

6. Pierce (1984) indicated (in his Table 5) that Peters (1934) recognised two species of stilts in New Zealand (listed as *H. him* [antopus] *leuco* [cephalus] and *H. h. novae* [zealandiae] (*sic*) in the table). Peters specifically stated (p. 289, footnote) that he did not believe there to be two species of stilts in New Zealand. He referred all New Zealand birds to *H. himantopus novaezealandiae*. In the same table (footnote 1), Pierce (1984) stated that Ellman's descriptions of stilts were referred to the genus *Hypsibates*. This is incorrect, as Ellman (1861) used *Himantopus*.
7. Sharpe (1896) cited the illustration in Reichenbach (1850) as referring to the Pied Stilt (see Sharpe's synonymy of *H. picatus*). the coloured plate in question is labelled 1045-46 and clearly refers to one species. Since one of the two is completely black and the other mostly so they are obviously *novaezealandiae*. Meyer's (1879) compilation supports this interpretation.

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SHORT NOTE

Predation of an arboreal rat by a New Zealand Falcon

At 11.30 a.m. on 13 February 1984 I encountered a New Zealand Falcon (*Falco novaeseelandiae*) in mixed beech-podocarp forest on the Cole Creek track, Mataketake State Forest, South Westland. The Falcon was initially perched on a large branch in the canopy of a silver beech (*Nothofagus menziesii*), but it soon moved into a large rimu (*Dacrydium cupressinum*) about 20 m high and for two minutes moved around the small branches and twigs searching continuously. It then flew rapidly into a large epiphyte (*Astelia* sp.) 15 m up in the crook of the same tree. There was a loud crash, pieces of vegetation fell out of the rimu, and then the falcon flew off to the original beech carrying a rat (*Rattus* sp.) in its talons.

The falcon perched on a large branch and appeared to prod the rat with its beak. I could not determine whether the rat was eaten because my view was partly obscured, but about a minute later the Falcon flew into a second rimu without the carcass and searched through the tree. At 11.38 a.m., five minutes after catching the rat, the Falcon flew into the canopy of this tree and caught a Silvereye (*Zosterops lateralis*) on the wing from a flock feeding in the foliage.

As far as I am aware this is the first record of an arboreal rat being taken by a New Zealand Falcon.

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