

EDITORIAL

This issue of Muruk will be the final one for 1986 and our original, ambitious goal of four stimulated interest from several widely separated sources. One correspondent from Poland extended warm congratulations and in fact was surprised that we were attempting four issues in our first year. Other letters have expressed some doubt about the ability of the Papua New Guinea Bird Society to sustain two publications and have wondered about the basis on which articles will be placed in one or the other. These are, of course, some of the important concerns debated by both the editorial committee and the Society's executive. For Muruk we will be seeking research articles, reports of careful observations in the field, and short notes on vagrant or rare species, nesting records, display or other unusual bird behaviour. The Newsletter will continue with reports on meetings and outings and will include species lists from the various areas that members visit. Short notes on bird identification and 'jizz' or information on where to find particular birds or birdwatching anecdotes will be welcomed. Our policy will be open to review as Muruk becomes well established.

It is particularly encouraging that we have had many promises of articles from people who have been doing research in Papua New Guinea. But not unexpectedly, they are slow to appear. Articles will also be forthcoming from some of our new members who have plans for netting and banding in the Port Moresby area. Their initial efforts at the Waigani setting ponds have already turned up a rare Gray's Grasshopper-Warbler. We look forward to all these contributions and ask the authors to submit their articles as soon as possible.

We now have access to a laser printer and hope that our senders appreciate the new format. Early in 1987 we will have a new cover design from students at the National Art School.

Joan A. Oliver, Editor.

BIRDS OF MOUNT SCRATCHLEY SUMMIT AND ENVIRONS:
3520 METRES ASL IN SOUTH-EASTERN NEW GUINEA

G.E.CLAPP

SUMMARY

Listed are 22 species of birds seen during a June 1984 visit to the summit of Mt. Scratchley, 3520 m in the Wharton Range of the central cordillera in south-eastern New Guinea. MacGregor's Bird of Paradise *Macgregoria pulchra* was not uncommon and specimens of a new food tree for this species were collected and subsequently identified as *Rapanea involucrata*. An active nest of the Island Thrush *Turdus poliocephalus* was found. Of exceptional interest was the sight record of the Logrunner *Orthonyx temminckii* at 3450 m the highest known record for this species on the island of New Guinea and the first known sighting by an ornithologist for many decades.

INTRODUCTION

I proceeded to Mt. Scratchley by helicopter from Kokoda on 9 June 1984 with one companion, T. Siravopa. We remained on the mountain until the morning of 18 June 1984 when we departed by helicopter for Kokoda. Whilst on the mountain we stayed in the Post and Telecommunication Corporation's microwave repeater station maintenance hut, sited on the summit. The weather was not good, several days being wasted because of thick cloud and rain and no bird observation was possible on 12 June. It was also quite cold and night temperatures may well have approached freezing. Wind varied between calm and quite high. Bird observation was thus rendered quite difficult, particularly because early clouding-in meant that we could not travel far from the hut with any safety.

Mt. Scratchley is one of the high mountain peaks in the central cordillera of the island of New Guinea, and is situated in the Wharton Mountain range. The site of the PTC tower is 3520 m (measured by altimeter) at ground level on the summit. Grid reference is EL472362 on the 1:100,000 scale topographic map EDITION 1 SERIES T683 SHEET 8380 WASA. Co-ordinates are 147°25'40"E and 08°43'10"S.

All altitudes quoted were measured by altimeter unless preceded by the letter 'C' which indicates an estimated altitude only.

The area visited was a patchwork of forest and natural grassland. The forest was largely dominated by *Dacrycarpus/Papuacedrus/Libocedrus* but also with many areas of lighter, drier and in some cases scrubby forest. The forest was interspersed with large areas of grassland: tussock grassland with cushion herbs and other alpine plants and trees and shrubs on the ridges and drier slopes, and coarse grassland and sedges