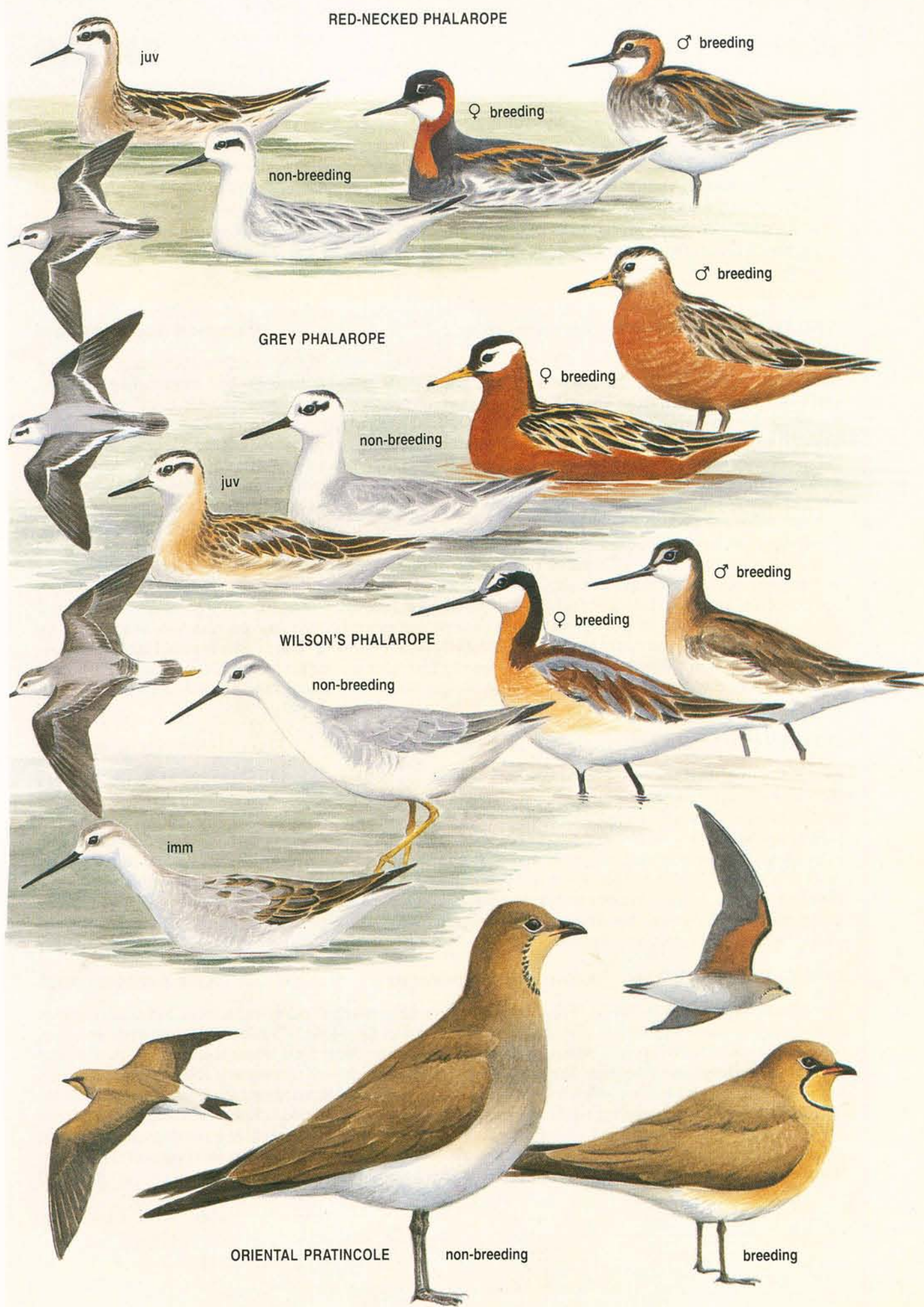


A large diverse group of birds of estuaries, coasts, riverbeds and farmland. Most are long-legged and feed in or near shallow water. Bill shape is varied; short and stubby in those (e.g. dotterels) that peck from the surface, but longer in those that feed in shallow water (e.g. stilts), or probe deeply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

ORIENTAL PRATINCOLE *Glareola maldivarum*

Rare Asian migrant

23 cm, 75 g. Distinctive atypical wader with graceful buoyant tern-like flight while feeding by hawking, swooping and soaring; sometimes feeds on ground with rapid tip-toeing run. Non-breeding adult has dull olive-brown crown, back and upperwings; throat buff, enclosed by a streaked black necklace; neck and upper breast pale olive-grey-brown, lower breast and belly white. Breeding adult has brighter olive-brown on head and upperparts; throat enclosed by bold black necklace; lower breast becomes buff. Juvenile has flecked appearance from back and upper breast feathers being tipped dark and edged buff. In flight, *underwing chestnut with dark grey trailing edge and tip, deeply forked white tail with olive brown tip*. **Habitat:** Breeds SE Asia. Migrates to Australasia, occasionally reaching NZ estuaries, coastal lakes and over open grassland. [Sp 174]



PRATINCOLES and COURSERS Glareolidae

Of the 15 species, 1 reaches New Zealand as a rare vagrant. Recent research suggests that this family is closely related to the gulls, terns and skuas, rather than the waders, as currently placed.

birds, similar to terns. They have very long, narrow wings, a forked tail and a wide gape with which they catch flying insects on the wing. They also feed on the ground like other waders; in spite of their short legs, they can run fast. Their bill is short and strongly arched. The sexes are alike.

Pratincoles are graceful and highly aerial

174. ORIENTAL PRATINCOLE

Glareola maldivarum

Plate 51

Size: 23 cm, 75 g

Distribution: Breed in southern Asia from Pakistan and India to Mongolia, China, Taiwan and the northern Philippines. They are partially sedentary in winter, but many migrate to winter in northern Australia, often in thousands, much smaller numbers reaching southern and eastern Australia. A few occasionally wander to New Zealand. Eight records: Westport (1898), a flock of at least

five at Appleby, Nelson (1959), Stewart Island (1963), Raoul Island, Kermadecs (1976), two sightings in South Canterbury (1977), Kaipara Harbour (1985), Ruapuke Island, Foveaux Strait (1988), Farewell Spit (1994), New Plymouth (1999) and Lake Ellesmere (2002).

Behaviour: Oriental Pratincoles fly like over-large swallows, usually near water.

Reading: Falla, R.A. 1959. *Notornis* 8: 126–127. Pierce, R.J. 1978. *Notornis* 25: 290.