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**Observations of Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*,
South Polar Skua *Stercorarius maccormicki* and other skuas
in Papua New Guinea waters.**

By Neil Cheshire

From 1985 to 2007 I made twenty voyages in CSIRO research vessels to the seas around Papua New Guinea including the Gulf of Papua, northern Coral Sea, Solomon Sea, Bismarck Sea and adjacent Equatorial Pacific, with voyages in all months except December. All observations listed are within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Papua New Guinea which extends up to 200 nautical miles (370km) offshore. I made counts of seabirds whilst steaming between stations when research work permitted. Most of my counts were from well offshore and very few Skua sp. were recorded.

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus* has a circumpolar Arctic breeding distribution during the northern summer with migration to the southern hemisphere commencing in late August (Furness 1987). In the SW Pacific region it is regularly recorded in small numbers off south east Australia, in the Tasman Sea and around northern New Zealand between September and May (Higgins and Davies 1996). There are no documented records for Papua New Guinea waters. Greensmith(1975) reported an immature near San Cristobal Island, Solomon Islands on 5 Feb 1975. I made the following observations of Long-tailed Skua in Papua New Guinea waters:-

15 Jan 1986 1°50'S 147°35'E 10 n.miles N from Manus Island. Equatorial Pacific, 1 immature
6 May 1988 0°00' 149°00'E 95 n.miles NNW from Mussau. Equatorial Pacific, 1 immature
9 Sept 1990 5°52'S 152 24'E 32 n.miles SE Cape Orford, New Britain, 1 immature
24 Sept 1990 6°46'S 147°50'E 4 n.miles S from Busiga, Bismarck Sea, 2 adults
8 Nov 1993 11°31'S 154°24'E 8 n.miles S Adele Island, Coral Sea. 1 immature .

All the birds I identified as Long-tailed Skua were slender, lightly built pale morph skuas and all had white wing shafts restricted to the outer two primaries, this feature being quite conspicuous. The two adult birds seen together on 24 Sept 1990 were similar. The nearest bird had dark greyish-brown upperparts with conspicuous heavily barred rump and upper tail coverts and dark brown tail with no projection. The upperwings were dark greyish brown with white shafts on two outer primaries. Head was dark brown with a buff collar and diffused greyish-brown breastband. Lower breast and belly buff. Underwing was dark brown being slightly lighter along edge of underwing coverts. The immature birds seen had greyish brown upperparts, head and upper breasts, with barred rumps and flanks, white to buff underparts and diagnostic underwing coverts barred brown on buff contrasting with darker brown primaries.

South Polar Skua *Stercorarius maccormicki* breeds around the Antarctic continent with a total population of about ten thousand pairs with about six thousand of these in the Ross Sea area centred around 180° longitude. It is a long-distance trans-equatorial migrant reaching Greenland in the north Atlantic and British Columbia in the North Pacific (Furness 1987). There are no documented records for Papua New Guinea waters. Within the Papua New Guinea EEZ I made the following observations:-

23 Nov 1992 2°32'S 154°55'E 46 n.miles NNE from
Nuguria Island 1 large dark skua
6 Feb 2000 10°41'S 149°34'E 20 n.miles S from Orangerie
Bay, Coral Sea, 1 large dark skua
4 Mar 2002 7°25'S 148°03'E Huon Gulf, 1 positive
maccormicki
11 Mar 2002 3°33'S 144°51'E 3 nmiles N from Bam
Island, Bismarck Sea, 1 positive maccormicki

I had positive sightings of pale morph South Polar Skuas on the 4 and 11 March 2002 in the Huon Gulf and Bismarck Sea. Both birds had a steady level flight with regular wing beats and showed brief interest in the ship. Compared to Pomarine Skua

they were larger more heavily built with broad wings, short tail and a heavy black bill. Both had very similar conspicuous two toned appearance with the head, hindneck and underbody being pale greyish-brown. This contrasted with blackish brown mantle, back ,tail and upperwings and underwing. The upperwing and underwing had prominent white wing flashes at the base of the primaries.

On the 23 Nov 1992 and 6 Feb 2000 I had distant views of single large heavily built dark brown skuas showing prominent white wing flashes. They were much bigger and more heavily built than Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus* The Brown Skua *Stercorarius antarcticus* usually winters between 30° and 50°S but there are a few recoveries of ringed birds from the tropics and the northern hemisphere (Olsen and Larsson 1997). Given the similarity in size and plumage of dark morph South Polar and Brown Skua, these observations could refer to either species.

Table of my sightings of Pomarine and Arctic Skua in PNG waters

Pomarine Skua

Pomarine/Arctic

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Bismarck Sea	1 (2)						1 (1)				

Arctic Skua

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Solomon Sea	1 (1)										

(first figure indicates number of sightings, figure in bracket indicates maximum count in any one sighting)

Note. The nautical mile is retained under the metric convention and is equal to 1.852 kilometres. It is equal to 1' of latitude so on nautical charts distance in nautical miles can be measured by using the latitude scale.

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Notes on birds and logistics from the south side of Mount Giluwe, SHP

By Ethan Linck

Introduction

In early August of 2009 I spent three days climbing the southern face of Mount Giluwe, from the Highlands Highway directly north of the village of Ialibu. Despite the accessibility of this route, it is rarely chosen, as the highway at this point passes some 500 meters lower (at ~ 2200 m asl) than the preferred access point on the north face of the mountain, the road leading from the village of Tambul -- I was told (to what degree of veracity I can't say) I was the first westerner to climb this route in some 30 years. I traversed from the Highlands Highway to the summit of the mountain, in the process transecting a range of forest and non-forest habitats of varying degrees of disturbance. Though bird watching was not my focus during the climb, and my observations are mostly incidental, I may be able to offer some insight as to the species to be expected in the area, and logistical information for future trips.

Narrative

I began my climb at Mt. Giluwe Lodge (telephone 71-06-4594), a newly established guesthouse on the highway about a mile before the Ialibu turnoff, at the edge of a *Eucalyptus* / *Araucaria* plantation. While still under construction at the time of my visit, it was comfortable, with hot water, delicious chips, fried bananas, and other well-prepared staples, and surprisingly, a satellite television. Its grounds featured a stand of *Pandanus* that was visited each morning by a stunning male **Princess Stephanie's Astrapia**.

The route I followed started in the expansive mid-montane forest at the mountain's base. Mount Giluwe is a hotspot of antarctic beech diversity, with seven species of *Nothofagus* recorded on the mountain. On the lower recesses of the mountain, sloping up from the highway, *Nothofagus* dominates. The trees grow to an enormous girth and at least 30 meters in height, and not surprising, the area was selectively logged in the 1970s, with small-scale timber extraction occurring to the present date in level terrain forest near the highway. Up to ~2500 m, heavy machinery was used, creating a deep (often inundated) furrow in the ground that served as our trail for some time. The impact of

the operation, however, seemed fairly localized, and the forest seems to be recovering nicely. I recorded **Tit Berrypeckers**, **Blue Bird of Paradise**, **King of Saxony Bird of Paradise (heard only)**, and **Common Smoky Honeyeaters** in this habitat. Past a broad bog coloured by several species of orchids, large stands of *Papuacedrus* conifers are present, giving the forest an oddly boreal feel. Many additional trees had been killed by bark-stripping for roof material, as the bark of the species peels off in large sheets. Further up, at ~2700 m, a broad river (at one time stocked with Rainbow Trout) marks the upper limit of both mechanized and man-powered logging. We clambered up the river for at least half a mile from here, during which time I saw several **Torrent Larks**, and most impressively, what was almost certainly a solitary **New Guinea Singing Dog**. Having not been seen in the field for several years, and popularly believed to now be restricted to western New Guinea, its presence on Mt. Giluwe indicates an easterly population making use of the vast alpine grasslands on the massif, a broad expanse of prime habitat for the species (or subspecies). My two local guides told me they often heard the dogs in the alpine grassland, but to look on one in that habitat (though apparently, not in forest habitat) would be fatal, an interesting bit of folklore supporting the dog's presence. From the river, we bushwhacked through progressively more stunted forest and tangles of *Nastus* bamboo, often up nearly nearly vertical ridge crests, before breaking out of the forest into grassland punctuated by isolated groves of podocarps at ~3300 meters. I believe this tree line to be artificially low, maintained through regularly set fires by locals -- on my return from the summit, my guides set several large blazes in the grassland, much to my dismay. We stopped there for the day, and camped in a cave on the side of a gully dropping into the trees, plugging its sides with vegetation and filling it with smoke to keep out the chill (~5 °C) of the night.

That the next morning I observed a **Regent Whistler**, **Crested Berrypeckers**, a pair of **Plum-faced Lorikeets**, a **Friendly Fantail**, several **Orange-billed Lorikeets**, an immature male **Ribbon-tailed Astrapia**, a **Black-breasted Boatbill**, a **White-winged Robin**, and heard a **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**. Of particular interest were a roving flock of **New Guinea**

Thornbills, and a **Long-bearded Melidectes**, both species with patchy distributions, and whose presence may indicate the richness of a given upper-montane habitat. The next day, after sleeping off the altitude headache I had from my rapid ascent, we made the summit push. I was kept constant company by **Alpine Pipits**. After another night in the cave, we returned to Mt. Giluwe Lodge the following day, without incident.

Future Work

I suspect spending time working the border of upper montane forest from several aspects of the mountain would yield interesting results, as the species composition and altitudinal limits of the habitat vary drastically, probably in correlation to sunlight exposure and other factors affecting microclimate. The forest between the *Papuacedrus* groves and the river also strikes me as having potential for a high level of diversity, as it is fairly tall (~20 m) for its altitude, and as it is punctuated by a number of bogs, ecotones abound. Elsewhere in New Guinea, *Papuacedrus* is becoming quite rare, and it is unknown what effect its loss may have on the upper montane avifauna. Moses Kanda, manager for Mt. Giluwe Lodge, has offered to establish facilities for researchers if there were appropriate interest, and I believe Mt. Giluwe would be a worthy candidate for ecological studies on high mountain birds.

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Madang & Keki Lodge

Visit Report Aug 27 – Sep 3, 2009

By Dominic Chaplin

Keki Lodge is situated at around 800m in the Adelbert Mountain range about 120km drive West of Madang.

Keki Lodge comprises some huts in a large clearing in forested

land owned by Moyang Okira. A feature of the clearing is a large fig tree where birds come and go all day. This is where we first recorded the most well known resident, the **Fire-maned Bowerbird**, restricted to a narrow distribution in the Adelbert Mountains. Other specialties like **Pesquet's Parrot** and **Blyth's Hornbill** were also present every day during our visit. There is good birding around the clearing and along a number of trails in the forest to see different species including **Magnificent Bird of Paradise** at his display grounds, **White-eared Catbird**, **Lesser Bird of Paradise** and **Banded Yellow Robin** etc.

The GPS reading was 830m above sea level (04 42 230S/ 145 24 324W) and it made a pleasant cool change from the hot lowlands around Madang. There is a refreshing creek to bathe in after a hard morning working the trails.

The wonderful Keki Lodge is excellent for both birding and relaxing. The only drawback is that it is very hard to contact. Moyang, the very helpful owner, will go out of his way to make sure you have a good stay. He lives about 10 km below the lodge where there is no phone/fax/electricity/email.

The official way to get in touch is to contact the Madang Visitors Bureau. It would be best to try this at least 3 months before you come.

Moyang Okira
c/o Madang Visitors Bureau
PO Box 1071
Madang
Papua New Guinea
Tel: 675 852 3302
Fax: 675 852 3540

To reach Keki you would need a four wheel drive vehicle, which could be hired from the airport or from hotels in Madang. You drive about 90km West of Madang until reaching the Keki Lodge sign. Then turn inland for about 30km. The road inland and uphill is not too bad for the first half, as far as the PMV goes, but it does

turn into a bit of a goat track after that, which four wheel drive enthusiasts will enjoy. Moyang does all he can to maintain the road and if you got stuck the local people would be sure to help.

Moyang is trying hard to encourage ecotourism to his land. Unfortunately few naturalists come to his lodge. We were the first visitors that year. If his lodge were to be unsuccessful the only alternative would be to convert his forest to subsistence agriculture. I encourage other birders to make the effort to visit his lodge, to help protect this excellent site as well as to enjoy some bird species which may be very hard to find elsewhere.

Arrangements for the visit were greatly assisted by Robert McKay, an Australian doctor living in Madang.

Other areas around Madang

A brief review of some other sites around Madang ‘Interesting’ species are in bold.

Ohu Butterfly Sanctuary

This area is about 15km SW of Madang. We arrived early and found a quiet local who accompanied me during the day for a small fee. We went down the hill and birded a track along by the river. There were quite a few birds here in the early morning including displaying **Lesser Birds of Paradise**.

Subsequently to this trip, further up from Ohu, Robert McKay found another area where he recorded 8 **King Birds of Paradise** and found a tree with **Eclectus Parrots** and **Edward's Fig Parrots** nesting. This area certainly would be worth more visits.

Birds observed:

Long-tailed Buzzard, Common Sandpiper, Great Cuckoo-Dove, Superb Fruit-Dove, Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove, Wompoo Fruit-Dove, Zoe Imperial Pigeon, Pinon Imperial Pigeon,

Red-cheeked Parrot, Western Black-capped Lory, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Dollarbird, Azure Kingfisher, **Common Paradise-Kingfisher**, Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, Brush Cuckoo (heard), New Guinea Friarbird, **Meyer's Friarbird**, Mimic Meliphaga, Streak-headed Honeyeater, Slaty-chinned Longbill, Green-backed Gerygone (heard), **Lowland Peltops**, Black-browed Triller, Brown Oriole, Spangled Drongo, **Lesser Bird of Paradise**, Yellow-faced Myna, Metallic Starling, Black Sunbird, Grey Crow

Logging Road South of Madang

To reach this area we drove about 15km south of Madang on the Ramu highway, then we turned inland just after crossing a very large river.

This is an access road for logging further down and regularly large trucks hauling logs come past. Despite this it is a very good area. We stopped on the bridge, at various patches of forest beside the road and went down a couple of side turnings. Quite a few interesting species were along here.

Birds observed:

Little Pied Cormorant, Intermediate Egret, Black Kite, Brahminy Kite, Grey Goshawk, Pacific Baza, **Gurney's Eagle**, Common Sandpiper, **Beautiful Fruit-Dove**, Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove, **Coroneted Fruit-Dove**, Pink-spotted Fruit-Dove, Emerald Dove, Pinon Imperial Pigeon, **Buff-faced Pygmy-Parrot**, Eclectus Parrot, Red-cheeked Parrot, Double-eyed fig-Parrot, Western Black-capped Lory, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, **Dwarf Koel**, Channel-billed Cuckoo, **Malay (Little) Bronze Cuckoo**, Papuan Spine-tailed Swift, Uniform Swiftlet, Glossy Swiftlet, Dollarbird, Azure Kingfisher, Sacred Kingfisher, Forest Kingfisher, Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, **Emperor Fairy-wren**, **Long-billed Honeyeater**, **Red-throated Myzomela**, New Guinea Friarbird, Yellow-bellied Gerygone, Large-billed Gerygone, Green-backed Gerygone, Slaty-chinned Longbill, Hooded Butcherbird, **Lowland Peltops**, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike,

Black-browed Triller, Brown Oriole, Spangled Drongo, Northern Fantail, White-bellied Thicket-Fantail, **Golden Monarch**, **Satin Flycatcher**, Shining Flycatcher, Metallic Starling, Yellow-faced Myna, Black Sunbird, Yellow-bellied Sunbird, **Streak-headed Mannikin**

Madang Town

Various birds were seen in and around Madang itself including: Black Kite, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Masked Lapwing, Feral Pigeon, **Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove**, **Beach Kingfisher**, Coconut Lorikeet, Varied Honeyeater, Willie Wagtail, Singing Starling, **Grand Mannikin**, Torresian Crow

Road to Keki Lodge

We stopped at a few spots on the way up the hill after the highway turnoff.

Birds observed included:

New Guinea Scrubfowl, Zoe Imperial Pigeon, Coconut Lorikeet, **Red-flanked Lorikeet**, **Edward's Fig Parrot**, Dusky Lory, Moustached Tree-Swift, Rainbow Bee-eater, Pale-billed Scrub-wren, White-shouldered Fairy-Wren, Boyers Cuckoo-Shrike, **Golden Myna**, Yellow-faced Myna

Keki Lodge

Includes the lodge clearing, trails and approx 1km up the road.

Birds observed:

Brown-collared Brush-Turkey (heard only), **Grey-headed Goshawk**, Great Cuckoo-Dove, Pink-spotted Fruit-Dove, Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove, **Beautiful Fruit-Dove**, Wompoo Fruit-Dove, Superb Fruit-Dove, Zoe Imperial Pigeon, Papuan Mountain Pigeon, **Pesquet's Parrot**, Red-cheeked Parrot, Eclectus Parrot, Western black-capped Lory, Dusky Lory, Coconut Lorikeet, **Palm Cockatoo**, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, **Buff-faced Pygmy-Parrot**, **Dwarf Koel** (heard only),

Glossy Swiftlet, **Variable Dwarf Kingfisher**, Rufous-bellied Kookaburra, **Blyth's Hornbill**, **Red-bellied Pitta**, **White-eared Catbird**, **Fire-maned Bowerbird**, **Plain Honeyeater**, **Spotted Honeyeater**, Forest White-eared Meliphaga, New Guinea Friarbird, Fairy Gerygone, Black Berrypecker, Yellow-bellied Longbill, Boyer's Cuckoo-Shrike, Yellow-eyed Cuckoo-Shrike, Stout-billed Cuckoo-Shrike, Grey Whistler (heard only), Little Shrike-Thrush, Chestnut-bellied Fantail, Sooty Thicket Fantail, Northern Fantail, **Ochre-collared Monarch**, Grey Crow, **Lesser Bird of Paradise**, **Magnificent Bird of Paradise**, **Superb Bird of Paradise** (heard only), **Banded Yellow Robin**, Black-fronted White-Eye, Yellow-faced Myna, New Guinea Flowerpecker,

Keki Diary Aug 29 - Sep 2

Late afternoon on August 29th, we headed up to Keki Lodge. The pleasant drive to the turnoff was uneventful apart from a **Buff-banded Rail** which crossed the road in front of the car. We turned up the hill and stopped at one nice patch of trees which had **Coconut Lorikeet**, **White-shouldered Fairy-wren**, **Pinon Imperial Pigeon** and I had a four second look at a **New Guinea Scrubfowl**, disappearing at speed down the hill.

One stop had both **Yellow-faced & Golden Mynas** in the same tree. Yet another stop had another **Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove** with a nice **Moustached Tree Swift**.

By now it was starting to get a bit dark as the road deteriorated into a bit of a goat track. But we made it without difficulty, arriving in the dark.

The first day got off to a very good start. We awoke just as daylight was starting to break. Looking up through the mist into the big fig tree, the silhouette of a **Pesquet's Parrot** was apparent. As the light improved we could admire this hulking great red & black parrot. Next up, a **Grey-headed Goshawk**, another New Guinea endemic, flew into the clearing. Then while we were looking at the Goshawk, the call went out, and a

fantastic male **Fire-maned Bowerbird** flew round the clearing and came in to feed on the fig tree. The next sighting was an incredible party of four **Blyth's Hornbills** swishing past. The noise from their wings beating has to be heard to be believed and has been likened to a steam engine going past.

Birding from the clearing is much easier than going into the forest and we also enjoyed seeing many birds here including **Ochre-collared Monarch, Grey Crow, Eclectus & Red-checked Parrots, Western Black-capped & Dusky Lorys, Great Cuckoo-Dove** along with a good selection of other colourful Fruit-Doves. Also seen were a number of honeyeaters with the least interesting being the very well named **Plain Honeyeater**.

The **Hornbills** and **Pesquet's Parrots** were around on and off every day and the **Fire-maned Bowerbirds** were regular visitors to the clearing. On various walks we also saw these bowerbirds both higher up and lower down from the lodge.

All morning we enjoyed this to the background sound of **Lesser Birds of Paradise** calling and after a short walk in the forest we could look up to see these birds flying away with great haste.

Moyang had built two very good hides two meters from display grounds of **Magnificent Birds of Paradise**. It was somewhat difficult to actually sit in the hides on a steep slope on a muddy hill side, without sliding out of the bottom. But at first light, once you had a good grip, it was possible to watch the **Magnificent BOPs** at point blank range. One hide even had two males displaying to a group of females.

The price for this spectacle became apparent later in the evening as chiggers began to take their toll. None of us escaped. Actually the locals do seem to escape, appearing immune to the effects of chiggers that everyone else would find unbearable.

A different set of species can be encountered inside the forest but great patience is required. New Guinea's forest birds are

legendary for being almost painfully shy and difficult to see. Still we had a bit of success here with birds including **Chestnut-bellied & Sooty Thicket-fantails**, a group of **White-eared Catbirds, Banded Yellow Robin, Wompoo Fruit-Dove**, a probable **Crinkle-collared Manucode** and a pair of **Palm Cockatoos**. A couple of the super skulkers, **Brown-collared Brush-turkey and Brown-headed Jewel-babbler**, remained conveniently invisible, giving an excuse for another visit in future years.

Moyang's family did a great job preparing the food we (Brenda) had brought and heating water for numerous cups of coffee. We enjoyed many hours sitting on the deck of our hut, reviewing the days proceedings, drinking the coffee and scratching the chigger bites. A little light rain for 24 hours added to the atmosphere and cooled us down nicely.

Whilst sitting on the deck, every day, a **Variable Dwarf Kingfisher** would come and sit in an orange tree right in front of us. Some of the rest of the time was spent squinting at tree tops in the far distance where **Papuan Mountain Pigeons, Eclectus Parrots** and other birds would come in to sit.

One evening we were surprised by the terrific noise of a drum beating. This was Moyang trying to get in contact with the village down the hill. Yes, in this 21st century world where you might imagine everyone has an iphone and broadband internet, there are still people who have to communicate using jungle drums.

We had a great time for four days and on the last days started to wonder about the source of a strange call we had been hearing all the time right next to our hut. A study of the bird call player revealed that it was actually a **Red-bellied Pitta**. Some effort was required to actually see this bird but we were finally rewarded by a very good look as he hopped across the entrance road.

It had rained somewhat during our stay but the road back down the hill was better. We stopped off again at a few spots down the road towards the highway, seeing a few more species that we didn't record at the lodge. One spot in particular had the local

endemic, **Edward's Fig-Parrot**, which we viewed at great distance from the road. Also above the road we found a pair of **Red-flanked Lorikeets** feeding in a palm.

Overall it was an excellent stay and again I encourage people to try and visit to support Moyang in his efforts to conserve this area.

Checklist of the Birds of Keki Lodge

This list is a collation of the bird records in the visitor's book at Keki Lodge up to August 2009, plus other sightings collected from trip reports on the internet.

Common Name	Scientific Name
Brown-collared Brush-turkey	Talegalla jobiensis
Oriental Hobby	Falco severus
Long-tailed Buzzard	Henicopernis logicauda
Brahminy Kite	Haliastur indus
Grey-headed Goshawk	Accipiter poliocephalus
Meyer's Goshawk	Accipiter meyerianus
New Guinea Eagle	Harpyopsis novaeguineae
Pygmy (Little) Eagle	Hieraaetus (m.) weiskei
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	Macropygia amboinensis
Black-Billed Cuckoo Dove	Macropygia nigrirostris

Stephan's Ground Dove	Chalcophaps stephani
Great Cuckoo-Dove	Reinwardtoena reinwardtii
Pink-spotted Fruit-Dove	Ptilinopus perlatus
Ornate Fruit-Dove	Ptilinopus ornatus
Superb Fruit-Dove	Ptilinopus superbus
Beautiful Fruit-Dove	Ptilinopus pulchellus
Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove	Ptilinopus iozonus
Dwarf Fruit-Dove	Ptilinopus nanus
Purple-tailed Imperial Pigeon	Ducula rufigaster
Zoe Imperial-Pigeon	Ducula zoeae
Palm Cockatoo	Probosciger aterrimus
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Cacatua galerita
Dusky Lory	Pseudeos fuscata
Coconut (Rainbow) Lorikeet	Trichoglossus haematodus
Western Black-capped Lory	Lorius lory
Red-flanked Lorikeet	Charmosyna placensis
Buff-faced Pygmy-Parrot	Micropsitta pusio
Double-eyed Fig-Parrot	Cyclopsitta diophthalma
Red-cheeked Parrot	Geoffroyus geoffroyi
Eclectus Parrot	Eclectus roratus

Pesquet's Parrot	<i>Psitttrichas fulgidus</i>
Dwarf Koel	<i>Microdynamis parva</i>
White-eared Bronze-Cuckoo	<i>Chalcites meyeri</i>
Greater Black Coucal	<i>Centropus menbeki</i>
Eastern Barn Owl	<i>Tyto (alba) javanica</i>
Rufous Owl	<i>Ninox rufa</i>
Papuan Boobook	<i>Ninox theomacha</i>
Uniform Swiftlet	<i>Aerodramus vanikorensis</i>
Papuan Spine-tailed Swift	<i>Mearnsia novaeguineae</i>
Moustached Tree-swift	<i>Hemiprocne mystacea</i>
Papuan Frogmouth	<i>Podargus papuensis</i>
Glossy Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia esculenta</i>
Rufous-bellied Kookaburra	<i>Dacelo gaudichaud</i>
Hook-billed Kingfisher	<i>Melidora macrorrhina</i>
Yellow-billed Kingfisher	<i>Syma torotoro</i>
Variable Dwarf Kingfisher	<i>Ceyx lepidus</i>
Dollarbird	<i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>
Blyth's Hornbill	<i>Aceros plicatus</i>
Red-bellied Pitta	<i>Pitta erythrogaster</i>

Yellow-breasted Boatbill	<i>Machaerirhynchus flaviventer</i>
Stout-billed Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina caeruleogrisea</i>
Yellow-eyed Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina lineata</i>
Boyer's Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina boyeri</i>
Black-shouldered Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina morio</i>
Black-browed Triller	<i>Lalage atrovirens</i>
Northern Fantail	<i>Rhipidura rufiventris</i>
Chestnut-bellied Fantail	<i>Rhipidura hyperythra</i>
Sooty Thicket-Fantail	<i>Rhipidura threnothorax</i>
Rufous Monarch	<i>Monarcha rubiensis</i>
Black-faced Monarch	<i>Monarcha melanopsis</i>
Black-winged Monarch	<i>Monarcha frater</i>
Spot-winged Monarch	<i>Monarcha guttulus</i>
Ochre Collared Monarch	<i>Arses insularis</i>
Torrent Flycatcher	<i>Monachella muelleriana</i>
Yellow-legged Flycatcher	<i>Microcea griseiceps</i>
Banded Yellow Robin	<i>Poecilodryas placens</i>
White-rumped Robin	<i>Peneothello bimaculata</i>
Olive Flycatcher	<i>Monachella flavirescens</i>

Grey Whistler	<i>Pachycephala (simplex) griseiceps</i>
Little Shrike-thrush	<i>Colluricincla megarrhyncha</i>
Rusty Pitohui	<i>Pitohui ferrugens</i>
Hooded Pitohui	<i>Pitohui dichrous</i>
Brown-capped Jewel-babbler	<i>Ptilorrhoa geislororum</i>
Rusty Mouse-Warbler	<i>Crateroscelis murina</i>
Fairy Gerygone	<i>Gerygone palpebrosa</i>
Green-backed Gerygone	<i>Gerygone chloronota</i>
Yellow-bellied Gerygone	<i>Gerygone chrysogaster</i>
Black Sunbird	<i>Leptocoma sericea</i>
Obscure Berrypecker	<i>Melanocharis arfakiana</i>
Black Berrypecker	<i>Melanocharis nigra</i>
Slaty-chinned Longbill	<i>Toxorhamphus poliopterus</i>
Yellow-bellied Longbill	<i>Toxorhamphus novaeguineae</i>
Dwarf Longbill	<i>Toxorhamphus iliolophus</i>
Pygmy Longbill	<i>Toxorhamphus pygmaeum</i>
Papuan Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum pectorale</i>
Black-fronted White-eye	<i>Zosterops minor</i>

Long-billed Honeyeater	Melilestes megarhynchus
Red-throated Myzomela	Myzomela eques
Dusky Myzomela	Myzomela obscura
Black Myzomela	Myzomela nigrita
Red Myzomela	Myzomela cruentata
Green-backed Honeyeater	Glycichaera fallax
Mountain Meliphaga	Meliphaga orientalis
Mimic Meliphaga	Meliphaga analoga
Forest White-eared Meliphaga	Meliphaga montana
Yellow-gaped Meliphaga	Meliphaga flavirictus
Spotted Honeyeater	Xanthotis polygramma
Plain Honeyeater	Pycnopygius ixoides
Marbled Honeyeater	Pycnopygius cinereus
Helmeted Friarbird	Philemon buceroides
Meyer's Friarbird	Philemon meyeri
Tawny-breasted Honeyeater	Xanthotis fulvigula
Mountain Drongo	Chaetorhynchus papuensis
Spangled Drongo	Dicrurus bracteatus
Crinkle-collared Manucode	Manucodia chalybatus
Magnificent Bird-of-Paradise	Cicinnurus magnificus

Lesser Bird-of-Paradise	Paradisaea minor
White-eared Catbird	Ailuroedus buccoides
Fire-maned Bowerbird	Sericulus bakeri
Gray Crow	Corvus tristis
Yellow-faced Myna	Mino dumontii
Blue-faced Parrot-Finch	Erythrura trichroa

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BIRDS OF THE LAUGHLAN ISLANDS

By Dion Hobcroft and K. David Bishop

On the 12 November 2007 whilst co-leading a southwest Pacific cruise for Victor Emanuel Nature Tours on board the *Oceanic Discoverer* we were fortunate to make a brief visit to the remote Laughlan Islands about 40 nautical miles east of Woodlark Island. Sometimes referred to as the Budi Budi Islands they consist of

five islands: Lilius, Budaduna, Bugulum, Wabulak and Wasima. The highest above sea-level is Budaduna at 18 metres above sea level (asl). The lowest is Wabulak at 4 metres asl. They are typical of many small coral atolls with vegetation dominated by Coconut palms *Nucia* and Casuarina *Allocasuarina littoralis*.

We began recording bird sightings at 0630 (9.28.5 S and 153.19.6 E) as we approached the Laughlan Islands from the west. We anchored off Budaduna (9.16.67 S and 153.40.25 E). Conditions were far from ideal as we were catching the tail end of Cyclone Guba with associated torrential rain and strong winds making birding very difficult. Barometric pressure was recorded at 1005 millibars.

We made two landings one at Budaduna in the morning between 0800 and 1000 that was largely washed out and one at Bugulum Island in the afternoon between 1300-1400 hours in slightly less torrential rain. We left in the late afternoon on a course for Ghizo in the Solomon Islands. Dion Hobcroft continued observing seabirds until 1830 where our position was 9.11.2 S and 154.21.7 E

There appear to be few if any published observations of birds from this outer edge of Papua New Guinea waters and we therefore document here our preliminary observations from these interesting small coral atolls. The following species were recorded during our visit and adjacent waters.

Pacific Imperial-Pigeon *Ducula pacifica*: Three seen well at Bugulum Island.

Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Ardenna pacifica*: A total of eight individuals noted, six as we approached and two as we left.

Tahiti Petrel *Pseudobulweria rostrata*: Two seen in the late afternoon over the ocean.

Collared Petrel *Pterodroma brevipes*: One dark morph bird was seen well by Dion Hobcroft at 1815 hours (9.12.23 S and

154.04.5 E). The bird was in flight and viewed at a range of 50-100 metres for nearly 60 secs. The dark grey underparts typical of a dark morph individual of this species; the largely white underwing with the striking broad black leading edge arcing into the underwing coverts were noted. This may be the first published occurrence of this species in Papua New Guinea waters. The first author has had considerable experience with this species in the Solomon Islands, Fiji, Vanuatu and New Caledonia and also extensive field experience with the closely related Gould's Petrel *Pterodroma leucoptera* in the Tasman Sea off Australia. This species is often lumped with Gould's Petrel but plumage differences and different seasonal reproductive biology may best warrant it kept as a full species until the different populations can be thoroughly assessed genetically.

Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel*: One adult male seen as we approached and twenty soaring over Bugulum Island.

Great Frigatebird *Fregata minor*: Ten soaring over Bugulum Island.

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster*: Two seen distantly as we approached and eight seen in the afternoon as we departed.

Eastern Reef Egret *Egretta sacra*: One dark morph seen on Budaduna Island by our colleague Peter Roberts.

White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*: One adult seen as we approached Laughlan Islands from the inshore lagoon and two others were seen at Bugulum Island.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*: Two seen on Budaduna Island.

Grey-tailed Tattler *Tringa brevipes*: One seen and heard by David Bishop on Bugulum Island.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*: Two seen on

Bugulum Island

Pomarine Jaeger *Stercorarius pomarinus*: Two birds, a light morph and dark morph were seen over the ocean at 9.16 S 153.53 E.

Common Noddy *Anous stolidus*: Twenty were recorded as we approached the Laughlan Islands.

White Tern *Gygis alba*: At least eight seen flying around Lilius Island from the anchored ship. Behaviour indicated birds were possibly breeding but we were unable to confirm this. Two more were sighted over the ocean at 9.12.23 S and 154.04 5 E.

Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus*: Ten recorded in the afternoon as we departed.

Sooty Tern *Onychoprion fuscata*: A total of seven noted as we approached the Laughlan Islands and ninety as we departed.

Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana*: One at Bugulum Island.

Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii*: Three seen in the lagoon area as we approached and two at Bugulum Island.

Rainbow Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus*: Six seen in total at Bugulum and Budaduna Islands.

Beach Kingfisher *Todiramphus saurophaga*: One seen on Bugulum Island

Island Monarch *Monarcha cinerascens*: Two birds seen well on Bugulum Island.

Singing Starling *Aplonis cantoroides*: Six seen on Budaduna Island around the village; several juvenile birds were present. Two more were seen at Bugulum Island.

References:

Christidis, L. and Boles W.E (2008) *Systematics and Taxonomy of Australian Birds* CSIRO Publishing Victoria, Australia

Coates, B.J. (1990) *The Birds of Papua New Guinea Volume 2*
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Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* at Port Moresby Airport with notes on House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* being established in Mount Hagen.

By Dion Hobcroft

On 11 July 2010 whilst boarding a plane at Jackson's Airport, Port Moresby my travel companion Paul Davis pointed out a sparrow. Expecting it to be House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* that appears to be well established at this site I was surprised to find it was a Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*. It was immediately recognised by the chestnut crown and black circular patch on the ear coverts. The record was placed on the Birdline PNG service operated by Eremaea birds. This species is very familiar to me from more than three decades birding in Asia-Pacific region.

Returning to PNG in August and visiting the Jackson's Airport for various domestic flights allowed me to follow up on this sighting. Two Eurasian Tree Sparrows were seen on both 9 August with companion Jon Irvine and possibly the same two were seen on 13 August in company with David Bishop. Dr. Bruce Beehler also observed a Eurasian Tree Sparrow at the nearby Airways Hotel. It would appear that the species is unfortunately close to becoming if not already established at Jackson's Airport area near Port Moresby.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* appears to currently be well established at both Jackson's Airport, Port Moresby and Mount Hagen Airport. I have observed small numbers of this species

(5-10) at Port Moresby since 2001 and Mount Hagen since 2005. My last observation of House Sparrows at Mount Hagen was on 29 August 2010.

Editorial note: The spread of Eurasian Tree Sparrow continues since the first records from Kimbe in April 2007 and Port Moresby in 2009 (Gregory 2009). House Sparrow has been well-established since the early 1990's in Port Moresby, with odd records from Nadzab, Mendi and Mt. Hagen, now well-established in the latter site.

References

Coates, Brian J. 1990 *The Birds of Papua New Guinea including the Bismarck Archipelago and Bougainville* Volume II Dove Publications Brisbane

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2 September 2010

A Taxonomic Overview of Changes to the Avifauna of New Guinea

by Phil Gregory

None of the major New Guinea ornithological references have been revised since they were published, and as a consequence the taxonomy is now somewhat out of date. The excellent standard field guide, Beehler et al *The Birds of New Guinea* was published in 1986, Brian Coates classic *The Birds of Papua New Guinea Vol. 1 & 2* was published in 1985 and 1991 respectively, with Coates and Peckover *Birds of New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago: A Photographic Guide* in 2001. The following species limits have been revised since these books were published, and a number of others are pending.

The standard Australian Check list *The Taxonomy and Species of Birds of Australia and its Territories* (RAOU 2008) by Christidis and Boles makes some significant alterations. My own *Checklist of the Birds of New Guinea and Associated Islands* (v. 3.1.3 2011) breaks down the avifauna as shown below:

Some Statistics of Bird Diversity from New Guinea:

Three families are currently recognized as endemic-
Melanocharitidae- Berrypeckers and Longbills
Paramythiidae- Tit-Berrypecker and Crested
Berrypecker

Cnemophilidae- Satinbirds, formerly somewhat anomalous members of the Birds of Paradise.

Four species are treated as Incertae Sedis at present and may represent distinct families- Melampittas (*Melampitta lugubris* and *M. giganteus*), Wattled Ploughbill (*Eulacestoma nigripectus*) and Blue-capped Ifrita (*Ifrita kowaldi*)

Total Bird Species in New Guinea : 886

Total species from mainland and nearby islands, excluding Bismarcks, Admiralties & Bougainville: 763

Total endemics in Checklist 432

Endemics of PNG 31

Endemics of West Papua 44

Endemics of mainland New Guinea 369

Endemics of Bismarck Archipelago 46- (16 New Britain, 8 New Ireland)

Endemics of Manus: 8

Endemics of Mussau: 3

Endemics of Bougainville: 6

The status as per the main world checklists latest editions is given: Clements 6th edition (2006), Dickinson et al The Howard and Moore *Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World* (2003) and the International Ornithological Congress (IOC) on-line checklist updates from 2011.

C & B = Christidis and Boles, H & M = Dickinson

Dwarf Cassowary *Casuarius bennetti*

The sometimes recognized taxon *westermanni* from the Vogelkop may be morphologically distinct with a white occipital region, and might be sympatric with the nominate, further research is required.

New Guinea Scrubfowl & Biak Scrubfowl

Megapodius decollatus and *M. geelvinkianus*

Beehler lumps this form in Dusky Scrubfowl *M. freycinet*, using Common Scrubfowl for the specific name. The group is now split into 5 species: Dusky Scrubfowl (*M. freycinet*) of West Papuan islands, New Guinea Scrubfowl *M. decollatus* (synonym *affinis*) of northern NG, Biak Scrubfowl *M. geelvinkianus* from Biak, Orange-footed Scrubfowl *M. reinwardt* of Australia and southern New Guinea, and Melanesian Scrubfowl *M. eremita* of the Bismarcks.

Australian White Ibis *Threskiornis molucca*

Listed by Beehler in Sacred Ibis *T. aethiopicus*, but long since split.

Australian Darter *Anhinga novaehollandiae*

Beehler lumps this form in the enlarged species group Darter *A. melanogaster*. Most authorities now recognize 4 species.

Papuan Harrier (Eastern Marsh Harrier / Spotted Marsh Harrier) *Circus (spilonotus) spilothorax*

This taxon has a complex history and has been regarded as part of Eastern Marsh Harrier (*C. spilonthorax*), though

C & B place it as a part of Swamp Harrier *C. approximans*, which seems odd. The authoritative *Harriers of the World* title by Simmons splits it, as do Ferguson Lees and Christie (2005) and the IOC. Treatment as an endemic island allospecies seems warranted.

Grey Goshawk: *Accipiter novaehollandiae*

At last split as Variable Goshawk *A. hiogaster*, the birds being quite unlike the Australian endemic Grey Goshawk except that this species also has a white phase, the original reason for lumping it! It is quite likely that there are more than one species in this *hiogaster* complex, with Bismarck and Solomons birds being quite distinct:

Ten local races: mainland *A. h. leucosomus*; *misiorensis* (Biak) small, brown-grey above with paler head, finely barred tail, greyish throat, plain rufous underparts; *pallidimas* (D'Entrecasteaux Archipelago) mid-size, grey-above, rufous neck collar, plain tail, rufous barring on flanks and belly; *misulae* (Louisiades) mid size, slate-grey above, traces of rufous collar, plain tail, plain rufous chest, barred belly and wing linings; *dampieri* (New Britain) small, grey above, variable intensity rufous beneath, barred on flanks, belly and wing-linings, plain tail; *lavongai* (New Hanover and probably New Ireland) mid-size, slaty-grey above, plain tail, greyish on throat, rufous underparts; *manusi* (Admiralty Is) and *matthiae* (St. Matthias) like *lavongai* but small and paler; *lihirensis* (Lihir and Tanga) large, dark grey above, sometimes traces of collar, plain tail, dark rufous

below with some barring on flanks, belly and wing-linings; *bougainvillei* (Bougainville & Buka) small, slaty-grey above, grey throat, rich rufous below.

These dark rufous-breasted forms from the Solomons could be specifically distinct as *Accipiter pulchellus*, and Bismarck Archipelago birds could well be another. Extralimitally eight other races in Sundas and Moluccas, Indonesia with *griseogularis* often split. With acknowledgement to Ferguson-Lees and Christie (2005)

Pygmy Eagle *Hieraaetus (Aquila) weiskei*

(Little Eagle, New Guinea Hawk-Eagle, Papuan Little Eagle)

Previously lumped with Little Eagle (*Hieraaetus (Aquila) morphnoides*) of Australia, but has striking morphological differences, and genetic work confirms status as a biological species (Gjershaug et al 2009).

Mayr's Forest Rail *Rallina mayri*

Split by all authorities, but very little known and possibly conspecific with Forbes's Forest Rail (*R. forbesi*), with voice reported to be similar.

Pale-vented (Common) Bush-hen *Amaurornis (olivaceus) moluccana*

Both Beehler and Coates list this species as Plain Bush-hen *A. olivaceus* (now *olivacea*) of the Philippines. The Australian authorities Christidis and Boles now list it as Pale-vented Bush-hen *A. moluccana*, as do the IOC and Clements, who calls it Rufous-tailed Bush-hen.

Purple Swampphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*

The local taxa *samoensis*, *melanopterus* and *melanotus* can be separated as Pacific Swampphen *P. melanotus*, with the complex proposed as being split into 6 species (Sangster et al 1999). Pending taxonomic review all the main checklists have adopted the status quo, as species limits need to be defined. Gregory has been proactive and split it from the complex as Pacific Swampphen.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

Somewhat isolated Australasian taxa *lugubris* and *australis* require genetic work to define relationships with Palearctic taxa. Rasmussen and Anderton (2005) suggest morphological and vocal differences may justify a split, but all authorities currently keep them lumped.

White-headed Stilt *Himantopus leucocephalus*

Beehler lumps this species in Black-winged Stilt *H. himantopus*, as do Coates and Christidis and Boles, but both Clements and the IOC regard the group as comprising 4 allospecies.

Masked Lapwing *Vanellus miles*

Two races, nominate *miles* breeding and hybrids with southern Australian race *novaehollandiae* recorded. These two races have a narrow hybrid overlap zone in central Queensland, but maintain very distinct identity either side, could be better treated as two recently diverged allospecies similar to Carrion (*Corvus corone*) and Hooded Crows (*C. cornix*) in the UK.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*

Listed in Beehler and Coates as Lesser Golden Plover *P. dominica*, the old name for what are now regarded as the species pair American *P. dominica* and Pacific Golden Plover (*P. fulva*). The former has been reported as a vagrant in PNG but is unconfirmed, the latter is a common migrant.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

The species requires genetic evaluation, the former endemic race *papuanus* was subsumed into nominate *dubius* of Philippines, but is highly distinct from *curonicus* and perhaps also this nominate form, which is still remarkably poorly known. It is resident, has a pink base to lower mandible, broad yellow eye-ring, lacks a very distinct non-breeding dress, and has considerably smaller size and distinct call notes. with emphatic single “keeee!” notes, sometimes repeated two or three times, also a harsh “chi chit” both quite different to Palearctic *curonicus* which has plaintive, disyllabic “pee-oo”

Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus*

(Mongolian Sand Plover, Mongolian Plover)

Nominate race is a common eastern Palearctic migrant throughout mainland and all satellite islands. This is increasingly being mooted as a split from *atrifrons*, the Lesser Sandplover of central Asia.

New Guinea Woodcock *Scolopax rosenbergii*

Formerly considered as Rufous Woodcock, conspecific

with Javan Woodcock (*S. saturata*) of Java and Sumatra, but now split by all the main checklists.

Slender-billed Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia amboinensis*
Beehler and Coates list this species as Brown Cuckoo-Dove *M. phasianella*, which is the Australian species as given in Christidis and Boles. Sometimes lumped with Brown Cuckoo Dove (*M. phasianella*) of eastern Australia but vocally and morphologically quite distinct, there seems no good reason not to treat this as an allospecies.

Common Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica*
Pacific Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps longirostris*
Beehler and Coates list these as Emerald Dove (*C. indica*), but IOC and various others now split *longirostris* of the mainland and Bismarcks from the grey-crowned *indica* group of India and se Asia to Indonesia, Borneo, Philippines and small islands of West Papua.

Southern Crowned Pigeon *Goura scheepmakeri*
(Scheepmaker's Crowned Pigeon, Goura Pigeon)
The three species of Goura are allospecies which replace each other geographically. The two distinctive subspecies of Southern Crowned Pigeon could perhaps be classed as allospecies, but requires research in possible overlap zone.
G. s. sclaterii extends from Mimika R. east to Fly R. area. Nominate *G. s. scheepmakeri* extends from Orangerie Bay west to at least Hall Sound and probably

as far as Fly R drainage, but is largely gone from much of eastern portions of this range.

White-bibbed Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus rivoli*

(White-breasted Fruit Dove)

Divides into two groups, yellow-breasted mainland form *bellus* and white-breasted island taxa, requires genetic work to check affiliations and to see if allospecies are involved.

Yellow-bibbed Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus solomonensis*

(Yellow-breasted Fruit Dove)

P. (s.) speciosus Geelvink Bay Islands is geographically disjunct and with distinct plumage and maybe vocalizations, coming from a important endemic bird area also this could well be a distinct species, requires genetic and field work.

Spice Imperial Pigeon *Ducula myristicivora*

Two well-defined races that may well represent different species. Nominate race from West Papuan Islands of Batanta, Misool, Salawati, Schildpad, Sinapang and Waigeo, with old extralimital record from Widi off Se Halmahera, also wandering birds near Sorong. Race *geelvinkiana* occurs Biak, Numfor and Meos Num in Geelvink Bay, with a vagrant from Arfak foothills near Manokwari (Gibbs 2001).

(Foya) Imperial Pigeon *Ducula* sp. nov.

An as yet undescribed and officially unnamed species of *Ducula* is known from the Foya Mts of West Papua, with

photographs appearing in several popular articles. The quite distinctive bird has a pale greyish chest and rich chestnut underparts including the undertail coverts

Pied Imperial Pigeon *Ducula bicolor*

Torresian Imperial Pigeon *Ducula spilorrhoa*

Yellowish Imperial Pigeon *Ducula subflavescens*

(Yellow-tinted Imperial Pigeon)

Beehler and Coates list *spilorrhoa* in Pied Imperial Pigeon *D. bicolor*, as do Christidis and Boles. IOC separate as 3 allospecies, with Yellowish Imperial Pigeon (*D. subflavescens*) of Bismarcks and Manus.

Bismarck Hanging Parrot *Loriculus tener*

(Green-fronted Hanging Parrot)

Sometimes lumped with Papuan Hanging Parrot (*L. aurantiifrons*) but plumage quite distinct and seems as distinct as any other of the *Loriculus* species..

Coconut (Rainbow) Lorikeet *Trichoglossus*

haematodus

Complex taxonomy, the Rainbow Lorikeet group of Beehler and Coates recently split up into component allospecies, occurs throughout mainland and offshore islands, except some small and isolated islands, but avoids high montane areas. Birds that can be grouped within Coconut Lorikeet are as follows:

T. h. haematodus West Papuan Islands east through Vogelkop to Geelvink Bay, and east to around 141°E.

T. h. intermedius (= *haematodus*) from Sepik Basin to Astrolabe Bay and south to Purari R. and Karimui, also

on Manam, meant to have less blue on head.

T. h. nigrogularis Aru Is. from *haematodus* by blackish belly patch, narrower barring on more orange breast, lighter blue head streaking.

T. h. micropteryx E. mainland west to Huon Peninsula and Lake Kutubu, and to around Hall Sound in south, also on Misima. Smaller and paler than *haematodus* with more orange breast and narrower barring.

T. h. caeruleiceps S. mainland from lower Fly R. to around Hall Sound, breast with narrow barring and head entirely streaked blue.

T. h. nesophilus, endemic to Ninigo Is and possibly Hermit Is, has some red on nape.

T. h. flavicans, endemic to Admiralties and Lavongai, and possibly this subspecies on St Matthias group, Nuguria and Hermit Is, has green or bronze-yellow upperparts, some red on vent, thighs, nape and hind-crown and grey-green streaks on head.

T. h. massena, endemic to the rest of the Bismarcks, including Karkar, also to Solomons and Vanuatu. Differs in having a smaller red breast patch.

Rainbow Lorikeet *Trichoglossus moluccanus*

Uncertain in NG following taxonomic revision, but birds resembling nominate of eastern Australia have been seen at Bensbach in Trans-Fly, and occasional occurrence within range of Coconut Lorikeet *caeruleiceps* taxon not surprising.

Biak Lorikeet *Trichoglossus rosenbergii* (Shawl-collared Lorikeet)

An island allospecies split off from the Rainbow Lorikeet complex.

Painted Tiger Parrot *Psittacella picta*

Three races, of which western *lorentzii* may be an incipient species, seems as distinct from others as Modest and Madarasz's Tiger Parrot are from each other. Nominate *P. p. picta* SE PNG in Wharton and Owen Stanley Ra. *P. p. excelsa* Central mountain ranges inc. Star, Hindenburg, Victor Emanuel and east through highland provinces. Crown more olive-brown than nominate *P. p. lorentzi* Snow Mts. A distinctive taxon that may be an incipient species, not well known. Crown olive-brown, male has yellow mark bordered black in front on sides of neck, both sexes with bluey-green cheeks and ear coverts, and rump barred black and yellow, not red.

Oriental Cuckoo *Cuculus optatus*

Himalayan Cuckoo *C. saturatus (horsfieldi)*

The form *optatus* is now usually split on the basis of song, but there seem to be no morphological differences that would be of use in the field. Both have occurred in Australia, with Oriental seemingly the more usual. New Guinea birds are likely to be the same but specimens of *saturatus* would be useful to confirm its presence.

Malay Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx minutillus*

This complex includes both Gould's (*russatus*) and Little Bronze-Cuckoos, which are have often been split in Australia but are now lumped by C & B and the major

checklists. The calls and songs are identical and the situation in New Guinea makes identifying the two highly problematic, so best lumped pending further study.

Eastern (Australian) Koel *Eudynamys cyanocephala*

A migrant species from Australia, which may be resident in southern New Guinea. Beehler and Coates list this as Common Koel *E. scolopacea*, as do Christidis and Boles. The Dickinson H & M list ducks the issue by lumping everything as Common Koel, including the obviously distinct Black-billed Koel *melanorhynchus* taxon in Sulawesi, which sounds nothing like any of the others.

Asian Koel *E. scolopacea*

See above. Listed as Common Koel along with the Australian *cyanocephala* by Beehler, Coates and Christidis and Boles. It is now split by Clements and the IOC as Asian Koel, of Asia and northern NG, based on very different female plumages

Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cacomantis flabelliformis*

(formerly *C. pyrrhophanus*)

Two races, *C. f. excitus* may be a distinct endemic montane isolate resident species, requires DNA work to substantiate. *C. f. flabelliformis* of E and S. Australia, with greyer upperparts and more buffy-rufous underparts, rarely occurs as a non-breeding migrant, known from Aru Is. and scattered lowland localities, also some mid-mountain sightings in PNG Highlands. Elsewhere, other subspecies (or species) breed in New Caledonia, Vanuatu and Fiji. This complex needs genetic

work to unravel relationships, as some calls and plumages are quite distinct amongst the group, it may well comprise several distinct species.

Sooty Owl *Tyto tenebricosa*
(Greater Sooty Owl)

Tyto (t.) arfaki throughout NG range, may be distinct species as very disjunct from Australian birds with some morphological differences, requires further study. The situation parallels that of Logrunner (*Orthonyx temminckii*) which was formerly another complex with isolated Australian and Papuan populations.

Manus Masked Owl *Tyto manusi*

This very rare and almost unknown species, perhaps the least-known NG bird, has in the past been lumped with Australian Masked Owl (*T. novaehollandiae*), which has obscured status and makes no sense given highly disjunct range.

Eastern Barn Owl *Tyto javanica*

(Common Barn-Owl (*Tyto alba*); Pacific Barn Owl, Australian Barn Owl *Tyto delicatula*)

Listed as Barn Owl (*T. alba*) in the field guides. The Barn Owl complex is almost world-wide and has recently begun to be unraveled from years of over-lumping, which has obscured status and identification. König & Weick (2008) recognize 11 of these taxa as specifically distinct, and research continues.

Biak Scops Owl *Otus beccarii*.

Has been lumped with the wide-ranging Moluccan Scops Owl (*Otus magicus*), with which it is listed in Beehler and Coates. It has a highly disjunct range from an island with many other allopatric endemic taxa, and is

morphologically distinctive. This distinctive isolated island form is best treated as a separate endemic species

Southern Boobook *Ninox boobook*

Sometimes lumped with Morepork (*N. novaeseelandiae*) of New Zealand, which is much darker and vocally completely distinct. The whole complex is currently under taxonomic review.

Solomons Boobook *Ninox jacquinotii*

The local race is *N. j. eichorni*. TN The *jacquinotii* group is now split into two additional species, East Solomons Boobook (*N. roseoaxillaris*) and Guadalcanal Boobook (*N. grantii*) (Dutson in press, König & Weick 2008)

Solomons Frogmouth *Rigidipenna inexpectata*

Previously considered a subspecies of Marbled Frogmouth *Podargus ocellatus inexpectatus*, as in all the field guides. but morphologically and vocally quite distinct.

White-throated Nightjar *Eurostopodus mysticalis*

White-throated Nightjar complex now split into 3 species with highly distinctive New Caledonian *exsul* and Solomons *nigripennis* elevated to species rank.

Solomons Nightjar *Eurostopodus nigripennis*

Formerly lumped with White-throated Nightjar but clearly highly distinct in plumage, vocals and habitat. Monotypic.

Starry Owlet-nightjar *Aegotheles tatei*

(Spangled Owlet Nightjar, formerly lumped with Feline Owlet-nightjar)

Formerly lumped with Feline Owlet-nightjar but morphologically and vocally distinct, with lowland not montane habitat.

Archbold's Owlet-nightjar *Aegotheles archboldi*

Probably best subsumed within Mountain Owlet-nightjar as that species is polymorphic and highly variable, and odd checkerboard distribution encompassed within range of that species does not make zoogeographic sense.

Mountain Owlet-nightjar may lack well-defined whitish hindneck collar can be less boldly spotted above, but much variation and does not seem safely separable.

Vogelkop Owlet-nightjar *Aegotheles affinis* E

(Salvadori's Owlet-nightjar, a poor name as *salvadorii* refers to a taxon of Mountain Owlet Nightjar; Barred Owlet-nightjar (*A. bennettii affinis*) if lumped). Formerly lumped with Barred Owlet-nightjar as race *affinis*, but seems morphologically fairly distinct and occupies different habitat.

Bare-legged Swiftlet *Aerodramus nuditarsus*

Formerly lumped with rare extralimital Whitehead's Swiftlet (*A. whiteheadi*) of Philippines

Mayr's Swiftlet *Aerodramus orientalis*

(*Collocalia orientalis*)

Endemic to New Ireland, Bougainville (and Guadalcanal) but may also occur on other islands.

A. o. leletensis, endemic to Lelet plateau on New

Ireland, has very dark upperparts glossed blue and an indistinct grey rump band.

An undescribed subspecies on Bougainville has browner upperparts with an only obscurely paler rump band, and darker underparts.

Moustached Kingfisher *Actenoides bougainvillei*

Two races, nominate on Bougainville, *A. b.excelsum* on Guadalcanal has green backed female, male unknown. May be a separate species. Very poorly known. Some recent reports from hill forest on Bougainville, but cryptic, probably mainly crepuscular and at very least uncommon, perhaps rare.

Kofiau Paradise Kingfisher *Tanysiptera elliotii*

Sometimes treated as conspecific with Common Paradise Kingfisher, but treatment as island allospecies seems appropriate.

Biak Paradise-Kingfisher *Tanysiptera riedelii*

Sometimes treated as conspecific with Common Paradise Kingfisher, but treatment as island allospecies seems appropriate on the grounds of distinct plumage. An island allospecies.

Black-headed Paradise Kingfisher *Tanysiptera nigriceps*

Sometimes lumped with Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfisher, but allopatric range with many other regional endemics, distinctive plumage and call indicate better treated as specifically distinct.

Blue-black Kingfisher *Todiramphus nigrocyaneus*
(Black-sided Kingfisher)

3 morphologically distinct races may conceivably represent 2 or 3 allospecies, more study required. Nominate race occurs from Batanta and Salawati to Geelvink Bay in N and Princess Marianne Strait in S. Distinctive northern race *T. n. quadricolor* occurs from Yapen Is east to Madang and Astrolabe Bay; male has *narrow transverse white band on lower breast, belly chestnut, back purplish-blue*. Female similar to male but with white belly. Distinctive southern race *T. n. stictolaema* occurs from Fly R. to Central Province, seems rare and seldom recorded. Male upperparts as *quadricolor*, but *throat blue with some white, breast blue, belly blue and may have white centre, sides of neck, flanks and lower belly black*, female similar but with *throat and belly white and broad blue breast band*.

Collared Kingfisher *Todiramphus chloris*
(Mangrove Kingfisher)

Variety of races on the islands, some of which may merit specific rank with quite different habitats, plumage and voice. Possible sympatry of taxa on New Ireland needs investigation.

Variable Dwarf Kingfisher *Ceyx lepidus*
(Variable Kingfisher, Dwarf Kingfisher)

May be several species in the complex, requires modern-day assessment, 5 races in NG with dark-billed *solitarius* on mainland, red or red and black billed birds in Bismarcks /Admiralties and Bougainville.

Black-faced (Masked) Bowerbird *Sericulus aureus*

The black faced montane Flame Bowerbird of NW NG was long lumped with the southern lowland forest species *S. ardens*, on the basis of a supposed intergrade! Plumage and habitat are quite different and it is clearly distinct, now generally split as the Black-faced or Masked Bowerbird.

Graceful Honeyeater *Meliphaga gracilirostris*

Elegant Honeyeater *M. cinereifrons*

The distinctive SE PNG taxon of what was Graceful Honeyeater is now split as Elegant Honeyeater on the basis of genetic distinction from that species and somewhat different morphology.

New Guinea Friarbird *Philemon novaeguineae*

Beehler, Coates and Christidis and Boles all lump this form in Helmeted Friarbird *P. buceroides*. Gregory regards it as quite distinct based on calls and morphology, whilst the IOC split it (and also separate out *yorki* in Far North Queensland as Hornbill Friarbird).

Dusky Myzomela *Myzomela obscura rubrobrunnea*

This Biak taxon was originally described by Mayr as an endemic species, and K. D. Bishop (pers comm) recognizes it as such, another Biak endemic.

Biak Gerygone *Gerygone xanthocollis*

Split by BirdLife then lumped back in Large-billed Gerygone, despite no other taxa of that species showing

yellow below, and with vocal data uncertain. Gerygones with yellow underparts have recently caused confusion here, prompting thoughts of Fairy Gerygone apparently! I thought it quite distinct and decidedly sparse. Clements and the IOC split it.

Papuan Log-runner *Orthonyx novaeguineae*

The New Guinea form has a highly disjunct range from Australian birds, as do several other species, but it is also notably smaller and has very distinctive songs and calls, quite unlike those of the Australian form. It is now split (Schodde 2002) as a new species, Papuan Log-runner *O. novaeguineae*. It is possible the western nominate birds represent another species.

Loria's Satinbird (Cnemophilus) *Cnemophilus loriae*

Crested Satinbird *Cnemophilus macgregorii*

Yellow-breasted Satinbird *Loboparadisaea sericea*

Dickinson in H & M (2003) separated this lineage from the Birds of Paradise and put into a new and separate family, the Satinbirds, resolving many contradictions with the former grouping. These become another endemic New Guinea family.

Dwarf Longbill *Oedistoma iliolophus*

Pygmy Longbill *O. pygmaeum*

Yellow-bellied Longbill *Toxorhamphus novaeguineae*

Slaty-chinned Longbill *T. poliopterus*

Formerly treated as honeyeaters, but now placed by Dickinson in H & M (2003) with the berrypeckers in the new endemic NG family *Melanocharitidae*.

Tit-Berrypecker *Oreocharis arfaki*

Crested Berrypecker *Paramythia montium*

These two species are split in Clements and the IOC into an endemic NG family, the *Paramythiidae*. Dickinson in H & M subsumes them back into *Melanocharitidae* berrypeckers and longbills, making that a strangely diverse group.

Black-shouldered Cuckooshrike (Black-shouldered Cicadabird) *Coracina morio*

Beehler lists this as part of Sulawesi Cicadabird *C. morio*, using the name Black-shouldered Cuckoo-shrike. Coates splits it off as *C. incerta*, Sharpe's Cicadabird, noting that it is usually treated with *C. morio*.

Cicadabird *Coracina tenuirostris*

Cicadabird taxonomy is complex and badly in need of unravelling, there is a New Guinea resident form of *C. tenuirostris* that calls like southern Australian birds, with the intervening Far North Queensland birds currently called *melvillensis* having entirely different songs, maybe paralleling the situation with Logrunners and Sooty Owls where northern and southern forms are separated by a distinct group, specifically distinct as in Chowchilla and arguably so with Lesser Sooty Owl.

Mussau Triller *Lalage conjunctiva*

Formerly lumped with Varied Triller (*L. leucomela*) in the field guides, Coates (1991) listed it as distinct and subsequent fieldwork by Gregory (1997) came out in support of this, as the species is more like Black-browed

Triller (*L. atrovirens*) than Varied, with quite distinct song. The species is endemic to Mussau and remains very little known.

Jewel-babblers *Ptilorrhoa* spp.

Clements put them with Quail-thrushes in the family *Cinclosomatidae*, but H & M separated them out as a distinct family the *Eupetidae*, whilst later treatments recognize *Psophodidae*, the whipbirds, quail-thrushes and jewel-babblers, with *Eupetidae* consisting of the Malaysian Rail-babbler (*E. macrocercus*). Clements (2010) places Blue-capped Ifrita with this otherwise monotypic family but this has not been widely accepted and the IOC maintain *Eupetidae* as monotypic.

Blue Jewel-babbler *Ptilorrhoa caerulescens*

Brown-capped Jewel-babbler *P. geislerorum*

The NE New Guinea taxon of Blue Jewel-babbler is split by Coates as Brown-capped Jewel-babbler *P. geislerorum*. This is likely to be correct and is now widely accepted.

Papuan Sittella *Daphoenositta papuensis*

Schodde & Mason (1999) now split this from the Varied Sittella *D. chrysoptera* of Australia, based on distinct montane habitat and morphology. The calls also differ considerably.

Rufous Whistler *Pachycephala rufiventris*

White-bellied Whistler *P. leucogastra*

The distinct SE PNG taxon of what was “Rufous

Whistler” is now split by all the major checklists as White-bellied Whistler *P. leucogastra*. Plumage and calls are very distinct and the female is nothing like Rufous Whistler, the sole grounds for lumping may have been one call that vaguely resembles a contact note of that species! Black-headed Whistler (*P. monacha*) actually seems to be more similar.

Grey Whistler *Pachycephala simplex*

The form found in NG and NE Australia is sometimes split as Grey-headed Whistler *P. griseiceps*. The residual *P. simplex* of northern Australia is then called Brown Whistler.

Sooty Shrike-thrush *Colluricincla umbrina* (Sooty Whistler)

Formerly known as the Sooty Whistler *Pachycephala tenebrosa*, but now placed instead with the shrike-thrushes.

Papuan Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus (bracteatus) carbonarius*

Beehler and Coates include this in Hair-crested Drongo *D. hottentotus*, using the name Spangled Drongo. More research may well reveal further species as mainland *carbonarius* call differently to Australian migrants, whilst Bismarck birds are different again. Coates (2002) splits New Guinea birds as Papuan Drongo *D. carbonarius*, and Gregory (2011) favours this treatment.

Mangrove Fantail *Rhipidura phasiana*

Split by Beehler, Coates and Christidis and Boles, previously sometimes included in Grey Fantail *R. fuliginosa* of Australia.

Ochre-collared (Rufous-collared) Monarch *Arses insularis*

The northern NG form is usually now split as Ochre-collared Monarch *A. insularis*, as was indicated as likely in Beehler and subsequently accepted by Coates.

Frilled Monarch *Arses telescopthalmus*

The Cape York form of Frilled Monarch, which has the sexes the same, is also now often split as a separate species under the name *A. lorealis*, the Frill-necked Monarch, though curiously C & B still lump it. Frilled Monarch thus becomes a New Guinea endemic.

Lesser Melampitta *Melampitta lugubris*

DNA studies suggest a link with Birds of Paradise, but this has not been widely accepted as so many points of difference remain. It is quite likely a separate family and is listed it as being of uncertain affinity in all the major checklists except Clements.

Greater Melampitta *Melampitta gigantea*

As above, but some recent work suggests these two highly divergent melampitta are not closely related at all, having nothing in common bar colour and terrestrial habits! Retained as Incertae Sedis in the IOC Checklist.

Blue-capped Ifrita *Ifrita kowaldi*

A curious species of uncertain family placement, which is apparently another poisonous bird too. Clements places it in Eupetidae along with Rail-babbler, a course not followed by anyone else.

Growling (Eastern) Riflebird *Ptiloris (m.) intercedens*

Beehler includes this in Magnificent Riflebird *P. magnificus*, as does Coates and the recent volume by Frith and Beehler on the Paradisaeidae. Vocally they are very distinct, and the situation parallels the morphologically very similar wedgebills (*Psophodes* spp.) in Australia. More research in the areas where the taxa abut is much needed. The Cape York form *alberti* is also quite distinct and needs genetic work to place its affinities, curiously enough the call is more like western Magnificent Riflebird than the geographically far closer Growling Riflebird.

Ashy Robin *Poecilodryas albispecularis*

Clements splits this from the Grey-headed Robin *H. cinereifrons* of far north Queensland, but C & B and H & M lump it, overlooking the quite distinct song and habitat.

Australian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus australis*

Beehler includes this with Clamorous Reed Warbler *A. stentoreus*, Christidis and Boles separate it. The form *sumbae* may be specifically distinct, see Pearson et al (2010)

Island Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus poliocephala*
Beehler includes this in Mountain Leaf Warbler *P. trivirgatus*, using the name Island Leaf Warbler.

Papuan Grassbird *Megalurus papuensis*
Dickinson in H & M (2003) follow Schodde & Mason (1999) and split this highland form from the Tawny Grassbird *M. timoriensis* of Australia and the NG lowlands, on the basis of distinct habitat and morphology. It also has entirely different calls and lacks the high pitched reeling song of the lowland species.

Black-fronted White-eye *Zosterops minor*
Beehler and Coates lump *chrysolaemus* and *minor* in Black-fronted White-eye *Z. atrifrons* of Sulawesi, using the name Black-fronted White-eye for the enlarged species group. Calls and songs are quite distinct and it is clearly not the same species as that in Sulawesi.

Australasian Pipit *Anthus australis*
Beehler and Coates list this as Richard's Pipit *A. novaehollandiae*, as do Christidis and Boles, but it is usually split off from that superspecies group, now separated as *A. australis* amongst others. *A. novaeseelandiae* is a New Zealand endemic in Dickinson's (2003) Howard and Moore checklist, but the New Zealand Checklist (2010) strangely lumps it. The highland New Guinea *exiguus* taxon may well be yet another species!

Yellow-faced Myna *Mino dumontii*

The Bismarck-Solomons form is now split as Long-tailed Myna *M. kreffti*, as initially suggested by Coates.

Green Figbird *Sphecotheres vieilloti*

Beehler lumps this in the Timor or Green Figbird, as do Christidis & Boles and Coates.

Red-capped and Olive-crowned Flowerpecker

Dicaeum geelvinkianum and *D. pectorale*

Beehler and Coates list this in Olive-crowned Flowerpecker *D. pectorale*, using the name Papuan Flowerpecker for the enlarged species, now usually split into 3- the western endemic Olive-crowned *D. pectorale*, the Red-capped (*D. geelvinkianum*) and Louisiade (*D. nitidus*) Flowerpecker.

White-spotted Mannikin *Lonchura leucosticta*

Coates and H & M lump this with Streak-headed Mannikin *L. tristissima*. They are similar but maintain their identity with only a small overlap zone, so there seems little point in lumping them pending a modern review of the genetics of this closely-related and rapidly speciating group.

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HBW 13 (Honeyeaters) and HBW with Colluricincla