

First Tasmanian Record of the Black-tailed Godwit.—On January 28, 1965, I had been studying waders at the western end of Ralphs Bay in the vicinity of South Arm. As I was driving home along the road that skirts the bay I stopped the car to count the individual waders that were well dispersed in the water about 120 yards away.

Although the light was fading I experienced no difficulty in differentiating Curlew, *Numenius madagascariensis*, Pied Oystercatcher, *Haematopus ostralegus* and Spur-winged Plover, *Lobibyx novae hollandiae*. As I scanned a loose flock of Curlew I became aware of a medium-sized wader standing amongst them. I approached to within 50 yards, by which time the bird was alone, the other species having moved to a fresh sector of the beach some 60 yards to the east. The remaining bird was clearly a godwit but, observed through 6 x 30 binoculars, appeared to be slightly different from a typical Bar-tailed Godwit, *Limosa lapponica*, a compact flock of 78 of which I had been studying earlier in the evening. These differences centred on the head and neck, the carriage of which was not typical of the Bar-tailed, and on the bill which was perfectly straight and appeared to be too long. These features led me to suspect that the bird in question could be a Black-tailed Godwit, *L. limosa* which has not, to my knowledge been previously reported in Tasmania.

I have observed both species on many occasions in the U.K. and I do not consider the differences in bill length and curvature and in the head and neck to be sufficiently reliable to allow a distinction to be drawn between the two species. I approached closer until the bird took wing, settling on the edge of the Curlew flock 60 yards away. The pure white tail with a broad black band, beyond which the entire feet protruded, and the white wing-bars, were clearly evident and confirmed that the bird was a Black-tailed Godwit.

As I approached the bird for the second time the Curlew again flew. The flock first flew out to sea but soon wheeled and headed in a westerly direction parallel to the water-line at a height of some 30 feet. The Black-tailed Godwit permitted my closer approach before it also flew. It headed in a north-easterly direction and flew, keeping close to the water, straight and fast towards the rocky eastern shore of Ralphs Bay until it was lost to view in the gathering gloom. Again the diagnostic tail and wing-bars were visible.

The Black-tailed Godwit occurs, in small numbers, in Victoria (see for example Smith *Aust. Bird Watcher* 2(3), 78) in company with Bar-tailed Godwits and on its own. In my U.K. (South Lancashire) experience I only rarely saw the two species together, the Bar-tailed being almost exclusively a bird of the sea-shore whereas the Black-tailed was normally found on moss-lands, estuarine mud-flats and at small slacks in the extensive coastal sand dunes as well as some distance inland. My experiences are in accord with the statements made by C. Oakes in his *Birds of Lancashire*, London, 1953.

Although the area has since been visited frequently by other observers and myself the bird has not been seen again, neither has it been recorded from any other wader resort in the district.—D. G. Thomas, Hobart, Tas.

Little Falcon steals prey from four Ravens.—At 8.50 a.m., April 9, 1965, four Ravens, *Corvus coronoides*, were seen feeding on a plover-sized bird on top of a six foot high fence on the grounds of the C.S.I.R.O. Division of Wildlife Research Station, Gungahlin, Canberra, A.C.T. It was a cool, overcast morning with practically no wind.

Suddenly a Little Falcon, *Falco longipennis*, flew in amongst the ravens, grabbed their prey, and flew off with it through some trees about 20 yards away. The ravens subsequently dispersed and made no attempt to follow the falcon.

Falcons normally catch live prey, whereas kleptoparasitism is a regular practice of scavenging birds such as gulls and crows. The audacity of this falcon is therefore quite remarkable. The ravens were too surprised to retaliate or to defend their prey.—GERARD F. VAN TETS, C.S.I.R.O., Canberra, A.C.T.