

WADER STUDY GROUP

Bulletin No 21

November 1977

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The next Bulletin will be prepared in January 1978 and all contributions would be welcomed. Please could you submit them by December 31st, to either of the editors:

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EH39 5AL. (Tel: Gullane (0620) 843580)
A.J. Prater, BTO, Beech Grove, Tring, Herts.
(Tel: Tring 3461)

Requests for information:

- 1) Colour ringed/colour dyed waders:- please report all schemes as well as all observations to Tony Prater (address above).
- 2) Weights of retrapped Ringed Plover chicks : Bull 17 (April 1976)
- 3) Ornithologists visiting Tunisia : Bull 18 (Aug. 1976)
- 4) Corpses of freshly dead waders : Bull 19 (Nov. 1976)
- 5) Colour ringed Oystercatchers: Exe Estuary : Bull 20 (June 1977)
- 6) Colour ringed Common Sandpipers - later in this Bulletin

REQUEST TO OBSERVE COLOUR-MARKED OYSTERCATCHERS

From 1975 to 1977 I colour banded nearly 600 adult Oystercatchers and a few first-calenderyear birds on the inland breeding area near Drachten (53 07 N 06 06 E) in the Netherlands (Friesland). This population winters in the Dutch Waddensea, along the continental coast to S.W. Iberia and in the British Isles (recoveries from the west, south and also west coast).

I use plastic rings (10 mm height): yellow, red, blue, green, black and white; 1 to 5 (maximally) colour-rings/bird; 0 to 2 under the intertarsal joint (left and/or right leg) and 0 or 1 above the intertarsal joint (left or right); in addition an aluminium ring above the intertarsal joint (left or right). All colours can be found in all positions, except 2 rings of the same colour on the same leg under the intertarsal joint.

One of the aims of this ringing programme is to study bill form in relation to feeding habits. We already have some evidence that the bill tip of individual birds may change from more or less blunt shortly after arriving on the breeding area, to pointed a fortnight or so later. We suppose that these birds feed on shell fish in the marine habitat and not on soft-bodied buried prey (worms).

Measurements: bill length to the tip of the longest bill half

a) from the feathers

b) from the proximal (hind) rim of the nose

bill thickness at the tip (over the first 3 mm length)

Classification of the bill tip: blunt, intermediate, pointed.

For precise documentation of bill form I take a photo of the (left) lateral side of head and bill, against a background of millimeter paper (for scale), together with a label indicating ring number and date; distance 20 to 25 cm.

If you catch one of my birds, please take the measurements as I did, including a classification of the bill tip. When possible, take a photo. When observing identified birds try to make notes on the type of food.

Recording of marked birds to:

Drs. J.B. Hulscher,
Zoölogisch Laboratorium,
Kerklaan 30,
HAREN (Gr.),
The Netherlands.