

WALKING WATERBIRDS

SHOREBIRDS For ID purposes there are 3 basic types of shorebirds: 6 ‘unmistakable’ species (avocet, stilt, oystercatchers, sheathbill; pp. 89–91); 13 plovers (mainly visual feeders with stop-start feeding actions; pp. 92–98); and 22 sandpipers (mainly tactile feeders, probing and picking as they walk along; pp. 99–109). Most favor open habitats, typically near water. Different species readily associate together, which can help with ID—compare size, shape, and behavior of an unfamiliar species with other species you know (see below); voice can also be useful.



At first glance, these shorebirds might seem impossible to ID, but it helps when different species associate together. The unmistakable **White-backed Stilt** left of center (1) is one reference point, and the large brown sandpiper with a decurved bill at far left is a **Hudsonian Whimbrel** (2), another reference for size. Thus, the 4 stocky, short-billed, standing shorebirds = **Black-bellied Plovers** (3). The remaining feeding birds comprise 3 medium-size and 3 small sandpipers. Two medium-size birds are stocky and rather short-legged, with medium-length straightish bills = **Red Knots** (4); the third has long legs and a fine, medium-length bill = **Lesser Yellowlegs** (5). Two of the small sandpipers are rather compact and whitish below, with short bills = **Semipalmated Sandpipers** (6); the third is slightly larger and browner with a long, tapered rear end = **Baird’s Sandpiper** (7).



Many shorebirds show a white wingstripe in flight, but more useful for ID are structure and relative size. The boldly marked **Semipalmated Plovers** at top are a good reference point, helping identify the smaller and grayer **Semipalmated Sandpiper** at bottom left, and the slightly larger, browner, and long-winged **Baird’s Sandpipers** on the right.

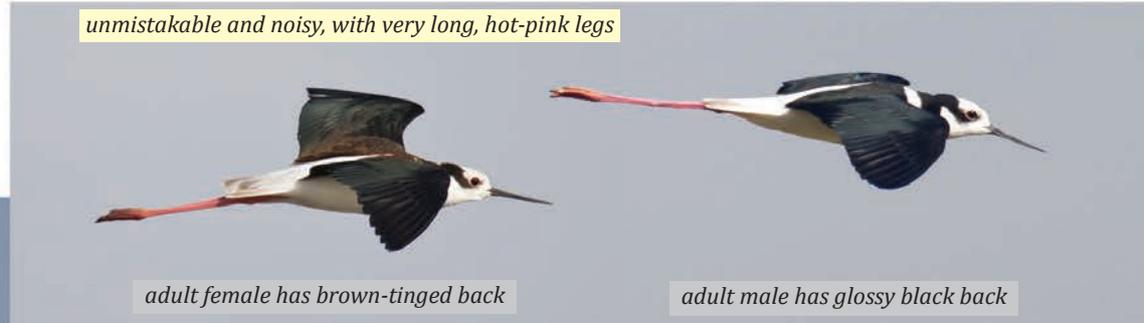
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unmistakable, elegant wader; no similar species in Chile



Andean Avocet *Recurvirostra andina* 45–48cm
N Andes. Fairly common s. to Atacama (3700–4600m); rarely wanders to coast. Shallow saline lakes, adjacent bogs. Feeds by wading, sweeping its bill side to side in shallow water. Calls: ringing, slightly nasal *wiek wiek...*, and *wehk*. Ages/sexes similar, but female bill more strongly recurved.

unmistakable and noisy, with very long, hot-pink legs



adult female has brown-tinged back

adult male has glossy black back



female

imm. has dark crown, brownish upperparts, like adult in 1–2 months



White-backed [Black-necked] Stilt *Himantopus [mexicanus] melanurus* 30–34cm
Fairly common in Cen Chile; rare visitor to Arica. Fresh and brackish marshes, river mouths, saline lakes. Usually in small groups; often roosts with other waterbirds when not territorial. Noisy: yapping and chirping. I have earned this elegant wader the name marsh poodle.

OYSTERCATCHERS Large stocky shorebirds with long, bright orange-red bills, thick pink legs. Usually in pairs or small groups; pied species can form non-breeding flocks up to a few 100 birds. Juvs. have dark-tipped bills, dusky eyes, attain adult appearance in a year or so.

from Magellanic Oystercatcher (limited range overlap) by brownish back, big white shoulder spur, flight pattern, voice

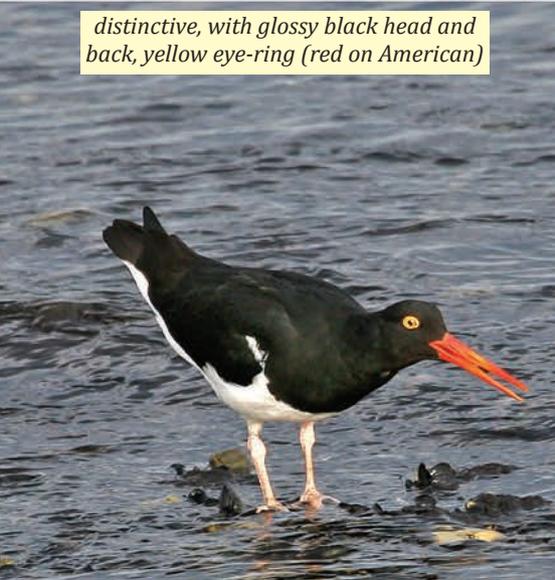
back tones vary with angle and lighting



American Oystercatcher *Haematopus palliatus* 41–44cm
N and Cen Chile. Fairly common to common on coasts s. to Gulf of Ancud; rare in e. Strait of Magellan. Sandy beaches, river mouths, locally in rocky areas. Loud, piping whistles, *wheéuh* and *wheek!*; piping chatters in interactions.

distinctive, with glossy black head and back, yellow eye-ring (red on American)

big white panel



Magellanic Oystercatcher *Haematopus leucopodus* 41.5–45cm
S and S-Cen Chile. Fairly common n. to Gulf of Ancud. Rocky, sandy, and muddy coasts, also well inland to fields and grasslands in breeding season. Calls unlike other oystercatchers: high, shrill, plaintive and whining whistles, often slurred and drawn-out, at times in ascending **For general queries, contact webmaster@press.princeton.edu**

distinctive: the only all-dark oystercatcher in Chile



larger and bulkier than American

Blackish Oystercatcher *Haematopus ater* 44–48cm
Fairly common but sometimes local along entire coast; usually in rocky areas, at times on adjacent beaches, at river mouths. Voice much like American Oystercatcher, with which it readily associates, especially when roosting.

distinctive, chunky, aberrant shorebird; no similar species in Chile



Snowy Sheathbill *Chionis albus* 37–42cm
S Chile. Scarce and local migrant (mainly Mar–Oct, a few stay year-round) from Antarctica to coasts of Tierra del Fuego and Magallanes, mainly at sealion and seabird colonies. Confiding; walks with pigeon-like gait and scavenges boldly. Flies strongly with stiff shallow wingbeats, short glides; does not **For general queries, contact webmaster@press.princeton.edu**



adults



conspicuous and noisy; no similar species in range



Chilean [Southern] Lapwing *Vanellus [chilensis] chilensis* 31–37cm
Cen and S Chile. Common, conspicuous, and noisy in Cen Chile (SL–3000m), in summer s. to Tierra del Fuego. Open country, from farmland and steppe to beaches and city parks. Pairs and smaller groups in breeding season; non-breeding flocks locally of 100s. Yapping and screaming calls can suggest parakeets, at times given at night. Imm. has duller eyes and legs, scaly pale edgings to upperparts, like adult in 1–2 months

large handsome plover; no similar species in range



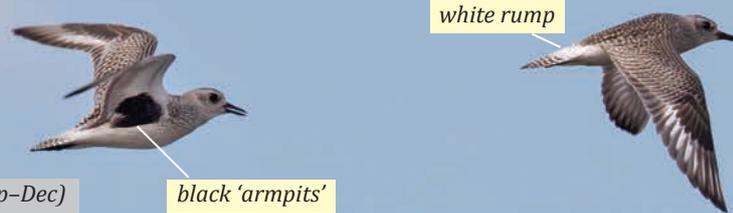
imm.



adult

Andean Lapwing *Vanellus resplendens* 30–35cm
N Andes. Uncommon s. to Antofagasta (3800–4600m). Bogs, lakeshores, adjacent fields. Singly or in pairs, locally in small groups. Strident cries and striking flight pattern recall Chilean Lapwing.

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juvs. (Sep–Dec)

black 'armpits'

white rump



with whimbrel and willet

molting adults

adult non-breeding

large, bulky, rather dull plover with big bill; attains black face and underparts in breeding plumage (Apr–Aug)

Black-bellied (Grey) Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* 26.5–28cm
Uncommon boreal migrant Aug–Apr to N and Cen coasts, at sandy beaches, river mouths; roosts on adjacent rocky coasts. Singly or in small groups, often roosts with other shorebirds. Melancholy, slurred, 2–3 syllable whistle mainly in flight, *heeéech* or *weee-oo*.



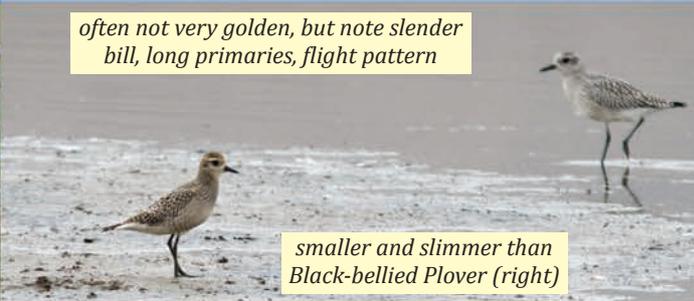
juvs. (Sep–Nov)

dusky underwings, golden rump



molting adult (Sep–Nov)

often not very golden, but note slender bill, long primaries, flight pattern



smaller and slimmer than Black-bellied Plover (right)



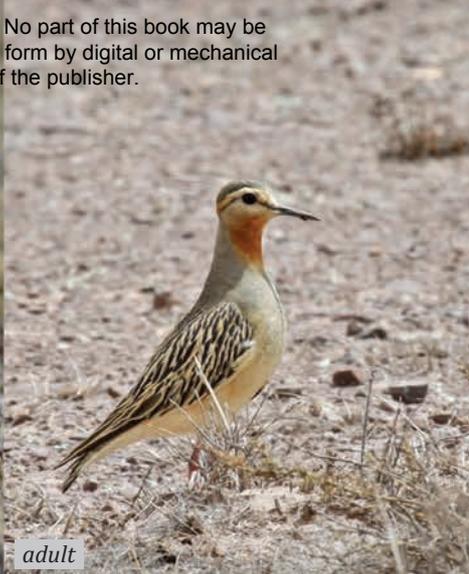
worn juv. (Nov–Dec)

American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica* 24–25.5cm
Uncommon to scarce boreal migrant Sep–Apr to N Chile (SL–4600m), rare in Cen and S Chile. Singly or in small groups. Varied plaintive whistles include *ch-weeth* in alarm (recalls Semipalmated Plover) and *weeth* in flight. Molting adults have varying amounts of black on face and underparts.

handsome, tall-standing plover with bold head pattern, orange throat, striped back; no similar species



juv.



adult

Tawny-throated Dotterel *Oreopholus ruficollis* 25.5–28cm

Uncommon summer breeder in Patagonia (migrates n. to Argentina in winter); rare and local (nomadic resident?) in N Andes (3500–4600m). Scarce migrant in Cen Chile (mainly May–Oct); breeds locally near coast in n. Coquimbo. Grassy steppe, puna plains, coastal dunes, plowed fields. Non-breeding flocks can be 10s. Slightly burry, plaintive whistles given mainly in flight, *trr-ééu* and *cheu chee-u*, etc. Juv. has scaly edgings to upperparts, weaker face and throat pattern.

chunky, medium-size plover with bold white eyebrow, rusty breast (duller in non-breeding)



adult breeding



juv.



Rufous-chested Plover (Dotterel) *Charadrius modestus* 20–21.5cm

S and Cen Chile. Uncommon to fairly common but local breeder in S Chile; most migrate n. in Mar–Sep to coasts of Cen Chile. Breeds on moorland; winters at estuaries, bays, mainly with muddy intertidal, adjacent grassland. Winter flocks can be a few 100 birds. Calls: plaintive whistles, *chee-it* and *whee-dili*. In summer, wheezy bleats alternate with a rattled ticking *tk-tk-tk...*, from ground and in display flight. Juv. (Jan–Mar) has buff spots and edging above, weaker eyebrow, general queries, contact webmaster@press.princeton.edu



adults



unmistakable, sought-after small plover with weevil-like bill, white diadem, orange legs

Diademed Sandpiper-Plover *Phegornis mitchellii* 18–19cm

N and Cen Andes. Uncommon and local (2000–4600m; above 3000m in N Chile). Bogs, adjacent streams and gravel bars in rivers. Singly, in pairs, or family groups; runs and bobs when nervous; probes in mud with aberrant (for a plover) bill. Flight often low and bounding. Calls: plaintive whistles, *whee-hu* and *peeu*, etc. Juv. has brown head and upperparts edged rusty, weak pale diadem.

unique, dove-gray shorebird with bubblegum-pink legs, ruby-red eyes; no similar species



imms.



with White-rumped Sandpipers



adult

Magellanic Plover *Pluvianellus socialis* 19–21cm

S Chile. Uncommon and local in n. Tierra del Fuego and s. Magallanes. Lakeshores and coasts, especially with stony substrate. Singly or in pairs when nesting, small flocks in winter. Often apart from other shorebirds, but also associates with migrant sandpipers. Calls: plaintive, hawk-like whistles; in courtship flight a mellow *ch-wee ch-wee...* Juv. (Dec–Mar) has orangish legs, amber eyes, white fleckings on breast. In its own family; more closely related to sheathbills than to plovers.

distinctive, with pale sandy upperparts, dull legs (dusky pinkish to grayish); dark breast patches (not a full collar)

non-breeding/imm. plumage



male breeding (female averages duller)



juv.

Snowy Plover *Charadrius nivosus* 15.5–16.5cm

N and Cen coasts. Uncommon to fairly common locally s. to Chiloé. Sandy beaches, adjacent river mouths; declining in areas with human and canine beach use. Non-breeding groups of 10s can associate with other shorebirds. Calls: quiet *chib*; also gravelly purrs and high whistles in courtship.

distinctive, rather petite plover with striking head pattern, long pink legs; black collar can appear broken when bird is hunched



no white hindcollar, unlike Snowy Plover

plumage similar year-round



Collared Plover *Charadrius collaris* 14–15cm

Cen Chile. Local and uncommon along coast and large rivers, at lakes; usually on sandy or stony substrates. Singly or in pairs; small non-breeding flocks associate with other shorebirds. Calls: bright *piiic*; gravelly chatters in interactions. Sexes similar but male averages brighter; juv. has broken breast band, dull head pattern, soon attains adult-like plumage

chunky small plover with yellow-orange legs; rather stubby bill has orange at base



non-breeding plumage



Semipalmated

upperparts darker than Snowy Plover

Snowy



breeding plumage

Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus* 16.5–17.5cm

Uncommon to fairly common boreal migrant Aug–Apr to N and Cen coasts. Beaches, river mouths, mainly with sandy and muddy substrate. Singly or in small groups, often with other shorebirds. Calls: 2-syllable, slightly plaintive, upslurred *ch'wieh* and *ch-wiet* and bickering chatters in interactions.

distinctive, medium-size plover with 2 black breast bands, long rusty tail, loud voice; plumage similar year-round



chick has single black breast band



Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus* 23–26cm

N lowlands. Scarce local resident in Arica, at river mouths, river bars, in adjacent fields. Singly or in pairs; usually not associated closely with other shorebirds. Calls: slightly shrieky *teeih*, and an often loud *tilldee-tilldee*, at times in circling display flight, the origin of English name.

distinctive chunky plover with faint dusky breast bands, black legs, plumage similar year-round



adults (male averages brighter than female)



imm.



Puna Plover *Charadrius alticola* 16–18cm

N Andes. Fairly common but local s. to Antofagasta (3800–4600m); occasional summer records s. to Cen Andes. Salt flats, bogs, lakeshores, singly or in small, loose groups. Calls: sharp, slightly liquid *spik*; bickering chatters in interactions. Juv. lacks black mask and rusty tones on head; soon like adult.

plump, handsome, medium-size plover with bold double breast bands; distinctive in range



breeding adults (male averages brighter than female)



imm.



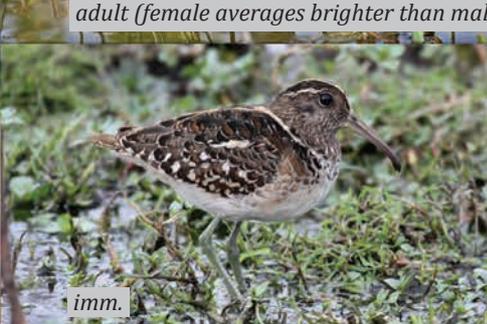
Two-banded Plover *Charadrius falklandicus* 17–19cm

Fairly common breeder in S Chile, rare and local n. to Cen Chile; very rare in winter to N Chile. Coasts, grasslands, lakeshores, often with stony and muddy substrate. Non-breeding flocks can be a few 100 birds. Calls: sharp liquid *whiik*; bright chips and pebbly chatters in interactions. Juv. and non-breeding have brown breast bands, juv. upperparts spotted and edged buff. For general queries, contact webmaster@princeton.edu

distinctive, cryptic shorebird with drooped bill, bold white wing spots, golden braces joining white bar at breast sides



adult (female averages brighter than male)



imm.

American Painted-snipe *Nycticryphes semicollaris* 19.5–22cm

Cen Chile. Uncommon and local from Vaparaiso s. to Biobío. Fresh and brackish marshes with rushes, reeds, adjacent flooded grassy meadows. Rarely seen unless flushed: flies up silently with stiff, flicking wingbeats and short, bow-winged glides before dropping back to cover. Singly, or several in a small area. Quiet; rarely utters low grunts when feeding. Related to jacanas, not closely to snipe.

SANDPIPERS Most species in Chile are boreal migrants, arriving in Aug–Oct and departing in Mar–Apr. Small numbers of most species remain in Chile as non-breeders during May–Jul and may attain varying degrees of breeding plumage or remain in non-breeding plumage.



Many sandpipers are long-distance migrants that on occasion wander far off course. And because birders often overlook migrant shorebirds in favor of more exotic local species, there is much to learn about the status of several species in Chile. **Western Sandpiper (left)** may be a rare but overlooked Oct–Mar migrant (this bird was in Arica); recently, **Upland Sandpiper (right)** has been detected as a Mar–Apr migrant in the Atacama Desert of N Chile, where birds are especially hard to see over at night (see appendix).

easily overlooked



smaller than Magellanic Snipe (no known range overlap) with brighter yellow legs, more bounding flight



ages/sexes similar



Puna Snipe *Gallinago andina* 21–24cm

N Andes. Uncommon and local in N Andes (3800–4500m), rare s. to Coquimbo. Puna bogs with streams and grassy vegetation, adjacent grassland; flushes readily into dry puna grassland where runs with nervous, bobbing gait. Calls: rather rough bleating *keb*, usually in short series when flushed. In flight dive produces a gruff, pulsating series of notes, rougher and faster-paced than Magellanic Snipe.

the only snipe in most of Chile; note cryptic plumage with striped head and back, very long bill, greenish-yellow legs



ages/sexes similar



Magellanic [South American] Snipe *Gallinago [paraguaiiae] magellanica* 26–29cm

Fairly common in S Chile, local n. to Cen Chile (SL–2500m); withdraws from colder areas in mid-winter. Fresh and brackish marshes, bogs, flooded meadows. Non-breeding aggregations can number 10s. Skulking. Flushes strongly, with fast erratic flight, usually uttering a single gruff *shehk* or rapid bleating series. In display flight, often high overhead, stooping bird produces rhythmic *whirr t-whirr t-whirr t-whirr...*, with pulsating, intensifying cadence; ends abruptly as bird

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note medium size, cryptic plumage, yellowish legs and bill base



with White-backed Stilt

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* 19.5–23cm

Scarce boreal migrant Aug–May (mainly Mar; SL–4600m) to N and Cen Chile. Fresh and brackish marshes, usually with grassy cover; not in open beach habitats. Usually singles, overlooked easily amid marshy vegetation. Calls: low wet *kerrip* in flight and when flushed. All plumages similar, but juv. brighter overall, non-breeding adult grayer.

adult non-breeding

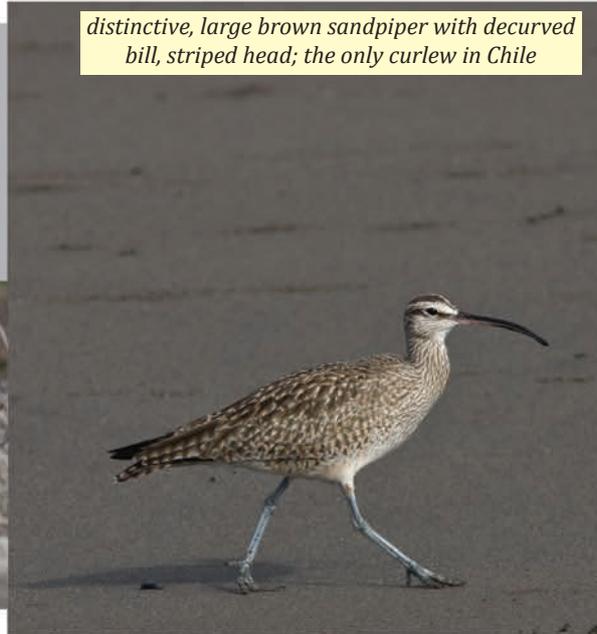


juv. (Sep-Dec)



clean-cut 'pectoral' divide

distinctive, large brown sandpiper with decurved bill, striped head; the only curlew in Chile



Hudsonian Whimbrel *Numenius [phaeopus] hudsonicus* 35.5–43cm

Common boreal migrant Aug–Mar to N and Cen coasts, s. to Chiloé; uncommon to S Chile. Beaches, river mouths, tidal flats; fields and rocky coast for roosting. Locally in flocks of 100s. Unlike godwits, rarely wades in deep water to feed. Calls: varied quavering and bubbling whistles; also piping



with Semipalmated Sandpipers



large sandpiper with long yellow legs, grayish bill base; often wades in water



non-breeding plumage



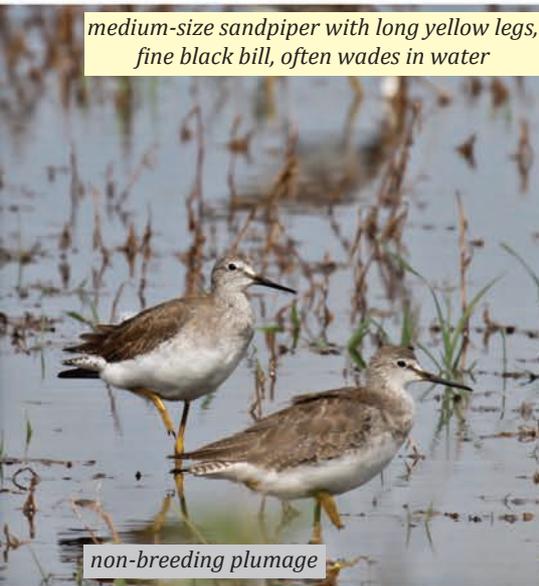
long bill



molting adult

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca* 29–31.5cm
Uncommon boreal migrant Aug–Apr locally throughout Chile (SL–4600m). Habitat and habits much like Lesser Yellowlegs, but rarely in groups of more than 20, often feeds by active dashing and sweeping its bill through the water, and more often in open coastal habitats. Calls: loud ringing *tchoo-tchoo-tchoo*, less often single notes. Often occurs alongside Lesser Yellowlegs. Breeding plumage (Mar–Aug) has bolder blackish barring below than Lesser.

medium-size sandpiper with long yellow legs, fine black bill, often wades in water



non-breeding plumage



small fine bill

larger size of Greater Yellowlegs (middle bird, with 2 Lessers) evident in direct comparison



Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* 24–25.5cm
Fairly common boreal migrant Aug–Apr locally throughout Chile (SL–4000m, mainly lowlands). Fresh and brackish marshes, lakes, river mouths. Often in flocks, locally of 20–100 birds, associating readily with other shorebirds. Typically feeds by delicate picking. Calls: mellow whistled *tchew* and *kyew kyew kyew*, not as loud and 'shouted' as calls of Greater Yellowlegs. In breeding plumage (Mar–Aug) attains whitish spangling above, dark streaks and spots on neck and chest. For general queries, contact webmaster@press.princeton.edu

distinctive large sandpiper with gray legs, long stout bill, bold wing pattern



molting adult



non-breeding plumage with Surfbirds

Western Willet *Tringa [semipalmata] inornata* 33–38cm
Fairly common but local boreal migrant Sep–Apr to n. coast in Arica; uncommon to rare s. to Cen Chile. Rocky coasts, beaches, river mouths. Singly or, in far north, in flocks of 100–200 birds, associating with other shorebirds. Noisy laughing calls include *kri will-willet*.

large sandpiper with long, pink-based bill, white rump and black tail, narrow white wingstripe



non-breeding plumage



males (right) smaller than female, brighter rusty below in breeding plumage (Mar–Aug)

Hudsonian Godwit *Limosa haemastica* 35–40.5cm
Locally common boreal migrant Sep–Apr to Gulf of Ancud and Chiloé; smaller numbers s. to Strait of Magellan and large flocks on e. coast of Tierra del Fuego (mainly in Argentina); scarce in N and Cen Chile (SL–4600m). Tidal flats, river mouths, beaches, lakes, marshes; adjacent grassland and shoreline for roosting. Away from main wintering grounds, singly or in small groups, often with other shorebirds. Feeds by probing, often wading belly-deep. Calls: clipped *kek* and hoarse chipping.

distinctive, medium-size shorebird with orange legs, chisel-like bill, striking flight pattern



non-breeding plumage, with Surfbirds



breeding plumage (Mar-Aug)



imm.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* 21.5–23cm

Fairly common boreal migrant Aug–Apr to coasts of N and Cen Chile. Rocky coast and adjacent beaches, river mouths. Locally in flocks of 50 or so birds, often with Surfbirds. Calls: mellow rattled *kri-ti-tuk* and varied chatters.

distinctive, chunky gray shorebird of rocky coasts; note short bill, yellow legs



non-breeding plumage



breeding plumage (Mar-Aug)



Surfbird *Aphriza virgata* 24–25.5cm

Fairly common to common boreal migrant Aug–Mar to rocky coasts of N and Cen Chile, uncommon to S Chile; rarely in adjacent non-rocky habitats. Locally in flocks of 100s, often with Ruddy Turnstones. Quiet calls easily lost amid sound of surf.

slightly larger and stockier than Baird's Sandpiper



non-breeding plumage silvery overall



breeding plumage (Apr-Aug)



molting 1st-year (Sep-Nov)

Sanderling *Calidris alba* 18–19cm

Fairly common to common boreal migrant Aug–Apr to coasts of N and Cen Chile. Sandy beaches, river mouths; roosts on adjacent rocky shoreline with other shorebirds. Not usually on muddy habitats; very rare away from coast. Locally in flocks of 100s, running back and forth with the waves. Calls: bright high *kiip*. Obviously larger than Semipalmated Sandpiper (p. 107).

rather plain small sandpiper with pale spectacles, yellowish legs



non-breeding plumage



breeding plumage (Mar-Aug)

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius* 16.5–18cm

Scarce boreal migrant Aug–Apr to N Chile. River mouths, ponds, rocky shoreline, fast-flowing rivers with stony banks. Usually singles, separate from other shorebirds. Walks with distinct teetering gait to rear end; flies with stiff shallow wingbeats and short glides on bowed wings. Calls: high, slightly

brownish upperparts, black legs, very long wings



worn juvs. (Oct–Nov)



molting 1st-year (Nov–Dec)



molting adult (Feb–Apr)

Baird's Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii* 16.5–18cm

Common boreal migrant Aug–Apr to Tierra del Fuego and adjacent S Chile; fairly common in N and Cen Chile (SL–4600m). Fresh to saline marshes, lakeshores, grasslands, beaches; less often open mudflats. Often in flocks, mixing with other species. Calls: dry trilled *krrip*. Cf. grayer White-rumped Sandpiper, smaller and stockier Semipalmated Sandpiper.

grayish upperparts, very long wings, dark legs, white rump



juv. (Oct–Dec)

unlike Baird's, often has dark flank streaks



non-breeding plumage



molting adult (Feb–Mar)

White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis* 17–18.5cm

Common boreal migrant Sep–Apr to Tierra del Fuego and adjacent S Chile; very rare in N and Cen Chile. Tidal flats, marshes, lakeshores, adjacent wet grassland. Often in flocks, mixing readily with Baird's Sandpiper, which prefers drier habitats. Calls: very high, thin, mouse-like *krri*. For general queries, contact webmaster@press.princeton.edu



small dark-legged sandpiper; non-breeding plumage not as silvery gray as obviously larger Sanderling (behind)



molting juvs. (Sep–Oct)



breeding plumage (Apr–Sep)

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla* 14–15cm

Uncommon boreal migrant Aug–Apr to coasts of N and Cen Chile. River mouths, beaches, coastal lagoons; singly or in small groups, often with other sandpipers. Calls: clipped *kíp* and low *krrp*. Lacks long-winged shape of slightly larger Baird's and White-rumped Sandpipers; bulkier and thicker-billed than Least Sandpiper, with dark legs. Also cf. Western Sandpiper (p. 99 and appendix).

smallest sandpiper, with creeping, mouse-like gait; brownish overall with white belly, yellowish legs



non-breeding plumage



with Semipalmated (left)



breeding plumage (Apr–Aug)

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla* 13.5–14.5cm

Uncommon boreal migrant Aug–Apr to N and Cen Chile. River mouths, coastal lagoons, marshes. Singly or in small groups; often with other sandpipers, but tends to stay in or near cover rather than feeding out in the open. Calls: high, reedy, slightly rolled *krriet*. Cf. slightly larger, grayer, and thicker-billed Semipalmated Sandpiper.



non-breeding plumage with Black-bellied Plovers (breeding plumage rusty below, Mar–Aug)



molting adults

stocky, medium-size sandpiper with rather short greenish legs; no similar species in Chile

Red Knot *Calidris canutus* 25.5–26.5cm

Scarce boreal migrant Sep–Mar to coast of N and Cen Chile; locally common on e. coast of Tierra del Fuego (Bahía Lomas). Mudflats, river mouths, less often beaches. Away from e. Tierra del Fuego, usually singles or small groups, associating with other shorebirds. Calls: quiet grunts and chippers.



lanky, medium-size sandpiper with slightly droop-tipped bill, whitish eyebrow, long yellowish legs

molting adult

non-breeding plumage (breeding plumage barred rusty below)

Stilt Sandpiper *Calidris himantopus* 20–21.5cm

Scarce boreal migrant Sep–Apr to N Chile, and Feb–Apr in Cen Chile. Fresh and saline marshes, lakes, river mouths; feeds by probing, often belly-deep in water. Usually singles, with other shorebirds. Calls: mostly quiet, rarely gives quiet grunts. Cf. Lesser Yellowlegs (p. 102), Wilson’s Phalarope.



with 2 Red Phalaropes

darker than Red Phalarope, striped
needle-fine
non-breeding plumage

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* 17–19cm

Pelagic. Scarce boreal migrant Sep–Mar off N Chile. Singly or in small groups; associates with larger, bulkier, and thicker-billed Red Phalarope. Feeds while swimming. Calls: clipped *pik*, distinct from higher, tinny *tink* of Red. Breeding plumage has dark head, white throat, rusty underparts.



elegant, medium-size sandpiper with needle-fine bill, white rump

non-breeding plumage

attaining breeding plumage, March



molting adult

Wilson’s Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor* 20.5–22cm

Fairly common boreal migrant Aug–Mar in N and Cen Chile (SL–4600m), locally common in S Chile (mainly Tierra del Fuego). Fresh and saline marshes, lakes. Singly or in flocks, at times of 1000s. Feeds while swimming, less often while walking. Quiet; at times gives low grunts. Cf. Lesser Yellowlegs (p. 102), Stilt Sandpiper. Other phalaropes pelagic, smaller, with strong black masks.



bold white wingstripe, black mask

non-breeding plumage

molting adult (breeding plumage has rusty underparts, white face)



silvery-gray back

Red (Grey) Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius* 20–21.5cm

Pelagic. Fairly common boreal migrant Sep–Mar, commonest off N and Cen Chile. Often in flocks, locally in 100s; rarely seen from shore, very rare inland. Feeds while swimming, often on glassy water. Cf. much rarer Red-necked Phalarope.

HERONS Large to rather small, long-legged wading birds, usually found near water. Flight direct with steady, fairly deep wingbeats, no gliding, neck typically pulled in, and legs trailing; most species perch readily in trees. Ages usually differ; like adult in 1–2 years; sexes alike.



imm. has yellowish backs to legs

distinctive small egret with black bill, yellow lores

adult has black legs, yellow feet

with American Great Egret

adult

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula* 49–59cm

Fairly common in N and Cen Chile; very rare s. to Magallanes. Marshes, lakes, rivers, estuaries, rocky seacoasts. Often hunts actively. Singles or small groups, often associated with other wading birds. Calls: low gruff *rah-abrr*, mainly in flight. Cf. Cattle Egret, imm. Little Blue Heron.

distinctive: the only large white egret in Chile; all ages have yellow bill, blackish legs and feet

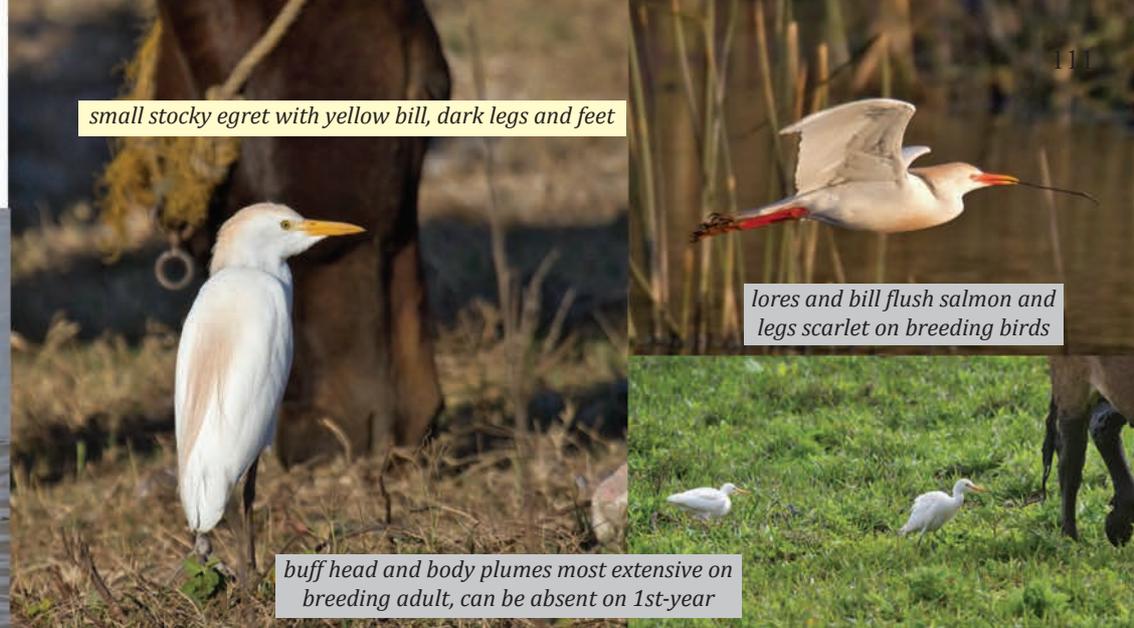


imm./non-breeding

breeding adult has green lores

American Great Egret *Ardea [alba] egretta* 84–99cm

Fairly common but low density in Cen Chile; uncommon in N Chile; rare s. to Tierra del Fuego (mainly in late summer–fall). Fresh and brackish marshes, lakes, rivers, estuaries. Often singly, locally in groups. Throaty calls creakier than Cocoli Heron.



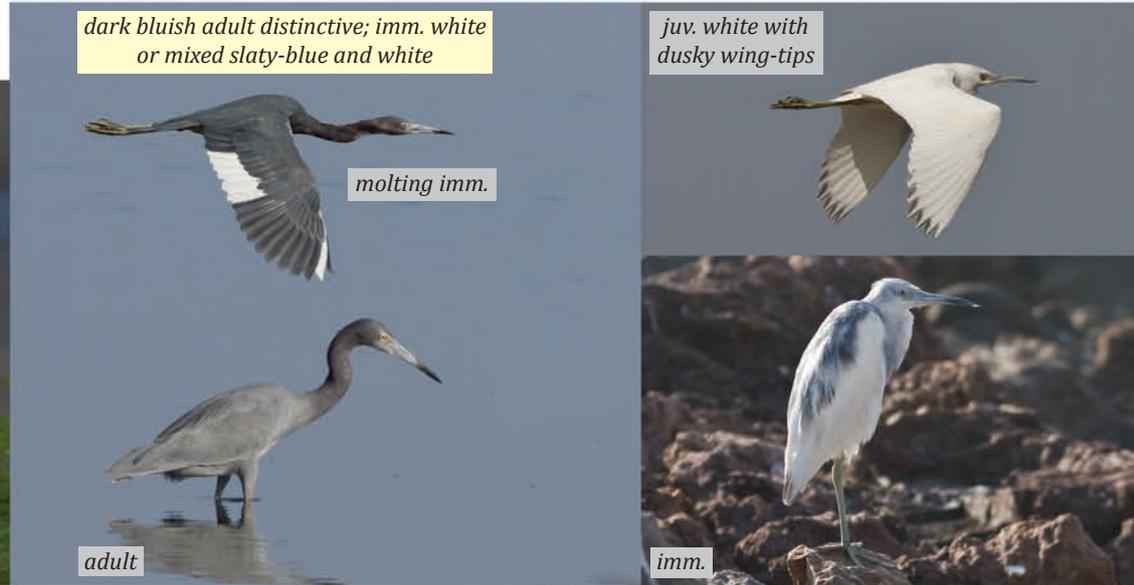
small stocky egret with yellow bill, dark legs and feet

lores and bill flush salmon and legs scarlet on breeding birds

buff head and body plumes most extensive on breeding adult, can be absent on 1st-year

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* 45–53cm

Fairly common to common in Cen Chile, uncommon in N Chile; wander s. Mar–May to Tierra del Fuego. Usually near livestock, in fields and marshes, less often at river mouths; rarely along open coastline or wading in open water. Often in groups, moving with cattle and horses; nests colonially in reed beds and trees with cormorants, other herons. Calls: grunts and clucks.



dark bluish adult distinctive; imm. white or mixed slaty-blue and white

juv. white with dusky wing-tips

molting imm.

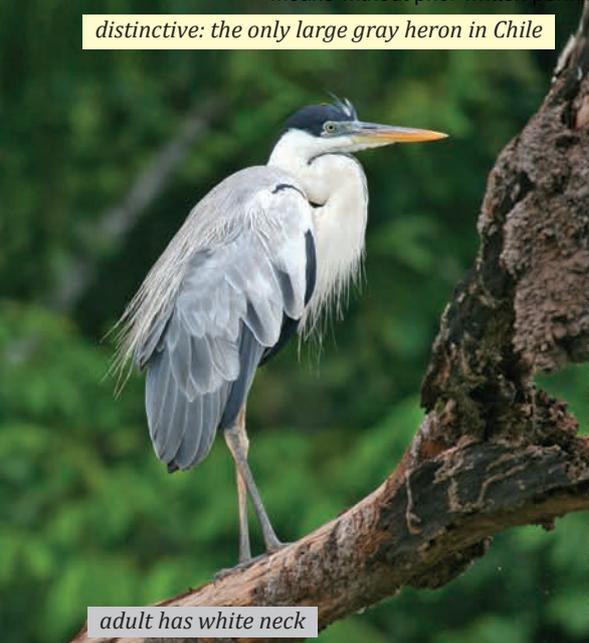
adult

imm.

Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea* 51–61cm

Uncommon visitor (year-round) in N Chile, s. to Antofagasta, rare s. to Cen Chile. Rocky seacoasts, river mouths, lakes, ponds. Often hunts while standing still, watching. Calls: harsh, drawn-out *grab-abh*, mainly in flight. Dark adult blends easily on rocky coastline; 1st-year from Snowy Egret by pale grayish lores and base to bill, greenish legs and feet. Attains adult plumage over 1st year.

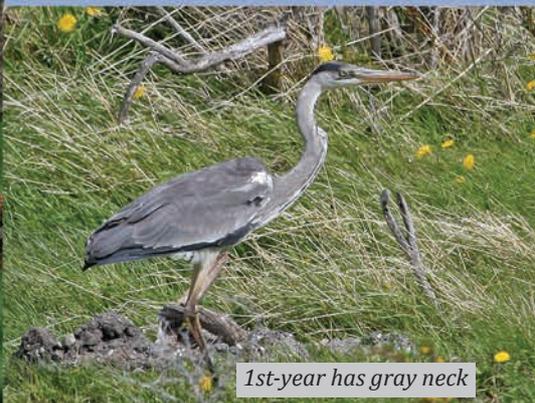
distinctive: the only large gray heron in Chile



adult has white neck



adult



1st-year has gray neck

Cocoi Heron *Ardea cocoi* 102–122cm

Uncommon and local in Cen Chile; very rare n. to Arica, s. to Magallanes. Fresh and brackish marshes, lakes, rivers. Singles or small groups. Deep throaty *rrobk*, mainly in flight.

distinctive: very small, striped buffy heron; no similar species in Chile



Stripe-backed Bittern *Ixobrychus involucris* 30.5–33cm

Cen Chile. Uncommon and local in fresh and brackish marshes. Retiring, in areas with tall rushes and reeds, where creeps stealthily; flights usually short, low over reeds or across open water. Usually silent; song (?) a moaning, frog-like *oooc*, repeated. Ages and sexes similar, but face and bill flush orange-pink in breeding adults.



typical (dusky) adults

widespread and distinctive, chunky dark heron



typical (dusky)
2nd-year



paler adult



bill base yellowish

dusky juv.

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* 56–64cm

Fairly common but often overlooked (mostly nocturnal) from Arica to Tierra del Fuego (SL–4600m). Marshes, lakes, rocky seacoasts, river mouths, harbors; roosts and nests in reed beds, dense trees. Mainly solitary feeder, but roosts can number 10s. Calls: low barking *wahwr*, mainly in flight; often heard at night. Most birds dusky, but paler types occur in Arica. 2nd-year like dull version of adult.

slightly rangier than Black-crowned, with deeper bill, longer neck, longer legs



adult



2nd-year



bill dark grayish

1st-year

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron *Nyctanassa violacea* 53–59cm

N coast. Rare but possibly increasing in Arica, where first found in 2009. Coastal habitats, harbor. Calls huskier than Black-crowned Night-Heron. Adult distinctive; 1st-year from Black-crowned by structure, fine pale spotting on upperparts; 2nd-year like dull version of adult. Mostly nocturnal.

IBISES Large, long-legged wading birds with slender decurved bills. Feed by methodical probing and picking, fly with neck and legs outstretched. Like adult in 1–2 years.



unmistakable in most of Chile; in Arica cf. Andean Ibis



no foot projection beyond tail



adult with throat wattle distended



imm.

Black-faced Ibis *Theresticus [melanopsis] melanopsis* 63–74cm

Common and conspicuous in Lake District, in summer s. to Tierra del Fuego; uncommon and local n. to Coquimbo (mainly Andes, to 3000m); rare in N Chile. Pasture, grassland, towns, locally beaches and river mouths; nests colonially in trees (often in towns), on cliffs. Loud trumpeting honks carry far, often reveal birds flying and soaring high overhead. Imm. duller overall, with reduced black ‘wattle.’

only in Arica; cf. Black-faced Ibis



Andean [Black-faced] Ibis *Theresticus [melanopsis] branickii* 63–74cm

Scarce in Arica. Found recently in Lluta Valley, where small groups forage in alfalfa fields. Much like Black-faced Ibis (which can occur alongside Andean) but bill shorter, throat ‘wattle’ limited to black whisker (similar to 1st-year Black-faced), black belly less extensive, hindneck

slender all-dark ibis; no similar species in range



imm./non-breeding



male (left) has longer legs than female

adult breeding

White-faced Ibis *Plegadis chibi* 51–61cm

Cen Chile. Uncommon and local in fresh and brackish marshes, usually with reeds and tall vegetation, flooded fields, lakes. Often in small groups. Muffled grunting calls mainly in flight. Puna Ibis (N Chile) appreciably stockier with shorter bill and legs.

stocky all-dark ibis; no similar species in range



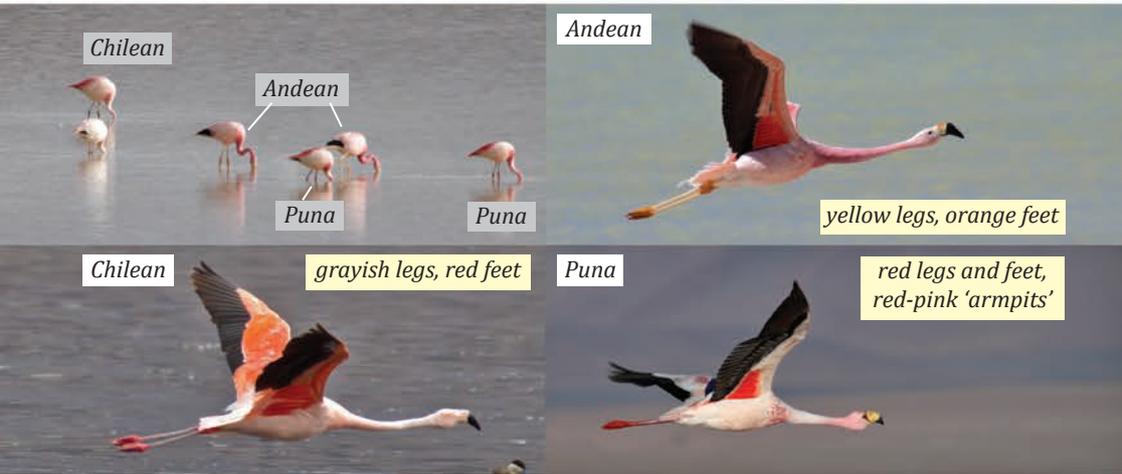
adult breeding

imm./non-breeding

Puna Ibis *Plegadis ridgwayi* 51–59cm

N Chile. Fairly common in N Andes s. to Tarapacá (4000–4600m); wanders regularly to coastal lowlands in Arica. Bogs, lakes, adjacent pastures; coastal wetlands. Usually in small groups, rarely to 50 or more. In Chile, no grunts and nasal calls, mainly in flight.

FLAMINGOS Unmistakable, social wading birds. Often associated with hot climates, but 3 species breed in N Andes, where lakes often freeze at night. Juvs. dirty whitish and brownish with dark streaking, 1st-years whitish overall with little pink; attain fully pink adult plumage in 2–3 years. Within mixed-species flocks, each species tends to group together. Nest colonially in remote areas, building raised mud cup nests on ground. Adults are compared below.



Chilean

Andean

Andean

Puna

Puna

yellow legs, orange feet

Chilean

grayish legs, red feet

Puna

red legs and feet, red-pink 'armpits'

note clean-cut black tertial wedge, long black bill 'hook' (imms. of other flamingos have messier black wedges)

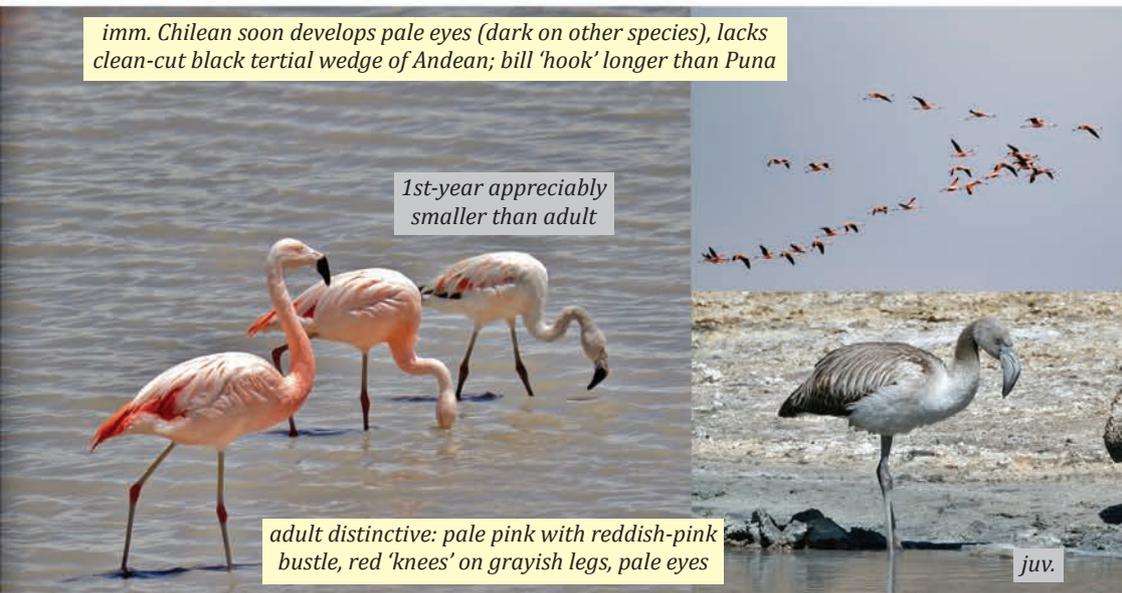


1st-year

subadult

adult has yellow legs, deep pink neck

Andean Flamingo *Phoenicoparrus andinus* 99–114cm
N Andes. Uncommon to fairly common but local (and declining) on shallow salt lakes and bogs s. to Atacama (2400–4600m). Calls: high reedy chippers and muffled low chuckles at rest and in flight; also a single hollow bray, or honk, *aanh* or *onh* in interactions. Appreciable size variation between ages (1st-year smaller) and sexes (males larger).



imm. Chilean soon develops pale eyes (dark on other species), lacks clean-cut black tertial wedge of Andean; bill 'hook' longer than Puna

1st-year appreciably smaller than adult

adult distinctive: pale pink with reddish-pink bustle, red 'knees' on grayish legs, pale eyes

juv.

Chilean Flamingo *Phoenicopterus chilensis* 84–102cm
Widespread. Fairly common in N Andes, s. to Atacama (2400–4600m); fairly common but nomadic in Patagonia (most widespread in summer); scarce and local in Cen Chile (mainly winter) from Chiloé n. to s. Valparaíso. Shallow saline lakes; non-breeders also at fresh lakes, sheltered inshore waters. Calls suggest geese: in flight, a honking 3-syllable *ah ah-ah*, 1st note quieter, last more emphatic; feeding birds give quieter bleating and honking calls.

note 'stubby' yellow bill with small black tip



imm. (left) and subadult

1st-year

adult has reddish legs, streaked bustle

Puna (James's) Flamingo *Phoenicoparrus jamesi* 89–101cm
N Andes. Uncommon to fairly common but local on shallow salt lakes and bogs s. to Atacama (2400–4600m). Calls: rolled purring brays, slower-paced than calls of Andean Flamingo.

COOTS AND RAILS Duck-sized to very small marsh birds. Most species keep to vegetation and can be difficult to see, but coots are usually conspicuous on open water. Rarely seen in flight. Ages differ, sexes similar; like adult within 1st year.



distinctive coot with pale yellow bill and leaf-shaped shield separated by red band



juv.

Red-gartered Coot *Fulica armillata* 38–40.5cm

Cen and S Chile. Common in Cen Chile (SL–2500m), s. locally to Tierra del Fuego. Fresh to brackish lakes, ponds, marshes, river mouths. Locally 100s, often on open water; grazes on land infrequently. ‘Song’ a fairly loud yapping series of barks, *k’yah k’yah k’yah...*; also a grating *kehr*, slightly wailing *wehk*, and clipped, slightly liquid *huik!* Juv. has hoary whitish head and neck, dark lores.

distinctive, rather gallinule-like coot with ‘flat’ dark red shield, large white wedges under tail



imm.

Red-fronted Coot *Fulica ruffrons* 33–35.5cm

Cen and S Chile. Fairly common in Cen Chile, very rare in summer s. to Magallanes. Fresh to slightly brackish marshes, lakes, and ponds, with surrounding reeds and rushes. Swims and walks readily, usually fairly near cover; rarely far out on open water. Striking ‘song’ a series of hollow clucks and gobbles that intensify, then slow toward the end, *wúka wúka wúka wúka wúka wúka wówh wówh wówh wówh*; clipped *keh!* when agitated. Juv. has whitish throat, duller plumage and bare parts.

small rounded shield varies from yellow to reddish orange, always brighter than bill



smaller than Red-gartered Coot (behind)



juv.

White-winged Coot *Fulica leucoptera* 34.5–37cm

Cen and S Chile. Uncommon to fairly common, n. locally to Atacama (SL–2700m); vagrant to Arica. Fresh and brackish lakes, marshes with open water, river mouths; does not need tall vegetation, often on open water. ‘Song’ a rather shrill series of clucks that may suggest a lapwing, *kib kib kib ki-hir ki-hir ki-hir...*; also a grating *kehr*, and muted *pubk!* Narrow white trailing edge to wings apparent in flight. Juv. has whitish lores and throat, duller bare parts. Smaller than Andean Coot of N Chile, with smaller shield, more indented gape.

no similar species in Chile; smaller and more retiring than coots



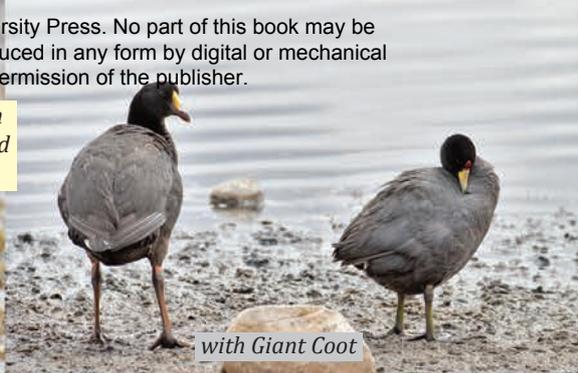
juv.



Spot-flanked Gallinule *Porphyriops (Gallinula) melanops* 25.5–28cm

Cen Chile. Fairly common but unobtrusive. Fresh to slightly brackish marshes, ponds, lakes, slow-moving rivers with vegetated banks. Singly or in pairs; feeds mainly while swimming. Calls: mostly quiet, low barking clucks, softer and less harsh than coots. Juv. duller, without black in face.

distinctive, rather large coot: adult shield can be dark red, white, or pale yellow; typically red in Andes, often white or yellow in lowlands



with Giant Coot



Andean Coot *Fulica ardesiaca* 40.5–45.5cm
N Chile. Fairly common but local in N Andes, s. to Antofagasta (3800–4600m); a few range to coast in Arica. Lakes with submergent vegetation, adjacent bogs, ponds. Often out on deep water. Calls: ‘song’ an intensifying series of relatively high, slightly hoarse or shrill clucks, *kiih kiih kiih kiih kih-hew kih-hew...*; low gruff *grruh grruh...*, and sharp *kiyp!* Juv. is variably grizzled whitish on face and throat.

distinctive huge coot with colorful bill, long red legs and big feet



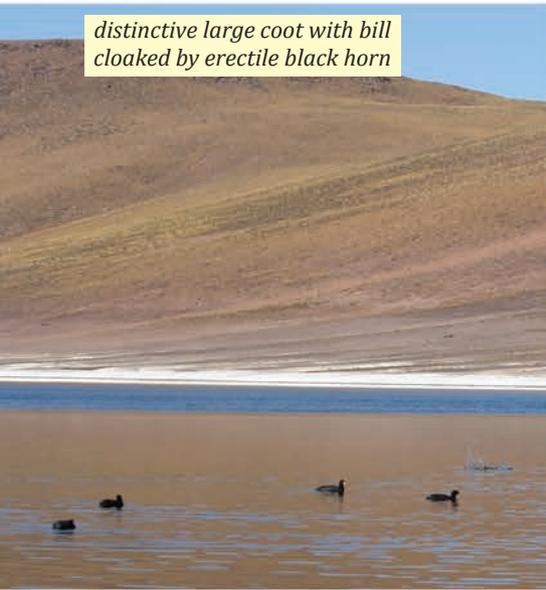
with Neotropic Cormorant



adult with juv.

Giant Coot *Fulica gigantea* 51–56cm
N Andes. Common to fairly common but very local s. to Antofagasta (3800–4600m). Lakes with submergent vegetation, bogs, ponds. Noisy and belligerent. Calls: ‘song’ a series of 3–5 clucking coos that accelerate into a purring growl, repeated a few times, *ku ku-ku-ku-ku urrrr, ku-ku-ku-ku-ku urrrr...*; upslurred screechy *hoo-reik* and squealing *rrieh*. Juv. has whitish face and foreneck.

distinctive large coot with bill cloaked by erectile black horn



adult at nest

Horned Coot *Fulica cornuta* 48–50.5cm
N Andes. Fairly common but very local in Antofagasta and Atacama (4000–4500m). Open lakes with submergent vegetation, often in barren and rocky surroundings. Low grunts and, in display, deep gruff booms. Juv. dark sooty gray overall with whitish throat.



adult



imm.

distinctive, with white streaks on sides, big white wedges under tail



with Cinnamon Teal

Common Gallinule (Moorhen) *Gallinula [chloropus] galeata* 33–38cm
Uncommon and local in N Chile, s. to Coquimbo (SL–4200m); vagrant to Cen Chile. Fresh to slightly brackish marshes, ponds, lakes; typically bordered by reeds and rushes. Usually near cover, to which it flies readily. Calls: slightly barking series, *keh! keh-keh-keh-keh-keh*; series of chuckles, at times preceded by a rolled grunt, *pwurreh puk puk-puk-puk...* Juv. duller, browner overall with dark bill.

widespread and distinctive, with colorful bill, hot-pink legs; the only large rail in Chile



adults



juv.

Plumbeous Rail *Pardirallus sanguinolentus* 30.5–34.5cm

Widespread. Fairly common in Cen Chile; local s. to Tierra del Fuego and in N Chile. Fresh and brackish marshes, damp pastures, ditches, lakes, and ponds, typically with rushes, tall grass, or reeds. Often in fairly open situations; swims well. Calls: ‘song’ a loud, slurred, rhythmic squealing *squee-i-reek squee-i-reek...*; alarm call an abrupt metallic *pseek!*



poorly known, medium-size rail with striped back, barred flanks; no similar species in Chile

Austral Rail *Rallus antarcticus* 19–21.5cm

S Chile. Scarce and very local in summer in Magallanes. Fresh marshes with tall rushes. Skulking, but feeds at edges on occasion. Calls: clipped, semi-metallic *pi-dik pi-dik pi-dik...*; decelerating, antiphonal series of low grunts paired with sharp, clipped squeaks, *urr'chi urr'chi urr'chi...*, which may be preceded by a screechy *rreeeh*.



tiny, very rarely seen; note short bill, white-dotted back, ruby-red eyes

Chilean Black Rail *Laterallus [jamaicensis] salinasi* 14–15cm

Cen Chile. Uncommon and local in fresh and saline marshes with dense tall grass and rushes, damp meadows with rank vegetation, alfalfa fields. Skulking and mouse-like, difficult to see. Song a rapid piping rattle ending with an emphatic note, *pirr-rr-rr-rr-rr-teú*, repeated; often given at night. Calls: slurred, husky growls when agitated, *zzhrr-zzhrr...*

GAMEBIRDS AND ALLIES

THICK-KNEES Large, long-legged ‘shorebirds’ found locally in warmer climates worldwide.



unmistakable: large nocturnal ‘shorebird’ with big yellow eyes, black head stripes

Peruvian Thick-knee *Burhinus superciliaris* 40–44 cm

N lowlands. Scarce and local in Lluta and Azapa Valleys of Arica; declining courtesy of agricultural development and disturbance (fairly common only 10 years ago). Barren stony desert, adjacent open agricultural areas. Singly or in small groups. Nocturnal; passes the day sitting quietly, often in the shade of small trees. Calls: at night, far-carrying clucks and yaps, usually in fairly rapid series.