

southern tip of Africa, 13 000 km away. Many BTO members may have read "Lemmings I" (*Bird Study* 33: 105-108), Ron Summers' account of the apparent interrelationship between the circa three-years cycles of lemmings, Arctic Foxes and Dark-bellied Brent Geese. In "Lemmings II" (*Bird Study* 34: 161-171), Ron and I show that not only does the breeding production of Brent Geese, as measured by the percentage of first-year birds along the North Sea coasts, follow a three-year cycle, but the breeding populations of Curlew Sandpipers, Turnstones and Sanderlings, as measured in southern Africa, also follow a synchronized three-year cycle. The populations of these wader species that winter in southern Africa also breed in the Taimyr Peninsula. They Grey Plovers wintering in Britain also originate in the Taimyr, and I expect that the proportions of first-year birds in Britain can be shown to fluctuate on the same three-year cycle as the Brent Geese. Developing this international

theme further, irruptions of Curlew Sandpipers into Britain seem to occur mainly in the years of high nesting success on their Taimyr breeding grounds. For example, in the autumn of 1969 there was a major irruption of Curlew Sandpipers in Britain. That year, 65% of the WCWSG's catches of Curlew Sandpipers in the south-western Cape were first-year birds. That irruption was observed as far afield as New Zealand, where unprecedented numbers of Curlew Sandpipers occurred. 1985 was another very good breeding year in the Taimyr Peninsula, and in Britain there was the largest passage of Curlew Sandpipers since 1969 (*BTO News* No. 141) and we had the highest proportion of first-year birds (60%). Waders had turned the world into a global village a long time before we did!

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