

Brood parasitism will evolve only in species where it results in more offspring than would have been produced by ordinary breeding (Hamilton & Orians 1965), and is rare in birds as there are only seven families or sub-families where it is practised and only one of these contains more than a dozen species (Lack 1968). It follows that there must be unusual and special reasons for its evolution, and it is possible that the severe effect of Mynas on Starling breeding success could be sufficient. Certainly the incubation period of the Starling, being 2 days shorter, would give the Starling an advantage in brood parasitism.

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WHITE-NECKED HERON NEAR MATAMATA

On 12 July 1978, while motoring south of Matamata, eastern Waikato, near the junction of highways 27 and 29 at about 0915 hrs, I noticed an unusual heron in flight. At first I thought it to be a White-faced Heron (*Ardea novaehollandiae*) but as I approached, I realised it was much larger, with a full white neck and darkish beak. It was flying higher than is usual for the White-faced.

The wings and upper parts of the body looked a darkish grey-blue, perhaps navy blue, and the body a lighter dull grey below. The wing beats were powerful, deep and slower than those of the White-faced.

As I turned into highway 29, the bird had passed me, flying south towards Tirau but, by the time I had turned back on to highway 27, it had swung west. It finally disappeared from view westward across open farm land. By its size and the whiteness of its neck, the bird could only have been a White-necked Heron (*A. pacifica*), which is widespread in Australia but has been recorded in New Zealand only once before, near Methven in April-July 1952 (Stidolph 1952, *Notornis* 5: 38).

In the frantic confusion of the occasion, I did not see more detail, particularly the white at the angle of the wing. A further search on the following days was unsuccessful.

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