## NORTH AMERICAN SECTION No. 3

Editor

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### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### Colour marking

Various members will be carrying out colour-marking studies in 1979 and observers are asked to keep a watch for birds marked during their studies as well as for birds marked during recently completed projects. Please note as many details as possible, including species, date, place, colour of dye and part of bird marked, colour, number and position of colour bands and metal band, including whether the bands were located above or below the 'knee'. Where the origin of the bird is known, a report should be sent directly to the bander, as well as to the U.S. Banding Laboratory, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Office of Migratory Bird Management, Laurel, Maryland 20811, U.S.A.

As indicated in the previous Bulletin, some of the projects that will be operating in 1979 include:

1. James Bay, Canada. Dr. R.I.G. Morrison, Canadian Wildlife Service, 1725 Woodward Drive, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1G 3Z7. Dye: picric acid (yellow/orange). Bands: yellow, light blue, metal, above and below 'knee'.
2. Alaska, U.S.A. R.E. Gill, Jr., U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, 1011 E. Tudor Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99503, U.S.A. Dye: picric acid. Bands: various, above and below 'knee'.
3. British Columbia, Canada. G. Kaiser, Canadian Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 340, Delta, B.C., Canada V4K 3Y3. Dye and bands.
4. Other projects: Other projects which have operated in recent years include the following: (a) Surinam, South America. Dr. A.L. Spaans. Colour bands. (b) North Dakota, U.S.A. D. Lank. Tags and various markings. (c) Massachusetts, U.S.A. B.A. Harrington. Colour bands. Sightings of any birds possibly originating from any of these - or other projects - should be sent to the U.S. Banding Laboratory at the above address.

#### Shorebird Surveys

The International Shorebird Survey scheme and the Maritimes Shorebird Survey scheme will be continued in 1979, and volunteers wishing to assist by counting shorebirds in a local study area this season as outlined in the last Bulletin are asked to contact one of the following: for areas in Canada - Dr. R.I.G. Morrison, Canadian Wildlife Service, 1725 Woodward Drive, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1G 3Z7, and for areas in the U.S., Caribbean, Central and South America - B.A. Harrington, Manomet Bird Observatory, Manomet, Massachusetts 02345, U.S.A.

### PRELIMINARY PROFILE OF THE NORTH AMERICAN MEMBERSHIP

by Marshall A. Howe

The North American section of the Wader Study Group was established in 1978 to promote information exchange and coordination of efforts among wader researchers and enthusiasts in the Western Hemisphere. The International Shorebird Survey, conducted since 1974 by the Canadian Wildlife Service and the Manomet Bird Observatory, had developed a network of wader censusers over a wide area east of the Rocky Mountains, but the level and breadth of wader interest among these and other potential participants was uncertain. When the number of members in North America exceeded 100, a survey of their interests and activities appeared of interest to help determine the viability of the organisation and the directions in which it should be developing. It could also serve as a convenient stimulus for exchange of information among members. A brief questionnaire was circulated during the latter half of 1978 to ascertain the professional status of members, the extent of their banding activities, the location of their field work, and the biological disciplines and wader taxa of interest to them.

Eighty five of the 138 (62%) members responded to the questionnaire: the format is shown below, with the number of positive responses indicated for each category. Approximately one half of the members are involved in some professional capacity with wader studies. Only 30 indicated current involvement with banding, most efforts being aimed at several species during migration. Research workers cited migration and feeding ecology as the disciplines of greatest interest. Ageing-sexing characters, moult, systematics and morphology evoked the least enthusiasm. Forty eight percent of field activities are located on the east coast of Canada and the United States, with an additional 31% in interior areas. Two study areas are on Caribbean islands and four in Central and South America. The bias towards the Atlantic coast partly reflects human population distribution, but also reflects the development of the International Shorebird Survey to investigate shorebird migration on the Atlantic coast.

The request for a short narrative describing specific wader activities determined that plovers and calidridine sandpipers are the most popular subjects of investigation, perhaps reflecting the relative abundance of these groups along the Atlantic coast. But some interest in all families and subfamilies of waders was expressed.

This information has all been transferred to keysort cards to enable a rapid response to be made to requests for information from members. For example, members interested in moult of calidridine sandpipers could easily and rapidly be put in contact with each other from the keysort file. Information on colour marking

schemes used by members could also be readily ascertained. I am willing to provide such information, as long as the demand does not become overwhelming. The information presently available is limited by the number of members that has responded to the questionnaire: those who have not are encouraged to submit one to me at the address below. If you have not received a questionnaire, or have misplaced it, please request another. If this system proves to be interesting and useful enough to members, we can consider expanding it to include members of the original Wader Study Group and starting a computerised information file. All comments and suggestions are welcome.

Summary of Wader Study Group (North American Section) Questionnaire and Responses from Members

1. What is your professional level of interest in shorebirds?
   (a) Amateur (37) (b) Student (11) (c) Professional (36) (d) Other (explain) (2).
2. What is the nature of your work on shorebirds?
   (a) General interest (45) (b) Conservation (27) (c) Banding (only) (7) (d) Research (11)
   (e) Research administration (3) (f) Other (0).
3. If you are banding shorebirds, please indicate the approximate number of species and individuals banded per year:
   Species: 1 (7) 2-5 (12) 6-10 (8) more than 10 (3)
   Individuals: less than 100 (11) 100-500 (13) 500-2000 (2) more than 2000 (4).
4. If you are conducting research, please indicate the disciplines in which you are currently active (with an x) and those in which you have a particular interest but are not presently involved (with an o):
   (a) Ageing-sexing (22) (b) Molt (19) (c) Feeding ecology (57) (d) Breeding biology (33)
   (e) Population ecology (34) (f) Social behavior (28) (g) Migration (64) (h) Systematics (13)
   (i) Morphology (10) (j) Other (0).
5. If you are color-marking birds in your work, explain briefly the species marked and the type(s) of markers used:
   19 members are color-marking shorebirds.
6. In what geographic area(s) are you observing or studying shorebirds?
   (a) Canada: East coast (15) West coast (5) North coast (4) Interior (11)
   (b) U.S.A.: East coast (32) West coast (7) Interior (19) Alaska (4)
   (c) Other: Caribbean (2) Central or South America (4).
7. On the reverse, please present a narrative summary (less than 100 words) of your interests and activities.

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## NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MINI-EXPEDITION TO SURINAM, 1978

by R.I.G. Morrison and A.L. Spaans

### Introduction and Background

In September 1978, the National Geographic Society funded a mini-expedition to Surinam to obtain photographic material on shorebird migration for a forthcoming article on 'Bird Migration' (currently scheduled to appear in the August 1979 issue of National Geographic Magazine). Two large-scale shorebird banding projects that would illustrate migration between North and South America were chosen for coverage. The projects were those organised by the Canadian Wildlife Service in James Bay, Canada, and by the Surinam Forestry Service in Surinam. In James Bay 38,504 shorebirds were captured between 1975 and 1978 (Table 1), and in Surinam 16,607 between 1970 and 1977 (Spaans 1979), resulting in the exchange of some 30 banded birds between the two programs.

A National Geographic photographer, Jonathan Blair, visited the banding operation in James Bay in August 1979, and subsequently travelled with Guy Morrison and Arie Spaans to Surinam in early September. The main objective of the mini-expedition was to obtain pictures illustrating shorebird migration between North and South America by photographing colour dyed birdsthat had been marked in James Bay. In addition, a valuable opportunity was created to extend scientific studies through (a) sightings of marked birds, (b) collaborative banding studies enabling future integration of previously collected biometric data from James Bay and Surinam, and (c) exchange of ideas and information. This report outlines briefly the results that were obtained.

### Study Areas

Areas visited on the coast of Surinam are situated at about 6°N and 54-57°W (Figure 1) and have been described by Spaans (1978, 1979). Most work was carried out at Krofajapasi between 11 and 18 September 1978, based at the camp of the Foundation for Nature Preservation in Surinam (STINASU) in the Wia-Wia Nature Reserve. Local shorebird habitat included sandy beaches, muddy creek banks and coastal lagoons, providing excellent opportunities for photography and scientific work. Weg naar Zee was visited six times between 10 and 23 September to look for colour dyed birds along the coastal mudflats. Arie Spaans visited the mudflats at Coronie and Nickerie in western Surinam on 21 and 22 September.

In James Bay, banding operations in 1978 were carried out during July and August principally at North Point (51°29'N 80°27'W), 17 miles NE of Moosonee, Ontario. A smaller camp was operated at Longridge Point (51°49'N 80°42'W) from 1-12 August (Figure 1). Shorebird banding operations in James Bay and some of the results obtained have been described by Morrison (1976, 1978).