

As this species migrates north from Australia to Indonesia in April, it seems logical to suppose that the Southland bird had gone astray in the course of migration.

— MAIDA BARLOW



SANDERLINGS AT LAKE WAITUNA (SOUTHLAND)

Lake Waituna, 15 miles S.E. of Invercargill is a shallow lagoon seven miles long, fed by small peaty streams and separated from the open sea by a narrow shingle-bank. Most of the time there is a single outlet through this shingle; but sometimes as the result of freak tides and weather, the outlet blocks, and the lagoon has been in this closed state from September 1966 to the time of writing.

The west end of the lake, known as Walkers Bay, has extensive areas of suitable habitat for waders. North of this is Swan Bay, which accommodates large numbers of waterfowl. There is usually an interesting assortment of shore-birds at Walkers Bay in the summer months. It has in the past produced Black-tailed Godwit, Royal Spoonbill, Whimbrel, Pectoral, Sharp-tailed and Curlew Sandpipers, numerous Red-necked Stints (largest count 40 plus). Long-billed Curlew are also usually found here.

On 18/12/66 the lake produced an addition to this already impressive list when a group of five Sanderlings (*Calidris alba*) was seen by Mrs. M. L. Barlow, Mr. S. L. Lobb and the writer.

While searching the shingle bar from our boat, a small and unusual wader was noted resting on the shingle among a small group of Turnstones (*A. interpres*). We went ashore and examined the bird from fairly close quarters with a 20x telescope and made the following notes. Bill and legs: black. Crown, hind neck and back: grey. Upper wing coverts grey with pale edge. Throat, breast and underparts: white. Eye: dark and bold. Pale stripe above eye extending back from white front. Grey hind neck feathers extending forward to form the beginning of a bar. Grey crown extending forward to form a point above bill. Forward angle of wing leading edge very dark. Definite wing bar when in flight. In flight tail had a dark centre with white on outer edges.

When put to flight our bird was lost from sight, but was located again about an hour later with four more of its kind feeding along the edges of shallow pools on an adjacent mud flat. There were Curlew Sandpiper (*C. ferruginea*) and Banded Dotterel (*C. bichenovii*) feeding nearby; the Sanderlings were plump and stockier than the Curlew Sandpiper, and shorter in the leg.

The things which impressed us most were the extreme whiteness of the underparts, the prominent dark eye and the constant running along the water's edge when feeding, although this running was probably due to the fact that there was a lack of ebb and flow of tide.

This is the second sighting of Sanderlings in Southland, the previous one being of a single bird seen by B. D. Heather on the Invercargill estuary.

— R. R. SUTTON

[The Sanderling is usually found in New Zealand as a lonely straggler. The only other record of a 'flock' is of five in Parengarenga Harbour during February, 1950. Notornis IV, 127.—Ed.]