

# The Birds of Mangalum and Mantanani Islands off the West Coast of British North Borneo

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The islet of Mangalum lies just outside the 25-fathom contour line and about thirty miles W. N. W. from Jesselton. Nearly circular in shape and about a mile and a half in diameter it is very low and flat except in the centre where there are a few hillocks surrounded by swamp in which sago-palms grow. Except for a little grass-land above some of the beaches it is covered with forest in which a few clearings on the west coast have been made by recent settlers from Borneo and elsewhere by a prospecting company which sank shafts in a search for oil. It is surrounded by coral: the reef is narrowest on the south and southeast, where a close approach is afforded to vessels, but is about a mile wide on the northern side.

The best landing place in the South-west monsoon is above the South-east point: in the winter monsoon the south shore seems most easily accessible.

Numerous little streams of brown but drinkable water reach the sea from the central swamp.

About sixty miles north-east from Mangalum Island but only about fifteen from the coast of Borneo and situated in shallower water lies a little group of islets—the Mantanani Islands—having about the same total area as Mangalum. Their surfaces are more diversified as there is a proportion of grass land on the largest, while others are rocky and provide caves occupied by a "birds-nest" Swift. Bajaus, or Sea-gypsies, inhabit the main islet intermittently and have cultivated suitable spots in a crude manner.

The group has been visited by collectors on several occasions: A. H. Everett, in December 1887, and again in April 1892, was probably the first to obtain birds; Dr. J. C. Moulton was ashore there in June 1921 and the writer spent a few hours on the main islet in June 1924.

I have listed, so far as is known, the birds which have been obtained on the Mantanani group where several species occur which do not seem to be present on Mangalum Island. It is unlikely during the week spent on the latter by myself and three collectors in July 1928 that we missed any resident birds, but though the Mantanani Islands have been less systematically worked they possess the larger fauna.

The only Mangalum birds not secured on the Mantanani Islands were:—

*Chalcophaps indica indica*  
*Leptocoma jugularis ornata*

While the Mantanani birds not obtained on Mangalum were:—

*Columba griseogularis*  
*Caloenas nicobarica*  
*Otus scops mantananensis*  
*Tanygnathus lucionensis*  
*Halcyon chloris cyanescens*  
*Collocalia* sp.  
*Artamus leucorhynchus leucorhynchus*  
*Aplonis panayensis heterochlorus*

### 1. MANGALUM ISLAND

#### 1. *Megapodius nicobariensis cumingi* Dillwyn.

*Megapodius Cumingii* Dillwyn. P. Z. S. 1851, p. 118, pl. 39 (Labuan Id.).

Motley and Dillwyn. Contr. Nat. Hist. Labuan, 1855, p. 32, pl. 7.

*Megapodius lowii* Sharpe, P. Z. S., 1875, p. 111 (Labuan).

2 ♂, 3 ♀. 10–15 July, 1928.

"Iris brown, skin of head and neck pinkish scarlet; bill horny brown, or olive brown with ochraceous tip, feet blackish, tarsi dull red posteriorly, sometime olive anteriorly."

Total length ♂ 355, 360; ♀ 348, 360, 360; tail ♂ 75, 75; ♀ 68, 77, 75; wing ♂ 212, 210; ♀ 202, 208, 215; tarsus ♂ 60, 60; ♀ —, 61. —: bill from gape ♂ 28, 27; ♀ 26, 27, 28 mm.

These birds in fresh plumage are darker throughout than a small series in worn plumage from the Mantanani Islands, a little group sixty miles to the north-east, and one should hesitate to base distinctions on slight colour differences without consideration of the time elapsed since the last moult took place. There is nothing in the description of *M. c. toluillii* Bangs and Peters,\* from Maratua Id. E. Borneo, to show that it differs in any way from other Bornean megapodes.

In spite of what Tweeddale† and Sharpe‡ have written *M. cumingi* is still thought by some authors to be based on Philippine birds, but the first name given to any of them is *M. pusillus* Tweedd.§

I have placed *cumingi* as a subspecies of *nicobariensis* but it is probable that both are only races of *reinwardti* Dumont, 1823.

\*Occ. Papers, Boston Soc. N. H., 5, 1927, p. 235.

†P. Z. S. 1877, p. 765–6 and footnote.

‡P. Z. S. 1879, p. 349.

§loc. cit. supra., pl. lxxviii. \*

#### 2. *Ducula pickeringi* (Cassin).

*Carpophaga pickeringi* Cassin, Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Philadelphia, vii, 1854, p. 228 (Mangsi Islet).

*Carpophaga everetti* Grant, Ann. and Mag. N. H. (6) 11, 1888, p. 351 (Mantanani Islands).

7 ♂ 6 ♀. 10–15 July 1928.

"Iris and eyelid crimson, bill plumbeous, cere and base darker, feet livid crimson."

Total length ♂ 435, 435, 430, 430, 422, 420, 415; ♀ 435, 435, 420, 410, 405; tail ♂ 172, 167, 175, 175, 170, 167, 170; ♀ 162, 165, 167, 165, 157, 153; wing ♂ 247, 245, 236, 240, 247, 233, 242; ♀ 238, 237, 236, 225, 215, 225 mm.

All except one specimen differ from two topotypes of "*everetti*" in having the tail metallic green instead of blue or violet: but Grant's Mantanani bird has "tail with a dark green metallic lustre" and Guillemard (P. Z. S. 1885, p. 420) notes of a series from Cagayan Sulu Id., "there is but little individual variation in the series, but in some the iridescent colour of the tail inclines rather to blue than green". Of one or two of my specimens which evidently struck me as being, in the flesh, rather more brightly coloured than others I have noted "forehead, cheeks and breasts slightly pinkish". It is evident that colour varies a little: for instance, the under tail-coverts vary from grey to greyish-cinnamon.

This greyish, dull fruit pigeon, almost devoid of metallic sheen and coppery green tints on back and wings, occurs on a number of small islands around North Borneo:—Mangalum,\* Mantanani, Mangsi, Cagayan Sulu, Cagayancillo, Sibutu, Sulu; and also in the Talaut Islands north of the Menado Peninsula, Celebes.† The type locality, Mangsi Islet, is only eight miles north of Banguay Island where, in 1928, Mr. F. N. Chasen and I obtained *D. acnea*.

*D. pickeringi* is, of course, not a full species, but I am unable to say how it should be indicated trinomially.

This grey fruit pigeon was very common on Mangalum.

#### 3. *Myristicivora bicolor bicolor* (Scop.).

1 ♂, 1 ♀. 11–12 July, 1928.

"Iris dark; edge of eyelid plumbeous; bill and feet plumbeous tip and claws black".

\*Recorded as occurring on "Mergalun" in Cat. Birds Brit. Mus. xxi, but no specimens listed. Probably observed by A. H. Everett.

†Fide Meyer and Wiglesworth; but Mathews (1927) does not admit its occurrence in the Austro-Oriental subregion.

Total length ♂ 400; ♀ 400; tail ♂ 135; ♀ 140; wing ♂ 233; ♀ 233 mm.

Not numerous on Mangalum Island.

4. *Treron vernans griseicapilla* Schleg.

One bird was seen.

5. *Chalcophaps indica indica* (Linn.).

2, 14th July, 1928.

"Iris dark; eyelid dull crimson; bill scarlet, cere and gonys dull crimson; feet dull crimson."

Total length 252, 245; tail 95, 92; wing 145, 144 mm.

6. *Cuncuma leucogaster leucogaster* (Gm.).

Several sea-eagles inhabited the island.

7. *Leptocoma jugularis ornata* (Less.).

3 ♂, 2 ♀. 10-14 July, 1928.

"Iris dark, bill and feet black."

Total length ♂ 115, 113, 110; ♀ 105, 104; Tail ♂ 35, 35, 33; ♀ 30, 30; Wing ♂ 52.5, 52, 52; ♀ 50, 50; Tarsi ♂ 16, 14, 14, ♀ 15, 14; Bill from gape ♂ 20, 19, 19; ♀ 20, 19 mm.

Inseparable from birds from North Borneo, Sumatra and from islands south of Singapore: though the males have the metallic forehead of smaller area than in a series of topotypes this may be due to immaturity and the make-up of the skins: otherwise there are no differences between them and Javanese birds.

8. *Anthreptes malaccensis bornensis* Riley.

2 ♂, 1 ♂ subad, 5 ♀, 10-14 July, 1928.

"Iris red in males, red or dark in females; bill blackish; feet olive, soles ochraceous."

Total length ♂ 140, 136, 133 (subad.); ♀ 128, 126, 114, 133, 123 (imm.); tail 52, 50, 45 (subad.); ♀ 43, 44, 42, 45, 38 (imm.); wings ♂ 70, 67, 65 (subad.); ♀ 62, 66, 63, 67, 61 (imm.); tarsi ♂ 19, 18, 18 (subad.); ♀ —, 19, 17.5, 17, 17 (imm.); bill from gape ♂ 19, 19, 19 (subad.); ♀ 19, 19, 19, 19, 18 (imm.) mm.

Inseparable from a North Bornean series (Jesselton to Sandakan).

The subadult male has yellow moustachial stripes bordering the brown throat and a few yellow feathers above the eye and behind the ear-coverts.

(In addition to the above, Frigate birds were several times observed high above the island while a small plover and a wagtail were seen to alight on the beaches.)

## 2. MANTANANI ISLANDS

1. *Megapodius nicobariensis cumingi* Dillwyn.

3 ♀. 16th June, 1924.

Wings 213, 215, 218 mm.

"Iris dark; bill horny, tip dull yellow; skin of head carmine; feet black, tarsi dull crimson posteriorly" C. B. K.

Plumage very worn and so faded that the feathers of the nape and mantle have acquired buffy edges.

2. *Ducula pickeringi* Cassin.

1 ♂, 1 ♀, 18th June, 1921.

Wings ♂ 244, ♀ 236 mm.

3. *Myristicivora bicolor bicolor* (Scop.).

1 ♀, 18th June, 1921.

Wing 234 mm.

The nutmeg pigeon occurs in great numbers.

4. *Treron vernans griseicapilla* Schleg.

1 ♀, 16th June, 1924.

Wing 142 mm.

5. *Columba griseogularis* (Walden and Layard).

2 ♂, 18th June, 1921.

1 ♂, 1 ♂, 16th June, 1924.

Wings ♂ 231, 238, 241, ♀ 245 mm.

"Iris orange-yellow; orbital skin crimson; bill tip yellow, base crimson; feet livid crimson" C. B. K.

A Philippine and Sulu Islands bird ranging to North Borneo. Probably a race of *C. metallica* Temm.

6. *Caloenas nicobarica nicobarica* (Linn.).

1 ♂, 16th June, 1924.

Wing 257 mm.

7. *Otus scops mantananensis* (Sharpe).

*Scops mantananensis* Sharpe Bull. B. O. C., 1, 1892, p. iv.

Obtained by A. H. Everett and differentiated by Sharpe from *O. s. elegans* (Cassin) of the Riu-Kiu (Loo-Choo) Islands. Not met with by later collectors.

Related to the better-known *O. s. malayensis* (Hay) of the Malay Peninsula, no representative of which is known from the Bornean mainland though allied races occur in various Philippine and Sulu Islands.

8. *Tanygnathus lucionensis* (Linn.).

*Tanygnathus salvadorii* Ogilvie-Grant, Ibis, 1896, p. 562.

1 ♀, 18th June, 1921.

2 ♂, 3 ♀, 16th June, 1924.

Wings ♂ 195, 200; ♀ 191, 192, 193, 195 mm.

"Iris yellow; maxilla scarlet, tip yellowish; mandible reddish-yellow; feet olive" C. B. K.

This series, composed of adult and somewhat immature examples, appears to agree well with descriptions of Philippine birds by McGregor (Manual of Philippine Birds, 1909, p. 281, etc.). The Mantanani birds separated by Grant are obviously immature as Salvadori considered (Cat. Birds Brit. Mus. xx, p. 426). The present series includes both birds with black shoulders and others in which the shoulders are largely green, while the wing-coverts of the latter lack the dark centres of the adults and have the golden margins narrower: further the crowns are of a paler blue.

There is another point: it should not be concluded that *Tanygnathus* is indigenous and that the Mantanani Islands have any special affinity with the Philippines because of its presence. Parrots are popular cage-birds everywhere: the Mantanani group is visited almost yearly by sailing craft from the Sulu Islands, etc., the crews of which may very possibly have introduced the ancestors of the present parrot population.

McGregor states "the Philippine green parrot is the common cage-bird of the natives, who have doubtless aided in its dispersal. Escaped cage-birds were shot by us on several occasions".

The species is not found free in Borneo though it occurs on Sibutu and Cagayan Sulu Islands, and on Palawan. Several subspecies have been proposed.

9. *Halcyon chloris cyanescens* (Oberh.).

1 ♂, 18th June, 1921.

Wing 114 mm.

10. *Collocalia* sp.

Breeds on the smaller rocky islets of the group.

11. *Artamus leucorhynchus leucorhynchus* (Linn.).

1 ♂, 2 ♀, 15th, 16th June, 1924.

Wings ♂ 135; ♀ 138, 140 mm.

12. *Aplonis panayensis heterochlorus* (Oberh.).

1 ♂, 16th June, 1924.

Wing 107 mm.

Of the size of the typical form, but plumage similar to birds of the Anamba Islands which Oberholser states differ in colour from Philippine birds.

13. *Anthreptes malaccensis bornensis* Riley.

1 ♂, 18th June, 1921.

Wing 68 mm.