



# WADER QUEST

THE NEWSLETTER Volume 11; Issue 2 2024



Common Snipe - Elis Simpson

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THE NATURAL HOME FOR WADER LOVERS

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AGM: 24 Nov 2024

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**Wader Quest's aims**

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

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

**Our mission:**

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

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

Wader Quest is an entirely voluntary organisation.

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Edited by Rick Simpson

# Wader Quest news

## Editorial Comment

I don't know about you, but I am very relieved that the eternal wet and windy weather is finally over. Here in North Yorkshire it has been like that since around November after our early snow covering. I understand that much of the UK and Ireland has suffered in the same way and indeed some parts still are. In some correspondence with artist, writer, musician, composer and friend Julia Page (see her wonderful [postcards in our shop](#)) we discovered yet another talent she possesses, that of being a poet. She penned the following in recognition of the appalling deluge many of us in the UK have faced and are facing. Naturally it includes a reference to waders.

*Friday the 21st. will be the longest day,  
But winter's still around us, although the month is May, nay June !  
And what a sorry tune we sing as winter marches right through spring ,  
Whilst pinching summer's bloom.*

*Double duvets, icy toes, who heard of such a thing in June ?  
Whilst screaming swifts have disappeared to warmer climes and azure skies,  
And blackbirds disincline to sing of joyous warmth and orange moons.  
They hide away by afternoon just waiting in the wings.*

*Bumble bees must have their hum and hoverflies their precious nectar,  
Marbled whites their linden flowers and ladybirds their sunny hours,  
Golden plovers flying high must sparkle in a cloudless sky,  
Whilst avocets must swipe and dip in treasured Eau de Nil lagoons.*

*This chilly season's circling round, those dark grey days come all too soon  
Give us please some summertime. We've had too much of winter's gloom.*



Golden Plovers sparkling in a cloudless sky - Elis Simpson

We continue our theme concerning our Wader of the Year Eurasian Curlew *Numenius Arquata* with more fun facts and coverage of the ups and downs of the Curlews courtesy of the WWT Severn and Avon Vales Curlew Project.

As well as the above poem, we have a Waders in Poetry page again this issue with Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* coming under the observant eye of none other than John Clare as a follow-up to the cover photo section with details of the species, which is our cover photo subject this time.

Further exciting news from the indefatigable Wader Quest Brazil duo with further successes in protecting waders in south-east Brazil.

From the other side of the world we have more news from the Bohai Bay wader counting team in China, always a fascinating read as well as some other regular features such as From the Library and this issue's artist Ellie-May Stacey better known as Elliestrations, with her amusing image puns.

## Events we will be attending in 2024

- **Birdfair 12-14th July.** This is at the new venue of Lyndon Top, Rutland, UK. We will be in Robin Marquee on stand 15. We hope many of you will be able to stop by and say hello, buy your pin badges and other Wader Quest merchandising, 25% of which will go directly to our Grants Fund for use around the world helping fund wader conservation projects. You can also sign up for 2024 as a Friend of Wader Quest or make a donation. 100% of both will go to the Grants Fund. **Stand Robin Marquee 15. Talk 12.30 Friday 12th, Avocet Lecture Theatre - Wader Quest Down-Under.**
- **Northern Farmland Curlew Awards Film screening 18th August.** This will be the debut screening of *The Lost Songstress* by Alicia Hayden, part funded by Wader Quest. Unfortunately this is not open to the public.
- **Spurn Migfest 6-8th September.** The annual Migfest is taking place at Spurn and we will once again be there. If you cannot make Birdfair but can get to Spurn, this is another chance to come and say hello and to get your hands on our wonderful collectables and other merchandising.
- **Northwest Birdwatching Festival 19-20 October.** As usual we will be exhibiting at this very friendly and enjoyable event.
- **WCWW 2nd-3rd November** - Wherever you happen to be in the world, why not join our world wader watching event? It is a bit of fun but a really useful awareness raising tool for us, so, the more the merrier. [See details here.](#)



## Executive Committee updates and news

Nothing to report

# **Wader Conservation World Watch 11**

**November  
2nd &/or 3rd  
2024**

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

[Details of how to take part](#)

# Wader Quest news - cont'd

**Global Birdfair 2024: 12-14th July - Lyndon Top, Rutland, UK**

Birdfair is approaching and we are launching our 2024 Wader Quest Collectable Pin Badges and the 2024 Friends of Wader Quest badge will also be available to signed up Friends and sponsors also to be launched at the Birdfair.



We will be in Robin Marquee Stand 15; we look forward to seeing many of you there, come and say hello.

## Grants Panel updates and news - Ray Heaton; Grants Panel Chair

We are in the process of funding an interesting study on three species of Austral migrating Waders in southern Brazil. The Tawny-throated Dotterel *Oreopholus ruficollis*, the Rufous-chested Dotterel *Zonibyx modestus* and the Two-banded Plover *Anarhynchus falklandicus* are little studied species that share their wintering grounds and stopover sites with Nearctic species such as the endangered Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Calidris subsruficollis* and American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*.

The study will tag the first three species, using leg flags and geo-positioning sensors to gain information on their migration routes, habitat use, and breeding areas. The study will also look at habitat protection particularly in relation to maintaining wader food supply. Collaborations with cattle rancher will enhance cattle management in terms of maintaining short grassland, an essential wader habitat.

All three species are little studied; it was only discovered in 2003 that the Rufous-chested Dotterel migrates directly from southern Brazil to the Falkland Islands in a non-stop flight. More information on all three species migrations, habitat use, and breeding success will enable more focused conservation measures to be put in place, particularly in the Lagoa do Peixe National Park in Rio Grande do Sul.

In addition we recently funded some coloured and engraved rings, also destined for south-eastern Brazil. These will be attached to breeding American Oystercatchers *Haemaotpus palliatus*, a species that is being gradually pushed to the margins by coastal development in south-eastern Brazil and elsewhere. By individually marking the birds researchers will be able to learn much about their movements, habitat preferences and levels of disturbance as well as in the long term survival and longevity aspects of their natural history.

No other applications are pending.



Rufous-chested Dotterel - Elis Simpson



Tawny-throated Dotterel - Elis Simpson



Two-banded Plover - Elis Simpson

# Open garden in Dunfermline raising funds for Wader Quest - Rik Morley

I've known Rick and Elis for a long time, we met many moons ago at Birdfair. I have always thought that charities with a boots-on-the-ground-not-for-profit outlook chimed with my thinking of how a charity should be run. Not like the charities where the chairman turns up in a Bentley! [Chance would be a fine thing - Ed.]

I knew that if I raised money for Wader Quest, that all of it would go to wader conservation through their Grants Fund, as 100% of all donations do.

Growing up in Lincolnshire, I never thought that the fields of Northern Lapwings *Vanellus vanellus* that I regularly saw would dwindle to the state they are now in; around my family home in North Lincolnshire the fields are now like deserts.

I think what shocked me most was when on two trips to Australia (my husband is from Australia) five years apart, Far Eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis* went from being common to us struggling to see one. This is highly likely due to the development and draining of various areas on the flyway.

I don't have a photo of Far Eastern Curlew and now its top of my list to see on my return in 2025.

Boots-on-the-ground-not-for-profit charities are rare in conservation, and I'm very happy to open my garden to raise money for Wader Quest. Entry is just £5, the price of a pint.

If you find yourself in Fife, Scotland send me an email - rik.morley@gmail and we can arrange a visit for you and you'll know that you will also be helping Wader Quest.

The next time you see a wader, just think, depending on where you are in the world, could this be the last time you see it - I, and Wader Quest, hope not!

Come and have a blether abouts birds, plants, conservation and of course Wader Quest, everyone is welcome and we look forward to sharing our garden, especially our collection of Irises, with you.



Me (centre) with Rick and Elis Simpson on a recent visit to my garden - Rik Morley



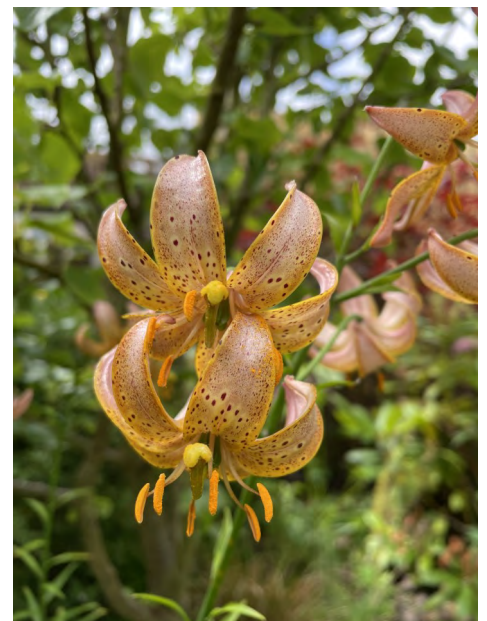
'Indian Chief' Iris - Rik Morley



*Bidens aurea* - Elis Simpson



*Astrantia major* - Elis Simpson



*Lilium martagon* - Elis Simpson

# Species Focus for 2024; Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*



Eurasian Curlew - Elis Simpson

## Some fun facts about the Eurasian Curlew?

### The Eurasian Curlew has been blessed by two Saints

In the 7th Century the grand old Welsh St Beuno was said to be sailing between Llanddwyn and Clynog when he dropped his prayer book onto the sea. A passing Curlew swooped down, scooped up the book and took it to the shore where the book was laid out to dry on some rocks. When St Beuno arrived he was so grateful he blessed the curlew and prayed for its protection.

St Beuno, however, was not the first to thus bless the curlew. Before him, in the 5th Century, St Patrick of Ireland too, legend would have it, heaped blessings on the Curlew after he set sail for the Isle of Man. Having got lost in the fog it was the call of a Curlew that told him in which direction to sail and that earned the bird his blessing promising that it would forever be protected and its nest hard to find.

It seems though that the passage of time is eroding the good works of these venerable gentlemen as the Curlew is plummeting in numbers not only in Wales and Ireland, but across the British Isles and beyond.

(An excerpt from [An Inspiration of Waders](#) by Rick and Elis Simpson)

# Latest news from the WWT Severn and Avon Vales Curlew Project - 22nd March - Mike Smart

Flooding continues to be the main concern for Curlews (and most others besides!) in the Severn and Avon Vales. There have been constant high water levels in the rivers and on the meadows since late October, with five major floods (when the rivers break their banks): true, there haven't been any more major floods in March (not yet at least), but river levels have remained high and there have been five star bores coming up the Severn. Many riverside meadows have remained permanently under water; even where the water flows off the fields, it is often back again with a couple of days.

So, the Curlews which have been returning from the coast since early February, planning to establish territories and prepare for nesting, have had to wait. In many cases they sit round the edges of the floodwater in little flocks of up to ten or a dozen birds, unable to stake out their regular territory, since it's all under water. Nor can they join the usual evening roosts, which at this early stage of the season often play an important part in social activities such as courtship display, because the usual sites are under several feet of water. This is also inconvenient for the observers, since these roosts, just before dusk, often offer a good opportunity to get a closer look at the birds, read ring numbers and thus identify individuals from previous years.

Nevertheless, we have managed to identify some old friends. The first among them was the oldest to be ringed, the legendary Blue Red Red. This individual was ringed as a male on the Severn estuary by Lydney on 26 September 2010, and marked with one numbered metal ring, and three unmarked coloured rings, on the right tibia (above the "knee") a blue ring, and on the left two red rings. He has been observed in the Severn Vales every single spring and summer since then, either at one of the roosts or on his usual breeding field; and in every single winter since then he has been seen back on the Severn estuary below Lydney, almost always in one of two spots, one on the east, the other on the west bank. He offers one of our best examples of site fidelity, both to his wintering area and to his breeding site. We don't know how old he was when first ringed – he must have been at least two, so by now he must be at least sixteen years old – not in itself a vast age for a Curlew, the oldest known individual from ringing data reached the age of 32. He was first seen this spring in a group of seven adults (none of the others ringed), hanging round the edge of deepish flooding, on a narrow strip of wet grass emerging from the water, loafing about, not able to do very much before water levels drop.

Another old friend seen on 13 March was AJ (ringed using a different, easier-to-read colour-ringing system) with a large



Male Blue Red Red in his summer breeding area - John Fletcher



Female AJ on 2 February 2024 at Boreenatra Dungarvan, Co. Waterford. (Photo: Fran O'Connell)

yellow "flag" ring inscribed AJ over a small blue ring on the left tibia and unmarked yellow and blue rings on the right tibia. Whereas Blue Red Red had been marked on the wintering grounds, AJ was a female, marked on her breeding area in 2021; her nest was found in 2022 (but was predated by a pair of Ravens, the gruesome predation event captured on a nest camera) and she almost certainly nested in the same field in 2023, though the actual nest was not found. Until this year we have never known her wintering area. Most of the Curlews that nest in the Vales seem to winter along the coast of the Bristol Channel, from Slimbridge to Devon and Cornwall, with some along the coast of South Wales. In February 2024 however, AJ was photographed near Waterford, Eire, providing the first Irish recovery of a Severn and Avon breeding bird.

# Latest news from the WWT Severn and Avon Vales Curlew Project - 22nd March - cont'd

She was seen on 13 March in the Severn Vales, either on the edge of the floodwater a little way from the usual nesting field or – a more unusual site - feeding with other Curlews on flooded cereal stubble. In the last few days, a couple more individuals recognisable by their rings have been located, back on breeding sites which are no longer flooded, though the ground where they will nest remains very wet. Few Curlews have as yet shown much sign of breeding behaviour – whether courtship chasing on the ground between individual pair members, or the lovely bubbling song-flight. It thus appears highly likely that 2024 will be another late breeding season (even if we don't have a late March/early April flood, as occurred in 2023).

News from other breeding areas shows that Curlews are back on their breeding areas – the frighteningly small number of breeding birds left on the Cotswolds for example, or the birds along the Lugg in Herefordshire. There too a delay in the breeding season is expected.

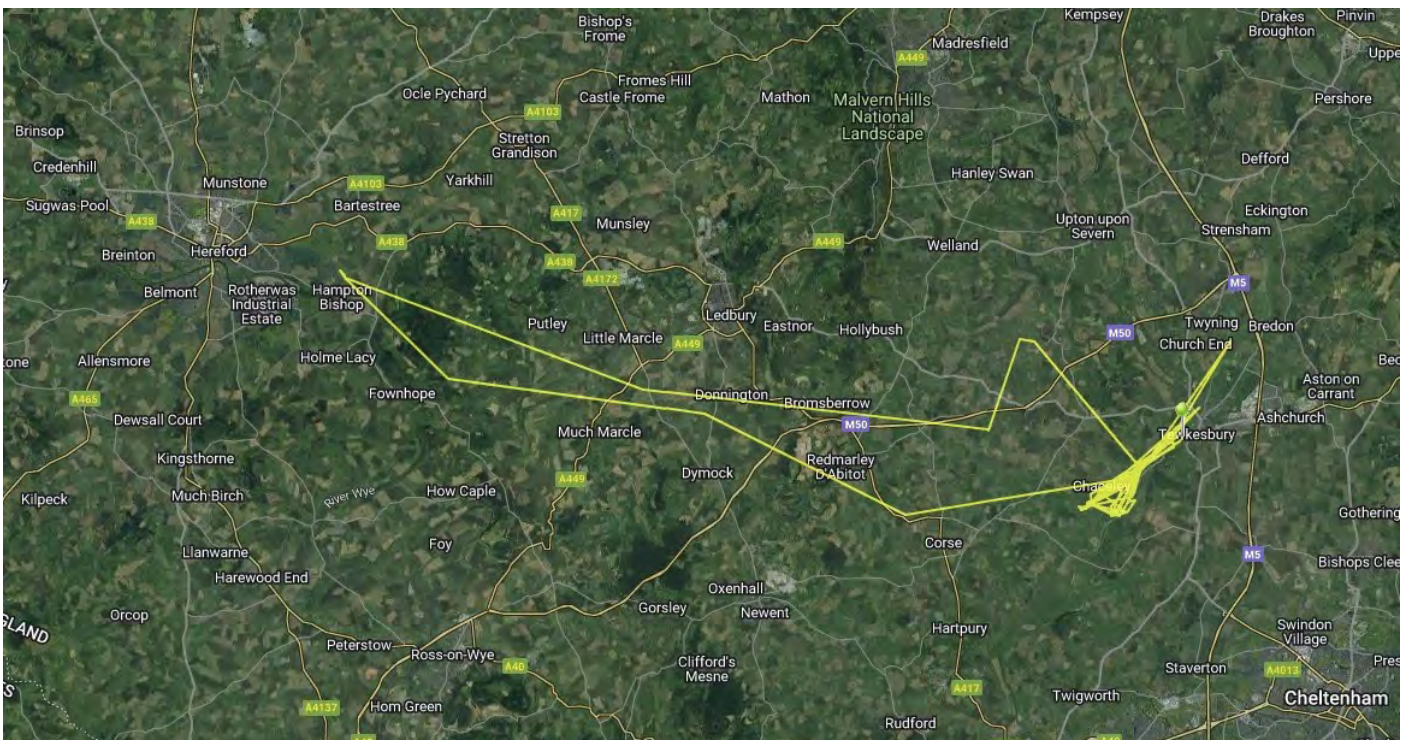
In the meantime, in collaboration with the Curlew Partnership – England, we are organizing one of a series of meetings for farmers and land-owners at the Farmers Club in Gloucester. It is hoped that the government's new Environmental Land Management Schemes will provide support for farmers who look after their breeding Curlews. We need to hear directly from the farmers themselves what kind of support would suit them best. The invitations have already been sent out – any farmers who would like further details are requested to contact the SAV team by phone or email!

# Latest news from the WWT Severn and Avon Vales Curlew Project - 9th April - Mike Smart

And the flooding just goes on and on and on.....

Two more major floods on Severn and Avon since the previous circular, and levels are rising again since the passage of Storm Kathleen last weekend! Particularly along the Severn, riverside meadows have remained deeply flooded, practically since the end of last October. Last year there was a late March/early April flood, which delayed the onset of nesting (first nest found on 26 April); it looks as though nesting will be even later this year, as the fields are so wet – and the grass is growing, so it may be more difficult to find nests.

Under these flood conditions Curlews have not been doing much of the courtship behaviour expected at this time of the year: not much courtship chasing, rather few of the song-flights with the haunting song, quivering wings and near stalling course. Along the Severn most are sitting in small groups of up to ten birds, not yet forming pairs or claiming territories, because the territories are under water. Along the Avon, where water levels rise and fall more quickly, there has been slightly more courtship activity, but then the breeding fields just flood again. We have



Curlew 08's travels on April Fools' Day this year, as revealed by its GPS tag.

# Latest news from the WWT Severn and Avon Vales Curlew Project - 9th April - cont'd

been able to follow this behaviour both by direct observation of individuals (many of them carrying colour rings that are legible in the field) and by the tracks shown by their GPS tags. All six of the GPS tagged birds are now back in the breeding area (most wintered along the Bristol Channel, though one, adult male white 07, was in Galicia, northern Spain in September 2023, only the second of the Severn and Avon Curlews to reach Iberia). Practically all of those marked with large colour rings in previous years are also back.

While most sit patiently at the edge of the flood, some have taken to wandering round other Curlew sites in the neighbourhood. Adult male 08, which carries a white numbered ring and a GPS tag, was originally ringed near Tewkesbury in April 2023; it spent the winter on the Severn estuary near the Severn bridge and was back in the breeding area by 21 February (see the tracking site on the WWT website <https://www.wwt.org.uk/our-work/projects/eurasian-curlew-recovery/curlew-tracking/>). On 1 April it set out on a jaunt at 7.37am, arriving an hour later at the well-known Curlew sites near the River Lugg in Herefordshire, staying there for four hours before returning home, just dropping in at Longdon Marsh in Worcestershire, another known Curlew site, for an hour, before returning to its starting point.

The use of these GPS tags, even more than the colour rings, makes it possible to understand better just how much these Curlews (supposedly very faithful to their breeding field) actually move around in the breeding season.

Another interesting observation shows a bird moving in the opposite direction. A chick (actually the first chick ever to be colour-ringed in Herefordshire, sadly not captured on camera) was ringed on the Lugg Meadows on 1 July 2021, with an orange ring on its left upper leg and a black ring inscribed OH in white letters on the right. It disappeared for three years, and was then resighted, back again on the field where it had been born on 20 March 2024. All very normal, a young bird spending two years or more at some unknown site before returning to its home area, presumably in with a view to nesting now it is sexually mature. But great excitement three days later, when this unfamiliar-patterned ring was seen, and its inscription read (after some intensive observations from a portable hide), in one of the flooded meadows near the Severn. Where will it settle down? At home in Herefordshire or in pastures new?

Curlews, as the biggest wading bird, do not usually begin their nest until the grass has grown enough to hide them from peering predators' eyes. The usual date for the clutch of four eggs to be completed is around 21 April, which is one of the reasons why 21 April has been chosen as World Curlew Day. Some fairly close relatives, notably Lapwing (which often nest early on almost bare earth), and also perhaps Redshank, may nest earlier in the season. Both these wader species have been noticeably noisier and more active this year in their courtship business, in comparison with their bigger relation, the Curlew. But even the best laid plans go wrong: one Lapwing had a complete clutch on a frighteningly bare stubble field on 29 March; another nearby pair had a complete nest, but no eggs - rather early, given the flood situation. By 4 April, however, after the latest big flood, one had disappeared completely, while the other was still visible, but full of water.



Lapwing nest on stubble field before the flood - Mike Smart



Après le déluge 4 April 2024 - Mike Smart.

# Latest news from the WWT Severn and Avon Vales Curlew Project - 9th April - cont'd

Nevertheless, the urge to press ahead with nesting is clearly present with the Curlews too: the first three Curlew eggs were found in the Upper Thames catchment on 7 April, at a site where conditions are perhaps a little drier than in the Severn, so the breeding season is under way.

## Latest news from the WWT Severn and Avon Vales Curlew Project - 17th May - Mike Smart

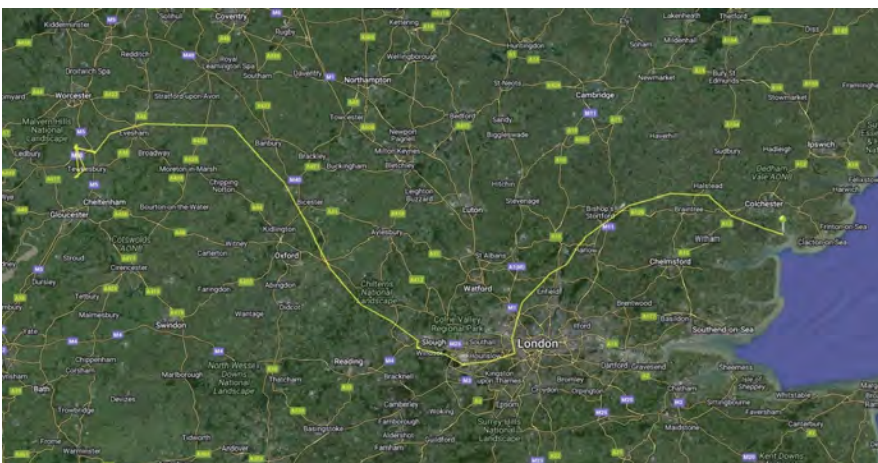
A great deal has happened in the world of Severn and Avon Curlews in the month since the last circular. The watchwords have been:

- World Curlew Day on 21 April; reports on WWT and Curlew Action websites, interview on BBC Radio Gloucestershire;
- Floods at last declining;
- Better understanding of movements of individual Curlews, thanks to colour rings and GPS tags;
- Late onset of nesting, but success in finding nests;
- Protection of nests from predation.

The floods along the Severn and Avon were unusually protracted and deep during winter 2023/24: many meadows along the Severn remained almost permanently under water from late October until mid-April; along the Avon, water levels rose and fell more rapidly, but there were long periods when the Avon Vale, north from Tewkesbury past Bredon, was simply a sheet of water a mile wide. Even now, many of the meadows remain very wet, and the hay meadow vegetation is only just beginning to revive. The Curlews themselves had begun to return from their wintering sites round the coast since mid-February, gathering in small flocks round their flooded breeding areas and clearly keen to begin nesting, but they couldn't nest in such deeply flooded fields.

Efforts in previous years to mark birds with colour rings and GPS tags are now bearing fruit; a good proportion of the Severn and Avon breeding Curlews can now be recognised, so that it is much easier to understand the behaviour of individuals. Winter 2023/24 produced not only the first record of a Severn and Avon nesting Curlew in Ireland, as reported in the previous circular (female Yellow AJ, now safely back in the vales), but also a first wintering record in Spain (male White 07, also back now); on the other hand female Yellow AY, which reached Portugal in July 2022, and was seen along the Avon in 2023, has not yet been noted in the vales in 2024.

Of at least 30 locally colour-ringed Curlews known to be alive at the end of the 2023 breeding season, 21 had by early May been re-sighted in the Severn and Avon Vales in 2024, many of them back on the fields where they had nested in previous years; two ringed birds have also been seen away from the vales, in both cases at known Curlew nesting sites: Yellow AL has been to Staffordshire but has since returned to the vales, Yellow AP has occurred in Oxfordshire. Six of these birds returned with their GPS tags, which means that their every movement, year-round, is being followed.



Movements in April of one year-old Curlew White 72, as shown by his GPS tag.

In mid-April, as floods began to drop and before nesting had begun in earnest, the opportunity was taken to catch a few more and to fit them with GPS tags. One of those caught, White 72, proved to be a bird only one year old, something of a surprise, since it used to be thought that Curlews do not normally return to breeding areas until the age of two; clearly however, White 72 was not hanging around in the vales: he first went on to the WWT London Wetland Centre at Barn Elms, and his last reported position was in Essex.

# Latest news from the WWT Severn and Avon Vales Curlew Project - 17th May - cont'd

This return of a one-year-old is not unique however; there was a similar occurrence the previous year, when Yellow CK, ringed as a chick in the vales in 2022, was back in March 2023; and then another case this year, when White 22, ringed as a chick in summer 2023, was back along the Avon on 24 April 2024. And Y5, a 2022 vales chick, is back and paired with another bird in 2024.

As expected, the flooding affected the onset of nesting. The first nest was



White 22, a chick from 2023, back along the Avon in March 2024 - Dan Gornall/WWT.



The first 2024 nest, at the base of a floodbank - Dan Gornall/WWT.

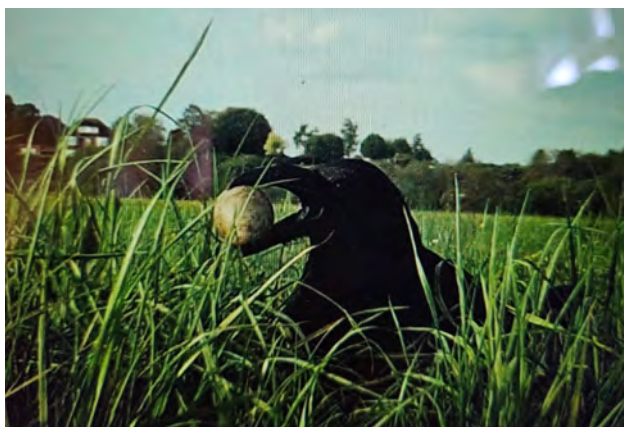
Another surprise was the occurrence of a pair of Curlews on higher ground, some way from the Severn and Avon Vales. This was traditionally a good spot for Curlew, but local farmers confirm that the birds had not nested in that area for ten or fifteen years and suggest that the birds may have returned because of the wet conditions in the vales. No nest has been found there yet, but this is an encouraging sign that the birds may recolonise former sites.

found on 17 April, a relatively late date (though the first in 2023, another wet spring, was not until 26 April). As last year, the wet conditions in the fields caused difficulties not just for farmers, but for nesting Curlews: the first nest was slightly above the level of the meadow, on a floodbank.

Perhaps also as the result of the flooding, the first ever vales Curlew nest in an arable field was found in late April 2024.



Curlew's nest in an arable field, a rare record in the Vales. Photo: Dan Gornall/WWT.



Raven preying a Curlew nest (nest camera).

As of mid-May 27 nests have been found; it is likely that a few more will be found from the estimated group of about 35 pairs in the area. Sometimes the nests have been found with the help of the bird's GPS tag which shows a bird repeatedly returning to the same spot in a field; sometimes by watching the bird from a distance as it returns to its nest; sometimes by noting the point from which the nesting bird flies up. One of the early nests was abandoned, probably because the site was too wet, and a replacement nest was started; so far four have been abandoned, probably because of the wet conditions. Already, nine have been predated; in many cases, a nest camera has been installed and has revealed the culprit: in one case a fox, in another a Raven; while Curlews may be able to fend off a Carrion Crow, they have little or no chance, as shown in previous years, against powerful birds such as Ravens, now nesting across large areas of the vales.

# Latest news from the WWT Severn and Avon Vales Curlew Project - 17th May - cont'd

Electric fences have so far been erected around nine of the nests, and it is planned to fit several more; it takes less than half an hour to install the fence, and the birds return very rapidly once the fence is in place. We are grateful to landowners and farmers for permission to erect fences on their land. But nest fences of course do not provide protection against avian predators such as crows and gulls, evidence so far suggests that fencing nests boosts the chances of hatching. Out of nine nests fenced this year, all are still active, with some due to hatch in the coming week. This year we shall be making a special effort, in consultation with farmers, to gather more information about predation, and about predator management on Curlew territories.

Those of you who have watched the Curlew Country nest camera in previous years will be pleased to know that the camera is again operating this year in Shropshire. For mesmerising footage, just google 'Curlew Country'.

The Curlew Action series of webinars continues; the most recent, on "Curlews and Extinction", was on Thursday 16 May; among the speakers was Dr Geoff Hilton, WWT Director of Conservation Evidence; the whole webinar will be available to view on the Curlew Action website very soon. Future planned webinars are on "Curlews of the world" on 5 June and "Curlews and development" on 12 June. To book a free ticket, just go to the Curlew Action website.

In addition to fieldwork and to public awareness activities, we have been talking to young people: Upton-on-Severn CE Primary school invited us to address their morning assembly about Curlews, and a couple of days later, we accompanied two classes on a visit to nearby Upton Ham (a Site of Special Scientific Interest for its outstanding hay meadow botany) where we didn't find the resident Curlews but picked out lots of Skylarks and spring flowers. Curlew Action has been very active in promoting the new GCSE in Natural History, due to begin in autumn 2026.



Curlew Assembly at Upton-on-Severn CE Primary School - John Dickinson.

# Latest news from the WWT Severn and Avon Vales Curlew Project - 18th June - Mike Smart

Once again, the last few weeks have provided a series of striking events in the world of Severn and Avon Curlews in the interval since the previous circular. The watchwords have been:

- Continuing impact of the weather
- Success in nest-finding, but loss of many nests
- Hatching of the first chicks
- Closer monitoring of Curlew movements thanks to GPS tags and colour rings
- Gatherings of failed breeders before they depart to the coast.

Earlier circulars have emphasized the impact of the unusually heavy flooding in the Severn and Avon Vales which persisted almost uninterrupted from late October 2023 right through the winter until late April 2024. The flooding meant that many of the riverside meadows where Curlews nest were under water when the birds returned from their wintering areas, so that the onset of nesting was delayed. While the flooding receded to some extent in April, May was a wet month (rainfall in Gloucester over 90mm, against an average of 69mm for the month) with constant rain in the first week, and several days of heavy rain at the end of the month, which caused residual floodwater on the riverside meadows to rise, swamping many wader nests, including species such as Avocet and Little Ringed Plover. The impact of the flooding has thus extended beyond the winter months; indeed, comparisons have been

# Latest news from the WWT Severn and Avon Vales Curlew Project - 18th June - cont'd

made to the situation after the infamous July 2007 summer flood, with almost bare ground, sometimes covered by a mat of dead vegetation, and limited grass growth. Some farmers have decided that it is not worth trying to cut hay on such fields and instead are putting animals out to graze early; others are reseeding their fields; there will probably be a shortage of hay next winter. Curlews are obviously affected, some nesting in areas outside the Severn and Avon Vales where nests have not been recorded for years, others trying to hide their nests in the small areas of green vegetation emerging from the mud. On the other hand, it may be that late or no hay cutting will allow a larger number of young Curlews to reach the flying stage; we shall obviously be looking at this issue in the coming weeks.

For a long time, the number of nesting Curlews occurring in the Vales has remained steady at 35-40 occupied territories; some of these are sites with a genuine nesting pair, some are single birds (usually a male) holding a territory in the hope of attracting a partner. The preliminary total for this year is 36 occupied territories, with the situation at some nesting sites as yet uncertain – a bird is holding a territory, but we don't yet know whether it really has a hidden nest, or whether it is just being hopeful. The number of nests found so far stands at 31 (a highly satisfactory figure, comparing well with results from previous years of the project, given that nests may be hidden in long vegetation in large fields and that the nesting birds are very secretive). Some of these nests are replacements for earlier nests that have been flooded or predated, but the preliminary figure for the number of genuinely nesting pairs is 23.



Replacement Curlew nest in a patch of docks in a muddy field. May 2024 - Dan Gornall



First chick of the year - Dan Gornall.

Of the 31 nests found, eight have been abandoned (often because of weather conditions), thirteen have been predated, one has been trampled by cattle & one failed for unknown reasons; of the remaining eight, seven have hatched and one nest is still being incubated. Of the seven that have hatched, the chicks have already been lost in three of these broods. The earliest chick to hatch was on 23 May.

Chicks are independent almost as soon as they emerge from the egg and run around on their own from day two. Their natural instinct is to lie doggo on the ground at the approach of any danger, so that they are very difficult to find in the grass. As soon as possible after hatching therefore, chicks are fitted with small radio tags so that they can be found as they grow; permanent rings are then fitted just before they reach the flying stage.

Fitting of GPS tags on adults earlier in the season has made monitoring of their movements much easier. On one hand GPS tagged birds make nest finding easier by repeatedly returning to the same spot; on the other they may reveal unusual behaviour: if a pair of Curlews lose their nest and then make a replacement nest, the replacement is usually very close to the original nest site; this year one pair of Curlews (both carrying GPS tags) lost their first nest and made their replacement nest several miles away – the first definite proof in the project area of such movements, though it has previously been suspected.

# Latest news from the WWT Severn and Avon Vales Curlew Project - 18th June - cont'd

Colour rings also allow fascinating insights into Curlew movements. For some years WWT has been “head-starting” young Curlews, i.e. raising chicks from eggs retrieved from East Anglian airfields, where they would otherwise have been destroyed to prevent airstrikes. Fifty youngsters were raised and released at Slimbridge in 2019, and five of these birds are nesting this year in the Severn and Avon vales. Young head-started Curlews have also been released by WWT for several years on Dartmoor to reconstitute the drastically reduced breeding population there. This year one of the Dartmoor head-starts (ringed J5 and released in 2022) appeared in the Vales and proceeded to nest at an age of only two. Sadly, its nest was not successful, but its further movements have been traced thanks to its ring, and it has appeared at one of the evening roosts round water bodies, where failed breeders often congregate before departing to estuarine or coastal moulting and wintering sites.



A chick just over a week old, found in long grass thanks to its radio tag - Dan Gornall



Dartmoor headstart J5 near its nest in the Severn and Avon Vales. Photo: Dan Gornall.

Another visitor from outside the area was Black 79, originally colour-ringed at its nesting site in Herefordshire. However, not all breeding birds were born as far off as J5 and Black 79. One bird reared as a chick in 2019, the first year of the SAV project, and ringed 08 was glimpsed briefly in the area in 2021 and suspected in 2022 but was well seen and photographed this year.

In summary a great deal of information has been gathered in this unusually wet year. Many nests have proved unsuccessful (hence our enquiries with farmers about predator management); the next few weeks will show just how many flying young are produced by the 30 or more pairs of Curlews. Watch this space for further information!

WWT has produced a video showing Dan and Andy at work; you can view it at <https://vimeo.com/956593828/c255d1e16c>



A chick born in 2019 back home in the Severn and Avon Vales in 2024. Photo: Dan Gornall.

# News from the internet

## Good news for Eurasian Curlews:

A report in the Darlington and Stockton times recently highlighted the good work being done on the Bolton Abbey Estate in Wensleydale, West Yorkshire. They have had a **record number of an estimated 250 pairs nesting**. Of course the outcomes from those nests are the important statistic, but with record numbers, the chances of getting more young Curlews in the air are increased.

It is not just on the moorland that measures are being taken to increase fledging rates, in the lower meadows and fields effort are being made to prevent mortality of chicks from the agricultural activities such as mowing rolling and harrowing, all activities that kill many unfledged chicks..

[Read full article here.](#)

## Not such good news:

One particular 'colony' of Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* in the Deurze/Anreep agricultural area in the Netherlands is faring less well.

This post by [Bert Dijkstra](#) says that he has at last found the last remaining nest in the region. The tragedy of this is that, in 2008 when Bert started his research, the same region held 14 pairs but over the years this has diminished to this year's single pair.

He wonders if this will be **the last year that the species breeds in the area?** Given that these birds are long-lived, there is still a chance that this pair may survive in the area in year's to come, but the outlook for the species in the locale is bleak.

## Even worse news for the Southern Red-breasted Plovers in New Zealand:

[Department of Conservation](#) Dotterel ranger, Craig Stonyer took this image of a new dotterel chick on Mount Rakeahua on Stewart Island (Rakiura) last breeding season in November. It's pretty poignant considering that DOC's flock count showed **only 25 chicks in total survived, and 41 adults were killed**.

The Southern NZ Dotterel is one of the closest birds on the planet to extinction. There is estimated to be just 101 individual birds as of April 2024—representing a 19% decline since 2023.

How can you help?

<https://nznaturefund.org/.../southern-dotterel-tuturiwhatu/>

## Important news from the EAAFP:

Big news for bird habitat conservation in Australia!

Minister for the Environment and Water announced \$17M (AUD) for EAAF016 (The Coorong, Lake Alexandrina & Lake Albert) habitat restoration!

A Flyway Network Site and Ramsar Site, this internationally recognized wetland is vital for endangered species like the Vulnerable Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*.

For details on how the funding can benefit birds and local community,

visit: <https://buff.ly/3w6kxMo>

[EAAFP post here.](#)



Eurasian Curlew chick - Elis Simpson



Eurasian Oystercatcher - Bert Dijkstra



Southern Red-breasted Plover - Craig Stonyer



© Chris Purnell

**Piping Plover  
named city bird  
of Waukegan,  
Illinois, USA.**



**A wader website  
worth visiting:**

[Shorebirds Peninsular Malaysia Project](#)



# The Cabo Frio shorebird project

## - Marcio Gonçalves

The Cabo Frio Shorebird Project (Projeto Aves Limícolas Cabo Frio) emerged in May 2023, shortly after a news broadcast on a local TV channel reported on the construction of, yet another, huge housing development (high-end condominium with access to the sea) in a deactivated saline area which was abandoned a few decades ago by the private sector. However, following demonstrations by environmentalists and the opinion of the Public Prosecutor's Office, the works have so far been halted by the authorities.



Deactivated Saline pools showing encroaching developments - Marcio Gonçalves.

The flora that was established at the site is restinga and mangrove, two ecosystems associated with the Atlantic Forest biome with small shrubs and their twisted branches serving as shelter for countless passerines and insects. It also features trees with their roots adapted to the rise and fall of the tide, with a rich fauna of crustaceans, small fish and aquatic insects in the tanks that were abandoned by the old salt company.

Here, flocks of coastal birds, including resident and migratory waders and several other species were observed, found the necessary peace to meet their daily nutrient needs, using them as dormitories and maintaining the essential ecological balance as predators of aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates. However, before the embargo enacted by the authorities, machines and workers were hired to block some water channels and deforest much of the flora, impacting the location and causing damage to the entire natural cycle.



Deactivated Saline pool in Cabo Frio – RJ.

Unfortunately, this is just an example of what could happen to the majority of salt mines that are deactivated, as they run a serious risk of becoming real estate developments here in Cabo Frio and in other cities that are located around the entire Araruama Lagoon. This precious aquatic ecosystem is considered the largest permanent hypersaline lagoon in the world.

I have a degree in Biological Sciences and I work as a teacher in basic education in public schools in the region. By choice and passion, I have been observing birds since 2008. After the previous report, the need for residents to “know how to conserve” (public awareness) about aquatic environments and consequently on the shorebirds that use them on their annual migration journey to the city's sites, as a resting area and to replenish their energy.



Plastics on the edge of Araruama Lagoon, Cabo Frio - Marcio Gonçalves.

# The Cabo Frio Shorebird Project - cont'd

Among the 47 species of shorebirds that migrate or reside in Brazil, 27 species have already been observed here using the deactivated salt pans, sandy ridges on the beaches and Araruama Lagoon as well as the rocky shores within the municipality.



Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*, White-rumped Sandpipers *Calidris fuscicollis*, Short-billed Dowitchers *Limnodromus griseus*, Hudsonian Whimbrels *Numenius hudsonicus*, Pectoral Sandpipers *Calidris melanoleucos* and Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*; Araruama Lagoon - Marcio Gonçalves.



Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*, Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*, Lesser Yellowlegs, Hudsonian Whimbrel, Pectoral Sandpiper and White-backed Stilt *Himantopus melanurus*; Araruama Lagoon - Marcio Gonçalves.

Cabo Frio was also cited by the PAN (National Action Plan for the Conservation of Shorebirds) which aims to promote the conservation and sustainable management of shorebird species in Brazil. In this plan, Cabo Frio is cited as a priority area for waterbirds and their habitats through actions such as monitoring populations, conservation of their sites and environmental education. And so the Cabo Frio Shorebird Project was born, with the aim of promoting environmental education actions, supporting public policies that meet local needs.



Lesser Yellowlegs and Hudsonian Godwit *Limosa heamastica* Araruama Lagoon Cabo Frio - Marcio Gonçalves.

# The Cabo Frio shorebird project - cont'd

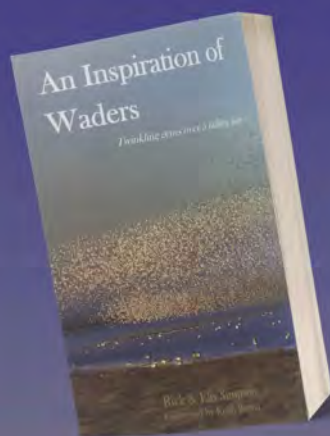


Marcio Gonçalves with students and school community members at a field trip to Siqueira beach, Cabo Frio - Sara Brito



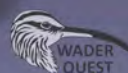
Birdwatching in an area of restinga with Araruama Lagoon in the background - Marcio Gonçalves.

## An Inspiration of Waders



*Twinkling gems over a falling tide*

The foreword is by Keith Betton



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

**AVAILABLE THROUGH THE WADER QUEST SHOP - £8.50 plus p&p**

# Colour-ringed waders on Rathlin Island

- Hazel Watson & Ric Else

It's fair to say Rathlin is not really a wader hotspot – the island has a rocky shoreline that generally only holds a small handful of waders at any particular time. But what we do notice is a constant turnover of birds using the island as a quick pitstop before adventuring on elsewhere. We patrol the shores of Church Bay most mornings, and we find each day delivers something new. During the peak wader passage times in spring and autumn, we compulsively check the beaches and other potential habitat as often as possible, knowing from experience that things can drop in at any time and seldom stay very long. This borderline obsessive behaviour has helped us to see 27 wader species here since 2017, including a Stilt Sandpiper (just the third record for Northern Ireland) and three separate American Golden Plovers.

The turnover is obvious to us from the change in numbers of each species present every morning, but just occasionally we see ringed individuals that provide us with some hard data on their movements. This spring we were lucky enough to have two colour-ringed waders visiting us, both of which had an interesting story to share about their travels.

In April we had been eagerly anticipating an influx of waders, as a timely storm in the preceding weeks had dumped a great pile of seaweed, now conveniently reaching maximum smelliness and invertebrate-richness at just the perfect moment to draw a wee crowd of hungry migrating waders. From mid-month we were excited to see dozens of Ruddy Turnstones and Dunlins fossicking in the oozing heaps – with our counts peaking at just over 200 waders in total this was a big event for us!

Among the small numbers that visit Rathlin, finding a ringed bird is a very rare thrill indeed, and on 1st May we were excited to spot a Ruddy Turnstone bearing a unique combo of coloured rings. A quick browse online of the ringing schemes suggested this bird had been ringed in Galicia in northern Spain, so we fired off an email to Antonio Fernández Cordeiro, Ringing Group ANDURIÑA Coordinator, to report our sighting. Antonio immediately got back to us, confirming our suspicions about the origins of our visitor – it had been ringed in spring 2022 near Pontevedra. But Antonio also had further exciting revelations for us. He very kindly shared a detailed record of repeated sightings of this bird between August and April each year, showing how incredibly site faithful it was to its Galician wintering site. Our sighting on Rathlin was the first time it had been sighted anywhere else. But even more amazing than that, our Ruddy friend had actually been seen in Galicia only four days before we saw it on Rathlin! In a straight line that is a distance of over 1,400km, and however you calculate the bird's potential journey, it takes some impressive travelling to reach us in that short time. We saw it again that evening, but by the following morning it had disappeared, presumably already winging its way further north towards the Arctic Circle. Antonio's data suggests he will expect to see it back on the same beach near Pontevedra in August, assuming all goes well. Will we see it stopping to feed on Rathlin again? Time will tell!

In the following days, the wader turnover continued, and just over a week later, we were treated to another ringed bird dropping in. This time it was a Dunlin, and one that was so remarkably fat that the lardy bulges of its enormous belly made it difficult to read the code on its tibia ring as it waddled around on the rotting seaweed. The coded yellow ring looked similar to that of another ringed Dunlin we had seen on Rathlin back in May 2019 (our only previous sighting of a ringed Dunlin here). That bird had been ringed as a juvenile in Ynyslas National Nature Reserve (over 300km away, in Wales) in 2018, and we quickly confirmed via the Mid-Wales Ringing Group's online reporting app that this new bird had also been ringed at the same site and in the same year. We are grateful to Tony Cross for the additional information that ours is the only re-sighting of this bird so far. It is curious that these ringed Dunlins occasionally drop in to Rathlin, while otherwise staying under the radar.

We may gripe about not seeing many waders on Rathlin, but probably the fact that we only get small numbers means that we can scrutinise them all extra carefully and makes it easier to spot ringed individuals, than if we had the luxury of an expansive mud flat swarming with large flocks. It also means that we appreciate every wader that finds its way here, and we really notice migration in action, which makes the island's modest wader passage one of our highlights of every year.



Colour-ringed Turnstone - Hazel Watson and Ric Else



Dunlin 57N - Hazel Watson and Ric Else

# Who's who in wader nomenclature, fame and obscurity; Bonaparte and Frazar – Rick Simpson

**Fame:** Charles Lucien Jules Laurent Bonaparte, 2nd Prince of Canino and Musignano (1803-1857) French statesman and ornithologist.

Yes, he is! I always get asked when I mention Bonaparte if he is related to Napoleon, well, Charles is Napoleon's nephew. Born in Paris, France, he was brought up in Italy; he travelled a lot and spent a great deal of time in America where he became a member of the Academy of Natural Sciences his main interest being ornithology. He was particularly known for his work in systematics and Seebohm described him as a 'great genus-splitter' after his penchant for creating many new genera, most of which are no longer used. He was though, not without influence, as this comment also from Seebohm indicates; 'The synonymy of the genus *Vanellus* cannot be regarded as a credit to ornithologists, who seem to have shared the superstitious Bonaparte-worship of the day. It is almost a waste of paper to reprint such useless synonyms, but a line has to be drawn somewhere.'

But why did Seebohm take such a dim view of Bonaparte's nomenclature?

Here are some of his genera that did not stand the test of time; *Catoptophorus* for the Willet now *Tringa semipalmata*; *Heteropodia* a synonym of *Calidris*; *Chettusia* for Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius*; *Leucopolius* for Kentish Plover, now *Charadrius alexandrinus*. He did name two genera still in use among the waders *Prosobonia* for the Polynesian sandpipers of which only *P. parvirostris* is extant, and Pied Plover *Hoploxypterus cayanus*.

His credits for waders taxonomy still recognised today went much further than genera.

## Super family:

Recurvirostroidea 1831

## Families:

Chionidae 1832 Sheathbills

Haematopodidae 1838 Oystercatchers

Recurvirostridae 1854 Avocets and Stilts

Ibidorhynchidae 1856 Ibisbill

Pedionomidae 1856 Plains Wanderer

## Subfamilies:

Phalaropodinae 1831 Phalaropes

Vanellinae 1845 Lapwings

## Genera:

Prosobonia 1850 Polynesian Sandpipers

Hoploxypterus 1865 Pied Lapwing

## Species: (Protonym and current taxonomy if different)

*Charadrius semipalmatus* 1825 Semipalmated Plover

*Tringa himantopus* 1826 (*Calidris himantopus*) Stilt Sandpiper

*Scolopax stenura* 1830 (*Gallinago stenura*) Pin-tailed Snipe

*Aegialitis melodus* 1838 (*Charadrius melodus*) Piping Plover

*Gallinago nigripennis* 1839 African Snipe

*Gallinago microdactyla* 1839 Madagascan Snipe

(With Jardine) *Xylocota jamesoni* 1855 (*Gallinago jamesoni*)

Andean Snipe

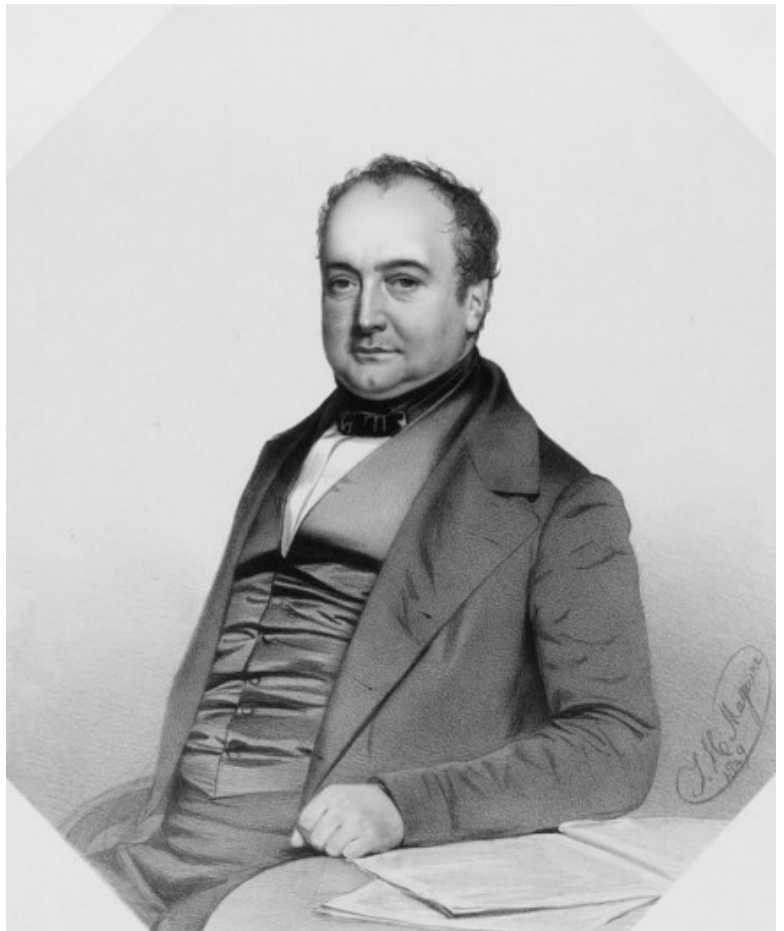
*Haematopus moquini* 1856 African Oystercatcher

## Subspecies:

*Gallinago nigripennis nigripennis* 1839 African Snipe

*Spilura solitaria japonica* 1856 (*Gallinago solitaria japonica*)

Solitary Snipe



Charles Lucien Jules Laurent Bonaparte - J. H. Maguire 1849

Many people will be familiar with the name Bonaparte's Gull *Chroicocephalus philadelphia*, which was named by Ord in 1815. However, fewer people will be familiar with Bonaparte's Sandpiper, at least those in the English speaking world, but this was an old vernacular name given to the White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis*. I say in the English speaking world, as the species is still known as *Gambecchio di Bonaparte* in Italy, *Bonapartes Strandloper* in The Netherlands, *Bonapartesnipe* in Norway and of course *Bécasseau de Bonaparte* in France, among others. Bonaparte also received two honorific scientific names for waders species, unfortunately neither are now in use and both refer to White-rumped Sandpiper.

- *Heteropygia bonapartei* Coues 1861
- *Pelidna bonapartei* Gould 18??

Charles Bonaparte died in 1857 back in Paris where he had been born .

Further reading - [What has Bonaparte got to do with waders?](#)

# Who's who in wader nomenclature, fame and obscurity; Bonaparte and Frazar – cont'd

**Obscurity:** Marston Abbott Frazar (1860–1925)  
American taxidermist and collector.

[Frazar](#) was born in Watertown, Massachusetts, USA. As a child he developed an interest in natural history and became a collector and taxidermist. He collected for both Charles Barney [Cory](#) and later for William [Brewster](#). It was Brewster that honoured Frazar in naming birds. One was as a subspecies of Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*. This he named *Tringa melanoleucus frazari* [sic] but today we consider Greater Yellowlegs to be monotypic so this name is therefore invalid.

However, Frazar's name has lived on to a greater extent due to Brewster naming a 'species' of Oystercatcher after him. This 'species', Frazar's Oystercatcher *Haematopus frazari* was discovered by Frazar on the west coast of Mexico. Frazar's name is probably still remembered as the Honorary English name was used as well as the now invalid scientific name. Just three specimens were collected from Carmen Island to the north of La Paz on the gulf of California. These specimens however probably relate to a hybrid swarm, of American Oystercatcher *Haematopus palliatus* / Black Oystercatcher *H. bachmani*, rather than a valid taxon, although some authorities consider it a subspecies of American Oystercatcher *H. palliatus frazari*.

**Honorary English:**

Frazar's Oystercatcher = Hybrid Black / American Oystercatcher

**Honorary scientific:**

*H. b. frazari* Brewster 1888 = Hybrid Black / American Oystercatcher *Haematopus bachmani* / *H. palliatus*

*T. m. frazari* Brewster 1902 = Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*



The New York Public Library. (1895). Frazar's oyster-catcher by Edwin L. Sheppard 1837 - 1904. Retrieved from [New York Library Digital Collections](#)

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## From the library: North American Shore Birds (1895) - Daniel Giraud Elliot

'Mr. Frazer [sic] obtained three specimens of [Frazar's Oystercatcher] to the northward of La Paz on the Gulf of California, and these comprise the foundation for this species. It is said to be common in the locality and evidently preparing to breed upon the sandy islands and shores of the gulf. It would seem desirable to compare more examples, not only with the common oystercatcher, but especially with the Galapagos bird in order to arrive at an entirely satisfactory decision as to the exact status of this form. The description given... will enable any one who may have specimens from the Gulf of California to ascertain if they agree with those sent to Mr. Brewster. This bird has also been seen on Los Coronados Islands, San Quentin Bay, and Cerros Island; also at Magdalena Bay, where it is common, and on Santa Margarita Island. They mated here in January, were shy, ran rapidly along the beach and took wing, uttering a loud, clear whistle, and after a short flight alighted at the water's edge. They fed upon bivalves.'



# Cover photo; Common Snipe - Elis Simpson



Common Snipe - Elis Simpson

Rick and I are fortunate enough to live sandwiched between the north-east Yorkshire coast and the North York Moors. In a matter of minutes we can be in either habitat, enjoying the sea air and vistas, or the often silent tranquillity of the uplands. One of our ways to relax is to visit the atmospheric moors, they are beautiful at any time of year, in any weather, but, as wader lovers, they are most enticing for us during the spring and early summer when the waders are breeding there, filling the air with sound.

On one of our recent trips we had gone in search of Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* and Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* chicks. We went to an area where we had seen both species previously, in which they appeared to be on territory.

We approached slowly in the car, using it as a hide as we had done many times before, with the windows open, in order that we could also enjoy the sounds of the landscape, so gaining the full experience of the place.

We spotted a bird on a wall not far in front and, as we approached it became obvious that it was a Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*. We often see Curlews on the dry stone walls that typify this habitat, and although we know Snipes use prominent features to keep watch from, this was the first time we had come across this usually a skulking bird, doing so.

We enjoyed our unsullied views of this attractive little wader for some moments before it flew off. The next thing we knew we were being treated to the wonderful display flight of this bird as it flew in large circles, every now and then diving and 'bleating' only to rise again, circle around, and then repeat the whole wonderful spectacle; both a joy to watch and pleasing on the ear, a real sound of the moors in springtime, every bit as evocative as the song of the Curlews, the display calls of the Lapwings or the plaintive whistle of the European Golden Plovers *Pluvialis apricarius*.

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## Common Snipe - Rick Simpson

### Common Snipe

*Gallinago gallinago*

[Linnaeus](#) 1758

IUCN Least Concern

**Scientific name explained:** *Gallinago*: Modern Latin; derived from Latin; *gallina* hen; *ago* resembling ([Brisson](#) 1760).



Common Snipe- Elis Simpson

**Alternative English names;** Air-goat, Double Snipe Eurasian Snipe, Full Snipe, Goat of the Bogs, Guttersnipe, Heather -bleat, Little goat of the air, Little goat of the evening, Little goat of the frost, moor-lamb, Sabine's Snipe, Single Snipe, Snippack, Snite, Snype, Snyte.

# Common Snipe - cont'd

**Non-English names:** (Europe) **Catalan:** *Becadell comú* **Croatian:** *Šljuka Kokošica* **Czech:** *bekasina otavní* **Danish:** *Dobbeltbekkasin, horsgök* **Dutch:** *Watersnip* **Finnish:** *taivaanvuohi* **French:** *Bécassine des marais, chevre-volant* **Gaelic:** *Gabhar-athair* (goat of the air) *Meann-an-athair* (kid of the air) *Gabhar-realhtha* (goat of the frost) *Gabhar-oidhche* (goat of the night) **German:** *Sumpfschnepfe, Bekassine, himmelsgeiss* **Hungarian:** *Sárszalonka* **Icelandic:** *Hrossagaukur* **Italian:** *Beccacino, beccacino reale* **Lithuanian:** *Perkūno oželis* **Norwegian:** *Enkeltbekkasin* **Polish:** *kszyk* **Portuguese:** *Narceja-comum* **Russian:** *Бекас* (Bekas) **Slovak:** *močiarnica mekotavá* **Serbian:** *Barska šljuka* **Spanish:** *Agachadiza común* **Swedish:** *enkelbeckasin* **Ukrainian:** *Баранець звичайний* **Welsh:** *gafr-y-gors* (goat of the marshes) *gafr-wanwin* (goat of the spring) *dafad-y-gors* (sheep of the marshes).

**(Indian Subcontinent):** *Chähā* (Hindi and Punjabi) *Khochā Sorāi, Chähā Sorāi, Chergya* (Assam) *Kärchelekā, Pungā* (Assamese, Nowgong) *Chegga, Kada-Khochā/Kada-Koocha, Khada-Kīchi* (Bengali) *Dao Didap* (Cachar, Assam) *Bandu-Koneya* = mud squatter (Coorg, Karnataka) *Garkhod* (Gujarati) *Chäh* (Kashmiri) *Voh Ti Alin* (Kuki) *Tingtilling* (Ladakhi) *Tibud, Pān Lawa/Pan-Lowa* (Maharashtra) *Dhushin Ilohi* (Maldives) *Cheklaobi, Chet-Phrang* (Manipur) *Ti Inrui* (Naga) *Chuntan Kata* (Malayalam) *Lik Pakhi* (Sindh) *Kaeswauwa/Keswatuwā* (Sri Lanka) *Mor-Ulan/Mor Ullān, Ullān Kūrūvi, Korra Kuthi* (Tamil Nadu) *Muku Puredi* (Telegu).

**(Asia) Chinese:** 扇尾沙锥 Chinese (Traditional): 田鷀 **Japanese** (romaji): *Ta-shigi* Japanese: タシギ **Nepalese:** *Bhārak*

**Collective nouns:** (in flight) a wisp; (on the ground) a walk; (in the bag) a couple - this latter refers to two birds but more than two are expressed in terms of couples; four birds = two couples, seven birds = three and a half couples etc.

**Suborder:** SCOLOPACI Strauch 1978

**Family:** Scolopacidae [Leach](#) 1820

**Subfamily:** Scolopacinae Leach 1820

**Taxonomy:** two subspecies are recognised:

- *Gallinago gallinago gallinago* - widespread across Europe and Asia
- *G. g. faeroensis* - breeds in Iceland, the Faeroe Islands and the islands of north Scotland.

**Synonymy of genus:**

*Scolopax* [Linnaeus](#) 1758

*Capella* [Frenzel](#) 1801

*Ascolopax* [Vigors](#) 1825

*Telmatias* [Brehm](#) 1831

*Pelorychus* Kaup 1829

*Enalius* Kaup 1829

*Nemoricola* [Hodgson](#) 1837

**Protonym:**

*Scolopax Gallinago* Linnaeus 1758

**Synonymy of species :**

*S. caelestis* Frenzel, 1801

*S. sakhalina* [Vieillot](#) 1817

*S. brehmii* Kaup 1147

*S. sabini* Vigors 1825

*Telmatias faeroensis* Brehm 1831

*Gallinago uniclavus* Hodgson 1837

*G. scolopacinus* [Bonaparte](#) 1838

*S. peregrina* [Temminck](#) 1840

*G. vulgaris* Dubois 1858

*G. russata* [Gould](#) 1873

**Systematic / Taxonomic history:**

The Common Snipe was once thought to be an almost global species with many subspecies. However over the years taxonomists have shown that many of these forms are distinct species.



Common Snipe - Elis Simpson



Faeroe Snipe in Iceland - Dave Jackson

# Common Snipe - cont'd

## Conservation status:

The main threats to this species are: habitat loss such as wetland drainage and grassland modifications; oil/petroleum pollution and change of land management and use across parts of Russia threaten some stop over points for migrating birds; lead poisoning due to swallowing lead shot on wetlands; predation on islands by introduced mammals such as hedgehogs; they are also shot for sport in some places including the UK.

## Population:

Birdlife consider Common Snipe to be of Least Concern, as it has a large global population. It is though declining across Europe and in the UK. The UK breeding population is around 67,000 pairs with some 1.1 million birds present in winter.

## Curiosities:

The species was first recorded in the UK in Anglo Saxon times.

According to the British Trust for Ornithology, from ringing recoveries, the oldest Common Snipe recorded is 16 years 19 days, but the average longevity of Common Snipe is just 3 years.

Unusually plumaged individuals of Common Snipe are sometimes met with. There have been numerous records of leucistic snipe that are all, or partially, white or sometimes cream-coloured. The Sabine's Snipe name referred to in the alternative English names is a melanistic form of the species that is predominantly found in Ireland. It was, at one time, thought to be a separate, and rare, species. It was described by Nicholas Aylward [Vigors](#), an Irish zoologist and politician, as *Scolopax sabini* in 1825 and was named after Joseph [Sabine](#), who was a British lawyer and natural historian.

The word sniper comes from C19th soldiers in India referring to a gunman who is skilled enough to shoot a snipe. But interestingly in Morocco, similarly adept marksmen were once often referred to as Rattigans after a particularly adept snipe hunter by that name who visited the country.

Much of what is now Greater London, was, at one time, marshland. There are records of Snipe being shot around Hanover Square in the 1720s, St Martin's-in-the-field in 1815 and in fields around what is now Belgrave Square in 1824. An old town lease of 99 years from Regent's Street in 1820 forbade the residents to shoot Snipe on the property on Sundays.



Leucistic Faeroe Snipe - Örn Óskarsson



Common Snipe 'drumming' - Elis Simpson



Wader Quest Collectable pin badges Number 34



Common Snipe in the snow - Julian Bhalerao

# Waders in poetry; *The Snipe* - John Clare

Lover of swamps  
The quagmire over grown  
With hassock tufts of sedge--where fear encamps  
Around thy home alone

The trembling grass  
Quakes from the human foot  
Nor bears the weight of man to let him pass  
Where thou alone and mute

Sittest at rest  
In safety neath the clump  
Of hugh flag forrest that thy haunts invest  
Or some old sallow stump

Thriving on seams  
That tiney island swell  
Just hilling from the mud and rancid streams  
Suiting thy nature well

For here thy bill  
Suited by wisdom good  
Of rude unseemly length doth delve and drill  
The gelid mass for food

And here mayhap  
When summer suns hath drest  
The moors rude desolate and spongy lap  
May hide thy mystic nest

Mystic indeed  
For isles that ocean make  
Are scarcely more secure for birds to build  
Then this flag hidden lake

Boys thread the woods  
To their remotest shades  
But in these marshy flats these stagnant floods  
Security pervades

From year to year  
Places untrodden lie  
Where man nor boy nor stock hath ventured near  
--Nought gazed on but the sky

And fowl that dread  
The Every breath of man  
Hiding in spots that never knew his tread  
A wild and timid clan

Wigeon and teal  
And wild duck--restless lot  
That from mans dreaded sight will ever steal  
To the most dreary spot

Here tempests howl  
Around each flaggy plot  
Where they who dread mans sight the water fowl  
Hide and are frighted not

Tis power divine  
That heartens them to brave  
The roughest tempest and at ease recline  
On marshes or the wave

Yet instinct knows  
Not safety's bounds--to shun  
The firmer ground where sculking fowler goes  
With searching dogs and gun

By tepid springs  
Scarcely one stride across  
Though brambles from its edge a shelter flings  
Thy safety is at loss

And never chuse  
The little sinky foss  
Streaking the moores whence spa-red waters spews  
From pudges fringed with moss

Free booters there  
Intent to kill and slay  
Startle with cracking guns the trepid air  
And dogs thy haunts betray

From dangers reach  
Here thou art safe to roam  
Far as these washy flag grown marshes stretch  
A still and quiet home

In these thy haunts  
Ive gleaned habitual love  
From the vague world where pride and folly taunts  
I muse and look above

Thy solitudes  
The unbounded heaven esteems  
And here my heart warms into higher moods  
And dignifying dreams

I see the sky  
Smile on the meanest spot  
Giving to all that creep or walk or flye  
A calm and cordial lot

Thine teaches me  
Right feelings to employ  
That in the dreariest places peace will be  
A dweller and a joy



Common Snipe- Rick Simpson

# Wader island; Ilha Comprida, São Paulo, Brazil

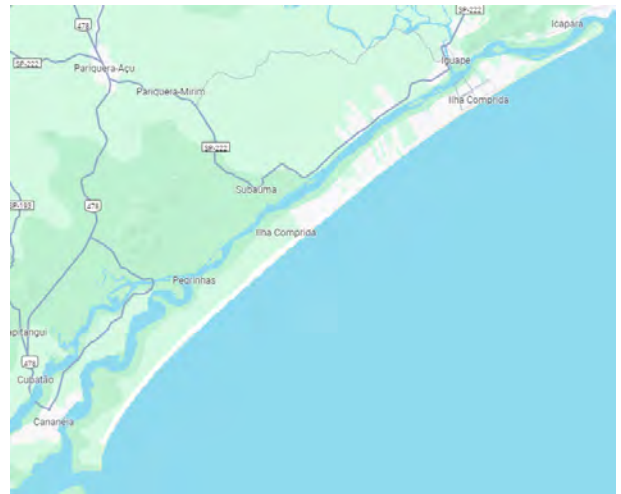
## - Karina Ávila and Bruno Lima

On the southern coast of the State of São Paulo, south-east Brazil, there is an extensive and narrow sandy island very close to the continent, approximately 65km long and 3km wide. Dunes, mangroves, beach shrub vegetation and dense Atlantic Forest form a complex of environments that are increasingly rare in the most populous state in the country.

This location is the municipality of Ilha Comprida (Long Island), considered a RAMSAR Site and an Important Bird Area because it has, among other characteristics, species of congregating shorebirds.

Ilha Comprida hosts a large number of shorebirds every year, such as Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*, Hudsonian Godwit *Limosa haemastica*, Stilt Sandpiper *Calidris himantopus*, Red Knot *Calidris canutus*, Sanderling *Calidris alba*, Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*, Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*, etc.

Ilha Comprida is also an important location for resident shorebirds such as Collared Plover *Charadrius collaris* and American Oystercatcher *Haematopus palliatus*.



Ilha Comprida - Google maps



Ilha Comprida - Karina Ávila

Furthermore, the two Environmental Protection Areas (state and federal) present on the island do not guarantee the conservation of important environments for birds.

To increase the level of protection for waders, Wader Quest Brasil/Projeto Aves Limícolas and the Bird Observers Club of Ilha Comprida came together and created a bill, which decrees that waders become part of the Municipal Natural Heritage of Ilha Comprida.



Grey Plover - Ernani Knupfer

The municipality is the most important breeding site for American Oystercatcher in the State of São Paulo, where the species has already lost so much habitat that the State Government classifies it as Vulnerable.

Wader Quest Brasil/Projeto Aves Limícolas supported by Wader Quest is starting an unprecedented project in the State to monitor this species on Ilha Comprida, by marking birds with rings and flags and encouraging community participation in monitoring ringed individuals, through citizen science.

The importance of Ilha Comprida for waders is equivalent to its degree of threat: real estate speculation and disorderly occupation of the island cause deforestation and the large flow of vehicles on the beach causing birds to be run over and eggs to be crushed.



Collared Plover killed by a car on the beach - Karina Ávila

Once approved, the law reinforces the protection status of waders and their habitats, and declares that the municipal government must hold bird festivals and other activities that highlight birds, culture and local commerce.

The project was accepted by councillor Rogério Revitti, but was processed for a year in the City Council, as the other councillors feared that it could be a problem for the island's development.

In one of the sessions at the City Council, the bill was to be vetoed, but something incredible happened: bird watchers from different corners of the country and also from other countries began to "flood" the City Council chat, requesting approval of the bill and listing the benefits for the municipality.

# Wader island; Ilha Comprida, São Paulo, Brazil - cont'd

Astonished by the popular pressure, the councillors withdrew for a brief meeting, and in the following session the bill was approved.

We know how much we still have to fight for waders to truly find a safe haven on Ilha Comprida, but this law is a big step, and other municipalities in the country will be able to do the same. [Portuguese text here.](#)



Hudsonian Godwit - Elis Simpson



Red Knot - Ernani Knupfer



Juvenile American Oystercatcher - Ernani Knupfer



Collared Plover - Karina Ávila



American Oystercatcher with Cayenne Terns *Thalasseus acuftavidus eurygnathus* - Ernani Knupfer

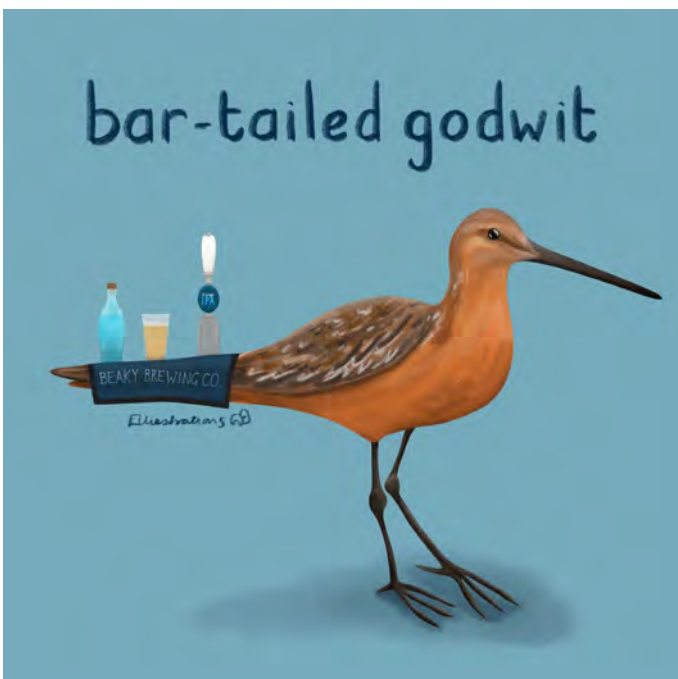
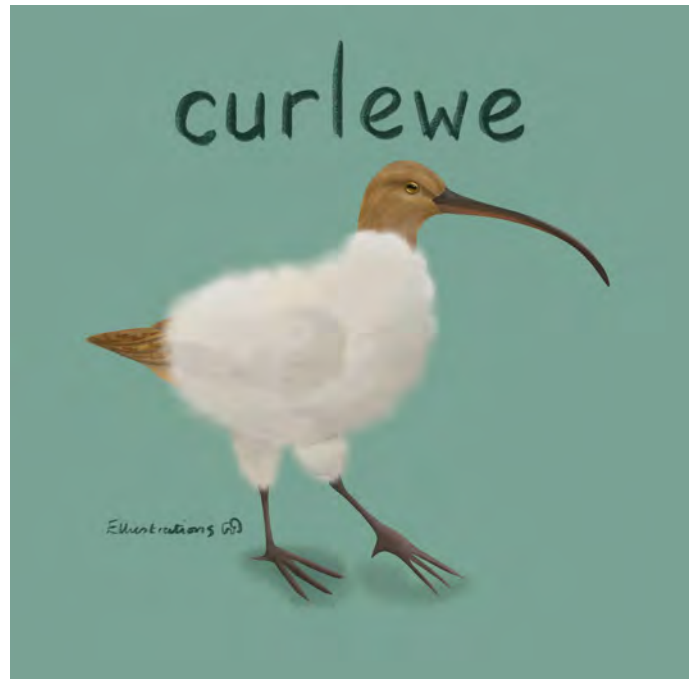
# Waders in art - Ellie Stacey

I started Elliestrations in 2020. At the time my mum was trying to learn her duck species, so as a joke I illustrated a guide to British duck species, all on rubber ducks. She said 'that would look good as a tea towel', and I fell down an online rabbit hole trying to make that happen for her!

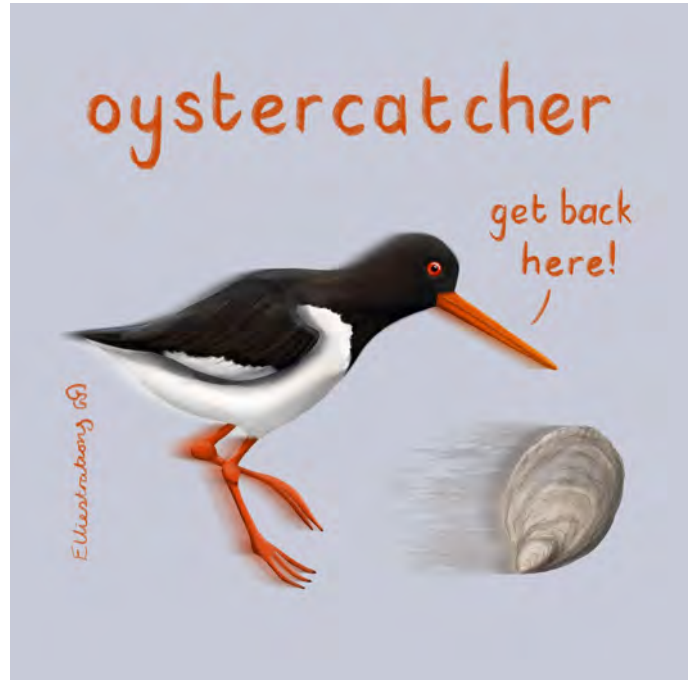
My day job is as an ecologist, so nature is a big inspiration for me. Sometimes it can all feel a bit serious, especially in the bird ID world, so my guides and puns aim to bring fairly accurate portrayals of species to new audiences with a bit of humour.

The puns are absolutely terrible (in fact several were ideas from my dad so are literal 'dad jokes') but I hope they make people smile/grimace.

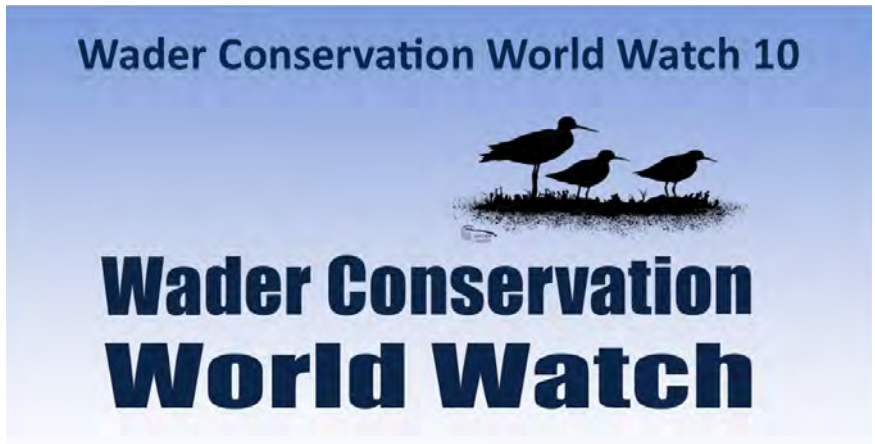
Most of my illustrations are available on various clothing items from my Teemill shop (a print-on-demand clothing company with a strong sustainability focus) - [elliestrations.teemill.com](https://elliestrations.teemill.com). I also sell in the Glasgow Scottish Design Exchange shop. I share my designs on my instagram [@\\_elliestrations](https://www.instagram.com/elliestrations) and on X Formerly Known as Twitter [@enor314](https://twitter.com/enor314).



# Waders in art - cont'd



Don't forget  
**WCWW 11**  
2nd-3rd November  
2024



# Bohai Bay 2024 updates

## - Chris Hassell & Katherine Leung

Update 1: May 12 2024.

Well, that's a nice title to write after 5 years. I am back on the Luannan Coast with our work once again centred on the mudflats of Nanpu. Of course, we have had our colleague Katherine Leung keeping everything going in 2020, 21, and 23. And our excellent drivers and scanners Liu Jianfeng and Liu Yang who managed the work alone in 2022. The field team this year for the scanning is Katherine, The Lius and me. But the Nanpu mudflat and adjacent salt ponds has many visiting and regular Beijing Normal University (BNU) students studying various aspects of its ecology throughout the spring season. Katherine also had assistance from Fion Cheung for a few days at the start of the field work. Fion is from WWF- Hong Kong and they were involved in the set-up of the Luannan Zuidong Nanpu Provincial Wetland Park.



The GFN/BNU visit to Hangu May 6 2024.

A thank you here too to the many and varied supporters who enables the work to continue during those years. This year we are indebted, once again, to Professor Zhang Zhengwang of BNU for the funds to get Katherine and me to Nanpu and to cover our costs while we are here. Katherine and I are volunteering our time. Due to our fascination with the place and the hope for future studies to continue here.

And it goes without saying that we thank Theunis Piersma for still giving his time to Nanpu and the EAAF more widely when he is stretched, pulled, and has requests falling on him constantly. Theunis too, I know, loves Nanpu.

Katherine arrived on the Nanpu seawall on April 29 and I joined on May 6 along with Professor Zhang, Theunis, Zhu Bingrun and Lei Weipan from BNU. We did an extensive exploration of the coast of Hangu the first day. My first few minutes on the receding tide found me counting 1,351 Asian Dowitchers, a very nice introduction.

The following 2 days were visits to the Zuidong and Nanpu seawall, and the new visitor centre of the Wetland Park. Then Theunis and BNU left for Beijing and Theunis back to The Netherlands.

Katherine, Liu Yang and I are now into the routine of early morning scanning on outgoing tides. Alarms going off at 03:30 isn't the greatest but once on the seawall, as the sunrises and the birds come back to the mud from their pond roosts it is magical, and the early morning light helps our work as we scan vigorously for marked birds from throughout the flyway. The seawall is relatively quiet compared to last year. A few trucks rumbling by (of course) as a new platform for an oil derrick is constructed just behind the seawall. Not an ideal time to be building it during peak migration season but once the derricks are built, they are benign and don't disturb the birds at all.

This is just a brief introduction to GFN's 17th year (2007 to 2024 minus 2008) on the Nanpu Seawall. We will give more information on the Red Knots (spoiler – low but not the lowest ever numbers) in the next Update.

Few places on earth stay the same. The images below are within 500 m of each other.



29 04 2011



10 05 2024

# Bohai Bay 2024 updates - cont'd

But sometimes change can be positive with carefully planned intervention. Spartina eradication has been a success. Images below.



28 05 2018



12 05 2024

But the Nanpu mudflats look much the same, until they erected an oil drilling platform and 6 kilometres of trees were planted on both sides of the seawall!



10/05/2024



20/05/2024

## Update 2: May 19 2024

As all our regular readers will know we are here to focus on Red Knots. No bird, carrying a mark, passes our telescopes without being recorded but undoubtedly Red Knots remain our focus.

Three subspecies occur in the EAAF but one of them, *roselaari* only occurs as a breeding bird on the Wrangel Islands. *Roselaari's* main non-breeding area is the Pacific coast of California and Mexico.



Red Knots

# Bohai Bay 2024 updates - cont'd

Its migratory route does not pass through the Yellow Sea so, we don't encounter that subspecies here. The two subspecies that we see are *rogersi* and *piersmai*. *Rogersi* breeds in Chukotka in far north east Russia and predominately spends the non-breeding season in New Zealand and south east Australia. *Piersmai* breeds on the New Siberian Islands, Russia and its main non-breeding area is northern Australia with some birds in South East Asia. Both subspecies can be found in each other's main non-breeding area.

When in full and fresh breeding plumage the two subspecies can be told apart if good views are obtained.

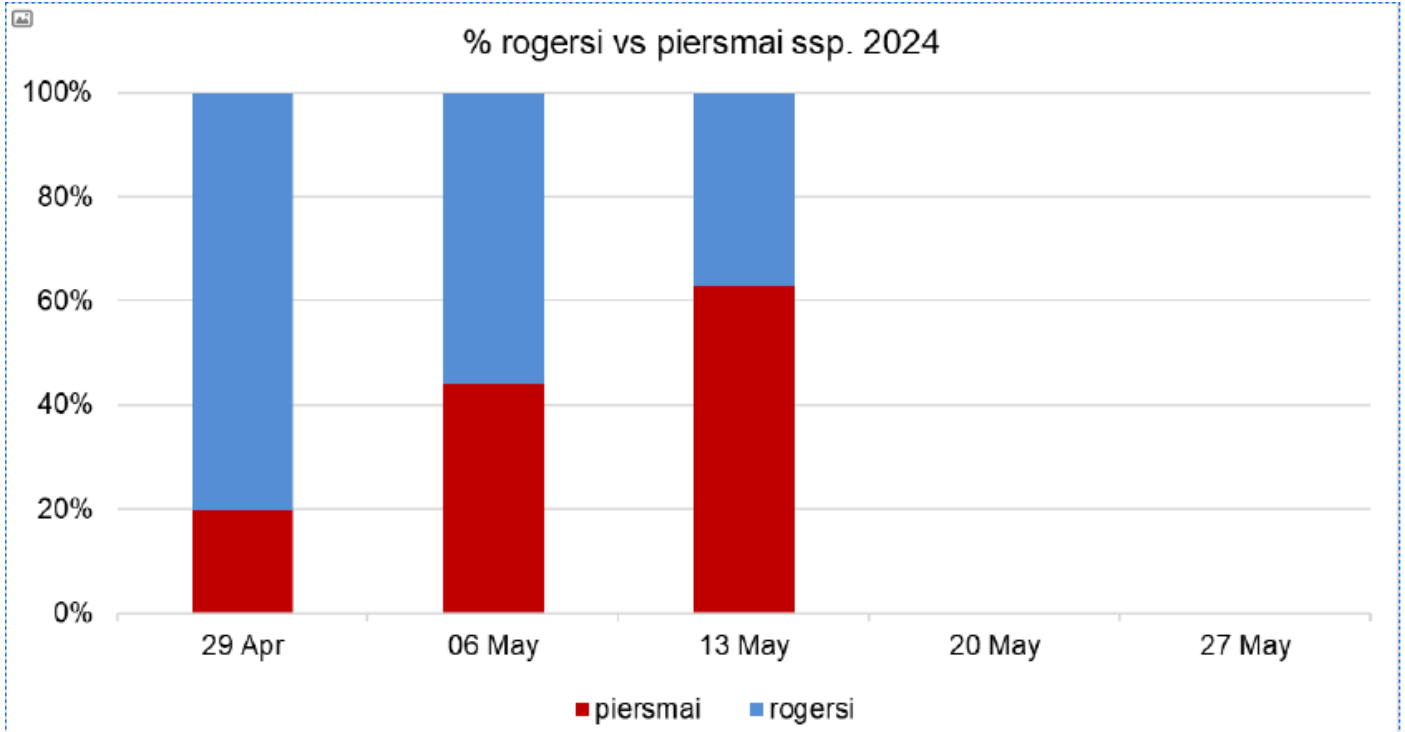


'Typical' *rogersi* - Adrian Boyle



'Typical' *piersmai* - Adrian Boyle

The breeding grounds of *rogersi* are snow-free and available to the birds before those of *piersmai* and this is reflected in their migratory schedules. We conduct daily assessments of the proportions of the two subspecies and this difference in timing is apparent from the simple graph shown below.



The x axis is week beginning.

Counting Red Knot here on the Luannan Coast is tricky (counting is tricky everywhere actually). We don't have the resources to do full counts of the area. So, we do an estimate every day when we are working at the core area of Nanpu. And, when we have time, we do more careful and structured counts. The numbers this year for the same date range as 2023 (the year with the lowest number 2010 - 2023) are considerably higher as shown below. This is still way below the peak numbers we recorded of 48,000 in 2028 and 2019. But the highest since 2020.

## Bohai Bay 2024 updates - cont'd

	2003	2004	Estimate/count
13 May	1150	7000	estimate
14 May	1288	10000	estimate
15 May	1370	10000	estimate
16 May	1400	11830	count
17 May	900	-	no estimate or count
18 May	1800	11000	estimate
19 May	1300	11810	count

All numbers mentioned are point counts or day counts and don't have any statistical work done to them. If turnover analysis was done the total numbers using Nanpu during the full spring migratory season would of course be much higher.

The dramatically lower numbers between the years aren't associated with a corresponding drop in the Red Knot population throughout the EAAF. The Monitoring Yellow Sea Migrants in Australia (MYSMA) count programme that has been running for 20 years shows 'no significant change' in the north west Australia Red Knot population. We think the fluctuating numbers are associated with the local food source here at Nanpu. The Red Knots feed predominately on *Potamocorbula laevis* (pots) and the numbers of this small mollusc fluctuate wildly. This year the density of pots is 'good' and considerably higher than in the previous 4 years (Hebo Peng pers. comm.) This matches with Red Knot counts mentioned above.

Additional data that we collect to help inform this story is abdominal profiles (AP). This is a visual assessment of the fat stores a bird has. We are not catching birds so we can't get their mass from weighing. AP is scored from 1 (very thin) to 5 (very fat). We take the AP score on all individually marked Red Knots if we obtain a suitable view. This year we are seeing more birds at AP 4 and 5 than during the same date range as last year, presumably a direct reflection of the more abundant pots in the mudflats.

The intriguing question to us is, how do the Red Knots know about the numbers, density, and availability of pots here in Nanpu year on year? And how do they 'decide' if there are enough pots for the numbers of birds present to allow them, as an individual, to gain enough weight for successful migration? And then logically they would need to decide to either stay at Nanpu or to move on to ensure the necessary weight gain? Birds are not on 'auto-pilot' driven by instinct alone. They must make decisions throughout the year and some of these are critical to get correct.



Early morning scanners Liu Yang and Chris Hassell

All the figures and graphs in this update will be finalized in the Bohai 2024 final report but are presented here to give you all a feel for the Red Knot situation at present.

# Bohai Bay 2024 updates - cont'd

Update 3: 5 June 2004

And before you know it, it's all over. I am back in Broome; Kath is on her way to Chongming Dao today and the Liu's have jobs and kids/grandkids to keep them busy! So, we have said our goodbyes to the Nanpu seawall and the birds for 2024. We wish them well on the rest of their journey to breed and back to their non-breeding grounds where we hope to encounter them again.



Field work is never perfect. Close! But muddy legs.



Early morning scanners await enough light to scan the birds.

The fieldwork was, as it always is, mixed. We had a terrible run of tides where birds were way out on the mud at first light when we arrived on the seawall. And then the day the birds were reasonably close the light was awful, and the mud looked like a pool of molten silver or mercury. Beautiful. But impossible to read flags or colour bands. We persisted with early morning starts and an afternoon trip to Hangu for very little data for 6 days. So, when finally, the tides and the light turned in our favour we were very pleased. And then we were getting up to 25 GFN colour bands per day on the mud. And when the birds were roosting in late afternoon light, and we could scan in the salt pond roost we got up to 33 with new colour banded individuals still arriving every day. Plus of course all the other flags from throughout the EAAF and CAF that we record.

# Bohai Bay 2024 updates - cont'd

We also had with us for the whole time we were at Nanpu a receiver to try and download data from the Bluetooth tags on Great and Red Knots from the work in Roebuck Bay in October 2023 (see [here](#)). Some of the time we tied the receiver to a permanent sign on the seawall and sometimes carried it with us. Also, Tong Mu and Rainy Cai were scanning with us at Nanpu and at other sites in the Bohai Sea. We didn't pick up any of the Great Knots at Nanpu, but we got a few of the Red Knots.



Kath and Rainy killing two birds with one stone, so to speak!

This seems to be reflected in the results of the subspecies comparisons that we make.

Usually by late May the *piersmai* subspecies dominates. Not so this year. It is difficult to give a definitive reason at short notice but either *rogersi* are leaving late for their breeding grounds or the *piersmai* haven't arrived yet, or perhaps won't arrive, and will go directly to the New Siberian Islands breeding grounds from sites further south. The final report will expand on this, but it is certainly not a 'traditional' season regarding the subspecies timing through Nanpu.

One bird that did arrive complete with colour bands and tag is represented on p37 with a brief history.

The season's final report will appear in the next newsletter and will update you all on the Wetland Park (see picture right), the salt/aquaculture ponds, breeding birds, general bird migration and more details on the fieldwork.

Thanks, as ever, to a range of people who were highlighted at the start of Update 1. And once more particular thanks to Professor Zhang and the Liu family.



The new Wetland Park visitor Centre.

# Bohai Bay 2024 updates - cont'd



Roebuck Bay, Broome,  
NW Aus (17-Oct-23)  
© Katherine Leung



Roebuck Bay, Broome,  
NW Aus (2-Apr-24)  
© Adrian Boyle

## Red Knot 4BYLR

First banded on 20-Feb-2014 as an adult at Roebuck Bay

Resighted 53 times at Roebuck Bay and 80 Mile Beach over the past 10 years

Resightings from Bohai Bay, China (in May):

2014, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023

Retrap and fitted with GPS-tracker on 17-Oct-2023 at Roebuck Bay

Last seen on 7-Apr-2024 at Roebuck Bay

Resight on Nanpu mudflat, Bohai Bay (20-May-24)



© Katherine Leung

## Wader Quest at Global Birdfair

Robin Marquee Stand 15

Talk by Rick Simpson

Wader Questing Down-under;  
searching for waders in Australia

Avocet Stage - Friday 12 July - 12.30pm



# 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.

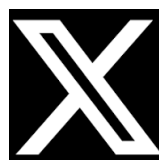
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## How you can help Wader Quest:

### Help us raise awareness

Join [Wader Conservation World Watch](#) 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> 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)

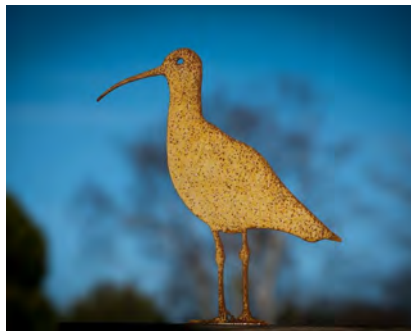
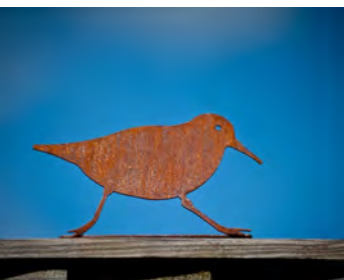
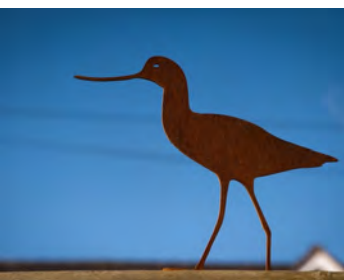
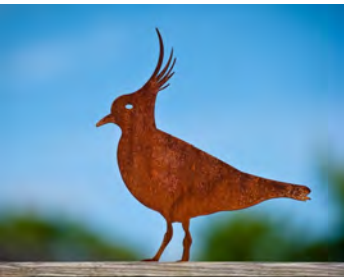
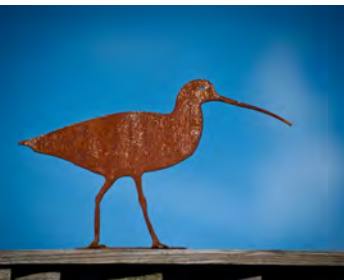
Curlew (small)

Lapwing

Avocet

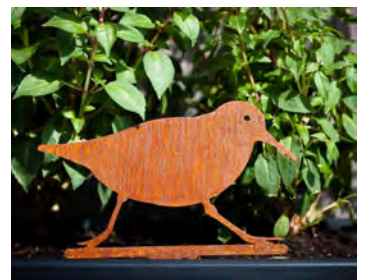
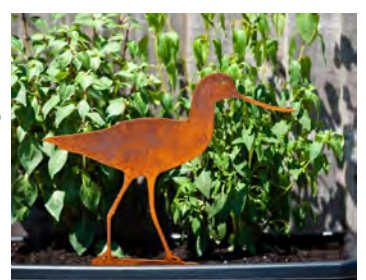
Sanderling

#### Fence toppers



Large Curlew only available as fence topper

#### Lawn/pot ornament



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

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

Watch them turn from shiny to rusty over time.

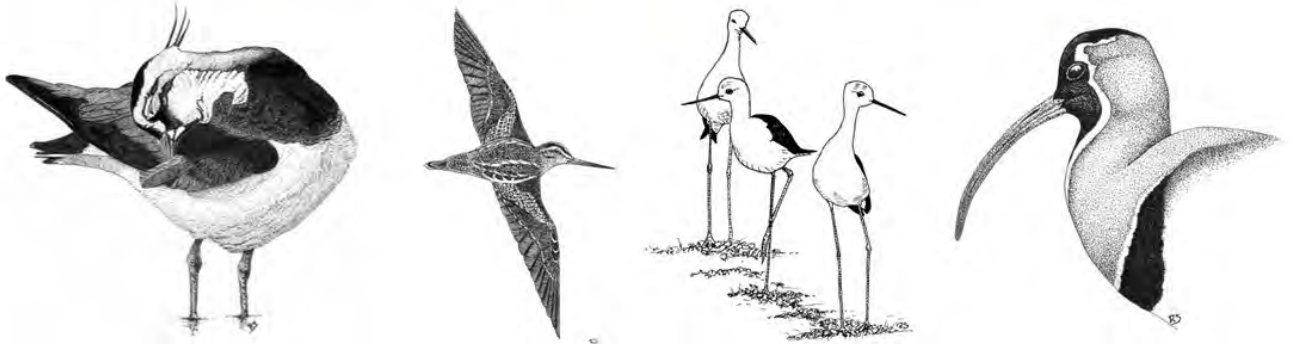


[WWW.RedDragonMetalArt.co.uk](http://www.RedDragonMetalArt.co.uk)

# Wader Quest merchandising

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

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



### Foreword by Dominic Couzens

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

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

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

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

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

- Debbie Pain: Conservationist and scientist.

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

- Rebecca Armstrong: Editor of Birdwatch magazine.

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



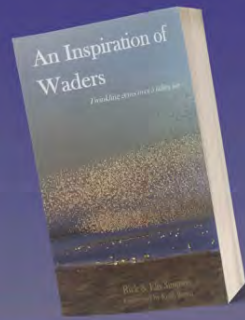
*'Breathtakingly excellent - like a birding Michael Palin. The photographs and drawings are fantastic, and the text is fast-moving and endlessly entertaining and amusing.'* Jim Wright.

**BUY NOW!**

# Wader Quest merchandising

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

## An Inspiration of Waders



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



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



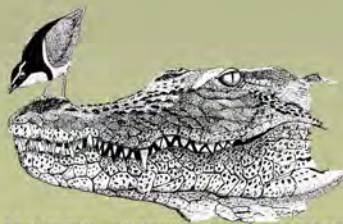
BY RICK AND ELIS SIMPSON



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

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

**£8.50**  
+p&p



WADER QUEST PUBLISHING  
All profits will go to Wader Quest

**BUY NOW!**

# Wader Quest merchandising

## Eury The Spoon-billed Sandpiper

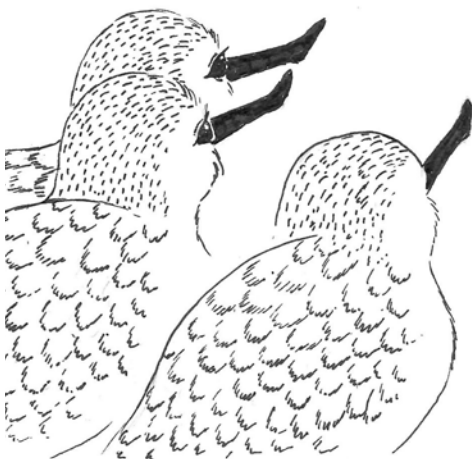
A Wader Quest Publishing book By Rick and Elis Simpson

Children 6 -11 years



**BUY NOW!**

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



# Wader Quest merchandising

## Wader Quest Collectables - Pin Badges

0. Wader Quest logo
1. Diademed Sandpiper-Plover
2. Ruddy Turnstone
3. Hooded Plover
4. Sanderling
5. Egyptian Plover
7. Dunlin
8. Black Stilt
9. Ibisbill
10. Northern Lapwing
11. River Lapwing
12. Common Ringed plover
13. Black-fronted Dotterel
14. Eurasian Curlew
15. Spoon-billed Sandpiper



16. Common Greenshank
17. Cream-coloured Courser
18. Grey Plover
19. Eurasian Dotterel
20. Great Thick-knee
21. Common Sandpiper
22. Crab Plover
23. Two-banded Plover

0-23 DESIGNS STILL



### 2021-23 DESIGNS

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

### ORDERS FOR ALL WADER QUEST MERCHANDISING [sales@waderquest.net](mailto:sales@waderquest.net)



**NEW FOWQ 2023 BADGE**  
Exclusive to 2023 subscribers.



## Wader Quest Collectables - Enamelled



## Earrings

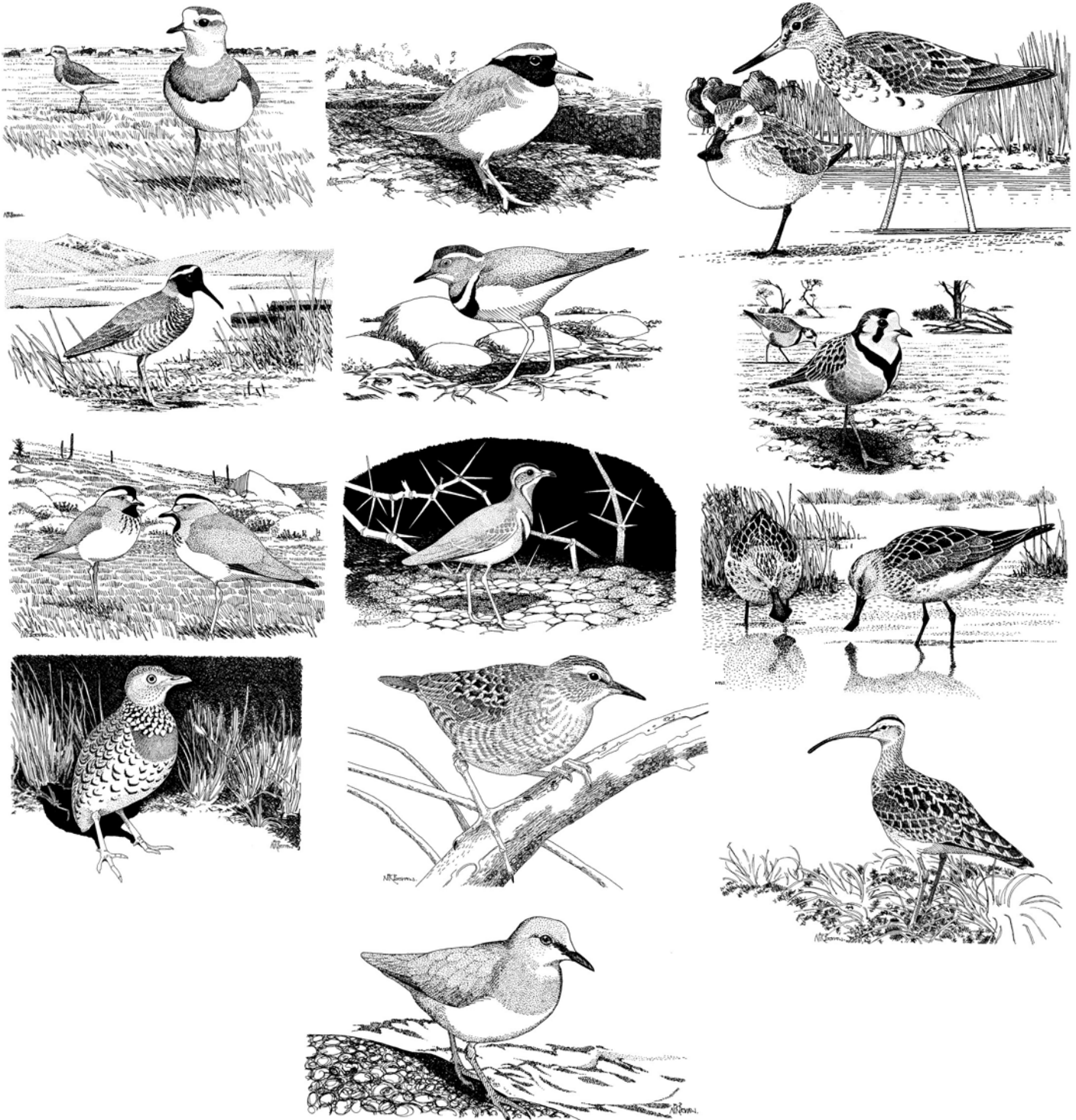
# Wader Quest merchandising

## NIK BORROW DESIGNED WADER GREETING CARDS

100 X 150 MM

PACK OF 12 + 1 FREE £10.00

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



# Wader Quest merchandising

## JULIA PAGE POSTCARDS

100 X 150 MM

£1.00 EACH

+P&P



Pied Avocets over Titchwell RSPB reserve © Julia Page

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



Eurasian Oystercatchers © Julia Page



Common Snipe © Julia Page



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

**Designs by  
Julia Page**

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



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

# Guidelines for applications for Wader Quest grants

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

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

Priority will be given to projects:

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

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

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

**£60,523.44**

## 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  
Wood Snipe  
Fuegian Snipe

## Countries supported

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



White-headed Stilt - Elis Simpson