

Biodiversity Record: Pacific golden plovers at Upper Peirce Reservoir

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Subjects: Pacific golden plover, *Pluvialis fulva* (Aves: Charadriiformes: Charadriidae).

Subjects identified by: Robin W. J. Ngiam and Ryuta Teo.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Upper Peirce Reservoir; 16 February 2024; around 1100 hrs.

Habitat: Rocky bank of large open fresh-water lake surrounded by secondary forest, and next to a golf course.

Observer: Robin W. J. Ngiam.

Observation: A flock of four adult Pacific golden plovers (Fig. 1) in non-breeding plumage (Fig. 2) was observed on the rocky banks of the reservoir. The location was along the newly opened Upper Peirce to MacRitchie public access trail which borders the Singapore Island Country Club golf course (Fig 3). The birds were relatively hidden from the view of human hikers by the trailside landscape plantings. This probably offered the birds as sense of security even though they were only about six metres from the trail. Hence the observer was able to obtain close-up pictures of the birds through the vegetation.



Fig. 1. A small flock of four Pacific golden plovers on the rocky bank of the reservoir. (Photograph by: Robin W. J. Ngiam)



Fig. 2. Close-up picture of one of the four Pacific golden plovers in non-breeding plumage. Fig. 3. Newly opened public access trail connecting Upper Peirce Reservoir to MacRitchie, with the Singapore Island Country Club golf course on the left, and the rocky bank of the reservoir on the right shielded by landscape plantings along the trail (Photographs by: Robin W. J. Ngiam)/

Remarks: In Singapore, the Pacific golden plover is a common winter visitor which typically arrives around July and departs by May to its breeding grounds in the Arctic tundra (Yong et al., 2017). These are gregarious shorebirds that frequent mudflats and open fields in coastal areas (Bird Society of Singapore, 2024). They have, occasionally, been observed at locations further inland such as along the banks of the Serangoon Reservoir (Ng, 2015) and the canal along the Bedok Park Connector (https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?place_id=6734&subview=map&taxon_id=4896). Given the central location of Upper Peirce Reservoir on Singapore Island, this observation seems to be the furthest inland record for the Pacific golden plover in the country.

While the conservation of natural habitats should remain a priority, this observation highlights the potential benefits of human modified and artificial habitats for migratory shorebirds in locations where the natural habitat has been removed. Various species of migratory shorebirds along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway have been recorded using different types of coastal artificial habitats (Jackson et al., 2020), the creation and enhancement of similar artificial habitats should also be considered in the land use planning policy in Singapore as part of the global effort to conserve migratory shorebird species.

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Literature cited:

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