

## BRYOPHYTES OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

### REQUEST FOR SPECIMENS AND RECORDS

BILL EDDIE

Studies of the bryophytes (mosses, liverworts and hornworts) of Papua New Guinea are still in their infancy. Although the bryoflora is relatively well-known compared to other regions of Malesia, it is under-explored, while taxonomic investigations largely remain at the "alpha" level.

I am planning an interim checklist of bryophytes and would welcome specimens from any locality in PNG. In addition, I would like to have records of the use of bryophytes by birds (e.g. nest-building, bower-decoration, foraging sites, etc.).

To collect bryophytes, all that is required is a series of small polythene bags, preferably of the sealable kind. The plants can be collected intact by gently teasing the rhizoids (root-like structures) from the substrate. Fertile material with capsules is most desirable but not absolutely necessary. Liverwort capsules tend to collapse very quickly and would probably be unsuitable for preservation in most cases, but collect capsules if you can. A good handful of material is much better than just one or two stems since duplicate material for other herbaria is often required, but please remember to tidy up the collecting site afterwards. Do not collect in any protected area or National Park. Bryophytes on bark or twigs are best collected together with the substrate using a small knife. No preservation is necessary, but remove any excess water by gently squeezing. Specimens should be air-dried as soon as possible but generally they will remain in good condition even after several days in polythene bags. Most important .....write collecting details in pencil on a small slip of paper or card and place this in *each* bag. Minimum details to record are as follows:

1. Locality (e.g. nearest town/village) and approximate elevation.
2. Habitat (e.g. lowland forest, mangrove, alpine grassland, etc.)
3. Microhabitat (e.g. on boulders, rotten logs, buttress roots *Pandanus* stems, etc.).
4. Shade (e.g. dark forest, bright areas by streams, etc.).

When you next sit down on a mossy log in the forest and the jewel-babblers are as elusive as ever, cast your thoughts to the humble bryophytes. They may not turn you into a budding William Blake but their subtle beauty is quite unsurpassed in the plant world, and rewards are a-plenty! Good luck.

Address: The Herbarium, Biology Department, P.O. Box 320, University, N.C.D., P.N.G.

## BIRDING IN THE HUON PENINSULAR

NICK GARDNER

### Introduction

Between October 6th and 13th 1986 I visited the montane forest above the village of Wasu, on the Huon peninsula, Morobe Province. Wasu is an ideal location for gaining access to this area which boasts five endemic species, and many other interesting birds. The newly constructed road now runs all the way to Kabwum, while regular PMV traffic assures one of transport to all the attractive localities. Increasing population pressure and rapid development in the Kabwum valley, coupled with the construction of a good access road to Wasu port, have all contributed to greater disturbance and forest clearance in the region. The continued existence of such rare species as New Guinea Harpy Eagle *Harpyopsis novaeguinae* and Vulturine Parrot *Psittichas fulgidus* would appear to be threatened.

### Transport

There are daily flights from Lae to Wasu. The port of Wasu is also served by weekly boats from Madang and Lae.

### Accommodation

There are no hotels in Wasu, although such facilities probably exist in the larger town of Kabwum. In Wasu I stayed at the Police Station. Out of Wasu I spent three nights in a small house belonging to the community leader at Satop village, and two nights in another located on a property near the highest part of the road. For one night I camped at Kalola.

### Birding sites

Most time should be spent birding the area of forest between 1650 and 1930 m (see map). This stretch of about 9 km can either be worked from Satop village or Yuwarre's property just below the gap. Due to the infrequency of PMVs early in the morning and the need to bird in the higher elevation areas before the weather deteriorates in mid-morning, the hut located on Yuwarre's property would probably make a better base. Naturally prior permission should be sought from the owner.

Four of the five Huon endemics (Spangled Honeyeater, Wahne's Parotia, Huon *Astrapia* and Huon *Melidectes*) are present along this stretch of road, although I missed the Huon *Melidectes*. The trails that penetrate the forest on the west side of the road host such unusual birds as Madarasz's Tiger-Parrot, Mottled Whistler, and New Guinea Harpy Eagle. Further down the road towards Wasu birds such as Vulturine Parrot and Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrot can be seen; while the secondary growth just above Satop Village shelters Grey-green Scrub-Wren.

The only other site worth investigating is the Emperor Bird of Paradise lekking