



Fig. 1. A-D. Sound spectrograms of simple repeated calls which occur throughout flight displays of Least Sandpipers. The frequency of the calls is indicated on the vertical scale (in kilocycles per second); representations made with a narrow band filter (C and D) show frequency most accurately. Representations made with a wide band filter (A and B) show temporal characteristics most accurately. The time marker is 250 milliseconds. E. Sound spectrogram of loud chattering call of Least Sandpipers. F. Sound spectrogram of "song" of Least Sandpiper.

RED ALERT

by P.R. Evans

Not many British wader-ringers have had the opportunity to bake in early December sunshine (30°C) and watch 500 Red-necked Stints gather on a sandy promontory to roost. Mind you, an ample supply of mosquito repellent was advisable. (As one expatriate Welshman said to me "They don't bite - they carry you off in their jaws ..."). And so it was that with the aid of a 20 ft. (6 m) mist-net, a long length of very elastic nylon string and a 4 ft. (1.3m) length of gnarled tea-tree, the Westernport Bay (Victoria, Australia) clap-net was born, and promptly caught 50 stints in one "pull". (A repeat performance for the benefit of a visiting British television film producer was not nearly so successful!) The birds were dyed on the belly with red 'Rhodamine B', which faded within a few weeks, but not before one of the Stints had been seen (the day after dyeing) on the other side of Port Phillip Bay, west of Melbourne. A frenzied report came through of "a bird in full breeding plumage in mid-winter - well, it was red all over!". Others were seen at another roost site on Westernport Bay a few days later. And so I thought I had heard the last of the stints, until I received a few weeks ago, from a variety of sources, including the ex-chairman of the WSG, who is himself now in Melbourne (catching Red-necked Stints, of course*), the following details: Red-necked Stint 032-11759 ringed Stockyard Point, Westernport Bay, Victoria (38°25'S, 145°23'E) on 12 December 1974; shot on 10 September 1977 on Tareii Lake, Borzja, Chita, U.S.S.R. (50°19'N, 116°23'E), 9600 km away from the ringing site.

Which all goes to show that if you dye waders red, you have to accept the political consequences!

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* The totals of waders caught during the first months of Clive Minton's activities with Australian wader ringers are given on p. 13. - Eds.