

MIMICRY BY SINGING BUSHLARK *MIRAFRA JAVANICA*

NIKLAS WAHLBERG

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).

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EXTENSION OF THE KNOWN RANGE OF HELMETED FRIARBIRD *PHILEMON BUCEROIDES*

LEN TOLHURST

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).

I am grateful to Clifford D. Frith for examining this paper and suggesting improvements to its presentation.

Cooper, W.T. & J.M. Forshaw 1977. *The Birds of Paradise and Bowerbirds*. Collins.
 Diamond, J.M. 1984. *The Bower Builders*. Discover/Sociobiology U.S.A.
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 Pruett-Jones, S.G. & M. Pruett-Jones, 1986. *National Geographic Research* 2: 87-105.

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(Ubaigubi Lodge is not currently open to the public. Ed.)

DISPLAY OF THE GLOSSY-MANTLED MANUCODE *MANUCODIA ATRA*

NIKLAS WAHLBERG

At 08:00 on 3 January 1989 I briefly observed a displaying Glossy-mantled Manucode *Manucodia atra* near Tufi, Northern Province. The bird was in the crown of a tall tree, in a clump of forest amidst wet savanna. The characteristic call of the Glossy-mantled Manucode had been heard earlier and was used to locate the bird. The view of the bird in display was partly obscured by foliage but the following was noted. The presumed male threw its wings forward, so that the wings were level with its head, and then produced its long monotonous whistle. A higher pitched whistle was then heard and I realised another bird (presumed to be female) had answered the displaying male. This all happened in about 15 seconds. The performance was repeated and then the birds flew off, with a third previously unnoticed bird.

This display has apparently not been described before (Cooper & Forshaw 1977; Gilliard 1969). Descriptions of the Glossy-mantled Manucode display say the wings are only partially spread and shaken along with the tail. Perhaps this is only part of the display, continuing with what I observed.

Cooper, W.T. & J.M. Forshaw 1977. *The Birds of Paradise and Bowerbirds*. Collins.
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VARIATION IN THE DISPLAY OF THE MAGNIFICENT RIFLEBIRD *PTILORIS MAGNIFICUS*

ROY D. MACKAY

The basic courting display and some variations of the display of Magnificent Riflebird have been described several times (Selous 1927; Crandall & Leister 1937; Crandall 1938; Gilliard 1969; Diamond 1972; Coates 1973; Cooper & Forshaw 1977). The known displays of the Magnificent Riflebird are summarised in Cooper & Forshaw (1977), Gilliard (1969) and Coates (1973). The displays described by Selous, Crandall & Leister and Crandall were given by solitary caged males. This is important as the following descriptions show that contact with the female may be a necessary part of the displays.

Over a period of four years, 1978 - 1982, I observed a male Magnificent Riflebird perform the basic display many times in the aviaries of the Baiyer River Sanctuary, Western Highlands Province, PNG. However, on a few occasions I noted additional features of the display apparently not described before.

In the basic display (as I term it) the male perches on a horizontal or sloping branch, spreads his wings to the fullest extent, with the underside of the wing facing forward and with the neck extended upward to show off the brilliantly coloured throat-shield. Then, while the bird raises and lowers himself on his legs and opens and closes his wings a little, to give a rustling sound, he leans his head and neck alternately along the top edge of each wing. This display usually goes on for at least 10 seconds, but sometimes nearly double that time. Sometimes, with the wings spread he will sway his whole body at right angles to the perch, to right and left.

The two variations I noted appear to me to be a pre-basic display and a post-basic display.

In the pre-basic display the male, on his display perch, preened his feathers, fluffed them out and uttered short chirrups and chuckles. Occasionally the wings were flicked half open and closed which usually denoted an imminent full basic display.

On two occasions a female advanced onto the display perch and as the male and female approached each other, without sound, both went into a "trance-like" condition. The female crouched low to the perch, very slowly stretched her head up until her throat and breast were displayed to the male. She stayed in this position for about eight seconds, while the male, in similar "trance-like" movements, stretched his head out to the female and tapped her gently on the breast; four times on the first occasion and three