

THE 1978 CAMBRIDGE NORWEGIAN EXPEDITION

by John Innes

The expedition arrived on the Hardangervidda, S.W. Norway, on 5 June and was present till the end of July. Although the weather during most of the summer was bad, the birds appeared to have a very good breeding season, and complete fledged broods of waders were noted on several occasions. Fieldwork was concentrated on Purple Sandpipers and Dotterels, and this bias is reflected in the ringing totals that follow:

	Adults	Pullus	Total
Golden Plover <u>Pluvialis apricaria</u>	1	19	20
Dotterel <u>Charadrius morinellus</u>	10	15	25
Great Snipe <u>Gallinago media</u>	5	6	11
Snipe <u>Gallinago gallinago</u>	-	1	1
Common Sandpiper <u>Actitis hypoleucos</u>	2	4	6
Wood Sandpiper <u>Tringa glareola</u>	1	2	3
Purple Sandpiper <u>Calidris maritima</u>	16	37	53
Dunlin <u>Calidris alpina</u>	22	17	39
Ruff <u>Philomachus pugnax</u>	1	-	1
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	58	101	159

The majority of the adults were caught using heart-shaped walk-in nest-traps made out of "Twilweld". In all cases, the traps were positioned in such a way that the eggs were beside the entrance. On several occasions, the same nest was visited twice in the space of a few days, which resulted in both members of the pair being caught. This was most effective with Purple Sandpipers and Dunlins, and on one occasion, two Dunlins were caught in a trap simultaneously. The other method used for catching adults was single-shelf mist-netting. This was very effective when chicks were present in an area, and was used most successfully to catch Purple Sandpipers and Dotterels.

Nests were found by cold-searching; the majority of the waders on the plateau sat very tightly when approached. The exceptions were the Golden Plovers, which varied in their reaction to the approaching observers.

All waders caught were ringed with rings of the Stavanger Museum. In addition, all the Purple Sandpipers caught were colour-ringed using individual combinations.

Ecological Studies of Dotterels and Purple Sandpipers

It was originally hoped to erect hides at nests of both of these species, but it was decided that this would be inadvisable due to the manner in which hides could potentially attract predators (including man). However, continuous observations were made of both species during the hatching period, and the data recorded are currently being analysed. An attempt was made to observe the movements of individual broods following hatching, but with Purple Sandpipers this proved to be impossible due to the distances that chicks were moved each day (up to 1Km). One brood of Dotterels was followed for six consecutive days before eventually being lost, and weight gains of the chicks were measured over this period.

Other studies

Seventy-five man hours were spent collecting quantitative data at a Great Snipe lek. Data were collected on a variety of different phenomena including individual song notes, total lek activity, fights, orientation of displaying birds, territory size and aerial activity.

A detailed bird census was made, the area covered embracing most of the major habitat types on the plateau. It is hoped that this will provide some quantitative data on the habitat preferences of birds on the plateau, and also give some idea of their relative abundance. This was closely linked with a study of the different plant associations on the plateau.

John Innes, Christ's College, Cambridge.