

CURRENT COLOUR MARKING SCHEMES

Since the lists in Bulletins 25 & 26 we have been notified of several further colour-ringing schemes and we list below all schemes in the Old World for which we have details. (For New World schemes, see Bulletin 26.) We are also entering a new season for temporary marks - dyes and leg flags. The Editors and the various people organising such schemes this winter have taken considerable trouble to make sure that these are compatible with each other and details are given below.

We continually stress the need for wader researchers to check before they start that they will not clash with another project. The problem was brought home painfully yet again to one of the Editors recently when he discovered that a colour-ringing scheme for Ringed Plovers virtually identical to his own had been operating over the same time period. In this case, because of difficulties of geography and communications, the conflict had not been apparent previously and both parties soon worked out a solution for future marking when it became known. However it is clear from some reported sightings that other Ringed Plovers are being colour-ringed by someone else who has not registered his scheme with either the WSG or his national ringing authority. It is vital that anyone marking waders should notify both his national scheme and the Wader Study Group Editors as soon as possible if they have not already done so. Anyone proposing to start colour marking waders should contact MWP before starting the scheme so that systems compatible with other projects can be worked out. For dyeing and flagging, notification is assumed to apply for one season only and re-notification should be given for any additional seasons. Clearly, anyone not checking in this way will be jeopardizing his own results as well as those of others.

Workers should consider carefully before starting any scheme what questions they are asking. If permanent marking is not required, permanent colour rings should not be used. If individual recognition (rather than various groupings) is not required, fewer different marks will be needed. Relatively few dye-marking schemes are possible at any one time and should only be used if results of maximum value can be obtained from the method, especially if the project is in potential conflict with more urgent schemes. The Editors would be pleased to assist in commenting on these projects.

Reports of sightings, with as much detail as possible, should be sent to the appropriate person listed below; he will pass it on if necessary. In case of doubt, the record should be sent to M.W.Pienkowski, Department of Zoology, University of Durham, South Road, Durham DH1 3LE, England. Please note that many schemes can make use of incomplete data if not all rings are clearly seen. Operators of schemes are requested to make sure that sightings are acknowledged and the observer informed of the history of the bird concerned.

COLOUR-RINGS

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Portugal (Rui Rufino, Centro de Estudos de Migrações e Protecção de Aves, Rua da Lapa 73, 1200 Lisboa, Portugal)

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Exe Estuary, England (Dr.J.D.Goss-Custard, ITE Furzebrook Research Station, Wareham, Dorset BH20 5AS, England)
Drachten, Netherlands (Dr.J.B. Hulscher, Zoologisch Laboratorium, Kerklaan 30, Haren (Gr.), Netherlands)
Friesian coast, Netherlands (Dr. Leo Zwarts, Achterwei 23, EE (FRL), Netherlands)

These studies use a combination of one or more 'conventional' colour-rings with a tall ring consisting of one colour with engraved bands of a second colour. These bands may each be wide or narrow and occur in one or more of three positions on the ring: high, middle and low.

Lancashire, England (K.B.Briggs, 26 Hazelmount Drive, Warton, Carnforth, Lancs. LA5 9HU, England) 4 'conventional' colour rings plus metal ring plus wingtag.

If colour-ringed Oystercatchers are caught, please measure the weight, the bill length from the tip of the longest mandible to the feathers and from the tip to the proximal (hind) rim of the nostril, and the bill thickness at the tip (over the first 3mm length). Note if the bill is blunt, intermediate or pointed and, if possible, take a photograph of the left side of the head and bill. If observing a bird in the field, please try to make notes on the type and size of food.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Lower Saxony, Germany (B.Riedel, 3411 Langenholtensen, Wilhelmstrasse 114, W.Germany)

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Northumberland, England (M.W.Pienkowski, Dept. of Zoology, University of Durham, South Road, Durham DH1 3LE, England)
Records relevant to other studies in Norfolk, England (G.Jackson), E.Germany (Dr.A.Siefke, Vogelwarte, Hiddensee) and Greenland (Expeditions) will be passed on.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

Portugal (Rui Rufina - see Black-winged Stilt)

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Hardangervidda, Norway (Cambridge Expedition 1978). Records to MWP

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

South Cleveland R.G., England (W.Norman, 27 Roxby Avenue, Kemplah Park, Guisborough, Cleveland, England)

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Teessmouth, England (Dr. P.R.Evans, Dept. of Zoology, University of Durham, South Road, Durham DH1 3LE, England)
see also colour flags.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

South Cleveland R.G. (see Golden Plover). See also colour flags.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Greenland (Expeditions in 1973, 1974 and 1979) Records to MWP. See also colour flags.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Teesmouth, England (Dr. P.R.Evans - see Grey Plover)
Greenland (Expeditions in 1972, 1973, 1974 and 1979) Records to MWP

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

South Africa (Cape Wader Group) Records to MWP

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Walney Island and Hilbre Island, England (Hilbre B.O.), east coast of Scotland (Tay R.G.), Hardangervidda, Norway
(Cambridge Expedition 1978), N. Wales SCAN RG: D.J. Stanyard, Groeslon, Caernarvon, Gwynedd, Wales.*

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Greenland (Expeditions in 1972, 1973, 1974 and 1979) Records to MWP

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Münster, W.Germany (M.Speckmann, Kuckuckweg 6, D-4530 Ibbenbüren, W.Germany)

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Münster, W.Germany (See Ruff)

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Teesmouth, England (see Grey Plover) see also colour flags

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Teesmouth, England (see Grey Plover) - 'conventional' colour rings
Freisian coast, Netherlands (see Oystercatcher) - 'banded' colour rings

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Münster, W.Germany (see Ruff)

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Ribble Estuary, England (Dr. W.G.Hale, Liverpool Polytechnic, Dept. of Biology, Byrom Street, Liverpool, England)
Note that if any Redshanks with wingtags which wrap around the wing are caught, these tags should be removed.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Münster, W.Germany (see Ruff)

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

North Pennines, England (Miss S. Jones, Dept. of Zoology, University of Durham, South Road, Durham DH1 3LE, England)
South Pennines, England (South Pennine R.G., J.E.Robson, 1 Lawnfold, Hadfield, Hyde, Cheshire, England)
Lower Saxony, Germany (see Little Ringed Plover)

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Teesmouth, England (see Grey Plover)
East coast of Scotland (Tay R.G.)
Greenland (Expeditions in 1973 and 1974)

COLOUR FLAGS AND COLOUR DYES

Colour 'flags' - pieces of plastic adhesive tape attached to metal rings - were described in Bulletin 25. Essentially they provide a temporary colour ring which is suitable for some projects and which reduces the long-term overlap and confusion between projects. The method will, however, also become wasted if it is used indiscriminately, and ringers are requested to consult the Editors and their national ringing authorities before embarking on such a scheme. Similarly colour-dyeing should not be used without prior consultation. A few ringers are using more permanent leg-flags but we strongly discourage this, except in a few exceptional cases, because of conflict with the wider use possible with temporary flags.

The following are operating currently-notified schemes:

P.J.Dugan, P.R.Evans and L.R.Goodyer (Dept. of Zoology, University of Durham) Teesmouth, Humber, Wash, Waddensee
(dyes or leg-flags on Grey Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Knot and Dunlin)

* Observers, particularly in N Wales, may like to note that 50 Purple Sandpipers were marked in November 1979 in that area by SCAN RG.

M.W.Pienkowski (Dept. of Zoology, University of Durham) Firth of Forth, Scotland (dyes and/or flags on Oystercatcher, Grey Plover, Knot, Dunlin, Bar-tailed Godwit, Curlew, Redshank ~~Turnstone~~, ~~Ringed Plover~~ and Lapwing)

D.Elphick (South Manchester R.G.) mid-Cheshire, England (Curlews dyed yellow on rump)

Clyde R.G. (Clyde Estuary, Scotland) dye on Ringed Plover and Redshanks

Miss S. Jones (Dept. of Zoology, University of Durham) Upper Teesdale, England. (leg-flags on Lapwings)

N.A.Clark (Dept. of Zoology, University of Edinburgh) Severn Estuary (dyes and leg-flags on Dunlins)

The relevant workers have devised non-conflicting schemes but sorting out the origin of a marked bird is quite involved. Records sent to M.W.Pienkowski will be passed on to the relevant worker and observers will be notified of the origin of their bird.

Ideally observers should note the species, colour of dye, its position on the bird (eg. breast, belly or rump), and/or colour of leg-flag; also, if possible, the number of birds in the flock checked for marks. Less complete information is also very welcome.

The two largest projects this winter (as well as some of the smaller ones) form parts of investigations of movements about and between estuaries within a winter - information urgently required by conservation and planning organisations (see elsewhere in this Bulletin). Although the work is being co-ordinated by the University of Durham and the Nature Conservancy Council, many other ringers and groups are taking part.

OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

For the Americas, see Bulletin 26.

Oman

The Royal Air Force Ornithological Society will be sending a party to Maserah Island, Oman, in eastern Arabia to continue studies begun in 1976. The expedition period, 21 October to 12 November 1979, corresponds with a large passage of Palaearctic waders through this region, and it is planned to mist-net large samples of those present. All waders and sea-birds (mainly terns) trapped will be dye-marked on the underparts with picric acid. As well as a few possible sightings elsewhere, dyed birds will provide information about local feeding and roosting movements and help in estimation of the numbers present. Sightings would be welcome and should be sent to: Sgt. Brian Etheridge, c/o N.M.S.U., R.A.F. Kinloss, Forres, Morayshire IV36 0LU, Scotland, or to the Editors.

Australia

An investigation, based on dye-marked birds, of movements about and from Port Phillip Bay, Victoria has been started. This concerns all wader species and sightings should be reported to Dr. C.D.T.Minton, c/o IMI Australia, 10th Floor, Heine House, 11 Queen's Road, Melbourne 3002, Australia.

SPRING PASSAGE OF DUNLINS, SANDERLINGS, RINGED PLOVERS AND TURNSTONES THROUGH BRITAIN - A FURTHER PROGRESS REPORT

by P.N.Ferns

Thirty-two people completed the form enclosed with Wader Study Group Bulletin 24 and, as described in Bulletin 26, coverage was arranged for at least 43 sites. Results have so far been received from 50 sites, though information has still to come in from ten of the original 43. While it is thus too early to present the results in full, it is worth giving a summary of what was achieved.

A total of 459 counts were made, giving an average of nine counts per site. At least 150 people contributed to the project in some way. Several sites had only low numbers of the four species, but this may be because waders on spring migration tend to associate in large flocks on more extensive feeding areas, rather than spreading out over a wide area as birds in winter tend to do. Even so, several observers commented on the fact that numbers seemed to be lower than in previous springs. This does not necessarily mean that fewer birds were migrating through Britain, since smaller numbers might also be expected (especially at the smaller sites) when weather conditions are particularly favourable for migration, or when food supplies are particularly good. In these circumstances, some birds might be able to overfly Britain and also less use might be made of smaller "emergency" sites.

At seven sites, more than 16 counts were made during the study period, and these will be particularly valuable in sorting out the numerical trends. One notable feature of the counts, was the great complexity of the migrations, especially in the case of Dunlin. Immediately adjacent sites often gave a completely different picture, and since arrivals and departures were often occurring simultaneously, it cannot even be assumed when counts were constant over a period of a few days that the same birds were involved. In this respect, the number of birds with differing amounts of summer plumage is proving very useful in sorting out waves of new arrivals, since many of the latter tend to have less summer plumage than birds which are departing.

Departures of birds on migration were observed at nine sites in four main areas - the Solent, Severn, Forth and Menai Straits. The average date of all such observations was 6 May and the dominant directions of movement were between NW and NE. The total numbers of birds involved were as follows: Dunlin Calidris alpina - 1561, Sanderling C.alba - 309, Ringed Plover Charadrius hiaticula - 90 and Turnstone Arenaria interpres - 64. Very few birds were colour-dyed (less than 100 Calidris alpina alpina) and no sightings of these were reported.

Twenty-one catches involving the four species were made at nine sites - the Wash, Devon, Severn, Dee, Southport, Morecambe Bay, Solway Firth, Inverness and Teesmouth. The total numbers of birds involved were as follows: Dunlin - 1785, Sanderling - 336, Ringed Plover - 447 and Turnstone - 395. The majority of these birds were fully processed and the results will thus be very valuable in helping to determine the likely destinations of particular waves of migrants.

A detailed account of the results will appear in the next Wader Study Group Bulletin.

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