

On Some Types of Birds (*Aves*) from the Solomon Islands Named by Edward Pierson Ramsay

IAN A. W. MCALLAN

Information Access & Advisory Services, Library, Macquarie University NSW 2109, Australia

ABSTRACT. In the years 1879–1882 the Curator of the Australian Museum, Edward P. Ramsay, named 15 bird taxa largely based upon specimens collected in the Solomon Islands by James F. Cockerell in 1878. Investigations based upon the original correspondence and examination of the specimens determined that the specimens used by Ramsay to describe these taxa were dispersed to at least six museums. The number of types collected by Cockerell is larger than previously thought, with only 40 of the 93 known extant type specimens being held by the Australian Museum. The dates of publication of these taxa, the journals of original publication and related nomenclatorial issues are discussed.

KEYWORDS. *Aves*, Solomon Islands, zoological nomenclature, Edward Ramsay, James Cockerell.

MCALLAN, IAN A. W. 2016. On some types of birds (*Aves*) from the Solomon Islands named by Edward Pierson Ramsay. *Records of the Australian Museum* 68(1): 31–43.

In 1995, while looking for type specimens in the bird collections of Museum Victoria, I came across several specimens that are arguably types of taxa from the Solomon Islands. These taxa were described by Edward Pierson Ramsay, Curator of the Australian Museum from 1874 to 1894, and are represented amongst the type specimens held in the Australian Museum (Etheridge, 1917; Longmore, 1991). Further research has revealed that type specimens from these collections from the Solomon Islands were dispersed to at least six museums.

The specimens in Museum Victoria were purchased from James F. Cockerell in 1879. James F. Cockerell was, like his father John T. Cockerell, a natural history collector (Whittell, 1954). He collected specimens on Cape York Peninsula in 1867–1868, in Samoa and the Bismarck Islands in 1875–1876, the Solomon Islands in 1878, Western Australia in 1879, and Cape York and the Aru Islands in 1880. He finally settled near Mildura in Victoria where he collected for the South Australian Museum, both in the local area and in South Australia itself.

The specimens referred to in this paper are from Cockerell's collections made when aboard the schooner *Ariel* under the command of Captain Neil Brodie in late 1878. Cockerell is known to have collected at three localities, Cape Pitt, the south-eastern point of Nggatokae in the New Georgia group; Lango [now = Lungga] on Guadalcanal; and the island of Savo (Whittell, 1954; Ramsay, 1879b). It is not known exactly when the specimens were collected, though many have details on tags that give general collection dates of October or November 1878. The *Ariel* was still present in Sydney in late May 1878 when it was reported to be tied up to Grafton Wharf (Anon., 1878). According to a newspaper account, the *Ariel* left the Solomon Islands on 21 December 1878 and arrived in Sydney on 6 January 1879 (Anon., 1879). Nothing is really known of what business was actually being conducted by the *Ariel*. The *Ariel* left Sydney again on 26 March 1880 on her last voyage and was sunk in deep water after hitting a coral reef—apparently off the coast of Guadalcanal (Anon., 1880). Brodie and the crew “together with a large number of natives” were able to make shore. Two