

Watched for 1½-2 hours, sometimes as close as 15-20 metres, they swam and dived without bringing anything visible to the surface, sometimes isolated, sometimes among a mixed flock of some 200 Paradise and Mallard Duck. One rather striking feature not previously recorded was the different position in which each bird held its neck. In fact we christened them "Longneck" and "Shortneck." The former (male?) carried its neck elongated and erect so that it appeared thin, whereas the other bird held its neck in the folded position, appearing thicker.

Lake Wingy is the northernmost of a group of three lakes situated on a Lands & Survey farm at the end of Ngataki Road, roughly halfway between Pukenui and Te Kao. It is not easy to find without local directions, in fact on our first day we missed it altogether. A local member, Mr Vic Hensley, who lives in Ngataki Road, had not seen these grebes himself but had heard reports of unusual grebes being seen on lakes further south early in 1977. Possibly the same pair have gradually moved northwards.

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IMMATURE BLACK-FACED CUCKOO SHRIKE (*Coracina novaehollandiae*) NEAR INVERCARGILL

On 15 June 1976, I heard a strange call at Daffodil Bay, Invercargill Estuary. I then saw a bird fly across the bay from some pine trees. Its undulating flight and relatively long tail were noticeable. I found it perched in a Eucalyptus tree along a bough of which it ran in a manner reminiscent of the Kokako. I was able to obtain good views of the bird with 8 x 30 binoculars at distances of 30 to 60 metres.

The bird eventually flew off towards some *Macrocarpa* trees about half a kilometre distant. Despite later searches, the bird was not seen again.

After consultation with B. D. Bell and F. C. Kinsky, the bird was confirmed as an immature Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike. This species occurs in Australia, Tasmania, New Guinea and nearby islands. Throughout Australia it has a widespread distribution (Frith H. J. (ed.) 1969, *Birds in the Australian High Country*, Sydney: Reed).

Description:

Dark (black) patch extending from the bill through the eye to the ear coverts. This patch was contrasted above and below by pale silvery-grey plumage.

Bill — black, similar in shape and proportion to a Black-billed Gull.

Back — from crown to tip of tail was ashy-grey in colour. The whole under-surface of the bird appeared to be pale greyish-white — lighter in colour than the back.

Primaries: dark brown or black.

Voice: Only one type of call was heard — a loud "Chow Chow-ow." It called frequently — both when in flight and when perched.

The Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike has been recorded in New Zealand several times before: Motueka (1869); Invercargill (1870); Westport (c1895 and 1931); Lake Ellesmere (1904); Greymouth (1914 ?); Taranaki (1914); north Kaipara Heads (Jan.-Sept. 1953); Himatangi (Jan. 1955); Fielding (1965) and Okuru (Sept. 1966).

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SPUR-WINGED PLOVER LONGEVITY RECORD

On 31 July 1966 a breeding adult Spur-winged Plover (*Vanellus miles novaehollandiae*) was banded by P. M. Muller in Otatara, Southland (Band E.61314). On 6 August 1977 this bird was found dead on the roadside by Mr J. L. Baker of Otatara with injuries consistent with its having been struck by a vehicle.

Some Spur-winged Plovers are capable of breeding at the end of their first year (Barlow *et al. Notornis* 19 (3): 212-249). Earliest recorded hatch-date is 2nd July. (op cit.) This bird's minimum age was therefore 12 years 1 month.

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TALON-GRAPPLING BY NEW ZEALAND FALCONS AND AUSTRALASIAN HARRIERS

Aerial talon-grappling has been recorded in a number of raptors. Brown & Amadon (1968: 99) mentioned it as part of courtship displays in some eagles of the genus *Haliaeetus* and some kites (*Haliastur* and *Milvus*). Hamerstrom *et al.* (1961), Carson (1962) and Clark (1975) recorded talon-grappling in Short-eared Owls (*Asio flammeus*) and considered it to be a form of courtship. Simms (1975) observed Merlins (*Falco columbarius*) talon-grappling and interpreted it as courtship, as did Chater (1975) who saw it in Common Buzzards (*Buteo buteo*).