

Smooth dance moves confirm new bird-of-paradise species

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Newly publicized audiovisuals support full species status for one of the dancing birds-of-paradise in New Guinea. This new species, called the Vogelkop Superb Bird-of-Paradise, is found only in the island's far-western Bird's Head, or Vogelkop, region.

In a new paper published in the journal *PeerJ*, scientists "show and tell" half-a-dozen ways this form is distinct from the more widespread Superb Bird-of-Paradise, now called the Greater Superb Bird-of-Paradise—the bird known for its bouncy "smiley face" dance routine.

"After you see what the Vogelkop form looks like and acts like in the wild, there's little room for doubt that it is a separate species," says Ed Scholes with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Birds-of-Paradise Project. "The courtship [dance](#) is different. The vocalizations are different. The females look different. Even the shape of the displaying male is different."

When expanded for courtship display, the Vogelkop male's raised cape creates a completely different appearance—crescent-shaped with pointed tips rather than the oval shape of the widespread form of the [species](#). The way the Vogelkop male dances for the female is also distinctive, the steps being smooth instead of bouncy.

More information: Edwin Scholes et al, Distinctive courtship phenotype of the Vogelkop Superb Bird-of-Paradise *Lophorina niedda* Mayr, 1930 confirms new species status, *PeerJ* (2018). [DOI: 10.7717/peerj.4621](https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.4621)

Provided by Cornell University

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