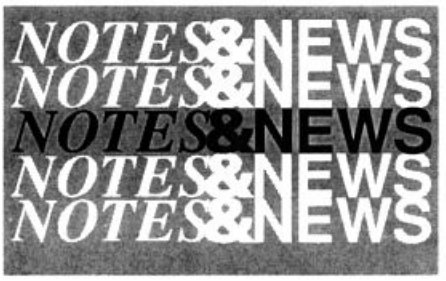

100 YEARS OF BIRD RINGING, 1899 –1999

An International Conference examining the results and perspectives of bird ringing over the past 100 years, was held at Helgoland, Germany, from 29 September to 3 October 1999. This EURING (The European Union for Bird Ringing) Conference hosted by the Institut für Vogelforschung 'Vogelwarte Helgoland', comprised of 14 sessions including symposiums on migration routes, migration ecology, wintering ecology, breeding ecology, survival studies, integrated monitoring, information systems and bird marking beyond ringing. Naturally in celebration of a 100 years of ringing, the past, present and future of bird ringing was addressed in presentations such as Clive Minton's *The history of wader ringing*.

The abstracts from this conference are now available on–line at the Web site: http://home.t–online.de/home/O.Hueppop–IFV/abstract.htm
Amongst those presentations of particular interest to wader workers were:
Food supply and winter mortality in Oystercatchers by Leo A. Zwarts,
Estimating the total number of birds using a staging site by Morten Frederiksen, A.D. Fox, J. Madsen & Kendrew Colhoun
The role of 'classic' VHF telemetry in ornithological field studies: status and perspectives by Klaus–Michael Exo
Seasonal distribution of Knots in the Wadden Sea of Schleswig–Holstein, Germany by Klaus Günther
Changing of wintering site or changing of recovery provision – an analysis of ringing data of Hungarian Lapwings *Vanellus vanellus* by Tibor Csörgõ, Gergõ Halmos & Lajos Varga.

INTERNATIONAL WATERBIRD CENSUS

The latest International Waterfowl Census (IWC) results from the Western Palearctic and Southwest Asia have just been published, including twenty–year population trends. The International Waterbird Census has taken place in January in the Western Palearctic and Southwest Asia in every year since 1967. The latest IWC results from the region have just been published, presenting detailed summaries of counts made by over 11,000 observers in 47 countries in January 1995 and January 1996. Midwinter numbers and distribution are summarised for 174 species of waterbird of which 23 million were counted in the region in 1995 and 19 million in 1996. In addition, detailed estimates of population trends between 1974 and 1996 of 24 species of Anatidae and Common Coot in five areas of the Western Palearctic are presented.

The reference details of this publication are: Delany, S., Reyes, C. Hubert, E. Pihl, S., Rees, E. , Haanstra, L., and van Strien, A. 1999. Results from the International Waterbird Census in the Western Palearctic and Southwest Asia 1995 and 1996. Wetlands International Publication No. 54, Wageningen, The Netherlands

The publication is available from: NHBS Mailorder Bookstore, 2–3 Wills Road, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5XN, Email: nhbs@nhbs.co.uk http://www.nhbs.com Phone: +44(0)1803 865913 Fax: +44(0)1803 865280

WORLD WETLANDS DAY

One forthcoming event to be found highlighted on the Ramsar Bureau's Web site is World Wetlands Day. World Wetlands Day (WWD), the 2nd of February of every year, has been celebrated all round the world since 1997 in more and more countries, at more and more levels of government and community. Last year's WWD theme, "People and Wetlands", proved to be especially helpful in communicating the key Ramsar wise use message to the wetlandophile public, and the theme for WWD 2000, "Celebrating our Wetlands of International Importance", will hopefully provide an opportunity to make Ramsar's "Vision for the List" –– a global network of interrelated internationally important wetlands –– more widely understood by our fellow citizens. The Ramsar Bureau will soon announce generous offers of WWD posters, colourful stickers for your lunchboxes, inspirational pep talks by the Secretary General, and once again there will be an offer to post a summary of your WWD activities along with others from the rest of the world on the Ramsar Web site. In the meantime, content yourselves with reading over New Zealand's planning for WWD 2000, the "public awareness strategy" from one of Ramsar's Contracting Parties down–under.
[Source: *Ramsar Bureau Web site*]

WETLANDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

On the eve of the 5th COP of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, held from 25 October to 5 November in Bonn, Germany, the Ramsar Bureau made available an important new policy paper on "Wetlands and Climate Change: exploring collaboration between the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change", newly written by Ger Bergkamp and Brett Orlando of IUCN–The World Conservation Union. This paper was sent to all the Administrative Authorities in the Ramsar Contracting Parties, with the request that they encouraged their counterpart national delegates to the UNFCCC COP to seek ways to build cooperation on wetland issues with the Ramsar Convention into the emerging UNFCCC agenda, as the CBD, CCD, CMS, and World Heritage have recently done. The IUCN paper proposes concrete suggestions for cooperation, but it's perhaps even more valuable as a background scientific briefing paper on the effects of climate change on wetlands and their valuable resources to humans round the world. The English original of IUCN's paper, together with a translation into Spanish and French are available via the Ramsar's Bureau Web site.
[Source: *Ramsar Bureau Web site*]

MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS AND LOCAL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN WETLAND MANAGEMENT

A six day workshop examining migratory waterbirds and local community involvement in wetland management is to be held at Lijiang county, Yunnan province, China, from the end of February to early March 2000. Human development history has shown that wetland has prominent economic, social and environmental values. Wetland and migratory waterbird conservation and wise use of natural resources by local community is essential for sustainable development.

The main objective of the workshop is to provide a forum for international and national experts to exchange and discuss issues on conservation and management of wetlands, protected wetland areas and migratory waterbirds by local community involvement. Four themes will be addressed by the workshop:

- Enhancement of management capacity of protected areas
- Conservation of wetland resources and migratory waterbirds
- Improvement of the living standard of local community
- Promoted community involvement in environmental protection and sustainable use of resources

The workshop is being organised by the Department of Forestry, Yunnan Province, the Forestry Bureau, Lijiang County, Yunnan Province and Wetlands International–China Programme. Further information is available from: Ms Julie Ma and Mr. David Li, Room 501, Grand Forest Hotel, No. 3 A, Beisanhuan Zhonglu Road, Beijing, P.R. China, 100029. Tel: +86–10–62377031 62058405 62058418 Fax: +86–10–62077900 Email: mayaj@263.net

COLOUR–FLAGGED BAR–TAILED GODWITS

From 4–10 September, Bob Gill and Brian McCaffery observed staging bar–tailed godwits in western Alaska on the southern Yukon–Kuskokwim Delta. Earlier aerial surveys (Gill & McCaffery 1999, *Wader Study Group Bull.* 88:49–54) indicated that the delta supported thousands of godwits, and we were not disappointed on our recent trip. We estimated at least 9,000 along the 10–km stretch of coastline where we worked.

By following foraging flocks, as well as working high tide roosts, we had a chance to scan many thousands of legs for colour flags. We made dozens of observations of colour–flagged godwits during our week in the field, including at least 28 different individuals. We still need to contact banders in Australia and New Zealand to confirm their colour–flagging protocols, but our preliminary conclusions indicate that we observed 12 individuals from south–eastern Australia (orange flag), 8 from north–eastern Australia (green flag), and 8 from New Zealand (white flag). A proposed link to wintering grounds in New Zealand and possibly eastern Australia had heretofore been based on reports of only three marked birds obtained during the previous 45 years. This information confirms that the Alaska breeding population of about 150,000 birds is distinct from those breeding elsewhere in Asia and that Alaskan birds winter in both eastern Australia and New Zealand. Further, our failure to see any birds that were marked on nonbreeding areas in north–western Australia (over 5,000 marked to date) supports the idea of the East Asian–Australasian flyway having at least two distinct populations of godwits, which are segregated from each other during almost their entire annual cycles.

Robert Gill
Email: Robert_Gill@usgs.gov
Reproduced from the *Waders–l* listserver

REQUEST FOR FEATHER TIPS FROM WADERS IN AMERICA AND EUROPE

This summer the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat organised the TundraNorthWest Expedition–99 through the Canadian High Arctic. A few lucky ones had the opportunity to join this icebreaker–based expedition in order to catch as many waders as possible at about 15 different sites in the High Arctic (from Baffin Island in the east to Banks and Herschel Islands in the west). During the expedition over 300 waders were caught and colour–banded. However, most critically to this request is the fact that we also sampled a few feathers in order to see whether we could use isotopic, or more generally, chemical fingerprinting to distinguish between geographical populations in species whose feathers were sampled throughout the breeding range. For example, using chemical means it might eventually be possible to distinguish between captured Red Knots or other waders wintering (and replacing their feathers) in Europe and South America. But also, it may perhaps be possible to distinguish between birds using different series of sites within the American flyways. A special case are the young–of–the–year where feathers collected at wintering areas might tell us where the juveniles originated. In the Arctic we have collected particularly nice series of samples of White–rumped Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper and Plover, and Sanderling.

What we are asking is whether people that have the opportunity to catch and band sandpipers, in South and North America as well as in Europe (for the latter area only Sanderling, Red Knot, Ruddy Turnstone and Grey Plover) could collect 1 cm (one centimetre) of the tip of the ninth secondary (S9), store it dry in an envelope with species–ID, ring number, site and date written on the envelope, and send it to us. In our experience the loss of 1 cm of S9 will not negatively affect the flight of the birds in any way. We are looking forward to receive material from both juveniles and adults. Contributions will be duly acknowledged and may help you personally in that it may lead to the identification of the origin of your birds!

If you have any questions, please get in touch. We look forward to hearing from you!
Address for correspondence: Theunis Piersma, Netherlands Institute for Sea Research (NIOZ), P.O. Box 59, 170 AB Den Burg, Texel, The Netherlands. Fax. –31–222–319674. E–mail: theunis@nioz.nl

Theunis Piersma, Marcel Klaassen & Ake Lindstrom

N.W.AUSTRALIA WADER EXPEDITIONS

North–west Australia was discovered to be one of the prime locations in the world for waders during the first RAOU (Birds Australia) "Expedition" there in August/September 1981. A series of expeditions have since taken place over the years to undertake comprehensive long term studies of the waders in N.W.Australia. The main study areas are Roebuck Bay, Eighty Mile Beach and Port Hedland. This region is now known to have a peak population of nearly 750,000 waders, with a huge variety of species (50, nearly a quarter of the 214 species of waders worldwide).

Three forthcoming shorebird expeditions to N.W.Australia are in the initial stages of planning. The provisional timetable is for the first to take place over a 3 week period in May – June 2000 to specifically study the non–breeding over–wintering (Austral) shorebirds. A second 3 week expedition within the period Nov 2000 – Feb 2001 is aimed at those species present in substantial numbers at that time e.g. Oriental Pratincole, as well as for moult completion date data on all species. The next major comprehensive expedition,

similiar in scale to those of recent years, is ear–marked for an 8 – 12 week period during August – October 2001, which is to include a complete count of 80 Mile Beach. The latter count logged up to 470,000 waders during the last expedition of August – October 1998 when over 128 people from 18 countries participated in the ringing (see *Ringing Totals 1998*) and counting of waders. Further information on these forthcoming expeditions can be obtained from: Clive Minton, 165 Dalgetty Road, Beaumaris, VIC. 3193, Australia. Email: mintons@ozemail.com.au

MANGROVE, MACROBENTHOS AND MACROFAUNA

A meeting will be held in Mombasa, 7–11 September 2000, on Mangrove, Macrobenthos and Macrofauna. Any paper dealing directly or indirectly with mangrove fish, birds, mammals, crustaceans, insects, molluscs, annelids and other invertebrates is more than welcome.

Further information and a pre–registration form is available at: http://www.specola.unifi.it/MMM/

WeBS PUBLICATION

The latest publication from the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS), *Wetland Bird Survey 1997 –98:.Wildfowl and Wader Counts*, summaries wildfowl and wader count data collected across Great Britain and Northern Ireland during 1997–98 and previous years (from 1969 for waders). The format of this annual report, has undergone a thorough revision to provide a now much clearer "one–stop–shop" reference for monitoring of non–breeding waterfowl in the U.K.. Furthermore it also shows more clearly how the U.K. meets its obligations to various conservation agreements and legislation.

WeBS annual index values (using the 'Underhill' method) and most counts of Oystercatcher, Grey Plover, Knot, Sanderling, Dunlin, Bar–tailed Godwit and, to a lesser extent, Black–tailed Godwits fell sharply in 1997–98. However, these species had shown elevated values in 1996–97 due to the severe winter and 1997–98 represented a return to average numbers. Counts of several species which favour mild weather also returned to more normal levels, although 1997–98 values represented increases over the previous winter, particularly for Avocet, Lapwing, Golden Plover, Curlew and Redshank. To read a comprehensive summary of these data, a copy of the report can be purchased from WeBS Secretariat, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, Slimbridge, Glos., GL2 7BT, U.K..

WeBS is the monitoring scheme for non–breeding waterfowl in the U.K., 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 and 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.

AEWA GOES LIVE

On August 30, 1999 Congo (Brazzaville) signed and ratified the African–Eurasian Waterbird Agreement. Due to this ratification the required number of at least seven African and seven Eurasian countries that signed and ratified the AEWA has been achieved and this means that the Agreement will come into force on 1st November 1999. It is expected that more countries will sign and ratify in due course.

Bert Lenten, secretary of the Interim Secretariat of the African–Eurasian Waterbird Agreement, c/o Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries, P.O. BOx 20401, 2500 EK The Hague (The Netherlands), tel: (+31) 70 3784982, fax: (+31) 70 3786146, E–mail: b.lenten@n.agro.nl, http://www.wcmc.org.uk/AEWA

FIRST AEWA MEETING

The First Meeting of the Parties to the African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) took place in Cape Town in November, followed by the Sixth Conference of the Parties to the Bonn Convention (full title: The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, often abbreviated to CMS). Apart from one event, these meetings are closed, in the sense that, in general terms, you need credentials from the Minister of Foreign Affairs to attend. You can read about AEWA and the Bonn Convention on their web site: http://www.wcmc.org.uk/cms. The event to which all were invited was the Scientific Symposium on Saturday 13 November, starting at 1000, at the Lord Charles Somerset Hotel in Somerset West. The programme included a talk by Pavel Tomkovich (Ornithology Department, Zoological Museum, Moscow State University, Moscow) on long–distance migratory patterns of Arctic breeding waders.

Professor Les Underhill (Chair of Scientific Symposium), Avian Demography Unit, Department of Statistical Sciences, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch 7701 South Africa. Phone +27 21 650 3227 Fax +27 21 650 3434. Web http://www.uct.ac.za/depts/stats/adu/

LATE BREEDING SEASON – RESULTS AND QUESTIONS

The results of this summer's work at Zackenberg in Northeast Greenland are being worked up now. We had extraordinarily heavy snow cover and a very late snow melt, which resulted in delayed breeding in waders. Many Turnstones and Knots did not breed at all. Snow melt was 10–14 days later than the previous four years, and medians of first egg dates in Sanderlings and Dunlins were six days late as compared to 1998, which may have been close to average. Those Turnstones, that bred, did so 12 days later than last year. The remaining pairs either stayed at their territories without breeding or rambled over the tundra for 1–2 weeks before they formed post–breeding flocks and left. Even the average clutch size was reduced by 4.6–9.4% in Sanderlings, Dunlins and Ruddy Turnstones. Predation was at the upper end of what we have experienced so far. The resulting breeding success was apparently heavily reduced in Turnstones (and possibly Knot), but normal in Sanderlings and Dunlins.

This is the first time that we have had the chance to monitor a late breeding season, as we have never before had any data for comparison at any studies in High Arctic Greenland. At the same time, these results may point to the direction that things will change with

Global Warming, as more snow and a later snow melt is predicted for this region. This brings me on to a few questions for you!

- Do you know of any monitoring of juvenile ratios among Old World wintering Nearctic Great Ringed Plovers, Red Knots, Sanderlings, Dunlins or Ruddy Turnstones?
- Do you know of any literature on reduced clutch sizes in (Arctic) waders in relation to timing of egg-laying or snow melt? There is a lot of literature on tits and other passerines, but what about waders?
- Besides this, I recorded a colour marked Sanderling. It carried a 'heavy' white plastic ring on the right tarsus and a metal ring on the left tarsus. Does anyone know anything about the possible origin of this bird?

Hans Meltofte, D.Sc., National Environmental Research Institute, Department of Arctic Environment, Tagensvej 135, 4th floor, DK-2200 Copenhagen N, DENMARK
Phone +45 3582 1415. Fax +45 3582 1420. E-mail mel@dmu.dk

SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS 27 June - 2 July 2000, Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia

Birds Australia is presenting the 2nd Southern Hemisphere Ornithological Congress (SHOC) in Brisbane next year. This Congress aims to bring together Southern Hemisphere ornithologists from around the globe to discuss research and conservation of birds in a distinctly southern fashion. With plenary speakers and symposium organisers confirmed from Southern Africa, South America and Australia, SHOC will be a truly international event. This major Congress will be held in Brisbane and hosted by the Queensland Ornithological Society.

Eminent ornithologists will give six plenary addresses:
Dr. Mark Burgman, AUSTRALIA: 'Population viability analysis for bird conservation';
Dr. Alan Kemp, SOUTH AFRICA: 'Sustainability of avian populations';
Dr Pablo Yorio, ARGENTINA 'Seabird conservation';
Dr. Eleanor Russell, AUSTRALIA: 'Avian Life Histories';
Dr. Phil Hockey, SOUTH AFRICA: 'Southern approaches to migration';
Dr Manuel Nores, ARGENTINA: 'Species richness in the Amazonian bird fauna from an evolutionary perspective'.

As well as open sessions, the programme includes the following symposia (Convenors as indicated):

1. Megapodes: past, present & future (Darryl Jones <D.Jones@mailbox.gu > Rene Dekker <dekker@nnm.nl>)
2. Ratite biology (David Westcott <david.westcott@tfrc.csiro.au> Peter Sharp <peter.sharp@bbsrc.acuk>)
3. Threatened species recovery programs in the Southern Hemisphere: are they working? (Jeremy Thompson <Jeremy.Thompson@env.qld.gov.au> Richard Hill <rhill@iconnect.net.au>)
4. Life history and ecology of Southern Hemisphere seabirds (Kees Hulsman <K.Hulsman@mailbox.gu.edu.au> Diego Montalti <montali@ilpla.edu.ar>)
5. Shorebird migrations between the hemispheres (Jim Wilson <j.wilson@dynamite.com.au>)
6. Biogeography - Gondwanan radiations (Leo Joseph <joseph@acnatsci.org>)
7. Systematics of Southern Hemisphere groups (Leo Joseph <joseph@acnatsci.org>)
8. Birds on the edge: fragmentation and disturbance (Richard Loyn <rhl@dce.vic.gov.au> Leon Bennun <eanhs@AfricaOnline.Co.Ke>)
9. Mating systems and cooperative Breeding (Robert Magrath <Robert.Magrath@anu.edu.au> Morne du Plessis <morne@botzoo.uct.ac.za>)
10. Southern Hemisphere migration: mirror image or new paradigm? (Ursula Munro <Ursula.Munro@ uts.edu.au> Hugh Dingle <rdhdingle@ucdavis.edu>)
11. Ecology of birds in human-dominated landscapes (Carla Catterall <C.Catterall@mailbox.gu.edu.au>)
12. Seabird conservation issues in the Southern Hemisphere (Eric Woehler <eric_woe@antdiv.gov.au> Steve Emslie)
13. Southern perspective on avian life histories (Professor Hugh Ford <hford@metz.une.edu.au>)
14. Physiological correlates of avian life histories (Bill Buttemer <bill_buttemer@uow.edu.au>)

Those interested in contributing to these symposia are invited to contact the convenors directly. Details of abstract formats required can be found at the SHOC 2000 website (http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/shoc) as can registration brochures and all other information on the Congress. Information can also be obtained from the SHOC 2000 Congress Secretariat: Conventions Queensland, PO Box 4044, ST LUCIA SOUTH QLD. 4067, Phone: +61 (0)7 3870 8831; Fax: +61 (0)7 3870 9514; Email: shoc2000@conqld.org.au

SHOC & AWSG CONFERENCE 2000

Following the highly successful Australasian Wader Studies Group conference on Phillip Island in June, there will be another wader conference in Australia in July 2000. This will take place in connection with the SHOC (Southern Hemisphere Ornithological Conference) which is to be held from 27 June to 2 July at Griffith University, Brisbane. On 1 July there will be a symposium on waders held within SHOC followed by an AWSG whole day conference at the same venue on 2 July. The theme on both days will be 'Linking the hemispheres - long distance wader migration'.

So far the AWSG has eight speakers lined up. They will cover case histories of long distance wader migration, including Red Knots through the Americas, migration of Bar-tailed Godwits from New Zealand and Australia to Russia and Alaska, and Great Knots between Australia and Russia. The results of the Eastern Curlew satellite-tracking project will be reported. One talk will review the physiological changes in waders prior to migration. Another will report on timing of departure from NW Australia, including the influence of weather on departures. We hope further speakers will be added to the program. The AWSG has approached several others who could talk on topics such as the conservation implications of long distance migration, and the influence of winds on migration.

Enquiries about the wader conference should be sent to <j.wilson@dynamite.com.au>

FIRST COLOUR FLAG RESIGHTING IN MONGOLIA!

Following the shorebird training workshop in Mongolia, A. Braunlich and B. Batdorj were looking at a flock of 120 Red-necked Stints at Buir Nuur (47°48'04"N, 117°53'13"E) on 7 June

1999 (11:30 local time). The birds were feeding along a narrow muddy shore of a small lagoon (not connected to the main lake). One bird in this flock had an orange leg flag on the right leg (above the tarsal joint). This bird was marked in south-eastern Australia by the Victorian Wader Study Group and is the first recorded movement between Australia and Mongolia!

Axel Braunlich <braunlich@ipn.de>.

126,403 PETITIONS FOR JAPANESE TIDAL FLATS

On the 12th June 1999, Japan Wetlands Action Network (JAWAN) together with WWF-Japan, Wild Bird Society of Japan, and local grassroots conservation groups handed over its national tidal flat petition with over 126,403 signatures. It was a petition for conservation of all the tidal flats in Japan. JAWAN started the campaign. Innumerable people and local, national, and international non-governmental organisations in Japan carried it out. Signatories include people from all over Japan and many people from overseas. Conservation organisations and groups in Japan are especially grateful for each of the many people overseas who expressed their strong desire to stop destruction of wetlands in Japan by signing immediately to our request, or inviting their friends to join our petition.

In fact, this is the first time that a petition not restricted to a particular local development was carried out. It used to be very difficult to mobilise public concern of people outside the locality. Only those few local people realising the danger could move people to protect particular wetlands. But this time, the extensive area covered by the signatories reflects the concern of Japanese. It is not only the loss of local tidal flats but is a problem that has impact nation-wide.

The Japanese government and JAWAN reported on the decision to conserve Fujimae Tidal Flats at the CoP7 of Ramsar Convention, May 1999. This decision that we got during the campaign period shows the awareness of people in Japan and is a result of continuous support from abroad. This recognition started from the impressive video image reporting Isahaya Bay that held the largest tidal flat cut off from the outer Ariake Sea.

The threat to the remaining sites still goes on. It is true that governments or companies responsible for 'public works projects' are starting to revise the development plan and reduce the area of development, referring to conservation of environment. In one of the revision of a project on Sanbanze Tidal Flat in Tokyo Bay, however, creation of an artificial is proposed in an area said to be a "degraded area" of the tidal flat. In reality, however, it is surveyed to be a spawning ground for fishes. Please keep your eyes on the development projects in Japan. We are also prepared to keep wetlands of this planet for all the living things depending on them and for us human beings.

Contact Japan Wetlands Action Network International Liaison – Maggie Suzuki / E-mail: BYG05310@nifty.ne.jp or KASHIWAGI Minoru / E-mail: TAE04312@nifty.ne.jp

SHOREBIRD SITE NETWORK EXPANDS TO 25 SITES!

In July 1999, four more sites joined the East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Site Network. Three of these sites are in China and one in Japan. Brief details on the sites are give below.

Manko (Okinawa, Japan)
Manko is a brackish tidal flat covering 58 ha, located in the southern part of the main island of Okinawa. It is approximately 3 km upstream of the mouth of the Kokuba and Noha Rivers, which pass through the commercial district of Naha City and Tomigusuku Village. The tidal flat is recognised by the Environment Agency of Japan as one of 12 important sites for shorebirds in Japan. The site was recently listed as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. Manko is of international importance as a staging site for Grey-tailed Tattler *Tringa brevipes*.

Chongming Dongtan (Peoples Republic of China)
Chongming Dongtan is situated at the eastern end of Chongming Island in the mouth of the Yangtze River to the north of Shanghai. The area consists of 32,620 ha of accreting intertidal mudflat. There have been international cooperative activities involving the site for over 10 years because of its importance as a staging site for shorebirds migrating to north-west Australia.

Chongming Dongtan meets the Network criteria in that it supports:
- > 20 000 shorebirds
- 1% criteria for 5 populations (Dunlin, Eastern Curlew, Great Knot, Kentish Plover, Spotted Redshank)
- staging criteria for an additional 5 populations (Grey Plover, Common Greenshank, Little Ringed Plover, Marsh Sandpiper, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper)
- "endangered" criteria for 1 population (Spoon-billed Sandpiper).

Yancheng Biosphere Reserve (Peoples Republic of China)
The Yancheng Biosphere Reserve extends along 528 km of coastline covering 453 000 ha of tidal flat and coastal wetlands in Jiangsu Province. The mudflats are accreting from silt carried north from the Yangtze River. The core area of the Biosphere Reserve covers 17 400 ha with an adjacent Buffer Zone and a large Transition Area. The reserve is already in the East Asian Crane Site Network.

Yancheng is used by over 80 000 shorebirds during migration and 20 000 shorebirds during the non-breeding season. An analysis of the data collected by the Research Officer at the Reserve (Wang Hui) shows the site meets:
- 1% criteria for 31 populations (Eurasian Oystercatcher, Black-winged Stilt, Pied Avocet, Grey Plover, Little Ringed Plover, Kentish Plover, Lesser Sand Plover, Oriental Plover, Northern Lapwing, Grey-headed Lapwing, Black-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, Eurasian Curlew, Far Eastern Curlew, Spotted Redshank, Common Redshank, Marsh Sandpiper, Common Greenshank, Spotted Greenshank, Common Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, Asian Dowitcher, Great Knot, Red Knot, Sanderling, Red-necked Stint, Temminck's Stint, Long-toed Stint, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Dunlin, Broad-billed Sandpiper)
- staging criteria for an additional 10 populations (Oriental Pratincole, Pacific Golden Plover, Long-billed Plover, Grey-tailed Tattler, Pintail Snipe, Swinhoe's Snipe, Bar-tailed Godwit, Green Sandpiper, Terek Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper)
- "endangered" criteria for 2 populations (Spotted Greenshank and Spoon-billed Sandpiper).

On the basis of the number of shorebird populations of international importance, Yancheng would be the most important site presently in the East Asian – Australasian Shorebird Site Network.

Yalu Jiang Nature Reserve (Peoples Republic of China)

Yalu Jiang Nature Reserve includes approximately 50km of coastline in Liaoning Province adjacent to the Peoples Democratic Republic of Korea. The Reserve covers 108 057 ha of mudflats that have a tidal range of 4 – 6 m. The area is of particular significance because it is one of the north most tidal flat areas for shorebirds to stage before moving on to the breeding grounds.

During the first and only known survey of Yalu Jiang in May 1999 a total of 151 708 shorebirds of 25 species were recorded (see Table 1). The site was found to meet the following Shorebird Site Network criteria:

- >20 000 shorebirds
- 1% criteria for 7 populations (Bar–tailed Godwit, Broad–billed Sandpiper, Dunlin, Eastern Curlew, Great Knot, Grey Plover, Spotted Redshank)
- staging criteria for an additional eight populations (Common Greenshank, Eurasian Curlew, Eurasian Oystercatcher, Red Knot, Ruddy Turnstone, Terek Sandpiper, Whimbrel, Wood Sandpiper)

Doug Watkins, Shorebird Flyway Officer, Wetlands International – Oceania. doug.watkins@ea.gov.au

AWSG IN CHINA

The Australasian Wader Studies Group (AWSG) has been involved for the fourth year running in training, surveying and wader counting activities at important wader sites in China during northward migration. This year we first returned to Shuangtaizihekou National Nature Reserve and then visited the proposed Linghekou Provincial Nature Reserve and the Yalu Jiang National Nature Reserve for the first time. These three Reserves are located on the northern Yellow Sea coast which is the final staging area before the breeding grounds for many wader species. Additionally, a count was carried out at the Huang He National Nature Reserve by a Chinese team made up from staff from Wetlands International - China Programme and the Reserve. Team members had been trained on our previous visits in 1997 and 1998. All this year's activities were conducted on behalf of Wetlands International – Oceania with funding from Environment Australia:

SHOREBIRD CENSUS – GULF OF THAILAND

During the weekend of 10–11 April 1999 five teams of ornithologists from Wetlands International and the Bird Conservation Society of Thailand undertook an extensive census of the shorebirds (waders) in the Inner Gulf of Thailand (see Table 1). The five teams, each with at least one experienced shorebird observer in the group, counted shorebirds in five sectors.

Sector 1:
Petchaburi area (from Ban Laem in the south up to Ban Bang Tabon)
Sector 2:
Bang Khlong area (from Ban Bang Tabon up to Mae Khlong River)

Table 1. Results (only shorebirds shown)

Sector	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Shrimp Ponds	Salt Pans	Mudflats
Species									
Black–winged Stilt	411	163	305	310	139	1328	381	580	367
Little–ringed Plover	1	–	–	1	–	2	1	1	0
Kentish Plover	2	–	5	–	1	8	0	8	0
Mongolian Plover	102	20	988	1944	951	4005	1345	92	2568
Greater Sand Plover	2	–	5	4	1	12	1	1	10
Pacific Golden Plover	38	158	35	212	569	1012	378	12	622
Grey Plover	–	–	4	–	1	5	2	1	2
Red–necked Stint	5	–	224	204	115	548	229	289	30
Temminck's Stint	–	–	3	–	–	3	0	3	0
Long–toed Stint	93	–	10	7	1	111	0	111	0
Curlew Sandpiper	7	106	920	610	192	1835	715	100	1020
Broad–billed Sandpiper	–	–	24	18	2	44	18	2	24
Ruff	–	2	–	1	1	4	4	0	0
Asian Dowitcher	–	–	79	12	2	93	2	0	91
Black–tailed Godwit	–	820	471	8	526	1825	1320	0	505
Bar–tailed Godwit	–	–	13	–	6	19	6	0	13
Whimbrel	74	–	–	4	43	121	0	0	121
Eurasian Curlew	–	–	–	2	1	3	0	0	3
Spotted Redshank	49	–	122	8	3	182	21	113	48
Common Redshank	51	15	70	1232	155	1523	61	2	1460
Marsh Sandpiper	98	51	131	445	99	824	559	202	63
Greenshank	60	69	116	161	108	514	200	84	230
Wood Sandpiper	37	–	1	2	10	50	4	46	0
Terek Sandpiper	–	–	4	–	–	4	0	0	4
Common Sandpiper	4	6	5	6	4	25	13	8	4
Ruddy Turnstone	4	–	–	–	–	4	0	0	4
Red–necked Phalarope	–	–	–	1	–	1	0	1	0
Little Stint	–	–	3	–	–	3	1	2	0
Nordmann's Greenshank	–	–	–	3	–	3	0	0	3
unidentified shorebirds	26	1079	–	1550	1927	4582	2424	30	2128
Total no. of shorebird	**1064**	**2489**	**3538**	**6745**	**4857**	**18692**	**7685**	**1688**	**9320**

Sector 3:
Samut Songkhram (from Mae Khlong River to Tha Chin River)
Sector 4:
Samut Sakhon (from Tha Chin River to Chao Praya River)
Sector 5:
Samut Prakan – Chonburi (from Chao Praya River up to Bang Pakong River and area from Bang Pakong River down to Chonburi)

JAPAN–USA DUNLIN MIGRATION PROJECT

In February 1999, Japanese and US government officials agreed to initiate a Japan–US Joint Dunlin Migration Project as a concrete step to conservation of shared migratory birds. Until 20 years ago, the Dunlin was a common wintering species in Japan but it has now declined sharply. Concerns over their status in wintering grounds led to the above project. This project aims at studying migratory paths by attaching colour flags to Dunlin in Alaska, where they breed, and collecting re–sighting information in wintering grounds in Japan, Korea, China and other areas. There are several subspecies or populations of the Dunlin that winter in East Asia. A population that breeds in North Slope, *Calidris alpina arcticola*, has been selected in the initial phase of the study. This population winters in Japan and other parts of East Asia. It can be found not only on tidal flats but also around inland wetlands such as rivers. Marking details: Right Leg: Tibia: none; Tarsus: Light blue ring/ metal ring
Left Leg: Tibia: Dark green Flag; Tarsus: none

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WADER COUNTS IN CENTRAL KAMCHATKA

A count of visible waterfowl migrating northward, was conducted from 27 April to 27 May on Kharchinskoe Lake. This 26.4 square km freshwater lake is surrounded by wetlands and located in the central part of Kamchatka Peninsula (56°32'N; 160°52'E). The observations were carried out daily for between 12 and 17 hours. The additional calculations were not applied to an estimation of migrating birds. In total, 2,200 swans, 31,000 geese 125,400 ducks, 18,500 shorebirds (not including Common Snipe and Long–toed Stints) and 7,000 gulls were counted. In total, 21 species of shorebirds were observed. The most numerous were Dunlin (7,290), Black–tailed Godwit (3,720), Wood Sandpiper (3,600) Greenshank (1,650), Red–necked Stint (1,100), Mongolian Plover (683) and Pacific Golden Plover (122). Most active migration of Black–tailed Godwit were observed on 23 May, Greenshank; 23–24 May, Wood Sandpiper; 24 May, Dunlin and Red–necked Stint; 24–25 May, Pacific Golden Plover; 25 May and Mongolian Plover; 25–26 May. A count of feeding Common Snipe and Long–toed Stints was conducted on 23 May (the visible migration observations did not allow an estimation of the actual number of these birds). Based on these counts we estimated the total number of birds feeding at the lake at any one time as more than 3,000 Common Snipe and more than 1,000 Long–toed Stint.

Yuri Gerasimov

SEA OF OKHOTSK STUDY

This is a first summary from a Pilot Project in the Sea of Okhotsk region to investigate wader migration in the fall. Due to a general lack of fall migration data on waders for the Sea of Okhotsk region (SofO) on the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, we visited the Kamchatka and Magadan regions this year to survey waders, check working conditions and establish closer contact with Russian authorities. With funding from the Shorebird Action Plan (Wetlands International – Oceania), we completed a pilot project over 5 weeks from 3 August 7 September 1999. Here is a brief summary of the findings:

Kamchatka

From 13 August 1999 until 20 August 1999 Falk Huettmann (F.H.) and Dr. Yuri Gerasimov (Kamchatka Institute for Ecology and Nature Management) were able to visit the Moroshechnaya Delta (56° 50' N, 156° 10' E) in Western Kamchatka to investigate and quantify fall migration of waders. Six daily 12 km beach counts were carried out at low tide covering the extensive mudflats of the Moroshechnaya River, the spit and the Sea of Okhotsk shore. A seventh count was cancelled because of rain. A constant strong wind, 10 - 14 m/s, occurred during our stay and sometimes made species identification difficult. Mudflat counts were done by scanning with a telescope, and most transect observations were made with a distance information (meters), which allows for detection curves and density corrections. Whenever possible, all species were scanned for flags, moulting stage, age and sex. This enabled an assessment of percentage of age classes, number of birds banded etc which helped to determine the turnover of birds during the study.

We were able to identify a Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* which is the first documented record for Kamchatka (photos were taken and await final acceptance by authorities). In addition, we found a Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* with a yellow flag and a metal band (marked in north–west Australia).

We also conducted eight counts (2 – 6 km long) in the tundra of the spit and checked the SofO shore at different tidal stages, did sea counts and quantitative beach debris surveys. Mist netting was made impossible by the strong wind, but we were able to record data from three Great Knots *Calidris tenuirostris* supplied by local game wardens. The birds were positively identified and measured; stomach samples etc. were taken and measured also for future analyses. We found that these three adult birds were feeding on berries from the tundra zone and were relatively light (130 g).

In general, we found that the Moroshechnaya region had high numbers of Bar-tailed Godwit and Dunlin *C. alpina*; medium (numbers of Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*, Red-necked Stint *C. ruficollis* and Great Knot and lower numbers of Mongolian Plover *Charadrius mongolus*, Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* and Greenshank *T. nebularia*. Only a very few individuals of Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*, numbers increased during our stay), Far Eastern Curlew *N. madagascariensis*, Grey-tailed Tattler *T. brevipes*, Lesser Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*, Grey Plover *P. squatarola*, Common Sandpiper *T. hypoleucos*, Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*, Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*, Black-tailed Godwit *L. limosa*, Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* and Red Knot *C. canutus*, only four, were observed). Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Eurynorhynchus pygmeus* and Long-toed Stint *C. subminuta* were not

observed, but their occurrence in the area is likely and we might have overlooked them due to the strong wind.

Below is a representative scan count held on 18 August 1999 at low tide, for a 12 km transect around the Moroshechnaya Spit (river mudflat and SofO beach):

N. madagascariensis	5
N. phaeopus	55
C. lapponica	3509
C. tenuirostris	1057
C. alpina	1630
C. ruficollis	616
Ch. mongolus	74
A. interpres	13
Pl. fulva	0
H. ostralegus	51
T. nebularia	6

100 benthos samples were collected from the mudflats of the Moroshechnaya River and the spit; they are currently being analysed. Droppings and food items including several berry species, were collected.

Originally we had planned to visit two additional sites, but due to unexpected problems including broken boat engines, unavailability of boats for rental from a near-by fishing village, severe weather conditions and lack of visiting permits for the other areas, these trips were unfortunately not possible. F.H. was able to visit a beach on Eastern Kamchatka close to Northern Petropavlovsk and carried out two 1–hour beach counts. Whimbrel, Great Knot and Red-necked Stint were seen in low numbers (< 100 birds for each species), the latter species was feeding on collembolans which were collected for species identification (in progress). Whimbrel droppings found in low concentrations on the beach contained berries. In Kamchatka, we did not see any other birds (for example, Dunlins) with colour bands.

Magadan Region

In collaboration with Dr. Alexander Andreev and Dr. Igor Dorogoy (Institute for the Problems of the North), F.H. was able to visit five sites near Magadan (59° 30' N, 151° E) from 26 August – 5 September 1999. Ola Lagoon (ca. 35 km east of Magadan, river mouth and end of Lagoon, 5 visits at low and high tide), Yana River delta and upriver (ca. 100 km west of Magadan: 2 low tide visits), Arman River delta and upriver (ca. 50 km west of Magadan: 1 low tide visit), and two sites at Magadan beach during low tide (Dukcha River and Magadanka River).

Altogether 70 benthos samples were collected at these sites. They were kindly analysed by Dr. Kyra Andreeva (Regel); further quantitative and qualitative work on this subject is in progress. Igor videotaped feeding birds. We were able to carry out scan counts for the mudflats, estimate abdominal profiles (an assessment of fat build up prior to migration), and, at the Ola Lagoon, examine six Great Knots in the hand. They were then were processed like the samples in Kamchatka. Stomach contents indicate that these birds fed on crustaceans, rather than berries cf. Kamchatka. The Magadan beaches had no waders. No large numbers of waders were found on the Arman River (strong freshwater inflow), but flocks of Great Knot (300 - 500) and Dunlin (up to 800) were observed at the Yana River and Ola Lagoon. Mongolian Plover, Grey-tailed Tattler, Grey and Lesser Golden Plover were found in lower numbers. Mostly due to the help of Igor, we finally observed Red Knot, Sanderling *C. alba*, Long-toed Stint, Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*, Wood Sandpiper *T. glareola* and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *C. acuminata* (< 10 birds for each species). Only five Bar–tailed Godwits were seen at Yana River. Surprising were the wide variations in abdominal profiles and body weights for Great Knot (80 - 170 g); no more than 10% of observed Great Knot were juveniles. Birds in wing moult were not observed, colour bands or flags were not found, and most waders had already moulted into winter plumage. A changing percentage of juvenile Dunlins, and a change in the low percentage of Dunlins still in full breeding plumage observed during our stay, could indicate that birds stay only a few days in the area and migrate in waves.

Below is a list of birds counted on a 2 km transect in the mouth of the Ola Lagoon, 29 August 1999 at low tide:

C. lapponica	2
C. tenuirostris	280
C. alpina	350
C. ruficollis	5
Ch. mongolus	14
A. interpres	4
Pl. fulva	4
H. ostralegus	0
T. nebularia	18
T. brevipes	4
P. squatarola	2

For all sites visited, land-based sea counts were carried out; the Moroshechnaya spit contained larger numbers of loafing Slaty-backed Gulls *Larus schistisagus*, Common Gulls *L. canus* and Black-Headed Gulls *L. ridibundus*. The two river deltas at Magadan beach also carried large numbers of gulls, (>10 000 birds; species as above, but higher percentage of Glaucous Gulls, *L. hyperboreus*; gulls were mostly in full moult or winter plumage). We were also able to identify conservation threats for waders at the sites visited, such as salmon fishing, hunting, pollution from mining and potential oil exploration.

In addition to Dr. Nick Gerasimov, Dr. Yuri Artukhin and Dr. Eugene Lobkov in Petropavlovsk, F.H. was able to meet and contact other Russian authorities on shorebird issues such as Dr. Pavel Tomkovich from the Zoological Museum of Moscow State University, and Dr. S. Karithonov from the Russian Bird Banding Office. Papers on this visit are currently in progress, a full report of the trip should be ready by end of November and a website is planned. Currently, we are also trying to compile with our Russian collaborators, a full literature review of Russian and English papers about the fall migration of shorebirds for the area.

While the diversity of birds met expectations, numbers were much lower than expected. Currently we cannot provide an explanation but we stress that our counts cover only two regions, a short time period and one field season. SofO seems to play a role as part of a moulting area, but it is not known whether the moult begins in the breeding grounds. Due to the huge area – SofO is over 1,500 km wide and 2,500 km long – investigations allowing for a 'complete picture' are difficult to carry out at the numerous beaches, river deltas and mudflats. They deserve much more effort since these areas can play an important role as a last stop–over site for waders on their southward migration in the fall.

Plans for future research on fall migration of waders in the SofO region are currently being discussed and depend on the evaluation of the results of this year's work, research funds, and support from Russian hosts. Future work includes finding funds to cover an Australian–based postdoctoral position on this subject, and strengthening international research networks (e.g.

Australia, North America, Japan and Europe). Work should further address the breeding grounds, Sakhalin Island plus the Amur River delta for closer investigation, training workshops in Eastern Russia, and capturing (e.g. cannon-netting, mist netting) and banding birds.

F.H. wishes to express his deep gratitude to all Russian collaborators and to Phil Battley, Danny Rogers, Mark Barter, Doug Watkins (Wetlands International – Oceania), Tony Diamond, Sophia and Julia Linke, the Linke–Welte family, Clive Minton's Delaware team, and some unknown weather gods who all helped tremendously to realise this project! Travel and field expenses were funded under the Asia–Pacific Shorebird Action Plan: 1998 – 2000, by Environment Australia

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COLOUR–MARKING REGISTER – UNTRACEABLE SIGHTINGS.

The following list contains all the sightings of colour–marked waders which have been received by the WSG Colour–marking register and which cannot be traced to a registered scheme.

The // indicates the birds tarsal joint (or "knee"). The colours are listed from top to bottom. So a bird seen with Red above the left knee, yellow above white below the left knee, metal above the right knee and blue below the right knee is listed as R//Y,W M//B. When the colour of a ring is uncertain, such as "Red/Orange" it is indicated as (R,O). When nothing is written either side of the // it means no ring was recorded either above or below the Knee. If the Knee (//) is not indicated the precise location of the rings is not known. ?? indicates that the observer did not see that particular part of the leg. The following abbreviations are used for the colours R=Red, O=Orange, Y=Yellow, G=Green, L=Light Green, B=Blue, P=Pale Blue, N=Black (Niger), W=White, K=Pink and M=Metal.

CODE	LEFT LEG	RIGHT LEG	PLACE SEEN
Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*			
99/AV1	O,M//	//	UK
99/AV2	N,M//	N,W//	UK
99/AV3	Y//	Y//	UK
Bar–tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*			
99/BA1	//R,W	//	UK
Black–tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*			
99/BW1	O/	/B//	UK
99/BW2	//R	O//	Iceland
99/BW3	//M	O//R	Iceland
Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*			
99/CM1	R//	Y//	UK
99/CM2	//G,G	//	UK
99/CM3	Colour–dyed pink on throat and neck – seen in 1994 in		Denmark
Curlew *Numenius arquata*			
99/CU1	M//B	//	UK
99/CU2	W,R//M	O,G//	Sweden
99/CU3	Y//M	//R	UK
99/CU4	R,N//	Y,N//	UK
99/CU5	M//G,Y,G	Y,G	UK
99/CU6	G//	W,G//	UK
99/CU7	W,B//	G//M	France
99/CU8	Y//	R,Y//M	Finland
Dunlin *Calidris alpina*			
99DN1	W,R	R,W	UK
Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*			
99/GK1	Y//	R//	UK
99/GK2	//R	//W,R	Switzerland
Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*			
99/KP1	M,R//	Y,W//	Turkey
99/KP2	M//	G,W//	Turkey
99/KP3	R//M	Y//B	Turkey
99/KP4	//L,M	//O,R,W	Spain
Knot *Calidris canutus*			
99/KN1	//O,Y	//O	UK