

CHAMBERS, S. 2009.

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

Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.

Marsh sandpiper: pp 181-182.



MARSH SANDPIPER

Family Scolopacidae

Species *Tringa stagnatilis*

Common name Marsh Sandpiper

Status Migrant

Abundance Rare

Size 220 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm, Wrybill 200 mm)

Habitat A bird of harbours and estuaries usually preferring still water areas.

Worldwide range Breeds in Central Asia migrating to Africa, southern Asia and Australia. Since 1959, when it was first recorded in New Zealand, numbers have grown to a record 8 birds being seen together in one flock at Miranda in 1998. Closely related to the Greenshank.

New Zealand range Birds turn up from time to time in all the main wading-bird areas.

Description – non-breeding

Upperparts Pale grey, with a dark edge to folded wings. **Underparts** White.

Eyebrow White. **Bill** Black, slim and pointed. **Legs** Dark grey.

Description – breeding

Upperparts Grey, flecked with brown. **Throat and breast** Grey, lightly flecked with brown. **Bill** Black. **Legs** Yellow.

Conspicuous features

- Has an elegant stilt-like appearance but much smaller than a stilt.
- Has a long slender bill.

Conspicuous characteristics

- In flight shows a distinctive white V marking on the back which separates it from the Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*).
- At high tide it keeps feeding in shallow water while other species roost.
- A fast flier.
- When in flight it usually calls.

Call Widely spaced “twee twee” notes.

Difference between Marsh Sandpiper and Lesser Yellowlegs when in breeding plumage

- Marsh Sandpiper has a white V marking on the back, seen when in flight.

Where to find – North Island

South Auckland – Miranda at the “Stilt Ponds”. P. 302.

South Auckland – Manukau at Te Hihi. One bird was seen Clarks Beach in 1998. P. 301.

Where to find – South Island

Canterbury – Lake Ellesmere. P. 351.

Southland – Waituna Lagoon. P. 364.