

in close company with Red-necked Stints, thus allowing a detailed comparison. Three Curlew Sandpipers (*C. ferruginea*) were nearby.

The following description is taken from our field notes: Size, very slightly larger than a Red-necked Stint; bill black, much longer than that of *ruficollis*; at least $1\frac{1}{2}$ times as long, heavy at the base, and tapering fairly quickly when the bird is observed head-on, and slightly down-curved at the tip; plumage very similar to *ruficollis*, but slightly more rufous; pale forehead, with the crown darkish and faintly streaked longitudinally; very pale sides of neck and nape, and a light superciliary bar; legs black. In flight, there was little to distinguish the bird from a Red-necked Stint, the tail pattern appearing identical, but the wing bars were extremely faint. The manner of feeding was the same as that of its companions.

The Broad-billed Sandpiper (*Limicola falcinellus*), which is known to both of us, has a noticeably heavier bill, and the crown is distinctly striped, compared with the faint markings observed on the crown of the Western Sandpiper.

The Western Sandpiper has been observed once in Great Britain, and so is included in Hollom's "Popular Handbook of Rarer British Birds," where an excellent description is to be found. This tallies very closely with our observations, except that the legs are described as "dark olive, but usually looking black." Also the toes are partially webbed, which we did not observe, mainly because the bird was for most of the time in very shallow water. The length is given as $6\frac{1}{2}$ ins., compared with 6 ins. for the Red-necked Stint as stated by Condon and McGill in "Field Guide to the Waders." Hollom describes it as "a confiding bird," which was definitely our impression during the long period of observation.

The Western Sandpiper breeds on the coasts of north and west Alaska, according to Peterson's "Field Guide to the Western Birds," and winters from San Francisco Bay southwards; so it is a species which, along with the Hudsonian Godwit, Yellowlegs, Wandering Tattler, and others, may be expected as an occasional visitor to New Zealand.

— A. BLACKBURN

— B. D. BELL



LITTLE WHIMBREL AT MIRANDA

On a routine check of the birds of the Miranda coast on 13/10/64, a dark brown bird was seen on the pools just north of the old Miranda wharf. It was smaller than a godwit and too large for any of the sandpipers which frequent those pools. Mrs. B. Brown and Miss A. J. Goodwin approached it carefully and soon noted its down-curved bill, which then became evident to the rest of the party in the car on the road. (Mrs.) Dr. K. Heinroth of West Berlin, Mrs. McKenzie and the writer. The bird was alone except for an almost fully red Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*) about two chains away. It allowed close inspection; and was clearly a Little Whimbrel (*Numenius minutus*). It is considered that it was most likely the same bird as the one seen at Karaka, Manukau Harbour, on 28/3/64 (*Notornis* 11, 99).

— H. R. MCKENZIE