

## FIJI 2007

*August 13, 2007 to August 18, 2007*

Guided by  
Phil Gregory

The Fiji extension worked out nicely, though the weather was pretty atrocious for a lot of it and Phil getting sick with flu on Taveuni was not exactly ideal. Air Fiji parted us from our bags for a day en route there too, but they turned up just in time and we had no problems getting back out or for the evening flight up to Nadi and home or onwards as the case may be.

We did well on Taveuni, our first short walk gave Red Shining -Parrot at the hotel, then both White-throated Pigeon and what I predict will be a split from Fan-tailed Cuckoo. The afternoon boat trip came up with a lovely close Tahiti Petrel and lots of Black Noddies, all in quite good conditions for once on this trip.

Despite rainy conditions on the key Des Voeux Peak morning, when I had serious doubts about finding the Silktail, we did OK and happily a tiny break in the heavy rain delivered the goods. My new dove site also came really good again, with brilliant looks at the amazing Orange Dove and the striking Many-colored Fruit-Dove.

Over on Viti Levu we again faced wet weather but came up with a fine male Golden Dove on the afternoon walk, and our first good views of Fiji Bush-Warbler and the lovely, colorful Fiji Parrot-Finch. Next day I opted not to make the 4-hour rough drive to what is a very arduous site for Long-legged Warbler, trying instead a new and close-at-hand site where Pink-billed Parrotfinch was a long shot. Amazingly, and despite the rain, we did find this mega-rarity and some folks even got a glimpse as it flew across the track. Another great find was an obliging sub-adult male Black-faced Shrikebill, a new site for the rare species which is now a Fiji endemic following the splitting of Nendo Shrikebill from the Santa Cruz islands.

My thanks to the group for signing-up and sorry about the coughing and sneezing; the trip makes a fine coda to PNG and those of us who then went and birded New Caledonia also had a great time there, with a fabulous Kagu display amongst many other highlights. Thanks to Peggy at Field Guides headquarters for good logistics, and to local guides Boro and Vido for their help, also to Christian for driving and saving the day. Vinaka vaka levu, thanks very much in Fijian. Join us for 2008 and see for yourself.....  
Phil Gregory, Auckland Aug 07

*List total: 54 bird taxa and 1 mammal taxa*

*If marked to left of list, \* = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic,  
N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant*

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### **Procellariidae**

TAHITI PETREL (*Pterodroma rostrata*)

*A great close view of one on the short pelagic off Taveuni. They breed in the mountains of this island.*

### **Sulidae**

RED-FOOTED BOOBY (*Sula sula*)

*A couple soaring with a distant frigatebird flock off Taveuni.*

BROWN BOOBY (*Sula leucogaster*)

*Good views on the boat trip.*

### **Fregatidae**

LESSER FRIGATEBIRD (*Fregata ariel*)

*Good numbers this year off Taveuni, with 80+ birds.*

### **Ardeidae**

WHITE-FACED HERON (*Egretta novaehollandiae*)

*A single at Suva airport as we awaited our evening flight. This is a newly arrived colonist from Australia.*

PACIFIC REEF-HERON (*Egretta sacra*)

*Dark phase and white phase birds seen, with a couple at Suva airport as well as the more usual coastal sightings.*

### **Accipitridae**

SWAMP HARRIER (*Circus approximans*)

*Small numbers seen on both islands.*

**E** FIJI GOSHAWK (*Accipiter rufitorques*)

*Nice views on Taveuni.*

### **Sternidae**

GREAT CRESTED TERN (*Sterna bergii*)

*A few off Taveuni.*

BLACK-NAPED TERN (*Sterna sumatrana*)

*Up to 5 birds sat on buoys off Garden Is. Resort for some great looks.*

BRIDLED TERN (*Sterna anaethetus*)

*Ten on the afternoon boat trip.*

BLACK NODDY (*Anous minutus*)

*About 250 on the afternoon boat trip.*

BROWN NODDY (*Anous stolidus*)

*Three on the afternoon boat trip.*

### **Columbidae**

**I** ROCK (FERAL) PIGEON (*Columba livia*)

*A few feral pigeons were around the Suva airport area.*

METALLIC (WHITE-THROATED) PIGEON (*Columba vitiensis*)

*Great views of 2 on Taveuni during a short pre-lunch walk.*

**I** SPOTTED DOVE (*Streptopelia chinensis*)

*Small numbers on Taveuni and near Suva.*

MANY-COLORED FRUIT-DOVE (*Ptilinopus perousii*)

*My new locality on Taveuni was brilliant for this species, with wonderful close views of males and females. Claims of the very similar Crimson-crowned Fruit-Dove here are likely to be misidentified females of the Many-coloured.*

**E** ORANGE DOVE (*Ptilinopus victor*)

*Fantastic views of three sunburst orange males and three females at my new site, one of the world's great doves. There was also a strange yellowish dove that is I think a xanthistic variant of this species, a very odd individual that has been here some 7 years.*

**E** GOLDEN DOVE (*Ptilinopus luteovirens*)

*Oh boy, what a good job we worked so hard to see a male on the first afternoon at Colo-i-Suva, as bad weather next day really mucked up sightings then. The male is a glistening yellow bird with odd darker streaks, very distinctive, and it yaps like a small dog!*

- E** PEALE'S IMPERIAL-PIGEON (*Ducula latrans*)  
*These large imperial-pigeons bark like a dog and have the local name of barking pigeon. We saw them well on both islands.*

**Psittacidae**

- E** COLLARED LORY (*Phigys solitarius*)  
*A very attractive colourful species that gave nice looks.*
- E** RED SHINING-PARROT (*Prosopiea tabuensis*)  
*One flew into the flowering tree at Garden Is. for a great initial look at this striking large maroon, green and blue coloured parrot. Bad weather subverted other sightings but we heard them at two other sites.*
- E** MASKED SHINING-PARROT (*Prosopiea personata*)  
*This species was good around Colo-i-Suva and we got some very nice looks.*

**Cuculidae**

- FAN-TAILED CUCKOO (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*)  
*The taxon simus here sounds completely unlike Australian birds, and has a melanistic phase not found elsewhere; it is pretty clearly a split-in-waiting. We saw a well-barred immature near Garden Is., a good find as this is quite a scarce species.*

**Apodidae**

- WHITE-RUMPED SWIFTLET (*Aerodramus spodiopygius*)  
*Small numbers daily.*

**Alcedinidae**

- COLLARED KINGFISHER (*Todirhamphus chloris*)  
*A very distinct form, and the whole complex of 49 taxa is way overdue for radical splitting. We saw the pale and rather Sacred Kingfisher-like taxon vitiensis on Viti Levu and Taveuni.*

**Hirundinidae**

- PACIFIC SWALLOW (*Hirundo tahitica*)  
*Small numbers on both islands.*

**Campephagidae**

- POLYNESIAN TRILLER (*Lalage maculosa*)  
*Common on both islands, oddly short-tailed for a triller.*

**Pycnonotidae**

- I** RED-VENTED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus cafer*)  
*Quite common on Viti Levu.*

**Turdidae**

- ISLAND THRUSH (*Turdus poliocephalus*)  
*We had brief views of *tempesti* on Taveuni and *layardi* at Colo-i-Suva, hampered by adverse weather conditions! The whole complex of 64 races is in need of review.*

**Sylviidae**

- E** FIJI BUSH-WARBLER (*Cettia ruficapilla*)  
*Good views at Colo-i-Suva.*

**Rhipiduridae**

- STREAKED FANTAIL (*Rhipidura spilodera*)  
*Seen nicely on both islands, likely to be distinct species from the New Caledonian birds too.*

**Monarchidae**

- E** SLATY MONARCH (*Mayrornis lessoni*)  
*This odd little monarch was quite common this time and we saw them well on both islands, they were noisy and active despite the weather.*
- \*** FIJI SHRIKEBILL (*Clytorhynchus vitiensis*)  
*Heard at one site on Taveuni, but bad weather fouled things up overall and we only heard it around Colo-i-Suva on Viti Levu.*

BLACK-THROATED SHRIKEBILL (*Clytorhynchus nigrogularis*)

*Great, I was able to tape in a sub-adult male at Colo-i-Suva, which gave really good looks and was the first time we'd seen this rare bird on the FG trip here. It is now a Fiji endemic too following the splitting of Nendo Shrikebill.*

VANIKORO FLYCATCHER (*Myiagra vanikorensis*)

*This attractive colourful monarch was common and vocal on both islands. It is a near-endemic.*

**E** BLUE-CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiagra azureocapilla*)

*Much scarcer than the Vanikoro Flycatcher, we got one in rain on Taveuni and then several around Colo-i-Suva.*

**E** SILKTAIL (*Lamprolia victoriae*)

*I was sweating on this one due to the dreadful weather, but a short gap in the rain gave us quite reasonable views of this strange dumpy bird with the striking tail pattern. It is currently placed with monarchs but is clearly very aberrant.*

**Petroicidae**

SCARLET ROBIN (*Petroica multicolor*)

*Now split by most as Pacific Robin *Petroica multicolor*, it is an allospecies of the Australian Scarlet Robin *P. boodang*. We saw it well at Colo-i-Suva where a juv. was being fed by a female.*

**Pachycephalidae**

GOLDEN WHISTLER (*Pachycephala pectoralis*)

*We saw one distinctive taxon: The Viti Levu taxon *graeffi* has just black marks at the side of the chest and a yellow throat, the female being drab olive with a pale throat. The whole complex of taxa is way overdue for a massive split-up, this is pretty clearly at least one endemic species, Fiji Whistler.*

**Zosteropidae**

**E** LAYARD'S WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops explorator*)

*Common on both islands.*

SILVER-EYE (*Zosterops lateralis*)

*A few seen on Taveuni.*

**Meliphagidae**

**E** ORANGE-BREASTED MYZOMELA (*Myzomela jugularis*)

*Quite common this year with 3 or 4 per day and a particularly memorable view of one on a verge at Colo-i-Suva, where the red cap and rump showed well.*

WATTLED HONEYEATER (*Foulehaio carunculata*)

*Quite common on Viti-Levu but rained out on Taveuni.*

**E** GIANT HONEYEATER (*Gymnomyza viridis*)

*Two very distinct and doubtless splittable taxa seen, with obvious vocal and plumage differences. The race *brunneirostris* was vocal around Colo-i-Suva with one showing well at Raintrees. The race *viridis* was very quiet on Taveuni in the rain, but we luckily had quite reasonable looks at 2 there, the orange bill and legs being very obvious and also the very greenish plumage.*

**Artamidae**

**E** FIJI WOODSWALLOW (*Artamus mentalis*)

*Much darker than White-breasted Wood-swallow, this endemic gave good views on both islands.*

**Cracticidae**

**I** AUSTRALASIAN MAGPIE (*Gymnorhina tibicen*)

*Two seen on Taveuni, introduced from Australia and still surviving here.*

**Sturnidae**

POLYNESIAN STARLING (*Aplonis tabuensis*)

*Great looks on Taveuni.*

**I** JUNGLE MYNA (*Acridotheres fuscus*)

*A few on both islands.*

**I** COMMON MYNA (*Acridotheres tristis*)

*Way too common on both islands.*

**Estrildidae**

- I** RED AVADAVAT (*Amandava amandava*)  
*A few at Nadi airport.*
- E** FIJI PARROTFINCH (*Erythrura pealii*)  
*Brief looks in the rain on Taveuni, then fabulous views of this gorgeous bird at Colo-i-Suva, where 5 adults had a dark faced juv. amongst them, looking remarkably like a Blue-faced Parrotfinch!*
- E** PINK-BILLED PARROTFINCH (*Erythrura kleinschmidti*)  
*An incisive an unfamiliar quiet 'tik' type call in forest at Colo-i-Suva got me and a handful of others on to this mega-rarity as it flew across the track. It was a life bird for Phil and a BVD for sure, but at least it is here and my hoped for finding paid off. It is known from a handful of sites and is classified as Threatened by BirdLife International, certainly few tours get it.*
- I** JAVA SPARROW (*Padda oryzivora*)  
*This was a new Fiji bird for me, introduced in the 1930's and still around in just a few sites. We saw an adult with 2 juvs. at Suva's Nausori airport, and 5 adults there next day.*

### **MAMMALS**

#### SAMOAN FLYING-FOX (*Pteropus samoensis*)

*A few at Colo-i-Suva, seen well in daylight, but none at the hotel camp at Taveuni this trip.*

***Additional Comments***

Highlights included: Tahiti Petrel, Red and Masked Shining-Parrots, Orange and Golden Doves, Many-colored Fruit-Dove, Silktail, Black-faced Shrikebill, Fiji and Pink-billed Parrotfinch- join us for 2008 folks!

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