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Birds of New Zealand - Locality Guide. 3rd edn.

Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.

Cattle egret: pp 92-93.



CATTLE EGRET

Family Ardeidae

Species *Bubulcus ibis*

Common name Cattle Egret

Status Native

Abundance Uncommon

Size 510 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm, White Heron 910 mm)

Habitat Generally it is found on pastureland associated with dairy cattle. Occasionally found on coastal estuaries such as the salt-flats at Miranda.

Worldwide range Well spread through North and South America, Africa, southern Europe, Asia through to Australia and New Zealand.

New Zealand range Found in many districts in both the main islands. The Cattle Egret first arrived in New Zealand in the 1960s. In the mid-1970s it arrived in larger numbers to winter on selected properties, mainly in the Rangiriri district,

south of Auckland. It is now an annual visitor to many localities but no nesting birds have yet been located.

Description

Head and breast White, rusty coloured when in breeding plumage. **Upper and underparts** White, tending to rusty colour on back when in breeding plumage.

Bill Yellow. **Legs** Dark grey.

Conspicuous features

- A small white heron.
- Trailing dark grey legs noticeable in flight.
- Rusty breeding plumage.

Conspicuous characteristics

- Gregarious and usually found in large flocks. The Rangiriri flock has consistently been comprised of over 200 birds.
- Easily frightened.

Call In New Zealand silent, but near the nest in Australia, the call is a “rick-rack rick-rack”, or a “kraah”.

Nesting habits As yet not found to be breeding in New Zealand. Birds obtain breeding plumage and then return to Australia to breed where they nest in trees in colonies. 4 to 5 whitish, green-tinged eggs are laid.

Where to find – North Island

Far North – Kerikeri on Kapiro Road just west of the junction with Landing Road. P. 282.

South Auckland – Miranda at the “Stilt Ponds”. P. 302.

North Waikato – Rangiriri on Churchill East Road or Lumsden Road after the Rangiriri Hotel on Highway 1. P. 309.

Hauraki Plains – Pipiroa at Buchanan Road off Highway 29. P. 307.

Manawatu – Foxton Beach area. P. 336.

Where to find – South Island

Canterbury – Lake Ellesmere at Doyleston. P. 351, 352.

Otago – Momona south from Dunedin – turn right into Marshall Road and left into Bull Creek Road.