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Birds of New Zealand - Locality Guide. 3rd edn.
Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.
Lesser (Red) Knot: PP 166-168.



LESSER (RED) KNOT

Family Scolopacidae

Species *Calidris canutus*

Common names Lesser Knot, Red Knot

Status Migrant

Abundance Common in selected areas

Size 250 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm, Wrybill 200 mm)

Habitat A bird of coastal areas, salty lagoons and harbours

Worldwide range The Lesser Knot is the second most common migrant to arrive in New Zealand over the summer months. It breeds well to the north of the Arctic Circle in both Siberia and Alaska. Birds spending the summer in New Zealand are generally considered to be of the Siberian race which also summers





in Australia. Leg banding has shown that Australian Red Knots also visit New Zealand in the same year. Knots arrive from the end of August with numbers peaking in December.

New Zealand range Found throughout New Zealand. Some harbours, such as the Kaipara, the Manukau and the Firth of Thames, attract very large flocks. Conversely, some harbours which attract godwits, such as Wharekawa and Tairua, on the Coromandel Peninsula, fail to attract knots.

Description – breeding plumage (above)

Head, neck and breast Chestnut. **Upperparts** A mixture of black, dark brown, grey and white. **Abdomen** Rufous. (See P. 166)

Description – non-breeding plumage (below)

Upperparts and wings Greyish-brown with thin white wing-bar. **Underparts** Greyish-white with some speckling on flanks. **Rump** Barred with white and grey. **Bill** Brown. **Legs** Greyish-brown.



Conspicuous features

- Considerably smaller than the godwits they roost among.
- Appear greyish in non-breeding plumage.
- In breeding plumage are highly coloured. Hence the name Red Knot.
- Colouring starts in late summer.
- Have a heavier appearance than the sandpipers they frequent with.
- Have a squat posture.
- In flight, look for the white wing-bar.





Conspicuous characteristics

- Have a habit of intermingling with godwits on high-tide roosts.
- Often found grouped right in the middle of a godwit mob.
- An easy bird to find when grouped in large numbers among godwits. However when found singly or when grouped intermittently among Wrybills, it is hard to identify. When in doubt look for scattered brown markings below the folded wings as the first identification pointer.

Where to find – North Island

South Auckland – Clarks Beach on the Manukau Harbour. P. 301.

South Auckland – Miranda. P. 302.

Where to find – South Island

Marlborough – Motueka estuary sandspit. P. 344.

Marlborough – Waimea Estuary at Rabbit Island Bridge west of Richmond. P. 344.

Southland – Fortrose Estuary, Waituna Lagoon and Awarua Bay. P. 364.

