

Sandpipers

Gray-tailed tattler / *Heteroscelus brevipes* / Kiashi-shigi / キアシシギ

This migrant member of the sandpiper family flies from breeding sites in Siberia to Amami-Oshima, where flocks can be seen on the Ose Coast in spring and fall. Some pass through on their way to wintering farther south in Asia or Australia, while others winter here. The adults have a grayish-brown body (24 to 27 centimeters long) with a gray head and white eyebrows. The chest and belly, which are speckled with dark spots during the breeding season, turn pale in the winter. The bird gets its Japanese name, *kiashi-shigi*, from its yellow (*ki*) legs (*ashi*), which are shorter than those of most sandpipers.

Black-winged stilt / *Himantopus himantopus* / Seitaka-shigi / セイタカシギ

The body of this very tall, slender migrating wader is mostly white, with the black wings of its name and a pale-gray tail. The bill is long, black, and needle-like, ideal for foraging in coastal wetlands and reef areas. The eyes are dark red and the long legs are reddish orange. The bird mainly feeds on aquatic insects on the surface of the water, but will sometimes eat shellfish. These are social birds, usually found in small groups. Those that don't spend the winter on Amami-Oshima go on to Australia and Southeast Asia.