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Tui (*Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae*) mimic parakeet calls at Raoul Island

The Tui (*Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae*) is an accomplished mimic throughout its range and is a plentiful species at Raoul Island, Kermadec Group (Merton 1970). At Raoul Island the Kermadec Red-crowned Parakeet (*Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae cyanurus*) is seemingly now only a rare visitor, though it occurs on the Herald Islets, 3-4 kilometres away. Stragglers to Raoul usually fall prey to cats (Merton 1970; Taylor 1985).

During a brief visit to Raoul Island with the Royal New Zealand Navy on 21-22 March 1992, Tui were immediately evident on arrival and were calling regularly during the morning about the Hostel buildings. At the same time as the Tui were calling, a distinctive parakeet chattering call was heard regularly. In spite of extensive searching only Tui were seen.

A close-up video and recording was made of a Tui perching and calling in a bush during the late afternoon of 21 March, while on a visit to the North Beach campsite of the 1966/67 OSNZ Expedition to Raoul Island. The calls of this Tui were similar to those heard earlier in the day, starting with two separate 'clop' calls, a short melodic cascade of notes, followed by a burst of 'parakeet chattering', before closing with a single 'clop' call. This was repeated a number of times before the bird flew off. Later in the evening and again the next morning Tui round the base accommodation continued to include a 'parakeet chatter' at the latter parts of their calls. All Tui making full calls included this phrase. No Tui were seen on Meyer Islet during a short visit on 22 March, but parakeets were plentiful (six individuals seen in 30 minutes) and all calls heard resembled the short chattering sequence given by the Tui on nearby Raoul.

Ward (1969) made sound recordings of Tui during the 1966/67 OSNZ Expedition. Ward as well as Merton (1970) remarked, as had others earlier, on the relative quietness, lack of raucous calls and significant bell notes of Tui at Raoul Island when compared to those on mainland New Zealand. Other than the usual Tui calls, Merton (1970) noted one unusual individual with a call of a (Indian) Common Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*), a species which seems not to have been reported on Raoul.

Because the Raoul Island Hostel and North Beach are so close to the Herald Islets, it is possible that both Tui and parakeet are occasionally in contact. It is significant that a good number of Tui there in 1992 had a parakeet component included in their calls, when this was not apparent to observers and sound recordists in 1966/67. Having acquired the habit of 'parakeet chatter' this seems to have become a significant component of the Tui's dialect near the base accommodation. It would be interesting to know how far this has spread among other Tui elsewhere on Raoul Island.

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