

# Vadefugle grupper.

## WADER COUNTS IN DENMARK 1978

by Hans Meltofte

The Danish Wader Study Group finished five years of monthly wader counts with an intensive program in 1978 (see WSG Bull 23). This note presents the preliminary figures for the Danish part of the Wadden Sea and the rest of Denmark in 1978. The figures must be taken with certain precautions. Concerning the Wadden Sea, Oystercatchers, Bar-tailed Godwits and Dunlins were 'counted' with an estimated accuracy of at least  $\pm 30\%$ . All other figures, including the rest of the country, are more likely to be minimum figures. Especially snipes, but also a number of other species, are greatly underestimated. All counts were performed mid-month, and several species may have reached significantly higher numbers during the intervening periods. It can be seen that Dunlin, Golden Plover, Oystercatcher, Bar-tailed Godwit and Lapwing are the most numerous waders in Denmark. Probably Common Snipe belong to this group too. On the other hand we were shocked by the absence of Curlews. This species has undergone an alarming decrease during migration in Denmark during the last decades. Thus the number of Curlews bagged have decreased from about 50000 annually around 1960 to about 20000 annually during these years. They are in urgent need of total protection.

Also the phenology must be taken with precautions. Thus, the late peak in Lapwing and Golden Plover is caused by increased concentration on coastal habitats (where counts were performed) during the autumn. Early in the season they roost on fields to a greater extent.

Compared with the other parts of the Wadden Sea, the Danish part holds high numbers of Dunlins, but very low numbers of Knots. Actually large flocks of Knots only occur by accident in the Danish part, while tens of thousands regularly occur just south of the border.

The 'irruption' of Little Stints this year is clearly reflected in the September figures. During the peak in the first week of the month, tens of thousands must have been involved. 1186 were counted on the Tipperne peninsula in western Jutland on 5 September.

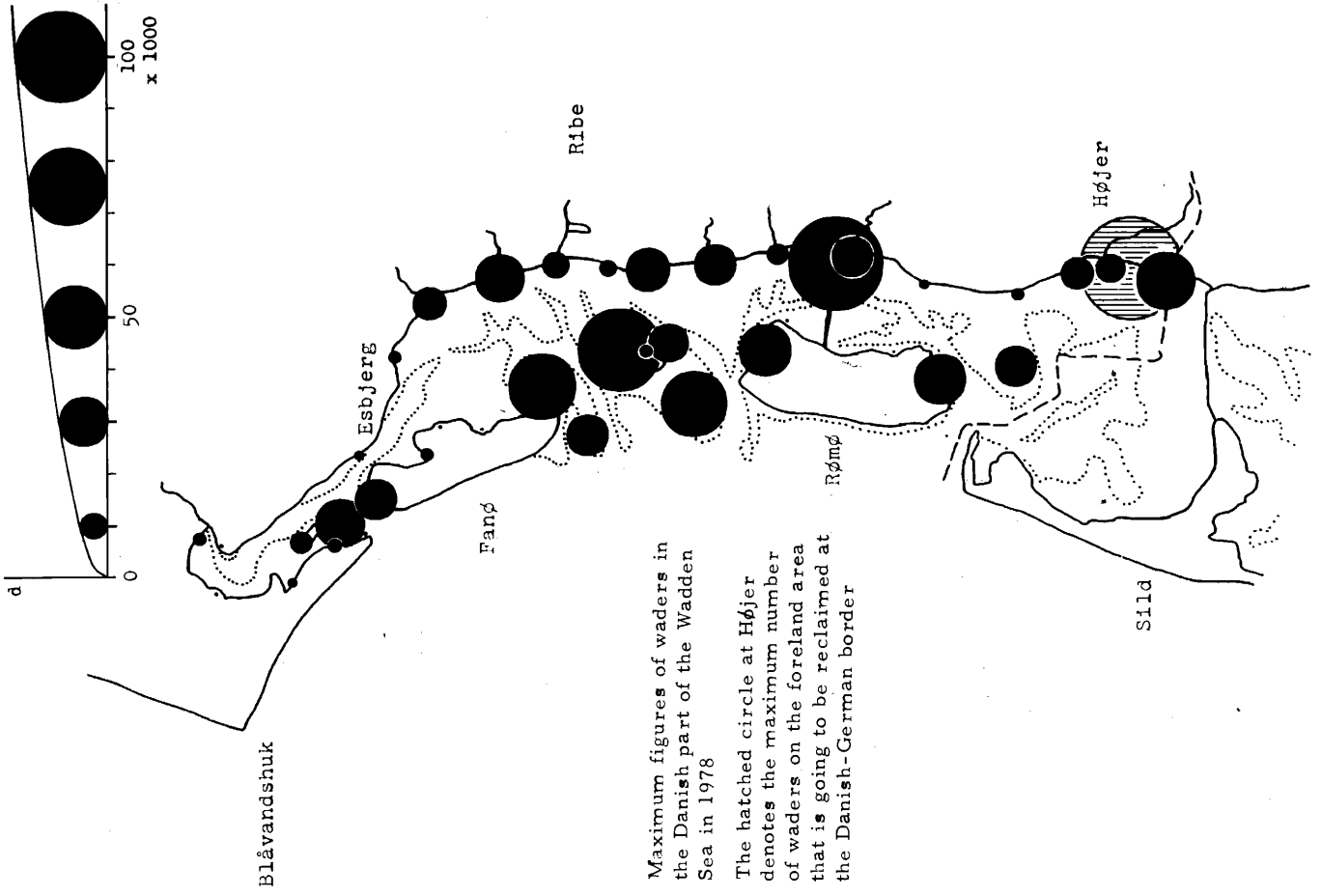
The autumn peak of 6400 Avocets in the Wadden Sea is only half last year's. This was due to nearly complete breeding failure in 1978 due to a severe storm in mid-June in which either the nests or newly hatched young drowned or the chicks died through chilling.

This and many other problems will now be analysed, and within a few years we hope to be able to present a full report on waders in Denmark.

Hans Meltofte, Møllegade 23, 3.tv., DK-2200 Copenhagen, Denmark

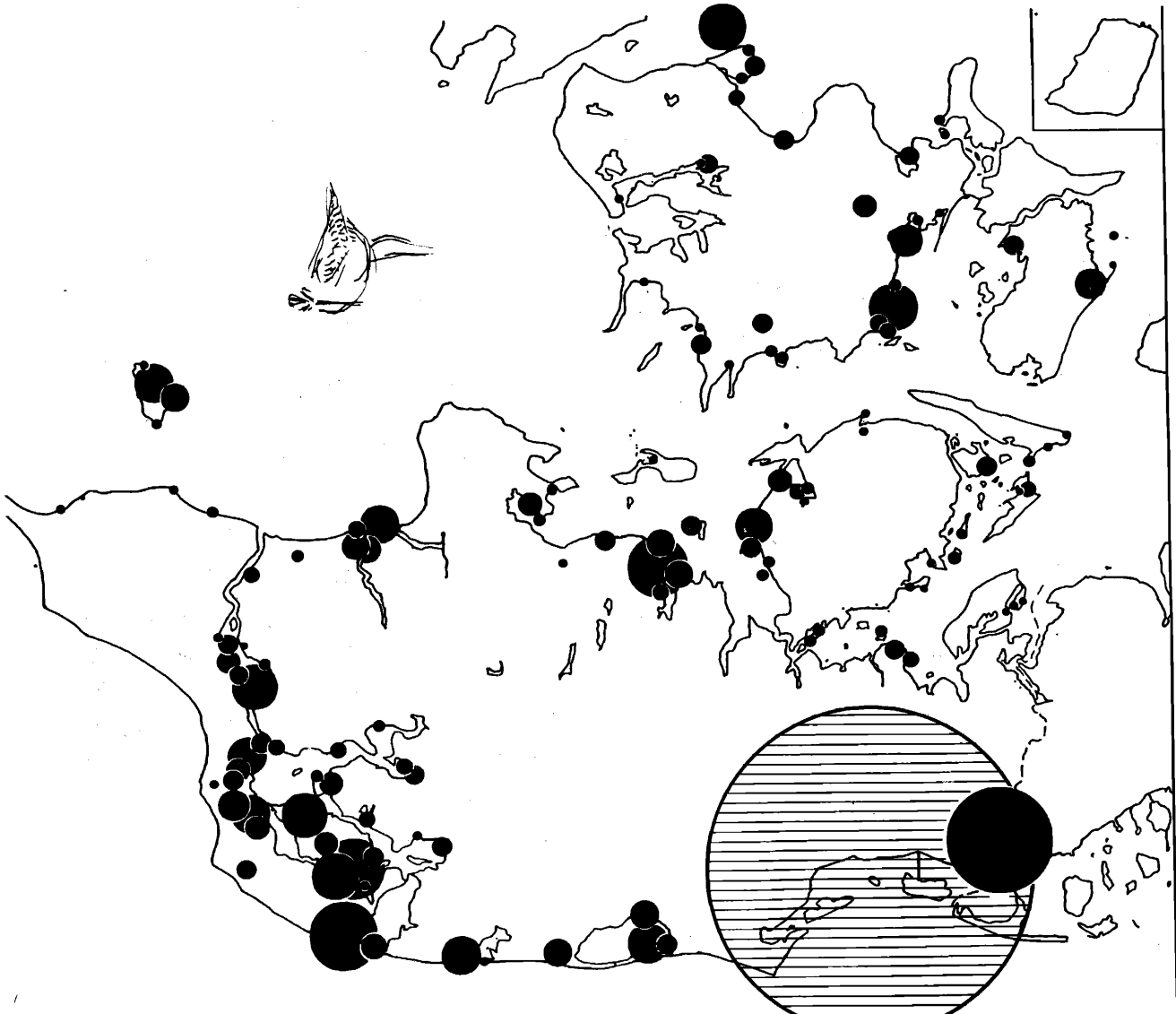
The Danish Wadden Sea, totals 1978

| Species             | Jan.         | Feb.         | Mar.         | Apr.          | Maj.          | Jun.        | Jul.         | Aug.          | Sep.          | Okt.          | Nov.          | Dec.         |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| Oystercatcher       | 21900        | 13950        | 29900        | 27400         | 15400         | 4600        | 4970         | 28400         | 65000         | 51300         | 34500         | 44000        |
| Lapwing             |              |              | 4600         | 658           | 721           | 846         | 805          | 9070          | 4720          | 6660          | 2360          | 27           |
| Ringed Plover       |              |              | 165          | 258           | 200           | 240         | 288          | 412           | 259           | 18            | 2             |              |
| Kentish Plover      |              |              |              |               | 3             | 17          | 36           | 16            |               |               |               |              |
| Dotterel            |              |              |              |               |               |             | 1            |               |               |               |               |              |
| Golden Plover       | 450          | 14           | 833          | 2000          | 2790          | 13          | 21           | 7100          | 3060          | 2050          | 5280          |              |
| Grey Plover         | 6            |              | 13           | 66            | 2770          | 474         | 28           | 2180          | 1150          | 1230          | 2320          | 125          |
| Turnstone           |              |              | 1            |               | 163           | 56          | 11           | 46            | 293           | 50            | 125           | 15           |
| Snipe               | 58           | 1            | 4            | 4             | 3             | 7           |              | 40            | 48            | 149           | 124           | 18           |
| Curlew              | 558          | 13           | 1100         | 1510          | 116           | 64          | 1330         | 3550          | 1640          | 3520          | 2130          | 4510         |
| Whimbrel            |              |              |              | 1             | 16            | 14          | 135          | 130           |               |               |               |              |
| Numenius sp.        |              |              |              |               |               |             | 100          | 100           |               |               |               |              |
| Black-tailed Godwit |              |              |              | 59            | 25            | 94          | 46           | 10            | 1             |               | 1             |              |
| Bar-tailed Godwit   | 4            |              | 2900         | 22500         | 42400         | 1100        | 6480         | 20300         | 13900         | 450           | 148           | 585          |
| Common Sandpiper    |              |              |              | 1             | 49            | 1           | 36           | 100           | 15            | 1             |               |              |
| Wood Sandpiper      |              |              |              | 2             |               |             | 1            | 4             | 2             |               |               |              |
| Green Sandpiper     |              |              |              |               | 1             |             |              | 4             |               |               |               |              |
| Redshank            | 983          | 724          | 729          | 1640          | 2040          | 897         | 3740         | 10300         | 2880          | 2460          | 1470          | 1850         |
| Spotted Redshank    |              |              |              |               | 24            | 6           | 5            | 72            | 26            | 55            | 2             |              |
| Greenshank          |              |              |              | 1             | 566           | 11          | 970          | 1760          | 481           | 88            | 5             |              |
| Knot                |              |              | 5030         | 36            | 1             | 175         | 3            | 1300          | 1360          | 409           | 270           | 300          |
| Little Stint        |              |              |              |               |               |             |              | 18            | 236           | 6             |               |              |
| Temminck's Stint    |              |              |              |               | 1             |             |              |               |               |               |               |              |
| Dunlin              | 5020         | 983          | 40500        | 196000        | 131000        | 700         | 5890         | 244000        | 358000        | 147000        | 63500         | 11100        |
| Curlew Sandpiper    |              |              |              |               |               |             |              | 56            | 17            |               |               |              |
| Sanderling          |              |              | 30           | 30            |               |             |              |               | 120           | 20            | 100           | 24           |
| Ruff                |              |              |              | 51            | 29            | 9           | 10           | 23            | 2             |               |               |              |
| Avocet              |              |              | 104          | 797           | 635           | 658         | 2230         | 6400          | 3660          | 759           |               |              |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>29000</b> | <b>15700</b> | <b>85900</b> | <b>253000</b> | <b>199000</b> | <b>9990</b> | <b>27100</b> | <b>335000</b> | <b>457000</b> | <b>216000</b> | <b>112000</b> | <b>62500</b> |



Maximum figures of waders in the Danish part of the Wadden Sea in 1978

The hatched circle at Højer denotes the maximum number of waders on the foreland area that is going to be reclaimed at the Danish-German border



Maximum figures of waders in Denmark 1978 (all species)  
The hatched circle denotes the Wadden Sea

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Denmark (ex Wadden Sea), totals 1978

| Species  | Jan.        | Feb.        | Mar.         | Apr.         | Maj.          | Jun.         | Jul.         | Aug.         | Sep.          | Okt.          | Nov.          | Dec.        |
|--|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| Oystercatcher <u>Haematopus ostralegus</u>         | 162         | 111         | 630          | 1675         | 4854          | 2466         | 4827         | 1390         | 270           | 363           | 135           | 67          |
| Lapwing <u>Vanellus vanellus</u>                   | 69          | 4           | 1370         | 15629        | 3688          | 5010         | 9193         | 31666        | 32197         | 45377         | 50877         | 23          |
| Ringed Plover <u>Charadrius hiaticula</u>          | 9           | 5           | 1494         | 986          | 1013          | 659          | 1467         | 1146         | 288           | 55            | 6             |             |
| Little Ringed Plover <u>Charadrius dubius</u>      |             |             |              | 3            | 9             | 5            | 2            | 9            | 3             |               |               |             |
| Kentish Plover <u>Charadrius alexandrinus</u>      |             |             |              | 6            | 13            | 12           | 18           | 11           | 3             |               |               |             |
| Dotteral <u>Eudromias morinellus</u>               |             |             |              |              | 3             |              |              | 8            |               |               |               |             |
| Golden Plover <u>Pluvialis apricaria</u>           | 266         | 2           | 138          | 6549         | 35272         | 52           | 325          | 31553        | 48594         | 84446         | 60066         | 97          |
| Grey Plover <u>Pluvialis squatarola</u>            | 2           | 1           | 2            | 11           | 495           | 88           | 58           | 781          | 836           | 1333          | 570           | 9           |
| Turnstone <u>Arenaria interpres</u>                | 4           | 20          | 2            | 6            | 135           | 16           | 90           | 40           | 64            | 8             | 4             |             |
| Great Snipe <u>Gallinago media</u>                 |             |             |              |              | 1             |              | 1            | 3            | 1             |               | 1             |             |
| Common Snipe <u>Gallinago gallinago</u>            | 145         | 35          | 84           | 479          | 146           | 58           | 75           | 1331         | 1302          | 2030          | 1196          | 60          |
| Jack Snipe <u>Lymnocyptes minima</u>               | 2           | 1           |              | 4            | 3             |              |              | 2            | 17            | 26            | 10            | 2           |
| Curlew <u>Numenius arquata</u>                     | 155         | 43          | 569          | 1571         | 134           | 120          | 626          | 758          | 325           | 347           | 278           | 125         |
| Whimbrel <u>Numenius phaeopus</u>                  |             |             |              | 32           | 176           | 13           | 101          | 107          | 38            | 1             |               |             |
| <u>Numenius sp.</u>                                |             |             |              |              |               |              |              | 122          |               |               |               |             |
| Black-tailed Godwit <u>Limosa limosa</u>           |             |             | 86           | 371          | 270           | 390          | 318          | 63           | 17            |               |               |             |
| Bar-tailed Godwit <u>Limosa lapponica</u>          | 3           | 2           | 1177         | 4115         | 18672         | 131          | 208          | 521          | 115           | 35            | 13            | 1           |
| Common Sandpiper <u>Tringa hypoleucos</u>          | 1           |             | 1            |              | 258           | 7            | 600          | 975          | 68            | 3             |               |             |
| Wood Sandpiper <u>Tringa glareola</u>              |             |             |              | 3            | 80            |              | 93           | 363          | 4             | 1             |               |             |
| Green Sandpiper <u>Tringa ochropus</u>             |             |             |              | 4            | 23            | 9            | 71           | 70           | 4             | 2             |               |             |
| Redshank <u>Tringa totanus</u>                     | 1183        | 399         | 604          | 3198         | 4170          | 2803         | 2621         | 2611         | 1460          | 1749          | 993           | 557         |
| Spotted Redshank <u>Tringa erythropus</u>          |             |             |              |              | 100           | 41           | 63           | 271          | 67            | 25            | 1             |             |
| Greenshank <u>Tringa nebularia</u>                 |             |             |              | 12           | 343           | 12           | 783          | 1483         | 348           | 78            | 16            | 4           |
| Marsh Sandpiper <u>Tringa stagnatilis</u>          |             |             |              |              |               |              |              | 1            |               |               |               |             |
| Knot <u>Calidris canutus</u>                       | 4           |             |              | 46           | 135           | 17           | 121          | 1599         | 633           | 97            | 7             |             |
| Purple Sandpiper <u>Calidris maritima</u>          | 13          | 18          | 11           | 22           | 9             |              |              |              | 6             | 1             | 1             | 7           |
| Little Stint <u>Calidris minuta</u>                |             |             |              |              | 42            | 1            | 36           | 48           | 1948          | 33            | 42            |             |
| Temminck's Stint <u>Calidris temminckii</u>        |             |             |              |              | 63            |              | 26           | 29           | 4             |               |               |             |
| Little / Temminck's <u>C.minuta/temminckii</u>     |             |             |              | 2            | 25            |              | 2            | 3            |               |               |               |             |
| Dunlin <u>Calidris alpina</u>                      | 5373        | 1323        | 9730         | 23400        | 50526         | 325          | 7541         | 12199        | 25127         | 41483         | 23509         | 3672        |
| Curlew Sandpiper <u>Calidris ferruginea</u>        |             |             |              |              |               | 1            | 184          | 505          | 432           | 24            |               |             |
| Sanderling <u>Calidris alba</u>                    |             | 47          | 16           | 17           | 45            |              |              | 41           | 191           | 44            |               | 5           |
| Broad-billed Sandpiper <u>Limicola falcinellus</u> |             |             |              |              |               |              | 4            | 4            |               |               |               |             |
| Ruff <u>Philomachus pugnax</u>                     |             |             |              | 869          | 6557          | 197          | 476          | 999          | 301           | 78            | 2             |             |
| Avocet <u>Recurvirostra avosetta</u>               |             |             | 316          | 3075         | 3315          | 2128         | 2705         | 684          | 323           | 572           | 50            |             |
| Red-necked Phalarope <u>Phalaropus lobatus</u>     |             |             |              |              |               | 2            |              | 4            | 2             |               |               |             |
| Wader sp.  | 13          | 6           | 126          | 138          | 229           | 26           | 112          | 471          | 144           | 195           | 59            |             |
| <b>Total</b>                                       | <b>7404</b> | <b>2017</b> | <b>34358</b> | <b>57302</b> | <b>130804</b> | <b>14589</b> | <b>32869</b> | <b>91749</b> | <b>115132</b> | <b>178406</b> | <b>137836</b> | <b>4629</b> |

PERMANENT LEG FLAGS

by Nigel A. Clark

As part of current studies of Dunlin Calidris alpina on the Somerset and Avon coast, England, 150 birds have been marked using leg flags placed above the 'knee'. The flags, made from 'Darvic' P.V.C. sheet 0.75mm thick - 0.5mm would probably be better for Dunlin - are 1cm high and project 1cm from the leg. They are made by folding a strip of 'Darvic' around a metal bar in boiling water and pinching the two flaps together with pliers. When cold the two flaps spring together. In use the flag is opened just enough to get it round the bird's leg and the two flaps glued together.

Flags made this way have the advantage over conventional colour-rings, that they can be seen at 600 metres, even in poor light. I have not marked birds with different codes for each individual. However, it would probably be possible to use two smaller flags without significantly reducing visibility. The flags have a very long life and, therefore, should not be used if a conventional colour-ring or temporary flag would be adequate. Temporary flags have been used with success on the Tees Estuary (Goodyer et al 1979).

Any observations of these flagged birds would be most useful. If possible note which leg carries the flag and the colour. Details of sightings should be sent to N.A. Clark, Department of Zoology, University of Edinburgh, West Mains Road, Edinburgh, Scotland.

Reference

Goodyer, L.R., Symonds, F. & Evans, P.R. 1979. Leg 'flags': temporary colour rings. Wader Study Group Bull. 25:12

NOTE: Because widespread use of permanent leg-flags would greatly reduce the potential usefulness and applicability of temporary leg-flags, we strongly discourage the use of permanent flags, especially if conventional colour-rings or temporary leg-flags would be adequate for any intended study.- The Editors.