

## SPUR-WINGED PLOVER ON THE WEST COAST

In early December 1972, the sawmilling staff of Donaldson's (Ngahere) Ltd approached members of our field staff to find out if they knew the name of a strange bird that had been inhabiting the swamp at the end of their sawdust dump.

Naked eye observations at a range of 50 to 60 yards gave the bird a tentative identification as the Spur-winged Plover (*Lobibyx novaehollandiae*). A positive identification was made on 15 December by Forester Jackson and Forester Trainee Corsan, using 7 x 50 binoculars over a range of 30 to 80 yards. Four birds were seen, two adults and two juveniles, and they were identified from the revised edition of the "Field Guide" (Falla *et al.*, 1970).

The adults had black caps and an incomplete black collar coming down both shoulders but not meeting in front. The front and belly feathers were white and the back appeared to be a grey to grey-brown colour. The yellow face wattles were prominent and a spur on the carpal flexure of the wing was seen. The legs were a very dark red colour. The adult birds stood about 12 to 15 inches high while the two juveniles were of different sizes, one being about 8 inches and the other 10 to 11 inches. The young birds were similar in many respects to the adults but they were still retaining a large proportion of juvenile plumage, giving a mottled fluffy effect to the beginnings of the adult plumage.

The mill staff indicated that the birds had been seen for about three or four weeks prior to our identification and that they had captured the chicks one evening on the sawmill roadway. The birds had been heard for nearly a month prior to this somewhere in the surrounding bush area but had not been seen.

The geographical location of these observations can be found on the topographic map NZMS 1, Sheet S 44, Ref.: 948916, Deadman Creek.

The distribution maps of the Spur-winged Plover in New Zealand given by Barlow (1972: Figs 2A-2B) show that the species has been only rarely recorded from the western and northern parts of the South Island so that, whether or not this sighting is indicative of a spread of the breeding range, it is one of the few positive records for the West Coast region, the closest other being that from Barrytown in 1968.

## REFERENCES

- BARLOW, M. 1972. The establishment, dispersal and distribution of the Spur-winged Plover in New Zealand. *Notornis* 19 (3): 201-211, 3 figs, 1 table.
- FALLA, R. A.; SIBSON, R. B.; TURBOTT, E. G. 1970. A field guide to the birds of New Zealand and outlying islands. 2nd ed. Pp. 1-256, text illus., pls 1-18. London: Collins.

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