

surface. At first sight I took it to be *Pluvialis*, but even at long range there appeared to be something not right about this identification. The paddocks and gateways were wet after heavy rains and I could not use my car but had to approach the birds on foot. Fortunately my bird was associating with one of the New Zealand Dotterel flocks, which did not move when the main mob edged away and allowed me to get to quite close range and have a good look at the stranger. It proved to be a Little Whimbrel.

Slim and erect, head and neck finer than a Golden Plover's and neck longer; bill under two inches, arched downwards, brownish, pinkish at the base of the mandible. Crown dark, with a narrow buffy median stripe and buffy white superciliary stripes. Sides of face buffy. Upper parts boldly spangled, dark brown and buff. Chin and throat whitish, breast buffy, belly and underparts paler or whitish. Rump and tail, well seen when the bird flew a short distance, brownish to greyish brown, tail barred darker brown. Legs relatively long, greyish. Compared with an Asiatic or American Whimbrel the bird had a much shorter bill, was altogether more slender and had a different carriage; it was also noticeably smaller.

White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis*.

Paua, 30/3/71. A large flock of mixed waders was roosting on one of the paddocks. I was able to spend over an hour moving my car along the western edge of the flock, observing at close range individual birds, including four Sharp-tailed Sandpipers which I watched for some time, alongside Turnstones. On moving round to the eastern edge of the flock I found another sandpiper, standing between two Turnstones. It was much the same shape as the Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, but considerably smaller, and had a fine straight bill; brown crown, whitish superciliary, greyish eye stripe; pattern of back and wings like Sharp-tailed Sandpiper's but less "scaly"; upper breast lightly streaked greyish, rest of underparts whitish. No rufous tinge on breast or crown. Legs, as far as could be seen, dark; no yellowish tinge. The birds were quite tame and I had plenty of time for close observation at a range of about 20 yards with x 10 binoculars but was still uncertain about the identification till the flock began to thin out as parties of birds left to feed on the mudflats. Eventually my birds flew, and I had an excellent view of the sandpiper's all-white rump and dark tail.

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## SHORT NOTE

### COMMUNAL FISHING BY SHAGS

On 2/5/71 a flock of Little Black Shags *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris* was fishing in Orakei Basin. Scattered through the flock were 12 Pied Shags *P. varius*, diving and swimming with the flock, and except for their comparative clumsiness, behaving exactly like the Little Black Shags. I noticed this behaviour again on 7/5/71 with a smaller proportion of Pied Shags. The Pied Shags usually fish individually. Were they copying the Little Black Shags and joining in where the pickings were better?

The Pied Shag is a permanent resident of Orakei Basin whereas the Little Black Shag comes and goes periodically, being more often seen there in autumn and winter. Orakei Basin is largely impounded, tidal water controlled by flood gates.

— SYLVIA M. REED