



WADER QUEST

THE NEWSLETTER Volume 10; Issue 2 2023



Piping Plover chick with bug breakfast - Rina Miele

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THE NATURAL HOME FOR WADER LOVERS

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Grants Panel:

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Vacancies: Interested parties in any of the above, please email info@waderquest.net for further information.

Next meeting:

Trustees: TBA May 2023

Exec. Comm: TBA May 2023

AGM: 26th November 2023

Friends of Wader Quest fees:

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Life £200.00

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Wader Quest's aims

To raise awareness about the challenges waders face in the modern world.

To raise funds to support wader conservation worldwide, especially those involving locally led community projects.

Our mission:

To promote, for the benefit of the public, the conservation and protection of waders or shorebirds and improvements of their physical and natural habitats; and

To advance the education of the public regarding the conservation and protection of waders or shorebirds and their natural habitats.

Wader Quest is an entirely voluntary organisation.

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Edited by Rick Simpson

Wader Quest news

Editorial Comment

As birds migrate across the world, either returning to breeding grounds in the Northern Hemisphere or leaving them in the Southern Hemisphere, it is time for us to remember just how important the act of migration is for these birds. For a long time we have realised the necessity to save a space for the birds in order that they can breed, and rest on their wintering grounds, but for too long we assumed that the bit in between was less important. So many studies now show how site-faithful birds are, not just on their destination locations, but also at stop-over places along the routes in between, that we now fully understand that removing one of these locations that migrants depend upon is nothing short of a death sentence for those birds that use it. Nowhere is this more vividly demonstrated than in the Yellow Sea region of Asia, a bottleneck for migrating water birds of all kinds, and especially waders. The wholesale destruction of that region has caused untold damage to vulnerable populations of birds. Thankfully the rate of destruction is slowing, but a recent report (see page XX) suggests that there is still much work to be done, and urgently.

Your support for Wader Quest has never been more important, be it as a Friend of Wader Quest, a Sponsor, or a donor, we guarantee that every penny that you send to us will be used exclusively to help fund wader conservation projects around the world. Thank you to everyone who has contributed your support is greatly appreciated, by us and I'm sure by the birds.

Trustee updates and news

No comings or goings to report.

Executive Committee updates and news

No comings and goings to report.

Grants Panel updates and news - Ray Heaton Chair Wader Quest Grants Panel

Since the last report, grants have been made to three studies of different plover species in South America, these studies all involve nest site protection, chick survival and outreach work amongst the local people and user groups in the respective areas. The species involved are Collared Plover *Charadrius collaris* in Colombia, Two-banded Plover *Charadrius falklandicus* in Guatemala, Snowy Plover *Charadrius nivosus* at Valdes in Patagonia Argentina. A further grant was made to a multi species flyway and banding study in Mongolia. We hope to share reports from these and other projects we have funded in future newsletters.

Recently we have made a grant to a study of American Oystercatcher *Haematopus palliatus*, at two sites showing population decline. We feel it is important to study species that are still considered widespread, even still 'common', in order to help understand the global decline in wading bird species populations.

Further funding has been given to the Shropshire Curlews Project in part to help extend the study of the Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* into different nesting areas. This project is demonstrating very poor chick survival in spite of nest protection and the majority of the recovered chick bands show evidence of predation.

We are currently looking at how we can help a Wading Bird Festival to be held in Australia's 'Top End', the Darwin-Garramilla Shorebird Festival on September 15-17th. www.shorebirdfestival.com.au This festival aims to raise the profile of all the migratory species using this important flyway and all the resident species of shorebird, thereby highlighting threats to their future survival.

Events planned UK:

We will be taking part in this May's [Global Big Day](#). If you would like to join us and help Wader Quest remain on the leader board for teams, then wherever you are in the world, please share your eBird lists with us; WaderQuestTeam.

We have been granted a stand at the [Global Birdfair](#) on July 14th - 16th July 2023. and have also been given a talk slot, the title is - Waders; myths, legends and faux pas. Date and time tbc.

We will be attending and making a presentation at the new [Birdwatchers Ball](#) event on the 12th of August at the Churchend Brewery, Ridge Lane, Nr. Nuneaton, Warks. CV10 0RD from 13.00 to 22.00hrs.

We will be returning to the [Spurn Mig Fest](#) event this year on the 8th - 10th September at the Spurn Bird Observatory, Easington Road, Kilnsea, Hull, HU12 0UB

Fingers crossed that the Northwest Birdwatching Festival takes place at WWT Martin Mere Wetland Centre again this year. Watch this space.

We will be holding our annual [Wader Conservation World Watch](#) event which will take place on the 4th and 5th of November. We hope to be able to surpass last year's totals and have many more participants.

The AGM date is the 26th of November. It will probably be a virtual meeting again this year and invites will be sent out before the event.

Events planned Brazil : (Wader Quest Brasil / Projeto Aves Limícolas)

[Avistar Brasil 2023](#) São Paulo - May 19th - 21 with a talk *Limícolas: como elas conquistaram o Litoral Paulista*. (Waders: how they won the São Paulo coast) at 13.30 on the 19th Auditorium 5. Also on Friday and Saturday evening at 18.30 Wader Quest Brasil/Projeto Aves Limícolas will be doing their "Noites escuras, migrações seguras" (Dark nights: safe migrations) event, where they highlight the migrations of waders and the risks of light pollution.

2nd [Congresso de Ornitologia das Americas \(oca2023.com.br\)](#) Gramado, Rio Grande do Sul, 1st to 4th August 2023.

Wader Quest news cont'd

Talks:

Since the last newsletter Rick and Elis have carried out a further 6 talks to clubs and societies with a combined audience of 208 people. The income from sign-ups, sales and donations from those talks came to £804.52. The total raised this financial year (since April 6th) from talks is £556.40, and the number people reached is 175.

To request a talk for your club or group email
waderquest@gmail.com

Forthcoming talks scheduled this year, if one is near you why not pop along to say hello;

2023

Time	Date	Group	Talk title
(19.30)	15/05/2023	Sutton Coldfield RSPB (3rd)	A Quest for Waders - Wader Quest on Safari
(19.30)	16/06/2023	Potters Bar & Barnet RSPB (5th visit)	Marathons, slides and leapfrogs – A Fascinating Diversity of Wader Migration strategies
(19.30)	17/08/2023	Wensum Valley Birdwatching Soc. (2nd)	A Quest for Waders - Wader Quest on Safari
(19.30)	19/10/2023	Nuneaton Bird Club	Marathons, slides and leapfrogs – A Fascinating Diversity of Wader Migration strategies
(19.30)	25/10/2023	Huntingdonshire RSPB (2nd visit)	New Moon on the Wane - The Curse of the Curlews
(19.00 tbc)	30/11/2023	Watford RSPB (2nd) ZOOM	New Moon on the Wane - The Curse of the Curlews
(19.30)	08/12/2023	South-East Cheshire Ornithological Soc.	Wader Quest

Our aims:

TO RAISE AWARENESS...

about the challenges waders face in the modern world.

TO RAISE FUNDS...

to support wader conservation initiatives worldwide, especially those involving locally led, community projects.



Snowy Plover Chick — Teresa Hedden

Wader Conservation World Watch 10

**November
4th &/or 5th
2023**

**Wherever you happen
to be in the world.**

[Click here for details of how to take part.](#)

Wader Quest news - cont'd

GLOBAL BIG DAY 2023

(globalbirding.org)

May 13th 2023

Join the Wader Quest team.

**Simply go birding wherever you
are in the world.**

**Record all your sightings on eBird
and share with ;**

WaderQuestTeam

**Let's beat last year' total for the team
(7th place 402 species)**





Wader Quest Brasil news

- Karina Ávila and Bruno Lima



Água: vital para as aves ([English version](#))

Existe um lugar no Brasil que recebe um enorme aporte de água doce provinda de um grande rio. Na foz desse rio forma-se um imenso estuário, com um labirinto de canais de manguezais, bancos de lodo e ilhas que podem ser bem pequenas ou ter vários quilômetros. À frente desse estuário, há uma das maiores e mais bem preservadas praias da região, a Ilha Comprida, com 74km de extensão. O céu se enche de bandos enormes de guarás-vermelhos *Eudocimas ruber*, milhares de garças *ardeidae*, colhereiros *Platalea ajaja* e biguás *Nannopterum brasilianum*. Nos rios e estuários, botos-cinzas *Sotalia guianensis* perseguem os numerosos cardumes. Se você pensou no Rio Amazonas e na floresta de mesmo nome, ou em qualquer um dos imensos manguezais do norte da América do Sul, se equivocou: essa região se encontra a pouco mais de 100km da maior cidade da América Latina: São Paulo.

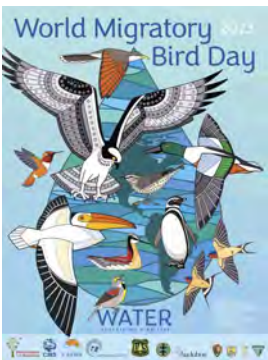
Localizada entre as vertentes florestadas da Serra do Mar e o Oceano Atlântico, essa região é conhecida como Lagamar – Complexo Lagunar de Cananéia, Iguape e Ilha Comprida. É um Sítio Ramsar, detentor de uma grande quantidade de água, que por sua vez alimenta muitos peixes e crustáceos – para o deleite de aves e pessoas.



Guarás-vermelhos — Karina Ávila



Maçarico-de-sobre-branco — Karina Ávila



Falando sobre a importância da água, esse ano a campanha do Dia Mundial das Aves Migratórias está focada na conservação da água, intitulada “Água; vital para as aves”. Essa data é organizada pela Environment for the Americas (EFTA), pela Convenção das Espécies Migratórias (CMS), e pelo Convênio de Aves Aquáticas Migratórias da África-Eurásia (AEWA).

A campanha elegeu dez espécies que ilustram a importância da água para as aves, representando não apenas a diversidade de aves, como também as várias maneiras de que as aves dependem de ambientes aquáticos saudáveis. O Beija-flor-ruivo *Selasphorus rufus* depende do néctar das flores, que crescem graças à água. O Pisa-n'água *Phalaropus tricolor* depende dos lagos de águas salobra durante sua migração, o Papa-lagarta-de-asa-vermelha *Coccyzus americanus* utiliza as florestas às margens dos rios para se alimentar e fazer seus ninhos. Uma das espécies mais inspiradoras talvez seja a águia-pescadora *Pandion haliaetus*, que ilustra uma história de êxito na conservação das aves aquáticas.



Pisa n'agua — Ernani Knupfer

Durante todo esse ano, a Wader Quest Brasil e o Projeto Aves Limícolas irão realizar atividades em parceria com a Environment for the Americas, para ressaltar a importância da água para as aves, principalmente na região do Lagamar. A ideia central é ressaltar a importância dessa região, que alimenta pescadores tradicionais e milhares de aves, tanto residentes quanto migratórias.



Pescadores tradicionais — Karina Ávila



Wader Quest Brasil news

- Karina Ávila and Bruno Lima



Não é lixo, é comida! ([English version](#))



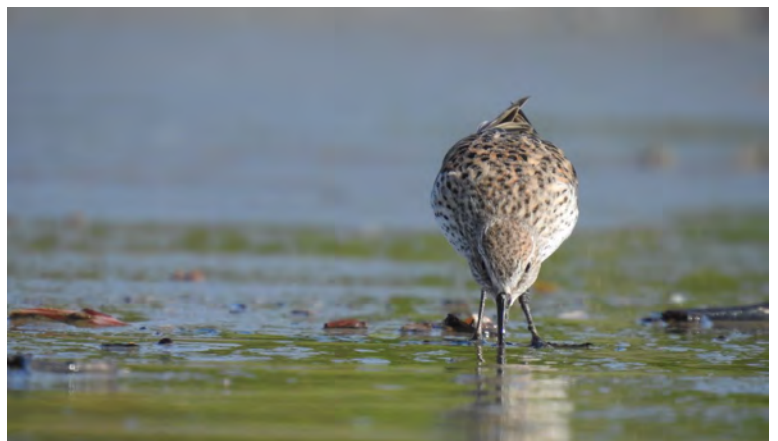
Trator limpando a praia — Karina Ávila

Ao longo da costa, a maré sobe e desce duas vezes ao dia. A cada maré alta, algas marinhas, conchas e outros objetos são lançados na praia, e ficam para trás quando a maré baixa. É nessa hora que as aves limícolas vão à costa à procura desse alimento. Acontece que muitas vezes esse material orgânico é visto como lixo, por isso as prefeituras utilizam tratores para a limpeza de praia.

Tratores na praia são uma ameaça terrível: além de espantar as aves e compactarem o solo e esmagarem pequenos animais e sementes, removem toda a camada de algas, pequenos crustáceos, vermes marinhos, conchas e tudo aquilo que serve de alimento às aves. Sem essa camada de matéria orgânica, a praia se torna um deserto estéril!



Imagine uma pequena ave como um maçarico-de-pernas-amarelas *Tringa flavipes* que, após uma longa viagem, chega às praias esperando encontrar alimento, mas tudo o que encontra é areia e sol!



Maçarico-de-pernas-amarelas (da frente) e maçarico-grande-de-pernas-amarelas *Tringa melanoleuca*; maçarico-de-sobre-branco se alimentando - Karina Ávila

O Projeto Aves Limícolas é um dos conselheiros do Conselho Municipal de Meio Ambiente de Peruíbe-SP, e recentemente tem pautado a problemática dos tratores nesse Conselho. Durante algumas reuniões, discutimos como poderia ser feita a limpeza das praias sem o uso de tratores – pois ainda temos que lidar com todo o lixo deixado pelos humanos.

E, em uma verdadeira vitória da sociedade civil, ficou decidido que nos trechos com maior concentração de aves limícolas – como a Praia do Tanigwá – não serão mais utilizados tratores! Enquanto isso, a Prefeitura de Peruíbe vai analisar os contratos de limpeza de praia, para que os tratores sejam banidos de todas as praias do município, buscando alternativas de limpeza de praia que removam o lixo humano e gerem emprego para a população.



New species for Gauteng Province – Rick Simpson



Double-banded Courser in Gauteng Province - Sue Oertli

This week Sue Oertli of Wader Quest South Africa got in touch with a story she wished to tell us about.

Sue is the eBird Reviewer for the Gauteng Province in South Africa and recently she received a sighting to review concerning a Double-banded Courser *Rhinoptilus africanus* that had been seen on the Vaal Dam near the Stillbaai Yacht Club, which is within the Gauteng provincial boundary.

The exciting thing about this sighting is that it was to be a new species for Gauteng Province. Presumably this would be of the subspecies *granti* as that would be the closest population to Gauteng. When we visited South Africa Sue took us just out of Gauteng and into the Free State to see this species. The site was near a town called Parys and we saw a single pair with a chick. This was the last remaining pair at the site where several had been before being studied by a gentleman called Dup Duplessis. The chick we saw was possibly the last to be hatched at the site, due to an increasing use of the area by quad bikes. This site is very close to the Gauteng Province border so it is perhaps a little surprising one has not been seen before, but, if what has happened to the small colony at Parys is happening elsewhere, then maybe it is not so surprising. The location for the sighting is a little under 100 km from Parys.

Sue managed to get to see the bird in question to add to her already impressive Gauteng list on the 29th of April and perhaps the best part of the story, at least from Sue's point of view, is that this was the 500th species to be recorded in Gauteng Province. How lovely that it should be a wader.

From the library - Bird Life of the Borders (1907; 2nd Edition) - Abel Chapman.

This issue from the library of Phil Hadley - Wader Quest Trustee and Secretary.

Among the bogs and mosses, snipe course high overhead, a dozen at a time and their strange bleating note comes down from mid air, alternating with the sharp metallic "chip-chip" when flying free. That other sound, the "drumming" is only heard as the snipe, when in rapid flight, suddenly plunges vertically earthwards, and always against the wind. Snipe only drum—or at least, drum loudest, against the wind, and when thus hurling themselves headlong downwards.

The "drumming" commences about mid-March, and I have heard it as late as July 15th; but by that date it has lost its initial vigour. While nesting, snipe have another note, croaking or querulous, uttered when on the ground, or just rising therefrom; I have noticed it when the bird was perched on a rail.



Conservation beyond boundaries

- Graham Appleton

The pressures on estuaries have never been greater, as we continue to turn to them for food and energy and to create land for new developments, such as ports and airports. These muddy havens might be protected by national and international statutes but legally-enforceable conservation designations can sometimes melt away when there is money to be made, as discussed in [Tagus Estuary: for birds or planes](#)

The Tagus Estuary is Portugal's largest wetland and the country's most important site for many waterbird species. Part of the estuary is designated under the EU Birds Directive, as a Special Protection Area (SPA), and there is a smaller Ramsar Site at its core. The Portuguese Environment Agency has approved plans to construct an international airport in Montijo, at the heart of the Tagus estuary, on a site overlapping part of the SPA. It's a decision that is being contested in the Portuguese courts, with the support of conservation organisations across Europe. The site is an Important Bird Area, with four waders in the top seven qualifying species. Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* head the list, alongside Dunlin *Calidris alpina*, Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* and Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*.



In a 2023 paper in [Animal Conservation](#), Josh Nightingale and colleagues investigate the movements of colour-marked Black-tailed Godwits, to see how much they fly into, out of and around the Tagus Special Protection Area. They conclude that a proposed new airport at Montijo, to serve Lisbon and the surrounding area, will affect twenty times as many *islandica* Black-tailed Godwits as suggested in an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The paper is summarised in [WaderTales blog #136](#).



Environmental Impact Assessments

Developers often argue that they only want to use a small area; taking a bite out of an estuary may seem to affect only a small fraction of a Protected Area. Surely that's not unreasonable? As part of the application process, they ask consultants to produce an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

Conservation beyond boundaries - cont'd

For wintering waders, an EIA involves a small number of counts of the birds in the affected area. Such a sampling regime does not take account of the fact that birds move around – a lot! When I visit my local supermarket, I may see fewer than 60 other customers but I know that the store serves a much bigger community. How big a community of Black-tailed Godwits feed in the mud that seems destined to lie under the flightpath of planes taking off and landing at a new Montijo Airport?

It is possible that an Environmental Impact Assessment will show that there are no species of note that will be affected by a new development but it is more likely that there will be issues to resolve. Perhaps the damage can be mitigated, by developing alternative habitat areas for key species. For waders, this could mean taking down a section of sea wall to turn farmland back into mudflats or creating replacement sites in which to roost. Mitigation for waders can sometimes work but it can be of limited use, as we see when planting young trees is suggested as a replacement for an established woodland.

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), conducted for the Montijo Airport development, considered the main threat to bird conservation to be noise disturbance, with an aeroplane taking off or landing every 2.5 minutes and flying at low altitude (<200 m) over the SPA ([see article by José Alves in Wader Study](#)). Such disturbance can cause birds to take flight, with consequent increases in daily energy expenditure and the risk or collision with aircraft.

The new study by Josh Nightingale and colleagues uses Network Analysis to assess how much connection there is between a threatened section of a protected site and other parts of an estuary. Information on movements of individual birds, generated by ringing, can help us to understand how birds move around estuaries and quantify the importance of different parts of a Protected Area.

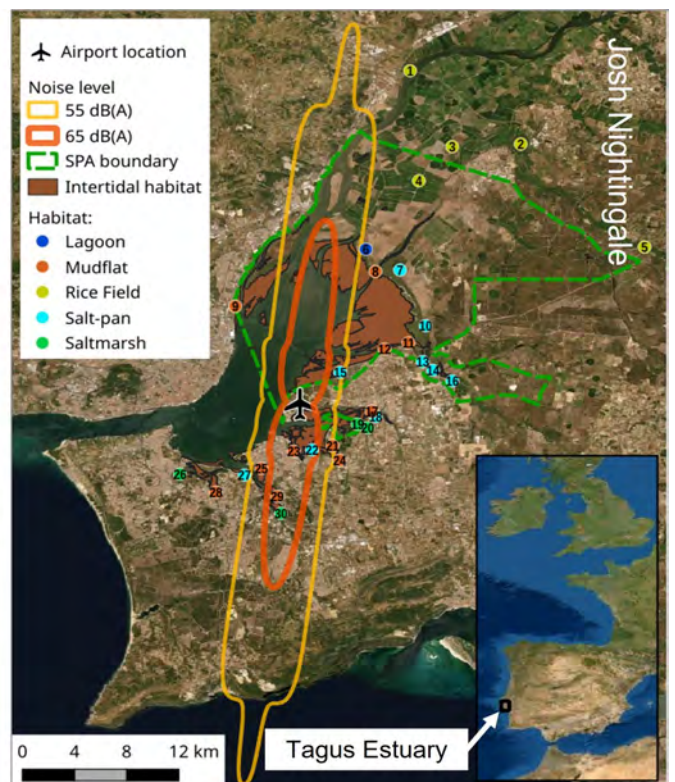
Impacts on Black-tailed Godwits

Islandica Black-tailed Godwits have been intensively studied since 1995, when the first birds were individually colour-ringed. Sightings of these birds have been reported by thousands of observers across the whole range of the subspecies and we have learnt a huge amount about migration. To get a flavour of the importance of these reports (and the dedication of birdwatchers) [read Godwits and Godwiteers](#).

In the early part of the winter, *islandica* Black-tailed Godwits are most likely to be found feeding on the Tagus estuary itself, with many moving to inland feeding sites, particularly rice fields, after Christmas. When Josh and his colleagues analysed movements of marked Black-tailed Godwits into and out of the area that will be impacted by aircraft taking off and landing, they found that up to 68% of *islandica* Black-tailed Godwits will be affected. This is much higher than the estimate of between 0.5% to 5.5% that was quoted in the EIA. The lower estimate is based on a 65 decibel (dB)(A) threshold, rather than 55 dB(A) used in the paper by Josh, uses old counts and does not consider bird movements. Please see the blog and paper for more details. The infographic alongside shows what this means in practice, when considering a flock of godwits.



Colour-ringed Black-tailed Godwit



Conservation beyond boundaries - cont'd

Conservation implications

The approach developed by Josh Nightingale is really neat. For the Tagus, it shows that over half of colour-marked Black-tailed Godwits use sites outside the Special Protection Area, as currently defined, and that the majority of the most important sites that provide connectivity across the estuary are also unprotected.



Josh Nightingale working on a Black-tailed Godwit

Using Black-tailed Godwits as an example, the research team show that the EIA may have underestimated the impact of the airport by a factor of about 20. When disturbed by aircraft or scared off to reduce strike risk, more energy will be expended and some birds may permanently desert key feeding or roosting areas. Research elsewhere has shown that displacements can have temporary and even long-term effects on the survival rates of affected individuals.

To quote from the paper, *“Protected Areas are a critically important conservation tool to protect populations, especially as ranges shift in response to climate change. To secure the integrity of PAs and the populations they support, we need to be able to accurately assess the impacts of developments inside and outside PA boundaries. Animal-tracking data offer exciting and feasible opportunities to assess PAs’ contributions to protecting populations of mobile species and the potential for adverse effects of external developments on PA integrity.”*

There are two take-home messages from this paper. Firstly, when defining the boundaries of a Special Protection Area or Ramsar site, it would be useful to analyse the movements of marked birds, so as to include roost sites and feeding sites that are strongly connected to the core area. Secondly, and just as importantly, there need to be better guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessments, so that use can be made of information generated by colour-ringed and satellite-tagged birds when assessing the real number of individuals that rely upon threatened areas. The new paper will be used to support legal arguments aimed at stopping the development of the new airport at Montijo, on the Tagus Estuary. This research has already attracted tremendous media attention in Portugal.



Astrid Kant
Black-tailed Godwits



Black-tailed Godwits in flight - Elis Simpson

Hoo

Wader conservation in action; Ynyslas National Nature Reserve, West Wales – Phil Hadley



View across Dyfi Estuary from Ynyslas – Phil Hadley

Background and geography

The beautiful dunes at Ynyslas are part of the Dyfi National Nature Reserve and is located on the West Wales coast midway between Machynlleth and Aberystwyth and is managed by Natural Resources Wales.

The sand dunes of the reserve are situated on the southern side of the Dyfi estuary which is the largest and most important estuary opening into Cardigan Bay. There is a large sand spit at the mouth of the estuary which forms part of the extensive dune system of Ynyslas with the North shore being part of the Snowdonia National Park.

The estuary is a scheduled Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) having vast areas of internationally important mudflats, sandbanks and saltmarsh providing vital areas for feeding and roosting wetland birds. It is approximately 5 miles long by 1.5 miles at its widest point with three-quarters of the estuary comprising sand flats and the remainder, saltmarsh, concentrated on the South shore and near to the seaward end.

From September through to March when the tide is receded, the sandbanks and mudflats are host to good numbers of wading birds and as the tide rises the birds move closer to the land where they can be viewed with binoculars and scope and even a camera lens if you are patient and quiet.

Visiting

I am privileged to visit this wonderful site several times a year throughout the seasons and try to plan my visiting around the ebb of the tide as the advancing water pushes the far off birds into view as they continue to rest and feed on the sandbanks and mudflats.

I visited in the first week in April this year, parking in my normal spot, the designated area on the beach adjacent to the Ynyslas Visitor Centre. This is when you get your first very pleasing view across the estuary to Aberdovey on the north shore. On arrival you are greeted by friendly, enthusiastic and knowledgeable reserve staff who provide a reserve guide with maps together with useful information about what to expect during your visit and rules about using defined paths, boardwalks and dog walking.



Beach access and parking with view across Dyfi estuary – Phil Hadley

Wader conservation in action; Ynyslas National Nature Reserve, West Wales – cont'd

What struck me immediately was the emphasis on the conservation work taking place on the reserve with large cordoned off areas up from spring through summer, designated for breeding birds, particularly Common Ringed Plovers *Charadrius hiaticula*.



Ynyslas Nature Reserve signage – Phil Hadley

Scanning the mudflats to the North I could immediately see good numbers of Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* and Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* and while viewing a pair of Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* I spotted a group of small birds on an adjacent sandbank. To my pleasure the birds turned out to be 6 Common Ringed Plovers, 2 of which were busily feeding with the other 4 resting. I also noticed through my binoculars that one of the birds had a leg tag in situ on its left tarsus, I hastily focused my scope to see if I could read the tag.

There is always an air of excitement when viewing a bird with leg tag because you know there is the potential to find out more about the history of the bird.

Making sure that I didn't disturb the birds, I managed to settle in a good position to clearly be able to read the tag as '36C' and also notably a yellow tag also on the birds left tibia and indeed managed to take some record photographs with my telephoto lens.



Common Ringed Plover showing the '36C' tag on its left tarsus (left) and a yellow colour

On returning home I submitted my findings to the team at Ynyslas NNR and was pleased to receive a very detailed and prompt response from Justin Lyons (Senior Officer – Land Management, Natural Resources Wales), who provided the following information: -

The colour-ringing is part of a project which is managed by Tony Cross (Mid Wales Ringing Group) with aims to study the origin, distribution and turnover rate of Common Ringed Plovers using this important (RAMSAR designated) migration stop-over site. In the last two years, around 150 Ringed Plovers have been individually colour-ringed with subsequent sightings recorded around the South of the UK, as well as movements recorded to and from Ireland, France and Spain.

It was confirmed that this particular bird logged as 'WHITE 36C' was ringed (NW84703) as an adult on 21st August 2020 at the Ynyslas Reserve. It was reported that it had been re-trapped there again on 3rd August 2022 when the colour rings were added. It is believed that this is one of the small number of Common Ringed Plovers that breed on site.

Wader conservation in action; Ynyslas National Nature Reserve, West Wales – cont'd

WHITE 36C was subsequently reported being seen in France on 10th October 2022 at Saint-Clement-des-Baleines/17, Charente-Maritime.

Reporting colour rings on birds is a vital process that enables the recording of invaluable data on birds' movements and survival, helping to understand the reasons for bird population declines and guide conservation initiatives to reverse the trends. It is therefore a real bonus to be having this project led by Tony Cross taking place at Ynyslas to further our understanding of the Plovers life history.



Ynyslas, Cordoned dune area - Phil Hadley

More email correspondence ensued with Justin who subsequently provided this overview of the conservation project concerning the Common Ringed Plovers on the Dyfi NNR;

Summary of Common Ringed Plover breeding on the Dyfi NNR – Ynyslas and the use of enclosures. Justin Lyons (Senior Officer – Land Management, Natural Resources Wales).

Common Ringed Plovers have had a long history of breeding at Ynyslas on the Dyfi NNR. However, between 2009 and 2017 just one pair were known to fledge young (see table right). The perceived reason for the decline was the rapid expansion of the dune system at the distal end of the sand dune with too much mobile sand and another breeding area on shingle becoming vegetated and reduced in area by erosion. During the period, there was no change in the public's popularity of the site; Ynyslas dunes (approx. 70ha just vegetated area) receives approximately 225,000 visitors annually, with possibly an increase in number of people visiting the site with dogs.

By 2017 the accretion and expansion of the dunes at the distal end of the spit had slowed down. In early July 2017 three Common Ringed Plover nests were found (the late date implying they had failed elsewhere). The area was cordoned off, but all 3 pairs failed (one nest looked as though it had been destroyed by a dog or fox, one nest buried in a sandstorm and the other inundated on a high tide). It did however galvanise us into trying to achieve the best possible conditions the following year.

So, the next year in late March the distal end of the dunes and intertidal were cordoned off with rope and frequent signage together with all visitors being asked not to walk into the area and to keep their dogs on a lead within the vicinity of the enclosure. The cordon rope is 536m long with over 20 signs on it and has 2 information panels. The total area of the enclosure is over 12ha when the tide is out and provides roughly 3ha that is suitable for the Plovers to nest on. Cordoning off the intertidal zone is a challenge but it is worth it for the chicks to be able to forage in as large an area as possible undisturbed.

Since 2020 we have also been cordoning off 2 other areas for nesting Plovers, one a large blow out (1ha) with shingle at the bottom (0.12ha) and 0.25ha of shingle ridge (storm beach). In both these areas nests have been successful and interestingly usually within a week the parents have moved the chicks to the large northern enclosure where there is less disturbance.

Fortunately, we have the visitor centre on site and a managed car park where we inform all visitors of the enclosures and the importance of keeping dog on leads and out of the enclosures. As you can imagine this can be a relentless task but

Ringed Plover number of breeding pairs that raise at least one chick at Ynyslas on the Dyfi National Nature Reserve				
Year	Successful breeding pairs	Total Number of chicks near fledging	Distal large Enclosure	Small Enclosures
1993	4	No data	-	-
1994	6	No data	-	-
1995	3	No data	-	-
1996	5	No data	-	-
1997	No data	No data	-	-
1998	3	No data	-	-
1999	4	No data	-	-
2000	4	No data	-	-
2001	3	No data	-	-
2002	4	No data	-	-
2003	3	No data	-	-
2004	4	No data	-	-
2005	3	No data	-	-
2006	5	No data	-	-
2007	2	5	-	-
2008	2	4	-	-
2009	0	0	-	-
2010	0	0	-	-
2011	0	0	-	-
2012	0	0	-	-
2013	0	0	-	-
2014	0	0	-	-
2015	0	0	-	-
2016	1	2	-	-
2017	0	0	-	-
2018	1	3	1	0
2019	2	5	1	1
2020	3	6	3	0
2021	7	14	5	2
2022	7	11	4	3

Wader conservation in action; Ynyslas National Nature Reserve, West Wales – cont'd

essential for the breeding success of the Plovers. We also use social media to put across the messages and share the success.

Below is a table of a summary together with maps and photographs of last year's breeding of Common Ringed Plovers at Ynyslas with 7 successful pairs and one successful pair of Oystercatchers, The first table (on the previous page) summarises the breeding success (or lack of it) on site since 2003; the gradual rise since 2018 is very encouraging and hopefully this year will be too. Regarding 2023, there is currently (03/05/2023) at least one pair on eggs already and another 2 pairs with territories and the Oystercatcher pair are back so hopefully they will lay and produce chicks too.

SUMMARY OF NESTS AND CHICK DEVELOPMENT FOR RING PLOVER AND OYSTERCATCHER ON DYFI NNR - YNYSLAS 2022										RP - Ringed Plover	OC - Oystercatcher
Nest Number	Species	SN Co-ords	Nest first seen	Suspected	Location	Nest Failed	Date chicks last seen	Development when last seen	Number of chicks last seen	Description	
1 (A)	RP	60770 94744		09-May	Main Enclosure					No evidence of chicks	
2 (B)	RP	60838 94764	09-May		Main Enclosure		21-Jun	Near fledging	2	2 birds near fledging correspond to when suspected of nesting	
3 (C)	RP	60542 93766	12-May		Blow out		06-Jun	Near fledging	1	1 bird near fledging correspond to when suspected of nesting	
4 (D)	RP	60733 94734		17-May	Main Enclosure					No evidence of chicks	
5 (F)	RP	60879 84740	06-Jun		Main Enclosure		21-Jun	2 weeks	2	Corresponds to alarming pair	
6 (G)	RP	60624 94670		06-Jun	Main Enclosure					No evidence of chicks	
7 (H)	RP	60515 94382			Temp Enclosure		29-Jun	Near fledging	1	Corresponds young chicks to near fledging dates	
8 (I)	RP	60942 94644	15-Jun		Main Enclosure		25-Jul	Near fledging	2	Corresponds young chicks to near fledging dates	
9 (K)	RP	60507 94354	03-Jul		Temp Enclosure		28-Jul	One week	2	Corresponds eggs to chicks	
10 (L)	RP	60805 94744			Main Enclosure		25-Jul	Near fledging	1	Corresponds young chicks to near fledging dates	
Totals			7	3					11		
1 (E)	OC	60951 94625	27-May	17-May	Main Enclosure		07-Jul	Near fledging	1	Last seen on edge of Leri Channel bend adjacent to carpark	

Two successful ringed plover nests outside reserve in temporary enclosure north of Borth starting level with golf course maintenance shed, set up by Carol Fielding with 4 and 3 chicks fledging.



Common Ringed Plover chicks - Ynyslas 2022



Plover chick and parent - Ynyslas 2022

Wader conservation in action; Ynyslas National Nature Reserve, West Wales – cont'd

Another benefit that the breeding enclosures, particularly the large one has had, is for the full development of the fragile embryo dunes to take place, that otherwise would be adversely impacted upon by footfall.



Full development of embryo dune beyond enclosure 2021 (view North towards Aberdyfi)



Full development of embryo dune beyond enclosure 2021

This conservation project has been further extended beyond the boundaries of the reserve by enabled collaborative working with local partners, in this case the local Borth Community Council.

This is because the plovers breed on land outside the ownership of NRW and so management measures have been put in place here too as it is obviously more difficult to control access in these areas. Dr Carol Fielding oversees this work liaising



Borth Beach – Dr Carol Fielding

closely with the council team. Carols' team have designed signs (see following page) with the help of a local artist and there are also temporary fences in place to try and restrict dogs and people once nests have been identified.

This project is still in a developmental stage, but Carol proudly announced that there was one fledged chick in 2021 and five chicks in 2022 from two adult pairs. So far in 2023 4 pairs have been identified with the first chicks due to hatch w/b 08/05/2023, so the fences and signage which started in 2022 seem to be making a real difference with increased numbers of fledging.

This area is slightly different habitat compared to the sand dune enclosures in the NNR and is actually an area of storm beach

Wader conservation in action; Ynyslas National Nature Reserve, West Wales – cont'd

Gofal – Adar yn Nythu
Watch Out – Nesting Birds About

Ebrill – Awst
April – August

Adar bach sy'n nythu ar y ddaear yw cwtlaid torchog maent yn nythu ar y glannau graean bras. Ni all cywion y cwtlaid torchog hedfan yn ystod 23 diwrnod cyntaf eu hoes.

Mae'r adar, y cywion a'r wyau wedi'u cuddliwio'n dda iawn ac mae'n hawdd i bobl a chŵn afonyddu arnynt neu eu niweidio.

Dyma sut y gallwch chi helpu ein cwtlaid torchog i fagu eu cywion yn llwyddiannus:

- Cadwch draw os byddwch chi'n gweld yr adar
- Cadwch elch ci dan reolaeth agos ger y graean bras

Ringed plovers are small, ground-nesting birds that nest on the shingle bank. Ringed plover chicks can't fly for their first 23 days.

The birds, chicks and eggs are all very well camouflaged and are easily disturbed or harmed by people and dogs.

Here's how you can help our ringed plovers to raise their chicks successfully:

- Keep your distance if you see the birds
- Keep your dog under close control near the shingle

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Watch Out – Nesting Birds About

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Cyngor Cymuned Y Borth / Borth Community Council



Cyngor Cymuned Y Borth / Borth Community Council



Signage, Borth Beach – Dr Carol Fielding

There is no doubt that there is an ongoing global ecological crisis taking place on our very watch with declining wader populations worldwide representing a matter of international conservation concern.

Two of the main causes of these declines are disturbance and habitat loss, mainly as a result of increasing human activity which is why conservation projects like the one initiated by the Ynyslas team are so vitally important, protecting and monitoring these key habitats for ground nesting birds.



Young Plover chick – Ynyslas 2022; J. Ibbotson



Oystercatcher with chick - Ynyslas 2022; J. Ibbotson

Cover photo; Piping Plover - Rina Miele



Piping Plover chick with bug breakfast - Rina Miele

I found a breeding site for these Piping Plovers and returned before sunrise some time later.

I laid low on the beach in dimly lit conditions in an area I anticipated them to be, and just waited for movement. They are extremely difficult to spot but with a keen eye and patience, they can be seen. Also the parents call to them so it's good to have an ear out for their peeping sounds as well. As they forage they are most concerned with procuring their food and watching out for predators, so as long as you don't make any sudden movements, the plover chicks may creep right near you. And that is essentially what happened. Though I do still shoot with a long super telephoto lens, 600mm, and I keep my distance. But it's about anticipating their movements; through many repeated visits watching them, seeing where they may go - not about chasing them around.

The chicks are extremely tiny, though being precocial* birds, start walking and foraging as soon as they are born. Of course they mimic the parents but they do it all themselves. So as seen in my photo this plover chick managed to snag a rather large breakfast bug!

[You can see more of Rina's wonderful photographs on instagram](#) or on her website rinamiele.com.

*See page 22; When precocious is cute.

Piping Plover - Rick Simpson

Piping Plover *Charadrius melodus* Ord 1824

IUCN Near Threatened

Scientific name explained:

- *Charadrius* - Late Latin; yellowish or tallow-eyed bird, mentioned in the late 4th Century Vulgate Bible. Derived from Greek *χαράδριος/kharadrios*, which was an unidentified, plain-coloured, nocturnal bird that dwelt in ravines and river valleys (*karadra* = ravine). According to some authors the sight of it could cure jaundice. Some consider this to be European Stone Curlew *Burhinus oedichnemus* leading to some Stone-Curlews being used in old medicine for this purpose.
- *melodus* - Latin *melodus* meaning melodious (*meloda* = song).

Alternative English names; American Piping Plover, Beach Bird, Belted Piping Plover, Feeble (Long Island), Oken's Plover, Western Piping Plover (*C. m. circumcinctus*).

Spanish names: Chorlitoje Chiflador (Nicaragua), Chorlitoje Silbador (Costa Rica), Chorlito Chiflador (Mexico), Chorlito Melódico (Puerto Rico), Chorlito Silbador (Dominican republic), Chorlo Chiflador (Mexico), Chorlo Silbador (Ecuador), Frailecillo Silbador (Cuba), Frailecito Patiamarillo (Venezuela), Playerito (Dominican Republic), Playero Melódico.

French names: Gravelot siffleur (Guadeloupe, Guyane), Pluvier siffleur.

Creole French names: Collier, Pluvier ollier (Guadeloupe), Ti Plivye siflè (Haiti).

Portuguese name: Batuira-melodiosa (Brazil).

Piping Plover - cont'd

Taxonomy; two subspecies recognised

C. m. melodus [Ord](#) 1824 - breeds in south-central Canada and north-central USA.

C. m. circumcinctus: [Coues](#) 1873 (protonym *Ægialitis melodus* var. *circumcinctus*) - breeds in eastern Canada, north-eastern USA.

But it was not always thus. In 1888 [Seebohm](#) wrote that there were two subspecies, and that some had claimed that the population in the Missouri Valley had developed a complete black pectoral band 'whilst the coast birds, probably finding it too conspicuous in such an exposed situation, have only acquired it on the sides of the breast.'

The significance of these breast bands, which are not consistent in all birds, has been variously disputed and refuted suggesting that just one, variable monotypic form exists; the variation in the breast band depending as it does instead upon the individual and based on sex, age, and, possibly, location. However, DNA testing has shown that the coastal and inland birds differ sufficiently to warrant subspecific status with the Great Lakes birds being more closely allied to the Prairie breeding population than to the Atlantic coastal birds. Colour ringing has suggested that there is no overlap between the two breeding populations.



Non breeding Piping Plover - Teresa Hedden



Breeding Piping Plover - Angela Cerelli Mercurio

Taxonomic history and synonyms;

Family: CHARADRIIDAE ([Leach](#) 1820)

Subfamily: CHARADRIINAE ([Leach](#) 1820)

The genus *Charadrius* was officially first used by [Linnaeus](#) in 1758 although it had been used previously by an Italian naturalist called Ulisse Aldrovandi in 1603 when referring to Common Ringed Plover as *Charadrius sive Hiaticula* (*Charadrius* or *Hiaticula*) both of which now refer to the Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*, which is the type species for the genus. Scientific naming of species is considered to have started with [Linnaeus](#) by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature so even if he has, as in this case, used a name already quoted elsewhere, he still remains the authority for that taxon.

Synonyms:

In 1888 most of the species in what we now refer to as the Charadriidae were considered to be in the genus *Charadrius*, with the exception of the *Vanellus* Lapwings, which had various genera at the time. [Seebohm](#), who agreed with this position, wrote with some irritation; 'The synonymy of the genus *Charadrius* is another appalling instance of the 'furor genericus' especially on the part of the arch genus-splitter [Bonaparte](#). A genus has been provided for about every two species'.

Piping Plover - cont'd

Many of those genera are now indeed valid (in bold), others however are not;

Genus	Authority	Year	Refers to (Seebohm)	(Present)
Pluvialis	Brisson	1760	<i>C. pluvialis</i>	Eurasian Golden Plover <i>P. apricaria</i>
<i>Squatarola</i>	Brisson	1760	<i>C. helveticus</i>	Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>
<i>Aegialitis</i>	Boie	1822	<i>C. hiaticula</i>	Common Ringed Plover <i>C. hiaticula</i>
<i>Eudromius</i>	Brehm	1831	<i>C. morinellus</i>	Eurasian Dotterel <i>C. morinellus</i>
Anarhynchus	Quoy & Gaimard	1833	<i>C. frontalis</i>	Wrybill <i>A. frontalis</i>
Oreopholus	Jardine & Selby	1835	<i>C. totanistrostris</i>	Tawny-throated Dotterel <i>O. ruficollis</i>
Erythrogonys	Gould	1837	<i>C. rufiventris</i>	Red-kneed Dotterel <i>E. cinctus</i>
<i>Hiaticula</i>	Gray	1840	<i>C. hiaticula</i>	Common Ringed Plover <i>C. hiaticula</i>
Thinornis	Gray	1846	<i>C. novæ zelandiæ</i>	Shore Plover <i>T. navaeseelandiæ</i>
Pluvianellus	Gray	1846	<i>C. sociabilis</i>	Magellanic Plover <i>P. sociabilis</i>
<i>Oxyechus</i>	Bonaparte	1856	<i>C. vociferus</i>	Killdeer <i>C. vociferus</i>
<i>Octhodromus</i>	Reichenbach <i>fide</i> Bonaparte	1856	<i>C. wilsoni</i>	Wilson's Plover <i>C. wilsonia</i>
<i>Zonibyx</i>	Bonaparte	1856	<i>C. modestus</i>	Rufous-chested Dotterel <i>C. modestus</i>
<i>Morinellus</i>	Bonaparte	1856	<i>C. morinellus</i>	Eurasian Dotterel <i>C. morinellus</i>
<i>Pluviorhynchus</i>	Bonaparte	1856	<i>C. obscurus</i>	Southern Red-breasted Plover <i>C. obscurus</i>
<i>Cirripidesmus</i>	Bonaparte	1856	<i>C. geoffroyi</i>	Greater Sandplover <i>C. leschenaulti</i>
<i>Leucopoliis</i>	Bonaparte	1856	<i>C. marginatus</i>	White-fronted Plover <i>C. marginatus</i>
<i>Aegialophilus</i>	Gould	1865	<i>C. cantianus</i>	Kentish Plover <i>C. alexandrinus</i>
<i>Podasocys</i>	Coues	1866	<i>C. montanus</i>	Mountain Plover <i>C. montanus</i>

The specific name has not changed since Ord's first naming in 1824, except in the changing of the gender to agree with the genus name see below. The only exception being in 1827 Wagler named the species after Dr Lorenz Oken (born Okenfuss) (1779–1851) a German physician, zoologist and natural philosopher.

Charadrius melodus Ord 1824

Charadrius okeni Wagler 1827

Aegialitis melodus Bonaparte 1838

Hiaticula meloda Gray 1840



Piping Plover with chick - Angela Cerelli Mercurio

Near Threatened: Considered Threatened in 1988 and Vulnerable in 1994. Downlisted to Near Threatened 2001, returning to Vulnerable in 2004 and then back to Near Threatened in 2006 remaining there until present.

The estimated population is thought to be around 11,500-12,500 individuals. The population decreased considerably over a 50 year period until conservation measure were put in place. Current trends are inconclusive but suggest stability or a small increase is likely although a continuation of this situation is directly linked to a continuation of conservation measure now in place. If removed the population would certainly decrease again.

The main causes of the decline have been environmental (water and beach management, dredging, shoreline development including wind

turbines and disturbance from human recreation); predation (natural avian and terrestrial predators - Merlin *Falco columbarius* numbers are increasing, one of piping Plovers major predators - plus introduced predators including cats and dogs); climate related changes (increased number and ferocity of storms, storm surges, rising sea levels, flooding).

Piping Plovers breed in the U.S.A. and Canada with small numbers on St Pierre and Miquelon Islands (France) with *C. m. melodus* populations along the Atlantic coast and *C. m. circumcinctus* in the Great Plains and the Great Lakes region.



Colour-ringed Piping Plover - Elis Simpson

Piping Plover - cont'd

Piping Plovers are truly shorebirds as they are seldom seen away from water. Breeding on sandy beaches, and islands also around alkaline lakes, reservoirs, sand and gravel pits, rivers and wetlands.

In winter they are very site faithful mainly in sandy bays, lagoons, and algal flats and mudflats, particularly in sheltered areas, mangrove roots and also rocky shores.



Adult Piping Plover - Rina Miele

When precocious is cute - Rick Simpson



Snowy Plover chick - Teresa Hedden

Wader chicks are among the most adorable of all chicks in the avian world. Those bald and blind nestlings of passerines, or the less than elegant squabs of pigeons, even the elegant raptors start life as ungainly monsters; and don't even get me started on owls!

One thing is for sure though, they have not evolved this way just so we humans can look at them and say ahhhhhh, aren't they adorable?

Baby birds come in two forms, **precocial** and **altricial**.

Precocial chicks are those that can pretty much fend for themselves right out of the egg, once they have dried off and their yolk sac no longer provides the sustenance they need, they are, to some extent, self-reliant. This term is similar to precocious and, much in the same way that a precocious child will often behave in a way that is unusually advanced for his or her years, a precocial chick is advanced in its maturity at hatching. That is why wader eggs are relatively large for the size of the bird, the youngster has to develop for longer and become larger than those that are not so self-reliant. This one reason why wader clutches of eggs rarely, if ever go above four in number, and often two only for smaller species.

Parental responsibility is varied in waders, in some, like Phalaropes and Jacanas the male is the one that tends the eggs and raises the young alone, the females sometimes having more than one partner. However, the

When precocious is cute - cont'd



Wrybill *Anarhynchus frontalis* chick - Rachel Hufton

These two terms basically refer to the amount of support that they need after hatching from their parents and should not be confused with **nidifugous** (derived from Latin; *nidus*, nest, and *fugere*, to flee) and **nidicolus** (derived from Latin; *nidus*, nest, and *colere*, to dwell or inhabit), which refer to whether or not the chick remains in the nest. The former being those that leave the nest almost immediately, like our wader chicks, the latter referring to birds like thrushes, herons and the like, where the young stay in the nest for some time and are at the same time, by dint, altricial, relying on their parents for their sustenance.

It is fair to say, that most species that are precocial are also nidifugous and those that are altricial are nidicolus, and, as most waders are precocial, they are also mainly nidifugous. However, there are exceptions to every rule. Young Crab

vast majority of waders share the incubation of the eggs, and when the eggs hatch their role is to guide the chicks to good feeding grounds, where they can help the youngsters find food, and safe areas where they keep a look out for predators to protect the chicks in order that they can concentrate on feeding in order to grow quickly. At this stage females will often desert the males and leave them to fend for the offspring. Developing and laying large eggs uses a great deal of energy and they need to be able to replenish their energy levels, especially those species that carry our long migrations.

This ability to fend for themselves to a large extent is what makes the head starting programmes for endangered species, such as Spoon-billed Sandpipers *Calidris pygmaea* or, closer to home, Black-tailed Godwits *Limosa limosa*, even possible. The eggs can be hatched in captivity and the chicks will feed themselves with no adults around at all. Once strong enough they can then be released into outdoor pens free from the threat of predation and eventually released into the wild to take their chances with the wild fledged birds.

Those that are not so self-sufficient are called altricial and the chicks are very immature and in a helpless condition at hatching requiring parental care for some time, like the groups mentioned in the opening paragraph.



Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* chick - Astrid Kant



Black-tailed Godwit chicks - Astrid Kant

Plovers *Dromus ardeola*, for example, are large and downy and do not need brooding, but, as they develop within their egg at the end of a tunnel in the sand (uniquely among waders, a single white egg; no need for camouflage in a dark tunnel) and are fed there for some time after hatching, they are partially precocial and nidicolus. Eventually they leave the nesting burrow, but they are still fed by the adults thereafter for a while. This is due to the prey species, namely crabs, being tricky to deal with and it takes some time for the young birds to be strong enough to deal with a large crab. The same is true of Oystercatchers. After hatching their bills are not equipped to hack limpets off rocks or break open mussels, or even dig for worms, so their parents acquire prey and feed it to

When precocious is cute - cont'd



Bush Thick-knee *Burhinus grallarius* chicks - Elis Simpson

the young birds. Oystercatchers are therefore partially precocial but they do not stay in the nest, so are nidifugous. Another slightly different example of an odd-man-out species is the Magellanic Plover *Pluvianellus sociabilis*. Uniquely among waders they possess a crop, where the adults can collect food items and then regurgitate this food to feed the young birds, however they too leave the nest soon after hatching.



Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* adult with chick - Elis Simpson

Waders in Poetry - King Canute and the Knots by Giles Watson

Canute leapt up from his throne -
his britches soaked - his doublet
flecked with spume - retreated
up the shingle - sat down to remove
his squelching boots - looked up
and laughed. All along the shore
a line of feeding knots were tilting
to water - auguring with their bills -
a line which wavered with the waves -
giving ground - then seizing it -
a battle-front bulging and receding.

So Canute learned from watching birds
how to be humbler than we have become -
gave his sovereignty and sway all up
to nature - knowing tides will rise
and wise birds match the flow

of the inexorable.



Red Knot - Elis Simpson

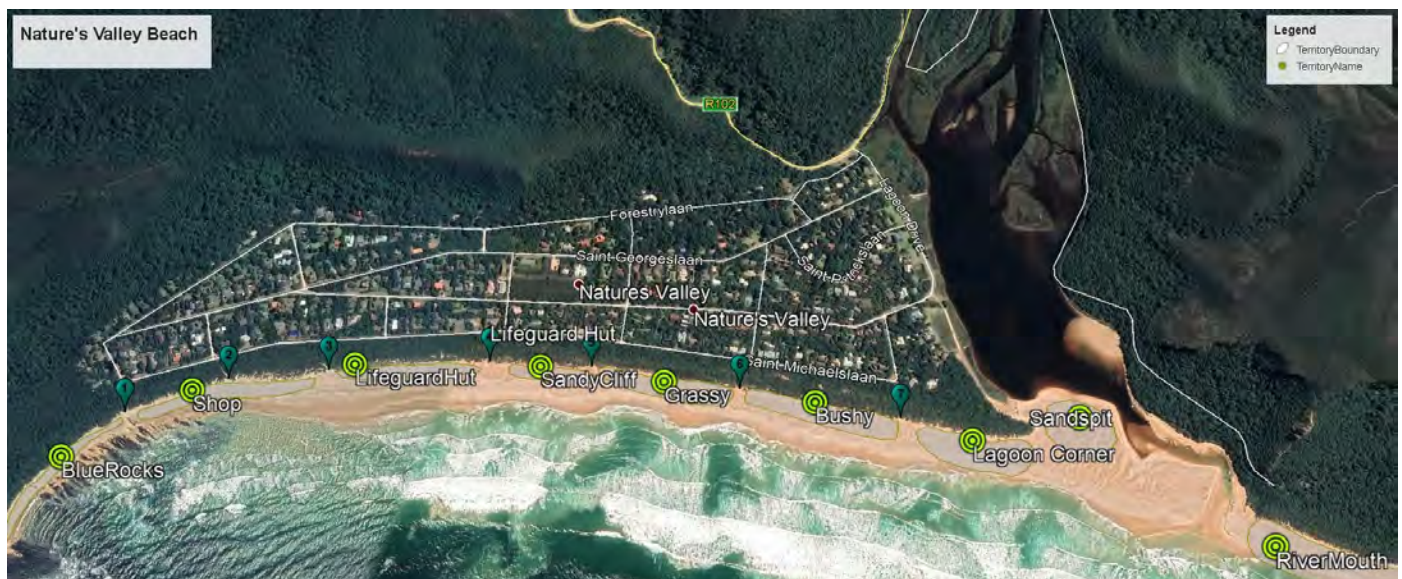
The Sands Of Change: Series 3 Episode 4

- 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.



Times have been dark on Lookout Beach, even the bright, warm rays of the summer sun could not lift the downtrodden hopes our winged community was feeling. The Summer started with so much anticipation and desire for a safe haven, away from the gloom of the past and the many threats that have proven to consume their whole being.

With such promise eight chicks entered this world, running to and fro on the golden beach of Lookout. This soon changed, with eight fast turning into two... The conditions on Lookout appeared to be becoming more and more uninhabitable; severely cold nights in early September took the lives of many and predation finished off the rest. Mr and Mrs Bacon were the proud owners of the first hatchlings, the golden children, the bringers of hope, the two that would bring the change, the ones that were sure to make it through the harsh times on Lookout and welcome easier days and nights to the shore. But even the reign of Toast and Egg was short-lived, with so much promise and potential never to take flight. Together Egg and Toast gently welcomed night; their young and weak little wings could not rage against the dying light...



New chick from Lookout - NVT

The Sands of Change: Series 3 Episode 4 - cont'd

A hush fell over Lookout with no new births. Not for a lack of trying because as they have proven, our Plovers are tiny in body but ferocious in soul. Since the passing of the last two chicks, Egg and Toast, 52 more eggs were laid by the ten pairs that call Lookout home, but not one has made it to fledge and leave the nest. Predation appears to be at an all-time high in the Lookout breeding area but this time we cannot criticise our conniving and always scheming Kelp Gulls; the blame lies elsewhere.

There is talk among the inner dune circle of dark Shades stalking the sands during day and night, ravishing all nests in sight. Disturbingly, these Shades come not with a feeling of fear or dread but more pleasant, trusting emotions that leave the Plovers easy prey to the onslaught. Our courageous researchers have not yet been able to uncover the culprits who lay claim to these vicious and unforgiving acts, but the sands of change always tell, as the shifting of the earth exposes the tracks of the wicked.

But never underestimate the prowess of the Plover. Born to be birds; they are adaptable and adjustable to situations that may seem overwhelming to others. Doomsayers they are not! January took our researchers by surprise as a little one popped out from a bush on the salty flats of the northern edge of Lookout. Ringed and dubbed Kami, for her ability to camouflage so well and stay hidden for many days and nights. But who does week-old Kami belong to? Ahh yes, the secretive and cunning pair, A62 and F027, find the most imaginative and daring nesting areas. This pair more than once now have slipped the teeth of our researchers' fine-toothed comb as they weave their way through the dunes in search of nests. But what a lovely surprise, which could not have come sooner for the plovers of Lookout Beach.

The arrival of Kami had the sands murmuring in cautious excitement as to the meaning of it all: does this usher in new times for the plover community or have the horrific and disturbed tales of the past been solidified into the norm? What of the Shades? Has their reign of terror ended or is it just beginning? Our courageous researchers cannot promise safe passage for the young on Lookout Beach, but with the warm kiss of the golden sands, the gentle breeze caressing feathers and the satin waves' ebb and flow a silent wish rises and takes flight.



Kami hiding after being ringed - NVT



Kami running off with mum following - NVT



Tucked away in Mum's embrace - NVT

Wader news from around the world - in brief

EUROPE

UK: A Grey-headed Lapwing *Vanellus cinereus* was found on the 1st of May in Northumberland England. It represents the first record for Great Britain and Ireland and reflects an increasing number of reports in recent years from other parts of the Western Palearctic (WP).

The first WP record was from Turkey in March 2018. A subsequent series of sightings the following year, which presumably refer to a single bird, were recorded in May 2019 (Norway and Sweden) and June 2019 (The Netherlands). The next record according to [Tarsiger](#) was in August 2021 in Slovenia, although another sighting, not mentioned in Tarsiger, presumably of the same individual, was made in Italy a few days later and accepted in the Italian Ornithological Commission (COI) - Report 30 (December 2022).

This UK record then is possibly the 4th record for the Western Palearctic, but actually they could all conceivably refer to a roving and returning single individual.



Ganesh Jayaraman / www.birdsforlife.in

UK: Curlew Recovery Project urges birders to report sightings of colour marked Eurasian Curlews *Numenius arquata* in a study to find out their movements and how best to protect them, hopefully reversing a population decline.

The Curlew Recovery Project is a DEFRA funded, Natural England led project in partnership with British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), Pensthorpe Conservation Trust, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT), the Defence Infrastructure Organisation and the Royal Air Force (RAF).

The project focus is to collect eggs from nests found on airfields, that would have otherwise been destroyed under licence, incubate them, and then rear chicks through to fledging in captivity – a process known as ‘headstarting’, which protects chicks during this critical period.

[Report a sighting - Curlew Recovery Project](#)



Colour ringed Eurasian Curlew Chick - Curlew Recovery Project

NORTH AMERICA.

USA:

Sea Islands Shorebird Festival

11th -12th May

Kiawah Island & Seabrook Island, South Carolina, USA.



Red Knots *Calidris canutus* - Pamela Cohen

Wader news from around the world - contd

NORTH AMERICA cont'd.

Canada: From Wasaga Beach in Ontario Sydney Shepherd, the Ontario Piping Plover Fieldwork Coordinator for Birds Canada reports the return of Pepa, a faithful female Piping Plover on the 23rd of April 2023.

“After a long, cold, and snowy winter, we are excited to announce that Pepa the Piping Plover has successfully completed another northbound journey and has arrived back at Wasaga Beach!

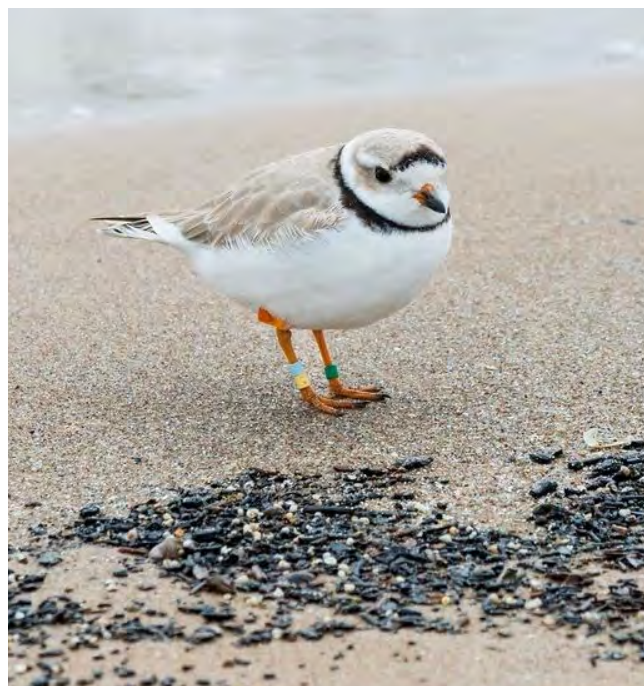
Pepa has quite the impressive resume – she hatched from Ontario’s Sauble Beach in 2012, spent a few years breeding on the shores of the US Great Lakes, then hopped back to Canada in 2016 to nest at Wasaga Beach.

This year will be Pepa’s 11th year of life, and her 8th breeding season at Wasaga.

Pepa is a regular snowbird [a northerner who moves to a warmer southern state in the winter] down south in Outback Key, [Florida] and we’re so grateful to have such incredible southern neighbours who love these birds just as much as we do!

Lorraine Margeson regularly sends us updates about Pepa’s winter adventures so we never miss a beat!

We’re hopeful that a mate will join Pepa at Wasaga Beach soon! To follow along on Pepa’s summer adventures, follow us at @ontarioplovers on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).”

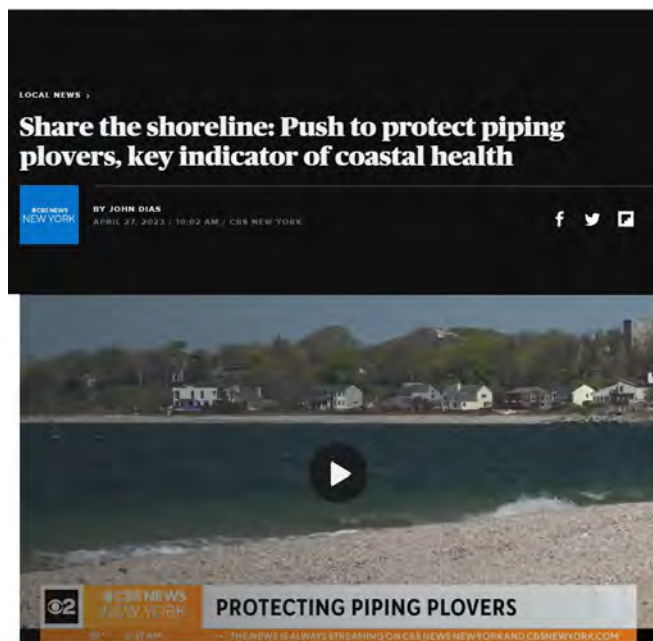


Pepa the Piping Plover on the day she arrived at Wasaga Beach Ontario - Donald Jun Zhang

USA: As spring brings warmer days New York beachgoers encouraged to share the shore with nesting Piping Plovers *Charadrius melodus* on a [CBS television news programme](#). The Piping Plovers that nest in the state are having a hard time and are not doing well according to the NYC Plover Project, a nonprofit organisation dedicated to helping the rare and endangered plovers. Last year from 116 individuals very few chicks survived. This was due to a variety of reasons including the deplorable, but still widespread nest vandalism, drones and dogs.

To try to prevent or at least mitigate this occurring again temporary fencing (April - August) is being used to protect nesting areas and create zones humans and dogs should avoid. People are urged to look out for the birds, even in those areas that are not cordoned off, as plovers don’t remain around the nest all the time as they have to make their way to the shoreline to feed.

Piping plovers are federally protected under the Endangered Species Act, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.



USA/Canada: Nearly all shorebird species along the Atlantic Coast of the U.S. and Canada have experienced steep declines, with many losing more than 50 percent of their population over the last three decades. Since 1980, these declines have been monitored, recorded, and are now reflected in a recent study authored by researchers from Environment and Climate Change Canada, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These declines show further evidence of the serious environmental changes impacting Earth’s biodiversity and natural landscapes, signalling a need for urgent conservation action to protect these long-distance migrants. While the trajectory of these declining numbers is alarming, it is important to emphasize that concerted conservation efforts can have a tangible positive impact. Targeted resources committed to recovery do work, so recovery is possible.

[Read full AOS article here.](#)



Dunlins and Sanderlings - Elis Simpson

Wader news from around the world - contd

USA: In Hawai'i the Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* is a much-cherished addition to the winter landscape. Named *Kōlea* by ancient Hawaiians, this migratory shorebird has been part of Hawaiian culture for centuries. In March 2022 30 birds were caught and fitted with coloured leg rings for identification. In addition, 10 birds carried live GPS backpack devices, 10 carried dummy backpacks and 10 had no backpacks at all to test if the backpacks affected their survival chances. It seems they don't as 80% across all groups returned this past winter.

A website called [Kōlea Count](#) has been set up to record when, where, and how many *Kōlea* migrate to Hawai'i and how many spend summers there. A full report for the winter just passed will appear in the next Wader Quest newsletter.



Pacific Golden Plover in breeding finery - Aravind Venkatraman

AUSTRALASIA



Australasian Ornithological Conference

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BIRDS
NEW ZEALAND
Te Kāhui Mātai Manu o Aotearoa



birdlife
AUSTRALIA

Australia: Darwin - Garramilla Shorebird Festival 15th - 17th September 2023

The aim of the festival is to engage and ignite the community of Darwin-Garramilla about shorebirds through the arts and sciences.

There will be shared stories about the migrant birds that travel thousands of kilometres every year to visit Darwin-Garramilla beaches and wetlands.

There will be stories about the Bush Stone-Curlew *Burhinus grallaria* that cries at night - this is a shorebird that many people already have strong connections to.

Also the Masked Lapwing *Vanellus miles* known for chasing people to protect their nests and young, and many other shorebirds that are found in freshwater wetlands and grassy plains.

Come along and be part of the shorebird community - all welcome.

[More information on the festival website.](#)



New Zealand: Forest & Bird's Golden Bay Branch recently completed a three-year project turning a freedom camping site near Farewell Spit, Tasman into a safe haven for birds. .

The camping site was designated by Tasman District Council despite objections from Forest & Bird, the Department of Conservation, and the Ornithological Society of New Zealand.

Migrant roosting waders, as well as breeding species abandoned the site due to disturbance, such as fires on the beach and recreational activities.

In March 2019, a campaign was launched and nearly two years later the council announced it would close the camp site.

Local Branch volunteers started to develop Taupata into an ecofriendly destination, restoring the area by planting native bush to shield the roost from human activity. Then, with community support, they built a bird hide. A Coastal Birds of Golden Bay information panel was designed and installed for visitors



Coastal Birds of Golden Bay- Forest & Bird

Wader news from around the world - cont'd

ASIA.

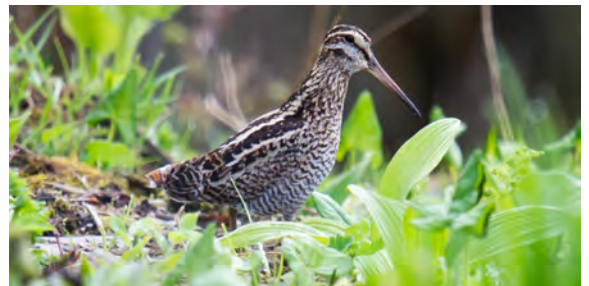
China: The good news is that a new International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) report *Situation Analysis on the Yellow Sea with Particular Reference to Intertidal and Associated Coastal Habitats*, shows that the worrying loss of tidal wetlands in the Yellow Sea region has been slowing since 2013. But the bad news is that urgent action is still needed to conserve these endangered intertidal habitats along the Yellow and Bohai Seas. Both have populations of globally threatened and near threatened waders that are continuing to decline. The IUCN report gives an update on the status of the Yellow Sea ecosystem since the first publication of the IUCN Situation Analysis more than ten years ago. [Read the full report here.](#)



Coastal development and flock of shorebirds on a tidal flat at Shuangtai Hekou National Nature Reserve, China - Zhang Ming

China: Following the last issue of the Wader Quest newsletter where we covered the Wood Snipe ([see here](#)), a new report has been published shedding more light on this mysterious birds migration; [Revealing migration of an unknown EAAF waterbird: The Wood Snipe.](#)

As this is a bird that is hard to see in all its chosen locations, even the locals that know of the bird and hear it seldom see it, details of its life history are relatively unknown. Therefore, to have satellite tracking devices fitted on some individuals will give a great insight into where they spend the winter, and the route they take to get there, away from the Himalayan upland pastures where they breed.



Wood Snipe - Craig Brelsford/[shanghaibirding.com](#)

China: Chris Hassel writes: This season's work was in jeopardy as funding for Global Flyway Network has dried up from the major sources in the Netherlands and China, who we thank for their long commitment to our work here. Luckily for our dataset and most importantly our presence at Nanpu four organisations have pledged money to GFN to keep the work going for its 14th year in a row. They have committed enough funds to enable Katherine Leung, Mr, and Xiao Liu to be at Nanpu for 6 weeks. So, GFN extend our thanks to Bobolink Foundation, Australian Wader Studies Group, Queensland Wader Studies Group and Victorian Wader Studies Group.

[The first report by Katherine Leung from Nanpu can be seen here.](#)



Luannan Wetland sign - Katherine Leung

Wader Conservation World Watch 10



Wader Conservation World Watch 4th—5th November 2023

Wader Guru is now live on our website:



Do you have an unanswered question about some aspect of wader or shorebird life, biology, history, etc. but have no place to find that information? Well look no further, just published on the Wader Quest website is the [Wader Guru page](#).

This is a panel of experts from around the world who have agreed to join the team in attempting to give people the answers they seek regarding the waders of the world.

There will be an expanding series of [FAQs](#) and also the opportunity to [Submit a question](#) should the FAQs not provide you with the answer you need. So, look out for imminent announcements promoting this new awareness raising tool in the Wader Quest tool kit.

Example FAQ 'What is the difference between waders and shorebirds?' [Sample answer here](#).

If you have no questions of your own, you can see some of the [Recent Questions](#) that have been asked by others and the Guru's answer.

NEW FEATURE: [A-Z of the people in wader nomenclature](#).

Who was Baird after whom Baird's Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii* was named and who named it? (It was [Elliott Ladd Coues](#) in 1861.)

If you have ever wondered who all these people who have named waders are, or thought about the people behind the names given in honour of someone, then this is the place to look for your answers.

How you can help Wader Quest:

Help us raise awareness

Join [Wader Conservation World Watch](#) 4th/5th November 2023

Share our social media



Help us raise funds to support wader conservation

[Become a Friend of Wader Quest](#) (100% goes to conservation)

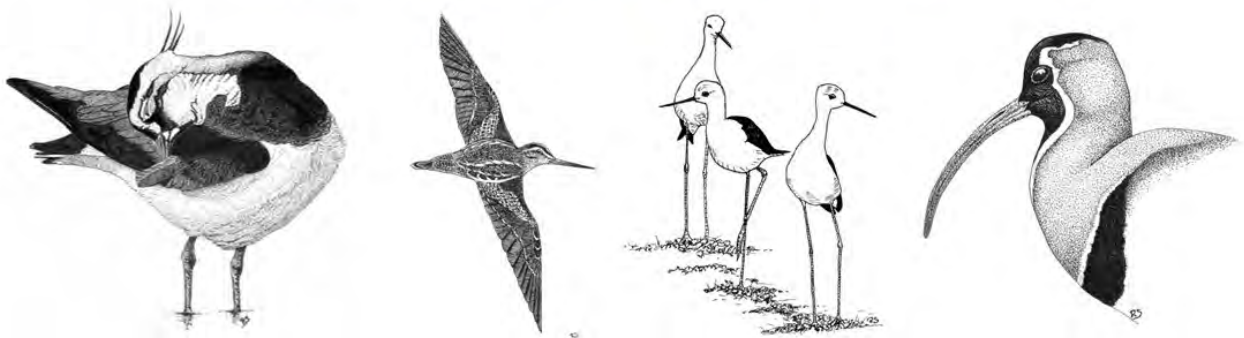
[Make a donation](#) (100% goes to conservation)

[Buy Wader Quest merchandising](#) (50% goes to conservation)

Wader Quest merchandising

New Wader Quest book - *A Quest for Waders* by Rick and Elis Simpson

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 - all proceeds go to Wader Quest.



Foreword by Dominic Couzens

'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



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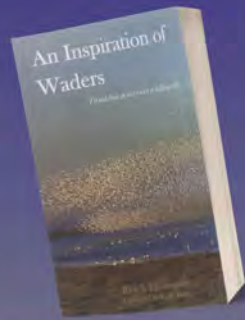
'Breathtakingly excellent - like a birding Michael Palin. The photographs and drawings are fantastic, and the text is fast-moving and endlessly entertaining and amusing.' Jim Wright.

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An Inspiration of Waders - A Wader Quest Publishing book By Rick and Elis Simpson

An Inspiration of Waders



Twinkling gems over a falling tide
The foreword is by Keith Betton



Discover our cultural connection to waders and how they have inspired us.



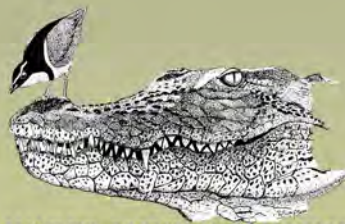
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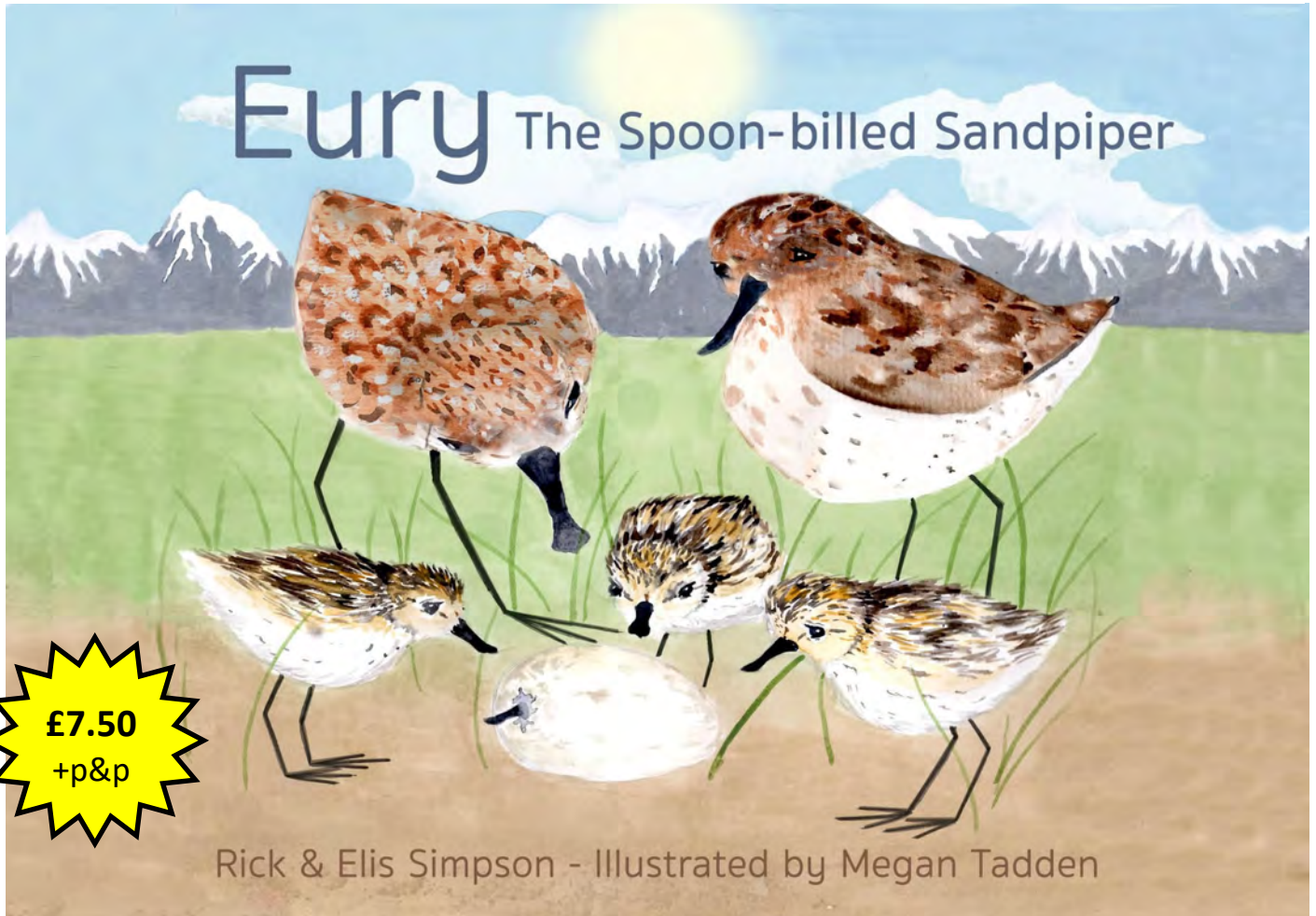
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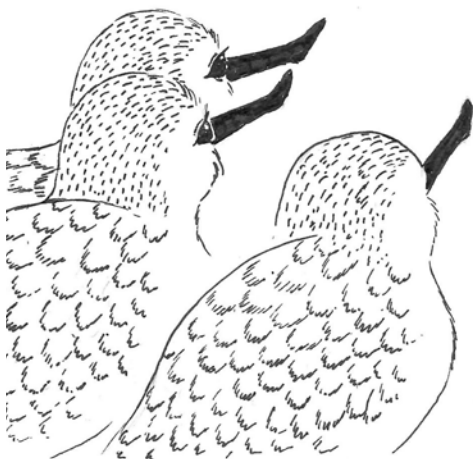
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11. River Lapwing
12. Common Ringed plover
13. Black-fronted Dotterel
14. Eurasian Curlew
15. Spoon-billed Sandpiper



16. Common Greenshank
17. Cream-coloured Courser
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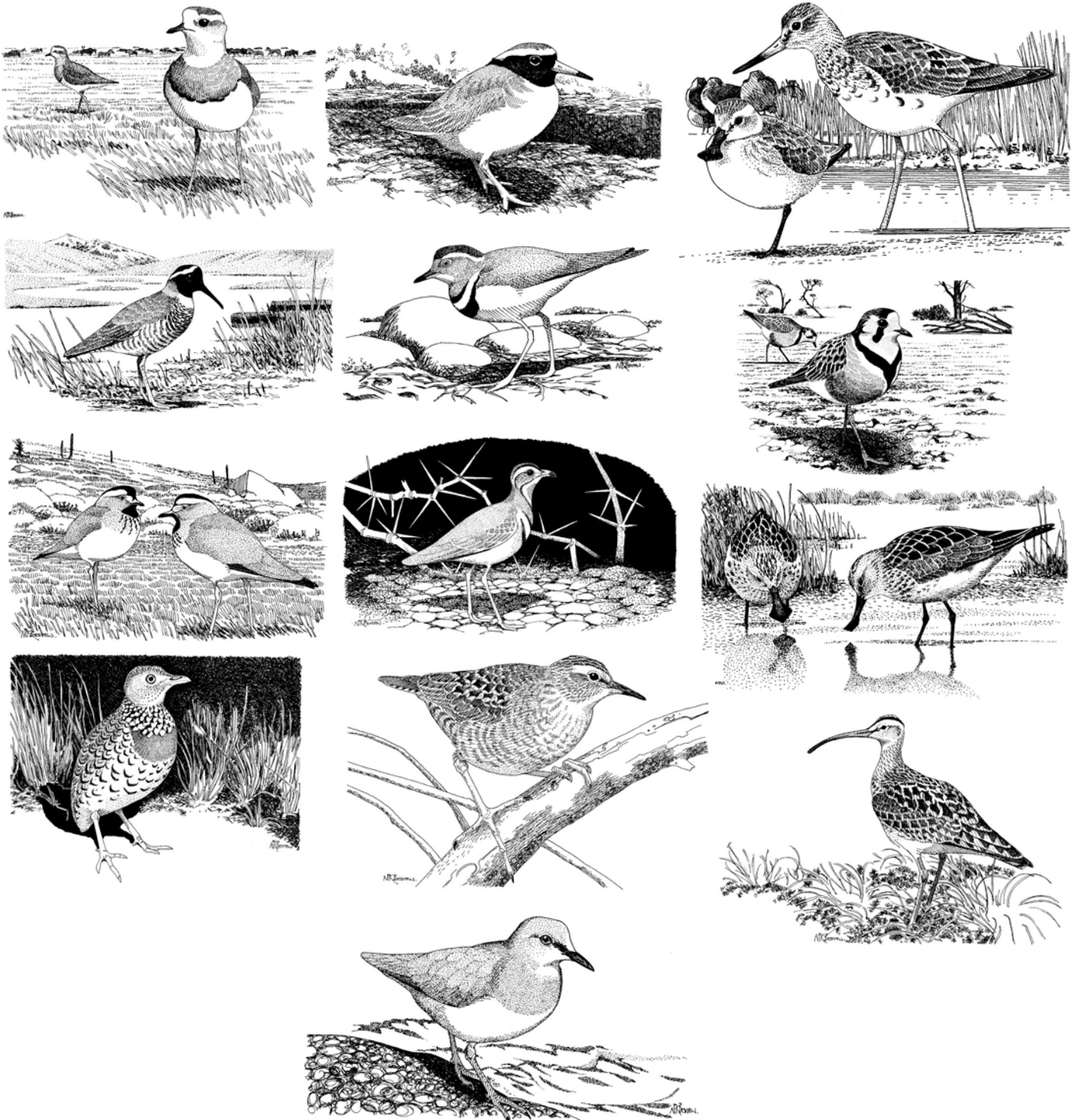


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Pied Avocets over Titchwell RSPB reserve © Julia Page

See newsletter [Vol 7 issue 3](#) pp11-13 where Julia is the featured artist in Waders In Art.



Eurasian Oystercatchers © Julia Page



Common Snipe © Julia Page



Northern Lapwing, Eurasian Spoonbills, Pied Avocets and Canada Geese at Titchwell RSPB reserve © Julia Page

Designs by
Julia Page



Eurasian Oystercatchers, Black-tailed Godwit, Common Ringed Plovers and Little Egret © Julia Page

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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

Total funds raised and donated since 12/09/2012 (Includes reserve funds in hand)

£55,038.48

Species supported

African Oystercatcher
American Oystercatcher
Collared Plover
Eurasian Curlew
Great Knot
Hooded Plover
Javan Plover
Magellanic Plover
Nordmann's Greenshank
Purple Sandpiper
Red-necked Phalarope
St Helena Plover
Snowy Plover
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Spoon-billed Sandpiper
White-faced Plover
White-headed Stilt
Wilson's Phalarope
Wilson's Plover
Wood Snipe
Fuegian Snipe

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Kazakhstan	USA
Malaysia	Venezuela



White-headed Stilt - Elis Simpson