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Ruddy turnstone: pp 143-144.

**Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* (Linnaeus 1758), Migrant  
1871 Ninety-mile Beach, Canterbury  
1888 Norfolk Island

“Dr. Finsch, writing in September 1870 (Journ. für Ornith. p. 349), expressed his conviction that, among other species which breed in high northern latitudes and migrate southwards on the approach of winter, the common Turnstone would yet be met with on the New-Zealand coast; and in the following season this prediction was amply verified by the capture of several specimens on the Ninety-mile Beach, in the South Island. All of these were females in winter plumage; but subsequently an example in summer plumage was shot at the Wade, and another was sent to me by Mr. Robson from Portland Island.

Of late years the bird has become tolerably common as a seasonal migrant, being particularly numerous in certain months in Manukau harbour and in the Bay of Plenty. They were exceptionally abundant in the former locality in 1880; and Mr. Cheeseman informs me that in March of that year he met with a flock there which must have contained upwards of a thousand birds, besides several smaller ones. Some that were shot on this occasion were so extremely fat as to be quite useless for skinning, from the quantity of oily matter that exuded from the skin of the breast and completely saturated the feathers. According to his observations the birds usually arrive in November or December, and depart in March or April, only a few of them remaining with us during the winter” (Buller 1888).

This Ninety-mile Beach is the extremely long shingle beach between Banks Peninsula and Timaru, not the more well-known Far North beach, which is not actually ninety miles long. The reason for the latter's name is unknown. Several theories have been put forward, the most common stemming from the days when missionaries travelled on horseback. On average a horse could travel 30 miles in a day before needing to be rested. The beach took three days to travel, therefore earning it the title Ninety Mile Beach, but the missionaries did not take into account the slower pace of the horses walking in the sand, thinking they had travelled 90 miles when in fact they had only travelled 60.

Hutton (1871) also reports Turnstone in Canterbury Province, probably referring to the same records.

The next record is of one in summer plumage shot at Silverdale on 1/4/1872. There is a specimen obtained from Christchurch in 1872 in the National Museum of Ireland. Ramsay (1888) recorded it in the mid-19th century on Norfolk Island. The next record there was not until October 1962.

**Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres morinella* (Linnaeus 1766)  
6/03/2007 Riverton estuary, Southland

“Ingrid (Hutzler) and Rob (Schuckard) saw in a flock of 10 Turnstones, 2 males with almost entirely red wing coverts and scapulars. A faint white wingbar could be distinguished with a very few smallish black individual feathers on either side of this bar. The rest was completely RED. After looking at descriptions and photos, these birds come as close to the *morinella* subspecies as it can be. This (sub) species has never been reported from New Zealand and not even from our Flyway (Schuckard 2007).