

SOME NOTES ON THE BIRDS SEEN IN THE TURAMA RIVER AREA, GULF PROVINCE

IAN BURROWS

The Turama River area was visited from 16 to 19 July 1988 to collect additional information for an environmental impact survey. The main purpose of the visit was to collect river water samples, so bird observations were casual. Observations were limited due to the flooded nature of the forest, it being the wet season then, as well as the persistent torrential rain.

Most observations were made during the first two hours of daylight and the last hour of daylight on 17th, when the rain stopped. Other observations were made between the sampling site and Komaio village, 3 hours boat journey downstream.

Access to this area is very difficult, involving a 30 min charter flight from Kikori to Komaio village in the only available plane. A three hour journey by an outboard driven boat is then required to get into the best quality forest area.

This list is by no means complete, however the few hours birding 'fitted in' given some idea of the richness of the area. Perhaps the proposed trip there in the dry season will tell us more.

Southern Cassowary *Casuarius casuarius*
On 17th four birds were seen near the camp. One adult female, one immature bird estimated to be about fifteen months old and an adult male with an eight month old chick.

Black-billed Brush-Turkey *Talegalla fuscirostris*
At least three groups of birds calling pre-dawn near the camp 17th - 18th. Two birds seen in the forest nearby on 17th.

Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*
One over Komaio on 16th.

Rufous Night-Heron *Nycticorax caledonicus*
Three birds present on the river near the camp 17th - 18th.

Striated Heron *Ardeola striata*
On 17th a bird was seen perched on a floating tree trunk from which it plunged into the water three times, catching small fish on each occasion. The tree trunk and bird disappeared round a bend in the river and the bird flew back upstream one minute later, only to land on another floating log and repeat the fishing process. On 18th five birds were seen between the camp and Komaio.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*
Three birds between the camp and Komaio on 18th.

Great Egret *Egretta alba*
Twenty birds between the camp and Komaio on 18th.

Common Sandpiper *Tringa hypoleucos*
Two birds on the river bank near the camp on 18th.

Southern Crowned Pigeon *Goura scheepmakeri*
Four singletons seen in the forest near the camp on 17th. One individual was perched 30 m in the understory, the others were seen foraging on the forest floor. On 18th one bird was seen perched in a riverside tree about 3 km downstream from the camp.

Great Cuckoo-Dove *Reinwardtoena reinwardtoena*
One in forest near the camp on 17th.

Brown Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia amboinensis*
One in forest near the camp on 17th.

Zoe Imperial Pigeon *Ducula zoeae*
One near the camp on 17th. One near Komaio on 18th.

Collared Imperial Pigeon *Ducula muellerii*
Ten seen near the camp on 17th. Over 600 seen from the river between the camp and Komaio on 18th.

Pinon Imperial Pigeon *Ducula pinon*
About ten seen near the camp on 17th.

Western Black-capped Lory *Lorius lory*
Four over the camp on 17th. About 100 in loose flocks of two to ten over Komaio on 18th.

Eclectus Parrot *Eclectus roratus*
Two seen over the camp on 17th. Three seen from the river between the camp and Komaio on 18th.

Greater Streaked Lory *Chalcopsitta scintillata*
Three over the camp on 17th. About 20 between the camp and Komaio on 18th. Over 200 in flocks of 2 to 20 over Komaio on 19th.

Red-cheeked Parrot *Geoffroyus geoffroyi*
A pair were nesting in a dead tree about 10 m up, near the camp.

Vulturine Parrot *Psitttrichas fulgidus*
One flew over the camp on 17th.

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita*
Three birds around the camp on 17th. About 20 between the camp and Komaio on 18th.

Palm Cockatoo	<i>Probosciger aterrimus</i>
Three seen from the river between the camp and Komaio on 18th.	
Brush Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis variolosus</i>
One in scrub at the camp 17th - 18th.	
White-crowned Koel	<i>Caliechthrus leucolophus</i>
One heard at dawn near the camp on 17 - 18th.	
Channel-billed Cuckoo	<i>Scythrops novaehollandiae</i>
Three over Komaio on 18th.	
Lesser Black Coucal	<i>Centropus bernsteini</i>
One in an overgrown garden area at Komaio on 18th. This record represents an extension of the known range of this species. It was previously thought to extend eastwards on the south coast only as far has the Fly River.	
Greater Black Coucal	<i>Centropus menbeki</i>
One heard calling at the camp, pre-dawn on 17th.	
Common Paradise-Kingfisher	<i>Tanysiptera galatea</i>
One in forest near the camp on 17th.	
Sacred Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon sancta</i>
One at Komaio on 19th.	
Blyth's Hornbill	<i>Rhyticeros plicatus</i>
About 40 around the camp area on 17th. A minimum of 264 observed from the river between the camp and Komaio on 18th.	
Uniform Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia vanikorensis</i>
About 20 around the camp on 17th.	
Glossy Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia esculenta</i>
Three around the camp on 17th.	
Papuan Spine-tailed Swift	<i>Mearnsia novaeguineae</i>
About 20 around the camp on 17th.	
Moustached Tree-Swift	<i>Hemiprocne mystacea</i>
Two in a riverside tree near Komaio on 18th.	
Pacific Swallow	<i>Hirundo tahitica</i>
Two near the camp on 17th.	
Blue Jewel-Babbler	<i>Ptilorhoa caeruleascens</i>
Two in forest near the camp on 17th.	
Golden Cuckoo-Shrike	<i>Campochaera sloetii</i>
Two in a riverside tree near the camp on 18th.	

Yellow-bellied Gerygone	<i>Gerygone chrysogaster</i>
One heard near the camp on 17th.	
Northern Fantail	<i>Rhipidura rufiventris</i>
One in forest near the camp on 17th.	
Willie Wagtail	<i>Rhipidura leucophrys</i>
Two at the camp 17 - 18th.	
Frilled Monarch	<i>Arses telescopthalmus</i>
One female in forest near the camp on 17th.	
Shining Flycatcher	<i>Myiagra alecto</i>
One in riverside bushes by the camp on 17th.	
Papuan Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum pectorale</i>
One in riverside vegetation by the camp on 17th.	
Black Berrypecker	<i>Melanocharis nigra</i>
One in forest near the camp on 17th.	
Yellow-bellied Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia jugularis</i>
A pair in coconut palms at Komaio on 19th.	
Black Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia aspasia</i>
A pair in an overgrown garden at Komaio on 18th.	
Brown-backed Honeyeater	<i>Ramsayornis modestus</i>
One at Komaio on 19th.	
Graceful Meliphaga	<i>Meliphaga gracilis</i>
Three in an overgrown garden at Komaio on 18th.	
Mimic Meliphaga	<i>Meliphaga analoga</i>
Two in forest near the camp on 17th.	
Helmeted Friarbird	<i>Philemon buceroides</i>
Four in forest near camp on 17th.	
White-spotted Mannikin	<i>Lonchura leucosticta</i>
About fifteen in riverside scrub on 17th. This record represents an extension of the known range of this species. It was previously thought only to extend eastwards into the Fly River area.	
Spangled Drongo	<i>Dicrurus hottentottus</i>
At least 20 birds heard in chorus at dusk.	
Brown Oriole	<i>Oriolus szalayi</i>
Two in forest near the camp on 17th.	

- Golden Myna *Mino anais*
Two around the camp area on 17th.
- Metallic Starling *Aplonis metallica*
About a hundred birds at a mayfly hatch over the river on the evening of the 17th.
- Singing Starling *Aplonis cantoroides*
Five in a flock of Metallic Starlings at a mayfly hatch over the river on the evening of the 17th.
- Yellow-eyed Starling *Aplonis mystacea*
One in a flock of Metallic Starlings at a mayfly hatch over the river on the evening of 17th.
- Hooded Butcherbird *Cracticus cassicus*
Two near the camp area on 17 - 18th.
- White-eared Catbird *Ailurodeus buccoides*
One around the camp area on 17th.
- Glossy-mantled Manucode *Manucodia atra*
Two near the camp area on 17th.
- Raggiana Bird of Paradise *Paradisea raggiana*
About ten birds in a display area about 300 m from the camp area on 17th and 18th.
- King Bird of Paradise *Cinnurus regius*
One calling near the camp area on 17th.
- Grey Crow *Corvus tristis*
Three seen from the river near Komaio on 18th.

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AN UNIDENTIFIED BERRYPECKER *MELANOCHARIS* SP. FROM THE OK TEDI AREA

PHIL GREGORY

During the course of an early watch at Dablin Creek, 7 km north of Tabubil on 1 October 1992, Chris Eastwood and I had two sightings of an unfamiliar *Melanocharis* berrypecker.

The first was feeding in the canopy of a tall bare tree at the base of the track at 700 m altitude. The second was a bird in mid-stratum at 850 m, seen by myself alone with x30 telescope views.

Description: a very small and short-tailed berrypecker of *Melanocharis* type, foraging like a *Gerygone* high in the canopy or perched on a branch in mid-stratum. Both birds were clearly of the same type, but what species? The birds were olive-green above, dingy yellowish beneath with faint narrow dark streaks. There was a greyish tinge to the head and the throat was slightly paler. The first bird had a yellow bill, the second a pale bill, the shape being short, quite slender yet stubby. Both birds had bright yellow pectoral tufts which were very striking. The eye was dark with no eye-ring.

The shape and size suggested Black Berrypecker *M. nigra*, but the birds were very small-looking, had bright yellow pectoral tufts, narrowly streaked underparts and pale or yellow bills. The size, shape and lack of eye-ring would not seem to indicate Streaked Berrypecker *M. striativentris*.

Coates and Lindgren (1978) had a strange *Melanocharis* at 2220 m on Mount Binnie, but of the *M. longicauda*/*M. striativentris* group with white tufts and strong black streaking down the abdomen. Both they and Murray (1988) made sightings of presumed or likely Obscure Berrypeckers *M. arfakiana* at Tabubil. The yellow pectoral tufts are a major identification feature, but the streaking on our birds at Dablin Creek is anomalous. The identity remains a mystery pending further sightings. Observers around Ok Tedi should carefully check all berrypeckers.

Coates, B.J., & E. Lindgren. 1978. **Ok Tedi Birds**. Ok Tedi Environmental Task Force, Ok Tedi Development Co. and The Office of Environment and Conservation.

Murray, A. 1988. A study of the birds of the Tabubil region, Western Province, PNG. **Muruk** 3: 89-117.

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