

CHAMBERS, S. 2009.

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

Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.

Nankeen kestrel: pp 123-124.



### NANKEEN KESTREL.

**Family** Falconidae

**Species** *Falco cenchroides*

**Common name** Nankeen Kestrel, Australian Kestrel

**Status** Native

**Size** 330 mm (cf sparrow 145, New Zealand Falcon 430 mm)

**Habitat** Open pastureland.

**Worldwide range** A regular visitor to New Zealand from Australia where it inhabits open pastureland and light bush country as well as sometimes moving into urban environments. In New Zealand it prefers similar habitats.

**New Zealand range** Isolated reports come from both North and South Island.

**Description – male**

**Head and neck** Blue-grey. **Back and upperwings** Cinnamon-brown with black primaries. **Underparts** White with wash of buff on upperbreast. **Tail** Grey with a black tip. **Ceres** (above bill) Yellow. **Eye** Brown with a thin yellow eye-ring. **Bill**

Horn coloured with a black tip. **Legs** Yellow with black claws.

### **Description – female**

**Head** Rufous with some black streaking. **Upperparts** Cinnamon-brown spotted or streaked black. **Underparts** Light brown breast to white abdomen. **Tail** Brown, barred with 10 rows of black and a black tip to tail.

### **Conspicuous features**

- Small size makes it distinctive.
- Black feather centre markings.
- Has pointed wings and a long tail.

### **Conspicuous characteristics**

- Hovers in flight above prey before gliding down.
- Tends to fly with fast wing beats and then soars with flat wings.

**Call** Shrill excited chatter.

**Nest** It nests in rock cavities, on cliff ledges or in old trees. Up to 5 buff, reddish-blotched eggs are laid. Nesting has not been recorded in New Zealand.

### **Where to find – old localities**

**Northland – Waipu** In the area around the village of Waipu and along Highway 1 near the town, one bird was recorded in 1996. P. 285.

**North Waikato** – Naike A bird was seen and photographed near the Naike school west of Huntly. Follow the Rotongaro road and carry on until you reach the sign saying Naike. This has been a regular location for this species. P. 310.

**Hawkes Bay** – Te Mata Te Mata peak is well signposted from the south-east of Havelock North town. Drive right to the summit. P. 332.