

NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF DOROBISORO, CENTRAL PROVINCE

CHRISTOPHER EASTWOOD

Dorobisoro (c. 9° 30' S, 147° 55' E) is a small village/mission station at c. 500 m, some 30 minutes flying time east of Port Moresby, aboard a scheduled Douglas Airways flight. I visited the area from 11 to 13 June 1988 in the company of the Port Moresby Bushwalkers.

The village lies at the bottom of a valley on the banks of a tributary of the Mimani River, in the foothills of the Owen Stanley Mountains. It is one of numerous villages in the area, with a comprehensive network of paths. Although the surrounding hills appear well forested, there has been considerable cultivation with the rain forest being replaced by secondary growth in the immediate vicinity of all the villages. Good, undisturbed rain forest tended to be higher up the hill slopes away from areas of settlement. Even here there was often still some evidence of human encroachment. Access to these areas was not easy given the hilly terrain.

Bird watching was largely exploratory and was confined to the mornings due to the unseasonal, torrential rains that fell every afternoon.

Generally, bird activity was scarce and was mostly confined to the occasional bird parties that were moving through the better forested areas above the villages. The villagers still hunt cassowary, although they must go on a three day trek if they are to be successful. brush-turkeys (presumably Black-billed) are also hunted and were noteworthy by their absence, being neither heard nor seen during the entire weekend.

Annotated List

Little Black Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>
Two flying down the river.	
Long-tailed Buzzard	<i>Hemicopernis longicauda</i>
One seen from the village, gliding along the edge of the hills, settling occasionally.	
Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>
Several seen from the village, flying about the tops of the hills.	
Little Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus morphnoides</i>
One with the Brahminy Kites.	
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	<i>Macropygia amboinensis</i>
One on the first day.	
Wompoo Fruit-Dove	<i>Ptilinopus magnificus</i>
Surprisingly, only one seen and none heard calling.	
Rainbow Lorikeet	<i>Trichoglossus haematodus</i>
A small flock flying between hills shortly before dusk.	
?Goldie's Lorikeet	<i>Trichoglossus goldiei</i>
Smaller birds flying with Rainbow Lorikeets were tentatively identified as this species.	

Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis castaneiventris</i>
A juvenile on the edge of disturbed forest.	
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx lucidus</i>
One on the edge of disturbed forest c. 800 m above the valley.	
White-eared Bronze-Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx meyerii</i>
Two in scrub along forest edge.	
Moustached Tree-Swift	<i>Hemiprocne mystacea</i>
One or two amongst Uniform Swiftlets which flocked in the valley during the rain. Single birds also seen on the edge of cleared areas in the valley floor.	
Uniform Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia vanikorensis</i>
Large flocks came into the valley with the rains.	
Glossy Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia esculenta</i>
Occasional birds in clearings near forest and flying above the canopy on forested slopes.	
Azure Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo azurea</i>
One, or possibly a pair, on the river upstream from Dorobisoro.	
Stout-billed Cuckoo-Shrike	<i>Coracina caeruleogrisea</i>
A pair feeding in undisturbed forest accompanied by Rusty Pitohuis.	
?Chestnut-backed Jewel-babbler	<i>Ptilorrhoa castanonotus</i>
A jewel-babbler, presumably this species, flushed from the side of a track, c. 900 m above valley.	
White-shouldered Fairy-Wren	<i>Malurus alboscapulatus</i>
In grassland, above cleared area of forest.	
?Sooty Thicket-Fantail	<i>Rhipidura threnothorax</i>
Presumably this species, as no white was seen on the bird, flushed from a thicket by the river.	
Torrent Flycatcher	<i>Monachella muelleriana</i>
Common on the river away from the main villages. Parties of four and five birds seen.	
Little Shrike-Thrush	<i>Colluricincla megarrhyncha</i>
One seen on the first morning.	
Hooded Pitohui	<i>Pitohui dichrous</i>
Small flock moving through forest in valley bottom.	
Rusty Pitohui	<i>Pitohui ferrugineus</i>
Small flock feeding in forest above valley.	
Black Berrypecker	<i>Melanocharis nigra</i>
Only one, in undisturbed forest above valley.	
Slaty-chinned Longbill	<i>Toxorhamphus poliopterus</i>
Two, on different days. One along river and one c. 500 m above valley.	
Dwarf Honeyeater	<i>Oedistoma iliolophus</i>
Several at a flowering tree.	
Papuan Black Myzomela	<i>Myzomelanigrita</i>
Several feeding with Dwarf Honeyeaters.	
?Scrub White-eared Meliphaga	<i>Meliphaga albonotata</i>
A meliphaga with a white ear patch was seen in scrub alongside the river and presumed to be this species.	
Tawny-breasted Honeyeater	<i>Xanthotis flaviventer</i>
One on the second day.	
Helmeted Friarbird	<i>Philemon buceroides</i>
Single birds were seen on all days.	

- Torrent-Lark** *Grallina bruijni*
One on the river in the same area as Torrent Flycatchers. At one time the lark and a flycatcher were perched on the same rock.
- Hooded Butcherbird** *Cracticus cassicus*
A family of four or five birds lived on the forested slope above Dorobisoro.
- Crinkle-collared Manucode** *Manucodia chalybata*
One or two birds on the edge of disturbed forest.
- Raggiana Bird of Paradise** *Paradisaea raggiana*
Seemingly the only common bird in the area. At times abundant.

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EXTENSION OF THE KNOWN RANGE OF SPLENDID ASTRAPIA ASTRAPIA SPLENDISSIMA

LEN TOLHURST

On 25 and 26 March 1989 a female Splendid *Astrapia Astrapia splendissima* was seen near the bailey bridge, above Ambua Lodge, Tari Gap, Southern Highlands Province. It flew away from me, at a distance of about 25 m when first seen. The tail-feathers were bi-coloured, white near the base and brown towards the end. The line of demarcation between the two colours was about half-way down the length of the tail. The white on the base of the tail covered the full width of the tail feathers, hence ruling out confusion with female Ribbon-tailed *Astrapia A. mayeri*. A male Ribbon-tailed *Astrapia* was seen in the same area.

These sightings were at c. 3600 m, only a little above Splendid *Astrapias*' upper altitudinal limit (Beehler *et al.* 1986). However, the Tari Gap is c. 150 km east of the Victor Emmanuel ange, the known eastern limit of this species. It is no doubt still true that the "Eastern limit of range unknown". However, these sightings do extend the known range to at least the Tari Gap area. Visitors to Ambua Lodge and the Tari Gap should carefully check all *astrapias*.

Beehler, B.M., T.K. Pratt & D.A. Zimmerman. 1986. *Birds of New Guinea*. Princeton University Press.

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BIRD NOTES FROM WALLAI ISLAND

RICHARD GREGORY-SMITH AND JUDYTH GREGORY-SMITH

Wallai Island, waterless and uninhabited, is situated about 6 km south of Kupiano in the Central Province of Papua New Guinea. We visited the island on 17 - 18 December 1988. The crossing from Kupiano takes one or two hours by outboard canoe, depending on wind and tide, and should not be attempted unless the sea is reasonably calm.

The island is a typical coral cay, c. 600 m in diameter with maritime forest in the centre, fringed with white coral sand and encircled by a reef with few passages.

Wallai Island is the site of a colony of Black Noddies *Anous minutus*. Up to a thousand were sighted at a time. They roosted in the forest but there was no current evidence of nesting. The noddies were accompanied on their fishing expeditions by Brown Boobies *Sula leucogaster* and Brown Noddies *Anous stolidus*.

At least one Beach Kingfisher *Halcyon saurophaga* inhabits the island. It was seen perched on dead branches from which it occasionally flew down to settle on the beach, where Hermit Crabs were the only food source in evidence. The kingfisher is a large strikingly white bird with green back and blue wings and tail. Its call is loud, instantly recognisable as a kingfisher, but reedy rather than full throated. Beehler *et al.* (1986) state that the sole record for the south coast of PNG is from Kupiano.

The island is frequented by Pied Imperial Pigeons *Ducula bicolor*. Six were seen coming into roost in the higher trees. There were also about 20 Varied Honeyeaters *Lichenostomus versicolor*, easily located by their melodious song. The race here has brown wings and back, touched with olive, and a black facial mask.

Species List: Lesser Frigatebird 5, Brown Booby 10, Eastern Reef-Egret (grey phase) 1, Ruddy Turnstone 1, Grey-tailed Tattler 1, Common Sandpiper 2, Black Noddy 1000, Brown Noddy 20, Crested Tern 1, Pied Imperial Pigeon 6, Beach Kingfisher 1, Varied Honeyeater 20.

Beehler, B.M., T.K. Pratt & D.A. Zimmerman. 1986. *Birds of New Guinea*. Princeton University Press.

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