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## MOUNTAIN TAILORBIRD AS HOST OF RUSTY BREASTED CUCKOO

by

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On 17 July 1997, on the western slopes of Gunung Mahawu near Manado, Minahassa, North Sulawesi (1°01'N, 18°03'E) at ca. 1100 at, I observed a recently fledged Rusty breasted Cuckoo *Cacomantis sepulcralis* being fed by two Mountain Tailorbirds *Orthotomus cuculatus*. The juvenile cuckoo was identified by its rich brown upperparts and whitish underparts (without buff), and the broad black barring all over (see MacKinnon & Phillipps 1993: 179, and Holmes & Phillipps 1996:32). The habitat was a mixed area of disturbed secondary forest with small patches of scrub and former cultivated land. Attention was drawn to the bird by its repeated hunger cries, from a tree about three metres above ground inside the secondary forest.

The breeding season of the Rusty breasted Cuckoo in the Lesser Sunda Islands lasts from March to May (Verheijen 1964), whereas in Minahassa a laying female was collected on 12 January (Stresemann 1940: 451). Rozendaal & Decker (1989:95) record a nestling being fed in North Sulawesi on 21 July, so the present observation is within the known time range of this species breeding. I

Known hosts of *Cacomantis sepulcralis* are, for instance, *Zosterops buruensis*, *Lanius schach*, *Calicicapa* sp., *Cyornis* sp., *Rhipidaira* sp., *Ficedula hyperythra*, *Megalurus palustris*, *Enicurus velatus*, *Saxicola caprata*, *Nectarinia aspasia* and *Nectarinia jugularis* (Hoogerwerf 1949: 33; White & Bruce 1986: 234; Rozendaal & Dekker 1989: 95; Stones *et al.* 1997: 46, Coates & Bishop 1997: 348). According to the Handbook of Birds of the World Volume 4 (del Hoyo *et al.* 1997:560), in which *C. sepulcralis* is treated as a subspecies of *C. variolosus*, there are more than 60 species of host of *C. variolosus* recorded, including tailorbirds in Sumatra.

This appears to be the first reliable record of a Mountain Tailorbird as host of the Rusty breasted Cuckoo.

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