

EDITORIAL

Once again a MURUK editorial has to start with apologies for the late appearance of this issue. This has largely been my fault as I did not realise quite how much work was involved, but has been compounded by that staple editor's excuse - the computer. Here is issue 4.1, I hope you find the wait was worthwhile. In producing this issue I have received a great deal of help from the previous editor, Mike Hopkins and my wife Jenny. I cannot thank either of them enough.

I hope issues 4.2 and 4.3 will follow in quick succession. These issues will each have a theme. In 4.2 most papers/notes will be on bird behaviour and 4.3 will concentrate on the birds of the Port Moresby area.

We always require more articles, whether a scientific study or interesting one-off observations. Examples of the latter are short accounts of areas visited in PNG, in the style of the Gregory-Smiths' "Wallai Island" note in this MURUK or amendments/additions to Beehler *et al*, like Tolhurst's Splendid *Astrapia* note. The displays and nesting behaviour of many species are unknown, so notes on these would be particularly welcome. (I would like to produce an issue of MURUK devoted to breeding behaviour one day). Even if you feel unable to submit a note or paper, please send in your "recent observations". Visitors, as well as residents can contribute as so relatively little is known of PNG's birds. Please, please write.

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MURUK is published by the Papua New Guinea Bird Society and is available as part of Society membership.

The cover of this MURUK, showing a Dwarf Cassowary was drawn by Gideon Anton.

MURUK is now printed by the PNG Rehabilitation Centre

PORT MORESBY RINGING REPORT 1986 - 1987

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After an absence of about ten years, bird-ringing, or banding, was re-established in the Port Moresby area in October 1986. Permits are required from both the PNG Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) and the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service (ANPWS). The ANPWS administer the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Schemes (ABBBS) and it is their rings we use. As far as we know there has been no bird-ringing in the Port Moresby area since 1977, when the late Harry Bell was working at Brown River (Bell 1982), close to one of the sites we now use. Indeed there have been few licensed bird ringers working in PNG in recent years, other than professional ornithologists who have been active near Tari, Southern Highlands Province, and Wau, Morobe Province. A summary of our ringing activities in the Port Moresby area between October 1986 and December 1987 is presented below.

Ringing Sites.

A wide range of ringing sites, from small offshore islets to high altitude (3000+ m) forests have been tried over these 15 months. Location details and a brief descriptions of each site are given below. The numbers after each site name refer to the following :

- PNG 1:100000 topographic survey map sheet number;
- eight figure map reference;
- number of birds trapped at that site (excluding retraps);
- number of species trapped at that site;
- number of days on which ringing was carried out at that site.

a) Brown River (8379, EK213857, 49, 25, 6)

This ringing site lies north of the Hiritano Highway, c. 5 km beyond the Brown River bridge and c. 40 km from Port Moresby. Recent logging activities (early 1987) in this area have created numerous trails along which we have set mist nets. This area has been logged on at least two occasions in the previous 30 years and is a mixture of dense secondary growth and rain forest. Approximately 150 species of birds have been recorded here in the past three years and many records from this area have been published in PNGBS newsletters and Muruk.

b) **Maui Islet, Fisherman's Island** (8378, EK045472, 2, 1, 1)

Maui Islet is a raised coral platform, lying c. 500 m to the south-west of Fisherman's Island, that at most protrudes 4 m above sea-level at low tide. There is some sparse vegetation on top of the island, amongst which various species of seabirds have been recorded nesting (PNGBS newsletters). We found a few tern-like nest scrapes containing eggs but no young, probably Bridled Tern *Sterna anaethus* nests. We think most breeding may occur during, or shortly after, the wet season when the vegetation may be more lush and provide more cover.

c) **Ilimo Farm/Pacific Adventist College** (8379, EK298620/EK303612, 4, 2, 2)

These two sites lie either side of the Hubert Murray Highway about 8 km from the Nine-mile (Hubert Murray/Hiritano Highways) junction. A small pond on Ilimo Farm, which has subsequently dried up, was used once. The farmland lying north of the Pacific Adventist College has been visited at night and Large-tailed Nightjars *Caprimulgus macrurus* have been trapped using a spotlight and "butterfly" net.

d) **Lake Omha** (8380, EL543317, 68, 14, 12)

This site lies at approximately 3660 m in the Owen Stanley mountain range, between Mount Victoria and Mount Albert Edward. Ringing activities have been carried out here as part of an investigation into the breeding biology, food and habitat preferences of Macgregor's Bird of Paradise *Macgregoria pulchra*. The habitat consists of extensive areas of sub-alpine grassland and bog with large stands of the podocarp tree *Dacrycarpus compactus* on drier ground. Trapping has been concentrated in and around the forested areas. Evidence is accumulating that many species lead a nomadic existence, invading these areas at times of rich food supply.

e) **Moitaka Settling Ponds** (8379, EK213623, 44, 12, 5)

The settling ponds lie to the north of Port Moresby, at the southern end of Waigani Swamp. There are five settling ponds of varying size separated by grassy banks. Around the edges of the ponds are varying amounts of exposed sludge which attract palearctic waders on passage. Between the settling ponds and Waigani Swamp there are extensive reed beds. All ringing activity here was in the latter part of 1986. This is the most frequently visited bird-watching site in the Port Moresby area.

f) **Motupore Island** (8378, EK311470, 26, 6, 11)

Motupore is a small, hilly island located about 15 km south-east of Port Moresby, 1 km from the mainland. Most of the land is eucalypt savanna, but there are some pockets of monsoonal woodland, extensive mangroves and a limited strand formation. Netting has been carried out in all these habitats with the number of birds caught reflecting the impoverished nature of this small island's avifauna.

g) **Myola** (8479, EK842894, 118, 27, 9)

Myola is a small village, situated at 2080 m in the Owen Stanley Mountain Range, a short distance from the Kokoda Trail and less than half-an-hour's flying time from Port Moresby. The village is on the edge of a large, marshy grassland basin which is surrounded by extensive moss forest. Close to the village are some gardens and where the forest has been cleared, but the land not utilised, there is some dense secondary growth. Mist nets have been set in all these habitats, although most trapping has been done in the forest and secondary growth east of the village.

h) **University of PNG (UPNG) Campus** (8379, EK197591, 14, 7, 10)

This site is IB's back garden on UPNG campus. Mist nets have been set occasionally, but the success rate has been low. Persistence pays, however, and this is the sole site of capture for five species.

i) **Varirata National Park** (8379, EK395560 & EK403568, 27, 13, 6)

This national park lies 40 km east of Port Moresby, on the scarp of the Astrolabe mountain range at c. 750 m. The habitat is mainly rain forest with savanna on the drier ridge tops. Two ringing sites have been used: in a stream valley south-east of the Gare's Lookout trail and along the Boundary trail which lies south of the access road and begins about 0.5 km before the toll gate. Permission to trap and ring within the park was granted by the DEC. Nearly 200 species of birds have been recorded in the park in recent years.

j) **Veimauri** (8379, EL050100, 8, 4, 1)

Another area of lowland rain forest that has recently become accessible as a result of logging operations. Its distance from Port Moresby (c. 60 km to the north-east along the Hiritano Highway) and very insistent mosquitos have precluded more frequent bird-ringing visits.

Species Accounts

In the 15 months from October 1986 to December 1987 360 birds of 95 species have been trapped and ringed. For 40 species only one individual has been ringed, whilst more than 30 individuals have been ringed of only two species, Fan-tailed Berrypecker *Melanocharis versteri* and Sooty Melidectes *Melidectes fuscus*. Only 15 species have been trapped at more than one site and no birds have been retrapped away from the site of original capture. Twenty-four individuals of 14 species have retrapped on subsequent visits to the same site.

A list of species caught and ringed, with some notes is presented below. The numbers after each species name refer to the following:

- Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union species number;
- Ring size used: where this differs from the ABBBS recommended size the latter number is shown in brackets;
- Number of birds ringed;
- Number of birds retrapped;
- Number of sites at which that species was trapped.

The names of the sites where the birds were caught are given. No analysis of the biometric data collected has been attempted if less than 10 birds of that species have been caught. Significance tests given are all from 2-sample t-tests.

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| Eastern Reef-Egret | <i>Egretta sacra</i> |
| 191, 11 (10), 2, 0, 1. Maui Islet. Two flightless, but fully feathered, juveniles ringed. Size 11 ring put on tibia and overlapped. | |
| Black-mantled Goshawk | <i>Accipiter melanochlamys</i> |
| 3068, 8, 1, 0, 1. Lake Omha. | |
| Comb-crested Jacana | <i>Irediparra gallinacea</i> |
| 171, 8, 7, 0, 1. Moitaka SP. | |
| Eastern Golden Plover | <i>Pluvialis fulva</i> |
| 137, 6, 2, 0, 1. Moitaka SP. | |
| Whimbrel | <i>Numenius phaeopus</i> |
| 150, 7, 1, 0, 1. Motupore Island. | |
| Common Sandpiper | <i>Tringa hypoleucos</i> |
| 157, 4, 8, 2, 2. Moitaka SP and Motupore Island. One bird was retrapped on Motupore Island six months after it had originally been caught and ringed there. | |
| Terek Sandpiper | <i>Tringaterek</i> |
| 160, 5, 1, 0, 1. Moitaka SP. | |
| Sharp-tailed Sandpiper | <i>Calidris acuminata</i> |
| 163, 5, 6, 0, 1. Moitaka SP. | |
| Red-necked Stint | <i>Calidris ruficollis</i> |
| 162, 3, 1, 0, 1. Moitaka SP. | |
| Black-billed Cuckoo-Dove | <i>Macropygia nigrirostris</i> |
| 3202, 6, 1, 0, 1. Myola. | |
| Stephan's Ground-Dove | <i>Chalcophaps stephani</i> |
| 3208 7, 1, 0, 1. Brown River. | |
| Peaceful Dove | <i>Geopelia striata</i> |
| 30, 6, 2, 0, 1. UPNG. | |
| Bronze Ground-Dove | <i>Gallinula beccarii</i> |
| 3211, 6, 1, 0, 1. Myola. One male. | |
| Mountain Owlet-Nightjar | <i>Aegotheles albertisi</i> |
| 3301, 4, 1, 0, 1. Myola. | |
| Large-tailed Nightjar | <i>Caprimulgus macrurus</i> |
| 332, 5, 3, 0, 1. Pacific Adventist College. All three birds were caught using a spotlight to dazzle them and a "butterfly" net. The birds showed a variable amount of white in the tail. | |

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| Common Paradise-Kingfisher | <i>Tanysiptera galatea</i> |
| 3334, 5, 9, 0, 1. Brown River. Nine birds trapped in a relatively small area of lowland rainforest and, as yet, not a single retrap. | |
| Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher | <i>Tanysiptera danae</i> |
| 3339, 5, 1, 0, 1. Varirata NP. | |
| Hook-billed Kingfisher | <i>Melidora macrorrhina</i> |
| 3322, 6, 1, 0, 1. Varirata NP. | |
| Sacred Kingfisher | <i>Halcyon sancta</i> |
| 326, 5, 15, 3, 2. Motupore Island and UPNG. Six males and four females with a further four birds unsexed, possibly two of each sex. Birds were sexed on plumage colour when viewed by refractive light (Disney 1974). One bird retrapped on Motupore on 11/4/87 had originally been ringed there on 6/10/86. Seven birds, presumably migrants returning from their Australian breeding grounds, were caught on Motupore on 18/4/87. The mean weight of Sacred Kingfishers caught in April (n = 9, mean = 42.22 g) was significantly less than that of birds caught in other months (n = 9, mean = 46.73) (t = 4.742, p < 0.01). Two birds originally ringed in April weighed 40 g and 44 g. When retrapped in late May 1987 they weighed 43 g and 46 g respectively. We believe this is an indication of the weight loss during migration and the subsequent weight gain. | |

| | n | smallest | mean | largest | Rand & Gilliard |
|----------------|----|----------|-------|---------|-----------------|
| wing | 14 | 85.0 | 92.6 | 96 | 90 |
| exposed culmen | 14 | 33.20 | 36.94 | 42.45 | 38 |
| head & bill | 14 | 61.0 | 67.64 | 72.0 | - |
| tarsus | 14 | 12.15 | 13.93 | 14.8 | 14 |

All measurements in mm.

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| Dwarf Kingfisher | <i>Ceyx lepidus</i> |
| 3321, 2(3), 1, 0, 1. Brown River. | |
| Island Thrush | <i>Turdus poliocephalus</i> |
| 3374, 5, 4, 0, 1. Myola. All caught in secondary growth at forest/garden edge. | |
| Blue Jewel-Babbler | <i>Ptilorhoa caerulescens</i> |
| 3385, 4, 2, 2, 1. Brown River. Two females. | |
| Gray's Grasshopper-Warbler | <i>Locustella fasciolata</i> |
| 821, 2, 1, 0, 1. Moitaka SP. A single bird trapped in reed beds between the settling ponds and Waigani Swamp, in October 1986 (Burrows & Hicks 1988). | |
| Clamorous Reed-Warbler | <i>Acrocephalus stentoreus</i> |
| 524, 2, 2, 0, 2. Moitaka SP and Ilimo Farm. | |
| Tawny Grassbird | <i>Megalurus timoriensis</i> |
| 523, 3, 1, 0, 1. Myola. | |
| Golden-headed Cisticola | <i>Cisticola exilis</i> |
| 525, 1, 2, 0, 1. Moitaka SP. | |
| Emperor Fairy-Wren | <i>Malurus cyanocephalus</i> |
| 3398, 2, 5, 2, 1. Brown River. A male and female caught together twice and one pair subsequently retrapped together. The fifth bird was female plumaged. | |

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| Orange-crowned Fairy-Wren 3413, 1, 3, 0, 1. Myola. | <i>Chytomyias insignis</i> |
| Rusty Mouse-Warbler 3410, 2, 4, 1, 1. Varirata NP. | <i>Crateroscelis murina</i> |
| Bicolored Mouse-Warbler 3411, 2, 1, 0, 1. Varirata NP. | <i>Crateroscelis nigrorufa</i> |
| Mountain Mouse-Warbler 3412, 2, 5, 0, 2. Lake Omha and Myola. | <i>Crateroscelis robusta</i> |
| Large Scrub-Wren 3405, 2, 9, 1, 2. Lake Omha and Myola. | <i>Sericornis nouhuysi</i> |
| Buff-faced Scrub-Wren 3406, 1, 4, 0, 1. Myola. | <i>Sericornis perspicillatus</i> |
| Papuan Scrub-Wren 3408, 1, 5, 0, 2. Lake Omha and Myola. | <i>Sericornis papuensis</i> |
| New Guinea Thornbill 3414, 1, 3, 0, 1. Lake Omha. | <i>Acanthiza murina</i> |
| Yellow-bellied Gerygone 3416, 1, 1, 0, 1. Brown River. | <i>Gerygone chrysogaster</i> |
| Sooty Thicket-Fantail 3425, 2, 1, 1, 1. Brown River. An individual bearing an old and worn ring (no. 020 28601) was caught on 1/8/87. The old ring was replaced with a new one. This bird was re-trapped on 9/8/87. It was originally ringed by Mr L.W.C. Filewood on 24/8/75 and so is at least 11 years 11 months and 16 days old, the oldest record for this species. It was ringed at a site less than 5 km from where retrapped. | <i>Rhipidura threnothorax</i> |
| Black Thicket-Fantail 3426, 2, 1, 1, 1. Brown River. | <i>Rhipidura maculipectus</i> |
| White-bellied Thicket-Fantail 3427, 2, 1, 1, 1. Brown River. On 9/8/87 all three species of thicket-fantail were trapped at Brown River. | <i>Rhipidura leucothorax</i> |
| Rufous-backed Fantail 3429, 1, 2, 0, 1. Brown River. | <i>Rhipidura rufidorsa</i> |
| Dimorphic Fantail 3430, 1, 2, 0, 1. Myola. | <i>Rhipidura brachyrhyncha</i> |
| Black Fantail 3432, 1, 7, 2, 1. Myola. Four males and three females. | <i>Rhipidura atra</i> |
| Friendly Fantail 3434, 1, 1, 0, 1. Myola. | <i>Rhipidura albolimbata</i> |
| Willie Wagtail 364, 3, 8, 0, 2. Moitaka SP and UPNG. | <i>Rhipidura leucophrys</i> |
| Spot-winged Monarch 3443, 2, 4, 0, 2. Brown River and Veimauri. | <i>Monarcha guttula</i> |
| Golden Monarch 3446, 1, 1, 0, 1. Brown River. One male. | <i>Monarcha chrysomela</i> |
| Olive Flycatcher 3461, 1, 1, 0, 1. Brown River. | <i>Microeca flavirescens</i> |
| Canary Flycatcher 3462, 1, 3, 0, 1. Myola. All three birds caught at the same time. | <i>Microeca papuana</i> |

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| White-faced Robin 397, 1, 3, 0, 1. Varirata NP. | <i>Tregellasia leucops</i> |
| Garnet Robin 3466, 1, 1, 0, 1. Myola. One male. | <i>Eugerygone rubra</i> |
| Ashy Robin 3477, 3, 14, 3, 1. Myola. Three birds originally ringed in September 1987 were retrapped in December 1987. There is a 10% difference in wing lengths of males and females (Rand & Gilliard 1967). This sexual dimorphism may be discernible in other measurements but the sample at present is too small so no averages are presented here. | <i>Poecilodryas albispecularis</i> |
| Black-sided Robin 3469, 2, 1, 2, 1. Brown River. | <i>Poecilodryas hypoleuca</i> |
| Greater Ground-Robin 3376, 5, 1, 0, 1. Lake Omha. | <i>Amalocichla sclateriana</i> |
| Lesser Ground-Robin 3377, 3, 1, 0, 1. Myola. | <i>Amalocichla incerta</i> |
| White-winged Robin 3473, 3, 6, 0, 1. Lake Omha. | <i>Peneothello sigillatus</i> |
| Blue-grey Robin 3475, 3, 1, 0, 1. Myola. | <i>Peneothello cyanus</i> |
| Mottled Whistler 3481, 2, 1, 0, 1. Myola. One male. | <i>Rhagologus leucostigma</i> |
| Regent Whistler 3484, 3(2), 8, 0, 2. Lake Omha and Myola. One male and seven females. | <i>Pachycephala schlegelii</i> |
| Rufous-naped Whistler 3494, 4, 5, 0, 1. Myola. | <i>Pachycephala rufinucha</i> |
| Little Shrike-Thrush 413, 4, 4, 0, 2. Brown River and Varirata NP. | <i>Colluricincla megarhyncha</i> |
| Grey Shrike-Thrush 408, 5, 2, 0, 1. Moitaka SP. A clutch of two nestlings ringed on 16/10/86, but unfortunately young and nestlings disappeared shortly after. | <i>Colluricincla harmonica</i> |
| Black Berrypecker 3512, 2, 7, 0, 2. Varirata NP and Brown River. Four males and three females. | <i>Melanocharis nigra</i> |
| Fan-tailed Berrypecker 3514, 1/2, 34, 2, 1. Myola. 11 males and 23 females. 23 caught between 25 - 27/9/87. The mean weight of females caught in December 1987 (n = 9, mean = 17.74 g, range = 12 - 18.6 g) was significantly greater than the mean weight of females caught in September 1987 (n = 14, mean = 14.73 g, range = 14.8 - 21.15 g) (t = 3.239, p < 0.01). Two females originally caught in September weighed 16.2 g and 18.6 g. When retrapped in December they weighed 18.0 g and 21.15 g respectively. We are unable to provide an explanation for this weight gain. Only one male was caught in December so no similar analysis could be undertaken. | <i>Melanocharis versteri</i> |

| | | n | smallest | mean | largest | Rand & Gilliard |
|----------------|--------|----|----------|-------|---------|-----------------|
| wing | male | 11 | 62.5 | 65.60 | 70 | 61 |
| | female | 23 | 62.0 | 68.07 | 79 | 68 |
| exposed culmen | male | 11 | 11.0 | 12.16 | 14.0 | 15 |
| | female | 23 | 10.5 | 12.25 | 14.5 | - |
| head & bill | male | 11 | 29.0 | 30.66 | 32.2 | - |
| | female | 23 | 27.6 | 30.38 | 32.0 | - |
| tarsus | male | 11 | 23.4 | 25.24 | 27.1 | 23 |
| | female | 23 | 21.8 | 26.79 | 28.1 | - |

All measurements in mm.

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| Crested Berrypecker 3518, 3(4), 5, 0, 1. Lake Omha. | <i>Paramythia montium</i> |
| Yellow-bellied Sunbird 572, 1, 9, 1, 1. Motupore Island. Six males and three females. | <i>Nectarinia jugularis</i> |
| New Guinea White-Eye 3526, 1, 3, 0, 1. Myola. | <i>Zosterops novaeguineae</i> |
| Olive Straightbill 3529, 2(3), 3, 2, 1. Myola. Two birds ringed on 25/9/87 were retrapped together, with a third bird on 4/12/87. | <i>Timeliopsis fulvigula</i> |
| Tawny Straightbill 3528, 3/4(3), 2, 0, 1. Brown River. | <i>Timeliopsis griseigula</i> |
| Long-billed Honeyeater 3548, 4, 2, 0, 2. Varirata NP and Brown River. | <i>Melilestes megarhynchus</i> |
| Slaty-chinned Longbill 3547, 1, 1, 0, 1. Varirata NP. | <i>Toxorhamphus poliopterus</i> |
| Dwarf Honeyeater 3546, 2, 13, 0, 3. Varirata NP, Brown River and Veimauri. Our most widely trapped species. In all honeyeaters for which data are available (51 species in Rand & Gilliard 1967), the female is smaller than the male. No size difference is noted for Dwarf Honeyeater although it is for its congener, Pygmy Honeyeater <i>Oedistoma pygmaeum</i> . It is assumed that Dwarf Honeyeater will similarly exhibit sexual dimorphism but the present sample of 13 birds is too small to discern this. No means are presented here. | <i>Oedistoma iliolophus</i> |
| Scrub White-eared Meliphaga 3576, 3, 1, 0, 1. Brown River. | <i>Meliphaga albonotata</i> |
| Puff-backed Meliphaga 3569, 3, 2, 0, 1. Varirata NP. | <i>Meliphaga aruensis</i> |
| Mimic Meliphaga 3575, 3, 1, 0, 1. Veimauri. | <i>Meliphaga analoga</i> |

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| Graceful Meliphaga 612, 3, 2, 0, 2. Motupore Island and Brown River. | <i>Meliphaga gracilis</i> |
| Yellow-gaped Meliphaga 3577, 3, 1, 0, 1. Brown River. | <i>Meliphaga flavirictus</i> |
| Black-throated Honeyeater 3654, 4(3), 1, 0, 1. Lake Omha. | <i>Lichenostomus subfrenatus</i> |
| Tawny-breasted Honeyeater 629, 5, 1, 0, 1. Brown River. | <i>Xanthotis flaviventris</i> |
| Helmeted Friarbird 642, 7, 1, 0, 1. UPNG. | <i>Philemon buceroides</i> |
| Rufous-backed Honeyeater 3581, 2(3), 14, 0, 1. Myola. Published data shows the female is approximately 10% smaller than the male (Rand & Gilliard 1967). The present sample is too small to discern any sexual dimorphism so no means are presented here. | <i>Ptiloprora guisei</i> |
| Sooty Melidectes 3552, 4, 36, 0, 1. Lake Omha. Two parameters in particular, wing length and head and bill length show a distinct bimodal distribution which probably relates to male and female birds. The data for these two parameters were split into large and small birds along the following lines: | <i>Melidectes fuscus</i> |
| Wing length: Small < 106 mm < Large | |
| Head and bill length: Small < 55 mm < Large. | |
| By splitting the data in this way most birds are either small-headed and short-winged or large-headed and long-winged. There were three exceptions which were large-headed but short-winged. These were omitted from the following calculations. The mean wing length of 16 large birds (mean = 112 mm; range = 108 - 115 mm) is significantly larger than that of 16 small birds (mean = 100.94 mm; range = 96 - 105 mm) ($t = 4.38, p < 0.01$). The mean head and bill length of 14 large birds (mean = 58.37 mm; range = 56.0 - 61.9 mm) is highly significantly larger than that of 15 small birds (mean = 52.75 mm; range = 50.3 - 54.9 mm) ($t = 7.78, p < 0.01$). Male Sooty Melidectes are larger than females (Rand and Gilliard 1967), therefore the birds with longer wings and larger head and bills are probably males and those with shorter wings and smaller heads and bills are probably females. It would seem possible, based on this set of data, that 90% of Sooty Melidectes could be sexed in the hand using the above guidelines. | |
| Belford's Melidectes 3557, 6, 6, 0, 1. Lake Omha. | <i>Melidectes belfordi</i> |
| Common Smoky Honeyeater 3550, 4(5), 1, 0, 1. Myola. | <i>Melipotus fumigatus</i> |
| Rufous-banded Honeyeater 600, 2, 2, 0, 2. UPNG. | <i>Conopophila albogularis</i> |
| Grey-headed Mannikin 3597, 1, 9, 0, 1. Moitaka SP. | <i>Lonchura caniceps</i> |
| Chestnut-breasted Mannikin 3602, 1(2), 1, 0, 1. UPNG. | <i>Lonchura castaneothorax</i> |
| Singing Starling 3607, 5, 1, 0, 1. UPNG. | <i>Aplonis cantoroides</i> |

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| Mountain Drongo | <i>Chaetorhynchus papuensis</i> |
| 3618, 3, 4, 0, 2. Varirata NP and Veimaui. | |
| Black-backed Butcherbird | <i>Cracticus mentalis</i> |
| 3625, 6, 1, 0, 1. Motupore Island. | |
| White-eared Catbird | <i>Ailuroedus buccoides</i> |
| 3629, 7(8), 2, 0, 2. Varirata NP and Brown River. | |
| Macgregor's Bowerbird | <i>Amblyornis macgregoriae</i> |
| 3633, 6(7), 2, 0, 1. Myola. Two females. | |
| Crested Bird of Paradise | <i>Cnemophilus macgregorii</i> |
| 3642, 5, 1, 0, 1. Lake Omha. One male. | |
| Macgregor's Bird of Paradise | <i>Macgregoria pulchra</i> |
| 3643, 8, 1, 0, 1. Lake Omha. | |
| King Bird of Paradise | <i>Cicinnurus regius</i> |
| 3668, 5, 1, 0, 1. Brown River. One female. | |

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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the PNG Department of Environment and Conservation for issuing permits to allow us to trap and ring birds in PNG, in general and Varirata National Park, in particular. We are grateful to the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme who supplied all the rings we use and to the land-owners of the ringing sites we use for allowing us to operate on their land. Finally a special thank you to all those PNGBS members and friends who have helped carry the ringing gear and with putting up and taking down the nets. It would not have been as easy nor as much fun without you.

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LOWLAND BIRDS OF THE VANIMO REGION, WEST SEPIK PROVINCE

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Vanimo lies in the north west of Papua New Guinea in the West Sepik Province. It is primarily a region of virgin lowland rainforest that has a rich avifauna, but is also rarely visited by ornithologists.

Hans Beste and I visited this area for five days in October 1987. Observations were made between Wutung, close to the Irian Jaya border, and the logging areas 26 km east of Vanimo, with several mornings being spent on the road going inland towards Bewani.

The annotated list that follows is only intended as an indication of the area's birdlife. It is no doubt incomplete, as our observations were mostly from roadsides, and our stay was short.

Highlights included sightings of the rarely seen Northern Cassowary, Forest Bittern, Gurney's Eagle, and Broad-billed Fairy-Wren.

Annotated List

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|--|----------------------------------|
| Northern Cassowary | <i>Casuarus unappendiculatus</i> |
| 5 Oct, an adult male flushed from dense vegetation at alarmingly close range, 7 km from the coast along the Bewani rd. Droppings in this area were numerous, indicating that this species is more common than our single sighting suggests. | |
| Forest Bittern | <i>Zonotrichia heliosylus</i> |
| 6 Oct, one flushed from a creek in selectively logged lowland forest 26 km east of Vanimo. Although only seen briefly the barring on the breast, underwing, and tail was clearly seen as it flew 100 m before landing out of sight. It was noted to be a large, heavily built bird with dangling yellow legs and feet. Further attempts at flushing it failed. | |
| Brahminy Kite | <i>Haliastur indus</i> |
| 5 Oct, two adults seen between Vanimo and Wutung. One juvenile along the Bewani rd at c. 200 m. | |
| Grey-headed Goshawk | <i>Accipiter poliocephalus</i> |
| 5 Oct, two along the Bewani rd, one perched in a coconut palm close to the coast, the other flying across the road at about 150 m. | |
| Gurney's Eagle | <i>Aquila gurneyi</i> |
| 5 Oct, one soaring near Musu, 10 km west of Vanimo. Watched for about five minutes as it soared just above the canopy. Noted to have very broad wings, a small head, a short rounded tail, wing tips heavily fingered and darker than the rest of the underwing. Wings held flat. | |
| Brown-collared Brush-Turkey | <i>Talegalla jobiensis</i> |
| Commonly heard throughout the region at dawn and dusk, or when raining. A shy bird difficult to observe well. | |
| Lesser Golden Plover | <i>Pluvialis dominica</i> |
| 5 - 6 Oct, odd birds seen along the beaches and at Wutung; 7 Oct, 350 on Vanimo airfield was the highest count, but abundant on the airfield throughout our stay. | |