

Description of the Unique
Parotia lawesii* × *Paradisaea rudolphi
Hybrid Bird of Paradise
(Aves: Passeriformes: Paradisaeidae)

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ABSTRACT. A unique female-plumaged Australian Museum specimen (AM O. 40100) of a hybrid between Lawes' Parotia *Parotia lawesii* and the Blue Bird of Paradise *Paradisaea rudolphi* is described, illustrated and compared with female-plumaged specimens of the putative parents. The hybrid, from the Baiyer Valley, Papua New Guinea, exhibits an external morphology intermediate between the two parent species. The informal common name—Schodde's Bird of Paradise—is applied to this new bird of paradise hybrid combination.

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During his work on the systematics of birds of paradise (Paradisaeidae), Dr Richard Schodde discovered a skin in the Australian Museum, Sydney, that appeared to be the product of a previously unknown intergeneric hybrid mating between Lawes' Parotia *Parotia lawesii* and the Blue Bird of Paradise *Paradisaea rudolphi* (Christidis & Schodde, 1993). Schodde suggested we examine the specimen. We did so, and found ourselves in complete agreement with his interpretation of its appearance.

While 13 intergeneric and seven intrageneric hybrid birds of paradise have been reported to have occurred in the wild, based on relatively few specimens (Stresemann, 1930; Mayr, 1941, 1962; Gilliard, 1969; Fuller, 1979), the bird Schodde brought to light is the first hybrid known involving the combination of *Paradisaea* and *Parotia*. The specimen has been

described only as being in feminine plumage with “the ventral markings and dusky bill of *Parotia lawesii* and the all black head, white orbital marks and heavy decurving bill of *Paradisaea rudolphi*” (Christidis & Schodde, 1993). For detailed descriptions and illustrations of the plumages of these parental species, see Gilliard (1969), Cooper & Forshaw (1977), Beehler *et al.* (1986) and Coates (1990).

The purpose of this note is to provide a full description and an illustration of this unique and significant specimen in the zoological literature. This is highly desirable because of the considerable historical and contemporary interest in the group generally (Gilliard, 1969; Schodde, 1976; Diamond, 1981, 1986; Beehler, 1989; Christidis & Schodde, 1992) and hybrids within it in particular (Stresemann, 1930; Iredale, 1950; Mayr,