WADER QUEST

THE NEWSLETTER Volume 11; Issue 1 2024

Malaysian Plovers - Daeng Manit

Inside this issue

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THE NATURAL HOME FOR WADER LOVERS

Registered Charity England and Wales; 1193674

Next meeting:

Trustees: TBC **Exec. Comm**: TBC **AGM:** 24 Nov 2024

Friends of Wader Quest fees:

Individual	**£10.00**
Family	**£15.00**
Life	**£200.00**

Sponsorship fees:

Club	**£20.00**
Corporate	**£50.00**

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Grant applications and information:	applications@waderquest.net
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Membership enquiries:	membership@waderquest.net

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.

CORPORATE AND CLUB SPONSORS

Wader Quest news

Editorial Comment

Due to time constraints on the Editor, from Volume 11 there will be just three newsletters a year plus the newsletter special after the WCWW event. Issue 1 will appear in March, Issue 2 in June and Issue 3 in September while the WCWW special will appear in November/December depending on editorial issues. This is mainly due to there having been two newsletters to compile at the end of the year during the busy period during and following the WCWW event and further issue to be edited in January.

In this issue there is a new feature, which we hope to make regular, concerning those people involved in naming of waders, be it as the author or as someone who has been honoured in the name. In each issue we will feature someone who has remained a well-known person and a person whose name widely unknown due to changes in the nomenclature of a given species. We considered calling the item 'Heroes and Zeroes', but reconsidered as those that are no longer commonly quoted are thus due to no fault of their own. Instead we plumped for Fame and Obscurity and this opener has the most famous person in nomenclature and someone, at least in English speaking countries, who has slipped into obscurity.

We also include an obituary, always a sad thing to do as another member of the world's waderologists and someone with whom we have had the great pleasure of liaising, Virginia Sanz, leaves us.

As this is our year of the Curlew there are a umber of items featuring the Eurasian Curlew. Including some facts about the species.

Trustee updates and news - Important update on our banking situation

We announced late last year that Barclays, our charity banker, was going to change our account, this would have meant shutting the old account and opening a new one. This in turn would have resulted in everyone who has a standing order with us, having to change the details. Thankfully the bank has now found a way of avoiding this, **so there is now no need to change any details on any standing order or other regular payment to the Wader Quest account**.

Executive Committee updates and news

Nothing to report

Grants Panel updates and news - Ray Heaton

2023 Anniversary Grant.

Congratulations to Malka Holmes of Greengage Films to whom the Grants Panel have awarded the Anniversary Grant.

We look forward to seeing her film on the Eurasian Curlews; 'Stunned by Silence' a short campaign film to highlight the urgency of curlew conservation. Much of the footage will be from the Snowdonia National Park and the panel were impressed that a Welsh language version of the film will be produced alongside an English language version. The film will be offered free to conservation and community groups and charities. I personally can't wait to roll out the red carpet for a Premier Screening.

Wader Quest have made the Eurasian Curlew a wader species we particularly wanted to help this year, due to the many difficulties these birds are facing in fledging, with very few young birds surviving (none in some areas) over recent years. Wader Quest have already made grants to a number of curlew conservation initiatives and projects and we hope this film will help to raise awareness to a wide audience.

Eurasian Curlew - Malka Holmes

Eurasian Curlew chick being ringed - Malka Holmes

Other grants.

An award has also been sent to the Tyne Tees Regional Jack Snipe Project to part fund a new Pulsar Axion2 LRF XG35 thermal scope.

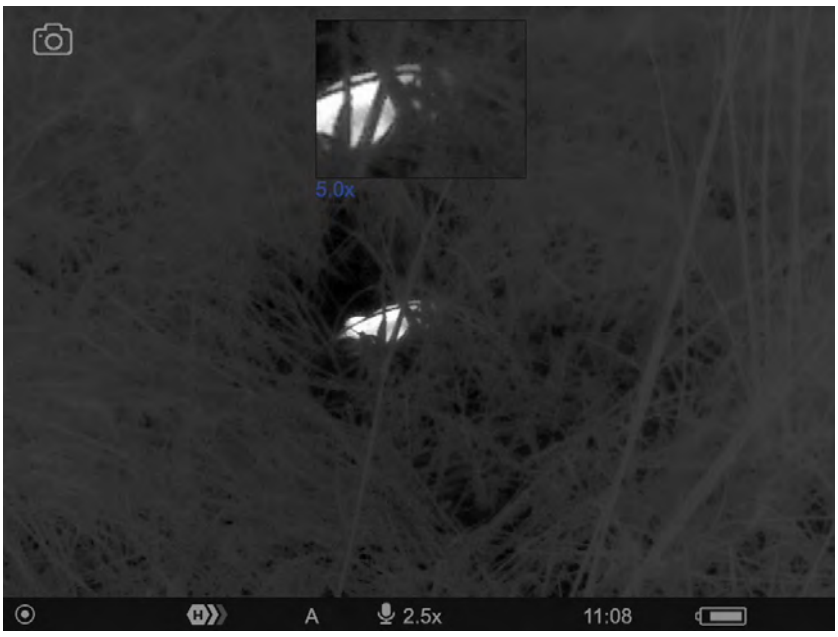
https://twitter.com/HalfSnipe

Jack Snipe - Steve Evans

Grants Panel updates and news - cont'd

As you can see from the photo to the right, finding Jack Snipes with the naked eye can be tricky. However below you can see how much easier finding these cryptic birds can be with thermal imaging equipment.

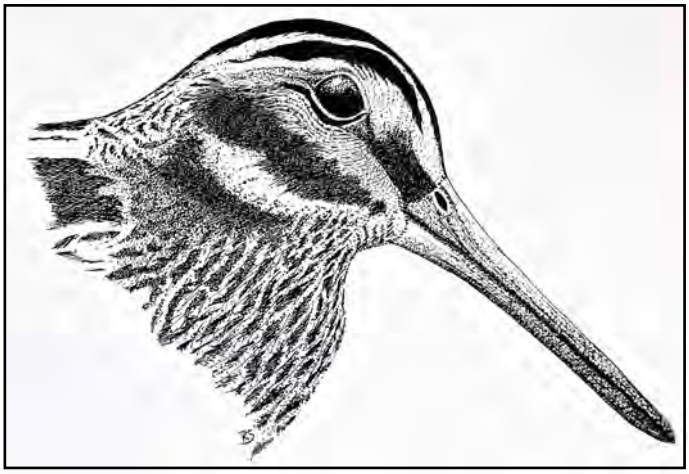
Steven Evans the coordinator of the Tyne Tees Regional Bird Group has highlighted the monitoring and assessment work they have been doing. This detailed work has involved mapping roost sites of wintering Jack Snipe and has raised the profile of this rarely seen and declining species among bird groups and conservation workers. They hope to further promote the study of Jack Snipe in the UK. The panel were impressed at the way the project has looked at this wintering and passage species within the UK and addressed it's 24 hour needs for roosting and feeding sites by studying the birds interactions across the habitats.



Thermal image showing two birds clearly - Steve Evans

Spot the Jack Snipe - Steve Evans

Wader conservation needs to be concerned with breeding and population recruitment, as well as winter survival and migration, and education and outreach to raise awareness. The Panel felt these two projects fitted that brief perfectly.



Jack Snipe - Rick Simpson

Additional information

We are also looking at how we can best help other applications for funds from organisations needing equipment and identification materials. Also a number of requests from bird clubs and local community groups and the Panel needs to determine the likely benefits to wader/shorebird species before we can offer appropriate support.

News from Wader Quest Brasil - Rick Simpson

News has reached us from our friends at Wader Quest Brasil, Karina Ávila and Bruno Lima who have been fighting tirelessly to protect the beaches of Peruíbe, on the coast of São Paulo. Their work as *Projeto Aves Limícolas* (Shorebirds Project) has also been ongoing and they are hoping to achieve the distinction of Peruíbe becoming the first city in Brazil, and only the second in the whole of South America, to gain the title of '*Cidade das Aves*' (City of the Birds). The application has been submitted

Bruno and Karina - Karina Ávila

This award is no easy thing to achieve, you don't just apply for it, the city has to meet certain conditions to be eligible and those have been hard fought for by Karina and Bruno who have been instrumental in making it happen. In order for the award to be given the following must be achieved by the city concerned. The city must;

- Officially celebrate World Migratory Bird Day
- Have conservation areas within the city
- Not having a pet friendly beach. Dogs and cats often scare away birds
- Dog and cat neutering program
- Carry out work to collect abandoned dogs and cats in natural areas
- Having a community involved in observing and protecting birds
- Municipal bird protection laws
- Have a bird protection group
- Promote environmental events
- Have a bird symbol

The last hurdle was crossed when the bird symbol of the city was announced. During six months *Projecto Aves Limícolas* carried out research to offer 30 common species for the final vote. This was decided through a municipal vote which started in the schools where children were invited to vote via drawings. The vote was then extended to the people of the city vis a website and 2,700 local people became engaged.

The result of the bird symbol vote? Well sadly, once again, our favourite for the title Southern Lapwing *Vanellus chilensis* was thwarted and the winner was the Burrowing Owl *Athene cunicularia*. Karina explained that the owls are charished in Peruíbe, where the nests are protected and they are highly visible throughout the entire city being partially diurnal.


Burrowing Owl - Elis Simpson

Now all of these conditions have been met by the hard work and dedication of Karina and Bruno working with the municipal government, all that remains is to await the arrival of the Environment for the Americas ambassador, Miguel Matta, who, in a ceremony scheduled for the second half of 2024, will give the international title of 'City of Birds' to Peruíbe.

But this award is not just an empty title which means nothing, it has real benefits for the city and the environment. It offers financial support for solving environmental problems and encourages species conservation actions. As an internationally recognized city, which encourages bird conservation and ecotourism, Peruíbe will have the opportunity to compete for international funding for future projects.

As stated, the city will be the first in Brazil and the second in South America to be recognized. Municipalities in Colombia, Mexico and the United States have already won the international title.

Wader Quest is very proud that it is represented in Brazil by such dedicated and hard working conservationists, and we are happy that we have, in some small way, helped the couple to succeed in this amazing achievement.

Fundraising news - The Big Green Hike

On the weekend of the 6th or 7th of April we will be striding out to raise money for Wader Quest by joining the Big Green Hike 2024.

Rick and Elis Simpson plan to do a hike from their home into the surrounding North Yorkshire coastal countryside. Rick commented -

'Along the way we will visit a nature reserve, follow an ancient path, encounter an industrial past, be awestruck by a geological landmark, pass an archaeological site and all the time looking out for birds, especially spring migrants, along the clifftop hedgerows as we go. The route is approximately 7 miles in length and should take about 3½ hours, however, as we will inevitably stop to look at birds, take photographs and admire the wonderful views hereabouts, I expect it'll take twice as long; note to self, pack sandwiches, tea and biscuits, water and of course a medicinal hip flask. All we have to do now is hope for a decent weekend regarding the weather, a tall order up here on the Yorkshire coast.'

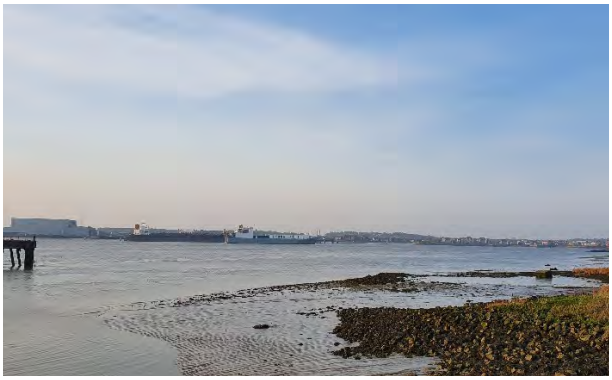
View from Boulby Bank east to Staithes - Elis Simpson

Meanwhile in Kent, **Elizabeth Anderson,** Trustee and Chair of the Executive Committee will be doing the same, or similar, in her home county of Kent.

'As a Trustee of Wader Quest, I'm excited to be participating in the Big Green Hike to raise funds to support wading birds all over the world. Wader Quest is a unique charity supporting bird species that we know and love, but which are often overlooked.

Waders include beautiful and well known species like oystercatchers, lapwings and curlews (this year's 'bird of the year' for Wader Quest). Many of these birds are endangered or threatened, and need our help.

On 7th April I'll be walking to raise funds, so I'd love your support. I'll be hiking nearby, and looking to cover 8 miles.'



View of the Thames estuary - Elizabeth Anderson

Donating through JustGiving is simple, fast and totally secure. Your details are safe with JustGiving - they'll never sell them on or send unwanted emails. Once you donate, they'll send your money directly to Wader Quest. So it's the most efficient way to donate - saving time and cutting costs for the charity.

Here is Rick and Elis' JustGiving page if you wish to support them.
Here is Elizabeth's JustGiving page if you wish to support her.

So, **please support us,** many small amounts soon add up, so no donation is too little, give what you can, and **remember that 100% of all donations to Wader Quest go into the Grants Fund and are used entirely for supporting wader conservation projects.**

Wader Quest is entirely voluntary.
Thank you for your support.
Caring is the first step to conservation.

Fundraising news - MyGivingCircle grant

Until midnight on Sunday 31st March – you could really help us by voting for Wader Quest.
If you go to the link below and vote for Wader Quest – MyGivingCircle will give us 50p.
https://mygivingcircle.org/wader-quest/vote

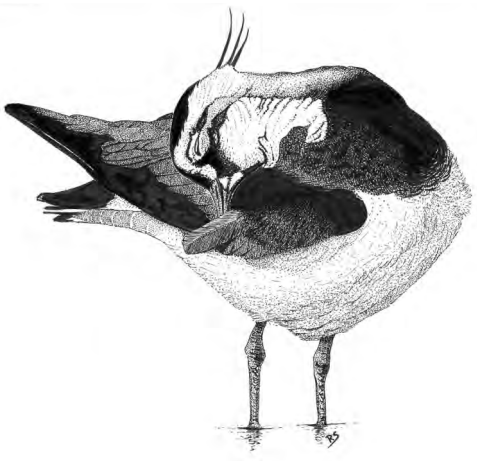
Grant Closes Mar 31st, 2024
£13,000 will be donated to the top 10 charities

Please help Wader Quest by voting.
You might help us raise funds to continue supporting wader/shorebird conservation.
Please also share with friends, family and colleagues.
Waders need love too!
Caring is the first step to conservation.

Republic of Ireland's National Bird - Rick Simpson

The 17th of March is St. Patrick's Day, the day all Irishmen celebrate their Patron Saint. I am sure that St Patrick would have been familiar with what is now the National Bird of the Republic, the Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus.*

The Lapwing was installed as the national bird of Ireland in 1990 by the Irish Wildlife Conservancy. Several years ago now the great British public were urged, by our good friend and erstwhile trustee of Wader Quest, David Lindo, to vote for a national bird for the UK. This was duly done and the result was, rather predictable and disappointing. I championed the Lapwing to be our national bird. I argued that it is universally well-known and popular, has its own act of parliament (The Lapwing Act of 1926 - unique among birds), is deeply rooted in our cultural history with the likes of Shakespeare and Bronte referring to it often, and not least because the colour of its back is British Racing Green! Not only that it has multiple local names showing that it was universally recognised and cherished by the good folk of yesteryear. (For more on this subject refer to *An Inspiration of Waders;* available from the Wader Quest shop.) Alas, my words fell on unhearing ears the noble Lapwing didn't even make the top 20 (sadly Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* and Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus* did! - what were you all thinking?). The final winner was Eurasian Robin *Eithacus rubecula…* sigh!



Northern Lapwing - Rick Simpson

I referred to the Lapwing as being noble, and it does in fact have noble connections in a roundabout way and that is because in Irish Gaelic it is called *pilibín*, which means "little Philip", and may refer to Philip II of Spain, also known as Philip the Prudent. In 1554 Philip married Queen Mary 1 and thus, by dint of that marriage became King of all Britain and Ireland, before becoming the King of Naples and Sicily also in 1554 and going on to become the King of Spain, from 1556 and King of Portugal from 1580 until his death in 1598. His tenure as King of England and Ireland ended though in 1558 upon the demise of said Mary. Why was the Lapwing perhaps named after him? Philip reputedly often wore a feather in his cap. Thus the Lapwing with its fine plume of head feathers may well have appeared like a small version of the man. However another source suggests that the word may alternatively, or perhaps additionally, be imitative of the bird's spring call.

Species Focus for 2024;
Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Eurasian Curlew - Elis Simpson

Some fun facts about the Eurasian Curlew?

The Eurasian Curlew is the largest wader to be found in Europe.

But it is not the largest wader in the world.

In fact, in terms of length, it comes in 3rd place:
Far Eastern Curlew *N. madagascariensis* at 66cm
Long-billed Curlew *N. americanus* at 65cm
Eurasian Curlew at 60cm

In terms of bill length it also ends up in 3rd place:
Long-billed Curlew at 21.9cm
Far Eastern Curlew at 20.1cm
Eurasian Curlew at 19.2cm

But, when we look at which is the heaviest, our chunky Eurasian tops the table:
Eurasian Curlew 1360g
Far Eastern Curlew at 1350g
Long-billed Curlew at 951g

All the above measurements are the highest recorded for the given species and will all have been from females as they are larger than the males, in common with many other wader species.

Curlew Action "Fieldworkers workshop" at Kings Lynn - Mike Smart

The sharp decline in the Curlew population right across northwest Europe has led to a great expansion in research projects and meetings about this iconic species. But the "Curlew Fieldworkers Workshop" organized by Curlew Action (www.curlewaction.org) held from 9 to 11 February in Kings Lynn (with much-appreciated support from Wader Quest) was something special: not a scientific symposium, not a theoretical session for policy makers, but a get-together of people actually working in the field on Curlew conservation: it brought together over a hundred practical Curlew conservationists – not just from England either, but from Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Irish Republic, and further afield Finland, Poland, Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium and France. The main aim was to give fieldworkers a chance to exchange views and experiences, with lots of personal interaction.

With Curlew Action's Russ Wynn as a knowledgeable and witty Master of Ceremonies, these sessions included both short talks and workshop sessions. Among the speakers (in some cases scientists reporting back on data provided by field workers, in others creative artists who have always been highlighted by Curlew Action) were:

- Pete Webster, a Bowland farmer who has completely revised his dairy farm business to recreate wetlands and encourage breeding Curlews, yet still make a living;
- Nicola Hemmings from Sheffield University who has been investigating eggshells from Curlew field projects; she confirms that fertility is not a major cause of egg failure: an important finding - we had feared that the failure to hatch might come about because ageing Curlews were no longer able to produce fertile eggs;
- Tony Juniper, Chair of Natural England, who paid tribute to the many projects working on Curlew conservation;
- Emmaneul Joyeux and colleagues who spoke of increasing numbers of nesting Curlews in parts of northern France;
- Rachel Taylor, who spoke about her dazzling glass statues;
- Mark Anthony (aka ATM), a street artist who is to create a Curlew mural in Kings Lynn as a long-term reminder of the workshop;
- Susannah Bleakley who demonstrated the use of social media to promote Curlew conservation in Cumbria:
- Michal Korniluk on the long-running Curlew breeding project in Poland which uses head-starting, but where the total number of breeding Curlews is down to only 200 pairs.

The workshops covered a variety of issues, but all aimed to give participants an opportunity to express their own views and to ask questions:

- Monitoring: one session chaired by David Jarrett, who spoke of his work in Finland, using audio-moths (a network of recorders planted across a remote area with few fieldworkers to monitor presence of breeding Curlews by their calls); the second chaired by Rachel Taylor, this time wearing her scientific hat, who conducted a series of questions on monitoring topics.
- Habitat management: chaired by Mike Smart, in which managers from nesting Curlew projects in a variety of different habitats gave details of the management issues they face, and the solutions reached.
- Working with a declining species: chaired by Patrick Laurie from Dumfries and Galloway in southern Scotland (an area of sharp Curlew decline), who reflected on the reactions of Curlew workers to the loss of breeding birds.

The Red Barn venue with participants- Rich Bunce The Walking Photographer

Russ Wynn - Rich Bunce The Walking Photographer

Tony Juniper- Rich Bunce The Walking Photographer

Rachel Taylor and glass Curlew- Rich Bunce The Walking Photographer

Curlew Action "Fieldworkers workshop" at Kings Lynn - cont'd

- Predator management: led by Andrew Hoodless, who conducted a number of opinion polls on the many aspects of this topic.
- Working with volunteers and landowners: led by Mike Pollard, which reviewed the involvement of volunteer supporters in Curlew breeding studies, and the need to work in close collaboration with farmers and landowners.

Mike Smart in action - Rich Bunce The Walking Photographer

Outside the formal sessions, the programme left plenty of time and space for informal chat and a chance to talk through issues, face to face. This was perhaps one of the main features of the whole weekend: I personally relished the opportunity to meet colleagues whom I previously knew only from email exchanges, and to learn more about projects I had not visited. One of my personal take-away messages was that it is hugely important to have not just a scientific enquiry, but some kind of conservation team working between scientists and the farmer/landowners.

Waders over Snettisham - Rich Bunce The Walking Photographer

The whole took place in the historic Red Barn, just outside Kings Lynn, with a Saturday evening entertainment in which Mary Colwell interviewed David Gray (patron and strong supporter of Curlew Action), who performed some of his songs. With a 5.30 start on Sunday morning, so that we could all see the high tide roost of nearly 100,000 waders at high tide at Snettisham on the coast of The Wash.

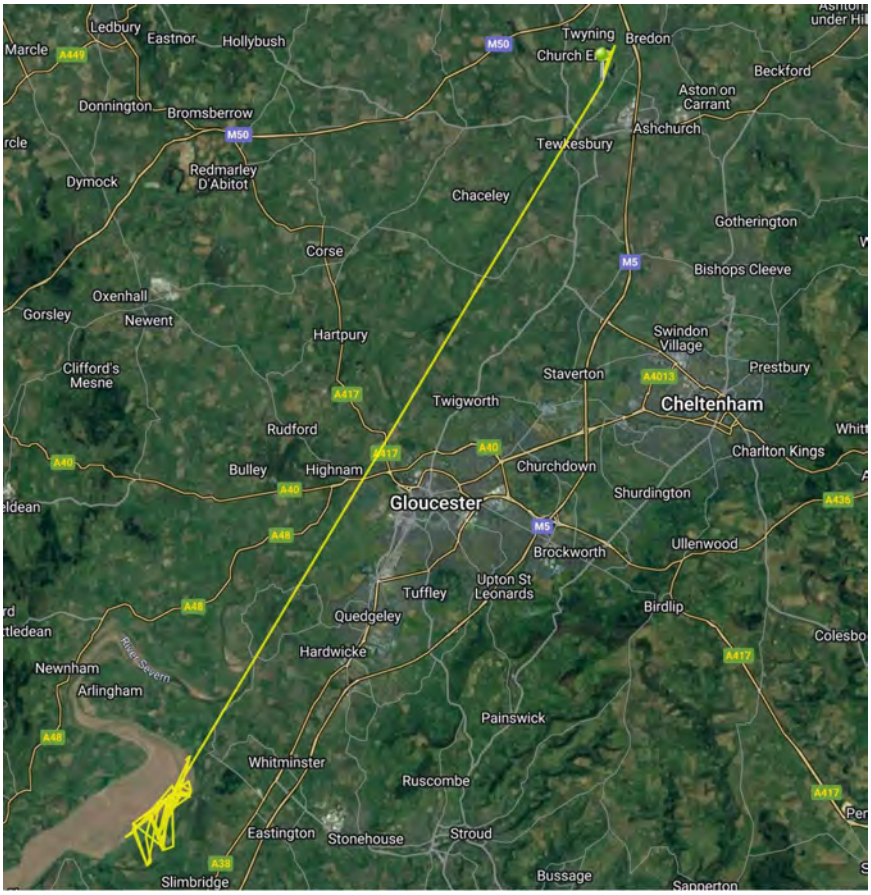
An unforgettable weekend! Curlew Action plans to make as much as possible of the proceedings available through its website. And maybe another workshop in a couple of years' time!

Delegates and organisers outside the Red Barn venue - Rich Bunce The Walking Photographer

Latest news from the WWT Severn and Avon Vales Curlew Project - 12th February - Mike Smart

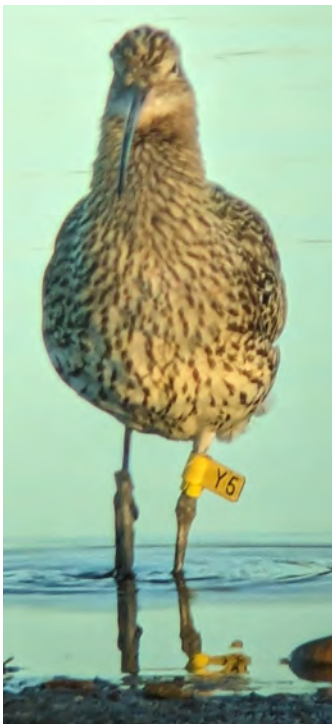
The Curlews are back: despite the unusually heavy winter flooding (we are currently in the fourth big flood with both the Severn and Avon breaking their banks since the first unusually early one last October), Eurasian Curlews *Numenius arquarta* are already returning from the coasts to their breeding grounds in the Severn and Avon Vales. The first unringed bird was seen (between flood episodes) at the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust's reserve at Coombe Hill on 3 February - a fairly early date, though they have appeared in previous years in January.

The WWT project which has been studying breeding Curlews in the Vales since 2019 has attached GPS tags to several breeding birds in the Vales. These tags give a great deal of additional information about the birds' movements, including their wintering areas. Thanks to its GPS tag we know (without any need for a human observer!) that the male (which breeds regularly along the Avon and also has a colour ring White 02) spent the 2023/24 winter in the Slimbridge area, and returned on 4 February to the Avon, as shown in the map to the right. A second tagged bird, this time a female, which had wintered further down the estuary at Burnham on Sea, has also returned today and checked in at five different sites. You can follow the movements of these birds on the WWT website.



Male Curlew White 02 GPS tag tracks - Kane Brides

Another way of following the movements of migrant Curlews is by reading the colour rings on their legs; the WWT project has marked a good number of Curlews, both adults and chicks, with colour rings that can be read in the field. Y5 (below left) was ringed as a chick along the Avon in summer 2022, spent winter 2022/23 on the Severn estuary around Slimbridge, made a couple of visits to the Severn Vale in summer 2023, then was back at Slimbridge for winter 2023/24. On 11 February 2024 it was photographed at the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust's Upton Warren reserve; is it going to breed in the vales this year?



Curlew Y5 - Mike Wakeman per John Belsey


Avon vale flooding - Mike Smart

Latest news from the WWT Severn and Avon Vales Curlew Project - 29th February - cont'd

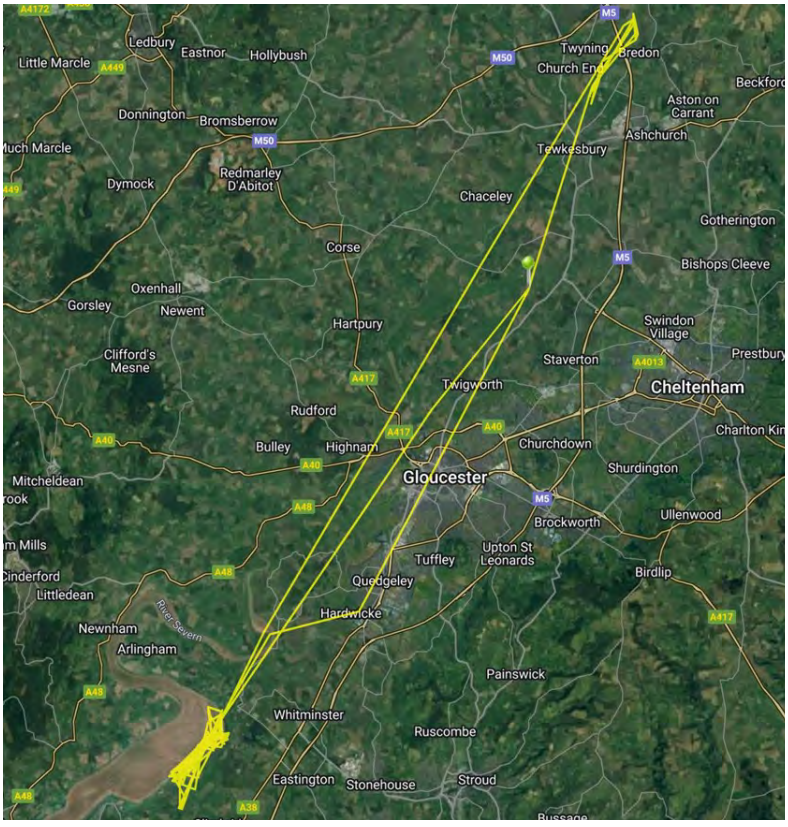
The flooding continues: there have so far been five big floods in the Severn and Avon Vales since October 2023, and the time between peaks has been so short that the floodwater has hardly had time to recede before the arrival of the next flood. Eurasian Curlew *Numenius Arquata* sites like Coombe Hill, Hasfield Ham, the Severn Ham at Tewkesbury, Upham Meadow in Twyning have been under almost continuous flooding, and access (for humans as well as Curlews) has often been difficult, if not impossible.

In the picture to the right, taken from the west, the course of the Avon is invisible: usually even the highest floods leave the top of the floodbank showing through the water and waterbirds concentrate on the emerging green area; but here there was practically no riverbank left.

Upham Meadow, Twyning, in late February - Mike Smart

As noted in the previous circular, Curlews returned a little earlier this year, the first being seen on 3 February, while the first GPS-tagged bird, an adult male carrying ring number 02, returned to the Avon on 4 February. The other five tagged birds had all returned to sites along the Avon by 19 February, despite the flooding. Without the tags, it would have been impossible to tell where they were – a clear illustration of the increased information provided by the tags.

Observations from previous years suggest that the flooding doesn't cramp the Curlews' style; they simply sit quietly around the edge of the floodwater, as near to their nesting fields as they can get, patiently waiting for the floodwaters to recede. On the day when the above picture was taken, as many as 16 Curlews were crammed onto the tiny patches of green floodbank still emerging from the water; all were of course much too far away for observers to check whether they had colour rings on their legs.



GPS tag for female 03 - Kane Brides

But, but, but! One of the satellite-tagged birds (number 03, a female, mate of male 02 which had been the first back) was nevertheless clearly perturbed by the conditions, as shown in the GPS tag map to the left.

The yellow squiggles around the estuary near Slimbridge show this female's local movements in winter 2023/24. The yellow line on the left shows her exodus to the Avon on 13 February; the yellow line on the right shows her return from the Avon to the estuary on 16 February; it must have been the flooding that caused her to rejoin winter quarters. But not for long: the line in the middle shows her heading back to the northeast and arriving at 2.15am near Coombe Hill (itself heavily flooded) on the morning of 17 February. An even more graphic illustration of the worth of the GPS tags, without which this toing and froing would have remained unknown!

Returning Curlews have not returned only to the Avon: at one site along the Severn (under deep flood) there was a single Curlew on 18 February, but four in a flock at the water's edge on 25 February. At another Severnside site, less constantly occupied in recent years, a single Curlew was seen on two consecutive days in late February.

The team will obviously be keeping a close look-out for GPS-tagged, colour-ringed and unmarked Curlews in the coming weeks. In 2023 wet conditions delayed the onset of nesting and caused some Curlews to nest on slightly higher ground – flood-banks or on low masses of vegetation. What does spring 2024 hold?

Two colour-ringed Eurasian Curlews in Devon - Rick Simpson

Two colour-ringed Eurasian Curlews *Numenius arquata* photographed on Exminster Marshes by Tim Ridgeway.

The individual to the right has a metal ring FJ28769 and the colour combination of grey left tibia, blue left tarsus blue right tibia and green over orange on the right tarsus.

It was ringed as an adult, meaning it was at least two years old, on the 15th of December 2023 on Exminster Marshes by the Devon and Cornwall Wader Ringing Group. It was next reported on the 17th of December, two days later and remained until at least the 11th of January 2024. The bird also bears a satellite tag so it should be giving up the secrets of where it goes to breed fairly soon.

Eurasian Curlew FJ28769 - Tim Ridgeway

Eurasian Curlew N6 - Tim Ridgeway

Eurasian Curlew N6 is one of the headstarted Curlews that had been released on the Norfolk Estate near Arundel in Sussex in July 2022. It is part of a project to restore the Curlew as a breeding bird in Sussex.

The eggs for this project were collected under a Natural England licence in Yorkshire from nests that were in a vulnerable situation, such as being in silage fields where the cutting would take place before the chicks had fledged, which would certainly cause their premature death. Some were from places where they were close to public rights of way where disturbance and dogs of the lead posed a real threat to their survival.

This bird was one of 37 chicks hatched and released that year and one of only 16 of those birds also given a GPS tag. As a result there is a trace of its movements since. The headstarted birds are colour-ringed: all birds have a yellow ring on the tibia and metal ring on the tarsus of the right leg and a red ring on the tibia of the left leg. Above the red ring on the left leg is an alpha-numeric coded yellow flag which identifies the individual.

- N6 was released on the 27th July 2022.
- It left Sussex on 9th August at 7am and made an apparently continuous flight to the Exe in Devon, arriving by 11:30am the same day.
- It travelled with another headstarted Curlew with the flag P9.
- Since then, they've moved very little – spending the last 16 months frequenting a small number of sites in the Exe between Exeter and Dawlish.

Eurasian Curlews - Elis Simpson

More colour-ringed birds in Devon - Rick Simpson

Tim Ridgeway, is always on the look out for colour-ringed birds on the coast of Devon and always reports what he finds. This is an important part of the research carried out by the ringers as, without these data they would have less of a picture as to the movements of these birds. Knowing where birds spend their time is crucial to preserving the habitats that they depend on.

Even if a bird is GPS tagged resighting information is very important as it provides vital data that the technology alone cannot. For example the GPS tag does not record the health of the bird, a resighting especially with a photograph does. It is also a chance to check that the tag is not negatively impacting on the bird, again crucial in these programmes. They also give the researcher the opportunity to it look at patterns of resightings for birds that have known movements, which will help them to interpret resighting data from birds that are flagged but not tagged.

This Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* was photographed by Tim on the 28th of December 2023 on the Exe Estuary.

It was originally ringed at Dawlish Warren on the 28th of October 2022 at which time it was a first calendar year bird. It was given a metal ring bearing DR47389 which was attached to the left tibia and a blue ring on the left tarsus (not visible in the photo). The right leg had a blue ring above the leg joint and dark green over light green below it on the tarsus.

It was next resighted in the Exe Estuary in December of the same year.

In December 2023 it returned to winter again in Devon being seen first in the Exminster Marshes on later on the Exe Estuary at the same location as the previous winter.

This information provides us with interesting details about site fidelity, and from a non scientific point of view, it is fascinating to know the lone grey plover out there on the mud is one and the same as the bird you saw last year. Knowing that it had returned (presumably) to the breeding grounds and returned adds a level of intimacy that you would not be able to enjoy if the bird had not been colour ringed.

Grey Plover DR47389 - Tim Ridgeway

Eurasian Oystercatchers K6 and HY - Tim Ridgeway

In the case of the Eurasian Oystercatchers *Haematopus ostralegus* above, they are pretty much sedentary and do not go far from one season to another. However in the case of this species the value of being able to individually recognise birds helps researchers to understand longevity (the oldest wader recorded in the world is a Eurasian Oystercatcher at over 40 years old) and also survival rates of birds as adults. To report a sighting visit [Devon and Cornwall Wader Ringing group - Report a sighting.]

K6 Ringed 04 Feb 2018 Dawlish Warren as an adult.

Remains within 1KM of the ringing site from late July/ August to February each winter, also resighted at Starcross golf course and Eastdon Farm, Cockwood.

Breeding area unrecorded.

Time since ringing 6 years and 5 days,

HY Ringed 8th October 2021 Dawlish Warren as an adult.

Remains within 1KM of the ringing site from late August to February each winter, also resighted at Starcross golf course and Eastdon Farm, Cockwood.

Breeding area unrecorded.

Time since ringing 2 years 4 months and 1 day

Obituary Virginia Sanz (1964–2024) - Christopher J. Sharpe & Sandra B. Giner

The world is a palpably poorer place without our friend and colleague Virginia Sanz. This realisation comes every morning on awakening and revisits us, and so many people who knew her, throughout the day, every day. We will remember her smile, her broad grin, her laugh, and her face so full of light. For Virginia left her mark indelibly on all whose lives she touched, whether or not they were biologists or conservationists; she made no distinction as to trivialities like profession, social status or nationality. Virginia had an impact on us all — and without her we realise how profoundly she encouraged and supported us and how fortunate we were to count her as a friend — through the conviction and sincerity with which she pursued the truth, scientific or otherwise, and sought to add her '*granito de arena'* to the betterment of our world. This has been most strikingly manifested in the huge spontaneous outpouring of national grief on social media, a phenomenon all the more ironic because Virginia had no time for these platforms. The tributes have come from government ministers, universities, scientists, collaborators, friends, but perhaps most tellingly from the people with whom she worked in the field, the local community members in the places she studied.

Virginia Sanz RIP - Sandra Giner

One of those places was Península de Macanao, on Margarita Island in NE Venezuela. The community requested a portion of her ashes for a remembrance ceremony held in Quebrada La Chica, in a sector known as '*el Nido de Virginia'* (Virginia's Nest) in the Macanao Faunal Reserve. Virginia's love affair with the island had begin with her 1989–1990 undergraduate thesis work on the Critically Endangered endemic capuchin monkey *Cebus apella margaritae*, after which she took part in the Provita-WCS project *Conservation of the Yellow-shouldered Parrot — Amazona barbadensis,* which led to a PhD examining the ecology of the species on Península de Macanao. This work gave her a landscape ecology perspective of conservation, triggering expansion of protected areas and creation of new reserves; the results were published as peer-reviewed scientific papers, and meanwhile Virginia made sure that the urban *margariteños* of Porlamar were made aware of their unique island fauna through environmental education programmes, and always encouraged the participation of park guards in activities. At the same time she applied her experience on Margarita Island to work in other arid regions like Falcón state. Over the last decade most of her work was on shorebirds, giving her the chance to spend months each year on Margarita Island or on the coast of western Venezuela. Virginia always arrived back in Caracas sun-scorched and bubbling with enthusiasm from those field trips.

Obituary Virginia Sanz (1964–2024) - cont'd

Born in Montevideo, Uruguay, Virginia arrived in Caracas with her family in 1977, a move provoked by the military dictatorship and subsequent purge of intellectuals. The beach had always been a part of her life, and she would make annual trips back to Uruguay to spend family time with her sisters and nephews. Family was important to her, and that definition extended far beyond blood relations, to her friends and their children. She mourned as her extended 'family' were forced to leave Venezuela, and she always made time to reconnect, and that time was always well spent.

2019 WHSRN shorebird conservation workshops in Paraguaná, NW Venezuela. Here Virginia is surrounded by many of the people she helped train; Virginia is front row second from right next to Chris Sharpe to her right and Sandra Giner in front of them - Sandra Giner

Although we all believed that we knew Virginia, we only really knew what was important, the aspect that might be called her inner soul. She rarely talked of herself, only over the past year contemplating retirement (which would have meant the chance to dedicate her time to essential matters, like processing the large seed and fruit samples she had collected, or analysing shorebird data). In the end, few knew that on hearing of the Vargas Tragedy in 1999 (the landslides on the northern slope of El Avila National Park that killed 10,000–30,000 and forced the evacuation of 100,000 people), she had jumped into her Jeep and driven to the area to help distribute food and assistance; she did the same with later landslides and floods in El Limón near Henri Pittier NP. Such things were typical. She was always ready to help, whether in accompanying a lone female colleague on a 3,000 km field trip or setting up Venezuela's second Motus tower.

Her reluctance to promote her own work extended to her scientific career, which produced some 50 peer-reviewed papers and over 100 conference presentations. The uncompromising scientific rigour of her output makes her one of the most prolific Latin American biologists of her generation, and she was highly respected within both shorebird and parrot research groups. She spent considerable time mentoring students, organising conferences and making presentations, often to park guards and policy-makers. Virginia was a major force in carrying out *Wetlands International*'s annual *Neotropical Waterbird Census* and *Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network*'s *International Shorebird Survey*. She was a founder of the Venezuelan Ornithologist' Union (UVO), a board member for three consecutive terms and part of the organizing committee of the VIII Neotropical Ornithological Congress in 2007 in Maturín, the I Venezuelan Ornithological Congress in 2007 and the Virtual Venezuelan Ornithological Congress in 2022.

2019 WHSRN shorebird conservation workshops in Paraguaná, NW Venezuela - Chris Sharpe

Obituary Virginia Sanz (1964–2024) - cont'd

Her work, since 2006, on shorebirds ranged from documenting distribution and status to shorebird diet, population monitoring to breeding biology, studying parasite loads to setting national priorities for conservation. In the last few years she had taken a course in aerial shorebird surveying and was working on an international effort to quantify the impact of microplastics. She was a regional expert in our 2016 workshop on *Identification of Key Areas for Shorebird Conservation in Venezuela* and collaborator on subsequent workshops in Falcón and Margarita in 2019, all under the auspices of *Manomet* and the *Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network.*

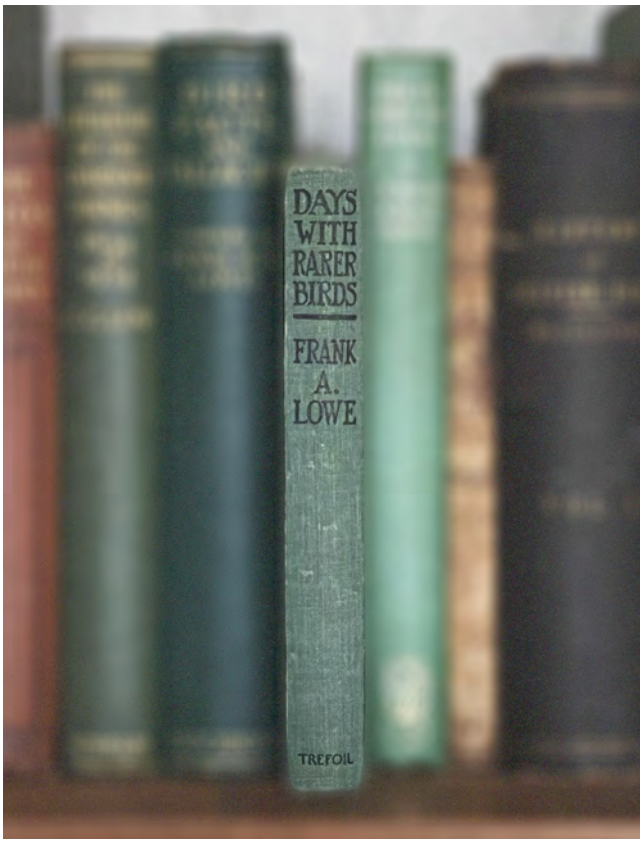
In sum, the loss of Virginia is a heavy blow for Venezuelan ornithology, and for the international shorebird and parrot research communities, but her spirit will live on in the work that those she inspired do in her name to advance knowledge and promote the conservation of the birds and wild areas she so loved.

Christopher J. Sharpe & Sandra B. Giner

Chris Sharpe added. *I know Virginia appreciated the assistance Wader Quest gave her, and that Sandra does too — thank you so much. Let's hope that together we can continue to improve the conservation outlook for Venezuela's shorebirds. There are moves to set up a shorebird conservation fund in Virginia's name.*

2019 WHSRN shorebird conservation workshops in Paraguaná, NW Venezuela - Chris Sharpe

From the library: Days With Rarer Birds (1934) - Frank A. Lowe



[Kentish Plover] *Eggs may be found on Texel, lying on low grass, although the favourite site is on mud. No matter how small the expanse of mud is available there, it may well harbour a clutch of eggs. A cow-clat forms quite a habitable scrape, as do the tracts of barren sun-cracked clay, dotted about the polders. A queer preference shown by Kentish plovers for accumulated rubbish, is not peculiar to these birds, and the rubbish need not be more than a scattering of sticks and straws, wind drifted. The selection of such a site cannot be prompted by a protective instinct ; rather does this choice of an area where there is natural adornment to surround the scrape seem to be an exaggerated carrying out of elaboration.*

Many birds decorate their nests, none more so than the waders, of which the Kentish plover is a good example. When eggs are laid amongst a rubbish drift, the rubbish is often its thickest right by the scrape. Furthermore, the scrape itself is adorned with additional matter, both by way of lining and as a surround, which could not possibly be intended for building material. One day I saw a scrape in a cow-clat, which was remarkably enhanced with a circle of sheep droppings, a passing strange freak of avian æstheticism ! More frequently one will find small bones are used for this purpose, which have been long bleached ; tiny pebbles, too, are carried to the scrape, bits of marine shells and sometimes even the empty shells from early hatched nests are all utilised in the decoration scheme. Except for the instance referred to, I have found that the added odds and ends are very light in colour, being for the greater part white—a fancy shared by several other waders.

Tracing the world´s oldest Spoon-billed Sandpiper Specimen - Bengt Legnell

The Vega, painting by Jacob Hägg (1839 – 1931) a Swedish naval officer and marine artist .

While reading through the first edition – printed 1881, of Adolf Nordenskiöld's book "*Vegas färd kring Asien och Europa*" (The journey of Vega around Asia and Europe), telling the story of his expedition to be the first to find "the north -east passage" from the Atlantic ocean, across the Arctic sea, through the Bearing Strait, into the Pacific Ocean. In the book I found an entry about the Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Calidris pygmea* that caught my attention.

Nordenskiöld's Vega expedition (1878 – 1880) got stuck in the ice between November 1878 to August 1879 almost exactly where present day Spoon-billed Sandpipers are breeding at the northern shores of Chukchi peninsula.

Nordenskiöld wrote in his diary the following when the "Spoonies" first arrived in May 1879;

> "*For a while during the spring the strange Spoon-billed Sandpiper was so common that we served it for dinner at the officers mess, something* [for which] *we received a strong and firm rebuke from animal collectors after we returned back home. This bird is only found in very limited numbers in museums. It was first described by Linné* [Linnaeus] *in "museum Adolphi Friderichi, Tomi secundi prodromus, Holmia 1764", and thereafter by C.P. Thunberg in the annals of the Science-Academy 1816 (page 194). Here it states that the home of this bird is situated in tropical America. Since then it has, on a very few occasions, been trapped in South-east Asia. Most likely, as Sylvia Ewersmanni, it spend the winters somewhere in the Philippine archipelago, but during the summer it finds it's way up to high north*".

What especially caught my eye was the scientific note – see above. From this I understood that Linnaeus had access to a specimen that was kept in the collection (museum) of King Adolf Fredrik (1710 - 1771) at his castle Ulriksdal outside Stockholm (Holmia). Linnaeus described it scientifically 1754.

I wanted to find more information about this specimen and contacted an old friend at the Museum of Natural History in Stockholm, Erik Åhlander (now retired).

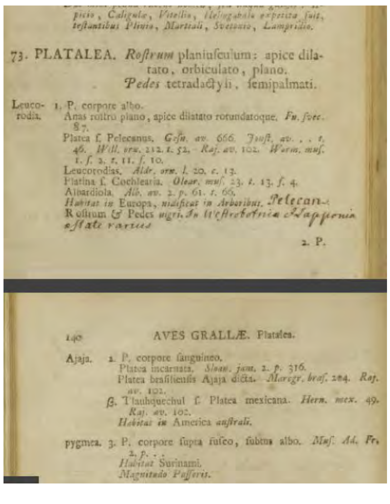
Together we started to research the matter and to our great surprise we found out that this bird, to which Linnaeus had access when he first described the Spoon-billed Sandpiper scientifically, still existed! It was hidden away, collecting dust, in an old cabinet at Uppsala University - and no-one seemed to be aware of it´s existence! (See photo left; Spoon-billed Sandpiper specimen at Uppsala University - Bengt Legnell.)

The only other information we could find out about this mounted bird was on a little piece of paper glued to it`s base. It stated the scientific name of the bird and "collected in Surinam"?!.

This information, of which Nordenskiöld was also aware triggered us to try to find out more about the history of this mounted specimen.

This is what we know so far;

1. The bird was kept in the collection of King Adolf Fredrik.
2. Linnaeus had access to the King's collection and described it scientifically in 1754. (updated 1758 and 1764). He gave it the scientific name *Platalea pygmea* as he classified it together with the Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* – therefore a pygmy Spoonbill. (He had seen a bill from a EurasianSpoonbill in the kings collection and might have known about Roseate Spoonbill *P. ajaja* from other European collections - see excerpt from *Systema Naturae* - right).
3. After the Kings death in 1771 Ulrika, his wife, who had fallen on hard times, had to sell his collection to England, but somehow the Spoon-billed Sandpiper stayed in Sweden. It was kept in alcohol at the time. We assume it was stolen (or possibly given or bought) by the curator of the King's collection, Friedrich Ziervogel. It is documented that after Friedrich´s death, the curator´s younger brother, Samuel, donated it to Carl Petter Thunberg - one of Linnaeus's "disciples", who had succeeded Linnaeus as a principle at Uppsala University. Thunberg described it again 1816. He also took the bird out of alcohol and mounted it as we see today.



picio, Caligulæ, Vitellio, Heliogabalo expetita fuit, testantibus Plinio, Martiali, Suetonio, Lampridio.

73. PLATALEA. *Rostrum* planiusculum: apice dilatato, orbiculato, plano.
Pedes tetradactyli, semipalmati.

Leucorodia. 1. P. corpore albo.
Anas rostro plano, apice dilatato rotundatoque. *Fn. svec.* 87.
Platea s. Pelecanus. *Gesn. av.* 666. *Jonst. av.* . . t. 46. *Will. orn.* 212. t. 52. *Raj. av.* 102. *Worm. mus.* 1. f. 3. t. 11. f. 10.
Leucorodias. *Aldr. orn. l.* 20. c. 13.
Platina s. Cochlearia. *Olear. mus.* 23. t. 13. f. 4.
Albardiola. *Alb. av.* 2. p. 61. t. 66.
Habitat in Europa, *nidificat in Arboribus.* Pelecan-
Rostrum & Pedes *nigri.*

2. P.

140 AVES GRALLÆ. Platalea.

Ajaja. 2. P. corpore sanguineo.
Platea incarnata. *Sloan. jam.* 2. p. 316.
Platea brasiliensis Ajaja dicta. *Marcgr. bras.* 204. *Raj. av.* 102.
β. Tlauhquechul s. Platea mexicana. *Hern. mex.* 49. *Raj. av.* 102.
Habitat in America *australi.*

pygmea. 3. P. corpore supra fusco, subtus albo. *Mus. Ad. Fr.* 2. p. . .
Habitat Surinami.
Magnitudo Passeris.

Tracing the world´s oldest Spoon-billed Sandpiper Specimen - cont'd

4. Professor Sven Nilsson at Lund University changed the name 1821 to *Eurynorhynchus griseus*, since he saw it could not be placed together with the Spoonbills. This name was changed to *E. pygmaeus* in 1826 by Boie and although the spelling has been emended several times this scientific name remained for almost 200 years until the Spoon-billed Sandpiper was placed in the *Calidris* genus in 2012 as *C. pygmaea* (Gibson and Baker).

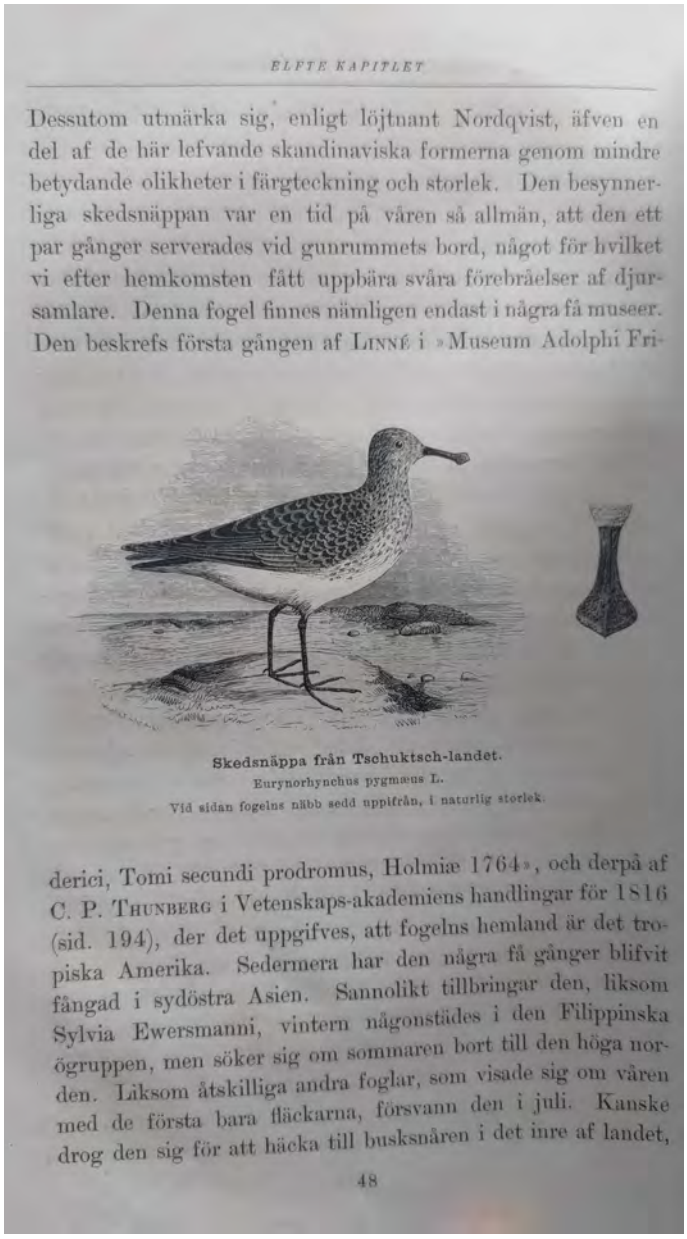
We have not found out how the bird ended up in King Adolf Fredrick´s collection. Since the note on the mounted bird states it was collected in Surinam, one theory is that it was given as a gift to the King by a Swedish man named Dahlberg. This Dahlberg was married to a Dutch widow that had some of the largest plantations in Surinam and often travelled there. Linnaeus met him in Stockholm 1754 when Dahlberg was on his way to have an audience with the King. It is documented that he gave the King a large donation of vertebrates that he had collected in Surinam at this meeting. Linnaeus later convinced Dahlberg to be a host and guide to one of his "disciples", a man named Rolander, who, on Linnaeus´ request, went with Dahlberg to Surinam 1755.

This is all we know so far. Why the bird is labelled as collected in Surinam remains a mystery. One likely explanation is that Dahlberg bought the bird in the thriving market of "curiosities" in Rotterdam on his way from Surinam to Sweden though we have no documentation that this is the case or that this specimen was indeed included in his gift to the king.

But the mind-bogging thought still remains, however far -fetched it may seem; "What if?" What if there was a population of Spoon-billed Sandpipers on the Alaskan side of the Bering Strait 350 years ago? The Bearing Strait acts like a "Wallace line" between Siberia and Alaska, especially regarding waders that breed on both sides. It seems Plovers like Grey and Pacific/American Plover, *Calidris* species like Red Knot *C. canutus*, Sanderling *C. alba,* Dunlin *C. alpina* etc, winter in either south America (including Surinam) if they breed on the Alaskan side of the strait and in Asia if they breed on the Siberian side.

There has been a number of sightings all the way down to Canada of Spoon-billed Sandpipers. There are old records from 1912 - I think it was, of a dozen birds in a flock in August outside of Barrow.

In 2018 scientists from US Fish & Wildlife Service, National Parks division, Manomet Inc. and Wildlife Conservation Society conducted a dedicated expedition to determine if Spoon-billed Sandpipers might be breeding in north-eastern Alaska. They were not able to find any Spoon-billed Sandpipers on this expedition, but they are determined to continue this search as they believe it is indeed possible they are breeding in Alaska.



ELFTE KAPITLET

Dessutom utmärka sig, enligt löjtnant Nordqvist, äfven en del af de här lefvande skandinaviska formerna genom mindre betydande olikheter i färgteckning och storlek. Den besynnerliga skedsnäppan var en tid på våren så allmän, att den ett par gånger serverades vid gunrummets bord, något för hvilket vi efter hemkomsten fått uppbära svåra förebräelser af djursamlare. Denna fogel finnes nämligen endast i några få museer. Den beskrefs första gången af LINNÉ i »Museum Adolphi Fri-

Skedsnäppa från Tschuktsch-landet.
Eurynorhynchus pygmæus L.
Vid sidan fogelns näbb sedd uppifrån, i naturlig storlek.

derici, Tomi secundi prodromus, Holmiæ 1764», och derpå af C. P. THUNBERG i Vetenskaps-akademiens handlingar för 1816 (sid. 194), der det uppgifves, att fogelns hemland är det tropiska Amerika. Sedermera har den några få gånger blifvit fångad i sydöstra Asien. Sannolikt tillbringar den, liksom Sylvia Ewersmanni, vintern någonstädes i den Filippinska ögruppen, men söker sig om sommaren bort till den höga norden. Liksom åtskilliga andra foglar, som visade sig om våren med de första bara fläckarna, försvann den i juli. Kanske drog den sig för att häcka till busksnåren i det inre af landet,

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A page from *Vegas färd kring Asien och Europa* - Bengt Legnell

Not only today have the "Spoonies" been one of the most iconic birds among ornithologists, and birdwatchers. It must have been one of the most sought after species amongst the collectors ever since Linnaeus first described it. Newcomb collected a specimen outside Calcutta in 1836. Blyth stated in 1842 that it was "excessively rare and curious", lamenting that he had no chance to examine it as it had been stolen from the museum by an employee (possibly like the one Linnaeus examined from King Adolf Fredricks collection). Hartlaub recorded a specimen 1842 that was collected by Leadbeater north of Calcutta and deposited in the Derby Museum, Liverpool. Hartlaub stated "It was one of the rarest birds in the world" Hume bought a specimen at the market in Calcutta 1879 and Nordenskiöld got a lot of blame for eating up Spoonies for supper, instead of letting the European museums include them into their collections, when he returned from his voyage around the world 1880. He did save a few from the frying pan though. They are kept in the Museum of Natural history in Stockholm.

Now it is only left to hope that the remaining 200-300 pairs will fare better and can prosper. Humankind cannot afford to lose such a special bird.

A Spoony in Europe? - Rick Simpson

In his *Traité d'Ornithologie* of 1831 Lesson wrote of the Spoon-billed Sandpiper '*From the north of the old and new continent; very rare in Europe; the museum has one killed near Paris'*. Quite a record if true! Three years later Hartlaub went in search of this specimen and was unable to locate it in the museum in Paris. Harting, writing about this episode in the Ibis in 1869 said that he too had gone in search of the specimen, also without success. He writes that Hartlaub was of the opinion that Lesson must have mistaken another species for the 'Spoony' and that it was an error to suppose the species had ever occurred in France. Harting wondered though, since other Siberian species have turned up in Europe, it is not possible for a Spoony to have done so too? Although he concedes that there is no evidence to suggest that it had, up to that point. Rather more interestingly a footnote on that page reveals the truth of the matter, which is rather damning. It reads;

> 'M. Jules Verreaux has recently informed me that no specimen of *Eurynorhynchus* has ever existed in the Paris museum, and that the bird to which Lesson referred under the name *Eurynorhynchus griseus*, and subsequently under the name *Erolia varia*, Vieillot, is nothing else than a *Tringa subarquata* [Curlew Sandpiper] with the hind toes cut off, and the bill remodelled with the aid of some warm water!

Is nothing sacred!

A Spoon-billed Sandpiper specimen at the Natural History Museum bird collection at Tring - Elis Simpson

Spoony news from Thailand - Rick Simpson

The Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force report that at the Gleua Café in Chachoengsao, Thailand, two spoonies have been colour-ringed and at the same time they were fitted with solar-powered satellite transmitters (see right), they are Orange K9 (below right) and A6.

Spoon-billed Sandpipers with satellite transmitter fitted - Alan Leitch

The equipment and rings have been fitted as part of the "Migratory Shorebird Research Project" led by the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation Thailand (DNP), in collaboration with the Conservation Ecology Program at King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (CEG KMUTT), WWT, RSPB, and the Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force of the East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP).

Spoon-billed Sandpipers with orange flag A9 - Katherine Leung

Thus far these transmitters have been sending back information that is revealing much about the birds' movements and also their habitat preferences, both vital in the management of the species and its protection within Thailand. It is of course hoped that both the transmitters and especially the birds themselves will survive the rigours of life and make the spring migration back north to the breeding grounds. This area of the species' life has not very much studied so it will be invaluable to gather such information regarding their stop over points and routes taken.

There have been 13 Spoonies tagged in the past both in the breeding grounds and along the migration route that have been providing researchers with much valuable data and it is hoped that these two birds tagged on the wintering grounds will ad more vital information in the search for tools with which the species can be rescued from its decline.

For more information, go to the SBSTF latest paper Cheng *et al*; Wader Study 127(3): 200–209, which shows the results of previous tracking information.

Perseverance pays off with first Spoon-billed Sandpiper in the Philippines

Robert Hutchinson reports on his facebook page *"Spoon-billed Sandpiper is undoubtedly one of the most sought-after waders in the world and one which we only ever dreamed of seeing in the Philippines. Finally it happened.. after countless days sifting through flocks of stints this beauty presented itself, a dream come true!"*

What a moment, and what a photograph, well done to all concerned for their indefatigable effort in finding this bird. **Ed.**

Spoon-billed Sandpiper (Critically Endangered), Balanga, Bataan, 7th March 2024 - Robert Hutchinson

Will juvenile birds survive the dry future? - Noémie Engel

More than half of all populations of shorebirds around the globe are declining, and climate change is a big part of the problem. The increase in temperature and the lower water levels in wetlands make it extremely difficult for shorebirds to rear their offspring past their first few months of life. In certain populations of cosmopolitan species, such as in the Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus,* there are two strategies to withstand climatic adversities: they either migrate to areas where the environment allows for a more successful reproduction, or they become residents of isolated areas with a comparatively more stable climate.

Because migratory populations are exposed to far more threats than resident ones, most researchers have focused their efforts on studying the resilience to climate change of migratory populations. However, resident populations, as they do not migrate, are much more exposed to resource overexploitation, habitat loss, and extreme weather events, especially if they inhabit islands.

In 2007, our group began monitoring the resident population of Kentish Plover on Maio, a small island in the Cabo Verdean archipelago situated off the West coast of Africa. After tireless efforts by students, researchers, and volunteers from the local NGO, Maio Biodiversity Foundation, we managed to mark approximately 80% of

Female Red-capped Plover *Charadrius ruficapillus* cooling her eggs by soaking them with her wet belly, a necessary parental behaviour to withstand extreme heatwaves in Australia - Don Hadden.

Piping Plover *Charadrius melodus* in the USA foraging next to a plastic water bottle - Kim Smith.

Will juvenile birds survive the dry future? - cont'd

the population with unique colour-ring combinations for each individual (See photo right). More than ten years later, and now with an immense database in our hands, we were able to study the demography of this resident population of Kentish Plover. After rigorous statistical analyses, what we discovered is somewhat alarming.

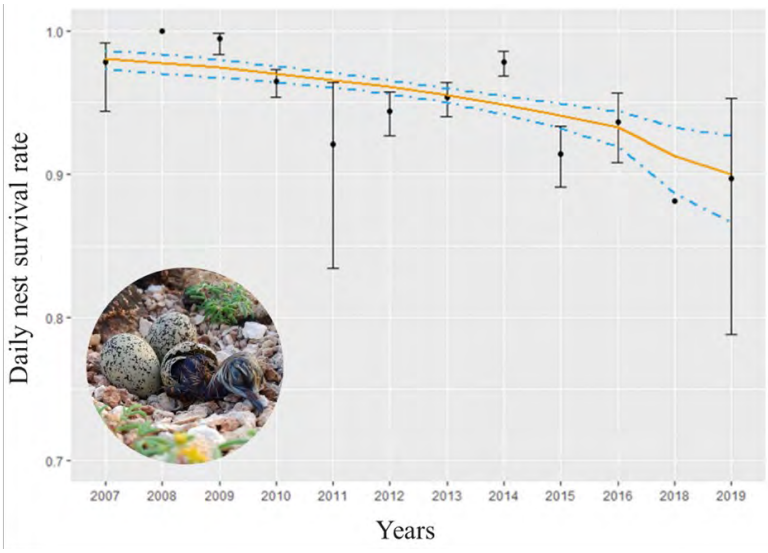
We discovered that over the last decade, nest survival and nesting densities have been trending downward. In other words, individuals have fewer nests, and the nests they do produce are surviving less well. (Se graph top p11).Although this sounds bad, it is well known that island bird populations do not reproduce as much as continental populations. It would be worrisome if there were not only fewer successful nests, but also if the adults producing them were surviving less. Therefore, in our most recent study, we wanted to estimate the survival rate of adult and juvenile Kentish Plovers on Maio. But more importantly, we also wanted to understand how local climatic conditions affect their survival in the light of ongoing climate change.

Investigator measuring the tarsus length of a Kentish Plover female upon capture (left). Kentish Plover with coloured rings in the wetland Salinas do Porto Inglês, Maio, Cabo Verde - Noémie Engel.

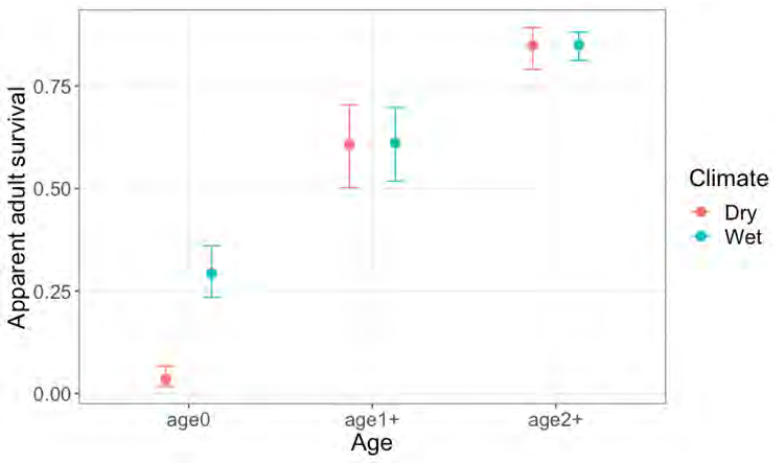
The climate of Maio is dry. Seeing raindrops fall during the year is rare, except in summer and early autumn. With the arrival of rain from July to October, seaweed and eelgrass grow, and with them appear coastal worms, small molluscs, and crustaceans- the favourite prey of shorebirds. This is why the successful reproduction of the Kentish Plovers largely depends on the availability of water (see graph middle right).

Thanks to the conservation efforts of our team, now the great majority of the population breeds in a large, protected wetland and designated RAMSAR site: the Salinas do Porto Inglês. However, this protected area is not immune to climate change, more specifically to droughts. Cabo Verde historically suffers from cyclic patterns of dry and wet years and the local population and animals are suffering from this. This is why we particularly wanted to study how the survival of Kentish Plovers is affected during dry and wet years.

After crunching the numbers, we discovered three interesting results. First, we confirmed that while the resident population of Maio has low reproductive success, adults have a relatively high apparent survival compared to mainland populations of plovers. Second, we found that individuals in their birth year have lower survival than adults, which is coherent with our expectations. Last and most importantly, we found that juveniles that were born in a dry year are 10 times less likely to survive their first year compared to those that were born in a wet year.



Daily nest survival real parameter estimates ± 95% CI for Kentish Plovers on Maio, Cabo Verde between 2007 and 2019 plotted across the years from the survival models with annual variation or a linear trend of year. Inset; Kentish Plover chick hatching at a nest on Maio, Cabo Verde - Noémie Engel, 2016.



Apparent annual survival rates ± 95% CI of juvenile and adult Kentish plovers on Maio, Cabo Verde under different climatic conditions.

Will juvenile birds survive the dry future? - cont'd

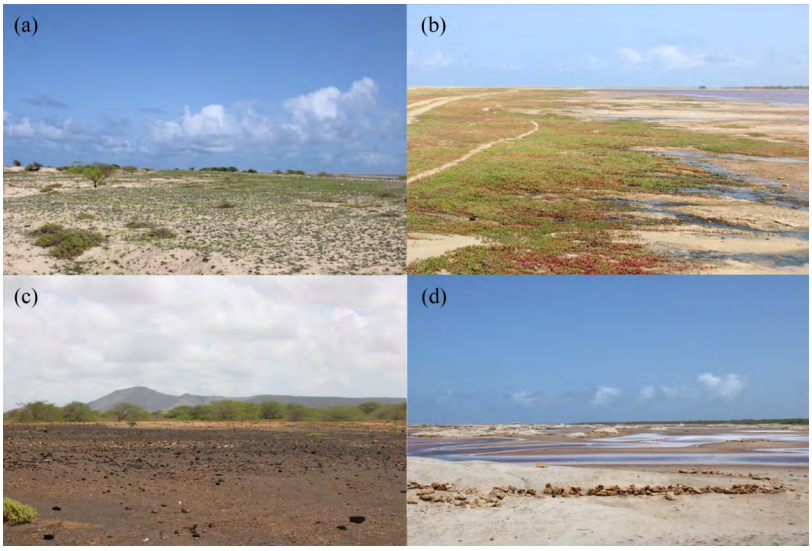
Such effects of droughts on survival are concerning. As weather conditions might become more unpredictable in the future under ongoing climate change, the cyclic patterns of dry and wet years in Cabo Verde will change. Our results provide demographic estimates that indicate which age class to focus our conservation efforts to, particularly in dry years. Nonetheless, the question that arises after this long-term analysis is: will juvenile Kentish Plovers on Maio survive the dry future?

Noémie Engel handling a Kentish Plover and measuring its bill length - Jean-Pierre Schmitz.

If you're eager to get involved in studying and conserving the Kentish Plover population in Maio, there are two direct ways you can help:
1) Join our research team in Maio by participating in a graduate program or volunteering.
2) Follow and support the Maio Biodiversity Foundation. Check out their events on social media to discover opportunities for hands-on involvement in the flora and fauna conservation of Cabo Verde.

Noémie Engel has recently finished her PhD at the University of Bath, UK carrying out research on the Kentish plover population in Cabo Verde. She has been actively involved in this project since 2016 leading the yearly fieldwork in Maio and collecting data that contributes to an ever-growing database. Her current interest is to show how such long-term monitoring programmes can be of great value to science but also to conservation and how both fields can mutually benefit from each other.

Follow Noémie!



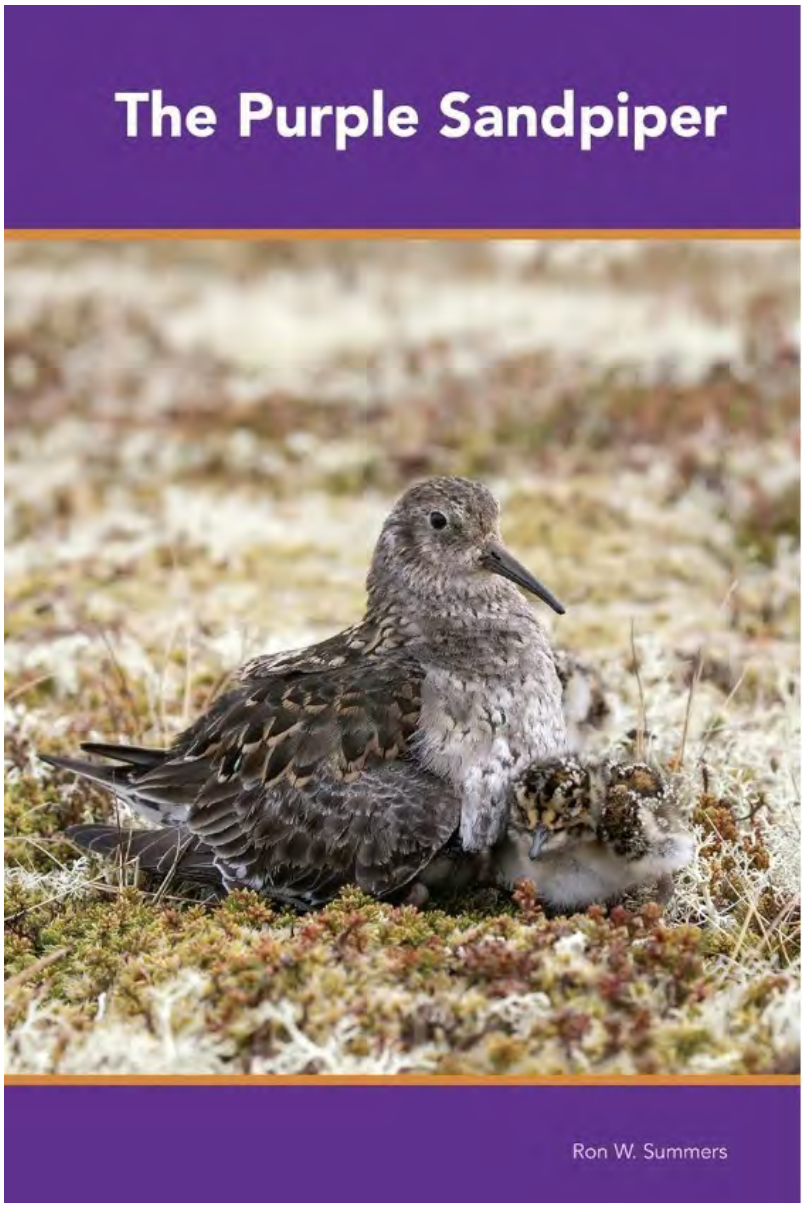
Major habitat types in the Salinas do Porto Inglês in Maio. Panels show: (a) the grassland, (b), the saltmarsh, (c) the semidesert and (d) the salt-extraction. Photos were taken in August 2023 just after the first rainfall - Noémie Engel.

Kentish Plover eating a worm. Photo taken from BirdFact.com

Three Kentish plover chicks in the Salinas do Porto Inglês in Maio - Noémie Engel.

Book Review: Purple Sandpiper by Ron Summers - Keith Betton

There is something really impressive about a single-species monograph that is privately published by the person who spearheaded much of the work inside. In this case Ron Summers was part of a small group in Scotland who realised in the late 1960s that there were hardly any ringing recoveries of Purple Sandpipers *Calidris maritima*. In the decade that followed, he and others made great strides to rectify this with targeted ringing on both the east and west Scottish coasts, and now over 9000 have been ringed. Also from the 1970s onwards he organised expeditions to find the birds breeding in Norway, Iceland and Svalbard. In addition to the data that his own studies have collected, Summers has brought together everything that is known about the species, mostly from European studies, as by comparison relatively little seems to have been published about the North American wintering population despite birds there being in decline.



The Purple Sandpiper By Ron W. Summers - Privately published. 2023 - £29.99 Hardback, 352 pp. Over 150 colour and black & white photos, illustrations, maps and tables - ISBN: 978-1-9999882-3-4

The book is divided into 15 chapters with the last being a synthesis of everything. In addition to outlining the work in Scotland and in the various breeding areas (including the tiny UK population) there are core chapters examining the birds' size, breeding distribution and numbers, nesting activity, migration, plus plumage and moult. For those more interested in the winter distribution and numbers, these are given a chapter as are discussions on how these populations have fluctuated, the preferred habitats, feeding behaviour, body mass, site fidelity, local movements, survival and population dynamics.

There are many interesting facts revealed from Summers work and those of others. There has been a northwest shift in the winter distribution of Purple Sandpipers within the UK which may be linked to climate change, or because Canadian birds (which winter in northern Scotland) are doing better than those in Norway (that winter on the east coast). Declines have also been recorded in Iceland where birds are both migratory and resident. The future is uncertain for this and other waders that rely on the tundra for breeding. This habitat is predicted to decline by between 40% and 57% by the time carbon dioxide has doubled from pre-industrial levels as boreal forest replaces it. The tundra can not move northwards as the Arctic Ocean occupies latitudes north of 80°N. Summers warns that the 15 million breeding waders in this habitat could be halved in number. In addition, on our rocky shores sea level is predicted to rise by up at least 40 cm which will reduce the available feeding and roosting habitat. However, on the other hand, increased wind action may result in more seaweed being washed up, providing good feeding habitat. So the future offers many conundrums.

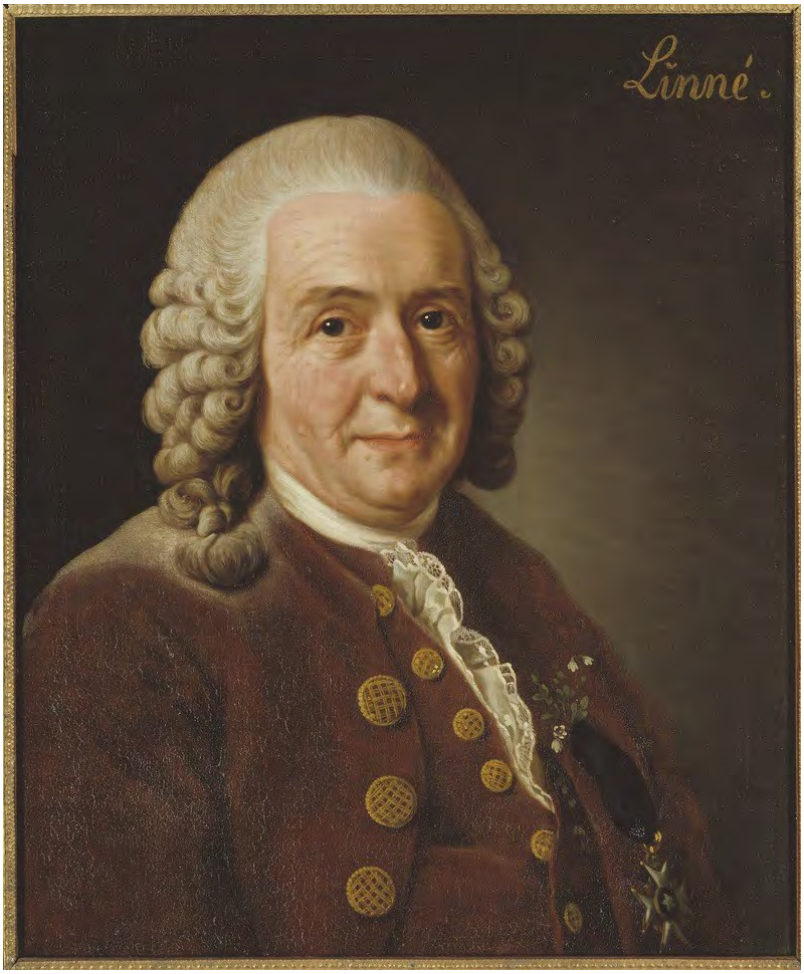
Among the other fascinating insights are discussions on the fact that as in other monogamous small waders females are larger than males. The relatively small males have short bills which could be advantageous as they undertake most of the brood attendance. But also this possibly reduces feeding competition between the sexes. Also, I have often wondered why Purple Sandpipers stop at Spain and do not migrate further south into Africa like Ruddy Turnstones *Arenaria interpres*. Summers suggests that in the tropics, invertebrates would find the rocky intertidal zone too hot at low tide. Also, the coasts of Britain offer a greater tidal range and therefore more feeding opportunities.

These are just a few examples of how comprehensive this book is. It is a delight to read, being well designed and created in an engaging style. It is a summary of research that has covered more than 50 years. It is personal research at its very best, and is a reminder of how without this kind of effort we would have little idea of what is happening to our bird populations.

Who's who in Wader Nomenclature, Fame and Obscurity; Linné and Azara – Rick Simpson

Fame: Carl von Linné (1707–1778)

Linné, who fashioned himself as Carolus Linnaeus, Latinised in keeping with the birds he named, is the most famous person in the naming of species. Here we have the man who brought us the binomial standardisation of scientific names. Since he was the first to do this, all the naming of birds since goes back to this point in 1758. Even if someone before this named a bird, it doesn't count, as it all started with Linnaeus. If he used your name for a bird, then tough, he gets the credit.



Carl von Linné, 1707-1778, botanist, professor Alexander Roslin 1775

However, just because Linnaeus used a name it doesn't mean it sticks. An example of this is *Numenius* meaning young or new moon, which we now still use as the genus for all curlews and whimbrels. Originally Linnaeus placed the curlews in *Scolopax* along with the woodcocks and snipes. So, when later it was decided that the birds were not in the same family, a new name was sought and was found in the name of *Numenius* as written by a Frenchman called Brisson in 1760. Since this was then the first alternative name since 1758 and *Scolopax* was still valid for the woodcocks, it became the genus for the curlews and has remained so ever since. However, Brisson had not invented this word, he had used a name that had first appeared in an Ancient Greek lexicon written by a chap called Hesychius. But, who gets the credit for it? Good old Monsieur Brisson, not Hesychius.

To illustrate further how someone naming something before Linnaeus used the same name we can turn again to Brisson. At some point in his career, he came across a skin of a new species of curlew, and seeing that it was not named he named it, in French, *Courlis de Madagascar*. Later in 1766 Linnaeus used this name turning it into scientific name as *Scoloax madagascariensis,* so he gets the credit for the name not Brisson. However if he were able to take it back I'm sure he would, because Brisson had misread a label on the skin, believing it to say Madagascar he named the bird. But, the place name was Macassar. The English name for this species is Far Eastern Curlew, a species that has never set foot in Madagascar. But the fact remains, there was no earlier valid name than Linnaeus' so it has stuck to this day, despite being quite obviously erroneous. Such are the rules of science.


Far Eastern Curlew - Elis Simpson

Despite the fact that some of Linnaeus' names have not stood the test of time, a good number have. In terms of genera we still use; *Charadrius* for the ringed plovers, *Haematopus* for the oystercatchers, *Recurvirostra* for the avocets, *Scolopax* for the woodcocks and *Tringa* for the shanks. He also coined *Parra* for the jacanas, which is no longer used, but the jacanas now consist of six new genera, and two of them still contain *'parra,* namely *Ireidiparra* for Comb-crested Jacana and *Microparra* for Lesser Jacana.

Since he was the first, understandably the number of waders he has named is vast, of the forty-five names he coined at species level just five didn't make it.

Who's who in Wader Nomenclature; Fame and Obscurity Linné and Azara – cont'd

Since many of the species he named now have subspecies, he is also credited with the nominate subspecies name.

What is perhaps surprising is that this colossus of a man in terms of the services he brought to the natural order of things, he only had one wader ever named after him and that is, or was, *Glottis linnei* which was given to what is now *Tringa nebularia*, the Common Greenshank, so even that is no longer valid. This faded honour was bestowed by a man called August Wilhelm Malm a fellow Swede in 1877.

Common Greenshank - Elis Simpson

Obscurity: Brigadier-General Félix Manuel de Azara (1742-1821)

Brigadier General Azara was a Spanish Military Officer. He lived famously for a number of years as the person after which Azara's Plover *Charadrius azarae* was named. This honour was bestowed upon him by none other than Temminck in 1823, who himself has a number of birds named in his honour, *e.g.* Temminck's Stint *Calidris temmincki.*

Sadly for Señor Azara, it turned out that the bird had been previously named, by Vieillot in 1818 as *Charadrius collaris* (now scientifically labelled *Anarhynchus collaris*), and became overnight, at least in English, Collared Plover. Azara's name does live on in Spanish as *Choleitejo de Azara* and also in French *Pluvier d'Azara.* However, this is a South American species, and in most Spanish speaking South American countries they have adopted *Chorlito collarejo* or a version of it in preference to *de Azara*. In French speaking South American countries on the other hand Azara's name is still in use as *Pluvier* or *Gravelot d'Azara* .

Collared Plover - Elis Simpson

A mascot to be proud of - Rick Simpson

Following last issue's 'A mascot to be proud of' item it seemed fitting to follow the theme with another wader that features on a Rugby Football Club logo. This time the species involved is the Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* and the rugby club is East Kilbride Rugby Football Club. However, as you can see, the species also features on the Association Football, Cricket and Sports Clubs of that town too. It may at first seem odd that the people of East Kilbride should unanimously fall upon the same emblem for their respective interests until you take into account the name of the town includes the name of a popular legendary figure, St Bride. St Bride has many legends surrounding her in association with Oystercatchers (see Bride's Bird)*.

*From Newsletter Volume 5 Issue 3 October 2018

Eurasian Oystercatcher - Elis Simpson

Cover photo; Malaysian Plover - Daeng Manit

Malaysian Plovers - Daeng Manit

The Malaysian Plover is a shorebird, for which all life cycles depend on a sandy beach, from birth to death. The plovers choose peaceful beaches to nest, feed and raise their chicks. Nowadays, most beaches are increasingly used by humans. Also continuing erosion of the coast and alien plants species that invade and cover habitats and nesting areas are a threat to breeding success. All these factors directly affect both a serious decline of the Malaysian Plover's nesting areas and their populations. Regarding the photo, this demonstrates how less beach areas for the plovers to use means they have to move to the unsuitable rock dam instead. The main idea behind it is to tell the truth and point out the serious situation the Malaysian Plovers find themselves in. To take this shot I used a Nikon Coolpix P950 camera.

Malaysian Plover - Rick Simpson

Malaysian Plover
Anarhynchus peronii
Schlegel 1865
IUCN Near Threatened

Malaysian Plover male - Elis Simpson

Malaysian Plover female - Elis Simpson

Malaysian Plover - cont'd

Scientific name explained:

- *Anarhynchus*: Greek *ana* meaning backwards and *rhunkhos* meaning bill. Not particularly apt for this species as it was first coined for the Wrybill *A. frontalis* which has a sideways bent bill.
- *peronii* - After Françoise Péron (1775-1810) French soldier and naturalist.

Alternative English names; Malay Plover, Malay Sand Plover, Malay Sand-Plover, Malaysian Plover, Malaysian Sand Plover, Malaysian Sandplover, Malaysian Sand-Plover .

Non-English names: Indonesia: *Burung Cerek Melayu, Cerek Malayu, Cerek Melayu* - Malay: *Burung Rapang Malaysia, Burung Rapang Pasir, Rapang Pasir* Thai: นกหัวโตมลายู (Transliteration): nók hŭa-too ma-laa-yuu Vietnamese: *Chim Choi choi lưng đen, Choi choi lưng đen .*

Family: Charadriidae Leach 1820
Subfamily: CHARADRIINAE Leach 1820

Taxonomy; Monotypic. The proposed subspecies *chaseni* Junge 1939 is not considered valid.

Synonomy of genus:
Charadrius Linnaeus 1758
Aegialites Boie 1822

Synonyms:
protonym *Charadrius peronii* Schlegel 1865

Systematic / Taxonomic history: Was considered by Harting to be synonymous with *A. dealbatus* (then in the genus *Charadrius*), and was adopted by some authorities including Seebohm, who later wrote '*Hartings identification of* Charadrius peronii *with* C. dealbatus *cautiously quoted by Legge (*Birds of Ceylon *0948), and rashly adopted by me (*British Birds *in p25) is a blunder which neither of us ought to have committed after the publication of Lord Walden's excellent plate in the '*Transactions of the Zoological Society' *and the care which Swinhoe took (*Porc Zool Soc *1870, p139) to point out the differences between the two species.'*

As for its lineage Johnsgard wrote; *'Bock (1958) suggested that* peronii *was derived from early* alexandrinus *stock* [Kentish Plover Anarhynchus alexandrinus] *and could almost be considered conspecific with it. I suggest it may have come more directly from the ringed plover type such as* dubius [Little Ringed Plover Charadrius dubius]*, which it closely resembles'*. The recent change in taxonomy base on molecular science would suggest otherwise.

Malaysian Plover male - Elis Simpson

Malaysian Plover female - Elis Simpson

Malaysian Plover sheltering from the sun - Elis Simpson

Malaysian Plover - cont'd

Conservation status:

- Near Threatened globally.

Threats to this species derive from its very particular habitat choice, that being sandy beaches. Since they occur in a zone popular with tourists who visit for these beaches, they have been pushed to the margins. It may be that coastal salt pans are providing a new habitat suitable for breeding, but they in themselves are potentially ephemeral as they often fall into disuse.

Malaysian Plovers beside detritus, one of the many threats facing this species; such irony that the 'dispose of responsibly' message is visible - Elis Simpson

Other threats include the increasing amount of human waste that is appearing on beaches around the world and the need therefore to clear the beaches for the tourists, thus destroying any potential breeding sites on a nightly basis should the birds be bold enough to even attempt to breed.

Population:

The population was estimated to number fewer than 10,000 individuals by Perennou et al. (1994), but BirdLife International (2001) noted that this may be an underestimate given the number of islands it inhabits. Therefore the population size is probably placed in the band 10,000-25,000 individuals, roughly equating to 6,700-17,000 mature individuals. (BirdLife Int'l)

Female Malaysian Plover with crab prey - Elis Simpson

Waders in art - Fernando Igor de Godoy

Cores, Migrações e Mistérios: Desenhando aves limícolas!

Desde criança sempre tive dois fascínios: desenhar e observar aves! Assim, tentei traçar a rota da minha vida para que conseguisse unir essas duas paixões. Cresci desenhando as aves, seja olhando fotografias de livros e revistas, ou observando as aves do quintal e de locais que visitava. Assim como muitos ilustradores, um dos aspectos que mais me chamava a atenção era as cores. Desenhar aves coloridas e suas nuances permitia explorar diversas técnicas e proporcionava um resultado atraente, como poucos grupos biológicos proporcionariam. De fato, poucos animais poderiam ter tantas cores quanto araras, papagaios, saíras, beija-flores, aves-do-paraíso etc.

Como observador de aves e posteriormente biólogo e pesquisador, gostava de ilustrar as espécies que via em campo e seus hábitos e os detalhes das cores sempre estavam presentes. Tentar atingir a precisão de cores sempre foi um desafio, seja com tinta ou lápis.

Quando comecei a observar aves, conhecia muito pouco sobre aves limícolas, em geral o que lia em livros ou assistia em documentários. As aves limícolas são espécies aquáticas que utilizam ambientes úmidos, como bordas de alagados, zonas entre marés, ambientes lodosos etc. Embora algumas espécies sejam residentes, ou seja, que não migram, outras realizam migrações de longas distâncias saindo dos extremos dos hemisférios em direção às regiões tropicais e semitropicais. Podem ser citados como exemplos, os maçaricos, batuíras, pernilongos e narcejas. De início, conhecia apenas poucas aves residentes como pernilongo-de-costas-brancas *Himantopus mexicanus melanurus*.

Na primeira vez que observei um maçarico, no caso um maçarico-solitário *Tringa solitaria*, em 2007, e o que me chamou a atenção foi o tamanho. Em livros,

"Colours, Migrations, and Mysteries: Drawing Shorebirds"

Since childhood, I've always had two fascinations: drawing and birdwatching! So, I tried to chart the course of my life to bring these two passions together. I grew up drawing birds, whether by looking at photographs in books and magazines or by observing the birds in my backyard and in places I visited. Like many illustrators, one aspect that always caught my attention was colours. Drawing colourful birds and their nuances allowed me to explore various techniques and produced attractive results, unlike many other biological groups. Indeed, few animals could boast as many colours as macaws, parrots, tanagers, hummingbirds, birds-of-paradise, and many others.

As a birdwatcher and later a biologist and researcher, I enjoyed illustrating the species I encountered in the field, with their habits and the intricacies of their colours always at the forefront. Striving for colour accuracy has always been a challenge, whether using paint or coloured pencils.

When I first started birdwatching, I knew very little about shorebirds, generally relying on information from books and documentaries. Shorebirds are waterbirds that inhabit wet environments such as the edges of marshes, intertidal zones, muddy areas, and more. While some species are residents and do not migrate, others undertake long-distance migrations from the extremes of the hemispheres to tropical and subtropical regions. Examples include sandpipers, plovers, stilts, and snipes. Initially, I was familiar with only a few resident birds, like the Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus melanurus*.

My true revelation about shorebirds came in 2007 when I first observed a Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria*. What caught my attention the most was their size. In books, birds are usually grouped by family or genus on a single page, making it difficult to grasp their actual size. For me, the sandpiper seemed to be about the size of an ibis

Waders in art - cont'd

geralmente as aves estão agrupadas de acordo com a família, ou gênero em uma prancha em uma única página. Por isso, não tinha noção real do tamanho. Para mim apresentavam um tamanho similar a um íbis (Threskiornitidae). Ao olhar com um binóculo diversas aves aquáticas (frangos-d 'águas , marrecos etc.) e de repente me deparar com um minúsculo maçarico-solitário entre elas foi uma grande surpresa!

Posteriormente, à medida que observava mais espécies também comecei a notar que de fato os guias ilustravam diversas plumagens coloridas, o que divergia do que em geral se vê no Brasil, já que as aves limícolas migratórias costumam ficar com plumagem de descanso com tons neutros, como cinza, branco e marrom. Descobri, então, que a cor muito pouco importava na identificação das espécies e que outras características eram mais fundamentais. Então, em saídas a campo aprendi muito com diversos colegas mais experientes que ofereceram dicas valiosas para identificar, como proporções, vocalizações, comportamentos, habitats. Comecei a despertar um grande interesse pelo assunto e aí resolvi mergulhar na pesquisar sobre a identificação das espécies e seus comportamentos. Lia livros e os comportamentos relatados recorri a assistir vídeos de como cada espécie se locomovia, como forrageava, para fixar melhor o aprendizado.

Vi que espécies de tons neutros e aparentemente todas similares na verdade consistiam em um dos grupos de animais mais curiosos e com inúmeras diferenças, que iam muito além de cores e plumagem. A cada dia a curiosidade fazia com que aprendesse mais e, assim, as aves limícolas se tornaram o meu grupo de aves preferidas. Aprender a observar os comportamentos facilitou muito a desenhar detalhes. Ao desenhar uma dessas aves, um maçarico por exemplo, eu me pergunto: "será que ele pousaria assim?" "como será que ele forragearia?". Então, me debruço para medir proporções e detalhes e tentar transmitir a maior realidade possível ao papel. Entretanto, o grupo é tão curioso que a cada dia se aprende algo novo e o fascínio por tais aves só aumenta!

Website: Ornithologia & Arte

(Threskiornitidae). However, when I looked through binoculars at various waterbirds (rails, ducks, and so on) and suddenly spotted a tiny Solitary Sandpiper among them, I was greatly surprised.

As I continued to observe more species, I also began to notice that field guides often illustrated these birds with colourful plumages, which differed from what is typically seen in Brazil. Migratory shorebirds tend to adopt subdued resting plumages with neutral tones, such as grey, white, and brown. I then discovered that colour was of little importance in identifying the species, and other attributes were far more crucial. During my field outings, I learned valuable tips from more experienced colleagues, such as proportions, vocalizations, behaviours , and habitats. This ignited a great interest in me, leading me to delve into researching the identification of species and their behaviours . In addition to reading books, I also turned to videos to gain a better understanding of how each species moved and foraged, solidifying my learning.

I realized that beneath the seemingly uniform and inconspicuous appearance of these birds with neutral tones, lay fascinating creatures with countless differences that extended far beyond colours and plumage. My daily curiosity drove me to learn more, and shorebirds quickly became my favourite group. Observing their behaviours became a valuable tool for capturing details in my drawings. When portraying one of these birds, such as a sandpiper, questions would arise, like "Would it actually perch like this?" or "How would it forage?". I would then delve into measuring proportions and details, striving to convey the greatest authenticity on paper. However, shorebirds are so rich in curiosities that every day brought new discoveries, increasing my fascination for them. Nowadays, in addition to focusing on details to represent them, I also try to convey the message of the importance of their conservation and their fragile habitats. Several species face declining populations and threats such as habitat loss, pollution, and more. Illustration can be one of the most effective tools for environmental awareness and emphasize the relevance of these birds.

Disrupted Serenity; Understanding the impact of human disturbance on wading birds in Langstone Harbour - James Cutting

Coastal wetlands, including estuaries, salt marshes and mudflats, are crucial habitats for a variety of wildlife, particularly wading birds. These ecosystems, however, are increasingly vulnerable to disturbances, many of which are driven by human activities. The impacts of disturbances on wading birds within coastal wetlands can be profound, affecting their behaviour, reproductive success, and overall survival.

Langstone Harbour, located on the southern coast of England, is a coastal gem on the outskirts of Portsmouth, a city with the honour of being the second most densely populated local authority outside of London. Once a bustling hub for maritime trade and fishing, the area experienced transformations over centuries. Urbanization and industrialization, with aggregate companies and the Southern Water sewage works at Budds Farm have led to extensive pollution from outflow, run off and marine traffic from barges. The outflow from sewage particularly has led to extensive algal blooms which cover vital mud flats and contamination of key invertebrate and mollusc prey. Noise and light pollution also play into the pressures on the harbours wildlife, with industrial machinery running 24/7 and the main south coast motorway (M27) roaring to the north.

Figure 1 Langstone Harbour - James Cutting

Efforts to safeguard Langstone Harbour's ecological integrity culminated in the establishment of protective designations. The acknowledgment of its unique features and the recognition of its importance for avian biodiversity paved the way for a more comprehensive approach to conservation. Langstone Harbour's dual recognition as an SSSI and SPA highlights its status as a natural treasure worthy of conservation efforts. The Site of Special Scientific Interest designation emphasizes the area's unique ecological characteristics, this includes its diverse flora and fauna, with a particular focus on the habitat it provides for wading birds and wintering Brent Geese *Branta bernicla*. The Special Protection Area designation goes a step further, acknowledging the vital role Langstone Harbour plays in supporting populations of wild birds.

Figure 2 Common Redshank - James Cutting

These designations are not mere accolades but crucial tools for ensuring the preservation of this ecosystem. The RSPB have acquired some large areas of Salt Marsh and islands in the east of the harbour as well as having the Hayling Oyster beds under their management and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trusts oldest reserve, Farlington Marshes juts out into the harbour from the northern shores. This site, with its mosaic of Grazing marsh, rough scrub, brackish and freshwater pools offers a range of habitats and is used as a breeding site by Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*, Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* and Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, the Lapwings are ringed by the trust and local ringing experts as part of a wider project monitoring the success of this priority conservation species.

Through WeBS data, we know that the harbour is of national importance to several wintering species including Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*, Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*, Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* and Dunlin *Caidris alpina*. With declines of 48% in breeding Curlew numbers in the UK between 1995-2020, the overwintering success of these birds is vital. The harbour offers a range of opportunities from the grazing marshes at Farlington during high tides, the roosts on the RSPB islands and the extensive mud flats when the tide is out. The fluting call of Curlew is one of the incredible elements to the winter soundscape. For the Godwits, returning from their breeding grounds in Iceland, the harbour offers them important staging grounds before their next leg down to the Tagus estuary in Portugal as well as offering wintering grounds for those that do not go as far south. Colour ringing data has shown the importance of Langstone as a wintering site for these birds, with remarkable site fidelity. One

Disrupted Serenity; Understanding the impact of human disturbance on wading birds in Langstone Harbour - cont'd

particular bird being at least 18 years old, having been ringed in Iceland as a chick in 2003 and subsequently been recorded at Langstone every year up until at least 2021 when I last saw a life history following a sighting.

The main draw for the birds is the mud. Extensive flats of thick, sticky mud full of invertebrates is exposed on the low tides and this is vital for wintering, passage and even breeding waders in the area. From WeBS data we know that between September and January, half of the Hampshire wintering population of Eurasian Oystercatchers *Haematopus ostralegus* spend their time in Langstone, using the islands at high tide to roost before moving out onto the mud to feed when the tide recedes. The largest flocks of Pied Avocet in the Solent area are also recorded in the harbour with maximum counts of 60 birds in a single flock during November and December.

During migration, Langstone Harbour becomes a crucial pitstop for countless birds traversing vast distances. The strategic location of the estuary along migratory routes offers a haven *en route*. Curlew Sandpipers *Calidris ferruginea*, Little Stints *Calidris minuta*, Little Ringed Plovers *Charadrius dubius* and both Common *Actitis hypoleucos* and Green Sandpipers *Tringa ochropus* all pass through, and the abundance of invertebrates ensures that these birds can replenish their energy reserves, to boost their chances of successful migration.

Figure 3 Antisocial Jet Ski use - James Cutting

Despite its protected status, Langstone Harbour faces challenges stemming from human activities.

The Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership (SRMP) formed in 2014, identified adverse effects on over-wintering bird populations because of an increase in residential dwellings within 5.6km of the coast. The increase in homes and associated infrastructure has brought more people to the area, looking to enjoy recreational pursuits, including boating, dog walking, birdwatching and photography, and water sports. All inadvertently disturb the delicate equilibrium of the ecosystem. The increased human presence in these sensitive areas may lead to birds abandoning their nests or foraging grounds, impacting their overall survival and productivity.

A recent study of Common Ringed Plovers *Charadrius hiaticula* by Marcus Ward and Trevor Codlin, published in the 2022 Hampshire bird report, suggested that the RSPB islands in the Eastern harbour offer a refuge and represent the highest breeding success of Common Ringed Plovers in the eastern Solent area. These islands are not only nesting sites for Ringed Plovers, they are also home to large colonies of Terns Sternidae and Gulls Laridae as well as at least 17 pairs of Oystercatchers. Their inaccessibility from the coastal paths and their shingle habitats are vital for this success, however, disturbance is still an issue here. Kayakers particularly, regularly flaunt the 'No Landing' rules and can be seen sat on the shingle or paddling in remarkably close proximity to the shore, sending hundreds of birds into the air in panic.

The need to protect valuable human assets and infrastructure, especially with rising sea levels due to climate change has lead to extensive coastal squeeze around the Solent area, with solid sea walls built to safeguard homes and transport links, this means remaining areas of open shingle, mud flats and grazing marsh become more fragmented and the birds get concentrated into a smaller area. This increases competition for food, nesting areas and limits the available area for roosting on high tides which forces the birds to seek alternative sites. In 2020, an area of sea wall in the eastern harbour was breached by the sea, the subsequent decision to not repair this and allow the area behind the wall to return to salt marsh was met with mixed reviews, some arguing that the grazing marsh behind was already vital habitat for ground nesting passerines, others that

Disrupted Serenity; Understanding the impact of human disturbance on wading birds in Langstone Harbour - cont'd

it offered a further buffer zone to hold water and protect houses. Either way, with rising sea levels, more natural schemes, other than hard barriers need to be considered and salt marsh can not only hold water but offers additional refuge for the birds the harbour is designated to protect.

Figure 4 Dog off the lead - James Cutting

Dog walking has both direct and indirect impacts on waders in the harbour. Birds, especially ground-nesting and foraging species, can be extremely sensitive to disturbance. Dogs off-leash, particularly if not under control, may accidentally trample nests, disturb incubating birds, or cause chicks to flee their nests prematurely not to mention flush foraging birds from feeding areas, at the cost of much needed energy. Uncontrolled dogs also pose a direct predation risk to birds. Continuous exposure to dogs can alter the natural behaviour of birds, they may become more vigilant, spending more energy on avoiding potential threats rather than focusing on feeding, breeding, or caring for their young.

Bird Aware Solent an initiative set up off the back of the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership, use staff and volunteers to try and educate the public, engage with dog walkers and recreational users about the threats posed by uncontrolled dogs and general disturbance as well as champion the Solent wildlife in a bid to mitigate some of the issues. Unfortunately, its success is hampered by the public's refusal to adhere to local bylaws regarding dogs and disturbance and by some individual's refusal to listen to polite requests from volunteers and signage.

Birders and Photographers also play their part in disturbance. As birders we like to think of our pastime as a benign one to the birds and wildlife we seek, however, poor fieldcraft and lack of understanding mean that too often birders and photographers get too close to the birds in their exuberance, causing stress, nest abandonment and disturbing foraging behaviour. This can often be inadvertent; however, it poses a serious threat, and we should always remember to put the birds first whatever we are doing. Maintaining a distance from wildlife, not entering areas cordoned off and limiting noise are all good practises.

As outlined above, there are many factors that influence the overall disturbance of the wading birds in Langstone harbour and the wider Solent area, but its not all doom and gloom. There are many schemes and groups that do fantastic work to try safeguard the wildlife that uses the harbour. The RSPBs life on the Edge project www.rspb.org/ourwork/conservation/projects/life-on-the-edge/ and the Save Our South Coast Alliance www.sosca.org.uk and Hampshire Wildlife Trusts 'Solent Seagrass Restoration Project' https://www.hiwwt.org.uk/seagrass-restoration, are great examples and the work done by Ringing groups such as FRG (Farlington Ringing Group) as well as the regular WeBS counts monitor the population dynamics of the birds to advise these charities and authorities, how best to protect the area. More is needed though, community and stakeholder engagement are key to the challenge here, engaging local communities in conservation efforts and providing them with information on the importance of coastal wetlands can garner support for protective measures. This requires more visibility from RSPB, Wildlife Trusts and local authorities and regular public events raise the profile of this coastal oasis and educating visitors about the sensitivity of the habitat and the importance of responsible behaviour. By fostering an understanding of the impact of human activities on wading birds and their habitats, communities can become stewards of Langstone Harbour, actively contributing to its long-term sustainability. For people to want to protect and restore something, they first need to love it!

Langstone is a unique habitat and as indicated, nationally and internationally important for the Waders and Waterfowl that use it but balancing the needs of the public for access and enjoyment with the imperative of conservation is an ongoing challenge. Environmentalists and ecologists often overlook their unique perspective on these matters and forget that access to green space, especially in heavily densely populated urban areas is at a premium, engaging people, offering them a glimpse at how we see the challenges can open common ground and can foster lifelong positive behaviours.

1st Northern Lapwing egg of 2024 found in the Netherlands - Rick Simpson

According to the Boerenlandvogels Nederland website on the 2nd of March, the first Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* egg of 2024 was found in Beuningen in the province of Gelderland. This find was reported to LandschappenNL at 10.10 am. The egg was checked by Aad van Paassen and, together with Gijs van den Brink (SBNL Nature Fund), it was determined that it was a fresh egg. The finder is Wil Schotanus, member of SBNL Nature Fund. The egg was found on a farmland plot.

Every year there is a competition to find the first Lapwing egg of the season in the Netherlands. Below is an excerpt from the book *An Inspiration of Waders* by Rick and Elis Simpson outlining the history of this occasion.

First Northern Lapwing egg in the Netherlands 2024 - Boerenlandvogels Nederland website

Displaying Northern Lapwing - Elis Simpson

'In the Province of Friesland, in the north of the Netherlands, the Northern Lapwing is called *Ijip*. It is Friesland's regional symbol, appearing often in local culture such as in folk songs, poetry and colloquial expressions. When the collection of Northern Lapwing eggs had been banned across Europe, Friesland retained regulated egg collection and was the only place in Europe where they could still be collected on cultural-historical grounds. The season for collecting was set between the beginning of March until around the end of the first week in April. This collection however was not a free for all with everyone running around the countryside plundering all available Lapwing nests. Each participant had to get permission from the provincial council before taking any eggs. Once the first clutch of eggs was taken the collector then had the job of protecting the second clutch, often by placing a cage over the nest to protect it from being trampled by cows or later destroyed during silage cutting. As a result few Lapwings kept their first clutch but fewer were lost during the silage making process. Despite objections from bird protection groups, a total of six thousand eggs could be collected. Originally tradition had it that the first egg collected in this way would be presented to the Queen of the Netherlands. That tradition was ended in 1968, after which it was presented to the Queen's Commissioner to the region and more latterly the local mayor.

Northern Lapwing at nest - Elis Simpson

On the 7th December 2005 the Dutch Council of State ruled that the gathering of Lapwing eggs in Friesland was prohibited on the grounds that it conflicted with the European directives on wild birds and the collecting ceased. There seems to have been a certain amount of toing and froing on the issue since then but from 2015 the finder of the first egg of the province and the finders of the first eggs in each of the communities are honoured by the King's Commissioner and by the mayors. The eggs cannot be taken, but must remain in their nests. When all the first eggs of the province have been

1st Northern Lapwing egg of 2024 found in the Netherlands - cont'd

reported, people are no longer allowed to enter the fields where lapwings are breeding. No-one that is except for the so-called *nazorgers*, who are a kind of caretaker for the Lapwings. These people are appointed by the Bond Friese VogelWachten and they are allowed to enter a section of farmland that is assigned to them, with approval from the farmer. Much as in the past during the collecting days, they search for the eggs of all the meadow nesting waders such as Black-tailed Godwits *Limosa limosa*, Common Redshanks *Tringa totanus* and Eurasian Oystercatchers *Haematopus ostralegus* in addition to the Lapwings and register them into a database. When the farmer wants to work the field, the *nazorgers* place markers to highlight the nest position so the farmer can avoid destroying the nest when mowing or carrying out other essential activities. Sometimes a cage is still placed over the nest to protect it from trampling by cows or sheep or a 'hood' may be used to protect the eggs from slurry/manure spreading operations.'

Northern Lapwing nest in the Netherlands - Elis Simpson

There is a lot of discussion in Friesland about this thorny issue. Would the continued collection of eggs present a threat to the species? Both sides of the argument can quote studies to support their stance, but it is fair to say that the collection of the first egg is unlikely to be as pressing in terms of a threat to the species as intensive farming, the lack of hay meadows, low water levels and the increase in predator numbers.

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

Make a donation (**100%** goes to conservation)
Use QR code on the right to make a donation

Become a Friend of Wader Quest (**100%** goes to conservation)

Buy Wader Quest merchandising (**25%** goes to conservation)

Red Dragon Metal Art

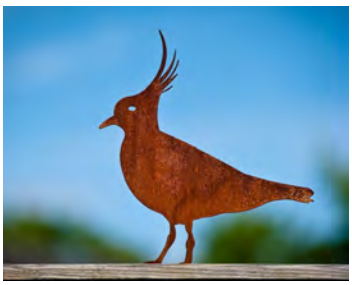
New line in wader motif garden ornaments from Red Dragon Metal Art

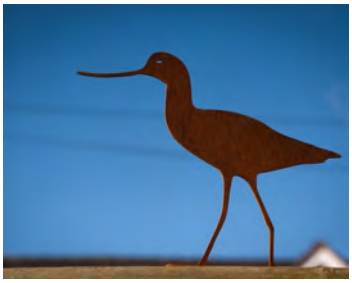
Steel wader shapes designed to rust and look spectacular
As fence toppers or with a spike to place in the ground or flower pot
Supplied rust free, ready to rust,
Place them in your garden and let the weather do the rest.

5 wader designs

Curlew (large)
Curlew (small)
Lapwing
Avocet
Sanderling

Fence toppers





Large Curlew only available as fence topper

[All available from the Red Dragon Metal Art website shop]

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.

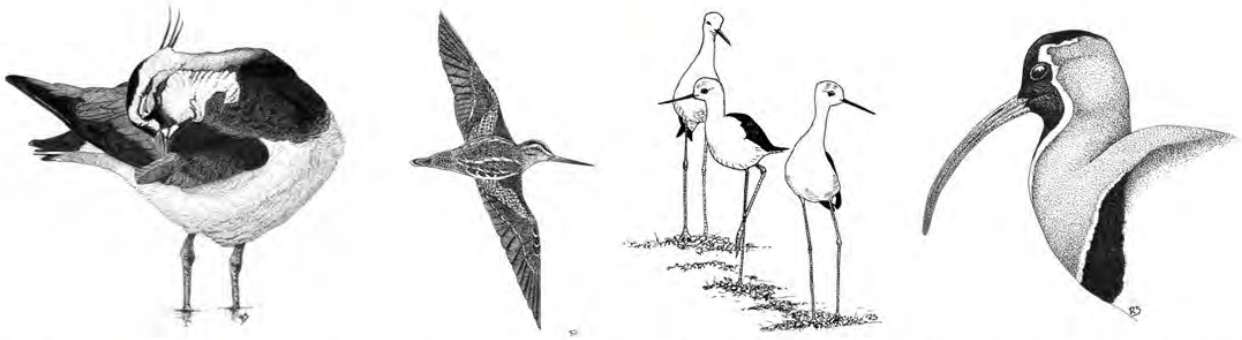
WWW.RedDragonMetalArt.co.uk

Lawn/pot ornament

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.

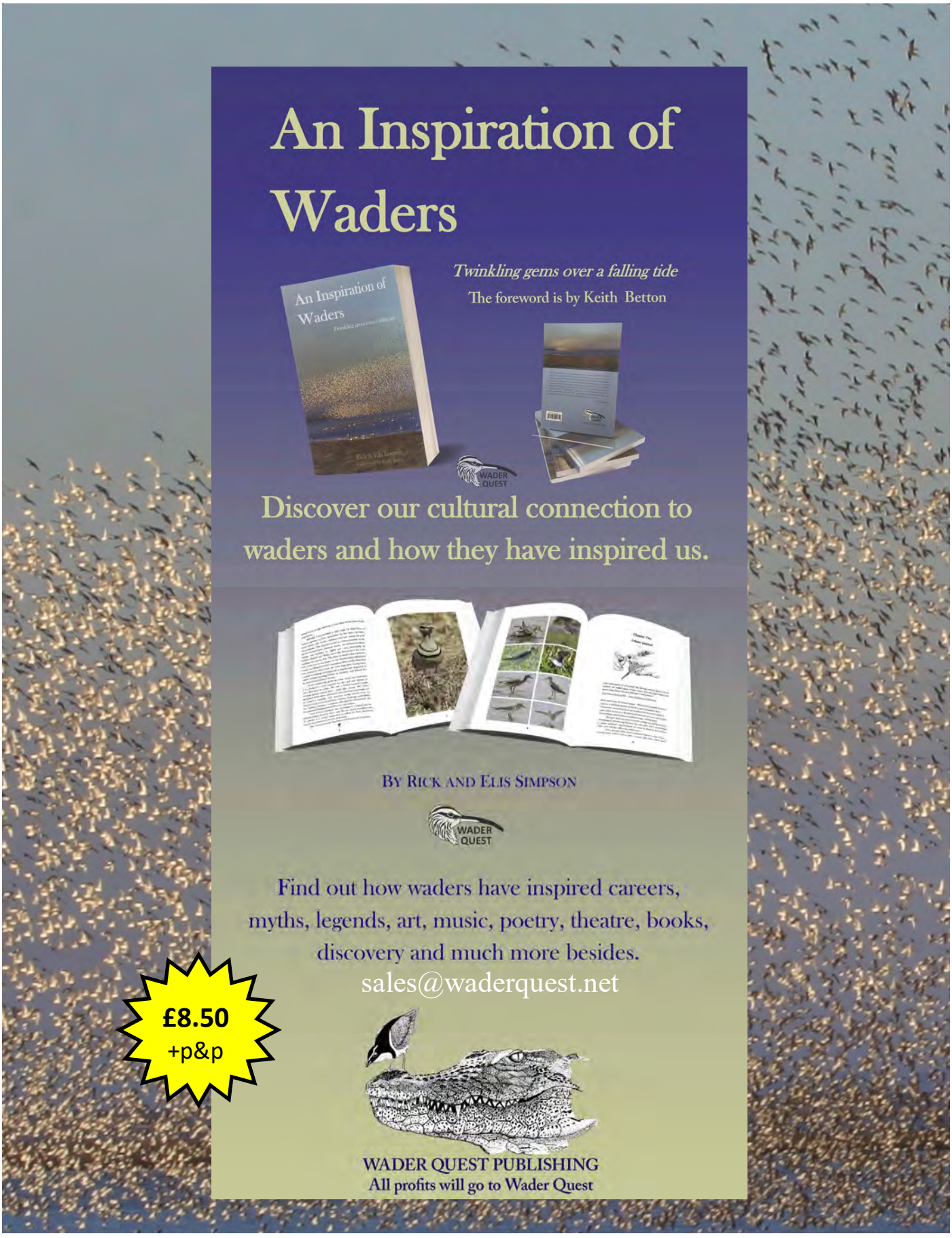
orders - sales@waderquest.net

'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



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A Wader Quest Publishing book By Rick and Elis Simpson

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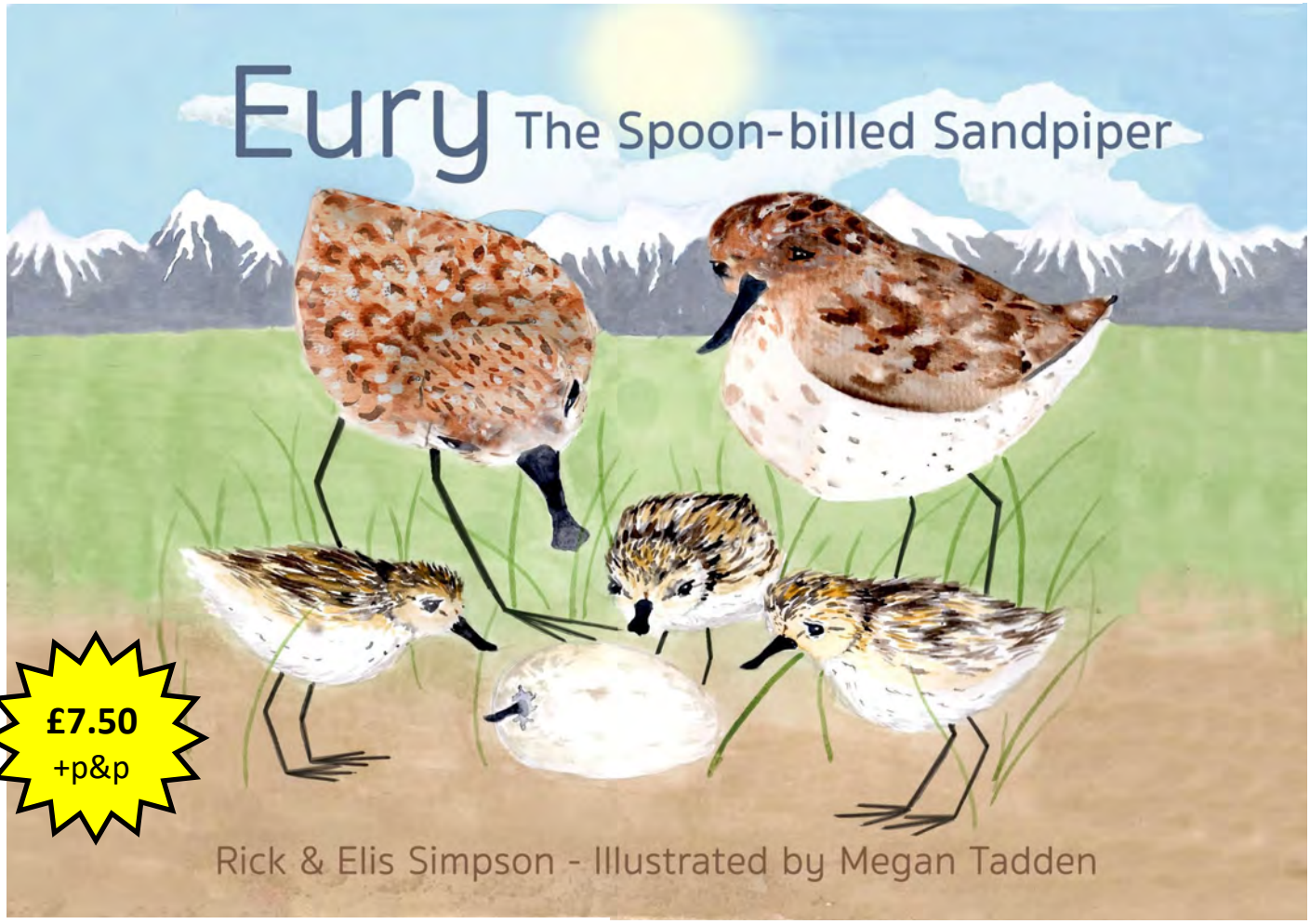

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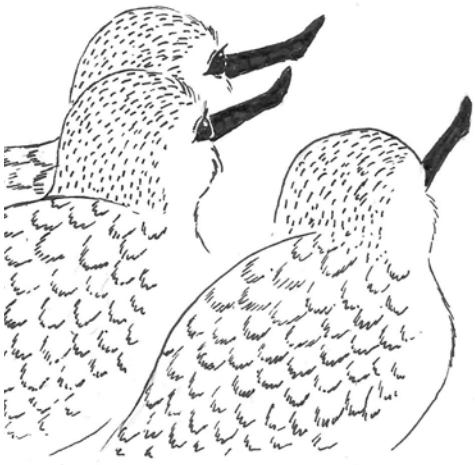

Wader Quest merchandising

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4. Sanderling
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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
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2021-23 DESIGNS

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30. Purple Sandpiper
31. Red-capped Plover
32. Eurasian Oystercatcher
34. Common Snipe
35. American Aocet
36. Grey Phalarope
37. Killdeer

ORDERS FOR ALL WADER QUEST MERCHANDISING sales@waderquest.net

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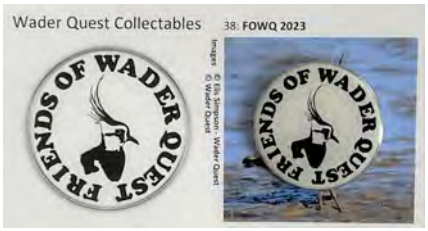

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Wader Quest Collectables - Enamelled Earrings

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NIK BORROW DESIGNED WADER GREETING CARDS

100 X 150 MM

PACK OF 12 + 1 FREE £10.00

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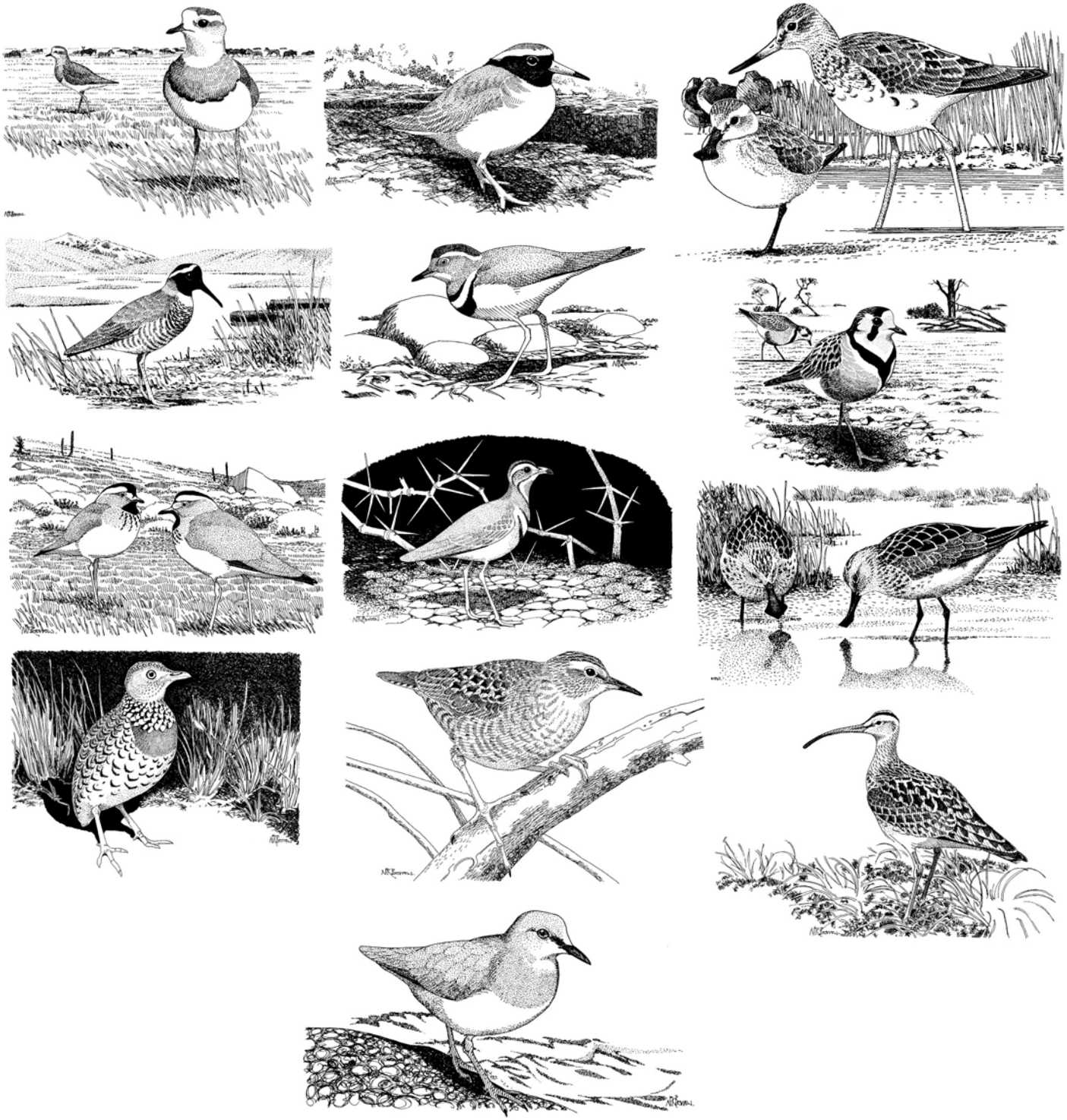

Wader Quest merchandising

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.

JULIA PAGE POSTCARDS

100 X 150 MM

£1.00 EACH

+P&P

Eurasian Oystercatchers © Julia Page

Common Snipe © Julia Page

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

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

Designs by 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

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

£57,941.69

Species supported

African Oystercatcher
American Oystercatcher
Collared Plover
Eurasian Curlew
Great Knot
Hooded Plover
Jack Snipe
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
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New Zealand
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Russia
South Africa
St Helena
Thailand
Uganda
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White-headed Stilt - Elis Simpson