



Female Wilson's Plover
Great Kills Park, Richmond Co.
May 22, 1978 *Thomas H. Davis*

PHOTOGRAPHS OF NEW YORK STATE RARITIES

32. WILSON'S PLOVER

THOMAS H. DAVIS

The Wilson's Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*) is chiefly a neotropical bird, although breeding along the Atlantic coast north to Virginia; rarely to southern New Jersey (J. Bull, 1974. *Birds of New York State*. Doubleday/Natural History Press, Garden City, N.Y.). In New York State this species' occurrence is confined to the south shore of Long Island with "more than 25 reports," including nine specimen records, extreme dates April 24-October 2. Eight of these reports are for May and at least nine in September, the latter mostly after hurricanes. From 1954 to 1978, this species had been reported only once, perhaps reflecting its general decline along the Atlantic coast due to loss and disturbance of habitat.

In May 1978, two additional Wilson's Plovers were noted along the New York coast. A female was reported May 20th at Great Kills Park, Richmond Co. by Robert Claremont with John Stoneck, and William and Norma Siebenheller. The bird remained only the following day when it was seen by other birders and photographed by the author. In my original color transparency a small patch of seaweed lies behind the bird's bill, giving its "thick bill" a gross exaggeration in this black-and-white rendition. That the bird was a female is evidenced by its brown breast band, narrow at the center and broadening on the sides. The plover fed at low tide on a hard clay tidal bank along with Semipalmated and Black-bellied Plovers, Ruddy Turnstones, Purple, White-rumped, and Semipalmated Sandpipers, Sanderlings, and others, but generally favored the company of Semipalmated Plovers.

On May 28th a Wilson's Plover was observed on a sandy bay beach one-quarter mile west of Shinnecock Inlet, Suffolk Co., by Allan Keith and a friend. Efforts to relocate this bird the following day were in vain.

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