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NEW BIRD RECORDS FROM BIAK ISLAND

by

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Mr. C. Hoogerheide, who was stationed at the Netherlands Naval Air Base at Biak Island between July 1953 and December 1954, brought together a small collection of birds, which was sent to the Leiden Museum. It is worth while to put on record those species, which have not been collected before on this island and to give remarks on a few other species. An excellent review of the avifauna of Biak Island is given by Mayr and De Schauensee (1939).

Fregata ariel ariel (Gray)

A ♂ imm. and a ♀ imm. have been collected by Mr. F. Heuberger at sea near the south coast of Soepiori between Korrido and the kampong Soëk on July 26, 1952. Through the intermediary of Dr. L. D. Brongersma the specimens were presented to the Leiden Museum.

Near this island the species has been collected before only by Beccari on May 8, 1875. Mayr and De Schauensee (1939, p. 14) already pointed out that the specimen must have belonged to *ariel* and not to *minor* as Salvadori (1882, p. 405) stated. It may be added that in the Leiden Museum there are no specimens of *minor* from the New Guinea region. The measurements of the 2 specimens are: wing 530, 553; middle tail feathers 190, 185; outer tail feathers 308, 330; culmen 88, 88; bill from gape 107, 106; tarsus 25, 22 mm.

Aviceda subcristata obscura nov. subspec.

Mr. Hoogerheide collected 5 specimens on the south coast of Biak. Moreover the Leiden Museum possesses a specimen collected by Von Rosenberg at Biak on March 25, 1869. Particulars of the specimens follow here:

Sex	Date	Wing	Tail	Culmen from cere	Tarsus
♂	22- 8-1953	289	168	20	32
♂	2-11-1953	292	193	20	32
— (♂)	14-11-1953	278	195+	20	35
♀	10- 9-1953	300	195	20	34
— imm.	24- 3-1954	265	176	19	29
— (♀)	25- 3-1869	287	184	—	34

These birds are near, but not identical with *stenozona* from West New Guinea. They are averaging smaller than both *stenozona* and *reinwardtii* (from Ceram, Ambon, and Haruku). Wing measurements of *stenozona* are mentioned by Mayr (1940, p. 8) and the measurements of our specimens fit well into the given variation range. The wing measurements of 7 ♂♂ and 7 ♀♀ of *reinwardtii* are given below:

	♂♂	♀♀
Ambon, Ceram, Haruku	286-302	298-315
Biak	278-294	287-300
West New Guinea	295-302	293-314

In coloration the Biak specimens are nearest to *stenozona*, but they are darker on the crown, hind neck, upper back and upper tail coverts. Bars on the under side of the primaries generally darker, more blackish and more pronounced than in *stenozona* and *reinwardtii*. In the latter forms these bars are mostly more reduced, not extending over the whole breadth of the inner webs of the primaries. Colour of the under tail coverts as in *stenozona*.

Type: ♂, Biak, 22-8-1953. R.M.N.H. Leiden, reg. no. 20985. C. Hoogerheide legit.

The two specimens collected in November show moulting primaries, in the ♂ collected Nov. 2 the primary moult is nearly finished, the outermost primary is growing out. In the specimen from Nov. 14 the three outer primaries are old and faded, the fourth is growing out, the innermost are all renewed. In this specimen the central tail feathers are new, the lateral ones are old and worn.

The immature specimen shows brownish edges along the feathers of the mantle and upper wing coverts; the primaries are whitish tipped.

Henicopernis longicauda fraterculus Stresemann and Paludan

A specimen has been collected on the south coast of Biak at the end of June 1954. The specimen is unsexed.

The status of the Biak population is still unsatisfactorily known. Mayr and De Schauensee (1939, p. 15) did not see material from Biak, but on account

of the remark by Salvadori (1880, p. 24) that a Biak specimen was small, they thought it possible that birds from this island belonged to the small race *minimus*, originally described from the Aru Islands.

Thanks to the courtesy of the authorities from the Bogor, British, and Genova Museums I was able to examine some additional material from the Aru Islands, Biak, Waigeu, and New Guinea.

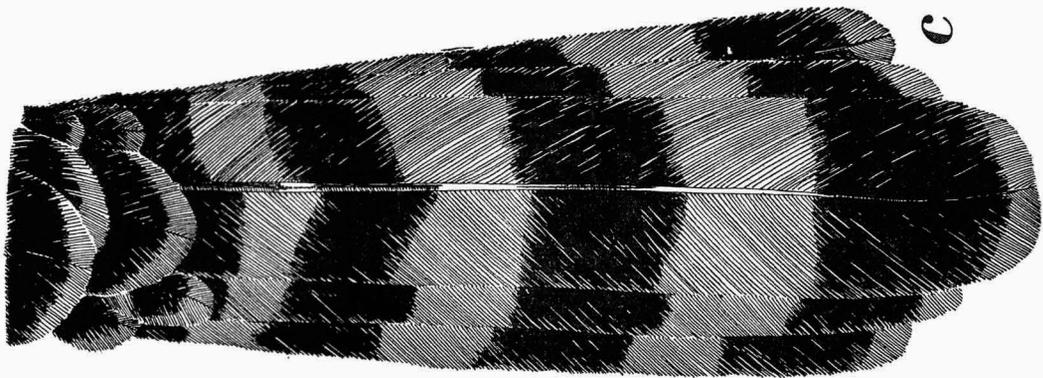
Preceding a discussion of the racial relationships some general remarks may be made.

Juvenile specimens have the individual feathers of upper parts and wing dark brown and greyish brown banded. The general appearance is rather pale, compared with the much darker (blackish) adult birds from New Guinea. In juvenile specimens the central tail feathers show a very small greyish brown terminal edge, preceded by a small (about 2 cm broad) dark brown bar (fig. 1a); in adult birds this subterminal bar is much broader (3.5-6 cm) (fig. 1c). In juvenile and subadult birds there are 4-5 dark and 3-5 paler bars visible besides the thin terminal edge. In adult birds there are 3-4 dark and 3-4 paler bars.

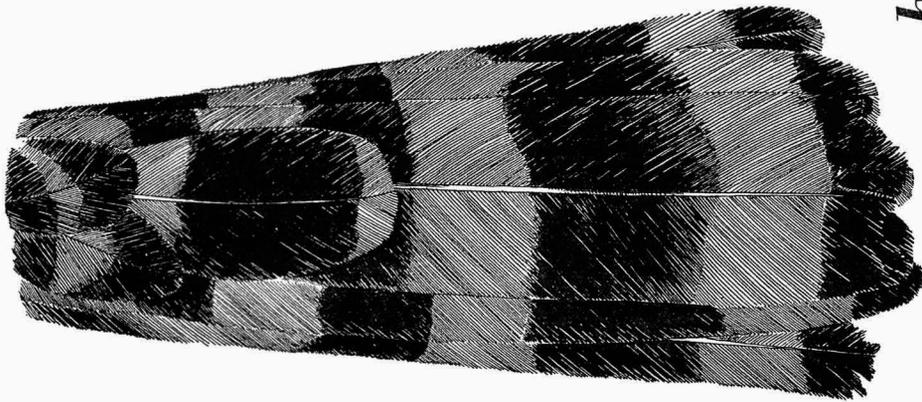
Subadult birds are only slightly paler than adult specimens, but still have retained the juvenile tail. Interesting is a subadult specimen from Biak (collected by Beccari May 7, 1875, Mus. Genova) showing tail moult. The tail is as in a juvenile specimen, but one adult coloured central tail feather is growing out (fig. 1b). At what age this change happens is not yet known.

Between the sexes there is no difference in colour pattern, but there is a difference in measurements, the ♀♀ being largest. Juvenile and subadult birds range not much smaller than fully adult birds. A list of the measurements of the examined skins follows here:

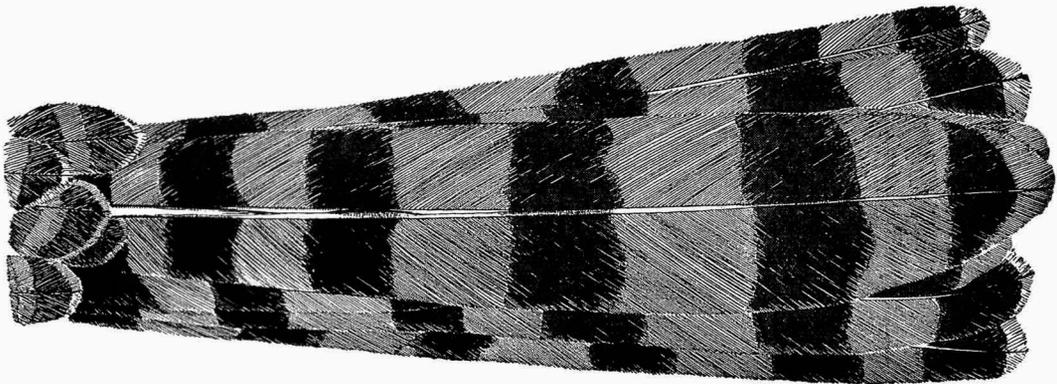
	Wing	Tail	Culmen	Tarsus
New Guinea				
Leiden Museum				
♂ Alkmaar	380	288	22	52
♂ Alkmaar	383	—	23	49
♂ Peramelesbivak	420	319	23	55
♀ Amberbaki	415	340	22	—
— (♀) Arfak Mts.	439	340	—	—
♀ subad. Heuvelbivak	395	425	22	55
— juv. South New Guinea	400	305	—	—
British Museum				
♀ Setekwa River	402	310	22	48
♀ Milne Bay	395	297	23	44



c



b



a

Fig. 1. *Henicopernis longicauda*. a, tail of unsexed juvenile specimen from Netherlands South New Guinea, 1911, Dr. A. C. de Kock coll., R.M.N.H. Leiden, reg. no. 6774; b, immature ♂, Korido, 7-5-1875, O. Beccari coll., Museum Genova C.E. 21544; c, ♂ adult, Went Mountains (*Perameles bivak*), South New Guinea, 29-11-1912, G. Versteeg coll., R.M.N.H. Leiden, reg. no. 24151.

	Wing	Tail	Culmen	Tarsus
Waigeu				
British Museum				
♂ subad.	360	278	22	44
Museum Genova				
♀	374	283	—	43
Biak				
Leiden Museum				
— subad.	378	293	21	49
Museum Genova				
♂ subad.	358	276	23	49
Museum Bogor				
♂	385	300	—	48
Misol				
Leiden Museum				
♂	340	248	22	—
Aru Islands				
Leiden Museum				
♂ Type specimen <i>minimus</i>	338	254	19	—
♀	349	250	+20	—
Genova Museum				
♂ Wokam	341	250	+20	—

From Japen Stresemann and Paludan (1932, p. 239) mention an adult specimen with a wing measurement of 382 mm (type specimen of *fraterculus*) and a probably juvenile specimen with a wing of 356 mm. Thus Japen and Biak birds are of the same size, and though both adult birds from Biak and Jobi fall just into the variation range of birds from the New Guinea mainland, subadult birds from these islands range smaller than those yet known from New Guinea. For the time being the name *fraterculus* must therefore be maintained for the birds from Japen and Biak. The tail/wing index is 75-82% in the birds from New Guinea proper, 75-77% for the birds from Biak.

Birds from the Aru Islands and Misol are much smaller and have a relatively shorter tail. Tail/wing index 71-75%.

It is remarkable that the 4 specimens seen from these islands have tails like those of juvenile and subadult specimens from New Guinea, though in the latter the bars are generally broader. In a ♂ from Wokam (in Museum Genova) the tail even shows 6 dark and 5 pale bars. The feathers of the upper parts of the birds from the Aru Islands and Misol also show greyish

brown bands like juvenile and subadult New Guinea birds. The terminal greyish brown bands of these feathers are rather broad, and therefore the upper parts show paler than even subadult specimens from New Guinea. It seems odd that accidentally only young specimens have been collected; perhaps this population retains this plumage during life. From Waigeu I saw two birds, an adult and a subadult specimen. The adult bird has the upper parts paler than both *longicauda* and *fraterculus* specimens and is nearer to *minimus* in this respect. In size, however, Waigeu birds correspond better with *fraterculus*. More material from Waigeu is necessary to ascertain the correct status of this population.

Birds from Batanta and Salawatti seem not to be different from those of the mainland of New Guinea, as recently has been pointed out by Gyldenstolpe (1955, pp. 214-215 and 383-384) for birds from Batanta.

Pandion haliaetus cristatus (Vieill.)

Mr. Hoogerheide collected a specimen on December 8, 1953. Wing 451 mm. The tail is moulting.

For Biak there was only one sight record by Ripley.

Charadrius mongolus mongolus Pall.

A specimen has been collected at Mokmer, south coast of Biak on February 14, 1954. Wing 135 mm.

Charadrius leschenaultii leschenaultii Less.

Two specimens (unsexed) from Mokmer, February 14, 1954. Wings 135, 135 mm.

Tringa hypoleucos L.

An unsexed specimen from the mud flats near Jediboer, south coast of Biak, collected on January 20, 1954. Wing 117 mm.

Another from Mokmer, March 4, 1954. Wing 116 mm.

Eurenetes ruficollis (Pall.)

A specimen from Mokmer, February 14, 1954. Wing 96 mm.

Anous stolidus pileatus (Scop.)

A specimen collected at sea north of Biak, July 7, 1954. Wing 279 mm.

Ptilinopus rivoli prasinorrhous G. R. Gray

A ♂ has been collected at Oerip, Woendi-atol, just east of Biak on February 11, 1954. Wing 126 mm. Not yet known from Biak proper.

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