

Otago: Berwick 21, Outram 7, Balclutha 21, Clinton (near Wairuma) 5, Hildethorpe (Oamaru) 5.

Southland: Te Anau 1, Croydon 3, Wyndham 54, Centre Hill 1, Hokonui 6, Papatotara 11, Orepuki 1, Waianiwa 12, New River Ferry 24, Makarewa 32, Waimatua 7, Rimu 14.

This report is the result of the co-operative effort of many OSNZ members, most of whom were acknowledged in the OSNZ newsletter of September 1984.

LITERATURE CITED

- HEATHER, B. D. 1978. The Cattle Egret in New Zealand in 1977. *Notornis* 25: 218-234.
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 HOWELL, L.; GAZE, P. D. 1985. Classified summarised notes 1 July 1983 to 30 June 1984. *Notornis* 32: 118-151.
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Shining Cuckoo carrying an egg

On 3 November 1985, at about 2 p.m., my husband saw a Shining Cuckoo (*Chrysococcyx lucidus*) sitting at 1.2 metres in a eucalypt at the side of our drive. A strong southerly wind was blowing, and the tree was getting very blown about.

When he was within 1 metre of the bird, he was surprised to see that it had an egg in its beak. This egg was off-white, slightly pink, and completely filled the bird's gape. The cuckoo seemed undisturbed by human presence and sat there for about a minute before flying 30 metres to the bush, still carrying the egg. The egg was estimated to be 14 mm in diameter and 19 mm long and was held with the pointed end into the gape.

I am not presuming that the egg was that of the Shining Cuckoo, although the colour and size can be variable (Buller p.81, Oliver p.534). To which species did it belong? It seems to be generally accepted that the hen cuckoo removes an egg from the chosen nest, and this is either dropped some distance away or is eaten.

Why, then, was the bird sitting in a eucalypt in the open with the egg in its beak and, when it flew off towards the bush, where a number of Grey Warblers were nesting, why was it still carrying the egg?

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[Michie (*NZ Bird Notes* 2 (8):196; 1948) reported two cases of Shining Cuckoo in the open carrying an egg, crushing it, swallowing the contents, and dropping the shell. The eggs were of Chaffinch and Grey Warbler. The egg in Mrs Skinner's note matches the description of a Grey Warbler's but could have been of some other passerine; the Shining Cuckoo's, however, is olive-green (Gill 1982, *Notornis* 29(3):219). November is the peak month for laying by Shining Cuckoos (Gill 1982:216). — Ed.]