

SHORT NOTE

EARLY RECORD OF A STINT IN NEW ZEALAND

In 1902 Captain Hutton reported to Sir Walter Buller that E. F. Stead had shot a small sandpiper at Lake Ellesmere. The 'new' wader was included in Buller's Supplement (1905: 186), where it was published as *Limonites ruficollis*, Red-necked Sandpiper. This has been accepted as the first record in New Zealand of any form of Stint. It is interesting that after obtaining several more specimens, Stead (1923: 493) still believed as late as 1921 that two species of Stint, *minutus* and *ruficollis*, visited New Zealand.

In October 1978, in the library of the British Museum of Natural History at South Kensington, I was privileged to spend two mornings examining a large folder labelled "Original Drawings of the Natural History of New Zealand, 1863-1883." The artist was Richard Laishley; and the birds, reptiles, insects and flowers which he depicted were, in his own words, "Illustrated from Nature."

Before he left England in 1860, Laishley's early talent for drawing had been developed at the Royal Academy School and in 1858 he had published an illustrated book, *British birds' eggs*. On his arrival, he was appointed pastor of the newly established Congregational Church at Onehunga. In 1874 he became Congregational minister at Thames. In both pastorates he was well placed to pursue his hobby of natural history, both in the bush and along the shore. Laishley became known to Buller, who refers (1873) to Laishley's having a collection in which there was a Cook's Petrel.

The Laishley folder contains paintings of about 48 species of native birds; and among them are several items of unusual interest. Some of Laishley's birds are painted in a circular setting (diameter c. 12 cm). Plate 39 has two such rounded paintings set side by side. One is of a Banded Dotterel (*Charadrius bicinctus*); the other is of a very small wader with a fine bill, black legs and the obvious proportions of a typical stint. Underneath is written "Charadrius minutus, Least Dotterel. From the Manukau N.I. 1866."

I had no hesitation in identifying this small wader as a stint in a phase of plumage which is commonly seen in New Zealand (Sibson 1968). The painting would seem to provide the first evidence of what is now called *Calidris ruficollis* in this country.

LITERATURE CITED

- BULLER, Sir WALTER L. 1873. History of the birds of New Zealand.
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