

# First Costa Rican record of Pacific Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*, Gmelin, 1789) (Aves: Charadriidae)

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**ABSTRACT:** Here we report on the first observation of Pacific Golden Plover in Central America, from Costa Rica. An individual in winter plumage was observed on salts ponds along with several other roosting waders

The Pacific Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*) has a breeding range extending from the Yamal Peninsula, the Koryak Mountains, and the Gulf of Anadyr in eastern Asia to extreme western Alaska (Hayman *et al.* 1991, Johnson and Connors 2010). Its wintering grounds span a large area across the Pacific and Indian Oceans, from Africa, India, the south Pacific, Hawaii to New Zealand and Australia (Hayman *et al.* 1991). In North America, some individuals regularly occur along the coasts of British Columbia, California, western Mexico, and the Revillagigedo Islands (Johnson and Connors 2010, A.O.U. 1998). Here we report the first record of Pacific Golden-Plover in Costa Rica and Central America.

On 30 September 2007, during the first Costa Rican Shorebird Annual Census, at La Ensenada Private Wildlife Refuge, prov. Puntarenas, Costa Rica (10°08'83" N, 85°03'04" W), we observed one adult individual in winter plumage (Figure 1). The bird was observed from 08:30 to 09:00 h roosting on a salt pond. The individual was distinguished from American Golden-Plover by its brighter plumage, slimmer body, a prominent ear-spot, yellowish face, and shorter primary wing projections in comparison to the tail length (Figure 1). At the same salt pond there were several other roosting waders, including several Black-bellied Plovers (*Pluvialis squatarola*), Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*), Willet (*Tringa semipalmata*), Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*), Short-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus griseus*), and Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*).

Along the Americas, the species is known to winter to such southern latitudes as Clipperton Island (Stager 1964; Howell *et al.* 1993) and even to the Atlantic, *i.e.* Bermuda and Barbados (Crossley 2002). There are sight records from Chile (Hayman *et al.* 1991), Ecuadorian coast (Ridgely and Greenfield 2001), and the Galapagos Islands (Haase 2011), but these are not supported by substantiating evidence (Remsen *et al.* 2013). The lack of observations prior to or subsequent to our record, despite the large number of survey hours in the area, suggests that this was an isolated occurrence. The Golfo Nicoya in Costa Rica, including the surrounding mangroves, mud beaches, salt ponds, and shrimp farms, is the most important stopover

and wintering area for shorebirds in Costa Rica (Barrantes and Sánchez 2003; Barrantes and Pereira 2011). This makes this area as an ideal place for vagrants and common individuals of shorebirds during the migration periods.



**FIGURE 1.** *Pluvialis fulva* photographed 30 September 2007, at La Ensenada Private Wildlife Refuge, prov. Puntarenas, Costa Rica. Identification confirmed by Matt Brady, Steven W. Cardiff, Donna L. Dittman, and Ryan Terrill. Photo: Johan Fernández Ramírez.

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