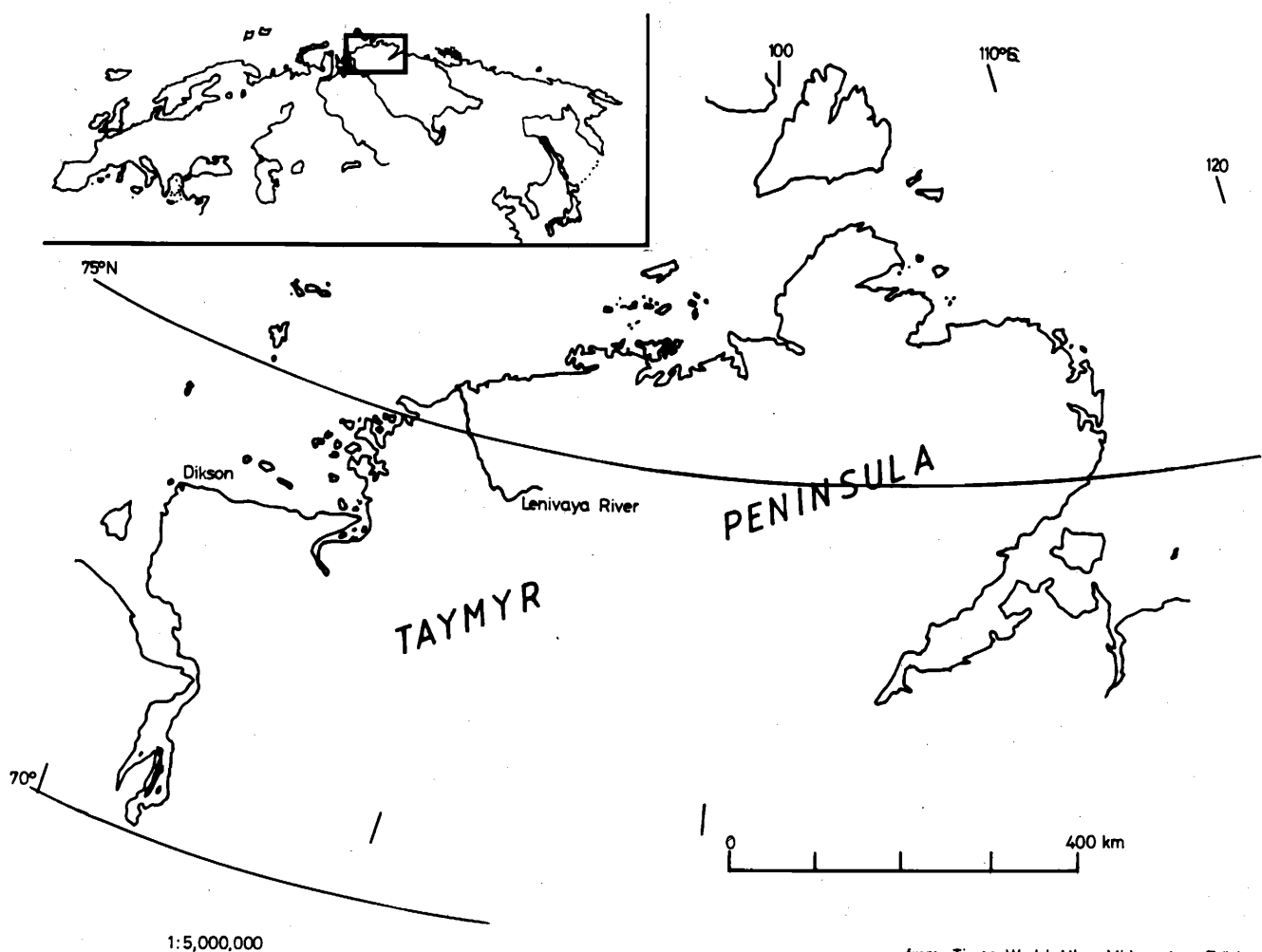


A POOR BREEDING SEASON IN 1983 FOR SOME WADERS ON THE TAYMYR PENINSULA

As so many of the shorebirds which spend the non-breeding season in Europe and Africa breed on the Taymyr Peninsula of the northern U.S.S.R., news of breeding conditions there is always of interest to shorebird workers in many areas. We have heard from Dr Pavel S. Tomkovich (of the Department of Ornithology, Zoological Museum, Moscow) that in summer 1983 there was a large number of Arctic Foxes Alopex lagopus, after the Lemming Year 1982. Consequently waders suffered heavily from predation by Arctic Foxes. On the N Taymyr (lower Lenivaya River) most wader-nests were destroyed. For example, the density of Curlew Sandpipers Calidris ferruginea on a study plot there in late June was 9 nests/28 ha (in an area with high density), while in late July the density was 7-8 broods/4 km². Almost all early nests of Turnstone Arenaria interpres and Grey Plover Pluvialis squatarola there were destroyed. As a result, in the first half of July there was a second peak of egg-laying by some waders. The hatching success of these late nests was higher, after snow-melt was advanced and the concentration of nests became lower. For example, of 7 broods C.ferruginea in the study area, 6 were late broods. The density of broods of Little Stint C.minuta was the highest (about 56 broods/4 km²), but the majority of broods were from late clutches. The high breeding success of this species was probably due to its preference for wet habitats, which are visited by Arctic Foxes less readily. No broods of Knot Calidris canutus and Sanderling C.alba were recorded at all, and few pairs were nesting.

No broods of C.canutus were recorded on 2 August on Sterlegova Cape (mouth of Lenivaya river), where 4 paired males were observed displaying in about 1 km² on 14-15 June.



from Times World Atlas, Mid-century Edition

Figure 1. The Taymyr Peninsula in Siberia, Showing sites mentioned in the text.

In the period 4-12 August, a search for wader broods in the vicinity of Dixon Settlement (NW Taymyr) revealed extremely few broods of C.ferruginea (less than 1 brood/km²), whereas in June 1982 there were more than 4 nests/km² of this species. Densities there of some other waders also were lower than in June 1982 (A.interpres, C.minuta, C.canutus). (Broods of C.alba were totally absent in August 1983.) However, the numbers of Pluvialis squatarola, Lesser Golden Plover P.dominica and Ringed Plover Charadrius hiaticula were not lower. Because the hatching dates of most P.dominica were very late there in 1983, Dr Tomkovich considers that the influence of Arctic Foxes near Dixon was high only at the beginning of the breeding season, but was reduced (or disappeared) some time later, when it was hard for Calidris sandpipers and Turnstones to re-nest.

Dr Tomkovich notes that these processes on the breeding grounds may, of course, influence the migration schedule, numbers and age-structures of some wader species in Europe. We would be very interested to hear from anyone who has information on this.