

## Unusual breeding behaviour of the Guira Cuckoo

### *Guira guira*

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Un nido de *Vanellus chilensis*, encontrado en la reserva natural de la fundación Federico Wildermuth, Santa Fé, Argentina el 20 de diciembre de 1996, contenía cuatro huevos propios y uno de *Guira guira*. Posteriormente el nido fue encontrado vacío, y se cree que fue predado. Parece ser inusual que *Guira guira* deposite sus huevos en el nido de una especie nidífuga que nidifica en el suelo.

On 20 December 1996, in the nature reserve of the Federico Wildermuth foundation, Santa Fé, Argentina, a Southern Lapwing *Vanellus chilensis* nest was discovered just below a barbed-wire fence bordering a neighbouring farmer's pasture. To the author's surprise, among the four typical brown, spotted eggs of the lapwing there was a turquoise egg with irregular remains of a white lime coating. It was obviously a Guira Cuckoo *Guira guira* egg. The following day, a small hole was seen in one of the lapwing eggs, and with the assistance of a tape amplifier, the sounds of three of the four young lapwings could be heard through the shells. However, these did not hatch during the day.



Guira Cuckoo *Guira guira* egg in an active Southern Lapwing *Vanellus chilensis* nest (Johannes Jenny)



Southern Lapwing *Vanellus chilensis* (Johannes Jenny)

On 22 December, two eggs had disappeared and on 25 December the nest was found to be empty. It was assumed that the snake *Philodrias patagoniensis* was responsible; no egg-shells were discovered in the vicinity of the nest and there was no sign of any young birds.

Facultative breeding parasitism has been reported for other members of the Coccyninae but not Guira Cuckoo. It appears strange that a nidicolous species should deposit its egg in the nest of a nidifugous ground-nesting species.

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