

- The Committee confirmed the identification by majority vote.
- B) The sightings of a Yellow-billed Spoonbill (*Platalea flavipes*) in Northland in 1976. A photograph was submitted with the report.  
The identification of this bird was confirmed by the Committee on a unanimous vote.
- C) The alleged sighting of five Stilt Sandpipers (*Micropalama himantopus*) at the Manawatu River estuary on 13th October 1976.  
This submission was rejected unanimously by the Committee.
- D) Sighting of a Baird's Sandpiper (*Calidris bairdii*) at the Manawatu River estuary on 10th, 11th and 25th October 1976.  
This submission was accepted and the identification was confirmed by the Committee, although only three out of the four committee members commented.

F. C. KINSKY, *Convener*

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## SHORT NOTE

### THE FIRST OCCURRENCE OF THE YELLOW-BILLED SPOONBILL (*Platalea flavipes*) IN NEW ZEALAND

On 23 August 1976, I sighted a group of four waders at Rangaunu Harbour, Kaitaia. I was immediately able to identify three of the birds as a White Ibis (*Threskiornis molucca*) and two Royal Spoonbills (*Platalea leucorodia*), but the fourth, though obviously a Spoonbill, was larger and had distinctive yellow legs, feet and bill. The Spoonbills were feeding vigorously in the shallows on the mud-flats, sometimes venturing out into water 45-50 cm in depth. On occasion these three birds would form into a line and work along the shoreline with typical sideways movements of their bills.

After consultation with a colleague, and reference to Frith 1969 (*Birds in the Australian high country*. Reed) and Slater 1970 (*A field guide to Australian birds*. Rigby), I realised that the unusual Spoonbill was, in fact, a Yellow-billed Spoonbill (*Platalea flavipes*).

In its native Australia, the species ranges throughout most of the continent, with the exception of the south-west and Tasmania, frequenting swamps, shallow lakes, rivers and dams.

This, however, would appear to be the first record of a Yellow-billed Spoonbill in New Zealand and outside of continental Australia (Conden 1975, *Checklist of the birds of Australia*. RAOU).

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[A photograph, unfortunately not reproducible here, together with the text, was submitted to the Rare Birds Committee which confirmed the identification on a unanimous vote — see Annual Report 1976/77. — Ed.]