

A SUMMARY OF PALAEARCTIC WADERS RECORDED IN NORTHERN BOTSWANA

by Derek J. Stanyard

The following notes are a summary of observation records accumulated in Northern Botswana during the period August 1973 to July 1977.

Schedule of Localities

River Nata Delta	20 10'S., 26 10'E	Matsitama	21 02'S., 26 42'E
Mumpswi	20 22'S., 25 50'E	Shashe	21 20'S., 27 27'E
Lake Ngami	20 25'S., 22 50'E	Francistown	21 12'S., 27 30'E
Makardikardi	20 06'S., 25 50'E	Mokobela	21 15'S., 26 25'E
Kasane	17 45'S., 25 10'E		

Descriptions of localities

Lake Ngami is situated at the southern end of the Okavango Swamps and varies in size from nil up to several square miles. The water supply to the lake is uncertain except in years of high rainfall further north; in these years it is not a suitable wader habitat. In other years there are varying extents of exposed muds and shallows offering suitable feeding and roosting sites. The fringes consist of open grassland and scrubland.

Makardikardi Pan is an open, predominantly dry salt pan, usually with only small areas of water. However in recent years consecutively good rains have resulted in large expanses of shallow water covering hundreds of square miles. At certain times this area supports hundreds of thousands of larger waterfowl including flamingo, pelican and spoonbills.

River Nata Delta. An inland river delta where the River Nata flows into Sua Pan, usually having some pools of water even in the dry season. The water tends to be very saline.

Mumpswi, Matsitama, and Mokobela. These are all isolated relatively small shallow pans containing fresh water and attracting comparatively small numbers of waterfowl.

Shashe. A man made lake produced by damming the Shashe and Inchwe Rivers. Covering several square miles this lake is largely unsuitable for waders, however towards the end of the dry season muddy fringes appear and attract small numbers of feeding waders.

Francistown. Observations were made at the local sewage settlement ponds. Numbers tended to fluctuate with water levels.

Kasane. An area of alluvial flood plains of the Chobe river with sandy islands in places.

OBSERVATIONS

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Recorded from October to May, with a record of 10 birds in August possibly indicating over-wintering. There is evidence of peak passage in December with c.1000 birds at Mokobela and c.200 birds at Lake Ngami and again in March with c.5000 birds at Makarikari and c.500 birds at Lake Ngami. Also recorded from Shashe, Francistown and Kasane.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Recorded from August to April usually in small numbers, occasionally in larger concentrations with c.100 birds at Lake Ngami in December and c.500 birds at Nata in October. Also recorded from Shashe, Matsitama, Francistown, Makarikari and Kasane.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Recorded from October to April with largest numbers in the first half of December, e.g. up to 800 birds at Mokobela; also c.200 birds at Nata mid-October and c.100 birds at Makarikari at end of March. Additional records from Francistown, Matsitama, Shashe, Mumpswi and Lake Ngami.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Recorded on two occasions, 8+ birds at Nata on 20 April 1974 and a single bird on 17 March 1974 at Shashe.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

A single bird recorded at Nata on 19 September 1976 in company of Turnstone.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

A single bird recorded at Nata on 19 September 1976 in company of Sanderling and subsequently on 1 October 1976.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Recorded from September to April in small numbers at Nata, Matsitama, Mumpswi and Shashe. Larger concentrations at Lake Ngami with c.200 on 29 March 1975, c.1000 on 31 March 1976 and c.500 on 21 November 1974, at Francistown c.300 on 13 March 1976 and at Makarikari 60 on 12 April 1974.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatalis*

Recorded from December to April in small number up to 12, at Mokobela, Matsitama, Francistown, Nata and Shashe.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Records only of small numbers for the months of September to December with c.100 birds at Mokobela on 1 December 1973. Also recorded at Lake Ngami and Nata.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Recorded in small numbers throughout the year at Shashe, Nata, Mokobela, Makardikardi, Lake Ngami and Francistown. Larger flocks observed during the period September to March with c.30 birds at Nata on 6 September 1976 and c.20 birds at Lake Ngami on 31 December 1974.

Caspian Plover *Charadrius asiaticus*

Recorded at Mokobela with c.150 birds in December and again in December at Lake Ngami where on one occasion several thousand birds were observed.

Additional notes

The following additional species of Palaearctic waders have been recorded by various observers as occurring in Botswana.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

It should be emphasized that the foregoing notes only reflect a summary of the author's observations. A more detailed report of the status of Palaearctic waders occurring in Botswana is presently in preparation.

The author would welcome any information, records or notes from other members who have visited or resided in Botswana.

Derek J. Stanyard, Court Farm, Groeslon, Casrnarfon, Gwynedd LL54 7UE, United Kingdom.

