

BRONZE-CUCKOO *CHRYSOCOCCYX* SP. PARASITIZES GREEN- BACKED HONEYEATER *GLYCICHAERA FALLAX*

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On 14 August 1992, Noam Shany and I watched a Green-backed Honeyeater *Glycichaera fallax* acting as foster parent to a fledgling bronze-cuckoo *Chrysococcyx* sp. 15 km south of Vanimo, West Sepik Province. As far as I know, this is the first record of this species being parasitized by the cuckoo.

The honeyeater was foraging for insects to feed the cuckoo in grass and second-growth bushes at the edge of the STK Malayan logging camp near Soussy, never higher than 1 metre above the ground; while the cuckoo - sitting on a low twig close to it - gave a constant "peep" louder and more frequently, flew off, followed by the fosterchild.

I have seen the same behaviour from an African cuckoo of the same genus and its weaverbird fosterparent. In that species of cuckoo, *Chrysococcyx caprius*, the fledgling has a bright orange beak. The Vanimo bird had a dark beak (and no bright eye-ring), and in addition had an irregular dark rufous eyestripe (it was probably the Malay Bronze-Cuckoo *C. minutillus*, an adult of which we had seen at almost exactly the same place a few days before).

Coates (1990) mentions that the egg reported for the Green-backed Honeyeater in the "literature" seems to be too big for the bird. Perhaps then it was actually the egg of a brood parasite such as a bronze-cuckoo, though it is reported that the Australian bronze-cuckoos lay eggs that are smaller than those of their hosts (Grzimek 1972).

Coates, B.J. 1990. *The Birds of Papua New Guinea. Vol. II.* Dove Publications.

Grzimek, B. (Ed.) 1972. *Grzimek's Encyclopedia of Animal Life. Vol. VIII.* Von Nostrand Rheinhold.

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SHORT NOTES

Nesting Brown-backed Honeyeaters *Ramsayornis modestus* with strange plumage. Jeff Chemnick, Roger Hicks & Niklas Wahlberg. On the 9 of September, 1990, we were birdwatching at Lake Iraguma, at approximately 08:30 under overcast conditions. Jeff Chemnick observed a pair of honeyeater-myzomela type birds with brown backs, white vertical ear markings and plum-red facial markings (throat and possibly forehead). The birds were actively foraging in the crown and branches of a *Eucalyptus* tree. They were seen to collect bark and make repeated trips to another nearby site, presumably nest-building. Wahlberg and Hicks identified the birds as Brown-backed Honeyeaters and were surprised by the facial colouration - a feature previously unrecorded. The authors feel that this colouration was a natural feature of the bird, as it did not look like staining. No source for staining could be found in the immediate vicinity (eg. flowers or fruit). The extent and intensity of the colouration was similar to that of a female Mountain Red-headed Myzomela *Myzomela adophinae*. The nest under construction by this pair of birds was subsequently located and photographed. It was typical of the Brown-backed Honeyeater; a metre off the ground located close to water's edge. It was penduline in shape and was composed mainly of *Eucalyptus* bark. Addresses: Chemnick: unknown to editor; Hicks: 7 Newtown, Codicote, Herts, U.K.; Wahlberg: Jaaskentie 7B, 02140 Espoo 14, Finland.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra* on Lake Wangbin, Ok Tedi area. Phil Gregory. Harry Bell (1969, Field notes on the Ok Tedi Drainage, Emu 69: 193-211) was the first to report the Eurasian Coot in PNG, when he found four pairs nesting on Lake Sogolomik (L. Wangbin) in 1966, though Schodde (in Coates, 1985, The Birds of Papua New Guinea. Vol I.) reported the species from near Wabag, Enga Province in 1960. Coates and Lindgren (1978, Ok Tedi Birds) did not find the birds on Lake Wangbin in 1978, and were told by the local people that the population had been shot out. I was therefore very interested to hear that 9 Eurasian Coot had been seen on the lake by Dave Houghton in June 1992. I went up to check myself on 6 August 1992, and found at least four birds, which were shy.

Wangbin Village used to be beside the lake, but moved down to just north of Tabubil some years ago, which has meant much less hunting pressure in the vicinity of the lake. Some hunting continues, with shotgun cartridges in evidence by the lake shore, but the coot have managed to either survive or recolonize. C. Cole in Coates (1985) reported coot from both Lake Vivien and Lake Louise, which lie relatively close to Lake Wangbin on the south of the main watershed. Some movement between the lakes seems likely, or perhaps from the Snow Mountains of Irian Jaya. The species has also been found in Eastern Highlands on similar small remote lakes (Finch & Gillison, 1988, Muruk 3: 6). Address: PO Box 69, Tabubil, Western Province.