

NORTH AMERICAN SECTION No. 2

Editor

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EDITORIAL

Since publication of the first North American section in Bulletin 23 several factors have prevented appearance of a second section. Basically, the deadline for Bulletin 24 came and went without enough material being submitted. No doubt potential American authors had insufficient time between the end of their field season and the autumn deadline to write, and new members unfamiliar with the Bulletin had not assessed the type of contributions required. As members become familiar with the Bulletin we hope they will be less reticent and submit short articles on any aspect of work on New World shorebirds. Material may be submitted at any time.

Publication is currently three times a year, in April, August and December; details of deadlines are given on the inside front cover. Requests for announcements should arrive well in time for inclusion in the appropriate issue. Please do not wait for the Editor to solicit an article from you - contributions will be welcome whenever they arrive!

The present edition contains articles dealing with banding and migration studies in areas ranging from the arctic to the tropics. Although the Bulletin has tended to concentrate on this type of article, we wish to expand the range of topics covered, and the next North American section will contain articles on shorebird behaviour.

The Wader Study Group has found it necessary to increase the yearly subscription owing mainly to rising costs in the production of the Bulletin and to high postal rates. It is unfortunate that the increase had to be implemented so soon after the formation of the North American section. The new rates are \$5.50 for delivery by surface mail or \$6.50 for delivery by air mail (see Bull. 24, pp 2-3 & pp 8-10 of this issue).

North American membership reached over 160 at the end of 1978, and we hope that everyone will wish to renew their subscription. Many members already take part in the co-operative International/Maritime Shorebird Survey schemes which are providing much valuable information for the future conservation of shorebirds. We should be very interested in hearing of suggestions for suitable co-operative projects which might involve North American members. European & African members are currently involved in two such projects; a coordinated survey of the spring passage of Knot from Africa to Siberia through the European seaboard, and a similar scheme examining the spring passage of several species of waders on the coasts of Britain (see Bulletin 24, pp 5-9, & p27 of this issue). We wish to encourage similar projects in North America.

Organization of the North American section of the Wader Study Group is purposefully fairly informal at the moment, and most contact between members is through publication of the Bulletin. Administrative matters are presently being carried out by members of an 'Advisory Panel' consisting of the Editor of the Bulletin, R.I.G. Morrison (Canadian Wildlife Service), the membership Secretary, E.H. Miller (York University) and the General Secretary, M.A. Howe (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). We are considering setting up a group of 'Regional Representatives', each of whom would be able to act as a collecting point for information on shore bird activities in their region, and anyone wishing to comment on this suggestion, volunteer for such a post, or who may have any other suggestions relating to the organization of the North American section of the Wader Study Group is encouraged to contact any of the members of the Advisory Panel.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Colour-marking

No banders have requested announcements concerning colour-marking activities during the forthcoming field season, though it seems more than likely that such work will take place in 1979. In any case, many birds bearing colour-bands from previous years' projects will be migrating through North America, and all persons are asked to keep a watch for and report any shorebirds they may see with colour-bands or colour-dyes.

Observers are asked to make a note of as many details as possible, including species, date, place, colour of dye and part of bird marked, colour, number and position of colour-bands and metal band, including whether the bands were located above or below the 'knee'.

The following is a list of recent colour-marking projects which in many cases may be operating next summer, with notes on techniques being used. Anyone seeing a colour-marked bird should report the details to the U.S. Banding Laboratory, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Migratory Bird Management, Laurel, Maryland 20811, U.S.A. Where there is no doubt as to the origin of the bird, a direct report to the bander should also be made and would be very much appreciated.

1. James Bay, Canada  
Dr. R.I.G. Morrison, Canadian Wildlife Service, 1725 Woodward Drive, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1G 3Z7.  
Dye - picric acid (yellow/orange)  
Bands - yellow, light blue, metal; above and below 'knee'.
2. Surinam, South America  
Dr. A.L. Spaans, Surinam Forestry Service; present address, Research Institute for Nature Management, Kemperbergerweg 67, Arnhem, The Netherlands  
Dye - none  
Bands - orange, above 'knee'.
3. Alaska, U.S.A.  
R.E. Gill, Jr., U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1011 E. Tudor Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99503, U.S.A.  
Dye - picric acid  
Bands - various, above and below 'knee'.
4. North Dakota, U.S.A.  
D. Lank, Langmuir Laboratory, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y. 14853, U.S.A.  
Dye - blue and green used in 1978  
Wing tags - various colours with various markings.
5. Massachusetts, U.S.A.  
Brian A. Harrington, Manomet Bird Observatory, Manomet, Massachusetts 02345, U.S.A.  
Dye - none  
Bands - various colours in various positions.

#### Shorebird surveys

Since 1974, the Canadian Wildlife Service and Manomet Bird Observatory have been collaborating in organizing an international shorebird survey network in North, Central and South America and the Caribbean. Valuable data are being obtained for identifying critical shorebird resources, and some of the preliminary results will be presented at the 44th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Toronto in March 1979. As well as providing information on critical shorebird areas and habitats, survey data are helping to delineate different migration routes and strategies used by various species. Such information is of basic importance in designing proper conservation policies. Long-term information is most useful, and it is planned to continue the surveys in 1979. Volunteers who may be able to take part either by continuing coverage of an area counted in previous years or who may be able to survey new areas would be most welcome. We are particularly interested in hearing from anyone who may be able to provide information on shorebirds in South America, or who may be able to suggest persons with whom we could get in touch in this respect. Participants are asked to adopt a study area in which the shorebirds are counted regularly during the course of the autumn migration, and/or into the winter where appropriate. Instructions and forms are provided.

Participants wishing to survey areas in Canada are asked to contact Dr. R.I.G. Morrison, Canadian Wildlife Service, 1725 Woodward Drive, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, Canada K1G 3Z7; those wishing to cover areas in the U.S.A., Central America, the Caribbean, or South America are asked to contact Brian A. Harrington, Manomet Bird Observatory, Manomet, Mass. 02345, U.S.A.

#### WADER STUDIES IN SURINAM, SOUTH AMERICA

by Arie L. Spaans

#### Introduction

Throughout the year, the muddy coast of Surinam, northeastern South America, forms a favourite haunt for North American shorebirds. In 1970 the Nature Conservation Department of the Surinam Forest Service and the Foundation for Nature Preservation in Surinam (STINASU) initiated a long-term study on these birds. The main objective of the study was to assess the importance of this coast for waders in order to examine whether, from a nature conservation point of view, the birds would need more protection than they were receiving. I was engaged in the study from April 1970 to May 1973 and from June 1975 to May 1977. In this paper I shall summarize what was done on the subject in these years, and also give some preliminary results. The main questions we wanted to answer were: which species of shorebirds occur along the coast, in what numbers, how do the numbers fluctuate throughout the year? Where do the birds come from, where do they winter? Do they moult in the area, which habitats do they use for feeding and roosting, which are their foods, how do they feed upon them and how important is the coast for North American waders from an international point of view?

#### The area

The 350 km shoreline of Surinam consists of extensive tidal mudflats, covered on the higher parts with black mangrove Avicennia germinans forests. The flats alternate in space and time from an accretion to an erosion coast. Along the erosion parts of the coast, the tidal zone consists mostly of a narrow, firm and tough clay bank eroding from older deposits. During the study, 66% of Surinam's shoreline was in accretion, 24% was in erosion, 4% was stationary, while 6% was fringed with a sandy beach. The coastal