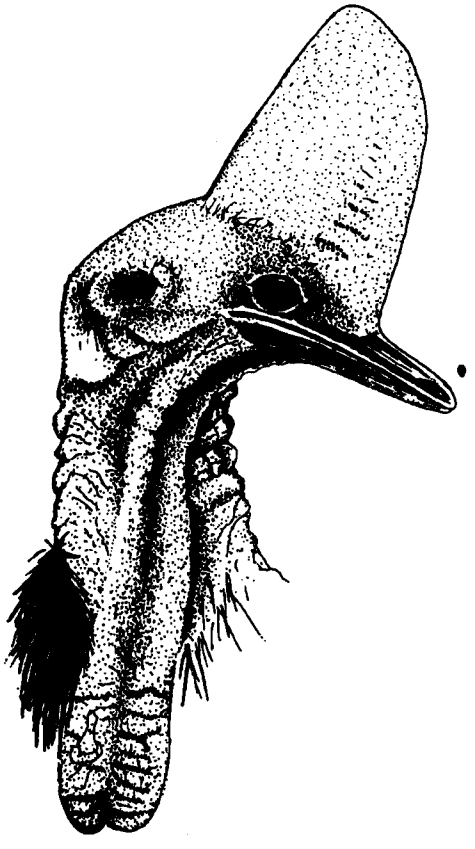
Contents

MURUK VOLUME 6 NUMBER 1 SEPTEMBER 1993

PRINTED COURTESY OF OK TEDI MINING LIMITED

MURUK



VOLUME 6 NUMBER 1 SEPTEMBER 1993

JOURNAL OF THE PAPUA NEW GUINEA BIRD SOCIETY

PRINTED COURTESY OF OK TEDI MINING

EDITORIAL

During 1991 to 1993 **Muruk** has been much behind schedule.due to changes of editor and heavy workloads. In particular, the recent observations section has become very out of date, and its usefulness is being questioned by some members. To remedy this **Muruk** 6:3 will contain an extended recent observations section . Recent observations provides a place where brief observation notes can be published. Records should fall into one of the following catagories:

a) records of rarely seen birds (wherever they occur);
b) records of birds in localities where they are rarely, or infrequently encountered;
c) records from localities which are rarely visited;
d) records of interesting behaviours, including feeding;
e) all nesting records, with date, nest site etc.;
f) first and last dates for migrant species.

Compilation of recent observations from various lists is a tedious job, and the editor requests that all records be submitted in a standard format to make the job as easy as possible. Please put all bird lists in the same order as that used in Beehler *et al.*, The Birds of New Guinea, and use the names from that book, or, for island species, the names in Coates (1985-1990) The Birds of Papua New Guinea. All records should consist of the date, the number of birds, the locality, the province, and the observer, e.g.:

Black-sided Robin 23 Jul 92, 2, Vanapa R, Cen (MH).

I can supply a standard list with bird names and spaces to those contributors who have a large number of records they wish to see published. Write to the editor to request this.

Editor for this issue: Mike Hopkins, with help from Roger Hicks ,Keyt Fischer & Phil Gregory.

COVER: Head study of Northern Cassowary by Jones Hiaso

MURUK is published by the Papua New Guinea Bird Society and is available as part of Society Membership. Back numbers are available at 4 Kina each plus postage and packing. Volume one (first published in 1986) was reprinted in 1990 and is available for 8 Kina.

Current membership rates are:

Local (within P.N.G.):

Individual: 11 Kina Family: 16 Kina Junior: 7 Kina

Overseas:	Nearby (Aus, NZ, SI)	Distant (other)
Surface mail:	12 Kina	15 Kina
Air mail:	15 Kina	20 Kina

Checks or draft should be sent to: The Treasurer, PNGBS, PO Box 1598, Boroko, P.N.G.

If it is not possible to pay in Kina, Pounds Sterling, Australian Dollars, or U.S. Dollars are acceptable, but please add the equivalent of 2 Kina to allow for bank charges.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE GREY-HEADED MANNIKIN *LONCHURA CANICEPS* AND THE CHESTNUT-BREASTED MANNIKIN *LONCHURA CASTANEOTHORAX* IN THE PORT MORESBY AREA

ROBIN L. RESTALL

In July 1990, my wife and I visited Port Moresby with the express purpose of observing the local mannikins *Lonchura* spp. in the field, and to make detailed examination of individuals in the hand including painting accurate colour references of each plumage phase if possible. After some interesting adventures, including escaping from a gang of rascals in the Morata township [we were attempting a sortie to the Waigani marshes], we met up with Roger and Jenny Hicks. Thanks to their good nature and extreme helpfulness, our objectives were achieved.

We visited several locations around Port Moresby, including a drive past Sogeri. Thanks to the kind service of Mr. and Mrs. Tolhurst of the Pacific Adventist College, we were able to set a mist net in a perfect location on two mornings and caught several birds of both species mentioned in the title. On the first day, upon catching 12 birds, we closed down the net. These were banded with official ABBBS rings, recorded by Roger, and carefully detailed by me. I retained four Grey-headed Mannikins for painting. On the second day some 27 birds entered the net almost immediately and I had to make some special efforts to prevent others from becoming trapped. We closed the net at once. From these I retained five birds for painting. All the birds were subsequently released in the location where they had been netted the previous day. The following notes derive from a combination of field observations and study of the captive birds.

Grey-headed Mannikin - *Lonchura caniceps caniceps*

This is the darkest and most richly coloured of the three races of this species. The other two, *L. c. kumusii* from the northern lowlands, and *L. c. scratchleyana* of mid-montane levels are both more pallid in every sense.

Adult males measured 110 mm in length with wings invariably 52 mm. The orange of the rump begins at the level of the first tertiary and is flushed with yellow there. The underwing coverts are pure buffish-salmon. Adult females measured 105 mm with the wings 48 mm. The orange of the rump begins irregularly (it may be scalloped with dark brown) at the level of the third tertiary. It lacks the yellowish flush and the uppertail converts are not quite so brilliant. With a quantity of full adults to choose from in the hand it is comparatively easy to select males and females, though no doubt a fair proportion would have to be classed as uncertain. The orange uppertail coverts are undoubtedly used as a social signal in

breeding behaviour for the long hair-like, or splayed ends are full and show down below the wing tips at the side of the body. They are quite noticeable when a bird, particularly a male, flies up to a vertical stem, above the level of most of the feeding birds. This contrasts with the Chestnut-breasted Mannikin, which has the rump and short uppertail-coverts are neat and close behind the wings, even when singing.

The vocabulary appears to be fairly limited, consisting of variations on a single note, plus the song. The contact call in flight is a long clear "*psiiitt*", but within the group it is a sharp "*psit*". The contact note of the male has a slightly dif ferent tone to that of the female.

The breeding season is recorded as being from October to April with the juveniles moulting into adult plumage from four to six months of age (Peckover & Filewood 1976). We saw juveniles in every stage of plumage from totally juvenile, through those beginning to show a few adult feathers, to birds that were mostly in their first adult plumage - a slightly duller version of the second moulted adult. However, there was evidence that breeding was taking place. Adult males were seen performing undirected song, i.e., sitting still, with neck slightly stretched, bill open and pointing forward, feathers of the flanks and belly fluffed out. An adult male was seen in full advertisement song when the head is turned from side to side through an arc of about 50 degrees. Several males were seen flying off in a direct and determined manner carrying lengths of grass, clutched at one end so it trailed along the body beneath a wing and behind, appearing to be attatched to the tail. One male was seen tearing off a stem from the inflorescence of the feral millet *Pannicum maximum* and then flying off in a direct line towards some bougainvilleas where, we assumed, a nest was being lined.

Two kinds of feeding behaviour were observed. Firstly, a bird would cling to the stem of a grass and peck out the seeds from the panicle it was clinging to or one within reach. I watched birds clinging to the thick stems of *Setaria* sp., and reaching out to feed on the green seeds of *Pannicum maximum* alongside. We observed them feeding on brakes of ripe grey-brown *Rottboellia exaltata*, amidst swathes of rich green plants not yet producing seeding heads.

The second kind of feeding behaviour was when the birds flew down to the ground and hopped around among short grasses, including what looked to me like *Chloris barbata*. Some birds hopped out onto the path and were observed picking up unidentifiable bits. Others jumped up to the seeding heads, maybe a foot or more, to grasp a panicle and fall back to the ground. A bird might jump 3 or 4 times before succeeding in pulling a stem down, whereupon it would stand on it and eat some of the seeds. I never saw a bird eat a seeding head out completely. This is cosistent with all grass-seed-eating by *Lonchura* spp. that I have observed, when the bird will eat some of the seeds in a head then move on.

This second type of feeding behaviour was also observed for *L. castaneothorax*.

At night the birds I kept for painting all slept in a row, tightly clumped side by side, around the rim of the food pot. As they prepared to roost, their contact notes were the same as the "*psit*" of the active birds in close sight of each other , although slightly muted.

In the savanna at low altitude the Grey-headed Mannikins were always accompanied by a smaller number of Chestnut-breasted Mannikins. The one exception to this appeared to be the trapped 27, of which over half were adult Chestnut-breasted and most of the rest were juveniles of one or other of the two species. On the Sogeri Plateau there were only small groups of Grey-headed without any Chestnut-breasted birds.

Chestnut-breasted Mannikin - *Lonchura castaneothorax ramseyi*

This is the south-easterly of the four sub-species that occur in New Guinea, and is quite distinct from the others. *L.c.sharpei* is a diminutive 100 mm or so, has the forehead to nape pale grey, and the underwing coverts buffy-salmon. *L.c.uropygialis* is similar but is distinguished by having a little yellow on the uppertail coverts. Both are exclusively from Irian Jaya. I am unfamiliar with the race *L.c. boschmai* from the Wissel Lakes District (Goodwin 1982) and the Araboe River area (Rand & Gilliard 1967) not having seen it live. The skins I painted it from in the British Museum collection indicate a distinctive bird with a chestnut breast and chestnut barring on the flanks, drab from forehead to nape and yellow uppertail coverts. Its size is unknown to me. Any observations or comments about *L. c. boschmai* would be most gratefully received.

The south-eastern race *L. c. ramseyi* (formerly known as *nigriceps*) is common around the Port Moresby area in the lowland savanna and marshy areas west to Hall Sound. The adult male measured from 110 mm to 113 mm, the adult females I measured were all 105 mm long. The wings of the males measured 52 mm, females were insignificantly different at 51 mm or 52 mm. The underwing coverts are white. I could not see any consistent plumage distinction between the sexes but there was a distinct tendency for the nape of the male to be less clearly ticked with grey, and conversely the female has the ticking regular and clear from crown to nape. Thus, with a quantity of birds to hand it is fairly easy to select certain males, certain females, and of course to have a quantity of uncertains. These comparisons were made on birds all in perfect new plumage.

Recently fledged juveniles have blackish bills, and, notwithstanding the pale belly and underwing coverts, can be mistaken for a young *L. caniceps* in the field. This blackishness soon turns to a violaceous pale blue-grey, probably within two to three weeks after fledging when the birds become independent and fully able to feed themselves. The implication in finding black-billed juvenile *L. castaneothorax* is that the species must have been breeding in June, an extension of the breeding season brought on no doubt by the exceptional rainfall of that month (rainfall recorded in June 1989, a normal year, was 16 mm. In June 1990 the measured rainfall in the area was 169 mm).

Despite the comment of Immelmann (1965) that the species appears only to have one call note (as the Grey-headed Mannikin in fact does) I found the voice of the Chestnut-breasted Mannikin to be more complex. W&hile the contact calls are similar to those of the Grey-headed Mannikin, a strong "*peeet*" on the wing, the close contact notes are several and varied. The contact note of the male is different from that of the female, and one of the birds, I think the male, has a "*zeet-a-zeet-a-zeet-a-zeet*"on a descending scale that sounds both intimate and comforting. It cannot be heard more than a metre or so away, and is quite distinct from the courtship song.

I observed a male engaged in undirected song on two occasions. The bird sat on a barbed wire fence, body clear of the perch, neck stretched and head pointing slightly down, maybe 10 degrees below horizontal, flanks and belly feathers erect. This is a typical *Lonchura* posture for undirected and advertisement displays.

At night, the birds I kept for study and painting all settled down in one melange in the food pot as if it were a nest. It was obvious they were bedding down for there was much "muttering"of soft mewing "*wee*" notes and others including the "*zeet-a-zeet*" song referred to above. They roosted by their own biological clock and not because I covered them up, in fact I had not altered the lighting in the room.

COMPARATIVE COMMENTS

There is a school of thought that believes the Chestnut-breasted Mannikin and the Grey-headed Mannikin are conspecific. They also believe the Yellow-rumped Mannikin *L. flaviprymna* is conspecific with these two. There will always be a school of lumpers, and other targets are the Streak-headed Mannikin *L. tristissima* and the White-spotted *L. leucosticta* as one, and the White-crowned *L. nevermanni* and Black Mannikin *L. stygia* as another. The basis for this compulsion to simplify is the Geographic Species Concept which holds that if two species co-exist in a habitat and do not naturally interbreed then they are separate species. Thus the opposite must be equally true, in that if hybrids occur naturally then the two animals are conspecific if not actually polymorphic. I am not a lumper. I feel that if two animals, in this case birds, have evolved to the state where they are physically and behaviourally distinct then the focus of study should be on why and how and what factors have driven them apart, and I see no benefit whatsoever in lumping them into singularity. New Guinea's mannikins are a wonderful living laboratory of evolution and should be the subject of a major study. Diamond (1972) has written eloquently about this in his discussion of the probable rapid evolution of *Lonchura spectabilis gajduseki*. The recent discovery of another very distinct sub-species with cinnamon underparts in the Urima Cattle Station in the Sepik Plains, *Lonchura spectabilis sepikensis* (Jonkers & Roersma 1990) dramatises his argument and makes it as contemporary as ever. In fact, in this world of rain forest destruction when all is woe, it is a small compensation that new habitat favouring the evolution of new races (and new species eventually?) is being created.

In my judgement the Chestnut-breasted Mannikin and the Grey-headed Mannikin are good species. They are physically different, they have different behaviour patterns, and different voices. Admittedly the differences are not dramatic, but in my opinion they are enough. The Chestnut-breasted Mannikin is a notoriously promiscuous species. In addition to the two species already referred to it naturally hybridises with the Spice Bird *Lonchura punctulata* in the wild in Australia (Immelmann 1965). Oddly however, the lumpers are not suggesting conspecificity here. It has become domesticated, and has produced hybrids with several other species of *Lonchura*, and several other estrildid species. Furthermore, the juveniles are distinct. This may be a small point but similarity of juvenile plumage is always held up by lumpers as constructive evidence of conspecificity in these cases.

In their work on the evolutionary genetics of the Estrildidae, Kakizawa and Watada (1985) used protein electrophoresis to calculate the genetic distances between a considerable number of species of estrildid finches. Two of these were *L. flaviprymna* and *L. castaneothorax*. Whilst they are undeniably closely related, sibling species, they were demonstrated as being distinct.

It would be comparatively easy to construct a series of simple experiments to explore the relationship of these birds. To begin with they would have to be kept in appropriate conditions of confinement. A simple aviary enclosing a large patch of various grasses would suffice. I would suggest populating the enclosure exclusively with male Grey-headed Mannikins and female Chestnut-breasted Mannikins. The resultant hybrids should then be paired with each other. Digital tape recordings should be made of the songs of both males (the male *L. castaneothorax* song call notes should be recorded separately) and the male hybrids and sound spectrographs produced. If conspecific, the hybrids should be 100 percent fertile, and if Peckover and Filewood (1976) are accurate in their description of the hybrid, a new population would quickly be stabilised. However, I would expect natural parent plumage patterns to reassert themselves very quickly with the Grey-headed form probably dominant. Until such experiments are conducted and concluded I maintain that the Geographic Species Concept is a sound guideline but not an immutable rigid rule.

Diamond, J.M. 1972. **Avifauna of the Eastern Highlands of New Guinea**. Publ. Nuttal. Orn. Club No. 12.

Goodwin, D. 1982. **Estrildid Finches of the World**. Brit. Mus. (Nat. Hist.).

Immelmann, K. L. 1965. **Australian Finches in Bush and Aviary**. Angus & Robertson.

Jonkers, B., & H. Roesma. 1990. New subspecies of Lonchura spectabilis from East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea. **Dutch Birding** 12: 22-25.

Kakizawa, R. & R. Watada. 1985. The evolutionary genetics of the Estrildidae. **J. Yamashina Inst. Orn.** 17: 143-158.

Peckover, W.S. & L.W.C. Filewood. 1976. **Birds of New Guinea and Tropical Australia**. Reed.

Rand, A.L. & E.T. Gilliard. 1967. **Handbook of New Guinea Birds**. Wiedenfeld and Nicolson.

Address: 31 South Bay Road, Hong Kong.

NESTING OBSERVATIONS ON PAPUAN FROGMOUTH *PODARGUS PAPUENSIS*

LEONARD P. TOLHURST

LOCATION: Pacific Adventist College campus is about 23 km from downtown Port Moresby, on the Sogeri Road. The campus is about one km south of the highway.

NEST LOCATION: The nest was built in a tall *Eucalyptus* tree, about 10 m above the ground, standing about 10 to 12 m east of the house in which I live. As the ground slopes away not far from the house, the nest was at about eye-level as I looked out of our upstairs lounge window. The distance from the window to the nest was about 7 to 10 m. This afforded very good observation conditions, as most of the time I only had to look out of the window. It also allowed for minimum disturbance of the nesting bird, as I could keep most of the window louvres closed, and only look out of the top ones. The *Eucalyptus* tree used was a rather open tree with large round shaped leaves, and visibility was fairly good, except for a small branch that obscured part of the nest, and the bird when it was on the nest.

NEST DESCRIPTION: The nest was a small platform of thin sticks, and did not look very secure. It was placed on a horizontal branch about 4 to 6 cm in diameter. Some other branches that joined on to the main branch at that point gave the necessary additional support for the nest.

NEST-BUILDING OBSERVATIONS: One bird was seen at the nest site around late October, or early November. I did not know this early that the pair were considering nesting at this site, but on hearing the typical frogmouth calls, I looked out of the window and, using a torch, saw a bird at the site. They must have been selecting the site, and then building their nest during the nights in early November, as there was no sign of the birds at the nest site during daylight hours. The nest was first noticed in daylight on 19 November 1989. During the evening of 19 November one bird was seen on the nest, and was calling '*murrr murrr murrr*' to its mate which was sitting on a stake not far away. Between 3:00 and 4:00 on 20 November one bird was again seen at the nest.

INCUBATION: From later observation it was discovered that there was only one egg in the nest, and it appears that incubation began on 21 November 1989, as that is the date that a bird was first seen sitting on the nest all day long. A summary of the incubation period observations made by myself and one of the college students who lived in my house whilst I was in Australia is given below. It appears, however, that the single chick hatched around 30 December 1989, as it was first seen on 5 January and was already covered in half grown cotton-like feathers. This would mean that the incubation period was about 37 days.

SUMMARY OF INCUBATION PERIOD OBSERVATIONS

From 21 November to end of the month a bird was seen on the nest day and night. This included times in the early morning when I woke up. Frequent bird calls were heard during the night.

26 November. A motor lawn-mower was used very close to the nesting tree, but the bird on the nest did not leave.

1 December. At 03:15 one bird was on the nest, and its mate was on a stake nearby. I wondered whether they took turns to incubate the egg so that the main incubator could eat.

4 December. At 04:00 no bird was on the nest. This was the first time since incubation began that the nest was left unattended. When I opened the metal louvres and shone a torch onto the nest the bird flew quickly to the nest, but did not stay there; it flew off to a nearby perch.

10 December. At 20:00 no bird was on the nest, but by 20:45 it had returned.

11 December. At 02:45 bird was on the nest, but had gone by 03:05. Several calls were heard, and the bird seemed to be feeding on moths and insects collected from around the security light on the corner of the house near the window used for viewing the nest. These flights to collect insects were made from the top of a nearby stake. By 03:15 it had returned to the nest and sat on it.

12 December. At 05:05 no bird was on the nest, but at 05:07 one returned to a nearby branch, then gave the rolling call and approached the nest with its wings spread out wide. It bent its head down twice to the nest, perhaps checking the egg, or rolling it over, and then sat down on the nest. At 10:30, in an effort to see if the egg had hatched, I chased the bird off the nest by trying to climb the tree. When I was only 1 m off the ground it left the nest. Then from the lounge window I could see that there was one egg in the nest. The bird remained off the nest for the rest of the day, but returned after dark.

13 December. Checked the nest three times between 03:00 and 03:30, and found the bird on the nest each time. Saw its mate flying around once. Bird on nest each time checked in the evening up to 20:00.

14 December. *c.* 02:30 and 05:00 a bird was on the nest.

17 December. No bird on nest most of the day, but one was on the nest by 21:50.

18-20 December. Frequent checks day and night. Bird usually on nest. Mate still around.

21 December. At 12:00 I chased bird off nest. No chick yet, egg still present. Left for Australia on afternoon flight. Arranged for college student to stay in my house while away, and asked him to continue reports of developments on the incubation.

21-24 December. Frequent checks made morning and night. On the night of December 23 bird was not on the nest when checked.

25 December 1989 to 5 January 1990. Frequent checks made.

5 January. At 16:30 bird was chased off nest and a chick was seen, with half grown cotton-like feathers on its body. It is thought that it hatched around December 30.

5-9 January. The bird was mostly on the nest during the days and nights. There were usually two adult birds around.

10 January. At 08:54 the bird was on the nest but allowed the chick to come out onto the branch in the open and look around. It was now about twice the size it was on January 5. The mate was not seen around. It is thought that the parents may have been taking turns at "baby-sitting". Dark spots were beginning to show on the white feathers of the chick. At 17:00 two adult birds were seen, one beside the chick, which was in the open.

11 January. At midnight the chick was alone in the nest.

11-19 January. The chick was left alone in the nest for much of the night.

20 January. The chick was now about three times its original size, and sat with its parent on the nest, or near it. The chick is very active, moving around a lot.

24 January. The chick was about the same size as its parent, except that its tail feathers were very short.

26 January. The chick was seen sitting on a branch near the nest.

27 January. In the morning the chick was back in the nest.

28 January. The chick moved to a higher branch in the tree, and sat there all day.

29 January. At about one month old, the chick was heard to make similar calls to those of the parents.

30 January. Both the parent and the chick were gone from both the nest and the nest tree.

31 January. No sign of either the parent or the chick all day.

1 February. Both parent and chick were back in the nest tree.

February 2. Both parent and chick were in the nest again, sitting side by side.

February 4-5. No sign of parent or chick by day or night.

February 6. Parent and chick were back in the tree.

February 7. Parent and chick gone again, and were not seen in the nesting tree again.

FURTHER COMMENTS. From the above observations it can be seen that :-

1. Dark spots begin to appear on the white feathers of the chick at about 10 days old.
2. At about 10 days old the parent allows the chick to come out from under its protective feathers and look around.
3. By 24 days old the chick is almost the same size as the parent, except its tail is still very short.
4. By 26 days old the chick left the nest and sat on a nearby branch.
5. By 29 days old the chick was heard making adult-like calls.
6. By 30 days old the chick had left the nest for a whole day. That is, it had gone to another tree.
7. By 37 days old the chick had left the nest and its tree for good.

Address: Pacific Adventist College, Private Mail Bag, Boroko.

NEW DISTRIBUTION RECORDS - LIHIR ISLAND

ROY D. MACKAY

During a ten day stay on Lihir and nearby islands in the New Ireland Province, PNG from 30 January 1991 to 8 February 1991 I recorded 37 species of birds. Three of these have not been recorded from these islands before (see Coates 1985).

Gurney's Eagle *Aquila gurneyi*. On 8 February 1991 while examining old burial sites near the Kennicott Niugini Joint Venture goldmine at Luise Harbour on the east coast, we (Biries, Margaret Mackay and I) saw a large dark eagle glide over us about 50 m above. It glided over us on thermals for about three minutes until it vanished behind a knoll. I identified it as a Gurney's Eagle by its all-over brown colour but for a pale patch under each wing where the secondaries join the primaries. I ruled out the juvenile of the White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* which usually has much more light colour under the wing and on the rump and underside of the tail. To confirm my identification I asked Biries about the eagles there and he said that the name of this bird, the Gurney's Eagle was *Managolai* and that the White-bellied Sea Eagle was called *Molam*. Biries knew that the Sea-Eagle caught fish but the Gurney's Eagle did not.

White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacuta*. Although this record is a long way from the rest of its known distribution in PNG this is not an unusual record for such a wide ranging species. I saw it on two occasions - 30 January 1991 over Lipuko Village on the east coast and on 3 February 1991 over the open grounds of the Roman Catholic mission at Paile on the south coast. It is a regular migrant from Australia and New Zealand through PNG to southeast Asia.

Four Red-rumped Swallows *Hirundo daurica* were seen together perched on a power line and swooping around the grounds of the Paile mission. I observed them for at least five minutes while waiting for transport from the mission - 3 February 1991.

Coates, B.J. (1985). **The Birds of Papua New Guinea. Volume I.** Dove Publications.

Address: C.M.B. 16, Paluma, Queensland 4816, Australia

BARNES'S LONG-TAILED BIRD OF PARADISE

WILLIAM S. PECKOVER

The female Splendid Astrapia Bird of Paradise featured in the extension of range for that species by Tolhurst (1990) is most likely a typical example of young Barnes's Long-tailed Bird of Paradise *Astrapia mayeri* x *Astrapia stephaniae*, probably a three to four year old male.

A less likely possibility for the individual described is that of an immature female Ribbontail Bird of Paradise *A. mayeri*. The occurrence of white tail feathers in *A. mayeri* is not confined to males. In his second volume Brian Coates features a Cliff and Dawn Frith photograph of an adult, white and black tailed, female plumaged, *A. mayeri* at the nest with a gaping nestling (Coates 1990). The one complete central tail feather of that bird is all white from the base to within 50 to 100 mm of the tip, which is black. The intact section of the broken other tail feather is also all white. The width of both feathers appear to be the same as that of an adult male - about 22 mm. The "brown towards the end" of the tail, in Len T olhurst's description of the individual he observed indicates a young hybrid male rather than a female *A. mayeri*.

The description given by Tolhurst of the tail feathers, namely "the white on the base of the tail covered the full width of the tail feathers" alone, precludes the possibility of the bird in question being a female *A. splendidissima*. In this species the white bases of the tail feathers are edged with brown or black, as is depicted in Gilliard (1969) and Cooper & Forshaw (1977) as well as by Medland (in Iredale 1950).

In 'Barnes's Long-tail' the extent of white in the central tail feathers is greater in some individuals than others (Shaw Mayer, pers. comm.). The pattern of white and black, and the width of the central tail feathers are also variable. The adult male described by Iredale and featured by Medland had a different pattern of white/black and a much wider, shorter tail (12 at base to 40 mm and 750 mm long) to the one which Shaw Mayer had at the Hallstrom Sanctuary, Nondugl and which is pictured in Peckover (1992) (tail about 22 mm wide throughout and 1080 mm long). These variations in obvious hybrids and the additional black in the tail feathers of some adult male 'pure' *A. mayeri* may indicate intergrading with *A. stephaniae* (that is, the occurrence of viable cross-breeding to second, third and subsequent generations) in at least some populations where the two species overlap. However, the two species are reported to "live side by side, one above the other, on Mt. Giluwe without appreciable hybridisation" (Gilliard 1969).

For many years the occasional hybrid birds of paradise which were collected in the wild were thought to be new species. The last to be described as such as *Astrapia barnesi*, Barnes's Long-tailed Bird of Paradise (Iredale 1948). In his later book on birds of paradise

Iredale (1950) refers scathingly to "this fantastic hybridisation theory." Despite the irrefutable evidence of the existence of hybridisation, Iredale was just unable to accept that it does occur in the wild. Its occurrence between some birds of paradise in the wild is now well known, accepted and documented (Stresemann 1930, Gilliard 1969, Coates 1990, Peckover 1992 etc.).

Len Tolhurst's comments on the earlier draft of this response are gratefully acknowledged.

Coates, B.J. 1990. **The Birds of Papua New Guinea Volume II**. Dove Publications.
Cooper, W.T. & J.M. Forshaw. 1977. **The Birds of Paradise and Bower Birds**. Collins.
Gilliard, E.T. 1969. **Birds of Paradise and Bower Birds**. Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
Iredale, T. 1948. A checklist of the birds of paradise and bowerbirds. **Australian Zool**. 2: 161-189.
Iredale, T. 1950. **Birds of Paradise and Bower Birds**. Georgian House.
Peckover, W.S. 1992. **Birds of Paradise**. Robert Brown.
Stresemann, E. 1930. Welche Paradiesvogelarten der Literatur sind hybriden Ursprunge? **Novitates Zoologicae** 36: 6-15.
Tolhust, L. 1990. Extension of the known range of Splendid Astrapia *Astrapia splendidissima*. **Muruk** 4:29.

Address: 14 Balanda Street, Jindalee, Queensland 4074, Australia.

UNUSUAL FORAGING BEHAVIOUR BY *APLONIS* STARLINGS BELIEVED TO BE *APLONIS METALLICA*

GEORGE E. CLAPP

INTRODUCTION

I report here an unusual foraging behaviour by *Aplonis* sp. starlings, believed to be *Aplonis metallica*, in which aquatic prey were taken from the Fly River, in the Western Province of Papua New Guinea.

OBSERVATIONS

Between 3 September and 20 October 1988 I was at Middletown on the lower Kikori River, about one hour upstream from Kikori township by motorised canoe. Whilst there I noticed on a number of occasions, but always from a distance, flocks of what appeared to be *Aplonis* starlings foraging over the River Kikori just before sunset. I was puzzled at the time, partly because I was not completely convinced of the birds' identity and partly because I could discern no swarms of insects on which they might have been feeding.

Between 30 May and 9 June 1989 I was at Kumul Base on the Fly River, about half an hour upstream from Kiunga township by motorised canoe, in the Western Province of Papua

New Guinea. On various occasions I again saw flocks of *Aplonis* starlings foraging over the river at dusk. This time I was able to observe them much more closely. The foraging behaviour took place in the extreme late afternoon, in the last half hour before complete darkness fell. Foraging ranged up and down the river over several hundred metres. The flocks were fairly cohesive and varied in size between 20 and 40 birds. Occasionally two flocks were seen in the same vicinity. As before, I could discern no swarms of insects, but again and again I clearly saw birds stop, hover for a brief period, then pick something from the water with the beak and continue flying. The objects picked from the water were not large, but I did on one occasion clearly see a drooping object in the beak, i.e., a non-rigid body drooping either side of the beak. It was impossible to track individual birds to see how often an individual obtained prey, but on any one time the majority of the flock would be quartering at the same time as only one or two individuals would be obtaining prey.

The birds were black *Aplonis* starlings with longish graduated tails. There was no sign of any light coloured iris — all appeared dark. There were no juveniles apparent. Viewing distance varied, with the closest being ten metres or so and the farthest several hundred metres. The clearest views were obtained between ten and fifty metres. The starlings were definitely *Aplonis* and, on balance, almost certainly *Aplonis metallica*.

I had noticed at Kumul that this particular foraging seemed more common at times when the river was in flood and there was a considerable amount of spume and flotsam in the water. However, it is important to note that the capture of the prey was not confined to spume covered water, nor was this foraging behaviour confined to the times when the rivers were in flood.

DISCUSSION

Although unidentified, the prey was obviously aquatic. There is, of course, the faint possibility that at Kumul, in the Western Province, the starlings might have been *Aplonis mystacea*, but the size of the flocks and the apparent absence of any light coloured irides would make it much more likely that they were *A. metallica*. There is, of course, little doubt that *A. metallica* was involved at Middletown, in the Gulf Province, but it must be pointed out that no clear view of the foraging behaviour was obtained there.

This particular foraging behaviour is not mentioned in any of the literature, and is presented here as the first reported observation of *Aplonis* starlings taking aquatic prey on the island of New Guinea.

[Note that Ian Burrows reports various starling species feeding on hatching mayfly in an apparently similar manner on p. 32 of this issue, Ed.].

Address: 123, Kennedy Terrace, Paddington, Brisbane, Queensland 4064, Australia.

PAPUAN HAWK-OWL *UROGLAUX DIMORPHA* IN THE LAE-BULOLO AREA

LORAINE LAMOTHE

Although Pratt (in Beehler *et al.*, 1986) states that *Uroglaux dimorpha* is distributed throughout the lowlands of New Guinea, Coates (1985) records it only from the southern side of the island. This note details its occurrence in the northern side of the cordillera.

On the 15 March 1981, a road kill was picked up on the Lae-Bulolo road between Gabensis and Wampit, Morobe Province. A study skin was made (PNGFC 00086) and housed at the PNG Forestry College before being sent to the Papua New Guinea National Museum at the end of 1987. The bird was identified as *U. dimorpha* by Roy Mackay (then at Baiyer River Sanctuary). He commented on its known distribution (southern side of the cordillera). The bird was an adult female; wing 224 mm; tail 148 mm; weight 236 g and ovaries undeveloped. The stomach contained 3 scarab beetles (Scarabidae) each approximately 26 mm long and 1 grasshopper (Orthoptera).

On the 15 January 1987 Forestry Department personnel in Bulolo purchased a juvenile owl from local children who claimed to have obtained the bird in the surrounding forest. It was a young *U. dimorpha* with the head still in downy white plumage. The wings were barred grey-brown. The bird was kept indoors and fed by hand, initially on raw beef and chicken. The diet was changed within a fortnight, to live grasshoppers and geckos which were also offered by hand to the bird. Beef and chicken were refused. By 3 March it had started foraging for itself. Over the 1987 Easter Ornithlon, a number of PNG Bird Society members viewed and photographed the bird. the bird was released on 5 July 1987, but remained in the vicinity of the house for several weeks before finally disappearing. It weighed over 300 g (largest Pesola scale available) and had a wing length of 221 mm. Other measurements were unobtainable because of handling difficulties.

In approximately October 1988, lecturing staff at the PNG University of Technology purchased a bird from children on a street in Lae. It was an immature *U. dimorpha*. They did not ask the birds provenance but it can probably be assumed to be Morobe, possibly even the Lae area. At the time the bird still retained downy white plumage on its head and underparts. The bird was still in captivity in December 1989 but disappeared over the Christmas holidays before measurements could be made.

U. dimorpha undoubtedly occurs in the region; however, it appears to be elusive in the field. It would also seem, from these initial observations, that the bird breeds from mid-year to the latter months of the year given the occurrence of juveniles in October and January.

Beehler B.M., T.K. Pratt & D.A. Zimmerman. 1986. **Birds of New Guinea**. Princeton University Press.

Coates B.J. 1985. **The Birds of Papua New Guinea**. Vol. 1. Dove Publications.

OBSERVATIONS FROM MANUS PROVINCE

LEONARD P. TOLHURST

From 25 June to 16 July 1991, I had the opportunity of spending three weeks in Manus Province. While this was a working assignment and bird watching was done in spare time, I was able to find enough time to make the visit very much worth while as far as my hobby is concerned.

Two weeks were spent in the Lorengau area, and most of my bird-watching was restricted to the town area, and to a few of the offshore islands. I did travel a few km up the Trans-Island Highway, if that is what it can be called, to the village of Rossun, where I spent one night. I had hoped to get out very early in the morning to see what I could in the surrounding forest areas, but during the night it began to rain very heavily, and did not stop until about noon resulting in a very short list for Rossun. The small offshore islands of Mandrin, Pityilu, and Hawei to the north of Lorengau are well worth a visit. The rewards on the islands for me were the sighting of Island Monach *Monarcha cinerascens*, Bismarck Black Myzomela *Myzomela erythromelas* and Grey Imperial Pigeon *Ducula pacifica*. These species can be seen elsewhere in Manus, and I was to see them again in some of the southern islands of the Province.

On Hawei I also saw the rare pied form of the Eastern Reef-Egret *Egretta sacra*. It was standing on a wreck of a World War II ship aground on the reef at the eastern end of the island. It stood next to a dark phase individual, and was covered with irregular patches of white and grey, with perhaps the latter colour being more dominant. No plumes were seen on the bird, so it was not in breeding plumage.

My last full week in Manus Province was most rewarding in more ways than one. I travelled by outboard motor-boat to visit the southern islands of Lou, Pam and Balaun. We left Lorengau on 7 July and travelled along the north coast of Manus Island going east till we entered the narrow Lonui Passage which separates Manus Island from Los Negros Island. Just before we travelled under the bridge that connects the two islands there is a small lagoon on the Los Negros side where several scores of World War II landing craft were run ashore and left to rust. It serves as a reminder of the bitter fighting that took place in this area of the Pacific during those days.

After going under the highway bridge, we worked our way through Bird Island Bay and through the gap in the reef and into the ocean, and then almost due south for Rei Village on the Island of Lou, 20 miles or 35 km away. We ran into heavy rain just before we reached the village but our essential luggage was well protected.

Lou Island is volcanic, and much of the island is covered with heavy bush. It was here that I saw the Admiralty Pied Monarch *Monarcha infelix* for the first time.

On Monday July 8th, I paid for the outboard motor fuel, and travelled with a couple of Rei villagers to the San Miguel Islands, commonly known as Tilianu Islands, although this name only refers to the main island of the group in the north. We first went to the southernmost island of the group shown on maps as Anobat Island, but known to the locals by the name Purol Island. This island is a real bird island, there must be thousands there, maybe because the island is not inhabited by man. By far the most common bird on the island is the Grey Imperial Pigeon. I had hoped to find the Nicobar Pigeon *Caloenas nicobarica* there in large numbers too, but only got a glimpse of one as it flew away through the thick forest. It was recognized by the large white tail, which was all that I was able to see. Another bird that I was hoping to see, and which virtually met us on the beach was the Beach Kingfisher *Halcyon saurophaga*. This is one bird I had been wanting to see for a long time, and I was also to see it several times later in other places.

Perhaps an even bigger thrill was to get a good look at the rare Manus Rufous Fantail *Rhipidura semirubra* on this little island. I later saw it again on Sivisa Island in the Fedarb Island Group. published reports of this beautiful species indicate that it is so rare on Manus Island that its status there is now considered uncertain. It is known to be on San Miguel and Tong Islands, so now we can add the name of Sivisa Island to its known habitat.

After leaving Anobat Island, we went North-east to Loraine Island, still in the San Miguel group, only to find that there were not many birds there. One sighting on Loraine Island is what I identified as Mangrove Kingfisher *Halcyon chloris*. It looked too large and too white to be a Sacred Kingfisher, yet I noticed that Coates (1985) indicated that this species is apparently not known in the Admiralty Islands, though it has been seen on Moru Island near north western Manus, and on Wuvulu Island to the west of Manus. It is common in the eastern Bismarck Archipelago. If this is a sighting of the Collared Kingfisher in the Admiralty Group, it could be a first, but I would like confirmation from others who visit this island, or correction as the case warrants.

While in these Islands it was interesting to see flocks of Grey Imperial Pigeons fly off to Lou Island where they feed, a distance of about 18 km. I also saw a pair of Rainbow Lorikeets *Trichoglossus haematodes* leave for the island of Rambutyo, a distance of about 20 km away.

Upon returning to Rei Village I gathered my luggage and travelled by boat to the west coast village of Solang. where my night's stay will long be remembered for the approximately 60 sea-bug bites I received! From Solang we travelled over land to the east coast village of Pam which is situated close to an area of thermal activity, with boiling water and boiling mud. It is in this area that I saw the largest complex of nesting area for the Common

Scrubfowl *Megapodius freycinet* that I have seen anywhere. It is a much larger complex than that in the Rabaul area where this species also uses the heat of the ground to incubate its eggs. During a long walk along the beach I was rewarded with a sighting of Mackinlay's Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia mackinlayi*. This species was also later seen on Sivisa Island.

On Wednesday July 10 we crossed over to the Pam Islands to the south of Lou Island. On the way a Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel*, and a Black Noddy *Anous minutus* were seen.

The next day we travelled further south to the volcanic island of Baluan, which is also very fertile. I travelled around the west side of the island till I reached the south coast, then transferred from a utility to the back of a trailer pulled by a tractor, and went straight up over the centre of the island to the north coast. On the summit I visited a small vent in the ground that was sending out steam and sulphur fumes.

On Friday, 12th July I returned to Rei where I spent the weekend. On the way we had a good close look at the island of Tuluman, just off the southern tip of Lou Island. Tuluman came up from the sea floor in a volcanic eruption some years ago. Singing Starlings *Aplonis cantaroides* and Rainbow Lorikeets have established themselves on the island, and shore and ocean birds include Sooty Tern *Sterna fuscata*, Black-naped Tern *S. sumatrana*, Black Noddy, and Eastern Reef-Egret.

On Sunday morning, July 14 I again hired a boat and visited the Island of Sivisa, in the Fedarb Group. This visit is alluded to a couple of times above in that I again saw the Manus Rufous Fantail here, also another sighting of Mackinlay's Cuckoo-Dove.

On Sunday afternoon I made the return trip to Lorengau, again not without running into another heavy downpour on the way.

Listed below are bird lists for the various places visited:-

LORENGAU AREA
Black Noddy
Rainbow Lorikeet
Uniform Swiftlet
White-rumped Swiftlet
Moustached Tree-Swift
Dollar Bird
White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike
Yellow-bellied Sunbird
Black-headed White-Eye
Manus Friarbird
Singing Starling
Metallic Starling

ISLANDS OFF LORENGAU
M=Mandrin Island
P= Pityilu Island
H=Hawei Island
Eastern Reef-Egret **MH**
Rufous Night-Heron **M**
Brahminy Kite **M**
Common Scrubfowl **P**
Whimbrel **P**
Black-naped Tern **H**
Grey Imperial Pigeon **M**
Rainbow Lorikeet **M**
White-rumped Swiftlet **M**
Island Monarch **M**
Shining Flycatcher **P**
Bismarck Black Myzomela **M**

ROSSUN VILLAGE
Grey Goshawk
Eclectus Parrot
Brush Cuckoo
Shining Flycatcher
White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike
Cicadabird
Northern Fantail

MOMOTE AIRPORT
Lesser Golden Plover
Ruddy Turnstone
Rainbow Bee-eater

LOU ISLAND
Black Bittern
Brahminy Kite
White-breasted Sea-Eagle (at sea)
Grey Goshawk
Common Scrubfowl
Common Sandpiper
Mackinlay's Cuckoo-Dove
Rainbow Lorikeet
Brush Cuckoo
White-rumped Swiftlet
Sacred Kingfisher
Beach Kingfisher
Rainbow Bee-eater
Northern Fantail
Admirality Pied Monarch
Shining Flycatcher
Metallic Starling
Yellow-bellied Sunbird

SAN MIGUEL GROUP
Eastern Reef-Egret
Rufous Night-Heron
Crested Hawk
Brahminy Kite
Common Scrubfowl
Nicobar Pigeon
Yellow-bibbed Fruit-Dove
Grey Imperial Pigeon
Rainbow Lorikeet
Collared Kingfisher ?
Beach Kingfisher
Manus Rufous Fantail
Island Monarch
Bismarck Black Myzomela
Singing Starling

PAM ISLANDS
Lesser Frigate Bird
Eastern Reef-Egret
Common Scrubfowl
Black Noddy
Rainbow Lorikeet
White-rumped Swiftlet
Beach Kingfisher
Shining Flycatcher
Metallic Starling

BALUAN ISLAND
Rufous Night-Heron
Grey Imperial Pigeon
Rainbow Lorikeet
Brush Cuckoo
Channel-billed Cuckoo
White-rumped Swiftlet
Sacred Kingfisher
Dollarbird
Shining Flycatcher
Yellow-bellied Sunbird
Bismarck Black Myzomela
Singing Starling

TULUMAN ISLAND
Eastern Reef-Egret
Black-naped Tern
Sooty Tern
Black Noddy
Rainbow Lorikeet
Singing Starling

SIVISA ISLAND
Eastern Reef-Egret
Common Scrubfowl
Purple Swamphen
Mackinlay's Cuckoo-Dove
Yellow-bibbed Fruit-Dove
Grey Imperial Pigeon
Rainbow Lorikeet
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo
White-rumped Swiftlet
Manus Rufous Fantail
Island Monarch
Bismarck Black Myzomela
Metallic Starling

Beehler, B.M., T.K. Pratt & D.A. Zimmerman. 1986. **Birds of New Guinea**. Princeton University Press.
Coates, B.J. 1985. **The Birds of Papua New Guinea. Volume I**. Dove Publications.
Coates, B.J. 1990. **The Birds of Papua New Guinea. Volume II**. Dove Publications.

Address: Pacific Adventist College, Private Mail Bag, Boroko.

DOES THE GREATER GROUND-ROBIN *AMALOCICHLA SCLATERIANA* INHABIT TARI GAP?

Bruce M. Beehler

On 20 November 1991, while birding the roadside forest of Tari Gap (at *c.* 2400 m) with several others, I heard a very distinctive song that I could not place to species. The song, musical, clear, and mournful, comprised a loose series of upslurred notes in a middle range. A complete series might contain four notes over a ten second period, and thus the series is quite hesitant or tentatively produced. In some instances only a single loud note was given.

The most remarkable aspect of the song was the ringing upslurred quality of the major notes. These are sometimes preceded by a short flat note, producing something like: "*hoo..wrrreeeee*?" Keys to characterization of this call are: (a) the sad quality; (b) the clear musical tone; (c) the preponderance of upslurred notes; (d) the slow, hesitant pace of note production; (e) the medium pitch of the notes, easily imitated by a human whistling; and (f) the series of notes moves up and down the scale in an odd fashion.

The song closely approaches songs I have heard of the Greater Ground-Robin *Amalocichla sclateriana* from the English Peaks, in the Owen Stanley Range. Might the song I have heard refer to that species? This song is distinct from those described for the Lesser Ground-Robin *A. incerta* and Logrunner *Orthonyx temminckii*.

I recommend that birders and fieldworkers visiting the area listen for this remarkable call, which we heard in the late afternoon. If, indeed, this is a Greater Ground-Robin, it should be looked for at elevations above 2500 m. This bird is exceedingly difficult to observe. It can best be encountered by whistling an imitation of the call or playing a tape, while waiting motionless within the forest near the singing bird. It will approach on or near the ground, but rarely affords clear views, as it remains hidden in the vegetation.

This would constitute a considerable range extension for the species, as it is only known from the Snow Mountains of Irian Jaya and the mountains south and east of Wau, Morobe Province (Owen Stanley and Wharton ranges, and Bulldog Road).

Address: Wildlife Conservation International, c/o Division. of Birds, NHB MRC 116, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560, USA.

BIRDING AT PACIFIC ADVENTIST COLLEGE

LEONARD P. TOLHURST

Pacific Adventist College (PAC) is a tertiary institution serving the South Pacific area and provides education for students from French Polynesia in the east to PNG in the west. The college campus and farm are beside the Hubert Murray Highway on the outskirts of the National Capital District. They may be reached by taking the road to Sogeri at the Nine Mile junction.

The estate consists of *c.* 500 hectares, mostly savanna type country, although there are some small patches of thick bush which attract forest birds. Three small artificial lakes attract many species of waterbirds. To date 120 species have been recorded on PAC property. This list includes rare visits from unexpected birds such as White-necked Heron *Ardea pacifica*, Royal Spoonbill *Platalea regia* and White-capped Noddy *Anous stolidus*.

The campus is surrounded by a security fence which is lit in places at night and patrolled regularly. The lights attract night-flying insects which attract night birds which because of the lights can be well seen (for a change). As a result PAC has become a popular birding-locale for viewing birds such as Barn Owl *Tyto alba*, Barking Owl *Ninox connivens*, Papuan Frogmouth *Podagrus papuensis*, and Large-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulus macrurus* (Hicks 1988).

The campus has been designated a reserve by the principal and many birds nest there unmolested (Halliday 1987).

Birdwatchers are welcome to visit the college Sundays - Fridays. Saturday is our Sabbath and it would be appreciated if bird watchers did not visit on this day. For night-time birding arrangements should be made beforehand, either through the PNGBS or by contacting the college direct (telephone 281112) so that the security team may be alerted and visitors not mistaken for rascals.

Halliday, D. 1987. Nesting notes from Pacific Adventist College. **Muruk** 2: 69-71
Hicks, R.K. 1988. Owling at the Pacific Adventist College, Port Moresby. **Muruk** 3: 25.

Address: Pacific Adventist College, Private Mail Bag, Boroko.

CHECKLIST

Status:
A = Common, recorded on most visits;
B = Uncommon, recorded on some visits;
C = Rare, infrequently recorded;
* = recorded nesting on PAC property.

For migrants, status only applies to the season when they are present.

Australasian Grebe A*
Little Black Cormorant A
Little Pied Cormorant B
Darter B
Pacific Heron C
Great Egret B
Pied Heron B
Intermediate Egret A
Cattle Egret B
White-faced Heron C
Little Egret B
Eastern Reef-Egret C
Rufous Night-Heron B
Black Bittern B
Sacred Ibis C
Royal Spoonbill C
Crested Hawk C
Black Kite C
Whistling Kite A
Brahminy Kite A
Spotted Marsh Harrier C
Grey Goshawk B
Collared Sparrowhawk B
Brown Falcon C
Australian Kestrel C
Peregrine Falcon C
Spotted Whistling Duck A
White-headed Shelduck C
Green Pygmy-Goose A
Grey Teal B
Pacific Black Duck A*
Australian White-eyed Duck C
Brown Quail B
Red-backed Button-Quail C
Buff-banded Rail B*
White-browed Crake A*
Bush-Hen B*
Dusky Moorhen A*
Purple Swamphen A*
Comb-crested Jacana A*
White-headed Stilt B
Masked Lapwing A*
Lesser Golden Plover A
Little Ringed Plover C
Wood Sandpiper B
Common Sandpiper A
Common Greenshank C
Latham's Snipe B
Swinhoe's Snipe B
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper A
Whiskered Tern B
Black Noddy C
Brown Cuckoo-Dove C
Peaceful Dove A
Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove C
Pied Imperial Pigeon B
Greater Streaked Lory C
Rainbow Lorikeet A
Western Black-capped Lory C
Red-cheeked Parrot A
Eclectus Parrot C
Oriental Cuckoo C
Brush Cuckoo A
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo C
Channel-billed Cuckoo C
Pheasant Coucal A*
Barn Owl A*
Barking Owl B
Papuan Frogmouth A*
White-throated Nightjar C
Large-tailed Nightjar B
Uniform Swiftlet B
Fork-tailed Swift C
White-throated Needletail C
Common Paradise-Kingfisher C
Blue-winged Kookaburra A
Forest Kingfisher A
Sacred Kingfisher A
Little Kingfisher C
Azure Kingfisher C
Common Kingfisher B
Rainbow Bee-eater A*
Dollarbird B
Singing Bushlark B
Pacific Swallow A
White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike A
Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike A
White-winged Triller B
Pied Chat B
Clamorous Reed-Warbler B
Golden-headed Cisticola A
White-shouldered Fairy-Wren A
White-throated Gerygone B
Willie Wagtail A*
Leaden Flycatcher B
Shining Flycatcher C
Grey Shrike-Thrush A
Yellow-bellied Sunbird A
Graceful Meliphaga C
Yellow-tinted Honeyeater B
Helmeted Friarbird A
Brown-backed Honeyeater B
Rufous-banded Honeyeater A
Grey-headed Mannikin A*
Chestnut-breasted Mannikin A
Singing Starling A
Yellow-faced Myna A
Brown Oriole B
Figbird A
Spangled Drongo B
White-breasted Wood-Swallow A
Hooded Butcherbird A
Fawn-breasted Bowerbird A
Glossy-mantled Manucode B
Torresian Crow A

COURTSHIP DISPLAY OF THE LONG-BILLED HONEYEATER *MELILESTES MEGARHYNCHUS*

NIKLAS WAHLBERG

While visiting the Simbai area in January 1988, I observed what appeared to be courtship display in the Long-billed Honeyeater *Melilestes megarhynchus*. I have already reported this behaviour (Wahlberg 1988), but would like to describe my observations in more detail. B.J. Coates (1990) has also seen this behaviour in the field, but his description also lacks detail.

The display was observed twice, on 6 and 21 January, 1988. The birds were in a rather tall patch of secondary growth at about 1500 m. The two birds were about 10 cm apart, one being directly above the other. Their tails were fanned and wings were fluttered as they jumped back and forth (in almost perfect unison) between a few bare, vertical branches. These branches were *c.* 1 m below the canopy. The birds called constantly, a high-pitched "*tsii-tsii*". I could not tell whether only one or both birds were calling. Occasionally the birds would take off and chase each other for a while, before landing in a tree (the same or different one) and repeating the performance. On the 21st I noted that the upper bird's tail was more fanned than the lower bird's. Also on the 21st, the birds would stop occasionally and touch bills gently, then resume jumping. Both times the birds flew off chasing each other until out of sight.

This behaviour is very interesting, I cannot remember seeing mention of it anywhere besides Coates (1990). Are we the only ones to have observed this, or have others also had the privilege? Beehler *et al.* (1986) says nothing of this type of behaviour. It would be interesting to know if the display leads to copulation.

Beehler, B.M., Pratt, T.K. & Zimmerman, D.A. 1986. **Birds of New Guinea**. Princeton University Press.
Coates, B.J. 1990. **The Birds of Papua New Guinea. Vol. II**. Dove Publications.
Wahlberg, N. 1988. Observations from Simbai. **Muruk** 3:41-47.

Address: Jaaskentie 7B, 02140 Espoo 14, Finland.

BIRD NOTES FROM LONG ISLAND, MADANG PROVINCE

JEFF CHEMNICK & JIM MELLI

We visited Long Island, Madang Province from 1 - 3 September, 1990. Long Island lies *c.* 50 km north of Wasu, in the Bismarck Sea. It is an extinct volcano with a large crater lake (Lake Wisdom) at its centre. The island experiences a wet and dry season, our visit was during the dry. The island is surrounded by coral reefs, which we found were good for snorkelling.

The vegetation of Long Island is mainly tropical rainforest, but near villages the forest has been cut back for gardens and coconut plantations. In the forest are many soft-leaved vines, orchids and ferns.

Our birding was concentrated in the vicinity of the airstrip and nearby villages. We made one trip to Lake Wisdom along a poorly defined track, guided by local people. The track passed through village gardens and secondary growth. As we approached the edge of the crater the gardens gave way to virgin forest. From the crater edge, the view over the lake was spectacular. A list of the birds we recorded during our stay on the island is given below.

In addition to birds we saw, some interesting reptiles, including a species of small boa, skinks and monitor lizards. These reptiles were photographed for latter identification.

Species List:

Little Grebe
Lesser Frigatebird
Osprey
Whistling Kite
Brahminy Kite
White-bellied Sea-Eagle
Pacific Black Duck
Common Scrubfowl
Whimbrel
Black-billed Cuckoo-Dove
Stephan's Ground-Dove
White-breasted Fruit-Dove
Coroneted Fruit-Dove
Grey Imperial Pigeon
Rainbow Lorikeet
Common Koel
Uniform Swiftlet
Glossy Swiftlet
Collared Kingfisher
Sacred Kingfisher
Blue-tailed Bee-eater
Hooded Pitta
Pied Chat
Golden-headed Cisticola
Island Monarch
Mangrove Golden Whistler
Louisiades White-Eye
Bismarck Black Myzomela
Sclater's Myzomela
Hooded Mannikin
Singing Starling
Metallic Starling

33 species.

Addresses: unknown to editor.

HIGH ALTITUDE RECORDS OF DOUBLE-EYED FIG-PARROT *CYCLOPSITTA DIOPTHALMA* AND FAIRY GERYGONE *GERYGONE PALPEBROSA*

FERNLEY B. SYMONS

During the recent Imperial College (London) expedition to Papua New Guinea I was lucky enough to be able to camp for two nights on Mount Missim, Wau (Morobe Province). At 09:00 on 21 July 1990, whilst preparing to depart from Camp 3, I was startled by an adult female Double-eyed Fig-Parrot *Cyclopsitta diopthalma* which flew across the camp clearing. On reaching the other side the bird paused for approximately 30 seconds, perching in a dense patch of secondary vegetation at the edge of the area.

Although the bird remained obscured for much of this time I was able to obtain good views of her head through a Kowa TSN-4 telescope from a distance of about 15 m. Good views of the blue cere and eye-ring, when coupled with the red face and green chin confirmed my initial identification. Flight was very fast and direct, a distinctive "*cheet*' flight call being uttered (it was this which alerted me to the bird's presence). The parrot appeared very small, being approximately 20 cm long.

This was the only occasion when I was able to positively identify Double-eyed Fig-Parrot in the area, although it may be noted that a similar pair of fast flying parrots were also observed during our stay.

Beehler *et al.* (1986) suggest that this species is found from sea-level to 1600 m. Camp 3 is located at *c.* 2000 m altitude, a significant increase over the previous quoted maximum. My observations of this species, both in Australia and Papua New Guinea suggest that large emergent trees often provide nest sites. Given the large number of these at this particular location it is more possible that breeding (as well as foraging) may occur at high altitudes.

Whilst based at the Wau Ecology Institute members of the expedition had several opportunities to investigate the summit of Mount Kaindi. On one such occasion, on the 24 July 1990 at approximately 11:00, I was able to observe a flock of small passerines which were foraging in the *Nothofagus* canopy. This included at least five female Fairy Gerygones *Gerygone palpebrosa*. Their lemon-yellow bellies and vents coupled with white throats and greenish upperparts excluded any of the other similar passerines normally found at this altitude. Whilst on Mount Kaindi I had ample opportunity to observe the Island Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus trivirgartus* at close quarters and so could confidently eliminate this species from the list of possibilities.

Beehler *et al.* (1986) state that *G. palpebrosa* occurs below 1450 m whilst my views were obtained at approximately 2350 m. It is interesting that, as in the majority of my Australian records of this species, an all female flock was observed. Males prove distinctly difficult to see in flocks in the neighbourhood of Cairns (North Queensland) in 1988 - good, clear views being rare.

These are two examples from growing list of extra-altitudinal records of a number of species (e.g., Cooper, 1988). Whilst significant habitat modification has occurred in the case of Mount Kaindi, resulting both in a decrease in the number of mature specimens of climax species and a concomitant increase in secondary vegetation, it is likely that this is only part of the story (*G. palpebrosa* being restricted to primary forest and older regrowth - Beehler *et al.* [1986]). Significant climatic and consequently vegetational changes appear to have occurred in the last few decades (resulting in the loss of glaciers from Mount Wilhelm in the late 1960s for example). It is quite possible that an amelioration associated with the changing conditions has allowed range expansions of various species which, hither-to, had been restricted to lowland habitats. Further records from montane regions are clearly required to investigate this assertion: it would undoubtedly pay to be on the look-out for lowland "residents" in these areas.

Beehler, B.M., T.K. Pratt & D.A. Zimmerman. 1986. **Birds of New Guinea**. Princeton University Press.

Cooper, W.R. 1988. High Altitude Scrubfowl. **Muruk** 3: 4.

Acknowledgements

These records were obtained during the recent "Imperial College Expedition to Papua New Guinea 1990", which took place during July and August of that year. I would like to extend my thanks to the following for their sponsorship:

The Imperial College Explorations Board, the Royal Geographical Society (Goldsmith's Company funds), the Gregory Fund (Imperial College), the Explorer's Club of New York, Glaxo Pharmaceuticals Ltd., the Gilchrist Educational Trust, the Godman Fund (Natural History Museum), the Royal Entomological Society, the British Ecological Society, the Royal College of Science Association (Imperial College) and Dorset County Council (U.K.).

In addition to the above organisations I would like to thank those companies that donated vital equipment, our patron Sir Cyril Clarke and all the other individuals who were kind enough to give financial assistance, advice and support.

Address: 8 Priory Gardens, Shirehampton, Bristol BS11 OBZ, U.K.

BIRDS NEAR LARONU VILLAGE, DOROBISORO, CENTRAL PROVINCE

BULISA A. IOVA

Dorobisoro is a small government station situated east of Port Moresby, at about 300 m altitude. A flight by light aircraft usually takes 30 minutes. The vegetation there is largely rainforest with *Eucalyptus* savanna surrounding the human habitation. The forest has been very vital in supplying my village people with raw material, especially wood and animal; food sources (*wel abus*).

My village, Laronu, is bisected by the Kemp Welch River that runs down from the mountains to the north. I arrived at my village on the 3rd December 1991 and returned to Port Moresby on January 2 1992. During the month I bird-watched around the village and the surrounding forest. Most of the more spectacular birds, like the Buff-tailed Sicklebill *Epimachus albertisi*, Trumpet Manucode *Manucodia keraudrenii*, Macgregor's Bowerbird *Amblyornis macgregoriae*, and Wattled Brush-Turkey *Aepypodius arfakianus*, were seen in the forest about a days walk on the slopes of Mt. Obree. I camped with some boys from my village at this site for four days. The list includes species seen between 300 and 3065 m altitude.

BIRDLIST

Local names are given in **bold**
fi = forest interior
fe = forest edge
s = savanna
r = along river
sf = secondary forest

Dwarf Cassowary fi **Kuboru**
Black-billed Brush-Turkey fi **Huri**
Wattled Brush-Turkey fi **Ina**
Common Scrubfowl fi **Huri Hauia**
Brahminy Kite s **Edomiri**
New Guinea Harpy-Eagle fi **Buru**
Emerald Ground-Dove fi, sf **Iunu Sabanu**
Stephan's Ground-Dove fi, sf **Iunu Sabanu**
Pheasant Pigeon fi, sf **Iobei**
Great Cuckoo-Dove fi, sf, fe **Une Sahu**
Brown Cuckoo-Dove fi, sf, fe **Une**
White-breasted Fruit-Dove fi **Yubue**
Wompoo Fruit-Dove fi, sf **Hauvore**
Superb Fruit-Dove fi, sf **Iavanu**
Zoe Imperial Pigeon fi **Bune**
Papuan Mountain Pigeon fi **Aheru**
Rufescent Imperial Pigeon fi **Bune**
Papuan Lorikeet fi, fe **Ua-a**
Western Black-capped Lory fi, sf **Viruina**
Papuan King-Parrot fi, sf **Ini**
Eclectus Parrot fi **Baraiki**
Buff-faced Pygmy-Parrot fi **Maki Maki**
Brush Cuckoo fe, sf **Une Kokori**
Brown-headed Paradise-Kingfisher fi, sf **Iauvo Kao**
Dwarf Kingfisher sf, fe **Konibora-a**
Yellow-billed Kingfisher sf, fe **Takiroro**
Dollarbird fe, sf **Kako**
Barking Owl fi **Isiro**
Papuan Frogmouth fi, sf **Maobu**
Mountain Owlet-Nightjar fi **Kikabironi**

Moustached Tree-Swift fe, sf **Ka-ara**
Glossy Swiftlet s **Amai**
Chestnut-backed Jewel-Babbler fi, sf **Soso**
Blue-breasted Pitta fi **Oivo**
Stout-billed Cuckoo-Shrike fi, sf **Osobu**
Grey-headed Cuckoo-Shrike sf **Surari**
Yellow-eyed Cuckoo-Shrike s, sf **Surari**
White-shouldered Fairy-Wren s **Siri Siri**
Tawny Grassbird s **Baka Kikeo**
Rusty Mouse-Warbler fi, sf **Uomu**
Pale-billed Scrub-Wren fi **Tetea**
Chestnut-bellied Fantail fi **Akinu**
Black Fantail fi **Akinu**
Friendly Fantail fi **Akinu**
Frilled Monarch fi, sf
Moutain Peltops fe, sf **Siri Kokoina**
White-faced Robin fi, sf **Niri Ruori**
Black-breasted Boatbill fi
Dwarf Whistler fi **Iku Maki**
Regent Whistler fi **Bibiso**
Little Shrike-Thrush fi, sf, fe **U-Uro Bini**
Hooded Pitohui fi, sf, fe **Soroka**
Papuan Flowerpecker fi, sf **Iemusu**
Black-fronted White-Eye sf, fe **Suvia**
Slaty-chinned Longbill sf, fi, fe **Subi**
Dwarf Honeyeater fi, sf, fe
Mountain Red-headed Myzomela fi, sf **Bitei**
Red-collared Myzomela fi, sf **Bitei**
Black-throated Honeyeater fi **Mitoi**
Mimic Meliphaga fi, sf, fe **Mitoi**
Common Smoky Honeyeater fi, sf **Ineka**
Belford's Melidectes fi, sf **Ivaho**
Ornate Melidectes fi **Moroa**
Helmeted Friarbird s, sf **Usou**
Long-billed Honeyeater fi, sf
Blue-faced Parrot-Finch fi, sf **Siribai**
Grey-headed Mannikin s **Mararu Rieku**
Spangled Drongo fi, sf **Kisio Kisio**
Mountain Drongo fi, sf **Kisio Kisio**
Brown Oriole fe, sf
Torrent-Lark r **Siudi**
Great Wood-Swallow sf, fe **Seseva**
Black Butcherbird sf, fi **Aukoko**
Hooded Butcherbird sf, s **Kaukoro**
Spotted Catbird fi, fe **Nuaino**
White-eared Catbird fi, fe **Nuaino**
Fawn-breasted Bowerbird sf **Sea**
Macgregor's Bowerbird fi **Auvo**
Trumpet Manucode fi **Namanu**
Crinkle-collared Manucode fi **Namunu**
Magnificent Riflebird fi, fe, sf **Aroa**
Brown Sicklebill fi **Magena**
Buff-tailed Sicklebill fi **Kuovi**
Stephanie's Astrapia fi **Usisu**
Magnificent Bird of Paradise fi **Sihi**
Raggiana Bird of Paradise fi, fe, sf **Ravai**
Grey Crow sf, fe **Koema**

Address: c/o Biology Department, UPNG, PO Box 320, University.

SOME NOTES ON THE BIRDS SEEN IN THE TURAMA RIVER AREA, GULF PROVINCE

IAN BURROWS

The Turama River area was visited from 16 to 19 July 1988 to collect additional information for an environmental impact survey. The main purpose of the visit was to collect river water samples, so bird observations were casual. Observations were limited due to the flooded nature of the forest, it being the wet season then, as well as the persistent torrential rain.

Most observations were made during the first two hours of daylight and the last hour of daylight on 17th, when the rain stopped. Other observations were made between the sampling site and Komaio village, 3 hours boat journey downstream.

Access to this area is very difficult, involving a 30 min charter flight from Kikori to Komaio village in the only available plane. A three hour journey by an outboard driven boat is then required to get into the best quality forest area.

This list is by no means complete, however the few hours birding 'fitted in' given some idea of the richness of the area. Perhaps the proposed trip there in the dry season will tell us more.

Southern Cassowary *Casuarius casuarius*
On 17th four birds were seen near the camp. One adult female, one immature bird estimated to be about fifteen months old and an adult male with an eight month old chick.

Black-billed Brush-Turkey *Talegalla fuscirostris*
At least three groups of birds calling pre-dawn near the camp 17th - 18th. Two birds seen in the forest nearby on 17th.

Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*
One over Komaio on 16th.

Rufous Night-Heron *Nycticorax caledonicus*
Three birds present on the river near the camp 17th - 18th.

Striated Heron *Ardeola striata*
On 17th a bird was seen perched on a floating tree trunk from which it plunged into the water three times, catching small fish on each occasion. The tree trunk and bird disappeared round a bend in the river and the bird flew back upstream one minute later, only to land on another floating log and repeat the fishing process. On 18th five birds were seen between the camp and Komaio.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*
Three birds between the camp and Komaio on 18th.

Great Egret *Egretta alba*
Twenty birds between the camp and Komaio on 18th.

Common Sandpiper *Tringa hypoleucos*
Two birds on the river bank near the camp on 18th.

Southern Crowned Pigeon *Goura scheepmakeri*
Four singletons seen in the forest near the camp on 17th. One individual was perched 30 m in the understory, the others were seen foraging on the forest floor. On 18th one bird was seen perched in a riverside tree about 3 km downstream from the camp.

Great Cuckoo-Dove *Reinwardtoena reinwardtoena*
One in forest near the camp on 17th.

Brown Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia amboinensis*
One in forest near the camp on 17th.

Zoe Imperial Pigeon *Ducula zoeae*
One near the camp on 17th. One near Komaio on 18th.

Collared Imperial Pigeon *Ducula muellerii*
Ten seen near the camp on 17th. Over 600 seen from the river between the camp and Komaio on 18th.

Pinon Imperial Pigeon *Ducula pinon*
About ten seen near the camp on 17th.

Western Black-capped Lory *Lorius lory*
Four over the camp on 17th. About 100 in loose flocks of two to ten over Komaio on 18th.

Eclectus Parrot *Eclectus roratus*
Two seen over the camp on 17th. Three seen from the river between the camp and Komaio on 18th.

Greater Streaked Lory *Chalcopsitta scintillata*
Three over the camp on 17th. About 20 between the camp and Komaio on 18th. Over 200 in flocks of 2 to 20 over Komaio on 19th.

Red-cheeked Parrot *Geoffroyus geoffroyi*
A pair were nesting in a dead tree about 10 m up, near the camp.

Vulturine Parrot *Psittrichas fulgidus*
One flew over the camp on 17th.

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita*
Three birds around the camp on 17th. About 20 between the camp and Komaio on 18th.

Palm Cockatoo *Probosciger aterrimus*
Three seen from the river between the camp and Komaio on 18th.

Brush Cuckoo *Cacomantis variolosus*
One in scrub at the camp 17th - 18th.

White-crowned Koel *Caliechthrus leucolophus*
One heard at dawn near the camp on 17 - 18th.

Channel-billed Cuckoo *Scythrops novaehollandiae*
Three over Komaio on 18th.

Lesser Black Coucal *Centropus bernsteini*
One in an overgrown garden area at Komaio on 18th. This record represents an extension of the known range of this species. It was previously thought to extend eastwards on the south coast only as far has the Fly River.

Greater Black Coucal *Centropus menbeki*
One heard calling at the camp, pre-dawn on 17th.

Common Paradise-Kingfisher *Tanysiptera galatea*
One in forest near the camp on 17th.

Sacred Kingfisher *Halcyon sancta*
One at Komaio on 19th.

Blyth's Hornbill *Rhyticeros plicatus*
About 40 around the camp area on 17th. A minimum of 264 observed from the river between the camp and Komaio on 18th.

Uniform Swiftlet *Collocalia vanikorensis*
About 20 around the camp on 17th.

Glossy Swiftlet *Collocalia esculenta*
Three around the camp on 17th.

Papuan Spine-tailed Swift *Mearnsia novaeguineae*
About 20 around the camp on 17th.

Moustached Tree-Swift *Hemiprocne mystacea*
Two in a riverside tree near Komaio on 18th.

Pacific Swallow *Hirundo tahitica*
Two near the camp on 17th.

Blue Jewel-Babbler *Ptilorhoa caerulescens*
Two in forest near the camp on 17th.

Golden Cuckoo-Shrike *Campochaera sloetii*
Two in a riverside tree near the camp on 18th.

Yellow-bellied Gerygone *Gerygone chrysogaster*
One heard near the camp on 17th.

Northern Fantail *Rhipidura rufiventris*
One in forest near the camp on 17th.

Willie Wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys*
Two at the camp 17 - 18th.

Frilled Monarch *Arses telescopthalamus*
One female in forest near the camp on 17th.

Shining Flycatcher *Myiagra alecto*
One in riverside bushes by the camp on 17th.

Papuan Flowerpecker *Dicaeum pectorale*
One in riverside vegetation by the camp on 17th.

Black Berrypecker *Melanocharis nigra*
One in forest near the camp on 17th.

Yellow-bellied Sunbird *Nectarinia jugularis*
A pair in coconut palms at Komaio on 19th.

Black Sunbird *Nectarinia aspasia*
A pair in an overgrown garden at Komaio on 18th.

Brown-backed Honeyeater *Ramsayornis modestus*
One at Komaio on 19th.

Graceful Meliphaga *Meliphaga gracilis*
Three in an overgrown garden at Komaio on 18th.

Mimic Meliphaga *Meliphaga analoga*
Two in forest near the camp on 17th.

Helmeted Friarbird *Philemon buceroides*
Four in forest near camp on 17th.

White-spotted Mannikin *Lonchura leucosticta*
About fifteen in riverside scrub on 17th. This record represents an extension of the known range of this species. It was previously thought only to extend eastwards into the Fly River area.

Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus hottentottus*
At least 20 birds heard in chorus at dusk.

Brown Oriole *Oriolus szalayi*
Two in forest near the camp on 17th.

Golden Myna *Mino anais*
Two around the camp area on 17th.

Metallic Starling *Aplonis metallica*
About a hundred birds at a mayfly hatch over the river on the evening of the 17th.

Singing Starling *Aplonis cantoroides*
Five in a flock of Metallic Starlings at a mayfly hatch over the river on the evening of the 17th.

Yellow-eyed Starling *Aplonis mystacea*
One in a flock of Metallic Starlings at a mayfly hatch over the river on the evening of 17th.

Hooded Butcherbird *Cracticus cassicus*
Two near the camp area on 17 - 18th.

White-eared Catbird *Ailurodeus buccoides*
One around the camp area on 17th.

Glossy-mantled Manucode *Manucodia atra*
Two near the camp area on 17th.

Raggiana Bird of Paradise *Paradisea raggiana*
About ten birds in a display area about 300 m from the camp area on 17th and 18th.

King Bird of Paradise *Cinnurus regius*
One calling near the camp area on 17th.

Grey Crow *Corvus tristis*
Three seen from the river near Komaio on 18th.

Address: Biology Department, P.O. Box 320, University, P.N.G.

AN UNIDENTIFIED BERRYPECKER *MELANOCHARIS* SP. FROM THE OK TEDI AREA

PHIL GREGORY

During the course of an early watch at Dablin Creek, 7 km north of Tabubil on 1 October 1992, Chris Eastwood and I had two sightings of an unfamiliar *Melanocharis* berrypecker.

The first was feeding in the canopy of a tall bare tree at the base of the track at 700 m altitude. The second was a bird in mid-stratum at 850 m, seen by myself alone with x30 telescope views.

Description: a very small and short-tailed berrypecker of *Melanocharis* type, foraging like a *Gerygone* high in the canopy or perched on a branch in mid-stratum. Both birds were clearly of the same type, but what species? The birds were olive-green above, dingy yellowish beneath with faint narrow dark streaks. There was a greyish tinge to the head and the throat was slightly paler. The first bird had a yellow bill, the second a pale bill, the shape being short, quite slender yet stubby. Both birds had bright yellow pectoral tufts which were very striking. The eye was dark with no eye-ring.

The shape and size suggested Black Berrypecker *M. nigra*, but the birds were very small-looking, had bright yellow pectoral tufts, narrowly streaked underparts and pale or yellow bills. The size, shape and lack of eye-ring would not seem to indicate Streaked Berrypecker *M. striativentris*.

Coates and Lindgren (1978) had a strange *Melanocharis* at 2220 m on Mount Binnie, but of the *M. longicauda/M. striativentris* group with white tufts and strong black streaking down the abdomen. Both they and Murray (1988) made sightings of presumed or likely Obscure Berrypeckers *M. arfakiana* at Tabubil. The yellow pectoral tufts are a major identification feature, but the streaking on our birds at Dablin Creek is anomalous. The identity remains a mystery pending further sightings. Observers around Ok Tedi should carefully check all berrypeckers.

Coates, B.J., & E. Lindgren. 1978. **Ok Tedi Birds**. Ok Tedi Environmental Task Force, Ok Tedi Development Co. and The Office of Environment and Conservation.

Murray, A. 1988. A study of the birds of the Tabubil region, Western Province, PNG. **Muruk** 3: 89-117.

Address: PO Box 69, Tabubil, Western Province.

BIRD SIGHTINGS FROM LAKE TEBURU

ANDREW L. MACK & DEBRA D. WRIGHT

Lake Teburu is in northern Gulf Provine near the confluence of the Pio and Purari rivers at about 600 m elevation. The lake lies within a steep-walled valley having no outflow other than via sinkholes that pocket the limestone sides of the valley. about 15 % of the lake is open water and the remainder is covered with dense mats of floating vegetation or dense thickets of rushes.

On 20 October 1991 we visited the lake for about five hours in the afternoon. Because it was extremely difficult to move through the floating vegetation, our observations were primarily made from a knoll near the north edge of the lake and on a quick pass over the lake by helicopter.

As the lake has not been visited by ornithologists before and is home to a large number of water birds, the limited observations we were able to make are worth recording.

The following birds were observed:

Little Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*
Fairly common.

Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*
Uncommon.

Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*
Common.

Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia*
Common.

Great Egret *Egretta alba*
Common.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*
Uncommon.

Rufous Night Heron *Nycticorax caledonicus*
Fairly common.

Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa*
Fairly common.

Green Pygmy Goose *Nettapus pulchellus*
Fairly common.

Australian White-eyed Duck *Aythya australis*
A single pair was seen at close quarters.

Wandering Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna arcuata*
Very common.

Spotted Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna guttata*
Uncommon.

Brahminy Kite *Haliaster indus*
Fairly common.

Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa*
Fairly common.

Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*
Fairly common.

Sacred Kingfisher *Halcyon sancta*
Uncommon.

Thanks to G. Allen, M. Jebb, M. Smith and Pacific Helicopters for enabling us to visit the lake. Our field work in PNG is supported by several sources, most notably Wildlife Conservation International, to whom we are particularly grateful.

Address: University of Miami, Department of Biology, Box 249118, Coral Gables, Florida 33124, U.S.A.

PAPUAN PARROT-FINCH *ERYTHRURA PAPUANA* ON MOUNT KAINDI, MOROBE PROVINCE

FERNLEY B. SYMONS

Mount Kaindi (2350 m) is one of the most accessible of Papua New Guinea's mountains. When this fact is allied with the nearby facilities at the Wau Ecology Institute (WEI), it is not suprising that much ecological data and many ornithological records have been obtained there. What is suprising, however, is that there have been no records of the Papuan Parrot-Finch *Erythrura papuana* in the past five years (R. Hicks, pers. comm.). The bird certainly occurred in times past (Gressit *et al.* 1978); more tangible evidence is provided by a rather moth-eaten specimen on display in the WEI's case of local fauna. As a member of an Imperial College (London) expedition I was able to investigate the summit of Mt. Kaindi on numerous occasions.

On 9 July 1990 at approximately 12 noon I was investigating the remaining *Nothofagus* forest to the right of the main road, at the point where this opens out into the south summit clearing (on the gold mine side). Following a track which led to what appeared to be a particularly promising patch I noticed a mixed flock of passerines. These included several Buff-faced Scrub-Wrens *Sericornis perspicillatus*, a single Common Smoky Honeyeater *Melipotes fumigatus*, at least one Friendly Fantail *Rhipidura albolimbata*, a Spot-winged Monarch *Monarcha guttula* and a single Island Thrush *Turdus poliocephalus*. In addition I observed a Papuan Parrot-Finch *Erythrura papuana*.

Unfortunately my views of the Parrot-Finch were brief and often partially obscured by vegetation. However, enough was seen for a positive identification. Initially I was struck by its large size; it had a rusty reddish tail and vent; the face was deep blue whilst the rest of the body was an iridescent green. I first thought I was seeing a Blue-faced Parrot-Finch *E. trichroa*. However, the impressive size of the bird, together with its heavy bill, suggested otherwise. The tail appeared longer than *E. trichroa* and the tail, rump and vent regions were a brighter red colour. The fact that only one individual was present tends to support the identification (Beehler *et al.* 1986 note that this species is generally solitary). The bird had been foraging at mid-level when first noted but soon moved up to forage in the *Nothophagus* canopy.

Later visits to Mt. Kaindi allowed me ample opportunity to observe the commoner Blue-faced Parrot-Finch *E. trichroa*, at reasonably close quarters. These were normally present in loose flocks which numbered between ten and twenty individuals. Flocks were very vocal and in general several birds could be heard calling simultaneously; indeed attempts to obtain sound recordings of single birds had to be abandoned. Like the Papuan Parrot-Finch they were found at mid-level and in the canopy.

In addition to my observations of live *E. trichroa* I was also able to examine a dead specimen. This was obtained from the Mt. Missim road in the Wau Valley after I observed a local man pick it up and examine it in a quizzical manner before tossing it away. The vegetation there was totally different, consisting in the main of coffee plantations with *Albizia* shade trees and rank grassland. I did not see live individuals of the Papuan Parrot-Finch in this habitat although Hooded Mannikins *Lonchura spectabilis* were reasonably abundant.

The specimen possessed the same iridescent green noted in *E. papuana* above, but was somewhat different in other details. As in *E. papuana* the blue of the face was marked, although certainly not as bright as the illustration in Beehler *et al.* (1986) suggests, those of Day and Simpson (1986) or Slater *et al.* (1986) being more accurate. The colour of the tail, rump and vent was less reddish than that of *E. papuana* and was closer to the dark brown reproduced in the Slater *et al.* (1986) illustration. In addition the tail was markedly shorter than that of the Papuan Parrot-Finch, although this character is probably not constant. Whilst it is difficult to determine if any changes had occurred to the pigmentation after death, the morphology of the bill is more certain. This was more delicate than that seen in *E. papuana*, being reminiscent of the European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*. On the other hand, the general impression imparted by *E. papuana* is that of one of the larger mannikins, for example the Grand Mannikin *Lonchura grandis* (in build if not in size). It would seem that if a comparison between *E. trichroa* and *E. papuana* is available then each is sufficiently distinct for identification to present little difficulty.

The flock containing *E. papuana* was observed foraging after a period of heavy rainfall. Observations from subsequent visits suggest that passerines may be more active before and just after rain. Many of these mixed species flocks seem to favour the clearings left when the local people extract wood. In areas abutting the road a thin periphery of older growth frequently hides a clear-felled wasteland within.

It is in this way that much of the climax vegetation ("moss forest") has been lost from the summit of Mt. Kaindi. *E. papuana* is probably not overly rare but nonetheless may well be vulnerable to disturbance. *E. trichroa* may be more tolerant in its habitat requirements. It is noticeable that many of the larger species of birds recorded by Beehler & Pratt (in Gressit *et al.* 1978) seemed to be absent during my visits to Mt. Kaindi.

Beehler, B.M., T.K. Pratt & D.A. Zimmerman. 1986. **Birds of New Guinea**. Princeton University Press.

Day, N. & K. Simpson. 1986. **The Birds of Australia**. 2nd Ed. Christopher Helm.

Gressit, J.L., M.K. Gressit & N. Nadkarni. 1978. **Guide to Mount Kaindi: Background to Montane New Guinea Ecology**. Wau Ecology Institute Handbook Number 5.

Slater, P., P. Slater & R. Slater. 1986. **The Slater Guide to Australian Birds**. Rigby.

Address: 8 Priory Gardens, Shirehampton, Bristol BS11 0BZ, U.K.

A VISIT TO THE EAST SEPIK PROVINCE

LEONARD P. TOLHURST

WEWAK AREA

During June and August 1990, it was my privilege to visit the East Sepik Province for six weeks.

First place of call was the provincial capital of Wewak. This town is situated right on the coast, with the eastern end of the Prince Alexander Mountains forming a backdrop to the south side of the town. The list of birds seen in Wewak area are those seen on the different times that I was in the area over the six weeks I was in the Province.

The drive by road from Wewak to Maprik is a very interesting one, and passes through some heavily populated hill country. It is also a road famous for rascal holdups. Fortunately, we had no incidents. While making this journey a male Lesser Bird of Paradise *Paradisaea minor* flew across the highway and over a nearby valley giving a splendid view.

HAYFIELD - MAPRIK

Years ago Maprik town had its own airfield next to the business district. However, due to the geography of the area the strip was very short, and has now been closed and part of it has been converted into a playing field. The airfield that now serves Maprik is located at Hayfield, which is about eight km south of the town. Maprik itself is surrounded by hills, and the streams that drain them carry gold in their gravel beds. Many local people pan for the yellow metal whenever they need extra cash, and some no doubt earn their living doing so.

The bird that gave me the greatest thrill in this area was the Australian Pratincole *Stiltia isabella* seen on the Hayfield airfield, and Meyer's Friarbird *Philemon meyeri* at Maprik.

HAYFIELD - PAGWI ROAD

From Hayfield a road extends southwards to the Sepik River, at Pagwi. This road is a very rough one in many places, and is one that you would not want to travel during times of heavy rain. It is advisable to avoid travelling it in the wet season, unless you have a good 4-wheel drive vehicle. Pagwi is the road head for all villages and towns upstream on the Sepik River. Even Ambunti is not connected to the rest of the Province by road. From Pagwi upstream one has to travel by river boat or canoe, or fly. Of course, in some places one can still walk, but this is not recommended. Interesting sightings along this road were the Blue-tailed Bee-eater *Merops philippinus*, which I also saw along the Sepik River, (I had previously seen the species in the Philippines), and a White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae*.

AMBUNTI AREA

Ambunti is an important Government Centre about 25 km upstream from Pagwi, but much further if you travel by canoe and negotiate all the loops of the Sepik River. I flew to Ambunti from Hayfield. Coming in to land at the airstrip at Ambunti is quite an experience. As you approach the airstrip, you cross the Sepik River, so must stay high enough to avoid a landing in the water or in the bank. At the far end of the strip is a steep hill, so you must get on to the end of the strip, so that you can pull up before you run out of ground. It would be very difficult to go around and try again, because the hill in front of you presents an obstacle.

Birds of special interest in this area were the Black-browed Triller *Lalage atrovirens* and Grey Crow *Corvus tristis*.

While at Ambunti where I stayed for three days, I spent one memorable day on the Sepik River, travelling by dinghy and outboard motor from Ambunti downstream past Pagwi to Kanganama Village and back, a total distance by river of 160 km. The whole trip took 8 hours including stops made at some of the villages along the way. Some of them had interesting names, such as Japanaut, which commemorates the Japanese withdrawal so I was told, and Suapmeri, or Shortmeri. I am not sure how the latter village got its name, unless it was named after a woman of short stature.

Interesting sightings along the river bank were Whiskered Tern *Chilidonias hybridus* which were very common, Sulphur-crested Cuckatoo *Cacatua galerita*, Channel-billed Cuckoo *Scythrops novaehollandiae*, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Lesser Black Coucal *Centropus bernsteini*, and Blyth's Hornbill *Rhyticeros plicatus*.

MAY RIVER

From Ambunti I flew to May River where I spent the weekend of 6 to 7 July. May River is a very isolated area. It takes two days to travel by canoe with outboard motor to reach it from Pagwi, going against the river current. I would have enjoyed spending much more time in this interesting place, and walking trips into the surrounding forests would be most rewarding I am sure. However I was able to see and hear about 30 species in the short time I was there. Perhaps the most exciting sighting was a male Twelve-wired Bird of Paradise *Seleucidus melanoleuca* flying over the May River. Other sightings that I really enjoyed were Brown Lory *Chalcopsitta duivenbodei*, White-throated Pigeon *Columba vitiensis*, and Grand Mannikin *Lonchura grandis*. The Streak-headed Mannikin *L. tristissima* was also seen in the area.

BONAHOI VILLAGE AREA

Bonahoi is a village about 35 km west of Maprik, where I spent five days. Birding in the area was fairly good, but I only really got away into the forest area for one day. However, some 37 species of birds were seen or heard while there. One day we saw a water snake swimming in a river. I was told that it was a non-poisonous species. Special sightings were: Glossy-mantle Manucode *Manucodia atra*, Brown Lory, Brown-collared Brush Turkey *Talegalla jobiensis*, Lesser Bird of Paradise very close to village houses, Black-browed Triller, Grey-headed Goshawk *Accipiter poliocephalus*, and Lesser Black Coucal.

KOIL ISLAND

About 62 km east-north-east of Wewak is the small low-lying island of Koil. From Wewak at sea level it cannot be seen, as it lies below the horizon. On a free day I arranged for an outboard dinghy to take me to this island hoping to see the Beach Kingfisher, and maybe the Nicobar Pigeon. We left early in the morning and after travelling at good speed for one hour, we stopped and just drifted on the ocean surface while we ate our breakfast sandwiches. We then pressed on for another hour before reaching the island. The ocean surface in places was covered with drift wood from the Sepik River. The currents in the ocean had lined up the drift wood in long lines that stretch for many miles across the ocean surface. Many terns used the drift wood for perching.

On the island of Koil I was disappointed at not seeing either of the two species I had hoped to see. I was told that the Beach Kingfisher was on the island, and the local people said they often saw them, especially in the early morning or late in the day. Since I was there in the middle of the day, it seemed that it did not help. However, I did make a real effort to find one, but with no success. I was told that the Nicobar Pigeon was not on the Island at all, so again no success.

One interesting sighting was the Sacred Kingfisher *Halcyon sancta* which seemed to be larger than ones seen elsewhere in Papua New Guinea and Australia and New Zealand. Also the bills on the birds seen looked longer and thinner than usual. If anyone had any information on variations with this species I would be interested to hear of them. [A reviewer suggests that this might have been a Collared Kingfisher *H. chloris*, Ed.]

WEWAK and WEWAK-MAPRIK ROAD

Spotted Marsh-Harrier
Black Kite
Whimbrel
Orange-fronted Fruit-Dove
White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike
Pacific Swallow
Dollarbird
Willie Wagtail
Grey Shrike-Thrush
Yellow-bellied Sunbird
Varied Honeyeater
Helmeted Friarbird
Singing Starling
Lesser Bird of Paradise
Torresian Crow

MAPRIK-HAYFIELD AREA

Little Black Cormorant
Intermediate Egret
Rufous Night-Heron
Black Kite
Brahminy Kite
Whistling Kite
Grey-headed Goshawk
Australian Pratincole
Masked Lapwing
Brush Cuckoo (h)
Lesser Black Coucal (h)
Rainbow Lorikeet
Red-cheeked Parrot
Eclectus Parrot
Sacred Kingfisher
Rufous-bellied Kookaburra
Papuan Frogmouth (h)
Moustached Tree-Swift
Papuan Spine-tailed Swift
Rainbow Bee-eater
White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike
Tree Martin
Pacific Swallow
Blue Jewel-Babbler
Emperor Fairy-Wren
White-winged Fairy-Wren
Willie Wagtail
Pied Chat
Black-headed Whistler
Black-winged Monarch (?)
Golden-headed Cisticola
Black Berrypecker
Papuan Flowerpecker
Western Mountain White-Eye
Black Sunbird
Yellow-bellied Sunbird
Forest White-eared Meliphaga
Helmeted Friarbird
Meyer's Friarbird
Plain Honeyeater
Brown Oriole
Yellow-faced Myna
White-breasted Wood-Swallow
Glossy-mantled Manucode

HAYFIELD-PAGWI ROAD

White-faced Heron
Black Kite
Brahminy Kite
Brown Goshawk (?)
Whistling Kite
Rufous-bellied Kookaburra
Blue-tailed Bee-eater
Dollarbird
Willie Wagtail
Pied Chat
Helmeted Friarbird

AMBUNTI

Black Kite
Whistling Kite
Bush-Hen (h)
Eclectus Parrot
Red-cheeked Parrot
Rufous-bellied Kookaburra
Sacred Kingfisher
Rainbow Bee-eater
Papuan Spine-tailed Swift
Tree Martin
White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike
Black-browed Triller
Dollarbird
Rusty Mouse-Warbler (h)
Northern Fantail
Variable Pitohui
Black Sunbird
Plain Honeyeater
Streak-headed Honeyeater
Helmeted Friarbird
Puff-backed Meliphaga
Spangled Drongo
Hooded Butcherbird (h)
Grey Crow

SEPIK RIVER BELOW AMBUNTI

Little Black Cormorant
Little Pied Cormorant
Rufous Night-Heron
Pied Heron
Little Egret
Intermediate Egret
Great Egret
Whistling Kite
Little Eagle (?)
Brahminy Kite
Whiskered Tern
Masked Lapwing
Purple Swamphen
Rainbow Lorikeet
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Brush Cuckoo (h)
Channel-billed Cuckoo
Lesser Black Coucal
Rufous-bellied Kookaburra
Azure Kingfisher
Blue-tailed Bee-eater
Blyth's Hornbill
Dollarbird
Willie Wagtail
Singing Starling

MAY RIVER

Little Black Cormorant
Little Pied Cormorant
Whistling Kite
Pacific Black Duck
Intermediate Egret
Bush-Hen (h)

Red-cheeked Parrot
Brown Lory
Rufous-bellied Kookaburra (h)
Rainbow Lorikeet
Eclectus Parrot
White-throated Pigeon
Pied Imperial Pigeon
Lesser Black Coucal (h)
Uniform Swiftlet
Sacred Kingfisher
Rainbow Bee-eater
Dollarbird
Cicadabird
Variable Pitohui (feeding young at nest)
Black Sunbird
Plain Honeyeater
Helmeted Friarbird
Streak-headed Mannikin
Grand Mannikin
Brown Oriole
Spangled Drongo
Hooded Butcherbird
White-breasted Wood-Swallow
Twelve-wired Bird of Paradise

BONAHOI VILLAGE AREA

Brahminy Kite
Crested Hawk
Grey-headed Goshawk
Collared Sparrowhawk
Brown-collared Brush-Turkey
Rainbow Lorikeet
Western Black-capped Lory
Brown Lory
Eclectus Parrot
Red-cheeked Parrot
Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove
Wompoo Fruit-Dove (h ?)
Brush Cuckoo
Papuan Frogmouth (h)
Papuan Boobook (h)
Uniform Swiftlet
Rufous-bellied Kookaburra
Sacred Kingfisher
Lesser Black Coucal
Yellow-billed Kingfisher
Rainbow Bee-eater
Dollarbird
White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike
Black-browed Triller
Blue Jewel-Babbler
Variable Pitohui
Black Sunbird
Helmeted Friarbird
Spangled Drongo
Brown Oriole (h)
Yellow-faced Myna
Metallic Starling
Lowland Peltops
Hooded Butcherbird
Fawn-breasted Bowerbird (h)
Glossy-mantled Manucode
Lesser Bird of Paradise

KOIL ISLAND

Lesser Frigatebird
Brown Noddy
Pied Imperial Pigeon
Sacred Kingfisher
Brush Cuckoo (h)
Yellow-bellied Sunbird
Metallic Starling

Address: Pacific Adventist College, Private Mail Bag, Boroko.

THE NEST AND NESTLING OF THE CRESTED BERRYPECKER *PARAMYTHIA MONTIUM*

GEORGE E. CLAPP

Few detailed descriptions of the nesting of the Crested Berrypecker *Paramythia montium* have been published. They are summarized in Coates (1990) but consist of descriptions of nests, eggs and nestling in the Snow Mountains (Rand 1942) and unpublished records supplied to Coates by C.B. Frith, D.W. Frith, and T. Palliser from the Tari Gap area. It is therefore still of value for further records to be published to enable a clear picture of nesting by Crested Berrypeckers to be established.

On 18 February 1989 at 08:00 I discovered an active nest of the Crested Berrypecker at 2725 m on the Hides Anticline in the Karius Range, Southern Highlands Province. The two adult birds were sighted first. One attended the nest and took food (unidentifiable) to a nestling. I examined the nest as best I could without handling the nestling.

The nest was situated in a small, rather densely foliaged, broadleafed tree, which I presumed to be a sapling. The nest was approximately 2.25 m up, and was very securely held in the centre of the sapling by a multi-fork formed by four or five upwards pointing main branches. The nest tree was situated right at the edge of a clearing with forest on two thirds of its edge. The nest was a cup, the measured dimensions being: external diameter 13.5 cm; internal diameter 7.0 cm; external depth 10.0 cm. The nest was composed externally of coarse vegetable matter, lined with fine vegetable matter and with fairly fresh, still green moss hanging all around the exterior and forming wisps on the bottom.

There was a single nestling, quite large with downy feathers none of which were in pin. The eyes were fully open and the nestling uttered a "*skrss*" call. It had a pinkish gape and a grey beak. Those feathers visible were a mixture of brown and green. The eye was dark.

The adult birds were silent when viewed through binoculars but it was probable that a cross between a hissing and rasping noise just before they appeared was in fact uttered by them.

On 19 February I was again able to observe this nest, albeit briefly. Both adults attended, but I could not distinguish what was fed to the nestling. Each adult bird appeared to swallow something when attending the nest, presumably faecal sacs.

The nest tree and its situation, nest type, materials and placement, as well as the single nestling, all accord well with the previous observations. Nest size is obviously variable. Time of breeding is also variable, even in the same general area, but this agrees with the general observation in Coates (1985) that frugivorous birds in P.N.G. breed at any time.

Coates, B.J. 1985. **The Birds of Papua New Guinea. Vol. I**. Dove Publications.
Coates, B.J. 1990. **The Birds of Papua New Guinea. Vol. II.** Dove Publications.
Rand, A.L. 1942. Results of the Archbold Expeditions No. 43. Birds of the 1938-1939 New Guinea Expedition. **Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.** 79.

Address: 123 Kennedy Terrace, Paddington, Brisbane, Queensland 4064, Australia

BRONZE-CUCKOO *CHRYSOCOCCYX* SP. PARASITIZES GREEN-BACKED HONEYEATER *GLYCICHAERA FALLAX*

HÉCTOR GÓMEZ DE SILVA GARZA

On 14 August 1992, Noam Shany and I watched a Green-backed Honeyeater *Glycichaera fallax* acting as foster parent to a fledgling bronze-cuckoo *Chrysococcyx* sp. 15 km south of Vanimo, West Sepik Province. As far as I know, this is the first record of this species being parasitized by the cuckoo.

The honeyeater was foraging for insects to feed the cuckoo in grass and second-growth bushes at the edge of the STK Malayan logging camp near Soussy, never higher than 1 metre above the ground; while the cuckoo - sitting on a low twig close to it - gave a constant "*peep*" louder and more frequently , flew off, followed by the fosterchild.

I have seen the same behaviour from an African cuckoo of the same genus and its weaverbird fosterparent. In that species of cuckoo, *Chrysococcyx caprius*, the fledgling has a bright orange beak. The Vanimo bird had a dark beak (and no bright eye-ring), and in addition had an irregular dark rufous eyestripe (it was probably the Malay Bronze-Cuckoo *C. minutillus*, an adult of which we had seen at almost exactly the same place a few days before).

Coates (1990) mentions that the egg reported for the Green-backed Honeyeater in the "literature" seems to be too big for the bird. Perhaps then it was actually the egg of a brood parasite such as a bronze-cuckoo, though it is reported that the Australian bronze-cuckoos lay eggs that are smaller than those of their hosts (Grzimek 1972).

Coates, B.J. 1990. **The Birds of Papua New Guinea. Vol. II**. Dove Publications.
Grzimek, B. (Ed.) 1972. **Grzimek's Encyclopedia of Animal Life. Vol. VIII**. Von Nostrand Rheinhold.

Address: Xola 314-E, 03100, México, D.F., Mexico.

SHORT NOTES

Nesting Brown-backed Honeyeaters *Ramsayornis modestus* with strange plumage. *Jeff Chemnick, Roger Hicks & Niklas Wahlberg.* On the 9 of September, 1990, we were birdwatching at Lake Iaraguma, at approximately 08:30 under overcast conditions. Jeff Chemnick observed a pair of honeyeater-myzomela type birds with brown backs, white vertical ear markings and plum-red facial markings (throat and possibly forehead). The birds were actively foraging in the crown and branches of a *Eucalyptus* tree. They were seen to collect bark and make repeated trips to another nearby site, presumably nest-building. Wahlberg and Hicks identified the birds as Brown-backed Honeyeaters and were surprised by the facial colouration - a feature previously unrecorded. The authors feel that this colouration was a natural feature of the bird, as it did not look like staining. No source for staining could be found in the immediate vicinity (eg. flowers or fruit). The extent and intensity of the colouration was similar to that of a female Mountain Red-headed Myzomela *Myzomela adophinae*. The nest under construction by this pair of birds was subsequently located and photographed. It was typical of the Brown-backed Honeyeater; a metre off the ground located close to water's edge. It was penduline in shape and was composed mainly of *Eucalyptus* bark. *Addresses: Chemnick: unknown to editor; Hicks: 7 Newtown, Codicote, Herts, U.K.; Wahlberg: Jaaskentie 7B, 02140 Espoo 14, Finland.*

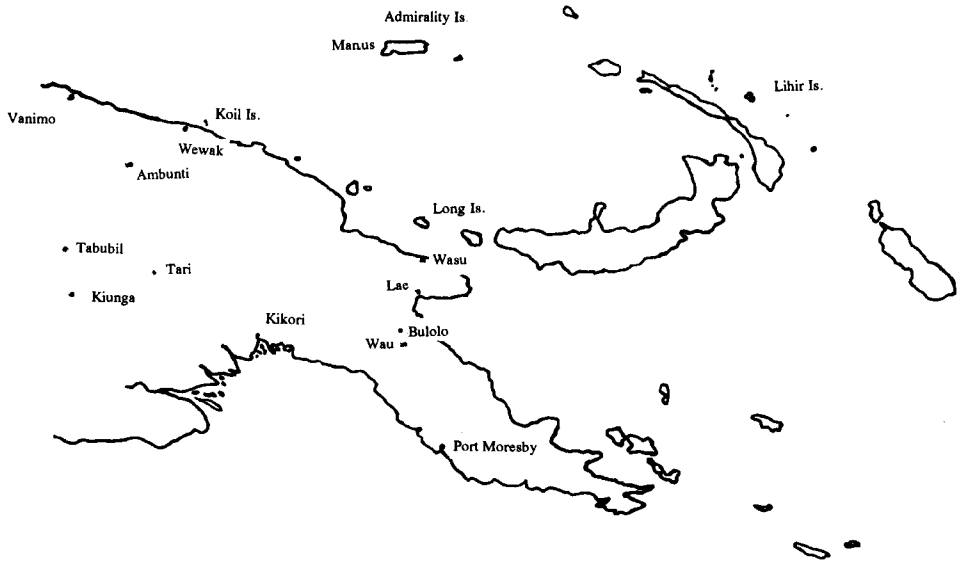
Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra* on Lake Wangbin, Ok Tedi area. *Phil Gregory.* Harry Bell (1969, Field notes on the Ok Tedi Drainage, Emu 69: 193-211) was the first to report the Eurasian Coot in PNG, when he found four pairs nesting on Lake Sogolomik (L. Wangbin) in 1966, though Schodde (in Coates, 1985, The Birds of Papua New Guinea. Vol I.) reported the species from near Wabag, Enga Province in 1960. Coates and Lindgren (1978, Ok Tedi Birds) did not find the birds on Lake Wangbin in 1978, and were told by the local people that the population had been shot out. I was therefore very interested to hear that 9 Eurasian Coot had been seen on the lake by Dave Houghton in June 1992. I went up to check myself on 6 August 1992, and found at least four birds, which were shy.

Wangbin Village used to be beside the lake, but moved down to just north of Tabubil some years ago, which has meant much less hunting pressure in the vicinity of the lake. Some hunting continues, with shotgun cartridges in evidence by the lake shore, but the coot have managed to either survive or recolonize. C. Cole in Coates (1985) reported coot from both Lake Vivien and Lake Louise, which lie relatively close to Lake Wangbin on the south of the main watershed. Some movement between the lakes seems likely, or perhaps from the Snow Mountains of Irian Jaya. The species has also been found in Eastern Highlands on similar small remote lakes (Finch & Gillison, 1988, Muruk 3: 6). *Address: PO Box 69, Tabubil, Western Province.*

Grey-streaked Flycatcher *Muscicapa griseisticta* at Ok Menga, Western Province. *Phil Gregory.* On 3 November 1992 Greg Johnston, Steve Richards and I were collecting frogs at Ok Menga 12 km southwest of Tabubil. I found a *Muscicapa* flycatcher perched on a dead tree, and subsequent views showed it to be a Grey-streaked Flycatcher *M. griseisticta*. The bird resembled a Spotted Flycatcher *M. striata*, but had rather heavy dark streaks on pale underparts, a pale belly and brown upperparts, with a pale wing-bar formed by the margins of the greater coverts. The streaking was too heavy for Spotted Flycatcher, and the only species on the PNG list that fits this description is Grey-streaked Flycatcher. Coates (1990, Birds of Papua New Guinea, Volume II) lists just the previous PNG records from near Vanimo and at Telefomin, the latter record fairly close to Ok Menga but north of the main watershed. Conceivably this species is more frequent than these records suggest, given the paucity of observers in western PNG. A second sighting was made near the same site on 22 Nov 1992. *Address: PO Box 69, Tabubil, Western Province.*

Night-time feeding of Blue-winged Kookaburras *Dacelo leachii*. *Leonard P. Tolhurst.* While looking for owls and other nocturnal birds at the Pacific Adventist College, N.C.D., Blue-winged Kookaburras have at times been disturbed by the approach of our vehicle, so it was known that they were active at night. They have also often been seen perched in a favorite roosting tree at night. However, from 10-13 June 1990, two birds were seen perched on fence posts (not a night-time roosting site!) near the bright security floodlights. One of the birds was seen to fly into a floodlit area, catch a flying insect and return to its fence post perch. This is the first time I have observed this species feeding at night. *Address: Pacific Adventist College, Private Mail Bag, Boroko, PNG.*

Thick-billed Ground-Pigeon *Trugon terrestris* in Varirata National Park. *Héctor Gómez de Silva Garza.* On 26 July 1992 in the forest near the Gare's Lookout trail. Noam Shany and I were watching a mixed flock which included a pair of Buff-faced Pygmy Parrots *Micropsitta pusio*, Chestnut-bellied Fantails *Rhipidura hyperythra*, Frilled Monarchs *Arses telescophthalmus*, Spot-winged Monarchs *Monarcha guttula*, Black-faced Monarchs *M. melanopus*, Black-winged Monarchs *M. frater*, and Fairy Gerygones *Gerygone palpebrosa*, when a Thick-billed Ground-Pigeon crossed the trail only 3 or 4 metres in front of us. We had good looks at it as it then walked in a 100 degree arc around us - often unconcealed by vegetation - before it disappeared into the forest following the flock. It was a quite unmistakable bird, a large pigeon with a proportionally large, mostly white beak, and a very conspicuous white throat and "sideburns". What I didn't expect, as it isn't shown in the field guide (Beehler *et al.* 1986), is that a few scattered feathers of the grey wing coverts shine purple at times. There is a record by Bret Whitney.(pers comm) but only one other record, on 16 Aug 1990, incorrectly listed as *Gallicolumba salamonsis* and without a description in **Muruk** 5 p. 147 (1992). Ed.] *Address: Xola 314-E, 03100, México, D.F.*, Mexico.



MAJOR LOCALITIES MENTIONED IN THE TEXT

INDEX TO PLACES MENTIONED IN THIS ISSUE

INDEX TO PLANT SPECIES MENTIONED IN THIS ISSUE

INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

MURUK welcomes any contributions which enlarge the body of knowledge of the birds of the New Guinea region. We welcome scientific papers, travelogues, regional lists, and casual observations. The recent observations section is compiled from submitted observations. Please send all contributions to:

The Editor, Muruk, PNGBS, PO Box 1598, Boroko, P.N.G.

Please type all manuscripts, double spaced. This makes it much easier for us to ensure accuracy. If you have access to a word processor then manuscripts can be submitted on disc (any type compatible with IBM standards). We edit initially in Microsoft Word 5, and later compose the final publication in Pagemaker IV. We can cope with documents from most other word-processing programs, but it may be advisable to create an ascii version of the document in case this proves difficult.

In general articles and notes should follow the style used in EMU (or see earlier issues of MURUK). Please pay special attention to the correct citation of references.

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 Society (Hicks, R. (1987) Checklist of the Birds of Papua New Guinea, PNGBS). In listings of birds please follow the order used in these publications.

For place names, please make sure that they can be located using standard maps. If they do not occur on the standard PNG 1:100,000 maps then please give the nearest mapped locality. Always give the province after the name.

Illustrations should be neatly drawn in black ink. Illustrations are scanned into a computerised format. Try not to put in too much detail. For all maps etc. please submit two copies, one without any annotation and another with the place names (etc.) marked. Alternatively, mark the place names on a transparent overlay. Line drawings of birds are welcome. Again, use black ink, and use as few shades as possible; stippling prints well. Drawings of cassowaries or related things for the covers are always welcome. The Society is considering the possibility of including black and white photographs in future issues if there is sufficient demand.

If you have any special requirements with regard to publication please let us know. The editors reserve the right to make any changes they see fit, and we do not normally return manuscripts for proof-checking unless this is specifically asked for by the authors.