

Russian-banded bird recaptured in W.A.

A tiny wading bird, banded in Eastern Siberia in June, 1979 by Russian scientists, has been recaptured in Alfred Cove near Perth, Western Australia.

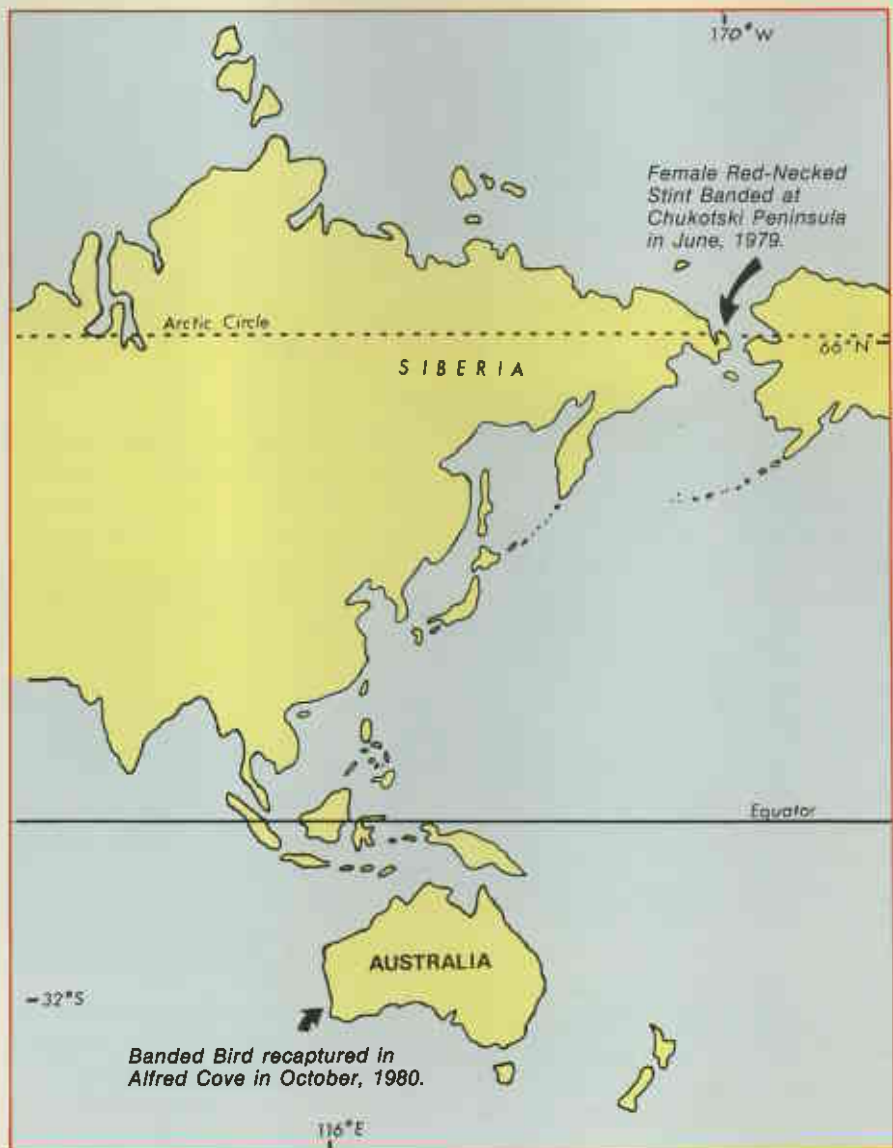
Although the bird, a Red-necked Stint (*Calidris ruficollis*) is commonly found in Western Australia, the species only breeds in Eastern Siberia and parts of Western Alaska—a distance from Perth of more than 12 500 kilometres via South-East Asia and Japan. However, no bird of this species previously ringed in its breeding area had been recaptured in Western Australia before now. In addition, the capture was the first recorded of any wader species being recaptured in W.A. after being ringed overseas.

A research officer with the Western Australian Wildlife Research Centre, Mr Jim Lane, who helped capture the Stint, said it was caught with a cannon-net while he was demonstrating the netting technique to members of the W.A. Wader Study Group. The Group was formed several years ago and is composed solely of amateur ornithologists with a special interest in migrating waders visiting W.A. One of the main activities of the Group is capturing various waders and banding them, noting information such as the time and place of their capture. The birds are then released and, if recaptured at a later date, the bands can provide valuable information as to the bird's travels.

Mr Lane pointed out that the capture of the Russian-banded Stint was also interesting in that it was the first time any waders had been caught with a cannon-net in Western Australia. Previously, the W.A. Wader Study Group had used set mist nets to trap birds, a technique



▲ A Red-necked Stint, one of many which annually visit W.A. from their breeding grounds in Eastern Siberia and Western Alaska. Photo—Copyright A. G. Wells.





◀ An example of the cannon-netting technique being used in the Swan River to capture pelicans.

which requires patience and a degree of luck. A cannon-net, unlike a mist net is not set up and left. It is usually positioned close to where birds congregate and fired over the birds with shotgun cartridges when they are within reach. The technique has been used to trap waders overseas but, until now, it has only been used

in W.A. to capture larger species such as Pelicans.

On the group's first try with the cannon-net, 151 waders were caught of which the banded Red-necked Stint was one.

Enquiries to the U.S.S.R.'s Moscow Ringing Centre for

Wildfowl revealed the bird was one of 267 Red-Necked Stints banded near Uelen on the Chukotski Peninsula between 1978-79 during a three-year study of the birds' breeding biology. The recaptured bird, a female, (ring number S-925.103) was marked at its nest on the peninsula on June 17, 1979. However, at the end of June researchers found her nest destroyed and she wasn't seen again that season nor during the 1980 breeding season.

(The Red-necked Stint (*Calidris ruficollis*) is the smallest member of the Sandpiper family, rarely attaining a length greater than 162 mm and a weight of 28.3 grams. The majority of birds visiting W.A. start arriving in mid-September and leave about April.)