

Australasia -- Campephagidae: Synonymize *Edolisoma tenuirostre nehrkorni* with *Edolisoma incertum*

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AusRAG committee input from Andrew Black, Guy Dutson, Anna Kearns, Leo Joseph

Main Points:

- (1) *Edolisoma nehrkorni* Salvadori, 1890, Agg. Ornith. Pap. Mol., p. 91, is known only from the type specimen originating from Waigeo Is, Raja Ampat Islands, off western New Guinea. On modern checklists, and since E. Mayr's classical "List of New Guinea Birds", 1941, this taxon has been classified as a race of *Edolisoma tenuirostre*. The male type is characterized as having black ear coverts, chin and throat (Taylor 2005), unlike nominate *tenuirostre*, for which these parts are grey.
- (2) Also reported from Waigeo is the Black-shouldered or Papuan Cicadabird, *Edolisoma incertum* (A. B. Meyer, 1874), the male of which also shows the black ear coverts, chin and throat of *nehrkorni*. The range of *E. incertum*, a year-round resident species of foothill and mountain forests, extends from Waigeo eastward clear across all New Guinea.
- (3) Further complicating matters is that nominate, Sahul Cicadabird, *Edolisoma tenuirostre tenuirostre*, from Australia migrates to Waigeo and much of New Guinea during the austral winter months.
- (4) Historically and as recently as a few decades ago, Waigeo was visited by few naturalists and birders and remained ornithological *terra incognita* except for old specimen collections. Since the advent of ecotourism however, Waigeo has become a mecca for birding, the main draw being the Red Bird of Paradise and Wilson's BOP. As a result, checklists posted to eBird have reported both *E. incertum* and *E. t. tenuirostre* (present from June to September, six reports with photos).
- (5) So, where's *E. t. nehrkorni*? No further specimens have turned up, and there have been no reports from the field. Could the *nehrkorni* type be a misidentified *E. incertum* instead? Certainly, the character states described for *nehrkorni* also apply to *incertum*.
- (6) A recently published molecular study sampled the type of *nehrkorni* and found that it more closely matched *incertum* than *tenuirostre*.
Pedersen, M. P., M. Irestedt, L. Joseph, C. Rahbek, and K. A. Jønsson. 2018. Phylogeography of a 'great speciator' (Aves: *Edolisoma tenuirostre*) reveals complex

dispersal and diversification dynamics across the Indo-Pacific. *Journal of Biogeography* 45:826–837. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jbi.13182>.

- (7) I wrote M. Pepke Pedersen inquiring about his sampling of the *nehrkorni* type, and here is his reply:

“We had a toepad sample from the type specimen sent from the Natural Sciences Museum of Torino and I don’t know of other specimens. At the moment, it appears to be a misidentified specimen of *incertum*, as we suggest in the appendix S3, but I have just required feedback from the museum in Torino (via my supervisor Jønsson). The plumage description of (the male) *nehrkorni* e.g. ‘black ear coverts, chin and throat’ would also seem to fit *incertum*.” (M. Pepke Pedersen in litt., 21 November 2018)

- (8) Given the facts now at hand, it would seem best to synonymize *nehrkorni* with *Edolisoma incertum* based on plumage, genetic information, and absence of any new evidence from the field that a cicadabird other than *E. incertum*, *E. tenuirostre tenuirostre*, and *E. melas* (looks completely different) exists on Waigeo.



Fig. 1 Black-shouldered Cicadabird (*Edolisoma incertum*), Waigeo Is, West Papua, Indonesia. Photo by Marco Valentini, 29 October 2024, eBird Checklist S200668681. Note that the AviList English name is a misnomer because the bird lacks a black shoulder. Reverting to the widespread recent name “Papuan Cicadabird” is recommended.

Recommendation:

Five AusRAG committee members have reviewed this proposal and support the following recommendation:

Synonymize *Edolisoma tenuirostre nehrkorni* with *Edolisoma incertum*. Delete AviList line 17855 for *Edolisoma tenuirostre nehrkorni*.

References:

Taylor, P.B. 2005. Campephagidae (cuckoo-shrikes). In J. del Hoyo, A. Elliott, & D. Christie, eds., Handbook of the Birds of the World, vol. 10: 40–123. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona.