



Reef & Rainforest



Papua New Guinea Photography Group

Accompanied by the photographer Harry Skeggs

Led by various expert local guides

28 June – 13 July 2019



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MEET YOUR GROUP LEADER

Award-winning wildlife and travel photographer Harry Skeggs has worked with some of the top names in travel and been a masterclass keynote speaker for National Geographic. His images have been exhibited in galleries around the world and regularly feature in the pages of BBC Wildlife, Amateur Photographer and, of course, National Geographic.

Harry's rapid ascent to the top echelons of wildlife photography has seen him described as "the future of top wildlife photography".

Harry's photography is informed by a love of nature which has taken him to over 75 countries, from the high Arctic to the New Guinea jungles on a mission to document and increase awareness of the world's most endangered animals. A conservationist at heart, he works closely with charities such as WWF to create compelling images of species under threat in order to shed light on their stories and encourage support for related conservation efforts.

A graduate of art history from Cambridge University, Harry is a particular exponent of the compositional and artistic elements of photography. He strives to help photographers identify their own unique style and works closely with them to take their work to the next level. Harry has already led a number of tour groups in which the lucky participants have received the benefits of his tutoring abilities and his profound photographic insights.

In the course of his work, Harry has become highly knowledgeable about flora, fauna and tribal cultures and combines that knowledge with his considerable photographic skills when leading groups of wildlife photography enthusiasts to some of the world's most exciting natural history destinations.





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INTRODUCTION TO THE ITINERARY

Vast and mysterious, Papua New Guinea (PNG) is one of the most diverse countries on Earth, with over 700 languages spoken and many different, exotic cultural groups, each one separated from the other by geographical and linguistic barriers.

Led by local guides and accompanied throughout by award-winning wildlife and travel photographer Harry Skeggs, the group will visit Rabaul to witness the annual Mask Festival, a riot of local colour where tribes from outlying islands come together to meet and compete in various canoe and dance festivals culminating in the Baining Fire Dance. We combine this with a visit to Goroka to see some of the many highland tribes found there, including the famous mud men.

Apart from the colourful cultural side, the other main attraction of Papua New Guinea is the impressive birdlife, most notably the extraordinary birds of paradise proclaimed by Sir David Attenborough as his all-time avian favourites. Close to Port Moresby, we will visit the Varirata National Park to see the famous Raggiana Bird of Paradise displaying. In the highlands, we stay at Kumul Lodge where you will have the chance to see another four species of birds of paradise within the lodge grounds: crested satinbird, ribbon-tailed astrapia, Princess Stephanie's astrapia and brown sicklebill. In other sites visited by the group near the lodge, there will be excellent chances to spot Loria's satinbird, King of Saxony bird of paradise, superb bird of paradise and the blue bird of paradise.

Whatever culture, scenery and wildlife you do see on this unique group journey, it will undoubtedly all be varied, exotic, colourful, bizarre and fascinating. Led by knowledgeable local guides and accompanied by Harry Skeggs, you will learn so much more about PNG than on a conventional tour. Call now for more details on 01803 866965 as places are limited to only ten participants.





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Papua New Guinea with Harry Skeggs

28 Jun Depart LONDON HEATHROW on BRITISH AIRWAYS flight BA11 at 1955 to SINGAPORE.

29 Jun Arrive SINGAPORE at 1605. On arrival, connect with AIR NIUGINI flight PX393 at 2035 to PORT MORESBY.

30 Jun Arrive PORT MORESBY at 0510. Met on arrival at the airport and transfer to the hotel. Time to relax after your journey. Afternoon drive to the VARIRATA NATIONAL PARK for birdwatching. Depart the city and head for the Sogerri Plateaux, located approximately 600 metres above sea level. Keep your fingers crossed for a sighting of the Raggiana bird of paradise which can be seen here. Return to PORT MORESBY and transfer to the hotel.



O/n GATEWAY HOTEL, B. The hotel is close to the airport, and provides comfortable accommodation. Facilities at the hotel include a bar, restaurant and swimming pool. NOTE: It is advisable to keep to the hotel compound, and not to venture into town at any time without an escort.



01 Jul Morning pick up from the hotel and transfer to the airport. Catch AIR NIUGINI flight PX160 at 0855 to GOROKA, arriving 0945. Met on arrival at the airport and transfer to the hotel. In the afternoon visit Akameku village and enjoy a traditional sing sing.

O/n PACIFIC GARDENS HOTEL, (B) Located in the beautiful Pacific Gardens Estate and one of the best hotels in Goroka. The hotel is located in over 20 acres of land with walking trails, barbecue area, playground and a meandering mountain stream. Accommodation is in comfortable rooms with private bathroom, tea and coffee facilities and tv.



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02 Jul

Goroka is situated 1600m above sea level and boasts a spring-like climate. It is “coffee capital” of Papua New Guinea where high-grade organic Arabica beans are produced in its rich soil. It is also the home of the famous Asaro Mudman. In the times of tribal war, the Asaro were generally beaten by enemy tribes. While fleeing the enemy, they jumped into mud ponds, covering their bodies with mud. The enemy tribesmen were scared off by the sight of them and withdrew. Since then, Mudman became the guarding symbol of Asaro villages. Today you will visit Asaro Valley and enjoy an Asaro Mudman performance, and try a traditional Mumu lunch with lots of fresh organic vegetables and chicken. Afternoon sightseeing tour of the town. O/n PACIFIC GARDENS HOTEL, (BL)



03 Jul

Morning visit to Mt Gurupoka. It is a moderate one-hour walk to the top of the hill, overlooking Asaro valley. You will visit an ancestral cave and enjoy a ghost dance performance. In the afternoon visit Chimbu cultural village and enjoy a traditional sing sing. O/n PACIFIC GARDENS HOTEL, (B).



04 Jul

Morning pick-up from the lodge and commence the drive to Mount Hagen, with a stop at a village attraction (transfer is 5-6 hours plus stop time). First drive through the rocky limestone country of Chimbu Province and then continue along the vast tea plantations of the fertile Wahgi valley. Stop over at Mindima village to view the Oma Masalai dance. This is a drama-type attraction based on an ancient story of the area involving spirits (Masalai) and villagers. Mount Hagen town is in the upper Wahgi Valley which displays some of the oldest evidence of agriculture in the world. Continue the transfer (c.45 mins) to the lodge.

O/n KUMUL LODGE, (BLD) “Kumul” means bird of paradise in Pidgin English, and there are not many places in PNG where you can see wild birds of paradise inside the lodge grounds, sometimes even from your own room. More than 70 species of birds have been recorded in the lodge grounds alone and more can be found at nearby sites. The lodge is locally run and was designed and built with mostly local materials. Accommodation is in simple rooms with private bathroom. There is also a stove to keep the room warm in the cool evenings.



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05 Jul

Morning visit to Pigsties, located approximately 5km from the lodge at 2566 metres, with a local guide in search of birds of paradise and other avian species. Afternoon visit to Anji Village for a cultural experience. O/n KUMUL LODGE, (BLD).



06 Jul

Morning visit to Tonga birding site with a local guide. The site is 1817m above sea level and approximately 15km from the lodge. The blue bird of paradise can be seen in this area. Afternoon visit to Kopia or Anji and Walya birding sites. NB: Choice of site to be discussed with your guide and will depend on the conditions pertaining at the time. The best available sites at the time of visit will be selected by your guide. O/n KUMUL LODGE, (BLD).

07 Jul

Morning pick-up from the lodge and transfer to the airport at MOUNT HAGEN. Catch AIR NIUGINI flight PX183 at 1315 to PORT MORESBY, arriving 1415. Met on arrival at the airport and assisted with connection to AIR NIUGINI flight to RABAUL, arriving 1730. Met on arrival at the airport and transfer to the hotel.



O/n KOKOPO BEACH BUNGALOWS, (BD). Located in the town of Kokopo in the province of East New Britain overlooking the beautiful Duke of York Islands, Kokopo town has grown rapidly since 1994 when the eruptions of Tavurvur volcano destroyed a large area of Rabaul. Accommodation is in a comfortable air-conditioned bungalow. The bungalows have private bathroom and balcony (some with sea view) and mini bar. The lodge has a bar and a restaurant built in traditional PNG Hauswin style and overlooks the view of the ocean and surrounding islands. A range of optional excursions can be arranged at the lodge.



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08 Jul

After breakfast, pick-up from the hotel for a volcano tour, including a visit to the foot of Mt Tavurvur. The tour also visits the U- boat tunnel and the Vulcanological Observatory. Later, return to the hotel. O/n KOKOPO BEACH BUNGALOWS, (BD).



09 Jul

After breakfast, pick up from the lodge for a full day (shared) boat trip to the Duke of York Islands. Enjoy a scenic boat ride, including the possibility of dolphin watching en route. Try a local outrigger canoe and enjoy a nature walk on Mioko Island, including a visit to the remains of legendary Queen Emma's house and pool. Time to relax and maybe swim and snorkel at beautiful Kabakon Island. Picnic lunch included. Later, return to the lodge. O/n KOKOPO BEACH BUNGALOWS, (BLD).



10 Jul

Over the next two days you will experience one of Papua New Guinea's great cultural festivals, the RABAUL MASK FESTIVAL. In the early morning visit a nearby beach on foot and witness the arrival of the Tubuan spirit by boat. This is the Kinavai ceremony, the start of Mask Festival. It is a sacred initiation ceremony performed by the Tubuan Society of the Tolai tribe, and you will see Tubuan mask dancers approaching by boat to the shore. Tubuan is a secret society kept alive by successive generations by Tolai tribesmen. They worship Tabu shell money as treasure, and the social power of a man is measured by how much Tabu he owns. It is believed that Tubuan is the female spiritual figure of the ancestor of the Tolai tribe who originated in neighbouring New Ireland, and Dukduk is Tubuan's son. Tubuan has staring eyes with a crescent-shaped mouth, while Dukduk is faceless and taller than Tubuan.



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You cannot know the secrets of the society unless you join, but you can touch on their culture during the festival. Return to the hotel for breakfast.

Spend the rest of the day visiting the Mask festival showground in Kokopo town where you will see different Mask cultures from East New Britain, West New Britain, New Ireland, Bougainville and, depending on the year, some Mask tribes will have come all the way from the Sepik and Highlands regions on the mainland to perform. O/n KOKOPO BEACH BUNGALOWS, (B)

11 Jul

After breakfast, pick up from the hotel and visit the Mask festival venue. During the festival you can use the courtesy stall with shade, cold towels etc. In the evening, depart the hotel to visit Kainagunan Village for the famous Baining Fire Dance. The Baining people live in the mountains outside Rabaul and are famous for their customary fire-dancing. The original residents of Rabaul were chased away by intruders from a neighbouring island – the Tolai Tribe – and they now live deep in the mountains at the base of a huge natural limestone cliff. Before a fire-dance the young men must begin secret preparations up to one month before. As the sunlight disappears, a large bonfire is lit and the fire-dancers begin. The band pumps out a hypnotic chant while the dancers run through the fire in a trance, kicking hot logs and showering red coals into the night. After you return to the hotel the ceremony will continue until the very early hours of the morning or until every burning ember is extinguished because, for the Baining people, the act of fire-dancing is a sacred custom that must be followed according to tradition: it's not just a tourist attraction. O/n KOKOPO BEACH BUNGALOWS, (B)



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- 12 Jul Morning pick up from the hotel and transfer to the airport. Catch AIR NIUGINI flight at 1230 to PORT MORESBY, arriving 1350. Met on arrival at the airport and transfer to the hotel. Afternoon at leisure. O/n GATEWAY HOTEL, (B).
- 13 Jul Morning visit to the Nature Park to see its botanical gardens and seek birds of paradise. Later, transfer to the airport and catch AIR NIUGINI flight PX392 at 1410 to SINGAPORE, arriving 1830. On arrival, connect with BRITISH AIRWAYS flight BA12 at 2315 to LONDON HEATHROW.
- 14 Jul Arrive LONDON HEATHROW at 0550.

Number of Participants: Maximum 10 / Minimum 6

Price: £6,978 per person

Single Supplement: £1,285 per person

To include: international flights, domestic flights, accommodation, transfers, nearly all meals, all tours and excursions as stated, reserve entrance fees, mask festival pass, private transportation with experienced driver, services of Harry Skeggs and various expert local guides, government taxes, service charges.

Please call Jonathan Morris for more details on 01803 866965 or email us at mail@reefandrainforest.co.uk



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IMPORTANT NOTES TO ACCOMPANY THE ABOVE ITINERARY

NB: This tour is sold subject to the understanding that all guests accept that, if Harry Skeggs is unable to accompany the group, a suitable replacement will be found. If Harry Skeggs is unable to accompany the group, no refunds will be given should any guest then decide to cancel the tour.

NB: Visas are required for travel. If you wish to arrange your visa before arrival, please contact the PNG High Commission. It is currently possible to obtain a visa on arrival, free of charge.

NB: All itineraries are subject to change without notice to take into account possible airline flight schedule changes which can take place before departure date or during the tour, and other operational factors. The Sepik River region itinerary is particularly susceptible to change.

NB: The quoted price for the above itinerary is based on current airline fares (both international and domestic), fuel surcharges and flight taxes. These (and other tour costs) may be subject to unanticipated increases beyond our control at short notice, either before or after you have booked the tour, in which case the price would need to be revised accordingly.

NB: This tour involves some travel in remote areas. This adds to the adventure and increases the opportunity to enjoy a true wildlife and wilderness experience. However, due to terrain, weather, road conditions, and other factors beyond our control, some elements of the tour may have to be altered. Times of some activities may need to be changed or even cancelled due to the conditions. If an activity is cancelled it will usually be replaced with an alternative activity that is more appropriate for the conditions. Advance notice will be given for any changes where possible, although at times changes may need to be made whilst the tour is in progress.

NB: Prices are based on a specific airlines and specific economy seating classes. Flights are booked on an ad hoc basis and so early booking is recommended to take advantage of the cheapest fare availability. Prices may rise if a more expensive seat class needs to be booked. Please call for information on price variations for using alternative airlines or for seat upgrades.

NB: It is a condition of booking that full travel insurance including Emergency Medical Repatriation is taken out by each person travelling. Your insurance cover must also include Missed Departure and/or Missed Flight Connection for both outbound and return flight sectors (such cover might be subject to a small additional premium – please confirm with your insurers). We ask that you send us a photo/fax/electronic copy of your policy document together with the 24hr medical assistance telephone number issued by your insurer.

NB: Clients must be aware that hotels, lodges and resorts as well as suppliers of tours and excursions used in this itinerary might not comply with European standards of health and safety. For instance, balconies may not be entirely child-safe or may be low in height, so always ensure children are kept away from balconies and do not go near them when intoxicated or unwell; swimming pools may not display depths, so never dive into a pool without checking depth first; vehicles may not always have safety belts fitted - contact our representatives if so, and refuse to travel; public areas might not be well lit, so take extra care and use a torch. Clients must be vigilant and take extra care for their own safety, as they may well be travelling to remote and primitive locations where high quality standards of safety may not be present.

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NB: Before and after booking, clients must familiarise themselves with current UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) travel advisories so as to satisfy themselves as to the suitability of the destination(s) to be visited in this itinerary. All decisions relating to the tour will be based on UK FCO advisories, and not those of any other countries' governments. In the event of any emergency or other problem encountered in the destination, it is advisable if appropriate to contact the local UK Embassy, High Commission or Consulate for assistance. The FCO in London also has dedicated telephone call centres: Crisis Management Dept - 0207 008 5335 (during UK office hours), and Global Response Centre - 0207 008 1500 (out of UK office hours).



Reef and Rainforest Tours Ltd.



A7 Dart Marine Park, Steamer Quay, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5AL, UK

Tel: ++ 44 (0)1803 866965 Fax: ++ 44 (0)1803 865916

www.reefandrainforest.co.uk mail@reefandrainforest.co.uk

