

The Avifauna of Melville Island, Northern Territory.

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The following is a list with short descriptions of nine new subspecies of birds known to occur on Melville Island. This list has been compiled from those recorded by Mr. Gregory M. Mathews in "The Austral Avian Record," which were collected for him by Mr. J. P. Rogers. Mr. Mathews records 67 subspecies, to which I am now able to add 30, making a total of 97. These additional ones are in the South Australian Museum collection and were recently collected by Mr. W. D. Dodd, who was engaged to collect natural history specimens in Western Australia, the Northern Territory, and Queensland. Mr. Dodd did exceedingly well in regard to birds for the short time that he spent on the island, as he had to attend to other branches of zoology besides ornithology. He landed on the island on the 7th of July and left again on the 30th August and collected altogether 85 species, the eggs of about 20, and several nests. After leaving Melville Island, Mr. Dodd visited Bathurst Island, where he also obtained several birds, which have not yet come to hand. He has now commenced to collect on the mainland. Specimens from the latter locality will be very welcome as they will prove valuable for compari-

son with insular forms. It will be noticed in this paper that several birds have been queried; this is due to not yet having their mainland representatives or sufficient material for comparison. In some instances no difference could be found, but others again showed a decidedly constant darker shade in plumage, and others were either larger or smaller than their mainland representatives. Those species prefixed by an asterisk had not been previously recorded, and those prefixed by an "O" were not contained in Mr. Dodd's collection.

All measurements are given in millimeters.

- 5a. *Megapodius duperreyi melvillensis*—Melville Island Scrub-Fowl.
- 16a. *Coturnix australis melvillensis*—Melville Island Brown Quail.
- 27a. *Turnix castanota melvillensis*—Melville Island Chestnut-backed Quail.
- 39a. *Ptilinopus regina melvillensis*—Melville Island Rose-crowned Pigeon.
- 43a. *Myristicivora bicolor melvillensis*—Melville Island Nutmeg Pigeon.
- 50a. *Geopelia humeralis apsleyi*—Melville Island Barred-shouldered Dove.
- 51a. *Geopelia placida melvillensis*—Melville Island Ground Dove.
- *57a. *Chalcophaps chrysochlora melvillensis* subsp. n.—Melville Island Green Pigeon.
Crown of head and nape paler and wings longer than specimens from the Northern Territory, Cape York, and Richmond River, New South Wales, length of wing 161, Northern Territory 150 and 151, Cape York 147, Richmond River 158.
- 59a. *Phaps chalcoptera riordani*—Melville Island Bronze-winged Pigeon.
- 69b. *Geophaps smithii cicilae*—Melville Island Naked-eyed Partridge Pigeon.
- 84a. *Eulabeornis castaneiventris melvilli*—Melville Island Rail.
- *212 *Hypsibates leucocephalus* subsp.? (immature)—White-headed Stilt.
- 240a. *Drediparra gallinacea melvillensis*—Northern Jacana.
- *241 *Stiltia isabella* subsp.? (immature)—Australian Pratincole.

- *246 *Burhinus magnirostris* subsp.?—Stone Plover.
(No Northern Territory specimens for comparison).
- o247a. *Esacus magnirostris melvillensis*—Allied Long-billed Stone-plover.
- *282a. *Butorides javanica* subsp.?—Mangrove Bittern.
(No Northern Territory specimen for comparison).
- o287a. *Ardeiralla flavicollis melvillensis*—Melville Island Bittern.
- *291 *Anseranas semipalmata*—Pied Goose.
- o315a. *Carbo melanoleucus melvillensis*—Northern Little Cormorant.
- *333a. *Astur clarus robustus* subsp. n.—The Greater Northern Grey Goshawk.
This a much stronger-built bird than *Astur radiatus* from North Queensland, it has a stouter bill, longer and stouter legs and claws. The whole of the upper surface greyish brown, under surface white with greyish-brown markings; the throat is streaked; upper breast heavily blotched, lower breast sides of body and abdomen heavily barred, some of these bars washed with rufous; thighs with narrow and fainter cross-bars, undertailcoverts white, secondaries and tail feathers with faint blackish cross-bars. Iris and feet yellow, sex female, wing 288, tarsus 81. A female of *A. radiatus radiatus* from North Queensland measures wing 266 tarsus 74.
- 337a. *Astur fasciatus didimus*—Melville Island Goshawk.
- *353a. *Haliastur sphenætrus territori*?—Northern Whistling Eagle.
Differs from South Australian and Victorian specimens in being much smaller and darker in the whole of the plumage. Sex, male, wing 377. Males from South Australia 402 and 416, Victoria 428.
- o369a. *Falco longipennis apsleyi*—Northern Little Falcon.
- 371a. *Iracidea berrigora melvillensis*—Northern Brown Hawk.
- o375a. *Pandion haliaetus melvillensis*—Northern White-headed Osprey.
- 381a. *Ninox boobook melvillensis*—Red Boobook Owl.
- 394a. *Trichoglossus rubritorquis melvillensis*—Northern Red-collared Lorikeet.
- *407a. *Trichoglossus versicolour mellori*?—Varied Lorikeet.
(No Northern Territory specimens for comparison).

- Much darker green throughout the whole of the plumage, the red of the crown of the head is not so vivid, and also a smaller bird in comparison to specimens from the Fitzroy River, N.W. Australia. Wing 114, N.W.A. specimens av. 125.
- *421b. *Calyptorhynchus banksii macrorhynchus?*—Great-billed Cockatoo.
 These birds have a much stronger bill than specimens from N.W. Australia and may prove to be identical with the above.
 (No Northern Territory specimens for comparison).
- 428a. *Cacatoes galerita melvillensis*—Northern White Cockatoo.
- 433a. *Cacatoes sanguinea apsleyi*—Melville Island Bare-eyed Cockatoo.
- *451a. *Aprosmictus erythropterus melvillensis* subsp. n.—Melville Island Red-winged Parrot.
 Much darker green and longer in the wing than specimens from the Northern Territory; crown of head and nape strongly washed with blue. Wing 185, N.T. specimens 175 and 180.
- o468a. *Platycercus venustus melvillensis*—Melville Island Smutty Parrot.
- 524a. *Podargus strigoides melvillensis*—Melville Island Frogmouth.
- *540b. *Alycyon pusilla ramsayi?*—Northern Little Kingfisher
 (No Northern Territory specimens for comparison).
- 548a. *Dacelo leachi nana*—Dwarf Fawn-breasted Kingfisher.
- 553a. *Halcyon macleayii publa*—Melville Island Forest Kingfisher.
- *556. *Halcyon sanctus* subsp.? (immature)—Sacred Kingfisher.
- 560a. *Halcyon sordidus melvillensis*—Northern Mangrove Kingfisher.
- *564a. *Merops ornatus* subsp.?—Bee-eater.
 (No Northern Territory specimens for comparison).
- 569a. *Caprimulgus macrurus* subsp.?—Large-tailed Nightjar.
 (No Northern Territory specimens for comparison).
- *581a. *Cuculus pyrophamus dumetorum?*—Fan-tailed Cuckoo.
 (No Northern Territory specimens for comparison).
- *591. *Chrysococcyx minutillus melvillensis* subsp. n.—Melville Island Bronze Cuckoo.
 Differs from *C. minutillus* in having the crown of head dark green, also the darker colouration of the

whole of the upper surface and tail, the latter showing very little rufous, and the black subterminal band being visible on the central tailfeathers.
Wing 96.

- *600a. *Centropus phasianus macrourus?*—Northern Coucal.
Two males, wing 230 and 241, male from Bellinger District, New South Wales, wing 210.
- 628a. *Microeca flavigaster melvillensis*—Melville Island Lemon-breasted Flycatcher.
- *645a. *Petroica cucullata melvillensis* subsp. n.—Melville Island Hooded Robin.
Differs from *P. cucullata subpicata* in its smaller size and in having its black markings as rich as those of Victorian and South Australian specimens of *P. cucullata vigorsi*. Wing 85, av., wing of *P. c. subpicata* 97.
- 653a. *Smicrornis brevirostris melvillensis*—Melville Island Yellow-tinted Tree-Tit.
- 664a. *Gerygone magnirostris melvillensis*—Melville Island Large-billed Fly-eater.
- 673b. *Gerygone chloronta apsleyi*—Melville Island Green-backed Fly-eater.
- 680a. *Pachycephala leucura greda*—Melville Island White-tailed Shrike-Robin.
- *687a. *Pachycephala gutturalis longirostris* subsp. n.—Long-billed Thickhead.
Tail black at base, slightly tipped with grey, wing 83, bill 17, specimen from Barron River, Queensland, has wing 88, bill 13.
- *697a. *Pachycephala rufiventris minor* subsp. n.—Lesser Rufous-breasted Thickhead.
Similar in colouration of upper and lower surface to that of *P. r. inornata* from South Australia, but has less black on sides of head; tailfeathers black at their base instead of grey. Wing 89, wing of *P. r. inornata* 99.
- 704a. *Pachycephala grisola riordani*—Melville Island Brown Thickhead.
- *727 *Rhipidura rufifrons dryas*—Wood Fantail.
Apparently no difference between the insular and mainland specimens.
- 729a. *Rhipidura sctosa melvillensis*—Melville Island Fantail.
- 736a. *Myiagra rubecula melvillensis*—Melville Island Blue Flycatcher.

- 739a. *Myiagra latifrons cooperi*—Melville Island Broad-billed Flycatcher.
- 748a. *Monarcha allecto melvillensis*—Melville Island Shining Flycatcher.
- 761a. *Coracina novae-hollandiae didimus*—Melville Island Cuckoo-Shrike.
- 763a. *Coracina hypoleuca apseyi*—White-billed Cuckoo-Shrike.
- o769a. *Coracina tenuirostris melvillensis*—Melville Island Caterpillar-catcher.
- *774a. *Lalage leucomela gouldi*—Banded Caterpillar-eater. Apparently no difference between the insular and mainland specimens.
- 810a. *Pomatorhinus temporalis bumba*—Melville Island Red-breasted Babbler.
- o855a. *Acrocephalus australis melvillensis*—Northern Reed-wren.
- 858a. *Cisticola exilis melvillensis*—Allied Grass-Warbler.
- 865a. *Megalurus alisteri melvillensis*—Melville Island Grass Bird.
- 967a. *Malurus melanocephalus melvillensis*—Melville Island Red-backed Wren.
- 991a. *Artamus leucorhynchus melvillensis*—Melville Island White-rumped Wood Swallow.
- *1011a. *Colluricincla brunnea melvillensis* subsp. n.—Melville Island Red-bellied Shrike-Thrush. Upper and lower surface darker and bill thinner than in specimens from N.W. Australia. Wing 125.
- *1015a. *Colluricincla parvula melvillensis* subsp. n.—Melville Island Little Shrike-Thrush. Upper surface much darker and bill longer than mainland specimens. Wing 95-101, bill 22-23, mainland specimen, wing 93, bill 20.
- 1031a. *Cracticus quoyi* subsp.?—Allied Butcher Bird. (No Northern Territory mainland specimens for comparison).
- *1037. *Cracticus nigrogularis picatus*—Pied Butcher Bird. Apparently no difference between insular and mainland specimens.
- 1073b. *Neositta pileata melvillensis*—Melville Island White-winged Tree-runner.
- *1111. *Dicaeum hirundinaceum* subsp.?—Mistletoe Bird. Only one female collected.

- 1131a. *Pardalotus melanocephalus melvillensis*—Melville Island Orange-rumped Pardalote.
- 1141a. *Melithreptus lunulatus gradus*—Melville Island White-naped Honey-eater.
- 1162a. *Myzomela crythrocephala melvillensis*—Melville Island Red-headed Honey-eater.
- 1169a. *Myzomela obscura apsleyi*—Melville Island Dusky Honey-eater.
- 1185b. *Gliciphila fasciata apsleyi*—Melville Island White-breasted Honey-eater.
- 1200a. *Stigmatops indistincta melvillensis*—Melville Island Least Honey-eater.
- 1218a. *Ptilotis sonora cooperi*—Melville Island Singing Honey-eater.
1253. *Ptilotis flavescens melvillensis*—Melville Island Yellow-tinted Honey-eater.
- 1265a. *Ptilotis unicolor brenda*—Melville Island White-gaped Honey-eater.
- 1293a. *Myzantha flavigula melvillensis*—Melville Island Yellow Minah.
- 1312a. *Entomyzon cyanotis apsleyi*—Melville Island White-quilled Honey-eater.
- 1315a. *Philemon argenticeps melvillensis*—Melville Island Friar-Bird.
- 1316b. *Philemon buceroides gordonii*—Melville Island Helmeted Friar-Bird.
- 1323a. *Philemon orientalis brenda*—Melville Island Little Friar-Bird.
- o1331. *Anthus australis rogersi*—Melville Island Pipit.
- o1339. *Mirafra javanica melvillensis*—Northern Bush Lark.
- o1357. *Munia castaneothorax apsleyi*—Melville Island Dark-breasted Finch.
- *1387 *Oriolus sagittatus affinis?*—Oriole.
(No Northern Territory mainland specimens for comparison).
- *1389 *Oriolus flavocinctus flavocinctus?*—Yellow Oriole.
(No Northern Territory mainland specimens for comparison).
- *1398 *Dicrurus bracteatus subsp.?*—Spangled Drongo.
According to Mathews in "Novitates Zoologicae" Vol. 18, p. 437 *D. bracteatus baileyi* of the Northern Territory differs from *D. b. bracteatus* in its larger wing—161. Only one Northern Territory specimen

at present in the South Australian Museum collection, wing 144, three specimens from the Clarence River N.S.W., 157, 158 and 170, one from the Tweed River N.S.W., 161; one male from Melville 152. More material required for comparison.

1414a. *Chlamydera nuchalis melvillensis*—Melville Island Bower-Bird.

*1423 *Corvus coronoides* subsp.?—Crow.
(No Northern Territory mainland specimens for comparison).
