

Timaliidae. The initial inequality in length of the mandible and maxilla of Grey-crowned and Hall's Babblers is another character that might have taxonomic value at familial level. We know of this condition in the Brown Creeper *Finschia novaeseelandiae* of New Zealand (Gill *et al.* 1980) and in the Australian Noisy Miner *Manorina melanocephala* (M.J. Whitmore, unpubl.).

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DRS BRIAN J. GILL* and DOUGLAS D. DOW, MOFSU, Department of Zoology, University of Queensland, St Lucia, 4067.

*Present address: Auckland Institute and Museum, Private Bag, Auckland 1, New Zealand.

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THE MARBLED FROGMOUTH *PODARGUS OCELLATUS PLUMIFERUS* IN THE NIGHTCAP RANGE, NORTH-EASTERN N.S.W.

Terania Creek basin (28°34' S, 153°19' E) in the Nightcap Range is a mixture of warm temperate and subtropical rainforest (Floyd 1977). The surrounding broken cliff-line carries wet sclerophyll forest which extends down into the basin on spurs. The southern part of the basin has been selectively logged between the 1920's and 1960's, resulting in a mosaic of regeneration of different ages.

While spotlighting along a logging road in the basin from January to March 1980, I made a number of sightings of the Marbled Frogmouth *Podargus ocellatus plumiferus*. One was observed on 15 January, one on 16 February and three on 7 March. Two birds seen on 30 December 1979 were also probably Marbled Frogmouths, but both flew off before their identities could be confirmed. All birds were recorded singly, perched mostly in understorey trees or on the horizontal sections of water vines *Cyssus* sp within 10 m of the road and from 3 to 30 m above the ground.

The Marbled Frogmouth was identified by its relatively long, graduated and pointed tail; delicate moth-like patterning of the body plumage; unstreaked throat and upper breast; and buff and black-banded

plumes above the bill. When viewed with a 100 watt spotlight, the eye appeared a lustrous, deep orange-red. These characters separate it from the Tawny Frogmouth *P. strigoides*, which was also seen along the road, whereas brown body colour, whitish eyebrow, white blotches on the wing coverts and orange-yellow or orange eye colour, which have been given as diagnostic for the Marbled Frogmouth (Slater 1970; Roberts & Ingram 1978; Pizzey 1980), are unreliable. Size was also of little use in separating Marbled and Tawny Frogmouths, because male Marbled Frogmouths exceed some Tawny Frogmouths in length and can appear quite bulky in the field.

Because there are few *P. o. plumiferus* in Australian collections, I collected a specimen from Terania Creek on 16 January 1981. Details of the bird, a male (Aust. Mus. reg. no. 0.54599), are as follows: total length 460 mm, wing span 750 mm, wing 239 mm, tail 250 mm, tarsus 33.5 mm, culmen (to base of skull) 42.5 mm, weight 286 gm. The eye was orange-yellow in daylight. In total length the specimen exceeds measurements given in Readers Digest (1976) and Pizzey (1980) and is comparable with large Tawny Frogmouths. However measurements of total length and wing are within the

range for the male Marbled Frogmouth given in Schodde & Mason (1980), but both tail and tarsus are longer.

I found the Marbled Frogmouth in Terania Creek in both warm temperate and subtropical rainforest and also in wet sclerophyll forest where there was a well-developed rainforest understorey. I recorded the bird in unlogged and regenerating forest of various ages, but never in the open pastoral land adjacent to the southern part of the basin. I feel that caution is necessary in interpreting these records because the bird may have been more strongly associated with the road than adjacent vegetation. Apparently suitable food was abundant along the road during summer and autumn when observations were made and I failed to record birds when spotlighting during cooler months in 1980.

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D.R. MILLEDGE, C/- P. O., Rosebank via Lismore, NSW, 2480.

9 January 1982.