

A LANDMARK WADER PUBLICATION

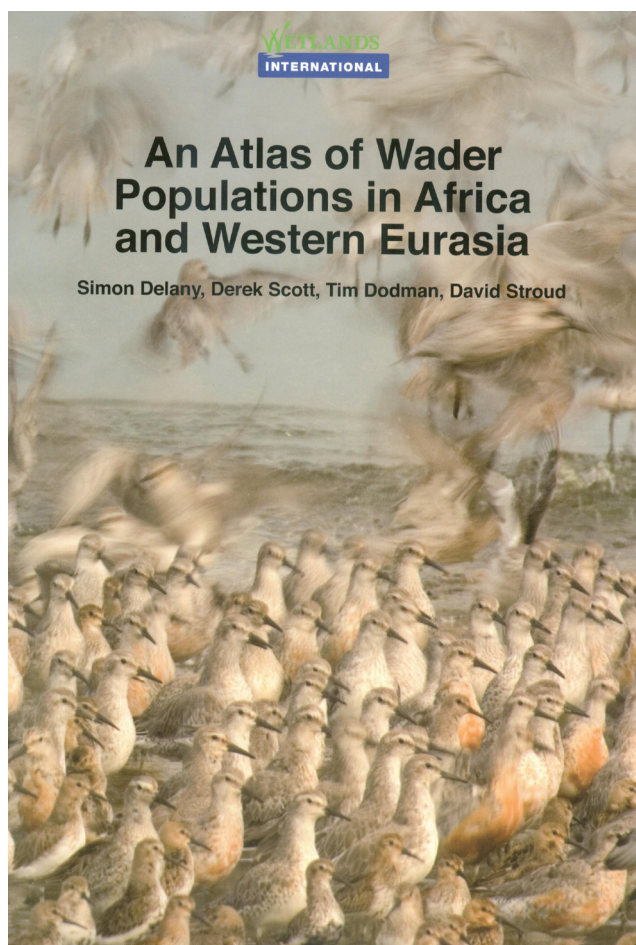
An Atlas of Wader Populations in Africa and Western Eurasia by Wetlands International and the International Wader Study Group, 2009, edited by Simon Delany, Derek Scott, Tim Dodman and David Stroud, published by Wetlands International, Wageningen, the Netherlands; hard cover, 524 pages, numerous full colour photos, distribution maps and tables. ISBN: 78-90-5882-047-1. €75/£70. (Can be purchased online from www.nhbs.com).

Everyone involved in the study of wader populations in Western Eurasia and/or Africa – and that is the majority of the members of the International Wader Study Group – is going to need a copy of this outstanding new book. It will be impossible to live without it!

This new atlas is a compilation of current knowledge on the population size, trend, distribution and movements of the 90 wader species that occur in Africa and Western Eurasia. It is based on data provided by the 15,000 waterbird counters of Europe, Africa and the Middle East and is the product of a huge effort of writing and analysis over ten years: there was a first draft in 1999, a second in 2001, a third in 2004 and a final consultation draft in 2007; 25 people were involved in writing the species texts and 100 more reviewed them.

The core of the *Atlas*, covering nearly 400 pages, is the species accounts which vary in length, mostly from three to ten pages, depending partly on how much is known and partly on the complexity of subspecies and populations. They cover geographical range and distribution, movements, the limits of each subpopulation, conservation status, habitat and ecology and conclude with a discussion of any key sites for the species and the protection status of those sites. Each is illustrated with an attractive photograph of the bird and a multicoloured distribution map. The maps are excellent and have great clarity. They show breeding and wintering areas, migration routes and key sites as well as the areas occupied by different populations and subspecies. The maps alone are worth the cost of the book all by themselves!

Apart from the species accounts, there is a 21-page introductory section which includes: a useful table summarising the population estimates and known trends for each species; maps showing sites for which count data were obtained and key sites for waders; and tables detailing important wader sites in terms of both the number of species occurring in significant numbers and total numbers of waders. At the end, there is a



country-by-country gazetteer of key wader sites which indicates the species for which each site is important.

Though this new *Atlas* is sure to be valued highly by all who study Old World waders, its true value will be in underpinning their conservation. This book is bound to become the key reference, the key database on which all large-scale efforts to conserve the wader populations of Africa and Western Eurasia are founded. The editors, the writers, the reviewers and the 15,000 counters are all to be congratulated on their efforts.

Humphrey Sitters