

not far away. A member of the party climbed the tree and found four eggs in the nest, three of them normal sparrow's eggs and the fourth somewhat smaller and lighter in colour. My first impression was that this egg was also a sparrow's egg, but lighter, as very often happens in sparrows' clutches. The next day, 5 January, in the morning, the tree was climbed again — and it was found that the clutch had grown to five eggs, four normal sparrow's eggs and the mysterious egg of the day before. It struck me that this was not normal, as the lightest egg in a sparrow's clutch is generally the last egg laid.

Not having any knowledge of the habits of the Long-tailed Cuckoo and the dimensions and colouring of its eggs, I only took note of the facts as found.

After my return, I saw at the Dominion Museum Mr Stead's paper on the Long-tailed Cuckoo and learnt that the dimensions of this cuckoo's eggs, as known up to now, are smaller than those of the House Sparrow's. The colour, as described by Mr Stead, also agreed with the colouring of the eggs seen.

I am now convinced that the egg seen was a cuckoo's egg.

— F. C. KINSKY

CHAFFINCH TAKES THE CAKE

On 11/11/55 we were having afternoon tea on the lawn when a Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*) came down to forage. A piece of cake was thrown to it, but though it approached it, coming to within three yards of us to do so, it made no attempt to eat it. However, when the piece of cake was crumbled the bird ate and then filled its beak and made off. This was repeated four times. The bird was by its flight pattern obviously taking the cake to its nest.

— W. A. WILLIAMSON

FALCON IN CHATHAM ISLANDS

Recently R. J. Scarlett (*Notornis* 6, p. 57) commented on the 'former existence of the falcon (*Falco novaeseelandiae* Gmelin) in the Chatham Islands', which, according to him, 'does not seem to have been recorded'. This authenticated record is based on five bones of *Falco* from the Chathams in the collections of the Canterbury Museum, collected over a period of about sixty years. However, it may be of interest to point out that quite a number of references occur in the literature of Chatham Islands birds to previous records of a species of *Falco* from this region.

Most of the prior records of *Falco* from the Chathams are based on identifications of bones collected by H. O. Forbes in February 1892 along the shores of Petre Bay, Chatham Islands. These records may be found in the following accounts: Forbes, 1892*a*, *Nature*, 46 (1185): 252-3; 1892*b*, *Nature*, 46 (1191): 404; 1893*a*, *Roy. Geogr. Soc., Suppl. Pap.*, 3 (4): 607-637; 1893*b*, *Fortnightly Rev.*, 53 (317): 669-690; 1893*c*, *Ibis* (6), 5, (20): 521-546. Other references to the presence of small hawks on the Chathams occur also, and these are probably based on Forbes's records, although some (e.g., Rothschild's) may be based on identifications from other collections. Among these secondary sources are: Milne-Edwards, 1896, *Ann. Sci. Nat. Zool.*, (8), 2: 117-136; Taylor White, 1896, *T.N.Z.I.*, 29: 162-168; Evans, 1899, *Birds, Cambr. Nat. Hist.*, 9; Rothschild, 1907, *Proc. Fourth Int. Orn. Congr., Lond.*, 1905 (9); 191-217; Lambrecht, 1933, *Handbuch der Palaeornithologie*.

Fortunately, unlike some other records of birds reputed to have inhabited the Chatham Islands at an earlier time, bones of *Falco* do exist, and probably quite a few more will be found in the near future. The relationship of this bird to the New Zealand mainland species would be of interest, if it should be possible to distinguish them from bones alone, particularly since the sub-specific relation of the other hawk on the Chathams, the only present-day one there, *Circus approximans approximans* (vide Amadon, 1941, *Emu*, 40: 365-384), with the mainland form seems unusual. Fuller details of the Chatham Islands extinct birds and an amplification of the accounts of Forbes and others listed above will be given shortly, but it is thought that these prior records may not be without interest.

— E. W. DAWSON