

Notes



Calls of American and Pacific Golden Plovers The calls of American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica* and Pacific Golden Plover *P. fulva* are generally considered inseparable (e.g. Pym 1982; Cramp & Simmons 1983; Hayman *et al.* 1986; Dunn *et al.* 1987). When I first heard *fulva* in Asia in 1982, it immediately struck me that its calls were distinctly different from those I had previously heard from *dominica* on the east coast of the USA in 1980 and 1981. None of the many persons with whom I discussed this, however, was able to confirm my views, so I gradually began to query my original opinion. In 1984, 1987 and 1988, I had many opportunities to hear *fulva* in Asia again, but unfortunately I failed to find any *dominica* on a short trip to the USA in 1984; I was unable, therefore, to confirm or revise my original view that the calls of the two forms were rather easily distinguishable.

I recently got hold of tape recordings of *dominica* (mostly alarm calls) from Manitoba, Canada (recorded by Arthur Allen/Peter Paul Kellogg; Library of Natural Sounds, Cornell University), which sound much like the calls I have myself heard from *dominica* and clearly different from the calls I have heard from *fulva*. Claudia Wilds (*in litt.*) and Lars Jonsson (verbally) confirmed that the calls they have heard from *dominica* in eastern USA basically conform with the ones on the tape (although Lars Jonsson commented that the recorded calls were perhaps slightly more squeaky than those normally given by migrants). I have compared these tape recordings of *dominica* with my own recordings of many different *fulva* from China, Japan and the Philippines, with Krister Mild's from the USSR (Mild 1988), with William Ward's from Norfolk Island and with H. Doug Pratt's from Kauai (Library of Natural Sounds, Cornell University), and the differences are obvious and consistent (as also shown by the sound spectrograms of some of these recordings: fig. 1). Lars Jonsson (verbally) has independently reached the same conclusion as I: that the calls of *dominica* and *fulva* generally are separable.

The normal flight calls of *fulva* are a 'chu-it' (fig. 1a), much resembling the call of Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*; a more drawn-out 'chu-ee' or 'chu-ee(uh)', with the stress more on the second syllable (figs. 1b, 1c); and a similar, but even more drawn-out 'chu-EET' or 'chu-EE(uh)', with the stress very clearly on the second syllable (fig. 1d). The last type of call is normally given when flushed. Less commonly heard utterances include distinctly trisyllabic calls, 'chu-ee-uh' or 'chu-ee-uuh', with the stress on the second or third syllables (figs. 1e, 1f), and monosyllabic calls. Note that these different types of call are not well defined; there is actually more of a cline from mono- to di- to tri-syllabic notes.

The usual flight calls of *dominica* seem to be a 't'ýý-ee' (or, differently transcribed, 'túú-ee'), with the stress usually clearly on the first syllable (fig. 1g); and a 't'ýý-y-ee' or 'ty-ýý-ee' (or, with different transcriptions,

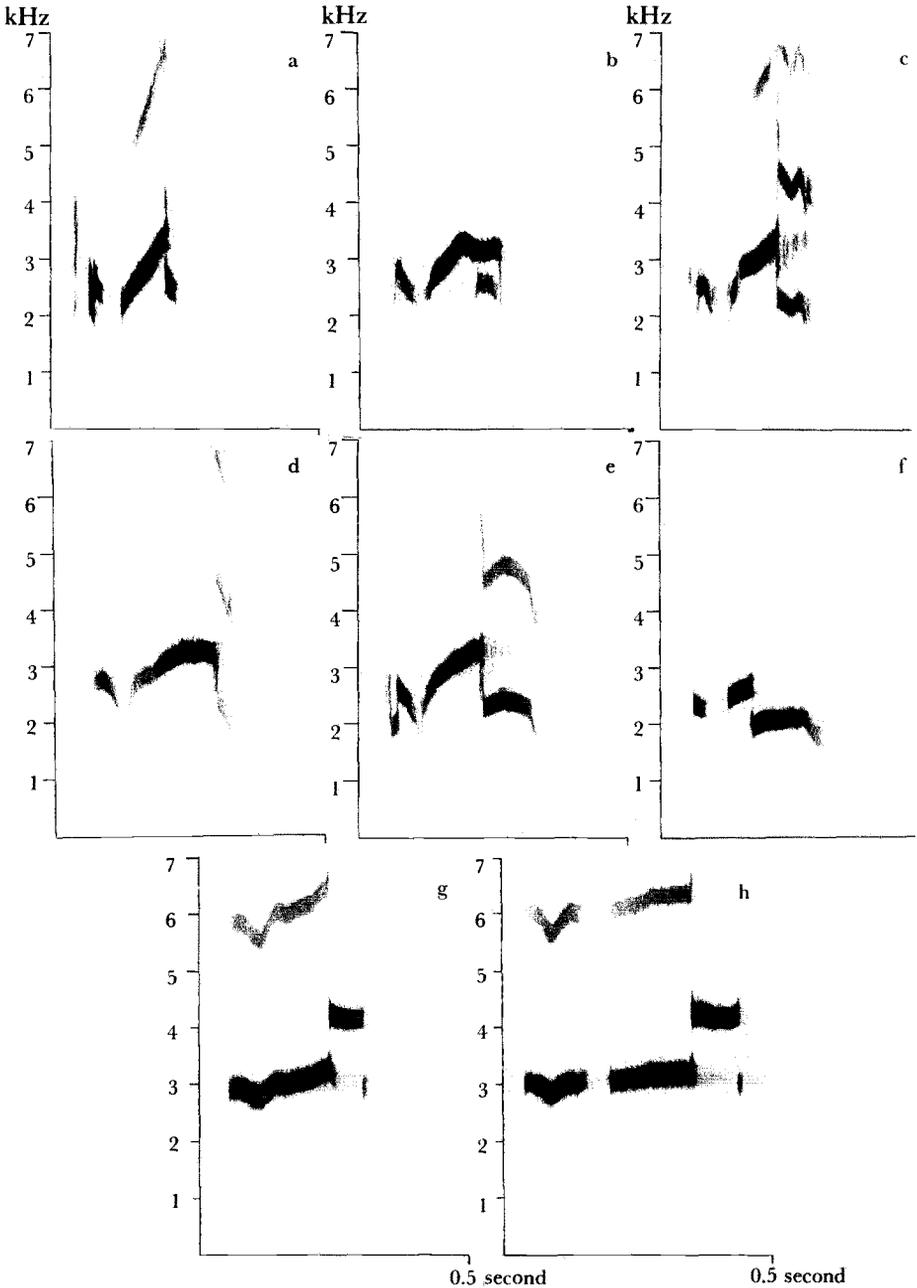


Fig. 1. Sonograms of calls of American Golden *Pluvialis dominica* and Pacific Golden Plovers *P. fulva*. (a) *fulva*, Bratsk, USSR, June 1987 (Kristen Mild); (b, c) *fulva*, Hainan, China, March 1987 (Per Alström); (d, e) *fulva*, Candaba, Philippines, December 1984 (Per Alström); (f) *fulva*, Bratsk, USSR, June 1987 (Kristen Mild); (g, h) *dominica*, Manitoba, Canada, June 1954. All scales identical to (a) (Arthur Allen/Peter Paul Kellogg).

'túú-u-ee' or 'tu-úú-ee'), with the stress either on the first or on the second syllable, and often with the second slightly vibrant (fig. 1h; the first two syllables are not always clearly separated). Monosyllabic calls are also given. The calls of *dominica* are usually higher-pitched than those of *fulva*.

Much further research needs to be done on the vocalisations of the two forms to learn more about the variations and whether or not the differences described here are consistent throughout the ranges; a study of the songs would be most welcome, too. If American and Pacific Golden Plovers are to be considered separate species, as seems to be the more widely accepted view today (e.g. OSNZ 1980; Connors 1983; BOURC 1986; Hayman *et al.* 1986), the vocal differences between them should be at least as pronounced in the area of sympatry as they are in very widely separated areas as described above.

I should like to thank Claudia Wilds and Lars Jonsson for their comments on this note, the Library of Natural Sounds, Cornell University, for providing me with some useful recordings, and Per Lindblad for valuable comments on the sonagrams. PER ALSTRÖM
Marholmsvägen 105, S-436 45 Askim, Sweden

REFERENCES

- BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION RECORDS COMMITTEE (BOURC). 1986. Records Committee: twelfth report (April 1986). *Ibis* 128: 601-603.
- CONNORS, P. G. 1983. Taxonomy, distribution, and evolution of Golden Plovers (*Pluvialis dominica* and *Pluvialis fulva*). *Auk* 100: 607-620.
- CRAMP, S., & SIMMONS, K. E. L. (eds.) 1983. *The Birds of the Western Palearctic*. vol. 3. Oxford.
- DUNN, J. L., MORLAN, J., & WILDS, C. P. 1987. Field identification of forms of Lesser Golden-Plover. *International Bird Identification. Proceedings of the 4th International Identification Meeting, Eilat, 1st-8th November 1986*.
- HAYMAN, P., MARCHANT, J., & PRATER, T. 1986. *Shorebirds: an identification guide to the waders of the world*. London.
- MILD, K. 1988. *Soviet Bird Songs*. Stockholm.
- PYM, A. 1982. Identification of Lesser Golden Plover and status in Britain and Ireland. *Brit. Birds* 75: 112-124.
- ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (OSNZ). 1980. Amendments and additions to the 1970 annotated checklist of the birds of New Zealand. *Notomis* 27 (supplement).

We welcome this contribution and hope that it will focus attention on the problem. The Identification Notes Panel considers, however, that the variation in tonal qualities of the calls and their interpretation by observers not already familiar with both species makes identification (and, especially, assessments of identifications) by call very difficult, particularly as some *dominica* calls could be interpreted as being like that of Spotted Redshank; structure and plumage remain the most solid basis for specific identification.

Spectacled Warblers feeding in association with Finsch's Wheatear
On 31st October 1986, along the road to Nizzana, in the Negev Desert, Israel, there were many Spectacled Warblers *Sylvia conspicillata*. They were normally to be found, in typical *Sylvia* fashion, skulking at the base of small bushes, searching for invertebrate prey. At a particularly bushy area, four Finsch's Wheatears *Oenanthe finschii* were present. The wheatears normally fed by perching on low bushes and dropping to the ground to catch prey, in the manner of a Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*. At times, they also fed in more typical wheatear fashion, on the ground.

While watching one Finsch's Wheatear flying from bush to bush, I noticed that a Spectacled Warbler was following it, flying in to the base of the bush that the wheatear had landed on a few seconds previously. Later in the day, I saw the same behaviour by different individuals.

In my opinion, the warblers were exploiting a sudden concentration of invertebrates at the base of the bush, as, on disturbance to the shrubbery, the majority of insects release their grasp, dropping to the ground. Normally, this is a good survival mechanism, but, in this case, they dropped, so to speak, right into the hands of a Spectacled Warbler.

P. A. AMIES

16 Sunnyside Road, Weston-Super-Mare, Avon BS23 3QF

Similar behaviour has been noted for Dartford Warbler *S. undata* with Stonechat (*Brit. Birds* 68: 196-202; 71: 182-183) and for Spectacled Warbler with Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti* and Spotted Sandgrouse *Pterocles senegallus* (*Sandgrouse* 3: 57). EDS

Interaction between Jackdaws and red squirrel On 25th December 1986, at Grasmere, Cumbria, I noticed some material falling from the upper branches of a Scots pine *Pinus sylvestris*, 15 m distant. A red squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris* was being chased through the branches by a Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*. After a few seconds, the squirrel dropped something to the ground, and the chase stopped. They watched each other, and at this point another Jackdaw flew across the path, joining the first; both were then within 1 m of the squirrel. The squirrel then moved to the end of some nearby branches, where it started searching for pine cones, still under the watch of the two following Jackdaws. After a while, the squirrel bit off a cone and moved to a larger branch to eat it. After a few seconds, the Jackdaws moved closer, and, as one came within centimetres, the squirrel leapt past it, narrowly avoiding the second Jackdaw, which noisily flew off. The remaining Jackdaw continued chasing the squirrel for a while, until they were lost from my vision. Shortly afterwards, a Jackdaw flew from the tree, without any visible reward from its encounter. I believe the two Jackdaws were trying to rob the squirrel of its food.

ANDREW WHITTAKER

5 Bryn Grove, Hest Bank, Near Lancaster HA2 6EX

Jackdaws sunbathing On 26th April 1986, at Sevenhampton, Wiltshire, I saw a Jackdaw *Corvus monedula* sunbathing on a bank of short grass. It was in full spread-eagled position, with wings and tail spread, and remained that way for approximately one minute. An hour later, I saw another Jackdaw sunbathing on rough pasture, near Liddington.

STEPHEN EDWARDS

Hazeldene, Medbourne Lane, Liddington, Swindon, Wiltshire SN4 0EY

Dr K. E. L. Simmons has commented: "The Jackdaw is known to sunbathe, with records of it adopting the "wings-down" and the "lateral" sunning posture, as well as the "spreadeagle" (see *The Sunning Behaviour of Birds*, 1986). That said, it seems seldom to be seen sunning—which is very surprising, considering how tame they get in some places."

ELS