

convince local authorities of the significance of obtaining specimens in order to document the biological diversity of their areas. Where collecting is contraindicated, it might be possible to meet the standards of the Code and to obtain material evidence for direct comparison with other specimens by capturing birds and retaining samples such as distinctive feathers and preserving material such as the growing feather pulp or tissue biopsies for genetic studies. With unusual forms that may be new species-group taxa one may describe the birds in the general, and not the nomenclatural sense, as has been done for other birds (Williams 1963:18, Field 1979:12), and to take care to restrict systematic descriptions to collected specimens (Wolters 1974, Prigogine 1981).

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A new subspecies of the Green-backed Robin *Pachycephalopsis hattamensis*, comprising the first record from Papua New Guinea

by Walter E. Boles

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The Australo-Papuan robin genus *Pachycephalopsis* Salvadori 1879 (Eopsaltriidae) of New Guinea comprises 2 species, which are roughly east-west counterparts, although there is overlap in the Weyland, Nassau and Oranje Mountains (Fig. 1; map in Diamond 1985: 89). The

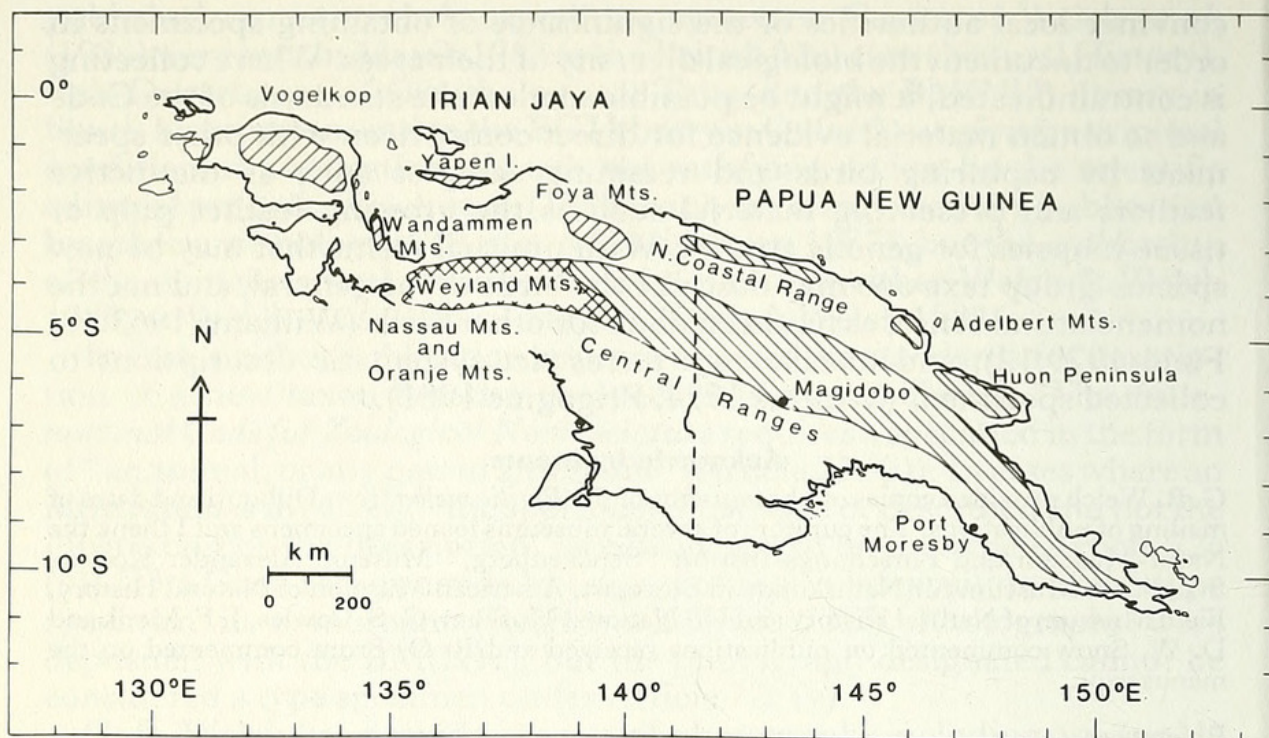


Figure 1. Map showing known distributions of *Pachycephalopsis hattamensis* (rightward diagonal) and *P. poliosoma* (leftward diagonal). The range of *P. poliosoma* at the western end of central New Guinea overlaps that of *P. hattamensis* (cross hatching). Type locality (Magidobo) of *P. h. lecrovae*, relative to Papua New Guinea–Irian Jaya border, is indicated. Modified from Diamond (1985: 89).

White-eyed Robin *P. poliosoma* Sharpe 1882, the eastern member, is a mid-montane (1000–1700 m) species of the Central Ranges, Adelbert Mountains, North Coastal Range and mountains of the Huon Peninsula. Whereas this distribution extends through Papua New Guinea into eastern Irian Jaya, Indonesia, that of the Green-backed (or Western White-eyed) Robin *P. hattamensis* (Meyer) 1874 has been considered restricted to slightly lower altitudes (600–1640 m) in Irian Jaya (Vogelkop, Wandammen, Weyland, Nassau, Oranje and Foya Mountains, and Yapen Island) (Beehler *et al.* 1986, Mayr 1986).

A recent collection of birds made by Ken Aplin from Magidobo (06°11'S, 142°46'E; 1450 m a.s.l.), Papua New Guinea, and received in spirit, contained one specimen of *P. poliosoma* and 2 of *P. hattamensis*, the latter extending the range of the species eastward by some 400 km and constituting the first record from the Papuan side of the island (Fig. 1).

Four subspecies of *P. hattamensis* are currently recognized (Diamond 1985, Mayr 1986): *hattamensis* (Meyer 1874) (Vogelkop); *ernesti* Hartert 1930 (Wandammen Mountains); *axillaris* Mayr 1931 (Weyland, Nassau and Oranje Mountains); and *insularis* Diamond 1985 (Yapen Island). The Magidobo birds most closely resemble *hattamensis* and *axillaris*, but plumage differences are apparent between the new specimens and each of the named forms. Accordingly, I name the Magidobo population as a new subspecies:

***Pachycephalopsis hattamensis lecrovae* subsp. nov.**

Holotype. Australian Museum registration number 0.59035. Collected

11 October 1985; ♂, testes enlarged (left testis 9×4 mm); wing (flattened) 99 mm; tail 61 mm; culmen (to skull) 21.0 mm; tarsus 31.4 mm; no moult; stomach contents small insects; field no. G55; partially skinned and dried as a skin; blood and liver samples taken by Aplin.

Paratype. AM 0.59036. Collected 13 October 1985; ♀, oviduct straight and thin, oocytes undeveloped; wing (flattened) 91 mm; tail 51 mm; culmen (to skull) 19.5 mm; tarsus 30.4 mm; no moult; field no. G76; retained in spirit. Only the second such specimen of this species in collections (Wood *et al.* 1982).

Wing lengths of the Magidobo specimens agree with the findings of Diamond (1985) that measurements of males average about 10 mm longer than those of females.

Distribution. Known only from the type locality.

Diagnosis. Differs from *ernesti* and *insularis* in having the undertail coverts orange rather than yellow-orange, the throat white like the chin and the lower breast without a grey wash. From *hattamensis* and *axillaris* it is separated by having the axillaries much more olive with only a trace of orange. Additionally, the upperparts and underparts, particularly the centre of the belly, are darker than in most specimens of the last 2 subspecies.

Etymology. This form is named in honour of Mary LeCroy, Department of Ornithology, American Museum of Natural History, in recognition of her long-standing and on-going contributions to our understanding of the avifauna of New Guinea.

Discussion. As both the holotype and paratype had been preserved and stored in alcohol prior to receipt, special care was taken when judging colours, particularly when the subspecific diagnoses are based primarily on the presence of alcohol-soluble carotenoid pigments. There is no evidence of colour alteration, however, as the potentially vulnerable orange undertail coverts remain the same colour as those of specimens of *hattamensis* and *axillaris* that had never been stored in alcohol. Additional specimens, not stored in spirit, are obviously desirable.

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