

Preface

ERNST MAYR, the paterfamilias of New Guinea ornithology, published his *List of New Guinea Birds* in 1941. It serves as the model for this publication. Mayr's seminal treatise to this day remains a cherished collectible as well as an informative reference for students of the avifauna of New Guinea. Offering this update, some seventy-five years later, acknowledges that the job Mayr did back before World War II was remarkably thorough and incisive. Some of the troublesome systematic and taxonomic issues that Mayr identified remain only partially resolved today, but molecular systematics has provided a major step forward, especially at the higher taxonomic levels. Exciting challenges await whomever takes up the avifauna of New Guinea as a focus of study, and we hope our publication will encourage a new generation of field, museum, and molecular-systematic ornithologists to work to resolve the persistent enigmas highlighted in Mayr's *List* and revisited here.

We started this book in the year 2000, at the same time that we started work on our field guide, *Birds of New Guinea, Second Edition* (Pratt & Beehler 2014). Both projects progressed in lockstep. Just as the *Species-Checklist of the Birds of New Guinea* (Beehler & Finch 1985) provided the taxonomic foundation of the first edition of *Birds of New Guinea*, so the present new book (which we informally call "the Checklist") delivers the scientific documentation for the second edition of the field guide. This new Checklist vastly expands the taxonomic scope of the 1985 work, containing very detailed accounts of distribution, systematics, plus treatment to the subspecies level. This expansion was necessary because of a wealth of new information on bird distribution within the region, wholesale changes to the classification of New Guinea birds, and the need to sort out the long-neglected treatment of subspecies. Because of this flood of new information, the Checklist's purpose outgrew the limits of the field guide, and this book became a truly independent and comprehensive avifaunal treatise. We have tracked down thousands of bits of information new and old pertaining to the distribution of the New Guinea birds and have traced the revolution in systematics for the avifauna. In this Checklist we have delved into the whys and wherefores of the classification of this great avifauna.

Towards the end of the field guide project, the burden of producing two lengthy and highly-detailed books proved too much. It was then decided to complete the field guide first, with the Checklist to follow. As a result, the distributional and taxonomic information of the

two books matches closely, but not perfectly, owing to newly-published studies and some postponed systematic decisions that are presented now for the first time.

For both authors this project has been a labor of friendship and collaboration. Many have generously lent a helping hand. We start with Mary LeCroy of the American Museum of Natural History, New York (AMNH). Mary is, in many ways, the keeper of the archive for New Guinea and its birdlife. We have gone to her to resolve the countless details surrounding the collectors, places, expeditions, type descriptions, and study skins that can be amassed only at a great natural history museum. She has worked for five decades in the American Museum's Department of Ornithology. No one knows more. We salute her dedication, friendship, and generosity. She was the natural candidate for Technical Editor.

Our respective home institutions have each offered a productive and supportive platform for long-term research. For BMB this is the Division of Birds of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC (here abbreviated as USNM). For TKP it is the Department of Vertebrate Zoology of the Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu (BPBM). We thank both institutions for their help.

Others have aided in various ways. Peter Mumford spent a summer assembling data for an early version of the text. Jennifer L. Mandeville completed the late Bill Peckover's New Guinea geographic gazetteer, which appears here as an appendix. Fellow scientists and scholars have shared their knowledge with us. Jared Diamond has provided advice on our work at various stages as well as important information on distributions of many species inhabiting New Guinea. David Bishop reviewed our manuscript at several stages and provided many insightful corrections and additions. The manuscript in draft was reviewed and critiqued by Sebastian van Balen, K. David Bishop, Walter Boles, Brian Coates, Jack Dumbacher, Guy Dutton, Chris Elan, Ben Freeman, David Gibbs, Frank Gill, Leo Joseph, Mary LeCroy, Roger Pasquier, Richard Schodde, Christophe Thébaud, and Iain Woxvold. Valuable technical advice was offered by Allen Allison, Michael Andersen, Richard Banks, Brett Benz, Enrico Borgo, Les Christidis, Nigel Cleeve, John Cox, Joel Cracraft, Normand David, Mark Denil, Edward C. Dickinson, Giuliano Doria, Carla Dove, Scott Edwards, Clifford Frith, Francesco Geremi, Brian Gill, Gary Graves, Philippa Horton, Helen James, Knud Jønsson, Leo Joseph, Allan Keith, Henny van de Kerkhof, Keller Koenig, Andy Mack, Steven van der Mije, Borja Mila, Storrs Olson, Dewi Prawiradilaga, Paul Scofield, Neil Stronach, Paul Sweet, Carlo Violani, and Bret Whitney. Also we thank the excellent technical staff of the ornithology units of the Museum Zoologicum Bogoriense, Cibinong, Indonesia; the Natural History Museum, Tring, England; the National Museum of Natural History, Leiden, Netherlands; Museo Civico di Storia Naturale G. Doria, Genoa, Italy; the American Museum of Natural History, New York; the Bernice Bishop Museum, Honolulu; and the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. Jacob Sancier provided a critical reading of the text in the proof stage. Robert Kirk and Princeton University Press made publication possible; Ellen Foos expertly managed the complicated publication process; Amy K. Hughes provided detailed and insightful copyediting; and Carol Bertler designed the book to make it compact, handsome, and readable. Finally, John Anderton provided the lovely bird drawings that grace the text.