

Australasian pied stilt

Himantopus himantopus leucocephalus 35 cm

NEW ZEALAND NATIVE, NOT THREATENED

The pied stilt is a slim black-and-white wader with very long red legs, a long, fine black bill, and a dark red eye. The back and wings are black, and the face and underparts are white. There are varying amounts of black on the neck and crown. Juvenile plumage is mottled with a grey wash on the head and neck, and brown-black on the back and wings. Stilts have a distinctive yapping call; the long legs and feet trail behind in flight. Pied stilts were first recorded breeding on Chatham Island in 1961, but are not common there. They have been recorded only from the main island, mainly around the margins of Te Whanga Lagoon, but also at other lakes. Breeding is from July to January; stilts nest as isolated pairs or loose groups, generally surrounded by, or near, water.



Pied stilt at nest. Photo: Barry Harcourt (DOC).