

more common during migration periods than in winter (Gallagher & Woodcock 1980; Uttley *et al.* 1988). Furthermore, population turnover can be significant as migration is not synchronous within a species. It is likely that the number of waders using Barr al Hikman as a migratory stop-over is at least as great as the numbers wintering.

The large number of birds present in this region, and their roosting habits, coupled with its great extent and difficulty of access make accurate counts extremely difficult. Sample counts of areas such as Barr al Hikman cannot be assumed to provide an indication of the species and numbers present, especially when we have very little knowledge of how sites and habitats are used by different species. If shorebird populations in the middle-east are to be assessed and monitored, extensive counts by relatively large teams of experienced observers are essential.

In summary, we found the shores of Barr al Hikman to hold internationally important numbers of shorebirds - notably Crab Plovers, sandplovers, Bar-tailed Godwits, Dunlin and Redshank. In addition it is the westernmost significant wintering site yet discovered for Great Knot and may hold significant numbers of Slender-billed Curlew.

REFERENCES

- Behrouzi-Rad, B. 1991. Waders in Iran. *Wader Study Group Bull.* 63: 33-36.
- Chernichko, A.B., Grinchenko, A.B. & Siokhin, V.D. 1991. Waders of the Sivash Gulf, Azov - Black Sea, USSR. *Wader Study Group Bull.* 63: 37-38.
- Curry, A.C. 1978. Report of the RAFOS Expedition to Masirah Island, 6-26 October 1976. Cyclostyled.
- Etheridge, B. 1980. Wader Studies. In: Pomeroy, C.A, (Ed). Report of the RAFOS Masirah Island Expedition, 22 October-26 November 1979.
- Gallagher, M. & Woodcock, M.W. 1980. *The Birds of Oman*. Quartet, London.
- Green M., McGrady M., Newton S. & Uttley J. 1992. *The shorebirds of Barr al Hikman and Ghubbat al Hashish, Oman*. Unpublished Report.
- Perennou, C., Rose, P. & Poole, C. 1990. Asian Waterfowl 1990. IWRB, Slimbridge, UK.
- Rogers, T.D. 1988. A new list of the birds of Masirah Island, Sultanate of Oman. The Oman Bird Record Committee, PO Box 246, Sultanate of Oman.
- Smart, I., Miles, G.A. & West, M. 1983. Waders and Waterbirds on Dubai Creek. *Wader Study Group Bull.* 37: 29-30.
- Summers, R.W., Underhill, L.G., Pearson, D.J. & Scott, D.A. 1987. Wader migration systems in southern and eastern Africa and western Asia. In: Davidson, N.C. & Pienkowski, M.W. (eds). *The conservation of international flyway populations of waders*. *Wader Study Group Bull.* 49 suppl./IWRB special publ. 7: 105-113.
- Tucker, G. 1985. Autumn wader migration in Bahrain. *Wader Study Group Bull.* 44: 30-32.
- Uttley, J.D., Thomas, C.J., Green, M., Suddaby, D. & Platt, J.B. 1988. The autumn migration of waders and other waterbirds through the northern United Arab Emirates. *Sandgrouse* 10: 58-70.
- Zwarts, L., Felemban, H. & Price, A.R.G. 1991. Wader counts along the Saudi Arabian coast suggests Gulf harbours millions of waders. *Wader Study Group Bull.* 63: 25-32.

A wintering or passage population of Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris* in the Arabian Gulf ?

Simon Aspinall

Aspinall, S.J. 1993. A wintering or passage population of Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris* in the Arabian Gulf ? *Wader Study Group Bull.* 72: 43-47.

Recent surveys of shorebirds in the Arabian Gulf have located Great Knot in a number of sites. A summary of these observations is provided together with a discussion on the status of this species in the Middle East and on possible migration routes of this westernmost wintering population.

Aspinall, S.J., National Avian Research Center, P.O. Box 45553, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

INTRODUCTION

Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris* breed in eastern Siberia and winter principally in northern Australia (Hayman *et al.*

1986), where recent surveys have found over 250,000 (Lane 1988). Their migration appears to take them very largely through the Philippines and New Guinea (Hayman *et al.* 1986). Considerably smaller numbers are regularly