

A YOUNG PALLID CUCKOO AND YELLOW- RUMPED THORNBILLS

IN July's Western Wildlife, Lesley Brooker mentioned the hosts of Pallid Cuckoos and Heather Adamson had a story on Yellow-rumped Thornbills - I can link these together.

Some time ago, on my five acres in Whitby, I heard the typical begging cry of a young bird, sounding like a small magpie. After homing in on the sound, I saw a young Pallid Cuckoo sitting in a grevillea about 50 cm above the ground. It was being fed very industriously by a group of Yellow-rumped Thornbills. A flock of these regularly grazed over our dichondra patch, picking out the seeds. It did look comical to see these small birds so busily feeding the much larger young cuckoo. It seems logical to assume that it had been hatched by the thornbills and was being raised by them - a real con job!

Geoff Brand



*Pallid
Cuckoo*

Lesley Brooker comments:

"Thanks for the record. Yellow-rumped Thornbills are a major host of the Shining Bronze-Cuckoo. Young Shinings are also larger than Yellow-rumps, so it could be that the cuckoo seen by Geoff was a Shining. It can be hard to pick the difference between fledgling cuckoos as they tend to look much the same at that age. Probably the biggest difference between Shining and Pallid fledglings is size (Pallids are larger and more mottled). A photo of a Shining fledgling can be found on <http://www.users.bigpond.com/LesMikeBrooker/nestling.htm> - unfortunately we don't have a good photo of a Pallid fledgling."