

## NOTES

### CURRENT STAGE AND PERSPECTIVES OF THE PROJECT “TRINGA GLAREOLA 2000”

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Remisiewicz M. 2005. *Current stage and perspectives of the project “Tringa glareola 2000”*. Ring 27, 1: 109-114.

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Paper of the Waterbird Research Group KULING no 107.

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#### INTRODUCTION

The Project “Tringa glareola 2000” has been launched in 1997 by the Waterbird Research Group KULING to focus interest of wader specialists from all over Europe and Africa on migrations of the Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*) through and between these continents. This common migrant has been seemingly well studied, however great majority of the papers described only phenomena of its migration over SW Europe (e.g. Myhrberg 1961, Meissner 1997). Thus, the international research project has been created to learn more about the Wood Sandpiper passage along the remaining migration routes – with particular focus on the SE route and on the wintering grounds. Namely, the aims of the project are to describe migration routes and winter quarters, migration dynamics and phenology, length of stay in stopover sites and migration strategy of the Wood Sandpiper. The progress of the programme was presented in a series of reports, following meetings of project participants (Remisiewicz 1998, 2002). The present paper, which opens the Proceedings of the 4<sup>th</sup> International Workshop on the Project “Tringa glareola 2000” is aimed to sum up the achievements of the programme and to present plans for the project output.

#### CURRENT STAGE OF THE PROJECT

Since the beginning of the project, 38 sites (in 26 countries) of Wood Sandpiper migratory concentrations have been covered with investigations (Fig. 1). For some of these sites data collected in years preceding the project are provided. Within the

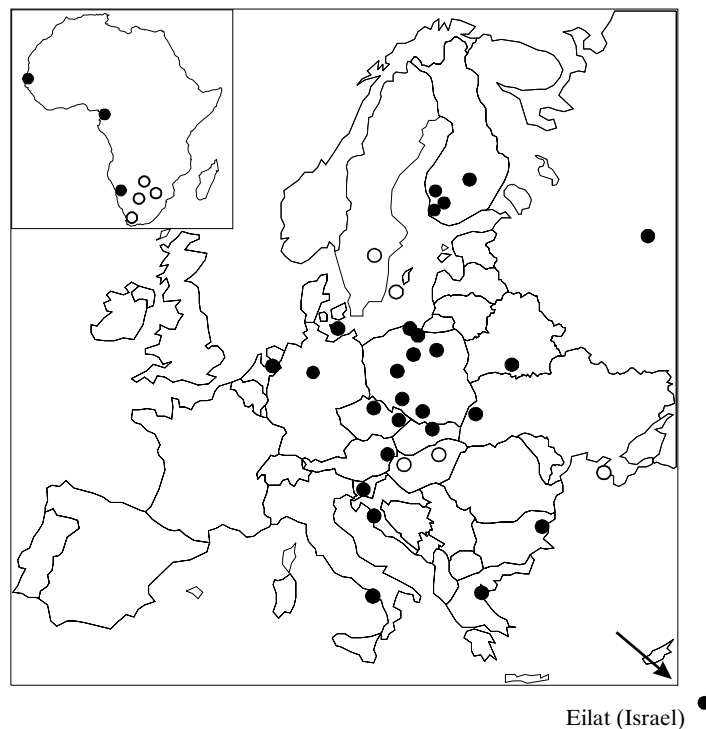


Fig. 1. Sites covered with studies within the project “*Tringa glareola* 2000”. Black circles – sites working in years of the project (1997-2004), open circles – sites for which archive data will be provided.

years of the project and particularly in four recent years, 30 sites have been covered with regular counts or ringing activity. The main methods applied in the project are ringing (including colour-marking) and counts of migrating Wood Sandpipers.

#### **Ringing and colour-marking**

Wood Sandpipers have been ringed at 29 sites in Europe and Africa. Ringing recoveries of birds caught at these stations, as well as those collected by national ringing centres will be assembled to provide basic information about the course of migration routes of the species. These “traditional” ringing recoveries will be supplemented by resightings of colour-marked Wood Sandpipers. Since 1997, ringing stations that take active part in the project, apart from the standard metal ring, have marked birds with combinations of four colour rings (two at each leg, above the tarsal joint). Thanks to flash colours, these rings could be recorded by bird observers using telescopes or even standard binoculars. The colour combinations are not individual, but they allow to identify the site of ringing, year and season and the pentade in which a given bird was marked. In the years of the project, Wood Sandpipers were colour-marked at 14 stations; in 2003 during spring and autumn seasons this method was applied at 9 stations. In spring 2004, which is planned as the last season of colour ringing, Wood Sandpipers have been marked at 4 ringing stations.

During the years of the project colour-marking proved to be an effective method, which can remarkably support analysis of ringing recoveries. Over 2700 Wood Sandpipers colour-ringed during 6 spring and 7 autumn seasons resulted in 27 records (Fig. 2 and 3). This gives the recovery rate of 1%, which is higher than that recorded for standard metal rings (0.5%, Remisiewicz 2002). Most numerous records of colour-ringed birds came from birds marked at ringing sites of the WRG KULING and of the Italian Gruppo Inanellamento Limicoli. In majority, they link Scandinavian breeding grounds with stopover sites located along the SW migration route, leading to the Mediterranean, and – possibly – to Western Africa (Fig. 2 and 3). Most interesting of these records are two recoveries of Wood Sandpipers that travelled between NE Poland and the region of the Bulgarian Sea coast. These recoveries, although few, confirm the assumption that this species uses the South-Eastern migration route. In addition, local records of the colour-marked birds provided additional interesting data on the length of stopover of Wood Sandpipers, in particular in Hohenau-Ringelsdorf, where individual colour codes were used.

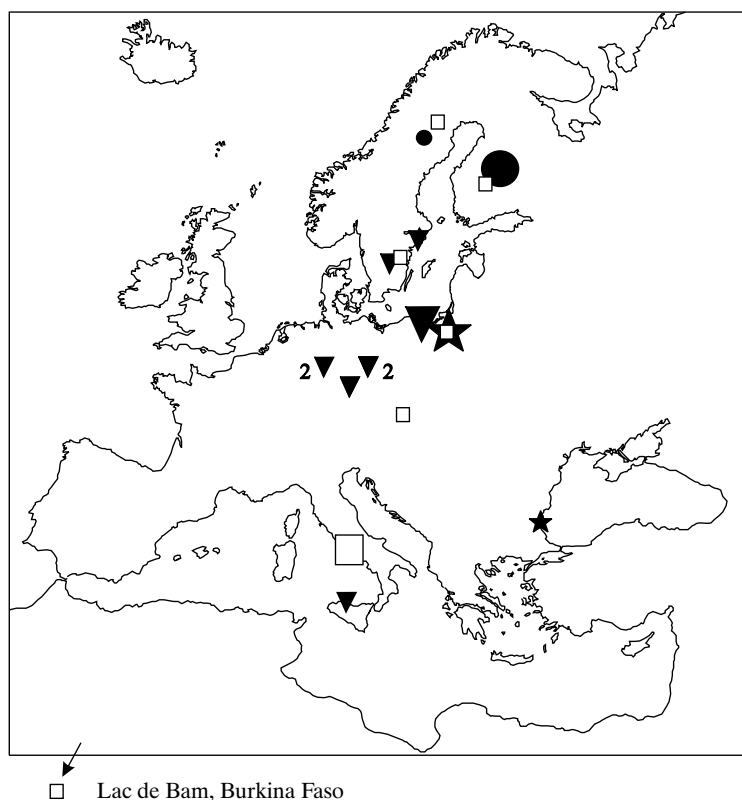


Fig. 2. Long-distance resightings during spring migration of Wood Sandpipers colour-marked within the project "Tringa glareola 2000". Large symbols – ringing stations, smaller corresponding symbols – resightings of birds colour-ringed at these stations; numbers near symbols – the number of records from one site.

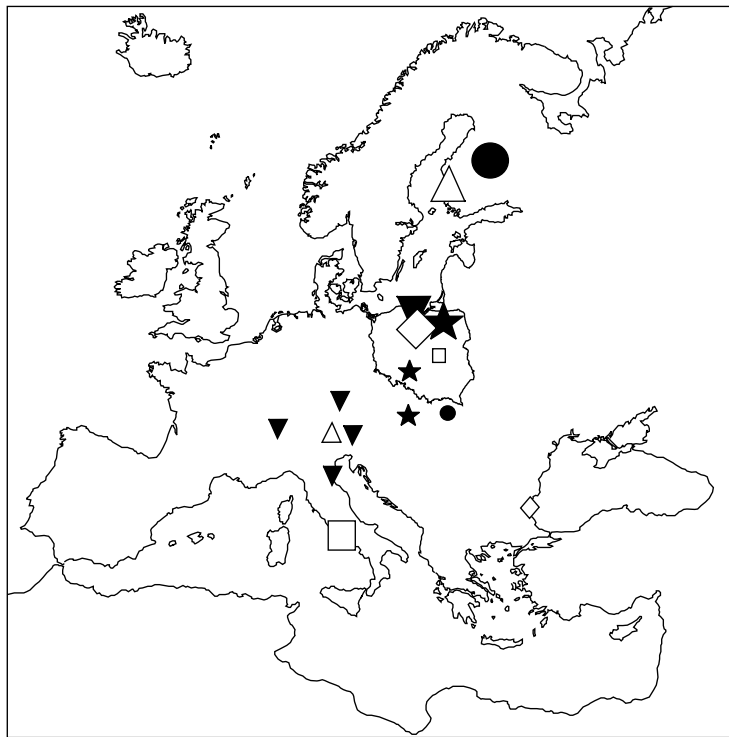


Fig. 3. Long-distance resightings during spring migration of Wood Sandpipers colour-marked within the project “*Tringa glareola* 2000”. Large symbols – ringing stations, smaller corresponding symbols – resightings of birds colour-ringed at these stations.

During ringing, at most sites, biometric measurements were taken from caught birds. The standard set of measurements included: total head length, bill length or nares length, tarsus or tarsus+toe length, wing length and weight. Since 2001, also fat score has been determined at most stations, according to the special scale developed thanks to cooperation of the Italian and Polish teams (Scebba and Moschetti in press). In total, measurements of *ca* 17 000 of Wood Sandpipers caught within the project and in preceding years are available for analyses.

### Counts

At most ringing stations and in several additional sites regular counts of Wood Sandpiper stopover concentrations have been conducted during the years of the project and before it. During spring seasons, the birds have been counted at 11 sites, and during autumn passage – at 19 sites. Comparison of migration dynamics, drawn based on the data collected simultaneously at sites from different regions of Europe, could allow to follow passage of groups of these birds over the continent. However, the counts were conducted with different frequency at different sites – from every day to every ten day controls. This can cause later methodical difficulties during

analyses of these data. In particular, such methodical difficulties can be of importance in the case of spring migration, which is quick and concentrated in time. However, the network of sites covered with similarly frequent counts is wide.

### **Other data**

Material obtained by the described main methods of studies on the Wood Sandpiper will be supported by additional data from irregular controls of stopover sites. For example, such data come from 14 sites in Belarus, which have been controlled 2-3 times during a spring season or from *ca* 20 sites in South Africa, controlled twice per year. In addition, single records of bird numbers from expeditions to the Middle East and Africa are available from the Wader Data Base. These information will be used to identify the core areas for the species on migration.

### **Workshops of the project**

Participants of the project had the opportunity to meet during four Workshops of the Project "Tringa glareola 2000". All of them were organised in Poland by the WRG KULING and provided good opportunities to discuss both methods of the fieldwork and common publications aimed as the output of the project. The present paper and the following series of wader studies presented in this issue of "The Ring" are proceedings of the last of these Workshops, held in January 2004 in Olsztyn (Poland).

### **Project output**

Information of the project has been present at 3 WebSites – German Bird Net, Colour Marking Register, and Kuling home page. Two first sources of information brought a remarkable number of information about observations of colour-marked Wood Sandpipers. In total 16 reports and short notes about the project have been published in ornithological journals in 8 languages. Yearly reports on the progress of the project have been presented since 1998 during Wader Study Group Annual Meetings.

The phase of collecting material will be closed after the spring season 2004. By the end of the first half of 2004, all project participants will provide their data to one common database coordinated by the author of this paper. Then, during 2004 and 2005, the material will be analysed in topic groups. The final aim of the project is to produce a monograph on migrations of the Wood Sandpiper, co-authored by participants of the project. This monograph is going to be issued in 2005 within the series "International Wader Studies" of the Wader Study Group. The topics of the monograph, agreed by the project participants will be: migration routes (based on recoveries and resightings), biometry, energetics and strategies of migration (including moult), migration dynamics, core areas and additional issues (as *e.g.* feeding ecology on migration).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project has been possible only thanks to involvement of many wader enthusiasts from numerous places in Europe and Africa. I am deeply grateful for their enthusiasm and deep engagement in the project, which has made an excellent atmosphere of cooperation. I am indebted to colleagues from the WRG KULING, in particular to Włodek Meissner, for their constant support not only in the fieldwork, but also in the every day running the project. Special thanks go to Małgorzata and Robert Krupa and Lucjan Kleinschmidt for organisation of the 4<sup>th</sup> Workshop of the project. Finally, I am grateful to Prof. Przemysław Busse for his kind offer to publish materials from that meeting in "The Ring".

Funds for the running costs of the project have been provided by the Department of Vertebrate Ecology and Zoology of the University of Gdańsk and WRG KULING. Fieldwork has been possible thanks to own funding of each group running a ringing station or conducting counts. Costs of colour rings have been covered mostly thanks to research grants from the University of Gdańsk, and several stations have been able to find their own funds for that purpose. The four workshops of the project participants have been supported by WRG KULING, Faculty of Biology, Geography and Oceanology of Gdańsk University and by the Faculty of Biology of Warmia and Masuria University in Olsztyn.

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