

Forthcoming talks: All 'Wader Quest' unless otherwise stated.

30/10/2017 Lancaster and District
Birdwatching Society

24/11/2017 Derbyshire
Ornithological Society

05/12/2017 Wigan RSPB local
group. (Subject TBA)

10/01/2018 East Surrey RSPB local
group

11/01/2018 North Bucks local
group (Confessions of Bird Guide)

08/02/2018 Wokingham and
Bracknell RSPB local group.

16/02/2018 Marylebone
Birdwatching Society.

01/03/2018 Solihull RSPB local
group.

08/03/2018 Stourbridge RSPB local
group.

14/03/2018 Watford RSPB local
group (Confessions of a Bird Guide)

27/03/2018 Peterborough Bird Club

05/04/2018 Sheffield RSPB local
group.

09/04/2018 Banbury Ornithological
Society.

10/04/2018 Reading RSPB local
group.

On the 1st of November 2017 Wader Quest will be 5 years young!

Since November the 1st 2012 we have:

Raised £20,000 for wader conservation

Established the Wader Quest newsletter

Initiated the UK's first, and now annual, Wader Festival in The Wirral

Helped to establish other annual UK wader festivals

Built a growing following of more than 250 Friends and Sponsors

Established the annual Wader Conservation World Watch event

Established a 10 strong Board of Trustees

Gained charitable status from HMRC to benefit from Gift Aid

Written and published a children's book; Eury the Spoon-billed Sandpiper

Given 79 talks raising awareness to 3,680 people

Personally experienced 176 of the world's wader species first hand

Designed our own logo — twice!

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Original logo 2012 - 2015



New logo 2015 - present

Five years of Wader Quest; the details



Rick and Elis during their Wader Quest adventures in South Africa; September 2013

On the 1st of November it will be five years since Elis and I embarked on our first journey as Wader Quest. Oh my have things changed since that day!

What started out as an attempt to see a Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Calidris pygmaea*, while we still could, morphed into a realisation that instead perhaps we should be doing something to stop it becoming extinct. Not that there was much we could do really, about the only option open to us was to raise money for a conservation project. The project we decided upon was the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust Spoon-billed Sandpiper Captive Breeding programme.



Spoon-billed Sandpiper — Elis Simpson

What followed was supposed to be a single, one-off, year of travelling to see as many species of wader as we could. The idea was that people would buy into the idea and send us money, which we would then pass on to the WWT. Well, our publicity wasn't very good I have to admit and later we learned that people were reluctant to part with their hard earned cash as they believed they'd be paying for our travels, which of course they weren't. We stumped up for everything.

The distressing event of my brother's decline in health and eventual death meant that the year got extended by three months as we didn't want to miss the time we still had to share with him by being absent.

During our travels we discovered that wader conservation was about so much more than cute little birds with funny little bills in the far flung corners of Asia. It was about pretty much everywhere we visited that had waders, in whatever habitat they happened to be living, including right at our back door. The destruction of habitat was startling and extremely upsetting.

In the end we travelled on six continents, on all nine flyways and saw a total of 175 species of wader falling just short of our target of 180.

The upshot of all this dashing about was that once our travels were over we had become ardent wader conservation fanatics, we had added the Hooded Plover *Thinornis cucullatus* to our fundraising efforts and then the Magellanic Plover *Pluvianellus socialis* which we turned into a Wader Quest project. This is still on going in a quiet back-burner sort of way.

The money we raised for WWT was not significant, or at least it wasn't as significant as we had hoped, but we were



Hooded Plover — Elis Simpson



Magellanic Plover — Elis Simpson

determined to continue our project and the travelling fundraiser of finite span metamorphosed into a fledgling charity dedicated to wader conservation.

We took on Trustees, we now have a total of 10 including Elis and me. Details of these heroes can be found on the back page of this newsletter as always.

During the intervening years we have set up several fundraising projects, all of which have been successful. We have raised further funds to help the Spoonies in Pak Thale in Thailand, this money is being held by us pending news about the project to form a reserve at Pak Thale. Our plan is to fund, or part fund, a hide for the planned reserve.

More recently we helped to fund the pioneering work of the Humber Wader Ringing Group replacing the Cannon nets with hydraulically activated units called 'Phutt nets', which will have a smaller impact on the environment when activated. (See page 9 for full list.)

Other achievements include this e-newsletter which just seems to grow every time with some really interesting articles written by some well-known waderologists as well as ordinary folk like us who just love waders.

Five years of Wader Quest; the details — cont'd

Perhaps our biggest achievement has been persuading the good folk of The Wirral (actually they needed little persuasion or encouragement) to create the UK's first wader festival following the example of our friends across the channel and the shorebird festivals up and down the US and Canada. The Wirral Wader Festival has run for three years now and this year we had the honour of introducing the guest speaker Iolo Williams, environmentalist and TV wildlife presenter, who entertained us with his talk on 'The Wildlife of the Welsh Coast.'

In 2015 we combined with Birdwatching Magazine to create a Wader Conservation November where all the events we attended were linked, the Wirral Wader Festival was the first of those events.



Since that first Festival there have been several others; one on the Wash in Norfolk (part of Wader Conservation November), another in South Walney in Cumbria, which this year ran for its second year, and for the first time, in partnership with the WWT, going back to our roots so to speak, this year also saw the first Severn Wader Festival at Slimbridge Wetland Centre.

Another of our annual events is the Wader Conservation World Watch, now is in its 4th year and growing, more on this later in the newsletter. We also hope that we will be able to start making some inroads into discovering exactly where the two forms of Willet spend their non-breeding seasons with a project called 'Where's Willet?', the details of which are not finalised but it will take place over this coming northern winter.

In addition we have celebrated Plover Appreciation Day for two years at Titchwell RSPB reserve as a joint event which we greatly enjoyed.

We are also very pleased with the reception our talks are getting from bird and wildlife groups up and down the country.

Whoever thought we'd end up writing a children's book? Well somehow it happened and the result is Eury the Spoon-billed Sandpiper (£7.99 Wader Quest Publishing 2016 available from Wader Quest) which is about a young Spoony as he battles to survive his first two years of life. The book is aimed at children of 6–11 years.

We have now raised £20,000 for wader conservation since we started, including the money we raised for the Spoonies initially, a figure of which we are

WIRRAL WADER FESTIVAL



WASH
WADER
FESTIVAL



proud and we hope that all of you who are Friends of Wader Quest, Sponsors, or donors, which together now number more than 250 subscriptions, have made it all possible are proud of yourselves too. We certainly greatly appreciate the support you have given us and faith you have all placed in us by trusting us to use your money to defend our beloved waders, which we have done faithfully and will continue to do so as long as we can.

We are now permanently represented for the first time in Scotland where Andrew Whitelee has settled to work along with his partner Penny Insole (two names you will see a lot on these pages). Andrew is a Trustee and volunteers for many events and is forever looking for ways to punish himself in order to raise funds for Wader Quest. Added to all of this he also organises, with the help of another of our Trustees and volunteers Ian Dearing, the Bird Race Challenge (formerly the Norfolk Bird Race) which is set up to raise funds for three charities on alternating years. Wader Quest, WWT and the World Land Trust.

What then of the future? Although we are registered with the British Government dept HMRC as a charity enabling us to claim Gift Aid and exempting us from some tax burdens, we are not yet a registered charity, but, fortunately those two north of the border volunteers Andrew and Penny Insole, have taken on the task of going through the onerous process of registering Wader Quest as a charity which we hope will give us even more credence as an organisation acting on behalf of waders who cannot do so for themselves.

For some time now we have wanted to create a new British presence of the global project known as 'The Flock' where cut-out wader shapes are placed in a flock either painted naturally or in random colours by children and adults alike as a global awareness raising scheme. We now have two volunteers who have agreed to help to create the 'The Flock UK'. They are Phil and Gail Pickett who also represented Wader Quest at the Wirral Wader Festival along with Andrew and Penny (I said you'd see their name a lot didn't I?) and Allan Archer, another Trustee.

We also have to keep up with legislation and the new data protection laws relating to data bases. Also privacy policies have to be looked into (See page 10 for our current Privacy Policy.)

Other than that who knows what the next five years may bring? We hope you will all be along for the ride with us, it'll be exciting to see where fortune takes us and the waders themselves.

Wader Quest news

Since our last newsletter, starting in August, we attended the British Birdwatching Fair. This quarter is the Wader Quest silly season, so much happens that we hardly have time to draw a breath. It is exhausting but rewarding.

The Bird Fair this year was another resounding all round success with the stand takings up on last year and the talk being attended by over 100 people for the first time. What is gratifying about this is that everyone in that audience had somewhere else they could have been or had something else they could have been doing but they chose to come and listen to the Wader Quest talk!



A busy moment on the Wader Quest stand
— Elis Simpson

This year Elis and Rick were joined on the stand by stalwart volunteers Andrew Whitelee and Penny Insole (them again!) who attended for all three days, taking a lot of the pressure off and making the event even more enjoyable for all concerned.

We had two competitions running this year; guess the number of m&ms in a jar



Steph Myszka receives her m&m's prize
— Elis Simpson

and a wader identification quiz. The former was won by Amy Wardle who won a pair of Opticron binoculars but who wasn't present to receive her prize on the day and second place Steph Myszka who won the jar of m&ms and was delighted to do so being able to collect them on the Sunday afternoon.

The ID competition was won by Tanya Derrick who fortunately was also on hand to claim her Opticron binocular prize on Sunday afternoon. The first prize in the raffle was won by Nina O'Hanlan who received a copy of the Collins Field Guide.



Tanya Derrick receives her quiz prize, a pair of Opticron binoculars
— Elis Simpson

The next event was the annual pilgrimage to Sweden for the Falsterbo Bird Show, a very relaxed and enjoyable event interrupted by dashes out of the marquee to see a passing raptor or two, or as was the case this year 92 White Storks *Ciconia ciconia*.



White Storks over Falsterbo
— Elis Simpson

The journey home wasn't quite so relaxed though as Rick and Elis had to make the ferry in time to be in the north-west of England for a talk the following day.

Somehow they made it and enjoyed meeting the East Lancashire Ornithological Club which kindly became a Club Sponsor so it was definitely worth all the effort and rushing around.

The very next weekend the frenetic pace continued with Wader Quest attending two events at the same time and this again was thanks to the help of our volunteers. Once again Andrew Whitelee and Penny Insole stepped in along with Gail and Phil Pickett as well as Allan Archer.

The weekend got off to a good start with the much trumpeted talk given by Iolo Williams on the Friday evening to open the proceedings for the Wirral Wader Festival, now in its third year. It was a highly successful evening; much enjoyed by everyone including Iolo himself it seemed.



Iolo Williams in full swing
— Elis Simpson

The Wirral Wader Festival continued on for the next two days with Andrew and Penny attending the Hoylake promenade for the high tide roost and Phil, Gail and Allan at the Red Rocks / West Kirby venue. The weather wasn't great for them but it could have been much worse for sure (see page 8 & 9 for a short report on the weekend).

That same weekend Elis and Rick Simpson were at the first Severn Wader Festival held at Slimbridge with the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust. The event was organised by Scott Petrek the Slimbridge reserve warden and it was a highly enjoyable weekend with the Wader Quest stand being in a very prominent position.

Wader Quest news — cont'd



The Wader Quest stand at Slimbridge — Elis Simpson

Hot on the heels of the Severn Wader Festival came another talk at Southport and the following day Plover Appreciation Day which was once again passed at Titchwell Marsh RSPB Reserve thanks to an invite from the RSPB's Carrie Carey.

Bad weather has been a regular feature of many of Wader Quest's events over the years and Plover Appreciation Day was no exception. Here Rick and Elis were ably assisted by Trustee and volunteer Allan Archer. The rain and wind diminished the pleasure of the day by a modicum but this was somewhat alleviated when RSPB volunteer, and old friend, Tony Gray found a Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* at the far side of the marsh which occasionally put in an appearance. We also had good looks at a Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* in juvenile plumage in front of the Parrinder hide where we were set up and there were double figures of Little Stints *Calidris minuta* there that day as well. There were loads of Ruff *Calidris pugnax* around too and needless to say the four expected plovers Grey *Pluvialis squatarola*, Eurasian Golden *Pluvialis apricaria*, Northern Lawing *Vanellus vanellus* and Common Ringed *Charadrius*



Little Stint — Elis Simpson

hiaticula all put in an appearance during the day.



Common Ringed Plover — Elis Simpson

The next event also occurred at an RSPB reserve, this time on the other side of the Wash in Lincolnshire at Frampton Marsh. We had been invited to attend by Toby Collett the warden and Matt Merritt the Birdwatching Magazine editor to help them celebrate a 'reader's day' looking for waders as part of



Dunlins in the sun at Frampton — Elis Simpson

their 200 bird year challenge.

Once more Rick and Elis who attended set up in a hide and spent the day talking to magazine readers and other reserve visitors about Wader Quest and wader conservation as they entered the hide. In contrast to other events the weather was very kind indeed with the sun shining most of the day.

Another talk, this time in Surrey, and then it was the turn of Walney to have its wader festival. The recurring weather theme reared its ugly head again for this event with Storm Brian making its presence felt. The first day's activities had to be cancelled for safety reasons predominantly because of a predicted high tide and storm surge, but the second day's events went ahead with talks and walks all of which were greatly appreciated by those who braved the weather to attend.



Grey Plovers battle the elements off Walney Island — Elis Simpson

Meanwhile Andrew and Penny were in the warmth and comfort of the Atholl Hotel in Pitlochry, Scotland for the Scottish Ornithological Club conference.

This was the second year that Wader Quest has attended the S O C conference. Wader Quest is not well known north of the border so attending this event is a great boon to our profile and awareness raising aims.

There were some excellent migration themed talks at the event, however, the highlight for our wader lovers was Jeroen Reneerkens talk on his work colour ringing Sanderlings *Calidris alba* on their Greenland breeding grounds and their subsequent dispersal to places as widespread as Orkney, Portugal, Mauritania and Namibia for the winter and how individual birds had been located en route in the Netherlands, the Mediterranean and Africa.

The SOC staff were brilliant and the food at the hotel was as good as ever. Andrew and Penny look forward to going back to the conference next year.

Wirral Wader Festival — Andrew Whitelee and Penny Insole

This was our first Wirral Wader Festival representing Wader Quest and we were excited to be involved and see what the weekend had to offer.

We were stationed at the Hoylake Promenade shore and the first thing we noticed when we arrived on Saturday was how far out the tide seemed to be but how quickly it moved in. Several thousand Eurasian Oystercatchers *Haematopus ostralegus* were busy feeding, being chased towards the beach by the fast moving tideline while small groups of Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* stood more calmly at the water's edge, taking advantage of their long legs and longer bills to feed at a more leisurely pace. Within an hour the high tide coupled with an on shore wind was pushing more and more waders ever closer.

The sea front was filling with on-lookers despite the strong winds and squally showers. Those that did brave the weather were treated to a fantastic spectacle – many thousands of birds – gulls, Eurasian Oystercatchers, Eurasian Curlews, Dunlins *Calidris alpina*, Red Knots *Calidris canutus*,



Massed ranks of Eurasian Oystercatchers (and the odd gull) — Andrew Whitelee

a nuisance. I am sure that this was mostly done without malice due to a lack of education and is something we need to work harder to overcome as there should be enough beach space for everyone if carefully managed.

The strong on-shore winds also brought a few surprises on Saturday with a Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus*, one Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus* and a Common Guillemot *Uria aalge* all being spotted during the afternoon. Once the tide began to subside and the crowds disappeared we decided to take a trip down to RSPB Burton Mere and were rewarded with excellent views of two Common Greenshanks *Tringa nebularia*, one still in breeding plumage, a small group of Black-tailed Godwits *Limosa limosa*, and a smattering of Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*, Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* and Dunlin.

The weather for Sunday's event was predicted to get worse during the afternoon but the crowds were undeterred and were treated to similar views and spectacles to those seen on Saturday. The south-westerly wind meant the tide didn't quite get as close to the sea front but this gave the large numbers of Dunlins, Common Ringed Plovers

and Sanderling, more room to feed and allowed us to give passers by good views of



Common Greenshanks — Andrew Whitelee

them through the scope. It was interesting to observe at close hand the difference in feeding behaviour between the species – the classic clockwork, frenetic feeding of Sanderlings, the stop-start run and pause of the Common Ringed Plovers and the more chilled out, methodical technique employed by the Dunlins. An added bonus was a summer plumage Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* that flew in and gave great views for a while before being chased off by yet another uncontrolled dog.

By the time the heavens opened with a torrential downpour at 3pm on Sunday we had seen thousands of birds including 14 species of wader however, we missed the Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca* that was reported from Hilbre Island later on Sunday afternoon.

Thanks to everyone who came up to talk to us, the genuine interest in the event and the birds was obvious, and the enthusiasm to learn more about waders was very inspiring. We really enjoyed our first experience of the Wirral Wader Festival and were proud to represent Wader Quest but the birds were the real stars of the show, which is just how it should be.



Unobservant or unconcerned?
— Andrew Whitelee

Sanderlings *Calidris alba*, Common Ringed Plovers *Charadrius hiaticula* and a small group of Bar-tailed Godwits *Limosa lapponica* all frantically feeding before the water covered their feeding grounds. At this point it is worth noting that there were some dog walkers who were ignoring the information signs asking them not to disturb the birds at such a critical time, with dogs chasing feeding waders, scattering roosting gulls and generally causing



Dunlin (left) and Sanderling — Penny Insole

Wirral Wader Festival — cont'd



Dunlins passing Red Rocks at West Kirby — Phil Pickett

At the Red Rocks / West Kirby site Wader Quest was ably represented by Allan Archer, and Gail and Phil Pickett.

The weekend started at Red Rocks, on the rocks themselves where Gail, Phil and Allan and two folk from the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) watched numbers of waders, mostly Dunlin *Calidris alpina*, whizz by them as the tide advanced.

Although it was a 'pretty blowy' day as Gail put it, the rain stayed away and it remained dry. Sadly though there was not much passing trade in the form of people who were attending the Wader Festival during the high tide period that the team remained on the rocks.

On Sunday, on their way back to Red Rocks following a quick visit to Burton Mere Wetlands, Gail and Phil spotted some Black-tailed Godwits *Limosa limosa* coming in to land in a field very close to a main road at Caldby. Naturally they stopped and were treated to the amazing sight of huge numbers of milling, bickering godwits just yards away, behind a low wall.

Returning to Red Rocks after that short pit stop, instead of working on the rocks themselves this time, they remained on a

smallish sandy patch where the Cheshire Wildlife Trust had a collection of muddy shore dwelling minibeasts which they had set up.

Sadly, although the weather started lovely the afternoon was wet, very wet in fact. The team reported some, but not much in the way of passing trade, so sadly, no sand sculptures were made nor were any wader



Eurasian Curlew — Phil Pickett

drawings coloured in. Those passing that were engaged by the team were happy to have a look through the scopes and to chat about waders and why the festival was taking place which is, after all, the reason for any of us doing this in the first place.



Black-tailed Godwit roost at Caldby — Phil Pickett



Our noble volunteers with Iolo Williams at his talk on the Friday evening; (above) Phil and Gail Pickett and Allan Archer (below Andrew Whitelee and Penny Insole — Elis Simpson



It was really wonderful to have Allan, Gail, Phil, Andrew and Penny representing Wader Quest at the Wirral Wader Festival since Elis and Rick Simpson were pre-booked to be elsewhere, *i.e.* the Severn Wader Festival at Slimbridge which went without a hitch for Rick and Elis as well as the WWT team led by Scott Petrek and volunteer and Friend of Wader Quest Roberta Goodall who was responsible for putting the WWT and Wader Quest teams together for this event.

Rick and Elis at least had the luxury of being indoors for the duration and there was much passing trade although how much of that was normal footfall and how much was because for the festival is hard to say.

The added bonus from Rick and Elis' point of view was that they were placed right in front of the live 'Spoony cam' so when there were no visitors to the stand they were able to watch those lovely little birds go about their daily business.

It was good to catch up with Club Sponsors Dursley Bird Watching & Preservation Society which also had a stand at the event.



Chris and Brenda Usher (DBWPS) — Rick Simpson

Iolo Williams' talk at the Wirral Wader Festival — Rick Simpson



A packed auditorium and eager crowd in keen anticipation as Rick Simpson introduces Iolo Williams — Elis Simpson

As evenings go, Iolo Williams talking about his beloved wildlife of the Welsh Coast, has to rate as one of the best. Iolo very kindly agreed (through friends of the Wirral Wader Festival team), to open the event on the Friday evening with his talk and Wader Quest was very proud to sponsor Iolo's fee and to introduce him on the night.

The venue for the talk was Heswall Hall which was made available to us thanks to the kindness of the Wildlife Wirral local Cheshire Wildlife Trust group, which agreed to incorporate the event into their winter talk season. Despite some early jitters about ticket sales the auditorium was packed with expectant people who anticipated a good evening listening to this popular TV presenter; they were not disappointed.

Whilst the talk was not exclusively about waders, they did feature, and one of the most interesting points he made was that Eurasian Whimbrels *Numenius phaeopus* have been recorded nesting in Wales on an island off the Llyn Peninsula, the only record thus far of them doing so.

When talking about wader flocks over the estuary Iolo mentioned that 'some people refer to them as murmurations'. After the talk while we were chatting I took him to task about this saying that we prefer to use an inspiration of waders. Iolo quickly pointed

out the use of the word 'some' in his comment and agreed that inspiration was much better and promised, if given the chance, he'd use it, perhaps even on Autumn Watch if appropriate. Let's hope so, it'd be a great boon to our campaign to have this collective noun adopted by the general birding public.

The talk was liberally scattered with facts and figures, personal anecdotes and stories, a touch of controversy, much talk about conservation and even the odd imitation or two of some of the birds he was talking about. There was a certain amount of hilarity when he discussed the naming of the European Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* and Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* and how it was lucky the Great and European were not transposed.

It seems Iolo doesn't like gulls, nor golfers, nor the BOU it would appear. All of these came in for some tongue-in-cheek ribbing, so he looked a little aghast when after his talk, as part of my thanks to him, I introduced myself as the Chair of the BOU, my local golf club and the Gull Appreciation Society, none of which (to his relief) is actually true.

There were some excellent questions from the audience the best of which was asking Iolo what law he would

implement were he able to do so. Interestingly he replied that he would make studying the natural world a compulsory subject in schools and even have it as a GCSE; an idea of which the audience thoroughly approved and it attracted a spontaneous round of applause all by itself.

The evening was a great success and we are very grateful to Iolo for giving up his time to come and help us to celebrate the Wirral Wader Festival and to get it off to such a grand start. The only problem is... How do you follow that?

A raffle was held in order to raise funds for the Wirral Wader Festival and the participating organisations and individuals donated prizes. Two of the prizes that Wader Quest supplied were donations from Opticron, one of our most supportive Corporate Sponsors, in the form of two pairs of binoculars. One pair was won by a lady who was just starting to birdwatch and being on a limited income was thrilled to have won them. The second pair was won by a lady who was trying to interest her son in birdwatching but didn't want to waste money if he didn't like it. He was duly thrilled and most enthusiastic about the detail with which he was now able to see the birds. Both worthy winners and both ladies (and son) went to Hoylake to try their new binoculars.

We have reached £20,000 in fundraising since 2012!

Donations made:

01/11/2012 – 31/03/2014:	£3,526.06
16/08/2013 – 30/09/2013:	£187.83 (\$350.00AU)
01/10/2013 – 17/09/2014:	£1,128.50
05/03/2014	£20.94 (US\$35.00)
20/03/2014	£20.94 (US\$35.00)
24/03/2015	£34.41 (US\$50.00)
26/03/2015	£53.02 (AUD100.00)
20/07/2015	£10.00
18/12/2015:	£95.73 (AUD200.00)
29/12/2015:	£141.27 (US\$ 200.00)
07/01/2016:	£199.85 (R\$1,125.00)
06/04/2016:	£100.72 (NZ\$200.00)
20/04/2016:	£100.00
22/01/2017:	£100.00
05/03/2017:	£336.24 (AU\$520.71)
14/03/2017:	£94.18 (US\$115.00)
13/04/2017:	£50.00
05/05/2017:	£153.33 (AU\$265.61)
13/08/2017:	£50.00
15/08/2017:	£15.00
Total Donations made:	£6,418.02

WWT Slimbridge Spoon-billed Sandpiper captive breeding programme.
 BirdLife Australia Hooded Plover Appeal.
 BirdLife Australia Hooded Plover Appeal.
 Western Snowy Plover appeal. Audubon California.
 Galveston oil spill appeal. Audubon, Texas.
 Waders in Working Wetlands - Shorebird Extravaganza.
 STOP Shorebirds from Dying; BirdLife Australia.
 Saint Helena National Trust 'Adopt a Wirebird' (St Helena Plover).
 BirdLife Australia for the Silent Shorebird Crisis Appeal.
 South Island Wildlife Hospital.
 Conectando os Pontos donated via Kickante site.
 Pukorokoro Miranda Trust for purchase of Robert Findlay Reserve.
 Mary Colwell for The Curlew Walk.
 Staffordshire Wildlife Trust Hazel Barrow Appeal.
 Wing Threads.
 Protect our Plovers; San Francisco Bird Observatory.
 Azerbaijan research project.
 Tassie Shorebird Rescue.
 Ben's big Curlew Ride (BTO)
 Snettisham Hide Appeal (RSPB)

Wader Quest Grants Fund disbursements:

26/09/2014:	£70.81
29/10/2014:	£133.14
30/10/2015	£350.00
17/12/2015:	£55.39
09/02/2016	£650.00
31/10/2016	£217.33
05/12/2016	£178.12
04/04/2017:	£282.02

Celluloid colour rings and measuring equipment purchased; Anak Burung Birdbanding Club, Indonesia.
 Five mist nets; Centro de Ornitología y biodiversidad, Paracas Peru.
 Opticron IS70 (18-54 eyepiece) telescope and Opticron 10x50
 Discovery binoculars; Nature's Valley Trust, Western Cape, South Africa.
 Celluloid colour rings; Anak Burung Birdbanding Club, Indonesia.
 Colour engraved leg flags; Conectando os Pontos, Paraíba, Brazil.
 Ringing pliers and weighing scales; Migratory ecology of Charadriiforms project; coastalBrazil.
 Celluloid colour leg rings; Migratory ecology of Charadriiforms project; coastalBrazil
 Colour leg rings; Humber Wader Ringing Group (HWRG).

Total Grants Fund disbursements: £1,936.81

Total raised for Magellanic Plover: £3,000.00

Total raised for Pak Thale Fund: £1,000.00

Total raised for HWSG 'Phut net': £1,500.00

Total paid out to wader conservation: £13,854.83

Additional funds held in reserve for wader conservation: £6,090.12

Total currently raised by Anniversary Raffle: £109.00



Grand total raised since 2012; £20,053.95

Well done and THANK YOU to all our Trustees, Friends, Sponsors, volunteers, supporters, and the generous wader-loving public.

Wader Quest notices

It has come to our attention that Privacy Policy rules under the Data Protection Act will be changing. In future we will not be able to assume you are willing to be contacted by us simply because you have provided us with your email details. By May 28th next year we must have written consent from Friends and Sponsors to contact them (including the distribution of this newsletter) otherwise we will be considered to be spamming our subscribers.

Our current policy:

We do not share your personal details with any third party for any reason

We do not sell your details to any third party for any reason

We contact you only for the purposes of legitimate Wader Quest business

That business includes; subscription reminders, appeals and the issue of e-newsletters.

The information we keep is as follows.

**Name
Email address
Postal address (if supplied)
Subscription amount
Subscription method (cash, bank transfer, standing order, cheque, PayPal)
Date joined
Eligibility for Gift Aid
Payments recieved**

If anyone would like us to erase any of this information from our database then he or she can request that we do so.

We keep information on lapsed members for two calendar years from the expiry of their subscription

Once we have formulated a sensible and convenient method to obtain permission from subscribers to contact them we will implement it before May 28th 2018.

In the meantime if you wish to email us giving us consent to contact you before this is done, then your email will be kept on file.

Wader Quest notices — cont'd

The 2017 Wader Quest AGM will be held at the WWT London Wetland Centre starting at 12:30 PM.

(Following the regular Trustees' meeting)

If you are interested in attending please apply for an agenda to waderquest@gmail.com so we have an idea of how many will be attending, thank you.

GREAT WADER QUEST 5th ANNIVERSARY RAFFLE



This magnificent original oil painting has been donated to Wader Quest to raise funds for Wader Conservation by artist Steve Cale.

This incredible framed (94cm x 54cm) artwork could be yours for as little as

£1.00

Each ticket is just £1 and will be available at all events and talks that we attend between now and the end of April 2018 (see front page or website for talk details) However you can apply by email to waderquest@gmail.com for tickets but you will need to pay 76p extra for postage and sorry, but we have to restrict the entrants to those with a UK address for delivery for the winning entry. You will need to make a payment using bank transfer, cheque (UK) or PayPal (email for all details) and send us your postal address and we'll send your tickets to you through the post.

Don't miss out on this wonderful opportunity to hang this glorious painting on your wall

Site fidelity, migration, movement and habitat preference of Latham's Snipe: the story so far — Birgita Hansen on behalf of the Latham's Snipe Project



Latham's Snipe observed during surveys at Peterborough in south-west Victoria — Rich Chamberlain.

This story began with a legal dispute over a housing development proposal for an urban wetland in southern Australia, a site that was populated by Latham's Snipe *Gallinago hardwickii* during their non-breeding season.

It has progressed far beyond what the original project team ever envisaged, thanks to the hard work and dedication of its (mostly) volunteer participants. And the story is still unfolding.

In 2014, a series of surveys were initiated by myself in collaboration with South Beach Wetlands and Landcare Group members Jodie Honan and Don Stewart. These were conducted around the Port Fairy area in south-western Victoria, Australia, a known hot spot for the species. The aim of these surveys was to establish the relative importance of urban wetlands to day-roosting snipe, and address the myth by development proponents that displacement of snipe from key wetlands due to housing development would simply result in movement of snipe to other sites.

The surveys involved counts of snipe at wetland sites over five consecutive months through the spring-summer. Sites were chosen to reflect both urban and rural settings, as well as targeting areas where

snipe have been known (or hypothesised) to occur previously. The outcome of those surveys was the discovery that over 95% of snipe were counted in urban wetlands, suggesting that displacement of birds could have negative consequences for the local population.

These initial surveys were continued in subsequent years, to gauge if that usage changed and to start collecting a time series of count data from the key wetland sites that appeared to regularly support snipe – namely Powling Street wetlands and Sandy Cove in Port Fairy, and a collection of small wetlands in the township of Peterborough (also a coastal town about 80km east of Port Fairy). As surveys progressed, interest in them from volunteers in other regions grew, which has resulted in a gradual increase in the number of sites counted each year. Surveys are now conducted three times during the non-breeding season (usually September, November and January), to gather information on site usage during seasonal climatic phases, that is, as the temperatures warm going into summer and wetlands start to dry out.

The most recent survey conducted

on September 23 had over 450 snipe and included counts from around 80 sites across six states and territories (i.e. all of eastern Australia). The largest count from the 2016-2017 summer was 684 snipe from similar numbers of sites. To put this into perspective, the East Asian-Australasian Flyway shorebird population estimates revision had maximum annual counts of Latham's Snipe of 1124 birds, from across all population monitoring sites in Australia. This poor representation compared to the previous population estimate from the breeding grounds in Japan (36,000) led the project team to use another approach for estimating the current size of the Latham's Snipe flyway population. Thus, the Latham's Snipe project surveys are yielding far more targeted count information, which may form the basis for future attempts at re-estimating snipe population sizes.

At the same time as snipe surveys were growing, the project received a small amount of funding from the Australia Japan Foundation for the team to travel to Japan and assist the Wild Bird Society of Japan with their newly commenced snipe research in Hokkaido. It also funded the purchase of light-level geolocators to deploy on snipe in Port Fairy. There was much scepticism from

Site fidelity, migration, movement and habitat preference of Latham's Snipe: the story so far — cont'd

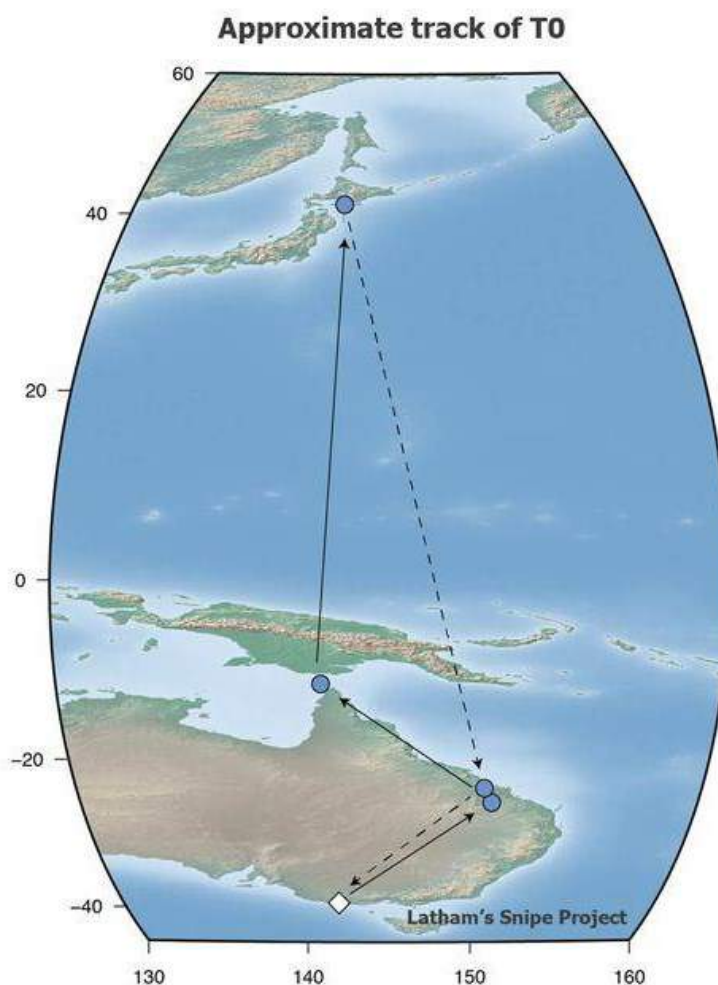
the wader community about the appropriateness of this approach for obtaining migration information, as there was a general misconception that Latham's Snipe were impossible to recapture and never re-sighted. With this shroud hanging over the heads of the Latham's Snipe project team in Port Fairy, the team embarked on a challenging journey of geolocator deployment on snipe. Catching techniques deployed in earlier years, elsewhere on this species failed in Port Fairy. So new approaches were developed and eventually resulted in successful capture of snipe. Fourteen birds were captured and fitted with geolocators in 2015-2016, and a further 25 in 2016-2017.

And to prove the sceptics wrong, the team recaptured their first geolocator bearing bird (the now famous T0) in October 2016. This geolocator yielded a full year worth of light data and with the help of Simeon Lisovski, a migration track was determined. Many insights were obtained from this single track, the most valuable being;

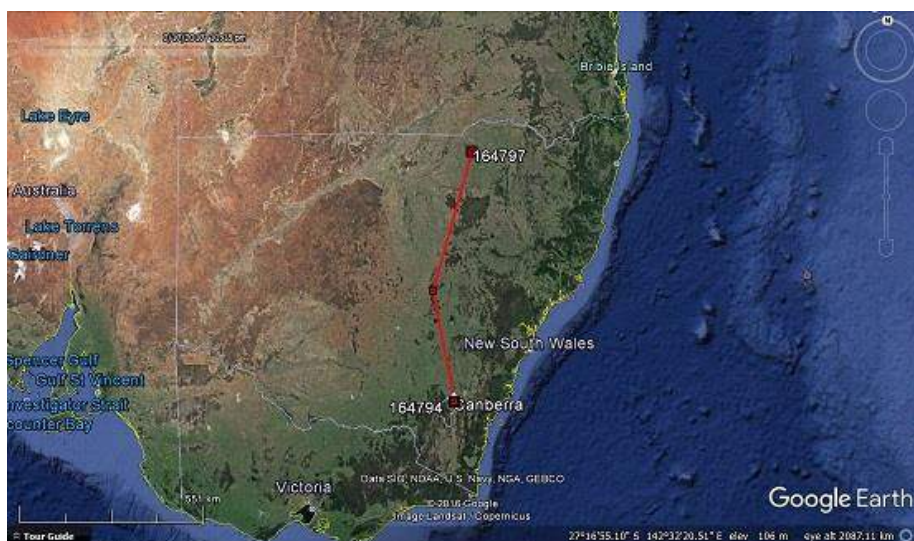
- (1) staging in south-east Queensland was clearly demonstrated,
- (2) the bird was highly site faithful (returning to exactly the same location a year later),
- (3) the bird attempted to breed in southern Hokkaido, and
- (4) most incredibly, it flew approximately 7000-7500km directly across the Pacific Ocean from Japan to Australia in 3 days, which is anywhere from between 97-104kph average speed... rivalling migration speed for other waders!

Not long after the geolocator program started, the Landcare group in Port Fairy were successful in obtaining some additional funds through a community grants program to help develop a radio tracking program. This commenced in the second year of snipe capture (2016-2017) and is continuing this season with the assistance of an undergraduate research student, Andrew Crossley. Sites where snipe are radio tracked to (day and night) have been subject to wetland assessments, to characterise vegetation and habitat type, and structure.

To add to this growing program of research about movement and habitat preference, the Woodlands and Wetlands



Geolocator track retrieved from T0, October 2016. Copyright: Latham's Snipe Project



Satellite track of "Tsubasa", identifying a stopover site in northern New South Wales. Copyright: Woodlands and Wetlands Trust.

Site fidelity, migration, movement and habitat preference of Latham's Snipe: the story so far — cont'd

Trust in Canberra, secured some funding to trial deployment of satellite transmitters on snipe using the Jerrabomberra wetlands there. Satellite tracking yielded only limited information before the units ceased transmitting, but those insights were nevertheless a tantalising taster of our missing knowledge about migration. A new stopover (or staging site) in northern New South Wales was identified, as well as information about local movements prior to migration departure. This information has complemented satellite tracking undertaken by the Wild Bird Society of Japan (WBSJ) just months previously, where 1 of 5 tracked snipe made it to West Papua before transmission ceased. So despite the relatively small amounts of information being obtained from these different methods, the body of knowledge about snipe migration has grown enormously since snipe research commenced in Port Fairy in 2014, and in Hokkaido by the WBSJ in 2015.

And proof of snipe site fidelity has continued to build. On October 1st a snipe caught and leg flagged at Jerrabomberra



Rich Chamberlain with the first ever snipe caught in Port Fairy, safely in hand — Birgita Hansen

wetlands in Canberra in summery 2016-2017 was re-sighted in the same wetland, and on October 3rd, a snipe caught in Port Fairy in December 2016 (J8) was recaptured in the same location. Further catching attempts are planned in both Port Fairy and Canberra over the next three months.

The future of the Latham's Snipe project seems promising with so many little bits of new knowledge filtering in. But the

project still faces challenges, most notably the current state of tracking technology and its appropriateness for use on snipe, and the difficulty in obtaining funding to ensure longer-term project sustainability.

The Latham's Snipe Project wishes to thank a large and supportive body of volunteers who have been instrumental in helping keep this project going, from counters across Australia, to Victorian Wader Study Group members supporting catching attempts, to our colleagues in Japan who have been so generous with their time and resources during mutual visits between the two countries. And thanks to the Australia Japan Foundation, the Victorian State Government, Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority and the Woodland and Wetlands Trust for funding to help purchase equipment and travel to Japan.

Birgita Hansen is a researcher at the Federation University, Melbourne, Australia.

[The Latham's Snipe project Australia](#); Birgita Hansen, Richard Chamberlain, Jodie Honan, David Wilson, Don Stewart, Lori Gould.



The spectacular Latham's Snipe with its amazing large eyes — Rich Chamberlain

Featured wader photo: Crab Plover — Jean-François Cornuaille



Species: Crab Plover *Dromas ardeola*
Photographer: Jean-François Cornuaille

Location: Bird Island, Seychelles.
Date: January 2012

Equipment: Panasonic DMC-FZ28 zoomx18
Details: Handheld, 1/400 sec, f/5.6, ISO 100

Words by Rick Simpson:

The crabs in this photo look like they are about to wreak their revenge on the Crab Plover as it rests unsuspectingly on the sand.

Far-fetched as this might seem it is actually not that unusual for crabs to get the better of Crab Plovers, their would-be predators.

The predominant food item of Crab Plover is, perhaps unsurprisingly given its name, crabs which it captures in the intertidal zone. When you live between the desert and the deep blue sea there is not, in all probability, much else to find to eat except crabs; although they will take other crustaceans, molluscs and marine worms when the opportunity or necessity arises.

One of the prey items available to Crab Plovers in Oman is the Swimming Crab. These crabs are large and therefore you'd have thought would make a good meal but they are also ferocious and difficult to handle and in terms of profitability *i.e.* nutritional reward balanced against effort in securing them, they are not as high as the small Sentinel Crabs. The reason for this is that they need to be broken up to be eaten whilst Sentinel Crabs, on the other hand, are small and can be swallowed whole with the minimum of effort. The downside for the Crab Plovers though is that the Sentinel Crabs are very fast moving and inconveniently hide themselves in burrows.

The question then is whether the Crab Plovers are forced to tackle these big brutes, with the risks and effort they take to consume, because the smaller, faster crabs are more difficult to catch?

To test this hypothesis, a group of researchers set up an experiment in which both species of crab were tethered and therefore unable to escape. The results showed that given the opportunity the Crab Plovers would select the smaller Sentinel Crabs in preference to the large Swimming Crabs. It appears that they will only resort to taking the larger, riskier crabs if these are particularly abundant or they are unable to catch the trickier Sentinel Crabs. So it seems that the Crab Plovers are forced into feeding on the fiercer crabs because the escape and hide response of the sentinel Crabs is so effective.

The risks that the Crab Plover take in tackling bigger prey are evident in an amusing YouTube video of a Crab Plover stabbing at a large crab which retaliates. You see a huge claw emerge from the water and the Crab Plover turns tail and runs away (see references for link).

Crab Plovers are unique among waders in that they lay their single egg in a burrow that they have excavated themselves with their beaks. The single egg is also unique in that, alone among waders, it is white not needing the cryptic colouration of

those which lay on the ground in full view. Additionally the Crab plover is unusual in that its chick is not fully precocial when it hatches and does not display the cryptic patterning of other wader chicks being all grey. The chick will remain in the burrow or at its entrance while the parent birds bring food to it. Gradually the chick is weaned with larger morsels then whole crabs and then live ones but even once it has fledged the young birds stick with their parents and continue to be fed.

Jean- François is currently working in the Reunion National Park where he manages a team of Rangers.

When he was a child, he lived near the Loire valley, and felt a strong conviction that he should protect the natural surroundings in which he found himself due to the destruction of the environment that he was witnessing around him caused by agriculture and urban development.

When he was 12 he met an ornithologist, his math's teacher who became a mentor and it is thanks to that teacher that Jean-François became an ornithologist himself.

References:

Bom, R. A., Godin-Blouin, S., & van Gils, J. A.: Does prey behaviour explain diet choice in crab plovers? (2017)

[Crab Plover afraid of its own prey](#) Roeland Bom

Paracas Shorebird Banding Project - Peru — Eveling Tavera, Enver Ortiz and Yaquelin Tenorio



Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla* with flag V9A in yellow for Peru; one of the most abundant species in the Aguada Bay— Eveling Tavera

It was more or less back in 2011 that we started this project and one of the principal questions we were asking ourselves when setting it up was, how do we go about it?

One of our main problems was a lack of the field equipment that we would need to carry out the work we had in mind. Shorebirds are a very special group of birds, and in order to catch them without injuring them, or worse, you need special mist-nets with a suitable mesh.



Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri*
— Eveling Tavera

Our next problem was sourcing these nets in South America where this kind of equipment is very expensive to buy online. Thankfully some friends of ours told us about one conservation community which might be able to help us in this matter. That community was Wader Quest which we found had been supporting numerous wader and shorebird conservation projects around the world in Africa, Asia, Caribbean, Australasia and The Americas. We decided to write to them and see what would happen.

The result was that in 2014 Wader Quest sponsored our work by obtaining these mist nets and sending them to us. With these nets we have been able to capture many shorebirds; thousands during these last 3 years of work.

The birds that we have been able to capture, and that we are most interested in, are the long distance migratory shorebirds that migrate annually over 11,000km from Paracas National Reserve in Peru to Alaska and the Canadian Arctic in North America. These journeys connect many important

stop-over sites during both the northward and southward migrations of these birds using three distinct flyways (migration



One of our skilled professionals removing a Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* from the net— Eveling Tavera

routes); the Pacific, Central and Atlantic flyways, along which our birds with Peruvian (yellow) flags (see main photo above) have been resighted.

Paracas Shorebird Banding Project - Peru — cont'd

This resighting data is so important because we can corroborate the migratory connectivity between breeding and non-breeding areas in the western hemisphere, something that is vital in considering the conservation of these long distance travellers.



In a good night we can catch more than 100 shorebirds — Eveling Tavera



Snowy Plover *Charadrius nivosus* — Eveling Tavera

In addition this important work with shorebirds has enabled us to develop many Honor's theses, taking in such general topics as shorebird ecology, principally with Western *Calidris maura* and Semipalmated Sandpipers *Calidris pusilla*. We have studied migratory confluence and life history patterns, morphology and segregation and finally diet and migration timing and many others topics that have been presented in both oral and



One of the activities that we are doing during the year is the census of flags — Eveling Tavera

poster presentations in local and international scientific ornithological conferences.



Processing and banding team — Eveling Tavera



The team of professionals and volunteers of the Paracas project — Eveling Tavera

For these reasons we are so grateful to Wader Quest for their help and we wish them many years of success in their goal of supporting shorebird conservation.

Eveling Tavera, Enver Ortiz, Yaquelin Tenorio, Renato Huayanca, Tania Poma & Mari Antezana. Shorebird Research Team in Peru.



CORBIDI

Centro de Ornitología y Biodiversidad

Ed:- We were of course delighted to be able to help and are very glad that our contribution to the project has had such a positive impact on not only the aims of the project, but the individuals involved in it as well.



**7th western
hemisphere shorebird
group meeting**

7mo encuentro de grupo de aves playeras del hemisferio occidental

**10—14 November 2017
Paracas, Peru.
Organised by CORBIDI**

Waders at the Naze, Essex, UK — Liz Huxley



Black-tailed Godwits — Liz Huxley

The Naze (from the Old English word ‘naes’ meaning nose) is the furthest point east in Essex and is a peninsula north of Walton on the Naze town and surrounded on three sides by water – Walton Channel to the west, Hamford Water (National Nature Reserve, RAMSAR site and SPA) to the north, and the North Sea to the east - resulting in plenty of foreshore and intertidal mudflats. Hamford Water provided the ‘adventure playground’ for the Swallows & Amazons in Arthur Ransome’s book “Secret Water”. Apart from the eroding cliffs and fossils (for which the site has SSSI status) and WWII history, The Naze is perhaps best known as a key bird migration hotspot on the Essex coast, but is also an excellent site for a wide range of waders.

The public open space is owned and managed by Tendring District Council and is mainly grassland with areas of rough grassland and dense scrub consisting of hawthorn, blackthorn, elder, gorse and bramble, with a network of footpaths crisscrossing the site. Essex Wildlife Trust manages a small nature reserve at the northern end of The Naze, and in 2016 opened a Visitor Centre next to the famous Naze Tower built in 1720 by Trinity House.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*, Dunlin *Calidris alpina*, Red Knot *Calidris canutus* and Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*. A significant flock of Pied Avocets *Recurvirostra avosetta* (400+) winter in Hamford Water, and some of these are generally on view around The Naze. A sizeable gathering of Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria* (2000+) rests on the mudflats at low tide, often associating with Northern Lapwings *Vanellus vanellus*. Ruddy Turnstones *Arenaria interpres* and Common Ringed Plovers *Charadrius hiaticula* forage along the tideline and foreshore, where Sanderling *Calidris alba* scamper like



Grey Plover — Liz Huxley



Eurasian Curlew — Liz Huxley

Winter is the season for the spectacle of big numbers of waders here. Many of the commoner species are well-represented with Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*, Black-tailed *Limosa limosa* and Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*, Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*,



Common Ringed Plover — Liz Huxley

clockwork toys ahead of the waves. Many of these species still show remnants of their smart breeding plumage when they first arrive in late summer or early autumn, but by

Waders at the Naze, Essex, UK — cont'd

winter most are varying shades of grey and brown!

The lagoon towards Stone Point is shallow and is great for waders at high tide and on passage, regularly turning up Little Stint *Calidris minuta*, Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* and Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*. Pools on Walton Hall Marshes are also great places to search for passage waders – Common Actitis *Actitis hypoleucos*, Green *Tringa ochropus* and Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*, Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*, Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*, Ruff *Calidris pugnax* and Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* can be expected. Rarities are always a possibility, for example Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* has occurred 14 times (making The Naze the best site in Essex for this species), a Stilt Sandpiper *Calidris himantopus* in 1973, and a Eurasian Stone Curlew *Burhinus oedicephalus* discovered on the saltmarsh on the 17th August this year was a surprise, having stopped over on its journey south.



Pied Avocets — Liz Huxley

Most wader species move much further north to breed, many to Arctic regions, and wader numbers at The Naze are much lower in the late spring and early summer, but small numbers of Common Ringed Plover and Eurasian Oystercatcher breed along the beach (which is also a nationally important breeding site for Little Terns *Sterna albifrons*, and Northern Lapwing and Common Redshank on the grazing marsh.

The Essex coast is not renowned for its seawatching, but The Naze can be a good spot from which to keep a look out, particularly in autumn if winds are from the east or south-east. Northern Gannets *Morus bassanus* and skuas *Stercorariidae* may be spotted, as well as passing wildfowl and waders. By October the first Dark-bellied Brent Geese *Branta bernicla* are arriving from their breeding grounds in Arctic Russia, and many will over-winter in Hamford Water, alongside Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*, Common Teal *Anas crecca*, Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*, Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*, Common Goldeneye *Bucephala*



Sanderlings — Liz Huxley

clangula, Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator* and more. Common Seal *Phoca vitulina* and Harbour Porpoise *Phocoena phocoena* are also possible, with an increasing colony of Common Seals resident in Hamford Water. The seals recently featured on Countryfile because of their rusty orange colour (is it an Essex spray tan?!). Their fur picks up iron oxide from the mud (oxidised iron pyrites from the red crag in the cliffs) when they haul out.



Common Seals — Liz Huxley

In spring and autumn The Naze can be alive with small birds stopping off to rest and refuel on their migration journeys. Many will be the common warblers – Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*, Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*, Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*, Common *Sylvia communis* and Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* – but scarcer and rarer species are always possible, particularly in autumn when the birds are in less of a rush to move on. Spotted *Muscicapa striata* and Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* are regular, as are Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*, Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* and Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*; whilst Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* and Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* are pretty much annual visitors. An

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* spent several days fishing in Hamford Water during September this year, often viewable from Stone Point. By October the number of Goldcrests *Regulus regulus* moving through increases, and they are always worth checking for Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*, Yellow-browed *Phylloscopus inornatus* and Pallas's Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*. An influx of European Robins *Erithacus rubecula* and Common Blackbirds *Turdus merula* also arrives from the continent, together with Redwing *Turdus iliacus*, Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris* and Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*. The rarest find is probably still the UK's first Red-throated Thrush *Turdus ruficollis* in 1994, just proving that almost anything could turn up here! [I saw that bird:-Ed.]



Pied Flycatcher — Liz Huxley

On the 15th of October this year The Naze Centre hosted a Bird Migration Day which was a very successful event attended by Wader Quest in the person of Trustee Ian Dearing.

Liz is self employed photographer and works part-time for Essex Wildlife Trust.:- Ed. www.lizhuxley.co.uk

Waders in art — Ayuwat Jearwattanakanok



Pin-tailed *Gallinago stenura* and Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* — Ayuwat Jearwattanakanok

Ayuwat Jearwattanakanok is one of the few Thai wildlife artists who specialise in birds. He is currently based in Bangkok but grew up in Chiang Mai, a city in the north, where he began birding and sketching birds ever since he was 10 years old. His works are

mainly watercolour.

"I became interested in birds through drawing. When I was young, I used to do many different kinds of drawings, then one day I started drawing birds. My dad knew some people in a local birding club, so he

introduced me to the club, then I officially started birdwatching. After that it became my serious hobby and I got involved in the birding and conservation community naturally. My favourite subjects for drawing are birds that are difficult to identify."



Spoon-billed Sandpipers *Calidris pygmaea* — Ayuwat Jearwattanakanok

Waders in art — cont'd



Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* — Ayuwat Jearwattananakorn

"I like it particularly because it's challenging look for a tough species and other people get on both the artist and the viewers side. I like it too. That's the main reason why I enjoy painting waders, as well as little brown jobs."



Common and Pin-tailed Snipes
— Ayuwat Jearwattananakorn



Little Stint *Calidris minuta* — Ayuwat Jearwattananakorn

Ayuwat is now combining his experience in arts and birding with nature conservation by working with the Bird Conservation Society of Thailand (BCST). Recently he has been greatly involved in the situation in Thailand at Pak Thale where he, as part of a team including the BCST are trying to secure parts of the Pak Thale salt pans to preserve the habitat which has recently come under threat from development for many wintering and passage waders including the Spoon-billed Sandpiper. Birders from around the world have been able to visit the region which has provided them with the easiest and most convenient place for tourists to see this wonderful species.

Wader Quest has raised funds to aid this project and hopes that once a reserve is established we will be able to fund or part fund a hide for visiting birders to enjoy the waders without disturbing them.

Did you know?



Hooded Plovers *Thinornis cucullatus* have an unusual moult strategy in that they have a prolonged primary moult coupled with the flexibility to change their rate of moult.

Males have a longer moult time than females and unlike other birds moult their primaries during the breeding season. Females can delay their moult but can also

speed the process up to complete at about the same time as males.

Hooded Plovers have a very low reproductive success rate and it is thought that this flexibility may facilitate the high levels of replacement clutches that are required by this species. (Rogers *et al.* 2014)
Photo; Hooded Plover — Elis Simpson

Waders in art — cont'd



Eurasian *Numenius arquata* and Far Eastern Curlews *Numenius madagascariensis* with a Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* — Ayuwat Jearwattanakanok



Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*
— Ayuwat Jearwattanakanok



Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis* and Spoon-billed Sandpiper
— Ayuwat Jearwattanakanok

Ken Gosbell wins the J.N. Hobbs Memorial Medal

The J.N. Hobbs Memorial Medal is an Australian national award which is conferred for outstanding contributions to ornithology by an amateur ornithologist.

The recipient of the medal in 2017 was Ken Gosbell who has been a great ambassador for bringing the attention of waders, and the threats they face, to the attention of both the public and governments alike.

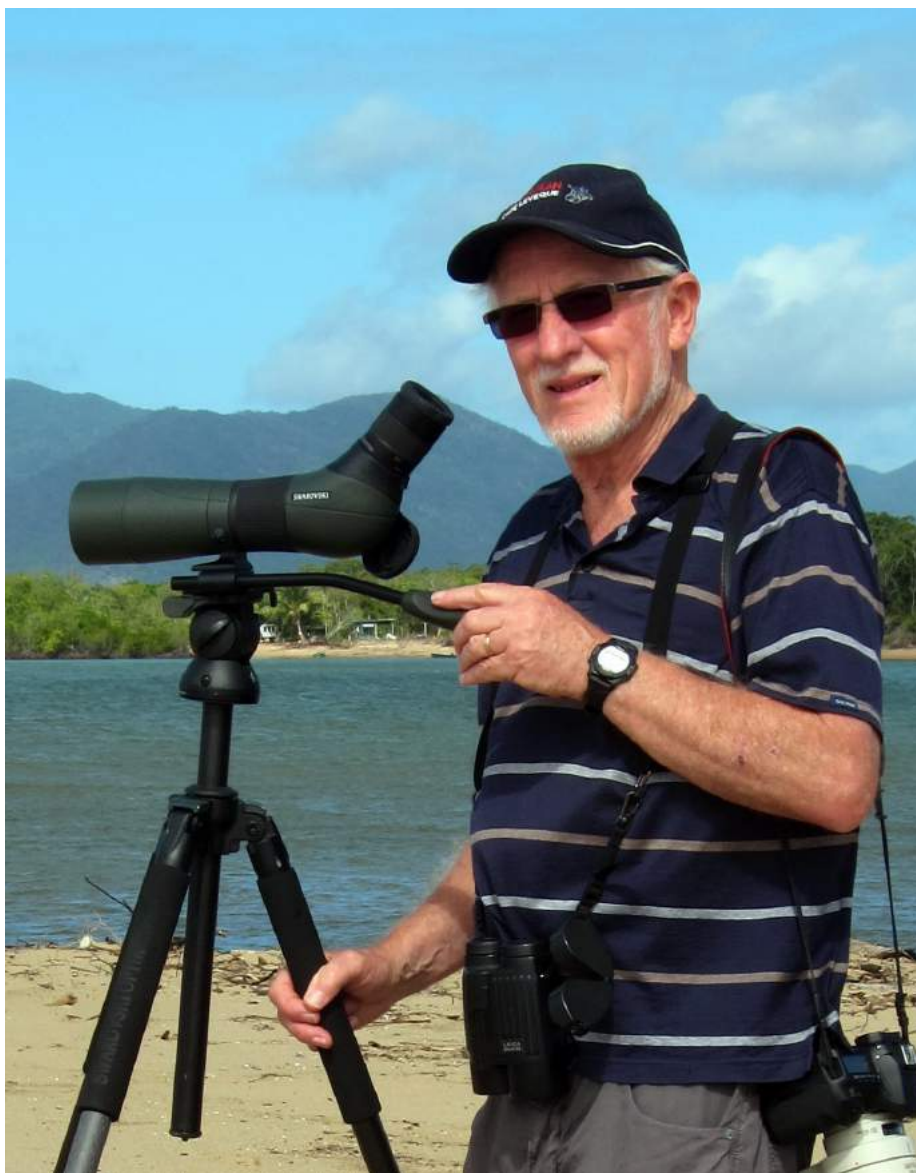
In 1995 Ken joined the Victorian Wader Study group (VWSG) on one of their regular cannon-netting catches and was immediately captivated by waders and has been studying them ever since.

Early on he worked closely with Clive Minton, himself a recipient of the medal in the year 2000, and learned a lot about cannon netting. Later he turned his attention to geolocators and became a leading expert in their deployment and analyses and was one of the first to realise that light levels recorded by geolocators on the breeding grounds could be used to tell when shorebirds were incubating. This idea has also been used as a tool to assess breeding success and has highlighted that second broods are more frequent than previously thought.

Ken has served on the Australasian Wader Studies Group (AWSG) Committee since 1997 and became Chairman of the group between 2006 and 2010.

The Shorebirds 2020 program, hosted at Birdlife Australia was conceived and initiated by Ken with Mike Weston and Danny Rogers which has been a boon to wader monitoring in Australia. The huge database has been critical in documenting the decreases in populations of migratory waders in Australia.

Ken was also a co-leader of the Saemangeum Shorebird Monitoring Program, a project that documented and publicised the disastrous tidal-flat reclamation project on the west coast of South Korea. Saemangeum could not be saved, but the Korean Government announced that it would not initiate any more major tidal flat



Ken Gosbell

reclamation projects lifting the threat to the Geum Estuary and the has led to an acceptance by national governments that shorebird populations are declining, largely because of habitat loss on their Asian staging grounds.

[Adapted from a Birdlife International website page written by Danny Rogers.]

In addition to all this Ken is also a Friend of Wader Quest and we are proud to count him among our supporters. Ed.

From the library: which year was this written?

Ah! Those Autumn mornings and evenings! How I love them! What stirring scenes among the birds I can recall; what stores of notes I made! How vividly some of them return; incidents of twenty years ago, among what were peaceful fields and wooded valleys then, but now, alas, the busy centre of a score industries. All those mighty trees, where the Rooks and Ring Doves bred, have bowed their noble heads before the axe; all the brushwood and the thickets and the close-set hedgerows, where the Warblers and Finches nested, are gone; all the tangled ditches and hollows, sacred to the Grasshopper Lark, and the Jack Snipe, Levelled away! ... No longer does the air resound with song at morn and even; all the feathered hosts are gone; the trout-stream is little more than an open drain; and one of the fairest sylvan scenes that ever eye of man gazed upon is now a desolation of bricks and mortar, and a wilderness of tall chimney shafts, factories and workshops! My ruined Aviary! (See page 29 for the answer:- Ed)

Study on Red Knots on west coast estuaries, the Dee, Alt, Ribble and Morecambe Bay; an appeal for sightings of marked birds — Jim Wilson

We have studied the spring migration of Red Knots *Calidris canutus* in north Norway since 2005 and in Iceland since 2011. We have caught and put unique coded flags on about 3,500 Red Knots at these spring staging sites. About 60% have been subsequently sighted, often multiple times over several years.

In 2014 we extended the project and set up a study site on the north Liverpool Bay coast and the Ribble estuary in the UK.

It has been known for many years that many Knots which have moulted in the Netherlands and east England (especially the Wash) in the autumn, move westwards in the winter into the Dee and Ribble estuaries and Morecambe Bay, and leave again in March back to the Wadden Sea. From there they migrate in early-mid May to staging sites in Iceland and north Norway. However little has been published or known about movements of the autumn and spring populations of Knots in these estuaries.

Our preliminary study showed that: The autumn and spring populations in these estuaries have been in constant decline since the 1970s.

Knots using staging sites in north-west Iceland, north Norway and moulting sites in the Wash and the Netherlands are mainly only found in these estuaries in the winter.

In the autumn and spring almost no Knots were carrying colour marks from Norway, north-west Iceland or the Netherlands, although probably about 1:200 of the total estimated Knot population is marked.

The Ribble is an extremely important site in the East Atlantic Flyway in summer for two year old birds (which do not migrate north). This seems to have been poorly recognised.

There is an extreme level of disturbance from many Knot sites.

We decided that the only place the autumn and spring populations on the west coast could be staging on spring migration was in south-west Iceland as this was the only major area where Knots had not been colour

marked. In May 2017 we marked 680 Knots in south-west Iceland. In autumn 2017 we found 3 Knots marked in north-west Iceland and 25 marked in south-west Iceland on the Ribble study site, showing the direct link with west Iceland.

The next big breakthrough was on 22 September, when a team of 25 people colour flagged 519 Knots near Formby Point on north Liverpool Bay. The birds are marked on the tarsus with an orange flag with two inscriptions, over a pale blue ring. About 50% of the marked birds were 2 years old, which means that for the first time the summering population on the west coast has been marked in good numbers.



Marked north Liverpool Bay — Ian Hartley



Marked north-west Iceland 2014 — Jan van de Kam

To date (15 October) about 30% of the birds have been resighted near the catch site and north to Southport and on the Dee estuary.

Your help is requested.

This is a unique opportunity to track these Knots throughout the English west coast estuaries. ***Especially Morecambe Bay which is not covered at all and we would like people to be aware of this exciting project.***

As so many Knots are now carrying flags you are almost guaranteed to find marked birds, but in most situations you'll need a good telescope to read the codes on the flags. (The record is about 90 readings in one day, but that was near the ringing site.)

Even if codes are not read off, the position and colours of flags and colour rings also tells us whether Knots are marked in Norway, north-west Iceland, south-west Iceland or the Netherlands. Knots with one



Marked north Norway — Jan van de Kam



Marked south-west Iceland May 2017. Bird resighted Formby Point 26/06/2017 — Peter Knight

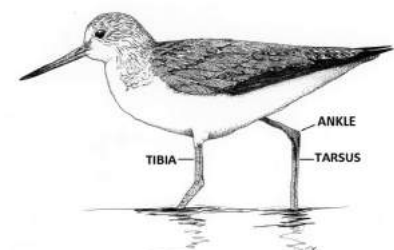
flag and 4 rings on the tarsus are marked in the Netherlands.

Even if you search through a flock and find no rings at all, this is still significant information and of interest.

Sightings should be sent to jimwils@frisurf.no

Reading colour rings — a reminder

- Leg rings are read starting with the bird's left leg first.
- The colours (and sizes) of each ring should be noted reading from top to bottom.
- Then the right leg should be read in the same manner.
- It is important to note if the ring is on the tarsus (below the ankle joint), or the tibia (above the ankle joint).
- Note any letters or numbers on flags if visible
- Also note the position of any metal rings



Common Greenshank — Rick Simpson

Recent colour marked birds seen — Rick and Elis Simpson



Black-tailed Godwit. *Limosa limosa limosa*

Ring details: GN// -WRf// (Green, Niger (black)— White Red flag (angle in this photo does not show the flag).

Date ringed: 14/07/2008

Age: Pullus (chick)

Location: Fljót, Skagafjarðarsýsla, Iceland.

Seen: Hunstanton, Norfolk, England. 10/08/2017

Photo: Elis Simpson



Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Ring details: R//metal (Red— metal ring) - Yf// (Yellow flag NHA)

Date ringed: 29/09/2017

Age: 1st year

Location: Revtingen, Klepp, Rogaland, Norway

Seen: Hauxley, Northumberland, England. 11/10/2017

Photo: Elis Simpson



Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Ring details: R//metal (Red— metal ring) - Yf// (Yellow flag XMV)

Date ringed: 23/09/2017

Age: 1st year

Location: Makkevika (Giske Ornithological Station), Giske, Møre & Romsdal, Norway.

Seen: Hauxley, Northumberland, England. 11/10/2017

Photo: Elis Simpson



Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Ring details: R//metal (Red— metal ring) - Yf// (Yellow flag VZN)

Date ringed: 13/09/2017,

Age: 1st year

Location: Makkevika (Giske Ornithological Station), Giske, Møre & Romsdal, Norway.

Seen: Berwick on Tweed, Northumberland, England. 11/10/2017

Photo: Elis Simpson

Waders in the Big Apple — Scott Petrek

Calling all wader lovers. Have you ever considered heading to New York to see the great variety of waders, or shorebirds, that the North American continent has to offer? No? Neither had I until I made my first trip to visit the Big Apple a few years ago. My trip has since become an annual occurrence to catch up with my best mate and indulge in the birds in his local area.

New York doesn't sound like a great place to start seeing North American waders but if there is one thing I have learnt about birding in New York City and the wider state, it is that amazing birds can be found in the most unlikely places and can be relatively easy to find.

One of my fondest memories from the my first visit to the city was seeing an American Woodcock *Scolopax minor* asleep under a small rhododendron in Bryant Park amongst the bustle of hundreds of people at the Christmas market just a few feet away.



Concealed American Woodcock — Scott Petrek



Said Rhododendron; Bryant Park — Scott Petrek

Urban waders aren't just restricted to off course migrants pulled in and disorientated by the bright lights; another species I regularly encounter in unexpected places is the Killdeer. *Charadrius vociferus*. These medium sized plovers can



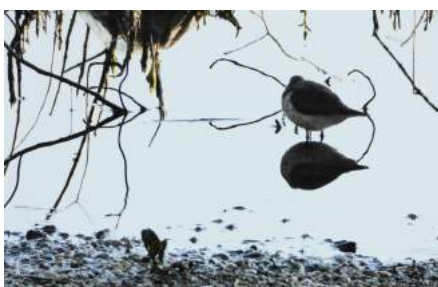
Greater Yellowlegs — Scott Petrek

be found breeding on rough patches of ground in suburban areas – my first sighting of the species was on a vacant building plot opposite the local school. So far as I know the female successfully fledged two chicks from a patch of land measuring less than a tenth of a hectare. One day whilst passing on my way to a local park I noticed a possum dead on the road, so traffic, children and the threat of building work weren't her only obstacles!



Killdeer territory — Scott Petrek

You won't see many waders in the city and the suburbs, but head to any patch of coast or even a local pond and you stand a chance of seeing at least a couple of species. I've seen Spotted Sandpipers *Actitis macularia* on seemingly small ponds and Black-bellied (Grey) Plovers *Pluvialis squatarola* roosting next to puddles in car parks along the barrier islands. Although I've seen relatively few of North America's 96 wader species, those that I have been fortunate enough to see are always memorable.



Spotted Sandpiper — Scott Petrek

One of my favourite places to visit on Long Island has become Captree Island and its saltmarsh. I've seen 20 species of wader here on relatively few visits including a Wilson's Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor*. The tidal marshes along the island bring waders relatively close in to the road. Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*, Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*, Willet *Tringa semipalmata* and Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla* can all be seen with ease along with many other non-waders such Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*, Northern Harrier *Circus hudsonius*, Yellow-crowned Night Heron *Nyctanassa violacea* and Saltmarsh Sparrow *Ammodramus caudacutus*.



Semipalmated Sandpiper — Scott Petrek

The shoreline at Gardiner Park has also become a firm favourite. Whilst exploring the creeks through the saltmarsh I've had Least Sandpiper foraging just a few feet away whilst Willets displayed overhead. Waders in America, or New York at least, just seem more tolerant of the presence of people affording careful birders some great views. Perhaps it's a necessity of the pressure on land in such an urban environment and competing space for wildlife. When you've got few options, you have to tolerate people in order to survive?

So if you ever find yourself in New York with some time to spare why not head out on to Long Island and see what you can see. And don't forget that you can even see waders in the hustle and bustle of the city that never sleeps, just check in the shrubs of the nearest flowerbed!

A first for the Indian mainland and the rescue of a sandplover — Ganesh Jayaraman



India's first Grey-tailed Tattler — Ganesh Jayaraman

Grey-tailed Tattlers *Tringa brevipes* breed in Siberia and on passage are seen along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. They are more commonly seen in the north of Australia, where they winter in good numbers.

But this year wader lovers from the city of Chennai were in for a surprise! A single Grey-tailed Tattler was recorded on October 2nd 2017 by Sunderavel and Sivakumar at Pulicat. This is a site where thousands of waders spend their winter or pass through during their southward and return migrations, so there is always the chance of a rarity appearing! Although it was not identified instantly, after some consultation, experts affirmed that it was indeed a Grey-tailed Tattler.

Almost a week later and after much searching a team of photographers who frequent that area myself, Aravind and Ram re-found the bird on one of the mudflats in the same area, foraging on a low tide. Grey-tailed Tattlers usually feed on polychaete worms, molluscs, crustaceans, insects and they indeed like small crabs. They dart about, bobbing and teetering between runs and locate prey by sight or by probing.

This is the first time Grey-tailed Tattler has ever been found in India and that makes it all the more special. Experts have confirmed that the nearest place that it has been record is Bangladesh. It is indeed a very interesting start to what could be one of the best seasons to come!!



Ganesh untangling the Lesser Sandplover from the net — Ganesh Jayaraman

Pulicat Lake is India's second largest lagoon, located on the border of Andhra Pradesh state and Tamil Nadu state and although 90% of the lake falls in Andhra Pradesh the other 10% comes under Protected Areas of Tamil Nadu. The lagoon is separated from the Bay of Bengal by many islands. Every year Pulicat is home to thousands of waders with the highest concentration found during the winter months of October to April.

Fishing is the main occupation of people who live in that area and abandoned

plastic fishing nets are a significant problem to marine life and the wintering birds. These nets can travel long distances from their points of origin and can remain in the ocean long after they are discarded. This can result in the entrapment and death of marine mammals, sea birds and fish.

On one of our earlier outings we (same team) came across a Lesser Sandplover *Charadrius mongolus* trapped in one such abandoned fishing net, it was unable to fly and completely entangled in the net. We got down from the boat and carefully removed the fishing net to set the bird free. The bird, once released, flew away strongly and we hope that it will return to winter with us again in years to come !!



Ram with the stricken bird before release — Ganesh Jayaraman

Wader Conservation World Watch 4 November 4th and 5th 2017

It is upon us; dust off your bins and scope, gather together your birding paraphernalia, its time for this year's WCWW.

We are asking all our supporters and friends to join in the global wader watch on the 4th and/or 5th of November.

- Visit your favourite wader / shorebird spot or spots.
- Make a note of what you see and where you see it.
- Send your list to us at waderquest@gmail.com

It is that simple.

Your birds (and numbers if you count them) and your name will be added to the global lists of birds and participants' Roll of Honour on the website and you'll receive a newsletter special with all the results.

SHOREBIRDS IN ACTION
AN INTRODUCTION TO WADERS AND THEIR BEHAVIOUR

RICHARD CHANDLER



PLUS!

Every participant's name will be entered in the prize draw to win a signed copy of Richard Chandler's new book;

SHOREBIRDS IN ACTION

Forthcoming wader events in which Wader Quest will be involved in 2017

Wader Conservation World Watch 4

4th-5th November
Wherever you are in the world

North-west Birdwatching Festival

18th-19th
Martin Mere Wetland Centre

WHERE'S WILLET? November 2017 -

January 2018, North, Central and
South America.

£20,053.95 raised for wader conservation since 2012

The passage at the foot of page 18 was written by Charles Dixon in his book *The Annals of Bird life* - a year book of British Ornithology (1890) and it just goes to show that nothing changes. That passage could have been written by me, or countless other people who can remember places that they frequented, as a younger person, full of birds and song that now are gone; replaced by urban sprawl: - Ed.

Wader photo gallery — send us your favourite wader photos



Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*
- Aravind Venkatraman; India



Hudsonian Whimbrel *Numenius hudsonicus*
- Martin Eayrs; Peru



Sanderling *Calidris alba*
- John Walker; USA



Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*
- Alan Jack; UK



Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*
- Elis Simpson; UK



Blackish Oystercatcher *Haematopus ater*
- Ken Sutton; UK



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Last meeting: 16th July 2017

Next Meeting: 10:30 26th November: London Wetland Centre

AGM 12:30 26th November: London Wetland Centre — please advise if you wish to attend; waderquest@gmail.com

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