

hand knowledge about Papuan birds in the wild which has been created by Bird Society members is undoubtedly the Society's greatest achievement. This data base is not confined to information in the Newsletter. Roy Mackay (1970) led the continuing book and booklet output by members. Harry Bell still, by a very wide margin, leads the field in the production of technical papers in overseas journals, probably with Matt Heron running second. Win Filewood is in front in popular articles. These, plus works in preparation are all part of that data base.

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## A COMMENT ON THE SLATY-BACKED GOSHAWK *ACCIPITER LUTEOSCHISTACEUS*

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Finch & McKean (1987) recorded observations on the Slaty-backed Goshawk *Accipiter luteoschistaceus* on New Ireland. Their description of the wings "projecting slightly beyond the short, squared tail" is puzzling and would certainly not be a general field character for the species. The individual described must have had a damaged or regrowing tail, because the tail projects beyond the wing tips at rest in all *Accipiter* species, including the Slaty-backed Goshawk (D. Mead pers. comm.). The Slaty-backed Goshawk is described by Wattel (1973) as having wing and tail proportions of the *A. novaehollandiae* type, but with a comparatively long tail. Even the other small *A. accipiter* of the Bismarcks, the New Britain Sparrowhawk *A. brachyurus* (literally "short tail"), has the tail projecting beyond the wing tips at rest, as revealed by the museum skins (D. Mead pers. comm.; see also Wattel 1973).

A small hawk with white underparts and slaty wings projecting slightly beyond a short, squared tail would suggest the Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* perched individuals of which may have the black shoulders hidden by scapular and breast feathers. It is possible that a Black-winged Kite could stray into the Bismarcks. I take this opportunity to draw attention to a useful paper on the Black-winged Kite in New Guinea (Wood 1970), not mentioned by Coates (1985).

I will conclude by saying that much remains to be learned about the raptors of PNG, particularly those on the islands. For instance, the juvenile plumage of the New Britain Goshawk *A. princeps* still remains to be satisfactorily described. Now that the PNGBS has assumed the role of PNG area co-ordinator for the Australasian Raptor Association, perhaps some detailed raptor studies and publications will result.

I thank David Mead for helpful discussion on *Accipiter* species.

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