

habitats it ascends far up rocky rivers and is well known in the farthest interior at 3700 ft. (Harrison, *Notornis VII*, 136).

The plumage changes of the White-winged Black Tern are notoriously puzzling. Adults and sub-adults have been observed near Auckland to change from winter dress to almost complete breeding dress in January and February, the main change taking place within about three weeks. In this plumage they sometimes remain in New Zealand throughout the southern winter and the same birds have been seen still elegantly black and white in late November and early December. In short, White-winged Black Terns in full or almost full nuptial dress may be found in New Zealand in any month of the year.

R. B. SIBSON



### ORIENTAL CUCKOO AT WHANGAROA, NORTHLAND

For some time in January, 1962, a strange bird, which was finally identified as an Oriental Cuckoo (*Cuculus saturatus*), was reported by my neighbours. Then for three consecutive days in early February it stayed and fed in my garden, where it perched on posts or upright sticks, keeping very still, not even moving its head, then diving down on to the garden with a flop with wings outspread. The food seen to be taken was worms only; and it got one every time.

From my workshop I was able to observe it for many hours at twenty feet, using binoculars, though they were hardly necessary. Size, smaller than Bush Hawk; head round, bill dark, not hooked, with yellow band at base, not long. Eyelid yellow. Top of head sandy-tinger with light slashes, back brown; upper wing surface brown with white bars; upper tail light blue with white bars; tip of tail fringed white. Upper breast white with speckling; breast light with yellow-buff slashes; under tail blue-black with elongated white dots. Legs yellow with white feathers on upper leg. Flight in long shallow dips.

T. M. ROBERTS

[Mr. Roberts' account is accompanied by rough sketches which were made on the spot and leave no doubt about the correctness of the identification. — Ed.]



### COMMUNAL DISPLAY OF SHINING CUCKOOS

Vegetation at Rissington, Hawke's Bay, consists largely of exotics such as pine trees, gums, wattles and poplars, except for a low growth of mixed native shrubs and trees and exotics in a few deep gullies, and lining the steep banks of the Mangaone Stream. It is surprising to find a few Bell-birds and Tuis inhabiting the area, and odd pairs of Grey Warblers and Fantails nesting in the cypresses (*C. macrocarpa*). An occasional Shining Cuckoo (*Chalcites lucidus*) is heard. At 8 a.m. on 25/12/61, there occurred one of those communal gatherings which I have observed on previous occasions but in much more suitable surroundings. Six Shining Cuckoos were together in a Black Wattle, making the usual rapid flights from branch to branch, with much excited calling on the note used in such displays. An hour later, the display was being continued in the top of a tall gum, and then the birds were lost sight of. They must have collected together from a very wide area.

A. BLACKBURN