



CHALCITES MEYERI.

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Meyer's Golden Cuckoo.

Chrysococcyx splendidus, Meyer, Sitz. k. Akad. der Wissenschaften zu Wien, lxi. p. 81 (1874).

Chrysococcyx meyeri, Salvad. Ann. Mus. Civic. Genova, vii. pp. 82, 762 (1875).

Lamprococcyx meyerii, Salvad. Ann. Mus. Civic. Genova, vii. p. 912 (1875).

THE little Golden Cuckoos form a natural section of the *Cuculidæ*, and are found all over Africa, India, the Malayan archipelago, Australia, and New Zealand. The African species are certainly the most brilliant; and none of the eastern ones can approach the Emerald Cuckoo (*Chalcites smaragdineus*) for beauty of plumage. In the plate I have endeavoured to illustrate a very common scene in the life of the Australian Golden Cuckoos; and I have no doubt that this New-Guinea species is parasitic on some of the small Warblers which are found in the same country, such as the *Malurus alboscapulatus*, which is the species I have ventured to introduce into my Plate. Dr. Buller, in the 'Birds of New Zealand,' gives a very interesting account of the little Cuckoo of that country (*Chalcites lucidus*) and its breeding-habits; and other notes on these birds will be found in my own and other authors' works.

The peculiar fiery bronze colour of the present species is one of its special characteristics. It was discovered by Dr. Meyer in the Arfak Mountains; and, as the latter gentleman observes, it "has the same brilliant gloss as the African *Chrysococcyx klaasii*, while the other known Golden Cuckoos of the east are not so entirely metallic. It is, moreover, distinguished from the other known species by the absence of any grey or white over the eye and on the cheeks, but is especially remarkable for the fine rust-brown colour of the wings, which in some degree call to mind the 'rufous tint of the upper surface' of *Chrysococcyx russata* of Gould."

Dr. Meyer named this bird *C. splendidus*; but as that title had already been applied by the late Mr. Gray to a South-African species, Count Salvadori very properly changed it to *C. meyeri*, one of the best and most appropriate names which could have been selected, in my opinion, in acknowledgment of Dr. Meyer's services to science in his celebrated voyages to the East. I should have followed Salvadori in calling this species a *Chrysococcyx*; but having placed all the Golden Cuckoos in my previous works under the genus *Chalcites*, I am obliged, for the sake of uniformity, to relegate this species to the same genus.

The following is a translation of Meyer's original description:—

"Head, cheeks, neck, back, wing-coverts, uropygium, and upper tail-coverts splendidly metallic green and copper-red; only behind the eyes, on the sides of the neck, a large white patch; chin, throat, breast, belly, and under tail-coverts with bands just as brilliant as the upper parts; under wing-coverts also striped, but the stripes brownish grey; wings on the upperside, at the base and at the ends blackish, in the middle reddish brown, and more vividly coloured on the outer webs than on the inner; underside of the wing at the ends grey, elsewhere light reddish brown; upperside of the tail, the two middle rectrices metallic green and copper-coloured, but not as brilliant as the upperside of the body; the other rectrices metallic only on the outer webs, the outermost very feeble, inner webs blackish with a white patch at the end; the outermost rectrice bears on the inner web, on a black ground, five white spots, on the outer web six, the last very narrow; underside of the tail greyish black, with whitish tips, the outermost rectrices on the inner web black, with five white spots, on the outer web lighter, with six white spots.

Total length 160 millims.; bill from the front 12, wings 91, tail 70.

The Plate represents, of the natural size, the type specimen of this species, kindly lent to me by my friend Dr. Meyer.



Gould, John and Sharpe, Richard Bowdler. 1877. "Chalcites meyeri, Meyer's Golden Cuckoo [Pl. 43]." *The birds of New Guinea and the adjacent Papuan islands : including many new species recently discovered in Australia* 4(V), -. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.322828>.

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