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Birds of New Zealand - Locality Guide. 3rd edn.

Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.

New Zealand pipit: pp 229-231.



NEW ZEALAND PIPIT

Family Motacillidae

Species *Anthus novaeseelandiae*

Common name Pipit,

Status Endemic

Abundance Uncommon

Size 190 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm, Skylark 180 mm)

Habitat A bird of the open countryside but preferring wilderness and unkempt areas. Prefers areas where scrubby roadside verges exist and roads are gravelled. Also commonly found on beaches.

Worldwide range Widely spread throughout the world with the European, Asian and Australian races being known by the name of Richards Pipit. In some countries it is migratory and tends to move east and south during the winter, turning up in western Europe, the United Kingdom and Africa.

New Zealand range Found throughout New Zealand but seldom in improved farming districts. Absent from forested areas.

Discussion Collected on Cook's voyage of 1783, and painted by George Forster, the ship's naturalist. This painting was used to describe "New Zealand's Lark" and this name was Latinised by Gmelin in 1789 to become *Alauda novaeseelandiae*. Hence, the cosmopolitan Pipit carries the species name of *novaeseelandiae*.

Description

Head Brown streaked with light brown and with a white eyebrow. **Upperparts** Brown streaked with light brown. **Chin** White. **Breast** White streaked with light brown. **Underparts** Whitish. **Tail** Dark brown with white outer feathers.

Conspicuous features

- A whitish eyebrow.
- White outer tail feathers.

Conspicuous characteristics

- Bobs its tail upon alighting.
- Signals its arrival with a loud high-pitched "scree" note.
- Has a tendency to rise on dusty country roads and then fly in undulating swoops alongside or in front of cars.

Call This is either a high-pitched "tueet tueet" or "scree scree" sound.

Nest A grass cup among tall grasses or in the base of a rush bush. Up to 4 creamy eggs blotched with brown are laid.

Differences between the Pipit and the Skylark

- The Pipit lacks the Skylark's crest and rather square head.
- The Pipit is of upright stance standing higher than the Skylark, which instead is inclined to sit back on its haunches with a sloping back posture.
- The Pipit has a habit of landing nearby and being a friendly and confiding bird. At such times it will bob its tail vigorously.
- Skylarks are vigorous aerial singers. Pipits sing from a perch although they will utter their "scree" note when on the wing.

Where to find – North Island

Northland – Cape Reinga. P. 280.

Northland – Dusty roads to the north of Awanui frequently have Pipits. P. 280.

Rotorua – The dusty roads of the Central Plateau areas of the North Island, in districts such as Rotoiti, Pongakawa and Manawahe, have good populations. P. 323.

Waikaremoana – On roads near the lake. P. 327.

Tongariro – Desert Road after Turangi. P. 317.

Where to find – South Island

Marlborough – Queen Charlotte Drive from Picton to Havelock. P. 340.

Westland – Many of the West Coast highways have Pipits.

Fiordland – Te Anau It is well-spread through the Manapouri, Te Anau area to Cascade Creek and Milford Sound.

Fiordland – Homer Tunnel Common around the Homer Tunnel area of Highway 94, even above the bush line. P. 370.