

Wader migration strategies in the Australasian- Asian Pacific flyway

C Minton (Wader Studies Group, Australia)

A comprehensive analysis of all recoveries of waders banded in the Australian-East Asian Flyway, together with sightings of colour leg-flagged birds, has been undertaken. The information will be used to outline migration routes and key stopover locations for different species. Weight data collected on migrants prior to departure will also be used to delineate the different migration strategies employed by various species in the flyway. Such data are the foundation for conservation initiatives now being promulgated, including the Australasian-East Asian Flyway Shorebird Reserve Network.

Banded Stilt breeding at Lake Ballard, Western Australia

J Lane (WA Department of Conservation and Land Management, Australia), **G Pearson** (WA Department of Conservation and Land Management, Australia) and **C Minton** (Wader Studies Group, Australia)

Banded Stilts *Cladorhynchus leucocephalus* are endemic to Australia, and unique among the 214 species of wading bird in the world in that they nest colonially, have white downy chicks and raise their young in creches. Breeding is confined to recently-flooded saline lakes of the arid interior. Here, the birds nest in the tens of thousands and feed on a super-abundance of brine shrimps *Parartemia*. Because of the considerable difficulty of finding and gaining access to nesting islets, Banded Stilt breeding has been infrequently observed and little studied. In February 1995, Cyclone Bobby dumped 380mm of rain to the north of Kalgoorlie in four days of continuous downpour. An aerial survey on 12 March revealed a colony of Banded Stilt on an islet in Lake Ballard (60,000ha). During ensuing months, this breeding event was followed by CALM scientific and management staff, Clive Minton of the Australasian Wader Study Group and a film crew from the ABC TV Natural History Unit. Preliminary results of this work will be presented.

Conservation of endemic New Zealand waders

R Pierce (Department of Conservation, New Zealand)

New Zealand has nine species of endemic waders, three of which also exhibit sub-specific variation. Of the nine endemic species, eight are considered threatened. The rarest taxa are the Chatham Island Oystercatcher (*Haematopus chathamensis*), Shore Plover *Thinornis novaeseelandiae*, Black Stilt (*Himantopus novaeseelandiae*), and the southern sub-species of New Zealand Dotterel (*Charadrius obscurus*), each of which numbers fewer than 150 individuals. Management programmes for all species have focused on combinations of habitat restoration, predator control, public awareness, captive breeding and release, translocations and pest contingency planning. Habitat restoration has focused primarily on mainland sites, particularly riverbeds and other wetlands which have become infested with weeds. This is best illustrated by Project River Recovery in the MacKenzie Basin where clearance of willows from riverbeds has resulted in recolonisation and breeding by four endemic species of wader, and other riverbed birds. Some predator control has been undertaken, with varying success, for Black Stilt nest protection, and elsewhere for southern and northern races of the New Zealand Dotterel and Variable Oystercatcher. Public awareness programmes have been successful in increasing the productivity of shorebirds generally, particularly on North Island beaches where many breeding grounds are fenced off from an increasingly beach-going public. Captive breeding programmes for the Black Stilt have resulted recently in the release of up to 30 juveniles (or sub-adults) into the wild each year, with some of these birds being recruited into the Black Stilt population. Shore Plovers have been raised in captivity in recent years, and two experimental releases on to mammal-free islands off the New Zealand mainland have taken place, the first failing because of predation by moreporks (*Ninox novaeseelandiae*) and dispersal of survivors to the mainland. Further releases of captive-reared

my little (Best) - abstract p 57



Western Spinebill *Acanthorhynchus superciliosus* (Wells/CALM)

Southern Hemisphere Ornithological Congress

The ecology, conservation and management
of southern hemisphere birds

**ALBANY, WESTERN AUSTRALIA
OCTOBER 5-9, 1996**

PROGRAM & ABSTRACTS

Hosted by the Royal Australasian
Ornithologists Union

