

Mindre meddelelser

Observations on the autumn migration of waders at Qaamassooq, Disko, West Greenland

OLE FRIMER

The autumn migration of high arctic waders through West Greenland has been little studied, and the migration routes are poorly known. The Disko Bay region is interesting in the respect that, from here, at least parts of the wader populations from Northeast Canada and Northwest Greenland continue eastwards across the Greenland ice cap to Southeast Greenland and further on to winter destinations in western Europe (Salomonsen 1967).

In the summer and autumn of 1990 and 1991 I spent several days on Qaamassooq (Flakkerhuk), eastern Disko Island ($69^{\circ} 31' - 40' N$, $51^{\circ} 50' - 52^{\circ} 10' W$), as part of an investigation of King Eiders *Somateria spectabilis*. Much attention, however, was paid to the waders in the area, as it turned out that flocks of high arctic species on autumn migration, especially Knots and Turnstones, congregated at the coast of northern Qaamassooq. The 10 km coastline within this study area is sandy beach with a 15-20 m wide littoral zone, and low sparsely vegetated dunes. Two brackish lagoons and adjacent *Puccinellia*-dominated marsh separate the beach area from the mainland. Estuarine sandy flats occur at both lagoons. A more detailed description of the area is given in Nielsen (1969).

Observations were carried out on 11-12 and 27-28 June, 9-11 and 24 July, 1-13 and 16-17 August 1990, and on 24-30 June, 9-13 July and 30 August 1991. As the main purpose of the field work did not concern waders, the methods were rather haphazard. However, in August 1990 daily counts were made along the beach. Also, during low tide most waders gathered on estuaries, mainly on a 0.3 ha sandy flat at the mouth of the smallest lagoon, where counts were made daily.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

The only Ringed Plovers observed in the breeding season was a flock of 9 birds (presumably non-breeders) on 27 June 1990.

In August 1990 flocks of up to 13 individuals (mean 3, n=14) were seen almost daily in the area, feeding on estuaries (Tab. 1), on banks of lagoons and on the seashore. Juveniles were seen in increasing numbers from 8 August. The species was not observed in 1991.

The Ringed Plover is a fairly common breeding bird in the Disko Bay region (Salomonsen 1967, 1990, Bennike 1990, Frimer & Nielsen 1990), and some of the birds recorded in August may have bred locally.

Red Knot *Calidris canutus*

In late June flocks of up to 10 non-breeding Knots were recorded in the area in both years. On average, 3 birds were seen per day during 24-30 June 1991. The first migrants seem to arrive at Qaamassooq in the second week of July, as flocks of 45 and 30 birds were seen on 10 July 1990 and 12 July 1991, respectively. A flock of 40 individuals was seen on 24 July 1990, and between 1 and 17 August flocks of up to 112 individuals (mean 19, n=12) were recorded, mainly on silt-covered flats in the northern part of the study area. Juveniles were seen from 9 August. In the following days they made up about 20% of the recorded birds. A flock of 58 birds observed on 17 August consisted almost exclusively of juveniles. No Knots were seen in the area on 30 August 1991.

Knots occurring in the Disko Bay area most probably belong to the population breeding on Ellesmere Island and in Northwest Greenland, west of the migratory divi-

Tab. 1. Waders observed on a 0.3 ha estuary at Qaamassooq during 2-13 and 16-17 August 1990.
Vadefugle observeret på en 0,3 ha vade ved Qaamassooq i perioderne 2.-13. og 16.-17. august 1990.

Date (August)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	16 ^a	17
<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>			1		1		5	2	2				.	
<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>		1	3	3	1									
<i>Calidris canutus</i>					1		1	11	6				1	
<i>Calidris alba</i>	10	5	6	8	4	3	2	5	5	5	5	3	6	
<i>Calidris maritima</i>							2	8	9	5	6	5		
<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	12	12	36	40	42	15	55	82	66	9	14	18	5	4
<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>		17	45		11		27	17	1					2

a: the estuary only partly exposed vaden kun delvis blotlagt

de (see Alerstam et al. 1986). Adult birds have previously been recorded in the region between 22 July and 15 August, and juveniles until September (Salomonsen 1950 and unpubl. data).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

The first Sanderlings were noted on 10 July 1990 (a flock of 7 individuals) and on 9 and 12 July 1991 (1 and 2 birds, respectively).

Between 1 and 17 August 1990 flocks of up to 10 Sanderlings (mean 3, n=43) were seen daily in the area, particularly on the estuary at the mouth of the smallest lagoon (Tab. 1). Many of the adult birds observed in August were in post-nuptial body-moult, appearing scaly on the back, and about 15% were in a more advanced moulting stage, being all-grey (first noted on 2 August). Juveniles were seen from 10 August, usually together with adults. In the following days they made up about 30% of the recorded birds.

The Sanderling is a fairly common migrant along the west coast of Greenland between the Disko Bay and the Thule district, both in spring and autumn. The birds are believed to belong to the Ellesmere/Northwest Greenland population (Salomonsen 1967, 1990). On Ellesmere Island the Sanderling initiate post-nuptial body-moult from mid-July (Parmelee & MacDonald 1960), which is in good accordance with the advanced moulting stages observed at Qaamassaoq in August.

Non-breeding Sanderlings occasionally occur on Qaamassaoq in the summer period. Two birds were recorded here on 20 June 1975 (Plantema & Groesz 1978).

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

In June and July in both years, up to 13 Turnstones were observed at the coast during all visits, usually singly or 2-3 together. Between 1 and 17 August 1990 fairly high numbers occurred in the area, with a peak around 8 August (Fig. 1). The few juvenile birds present during the first two weeks of August were most probably young of the resident breeding pairs (Frimer in pr.). Turnstones occurred over all of the coastal area in flocks of up to 10 individuals, but gathered into larger flocks on estuaries, especially at the mouth of the smallest lagoon, which appeared to be the most important feeding site during low tide (compare Fig. 1 and Tab. 1). On 30 August 1991 only 5 juveniles were present in the area.

Large numbers of Turnstones have previously been recorded on eastern Disko Island; adults between 22 July and 16 August, and juveniles from 14 August to the end of the month (Salomonsen 1950).

According to Parmelee & MacDonald (1960), very few Turnstones show any trace of body-moult on the Ellesmere Island breeding grounds. On Qaamassaoq, visible evidence of moult was found among less than 10% of the observed birds, lacking chestnut on the upperparts.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

On 24 July 1990 a flock of about 30 birds, including both adults in post-nuptial body-moult and juveniles, were

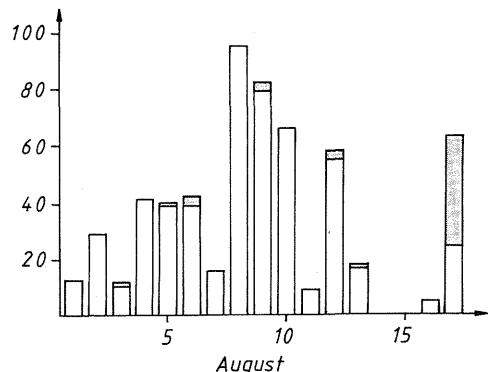


Fig. 1. The number of adult and juvenile (shaded) Turnstones recorded on Qaamassaoq during 1-13 and 16-17 August 1990.

Antal adulte og juvenile (grå felter) Stenvendere observeret på Qaamassaoq i perioderne 1.-13. og 16.-17. august 1990. I tallene indgår både rastende trækfugle og områdets lille ynglebestand.

feeding in the littoral zone. Between 1 and 17 August 1990 flocks of up to 45 individuals (mean 9, n=74) were observed daily in the coastal area. On average, 44 birds (range 33-54) were seen per day during 1-8 August, and 16 birds (range 2-27) between 9 and 17 August. Based on a sample of 146 birds recorded during the first week of August, juveniles made up 89%, winter plumage birds 8%, birds in post-nuptial body-moult 2% and birds in nuptial plumage 1%. On 30 August 1991 only one juvenile was encountered in the coastal area; most Red-necked Phalaropes have left Disko Island by this time.

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Resumé: Observationer af efterårstrækkende vadefugle på Qaamassaoq, Disko, Vestgrønland

Som led i en Ederfugle-undersøgelse tilbragte jeg i juni-august 1990 og 1991 adskillige dage på Qaamassaoq (Flakkerhuk), Disko, Vestgrønland, hvor vadere fra Ellesmere Island og Nordvestgrønland samledes i større flokke.

Kysten består af sandstrand og lave klitter. To brakvandslaguner med tilhørende marsk afskærer strandområdet fra heden.

I juli og august optrådte flokke af Stor Præstekrave *Charadrius hiaticula*, Islands Ryle *Calidris canutus*, Stenvender *Arenaria interpres*, Sandløber *Calidris alba* og Odinshane *Phalaropus lobatus* på efterårstræk i området (Tab. 1 og Fig. 1). Stor Præstekrave og Odinshane yngler bl.a. i Disko Bugt regionen, medens de tre øvrige

kommer fra yngleområderne på Ellesmere Island og i Nordvestgrønland. Ved lavvande samledes især Islandske Rylér på mudder- og sandflader i den største lagunes nordøstlige del, medens Stenvendere og Sandløbere hovedsageligt holdt til på en 0,3 ha stor vade ved mundingen af den lille lagune (Tab. 1).

Disse observationer viser, at det nordlige Qaamassoq udnyttes som rasteplads af vadefuglebestandene fra Ellesmere/Nordvestgrønland på efterårstræk, hvor de har mulighed for at "tanke op" inden den lange flyvetur over indlandsisen og/eller Atlanterhavet til vinteropholdsstederne i Vesteuropa (Islandske Ryle og Stenvender) og Vestafrika (Sandløber).

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Bemærkninger om den Færøske Stær *Sturnus vulgaris faroensis*

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Stærene på Færøerne tilhører en endemisk underart *Sturnus vulgaris faroensis*, der iflg. Evans (1980) står ret isoleret i forhold til andre underarter og bestande. Karakteristisk for de færøske fugle er især den mørkebrune ungfugledragt samt storrelsen, idet de er større end nominatformen med længere og især bredere næb og kraftigere ben (Salomonsen 1935). Desuden har op mod halvdelen af Stærene på Færøerne nøgne partier i ansigtet (næbbrod, øjnenes omgivelser, pande); det gælder begge køn og ses på alle årstider, men samme fugl kan have nøgne partier ét år og savne dem det følgende (egne obs.).

Den Færøske Stær er aldrig truffet uden for Færøerne, og selv inden for Færøerne synes fuglene at være ganske stationære. Længste afstand mellem mærknings- og genfundssted for 124 ringmærkede fugle var 15 km. Jeg har ofte set ringmærkede fugle i Tórshavn som næsten givet hører til dem jeg selv har mærket på Nólsoy, men afstanden her er blot 6 km.

Stære tilhørende nominatformen ses fåtalligt på Færøerne (9 fund t.o.m. 1989, se Sørensen (1988) og Sørensen & Jensen (1991)), sandsynligvis på træk mellem Norge og Storbritannien (bekræftet af ringfund). Er man



Tab. 1. Mål taget på levende Stære på Færøerne (subsp. *faroensis*) hhv. i Nordjylland (subsp. *vulgaris*) 1987-91: hovedlængde fra nakke til næbspids, næbbredde lige bag næseborene, vingelængde (max. længde: affladede strakte svингfjer) og vingedifferens (se Fig. 1) som pct af vingelængden. Forskellen mellem underarterne er signifikant i alle tilfælde ($P < 0,001$).

Measurements of live Starlings from the Faeroes (subsp. faroensis) and Scandinavia (subsp. vulgaris). Wing length refers to maximum length (flattened and straightened primaries); wing difference is the distance from the tiny outermost primary to the wing tip (Fig. 1) relative to the wing length. The difference between subspecies is significant in all measurements in both sexes ($P < 0,001$).

	hanner males		hunner females	
	<i>faroensis</i>	<i>vulgaris</i>	<i>faroensis</i>	<i>vulgaris</i>
Hovedlængde Head length (mm)				
n	34	53	25	29
var.bredde range	50,2-62,6	41-58	53,3-59,6	53-57
\bar{x}	57,9	55,4	56,8	54,6
SD	2,1	2,5	1,5	1,1
df		85		52
t		4,79		6,00
Næbbredde Bill width (mm)				
n	46	53	52	29
var.bredde range	8,3-9,8	6-8	8,2-9,7	7-8
\bar{x}	9,01	7,6	8,94	7,4
SD	0,30	0,54	0,32	0,50
df		97		79
t		16,37		16,76
Vingelængde Wing length (mm)				
n	62	53	61	29
var.bredde range	129-139	127-138	127-140	125-133
\bar{x}	135,7	132,2	133,3	129,8
SD	2,0	2,2	2,9	1,9
df		113		88
t		8,96		5,89
Vingedifferens Wing difference (%)				
n	52	53	54	29
var.bredde range	58,1-63,9	62,4-68,5	59,0-64,9	62,3-67,7
\bar{x}	61,0	65,4	61,2	65,0
SD	1,4	1,4	1,2	1,2
df		103		81
t		16,17		13,52

først opmærksom på det, skiller disse fugle sig klart ud fra de lokale Stære pga. deres spinklere bygning og ofte også på adfærden (egne obs.).

I et forsøg på at fastslå nogle klare kvantitative og mindre subjektive forskelle mellem *faroensis* og *vulgaris* har jeg i 1987-91 målt et antal levende Stære på Færøerne (Nólsøy hhv. Suduroy (Sumba)), i det følgende slæt sammen da der ikke kunne påvises statistisk signifikante forskelle mellem fuglene fra de to områder). Resultaterne er angivet i Tab. 1. Til sammenligning er givet mål fra Stære (*vulgaris*) fanget i Nordjylland i foråret 1987 (William Carøe Aarestrup). Disse fugles mål må være rimeligt repræsentative for de *vulgaris*, der træffes på Færøerne, idet der ikke er større forskelle på bestandene i det kontinentale Nordvesteuropa (Evans 1980).

Alle fuglene var mindst i deres andet kalenderår (2K+). De tagne mål var hovedlængde, næbbredde, vingelængde samt afstanden mellem spidsen af den lille yderste håndsvingfjer og vingespidseren ("vingedifferensen", se Fig. 1), her givet som procent af vingelængden. Vingedifferensen blev introduceret af Andersen (1898) som et nyttigt mål til karakterisering af den Færøske Stær, men det er siden stort set blevet overset.

Som en tilføjelse kan her angives størrelsen af den Færøske Stærs øg, hvormed intet tilsyneladende findes publiceret: taget som gennemsnit af de enkelte kuld gennemsnit fandtes en længde på 31,30 mm (SD = 0,92) og en bredde på 22,20 mm (SD = 0,64) (n=17 kuld, alle fra Nólsoy 1987-88).

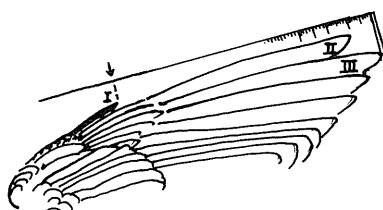


Fig. 1. Den såkaldte vingedifferens defineres som afstanden fra den lille yderste håndsvingfjer (I) til vingespidsen.

The "wing difference" is defined as the distance from the tiny primary I to the tip of the wing.

Diskussion

De anvendte mål er formentlig de mest hensigtsmæssige til adskillelse af de to stærformer. Ved sammenligning med skind skal man dog være opmærksom på, at hovedlængden normalt ikke kan måles på skind, og at skind skrumper med nogle få procent under tørringen. Vingedifferensen ser dog ikke ud til at ændres (egne obs. på to fugle målt i frisk tilstand og senere som tørre skind – i begge tilfælde var vingedifferensen uændret mens vingelængden blev reduceret med 2 mm). Det betyder, at vingedifferensen givet som procent af vingelængden *vokser* under utdørringen, hvilket da også fremgår ved sammenligning mellem gennemsnitsmål for skind og fri-ske fugle (egne obs.).

Statistisk set er der meget klare forskelle mellem de to former i alle de angivne mål (Tab. 1). En "normal" fugl kan således bestemmes sikkert ud fra et eller flere af dem. Der er dog et vist overlap mellem *faroensis* og *vulgaris* i alle tilfælde, evt. med undtagelse af næbbreden (men bemærk, at næbbreden for *vulgaris* i denne undersøgelse er grovere bestemt end for *faroensis*, 1 mm mod 0,1 mm). Måling af næbbreden kan dog være lidt vanskeligt at standardisere, i hvert fald angiver Evans (1980) lidt mindre værdier for *faroensis* end de her givne ($8,01 \pm 0,38$ mm for 31 hanner, $7,85 \pm 0,30$ mm for 24 hunner). Vingedifferensen ser imidlertid ud til at separere de to stærformer lige så godt som næbbreden (Tab. 1), og kombi-

neres næbbredde og vingedifferens opnås en næsten sikker bestemmelse. Samtidig er der kun ringe eller ingen forskel på han og hun i disse mål, hvorfor en kønsbestemmelse bliver mindre kritisk.

Summary: Morphometrics of Faeroese Starlings

The endemic Faeroese Starling *Sturnus vulgaris faroensis* has never been recorded outside the Faeroes. Nominate *vulgaris*, on the other hand, occurs infrequently in Faeroe during migration (9 records) where it is quite easily recognized by the experienced eye. However, criteria used to discriminate between the subspecies are rather vague and difficult to communicate, so in order to obtain quantitative criteria a number of live *faroensis* were measured and compared with migrant *vulgaris* caught in N Jutland, Denmark (Tab. 1). Clear differences between subspecies were found in all measurements but also some overlap. The clearest separation is obtained using bill width and "wing difference" (Fig. 1) given as percent of wing length, a character noted already by Andersen (1898). These two measurements have the further merit of showing little or none sexual dimorphism.

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