

- 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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