

Although the drum is a men's instrument, it can be seen that women have an important role in its construction. This, perhaps, relates to the origin myth of the instrument whereby the first drum is made by a man to imitate the sound of sexual intercourse he hears occurring between his brother and his brother's wife. A similar origin myth also gives the origin of the jew's harp. In the Mountain Ok area of West Sepik and Western Provinces, one stage of male initiation concerns the drum and jew's harp apparently the only area in the country in which a boy must be initiated before he can play such instruments. While no such initiation is required amongst the Hewa, this linking of the two instruments through legend is of considerable interest.

The Hewa drum is primarily used during an all-night singing called *yap*, usually performed to open a new house. Traditionally all dancers are male (women and girls sit around their fireplace inside the house) and the main dancer is heavily decorated with leaves hanging from the front and a variety of feathers at the top and rear of his headdress. The drum is played to signal different sections of a song or a change to a new subject. The performance takes place inside the house from sunset to dawn.

While the importance of bird feathers to singing decorations and of bird song to some indigenous music theories (e.g., Feld 1990) is well known in both ornithological and ethnomusicological circles, to our knowledge the Hewa region is the only area in Papua New Guinea in which a bird skin of any type is used for a drum. Even for the entire New Guinea island, the only other use of a bird skin known to us is found along the northern Irian Jaya coast where a species of cassowary (*Casuaris unappendiculatus?*) is used (e.g., see Clercq & Schmeltz 1893, Sande 1907, Galis 1955, Kunst 1967, Stokhof 1983). We would greatly appreciate from readers any other information about the use of bird skins for the kundu or any other instruments.

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A SPECIMEN OF MOUNTAIN NIGHTJAR *Eurostopodus archboldi* FROM THE HINDENBURG RANGES

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The Mountain (or Archbold's) Nightjar *Eurostopodus archboldi* is endemic to the mountain ranges of central and eastern New Guinea (Coates 1985), normally occurring at 2250 to 3,200 m, rarely as low as 2200 m (Beehler et al. 1986); it is the only nightjar found at this altitude. The distribution of this species in Papua New Guinea is fragmented, with records from Mt Hagen, Enga Province; Mt Giluwe, Southern Highlands Province (and the Tari Gap area cf. Muruk 1994.....ed); Huon Peninsula; and Wharton Range, on the border of the Central and Northern Provinces, south-east New Guinea (Coates 1985).

A specimen was collected by Dr Tim Flannery (Australian Museum, Mammal Section) and Mr Lester Seri (Department of Environment and Conservation, Division of Wildlife, Papua New Guinea) on Finimter Plateau, Hindenburg Range, at an altitude of 2280 metres. The specimen was captured on 01 May 1992, while mistnetting for bats *Syconycteris* sp. at the junction of an area of forest and grassland. The bird entered the net between 1930 and 1945 hours, shortly after several bats were heard calling.

This is the first record of Mountain Nightjar for Western Province. The specimen is now registered in the Australian Museum ornithology collection (O.64412).

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ISLAND THRUSH (*Turdus poliocephalus*) IN WESTERN PROVINCE, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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The Island Thrush *Turdus poliocephalus* is found in many areas throughout the islands of the Southwest Pacific, where it exhibits considerable variation in plumage colour and pattern, and size (Diamond 1989) between populations on different islands and even different mountain ranges within one island.

Ripley (1964) recognised 50 subspecies; two further subspecies have been since described (Diamond 1989).

On the New Guinea mainland there are currently considered to be four subspecies:

T.p. versteegi (Snow Mountains), *T.p. erebus* (central highland provinces); *T.p. keysseri* (Saruwaged Mountains, Huon Peninsula); and, *T.p. papuensis* (Owen Stanley and Wharton Ranges).

Although geographically isolated, these subspecies are similar in colour and shape, but differ in size. Measurements of wing, tail and tarsus can be used as a basis for identification, however, there are also size differences between male and female of the same subspecies (Table 1).

On 04 and 05 April 1987 three birds were collected by Dr Tim Flannery (Australian Museum, Sydney) and Mr Lester Seri (Department of Environment and Conservation, Division of Wildlife, Papua New Guinea), near Dokfuma, Star Mountains (altitude 3200 metres). They subsequently captured a further individual on Finimteri Plateau, Hindenburg Range (altitude 2280 metres) on 02 May 1992. The specimens were incorporated in the Australian Museum bird collection. Measurements were taken and their sexes were determined by internal examination (Table 2).

The measurements indicate that these specimens represent *T.p. versteegi*. Ideally, a greater number of individuals within this region should be measured. The tarsus lengths of the two males are smaller than those of five specimens measured by Mayr & Gilliard (1951). The measurements of the adult female are inconsistent with those published of *versteegi* females. The differences in the measurements of the three adult birds collected by Flannery and Seri raise an element of doubt as to whether these birds are truly *versteegi* or perhaps a new subspecies.

These are the first records of the subspecies *Turdus poliocephalus versteegi* for Papua New Guinea.

Table 1.

Comparative wing, tail and tarsus measurements (mm) of adult Island Thrush subspecies. From Diamond (1989) and Mayr & Gilliard (1951).

		<i>versteegi</i>	<i>erebus</i>	<i>keysseri</i>	<i>papuensis</i>
Wing	male	136.0-144.5	124.5	118-124.0	127.0-135
	female	135.5-136.0	122.5-125	118-120.5	125.5-129
Tail	male	100-108	89	85	97- 105
	female	96-102	85-90	80	91- 94.5
Tarsus	male	39.5-42.0	36.5	36	33.5-38
	female	40.0-40.5	35.0-37.5	38	36.0-37.5

Table 2.

Measurements (mm), sexes and Australian Museum registration numbers of specimens collected by Flannery and Seri.

Locality	Dokfuma	Dokfuma	Dokfuma	Finimteri
Sex & Age	Ad. male	Ad. female	Ad. male	Imm. female
AM Reg.	O.59750	O.59751	O.59752	O.64416
Wing (mm)	139	134	138	129
Tail (mm)	107	107	108	102
Tarsus (mm)	38.7	39.3	39.2	39.2

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THE AVIFAUNA OF THE ALOTAU AREA, MILNE BAY PROVINCE

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Location:

Alotau is the provincial capital and gateway to the Milne Bay Province and is located 385 Km E. S. E from Port Moresby. The peaceful town has 6,385 inhabitants and is located on a narrow coastal plain on Milne Bay. The surrounding area has steep rainforest covered mountains, coconut plantations and oil palm estates interspersed with traditional gardens and undisturbed lowland rainforests. A regional highway passes through Alotau and connects East Cape and Sagarai via Gurney Airport. Other local roads link to the north coast and the southern shores of the Bay. Local vessels and dinghies link the villages and island areas. A network of airstrips connects Alotau with the islands and inner mountain areas.

Topography and Vegetation : Major Classifications

Lowland rainforests : e. g. Alluvial plains Alotau region.

Rugged Mid-High Mountain Ranges : e. g. Owen Stanley Mt Dayman (2980m) and Agaun (1015m).

Dry coral limestone coasts and grassland savannahs : e. g. Cape Vogel, Rabaraba District.