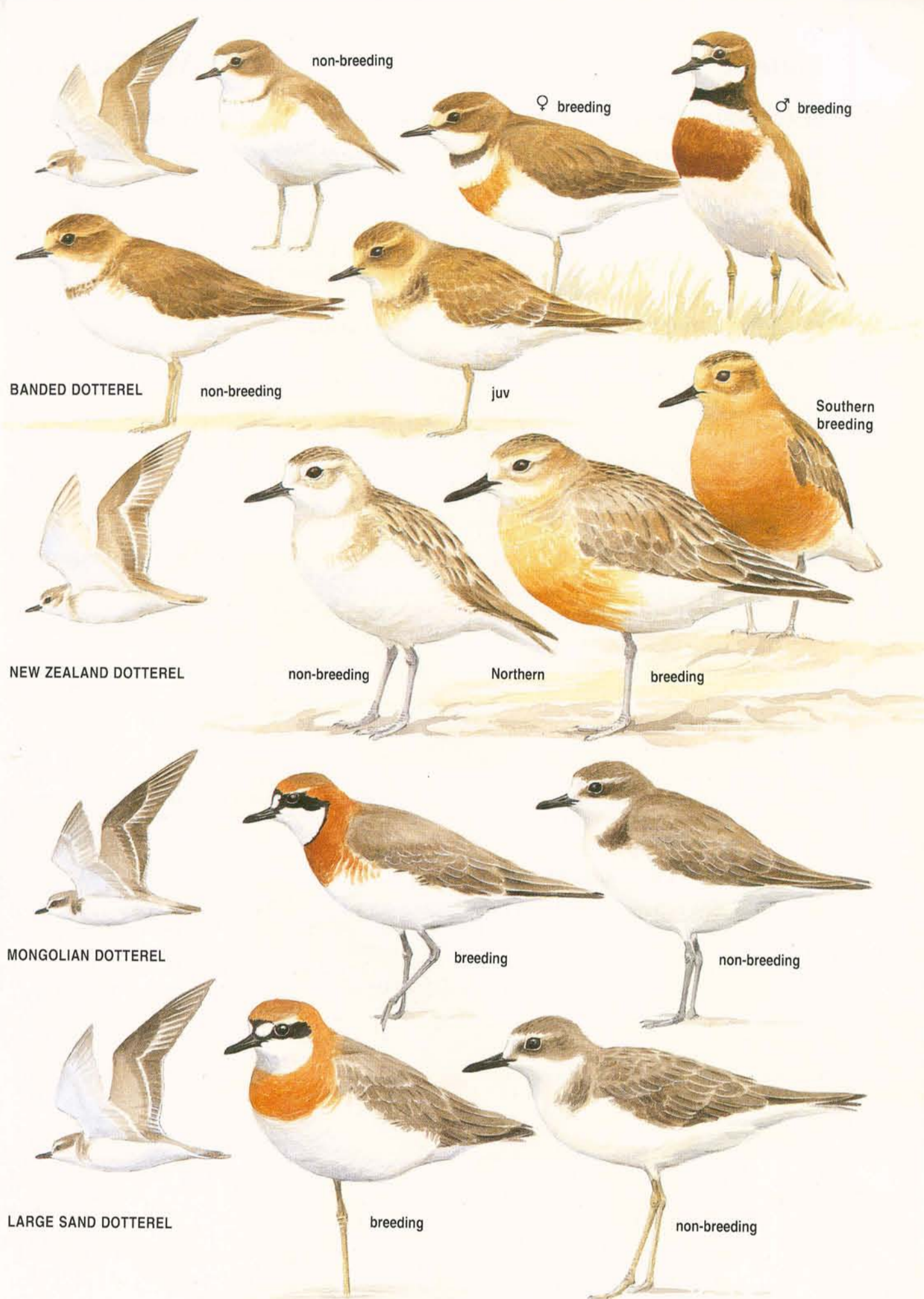


A large diverse group of birds of estuaries, coasts, riverbeds and farmland. Most are long-legged and feed in or near shallow water. Bill shape is varied; short and stubby in those (e.g. dotterels) that peck from the surface, but longer in those that feed in shallow water (e.g. stilts), or probe deeply (e.g. godwits). Flight strong and direct. Often form flocks while roosting or flying, but disperse to feed. Many species seen in NZ breed in the Arctic and arrive in September, with remnants of breeding plumage, and depart in March, often in breeding plumage. Most subadults and a few adults spend the southern winter here.

LARGE SAND DOTTEREL *Charadrius leschenaultii*

Rare Asian migrant

24 cm, 90 g. *Large leggy dotterel with long heavy black bill*. Like Mongolian Dotterel but larger, much longer legs and body held more horizontal, and bill much more robust. Breeding adult has a narrow pale reddish-orange breast band, extending upwards on sides of neck to behind eye; black line through eye to bill and across top of forehead. Non-breeding has white forehead and eyebrow, plain grey-brown upperparts and white underparts except for grey-brown shoulder tabs, which may meet to form a thin breast band. Legs long, yellowish grey to green. In flight, distinct wingbar well onto primaries. Sexes alike. Usual call is a soft trill. **Habitat:** Breeds Central Asia. Only a few reach NZ estuaries each year, mostly at Kaipara, Manukau, Firth of Thames and Farewell Spit. [Sp 180]



PLOVERS, DOTTERELS and LAPWINGS

Charadriidae

About 65 species, most of which are migratory. There are about 29 plovers and dotterels, of which 5 (formerly 6) breed in New Zealand and 8 visit as migrants from the Northern Hemisphere; 26 lapwings, 1 of which breeds in New Zealand. Some authorities place the Red-kneed Dotterel with the lapwings rather than the plovers.

In New Zealand, the terms plover and dotterel mean the same thing; there is no clear distinction. All are plumpish with a thick, short neck, short tail, small, rounded head

with a high forehead and bill shorter than the head, pointed and slightly swollen at the tip. The plumage is a blend of black, white, brown and grey, sometimes more colourful in breeding plumage. They often have a bold pattern in flight. They have a characteristic 'walk and stop' way of feeding.

Lapwings tend to be inland on pasture and around coastal wetlands. They have wattles on the face and spurs on the bend of the wing, and are noisy on the ground and in flight, by night as well as by day.

180. LARGE SAND DOTTEREL

Charadrius leschenaultii Plate 40

Other names: Large Sand Plover, Greater Sand Plover

Size: 24 cm, 90 g

Geographical variation: Of the three subspecies, *leschenaultii* breeds in eastern central

Asia and migrates to Australasia.

Distribution: Breed across central Asia from Turkey to northwestern China, and winter in Africa, southern Asia and Australasia. The subspecies *leschenaultii* breeds in southern

Siberia, Mongolia and northwestern China, and migrates to Australasia, especially to the coasts of northern Australia and down the eastern seaboard to Victoria and Tasmania. In New Zealand, they are recorded almost annually as a rare visitor, mostly in September–April. Favoured sites are the Kaipara and Manukau Harbours, the Firth of Thames and Farewell Spit, but they have been recorded on estuaries from Parengarenga Harbour to coastal Southland. The most seen together

is 9 in the Firth of Thames in 1983.

Population: Normally, fewer than 10 visit New Zealand each summer, whereas about 75,000 visit Australia.

Behaviour: Gregarious, feeding and roosting with other species, especially with Banded Dotterels on mudflats and estuaries. They feed in the 'run-and-stop' manner typical of plovers. The call is a soft trill similar to that of the Mongolian Dotterel.

Reading: Sibson, R.B. 1953. *Notornis* 5: 179–181.