Aveiro. (14,250 in 1975) including Dunlin (5,500), Black- tailed Godwit (4,000), Bar-tailed Godwit (1,300) and Avocet (700). Even so far north as here there were 120 Kentish Plovers and 30 Little Stints.

Sado (11,400 in 1975) including Dunlin 8,500) and Redshank (1,100).

c) SPAIN

January 1975 counts showed that there were only three areas on the Mediterranean and southern Atlantic coasts which supported over a thousand waders. In the Mediterranean the Ebro Delta (1,564) was the best with Dunlin (600) and Black-tailed Godwit (575) the most frequent. Even here there were 152 Little Stints, a few Kentish and a single Little Ringed Plover.

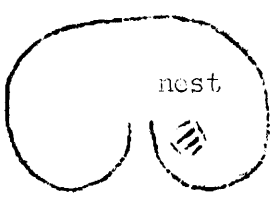
On the S W Atlantic coast the marismas of the Guadalquivir had 5,900 waders mainly Black-tailed Godwit (5,650) but also 180 Avocets, 32 Black winged Stilts and 5 Marsh Sandpipers. The complex of the Rio Tinto/Odiel/Umbria near Huelva supported 2,900 waders, mostly Golden Plovers although over 2,000 Grey Plovers have been recorded here on autumn passage.

As a postscript to this mass of figures I would appeal to any bird watchers, who visit and count waders in the less frequently watched areas including Spain, Portugal, Italy, SE Europe or anywhere else to send the IWRB/WRG copies of counts. All data, at any time of year, are needed but please try to count the whole of an area and clearly indicate if coverage is incomplete. Count data are collected by Tony Prater, BTO, Beech Grove, Tring, Herts.

METHODS OF CATCHING AND STUDYING BREEDING WADERS - CONTINUED AGAIN

The articles in Bulletins 16 & 17 by G.H. Green, P.N. Ferns and R.M. Bishop have continued to generate much discussion. R.W. Summers has kindly sent us a copy of his article on "Trapping waders at the nest" (Safring News 4 (1): 18-19, 1975), concerning the use of the heart-shaped trap. We reprint part of this below.

"Find a wader nest and place the trap over it such that the nest is in the position as seen in Fig 1. This is critical. If the trap is placed over the nest so that the latter is near the the back or sides, the bird may false-brood outside the trap. Also if the nest is in direct line with the entrance the bird will walk out again. The trap should therefore be placed as shown, and with the entrance facing the ringer's direction of approach. The trap entrance should be adjusted so that it is just wide enough for the bird to get through. Pegs are pushed through the wire and into the ground keeping the trap steady. Then retire.



The "normal" behaviour to the trap by the nest owner is as follows (as seen in European Oystercatcher): once the ringer has departed from the scene the bird reappears in about 5 minutes and lands some 50 m from the trap. It approaches the trap and then starts circling at a radius of 25 m but getting closer and closer all the time. This circling may be interspersed with periods of standing, or short retreats from the trap. After about 15 minutes the bird circles within inches of the trap, sometimes pecking at the mesh. It eventually concentrates its activities near the entrance, as the nest is closest to the trap wall at this point and about 20 from setting, the bird enters and settles on the eggs.

We gave the bird a moment or two on the eggs and then walked over to the trap. The bird rises from the eggs, moves to the back of the trap and pushes with the bill trying to effect an exit.

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Only when the ringer is about 10 m from the trap does the bird panic and start to flap about, so the last few metres should be covered quickly and the bird subdued.

20-25 minutes was the usual trapping time though 4 minutes a record. If the bird is not showing signs of entry after 20-25 minutes (i.e. not concentrating its activities at the trap entrance), the trap must be removed, and 30 minutes must be regarded as a maximum for the bird to be kept off its eggs. Sometimes the drive to incubate will be low (e.g. before a clutch is complete or in hot weather) and one must accept failure."

In my experience, there are tremendous variations in the responses of individual birds to traps at the nest, some keeping several metres away, while others walked in immediately. Some birds showed different extremes of behaviour on different days. In some cases it was clear that a bird would enter the trap only by walking directly towards the nest which, therefore, had to be in line with the entrance. As Harry Green and Peter Ferns pointed out earlier, this problem may be overcome by approaching the trap from the same site as the entrance from as close a position as concealment will allow. Probably the answer is to recognise the differences in individuals and be prepared to try several trap positions as well as different trapping methods (see earlier articles), after a long interval to allow incubation to be re-established.

Finally, in reply to yet another query, it should be stressed that, whatever method is used, the nest and trap must be kept under continual observation during the trapping attempt.

Mike Pienkowski

WADER NETS

The first Knox wader nets made from material half as thick (and strong) again as normal mist nets arrived at Beech Grove in May. One was immediately erected on the lawn and proved to be very well finished with an immense amount of slack and good strong, inelastic shelf-strings. The main problem with these 3-shelf nets may be the height to which they will set - with taut side strings the netting is about ten feet high and the pockets have a really good amount of bag. Anyone with short poles (or tall water) should beware.

Comments from ringers have been favourable. Even those apparently wedded to les filets Francais have probably been convinced on the grounds of quality, price and availability to buy British. Rather few 12 m nets were sold but most of the 18 m nets from the first production run of netting have now gone. If you want to reserve one (or more) write quickly. Knox have been asked to make more material but, at the moment, they cannot give a definite delivery date - they will be encouraged to produce it quickly.

Since the nets are made from single shelf lengths joined by the shelf-string the nets may readily be lowered into 2-shelf (or single shelf) format. When the next lot of netting is available we will certainly be offering un-made-up single shelf netting. Please let me know if you feel strongly about what you would want:

a) neatly packaged loose lengths with exactly the right number of meshes to make a shelf of each length of made up net (12m and 18m)

b) accurately cut lengths of any other size

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