

Wader ringing at Eilat, Israel

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Located at the junction of three continents, Israel functions as a land bridge for birds migrating south from Eurasia to Africa in autumn and north to their breeding grounds in spring (Safriel 1968). Eilat, located in the Syrio-African Rift Valley along this land bridge and at the northern fringe of the 2000-km Sahara-Arabian desert belt, is an ideal staging area for migratory birds (Shirihai and Christie 1992, Yosef 1995, Shirihai 1996). Dur-

ing the years 1984-2000, the International Birding and Research Center in Eilat (IBRCE) trapped and ringed over 140,000 birds of 131 species. However, the major focus of these studies has been passerines and, to lesser degree, raptors. During most years, waders were ringed only when trapped accidentally. The exceptions were 1990-1992 and 1999-2000 when waders were also targeted. The 1990-1992 project was



WADER STUDY GROUP

Bulletin 96 December 2001

86-87

a result of the encouragement of Dr G. Boere and WIWO. The recent focus on waders was the initiative of the IBRCE.

A total of 7,637 waders of 32 species were trapped and ringed in the 17 years of ringing (Table 1). The majority were ringed during 1990-1992 (2,468; 32%) and 1999-2000 (3,739; 49%). During the latter period, waders were trapped using seven walk-in traps on the Salinas.

The Little Stint *Calidris minuta* was the dominant species ringed with a total of 4,618 (60.5%). This number is considerably greater than the numbers of this species ringed at any other location, worldwide, during 1998 (Ward 2001). Dunlins *C. alpina* were the second most numerous species (1,095; 14.3%). The majority (5,575; 73%) of the waders were ringed during the autumn migration period. To date, only four (0.05%) of the waders ringed at Eilat have been controlled outside Israel; probably because of the lack of wader ringing activity in the tundra regions of Eurasia. A Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* was recovered in western Russia 14 months

after it was ringed in Eilat; a Green Sandpiper *T. ochropus* was recovered in the Ukraine 5 months after it was ringed (Yosef 1997); a Wood Sandpiper *T. glareola* was recovered after 1,534 days in Smolensk, Russia; and a Dunlin ringed in Poland was controlled at Eilat 408 days later (a distance of 3,040 km between the ringing and control locations). The IBRCE continues to focus on waders and plans to broaden the trapping and ringing period during the years to come.

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Table 1. Waders ringed at Eilat, Israel, during 1984-2000.

SPECIES	1984	'85	'86	'87	'88	'89	'90	'91	'92	'93	'94	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	2000	
Kentish Plover <i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>			7			1	9	23	38	1	5		46		1	49	43	223
Caspian Plover <i>Charadrius asiaticus</i>	7	6							7									20
Little Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius dubius</i>	11	4	4				1	2	1				3		1	5	12	44
Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	1		3				8	34	8				11		30	118	84	297
Greater Sandplover <i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>									2							1		3
Eurasian Dotterel <i>Eudromias morinellus</i>		3																3
Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>								1										3
Spur-winged Plover <i>Vanellus spinosus</i>		4						4	2						2	2	1	15
White-tailed Plover <i>Vanellus leucurus</i>		1																1
Northern Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	1																	1
Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>			8			2	163	134	42		4		21		66	395	260	1095
Long-toed Stint <i>Calidris subminuta</i>								1										1
Curlew Sandpiper <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	1						26	19	5	3	2		4		9	8	1	78
Little Stint <i>Calidris minuta</i>	26	11	26			5	196	951	346	134	39		179	2	263	1181	1259	4618
Temminck's Stint <i>Calidris temminckii</i>	6		1			1		5	1				3		1	2	1	21
Broad-billed Sandpiper <i>Limicola falcinellus</i>							5	12	8		2		5		6	5	10	53
Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	13	8				1	6	7	22	2	2		13		26	61	46	207
Jack Snipe <i>Lymnocyrtus minimus</i>	1					1												2
Common Snipe <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	4	2	3		3	9	1	8		3			1		2	3	3	42
Great Snipe <i>Gallinago media</i>	1	1																2
Pintail Snipe <i>Gallinago stenura</i>	1																	1
Eurasian Woodcock <i>Scolopax rusticola</i>										1						1		2
Eurasian Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>										12								0
Whimbrel <i>Numenius phaeopus</i>									1									1
Wood Sandpiper <i>Tringa glareola</i>	6	3	3		1	15	124	98	5	3	3		29		4	19	7	320
Greenshank <i>Tringa nebularia</i>					22	2	2	1	2						1	1	1	32
Green Sandpiper <i>Tringa ochropus</i>	1	5	1			5	13	8	10	6	4		9		9	10	11	92
Marsh Sandpiper <i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>		1	1				7				1		4		5	5	18	42
Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>						30	18	11	12	1			38		57	57	30	254
Common Sandpiper <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	5	4	1			7	5	16	13	14	19		38	1	6	9	18	156
Ruddy Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>															2			2
Red-necked Phalarope <i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>									6									
TOTAL	85	53	58	0	26	49	603	1342	523	179	82	0	404	3	491	1932	1807	7637