

STOP PRESS

PERFORATIONS IN FEATHERS OF *CHRYSOCOCCYX* SPECIES

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A recent observation of a Diederik Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx caprius* that I caught for ringing showed perforations of some of the tail feathers. These perforations were in the vane of the feathers, sometimes up to 11 in a row. I removed one of these feathers for closer inspection at a later time.

A month after I retrapped the same individual, the same feather was now replaced by an almost completely moulted one (score = 4). This feather was also perforated, in almost the same pattern. A subsequent Diederik Cuckoo, and a Klaas's Cuckoo *C. klaas* had similar perforations. I also checked the primary and secondary feathers of the Klaas's Cuckoo, and P1 (left wing) was also perforated, but to a slightly lesser extent. I did not check the previous birds for perforations of the primaries or secondaries. These perforations are unlikely to be caused by lice or other ecto-parasites, because of their exposed position and pattern.

I would like to collect more information on this. Ringers could check the feathers of

Chrysococcyx species, as well as other cuckoos, for perforations.

Perhaps more importantly, information on the absence of perforations in any individual cuckoos (or presence in other birds) is required. If, therefore, you find any cuckoos without perforations, this information will be most welcome.

In addition, ringers can note the feather position and number of visible perforations (e.g. P1-R-3 perfs; T2-L-10 perfs). Any feathers not scored will mean that no perforations were seen. Feather samples (one or two per bird) can be taken, at ringers discretion, and sent to me. Place feathers in a stiff envelope (you may use cardboard) and mark with appropriate details (location, species, date, position of feather and ring number).

I will collate the data and try to determine the cause of the perforations, but your comments will be appreciated, as well as sources I might consult. Please send information and samples to the address given above.