

WADER RECAPTURE RATES

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After five full seasons of ringing waders in Rhodesia it is now time to sit back and assess what has been learnt of the many species that visit this country. Some species have provided more data than others and it is interesting to look briefly at one aspect - recaptures. Table 1 shows the numbers ringed of the major species handled in the five year period; the total number of recaptures as a percentage of the ringing total. The order of the table follows the final figure. It should be mentioned here that netting takes place throughout the year.

Table 1

Species	No. Ringed	% Recaptures*	% Individuals recaptured
Treble-banded Plover	565	53,1	33,8
Kittlitz Plover	836	65,4	33,4
Blacksmith Plover	215	31,6	24,2
Common Sandpiper	339	23,9	18,6
Painted Snipe	90	18,9	16,7
Little Stint	2 523	17,6	14,9
Ethiopian Snipe	91	15,4	14,3
Wattled Plover	159	12,6	12,6
Marsh Sandpiper	130	13,1	10,0
Wood Sandpiper	837	8,8	7,7
Curlew Sandpiper	180	6,7	5,0
Greenshank	77	3,9	3,9
Ruff	659	3,5	3,2

* Includes local controls

As would be expected indigenous species head the list but it is surprising that there is such a poor retrap rate for such common waders as Wood Sandpiper and Ruff. Nowadays one does not ring purely for the sake of recoveries but for the information one gains at the time of ringing and on subsequent recapture, therefore, it would seem practical to concentrate on these species which one is likely to recapture on one or more occasions as the information collected on these occasions only enhances the original data.

Although not indicated in the above figures colour ringing has enhanced the "recapture" rate for the Blacksmith Plover but not, surprisingly for the commoner Wattled Plover. Here I use the term "recapture" rather loosely and refer to sightings of individually colour-ringed birds either at place of ringing or at sites in the vicinity of Salisbury. In the one year of the colour-ringing survey the "recapture" rate has improved from 31,6% as shown in Table 1, to 35,8%. Unfortunately, although more colour-ringed birds have been seen in the field it has not been always possible to get close enough to determine the exact combination of colours. Too few Greenshank have yet been colour marked to draw conclusions.

For the palaeartic waders it is interesting to note the percentage of individual birds recorded in subsequent seasons (Table 2).

Table 2

Common Sandpiper	6,8%
Marsh Sandpiper	5,4%
Little Stint	4,6%
Wood Sandpiper	2,5%
Ruff	1,2%
Curlew Sandpiper	0,6%
Greenshank	-

The Common and Marsh Sandpiper are much more restricted seasonally, to favoured habitats in the Salisbury area than the other species.

The recapture figures in Rhodesia for palaeartic visitors are likely to vary greatly from those in the extreme south of their range as many, if not all as in the case of the Curlew Sandpiper, are passing through our area. It would be interesting to see comparative figures from other wader enthusiasts.

INTERESTING RECOVERIES

R. 69 Night Heron Nycticorax nycticorax H 2801 (M. Moscu)
23.06.69 Braila, Romania 45 05N, 28 05E
09.02.73 Villa Nova, Mozambique 17 30S, 34 10E

Bird found dead.

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R. 708 Red-backed Shrike Lanius collurio 80 484 186 (Germany)
17.08.74 Darmstadt, Hessen, BRD 50 37N, 08 10E
January 1977 Que Que, Rhodesia 18 55S, 29 49E

Bird found dead.

Recovery originally reported in the "Midlands Observer"
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