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More mixed breedings between *Parus cinctus* and *P. montanus* in Finnish Lapland

Antero Järvinen

Recently several mixed breeding pairs of the Siberian Tit *Parus cinctus* and the Willow Tit *P. montanus* have been reported from northern Finland (Hildén & Ketola 1985, Järvinen et al. 1985, Järvinen 1987). Here I report additional cases of mixed breeding from the Kilpisjärvi area, NW Finnish Lapland (about 69°03'N, 20°50'E).

In spring 1989 four typical *P. cinctus* nests with a thick hair layer were observed in nest-boxes in Kilpisjärvi. When breeding at the boxes was followed more closely, three of these pairs were found to be mixed pairs, the female always *P. cinctus*. Two of the pairs (A and B) bred in barren mountain birch forest 1 km apart, and the third (C) in more productive mountain birch forest about 5 km away.

A. The first egg was laid on 18 May; all nine eggs hatched. The *P. montanus* male defended the box vigorously and fed both the female during the incubation period and the nestlings when they were 0–7 days old. However, the male was not seen at the box later in the nestling period; possibly because of this only three young fledged (the hungry nestlings begged loudly for food). The nestlings looked like *P. cinctus* chicks.

B. The first of the nine eggs was also laid on 18 May; all the eggs hatched, but only four young fledged. The male behaved exactly like male A. The nestlings were of *P. cinctus* type.

C. The first of eight eggs was laid on 23 May; seven eggs hatched and all the hatchlings fledged. The female was previously ringed, born in the area in 1984. Although the nest was visited six times, the male was never seen, but when about two weeks old

the nestlings were black-headed with slightly rufous flanks. So the father must have been *P. montanus*.

As the genetic basis of the determination of plumage characters is unknown, it is impossible to say whether males A and B were the biological fathers of the nestlings or had only adopted them. At least the *P. montanus* males were already feeding the *P. cinctus* females during the incubation period and no *P. cinctus* males were seen near the nests. These and earlier observations indicate that in mountain birch forests these *Parus* species may interbreed more frequently than previously known.

Selostus: Lisää lapin- ja hömötiaisen sekapesintöjä Kilpisjärveltä

Kesällä 1989 Kilpisjärvellä pesi pöntöissä kolme lapin- ja hömötiaisen sekaparia. Kaikissa tapauksissa naaras oli lapintiaisen. Nämä ja aikaisemmat 1980-luvulla Pohjois-Suomessa tehdyt havainnot viittaavat siihen, että nämä tiaislajit pesivät sekapareina luultua useammin.

References

- Hildén, O. & Ketola, H. 1985: A mixed pair of *Parus cinctus* and *P. montanus* nesting in Kuusamo. — *Ornis Fennica* 62:26.
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 Järvinen, A., Ylimaunu, J. & Hannila, J. 1985: A mixed nesting pair *Parus montanus* and *P. cinctus* in Finnish Lapland. — *Ornis Fennica* 62:25–26.

Author's address: Kilpisjärvi Biological Station, University of Helsinki, Arkadiankatu 7, SF-00100 Helsinki, Finland

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