

## 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

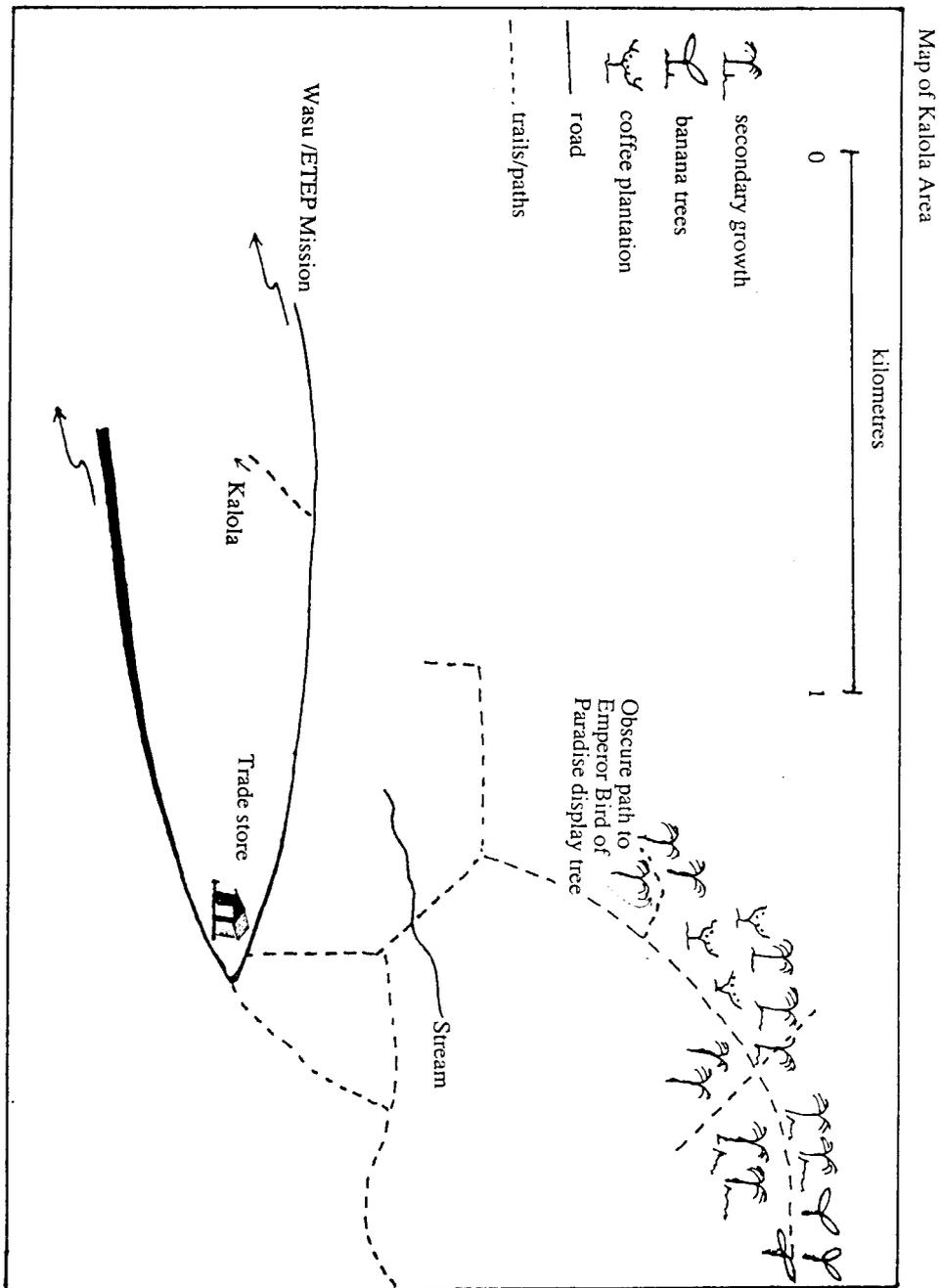
There are no hotels in Wasu, although such facilities probably exist in the larger town of Kabwum. In Wasu I stayed at the Police Station. Out of Wasu I spent three nights in a small house belonging to the community leader at Satop village, and two nights in another located on a property near the highest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

### Birding sites

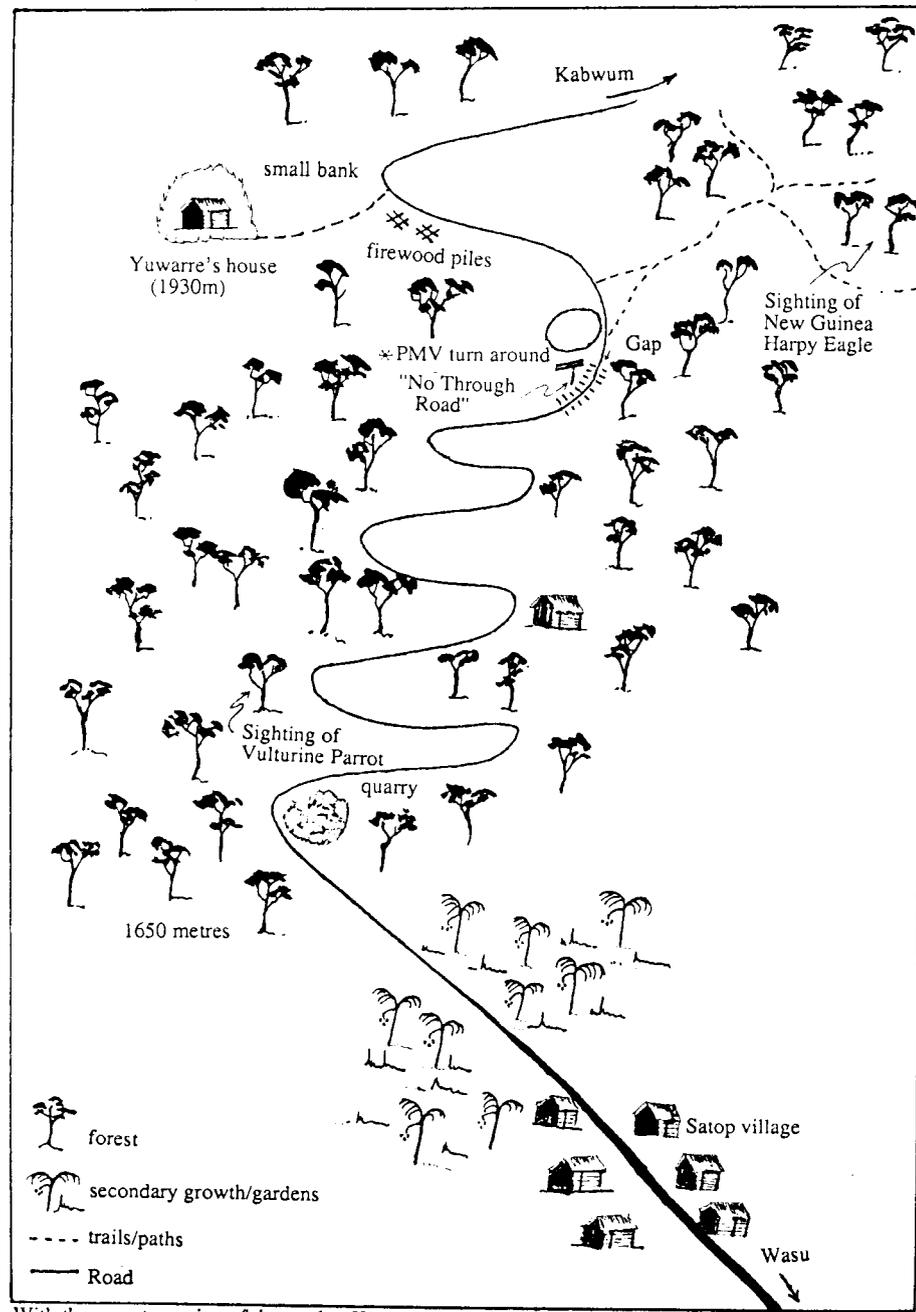
Most time should be spent birding the area of forest between 1650 and 1930 m (see map). This stretch of about 9 km can either be worked from Satop village or Yuwarre's property just below the gap. Due to the infrequency of PMVs early in the morning and the need to bird in the higher elevation areas before 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



Map of Gap Area .



\* With the recent opening of the road to Kabwum the PMV turn around and the "No Through Road" sign are likely to disappear.

ground at Kalola. The males are most active in the evening and early morning. The habitat is heavily disturbed and does not deserve too much time. Amongst the few other interesting species are Magnificent Riflebird, Magnificent Bird of Paradise, Red Myzomela, Chestnut-backed Jewel-Babbler and Grey-green Scrub-Wren.

**List of birds seen in the Wasu area (w = Wasu, g = gap area, k = Kabwum area).**

Great Frigatebird w, Lesser Frigatebird wg, Brown Booby w, Eastern Reef-Egret w, Black Kite wk, New Guinea Harpy-Eagle g, Brown Falcon gk, Eastern Golden Plover w, Whimbrel w, Common Tern w, Black-naped Tern w, Bridled Tern w, Crested Tern w, Brown Noddy w, Brown Cuckoo-Dove gk, Great Cuckoo-Dove g, Wompoo Fruit-Dove g, Pink-spotted Fruit-Dove k, Ornate Fruit-Dove gk, Rufescent Imperial Pigeon g, Zoe Imperial Pigeon k, Papuan Mountain Pigeon g, Dusky Lory gk, Rainbow Lorikeet k, Western Black-capped Lory gk, Papuan Lorikeet g, Yellow-billed Lorikeet g, Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrot g, Double-eyed Fig-Parrot k, Madarasz's Tiger-Parrot g, Eclectus Parrot k, Vulturine Parrot g, Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo k, Moustached Tree-Swift gk, Uniform Swiftlet w, Mountain Swiftlet gk, Glossy Swiftlet gk, Blue-tailed Bee-eater w, Dollarbird k, Pacific Swallow wgk, Grey Wagtail g, Hooded Cuckoo-Shrike g, Stout-billed Cuckoo-Shrike k, Yellow-eyed Cuckoo-Shrike k, Black-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike gk, Long-tailed Shrike g, Chestnut-backed Jewel-babbler k, Blue-capped Ifrita g, Island Leaf-Warbler g, White-shouldered Fairy-Wren gk, Orange-crowned Fairy-Wren g, Rusty Mouse-Warbler gk, Mountain Mouse-Warbler w, Large Scrub-Wren g, Buff-faced Scrub-Wren g, Grey-green Scrub-Wren gk, Fairy Gerygone k, Rufous-backed Fantail k, Dimorphic Fantail g, Black Fantail g, Friendly Fantail g, Willie Wagtail wk, Black Monarch, Black-winged Monarch k, Black-breasted Boatbill g, Canary Flycatcher g, Black-throated Robin g, Blue-grey Robin g, Mottled Whistler g, Regent Whistler g, Grey Whistler k, Brown-backed Whistler g, Little Shrike-Thrush gk, Hooded Pitohui gk, Black Pitohui g, Fan-tailed Berrypecker g, Spotted Berrypecker g, Tit Berrypecker g, Yellow-bellied Sunbird w, Black-fronted White-Eye k, Long-billed Honeyeater k, Slaty-chinned Longbill g, Red Myzomela k, Mountain Red-headed Myzomela g, Mountain Meliphaga g, Yellow-gaped Meliphaga g, Black-throated Honeyeater g, Tawny-breasted Honeyeater k, Marbled Honeyeater g, Meyer's Friarbird k, Rufous-backed Honeyeater g, Cinnamon-browed Melidectes g, Ornate Melidectes gk, Spangled Honeyeater g, Blue-faced Parrot-Finch g, Metallic Starling w, Yellow-faced Myna k, Brown Oriole k, Great Wood-Swallow gk, Hooded Butcherbird gk, Mountain Peltops gk, Macgregor's Bowerbird g, Crinkle-collared Manucode k, Magnificent Riflebird k, Huon Astrapia g, Superb Bird of Paradise g, Wahnes' Parotia g, Magnificent Bird of Paradise k, Emperor Bird of Paradise k, Grey Crow k.

Address:

## BEYOND MYOLA

BY ROGER HICKS

Early on 16th October 1987 I was again on my way to Myola, only three weeks after my last visit. Then Mike Hopkins had reached 3150 m to the east of the village. Such was his enthusiasm for this high altitude forest that he had organised this trip in order to return as soon as possible. This time I, and five others, were going to accompany him. We arrived in Myola before 07:00 to be greeted by the now traditional coffee and toast. After breakfast, porters were hired to carry our bags to a campsite selected by Mike on his previous visit. We set off at about 08:30 on the first stage of our trek. The path climbed steeply most of the way and it took us about 4 hours to reach the tree fern forest at 2800 m (700 m higher than Myola). Towards the top of the ridge some flowering trees were attracting a variety of lorikeets, including Papuan, Little Red, Yellow-billed and Plum-faced. Nearby, and moving with contrasting slowness, we saw a male Brehm's Tiger-Parrot. The hunting trail we were following continued beyond the weird scenery of the tree fern forest but still climbed just as steeply. Orange-billed Lorikeets replaced Yellow-billed but there was much less bird activity during the afternoon or maybe I was just getting too tired to notice. Mike, Peter and Burk pushed on ahead, and by the time Bill and I reached the grassland, where Mike intended us to camp, they had already set up the tents. Our campsite was on a slight rise in the grassland, at 3150 m. Alpine Pipits were common, flying from the grass to perch on tree ferns while Island Thrushes and White-winged Robins were to be seen at the forest edge.

As the sun sank, the temperature dropped rapidly and we all opted for the warmth of our sleeping bags. When I woke there was ice on the tent and until the sun climbed above the surrounding peaks it was chilly. A pair of Eastern Alpine Mannikins and a small party of Mountain Firetails, which drew attention to themselves by their mewing calls were seen at the grassland edge near the camp. Belford's Melidectes and Crested Berrypecker were common in the forest. After breakfast, and a stand in the sun to warm up, Mike and Peter set off in an attempt to reach the summit of Mt. Kenevi (3400 m), while Helen and I went in search of birds in the forest nearer the campsite. Three Greater Ground Robins, intent on a dispute of their own, stopped less than 2 m from us. Upon realising we were there, one flew for about 2 m, never more than 10 cm from the ground. This may be the first time this species has been recorded flying. Before returning to the camp for lunch we added Lesser Melampitta and Blue-capped Ifrita to our list. For the latter, this is *c.* 300 m above the extreme upper limit given in Beehler *et al.*. After lunch we ventured to another part of the forest seeing a male Painted Tiger-Parrot climbing along moss covered branches, a very cryptic Rufous Woodcock foraging amongst the leaf-litter and a flock of *c.* 20 New Guinea Thornbills flitting through