

MELILESTES POLIOPTERUS, *Sharpe.*

Grey-winged Honey-eater.

Melilestes polyopterus, Sharpe, Journ. Linn. Soc., Zool. vol. xvi. pp. 318, 438 (1882).

THE genus *Melilestes* was founded by Count Salvadori for the reception of a little group of Honey-eaters peculiar to the Papuan subregion. The four species comprised under the genus present considerable difference in coloration; but the affinities of the present bird are clearly with *M. novæ guineæ*, a little species which was for a long time thought by naturalists to be an *Arachnothera*. The latter genus is now considered to be exclusively Indian; and although *M. novæ guineæ* and *M. polyopterus* have much the appearance of a Spider-hunter, they would be expected from their habitats to be more nearly allied to the Australian *Meliphagidæ*.

The chief differences which *M. polyopterus* exhibits when compared with *M. novæ guineæ* are the plumbeous wings and head, as well as the yellow spot on the throat.

Mr. Goldie obtained a single specimen of this new species in the Choqueri district, at the back of the Astrolabe Mountains, in South-eastern New Guinea, where it was called by the natives "bererita."

The following description has been taken from Mr. Sharpe's paper on Mr. Goldie's collections:—

"General colour above green, the whole of the crown and nape dark slaty grey; wing-coverts slaty-grey, quills dusky, externally slaty grey, rather lighter along the edge of the primaries, the secondaries with a very aint olive tint on the outer webs; tail-feathers dusky, externally edged with slaty grey and having a small white spot at the tip of the inner web; lores, sides of face and ear-coverts dull slaty grey with a slight wash of green; under surface of body olive-yellow, the chin dusky grey washed with yellow, the lower throat bright yellow; thighs ashy washed with yellow; under tail-coverts yellow, ashy grey along the centre; under wing-coverts and axillaries white, the latter washed with yellow; quills dusky brown, edged with white along the inner web. Total length 4·4 inches, culmen 1·2, wing 2·85, tail 1·55, tarsus 0·7."

The figures in the Plate are drawn from the typical specimen in the British Museum, and represent an adult bird of the natural size in two positions. [R.B.S.]