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Birds of the Korup National Park, Cameroon

by Jane Thomas

Publications Department, College of Forestry
Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon 97331, USA

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Summary

Birds were studied in Cameroon's Korup National Park during 1978 to 1989. A list of 128 bird species is given, most of which occur in lowland rain forest. One "threatened" species, *Picathartes oreas*, occurs within the park, along with eleven others listed in the Red Data Book as candidate threatened species.

Résumé

Les oiseaux ont été étudiés de 1978 à 1989 au Cameroun dans le Korup National Park. La liste comporte 128 espèces aviennes dont la plupart se rencontrent en forêt pluviale de plaine. Une espèce menacée, *Picathartes oreas*, se trouve dans le parc ainsi que onze autres qui figurent au Livre Rouge comme espèces potentiellement menacées.

Introduction

This paper provides an annotated list of the birds of the Korup National Park, in Cameroon's Southwest Province. Many of Korup's birds may also occur in neighbouring southeast Nigeria, where the Oban rainforest park was recently created. Korup, which contains the Red-headed Rockfowl *Picathartes oreas* and seven species of threatened mammals, is listed as a key forest for threatened birds (Collar & Stuart 1988).

I carried out ornithological research in Korup between 1978 and 1989 (December to July). I netted birds at eight sites within a 5 x 12 km area in the southern part of the Korup National Park (Fig. 1), resulting in 1106 captures (51 species). These netting records are briefly mentioned in the following list as an indication of abundance and distribution. Bird frequencies within 51 mixed-species flocks are also included.

There is currently no complete list of Korup birds. In the 1980s a draft management plan (Gartlan, undated) listed birds of the Korup area, but did not specify occurrence within the park itself. Stuart (1986) lists birds seen in Korup during a short ICBP visit to our camp in 1984. Serle (1950, 1954, 1965) gives occasional records for the Korup area. The following list is made up of my own records, with reference to other published accounts where applicable.

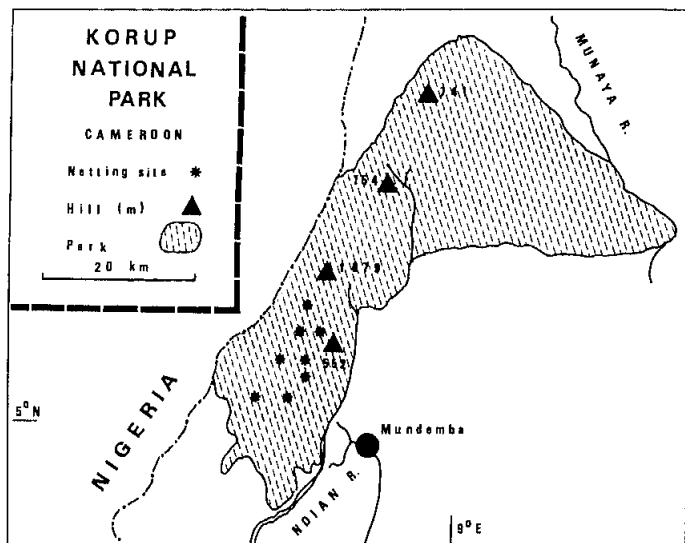


Figure 1. Korup National Park, Southwest Province, Cameroon.

The Study Area

The Korup National Park (126,000 ha) and much of the surrounding area supports species-rich moist evergreen forest (Thomas 1986). The climate is strongly two-seasonal with up to 5000 mm of rain in a year. Rains begin in February and March, with the wettest months being August and September. The rains end in October or November; December and January are usually dry.

Within the park, there are several widespread habitat types. Flat, well-drained areas predominate in the south and east, where the forest canopy is more or less continuous. In the north and west there are many steep forested hillsides and ridges. At scattered locations, gneiss boulders up to 10 m diameter provide caves and crevices for nesting birds and rock-dwelling animals.

Small shaded streams occur throughout the forest, as well as larger unshaded rivers with pools, rocky and stony areas, and rapids. The upper Ndian River forms the southeast border of the park. Some low-lying parts of the forest are swampy for much of the year and are characterised by climbing palms and big-leafed herbaceous plants.

Openings in the canopy exist where large trees have fallen, but they seldom exceed 0.2 ha in area. Other open sites include inselbergs and bare rock faces, river banks with scrub, and abandoned fields or village sites. These small openings add some diversity to the forest avifauna, but the park lacks extensive areas of cultivation and second-growth scrub. The tallest hill in Korup (1079 m) is not high enough to support montane vegetation.

Results and Discussion

The list below includes 128 birds species from the Korup National Park. Because I did not spend time in the canopy, many canopy species and birds flying above the forest were undoubtedly missed. I also spent relatively little time along the Ndian River bordering the park. Most species listed are therefore birds of the understorey.

The park is rich in lowland forest species. One species, *Picathartes oreas*, is listed as "Rare" in the Red Data Book (Collar & Stuart 1985). Another eleven Korup species were considered as candidates for threatened status (Appendix G, Collar & Stuart 1985) and are starred in the list below.

No montane birds were found in southern Korup, but it is possible that a few of the montane species found in other parts of southwest Cameroon (Stuart 1986) may occur elsewhere within the park.

Migrants are rarely found within the closed-canopy forest, although locally migrant bee-eaters (*Merops muelleri* and *M. albicollis*) were seen along forest streams. Palaearctic migrant Common Sandpipers *Actitis hypoleucos* occur along the Ndian River.

Species list

Taxonomy for non-passerines is based on *Birds of Africa* (Brown *et al.* 1982; Urban *et al.* 1986; Fry *et al.* 1988), and passerines follow Hall & Moreau (1970). All birds listed occur within the park, but habitats outside the park are also mentioned. Status and habitats are listed below:

- ** Threatened species (Collar & Stuart 1985)
- * Candidate threatened species (Collar & Stuart 1985)
- F Forest
- FS Forest streams
- FC Forest canopy
- A Aerial/above forest
- R River
- E Edge, cultivation, open habitats
- S (end of entry) — Species also recorded by ICBP expedition in February/March 1984 (Stuart 1986).

The number of birds captured per site is given as an indication of abundance; the number indicates the total number of individuals captured at each site (eight sites, 3–21 days per netting session, 1–5 netting sessions per site).

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* FS. Seen occasionally in forest pools.

***White-crested Tiger Heron** *Tigriornis leucolophus* FS. Occasionally seen above small forest streams. S.

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta* R. Along river bordering park.

Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus* R. Along river by park.

Hadada *Bostrychia hagedash* R, E. Along river.

Hartlaub's Duck *Pteronetta hartlaubii* R, FS. Munaya River, April, and sometimes along Ndian River.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* R. Seen on Ndian River by park, December to February. Also recorded from the Korup/Ndian area by Serle (1965).

Black Kite *Milvus migrans* R, A, E. Common in secondary areas and over forest, October to June.

Palm-nut Vulture *Gypohierax angolensis* R, E, A. Common in secondary areas and along river; also seen over forest. S.

Harrier Hawk *Polyboroides typus* R, E, FC. Common in plantations and along river; also over forest. S.

African Goshawk *Accipiter tachiro* F.

***Long-tailed Hawk** *Urotriorchis macrourus* F. Low in forest.

Crowned Hawk-Eagle *Stephanoaetus coronatus* R, F. S.

***Black Guinea fowl** *Agelastes niger* F. Groups are fairly common; for example, seen three times during one week in April 1989. S

Nkulengu Rail *Himantornis haematopus* F. Frequently heard before dawn. S.

White-spotted Flufftail *Sarothrura pulchra* F. Present in swampy areas, but usually difficult to see; occasionally heard. S.

Finfoot *Podica senegalensis* R. In Ndian River and larger forest streams.

Senegal Thick-knee *Burhinus senegalensis* R. By river bordering park.

White-collared Pratincole *Glareola nuchalis* R. On banks in river bordering park.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* R. River bordering park, common December–April.

Green Pigeon *Treron calva* R, FC, A. Forest canopy and over river. S.

Blue-headed Wood-Dove *Turtur brehmeri* F. Common, sometimes on the ground. Often heard. Captured at 1 of 8 netting sites. S.

African Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus* R, FC, A, E. Flocks of parrots flew over the palm plantations each day, returning to forest at night. S.

Great Blue Turaco *Corythaeola cristata* R, F, E. Frequently heard and sometimes seen. S.

Verreaux's Turaco *Tauraco macrorhynchus* F. Frequently heard, sometimes seen. S.

Red-chested Cuckoo *Cuculus solitarius* F, E.

Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo *Cercococcyx olivinus* F.

Emerald Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx cupreus* FC, E. A canopy species, rarely seen, but frequently heard both in the forest and in secondary areas. S.

Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas* FC, E, S.

Yellowbill *Ceuthmochares aereus* F. A skulking bird, difficult to see in the foliage under the upper canopy, but often revealed by its call. Present in at least 10% of mixed-species flocks. S.

Black-throated Coucal *Centropus leucogaster* F. Seen in swampy part of the forest, January 1979. S.

*Sjöstedt's Barred Owlet *Glaucidium sjoestedti* F. Rarely seen; flies during day, sometimes calls at night. One caught in June 1978, despite Louette's (1981) comment that this species is found only east of Mount Cameroon. S.



Sjöstedt's Barred Owlet *Glaucidium sjoestedti*
(Photo: Jane Thomas)

- African Wood Owl *Strix woodfordii* F, E. Frequently heard at night. S.
- Sabine's Spinetail *Rhaphidura sabini* R, A. River by forest, January.
- Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus* R, A. River by forest, May.
- *Bare-cheeked Trogon *Apaloderma aequatoriale* F. Uncommon. Seen twice at mid-height.
- Chocolate-backed Kingfisher *Halcyon badia* F. Present as high as forest canopy, where occasionally seen and more often heard. Caught twice. S.
- Blue-breasted Kingfisher *Halcyon malimbica* F. Difficult to see; caught once in forest, probably fairly widespread. S.
- Woodland Kingfisher *Halcyon senegalensis* R, E. Common in secondary areas and along river bordering forest.
- Dwarf Kingfisher *Ceyx lecontei* F. Seldom seen, but locally common in the forest; caught at three netting sites, 1–3 birds/site.
- Pygmy Kingfisher *Ceyx picta* R, E. Common.
- White-bellied Kingfisher *Corythornis leucogaster* F. Very common, but not easily seen; captured at all eight netting sites, 1–6 birds/site. Often captured away from water. S.
- Malachite Kingfisher *Corythornis cristata* R, E. Along Ndian River by park. Noted by Serle (1950) in the Ndian/Korup area.
- Shining-blue Kingfisher *Alcedo quadribrachys* FS, R. Regularly found along medium-sized streams; captured at five netting sites, 1–2 birds/site. S.
- Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima* R, FS. Along Ndian River, and sometimes over larger forest rivers.
- Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* R. Along Ndian River, February–April.
- Blue-headed Bee-eater *Merops muelleri* FS. Seen over a small stream, early January 1979. S.
- Black Bee-eater *Merops gularis* F, FC. Seen once, captured once. S.
- White-throated Bee-eater *Merops albicollis* FS, E. Seen over a forest stream, late January 1979; according to Louette (1981), this species spends October–June in the southern forested part of Cameroon and the wet season in the North.
- White-crested Hornbill *Tockus albocristatus* F. Occasionally seen and more often heard; often with monkey groups. S.
- Black Dwarf Hornbill *Tockus hartlaubi* F, FC. Seen several times in the canopy. S.
- Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill *Tockus camurus* F. Fairly common; usually in groups, often detected by call. Present in about 10% of mixed-species flocks. S.
- Pied Hornbill *Tockus fasciatus* R, F, FC, E. Particularly common in secondary areas; also high in forest.

Piping Hornbill *Ceratogymna fistulator* R, F, FC, E. Common and noisy, especially in canopy; also secondary areas. S.

Black-casqued Hornbill *Ceratogymna atrata* R, F, FC. Common and noisy above forest; less common on river than *C. elata*. S.

***Yellow-casqued Hornbill** *Ceratogymna elata* R, F, FC, E. Common and noisy above the forest and along rivers. S.

Red-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus atroflavus* F, E. Caught at two netting sites; more often heard. Also seen in cultivated areas. S.

Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus bilineatus* F, FC. Common. S

Yellow-spotted Barbet *Buccanodon duchaillui* F, FC. Difficult to see, but frequently heard. S.

Hairy-breasted Barbet *Tricholaema hirsuta* F. A flock seen once.

Spotted Honeyguide *Indicator maculatus* F. Difficult to see; captured at two sites, 1–2 birds/site.

Buff-spotted Woodpecker *Campethera nivosa* F. Caught at two sites (1–3 birds/site) and seen with several flocks. S.

Yellow-crested Woodpecker *Dendropicops xantholophus* F.

Rufous-sided Broadbill *Smithornis rufolateralis* F. Not common, but easy to see when it calls. Seen at least twice with mixed-species flocks.

White-throated Blue Swallow *Hirundo nigrita* R. Ndian River, January; found only along rivers.

European Swallow *Hirundo rustica* R, A, E. Common near Mundemba; over river near park December to April.

Mountain Wagtail *Motacilla clara* FS. Near streams, especially in hilly areas. Caught once. S.

Blue Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina azurea* F, FC. Secretive; hides in thick leaves in the lower part of the canopy. Probably fairly common, but seldom seen. Noted in about 15% of mixed-species flocks. S.

Little Greenbul *Andropadus virens* R, F, E. A noisy bird found throughout the forest, particularly in swampy areas; also in small patches of forest in secondary areas or along rivers. Not seen in mixed-species flocks. Captured at four netting sites, 2–8 birds/site.

Cameroon Sombre Greenbul *Andropadus curvirostris* F. Uncommon, although difficult to distinguish from *A. virens* in the field. Captured once.

Yellow-whiskered Greenbul *Andropadus latirostris* F. Very common; found from low to mid-level. Captured at all eight netting locations, 2–8 birds/site. Not associated with mixed-species flocks. S.

Bearded Greenbul *Criniger barbatus* F. Caught at five sites, 1–2 birds/site, but many

stay above net level. Found with about 13% of mixed-species flocks. Birds were the white-throated race *C. b. chloronatus* found further east, not the Nigerian race *ansorgeanus* that Louette (1981) suggested might occur in western Cameroon. S.

White-bearded Greenbul *Criniger calurus* F. Common and noisy, from ground to lower canopy level; usually several together. Found with about 40% of mixed-species flocks. Caught at five netting sites, 1–2 birds/site. S (*C. calurus/indussimensis*).

Bristlebill *Bleda syndactyla* F. A large and noisy greenbul of the lower forest, not always easy to see. Found with about 10% of mixed-species flocks, and caught at seven netting sites, usually 1–4 birds/site. One recaptured eight years after ringing. Follows ant swarms. S.



Bristlebill *Bleda syndactyla*
(Photo: Jane Thomas)

Green-tailed Bristlebill *Bleda eximia* F. A common and noisy greenbul of the forest floor and lower vegetation. Captured at seven netting sites (1–14 birds/site) and present with more than 25% of mixed-species flocks. Follows ant swarms. S.

Sjöstedt's Honeyguide Greenbul *Baeopogon clamans* F. Seen in forest January 1979. S.

Spotted Greenbul *Ixonotus guttatus* R, F, FC. Seen occasionally, always travelling in fast-moving single-species flocks; it has the habit of repeatedly lifting one wing as it sits high in a tree. S.

Icterine Greenbul *Phyllastrephus icterinus* F. Very common; recorded in more than 55% of mixed-species flocks, typically many individuals per flock. Usually flies above the level of mist nets, but caught at all eight netting sites, 1–7 birds/site (numbers may include some *P. xavieri* females). S (*P. icterinus/xavieri*)

Xavier's Greenbul *Phyllastrephus xavieri* F. Difficult to distinguish from *P. icterinus* in the field. The significantly larger *P. xavieri* males, however, were captured at four netting sites (1–3 birds/site).

Nicator *Nicator chloris* F. A noisy bird of mid-forest to canopy; not especially common. Noted in about 6% of mixed species flocks.

Sabine's Puff-back Shrike *Dryoscopus sabini* F, FC.

Brown-chested Alethe *Alethe poliocephala* F. Common, though not as abundant as *A. diademata*, and much quieter; usually in pairs. Found with about 8% of mixed-species flocks, and captured at all netting sites, 2–5 birds/site. Follows ants. S.

Fire-crest Alethe *Alethe diademata* F. Abundant, captured at every netting site. Thirty-seven individuals were caught at one site during March 1979 (elsewhere: 1–14 birds/site). Birds were recaptured as far as 750 m from their original capture point, and up to eight years after ringing. Found with about 17% of mixed-species flocks. Follows ants. S.

Forest Robin *Stiphrornis erythrorhax* F. Abundant, but often hard to see; stays near the ground and can sometimes be detected by its call. Captured at all netting sites, 1–9 birds/site. Usually recaptured within 200 m of original capture site. S.

White-tailed Ant-thrush *Neocossyphus poensis* F. An ant-following species, caught at seven netting sites (1–4 birds/site). Does not normally travel with mixed-species flocks. S.

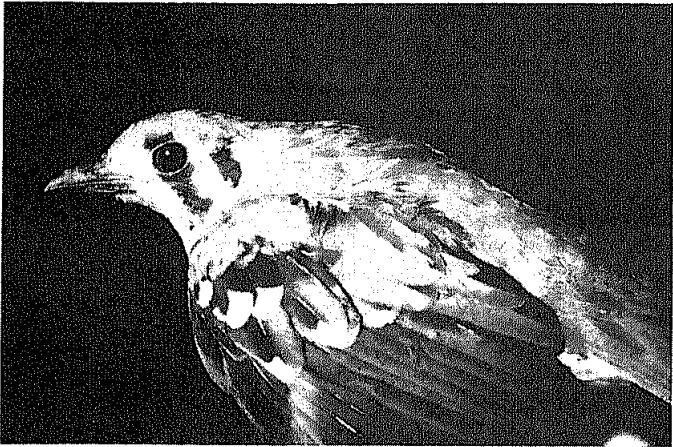
Fraser's Rusty Thrush *Neocossyphus fraseri* F. Seen once and captured once. S.

***Grey Ground-Thrush** *Turdus princei* F. Rare; caught once and never otherwise seen. Louette (1981) lists specimens from only four locations in eastern Cameroon.

***Black-eared Ground-Thrush** *Turdus cameronensis* F. Rare; caught twice and never otherwise seen; 2–3 birds/site. Louette (1981) lists five previous Cameroon records, including Serle's (1950) record for the Ndiang/Korup area.

Pale-breasted Akalat *Trichastoma rufipennis* F. A very common bird of the forest floor; stays hidden in the undergrowth, but very noisy. Always in groups of about 3–5 birds. Captured at all eight sites, 1–11 birds/site. The same individuals were often recaptured together after a year or more, and always within the same small area. Sometimes found with mixed-species flocks, but probably only while the flock passes through its territory.

Blackcap Akalat *Trichastoma cleaveri* F. A forest-floor species, fairly common, but difficult to see. Captured at all eight sites, 1–3 birds/site. Travels alone or in twos or threes; sometimes found with mixed-species flocks. S.



Black-eared Ground-Thrush *Turdus cameronensis*
(Photo: Jane Thomas)

****Red-headed Rockfowl *Picathartes oreas* F.** A rare bird of rocky areas within the forest. Seen twice. In February 1979, seen hopping through trees with a mixed-species flock, making a call like the sound of heavy furniture being pushed across a gritty wooden floor. Other observers have also noted it occasionally (D. Thomas, F. Namata, pers. comm.). Classified as "Rare" by Collar & Stuart (1985).

Black-capped Apalis *Apalis nigriceps* F. Seen with a flock in the northern part of the study area, April 1979.

Yellow Longbill *Macrosphenus flavicans* F. Captured once.

Green Hylla *Hylla prasina* F. Common; seldom seen but easily detectable by its call. Found in 31% of mixed-species flocks. Usually within thick vegetation of lower canopy, but captured at five netting sites (1–5 birds/site). S.

***Olivaceous Flycatcher *Muscicapa olivascens* F.** Three birds captured at one site.

Cassin's Grey Flycatcher *Muscicapa cassini* FS, R. Along Ndian River and larger forest streams. S.

Yellow-footed Flycatcher *Muscicapa sethsmithi* FS. Always on low-hanging lianes over medium–small forest streams; fairly common. Captured once.

Dusky Blue Flycatcher *Muscicapa comitata* F. Captured once.

Forest Flycatcher *Fraseria ocreata* F. Seen with flocks in northern part of study area; not common. S.

White-browed Forest Flycatcher *Fraseria cinerascens* FS, R. Fairly uncommon in Korup; always found low over streams. Captured at four netting sites, 1–2 birds/site. S.

Yellow-bellied Wattle-eye *Platysteira concreta* F. Stays below about 10 m; captured at four netting sites, always 2–3 birds together.

Chestnut Wattle-eye *Platysteira castanea* F. Noisy; seen with about 25% of mixed-species flocks. Usually above net level, but captured at three sites (2–4 birds/site). S.

***White-spotted Wattle-eye** *Platysteira tonsa* F, FC. Seen occasionally; probably limited to canopy and lower canopy, as it is in the Douala-Edea forest (pers. obs.). S.

Dusky Crested Flycatcher *Trochocercus nigromitratus* F. Captured at three netting sites (1–2 birds/site). S.

Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher *Trochocercus nitens* F. Captured once and seen twice with mixed-species flocks. S.

Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone rufiventer* F. Abundant; easy to see and hear. Always perched at about 10–15 m, though sometimes captured when it swooped lower; captured at five sites, usually 1 bird/site. Seen with more than 35% of mixed-species flocks, although it may only have joined while the flock passed through its territory. The southern Korup birds all seem to be the grey-backed type shown as *T. r. neumanni* in Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1973). S.

Collared Sunbird *Anthreptes collaris* FC, E. Seen several times.

Brown Sunbird *Anthreptes gabonicus* R. Seen along the Ndian River, December and January. Probably also in the canopy, as it is in the Douala-Edea Reserve (pers. obs.).

Fraser's Scarlet-tufted Sunbird *Anthreptes fraseri* F, FC. Very common, found in 47% of mixed-species flocks, usually in large numbers in the lower part of the canopy. Usually stays higher than nets, but caught at three netting sites (1–4 birds/site), usually with other flock species. S.

Olive-bellied Sunbird *Nectarinia chloropygia* F, FC, E. Present in larger forest gaps and in the canopy; common in open areas outside the park.

Bates's Sunbird *Nectarinia batesi* F. Uncommon; difficult to see.

Olive Sunbird *Nectarinia olivacea* F. Very common, from low to mid-level. Found with about 15% of flocks. Captured at all eight netting sites (1–20 birds/site). S.

Blue-throated Brown Sunbird *Nectarinia cyanolaema* F, FC. Captured once in forest. S.

Vieillot's Black Weaver *Ploceus nigerrimus* R, F, E. Found in single-species flocks in the forest; also along river and in cultivated areas outside the park.

***Rachel's Malimbe** *Malimbus racheliae* F. Middle to upper forest, usually in twos or threes. Found with 43% of mixed-species flocks, and captured once. S.

Red-headed Malimbe *Malimbus rubricollis* F. Seen above a clearing, northern part of study area, April 1979.

Crested Mallmbe *Malimbus malimbicus* F. With a mixed-species flock in northern part of study area; in the Douala-Edea Reserve this species is more common than in Korup, and tends to be in swampy areas (pers. obs.). S.

Blue-billed Mallmbe *Malimbus nitens* F. Mid-level forest, found with almost 20% of flocks. Nests frequently seen hanging low over small forest streams. Captured at four sites, 1 bird/site, but others visible nearby. S.

Flower-pecker Weaver-Finch *Parmoptila woodhousei* F. Present with about 8% of flocks and captured at three sites (1-3 birds/site). S.

Grey-crowned Negro-Finch *Nigrila canicapilla* F, E. Mid-forest and lower canopy.

Chestnut-breasted Negro-Finch *Nigrila bicolor* F, E. Canopy or forest gaps; captured at three sites, 1-2 birds/site.

Bluebill *Spermophaga haematina* F. Captured once in a swampy area of the forest.

Narrow-tailed Starling *Poeoptera lugubris* FC. Several seen feeding high in a forest *Daniella* tree, February 1979.

Velvet-mantled Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis* F. Seen several times. S.

Shining Drongo *Dicrurus atripennis* F. The most common forest drongo; a noisy flock member, present in more than a quarter of mixed-species flocks. Usually perched on a liane about 10-20 m up. Captured once. S.

Square-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus ludwigii* F. Seen several times, but much less common than *D. atripennis*.

Black-headed Oriole *Oriolus brachyrhynchus* F. A very common bird of the lower canopy, seldom seen. Heard with about 13% of mixed-species flocks, but heard just as often alone. S.

Pied Crow *Corvus albus* R, E. Common in plantation and open areas; also over river by park.

Acknowledgments

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