

Glossy Swiftlet (*C. esculenta*)  
 White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike (*Coracina papuensis*)  
 Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike (*C. novaehollandiae*)  
 Black-shouldered Cuckoo-shrike (*C. morio*)  
 Black Cuckoo-shrike (*C. melaena*)  
 Varied Triller (*Lalage leucomela*)  
 White-shouldered Fairy-wren (*Malurus alboscapulatus*)  
 Tawny Grassbird (*Megalurus timoriensis*)  
 Golden-headed Cisticola (*Cisticola exilis*)  
 White-bellied Thicket-fantail (*Rhipidura leucothorax*)  
 Sooty Thicket-fantail (*R. threnothorax*)  
 Northern Fantail (*R. rufiventris*)  
 Willy Wagtail (*R. leucophrys*)  
 Frilled Monarch (*Arses telescopthalmus*)  
 Black-faced Monarch (*Monarcha melanopsis*)  
 Golden Monarch (*M. chrysomela*)  
 Hooded Monarch (*M. manadensis*)  
 Satin Flycatcher (*Myiagra cyanoleuca*)  
 Lowland Peltops (*Peltops blainvillii*)  
 Olive Flycatcher (*Microeca flavovirescens*)  
 Yellow-breasted Boatbill (*Machaerhirynchus flaviventer*)  
 Grey Whistler (*Pachycephala simplex*)  
 Little Shrike-thrush (*Colluricincla megarhyncha*)  
 Grey Shrike-thrush (*C. harmonica*)  
 Papuan Flowerpecker (*Dicaeum pectorale*)  
 Black-fronted White-eye (*Zosterops atrifrons*)  
 Silver-eared Honeyeater (*Lichmera alboauricularis*)  
 Yellow-bellied Sunbird (*Nectarinia jugularis*)  
 Black Sunbird (*N. aspasia*)  
 Dusky Myzomela (*M. obscura*)  
 Red-throated Myzomela (*M. eques*)  
 Mimic Meliphaga (*Meliphaga analoga*)  
 Scrub White-eared Meliphaga (*Malbonotata*)  
 Varied Honeyeater (*Lichenostomus versicolor*)  
 Tawny-breasted Honeyeater (*Xanthotis flaviventer*)  
 Plain Honeyeater (*Pycnopygius ixoides*)  
 Streak-headed Honeyeater (*Pycnopygius stictocephalus*)  
 Helmeted Friarbird (*Philemon buceroides*)  
 Chestnut-breasted Mannikin (*Lonchura castaneothorax*)  
 Grand Mannikin (*L. grandis*)  
 Metallic Starling (*Aplonis metallica*)  
 Singing Starling (*A. cantoroides*)  
 Yellow-faced Myna (*Mino dumontii*)  
 Brown Oriole (*Oriolus szalayii*)  
 Spangled Drongo (*Dicrurus hottentotus*)  
 White-breasted Wood-swallow (*Artamus leucorhynchus*)

Hooded Butcherbird (*Cracticus cassicus*)  
 Fawn-breasted Bowerbird (*Chlamydera cerviniventris*)  
 Yellow-breasted Bowerbird (*C. lauterbachii*)  
 Trumpet Manucode (*Manucodia keraudrenii*)  
 Raggiana Bird-of-Paradise (*Paradisaea raggiana*)  
 King Bird-of-Paradise (*Cicinnurus regius*)  
 Magnificent Riflebird (*Ptiloris magnificus*)  
 Torresian Crow (*Corvus orru*)

List compiled by:

Antony Fabbro 9/75 Darling Point Rd. Darling Point, NSW 2027, Australia.  
 Ms Margaret Wilson C/o Corda PO Box 423, Alotau, Milne Bay Province.  
 Malcolm Hodgson C/o CDC PO Box 4332, Jakarta 21043, Indonesia  
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**FURTHER OBSERVATIONS OF *Aplonis* STARLINGS FEEDING ON INSECTS**

Mary LeCroy

Two observations of *Aplonis* starlings feeding on insects reported in a recent issue of *Muruk* (Clapp 1993 ; Burrows 1993) prompted me to report similar observations I have made on the Sepik River. Such behaviour may not be uncommon.

On 3rd February 1989 near Kamindimbit on the middle Sepik, in late morning I noticed *Aplonis* starlings swooping over the river after mayflies that had hatched. Their foraging resembled that of swallows.

On 22nd February 1991, again on the middle Sepik, at 6.40am, hundreds of *Aplonis metallica* were seen foraging low over the surface of the river. There were flocks of perhaps 50 birds that merged and separated in wheeling flight. Some of these flocks seemed to be following the edge of the outflow of a small tributary. At first it seemed that the large flocks were following canoes crossing the river, and I thought that perhaps the canoes were stirring up insects from the water's surface, but later there appeared to be no interaction between the flocks and the canoes. The flocks swirled back and forth across the Sepik and into and out of the tributary for some 20 minutes. There were a few Rainbow Bee-eaters (*Merops ornatus*) and White-breasted Wood-swallows (*Artamus leucorhynchus*) feeding with the starlings, some of which may have been *A. cantoroides*. There were a few starlings in immature plumage. In another 10 minutes all of the feeding birds had gradually disappeared. The disappearance was so gradual that it seems unlikely that the starlings were gathering insects to feed young. I saw no purposeful flight towards and away from the river such as one might expect if there were a nesting tree in the vicinity.

On 20th February 1992 near Korrogo on the middle Sepik, I again saw a wheeling flock of *A. metallica* foraging low over the river at sunrise.

While I was unable to determine the prey items in the latter two cases, it is likely that they were hatching mayflies as well. I did not notice these flocks in the evenings, on other mornings, or on the lower Sepik. These observations were made whilst I was ornithologist on American Museum of Natural History Discovery Tours aboard the *Melanesian Discoverer*. In 1989, 1991 and 1992 we were on the Sepik for 4 1/2

days, in 1994 for 3 1/2 days, all in late February. Morning and evening were the usual times for observations from deck and similar behaviour at other times of day might be missed. Nevertheless, to have seen this behaviour only 3 times in 17 days indicates that it is sporadic and is likely associated with a superabundance of insects near the surface, such as occurs when mayflies hatch.

### References

Burrows I. 1993 Some notes on the birds seen in the Turama River area, Gulf Province. **Muruk** 6 (1): 28-32.

Clapp G.E. 1993. Unusual foraging behaviour by *Aplonis* starlings believed to be *Aplonis metallica*. **Muruk** 6 (1): 12-13.

*Author's address: Dept. of Ornithology, American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th St., New York, NY 10024, USA.*

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### Yellow-billed Spoonbill (*Platalea flavipes*): A new species for Papua New Guinea

Although the Yellow-billed Spoonbill is illustrated in Beehler et al (1986) there were no documented records until those listed in *Muruk* 6:3 (1994), which include brief details of the 1992 records following:

On August 13th 1993 a flock of at least ten Yellow-billed Spoonbills were observed at fishing hole number two together with large numbers of other waterbirds including c. 100 Royal Spoonbills (*Platalea regia*). All individuals were observed at length through a Questar telescope and 10x40 Zeiss binoculars, both in flight and standing. Immediate comparison was made with neighbouring Royal Spoonbills and the pale yellow bill and legs were noted. A similar flock was previously observed by this author whilst leading a Victor Emanuel Nature Tours Inc. trip to Bensbach, during August 1992 (*Muruk* 6(3)1994). That Yellow-billed Spoonbills were observed at the same site two years running suggest this species may now regularly occur in the Bensbach region of Papua New Guinea.

Other records of interest:

**Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*):** A flock of 23 including some in breeding plumage foraging in open short grass plains near the Bensbach River appears to represent the first record of this recent addition to the PNG avifauna for Western province. August 12th 1993

**White-faced Heron (*Ardea novaehollandiae*):** A single adult observed along the fly River c. 20 km north of Kiunga. August 16th 1993 This appears to be one of the few published record of this species north of more typical habitat such as occurs around the Bensbach River. (*There is a single Tabubil record recorded in Murray (Muruk 3 (3)1988)...ed.*

**Spotted Jewel Babbler (*Ptilorrhoea leucosticta*):** A single bird similar to that illustrated for the Central Highlands (Beehler et al 1986) was exceptionally confiding as it foraged around the paths and car park of Ambua Lodge. August 25-26, 1993. This is a shy and rarely recorded species in the Ambua-Tari Gap area.

*K. David Bishop 'Semioptera'. Lot 15, Kerns Road, Kincumber, NSW 2251, Australia  
(Received August 1994)*

### **INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS**

***Muruk*** welcomes any contributions which add to the body of knowledge about the birds of the New Guinea region. We welcome scientific papers, travelogues, regional lists and casual notes and observations, particularly from the less well known areas. Please send all contributions to:

Editor, *Muruk*, PNGBS PO Box 1598, Boroko, NCD, Papua New Guinea.

or Editor, *Muruk*, PO Box 69, Tabubil, Western Province, PNG Ph. 675 589310 or fax 589641

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For English and scientific names use those in Beehler B.M. et al. 1986 **Birds of New Guinea**, Princeton University Press, or the checklist produced by the PNGBS (Hicks R. 1987 **Checklist of the Birds of Papua New Guinea**, PNGBS). With bird lists please follow the order used in these publications.

For place names kindly try to ensure that they can be located using standard maps. If they do not occur on the PNG 1:100,000 series maps then please give the nearest mapped locality. Always give the province after the name, and grid references are useful.

Illustrations should be neatly drawn in black ink and avoiding too much detail. For all maps please submit two copies, one without any annotation and another with the place names marked. Alternatively, mark the place names on a transparent overlay. Line drawings of birds are welcome. Again, use black ink and as few shades as possible. Drawings on the theme of cassowaries are always welcome as potential cover items. Black and white photographs may also be included for possible usage.

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