

# The North Queensland Naturalist

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## The Golden Bronze Cuckoo

*Lamprocoecyx plagus* (Latham)

By John McLoughlin

This interesting bird is found in most parts of Australia, in Tasmania and in the Pacific Islands. It is about six inches in length and has a bill characteristic of that of a honey-eater. It has a green back, the green merging into a dark brown near the tail. The wings are green, and the head a light brown. The breast and stomach are creamy white, and are crossed with bars of light or dark brown. It feeds mainly on insects and their larvae. It is seen mostly singly or in pairs, although on two occasions, while studying this bird, I have seen three together. Upon further examination, I noticed that on each occasion there were two males and one female. The recorded foster parents number sixty. I have noticed that in Cairns, the chief bird to which the cuckoos leave the rearing of their progeny is the Northern Warbler, *Gerygone muki*. This little bird generally

builds its nest overhanging water. It is dome shaped with a hooded entrance and a long tail. Before the female cuckoo lays her egg, the male flies close to the nest, thus attracting the attention of both warblers. They at once give chase, and try to drive him away. When the male cuckoo has led the two birds some distance from the nest, the female cuckoo then flies quietly to the nest, kicks one of the warbler's eggs out and deposits her own deep bronze coloured egg. She then makes a hasty departure, and joins her mate. The warblers return and are ignorant of the strange egg in the nest. If the egg of the Golden Bronze Cuckoo is lightly rubbed with a damp cloth, the bronze colour will rub off, disclosing a pale green shell. When the young cuckoo hatches, it is generally too cramped with the other two smaller birds alongside so it ends up by kicking them out of the nest.

## Book Review

25. **FISHING ON THE BARRIER REEF AND INSHORE**, by Geo. Coates, 71 pp., 4 plates, 1 coloured, and many figures, T. Willmetts and Sons (Pty.) Ltd., Townsville. The author is to be congratulated on this excellent work. The title might have been improved by the appellation Great Barrier Reef. All the various fish are beautifully figured, some in colour, and in every case, the biological name is inserted. The correct vernacular names are prominently displayed and the local name added in a less conspicuous position. Maps of the Great Barrier Reef as a whole, as well as those

of the Cairns, Townsville and other areas are added. The Thread Fin Sea Perch, also locally known as Chinaman Fish is no longer placed on the poisonous list, and official sanction for this appears to be given, as the legal size is now quoted as 12 inches. Some doubt is also expressed as to the poisonous propensities of Coates' Sea Perch, and here again the "legal size" is given. Many useful notes are given of the various fish, and of fishing in general. This volume is surely the most useful and handy yet published dealing with fishing in these waters.

## North Queensland Naturalists' Club

Meets at School of Arts, Lake Street, Cairns usually on second Tuesday in each month at 8 p.m.  
Next Meeting: Annual General Meeting: Presentation of Annual Report and Balance Sheet; Election of Officers.

MEETINGS: 12th July, 1950. Cine-film, Life History of *Cosconoscera hercules*, by K. Bolton.  
8th August, 1950. Customs of Natives of New Guinea, by A. F. Lannoy.

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