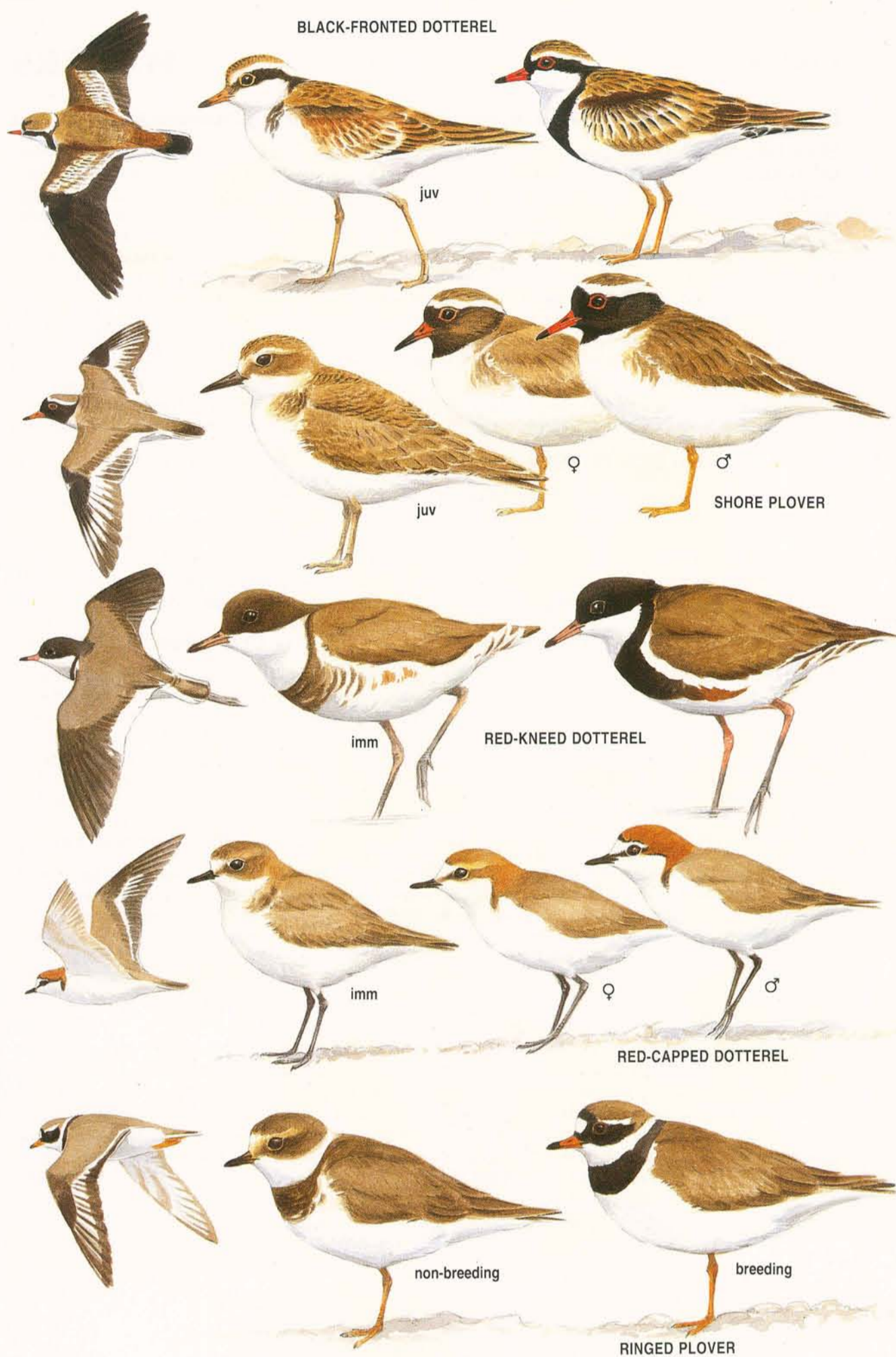
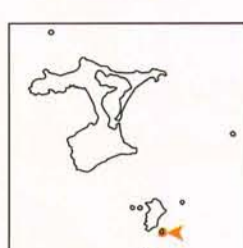


A large diverse group of birds of estuaries, coasts, riverbeds and farmland. Most are long-legged and feed in or near shallow water. Bill shape is varied; short and stubby in those (e.g. dotterels) that peck from the surface, but longer in those that feed in shallow water (e.g. stilts), or probe deeply (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.

SHORE PLOVER (Tuturuatu) *Thinornis novaeseelandiae*

Rare endemic

20 cm, 60 g. Distinctive *small stocky dotterel* of South East I and the Western Reef in the Chathams, but recently introduced on Motuora I in the Hauraki Gulf and near Mahia in Hawke's Bay, and seen on nearby estuaries. Crown, neck and upperparts greyish brown; white ring around back of head above eyes and across forecrown; black forehead, sides of face and throat in males, dirty brown in females; underparts white. Bill red, tipped black; legs orange. Juvenile has white head and neck with brown-grey cap and eye patch; bill brown with orange base. Usual call a quiet 'kleet', but loud ringing aggressive calls sound like oystercatcher piping calls. **Habitat:** Wave platforms, marsh-turf and estuaries. **Breeding:** Oct–Feb. [Sp 184]



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.

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.

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

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.

184. SHORE PLOVER *Thinornis novaeseelandiae*

Plate 41

Other name: Tuturuatu

Size: 20 cm, 60 g

Distribution: South East Island and Western Reef in the Chathams and rarely wandering to other islands of the group. They live on the coastal rocky wave platforms and on the 'Clears', an open, exposed area of saltmeadow at the southern end of the island.

Shore Plovers were recorded in the South Island at Queen Charlotte Sound (Marlborough Sounds) and Dusky Sound (Fiordland) in 1773, and were probably distributed widely round the South Island coast until exterminated soon after the arrival of Norway rats and feral cats. The last reliable mainland record was at Waikawa River, Otago, about 1871. At that time they were still on Mangere and Pitt Islands in the Chathams, but they disappeared soon after the introduction of cats to those islands.

Shore Plover reared in captivity have been released on Motuora Island (Hauraki Gulf) and near Mahia (Hawke's Bay) since 1994, and some of these birds have been seen on the mainland coast, as far away as the Manawatu Estuary.

Population: c. 250 in 2004; c. 130 on South East Island, 15 on Mangere Island and c. 100 in captivity or released.

Conservation: Protected endangered endemic. Very vulnerable to predators such as cats, and naturally survive on two small

predator-free islands, despite hundreds being collected for museum specimens between 1890 and 1910. Faced by the constant risk of introduced predators reaching South East Island, the loss of marsh-turf habitat since the removal of sheep in 1961, and the risk of fire, disease or the encroachment of breeding fur seals onto key feeding and breeding areas, the aim is to establish several self-sustaining populations on islands and in captivity.

Since 1994, over 150 captive-bred birds have been released on Motuora Island and near Mahia but only the latter is self-sustaining. In February 1999, a new population of c. 20 birds was discovered on the rarely visited Western Reef off the north-western tip of Chatham Island, but it has since died out.

Breeding: Eggs are laid from mid-October to January. Nests are hidden under thick vegetation, occasionally under boulders near the shore or under large rocks inland. They lay 2–3 pale buff eggs (37 x 26 mm, 13 g), blotched or spotted darker brown. Both sexes, but mostly females, incubate for about 28 days, usually starting when the last egg is laid. The fledging period is 36–55 days. Some young breed at 2 years, but most start when 3 years old. A bird banded as an adult lived to over 20 years old.

Behaviour: Strongly territorial in the breeding season, but in winter they may roost and feed in flocks of up to 35 birds. They are noisy,

making loud, ringing calls, especially in aggression with neighbours. The normal call of both sexes is a quiet 'kleet' or 'pip', higher-pitched in females.

Feeding: Diet includes crustaceans (copepods, ostracods, amphipods, isopods), spiders, molluscs (gastropods, bivalves), insects and their larvae. They glean and peck among the tide-wrack and on wet rock platforms covered

in algae and barnacles. They may take rapid, short steps – 'step-peck-peck-peck-step' – or foot-tremble on algae-covered rock platforms.

Reading: Davis, A. 1994. *Notornis* 41 (S): 171–194. Davis, A. 1994. *Notornis* 41 (S): 195–208. Dowding, J.E. & Kennedy, E.S. 1993. *Notornis* 40: 213–222. Fleming, C.A. 1939. *Emu* 39: 1–15.