

back of skull to bill tip.

Nigel A. Clark, Department of Zoology, University of Edinburgh.

(Other workers have developed special gauges for measuring head length and we hope to report on these in the next Bulletin. Eds.)

French Wader Mist Nets For Sale (This offer is effective in Great Britain and Ireland only)

I am planning to import some French mist nets on behalf of a number of wader ringers, and will be prepared to increase the order to make extra nets available (at cost price) to other mist netters who are interested. French nets will be familiar to all who have mist-netted with Wash Wader Ringing Group in recent years. They are 40 feet long and 9 feet high, with three good-sized pockets and a mesh size (stretched diagonal) of about 1½ inches. The nets have braided cord shelf strings and need to be set with a lot of tension: this, together with their 40 feet length, helps to avoid the possible problem of nets sagging at the centre when full of birds. They hold successfully all waders from dunlin to curlew, and regularly catch gulls and shelduck; they are excellent at thrush roosts, but are not really suitable for catching in daylight.

At the time of writing it is not clear what the exact price will be (exchange rates, inflation, etc) but it is likely to be around £20 per net. The more nets we can order, the lower the price will be. Will all those interested please write to me by 20th May stating the number of nets wanted, and enclosing a deposit of £5-00 per net ordered. Delivery is likely to be in June or July, and full payment will have to be made then.

Dr. David Norman, Rowswood Cottage, Ridding Lane, Sutton Weaver, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 6PF, England.

Wader Study Group Autumn Conference and Annual General Meeting

This event will be held during the weekend 1-2 November 1980 at Denstone College, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire where the headmaster, Tim Benyon, has kindly offered us accommodation. The cost will probably be around £7 per person inclusive of meals and one night's accommodation. Details have still to be decided and full information will be sent out with the August Bulletin - meanwhile make a note in your diary.

We should like to hear from anyone willing to give a short paper at the meeting. Please contact (as soon as possible please) either M.W.Pienkowski, Zoology Department, University of Durham, Durham, England or G.H.Green, Windy Ridge, Little Comberton, Pershore, Worcs., WR10 3EW, England.

IWRB Woodcock and Snipe Research Group - American symposium

This Group, which operates within IWRB, has sent us information about the 7th American Woodcock Symposium to be held 28-30 October 1980, State College, Pennsylvania, USA. It is hoped that some of the people active in Woodcock studies in Europe will be able to attend. Those interested should write to Symposium Planning Committee, c/o John Tautin, Office of Migratory Bird Management, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Laurel, Maryland 20811, USA.

Woodcock Wings

The Woodcock and Snipe Research Group are collecting data from Woodcock wings to aid sex and age determination. Anyone interested in this project should write to Dr H. Kalchreuter, D-7823 Bonndorf-Glashütte, Federal Republic of Germany. Information on these characters has been published by Clausager, I. (1973) 'Age and sex determination of the woodcock' Danish Rev. Game Biology 8:1-18 copies of which may be available from Vildtbiologisk Station, Kalø, 8410 Ronde, Denmark.

CONTINUING REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION OR MATERIAL

We repeat below requests that have previously appeared in WSG Bulletin but which continue to be active.

Sightings of colour-marked birds

A list of currently registered schemes was given in Bull.27 and is updated elsewhere in this issue.

Whole bodies of freshly dead waders

Readers of WSG Bulletin will know of the recent progress made on the analysis of body condition in waders and the development of ways of assessing this in the field. Such developments require analysis of dead birds, both those accidentally killed and those dying apparently because of adverse weather conditions.

Freshly dead whole bodies should be well wrapped in polythene bags inside strong external wrapping and sent by first class mail to: N.C.Davidson, Department of Zoology, University of Durham, South Road, Durham DH1 3LE. Mark the package: "Pathological specimens - URGENT" and please include a note of details of how obtained and where, weight at time of death/capture, etc.

(N.B. If such specimens leak, or are obnoxious, the Post Office can and will destroy them without comment and may prosecute the sender.)

Curlew measurements

Ian P. Bainbridge (new address: 137 Denton Road, Denton Burn, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England) is analysing geographical variation in wings and bill-lengths and weights of Curlew Numenius arquata in Europe and would welcome further data from anywhere in Europe. Sources of data will, of course, be acknowledged.

Wader Study Group data forms

Various studies noted previously in the Bulletin depend on the co-operative collection of data by ringers and groups in different areas and, in many cases, it is unlikely that individual workers can alone collect adequate data. This is one reason for the Group's existence. Some relevant recent requests are analysis of cold weather weights of waders generally (Bull 25:5) and Redshank *Tringa totanus* in particular (Bull 26:4) and moult of waders (Bull 26:3). The matter is also discussed elsewhere in this issue and there seem to be good prospects at present for the analysis of this co-operatively gathered data. All wader ringers are urged to send data routinely to the WSG files and to make attempts to supply earlier data where this has not already been done. Forms are available from and should be returned to:- G.F.Appleton, 18 Old Barn Road, Bournville, Birmingham B30 1PY, England. If at all possible, ringers are urged to adopt the new style forms for both new data and any earlier material which is not already on forms.

Münster sewage farms

The work of the Biologische Station at Münster is outlined in an article in this issue and was the subject of two requests in Bull 27:3. The workers there would welcome information on management of wetlands, particularly *Typha* control. Secondly, in summer, particularly August, there is the opportunity for young ornithologists to take part in activities such as recording, ringing and habitat management. Basic accommodation, including washing and cooking facilities, will be available and there is space for tents. On either aspect write to:

Biologische Station Rieselfelder Münster, Wöstebach 11, D-4400 Münster, West Germany.

INFORMAL MEETING AT THE BRITISH TRUST FOR ORNITHOLOGY'S RINGING AND MIGRATION CONFERENCE, 5th JANUARY 1980

It has long been a tradition for there to be a Wader Study Group meeting at the annual BTO Ringers Conference. In the past this gathering has constituted the Annual General Meeting which will now take place at an open autumn meeting, but with so many WSG members gathered together in one place it would have been foolish to forgo the opportunity for an exchange of ideas.

Harry Green (Chairman) explained the new subscription increase, announced the proposed introduction of a standard data form to replace that which has been used in the United Kingdom for several years and chaired the discussions which followed.

Dave Okill (Shetland) and Harry drew our attention to Dave's new mini cannon-net, which is about 5m square. Trials were about to occur and we will be very interested in their outcome, especially as such a small net may be very valuable for people trying to catch waders on rocky shores.

William Dick (Co-ordinator) was persuaded to speak about the 1979 spring knot project and his plans for 1980. He sketched the story as described in bulletin 27 and went on to mention the main areas in which work should be taking place in 1980. It is hoped that count data will be collected from Portuguese estuaries and, as Rui Rufino was with us, this looks more than likely. Olivier Fournier and Peter Prokosch plan to organise further studies in France and Germany which can be backed up by counts in Finland. Harry Green mentioned the British spring 1979 project and lamented the failure of his own team (the Celtic Wader Research Group) to catch during the spring of 1979. He intimated that the data collected, particularly by counts, indicated the need for a more specific study in some future year. The organiser, P.N.Ferns, is preparing a report and future plans.

A strong appeal was made for notification of colour-ringing schemes and Mike Pienkowski drew our attention to Pat Dugan's (Durham University) colour marking project which involves dyeing Knot *Calidris canutus*, Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* and Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* at several estuaries. Derek Langslow (Nature Conservancy Council) emphasised the importance of studies of movements between estuaries for applied conservation and appealed for co-operation when local data were needed for central analysis. Harry Green suggested a geographical extension in our activities, especially to include rocky shores and non-estuarine shoreline to back up long standing studies on big estuaries.

A wider discussion ensued about the registration of colour marking scheme and Wally Thrower (Norfolk and Bardsey) expressed the widespread view that there were now too many uncontrolled multifarious marking systems. Derek Langslow and Raymond O'Connor (Director B.T.O.) both said that lack of staff time prevented the BTO from undertaking detailed administration of colour marking schemes. John McMeeking (BTO President and Wash Wader R.G.) suggested that British wader ringers should be required to check with Wader Study Group register of colour marking before new schemes were given the go-ahead and that the NCC should only give grants for studies using these methods to wader workers who had registered their projects with the WSG. Derek Langslow promised to follow this up by discussing with NCC Licencing Branch the possibilities of requiring or requesting wader researchers to consult the WSG. Raymond O'Connor warned the WSG officers that administration of non-overlapping colour ringing schemes was not an easy task.

Other points which arose included an appeal for freshly dead waders on behalf of Nick Davidson (Durham University), a discussion on inter-estuary differences in wintering Dunlin biometrics, and questions about the wisdom of dyeing birds in the spring. Even more discussions occurred in the bar and small groups of WSG members were still talking at 5a.m., though I cannot remember what was being said after about 2.15a.m.! - G.F.Appleton, Secretary.

MULTI-COLOURED BIRDS

Reprinted from the first paragraph of an article in 'East Lothian News': Birds found in the Forth area daubed in combinations of red, green and orange paint are unwittingly taking part in a research project, and are not the victims of some stray punk rocker!