New Holland Honeyeater
Phylidonyris novaehollandiae
In large flocks throughout scrub and low heath; breeding.

Tawny-crowned Honeyeater *P. melanops*
Everywhere but mainly in open heathland; breeding.

Silvereye *Zosterops lateralis*
Most common bird on island except on rocks and grassland; breeding.

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*
Everywhere; breeding.

Australian Raven *Corvus coronoides*
Up to 12 birds, often near fowlyard.

Acknowledgement

This list was compiled with the help of Ron Thoday and Peter Trusler, present on the 1975 and 1977 visits; and Anne Kerle present on the 1975, 1978 and two subsidiary visits. All made helpful comments on the manuscript. The assistance of lightkeepers both past and present is acknowledged.

References

Reilly, P. N. (1977), 'Seabird Islands No. 45; Gabo Island, Victoria', *Corella* 1:51-53.
Robinson, L. N. (1965), Birds of the Mallacoota Area, Victoria, Bird Observers Club, Melbourne.

P. N. Reilly, 1 Exon Street, Hampton, Vic. 3188.

Observations on the Diet of a Fledgling Rufous-tailed Bronze-cuckoo

In August 1974, at 'Eden Vale', Sandy Flat, New South Wales a pair of individually colour-banded* Yellow-rumped Thornbills *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*, (No. 012-22103 and 012-22113), was observed repairing an old nest 1 m from the ground in a Bunya Pine *Araucaria bidwilli*. Four eggs were laid but three disappeared during incubation. Some days after hatching it was discovered that the chick was a cuckoo.

A Rufous-tailed Bronze-cuckoo *Chrysococcyx basalis*, had been seen and heard in the vicinity for some days, usually early mornings, calling from power transmission lines or a *Pinus radiata* about 20 m from the nest.

Frequent observations were made of the nest during the feeding period, and it was noticed that green long-horned grasshoppers, (Tettigoniidae), and several species of smooth skinned caterpillar appeared to be the main items of food brought to the nest.

When the young cuckoo left the nest it spent the first three days fluttering about in the nest tree and in several fruit trees nearby, then it flew to the *P. radiata* and immediately began to supplement the ration brought to it by the thornbills by eating hairy caterpillars which were abundant on the tree. It was then joined by the adult cuckoo, but was not seen to be fed by it.

The thornbills gradually stopped feeding the young bird, and in two weeks both cuckoos had disappeared.

This poses the question; was the nesting fed by it's real parent unknown to the observer, or does the young cuckoo instinctively eat hairy caterpillars, as cuckoos have apparently become adapted to eating these caterpillars which are avoided by most birds?

During the whole period that the young cuckoo was being fed by the thornbills it made the same 'hissing' calls as young thornbills do. In December of the same year a group of Superb Blue Wrens *Malurus cyaneus*, was seen to be feeding another Rufous-tailed Bronze-cuckoo which made the same 'squeaking' calls as young wrens do. Apparently cuckoos are able to mimic the begging calls of the young of the species which is fostering them.

The following year the thornbills moved 300 m away and successfully reared their own young, as did an unbanded pair which took over the old nest in the Bunya Pine.

* *Bands used were provided by the Australian Bird-banding Scheme, Division of Wildlife Research, CSIRO.*

T. H. Alley, 32 Parkland Drive, Alstonville, N.S.W. 2477