
A New Technique Hints at Yellow-billed Cuckoo's Wanderings

The new technologies of transmitters and data loggers give us the ability to track individual birds throughout the year, setting aside previously well-known "facts". Indeed, such a device placed on a single netted Yellow-billed Cuckoo (Sechrist et al. 2012) provided a shocking insight into a migration strategy that others had only barely suggested at (e.g., Hughes 1999). With admirable modesty, the authors said their work "hinted at a flexible migration strategy". While the female bred within a few kilometers in each of two years, in its first summer she traveled from her New Mexico breeding site, and moved over a thousand kilometers through Chihuahua and Sonora, then returned to the Rio Grande valley before migrating. Then in the winter, after migrating some 8,000 kilometers, far from imprinting on its wintering grounds, it traveled another thousand kilometers over several months in Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina. This is a

far cry from the normal model that we have of a bird migrating between fixed wintering and breeding areas.

Literature Cited

Hughes, J.M. 1999. Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), the Birds of North America Online (A. Poole, Ed.). Ithaca: Cornell Lab of Ornithology; Retrieved from the Birds of North America Online: <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/bna/species/418>

Sechrist, J. D., E.H. Paxton, D.D. Ahlers, R.H. Doster, and V.M. Ryan. 2012. One year of migration data for a Western Yellow-Billed Cuckoo. *Western Birds* 43:2-11.

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