

Sanderling

PJ	Middleton, Morecambe	15.5.69	x Somme, France	20.8.70
Juv	Heacham, Wash	28.9.69	x Cadiz, Spain	27.11.70
PJ	Snettisham, Wash	13.7.68	x Santander, Spain	3.12.70

Ruff

FG	male Morpeth, Northumberland	29.8.64	x Ferrara, Italy	30.3.70
PJ	" Newhaven, Sussex	11.1.69	x Gers, France	30.12.70

Avocet This is the first foreign recovery of this species

Pull Minsmere, Suffolk 28.7.70 + Santander, Spain 22.10.70

5 Studies on the Knot

by Mike Pienkowski

During the last few months the information gathered on the Knot by ringers and groups throughout the country, has been investigated by Tony Prater, Peter Stanley and myself, and these studies are continuing. The Merseyside, Morecambe Bay, North Solway and Wash Wader Ringing Groups together with several individuals have been generous enough to supply data and we hope that others may be able to co-operate. The objects of this note are to indicate what information is of most use and how it is being used.

A preliminary look at the traditional wader parameters - wing and bill length, and weight - has shown that wing length may be very useful in separating populations of Knot. Fairly large samples from the Wash in November and the Dee in January show good agreement with regard to four component populations; mean wing lengths approx. 165-166, 171, 174.5, and 177.5mms. respectively. As may be appreciated, the reasonably reliable separation of such close components requires a fairly large sample. The Wash sample was 939 birds from 3 cannon-net catches and the Dee 571 from two catches.

As Knot populations on all British estuaries at any time of the year are likely to be made up of several components and not just one, it is highly desirable that as many birds as possible are processed; 500 processed in any month is a useful target to aim at. Obviously, as this sort of total is unlikely to be reached in one year, it is important that a standard measuring technique is adhered to. However, I hope that no-one will assume that because he has no chance of measuring 500 birds there is no point in measuring any, as much smaller samples can be particularly useful in filling gaps, both geographical and chronological, once the big samples have given some indication of which populations are likely to be present.

The situation with wing lengths may be complicated further by feather wear and shrinkage between moults. Wash retraps indicate that Knot wing lengths may decrease up to 7mm. from November to August! This goes to emphasise the importance of measuring all controls and retraps to provide a check on the general data.

It appeared at one time that bill length might be useful when used in conjunction with wing length in separating Knot populations. This now, however, seems unlikely and, although one cannot yet say definitely that there is no point in measuring bill lengths wing lengths are definitely much more use. On the other hand weights seem to be extremely valuable, not only in the investigation of the amount of fat a bird is carrying but also, in this species, for the separation of populations and of sexes.

In order to determine which birds are going where, the numerical analysis of retraps from the same estuary and controls from other estuaries is particularly rewarding, and when used in conjunction with the processing data, even more so. In order to use this type of information to its best advantage it is necessary to have details of both retraps and catch totals for the sites. The most useful form of the latter is as totals by months and years or, alternatively, as full details of each catch. It is then possible to remove the bias due to different intensities of ringing during the year and between years.

In summary, some of the most important details for wader studies are:-

- 1) catch totals, as described above, preferably split between new birds and retraps and, where possible, by age.
- 2) details of retraps within the same or nearby estuaries.
- 3) processing details of all controls and as many new birds as can be measured.

The most useful processing details for the Knot are wing length and weight, but bill length may prove of some use.

If any ringer or group is willing to allow use of any part of their results, I would be very pleased to receive it at the address below.

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#### THE MOVEMENT OF ICELANDIC RINGED KNOT IN BRITAIN DURING THE WINTER 1970/71

by Peter Stanley

The Wader Study Group was set up to co-ordinate British wader research so that the efforts of individual members could be channelled towards rewarding collaborative research. This policy is already leading to success in the case of the Knot, a species chosen for particular attention in 1971.

It became evident some time ago that during the winter there are substantial movements of Knot between estuaries and even across the country. Recoveries of Knot, ringed in early autumn on the Wash, later the same winter on the Conway estuary, the Dee, the Ribble, Morecambe Bay and in Northern Ireland, suggested that a proportion of the early autumn Wash Knot population moved north and west during the late autumn. Wader counts have suggested that a strong NW. passage of Knot occurs just prior to the spring migration and results in very large transient flocks on Morecambe Bay in early May. Data, summarised in Table 1, collected by the Cambridge/London Iceland expeditions during 1970 suggests that the Icelandic passage