

FOODS OF THE LONG-TAILED CUCKOO

Little is known about the diet of Long-tailed Cuckoos (*Eudynamis taitensis*) except that they eat insects and are also predatory on lizards and on other birds and their eggs (Oliver 1955, *New Zealand birds*. Reed, Wellington). Recently I examined the stomach contents (proventriculus plus gizzard) of two Long-tailed Cuckoos, both apparently adult.

The first stomach, from a bird collected in Auckland on 2 March 1978, contained a hymenopteran (7 mm long), a fragment from a large harvestman (Opiliones), and 15 seeds of *Acaena* (Rosaceae). There were large deposits of abdominal fat suggesting preparation for migration. The second stomach, obtained from Hokitika (no date), held two hemipterans (10 mm long), 43 green cockchafer beetles (*Pyronota*, 9 mm long), and six seeds of *Trifolium*, probably *pratense* (Fabaceae). Also there were a few small stones (1.2 mm across) and a tangled knot of fibrous rootlets (15 mm across).

These observations confirm that Long-tailed Cuckoos eat various arthropods. The presence of seeds is interesting. Perhaps they were ingested accidentally, but this is not necessarily so since close relatives of the Long-tailed Cuckoo eat berries and other fruits (Meise & Schifter 1972. In *Grzimek's animal life encyclopedia* vol. 8. Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York).

I thank Mrs M. J. A. Bulfin for identifying the seeds, Mr P. M. Johns for checking the arthropods, and Prof. W. C. Clark for obtaining the cuckoos.

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The gizzard contents of a Long-tailed Cuckoo (*Eudynamis taitensis*) which crashed into a window in Birkdale on 6/4/79, were sent to Dr Charles Watt of the DSIR. He identified them as follows:

Auckland weta (*Hemideina thoracica*) 1F, 1 nymph.

Katydid (*Caedicia simplex*) 1 adult.

Smooth stick insect (*Clitarchus hookeri*) 4M, 3F.

Prickly stick insect (*Acanthoxyla prasina*) 1F.

This list may prove useful to anyone investigating the food of insectivorous birds in New Zealand.

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