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AN EXTENSION OF ALTITUDE RANGE FOR TWO MANNIKIN SPECIES

ROGER HICKS

On 3 April 1986 at Myola, Northern Province 09° 09' S, 147° 45' E two Eastern Alpine Mannikins *Lonchura monticola* were observed on the edge of a flock of c. 100 Grey-headed Mannikins *L. caniceps*, feeding on the short grass of the airstrip. Two birds were subsequently seen on the moss-forest/grassland border, again in the company of Grey-headed Mannikins. Myola, at 2080 m, lies well below the normal altitude range for Eastern Alpine Mannikins, given as 2700 m to 3500 m in Beehler *et al.* (1986) and 9000' to 12000' (2750 m to 3400 m) in Rand and Gilliard (1967). In the days preceding the observation there had been very heavy and continuous rainfall. This might have caused the birds to move lower. Grey-headed Mannikins had been recorded on each of the five days prior to this observation. The Eastern Alpine Mannikins were seen by six other observers. In September 1987 Eastern Alpine Mannikins were found to be common in the tree fern forest located 2 km from Myola 500 m higher (M.J.G. Hopkins, pers. comm.).

Grey-headed Mannikins have been recorded at Myola on previous and subsequent visits: April 1985 P. Lambley, June 1986 J. Oliver, April 1987 H.C.F. Hopkins & P. Lambley (pers. comms), and in September 1985 and June and September 1987 (pers. obs). They have usually been observed feeding in the grasslands of the Myola basin or along the moss-forest/grassland edge. Myola is higher than the upper altitude limit for this species given by Beehler *et al.* (1986) as 1900 m, and by Rand & Gilliard (1967) as 5800' (c. 1800 m). The regular recording of this species suggests it is a resident in the area.

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THE LOGRUNNER, *ORTHONYX TEMMINCKII* (ORTHONYCHIDAE), AT TARI GAP, SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS PROVINCE, PAPUA NEW GUINEA.

CLIFFORD AND DAWN FRITH

To date the Logrunner *Orthonyx temminckii* has been considered to have a conspicuously discontinuous distribution on the island of New Guinea. The three apparently isolated Papuan populations are each given subspecific status: *O. t. novaeguineae* of the Vogelkop in Irian Jaya, *O. t. dorsalis* of the Snow Mountains in Irian Jaya, and *O. t. victoriana* of the Wharton Range and Herzog Mountains of south-east New Guinea between 1200 and 2800 metres above sea level (Deignan 1964, Rand & Gilliard 1967, Beehler *et al.* 1986). A recent sighting of the species on Mt. Scratchley by Clapp (1986) has extended its altitudinal range to 3450 m. The species was unknown from the Eastern and Central Highlands of Papua New Guinea (Diamond 1972, Beehler *et al.* 1986).

During September and October 1986 the authors carried out a bird mist-netting and banding study at six sites in the moss forest of the Tari Gap area (5°58' S 143°8' E), Southern Highlands Province, at altitudes predominantly between 2600 and 2800 m. The study was conducted on behalf of the Wildlife Conservation International, of the New York Zoological Society. A total of 266 hours was spent with four 12 m and four 9 m mist nets erect during 32 netting days. Thus there was an average of 8.3 hours each netting day with 84 linear metres of mist net.

On 12 September 1986 a female Logrunner was netted, and on 30 September a male was caught 2 km from the capture point of the female. Both birds were in adult plumage without moult (see Table 1).

Table 1. Measurements of two banded *Orthonyx temminckii* mist-netted at Tari Gap, Southern Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea.

Band No.	Sex	Weight	Wing	Tail	Tarsus	Culmen	Skull+bill
05099314	F	55.1g	85	66	29	-	38.9
05099346	M	61.5g	87	82	34	17.1	39.9

Note: Skull+bill is the maximum length from rear skull to bill tip. Wing is the maximum, flattened chord. Culmen is from bill tip to union with skull. All measurements are in mm.

Tari Gap is approximately midway between the eastern extremity of *O. t. dorsalis* distribution (Oranje Mts.) and the western limit of *O. t. victoriana* (Mt. Missim, Kuper Range) and is at least 400 km from either subspecies population. As wing length measurement in the two subspecies overlap (Mayr & Rand 1937, Rand 1940, Rand 1942) specimens of the Tari Gap population would be required in order to be able to clarify subspecific status.

The Logrunner was discussed by Diamond (1972) as one of nine "drop out" species absent from the Eastern Highlands zoogeographical area but present in areas of western and south-eastern New Guinea on the central cordillera. Further searching for this inconspicuous species to the east and west of Tari Gap is required to establish if, in fact, it has a continuous distribution along the length of the central mountains of New Guinea.

During our eight weeks field work we did not see or hear *Orthonyx* other than the two netted individuals; but CBF did note the conspicuous results of logrunner leaf-litter foraging on the forest floor, identical to that of *O. spaldingii*, and saw the stick foundations of two logrunner nests. Clapp (1986) notes that the New Guinea logrunner populations appear less noisy than Australian birds. The logrunner vocalizations described by Beehler *et al.* (1986) are for Australian birds, suggesting a lack of knowledge of calling New Guinea birds. Thus, the presence of the species in New Guinea may be more readily detected by mist netting. Jared Diamond (pers. comm.) has, however, pointed out that intensive mist netting has been carried out at other locations in the Central Range of Papua New Guinea, east of longitude 146°, including Mt. Karimui, Okapa area, Schrader Range and elsewhere.

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FAWN-BREASTED BOWERBIRD *CHLAMYDERA CERVINIVENTRIS* ON THE LAI RIVER, JIMI VALLEY, WESTERN HIGHLANDS, PAPUA NEW GUINEA.

CLIFFORD B. FRITH

The Fawn-breasted Bowerbird *Chlamydera cerviniventris* is known to occur on New Guinea in coastal areas from the SE tip of the island along the north coast as far west as Jayapura and along the south coast as far west as the Merauke area and also in the Ransiki and Kebor Valley areas of the Vogelkop, Irian Jaya; usually below 500 metres but rarely to 1400 m (Cooper & Forshaw 1977, Beehler *et al.* 1986). It is also found on the north-eastern coastal areas of Cape York Peninsula, Australia.

The 3 to 5 December 1985 were spent at Ruti Cattle Station (5°20', 144°15') on the Lai River in the Jimi Valley, Western Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea observing birds. Throughout this period the Fawn-breasted Bowerbird was commonly seen and heard about the immediate vicinity of the homestead and throughout adjacent valley floor grassland and abutting rainforest edge along the sides of the valley floor; by myself, Dawn Frith and Roy & Margaret Mackay.

One active and several disused nests of this species were found in isolated small trees and shrubs on the open grassland, and three active bowers were examined. These structures, and the bird activity at them, will be reported fully elsewhere (Frith & Frith, in prep.).

The presence of *C. cerviniventris* on the Lai River represents the first record of the north coast populations inland, or south, of the Schrader and Bismarck Ranges, and is probably the most inland location for it. Ruti Cattle Station is approximately 145 km inland of Bogia, the closest point on the coast. It is likely that the Lai River birds represent an inland extension of populations of the Sepik-Ramu river systems, via the grasslands of the Yuat River Valley.

The Fawn-breasted Bowerbird occurs sympatrically with the Yellow-breasted Bowerbird subspecies *C. lauterbachii lauterbachii* at Aiome in the Ramu River Valley (Gilliard 1969). The Lai River *C. cerviniventris* are located between the presently known distributions of the Baiyer-Wahgi Valley populations of *C. l. uniformis* and the Aiome-Jagei River population of *C. l. lauterbachii*.

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