

LONG-TAILED CUCKOO (*Eudynamis taitensis*) — "*Karavia*"

This is called the "*Fantail*" or "*Kokorove*" on Palmerston. It is present all the year round and I was told that the numbers don't vary seasonally. This would seem to be incorrect. The bird has never been seen to breed on the atoll. During my visit there were probably between 20-40 of this species combined on all the islets. It is not shot for food. The people say that when it is heard whistling it is a sure sign of rain.

I was given a list of birds recorded as breeding, those probably present and those classified as vagrants, before I left for Palmerston and, by comparison, the number of birds commonly or even occasionally seen, is greater than anticipated. At the same time there are some surprises in the small number of species breeding. The only bird listed as a likely vagrant which was not seen was the duck; but while Muscovy ducks are bred and eaten in the settlement, I could not discover any record of migrating species having rested on the atoll; they probably do so, however, as recorded from Penrhyn and elsewhere.

It is unlikely that a visit to Palmerston of similar length to mine will be made for a considerable time because of its isolation. For this reason I hope these notes will be of some value in the general compilation of data on the birds of the Cook Group.

**THE FOOD OF THE MOREPORK**

By C. J. LINDSAY and R. G. ORDISH
Dominion Museum, Wellington

In the earlier periods of ornithological history in New Zealand it was thought that the Morepork (*Ninox novaeseelandiae*) lived on birds, rats, and to a lesser extent, on insects. When regurgitated pellets were examined however, they were found to contain mainly insect remains.

Over the last six years twenty-five Moreporks have been received at the Dominion Museum and we have taken this opportunity to study further the feeding habits of this bird. The stomach of each bird was examined and, where possible, the contents were identified. The results, shown in the Table, also indicate an insect diet, vertebrate remains being found in only two specimens.

The specimens whose localities are known are all from the North Island and those without locality are almost certainly so. Because they were obtained in all seasons they give some indication of the Morepork's feeding habits.

Firstly the diet is varied and suggests random feeding on readily available species rather than a search for particular prey. Several insects such as moths and cicadas would only be available for a limited period while others, particularly the wetas, would be available throughout the year. As a result the wetas emerge as a staple item of diet.

Moreporks have been observed to feed on insects that have been attracted to street lights and also to take insects from trees. The presence of grass grub moth larvae in the samples suggests that Moreporks will feed also from the ground. This larva is a grassland pest which burrows deep in the soil and emerges at night to feed on grass. Of incidental interest is a sample of forty-two Noctuid moths eaten in mid-winter.

TABLE OF STOMACH CONTENTS OF THE MOREPORK
(*Ninox novaezealandiae*)

Locality and Date	Vertebrates	Spiders	Beetles	Moths	Wetas, Stick Insects and Related Insects		Other Insects	Worms
Masterton 26/8/50 (from pellets)		Unidentified 2 specimens	Small longhorn Unidentified 1 specimen					
Turangi Taupo 21/5/56		(<i>Dolomedes</i> sp.) 1 specimen	Huhu (<i>Prionoplus</i> <i>reticularis</i>) 4 specimens					
Silverstream Wellington 12/6/59		Spider Mandibles 2		Grass Grub Moth Larvae (<i>Oxycaenus</i> sp.) 29 specimens	Weta mandibles 3			
Lowry Bay Wellington 2/6/60			Grass Grub Beetle 1 specimen. Longhorn 2 specimens	Melanchrid Moths 6 specimens	Tree Weta (<i>Hemideima</i> <i>thoracica</i>) 1 specimen	Cockroach 1 specimen		
Wanganui 8/6/60				Unidentified 22 specimens				
Lowry Bay Wellington 2/9/60			Grass Grub Beetle 1 specimen. Longhorn 2 specimens	Cut worm moths 4 specimens		Cockroach 1 specimen		
Ngaio Wellington 17/10/60		Orb Spider 1 specimen	Longhorn Unidentified 1 specimen	Unidentified 21 specimens	Tree Weta 4 specimens			

Locality and Date	Vertebrates	Spiders	Beetles	Moths	Wetas, Stick Insects and Related Insects		Other Insects	Worms
Stokes Valley Wellington 22/12/60			Huhu 7 specimens		Tree Weta 3 specimens			
Days Bay Wellington 26/2/61			Longhorn (<i>Xuthodes batesi</i>) 2 specimens	Unidentified 15 specimens	Tree Weta 2 specimens	Cockroach (<i>Platyzosteria</i> sp.) 1 specimen	Large Cicada (<i>Melampsalta cingulata</i>) 1 specimen	
Khandallah Wellington 12/4/61		Unidentified 4 specimens		Unidentified 6 specimens	Tree Weta 10 specimens. Cave Weta 12 specimens		Bush Cicada (<i>Melampsalta scutellaris</i>) 2 specimens	
Days Bay Wellington 24/7/61		Longhorn Unidentified 2 specimens	Unidentified 2 specimens	Tree Weta 9 specimens. Cave Weta 6 specimens				
Ohope 1961			Grass Grub Beetle (<i>Odontria</i> sp.) 1 specimen	Unidentified 3 specimens	Cave Weta 3 specimens	Cockroach (<i>Platyzosteria</i> sp.) 1 specimen		
Stokes Valley Wellington 27/2/62							Large Cicada (<i>Melampsalta cingulata</i>) 5 specimens	
Rainbow Springs Rotorua 28/3/62				Insect fragments	unidentifiable			

<i>Locality and Date</i>	<i>Vertebrates</i>	<i>Spiders</i>	<i>Beetles</i>	<i>Moths</i>	<i>Wetas, Stick Insects and Related Insects</i>	<i>Other Insects</i>	<i>Worms</i>
Wakamaru 4/4/62	Mouse (<i>Mus musculus</i>) 1 specimen				Australian Katydid (<i>Caedicia simplex</i>) 1 specimen		
Rotorua 22/6/62	Small Passerine Bird 1 specimen Leg & feathers	Unidentified 1 specimen		Unidentified 2 specimens	Tree Weta 3 specimens. Cave Weta 1 specimen	Green Stick Insect (<i>Clitarchus hookeri</i>) 1 specimen	Earth Worms 3 specimens
Whakatane 1/8/62			Grass Grub Beetle (<i>Odontria piceps</i>) 10 specimens	Unidentified 26 specimens		Australian Black Cricket (<i>Achet commodus</i>) 1 specimen	Crane Fly (<i>Tipulidae</i>) 1 specimen
Te Horo Wellington 4/9/62				Unidentified 5 specimens	Tree Weta 2 specimens		
No locality 1962			Grass Grub Beetles 14 specimens				
Murupara Auckland 1962				Unidentified 2 specimens 1 larva			
Waikanae 8/5/63		Stomach	Empty				

Locality and Date	Vertebrates	Spiders	Beetles	Moths	Wetas, Stick Insects and Related Insects	Other Insects	Worms
Paekakariki 11/5/63				Unidentified 11 specimens	Tree Weta 1 specimen	Australian Katydid (<i>Caedicia</i> <i>simplex</i>) 3 specimens	
No locality 1963			Grass Grub (<i>Odontria</i> <i>magnum</i>) 7 specimens. Small Longhorn 1 specimen Carion Beetle (<i>Necrophilus</i> <i>prolongatus</i>) 1 specimen	Unidentified 16 specimens	Cave Weta 1 specimen	Stick Insect 1 specimen Australian Katydid (<i>Caedicia</i> <i>simplex</i>) 2 specimens	
No locality 1963						Australian Katydid (<i>Caedicia</i> <i>simplex</i>) 2 specimens	
Eastbourne Wellington 31/5/64			Grass Grub Beetle (<i>Odontria</i> sp.) 19 specimens. Longhorn 1 specimen	Unidentified 3 specimens	Tree Weta 1 specimen. Cave Weta 1 specimen	Green Stick Insect (<i>Clitarchus</i> <i>hookeri</i>) 3 specimens	
Paraparaumu 16/6/64				Melanchrids 42 specimens	Cave Weta 2 specimens	Cockroach (<i>Platysotheria</i> <i>undulivitta</i>) 2 specimens	