

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

20 March 2023

The Editor
Notornis

Sir,

In their Short Note “Kākā (*Nestor meridionalis*) investigate and depredate kakaruai (South Island robin *Petroica australis australis*) eggs” (*Notornis* 70(1): 42–44), published in March 2023, the authors state that “To our knowledge, there are only two other known observations of kaka destroying the eggs of other birds”. Apart from there being unlikely to be records of “unknown” observations, one of those observations was a personal communication on 24 October 2022 of an observation made in 1999. The other record was in a non-refereed publication.

The authors are apparently unaware of yet another observation made in 2000: “Egg predation by South Island kaka (*Nestor meridionalis*). *Notornis* 52(2): 106–108 (2005)”. This note records the consumption of eggs from an open nest of unknown songbird in forest on the St Arnaud Range in Nelson Lakes National Park. The note expands on the basic observation and provides estimates of the nutrients gained by the kaka in less than 10 minutes.

Department of Conservation workers at St Arnaud engaged in kaka research “were not surprised” by that observation: one of them may have been the source of the personal communication of 24 October 2022.

This raises a couple of issues. First, a significant behaviour by a threatened New Zealand bird was known to people researching that species but apparently they had not thought that the information was worth making available to others, at least not until questioned 23 years after the event. Then, the person making the comment in 2022 seems not to have been aware of the observation published in 2005 that involved one of their banded birds fitted with a radio transmitter. Secondly, the authors of the March 2023 note – and their reviewer(s) – missed a previous published record in a rather obvious place to begin looking. A search on the *Notornis* online database with the keyword “kaka” identified the 2005 note in a few seconds.

Yours, etc.

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