

Slender-billed Curlew: the search intensifies

Given the extreme rarity of the Slender-billed Curlew *Numenius tenuirostris*, a concerted global effort to try to 'rediscover' the species was launched by the Slender-billed Curlew Working Group (SBCWG) in December 2009. This effort is encouraging birdwatchers to visit all known and potential passage, wintering and moulting sites to search for the species. This focus on non-breeding sites is considered to offer greater chances of success compared to efforts to locate a probable handful of birds on a vast area of potential breeding habitat. Additionally, detailed and up to date information on the field identification of the species has been produced to aid observers. Further information on how to assist in this search is available from www.slenderbilledcurlew.net and the following publications:

- Cleeves, T, N Crockford & P Köhler. 2008. Die größte feldornithologische Herausforderung Europas: Die Suche nach dem Dünnschnabelbrachvogel [The Slender-billed Curlew Quest: the greatest European birding challenge]. *Der Falke* 55 (11): 419–428.
- Cleeves, T, N Crockford & P Köhler. 2009. The Slender-billed Curlew quest. *Birdwatch* 199: 43–47. (this and the next publication are available at www.slenderbilledcurlew.net)
- Delany, S (ed). 2009. Special Slender-billed Curlew issue! *International Waterbird Census Newsletter* 12: 1–15.

The report of the unsuccessful Slender-billed Curlew expedition to Ayaqaghitma lake, Uzbekistan, in spring 2008, partially funded by OSME and which included the playing of Slender-billed Curlew calls from the top of a lorry located c300 m from the shoreline, can be downloaded from the latter website. The RSPB has awarded Sadegh Sadeghi Zadehan 2000 US\$ for surveys in Iran to search for the species.

Request for biometrics. In collaboration with SBCWG, the RSPB are drafting a proposal to search bird markets all around North Africa and the Middle East. This will include practical guidelines, with details of possible confusion species, to facilitate measurement

and identification of possible curlews for sale in the markets. Details of morphometrics (bill length, bill + skull, tarsus, wing length, wing formula etc) of Slender-billed Curlew, Steppe Curlew *Numenius arquata suschkini* and Steppe Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus alboaxillaris* are required. If you are able to help please contact Nicola Crockford at nicola.crockford@rspb.org.uk.

Request for photos. As part of the SBCWG's work, investigation is currently being made into the identification of several forms of *Numenius* in the Palearctic region and adjacent areas. The group is therefore seeking photos of the following taxa: *N. tenuirostris*, *N. a. arquata*, *N. a. orientalis*, *N. a. suschkini*, *N. p. phaeopus*, *N. p. alboaxillaris*, *N. p. variegatus* and *N. p. hudsonicus*. Due to a lack of data and ambiguity associated with *Numenius* from eastern Europe/western Asia, photos from this area are particularly sought. All photos should be sent to Ross Ahmed (rossahmed@gmail.com) and correspondence should include any relevant details such as photographer, date taken and location. Photos should preferably not be manipulated before sending, although edited photos are also welcome.

ERRATUM

Review: The Birds of Turkey (*Sandgrouse* 31 (1): 80–81, 2009).

The order of authors presented at the head of the review reflects that shown in the cover scan received from the publishers to accompany the review but not that of the actual book as published. The reviewer had submitted the author order correctly but I, the editor, altered it to match the scan. The correct citation details are: Guy M Kirwan, Kerem A Boyla, Peter Castell, Barbaros Demirci, Metehan Özen, Hilary Welch & Tim Marlow. 2008. *The Birds of Turkey*. Christopher Helm, London.

CORRIGENDUM

Prior, R & C Conroy. 2009. The Ras Baalbek semi-desert: Lebanon's aridland area and its birds. *Sandgrouse* 31: 140–145.

The authors apologise for incorrectly attributing Plates 2 & 3 which, in fact, were photographs by Karen Wade.