

## OTHER NOTICES

### Moroccan Ornithological Atlas

Since its creation in 1920, the Institut Scientifique of Rabat (Mohamed V University) has collected all ornithological observations in Morocco. It has an Ornithological Committee, which publishes an annual report with the full support and assistance of all resident ornithologists. This year it is launching a five-year Atlas project on the breeding birds in Morocco.

Any unpublished records from visiting birdwatchers in Morocco should be sent for inclusion in the yearly report or in the Atlas. All contributions will be acknowledged by: Michel Thévenot, Institut Scientifique, Centrale ornithologique, B.P. 703 RABAT-Agdal (MAROC).

### Second European Woodcock and Snipe Workshop March 30, 31 and 1 April 1982 at The Game Conservancy, Fordingbridge, Hampshire.

Technical sessions will be devoted to various aspects of woodcock and snipe research and management, such as Habitat, feeding and breeding ecology, behaviour, winter ecology. Ringing results, migration, population dynamics, hunting. Telemetry, kill statistics, wing collection.

A field trip and time for informal discussions (including aging demonstrations) also will be scheduled.

Although the Workshop will primarily concern the European woodcock and snipe we heartily welcome our American colleagues and relevant papers on their research. Persons wishing to present a paper (in English) should send a title and abstract to Herby Kalchreuter, D-7823 Bonndorf-Glashutte, F.R.G. not later than December 1, 1981. Appropriate papers will be published as the Proceedings of the Second Woodcock and Snipe Workshop.

Further details will be announced by the next WSRG-Newsletter (December 1981). For further information write to Dr. H. Kalchreuter, D-7823 Bonndorf-Glashutte, West Germany.

### Marine Litter Research

Many WSG members must frequently walk along shores and will not need reminding of the junk which is becoming more and more ubiquitous on our beaches. Some of those in Britain may like to take part in a study of marine litter, its environmental impacts, composition, distribution, etc., organised by Trevor R. Dixon, Lecturer in Environmental Science at Buckinghamshire College of Higher Education.

In the first National Shoreline Refuse and Litter Survey (sponsored by the Keep Britain Tidy Group, The Sunday Times and the WATCH Club) in 1978-1979 almost 800 survey forms recording over 20,000 items of litter were returned showing that containers made from plastic, glass, metal, paper/board and wood were the most frequently found category. Of these, 42% were made from plastic and 22% from metal. 47% of the plastic containers were lavatory cleanser and other household product bottles originating from many different countries but mostly from the U.K. 67% of metal containers were drinks cans - mostly of the pull tab type, the majority probably originating from local discards by holiday makers on beaches during the summer months. Samples of plastic and glass bottles were dated showing that most were current production types or less than five years old.

A wide range of other types of litter were identified including plastics, metal and wooden items including driftwood. Unexpected finds included the remnants of a drinks cooler, a luggage trolley, part of an aircraft wing, a sewing machine, used British Rail cheques, and a crematorium urn. Potentially hazardous finds included a wide range of drugs, chemicals, munitions, and pyrotechnics.

Trevor Dixon comments:

"The prevalence of plastic containers and materials, even though they comprise a small proportion of ship generated waste, can be explained by its durability, and is the cause of increasing alarm from environmentalists because long-term effects on sea and beach environments are not known. Quite apart from the aesthetic degradation of all litter on coastal amenities other ecological impacts have been identified.

"Living organisms have ingested marine litter or become entangled in it, often with fatal results. For example, seabirds have lined their nests with scraps of fishing net and inadvertently killed their offspring when they subsequently became entangled in it. Many items of litter, including a small toy, have been found in the stomachs of other seabirds. Hundreds of seals have been maimed or killed following entanglement in various items of litter. Human injuries include foot lacerations from ring pull tabs of drinks containers or other sharp edges of metal or glass items of litter found on beaches. Also, human health hazards arising from encounters with packaged hazardous goods lost from ships and subsequently washed ashore have been identified. On one occasion 43 people were called to hospital for medical examination following exposure to concentrated ethyl mercaptan fumes. More recently canisters of arsenic trichloride, which could have given off lethal fumes if exposed to the atmosphere, were washed ashore on to beaches of southern England.

"The results of the survey help prove that widespread and continuous dumping of refuse by ships and pleasure craft at sea is seriously affecting our coastal amenities, particularly beaches used for leisure and recreation. At the present time there are no effective marine waste disposal controls and our aim is to strengthen the case for these by providing hard evidence which shows the detrimental environmental impact that indiscriminate and deliberate dumping at sea is causing."

A second survey is now beginning. Two sorts of help would be welcome:

- (a) volunteers to take part in the survey (these should please send a large stamped addressed envelope to: National Shoreline Refuse & Litter Survey, Keep Britain Tidy Group, 37 West Street, Brighton, BN1 2RE);
- (b) reports of incidents involving damage to any wildlife caused by litter (these should be sent to Trevor Dixon, Buckinghamshire College of Higher Education, Queen Alexandra Road, High Wycombe HP11 2JZ).