

EDITORIAL

Firstly, apologies for the long delay in the appearance in this issue of MURUK. Most of the delays have been due to uncertainty over the future of the journal. However, the PNGBS committee has now decided about its future, and we are committed to the continuation of MURUK, although in rather a different form from that originally envisaged.

The original problem over the Newsletter, which led us to start a new journal, was that of delays in the production. It was felt that by starting a new journal most of the more time-consuming (in terms of editing) articles would then be removed from the Newsletter and production would be much faster. At the same time it was hoped that MURUK would attract "high quality" articles and become a recognised international journal. Two things have gone wrong. The Newsletter has not become shorter, and we have not had the time, expertise, or a sufficient quantity of articles for MURUK. It is apparent that the bulk of the material that the Society publishes is not suitable for an "international" journal, and we were over-optimistic for MURUK.

After considerable debate we have decided to continue both MURUK and the Newsletter. From henceforth the Newsletter will be produced monthly and strictly limited to Society business. It will be distributed locally, and included with MURUKs for foreign members. It will not be more than two pages in length. All other material will appear in MURUK. Thus MURUK will contain "serious" articles, notes, and travelers tales etc. Indeed it will become more like the Newsletter used to be, but without the month to month Society business. This will restore the Newsletter to its original function "a newsletter".

The editors of MURUK will be pleased to accept more serious scientific articles, and will attempt to reproduce these as well as possible, but each MURUK issue will also contain a variety of other material.

Some members had suggested that we might be better dropping MURUK and introducing another title for the news sheet. We feel it would be confusing to drop one title now and add a third. While the Newsletter has built up a reputation in libraries, and is widely known, it is notoriously difficult to quote due to past errors in numbering sequences etc. The snappier "Muruk" should be much easier to quote.

SOME NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF THE BISMARCKS

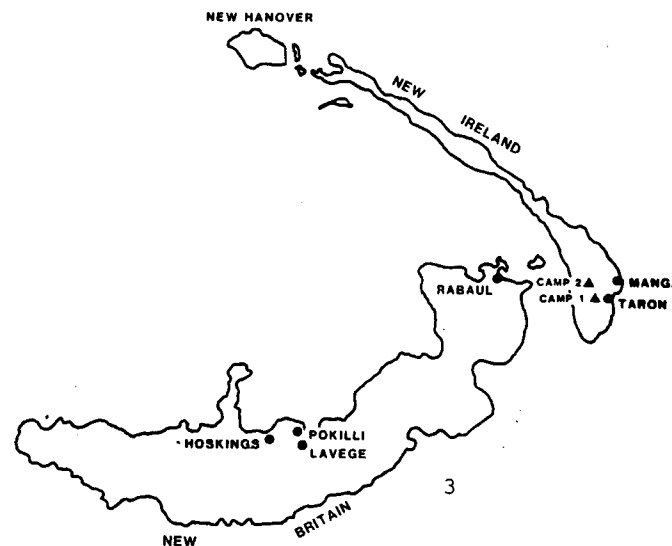
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SUMMARY

An annotated list is provided of species encountered on a seven day expedition to Manga and Taron in New Ireland and the Hoskins area of West New Britain. This list includes notes on some aspects of the endemics, comparisons with familiar mainland populations and some taxonomic discussion. Details are given of an apparently undescribed flycatcher *Microeca* sp. which was encountered on both islands.

INTRODUCTION

Our itinerary was as follows - 20 April 1984 we left Port Moresby for Rabaul where after a brief stop we took a chartered aircraft for Manga. We camped overnight at Manga and were driven next morning to Taron. After hiring carriers we commenced walking into the mountains (a spur of the Hans Meyer Range). Camp No. 1 that night was at about 400 m altitude. Five hours walk next morning (22 April) took us to an altitude of 1400 m. Camp No. 2 was quickly set up and the rest of the day and three hours next morning were devoted to bird watching. The rest of the day was spent walking down the mountain and the night was spent at Taron. After a few hours bird watching next morning we were driven to Manga and from there after a few hours flew to Hoskins via Rabaul, Sula and Bialla. Using the hotel as a base, in the following three days we worked the country around Hoskins, the thermal springs area at Pokilli, the garden areas and Galuku Creek near Lavege and various patches of forest along the Hoskins-Lavege road. We returned to Port Moresby on 27 April, 1984. The main localities studied are shown on the map in Figure 1 below.



**ANNOTATED LIST OF BIRDS RECORDED IN NEW BRITAIN AND
NEW IRELAND, 20-27 APRIL 1984.**

In the case of species not recorded from mainland Papua New Guinea distribution is given in brackets following the scientific name. Abbreviations used: NB = New Britain; NI = New Ireland; B = NB + NI; S = Solomons.

DWARF CASSOWARY *Casuarus bennetti*

NB Two individuals along Galuku Creek.

EASTERN REEF EGRET *Egretta sacra*

NI Two dark phase birds on the coast near Manga.

BLACK BITTERN *Ixobrychus flavicollis*

NB An adult along Galuku Creek.

NI One bird calling from thick swampy cover near Manga.

CRESTED HAWK *Aviceda subcristata*

NB This species was fairly frequent along the Hoskins-Lavege road, but seemingly not as numerous as in New Ireland.

NI Common all along the coast, encountered singly, in pairs or in groups of up to five. More numerous than anywhere that we have encountered the species on the mainland. We neither saw nor heard birds away from the coast although they are to be expected in the mountains.

Appearance is much the same as on the mainland, and the calls seemed identical.

BRAHMINY KITE *Haliastur indus*

NB Fairly common along the coast road particularly over oil-palm plantations.

NI Common along the coast and into the lower mountains.

Status, appearance and calls as on mainland; immatures were infrequently seen.

WHITE-BELLIED SEA-EAGLE *Haliaeetus leucogaster*

NI One young bird over the coast near Taron.

GREY GOSHAWK *Accipiter novaehollandiae*

NB Fairly frequent along the coast road.

NI Common along the coast road.

Appearance and abundance as for mainland.

SLATY-BACKED GOSHAWK

Accipiter luteoschistaceus (B)

NB Only one adult and one immature, both observed along the Hoskins-Lavege road.

NI In the early morning (21 April) BWF located an adult in secondary growth/old gardens near Manga. Another adult individual was seen between Mange and Taron.

A very small hawk, all white below from chin to vent, blackish on head and sides of face, dark slaty wings, back and tail. Wings projected slightly beyond the short squared tail. Cere and legs were orange-yellow. It was flying excitedly from one dead tree to another giving a pinched 'keek-keek' call. Unlike most other papuan accipiters the notes were paired. BWF has heard similar calls from displaying *A. poliocephalus* on the mainland although the normal call of *A. poliocephalus* is continuous.

Previously known only from New Britain and Umboi Island the adult at Manga appears to be the first record for New Ireland. It is likely that this species is resident on New Ireland.

ORIENTAL HOBBY

Falco severus

NB A pair of approachable adults in a disused garden at Lavege. Our guide who had a considerable knowledge of the local birds stated that he had not seen this species in his area before.

SPOTTED WHISTLING-DUCK

Dendrocygna guttata

NB One dead bird near Galuku Creek.

COMMON SCRUB-FOWL

Megapodius freycinet eremita (B.S)

NB Abundant at the breeding grounds in the thermally heated soils at Pokilli, and common throughout scrub along the coast.

NI Birds heard in the scrub behind Manga, but not encountered anywhere else.

Schodde (1977) treats this taxon as a distinct species. Hybrid populations between subspecies occur (Mayr 1938, Diamond and Lecroy 1979), however, we feel treatment as a semi-species might be appropriate. Appearance differs from *M. f. affinis* and *M. f. reinwardi* of the mainland in the reddish bill, shorter crest, bare forehead, paler legs and grey neck contrasting with the otherwise earth-brown plumage.

Sibley (1946), Frith (1956) and Roper (1983) discuss this species' interesting nesting habits, while Broome *et al.* (1984) have recently published the results of a study of population density and habitat use in New Britain including the Pokilli area. As well as the very different nesting habits, the call is shorter in duration than mainland birds, 'cocoort-cut', usually omitting the third part of the call.

PINK-LEGGED RAIL

Rallus insignis (NB)

- NB Several heard and seen in lowland rainforest at the base of the first high hill out from Hoskins on the Hoskins-Lavege road and a party in the swampy rainforest near Pokilli.

The calls were quite varied. There appeared to be a contact subdued deep 'tuk-tuk' call similar to *Rallus tricolor*; a ticking and clucking similar to *Amaurornis olivacea* preceding a squealing series of excited notes which was vaguely like an animal in distress. Orenstein (1976) and Bishop (1983) have previously described and discussed some of the calls of this species.

GREY PLOVER

Pluvialis squatarola

- NI One on the beach near Manga.

EASTERN GOLDEN PLOVER

Pluvialis dominica fulva

- NB Fifteen at Rabaul airport.
NI Twenty at Manga airstrip.

WHIMBREL

Numenius phaeopus

- NI One on Manga Beach.

GREY-TAILED TATTLER

Tringa brevipes

- NI One on Manga Beach and identified by its call.

COMMON SANDPIPER

Tringa hypoleucos

- NB A few along creeks and on Hoskins and Rabaul airports.
NI In spite of the late date still many on creeks and the beaches.

YELLOW-LEGGED PIGEON

Columba pallidiceps (B,S)

- NI Only one bird seen, over forest near Taron where the hills come almost to the sea.

Shape is much like *C. vitiensis* with long wings, small head and short tail. It also has relatively slow rowing wingbeats. Appearance is wholly blackish with a strikingly white head.

PAPUAN MOUNTAIN PIGEON

Gymnophaps albertisii

- NI One individual flying over first camp, and a small party flying over second camp.

The only obvious difference between these birds and mainland populations is their comparative scarcity.

BROWN CUCKOO-DOVE

Macropygia amboinensis

- NB Singles and pairs in forest and secondary growth along the coast.
NI Small numbers along the coast and in forest up to second camp.

In appearance the bird looks sligher than mainland populations and is paler pinkish-brown below.

MACKINLAY'S CUCKOO-DOVE

Macropygia mackinlayi (B,S)

- NB Only singles and pairs observed along the coast.
NI Very few observed along the coastal forest, scrub and open country.

PIED CUCKOO-DOVE

Reinwardtoena browni (B)

- NI Two single adults in scrub along the coast; suprisingly not encountered in the forest of the mountains.

This species is very like *R. reinwardti* of the mainland although possibly a little smaller and differs in that the bright chestnut wings, back and tail of *R. reinwardti* are replaced by slaty-black. Neither Goodwin (1967) nor Peters (1937) record this species from New Ireland, but Beehler (1978) does and cites earlier records. No call was identified as belonging to the species.

STEPHAN'S GROUND-DOVE

Chalcophaps stephani

- NB Common along the coast road, particularly in the drier second growth on the edge of rainforest.
NI Small numbers along the coast and up to the first camp.

Similar to mainland birds but is more numerous. The deep, monotonous frogmouth-like 'OOOm-OOOm-OOO' call sounds identical.

NICOBAR PIGEON

Caloenas nicobarica

- NI An immature bird with dark tail flying along the coast in the late afternoon at Manga.

The short neck, relatively long narrowed wings, and very short tail present a distinctive silhouette.

WHITE-BREASTED FRUIT-DOVE

Ptilinopus rivoli

- NB A pair in the lowlands along Galuku Creek.
NI Not observed but commonly heard around second camp.

Whilst only found in the mountains on the mainland, where up to nine members of the genus occur at lower elevations, the occurrence in lowland forest on the islands is probably a result of lack of competition.

RED-KNOBBED IMPERIAL PIGEON *Ducula rubricera* (B,S)

- NB Very common all along the coast in singles, pairs or parties. Freely associates with *D. bicolor* and at times with *D. pistrinaria*.
 NI Common but not as abundant as in New Britain. Found all along the coast and in the mountains up to the first camp.

Whereas other *Ducula* in the Bismarcks were obvious counterparts of mainland species, *D. rubricera* is quite unlike any mainland *Ducula*. Its distinctive main call is a strange explosive laugh 'whroo-whroo-roo-roo-roo-roo-roo-roo', with the 'roo' notes descending and growing quieter. All notes are very guttural.

PIED IMPERIAL PIGEON *Ducula bicolor*

- NB Very common along the coast road, occasionally mixing with *D. rubricera*.
 NI Small numbers along the coast and following the river valleys into the low mountains.

Plumage is identical to that of mainland *D. bicolor*, but they appear smaller in the field.

GREY IMPERIAL PIGEON *Ducula pistrinaria* (B,S)

- NB Fairly frequent, but only along the coast; In singles, pairs or more usually in small parties. Mixes with *D. rubricera* and *D. bicolor*.
 NI One along the coast near Taron was the only bird seen.

FINSCH'S IMPERIAL PIGEON *Ducula finschii* (B)

- NB Only one individual was encountered. It was perched in the lower canopy where it hopped nervously from one perch to another and back again. This was in the forest just above the first camp.

This pigeon is very attractive with glistening iridescent green, blue and gold on the back. The creamy-grey head to upper-breast contrasts markedly with the orange-chestnut upper-breast to undertail coverts. The pale grey subterminal band on the tail is very distinctive. The bird was squat and plump, similar in shape to *D. rufigaster* of the mainland, to which it is probably closely related. No call was heard.

BLACK IMPERIAL PIGEON *Ducula melanochroa* (B)

- NI A number of birds seen in the lower forest behind Taron, as low as 150m. Our observations and those of Bishop (1983) indicate that this species is not confined to mountain forest. Encountered either singly or in pairs and rather tame for such a large bird. The birds sat very close to each other in pairs on the branches of the lower canopy.

The bird is very attenuated with a small head, slender neck, long body and relatively slender tail. The overall dusky black

appearance contrasts markedly with the grey underside of the tail, red eye, bill and feet. The call is a very deep resonant 'mmmmmmmmmmmmmm' with little inflection. The closest relative of this species on the mainland is possibly *D. pinon*, with both species seemingly occupying similar niches.

RAINBOW LORIKEET *Trichoglossus haematodus*

- NB Small numbers generally.
 NI Only small numbers around Taron up to first camp and a few seen at Manga in a garden area.

Much scarcer than in similar locations on the mainland. Island birds are possibly smaller and quieter.

EASTERN BLACK-CAPPED LORY *Lorius hypoinochrous*

- NB Very common all along the coast, particularly in coconuts and at a roost at Pokilli.
 NI Common at Taron but not seen at Manga where there are no large stands of coconuts.

The conspicuous white cere, red nape, and distinctive call readily separates this species from *L. albidinuchus* where the two species coexist in the lower mountains. The drawn out nasal 'wheeyah' is similar to the call of mainland birds, nor are these Bismark individuals different in appearance.

WHITE-NAPED LORY *Lorius albidinuchus* (NI)

- NI Common at our second camp, where it occurred in pairs.

This New Ireland endemic parrot is to the best of our knowledge reported here for only the second time since it was originally collected. There is however an unpublished report of it by Ron Brown (now of Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries, Victoria). He has been kind enough to give BWF copies of all his field notes (containing copious, identifiable field-drawings) of his birding trips in New Guinea, Bismarcks, Solomons and central Pacific Islands. On the west coast of New Ireland (presumed the south-east mountain region) at a place called Namasalong, he found two White-naped Lories at 550 m on 12th December 1975. The published report is of Bruce Beehler's (1978) expedition into the Hans Meyer Range from 6th February 1976, with the first bird collected on 10th February.

This is a much slighter looking bird than *L. hypoinochrous*, with a blackish (not white) cere and distinctive white inverted triangular nuchal patch easily seen as the bird turns its head. Underparts are wholly red with an indistinct narrow yellow band across the breast. The call is very different from *L. hypoinochrous*. It is a single or double wavering whistle 'schweeee', being more tremulous than but similar to *L. lory*, apart from the wavering effect. It was tamer and quieter than *L. lory*, acrobatically feeding in the understory.

RED-CHINNED LORIKEET

Charmosyna rubrigularis (B)

- NI Common in small parties at the second camp behind Taron, where it was the only small lorikeet.

The call is very like *C. pulchella* of the mainland although the bird is very different in appearance.

RED-FLANKED LORIKEET

Charmosyna placensis

- NB Very common throughout the lowlands, large congregations at flowering trees.
NI Very common throughout the lowlands and into the mountains up to the first camp.

The appearance is much as for the mainland population, however some males seemed brighter. The call is a dry rasp typical of north-coast birds on the mainland.

BLUE-EYED COCKATOO

Cacatua ophthalmica (NB)

- NB From Hoskins to Lavege the bird is very common. A sizeable roost exists at the first hill out from Hoskins on the Hoskins-Lavege road.

The absence of any cockatoos on New Ireland is puzzling as habitat is much the same as in New Britain. Even accidental introduction might have been expected from birds traded as pets. We know of no New Ireland records although Forshaw (1973) and Peters (1937) include this as part of its distribution. Although obviously closely related to *C. galerita* of the mainland, this species is smaller with a bluer bare patch around the eye and a curious backward curving yellow crest. There seems to be less intense yellow under the wings. The contact call is typical of a white cockatoo but more pinched than *C. galerita*. It also has a laughing call 'ka-ka-ka-ka-ka-ka-ka' quite different from any of the *Cacatua* species we are familiar with.

BUFF-FACED PYGMY PARROT

Micropsitta pusio

- NB Common in forest and secondary growth along the coast road.

In no way does this species appear to differ from mainland populations.

GREEN PYGMY PARROT

Micropsitta finschii (NI, S)

- NI Fairly common in forest and secondary growth.

Call, habits and habitat resemble *M. pusio*. Some birds showed bluish washes to the face and crown.

RED-BREASTED PYGMY PARROT *Micropsitta bruijnii*

- NI Common in the forest around the second camp, showing favour for the *Albizia*-like trees.

Calls piercing and similar to mainland birds.

SONG PARROT

Geoffroyus heteroclitus (B, S)

- NB One adult male in forest along Galuku Creek.
NI Heard flying over second camp, but not seen there.

Whilst the male looks rather like a yellow headed *G. geoffroyi*, the calls are much like *G. simplex* of the mainland.

ECLECTUS PARROT

Eclectus roratus

- NB Very common throughout the coastal areas.
NI Very common throughout the coastal areas, and in the mountains up to our first camp.

This species is more common than on the mainland. A high percentage of female birds were seen, whereas on the mainland females are much scarcer than males. Overall the Bismarck birds look smaller than mainland birds and in spite of being noisy may not be quite so loud and raucous.

BISMARCKS HANGING PARROT *Loriculus tener* (B)

- NB Fairly common along the coast, usually in singles or pairs.
NI Frequent in forest and secondary growth along the coast.

There are ten recognised species of *Loriculus* extending from the Indian sub-continent to the Bismarcks. Every other species has a bright red rump and uppertail coverts. The bird of the Bismarcks differs from all of these in having a brilliant yellow-green rump and uppertail coverts. However it is usually relegated to subspecific status being treated as a race of the mainland *L. aurantiifrons*. The crown of *L. aurantiifrons* is orange-yellow whilst the crown of *L. tener* is uniform green like the remainder of the head. The call is virtually the same as for the mainland bird, a 'zi-ip, zeep-zeep', or a persistent 'zee-zee-zee....' when perched. We have field experience of seven species of *Loriculus* and whilst various authors all describe the calls in different ways, all *Loriculus* sound very similar to us. *L. tener* is more numerous than is *L. aurantiifrons* on the mainland. We would suggest that the difference in plumage between *L. tener* and *L. aurantiifrons* is sufficient to give *L. tener* specific status. It thus is a species endemic to New Britain, New Ireland, the Duke of York group and the larger satellite island of New Hanover. It is difficult to understand why the bird was classified with *L. aurantiifrons* when all other island types are given specific rank.

ORIENTAL CUCKOO

Cuculus saturatus

- NI One late bird along the creek at first camp.

BRUSH CUCKOO

Cuculus variolosus

- NB Fairly common in forest edge and secondary growth.
 NI Small numbers throughout the area as high as second camp.

Appearance is in every way like birds on the mainland but possibly not as numerous.

SHINING BRONZE CUCKOO

Chrysococcyx lucidus

- NI One bird in forest edge at Manga.

It was considered to be of the nominate New Zealand race on the basis of the extensive white flecking on the forehead.

COMMON KOEL

Eudynamis scolopacea

- NB Common throughout the lowlands in forest and secondary growth.
 NI Common throughout the lowlands up to the second camp.

Similar to the birds from around Port Moresby having all of the calls of the lowland birds rather than the limited repertoire of the montane birds on the mainland.

CHANNEL-BILLED CUCKOO

Scythrops novaehollandiae

- NB A compact flock of over forty birds at the first hill out from Hoskins on the Hoskins-Lavege road.

This observation strongly supports BWF's theory that the Bismarcks, and not the New Guinea mainland, are the major wintering area for Australian-bred birds.

VIOLACEOUS COUCAL

Centropus violaceus (B)

- NB Common throughout the lowland forest and secondary growth, but can be difficult to observe.
 NI Scarce with only two pairs recorded; one just behind Taron, the other at the second camp.

Possibly related to *C. menbeki* of the mainland, see Mason *et al.* (1984). This species occupies the canopy inside the forest from which it gives loud, deep and far carrying notes. The usual call heard is a very deep 'o-oomp' with the emphasis on the second part which is also slightly higher pitched. Sometimes the call is a deep descending 'hoo-hoo-hooo...' given singly or as a duet. Orenstein (1976) discusses this species' call. The difference in abundance on the two islands is marked.

WHITE-NECKED COUCAL

Centropus ateralbus (B)

- NB Very common throughout the lowland forest and secondary growth, usually in pairs or at times small parties.
 NI Frequent in the lowlands up to our second camp, but not as numerous as on New Britain.

In the Bismarcks there is no open country or grassland coucal, and this species is also a forest dweller living in the tree canopy or thick understory. Very varied in its repertoire *C. ateralbus* gives a series of deep 'ooms' like *Chalcophaps stephani*. These may build up into a louder series of 'oo's; if a duet, they increase in volume and the alternate note is a couple of tones higher. The contact and alarm call is an explosive 'tuck' which is often given from the canopy whilst the bird peers down. Diamond (1972) and Orenstein (1976) have described calls of this species. When found in the forest, the bird is quite tame. Some individuals are much scruffier in the white feathering on the head than others. Some darkish birds seen briefly were probably juveniles of this species.

BARN OWL

Tyto alba

- NB Two heard by JMCK, calling between 0200 and 0230 hours at Hoskins.

The call was definitely not that of *T. capensis* and judging from Gilliard and Lecroy's description (1967) not that of *T. aurantia*. Bishop (1983) has previously recorded *Tyto* sp. from the same area.

BISMARCK BOOBOOK OWL

Ninox solomonis (B)

- NI Commonly heard around Manga; as many as six individuals heard along two km of road. One newly fledged juvenile at 1000 hours, perched on a bare branch over a path in the forest above the first camp.

The description of the perched bird is as follows: facial disk all blackish; head, crown to base of bill, brown with pale tipping; whitish lines over eyebrow of facial disk; throat to middle breast barred chestnut, brown and blackish; remainder of underparts whitish; back dark brown with white crescentic tipping; wing coverts similar; flight feathers brownish grey with darker barring; tail brownish-grey with narrower paler banding; iris yellow; downy tufts still present on head. This owl was similar in size to *N. connivens*. The call was a crooning, almost frog-like series consisting of sets of two or three pairs of identical notes; 'oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo'. The bird appears very different from *N. theomachus* and the call lacks the integrated descending two notes of that species. Beehler (1978) also describes this call.

NEW BRITAIN BOOBOOK OWL *Ninox odiosa* (NB)

- NB One pair, and possibly a second pair, resident near the Hoskins Hotel. They appear to be based around the Local Government Building where the male calls from an open dead branch in a garden. They also call from the coconut plantations and doubtless hunt in there.

A small owl totally different from the robust *N. solomonis*. Facial disk all white; underparts all whitish with faint streaking; dark band across the neck; crown, back and wing coverts grey-brown with pale tipping; wings and tail similar but without pale highlighting. In the torchlight the bird appears all white with a dark collar. At dusk the birds would wake, call once or twice then remain quiet until the moon rose (at about 0330 hrs during our stay). Then the birds called continuously. The calls began as a series of "oo"'s starting low, then rising and speeding up and becoming louder. A contact sharp 'kyack' was given at odd times between bouts of calling. The strong territorial call was barely recognisable as an owl when heard from a distance, sounding almost bell-like and strangely similar to a Crested Pitohui *Pitohui cristatus*. After a few notes rising in pitch, a series of identical 'oo' notes was given evenly and continuously spaced at a rate of five notes per three seconds for anything up to five minutes. This bird has no close mainland relatives, and we know of no other Australasian owls having such a call.

LARGE-TAILED NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus macrurus*

- NB Common at Hoskins.
NI One individual seen at Manga, possibly a second bird heard.

The impression that the species is scarce on New Ireland is given by the solitary record. It may be that this was not the season there for vocal activity.

MOUSTACHED TREE-SWIFT *Hemiprocne mystacea*

- NB Fairly common along the coast road.
NI Common throughout the lowlands up to the first camp.

Identical to the mainland population in all respects, but far more numerous than we have ever encountered it there.

GLOSSY SWIFTLET *Collocalia esculenta*

- NB Fairly common along the coast, greatly outnumbered by *C. vanikorensis* and to a lesser extent *C. spodiopygia*.
NI Very common throughout, more numerous along the coast than in the mountains.

Possibly not as bright blue as mainland birds. It was very common at sea level in contrast to its foothill/montane preferences on the mainland.

UNIFORM SWIFTLET *Collocalia vanikorensis*

- NB Abundant throughout the lowlands.
NI Abundant throughout the lowlands.

Other all-dark swiftlets may have been overlooked in New Ireland, as in the hills and flying high in the lowlands were what appeared to be some larger more uniform, slender-winged swiftlets.

WHITE-RUMPED SWIFTLET *Collocalia spodiopygia* (B, S)

- NB Common along the coast road in small numbers especially at the first hill out from Hoskins on the Hoskins-Lavege road, where it was the dominant swiftlet.
NI Common in the river valleys in the hills, and smaller numbers in the lowlands.

This species was usually seen in single species flocks. The small size, slender wings and habit of holding the wings rigidly below the horizontal between bouts of flapping make this species recognisable at a distance before the diagnostic white rump is seen. It would appear that *C. spodiopygia* partially displaces *C. esculenta* from the hills.

COMMON KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

- NB A few birds on rivers and creeks in open situations.
NI Commonly observed along rivers and creeks in open country both in the lowlands and in the hills.

Certainly the birds looked duller than mainland birds but otherwise did not differ. Always on open rivers, not forested streams.

SACRED KINGFISHER *Halcyon sancta*

- NB Very common in gardens, forest edge and clearings.
NI Common along the coast in open situations.

COLLARED KINGFISHER *Halcyon chloris*

- NB Fairly common in gardens, clearings and forest edge.
NI Frequent in coastal lowlands, gardens, forest edge and clearings, but smaller more strikingly marked birds in the forest interior at c. 800 m altitude.

The coastal *H. chloris* are robust birds, dull coloured but more of a blue-green cast than mainland birds. In the mountains of New Ireland at c. 800 m altitude behind Taron, we encountered a pair of small birds with a piercing, long descending call like an *Accipiter*. The forehead spots were pronounced like *H. macleayi*, and the birds seemed blue and white with white reflections off the mantle. They remained in the forest canopy at all times.

BLACK-HEADED PARADISE KINGFISHER *Tanysiptera nigricept* (NB)

- NB Fairly common in wet rainforest and thickly vegetated gullies in the Pokilli area.

Very similar to *T. sylvia* of southern Papua New Guinea and northern Queensland with which it forms a superspecies. It differs in appearing smaller and having a black, not blue, crown. The rising trill and plaintive descending whistle are similar to the calls of *T. sylvia*.

BISMARCK KINGFISHER *Alcedo websteri* (B)

- NB A pair along Galuku Creek near Lavege in thick rainforest. Possibly more than one pair involved.
NI A pair along the forested creek at the first camp.

Undoubtedly this is the Bismarck representative of the more widespread *A. azurea*, differing in that the orange-buff colouring is replaced by white, including the underwing coverts as observed during a wing-waving display, typical of the genus. Call, habits and habitat preferences as for *A. azurea*; however it was relatively scarcer.

DWARF KINGFISHER *Ceyx lepidus sacerdotis*

- NB Several individuals in rainforest around Pokilli and the Hoskins-Lavege road.

A very different looking bird from the mainland population *C. l. solitarius*. Much brighter overall with a bright red bill rather than black; rich orange patches on the forehead (not whitish); rich orange instead of creamy-buff underparts. The crown and face are rich purplish with ultramarine highlighting rather than ultramarine with blackish tipping on forehead and crown. Wings and back purplish-blue. The general appearance from the front is a very reddish looking bird. The kingfisher appears larger than *C. l. solitarius*. The call is much like that of *C. l. solitarius* but possibly louder and less shrill. Differences in appearance and call suggest *C. l. sacerdotis* may in fact be a distinct species. It is surprising to find that *C. l. mulcata* of New Ireland has a black bill and closely resembles *C. l. solitarius*.

RAINBOW BEE-EATER *Merops ornatus*

- NB Common throughout the lowlands in open country and forest edge.
NI Common throughout the lowlands.

Most birds observed were immatures.

BLYTH'S HORNBILL *Rhyticeros plicatus*

- NB Fairly common throughout the lowland forest.
NI Common from sea level forest right up in the mountains to the second camp.

Bismarck birds appear to be no different from those on the mainland.

BLUE-BREASTED PITTA *Pitta erythrogaster*

- NI One noisy bird holding a territory in thick secondary growth scrub at Manga.

Perhaps the call was not as resonant as mainland birds.

PACIFIC SWALLOW *Hirundo tahitica*

- NB Common around Rabaul airport and the major bridge on the Kimbe road.

TREE MARTIN *Hirundo nigricans*

- NB Two birds at Rabaul airport.

CICADABIRD *Coracina tenuirostris*

- NB Common throughout forest and forest edge, far more males seen than female plumaged birds, and pairs only a few times.
NI Common from sea level up to the second camp.

More abundant than on the mainland. The call is a little slower, but it was only heard on a couple of occasions.

WHITE-BELLIED CUCKOO-SHRIKE *Coracina papuensis*

- NB Fairly frequent in pairs, in forest edge and secondary growth.
NB A few pairs seen throughout the lowlands and along creeks in the mountains up to the first camp.

In appearance identical to mainland populations. The normal flight call however is very different, vaguely like the first two notes of *C. boyeri* being an explosive "sh-zick".

YELLOW-EYED CUCKOO-SHRIKE *Coracina lineata*

- NI Two at the second camp.

VARIED TRILLER *Lalage leucomela*

- NB Very common in thick secondary growth and forest throughout the lowlands.
NB Very common not only throughout the lowlands but as high as the second camp.

Much like mainland birds but less barred and not so well patterned. Whereas this is normally a low elevation species on the mainland, it extends to high altitudes at least on New Ireland. The calls are similar to mainland birds, but some single notes are quite different and best described as rising or falling slurs.

GOLDEN-HEADED CISTICOLA *Cisticola exilis*

- NB Very common at Manga airstrip; a few at a grassy expanse in a creek valley near Taron.

Calls identical to mainland birds. Birds very pallid on the underparts, almost as pale as *C. juncidis* from Bensbach. The birds also lacked a rich golden head and buff edges to wings and back feathers. If this was because the birds were in eclipse, they differed from the mainland eclipse birds by having a normal, not longer, tail.

ISLAND LEAF-WARBLER *Phylloscopus trivirgatus*

- NI One seen in rainforest canopy with *Myzomela* honeyeaters and *Monarcha* flycatchers at the second camp.

RUFIOUS-FACED THICKET WARBLER *Ortygocichla rubiginosa* (NB)

- NB Found in two localities: the thick stands of ginger at the base of the first hill out from Hoskins on the Hoskins-Lavege road, and wet hilly rainforest five km before Lavege. In both cases parties of four were involved suggesting family parties.

Not much information has been published on this species, and the opportunity is taken to add a little to the store of knowledge. The adults are most attractive birds with bright rufous face, and rufous tail with paler outer retrices which may be slightly translucent. Back and wings earthy brown, underparts paler brown possibly with rusty tinge but difficult to see in the shade of the forest. The bill was pale almost pinkish, the tail feathers appeared to have attenuated tips. Immatures (?) lacked the bright reddish face and were brown overall. The parties kept in contact as they hopped over the ground and fallen logs, with a low 'churr' quite like the contact call of *Megalurus albolimbanus*, deeper than *Crateroscelis murina* and more rolling. One bird presumed to be the adult male of the party would occasionally climb onto an elevated perch such as a small shrub or log and give a very sweet and pure five-note refrain which did not vary. The second note was two tones above the first, third note a tone below the first, fourth note one tone above the first, the last note the same as the first, thus '- - - - -'.

In behaviour the birds were very like *Crateroscelis*. The sweetness and simplicity of the song and the contact notes were also very like that genus. Placing the genus *Ortygocichla* in Sylviidae and not Acanthizidae must be an error. Our observations suggest that the genus is closely related to *Crateroscelis* rather than just a species

occupying a similar niche. Orenstein (1976) also likened the species to an Acanthizid viz *Pycnoptilus floccosus*, the Pilot-bird of Australia.

NORTHERN FANTAIL

Rhipidura rufiventris

- NB One of the common inhabitants of forest interior where usually encountered in pairs, sallying out from branches to capture flying insects.
NI Fairly common in forest and thick secondary growth from sea level up to the second camp.

Did not appear to differ from mainland populations. Calls were much the same but perhaps more varied. On the mainland it is a lowland/foothill species, but on New Ireland and New Britain (Gilliard and Lecroy 1967), reaching high elevations.

WILLIE WAGTAIL

Rhipidura leucophrys

- NB Common in towns, villages, gardens, riversides and forest clearings.
NI Small numbers along the coast in villages, gardens, coconut plantations and riversides.

Appears to be considerably larger than the mainland population although plumage and song do not differ. The harsh churring call sounds more grating. At the Hoskins Hotel one bird sang all night, every night.

ISLAND MONARCH

Monarcha cinerascens (B,S)

- NI One bird seen on New Ireland associating with *M. chrysomela*, *M. verticalis* and *Rhipidura rufiventris* at the second camp.

More sluggish than other *Monarcha*'s of the Bismarcks, but surprisingly scarce (perhaps because we did not search coastal scrub along the beaches). On New Ireland it extends into the mountains as high as the second camp.

BISMARCK PIED MONARCH

Monarcha verticalis (B)

- NB Two single immature birds seen in the Pokilli area each associating with mixed parties.
NI A pair at the second camp associating with mixed feeding parties.

This striking black and white monarch was only found in New Ireland at one locality at the second camp. Other workers have found it to be common. A very active species; in its rapid movements it did not strikingly remind us of any mainland monarch. Although it has a similar plumage pattern to *M. guttula*, it is perhaps more closely allied to *M. trivirgatus* or even *M. axillaris*. The harsh churr was much like the call of these last two species. On the mainland both *M. guttula* and *M. manadensis* have a soft descending whistle similar to a bronze-cuckoo. No such call

was heard from *M. verticalis* during our brief encounter with this species.

GOLDEN MONARCH

Monarcha chrysomela

- NI One of the commonest passerines of the forest interior. Equally common from sea level forest and secondary growth right up to the second camp.

An enigma in the distribution of species is that in the Bismarcks, it is very common on distant New Ireland but totally absent from the nearer New Britain. The male is very bright and appears to differ little from birds on the mainland, but the female-plumaged birds are a most attractive golden-olive not olive-yellow. Most calls are harsh, and the song seems to lack the sweet variations found in mainland birds. Whereas the mainland birds are lowland/foothill forest inhabitants, on New Ireland the species ranged commonly up to the second camp.

SHINING FLYCATCHER

Myiagra alecto

- NB Very common throughout the forest and secondary growth, perhaps the most numerous passerine of the forest interior.
- NI Very common in forest from sea level up to the second camp, garden edges, secondary growth, coastal scrub, and even amongst coconuts.

Far more abundant than on the mainland. Calls and appearance are much the same as birds from the mainland. Whereas on the mainland the bird favours lowland swamp forests and mangroves (except at Baiyer River), in New Ireland it was found high in the montane forest.

LESSER SHINING FLYCATCHER *Myiagra hebetior* (NB)

- NB Two birds in wet hilly rainforest, five km northwest of Lavege.

Our attention was drawn to the bird by a harsh churring similar to *Monarcha axillaris* coming from the lower canopy. It appeared as a small, slender, all-dark flycatcher flying among the lower canopy of the forest, disappearing into a clump of leaves for a short while then flying to another patch. When perched the bird was shaped much like a typical *Myiagra* except that its carriage was more horizontal and it did not shiver its tail. David Bishop (pers. comm.) states that male *M. hebetior* are extremely difficult to separate confidently from male *M. alecto*. The call is different and generally *M. hebetior* keeps to primary forest. The female has a grey head, white underparts and dull tan upperparts. Observations on its behaviour should help elucidate its generic placement.

SATIN FLYCATCHER

Myiagra cyanoleuca

- NB A female plumaged bird of this Australian migrant was seen in the scrub around the megapode breeding grounds at Pokilli.

MICROECA FLYCATCHER

Microeca sp.

- NB One pair feeding in branches of scattered trees in village gardens at Lavege, near sea level

While walking round the gardens we observed a pair of olive-coloured birds flycatching from a branch in a dead tree and among the blossoms of neighbouring flowering trees. It appeared to be a *Microeca*. We watched for some time as the birds remained in the canopy, and the male flew to a high dead branch and sang (see below). An *Artamus insignis* was also perched in the branches of the dead tree and the flowering trees attracted large numbers of *Charmosyna placensis*, *Aplonis metallica* and *Myzomela cinerascens*.

- NI One pair feeding in the outer branches of an *Albizia*-like tree, at the second camp, at 1400 m.

While watching a pair of *Lorius albidinuchus*, BWF one of a pair of small flycatchers. BWF, JMcK and Kathleen Shurcliff watched the birds feeding for about 20 minutes and were convinced they were watching a *Microeca* sp.

DESCRIPTION: The same size and shape as *M. griseocephala*. The whole head and sides of face down to and below the eyes were a dark dusky grey resulting in a capped effect, the like of which we have never before seen on any *Microeca*. We could not see any indication of a pale loreal line from the eye to the base of the bill. The back and tail were dark olive, and the wings brownish black. Underparts uniformly buff-olive from chin to vent with highlights on the centre of the breast and along the flanks. We could not see if the lower mandible was pale, but it appeared not to be. The legs were uniformly dark.

HABITS: The birds kept to the high tree canopy not venturing any lower than ten m. Behaviour was like *M. griseocephala*, perching for a while, flicking the tail then flying to snatch an insect from a twig and returning to the same or another perch.

CALL: Song a sweet 'swit-tee' etc, given rapidly, almost half way between that of *Microeca flavigaster* and *M. griseocephala*. In volume it was more like the latter.

DISCUSSION: No microecas have been reported from the Bismarcks, yet in the space of three days we had found pairs in open gardens at sea level on New Britain and at 1400 m in rainforest on New Ireland!

The birds from New Ireland and New Britain were very similar in appearance and behaviour, although they were found in different habitats and at different altitudes. However, the pair from New Britain did not seem as olive as the New Ireland birds, though they had the grey-capped head and dark feet.

Of the five *Microeca* species with uniform tails, only *M. flavigaster* and perhaps *M. hemixantha* have dark feet; but *M. flavigaster* has an olive crown uniform with the back, lemon-tinged underparts with white throat, while *M. hemixantha* is olive above, has a slight yellow supercilium, the auriculars are rather dusky, and the underside is bright yellow with the throat a little paler.

Of the three pale-legged *Microeca* species, *M. papuana* is bright olive-green on the head and back and bright canary-yellow below. *M. flavovirescens* has a distinct eye-ring, olive head and back, with uniform olive-yellow underparts. *M. griseocephala* has a grey crown and face contrasting with an olive back, but the underparts are washed yellow with whitish throat.

Although it is not possible to draw conclusions from these sightings, we can make some suggestions and prompt further work. The birds observed in the Bismarks are not a known form of *Microeca* from the mainland. They represent either a new race of a known species, or a species as yet undescribed. Whichever is the case, the presence of *Microeca* on both New Britain and New Ireland is a considerable range extension for the genus.

It is likely that the closely allied species, based on the features of grey cap, song, presence in high canopy and feeding habits, is *M. griseocephala*. In spite of uniform buff-yellow underparts, the head pattern and presence in canopy rather than understory frequenting make alliance with *M. flavovirescens* unlikely. *M. flavigaster*, whilst the only dark-legged species with washed yellow on the breast, shows a pale supercilium and has a very different and more varied song. In addition the presence of *M. flavigaster* at 1400 m in rainforest canopy would be most surprising. *M. papuana* is a different shape, being more squat with a shorter tail and plump body, and has a very different song.

COMMON GOLDEN WHISTLER *Pachycephala pectoralis*

- NB Small numbers in the wet rainforest five km northwest of Lavege.
- NI Found in low forest behind Manga and Taron and in the mountains as high as the second camp.

The males had olive back and wings, a narrow golden collar and a narrow black neck band. Compared to mainland *P. melanura* they were slighter, without the black tail and dark wings, and the neck band was narrower, the collar less distinct and the underparts a less bright gold. The song was simpler, being a monotonous song of 3-4 notes, almost like *P. simplex*.

BISMARCK'S FLOWERPECKER *Dicaeum eximium* (B)

- NB Very common throughout all vegetated areas providing sufficient cover.
- NI Very common from sea level up to and beyond the first camp.

Undoubtedly a representative of the *D. pectorale* group which also incorporates *D. geelvinkianum*, *D. nitidum* and *D. aeneum*. Very little different from *D. geelvinkianum* of the mainland in habits, although call may possibly be stronger. Male has a small red spot on breast, female with black spot; both sexes show a white spot on the side of the gape with a dark streak bordering it from the gape line. Back brownish-grey, underparts greyish-white.

BLACK SUNBIRD *Nectarinia aspasia*

- NB Common in coconut plantations, secondary growth and rainforest.
- NI Common from sea level in all vegetated habitats except grassland up to the second camp.

Much the same as the mainland birds although females may have greyer heads. Whilst a lowland/foothill species on the mainland (with the exception of Baiyer River), the species is far ranging in its choice of elevation, at least on New Ireland.

YELLOW-BELLIED SUNBIRD *Nectarinia jugularis*

- NB Fairly frequent in gardens, secondary growth, the coastal scrub and along rivers.
- NI Frequent in lowlands penetrating as high as the first camp along the rivers.

Outnumbered by *N. aspasia* but generally common, appearing no different in any way from mainland birds.

BLACK-HEADED WHITE-EYE *Zosterops hypoxantha* (B)

- NB One bird feeding amongst dead branches on the slopes of the first hill out from Hoskins on the Hoskins-Lavege road.

A very attractive white-eye, with uniform olive-yellow underparts, a striking blackish head and face with a very conspicuous white eye ring. Unfortunately the bird never uttered a sound, so whether it was of the *Z. atrifrons* group or *Z. novaeguineae* group could not be determined on the basis of call. The uniform underparts and dark head appeared similar to *Z. griseotinctus* and thus a *Z. novaeguineae* affinity is conjectured.

RED MYZOMELA *Myzomela cruentata*

- NI Common from sea level up to the first camp, gathering in groups at flowering trees.

Does not seem as bright as mainland birds especially on the flight feathers. On the mainland this species is not usually encountered below 300 m.

NEW BRITAIN DUSKY MYZOMELA *Myzomela cineracea* (NB)

- NB Common throughout secondary growth, rainforest and even in coconut plantations. Unlike many other forest birds, also found in the understory of forests.

We expected that *M. cineracea* would appear similar to *M. eques* but without a red throat, however we were surprised to find quite a different bird. It was not as attenuated as *M. eques* but larger and longer than other small myzomelas. The ashy-grey plumage is very different from the dark earthy-brown of *M. eques*. The birds were noisy at times giving a typical myzomeline 'zit-zit'. *M. cineracea* was common in most lowland habitats that provided cover, whereas *M. eques* is purely a forest bird. In its habits and habitat preferences *M. cineracea* seems to have taken on the role of a *Meliphaga* honeyeater of the *M. analoga* group.

OLIVE MYZOMELA *Myzomela pulchella* (NI)

- NI Two birds at the second camp were the only individuals observed.

The two birds were investigating epiphytic growth on a branch. Dull olive green above, slightly yellower below with a short curved bill and dashing flight. The call was a 'zzr' repeated as the birds moved.

RED-HEADED BLACK MYZOMELA *Myzomela erythromelas* (NB)

- NB Frequent along the coastal road, but only adult males seen.

Whilst so closely resembling *M. erythrocephala* of the southern mainland and northern Australia it is a smaller bird with a short bill like *M. adolphinae*.

NEW BRITAIN FRIARBIRD *Philemon cockerelli* (NB)

- NB An abundant species in garden clearings, coconuts and rainforest.

Generally most calls, habits and appearance are not remarkably different from *P. novaeguineae*. It is smaller, not as noisy, darker overall, and lacks any knob on the bill, but whether this is sufficient enough to separate it at the species level is debatable. One way that *P. cockerelli* differs markedly from *P. novaeguineae* is the peculiar habit of starting to call as early as 0300 hrs; many birds giving a monotonous 'tok tok tok', somewhat like *Caprimulgus macrurus* but slower, continuing until dawn.

NEW IRELAND FRIARBIRD *Philemon eichorni* (NI)

- NI Our only observation was of a bird flying over the road near Taron. We neither saw nor heard it in the Hans Meyer Range.

We were surprised not to find this species commonly throughout the lowlands where the habitat seems ideal. It seems unlikely that

we overlooked the species. The one we did see was very small, almost like *P. citreogularis* in size and shape.

BUFF-BELLIED BLACK MANNIKIN *Lonchura melaena* (NB)

- NB Up to twenty birds frequenting rank grassland near the radio tower just past the Local Government Buildings in Hoskins.

Superficially like *L. grandis* of the mainland, but appeared proportionally larger, and the bill was blackish with a contrasting bluish base rather than all blue. The black only extended to mid-breast, below which it was uniform cream-buff with blackish scalloping along the flanks. The back and wings were rich chestnut whilst the rump was cream-orange. Immatures were all greyish-brown with darker markings about the head. The call was a typical *Lonchura* call.

BUFF-BREASTED MANNIKIN *Lonchura forbesi* (NI)

- NI Common all around Manga airstrip in rank grass.

Very like *L. spectabilis* but white underparts of that species replaced by uniform, warm rufous; rump orange not cream-orange; upperparts more orange-brown, not cream-brown. Immatures probably indistinguishable from *L. spectabilis*, as is the call.

SINGING STARLING *Aplonis cantoroides*

- NB Our only birds in the Bismarcks were in the village gardens at Lavege where it was common.

It appeared to be identical in appearance and habits to mainland birds although greatly outnumbered by *A. metallica*.

METALLIC STARLING *Aplonis metallica*

- NB A very abundant bird, the most frequently observed species, found everywhere.
NI Abundant from sea level up to the first camp, and in small numbers up to the second camp.

The commonest species on both islands, maybe fractionally larger than mainland birds where it is a lowland species (exception being Wau Golf Course). In New Ireland, we recorded it as high as 1400 m.

LONG-TAILED MYNA *Mino kreffti* (B)

- NB Very common throughout the lowlands, usually in pairs.
NI Very common in the lowlands and in the mountains up to the first camp.

Appears considerably larger than the mainland *M. dumonii* (with which it is often considered conspecific) birds, with a very different

repertoire of calls many of which more closely resemble *M. anais* than *M. dumontii*. The calls are rather like *Dicrurus hottentottus* with a variety of wolf-whistles, screeches and metallic notes but nothing low and harsh like mainland *M. dumontii*. We agree with Schodde (1977) that *M. krefftii* is specifically distinct from *M. dumontii*.

SPANGLED DRONGO

Dicrurus hottentottus

- NB Very common throughout secondary growth and forest.

Whilst in appearance it is like the birds of the mainland, it is not as noisy and lacks the metallic clinking and clanging notes. One common call is a carrying 'tuck' note like *Manucodia chalybatus*, not shared by mainland birds. Vaurie's (1949) action in uniting a wide diversity of taxa under *D. hottentottus* is far too simple a solution. Our experience in the field with a number of these forms indicate that at least four species are involved.

PARADISE DRONGO

Dicrurus megarhynchus (NI)

- NI This spectacular New Ireland endemic, somewhat resembling an *Astrapia* more than a Spangled Drongo, is fairly common in rainforest from sea level up to the second camp.

Behaviour is similar to *D. hottentottus* but there are several differences: this species only occurs in the forest, not forest edge or clearings; it is a bird of the canopy not the understory it feeds in sallies from the lower tree canopy; it ranges from sea level up to 1400 m; it is almost always encountered in pairs; it does not actively associate itself with other species; and is far less noisy. Contrary to Beehler (1978) we did not think the calls resembled *D. hottentottus*, as most calls were whistles given in series, very closely resembling *Oriolus* (of which there are none in the Bismarcks). With the few species of forest birds on New Ireland, and most of these rather quiet (in fact New Ireland mountain forest is virtually quiet even at dawn), it is probably not necessary for the birds to have loud distinctive calls. A pair may be feeding in the canopy above the observer but not a sound is made other than the rustling of wings and tails. In the early mornings in lowland forest immediately behind Taron, numbers of birds called to each other with a musical oriole-like refrain, but did not introduce any harsh notes.

WHITE-BACKED WOOD-SWALLOW

Artamus insignis (B)

- NB Only one bird, in the village garden at Lavege.

This large, very attractive wood-swallow approaches *A. maximus* in size. Our only individual was located in a garden, sallying from the branches of dead trees keeping high above the ground. It was not seen to soar, nor heard to utter a sound. The bird appears to be inexplicably scarce.

BOUGAINVILLE CROW

Corvus meeki insularis (B,S)

- NB Very common in forest, forest edge, clearings and along the coast.
NI Common all along the coast, and in the mountains as high as the first camp.

Any visitor to the Bismarcks who has experience with *C. orru* will be surprised by this very different bird. General appearance is top heavy with a heavy bill, short neck and short tail. In flight, deep wingbeats are followed by a period of gliding with wings held below the horizontal. Long distance flying is often at a great height. Some birds had whitish tips to their bills, and most birds had the pale bluish irises of adults. The call is totally unlike *C. orru* of the main land; a series of notes sounding like the first note of a *Paradisaea raggiana* repeated, the last notes lower pitched. All calls are much higher toned than mainland birds. Schodde's (1977) description of the call of *C. m. meeki* is very similar. The taxonomic affinities of *C. m. insularis* clearly lie with *C. m. meeki* of Bougainville and Shortland Islands in the northern Solomons rather than with *C. orru* of mainland New Guinea and eastern and northern Australia. One major difference in *C. m. meeki* and *C. m. insularis* is that the former tends to be restricted to rainforest whilst the latter has adapted to other habitats. Until more definitive field work can be carried out we prefer to follow Goodwin's (1976) suggestion that *C. woodfordi* of the central and southern Solomons is probably specifically distinct from *C. m. meeki*, differing in pale bill, brown irises, unfeathered culmen base and altitudinal preferences.

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NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF NEW IRELAND

DICK JONES AND PETER LAMBLEY

We visited New Ireland on a collecting trip for reptiles and arthropods from 20th November to the 3rd December 1986. While we were there we made casual observations on the birds seen.

Localities visited were as follows:

1. Lelet Plateau. An area of limestone at an altitude of about 1000 m. Much of this area is either cultivated or covered with secondary growth, however areas of primary forest remain especially on the hills surrounding the plateau.
2. The coast road north of Namatanai to the Lelet turn off. This road runs close to the east coast mostly through coconut plantations and some secondary forest. The coastline is fringed by long sandy beaches interrupted by occasional low rocky headlands and river mouths. This is generally not a good coast for waders though small numbers occur especially where rivers enter the sea. The limited areas of lowland forest were not investigated in any detail.
3. Hurris. This was the best locality for waders that we saw; on the seaward side of a sandy beach is an extensive area of coral rubble which is exposed at low tide. South of Hurris there is no fringing reef and there is a strong surf on to these beaches.
4. Logging area near Hurris. This is a heavily logged area now starting to regenerate, some areas of primary forest remain at an estimated altitude of 500 m.
5. Logging area near Pulpulu. A recently built road penetrates hill forest up to about 1000 m. At present this forest is still largely undisturbed, (though probably not for much longer) and is the best access that we found to the Hans Meyer range.
6. Manga Mission south to Cape Mimias. The road runs through plantations and lowland rainforest.

Systematic list.

Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel*
Off the coast north of Namatanai.

Eastern Reef-Egret *Egretta sacra*
Hurris, Cape Mimias and Namatanai.