

EDITORIAL PAGE

COVER

The cover of this issue, and of those which follow, are representations of cassowaries by the artist Kauage.

Kauage is from Miugu Village in Chimbu Province, PNG. Until 1968 he worked in coffee and rubber plantations, and then he came to Port Moresby he and worked as a cleaner at the Administrative College. He showed his drawings to Georgina Beier, who was then in charge of the Centre for New Guinea Cultures at the University of Papua New Guinea. Soon after this he gave up his job and took up full time drawing and painting, giving his first exhibition at UPNG in 1969. Since then he has exhibited throughout Australia, as well as in Manila, Suva, Brighton, Edinburgh, Ite and Los Angeles. His work has recently been featured in Air Niugini's Paradise magazine, and he is generally recognised as one of Papua New Guinea's foremost artists. His work is frequently on show at the Art School in Port Moresby.

These pictures of Muruks were specially commissioned by the PNGBS. The full-sized originals (51 x 63 cm), in black and white, may be purchased from the Society at the very reasonable price of 40 kina each. Please write to Mike Hopkins if you are interested.

FUTURE COVERS

We would like to use pictures of Cassowaries on our future issues. Readers are invited to submit drawings for consideration. The size is unimportant, but in order to get as clear a reproduction as possible, line drawings in black ink with minimum shading would be best. Please send drawings to the editors.

FUTURE MURUKS

With the eventual publication of two issues of Muruk in 1987 the backlog of articles is now becoming low. If you have something which is intended for Muruk the editors would be very grateful if you could submit it as soon as possible. Suitable material can be sent direct to the editors, or to the Society at PO Box 1598, Boroko, NCD, Papua New Guinea.

Mike Hopkins & Joan Oliver, Editors

BIRDS OF THE LOWER SIBIUM MOUNTAINS PAPUA NEW GUINEA

GEORGE E. CLAPP

SUMMARY

An account is given of a brief visit in April 1984 to the Sibium Mountains, a semi-isolated outlier range in the Oro Province of North-east New Guinea. These mountains were hitherto unexplored ornithologically. Thirty-two species of birds were encountered, including the relatively uncommonly recorded Lesser Melampitta *Melampitta lugubris*, Wallace's Fairy-Wren *Sipodotus wallacii*, Yellow-legged Flycatcher *Microeca griseiceps* and Buff-tailed Sicklebill *Epimachus albertisi*. Brief notes are given on behaviour, calls, altitude, etc. It is concluded that these observations from 1000 to 1300 m indicate a potentially rich avifauna that may be revealed when the Sibium Mountains are explored to their full height of nearly 2200 m.

INTRODUCTION

This report continues the series of accounts by the writer on the avifauna in remote locations in the Oro Province of Papua New Guinea.

Between 9 and 13 April 1984 I camped out in the Sibium Mountains. My camp, Rhonda one, was situated at Latitude 09° 18' 13" S, longitude 148° 25' 40" E grid reference FK 568715 on the 1:100,000 topographical map, edition 1 - AAS Series T683 Sheet 8579 Sibium.

The camp was 12 km in a direct line from the village of Gewoia, but that represented a walk of one and a half days, necessitating an overnight stop, so the site was more isolated than appears at first glance. The nearest airstrip is at Gewoia village which lies at grid reference FKG30823 on the same topographic map. The camp was 42 km in a direct line from the crest of the Owen Stanley mountain range, and was situated at an altitude of exactly 1000 m. The journey from Popondetta to the camp and back was made by helicopter. Gewoia villagers walked from the village, erected the helipad, assisted me in my work and walked back again. All altitudes quoted were measured by altimeter.

THE SIBIUM MOUNTAINS

Situated in the Oro Province, in the northern portion of the south-east of the island of New Guinea, the Sibium Mountains rise to nearly 2200 m.

They appear to have been unexplored ornithologically before this visit (Diamond 1985 and my own researches) and none of the early collectors and naturalists recorded any visits to them. Although not far from the top of the main range, the Sibium Range is semi-isolated, being separated from the central cordillera by lowlands of 1000 m or less. It was therefore fortuitous