



Figure 1. Observations of Golden Plovers near Dunbar, winter 1977-78.

THREE WADER SPECIES USING THE SAME NEST SITE

by K.B.Briggs

The banks of a 5km stretch of the River Lune near Arkholme, Lancashire (N W England) are searched daily for nest scrapes in spring as part of a study on the ecology of Oystercatchers *Haematopus ostralegus*. In 1979 the river was flowing 60-90cm above its normal spring level. As a result, many of the seven species of waders breeding in the locality were nesting in flood debris deposited on the pastureland, some 15-20m from the water's edge, and not as usual amongst the riverside gravel and sparse vegetation. On 24 April two scrapes, well lined with short grass stems, were found amongst the debris on the fields near the confluence with Newton Beck. One scrape was by a log (about 40 x 20cm). By 26 April, three more scrapes appeared within 5-6m of the other two. One Curlew *Numenius arquata* egg was found in the scrape by the log on 27 April. This egg was marked, as was the second on the following day. On 29 April, the two eggs were found crushed (presumably by cattle) and had disappeared by 2 May. The Curlew pair relaid approximately 200m inland about twelve days later.

Three fresh scrapes were found in the original area on 11 May and one more on 15 May by the log. The scrape was lined and a clutch of three Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* eggs produced by 18 May. Two days later, the eggs were trampled. This pair of Lapwings had previously nested 20m from this site amongst riverside gravel, but the clutch of four eggs had been flooded on 9 May. One further attempt (unsuccessful) was made on 1 June near their original site.

Two new scrapes were found 4m apart in the area on 25 May and two days later there was a scrape again by the log about 4m from the two earlier scrapes. A pair of Oystercatchers were observed in the scrape area and one egg was laid on 30 May. The egg was marked and measured. No further eggs were laid and incubation commenced. This egg was also crushed on 2 June. The pair were occupying the territory for the first time and the egg weight (44g) and the egg size index (38.77, as defined by Väisänen 1977) are consistent with figures being obtained for young or late breeding Oystercatcher pairs in this inland site. The pair made no further attempts to breed.

Väisänen, R.A. 1977. Geographic variation in timing of breeding and egg size in eight European species of waders. *Ann. Zool. Fennica* 14: 1-25.

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