excursion (6 April), three individuals were seen, with a number of other individuals being heard.

Rennell White-eye *Zosterops rennellianus*

Despite its name, this Rennell endemic does not have a white eye-ring (it is dark!!) and somewhat uncharacteristically for a White-eye, it also has a bright orange bill. Nevertheless, it was well seen during the landing, with A recorded (6 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. It is generally less numerous than some of the other White-eye species on the voyage, although there were multiple sightings on WPO 2013 with A logged.

Green-backed White-eye *Zosterops xanthochrous*

This New Caledonian endemic is reasonably common and A was logged on the visit to Riviere Bleue on 2 April.

Slender-billed White-eye *Zosterops tenuirostris*

Somewhat uncharacteristically, this proved to be the trickiest of the Norfolk Island endemics to find, although those who persevered got some nice views and a low A was recorded (30 March).

Silver-eye *Zosterops lateralis*

The only sightings of this species were on Norfolk Island (30 March: low A) and at Riviere Bleue (2 April: 2).

Bare-eyed White-eye *Woodfordia superciliosa*

This species is the commonest of the single-island endemics on Rennell and good numbers (a high A) were seen during the shore excursion on 6 April.

Although this species is currently treated as a White-eye, further taxonomic work is surely required, as structurally it seems so different from 'normal White-eyes'.

Metallic Starling *Aplonis metallica*

This species was only seen on Kolombangara (9 April), where A was logged.

Singing Starling *Aplonis cantoroides*

This species was recorded on Guadalcanal (8 April) and Kolombangara (9 April), with A logged on both islands.

Rennell Starling *Aplonis insularis*

This Rennell endemic seems to be somewhat nomadic, as the numbers seen varies from year to year. On this year's visit, it was present in comparatively low numbers, with six birds being recorded during the shore excursion on 6 April.

Brown-winged Starling *Aplonis grandis*

This Solomon Islands endemic species is reasonably reliable at Mount Austin, Guadalcanal, with A logged on 8 April. Despite its name, the diagnostic pale brown primaries can be moderately difficult to see when birds are perched.

San Cristobal Starling *Aplonis dichroa*

This Makira Island endemic can be moderately tough to find, with only six birds seen during the shore excursion on 7 April.

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 both Mount Austin, Guadalcanal (8 April) and the following day on Kolombangara, with A logged on both islands.

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

This Asian introduction is reasonably numerous on New Caledonia (2 April) and in Honiara, Guadalcanal (8 April), with A recorded on both dates.

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

This introduced species is common on Norfolk Island, with A logged.

Midget Flowerpecker *Dicaeum aeneum*

This Solomon Islands endemic is not uncommon at Mount Austin on Guadalcanal and A was recorded on 8 April, although its tiny size means getting good views can often be challenging.

Mottled Flowerpecker *Dicaeum tristrami*

Reasonable numbers of this Makira endemic were seen on the shore excursion on 7 April, with A recorded.

Olive-backed Sunbird *Cinnyris jugularis*

Only seen on Makira (7 April: 2), Guadalcanal (8 April: 2) and Kolombangara (9 April: A).

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

A lone bird recorded at sea on 27 March, as the ship cruised up the New Zealand coastline, was the only record.

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

A common introduction which was seen on both Norfolk Island (30 March: low B) and New Caledonia (2 April: A).

[**Common Waxbill** *Estrilda astrild*]

Another introduction which was seen in New Caledonia, with A logged on 2 April.

Red-throated Parrotfinch *Erythrura psittacea*

This New Caledonian endemic was seen in small numbers at Riviere Bleue (2 April: 6).

CETACEANS

Sperm Whale *Physeter macrocephalus*

Sperm Whales were seen on two dates, with eight animals on 31 March (the sea day between Norfolk Island and New Caledonia) and two on 11 April off New Ireland.

On the early WPO expeditions, this species was regularly seen off Bougainville, however, WPO 2013 was the second year in succession when none were recorded there. Although average water temperatures around the Solomon Islands were reported to be 3-5°C above normal, it seems unlikely this is the explanation for this unexpected trend.

Humpback Whale *Megaptera novaeangliae*

The sole sighting was a lone animal on 26 March offshore from South Island.

Blue Whale *Balaenoptera musculus*

Undoubtedly one of the most unexpected discoveries on any WPO expedition was the eight Blue Whales which were seen off the west coast of North Island on 27-28 March. The first animal was recorded shortly after exiting Cook Strait (between South and North Islands), with three more seen later day and four further sightings the following day.

Bryde's Whale *Balaenoptera edeni*

A lone animal off New Ireland on 11 April was the only record of the expedition and the first sighting of this species on a WPO voyage for a number of years.

Orca *Orcinus orca*

At least 20 animals were seen on 27 March off the south-west corner of North Island.

Short-finned Pilot Whale *Globicephala macrorhynchus*

A small pod (low A) was recorded on 7 April, as the ship cruised from Makira towards Guadalcanal.

Pygmy Killer Whale *Feresa attenuata*

Six individuals of this small and rarely encountered species were seen off New Ireland on 11 April.

Melon-headed Whale *Peponocephala electra*

There were several sightings of this species off New Ireland on 11 April (A), with some of the animals seen close to the ship.

False Killer Whale *Pseudorca crassidens*

The only records of this species were as the ship sailed away from Guadalcanal (8 April), with a low A logged.

Cuvier's Beaked Whale *Ziphius cavirostris*

At least three individuals were seen off the New Caledonian coastline on 1 April.

Dwarf Sperm Whale *Kogia breviceps*

This species was only seen on 7 April (offshore from Makira) with three animals spotted.

Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*

Small numbers of Bottlenose Dolphins were seen on 30 March (near Norfolk Island), 31 March (sea day between Norfolk Island and New Caledonia) and 3 April (offshore from New Caledonia), although all counts were in low single figures.

A was also logged off Kolombangara on 9 April. It is possible these animals were Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops aduncus*, although the views were not good enough to be certain.

Rough-toothed Dolphin *Steno bredanensis*

The waters off Bougainville are usually reasonably reliable for this species and a small pod of five or so animals were seen there on 10 April.

Short-beaked Common Dolphin *Delphinus delphis*

Good numbers were seen off the west coast of North Island on 28 March, with B logged.

Spinner Dolphin *Stenella longirostris*

This species can be extremely common off Bougainville and New Ireland and good numbers were seen offshore from the latter island on 11 April, with B recorded.

Pantropical Spotted Dolphin *Stenella attenuate*

Another species which was seen well off New Ireland (11 April: A).

Fraser's Dolphin *Lagenodelphis hosei*

The views of this species off New Ireland (11 April) were unquestionably the best of any WPO expedition, with some of the animals bow-riding for several minutes and other 'porpoising' immediately adjacent to the side of the ship. This gave everyone a great opportunity to see the animals' pink flanks and somewhat stubby beaks.

Dusky Dolphin *Lagenorhynchus obscurus*

Reasonable numbers were seen on the first full day of the expedition (26 March), as the ship cruised north up the east coast of South Island.

Hector's Dolphin *Cephalorhynchus hectori*

At least five of these small New Zealand endemics were seen on 26 March, not long after the ship had left Lyttelton.

© Chris Collins/WildWings
May 2013

www.wildwings.co.uk