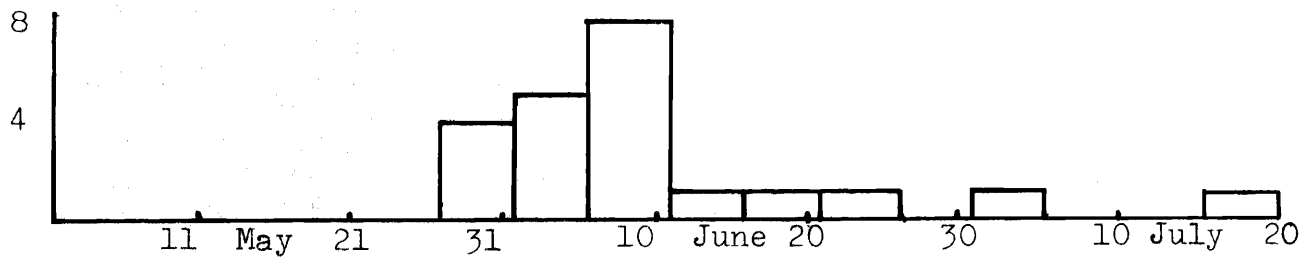
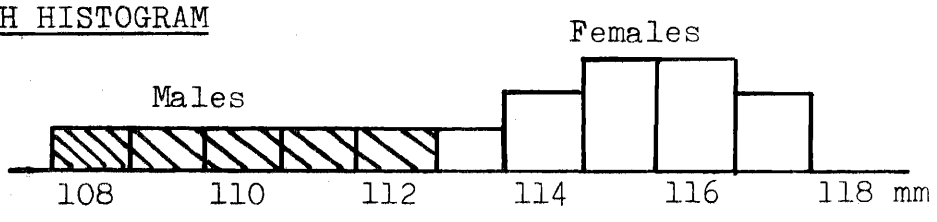
Estimated dates of hatching of the pulli ringed



We can thus see that a Common Sandpiper with eggs will be about 20g up on normal (each egg weighs about 12g). The bird weighing 71g on 16 May was retrapped at 53g on 17 June.

We have been colour ringing these birds, so as well as the heavy females we have been able to sex some other birds on behaviour. For 11 females the average winglength is 115.3mm (SD= 1.2) and for 5 males 110.0mm. For all adults the average is 113.3mm (SD= 2.7)

WINGLENGTH HISTOGRAM



We urgently appeal for any observations of colour ringed Sandpipers. Full details of colour code are not nearly so important as the general fact of being colour-ringed, so please do not withhold a sighting because of incompleteness. A look at BTO recoveries of Sandpipers ringed on the breeding areas reveals 14 back around their breeding place (confirmed in our case with 24 caught again within the South Pennines in later seasons over the last 10 years), 2 in Africa, 6 in France and 1 in Portugal, but only 2 in Britain. However 7 ringed at likely stopping places (Abberton etc.) have been found in potential breeding areas in May and June. S. Brown suggests that they are long-hop migrants but as they appear to leave the breeding streams early we want to know where they hop from as well as to.

South Pennine Ringing Group, J.E. Robson, 1 Lawnfold, Hadfield, Hyde, Cheshire.

THE CELTIC WADER RESEARCH GROUP

What's in a name ..... admittedly The Celtic Wader Research Group (CWRG for short, pronounced K-whirr-g) is a rather grand title for a small group of people studying waders on the shores of South Wales and around the Severn Estuary. SEWAGE, a mnemonic appropriate for a group working on the shores of an estuary adjacent to large cities, was a promising alternative which started well .... Severn Estuary, Wales and .... but it failed in the end so we were stuck with Chris Hemmings' idea - CWRG. In our early days we did have 'Celtic' aspirations and some of us had caught waders on the north, west and south coasts of Wales and even shown an interest in the Hebrides to say nothing of hopefully gazing westwards to

Ireland. But we have remained in South Wales. None of the Group are 'Celtic' (I think) and certainly none are Welsh. Of our 11 members only three are resident in Wales. Most of us are English Midlanders and several of us learnt about waders with the Wash Wader Ringing Group (WWRG) and are still members of that Group. I have heard it said that we have fled from Clive Minton's benign dictatorship in the east to set up our own democracy in the west - a tale quite without (well ..... nearly without) foundation! For several years we were wholly and gratefully dependent on the WWRG for cannon netting equipment and on occasions we even enticed a few WWRG members to abscond from east to west and help us, but now we are more settled and find our helpers nearer at hand. Several innocent pupils at extra-mural classes in ornithology have found themselves in unlikely, unexpected and insalubrious situations against their better judgement but some have survived to help another day. We now own two cannon nets, have an interest in Phhut-netting and muster enough mist nets between us for most purposes. We are not a ringing group as such and we do not hold group rings but we are meticulous in gathering all data centrally. The Group was founded in 1974 to give title to an assorted collection of wader ringers who had been active in South Wales since 1972. We call ourselves a Research Group to remind ourselves and others that our interests extend beyond mere ringing to the proper examination of the wader in the hand and associated study of numbers, the wader on the mud and the habitat. Every trapped bird is weighed and measured in proper fashion and Dunlin are subjected to detailed scrutiny. If we suffer casualties (birds!) they are subjected to laboratory analysis to determine fat free weight and fat load.

Although we are more than happy to catch any species of wader (or any other coastal birds for that matter) our primary study objectives have been the spring passage of Dunlins and Ringed Plovers near Newport and Cardiff and the wintering population of these species in the far west of Pembrokeshire. We have been fairly successful in the study of spring Dunlins and like to think we were prime movers in reminding ringers of the ancient knowledge that Dunlin races can be distinguished by breeding plumage on passage in May. We are now writing about various aspects of Dunlin spring migration, Dunlin races, their weight changes prior to migration and their plumages. Spring studies of Ringed Plovers have been less successful because although several thousands are present near Newport they are difficult to catch because they do not flock closely together and are often diluted by superabundant Dunlins. We have collected a little data which shows Ringed Plovers to be medium sized birds, probably bound for breeding grounds in Iceland and NE Greenland. Winter Dunlin studies in the mild, westerly, Atlantic-influenced climate of Pembrokeshire have been valuable for providing mean weights for comparison with the bitter east coast and elsewhere. This information is being incorporated in a paper on Dunlin weights by Lloyd, Pienkowski and Minton none of whom belong to CWRG - but to be fair we are only supplying about 5% of their data at the most! We started well with winter Ringed Plover in Pembrokeshire and caught quite a few. They were large British breeding birds useful to compare with spring passage migrants. Recently they have become more difficult to catch and ever increasing activity at the oil terminals in Milford Haven may be having some effects. Certainly oiled beaches have curtailed our activities at times. The capture of 42 Whimbrel was an unexpected spin-off from more mundane wader studies and data from these together with Severn Estuary counts and an analysis of European ringing recoveries is at present being submitted for publication.

CWRG has always been a small group with specific aims and we plan to remain so. Soon our emphasis on spring Dunlin will probably change to autumn Dunlin. Hopefully we can improve our studies of Ringed Plover and Whimbrel and extend to other species - particularly Redshank. Additionally Group members do tend to get mixed up in other things such as recent cannon netting of gulls at rubbish tips in the Midlands and near Tenby and some of us are not sure whether we are true wader ringers or renegades from the gull cause returning to our true calling!

We have published one short report of 18 A4 duplicated pages which is mainly a recovery list enclosed in a fine and elegant cover depicting flying Dunlin drawn by Ray Bishop (A few copies are still available from the author, price 30p). Most of the recoveries listed are Dunlin and we have segregated them according to race. As well as the usual Scandinavian birds we have caught Dunlin from the Mauritian, the Moroccan and the Icelandic wader expeditions and while mentioning wader expeditions I should mention that a CWRG man visited NE Greenland for waders in 1972 and that three CWRG men were members of the Wader Study Group half of the Joint Biological Expedition to Greenland in 1974 the results from which ..... but I digress.

Waders ringed by CWRG: Snipe 1, Ringed Plover 189, Turnstone 42, Grey Plover 3, Oystercatcher 15, Redshank 19, Dunlin 3528, Knot 27, Curlew Sandpiper 1, Whimbrel 42, Curlew 14, Bar-tailed Godwit 9: Total 3890.

G.H. Green, Windy Ridge, Little Comberton, Pershore, Worcs.

WADER COUNTS: January 1976

(as reported to the 1977 IWRB Meeting)

Tony Prater

Almost the whole of the Atlantic coast of Europe was counted in January 1976. The numbers of the principle species recorded are presented in Table 1. Only NW Spain was not covered. The table includes estimates based on previous counts for countries where data were lacking for 1976 and can therefore be compared with Table 1 in the report presented at Alushta. Further details on the counts are summaried below.

Denmark. Apart from the Waddensea, a further 19 sites were counted. Very few waders were found with only C. alpina (2,300) and T. totanus (90) exceeding 50 individuals.

Waddensea. Counts were made in Denmark and the Netherlands, although details from the latter area have not yet been received. Relatively small numbers and no C. canutus were observed in the Danish Waddensea.

Delta. Details of counts made in this rapidly changing area were received for both January 1975 and 1976. Interestinly there are relatively few changes in the status of wintering birds since massive reclamation work has taken place. In 1976 the wintering flocks of R. avosetta (440); T. erythropus (53) and A. interpres (2,200) were of particular note. A detailed paper on the eight full