

Letter to the Editor

Sir,

In the report of the R.A.O.U. excursion in New Guinea (*Emu*, 62: 67-98) mention is made of the observation of silvereyes, which were identified as *Zosterops novaeguineae*, at various localities near Wau. I doubt this identification for the following reasons: though the Morobe District has been worked by several collectors, no previous records of the occurrence of *Z. novaeguineae* in the area exist; *Z. atrifrons chrysolaema*, on the other hand, a species not mentioned in the R.A.O.U. report, is known to be common there, and has been collected in series at various localities near Wau. In my revision of the Zosteropidae (*Zool. Verh.* no. 50, 1961), maps of the known distribution of the two species are given on pp. 80 and 107. Also, the birds observed were noted to be: "much brighter in plumage than their counterpart in southern Australia", an observation which is correct for *Z. atrifrons chrysolaema*, which is an extremely bright and beautiful form, but scarcely for *Z. novaeguineae crissalis* of South-eastern New Guinea, and even less so for *Z. novaeguineae oreophila* of the Huon Peninsula. Therefore I regard it as a safe assumption that the birds observed by the R.A.O.U. party were, in fact, *Z. atrifrons chrysolaema*.

I take this opportunity to remark on two minor matters. The reed-warbler is referred to as *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*, but the specific distinctness of the oriental species has now been well established, see for example Stresemann & Arnold (*J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc.*, 48: 428-443), and it should be known as *Acrocephalus stentoreus*. If, however, one insists on using the name *A. arundinaceus*, the vernacular Australian Reed-Warbler, as used in the list, would seem singularly inappropriate.

The Bare-eyed Crow is listed as *Corvus tristis*. While there is a tendency, particularly in the Anglo-Saxon countries, to do away with monotypic genera, I still prefer to keep this peculiar species in its own genus, as *Gymnocorvus tristis*. I do not know what the field-experience of the R.A.O.U. observers with this species has been, but the first time I observed it, in forest north of Sorong in the extreme north-west of Dutch New Guinea in March 1957, I did not even recognize it as a crow, and it is certainly very different from any members of the rather compact and uniform genus *Corvus* I know.

Yours, etc.,
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