



Painted Snipe in characteristic attitude of attack.

Photo. by A. F. D'Ombra.

Coturnix novæzealandiæ pounami subsp. nov.

Differs from *C. n. novæzealandiæ* in being paler above and in having a different wing formula, resembling the wing formula of the Australian Quail, cf. *Manual*, 1921, pl. 31, fig. 2.

Type from Port Cooper, South Island, in British Museum.

Megadyptes antipodes fallai subsp. nov. from Stewart Island.

In the *Records of the Auckland Institute and Museum*, vol. I, no. 6, September 26, 1935, Dr. Falla comments, on p. 319, on the uniformity of size in those birds from Stewart Island. They are larger than typical birds and measure—

Flipper	Culmen	Tail	Tarsus	Mid toe and claw
195-210	54-59	50-63	30-35	77-83
(202)	(55·8)	(57·6)	(32·8)	(80·3)

In *Supplement to the Birds of Norfolk and Lord Howe Islands* July 15, 1936, pl. 75, is figured *Megadyptes antipodes* from Auckland Island. The culmen measures 48 mm., flipper 206, tarsus 29.

Add as synonym of *Coprotheres pomarinus nutcheri* Mathews, 1917—

1923 *Stercorarius nigricapillus* Bergmann, *Fauna och Flora*, vol. 17, no. 5, p. 232, May, Kamtchatka.

Behaviour of the Painted Snipe in Captivity

By A. F. D'OMBRAIN, West Maitland, N.S.W.

A specimen of the Painted Snipe (*Rostratula australis*), evidently sick or injured, was found near West Maitland in October, 1943. As it could not fly it was feared it would only be the prey of some marauding animal if left alone, so it was brought in to Mr. F. W. Drew of Lorn, West Maitland, to see if it could be nursed back to health. I have not heard of one being kept in captivity before so made a trip at once with my camera to see if a photograph of this very beautiful bird could be obtained.

The bird had the run of a small wired-off portion of the garden, and also a comfortable weatherproof shelter. Immediately upon the approach of any person the bird quickly runs into the shelter and wedges itself tail first into the farthest corner. To do so it stands on the tips of the toes, pushing backwards with an action suggesting 'marking time' and elevating the tip of its tail and wings so high up along the corner of the box that the breast and point of the beak are almost touching the floor in front of its feet. The impression it at once conveyed to me was the comic artist's

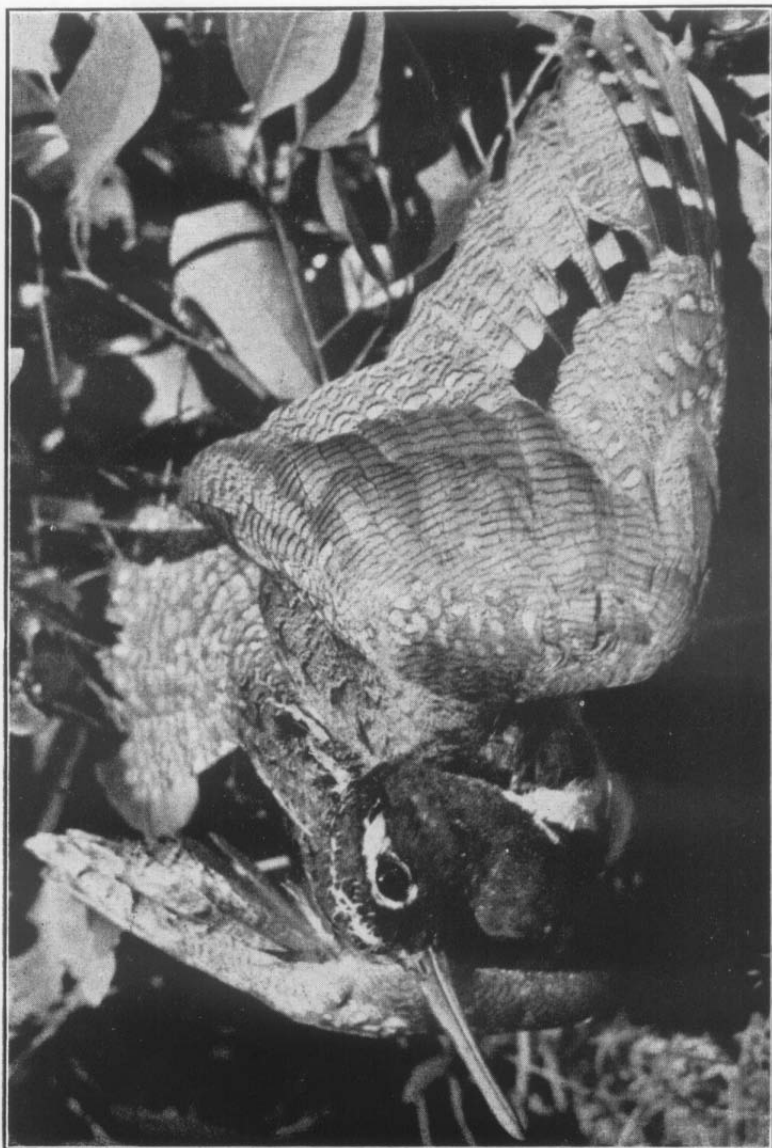
drawing of a timorous old lady standing on a chair holding her skirts up, while taking refuge from a mouse. Although the bird has become very much tamer now (nearly a month having passed since it was brought in) it still runs to its corner if anyone other than Mr. Drew comes near. No amount of coaxing or tempting with food will induce it to come out, but once taken out into the open a complete change comes over the bird, both in appearance and manner. Daintily running across the grass on its slender green legs, it suddenly stops dead a few feet from any intruder. With a rapid movement and a rustle of feathers like that of a turkey gobbler, both wings are spread in a graceful curve nearly to the full expanse, the tail is spread stiffly to a wide fan shape, and the head and breast tilted down until nearly touching the ground. The white band which runs from the back of the neck to the breast is hidden at the shoulders by the position of the wings.

In this menacing attitude it remains poised for a few seconds, very slowly swaying the wings backwards and forwards, in the manner of a butterfly sunning itself on a flower after a cold night. Without further warning it charges straight ahead with wings, tail and head in the same position. What follows comes as an anti-climax, for, fully expecting some harsh and menacing cry to accompany such a brave charge, it is almost a shock to hear the bird emit a pleasant, soft, and almost musical little 'booo' as it runs forward.

Soft though the sound may be, the little Snipe is no 'softy' at heart, as it comes straight on undaunted by the size of a man's legs standing in its way and delivers a jab with all the power behind its beak. However the force behind this concentrated charge is slight and even if delivered on the palm of the hand it is so weak as scarcely to be felt. The whole attack is most amusing, but is a very brave effort for so small a bird. Now that the way is blocked, it will not retreat but with wings still held out, and neck still tucked back, it daintily side steps around, crab-fashion. In fact the whole attitude rather resembles the scuttling side-ways run of a small crab on a beach.

As it sidles around one's legs the wings slacken slightly as the bird gets near some cover, but the slightest move will see the wings whip up into position again, and it is once more ready to do battle. When the bird is left alone it makes for cover quickly, all the feathers slacken, the wings fold up and in a second it has merged itself into the cover so well that it is very hard to find.

The bird is feeding well and eats worms, meat and insects: in fact it is a voracious eater. It seems to be taking a liking to its surroundings and certainly to Mr. Drew, as it knows him instantly from any strangers.



Painted Snipe with wings partly lowered preparatory to assuming normal position, and showing the beautiful wing markings.

Photo, by A. F. D'Ombra.