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PARENT-OFFSPRING ATTACHMENT IN THE HOODED MANNIKIN *Lonchura spectabilis* OF NEW GUINEA

The following observation was made in Tsuwenkai village, Western Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea. The village is located at about 5°25'S, 144°38'E at an altitude of about 1 500 metres in the mid-montane rainforest zone of the north wall of the Jimi Valley, western Bismarck Range.

The Hooded Mannikin *Lonchura spectabilis* is locally common, and is encountered in small flocks in the anthropogenic grasslands within the mosaic of secondary forest, cultivations and habitation sites between altitudes of about 1 450 and 1 700 metres.

On 4 February, 1974, a villager brought me the domed nest of a Hooded Mannikin containing three well-feathered chicks. The nest had been taken from a tract of grassland some 600 m by direct line from my house, on the far side of a steep-sided spur parallel to the one on which my house was located. There were no continuous corridors of grassland between the nest site and my house. Diamond (1972) considers the Hooded Mannikin to be confined to such corridors.

I placed the nest on the ground against a small shrub by my house. During the afternoon my local field assistants reported that two adult Hooded Mannikins called and flew around in an apparently agitated manner near my house-yard. The chicks responded by peeping, whereupon the adult birds approached the nest and one entered and apparently fed the chicks.

I then placed the nest about 1.5 metres above the ground in a fork in a shrub on the edge of a tract of grassland some 20 metres from my house. Within ten

minutes an adult had entered the nest apparently to feed the chicks. They were fed at least twice more before nightfall, and one bird apparently entered the nest and brooded the chicks shortly before darkness fell.

Chicks were fed in succeeding days and appeared healthy when I examined the nest on 8 February. The next day a small boy removed the nest, but I returned it to the shrub, intact but misshapen. The chicks were unharmed and apparently left the nest shortly thereafter. They were not seen in the vicinity again.

Assuming that the adults attending the nest were parents of the nestlings they showed a strong parent-offspring attachment which overcame relocation of the nest. They either followed the woman who had removed their nest through vegetation normally avoided by the species, or scouted widely across heavily dissected terrain until able to locate the chicks by calls. Thereupon, they continued to care for the chicks despite repeated gross interference with the nest, suggesting that investment in their established clutch was high.

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