

SHORT NOTES

A White-faced Heron reacts to a cat

On 12 April 1989 we were counting birds at Jordan's, on the Kaipara Harbour. At the head of a tidal inlet on the south of the farm is a shallow muddy lake. A single White-faced Heron (*Ardea novaehollandiae*) was feeding in soft mud on the lake when a cat (*Felis domesticus*) emerged from scrub and walked out onto the mud, making for the other side. The cat continued out for about 25 m until the mud became softer and its paws began to sink in and, finding no firm mud, returned along the path it had come. When the cat first emerged, the heron stopped feeding and walked towards the cat, its neck stretched out and wings raised from the body, approaching to within 2-3 m of the cat, which ignored it. The heron maintained this posture and followed the cat closely until it disappeared into the scrub. During this time 20 Spur-winged Plovers (*Vanellus miles*) had arrived, and as the cat was retreating all walked towards it, calling vociferously. Presumably the heron was in familiar enough an environment to approach closely a potential predator, out of its element, with the intention of seeing it away. Whether a cat would ever take on a bird the size of a fully grown heron is highly debatable, and this one certainly seemed too preoccupied with crossing the mud to take much notice of the heron.

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New species for the Auckland Islands

During recent fauna surveys by the Department of Conservation on the Auckland Islands (November-December 1989), two new species of bird were recorded for the island group.

On 14 November, a lone Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) was seen on Enderby Island. It was standing on grass sward above cliffs on the north-eastern side of the island. It was in a flock of roosting Auckland Island Shags (*Leucocarbo campbelli colensoi*) at the edge of a large breeding colony of shags. The goose was seen throughout the expedition either roosting with the shags or grazing on the sward, and it was still there in mid-January 1990, when a party visited the island (W. J. Cooper, pers. comm.).

On 30 November, a Shining Cuckoo (*Chrysococcyx lucidus*) was seen on Ocean Island, a 12.5 ha island on Port Ross. It was first seen in flight in *Dracophyllum longifolium* shrubland. A short time later, it was seen on the ground, feeding voraciously. It did not take flight until approached to within three metres.

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