

CLUB ANNOUNCEMENTS

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

The Club's next meeting, in conjunction with the Linnean Society, will be held on Thursday 6 October 2022 at 6.00pm, when Prof. Jared Diamond will talk on *What's so special about New Guinea birds?*

The meeting will be in hybrid format, both in person at the Linnean Society, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1J 0BF, and online via Zoom.

Abstract.—The tropical island of New Guinea has long played a pre-eminent role in ornithology, which caused it to be chosen as the site for the BOU's Jubilee Expedition in 1909. Part of the reason is New Guinea's many extraordinary birds, such as its birds of paradise, whose male ornamental plumages carry sexual selection to extremes; bowerbirds, whose males build the most elaborate display structures among animals; megapodes, the only birds that incubate their eggs by natural heat sources rather than by body heat; its diversity of parrots and kingfishers, orders that probably evolved in New Guinea; Greater Melampitta *Melampitta gigantea*, the only passerine known to roost underground; and its many bird groups convergent on but unrelated to the nuthatches, creepers, warblers, finches, wrens, and sunbirds of the rest of the world. Another reason is New Guinea's equatorial location combined with its high mountains, resulting in a range of habitats from tropical rainforest in the lowlands to glaciers on the highest peaks at 5,000 m. Still another reason is its simple geography: a single central cordillera with montane allospecies arranged from west to east, separating northern and southern lowlands with lowland allospecies arranged in a ring. New Guinea should not be thought of as the world's largest tropical island, but instead as Earth's smallest continent. New Guinea has proved to be ideal terrain for studying speciation, ecological segregation, and other biological phenomena. New Guineans themselves are walking encyclopedias of knowledge about their birds. The illustrated talk will explain these and other features that make New Guinea birds special. The only disadvantage to visiting New Guinea is that, thereafter, you'll find the rest of the world boring by comparison.

Biography.—Jared Diamond is a Pulitzer-prize-winning author of five best-selling books, translated into 43 languages, about human societies and human evolution: *Guns, germs, and steel*; *Collapse*; *Why is sex fun?*; *The third Chimpanzee*; and *The world until yesterday*. As a professor of geography at UCLA (University of California at Los Angeles), he is known for his breadth of interests, which involves research and teaching in three other fields: the biology of New Guinea birds; digestive physiology; and conservation biology. His prizes and honours include the US National Medal of Science, the Pulitzer Prize for Non-fiction, the Tyler Prize for Environmental Science, and election to the US National Academy of Sciences. He is a director of World Wildlife Fund/US. As a biological explorer, his most widely publicised finding was his rediscovery, at the top of New Guinea's remote Foja Mountains, of the long-lost Golden-fronted Bowerbird *Amblyornis flavifrons*, previously known only from four specimens found in a Paris feather shop in 1895.

Registration details will be published nearer the time on the Linnean Society website and the BOC site.

Erratum

In *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 142: 122, in the legend to Fig. 8, the text relating to image F was incorrect. This photograph of New Caledonian Storm Petrel *Fregetta lineata* was taken off Port Stephens, New South Wales, Australia, in January 2021, by Allan Richardson, rather than off Nouméa, New Caledonia, in January 2020, by Hadoram Shirihai, as erroneously stated therein. The authors would like to apologise to the photographer concerned for any confusion that was caused.

Friends of the BOC

The BOC has from 2017 become an online organisation without a paying membership, but instead one that aspires to a supportive network of Friends who share its vision of ornithology—see: <http://boc-online.org/>. Anyone wishing to become a Friend of the BOC and support its development should pay UK£25.00 by standing order or online payment to the BOC bank account:

Barclays Bank, 16 High Street, Holt, NR25 6BQ, Norfolk
Sort Code: 20-45-45
Account number: 53092003
Account name: The British Ornithologists' Club

Friends receive regular updates about Club events and are also eligible for discounts on the Club's Occasional Publications. It would assist our Treasurer, Richard Malin (e-mail: rmalin21@gmail.com), if you would kindly inform him if you intend becoming a Friend of the BOC.

The *Bulletin* and other BOC publications

Since volume 137 (2017), the *Bulletin* of the BOC has been an online journal, published quarterly, that is available to all readers without charge. Furthermore, it does not levy any publication charges (including for colour plates) on authors of papers and has a median publication time from receipt to publication of five to six months. Prospective authors are invited to contact the *Bulletin* editor, Guy Kirwan (GMKirwan@aol.com), to discuss future submissions or look at <http://boc-online.org/bulletin/bulletin-contributions>. Back numbers up to volume 136 (2016) are available via the Biodiversity Heritage Library website: www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/46639#/summary; vols. 132–136 are also available on the BOC website: <http://boc-online.org/>

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