

The nest of Cricket Longtail *Spiloptila clamans* at Oued Jena, Awserd

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We visited the Oued Jenna area near Awserd, Western Sahara, on 2 and 4 April 2011. We saw and heard many adult Cricket Longtails on territory, including a family party of recently fledged young, and found eight nests. Three of the nests were old (previous year), two were under construction (near complete), one contained four eggs (an adult was incubating), and two had recently contained young (debris at base of nest).



Picture 1. Cricket Longtail. Occupied nest in low Acacia bush, Oued Jena, 2 April 2011 (Peter Castell).

Seven of the nests were in thick tussocks of coarse grass and one was in the base of a thick bushy Acacia. Average height was c. 0.5m (0.2 - 1.0). The nests were oval, vertically domed, with a small entrance hole near the top, and constructed mainly of grass (both coarse and fine) and some hair and vegetable down, the interior lined with fine grass and much vegetable down. The four eggs were very pale blue (c/f white in Urban *et al.* 1997: *Birds of Africa* vol. 5) with sparse and tiny reddish-brown spots; one measured 12.9 x 9.2mm.

The nestling of this species does not appear to have been described.



Picture 2. Cricket Longtail. Interior of nest and four eggs, Oued Jena, 4 April 2011 (Peter Castell).