TABLE III

SUMMARY OF NEST RECORD CARDS AND MOULT CARDS COMPLETED BY THE CAMBRIDGE ICELAND EXPEDITION 1972

	Nest Record Cards	Moult Cards
Oystercatcher	174	145
Ringed Plover	88	2
Golden Plover	39	-
Turnstone	-	28
Purple Sandpiper	4	124
Dunlin	12	-
Sanderling	-	1
Redshank	99	17
Black-tailed Godwit	5	-
Whimbrel	73	-
Snipe	4	-
Red-necked Phalarope	6	-
Arctic Skua	7	-
Black-headed Gull	-	20
	512	346

The W.W.R.G. Visit to Denmark and Sweden, August 1972

New information on the timing of Dunlin wing moult

by P. Stanley

It is unfortunate that considering the large amount of interest in waders in Denmark and Sweden there is so little liaison between ornithologists in these countries and workers in Britain. With this in mind and with the intention of obtaining measurements of waders on passage through the Baltic a small party composed of Mike and Daphne Watson and Peter and Judy Stanley visited Fenno-Scardia in August 1972.

Our first call was at Blaavands-Huk on the west coast of Denmark where for many years the visible migration of waders has been intensively studied. This field of wader research which has been somewhat neglected in Britain has produced valuable information that when analysed in conjunction with ringing data has allowed a more comprehensive picture of wader migration to be drawn than can be obtained from ringing data alone. Thus, workers at Blaavands-Huk have produced an interesting paper on the migration of the Knot through the North Sea and their paper on the general visible wader migration at Blaavands-Huk is extremely valuable.

The party spent almost a week at Ottenby Bird Observatory situated on the southern tip of the island of Oland that lies off the S.E. coast of Sweden. Ottenby has long been famous for the pioneer work on passerine and wader migration started at the beginning of this century and large numbers of waders have been trapped for many years. The catching technique is based on cage traps that are placed on the banks of rotting seaweed that build up around the rocky shoreline. Because the Baltic is not tidal, the traps can be placed at the waters edge and when visited every 45 mins. during daylight have produced satisfactory numbers of waders. We were very impressed by this trapping method and feel sure that it could be applied with success in Britain. The efficiency of catching is high and the technique should be ideal for trapping freshwater waders on pools etc. where the water level is relatively stable. (Jack Reynolds has recently used cage traps successfully in N. Norfolk to catch Snipe and other fresh water waders.)

With the generous cooperation of the Ottenby Bird Observatory, the party were able to measure approximately 200 waders including a valuable sample of 130 Dunlin. The Dunlin proved to be particularly interesting because a significant proportion of the adults were migrating in suspended wing moult. The sample of 130 contained 4 juveniles and 70 of the adult birds had eleven old primaries and had not started

moulting. Fifteen birds were in typical suspended primary moult with from 1 to 7 fully grown new primaries and a full complement of old primaries. A further 24 birds had virtually suspended their moult with a full wing of old and new primaries except for one new primary at an advanced stage of feather growth (stage 3 or 4). Of the remaining birds, many had almost full wings with a number of new primaries growing in a block (e.g. 8 old and 3 new at stage 4). The Dunlin at Ottenby during this period were on migration, only stopping to feed for a matter of hours and retraps of birds ringed more than 12 hours previously were very rare. The sample contained two British ringed Dunlin:

BB 93182 ringed as an adult 30.8.69. Terrington, Norfolk
BH 87377 " " " " 29.1.72. Point of Air, Flintshire

The sample can thus be considered to contain birds belonging to the populations that visit Britain. It is considered unlikely that they had stopped elsewhere on their migration long enough to start moulting and thus these Dunlin probably start their moult on the breeding grounds. It is interesting that a catch made on the Wash on 28.8.72 contained 1 Dunlin in suspended moult and Dunlin in suspended moult were also recorded in Morocco, (see M. Pienkowski in this bulletin). It is of course logical that a small bird such as a Dunlin would undertake a migration with a full wing, active wing moult would probably decrease flight efficiency and entail greater energy consumption.

One striking feature of the Dunlin ringing at Ottenby is that the observatory very rarely controls birds ringed in previous years - a very different situation to Dunlin ringing in Britain. A useful number of juvenile Wood Sandpipers were trapped and a further ten species of wader handled.

1972 was a very bad autumn for wader trapping in Sweden, the number trapped at Ottenby being well down on normal years. Our next stop was at the Falsterbo Bird Observatory that is situated on the southern tip of Sweden. This Observatory is, of course, famous for the bird of prey passage but considerable numbers of waders are trapped in July and August. The trapping site is a pool with patchy vegetation a small distance inland from the shore and once again cage traps are employed. The main species caught are Dunlin, Snipe and Sandpipers.

We were very fortunate in having Niels Otto Preuss, the organiser of the Danish ringing scheme to introduce us to Denmark and especially to show us the famous wader tinging site at Amager. It is to be hoped that at least part of this tremendous sit can be maintained as a reserve rather than be lost to urban development.

The rest of our stay on the continent was s ent observing waders in Denmark and Holland. We would like to thank all the people in Denmark and Sweden who made the trip so enjoyable and worthwhile. Considerable interest was shown in the W.S.G. and we now have a number of Danish and Swedish members.

Cambridge Sidi Houssa (Morocco) Expedition 1972

by Derek Stanyard

As a follow up to the Moroccan Expedition of 1971 a team of ringers spent 10 days mi netting waders on an area of salt lagoons about 400 miles down the Atlantic coast of Morocco, during September of this year.

The Moroccan Administration dos Eaux et Forets granted permission for the expedition to operate and the Institut Scientifique Cherifien (Rabat) supplied rings

The comparatively short period spent on the site proved extremely rewarding, in all 1300 birds were caught of which 1150 were waders. Besides a large number of valuable retraps and controls from last year, the group also controlled birds from Sweden (2 Curlew Sandpiper and 1 Ringed Plover), Germany (1 Curlew Sandpiper) and Britain (2 Dunlin), One of the Dunlin having been ringed on the Wash two months previously.