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SHORT NOTES

COMMON SANDPIPERS IN FAR NORTH

On four occasions, we have seen two Common Sandpipers (*Tringa hypoleucos*) at Pirini Creek on Rangaunu Harbour.

On 12 January 1982, we saw a single bird perching on a small mangrove. It rose from its roost, calling *twee-twee-twee*, and flew with a short jerky flight, gliding to land in adjacent mangroves. On 13 January, two flew out of the mangroves and landed nearby on the exposed tidal flats beside Pirini Creek. We watched them feeding on crabs, stretching their necks forward to stalk, rapidly pecking several times, and running quickly in search of more prey. They ran with their bodies hunched and head outstretched.

On 15 and 19 January the two were feeding near Bar-tailed Godwits (*Limosa lapponica*), Knots (*Calidris canutus*) and Turnstones (*Arenaria interpres*) out near the water's edge on the exposed tidal flats. On all occasions, the sandpipers were feeding on dried-out *Zostera* flats during an incoming tide.

Over the past 6 months, we have seen these sandpipers, godwits, knots and Turnstones roosting among mangroves, along with many native wader, swamp and bush birds. Perhaps if ornithologists were to investigate these areas more often, some of the more uncommon migrant waders of this habitat such as the Common Sandpiper, Marsh Sandpiper (*T. stagnatilis*) and perhaps the Wood Sandpiper (*T. glareola*) could be found.

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A TRANSIENT COLONY OF RED-BILLED GULLS

The transience of a colony of Red-billed Gulls (*Larus novae-hollandiae*) was seen this summer on Rangaunu Harbour, Northland. On 24 October, 15 pairs had started nesting on Walker Island in the middle of the harbour, and most had laid eggs. By mid-November, however, all had shifted to a rock off Rangiputa, where 78 pairs were nesting, with eggs in 73 nests. All the nesting material had gone