

- Doria's Hawk *Megatriorchis doriae*
Observed by JPD at a Raggiana Bird of Paradise Lek on 20 June. This bird entered the lek tree and perched there for a few minutes, which gave JPD the opportunity to make extensive field notes on the individual, an adult in typical plumage. The Raggianas evacuated the tree well before the hawk appeared in the lek.
- New Guinea Harpy-Eagle *Harpyopsis novaeguineae*
Michael Lucas and Rodney Goga, field technicians from Biagge working with our team, claimed to have heard this species in the area south of the loop trail.
- Little Eagle *Hieraaetus morphnoides*
15 June, 2 light-morphs, soaring off Gare's Lookout.
- White-bibbed Ground-Dove *Gallicolumba jobiensis*
One, in immature plumage, was observed by BMB in the forest interior after it flushed from the ground to a low perch.
- Malay Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx minutillus*
The distinctive song of this species was heard on several days in the forest interior.
- Dwarf Koel *Microdynamis parva*
Several calls of this species were heard by BMB on a number of occasions. JPD observed a single male. The male is easily lured in by an imitation of its whistled call.
- Marbled Frogmouth *Podargus ocellatus*
9 July, BMB heard this species calling in the forest.
- Owlet-Nightjar sp. *Aegotheles* sp.
We observed this bird with the aid of torchlight. The bird perched in a *Casuarina* right by our camp in the open part of the park. BMB's tentative identification was Australian Owlet-Nightjar based on the pale plumage. A harsh call, typical of an owlet-nightjar, was heard from the *Casuarina* grove on several occasions.
- Scaly Thrush *Zoothera dauma*
One, in adult plumage, was mist-netted in the forest interior.
- Streak-headed Honeyeater *Pycnopygius stictocephalus*
An oft-recorded species at the forest-edge. Heard more often than seen.
- Parrot-Finch *Erythrura* sp.
BMB heard the *t-t-t* flight call of a parrot-finch on several occasions.
- Mountain Peltops *Peltops montanus*
There has been some disagreement about which peltops species inhabit the park. On two differing days, at two different sites, BMB heard the distinctive, descending series of tittering notes that is given only by *P. montanus*.
- Crinkle-collared Manucode *Manucodia chalybata*
We observed and heard only this species of manucode in the park. It kept primarily to the forest interior, although we also saw individuals visiting fig trees at forest edge. We recorded neither Trumpet nor Glossy-mantled Manucodes.
- Raggiana Bird of Paradise *Paradisaea raggiana*
We found a female sitting on a nest in a small fig tree near the Information Centre in late July. No egg had been laid when we checked the nest.

Beehler, B. & B. Finch. 1985. *Species-Checklist of the birds of New Guinea*. RAOU Monogr. #1.

Addresses: ¹Smithsonian Institute, Washington D.C. 20560, USA.
²7724 Trailwind Drive, Cincinnati, Ohio 45442, USA.

WHEN VARIRATA IS GOOD IT IS VERY GOOD

CHRISTOPHER EASTWOOD

One Sunday in May I had arranged to go to Brown River to do some birding but, because I overslept, ended up in Varirata National Park. I was there by the relatively late hour of 07.45 and really did not expect to see much.

My route took me from Varirata Lookout to Gares Lookout, back down to the picnic site and the start of the Circuit Track and then back along the stream to Varirata Lookout. This is a longish walk at the best of times.

Starting out at Varirata Lookout, I first saw several Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrikes in the casuarinas and a Pheasant Coucal in the scrub below them. I walked on for about half an hour and eventually reached the first thick patch of bamboo. There seemed to be a fair bit of activity, so I sat down and waited. Shortly thereafter, I heard scratchings on the forest floor and a pair of Chestnut-backed Jewel-Babblers emerged in full view, foraging along the edge of the path and quite oblivious of me. I was then distracted by a burst of activity to my right, and a Black Butcherbird flushed from the floor to perch in the bamboo. The jewel-babblers had now moved on but, almost immediately, I heard more calls behind me, and turning I saw a male Painted Quail-Thrush cross the path a few metres away and forage nearby. It called continually and was soon joined by a female. As the female neared the male, the male circled the female two or three times, making the occasional small jump and calling at the same time. Both birds then settled down and continued foraging.

I had to flush the quail-thrush as I could hear a cuckoo calling nearby and wanted to investigate. I could not see the bird, but did hear some rustling down by the path; I froze, and a Pheasant Pigeon stepped onto the path. It appeared to see me, for it turned and started walking quickly down the path. However, after a few steps, it stopped and foraged by the path for at least 5 minutes before disappearing back into the bush.

It was time for me to move. Some distance away I came across a third quail-thrush, a male, but I was more interested in some activity nearby that turned out to be a party of Hooded Pitohuis. While trying to get some good views of them, I heard rustling to my left and saw a Cinnamon Ground-Dove walking quickly over the ground. Unfortunately, it saw me and had vanished by the time I lifted my binoculars.

Shortly before I reached Gares Lookout, I saw a large, noisy, active flock of at least 12 Grey Crows flying around and sometimes perching in the trees. They had with them several juveniles, which were almost as large as the adults but looked quite black.

From Gares Lookout, I headed back towards the picnic site. At one of the patches of rain forest, I heard more calling and picked up two Northern Scrub-Robins by the path and could hear a third bird calling inside the forest. While watching the scrub-robins, I heard yet more movement and realised I was looking at a juvenile Dwarf Cassowary half hidden behind a small bush. It stayed there for several minutes before emerging and looking me in the eye somewhat balefully. Again, I moved on.

At the picnic site, I joined the path that would take me along the stream back to Varirata Lookout. It was well past midday and there was by now virtually no activity at all. Surprisingly though, after 20 minutes or so I came across my first bird party of the day which contained the usual Spot-winged and Frilled Monarchs, Grey Whistlers and Yellow-bellied Gerygones amongst others. Once the bird party had passed by, all activity ceased.

As I drove out of Varirata I was joined for a few minutes by a Long-tailed Buzzard which was flying along the road. That was the end of an excellent day.

Address: P.O. Box C312, Clarence Street, Sydney 2000, Australia.

SCALY THRUSH *ZOOTHERA DAUMA* AT VARIRATA NATIONAL PARK

RICHARD GREGORY-SMITH

On 21 May 1989, in Varirata National Park, Central in Varirata National Park, Central Province, I flushed a medium-sized brown bird from the path through deep rain forest on the circular trail between the Raggiana Bird of Paradise display tree and the entrance road.

I thought at first it might be a Quail-Thrush, but it froze some 20 m away and I was able to identify it as a Scaly Thrush *Zoothera dauma*. The bird was heavily spotted all over, dark brown on off-white, and the spots (scales) were more dense on the back than on and below the face. The legs were pale and pinkish, as was the bill.

I was using Minolta 8 x 40 binoculars. There are no previous records of this species in Varirata National Park and no records of migration to and from Australia. It seems it may be a scarce nomadic species in Papua New Guinea.

I had previously seen this species in Australia and Nepal.

address: 13 Astelia Place, Rivett, Canberra, ACT 2611, Australia.

RECENT OBSERVATIONS APRIL - JUNE 1989

COMPILED BY ROGER K. HICKS

All observations refer to the Port Moresby area unless the site name is followed by an abbreviated province name.

Contributors: Colin Bacon (CB); Robin Benson (RB); Ian Burrows (IB); Bill Cooper (BC); Chris Eastwood (CE); Richard Gregory-Smith (RGS); Roger Hicks (RH); Andrew Lyburn (AL); Geoff Smith (GS); Len Tolhurst (LT); Niklas Wahlberg (NW).

Abbreviations: ad = adult; Cen = Central Province; EHP = Eastern Highlands Province; I = Island; imm = immature; juv = juvenile; L = Lake; Mor = Morobe Province; NP = National Park; NSP = North Solomons Province; Oro = Northern Province; PAC = Pacific Adventist College; R = River; rd = Road; SHP = Southern Highlands Province; SP = settling ponds; UPNG = University of PNG campus; y = young.

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Dwarf Cassowary | <i>Casuarius bennetti</i> |
| 9 Apr, 1, Varirata NP (RGS); 24 Apr, 1 ad, Boundary trail, Varirata NP (IB); 29 Apr, 1 half-grown individual, Boundary trail, Varirata NP (IB); 14 May, 1 juv, Varirata NP (CE). | |
| Short-tailed Shearwater | <i>Puffinus tenuirostris</i> |
| 20 May, 1 pursued by an imm White-bellied Sea-Eagle off Idler's Bay (IB). | |
| Australasian Grebe | <i>Tachybaptus novaehollandiae</i> |
| 6 May, pair nesting on pond in Varirata NP (RGS). | |
| Great Cormorant | <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> |
| 1 Apr, 5 May & 26 May, 1, Moitaka SP (IB, RGS & RH). | |
| Little Pied Cormorant | <i>Phalacrocorax melanoleucos</i> |
| 26 May, 25, Moitaka SP (RGS). | |
| Eastern Reef-Egret | <i>Egretta sacra</i> |
| 14 May, 3 white phase, Gaba Gaba (RGS). | |
| Black Bittern | <i>Ixobrychus flavicollis</i> |
| 13 Apr, 1 imm, Moitaka SP (IB); 5 May, 1 juv, Moitaka SP (RGS). | |
| Osprey | <i>Pandion haliaetus</i> |
| 7 Apr, 1, Moitaka SP (IB); 5 May, 1, Moitaka SP (RGS); 28 Jun, 1, Moitaka SP (RH). | |
| Long-tailed Buzzard | <i>Henicopernis longicauda</i> |
| 4 May, 1, Baim-Huon, Mor (RGS); 21 Jun, Varirata NP (CE). | |
| Bat Hawk | <i>Macheiramphus alcinus</i> |
| 5 May, 1, Buhem R, Mor (RGS); 14 May, King Bird Tree (IB). | |
| Black Kite | <i>Milvus migrans</i> |
| 9 May, 100, Lae, Mor (RGS). | |
| White-bellied Sea-Eagle | <i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i> |
| 20 May, 1 imm, in pursuit of a Short-tailed Shearwater, Idler's Bay (IB); 26 May, 1, Local I (RGS); 10 Jun, 1 imm, Elavala R, Wes (RH <i>et al.</i>). | |
| Spotted Marsh Harrier | <i>Circus spilonotus</i> |
| 5 May, 1, Lae, Mor (RGS). | |
| Swamp Harrier | <i>Circus approximans</i> |
| 19 May, 1, Moitaka SP (RGS). | |