

The Nest

The nest was constructed from thin sticks supported by two or three thin outer members of the branch beyond the last main fork in the branch. The nest was a platform estimated to be 750 mm by 600 mm by 150 mm deep. The distance to the nest from the observation point was too far to allow a detailed examination of the nest.

Young Grey Crows

When first observed on the 26th and 27th of November 1994 there were four nearly fully fledged young on the nest being fed at short regular intervals by what appeared to be only two adults. Observation times were around 4 pm on the 26th and 10 am on the 27th.

At the next observation of the young on the 3rd of December, they were flexing their wings preparing to leave the nest. This time they were being fed infrequently. Observation time was between 9.30 am and 10.30 am.

The site was visited again on the 18th of December and the nest was found to be vacated. Grey crows could be heard about one kilometre away to the south.

It was noted in May 1995 that the top ten metres of the tree was in full thick foliage and the location of the nest could not be observed from the lookout.

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BAT HAWK (*Macheiramphus alcinus*) SIGHTING FROM KOBAKMA, IRIAN JAYA, INDONESIA ON 8TH DECEMBER 1990.

By William F. Glynn.

This is to record the sighting of a Bat Hawk (*Macheiramphus alcinus*) at Kobakma in the Wamena Government District, Irian Jaya, Indonesia on the 8th of December 1990. Kobakma, (elevation 975m) is twenty minutes by a Cessna 185 or a two day walk, north of Wamena (elevation 1525m), the government administration centre for the Baliem Valley region. There were no roads to Kobakma in 1990. The immediate area around (three to four kilometres) Kobakma has cleared areas with regrowth rain forest, beyond this is rain forest. Kobakma is situated on a flat ridge top.

The Bat Hawk was sighted at 8 am about four kilometres east of the air strip (in the centre of Kobakma) above the main walking track to Pasvalley and Wamena. The Bat Hawk was flying in a westerly direction about 100m above the ground. It appeared to be flying direct to a definite location. The sky was clear at the time of sighting. (Editor's note: Will Glynn knows the species from Papua New Guinea and is certain of his identification, though no field notes were made at the time. It is not known from Irian Jaya, but occurs in Java and Borneo and its occurrence in this province of Indonesia is not altogether unexpected.)

Other species sighted between the 4th and 9th of December included: Brown Quail, Grey Gos-hawk (white phase), Collared Sparrow hawk, Crested Hawk, Little Eagle (pale phase and dark phase). Buff-banded Rail, White-browed Crane (Heard), Bush-Hen (Heard), Victoria Crowned Pigeon (fleeting glimpse), Pheasant Pigeon, Papuan Mountain Pigeon, Wompoo Fruit Dove,

Orange-bellied Fruit Dove, Rainbow Lorikeet, Sulphur Crested Cockatoo, Bronze Cuckoo sp., Brush Cuckoo, Pheasant Coucal, Yellow Billed Kingfisher, Dollar Bird, Blyth's Horn bill, Great Wood-Swallow, Mountain Swiftlet, Boyer's Cuckoo Shrike, Brown Oriole, Helmeted Friarbird, Meyer's Friarbird, Black-browed Triller, White-shouldered Fairy Wren, Northern Fantail, Chestnut-bellied Fantail, Mountain Peltops (sitting on nest), Black-sided Robin, Grey Wagtail, Grey Shrike-thrush, Dwarf Whistler, Black-headed Whistler, Hooded Pitohui, Black Berrypecker, Black-fronted White-eye, Papuan Flowerpecker, Long-billed Honeyeater, Dwarf Honeyeater, Yellow-faced Myna, Yellow-breasted Bower-bird, Lesser Bird of Paradise, Grey Crow, Singing Starling.

The Mountain Peltops was nesting about six metres above the main walking track to Pasvalley. It's mate kept watch close by. The Grey Wagtail was at an elevation of 880m on the bank of a very fast flowing river.

Reference: B. M. Beehler (1985). **Birds of New Guinea.**
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SPECULATION : ADDITIONS TO THE AVIFAUNA OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

by Phil Gregory

I have a checklist of New Guinea birds published by Bill Principe (1991), which details 708 species definitely known to have occurred on the mainland of New Guinea as a whole including the nearby islands, and lists a further 58 as either undocumented, with uncertain taxonomic status or which the author expects to occur. This latter category is unusual in being included in a lighter type face in the main body of the list rather being in an appendix, which can make for confusion. Some of the predictions I find surprising, and with this in mind have decided to speculate on a list of my own.

Basically almost anything which has occurred as a vagrant to Australia is a fair bet, and a few Australian dispersives are possible. Seabirds form the largest body of potential candidates, and given the limited pelagic observations from New Guinea seas so far we can expect a lot of additions in due course. Long distance migrants form the next major category.

Bill's predicted list is given below, and is followed by my own. Other scryers of the crystal ball are welcome to join in ! The Papua New Guinea list is currently 665 from the mainland and nearby islands, with an additional 94 from the Bismarck Archipelago, Admiralty Islands and North Solomons (based on Chris Eastwood's latest pocket check list, PNGBS 1994). The grand total is thus 759 species.

Bill Principe's Predictions * Denotes species now reported from PNG.

Cape Petrel	<i>Daption capense</i>
Hawaiian Petrel	<i>Pterodroma phaeopygia</i>
White-necked Petrel	<i>Pterodroma exsul</i>
Phoenix Petrel	<i>P. alba</i>
Mottled Petrel	<i>P. inexpectata</i>

Solander's Petrel	<i>P. solanderi</i>
Kermadec Petrel	<i>P. neglecta</i>
Cook's Petrel	<i>P. cookii</i>
Gould's Petrel	<i>P. leucoptera</i>
Stejneger's Petrel	<i>P. longirostris</i>
Black-winged Petrel	<i>P. nigripennis</i>
Fiji Petrel (Macgillivray's)	<i>Bulweria macgillivrayi</i>
Bulwer's Petrel	<i>Bulweria bulwerii</i>
Buller's Shearwater	<i>Puffinus bulleri</i>
Manx Shearwater	<i>P. puffinus</i>
Hutton's Shearwater	<i>P. huttoni</i>
* Audubon's Shearwater	<i>P. l'herminieri</i> . Recorded by Palliser between Buka and Kieta on 28.12.87. (Coates 1990)
White-faced Storm-Petrel	<i>Pelagodroma marina</i>
Black-bellied Storm-Petrel	<i>Fregatta tropica</i>
White-throated Storm-Petrel	<i>Nesofregatta fuliginosa</i>
Swinhoe's Storm-Petrel	<i>Oceanodroma monorhis</i>
Leach's Storm-Petrel	<i>O. leucorhoa</i>
Matsudaira's Storm-Petrel	<i>O. matsudairae</i>
Chinese Egret	<i>Egretta eulophotes</i>
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
Javan Pond-Heron	<i>Ardeola speciosa</i>
Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
von Schrenk's Little Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus eurhythmos</i>
Cinnamon Bittern	<i>I. cinnamomeus</i>
Japanese Night-Heron	<i>Gorsachius goisagi</i>
Malay Night-Heron	<i>G. melanolophus</i>
* Yellow-billed Spoonbill	<i>Platalea flavipes</i> . Now documented from PNG at Bensbach (Gregory 1994, Bishop 1995).
Pied Harrier	<i>Circus melanoleucus</i>
Grey Falcon	<i>Falco hypoleucus</i> . Reported from Bensbach (Stronoch 1981). Listed in Coates as possible. Included in the PNGBS check-list.
Nordmann's Greenshank	<i>Tringa guttifer</i>
Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>T. flavipes</i>
Upland Sandpiper	<i>Bartramia longicauda</i>
Hudsonian Godwit	<i>Limosa haemastica</i>
Western Sandpiper	<i>Calidris mauri</i>
White-rumped Sandpiper	<i>C. fuscicollis</i>
* Baird's Sandpiper	<i>C. bairdii</i> . Documented from Kanosia Lagoon, Central Province, PNG by Finch (1986)
Stilt Sandpiper	<i>Calidris himantopus</i>
* Long-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus scolopaceus</i> . Documented from Aroa Lagoon, Central Province, PNG by Finch (1984)
* Pin-tailed Snipe	<i>Gallinago stenura</i> . Recorded from the Port Moresby area on a number of occasions. Requires documenting.
Grey Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus fulicaria</i>
South Polar Skua	<i>Catharacta maccormicki</i>

Grey-backed Tern	<i>Sterna lunata</i> . Reported far offshore from Madang (Bailey 1992) and by Burrows (<i>in litt.</i>) off New Ireland.
Spice Finch	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i> . Port Moresby records are regarded as escapes (Coates 1990).

Taxonomic uncertainty : As listed by Principe (1991)

Torres Strait Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula spilorrhoa</i> . Split by Sibley and Monroe from <i>D. bicolor</i> .
Malay Bronze-Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx malayanus</i> . Included with <i>C. russatus</i> by Coates (1985)
Gould's Bronze-Cuckoo	<i>C. russatus</i> . Included with <i>C. malayanus</i> by Coates (1985)
Biak Paradise-Kingfisher	<i>Tanysiptera riedelii</i> . Sometimes treated as a subspecies of Common Paradise-Kingfisher <i>T. galatea</i> .
Kofiau Paradise-Kingfisher	<i>T. ellioti</i> . Sometimes treated as a subspecies of <i>T. galatea</i> .

Phil Gregory's predictions:

Many cold water seabirds are possible but I am sticking to the more widely dispersing commoner species:

Phoenix Petrel	
Black-winged Petrel	
Buller's Shearwater	
Sooty Shearwater	<i>Puffinus griseus</i> . Reported by Greensmith (1975) from the Bismarck Sea but possible confusion with Heinroth's Shearwater has denied general acceptance so far.
Hutton's Shearwater	Tentatively reported off Cape Suckling by Finch (1983).
Christmas Shearwater	<i>Puffinus nativitatus</i> . Two likely sightings are given in Coates (1990)
Swinhoe's Storm-Petrel	
Matsudaira's Storm-Petrel	
Purple Heron	
Black-crowned Night Heron	
Sarus Crane	<i>Grus antigone</i>
Chestnut Teal	<i>Anas castanea</i> . A female specimen from the Bensbach area is reported by Stronoch (1980).
Red-legged Crane	<i>Rallina fasciata</i>
Pheasant-tailed Jacana	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>
Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>
Red-capped Dotterel	<i>Charadrius ruficapillus</i>
Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> . Recorded from New Ireland by Burrows (<i>in litt.</i>) and should turn-up on the mainland.
Lesser Yellowlegs	
Nordmann's Greenshank	
Spoon-billed Sandpiper	<i>Eurhynchus pygmaeus</i> . A long shot, but.....
White-rumped Sandpiper	
Hudsonian Godwit	
Grey Phalarope	
Bristle-thighed Curlew	<i>Numenius tahitiensis</i> . Most likely from the islands region.
Franklin's Gull	<i>Larus pipixcan</i>
Black-tailed Gull	<i>Larus crassirostris</i>
Grey-backed Tern	
Christmas Island Frigatebird	<i>Fregata andrewsi</i> . Reported as probables from the Fly River estuary by Capt. D. Simpson and very likely to occur. Scrutinize Frigates !

South Polar Skua	
Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis (nipalensis)</i>
Citrine Wagtail	<i>Motacilla citreola</i>
White Wagtail (Black-backed races)	<i>M. alba (lugens)</i>
Red-throated Pipit	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>
Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
Spice Finch (Nutmeg Mannikin)	

For purely Papua New Guinea list additions, I would predict Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*), Grey-faced Buzzard (*Butastur indicus*), which was reported from Varirata in 1994 but with an inadequate description (PNGBS N/L 283 June 1995), and Brown Shrike (*Lanius cristatus*).

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Book Review: *Cuckoos, Nighthawks and Kingfishers of Australia*, edited by Ronald Strahan. 1994. Angus and Robertson. Price \$95.

This is volume 9 in The National Photographic Index of Australian Wildlife, and despite the title actually covers 17 families of both non-passerines and passerines. These include pittas, lyrebirds, scrub-birds, larks, swallows, pipits, wagtails cuckoo-shrikes, trillers and bulbuls. One can see why a succinct and accurate title for the book was not possible !

The photographs are of a high standard and include some outstanding shots, the nestling Pheasant Coucals on p.44 being quite superb as are many of the night-birds and cuckoos.

The text is pleasantly generalized and includes many informative digressions into the history of the species. I learned that the use of birds as messengers began during the second Punic War in 218-201 BC, and marking, of the same species, the Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*, is mentioned in Pliny. It avoids the dry, purely scientific boredom of Birds of the Western Palearctic, which is almost unreadable, and makes no pretence of being as comprehensive. It is a book to dip into and enjoy rather than being the fount of all wisdom about a species.

That said, I have some difficulty reconciling a \$95 price tag with some major errors in presentation and inconsistencies in the text. The worst example is the Fork-tailed Swift *Apus pacificus* on p125 which is actually a White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus*, probably the same bird as that shown in the account of this species since the photographer and dates are the same ! The Tawny Frogmouth flight shot on p.90 is captioned from Baiyer River, Papua New Guinea, if so the first record of the species from this country. The Rufous Scrub-bird on p.196 has a photo beneath it of a Noisy Scrub-bird from Two People Bay in WA and it is at best unclear as to which species it is referring. All such errors are surely avoidable on a careful proof read, and spoil the effect of this major undertaking.

The text is also not without fault. Little Swift *Apus affinis* is mentioned in the general account as a vagrant, but gets no mention under the vagrants section at the end of the book. The accounts of Glossy Swiftlets *Collocalia esculenta* are not really convincing, lacking major field characters, and the photo fails to do the species justice, I would hesitate to identify the species shown here. Fairy Martin is a vagrant to Tasmania, but is marked on the map as found in half the island. Grem-lins have also hit the Latin names, as *Merops orientalis* mentioned on p.164 is emphatically not the European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* which is the intended species. The Brown Pigeon *Macropygia amboinensis* gets a q instead of a p twice, those spell-checkers really have a problem with scientific names !

The ever vexatious Australian taxonomy also rears its head, with lots of new or resurrected genera appearing (*Todiramphus*, *Cecropis*, *Cheramoeca* etc.). Just when you thought Lesser Sooty Owl *Tyto multipunctata* was here to stay, it again gets demoted to *T. tenebricosa* despite a pretty convincing text argument for the differences. The Norfolk Island Boobook *Ninox novaeseelandiae* gets its own treatment as that form, but is also listed under Southern Boobook as *N. boobook rufulata*, which I suppose hedges the bets.

It is a pity that such inconsistencies were not avoided, too many creep in for such a major work at a major price and detract from the high quality of the project. Books written by committees or teams of authors face a difficult situation, but surely a prestige project like this could get its act together ? Better luck with volume 10, the final one and a grab-bag of everything not already covered in the series, I look forward to the title with interest.

Phil Gregory