

## A VISIT TO THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

JOHN F. SILCOCK

On Wednesday 26 October 1988, I paid a brief visit to Tari, staying overnight at Ambua Lodge. The habitat thereabouts has recently been very well described by Roger and Jenny Hicks (Hicks & Hicks 1988), so I will not do so here. Highlights were a delightful Garnet Robin in the forest near the waterfall and a beautifully plumed King of Saxony Bird of Paradise at its display tree, on the road up to Tari Gap. Unfortunately my walk down from the gap was marred by pouring rain which made me cast doubts on what might well have been the most significant sighting. This was a bird of paradise that looked suspiciously like a Carola's Parotia - what else has a white flank patch? - but this was at around 2500 m and both my spectacles and binoculars were covered with rain so I cannot be sure. Have there been any reports of this species being seen this high?

Next morning, after a pre-breakfast walk around the lodge, it was back to the airfield. Following a quick hop to Mendi, I was whisked by helicopter to Poroma, some 30 km to the south, where Gulf Oil have their base camp for their Iagifu/Hedinia oil exploration. Poroma at, 1400 m, is in a "U" shaped valley and fairly heavily populated. The combination of local gardens and a continuous stream of noisy helicopters restricted the number of birds that were to be seen. The most interesting sighting was a Fork-tailed Swift. Nonetheless, since it is probably an area that has not been reported upon before in Muruk, a full list is shown below.

Species definitely identified during the two visits were:

### Tari (Ambua Lodge and above):

Black-billed Cuckoo-Dove, Papuan Mountain Pigeon, Yellow-billed Lorikeet, Papuan Lorikeet, Dusky Lory, Goldie's Lorikeet, Mountain Swiftlet, Glossy Swiftlet, Hooded Cuckoo-Shrike, Black-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike, Long-tailed Shrike, Pied Chat, Island Thrush, Island Leaf-Warbler, Tawny Grassbird, Black Fantail, Dimorphic Fantail, Friendly Fantail, Canary Flycatcher, Garnet Robin, White-winged Robin, Mid-mountain Berrypecker, Crested Berrypecker, Red-collared Myzomela, Yellow-browed Melidectes, Belford's Melidectes (and probably some hybrids of the last two), Grey-streaked Honeyeater, Common Smoky Honeyeater, Great Wood-Swallow, Mountain Peltops, Loria's Bird of Paradise, Brown Sicklebill (h), Ribbon-tailed Astrapia, Stephanie's Astrapia, Lawes Parotia, King of Saxony Bird of Paradise.

### Poroma:

Black Kite, Fork-tailed Swift, Mountain Swiftlet, Glossy Swiftlet, Pacific Swallow, Richard's Pipit, Long-tailed Shrike, Pied Chat, White-shouldered Fairy-Wren, Willie Wagtail, Black-headed Whistler, Tawny-breasted Honeyeater, Hooded Mannikin and Great Wood-Swallow.

In addition, I saw a Long-tailed Buzzard over the rain forest at the Hedinia-3 well site.

Hicks, R.K. & Hicks, J.H. (1988). A weekend in Tari. Muruk 3: 20-23.

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## HOUSE SPARROWS *PASSER DOMESTICUS* ON YULE ISLAND, CENTRAL PROVINCE

RICHARD GREGORY-SMITH AND JUDYTH GREGORY-SMITH

One is rarely not pleased at an unusual sighting, but this was the case on Yule Island on 2 October 1988. Although we had bird watched on the island a number of times over the previous two years this was our first sighting of House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*.

Near the Girls' High School two sparrows flew from the buildings into a mango tree and were clearly observed to be a male and female. Subsequently, 10 were seen on 24 December 1988 and it seems they may be breeding.

We had previously seen only one House Sparrow in Papua New Guinea, a female outside the Galley Restaurant in Port Moresby (in Hicks 1988) and there had only been two records prior to this (Ashford 1978, Hicks 1986).

Ashford, R.W. 1978. First record of House Sparrow for Papua New Guinea. *Emu* 78:36.

Hicks, R.K. 1986. Female House Sparrow on Paga Hill, Port Moresby. A second record for PNG.

Muruk 1(3):20 - 21.

Hicks, R.K. 1988. recent Observations: January - March 1987. Muruk 3(1):26 - 30.

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## WILSON'S STORM PETREL *OCEANITES OCEANICUS* IN THE GULF OF PAPUA

JERRY WARNE

On 25 July 1988, whilst sailing across the Gulf of Papua, c. 32 km ESE of the Fly River, Western Province, I watched a Wilson's Storm Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus* about 15 - 20 m off the stern of the boat. The bird was on view for about 15 minutes during which time I noted the relatively short and rounded winged appearance, with pale upperwing covert patch; square white rump, with extension round towards the undertail coverts; dark underwing and long trailing legs. The latter feature was also obvious as the bird banked to reveal feet protruding noticeably beyond the tail tip. Yellow foot webs were not seen. The weather over the previous few days had been force 6 - 7 SE winds.

This sighting constitutes the second record for New Guinea (Beehler *et al.* 1986).

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