

my imitation calls, gradually came lower. Then periodically two or three of the party would fly to near ground level across the track to ripe orange fruiting heads of a "bush lily" (*Astelia fragrans*), where each one swallowed whole two, three or four of the quite large fruits. Sometimes one more aggressive bird kept the others at bay while it fed; at other times two fed together. It seemed to me in the end that every member of the party had sampled the fruits.

Following this short interlude, they moved off into the shrub layer, resuming their more typical invertebrate-hunting behaviour.

The fruit-eating episode was watched in good light from a distance of only about 5 m.

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COMMON SANDPIPER IN MANUKAU HARBOUR

The annual summer census of shore-birds 'on the Manukau' took place on 13 Nov. 1977. Early in the day there was steady light drizzle and visibility was poor. Out from Westfield, Godwits (*Limosa lapponica*) and Knots (*Calidris canutus*) were dimly discernible till the rising tide forced them towards Harania Creek before they took off to cross the Isthmus by their traditional flight-lines over Otahuhu.

When we reached Tararata Creek, a short distance upstream from the new bridge, the tide was nearly full and an outer basalt reef which is a favourite resting place for shags, herons, waders, gulls and terns, was quite submerged. Not even a Pied Stilt (*Himantopus leucocephalus*) or an Oystercatcher (*Haematopus finschi*) remained. However, as we descended to a short, smooth beach we were surprised to see a single small wader with a clear white wing-bar rise and flit low over the water across the estuarine bay. The weather was now improving. The wader had the characteristic flickering flight of a Common Sandpiper (*Tringa hypoleucos*). It alighted on a boulder, the top of which was not quite covered by the tide, and within this limited space it ran, bobbed and appeared to search for food. From a distance of about 80 m we were able to watch it for some minutes. In every way it bore the stamp of a Common Sandpiper, a bird well known to us in many lands. Unfortunately, it was not heard to call as adults commonly do on their northward migration in spring. Even where they are numerous, Common Sandpipers are not strongly gregarious. It is a mark of the species to breed 'loners.'

The only wader which at all resembles *hypoleucos* is the American Spotted Sandpiper (*T. macularia*) in winter or sub-adult plumage. Though adults of the two forms in breeding dress are quite distinct, some authorities have relegated *macularia* to sub-specific status. *Macularia* has crossed the Atlantic on a number of occasions, but it does not appear to stray far out into the eastern Pacific, where its place

is taken by the much larger Wandering Tattler (*T. incana*). Neither in Munro's *Birds of Hawaii* (1960) nor in the Audubon Society's *Hawaii's Birds* (1967) is the Spotted Sandpiper listed among the casual and accidental species recorded between 1960 and 1966. On the other hand, Common Sandpipers of Asiatic origin commonly winter in the Solomon Islands; and in south-eastern Australia they may reach Tasmania.

We returned hopefully to Harania Creek on a calm sunny afternoon a few days later, but although we scrutinised every jutting rock or likely eminence as the tide gently flooded the flats, we could not find our Common Sandpiper. Nor was it subsequently reported by any local bird-watcher. Manukau Harbour has many quiet bays and creekmouths where a solitary Common Sandpiper might pass the summer unnoticed. Perhaps it moved on in search of a stony riverbed with fresh tumbling water.

This is the first record of a Common Sandpiper in Manukau Harbour, and apparently the sixth for New Zealand.

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NOTES ON THE CHATHAM ISLAND FANTAIL

The authors were members of the 1977/78 Taiko Expedition, led by D. E. Crockett, to the Tuku Valley in the south-west of Chatham Island. This remote region contains the last large remnant of virgin forest on the island. The bush is fairly open, with a canopy primarily of *Dracophyllum arboreum*, *Coprosma chathamica*, *Pseudopanax chathamica* and *Hymenanthera chathamica*. The Chatham Island Fantail (*Rhipidura fuliginosa penitus*) is, with the Silvereye (*Zosterops lateralis*), the most common native bush bird. It differs from the New Zealand subspecies in possessing noticeably less black on the tail and being more robustly built.

A Chatham Island Fantail nest containing one egg was found, fifty metres from the bush edge near the Tuku Valley, on 19 January 1978. Observations on the pair were subsequently made from a tree hide nearby, and single birds were followed by observers on the ground. The nest was sited in a *Corokia macrocarpa* 5 m above a small clearing. In construction and position it resembled that of the New Zealand subspecies, possessing a distinct "tail." It seems likely that the pair was using the nest for a repeat clutch, the rim of the bowl being of fresh material, which had been added to the original structure.

On the 20th the nest contained two eggs; and hide observation revealed the pair to be already incubating the incomplete clutch. The following evening the bird sat tight when an attempt was made to check the contents of the nest. The next day the nest contained three eggs, the full clutch.