



MELIDORA MACRORHINA, Less.

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Hook-billed Kingfisher.

- Dacelo macrorhinus*, Less. Voy. Coquille, Zoologie, Atlas, pl. 31 bis, fig. 2 (1826).—Id. Féruss. Bull. Sci. Nat. xii. p. 131 (1827).—Id. Voy. Coquille, Zool. i. p. 692 (1828).—Id. Man. d'Orn. ii. p. 94 (1828).—Gray, Cat. B. New Guinea, p. 19 (1859).—Id. Proc. Zool. Soc. 1859, p. 154.
- Melidora euphrosia*, Less. Traité d'Orn. p. 259 (1831).—Id. Compl. Œuvres de Buffon, Oiseaux, p. 653 (1838).—Bp. Consp. Gen. Av. i. p. 150 (1850).—Finsch, Neu-Guinea, p. 160 (1865).
- Dacelo macrorhynchus*, Less. Traité d'Orn. p. 249 (1831).
- Melidora macrorhyncha*, Gray, List Gen. Birds, i. p. 10 (1840).—Id. List Gen. Birds, p. 14 (1841).—Id. Handl. B. i. p. 89, no. 1067 (1869).—Ramsay, Proc. Linn. Soc. New S. Wales, iii. p. 252 (1878), iv. p. 97 (1879).
- Dacelo macrorhynchus*, Gray, Genera of Birds, i. p. 78 (1846).
- Melidora macrorhina*, Reichenb. Handb. spec. Orn. Alced. p. 41, sp. 99, Taf. 428. figs. 3166–7 (1851).—Sclater, Journ. Linn. Soc. ii. p. 156 (1858).—Sharpe, Mon. Alcedinidae, p. 120 (1871).—Beccari, Ann. Mus. Civ. Genova, vii. p. 708 (1875).—Salvad. tom. cit. p. 766, viii. p. 398 (1876).—Cab. & Reichenow, Journ. f. Orn. 1876, p. 323. —Salvad. Ann. Mus. Civ. Genova, xi. pp. 128, 303; xiii. p. 319 (1878).—Id. Orn. Papuasie, &c. i. p. 500 (1881).
- Melidora euphrosina*, Reichenb. loc. cit.; Rosenb. Nat. Tijdschr. Nederl. Ind. xxv. p. 230 (1863).—Id. Journ. f. Orn. 1861, p. 117.
- Melidora euphrosie*, Bp. Consp. Vol. Anisod. p. 9 (1854).
- Dacelo macrorhynchus*, Gray, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1858, p. 189.—Id. Cat. B. New Guinea, p. 54 (1859).—Id. Proc. Zool. Soc. 1861, p. 433.
- Dacelo macrorhina*, Schlegel, Mus. Pays-Bas, Alcedinidae, p. 22 (1863).—Id. Vog. Ned. Ind. Alced. pp. 17, 51, pl. 4. fig. 1 (1864).—Id. Mus. Pays-Bas, Alced. (Revue), p. 18 (1874).—Giebel, Thes. Orn. ii. p. 7 (1875).
- Melidora goldiei*, Ramsay, Proc. Linn. Soc. New S. Wales, i. p. 369 (1876).
- Melidora collaris*, Sharpe, Journ. Linn. Soc. xiii. p. 313 (1877).

It is to Count Salvadori that we owe our knowledge of the plumages through which this extraordinary form of Kingfisher passes. Mr. Bowdler Sharpe, in his Monograph of the family, seems to have been acquainted with the female bird only; and at the time that he wrote, very few specimens existed in European museums. More recently, however, Mr. Bruijn and the well-known Italian traveller Signor D'Albertis have forwarded to the Genoa museum a large series of specimens, while it has also been obtained by other naturalists in South-eastern New Guinea. The late Dr. James met with it near Hall Bay; and Mr. Ramsay has recorded it from the interior of the country near Port Moresby. We have also seen specimens collected near East Cape by Mr. Hunstein, and by Mr. Goldie on the Astrolabe range.

The south-eastern specimens were described independently by Mr. Ramsay and Mr. Sharpe as a distinct species; but Count Salvadori compared the type of *Melidora collaris* with others from North-western New Guinea, and feels certain that it is nothing but the ordinary adult male of *M. macrorhina*.

The present species was discovered by Lesson during the voyage of the 'Coquille,' near Dorey, where also Mr. Wallace and Von Rosenberg met with it. It has likewise been found by the latter collector, and by Signor D'Albertis at Andai; while Dr. Beccari met with it at Warbusi, and D'Albertis at Ramoi. It inhabits likewise the islands of Salawati, Batanta, Waigiou, and Mysol. Professor Schlegel states that the specimens in the Leyden Museum from Waigiou differed in having the spots on the back and wings clearer, and of a bright greenish yellow; but Count Salvadori could not find any points of difference in individuals collected in that island by Beccari and Bruijn. We are still without any exact information as to the habits of this peculiar Kingfisher, whose hooked bill would seem to be adapted for some special purpose in the capture of its prey.

I here translate the description of the sexes given in Count Salvadori's work, from which also the synonymy of the species has been derived.

Adult male. Head black, feathers margined with blue, a spot on each side of the forehead, extending above the eyes, rufous; cheeks and ear-coverts black, the former separated from the latter by a whitish band starting from the angle of the mouth; round the neck a black collar, succeeded by a white one; remainder of the upper surface dusky brown, with broad ochraceous yellow margins to the feathers, those of the rump and upper tail-coverts more yellow; quills dusky, the secondaries externally margined with rufous, internally with broad fulvous edges; beneath dull white, with very narrow dusky edges to the feathers of the throat

and upper breast ; under tail-coverts rufescent ; tail-feathers brownish tipped with ochraceous ; bill black above, white underneath ; feet greenish olive ; iris black.

Female. Similar to the male, but with the head black with obscure yellowish ochre margins to the feathers, surrounded by a band of blue ; collar round the hind neck whitish and rufous ; vent white, very slightly rufescent ; throat rufescent with dusky black margins to the feathers. Young birds resemble the old female, and have the underparts of a rufous colour. It must be noted that the figures in Mr. Sharpe's work have the soft parts very erroneously coloured, as might have been expected at a time when all information on this subject was wanting.

The Plate represents a male and a female, of the natural size, the latter being the upper figure. They have been drawn from a pair of birds in my own collection.

[R. B. S.]



Gould, John and Sharpe, Richard Bowdler. 1882. "Melidora macrorhina, Hook-billed Kingfisher [Pl. 53]." *The birds of New Guinea and the adjacent Papuan islands : including many new species recently discovered in Australia* 4(XIII), -. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.322838>.

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