

WSG PROJECT ON MOVEMENTS OF WADER POPULATIONS IN WESTERN EUROPE: SIXTH PROGRESS REPORT

by M. W. and Ann Pienkowski

We shall keep this report very short, not only because much of the summer is spent on administrative tasks concerned with the data collection rather than receiving exciting news, but also because space in the Bulletin is limited and some non-participants in the project might find too much on progress reports trying!

We were very pleased to note that, following our report on data collection from wader-ringers in the last progress report, several other groups have arranged to start coding and sending their records. More are always welcome.

We are in the midst of making arrangements for the visible marking programme for the coming autumn and winter. This will have just started by the time that this Bulletin is received. There seem to be good prospects for marking in the Vadehavet/Wattenmeer/Waddenzee complex of Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands; the Zeeland Delta of SW Netherlands; the Normandy/Brittany coast of France; the Moray Firth and the Clyde Estuary in Scotland; The Wash and Teesmouth of the east coast of England; and several sites on the Irish Sea coast of North Wales and NW England.

We are hopeful that the results of marking at these sites will fill in many of the remaining gaps in our knowledge of movements from sites used for moulting and in early winter to those used later in the winter; and also provide some information on movements later in the winter.

Because of the very restricted number of suitable dyes available, we have had to vary the marking schemes used with different dyes. Here is a list of the likely types of mark (and some are illustrated in Fig. 1):

1. A few birds will be dyed on the wing-bars only. Most colours will be applied in the manner of either (2) or (3).
2. Dye on the underside forward of the legs.
3. Dye on the underside behind the legs, and also on the tail.
4. Some birds may be dyed on the whole underside, and possibly also on the wing bar. For at least one dye (probably including the well-known yellow-orange colour), the marking zone of the underside will be divided into three, rather than two, parts:
5. Dye on the neck and upper breast only.
6. Dye on the mid part of the underside, leaving an undyed area in front of and behind the dye.
7. Dye on the rump and upper & lower tail coverts only.

This sounds very complicated, but most observers have found it fairly easy to distinguish these different types; of course, only some of them will be used with any one colour. If you see a marked bird, please note:

- (i) the colour of the dye;
- (ii) its position on the bird;
- (iii) the colour of any leg flag present;
- (iv) the position of any leg flag: above or below the leg joint; which leg.

If you cannot see all of this, please still send in a report as the system is designed so that we can usually make use of incomplete information.

Although all sightings are welcome, the most valuable contribution can be made by checking an area as frequently as possible and reporting each visit (and the approximate number of birds checked), whether or not dyed birds were seen. We hope that as many as possible of last year's observers will take part again this year, and would welcome new participants. Checks are required in all areas, including those where marking is taking place. For more details of the project and reporting forms, please write to us.

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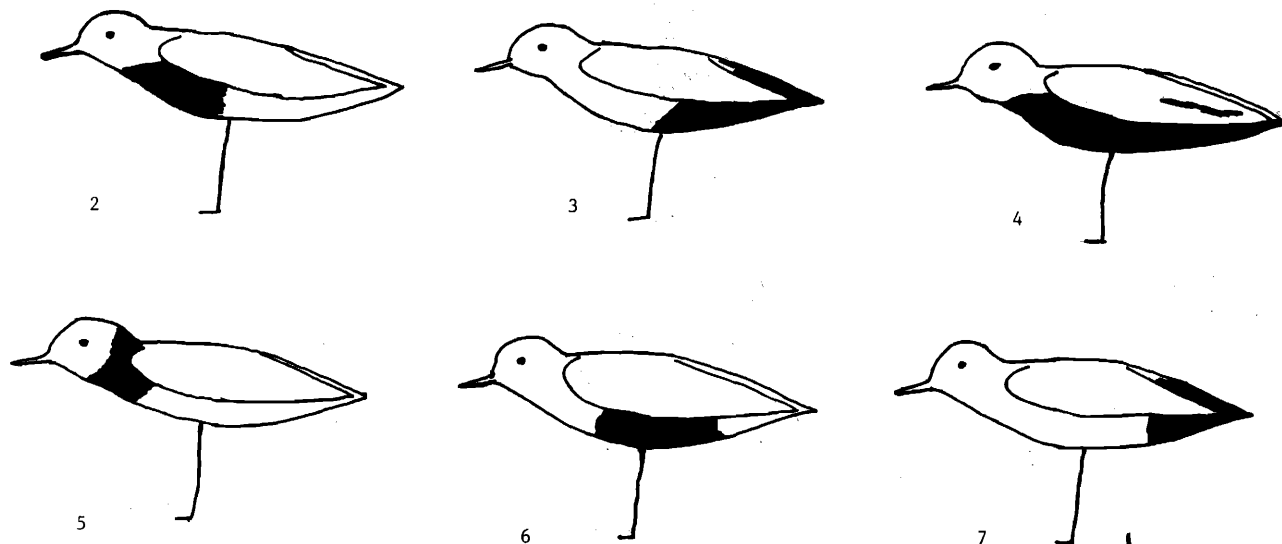


Figure 1. Some of the types of dye-mark used (see text)