

ANOTHER LITTLE WHIMBREL AT MIRANDA

The tide was falling at the old Lime Works site on 4/1/66 and most of the hundreds of roosting waders had left for the mudflat feeding grounds when a New Zealand Dotterel (*Charadrius obscurus*) and another bird of rather similar size were noticed at the end of a low shell spit by the Miranda creek. E. K. S. (Ken) Rowe of Rangiora, his family and the writer approached and easily identified it as a Little Whimbrel (*Numenius minutus*). From some distance it was seen that it had broad light bands above its eyes and a slight but clear light median stripe on the upper crown but not forward onto the front of the head; its upper surface and breast were a strong brown, the belly lighter. The bill was about two inches long and curved only moderately. Ken Rowe and one of his sons crept up to within a few yards and verified these points. It did not call when it flew.

Near the same place it was seen again and recognised by A. M. C. ("Mike") Davis of Auckland on 9/1/66.

On 11/1/66 a party of New Zealand watchers had the pleasure of studying this bird with Dr. Roger Tory Peterson, Dr. Olin Sewall Pettingill and Mrs. Pettingill of U.S.A. The visitors were particularly interested because this bird is the Asiatic counterpart of their Eskimo Curlew (*Numenius borealis*) which was gunned to near-extinction or perhaps complete extinction. On this occasion the Little Whimbrel was first seen on the top of a high shell ridge on the beach, again with the tide falling. It flew inland to the well-known Miranda Pools where Mrs. Beth Brown located it with a family of Pied Stilts only a few yards inside the road fence. Further notes were made to the effect that its legs were blue grey, the latter half of the bill flesh coloured and the forward part brown, the back patterned brown and grey, the brown being somewhat rufous. It was very tame.

On its favourite shelly ridge it was studied at leisure at a few yards on 28/1/66 by R. B. Sibson.

The last sighting was at the Miranda Pools on 8/2/66 when it flew from rough ground close to Mr. and Mrs. W. Davidson, Minn., U.S.A., Misses D. and E. Roberts and A. J. Goodwin, John and Beth Brown, Mrs. H. M. McK. and H. R. McK.

It was noted by the writer that the bill of this bird was appreciably less curved than that of the one seen on 28/3/64 at Karaka, Manukau Harbour (*Notornis* 11, 99) and the one, presumed to be the same as the one of 28/3/64, seen at Miranda on 13/10/64 (*Notornis* 12, 110). According to what is known of normal growth in the genus *Numenius* this may indicate that the present bird is in its first year.

— H. R. McKENZIE



PECTORAL SANDPIPERS INLAND IN HAWKES BAY

On the morning of 17/1/66 I noticed from the Porangahau road numerous White-faced Herons and scores of Pied Stilts in the shallows along the eastern shore of Lake Hatuma, near Waipukurau; and I was fortunate in finding a grassy 'public road' which led directly down to the edge of the lake. The seasonal recession of the water level had occurred, leaving exposed quantities of shells of dead freshwater mussels (Kakahi), which along one stretch were so thick that they almost formed a beach. Here about a dozen Black-billed Gulls