

MUSCICAPA GRISEICTICTA WINTERING IN NEW GUINEA

The Grey-streaked Flycatcher *Muscicapa griseisticta* breeds in eastern Siberia and winters in the Philippines, Celebes, Moluccas and the western New Guinean region. Seven records for the New Guinean region were summarized by Rothschild *et al.* (1932: 157) and by Mayr (1941). Subsequently, three more records have been reported for the New Guinean region (Gyldenstolpe 1955: 349; Gilliard and LeCroy 1961: 55; Mees 1972: 83). Most of the New Guinean records are from islands off western or north-western New Guinea (Gebe, Misoöl, Waigeo, Mapia, Japen, Pulu Adi) or from the Vogelkop (localities: Sainkedoek, Andai, Manokwari). The sole prior record for the main body of New Guinea is a specimen taken by Gilliard at Telefomin.

On 19 and 20 October 1979 I observed one individual on the main body of New Guinea, at Danau Bira (Lake Holmes) in the foothills of the van Rees Mts, 400 metres above sea level, 138°2'E, 2°28'S. I noted it as a *Muscicapatype* flycatcher, dark above, white below, with streaked breast. This individual was at a height of twenty to thirty metres in the crown of a tall strangling fig-tree that was in fruit and had attracted many avian frugivores. The tree stood on the lawn of the Summer Institute of Linguistics settlement, fifty metres from the lake and 500 from the nearest forest. Although I was observing at this fig-tree for much of the day on 19 and 20 October, I saw *M. griseisticta* only in the early morning. I did not see it in my observations of this same tree on 4, 5, 6, 18, 21 and 22 October.

The bird's behaviour was similar to that of its three congeners of which I have experience (*M. hypoleuca*, *M. striata*, *M. latirostris*), i.e., it made repeated short sallies and returned to the same perch or a nearby one. The sole resident New Guinean species occupying a similar niche as a short-sallying flycatcher in the crown of isolated trees in the lowlands is *Microeca flavigaster* but it happened to be absent at Danau Bira and is generally rare in western New Guinea and more

widespread in eastern New Guinea. The resident flycatcher *Peltops blainvillii* was present at Danau Bira but makes much longer sallies and is a much larger bird.

This is the second most easterly record for *Muscicapa griseisticta*, Telefomin being more easterly. Its absence from eastern New Guinea may perhaps be due to competition from the resident *Microeca flavigaster*. Records for the New Guinean region fall between 19 October and 27 April. Except for Pulu Adi, all localities where *M. griseisticta* has been observed in the New Guinean region are from the northern watershed, which is the part that would be reached first by migrants from eastern Siberia and the Philippines. Like virtually all other winter visitors to New Guinea, *Muscicapa griseisticta* is confined there to open habitats.

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In 1981 I again observed individuals (six times) and pairs (twice) of *M. griseisticta* in western New Guinea: at Danau Bira, January 25 – 28 and February 13 – 15; and at Wanggasten in the Fakfak Mts of the Onin Peninsula, 650 metres above sea level, March 3 and 4. All sightings were in the canopy of trees that stood in the open or at the forest edge.

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