

Gulf & Western Provinces



Rain drenched, sparsely populated and frighteningly remote, the Gulf and Western Provinces are the Wild West of PNG. A vast and mangrove-pocked coastline arches around the Gulf of Papua from one isolated community to the next. Inland the rich wetlands and seasonally flooded grasslands eventually give rise to the foothills and mountains of the Highlands.

Locals hardy enough to survive the thriving population of malarial mosquitoes and endless meals of sago get around by foot, canoe and small plane. There is barely a sealed road to be found, and roads of any description are rare. Because of this limited infrastructure, few travellers reach the area and even fewer do so independently. Those that do seldom venture far beyond the sleepy provincial capitals of Kerema and Daru, which attract a small, but growing, trickle of nature enthusiasts.

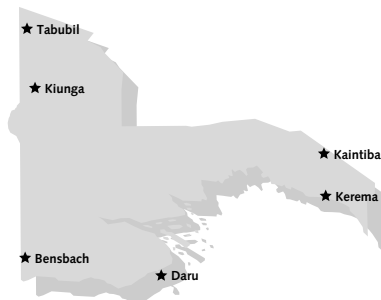
In the forests and riverside wetlands around Kiunga and Tabubil, adventurers are discovering a dizzying array of some of the island's most exotic birds. Similarly, two of the country's greatest rivers, the Fly and the Strickland, along with Tonda Wildlife Management Area, are receiving rave reviews from fishermen with the resources and tenacity to get there.

In the remote northwest corner of Western Province, the Ok Tedi Mine is of major economic importance to Papua New Guinea, and subject to considerable litigation by traditional landowners who are concerned about environmental degradation and the validity of royalty payment calculations.

In a country often considered the last frontier for adventure seeking travellers, it is only fitting that these provinces have the final word in the Papua New Guinea section of this book.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Hooking up with Samuel Kepuknai in **Kiunga** (p206) and heading into the cloud forests and the secret leks of the birds of paradise
- Knowing you are the first Westerner for many years to canoe to **Kaintiba** (p204) and visit traditional villages near **Kerema** (p202) on foot
- Watching birds and fishing for barramundi at **Bensbach** (p208), one of the most remote places in the country
- Buying the local mud crab at **Daru** (p205) and having it cooked for you that night



■ POPULATION: 260,200

■ AREA: 133,800 SQ KM

History

The coastal people of the Gulf traded sago for pottery brought by Motuans from the Port Moresby area for centuries. Less harmonious relations existed with the fierce Anga people, who live in the hills behind the coastal swamp-land. The Anga had a taste for human flesh, but haven't pursued head-hunting seriously since the last major raid at Ipisi, near Kerema, before WWII. Their proximity to the sea also made the coastal people targets of the London Missionary Society 'soul hunters', who arrived in the early 1880s.

In 1842 French Dumont d'Urville charted the western side of the Gulf of Papua in HMS *Fly*, discovering the Fly River. In 1876 ruthless Italian explorer Luigi d'Albertis steamed over 900km up the Fly, terrifying any dangerous-looking villagers with fireworks and returning with a huge collection of botanical specimens, insects, artefacts and even painted skulls from village *haus tambarans* (spirit houses).

In 1901 the Scottish Reverend James Chalmers and 12 companions had their skulls crushed with stone clubs when they attempted to bring the word of God to Goaribari Island on the Gulf of Papua. Chalmers and co might have seemed like a gift from the gods to the protein-starved villagers, but 24 of them soon paid the price when they were killed by the crew of the *Merrie England*, sent from Port Moresby in the name of justice.

Charles Karius and Ivan Champion set out to travel up the Fly River from Daru in 1927, cross the central mountains and go down the Sepik to the north coast. Their first attempt failed, but a year later they completed the journey.

Geography

The Fly River starts high in the mountains and turns southeast towards the sea and a huge, island-filled delta. The Strickland River joins the Fly about 240km from the coast. Villages are usually some distance from the river to avoid flooding, and the Fly flows through 250,000 sq km of wetland where countless mosquitoes are the only welcoming party.

From the mouth of the Fly east to the Purari River, the Gulf of Papua is a succession of river deltas, backed by mangrove swamps running up to 60km inland.

Culture

Villages were traditionally centred around the *dobu*, a longhouse in which weapons,

important artefacts, ceremonial objects and the skulls of enemies were stored. While men slept inside, women slept in smaller individual huts outside.

The *dobus* were veritable museums of traditional art, and seven distinct artistic styles have been categorised from the mouth of the Fly around to Kerema. There are no 'fully furnished' spirit houses left, but you can find figures, bullroarers, *kovaves* (conical ceremonial masks), headrests, masks, skull racks (every home should have one) and gope boards, which are elliptical in shape, rather like a shield, and incised with brightly coloured abstract patterns or stylised figures. Warriors were entitled to have a gope board for each act of bravery or to celebrate each successful conflict.

The Gulf people have been bombarded with Christianity for nearly a century and many traditions have been lost, including cannibalism. While eating flesh had ritual and religious importance, it is also possible that it was provoked by endemic protein deficiency in the area. The main food today is sago: the tasteless, starchy food from the pith of the sago palm. There is no shortage of sago, so nobody starves, but severe protein deficiencies remain a problem.

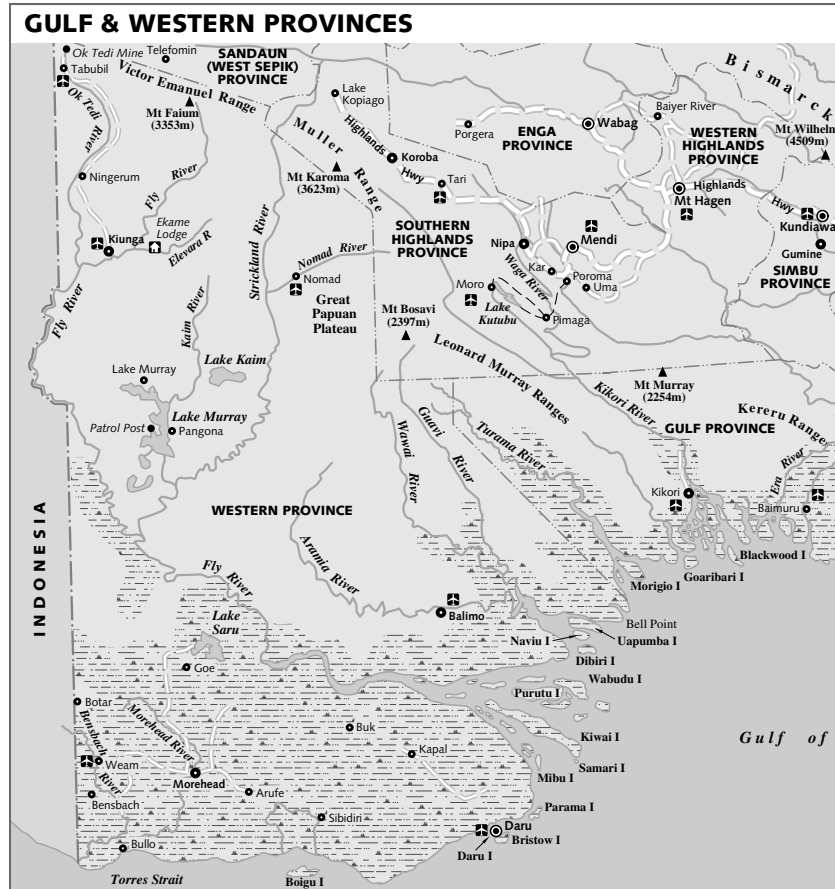
Getting There & Around

The most notable thing about the roads – there aren't any. Apart from the Hiritano Hwy to Kerema, and the Tabubil–Kiunga road (maintained by Ok Tedi mine), most transport is by air. The Southern Highlands Gulf Hwy will connect Mendi to Kikori sometime in 2008. Be one of the first to travel it, exploring seldom-visited villages as you go.

Pacific Frontline Trading (☎ 321 7204, 321 7990 in Port Moresby) operates a monthly boat that calls into most Gulf and Western province ports including Kerema, Kikori and Daru but finding reliable departure dates is difficult.

GULF PROVINCE

Gulf is the country's least-visited province, which in many ways is its most appealing aspect. There is virtually zero tourist infrastructure and it is impossible to avoid the 'real' PNG. Getting around is an endurance test in itself and there's little respite at the end of the



day; village or mission food and accommodation are pretty much it.

KEREMA

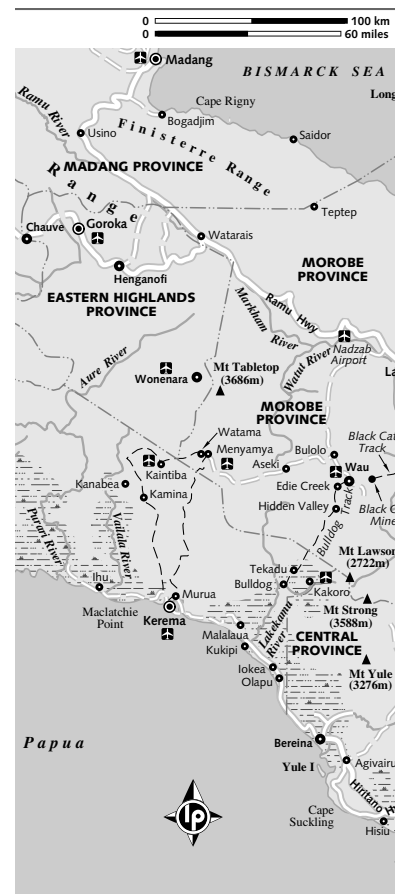
Kerema may be the provincial capital and one of the largest towns this side of Port Moresby but there is precious little bustle in the hustle to downtown Kerema. What is there can be found clustered around the central footy field, a 30-minute walk uphill from the wharf. Although it may be hard to believe, Kerema was primarily selected as the provincial capital because of its climate – it is comparatively drier than elsewhere in the province.

Apart from its friendly people, there is little else to recommend it. As a stop on a

journey into the interior, however, it does have a useful couple of trade stores, including **Ning's Trading** (☎ 648 1061), a **Bank South Pacific** (☎ 648 1025) that can cash travellers cheques and (if the telephone lines are operational) give out cash on credit cards. Other town amenities include a police station and a **post office** (☎ 648 1028).

Sleeping & Eating

Catholic Mission (☎ 648 1012; dm incl breakfast & dinner K85) Cleanliness may be next to godliness, but this adage isn't embraced at the Catholic Mission. The shared facilities need more than a decent scrub. Do yourself a favour and don't be tempted to peel back the bed sheets. However the staff are friendly and can provide



invaluable information on the surrounding areas; they can also contact other Catholic lodges and link you with locals who can act as guides.

Lavai Hotel (Hotel Kerema; ☎ 648 1396; fax 648 1397; s/d incl breakfast K170/210) This place offers a simple, no-frills arrangement – fridge, TV, bed and tea-/coffee-making facilities and that's about it. The restaurant on occasion can rustle up one of the region's famous mud crabs and the bakery makes delicious cream buns.

Alternatively ask at Hearo Alex Trading, which was in the process of building a guesthouse when we passed through or, at a pinch, the **Salvation Army** (☎ 648 1384) or the **Missions of Charity** (☎ 648 1089).

Getting There & Around

Bad weather causes frequent flight disruptions and cancellations and, much to the locals' dismay, the airlines refuse to carry betel nut.

Airlines PNG (☎ 648 1251) flies between Port Moresby and Kerema (K459) daily except Sunday. Flights continue to Balimo (K574, Monday and Friday), Kikori (K390, daily except Sunday), Daru (K571, Monday and Friday), Mt Hagen (K541, Thursday) and Kiunga (via Lake Murray, Obo and Suki on Saturday). At the time of research Airlines PNG had indefinitely suspended many services to smaller airstrips; however, it may be worth enquiring about flights if you are of the Indiana Jones ilk.

North Coast Aviation (☎ 648 1230) flies three times a week from Kerema to Lae (K417) via Kamina (K171), Kaintiba (K204), Kanabea (K204) and Menyama (K252) although the exact route varies with who wants to get off where.

Hevi Lift (☎ 648 1230) also operates a Monday flight to and from Moresby and Kikori, and a Wednesday flight to Mt Hagen which returns to Kerema on Thursday.

PMVs travel the Hiritano Hwy (p84) on a good year between Port Moresby's Erima bus stop and Kerema (five hours, daily). The road, however, is in dire need of some TLC and currently vehicles are only able to get as far as Malalaua (K20, four hours), from where you will have to catch a dinghy (K50, two hours). Don't risk travelling in stormy weather, and be sure to pick up some mud crabs at the mouth of the river before crossing the bay to Kerema.

AROUND GULF PROVINCE

The vast mangrove swamps and mountains are the main attraction of the Gulf Province. You can take any direction and go from village to village, eating sago and sleeping in local homes. The villagers are famous for their friendliness (post head-hunting days) and it can be difficult to get away. If you plan on walking anywhere it's best to take a guide. The missionaries in Kerema should be able to help with guides and reliable boat men. Alternatively, Tony Malaisa from the Kerema Educational Services office at the Kerema Catholic Mission compound (opposite) may be able to help.

From Kerema you can head west to Ihu, via Donbosco Arimiri Secondary School

and Herehere following an old tractor road. At Ihu you can stay at the government station or proceed to Lariau where there is a Catholic Mission.

A more interesting trip is to walk to Aseki (p140) in Morobe Province via **Kamina**, **Kanabea** and **Kaintiba**. The villages along this route have retained much of their indigenous culture and offer a view into the traditional way of life. Not far off the main track are villages where people still wear traditional clothing. The entire trek takes seven to eight days. The Catholic Mission at Kamina, a two-day walk from Kerema, should be able to put you up for a night. If you want to attempt it, you can take a canoe for much of the distance to Kamina before continuing on foot.

Kaintiba is in Anga country and is a tough, two- or three-day walk from Kamina where you climb through a range of vegetation including *kunaigras* and mountain forest. From Kaintiba you can fly back to Kerema, or to Menyamyam or Lae. Alternatively, you can keep walking to Menyamyam or Aseki (p140) and take a PMV to Lae. But hell, why stop there? It is possible to head for either the Bulldog or Black Cat Tracks (p137), which begin near Wau. You would, however, need to be well prepared, extremely fit and possibly a little insane to attempt such arduous undertakings back-to-back.

Malalaua

There is no reason to stop in Malalaua other than if your PMV from Port Moresby (K20, four hours) arrives too late for you to catch an onward dingy to Kerema (K50, two to three hours). The PMV stop is actually 1km east of Malalaua in a village called **Sapeahora** ('head of the crocodile') on the river bank. There is a small market here and boats usually depart around 2pm for Kerema. If you miss the last boat your official accommodation options are zilch. We stayed with local Rastafarian Alex Naime and his extended family. Alex has a disused shipping container which he allows people to sleep in and can rig you a mosquito net and provide a thin mattress. He doesn't charge but you should leave a monetary gift which is customary in such circumstances. His house is 50m before the bridge.

Malalaua is at the southern end of the WWII-era Bulldog Track (p137), although this walk is better accessed from the other end near Wau, in Morobe Province.

Kikori

For those gluttons for punishment, this is the most arduous boat trip of all, combining a series of canoes and other boats through endless swamp to Baimuru, Kikori, and then on to Daru. This could take several weeks and requires you to plan your first couple of days with the help of the missionaries in Kerema, and just hope for the best beyond that. Don't forget to take a good amount of food and buckets of mosquito repellent. Faster but less interesting is by motorised dingy along the coast. A 75hp motor will get you there twice as fast as 45hp and cost K200. Faster still – fly.

Kikori is the coastal base for the 264km Kutubu oil pipeline and has great barramundi and black bass fishing. **Delta Lodge** (☎ 648 5029) run by Robert Snr can organise fishing expeditions and *puk-puk* (crocodile) spotting night trips. The area is well known for its large pythons which are sometimes to be found coiled around each other in amorous reptilian embrace. Locals say it's bad luck to disturb copulating snakes – we say it's plain foolishness.

The **Community Development Initiative** (CDI; ☎ 648 5001, d K80) can also provide you with accommodation.

WESTERN PROVINCE

The majority of the province consists of an inhospitable flood plain which borders Indonesia's West Papua and receives little rainfall in itself. Instead the massive Fly River system and its tributaries, including the Strickland and Ok Tedi Rivers, are fed by the far wetter Highlands. Olsobip, one of the northernmost stations in the province, could well be one of the wettest places on earth with a rainfall in excess of 10m a year – although this has never been scientifically established as there is no weather station here.

The far west sees few tourists but is slowly gaining a worldwide reputation as a bird-watching destination (near Kiunga) and a fishing mecca (in the Tonda Wildlife Management Area – for those who can afford it).

The local economy revolves around the Ok Tedi mine (opposite), which accounts for over half of the entire province's economy

OK TEDI MINE

The open-cut Ok Tedi mine has been yielding gold and copper from Mt Fubilan, just beyond Tabubil, since 1984. For a time it was the largest gold mine outside South Africa, and if you can persuade Ok Tedi Mining Limited (OTML) to let you visit (having done the mandatory two-hour safety course), the immense size of the operation won't fail to impress. The logistics are extraordinary: to get the ore to ships off the PNG coast, a copper/gold slurry is sent 140km through a pipeline to Kiunga, where it's loaded on to barges for the 800km trip down the Fly River.

The mine has not been without controversy. In 1984 a tailings dam collapsed allowing 80,000 tons of pollution per day to flow into the Ok Tedi and Fly Rivers. The resulting disaster endangered the livelihoods of people living along the river and damaged important breeding grounds for ocean fish near the river mouth.

A lawsuit was filed against BHP, the Australian company that developed and managed the mine. Thirty thousand villagers demanded compensation for the environmental damage. But BHP refused; it persuaded the PNG government to make it illegal for anyone to claim damages from BHP or its affiliates, such as Ok Tedi Mining Limited, in such cases. The suit was filed instead in Melbourne and, soon after, BHP and the landowners agreed on a big out-of-court settlement.

In 2002 BHP opted out of Ok Tedi. Control was assumed by a company owned by the traditional landowners, who retained most of the mine's OTML management to run the show.

and a quarter of the country's entire export earnings.

DARU

Daru was the colonial headquarters for Western Division, the former name of the province, from 1893 and remains the capital today. It is on a small island of the same name, not far from the mouth of the Fly River. The main drawcard is the fishing, but some sailors moor here en route between Australia and PNG. The best contact is Max, the manager of the Kuki Hotel (below), who can arrange fishing trips in the mangroves for barramundi and black bass. Rates vary from about K600 to K3000 for a two-day trip (depending on how much fuel you use).

There's a **Bank South Pacific** (☎ 645 9062), but bring some cash with you.

Sleeping & Eating

Kuki Hotel (☎ 645 9476; marumari@daltron.com.pg; r K120/170; 🍷 📺) The cheaper rooms have share facilities, while the self-contained rooms are more comfortable and come with TV and phone. The hotel's Crayfish Restaurant (open 6am to 8am, noon to 1.30pm and 6.30pm to 8pm) serves tasty food at fair prices.

New Century Hotel (☎ 645 9169; newcentury@daltec.com; s/d K198/308, incl meals K253/418; 🍷) The only other option in town, the rooms here are clean and comfortable although unin-

spiring. Its Chinese restaurant (open 6am to 8pm) makes for a tasty alternative if you have been living on sago in the bush.

Getting There & Around

Airlines PNG (☎ 645 9039; airport) flies between Daru and Port Moresby (K640) everyday except Sunday, and has a couple of flights a week to Kiunga (K755), Tabubil, Kerema (K571) and other exotic locales.

The only passenger boat to call here is unreliably operated by Pacific Frontline Trading (p201) on a monthly schedule.

AROUND WESTERN PROVINCE

Tabubil

Tabubil dances to the tune of Ok Tedi, and the town exists purely to support the vast gold and copper mine 30km to the northwest. You may have to pinch your travelling companion to remind yourself that you are still in PNG. The orderly rows of Australian-style housing, footpaths, street signs and roads free from potholes makes it seem like the last bastion of Western civilisation in an apocalyptic film.

Tabubil has dreadful weather. It was raining when we arrived and it was raining when we left. When asked how long it had been raining, a local replied 'seven months'. When we later asked him how long had he lived in Tabubil he replied, 'seven months'.

Tabubil has a post office, well-equipped hospital, pharmacy and supermarkets in a

complex near the centre of town. **Westpac** (☎ 548 9169) has a branch where you can withdraw money against your credit card. ATMs are coming soon.

Like Kiunga, the bird life in the valleys around Tabubil is quite amazing – there are more than 10 species of birds of paradise. Most birders engage Samuel Kepuknai (right) from Kiunga as a guide.

SLEEPING & EATING

There are only two accommodation options in town and both are often full.

Palace Tabubil (☎ 548 9108; fax 548 9107; dm K50-90, r K150-225) Recently Tabubil Engineering has allowed travellers to stay in their *dunga* (company-owned accommodation in a large compound opposite the General Hospital). The rooms are freshly painted and some have kitchenettes, a TV and fridge. The friendly ladies who work here will find you a two-burner stove if you are staying in a cheaper room. Book first at the office.

Hotel Cloudlands (☎ 548 9277; cloudlands@online.net.pg; Newman Rd; s K132-330, d K154-385; ☎ ☎ ☎) There are three types of rooms (budget, standard and executive) and all are clean, if a little uninspiring. Internet costs an exorbitant K2.50 per minute. The bar and restaurant (meals K20 to K35, open 5.15am to 9.30pm) cater mainly to the tastes of the expats here on mining business.

In the shopping centre there are a couple of bakeries and some *kai* bars. You can also eat at the nine-hole **Tabubil Golf Club** (☎ 548 8181; ☎ lunch & dinner) and drink at the **Star Mountains Hash House Harriers Club** (☎ 6pm-midnight Mon, Wed, Fri & Sat).

GETTING THERE & AROUND

Be prepared to be stranded in Tabubil. The planes can't land when the cloud and rain obscure the runway – this is most days. Many locals prefer to fly from Kiunga; the weather is better there, the valley broader and, subsequently, the flights more reliable.

Airlines PNG (☎ 548 9171; tbgres@apng.com; airport) flies daily (except Sunday) to Port Moresby (K941) and Mt Hagen (K630) and alternating days to Lae (K861) and Daru (K883). **Air Niugini** (☎ 548 3109/3077; sales.tabubil@airniugini.com.pg; town centre) operates under contract to Ok Tedi and most flights are not open to the public. It does, however, fly three times a week to Port Moresby (K949). **MAF** (☎ 548 9025; airport) flies to

Vanimu (Wednesday, K600), Tari (Thursday, K440), Mt Hagen (once a week) and Telefomin (five times a week, K150).

The road to Kiunga is serviced by PMVs (K20, three hours) that leave Tabubil at about 7am and again at 10am; the hotel can arrange for one to pick you up.

Kiunga

The river port of Kiunga is the most northern navigable point on the Fly River and the start of the Kiunga–Tabubil Hwy, the only all-weather road in the province. Slurries of copper concentrate from the Ok Tedi mine are sent here to the waiting barges along a 137km pipeline which runs parallel to the highway.

Bank South Pacific (☎ 548 1073) has a branch in Kiunga, but carry any money you'll need.

ACTIVITIES

In recent years Kiunga has become a popular destination for bird-watchers, mainly due to the expertise of Samuel Kepuknai, an unassuming but passionate naturalist who's an expert on where to find the region's birds. Contact him at **Kiunga Nature Tours** (☎ 548 1451; kepuknai@online.net.pg) to arrange tours up the Fly River or day trips from Tabubil. He charges about K200 per group, per day plus transport.

The best birding is between April and October when it's drier and the birds are beginning their breeding cycles. Bring some rubber boots for walking in the mud.

SLEEPING & EATING

Kiunga has more places to sleep and eat, and caters to a wider range of budgets than Tabubil.

Bamboo Lodge (☎ 548 1148; s/d K75/100) Don't expect anything beyond a bed and a table. Pretty grim.

ONE FOR YOU, ONE FOR ME

There is a peculiar way of shaking hands around Tabubil and Kiunga. It starts in normal fashion but ends with a nifty little snap. At the conclusion of the handshake, leave a hooked finger extended. The other person will clasp this with two of their own fingers and when you both withdraw your fingers you'll be able to 'snap' them against each other. Cool.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

If you find bird-watching boring you may be forced to reconsider that position after a visit to Papua New Guinea. Even those who have trouble identifying a chicken, except when it's quartered, roasted and served with a side of chips, have been caught singing the praises of New Guinea's avian star – the bird of paradise.

Birds of paradise are the drag queens of the animal kingdom – strutting their stuff in vividly coloured feathers and finery. Impossibly long tail feathers, iridescent breast shields, flashy capes, head ribbons and fleshy neck wattles are all part of their outlandish costumes. Some cavort in crowds, sashaying from one branch to the next in unbridled vanity, while others prefer to shake their tail feathers on specially prepared stages called leks.

There are a number of places all over the country where it is relatively easy to see birds of paradise, but keep your expectations realistic. Those kaleidoscopic dances are reserved for disinterested females – usually high in a tree, obscured by branches and silhouetted by the rising sun. If your photos don't quite cut it, check out the July 2007 *National Geographic* article at www7.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0707/feature3.

PNG has one more ornithological oddity (and besides, every campy drama needs a butch villain). Enter stage left, the world's only poisonous bird – the *pitohui*. Little is known about the *pitohui* but the steroidal alkaloids found on its feathers are chemically identical to those found on poison dart frogs.

Ekame Lodge (☎ 548 1451; kepuknai@online.net.pg; r per person K45, 3 meals K70) Guide Samuel Kepuknai (see opposite) runs this lodge on the banks of the Elevara River, about three hours by boat from Kiunga. This village-style place was built specifically for bird-watching. Samuel virtually guarantees you'll see the 12-wired bird of paradise, king bird of paradise, white-bellied *pitohui*, little paradise kingfisher and flame bowerbird, among others. The return boat trip costs K350.

Kiunga Guesthouse (☎ 548 1084; manager@ningrum.com.pg; s K150-290, d K240-400) The budget and basic rooms share the common bathroom, while the more expensive self-contained rooms are very comfortable with cable TV and spacious layouts. Rates include meals and laundry. The restaurant (meals K15 to K30; open 6am to 8am, noon to 1.30pm and 6.30pm to 8.30pm) also serves home-cooked meals to nonguests.

Lobira Hotel (☎ 548 1127; nfdc@daltron.com.pg; r K195-250) There is no sign but you can't miss this large, apricot-coloured building opposite the Kiunga Guesthouse. The self-contained rooms are smaller than those next door although the basic rooms are comparable. Rooms have cable TV, air-con and a fridge. Rates include meals and laundry (per person). The restaurant (meals K20 to K30; open 6am to 8am, noon to 1.15pm and 6pm to 8pm) cooks much the same style food as next door.

GETTING THERE & AROUND

PMVs to Tabubil (K20) leave around mid-morning: the metal road is well maintained by the mine. Town is a 30-minute walk from the airport. Hotels provide transfers.

Airlines PNG (☎ 548 1257) flies everyday (except Sunday) to Port Moresby (K925) and Mt Hagen (K614). It flies three times a week to Daru (K746) and Lae (K875). **MAF** (☎ 548 1203) has flights to southern airstrips including Lake Murray and Daru. It also operates a weekly flight to Tari via some truly remote stations.

The barges at the wharf will not take travellers.

Tonda Wildlife Management Area

Tropical Papua New Guinea isn't usually associated with savanna woodlands, yet the New Guinea savannas cover approximately 2.5 million hectares across the PNG and Indonesia border. The monsoonal savannas of the Transfly Region become extensive, shallow lake systems. Merauke, Bensbach and Wassi Kussa Rivers in particular have large seasonal lake systems that support large sedge grasslands and paperbark woodlands.

The **Tonda Wildlife Management Area** was established in 1975 to conserve 590,000 hectares of savanna, protect wildlife species from overhunting and attract sustainable development.

BENSBACH

The Bensbach area is a vast floodplain and lies within the Tonda Wildlife Management Area. The whole place is alive with birds and animals, including Rusa deer (that the Dutch dropped off as a food source for shipwrecked sailors), wallabies, crocodiles and pigs. Bird-watchers and fishers are well catered for; the Bensbach River is renowned for its barramundi.

In the heart of all this is **Bensbach Wildlife Lodge** (☎ 542 1438 Mt Hagen; www.pngtours.com; per person all-inclusive US\$600), located 96km north of the river mouth on the Bensbach River and 12km from the Indonesian border. The low-lying lodge is built of local materials and sleeps 16 in two wings that are separated by a common lounge. The lodge is ideal for fishermen and quite comfortable, if rather expensive.