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 plumish 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.

179. RINGED PLOVER Charadrius hiaticula

Size: 19 cm, 60 g
Distribution: Breed in northeastern Canada, Greenland, Iceland, northern Europe and northern Asia east to the Bering Sea. They winter mainly in Africa, but a few winter on the coasts of Japan, Korea and China, and vagrants reach Indonesia, New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand. The two New Zealand records of single birds are both at the Firth of Thames (December 1970–May 1971 and November 1983–October 1985).