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The Shorebirds of Sea Isle Beach

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UNTIL twelve or fifteen years ago the members of the Club with only two or three exceptions knew next to nothing concerning shore-birds. Their interest was entirely occupied with the birds of the interior, especially with those of the mountain districts. Of later years, however, all of this has been changed, largely perhaps to the advent of the automobile, which makes a day's trip to the shore as easy of accomplishment as a tramp through nearby woodland. The result is that the study of shore-birds and water-fowl has taken the leading place in our ornithological activities, and what I have said about our Club is equally true of bird students in other parts of the country.

The abolishment of spring shooting and the placing of practically all shore-birds on the protected list has also played a prominent part in the popularization of this branch of bird study since birds that were wild and ever alert for the sportsman's bombardment have become tame to a degree beyond all expectation.

I shall never forget the date of July 7, 1916, when a trip was conducted northward through the thoroughfares from Atlantic City to Little Beach Island for the purpose of photographing Common Terns on their nesting grounds. Scoville,

Rhoads and myself were of the party. The subsequent remarks of Rhoads on the inability of the rest of us to identify the common shore-birds filled me with a high resolve to gain at least a passing knowledge of this interesting group.

The next summer I had a cottage at Peermont on Seven-mile Beach and there had opportunity to become acquainted, during the southward migration, with such species as the smaller "Ox-eyes," Piping, Ring-necked and Black-bellied Plovers, Sanderlings, Dowitcher and Turnstone.

Subsequently for several seasons aided and abetted by Witmer Stone and the late Walker Hand, I studied these birds in the Cape May district and learned to identify most of our common shore-birds.

For the past ten years most of my observations have been along that strip of territory extending from Corson's Inlet to Townsend's Inlet which includes Sea Isle City and was formerly known as Ludlam's Beach.

Today the marshes lying back of this beach remain as one of the few unspoiled districts along the Jersey coast where the bird student may spend many profitable hours.

The records, and notes herewith presented cover this area and are compiled from my journals of the intervening years in which I have attempted to write down my observations on the voices, manners and behavior of this fascinating group of birds.

Pluvialis dominica dominica. GOLDEN PLOVER.—September 30, 1933, Sea Isle City. While walking along the railroad embankment I am attracted to a strange bird note. I soon discover the calling bird high in the air and follow it with my glasses as it flies to a distant point at the edge of the thoroughfare. Following it I encounter a large flock of Black-bellied Plovers and among them is one that appears different. It is a trifle smaller than the rest and although already in winter plumage seems at a distance to be of a warm, buffy color. As it flies away its axillars are seen to be uniform in color with the rest of its underwings. As it flies off pigeon-like, with deep wing strokes the bird gives me further definite evidence of its identity by calling and by its *quee-e-ip'* note I recognize my

sky wanderer of an hour ago and am happy in seeing a Golden Plover.

Squatarola squatarola. BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER.—June and July are the only months when the Black-bellied Plover is conspicuously absent from our coastal marshes. Arriving on its fall migration in late July and early August it reaches its greatest abundance about the latter part of September when most other shore birds have departed southward. A few remain throughout the winter but it is not until mid-May that it can again be observed in large flocks, associating with Turnstones, Knots, Dowitchers and other waders.

It is one of the most difficult of all shore-birds to approach over the open marsh. I encountered a flock of 96 of them on the open flats at Sea Isle City on September 30, 1933. I approached them ever so cautiously but for every step I moved forward the flock advanced an equal distance, as a rule hopping along on one leg, for I had come upon them during a rest period. Upon reaching an area of marsh grass they evidenced less concern but even with this apparent protection they stood about with heads raised in a dignified but alert attitude. Upon too near an approach the entire flock rose into the air and made off in rather open formation. In flushing and while on the wing the *toor-a-wee* note was heard constantly.

Arenaria interpres morinella. RUDDY TURNSTONE.—Turnstones may be looked for during the late summer when many of them are still in breeding plumage but the later migrants and those remaining into September are invariably in winter plumage. May, however, is the time to observe the species to best advantage. No other shore bird is more conspicuously marked at this season. The pied black and white head, the rufous, black and white upper parts and the black breast band of spring birds will prevent confusion with any other species. The short and apparently slightly upturned bill and short orange-colored legs are good field marks at all seasons.

Turnstones regularly associate with other waders, particularly the Black-bellied Plover. They are birds of sandy or muddy shore lines. No other species possesses the habit of turning over with their bills stones, pebbles, shells or clumps

of mud in search for food, One may look for them either on the mud flats or along open beaches. A bird, noted on September 6, 1919, stood on one leg along the surf line and when the wash of incoming waves disturbed it, it hopped up the beach and very sleepily buried its bill in its back feathers.

The *ketty-kit* call note of the species, sounded upon being flushed, is characteristic of this bird alone.

Charadrius melodus. PIPING PLOVER.—The Piping Plover is the first of the migratory shore-birds to arrive in the spring, coming by mid-March. I noted as many as 20 of them on the flats at Brigantine, N. J., on March 25, 1932. During the breeding season, which occurs throughout the month of June, the species is in no sense gregarious and it is not until mid-August that one may encounter them in close flocks. On August 22, 1928 at Sea Isle I noted 16 birds feeding close together on the tidal flats. It is seldom met with after September.

Only the notes of the Black-bellied Plover arouse in me the same emotion as does the call of this bird. When walking over the sand flats at sun-down the sweet, liquid *queep-queep-o'* of the Piping Plover is an ever-present sound as one strains his eyes to determine whence the phantom note arises, so perfectly does the pale color of the bird harmonize with its sandy surroundings.

Charadrius semipalmatus. SEMIPALMATED PLOVER.—The characteristic which distinguishes the "Ring-neck" from all other common shore-birds is its manner of progression across the mud flats. It runs forward quickly for a few steps, feeds and then raises its head to remain motionless for a few seconds as if in contemplation. This process is repeated indefinitely and renders the species a deliberate feeder reminding one of a similar habit of the Robin. It seldom feeds continuously as do the smaller Sandpipers but dabs at each morsel of food. This habit alone will identify it at a great distance.

The Ring-neck is not gregarious to any great degree although it shows a tendency to flock with its own kind upon being disturbed yet it flies in rather open flocks but upon alighting soon spreads out in all directions, failing to keep together as do the smaller Sandpipers.

Although occurring along ocean beaches with the Sanderling, Semipalmated Sandpiper and other waders it feeds further up the beach beyond the wash of the waves but seldom in the area of dry sand where the Piping Plover is at home.

On August 12, 1916, I was attracted at night to its call note, a characteristic *tŭr-o-ēēp′*, and found it by the light of the moon feeding at the edge of the surf. To what extent this night-feeding habit among shore birds is general I have not determined.

Pagolla wilsonia wilsonia. WILSON'S PLOVER.—While at Sea Isle City on September 15, 1933, during the period of a severe north-east storm, I noted two waders seeking shelter from the high winds behind a cement coping of a flower bed. I watched them from a distance of twenty feet. One of them was a Semipalmated Plover. The fact that the other was a considerably larger bird aroused my suspicion. A close inspection revealed a larger and heavier bill, which was entirely black, a lighter mantle and a neck ring which did not show black all around. I have no doubt that the bird was a Wilson's Plover. My observations were substantiated at the time by a friend who was unaware of the significance of the points of distinction that I was endeavoring to determine. This constitutes my only record from New Jersey.

Oxyechus vociferous vociferous. KILLDEER.—Although a true shore-bird the Killdeer frequents and breeds amid upland surroundings especially in cultivated fields. It nests much later immediately along coast than inland. One need hardly expect to find eggs before mid-May or the first of June.

When first flushed the Killdeer gives voice to a hurried and nervous *klee-il-il-il-il-la,* which is probably a recruiting call. When in sustained flight and well on its way the voice comes as *kil-dee, kill-dee,* etc., rapidly enunciated as the bird flies erratically in a zig-zag course. A note less frequently indulged in, as the bird runs ahead of an observer, is a softer *dee-e-e-e-e-e-e-e.*

On June 9, 1933, at Sea Isle City I flushed a bird from a set of four eggs. It employed every artifice at its command to lead me away from the nest. It performed like a wounded

bird, dragging itself along the ground with head stretched forward and tail spread while beating the earth with its wings. It uttered continuously a plaintive *klee-e-e-deh-deh.*

The Killdeer is the noisiest of all shore birds and the first of a mixed group to take alarm when the feeding grounds of associated species are invaded.

Phæopus hudsonicus. HUDSONIAN CURLEW.—The Hudsonian Curlew is the only large wader that occurs in great numbers on our coastal marshes today. Arriving in New Jersey about the first of May I have noted them at Sea Isle City, May 8, 1925, in flocks numbering from 250 to 500 birds. When flying over long distances they generally progress in regular formation and the flocks at a distance have the appearance of drifting smoke. I have only noted the Curlew soaring, when about to alight. Notwithstanding the fact that the species goes all the way to the Arctic to breed I have found them on their return migration as early as the 23d of July (Sea Isle) and by the end of the first week in August they are present in large numbers. At this time upon the meadows they have the appearance of feeding Grouse but at a reasonable distance their long, curved bills will readily identify them. Although elusive and ever alert they possess much poise, displaying none of the restlessness of a Yellow-legs, feeding for hours in a suitable locality, if undisturbed.

With the apparent extermination of the Eskimo Curlew and the great scarcity of the Long-billed in the East this is the only Curlew to be noted at the present day on our coast but all flocks should be carefully scanned, for it is among these that one of the above species or a Godwit may be discovered. The downward curve of the bill will readily distinguish the Curlews from the Godwits.

Bartramia longicauda. UPLAND PLOVER.—The Upland Plover is no longer a common bird in areas contiguous to the New Jersey coast. About fifteen years ago I found it a regular summer resident in grassy fields of the Cape May region.

Quoting from my notes of August 22, 1920, (Cape May) I flushed a flock of 10 Upland Plovers which flew out over the meadows in a rather open formation. When disturbed upon

the sand flats the bird would run a short distance, lower its tail once or twice in a deliberate manner without dropping its body then run again to repeat the process. It frequently uttered, while on the ground, a *quip-ip-ip* note which became more hurried and prolonged when it flushed and wheeled away in a hurried flight to a distant point. Its course was at no time direct, its destination being reached by a flight along a series of wide arcs as if it had no particular point of refuge in mind.

When it flew in to stand upon the meadows it raised its wings well above its body, drawing them down slowly. As it ran away from me it held its head erect in much the same manner as the Bob-white affects when running through tall grass. When suspicious and undetermined whether to take flight or not it moved its head backwards and forwards repeatedly. At no time, while on the flats, did it utter its loud, clear, whistled *whe-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-oo-o-o-o-o-o*, the call which one hears so often on its nesting grounds.

Actitis macularia. SPOTTED SANDPIPER.—Along the coast the Spotted Sandpiper is a summer resident, nesting along sandy ridges and about shell heaps. It is noted most commonly along the muddy shores of the bays and larger thoroughfares. It is not a gregarious bird nor strictly sociable but it may occur in numbers where food is abundant. No matter what its activity may be it continuously teeters, tilting its tail up and down in a nervous fashion. In this action the legs are flexed and the forepart of the body is jerked down as the tail is raised. Its wing-strokes are also distinctive. It holds the wings stiffly outspread and inclined downwards and vibrates the tips without bringing them above the back, this action differing from the long, flowing beats of other similar waders.

Its characteristic whistled *peet-weet* is indulged in either while on the wing or on the ground. An infrequent note sounded while feeding (August 20, 1933) is a long, tremulous *ip-ip-ip-ip-ip-ip-ip*.

Tringa solitaria solitaria. EASTERN SOLITARY SANDPIPER.—Only in favored haunts may the Solitary Sandpiper be noted

along the Jersey coast. It never frequents the shore line or the broad salt marshes as do the majority of other waders. As its name implies it is a rather solitary bird, being found singly or in pairs rather than in flocks. On migration it may be looked for along ditches or about pools of quiet water and prefers a muddy shore line to a pebbly one, such as the Spotted Sandpiper delights in. In the fall of the year it is a frequent bird about rain pools and one may easily pass it by for it is generally silent and unsuspicious and will rarely take wing unless too closely approached.

The black and white bars on the outer tail feathers and tail coverts will distinguish the Solitary from the Spotted Sandpiper while its flight differs as well, being characterized by deep, sweeping wing beats, like those of a Yellow-legs.

Catoptrophorus semipalmatus subsp. WILLET.—The Eastern Willet no longer breeds on the seaside marshes of the New Jersey coast although it still does so on the Delaware Bay marshes below Salem. This fact together with the regular presence of the Western Willet and of intermediates along the Atlantic coast in the southward migration as proven by specimens makes it difficult to say which race one sees along our coast, it being practically impossible to distinguish the two in the field.

I have seen Willet as early as the first week of August at Sea Isle City where they generally associate with Curlews when on the marsh and nearby, the black outer edge to the wings, caused by the dark primaries, and the straight rather heavy bill should distinguish them. When on the wing they are absolutely unmistakable with the long conspicuous white patches showing on both surfaces of the wings. Upon alighting the Willet raises its wings slowly and slowly folds them.

They feed sometimes on the sea beach following the waves in and out like a Sanderling. Their call came to me as *que-will-wilp.*

Totanus melanoleucus. GREATER YELLOW-LEGS.—The Greater Yellow-legs is a common spring and fall migrant along the coastal marshes. Its flight is swift, strong and well-sustained, its long neck and bill extending forward and its long

yellow legs stretching out behind give it a slender, rakish appearance in flight which is quite distinctive. Flying, as a rule, at a good elevation, when about to alight it scales down on down-curved wings. Upon alighting it stands for a moment with its wings extended upwards, then folds them deliberately and if not suspicious gives a few jerky bows and begins to feed. When walking about its movements are quite lively and I have noted it at times dart quickly from one position to another over a long period without any apparent reason.

The call notes of the Greater Yellow-legs are very variable. The yodel call is generally given by a bird persisting in a locality. It is sounded either while in the air or when on the marsh and may be represented as *cur-dle-dee, cur-dle-dee,* etc., repeated for several seconds.

Three loud, ringing, *wheu-wheu-wheus* represent the common call of the species. This is generally given by passing or leaving birds.

Sustained *kip-kip-kip* notes may be uttered by a suspicious bird, walking about nervously while undetermined whether to leave the locality or not. When thoroughly aroused (Notes of Aug. 29, 1920) this succession of calls gradually changes into a series of *queu-queu-queu* notes as the bird takes wing. These at length break down into a series of three to four *queus,* which undoubtedly constitute a recruiting call as a bird leaves its companions.

Another note of suspicion which I have heard from a bird on the ground is a single *kee-airp,* which may or may not be repeated.

Apart from these, its commoner notes, the Greater Yellow-legs possesses conversational cheeps and murmurings expressing companionship and confidence.

Totanus flavipes. LESSER YELLOW-LEGS.—The Lesser Yellow-legs is a smaller edition of the Greater in respect to its appearance and behavior. It possesses the same habit of tilting its body and alternately lengthening and shortening its neck with a bobbing motion when suspicious of danger and when about to take wing.

It is the commoner of the two species in late summer and autumn but very rare in spring. It flies in larger flocks and on August 3, 1933 I noted 50 Lesser Yellow-legs in the same district where but 2 Greater Yellow-legs were present but this ratio is undoubtedly high and not comparable as the larger species is a later migrant and is not plentiful so early.

When on the meadows, unless aroused, the Lesser Yellow-legs is usually silent. It is apt to be far more noisy when in flight. It is much less suspicious than the Greater Yellow-legs but may be equally aroused by a Greater Yellow-legs associated with it.

The notes of this species seem to me to be not so varied. Its yodel call is hardly distinguishable from that of the larger bird and is undoubtedly given under similar impulses.

Its *kip* notes unquestionably register suspicion or protest when the bird is aroused. This, when a bird takes flight, usually breaks down into single and double notes after the bird is well on its way. The *kip* call may be retained or it may be altered into *wheu* or *cu* notes, either single or double. A wandering single bird seems to use this call more often doubled.

Calidris canutus rufus. AMERICAN KNOT.—In my experience the Knot seems to be a much commoner bird in the spring than in the fall. On May 4, 1933, as many as 40 were noted in a single flock at Avalon in association with Turnstones and Sanderlings. The pinkish-cinnamon underparts at this season render the species both handsome and conspicuous. The fall migration is extended over a greater period and the flocks, as a rule, are not so large. Besides their uniformly gray plumage tends to conceal the birds at times. When noted they are generally grouped in compact bunches, all moving along together. They are less apt to scatter over their feeding grounds than any other wader. When resting along the higher beaches or on the flats they stand quietly, close together and facing the wind. On the wing they fly closely in compact flocks, twisting and turning in unison like the smaller Sandpipers.

Although usually a silent bird when disturbed the Knot gives voice to a soft, whistled *quit-quit* note.

Pisobia melanotos. PECTORAL SANDPIPER.—The Pectoral Sandpiper may be noted as a migrant during late summer and fall in wet grassy meadows, sometimes about pools on the mud flats but very rarely on sandy beaches. It is of rare occurrence in spring the regular northward route being up the Mississippi Valley as in the case of the Lesser Yellow-legs, Baird's Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, etc. Frequently it occurs in scattered flocks but more often is seen singly. It is rather phlegmatic in comparison with other Sandpipers, its habits suggesting those of the Wilson's Snipe for when aroused it springs singly from its grassy cover, flying away on a zig-zag course. Although erratic at first, in sustained flight its course is swift and direct after it is definitely on its way. As a rule it keeps to itself but I have found it associating with Least and Solitary Sandpipers and at times with the Semipalmated Sandpiper. Its movements are deliberate while feeding as it probes in the mud with rapid strokes of its bill.

I have noted its flight call as *kree-kree* when the bird is flushed.

Pisobia fuscicollis. WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER.—This little Sandpiper I have seen more commonly during its spring migration than in the fall. Anyone visiting Brigantine rain pools near the Country Club during the latter part of May is sure to see it. It is easily confused with the Semipalmated Sandpiper but is a rangier and slimmer bird and has two characters by which its identity may definitely be determined, its white rump, or rather upper tail coverts, which show conspicuously in flight and its squeaky, mouse-like note, *tsit,* which is uttered when the bird is flushed.

It is very social and unsuspicious, moving about in small flocks of its own kind or associating with other small Sandpipers. When disturbed it generally flies but a short distance and is apt to return to the pool from which it has been disturbed. While on the ground the grayish or buffy color of the neck and upper breast extends down the sides beyond the bend of the wing whereas in the Semipalmated and Least Sandpipers it is not so extended and there is a decided white area before the wing.

Pisobia bairdi. BAIRD'S SANDPIPER.—The Baird's Sandpiper occurs along the coast of New Jersey only as a rare migrant in the fall. On account of its close general resemblance to the Least and Semipalmated and White-rumped Sandpipers with which it associates it is apt to pass by unnoticed and should be identified very carefully in the field. Besides having the upper parts lighter, the buffy tint of the breast of the Baird's extends down the sides beyond the bend of the wing as in the White-rumped, but it does not have the white rump of that species.

When feeding it is not so active as many of its associates and walks slowly about, weaving in and out among them. This characteristic and its slightly larger size should attract the attention of the observer. It feeds at the edges of tidal flats and about the margins of partly dried-up pools. Usually one or rarely more than two birds frequent an average association of waders at the height of the migration. Only once have I definitely identified it.

Pisobia minutilla. LEAST SANDPIPER.—Although abundant, the Least Sandpiper is among the most difficult of all shore birds to detect while feeding quietly on the mud flats. At first, it is practically indiscernible against the dark soil or brownish stubble but, at length, one discovers a movement, rather than a bird; then, by further searching, a second, third or perhaps a dozen are seen feeding or walking to and fro in a more or less deliberate manner, evidencing at no time the quickness of movement that characterizes the Semipalmated Sandpipers in like pursuit. When feeding in shallow pools, however, they show a much more restless spirit and dart hither and thither, probing in the water or pursuing one another in a playful manner. When flushed one hears their soft *kre-e-e-ep* note, a call to which others of their kind respond by joining in a flock to wheel across the marsh to a new feeding grounds. Flying in a rather close formation, first they appear dark as their wings and back come into view, then, in an instant, as if on signal, flashes of white reveal that they are flying obliquely to the observer. Finally with set wings they swerve down and once again are lost against the black

mud of the flats as they settle to feed. As they glean for food they utter a soft, conversational note like *weh-weh-weh-weh-weh* which under excitement or suspicion develops into a *whit-it-it-it-it* or *twit-it-it-it-it* or *twick-wick*. It is not so loquacious as the Semipalmated Sandpiper when grouped.

The Least Sandpiper reaches the New Jersey meadows earlier than the Semipalmated both in spring and fall and the marshes are its preferred feeding grounds as it does not visit the beaches to any extent. Its small size should distinguish it from all other Sandpipers except the Semipalmated and the Western from which at close range its yellowish-green legs will identify it.

Pelidna alpina sakhalina. RED-BACKED SANDPIPER.—The Red-backed Sandpiper is the last of our transient shore-birds to arrive in the fall, seldom appearing in any marked numbers before mid-September. Thenceforward it is by far the commonest species in our district during the winter months. It can be noted in flocks along the beaches and mud flats but more particularly on exposed inlet bars at low tide. Generally unsuspicious, it may be closely approached. It secures its food by probing in the sand or mud, wading at times in water up to its belly. When flushed the Red-backs mass in a close formation and fly off in a waving, serpentine flight.

In spring its bright rufous upper parts and black belly are unmistakeable but it may be identified at any season by its rather large and curved bill even in the gray-backed, white bellied plumage of winter.

The only call note of the species which I have recorded is a repeated *purre*, suggesting a soft call of the Common Tern.

Limnodromus griseus griseus. EASTERN DOWITCHER.—Dowitchers arrive on their spring migration in May and are to be noted along the mud flats of the larger bays and thoroughfares, generally, in company with other waders. From early July once again they are a feature of the mud flats, reaching their greatest concentration about the first week in August when flocks of 50 or more are a common occurrence. At this time many of the birds still retain their rufous underparts while others are in the grayish attire of winter. The exces-

sively long bill, only equalled by the Woodcock and Snipe, in birds of approximately similar size, is characteristic.

The feeding habits of the Dowitcher are unique. It probes with its long bill into the mud of the exposed tidal flats, holding it almost vertically, frequently burying it as far up as its head and often in shallow water submerging its head as well. While its bill is inserted it pumps its body up and down several times before withdrawing it.

Dowitchers flock rather closely and when flushed fly in close ranks and circle about in search of another feeding ground. When resting they stand motionless with bill extended forward or sleep while standing on one leg with their bills buried in the back feathers. I have variously interpreted the flushing note of the Dowitcher, which is not strikingly loud, as *chick-a-chick* or *tick-a-tick*.

Limnodromus griseus scolopaceus. LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER.—On August 20, 1933, while on the marshes at Sea Isle City I noticed a single bird which I took to be of this western race, feeding rather apart from seven Eastern Dowitchers. I was attracted to it by its darker upper parts and decidedly larger bill. When the flock flushed this individual flew away with the others but separated from them and landed in a different pool from the one on which the others took refuge.

Micropalama himantopus. STILT SANDPIPER.—The Stilt Sandpiper is entirely casual along the Jersey coast in spring and by no means regularly occurring in large numbers in fall. In the latter season I have found it a rather late migrant, the birds which I have observed appearing from August into September.

The Stilt Sandpiper is actually a small bird but its long legs give it the appearance of a much larger one. It associates regularly with Dowitchers, Yellow-legs and the smaller Sandpipers on the mud flats and about salt-meadow pools. When at rest it displays none of the nervousness of the Yellow-legs, being much more sedate, neither jerking its head or tilting its body. On the wing its flight is rapid and regular and upon alighting it will lift its wings over its body in the manner of a Yellow-legs. It somewhat resembles the Lesser Yellow-legs

but its rather shorter legs do not project so far beyond the tail in flight and its bill is proportionately longer. When on the ground it stands much lower and its legs are greenish instead of yellow. Its legs, however, are considerably longer than those of other shore birds of the same bulk. Its flushing note, as it darts swiftly away, is a sharp *tweet-tweet.*

Ereunetes pusillus. SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER.—The Semipalmated Sandpiper is the most abundant wader along the New Jersey coast in both spring or fall, its time of arrival averaging a few days later than that of the Least Sandpiper. During 1933 I noted as many as 400 of them at Sea Isle City as late as June 11 and a month later they were already appearing on their fall migration.

When feeding the Semipalmated Sandpiper is most common about meadow pools but it also frequents the beaches in an area just above the wash of the waves. With heads held down the birds dabble here and there for food and when feeding in a company indulge in a conversational chatter or whinny, which sounds like *witter-witter-wit* or *whert-ert-ert-ert.* The flushing notes I have interpreted as *che-che-cher-cheep* and again as *wheet-eet-eet-eet.* I have watched them as they walk through shallow water without effort, turning from side to side as they glean for food, thrusting their heads into the water as far as the base of the bill and sometimes beyond. I have noted birds in the early morning which apparently have fed all night, standing on one leg with the bill tucked under the feathers of the back. Like the Least Sandpiper the Semipalmated often assumes a playful attitude, chasing one another over the flats, with heads lowered and tails raised as they indulge in conversational mutterings.

The Semipalmated Sandpiper is a little larger than the Least and in good light its black legs will distinguish it from the smaller bird. The Western Sandpiper is but casual on our coast in spring but in the fall, when at times it is quite common, it is difficult to separate from the Semipalmated. It has a longer and slightly decurved bill, is slightly tamer and has a habit of more or less feeding apart from a general collection of Semipalmated Sandpipers.

The white area before the bend of the wing will distinguish the Semipalmated from a Baird's or White-rumped Sandpiper in any plumage.

Ereunetes mauri. WESTERN SANDPIPER.—I have but few records of the Western Sandpiper in spring although it is of casual occurrence, but may always be noted in association with the Semipalmated Sandpiper after the middle of July. It apparently remains in numbers later than the Semipalmated as I have noted as many as twenty in one group at Sea Isle City as late as Oct. 25, 1933. It is worthy to note that these were seen on the beach where the species occurs more commonly than on the flats after the middle of September.

One is competent to distinguish the Western from the Semipalmated Sandpiper only after long association with the bird as it possesses certain traits and characteristics which are hardly describable but which lead to its identity. The colors of the upper parts are richer in the Western but not invariably so. Perhaps, the length and shape of the bill is its best field character. On the average it is longer than that of the Semipalmated Sandpiper but that of a long-billed Semipalmated may be almost of the same length as that of a short-billed Western. The bill of a long-billed Semipalmated is quite straight and becomes slender towards the tip; that of a short-billed Western is not so slender towards the tip and has just an appreciable downward bend at the end; in long-billed Westerns the bill becomes slender towards the tip and frequently shows a decided drop at the end.

It is difficult to hear the calls of the Western Sandpiper apart from those of the Semipalmated unless the bird is noted alone. Its most common call has the *ee* sound heard in the *kreep* of the Least Sandpiper and may be expressed as *cheep* or *cher-eep*. This is heard mostly when the bird is in flight. Birds usually flush with a *cher-ip-ip* note. Its voice distinctions, however, are hard to determine. I have noticed in a mixed flock of Sandpipers that the Western appears to feed along the edges and not in close ranks with the others. This observation may be helpful in determining the species.

Crocethia alba. SANDERLING.—The Sanderling is the most

conspicuous wader of the ocean beaches and is absent from the New Jersey shore line for not over a month during the entire year. In its eagerness for food it seems to be unmindful of the sweep of incoming waves, as occasionally a tempting morsel will hold its attention until it is almost overwhelmed and forced to run further up the beach. So quickly and in such perfect unison does a flock of these birds run in and out at the edge of the waves that they seem to be a part of the ebb and flow of the surf.

When approached too closely, they become suspicious, and fly out over the breakers, gleaming white in the sunshine as their bodies are turned in flight; at a safe distance they circle in again and start feeding the moment they alight. When their appetites are satisfied or when the tides are high or the sea rough they withdraw to the upper beaches and squat among the clam shells or other sea-wrack. Often they will rest on one leg and hop along on it for long distances until one is almost convinced that the bird in question must be a cripple.

One hears its call note as it feeds and when a flock flushes. I have generally recorded it as *ket-ket* but under great excitement it sometimes sharpens into *zit-zit-zit*.