

should be suitable for one or two of the Huon endemics, but I have so far not explored this area.

For those wishing to see Huon endemics, expensive air travel or time-consuming sea travel is involved. A road from Wasu on the north coast of the Huon is ideal for bird-watchers, going straight up the mountain towards Kabwum, giving access to the altitudinal ranges of all the endemics. First the **Emperor Bird of Paradise** is found above 500 m, then the **Wahnes' Parotia** at 1100 m, the **Spangled Honeyeater** at 1200 m, the **Huon Astrapia** at 1500 m, and finally the **Huon Melidectes** at 1600 m.

A road from Finschhafen runs north along the coast to Sialum, while an inland road linking Finschhafen with Pindiu is under construction. This too should give access to the Huon endemics. As yet there is no road link planned between Finschhafen and Lae, mainly due to the unwillingness of Finschhafen residents to allow their peaceful hideaway to be accessible by road to rascal elements.

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

Finch, B.W. 1986. Black-headed Gulls *Larus ridibundus* at Lae Airstrip, Morobe Province. Third record for mainland Papua New Guinea. *Muruk* 1: 90.

Address: Language Dept., Unitech, Private Mail Bag, Lae.

ASIAN WATERFOWL CENSUS : PORT MORESBY AREA, 1990.

ROGER K. HICKS

The Asian Waterfowl Census (AWC) is co-ordinated by the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau (IWRB) and Asian Wetlands Bureau (AWB). The aims of the AWC are "to obtain information on waterfowl populations at wetlands in Asia during the mid-winter period (January), as a basis for evaluation of sites and monitoring populations" and "to encourage greater interest in wetlands and waterfowl amongst governmental, non-governmental and private individuals and thereby promote the conservation of wetlands in Asia". In 1989 twenty countries participated, 1319 sites were covered and 6.9 million waterfowl of 222 species were recorded (Scott & Rose 1989).

PNG is not part of Asia, but was included in the Directory of Asian Wetlands (DAW) (Scott 1989). This was presumably because Irian Jaya, the western half of the island of New Guinea is a province of Indonesia which is in Asia, so the eastern half of the

island, PNG, was also included. PNG's avifauna is distinctly Australian, with less than 50% of south-eastern Asian waterfowl (as on the AWC form for that region) and if the long distance migrants (wadlers and terns) are ignored, then only 33% of waterfowl are common to PNG and south-east Asia. However, in 1990 PNGBS members were invited to participate in the AWC for the first time.

January is not the best month to conduct a census of waterfowl in PNG. It is the height of the wet season in most parts of the country. High rainfall causes extensive flooding in the lower reaches of most rivers, greatly increasing the area of wetland. Access to some sites becomes difficult if not impossible. The waterfowl also tend to disperse over a greater area, depressing numbers at accessible sites. Numbers of waterfowl are usually augmented each wet season by migrants from Australia. The late eighties were wet years in Australia, so birds have not moved to find more suitable habitat. Concentrations of waterfowl, in the Port Moresby area, are greatest towards the end of the dry season, October - November, when the wetland is smallest.

Between 11 - 14 January 1990, five members of the PNGBS (Will Glynn, Roger Hicks, Edel & Lex Kraaijo and Niklas Wahlberg) visited seven wetland sites in the Port Moresby area, six of which were included in the DAW. Each of these sites has been regularly visited by PNGBS members over the last five years, at least. Counts have been made regularly at Moitaka Settling Ponds and Hisiu Beach. The AWC counts are presented in Table 1.

Fifty-two species were recorded in the course of the census. Over the previous year only 12 other wetland species were recorded at these sites. These included two vagrants, one passage migrant and two Australian breeding species, leaving only seven species which might have been expected on the census days. No large concentrations of any species were noted, for the reasons outlined above.

The following observations were noteworthy for the Port Moresby area. At a high-tide roost near the village of Lea Lea we saw c. 50 Grey-tailed Tattlers, c. 80 Greenshanks and, most unexpectedly, six White-headed Shelduck. At Kanosia Lagoon we counted nine Wood Sandpipers and three Oriental Pratincole. There were also eight Red-rumped Swallows hawking over the lagoon. The rarest species recorded, for PNG, was probably the single adult Great Cormorant seen at Moitaka settling ponds where a Little Bittern was heard and a Black bittern seen. Individuals of all egrets recorded, at all sites, were in breeding plumage, although no nest sites were found. Australasian Grebes were noted nesting or with young at most freshwater sites and the behaviour of a pair of Little Ringed Plovers, of the resident race, suggested they were probably breeding at Kanosia Lagoon.

Scott, D.A. (ed). 1989. *A Directory of Asian Wetlands*. IUCN

Scott, D.A. & P. Rose. 1989. *Asian Waterfowl Census 1989*. IWRB.

Table 1. Results of the 1990 Asian Wetland Census: Port Moresby Area

Site Codes: 1 = Moitaka Settling Ponds; 2 = Lakes Iaraguma and Bunu; 3 = Lea Lea Salt Flats; 4 = Kanosia Lagoon; 5 = Aroa Lagoon; 6 = Hisiu Lagoon; 7 = Hisiu Beach (Obu Point - Cape Suckling).

Abbreviations: b = noted breeding during AWC; h = heard; X = recorded at site in previous year but not during the AWC.

Sites	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Date of Census	11/1	13/1	13/1	14/1	14/1	14/1	14/1
% Coverage of wetland	100	100	100	100	50	100	50
Australasian Grebe	1	104b	-	82b	8	X	-
Great Cormorant	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Little Black Cormorant	61	53	-	X	160	X	-
Little Pied Cormorant	X	41	-	X	80	X	-
Darter	X	1	-	-	1	-	-
Great Egret	4	8	-	1	X	7	-
Pied Heron	330	29	-	-	-	-	-
Intermediate Egret	3	16	1	-	-	-	-
Cattle Egret	-	13	-	18	-	-	-
Little Egret	9	1	-	-	3	1	-
Eastern Reef-Egret	-	-	X	-	-	-	X
Striated Heron	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Rufous Night-Heron	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Little Bittern	h	-	-	-	-	-	-
Black Bittern	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Glossy Ibis	-	-	-	-	X	-	-
Sacred Ibis	-	X	-	-	-	X	-
Straw-necked Ibis	-	-	X	-	-	-	-
Royal Spoonbill	-	1	-	-	2	-	-
Spotted Whistling Duck	14	X	-	X	2	X	-
Wandering Whistling Duck	208	419	-	30	20	4	-
White-headed Shelduck	-	-	6	-	-	-	-
Green Pygmy-Goose	X	2	-	-	1	X	-
Grey Teal	X	X	6	-	-	-	-
Pacific Black Duck	11	10	-	36	4	2	-
Garganey	9	39	-	3	-	X	-
Australian White-eyed Duck	-	-	-	X	-	-	-
Buff-banded Rail	X	-	-	X	-	-	-
White-browed Crake	h	X	-	X	-	X	-
Bush-Hen	h	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dusky Moorhen	83	161	-	2	70	6	-
Purple Swamphen	8	49	-	4	35	6	-
Comb-crested Jacana	2	49b	-	X	3	19	-
White-headed Stilt	7	X	-	X	1	X	-
Beach Stone-Curlew	-	-	-	-	-	-	X

Sites	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Date of Census	11/1	13/1	13/1	14/1	14/1	14/1	14/1
Oriental Pratincole	X	-	-	3	-	-	-
Masked Lapwing	10	3	-	29	3	5	-
Grey Plover	-	-	X	-	-	-	2
Pacific Golden Plover	5	X	5	X	-	X	X
Little Ringed Plover	X	-	-	2	-	-	-
Mongolian Plover	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Large Sand-Plover	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Eastern Curlew	-	-	-	-	-	-	X
Whimbrel	X	-	2	-	-	-	X
Little Curlew	X	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wood Sandpiper	X	X	-	9	-	-	-
Grey-tailed Tattler	-	-	50	-	-	-	4
Common Sandpiper	4	X	X	X	-	2	6
Common Greenshank	X	X	80	X	-	X	-
Marsh Sandpiper	X	-	5	X	-	-	-
Terek Sandpiper	-	-	2	-	-	-	1
Snipe sp.	3	X	-	1	-	X	-
Black-tailed Godwit	X	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bar-tailed Godwit	-	-	X	-	-	-	X
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	1	X	11	19	-	17	-
Pectoral Sandpiper	X	-	-	-	-	-	-
Red-necked Stint	X	X	150	X	-	3	27
Long-toed Stint	X	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sanderling	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Whiskered Tern	X	-	-	-	-	X	-
White-winged Black Tern	13	-	-	-	-	X	-
Gull-billed Tern	X	X	X	-	X	X	-
Common Tern	X	-	X	-	-	X	X
Little Tern	3	X	-	-	-	X	X
Crested Tern	-	-	-	-	-	-	X
Lesser Crested Tern	-	-	-	-	-	-	X

Address: c/o NCC, P.O. Ward's Strip, Waigani, PNG.