

# Observation of a Slender-billed Curlew *Numenius tenuirostris* in west Siberia

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From 4 May 1996 to 27 July 1996, an ecological expedition was organised to boggy areas intersecting the taiga and forest-steppe zones lying to the west and north-west of Tara, Russia, the only historically recorded breeding area of the Slender-billed Curlew (Nowak 1995; Nowak & Vangeluwe in press).

On 9 July 1996 around mid-day (with thus optimal light conditions), the first author spotted one Slender-billed Curlew in adult plumage along the southern shore of Lake Bolshoye Tukmaty (54° 54' N, 62° 20' E; Figure 1).

punctuated with rounded spots, short and slender bill. The call recorded on wintering grounds in Morocco (Gretton 1991) and more recently in Italy (Serra *et al.* 1995) consisting of a succession of very short notes "bi-bi-bi" or "pi-pi-pi" was also heard clearly. Despite further intensive searching the bird was not relocated. We assume it was a mature non-breeding bird or a summering immature.

Old Russian publications also contain summer records of Slender-billed Curlews in this area (Shdrinsk and Chelabinsk), however without giving precise descriptions (Gladkov 1951: 307; Tugarinow & Kozlova 1953: 73; Dogushin 1962: 133; Kozlova 1962: 309).

Further fieldwork is planned during spring and summer 1997 in the area of this observation, and particular northwards within the boggy taiga zone in order to locate sites used by nesting Slender-billed Curlew and to identify the limiting factors affecting the breeding population.

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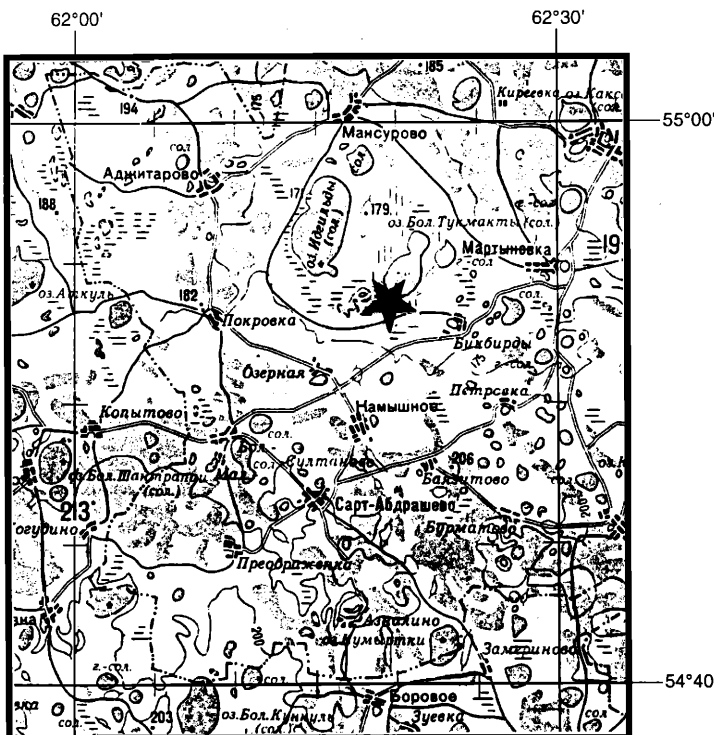


Figure 1. Location of Slender-billed Curlew observation at Lake Bolshoye Tukmaty, Russia (1 cm = 5 km).

This brackish lake, situated in the forest-steppe, is adjacent to copses of birch *Betula* sp., Aspen *Populus tremula* and pine *Pinus* sp.. The bird was observed in flight, from a distance of approximately 25 m. with 12 x 40 binoculars. The identification is based on the following criteria: small size, pale underparts, flanks and belly