



# Pathfinder Honour: Trainer's Notes

## Birds 1 (Fiji)



### Instructions to Trainers / Instructors of this Honour

Thank you for being involved with this Honour. These notes have been developed to assist in teaching / instructing this honour. We recognise that there is much more information available and we are grateful that you should share your expertise.

Please remember that Honours are designed to develop our Pathfinders in many ways; their interests, their knowledge and their relationship with their Saviour and Creator. Your enthusiasm and creativity will have a huge impact on those doing the honour.

To complete an Honour, the following (where applicable) must be completed satisfactorily:

- Physical and Practical Requirements.
- Honour Workbook.
- Honour Assessment Sheet. *(On SPD Honour Website but Leader's level access is required)*

### Additional Reference Material

Please see ADDITIONAL REFERENCES on final page.

### Acknowledgements

The TPU Northern Regional Resource Committee for the insightful thought of incorporating cultural heritage into the Pathfinder Honour.

The helpful staff of the Gov't Archives and the library staff of USP for making resources readily available. TPUM Youth Director, Pastor Sione Ausage and Fiji Mission Youth Director, Pastor Kepurueli Duana for facilitating the writing of the Pathfinder curriculum.

# Birds 1 (Fiji) Honour

## INTRODUCTION

The South Pacific Division has developed the Birds 1 Honour, taking into account the number of countries and different environments in the Division. The first five Requirements are what we call generic; ie they apply to any country in the Division and, for that matter, the world. These generic Trainer's Notes are called '*Birds 1 Honour Trainer's Notes, Generic.doc*'.

REQUIREMENTS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9: '*Birds 1 Honour Trainer's Notes, Generic.doc*'.

REQUIREMENT 6: The Fijian part is covered in these notes.

REQUIREMENTS 7, 8: Birds of Fiji are covered in these notes. Please note that space permits the inclusion of only a few species of the wonderful birds of Fiji.

**REQUIREMENT 6: Name five ways by which birds impact on the lives of people. Some of these must relate to people of your country or where you live.**

### **Birds in Fiji.**

Fiji is one of the richest Pacific Island countries for wildlife, especially rainforest birds.

Fiji has currently 87 species of breeding birds. Many are widespread across Fiji, some are only found on the major islands, and others are only found on some single islands.

As Fiji was originally almost entirely forested, its native land-birds are mostly forest species, with a small number of wetland species. Most forest birds are tolerant of various forest types (e.g. low and high attitudes, wet and drier, old growth and degraded). Some forest birds are restricted to wetter forest and a few species are absent from the highest mountains. Some forest birds have adapted to grassland, agricultural land, gardens and town habitats but most species in these artificial environments are not native to Fiji.

Fiji also supports several species of seabirds which feed in the various coastal and marine habitats and come to land to nest.

### **Organisations that look after Birds in Fiji.**

A programme is underway in Fiji aimed at saving endangered birds.

The Birdlife International Fiji Programme was set up in 2002 to save birds from extinction.

At the moment the organisation is focussing on seabird colonies to work out protected bird areas, how best to eradicate pests and how to get communities involved.

Vilikesa Masibalavu is the manager of Birdlife International Fiji whose programme is to bring awareness to communities about the importance of conserving birds. As 80 per cent of Fiji is owned by communities, it is important for them to be involved in the programme. In Fiji, there is not much interest in birds. The objective is to create awareness among the people that they are important. Birds are very good biological indicators.

Birdlife International Fiji also helps other islands in the Pacific region, such as New Caledonia, Samoa and the Cook Islands.

Nature Fiji Mareqeti Viti is another organization that looks after endangered bird species in Fiji.

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**REQUIREMENT 7: Make a list of at least twenty (20) species of birds that you personally have observed and positively identified by sight.**

Note. It is OK to include birds seen in Requirements 8 and 9.

For the best experience, students should witness birds from a number of different ecosystems to get experience in determining different features; for example in the structure of bills, feeding methods, flocks, colours etc.

Following are just some of the birds found in Fiji.

### **Mask Shining Parrot (*Prosopiea personata*)**

Viti Levu (the main island of Fiji) has its own parrot, the Masked Shining Parrot *Prosopiea personata*.

Also known as the Sulphur or Yellow-breasted Musk Parrot, and the Masked Parrot, it is a slim green parrot with a characteristic black mask on its face, and a bright yellow breast.

A forest bird, it is found from sea level to 1,200 metres (3,800 ft) in the mountains of Viti Levu where it feeds on fruits in the canopy, but also takes crops such as bananas.

This photo was taken at the Kula Eco Centre on Viti Levu.



### **The Red Shining Parrot (*Prosopiea tabuensis*)**

The Red Shining Parrot is endemic to Fiji but has been introduced to Tonga.

It is a medium sized, long-tailed red parrot with a green back and blue on the nape, tail and wings. Coloration varies somewhat from island to island, especially in the amount of blue on the nape and the shade of red (which can be crimson, red, or maroon).

Several Kadavu (Fijian) parrots inhabit the trees of Treasure Island Resort in the Mamanucas, squawking loudly as they forage for fruits, seeds and insects.

They inhabit forests and plantations, and are often solitary or in pairs.

The photo was taken at Dravuni village in the Kadavu Group.



### **Collared Lory (*Phigys solitarius*)**

The Collared Lory *Phigys solitarius* is endemic to Fiji and is locally known as the Kula Bird. This short, chubby parrot has a patterned array of colour: red, green, and deep purple with a yellow bill.

It is common throughout Fiji in the lowland coastal forests and plantations where it feed in flowering trees including the coconut and African tulip tree.



Picture: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collared\\_Lory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collared_Lory)

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### **Banded Rail (*Rallus philippensis*)**

Banded Rails can be found foraging among the shrubs on Elevuka Island (Treasure Island Resort) in the Mamanucas of Fiji

In mid-summer they have fluffy chicks. These sturdy birds with lovely reddish brown crown, nape and eye stripe have been extirpated from Viti Levu because of the introduced mongooses which prey on this nearly flightless bird and feed on its eggs.

Rails apparently can be quite strong flyers and have colonized many remote Pacific Islands, but once established they tend to become flightless.

This bird is also called the Buff-banded Rail or the Banded Land Rail



### **Orange Fruit Dove (*Ptilinopus victor*)**

Based on [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orange\\_Fruit\\_Dove](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orange_Fruit_Dove)

The Orange Fruit Dove (*Ptilinopus victor*), also known as Flame Dove, is a small, approximately 20 cm (8 in) long, short-tailed fruit-dove. One of the most colourful doves, the male has a golden olive head and elongated bright orange "hair-like" body feathers. The legs, bill and orbital skin are bluish-green and the iris is whitish. The female is a dark green bird with blackish tail and orange-yellow under-tail coverts. The young resembles female.

The Orange Dove is distributed and endemic to forests of Vanua Levu, Taveuni, Rabi, Kioa, Qamea and Laucala islands of Fiji. The diet consists mainly of various small fruits, berries, caterpillars and insects. The female usually lays one white egg.



### **Swamp Harrier (*Circus approximans*)**

This large hawk is also called the Australasian Harrier or the Swamp Harrier. These long-winged and long-tailed birds have plumage that varies from all dark brown (possibly immature) to brown with buff-coloured, barred tails. Body length is 50 to 60 cm (20-24 in), and the wingspan is 120 to 145 cm.

They can be seen soaring or hovering usually in open countryside, although several have been seen around the Royal Suva Yacht Club, just a few miles outside the city.

They nest on the ground in swamps and marshes. Their food usually consists of small reptiles, mice or birds.



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### **Fiji Goshawk (*Accipiter rufitorques*)**

The only accipiter in Fiji is the Fiji Goshawk *Accipiter rufitorques* which is endemic.

It makes its home anywhere from dense forest to urban areas.

It rarely soars, but is more likely to be seen using a flap and glide flight, or a low, twisting flight to capture prey.

It is identifiable by its blue-gray plumage with a brownish pink area below and around the neck.

It is often mobbed by smaller birds.



### **Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrines*)**

The Peregrine Falcon is the only falcon recorded in Polynesia.

Nesting in cliffs, these hunters feed on birds which they take in flight. In Fiji they have been seen to take flying foxes (fruit bats) as well.

Although the Fijian residents are of the same species as those found elsewhere, they have strikingly different plumage: a fully black head and paler back than those of the continents.

They are listed as an endangered species but their status in Fiji is not well recorded.

A successful breeding program is underway at the Kula Eco Centre on Viti Levu, where they have several dozen breeding pairs.



### **Spotted Dove (*Streptopelia chinensis*)**

The Spotted Dove was introduced to Fiji in the 1930's and has flourished on the islands. Many of them are to be seen on Likuri (Robinson Crusoe) Island.

In September, the austral spring, the males are often heard and seen doing their mating dance. The male puffs up his collar, squats low to the ground then pumps up and down while letting out a deep woo coo, woo coo.

In the picture a male is following an uninterested female.



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### **Collared Kingfisher (*Halcyon chloris*)**

Perched on mangrove branches or power lines, the stout Collared Kingfisher is a striking bird, with its blue back and head, and white collar with a rusty eyebrow.

This Kingfisher is widespread from the Red Sea, to Australia and the tropical Pacific. It is also known as the White-collared Kingfisher and the Mangrove Kingfisher.

It has been seen in Fiji along the Navua River and in Tonga along the coast. The photo was taken at the Kula Eco Center, Viti Levu, Fiji.

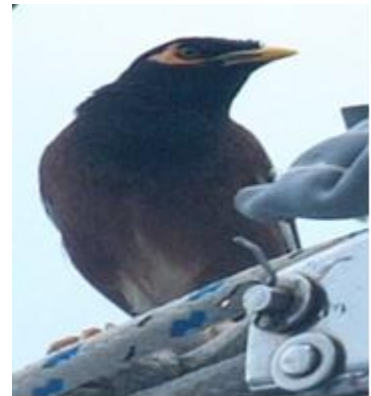


### **Common or Indian Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*)**

By far the most commonly seen (and heard) bird in Fiji is the Common, or Indian Myna, an introduced species that has virtually taken over the country with its abundance.

In Suva alone, at dusk each day thousands of mynas swirl above the streets and settle in the massive ficus trees, or on the roofs of the commercial dock buildings creating a great ruckus and flurry.

It is a handsome brown and black bird with distinctive white patches on the belly, under-tail coverts, and wings, and sporting a bright yellow area of bare skin around the eyes.



### **Red-vented Bulbul (*Pycnonotus cafer*)**

Another introduced species, the Red-vented Bulbul is fairly common in urban areas. Like the common Myna, it is a native of India.

It is a dark crested bird with white rump and tail tip, and bright red under-tail coverts. These birds are found in French Polynesia's Society Islands, Tonga and Fiji.



Picture: [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/72/Red-vented Bulbul %28Pycnonotus cafer%29 feeding at Kapok %28Ceiba pentandra%29 at Kolkata | IMG 2535.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/72/Red-vented_Bulbul_%28Pycnonotus_cafer%29_feeding_at_Kapok_%28Ceiba_pentandra%29_at_Kolkata_IMG_2535.jpg)

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### Layard's White-eye (*Zosterops explorator*)

A small Fijian endemic bird is Layard's White-eye. It is also called the Fiji White-eye.

It is found in many habitats, including urban gardens. Similar in appearance to the Silvereye, *Zosterops lateralis* the Layard's has a complete white eye-ring (unlike the Silvereye which is broken in front of the eye.)

The Layard's is olive green above with a yellow throat and breast



### Wattled Honeyeater (*Foulehaio carunculata*)

This medium sized honeyeater (Note the down-curved bill) is olive green with a small orange wattle surrounded by black (Fijian birds).

It is endemic to central Polynesia with two sub-species in Fiji.

It is aggressive and noisy, and might harass larger birds.

It feeds on nectar, insects and even small lizards.

It was photographed at the Kula Eco Center on Viti Levu, Fiji.



### Orange-breasted Honeyeater (*Myzomela jugularis*)

The Orange-breasted Honeyeater, also called the Orange-breasted Myzomela is one of Fiji's beautiful endemic birds.

This small bird with a down-curved bill (characteristic of the honeyeaters) has a black back and bright yellow-orange breast and a white-tipped tail. The male has red on its crown and rump.

It is seen in forest edges and village parks and gardens feeding on flowering trees and shrubs.



Picture: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Orangebreasted\\_Myzomela\\_taveuni\\_jun08.JPG](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Orangebreasted_Myzomela_taveuni_jun08.JPG)

### Great Frigatebird (*Fregata minor*)

The Great Frigatebird is a large dispersive seabird in the frigatebird family.

It is a lightly-built large seabird up to 105 cm long with predominantly black plumage. The female is larger than the adult male and has a white throat and breast. The male's scapular feathers have a purple-green sheen. In breeding season, the male is able to distend its striking red gular sac.



The species feeds on fish taken in flight from the ocean's surface (mostly flying fish). They feed in pelagic waters within 80 km of their breeding colony or roosting areas.

Pictured Male Great Frigate Bird [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Great\\_Frigatebird\\_at\\_Genovesa.JPG](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Great_Frigatebird_at_Genovesa.JPG)

## **Birds 1 (Fiji) Honour**

**REQUIREMENT 8: Make a list of five (5) species of birds that you personally have positively identified by sound.**

Trainers, if you are not an expert in this area, it is worthwhile finding someone who is.

For those with a limited knowledge of birds, this is probably one of the most challenging parts of this honour. Sometimes it can be difficult to demonstrate and/or describe a bird's song. Bird books often have well developed descriptions of bird calls and it is a fun way to describe these calls with your students putting these worded descriptions into voice.

If you are having trouble with these calls, check out the Internet to help you as a starting point. While these are fantastic, they are no substitute for a real outdoor experience.

**REQUIREMENT 8: Do at least one of the following:**

Please see 'Birds 1 Honour Trainer's Notes, Generic.doc'

- a. **Set up a feeding station and report on the bird visitors observed for a period of seven days.**
- b. **Find an 'occupied' bird's nest, identify the species of the bird that built it, describe the nest in detail, observe the nest for five days, and report what happened at the nest on each of the days.**
- c. **Make at least three visits to a bird habitat in the wild. Make a brief report on the number of birds observed, the number of different birds observed and any interesting things you saw.**



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## ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

### Internet:

List of birds of Fiji : [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_birds\\_of\\_Fiji](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_birds_of_Fiji)

- A detailed of birds found in Fiji

Bird watching in Fiji: [http://www.fatbirder.com/links\\_geo/australasia/fiji.html](http://www.fatbirder.com/links_geo/australasia/fiji.html)

Bird Stamps of Fiji: <http://www.stampsfiji.com.fj/birdsb.htm>

### Books:

Dtson, G and Masibalavu, V (2006). Important Bird Areas in Fiji. Streamline Creative Limited, Auckland, New Zealand.

Watling, D (1982). Birds of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. Millwood Press, Wellington, New Zealand.

Clunie, F & Morse, P (1984). Birds of the Fiji Bush. Fiji Oceania Printers.

Watling, D (1986). Mai Veikau: Tales of Fijian Wildlife. Suva, Fiji.

If you're interested in following up on bird "literature" I strongly suggest you pick up a copy of Paddy Ryan's Fiji's Natural Heritage or Birds of the Fiji Bush by Fergus Clunie. Both are available in Fiji. The fine photos that grace this section and other pages on this site are courtesy of Paddy Ryan.