

DEFORMED FEET OF SPUR-WINGED PLOVERS AND PIED STILT IN SOUTHLAND SHEEP COUNTRY

In August/September 1977 I spent some time nest-trapping breeding Spur-winged Plovers (*Vanellus miles novaehollandiae*) to obtain measurements.

On 3 September I had a real field day, thanks in part to Roger Sutton who had told me the whereabouts of four nests in the Lorneville area. Altogether that day I trapped ten birds at ten different sites, all in the Lorneville/Makarewa area. Four of these birds had one or more toes missing. Two birds (one deformed, the other not) had wool fibres wound round toes (one bird on one toe, the other on two toes). The most badly deformed bird had been banded as a chick by Roger Sutton on 8 October 1968, approximately half a mile away from its 1977 nest-site. This bird's left foot was missing altogether. At the tarso-metatarsal joint was a callus approximately 10 mm in diameter on which the bird walked. The bird had originally held two bands on each leg. The lower left leg-band was missing but the other was present, retained by the callus. Both right leg bands were present. Two right toes were deformed, broken and hanging, and one had wool fibres wound tightly around it.

One wonders how much the bands contributed to the retention of wool on this bird. But a further factor may be the area where this bird has presumably spent its nine years of life. It consists mainly of holding paddocks for a nearby freezing works, and is consistently fairly heavily stocked with sheep. Indeed the general Lorneville/Makarewa area has a high sheep population.

On 14 August 1977 Mr A. J. N. Campbell rang me about an unusual bird on his farm at Woodlands. This proved to be a Pied Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*), both of whose legs terminated at the tibio-tarsal joint. The bird was walking on its stumps without difficulty, feeding in a damp area. This bird remained about the same area and a nearby pond for approximately two weeks, when it was found dead. Its calloused stumps had wool fibres caught within the callus. The Woodlands area is highly productive farmland with a high sheep carrying capacity.

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BIOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS FROM BLACK ISLAND, ANTARCTICA

Members of the 1975-76 Victoria University expedition to Antarctica (VUWAE 20) spent two weeks undertaking geological investigations on Black Island and Brown Peninsula, Ross Ice Shelf.