

## **Birds of the Muller Range, Western and Southern Highlands Provinces, Papua New Guinea**

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## Chapter 16

### Birds of the Muller Range, Western and Southern Highlands Provinces, Papua New Guinea

*Paul Igag*

#### SUMMARY

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A rapid biodiversity survey in the Muller Range, central-western Papua New Guinea, surveyed birds at three camps between 500 m and 2,900 m elevation over the period 5-25 September 2009. One hundred and thirty-three species were recorded. A total of 303 individual birds were mist-netted. Interesting distributional records for the Muller Range include Archbold's Robin (*Eurostopodus archboldi*), Green-backed Robin (*Pachycephalopsis hattamensis*), Crested Satinbird, Yellow-breasted Satinbird, and Ribbon-tailed Astrapia (*Astrapia mayeri*). Notable for not being recorded in the Muller Range is the Blue Bird of Paradise, which reaches its western range boundary somewhere between the Muller Range and Tari Valley. This substantial upland area will merit additional ornithological field study in order to search for species such as Papuan Whipbird (*Androphobus viridis*), Greater Ground-Robin (*Amalocichla sclateriana*), and Sooty Whistler (*Pachycephala tenebrosa*).

#### INTRODUCTION

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There are many unanswered questions about avian distribution cross the middle sections of the central ranges of New Guinea. In particular there are unresolved issues about western and eastern species ranges boundaries that appear to coincide with the great geographic discontinuity formed by the gorge of the Strickland River. The objective of this study was to assess the diversity of, and obtain distributional data for, birds from the Muller Range, which lies just on the Strickland River's eastern flank.

#### METHODS

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Birds were mist-netted and observed adventitiously on morning and afternoon transect walks through the habitat at three elevations: Gugusu (515 m), Sawetau (1,300-2,000 m) and Apalu Reke (2,875 m). Descriptions of these sites can be found in Takeuchi (Chapter 9, this volume). An attempt was made to document all species present at each camp environment.

#### RESULTS

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The survey results are summarized in Table 16.1, which lists species recorded by field camp. Details of particular observations and a full analysis of the results are precluded because of the tragic and untimely passing of the author. For those wishing to follow up on this important study, we recommend contacting field co-workers Vincent Kalkman, Ken Aplin or Stephen Richards (see Participants and authors for contact details).

**Table 16.1.** Birds documented at three sites in the Muller Range, Papua New Guinea.

Common Name	Species	Gugusu (515 m)	Sawetau (1,300-2,000 m)	Apalu Reke (2,875 m)
Dwarf Cassowary	<i>Casuarus bennetti</i>		X	X
Long-tailed Buzzard	<i>Hernicopernis longicauda</i>	X	X	
Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>	X		
Black-mantled Goshawk	<i>Accipiter melanochlamys</i>			X
Australian Kestrel	<i>Falco cenchroides</i>	X		
Black-billed Brush-turkey	<i>Talegalla fuscicrostris</i>	X		
Wattled Brush-turkey	<i>Aepyodius arfakianus</i>			X
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	<i>Macropygia ambionensis</i>	X	X	
Black-billed Cuckoo-Dove	<i>Macropygia nigristrois</i>			X
Great Cuckoo-Dove	<i>Reinwardtoena reinwardti</i>	X		
Cinnamon Ground-Dove	<i>Gallicolumba rufigula</i>	X		
Bronze Ground-Dove	<i>Gallicolumba beccarii</i>		X	
Pheasant Pigeon	<i>Otidiphaps nobilis</i>	X		
Southern Crowned Pigeon	<i>Goura scheepmakeri</i>	X		
Wompoo Fruit-Dove	<i>Ptilinopus magnificus</i>	X		
Ornate Fruit-Dove	<i>Ptilinopus ornatus</i>		X	
Beautiful Fruit-Dove	<i>Ptilinopus pulchellus</i>	X		
White-breasted Fruit-Dove	<i>Ptilinopus rivoli</i>		X	
Orange-bellied Fruit-Dove	<i>Ptilinopus iozonus</i>	X		
Purple-tailed Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula rufigaster</i>	X		
Zoe Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula zoeae</i>	X		
Papuan Mountain Pigeon	<i>Gymnophaps albertisi</i>	X	X	X
Dusky Lory	<i>Pseudeos fuscata</i>	X		
Rainbow Lorikeet	<i>Trichoglossus haematodus</i>	X		
Papuan Lorikeet	<i>Charmosyna papou</i>			X
Plum-faced Lorikeet	<i>Oreopsittacus arfaki</i>			X
Palm Cockatoo	<i>Probosciger aterrimus</i>	X		
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	<i>Cacatua galerita</i>	X		
Eclectus Parrot	<i>Eclectus roratus</i>	X		
Vulturine Parrot	<i>Psitticus fulgidus</i>	X	X	
Brush Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis variolosus</i>	X		
Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo	<i>Cocomantis castaneiventris</i>		X	
Rufous-throated Bronze-Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx ruficollis</i>			X
Indian Koel	<i>Eudynamys scolopacea</i>	X		
Sooty Owl	<i>Tyto tenebricosa</i>	X		
Papuan Boobook	<i>Ninox theomacha</i>	X		
Mountain Owlet-nightjar	<i>Aegotheles albertisi</i>			X
Archbold's Nightjar	<i>Eurostopodus archboldi</i>			X
Lowland Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia vanikorensis</i>	X		
Glossy Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia esculenta</i>			X
Shovel-billed Kookaburra	<i>Clytoceyx rex</i>		X	
Rufous-bellied Kookaburra	<i>Dacelo gaudicaud</i>	X		

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Table 16.1. *continued*

Common Name	Species	Gugusu (515 m)	Sawetau (1,300-2,000 m)	Apalu Reke (2,875 m)
Azure Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo azurea</i>	X		
Blyth's Hornbill	<i>Rhyticeros plicatus</i>	X		
Blue-breasted Pitta	<i>Pitta erythrogaster</i>	X		
Hooded Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina longicauda</i>			X
Black Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina melaena</i>	X		
Black-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina montana</i>		X	
Golden Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Campochaera sloetii</i>	X		
Varied Triller	<i>Lalage leucomela</i>	X		
Island Thrush	<i>Tudus poliocephalus</i>			X
Spotted Jewel-babbler	<i>Ptilorrhoa leucosticta</i>			X
Blue Jewel-babbler	<i>Ptilorrhoa caerulescens</i>	X		
Chestnut-backed Jewel-babbler	<i>Ptilorrhoa castanonotus</i>		X	
Blue-capped Ifrita	<i>Ifrita kowaldi</i>		X	
Tawny Grassbird	<i>Megalurus timoriensis</i>			X
Wallace's Fairy-wren	<i>Sipodotus wallacii</i>	X		
White-shouldered Wren	<i>Malurus alboscapulatus</i>	X		
Rusty Mouse-Warbler	<i>Crateroscelis murina</i>	X		
Bicoloured Mouse-Warbler	<i>Crateroseclis nigrorufa</i>		X	
Mountain Mouse-Warbler	<i>Crateroscelis robusta</i>		X	X
Pale-billed Scrubwren	<i>Sericornis spilodera</i>	X		
Large Scrubwren	<i>Sericornis nouhuysi</i>		X	X
Papuan Scrubwren	<i>Sericornis papuensis</i>		X	X
Grey Gerygone	<i>Gerygone cinerea</i>		X	
Yellow-bellied Gerygone	<i>Gerygone chrysogaster</i>	X		
Black Fantail	<i>Rhipidura atra</i>		X	
Friendly Fantail	<i>Rhipidura albolimbata</i>		X	X
Dimorphic Fantail	<i>Rhipidura brachyrhyncha</i>			X
Northern Fantail	<i>Rhipidura rufiventris</i>	X		
Black Monarch	<i>Monarcha axillaris</i>		X	
Spot-winged Monarch	<i>Monarcha guttula</i>	X		
Frisled Monarch	<i>Arses telescopthalmus</i>	X		
Black-breasted Boatbill	<i>Machaerirhynchus nigripictus</i>		X	
Canary Flycatcher	<i>Microeca papuana</i>			X
Garnet Robin	<i>Eugerygone rubra</i>			X
Ashy Robin	<i>Poecilodryas albispecularis</i>		X	
Black-throated Robin	<i>Poecilodryas albonata</i>			X
Northern Scrub-Robin	<i>Drymodes superciliaris</i>	X		
Lesser Ground-Robin	<i>Amalocichla incerta</i>		X	
White-winged Robin	<i>Penethello sigillatus</i>			X
Blue-grey Robin	<i>Peneothello cyanus</i>		X	
Green-backed Robin	<i>Pacycephalopsis hattamensis</i>		X	
Mottled Whistler	<i>Rhagologus leucostigmus</i>		X	

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Table 16.1. *continued*

Common Name	Species	Gugusu (515 m)	Sawetau (1,300-2,000 m)	Apalu Reke (2,875 m)
Sclater's Whistler	<i>Pachycephala sclateri</i>		X	
Brown-backed Whistler	<i>Pachycephala modesta</i>			X
Rufous-naped Whistler	<i>Pachycephala rufinucha</i>		X	X
Little Shrike-thrush	<i>Colluricincla megarhyncha</i>	X		
Black Pitohui	<i>Pitohui nigrescens</i>		X	
Wattled Shrike-tit	<i>Eulacestoma nigripectus</i>			X
Black Sittella	<i>Daphoenositta miranda</i>			X
Black Berrypecker	<i>Melanocharis nigra</i>	X		
Mid-mountain Berrypecker	<i>Melanocharis longicauda</i>		X	
Fan-tailed Berrypecker	<i>Melanocharis versteri</i>		X	X
Tit Berrypecker	<i>Oreocharus arfaki</i>		X	
Crested Berrypecker	<i>Paramythia montium</i>			X
Werstern Mountain White-eye	<i>Zosterops fuscicapillus</i>		X	
Olive Straightbill	<i>Timeliopsis fulvigula</i>		X	
Long-billed Honeyeater	<i>Melilestes megarhynchus</i>	X		
Yellow-bellied Longbill	<i>Toxorhamphus novaeguineae</i>	X		
Slaty-chinned Longbill	<i>Toxorhamphus poliopterus</i>		X	
Dwarf Longbill	<i>Oedistoma iliolophus</i>	X	X	
Myzomela species	<i>Myzomela</i> sp.	X		
Red-collared Myzomela	<i>Myzomela rosenbergii</i>		X	X
Meliphaga species	<i>Meliphaga</i> sp.	X		
Black-throated Honeyeater	<i>Lichenostomus subfrenatus</i>		X	X
Obscure Honeyeater	<i>Lichenostomus obscurus</i>	X		
Tawny-breasted Honeyeater	<i>Xanthotis flaviventer</i>	X	X	
Helmeted Friarbird	<i>Philemon buceroides</i>	X		
Red-backed Honeyeater	<i>Ptiloprora guisei</i>		X	
Grey-streaked Honeyeater	<i>Ptiloprora perstriata</i>			X
Sooty Melidectes	<i>Melidectes fuscus</i>			X
Belford's Melidectes	<i>Melidectes belfordi</i>			X
Yellow-browed Melidectes	<i>Melidectes rufocrissalis</i>		X	
Common Smoky Honeyeater	<i>Melipotes fumigatus</i>		X	
Blue-faced Parrot-finch	<i>Erythrura trichroa</i>		X	
Yellow-faced Myna	<i>Mino dumonti</i>	X		
Spangled Drongo	<i>Dicururus hottentotus</i>	X		
Hooded Butcherbird	<i>Cracticus cassicus</i>	X		
Black Butcherbird	<i>Cracticus quoyi</i>	X		
Macgregor's Bowerbird	<i>Amblyornis macgregoriae</i>		X	
Crested Satinbird	<i>Cnemophilus macgregorii</i>			X
Yellow-breasted Satinbird	<i>Loboparadisea sericea</i>		X	
Short-tailed Paradigalla	<i>Paradigalla brevicauda</i>		X	
Magnificent Riflebird	<i>Ptiloris magnificus</i>	X		
Brown Sickbill	<i>Epimachus meyeri</i>			X

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Table 16.1. *continued*

Common Name	Species	Gugusu (515 m)	Sawetau (1,300-2,000 m)	Apalu Reke (2,875 m)
Black Sicklebill	<i>Epimachus fastuosus</i>		X	
Raggiana Bird of Paradise	<i>Paradisaea raggiana</i>	X		
Ribbon-tailed Astrapia	<i>Astrapia mayeri</i>			X
Superb Bird of Paradise	<i>Lophorina superba</i>		X	
Carola's Parotia	<i>Parotia carolae</i>		X	
King of Saxony Bird of Paradise	<i>Pteridophora alberti</i>			X
Magnificent Bird of Paradise	<i>Cicinnurus magnificus</i>	X	X	
Bare-eyed Crow	<i>Corvus tristis</i>	X		