
The populations, study and protection of waders in Kazakhstan

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Within the vast territory of Kazakhstan, which includes a wide range of ecological zones - ranging from deserts to forest-steppes and alpine areas - 57 species of waders have been recorded. Two of these have been found for the first time recently: Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata* in 1977, and Red-necked Sandpiper *C. ruficollis* in 1979.

The waders of Kazakhstan can be divided into three groups: 29 nesting species, 22 migratory species and six sporadic or visiting species (Table 1). It should be noted that there is currently no reliable evidence of Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* and Wood Sandpiper *T. glareola* nesting in Kazakhstan. The nesting of Pintail Snipe *Capella stenura* was found for the first time in Western Altai (north-eastern Kazakhstan) in 1973. In the semi-desert zone the nesting of Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* was discovered in 1986 on the lower course of the Turgai River in Central Kazakhstan. In 1975 the nesting of White-tailed Plover *Vanellochettusia leucura* was described for the first time.

The most numerous waders in Kazakhstan are Lapwing, Little Ringed Plover, Redshank and Black-tailed Godwit. They nest everywhere except in the arid desert and alpine zones. Frequent, but less widely distributed species are Stone Curlew, Kentish Plover, Oystercatcher, Black-winged Stilt, Curlew, Common Sandpiper, Snipe, Black-winged Pratincole, Collared Pratincole and some others. The remainder of breeding waders nest locally and in small numbers.

Some waders have become very rare and are listed in the Kazakhstan Red Data Book. In contrast, some species have shown an expansion of their range: White-tailed Plover have expanded mainly in northern and north-western directions, Black-winged Stilt in northern and north-eastern directions, and Collared Pratincole in a northerly direction. At the same time numbers of Curlew, Oystercatcher, Avocet and Marsh Sandpiper have reduced in numbers appreciably.

Waders are distributed irregularly over the geographic zones of Kazakhstan. The greatest number of species (16) nest in steppe and forest-steppe (typically: Sociable Plover, Curlew, Black-tailed Godwit, Marsh Sandpiper and Black-winged Pratincole). Eight species nest in the desert (typically: Stone Curlew and Greater Sand Plover) and seven in the mountains (typically: Ibisbill, Dotterel and Hermit Snipe).

Since the publication of the second volume of *Birds of Kazakhstan* in 1962, which contained the description of Order Limicolae, about 120 works on the biology, distribution and abundance of waders have been published (mainly by scientists of the Zoology Institute, Kazakh Academy of Sciences). This is a small output, of course. The most studied areas have been the southern, eastern and central regions of Kazakhstan, but ornithologists have not paid enough attention to the northern and western regions of Kazakhstan.

There is varying knowledge of the biology of different species of waders. The majority of publications have been concerned with the study of seasonal migrations and wader nesting biology. There has been much less coverage of questions concerning numbers, distribution and feeding ecology. Only a few works have information about moulting, feeding and wader nesting behaviour. No studies have been carried out concerning wader populations and their food reserves.

There is no effective system of protection of waders and their habitats. Generally, only studies of waders' seasonal migrations are conducted intensively. As for our knowledge of separate species, the greatest number of publications concern not the numerous and widespread waders, but the rarest and most restricted birds, such as Sociable Plover (five publications) and Ibisbill (six publications). Next most intensively studied have been Redshank, Kentish Plover, Black-winged Stilt, Avocet, Little Stint and Red-necked Phalarope (three publications each). Only one or two pub-



Table 1. Waders occurring in Kazakhstan.

Nesting species

Stone Curlew *Burhinus oedicephalus*
 Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*
 Little Ringed Plover *Ch. dubius*
 Kentish Plover *Ch. alexandrinus*
 Greater Sand Plover *Ch. leschenaultii*
 Caspian Plover *Ch. asiaticus*
 Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*
 White-tailed Plover *Vanellodictyna leucurus*
 Sociable Plover *Chettusia gregaria*
 Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*
 Ibisbill *Ibidorhyncha struthersii*
 Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*
 Avocet *Recurvirostra avocetta*
 Curlew *Numenius arquatus*
 Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*
 Common Sandpiper *Tringa hypoleucos*
 Green Sandpiper *T. ochropus*
 Wood Sandpiper *T. glareola*
 Marsh Sandpiper *T. stagnatilis*
 Spotted Redshank *T. totanus*
 Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*
 Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*
 Snipe *Capella gallinago*
 Pintail Snipe *C. stenura*
 Forest (Latham's) Snipe *C. media*
 Hermit Snipe *C. solitaria*
 Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*
 Black-winged Pratincole *G. nordmanni*

Migratory

Grey Plover *Squatarola squatarola*
 Golden Plover *Charadrius apricaria*
 Lesser Golden Plover *Ch. dominicus*
 Ringed Plover *Ch. hiaticula*
 Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*
 Slender-billed Curlew *Numenius tenuirostris*
 Whimbrel *N. phaeopus*
 Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*
 Terek Sandpiper *Terekia cinerea*
 Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*
 Redshank *T. erythropus*
 Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*
 Sanderling *Crocethia alba*
 Little Stint *Calidris minuta*
 Red-necked Stint *C. ruficollis*
 Long-toed Stint *C. subminuta*
 Temminck's Stint *C. temminckii*
 Dunlin *C. alpina*
 Curlew Sandpiper *C. ferruginea*
 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *C. acuminata*
 Jack Snipe *Limnocyptes minimus*
 Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

Sporadic

Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus*
 Oriental Plover *Ch. veredus*
 Little Whimbrel *Numenius minutus*
 Asiatic Dowitcher *Limnodromus semipalmatus*

Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*
 Cream-coloured Cursor *Cursorius cursor*

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lished works contain information on the most common species in Kazakhstan - Lapwing, Black-tailed Godwit and Little Ringed Plover. There is similarly poor knowledge of many other species of waders which nest in and pass through Kazakhstan. Some species have never been specifically investigated.

However, about half of all published works have information on several species of waders (including information on migration, nesting biology, feeding, and faunistics). It is most important to gather information on the population dynamics of species, especially those which are declining in numbers and are of high conservation importance. Such species are included in the Kazakhstan Red Data Book: Sociable Plover, White-tailed Plover, Ibisbill, Asiatic Dowitcher, Slender-billed Curlew and Little Whimbrel. There are several changes in the second edition (1991) of the Kazakhstan *Red Data Book*.

Greater Sand Plover was taken out as species, since it has increased its number; White-tailed Plover was moved to the

