

Species List
Voyage # 1277
Western Pacific Odyssey
29 March 2012 - 28 April 2012



© A Russ



Heritage Expeditions

53b Montreal Street, PO Box 7218, Christchurch, New Zealand.

Tel: +64 3 365 3500 / Fax: +64 3 365 1300

Freephone (within NZ): 0800 262 8873

info@heritage-expeditions.com / www.heritage-expeditions.com



© A Russ



© A Russ



© A Russ



© A Russ



© A Russ



© A Russ



© A Russ



© Heritage Expeditions



© A Russ



© A Russ



© A Russ



© Heritage Expeditions



© A Russ



© Heritage Expeditions



© Heritage Expeditions

WESTERN PACIFIC ODYSSEY

29th March – 28th April 2012

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 Tauranga and arriving in Yokohama.

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 was 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.

BIRDS

Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa*

A low A was logged on Kolombangara on 12 April with similar numbers also then noted on Chuuk on 17-18 April.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

A lone bird seen on Chuuk on 18 April was the sole sighting on the expedition.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

Three were seen on Chuuk on 17 April.

Melanesian Scrubfowl *Megapodius eremita*

A single bird was seen during the shore excursion on Makira (10 April).

[Red Junglefowl *Gallus gallus*]

This introduced species is well established on Norfolk Island and two were seen during the zodiac cruise along the western shoreline (2 April).

Snowy Albatross *Diomedea exulans*

Several birds which were considered to be this form/species were seen in the Hauraki Gulf (30 March).

Antipodean Albatross *Diomedea antipodensis*

A single bird which showed features of this form/species was seen in the Hauraki Gulf (30 March) with a further individual noted the following day.

Gibson's Albatross *Diomedea gibsoni*

A number of birds showing characteristics of this form/species were seen in the Hauraki Gulf (30 March) with others seen the following day.

Short-tailed Albatross *Phoebastria albatrus*

Participants on WPO 2012 enjoyed the best showing by this species for several years with at least 22 individuals seen across three days.

A total of nine birds, in various plumages, were seen off Torishima on 25 April, with some good views in the late afternoon close to the ship. The following morning, there were some more close encounters (again offshore from Torishima) with the day total being ten individuals, which included several seen as the 'Spirit of Enderby' continued northwards.

The final sightings were between Miyake-jima (Izu Islands) and Tokyo Bay (27 April) where three different birds were seen.

Laysan Albatross *Phoebastria immutabilis*

This species can be tricky along the WPO route, however, three birds were seen between Miyake-jima and Tokyo Bay (27 April).

Black-footed Albatross *Phoebastria nigripes*

The first sightings of this species were on 24 April (east of the Bonin Islands) where A was logged. Similar numbers were then seen on the subsequent two days (off Torishima and cruising northward from there), with the final birds being as the ship sailed north from Miyake-jima to Tokyo Bay on 27 April.

Campbell Albatross *Thalassarche impavida*

Four were seen in the Hauraki Gulf on 30 March with the characteristic honey-coloured eyes of this form/species being well seen on some of the closer birds.

White-capped Albatross *Thalassarche steadi*

A low A was logged in both the Hauraki Gulf (30 March) and the following day, with the birds considered to be this form/species of 'Shy' albatross.

Pacific Albatross *Thalassarche platei*

A single bird was seen in the Hauraki Gulf (30 March) with at least five the following day.

Although it is difficult to be absolutely sure, it appeared that the birds were 'Pacific Albatrosses' which is split by some authorities from Buller's Albatross.

Beck's Petrel *Pseudobulweria becki*

One of the major specialities of the voyage, with at least eight individuals of this extremely poorly known species seen off New Ireland on 14 April. The first of these was on a chum slick off Cap St George in the early morning, with at least three later in the day on another slick which was laid further north near to the Feni Islands.

Single birds were also seen the previous evening off NW Bougainville and the following day whilst cruising north towards Chuuk, although the views were much better on 14 April.

Tahiti Petrel *Pseudobulweria rostrata*

This species was seen on a daily basis from 1-8 April inclusive (day south of Norfolk Island – day south of Rennell Island) with A logged on three dates and low single figure counts on the other days.

The only other sightings were off New Ireland (14 April) where three birds were recorded.

Grey-faced Petrel *Pterodroma gouldi*

Good numbers were seen on a daily basis between the Hauraki Gulf and Norfolk Island (30 March – 2 April) with the highest count being a low B (ie at least 100 individuals) on 1 April.

Providence Petrel *Pterodroma solandri*

This species is not recorded annually on the WPO, however, two individuals were seen on 3 April, ie the sea day north of Norfolk Island.

Kermadec Petrel *Pterodroma neglecta*

Seen on six dates with the majority of sightings being between 31 March-3 April when this species was seen on a daily basis, with a low A logged on 1 April (day south of Norfolk Island). The only sightings outside this period were single birds on 8 April (sea day south of Rennell) and 23 April (sea day south of Bonin Islands).

Herald Petrel *Pterodroma heraldica*

Two birds were seen whilst cruising north from the Three Kings Islands, off northern North Island. This area had not been previously visited on the WPO and these constituted the first records for any WPO expedition.

White-necked Petrel *Pterodroma cervicalis*

There were sightings on five dates. A was logged on a daily basis between 31 March-3 April, with the final record being a lone bird close to New Caledonia on 4 April.

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, although A was logged in the Hauraki Gulf (30 March) and the following day as the ship cruised north from the Three Kings Islands. The final sightings were four birds on 1 April.

Gould's Petrel *Pterodroma leucoptera*

Seen on a daily basis between 31 March- 6 April (day 1 to Norfolk Island – day 1 to Rennell) with the highest counts being around the southern end of New Caledonia (4-5 April) when B was logged.

Collared Petrel *Pterodroma brevipes*

Separating pale morph Collared Petrels from Gould's Petrels is never easy and is best done from photos, however, birds which appeared to be Collared Petrels were seen on 1, 3, 4 and 5 April.

Interestingly, photos suggested that a surprisingly large number of the *Pterodromas* seen off southern New Caledonia (3-4 April) were this species even though it is not considered to breed there. This raises the intriguing question as to whether the criteria for separating Gould's and Collared Petrels are indeed correct, or whether the former actually breeds in the mountains of New Caledonia.

Magnificent Petrel *Pterodroma (brevipes) magnificens*

Birds which were considered to be this form/species were well photographed on 3 and 7 April (day south of New Caledonia and two days south of Rennell Island).

Bonin Petrel *Pterodroma hypoleuca*

The most northerly of the *Pterodromas* which are regularly seen on the WPO, with the first sightings being three days south of the Bonin Islands (21 April: low A). The largest numbers were recorded in the vicinity of the Bonin Islands with B logged on both the day south of the islands and whilst cruising past the archipelago. There were then single figure counts on the following two days (25 April off Torishima: 2; and 26 April northwards from Torishima: 3).

Black-winged Petrel *Pterodroma nigripennis*

Encountered on a daily basis from the Hauraki Gulf (30 March) until a day north of Norfolk Island (3 April) with A logged on the middle three days and single figures counts on the other two dates.

Pycroft's Petrel *Pterodroma pycrofti*

Two birds which were considered to be this species were photographed in the Hauraki Gulf on 30 March.

Fairy Prion *Pachyptila turtur*

A was logged in the Hauraki Gulf on 30 March with five birds then seen the following day.

Bulwer's Petrel *Bulweria bulweria*

Seen in good numbers, with sightings on nine dates and a total of 27 individuals recorded. The first bird was on 9 April (off Rennell), however, between 15-23 April May (a day north of New Ireland – day south of Bonin Islands), birds were seen on seven dates, with the highest count being 15 individuals three days south of the Bonin Islands.

White-chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis*

A single bird was photographed in the Hauraki Gulf on 30 March.

Black Petrel *Procellaria parkinsoni*

B was recorded in the Hauraki Gulf (30 March) with A noted the following day and a total of three birds across the subsequent two dates.

Streaked Shearwater *Calonectris leucomelas*

This species is sometimes recorded off New Ireland and on WPO 2012 we logged a low A there, with a further four birds seen the following day. The biggest numbers were, however, on the last three days of the expedition with a high C (ie approaching 10,000 individuals) between Miyake-jima and Tokyo Bay (27 April).

Flesh-footed Shearwater *Puffinus carneipes*

This species was recorded at both ends of the voyage, with a high A in the Hauraki Gulf (15 April), two birds the following day and a single individual off Norfolk Island (2 April). Another lone individual was then seen off the Bonin Islands (24 April) with the final records being seven birds between Miyake-jima and Tokyo Bay (27 April).

Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus pacificus*

This was the most frequently encountered species on the voyage with sightings on 23 dates. The first records were a day south of Norfolk Island (1 April: 6) and birds were then seen on an almost daily basis until north of Torishima. On most dates, A or B was logged with the highest count being in the evening shortly after leaving New Caledonia when a high C (ie approaching 10,000 birds) was recorded.

During the first half of the trip, dark phase birds predominated, however, during the latter stages of the expedition almost all the birds were pale.

Buller's Shearwater *Puffinus bulleri*

Only seen in the Hauraki Gulf on 30 March where a high B was recorded and the following day when A was logged.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

Only seen in the early and latter stages of the voyage with a total of eleven birds recorded. The first of these were in the Hauraki Gulf (30 March: 3) with a lone bird then recorded the following day. The only other confirmed sightings were close to Japan with three off the Bonin Islands (24 April) and four between Miyake-jima and Tokyo Bay (27 April).

Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris*

This species was recorded on 22 dates with almost daily sightings from a day north of Norfolk Island (3 April) until reaching Tokyo Bay (27 April). On many previous WPOs, big flocks of migrating birds have been recorded but these were not in evidence until the latter stages of the 2012 expedition with single figure counts on the majority of dates.

The highest numbers were a day south of the Bonin Islands when a low C was recorded.

Christmas Shearwater *Puffinus nativitatis*

A new bird for the WPO systematic list, with at least two individuals off the northern end of the North Marianas Islands archipelago on 21 April, with one of these being well photographed.

Fluttering Shearwater *Puffinus gavia*

A was logged in the Hauraki Gulf (30 March) with a further four birds the following day.

Little Shearwater *Puffinus assimilis*

Seen on a daily basis from 30 March – 2 April (Hauraki Gulf – Norfolk Island) with the highest count (a low A) on the last of these dates.

The birds seen around Norfolk Island were presumably of the race *assimilis* which breeds on Norfolk Island. It is interesting to note, however, 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 !!

Further south, the birds were presumably of the subspecies *aurakiensis* which, as its name suggests, breeds in the Hauraki Gulf.

Bryan's Shearwater *Puffinus bryani*

This taxon, which was only described in 2011, has since been discovered to breed on some of the small islets at the northern end of the Bonin Islands archipelago and it has been speculated that this could be one of its main breeding grounds. A bird which showed the described characteristics (eg small size, white face etc) was seen on 24 April a few miles offshore from these islands.

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

The first sightings were near Noumea, New Caledonia on 5 April with single birds then seen on the following two days.

Birds were then seen close to Chuuk (17 April: 2; 18 April: 5) with others off the North Mariana Islands (22 April: low A, 23 April: 2) with the final sighting being a lone bird off Torishima on 25 April which was considered to not be a Bannerman's Shearwater.

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.

Bannerman's Shearwater *Puffinus bannermani*

The identification criteria for this poorly known bird remain somewhat confused, especially as Atoll ("Tropical") Shearwaters also seemingly occurs in the waters between the North Marianas and Bonin Islands.

A bird which was considered to be Bannerman's Shearwater was, however, seen east of the Bonin Islands (24 April).

Heinroth's Shearwater *Puffinus heinrothi*

One of the star seabirds of the WPO with a total of nine individuals logged across four dates, a far wider range of sightings than on any previous WPO expedition.

The first record was close to the Russell Islands, west of Guadalcanal, on 11 April, with five then noted the following day close inshore to Kolombangara. Two birds were then seen off western Bougainville on 13 April with a singleton off New Ireland the following day.

Wilson's Storm-petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*

This species was seen periodically throughout the voyage and was recorded on eleven dates including daily sightings between 30 March-4 April. The first sightings were eight birds in the Hauraki Gulf (30 March) with the final sightings being two birds east of the Bonin Islands on 24 April. The typical number seen on any one day was between 1-4 birds with the maximum being eight.

New Zealand Storm-petrel *Oceanites maorianus*

Oiling in the outer Hauraki Gulf for this species proved highly successful with a low A logged for the day. The maximum number seen at any one time was fourteen birds, with possibly at least twenty during the day.

The following day a single bird was recorded whilst cruising north from the Three Kings Islands.

“New Caledonian Storm-petrel”

Participants on WPO 2012 had by far the best views to date of this mystery storm-petrel (which resembles New Zealand Storm-petrel), with at least one individual seen well to the east of all previous sightings (2008, 2010 and 2011).

When a short article about the 2008 sighting was published in the British magazine *Birding World* (by Steve Howell and Chris Collins) reference was made to the fact that a number of observers felt the bird was too large to be New Zealand Storm-petrel. The excellent views on WPO 2012 solidified this belief, with good photos taken of the bird immediately alongside a Wilson's Storm-petrel.

White-faced Storm-petrel *Pelagodroma marina*

The first sightings were of four birds in the Hauraki Gulf on 30 March with two then logged the following day and the final sightings being three individuals near Norfolk Island on 2 April.

White-bellied Storm-petrel *Fregetta grallaria*

Three individuals were seen on 3 April as we cruised north from Norfolk Island towards New Caledonia. It is interesting to note that this species was not recorded on the first two WPO expeditions but 2012 was the fourth year in succession it has been seen.

Polynesian Storm-petrel *Nesofregetta fuliginosa*

Two individuals of this poorly known and endangered species were found on 7 April (day 2 to Rennell) with a further bird seen the following day.

This final individual, which was seen well by many close to the bows of the ship, was the most northerly WPO record by at least 200 nautical miles.

Leach's Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

This species was only seen in the late stages of the expedition with five birds seen between 22-25 April (two days south of the Bonin Islands – Torishima).

Tristram's Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma tristrami*

The first sightings of this species were on the day the ship passed the Bonin Islands (24 April) where A was logged. Similar numbers were then recorded (ie up to 100 individuals) on the following two days, with the highest counts being on 27 April (cruising towards Tokyo Bay from Miyake-jima) when B was recorded.

Matsudaira's Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma matsudairae*

This species was seen on six consecutive dates with the first sightings being four days south of the Bonin Islands (20 April: 4 birds). For the following three days A was logged, with B then recorded off the Bonin Islands on 24 April. The final records were four birds off Torishima (25 April).

Common Diving-petrel *Pelecanoides urinatrix*

Good numbers were seen in the Hauraki Gulf on 30 March with A logged.

Red-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon rubricauda*

The first sighting was a day north of the Hauraki Gulf (31 March: 1), with birds then seen on the subsequent three days including some good views of this species on the zodiac cruise off the western side of Norfolk Island (2 April: low A).

A total of seven individuals were then seen on an irregular basis between 6-25 April with the final sighting being off Torishima on 25 April.

White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus*

This species is invariably more regularly recorded on the WPO than Red-tailed Tropicbird with sightings on sixteen dates including daily sightings from New Ireland (14 April) until a day south of the Bonin Islands (23 April). There was only one occasion during the trip when more than three birds were logged (17 April Chuuk: 6) with all other counts being between 1-3 individuals.

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 nine dates with the first sighting (1 bird) being off Norfolk Island on 2 April and the final record off Chuuk on 17 April. The highest count was off New Ireland where B was logged.

Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel*

This species was only recorded during the middle section of the trip, with birds seen on nine dates between 5-15 April (New Caledonia-day 1 north of New Ireland). On most occasions, the day counts were in single figures although off Bougainville, New Ireland and a day north of there (13-15 April), A or B was logged.

Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra*

This species was recorded on seven dates during the voyage with the largest numbers (A) recorded close to Norfolk Island (2 April) 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*

This species was encountered on seventeen dates between New Caledonia and Tokyo (6-27 April). Although most day counts were in low single figures, A was logged off Guadalcanal (11 April) and the Bonin Islands (24 April).

Red-footed Booby *Sula sula*

Seen on fifteen dates between 2-24 April (Norfolk Island – Bonin Islands) although on most dates only a single figure count was recorded.

Following the sighting of a sub-adult white morph bird south of the Bonin Islands in 2011 which had a dark tail and thus showed the main characteristic of the Eastern Pacific subspecies *websteri*, there were a couple more records of similar looking birds in the latter stages of the 2012 expedition. It is presumed that this is, therefore, a rare plumage variant in West Pacific populations rather than birds wandering from further afield.

Australian Gannet *Morus serrator*

The only records were in the Hauraki Gulf on 30 March when B was logged and the following day when a low A (ie c20-30 individuals) was recorded.

Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*

Two birds were noted whilst zodiac cruising along the west coast of Norfolk Island (2 April) where this species is a vagrant.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

A reasonably common bird in Tokyo Bay (27 April).

Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax varius*

The only record on the voyage was shortly after the 'Spirit of Enderby' left the wharf at Tauranga (29 March) where there is a small colony of this species.

Little Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*

Three birds were observed on the trip to Riviere Bleue on New Caledonia (5 April), with a lone bird in the harbour at Honiara on 11 April being the only other record on the expedition.

Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis*

A total of at least thirteen birds were observed during the shore excursions on Chuuk (17-18 April).

Intermediate Egret *Mesophoyx intermedia*

A single bird was seen at the small marsh on Chuuk (18 April).

White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae*

Recorded during the zodiac cruise off Norfolk Island (2 April: 1) and on New Caledonia (5 April: 2).

Pacific Reef Heron *Egretta sacra*

Seen on five dates with three birds on New Caledonia (5 April), one on Rennell (9 April), two on Kolombangara (12 April) and four individuals on both days on Chuuk (17-18 April).

Striated Heron *Butorides striatus*

Two birds seen on the zodiac cruise through the mangroves on Kolombangara (12 April) were the only sightings of the voyage.

Rufous Night-Heron *Nycticorax caledonicus*

This species was only recorded on Chuuk with seven birds seen in the late afternoon of 17 April and five the following day.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

As the ship cruised into Tokyo Bay on 27 April, a low A was logged.

Australian Ibis *Threskiornis molucca*

This species is reasonably common on Rennell with A logged on 9 April.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

This species was seen in small numbers on three of the islands visited in the Solomons, namely Rennell (9 April), Makira (10 April) and Kolombangara (12 April). The only other records were on New Caledonia where there were a total of 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 10 April.

Black (-eared) Kite *Milvus (migrans) lineatus*

Only seen as the 'Spirit of Enderby' cruised through Tokyo Bay (27 April) with A logged.

Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus*

This species was only seen on New Caledonia with three recorded on 4 April and a low A the following day 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 nine individuals logged.

Solomon Islands Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus sanfordi*

This impressive Solomon Islands endemic was seen on three islands with two birds on Makira (10 April) and four individuals the following day at Mount Austin on Guadalcanal. The final sightings were two birds during the shore excursion on Kolombangara (12 April).

Variable Goshawk *Accipiter hiogaster*

A single bird was seen at Mount Austin on Guadalcanal on 11 April.

Brown Goshawk *Accipiter fasciatus*

There were three sightings of this species on Rennell on 9 April.

Pied Goshawk *Accipiter albogularis*

This species is endemic to the Solomon Islands and birds were seen on Makira (10 April: 2), at Mount Austin, Guadalcanal (11 April: 2) and on Kolombangara (12 April: 1).

Australian Kestrel *Falco cenchroides*

A single individual was seen during the zodiac cruise off Norfolk Island (2 April).

Oriental Hobby *Falco severus*

One was seen during the zodiac cruise through the mangroves on Kolombangara (12 April).

Buff-banded Rail *Gallirallus philippensis*

A single bird was seen during the journey back to Noumea from Riviere Bleue on New Caledonia (5 April).

Roviana Rail *Gallirallus rovianae*

Five individuals of this highly localised Solomon Islands endemic were seen on Kolombangara (12 April).

Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*

At least eight birds were seen on 12 April whilst ashore on Kolombangara.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

This species is a reasonably recent, seemingly natural, colonist of Chuuk and birds were seen on both days (17-18 April).

Kagu *Rhynochetos jubatus*

This species is always one of the major landbird highlights of the WPO and we enjoyed great looks at eleven birds at Riviere Bleue, New Caledonia on 5 April.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*

Ten birds were present near the landing site on Kolombangara (12 April) with slightly smaller numbers seen on both days on Chuuk (17-18 April). The only other sightings were birds seen flying passed the ship in the latter stages of the expedition with two recorded on 26 April (sailing north from Torishima) and a lone individual the following day between Miyake-jima and Tokyo Bay.

South Island Pied Oystercatcher *Haematopus finschi*

Several birds were seen as the ship sailed from Tauranga on 29 March.

Variable Oystercatcher *Haematopus unicolor*

Another species which was only seen as the ship sailed from Tauranga (29 March) with several feeding on the mudflats.

Wandering Tattler *Heterosceles incanus*

Five were found whilst zodiac cruising along the shoreline of Norfolk Island on 2 April, with the only other sightings being a total of four birds on Chuuk (17-18 April).

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

A single bird was noted on Rennell (9 April) with the only other sighting of the expedition being one flying past the ship between Miyake-jima and Tokyo Bay (27 April).

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

A reasonably common species on Chuuk with A logged on both days (17-18 April). A lone migrating bird was also seen flying by on 25 April (offshore from Torishima).

Grey ("Red") Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*

This species was only recorded during the final days of the expedition with sightings on 25-28 April (Torishima-Yokohama). The highest numbers were between Miyake-jima and Tokyo Bay when B was logged.

Red-billed Gull *Chroicocephalus scopulinus*

This New Zealand endemic was only seen in Tauranga (29 March) and around the Maori Rocks in the Hauraki Gulf, where there was a substantial flock which was estimated to be approaching 1,000 birds (30 March).

Silver Gull *Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae*

This species was reasonably numerous (A) around the harbour in Noumea, New Caledonia on both 4 and 5 April.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

A common bird in Tokyo Bay (27 April) where a low B was logged.

Vega Gull *Larus vegae*

Seen in reasonable numbers in Tokyo Bay (27 April) with A recorded.

Slaty-backed Gull *Larus schistisagus*

A lone bird in Tokyo Bay (27 April) was the sole sighting of the expedition.

Black-tailed Gull *Larus crassirostris*

Another gull which was only seen at the very end of the expedition. This species was also reasonably numerous with A logged on 27 April (ie the approach to and within Tokyo Bay).

Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus*

This species was first seen on the sea day south of Norfolk Island on (1 April) and last recorded off the Bonin Islands on 25 April with sightings spread across fifteen days between those dates. The highest numbers were recorded around Chuuk (18 April) where B was logged.

Black Noddy *Anous minutes*

This species was encountered on an almost daily basis between a day south of Norfolk Island (1 April) and a day north of Chuuk (19 April) with sightings on fifteen dates. The highest counts were around Norfolk Island and Chuuk, where B was logged.

Grey Ternlet *Procelsterna albivitta*

This species is regular in the Hauraki Gulf and also breeds around Norfolk Island. It was seen on a daily basis between these two locations (30 March-2 April) with A logged at the Maori Rocks in the Hauraki Gulf and daily single figure counts for the following three days.

White Tern *Gygis alba*

Sightings of this species were divided into two discrete blocks with birds seen on a daily basis from the sea day south of Norfolk Island until arriving at New Caledonia (1-4 April) and from 14-22 April (New Ireland – two days south of the Bonin Islands). The highest count was around Chuuk on 18 April where B was logged with all other daily maxima being in single figures or A.

Sooty Tern *Onychoprion fuscata*

Generally this widespread species is one of the most frequently encountered seabirds on the voyage and in 2012 was seen regularly between Norfolk Island (2 April) and Torishima (25 April). There were sightings on eighteen dates during this period with B logged on seven occasions and the highest count being off Bougainville where C was recorded on 13 April.

Grey-backed Tern *Sterna lunata*

This species rarely seems to approach ships although birds were seen on four dates with the highest count being off Bougainville where a low A was logged on 13 April. Two birds were seen as the ship cruised away from Guadalcanal on 11 April with a further two individuals noted off New Ireland (14 April).

The best sightings of the expedition were, however, way to the north with six individuals seen reasonable well offshore from some of the uninhabited islands at the northern end of the North Marianas archipelago on 21 April.

Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus*

This species was only encountered whilst cruising through the Solomon Islands and off Bougainville with a total of eight individuals logged between 11-13 April.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

Two birds in Tokyo Bay (27 April) were the only records on the expedition.

Fairy Tern *Sternula nereis*

Good numbers were found shortly before arriving at Noumea on 4 April with three birds also seen the following afternoon as the ship departed New Caledonia for the Solomon Islands.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

Seen on four widely spaced dates with the highest number being four individuals off Rennell on 9 April.

White-fronted Tern *Sterna striata*

Only seen as the ship sailed from Tauranga on 29 March where several individuals were seen.

Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana*

Good numbers were in the waters around Chuuk with A logged on 17 April and B the following day. The only other sightings were four birds (4 April:1 and 5 April: 3) as the ship sailed between the reef entrance and Noumea.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

This species was only recorded on Chuuk with what was presumed to be the same lost individual seen on both 17 and 18 April.

Great Crested Tern *Sterna bergi*

This species was seen close to the majority of islands between New Caledonia and Chuuk (with sightings on nine dates) with the highest count being offshore from Kolombangara where A was logged (12 April). On almost all other days when this species was recorded, counts were in single figures.

South Polar Skua *Stercorarius maccormicki*

A total of seven 'South Polars' were seen between 23-27 April with three on 25 April (off Torishima) and lone individuals on all other dates.

Brown Skua *Stercorarius antarcticus*

This species was new for the WPO list and two birds were noted close to the Three Kings Islands off northern New Zealand on 31 March.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

This species returned to a more normal level of sightings on WPO 2012, after only a limited number of records in 2011 (when the expedition commenced three weeks later), with birds noted on eleven dates. Most of these were seen in the second half of the expedition with the highest count being 42 birds between Miyake-jima and Tokyo Bay (27 April).

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

There were single figure counts of this species on eleven widely spaced dates with the first sighting being in the Hauraki Gulf (30 March) and the final records between Miyake-jima and Tokyo Bay on the last sea day of the expedition (27 April).

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

The most frequently recorded Skua in terms of the number of birds sighted and dates with at least 65 individuals seen across fourteen days.

This species was noted on an almost daily basis from Bougainville (13 April) until Tokyo Bay (27 April) although two birds were also recorded off Northern New Zealand on 31 March with one the previous day in the Hauraki Gulf.

Probably the most bizarre record was an individual which was seen harassing a South Polar Skua – something which cannot have been seen many times previously !!!

Ancient Murrelet *Synthliboramphus antiquus*

Two birds were seen in Tokyo Bay on 27 April.

Japanese Murrelet *Synthliboramphus wumizusume*

Japanese Murrelet is the last of the 'big birds' on the WPO itinerary and two birds were seen very well off the bows of the ship as we cruised past their breeding islets near Miyake-jima on 27 April with several other birds seen more distantly in the same general area.

Rhinoceros Auklet *Cerorhinca monocerata*

Another species which is only seen at the very end of the voyage with approximately twenty birds (ie a low A) logged in Tokyo Bay (27 April).

Metallic Pigeon *Columba vitiensis*

Six birds were seen in the late afternoon of 4 April at Mount Koghi, New Caledonia with the only other sighting being a lone bird on Makira on 1 May. Although this was the fifth time the 'Spirit of Enderby' had visited Makira, this was only the second sighting of this species on this island.

[**Spotted Dove** *Streptopelia chinensis*]

This Asian introduction was seen on New Caledonia, with A recorded on both 4 and 5 April.

Mackinlay's Cuckoo-dove *Macropygia mackinlayi*

This species can be found on all islands on the WPO itinerary through the Solomons archipelago and was indeed recorded on all landings there, with the highest count being on Rennell (9 April) where A was logged. On all other dates, there were only low single figure counts.

Pacific Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps longirostris*

The only sightings of the voyage were two individuals at Riviere Bleue on 5 April.

Stephan's Dove *Chalcophaps stephani*

A single bird was seen on the shore excursion to Mount Austin, Guadalcanal (11 April), with another lone individual the following day on Kolombangara.

Caroline Islands Ground-dove *Gallicolumba kubaryi*

This species is endemic to the Caroline Islands and was seen in good numbers on Weno on 18 April with a low A recorded. Three birds were also observed the previous afternoon in a brief walk after the ship had been cleared.

Crimson-crowned Fruit-dove *Ptilinopus porphyraceus*

Reasonably numerous on Chuuk, with A logged on both days ashore (17-18 April).

Yellow-bibbed Fruit-dove *Ptilinopus solomonensis*

Two birds were seen on Makira (10 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 9 April.

Claret-breasted Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus viridis*

Another range-restricted fruit-dove which was seen on Guadalcanal (11 April: A) and Kolombangara (12 April: A).

White-headed Fruit-dove *Ptilinopus eugeniae*

This species is endemic to Makira and a few adjacent small islands and was seen during the shore excursion on 10 April with two individuals logged.

Pacific Imperial-pigeon *Ducula pacifica*

This species was only seen on Rennell (9 April) with a low A recorded.

Red-knobbed Imperial-pigeon *Ducula rubricera*

This impressive looking pigeon was seen in reasonable numbers on Makira, Guadalcanal and Kolombangara (10-12 April) with A logged on both Makira and Kolombangara and eight on Guadalcanal.

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 10 April.

Island Imperial-pigeon *Ducula pistrinaria*

This nomadic species was seen on Rennell, Makira and Kolombangara (9,10 and 12 April) although only in small numbers with the highest count being five birds on Rennell.

New Caledonian Imperial-pigeon *Ducula goliath*

Two individuals were logged at Riviere Bleue on 5 April, with another six seen the previous day by those who went to Mount Koghi.

Ducorps' Cockatoo *Cacatua ducorpsii*

This species was seen at Mount Austin, Guadalcanal on 11 April and the following day on Kolombangara with A logged on both landings.

Cardinal Lory *Chalcopsitta cardinalis*

This brilliantly coloured parrot was seen on Guadalcanal and Kolombangara with A logged on both islands.

Coconut ("Rainbow") Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus*

This species was common in downtown Noumea, New Caledonia (4-5 April), with a few birds also seen on the excursion to Riviere Bleue. It was also seen on Makira (10 April: 4), Guadalcanal (11 April: 3) and Kolombangara (12 April: A).

Yellow-bibbed Lory *Lorius chlorocercus*

A Solomon Islands endemic which was seen on Rennell, Makira, Guadalcanal and Kolombangara (9-12 April) with the highest count being at Mount Austin where A was logged.

Meek's Lorikeet *Charmosyna meeki*

A single bird was seen on Kolombangara (12 April).

Duchess Lorikeet *Charmosyna margarethae*

The only records of this handsome parrot were on Kolombangara where a low A was recorded on 12 April.

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 Rennell, Makira and Guadalcanal with the highest count being on Rennell where A was recorded (9 April).

Horned Parakeet *Eunymphicus cornutus*

This New Caledonian endemic showed well at Riviere Bleue (where it can be tricky) with at least eight birds recorded on 5 April.

New Caledonian Parakeet *Cyanoramphus saissetti*

Another species which is not seen on every WPO but many people had excellent looks during the visit to Riviere Bleue, New Caledonia on 5 April with eight birds being logged. The previous afternoon, two were also seen at Mount Koghi by those who visited this site.

Singing Parrot *Geoffroyus heteroclitus*

Seen on Rennell, Guadalcanal and Kolombangara with the highest count being on Kolombangara (12 April) where A was recorded.

Eclectus Parrot *Eclectus roratus*

Another beautiful bird which was recorded on Makira, Guadalcanal and Kolombangara (10-12 April) with the highest count being at Mount Austin where A was logged.

Shining Bronze-cuckoo *Chrysococcyx lucidus*

Three birds were seen on Kolombangara (12 April) during the zodiac cruise through the mangroves.

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 (11 April) with three logged during the morning excursion. The following day, six were seen on Kolombangara.

Glossy Swiftlet *Collocalia esculenta*

This species was seen in reasonable numbers on the two days ashore on New Caledonia (4-5 April) and then on all the islands visited in the Solomons with A logged on each island.

White-rumped Swiftlet *Aerodramus spodiopygius*

Reasonably numerous on Kolombangara (12 April) with A recorded with the only other sighting being on New Caledonia (4 April).

Uniform Swiftlet *Aerodramus vanikorensis*

Seen on all the islands visited in the Solomons, with the highest count being on Makira (10 April) where a high A (ie approaching 100 individuals) was logged.

Caroline Islands Swiftlet *Aerodramus inquietus*

This extremely common Swiftlet is endemic to the Caroline Islands and was seen on Chuuk on both 17 and 18 April.

Moustached Treeswift *Hemiprocne mystacea*

This impressive bird was seen on Rennell (9 April: 5), Guadalcanal (11 April: 4) and Kolombangara (12 April : low A).

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Two birds of the race *salomonensis* were seen on Kolombangara on 12 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.

Little Kingfisher *Alcedo pusilla*

Three individuals seen during the zodiac cruise through the mangroves on Kolombangara (12 April) were the first WPO sightings for several years.

Ultramarine Kingfisher *Todirhamphus leucopygius*

Four individuals (two presumed pairs) of this tricky and always much desired Solomon Islands endemic were found at Mount Austin, Guadalcanal on 11 April.

Collared Kingfisher *Todirhamphus chloris*

A low A was logged on Rennell on 9 April, with two birds the following day on Makira and the final sightings (also two individuals) being on Kolombangara on 12 April.

Beach Kingfisher *Todirhamphus saurophaga*

A single bird was seen on a small island just offshore from Makira on 10 April.

Sacred Kingfisher *Todirhamphus sanctus*

This species was first seen on four dates with the most surprising sighting being a lone bird which landed on the ship well offshore from Bougainville on 13 April. Curiously, this is at least the third time this species has been recorded at sea in this general area on WPO expeditions.

Birds were also seen during the zodiac cruise off Norfolk Island (2 April: 6), with single individuals on the shore excursions on Rennell and Kolombangara (9 and 12 April).

Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis*

Only recorded on Makira (10 April) where four birds were seen.

Blyth's Hornbill *Aceros plicatus*

Reasonable numbers of this spectacular bird were seen at Mount Austin, Guadalcanal on 11 April (low A) with four the following day on Kolombangara.

New Caledonia Myzomela *Myzomela caledonica*

The first of six species of Myzomela recorded on the voyage with a low A logged at Riviere Bleue on 5 April and three the previous day at Mount Koghi.

Micronesian Myzomela *Myzomela rubratra*

This species is common on Chuuk and A was logged on both 17-18 April.

Cardinal Myzomela *Myzomela cardinalis*

This species was only seen on Rennell where it is common (9 April: A).

Yellow-vented Myzomela *Myzomela eichhorni*

A relatively scarce and range-restricted Solomon Island endemic, with eight recorded on Kolombangara on 12 April.

Black-headed Myzomela *Myzomela melanocephala*

Endemic to some of the islands in the Central Solomons, four individuals were seen at Mount Austin, Guadalcanal on 11 April.

Sooty Myzomela *Myzomela tristrami*

Restricted to Makira and a few nearby islands, this species was reasonably numerous (A) during our shore landing on 10 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 and several birds were seen around Noumea and at Mount Koghi on 4 April.

Barred Honeyeater *Phylidonyris undulata*

This endemic is not uncommon in suitable habitat on New Caledonia, with a low A at Riviere Bleue on 5 April and five the previous afternoon at Mount Koghi.

Crow Honeyeater *Gymnomyza aubryana*

We were extremely fortunate to visit Riviere Bleue (5 April) when there were a number of flowering trees immediately adjacent to the track and, as a result, had the best showing by this species of any WPO visit. A minimum of eleven birds were found with some incredible views obtained.

New Caledonian Friarbird *Philemon diemenensis*

This endemic was seen on the excursion to Riviere Bleue on New Caledonia (5 April: A) with two also seen by those who visited Mount Koghi the previous afternoon.

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 two individuals located (10 April).

Norfolk Island Gerygone *Gerygone modesta*

Usually this Norfolk Island endemic is reasonably easy to find, however, with sea conditions making it impossible to land, views were somewhat more distant than usual with two individuals seen during the zodiac cruise along the western shoreline on 3 April.

Fan-tailed Gerygone *Gerygone flavolateralis*

Seen in reasonable numbers on New Caledonia with A during the excursion to Riviere Bleue on 5 April and similar numbers the previous afternoon at Mount Koghi.

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

A reasonably numerous bird on Rennell with A logged during the shore excursion on 9 April.

Although this bird is generally lumped with the Gerygones on New Caledonia (and not treated as a Rennell endemic), visually it is quite different, 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. Playback experiments on both New Caledonia and Rennell also suggest that the birds do not recognise the songs of the birds from the other island, providing further evidence that the two forms should indeed be split.

White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus*

This species is generally only encountered in more 'open country' habitats on New Caledonia with a lone bird on the afternoon of 4 April and five during the trip to Riviere Bleue on 5 April.

Southern Melanesian Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina caledonica*

Six birds were seen at Riviere Bleue, New Caledonia on 5 April with three having been seen the previous afternoon at Mount Koghi.

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

Northern Melanesian Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina welchmani*

Four individuals were seen on Kolombangara (12 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. A was logged on Rennell and Kolombangara (9 and 12 April), with six birds seen on both Makira and Guadalcanal (10-11 April).

White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina papuensis*

As with the above species, this cuckoo-shrike was only seen in the Solomons with A logged at both Mount Austin, Guadalcanal and on Kolombangara (11-12 April).

New Caledonian Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina analis*

This New Caledonian endemic was seen at Riviere Bleue on 5 April where six birds were found.

Cicadabird *Coracina tenuirostris*

Only seen on Guadalcanal (11 April) where three individuals were seen at Mount Austin and the following day on Kolombangara where a lone bird was recorded.

Makira Cicadabird *Coracina salomonis*

Six individuals of this recent split were seen on Makira on 10 April.

Long-tailed Triller *Lalage leucopyga*

Two individuals were seen at Riviere Bleue, New Caledonia on 5 April, with a lone individual seen the day before at Mount Koghi. The only other sightings were on Makira (10 April) where two were noted.

Oriole ("Golden") Whistler *Pachycephala orioloides*

At least six were seen on Makira (10 April) with three the following day on Guadalcanal. Oriole Whistlers were also heard on Kolombangara (12 April).

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

This endemic is generally found in more forested areas than the next species (ie Rufous Whistler) and a low A was logged at Riviere Bleue, New Caledonia on 5 April.

Rufous Whistler *Pachycephala rufiventris*

The only record was during the shore excursion to Riviere Bleue, New Caledonia where a lone individual was seen (5 April).

Willie-wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys*

Seen on Makira (10 April: 1), Guadalcanal (11 April: 2) and Kolombangara (12 April: low A).

White-winged Fantail *Rhipidura cockerelli*

Two individuals were seen during the mangrove zodiac cruise on Kolombangara on 12 April.

Rennell Fantail *Rhipidura rennelliana*

This species is endemic to Rennell and was seen well during the shore excursion on 9 April with a low A logged.

Grey Fantail *Rhipidura fuliginosa*

Nine individuals were seen on the shore excursion to Riviere Bleue on New Caledonia (5 April) with smaller numbers at Mount Koghi the previous afternoon.

Streaked Fantail *Rhipidura spilodera*

Another New Caledonian endemic which was well seen at Riviere Bleue (5 April: low A).

Rufous Fantail *Rhipidura rufifrons*

This species was only found on Makira and Guadalcanal with a low A on 10 April and a lone bird the following day at Mount Austin.

Southern Shrikebill *Clytorhynchus pachycephaloides*

Six individuals of this regional endemic (which is only found on New Caledonia and Vanuatu) were seen at Riviere Bleue National Park on 5 April.

Rennell Shrikebill *Clytorhynchus hamlini*

This Rennell endemic is common (A) and was seen very well during our shore excursion on 9 April.

Chuuk Monarch *Metabolus rugensis*

Those who visited Tol South had some great looks at this highly range-restricted and endangered species with a pair seen on 18 April.

Chestnut-bellied Monarch *Monarcha castaneiventris*

A Solomon Islands endemic which was seen on both Makira (10 April) and at Mount Austin, Guadalcanal (11 April) with A logged at both localities.

White-capped Monarch *Monarcha richardsii*

This monarch is only found in the New Georgia group of islands (within the Solomons) and five individuals were seen on 12 April during our shore excursion on Kolombangara.

White-collared Monarch *Monarcha viduus*

This is another very range restricted monarch (which in this case is endemic to Makira) with three seen on 10 April.

Kolombangara Monarch *Symposiachrus browni*

This species is only occasionally recorded on WPO visits to Kolombangara, however, we were extremely fortunate to find a male bird which gave some great views to many (12 April).

Solomons (“Black-and-white”) Monarch *Symposiachrus barbatus*

This is another species which is not seen every year, however, three birds were seen at Mount Austin on 11 April.

Oceanic Flycatcher *Myiagra oceanica*

This Micronesian endemic is relatively common on Chuuk and A was logged on both days we were ashore (17-18 April) with birds seen on both Weno and Tol South.

Steel-blue Flycatcher *Myiagra ferrocyanea*

This Solomon Islands endemic was seen on Guadalcanal (11 April: low A) and Kolombangara (12 April: 7).

Melanesian (“New Caledonian”) Flycatcher *Myiagra caledonica*

This species was seen at Riviere Bleue, New Caledonia (5 April: 5) and also on Rennell (9 April: 6).

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, five were found in the forest at Riviere Bleue on 5 April with one seen the previous afternoon at Mount Koghi.

White-billed (“Guadalcanal”) Crow *Corvus woodfordi*

This is another corvid which can be extremely elusive, however, at least six birds were seen at Mount Austin, Guadalcanal on 11 April.

Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos*

Four individuals of this reasonably widespread species were seen in Tokyo Bay (27 April).

Yellow-bellied Robin *Eopsaltria flaviventris*

This New Caledonian endemic is reasonably numerous at Riviere Bleue National Park with A logged (5 April).

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

A total of nine birds were seen migrating past the ship over the last three sea days of the expedition (Torishima-Yokohama) with the only other sighting being a lone, seemingly vagrant, bird on Chuuk on 18 April.

Welcome Swallow *Hirundo neoxena*

This species is reasonably common on Norfolk Island (2 April) with A logged during the zodiac cruise along the western shoreline.

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, New Caledonia with A recorded on both 4 and 5 April.

Caroline Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus syrinx*

This species is endemic to the Caroline Islands and was seen in reasonable numbers on both Weno and Tol South, Chuuk on 17-18 April with A logged on both dates.

Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope*

A lost migrant spent several minutes flying around the ship on 25 April (close to Torishima), although it was not seen to land.

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 (9 April), a low A was logged.

Caroline Islands White-eye *Zosterops semperi*

This Micronesian endemic is reasonably numerous on Chuuk and A was logged on both 17 and 18 April with birds recorded on both Weno and Tol South.

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 low A recorded (9 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. During our shore excursion, it was less numerous than some of the other white-eye species on the voyage with only eight individuals logged on 12 April.

Green-backed White-eye *Zosterops xanthochrous*

This New Caledonian endemic is reasonably common and A was recorded following the visit to Riviere Bleue on 5 April with slightly lower numbers the previous afternoon at Mount Koghi.

Silver-eye *Zosterops lateralis*

The only sightings of this species were at Mount Koghi on 4 April, the day before the excursion to Riviere Bleue.

Faichuuk ("Great Truk") White-eye *Rukia ruki*

This species is only found on a few of the islands within the Chuuk lagoon and is treated as critically endangered by Birdlife International. After a long zodiac ride and a tough climb, two birds were seen on Tol South on 18 April.

Bare-eyed White-eye *Woodfordia superciliosa*

This species is the commonest of the single-island endemics on Rennell and good numbers (a low B) were seen during the shore excursion on 9 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*

Seen on Makira (10 April: 4), and Kolombangara (12 April: A).

Singing Starling *Aplonis cantoroides*

This species was recorded on Makira (10 April: low A), Guadalcanal (11 April: 1), and Kolombangara (12 April: A).

Rennell Starling *Aplonis insularis*

This Rennell endemic seems to be somewhat nomadic as the numbers seen do vary from year to year. On this visit, however, it was present in comparatively low numbers with a low A recorded during the shore excursion on 9 April.

Brown-winged Starling *Aplonis grandis*

This Solomon Islands endemic species is reasonably reliable at Mount Austin, Guadalcanal with A logged on 11 April and five birds then seen the following day on Kolombangara. Despite its name, the diagnostic pale brown primaries can, on occasions, 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 10 April.

Striated Starling *Aplonis striata*

This New Caledonian endemic is not particularly common at Riviere Bleue and only seven individuals were recorded there on 5 April, however, those who visited Mount Koghi on the previous afternoon logged A.

Micronesian Starling *Aplonis opaca*

A common bird on Chuuk with A recorded on both 17-18 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 (11 April: low A) and the following day on Kolombangara (6 birds).

[Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*]

This Asian introduction was reasonably numerous on New Caledonia (4-5 April) and in Honiara, Guadalcanal (11 April) with A recorded on all three dates.

[European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*]

This introduced species is common on Norfolk Island and despite being unable to land (due to the weather conditions), a low A was logged during the zodiac cruise along the western coastline (2 April).

Midget Flowerpecker *Dicaeum aeneum*

This Solomon Islands endemic is not uncommon at Mount Austin on Guadalcanal and a low A was recorded on 11 April, although its tiny size means getting good views can often be challenging.

Mottled Flowerpecker *Dicaeum tristrami*

Reasonable numbers of this Makira Island endemic were seen on the shore excursion on 10 April with A recorded.

Olive-backed Sunbird *Cinnyris jugularis*

Only seen on Makira (10 April: 1), Guadalcanal (11 April: 6) and Kolombangara (12 April: A).

Eastern Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla tschutschensis*

One of the biggest surprises of the expedition was a lone wagtail which flew close to the ship a day north of New Ireland (15 April).

Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala*

A single migrant was seen flying past the ship on 25 April (offshore from Torishima).

[House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*]

Another common introduction which was seen on both days ashore in New Caledonia (4-5 April) with A recorded.

[Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*]

This species was recorded in small numbers on both days on Chuuk (17-18 April) where it is believed to be a recent, and presumably ship-assisted, arrival.

[Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild*]

Seen in small numbers (6 birds) in Noumea on 4 April.

Blue-faced Parrotfinch *Erythrura trichroa*

This species was seen on both days ashore on Chuuk with A recorded on 18 April and nine individuals the previous afternoon.

Red-throated Parrotfinch *Erythrura psittacea*

This, sometimes tricky, New Caledonian endemic was only seen in small numbers at Riviere Bleue (5 April: 3).

CETACEANS

Sperm Whale *Physter macrocephalus*

Sperm Whales were only seen on two dates with ten animals on 31 March (a day north of the Hauraki Gulf) and two on 3 April (a day north of Norfolk Island). Somewhat surprisingly, none were seen off Bougainville where this species is usually regular.

Short-finned Pilot Whale *Globicephala macrorhynchus*

A small pod of approximately seven animals was seen two days south of the Bonin Islands (22 April).

Pygmy Killer Whale *Feresa attenuata*

The only sightings of this small and rarely encountered species were west of Guadalcanal (11 April) where a pod which contained about fifteen animals was seen.

Melon-headed Whale *Peponocephala electra*

A pod, which comprised at least a hundred animals, was seen and photographed off New Ireland on 14 April.

False Killer Whale *Pseudorca crassidens*

Pods were seen off Bougainville and New Ireland (13-14 April).

Risso's Dolphin *Grampus griseus*

This species was seen on three occasions with the first sightings being four animals west of Guadalcanal (11 April). Two were then seen on 22 April (two days south of the Bonin Islands) with the final sightings being a pod of about eight whilst cruising north from Torishima (26 April).

Cuvier's Beaked Whale *Ziphius cavirostris*

Three of these distinctive whales were seen off the Bonin Islands (24 April) with a lone individual seen the following day off Torishima.

Ginkgo-toothed Beaked Whale *Mesoplodon ginkgodens*

A small pod of beaked whales were seen offshore from Torishima (25 April) which appeared to be this poorly known species. What was presumed to be the male was black in colour with no scratch markings noted and none of the patterning/markings which would indicate it was either Hubb's or Stejneger's Beaked Whales, the other two species which are known from this general area.

It is interesting to note that a pod of seemingly identical animals was seen at almost exactly the same location on WPO 2011 and whilst this is merely speculation, it seems not inconceivable that these were actually the same group of animals.

The following day (26 April) there was a sighting of two beaked whales further to the north and again a male was seen which exhibited similar features.

Beaked Whale sp

As well as the sightings described above, beaked whales were also seen on a further seven days but none of these were identified to species, although it is thought at least some of them were probably Blainville's Beaked Whales.

Dwarf Sperm Whale *Kogia breviceps*

This species was only seen on 11 April (west of Guadalcanal) with two animals spotted. It is likely that the marginally choppy conditions than usual reduced the number of sightings as this species is difficult to find unless the seas are flat.

Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops aduncus*

This comparatively recent split from the more widespread Bottlenose Dolphin was seen on two occasions with two animals off Bougainville (13 April) and five within the lagoon on Chuuk (18 April).

Short-beaked Common Dolphin *Delphinus delphis*

A decent sized pod (A) was seen in the outer Hauraki Gulf on 30 March.

Spinner Dolphin *Stenella longirostris*

This species is generally the most frequently encountered dolphin on the WPO and pods were seen on a daily basis between Guadalcanal and New Ireland (11-14 April).

Pantropical Spotted Dolphin *Stenella attenuate*

This species was seen on four widely spread dates with the first sighting being off Norfolk Island (2 April) and the final record off the Bonin Islands on 24 April.