Birdwatching
So Natural
GAUDALCANAL | MALAITA MAKIRA
GIZO | KOLOMBANGARA | VELLA LAVELLA
RANONGGA | TETEPARE | SANTA ISABEL | RENNELL

SO SOLOMONS, SO DIFFERENT!
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The Solomon Islands is home to a couple of near legendary flightless rails and some of the least known birds on the planet.

**Birdwatching**

The Solomon Islands offers around 50 endemic species and another 25 which it shares with Bougainville and Buka in Papua New Guinea. For the true birding enthusiast wishing to see as many of the Solomon’s endemics and near endemics you may need to venture off the beaten track, which involves island hopping on boats and small planes. In some areas treks into the interior mountains will be necessary and this will involve hiking along challenging trails and a good level of fitness is advised for visitors to many of the Solomons unique birding destinations. These areas include the mountains of Guadalcanal, the higher altitudes on Kolombangara and parts of Makira, Malaita and Isabel.

There are also a number of birding areas which are more accessible such as the Honiara environs, Gizo and Rennell. In many birding locations of the Solomons you will find local guides well versed in the species found around their area. A selection of travel operators can also arrange bird watching excursions.

So come bird watching in the Solomon Islands. So Solomons. So Different!

**Malaita**

For the more intrepid birding enthusiast, the remote and mountainous regions of Malaita is home to an endemic honeyeater, fantail and white-eye. Access to these areas involves trekking through the central mountains of the island and you will need to allow a few days involving camping and village stays.

**Makira (San Cristobal)**

This is an important island for Solomon Islands endemic species. The central mountain chain holds Shade Warbler, San Cristobal Melidectes, Chestnut-bellied Imperial Pigeon, White-collared Monarch, Ochre-headed Flycatcher, Sooty Myzomela, Dusky Fantail, San Cristobal Leaf Warbler and San Cristobal Thrush. The coastal lowlands have San Cristobal Starling and Mottled Flowerpecker.

**Guadalcanal**

The main island of the Solomon’s group where the capital Honiara is located. This long thin island has a central mountain chain and good hill forest birding around the capital with White-billed Crow, Chestnut-bellied Monarch, Duchess Lorikeet, Cardinal Lorikeet, Yellow-bibbed Lorikeet, Ultramarine Kingfisher, Black headed Myzomela and White-winged Fantail. The high interior mountains have Hooded Whistler, San Cristobal Thrush, Guadalcanal Honeyeater, Guadalcanal Thick-billed (Brown Fantail) and if you are extremely lucky, the almost unknown Mustached Kingfisher.

**Gizo**

Gizo is the jumping off point for the key birding areas of Kolombangara, Ranonga and Vella Lavella. Gizo itself is home to Splendid White-eye.

**Kolombangara**

Around 50 minutes by boat from Gizo, Kolombangara is a steep forested volcano and a major site for Kolombangara Leaf Warbler. Crested Cuckoo-Dove, Pale Mountain Pigeon, Roviana Rail, Meeks Lorikeet, Kolombangara Monarch, Yellow-vented Myzomela and Kolombangara White-eye. The lodge at Imbu Rano, about a 20 minute drive inland form Ronggi Cove is purpose built for nature lovers, including a large viewing deck. The more intrepid birder will need to trek around the island and through the inland valleys to view a number of species.

**Vella Lavella & Ranongga**

Accessible by boat on a day trip from Gizo. A day trip can visit to both Vella Lavella and Ronongga and the sea crossing can offer some interesting seabirds. Vella Lavella is home to the endemic Banded White-eye. Ronongga is home to the endemic Ronongga White-eye.

**Tetepare**

Around 2 hours by boat ride from Munda lies Tetepare island, a nature wonderland and home to the endemic Tetepare White-eye. Also known as “The Wild island” you can stay on Tetepare at the eco-lodge and enjoy this island of natural beauty which is home to over 70 recorded species of bird.

**Santa Isabel**

From the provincial capital of Buala you can arrange tours into the mountains of Isabel which is home to the endemic species of Fearful Owl and Black-faced Pitta, which are two great rare prizes for birdwatchers. Other species include Mountain Pygmy Parrots, White-eyed Starlings and Woodford’s Rails amongst others.

**Rennell**

A one hour flight south of Honiara, Rennell Island is home to an endemic white-eye, fantail and starling and a lowland form of what is currently called Island Thrush. It is the only island in the Solomons where you can view Fantailed Gerygone. Tours to bird sites around the island that is also World Heritage listed can be arranged through guest houses on the island.
WHERE ARE THE SOLOMONS?
An archipelago of 992 islands, we are located in the South Pacific, north-east of Australia between Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Vanuatu.

OUR PEOPLE AND CULTURE
Solomon Islanders are a blend of mainly Melanesian, Micronesian and Polynesian people with a population of around 550,000. Our cultural values stem back thousands of years and are very much linked to our land and surrounding seas. Most of the population still live a subsistence lifestyle where family and village community are the centre of social life.

GOVERNMENT
The Solomon Islands follows the Westminster democratic system and is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations. The head of state is the Governor General, representing the British Monarch. The Government is headed by an elected Prime Minister and cabinet. There is a 50-seat parliament with elected members.
Honirara on Guadalcanal Island is the capital city and main port of entry and commercial centre.

LANGUAGE
The are 89 distinct languages spoken in the Solomon Islands. The lingua franca is Solomon Islands Pigin, although English is the official language and widely spoken and understood.

GETTING THERE
The national carrier Solomon Airlines, fly to Honirara 4 times a week from Brisbane to Honiara; 4 times from Nadi, Fiji and weekly from Port Vila, Vanuatu and Port Moresby, PNG. Virgin Australia have twice weekly flights from Brisbane. Air Pacific fly in weekly from Nadi and Port Vila and Air Niugini have 3 weekly flights from Port Moresby.

GETTING AROUND
Solomon Airlines to 22 domestic ports from Honiara. Regular shipping services to many parts from Honiara.

CLIMATE
Tropical. Drier and cooler - April to October. Warmer and more humid - November to March. Average day time temperature around 28c.

DRESS CODE
Tropical casual. Conservative beach wear around beach areas.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS
Australian, NZ and most EU passport holders can enter for up to 30 days visa on arrival. Passport must be valid for 6 months. More information can be found on our website www.visitsolomons.com.sb

ELECTRICITY
Same as Australia. 240v AC and same power sockets/plugs.

HEALTH
Main centres have hospital or health clinics. The Solomons does experience Malaria and precautions are recommended.

Useful Weblinks
Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau: www.visitsolomons.com.sb
Solomon Airlines: www.flysolomons.com
Solomon Islands Immigration (entry requirements): www.commerce.gov.sb

Birdwatching Operators

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TETEPARE
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RENNELL
GUEST HOUSES
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