

NEW ARCTIC WADER FOR NEW ZEALAND LIST.

By R. B. Sibson, Auckland.

On 29/8/48 between Miranda and Waitakaruru in the Firth of Thames I had distinct views at about 120 yards of a grey plover (*Squatarola squatarola*) both in flight and on the ground. With me were Messrs. F. M. Brookfield, S. Hills and F. Murray. At the full tide which was so poor that a strip of about 200 yards of mudflat was left still uncovered, we were hoping to find three whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*) which had been seen on this reach on 27/6/48, and we were closely scanning the hundreds of waders, mainly godwits, knots and stilts, which were spread out along the tideline.

A party of knots, headed by a single godwit, was flying past; when a greyish wader showing a white rump, separated itself from them and alighted in front of us, but not before I had clearly seen the diagnostic black axillaries. My attention to the flying birds had first been drawn by a plaintive and unfamiliar call, which I have no doubt was uttered by the grey plover, and which the British Handbook syllabizes as "Hee-oo-ee," and Mayr ("Birds of the South-West Pacific") as "whee-er-ee." My companions saw the bird well, as it stood on the tideline, but the increasing softness of the mud precluded our nearer approach, and we had to leave without seeing it on the wing again.

The grey plover is a holarctic species, whose winter range has been described as almost cosmopolitan. Sooner or later it was bound to be discovered in New Zealand, even though, according to Mayr, it is rather rare in the South-west Pacific, a statement which has recently been confirmed for the Solomons by P. C. Bull (v. Emu, Vol. 47, p. 168).

Nine years and more ago, I knew the grey plover well in England, where I could always find them in some numbers in winter on certain parts of the Kentish coast. In New Zealand I have been keenly on the look-out for this species, ever since at Karaka, in Manukau Harbour, I twice had unsatisfactory views of a solitary, white-rumped, plaintive-voiced wader of the right size, flying directly away so that it was not possible to see the black axillaries without a glimpse of which no identification of this plover can be accepted. The dates were 10/2/46 and 10/1/47. Subsequently, at Karaka, in the latter end of summer, 1947, Mr. D. A. Urquhart noted more than once with Pacific golden plovers a grey-looking stranger.

The date, August 29th, on which the Firth of Thames grey plover was seen indicates that yet another arctic-breeding wader may occasionally winter in New Zealand. It may be assumed that the bird was immature.

AN INLAND RECORD OF THE WHITE-FRONTED TERN.—As R. B. Sibson has pointed out (N.Z.B.N., Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 10) proved inland records of the white-fronted tern (*Sterna striata*) are extremely rare, and it is therefore of interest that I recorded one on November 21, 1947, at Lake Rotorua. The bird was resting amongst the nesting red and black-billed gulls on one of the small islets behind the Ward Baths. I was counting the two species of gulls at the time it was noticed, and had ample opportunity of observing it through binoculars at short range. All its features were thus plainly visible, and the white on the forehead was noted as being rather large for a breeding bird, suggesting an early commencement of moult. The bird was an adult, and I should add that I am familiar with the black-fronted species which is a more usual inland visitor. As the number of gulls was increasing daily, I assume that they were coming in from the coast, and possibly this bird may have arrived with a flock of gulls.—J. M. Cunningham, Masterton.