

NEW CALEDONIA

15 – 21 October 2009



This visit to New Caledonia was a detour on a trip to SE Australia. The purpose of our visit was quite obvious – *Kagu* and the endemics. We also hoped for some good seabird watching (as we got on Lifou Island and in Nomuea). We found New Caledonia to be a very friendly country and the more developed areas reminded us about Mediterranean areas. The high prices was quite a chock for some of us, on the other hand, the food on restaurants was very delicious. Before the trip we got a lot of helped from Sue Gregory and Alan McBride. Mathias Bergström and Musse Björklund also provided us with important information. Our sincerely thanks goes to them.

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Kagu, Parc du Rivière Bleue.

Photo: Göran Pettersson

FRONT PAGE: *Kagu*. Parc du Rivière Bleue. Photo: Göran Pettersson



Seabird watching en route to Xodre, Lifou Island 19 Oct.

Photo: Göran Pettersson

15 Oct

We left Sydney International Airport at 1.15 p.m. and arrived in Noumea, capitol of New Caledonia, at 4.10 p.m. Smoothly we picked up our minibus for our stay. On the way to Noumea we saw a *Barn Owl* (subsp. *T. a. delicatula*), a good bird on New Caledonia. We saw 2 birds on the same place one more time during our stay. We arrived at the hotel at 7 p.m. and had dinner at the hotel. 8 species today.

16 Oct

Early breakfast, 5.15 a.m. and left the hotel 6.05. We drove directly to **Parc du Rivière Bleue** and met our guide for the day, Jean-Marc. Jean-Marc was an excellent guide with good knowledge about where and how to find the target species. We had great success and managed to spot all target species, even the difficult *Crow Honeyeater*, although some people didn't get good views. We also met the now retired Mr Yves Letocart, to whom we expressed our gratitude of his successful work to protect the Kagu. We left the reserve at 5.30 p.m. and reached the hotel at 6.45. Dinner across the street and found that the prices were as high as on the hotel (would someone believed something else?). 39 species today.

17 Oct

We left the hotel at 4.40 a.m. and arrived at **Farino** at 6.50. We walked different trails but didn't manage to find the Grassbird. The heat came in quite early and slowed down the bird activity. After the mandatory lunch baguette we left the area at 1.30 p.m. We drove slowly southwards and made some shorter and longer (**Plague Ouano**) stop en route to Noumea. Back in Noumea at 5.45 p.m. and dined at a pizzeria along the beach boulevard. 48 species today.

18 Oct

We started with pre-breakfast seabird watching at the beach in front of our Hotel. Surprisingly good number of *Wedge-tailed Shearwaters* – 1.500 birds. After breakfast we left the hotel at 7.10 a.m. and drove directly to **Mont Koghi**. There were some tricky junction but as long as we headed uphill it was ok. We stayed here until 12.15. Later on in the morning many weekend visitors turned up, people with dogs, picnic baskets, running shoes e.t.c. However this didn't affect the birding and it was nice to see the good interest from the local people to visit a nice piece of nature. In the very end of our walking we eventually find a *New Caledonian Grassbird*. Everybody also got good views of the bird. In the afternoon we spend some hours at **Yaté** on the coast. This was also a nice picnic place with some smaller coffee shops. We counted 2.500 *Wedge-tailed Shearwaters* following the coastline southwards. On the way back to Noumea we made a short stop at **Parc du Rivière Bleue** (4.45–5.20). 34 species today.

19 Oct

35 minutes long early morning flight to **Lifou Island** and landed at 6.35 a.m. We picked up our minibus and started to look for the *Lifou White-eyes*. Both species were singing and we managed to observe at least 20 *Small Lifou White-eye* and 10 *Large Lifou White-eye*. The bigger one was extremely tough to see. Only 2 birds were

seen and not all people in the group managed to catch a glimpse of this very secretive creature. However, the song was very conspicuous. We followed the east coast road south to the end to **Xodre**. This was a good place for seabird watching. Among 400 *Wedge-tailed Shearwaters* we picked up 2 *Tahiti Petrels*. We flew back to Noumea 6.20 p.m. 29 species today.

20 Oct

Breakfast at 6 o'clock. No serious birding today and we were lucky, this was the day with showers (in morning). We drove slowly to **Mont Dore** and continued to **Plum**. We tried to find some good seabird spot but only "semispots" were on our way. We stayed in the area to 11 a.m. and drove then to the coastline 25 km N of Noumea. Nice views but no interesting birds. Early afternoon arrival to our hotel (3.30) with free activities like Aquarium visit and running. Dinner at the hotel. 29 species today.

21 Oct

Morning flight to Sydney and we arrived to Sydney before lunch time.



Kagu, Parc du Rivière Bleue.

Photo: Göran Pettersson



New Caledonian (White-bellied) Goshawk.

Photo: Göran Pettersson

BIRDLIST – NEW CALEDONIA

E= endemic breeder in New Caledonia. Follows Clements (2007)

1. **Australian Grebe** *Tachybaptus noavehaollandiae leucosternos*
2 ex en route to Farino 17/10.
2. **Tahiti Petrel** *Pterodroma rostrata trouessarti*
2 ex Xodre, Lifou Island 19/10.
3. **Wedge-tailed Shearwater** *Puffinus pacificus*
1 500 ex Noumea in early morning and 2 500 Yáte 18/10, 400 ex Xodre, Lifou Island 19/10 and 300 ex Mont Dore and 50 ex Noumea 20/10.
4. **Short-tailed Shearwater** *Puffinus tenuirostris*
75 ex Xodre, Lifou Island 19/10.
5. **Red-footed Bobby** *Sula sula*
10 ex Xodre, Lifou Island 19/10.
6. **Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*
2 ex Plague Ouano 17/10.
7. **Little Pied Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*
1 ex Parc de Riviere Bleue 16/10, 2 ex Plague Ouano and 4 ex en route to Noumea 17/10 and 1 ex N of Noumea 20/10.
8. **White-faced Heron** *Egretta novaehollandiae*
5 days with observations. Maximum 5 ex during the day 20/10.
9. **Pacific Reef-Heron** *Egretta sacra*
2 ex Plague Ouano 17/10, 2 ex Lifou Island 19/10 and 1 ex N of Noumea 20/10.
10. **Rufous Night-Heron** *Nycticorax caledonicus caledonicus*
2 ex Noumea 16/10 and 1 ex 18/10.
11. **Grey Teal** *Anas gracilis*
10 Foa 17/10.
12. **Pacific Black (Grey) Duck** *Anas superciliosa*
2 ex Parc de Riviere Bleue and 1 ex en route to Noumea 16/10, 2 ex Foa 17/10.
13. **Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus cristatus*
1 ex Plague Ouano 17/10, 1 ex Yáte 18/10 and 2 ex Noumea 20/10.
14. **Whistling Kite** *Haliastur sphenurus*
2 ex Parc de Riviere Bleue 16/10, 12 ex during the day 17/10 and 2 ex Noumea area 20/10.
15. **Swamp Harrier** *Circus approximans*
5 ex during the day 17/10.
16. **Brown Goshawk** *Accipiter fasciatus vigilax*
2 ex Foa and 1 ex en route to Noumea 17/10, 1 ex Lifou Island 19/10 and 1 ex Noumea area 20/10.
17. **New Caledonian (White-bellied) Goshawk** *Accipiter haplochrous* *E*
2 ad Parc de Riviere Bleue 16/10, 2 ex Farino 17/10, 1 ex Mont Koghi and 1 juv. Yáte 18/10.
18. **Buff-banded Rail** *Gallirallus philippinis swindellsii*
1 ex Foa 17/10.

19. **Purple Gallinule** *Porphyrio porphyrio samoensis*
8 ex en route to Farino 17/10 and 3 ex Noumea area 20/10.
20. **Kagu** *Rhynochetos jubatus* *E*
7 ex Parc de Riviere Bleue 16/10.
21. **Pacific Golden-Plover** *Pluvialis fulva*
40 ex Lifou Island 19/10.
22. **Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica*
1 ex Lifou Island 19/10.
23. **Grey-tailed Tattler** *Tringa brevipes*
2 ex Plague Ouano 17/10.
24. **Wandering Tattler** *Tringa incana*
12 ex Yáte 18/10, 1 ex Lifou Island 19/19 and 1 ex Noumea 20/10.
25. **Silver Gull** *Larus novaehollandiae*
5 days with observations. Maximum 30 ex Noumea 20/10.
26. **Black-naped Tern** *Sterna sumatrana*
12 ex Noumea 18/10 and 170 ex 20/10.
27. **Great Crested Tern** *Thalasseus bergii cristatus*
4 ex Plague Ouano 17/10, 2 ex Noumea 18/10, 3 ex Lifou Island 19/10 and 6 ex during the day 20/10.
Unidentified Noddy *Anous sp.*
6 ex Noumea 17/10.
28. **Metallic Pigeon** *Columba vitiensis hypoenochroa*
1 ex en route to Noumea 16/10, 10 ex Farino 17/10, 3 ex Lifou island 19/10 and 1 ex en route to Mont Dore 20/10.
29. **Spotted Dove** *Streptopelia chinensis* *Introduced*
5 days with observations.
30. **Emerald Dove** *Chalcophaps indica sandwichensis*
1 ex en route to Noumea 16/10 and 5 ex Lifou Island 19/10.
31. **Cloven-feathered Dove** *Drepanoptila holosericea* *E*
1 ex Parc de Riviere Bleue 16/10 and 3 ex Farino 17/10.
32. **Red-bellied Fruit-Dove** *Ptilonopus greyii*
10 ex Lifou Island 19/10.
33. **New Caledonian Imperial-Pigeon** *Ducula goliath* *E*
8 ex Parc de Riviere Bleue 16/10, 15 ex Farino 17/10, 8 ex Mont Koghi and 3 ex Yáte 18/10.
34. **Rainbow Lorikeet** *Trichoglossus haematodus deplanchii*
7 ex Parc de Riviere Bleue 16/10, 1 ex Farino 17/10, 2 ex Yáte 18/10 and 2 ex Mont Dore 20/10.
35. **Horned Parakeet** *Eunymphicus cornutus cornutus* *E*
3 ex Parc de Riviere Bleue 16/10 and 1 ex 18/10.
36. **Fan-tailed Cuckoo** *Cacomantis flabelliformes pyrrhophanus*
2 calling Mont Koghi 18/10.
37. **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx lucidus lucidus*
1 ex Parc de Riviere Bleue 16/10 and 1 ex 18/10, 3 ex Farino 17/10, 3 ex Mont Koghi 18/10.
38. **Barn Owl** *Tyto alba delicatula*
1 ex en route to Noumea 15/10 and 2 ex the same place 17/10.
39. **Glossy Swiftlet** *Collocalia esculenta albidior*
Noted with good numbers on all days, 15-21/10.
40. **Sacred Kingfisher** *Todirhamphus sanctus*
T. s. canacorum: 5 days with observations. Maximum 8 ex during the day 17/10.
T. s. macmillani: 5 ex Lifou Island 19/10.
41. **Pacific Swallow** *Hirundo tahitica subfusca*
3 ex Parc de Riviere Bleue 16/10, 10 ex during the day and 10 ex Lifou Island 19/10.
42. **Melanesian Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina caledonica caledonica*
15 ex Farino 17/10 and 2 ex Mont Koghi 18/10.
43. **New Caledonian Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina analis* *E*
2 ex Parc de Riviere Bleue 16/10.
44. **Long-tailed Triller** *Lalage leucopyga*
L. l. montrosieri: 1 en route to Fariono 17/10, 2 Mont Koghi and 1 ex Parc de Riviere Bleue 18/10, *L. l. simillima*: 1 ex Lifou island 19/10.

45. **Red-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus cafer* **Introduced**
4 days with observations. Most observations were from Noumea area.
46. **New Caledonian Grassbird** *Megalurulus mariei* **E**
1 ex Mont Koghi 18/10.
47. **Grey Fantail** *Rhipidura fuliginosa bulgeri*
2 ex Parc de Riviere Bleue 16/10, 20 ex Farino 17/10, 4 ex Mont Koghi 18/10 and 1 ex Noumea 20/10.
48. **Streaked Fantail** *Rhipidura spilodera verreauxi*
2 ex Parc de Riviere Bleue 16/10 and 3 ex Lifou Island 19/10.
49. **Southern Shrikebill** *Clytorhynchus pachycephaloides*
4 ex Parc de Riviere Bleue 16/10 and 2 ex Farino 17/10.
50. **Melanesian (New Caledonian) Flycatcher** *Myiagra caledonica*
M. c. caledonica: 1 ♂ Parc de Riviere Bleue 16/10, 1 ex and 2 singin Farino 17/10.
M. c. viridinitens: 2 ex Lifou Island 19/10.
51. **Yellow-bellied Robin** *Eopsaltria flaviventris* **E**
3 ex Parc de Riviere Bleue 16/10, 4 ex Farino 17/10 and 2 ex Mont Koghi 18/10.
52. **Fan-tailed Gerygone** *Gerygone flavolateralis*
G. f. flavolateralis: 2 ex Parc de Riviere Bleue 16/10, 5 ex Farino 17/10, 2 ex Mont Koghi and 1 ex Parc de Riviere Bleue 18/10, 3 ex during the day 20/10.
G. f. lifuensis: 5 ex Lifou Island 19/10.
53. **New Caledonian Whistler** *Pachycephala caledonica* **E**
2 ♂♂ Parc de Riviere Bleue 16/10, 5 ex Farino 17/10, 2 ex Mont Koghi 18/10 and 1 ♀ en route to Mont Dore 20/10.
54. **Rufous Whistler** *Pachycephala rufiventris xanthebraea*
4 ex Farino 17/10 and 2 ex Mont Koghi 18/10.
55. **Large Lifou White-eye** *Zosterops inornatus* **E**
10 ex (8 singing) Lifou Island 19/10.
56. **Green-backed White-eye** *Zosterops xanthochroa* **E**
2 ex Noumea and 6 ex Parc de Riviere Bleue 16/10, 50 ex Farino 17/10 and 10 ex Mont Koghi 18/10.
57. **Small Lifou White-eye** *Zosterops minutus* **E**
20 ex Lifou Island 19/10.
58. **Silver-eye** *Zosterops lateralis*
Z. l. griseonota: 10 ex during the day 17/10 and 1 ex en route to Mont Dore 20/10.
Z. l. melanops: 1 ex Lifou island 19/10.
59. **Dark brown Honeyeater** *Lichmera incana*
L. i. incana: 4 ex en route to Noumea 15/10, common during the day 16-18/10 and 2 ex en route to Mont Dore 20/10.
L. i. poliotis: 4 ex Lifou Island 19/10.
60. **New Caledonian Myzomela** *Myzomela caledonica* **E**
6 ex Parc de Riviere Bleue 16/10 and 5 ex Farino 17/10.
61. **Cardinal Myzomela** *Myzomela cardinalis lifuensis*
10 ex Lifou Island 19/10.
62. **New Caledonian Friarbird** *Philemon diemenensis* **E**
20 ex Parc de Riviere Bleue 16/10, 5 ex Farino 17/10, 1 ex Mont Koghi and 4 ex Yáte 18/10.
63. **Crow Honeyeater** *Gymnomyza aubryana* **E**
1 ex Parc de Riviere Bleue 16/10.
64. **Barred Honeyeater** *Phylidonyris undulatus* **E**
3 ex Parc de Riviere Bleue 16/10, 1 ex Farino 17/10 and 2 ex en route to Mont Dore 20/10.
65. **White-breasted Woodswallow** *Artamus leucorhynchus melaleucus*
7 days with observations. Maximum 30 ex Lifou Island 19/10 and 20 ex during the day 17/10.
66. **New Caledonian Crow** *Corvus moneduloides* **E**
4 ex Parc de Riviere Bleue 16/10, 6 ex Farino 17/10, 6 ex Mont Koghi and 4 ex Yáte 18/10.
67. **Striated Starling** *Aplonis striata* **E**
A. s. striata: 2 ex Parc de Riviere Bleue and 3 ex en route to Noumea 16/10, 8 ex Farino 17/10, 2 ex Mont Koghi and 2 ex Yáte 18/10.
A. s. atronitens: 2 ex Lifou Island 19/10.
68. **Common Myna** *Acridotheres tristis* **Introduced**
5 days with observations.
69. **House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* **Introduced**
7 days with observations.

70. **Common Waxbill** *Estrilda astrild* **Introduced**
10 ex Farino and 15 ex Plague Ouano 17/10, 40 ex during the day 20/10.
71. **Red-throated Parrotfinch** *Erythrura psittacea* **E**
2 ex Farino 17/10.
72. **Chestnut-breasted Munia** *Lonchura castaneothorax* **Introduced**
20 ex during the day 17/10.



New Caledonia Flying Fox, Mont Koghi.

Photo: Göran Pettersson

MAMMALS LIST

1. **New Caledonia Flying Fox** *Pteropus vetulus*
8 ex Mont Koghi and 4 ex Yáte 18/10.

REPTILE LIST

1. **Colubrine Sea Krait** *Laticauda colubrine*
1 ex Noumea 18/10.