



WADER SURVEY ALONG THE INDIAN EAST COAST

Oriental Bird Club's Conservation Fund has provided a grant to Dr S. Balachandran for surveying the waders along the east coast of India from Chilka Lake in Orissa to Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu (OBC Bulletin No. 25). The aims are to find out the current status and distribution of Asian Dowitcher *Limnodromus semipalmatus* and the globally threatened Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Calidris pygmaea*, and to record other rare wintering waders present. Current threats to the species will also be identified and management recommendations will be made. These coastal wetlands include diverse habitats: mudflats, sand flats, brackish coastal lagoons, salt pans and fresh waters. A rapid preliminary survey will be undertaken during the first month of the study to identify wader sites other than the well-known sites. During the second month, an intensive survey will be carried out at Chilka Lake and Point Calimere, currently the only known wintering sites of these species, as well as any other important wader site(s) discovered during the preliminary survey.

BREEDING SUCCESS IN 1997 IN EASTERN SIBERIAN ARCTIC

Pavel Tomkovich briefly summarised in a recent *Wader-l* listserver mailing, the success of the 1997 wader breeding season in Siberia, a full account of which is being published in the WSG Bulletin. Meanwhile, below is reproduced a *Wader-l* mailing from Clive Minton, Roz Jessop & Mark Barter (on behalf of the

Victorian Wader Study Group) that provides a measure of the said breeding success as viewed from within Australia.

Each Austral summer the Victorian Wader Study Group attempts to obtain a measure of the previous arctic breeding season's success by measuring the proportion of juveniles in wader populations. To minimise the effects of other variables, samples are obtained in a standardised way. For the 'small waders' this involves four different sites, capture by cannon netting, and captures in the December/February period only. 'Twinkling' (disturbing birds to get them into the catching area) is also kept to a minimum as this has been found to bias the sample (increased % of juveniles) on occasions.

Table 1 below gives the initial results for the 1997-98 Austral summer.

Based on similar data obtained in each of the past 19 Austral summers breeding success in the Arctic in 1997 would be classed as:-

Red-necked Stint

Calidris ruficollis **poor to moderate**

Curlew Sandpiper

Calidris ferruginea **moderate to good**

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper

Calidris acuminata **moderate**

In arriving at these tentative classifications, account has been taken of the fact that one of the five catches which make up the Werribee Sewerage Farm total -with 116 of the Curlew Sandpipers and 80 of the Sharp-tailed Sandpipers - took place after considerable 'twinkling' on an ebbing tide with many birds being seen to leave the roost for the emerging tidal flats. It is possible (indeed probable) that this catch was biased in favour of juveniles. A further 'non-twinkled' catch of these species at that location will be attempted in the next few weeks. All other samples are considered to be representative of the

population as a whole (or at least those roosting at the main locations). In that context, it is not clear why the percentage of juvenile Curlew Sandpipers in the Queenscliff sample was much lower than in Westernport Bay. On the basis of this information, 1997 was not a good breeding season in the eastern Siberian arctic as predicted in the 'three year, predator/lemming related cycle'. This is in agreement with information from other sources (especially Pavel Tomkovich) suggesting that 1997 was at best 'patchy'. It seems that the strict three-year cycle may at last have been broken after a run of almost 20 years. It will be especially interesting and important to see what 1998 produces.

THE STILT

The latest journal of the East Asian - Australasian Flyway, *Stilt* 31, has recently been published by the Australian Wader Studies Group (AWSG), a special interest group of Birds Australia. Of the five research papers presented, three examine the migration strategies and hunting of migratory waders at Chongming Dao, near Shanghai, China. From the western edge of the Flyway, comes a paper describing the biometrics, moult, age structure and subspecies of Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus* wintering at great Vedaranyam Swamp in south-east India. Finally, in the fifth paper, an analysis is presented of the continuum of migratory waders in south-east Asia, Australia and New Zealand. The journal concludes with a series of short communications principally on waders, brief reports from some current Australian colour-ringing and counting programmes and abstracts of the Parks Victoria Hooded Plover Seminar series.

Table 1. Percentage of juvenile birds in waders caught in Victoria, Australia in December 1997 - early January 1998.

	Werribee SF	Queenscliff	NE W'nportBay	Inverloch	TOTAL
Red-necked Stint	7.5% (617)	3.5% (862)	9% (1040)	8.5% (624)	7.2% 3143)
Curlew Sandpiper	42% (132)	4.5% (70)	21% (319)	- (1)	24% (521)
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	26% (117)	10% (20)	6% (128)	- (1)	15% (265)

Sample sizes (*ie.* catches) are given in brackets.



FUJIMAE TIDAL FLAT

Fujimae Tidal Flat in Ise Bay, is one of the largest shorebird staging sites in Japan with more than 12,000 birds counted in spring. The *Inventory of Shorebird Sites in Japan* released by the Environment Agency in September 1997, identified the site as one of the important shorebird sites in Japan. Despite this assessment and vigorous campaigning by Japan Wetlands Action Network, the East Asia/Australasia Flyway is to lose yet another staging site in Japan to landclaim. In January 1998, Nagoya City took the decision to utilise Fujimae Tidal Flat as a final dumping ground for 1,100 tons of garbage a day. This level of activity is projected to completely fill the site within ten years, removing one of the last tidal flats in Ise Bay not to have already been land claimed.

WHSRN NEWS ONLINE!

The Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, established in 1985, is a partnership program of the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences and Wetlands International: the Americas. Current and past issues of *WHSRNews* are now available over the Internet at <http://www.manomet.org>, under the Wetlands Division. New issues will be posted before printed copies become available and many contacts and resources will be hyperlinked for easy access. The latest issue contains 21 hyperlinks for your convenience!

The latest edition of *WHSRNews* (Vol 1.4) brings news from the North American prairies of botulism having killed waterfowl, including shorebirds, in the spring-summer of 1997. Based on a statistical sampling method, it appears that approximately 500,000 waterfowl may have died around the WHSRN site of Old Wives Lake of Saskatchewan, Canada. Apparently 85% were ducks and coots, while 15% were shorebirds, mostly Avocets. Research co-ordinated by Trent Bollinger (Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre), revealed that the birds were poisoned by consuming invertebrates (maggots) associated with duck carcasses from the previous year when as many as 136,000 birds had died.

Progress reports on several WHSRN projects are given in the latest *WHSRNews*. One such project is the Shorebird Migration Atlas which on completion will provide a useful tool to wildlife managers and biologists. The atlas will include maps showing the times of migration as well as the continental location of major stopover zones used during north and south migrations. Other features of the atlas will include graphs of the relative dispersion of each species, *i.e.* how dependent they are on a large/small number of staging sites used during migration. That will be useful for setting conservation and habitat priorities and is a major component of WHSRN's technical package. The Shorebird Atlas, funded by the US Fish & Wildlife Service, is expected to be completed by mid-1998.

SHOREBIRD SISTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM

The Shorebird Sister Schools Program was developed in 1995 as an add-on to the Kachemak Bay Shorebird Festival. The original program linked 17 schools in an interactive program, using the WWW and E-mail to correspond with pen pals along the Pacific Flyway during the spring shorebird migration. Teachers received an activity packet to learn more about shorebird field trip possibilities. Field trip data were shared with the other schools by E-mail and the Internet. Students also learned from biologists who were radio-tagging and tracking Western Sandpipers and Pacific Golden Plovers during migration. Students tracked the birds with the researchers and asked questions along the way. The program has now expanded from a small grass roots program to an international success! Participant numbers have doubled to more than 20 countries including Brazil, Portugal, China, Australia and the Netherlands.

In 1996, the program moved to the USFWS's Regional Office in Anchorage, Alaska. The program's home page includes maps of major stop-over sites for Arctic nesting shorebirds, migration pathway maps, education materials, and links to multiple home pages. For further information the Shorebird Sister School Programme Homepage is: <http://www.fws.gov/~r7enved/ssspeasy.html>

For those without Internet access, the postal address is: Heather Johnson, Environmental Education Specialist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1011 East Tudor Rd., Anchorage, Alaska 99503.

To subscribe to the Shorebird E-mail list server, send a message to: majordomo@www.fws.gov with this message: subscribe fws-shorebirds-digest. *See you on the 'Super Shorebird Flyway!'*

Heather Johnson

WeBS PUBLICATION

The latest publication from the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS), *WeBS 1995-96: Wildfowl and Wader Counts*, summarises wildfowl and wader count data collected across Great Britain and Northern Ireland during 1995-96 and previous years (from 1969 for waders). The overall UK total of waders was lower than in recent years, primarily due to lower numbers of Lapwing and Golden Plover during the cold period in mid-winter. Counts of these two species in Northern Ireland were, however, higher than normal. British numbers of Avocet, Purple Sandpiper and Turnstone were also lower than average, whilst indices for Curlew, Redshank and Sanderling were much lower than for previous years. Numbers of Snipe and Jack Snipe were higher than normal. Index values (using the 'Underhill' method) for Bar-tailed Godwit and Ringed Plover reached six and five year highs respectively. To read a comprehensive summary of these data, a copy of the report can be purchased from Natural History Book Service, 2-3 Wills Road, Totnes, Devon TQ9 5XN, UK.

WeBS is the monitoring scheme for non-breeding waterfowl in the UK, which aims to provide the principal data for conservation of their populations and wetland habitats. The data collected are used to assess the size of waterfowl populations, assess trends in numbers and distribution, and identify and monitor important sites for waterfowl. A programme of research underpins these objectives. Continuing a tradition begun in 1947, around 3,000 volunteer counters participate in synchronised monthly counts at wetlands of all habitat types,



mainly during the winter period. WeBS is a partnership between the British Trust for Ornithology, The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee on behalf of English Nature, Countryside Council for Wales, Scottish Natural Heritage and Department of Environment, Northern Ireland.

BREEDING LAPWINGS IN BRITAIN

The first national survey of breeding Lapwings in Britain and Northern Ireland is to take place during spring 1998 and 1999. The survey is essentially to be made up of three different surveys. In England and Wales, a 1987 survey is to be repeated that involves revisiting the same squares initially selected 10 years ago and using tetrads (2 km x 2 km, 400 ha) as sampling units. From each 10 km square on the national grid that contained land, one tetrad was randomly selected, resulting in a total of 1,713 tetrads. This particular survey, to be undertaken in 1998, is being sponsored by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and organised by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO).

In Scotland, the BTO will run a survey in 1998 using similar methods to those adopted in England and Wales but with modifications to take into account the lower numbers of volunteer observers and remoteness of many areas. Concurrent with this, RSPB are to use professional staff to repeat an earlier survey whose methodology is more intensive than the BTO's.

For the proposed survey of Northern Ireland, Lapwing will be surveyed as part of a wider survey of all breeding waders. The 1999 wader survey will be a repeat of a survey carried out during 1986 and 1987, in which tetrad was randomly selected from each of the 146 10 km squares that contained land. As well as providing information about the status of breeding waders in Northern Ireland, the Lapwing data will be combined with data from the rest of the UK to produce, for the first time, a national Lapwing population estimate. If you would like to take part in these surveys (as a volunteer) or require more

information, please contact the National Organiser, *Stephen Browne, BTO, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk, IP24 2PU, UK*
E-mail: *Stephen.Browne@bto.org*

ORANGE DARVIC

Because some coloured Darvic pressed PVCU sheets (for colour rings) must now be bought in large multi-packs, we have had to buy more ORANGE **0.5mm thick** sheets than we need. We are prepared to offer whole sheets (approx. 6 feet by 4 feet) at £34 per sheet (including V.A.T.) **plus costs of carriage** to anyone interested. Prices for half and quarter sheets by negotiation. (The price asked for the whole sheet is the price we have had to pay for a sheet in the bulk purchase.) For further details contact: Robin M. Ward or Michael Bone at Dept. of Biological Sciences, University of Durham, South Road, Durham, DH1 3LE. Tel No. 0191 374 3350 E-mail: *R.M.Ward@durham.ac.uk*

DR YAA NTIAMOA-BAIDU.

The Ramsar Bureau is delighted to forward the following news from WWF concerning Dr Ntiamao-Baidu, Chairperson of Ramsars Scientific and Technical Review Panel: Professor Dr. Yaa Ntiamao-Baidu has been recruited as the Regional Director for the WWF Africa & Madagascar programme. Yaa has over 20 years experience in wildlife conservation in diverse areas including species protection and NGO institution building. She is currently Associate Professor and Head of the Zoology Department at the University of Ghana as well as Executive Director of the Ghana Wildlife Society. Yaa will be joining WWF staff at the Education Workshop in Lagos, and the Africa/ Madagascar Subcommittee meeting in Ibadan, before taking up the post in June 1998.

AEWA NEWSLETTER, ISSUE 3

The Interim Secretariat of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) published the third issue of the AEWA Newsletter at the end of 1997. The aim of this Newsletter is to inform you about Action Plans, Projects, Publications, Meetings of Interest etc. as far as related to the Agreement. There are still some copies of this Newsletter available free

(either in French or English). If you are interested please let me know.
Bert Lenten, secretary,
B.LENTEN@n.agro.nl

THE TATLER

A total of 17,107 waders of 29 species were counted at the prime wader sites at Chongming Dao over a two-day period (9/10 April 1997). This count and others carried out in 1997 and 1996 suggest a very high turnover rate, implying that more than 200,000 shorebirds could be using the site during northward migration. This figure can be expected to rise substantially when southward migration and non-breeding populations are taken into account. The site is internationally significant for Eastern Curlew, Spotted Redshank, Nordmann's Greenshank, Great Knot, Dunlin and Spoon-billed Sandpiper. It is therefore good news that the Shanghai Provincial Government was planning to declare the prime wader habitat as a Nature Reserve before the end of 1997. (*From the November issue of The Tatler, the newsletter for the East Asian-Australian Flyway, produced by the Australasian Wader Studies Group. Editor: Phil Straw, Tel/Fax: +61 2 9597 7765. E-mail: pstraw@mpx.com.au.*)

FIFTH WORKSHOP OF THE WOODCOCK AND SNIPE SPECIALIST GROUP

After more than five years since the Fourth Workshop in Saarbrücken, April 1992, the WSSG will meet again in order to present the results of recent research, exchange information on methodology and discuss running projects. This time the group will meet closer to eastern Europe, the main breeding range of all four species.

This Fifth Workshop, a joint venture of Wetlands International and the CIC-Migratory Bird Commission will be hosted by the European Wildlife Research Institute (EWI) of the Agricultural University of Poznan, under the auspices of the Minister of Environment, Natural resources and Forestry, Poland, and the Polish Hunters Association. It will take place on 3-5 May, 1998 in Czempin, Poland. Experts from most European countries and especially Russian colleagues are



expected to participate. The papers presented will be published as proceedings.

For further information contact the co-ordinator of the WSSG: Dr Herby Kalchreuter, EWI, D-79848 Bonndorf - Glashutte, Germany (Tel. +49 7653 1891, Fax. +49 7653 9269).

**2ND INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON WETLANDS
AND DEVELOPMENT
DAKAR, SENEGAL, 8-14
NOVEMBER 1998**

The final announcement and booking forms for this Wetlands International conference, which will include the triennial Wetlands International Board meeting, are now available. Contact: Maria Pierce, Wetlands International, Marijkeweg 11, PO Box 7002, 6700 CA Wageningen, The Netherlands. Tel. +31 317 474711; fax +31 317 474712; E-mail post@wetlands.agro.nl. Conference information and updates are also available from the Wetlands International Web-site: <http://www.wetlands.agro.nl>

As the first major conference on wetlands in Africa, the conference will build on the achievements of the 1st International Conference on Wetlands and Development (Kuala Lumpur, 1995). Wetland conservation in Africa is presented with many challenges and opportunities of global importance. To date, African wetlands have not received adequate international attention either from the scientific, conservation or donor communities. This is in part because of resource constraints and the fact that local realities make implementing international conventions and national legislation difficult. The conference, through plenary sessions and workshops, provides international conventions and donor agencies an opportunity to debate wetland issues as well as determine conservation priorities. The workshops will be a conduit for local project and agency managers to determine ways to put new information into action at the local level. The conference will produce practical solutions to help focus global resources on local needs.

Audience

Experts and project leaders on wetlands and wetland biodiversity; African governmental and non-governmental agencies; international organisations working on wetland issues; multilateral and bilateral agencies, foundations and donors.

Technical conference registration is on Tuesday 10 November, with the conference closing on Saturday 14 November, followed by optional post-conference excursions. The conference is preceded (on 8-10 November) by the Wetlands International Board meeting.

Workshops

There will be five workshops, some running concurrently:

- Strategies for wise use of wetlands (2 days)
- Strategies for conserving migratory waterbirds (2 days)
- Integrated wetland and water resources management (2 days)
- Wetland inventory, assessment, monitoring and valuation (1 day)
- Mechanisms for financing wise use of wetlands (1 day)

Location and costs

The conference will be held at Le Meridien President Hotel, Dakar, on the coast a few minutes from Dakar International Airport. Accommodation, breakfast and lunch are available at a special price of US\$98 per night. Evening meals must be covered by each delegate (cheap local restaurants are nearby). Dakar is served by direct daily air-links from a number of European cities and east coast US cities. Registration fee is US\$240 (with a reduced rate of US\$190 for Wetlands International Board members). An accommodation deposit of US\$70 is payable in advance (non-refundable after 9 October). Registration forms and payments are due by 30 September 1998.

PROJECT 'TRINGA GLAREOLA 2000'

Since it started in 1997, the international research program "Tringa glareola 2000" has been continually developing and the international team of people involved is growing all the time. After two years of

activity, a meeting to sum up the results reached so far and to plan activities for future years is needed. Therefore, Waterbird Research Group KULING invites participants to a Workshop on Project "Tringa glareola 2000". Within the Workshop the following topics are planned:

1. Brief presentation of all (past and present) studies on Wood Sandpiper migration in each country;
2. Original talks on research on this species;
3. Discussion on proposals of common research topics on Wood Sandpipers, which could be realised in future seasons of the Project

Participants are requested to prepare presentations and provide them also in written form as all workshop proceedings will be published as an issue of the journal *The Ring*.

The Workshop will be held on 22 November 1998, near Gdansk, Poland. On 21 November, a general conference dedicated to Polish research on waders' migration is planned and overseas participants are welcomed to that also (English version of abstracts of talks and posters will be provided). The approximate cost of accommodation is between 20-30 USD per day. The conference fee is 15 USD. All payments should be made in USD or PLN. For participants from Eastern Europe there is the possibility of covering costs of accommodation, conference fee and perhaps travel expenses. All persons interested in participating in the Workshop will receive the second announcement with further details in May 1998.

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