

**REPORTS 1992**

The recent reports section has become woefully out-of-date and cumbersome to organise, so a simplified system begins this issue. There are so few observers in PNG that reports are heavily biased towards the well-known areas like Varirata, Port Moresby environs and Ambua/Tari.

We now have a fairly good database of species occurrence there, so rather than repeat sightings of common or well-known species at their customary localities, this section will focus on the less studied areas. Reporting significant occurrences anywhere is still to be encouraged, along the following guidelines:

- E** = Extension of range, records from areas away from the known range.
- A** = Altitudinal extension, given the significance that altitude plays with the avifauna of PNG this is a particularly interesting section.
- B** = Breeding records, lacking for many quite common species. Could usefully include date, clutch size, nest description, behavioural observations etc.
- R** = Scarce or rare species, to be reported from anywhere.
- M** = Migrants, with first or last dates of interest or numerical records of note.
- G** = General interest, may be behavioural, unusual numbers or locations, odd plumages etc.

Records not fitting the above categories are usually from the many lesser known localities.

Please send all records, trip reports etc to:

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**Observers for 1992**

CE Chris Eastwood based in Lae, Morobe Province.

PG Phil Gregory, based in Tabubil, Western Province.

**Systematic List**

The following abbreviations are used: f denotes female m denotes male  
imm denotes immature juv denotes juvenile

**Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel* G**

1 f Kiunga Wharf 19.4.92. PG Occasionally seen here, presumably following the Fly River to over 400km inland!

**Green-backed Heron *Butorides striatus***

Kiunga on 26 and 27.9.92. CE/PG

**Pied Heron *Egretta picata***

1 Tabubil 24.7.92. PG

**European Coot *Fulica atra* R**

4+ Lake Wangbin 9.8.92. with 9 reported in June (I Schofield pers comm) PG. Believed shot-out in the late 70's.

**Salvadori's Teal *Anas waiguensis* R**

1 on the Ok Menga near old Megalsimbip 15.3.92. PG

**Grey Teal *Anas gibberifrons* E**

1 Lake Wangbin 9.8.92 was new for the Ok Tedi area PG.

**White-bellied Sea-eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* E**

An imm bird by Cloudlands Hotel in Tabubil on 30.7.92. was the first for the area, seen later that day 15km south at Sawmill.

**Black-mantled Goshawk *Accipiter melanochlamys***

Singles at Townsville drill site, Ok Tedi 15 and 19.9.92

**New Guinea Harpy Eagle *Harpyopsis novaeguineae* R**

A single heard calling Ok Ma road, Ok Tedi 30.8.92.

**Bat Hawk *Macheirhamphus alcinus* R**

2, and nest at Sankwep Road near Lae on 16.8.1992 and on 7 occasions up to 25.12.92. CE

**Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus* R**

Ambua on 7.11.1992. CE

Sankwep Road on 22.11.1992. CE

**Grey-headed Goshawk *Accipiter poliocephalus***

1 normal phase Ok Ma road 26.4.92 PG

1 ad normal phase and 1 imm there 8.7.92. PG

2 of the apparently undescribed melanistic morph there 28.7.92. PG

1 normal phase Helsinki, Ok Tedi mine 29.7.92. PG

1 normal phase Sankwep Road near Lae on 20.9.1992. CE

**Brown Falcon *Falco berigora***

Ambua on 7.11.1992. CE

Mt Wilhelm on 12 and 13.12.1992. CE

**Australian Hobby *Falco longipennis***

3 imm Kiunga 24.5.92. 1 there 1.8.92. PG

**Oriental Hobby *Falco severus***

Gain on 17.5.1992. CE

Seen occasionally around the Ok Tedi area but very sparse.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

Kiunga on 27.9.1992. CE

Occasional around Tabubil.

Brown-collared Brush-turkey *Talegalla jobiensis*

Heard Sankwep Road near Lae on 1.8 and 20.9.1992. CE

Brown Quail *Coturnix australis*

Tari Gap on 8.6.1992. CE

Buff-banded Rail *Rallus philippensis*

Ambua on 7.11.1992. CE

Red-backed Buttonquail *Turnix maculosa* E

1 flushed by Cloudlands Hotel Tabubil on 24.8.92 was new for the Ok Tedi area PG.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*The race *dubius* is resident (3 pairs) at Tabubil around the airstrip and lay-down areas, also at Sawmill on the Kiunga road. Display noted in late July PG.Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*

2, Tabubil airstrip 5.9.92. were the first returning birds in the area PG

Australian Pratincole *Siltia isabella*

5 at Kiunga 23.6.92. PG One or two at Jacksons Airport at Port Moresby on 11.8.1992. CE

White-throated Pigeon *Columba vitiensis* R

1 Ok Menga 16.8.92.

New Guinea Bronzewing *Henicophaps albifrons* E

1 Dablin Creek 16.7.92. 1 Mt Robinson, Ok Tedi 3.10.92. PG.

Southern Crowned-pigeon *Goura scheepmakeri* R

Elevala River N of Kiunga 3 birds on 27.9.1992. CE/PG

Black-collared Imperial Pigeon *Ducula muelleri*

10 Fly R. N of Kiunga 18.4.92 and over 50 there 24.5.92 100+ there 1.8.92 but none seen same area 26/27.9.92 PG

Dwarf Fruit-dove *Ptilinopus nana* 4 (1m, 3 f) at Km 90 Kiunga/Tabubil road 24.5.92. PG Kiunga on

29/9/1992. CE/PG. Tabubil on 2.10.1992. CE/PG Sankwep Road on 22.11.1992. CE

Purple-tailed Imperial Pigeon *Ducula rufigaster*

Veimauri on 15.3.1992. CE

Rufescent Imperial Pigeon *Ducula chalconota* E

Mount Robinson, Tabubil 4 on 3.10.1992. CE

Goldie's Lorikeet *Trichoglossus goldiei*

4 at 2640m at Tari Gap on 8.6.1992. CE/PG. Sankwep Road on 25.12.1992. CE

Streaked Lorikeet *Charmosyna multistriata* R

1 at Ok Menga 1.3.92 30 Dablin Creek 5.3.92. 6 there on 27.3.92. 11 Dablin Creek 28.5.92 PG; 30+ there on 20.8.92 PG; 30 on 2.10.1992 CE/PG

Little Red Lorikeet *Charmosyna pulchella*

40+ Dablin Creek 19.8.92. 30 Ok Menga 20.8.92.

Whiskered Lorikeet *Oreopsittacus arfaki*

Ambua on 7 and 8.11.1992 CE. 5 at Townsville drill site 13.9.92. PG

Josephine's Lorikeet *Charmosyna josefinae* R

2 Dablin Creek 31.5.92. 1 at Townsville drill site 15.8.92 and 2 there on 12.9.92. 3 at Ok Menga 20.8.92. PG

Pigmy Lorikeet *Charmosyna wilhelminae*

5 at Townsville drill site 13.9.92. 11+ there on 21.9.92 PG.

Double-eyed Fig-parrot *Psittaculirostris diophthalma*

1 at Sankwep Road on 16.8.1992. CE

2 Gusiore village, Elevala River, N of Kiunga 27.09.92 PG

Sankwep Road on 1.11.1992. CE

Large Fig-Parrot *Psittaculirostris desmarestii*

3+ 1.8.92 and 2 on 26.9.92 along the Fly River N of Kiunga PG.

Brehm's Tiger-parrot *Psittacella brehmii*

Tari Gap on 8.6.1992. CE

Madarasz's Tiger-parrot *Psittacella madaraszii*

1m Townsville drill site 13.9.92. PG

Papuan Hanging Parrot *Loriculus aurantiifrons* R

2 m and f/imm Ok Ma road 26.4.92 PG Heard Ok Ma road 30.7.92. 1 at Dablin Creek on 1.10.1992. CE

Pigmy-parrot *Micropsitta sp*

5m and 3 f Dablin Creek 1.3.92 were of the yellow crowned Ok Tedi form, the fourth sighting recorded. 20 flying over Ok Menga 14.6.92. 22 there 20.6.92. 20 Ok Ma road 28.7.92. 5+ Townsville drill site 15.8.92. 30+ Dablin Creek 19.8.92.

1 pair excavating a chamber in a tree stump at Townsville drill site 12.9.92, photographed and sound recorded on 19.9.92.

40+ Ok Menga 5.10.92. 220+ flying N over Ok Menga area between 1530-1730 on 25.10.92 45 N 8.11.92 and an extraordinary 650 NE here between 1600-1645 on 22.11.92, going over like dust specks. Clearly a common species in the area PG!

**Vulturine Parrot *Psitttrichas fulgidus* R**

5 Ok Ma road 26.4.92. 2 at Ok Menga 14.5.92. 2 Dablin Creek 27.7.92. 5 at Km 92 Kiunga /Tabubil road 30.7.92. 6 along the Ok Ma road, 29.8.92. 3 along the Tabubil - Kiunga Road on 25.9.1992. Kiunga on 27.9.92. and 3 there 14.11.92 CE/PG. 1 at Dablin Creek on 1 and 3.10.1992. CE/PG

**Channel-billed Cuckoo *Scythrops novaehollandiae***

1 at Alotau 3.1.92, an unusual date PG; 27 in small flocks Fly R N of Kiunga 18.4.92. 2 Gusiore, Elevala R 27.9 and 5 near Nomad River, nr. Kiunga on 28.9.1992. CE/PG

**Dwarf Koel *Microdynamis parva***

1m Fly R N of Kiunga 1.8.92. 1m and 1 f Ok Menga 20.8.92. PG

**Long-billed Cuckoo *Rhamphomantis megarhynchus* R**

2 ad and 1 imm at Veimauri 28.6.92. feeding on caterpillars in a tree.

**Barking Owl *Ninox connivens***

A female heard calling (fairly high pitched wufwuf) at 4th Street Lae on 10.3.1992. Even the dogs were reacting ! CE. 4th Street Lae on 9.4.1992. CE. 1 at Kiunga wharf on a floodlit fence 14.4.92. PG

**Papuan Spine-tailed Swift *Mearnsia novaeguineae***

Kiunga on 27.9.1992. CE/PG

**Swiftlet sp. *Collocalia* sp.**

A flock of 30 large brown swiftlets at Sagarai near Alotau on 3.1.92. was intriguing and suggests Whitehead's *C. whiteheadi* or Three-toed *C. papuensis* may be in the area. PG

**White-throated Needletail *Hirandapus caudacutus***

30 at Kiunga wharf on 27.9.1992 and 40 there next day. CE/PG

**Dwarf Kingfisher *Ceyx lepidus***

Sankwep Road on 1.11.1992. CE

**Azure Kingfisher *Ceyx azureus***

Kiunga on 28.9.1992. CE/PG

**White-collared Kingfisher *Halcyon chloris* B**

1 ad and 3 juv in a tree ant mud-nest 6m up in a pandanus on an islet off East Cape, Milne Bay 4.1.92. PG

**Forest Kingfisher *Halcyon macleayi* E**

1 Tabubil 13.8.92 was new for the Ok Tedi area PG.

**Hook-billed Kingfisher *Melidora macrorrhina***

5 calling around km 4 along Ok Ma road 29.8.92. Regularly calls by Cloudlands Hotel in Tabubil town. PG Heard Sankwep Road on 29.11 and 3.12.1992. CE

**Dollarbird *Eurystomus glaucurus* M**

Many singles (20+) Fly R N of Kiunga 24.5.92, plus hawking flocks of 20 and 30, clearly migrants.

**Blyth's Hornbill *Rhyticeros plicatus***

3; 1 first, then later a pair at Sankwep Road on 6.9.1992. CE. 21 at Gusiore N of Kiunga on 27.9.92. CE/PG. Tabubil on 1.10.1992. CE/PG. 20 at Sankwep Road on 1.11.1992. CE

**Barn Swallow *Hirundorustica***

Kanosia on 15.3.1992. CE. Small nos over-winter ar Tabubil PG.

**Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica* R**

3 at Alotau 1.1.92. 7 at Tabubil 2.2.92. PG. Kanosia on 15.3.1992 CE The species seems to be becoming much more frequently recorded in recent years.

**Tree Martin *Hirundo nigricans***

Kanosia on 15.3.1992. CE

**Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea***

1 f at Kiunga on 19.4.92 was getting late; Tabubil on 4.10.1992. CE Ambua on 6 and 7.11.1992. CE

**Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava***

1 in spring plumage Tabubil 28.3.92. The white supercilium, grey crown and entirely yellow underparts indicate the race *simillima* PG.

**Alpine Pipit *Anthus gutturalis***

Mt Wilhelm on 12 and 13.12.1992. CE

**Golden Cuckoo-shrike *Campochaera sloetii* G**

Quite common around Tabubil, and very vocal. The species seem to particularly like *Albizia* trees which have an abundance of caterpillars at times. PG

**Wallace's Fairy-wren *Todopsis wallacei* R**

2 at Dablin Creek on 1.10.1992. PG/CE

**Grey Gerygone *Gerygone cinerea* E**

Ambua on 7.11.1992.

1 Townsville drill site, Ok Tedi 13.9.92. PG. New for the area

**Bicoloured Mouse-warbler *Crateroscelis nigrorufa* R**

Ambua on 6.11.1992.

**Torrent Flycatcher *Monarchella muelleriana***

Sankwep Road on 1.11.1992. CE. Ambua on 7.11.1992. CE. Sankwep Road on 15 and 22.11.1992. CE

**Garnet Robin *Eugerygone rubra* R**

1 male singing and wing flicking Townsville drill site, Ok Tedi 22.9.92. PG New for the area.

**Black-sided Robin *Poecilodryas hypoleuca***

Brown River on 14.3.1992. CE. Sankwep Road on 15.11.1992.

Banded Yellow Robin *Poecilodryas placens* **R**  
 Heard Veimauri on 15.3.1992. CE

White-rumped Robin *Peneothello bimaculatu* **R**  
 Uncommon at several hill forest localities around Tabubil. PG

Rusty Whistler *Pachycephala hyperythra* **R**  
 Tabubil on 1.10.1992. CE/PG A scarce species known from two sites around Tabubil. PG

Golden-backed Whistler *Pachycephala aurea* **R/B**  
 At least 2 pairs resident at Km 119 nr. Tabubil with a juv seen in early August.

Mottled Whistler *Rhagologus leucosticta* **R**  
 1 ♀ at 1200m below Folomian at Ok Tedi mine 30.7.92. PG.

Black Pitohui *Pitohui nigrescens* **E**  
 1 imm Ambua 9.6.92 PG; Ambua on 6.11.1992. CE 1 male Townsville drill site, Ok Tedi 21.9.92. was new for the area. PG.

Varied Sittella *Daphoenositta chrysoptera*  
 Ambua on 7.6.1992. CE

Mid-mountain Berrypecker *Melanocharis longicauda*  
 Ambua on 8.11.1992. CE

*Melanocharis* sp  
 A distinctive yellow billed small high canopy *Melanocharis* at Dablin Creek Tabubil on 1.10.92 may be an undescribed form PG/CE. See *Muruk 1993* Vol 6 : 1 p.33

Green-backed Honeyeater *Glycichaera fallax* **E**  
 Tabubil on 1.10.92 at 850m PG, and 5.10.1992. CE

Plain Honeyeater *Pycnopygius ixoides*  
 Kiunga on 29.9.1992. CE/PG

Sooty Melidectes *Melidectes fuscus* **R**  
 Mt Wilhelm on 13.12.1992. CE

Mountain Firetail *Oreostruthus fuliginosus*  
 Tari Gap on 8.6.1992. CE

Yellow-eyed Starling *Aplonis mystacea* **R**  
 1 Ok Menga 14.6.92 and 20 (5imm) there on 20.6.92.  
 1 Fly R. near Kiunga on 29.9.1992, with *A. metallica* CE/PG. The nasal bristles were a surprisingly useful field character in flight.

Great Wood-swallow *Artamus maximus* **A/B**  
 Resident in Tabubil from 500m with 3 groups of about 10 birds.  
 11.10.92, Tabubil industrial area, 3 juv in a nest 20 m up in an epiphytic clump on a branch of a dying tree  
 Gain on 17.5.1992. CE. An unusually low altitude record at c. 400m at Sankwep Road on 1.11.1992. CE  
 Mt Wilhelm on 13.12.1992. CE

White-breasted Wood-swallow *Artamus leucorhynchus* **E**  
 1 Tabubil 6.8.92 was new for Ok Tedi.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* **E**  
 3m Gordon Market, Port Moresby 27.6.92. The species appears to be colonising the city.

Archbold's Bowerbird *Archboldia papuensis* **R**  
 1 male at bower at Tari Gap on 9.6.1992. CE/PG. Ambua on 8.11.1992. CE

Flame Bowerbird *Sericulus aureus*  
 1 fnr Kiunga 2.8.92.PG. Male and female near Kiunga on 29.9.1992. CE/PG

Loria's Bird-of-Paradise *Loria loriae*  
 Ambua on 6 and 7.6.1992. Also on 6.11.92 CE

Crested Bird-of-Paradise *Cnemophilus macgregorii*  
 Tari Gap on 8.6.1992. CE

Yellow-breasted Bird-of-Paradise *Loboparadisaea sericea* **R**  
 1 male Townsville drill site, Ok Tedi 19.9.92 PG

Trumpet Manucode *Manucodia keraudrenii*  
 31.7.92, 2, 29.9.92, 1 + 2 heard, Magazine road, Kiunga PG.

Twelve-wired Bird-of-Paradise *Seleucidis melanoleuca*  
 Calling male near Kiunga on 26 and 28.9.1992. CE/PG

Short-tailed Paradigalla *Paradigalla brevicauda* **E**  
 Ambua on 6 and 7.6.1992. Also on 6.11.92 CE. 2+ seen and 4 hrd Townsville drill site Ok Tedi 13.9.92 PG

Buff-tailed Sicklebill *Drepanornis albertisii*  
 Briefest of views of a male (?) at Ambua on 8.6.1992. CE

Black Sicklebill *Epimachus fastosus* **R**  
 1 male in scope at Benari Road on 9.6.1992. CE/PG. Heard Ambua on 7.11.1992. CE. Still present around Tabubil, heard at Mt Robinson and Townsville Drill site. A skin in the market costs about K180 in 1992.  
 Brown Sicklebill *Epimachus meyeri*  
 Heard Ambua on 7.11.1992. and seen on 8/11/1992.CE

**Ribbon-tailed Astrapia *Astrapia mayeri* R**

Tari Gap on 8 and 9.6.1992. CE/PG. Ambua on 7 and 8.11.1992. CE

**Stephanie's Astrapia *Astrapia stephaniae***

Ambua on 7.11.1992. CE

**Carola's Parotia *Parotia carolae***

3m and 2f/imm "Helsinki" Mt Robinson, Tabubil on 29.7.92 and 2f/imm Geneva ridge Ok Tedi mine site same day PG. 1f/imm Mt Robinson 3.10.1992. CE/PG

**King-of-Saxony Bird-of-Paradise *Pteridophora alberti***

Ambua on 7.6.1992. CE/PG. Tari Gap on 8.6.1992. CE/PG. Ambua on 7 and 8.11.1992. CE

Still present around Ok Tedi mine site on Mt Binnie and Mt Akrik Sept 92 PG

**King Bird-of-Paradise *Cicinnurus regius***

Heard Sankwep Road on 16.8.92 and 22.11.92 CE

Tabubil is too high for the species (though it occurs in riparian habitats at Km 113). Only a single skin seen both 1992 and 1991 (which came up from Kiunga and cost K5). PG

**Magnificent Bird-of-Paradise *Diphylodes magnificus***

Common around Tabubil, males very vocal but hard to see. Land clearance along the tracks is also beginning to have an effect. Rarely hunted for plumes, only a single market specimen in 1992 (for K5). PG

**Magnificent Riflebird *Ptiloris magnificus***

Quite common around Tabubil, with a distinctive wolf whistle call unlike the harsh growling disyllabic call of the eastern form. PG. Never seen in the market.

**Greater Bird-of-Paradise *Paradisaea apoda***

Females and imm plumaged birds are common around Tabubil, but full plumed males are very elusive and under considerable hunting pressure. PG A good male skin will cost K20 minimum. Most skins on sale are lemon plumed Lesser BoP (*P. minor*) from the Telefomin area.

**Miscellaneous records from 1991**

Contributed by PG, selected highlights only.

Abbreviations: L=Lake; R=River; NCD=National Capital District (Port Moresby area)

**Crested Hawk *Aviceda cristata***

A displaying bird at Tabubil 31.3.91. was reminiscent of European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*, with wings raised to 75 and slowly flapped.

**Papuan Harrier *Circus spilonotus***

1 flying north over Tabubil town 23.2.91. was new for the area.

**Black-mantled Goshawk *Accipiter melanochlamys***

Singles at 1600m at Townsville Drill Site nr Ok Tedi 15 and 19.9.92.

**Gurney's Eagle *Aquila gurneyi* R**

28 Apr 91, 1, km 120 on rd to Kiunga from Tabubil.

**Little Eagle *Hieraaetus morphnoides***

21 Apr 91, 1, Ok Ma nr. Tabubil.

**Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus***

27 Jan 91, 1 ad, behind Islander Hotel, NCD.

**Common Sandpiper *Tringa hypoleucos* M**

27 Feb 91, 13 on golf course during a morning of low cloud, Tabubil.

**Streaked Lorikeet *Charmosyna multistriata* R**

31 Jan 91, 1 feeding with *C. placensis* in a flowering tree by the International School, Tabubil.

**Red-breasted Pygmy-Parrot *Micropsitta bruijnii***

24 Mar 91, 2 f/1imm m, Ok Tedi

**Eclectus Parrot *Eclectus roratus***

1991: quite frequent in general area of Tabubil, mostly single males in Mar-Apr, but pairs more common in May.

**Vulturine Parrot *Psittrichas fulgidus* R**

20 Apr 91, 3, Ok Ma (PG); 12 May 91, 4, km 115 Kiunga-Tabubil rd, (PG); 12 May 91, 2 nr Tabubil, (PG). Still not rare around Tabubil, can be seen on most trips out of town, but increasing settlement poses an immediate threat. The species is no longer seen over or near the town itself, whereas 5 years ago it was still possible to find it there.

**Oriental Cuckoo *Cuculus saturatus* M**

1 12 Feb 92 Tabubil (PG). 4 Apr 91, 1 hepatic phase, Ambua Lodge, Tari, SHP

**Rufous-throated Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx ruficollis* M**

4 Apr 91, 4, Ambua Lodge, Tari, SHP, chasing around the canopy calling a high-pitched, noisy, shrill "peer". Occasionally one would perch and shiver its wings before being chased again

**Lesser Black Coucal *Centropus bernsteini***

10 Feb 91, 1, Tabubil

**Sacred Kingfisher *Halcyon sancta* M**

21 Apr 91, first record of year in Tabubil. 10 May 91, a bird was stunned by flying into a window at Tabubil. It recovered and was released. Buff spots on coverts suggested a first winter bird.

**Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* M**

11 Oct 92, 1 Tabubil.

**Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica* M**

2+ nr Islander Hotel, NCD 27 Jan 91.