

in the Middle Sepik district and around the Port Moresby/Central Province area.

WHITE-BELLIED PITOUI *Pitohui incerta*

This rare and enigmatic species occurs up-river from the town in the monsoon forest, with brown and black bird parties. It may easily be mistaken for a Little Shrike-thrush *Colluricincla megarhyncha* but is stouter, shorter tailed, and pale creamy beneath with fairly obvious diffuse darker mottling on the chest. Prominent dark eye with pale lores, being almost encircled by pale like an eye-ring. Bill pinkish-horn with a darker lower mandible. Legs brownish-pink. One distinctive call was a repeated *tuc*, almost like clicking the tongue, as well as some typical 'pitohui type' musical calls. The birds kept to the mid-stratum, feeding in vine tangles and perching on tree trunks in a manner reminiscent of *Phyllastrephus* bulbuls.

BROAD-BILLED FAIRY-WREN *Malurus grayi campbelli*

Discovered by Palliser (1988) in swamp forest between the Kiunga airstrip and the river. There are no subsequent Kiunga records, but it was found in a peculiarly difficult and inaccessible habitat. This may be the only field observation of this form, the Mount Bosavi (extreme southwest of Southern Highlands Province) birds all being trapped and then described as a new species *M. campbelli* (Schodde & Weatherly 1982). Following further research and specimens, it was subsequently shown by LeCroy & Diamond (1995) to be a subspecies of the Broad-billed Fairy-wren *M. grayi*.

BANDED YELLOW ROBIN *Poecilodryas placens*

Reported from monsoon forest a short way up-river in April 1994 (I. Richardson *in litt.*). Confirmation is desirable; this would be a significant but not unlikely range extension, as the species is previously known from Mount Bosavi.

WHITE-SPOTTED MUNIA *Lonchura leucosticta*

Reported by Palliser (1988) from the airstrip vicinity, and found in April 1994 at Rumgenai some 27 km north of the town. A Trans-Fly species that is on the edge of its range here, Trans-Fly being the lower and middle sections of the Fly river catchment.

CRIMSON FINCH *Neochmia phaeton*

Two birds with a White-spotted Munia in kunai grass at Rumgenai in April 1994 were a long way from the known range in the middle Fly River.

YELLOW-EYED STARLING *Aplonis mystacea*

Occurs in small numbers with flocks of Metallic Starlings *A. metallica* along the river. The nasal tuft is a useful field character in flight.

FLAME BOWERBIRD *Sericulus (aureus) ardens*

The southern form *S. (aureus) ardens* is still to be found along Magazine road north of the town, where the birds fly over at canopy height of an early morning; also quite often seen flying over the Boystown Road. Skins of males are occasionally seen dangling from the driving mirrors of vehicles, where they are a local version of fuzzy dice and clearly an object of status!

GREATER and RAGGIANA BIRDS-OF-PARADISE *Paradisaea apoda* and *P. raggiana*

The Raggiana seems to be the species usually seen along the Fly River itself in this district, whilst the Greater occupies the areas further away. Hybrids would be extremely difficult to detect, and whether the two species do hybridize here is still unknown. One lek of Greater Birds has been in use for over two decades.

Observations from Obo

Obo is a small airstrip and distribution station sited on the Fly River just north of the Strickland confluence, lying in the middle-Fly wetlands about 200 river miles inland. Ok Tedi Mining Ltd sponsored some surveys in 1994–95 for the Asian Wetland Bureau, and the records here were made whilst a member of that team, unless otherwise stated. Very little has been published about the area.

LITTLE BITTERN *Ixobrychus minutus*

Jaensch (1995) recorded four calling birds in June 1994, flushing a probable pair—which strongly suggested that breeding occurs in these vast wetlands. Various other individuals were seen in December 1994 and April 1995. It can be assumed that a resident breeding population is present, which may perhaps be seasonally augmented by Australian migrants.

GLOSSY IBIS *Plegadis falcinellus*

Counts of 973 at dusk at Lake Daviumbu on 2 December, and 400+ at Lake Ambuve on 4 December show the significance of the area for this species during the austral summer. None were seen in April 1995.

MAGPIE GOOSE *Anseranas semipalmatus*

The area holds good numbers during the austral summer, with 250 at Lake Pangua on 2 December and 150 at Lake Owa on 3 December 1994. Much smaller numbers were present in April 1995, and nests were found.

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

4 at Lake Pangua 2 December, 12 at Lake Owa 3 December, 38 Lake Ambuve 4 December 1994. The species is sparse in Papua New Guinea and this may be a significant wintering area.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

The marshy edges of ox-bows supported good numbers of birds, with 10 at Lake Pangua on 2 December, 45 at Lake Owa on 3 December and 10 at Lake Ambuve on 4 December. The area is likely to be a significant wintering ground, for a species thought to be very scarce in Papua New Guinea.

RESTLESS FLYCATCHER *Myiagra inquieta*

The species was previously only known from the southern Bensbach River area in Papua New Guinea, so singles near Komavai village, Lake Pangua on 26 April and at Obo station on 27 April 1995, and a pair found nesting on the roof beam of an abandoned hut at Lake Ambuve in April 1995, are noteworthy range extensions, several hundred kilometres further inland. The nest was a neat cup of dried grass and fine woody material containing a single whitish egg with dark spots. Apparently the first instance of nesting proven for New Guinea.

GREAT REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

Usually considered to be a vagrant to the Australasian region. One was singing in reeds along the channel to the main river at Lake Ambuve on 4 December, readily recognised by the distinctive harsh song, large size and streaked breast. May be a far more regular visitor than previously realised.

FLY RIVER GRASSBIRD *Megalurus albolimbatus*

Two at Lake Daviumbu on 2 December, the type locality for the species; one at Lake Owa on 3 December. Recorded in April from Lake Pangua, Lake Owa and Lake Daviumbu, in floating *Echinochloa* and *Leersia* sp. grass mats, not *Cyperus* sedge beds as is the habitat at Bensbach. The species has a distinctive whistled call, a quiet, rising zeeee, and may be distinguished from Tawny Grassbird *M. timoriensis* by the prominent white edges to the black tertials, a gently rounded rather than ragged tail, orangish rump, whitish supercilium and underparts and an unstreaked orangish crown.

Lake Owa and Lake Pangua are new localities for the species which is a Papua New Guinea endemic previously known from Lake Daviumbu and the middle Bensbach river. The abundance of suitable habitat in the middle Fly suggests that this easily overlooked species may be more widely distributed than currently recognised and may occur across the border in West Irian.

BLACK MANNIKIN *Lonchura stygia*

Not recorded during December 1994, and only found at Lake Owa in April 1995, despite extensive searches at other apparently similar sites during both expeditions. We saw a total of over 30 individuals in small flocks, most with flocks of Grey-crowned Mannikin *Lonchura nevermanni*, which was widespread in the area in both December and April. *Lonchura stygia* was invariably seen at rest in floating or emergent grass, especially *Oryza* and *Echinochloa* spp. in full seed head, feeding on *Echinochloa* seeds like its congener.



Reino, Luis Miguel and Patacho, Domingos. 1997. "A new breeding area for the song thrush *Turdus philomelos* in north Portugal." *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club* 117, 312–314.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/123804>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/76818>

Holding Institution

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

Sponsored by

Biodiversity Heritage Library

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: In Copyright. Digitized with the permission of the rights holder.

Rights Holder: British Ornithologists' Club

License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>

Rights: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/permissions/>

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.