

The Editor
Sir

Egg sizes in introduced birds

An editorial oversight prevented my being able to correct some minor errors in Flux's (2006) interesting and informative response to our paper on the reduction in egg size in populations of exotic passerines in New Zealand. Specifically, despite the claim that the eggs were collected from 'an unspecified area', we clearly state in the reference from which the data were obtained (Cassey *et al.* 2005) that the eggs were collected in agricultural habitats at Benneydale in the Central North Island, and cited the map reference (175°22' E, 38°32' S).

I note also that our key variable of interest was average clutch volume, the product of egg volume and clutch size. Interestingly, we did not find a consistent relationship, as might be inferred from Flux (2006), between average egg volume and clutch size between regions. However, I cannot help but agree that the much larger sample sizes available to Flux clearly cast considerable doubt on the generality of the relationship we derived and so I strongly encourage more studies that might further elucidate

the mechanisms of the variability in reproductive output in exotic birds in New Zealand.

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LITERATURE CITED

- Flux, J.E. C. 2006. No evidence for a reduction in egg size in introduced populations of European starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) and song thrushes (*Turdus philomelos*) in New Zealand. *Notornis* 53: 383-384.
- Cassey, P.; Ewen, J.G.; Boulton, R.L.; Blackburn, T.M.; Møller, A.P.; Biard, C.; Olson V.; Karadas, F. 2005. Egg carotenoids in passerine birds introduced to New Zealand: relations to ecological factors, integument coloration and phylogeny. *Functional ecology* 19: 719-726.

The Editor apologises to Dr Cassey for not referring Dr Flux's letter to him for comment and response before deciding that its content merited a more formal treatment (and citation) than was possible in a letter, and proceeding on that basis; and to Dr Flux for any embarrassment the decision to change the format of his letter may have caused.