

Watola, G. 2011. The Discovery of New Zealand's Birds. (3rd Edition in prep.)  
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Painted snipe p 132.

**Australian Painted Snipe** *Rostratula australis* (Gould 1838), Vagrant (1)  
6/8/1986 Lake Ellesmere, Canterbury

The only Painted Snipe to be recorded in New Zealand was found on a bird-watching trip led by Kathleen Harrison and Shona Mulligan (1987). It was found at Wolfe's Road, Lake Ellesmere on 6/8/1986. A lot of excitement surrounded this find, unusual for most recent firsts, as more than two people were present at the time of discovery.

It appeared to be rather Marsh Crake-like in appearance, but was soon seen to be much larger. It had brilliant white underparts, green legs and conspicuous head and back markings. It appeared to be a male, as it lacked the rufous markings of the female. A very short description was published, but the uniqueness of the bird was apparent. A pair was possibly present, according to a later witness who may have seen a female on the 12th August.