

**Confirmed talks by Rick and Elis Simpson: all 'Wader Quest' unless otherwise stated.**

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 outbreak all talks have been cancelled up to and including at least September 2020.

#### **Events for 2020**

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**STOP PRESS:** sad news has reached the Wader Quest office. John Ward, better known as 'Big Jake', passed away on the 24th of April 2020.

His amazing talent at imitating birds and waders in particular has brought much pleasure to many.

Hearing the calls of these wonderful birds has no doubt inspired many to view and appreciate waders in a new way.



#### **Inside this issue:**

- 1: Editorial
- 2: Wader Quest News
- 3-4: Colour-ringed Curlews.
- 4: Wader Quest subs policy change.
- 5-8: Sands of Change - S2: Ep 3
- 8-10: Waders in art. Jose Arcas
- 11-12: Making of a felt Curlew.
- 13: Felt brooches for sale.
- 14: Waders in poetry/From the library.
- 15: Featured Photo Far Eastern Curlew.
- 16-17: Waders on Reunion Island
- 18-19: World Wader news in Brief
- 20: Wader Gallery
- 21: Wader Quest books.
- 22: Wader Conservation World Watch7
- 23: Grant application guidelines
- 24: Contact details and sponsors

## **Editorial - Rick Simpson**

This newsletter comes to you in extraordinary circumstances; humanity is looking in the mirror and wondering what happened? It is a sobering experience to live at a time when our very existence is vulnerable and we face challenges with potentially tragic consequences. When I think about the concern that the Covid-19 disease is causing, and rightly so, it makes me wonder why another life-threatening problem, that of climate change, does not have the same effect on people. What faces us now, even though it is likely we will overcome this pandemic, is the realisation that we are not invulnerable. What we do has consequences, not just for us, but for every living thing on this planet. It is a timely reminder that what we do can have a devastating effect for entire species, even our own.

However, the subject of climate change is not for this column today, we need to look at the most immediate threat, that of the pandemic virus sweeping the world and how it is affecting what we do.

Clearly, as with all other organisations and people in all walks of life, we need to make sure that all volunteers' and trustees' health and welfare is not compromised. With that in mind all public and group activities connected to Wader Quest up to and including September of this year have been cancelled or postponed, pending further advice from the authorities.

However, this does not mean that Wader Quest is grinding to a halt altogether. Trustee meetings can and have taken place virtually; it is possible to discuss ideas and make plans without actually meeting, and the

newly set up Executive Committee (see page 2) can similarly function.

Obviously the groups that we visit have come to the same conclusion and many of them have very kindly offered us a postponement to next year instead of cancellation. This means we will still have the pleasure of visiting these groups, just a little later than planned.

We learned early in April that the British Birdwatching Fair (BBF) at Rutland is now definitely cancelled. This news did not come as a surprise to us, but nevertheless was disappointing as the BBF is a highlight in our social calendar. This very fact of it being very much a social occasion means that clearly the decision was the correct one to make, however painful it was for the organisers, exhibitors and potential visitors alike.

It seems unlikely that the Swedish Bird Show in early September will take place too, but as yet no decision to that effect has been announced.

Amid all the gloom that surrounds us there are some incredible acts of kindness and compassion being displayed by people from all walks of life towards fellow human beings. We hope that maybe this augurs well for a more caring and selfless society that may also see the environment, and the life forms that share this earth with us, getting a fairer crack of the whip.

There are few positives to be drawn from such trying times, but the beach nesting birds in the Northern Hemisphere (see page 19) may at least get a bit of a break from the disturbance they endure from recreational activities. Maybe migrant birds

will not be so widely hunted and more of them will reach their breeding grounds, we can but hope.

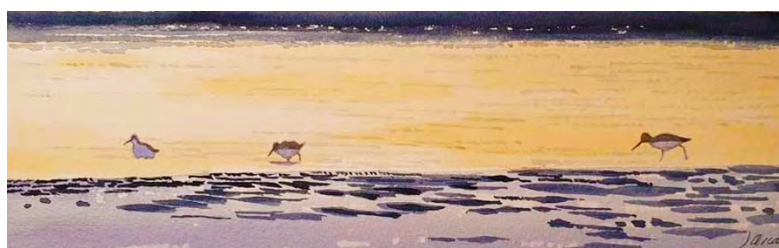
We heard the good news recently from Adelaide in Australia that 17 Hooded Plovers have fledged in that region, one of the best outcomes for a decade (see page 19). This may have been assisted by fewer people being around but is a sure testament to the dedication and hard work of those involved in protecting this species.

Wader Quest has to move on, as we all do, and we hope that in order to continue to grow, we will be able to produce more online content and update the website. We will, whatever happens, continue to spread awareness about waders and the challenges they face, whatever occurs in the next few months.

Things look glum for we humans right now, but this will pass, all being well. The problems that waders face however are more long term and complicated to resolve. Covid-19 will go away, or at least likely be controlled and humankind is likely to prevail, but the problems facing the world's waders cannot be solved so quickly, and it will therefore remain our duty to remind people that these problems still continue, even when we are not paying attention to them.

All that remains is for us to say, observe local and national advice given to you by the authorities; it is there to protect you, your loved ones, your family, the wider community and above all the over stretched health workers who are on the front line, helping to save lives under unprecedented pressure.

**Keep well; keep safe.**



**Waders in Art:  
Featured Artist  
Jose Arcas  
Pages 9-11**

## Wader Quest news - Rick Simpson

The biggest news we have since the last newsletter is that before Covid-19 hit the UK with such voracity, is that following appeals for help in running the charity, we have formed the core of an Executive Committee. This committee, which we hope will expand in time, will press on with the administrative changes needed to allow Wader Quest to grow and fit into a changing and more challenging world. Needless to say the work is slightly on hold at the moment due to difficulties in handovers of responsibilities, but we are very pleased to announce that we now have a new Treasurer, Louise Hathaway, and a new Membership Secretary, Corinne MacGarvey.

We held our inaugural Executive Committee meeting at Linford Nature Reserve in Milton Keynes on the 1st of March 2020. The meeting was attended by Andrew Whitelee (Chair), Andrew MacGarvey (Secretary), Corinne MacGarvey (Membership), Rick and Elis Simpson (Trustees), Dylan Parry-Davies and Kirsty Yeomans. Phil Hadley and Ellie Wise were invited but were unable to attend although they expressed an interest in being involved.

Much was discussed about the way ahead and some very interesting ideas and solutions to problems were brought to the fore. Sadly before we had time to enact some of the ideas the lockdown in the UK occurred.

We have all been communicating by email, and Andrew Whitelee and Andrew MacGarvey are working to set up the next meeting online so we hope to press on with the changes needed.

Most Friends and Sponsors will have received an email about a change to our policy on collecting subscriptions. We will be moving from subscriptions being due on the anniversary of signing up to being due on January the 1st of each year. This is to streamline payments as we grow, reducing the number of emails that need to be sent out to remind subscribers of the imminent payment due date.

**Should anyone else wish to offer their services in any capacity to assist in the running of Wader Quest, we are still looking for more volunteers to join the Executive Committee.**

We are based in Buckinghamshire, so being able to attend the occasional physical meeting there would be preferable, however once we have set up the system for video conferencing and meetings, that will not necessarily exclude people who have something to offer from further afield.

If you are interested in becoming part of the Wader Quest team on the Executive Committee and would like to find

out more, please email [info@waderquest.net](mailto:info@waderquest.net) in the first instance and we'll take it from there.

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought tremendous restrictions and changes to everyone's movements and routines. Conservationists are no less affected than anyone else and this slowing down of conservation work has inevitably meant that Wader Quest's correspondence has similarly diminished. We receive a very small fraction of emails and post requiring our attention compared to earlier in the year, before the virus broke out.

With so many talks and events no longer taking place, all the work and preparation that goes into facilitating Wader Quest's presence at them has more or less disappeared overnight. This provides us with a silver lining in dark times, it is our opportunity to take on some of the tasks that have needed doing for some time, but somehow always seemed to be way down the to-do list, there always seeming to be something more pressing to deal with.

As a result we are pressing ahead with improvements to the website, adding new information. The latest development is the introduction of information about each of the families and distinct subfamilies and tribes under the 'What Are Waders' menu. This we will follow up with more information about each species. Obviously, this will be a mammoth task (any volunteers to help?), but bit by bit we hope to start work on populating the site very soon.

Unfortunately Elliot Monteith has decided to step down as Deputy Editor of Wader Quest for health reasons and of course we wish him well with a speedy recovery. Kirsty Yeomans has stepped into the position and will be involved in the next issue.

On the 21st of April (World Curlew Day - see page 19) the Wader Quest Trustees held their first virtual meeting facilitated by the kindness of Ellendale Environmental, one of our Corporate Sponsors, who allowed us to use their infrastructure to do so. The meeting was a success and that may mean we can consider whether the travel expense and carbon emissions caused by physical Board Meetings are avoidable by continuing to work remotely in this way.

Rick Simpson has also been involved in a couple of projects doing virtual interviews. The first of these was with our old friend and former Trustee Allan Archer of [talk:Wildlife](#) (video number 4) who produced a video of a conversation between himself and Rick, which outlined Wader Quest's history and current status.

The second occasion was when Rick took part in a podcast by [Trees a Crowd](#) for World Curlew Day (see page 19).

With all the isolating that is going on these days technological wizardry is invaluable in enabling people and organisations like ours to function, despite the inability to meet in person. Much of our technological knowhow is provided for us by Andrew Whitelee, who has been instrumental in driving the modernisation of Wader Quest forward in his new role as Executive Committee Chair. Our thanks go to him for the time and effort he is putting in to keep things moving in these difficult times.

One of our recent grants was to purchase an incubator for the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) to use as part of their Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* headstarting programme. The purchase took place and the photograph below, sent to us by the WWT, shows the incubator in use complete with four Curlew eggs. Eurasian Curlews, indeed curlews of most species, are facing major declines due to habitat loss and an increased susceptibility to predation. Predator numbers seem to be soaring whilst breeding attempts are reducing meaning that the success rate of those attempts is plummeting. The most vulnerable period for any ground nesting bird is from the laying of the eggs to fledging and the headstarting programme is designed to allow many more individuals to reach the fledging stage. Adult survival rate is still good, so by helping these birds reach that stage we will help slow down the terrible declines being witnessed. This is not a long term solution to this problem, but it gives us breathing space to find more lasting measures to stop the declines altogether so Wader Quest is proud to be a contributor to this project.



Egg incubator funded by Wader Quest - WWT

## Curlew and the Wash Wader Ringing Group - Dr Robert Pell

The Wash is one of a small number of sites of international importance in the UK for the Eurasian Curlew population (the only UK site that supports greater numbers being Morecambe Bay), with peak counts exceeding 8,500 during autumn passage. The Wash Wader Ringing Group (WWRG) has been ringing Curlew for over 60 years and has contributed considerably to our understanding of their populations. Our work on Curlew is a key resource to provide a comprehensive conservation strategy for one of our most loved and threatened wader species.

In addition, fieldwork techniques pioneered by WWRG have become standard approaches used all over the world, contributing to the conservation of many other threatened species of Curlew and other waders. This long-term data collection is carried out entirely by volunteers, with several hundred hours of fieldwork involving just Curlew undertaken in the past year. Our group membership includes a healthy mixture of professional and amateur ornithologists.

Reports of birds marked by the group indicate that most birds using the Wash breed in Finland and Sweden, with a smaller proportion coming from breeding sites within the UK. Birds depart the Wash for their breeding grounds in mid- to late-March, returning in mid-July. For most, their journey crosses the North Sea over the German Waddensee, Helgoland, and Jutland (Denmark), then southern Sweden and the Baltic Sea, before arriving in Finland.

The data provided from our ringing studies show that Curlew spend a surprisingly little time on their breeding grounds compared to their wintering grounds, in keeping with most other wader species. This might be inferred from the evolution of the characteristic long curved bill of the Curlew, ideally suited to probing deep into tidal mudflats. Migration to Finland allows exploitation of seasonal food abundance for themselves and their chicks, who are precocious and largely independent from their parents on hatching.

We are currently trying to understand better the survival rates of the overall, passage and wintering Curlew populations, by using engraved plastic 'flags' to individually mark Curlew we catch on the Wash allowing us to track their movements without recapturing them. This project has been running since 2012, and we have recorded over 3,000 sightings of marked birds. From this data we know that, in line with other large waders, year-on-year



Eurasian Curlew 7T ringed as an adult bird 25/08/2017, Snettisham, Norfolk - Elis Simpson.

survival of Curlew is high, with over 90% surviving to the following year.

From our studies of marked birds, we know that some birds encountered on the Wash during autumn passage are local breeders from the Brecks. There has been a dramatic decline in the UK breeding Curlew population over the past 20 years. Recruitment of new birds into the adult population has been identified as a key driver for this decline, and conservation efforts such as prevention of chick predation are key priorities.

Birds marked by the group encountered on the Wash in autumn have been seen wintering in Cornwall and Kent, and the group has also recorded birds on passage marked by ringing groups in the northeast and north Wales. These findings confirm that the Wash functions rather like a large transit hub for migrant Curlew as well as a wintering destination (imagine the Wash as being the wader equivalent of Heathrow Airport!).

Our studies have also indicated that wintering birds change their feeding habits, possibly in response to food availability; during autumn passage and early winter, birds can often be encountered feeding on the extensive tidal mudflats on the eastern shore of the Wash. Later in winter, birds are more frequently

encountered feeding in fields around Snettisham, Heacham and Hunstanton, with individuals venturing further along the north Norfolk coast. Long-term monitoring strategies such as those carried out by the group are important as they can identify local change affecting survival of wintering birds.

One example of how we have recently applied our Curlew study data was to determine whether the severe weather event called 'the Beast of the East' affected Curlew survival. We compared the re-encounter rate of birds seen in the winter of 2017/2018 (i.e. before the 'Beast') and those seen in the Winter of 2018/2019. Out of the 84 individual flagged birds seen in 2017/2018 within our East Wash study area, 74 were seen again in 2018/2019. This means that at least 88% of birds survived to the following winter. We concluded that the adverse weather had not dramatically affected Curlew survival, however we were not able to determine whether breeding success in the subsequent year was affected.

Our work is just one piece in the puzzle of Curlew conservation. Studies in the UK and elsewhere in Europe are a priority to help reverse the declines seen in this charismatic wader. We are increasing our understanding of how they use various



## Curlew and the Wash Wader Ringing Group — cont'd

sites in both the UK and elsewhere on their migratory flyway, and welcome any sightings of flagged Curlew.

Please feel free to forward any sightings to the [Report a Colour Marked Bird](#) page on the WWRG website.

For further information on the work of the Wash Wader Ringing Group, please visit <https://wwrg.org.uk/>



Ed:- If you live in or are visiting west Norfolk on a regular basis the WWRG would be very grateful if you would keep an eye out for similarly marked Curlews and report them to the [Report a Colour Marked Bird](#) page.

We also remind you that should you be fortunate enough to come across any colour marked wader, please remember to report it, resightings are vital to researchers who are studying these birds.



Eurasian Curlew OH ringed as an adult bird 14/08/2018, Snettisham, Norfolk - Elis Simpson.

## Wader Quest's Subscription Policy is Changing

**Previously subscriptions became due on the anniversary of joining Wader Quest.**

**To streamline administration of the membership of both Friends and Sponsors the due date will now be on the 1st of January each year.**

**You will have, or will shortly receive, an email from the Membership Secretary explaining how this affects your personal subscription.**

**Your co-operation in making this necessary change is greatly appreciated.**

**Here is a reminder of the current rates.**

### **FRIENDS OF WADER QUEST**

Individual £10.00

Family £15.00

Life £200

### **WADER QUEST SPONSORS**

Club Sponsor subscriptions £20.00

Corporate Sponsors £50.00



## The Sands of Change: Series 2 Episode 3 — Nature's Valley Trust

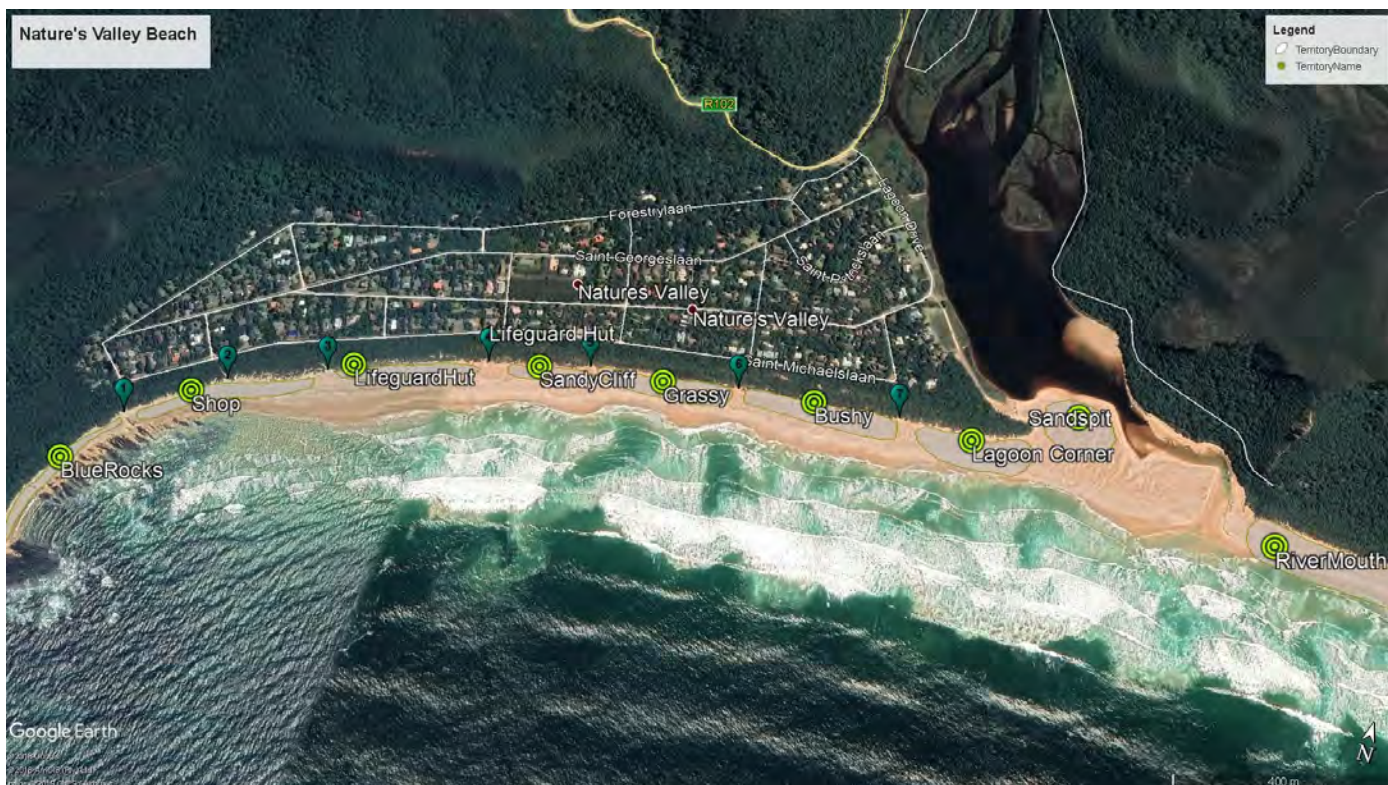
*'These stories were written in order to make our coastal work, namely the shorebird component of coastal impact programme, more accessible to the lay-person. This is the person to whom the jargon of scientific work does not resonate but they do indeed still care for our environment and the animals that live in it. So we use a social media platform to bridge the gap, to share the plight of the shorebirds in a way that appeals to everyone. With this out the box idea we try to connect people emotionally to shorebirds, and of course to spread awareness in that way. Everyone loves a good soapy!'*

*These stories are written mainly by the interns and staff of NVT who work on the shorebird programme. We grow to know each and every pair of shorebirds that nest on Nature's Valley and Lookout beach very well and try to make it a bit easier for them to fledge their young. We are with the nests from egg to fledge, constantly monitoring and so we get very well acquainted with the social structure and general behaviour of the adults. The stories are based on true events*



*with a little bit of imagination added here and there to make it a palatable read.'*  
- Brittany Arendse NVT.

[We loved this idea of connecting with the local community through storytelling so decided to serialise the stories.]



Drama. Intrigue. Scandal. The lives of our shorebird community are always changing and, as the wind blows the sands, it forever alters the landscape and so too, their lives. We are well aware of the sensation

following our little shorebirds on Nature's Valley Beach, but what is news from the Lookout Beach community?

In the passing weeks our White-fronted Plovers *Charadrius marginatus* have

been doing well, new nests are abounding, nesting signs are being propped up, proudly proclaiming this fact and we have even seen the birth of two new little chicks, Ketchup and Chutney. These little birds are happily



## The Sands of Change: Series 2 Episode 3 — cont'd

scurrying about the dunes, joyfully following their parents and our researchers are watching with eager anticipation to see what trials and tribulations await these, the youngest of our little Plover population.

We are also waiting with breathless expectation on the arrival of even more chicks as our researchers are monitoring two active nests in the area. Let us all hope that the sands will remain favourable for our beloved birds!

While all seems to be well with our plovers, everything has not been as peaceful on this beach as it seems. It appears there have been many changes on this prime real estate area and many new faces have recently made the dunes on Lookout Beach their home. There is the African (Black) Oystercatcher *Haematopus moquini* couple anxiously awaiting the arrival of their little chicks, the Water Thick-knee *Burhinus vermiculatus* pair nesting close to the Kelp Gull *Larus dominicana* colony, some Three-banded Plovers *Charadrius tricollaris* nesting in the dunes and even an Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca* nesting in the grass close to the territories occupied by our little plovers. The newcomers have certainly ruffled up a few feathers and disputes with the new neighbours have been rampant.

All of these quarrels culminated in a very abrupt and very dramatic altercation between two residents! What, you may ask happened between these quarrelsome inhabitants of Lookout Beach? Well, a few weeks past, while doing plover survey, our researchers noticed something strange – feathers were blowing across the dunes of Lookout Beach, the sands had clearly been traumatised by some drastic change and then the intrepid researchers came across the carnage. In the middle of a circle of white down feathers, they saw him, the Kelp Gull lying motionless among the grass. The researchers were horrified quickly realising that the location of the body was in close proximity to the nesting Egyptian Goose! Anxiously they approached, hoping not to come across more butchery, scared to discover just what remained of her and her ten beautiful white eggs! There was a collective sigh of relief when they finally saw her, for there, nestled among the tall grass, she was protecting her future progeny with pride. How was the Kelp Gull struck down? And why was his body found so close to our Mother Goose? The disarray of feathers



Chutney - NVT



Ketchup - NVT



African (Black) Oystercatcher - NVT



Water Thick-knee and Kelp Gull - NVT





## The Sands of Change: Series 2 Episode 3 — cont'd

suggests a fight. Perhaps the Kelp Gull deserved his fate? Did he venture too close to this protective mother, perhaps he hungrily tried to take some of her precious eggs? Was this an ordered hit by the resident Kelp Gull gangsters gone horribly wrong? If so, who could blame our suspected assassin if she then ferociously protected her precious eggs from such a vicious attack? We can only speculate what events unfolded on that fateful day when the Kelp Gull met his end.

How will the tides and sands change in these coming weeks? In what way will these changes affect our courageous and, sometimes cunning, shorebird community? What will happen to little Ketchup and Chutney? With the tides certain to change once more, the winds bound to blow in all directions and the sands never to stagnate in one place for too long, we can but wait and see what will happen next in these, our shorebird chronicles.



Egyptian Goose brooding surrounded by gull feathers - NVT



The victim - NVT



This is Brittany Arendse of NVT who has been instrumental in sending us the saga of the waders on the South African beaches under the title Sands of Change, which we hope you find as entertaining as we do.

Here Brittany can be seen holding a copy of the Lar Jonsson poster, signed by Lars, that she won in the Prize Draw last November in the Wader Conservation World Watch event. It took a little while for the poster to get to her, but happily it did so eventually and she has sent us this picture to prove it.

*If you would like to get a signed copy of this poster yourself, we still have a few in stock. See page 23 for details of how to acquire one.*





## Waders in Art: A commitment to Nature Conservation through Bird Painting — Jose Arcas



Bar-tailed Godwit - Jose Arcas

My life has always been closely linked to nature. Ever since childhood I have spent many hours in the field, alone or in the company of some enthusiastic friend or my own younger brother.

I was very lucky that my parents built a house in one of the wildest and best-preserved areas of Galicia, in northwestern Spain. That fact marked me forever and, definitively, my career in life, so I studied biology, defending years later my doctoral thesis in the department of Ecology and Animal Biology of the University of Vigo. The thesis, of course, dealt with the influence of various factors on the energy balance of the Common Sandpiper, *Actitis hypoleucos*, in a natural border estuary, between Spain and Portugal.

I also worked on various bird conservation projects and published numerous scientific and informative articles in specialized journals. I have also been an expert bird ringer for almost 30 years.

As for my artistic training, I'm self-taught and although I use different media to work with, I feel true predilection for watercolour. Waders and seagulls are my favourite birds, and that is why they are the most represented groups in watercolours. I like painting in the field, where I take a great number of inspirational sketches, photos, etc. that later on will be useful at the studio. I put emphasis on the light, rather than on the subject.

I have recently published a book entitled "Cíes Islands Sketchbook" in which



Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* - Jose Arcas



Common Ringed Plover - Jose Arcas



## Waders in Art: A commitment to Nature Conservation through Bird Painting — cont'd

many watercolours are collected, most of them made in the field, about the fauna and flora of the Atlantic Islands of this Galician National Park.

I have also participated in numerous solo and collective exhibitions, the most recent in the national park of Lazio, in Italy.

I currently direct the art line of the digital magazine El Ecoturista.com, where some of my drawings are published in sections as interesting as "Painting in", "Species of the Month" or "Nature Calendar".

Many of my drawings are used in conservation campaigns, both as an advertising tool to raise public awareness and to raise funds for specific project. Most recently, I have participated in the monitoring study of the breeding population of the Kentish Plover, *Charadrius alexandrinus*, in Northern Portugal, in collaboration with ANABAM, a local environmental group.



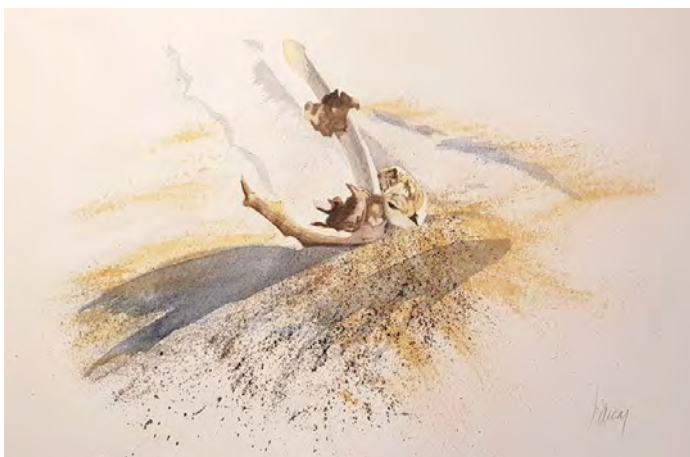
Common Sandpiper - Jose Arcas



Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* - Jose Arcas



Ruddy Turnstones *Arenaria interpres* - Jose Arcas



Kentish Plover chick - Jose Arcas



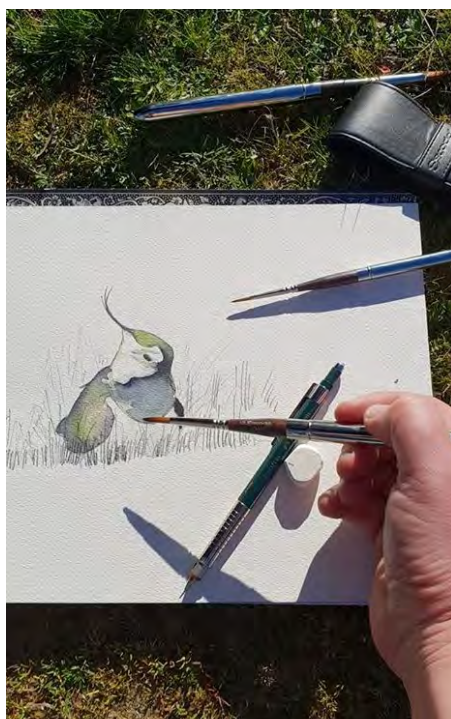
Ruddy Turnstones and Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* - Jose Arcas



## Waders in Art: A commitment to Nature Conservation through Bird Painting — cont'd



Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*  
sketches - Jose Arcas



Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* field sketches  
- Jose Arcas



Dunlin *Calidris alpina* sketches - Jose Arcas

Jose's work can be purchased in the following ways:

On his own website [www.iosearcas.com](http://www.iosearcas.com)

On his Facebook's page [@iosearcasart](https://www.facebook.com/iosearcasart)

Or can be ordered directly by phone

(+34 637862439)

Or email ([hypoleucos@yahoo.es](mailto:hypoleucos@yahoo.es)).



Common Ringed Plover - Jose Arcas



Jose at work - Jose Arcas



## The sculpting of a felt Curlew — Holly Thompson



Eurasian Curlew

I am lucky enough to be based in the Cumbrian countryside in the North West of England. As a result I get to spend many happy hours watching birds and enjoying nature. This closeness to the natural world around me provides me with plenty of inspiration for my work, painting and sculpting the wildlife I see.

I am extremely fortunate too, to live in an area where Eurasian Curlews still breed. The species is not doing well as a breeding bird but, within a half mile walk, I am blessed to be surrounded by them and their beautiful, haunting call. I also delight in trips to nearby nature reserves such as the RSPB's Leighton Moss, to see a whole variety of waders one of the highlights of which is the pleasure of catching close views of Pied Avocets.

I have always been fascinated with the natural world, and I am passionate about living as lightly and naturally as I can, using and reusing everything I possibly can.

Although it is more time consuming to do so, my work routines stick to this zero-waste ethos, reusing wire, card, discarded wool, reclaimed or fallen wood etc. All of the labels I use for my products and my business cards are all produced using a typewriter and recycled paper.

People's lives these days are so often spent at high speed and disconnected from nature, so my aim is to create slowly



Holly's business card

crafted glimpses of wildlife for people to treasure as reminders of the wild.

Below I will go through the process that I undertake from raw idea or inspiration to finished felt sculpture.

Before beginning each sculpture, I thoroughly research each bird or creature in order to understand it. I observe them as much as possible in nature and study

whatever information material I am able to find.

To make my sculptures, I use a dry needle felting technique, using local Cumbrian sheep wool and a very sharp barbed needle.

To achieve the colours, I pre dye the wool with plants such as woad or bramble leaves and vegetable scraps such as onion skins and avocado stones.

The process is very long as I use raw fleece. This use of raw fleece means that the material needs to be washed thoroughly before it can be successfully dyed.

Let me take you through the stages required for producing the Eurasian Curlew in the picture at the top of the page.

First, I need to build the sculptures armature, the bare bones, which will give strength and support to the finished sculpture.

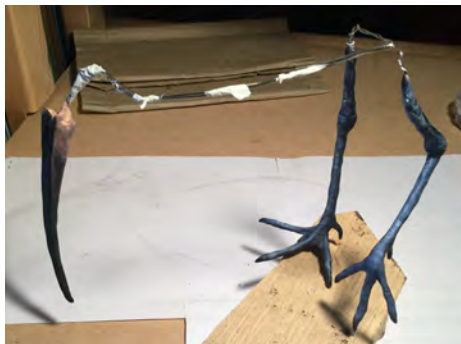




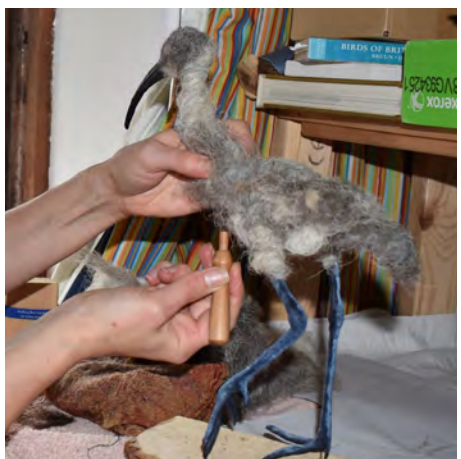
## The sculpting of a felt Curlew — cont'd

I next sculpt the bare parts of the bird; the beak is fashioned from clay or paper and then hand painted.

The legs undergo the same process or, depending on the species, they may be created using felt, in the case of the life-sized Curlew they are made from clay.



I then build up the core shape of the bird with wool from Herdwick sheep. This product is abundant in Cumbria, but its use is specialised due to its very rough texture making it easy to get hold of.



To felt the wool together, I stab repeatedly with the needle until it fuses together.

At this stage I also add the glass eyes and I then add the colour and detail on

top once I have achieved the desired shape, for the curlew I have used zwartbles, texel, white woodland and coffee dyed wool. To achieve a more life-like effect I felt each prominent feather individually and felt them into place on the sculpture.



When mounting the bird, I use fallen wood that I have found as that compliments the sculpture. I feel wood and wool tend to work well together.

*In addition to the large pieces like the Curlew Holly. has demonstrated the creation of for us here, she makes many smaller sculptures from brooches through to miniature and life-sized smaller birds and animals. She is happy to take commissions and often exhibits at local events where her wonderful creations can be seen and purchased.*

Ed:- If you would like to commission Holly to produce a sculpture of a bird or animal of your choice, or would like more information, then please contact her directly.

All photos on this and the preceding page © Holly Thompson.

website: [www.illexwildarts.weebly.com](http://www.illexwildarts.weebly.com)  
[Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) & [Twitter](#): illexwildarts  
 Email: [illexholi@gmail.com](mailto:illexholi@gmail.com)



Eurasian Oystercatcher



Northern Lapwing



Common Snipe



Common Snipe



Three Common Redshanks, a Common Greenshank and a Spotted Redshank



## Holly Thompson felt wader brooches for sale through Wader Quest



To give you some idea of scale, the Ringed Plover is 5.5cm bill tip to tail tip - Holly Thompson

Holly has very generously offered us a commission on some of her products, including the Curlew in this article which, you'll be disappointed to learn, has already been snapped up by a discerning buyer. **Holly has made a donation of £50 from the sale.**

However we do have a number of brooches that Holly has made exclusively for Wader Quest. These felt brooches are not mass produced, each being hand crafted, making them unique.

Above you can see the brooches available. All priced at £18 + £1.50 p&p except the Common Ringed Plover, Ruddy Turnstone and Eurasian Oystercatcher which are all £16 + £1.50 p&p. If you are interested in any of those brooches contact us by email; [sales@waderquest.net](mailto:sales@waderquest.net), but hurry we have just one of each.



Holly Thompson at work - Holly Thompson



## WADERS NEED LOVE TOO! JOIN US FOR OUR 2020 WADER CONSERVATION WORLD WATCH - 31<sup>st</sup> October & 1<sup>st</sup> NOVEMBER

Whether or not this event will take place is still uncertain because of the Covid-19 pandemic crisis.

If it does go ahead observers should only take part if it is safe for them to do so and they are acting within whatever local or national regulations are in place.

Protect yourself, your family, the wider community and the health workers who are on the front line helping to save lives under unprecedented pressure.



See page 28 or [WCWW webpage](#) for details

### Waders in poetry; A Shropshire Curlew - Lucy Grove

Curlew, will you ever cry here again?  
On Corfield Farm,  
Where the Corve circumvents your courting field?  
Short turf, ripped rough by the tongues of hooved beasts  
Neighbouring lanky and lush where you sweep and probe.

Spooked by the thundering tanker  
You bubble-up, mirroring my milk on the boil.

Grandad knew of dozens,  
Father a few.  
My son will not know you here -  
His sky wide eyes will not witness your wildness.  
Perhaps on some faraway shore.  
But not here  
In the heart of your home -  
And mine.



Eurasian Curlew - Elis Simpson

### From the library - Alaska Bird Trails; Herbert Brandt (1943)

*'... one of my favourite suborders of birds, the shorebirds. Many species of this group are such far-ranging, graceful creatures that they seem clothed in mystery and romance. They are creatures with tremendous capacity for flight - veritable pilgrims of the air - nomads of the feathered world. Their migration is coextensive with all lands of the habitable globe, from the polar basin to the farthest extremes of the three southern continents. Their wild love songs defy description as does the perfume of a gardenia.'*





## Featured Photo — Far Eastern Curlew; Carlos Ibañez Ueda



**Photographer:** Carlos Ibañez Ueda.

**Location:** Kujukuri beach - Chiba Prefecture - Japan.

**Date:** 1st September 2019.

**Species:** Far Eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis*.

**Camera:** Nikon D7500.

**Lens:** Tamron 150 - 600mm lens.

**Details:** 1/2000 - f/5.3 - ISO 400.

## Why *madagascariensis* for the Far Eastern Curlew? - Rick Simpson

The Far Eastern Curlew is Endangered and, as the English name implies, is a bird to be found in the orient. Although it is not restricted to Asia and is a very long distance migrant, breeding in Siberia and wintering as far south as Australia and New Zealand, its scientific name *Numenius madagascariensis* is very misleading. The Far Eastern Curlew has never been recorded in Madagascar, nor anywhere in the African region, for that matter. It is also not a species prone to vagrancy, seldom wandering from its traditional migration routes.

So from where did this name, associating the bird for all time with Madagascar, originate?

It is the result of simple human error by none other than the forefather of scientific nomenclature, Linnaeus himself. When describing this bird in 1758 he misread a label. The label stated that the bird was collected in Macassar (Makassar Indonesia), but Linnaeus read it as Madagascar instead, thus giving it the scientific name of

*madagascariensis*.

So why is it then, if we know this is wrong, that the name persists to this day?

It is due to the scientific protocol, which states that the oldest valid name given to a species will be used, however apt or otherwise it is.

Another example of this is, or at least was, the Hooded Plover *Thinornis cucullatus*, which was originally described as *Charadrius rubricollis* by Gmelin in 1789. This was later challenged by Vieillot in 1818 who suggested the species name change to *cucullatus* (Late Latin; hooded, *cucullus* hood). [*Charadrius* later became *Thinornis* Greek; *this* beach or sand; *ornis* bird. Gray 1845.] This species name change came about not because *rubricollis* (Latin; *ruber* red; *collis* necked) is a misnomer, the Hooded Plover is not red necked, but because it became apparent that the initial description involved two species. This occurred as it was not described from the Type Specimen (the example from which a species is described),

which seems to have disappeared, but from drawings made by the original collector and these had mixed together the Hooded Plover and the Red-necked Phalarope. It was this mistake that rendered it invalid, and not the fact that it was wrong.

Linnaeus was the first to describe so many things that it is often him that is quoted as the authority for a species name, even when the genus has later been changed. An example of this is European Golden Plover, which was originally named '*Charadrius apricarius*' by Linnaeus in 1758. Later when the genera were sorted out, principally in the first instance by Brisson in 1760, when he revised many of the wader genera we use today, the European Golden Plover was put in a different genus, that of *Pluvialis*. Despite this genus change, the original species name stands so the European Golden Plover became *Pluvialis apricaria* (note the change in gender) but is still credited to Linnaeus as the original authority as that did not change.



## A review of WCWW on Reunion Island - Jean-François Cornuaille

Since our first involvement Wader Conservation World Watch on Reunion Island in 2017, we saw an opportunity to focus on waders, and to improve our local knowledge of them.

Before that, only a few birdwatchers registered their sightings, and a lot of people ignored that we can see these long distance migratory birds every year on our small (2500 km<sup>2</sup>), lonely island in the Indian ocean.

We knew that Reunion Island isn't an important site for the waders. But is Reunion Island within the West Asian-East African Flyway? We didn't know! Are waders regularly wintering in Reunion island? Are they stopping during their pre-nuptial migration, and/or during the post-nuptial migration?



Notwithstanding the WWCW focus on the beginning of November (the event happens on the first weekend of November each year - see page 22), we analysed the 1330 previous data, from September 2001 to October 2017 (before the 2017 WCWW).

As we see on figures 1 and 2, although we see waders all year round, the main period to observe them is September, October and November.

So, we can suppose that Reunion Island is essentially a post-nuptial migratory stop, because 80 % of the data have been registered between August 11th and December 31st.

Figure 3 gives the annual distribution of the number of birds. It shows that the stop in Reunion Island is extremely concentrated on October!

A focus on the post-nuptial period in figure 4 (on page 19) shows that waders are mainly observed between the middle of September and the middle of November.

With the previous data, and with

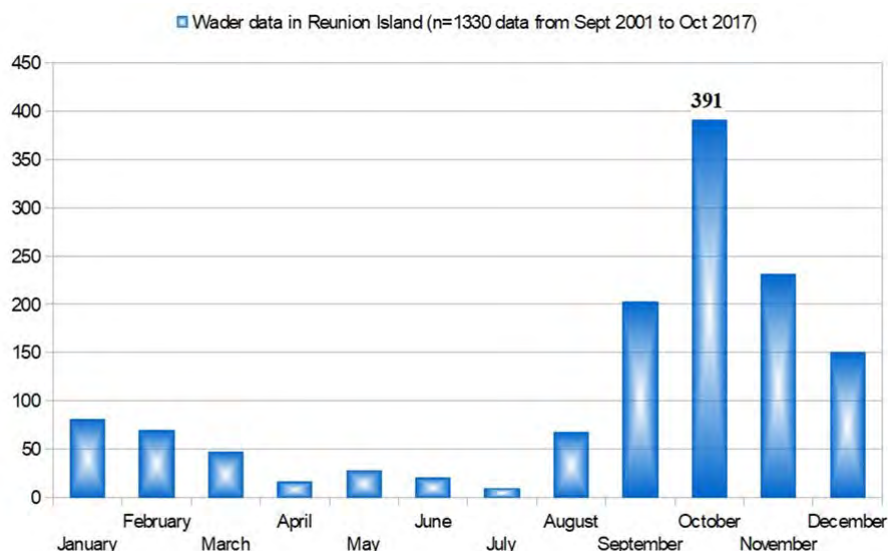


Fig.1 – Wader data from September 2001 to October 2017 / SEOR

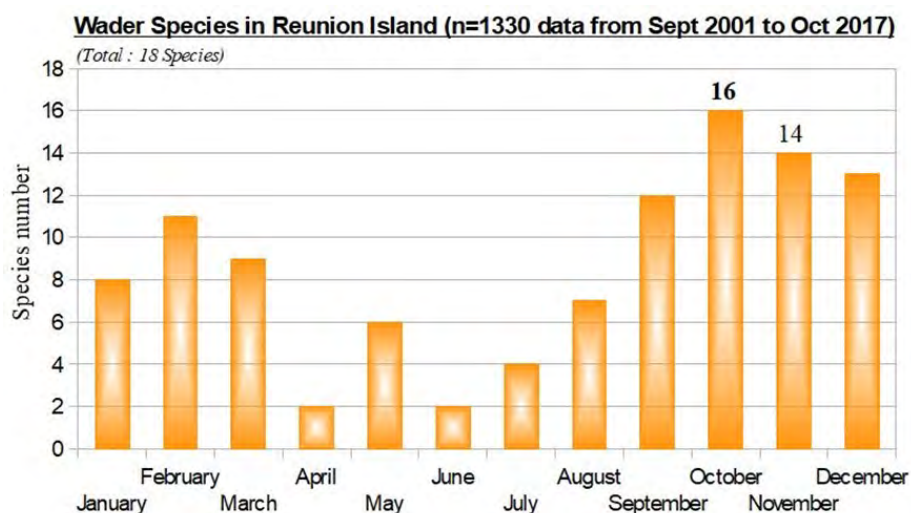


Fig.2 – Species number from September 2001 to October 2017 / SEOR

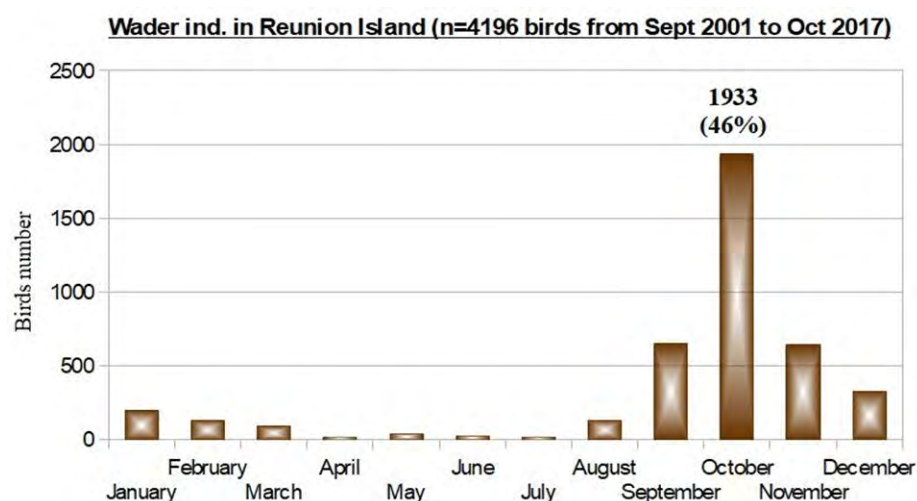


Fig.3 – Birds number from September 2001 to October 2017 / SEOR



## A review of WCWW on Reunion Island - cont'd

the data collected during WCWW in 2017, 2018 and 2019, we confirm that the important peak is situated during the first ten days of October: we saw fewer Waders during WCWW (in spite of the important birdwatchers number these days) than at the beginning of October!

### Conclusions:

- Reunion Island is essentially a post-nuptial migratory stop
- 19 species have been observed since 2001
- The number of birds is not high max group registered: 95 (Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*)
- The peak for 14 species is situated in the first decade of October

### Question :

Are the waders that appear on Reunion off course, having lost their way ?

Wader data in Reunion Island between August and December (n=1043 data from 2001 to 2017)

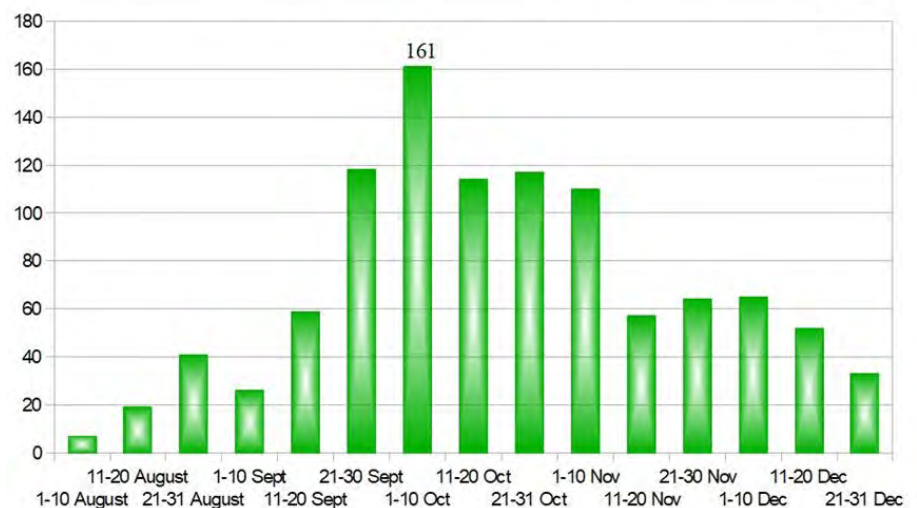
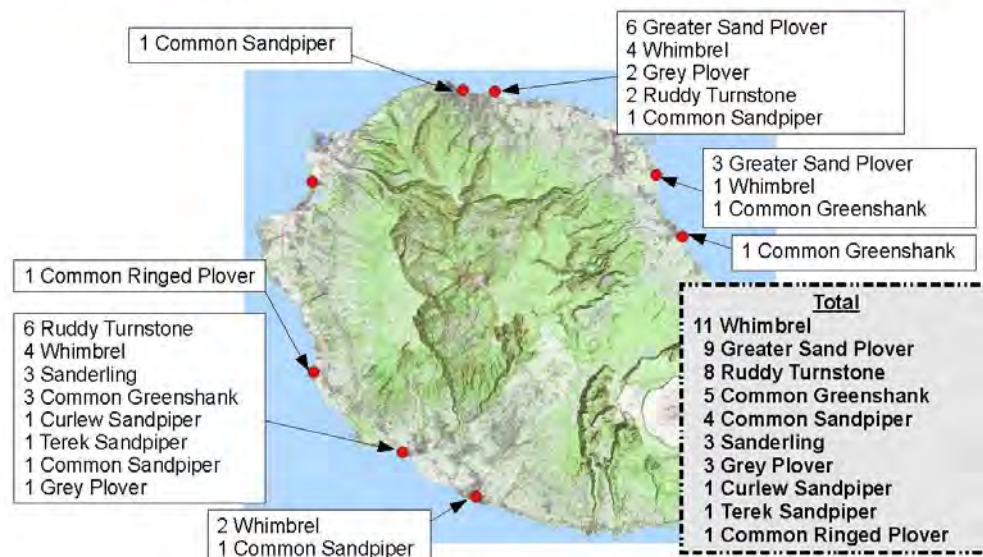
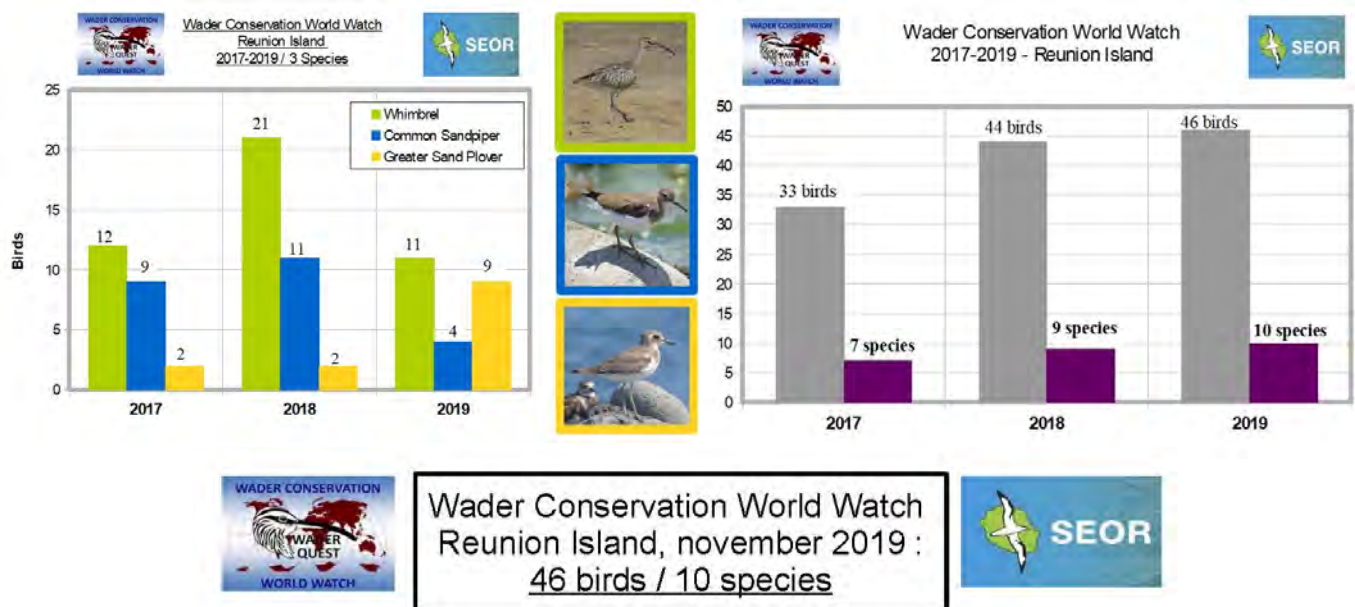


Fig.4 – Waders data per 10 day period – 2001 to 2017 - SEOR





## Wader news in brief from around the world — Rick and Elis Simpson

### Belarus

#### **The oldest Belarusian Black-tailed Godwit .**

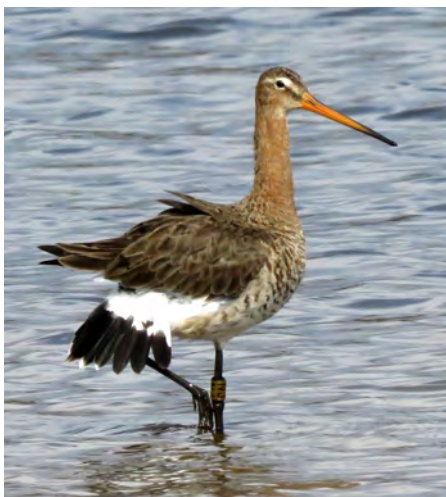
The oldest Belarusian Black-tailed Godwit, *Limosa limosa* is another year older.

The male Godwit with an orange leg ring inscribed with the letters NJ hit the headlines in Turaŭ meadows in the Pripjat floodplain, Belarus last year when it was photographed by Viktor Natykanets (Belarus Academy of Science). Its sighting meant that it became the oldest ever recorded Belarusian Black-tailed Godwit. At 15 years old.



Black-tailed Godwit NJ 2019 - Viktor Natykanets

On the 14th of April this year it was once again seen near Turaŭ and thus is now 16 years old.



Black-tailed Godwit NJ 2020 - Pavel Pinchuk

The first time the bird was caught was on the 22nd of April 2006 when it has a metal ring attached to its leg.

In May 2010 it was caught again, on the nest, and was fitted with the orange coloured leg ring marked with NJ in black letters.

After that, there was no news about this individual until April the 10th last

year when the bird was photographed causing much excitement. This year the bird has been seen and photographed again, in almost the same place. The minimum age of this bird is therefore 16 years.

The fact that the Godwit returned to the same place says that, despite last year being very dry, this bird has probably been successful and again underscores the importance of the Pripjat floodplain as an important site for waders and marshland birds.

The oldest recorded Black-tailed Godwit of all time is 23 years and 8 months when last reported in England.

Story first reported on [Turov ringing station facebook page](#).

Thank you to Pavel Pinchuk Head of Turaŭ Ringing Station, Belarus for added background.

*This is another example of the value of colour ringing birds, so they can be identified as individuals, increasing our understanding of their movements and longevity, thus assisting us to put sensible conservation management in place.* Ed.

### New Zealand

#### **Shore Plovers released on Manu island**

A total of 5 young Shore Plovers *Thinornis novaeseelandiae* were raised at the Isaac Conservation Captive Breeding facility near Christchurch in New Zealand . Despite the lockdown currently in place in New Zealand, permission was given to move the birds to Mana Island, near Wellington in New Zealand as it was deemed essential for their survival, and the survival of the species as a whole.

They are undergoing what is known as a soft release where they are kept in a large holding pen at the location site where they will be released. They will have a caretaker to feed and help them get accustomed to the sights and sounds of their new habitat, before finally being left to find their own way in the world.

The Shore Plover is on the brink of extinction because of introduced predators such as cats and rats that were introduced in the 19th century. There are only about 250 of them left in the world.

Story first reported on [Isaac Conservation Trust facebook page](#).

*Rick and Elis Simpson visited the Isaac Conservation Trust on their travel in New Zealand. The full story of which can be found in the soon to be released book A Quest for Waders written by the couple.* Ed.



Shore Plover at the Isaac Conservation Trust , Peacock Springs facility - Elis Simpson

### Australia

#### **Hooded Plover success**

The third-highest number of Hooded Plovers *Thinornis cucullatus* fledglings has been recorded on Fleurieu and Adelaide beaches for the decade. Seventeen individuals making it through to their first flight this season, only two fewer than the best breeding season recorded, 2015-16.

These results for the threatened birds which nest on these beaches show that the decade-long conservation effort has been paying off.

The Hooded Plover is on Australia's



Hooded Plover - Elis Simpson



## Wader news in brief from around the world — cont'd

threatened with extinction list, and in South Australia it is vulnerable under the National Parks and Wildlife Act. The IUCN category is Vulnerable.

The Hooded Plover project is a collaboration between BirdLife Australia and the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board, along with the Onkaparinga, Yankalilla, Victor Harbor, Alexandrina, Marion, Holdfast Bay and Charles Sturt councils, and the federal government's National Landcare Program.

### USA

#### Beach closures positive for beach nesting birds?

Beach closure may be promising for beach nesting birds this season.

While frustrated human visitors may be unhappy about not being able to go to the beach as part of our fight against Covid-19, beach nesting waders may be able to take advantage of the change.

For example, in Florida wildlife experts believe fewer people on the beaches, or just driving near them, at the start of breeding season, may protect some nests from disturbance and even draw more sensitive species onto beaches they otherwise shun. It is too early to say yet but researchers are looking forward to seeing what the differences may be this year and will begin to monitor the changes in the coming weeks.

Snowy Plover *Charadrius nivosus* is a species that is fairly sensitive to human disturbance so it typically nests only in protected areas because it's much less disturbed. But researchers wonder if they will make their way to other beaches as beach closures continue.

The reduction in vehicles driving near the beach or people walking around

the sand, especially those exercising their dogs, may help protect more chicks and nests, although law enforcement vehicles on the beach could still be a concern.

Anecdotally it is understood that when beach roads were devastated by Hurricanes Ivan and Dennis, the waders did very well with no cars driving through the area as roads have been constructed right through the heart of nesting areas, so obviously they would do better if those roads and all of our cars and people were not there.

**Stop press: Since writing this piece Florida has opened some of its beaches again for exercise purposes.** Restrictions are however in place on their use. The beaches are only open between 6am and 11am and from 5pm to 8pm. These restrictions will not help the beach nesting birds as within minutes of the beach opening thousands of people arrived to take advantage after the shut down. I guess it is business as usual for the beach nesting birds after all, at least in some parts of Florida. Ed.

### Brazil

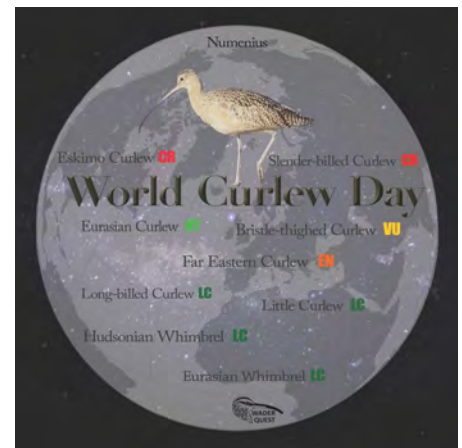
#### Tame Southern Lapwings

Can you imagine, those of you who are lucky enough to live where Northern Lapwings *Vanellus vanellus* reside, having tame wild living individuals that feed from your hand?

Well the Southern Lapwing *V. chilensis* is a very different bird from its northern counterpart. It is a bird that is very happy to associate with humans and can be found nesting in open spaces, even within the biggest and busiest of cities, such as São

Paulo.

Even though these birds are more habituated to humans than ours in the UK, it was still a surprise to find this [video of a Brazilian lady feeding three Southern Lapwings](#) by hand having just allowed them onto her property by opening her front gate. Quite remarkable.



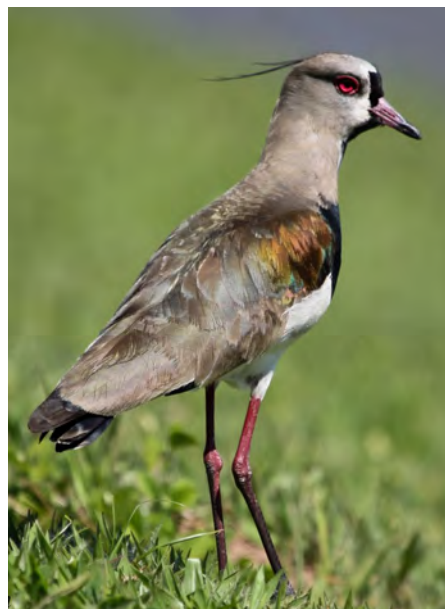
### Global

#### World Curlew Day

April the 21st saw the second World Curlew Day which was celebrated around the world by people who love their curlews, whichever species they are lucky enough to have in their region. Most curlew species are declining, some more than others and two may well be extinct, so it is right and fitting that they have their own global celebration. For our part we produced a [blog](#) with some details about some of the problems each species is facing and Wader Quest also took part in a [podcast called CURL-EW-PHORIA](#) by Trees A Crowd hosted by David Oakes, which celebrated the day with comments from people concerned about curlews from all walks of life, including our own Rick Simpson.



Snowy Plover - Elis Simpson



Southern Lapwing - Elis Simpson



Cur-lew-phoria - Trees A Crowd



## Wader photo gallery — send us your favourite wader photos



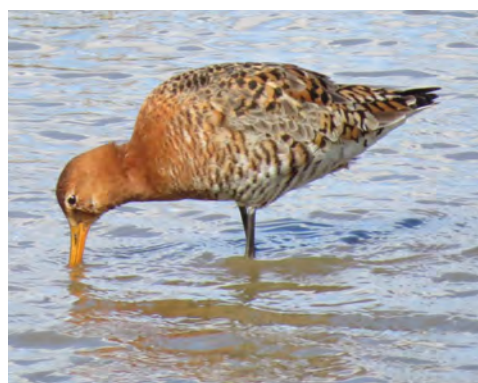
Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*  
- Tommy Pedersen; Zanzibar, Tanzania.



Long-toed Stint *Calidris Totanus*  
- Elis Simpson; Thailand.



Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*  
- Aditya Roy; India.



Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*  
- Roberta Goodall; UK.



Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*  
- Mark Stokeld; UK



Greater Sandplover *haradrius leschenaultii*  
- Aravind Venkatraman; India



Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Calidris pygmaea*  
- Ayuwat Jearwattananok; Thailand



Grey-tailed Tattler *Tringa inornata*  
- Vojtěch Kubelka; Australia



## Wader Quest Publishing

*Eury The Spoon-billed Sandpiper* is a beautifully written and illustrated story about the life cycle experience of a critically endangered wader. The title itself provides an interesting and subtle reference to the [old generic] scientific name for this wader species.

We get to know Eury and his family as we might any family. Sometimes to anthropomorphise in this way can be strained, but here it is comfortable and compelling. We can easily envisage our own grandchildren being captivated by Eury's life and the many adventures he encounters, and experiencing the many emotions that, like all good stories, it evokes.

Of course, *Eury The Spoon-billed Sandpiper* is more than a delightful children's story, because through it, the authors Rick and Elis Simpson, who reveal intimate knowledge of the birds, provide a powerful conservation message about the many threats including, and perhaps especially, from 'the creatures that walk upright'. The clever insinuation of themselves into the story, as friendly upright creatures, is a gem.

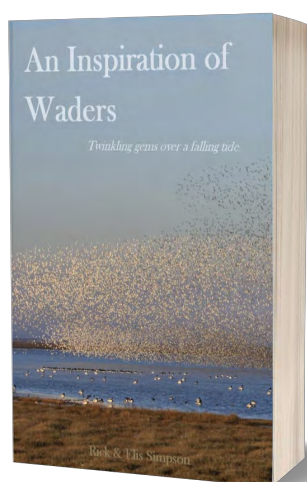
We applaud the authors and the illustrator for this charming and important contribution to children's literature about endangered waders."

Mike & Rose Clear

(Authors of "Letters to the Family – The Story of an Endangered Shorebird": Envirobook, Sydney 2010)



*Eury The Spoon-billed Sandpiper* - £7.50 plus p&p



*An Inspiration of Waders* - £8.50 plus p&p

This book looks at the cultural connection we have with waders and how they have inspired us down the centuries. It looks at how the authors have been inspired by waders and how other waderologists have likewise been inspired. It looks at some of the myths and legends surrounding this interesting group of birds plus their place in art, music and literature.

Waders have inspired many things in human history from hieroglyphs to voyages of discovery, many of which are featured. Some waders themselves have proved to be inspirational and their stories can be found within this book.

The underlying purpose of the book is to encourage the use of a suggested new collective noun for a mixed or unidentified flock of waders over an estuary (no prizes for guessing what it is).

Three appendices cover other collective nouns for waders, a ditty about the Spoon-billed Sandpiper and information about Wader Quest.

The foreword is by Keith Betton; Hampshire County Recorder, former Council Member of the RSPB and currently Vice President of the BTO.

ISBN 978-0-9955146-1-4 (Wader Quest Publishing)

## COMING SOON

*A Quest for Waders* by Rick and Elis Simpson. Proposed release date August 2020.

This is the story of Wader Quest from the seed of an idea in a house in Buckinghamshire through travels to fourteen countries on six continents in search of waders.

It includes much additional information about the species seen as well as anecdotes from their travels.

It also charts another journey, that of Wader Quest itself and the gradual realisation that all was not well in the world of waders, culminating in the establishing of Wader Quest as a charity.



All proceeds from these sales go to Wader Quest

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## Wader Conservation World Watch7

**WADER CONSERVATION****WORLD WATCH**

**31<sup>st</sup> October & 1<sup>st</sup> NOVEMBER 2020**



**A** Go out and see waders wherever you are in the world.



**B** Send us an email telling us what you have seen and where.



**C** Find your sightings on the species list and roll of honour.

STAND UP FOR WADER CONSERVATION AND SAY:



**I CARE**



THE NATURAL HOME FOR WADER LOVERS

**WADERS NEED LOVE TOO!**

[waderquest@gmail.com](mailto:waderquest@gmail.com) / [info@waderquest.net](mailto:info@waderquest.net)

## Guidelines for applications for Wader Quest Grants

**Projects should ideally be directed to one or more of the following funding priorities:**

- Investigating the status of Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable or Near-threatened wader species
- Attempting to further the knowledge of current Important Bird Areas (IBAs) of significant importance to waders, through breeding surveys and conducting systematic counts
- Investigating potential new IBAs or ornithologically little known areas for waders
- Conducting ecological studies of little-known wader species
- Educational programmes, especially aimed at school children and youth to conserve and protect waders and their habitat

**Priority will be given to projects:**

- Conducted by Nationals of the country where the activity will take place
  - Containing an educational element, that engage with local communities and/or have an element of long-term sustainability of the project, such as training of local counterparts or raising awareness of wader conservation within the wider community
  - Providing an improvement in the understand of the conservation needs of a under studied wader species through research
- The Wader Quest Grants Committee decision will be final and, unless initiated by Wader Quest, no further correspondence will be entered into regarding the decision.

Download Application form [here](#) and send to [applications@waderquest.net](mailto:applications@waderquest.net)

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REDBUBBLE**



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# WADER QUEST

## THE NATURAL HOME FOR WADER LOVERS

Wader Quest is a registered charity in England and Wales No. 1183748

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Individual	£10.00
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Life	£200.00

#### Sponsors:

Club	£20.00
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Rates effective from 06/04/2019

### Wader Quest Personnel

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**Executive Committee:** Andrew Whitelee (Chair), Andrew MacGarvey (Secretary), Louise Hathaway (Treasurer), Corinne MacGarvey (Membership), Dylan Parry-Davies, Elis Simpson, Rick Simpson, Kirsty Yeomans.

**Grants Panel:** Andrew Whitelee (Chair) Rick Simpson, Jannik Hansen.

**Vacancies:** Interested parties in either Trustee or Committee posts, please email [info@waderquest.net](mailto:info@waderquest.net) for further information.

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Edited by Rick Simpson with thanks to Penny Insole for proof reading.

