

The wader studies of the Waterbird Research Group Kuling

Włodzimierz Meissner

Meissner, W. 1992. The wader studies of the Waterbird Research Group Kuling. *Wader Study Group Bull.* 66: 78-80.

Włodzimierz Meissner, Department of Vertebrate Ecology & Zoology, University of Gdansk, Al. Pilsudskiego 46, 81-378, Poland.

The Waterbird Research Group KULING was formed in 1983. Studies have been carried out in the western part of Gdansk Bay (Figure 1) for eight years on the migration of waders and terns, and on wintering gulls and waterfowl. KULING works within the framework of the Ornithological Section of Biological Student Circle (Gdansk University). The season 1986/87 was the last whilst group members were students at Gdansk University, and since then there have been some changes in the group. We have had some problems, but we have continued studies in the Gdansk Bay region. Now KULING gathers professional ornithologists, students and bird-watchers. We work in co-operation with Department of Vertebrate Ecology and Zoology of University of Gdansk.

Observations of autumn wader and tern migration are made in the Reda mouth region. In the years 1984-1989 we observed and caught waders also in Jastarnia (Sikora & Meissner 1992), but now that place has lost its importance for waders. Some parts of the meadows dried out and the grasses became higher because cattle and sheep grazing was stopped. We catch waders with tunnel traps and ring, measure and weigh them. The primary moulting pattern is also identified. Every day we count waders resting and feeding near the ringing point. More detail description of the methods and ringing points was given in two previous reports (WRG KULING 1985; Brewka *et al.* 1987). The results of our work are summarised in Tables 1-3.

The species structure of captured waders depends on the trapping habitat. The majority of Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*, Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*, Little Stint *Calidris minuta* were ringed in Jastarnia, where there are wet meadows and a shallow boggy pool with municipal sewage. Almost all Knot *Calidris canutus* and Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* were caught in traps standing on the sandy seashore. Dunlin *Calidris alpina* and Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* were numerous in both those habitats. The number of caught Snipe and Wood Sandpiper is decreasing because of cessation of wader catching at the Jastarnia ringing point. The decreased number of ringed Common Sandpipers is a result of the habitat selection of this species. Most Common Sandpipers

were caught close to the Reda mouth where this species roosts in large numbers at night and where many traps were located between 1983-1986.

Until June 1990 we collected 330 long-term retraps from 15 wader species (Table 3). The more interesting are: five Dunlins from Egypt, Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus* from Hungary, Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* from Ghana and Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* from Togo.

In 1990 we finished collecting biometric data. In 1991 we will start with new set of measurements. We intend to publish papers on biometry, habitat selection and migration of Dunlin, Knot, Redshank *Tringa totanus*, Common Sandpiper, Wood Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Snipe and others. Data on fat reserves in Dunlin have been collected and preliminary results will be published soon. I hope that in future years we will be able to catch more large and medium size waders, because of a change in the type of trap used.

Another subject of our research are the waterfowl wintering on the western part of the Gdansk Bay. The reports from winter counts are published in the journal *Notatki Ornitologiczne*. In 1987-1989 we collected data about species and age structure of gulls wintering at the Gdansk Bay. Some results will be published in Proceedings of the Sixth Conference of Baltic Birds. In 1990 we took part in international ACRO programme and we ringed 1,439 birds from the genus *Acrocephalus*.

Whilst undertaking the work described above we have obtained many interesting observations of rare species, including six new ones for Poland.

It is very difficult to say how many people are involved with WRG KULING since we have never had an official registration or a list of members. Everyone who wants to watch birds with us is welcome.



Table 1. Numbers of waders ringed by WRG KULING in successive years.

Species	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	Total
<i>Calidris alpina</i>	2928	1939	1476	1771	33	681	2271	2860	14959
<i>Calidris canutus</i>	73	63	157	60	2	150	83	198	786
<i>Calidris minuta</i>	21	46	98	92	2	64	26	33	382
<i>Calidris temminckii</i>	2	4		7	2	7	9	1	32
<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	127	159	135	153	11	142	70	143	940
<i>Calidris alba</i>		3	1	1	1	8	16	13	43
<i>Limicola falcinellus</i>	5	8	11	11	1	3	1	2	42
<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	39	49	19	32	1	19	6	6	171
<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	2	6	13	24					45
<i>Tringa totanus</i>	179	241	85	120	9	58	63	73	828
<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	2	6	5	1			1	1	16
<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	4	4	11	6	1	2		1	29
<i>Tringa glareola</i>	40	64	143	219	92	63	157	9	787
<i>Tringa ochropus</i>		3	5	3	1	3	23		38
<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	243	153	212	229	24	47	40	16	964
<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	27	72	20	79	3	14	15	16	246
<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	29	32	24	2		10	4	26	127
<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	1	2	1			1			5
<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	49	16	22	2	1	3		8	101
<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	4	7	1					3	15
<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	5	4	6	3			2	1	21
<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	25	18	11	15		30	68	45	212
<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	1	1		2					4
<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>				1			2		3
<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	154	117	66	193	47	113	241	25	956
<i>Lymnocyptes minimus</i>							7		7
Total waders	3960	3017	2522	3026	231	2418	3105	3480	21759
Other species									2124
Total all species									23883

Table 2. Birds with foreign rings caught by WRG - KULING in years 1883 - 1990.

Species	Ringing Centre														
	Arnhem	Bologna	Copenh.	Helgola.	Helsinki	Hiddens.	London	Lubliana	Moskwa	Paris	Praha	Pretona	Riga	Stavanger	Stockholm
<i>Calidris alpina</i>	6	1	4	13	8	20	44		11	3				5	22
<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>			1	1	1		2								3
<i>Calidris canutus</i>							2					1			
<i>Tringa totanus</i>					2							1			
<i>Tringa glareola</i>					1					1					
<i>Arenaria interpres</i>					1	1									

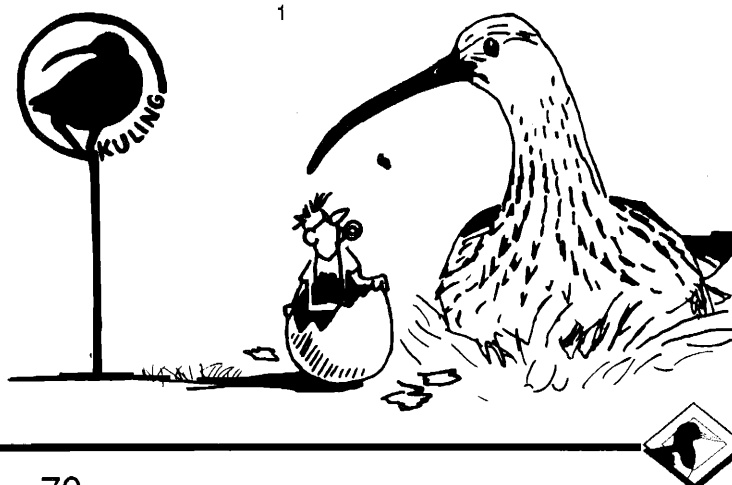


Table 3. Recovery rates of different wader species.

Species	Number of recoveries	% Recovery rate
<i>Calidris alpina</i>	210	1.4
<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	10	1.1
<i>Calidris canutus</i>	23	2.9
<i>Calidris minuta</i>	1	0.3
<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	28	2.9
<i>Limicola falcinellus</i>	1	2.4
<i>Tringa glareola</i>	5	0.6
<i>Tringa totanus</i>	34	4.1
<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	1	2.6
<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	1	0.4
<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	2	2.0
<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	5	2.9
<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	4	0.4
<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	2	1.6
<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	3	1.4

Many people ask us what the name of our group (KULING) mean. The natives of the Gdansk Bay region have recognised two kind of waders: small ones, running quickly along the shore they call BIGUS and large ones with a curlew-like bill KULING. So, the Curlew is KULING too. It is very similar to the Polish Scientific name of Curlew - KULIK.

REFERENCES

- Brewka, B., Meissner, W., Sikora, A. & Skakuj, M. 1987. Four years of the activity of Waterbird Research Group "KULING". *The Ring* 11: 339-347.
- Sikora, A. & Meissner, W. 1992. The spring migration of waders in Jastarnia, Gdansk Bay, Poland. *Wader Study Group Bull.* 66: 63-65.
- WRG KULING. 1985. Wader studies in the Gulf of Puck, Poland, 1983-84. *Wader Study Group Bull.* 45: 23-24.



STOP PRESS!

1993 AOU Symposium on Behavior, ecology and conservation of Western Hemisphere Shorebirds- ANNOUNCEMENT

During the 1993 Annual Meeting of the American Ornithologists Union (Fairbanks, Alaska, 8-13 June 1993) there will be a day-long special symposium on the behavior, ecology and conservation of western hemisphere shorebirds. This symposium will serve as the second of three shorebird symposia focussing on issues facing Western Hemisphere shorebirds. The first was held in Quito, Ecuador in 1991. The third will be in Costa Rica in 1995.

Symposium conveners are: Susan Haig (US Fish & Wildlife Service), Gonzalo Castro (Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network) and Peter Hicklin (Canadian Wildlife Service).

The objective of the symposium is to promote information exchange regarding wader conservation and ecology. Participants will be asked to give a scientific paper of approximately 15 minutes duration. Each participant will be asked also to submit a single page extended abstract of their presentation. Extended abstracts should follow the same format as AOU abstracts. The extended abstracts will be bound and handed out on the day of the symposium. They will also be published in the *Wader Study Group Bulletin*.

Interested researchers should register for the AOU and send in a regular AOU abstract. Extended abstracts should be sent (no later than the AOU registration deadline) to: **Susan Haig, G08 Lehotsky Hall, Clemson University, Clemson SC 29634. Tel. 803-656-0318; BITNET SHAIG@CLEMSON.**

Special Note. British Petroleum has graciously offered to provide transportation, accommodations and food for a trip to tundra shorebird habitat at Prudoe Bay for interested shorebird symposium participants. The trip will leave immediately after the AOU and will last 2-3 days. There will be a limit on the number of participants that can accommodate, so please let Susan Haig (address above) know as soon as possible if you would like to participate in the field trip.

