

Nevertheless, having seen unusual numbers of adult Curlew Sandpipers as far apart as Tunis and Upper Severn in late July and early August, I modestly assumed that somebody somewhere must have been something similar; so far, however, I've drawn a complete blank; juvenile Curlew Sandpipers yes - thirties and forties in eastern England in late August; 60 plus on the Forth; several thousand in Vendee, France, with their arrival date clearly noted as the evening of 8 September; we've even seen (for the Upper Severn!) good numbers of juveniles in September - two on the east bank on 9 and 11 September, and on the west bank 8 on 6 September (seven of which departed with rings on their legs in the early hours of 7 September). But adults - no; the only remotely promising lead was a Marsh Sandpiper (which after all also comes from the eastern end of the wader spectrum) at Borough Fen on 5 August.

So, did anybody see unusual numbers of Siberian waders, especially adult Curlew Sandpipers, anywhere in the western Palearctic in late July or early August? And if so can they explain why such numbers were around - is this purely a case of weather conditions affecting the adults as they carried out their usual migration, or could there have been an unusually large and early exodus from the breeding grounds, and if so, why?.

Or is the 1975 Curlew Sandpiper invasion a figment of my imagination?

MIST-NETS

Chris Mead

It is now almost twenty years since mist-nets were introduced to the British ringing scene. During that time a wide variety of manufacturers, materials, meshes and net sizes and heights have been used and it seems appropriate, as we emerge from a very difficult period when supplies have been almost unobtainable, to run through the types for the benefit of wader netters. These are listed in a roughly chronological order, and if they are (or may be) available comments on prices and availability are added.

HIGH NETS

- A) Japanese 1.5", 3-shelf, nylon nets. The first type. Flimsy, untethered -(it had not been invented) but used by the first wader netters.
- B) Gundry 1.5", 3-shelf, terylene nets. Stronger than the Japanese material, tethered (at least since ca. 1965). The material is 125d/2-ply and such nets are still being made by Bridport-Gundry. Some 70 are outstanding to ringers and when (if) further nets become available ringers with SAE's at the ringing office will get to hear of them and their prices (likely to be rather more than those on order).
- C) Gundry 1.25", 4-shelf, terylene nets. Made from the same material as B these proved ideal for small passerines but did not take waders at all well. Knox 1.25" nets are direct equivalent.
- D) Gundry 1.25", 4-shelf, terylene SUPERFINE nets. These are made from 75d/2-ply material and their current equivalent is the Japanese nets now being imported. Some ringers have used these nets in daylight and caught waders.

E) Gundry 3", 2-shelf, nylon nets. Only 60' available. These wader nets were produced for several years but proved nasty if small waders were caught. They have been out of production for some time - most sensitive ringers have probably relegated them lower even than strawberry protection.

F) French wader nets. The situation here is confusing. The better nets had 1.7" mesh with 55 meshes per shelf. They were 3-shelf nets with braided shelf string (40.5 kg breaking strain) and 440 mesh (laterally) to the 12 m net. Tethered top and bottom. However our most recent request, to the same firm, has resulted in an inferior sample net with 1.5" mesh only (making less slack all round) and thinner shelf strings. The material feels different although the specification is probably the same 210d/2-ply. These nets are not currently being imported and it may be that the good type of French net is gone for ever. On the basis of the last quotation they would cost at least \$15.50 for a 12 m net.

G) Knox, 1.5", 3-shelf, polyester nets. These are the new ones which should start to be available in January. The material is 1250/4 ply polyester - half as strong again as normal mist net material and about 90% of the strength of the French material. The mesh size has been set at 1.5" to allow for their use at thrush roosts etc but the lateral slack, at over 800 meshes per 18 m net, has been increased to make really capacious shelves. Shelf string will be 18-ply polyester with a breaking strain of 32 kg - probably stronger than the old Gundry wader shelf-string. This shelf-string should soon be available in ca. 100 m long at 35p. The nets will be tethered one edge only. Both 12 m and 18 m nets will be available at \$14.50 the former and \$18.50 the latter. Rather more expensive than we had hoped but they should be really good catching nets and very long-lasting.

SINGLE SHELF NETS

Wader catchers have had a lot of success with singles. At the moment we are in the process of importing Japanese superfine 42" singles and loose material. Wader catchers trying to operate in daylight may find that these nets will work. Other sorts of single shelf netting may become available in the future when the Gundry material currently in Ireland is cleared. Since we do not know what they have, and any order for single-shelf material from Knox would slow down their delivery on other nets, we do not feel justified in trying to get Knox singles yet.

HOW TO GET HOLD OF NETS

For Knox nets send in the postal Q-form or a letter asking for whatever nets you want. Immediately the first of the nets you request becomes available the Ringing Office will invoice you for them and, as soon as you pay, they will start coming. For Jap nets money should be enclosed with your order. If you have Gundry nets on order they should come eventually at no extra cost to you - if you want to hear about further Gundry nets that might become available details (and prices - which will inevitably be increased) will be sent if you have lodged an SAE with the Ringing Office. French nets do not currently seem to be a good buy. Incidentally if you have wader shelf string on order Knox material will be sent as soon as it comes in.