

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*).