



WADER QUEST

THE NEWSLETTER Volume 10; Issue 4 2023



Eurasian Curlew - Damian Money

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THE NATURAL HOME FOR WADER LOVERS

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

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Trustees: TBC

Exec. Comm: TBC

AGM: 24 Nov 2024

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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

Just when you get used to something, it changes. When it comes to taxonomy and the systematics of the world's avifauna, that is very much the case. We have been keeping our eye on changes and you will be able to find a full run down on the changes on page 5. In the last newsletter we brought you news about the Lesser Sand Plover split, the species becoming Siberian Sand Plover (*mongolus* group) and Tibetan Sandplover (*atrifrons* group), it is repeated here with more changes.

The other major news is that we have decided that each year we will 'adopt' a species to focus upon and it was unanimously decided that there was no better species to start with in 2024 than the Eurasian Curlew. Again more details on this can be found on page 4.

Trustee updates and news

At the AGM held on November 26th, both Phil Hadley and Ray Heaton were required by our constitution to stand down as trustees, Both however were eligible for re-election and both were unanimously returned to office at the same meeting.

Executive Committee updates and news

No comings and goings to report. But we do still have vacancies if you are interested in furthering Wader Quest's aims.

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

We are delighted to have received an interesting number of applications for grants mainly in the area of public engagement and education. There is a good global spread of applicants from: Africa, Indonesia, South America and the UK.

The panel will consider all applications received at the end of December 2023 for the special Wader Quest Anniversary Award. All applications are also seriously considered to establish how well we can help the proposed conservation efforts using our budget.

Why not consider contributing to the Wader Quest Grant Fund? All donations of any size are welcome and remember every penny donated is used for wader conservation.

Wishing you well in 2024.

Polite reminder!

Subs are due 1st January

Prices held for another year (details page 2)

Thank you for your support in 2023

we look forward to your support in 2024

Remember your subs equal 19p a week and every penny goes to wader conservation



Focal species for 2024 is Eurasian Curlew

Species Focus for 2024; Eurasian Curlew - Rick Simpson



Eurasian Curlew with crab prey item © Roland Wengenmayr

2024 is the Wader Quest year of the Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Much in the same way as the Chinese adopt a symbol for any given year, following a suggestion made to the trustees, Wader Quest has decided to adopt this idea and each year we will be highlighting a wader species, following its ups and downs with regard to conservation throughout the year.

Rest assured this does not mean that all other wader species in different parts of the world will be forgotten, it is just that we will follow the fortunes of one particular species each year and highlight any news we can find about that species.

Why the Eurasian Curlew?

Well a good percentage of our Friends and Sponsors are located in Europe, particularly the UK and it is there that this species is suffering terrible losses. As a result its category on the IUCN Red List has slipped to Near Threatened and very likely to slip further. Added to this, and indeed because of this, it is one of the most pressing conservation issues in our region at this time. We felt that whatever we can do to help highlight the Eurasian Curlew's situation and to raise awareness about what is happening and why, was a very good place for us to start.

We will also be working closely with some of the organisations concerned with the work being carried out to save the species, in particular with Curlew Recovery Partnership, chaired by our long-established friend May Colwell.

In addition Wader Quest has already made several grants and donations to help fund projects involved with this important work, starting back in 2016 with a donation to Mary's Curlew Walk that set the whole ball in motion. Since then we have backed, conferences, Curlew Action packs, electric fencing for nests, trail cameras, an incubator for headstarting, research and even a filmmaker raising awareness about the species. So Wader Quest is already invested in the conservation of the Eurasian Curlew.

When is a wader not a wader? - Rick Simpson



Yellow-legged Buttonquail - Peter Ericsson

The answer to that thorny question is; when it becomes a gull! That's when.

Anyone who knows me well, or has attended certain of our talks, will be well aware how I felt about the Turnicidae or buttonquails, being unceremoniously dumped into the Charadrii, our beloved waders. How I longed for the days when birds were classified by visual and behavioural traits and obvious close affinities. I was always puzzled by the inclusion of the Jacanadae i.e. jacanas (why are they not gallinules, which they resemble so closely) and the Thinocoridae or seedsnipes (resembling grouse) in the seminal *Shorebirds* guide by Hayman, Marchant and Prater. Later, and just as perplexingly the Pediononidae or Plains Wanderer and Chionidae, the two sheathbills were also added. I had read somewhere that the Charadrii is a taxonomic dumping ground, - if you don't know what it is, stick it in that particular suborder. It was certainly looking like that from my non-scientific perspective, which is where I come from. When the buttonquails were added I knew that disrespect to our waders was rife in the scientific world.



Rock Pratincole - Elis Simpson

When is a wader not a wader? - cont'd



Crab Plover - Aditya Roy

Well, recently a new study has shown that the buttonquails are not waders (I could have told them that) but are instead, gulls in the suborder Lari (I didn't see that coming!). Bewildering though this is, I rejoiced, the buttonquails were gone. Unseen and unfathomable science had deposited the buttonquails in our remit and then hooked them out again - hooray!

But it is worth remembering that around every silver lining there is also a cloud; as I read on that joy was short-lived. I have always felt that pratincoles and coursers or Glareolidae were *bone fide* waders, despite the coursers being dry land birds and the pratincoles having such short legs that wading would be suicidal. But, this self same study showed that they too would migrate out of the Charadrii and into the Lari. However, there was worse to come. I discovered the Dromadidae, the single species family of Crab Plover was also to be removed to the Lari. Now this surely is a classic wading bird, almost always seen wading on its wonderfully long and elegant legs, isn't it? Admittedly it is anomalous in its breeding natural history when compared to the majority of waders; nests in a burrow that it digs in the sand with its massive bill; single egg, white at that; non precocial chick, which is uniformly grey and white, not cryptic like other wader chicks and which needs to be fed (unsurprising since it resides at the end of a sandy tunnel). But with the adults resemblance to avocets and the bill like a thick-knee, the Crab Plover clearly fitted in near them, didn't it? Apparently not. Its gone.

So, the number of waders in the world (formerly 257) has now been reduced by 36 (18 buttonquails, 9 coursers, 8 pratincoles and the Crab Plover). This means that, if we count those that are extinct or thought to be extinct, the total now rests at 221.

On a personal level this means that from 186 species on my world wader list I drop to 172 species seen. From now on though, I will be referring to my success rate in terms of percentages and not actual numbers as that has risen from 72.5% of all species seen to 78%. If you then remove the 9 species I can't possibly see, since they are extinct (or believed to be so), that percentage leaps to 81%.

Right, now, you science buffs, how about working your magic on the seedsnipes, sheathbills and the Plains Wanderer? I can live with Jacanas.

Wader Quest will be adopting these taxonomic changes with immediate effect, the wader directory on the website has already been altered.

List of Charadrii (waders or shorebirds)

1	Lesser Jacana	43	Great Stone-curlew	85	Madagascar Plover
2	African Jacana	44	Beach Stone-curlew	86	Kittlitz's Plover
3	Madagascar Jacana	45	Egyptian Plover	87	St. Helena Plover
4	Comb-crested Jacana	46	Northern Lapwing	88	Three-banded Plover
5	Pheasant-tailed Jacana	47	Long-toed Lapwing	89	Forbes's Plover
6	Bronze-winged Jacana	48	Blacksmith Lapwing	90	White-fronted Plover
7	Northern Jacana	49	Spur-winged Lapwing	91	Kentish Plover
8	Wattled Jacana	50	Sociable Lapwing	92	Snowy Plover
9	Greater Painted Snipe	51	River Lapwing	93	White-faced Plover
10	Australian Painted Snipe	52	Black-headed Lapwing	94	Javan Plover
11	South American Painted Snipe	53	Yellow-wattled Lapwing	95	Red-capped Plover
12	Magellanic Oystercatcher	54	White-crowned Lapwing	96	Malaysian Plover
13	Blackish Oystercatcher	55	Senegal Lapwing	97	Chestnut-banded Plover
14	Black Oystercatcher	56	Black-winged Lapwing	98	Collared Plover
15	American Oystercatcher	57	Crowned Lapwing	99	Puna Plover
16	African Oystercatcher	58	African Wattled Lapwing	100	Two-banded Plover
17	Eurasian Oystercatcher	59	Spot-breasted Lapwing	101	Double-banded Plover
18	South Island Oystercatcher	60	Brown-chested Lapwing	102	**Siberian Sandplover
19	Pied Oystercatcher	61	Grey-headed Lapwing	103	**Tibetan Sandplover
20	Variable Oystercatcher	62	Red-wattled Lapwing	104	Greater Sandplover
21	Chatham Oystercatcher	63	*Javan Lapwing	105	Caspian Plover
22	*Canarian Black Oystercatcher	64	Banded Lapwing	06	Oriental Plover
23	Sooty Oystercatcher	65	Masked Lapwing	107	Eurasian Dotterel
24	Ibisbill	66	Black-shouldered Lapwing	108	Rufous-chested Plover
25	Black-winged Stilt	67	White-tailed Lapwing	109	Mountain Plover
26	White-headed Stilt	68	Pied Plover	110	Hooded Plover
27	Black-necked Stilt	69	Southern Lapwing	111	Shore Plover
28	White-backed Stilt	70	Andean Lapwing	112	Black-fronted Dotterel
29	Black Stilt	71	Red-kneed Dotterel	113	Inland Dotterel
30	Banded Stilt	72	European Golden Plover	114	Wrybill
31	Pied Avocet	73	Pacific Golden Plover	115	Diademed Sandpiper-Plover
32	American Avocet	74	American Golden Plover	116	Tawny-throated Dotterel
33	Red-necked Avocet	75	Grey Plover	117	Magellanic Plover
34	Andean Avocet	76	Northern Red-breasted Plover	118	Eurasian Woodcock
35	Eurasian Stone-curlew	77	Southern Red-breasted Plover	119	Amami Woodcock
36	Indian Stone-curlew	78	Common Ringed Plover	120	New Guinea Woodcock
37	Senegal Thick-knee	79	Semipalmated Plover	121	Bukidnon Woodcock
38	Water Thick-knee	80	Long-billed Plover	122	Sulawesi Woodcock
39	Spotted Thick-knee	81	Little Ringed Plover	123	Moluccan Woodcock
40	Double-striped Thick-knee	82	Wilson's Plover	124	American Woodcock
41	Peruvian Thick-knee	83	Killdeer	125	Chatham Snipe
42	Bush Stone-curlew	84	Piping Plover	126	*North Island Snipe

List of Charadrii - cont'd

127	*South Island Snipe	159	Hudsonian Whimbrel	191	Sanderling
128	Snares Snipe	160	Bristle-thighed Curlew	192	Semipalmated Sandpiper
129	Subantarctic Snipe	161	*Slender-billed Curlew	193	Western Sandpiper
130	Jack Snipe	162	Eurasian Curlew	194	Red-necked Stint
131	Solitary Snipe	163	Far Eastern Curlew	195	Little Stint
132	Latham's Snipe	164	Long-billed Curlew	196	Temminck's Stint
133	Wood Snipe	165	Upland Sandpiper	197	Long-toed Stint
134	Pin-tailed Snipe	166	Spotted Redshank	198	Least Sandpiper
135	Swinhoe's Snipe	167	Common Redshank	199	White-rumped Sandpiper
136	African Snipe	168	Marsh Sandpiper	200	Baird's Sandpiper
137	Madagascar Snipe	169	Common Greenshank	201	Pectoral Sandpiper
138	Great Snipe	170	Nordmann's Greenshank	202	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
139	Common Snipe	171	Greater Yellowlegs	203	Curlew Sandpiper
140	Wilson's Snipe	172	Lesser Yellowlegs	204	Purple Sandpiper
141	South American Snipe	173	Green Sandpiper	205	Rock Sandpiper
142	Magellanic Snipe	174	Solitary Sandpiper	206	Dunlin
143	Puna Snipe	175	Wood Sandpiper	207	Spoon-billed Sandpiper
144	Noble Snipe	176	Terek Sandpiper	208	Broad-billed Sandpiper
145	Giant Snipe	177	Common Sandpiper	209	Stilt Sandpiper
146	Fuegian Snipe	178	Spotted Sandpiper	210	Buff-breasted Sandpiper
147	Andean Snipe	179	Grey-tailed Tattler	211	Ruff
148	Imperial Snipe	180	Wandering Tattler	212	Wilson's Phalarope
149	Short-billed Dowitcher	181	Willet	213	Red-necked Phalarope
150	Long-billed Dowitcher	182	Tuamotu Sandpiper	214	Grey Phalarope
151	Asian Dowitcher	183	*Christmas Sandpiper	215	Plains Wanderer
152	Black-tailed Godwit	184	*Moorea Sandpiper	216	Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe
153	Hudsonian Godwit	185	*Tahiti Sandpiper	217	White-bellied Seedsnipe
154	Bar-tailed Godwit	186	Ruddy Turnstone	218	Grey-breasted Seedsnipe
155	Marbled Godwit	187	Black Turnstone	219	Least Seedsnipe
156	Little Curlew	188	Surfbird	220	Snowy Sheathbill
157	*Eskimo Curlew	189	Great Knot	221	Black-faced Sheathbill
158	Eurasian Whimbrel	190	Red Knot		

*Extinct or probably extinct.

Note also that the official IOC English name of Pied Lapwing has reverted to Pied Plover. It has also changed its scientific name in a big shake up of the Charadrii. (See pages 9-10).

Included in this is the official English name of the White-headed Lapwing now becoming the White-crowned Lapwing. This however is not a change for the Wader Quest Wader Directory as we have always called this species White-crowned even though the scientific name *albiceps* translated means white-headed (Latin *albus* = white *ceps* = headed from *caput* head) as this is clearly more apt.



Pied Plover and White-crowned Lapwing - Elis Simpson

List of Charadrii... there's more!

You will probably now be aware that the Lesser Sandplover has been split into two species, meaning Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus* becomes Siberian Sand Plover *C. mongolus* and Tibetan Sand Plover *C. atrifrons*... or does it?



Siberian Sand Plover - Martin Cachard



Tibetan Sand Plover - Ganesh Jayaraman

'Fraid not! There has also been a major change affecting many of the birds in the huge genus of *Charadrius*. Some, but not the majority, will continue to be *Charadrius* (Linnaeus 1758), but that will now only apply to the following species;

Common Ringed Plover *C. hiaticula*

Little Ringed Plover *C. dubius*

Three-banded Plover *C. tricollaris*

Semipalmated Plover *C. semipalmatus*

Killdeer *C. vociferus*

Forbe's Plover *C. forbesi*

Long-billed Plover *C. placidus*

Piping Plover *C. melodus*

In addition the following will change to *Charadrius*

Black-fronted Dotterel *C. melanops* from *Elseyaornis*

Shore Plover *C. novaeseelandiae* from *Thinornis*

Hooded Plover *C. cucullatus* from *Thinornis*



Black-fronted Dotterel, Shore Plover and Hooded Plover - Elis Simpson

The majority of the remainder of the plover species, those listed below, have now been given a new genus name and that is *Anarhynchus*! If you are familiar with the scientific names of birds you may well be aware that this is the genus given to the Wrybill *A. frontalis*. It comes from the Greek *ana* meaning backwards and *rhunkhos* meaning bill, referring to the unique right-bending bill of the species. It seems odd then that this genus now applies to a huge swathe of plovers. The reason is of course that the earliest name applied to any taxon in science takes precedent, therefore, since all these birds are closely related to the Wrybill genetically, and *Charadrius*, which is older (*Charadrius*; Linnaeus, 1758 - *Anarhynchus*; Quoy, & Gaimard 1832), is already taken the first genus available is *Anarhynchus*. So, therefore we now have;

N. Red-breasted Plover *A. aquilonius*

Javan Plover *A. javanicus*

Double-banded Plover *A. bicinctus*

S. Red-breasted Plover *A. obscurus*

White-faced Plover *A. dealbatus*

***Siberian Sand Plover** *A. mongolus*

Wilson's Plover *A. wilsonia*

White-fronted Plover *A. marginatus*

***Tibetan Sand Plover** *A. atrifrons*

Madagascar Plover *A. thoracicus*

Red-capped Plover *A. ruficapillus*

Greater Sand Plover *A. leschenaultia*

Kittlitz's Plover *A. pecuarius*

Malaysian Plover *A. peronii*

Caspian Plover *A. asiaticus*

St Helena Plover *A. sanctaeheleniae*

Chestnut-banded Plover *A. pallidus*

Oriental Plover *A. veredus*

Kentish Plover *A. alexandrinus*

Collared Plover *A. collaris*

Mountain Plover *A. montanus*

Snowy Plover *A. nivosus*

Puna Plover *A. alticola*

* see above

List of Charadrii... there's more!

Staying with the plovers, quite recently the **Eurasian Dotterel** was moved to *Charadrius* from its own genus *Eudromias* (Brehm, 1830 - from the Greek *eudromia* meaning swiftness, referring to the fast pace at which the bird runs). That has now been reversed and so reinstating *Eudromias morinellus*. The same applies to the **Rufous-chested Dotterel** only relatively recently added to *Charadrius* and now removed back to a former genus; *Zonibyx* (Reichenbach 1853 - Greek *zone* band or girdle and Modern Latin *ibyx* lapwing). The **Pied Lapwing** has moved from *Vanellus* (Brisson 1760) back to its own genus and thus; *Hoploxypterus cayanus* (*Hoploxypterus* Bonaparte 1856 - Greek *hoplon* meaning weapon, *oxus* meaning sharp and *-pterus* meaning -winged referring to the sharp spurs at the bend in the wing of this species allying it to some of the lapwings).



Eurasian Dotterel and Rufous-chested Dotterel - Elis Simpson

The remaining plovers not mentioned all retain their current status;

lapwings *Vanellus*

Red-kneed Dotterel *Erythrogonys cinctus*

tundra plovers *Pluvialis*

Diademed Sandpiper-plover *Phegornis mitchellii*

Inland Dotterel *Peltohyas australis*

Tawny-throated Dotterel *Oreopholus ruficollis*

Other changes involve the two South American Thick-knees namely, Double-striped and Peruvian. Hitherto they have both been considered to be *Burhinus* (Illiger 1811) along with many of the thick-knees and stone-curlews, however the new treatment separated them into a shared new genus *Hesperoburhinus* (Černý, van Els, Natale & Gregory 2023 from the Greek *hespero* western, *bous* ox and *rhis* nose). This being a nod to them being the only species of the family in the western hemisphere.

Some of these changes have already been Implemented on the website, the remainder will be done as soon as possible after the editing of this newsletter is completed.



Red-kneed Dotterel, Diademed Sandpiper-plover and Tawny-throated Dotterel - Elis Simpson



Double-striped Thick-knee — Lermith Torres



Peruvian Thick-knee - Elis Simpson

IUCN Red List Updates: Charadrii

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List Updates

Family	Scientific Name	Common Name	Previous Red List Status	Decision
Pluvianellidae	<i>Pluvianellus socialis</i>	Magellanic Plover	Near Threatened	Vulnerable
Charadriidae	<i>Anarhynchus thoracicus</i>	Black-banded Plover	Vulnerable	Vulnerable
	<i>Anarhynchus dealbatus</i>	White-faced Plover	Data Deficient	Least Concern
	<i>Anarhynchus mongolus</i>	Siberian Sand Plover	Not Recognised	Endangered
	<i>Anarhynchus atrifrons</i>	Tibetan Sand Plover	Not Recognised	Least Concern
Scolopacidae	<i>Scolopax celebensis</i>	Sulawesi Woodcock	Near Threatened	Least Concern

[See full list here.](#)



Magellanic Plover - Elis Simpson

Do you suffer from Solastalgia? I bet you do! - Rick Simpson

Never heard of solastalgia? No? Neither had I, but since it is a relatively new word, a neologism if you will, it is not entirely surprising.

What does it mean? Well, like so many of our scientific words it is a compound of two words from the classical languages, Latin and Greek; Latin *sōlācium* meaning comfort and the Greek root *-algia* meaning pain, suffering or grief. Solastalgia is defined as a form of emotional or existential distress caused by environmental change. It will usually lead to a feeling of nostalgia after a period of time when the grief has past and we yearn for ‘the good old days’ before the changes happened.

Who among us has not felt like weeping when a stand of trees near our home is felled, or a new sign appears by the side of the road telling us a new housing estate or wind farm is to be built on the hitherto scenic landscape? I cannot speak for people in China and around the Yellow Sea who have witnessed the massive destruction of the intertidal zone, some probably don't care that it is gone, but many I feel sure do, and in theory this is all done to benefit them.

Have a thought then for how the birds must feel, if they are capable of such emotions, when they arrive after a long flight, hungry and tired, to find that the object of their desires, an oozing mudflat full of food and safety, is now a car park! Sadly this will not, in their case, lead to bouts of nostalgia later in life as their life expectancy will be curtailed by the lack of food and shelter resulting, almost inevitably, in an early demise.



Bankside clearance on the River Lugg - Herefordshire Wildlife Trust

Wader Conservation World Watch 11

**November
2nd &/or 3rd
2023**

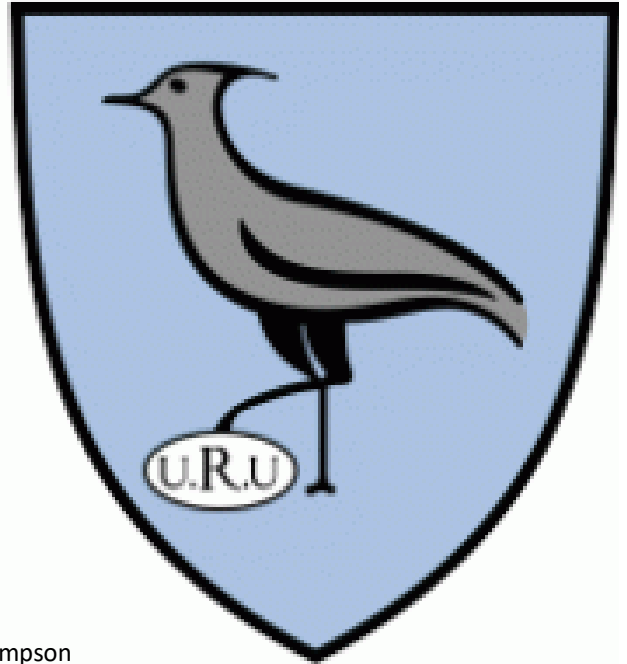
**Wherever you happen
to be in the world.**

A mascot to be proud of - Rick Simpson

During this year's Rugby World Cup I couldn't help noticing that the Uruguayan team's logo is the Southern Lapwing *Vanellus chilensis*, which by no coincidence is also the National Bird of Uruguay. In Spanish the name is, among others, *tero* after its noisy call. The species is widespread and common throughout Uruguay and most of South America. It is a bird that frequently appears on sports fields (we found one that was nesting on the centre spot of a football pitch in Brazil, the constant use forming a sort of 'natural' scrape at that spot). The team nickname's is *Los Teros*. On the face of it, it may seem an odd choice for a rugby team to choose an apparently delicate bird as a mascot, however the Southern Lapwing, in common with many of its family has a reputation for being pugnacious and aggressive.



Southern Lapwing or Tero - Elis Simpson



From the library - A Quest For Birds (1934) - W. K. Richmond.

There is a short period of inactivity and silence, and then, one day in mid-July there is a clear whistling in the sky, and before we know where we are the return movement has begun. Whimbrels and rose-coloured Knots in their glorious red and chestnut summer plumage and Bar-tailed Godwits shining resplendently in burnished red, return southward from the northern tundras almost before the last of their fellows are fairly on their way there. Usually there is little more than three weeks between the departure northwards of the last of the birds on their spring migration, and the arrival of the first birds returning on the autumnal movement southwards. It may seem strange to many people that such a movement should be called autumnal when many of our English birds are still in the midst of the nesting season, and when most of us are still looking forward to our summer holidays; but it is a fact that the first return of these northern breeders marks the turning point in the year which from now on "steps slow to decay."

By the first week in August a great rush is in progress, and a sense of activity and expectancy is in the air once again. The waders appear in thousands, the adults in their smart breeding plumages, and the more numerous young in their winter dress. Grey Plovers, Ringed Plovers, Sanderlings, Dunlin, Turnstones, Oystercatchers, Purple Sandpipers and others all appear for a short time, and then pass onwards on their way, giving way to others that take their places immediately. And so the changing pageant continues unbroken.



New book for wader enthusiasts - The Purple Sandpiper, by Ron Summers

This monograph, which was published in July 2023, is a synthesis of data from both published and unpublished studies and surveys of Purple Sandpipers over 50 years. All aspects of the bird's life history are covered, including morphology, distribution, numbers, population structure, breeding, moult, migration and feeding. These aspects are compared with other wader species to highlight adaptations of Purple Sandpipers to their unusual lifestyle of living on rocky seashores in winter. Amber-listed, Purple Sandpiper populations are decreasing in the UK, so conservation issues are discussed. Written in a popular style and richly illustrated with over 100 graphs and maps, and over 150 photographs, this book (352 pages), which is fully referenced, is both informative and thought provoking for all that have an interest in waders.

This hardback book is available for purchase, priced £30. For more information or to order a copy, please contact the Natural History Book Service (NHBS), UK.



Darwin-Garramilla Shorebird Festival - Amanda Lilleyman

This year we were excited to hold the first ever Darwin-Garramilla Shorebird Festival to celebrate shorebirds and the community of people that connect with them. The aim of the festival was to engage and ignite the community of Darwin-Garramilla to learn and protect shorebirds through the arts and sciences. The festival included a curated art exhibition by local artists, art and craft sessions for the community, poetry, birdwatching and surveys, presentations, and social chats, and will conclude with a music immersion session.



The festival was held over the weekend of 15-17 September 2023 and had a range of activities across ten different venues in Darwin-Garramilla. Over 150 people attended the festival events, ranging from kids to adults, and we noticed smiles, laughter, conversation, and even tears (at the beauty of performances).



Our opening reception was a hit with everyone enjoying the music, talks, food, market stalls, the beautiful Welcome to Country, and the backdrop of the Arafura Sea from Nightcliff Foreshore. We also had special guests attend the festival, including a visiting arts and environmental humanities Professor from the University of New Mexico, Prof. Subhankar Banarjee, guests from New Zealand, Dr Micha Jackson, visiting scientist and keynote speaker who shared her tales from the tundra, and the Bowerbird Collective. We were thrilled to have Simone and Anthony from the

Darwin-Garramilla Shorebird Festival - cont'd



Bowerbird Collective join us to share their love of shorebirds and perform their new piece 'Life on Land's Edge'. It was truly stunning and the perfect selection of video to accompany their music.

We'd like to extend a big thank-you to everyone who volunteered, performed, curated art, counted shorebirds, helped at events, and shared the shorebird love and story. It was magical and really shows how special the community is, and how fortunate Darwin is to have a group of people that care about these birds. This is a positive step towards protecting highly threatened shorebirds.



Wader Quest is proud to have contributed to the funding of this festival - Ray Heaton, the Chair of the Wader Quest Grants Panel commented; *'We are pleased to have responded to a request for funding from Australia for the Birdlife Top End Darwin-Garramilla Shore Bird Festival in Australia. The coastal position of Darwin with its geographical proximity to Indonesia and South Asia makes it an important migration route and stop over site for many bird species, on their autumn and spring migrations. Large numbers of birds including wader species use the area and benefit from suitable habits, which also facilitate for resident breeding wader species. Raising the profile of requirements for wader species' survival is important work and can impact positively among residents and decision makers helping future survival.'*

All photographs supplied by Amanda Lilleyman depicting various activities at the festival.



The St Helena Plover or Wirebird – St Helena National Trust

The St Helena Plover *Anarhynchus sanctaehelena*, locally known as the Wirebird, is the islands last surviving endemic land bird and is also our national bird. It is closely related to, and likely to be a descendent of, the Kittlitz's Plover (*Anarhynchus pecuarius*) in Africa compared to which it is slightly larger, with longer legs and a less efficient flier.

This small enigmatic bird feeds on ground dwelling invertebrates such as beetles, caught using a 'run and grab' technique. The Wirebird habituates in both dry and wet pasturelands and semi desert areas with open views where vegetation is preferably <5cm in height with patches of bare ground. Fairly flat or gently sloping semi desert areas are believed to be its original habitat before being forced to find alternative habitat due to predators and invasive species. Predatory species such as feral cats, rats and mynas threaten chick and egg survival, invasive vegetation species overtake natural habitats pushing birds further to the edges of their range whilst human development impacts the very survival of this species.

The St Helena National Trust leads the annual Wirebird census count that takes place during the Wirebird's peak nesting season in January. At this time most birds will be present within their territories - no Wirebirds are counted while flying - producing more representative results. The census is conducted on a total of 31 sites across the island from pasture lands to semi-desert areas. The first Wirebird census was undertaken in 1988/89, then again in 2000/01 and now annually (by the Trust) since 2006. The first species action plan was developed in 2008. Its aim was to reduce the Wirebird's IUCN threatened status from 'Critically Endangered' to 'Vulnerable', which was achieved in 2016.

There have been many conservation project focussing on conserving the Wirebird, the majority of which have been led by the St Helena National Trust in partnership with various international partners, primarily the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

2008 – 2011: Mitigation impacts on Wirebird population Project; this project ensured that there was sufficient pastureland restored and managed to compensate for Wirebird habitat lost due to development of the airport.

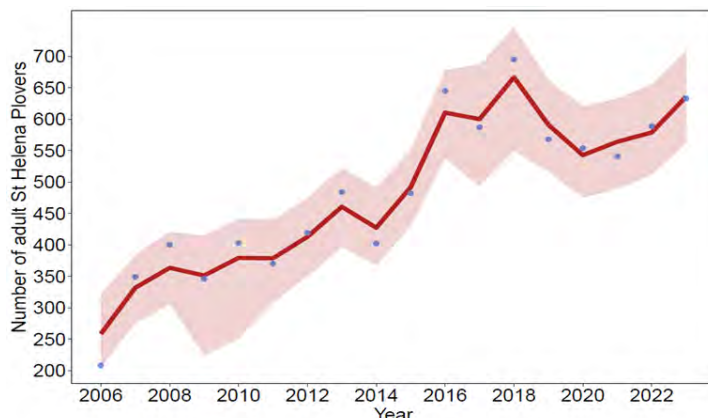
2012 – 2015: Predator control Project; funded by the Overseas Territories and Environment Programme (OTEP) This project focussed on four key Wirebird sites where both the Wirebird and predators *i.e.* feral cats and rats, were monitored with trapping and baiting of these predator species being carried out. As a result of project activities, in particular the feral cat trapping and rodent baiting, in a census conducted in January 2013 it was confirmed that Wirebirds were on the increase with noticeably more juveniles. This project continued into 2016 working with the contractors of the airport project to continue trapping feral cats and monitor Wirebird populations in the area.

2020 – 2023: Darwin Plus funded Invasive Vertebrate Project (DPLUS107); this continued with efforts started on the predator control project and also looked at targeting other predatory and invasive species: Common Myna and European Rabbit. Roost counts, trapping trials and a feasibility study were carried out, over 3,000 mynas were trapped in just over 1 year, making it a success.

2023 – present: Darwin Plus funded Grassland Project (DPLUS190); this project is looking at restoring grasslands (pastures) and looking at high priority invasive vegetation species: Bull grass, Lantana and Furze. The aim is to create suitable habitat for both the Wirebird and livestock to help the birds and aid local farmers' livelihoods.



St Helena Plover or Wirebird - St Helena National Trust



Graph plotting the Wirebird population in terms of adult birds
- St Helena National Trust

Cover photo; Eurasian Curlew - Damian Money



This photograph was taken by regular newsletter contributor Damian Money and is of one of a pair of Eurasian Curlews on the North York Moors near Danby, North Yorkshire. In the 2017 Yorkshire Bird Report it stated that breeding numbers in Yorkshire were slightly up on previous years. Let's hope this is a long term trend. In the Esk Valley study area at least 64 pairs were reported and 25 broods were seen but on Fylingdales Moor the numbers were slightly down.

Eurasian Curlew - Rick Simpson

Eurasian Curlew

Numenius arquata

Brisson 1760

IUCN Near Threatened

Scientific name explained:

- *Numenius*: Greek; mentioned by Hesychius as *noumenius* referring to an unnamed bird, assumed to be Curlew; *noumenia* young or new moon; *neos* young or new; *mene* moon (Brisson 1760). * See page 19 for comment.
- *arquata* - Latin; archery bow.

Alternative English name; Whaup .

Family: SCOLOPACIDAE (Rafinesque 1815)

Subfamily: TRINGINAE (Rafinesque 1815)

Tribe: NUMENIINI

Taxonomy; Three subspecies

- *N. a. arquata*: Western, northern and central Europe
- *N. a. orientalis*: Western and central Siberia to Manchuria
- *N. a. suschkini*: Western Kazakhstan to south-western Siberia



Eurasian Curlews - © Phil Hadley

Eurasian Curlew - cont'd

Synonymy of genus:

Scolopax Linnaeus 1758

Numenius Brisson 1760

Curlirius Rafinesque 1815

Phaeopus Cuvier 1817

Cractiornis Gray 1841

Synonyms:

protonym *Scolopax Arquata* Linnaeus, C 1758

Scolopax arquata Linnaeus 1758

Numenius numenius Brisson 1760

Numenius arquata Latham 1787

Numenius major Stephens 1824

Numenius virgataus Cuvier 1829

Numenius lineatus Cuvier 1829

Numenius nasicus Temminck 1840

Cracticornis arquatus Gray 1841

Numenius arquatula Hodgson 1844

Numenius cassani Swinhoe 1867

Conservation status:

- Near Threatened globally.
- Vulnerable in Europe, Red Listed in the UK and a UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species.

Population:

Globally; 835K - 1.31 million individuals.

European; 212K and 292K pairs = 425 - 584 K mature individuals.

UK; 58.5 thousand breeding pairs.

The UK population is significant as it represents approximately 25% of the global population.

The UK population is in decline and has been since the 1970s halving in the last 20 years.

In some lowland habitats the species is either extinct or approaching extinction with overall numbers very low, probably only around 500 pairs.

The number of birds visiting in the winter period has also declined by around 25%.

It is for all the above reasons that the bird is categorised as it has been .

Reasons for the decline are;

- changes in farming practices, moving from hay production to silage production,
- over grazing,
- habitat destruction and degradation,
- predation especially on eggs and young. Very often zero chicks reach fledging age season after season, and the lack of recruits leads to declines.



Eurasian Curlew eggs - Andrew Whitelee



Curlew chicks in nest - Rachel Bennett



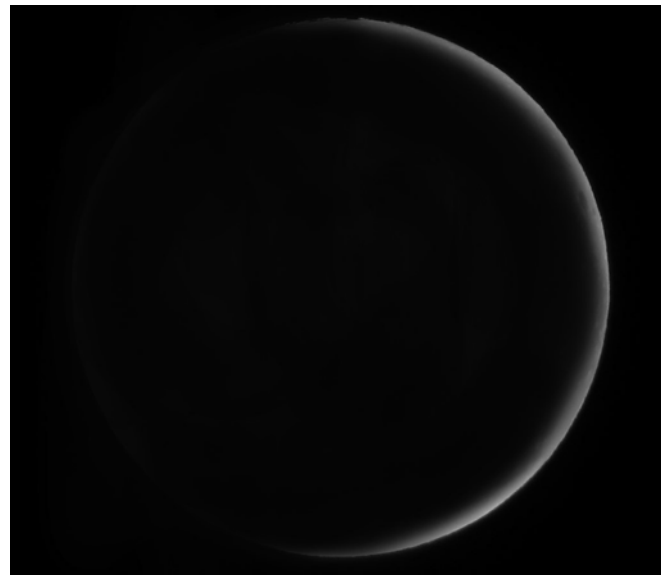
Well developed Curlew chick awaiting ringing - Elis Simpson

Eurasian Curlew - cont'd

*As an aside here, my feeling is that the originally intended meaning of *neos* was in fact 'young moon' and not 'new moon' as is almost universally quoted. My reasoning being that, in astronomical terms, the new moon is all dark whereas the slender crescent is known as a young moon. That said, in non-scientific circles, many people refer to the crescent moon as being the new moon, as that is the first moon that is visible to the naked eye, the new moon being invisible and therefore apparently absent.

But this bird's scientific name was not originally created in English nor by people of a non scientific background. The first person to coin *Numenius* for this taxon was a French zoologist and natural philosopher, one Mathurin Jacques Brisson. He did not conjure this name up but used a word from an Ancient Greek lexicon by Hesychius which referred to *noumenios* and described it simply as a species of bird. It had been widely assumed that this bird, whose name had the meaning of young or new moon, was the Curlew due to the resemblance of the bill to the crescent phase of the moon. Brisson's name was later adopted by Carl von Linné (Linnaeus).

What we cannot know is Brisson's familiarity with the phases of the moon or whether he just took the word at face value to mean the Curlew. I suggest though that if indeed Hesychius' name did refer to the Curlew, then surely his knowledge of Greek and the understanding that it resembled the crescent phase of the moon, must suggest that young, rather than new was the initial interpretation of *neos*. In French there is no such confusion as the crescent moon in the young phase sounds, in English, altogether like a superior breakfast item; *premier croissant*, which linguists will know, and others will be able to guess, translates as the 'first crescent'.



New Moon (L) and Young Moon (R); two things to consider; which most resembles a Curlew's beak? Did Hesychius know his Greek?

For more on this theory see [this video](#) or read [this article](#).

If you would like to support Wader Quest you can buy our merchandising 25% of the price of which goes directly to our conservation grants fund and will be used for no other purpose.

The Eurasian Curlew is available as a pair of earrings for £10.00 plus p&p or as a pin badge for just £2.00 plus p&p.



Severn & Avon Vales Curlew season 2023

29

farms surveyed



226

fields checked

27

nests found



34

pairs monitored

90

eggs laid

29

chicks hatched

Keep up-to-date online - through our website (QR code) & #SAVCurlews on Twitter



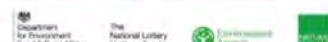
Colour Ringed Curlew

This year we are very pleased to have colour ringed a total of 24 Curlew (8 adults & 16 chicks)

6 of the adults were fitted with GPS tags, their movements can be followed, scan QR code.

9

chicks fledged



Knots - A Flag Spotter's Tale - Richard Smith

I get to Thurstaston as the sun is peaking over the horizon. It's just after Christmas (2022) and there's the promise of a perfect winter's day with clear sky and a gentle breeze, and I'm here to log colour ringed Red Knots *Calidris camutus*. The clear sky means that there has been a sharp frost overnight so I know the Knots will be hungry, but where are they? The tide is ebbing with the mudbanks just starting to show, but there's no sign of them. As I walk along the causeway I'm worried that the Knots have gone elsewhere, Formby perhaps, but then I see a great mass flying up from their roost on the edge of Heswall marsh. There must be 20,000, wow! They fly up from Heswall in one big flock and I fear they are all going to land out on Dawpool Bank, but then a few hundred peel off to land close to me on the mud, after 20 minutes they are joined by several more hundreds until I reckon over three thousand are between me, on the causeway, and Caldy steps, and I eagerly start to scan through them with my 'scope.



Early morning at Thurstaston in December and the Knots are hungry - Richard Smith

In the bright morning light I soon see what I'm looking for, orange flags on the birds' legs, each individually marked with letters and/or numbers. There's '5A', lovely to see that one first seen by me at Caldy way back in October 2017 a few days after it was ringed. 'ECE' is a regular at Thurstaston and I've already recorded it three times this winter, I then spot 'CCH' which hasn't been seen since last winter, and that was at Meols. Here's something interesting - '10C' and '15C' together and both ringed just last month at Hoylake. 'PET' seems to be following me around and I've already seen it at Thurstaston, Meols and West Kirby this winter. I then see three Knots ringed last March at Ainsdale - '64L'. '76L' and '20M' - all new ones for Thurstaston. I see 'VXX', which was in Iceland in May, whilst '76E' joined the huge throng at Snettisham on the Wash where it was recorded both in April and August, glad to see they've both made it back here. Ah, what's this? A Knot with four colour rings and a flag means it is one ringed by the Dutch on the Waddensea - I make sure I get a good photo of that one and when I get home I find out it

Knots - A Flag Spotter's Tale - cont'd



Orange flags '5A', ringed at Altcar in September 2017, and '15C' ringed at Hoylake in November 2022 - Richard Smith

was ringed on the lonely island of Griend in October 2019. Next there's one with a Yellow flag and the code '14C', it was ringed in Iceland in May 2017 and it's the first time it's been recorded on the Dee Estuary. I spot several more, including one ringed on the Wash, but after just over an hour the Knots are spooked by a Peregrine and with a loud woosh of wings take flight and move to the far side of the channel. But I'm more than happy, not just with a very good haul of colour ringed Knots, but having been in the close presence of such wonderful birds.

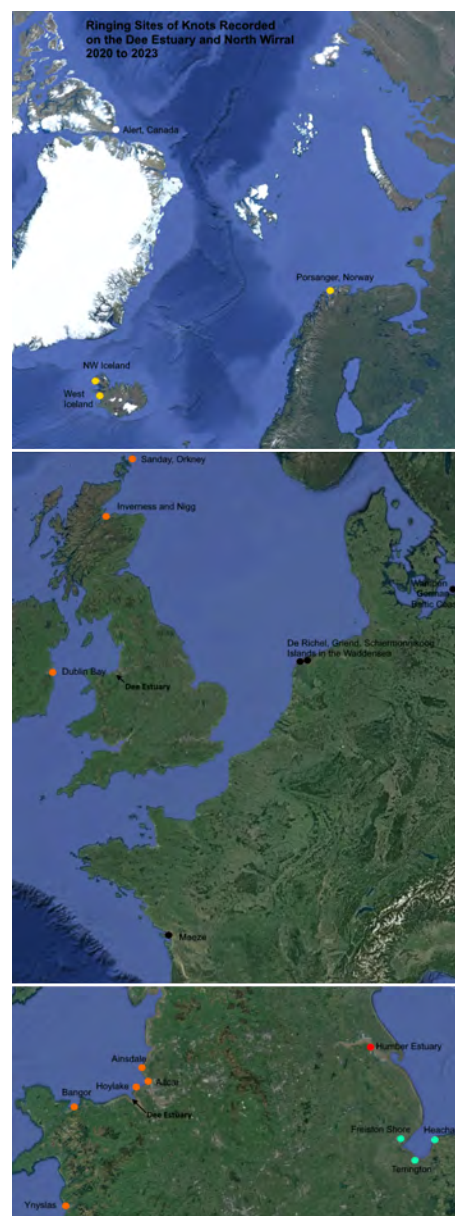
I hope the above paragraph gives you a feel as to why we record colour ringed Knots (and many other species). I know it doesn't appeal to everyone but once you get into it it can be very addictive! Thanks to colour ringing and their subsequent recording, the Knots which visit Liverpool Bay (including the Dee Estuary and North Wirral) have rapidly become one of the most studied populations of Knots in the world. I can only think of two other comparable sites - the Waddensea (mainly the Netherlands) and Delaware Bay in the USA - and their study periods are relatively short when the birds are passing through on migration, whilst here in Liverpool Bay the birds are present all year (this includes non-breeding birds present between mid-May and mid-July).

In the winter of 2022/23 we logged a total of 564 records of Orange flagged Knot on the Dee Estuary, plus 102 records from other schemes. It's always fascinating to find out where these birds have been ringed, and that's shown in the maps on the right.

All the Knots we see on the Dee Estuary are the race which winter in north-west Europe, including the UK, and breed in north-east Canada - *Calidris canutus islandica*. As you can see from the maps they have been ringed at a good variety of locations ranging from Alert, near the North Pole in Canada, Iceland and the far north of Norway, east to the Baltic coast of Germany and as far south as the French Atlantic coast, as well as many sites in the British Isles. The different coloured dots represent different ringing schemes - to read about these refer to the 'Photographic Guide to Colour-marked Red Knot' - download the PDF file by clicking here.

If you wish to read more about the Red Knots of the Dee Estuary and adjacent Liverpool Bay you may find the following articles of interest:

1. Among Knots by Richard Smith - [February 2018 Dee Estuary Newsletter](#).
2. 2 Years on: Some new observations from the Altcar Red Knot Colour -Ringing Project by Rose Maciewicz and Peter Knight - [November 2019 Dee Estuary Newsletter](#).
3. Liverpool Bay Knots by Richard Smith - [August 2021 Dee Estuary Newsletter](#) - .
4. Colour Ring Report: Knots by Richard Smith - [January 2022 Dee Estuary Newsletter](#).
5. Flying off to Iceland in May to follow migrating Red Knot by Rose Maciewicz and Peter Knight - [August 2022 Dee Estuary Newsletter](#).



Knots - A Flag Spotter's Tale - cont'd



Orange Flag 23J, ringed on the Orkneys in May 2022 - Richard Smith



Orange Flag TUL ringed on Cardigan Bay in Sep 2022 - Richard Smith



Lime Flag CKY ringed at Heacham on the Wash in Nov 2021 - Richard Smith



A real rarity, ringed at Alert, Arctic Canada in 2008 - Richard Smith



Yellow Flag 63M ringed in west Iceland in May 2017 - Richard Smith



Y8PGPY ringed at Griend (Waddensea) in Sep 2021 - Steve Hinde

A Tale of Two Rings - Andrew Whitelee

I'm a big fan of colour-ringing as it makes identification of individual birds easier in the field and can lead to more sightings and useful data on migration and movements.



Ruddy Turnstone with colour rings - Andrew Whitelee



Arctic Skua - Andrew Whitelee

I found this colour-ringed Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* in Shetland in May this year and submitted the sighting. When the project owner got back to me it was interesting to find out that this individual was originally ringed in Moaña, Pontevedra Spain in October 2022 and had been recorded down there over the winter on 15 occasions. My sightings was the only record of this bird as it travelled north to its presumed breeding grounds in Norway (see table below).

Compare that to the Arctic Skua (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) that I recorded (under licence) on a bird survey this summer. The bird has a metal ring on its right leg (just visible in the photo). Despite my best efforts and zoomed in photos, I couldn't manage to read the number on the ring. This meant I couldn't identify the individual bird and find out any information about its movements.

A case of what might have been.



PROGRAMA DE SEGUIMENTO DE LIMÍCOLAS EN GALICIA

SHOREBIRDS MONITORING PROGRAM IN GALICIA

grupodeanelamentoanduriña.blogspot.com
Send records to: antoniofcordeiro@hotmail.com



Arenaria interpres

Color code: N/BWR Ring: 3M011806 ESI Age: 4 Sex: - Date: 02/10/2022 Catching place: O Con, Moaña (Pontevedra), Spain 42°14'55"N 08°47'27"W
Anilladores/ringers: Antonio Fernández Cordeiro, Alberto Bon Monroy

			Km	Dirección	Días
09/10/2022	Praia da Xunqueira, Moaña (Pontevedra), Spain	42°17'11"N 08°43'41"W	1,7	0	7
09/10/2022	O Con, Moaña (Pontevedra), Spain	42°14'55"N 08°47'27"W	0	0	7
30/10/2022	Praia da Xunqueira, Moaña (Pontevedra), Spain	42°17'11"N 08°43'41"W	1,7	0	28
19/11/2022	O Con, Moaña (Pontevedra), Spain	42°14'55"N 08°47'27"W	0	0	48
18/12/2022	O Con, Moaña (Pontevedra), Spain	42°14'55"N 08°47'27"W	0	0	77
30/12/2022	O Con, Moaña (Pontevedra), Spain	42°14'55"N 08°47'27"W	0	0	89
06/01/2023	O Con, Moaña (Pontevedra), Spain	42°14'55"N 08°47'27"W	0	0	96
08/01/2023	Praia da Xunqueira, Moaña (Pontevedra), Spain	42°17'11"N 08°43'41"W	1,7	0	98
15/01/2023	O Con, Moaña (Pontevedra), Spain	42°14'55"N 08°47'27"W	0	0	105
12/02/2023	Praia da Xunqueira, Moaña (Pontevedra), Spain	42°17'11"N 08°43'41"W	1,7	0	133
19/02/2023	O Con, Moaña (Pontevedra), Spain	42°14'55"N 08°47'27"W	0	0	140
05/03/2023	O Con, Moaña (Pontevedra), Spain	42°14'55"N 08°47'27"W	0	0	154
06/04/2023	O Con, Moaña (Pontevedra), Spain	42°14'55"N 08°47'27"W	0	0	186
12/03/2023	Praia da Xunqueira, Moaña (Pontevedra), Spain	42°17'11"N 08°43'41"W	1,7	0	181
09/04/2023	Praia da Xunqueira, Moaña (Pontevedra), Spain	42°17'11"N 08°43'41"W	1,7	0	189
20/05/2023	Sandness, Shetland (Scotland), GB	60°17'60"N 01°41'09"W	2062,4	11,0	230

More colour-ringed bird reports - Rick Simpson



Bar-tailed Godwit - Damian Money

This Bar-tailed Godwit *Limos lapponoica* was photographed by Damian Money on Redcar beach in the north-east of England on 30th of August this year. Damian reported his sighting to the Stavanger Museum and discovered that the bird had been originally ringed and a flag with EMZ attached just three days earlier at Revtingen in Norway! The ringer considered this to be a migrant and not one of the breeding nor wintering birds. How correct he was! So this bird had travelled 609km in that time. In Bar-tailed Godwit terms this is not a huge distance and would easily have been completed in a single flight.



Purple Sandpiper - Damian Money

During WCWW 10 on the 5th of November, Damian was again at his local patch in Redcar when he photographed some Purple Sandpipers *Calidris maritima*, which he kindly shared with us. One of those was this bird carrying a green flag with XMM on it. The Purple Sandpiper was ringed as a first year bird on the 21st of August 2014 at Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway. Damian tells us that it has returned to Redcar every winter since. Its flag is rather worn now so the code is hard to see but it usually allows close views and you can then even read the metal ring via photographs.

More colour-ringed bird reports - cont'd

A number of Eurasian Oystercatchers *Haematopus ostralegus* with colour rings can be seen in Exmouth, Devon UK.

This individual caught our attention due to its age, that being 36. The bird was caught and ringed at age 2 years on 28th of September 1989 at Dawlish Warren 29/09/1989. It has spent much of its time since then between Zuid Holland, Netherlands and Dawlish Warren in Devon where it has often been sighted and was resighted by Tim Ridgeway on 17th of November 2023.

The longest lived wader ever recorded according to BTO records was a Eurasian Oystercatcher that was ringed (as an adult) in Lincolnshire on the 30th of July 1976. 41 years 1 month and 5 days later it was shot in France on the 4th of September 2017. As it had been ringed as an adult so, at least two years old, it was at least 43 years old when it was killed. Exactly how long it could have lived is anyone's guess.

However; I did find a Dutch record of an individual that was ringed on the 3rd of March 1972. This too was an adult. I was last heard of on the 1st of August 2016 when I believe it was taken by an avian predator. This means that the time span between the two recorded events was 44 years 4 months and 25 days, making the bird at least 46 years old. Unfortunately my notes do not record the source of this information nor the cause of death so some, or all, of it may not be accurate.

Either way, Tim's oystercatcher has potential to become a record breaker.



Eurasian Oystercatcher - Tim Ridgeway

Incredible journeys - Rick Simpson

Bristle-thighed Curlews *Numenius tahitiensis* have an amazing migration strategy, spending the non-breeding season exclusively on oceanic islands in the Pacific after leaving their breeding grounds in Alaska. One female was tracked by satellite in May returning to its breeding grounds and took six and a half days to get there in a single non-stop flight. At times it was recorded travelling at 120mph! The total journey was 10,288 km (6,392.6 miles). It was also often recorded travelling at an altitude between 2,000 and 3,000m (6,561.68 - 9,842.52 feet). This particular bird, which carries a red flag number 144, was captured in April 2023 on Reitoru, an uninhabited Island in the Tuamotu atoll, exactly where it had been captured, as an adult bird, in March 2003. This would make the bird at least 22 years old.



Bristle-thighed Curlew - Alex Wang

A Sanderling *Calidris alba* that had been ringed as a chick at Zackenberg in eastern Greenland in 2021 was seen and its colour rings read and reported in Rio Savane in Mozambique in September 2023. Sanderlings are not unusual in Mozambique in the non breeding season, however the Greenland population is thought to winter mainly in west Africa. So how did this little bird end up at the other end of the continent on the wrong side? A number of possibilities are suggested. One is that it continued down the west coast of Africa and then travelled up the east coast to Mozambique. Another suggests it may have crossed the continent, even crossing the Sahara as some have been known to do. Or did it connect with some eastern breeding birds in its first winter and then return north with them later to travel back south with them to Mozambique?



Sanderling - Elis Simpson

Incredible journeys - cont'd

A study has shown that juvenile Eurasian Whimbrels, *Numenius phaeopus* of the subspecies *islandicus* fly non-stop to west Africa on their first migration in line with the adults that do the same. However the young birds mainly leave later than the adults, taking a less direct route and once in Africa they continued their journey with more stops than the adults. How these young birds are able to do this with no input from more experienced birds is still to be learned. [Read more here.](#)



Eurasian Whimbrels - Elis Simpson

Some extralimital records - Rick Simpson

A Piping Plover *Charadrius melodus* has been recorded for the first time in Colombia, South America at Boca Camarones at the mouth of the Laguna de Navio Quebrado. The usual wintering grounds of this species include the Gulf Coast of Mexico as far south as the Yucatan Peninsula and they are also present in some Caribbean islands. It is not the first South American record however, as it has been recorded in both northern Costa Rica and neighbouring Venezuela just over the Colombian border.

Incredibly it was at the same spot at the same time as Colombia's first Siberian Sand Plover *Anarhynchus mongolus*. This being even more out of the way, since it usually winters in South-east Asia down to Australasia.



Piping Plover in Colombia - Ryan Jones



Siberian Sand Plover (rear R), Semipalmated Plover (rear L) *Charadrius semipalmatus* and Piping Plover front (out of focus), together in Colombia - Ryan Jones



Siberian Sand Plover in Colombia - Ryan Jones

On the 3rd of December 2023, in war-torn Ukraine, an unexpected ray of light amidst the horrors facing the country in wartime occurred for observers Oleksandr Riznyk, Anna Alabina and Dasha Buzovka. They discovered Ukraine's first record of Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* on the Embankment of the Dnipro River in Cherkasy. The Ukrainian name is Коловодник жовтоногий (Kolovodnyk zhovtonohyy) and translates to Yellow-legged Sandpiper.

Four days later on the 7th of December on the continent of Africa, in Mauretania, another Nearctic waif, in the form of the world's smallest wader, Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*, was located by Tom Versluijs in Baie d'Aouatif in the Banc d'Arguin National Park.

The next day and at the other end of the African continent yet another Nearctic wader was found by Salim Lee in Zambia at the Sable Dam in Lusaka, this time it was a White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis*.



Lesser Yellowlegs in Ukraine -



Least Sandpiper in Mauretania - Tom Versluijs



White-rumped Sandpiper in Zambia - Salim Lee

Some extralimital records - cont'd

A juvenile Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Calidris subruficollis* has been seen in southern India where there have now been just two records. Incredibly both of these records have occurred very close to each other but 13 years apart. The first was on 13th October 2010 at Kannur International Airport. The recent sighting was on the 10th of October 2023 and was found by Dr Jayan Thomas who saw the previous bird as well.



Buff-breasted Sandpiper at Madayipara grassland - Dr Jayan Thomas

Other international wader news - in brief

USA: A bird in the hand, and band through a lens - Latest blog from [Kōlea Count.org](https://www.kolea.org)

Two years after researcher Wally Johnson and countless volunteers fitted 20 Punchbowl kōlea with satellite tracking tags, four birds still carried their tiny backpacks. Time after time, Wally and helpers arrived in the cemetery with headlamps, cameras, mist nets, and netguns to recapture the birds. Besides relieving the kōlea of their no-longer-functioning tags, Wally wanted to see how they had fared physically. Each of the four have flown two round-trips to Alaska and back, or about 12,000 miles, carrying the tags.

But those kōlea were geniuses at staying just out of reach, dodging nets with such precision we joked that they could read our cars' license plate numbers. Finally, persistence paid off. On November 29th, Joshua Fisher, a USFWS biologist and netgun expert, caught one of the four. And good news: After removing the tag and examining the bird, Wally saw no evidence that the device and its harness had caused the bird any harm.

[Read full blog here.](#)



Pacific Golden Plover - Tom Fake

USA: 2023 was a record breaking year for breeding Near Threatened Piping Plovers *Charadrius melodus* in Massachusetts with an unprecedented 1,145 pairs reported to have nested on beaches within the state this year. The closing of beaches where the birds nest is controversial but there is no doubt that this has helped the species to recover its numbers. This represents over 50% of all breeding Piping Plovers in the USA.

The rise in numbers is up from the 1986 figure of just 200 pairs, when the recovery programme was initiated. However it is not just the numbers involved that herald this success, the fact that the birds have returned to beaches where they have not bred for years is another mark of the success of the programme.

The success of the programme comes from a number of actions, in some cases controversial and unpopular. These include placing fences around breeding birds, cancellation or postponement of public firework events and the culling of Red Foxes *Vulpes vulpes*, protecting the birds and their nests from both people and predators. The culling or control of wild animals is not universally approved of, understandably, but it is important to point out that foxes are one of the main predators of ground nesting birds and in urban environments their numbers are artificially high. Their control will certainly improve the life chances of adults, eggs and chicks alike.



Piping Plover at nest - Elis Simpson

Wader news from around the world - in brief

NORTH AMERICA

USA: Phalaropes and Saline Lakes Program 2023 Report - Kiki Tarr and Ryan Carle

Summary

2023 marks the fifth year of Oikonos' phalaropes and saline lakes program. The program's goal is to identify phalarope and saline lake conservation needs through science and education, and to use the story of phalaropes to advance urgently needed conservation of saline lakes hemisphere-wide. This year, major achievements included:

- Tagging 25 Wilson's Phalaropes *Phalaropus tricolor* in Canada and California with partners to better understand phalarope movements, how long they stay at saline lakes, and connections between breeding sites, migratory sites, and wintering sites. This first-ever tracking data on the species has already provided many new insights into their habitat needs.
- Completion of the 5th consecutive year of regionally coordinated phalarope surveys at 6 major North American phalarope staging sites. Oikonos has led Mono Lake surveys since 2019 and organizes coordination with partners' surveys at the other sites.
- Leading the Intermountain West Shorebird Survey for sites in the Eastern Sierra, part of a collaborative regional project with National Audubon and Point Blue Conservation Science to survey shorebirds throughout the western U.S.
- Helping host the first-ever Mono Lake Phalarope Festival in Lee Vining, attended by approximately 120 people, including eight visitors who work on phalarope conservation in South America.
- Dedicating three new phalarope murals in Lee Vining painted by Argentinian artist Franco "Vato" Cervato.
- Making significant advancements in outreach and education, including class visits from Lee Vining public school kids to see the phalarope murals, international educational exchange events with Argentinian youth, public talks, and many news articles.

[Read full report here](#). Project part funded by Wader Quest.



A male Wilson's Phalarope tagged with a Motus nanotag; Chaplin Lake, Saskatchewan, Canada - Ryan Carle

Don't forget we have wader artworks for sale on the website.

You could adorn your wall with this wonderful Sociable Lapwing original by Szabolcs Kókay.

See our [Artwork page](#) on the website with more artwork by Szabolcs Kókay and also;

- Richard Allen
- Tom Henderson
- Heidi Lots
- Holly Thompson - Ilex Wild Arts
- Jose Arcas



Sociable Lapwing - Szabolcs Kókay

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](#) 2nd/3rd November 2024

Share our social media



Help us raise funds to support wader conservation

Charity number; 1193674

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

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

[Buy Wader Quest merchandising](#) (25% goes to conservation)

Red Dragon Metal Art

New line in wader motif garden ornaments from Red Dragon Metal Art

Steel wader shapes designed to rust and look spectacular
As fence toppers or with a spike to place in the ground or flower pot
Supplied rust free, ready to rust,
Place them in your garden and let the weather do the rest.

5 wader designs

Curlew (large)

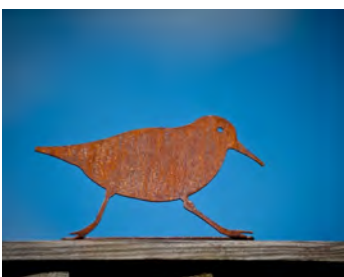
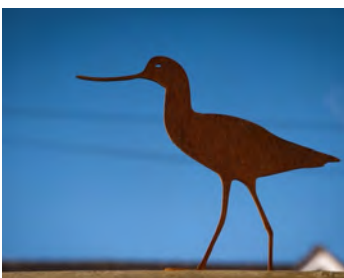
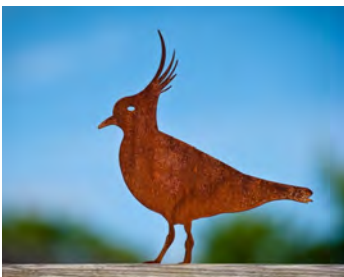
Curlew (small)

Lapwing

Avocet

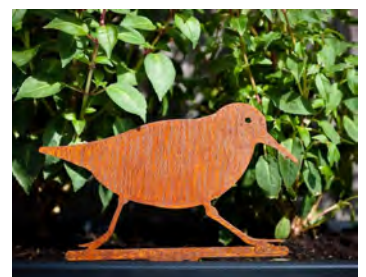
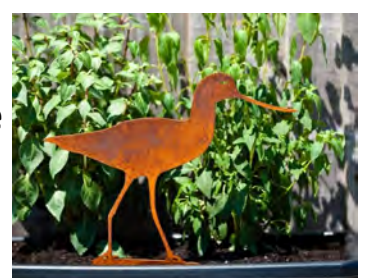
Sanderling

Fence toppers



Large Curlew only available as fence topper

Lawn/pot ornament



[All available from the Red Dragon Metal Art website shop](http://www.RedDragonMetalArt.co.uk)

For each wader design sold Red Dragon will donate a percentage of the price to Wader Quest

Watch them turn from shiny to rusty over time.

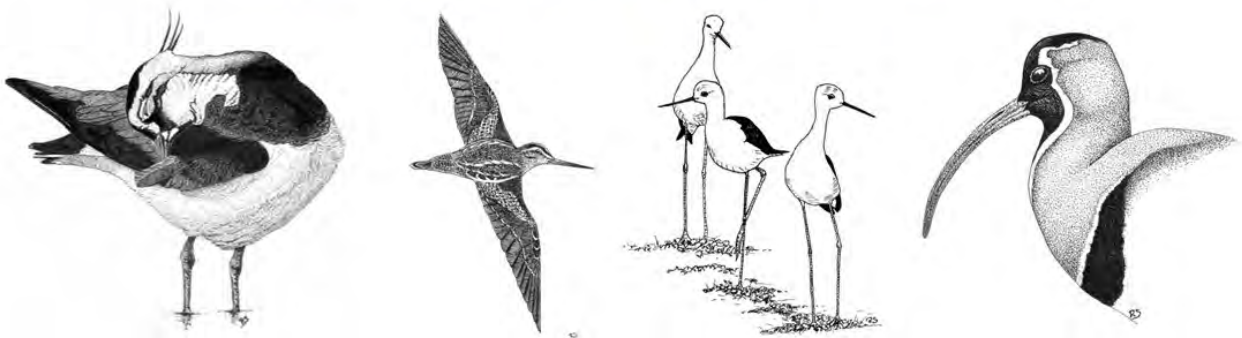


[WWW.RedDragonMetalArt.co.uk](http://www.RedDragonMetalArt.co.uk)

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



**£15.00
+p&p**

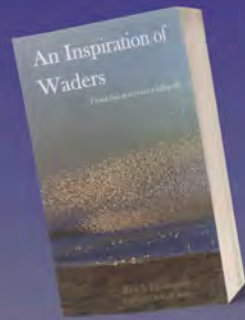
'Breathtakingly excellent - like a birding Michael Palin. The photographs and drawings are fantastic, and the text is fast-moving and endlessly entertaining and amusing.' Jim Wright.

BUY NOW!

Wader Quest merchandising

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.



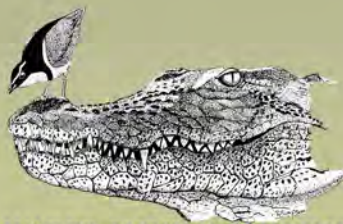
BY RICK AND ELIS SIMPSON



Find out how waders have inspired careers, myths, legends, art, music, poetry, theatre, books, discovery and much more besides.

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£8.50
+p&p



WADER QUEST PUBLISHING
All profits will go to Wader Quest

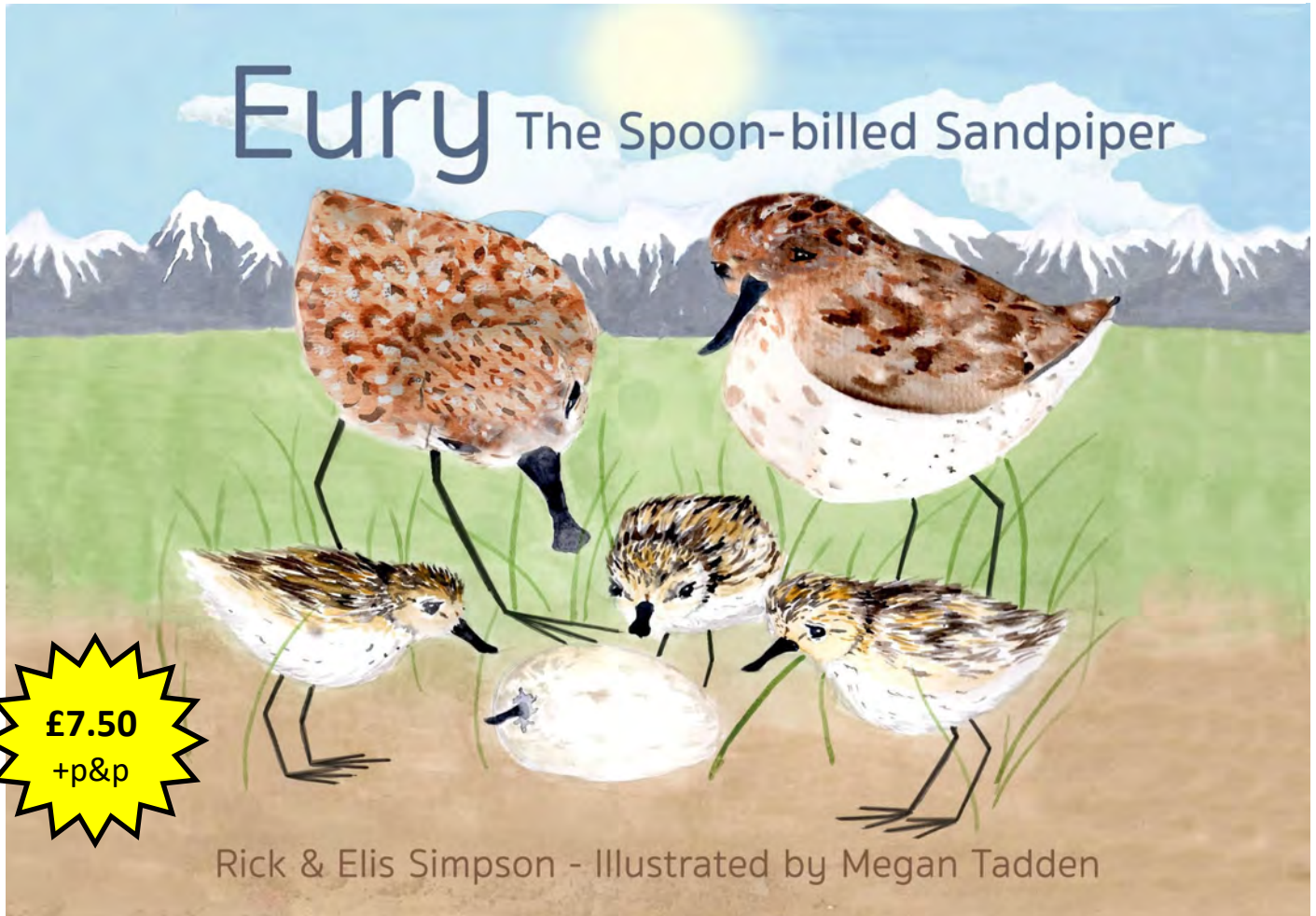
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Wader Quest merchandising

Eury The Spoon-billed Sandpiper

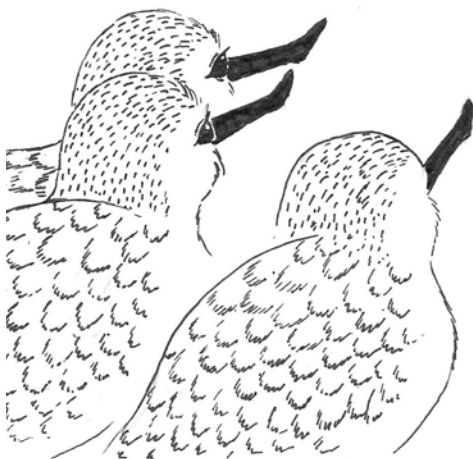
A Wader Quest Publishing book By Rick and Elis Simpson

Children 6 -11 years



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Wader Quest merchandising

Wader Quest Collectables - Pin Badges

0. Wader Quest logo
1. Diademed Sandpiper-Plover
2. Ruddy Turnstone
3. Hooded Plover
4. Sanderling
5. Egyptian Plover
7. Dunlin
8. Black Stilt
9. Ibisbill
10. Northern Lapwing
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
18. Grey Plover
19. Eurasian Dotterel
20. Great Thick-knee
21. Common Sandpiper
22. Crab Plover
23. Two-banded Plover

0-23 DESIGNS STILL



2021-23 DESIGNS

24. Terek Sandpiper
25. Banded Stilt
26. Sociable lapwing
27. Collared Pratincole
29. Blacksmith Lapwing
30. Purple Sandpiper
31. Red-capped Plover
32. Eurasian Oystercatcher
34. Common Snipe
35. American Avocet
36. Grey Phalarope
37. Killdeer

ORDERS FOR ALL WADER QUEST MERCHANDISING sales@waderquest.net



NEW FOWQ 2023 BADGE
Exclusive to 2023 subscribers.



Wader Quest Collectables - Enamelled



Earrings

Wader Quest merchandising

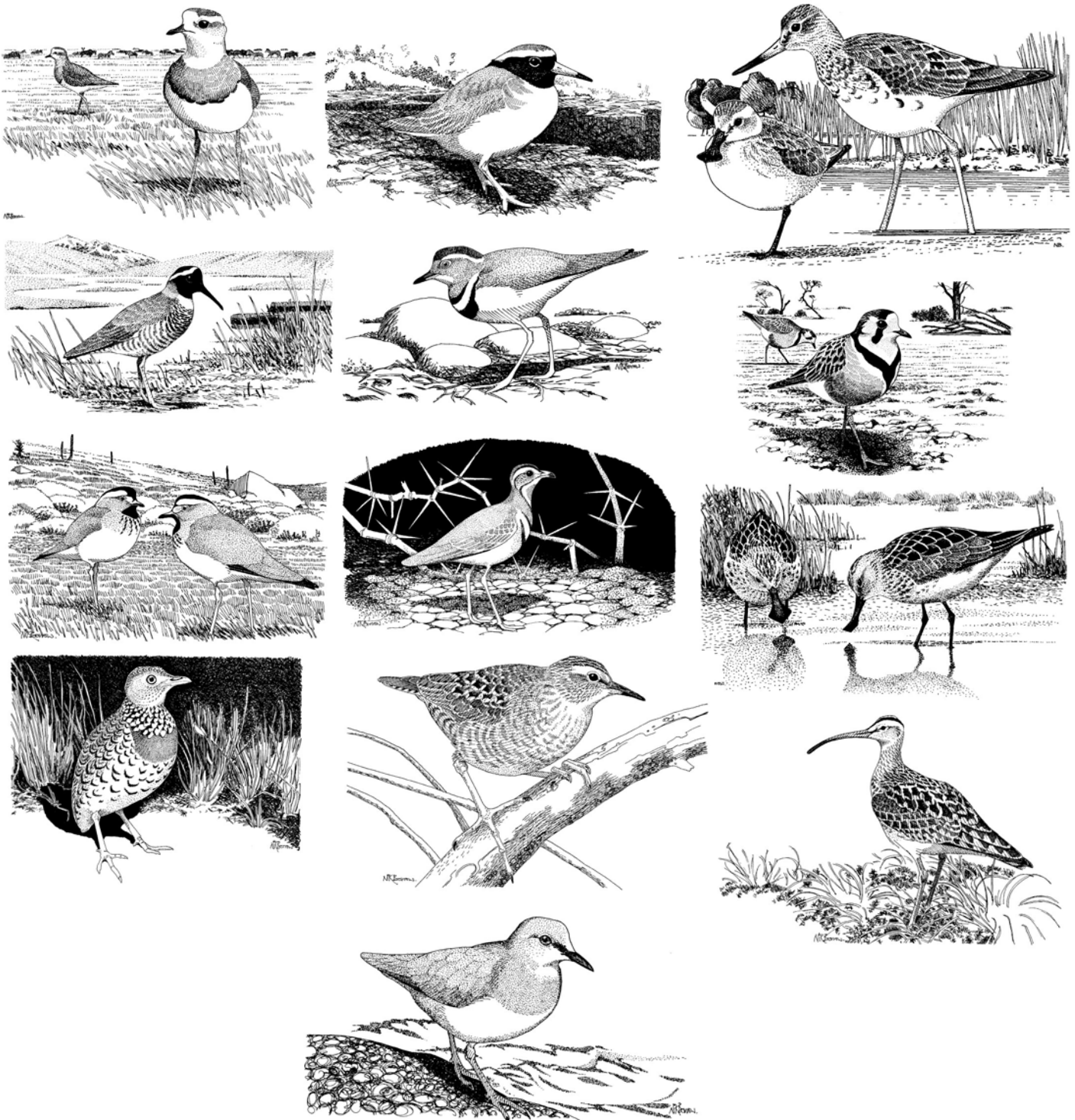


**NIK BORROW DESIGNED WADER
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100 X 150 MM

PACK OF 12 + 1 FREE £10.00

sales@waderquest.net



Wader Quest merchandising

POSTCARDS
100 X 150 MM
£1.00 EACH
+P&P



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

sales@waderquest.net

Guidelines for applications for Wader Quest grants

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

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

Priority will be given to projects:

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

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

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
Sociable Lapwing
Spoon-billed Sandpiper
White-faced Plover
White-headed Stilt
Wilson's Phalarope
Wilson's Plover
Wood Snipe
Fuegian Snipe

Countries supported

Australia	Nepal
Azerbaijan	New Zealand
Belarus	Peru
Brazil	Russia
Chile	South Africa
China	St Helena
Hungary	Thailand
Iceland	Uganda
Indonesia	UK
Kazakhstan	USA
Malaysia	Venezuela



White-headed Stilt - Elis Simpson