

Waders are also well represented in the eleven analytical and other papers in these first two numbers. Three articles concern planning and management of wetland reserves and others consider the status of Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola* and the migration of Common Sandpiper *Tringa* (= *Actitis*) *hypoleucos* and of Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*. Other studies cover a wide range from a catalogue of the fauna of the region in the 18th century to a new ringing data card via works on passerines, birds of prey and methodology of censuses. The text is well illustrated, not only with tables, graphs and very clear maps, but also with line drawings and photographs, among which waders and wetland habitats are again prominent.

The journal, edited by Peter H. Barthel, Bernd Riedel and Frank-Ulrich Schmidt, will appear twice per year at the very reasonable subscription of DM 6. plus postage. Enquiries and orders should be sent to: Bernd Riedel, Brunsteiner Strasse 24, 3410 Northeim 1, Federal Republic of Germany.

JOINT BIOLOGICAL EXPEDITION TO NORTH EAST GREENLAND 1974



UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE

WADER STUDY GROUP

Cover of the
Greenland
Expedition
Report —
reproduced at
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REVIEW: " JOINT BIOLOGICAL EXPEDITION TO NORTH EAST GREENLAND 1974"

Edited by G.H.Green and J.J.D.Greenwood. Dundee University N.E.Greenland Expedition, Dundee, 1978. pp 258, numerous text figures, 30 x 21cm. Copies available from: Dr. J.J.D.Greenwood, Department of Biological Sciences, The University, Dundee, Scotland. Price (including postage): £4.50 in Britain and £6.00 overseas (Cheques payable to: Wader Study Group N.E. Greenland Expedition 1974).

This is a report of a 25-man expedition to the area around Kong Oscars Fjord, rather more than 'half-way-up' the east coast of Greenland. Once the reader has overcome those first green feelings of envy that so much could be seen and studied by so few in such surroundings, he begins to appreciate the introductory comments that the reasons for the expedition were not purely hedonistic! Amply borne out is the statement that the expedition was designed to serve a number of scientific purposes, and to provide training for young field biologists - all in an area unusually, and preciously, free from the influence of man.

Many waders, the prime objects of study, breed in the high Arctic and winter in remote areas of Africa - and themselves are vulnerable to man's 'progress' (estuarine barrages and the like) whilst resting and feeding on European shores on migration. The need for basic information on the breeding, distribution and movements of these birds was an additional spur, the better to plan effective conservation in Europe.

Not often does the reviewer get the chance to say that a book is all things to all men, but this Report comes close to that ideal. Even the cover, with its immaculately presented falcon symbolic of the Expedition, by Ray Bishop, must score instant success with any perceptive bird man - artistically inclined or not. This standard of illustration is maintained throughout and not just pictorially. Graphs and histograms are naturally often needed for the scientific aspects - but to find them a pleasure to admire is unusual in a scientific paper.

The Report opens with a series of narrative reports (23pp) by the various teams, outlining in varied but fascinating style their impressions of the scenery, wildlife, logistic and gastronomic 'experiences'. These range from the laconic but heartening medical report, including Guy Morrison's emergency evacuation with appendicitis (and his return three weeks later!) to many lyrical descriptions of the majestic mountain backdrop, of the confidently tame Sanderling, brooding young within an arm's length of the photographer, or sweet-eating Arctic foxes. Interesting reading in itself, this, for anyone with a taste for adventure or an enjoyment of wild places. But more than that, it is valuable background information, coupled with the detailed organisational report (13pp) for anyone planning a similar expedition.

The bulk of the Report - 200 valuable pages - is naturally enough concerned with matters scientific. For the lay reader, it is pleasing to report that this does not mean dull and indigestible reading. Far from it. There are 29 papers, and here the reviewer's difficulty really starts, as each merits its own summary and review, which space just does not permit. Three are devoted to various techniques involved in wader catching, marking and measuring, and one to the detailed assessment of subsequent sightings and movements of marked birds. Apart from the excitements of the many reports of colour-marked birds in the expedition's home country, the benefits of colour marking (despite its difficulties) as against 'routine' ringing recoveries are clearly demonstrated.

Four papers deal with the ecology and distribution of Arctic waders in breadth and depth, and with the influence of their harsh environment - for example of snow conditions on the date of breeding. Aspects of the biology of particular species are the topics for eleven papers, the waders (plumage, eggs, chicks) receiving most attention, supplemented by thumbnail sketches of exciting birds like Pinkfeet and Barnacles, Glaucous Gulls, and fascinating details of passerines like the Snow Bunting, well adapted to the conditions. Amongst the remainder will be found details of the biogeography and climate of the study area, with general accounts of the botany, mammals and avian blood parasites. Three longer papers deal with the terrestrial invertebrates of the tundra, and freshwater tarn ecological studies. There are eight extremely useful pages of bibliography of selected and appropriate references.

The general reader, whatever his initial thoughts about 'skipping some of the science' and concentrating on the more general narrative and broad ecological material, will find himself involved by every page and will be enthralled by the whole. Beyond that, this Report must class as essential, rather than just 'recommended', reading for anyone with an interest in waders and their conservation, or in Arctic ecosystems. It is difficult to think of a parallel volume with anywhere near such a wealth of material - and for information, interest and presentation it constitutes excellent value for money.

Jim Flegg.

(A list of the papers in the Report directly concerned with waders will be found in 'Recent Publications' in this issue - The Editors)