

Notes on the vocalizations of Paradise Crow (*Lycocorax pyrrhopterus*)

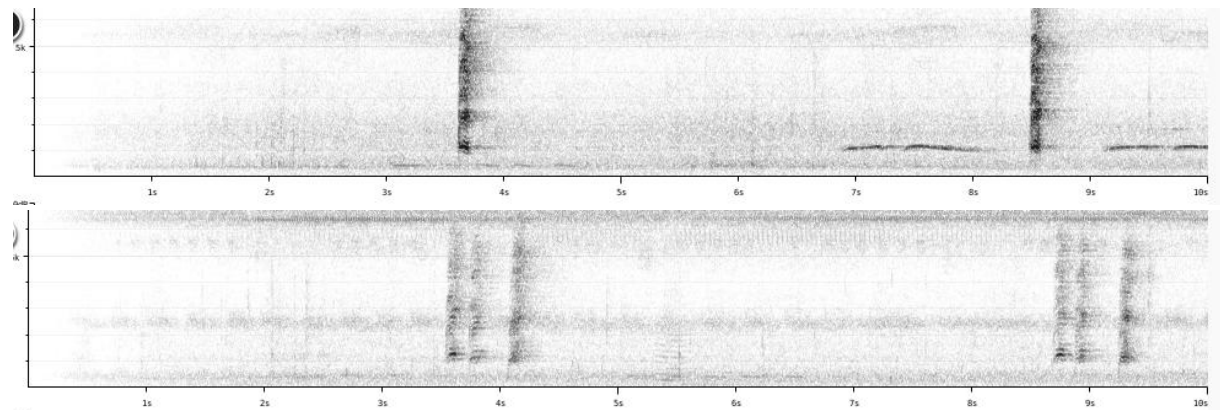
Peter Boesman

In the following we briefly analyze and compare voice of the three races of Paradise Crow (*Lycocorax pyrrhopterus*). We also try to quantify the extent of any vocal differences using the criteria proposed by Tobias *et al.* (2010), as a support for taxonomic review. We have made use of sound recordings available on-line from Xeno Canto (XC) and Macaulay Library (ML).

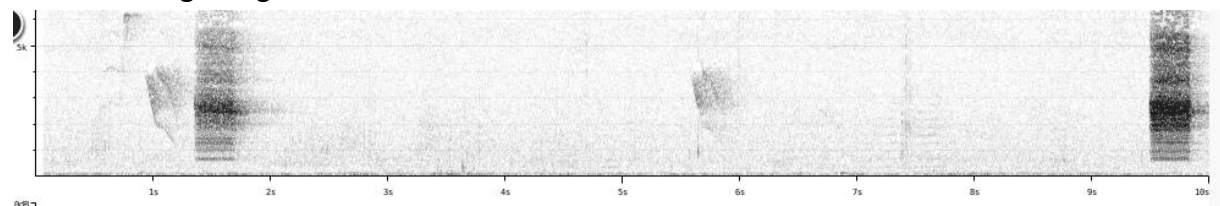
An overview of the different vocalizations per race which we found in the available on-line recordings:

nominate

An explosive guttural "keh!", single or doubled/tripled

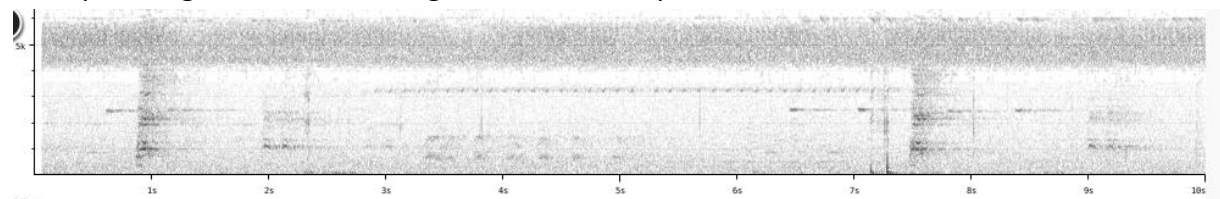


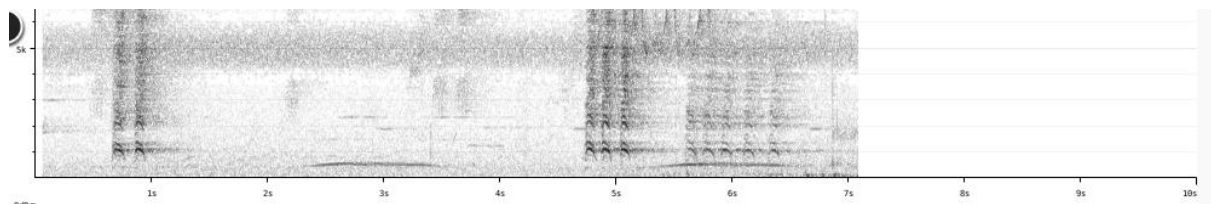
A drawn-out grating note



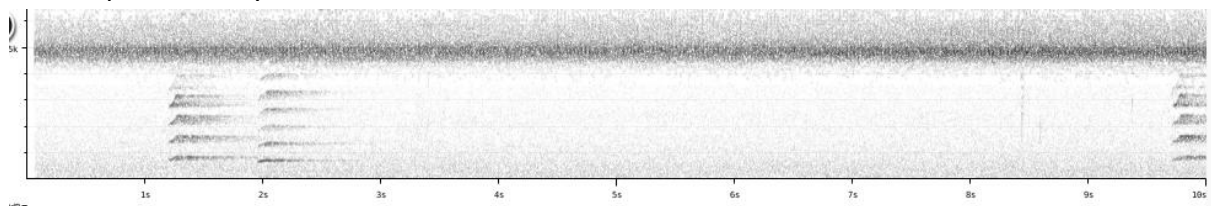
Race *morotensis*

An explosive guttural "keh!", single or doubled/tripled

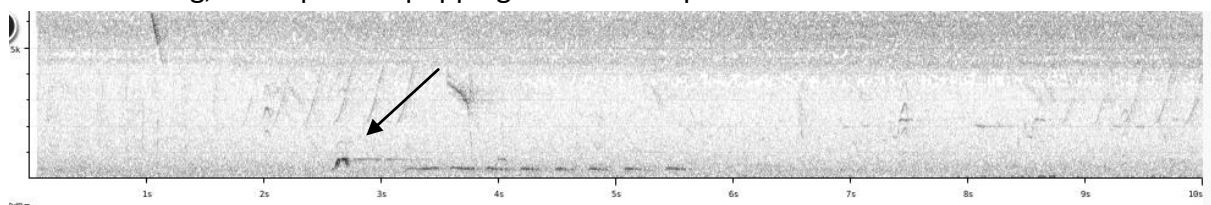




A nasal plaintive "kyeh"

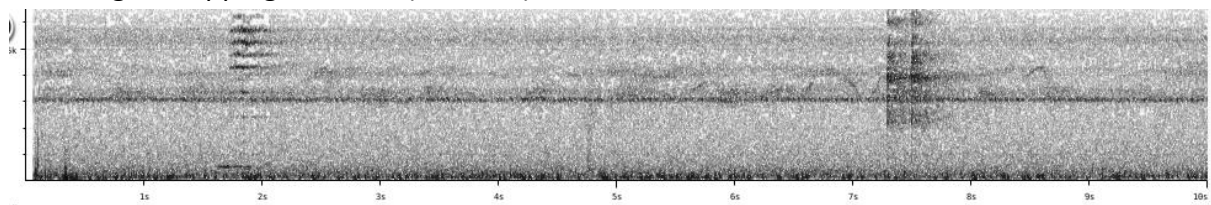


Presumed song, a low-pitched popping whistle 'whup!'

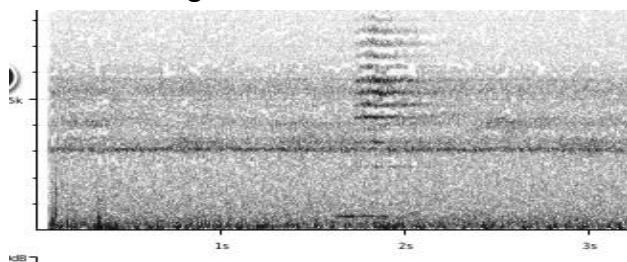


Race *obiensis*

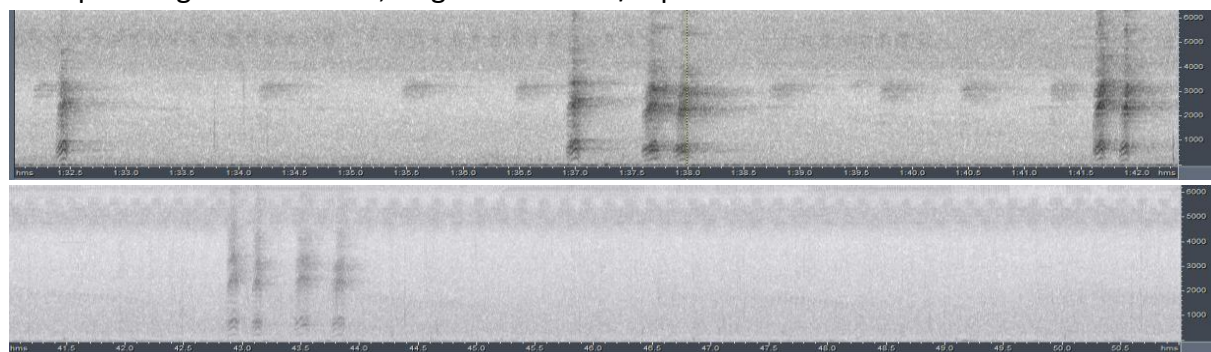
A clicking or clapping like note (doubled)



An electric single note "kek"



An explosive guttural "weh!", single or doubled/tripled



Presumed song, a hollow mournful monosyllabic or bisyllabic whistle "whoo" or "whu-oo" (other frequency scale !)



There are apparently no recordings available of the whistled song for nominate, thus not allowing a comparison of this vocalization.

There are nevertheless clear indications that the vocabulary of *obiensis* is different, with also the guttural call different from the two other races (different distribution of the frequency bands).

The song whistle of *obiensis* is very different from *morotensis*, the former being (often) clearly bisyllabic and less emphatic. We have only one example of the latter however.

It is thus too speculative to score the vocal differences, but there are clear indications that the homologous vocalizations are different.

This note was finalized on 2nd February 2016, using sound recordings available on-line at that moment. We would like to thank in particular the sound recordists who placed their recordings for this species on XC and ML: Patrik Åberg, K. Gareth, Frank Lambert, John Mittermeier, Mike Nelson and Mark Thibault.

As a little side note, in the original description Bernstein described voice as "whunk", and a nice picture was made later by John Gould:



LYCOCORAX OBIENSIS, Bernst.

Obi Paradise-Crow.

Lycocorax obiensis, Bernst. Journ. für Orn. 1864, p. 410.—Id. Nederl. Tijdschr. Dierk. ii. p. 350 (1865).—Schl. op. cit. iii. p. 192 (1866).—Id. Mus. Pays-Bas, Coraces, p. 132 (1867).—Gray, Hand-list of Birds, ii. p. 17, no. 6263 (1870).—Sharpe, Cat. Birds in Brit. Mus. iii. p. 185 (1877).—Salvad. Ann. Mus. Civic. Genov. xvi. p. 199 (1880).—Id. Orn. Papuasie e delle Molucche, ii. p. 495 (1881).—Guillemard, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1885, p. 573.

This species appears to be confined to the Obi group of islands in the Moluccas, where it replaces *Lycocorax pyrrhopterus* of Batchian and Gilolo, and *L. morotensis* of Morotai or Morty Island. It is distinguished from both by the greenish wash on the upper parts, and it has the quills blacker than in *L. pyrrhopterus*. Count Salvadori and ourselves both regarded the white on the base of the quills as a distinctive character of *L. morotensis*, but Dr. Guillemard, who has recently visited the Obi Islands and obtained five specimens of the present species, states that all his series, excepting one bird, had a white mark on the primaries. The exception was in the case of a female bird, which was duller in colour than the males and had the primaries buff.

Dr. Bernstein, the discoverer of the species, procured it in Obi Major and Obi Lattoo, but he states that, like *L. morotensis*, it is a difficult bird to procure, as it frequents the thick forest. Its note is described by Dr. Bernstein as "whunk."

The following description of an adult bird is copied from the British Museum 'Catalogue of Birds,' and is taken from a specimen in that institution:—

"General colour above and below of a dull rifle-green, somewhat glistening; tail black, the feathers slightly washed with green on the outer web; quills blackish brown, the least wing-coverts edged with dull green like the scapulars, the rest of the coverts and secondaries slightly washed with green on the outer web, the primaries much paler brown; bill and feet black. Total length 13.5 inches, culmen 1.95, wing 7.75, tail 6.75, tarsus 1.9."

Dr. Guillemard says that the iris is crimson, but that in the female bird referred to above it was brown.

The figure in the Plate represents an adult bird of about the size of life, and is drawn from a specimen kindly lent to us by Dr. Guillemard.

[R. B. S.]

References

Tobias, J.A., Seddon, N., Spottiswoode, C.N., Pilgrim, J.D., Fishpool, L.D.C. & Collar, N.J. (2010). Quantitative criteria for species delimitation. *Ibis* 152(4): 724–746.

Recommended citation

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