

## Forthcoming talks:

13/11/2015 Potters Bar and Barnet  
RSPB local group. 19.45  
Tilbury Hall, United Reform Church,  
Darles Lane, Potters Bar. EN6 1BZ.

07/12/2015 Hemel Hempstead  
RSPB local group. 20.00  
The Cavendish School, Warners End  
Road, Hemel Hempstead. HP1 3DW.

07/01/2016 Woodbridge RSPB local  
Group. 19.30 Woodbridge  
Community Hall, Station Road,  
Woodbridge, Suffolk. IP12 4AU.

16/02/2016 Milton Keynes Natural  
History Society. (Waders of Milton  
Keynes) 20.00 Cruck Barn Alston Dr,  
Milton Keynes MK13 9AP

14/04/2016 Gravesend RSPB local  
Group. 19.30 North Fleet School for  
Girls, Hall Road, Gravesend, DA11  
8AQ.

17/05/2016 19.30 Temple Hall,  
York St John University,  
Lord Mayors Walk,  
York. YO31 7EL

## Inside this issue:

Wader Conservation November	2
Wirral Wader Festival	3
Wash Wader Festival Snippets	4
Godwits in the Netherlands	5
Willetts in South America	6
Celebrate Delaware Bay	7
Waders Wrapped in Blue	8-9
RSPB Burton Mere Wetlands Snippets	10-11
Godwits of Gilroy	12-13
Buffey the Bogey Slayer	14
Russian Red Knot in Roebuck Bay	15
Wash Wader Ringing Group Controls and Recoveries 2014	16-19
Magellanic Plover project update	19
Rare wader round up: UK	20
Richard Allen donation Photo gallery	21
Trustee news Contact details and sponsors	22

## Editor's diatribe

Wader Quest seems to be going from strength to strength with all the effort beginning to pay some dividends.

We have been working very hard this year on many fronts, both personal and for Wader Quest. It has been an exhausting process and of course it is not over yet.

We do seem to be making advances as far as our public profile is concerned. We had become quite accustomed to people saying 'Wader Quest? I've never heard of you!' such is the lot of a new organisation. However latterly we have been hearing this less and hearing 'Ah yes, I've heard of you; tell me again, what is it exactly that you do?' This shows that we are at least making inroads into the public's consciousness, but also shows that we still have some way to go to get the message across.

This advance in our public profile is in no small part due to the relentless effort that Elis puts in every day on social media; facebook, twitter and linked-in. If it were not for all this industrious networking we wouldn't even be famous in our own living room let alone have people know our name in various locations across the world.

We are very pleased with the links we have forged with many



Juvenile Little Stint *Calidris minuta*  
- Elis simpson



Juvenile Dunlin *Calidris alpina* - Elis Simpson.

excellent conservation organisations, especially those that are dedicated, as we are, to wader conservation.

One such organisation is the International Wader Study Group (IWSG) which supports scientific research into waders. Elis and I were very proud to be invited to be joint Membership Secretaries of this well respected group and were happy to accept despite the additional workload that it would inevitably bring. We attended our first meeting and were voted onto the Executive Committee at the IWSG annual conference in Iceland.

Preparations are of course well under way for the Conservation November events, more of which will be covered on the following pages but we really did want to point out the outstanding effort that the Wirral Wader Festival committee have put in to making the UK's first ever wader festival something very much to look forward to. The people in question are Karen Leeming and Sheila Ryde (Dee Estuary Voluntary Wardens), Dan Trotman (RSPB), Lynne Greenstreet and Matt Thomas (Wirral Rangers), Sarah Bennett (Cheshire Wildlife Trust) and of course our own Sue Healey who has taken on the role of Events

Officer for Wader Quest with such enthusiasm.

Looking to the future we are also thrilled that the Norfolk Bird Race, which is run in conjunction with the Norfolk Bird and Wildlife fair will, in 2016, be held to raise funds for Wader Quest. I hope then that anyone with a penchant for such activities will take the opportunity to 'bird Norfolk' on the 30th of April next year.

The speaking season is back with us and we have already clocked up four talks at the Dursley Birdwatching and Preservation Society, Richmond and Twickenham RSPB local group Preston Natural History Society and the Huddersfield Birdwatchers' Club. We were warmly received at them all and we enjoyed meeting the members of the respective organisations very much. Don't forget, if you are a member of a club that holds indoor meetings mention us to your meetings organiser and we'll be more than happy to come along to talk to your group. We would like to place on record our thanks the organisers of the clubs that we have visited for the opportunity to spread the word about what Wader Quest is doing to support wader conservation.

## Wader Conservation November

**WADER CONSERVATION  
WORLD WATCH  
7—8 NOVEMBER 2015**

SEE AS MANY WADER SPECIES THAT WEEKEND AS YOU CAN;  
TELL US WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN - waderquest@gmail.com;  
WE'LL COMPILE A COLLECTIVE WORLD SPECIES SEEN LIST;  
YOUR NAME WILL APPEAR ON A ROLL OF HONOUR ON THE  
WADER QUEST WEBSITE;  
LET'S BEAT LAST YEAR'S TOTAL OF 118 SPECIES!  
SHOW YOUR GRATITUDE AND SOLIDARITY FOR THE WORK  
WADER CONSERVATIONISTS EVERYWHERE ARE DOING  
SIMPLY BY WATCHING THE BIRDS THEY HELP TO SAVE!

WADERS NEED LOVE TOO!  
SUPPORTING SHOREBIRD CONSERVATION



### WIRRAL WADER FESTIVAL

14th—15th November 2015



COME AND JOIN US IN CELEBRATION OF WIRRAL'S  
WONDERFUL WADERS AT THE UK'S FIRST EVER WADER  
FESTIVAL!

OVER THE WEEKEND THERE WILL BE:  
FAMILY FUN AT THURSTASTON VISITOR CENTRE INCLUDING: A BEACH  
CLEAN; ART SESSIONS WITH SHORE COTTAGE STUDIOS; RINGING AT THE  
BIRD HIDE; LOW WATER CREATURE HUNTING; EXHIBITIONS AND TALKS

HIGH TIDE BIRDWATCHES AT THREE LOCATIONS;  
WEST KIRBY, NEW BRIGHTON AND HOYLAKES

[www.waderquest.org](http://www.waderquest.org)



Wirral Wader Festival is  
part of Wader  
Conservation November



Join us for the  
**Wash Wader Festival**  
28th - 29th November 2015  
at  
RSPB Titchwell Marsh reserve

Come and find out more about waders

Meet Rob Parkin artist and  
conservationist in the Parrinder hide

RSPB volunteers to help you find  
and identify waders

Wader Quest stand

Wash Wader Ringing Group stand





## Wader Conservation World Watch

It's as simple as A,B,C.

- Go out and see waders/shorebirds wherever you are in the world.
- Send us an email telling us what you have seen and where.
- We'll create a list the species seen between us worldwide.
- Look for your name on the roll of honour on the website.

It is that easy; no registering required just good old-fashioned bird  
watching...  
Oh! And an email.

This is your opportunity to show your solidarity with, and appreciation  
of, wader conservationists around the world be they professionals or  
volunteers.

## Wirral Wader Festival

The UK's very first dedicated wader festival.

Main event to be held at Wirral Country Park, Thurston 10am - 4pm

Also at

West Kirby/Red Rocks

New Brighton Marina

Hoyle Promenade

Parkgate Old Baths Car Park at dusk

Full details of this exciting event on page 3

## North-west Birdwatching Festival Martin Mere WWT

21st and 22nd November

Wader Quest will be attending this excellent event along with other  
organisations involved in the Wirral Wader Festival;

Display of entries for the Wirral Wader Festival childrens' painting  
competition

## The Wash Wader Festival

At RSPB Titchwell Marsh reserve, Norfolk

Meet the Wader Quest Team

Watch Rob Parkin artist and conservationist at work (Parrinder Hide)

Find out what the Wash Wader Ringing Group do

RSPB volunteers on hand all day to help you find and identify waders.



## Wirral Wader Festival

The Wirral Wader Festival is really beginning to take shape with many events already confirmed.

The main event will take place at Wirral Country Park Thurstaston where it will be hosted by the Wirral Council Rangers. There will be plenty to see and do for all the family.



Thurstaston Country Park Centre  
- Lynne Greenstreet

The *Biggest Twitch* team Alan Davies and Ruth Miller have agreed to come along and help us promote the event as well as show people some waders on the beach near the centre.



[www.thebiggesttwitch.com](http://www.thebiggesttwitch.com)

Artist and conservationist Rob Parkin is coming to Thurstaston to paint live in the centre. He will be chatting to the public about his work.



Rob Parkin in his studio - Angela Parkin

We will be running a kids' painting competition with a small prize for the best entries on each day. All the entries will be taken to the north-west Birdwatching Festival and displayed in the Martin Mere WWT centre.

At the base of the cliffs at Thurstaston is a small cottage on the shore which is the home of Shore Cottage art studios. They will be running an event on each day to coincide with the festival, making wading bird scarves on Saturday and laser cut wader greeting cards on Sunday.



For those interested in enhancing their book collections there will be two second hand book sellers attending; Ken Mullins Books and Garrick Books. There will also be optics on display from the RSPB and there will be merchandising available from the Wirral Rangers, Cheshire Wildlife Trust and of course our own Wader Quest items.

Something that we think will attract much attention is the taxidermy collection that is being supplied mainly by Liverpool Museum with additional items from the British Natural History Museum.

There will be talks on both days including from *The Biggest Twitch* team, Allan Conlin on wader identification and Wader Quest on Saturday and on Sunday one about digiscoping by Scott Reid and another about wader food in the mud by David Clare of Liverpool University.

Unconfirmed as yet is the ringing demonstration in the bird hide and also Raptor Rescue who may bring along some birds with them.

There will be a demonstration of the creatures that constitute wader food on both days run by Ian Wallace who will hopefully have some fascinating things to show us that he and Matt Thomas, one of the rangers will have collected from the mud earlier in the day.

For those who want to get out to look at waders, and who wouldn't, there are three high tide roost watches on each day; at West Kirby / Cheshire Wildlife Trust Red Rocks Reserve where the Dee Estuary Voluntary Wardens will be protecting the roosting waders, they will have telescopes on hand for members of the public to see the birds more clearly, one of which was supplied by our sponsors Opticron. Alan and Ruth will

also lead wader watches on the Thurstaston foreshore.



Red Rocks - Paul Byrne

Cheshire Wildlife Trust will be on hand to tell people about the Red Rocks reserve and lead walks there on both days (2.00 pm Sat and 2.30 pm Sun).

At New Brighton Marina there is another high tide roost where Purple Sandpipers *Calidris maritima* can be seen. The Wirral Rangers, RSPB and Cheshire Wildlife Trust will be on hand to point out the birds on the pontoons on Marine Lake (11.00 am Sat and 12.00 Sun mid-day).



Purple Sandpipers *Calidris maritima*, Ruddy Turnstones *Arenaria interpres* and Sanderling *Calidris alba* New Brighton Marina  
- Elis Simpson

At Hoylake Promenade the RSPB and Dee Estuary Voluntary Wardens will be observing waders as they are pushed up the beach by the tide. (Saturday at 11.00 am and Sunday at 12.00 mid-day). 9 species of wader are regularly seen here and it's a chance to brush up on your identification skills. If you don't have a telescope there will be some provided.



Hoylake Promenade - Elis Simpson

At the end of the day at RSPB Parkgate there will be a dusk birdwatch from the Old Baths Car Park with the possibility of seeing Hen Harriers *Circus cyaneus* and Short-eared Owls *Asio flammeus* to round off the day.

## The Wash Wader Festival

We are greatly looking forward to visiting Titchwell Marsh RSPB reserve on the 28th and 29th of November for the last of our events in Wader Conservation November, the Wash Wader Festival.

It will be different from the event in the Wirral in that it will be happening in partnership with the RSPB and on a reserve.

Happily Rob Parkin will again be with us and setting up his easel in the south facing

Parinder hide where the light will help him and hopefully the vista will inspire him.

Wader Quest will be in a small marquee near the visitor centre along with the Wash Wader Ringing Group who will be bringing along information about their activities.

There will be plenty of RSPB volunteers along the paths and in the hides to help the public find and enjoy the waders to be found on the reserve and all will be told about the

spectacle to be seen at Snettisham and, although it was not practical to have any events there this year, they will be encouraged to go there and enjoy the amazing sight of thousands of waders on the wing in unison.



giving  
nature  
a home

## Why not Volunteer for one of the November events?

If you live near to one of the festivals then please consider coming along to lend us a hand with the running of the event.

At both these events we are looking for people especially on Sunday to help out as volunteers. In the Wirral some of the volunteers will be busy on Sunday with their regular WeBS counts and at Titchwell it

would be great to have more volunteers on that day.

There will be a variety of things that need doing, none of them particularly onerous so if you can spare the time and want to be part of these two events which are new to the UK, then in the first instance get in touch with us at: [waderquest@gmail.com](mailto:waderquest@gmail.com).



## Some snippets about wader populations — Elis Simpson

### Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius*

Critically Endangered

1,524 Sociable Lapwings have been seen by a monitoring team in Uzbekistan. This is the biggest number recorded in recent times away from the western flyway hotspot in Turkey/Syria. Another 700 birds arrived raising the total to 2,210 making it the third largest congregation on the Eastern flyway.

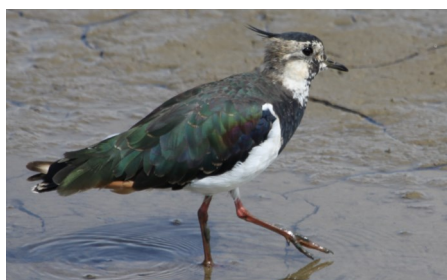


Sociable Lapwing - Elis Simpson

### Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Least Concern

In the UK Northern Lapwing populations have declined most dramatically in southern England and Wales. This decline is largely a result of autumn sowing of crops, which results in crops being too tall, and a reduction in uncultivated grassland through increased hill farming. Farmland is the only suitable option for nesting for this species in this region. The declines are startling; between 1987 and 1998 Northern Lapwing numbers dropped by 49% in England and Wales; since 1960 80%; in the last decade or so the breeding population has fallen by more than 50% which is deeply worrying. The UK holds around 20% of the European breeding population.



Northern Lapwing - Elis Simpson

### Wrybill *Anarhynchus frontalis*

Vulnerable

Prior to the 1940s hunting was a primary cause for a major drop in the Wrybill population, which has since recovered.

However, threats from introduced mammalian predators and native birds together with the flooding of nests and the loss and degradation of breeding habitats, are putting this species under further pressure.

Winter count population estimates suggest that there are about 5,000 individuals.

Wrybills breed exclusively on the braided riverbeds of Canterbury, in South Island New Zealand. Around 95% of them spend the non-breeding season in the Auckland region of the North Island.



Wrybill - Elis Simpson



## 2015 Black-tailed Godwit update from the Netherlands — Rick Simpson

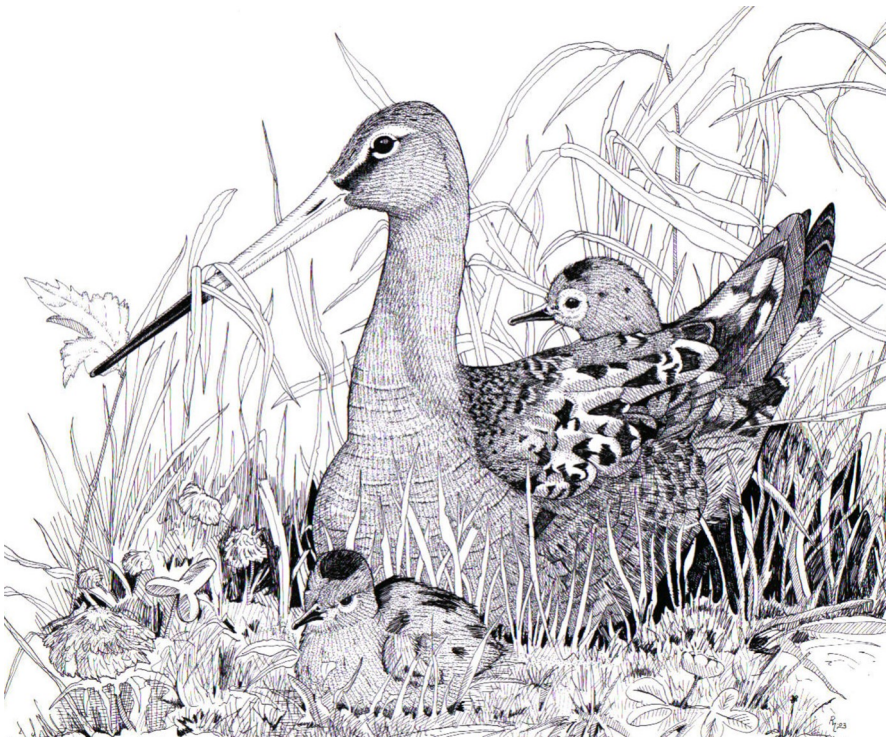
Our friend Astrid Kant in the Netherlands reports that the 2015 breeding season was not a good one for Black-tailed Godwits which resulted in her feeling a little down. She said 'Normally I find myself optimistic, but this year has left me a bit sad'.

The year started with a drought which meant that the females were unable to find enough food to get themselves into egg laying condition. Then there was the Dutch agricultural system which has changed in that mowing times of the wet meadows, that the godwits rely on to raise their families, have started earlier and earlier. In the past the meadows were mowed after the chicks had fledged in late



Astrid with a godwit chick  
- Elis Simpson.

June, but as the mowing time advanced first the fledglings were killed by the mowers, then younger chicks and even eggs and some now are even cut before



Black-tailed Godwit - Ronald Messemaker

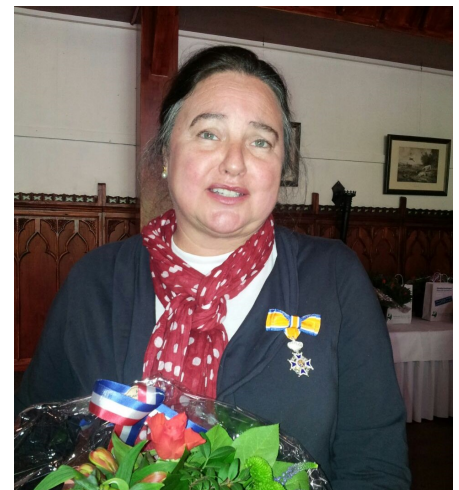
the birds have had time to lay their eggs. As if this wasn't enough for the birds to contend with, higher than usual numbers of chicks and eggs have been predated because the predators have been paying them more attention due to a lack of alternative food sources caused by the drought. Finally the chicks that did survive found it very hard to find enough food as a

result of the cold, late spring with too few insects about.

By the end of the season Astrid had found 180 nests and ringed 20 adults and at least 20 chicks which were underweight for their age.

Astrid summed the season up rather ruefully with the phrase 'Poor godwits, another year wasted'.

On a personal note Astrid was honoured with an award by His Majesty King Willem-Alexander of The Netherlands for her work with the godwits which she has been doing voluntarily for close to 30 years saving a growing number of godwits every year from the horror of death by grass mower.



Astrid receives her award  
- Ronald Messemaker



Black-tailed Godwit - Ronald Messemaker



## Willet Status In Southeastern South America — Natalia Martinez Curci & Adrian Azpiroz

The status of Willet *Tringa semipalmata* in southeastern South America was reevaluated in a recent research work made by researchers from Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and the Chair of Wader Quest, who contributed personal observations made whilst in Brazil. The Willet is a Nearctic migratory shorebird that breeds in North America and migrates south during the non-breeding season. Two subspecies are recognized: 'Eastern' Willets *T. s. semipalmata*, which breed along the Atlantic coast from Canada to Mexico, and 'Western' Willets *T.s. inornata* that nest farther west in the Great Plains and Prairie Wetlands.

Although a good body of information from

and until now, only the presence of 'Eastern' Willets was confirmed. Advances in field identification of subspecies provide new tools to reevaluate novel and historical records and to assign subspecific status. According to O'Brien (2006) 'Eastern' Willets are smaller, close in size to Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca* and have slimmer bodies than 'Western' Willets, which are about the size of a Hudsonian Godwit *Limosa haemastica*. Furthermore compared to 'Westerns', 'Eastern' Willets look more compact, shorter-legged, shorter-necked and have a thicker and less straight-edged bill, showing a distinct gonydeal bulge and sometimes a slight droop. 'Westerns' have more elongated bodies with longer legs and neck and slimmer, straighter-edged and finer tipped bills. In basic molt, 'Eastern' Willets are slightly darker and browner overall, while 'Westerns' are typically very pale and grayish. Despite these differences, some overlap is likely.

In the light of these new clues, the subspecific identity of published and novel Willet records from southeastern South America (specifically the southern part of Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul States in Brazil, Buenos Aires province in Argentina and Uruguay) was reevaluated in a research paper, recently published in *Ornitología Neotropical* (see Martínez-Curci et al. 2014 for details). Authors reviewed the literature and on-line ornithological databases (eBird, EcoRegistros, WikiAves, Wiki Aves, Xenocanto) and included their own observations based on shorebird counts in August 2010 (single

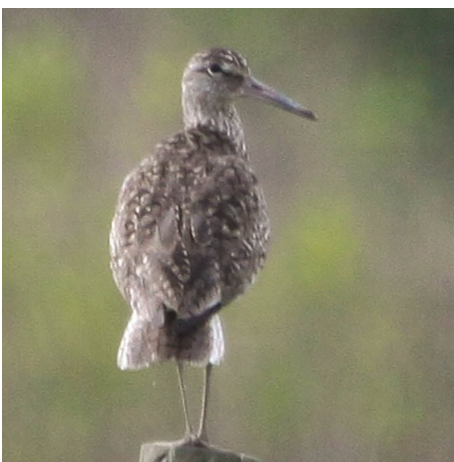
count), December 2011, March, April, May and June 2012 (weekly counts), March, June and July 2013 (monthly counts) at Bahía Samborombón (Punta Rasa and surroundings), Buenos Aires, Argentina, and repeated visits to Molhe Oeste and Lagoa do



'Western' Willet: - Elis Simpson

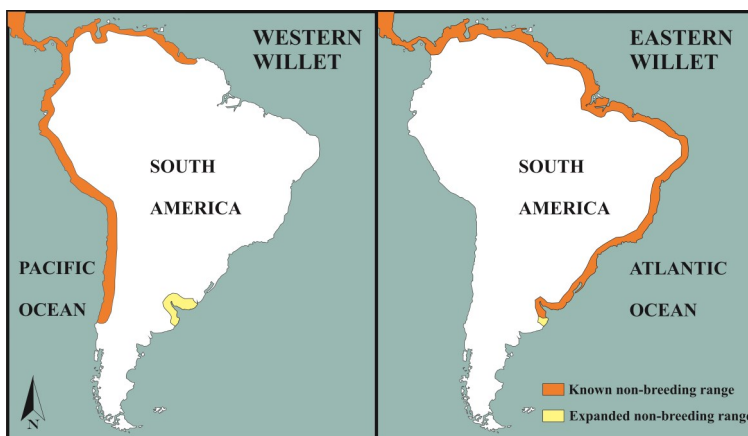
Peixe in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. Whenever possible, subspecific status was determined for both published and unpublished photographic material following identification criteria presented by O'Brien (2006). The new data indicated that Willets occur on a regular basis in small numbers in southeastern South America and might be recorded throughout the year. The known non-breeding range of the Western Willet was extended southwards, with new records from Buenos Aires province in Argentina, Maldonado and Montevideo departments in Uruguay and Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul states in Brazil.

Natalia S. Martínez-Curci, Adrián B. Azpiroz.

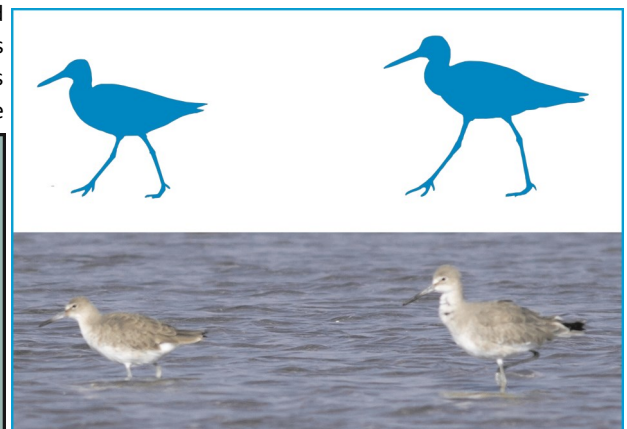


'Eastern' Willet: - Elis Simpson

breeding and non-breeding areas located in North America is available, the species status and subspecies non-breeding distribution have not been fully documented yet. In Southeastern South America, in particular, Willet status ranges from vagrant to regular, in August 2010 (single



Non-breeding ranges of Western (left) and Eastern (right) Willets.



Silhouettes showing typical differences between Eastern (upper left) and Western (upper right). Two Willets observed in Buenos Aires, Argentina in June 2012 (Photo: G. Battaglia). The birds show differences in structure, color, and size that are compatible with 'Eastern' (lower left) and 'Western' Willet (lower right) characteristics (adapted from Martínez-Curci et al. 2014).



## Celebrate Delaware Bay: Taking Action on the Delaware Bay

— Laura Chamberlin

It's October and that means shorebirds from across the Western Hemisphere are heading south from their Arctic breeding grounds. For most of these birds, arriving in the Arctic was no small feat. Flying from wintering grounds in South America, some as far as 9,000 miles away, Red Knots *Calidris canutus*, Ruddy Turnstones *Arenaria interpres*, Semipalmated Sandpipers *Calidris pusilla*, Sanderlings *Calidris alba*, and others, rely on a few crucial rest and refuel sites along the Atlantic Flyway. Amongst these stopover sites is Delaware Bay, where they are able to double their weight on the nutrient-rich horseshoe crab eggs for the final flight to the Arctic.



Leader Participant: Leader Program participant whose task was to weigh Ruddy Turnstones, gaining hands-on experience and inspiration from the shorebird research team  
- Laura Chamberlin

Given its importance as a stopover site, in 1986, biologists, political leaders and local communities came together to recognize Delaware Bay as the first Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) Site of Hemispheric Importance. WHSRN, which now has 92 sites throughout the Western Hemisphere, is a science-based, partnership-driven, conservation strategy for protecting the ecological integrity of critical habitats for shorebirds throughout the Americas.

Unfortunately, the situation at Delaware Bay has changed. In the 1990s, overharvesting of horseshoe crabs *Carcinoscorpius ritundicauda* for bait reduced their population, reducing the number of eggs available for shorebirds. The loss of food

at this important stopover site, combined with other threats including disturbance, sea level rise and extreme storms, has left shorebirds struggling to survive. Most notably among these imperiled populations is the *rufa* subspecies of Red Knot, which recently received protection under the U.S. Endangered Species Act.



Return the Favor: Two young children save a stranded horseshoe crab from a man-made hazard at Sea Breeze Beach - Laura Chamberlin

The approach to reversing shorebird declines at the Delaware Bay is multi-faceted, with efforts that include habitat restoration, leadership engagement, and scientific study. Through the Celebrate Delaware Bay initiative, WHSRN and other partners are focusing on one of the most critical components of conservation: community engagement.

Now in its second year, Celebrate Delaware Bay collaborated with partners to educate and inspire people to take action including horseshoe crab rescue, horseshoe crab tagging and surveys, beach stewardship, and leadership education. This spring also included new activities such as conservation-based art, student education, and improved collaborations with nature-based tourism efforts.

A few of the highlights from the 2015 Celebrate Delaware Bay season include: Nearly 30,000 crabs have been rescued through reTURN the Favor volunteers in New Jersey (as of early June). Nine organizations coordinated volunteers to rescue stranded horseshoe crabs on 17 beaches at Delaware Bay, minimizing the number of horseshoe crabs that are lost during spawning.

Students at two elementary schools created 15 signs to raise awareness. Using art

as a tool for conservation, students helped to create wildlife education signs for New Jersey's Bayshore beaches. These signs will inspire more people to be respectful visitors by sharing the beach with birds and horseshoe crabs. They will also encourage more people to get involved in conservation actions like horseshoe crab rescue and beach stewardship.

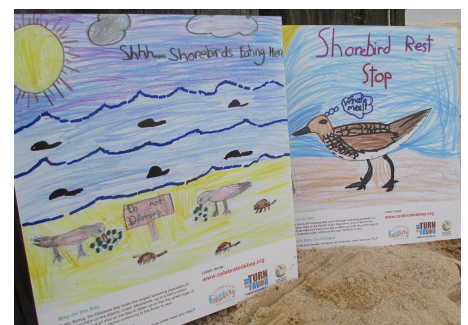
New Jersey's Delaware Bay Shorebird Project mentored 46 conservation leaders. Leaders joined the shorebird research team to learn more about shorebirds and horseshoe crabs, and specific actions they can take to protect them and their habitats. Participating leaders included elected officials, government officials, business owners, funders, and educators.

The hands-on, one-on-one interaction from these citizen science and stewardship activities builds a stronger, hopefully lifelong connection with the Delaware Bay, shorebirds, and horseshoe crabs. Building a larger community that supports the Delaware Bay will ensure that many more generations will find joy and inspiration in the 9,000 mile journey of a small, [American] robin-sized bird.

And the good news is that New Jersey's Delaware Bay Shorebird Project reports that there was a high count of a little over 24,000 Red Knots at Delaware Bay, close to last year's numbers. And 90% of the birds captured from May 26–28 had a weight greater than 180 grams, the ideal departure weight to successfully reach the Arctic breeding grounds. Very good news indeed.

To learn more about each of the community engagement projects and partners of Celebrate Delaware Bay visit: [www.celebratedebay.org](http://www.celebratedebay.org)

For more from New Jersey's Delaware Bay Shorebird Project and this year's shorebird research visit: [www.conservewildlife.org](http://www.conservewildlife.org)



Youth Signs: Two samples of the 15 youth signs which will be installed on New Jersey's beaches in 2016 - Laura Chamberlin



## Waders Wrapped in Blue — Jacqueline A. Cestero

“Tranquility Wrapped in Blue” is the tag line long attributed to Anguilla, British West Indies. This 35 square mile British Overseas Dependent Territory is the northern-most island of the Lesser Antilles chain. It prides itself on being a playground to the stars, where private jets and yachts sometimes seem more abundant than vehicles. Anguilla also boasts 33 pristine sparkling white sand beaches and some of the finest cuisine in the Caribbean.

Few are aware that this little neatly wrapped package hides a wealth of wildlife and biodiversity. Five designated marine parks surround Anguilla, including: Dog Island, Prickly Pear Cays, Sandy Island, Little Bay and Shoal Bay extending to Island Harbour, and are home to a number of species of turtles, colorful reef fish and corals, sharks, migrating whales and dolphins. Many of the island’s beaches provide nesting habitat for endangered sea turtles. Anguilla’s offshore cays are some of the most spectacular in the Caribbean. They are a mecca for nesting seabirds with 16 different species present during the breeding season. Four of these cays have been designated Important Bird Areas (IBAs) by Birdlife International, primarily because of their large congregations of nesting seabirds with local, regional and in some cases global importance.

The main island is dotted with more than 20 wetlands. These salt ponds were the center of a thriving salt industry dating back to the Arawak Indians. Today they provide critical habitat for both resident and migratory species as they travel along the Atlantic Flyway. Eleven of these ponds have been designated IBAs because they support large colonies of nesting seabirds such as the Least Tern *Sterna antillarum* and/or large populations of waders like the Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*. Further, they support other wildlife biodiversity including 5 of the Lesser Antilles Restricted Range Species.



American Oystercatcher - Jacqueline A. Cestero



West End Pond IBA Anguilla British West Indies - Jacqueline A. Cestero

Approximately 139 species of birds have been identified as residing on Anguilla for all or part of the year. Of this number, 32 are considered waders or shorebirds. Five of these species are breeding residents: Snowy Plover *Charadrius nivosus*, Wilson’s Plover *Charadrius wilsonia*, Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*, American Oystercatcher *Haematopus palliatus*, and the Black-necked



Black-necked Stilt - Jacqueline A. Cestero

stilt *Himantopus mexicanus*. Only the Willet *Tringa semipalmatus* is a breeding visitor and is present from March to October. The opportunity to see nesting activity in any of these species is a real treat for any nature lover.

The most common visitors to Anguilla include the Black-bellied Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*, Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus*, Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*, Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*, Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularia*, Hudsonian Whimbrel *Numenius hudsonicus*, Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*, Sanderling *Calidris alba*, Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*, Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*, White-rumped Sandpiper

*Calidris fuscicollis*, Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*, Stilt Sandpiper *Calidris himantopus*, and the Short-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus griseus*. Although the Wilson’s Snipe *Gallinago delicata* is considered a regular visitor, it camouflages itself well in the reeds and is often tough to see. Each year, small numbers of these migratory species overwinter on Anguilla’s wetlands.

A number of Ruddy Turnstones come to the island as banded birds and they are reported through <http://www.bandedbirds.org/>. One bird in particular, “2EY” is a regular visitor to Road Bay Pond. He has been seen in the same location each Spring and Fall since 2011 when he was originally banded in the state of New Jersey. Others have been banded in the state of Delaware and one in South America. Their repeated presence reinforces how important protecting the island’s wetlands is for migratory species.



Ruddy Turnstone 2EY - Jacqueline A. Cestero

A few “scarce visitors” like the American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*, Red Knot *Calidris canutus*, Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri*, and Wilson’s Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor* are seen in small numbers most years. The Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria* is more likely to be seen on grasslands and mud flats from August to November. In 2015 a Wilson’s Phalarope spent several weeks on West End Pond IBA along with a large flock of Lesser Yellowlegs before changing into its breeding colors and moving on. Cont’d on p9



## Waders Wrapped in Blue — cont'd



A variety of waders - Jacqueline A. Cestero

Although many of the island's salt ponds are seasonal, 2015 brought severe drought to the region. It has interrupted the normal Fall routine on some wetlands, while others continue to thrive. The presence of tropical storms and hurricanes also has an effect on what species are seen at this time of year. Although Anguilla has not received a direct hit from a hurricane so far this year, a number of major storms have skirted the

visited by a Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis* after Hurricane Omar brushed the island. This heavy bodied sea duck is normally found across the United States and Canada. It was a first ever record not only for Anguilla, but the Caribbean region as well.



Semipalmated Sandpiper - Jacqueline A. Cestero

island. Disruptions like these often bring interesting and rare visitors as they are blown off course or try to outrun the weather. For example, in 2008 Anguilla was



Solitary Sandpiper - Jacqueline A. Cestero

Some of Anguilla's rare visitors include the Piping Plover *Charadrius melodus*, American Avocet *Recurvirostra americana*, Hudsonian Godwit *Limosa haemastica*, Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*, Ruff *Calidris pugnax*, and the Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*. There is one record of a Marbled Godwit *Limosa fedoa* on Caul's Pond in 2009 shortly after Tropical

Storm Erika passed to the south.

These waders round out a wide variety of land, water and seabirds making Anguilla a great location for bird watching year-round.



Killdeer - Jacqueline A. Cestero

"Jackie" Cestero is an avid photographer and bird watcher. She went to Anguilla in 1984 and fell in love with the quiet beauty of the island and the people who live there. Anguilla became her full time home in 1998.

Jackie was a volunteer for The Anguilla National Trust Monthly Bird Monitoring Program from 2007 to 2012. She served as Project Manager for the Dog Island Restoration Project from 2011 to 2012.

In 2009 she published *From Bananaquits to Boobies A Photographic Gallery of the Wild Birds of Anguilla*, a 160 page full color photography book featuring many of Anguilla's bird species. As the creator and editor of *The Salty Wing*, she crafts a quarterly publication that highlights Anguilla's wetlands and wildlife.

Jackie is also a regular contributor to "Anguilla Life" magazine and other periodicals.



Wilson's Plover chick - Jacqueline A. Cestero

Did you know that the Crab Plover *Dromas ardeola* is the only wader in the world that excavates a burrow in which to lay its single egg?





## A slow-burning Autumn, but Burton Mere maintains its 'Pecs' appeal — Dan Trotman

Rewind twelve months to October 2014 and RSPB Burton Mere Wetlands was just drawing breath after what remains its busiest month in its short lifetime. Over 4000 people graced the reserve last September, the majority of those for two little reasons; a brace of diminutive passage waders spent relatively long stays and frequently showed well. The first, a Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*, is an annual staple here yet most locals have to wait until autumn to add it to their year list. The second, a juvenile Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*, was a less frequent visitor (although ended up being the third in twelve months sandwiched between two stunning spring adult females).

A mere three years after opening its doors, the reserve was fast making a name for itself as an excellent location to watch passage waders (of course, locals had known the reserve much longer under its former guise 'Inner Marsh Farm' prior to its expansion and subsequent rebranding in 2011). Other high profile waders the site boasts from over the years are Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni*, Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus solopaceus* and Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*.



Lesser Yellowlegs - Elis Simpson

Its old name offers a huge clue to the history of the land that is now this vibrant wetland mosaic; until the RSPB bought it, the first area in 1986 and an extension in 2006, these were crop fields, a far cry from the now SSSI-designated, internationally important site for wintering waders and wildfowl.

Back to the present, and it's been a rather different autumn so far. True to form, the Spotted Redshanks *Tringa erythropus* were the first to return on their southward journey way back in late June, still looking resplendent in their black summer plumage. Soon followed the greenshank and the first two Common Sandpipers *Actitis hypoleucos* in early July.

For a brief spell in mid-Summer, the main scrape on the reserve was dominated by waders with 29 pairs of Pied Avocets



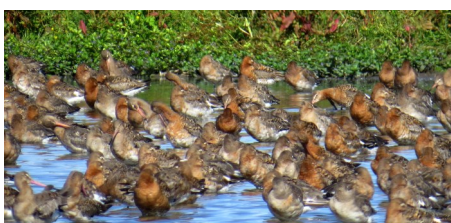
RSPB Dee Estuary nature reserve, Burton Mere Wetlands - Elis Simpson



Pied Avocets - Elis Simpson

*Recurvirostra avosetta* nesting on the islands, along with over 60 pairs of Northern Lapwings *Vanellus vanellus* on the recently created wet grassland – one of the best lapwing breeding sites in Wales (yes, we span the border!). Much harder to spot, a couple of pairs of Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* teased visitors as they cautiously fed with their fledged young around the scrape.

The Dee's unique flock of summering, non-breeding *islandica* Black-tailed Godwits *Limosa limosa* were as impressive as ever, some moulting to their iconic russet plumage and quickly joined by returning breeding individuals through July, in their full red glow.



Black-tailed Godwits (*islandica*) - Elis Simpson

Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*, Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* and the odd Eurasian Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria* trickled through in late July, with Ruff *Calidris pugnax* numbers building steadily through

August to a peak of 28 in the last week of the month, alongside notable counts of 6 Green Sandpipers and 6 Common Greenshanks *Tringa nebularia*. A single Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* ended August on a high... and then came September. We braced ourselves for a repeat of last year, dreaming of another Red-necked Phalarope or perhaps even a Grey *P. fulicarius* or a Wilson's *P. tricolor*!

We waited... and waited. Even the reliable 'Pec' eluded us. Word of mouth suggested a similarly slow migration elsewhere, but it doesn't stop you taking it personally. The reserve's wardens cracked on with the usual post-breeding season management – and manipulation – of the vegetation around the wetlands, to maintain the condition of the habitats but also to open up views in front of the hides and screens.



Little Stint - Elis Simpson

With pool edges trimmed, all of a sudden there were Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* everywhere and even the odd Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus* by the end of the month. A number of Little Stints then either arrived, or became visible thanks to the removal of rushes and reeds, with a peak  
Cont'd on p11



## A slow-burning autumn, but Burton Mere maintains its 'Pecs' appeal — cont'd

of 4 towards the end of September along with, just as we were about to give up hope of a September record for this year, a juvenile Pec! Finally, almost four weeks later than last year, one of our most sought after passage waders made an appearance, keeping visitors on their toes with regular movement between pools and showing from different hides, but still present at the time of writing.

Right now, as the days shorten and the temperature drops, the reserve has arguably



Pectoral Sandpiper - Elis Simpson

never looked better. New record duck counts have been set in recent weeks, Pink-footed Geese *Anser brachyrhynchus* are using the scrape and surrounding fields like never before, Northern Lapwings float around already in flocks of hundreds and the godwit numbers have surpassed the 1000 mark sensational to watch swirling through the air (albeit usually pursued by a hungry Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*!).

Another autumn migration draws to an end, but in some sense the wader show is just beginning. It's the internationally important numbers of wintering Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*, Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*, Dunlin *Calidris alpina*, Red Knot *Calidris canutus* and Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* that helped earn the Dee Estuary its SSSI and SPA status. The RSPB Dee Estuary team are hugely looking forward to growing links with Wader Quest firstly in supporting next month's World Watch, with many eager eyes hoping to find each and every elusive wader species

possible at Burton Mere Wetlands, and fingers crossed for a north-westerly wind to push in some of those internationally important species from the estuary. Secondly, the Wirral Wader Festival promises to be an exciting celebration of the estuary and the wider Wirral coastline, hopefully setting a national precedent that will help protect the thousands of wading birds reliant



Burton Mere Wetland centre - Elis Simpson

on these shores each year.

Dan Trotman is the Visitor Experience Manager for RSPB Dee Estuary nature reserve, Burton Mere Wetlands, Puddington Lane, Burton, Cheshire, CH64 5SF

## More wader population snippets — Elis Simpson

The **Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica baueri* has significantly declined in New Zealand over the past two decades falling from 100k to 85k. The latest count of 70k shows a population decline of 5-6% per year. The oldest Bar-tailed Godwit in Northern Australia was 27 years old but is surpassed by a bird from the UK which has attained 30 years and three months.



Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica baueri* - Elis Simpson

Britain as a whole has seen a decline in the breeding population of the **Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata* by some 45% between 1995 and 2012 and the rate for Scotland and Wales is 50%. This difference reflects the fact that Eurasian Curlews are predominantly upland birds where most losses have



Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* - Elis Simpson

occurred, indeed some lowland areas have shown a rise in population levels. The UK holds about 30% the European breeding population of the species; around about 65k pairs.

The **Shore Plover** *Thinornis novaeseelandiae* of New Zealand is one of the rarest waders in the world. It has a small and vulnerable population of around 200 individuals and is classified as Nationally Critical in the *New Zealand Threat Classification System* and listed as Endangered on the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*. Formerly it was found around New Zealand's mainland coast, but had gone from there by the 1870's.

Introduced rats and cats are believed to be the principal causes of this loss. Since then Shore Plovers have been confined to the Chatham Islands. In the 1990's the Shore Plover Recovery Group founded a captive population on the mainland at the The Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust and Pukaha Mount Bruce National Wildlife Centre, using wild collected eggs.

This captive breeding programme has resulted in over 400 juveniles being released on predator-free offshore islands. If this species is to survive then conservation effort will need to continue as these new populations are unstable and are not yet self sustaining. In 2013 the wild population fell to a little over 60 pairs.



Shore Plover *Thinornis novaeseelandiae* - Elis Simpson



## The Godwits of Gilroy — Richard Smith

It seems amazing that over the past two years the small flooded field next to Gilroy Nature Park in West Kirby, Merseyside, England, has become one of the most important sites in the United Kingdom for migrating Black-tailed Godwits *Limosa limosa islandica*, particularly during the months from August to October when they are undergoing their post-breeding moult.

Graph 1 on page 13 shows the weekly max from March 2014 to February 2015, a particularly good 12 months.

This field, with a busy footpath full of dog walkers and cyclists on one side and a housing estate down the other, is no more than two acres in area yet has held over 10% of the country's Black-tailed Godwits when 4,900 were counted on October 10th 2014. That maximum count may have been a one off but since 2008 we have had no less than 79 individual counts of International Importance, and over the past two years 21 of these have been greater



The Black-tailed Godwits of Gilroy - Elis Simpson



The godwits share the field with several horses, 15/8/15  
- Richard Smith.

than 2,150, or 5% of the UK population. To put these counts into a National perspective the whole of the Thames Estuary, the second most important site in the UK, had a maximum count of 5,806 in the winter of 2013/14, just 906 more than our max. Another important site, Morecambe Bay, had a max of 2,693 in 2013/14 - twice in 2014 Gilroy had higher counts and, by my reckoning, Morecambe Bay is at least 3,800 times bigger!

Graph 2 on page 13 shows max counts



Black-tailed Godwits - Elis Simpson

for each season from the winter of 2007/08 to the summer of 2015, with the crucial International Importance threshold of 610 shown. Crucial, as this has implications under the *Habitats Directive* 2010 regarding the future protection of this site. The high numbers mean that it has a strong functional link to the *Dee Estuary Special Protection Area* and Ramsar site, in other words Black-tailed Godwits from the Dee Estuary SPA depend on Gilroy on a routine basis, and it's loss would have a serious negative impact on the SPA even though it is outside it's boundary. Interestingly, the counts are so high at Gilroy that theoretically it could be designated an SPA in it's own right, although more likely it could be incorporated into the Dee Estuary SPA and that is a realistic possibility.

At present, other than this 'functional link', the Gilroy field has no protection whatsoever and is therefore vulnerable to any development and/or change of use

Cont'd on p13



Black-tailed Godwits at Gilroy, 27/8/15  
- Richard Smith



## The Godwits of Gilroy — Richard Smith

Unfortunately such a development is very much on the cards with the planned Hoylake Golf Resort which it is said will stretch right across the Hoylake Langfields between Hoylake and West Kirby. Although we do not yet have details of this project I do know there is a lot of opposition to it, not least from golfers as every local golf course is losing members and the last thing they need is two more golf courses to compete against! That aside, if this Golf Resort does go ahead I see this as an opportunity to incorporate the Gilroy flooded field into the scheme as a wildlife feature and that will be something we will be pushing for.

Gilroy is located on the Wirral peninsula in North-west England, between the estuaries of the Dee and Mersey. To visit the Godwit field at Gilroy take the path that runs across the fields from Gilroy Road in



Black-tailed Godwits - Richard Smith

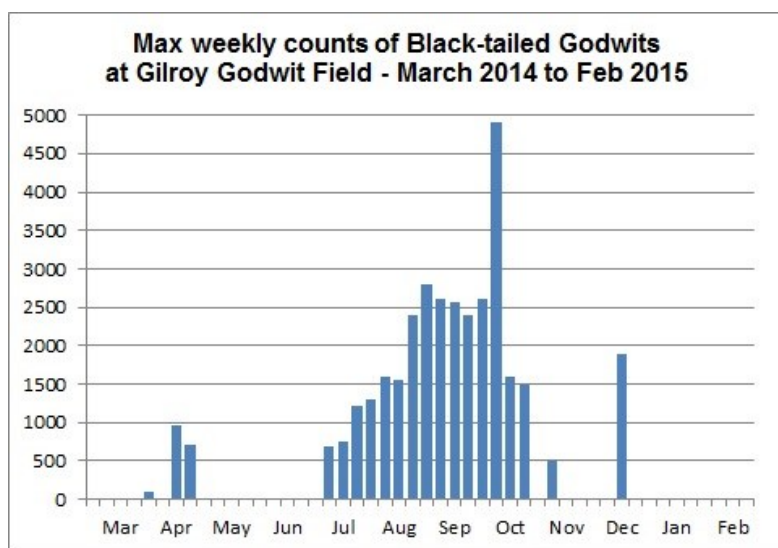
West Kirby to Hoylake Station (nearest post code is CH48 6DG), as you go through the gate at Gilroy Road the godwit field is on your right with a good viewing point about 50 yards further on. I can't guarantee any Godwits but from mid-July to mid-October they are usually there over high tide specially on spring tides, on neap tides they are a bit more unpredictable. When they are not at Gilroy you can see them feeding

on the Dee Estuary but in the summer they tend to be a long way out on Dawpool Bank. If the godwits are at Gilroy it is more than likely I'll be there - so come and say hello.

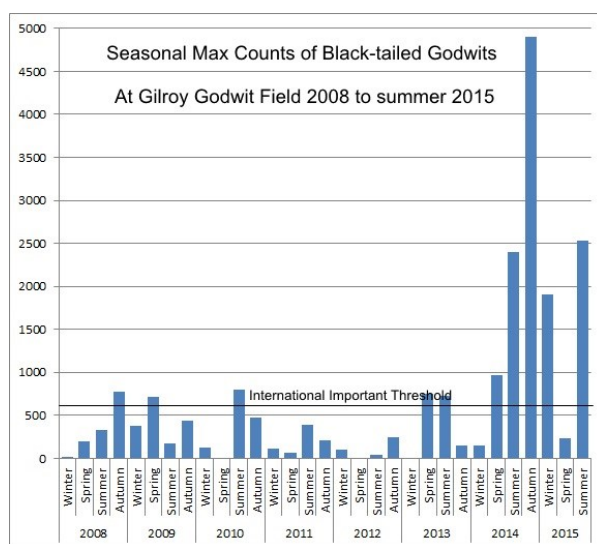
Sources of Information for this article:

1. On-line WeBS Report 2013/14 - <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/webs>
2. David Parker - Chair of Dee Estuary Conservation Group.
3. Tim Melling - RSPB North-west Conservation Officer.
4. All the people who have done counts at Gilroy as well as myself, in particular Chris Butterworth, Matt Thomas and Paul Whitehead.

Richard Smith ([www.deeestuary.co.uk](http://www.deeestuary.co.uk))



Graph 1 - Richard Smith



Graph 2 - Richard Smith

## Prize winners from the British Birdwatching Fair 2015



Michael Hicks won the tricky 'Guess the number of birds' competition. Michael's guess of 1176 guess was the closest to the actual number of 1118.

Signed Ibisbill print by Steve Cale.

- Elis Simson



Jo and Colin Gould won first prize in the raffle. We presented them with their prize at Thurstaston, the site of forthcoming Wirral Wader Festival.

Signed *Calidris* plate by Richard Allen

- Elis Simson



Rachel Warren won the prize draw for new sponsors signing up during the month of August 2015. It doesn't look like she has much space left on her wall for it!

Signed wader poster by Lars Jonsson

- Jeff Price

## Buffy the bogey-slayer — Sav Saville

### FIRST BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER IN NEW ZEALAND!

On 20th March 2014 a Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Tryngites subruficollis* was found at South Kaipara Head just North of Auckland, New Zealand. Although Buff-breasted Sandpiper has a well-known liking for vagrancy – all over Europe, many Australian records, even to Sri Lanka (!) – this was the first for New Zealand (well, it is a long way off the beaten track, eh?).

For myself and Brent Stephenson (old birding mates and business partners) this wasn't great news though. For various reasons neither of us was going to be able to



Buff-breasted Sandpiper  
- Brent Stephenson: Eco Vista Photography and Research



Buff-breasted Sandpiper  
- Brent Stephenson: Eco Vista Photography and Research

get there for the next 2 weeks at least!! A twitchers worst nightmare.

The bird was subsequently successfully twitched by about 15 birders (Yep, 15, there really are not many birders here!?) over the next week, and all the top listers except us two had it in the bag. To make matters worse the access to the site is tricky to say the least. It is only possible to cross the area where the bird was at low tide, and to get to the start point one has to travel through a forest.....which became closed to the public due to extreme fire risk on April 1st.

To make matters even worse a Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii* (first twitchable in New Zealand for 25+ years) also pitched up a

couple of hours to the North. By the time we could even start to think about getting up there the forest had been closed for two weeks, so no sign or news of Buffy, and the Crested Tern hadn't been reported either.

Then, on April 23rd everything changed!! The forest re-opened on 22nd, and Buffy was still there and the Crested Tern was re-found, and better still the tides looked right for a big day twitch!!

April 24th was an 18 hour birding day, covering over 1,200kms, but two tired and happy birders each scored two New Zealand ticks. The Buff-breasted Sandpiper showed really well for us in almost perfect weather



Crested Tern (right) with Royal Terns *Thalasseus maximus*  
- Brent Stephenson: Eco Vista Photography and Research

after what was thankfully a quite quick search, as later, did the tern.

For me this was very much a case of "Buffy the bogey-slayer" because even though I was brought up in Britain and saw pretty much every rare wader in the '70s and '80s (Red-necked Stint *Clidris ruficollis*, Hudsonian Godwit *Limosa haemastica*, Western *Calidris mauri*, Solitary *Tringa solitaria* and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*) I had never managed to connect with a Buff-breasted Sandpiper, even over the last couple of years when we have been to the British Birdwatching Fair I have managed to unsuccessfully twitch them.....I guess they will be easy for me from now on!!

So another yellow-legged wader tick for us in New Zealand. The circumstances, and locality, of this bird were quite reminiscent of the Oriental Plover *Charadrius veredus* that we saw with Rick and Elis in October last year at Port Waikato.



Oriental Plover - Elis Simpson

Sav Saville  
Wrybill Birding Tours, NZ  
"Great Birds, Real Birders"  
[www.wrybill-tours.com](http://www.wrybill-tours.com)

## 'Wader Quest mobile' new decals revealed — You won't miss us on the road!





## A Russian Bird's Roebuck Bay Stopover — Grace Maglio

For just over two years I have been fortunate enough to live in Broome and been able to devote much of my time learning about the wonderful world of migratory shorebirds and where better to learn than the shorebird capital of Australia!

At this time of year, the flocks seem to grow daily as birds return from their northern breeding grounds. Being able to watch these birds roosting and recovering from their long journeys, from the top of the pindan cliffs of Roebuck Bay, is certainly one of life's special experiences.

On the morning of 10th September 2015 a Red Knot *Calidris canutus* pale green over white engraved flag CKX was seen at a roost known as 'Campsite', banded by Pavel Tomkovich in southern Chukotka. As it happens, on the 4th October 2014 I saw the same bird, at the same roost, looking decidedly exhausted roosting on one leg, that leg in mud up to its tibia, head slumped forward and the tip of its bill resting on the mud. Its roosting behaviour suggested that its flight to Roebuck Bay might have taken its toll.

In response to the 2014 sighting Pavel indicated that the bird was tagged as an adult female (metal band HS009601) on 30 May 2012, it was paired with a flagged male before and after that date and later in that season the male was attending chicks indicating successful nesting. The female was never recorded again after the prenesting period.

It was with much excitement I was able to report another sighting of this bird. My observations of CKX this year were more indicative of a 'normal' roosting bird, although she did still seem to prefer to rest with her head down and bill pointing towards the mud, she was a little more alert and her overall posture was encouraging.

Feedback from Pavel indicated that although many colour-flagged males and



Red Knot in Russia - Pavel Tomkovich

several females were back on their breeding territories, this sighting is the only source of information that CKX is alive and continues her annual migrations. Pavel was happy with the fate of the bird and commented that the sighting adds a valuable piece of information



Red Knots with Curlew Sandpipers *Calidris ferruginea* and Greater Sandplover *Charadrius leschenaultii* - Grace Maglio

to the projects database about survival and movements of the projects marked shorebirds.

He found it interesting that most Red Knots of the *rogersi* subspecies migrate to East Australia and New Zealand and only a few come to NW Australia.

It seems that many of the Red Knots in Pavel's ongoing studies are recorded in Bohai Bay but CKX has never been recorded elsewhere and her migration route and current breeding area remain a mystery.

I have not seen CKX again this year but hope to be able to report further sightings in future southward migrations.

A big thank-you to Pavel Tomkovich for his assistance and support in the compilation of this note. And the use of his photograph of Red Knots in Russia.

Grace Maglio



**STOP PRESS:**

Spoon-billed Sandpiper back at Pak Thale 18/10/15. Good news for would-be Spoony twitchers.

## WASH WADER RINGING GROUP CONTROLS & RECOVERIES HIGHLIGHTS 2014

### — Steve Wakeham

#### Eurasian Oystercatcher - *Haematopus ostralegus*

Adult	23.08.82	Leverton, Lincolnshire	
Freshly dead	16.02.14	Heacham, Norfolk	LOCAL

Ringed already as a full adult (at least in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year) back in 1982, and found freshly dead 32 years later. The national longevity record for Oystercatcher still stands at 40 years 1 month.

Adult	18.10.08	Snettisham, Norfolk			
Caught by ringer	18.06.14	Mevaer, Loppa, Finnmark, <b>Norway</b>	70 20'N 21 26'E	2217 KM	NNE

Many of the Oystercatchers wintering on The Wash come from the Norwegian breeding population. Whilst most come from southern Norway, some venture much further north to breed – this the northern-most example in 2014.

#### Common Ringed Plover - *Charadrius hiaticula*

First year	06.09.14	Parnassiaweg, Bloemendaal, Noord-Holland, <b>The Netherlands</b>	52 25'N 04 33'E		
Caught by ringer	11.09.14	Snettisham, Norfolk		282 KM	WNW

Ringed Plovers occur in Britain both as breeding and migrant populations. This individual, only the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dutch-ringed Ringed Plover to be found on The Wash, will likely have been a migrant: Note the rapid movement between ringing sites.

#### Red Knot - *Calidris canutus*

First year	14.08.98	Ujście Wisły, Gdansk-Swibno, Pomorskie, <b>Poland</b>	54 22'N 18 56'E		
Caught by ringer	05.10.13	Snettisham, Norfolk		1229 KM	W
Adult	11.02.12	Snettisham, Norfolk			
Caught by ringer	16.05.14	Kollafjordur, Stranda, Strandasýsla, <b>Iceland</b>	65 34'N 21 24'W	1868 KM	NW
Adult	11.02.12	Snettisham, Norfolk			
Caught by ringer	16.05.14	Kollafjordur, Stranda, Strandasýsla, <b>Iceland</b>	65 34'N 21 24'W	1868 KM	NW
Adult	31.07.11	Wainfleet, Lincolnshire			
Caught by ringer	22.05.14	Dynjandi, Arnarfjordur, Vestur-Ísafjarðarsýsla, <b>Iceland</b>	65 44'N 23 12'W	1922 KM	NW
Adult	11.02.12	Snettisham, Norfolk			
Caught by ringer	24.05.14	Bardastrandarsýsla, Vestur-Barðastrandarsýsla, <b>Iceland</b>	65 37'N 23 28'W	1949 KM	NW
First year	21.09.01	Terrington, Norfolk			
Caught by ringer	25.05.14	Dynjandi, Arnarfjordur, Vestur-Ísafjarðarsýsla, <b>Iceland</b>	65 44'N 23 12'W	1949 KM	NW

Some of the Knot occurring on The Wash in the autumn are from the nominate *canutus* race which breed in northern Russia. These birds migrate through the Baltic to reach the UK before continuing south to winter in west Africa staging via other SW European estuaries. This is only the eighth Polish-ringed Knot to be found on The Wash.

Adult	26.05.07	Hlídsnes, Alftanes, Kjósarsýsla, <b>Iceland</b>	64 05'N 22 01'W		
Caught by ringer	14.08.14	Wrangle, Lincolnshire		1770 KM	SE

By far the majority of Knot occurring in Britain are from the *islandica* race which breed in the high Arctic of northern Greenland and NE Canada. A good proportion of these stage their migration through Iceland, and an expedition undertaken by the International Wader Study Group captured over 630 Knot here during their spring migration in 2014 – including 5 Wash-ringed birds – and all these now carry colour-rings as part of this study. Note that the first two highlighted were caught together both on The Wash and in Iceland.



## WASH WADER RINGING GROUP CONTROLS & RECOVERIES — cont'd

### Red Knot - *Calidris canutus* (cont'd)

Adult	26.05.09	Marnes, Porsanger, Finnmark, <b>Norway</b>	70 24'N 25 32'E		
Caught by ringer	11.02.12	Snettisham, Norfolk		2331 KM	SW

*islandica* Knot also stage via northern Norway, which is, in fact, the shortest route for this migration. Note this, and all the Icelandic examples, were still on passage towards the end of May, and yet they complete their breeding and return to The Wash within two months.

Adult	26.07.13	Leverton, Lincolnshire			
Dying (on ship)	20.05.14	500 KM SW of Iceland, <b>North Atlantic Ocean</b>	60 00'N 28 15'W	1902 KM	WNW

We can only speculate that this hapless individual was blown off course and 'missed' its vital staging point in Iceland.

Second year	03.07.04	Heacham, Norfolk			
Caught by ringer	30.01.14	Boosterstown, Dublin, <b>Ireland</b>	53 19'N 06 13'W	448 KM	W
Adult	11.02.12	Snettisham, Norfolk			
Caught by ringer	30.01.14	Boosterstown, Dublin, <b>Ireland</b>	53 19'N 06 13'W	448 KM	W

Wintering Knot congregate in large numbers in estuaries around the British Isles, including The Wash. As part of a study being undertaken by BirdWatch Ireland and Dublin Port to help understand how waterbirds use Dublin Bay, the first cannon-netting here took place on 30 Jan 2014, when a total of 1673 birds were captured and ringed. This included two Wash-ringed Knot (the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> such records to Ireland), along with

### Sanderling - *Calidris alba*

Adult	03.08.12	Snettisham, Norfolk			
Caught by ringer	29.11.13	Cap Iwik, Baie Du Levrier, Banc D'Arguin, <b>Mauritania</b>	19 53'N 16 19'W	3945 KM	SSW
Adult	25.08.05	Heacham, Norfolk			
Sick (Injury)	28.12.13	Alvor, Faro, <b>Portugal</b>	37 07'N 08 35'W	1892 KM	SSW

It is known that Sanderlings breeding in NE Greenland pass through The Wash, migrating southwards as far as South Africa. These examples represent the second Wash-ringed Sanderling to be found in Mauritania, and the fifth to Portugal respectively.

First year	16.09.12	Snettisham, Norfolk			
Caught by ringer	31.05.13	Sandgerdi, Gullbringu, Gullbringusýsla, <b>Iceland</b>	64 02'N 22 42'W	1819 KM	NW
Caught by ringer	05.10.13	Snettisham, Norfolk		1819 KM	SE
Adult	31.05.13	Sandgerdi, Gullbringu, Gullbringusýsla, <b>Iceland</b>	64 02'N 22 42'W		
Caught by ringer	05.10.13	Snettisham, Norfolk		1819 KM	SE

These birds will have been en route to breeding grounds in Greenland when captured in Iceland; the first example is the fifth Wash-ringed Sanderling to Iceland, and it has subsequently returned for the following winter on The Wash. It was joined by the second example – only the third Icelandic-ringed Sanderling to be found on The Wash. Note that both these birds were caught together in Iceland and at Snettisham, Norfolk, undoubtedly, having been to Greenland in-between times.

Adult	10.09.10	Heacham, Norfolk			
Caught by ringer – colour rings added	08.11.12	Samouco harbour, Rio Tejo, <b>Portugal</b>	38 44'N 09 01'W	1736 KM	SSW
Ring read in field	15.02.13	Samouco beach, Alcochete, <b>Portugal</b>		LOCAL	
Ring read in field	23.02.13	Alcochete beach, <b>Portugal</b>		LOCAL	
Caught by ringer	21.08.13	Snettisham, Norfolk		1733 KM	NNE
Ring read in field	30.05.14	Hestamöl, Norðurþing, Norðurland eystra, <b>Iceland</b>	66 32'N 16 04'W	1770 KM	NNW

Finally, the colour-ringing of this Sanderling, after it had originally been ringed on the Wash, has helped build up a more complete migration history, with this bird not only having been recaptured back on the Wash the following autumn (on its south-bound journey), but also heading north through Iceland the subsequent spring.

## WASH WADER RINGING GROUP CONTROLS & RECOVERIES — cont'd

### Dunlin - *Calidris alpina*

Adult	12.08.10	Snettisham, Norfolk				
Caught by ringer	03.05.13	Rouxique, Sanxenxo, Pontevedra, <b>Spain</b>	42 25'N 08 49'W	1353 KM	SSW	
Adult	24.07.05	Leverton, Lincolnshire				
Caught by ringer	07.05.13	Reserve de Moeze-Oleron, Moeze, Charente-Maritime, <b>France</b>	45 53'N 01 05'W	796 KM	S	

Migration patterns of Dunlin through western Europe are well documented, and further controls and recoveries of Wash-ringed birds add to our knowledge. Whilst fairly typical in nature, the timings of these movements can, never-the-less be instructive in themselves – these two examples demonstrating the early May passage through Iberia and into France...

Adult	25.08.09	Leverton, Lincolnshire				
Caught by ringer	06.07.14	Nidingen, Halland, <b>Sweden</b>	57 18'N 11 54'E	886 KM	ENE	
First year	17.11.12	Terrington, Norfolk				
Caught by ringer	09.07.14	Nidingen, Halland, <b>Sweden</b>	57 18'N 11 54'E	890 KM	ENE	

...whilst the timing of return migration through Sweden occurs in early July...

First year	02.08.96	Leverton, Lincolnshire				
Caught by ringer	17.08.12	Parque National Marismas del Odiel, Huelva, <b>Spain</b>	37 16'N 06 55'W	1832 KM	SSW	

...with some birds reaching Spain by mid-August.

Adult	03.08.12	Snettisham, Norfolk				
Caught by ringer	24.11.14	Banc d'Arguin, Mauritania, <b>Mauritania</b>	19 54'N 16 18'W	3943 KM	SSW	

Then finally, a typical example of a Dunlin controlled on its West African wintering grounds; this being the 12<sup>th</sup> such record from The Wash.

### Bar-tailed Godwit - *Limosa limosa*

Adult	11.08.06	Leverton, Lincolnshire				
Caught by ringer	30.01.14	Boosterstown, Dublin, <b>Ireland</b>	53 19'N 06 13'W	425 KM	W	
Adult	12.08.10	Friskney, Lincolnshire				
Caught by ringer	30.01.14	Boosterstown, Dublin, <b>Ireland</b>	53 19'N 06 13'W	431 KM	W	

The first records of Wash-ringed Bar-Tailed Godwits to be reported in the Republic of Ireland – both captured in the inaugural cannon-netting session in Dublin Bay (see Knot, above, for more details).

Second year	20.01.96	Friskney, Lincolnshire				
Caught by ringer	25.08.13	Wrangle, Lincolnshire			LOCAL	

Still going strong, over 17 years after having been ringed – but only just over half way towards the national longevity record of 33 years 11 months!

### Eurasian Curlew - *Numenius arquata*

Adult	23.08.05	Holbeach				
Ring read in field	23.06.13	Torvelantie, Kajaani, Oulu, <b>Finland</b>	64 19'N 27 52'E	2036 KM	NE	
Adult	05.08.08	Heacham, Norfolk				
Found dead	22.05.14	Koskenkorva, Ilmajoki, Vaasa, <b>Finland</b>	62 41'N 22 27'E	1690 KM	NE	
Nestling	02.06.04	near Nilsia, Pohjois-Savo, Kuopio, <b>Finland</b>	63 18'N 28 11'E			
Caught by ringer	13.08.14	Friskney, Lincolnshire		1983 KM	SW	

The majority of overseas controls involving Curlew involve records from the main breeding grounds in Finland, with most years seeing at least one exchange with The Wash – these being typical examples.



## WASH WADER RINGING GROUP CONTROLS & RECOVERIES — cont'd

### Eurasian Curlew - *Numenius arquata* (cont'd)

Adult	02.09.00	Terrington, Norfolk			
Freshly dead (shot)	08.05.14	Izhma, Komi, Russian Federation	65 00'N 53 54'E	3326 KM	ENE

Whilst over 100 British-ringed Curlew have been found in Finland over the years, there have only been 13 previous recoveries into Russia (6 being Wash-ringed birds), and most of these have been west of 40 degrees east. This bird joins another very similar record from 1992 (involving a Curlew ringed at Wainfleet), between them being the easternmost recoveries of any British-ringed Curlew.

### Common Redshank - *Tringa totanus*

First year	11.06.13	Flatey, Breida Fjordur, Vestur-Barðastrandasýsla, Iceland	65 22'N 22 55'W		
Caught by ringer	25.08.13	Terrington, Norfolk		1914 KM	SE

It has long been established that Icelandic Redshank winter in Britain, and this is the 11<sup>th</sup> Icelandic-ringed individual to have been caught on The Wash.

Adult	19.09.12	Terrington, Norfolk			
Ring read in field	23.02.14	Camel Estuary, Cornwall		438 KM	SW

Perhaps surprisingly, the first Wash-ringed Redshank to be found in Cornwall.

Steve Wakeham, Wash Wader Ringing Group, 2015

## Magellanic Plover project update — Rick and Elis Simpson

Last year Ricardo Matus with Olivia Blank and Fernando Díaz placed identifying leg rings and flags on eight Magellanic Plovers *Pluvianellus socialis*. To their delight all eight of these birds returned to the breeding grounds after spending the winter away.



Juvenile 183; 13/1/15 - Ricardo Matus

Not only does this mean we have our first set of data for returning birds it also means that Magellanic Plovers can be relied upon to return to the same area year on year, all being well.

This piece of information emboldened us to make an attempt at fitting geolocators to some of the birds to see if we could get a handle on how far they move from the breeding area in the Austral winter.

We contacted James Fox at Migrate Technology who agreed to supply five geolocators and at the International Wader



Adult 180; 24/9/15 - Ricardo Matus

Study Group conference Ron Porter, who has an enormous amount of experience and expertise with putting geolocators on



Adult 186; 8/10/15 - Ricardo Matus

waders, offered his help with the project. This was an tremendous boost to our prospects of a successful outcome.

The Geolocators were sent to Ron who then

calibrated them and sent them on to Ricardo in Chile.



Egg of 186; 8/10/15 - Ricardo Matus

In a sense that is the easy part done, the real work, and by far the most touch and go, now lies with Ricardo and the team who will have to catch five Magellanic Plovers and deploy the geolocators on them.

After that it is a question of wait and hope. The hope being that the birds will once again return and then having the luck to be able to recapture them to retrieve the information.

We have a long way to go in this project, but we are at least taking our first exciting steps.



Geolocators - Ron Porter

## UK Wader Summary July - September 2015 — Oliver Simms

After the exceptional spring, early autumn, which is usually the best time for waders, turned out to be something of a disappointment even if there was still plenty to see. The long staying Hudsonian Whimbrel *Numenius hudsonicus* remained at Pagham Harbour in West Sussex until the 27th July. Nearby, the even longer staying Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca* remained at Titchfield Haven in Hampshire until 24th July and what was presumably the same bird appeared at Whippingham on the Isle of Wight on 23rd September. The question has to be asked whether this will become a regular returning bird?

New discoveries were headlined by a juvenile Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla* on St Agnes on the Isles of Scilly on 16th July. This was the first British record since an individual on Tresco in 2011 meaning that several birders made the trip during its 8 day stay for this previously almost annual "peep". As is often the case, the archipelago proved to be a decent place to find American waders including American Golden Plovers *Pluvialis dominica* on Tresco on 3rd July and 22nd-23rd September. A juvenile Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularia* was reported briefly on Bryher on 21st September. Several Pectoral Sandpipers *Calidris melanotos* were seen



Least Sandpiper; Isles of Scilly  
- Martin Goodey

across the archipelago, while a Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Tryngites subruficollis* flew over St. Mary's on 30th August.

After a fall in records in recent years, it was good to see a decent autumn for Wilson's Phalaropes *Phalaropus tricolor*. There were reports in Cornwall and the Outer Hebrides in August before an individual was found at the wader hotspot of Frampton Marsh RSPB in Lincolnshire on 8th September. It or another bird was in the Pannel Valley in Sussex on 19th September before relocating to Vange Marsh RSPB a day later and staying until early October.

A Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*



Spotted Sandpiper; Coate Water  
- Jeff Lack

was found at Slimbridge WWT on 29th September, an excellent find considering this species as returned to being a genuine rarity after the bumper year in 2011. Not too far away, a pristine summer plumaged adult Spotted Sandpiper was an exceptional inland find at Coate Water Park in Wiltshire on 16th August, where it showed superbly until 27th August.

Other American waders included a Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* was seen briefly at Brockholes Nature Reserve LWT in Lancashire on 20th August before being refound on the Conder Estuary on 23rd, where it remained for 3 days. A Baird's Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii* was at Seaton Marshes in Devon on 15th August, while another was at Castletown in Highland on 24th August and a third was on Tiree in Argyll for a few days at the end of September.

2 American Golden Plovers were seen on both Orkney and Shetland in the period, while it continued to be an excellent year for White-rumped Sandpipers *Calidris fuscicollis*, with individuals seen at 11 sites. Long-billed Dowitchers *Limnodromus scolopaceus* were seen at Yell on Shetland, Keyhaven Marshes in Hampshire and Skokholm Island off the Pembrokeshire coast. Buff-breasted Sandpipers were seen at a total of 8 sites but, as usual Pectoral Sandpiper was the most common American wader.

It was not an exceptional year by any means but there were some waders of a



Baird's Sandpiper; Tiree  
- Jim Dickson

European or Asian origin. A Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* was at Low Newton in Northumberland on 4th July, with another suppressed in the Burnham Deepdale area in Norfolk in late June. A Broad-billed Sandpiper *Calidris falcinellus* stayed for a week at the excellent Snettisham RSPB for a week from the 18th July, while another was briefly at Scorton Lake in North Yorkshire on 26th August. Only 1 Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* was seen in the period – at Cliffe Pools RSPB in Kent for three days from 13th



Long-billed Dowitcher; Yell  
- Gary Bell

July.

Dorset scored the only three Kentish Plovers *Charadrius alexandrinus* in the period – at Overcombe on 3rd August, Brownsea Island on 1st September and Ferrybridge on 24th September. The decent year for Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*



Buff-breasted Sandpiper; Whitburn  
- Frank Golding

continued with birds scattered predominantly along the south and east coasts with 4 together at Sandwich Bay on 20th August.

After the excellent spring, Eurasian Dotterel *Eudromias morinellus* put on another strong showing including a flock of 26 at St. Margaret's at Cliffe in Kent on 27th August. There were also decent numbers of Red-necked Phalaropes *Phalaropus lobatus*, a few Grey Phalaropes *Phalaropus fulicarius* and towards the end of the period, the first few Jack Snipe *Limnocryptes minimus* of the winter.



## Richard Allen donation to Wader Quest from the sale

At the Norfolk Bird and Wildlife Fair in 2015 we approached Richard Allen and Jan Wilczur to ask if they would be willing to donate any signed prints to have as prizes for raffles and competitions. Both artists were forthcoming and Richard Allen let us have a signed print of the juvenile *Calidris* plate from Birds of the Western Palearctic (BWP) and Jan produced two original line drawings, one of a Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* the other of a Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*.

In addition Richard suggested that we might

like to display the original artwork of his plate, again from BWP, of lapwings in flight offering to give us 25% of the sale price.

We displayed the artwork on the stand at the British Birdwatching Fair and also the Falsterbo Bird Show in Sweden where we came very close to selling it, but in the end it was a private buyer, who wishes to remain anonymous, that bought it.

Richard was delighted that we had managed to sell his beautiful painting and we were equally delighted when he presented us with £100.



## Wader Photo Gallery — send us you favourite wader photos



Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*  
- Jim Dickson; UK



Spot-breasted Lapwing *Vanellus melanocephalus* - Girum Tewelde Eshi; Ethiopia



Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*  
- Elis Simpson; UK



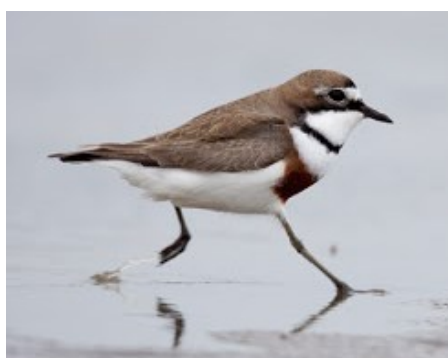
Dunlin *Calidris alpina*  
- Ron Thomas; UK



St. Helena Plover or Wirebird *Charadrius sanctaehelenae* - Andrew Darlow; St Helena



Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus*  
- Tommy Pedersen; UAE



Double banded Plover *Charadrius bicinctus*  
- Brent Stephenson; New Zealand



Sanderling *Calidris alba*  
- Astrid Kant; USA



Wattled Jacana *Jacana jacana*  
- Elis Simpson; Brazil

## Wader Quest Trustee news.

Wader Quest currently has nine Trustees:

- Chair: Rick Simpson
- Secretary: Rachel Walls
- Treasurer: Elis Simpson
- Board members: Allan Archer, Lee Dingain, Sue Healey (Events), Chris Lamsdell (Ringing), Oliver Simms
- Membership secretary (non Trustee): Debbie Armstrong

The Board of Trustees is sorry to announce the resignation of our good friend David Lindo. David has served on the board since March 2014 when we first set up the charity and has been very supportive, offering much advice from his extensive experience as *The Urban Birder*. He will be missed as a board member, but he has agreed to help out in an advisory capacity when he is able. At the meeting held on 25th October 2015 the Board offered a formal vote of thanks for his contribution to setting up Wader Quest. David will continue to be a Corporate Sponsor as *The Urban Birder*.

Next Trustees meeting 10:30 10th January 2016 — Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust London Wetlands Centre, London.

## ANNOUNCEMENT: FRIENDS OF WADER QUEST

At the meeting of the Board of Trustees held on October 25th 2015 it was unanimously agreed that there should be a change in name of individual (ordinary and life), and family sponsors of Wader Quest.

Ordinary, Family and Life sponsors will now be known as Friends of Wader Quest while Clubs and Corporates will remain as sponsors.

There will still be different rates, for individuals, families and life supporters, which remain unchanged.

The board felt that this better reflected the relationship between the charity and its supporters.

### Friends of Wader Quest:

Individual	£5.00
Family	£7.50
Life	£200.00

### Sponsors:

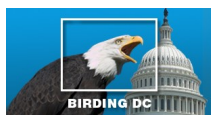
Club	£10.00
Corporate	£50.00



Eurasian Golden Plovers - Elis Simpson

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Gay Birders' Club



Enabling contact between LGBT birders



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