

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 77 (2011)
Heft: [4]

Artikel: Common Cuckoo
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-943376>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 07.08.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Sender:

The Secretary of the Swiss Society of New Zealand Inc
 Trudi Brühlmann
 401 Marine Drive
 Mahina Bay
 Eastbourne
 Lower Hutt 5013

New Zealand
 Permit No. 93966



HELVE⁺IA

Magazine for Members of the Swiss Society of New Zealand Inc

FAUNA IN SWITZERLAND

Common Cuckoo

The Common Cuckoo, *Cuculus canorus*, is a widespread summer migrant to Europe and Asia, and winters in Africa.

The cuckoo family gets its name for the call of the male Common Cuckoo, usually given from an open perch, goo-ko. During the breeding season the male typically gives this call with intervals of 1-1.5 seconds, in groups of 10-20 with a rest of a few seconds between groups. The female has a loud bubbling call.

Its food is insects, with hairy caterpillars, which are distasteful to many birds, being a speciality. It also occasionally eats eggs and chicks.

The Common Cuckoo is a brood parasite, which lays its eggs in the nests of other bird species, particularly of Dunnocks, Meadow Pipits, and Eurasian Reed Warblers.

At the appropriate moment, the hen cuckoo flies down to the Reed Warblers' nest, pushes one Reed Warbler egg out of the nest, lays an egg and flies off. The whole process is achieved in only about 10 seconds.

Cuckoo chicks methodically evict all host progeny from host nests. It is a much larger bird than its hosts, and needs to monopolise the food supplied by the parents. The Cuckoo chick will roll the other eggs out of the nest by pushing them with its back over the edge. If the Reed Warbler's eggs hatch before the Cuckoo's egg, the Cuckoo chick will push the



other chicks out of the nest in a similar way.

At 14 days old, the Cuckoo chicks are about three times the size of the adult Reed Warblers. The numerous and rapid hunger calls of the single cuckoo chick (which perfectly mimic the cries of a whole brood of warbler chicks), and to a lesser extent its coloured gape, encourage the host parents to bring more food.

Cuckoo chicks fledge after about 20-21 days after hatching, which is about twice as long as for Reed Warblers. If the hen cuckoo is out-of-phase with a clutch of Reed Warbler eggs, she will eat them all so that the hosts are forced to start another brood.

from the internet

When I was a child the saying went that you wouldn't be short of money all year if you had money on you at the first call of the cuckoo. One year I borrowed a 10 cent piece from my mother's purse and kept it faithfully in the pocket of my apron, dreaming and scheming how I would contribute to our finances. Well, the apron went into the washing, my mother must have wondered about the coin when she found it. And I heard the first cuckoo in that spring without money in my pocket, and therefore was unable to contribute to the Brühlmann finances... tb