



**Notes & News** is compiled by Silke Nebel to whom contributions should be sent.  
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## NEW IWSG PROJECT: SANDERLINGS

At the end of the *Workshop on Sanderlings during winter, migration and reproduction* held at the IWSG conference in Poland in October 2008 reported elsewhere in this issue, it was decided to set up a new IWSG project on Sanderling ecology. Here Jeroen Reneerkens, the project leader, explains the background and aims of the project. All interested in taking part are asked to contact Jeroen at [J.W.H.Reneerkens@rug.nl](mailto:J.W.H.Reneerkens@rug.nl).

### Background

The Sanderling is a common, cosmopolitan shorebird that largely depends on sandy beaches, a habitat not used as much by other waders, and other coastal areas. Despite their visibility, site fidelity and appeal to both professional biologists and amateur birders – not least because of their impressive migratory journeys – much basic ecological knowledge of the species is still lacking. Also, their scattered distribution in countries with few ornithological activities has made reliable monitoring of the species difficult. The fast spring migration is a problem for studies of phenology and migration strategies. The apparent mixing of Sanderlings from different breeding grounds, that cannot be distinguished, in a large non-breeding area between NW Europe and southern

Africa is the main reason why their migration routes are not fully understood. Furthermore, Sanderlings generally do not occur in large numbers in mixed wader roosts in intertidal areas, which is why relatively few Sanderlings are caught and ringed: it demands focused catching aimed at Sanderlings.

### Aims

This project aims to increase the number of colour-ringed Sanderlings and resightings thereof at many locations in Europe, Africa and SW Asia to unravel the complex migratory pathways of Sanderlings of the Greenlandic and Siberian breeding populations that have been shown to mix on the non-breeding grounds. We hope to achieve this by creating an international network of Sanderling enthusiasts that will be stimulated to conduct catches and resightings and counts of Sanderlings in a standardized way. We are convinced that we can learn much more about migration routes, phenology and population dynamics (survival and recruitment) with such a focussed effort. It is our wish to collaborate with the already existing European Sanderling colour-ring projects.

### Duration of the project

At least five years.

### Output

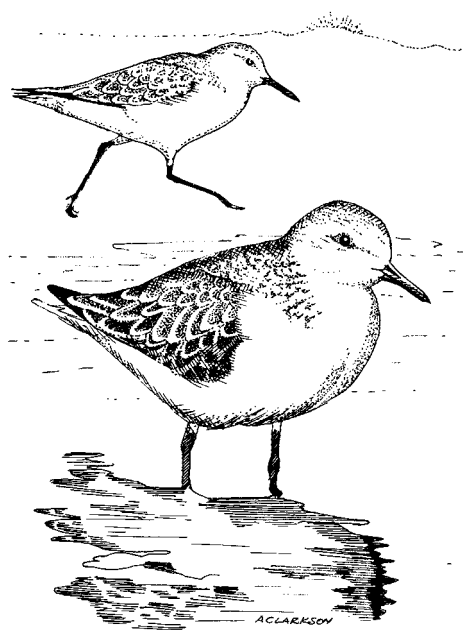
More or less annual reports in the *Wader Study Group Bulletin*. We also aim to produce a nice set of papers, based on the achieved knowledge, in peer-reviewed scientific journals.

### The team

Kirsten Grond, Romke Kleefstra, Brecht de Meulenaer, Martin Poot and Jeroen Reneerkens (project leader).

### The scheme

The colour-ring scheme is an extension of the scheme as already registered with the IWSG Colour Marking Register for Sanderlings ringed in Ghana, Mauritania, the Netherlands, Iceland and Greenland. The scheme consists of two colour-rings on each tarsus and an additional flag (extended colour-ring) that can be above, between or below the rings on the left or right tarsus. We use four clearly visible colours for both rings and flag: red, white, green and yellow. Rings of the same colours can be stacked and look like a single large ring.



## CONSERVATION NEWS

### Canal diverted in India to save Critically Endangered Jerdon's Courser

The 270-mile Teluga Ganga Canal in central Andhra Pradesh will be diverted around the only remaining habitat of the Critically Endangered Jerdon's Courser *Rhinoptilus bitorquatus*. Because of its specialised habitat requirements, Jerdon's Courser is endemic to the Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh and extreme southern Madhya Pradesh, India. Believed to number no more than 50 individuals, the bird was thought to be extinct until its rediscovery in Andhra Pradesh 22 years ago. The rediscovery led the Andhra Pradesh government to establish the Sri Lankamalleswara Wildlife Sanctuary to protect the courser's habitat of scrub forest interspersed with bare ground in the gently rolling, rocky foothills of the Eastern Ghats.

When the proposed route of the canal threatened the sanctuary, conservationists including Bombay Natural History Society and RSPB urged the Supreme Court of India to intervene. The Supreme Court halted the construction work, and now, three years later, a new route has been approved which avoids most of the protected sites. The Andhra Pradesh Irrigation Department has agreed to buy 3,000 acres of scrub forest between the new canal route and the sanctuary. The state's Forest Department will manage that land to protect and enlarge the bird's habitat.

[http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2008/08/jerdons\\_courser.html](http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2008/08/jerdons_courser.html)

### Port expansion planned at Langebaan Lagoon, South Africa

Langebaan Lagoon is the most important wetland for waders in South Africa, regularly accounting for around 10% of South Africa's coastal wader numbers. The lagoon can support more than 37,500 waterbirds during summer. BirdLife South Africa reports that this important Western Cape wetland is now plagued by port expansion, sewerage pollution, urban development and tourism infrastructure development, and may lose its conservation status as an important site for South Africa's breeding coastal birds. The existing iron ore terminal is set to double its capacity for iron ore exports. The planned expansion has been seriously criticized by conservation organisations due to the expected impact on the hydrology, lagoon sediments, birdlife and shoreline of the lagoon.

[http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2008/09/langebaan\\_lagoon.html](http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2008/09/langebaan_lagoon.html)

### Canada makes giant leaps in site protection

The Canadian Government has announced that it will protect more than 450,000 ha of Arctic wilderness in Nunavut province, including a globally significant Important Bird Area, by establishing three new National Wildlife Areas: Ninginganiq (Isabella Bay), Qaqulluit (Cape Searle) and Akpait (Reid Bay). All three sites are located on the north-east side of Baffin Island in Nunavut.

In another recent announcement, the Ontario government pledged to permanently protect 225,000 km<sup>2</sup> of boreal forest in the northern area of the province. Covering more than 20% of Ontario's total land mass, the area to be protected is roughly the same size as the UK. Scientists around the world



Jerdon's Courser (photo: Simon Cook)

have been calling on Canadian governments at all levels to protect the boreal forest, which is under increasing pressure from logging, mining and oil and gas exploration. The vast boreal region in northern Ontario represents 43% of the province's land mass and has been identified as one of the world's most significant and largest intact forest and wetland ecosystems. Boreal forests are also the world's single-largest terrestrial carbon storehouse. The Canadian boreal forest alone stores 186 billion tons of carbon – equivalent to 27 years of the world's carbon dioxide fossil fuel emissions. It also contains the majority of North America's fresh, unfrozen water and provides nesting grounds for billions of migratory songbirds and waterfowl; half of North America's birds are dependent on Canada's boreal forest for their survival.

In May, the Quebec government announced that they will protect more than 18,000 km<sup>2</sup> of forest and wetlands in 23 new conservation areas. Fifteen of these areas are in the boreal zone. The move will bring the province closer to its pledge to protect 8% of its natural spaces from development by the end of 2008. The new conservation areas amount to more than one per cent of Quebec's total area and was the biggest area of land protected in more than 100 years.

[http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2008/09/canadian\\_protection.html](http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2008/09/canadian_protection.html)

### The Japan Wetland Society (JAWS) officially established on 6th September 2008

The inauguration ceremony was held in Tokyo and Prof. Tsujii (President of WI Japan) was selected as the first President of the Society. Among the Board members of the Society are Prof. Masatomi (crane expert), Prof. Isozaki (environmental laws), Prof. Kikuchi (head of the Japanese delegation at Ramsar COP5), Ms Nakamura (Ramsar Center Japan) and Mr Natori (UNU). The Society aims to promote wetland-related researches and conservation and wise use of wetlands.

### Report from the 10th Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention, 28 October–4 November 2008 in Changwon, Republic of Korea

The tenth meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 10) to the



Ramsar Convention was held from 28 October–4 November 2008 in Changwon, Republic of Korea under the theme “Healthy Wetlands Healthy People.” More than 2000 participants representing 158 countries attended, as well as international organization partners of the Ramsar Convention, UN agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. COP 10 adopted 33 resolutions on wetlands, including those focused on climate change; biofuels; extractive industries; poverty eradication; human health and well-being; enhancing biodiversity in rice paddies; and promoting international cooperation on the conservation of waterbird flyways. One of the highlights was the public attention that COP 10 received in the host country, Korea, who also provided excellent facilities and support for the Meeting.

One of the most important pre-Ramsar meetings was the East-Asian Coastal Wetlands Symposium, hosted by the Republic of Korea’s Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs (the Korean ministry now most responsible for the conservation of coastal and intertidal wetlands), and organized by the successful collaboration of e.g. the Getbol (tidal-flat) Forum Korea, BirdLife International and the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat. There were a number of important contributions to this Symposium including the Report on the Saemangeum Shorebird Monitoring Program (SSMP) 2006–2008 (which can be downloaded from [www.birdskorea.org](http://www.birdskorea.org)) and the Monitoring Yellow Sea Migrants in Australia program, jointly presented by AWSG and Birds Korea. This was one of a number of presentations given by the SSMP team during the meeting reporting that the reclamation of Saemangeum had caused substantial decreases in shorebird abundance at Saemangeum; that these had not been compensated for by increases in shorebird numbers in other Korean sites; and that the declines in Saemangeum have coincided closely with a decline in the numbers of migratory shorebirds reaching north-western Australian non-breeding grounds. These findings received a good deal of media attention within and outside of Korea.

Of the 33 resolutions adopted at the Ramsar COP, three are of special note here: Resolution 13 on the *Status of Sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance*; Resolution 21 *Guidance on Responding to the Continued Spread of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1*; and Resolution 22 *Promoting International Cooperation on Waterbird Flyways*. The latter Resolution is particularly relevant to shorebird conservation as it strongly encourages parties and other governments to actively support and participate in relevant international plans and programs for the conservation of shared migratory waterbirds and their habitats. It also urges parties to identify and designate as Ramsar sites all internationally important wetlands for waterbirds on migratory flyways; to enhance their efforts to address the root causes of the continuing decline in waterbird status; it urges the governing bodies of flyway initiatives to share knowledge and expertise on best practices in the development and implementation of flyway-scale waterbird conservation policies and practices. Importantly, conclusions from the East Asian Coastal Wetlands Symposium were included in Resolution 22 as an Annex, adding an important argument for future communication between local communities and government to protect the precious tidal flat resources of the Yellow Sea. The Government of the Republic of Korea responded positively by giving important commitments relating to the future protection of intertidal wetlands.

These commitments were also supported in Resolution 13 where it states:

“(x) that the government of the Republic of Korea continue to provide the Secretary General with updated reports of monitoring concerning the ecological impact, especially in relation to population declines in internationally important migratory waterbird populations, of the Saemangeum land-claim; and advise the Secretariat of any significant change in ecological character in the Wetland Protection Areas and the Ecosystem Landscape Conservation Areas that are wetlands.”

To underscore the importance of the Yellow Sea as a critical region within the East Asian–Australasian Flyway, Wetlands International launched a wonderful book on the Yellow Sea by photographer Jan van de Kam and other authors titled *Invisible Connections*. This book provides a visual celebration of the journey these marvellous birds make along this flyway and the critical need to preserve the tidal flat systems that support them; it can be downloaded for free (60MB) from <http://www.wetlands.org/>. It was an important contribution to the Ramsar Meeting and will be a useful reference for the future.

Progress was made within the context of the Ramsar COP10 for improved recognition of the importance of wetlands, in particular tidal flats, but it also highlighted the extensive work remaining to be done in terms of education and awareness of communities and governments along flyways. While the next Ramsar COP will be in Romania in 2011, another major opportunity to highlight the need for the conservation of the shorebirds and tidal-flats comes with the next Convention on Biological Diversity conference, to be held in Japan in 2010.

*Ken Gosbell and Danny Rogers (AWSG) and  
Nial Moores (Birds Korea)*

## Other Ramsar News

**Kenya** has added two of its five Ramsar sites to the **Montreux Record**, which lists Ramsar sites where changes in ecological character have occurred. **Lake Baringo** (designated in 2002) and **Lake Naivasha** (1995) are being listed because of a number of adverse changes and threats, including habitat degradation by siltation; invasive species; changes in the rivers’ courses and diversion of water; and increased water turbidity and nutrient enrichment.

There are currently 58 Ramsar sites on the Montreux Record. Since the creation of the Record in 1990, 26 sites were successfully removed ([http://www.ramsar.org/key\\_montreux\\_record.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/key_montreux_record.htm)).

**Germany and Austria** registered the **Austrian–Bavarian Wildalm** as a Transboundary Ramsar Site. It comprises the existing Ramsar sites **Bayerische Wildalm and Wildalmfilz** (designated in 2004) in Tyrol, Austria, and **Bayerische Wildalm** (designated 2007) in Bavaria, Germany. The wetland is a remarkable peatland concentration in a karst depression, or polje, with many endangered plant species.

**Germany and France** have jointly designated two new Wetlands of International Importance. The site covers both sides of the upper river Rhine between the two countries, roughly from the Karlsruhe area southward past Strasbourg and Freiburg nearly to Basel, some 170–190 km. The French



Ramsar site, *Rhin supérieur/Oberrhein*, includes 22,413 ha in the Alsace region; the German one, *Oberrhein/Rhin supérieur*, covers 25,117 ha in Baden-Württemberg. Both Ramsar sites are Natura 2000 Special Protection Areas. The site includes 190 km of the eastern bank of the river Rhine, with a variety of different natural and human-made habitats and including at least ten zones of protection for birds. This alluvial area is very important for recharging one of the biggest aquifer in Europe. The site supports an outstanding number of relict, endangered and rare flora and fauna species, of which some cannot be observed anywhere else in Germany. An average of 92,000 migratory birds stop here every year, and 46 fish species are supported. The site is also the last refuge for some sub-Mediterranean species, such as wild bees, dragonflies and butterflies.

**France** has designated eleven new Wetlands of International Importance. In addition to several lagoon systems along the northern and southern coasts, there are two additional lagoons along the beautiful east coast of Corsica. Perhaps most interestingly, there are also several new sites in France's overseas territories, including a coral reef system near Tahiti in French Polynesia, sites on Martinique and in French Guyana, and a 2.2 million ha expanse of the southern Indian Ocean that includes the French sub-Antarctic archipelagos Crozet and Kerguelen and the Amsterdam and Saint-Paul islands. In addition, the new sites include the long-awaited *Impluvium d'Evian*, the plateau across Lake Geneva. The Danone Group, owner of the Evian bottled water company, has generously supported the Ramsar Convention's outreach efforts over the past ten years through the "Evian Initiative" and the "Ecoles de l'Eau" project.

**Colombia** has designated its fifth Wetland of International Importance, a high Andean site (3,300–4,850 m a.s.l.) in the central mountains. *Complejo de Humedales Laguna del Otún* (6,579 ha) is a complex of wetlands located within the Los Nevados National Natural Park in the Central Andes of Colombia. It includes lagoons, swamps, peatlands interconnected or functionally related with one another and influenced by glaciers and páramo vegetation.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina** has designated *Livanjsko Polje (Livno karst field)* (45,868 ha) in Hercegbosanska canton as its third Wetland of International Importance. The new site is the largest karst depression in the Dinaric karst region and perhaps the largest periodically flooded karst field in the world. It comprises seasonally flooded agricultural land and alluvial forest, seasonal marshes and pools, permanent streams, karst springs and sinkholes, and the largest peatland in the Balkans. Together with the Sava wetlands, it is the most important wintering, migration, and breeding site for waterbirds and raptors in the country and a key site along the Central European Flyway. Threats include water extraction for energy production, a planned coal-fired thermolectric plant, and unsustainable peat excavation.

**Portugal** has brought its total number of Wetlands of International Importance to 28 by designating eleven new sites in its mid-Atlantic autonomous region of the Azores Archipelago – volcanic-based wetlands of great beauty and importance. They include caldera lakes, geothermal springs and pools, mountain peatlands, and other wetland types on many of the nine islands of the group, as well as one of its famous reefs. For photos and more site descriptions go to [http://www.ramsar.org/wn/w.n.portugal\\_eleven.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/wn/w.n.portugal_eleven.htm).

**Peru** has designated its 13th Wetland of International Importance with the *Manglares de San Pedro de Vice*

(3,399 ha). This wetland in northern Peru is the last mangrove relict of the southern Pacific coast of South America. The site is part of the coastal wetland corridor for migratory birds, registering 98 species of resident and migratory waterfowl. The mangrove is habitat to many fish species, reptiles, invertebrates and micro fauna, and some mammal species. It is also of great social and economic importance for the inhabitants of the area, undertaking activities such as subsistence fishing and extraction of crustaceans and mollusks. The wetland is currently threatened due to inadequate management and lack of planning. Every year thousands of tourists visit the site, leaving trash behind, which accumulates and creates not only a visual impact but affects the wildlife living in it.

**Italy** has named *Lagustelli di Percile* (256 ha) as its next Wetland of International Importance. This Natura 2000 Special Protection Area and Regional Natural Park in the hills of the province of Roma consists of two closed Apennine lakes and their surroundings. The two basins constitute one of the most interesting areas of karstic origin of central Italy and their circular morphology witnesses their origin as dolines. Cow grazing and tourism are the main threats in the area.

**Chad** has designated the *Plaine de Massenya* (2,526,000 ha) as its sixth Wetland of International Importance, bringing its total area under Ramsar listing to 12,405,068 ha, second only to Canada in total area listed. The site, located in the southwestern regions of the country, is an inland wetland that forms part of the Lake Chad Basin and is characterized by freshwater marshes, rivers, streams and creeks. It plays several roles such as flood control, sediment capture, groundwater renewal, etc. Various endangered species that also attract tourists are present, e.g., the African elephant, leopards, the Nile crocodile, and others. There are 386 species of birds noted in the area, as well as numerous fish species. The most important livelihood activities in the area are fishing, agriculture and livestock keeping. The main threats are deforestation, high concentrations of livestock, bush fires, over-fishing practices, poaching and lack of personnel with technical capabilities to ensure proper management practices. In the surrounding areas the major threat is caused by exploration activities for petroleum. Development projects in the area are being carried out by NGOs, e.g., education of the local communities on sustainable management of their resources, and an inventory is being carried out on sustainable energy sources.

**Australia** has designated the *Paroo River Wetlands* (138,304 ha), part of a National Park in New South Wales, as its 65th Ramsar site. The Paroo is the last remaining free-flowing river in the Murray-Darling Basin, and the site features such wetland types as large overflow lakes, tree-lined creeks and waterholes and lignum and canegrass swamps. The site is one of the most important wetland systems for waterbirds in eastern Australia and supports a number of threatened plant and animal species as well as significant native fish communities. The area is highly significant for local Aboriginal people in terms of archaeological, traditional and contemporary social values.

**Uzbekistan** has added the *Aydar Arnasay Lakes System* (527,100 ha) to the Ramsar List. This ornithological protected area is the largest reservoir of Uzbekistan, consisting of freshwater lakes situated in the middle stream of the Syrdarya River and on the irrigated massif of Golodnaya steppe and Kyzylum desert. The site is located at the crossroads of the Afro-Eurasian and Central Asian flyways and a centre for migrating and wintering waterbirds, with more than 100 species noted. It provides habitat to threatened species like



White-headed Duck, Sociable Lapwing, Dalmatian Pelican, Red-breasted Goose, Lesser White-fronted Goose, and Pallas Sea-eagle and provides an important source of food and a spawning ground for various species of fish. The main vegetations are reed communities used by local people, saltwort and tamarisk. An action plan for maintaining the stability of ecological conditions, 2008–2015, is in place.

**Japan** has designated four more Wetlands of International Importance.

**Malaysia** has named a natural coastal mangrove and peat swamp forest in Sabah province under the name **Lower Kinabatangan–Segama Wetlands** (78,803 ha) as its latest Ramsar site.

**Nepal** has designated **Mai Pokhari** (90 ha) as a Ramsar site, a permanent freshwater pond that has great religious and cultural value in the Buddhist, Hindu, and Mundhum traditions.

## REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

### Wanted: group photos of past Wader Study Group conferences

We have been collecting information on all Wader Study Group conferences from 1975 onwards. The idea is to make this information available on the WSG website and we are hoping to have a group photograph for each year. If you have a group picture of any past WSG conference that you would be willing to share please send it to Jutta Leyrer at [jleyrer@nioz.nl](mailto:jleyrer@nioz.nl).

## VITAL MATERIAL FOR MAKING COLOUR RINGS AND FLAGS

### Goodbye Darvic – Welcome Salbex!

Over the past two years there has been much concern among the many wader researchers who use colour rings/bands and flags that the only really suitable plastic material, Darvic, has become unavailable because the UK company that made it has ceased business. Just recently a new material called Salbex which appears, for all practical purposes, to be exactly the same as Darvic has become available and can be purchased from the British Trust for Ornithology via <http://blx2.bto.org/btos/ringingSales.html>. Salbex is only available in 0.5 mm thickness and in the following colours: white, black, yellow, orange, red, green and blue. Also available from Porzana Ltd of the UK (contact Kevin Thornton at [porzana@wetlandtrust.org](mailto:porzana@wetlandtrust.org)) is a 1.5 mm thick laminate version called Sandwich Salgrave. This has a variety of colours on the outside and white or black below and is suitable for engraving. It is available with white or yellow on black and also with red or green or blue or black on white.

## CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP ANNOUNCEMENTS

### 7th Conference of the European Ornithologists' Union 2009: 21–26 August 2009, Zurich, Switzerland

The European Ornithologists' Union has been founded as an equal partnership among avian biologists across Europe to provide an international forum for the advancement of

European ornithology in all its aspects. The bi-annual conferences provide ideal platforms to get in contact, exchange ideas and disseminate knowledge. The 7th EOU conference is to be held at the University of Zurich from 21–26 August 2009. It aims at bringing together the full range of researchers in ecology, behaviour, evolution, physiology, morphology, systematics and conservation biology of birds to exchange ideas and to think about future research projects.

Information on the conference location, accommodation, deadlines, registration fees, etc. are available at <http://www.eou2009.ch/>. You may also wish to contact the local organising committee at [info@eu2009.ch](mailto:info@eu2009.ch). Information on the Scientific Programme Committee, the general scientific programme, plenary talks and the submission of symposia and papers are provided at <http://www.ucc.ie/en/eou2009/>. Inquiries about the scientific programme should be addressed to [EOU2009Programme@ucc.ie](mailto:EOU2009Programme@ucc.ie).

## WADERS IN THE MEDIA

### Blow-darted American Oystercatcher makes recovery

Almost every year the Animal Rehabilitation Keep at the University of Texas gets reports of wild birds that have been targeted by people with a blowgun. If the dart does not kill the bird immediately, it may be able to survive for weeks or even months impaled by a dart. Unusually, in 2008 there have been several birds with darts in them in the Port Aransas area near Corpus Christ, Texas, including an American Oystercatcher in October. Four men were convicted for shooting the birds while taking breaks from their work at a local restaurant. The American Oystercatcher was caught alive, rehabilitated and released.

For media coverage, go to <http://www.caller.com/news/2008/nov/03/4th-suspect-in-bird-dart-case-turns-self-in/>.

Tony Amos ([afamos@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:afamos@mail.utexas.edu)),  
University of Texas at Austin



Juvenile American Oystercatcher *Haematopus palliatus* carrying two blow-darts near Port Aransas, Texas, October 2008 (photo: Tony Amos).

