NORTH AMERICAN SECTION No. 5

Editor

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Colour-marking

Currently and recently active colour marking projects were listed in Bulletin No. 26, p.36. Persons observing a colour-marked bird are asked to send details of the sighting to the bander who marked the bird if possible and to the U.S. Banding Laboratory, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Office of Migratory Bird Management, Laurel, Maryland 20811, U.S.A.

Shorebird Surveys

The Canadian Wildlife Service and Manomet Bird Observatory are planning to continue the Maritimes Shorebird Survey and International Shorebird Survey schemes in 1980. Anyone who is not currently participating and wishes to do so should contact one of the following: for areas in Canada - Dr. R.I.G. Morrison, Canadian Wildlife Service, 1725 Woodward Drive, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1G 3Z7; for all other areas - B.A. Harrington, Manomet Bird Observatory, Manomet, Massachusetts 02345, U.S.A.

Proposed Shorebird Meeting

We should like to ascertain from members potential interest for holding a meeting concerned with shorebird research in the Americas at some point during the next couple of years. The Pacific Seabird Group has held highly successful shorebird meetings during the past several years and there is clearly considerable scope for a conference dealing solely with shorebird studies. We should like to request any members who may have opinions or ideas on this matter to contact the General Secretary of the North American Section, Dr. Marshall A. Howe, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Migratory Bird and Habitat Research Laboratory, Laurel, Maryland 20811, U.S.A. If you would be interested in such a meeting and able to attend, please let Marshall Howe know.

Articles and Material for the Bulletin

Woefully little material is finding its way to the Editor from members except as the result of direct requests. If you are carrying out shorebird work, please consider submitting an article to the Bulletin. Articles need not be long and may contain preliminary results where these are of interest - publication in the Bulletin is not intended to preclude later publication in ornithological journals.

BIOMETRICS AND MOULT OF SANDERLINGS Calidris alba DURING THE AUTUMN IN SURINAME

by Arie L. Spaans

Biometric and moult studies of migrating birds may provide useful information about the birds' origin, their wintering areas or the migration routes they follow. This paper describes the biometrics and moult stage of Sanderlings Calidris alba caught on the coast of Suriname, northeastern South America, during late September and early October. The main purpose of this paper is to show that in mid autumn two groups of first-year Sanderlings, differing in weight and moult stage, are present. It is suggested that the two groups originate from different geographical areas.

Methods

From 30 September to 2 October 1975, 80 first-year and 10 adult Sanderlings were mist-netted around high tide on the Atlantic coast of Suriname near Krofajapasi, approximately 50 km ENE of Paramaribo. Birds were ringed and processed as soon as possible after capture. They were aged on the basis of plumage characteristics described by Prater et al. (1977). Bill lengths (exposed culmen) were measured to the nearest 0.1mm, wing lengths (maximum chord method) to the nearest mm. Weights were taken to the nearest 0.5g. Nearly all the birds were examined for moulting primaries, secondaries, tertials, scapulars and wing coverts in the right wing, and for moulting feathers of the crown, upperparts (hind neck and back), underparts (throat, breast and abdomen) and the tail. In some cases not all the measurements were taken or all the feather groups examined. This accounts for the differences in sample size.

Results

Biometrics

Measurements and weights are summarised in Table 1. First year birds had slightly shorter bills and longer wings than adults. Their weights were also slightly lower. Only the difference in bill length, however, appeared to be significant (Mann-Whitney U test, $p = 0.04$).

The bill and wing length distributions of the first-year birds suggest a bimodality (Figure 1). The Percentage Cumulative Frequency (PCF) method (Griffiths 1968) gives mean bill lengths for the two components of the population of 25.5 and 27.7mm, with a standard deviation of 0.8 and 0.9mm, respectively. The mean wing lengths of the two population components are 125.9 and 131.0mm, with a standard deviation of 1.7 and 2.0mm, respectively. In both cases