

**MOUNTAIN NIGHTJAR *Eurostopodus archboldi* BREEDING AT AMBUA**

During the afternoon of 23. 10.92 Allan Richards and I were birding some 200m above the bailey bridge east of Ambua Lodge, Tari, when we saw a bird on the side of the road. We split up and climbed a 4m bank in pursuit and in so doing flushed a nightjar. The bird allowed a close approach to within 1m on two occasions, before giving a pathetic fluttering display of aggression. The bird returned to some lichen covered road spoil pushed up during road construction. We realised that it might be defending a nest and quickly spotted a single white egg apparently without any support material around it. On our return the bird was sitting tightly on the egg.

Overall the bird was a very dark toffee-brown/blackish colour with prominent dull buffish eyebrows and a broken white collar. The feathers of the underparts were broadly tipped buffish but with some white tips too. Many of the mantle feathers were also tipped buff and white. Some feathers on the coverts and possibly scapulars were entirely fawn coloured. There were no white patches in the wings or tail. The tail feathers had tan notches as did some of the outer primaries.

The description fits Mountain Nightjar (*Eurostopodus archboldi*), and with the altitude of the Bailey Bridge at about 2200m this is the only species expected. The nest and eggs are hitherto undescribed.

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**FURTHER RECORDS OF AN UNIDENTIFIED PIGMY-PARROT *Micropsitta* sp. FROM THE OK TEDI AREA**

Phil Gregory

Greg Johnston and I were birding along the track at Dablin Creek north of Tabubil on November 29th 1991, at a height of about 750metres. We found a flock of Josephine's Lorikeet (*Chamosyna josefinae*) high in the canopy and were observing them through a Kowa x30 wide angle lens telescope, when GJ saw a small flock of pigmy-parrots (*Micropsitta* sp.) fly in. Looking through the 'scope I realised we were on to something unusual as I could not recognise what we were observing :

I watched the bird for about 30 seconds, GJ for slightly longer, and we noted the following: A typical pigmy-parrot with short tail and a striking yellow forehead and crown, a broad dark eyestripe, red underparts with a dark chest band, and green upperparts. GJ noted the eyestripe as blue and the cheeks as yellow, with a blue breastband. The bird then flew away along with 3 other *Micropsitta*, giving the typical "tsit tsit" flight call.

The bird clearly did not fit any of the forms of Red-breasted Pigmy parrot (*M. bruijnii*) illustrated in either Coates (1986) or Beehler (1986), and neither did Yellow-capped Pigmy parrot (*M. keiensis*) seem right. However, reference to Murray (1988) clearly referred to a similar individual, her bird being a male at an altitude of 2140m on Mt. Binnie and again not obviously referable to any described form of *Micropsitta*. Murray suggested her bird may have been a colour variant of *M. bruijnii*, or perhaps a high altitude subspecies of same, or even a new species. Clearly we needed more sightings, and my next came on December 26th 1991 again along the Dablin Creek track at 800m. I located a flock of *Micropsitta* flying

around which settled in the crown of a tall leafy tree, and proved to be the strange form once again, this time with males, females and immature birds present. The flock of 18 birds was mostly inactive, sitting quietly or preening. The males were much as our previous sighting, with broad blue eyestripe, blue chest band, yellow cheeks, chin and throat and yellow crown and forehead with a bluish nape. The underparts were orangey-red, including the undertail coverts. The upperparts were green with a blue upper tail. The legs were grey.

Immature males had a dull yellow forecrown, a dark blue eyestripe, with a yellow chin throat and cheeks and a dark green chest band with paler green belly and flanks and orangey undertail coverts. Females had buff faces and supercilia with a dark eyestripe and the upperparts green with a bluish hindcrown and nape. When preening, the tail appeared tipped and edged with yellow. The underwing was greyish, and the eyes dark. Calls were a sibilant "tsst tsst". Birds were seen later feeding on the highest lichen covered branches of tall trees, too high to discern exactly what was being taken.

This sighting confirms the existence of an unknown form of *Micropsitta* at Ok Tedi, clearly not just some plumage variant of *M. bruijnii*. Views suggest close kinship with that species but with a very distinct head pattern on male birds. A review of my own records of *Micropsitta* showed most birds were just fly-overs and only three sightings were of perched birds, none of these adult males. Murray records seeing birds with red crowns of the race *M. b. bruijnii*, as might be expected from the known distribution. This raises perhaps the possibility of an overlap between this form and the new type, or great variation in the populations in this area. Discussions with visiting tour groups reveal most *Micropsitta* records are of flyovers, and several reports of *M. keiensis* most likely refer to the males of the new form instead. *An adult male example is illustrated in the frontispiece to this issue...ed.*

I suspect that this form is widespread as I later had sightings of 3 males and 5 females in forest edge at Ok Menga, 750. on March 1st 1993. A specimen or photograph would be highly desirable but not likely given the nature of *Micropsitta* parrots. The status of the new form requires further field work, and observers visiting the area should be aware of the situation, paying particular attention to any adult male *Micropsitta*.

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**FIRST PNG NESTING RECORD FOR BAT HAWK *Macheiramphus alcinus***  
by Chris Eastwood

I had gone birdwatching with friends of mine, Carmela and Ted Bishop, who had joined me for their first ever birdwatching trip. While driving back to Lae at about midday, Ted spotted a bird perched high up in a tall tree and silhouetted against the sky. We stopped our cars and with the aid of a telescope immediately