

Merops ornatus was common as the steep banks offer suitable nesting sites and adequate food is available from the bee-farm nearby.

*By Jaroslav Klapste and Peter Klapste,
6/15 Southey St., Elwood, Victoria. 3184.*

A Koel (*Eudynamys scolopacea*) at Blackburn, Victoria. On December 5, 1975 at 08.45 E.D.S.T., I called at Mrs. Mabel Pollock's residence in Wolseley Crescent, Blackburn, at her request, as she had told me of a most unusual bird in the area. We heard the bird calling in the garden next door, but were unable to see it. My identification of the call was that of a Koel. I returned at 12.50 hours and heard it calling, but was still unable to see it.

I returned again at 1700 hours accompanied by Mr. Bryan Mitchell and Mr. & Mrs. Keith Richards. I had a somewhat sketchy tape recording of a Koel's call which I played several times through a loud speaker. Eventually the bird responded vocally to the recorded call, then flew to a tree 20 metres away thus enabling us to have very good views of a male Koel for almost an hour. I taped the bird calling, and played his own call back to him. On hearing the call he flew to various points nearby. Mr. & Mrs. Keith Richards, who know the species very well, confirmed the identification of the Koel.

The following day, December 6, 1975, the late Mr. Roy P. Cooper also had excellent views of the bird, as did Mr. & Mrs. Frank Stephens, each of whom know this species particularly well. On December 7, 1975, numerous members of the Bird Observer's Club visited the area and saw the bird.

The Koel was first noticed by Mrs. Pollock and many of her neighbours on November 29, 1975 and it was last reported on December 9, 1975.

The area is a built-up suburban complex with mixed gardens including pine trees, eucalypts, shrubs, lawns and fruit trees such as plums, prunus, cherry-plums and loquats.

On December 6, 1975, Mrs. Ellen McCulloch, Mrs. Berris Stokes, Mr. Roy Cooper and I watched the bird for some time in the back garden of a house in Wolseley Crescent and saw it eating cherry-plums.

The bird called constantly in the early morning and again in the evening, every day of its stay. It showed a preference for pine trees to perch in, and apparently roosted in one every night on the property of the people upon whose cherry-plums it had been feeding.

The only other Victorian record of a Koel was at Mallacoota in 1917.

I wish to thank Mrs. Mabel Pollock for drawing our attention to this most unusual visitor to suburban Melbourne.

The recording of the Koel calling at Blackburn is now included in the Bird Observer's Club Cassette Library in the study tape of cuckoos.

By Alma Mitchell, 4 Betula Ave., Nunawading, Vic. 3131.