
New information on the distribution of the Collared Plover *Charadrius collaris* in Chile

Yerko Vilina & Patricio Droully

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INTRODUCTION

The Collared Plover has usually been observed in wetlands such as sandy coastal beaches and river banks on inland lakes in America. Observations span from southern Mexico in the north to Buenos Aires and Mendoza, Argentina, in the south. The species is absent in almost all the Pacific coast of South America, except for northern and central Chile (Hayman *et al.* 1986).

In Chile it was observed for the first time on the sandy beaches of Con-con, in the province of Valparaíso, on 25 April 1921 (Wetmore 1926). Since then, other sightings have extended its distribution in the south to the province of Malleco (Phillippi-B. 1964). Its distribution was extended almost 300 km further by Dr. R. Shlatter, who observed it on numerous occasions in Mehuín, province of Valdivia (Araya & Millie 1986).

During 1987 and 1988 the authors visited 40 wetlands along the coast and on islands between 18°30'S and 35°20'S in Chile. *Charadrius collaris* was observed at the northern edge of its distribution, in the Estero Yali (33°47'S, 71°44'W) on 11 November 1987 and in Las Palmas I y II dam (33°36'S, 71°23'W) in July 1988. However, the Collared Plover was found further than its known septentrional range in Maintencillo (32°40'S, 71°25'W) on 21-23 August 1988, where three birds were observed on the sandy beaches. On 14 May, at the Catapilco lagoon (32°33'S, 71°17'W), 15 km from the coast, we saw two plovers on the muddy bank. At the outlet of the Choapa River (30°37'S, 71°33'W), on 1 October, we recorded five birds on the sandy beaches. At the outlet of Huasco River (28°27'S, 71°21'W) on 6 July, we saw three Collared Plovers also on sandy beaches.

With respect to the reproduction of *Charadrius collaris* in Chile, D. Bullock mentions the presence of an adult female with fertilized eggs (Goodall *et al.* 1954). J.C. Johow observed nesting in January on the banks of Nuble River, (Phillippi-B. 1964) and Oyarzo & Ruiz (1983) describe the capture of two adult females with active ovaries on the Diguillín River, province of Concepción. Furthermore, the recent observations of a nest with three eggs on Pichidangi beach, province of Choapa (Johow 1989), confirms reproduction by *Charadrius collaris* in Chile.

From the results obtained it can be concluded that the distribution of the Collared Plover in Chile extends about 450 km further north than has been described before. During this work it was observed

between April and November, supporting other field observations that mention its presence between April and January (Goodall *et al.* 1951; Phillippi-B. 1964; Oyarzo & Ruiz 1983; Johow 1989).

In recent years *Charadrius collaris* has been observed more frequently in Chile, making its distribution more closely allied to that of *Charadrius alexandrinus*, which is the species that is distributed on the Pacific coast in South America. Because of this, recognising Collared Plover young was difficult because they have a plumage similar to the Snowy Plover adult, differing principally in the color of their legs (yellow for *C. collaris* and black for *C. alexandrinus*).

These records and previous reports indicate that *Charadrius collaris* is colonizing the Pacific South American coast, and that it is still spreading. The expansion probably consists of individuals that came to the central provinces of Chile from Argentina. One way to investigate this expansion hypothesis is a systematic description of the species' distribution in Chile and on the Pacific Ocean coast.

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- Yerko Vilina, Laboratorio Biología de la Reproducción, Depto. Biol. Cel. y Gen., Fac. de Medicina, Universidad de Chile, Casilla 70061 Correo 7, Santiago, Chile.
- Patricio Droully, Carlos Cariola 3916, Macul, Santiago, Chile.

