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A 'YELLOW-CROWNED' PARAKEET ON CHATHAM ISLAND

At 1330 h on 29 December 1982 I saw a 'yellow-crowned' parakeet at Sore-tooth Spur (near the Taiko Camp) on the south bank of the Tuku a tamatea River, Chatham Island. The bird, which was alone, was seen briefly as it flew towards me, the red forehead and yellow crown being very conspicuous. The bird disappeared from sight and was not seen again. It was seen through 10 x 40 binoculars in bright light conditions. Parakeets were not uncommon around the Taiko Camp in December 1982 and early January 1983, up to eight birds being seen at one time, but all others seen closely were Red-crowned Parakeets (*Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae chathamensis*).

From this brief view the bird appeared to be a typical Chatham Island Yellow-crowned or Forbes' Parakeet (*C. auriceps forbesi*). At the time of observation I was unaware of the range of characters exhibited by hybrids between this taxon and the Red-crowned Parakeet. Taylor (1975) noted that hybrid *C. n. chathamensis* x *C. a. forbesi* on Mangere Island vary considerably, and of eight specimens of aviary-bred *C. n. novaezelandiae* x *C. a. auriceps* in the Canterbury Museum, Christchurch, only one is an 'obvious' hybrid, showing an orange back to the crown and red ear patches (pers. obs.). Some Mangere Island hybrids are "Forbes'-like," but differ from Forbes' by having "faint yellowish-orange spots behind the eyes" (Taylor 1975). This feature was not looked for on the bird which I saw and so I cannot determine whether it was Forbes' or a hybrid.

This is the first record of a Forbes'/Forbes'-like Parakeet from Chatham Island. There are historical records of Forbes' Parakeet from Pitt, Mangere and Little Mangere Islands but not from Chatham Island (Travers & Travers 1873, Fleming 1939). More recently, Taylor (1975) noted Forbes' Parakeets and hybrids being restricted to Little Mangere and Mangere Islands.

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