



MELILESTES LILLOPHUS, *Salvad.*

MELILESTES ILIOLOPHUS, *Salvad.*

Long-plumed Honey-eater.

Melilestes iliolophus, *Salvad.* Ann. Mus. Civic. Genov. vii. p. 951 (1875), xvi. p. 75 (1880).—*Id.* Orn. Papuasie delle Molucche, ii. p. 316 (1881), iii. p. 543 (1882).—*Sharpe*, Journ. Linn. Soc., Zool. xvi. p. 437 (1882).

Arachnothera iliolophus, *Gadow*, Cat. Birds in Brit. Mus. ix. p. 3, pl. i. fig. 2 (1884).

THE genus *Melilestes* has been united by Dr. Gadow to the genus *Arachnothera*; but in our opinion Count Salvadori was right in placing it with the *Meliphagidae* or family of Honey-suckers, rather than with the Sun-birds or *Nectariniidae*, where it is located by Dr. Gadow. The long fluffy plumage and the silky tufts on the flanks are characters which ally the genus to the Honey-suckers, though the general appearance of the birds is very much that of the Spider-hunters (*Arachnothera*).

Count Salvadori includes four species in his genus *Melilestes*, of which the present and *M. affinis* (a species summarily suppressed without just cause by Dr. Gadow, who has never seen a specimen) are distinguished by their greyish-olive underparts. A fifth species has been discovered since Salvadori wrote, which is figured in the present work.

The present species was discovered in the islands of Jobi and Miosnoum, in the Bay of Geelvink, by Dr. Beccari, and we cannot find any marked difference between some of the typical examples now in the British Museum and others obtained in South-eastern New Guinea, where it has been obtained by Mr. Goldie and Mr. H. O. Forbes in the Astrolabe Mountains. The following description is from one of Mr. Goldie's specimens:—

Adult. General colour above dull olive-green, the head a little duller than the back; feathers of the lower back and rump very long and silky, and a little lighter than the rest of the back; wing-coverts like the back; the primary-coverts and quills dusky brown, edged with olive-green like the back, the secondaries more broadly; tail dusky black; lores and feathers round the eye ashy olive; ear-coverts lighter olive; under surface of body very pale yellowish, ashy on the cheeks and throat; sides of the body with long silky plumes of paler yellow; under tail-coverts like the abdomen, and washed with pale olive-green; axillaries light yellow like the sides of the body; under wing-coverts light ashy brown, washed with yellowish olive; quills dusky below, whitish along the edge of the inner web. Total length 3·9 inches, culmen 0·85, wing 2·7, tail 1·45, tarsus 0·85.

The figures in the Plate are drawn from two specimens procured by Mr. H. O. Forbes in the Sogeri district of the Astrolabe Mountains.

[R. B. S.]



Gould, John and Sharpe, Richard Bowdler. 1887. "Melilestes iliolophus, Long-plumed Honey-eater [Pl. 57]." *The birds of New Guinea and the adjacent Papuan islands : including many new species recently discovered in Australia* 3(XXIII), -. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.322770>.

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