

LETTER

BURU BIRD COLLECTIONS

Dear Sirs,

I read with great interest Paul Jepson's article in *Kukila* (1993, 6:85-109) on Bum birds. I found it encouraging that he recorded such a high percentage of the bird species known from the island but discouraging to hear that logging is proceeding apace.

I wrote him concerning a few points with regard to previous collections and he suggested that *Kukila* readers might be interested in them.

An understandable confusion exists between Tring and the British Museum Sub-department of Ornithology. The original Tring bird collection was part of the private natural history collection of Lord Walter Rothschild. In 1931 the bird skin collection was purchased by the American Museum of Natural History and moved to New York. Mounted birds and eggs and nests were not purchased. The Tring property was left to the British Museum by Rothschild and the Sub-department of Ornithology was moved from London to Tring, in the 1970s if memory serves me correctly. So the bird collection now at Tring is that of the British Museum-

The collections made by Rothschild's collectors, including the Bum collections of Doherty, Dumas and Kuehn are in New York. Stresemann (*Novitates Zoologica*, 1914, 31:358-400) summarizes knowledge of the avifauna of Buru, including his own collection on the second Freiburg Moluccan Expedition. He states that his collection, including the types, is for the most part in Tring; those specimens are now in New York. However, a part of the specimens collected by the geologist Deninger on the first Freiburg Moluccan Expedition are in Munich. From each of these collections there may be scattered specimens elsewhere, due to subsequent exchanges of material between museums. Also, according to Stresemann, Wilfred Stalker's 1909 collection from Bum is in the British' Museum. This collection was not a part of either of the Freiburg Moluccan expeditions.

The Pratts collected 200 birdskins of which 32 went to Rothschild (then New York), and the rest went to the British Museum.

Sincerely yours,

Mary LeCroy, Dept. Of Ornithology,
American Museum of Natural History.