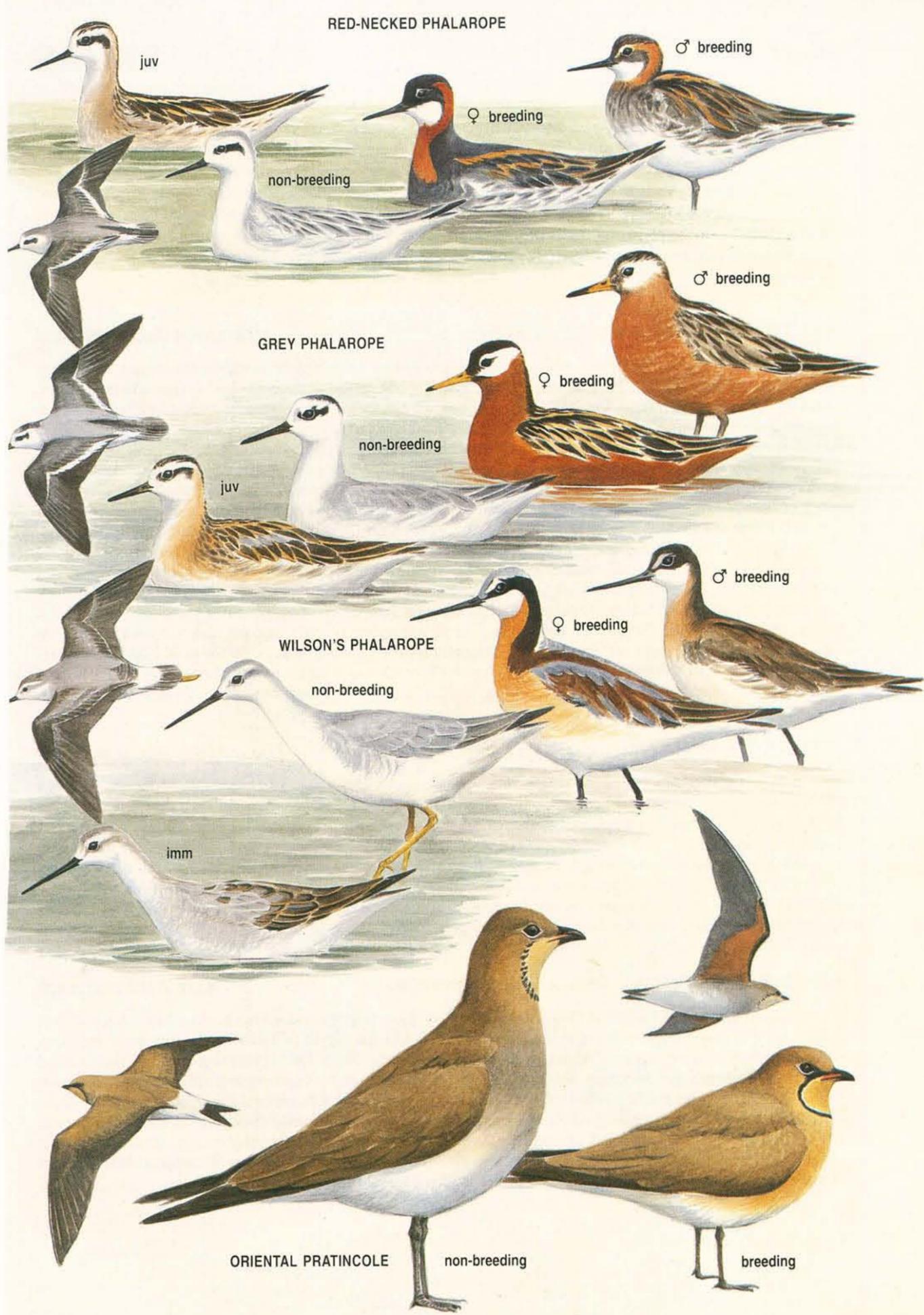


A large diverse group of birds of estuaries, coasts, riverbeds and farmland. Most are long-legged and feed in or near shallow water. Bill shape is varied; short and stubby in those (e.g. dotterels) that peck from the surface, but longer in those that feed in shallow water (e.g. stilts), or probe deeply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

**RED-NECKED PHALAROPE** *Phalaropus lobatus*

Rare Arctic straggler

19 cm; ♂ 30 g, ♀ 35 g. Unusual small slim and graceful wader. Feeds by swimming jerkily or in circles, pecking from the water surface. Short very fine black bill; very short dark grey legs with lobed feet; white wingbar; large white patches at sides of rump contrast with black stripe down grey-tipped tail. Non-breeding adult like Grey Phalarope, but bill finer, back feathers have dark centres and broad white edges, giving a *scaly* appearance. Breeding adult unmistakable: mainly grey above, with rufous patch sweeping from behind eye down sides of neck to throat; male duller. Juvenile has grey patch behind and below eye, and grey on crown extends down hindneck to back. **Habitat:** Breeds Arctic. Migrates to pelagic waters off western N America, Arabia, Micronesia and Namibia. A few have straggled to NZ estuaries or coastal lakes. [Sp 226]



**PHALAROPES**

3 species, all of which are rare visitors to New Zealand.

A small anomalous family of medium to small waders with reversed breeding roles, in which the females are larger and brighter than the males and confine their breeding activities to courtship, mating and laying eggs. Gregarious when not breeding. All are expert swimmers, even in shallow water, with dense plumage on the breast and belly that traps air and makes them float high and buoyantly. Two of the three have a circumpolar breeding range and spend the autumn and winter at sea; they have the salt gland highly developed. The third species, the Wilson's Phalarope,

**Phalaropodidae**

prefers freshwater wetlands and has normal salt glands.

All phalaropes are slim, having a small head on a slender neck and a sharp, straight bill. Their legs are laterally compressed, and their toes are lobed like those of grebes and coots. They spin, or pirouette, while swimming, stirring plankton or other invertebrates up from below – a technique used more on terrestrial lagoons rather than at sea. They also dab the bill into the water and wade in algal mats and, darting this way and that, feed on flies gathered there. New Zealand records are mainly at coastal lagoons, lakes and estuaries.

**226. RED-NECKED PHALAROPE** *Phalaropus lobatus*

Plate 51

**Other name:** Northern Phalarope  
**Size:** 19 cm; male 30 g, female 35 g  
**Distribution:** Breed on arctic tundra in Greenland, Iceland, Scandinavia and the northern parts of Asia, Alaska and Canada. They migrate to three main zones of oceanic upwelling: off western North America, off Arabia, and between the Philippines and New Guinea, although some winter off Namibia. They are an annual migrant in small numbers

to most Australian states, particularly in the northwest and southeast. Seven New Zealand records: Lake Ellesmere (1929, December 2000, October 2002), Wanganui Estuary (April 1935), Washdyke Lagoon (March 1961), Manukau Harbour (June 1985), Miranda (December 1996), Farewell Spit (November 2000, October 2002) and Lake Grassmere (November 2002).  
**Reading:** Crockett, D.E. 1961. *Notornis* 9: 266. Jenkins, J.A.F. et al. 1986. *Notornis* 33: 191–192.