

# THE MONTCLAIR BIRD CLUB

## YOUR WEEKLY BIRD 59

October 20, 2024

by Rick Wright

### Rusty-breasted Cuckoo



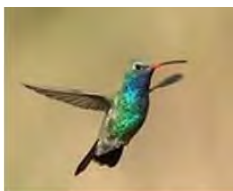
Francesco Veronesi, Wikimedia Commons

The rusty-breasted cuckoo of Indonesia was named on its discovery *Cacomantis sepulcralis*, meaning “prophet of doom from the grave.” In 1843, Salomon Müller explained why:

It is regarded by almost all of the native inhabitants of the archipelago as a messenger of grief and a certain omen of death. That belief comes from the bird’s frequent habit of letting a strange and gloomy vocalization be heard, at dawn and dusk and even in the middle of a moonlit night, from the cemeteries, which because of their bleak settings close to villages are the favored habitat of this cuckoo. For this reason, they are commonly called in daily life “Boeron tjelaka,” birds of misfortune and prophets of woe.  
(*Natuurlijke geschiedenis der Nederlandsche bezittingen in Oost-Indië*)

Have a listen and see what you think: <https://xeno-canto.org/species/Cacomantis-sepulcralis>.

**If you would like to see your photographs highlighted here, send one or two pictures with a short paragraph to Sandy Sorkin & Rick Wright at [MontclairBirdClub100@gmail.com](mailto:MontclairBirdClub100@gmail.com).**



Southwest Wings

