

CHAMBERS, S. 2009.

Birds of New Zealand - Locality Guide. 3rd edn.

Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.

Long-tailed cuckoo: pp 218-220.



### LONG-TAILED CUCKOO

**Family** Cuculidae

**Species** *Eudynamis taitensis*

**Common name** Long-tailed Cuckoo

**Status** Endemic

**Abundance** Common in forested areas

**Size** 400 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm, Shining Cuckoo 160 mm)

**Habitat** Confined to tall forests especially in areas where Whiteheads live in the North Island and Yellowheads and Brown Creepers in the South Island. It parasitises the nests of these species letting them rear their young. Birds can be found outside of these areas during times of migration.

**Worldwide range** Winters in the Pacific Islands both to the north-east and north-west of New Zealand from New Guinea in the east to Rarotonga, Tahiti and the Marquesas Islands in the east. Breeds in New Zealand only.

**New Zealand range** North, South, Stewart Island and offshore islands,

particularly Little Barrier, Great Barrier and Kapiti Islands, with concentrations in central North Island native and exotic forests, and forested areas of the South Island.

### **Description**

**Upperparts** Rich brown, barred with black. **Underparts** Creamy-white boldly streaked with brown and black longitudinal markings. **Tail** Prominent horizontal barring on undertail and uppertail.

### **Conspicuous features**

- One of the bigger birds of the New Zealand forest.
- The long tail is noticeable especially when in flight.

### **Conspicuous characteristics**

- The screeching song uttered from a high perch.
- Birds are known to spiral when in flight, often screeching at the same time.
- Could be mistaken for a New Zealand Falcon when in flight.
- Whiteheads, Yellowheads and parakeets will often mob cuckoos if they enter their territories.

**Call** A long, harsh, drawn out “tuuueet”, not unlike the introduced Greenfinch but on an ascending scale rather than a descending one, is the usual call. Also a musical song of ringing warbled, short notes.

**Nesting** Lays a creamy-white egg usually in the nest of the Whitehead, Yellowhead or Brown Creeper. Sometimes it also lays in nests of Silvereyes and Fantails.

**Arrival and departure dates** Arrives in New Zealand in early October. Departs in early March. Birds are seldom heard after the end of January.

### **Where to find – North Island**

**Coromandel** – The DOC camp ground up the Kauaeranga Valley behind Thames is a good place to find these birds after January. They start calling well before light in the morning. P. 305.

**King Country** – Pureora near the camp ground and at Bismarck Road. P. 314.

**Central Plateau** – Whakamaru in pine forests here. P. 315.

**Urewera** – Waikaremoana. P. 328.

### **Where to find – South Island and Stewart Island**

**Marlborough** – Pelorus Bridge from walking tracks. P. 343.

**Westland** Found in all tall forests.

**Fiordland** – Eglington **Valley** at Cascade Creek and the Hollyford Valley. P. 370.

**Oban** – Around the township and also on Ulva Island. P.367.