

Occurrence of the Long-tailed Cuckoo *Eudynamis taitensis* on Caroline Atoll, Kiribati

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The Long-tailed Cuckoo *Eudynamis taitensis* performs what is perhaps the most remarkable overwater migration of any land bird (Lack 1959). It breeds in New Zealand and is known to winter in the islands of the Central Pacific Ocean, with stragglers seen as far away as Palau to the west and Pitcairn Island to the east (Bogert 1937). Although the Line Islands are along the perimeter of this range, the Long-tailed Cuckoo has never been reported for the Line or Phoenix Islands (Pratt *et al.* 1987). In 1883, when Dixon (1884) visited Caroline Atoll (10°S, 150°W) at the south-eastern end of the Line Islands, he reported that a colleague had heard 'the notes of a singing bird' but no land bird was collected. In June 1965, when biologists from the Pacific Ocean Biological Survey Program visited Caroline Atoll, they failed to detect land birds (Clapp & Sibley 1971).

We encountered this cuckoo on four islets during our 22–29 September 1988 survey of all 39 islets of Caroline Atoll as part of a research team from the Soviet Oceanographic Research Vessel *Akademik Korolev*. Harsh monosyllabic or disyllabic call notes were heard (presumably of this species) on South Island, on one of the channel islets and on Long Island. On 25 September, a single bird probably of this species, was heard and briefly seen on South Island. Then on 26 September, an individual was positively identified (CBK) on Nike Island. Finally, on 28 September, we collected a male on Long Island (U.S. National Museum No. 607191) near the same location where we (AKK and KT) heard and followed a cuckoo-

sized land bird for about 20 min on 27 September.

These records establish the Long-tailed Cuckoo at least as a winter straggler to the Line Islands. Since our visit, we learned from corresponding with the atoll's only human inhabitants, the Ronald Falconer family, that an individual Long-tailed cuckoo was occasionally seen in 1989 near their dwelling on the southern-most channel islet. Our observations at five widely scattered locations (the most distant observations were at least 9 km apart) suggest that several individuals were present on the atoll during our visit. If so, the species probably disperses with regularity to Caroline Atoll and perhaps to others of the better vegetated Line and Phoenix Islands as well.

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