

---

# An observation of Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* feeding on fish

Juan A. Lorenzo Gutiérrez & Julio González Domínguez

J.A.L. Gutiérrez, Departamento de Biología Animal (Zoología), Universidad de La Laguna, 38206 La Laguna, Tenerife, Islas Canarias, Spain.

J.G. Domínguez, C/ Santiago, No. 112 S/C de Tenerife, Islas Canarias, Spain.

---

On 15 January 1990 during the course of a wader census at El Médano, a locality in the south of Tenerife (Canary Islands), we obtained an interesting observation relating to the diet of Whimbrel.

A bird was located feeding in one of the small tidal pools when suddenly, it was observed to capture a fish in a fashion very similar to that of a Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*. The fish was deposited on a rock at the side of the pool and the Whimbrel then proceeded to stab it several times after which it was ingested head first. The fish, which was approximately 8 cm. long, was identified as specimen of the Ornate Wrasse *Thalassoma parvo*, known locally as "pejeverde".

The diet of waders in some of their wintering areas has been poorly studied. In the Canary Islands, the fish that are trapped in rock pools when the tide ebbs, constitute important components of the diet of Little Egret and Grey Heron *Ardea cinera*; however our observation indicates that they could also represent an important food resource for medium to large waders.

Apparently the presence of fish in the Whimbrel's diet has not previously been recorded. Cramp & Simmons (1983) only mention diverse invertebrates, molluscs and occasionally Viviparous Lizard *Lacerta vivipara* (Kumari 1958 in Cramp & Simmons 1983).

## REFERENCES

Cramp, S. & Simmons, K.E.L. 1983. *The Birds of the Western Palearctic*, Vol. 3. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

