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## SHORT NOTE

### ORIENTAL CUCKOO IN SOUTHLAND

On 15 January 1983, I received a phone call from Mr C. S. Nicol, farmer of Kapuka, Southland, to report that there was an unusual bird in his garden. He further said that he thought it was a cuckoo but not a Shining or Long-tailed Cuckoo, both of which he was familiar with. From his very good description we provisionally identified the bird as an Oriental Cuckoo (*Cuculus saturatus*).

The following day I visited the area and had excellent views of the bird at a distance of 5-20 metres through the open window of the Nicol homestead. The bird was about the size of a large Tui and obviously a cuckoo. Conspicuous features were a barred black and white breast, blackish-white spotted tail tipped with white, yellow legs and feet, head and back bluish grey.

The bird was actively feeding on earthworms which were emerging from a rain-sodden lawn. From sundry perching positions around the lawn, the bird was frequently flying to the ground to catch worms, which were eaten on the ground.

Colour photographs of the bird were taken in a poor light. To enable closer photographs to be taken, earthworms were collected and thrown from the open window. The bird approached with a minimum of caution to about 5 metres to eat these worms.

Having consulted New Zealand, Australian and British and European field guides, I have no doubt that the bird was in fact an Oriental Cuckoo.

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[Copies of colour photographs are on file with the Rare Birds Committee. — Ed.]