

BANDING AND FOOT LOSS: AN ADDENDUM

C. L. GRATTO-TREVOR

*Prairie and Northern Wildlife Research Centre
115 Perimeter Road
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 0X4 Canada*

Abstract.—Nine of 2583 (0.3%) adult shorebirds captured during migration had natural, healed leg injuries (ranging from 0.0 to 0.5% in different species). In a long-term study of a breeding population of Semipalmated Sandpipers (*Calidris pusilla*), no birds were known to be injured from the metal CWS/USFWS bands used. One of the 278 individuals resighted at least 1 yr later suffered a leg injury from a color band that was too small. In at least some species of shorebirds, leg injuries from banding activities are rare when appropriate bands and techniques are used.

ANILLAMIENTO Y PÉRDIDA DE EXTREMIDADES: UN ANEJO

Síntesis.—Nueve de 2583 (0.3%) adultos de playeros capturados durante la migración, mostraron cicatrices de heridas en las patas causadas por anillas (alcance de 0.0% a 0.5% en diferentes especies). En un estudio a largo alcance, efectuado en individuos de *Calidris pusilla*, no se encontraron muestras de heridas causadas por la utilización de bandas de metal provistas por el Servicio de Pesca y Vida Silvestre Federal. De 278 individuos, uno observado al menos un año más tarde sufrió daño en una pata como resultado de habersele colocado una anilla de colores muy pequeña. Al menos en algunas especies de playeros, el daño causado por anillas es raro siempre y cuando se utilicen las anillas y técnicas apropiadas para marcar el ave.

A recent paper by Reed and Oring (1993) gives leg-injury rates in several species of shorebirds. In this paper I provide additional information on band-related injuries in adult shorebirds.

Updated totals of natural, healed leg-injury rates in adult shorebirds captured during migration at Little Quill Lake, Saskatchewan, from 1990 to 1992 are as follows: Stilt Sandpipers (*Calidris himantopus*), 6/1257 (0.5%, including five with healed broken legs and one with a missing leg); Semipalmated Sandpipers (*C. pusilla*), 2/811 (0.2%, both old broken legs); Long-billed Dowitchers (*Limnodromus scolapaceus*), 1/85 (0.1%, missing leg); Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*), 0/155; Pectoral Sandpiper (*C. melanotos*), 0/121; Least Sandpiper (*C. minutilla*), 0/96; and Short-billed Dowitcher (*L. griseus*), 0/58).

Reed and Oring (1993) noted injuries caused by bands in a breeding population of Spotted Sandpipers (*Actitis macularia*). In an 8-yr study (1980–1987) of a breeding population of Semipalmated Sandpipers at La Perouse Bay (40 km east of Churchill, Manitoba), none of the leg injuries observed was caused by metal bands. A total of 278 individuals were seen or captured in a subsequent year, up to 8 yr after first being banded. Many species of shorebirds, particularly Semipalmated Sandpipers, are notorious for loss of metal bands due to corrosion and/or abrasion, sometimes in only 1 yr (pers. obs.). Therefore all metal bands used in this study were stainless steel; “thin” bands made in the United States circa

1977, and “thick” bands made in Sweden about 1978. All were size 1B CWS/USFWS bands.

Color bands were, of necessity, UV-stable darvic bands (1981–1987). Some of these were obtained from a no longer existing supplier in Scotland, and the remainder were cut down from size “2” (XB) A. C. Hughes bands (before smaller A. C. Hughes bands existed in UV-stable), and shaped in hot water. Out of the 278 birds color-banded and re-observed in subsequent years (834 color bands), only one bird was seen with a leg injury. The bird was observed limping 1 yr after being banded. I then recaptured the bird on its nest, and found that I had cut the color band too small. The band was constricting the leg, which was swollen. The band was removed with difficulty, and the bird was observed walking normally a few days later.

If appropriate care is taken in size, type, and application of metal and color bands, leg injuries from banding are rare in at least some species of shorebirds.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Funding for these projects was primarily from the Canadian Wildlife Service, Prairie Habitat Joint Venture of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, and National Science Foundation. I would particularly like to thank H. L. Dickson, and everyone else who helped with collection of the data, logistics, and/or funding.

LITERATURE CITED

REED, J. M., AND L. W. ORING. 1993. Banding is infrequently associated with foot loss in Spotted Sandpipers. *J. Field Ornithol.* 64:145–148.

Received 2 Jun. 1993; accepted 20 Jul. 1993.