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

Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.

Redpoll: pp 262-263.



REDPOLL

Family Fringillidae

Species *Carduelis flammea*

Common name Redpoll

Status Introduced

Abundance Common

Size 120 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm, Chaffinch 150 mm)

Habitat A bird of open country and wasteland. Avoids areas of high fertility pastures. Found in both native and exotic forests and even to above the snow line in some areas.

Worldwide range Europe to Asia.

New Zealand range Found throughout New Zealand but with sparse populations in some areas, such as in the intensive dairying areas of South Auckland and the Waikato. It is very common in the South Island.

Description – male

Head Dark behind bill then a reddish crown to the back of the head. **Neck, nape and back** Brownish. **Wings** Dark brown on primaries with distinctive whitish wingbar. **Chin** Black. **Breast** Brownish with a reddish flush in the breeding season. **Underparts** Greyish with some scattered dark brown striping.

Description – female

Crown Reddish. **Upperparts** Greyish-brown with noticeable dark brown striping but less coloured than on the male bird. **Underparts** Whitish, with light brown striping but lacking the reddish flush of breeding plumaged males.

Conspicuous features

- The smallest of the introduced finches.
- Whitish wingbar.
- Red on forehead.
- Black chin on male birds.
- Striking on the back of head and mantle is noticeable.

Conspicuous characteristics

- Noisy flight-song is conspicuous.
- Feeds on the ground often among other finches.
- Will feed close to buildings and houses in some localities.
- Enjoys feeding over stubble paddocks.

Call Song which is delivered by the male bird, is a loud, direct, rippling trill, more often heard in flight than from a perch.

Nest A neat cup of dried grass and fine twigs, lined with wool and feathers, placed in a fork of a tree or on a branch in a low shrub. Up to 4 blue, brown-spotted and streaked eggs are laid.

Where to find

Expect it in any locality but it is more common in the South Island and Stewart Island than in many North Island localities. Very common in inland Canterbury, Central Otago and on the Otago Peninsula.