
NOTES & NEWS & NEWS NOTES NOTES & NEWS & NEWS NOTES

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CAP and grassland breeding waders

From July 21 to 24 1992 an international conference organised by the European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism was held in the Centre de Biologie des Ecosystemes d'Altitude (CEBA), University of Pau, France.

It focused on the nature conservation importance of traditionally managed extensive pastoral farmland, such as transhumance in the French and Spanish Pyrenees, crofting in the Hebrides of Scotland and dry cereal production on the Spanish steppes. Papers were read on ecology, economics and politics, landscape and human ecology, and the prospects for the future, especially in the context of the reform of the European Community (EC) Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

The final recommendations are aimed at stimulating awareness amongst ecologists, nature managers and agricultural policy makers, of the nature conservation importance of extensive pastoral agriculture and its uncertain future. The conference statement and recommendations are presented in a discussion document *Prospects for Nature Conservation in European Pastoral Farming Systems* prepared by Eric M. Bignal and David I. McCracken, available from the first author at Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Kindrochaid, Bruichlad-

dich, Islay, Argyll, PA44 7PT, Scotland.

Colour marked Icelandic Black-tailed Godwits

During the 1993 breeding season, Dutch WIWO-expedition has ringed Black-tailed Godwits *Limosa l. islandica* in Iceland, to increase the knowledge of migration routes and wintering grounds of this subspecies. All birds have been ringed with a yellow ring on both legs. The height of the rings is 13 mm and they have a black horizontal bar in the middle. The wingbars of the birds have been painted yellow.

All observers in Europe and Africa are asked to look out for these marked Black-tailed Godwits. They will probably occur in both tidal areas and freshwater wetlands. Anyone reporting a sighting will be immediately informed about the place and date of ringing. Please forward any sightings to Gerrit J. Gerritsen, Julianastraat 40, 8019 AX Zwolle, The Netherlands, or through normal WSG colour mark register channels.

Flagwatch 1993

The wader leg-flagging programme in Australasia has continued during the last year with a further 10,000 birds being marked. An important extension to the programme during the year was the commencement of marking in north-western Australia, where some 4,500 waders were flagged yellow. Thus, birds are now being flagged orange, white, green and yellow.

With the increasing numbers of flagged birds, the incidence of sightings has accelerated, these coming recently from China, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, Brunei, Indonesia and New Zealand, as

well as very interesting records from within Australia itself. The most dramatic sighting was of three Bar-tailed Godwits in the same roosting flock at the Ariake Sea, Kyushu, Japan, in April 1992. These birds had white, green and orange flags, indicating that they had originated from New Zealand, Queensland and Victoria, respectively. A report on the results of the programme to date is published in the April 1993 *Stilt*.

Allowing for a conservative annual survival rate of 75%, it is estimated that there are currently approximately 14,500 Australasian leg-flagged birds in the flyway.

The great majority of flags have been placed on the upper right leg (tibia), but a few are on the lower right leg (tarsus) – especially Ruddy Turnstone and Sanderling – and also on the left leg. The exact position is not important.

Any reports of sightings should include species name, place (including latitude and longitude), date and also approximate numbers and species of waders present, and be sent to Mark Barter, 21 Chivalry Avenue, Glen Waverley, VIC 3150, Australia.

Prairie ecosystems: wetland ecology, management and restoration

The Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center is host to a Wetland Symposium on the above topic from the 9–13 August 1993 in Jamestown, North Dakota, USA. The Symposium is jointly sponsored by the North Dakota Chapter of the Wildlife Society, the North Dakota Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Ducks Unlimited.



ed's Institute for Wetland and Waterfowl Research.

Monday and Tuesday, August 9-10, are devoted to field trips that will feature guided tours of prairie wetlands and will include oral presentations by wetland experts. Nine sessions of oral presentations are planned for the remaining three days of the Symposium that will centre upon: Long-term wetland studies (two sessions); Wetland hydrology and biota; Plants and the landscape; Wetland restoration and creation; Wetland policy and legal issues; Wetland birds; Wetland contaminants and agriculture; and Wetlands and society.

For information about the Symposium contact Ned H. Euliss, Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center, Route 1, Box 96C, Jamestown, North Dakota, 58401 USA.

Waders in Hong Kong

In the May edition of *British Birds*, Ray Tipper summarises the status of waders in Hong Kong, a country little more than 1,000 km² in extent but with 57 species of wader recorded. The mudflats of Deep Bay and pools of Mai Po, the latter managed and partially owned by World Wide Fund for Nature (Hong Kong), are the key wader sites. Numbers peak with up to 12,000 waders during spring passage, when to see 35 wader species or even more in a day is far from exceptional! Much of this paper in fact concentrates upon a selection of essentially Asiatic species which Ray has illustrated with eleven high quality close-up photographs.

Collared Pratincole marking

In June 1993 a Collared Pratincole colour-ringing programme was started in south-western Spain.

Birds carry four colour rings, two on each leg. Rings on the right leg are white over green, white over white or white over orange. Any information about sightings of these birds would be appreciated. Please send details to B. Calvo, Zoology Department, Glasgow University, Glasgow G12 8QQ, Scotland, UK, or through normal WSG colour mark register channels.

Surveying breeding waders in Scotland

At the time of writing, the second field season for the joint Scottish Ornithologists' Club/Royal Society for the Protection of Birds survey of breeding waders on agricultural land is coming to an end. In 1992, 240 randomly selected plots throughout mainland Scotland were surveyed, together with a further 100 sites identified as key areas for breeding waders (initial results from this survey have been published in *Scottish Bird News* and *BTO News*). The second year of the survey has concentrated on coverage of wader populations of Shetland, Orkney and the Outer Hebrides.

Wader Study Group members will be particularly interested to hear that we have attempted to repeat as closely as possible the surveys first undertaken in 1983 by WSG and NCC teams on North and South Uist in the Outer Hebrides (*Bulletin* 39). We have been very fortunate to have received help from the Royal Air Force Ornithological Society who have been based for two weeks on the islands. RAFOS plan to re-survey a sample of the sites first covered in 1983, and this will give us an estimate of any change in numbers of breeding waders that may have occurred over the last ten years on the islands.

I shall attempt to keep WSG members informed of results obtained both from here and elsewhere in Scotland.

Mark O'Brien, RSPB, 17 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh, Scotland

Wader expedition to Northwest Australia, March/April 1994: appeal for helpers

WSG members are invited to participate in the next major visit by the Australian Wader Study Group to the Broome/ 80 Mile Beach/Port Hedland Saltworks areas of north-west Australia. This area holds up to 750,000 waders (out of an estimated 3 million in Australia) of a wide variety of species (44 species recorded at Broome).

Counting and banding studies have been undertaken by special expeditions almost annually since 1981 and there is now an RAOU (Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union) Bird Observatory established in the centre of the best wader area at Roebuck Bay, 15 km east of Broome. A total of 33,000 waders of 37 species have now been banded. During the last major visit in August to October 1992 over 7,000 waders of 32 species were caught. In April this year, a systematic watch at the recently discovered 'assembly point' saw 36,000 waders in 370 flocks depart on their nonstop 5,000 km/3 day flight to China over a period of 22 days - a moving experience!

The 1994 visit will cover, for the first time, the whole of the 8 week migratory departure period in March and April. Daily migration watches will take place, regular counts will be undertaken, and almost daily cannon netting (and some mist

