

## MIMICRY BY SINGING BUSHLARK *MIRAFRA JAVANICA*

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On 13 February 1988 a Singing Bushlark *Mirafra javanica* was observed using mimicry in its display flight at Dogura Inlet, Bootless Bay, National Capital District. The bird flew up to a height of c. 8 m and slowly "parachuted" back to the ground singing. The calls of Willie Wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys*, Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops ornatus* and a meliphaga honeyeater *Meliphaga* sp. could be discerned in the song. The imitations were very clear and fooled me when I first heard them. All species that were mimicked were present in the area.

The Singing Bushlark occurs from Africa through southern Asia to Australia. It is described as an accomplished mimic in Australia (Pizzey & Doyle 1980) but apparently this has not been noted elsewhere (King *et al.* 1975; Serle *et al.* 1977; Williams & Arlott 1963) including PNG (Rand & Gilliard 1967; Beehler *et al.* 1986). Other *Mirafra* larks are known to be mimics and in fact the Sabata Lark *M. sabata* imitates over 60 other species of bird (Maclean 1985).

- Beehler, B.M., T.K. Pratt & D.A. Zimmerman. 1986. *Birds of New Guinea*. Princeton University Press.  
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 Serle, W., G.J. Morel & W. Hartwig. 1977. *Birds of West Africa*. Collins.  
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## EXTENSION OF THE KNOWN RANGE OF HELMETED FRIARBIRD *PHILEMON BUCEROIDES*

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From 27 March - 2 April 1989 while staying at Rakamanda, Enga Province, I saw, but more often heard Helmeted Friarbirds. I only saw one, on 27 March. The altitude range for this species has been given as "... sea level - 1000 m (rarely to 1500 m)" (Beehler *et al.* 1986). Rakamanda, at 2166 m, is c. 666 m above the reported upper altitude limit of this species.

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

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## EXTRA-BOWER DISPLAY OF MACGREGOR'S BOWERBIRD *AMBYLORNIS MACGREGORIAE*

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In August 1987 we made a three day visit to Ubaigubi with an American bird-watching tour group. Ubaigubi is a remote, but popular bird-watching area at 1880 m near Crater Mountain in Eastern Highlands Province (sheet 7985, Goroka, 1:100000 series map, map ref. BN9982). Near the guest house are several hides overlooking the display grounds of birds of paradise and bowers of Macgregor's Bowerbird.

We independently observed an unusual, and apparently unrecorded, display of the male Macgregor's Bowerbird and only when comparing notes subsequently, realised we had seen the same behaviour.

On the afternoon of 20 August 1987, Gail Cheeseman observed a bower for over an hour during which she heard the bird give some mimicking calls and saw the unusual display for about 10 minutes. On the afternoon of 21 August 1987 Roy Mackay observed a different bower for nearly three hours and in that time saw the unusual display for almost an hour, broken into two periods.

This display was unusual because it took place a short distance from, but within sight of the bowers. During the display the bird leapt from sapling to sapling, flapping its wings once or twice to cover the distance. During each leap the bird's golden-orange crest was flashed fully open and then closed as the bird landed in the next sapling. The saplings were only 3 - 10 cm in diameter. The leaps were c. 2 - 6 m long and were made between 2 and 4 m above the ground, and up to 15 m away from the bower. Each leaping display lasted from 2 - 10 minutes, interspersed with a rest period, sometimes spent giving typical bowerbird grating or churring calls or mimicry. Some of the vocalisations seemed to be mimicking an axe hitting a tree, a dog barking, the rustling of *Pandanus* leaves and people talking at a distance.

As we were to return to Goroka the next morning we could not observe these displays again. The impression we gained was that the birds were widening their area of influence to attract females by displaying away from the bower, but close enough to it to be able to lead the female down. The flashing of the crest, calls and mimicry away from the bower may provide greater potential for attracting females than the more usual behaviour of sitting in a tree close to the bower and calling as described by Cooper & Forshaw (1977), Diamond (1984), Marshall (1954), and Pruett-Jones & Pruett-Jones (1986).