

**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**

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

### **A Quest for Waders**

**£15 +p&p**

**All proceeds go to Wader Quest**

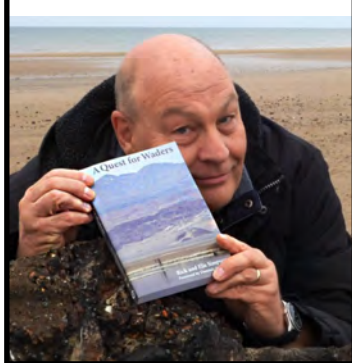
*'Rick is a natural storyteller, it is clear that he has a unique understanding and love of birds, particularly waders.'*

*Writing with a palpable warmth, Rick certainly has the ability to deliver a poignant message.*

*This book has an enchanting montage of experiences and, with Elis' beautiful colour photographs, it is perfect for all to enjoy.'*

Sandra Herman JP. MSc. BSc (Hons).

[AQfW Video; click here](#)



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## **Editorial - Rick Simpson**

Welcome to the October issue of the Wader Quest newsletter. We are continuing with the new style as it seems to work well, and no-one has complained!

The newsletter is automatically sent to all Friends and Sponsors but if you would like to be added to the mailing list so as not to miss any future issues, the easiest way is simply to join Wader Quest from as little as £10 per annum (see back page for details of rates).

In this issue we have regular contributions from South Africa, continuing the saga of the White-fronted Plovers in the Sands of Time series, we have a very unusual Waders in Art contribution from Julia Page. We also have a different take on the featured photo where we have two photos instead of one, and, the photographer is Robert Page, the son of Julia, the featured artist. There is a poem, from the library and several interesting articles for you to read.



Julia Page is our featured artist for our Waders in Art pages (10 - 12)

**Don't forget.**

**This is your chance to show you care about the world's waders.**

**Join the Wader Conservation World Watch**

**31st Oct and/or 1st Nov.**



## Wader Quest news - Rick Simpson

Despite all that is happening in the world, the period since the last newsletter has been very busy. We have had several more meetings of the Trustees and Executive Committee (ExCo.) and things are definitely moving in the right direction.

Some of you may have noticed Rick's face appearing all over the place on videos. This was an idea forwarded by ExCo. member Kirsty Yeomans and it seems to have gone down quite well with many favourable comments (and a few cheeky ones too). Sadly Kirsty has had to leave the ExCo. for now, due to work commitments, but as she is still keen to help we are working on how best to channel her support in other ways. The logo/poster for Wader Conservation World Watch (WCWW) was her creation and we are very proud of it.

In addition to the videos, Rick has been popping up representing the charity around the world on podcasts. The first, earlier this year, talking to Trees a Crowd in the UK about [World Curlew Day](#), then in Australia talking about Plover Appreciation Day and more recently in South Africa with Bird Emergency [talking about WCWW](#). All this publicity has also led to a second interview with ex Trustee Allan Archer on his [Talk Wildlife channel](#) and another with Birdwatching Magazine (Corporate Sponsors) Editor Matt Merrit who is also an individual Friend of Wader Quest. As if that wasn't enough exposure, Rick will shortly be appearing on the David Lindo in Conversation with... series. When asked about his new-found fame Rick said. 'I have never dreamed of being rich and famous, just rich, that plan seems to be backfiring somewhat.'

We are also embarking on creating some videos with the audio help of Kohuhu Studio Productions who have composed and recorded original pieces of music for Wader Quest to which we intend to add footage thus creating some very interesting and entertaining videos in the future.

On the creative side we have now launched our new book; [A Quest for Waders](#). This 374 page tome chronicles the travels of Rick and Elis as they travelled the world to see waders while fundraising for the Spoon-billed Sandpiper Captive Breeding Programme. The highs and lows are all captured in piercing detail with much scene setting and information about the birds and their problems. Underlying these travels another journey was taking place, that of Wader Quest itself from its humble fundraising start to the charity it is today. If you like travel books, this is one. If you like wader books, this is one, if you like self-deprecating autobiographical books, this is one. The most important thing to remember is that Rick and Elis have produced this book entirely voluntarily, giving their time and talents freely. All proceeds from the sale of the books will stay with Wader Quest.

Also recently launched, at the virtual British Bird fair, were our four [new pins](#), numbers 20-23, they being Great Thick-knee *Esacus recurvirostris*, Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*, Crab Plover *Dromas ardeola* and Two-banded Plover *Charadrius falklandicus*. They were warmly received by collectors and sale were swift, despite not attending our biggest fundraising event of the year. Wader Quest is gaining a reputation for its pin badges being as accurate as the format can allow, with attention to detail and good quality and for that we have to thank the manufacturers Rocket Charities who are very patient when listening to our endless corrections and alterations in order to achieve and maintain this standard.



More recently still, following an incredibly generous donation from one of our Trustees Ian Dearing, of a number of original artworks by Nik Borrow, he followed this up by arranging for Wader Quest to have the 13 designs turned into [greetings cards](#) (blank for your own message) which we are selling as a set of 12 with a bonus free card and design. The ideal Christmas card for wader lovers the world over.

Events are still happening around the world despite the pandemic. Those events that encourage people to go outdoors as individuals or in small groups are being especially well attended. Plover Appreciation Day organised by BirdLife Australia was a success and witness the phenomenon that was the world's first Global Bird Weekend where between the observers over 7,000 species were seen around the world. Rick would have us believe that his contribution of a short video is what made the difference. Joking aside this augurs well for our own WCWW event at the end of this month. We have already had some exciting





## Wader Quest news — cont'd



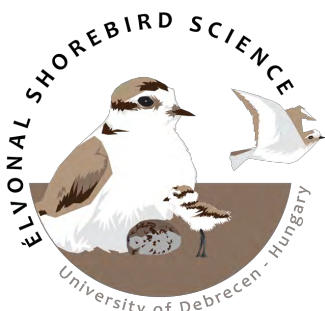
offers of help from new places so, fingers crossed, we can ride the wave of resurging birding events and recently returned freedoms.

The **2020 AGM** took place in a virtual form for the first time. After the success of the live event last year we had hoped to have another this year, but clearly that was not on the cards. There were some minor hiccups, as would be expected of a first attempt, but thanks to the hard work and expertise of Andrew MacGarvey, Phil Hadley and Elis Simpson who manipulated all the technology to such good effect, it went very smoothly. After the introductions by meeting Chair Andrew MacGarvey, we started by showing a series of videos. The first was from [BirdLife Australia](#) with a film about their beach nesting bird programme and in particular the Hooded Plover *Thinornis cucullatus*, a project close to our heart as it was the second that we raised money for after the Spoon-billed Sandpipers *Calidris pygmaea*. We then showed a wonderful animated video from the [East Asian-Australasian Flyways Partnership](#) (EAAFP) about the journey of a Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris* called 'Beak Beak' from a researcher's point of view, and we also had a very informative video sent to us by [Nature's Valley Trust](#) in South Africa about their work with White-fronted Plovers *Charadrius marginatus* (see Sands of Change p5 for the latest stories from those beaches). That section was rounded off with our own video of Rick Simpson encouraging people to join Wader Conservation World Watch.

Following the beach nesting bird theme, the first half of the event was rounded off by a very heartfelt and passionate talk from Becky Bowen about the work she does with [Save Our Shorebirds](#) on the Mendocino coast in California, it was hard not to want to jump on an aeroplane and go and help the team watch over their shorebirds.

Then followed the business part of the proceedings with the AGM proper. During Rick Simpson's Chair report for the year a number of videos were shown from recipients of grants and donations, which was an effective way to tell people about the things they have helped to fund. These included [Wader Quest Brasil](#) with Karina and Bruno talking about the work they have been doing in our name. This was followed by Nur Munira from [Shorebird Peninsula Malaysia Project](#) talking about the workshop she is planning for November, Hari Basnet of [Bird Conservation Nepal](#) explaining the work they did with Wood Snipe in Nepal and from Leylya Khasyanova of [Elvonal](#) who is still waiting to use the scope and tripod we supplied for her work when she can travel again to Belarus to join the project she is supporting. The last of these videos was a wonderfully edited message from Sandra Giner in Venezuela talking about the projects she is carrying out with communities there and all the challenges that entails.

Following the AGM where the Trustees and new Executive Committee were all ratified into their positions we had the key note presentation from Rob Clay, the Director of the [Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network](#) (WHSRN) explaining how it all started with one site in Delaware Bay in the USA to now having 107 sites in 17 countries up and down the Americas. From our perspective it was encouraging to see what can be done from humble beginnings. The graph Rob showed of the decline of waders over the last fifty years in Canada, despite all the effort being put into their protection and conservation, just underlined why what we are doing collectively among all the wader and shorebird organisations is so crucial.



## Wader Quest news — cont'd

The Board of Trustees has recently co-opted a new Trustee whose position was ratified at the AGM, and we warmly welcome Ray Heaton who has had fifteen years' experience as a Trustee of the Zoological Society of London. His experience there will be very useful in driving forward future policies and plans.

Recently we held a vote among Friends and Sponsors on the subject of converting the charity into a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). There are many benefits to doing so and the vote was carried with 100% of those responding, approving of the change. This change will formally be applied for once the reports and accounts for 2019/20 financial year have been submitted to the Charity Commission.

The last thing to report here is that we have a new IT team in place. The website was originally set up by Allan Archer when he was a Trustee. It was a mammoth undertaking but it has given us such a solid base on which to build. After he left to take up full time employment, we have however been unable to make much progress on expanding his excellent foundations. Now, with Jack Delabye organising a template to set up all the species information and Richard Parkes helping out with the administration and running of the site, both joining us on a voluntary basis, we hope that development of the site will begin in earnest soon.

## Willen Lake; how a leak led to a waderfest - Andrew MacGarvey

On the 5th September, word came through various birding messaging services that Anglian Water was present at Willen Lakes in Milton Keynes, UK. There was a problem with a valve and water was flowing out of the lake at a fast rate. The level of North Lake had already dropped significantly, revealing around 20 feet of mud around the island. Given the time of year, this news provoked immediate interest as the possibility of passage waders dropping into Willen was now significantly increased.

Initially, the mud was inhabited by gulls, Northern Lapwings *Vanellus vanellus* and Green Sandpipers *Tringa ochropus* that had already been on the site. However, the water continued to flow out of the lake. By Sunday morning, Mike Wallen was reporting, the water level had dropped by a metre. It later emerged that the sheer pressure of the water exiting at this stage prevented engineers from making the necessary repair. Local birders were reminiscing about the 1980s and early 90's – at that time the water level was managed for wildlife leading to ideal conditions for passage waders and there was even a pair of Black-winged Stilts *Himantopus himantopus* seen for a few days in 1988. [Read more.](#)



Willen Lake with low water level - Elis Simpson

## Trio of remarkable wader observations for Kevin Zimmer in California - Rick Simpson

Morro Bay Sandspit in San Luis Obispo county, California, USA, involves a 4 or 5-mile, one-way hike to its northern tip. It is there that the majority of waders, or shorebirds, seem to concentrate, so, if you are going to go to the trouble of hiking the spit, then you really need to hike the whole 8+ mile round trip, or else you end up missing the best area. This makes it an under watched spot as you have to be pretty dedicated to make the effort to bird there. However, Kevin Zimmer, who has made the trip before with interesting results, proved that it often pays off if you do make that effort.

On the 1st of October 2020 Kevin Zimmer took that hike and had a bit of a red letter day. In that one visit he recorded a first record for the county, a melanistic sandpiper and a bird that, although is reasonably to be expected in the county, is unusual along the beach.

Kevin's 8-mile roundtrip trek along the Morro Bay sandspit, began with an unusual plover sighting, in ... [Read more.](#)



1st County, 5th State and 12th continental USA record of Common Ringed Plover - Kevin Zimmer



## Better late than never - Faansie Peacock

In what may well be some bizarre birding record, the Covid-19 lockdown period proved to be a most productive season for discovering rarities, despite no birders being able to leave their homes. The ample free time allowed people to dig out their old notes and photographs and reinvestigate those nagging unanswered identification questions.

One such lingering enigma found its way into my inbox. After a few days of playing detective, a strange story emerged concerning one of the most exciting *post hoc* records in our birding history.

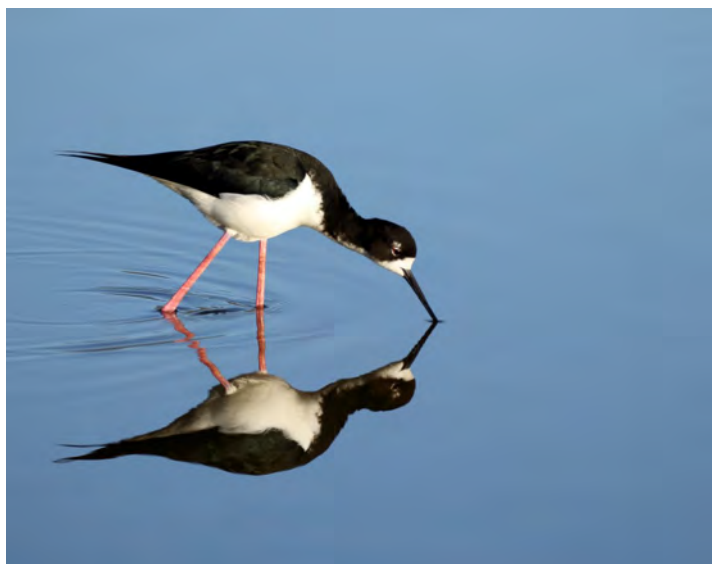
First, the timeline. Our story starts 15 years ago, according to the relevant camera metadata. On 13 February 2005 Peter Stacey photographed a pratincole at the Wavecrest Hotel and Spa between Kei Mouth and Mazeppa Bay in the Eastern Cape. The bird was resting on rocks along the southern bank of the Ngqusi River mouth. The sighting left Peter puzzled, but the case went cold. [Read more.](#)



## Wader Quest' takes flight in Hawai'i - Paige Mino

Hawai'i, it's one of the most remote island chains on Earth. Most people think of sandy beaches and clear ocean water. Wader-lovers will have a different image in mind, one of mudflats and sedges. The perfect habitat to see waders. Of these shorebirds, six are federally endangered and endemic to the islands. Let's introduce you to some of our feathered friends...

The Hawaiian stilt is an endangered and delicate shorebird endemic to Hawai'i. Commonly referred to by its Hawaiian name, *ae'o*, which translates to 'stilt' and refers to wooden stilts, which perfectly defines this bird whose bright pink legs make up most of its body. These slender and slightly formal birds don a black back and white under plumage. Looking at them you'd think they were on their way to a black-tie event. This subspecies of black-necked stilt differs from its North American counterpart by having more black on its face and neck, and a longer bill and tail. The long, slender beak perfectly allows this bird to probe through muddy waters in search of small aquatic invertebrates and fish. *Ae'o* are non-migratory birds that can be found in shallow, open wetlands and marshes throughout the Hawaiian Islands (except for Kaho'olawe). [Read more.](#)



The Hawaiian Stilt or *ae'o* is endemic to Hawai'i - Bret Mossman

## New Breeding behaviour discovered for Nordmann's Greenshank - Rick Simpson

Nordmann's Greenshank, also known as Spotted Greenshank *Tringa guttifer* is still very much an enigma when it comes to its breeding behaviour. Although they are seen in certain locations in their wintering grounds and on migration their breeding habits are little known due to their choice (a very wise one) to breed in very remote areas of the Russian tundra.

There have previously only been six Nordmann's Greenshank nests ever found, and the unusual thing about these nests is that all have been found in trees. This is not unprecedented among waders as Green *Tringa ochropus* and Solitary Sandpipers *Tringa solitaria* for example are known to nest in tree but using the old nests of other species. In the case of the Nordmann's Greenshank it constructs its own nest.

During a survey in Schaste Bay, Khabarovsk Krai, Russia, between mid-May and mid-August this year, carried out despite the difficulties that Covid-19 has presented this year, albeit with a depleted team, researchers made an interesting discovery. They found a pair of Nordmann's Greenshanks nesting... [Read more.](#)



Nordmann's Greenshank - Konstantin Maslovsky

## A rough start to life for little XT (White) - Dan Lees

The Hooded Plover *Thinornis cucullatus* is a vulnerable beach-nesting shorebird native to southern Australia and Tasmania. Since 2006, BirdLife Australia's Beach-nesting Birds Program has been working with community volunteers, land managers and government agencies to improve the declining trajectory of Hooded Plover and other beach-nesting shorebird populations.

Most of our efforts focus on educating the public, training local volunteers, on-ground actions to protect the birds and their habitat and research. Nonetheless, the team also attends calls of injured birds and coordinates the rescue following our Emergency Rescue Protocols, like in this story.

On the 3rd of April BirdLife Australia's Beach-nesting Birds staff members received a report from Friends of the Hooded Plover Surf Coast volunteers Marg MacDonald and Sue Guinness that a juvenile Hooded Plover at Fairhaven, two hours west of Melbourne, had a severe limp. The limping juvenile was one of two successful fledglings from Fairhaven beach whose flagged parents are HP (White) and SH (White). [Read More.](#)



Hooded Plover XT (White, before ringing) - Dan Lees



### [Wader Conservation World Watch](#)

**31st Oct and/or 1st Nov 2020**

## The Sands of Change: Series 2 Episode 5 — 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*

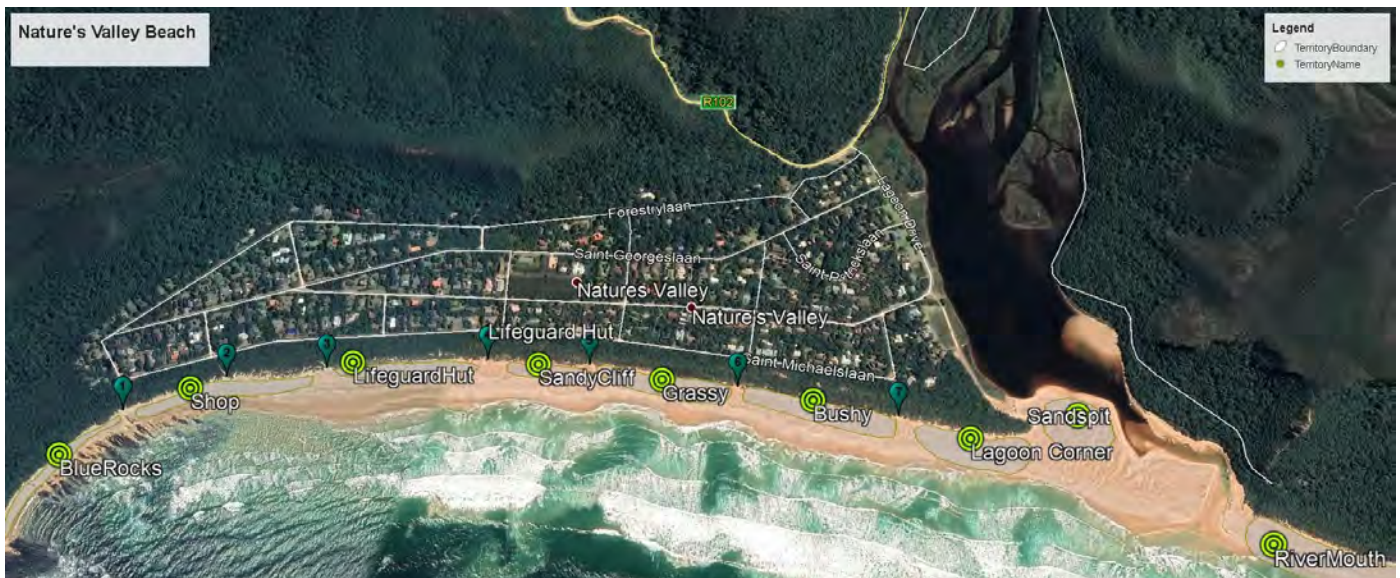


*with a little bit of imagination added here and there to make it a palatable read.'*  
- Brittany Arendse NVT.

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



## The Sands of Change: Series 2 Episode 5 — cont'd



Once a year it happens. The vibrations of their footprints pulsate more and more each day. Their usual murmurs turn to a thundering noise. Their mere presence billows through the air. December and its holidaymakers. A time unparalleled by any other. A time which hints at change. A time which signals unexpected shifts in the sands. A time of danger for our beloved shorebird community. A time when thousands of beachgoers take to the shores inhabited by our White-fronted Plovers *Charadrius marginatus*.

Still reeling from the discovery of the dreaded nurdles on our beach, our intrepid researchers took to the ever-busier beach with caution. Little did they know that they were in for yet another shock! While out on a survey they saw her. A beautiful little plover in the shop territory. This little girl most definitely has had a few blows in life. Both her feet were severely mangled and she was forced to limp along the water's edge in search of sustenance. The whole situation had a very eerie feel to it. As if a ghost was visiting the beach. Her light colouration. Her maimed feet. This subdued little plover was oddly reminiscent of darling little Pearl, taken far too soon from the beach. The suspected cause of Pearl's downfall had been fishing wire, which mercilessly wrapped around her feet, making moving around difficult. Was fishing line to blame once more? Did this little female get tangled by accident or was there perhaps a sinister conspiracy afoot?

Not far from our brave and broken little plover strutted the infamous Ed. His squinting eyes. His plotting posture. He seemed to have little care in the world, preening his feathers, strutting his stuff and apparently caring little about his poor mangled compatriot nor about the doting



Poor plover - NVT



Ed plotting - NVT



## The Sands of Change: Series 2 Episode 5 — cont'd

Violet, hobbling faithfully behind him. Ed always keeps us wondering. Why do all that cross paths with him seem to run into severe and certain misfortune? What is he scheming about this week? Is it a coincidence that he has been spotted close to the water's edge walking among the fishermen? Why have the researchers not come across a nest belonging to Ed and Violet? Will Violet ever be able to tame his wild ways? All we know is that as Ed plots his next move, the sands are shifting and ever-conspiring as well.

This is never clearer than when we look at the turbulent life of our magnificent un-banded heroine. As the wind blows the sands in all directions, a worrying breeze has been wafting through the Valley. This, it seems, has culminated in disaster for this beloved plover. She has been seen scurrying about the dunes with severe frustration. The sands, it seems, are forever colluding against her. So much so that her beautiful nest produced just last week, was callously trampled by some of the four-footed intruders recently arriving in hordes, accompanied by their human companions. Disillusion and demoralisation followed. We can but wonder if our little heroine and her un-banded mate can persevere once more and produce a new nest. If so, will the nest be safe from oblivious beachgoers happily scampering up and down the dunes, seemingly unaware of the nesting signs proudly proclaiming the presence of precious potential plovers? Our researchers are certainly hopeful that their relentless campaigning will make the hordes sympathetic to the plight of our plovers.

What of the love saga happening between Wilma, the mature Fred and the handsome young Edwardo? When last we left these birds it was unclear which male had prevailed and won over Wilma's fickle heart. It seems, however, we may have a victor! In the past week Wilma was spotted happily scampering about the dunes with none other than Edwardo! It seems that the wilful Wilma may have sent Fred packing for good and has instead shacked up with her toy boy. With no nests in the area, it is uncertain if this fling will turn to anything serious and we can but wait and see what the sands will reveal to us about this scandalous new union!

What will happen this coming season with our gallant shorebird community? Will new love blossom in the warm summer sun? Will the precious eggs survive the overflowing masses arriving on our shores? The waters are glistening, reflecting the warm African sun. The welcome cool breezes are wafting across the shore. The beautiful blue skies are forever keeping watch from above.

Marvellous, magnetic summer has truly arrived here on Nature's Valley beach and we can but hope that the sands will remain favourable, that our visitors will be mindful and that all will be well on our treasured beach during this, our festive season!



Tracks that may have been made by the dog that destroyed the nest - NVT



Wilma; who will she pick? - NVT



Edwardo - NVT

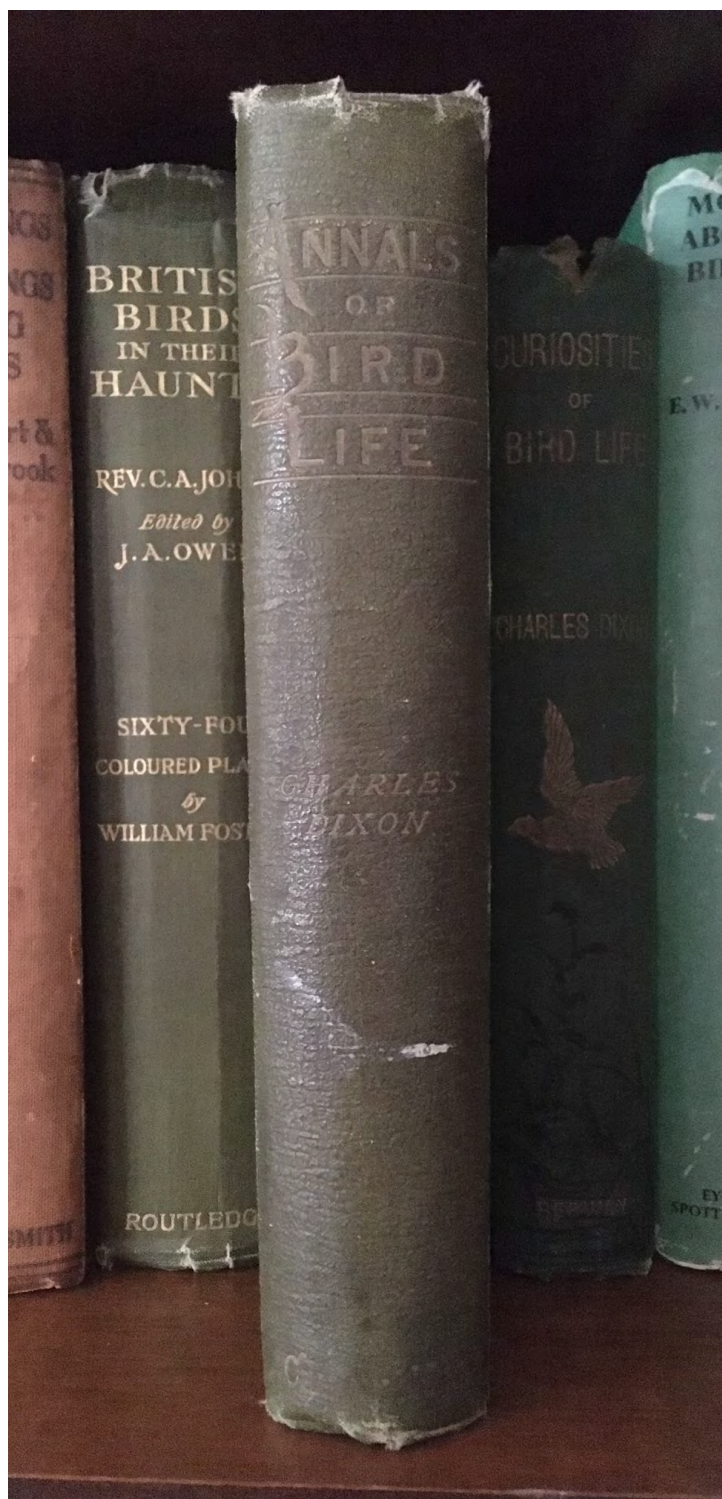




## From the library - Annals of Bird Life; Charles Dixon (1890)

*'Ah, those autumn mornings and evenings! How I love them! What stirring scenes among the birds I can recall; what stores of notes I made! How vividly some of them return; incidents of twenty years ago, among what were peaceful fields and wooded valleys then, but now, alas, the busy centre of a score of industries. All those mighty trees, where the Rooks and Ring Doves bred, have bowed their noble heads before the axe; all the brushwood and the thickets and close-set hedgerows, where the Warblers and Finches nested are gone; all the tangled ditches and hollows, sacred to the Grasshopper Lark, and the Jack Snipe, levelled away! Reader, pardon this digression; but to write on bird congregations is to bring back from the past a whole train of memories concerning one of the most highly-favoured spots for birds it has ever been my lot to know. Sad to relate, this bird paradise has all been destroyed; misfortunes and death overtook the ancient family who owned this fair domain, and fields and park, woods and fish-ponds, all fell prey to that modern curse, the speculative builder! No longer does the air resound with song at morn and even; all the feathered hosts are gone; the trout-stream is little more than an open drain; and one of the fairest sylvan scenes that ever eye of man gazed upon is now a desolation of bricks and mortar, and a wilderness of tall chimney-shafts, factories and workshops! My ruined Aviary!'*

[130 years later and it still goes on; we all have a spot like this we can recall from our past that is no longer there - Ed.]



**WADERS NEED LOVE TOO!**  
**JOIN US FOR OUR 2020 WADER**  
**CONSERVATION WORLD WATCH**  
**31<sup>st</sup> October & 1<sup>st</sup> NOVEMBER**  
 See page 28 or [WCWW webpage](https://www.waderquest.org) for details



## Featured Photo — Sanderlings; Robert Page



**Photographer:** Robert Page. **Species:** Sanderling *Calidris alba*.

**Location:** Titchwell beach, Norfolk, UK.

**Date:** 22 October 2018. 11.14.

**Camera:** Nikon D7200.

**Lens:** Nikon 200-500 f5.6.

**Details:** 1/3200 - f/8 - ISO 640



**Photographer:** Robert Page.

**Location:** Titchwell beach, Norfolk, UK.

**Date:** 22 October 2019. 11.12.

**Species:** Sanderling *Calidris alba*.

**Camera:** Nikon D7200.

**Lens:** Nikon 500mm f5.6 PF.

**Details:** 1/3200 - f/8 - ISO 450 - -0.3 step

Unusually we are featuring two photos this issue, as they were, by some coincidence, photographed exactly a year apart, less two minutes, a fact that Robert had not realised until now - Ed.

'Photographing Sanderlings is very pleasurable but quite a challenge in every respect, these are my best efforts to date, both taken at Titchwell marsh reserve in Norfolk, a year apart.

Capturing Sanderlings running along the tideline is not the most comfortable of activities as I found out whilst attempting to get as low as possible to the sand with my camera, maintaining a crab like

position for long periods of time, your legs and back do not thank you!

The Sanderlings accelerate as they make their way past you as well, which really tested out my camera's autofocus; it's almost unbelievable how fast their legs move. Anyhow this particular shot of the Sanderling (above right) with both feet in the air was the best action shot I managed.

On my next trip I purchased a waterproof mat for the exact purpose of photographing wading birds on wet sand to try and make things more comfortable, wet clothes, in October, on the north Norfolk coast is not a good idea!

I was very pleased that this particular Sanderling (above left) decided to have a quiet moment in front of me, pausing from the seemingly never-ending search for food to tuck its beak underneath its wing for a few seconds rest. This pause in proceedings allowed me to frame the image on the screen on the back of my camera as opposed to looking through the viewfinder, which also gave me a more intimate lower angle of view.

Sanderlings are the most confiding of the waders I've photographed on this beach but, despite this, one needs to move ahead of them and wait for them to come towards you'.

## Waders in poetry; 10th May is Dotterel Day - Barbara Hickson

Little fools? Perhaps — to return tamely  
to our resting fields each May.  
Good to eat, easy to trap.

Few see where we breed in shrinking numbers.  
Brave, if you dare, our barren mountain plateaux,  
our wind-scoured, out-of-reach refuge.

Watch how we skitter through mist,  
our yellow stop-start legs scuttling over stunted grass,  
bobbing between boulders.

Witness, against the dull day, our pin-sharp markings,  
chestnut belly, crisp white eye stripe.  
Think how appealing, how intriguing we are.

You'll miss us when we're gone.  
Fools? Perhaps. We to trust you,  
you to betray us.

[*morinellus*: 'little fool'  
First published in *Watch the Birdie* (Beautiful Dragons  
Collaborations 2018).]



Eurasian Dotterel - Elis Simpson

[Read about the naming of Dotterels](#); an excerpt from *An Inspiration of Waders* by Rick and Elis Simpson



## Waders in art - WHERE'S OLI ? Julia Page



Birds of the London Wetland Centre - Julia Page

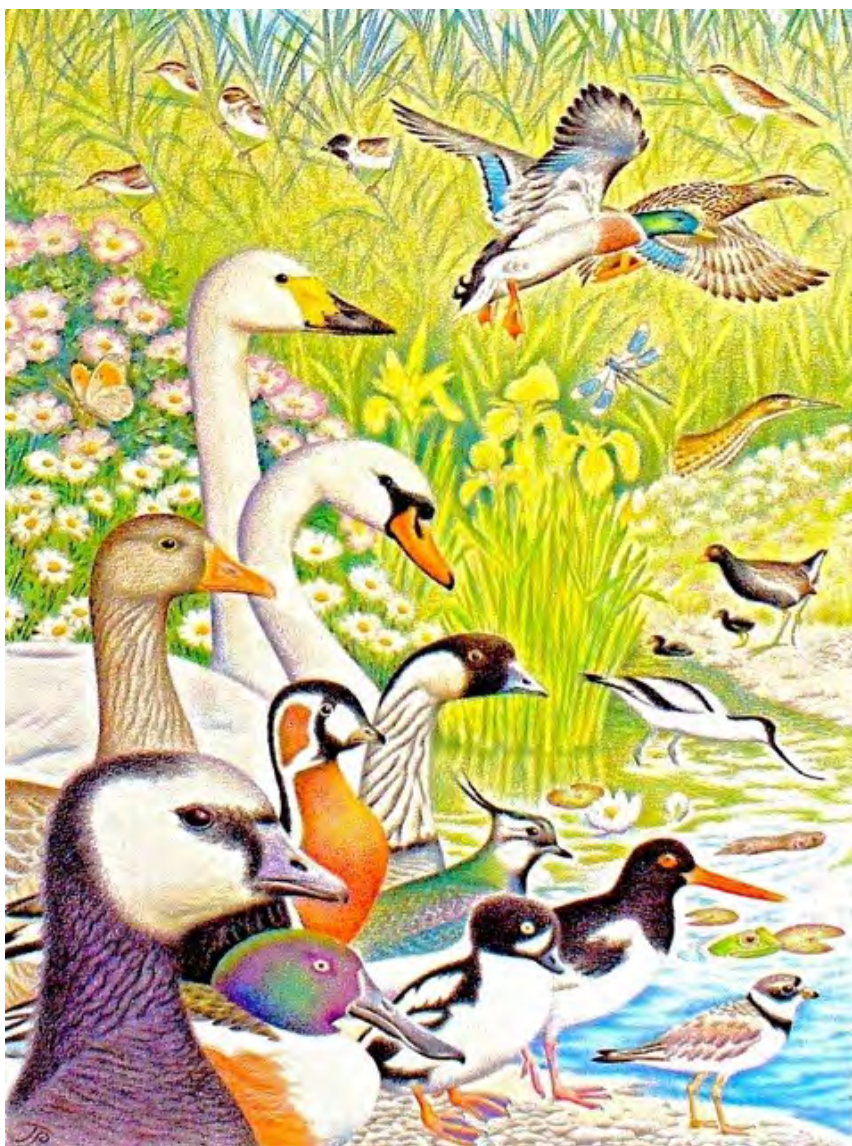
When our children were young, one of their favourite books was 'Where's Wally?' by Martin Handford. They loved trying to find him in his distinctive red and white striped shirt amongst the hundreds of other characters on each page. The recurring stars of my article aren't striped but they do have the red and white colouring which gives them stand-out prominence. I don't think it will be nearly so hard to spot them in my drawings and paintings as it was to spot Wally. The 'Oli' of the title will appear later on in the article.

Living in the London suburbs, sandwiched between Bushy Park, Home Park and Queen Mary Reservoir, with the River Thames to the immediate south, acting as a wildlife corridor, we do see some less than usual birds flying over such as Common Buzzards *Buteo buteo* and Red Kites *Milvus milvus* and every day a certain number of regular seabird species such as large flocks of Black-headed Gulls *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*, Herring Gulls *Larus argentatus* and the occasional group of terns. Waders hadn't ever featured in that list until one day I saw and heard a pair of Eurasian Oystercatchers *Haematopus ostralegus* flying over the garden and there was no mistaking that shrill, piping call.

This distinctive pied wader, with the vibrant red beak and rose pink legs, seems to have been following me wherever I've been in recent years and before I first visited the London Wetland Centre, I hadn't realised just how close this species was to home. My first visit to the Wildfowl and Wetland Trust Reserve at Barn Elms, London Wetland Centre, was a real eye opener. I was amazed to see flocks of Northern Lapwings *Vanellus vanellus* and Oystercatchers feeding in the shallows along with the more expected swans, coots, geese and ducks. On a subsequent occasion I was lucky enough to watch four Black-tailed Godwits *Limosa limosa* probing the mud from the Peacock Tower.

This reserve is a wonderful oasis, a jewel amidst the city, a stop off point for many species, a breathing space for visitors and a great inspiration for artists. I can never get over the fact that Oystercatchers are probing for invertebrates whilst Lapwings circle above and it's all happening about a half a mile from the Hammersmith flyover.

Being so taken with all the beautiful birds I had seen at the reserve, I decided to produce an artwork to get printed as postcards for WWT to sell in the Visitor Centre shop to raise funds. Along with many of the birds I'd seen, it also featured several



More birds of the London Wetland Centre - Julia Page



The view from the Peacock Tower, London Wetland Centre - Julia Page



## Waders in art - cont'd

species of wader such as Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*, Lapwing, Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* AND of course the necessary Oystercatcher without which the picture would not be complete. One of the best views at LWC is from the Ladies' room window. It does remind me of the view from a Hebridean ferry - water and islands everywhere!

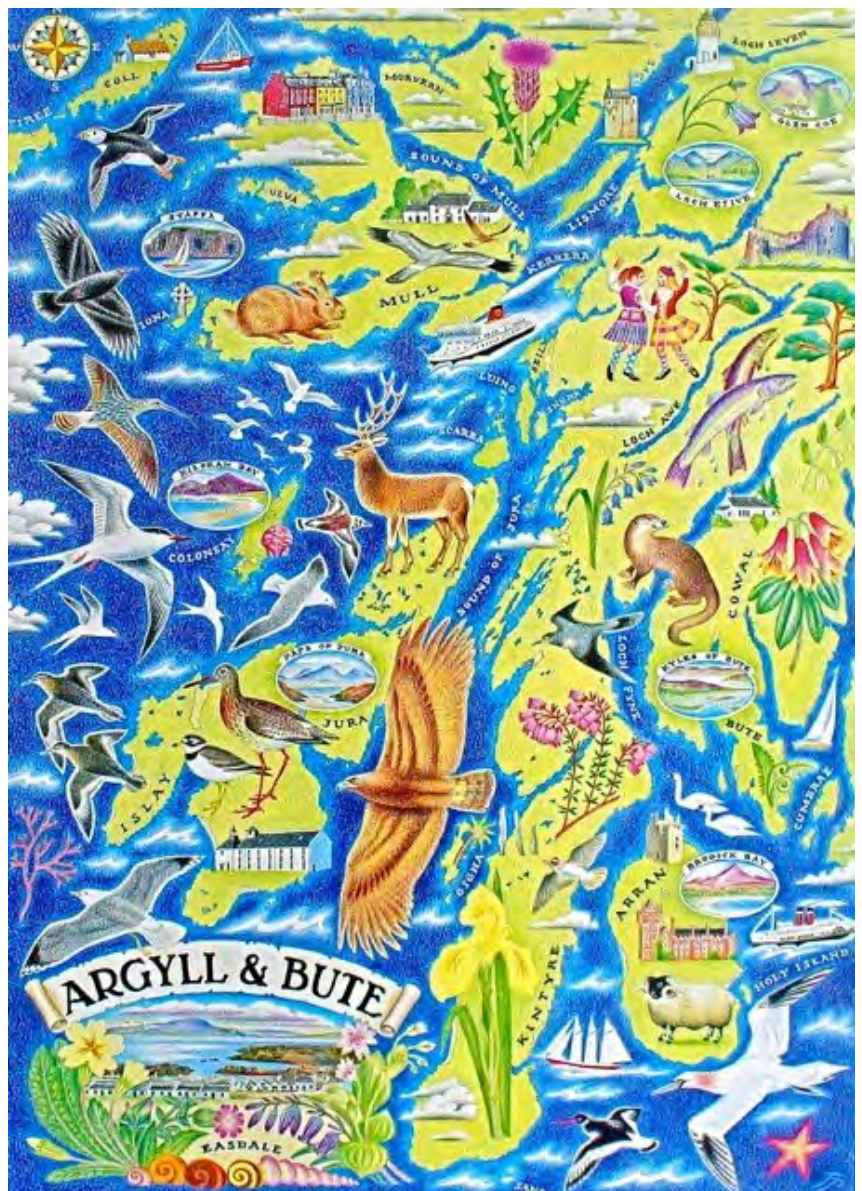
We did actually travel to the Hebrides for many years, to Colonsay in the Inner Hebrides. This beautiful, pristine isle situated between Islay and Jura to the South East, and Mull, Col and Tiree to the North West, is one of Argyll's gems and I enjoyed drawing the maps of its location featuring mostly natural points of interest, especially birdlife and of course the necessary Oystercatchers. A week during May on Colonsay is guaranteed to ensure that you return year after year to repeat the same intense feelings of freedom, joy and communion with nature while the island undergoes its most glorious surge of renewal. Our cottage was close to the sea and on our first morning out it was of course that familiar shrill piping call that greeted us on the rocky shoreline. There's something I have in common with Oystercatchers: however much we like sandy beaches, we prefer stony, rocky ones and Colonsay has some superb crescent sand bays but also my favourite of all which I call the Stony Beach. This is a bay with a small amount of sand but mostly large and small stones, rocks and a whole variety of rock pools. It's a place I could spend a whole day at, gazing into the miniature unique worlds amongst the pools and marvelling at the infinite pebble designs. There are always Oystercatchers here, probing amongst the rocks for invertebrates. The Stony Beach without oystercatchers would be unthinkable.

At the far end of the bay is a small sheltered cove with high rocks all around, almost like a cave without a ceiling. Sometimes the oystercatchers would stand guard at the entrance and their high pitched cries would resonate around the cove with a repeating echo. This amplified call inspired me to write a fiddle piece called 'Oystercatchers' Reel' and I have a distinct memory of sitting on a rock, writing down the melody into my pocket mini manuscript book as the birds sang their song.

One year we even brought one of our pet guinea pigs with us all the way to Colonsay and back on public transport. She managed the journey like a dream and so enjoyed all the luscious grass and herbage at the cottage. On our return, I wrote and illustrated the book 'Journey to an Island - with Little Moon and Oli'. Oli was Little Moon's companion on the journey - an RSPB toy Oystercatcher with a very loud call when squeezed. I do think that humans are programmed to enjoy the colour red, due to our foraging behaviour for ripe fruits in our dim and distant past. So the inclusion of a big, red beak in every illustration was certainly an attractive and colourful addition to each page.



Some birds of Colonsay [printed and sold as a postcard] - Julia Page



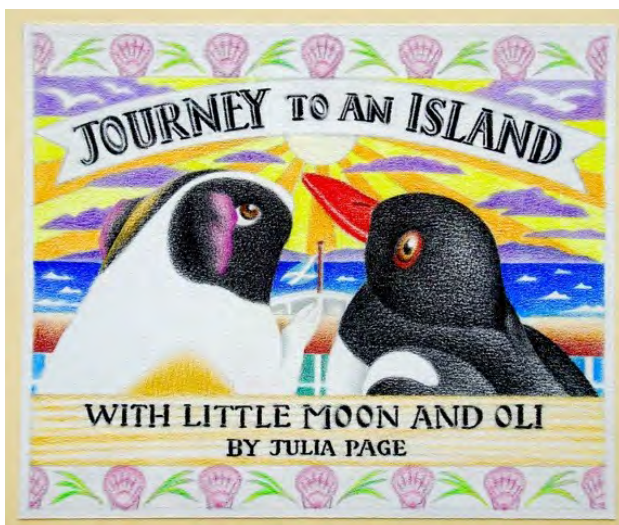
Map of Argyll and Bute, featuring Colonsay west of Jura - Julia Page



## Waders in art - cont'd

2009 saw our last trip to Colonsay. The long journey was much more difficult than usual so we researched finding somewhere closer to home for our next taste of freedom. The coast of Norfolk provided that for us with its vast, continual strands and wide open skies. Living in suburbia, we never get to see the horizon, but in Norfolk that's almost a 360 degree opportunity. With the addition of the salt marshes and freshwater lagoons, artists' inspiration is everywhere especially as the birdlife features so prominently. Waders of all kinds are the great attractions here and I included several species in my artworks from this area. Naturally, Oystercatchers feature in most of them.

One of my best experiences of waders was very surprising. Walking down to the beach in fog didn't seem at all promising but once down there, and although it was easy to get disorientated on the vast shore, one was gradually put at ease hearing the birds at the tideline going about their business as usual. The tide edge attracts a myriad of species - Sanderlings *Calidris alba*, Ruddy Turnstones *Arenaria interpres*, Eurasian Curlews *Numenius arquata*, Purple Sandpipers *Calidris maritima*, godwits and several other waders. The most vocal of course were the Oystercatchers and like in the Colonsay cove, their voices were amplified by the mist and seemed louder than ever. This was partially due to the still silence created by the lack of wind and crashing waves. It was hard to see all the birds clearly with the mist swirling around but the bright red beaks of the oystercatchers stood out like beacons offering reassurance and familiarity in this magical opaque world.



Cover illustration for 'Journey to an Island' - Julia Page



Little Moon and Oli arriving at Scalasaig, Isle of Colonsay. Julia Page



Some birds of the Norfolk coast, featuring terns, Brent geese, cormorants, gulls and an oystercatcher - Julia Page



Some more birds of the Norfolk coast, featuring ringed plovers, oystercatchers, a godwit and a little egret - Julia Page



Oystercatchers at Kiloran Bay, Isle of Colonsay - Julia Page



## Wader news in brief from around the world



Oriental Plover on Reunion Island — Stéphane Michel

### African region -

A slew of firsts from the region as reported in the *African Bird Club Bulletin* Vol 27 No 2;

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* 25th November 2017; Sungwe River, Gorongosa National Park, Sofala, Mozambique. Although there was a report of two in August 1999. As this is a frequent visitor to SA this being the first official record for Mozambique may reflect a lack of birding coverage rather than actual rarity.

Senegal Lapwing *Vanellus lugubris* 19th December 2019; Farquhar Atoll, Seychelles. Two birds remained until 2nd January 2020.

Oriental Plover *Charadrius veredus* 16th October 2018; Rivière des Pluies, Northern Réunion, Mascarene Islands. The report mentions that it was last seen the 21st of October, however it was also reported for Wader Conservation World Watch having been seen over the weekend of the 4th and 5th of November.

White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis* 22nd September 2018; Macaneta, near Maputo, Mozambique. Last seen 19th of October. This bird was found in the same area as Pectoral *Calidris melanotos* and Sharp-tailed *Calidris acuminata* Sandpipers in February a- March 2018.



Young Black-winged Stilt on Fuerteventura - Elis Simpson

### Asian region -

First records of a single Beach Thick-knee *Esacus magnirostris* and 20 Grey-tailed Tattlers *Tringa brevipes* on Snake island, off Enggano Island, Indonesia as reported in *Wader Study* the International Wader Study Group Journal Volume 127 Issue 2. Enggano Island lies 100km SW of Sumatra where there have been fewer than 10 records of Beach Thick-knee (1980-2020; all of which have been on the western side).

The first Grey-tailed Tattler was recorded as late as 1999 and few have been seen since so a flock of 20 is quite exceptional. All these more recent sightings probably point to increased birdwatching awareness with regard to the importance of the island for waders.

From Oriental Bird Club *Birding Asia* No 32; A Sulawesi Woodcock *Scolopax celebensis* was caught on a camera trap on the Minahasa Peninsula, Sulawesi, Indonesia. This is thought to be the first ever image take of this species. It was first discovered in 1917 but not described until 1921 by Joseph Harvey Riley. Nine specimens were collected in 1930-31 by Heinrich. Since that time there have been few records.

### Central America -

First Black Turnstone *Arenaria melanocephala* record for Central America, a single bird seen 12th May 2018 Delta del Estero Real, Nicaragua. Reported in the Neotropical Bird Club Journal *Cotinga* No 42.

The normal winter range of this species sees them remaining north of the Tropic of Cancer on the coasts of Sonora and Baja California in Mexico. This is only the second extralimital record well south of its normal range, the first being in 1968 when one was seen on the Galapagos Islands. They have in addition, been observed in Sinaloya and Nayarit just south of the tropic of Cancer in Mexico and in Colima some 800 km south of the nearest North American record.

This individual was mixing with 24 Ruddy Turnstones *Arenaria interpres*. It is thought likely that this bird remained for the period of the breeding season as it (or another) was seen in the same place, also with Ruddy Turnstones in July.



Black Turnstones, Washington USA - Elis Simpson



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



Two of the three Eurasian golden Plovers hatched from taken eggs - Jack Ashton-Booth

### UK - Wader Eggs Hatch After Being confiscated from an egg collector.

Three European Golden Plovers *Pluvialis apricaria* and one Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* have been released into the wild after they were found as eggs in an incubator belonging to an egg collector in South Yorkshire.

The reason an egg collector would have kept eggs in an incubator is not clear, but the unpleasant thought that these birds were destined for the taxidermist once they had hatched is unsettling in the extreme. Thankfully though, due to the vigilance of the South Yorkshire Police and the RSPB the plan was thwarted and congratulations are also due to Smith's Nurseries who looked after the eggs and raised the healthy juvenile birds ready for release.



The overnight sleeping arrangements - Colette Doughty

### New Zealand - Dedication and devotion no enough to save plover nest.

Ailsa McGilvary-Howard will be known to regular readers because of her articles and dedication to protecting Double-banded Plovers *Charadrius bicinctus*, known locally as Banded Dotterels, on the beaches near Kaikoura in New Zealand.

Recently she formed a watch team with herself and young companions Josh, Colette and Olivia for an all night vigil in an attempt to prevent the attentions of a marauding local cat at the nest.

Sleeping near a nest has enabled her to protect nests in the past. However this particular pair were easily frightened and therefore the team had to give them a great deal of space before they felt safe enough to return to the nest. Unfortunately despite the teams efforts the cat was not deterred, and made an early morning pass to the nest at 5.17 am.

Ailsa said that it is challenging to know that realistically this technique cannot be used long-term to save chicks and adult birds during the nesting the period and that responsible cat ownership is the only way forward in reducing wildlife mortality and improving breeding outcomes.

Despite the tragic outcome of this story it is heart-warming to know there are people like Ailsa and her team of youngsters who are prepared to take such drastic steps in order the help the little birds they clearly love so much.



Flightpath of 4BBRW - Adrian Reigan

### New Zealand - New world record for longest flight is set by another Bar-tailed Godwit.

A male Bar-tailed Godwit carrying a transmitter and known as 4BBRW on account of his 2 blue, 1 red and 1 white coloured leg ring combination has set a new world record for the longest flight ever recorded.

It came as part of a round trip from New Zealand, via South Korea, to Alaska (to breed) and then after a brief stop in southern Alaska direct from there back to New Zealand. It was that last leg that brought this bird to fame, although the entire journey was 28,625 km the last section was 12,050 km which it completed in 11 days of non-stop flight, encountering headwinds along the way holding him up. The previous record of 11,680 km was held by another godwit, a female this time, known as E7, which finally proved that the godwits were capable of flying from Alaska to New Zealand non-stop in 2007.

The flightpath of this incredible bird is shown here and the staggering accuracy of its arrival back to the place from whence it left New Zealand beggars belief. Somehow, out there over the seemingly endless and featureless ocean this bird knew exactly where it was and adjusted its direction to arrive where it wanted to be.

The stamina and fortitude of these birds is amazing and quite how they came to evolve such a strategy is mind boggling. If this feat, performed by a small bird unaided with no technology to aid it doesn't fit into the awesome category, nothing does. These birds are inspirational in the extreme, truly phenomenal and they deserve the greatest respect and all the help we can give them to survive.

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



Variable Oystercatcher K-7446 - Emily Roberts

### New Zealand - Long lived Variable Oystercatcher recorded.

The oldest known Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* reached 43 years 4 months, with the second oldest 36 years 11 months. The oldest American Oystercatcher *H. palliatus* was 23 years 10 months. The oldest known Pied Oystercatcher *H. longirostris* is 32 years 2 months and the oldest Sooty Oystercatcher *H. fuliginosus* was 25 years 6 months.

A report from New Zealand concerning a Variable Oystercatcher with leg flag number K-7446 appears to be the oldest oystercatcher of any of the New Zealand species, and is possibly the second oldest oystercatcher of any species globally.

K-7446 was banded by Ray Benfell as a chick on Somes Island, Wellington Harbour on 2 January 1982. and was seen and photographed (left) on 25th October 2020 so the bird is now 38 years and 10 months of age.



## A couple of EAAFP events that may be of interest.

Flyway Youth Forum 2020 November 28/29 & December 5/6

Also;

if you are participating in the [Wader Conservation World Watch](#) and are in the EAAF, then perhaps you may find some flagged waders. If so, photograph them and enter the

## #ILEGFLAGCHALLENGE Photo Contest

Information and submissions via [tiny.cc/legflag](https://tiny.cc/legflag)



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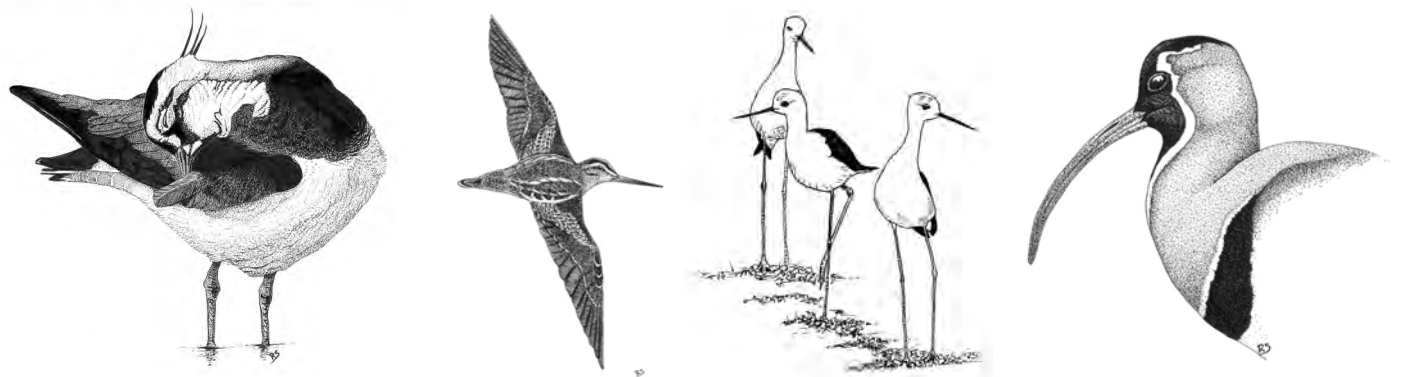
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# New Wader Quest book - A Quest for Waders

A new book from Wader Quest Publishing by Rick and Elis Simpson. This book chronicles the journeys they made to see waders around the world, and the parallel journey of Wader Quest from fundraiser to Registered Charity.



## Foreword by Dominic Couzens

Original artworks throughout by Rick Simpson  
Photographs of most species seen by Elis Simpson

*'This is a cracking read whether you're a waderphile or not. Ticking, dipping, ducking, diving, it's all here as Rick and Elis go through their version of a mid-life crisis to set up Wader Quest. A must-read for all birders.'*

- Iolo Williams: Naturalist and T. V. presenter.

*'Rick and Elis' enthusiasm ripples through this book, what they have achieved, bringing waders to the forefront of peoples minds alongside their conservation is second to none. A brilliant read which, like their beloved waders, will have you probing deeper into this amazing family.'*

- Tim Appleton MBE: Founder of Birdfair Rutland Water and Creator of Rutland Water Nature Reserve.

*'I was hooked by the prologue. The tragedy of extinction was brought home to me on seeing, in Morocco in 1990, three of the last few slender-billed curlews to exist. Thanks to the commitment of conservation organisations from around the world and support of people like Rick and Elis the spoon-billed sandpiper has a fighting chance of making it.'*

- Debbie Pain: Conservationist and scientist.

*'Waders are one of the most threatened groups of birds, with several species on the brink of extinction and many more suffering serious declines. This makes Rick and Elis Simpson's Wader Quest - a charity dedicated to protecting waders and highlighting their plight - important and necessary. This fascinating book tells the story of how the organisation grew from their quest to see all the world's waders, before it was too late.'*

- Rebecca Armstrong: Editor of Birdwatch magazine.

orders - [sales@waderquest.net](mailto:sales@waderquest.net)



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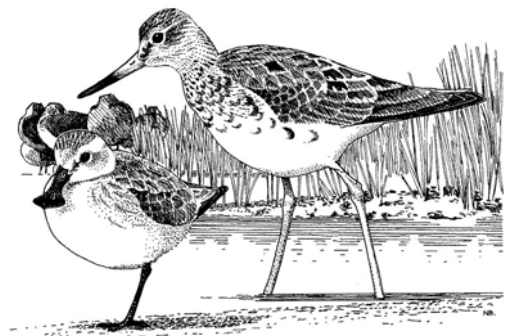


**sales@waderquest.net**

(price includes p&p in UK. Outside UK please ask.)



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## 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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## Wader Quest's Subscription Policy has Changed

**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 received 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





# WADER QUEST

## THE NATURAL HOME FOR WADER LOVERS

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

### FRIENDS OF WADER QUEST AND SPONSORSHIP RATES

#### Friends of Wader Quest:

|            |        |
|------------|--------|
| Individual | £10.00 |
| Family     | £15.00 |
| Life       |        |
| £200.00    |        |

#### Sponsors:

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| Club      | £20.00 |
| Corporate | £50.00 |

Rates effective from 06/04/2019

[membership@waderquest.net](mailto:membership@waderquest.net)

### Wader Quest Personnel

**Board of Trustees:** Rick Simpson (Chair) Ian Dearing (Secretary), Chris Lamsdell, Ray Heaton, Elis Simpson. (1 vacancy.)

**Executive Committee:** Andrew MacGarvey (Chair), Louise Hathaway (Treasurer), Vacancy (Secretary), Corinne MacGarvey (Membership), Phil Hadley, Dylan Parry-Davies, Elis Simpson, Rick Simpson, Ellie Wise (Vacancies.)

**Grants Panel:** Rick Simpson, Jannik Hansen. (Vacancy.)

**Vacancies:** Interested parties in any of the above, please email [info@waderquest.net](mailto:info@waderquest.net) for further information.

**Next Trustee meeting:** TBA

**Next Executive Committee meeting:** 9th November 2020

**Next AGM:** 2021 TBA

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

