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Pacific golden plover: pp 162-164.



PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER.

Family Charadriidae

Species *Pluvialis fulva*

Common names Golden Plover, Pacific Golden Plover

Status Migrant

Abundance Common in selected areas

Size 250 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm, Banded Dotterel 250 mm)

Habitat Selective as to habitat, preferring muddy estuaries.

Worldwide range Breeds in eastern Siberia and Alaska and migrates south down the countries to the west of the Pacific rim to Australia. It also spreads out across the Pacific, wintering on tropical islands often in association with the Wandering Tattler. It can be easily viewed along the rocky coastlines of many of the Pacific Islands such as Fiji, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Samoa, Rarotonga and Tahiti. Good numbers of birds find New Zealand. It can be confused in New

Zealand with the American Golden Plover (*Pluvialis dominica*), which breeds across the Canadian Arctic and generally migrates to South America.

New Zealand range Found in traditional wading bird habitats throughout New Zealand, with small flocks occurring in the far north of the North Island, the Manukau Harbour, the Firth of Thames, Lake Ellesmere and at Awarua Bay and the Invercargill Estuary in Southland.

Description – breeding plumage (above)

Crown of head and upperparts Brown, heavily flecked with golden-yellow and white. **Neck** A white dividing line starting at the forehead and travelling behind the eye and down the neck, separates the black underparts from the golden upperparts. **Underparts** Black.

Description – non-breeding (below)

Head Brown with a white stripe above the eye. **Throat** Buff. **Upperparts** Brown, with feathers edged with golden-buff. **Breast** Light brownish. **Abdomen** White. **Bill** Black with white feathers around the base.

Conspicuous features

- The golden tonings are noticeable in non-breeding birds.
- Only expect the breeding plumage at the end of the summer and early autumn in New Zealand birds.
- On breeding plumage birds look for the striking black underparts with white line from head to flanks in breeding plumage birds.

Conspicuous characteristics

- Usually viewed with head held high.
- Have the usual plover habit of running and pausing while feeding.
- Sometimes leave the coastline habitat to feed on nearby pastures.
- Have an “ever alert” stance.
- At high-tide birds will stand motionless for some time.
- Upon landing, birds hold their wings erect for a moment before folding.

Call A clear two-syllabic “tuill tuill”.

Differences between Pacific Golden Plovers (*P. fulva*) and American Golden Plovers (*P. dominica*)

- When birds are standing, the folded primary feathers of the American Golden Plover extend well beyond the tail. The primary feathers of the Pacific Golden extend minutely past the tail.
- When birds are standing the folded tertial feathers of the American Golden Plover lie well back from the tip of the tail, as compared with the Pacific Golden.
- The Pacific Golden Plover is smaller and slimmer than the American Golden Plover which can be described as “fairly bulky”.
- In breeding plumage the Pacific Golden Plover has less shoulder-white

than the American Golden Plover.

- In non-breeding plumage the Pacific Golden Plover has an indistinct white eyebrow stripe and a golden head. The American Golden Plover has a much whiter eyebrow stripe and greyish head tonings.
- In non-breeding plumage the Pacific Golden Plover has brown upperparts spotted with bright yellow, while the American Golden Plover has greyish-brown upperparts spotted with pale yellow.

From P. 161.

Migrants attracted to high-tide Wrybill roosts The following species will sometimes roost with Wrybills – Mongolian Dotterel, Large Sand Dotterel, Siberian Tattler, Terek Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper and Red-necked Stint.



Where to find – North Island

Northland – Aroha Island, Kerikeri. There is always a good-sized flock here. P. 282.

North Auckland – Kaipara Harbour at Manukapua Island. P. 287.

Great Barrier Island – Whangapoua Beach on the sand estuary east of the Okiwi airstrip. P. 290.

South Auckland – Manukau Harbour in the Clarks Beach area. P. 300, 301.

South Auckland – Miranda sometimes present on dry mud near the “Stilt Ponds” area. P. 302.

Bay of Plenty – Kaituna River-mouth. P. 320.

Hawkes Bay – Ahuriri just north of Napier. P. 331.

Manawutu – Manawatu Estuary. P. 336.

Where to find – South Island

Marlborough – Motueka Estuary. P. 344.

Canterbury – Lake Ellesmere at various places. P. 351.

Southland – Waituna Lagoon. P. 364.