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BirdLife Australia Rarities Committee Unusual Record Report Form

This form is intended to aid observers in the preparation of a submission to document a major rare bird in Australia. Its use is NOT mandatory. Please attach and/or include all relevant information including any digital images. Please Email the completed form/submission to the BARC Chair, Tony Palliser

tonyp@bigpond.net.au

BARC considers submissions that include a minimum of the submitter's name(s), the bird species claimed and the location and date(s) of the record. However, more information and evidence will usually be required for BARC to accept a record. So, please submit as much detailed information about the bird as possible.

If you choose not to use this form please make sure all relevant information requested in this form is included in your submission. However, it is our preference that you fully complete sections "A" and "B", or follow their headings, so that BARC has some continuity between all submissions.

Section A: Submitter details

Your name(s) Joint submissions are fine	Christine Taylor
Your email, phone or address	

Section B: Record details

Common and scientific names Include subspecies if relevant	Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>
Site location (with GPS if possible)	Little Eyre Island Smoky Bay West Coast South Australia Lat -32.361126 Long 133.762026 Accessible only by boat
Date(s) and time(s) of record (First and last date of occurrence if known)	1 March 2020 ~2.45pm 26 March 2020 1.00pm – 4.30pm 14 May 2020 ~1.30pm – 3.20pm
How many individuals were there?	One
What was the distance to the bird(s)?	1 March: 40-50 m 26 March: closest was about 20 m. Photos were taken from about 30-40 m. 14 May: 20 m +
Habitat description	Sandy spit with shellgrit and dead seaweed on a sand island. The island is about 23 ha and is vegetated.

Sighting conditions (e.g. weather, visibility, light conditions)	1 March: warm 22°C, light south-westerly wind 6 knots, cloudy 100% cloud cover, and tide incoming. 26 March: warm 27°C, light southerly wind 6-9 knots, clear sky – 10% cloud cover, tide incoming, high, falling. 14 May: warm 20-25°C, very light/calm south-westerly wind 0-5 knots, 50% cloud cover, tide incoming, high, falling.
How confident are you in the identification (as a %) and why?	100% - small plover, wide black breastband and collar bordering a white hind-collar, white forehead with wide black loreal stripe to gape (no white between loreal stripe and gape), yellow/orange legs with no obvious webbing between toes, no yellow eye ring.
Did you find and/or identify the bird initially? Who else recorded the bird and do they agree with the identification?	Yes No-one else recorded the bird
What experience have you had with this species?	None
Has this species been seen at this location before? When?	No
Have photographs of the bird or discussion of it occurred on the internet? (Please provide the site name, a summary, electronic link, etc.)	No
Do you permit BARC to display your images etc. electronically (credited with your name)	Yes

You may choose to delete or ignore this page, but please include as much of the requested information in your submission as possible, especially Sections C and E.

Section C: Supporting evidence

Please include evidence that supports the identification, such as photographs, video, call recordings, etc. Digital images can be pasted into this document below, at the end, or provided separately. Digital video and sound recordings can be sent separately to this form. Label photos etc or insert captions to make note of relevant features they show.

Cropped photos are attached with this submission.

Section D: Description of the bird(s)

Please provide a description of the bird(s) including all identification features recorded. Provide all possible details that might corroborate the identification.

Plumage	Distinct white collar and brown upper plumage. The black breast band is wide and bulges at the shoulder, where mottled brown and white feathers could be seen at the sides of the breast, between the wing and band. Black band continues around back of neck bordering the broad, complete white hind-collar. White underparts and conspicuous white wing bar. White patch on forehead extends to eye and meets pale extensive supercilium. The black loreal stripe was broad and met the gape; there was no strip of white feathering separating the loreal stripe from the gape.
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Bare parts	Legs coloured yellowish/orange, red/pink spot at base of lower mandible and dark, almost black bill, pale eyelids when closing eyes (roosting). Webbing not obvious between toes.
Moult details	Active primary moult was visible in photographs obtained on 26 th March, which showed new inner primaries, a moult gap indicating that primaries 8 and 9 were in moult, while primary 10 had yet to be moulted. It is thought the bird was moulting into first alternate plumage.
Structure and 'jizz'	When standing the bird had a horizontal stance as in the photos. When disturbed the bird flew, landed and had an alert, upright stance.
Calls	Not discerned
Behaviours	Found roosting on all occasions in a similar place on the sand spit with other small waders. On 14 May it flew to the mudflat at the waters edge and had typical plover like behaviour – run, stop, peck.
Age, sex and/or taxonomy	Bird likely to be in its first year as the bill is dark in colour. The combination of late primary moult, fairly subdued pale spot at the base of the lower mandible, and dull-coloured legs suggests that the bird was in its first year. A complete primary moult, slightly later than that of adults, is typical of eastern populations of Ringed Plover (<i>spp tundrae</i>).

Section E: Confusion species

Please indicate other species that the bird(s) might be confused with and how they can be eliminated

Little Ringed Plover – has a distinct yellow eye ring, lacking in this bird. The Little Eyre bird had a broad white wing bar which the Little ringed plover lacks. Little Ringed Plover are usually found in freshwater habitats.

Semipalmated Plover – has a slightly narrower black loreal stripe, and a narrow white line of feathering juts between the loreal stripe and the base of the gape. For this bird the black loreal stripe runs straight into the gape, indicating Ringed Plover. The black breast band in the Semipalmated is narrow and broader in the Ringed (broad in this bird). The Semipalmated plover has a larger web between the middle and outer toes than the Ringed and an obvious web between the middle and inner toes, which the Ringed lacks. On the 14 May I specifically looked for the presence or absence of webbing between the toes and an eyering. I observed the bird stretch its legs and toes out and webbing was not obvious. Semipalmated plover can have a distinct, narrow, yellowish orbital ring, not observed in this bird.

Section F: References and aids	
Did you use books, journal articles or on-line sites or pages to help you prepare this submission? Which ones?	<p>Geering, A., Agnew, L. & Harding, S. 2008, <i>Shorebirds of Australia</i>, CSIRO Publishing, Australia.</p> <p><i>HANZAB – Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds</i> 1996, Snipe to Pigeons Vol. 3, pp. 828 – 831, Oxford University Press, Melbourne.</p> <p>Hollands, D., & Minton, C. 2012, <i>Waders: The Shorebirds of Australia</i>, Bloomings Books Pty Ltd., Melbourne, Australia.</p> <p>Menkhorst, P., Rogers, D., Clarke, R., Davies, J., Marsack, P. & Franklin, K., 2017. <i>The Australian bird guide</i>. CSIRO Publishing.</p> <p>Pizzey, G. & Knight, F. 2010, <i>The Field Guide to the Birds of Australia</i>, 8th edn, Harper Collins Publishers, Australia.</p>
Would you like to acknowledge the assistance of others in the identification process or preparation of this submission?	<p>Jane Cooper</p> <p>Danny Rogers</p>



410 26.3.20 white underparts



434 26.3.20 mottled brown and white feathers at side of breast



438 26.3.20 wide black breastband pale extensive supercilium



439 26.3.20 white wingbar



441 26.3.20 yellow orange legs pink at base of lower mandible



442 26.3.20 bulge of breast band at shoulder



443 26.3.20



444 26.3.20 brown upperparts white collar bordered by black collar



447 26.3.20 size in relation to red-necked stint and red-capped plover



450 26.3.20 white wing bar

Notes on identification of Eyre Island Plover 17 June 2020.

For identification of this bird it is necessary to distinguish between the race of Common Ringed Plover (CRP), *C. h. tundrae* and Semipalmated Plover (SPP), *C. semipalmatus*. Hayman *et al.* (1986, p. 283) note that this race of CRP and SPP are very similar.

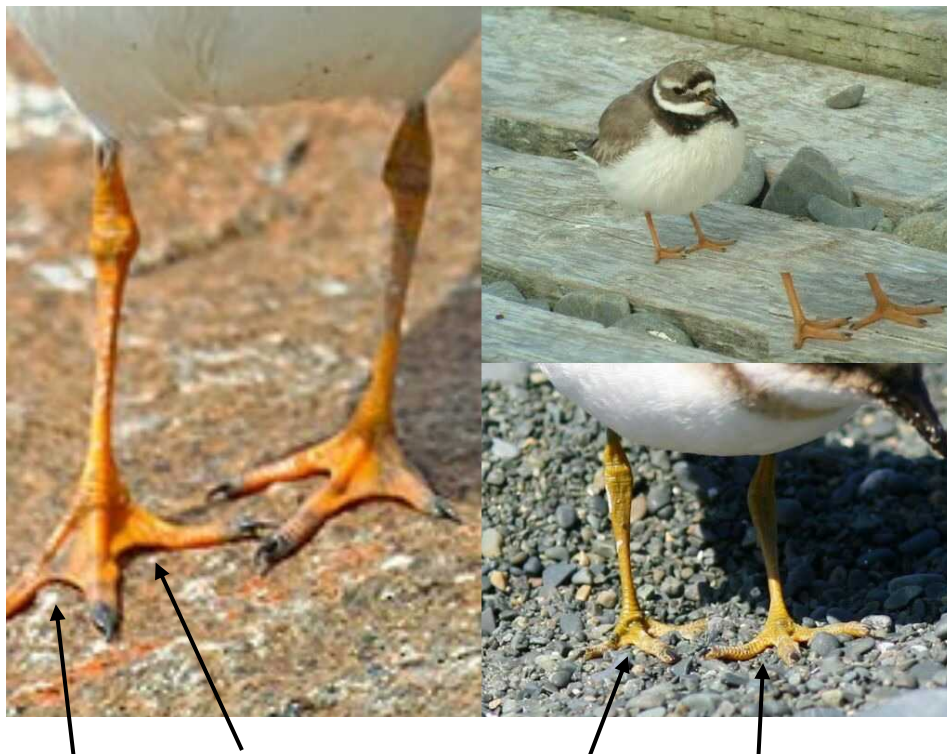
All discussions of the ID features of these taxa conclude that there are only two diagnostic features to separate them; the form of webbing between the toes and the call.

“When it comes to separating Common Ringed and Semipalmated Plovers there are two absolutely fool proof characters to look for and they are: toe palmations and call”. Brown (2018)

The relevant features are:

1. *SPP has webs between both toes*. A larger web between the outer and inner toe and a smaller one between the inner and middle toe as illustrated in Figure 1.
2. CRP may have a small web between outer and middle toe, smaller than on SPP, but has *no visible web between inner and middle toe* as illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 below. “So the key is the semipalmation between the *inner and middle toe*, which is *absent on CRP, and present in SP*. “ Lopezvelasco (2012)

Figure 1. Comparison of *C. semipalmatus* below (LH picture) and *C. hiaticula* (RH pictures).
SPP CRP



Larger web between outer and middle toe with smaller web between inner and middle toe

No web, or at best a very small web, between outer and middle toe (RF) and no visible web between inner and middle toe (LF)



Figure 2a. Common Ringed Plover (Spain) with no visible web between inner and middle toe and a visible web between outer and middle toe.



Figure 2b. Web between outer and middle toe on a juvenile CRP in Spain.

“CRP do show semipalmations between the outer and the middle toe. And, in some birds, they can be quite extensive. Such as on the Lanzarote bird [above Figure 2a and 2b]. It’s true that they’re more extensive on SP, but, still, they can be quite noticeable on certain CRPs”. (Daniel Lopez velasco 2012).

Hayman *et al.* (1986, p. 283) state that CRP has a very small web between inner and middle toe but that it is rarely visible. Paulson (2005, p. 60) states that CRP has no webbing between inner and middle toe and slight webbing between outer and middle toe. O’ Bbrien *et al.* (2006, p. 237) states that toes on CRP are unwebbed. Chandler (2009, p. 122) states that on

CRP there is restricted webbing between outer and middle toes only which separates from SPP. See also Menkhorst (2017, p. 133) for a comparison of the webbing on CRP and SPP.

Examination of the feet of the Little Eyre bird reveals the following.

Figure 3a. Plover on Little Eyre Island 17 June 2020.





Figure 3 b. No web visible between inner and middle toe indicates CRP.



Figure 3c. No obvious web between outer and middle toe on right foot; a hint of a web between outer and middle toe on left foot? If so, consistent with CRP.



Figure 3d. No web visible between inner and middle toe on right foot consistent with CRP.

The Little Eyre bird has no web visible between the inner and middle toe and if there is one between the outer and middle toe it is rather small. Both features are consistent with CRP and not SSP.

[Insert recording of call here when obtained]

Additional features to distinguish between SPP and CRP are;

1. Lack of yellow eye-ring which should be present on *C. semipalmatus* at any age. (Boyle *et al.* BARC 873; Menkhorst *et al.* (2017, p. 133).

“Any Common Ringed Plover being claimed in North America should have a dark orbital ring, just as any Semipalmated Plover being claimed in Europe **or Asia** should have some yellow or orange/yellow in its orbital ring” (Brown 2018).

I assume this applies to any vagrant in Australia. The Little Eyre bird has no obvious yellow in its orbital ring which suggests CRP rather than SPP. Hayman *et al.* (1986, p. 33) don't stress this distinction as some breeding CRP can show a yellow orbital ring.

Mullarney *et al.* (1999, p. 128) note that SPP has a thin pale orbital ring lacking in Ringed Plover and juvenile Ringed often shows a suggestion of a pale eye-ring or crescent in front or below the eye. A small white crescent below the eye is visible on the Little Eyre bird as illustrated in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Little Eyre bird showing a small white crescent below the eye typically seen on juvenile CRP.

2. Of particular importance is the width of the black lores and if they extend to meet the gape. (Boyle *et al.* BARC 873; Brown (2018); Menkhorst *et al.* (2017, p. 133)). The Little Eyre bird lacks an obvious white strip between dark lores and gape which indicates CRP. However, note that this white strip between the dark lores and the gape has been recorded on a juvenile CRP in Spain! Lopezvelasco (2012).
3. CRP has a longer bill tapering over distal third of the bill. This feature is not always easy to judge but in this case is descriptive of the Little Eyre bird as apparent in the photographs taken by Christine Taylor on 26 March in Figure 5 below and Figure 3a above. Hayman *et al.* (1986, plate 33) illustrate the subtle difference in bill shape on breeding birds.

4. The black breast band of CRP is said to average wider than that of SPP but there is much overlap and on individuals the width of the breast band varies with changes in posture and the weather conditions. This is evident on the Little Eyre bird. The photographs in Figure 5 were taken by Christine Taylor on 26 March (Temp 27°C) and show a much broader black breast band than shown by the bird on 17 June (Temp 20°C max?) See Brown (2018) for an example of a SPP with a broad black breast band.



Figure 5. Little Eyre bird showing wider black breast band than in Figure 3. Christine Taylor 26 March 2020.

5. Wing bar



Figure 6. Ringed Plover adult female pattern of primaries showing P1 to P6 with white extending onto the outer vane from the white shaft. P7-P10 show only white shafts, longer on P10. Blasco-Zumeta and Heinze <http://blascozumeta.com/wp-content/uploads/aragon-birds/non-passeriformes/169.ringedplover-chiaticula.pdf>

The Little Eyre bird shows a pattern of the white on the primaries consistent with CRP as illustrated in Figure 7 below.



Figure 7 showing wing bar on Little Eyre bird consistent with CRP illustrated in Figure 6.

6. Age and moult.



Figure 8. Adult *C. h. tundrae* dated 25 June 2008 in Russia, no web visible between outer and middle toe.

Figure 8 of a photograph from Russia on 25 June 2008 of a breeding adult *C. tundrae* (sex not noted but probably male by extent of black mask) suggests that the Little Eyre bird is in first breeding plumage. The extent of the black on the face and head is not as complete as that on the adult in Figure 8 and the bill is not as brightly coloured and some brown in the ear coverts suggests a first breeding female (Hayman *et al.* 1986, Plate 33, 86c).

Meissner *et al.* (2015) provide some ageing and sexing information for Ringed Plover but warn that as it is based on birds that migrate through Europe so should be applied with caution to other populations. However, the moult schedule for *C. tundrae* is different from that of *C. hiaticula*. In particular, by May of its first calendar year *C. h. tundrae* has no juvenile primaries, body feathers or median coverts and has completed moults from juvenile to first non-breeding and then into first breeding. See Figure 9 below.

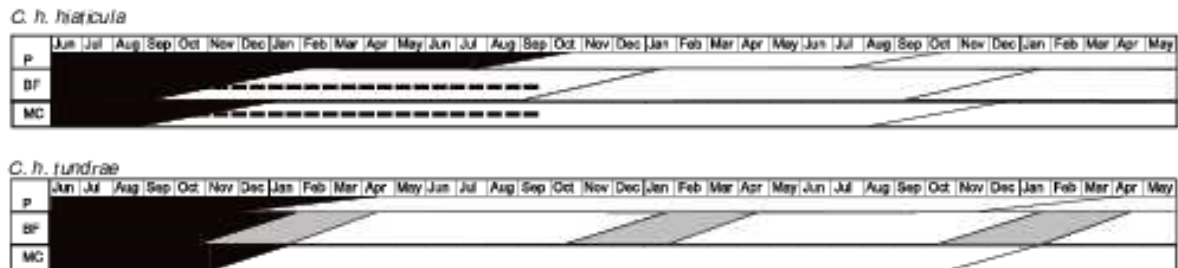


Fig. 1. Moult schedule of Ringed Plover in the subspecies *hiaticula* and *tundrae*. P = primaries; BF = body feathers; MC = median wing coverts; Black = juvenile feathers; grey = non-breeding plumage; white = breeding plumage; black broken line = presence of retained juvenile inner median coverts (but not in all individuals).

Figure 9. Moult cycle of CRPs. Source: Meissner *et al.* (2015).

Furthermore, Christine Taylor has a photograph showing the Little Eyre bird was in primary moult on 26 March reproduced below as Figure 10.

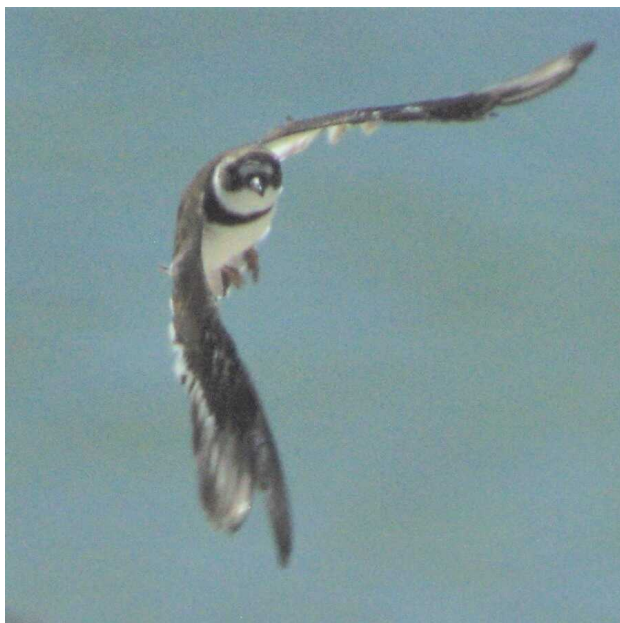


Figure 10 showing primary moult on Little Eyre bird on 26 March consistent with the moult cycle of *C. h. tundrae* of CRP.

The plumage of the Little Eyre bird is consistent with the moult cycle of *C. h. tundrae* but not *C. hiaticula*; Mullarney (1999, p. 128) also note that *C. h. tundrae*, moult their flight feathers on the wintering grounds)

If the Little Eyre bird remains, as seems likely, it should moult into 2nd non-breeding plumage over the period October to December 2020 and into breeding plumage between February and mid-April 2021 when it should then head north.

References

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https://www.researchgate.net/publication/274709649_Ageing_and_sexing_the_Ringed_Plover_Charadrius_hiaticula
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Updated 30 June 2020.