

Abundance and phenology of migratory non-breeding shorebirds on exposed sandy beaches of south central Chile

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Aparicio, A. 2006. Abundance and phenology of migratory non-breeding shorebirds on exposed sandy beaches of south central Chile. *Wader Study Group Bull.* 111: 60–63.

Keywords: shorebird, migration, phenology, Chile

Variation in abundance and annual chronology of non-breeding migratory shorebirds on sandy beaches of the south-central Chilean coast was evaluated during a full migratory cycle from Oct. 2000 to Feb. 2002. Ten species were found on five beaches in Valdivia Province (c.39°S): Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*, Sanderling *Calidris alba*, Baird's Sandpiper *C. bairdii*, Surfbird *Aphriza virgata* and Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* were visitors during austral spring and summer, whereas Rufous-chested Dotterel *Charadrius modestus*, Collared Plover *C. collaris*, Two-banded Plover *C. falklandicus*, Blackish Oystercatcher *Haematopus ater* and Magellanic Oystercatcher *H. leucopodus* visited the area during autumn and winter. The low numbers of shorebirds found on the study sites suggest that in south central Chile sandy beaches are not an important stopover habitat. However the complex landscape that exists in the region, consisting of sandy beaches, intertidal beaches and river flats, could support a large number of birds and may be critical resting or feeding areas for some species. Due to the lack of previous data about its avifauna, and the rapid deterioration of some wetlands in the area, this study will be useful as a reference point for future studies with larger spatial and temporal coverage.