INTRODUCTION
The North Pacific region represents a relatively small portion of the holarctic landmass, but it is one of the world's most important breeding areas for shorebirds (Gill et al. 1995). At least 67 migrating species or subspecies occur in the Russian Far East. The Sea of Okhotsk is the most important region for migrant waders in the Russian Far East during southward passage. However, chronology of migration of sexes and ages in most of the species is poorly understood, and only a preliminary inventory of wetlands of importance for waders was only carried out recently for the Russian Far East (Tomkovich 1996). Therefore one of the working groups of an international expedition to Babushkina Bay, Russian Far East, focused on the migration of shorebirds. The expedition consisted of teams from the Eastern Palearctic Wetland Research Centre, Magadan, Russia, and the University of Osnabrueck, Germany.

STUDY AREA
The study area was situated in the Babushkina Bay (59°13' N; 153°27' E), 150 km east of Magadan (Figure 1). It covered swampy as well as rocky coastal tundra surrounding a lagoon. This unique tundra belt extended up to 3 km inland. Pine Pinus pumila and alder Alnus fruticosa underbrush mark the transition to hills and mountains. The lagoon was separated from the open sea by a long and narrow spit except at the south-western end. Wide sand and gravel banks lay between the three lagoon supplying rivers (Meldek, Srednjaja and Buksendja). At low tide, sandy tidal flats in the lagoon emerged from the water. In mid-June the tidal flats were totally ice-covered; the last ice thawed in July. Usually higher high tides (average tidal range 2.5 m) alternated with lower high tides (average tidal range 0.2 m). The lower high tides normally did not even cover the tidal flats. The spit and the tidal flats appeared to be the most important staging areas for waders.

METHODS
Ground counts of waders, especially on the tidal flats (1 km²) and the shores of the spit (9 km), were made at least once per five-day period over 63 days from 14 June to 15 August. The last regular count on the tidal flats took place on 13 August and on the spit on 11 August. Some additional observations near
the camp were made later. On 10 and 12 August, 15 soil samples were taken to find out possible prey species on the tidal flats. A rigid plastic tube was inserted into the water and pushed through the substrate. The substrate within the tube was stirred and the invertebrates were removed using a fine sieve. The process was continued until no more items were found. The invertebrates were stored in 70 % alcohol for identification later. The density of individuals was not recorded.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

**Pacific Golden Plover Pluvialis fulva**
Small groups with a maximum of 23 (10 August) were seen from 9 July to 12 August. The birds appeared mainly in the tundra.

**Grey (Black-bellied) Plover Pluvialis squatarola**
Three adults were seen roosting on the spit on 19 July.

**Lesser Sand Plover Charadrius mongolus**
The first peak of birds was observed from early to mid July with a maximum of 46 on 12 July. Unfortunately, there is no information about the age or sex of these birds. Between 13 July and 8 August only individuals or small groups of up to 12 were counted. From 9 August onwards, bigger flocks appeared in the study area, with a maximum of 70 birds on 10 August. Most birds were males and juveniles, and only very few females were seen (Figure 2). The birds occurred mainly on the spit or in the tidal flats.

**Little Curlew Numenius minutus**
No staging birds were observed. Migrating groups seen were 6 individuals on 21 July, 12 individuals on 9 August, 85 individuals on 10 August and 134 individuals on 12 August.

**Whimbrel Numenius phaeopus**
The first Whimbrel was seen on 27 July on the tidal flats. Up to 8 August only individuals or small groups with a maximum of four birds were recorded. In the week from 9 - 15 August, the number of passing and roosting birds increased with a maximum of 238 migrating and 40 roosting birds seen on 10 August.

**Far Eastern Curlew Numenius madagascariensis**
From mid-June up to the end of July single individuals or pairs were seen at irregular intervals. A breeding pair was located in the peat marshes of the Srednjaja valley.

**Spotted Redshank Tringa erythropus**
A group of five individuals was on the spit on 11 July and one single bird was observed between Srednjaja and Buksendja on 14 July.

**Greenshank Tringa nebularia**
Throughout the whole observation period, single birds and small groups (a maximum of 13 birds on 10 August) occurred irregularly in the study area. The first juvenile birds were seen on 8 August.

**Green Sandpiper Tringa ochropus**
Two individuals were observed in different locations at the delta of the Meldek river on 31 July and another at Buksendja on 1 August.

**Wood Sandpiper Tringa glareola**
From 3 August onwards, single birds and small groups were seen in all parts of the study area. On 4 August, a maximum of 58 birds was counted. Most birds stayed near shallow freshwater pools or rivers in the marsh area.

**Terek Sandpiper Xenus cinereus**
The first bird was seen on 3 July and the maximum of 55 was counted on 11 July. Until the end of the observation period, individuals and groups of up to 47 birds appeared mainly on the gravel beaches of the spit. The dynamics of migration are shown in Figure 3.

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![Figure 2. Dynamics of migration of Lesser Sand Plover Charadrius mongolus in Babushkina Bay 1995 (maximum per five-day period)](image)

**Black-tailed Godwit Limosa limosa**
One adult was seen on 1 August and four juveniles on 10 and 12 August, all birds were on the tidal flats.

**Bar-tailed Godwit Limosa lapponica**
Two individuals were seen at the lagoon and at Buksendja on 25 and 26 July. Further birds appeared irregularly from the end of July to 13 August, with a maximum of 23 on 12 August. The first juveniles were seen on 10 August. Usually the birds stayed on the tidal flats. From 10 August onwards, only juveniles were observed.

![Figure 3. Dynamics of migration of Terek Sandpiper Xenus cinereus in Babushkina Bay 1995 (maximum per five-day period)](image)
**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*
Very small groups or single birds were observed from 17 July to 10 August with the maximum count (11) on 26 July. The first juvenile was seen on 2 August.

**Grey-tailed Tattler** *Heteroscelus brevipes*
From 10 July onwards, Grey-tailed Tattlers appeared in the study area. Single individuals and groups up to a maximum of 29 (8 August) were counted mainly in the saltmarshes.

**Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*
Scattered individuals or groups up to three were observed mostly on the stoney beaches of the spit from 12 to 27 July.

**Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus*
This was the most numerous shorebird in Babushkina Bay. Birds foraged primarily on the surface of the Okhotsk Sea. About 1,000 adult birds were observed from 8 to 12 July on the open sea outside Babushkina Bay. On 2 August the first juvenile birds were seen and, on 5 August, about 5000 juveniles were feeding in the nearshore areas, where floating plankton concentrated on the surface. On 15 August, 650 juveniles were again close to the shore. In August small flocks also foraged on the lagoon and the tidal flats. Breeding birds were seen in the freshwater marshes around Babushkina Bay.

**Pintail Snipe** *Gallinago stenura*
Four birds were found scattered in the dense grass of the spit from 5 to 13 August.

**Red Knot** *Calidris canutus*
Single birds were seen from mid-July to mid-August. On 1 August, up to 22 individuals were feeding on the tidal flats. The first juvenile bird was seen on 8 August.

**Great Knot** *Calidris tenuirostris*
Small groups (up to 19 on 10 July) were seen from 16 June to 12 August mostly on the spit and the tidal flats. The first juvenile bird was seen on 31 July. One flock of four was found at a height of 100 m in a rocky area with scrub pine trees *Pinus pumila* on 11 August. On 21 July, 200 Great Knots were seen flying along the coastline to the west.

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*
There were four records of single adult birds on the spit between 13 July and 3 August.

**Red-necked Stint** *Calidris ruficollis*
This was the most numerous wader species on the tidal flats, with a maximum of at least 1,000 individuals on 12 August (Figure 4). Larger numbers of adult Red-necked Stints arrived in late July (up to 195 on 27 July), whereas juveniles did not occur until 3 August. On 12 August, juveniles formed 96% of the total.

**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*
From 11 to 13 July three adult Little Stints were observed on the spit and on 14 July, one adult on the shore near the tidal flats.

**Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii*
Very small numbers were seen from 2 to 12 August. On 10 August, a maximum of seven birds was observed feeding in the tidal flats and the delta of the Srednjaja. The first juvenile bird was seen on 8 August.

**Long-toed Stint** *Calidris subminuta*
Over the whole period, Long-toed Stints occurred as single birds or in scattered groups (up to eight individuals on 8 August) on the marshy edges in the northern parts of the lagoon. Some breeding pairs were also found in this area.

**Baird's Sandpiper** *Calidris bairdii*
One adult in breeding plumage was seen on 31 July in the Meldek delta.

**Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** *Calidris acuminata*
Two single juvenile individuals were seen on 9 and 10 August in dense vegetation on the spit and in the saltmarshes.

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*
The maximum number of 117 adults and 33 juveniles was counted on 8 August on the tidal flats (Figure 5). The first juveniles were seen on the tidal flats on 27 July, and their number increased to mid-August with up to 71 seen on 13 August. Breeding birds were found in wet grassland around the lagoon. These birds belong to the subspecies *C. a.*
kistchinski (Tomkovich 1986; Gill et al. 1995).

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*
One adult Broad-billed Sandpiper was observed at the tidal flats feeding with Dunlins on 27 July.

**SOIL SAMPLES**
The invertebrate fauna of the soil samples was dominated by crustaceans of many species. The possible prey species found in the samples are listed in Table 1.

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<td>Mysidae</td>
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<td>Archaemysis sp. (cf. grebnitzkii)</td>
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*Table 1 Possible prey species for waders in the tidal flats of Babushkina Bay.*

**DISCUSSION**
Babushkina Bay is already known as a wetland of some importance for migratory waders based on the observations of Kistchinski (1968) but Black-tailed Godwit, Sanderling, Little Stint, Baird’s Sandpiper and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper are not on his list for the Magadan Region. However, the Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* was not found in this study although this species has a broad breeding distribution in the Magadan Region (Tomkovich, pers. comm.).

The study area seems to be important only for Red-necked Phalarope (foraging on the sea), while the waders in the lagoon stopped very briefly and it is possible that many species did not stop at all. A probable reason is the sandy substrate of the tidal flats and the low density of annelids. Most high wader concentrations in the Sea of Okhotsk are on mudflats (Tomkovich, pers. comm.).

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**
The expedition could only have been carried out with the collaboration of many people. We are grateful to A.V. Andreev, H.-H. Bergmann, W. Gatter, H.-J. Hehman, L. von der Heyde, A.V. Kondratyev, T. Meinrenken, F. Millers and B. Rupprecht for their help and observations, B. Saur for helping with the soil samples, K. Regel for the identification of invertebrates and P.S. Tomkovich for editing the manuscript.

**REFERENCES**

