

## SHORT NOTES

### Was *Taphaetus lacertosus* De Vis a fishing eagle, *Ichthyophaga* Lesson?

*Uroaetus brachialis* De Vis (1890, Proc. Linn. Soc. Qd 6: 161-2) is based on a humerus (QM. F117) that resembles that of the Wedge-tailed Eagle *Aquila (Uroaetus) audax*. De Vis (1891, Proc. Linn. Soc. NSW 6: 123-5) assigned to *Uroaetus brachialis* a femur (QM F118) found by a Mr Hurst, and because it differed markedly from that of the Wedge-tailed Eagle, De Vis (1891) created a new genus *Taphaetus* for *U. brachialis*. This femur, together with a second humerus (QM F5507) and a quadrate (QM F5508) were named by De Vis (1905, Ann. Qd Mus. 6: 3-25) *Taphaetus lacertosus*, and he returned the type humerus of *brachialis* to *Uroaetus*, which has since been included in *Aquila*.

The type-species of *Taphaetus* is *brachialis* and De Vis was incorrect in retaining it only for his new species, *lacertosus*, which should either be given a new generic name or be placed in an appropriate genus.

According to De Vis (1905), *lacertosus* resembled the White-breasted Sea-eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*

more than the Wedge-tailed Eagle. It was the same size as the White-breasted Sea-eagle, but with shorter and more powerful wings. This suggests that it may have been a fishing eagle, *Ichthyophaga* Lesson. There are two extant species of fishing eagle. Both occur in southern Asia and their ranges overlap that of the White-breasted Sea-eagle in south-eastern Asia including Indonesia. Both are the same size as the White-breasted Sea-eagle and they are characterized by having shorter broader wings than other eagles, including sea-eagles (Brown and Amadon 1968, Eagles, Hawks and Falcons of the World: 299-302; Lloyd and Lloyd 1969, Birds of Prey: 56-7).

I suggest, therefore, that *lacertosus* be placed in the genus *Ichthyophaga* rather than in *Aquila (Uroaetus)*. To avoid further confusion in future, I hereby select as lectotype of *Taphaetus lacertosus* De Vis 1905 the humerus (QM F5507) described on pages 4 and 5 and illustrated in Pl. I, Figure 1.

DR G. F. VAN TETS, *Division of Wildlife Research, CSIRO, PO Box 84, Lyneham, ACT 2602.*  
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### First record of White-lined Honeyeater in northern Kimberley, WA

Hitherto the White-lined Honeyeater *Meliphaga albilineata* has been known only from the Arnhem Land plateau. We collected a specimen on 6 and another on 17 February 1973 from east of the Mitchell River at Survey Pool (14°41'S, 125°43'E).

Details of the specimens are: WA Museum Reg. No. A12386; male; skull fully pneumatized; weight 28 g; total length 194 mm, wing 89, tail 79, bill from base of skull 23.8, bill exposed culmen 18.5, tarsus 21. Bill black, lower mandible slightly paler, gape yellowish white, mouth orange, iris whitish grey, legs grey. A12387; female; skull fully pneumatized; weight 23 g; total length 177 mm, wing 79, tail 70, bill from base of skull 22, bill exposed culmen 17, tarsus 19. Bill black, mouth yellow, gape white, iris whitish, legs grey. The stomachs of both birds contained Green Tree-ants *Oecophylla virescens*.

Deignan (1964, Rec. Am.-Aust. scient. Exped. Arnhem Ld 4: 419) stated that the block published in Emu 16 (Pl. 45) is a satisfactory portrait of birds from the Arnhem Land plateau. The Western Australian specimens differ slightly from this, having less yellow on the primaries and being more greyish brown on the back.

Five visits were made to the Survey Pool from 15 January to 17 February. One to three birds were

heard or observed on each occasion except on 17 February when eight birds were recorded.

We also recorded one and three birds respectively on two out of four visits to Crystal Creek near Crystal Head (20 km north-north-east of Survey Pool); and two birds from Mitchell River Falls (20 km south of Survey Pool) on 14 January. Like Survey Pool these areas were extremely rugged: huge slabs and boulders of sandstone intersected by a deep gorge with fast flowing water. The terrain was sparsely wooded with *Eucalyptus*, *Acacia* and *Ficus*. 'Spinifex' grew thick and high between the jumbled sandstone.

The powerful fluting call of these birds made identification easy. Their habits of always calling from a concealed perch and of flying fairly long distances (up to 400 m) when flushed, made them difficult to collect. They were usually encountered in deep gorges or at their margins.

The collection of the White-lined Honeyeater in the Mitchell River area confirms sightings of the species made by LAS and J. Dell in similar habitat on Bigge Island (5 June 1972) and on Wollaston Island (11 June 1972) while taking part in a survey of the Bonaparte Archipelago.

LAWRENCE A. SMITH and R. E. JOHNSTONE, *Western Australian Museum, Francis Street, Perth, WA 6000.*  
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