

ROSE-CROWNED FRUIT-DOVE *Ptilinopus regina*

One bird found dead 13 September 1980 (now a specimen in the Australian National Wildlife Collection, Canberra), and two separate sightings were made one month later. No further records (OE, BE).

PALLID CUCKOO *Cuculus pallidus*

One bird at Steeles Point, 23 May and mid-June 1984 (HS).

MARTIN sp. *Cecropis* sp.

Several birds with swallows at Kingston 21 June-15 July 1985; possibly Fairy Martins (NH).

RICHARD'S PIPIT *Anthus novaeseelandiae*

Regular reports of pipits on the airfield from 1983 to 1985 were not confirmed by NH.

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**SHORT NOTE****A Japanese Snipe at Mangere**

The occurrence of several snipe in Southland during the 1984-85 summer has recently been reported (C. M. Miskelly *et al.* 1986, *Notornis* 32:327) in an account which includes previous records of snipe in New Zealand.

On 13 October 1985, while visiting the AMDB Mangere ponds, DGB and MJT were observing an area of shallow rainwater pools within a site of new construction, having stayed in our car so as not to disturb a flock of about 300 Pied Stilts in the nearest pool. Also present were 15 Knots and 10 Bar-tailed Godwits, and close to these, walking along the water's edge, was another bird which we both exclaimed could only be a snipe. The bird moved behind a clump of vegetation, but it soon emerged, flying low, and after briefly hovering close to the godwits alighted in a patch of dead weeds.

Here the snipe remained at rest with its head and upper parts in view, and in this position we were able to examine it through binoculars and a 22x telescope from 30 metres away for 20-30 minutes. A sketch showing proportions, bill length, and patterns of the head, back, and flanks tallied well with field guide illustrations and photographs of snipe. Also clearly visible between the tips of the folded wings was a small chestnut-orange patch of tail feathers.

Later that day, the bird was found in the same place by RJC, who took photographs, and on the following day it was studied for an hour by Stephen Davies, who also made notes. From these observations we decided that the species was *Gallinago hardwickii*, the Japanese Snipe, and this identification has been accepted by the Rare Birds Committee of OSNZ.

The bird showed three different types of behaviour when alarmed. When found by RJC, it was dozing close to the short broken remains of some reedy vegetation in company with 40-50 Pied Stilts. Several of the stilts became noisily agitated the moment RJC's head appeared above the skyline and one or two took to wing. When one of these swooped close overhead, the snipe shot up its neck and body until it was standing in a very alert posture, as if ready to fly. Later, when a Harrier passed over the sludge pit some distance away, putting up most of the stilts, the snipe was seen to crouch forward with its bill slanted down and to flick up its tail into a high vertical fan above its downward-sloping back. When increasingly agitated, the snipe moved a short distance into thicker cover and crouched down in the vegetation.

After several photographs of the bird at rest had been taken, a pebble was tossed so as to cause a minor alarm and the camera shutter was fired simultaneously with the sound of the pebble landing. The resulting photograph shows the crouched bird with its tail spread and only partly blurred by the movement. The tail feathers are dark with some barring for three-quarters of the length, and then chestnut, becoming paler towards the tip, and they are a reasonable match to the illustration in Slater (1970. *A Field Guide to Australian Birds; Non-passerines*, page 88). This compares the tail of *G. hardwickii* with those of *G. megala*, *G. stenura*, and *G. gallinago*. It depicts the last two with a dark band towards the tip of the tail, while *G. megala*, the Chinese Snipe, which seems the most likely alternative to *G. hardwickii* in New Zealand, is less brightly coloured and lacks the barred pattern in the tail.

The bird was seen again by RJC on 23 October 1985 in an adjoining sludge pit, when it got up from the bare edge of a lagoon, flew low over the vegetation, and dropped immediately into cover some 50 metres away. It was then easily seen from the other side of the lagoon to be dozing, head tucked well down, for the 15 minutes or so that it was under observation.

We are grateful to Stephen Davies for his prompt response in gathering details of the snipe. Several other OSNZ members sought the bird in vain during the following weeks.

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