

Long distance British recoveries were:

Ad	20.11.71	Langstone Hbr	v	Bradwall, Essex	18.8.74
Juv	28.7.72	Spey, Moray	v	Swale, Kent	20.7.74
Juv	28.8.72	Wash	x	Tongue, Sutherland	5.7.74
Juv	29.8.72	Belfast, Down	v	Hayle, Cornwall	4.8.74
Ad	2.6.73	Dee	v	Teesmouth	18.8.74
Juv	15.10.73	Poole Harbour	v	Canvey, Essex	16.8.74
Ad	11.5.74	Morecambe Bay	v	Swale, Kent	20.7.74

Sanderling

Ad	12.8.68 (& 17.5.69	Wash	+	Calvados, France	12.8.74
Ad	17.5.69	Wash	+	" "	12.8.74

JOINT BIOLOGICAL EXPEDITION TO NE GREENLAND, 1974

G.H. Green

Readers of Mike Pienkowski's account, (in Bulletin No.12) of the early days of this expedition will have learnt that following shipping problems in Iceland and Guy Morrison's appendicitis in Greenland, we were able to settle to serious wader studies. These continued in several different valley systems until we returned to Britain 16 August.

As leader of the Wader Study Group Expedition I took the precaution of getting transported by helicopter as far from the 'civilisation' of Mestersvig as I could and, as it turned out, Mike was left (quite unintentionally) holding the baby! Having led several wader expeditions himself he had come on this one as a 'member' expecting to have a nice holiday peacefully watching Ringed Plover, but instead found himself king-pin radio operator, public relations officer, chief negotiator for helicopters to get us back to Mestersvig when the pack ice refused to break (and the boat leaked anyway) and innumerable other unexpected jobs. I hope his own work on Ringed Plover breeding behaviour and feeding ecology did not suffer too much. We are all very grateful to him.

The results of the expedition's bird catching and ringing are shown in Table I. The numbers do not seem large by cannon netting standards, but each wader has to be individually caught, usually at the nest, and the amount of work and effort required to produce these totals is very great. All the birds were weighed, measured, photographed, dye marked and colour ringed. The results of the latter are most exciting and the number of sightings in Britain of these marked birds are listed in Table 2. The technique is obviously a powerful one in wader studies of this type, but it must be used with care. Anyone considering such a scheme must feel honour-bound to consult with the BTO first to avoid overlapping of schemes and invalidation of each other's work. We are most grateful to the BTO for the publicity given to our scheme and to Tony Prater who has acted as receiver-of-reports. Several other ornithological journals also asked for people to watch for marked waders. There is still time for more records. We hope you will all still keep a look-out for colour rings, even though dyed feathers may now have moulted.

We have also had report of a Ringed Plover ringed as a pullus in Greenland being run over by a car near Bergen in Norway. In Greenland we found two Ringed Plovers carrying British rings. One ringed on the Solway 20th May 1973

and the other at Farlington 22 August 1971. Incidentally Stuart Brown made excellent use of our enforced stay in Iceland by reading by telescope the ring numbers of two Redshank breeding near Reykjavik airport - both had been ringed at Snettisham at the Wash, one on 21 August 67 and the other 1 Jan 1972.

Of the sightings of dye-marked birds the Sanderling are most exciting. They are the first proven records of NE Greenland breeding birds in Britain and confirm predictions made from other data. They should now be migrating further south down the West African coast.

The measurements collected from the breeding birds will be published in due course and be available for comparative studies. I have already made some preliminary comparisons with Dunlin and Ringed Plover caught in May on passage in Wales and they help in confirming our identification of Greenland birds at that time.

In addition to the ringing and associated activities we collected much other data about waders based on 'territory'. When breeding birds were located special printed cards were filled in. These recorded indications of breeding activity (song flight, display &c), details of habitat (topography, vegetation), nest records, egg weights and measurements and details of any adults and pulli caught. We used about 350 of these cards and they contain a large amount of information which on analysis will give details of habitat preferences of each species, dates of breeding, growth rates of pulli and so on.

All sightings and territories were plotted on maps or aerial photographs and we built up a complete record of the waders in all the places visited. These maps give us a unique picture of the density and distribution of waders over a large area.

One interesting discovery we made was that early in the season the snow cover varied greatly from valley to valley and hence the date of the start of breeding varied also. We found at least 10 days difference in timing of breeding in valleys only 25 km apart. These differences could mean all the difference between successful and unsuccessful breeding in any given year and general remarks about 'non-breeding' or 'poor breeding' over the whole coast of NE Greenland should be viewed with caution. The mountainous nature of the country may well mean that at least some of the birds breed successfully every year.

We are extremely grateful to all our well-wishers, sponsors, and innumerable people who have helped the expedition in one way or another. The Wader Study Group half of the expedition meshed very well with the Dundee University half and we hope that the combined study of Ringed Plover ecology will be fruitful. I very much appreciate the understanding shown by joint leader Jeremy Greenwood of the eccentric and extremely expensive demands made on the whole expedition by the Wader Study Group.

NE Greenland is a magnificent part of the world and as Salomonsen writes on the last page of the 'Arctic Year' "Those who have been to the Arctic always long to go back"

TABLE I - TOTALS OF BIRDS RINGED

<u>Species</u>	<u>Pull</u>	<u>Juv</u>	<u>Adult</u>	<u>Total</u>
Barnacle Goose	1	0	0	11
Long-tailed Duck	0	0	1	1
Glaucous Gull	0	0	3	3
Long-tailed Skua	0	0	5	5
Arctic Tern	30	0	58	88
Turnstone	33	6	13	52
Ringed Plover	53	1	43	97
Knot	10	2	2	14
Dunlin	59	12	25	96
Sanderling	69	34	18	121
Wheatear	0	1	2	3
Snow Bunting	49	33	20	102
	<u>302</u>	<u>89</u>	<u>190</u>	<u>583</u>

One Ringed Plover carried a British ring.

In addition 3 pullu Knot were marked with colour rings only as no metal rings were available!

TABLE 2 - SIGHTINGS OF DYE-MARKED AND COLOUR-RINGED WADERS

1. Sanderling	The Wash, Norfolk	20-24 August
2. Sanderling	Pembrey, Carmarthen	16 August
3. Sanderling	Scilly Islands	27 August until 3 September
4. Sanderling	Budle Bay, Northumberland	7 September
5. Sanderling	Sand Bay, Somerset	1 September
6. Sanderling	Padstow, Cornwall	details not yet in
7. Ringed Plover	Ythan Estuary, Aberdeen	26 August
8. Ringed Plover	Montrose Basin, Dundee	20 August
9. Ringed Plover	Havergate Is. Suffolk	4 September
10. Ringed Plover	Bridgewater Bay, Somerset	18 August until 15 September
11. Ringed Plover	Severn Beach, Glos.	8 September
12. Ringed Plover	Collieston, Ythan Est	3 September Probably different bird to No.6
13. Ringed Plover	Minsmere, Suffolk	12 September
14. Turnstone	Burry Port, Carmarthen	28 August until 1 September
15. Dunlin	Swansea Bay, Glamorgan	15 September