

middle arm through familiar Fiordland rain and the ever persistent sandfly. The Green Kaka would not appear to be as plentiful as in days gone by and indeed only one bird was noted on this trip. Four days' bush slashing from George Sound brought us to our base camp at the foot of Saddle Hill.

That evening whilst huddled around our campfire, a shadow flew low overhead emitting a most unusual weird cry which might almost be described as maniacal. We had never heard any resemblance to this call before and I have no particular desire to hear it repeated. It could well have been the cry of the Laughing Owl (*Sceloglaux albifacies*).

Poking amongst the boulders at the foot of our hill, Carey discovered some small bones which were later confirmed by Mr. R. J. Scarlett as those of the Kakapo.

The next day Carey and I ascended the leading ridge of Saddle Hill. Nearing the summit the character of our ill-defined track suddenly changed to that of a well kept garden path. The edges had been neatly trimmed and all untidy waste had been removed. Five dust bowls, some two feet wide and six inches deep lined this fifty yards stretch of track. Well defined tunnels led off down through stunted species of *Dacrydium* and *Dracophyllum* to a tiny tarn some 300 feet below.

Descending rapidly to this ledge, we found that our tarn was surrounded by a mass of rolled grass pellets. Further searching revealed a typical spiral dropping of fine grass texture which now resides in the Southland Museum. A night vigil was kept but no Kakapo were seen or heard.

Before leaving our Kakapo haunt we were visited by two wrens which I can only describe as being of a much more vivid green colour than the normal Bush Wren. In a subsequent communication, Dr. Falla suggested that they could have been the recently described Fiordland Wren (*Xenicus gilviventris rineyi*).

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NOTES ON SOME ARCTIC WADERS IN THE MANAWATU

By IAN G. ANDREW

The estuaries of the Rangitikei and Manawatu have extensive areas of tidal flats which are favoured by several species of waders and it is reasonable to expect that many more interesting records will be made in these localities in the near future. The Manawatu is already well known for the regular winter appearance there of a flock of Royal Spoonbills (*P. regia*). Five species of waders which breed in New Zealand occur regularly at both estuaries. These are: South Island Pied Oystercatcher, Northern Oystercatcher, Banded Dotterel, Wrybill and Pied Stilt.

The only arctic-breeding wader which occurs regularly in fair numbers in the Manawatu is the Bar-tailed Godwit (*L. lapponica baueri*). In 1958-1959 the summer populations of these at the estuaries of the Manawatu and Rangitikei respectively were c. 260 and c. 40. The winter population at the Manawatu is usually between 10 and 20. Other arctic waders are relatively rare visitors to the district. A summary of species

recently observed by me is given below. Two of these, Long-billed Curlew and Red-necked Stint, are, I believe, the first records for the district.

Pacific Golden Plover (*C. dominicus fulvus*). After the Godwit, this is the commonest arctic wader in the Manawatu and is probably present every southern summer. Recent counts by Mr. E. Dear and myself are:

Rangitikei estuary: c. 10 on 23/11/58, 26/12/58 and 3/1/59.

Manawatu estuary: 21 on 17/1/59, 1 on 7/2/59.

Long-billed Curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*). A single bird stayed on the Manawatu estuary over part of the summer. I saw it on 6/12/58, 20/12/58 and 17/1/59, but missed it on 7/2/59 and subsequently. The closest I ever managed to approach was about sixty yards. It was conspicuously larger than a Godwit. Size, very long decurved bill and absence of a median stripe on the crown ruled out the possibility of its being a Whimbrel. At no time was it heard to utter a call of any description.

Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*). Rarely reported in the Manawatu. Mr. E. Dear and I saw two at the Rangitikei estuary on 23/11/58. They were not seen again.

Knot (*Calidris canutus*). Has been frequently reported in small numbers and may be a regular visitor, but I have rarely found it. At the Manawatu estuary: 1 on 1/10/55; 2 on 6/12/58; 7 on 20/12/58.

Siberian Pectoral Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*). Stidolph (N.Z. B.N. 3, 126) has observed this species at Foxton Beach. Last summer I found them in some numbers, viz: Rangitikei estuary, 1 on 23/11/58; c. 6 on 26/12/58; 8 on 3/1/59 (also seen by Mr. E. Dear). Manawatu estuary, 13 on 7/2/59. On 3/1/59, I was able to approach to 20 yards, at which distance they were very wary, although several Wrybills fed fearlessly only six yards from my feet. With 8 x 30 binoculars I particularly noted the following features: bill black; forehead and crown rufous, very much so in some individuals; pale superciliary stripe; breast pale with no clear demarcation from the white abdomen; legs an uncertain shade of yellow. The same features were noted at the Manawatu estuary on 7/2/59, when one bird had conspicuous crescentic markings on the flanks, thus confirming the identification. These crescentic markings were absent or inconspicuous in the other birds, but the pale breast with the colour fading out gradually to the abdomen, in addition to a soft piping call and rufous crown, clearly separated them from the American Pectoral Sandpiper (*C. melanotos*):

Red-necked Stint (*Calidris ruficollis*). The first record known to me of this small sandpiper in the Manawatu is of three which wintered in 1958. I saw these on 8/7/58, 13/7/58 and 26/8/58. Although they were usually watched at not less than fifty yards, their diminutive size compared with nearby Wrybills and Banded Dotterels, the short, straight black bill and black legs, streaked pale gray upperparts and white on the face, indicated that they were *ruficollis* in winter plumage (probably yearlings, Ed.). Dr. R. A. Falla confirmed the identification. In addition the rump and tail were noted as dark centrally and pale laterally, a white alar bar was present and the call-note uttered in flight was a distinctive, rapid, high-pitched "tiu tiu tiu." I again saw Red-necked Stints on 26/12/58, when about six in company with four Sharp-tailed Sandpipers were located in the Rangitikei estuary. The differences between the two species were very marked.