

contained herein are mine alone. I am indebted to councillor Amos Bedana of Gewoia village for general organisation of the work programme, and to his relatives who walked in and out of the area, cut the helipad and generally arranged matters at the camp. Thanks are also due to the pilots of Pacific Helicopters for setting us down and picking us up safely and on time in a remote location.

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INTERESTING BIRD OBSERVATIONS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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The following observations represent new distributional records for Papua New Guinea (cf. Beehler *et al.* 1986) or additional information on the voices of little known species (cf. Coates 1985, Hadden 1981). Most observations were made during the period 6 July to 9 October, 1986 while leading several bird tours in the region. I am grateful to my clients who made these observations possible.

ANNOTATED LIST

CATTLE EGRET *Egretta ibis*

Eleven individuals, none in breeding plumage, feeding among a small herd of cattle near Ilimo farm 22 August, Central Province.

GREAT CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Single adult with flocks of Little Black Cormorant *P. sulcirostris* on the Bensbach river below Bensbach Lodge. 26 July, Western Province.

GREAT-BILLED HERON *Ardea sumatrana*

Unusually numerous (for this species) along the Bensbach river. More than 18 individuals counted near the Bensbach Lodge. All birds were observed in tall, heavily wooded monsoon riverine forest and at least three individuals were in immature plumage. 27 July, Western Province.

SACRED IBIS *Threskiornis aethiopicus*

Two to three thousand seen along the Bensbach river above the Lodge. 27 July. Single adult in the top of a dead tree in heavily cut over sago swamp forest. 24 August, Western Province.

BAT HAWK *Macheiramphus alcinus*

Single adult hawking over selectively logged lowland forest immediately south of the Markham river (near the Markham bridge, Lae). 6 August, Morobe Province. (D. & N. Massie pers. comm.).

BRAHMINY KITE *Haliastur indus*

Single adult over alpine grassland at Tari gap c. 2700 m. 19 August, Southern Highlands.

GREY GOSHAWK *Accipiter novaehollandiae*

An adult female attending a large stick nest c. 12 m up in a 25 m tall tree at the edge of selectively logged lowland swamp forest. 18 July, Kapiura, northern West New Britain.

MEYER'S GOSHAWK *Accipiter meyerianus*

Two 'pied' phase birds soaring high over montane forest above Ambua Lodge, Tari (2000-2700 m). July and August, Southern Highlands.

GURNEY'S EAGLE *Aquila gurneyi*

Single adult soaring over a forested ridge of the Markham river (near the Markham bridge, Lae). 6 August, Morobe Province.

SALVADORI'S TEAL *Anas waiguensis*

One 'pair' on forest-lined river (c. 2100 m) above Margarima, Southern Highlands Province. Note: this species has disconcertingly declined radically in the past ten years from former regular haunts such as the Wahgi and Baiyer valleys. 16 August.

BAILLON'S CRAKE

Porzana pusilla

At least three adults and one immature foraging at dusk in swampy grassland and dense scrub over water. Small lagoon near Iimo farm. 19 August, Central Province.

AUSTRALIAN PRATINCOLE

Stilia isabella

Single adult foraging on Tari airstrip. 17/18 August, Southern Highlands.

LITTLE CURLEW

Numenius minutus

Single adult on Rabaul airstrip with a large (c. 150) mixed flock of shorebirds. 7 October. Third record for New Britain (Bishop in prep.).

LATHAM'S SNIBE

Gallinago hardwickii

At least two birds at Moitaka sewage ponds. Both individuals were scrutinised carefully with a 15-60x telescope and the diagnostic long tertiaries overlapping the tips of the primaries on the folded wing but noticeably shorter than the tail were noted (cf. Hayman, Marchant and Prater 1986). 8 October, National Capital District.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT

Limosa limosa

Three individuals on Rabaul airstrip represent only the second New Britain record (Bishop in prep.). 7 October, East New Britain.

PIED CUCKOO-DOVE

Reinwardtoena browni

Normally uncommon and inconspicuous, at least four individuals were observed in or at the edge of primary lowland forest, Pokilli Wildlife Management Area, north-central West New Britain, 4-7 October. One pair was observed briefly giving a bowing display and the presumed male giving a magnificent vocal display. Voice: Slow, mournful, slightly monotonous two note call the first disyllabic and upslurred, the second following a 1/2 second pause is longer and downslurred. The male responded well to tape playback.

WHITE-BREASTED FRUIT-DOVE

Ptilinopus rivoli

Single adult carrying nesting material in lowland forest, Pokilli Wildlife Management Area. Previously considered mainly a montane resident and only a visitor to the lowlands on New Britain (Bishop in prep., Diamond pers. comm.). 5 October, West New Britain.

BLACK IMPERIAL PIGEON

Ducula melanochroa

Generally considered a montane resident this species has been observed relatively frequently in the lowlands (Bishop 1983). Further observations of individuals and a group of five in lowland forest, Pokilli Wildlife Management Area, suggests that this may be a regular possibly seasonal phenomena (as in *Gymnophaps albertisii*). West New Britain.

FINSCH'S IMPERIAL PIGEON

Ducula finschii

Generally common and widespread throughout the lowlands forests of West New Britain this species can easily be overlooked unless one is familiar with its distinctive call. Voice: not dissimilar to a steam train entering a tunnel. Loud, guttural three note call; *wok wok woowoo.....*, the first two notes short and identical the third descends and slows into a growl.

DUSKY LORY

Pseudeos fuscata

Groups of 2-8 birds seen flying over and feeding in tall flowering *Schefflera* sp. above 2000 m. Near Ambua Lodge, Tari, Southern Highlands. 17-19 August. This species rarely reaches 1800 m. (Beehler *et al.* 1986).

MADARASZ'S TIGER-PARROT

Psittacella madaraszii

Single adult female observed on two separate occasions during July and August, foraging in the scrubby edge of mid-montane forest c. 1,800 m, Kuhli Mission, Western Highlands. Contrary to the illustration in Beehler *et al.* (1986) this individual had a distinctive chocolate brown patch extending from the nape to the lower hindneck but lacked any indication of scaling. The blue on the forehead was barely visible and then only at very close range and in good light.

RED-BREASTED PYGMY-PARROT

Micropsitta bruijnii

Two males and at least one female feeding in flowering tree, Baiyer River Sanctuary. Second record for the sanctuary, however, this species is regularly observed on the nearby Jimi Ridge and may be a regular migrant. 6 August, Western Highlands.

VULTURINE PARROT

Psittichas fulgidus

At least one adult observed in flight over undisturbed forest on a steep escarpment, immediately south of the Markham river (near the Markham bridge, Lae). 5 August, Morobe Province.

HORSFIELD'S BRONZE-CUCKOO

Chrysococcyx basalis

Two to three individuals feeding on the ground in large open plains bordering the Bensbach river. 26 July, Western Province.

SOOTY OWL

Tyto tenebricosa

Single adult observed on numerous occasions at dawn during July and August entering and once carrying a mouse (*Mus musculus*?) to a presumed nest hole 7 m up in a lightning-damaged tree. Baiyer River Sanctuary, Western Highlands.

RUFOUS OWL

Ninox rufa

Two adults flushed from c. 4 m up along a trail within riverine hill forest. 9 August, Baiyer River Sanctuary, Western Highlands.

A maximum of three individuals observed just prior to dawn (05:15) perched on posts alongside the road in eucalypt savanna on the approach to Varirata National Park. 24 & 27 August, Central Province. (H. Buck pers. comm.)

Two individuals observed alongside the Tari Gap road, c. 2000 m. One bird appeared to use the side of a high embankment from which to forage. This species gives an exceptionally large, bright, retinal reflection, shows no white in flight and looks brown not black. 25 July and 17 August, Southern Highlands.

A call heard and tape recorded at dawn in a remnant patch of lowland swamp forest c. 16 km north of Arawa resembled the only known description of this species' call. (cf. Cain & Galbraith 1956). North Solomons.

A pair of birds heard and seen duetting, Varirata National Park, Central Province. The call of the male differed radically from the female. Male: one or occasionally two note, explosive whistled "twip" preceded immediately by the female giving a high pitched whistle; the first two notes rather staccato then blending to a high pitched descending whistle. While uttering his call the male was observed strutting in a very upright posture on the forest floor. His breast appeared inflated and the white moustachial stripes contrasted dramatically with the blue breast and face mask.

Observed in small groups (2-6) frequently in association with Yellow-throated White-eyes *Z. metcalfei*. from c. 100 to c. 1000 m (*contra* Hadden 1981). July-October, Panguna/Arawa Bougainville, North Solomons.

Three individuals observed for c. 20 min. foraging in lower canopy of montane forest (c. 2000 m) near Ambua Lodge. Generally dark-streaked yellowish-green appearance, and yellow pectoral tufts were diagnostic. Third record for the Central Highlands (cf. Beehler *et al.* 1986). 14 August, Southern Highlands.

A group of c. 5 birds feeding on *Saccharum* sp. grass seedheads and bathing in a small roadside puddle, approximately 20 km south-east of Hoskins, West New Britain. This represents the first published record of this little known species in the province. In the field appears dark and dumpy with pale buffy lower abdomen and rufous-orange tail coverts.

Seen and heard commonly in the canopy of mid-montane forest, c. 1,800 m Jimi Ridge, Western Highlands. 7-9 August. The call is somewhat similar to some of the harsh notes uttered by the Superb Bird of Paradise *Lophorina superba* (pers. obs., cf. Beehler *et al.* 1986). Its apparently unrecorded call is a series of loud, harsh, grating notes slightly upslurred, *sssh sssh sssh*, usually two notes followed by a brief pause and again two to three notes. As the series continues the notes become slower and stronger but lower pitched than the Superb's. Individual males were observed calling in this manner and both sexes responded to tape playback.

At least one single adult female was observed feeding in near proximity to male and female Lawes' Parotia *Parotia lawesii*. Mid-storey, partially logged mid-montane forest (c. 1800 m). July/August, Kuhli Mission, Western Highlands. Species of the genus *Parotia* supposedly occupy allopatric ranges, however, this and other observations suggest, certainly for these two species, that the situation requires further study.

Single male observed in the mid-storey of dense montane forest c. 2000 m. 17 August, Ambua Lodge, Tari, Southern Highlands. (David & Nancy Massie pers. comm.). There are few records of this elusive species in the central ranges (Beehler *et al.* 1986.).

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