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Yale PEABODY MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

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Postilla

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BIRDS FROM DJAILOLO, HALMAHERA¹

By

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My wife and I had the opportunity of spending a week in the vicinity of Djailolo on the island of Halmahera from September 2 through 8, 1954, during a trip in the Moluccas sponsored partly by the Guggenheim and National Science Foundations as well as Yale University.

Djailolo was visited briefly by Alfred Russel Wallace in 1858 who remarked (1869) on the lack of original forest in the area around Sahoe, and the vast extent of heavy grass and high reeds which made bird study very difficult. We had originally intended to spend several months on Halmahera, but were prevented from doing so by a local outbreak of guerilla activity and so had to content ourselves with a short visit to the Djailolo area.

In back of the village there is a low, conical, three thousand foot mountain, Mount Djailolo, which has patches of heavy forest on its steep slopes. In addition, an experimental agricultural farm at Achango, seven kilometres by road to the north gave us an opportunity to camp in the midst of a varied environment, patches of dense scrub mixed with sago swamp,

¹ Dedicated to Professor Erwin Streseman in honor of his seventieth birthday.

cleared fields, high stands of cultivated trees such as kapok and shade trees used in the plantations of cocoa and nutmeg. Five kilometres farther along this road to the north is a small auxiliary airstrip which occasionally serves the Ternate area. Altogether in 1954 this was a far more rewarding mixture of scrub and second growth forest than one would be led to believe from Wallace's description.

Is this short time we failed to see many of the birds collected by Wallace or later visitors such as Bernstein, Heinrich, or de Haan. However, we made a small collection and a few observations which may be of interest.

Several species were seen but not collected as follows:

Sterna sumatrana, Djailolo Bay

Tadorna radjah radjah. The Radjah Shelduck was flushed out of a sago swamp at Achango, the female uttering the characteristic grunting call as they flew.

Spizaetus gurneyi. A pair of this hawk-eagle was observed on the slopes of Mount Djailolo. As the birds flew they showed a prominent mirror patch at the base of the primaries. The birds first appeared about 8:30 a.m., circling high over the heavy forest about half way up the mountain approximately 1500 feet above sea level. Their circling was purposeful, taking them ever lower down to lower altitudes, finally to the area of semi-cultivation and scrub until they were lost to view in the lowland coconut plantation.

Hornbills, *Aceros plicatus ruficollis*, were coming into breeding condition at this time although still occupying a communal roost in the kapok trees. However, display flights were common. The appearance of the Hawk-eagles seemed to drive them into a frenzy of display. Six hornbills could be seen at one time in the air, circling round and round in tight circles as the hawk-eagles flew by, banking sharply with set wings making a characteristic whirring, drumming sound.

Rallus philippensis subsp. Two rails were flushed from the paddy fields at Achango on September 8. They were close enough to spot the grayish-streaked sides, brownish-grayish

back and reddish streak through the eye identifying them as the Banded Rail. Presumably they were migrants into the north Moluccas from Australia and belonged to the population *yorki*. This species has not previously been recorded from Halmahera *vide* van Bemmelen (1948).

Centropus bengalensis medius. Seen in long grass at the Djailolo airstrip.

Species collected.

1.) *Accipter novaehollandiae griseogularis* (Gray)

In a backyard garden at Achango.

2.) *Ptilinopus hyogastra* (Temminck)

Often perched on telephone wires. Males were coming into breeding condition ahead of females. The first female with enlarged ovaries was taken in October on Batjan. Weight; ♂♂ 159, 169; ♀♀ 105, 162 grams.

3.) *Ducula bicolor* (Scopoli)

4.) *Reinwardtoena reinwardtsi reinwardtsi* (Temminck)

5.) *Macropygia amboinensis batchianensis* (Wallace)

♀ ovaries enlarged September 7, weight 139 grams.

6.) *Geoffroyus geoffroyi cyanicollis* (S. Müller)

Not breeding. One bird very worn. Weight ♂♂ 174, 188, ♀♀ 160, 188, 190, 222 grams.

7.) *Scythrops novaehollandiae* Latham

The Channel Bill appeared for the first time on September 2, and was seen daily flying north in small groups from two up to ten. The birds appeared to be migrating. A single male had small fruits in the stomach. Unrecorded previously from Halmahera.

8.) *Centropus goliath* Bonaparte

This coucal was heard to give two calls, a curious chuckling which sounds like a rail, and a deep low moaning roar. Local name, "Sokukud."

9.) *Otus leucospilus* (Gray)

This is a large dark owl, larger than any of the forms of *scops* (wing of our ♂ 173 mm.), dark above and with pronounced dark central streaks on the feathers of the upper surface.

In southern Asia the typical call of *scops* may be likened to "tonk tonk ta tonk." As Heinrich (1940) has noted, this species calls entirely differently. A single male perched about thirty feet above the ground in dense shade trees at Achango called a single, rasping "kwok" at regular intervals with perhaps ten seconds between each call. The resonance and growling quality of the call sounded more like a barking deer than a bird. Weight 160 grams. Local name, "Goroko."

10.) *Ninox connivens rufostriata* (Gray)

A female collected from a shade tree at Achango had a two-syllabled call like the yapping of a small dog, "ow-wow, ow-wow." Heinrich (1956) found this owl in the mountains in contrast to our experience.

11.) *Caprimulgus macrurus schillmölleri* Stresemann

A male in breeding condition weighed 79 grams. Call, the familiar "tock tock" of the species.

12.) *Collocalia vanikorensis moluccarum* Stresemann

A female coming into breeding condition weighed 11 grams. Another female weighed 12 grams. First record of this subspecies for Halmahera *vide* Van Bemmelen (1948). One of these specimens with a wing measurement of 114 mm. seems exceedingly close to the race *waigeuensis*. The other female with a wing of 107 mm. fits closer to *moluccarum*. These specimens belong to the *vanikorensis* assemblage with uniform backs and unfeathered tarsus. Local name "putih."

13.) *Collocalia esculenta nubila*, new subspecies.

Type: ♂ ad. (Y.P.M. no. 36966), collected September 6, 1954, by S. Dillon Ripley at Achango, Djailolo, Halmahera, Indonesia.

Diagnosis: The single specimen of Glossy Swiftlet taken by me on Halmahera prompted me to examine comparative material of this species. From this it is at once apparent that

the population found on Morotai, Halmahera, Ternate and Tidore differs strikingly from typical *esculenta* of Obi, Buru, the southern Moluccas, Celebes (Sulawesi) and New Guinea in being dark below, the abdomen being clouded over. The feathers of the abdomen have dark greenish or dark greenish fuscus centers with white edges only. In this character *nubila* is similar to *dodgei* of Borneo or *bagobo* or *isonota* of the Philippines. This population, however, is smaller than these, more northern forms, and also far more glossy on the back, matching typical *esculenta* in this. In addition the abdomen is even more suffused than in the Philippine races.

Wing measurements of *nubila* are; 6 ♂ 93 - 96; 3 ♀ 92 - 95; 5 sex indet. 90 - 96 mm. Weight, 1 ♂, 6 grams.

This new form is extremely interesting from a zoogeographic point of view, showing as it does a strong relationship to the populations of the southern Philippines.

I am grateful to Dr. Junge at Leyden, Professor Stresemann at Berlin and Dr. Amadon of the American Museum of Natural History in New York for the loan of specimens in their care.

14.) *Hemiprocne mystacea confirmata* Stresemann

A pair were in breeding condition in early September and weighed ♂ 76, ♀ 69 grams.

15.) *Ceyx lepidus uropygialis* (Gray)

Weight; ♂ ♂ 11 - 20 (mean 16); ♀ ♀ 17, 22, 30 grams.

16.) *Halcyon diops diops* (Temminck)

Common in cultivated areas, often on telephone wires. In addition to the character of the breast band in the female, the lack of the white neck ring and so forth, there is a pronounced weight difference between the sexes. A young male which answers to the description of the "young female" in Sharpe (1892) weighed 37 grams. Two ♂ adult weighed 43,45; ♀ ♀ ad. 65, 65 grams. Local name "Chawahiru."

17.) *Halcyon funebris* (Bonaparte)

This heavy-set dark brownish green kingfisher, while possessing a plumage pattern of spots and neck ring rather like

the *chloris* assemblage has a superficial resemblance to the brightly colored *winchelli-hombroni* group of the Philippines.

18.) *Tanysiptera galatea isis* Gray

Comparison of a small series of Racquet-tailed Kingfishers from Halmahera and Batjan shows that Halmahera birds have an ultramarine crown only very narrowly bordered on the sides with cobalt which forms a superocular stripe. In the Batjan population the cobalt is much more pronounced, being broad, extending onto the crown and making a noticeable nuchal ring. G. R. Gray (1860) described *isis* from "Batchian and Gilolo," a name which has been merged with *margarethae* of Heine (1859) from Batjan. I hereby restrict the type locality of *isis* to Gilolo (= Halmahera) which thereby becomes available for the Halmahera population.

A female called with a single soft mewling note. Weight ♂ 55, ♀ ♀ 64, 78 grams. Local name, "Menyalum."

19.) *Eurystomus orientalis pacificus* (Latham)

Weight ♂ ♂ 175, 182 grams.

20.) *Hirundo tahitica frontalis* Quoy and Gaimard

One, sex indet. weight 15 grams.

21.) *Artamus leucorhynchus leucopygialis* Gould

Male, weight 46 grams.

22.) *Aplonis metallica metallica* (Temminck)

Starlings were in small flocks in scrub-edge of forest areas about 650 feet above sea level. They made a series of short tinkling calls. Weight ♀ 60 grams. Local name "Hidis."

23.) *Corvus validus* Bonaparte

Local name "Bokogk."

24.) *Lycocorax pyrrhopterus pyrrhopterus* (Bonaparte)

This crow-like bird of paradise occurs from sea level to the tops of the mountain ridges. Normally the call is a very harsh rasping "tschak tschak." A pair at Achango were sitting closely side by side on a coconut palm frond. Both birds had enlarged gonads on September 7. A third bird was sitting near by. One bird, the male, was making a very deep, low

“om” sound, evidently a display note. It seemed to swell up and bow slightly as it called. Local name “Siamit.”

25.) *Lalage aurea* (Temminck)

A bird of open scrub; ♂ weight 32 grams.

26.) *Coracina atriceps magnirostris* (Bonaparte)

Weight ♂ 150, ♀ 128 grams.

27.) *Coracina papuensis melanolora* (Gray)

Weight ♀ 82 grams.

28.) *Hysipetes affinis chloris* (Finsch)

Specimens from Halmahera seem slightly more bronzy, less pure yellow green above and below than those from Batjan. There is no difference in size, however, and this distinction does not seem marked enough to warrant nomenclatorial recognition.

Birds were in breeding condition in September. Weight ♂ ♂ 38, 41, ♀ ♀ 41, 42 grams. Local name “Klaitua.”

These bulbuls were often in small family parties of from two or three to nearly a dozen. On one occasion I found *Monarcha trivirgatus* flocking with them evidently in a mixed feeding association. They occurred in open scrub or dense forest from sea level up to nearly five thousand feet without evident altitudinal or habitat preference.

29.) *Myiagra galatea galatea* Gray

A male in breeding condition weighed 11 grams. The bill of this specimen shows no evidence of mal-formation but in form resembles typical *Monarcha* species, being laterally compressed, with little of the tumid appearance of *Myiagra*. No other specimens collected, or examined in the series in the American Museum of Natural History show this appearance, perhaps a mutant gene for bill shape approaching the related monarch flycatchers.

30.) *Monarcha trivirgatus bimaculatus* Gray

Male in breeding condition, weight 15 grams.

31.) *Nectarinia sericea auriceps* Gray

A male had enlarged gonads although a female showed no enlargement. Weight ♂ 8, ♀ 7 grams.

32.) *Melitograis gilolensis* (Bonaparte)

A male with gonads enlarged was taken in substage forest growth at 850 feet above sea level. The bird called with a single harsh rasping note. Weight 54 grams. Local name "Sotosoto."

This honeyeater was always seen as a solitary individual and seemed to show aggressive behavior. On one occasion as I have described elsewhere (1959) I saw a single bird disperse a flock of bulbuls.

33.) *Lonchura ferruginosa jagori* (von Martens)

A male with gonads slightly enlarged was taken out of a small flock in heavy weeds on the edge of a garden at Achango. Weight 13 grams. Local name "Kotolor"

Like *Hypsipetes*, *Collocalia esculenta nubila* and perhaps *Pitta maxima* and *Halcyon funebris*, the occurrence of *Lonchura ferruginosa jagori* on Halmahera emphasizes the zoogeographic link between the northern Moluccan islands and the Philippine Archipelago. Although the predominant early avifaunal influence in the area can be said to have come from the Australian-New Guinea region with these islands containing the most westward extensions of the families of the Birds of Paradise and the Honeyeaters, represented in each case by endemic genera, still the importance of the Philippines should not be underemphasized. It is instructive in this regard to be in Halmahera during the migration as we were, and to note the arrival daily of such species as the warblers, *Phylloscopus* and *Locustella*, the flycatchers, swallows, and the others, so many of which have obviously come directly from the islands to the northwest on passage. These connections can only have been adventitious, over water, but the route is there ready to hand.

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