

# Ageing and Sexing Series\*

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## Part 5: Ageing and sexing the Eurasian Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

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### INTRODUCTION

The criteria presented here have only been established from European specimens. Even if only one species is known, we cannot be sure that these criteria are available for Asian populations.

The Eurasian Woodcock is distributed throughout Eurasia from approximately 35°N to 65°N, except in South Asia, where it can be observed to 10°N, and from the coast of the Eastern Atlantic to that of the Western Pacific, as far as 160°E. In Europe, it breeds mainly in the woodlands of Russia, Fennoscandia and Central Europe. Autumn migration starts in the last ten days of September in Russia but major migratory movements usually occur from mid-October to the end of November. The main wintering grounds of the European population are in W and S Europe (the British Isles, France, and the Iberian Peninsula) and around the perimeter of the Mediterranean (Italy, Greece, Turkey, and North Africa). Spring migration starts at the end of February with a peak in March. The latest birds reach their breeding grounds in mid-May in the east of European Russia. The woodcocks that breed in Central and N Asia winter in India, China and in the northern parts of South East Asia.

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\*This series summarising current knowledge on ageing and sexing waders is co-ordinated by Włodzimierz Meissner (<sup>1</sup>Avian Ecophysiology Unit, <sup>2</sup>Vertebrate Zoology Unit, Department of Vertebrate Ecology & Zoology, University of Gdańsk, Al. Legionów 9, 80-441 Gdańsk, Poland. [w.meissner@univ.gda.pl](mailto:w.meissner@univ.gda.pl)). See *Wader Study Group Bulletin* Vol. 113 p. 28 for the Introduction to the series.