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REPORT OF THE SLENDER-BILLED CURLEW WORKING GROUP TO THE 13TH MEETING OF THE CMS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

submitted by

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Stable Isotopes

RSPB is taking the lead in a new technique aimed at locating the breeding area(s) of the species. Several dozen feather samples from juvenile Slender-billed Curlew museum specimens have been tested for carbon, hydrogen and nitrogen isotope ratios. Feathers of similar waders (e.g., *Numenius arquata*) have been collected in the field in Southern Russia and Northern and Central Kazakhstan and are being analysed. The first preliminary results seem to indicate that most of the birds were born in the steppes of Kazakhstan. More samples are being collected and possibilities for using other isotopes are being investigated.

SbC Database

Since 2002 the Working Group has received 16 records of possible/potential birds from Ukraine (11 records), Greece (2), Uzbekistan (1), Spain (1) and Egypt. All where checked and although they do not meet the criteria for acceptance as "verified" set for the database, the Ukrainian records are extremely interesting and deserve further search. Plans are in place for a survey in Autumn 2006.

Wader Atlas

Data from the Slender-billed Curlew database were used to provide the information used in the upcoming "Atlas of wader populations in Africa and west Eurasia".

Reference Database

The list of relevant literature is regularly updated and currently contains 321 entries.

Genetic Analysis

A bird located in the United Kingdom in the winter 2004-05 raised a lot of attention, since it looked remarkably like a juvenile SbC. Faecal and feather samples were collected and sent for analysis in Sweden. The results indicate that the bird was an odd-looking Eurasian Curlew (*Numenius arquata*).

Satellite Tag

A new solar-powered PTT satellite tag weighting only 12 g is currently available. In May the tag, offered for free by the producer, was fit to a Whimbrel (*N. phaeopus*) in the United Kingdom. The bird successfully migrated back to Iceland and it is currently in Senegal. This remarkable success seems to indicate that the techniques may be used on a SbC for a long range track.