

A DOTTEREL ON SOUTHEAST FARALLON ISLAND, CALIFORNIA

PHILIP HENDERSON, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, 4990 Shoreline Highway, Stinson Beach, California 94970

Among the birds that came to Southeast Farallon Island in a spectacular migrational wave on 12 September 1974 was a Dotterel (*Eudromias morinellus*). The number of shorebird species on the island had increased from 5 the previous day to 13, and the number of other migrant species from 14 to 59. The island, located 43 km west of San Francisco, California, is visited regularly in the spring and fall by migrant birds.

The Dotterel remained until 20 September. It was observed by eight persons and was photographed (Figure 1). It spent its time on the dry flat parts of the island and was often seen in the company of migrant Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*). It was less skittish than the Killdeer and could be approached quite closely. Several times observers came within 5 to 10 m of it. When approached the Dotterel exhibited the "run-pause-run" behavior typical of other plovers. In flight it was very swift and emitted a repeated call note similar to the Black-bellied (*Pluvialis squatarola*) or Golden Plover (*Pluvialis dominica*). The quality of the call was like the other plovers' but the note was simpler, lacking inflection. The plumage was apparently that of a juvenile nearing the end of its postjuvinal molt; the back feathers were black with white edges except for a few unmolted feathers that were black with rufous edges (see Dement'ev et al. 1968).

The Dotterel is a local breeder in the mountains of northern Europe and Asia. It winters in northwestern Africa, southern Tunisia, and the basin of the Mediterranean—particularly in the eastern Mediterranean and eastward to Iraq and the Persian Gulf (Nethersole-Thompson 1973). Its status in North America has yet to be fully defined. Seventeen records (20 individuals) exist in northwestern Alaska, for late May through the third week of June (Gabrielson and Lincoln 1959, and several references therein; Gibson and Byrd 1972, 1974, 1975, 1976); and three records (3 individuals) for July (Gibson and Byrd 1972, 1976; Stone 1900, in Gabrielson and Lincoln 1959). Included in the June records were two females in advanced breeding condition and sightings of pairs. The only fall record for Alaska is for a single bird seen in the Aleutians, 17 September 1977 (Gibson 1978). The Aleutians are several hundred kilometers south of the spring records. Brina Kessel (pers. comm.) considers the Dotterel to be an annual but rare summer visitant and apparent breeder in the mountainous regions of northwestern Alaska.

Besides the Farallon bird there are only two other records of vagrant Dotterels for the eastern Pacific Ocean region, a female (age unspecified) collected at Westport on the coast of Washington, 3 September 1934 (Brown 1935), and an immature female collected on Kure Atoll, in the Hawaiian Leeward Islands, on 9 September 1964 (Clapp and Woodward 1968). Of these records, all three birds were in the company of other plovers: Killdeer on the North American continent and Golden Plovers in Hawaii. It is notable that all three records occurred in the first two weeks of September and within the latitude of the Dotterel's correct winter range. The Aleutian bird may also represent a vagrant record.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks are due the many persons and organizations, who by their generous donations in support of PRBO's Farallon Research Station, have made possible exciting observations such as the one reported here. I also wish to express my appreciation to Brina Kessel, University of Alaska, for information on the Alaskan status of the Dotterel and to Pieter Myers for permission to include his photograph of

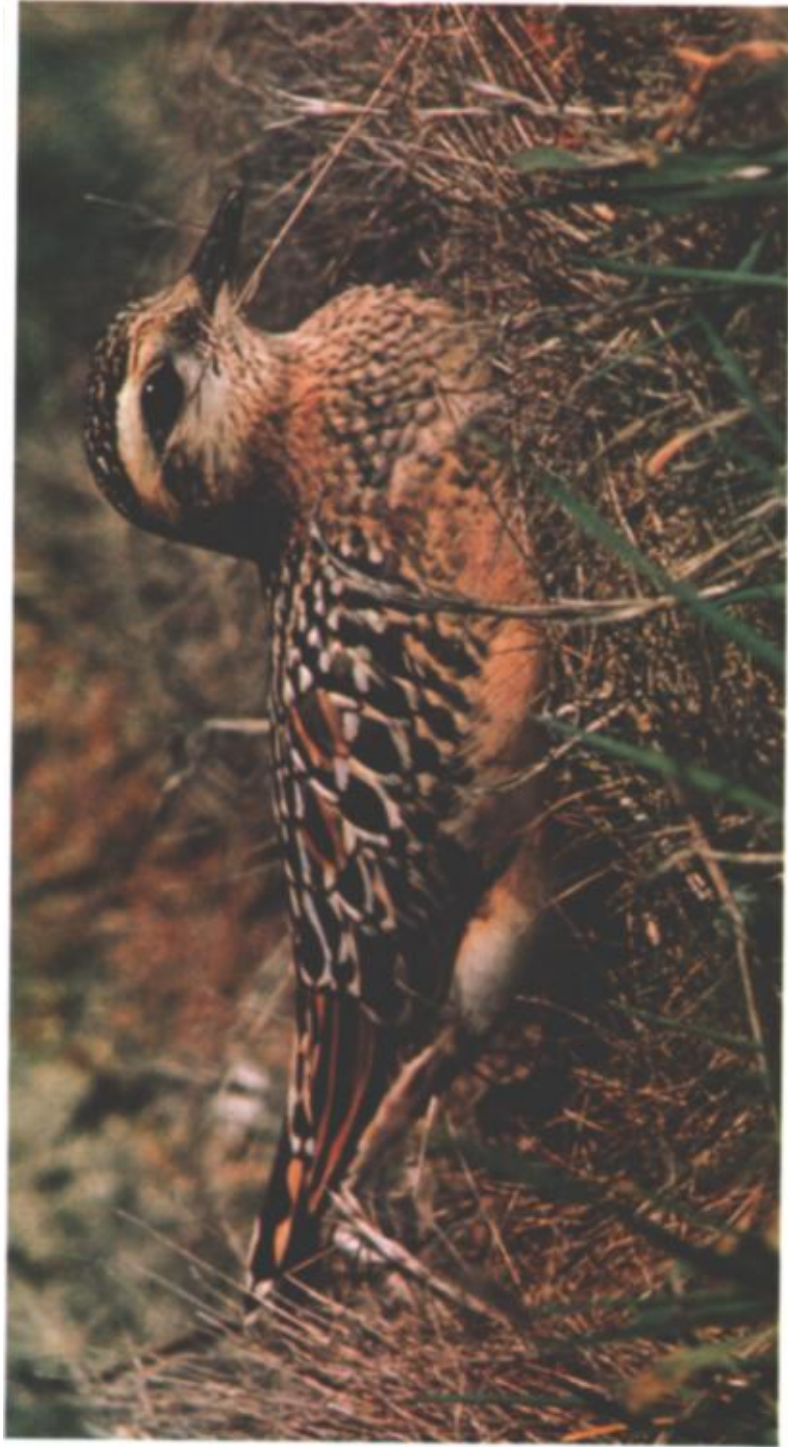


Figure 1. Dotterel (*Eudromias melanotos*) present on Southeast Farallon Island, California, 12-20 September 1974.

Photo by Pieter Myers

NOTES

the bird. Guy McCaskie contributed comments on an early draft, and David Ainley was of considerable help throughout preparation of this report. This is Contribution 112 of Point Reyes Bird Observatory.

LITERATURE CITED

- Brown, D. E. 1935. Dotterel in western Washington. *Condor* 37:82.
- Clapp, R. B. and P. W. Woodward. 1968. New records of birds from the Hawaiian Leeward Islands, Proc. U. S. Natl. Mus. 124(3640):1-17.
- Dement'ev, G. P., R. N. Meklenburtsev, A. M. Sudilovskaya and E. P. Sangenburg. 1968. Birds of the Soviet Union, vol. 3. (Transl. from Russian) Israel Program for Scientific Translations, Jerusalem.
- Gabrielson, I. N. and F. C. Lincoln. 1959. The birds of Alaska. Stackpole Co., Harrisburg, PA, and Wildl. Manage. Inst., Washington, D.C.
- Gibson, D. D. 1978. The autumnal migration. Alaska region. *Am. Birds* 32:243-245.
- Gibson, D. D. and G. V. Byrd. 1972. The nesting season. Alaska region. *Am. Birds* 26:890-893.
- Gibson, D. D. and G. V. Byrd. 1974. The nesting season. Alaska region. *Am. Birds* 28:935-938.
- Gibson, D. D. and G. V. Byrd. 1975. The nesting season. Alaska region. *Am. Birds* 29:1018-1020.
- Gibson, D. D. and G. V. Byrd. 1976. The nesting season. Alaska region. *Am. Birds* 30:990-991.
- Nethersole-Thompson, D. 1973. The Dotterel. Collins, London.
- Pitelka, F. A. 1974. An avifaunal review for the Barrow region and north slope of arctic Alaska. *Arctic Alp. Res.* 6(2):178.

Accepted 2 September 1978