

October 14, 2014

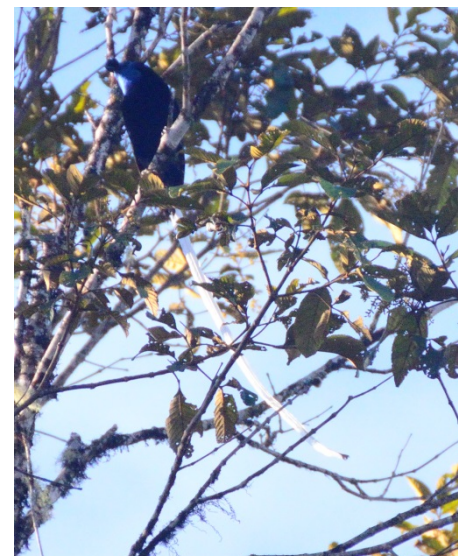
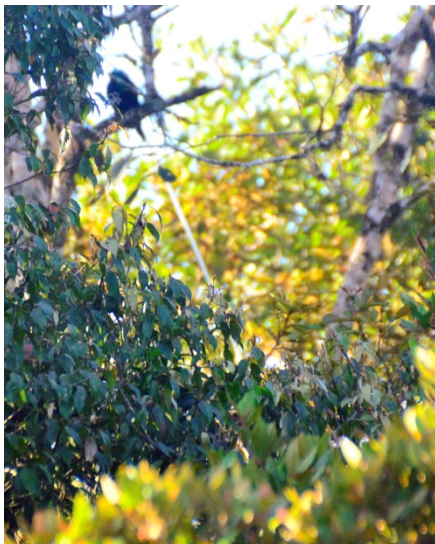
Today started out very early as we were going birding again, this time just as the sun was rising. The view from our hut was magnificent. The sky turned a light pink and the flowers around us glistened. Ambua is filled with all sorts of beautiful flowers in all different colors.



Joseph once again took us out birding along with Thomas and our driver (who actually was the best in spotting the birds). Once again we lucked out and saw several different ribbon tailed BOP. This time we could see the blue crest on the bird and the ball on its beak.



The tremendously long tails of Ribbon-tailed Astrapias, as they officially are called (astrapia is Greek for flashing or lightning), don't help them survive as is the point of most feathers. In fact they get in the way with the bird sometimes having to pause whatever it is doing to untangle their tails before they can fly away—not a survival advantage. But the tails do help them attract females. The ribbon-tailed astrapia is nearly threatened due to habitat lost (logging!) and hunted for its feathers, particularly by the Huli. It is hard to see in the pictures I neck. Above the bill is an ornamental "ball" plume, which you can see in the picture. The long tail feathers are over three times the length of its body which makes them the longest tail feathers in relation to body size of any bird,



On the way back we passed many "home depots." With all the logging going on here, entrepreneurs have set up "stores" at their homes (huts) selling lumber. Between the logging and the current drought, the trees, and the birds, are in big trouble.



We also passed huts with cans on the roofs (the one with flatter roofs, obviously). They call this recycling....They collect the cans and eventually when they have enough, they trade them in for money.

We came back for breakfast and then headed off on our tour for the day, visiting 4 different Huli villages. Again we passed families sitting by the side of the road, women selling betel nuts and groups of men playing cards, which seems to be the national past time here for men.

