

# A long way from home

Rare birds aren't just threatened species some of them are simply a long way from home. They often don't have any important impact on New Zealand's birds but they are fun to look for and occasionally they settle here and become familiar – like the White-faced Heron, Swallow, and Silvereye.

Most of these rare birds are found by observant people doing the things they normally do, but if they stay other people can see them too. This is the aspect of birding known as "twitching". These are some of the rarities that have caused a stir around Auckland in recent years

## Some long distance migrants that go off course.



This **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** should have migrated from the American Arctic to the pampas of Argentina but was well off course on the South Head of the Kaipara harbour in March 2014. Never before seen in New Zealand this mistake delighted many visiting birders.



A big surprise in September 2009 when an odd gull on the Manukau Harbour turned out to be the third **Franklin's Gull** to visit New Zealand. Normally these gulls breed in the northern USA and Canada and winter along the west coast of South America. This bird moved to Bruce Pulman Park in Papakura where it was easily found in the car park and could be bribed with bread.



Normally **Japanese Snipe** winter in Australia, where they hide in dense weedy cover so more than a little bit of luck is required to find them. This one came to the urban park of Forest Lake in Hamilton during the 2005-6 season and was a favourite for patient birders willing to wait for it to appear and feed in the soft mud.



The **Dunlin** that visited the Manukau Harbour in 2006 was just the fourth record for New Zealand. Thoroughly confused this bird appears to have set off on migration in a mirror image of the path it should have taken, missing the excitement of breeding for a second consecutive winter.

**Australian Waterbirds** are a common group of rarities, they breed up during wet seasons in the dry country then look for greener pastures when the droughts hit.



**Australian Pelicans** have only made it to New Zealand twice before, one in 1889 and about 6 birds during the late 1970s. Since August 2012 at least 14 birds have been based in the Kaipara Harbour but they've travelled from Parengarenga to Whanganui - attracting attention where ever they turn up. They disappeared about June 2014 so if you have seen these birds recently please let us know.



**Gull-billed Terns** are birds of the Australian interior that have been fairly regular visitors to New Zealand. In June 2011 the biggest influx ever was recorded with many of the birds still roaming the country. A flock of 16 seen on the Manukau Harbour is the biggest group recorded in New Zealand.



A drought in Australia can lead to **Glossy Ibis** in New Zealand, sometimes in small flocks. Great excitement was generated in January 2015 when one was found on a nest in Canterbury. Will it be a one off or might they increase and become resident? These two came to Miranda in October 2011.



Small white herons are not baby White Herons but usually **Little Egrets**. They are fairly frequently seen in New Zealand with up to three birds at Mangere and another at Mangawhai in recent years.



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