



## NORTH AMERICAN SECTION No. 8

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Colour-marking

A number of colour-marking schemes will again be active in 1981 and observers are asked to be on the lookout for birds marked both this summer and in previous years. Details to be noted include species, date, place, colour of any dye and part of bird marked, and colour, number and position of colour-bands and metal band, including whether the bands were located on the 'upper' or 'lower' leg. Where the origin of the bird can be determined, a report may be sent directly to the bander as well as to the U.S. Banding Laboratory, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Office of Migratory Bird Management, Laurel, Maryland 20811, U.S.A. The following are some of the schemes known to be operating in 1981 or in recent years - a fuller list is given in WSG Bulletin No. 29, N.A. Section No. 6, p. 27. Please contact the Editor if you would like a colour-marking scheme advertised.

1. C.W.S. Studies in James Bay The large-scale shorebird banding program run by the Canadian Wildlife Service in James Bay, Canada, will be continued in 1981. Birds are marked with picric acid and yellow or light blue colour-bands. Full details of sightings should be sent to Dr. R.I.G. Morrison, Canadian Wildlife Service, 1725 Woodward Drive, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. K1A 0E7.

2. Red Knot A program of coordinated banding studies to investigate the migration of the Red Knot is being carried out by the Manomet Bird Observatory, with the involvement of the Canadian Wildlife Service. Over the past year, MBO staff have captured Red Knot in New Jersey, Massachusetts and Florida, and fieldwork is planned in Argentina in April 1981. Birds are being marked with picric acid and colour-bands. We are requesting anyone observing Red Knot to make a special effort to examine the birds for dye or colour-bands and to report any sightings to Brian A. Harrington, Manomet Bird Observatory, Manomet, Massachusetts 02345, U.S.A. - telephone (617)-224-6521. General observations on concentrations of Red Knot would also be very much appreciated, including reports where it can be ascertained that there were no colour-marked birds in a flock.

3. Other projects Please see listing in WSG Bulletin No. 29, N.A. Section No. 6, p. 27. Additional projects include: Marbled Godwits on Bodega Bay, California, by Peter G. Connors, Semipalmated Sandpipers at Churchill, Manitoba by Cheri L. Gratto and Baird's Sandpipers on Ellesmere Island by B. Witts and R.I.G. Morrison.

### International Shorebird Survey Scheme

The I.S.S./Maritimes Shorebird Survey scheme will continue in 1981. It is providing very useful data on shorebird distribution over a wide geographical area and we should welcome the participation of both old and new volunteer observers. We are especially interested in expanding the survey network in Central and South America. If you are able to assist with the surveys or know of anyone else who might, please contact one of the following:

1. for areas in Canada: Dr. R.I.G. Morrison, at the address above,
2. for areas in the U.S.A., the Caribbean, Central and South America: Brian A. Harrington, Manomet Bird Observatory, Manomet, Massachusetts 02345, U.S.A.

## PREDATOR-MOBGING BEHAVIOUR IN THE SHOREBIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA

by Tex A. Sordahl

The function, context and control of mobbing are poorly understood (Curio 1978). Its presence or absence in a species does not relate simply to taxonomy (Altmann 1956). And while some attempts have been made to interpret the likelihood of mobbing as a function of social grouping patterns, especially the probability of having kin nearby (Rohwer et al. 1976), other factors must be involved. For example, some evidence suggests that mobbing is more common among larger species of related taxa (Hamilton 1975). In an attempt to gain insights about mobbing, I examined its occurrence in the North American Charadrii. The results of my survey are presented here. The determinants and functions of shorebird mobbing will be discussed in greater detail elsewhere (Sordahl ms).

At least four types of shorebird behaviour could be interpreted as mobbing: (1) the tendency of nonbreeding flocks of some species to follow or track hunting raptors while making rapid maneuvers; (2) the tendency of many shorebirds to respond to their flockmates' distress screams by flying around them (Rohwer et al. 1976); (3) the tendency of individuals to be attracted to predators, circle around them or even land nearby (e.g. Sordahl 1979: 566; see interpretation in Kruuk 1979); (4) the swoop-diving or dive-bombing displays, and the actual chasing of potential predators, that many shorebirds exhibit. In this paper I restrict the term mobbing to the last category of behaviours which should perhaps be referred to as attack-mobbing. Thus, I exclude behaviours which may be only curiosity or escape behaviours, and limit mobbing to actions which have a more direct anti-predator function. Several shorebirds exhibit a behaviour, apparently evolved specifically to prevent ungulates from stepping on nests, in which the incubating bird allows the mammal to approach within 1-2 steps before flushing into its face; this may deflect the mammal, but it should not be considered mobbing.

I classified shorebirds as either mobbers or non-mobbers, based on personal experience and questionnaires sent to researchers who have extensive field experience with particular species. The questionnaire explained the definition of mobbing used here and inquired simply whether or not a species had ever been observed mobbing potential predators of adults, eggs or chicks.