

American Pectoral Sandpiper (*Calidris melanotos*) on Texel

by

Sir GERALD LATHBURY and W. H. BIERMAN

(Plates 1—2)

When watching birds on the isle of Texel in the North of Holland in the company of Mrs. Elisabeth Bierman on September 20th., 1961, we were for some time engaged in observing the Ruffs, and particularly their well-known variation in size and in the colouring of the legs, going from grey and greenish to yellow and even orange. These birds, all in winter plumage now, were feeding in the pools and ditches along the sea-wall on the E. side of the island. Eventually we discovered what we first thought to be quite the smallest reeve we had seen so far, feeding in some vegetation near the dyke S. of the polder "Eendracht", but when the bird flew up to a Redshank standing close by we saw that so small a bird could not possibly be a reeve. Closer inspection then revealed more distinctive characters, foremost the abrupt ending of the streaked breast, contrasting with the almost purely white belly. And the bird called on flying away, a fairly loud note we put down as "triek, triek, triek", the difficulty always being that people of different nationality tend to hear different words in a bird call. After the first excited argument that probably is one of the main attractions of our ornithological adventures, we quickly came to the conclusion that this bird should be an American Pectoral Sandpiper (*Calidris melanotos*), and this the first duly witnessed record of the species for the Netherlands. One of us (L.) had previously seen this wader in South America and also in Britain, where it now is a nearly annual visitor. We observed the bird at our ease from the car at a distance of under forty feet, and were able to compare its size with that of a Dunlin and a Curlew-Sandpiper feeding close to it, our bird being even slightly bigger than the Curlew-Sandpiper. The habit of stretching its neck when on the alert gave it a remarkably ruff-like appearance, but the bird was smaller and generally browner. A rather warm-brown streaked skull-cap accentuated a light eye-stripe, the neck and breast looking a streaked brown, contrasting with a lighter chin and an almost white belly. On the dark-streaked back two snipe-like stripes were only to be seen when observing the bird from behind. In flight the pale outer tail feathers set off the very dark feathers in the centre. The bill was dark, and certainly relatively shorter than the Dunlin's and more conical, being thicker at the base with a more pointed, slightly decurved tip. The legs, greenish-yellow rather than ochre, could match the colouring of the legs of some of our Ruffs. The bird moved fairly slowly while feeding and kept picking and probing in the mud near the ditch among the scanty vegetation. When flushed it always called, flying a short distance in an erratic most un-ruff-like flight.

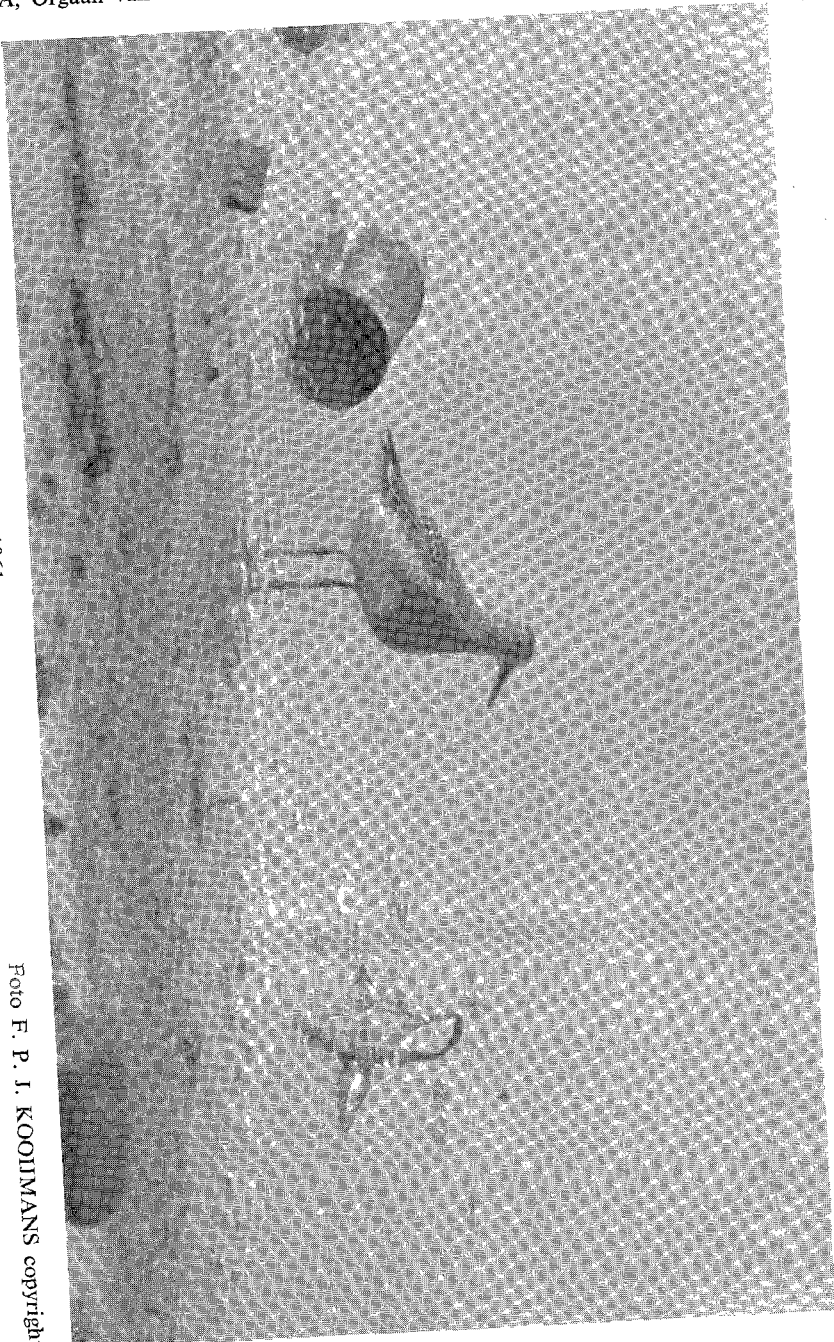


Fig. 1. *Calidris melanotos*, Texel, 23 september 1961.

Foto F. P. J. KOIJMANS copyright

Fig. 2. *Calidris melanotos*, Texel, 23 september 1961.

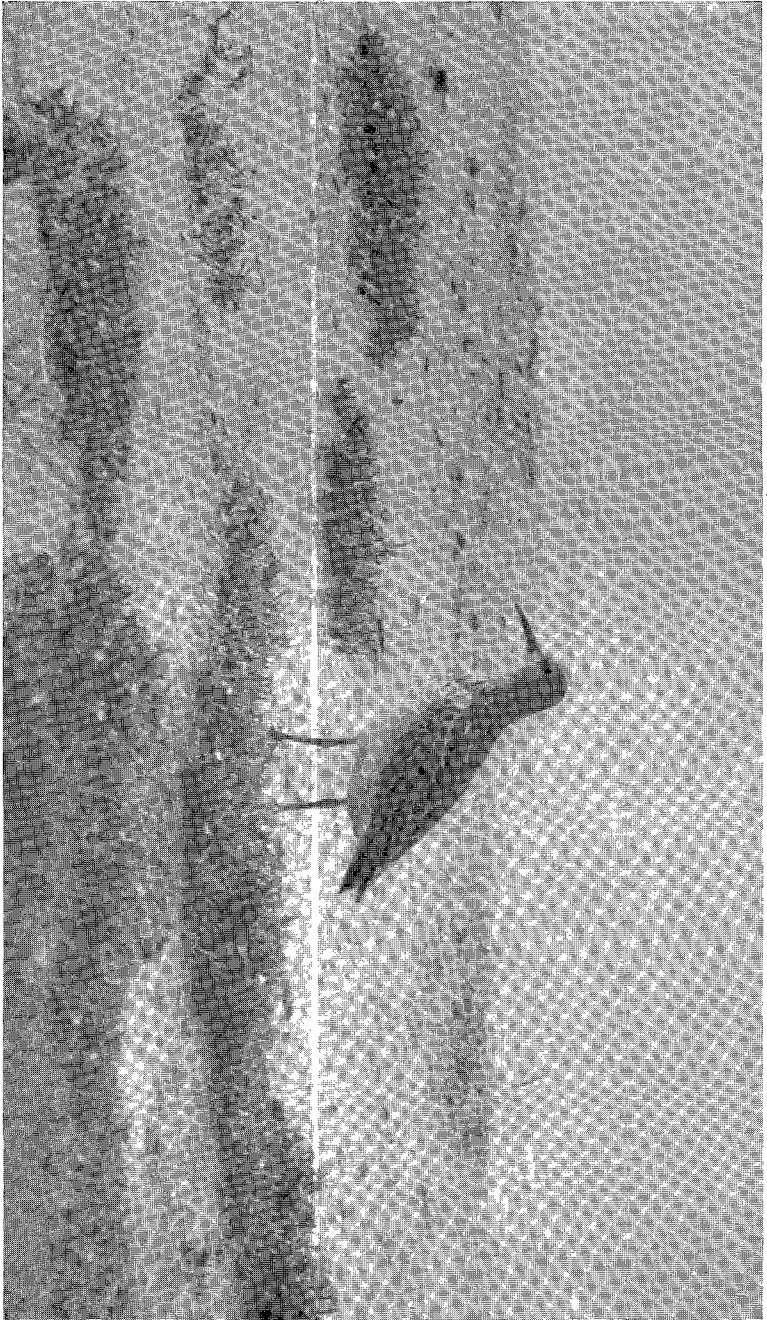


Foto F. P. J. KOOLMANS copyright.

The very heavy storms in the Western Hemisphere, extending to the Atlantic and even to the Irish Sea during the previous week can easily account for the presence of this migrant in the Netherlands. During the week-end the excursion of the Netherlands Ornithologists' Club (Club van Nederlandse Vogelkundigen) confirmed this observation, several members being able to take pictures of the rare visitor.

SAMENVATTING:

Beschreven wordt een waarneming van *Calidris melanotos* op Texel door twee waarnemers op 20 september 1961. Op 23 en 24 september kon deze waarneming worden bevestigd door de volledige excursie van de Club van Nederlandse Vogelkundigen. De vogel bevond zich voortdurend langs de dijksloot ten zuiden van het huisje van de bewaker van de schorren achter de Eendracht, Teun Brouwer, die later verklaarde de vogel wel al enige dagen te hebben gezien, maar er niet in geslaagd te zijn hem te determineren, omdat hij „heel geen kentekens had”.

Op 14 augustus 1957 zag Kist een tweetal vogels van deze soort (*Limosa* 31: 82 (1958)), maar die waarneming kon niet door anderen bevestigd worden.

De in de Vogelgids gegeven naam Gestreepte Strandloper kan nauwelijks kenmerkend worden genoemd, daar deze vogel zeker niet een meer gestreepte indruk maakt dan sommige andere strandlopers. Het verenkleed maakt eerder een geschubde indruk, en zelfs op geringe afstand is de fijne streeptekening niet opvallend. In houding, kleurverdeling en model lijkt deze Amerikaanse strandloper zeer veel op een kleine Kempphaan, waar echter de roep bij het opvliegen, die door de excursie (Kist, in litt.) werd gestandaardiseerd als „krri-krri-krrièk”, vrij luid en scherp, hem gemakkelijk van onderscheidt.

In Engeland is deze Amerikaan een niet zeldzame verschijning; vrijwel elk jaar worden er waarnemingen gemeld. Na de orkaan welke in Ierland woedde op 15 en 16 september werden er in dat land minstens acht gezien, met nog andere Amerikaanse steltlopers (R. F. Ruttledge, in litt.). Het broedgebied van de Gestreepte Strandloper bevindt zich in arktisch Noord-Amerika, het overwinteringsgebied in Zuid-Amerika.
