

## **Foraging Site Selection of Two Subspecies of Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*: Time Minimizers Accept Greater Predation Danger Than Energy Minimizers**

Authors: Duijns, Sjoerd, van Dijk, Jacintha G.B., Spaans, Bernard, Jukema, Joop, De Boer, Willem F., et al.

Source: Ardea, 97(1) : 51-59

Published By: Netherlands Ornithologists' Union

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5253/078.097.0107>

---

BioOne Complete ([complete.BioOne.org](https://complete.bioone.org)) is a full-text database of 200 subscribed and open-access titles in the biological, ecological, and environmental sciences published by nonprofit societies, associations, museums, institutions, and presses.

Your use of this PDF, the BioOne Complete website, and all posted and associated content indicates your acceptance of BioOne's Terms of Use, available at [www.bioone.org/terms-of-use](https://www.bioone.org/terms-of-use).

Usage of BioOne Complete content is strictly limited to personal, educational, and non - commercial use. Commercial inquiries or rights and permissions requests should be directed to the individual publisher as copyright holder.

---

BioOne sees sustainable scholarly publishing as an inherently collaborative enterprise connecting authors, nonprofit publishers, academic institutions, research libraries, and research funders in the common goal of maximizing access to critical research.

# Foraging site selection of two subspecies of Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*: time minimizers accept greater predation danger than energy minimizers

Sjoerd Duijns<sup>1,2,\*</sup>, Jacintha G.B. van Dijk<sup>1,2,3</sup>, Bernard Spaans<sup>1</sup>, Joop Jukema<sup>4</sup>,  
Willem F. de Boer<sup>2</sup> & Theunis Piersma<sup>1,5</sup>

Duijns S., van Dijk J.G.B., Spaans B., Jukema J., de Boer W.F. & Piersma T. 2009. Foraging site selection of two subspecies of Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*: time minimizers accept greater predation danger than energy minimizers. *Ardea* 97(1): 51–59.

Different spatial distributions of food abundance and predators may urge birds to make a trade-off between food intake and danger. Such a trade-off might be solved in different ways in migrant birds that either follow a time-minimizing or energy-minimizing strategy; these strategies have been assigned to two subspecies of Bar-tailed Godwits *Limosa lapponica* that use the European Wadden Sea during northward migration. At the study area on Terschelling, we recorded feeding site selection, time budgets and intake rates (prey/min) in the period that both *lapponica* (energy minimizer) and *taymyrensis* (time minimizer) subspecies were present (late April till the end of May 2007). Prey availability (number of prey/m<sup>2</sup>) was negatively correlated to the distance from cover. Based on resightings of colour-ringed Bar-tailed Godwits, *taymyrensis* was foraging closer to cover, and for a higher proportion of time than *lapponica* (67% vs. 33%). During the high tide period *taymyrensis* was also foraging on inland coastal meadows. Moreover, *taymyrensis* was more vigilant than *lapponica*, whereas *lapponica* showed more resting and preening behaviour. *Lapponica* had a higher instantaneous intake rate, but *taymyrensis* had a higher overall intake rate and the birds were more successful in taking larger prey items than *lapponica*. Supposedly, due to the increased foraging time and additional foraging on the inland meadows, the time-minimizing *taymyrensis* achieved a higher fuel deposition rate than *lapponica*. *Taymyrensis* shifted towards food-rich areas, apparently accepting higher predation risks, whereas energy-minimizing *lapponica* avoided predation danger by foraging further from cover.

**Key words:** *Limosa lapponica lapponica*, *Limosa lapponica taymyrensis*, predation, intake rate, migration strategy, feeding site selection, trade-off

<sup>1</sup>Department of Marine Ecology, Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research (NIOZ), P.O. Box 59, 1790 AB Den Burg, Texel, The Netherlands; <sup>2</sup>Resource Ecology Group, Wageningen University, P.O. Box 47, 6700 AA, Wageningen, The Netherlands; <sup>3</sup>current address: Netherlands Institute of Ecology (NIOO-KNAW), Centre for Limnology (CL), P.O. Box 1299, 3600 BG Maarsse, The Netherlands; <sup>4</sup>Haerdawei 62, 8854 AC Oosterbierum, The Netherlands; <sup>5</sup>Animal Ecology Group, Centre for Ecological and Evolutionary Studies, University of Groningen, P.O. Box 14, 9750 AA Haren, The Netherlands; \*corresponding author (Sjoerd.Duijns@nioz.nl)



## INTRODUCTION

A successful migration strategy results from optimizing at least three selective factors: time, energy and predation (Alerstam & Lindström 1990). Birds may minimize

the time for migration, i.e. flight as well as fuelling time (maximize speed of migration), minimize the total energy cost of migration (energy cost of transport), or minimize predation risk during migration. Depending on the migration and energetic status, individuals may

opt for different solutions to balance these selective factors. Theoretical studies of migration usually incorporated the dichotomy between time and energy minimization (Lindström & Ålerstam 1992, Hedenström 1993, Vrugt *et al.* 2007), and only few studies addressed the issue of predation minimization (e.g. Weber *et al.* 1998, Burns & Ydenberg 2002). Most empirical studies that have focused on predation minimization during migration are concerned with passerines (e.g. Lindström 1990, Fransson & Weber 1997, Schmaljohann & Dierschke 2005) and to a lesser extent with shorebirds, such as Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri* (Ydenberg *et al.* 2002, Lank *et al.* 2003, Pomeroy 2006, Pomeroy *et al.* 2006, 2008), Dunlin *Calidris alpina* (Dierschke 1998) and Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* (Metcalf & Furness 1984). To explore in which way predation danger modulates decisions of birds on migration, we investigated foraging behaviour of two subspecies of Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* that are known to exhibit contrasting migration schedules.

The Bar-tailed Godwit is a long-distance migrant of which two subspecies occur along the East-Atlantic flyway (Engelmoer & Roselaar 1998, Engelmoer 2008). These two subspecies follow a leap-frog migration, with the European Wadden Sea as staging and stopover site (Drent & Piersma 1990). The subspecies *taymyrensis* (600 000 birds; Wetlands International 2006) visits the Wadden Sea twice a year during one month to replenish stores needed for migration between breeding areas in northern Siberia and wintering sites in West Africa (Smit & Piersma 1989, Engelmoer 2008). *Taymyrensis* follows a time-minimizing migration strategy (Scheiffarth *et al.* 2002): it faces a tight time schedule before leaving to the breeding grounds, and devotes as much time as possible for fuel deposition, while minimizing other energy consuming activities. By increasing foraging time, the time at the stopover site is minimized, and consequently time spent on migration is minimized. *Lapponica* (120 000 birds; Blew & Südbeck 2005, Wetlands International 2006), on the other hand, stays in the Wadden Sea for the entire winter before leaving to less distant breeding grounds in northern Scandinavia and the White Sea area (Cramp & Simmons 1983, Prokosch 1988, Engelmoer 2008). *Lapponica* follows an energy-minimizing migration strategy (Scheiffarth *et al.* 2002), as the subspecies builds up the required spring reserves over a long period before leaving to the breeding grounds. These birds do not have to forage the entire available time, which enables them to spend more energy and time on activities as moulting and predation avoidance.

Aerial predators of wader species, such as falcons, often make use of vegetation, hills, dikes and other structures to cover their approach when hunting close to the salt marsh (Bijlsma 1990, Cresswell & Whitfield 1994). Several studies have confirmed that the hunting success of aerial predators is higher on salt marshes than on open mudflats without any cover, suggesting that predation risk declines with distance from cover (Cresswell 1994, Ydenberg *et al.* 2002, Whitfield 2003, Dekker & Ydenberg 2004, van den Hout *et al.* 2008). To study the role of predation minimization on the stopover ecology of the two Bar-tailed Godwit subspecies, we focused on the importance of distance from cover. We recorded feeding site selection, time budgets and intake rates in the period that both subspecies are present in the Wadden Sea during northward migration from late April to the end of May.

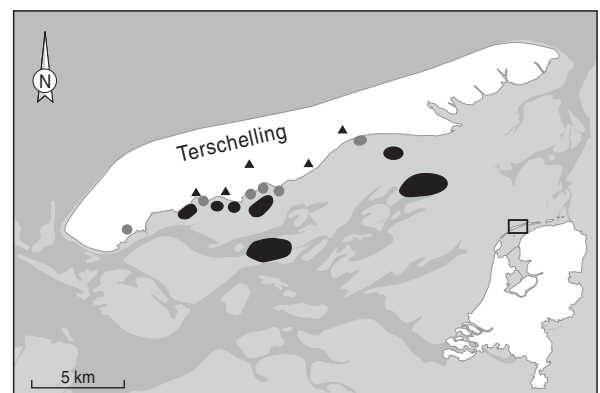
## METHODS

### Study area

Data were collected on the tidal flats and on inland coastal meadows of the Dutch Wadden Sea island Terschelling (53°24'N, 05°21'E; Fig. 1). Bar-tailed Godwits are known to primarily forage on tidal flats (Cramp & Simmons 1983), although in spring they also use inland coastal meadows for feeding (Piersma *et al.* 1993, van de Kam *et al.* 2004).

### Population identification

In 2001 the Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research (NIOZ) on Texel, in association with various ringing



**Figure 1.** The island Terschelling located in the Dutch Wadden Sea. Sites of benthic sampling and main foraging areas of Bar-tailed Godwits are indicated in black. The small grey circles indicate the most important high water tide roosts. The small inland triangles represent the main feeding sites on the meadows.

groups, started a colour-ringing program on the Bar-tailed Godwit. Based on the catching and/or previous resighting dates of colour-ringed individuals, they can be assigned to either the subspecies *lapponica* or *taymyrensis*. Birds caught and/or resighted between October and March in the Wadden Sea were assigned to the subspecies *lapponica*, and individuals caught and/or resighted in West Africa to the subspecies *taymyrensis*. In the Dutch Wadden Sea area, many birds were caught with 'wilsternets' (Jukema *et al.* 2001) on inland coastal meadows in May, or were resighted only in May. It is estimated that only a small fraction (6.7%) of the birds caught in May are *lapponica* (B.S., unpubl. data). We therefore assume that all birds caught and/or resighted only in May are *taymyrensis*. Up to March 2007, a total of 2173 Bar-tailed Godwits were colour-ringed, of which 15% were *lapponica* and 85% *taymyrensis*.

Since only a small fraction of the birds observed were colour-ringed, we tested the degree to which the two subspecies mixed while foraging. If they would not mix, the presence of colour-ringed individuals in a flock could indicate to which subspecies the flock belonged. In all flocks observed on inland coastal meadows and on tidal flats during low tide (3 hours before and after low water) that contained multiple colour-ringed individuals ( $n = 32$ ), it never occurred that an assigned colour-ringed *lapponica* was foraging together with an assigned *taymyrensis* (Fisher's exact test,  $P < 0.001$ ). Therefore, we assumed that flocks could be assigned to a subspecies on the basis of the identity of single individuals in the flock. In total we resighted 371 different colour-ringed Bar-tailed Godwits, of which 69 were *lapponica* and 302 *taymyrensis*.

### Observations and benthos sampling

Behaviour of Bar-tailed Godwits was recorded during daylight on tidal flats, high water roosts and inland coastal meadows. Within each flock, 2-min focal animal observations were conducted (Martin & Bateson 1993) of randomly chosen birds with 20–60x zoom spotting scopes. Five different categories were distinguished: foraging, resting, preening, vigilance and flight. Vigilant behaviour was scored when the bird had raised the head from the head-down foraging position to at least a horizontal position ('head-up vigilance', Metcalfe 1984). Flight behaviour was scored when a focal bird flew in the air. Bar-tailed Godwits are highly dimorphic in bill and body size, which can affect their foraging behaviour (Smith & Evans 1973, Cramp & Simmons 1983, Glutz von Blotzheim *et al.* 1985), therefore the sex of each focal bird was recorded. Sex was determined by body size, coloration and bill length (Both *et*

*al.* 2003). Abdominal profiles (ranging from 1 – lean – to 5 – abdomen bulging) were scored to estimate the body condition of the birds (Wiersma & Piersma 1995). Every 30 min the number of individuals was estimated, and the contours of the flock were plotted on Google Earth maps.

Prey items were scored to determine the intake rate. Bar-tailed Godwits in the Wadden Sea mudflats mainly feed on lugworm *Arenicola marina*, ragworm *Nereis diversicolor*, catworm *Nephtys hombergii* and bristleworm *Scoloplos armiger* (Scheiffarth 2001). When foraging on inland coastal meadows, Bar-tailed Godwits mainly feed on crane fly larvae *Tipula paludosa* (Piersma *et al.* 1993, van de Kam *et al.* 2004). The prey items were scored in four classes: (1) small polychaetes (all items up to half the bill length; i.e. smaller than 5 cm), (2) large polychaetes (all items exceeding half the bill length; i.e. larger than 5 cm), (3) lugworms, and (4) crane fly larvae.

To assess food availability of the tidal areas, soil samples were taken on spots where foraging flocks had been observed. Per foraging area, 10 random samples with a depth of 15 cm (equal to  $\pm 1.5$  times the bill length) were taken with a standard PVC tube (1/56 m<sup>2</sup>) in a randomly placed square of 100 x 100 m. The samples were sieved over a 1-mm mesh sieve and the four main polychaetes species were identified and measured by a ruler to the nearest 5 mm. Per sample, we calculated the abundance of prey/m<sup>2</sup>. As our sampling sessions on inland coastal meadows failed, we took crane fly densities from a similar grassland polder on another Dutch Wadden Sea island, Schiermonnikoog (Tinbergen 1981).

### Cover

To assess the distance from cover per subspecies, the location of each colour-ringed individual on the tidal flat and the inland coastal meadows was mapped. The distance from each foraging location to cover (e.g. dike, tree, scrub) was measured (m) from the centre of the flock. In this way the distance of each foraging colour-ringed individual from cover could be determined.

### Data analysis

For the analysis we merged observations into so-called 'sessions', with a mean for both sexes. Each session ended when the observed flock flew up, the flock size changed or the session exceeded one hour. Over all tidal hours, we performed 1569 observations (692 low tide hours; i.e. 3 hours before and after low water) which we pooled per sex into 445 sessions (195 low tide hours), resulting in a mean number of 3.5 observations (3.5 low tide hours) per session. In the meadows

we conducted 192 observations which were also pooled per sex into 49 sessions, resulting in 3.9 observations per session. Analyses are based on the sessions, with mean values for males and females to correct for sex in the model, hence sample sizes refer to sessions and not to individual birds. In all models sex is included as fixed factor to allow for morphological and behavioural differences between the sexes. Tidal and weather (i.e. temperature, wind speed, wind direction) data were obtained from Rijkswaterstaat Rijksinstituut voor Kust en Zee and the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute (KNMI), and were used as covariates whenever they were significant in the model.

*Taymyrensis* shows fast increases in body mass when staging in the Wadden Sea in May, whereas *lapponica* increases with a rather slow rate (Prokosch 1988, Drent & Piersma 1990). To determine the fattening rate of the two subspecies, mean abdominal profiles ( $\pm$ SE) per session of all tidal hours during the fattening period of both subspecies were used. A GLM was performed, with date as covariate, to assess differences between the two subspecies.

To assess differences in intake rate between the two subspecies, we calculated the instantaneous intake rate (prey/min) as the number of prey items taken when foraging. Only sessions of low tide hours were used in the calculation. The overall intake rate (prey/min) is defined as the number of prey items taken during entire focal observation periods (2 min) and further includes all tidal hours, including the inland coastal meadows. Besides the overall intake rate, we calculated the intake rate for each of the four prey items (i.e. small polychaetes, large polychaetes, lugworm, crane fly larvae), which were all natural-log transformed. For the instantaneous and overall intake rate calculations, a GLM was performed with sex as an additional fixed factor. Data were natural-log-transformed to satisfy the assumption of normality (Zar 1996). Time budgets of both subspecies were determined by the percentage of time spent per activity within the 2-min observations.

Effects of cover (as proxy for predation danger) on foraging behaviour were tested by correlation analysis. The mean time (s) per session spent on each behavioural category was converted into percentages and arcsin-transformed. Only data of the low tidal hours have been used, as during high tide birds are much limited in where to forage. Moreover, we examined whether intake rate and prey availability were correlated with distance to cover. Analyses were performed with Pearson correlation ( $r$ ) or Spearman's Rho ( $r_s$ ). Graphical data of these correlations were pooled into 250-m points. Meadows are shown in graphs, but are excluded from

correlation analyses. We performed GLM's to test for differences in behavioural activity between the two subspecies, with sex as additional fixed factor, by pooling data from all tidal hours. The behavioural category flight did not satisfy the assumption of normality, and therefore the non parametric Mann-Whitney U test was used. Differences in foraging mean distance ( $\pm$ SE) from cover between the two subspecies were analysed with a Student's  $t$ -test, in which data of low tide hours and meadows were used.

Basic assumptions of parametric tests were examined by testing for normality, residual analysis, and the application of the Levene's test for equality variances. The reported mean values and SE were back-transformed without corrections. All analyses were performed using SPSS version 15.0.

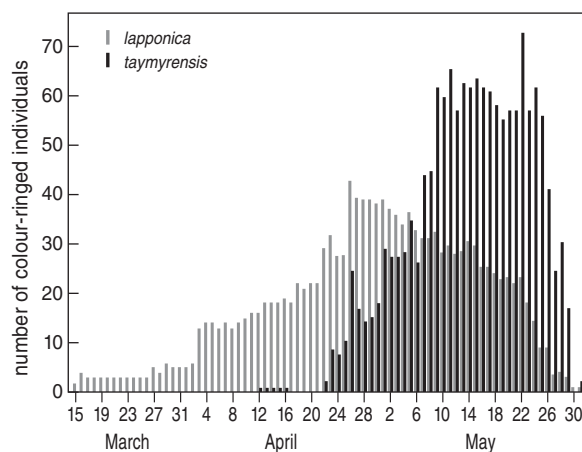
## RESULTS

### Seasonal occurrence

From March until mid-April 2007, only colour-ringed *lapponica* individuals were seen. An influx of colour-ringed *taymyrensis* began on 22 April (Fig. 2). From the beginning of May, *lapponica* started to leave the study area and gradually decreased in numbers in May. *Taymyrensis* did not leave the study area until the end of May.

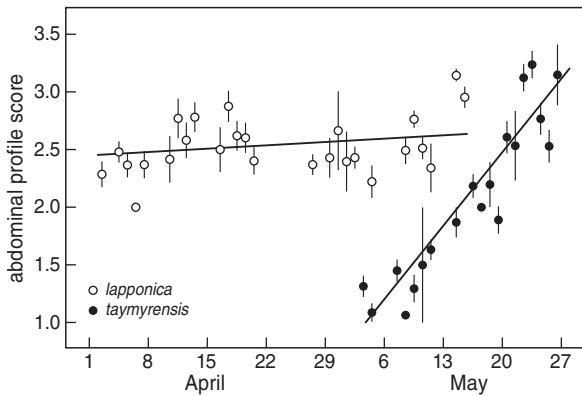
### Fuelling patterns

*Taymyrensis* were on average slimmer than *lapponica* individuals (GLM,  $F_{70,650} = 5.30$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). However, in *taymyrensis* the daily increase of abdominal profile was almost 10 times faster than in *lapponica* (Fig. 3).

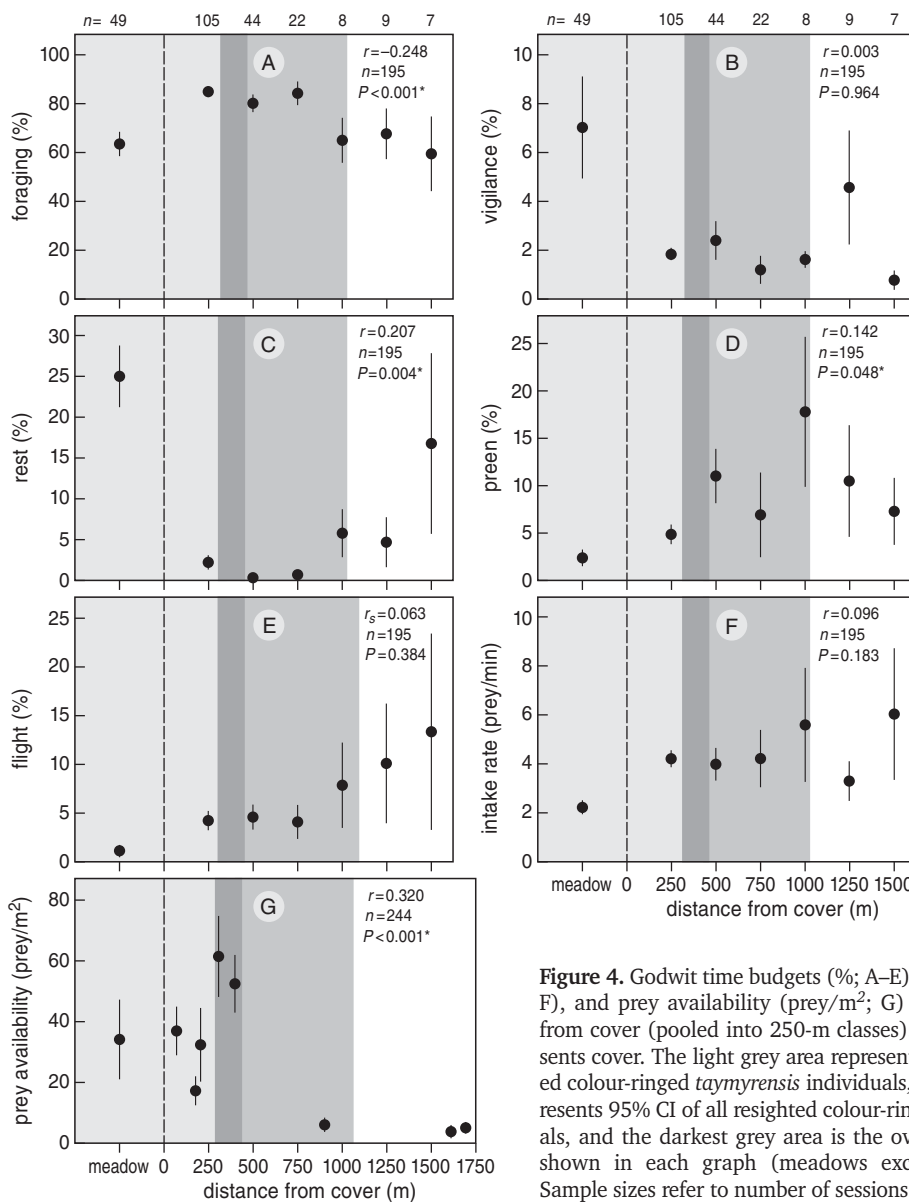


**Figure 2.** Daily number of resighted colour-ringed *lapponica* and *taymyrensis* Bar-tailed Godwits on Terschelling, spring 2007.

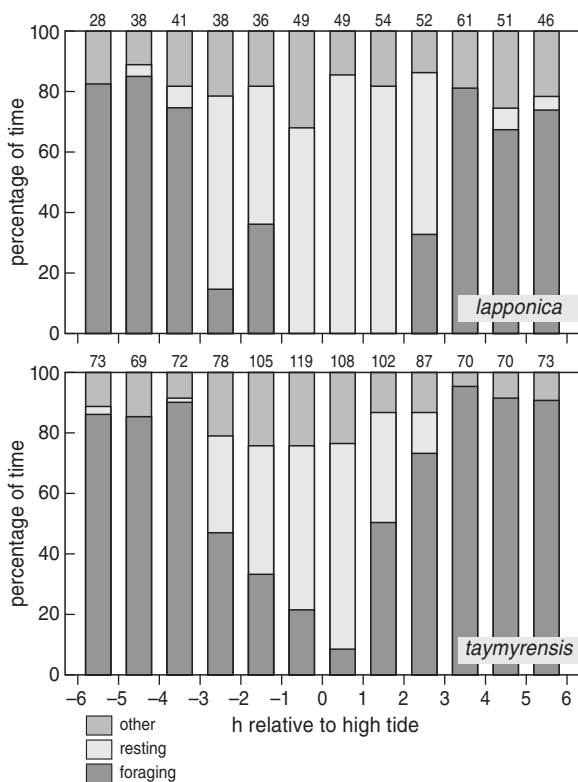




**Figure 3.** Abdominal profile score (mean  $\pm$  SE) of two Bar-tailed Godwit subspecies throughout spring 2007. Regression coefficients are 0.004 AP-units/d for *lapponica* ( $F_{1,434} = 7.14$ ,  $R^2 = 0.016$ ,  $P = 0.008$ ) and 0.043 AP-units/d for *taymyrensis* ( $F_{1,283} = 136.13$ ,  $R^2 = 0.325$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ).



**Figure 4.** Godwit time budgets (%; A–E), intake rate (prey/min; F), and prey availability (prey/m<sup>2</sup>; G) in relation to distance from cover (pooled into 250-m classes). The dotted line represents cover. The light grey area represents 95% CI of all resighted colour-ringed *taymyrensis* individuals, the dark grey area represents 95% CI of all resighted colour-ringed *lapponica* individuals, and the darkest grey area is the overlap. Correlations are shown in each graph (meadows excluded from analysis). Sample sizes refer to number of sessions. \* indicates  $P < 0.05$ .



**Figure 5.** Activity pattern of two Bar-tailed Godwit subspecies in relation to tidal stage. The category ‘other’ includes preening, vigilance and flight. Sample sizes (total number of birds recorded) are given for each hour.

**Correlations with distance to cover**

Resting and preening increased with distance from cover, whereas time spent foraging and prey availability decreased with distance (Fig. 4). Vigilance, intake rate and time spent flying were not correlated with distance from cover.

*Lapponica* foraged at a mean distance of  $397 \pm 67$  m from cover, and *taymyrensis* at a mean distance of  $85 \pm 21$  m from the nearest cover ( $t$ -test,  $t_{21} = 4.26$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). In particular *taymyrensis* on inland coastal meadows were foraging close to cover.

**Foraging behaviour**

*Taymyrensis* spent more time foraging than *lapponica* (Table 1) as the subspecies was still foraging during high tide when *lapponica* was roosting (Fig. 5). *Lapponica* spent more time resting and preening, whereas *taymyrensis* was more vigilant. There was no difference in time spent flying between the subspecies.

During low tide, *lapponica* had a higher instantaneous intake rate (3.5 prey/min) than *taymyrensis* (2.8 prey/min;  $F_{1,188} = 4.27$ ,  $P = 0.040$ ). However, the overall intake rate showed an opposite trend (1.1 and 1.3 prey/min, respectively;  $F_{1,431} = 6.56$ ,  $P = 0.011$ ). *Taymyrensis* ingested large polychaetes at a higher rate than *lapponica*, whereas intake rates of small polychaetes and lugworms did not differ between the subspecies (Table 2). No comparison was made for crane fly

**Table 1.** Time budgets (% of time) of two subspecies of Bar-tailed Godwit, based on 2-min observation periods. Means and SE are based on arcsin-transformed data, given are back-transformed values.

Behavioural category	Lapponica (n = 166)		Taymyrensis (n = 285)		Test	P
	Mean	Upper / lower SE	Mean	Upper / lower SE		
Foraging	33.12	5.22/4.92	66.82	4.46/4.52	$F_{1,439} = 20.47$	<0.001
Rest	34.69	5.12/4.89	14.77	2.40/2.22	$F_{1,437} = 8.68$	0.003
Preen	5.27	1.18/1.06	1.84	0.37/0.34	$F_{1,442} = 15.80$	<0.001
Vigilant	2.21	0.33/0.31	3.42	0.50/0.47	$F_{1,440} = 16.93$	<0.001
Flight	5.00	0.93/0.93	3.70	0.58/0.58	$U = 22072.50$	0.151

**Table 2.** Overall intake rate (prey/min) by prey class taken by two subspecies of Bar-tailed Godwit. Means and SE are based on log-transformed data, given are back-transformed values.

Prey item	Lapponica (n = 160)		Taymyrensis (n = 236)		Test	P
	Mean	Upper / lower SE	Mean	Upper / lower SE		
Small polychaetes	1.05	0.14/0.13	1.22	0.11/0.10	$F_{1,393} = 1.04$	0.310
Large polychaetes	0.07	0.01/0.01	0.13	0.01/0.01	$F_{1,393} = 9.49$	0.002
Lugworms	0.02	0.00/0.00	0.01	0.00/0.00	$F_{1,393} = 0.86$	0.354

larvae, as only *taymyrensis* was foraging on inland coastal meadows. For *taymyrensis*, intake rates on tidal flats and meadows were similar (1.2 prey/min;  $F_{1,277} = 0.97$ ,  $P = 0.326$ ).

## DISCUSSION

By using resightings of colour-ringed individuals, we confirmed the established patterns of *lapponica* and *taymyrensis* presence in the Wadden Sea (Prokosch 1988, Piersma & Jukema 1990, Scheiffarth *et al.* 2002, Engelmoer 2008). *Lapponica* was present during winter till mid May and *taymyrensis* from late April to late May. The idea that 20% of the wintering Bar-tailed Godwit population in the Wadden Sea consists of *taymyrensis*, as suggested by Engelmoer (2008) on the basis of biometry, was not supported by our resightings.

Body stores of *taymyrensis* arriving in the Wadden Sea at the end of April were close to depletion. Throughout their stay of only one month they were able to prepare for the next leg of the migration route of more than 3000 km. The apparently high daily food intake was achieved by (1) foraging a large proportion of time per day, which they achieved by feeding during high and low tide close to cover on mudflats, (2) feeding on inland coastal meadows, and (3) selecting sites where they found large prey species. Thus, our results confirm that *taymyrensis* follows a strategy of a time minimizer (Scheiffarth *et al.* 2002).

*Taymyrensis* foraged close to cover in areas with a higher prey density. By foraging close to cover, birds are more vulnerable to surprise attacks by raptors (e.g. Cresswell & Whitfield 1994, van den Hout *et al.* 2008), and apparently *taymyrensis* accepted a higher predation danger in favour of better feeding opportunities. The trade-off between food and danger has inspired many investigators (e.g. Milinski & Heller 1978, Sih 1980, Brown & Kotler 2004). Dark-eyed Juncos *Junco hyemalis* which had been deprived of food opted for a riskier habitat to enhance their feeding rates (Lima 1988). In a study of Western Sandpipers, heavy birds predominated at safe stopover sites, while leaner birds used sites where predation danger was greater (Pomeroy 2006). Our observations of Bar-tailed Godwits add well to these findings: initially heavier Bar-tailed Godwits foraged further from cover, and leaner birds closer to cover. Thus, the benefit of better feeding opportunities outweighed the risk of selecting more dangerous areas. This was clearest during high tide, when *taymyrensis* using inland coastal meadows, necessarily foraged close to cover (i.e. ditches, trees and

buildings). A study on Ruffs *Philomachus pugnax* showed that birds foraging on meadows avoided fields that were located near trees and buildings (Verkuil & de Goeij 2003). We suspect that especially individuals that face difficulties in reaching their departure fuel load in time, would supplementary forage in the meadows. Caldow *et al.* (1999) showed that Oystercatchers *Haematopus ostralegus* tend to feed in meadows to supplement their low-tide intake on the tidal flats. Piersma & Jukema (1993) found that Bar-tailed Godwits at a coastal site were 40 g heavier than those feeding on inland meadows. In line of this finding, we found the mean abdominal profile score (corrected for date) of 1.8 in meadows compared to 2.2 on tidal flats (GLM,  $F_{1,279} = 10.424$ ,  $P = 0.001$ ).

We suggest that Bar-tailed Godwits traded distance to cover against food abundance. By increasing foraging time and by facing a higher predation risk, the time-minimizing *taymyrensis* ensured the accumulation of a sufficient fuel load, within a short stopover period, whereas the energy-minimizing *lapponica* minimized predation by foraging in the safer areas. It is expected that these strategies influence survival rates, and we predict higher mortality rates due to a higher predation risk for the *taymyrensis* subspecies during the migration seasons.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to the volunteer ring readers, and especially to Harry Horn who resighted many colour-ringed Bar-tailed Godwits during the study period and continues to do so. He also helped and arranged accommodation during the fieldwork. We are grateful to the ringing groups of VRS Castricum en VRS Calidris Schiermonnikoog for catching and colour-ringing so many Bar-tailed Godwits. Many thanks to the State Forestry Service (Staatsbosbeheer Terschelling) for providing the accommodation on Terschelling, and to Wetterskip Fryslân for allowing us access to their private road. SD and JvD thank Wim den Brok for their pleasant stay on the campsite Nieuw Formerum, and David Cerasale for assistance with the benthic sampling and for the unforgettable memories. Casper Kraan assisted with creating the figure of Terschelling. We also thank Kees Camphuysen, Piet van den Hout, Jan van Gils and two anonymous referees for their helpful comments on the MS.

## REFERENCES

- Alerstam T. & Lindström Å. 1990. Optimal bird migration: The relative importance of time, energy and safety. In: Gwinner E. (ed) Bird migration, physiology and ecophysiology. Springer-Verlag, Berlin, pp. 331–351.
- Bijlsma R.G. 1990. Predation by large falcons on wintering waders on the Banc d'Arguin, Mauritania. *Ardea* 78: 75–82.



- Blew J. & Südbeck P. 2005. Migratory Waterbirds in the Wadden Sea 1980–2000. Wadden Sea Ecosystem No. 20. Common Wadden Sea Secretariat, Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Group, Joint Monitoring Group of Migratory Birds in the Wadden Sea, Wilhelmshaven.
- Both C., Edelaar P. & Renema W. 2003. Interference between the sexes in foraging Bar-tailed Godwits *Limosa lapponica*. *Ardea* 91: 268–272.
- Brown J.S. & Kotler B.P. 2004. Hazardous duty pay and the foraging cost of predation. *Ecol. Lett.* 7: 999–1014.
- Burns, J. G. & Ydenberg, R. C. 2002. The effects of wing loading and gender on the escape flights of Least Sandpipers *Calidris minutilla* and Western Sandpipers *Calidris mauri*. *Behav. Ecol. Sociobiol.* 52: 128–136.
- Caldow R.W.G., Goss-Custard J.D., Stillman R.A., Le V. Dit Durell S.E.A., Swinfen R. & Bregnballe T. 1999. Individual variation in competitive ability of interference prone foragers: the relative importance of foraging efficiency and susceptibility to interference. *J. Anim. Ecol.* 68: 869–878.
- Cramp S. & Simmons K.E.L. 1983. Handbook of the birds of Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. Vol. III. Waders to Gulls. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Cresswell W. 1994. Age-dependent choice of Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) feeding location: profitability or risk? *J. Anim. Ecol.* 63: 589–600.
- Cresswell W. & Whitfield D.P. 1994. The effects of raptor predation on wintering wader populations at the Tynninghame estuary, southeast Scotland. *Ibis* 136: 223–232.
- Dekker D. & Ydenberg R.C. 2004. Raptor predation on wintering Dunlins in relation to the tidal cycle. *Condor* 106: 415–419.
- Dierschke V. 1998. High profit at high risk for juvenile Dunlins *Calidris alpina* stopping over at Helgoland (German Bight). *Ardea* 86: 59–69.
- Drent R. & Piersma T. 1990. An exploration of the energetics of leap-frog migration in arctic breeding waders. In: Gwinner E. (ed) Bird migration, physiology and ecophysiology. Springer-Verlag, Berlin, pp. 399–412.
- Engelmoer M. & Roselaar C.S. 1998. Geographical variation in waders. Kluwer, Dordrecht.
- Engelmoer M. 2008. Breeding origins of wader populations utilizing the Dutch Wadden Sea, as deduced from body dimensions, body mass, and primary moult. PhD Thesis, University of Groningen.
- Fransson T. & Weber T.P. 1997. Migratory fuelling in Blackcaps (*Sylvia atricapilla*) under perceived risk of predation. *Behav. Ecol. Sociobiol.* 41: 75–80.
- Glutz von Blotzheim U.N., Bauer K.M. & Bezzel E. (eds) 1985. Handbuch der Vögel Mitteleuropas. Band 7, Charadriiformes (2. Teil). Aula-Verlag, Wiesbaden.
- Hedenström A. 1993. Migration by soaring or flapping flight in birds the relative importance of energy cost and speed. *Phil. Trans. R. Soc. Lond. B* 342: 353–361.
- Jukema, J., Piersma, T., Hulscher, J.B., Bunschoke, E.J., Koolhaas, A., & Veenstra, A. 2001. Goudplevieren en wilsterflappers: eeuwenoude fascinatie voor trekvogels. Fryske Akademy & KNNV Uitgeverij, Leeuwarden / Utrecht.
- Lank D.B., Butler R.W., Ireland J. & Ydenberg R.C. 2003. Effects of predation danger on migration strategies of sandpipers. *Oikos* 103: 303–319.
- Lima S.L. 1988. Initiation and termination of feeding in Dark-eyed Juncos: influences of predation risk and energy reserves. *Oikos* 53: 3–11.
- Lindström Å. 1990. The role of predation risk in stopover habitat selection in migrating Bramblings, *Fringilla montifringilla*. *Behav. Ecol.* 1: 102–106.
- Lindström Å. & Ålerstam T. 1992. Optimal fat loads in migrating birds: a test of the time-minimization hypothesis. *Am. Nat.* 140: 477–491.
- Martin P. & Bateson P. 1993. Measuring behaviour: an introductory guide. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Metcalfe N.B. 1984. The effects of mixed-species flocking on the vigilance of shorebirds: who do they trust? *Anim. Behav.* 32: 986–993.
- Metcalfe N.B. & Furness R.W. 1984. Changing priorities: the effect of pre-migratory fattening on the trade-off between foraging and vigilance. *Behav. Ecol. Sociobiol.* 15: 203–206.
- Milinski M. & Heller R. 1978. Influence of a predator on the optimal foraging behaviour of Sticklebacks (*Gasterosteus aculeatus* L.). *Nature* 275: 642–644.
- Piersma T. & Jukema J. 1990. Budgeting the flight of a long-distance migrant: changes in nutrient reserve levels of Bar-tailed Godwits at successive spring staging sites. *Ardea* 78: 315–337.
- Piersma T. & Jukema J. 1993. Red breasts as honest signals of migratory quality in a long-distance migrant, the Bar-tailed Godwit. *Condor* 95: 163–177.
- Piersma T., Koolhaas A. & Dekinga A. 1993. Interactions between stomach structure and diet choice in shorebirds. *Auk* 110: 552–564.
- Pomeroy A.C. 2006. Tradeoffs between food abundance and predation danger in spatial usage of a stopover site by Western Sandpipers, *Calidris mauri*. *Oikos* 112: 629–637.
- Pomeroy A.C., Butler R.W. & Ydenberg R.C. 2006. Experimental evidence that migrants adjust usage at a stopover site to trade off food and danger. *Behav. Ecol.* 17: 1041–1045.
- Pomeroy A.C., Acevedo Seaman D.A., Butler R.W., Elner R.W., Williams T.D. & Ydenberg R.C. 2008. Feeding–danger trade-offs underlie stopover site selection by migrants. *Avian Cons. Ecol.* 3: 7. Available at : <http://www.ace-eco.org/vol3/iss1/art7/>.
- Prokosch P. 1988. The Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea as spring staging area for arctic wader populations demonstrated by Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*, L. 1758), Knot (*Calidris canutus*, L. 1758) and Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica* L. 1758). *Corax* 12: 273–442.
- Scheiffarth G. 2001. The diet of Bar-tailed Godwits *Limosa lapponica* in the Wadden Sea: combining visual observations and faeces analyses. *Ardea* 89: 481–494.
- Scheiffarth G., Wahls S., Ketzenberg C. & Exo K.M. 2002. Spring migration strategies of two populations of Bar-tailed Godwits, *Limosa lapponica*, in the Wadden Sea: time minimizers or energy minimizers? *Oikos* 96: 346–354.
- Schmaljohann H. & Dierschke V. 2005. Optimal bird migration and predation risk: a field experiment with Northern Wheatears *Oenanthe oenanthe*. *J. Anim. Ecol.* 74: 131–138.
- Sih A. 1980. Optimal behavior: Can foragers balance two conflicting demands? *Science* 210: 1041–1043.
- Smit C.J. & Piersma T. 1989. Numbers, mid-winter distribution and migration of wader populations using the East Atlantic Flyway. In: Boyd H. & Pirot J.Y. (eds) Flyways and reserve

- networks for water birds. IWRB Spec. Publ. 9, Slimbridge, pp. 24–63.
- Smith P.C. & Evans P.R. 1973. Studies of shorebirds at Lindisfarne, Northumberland. 1. Feeding ecology and behaviour of the Bar-tailed Godwit. *Wildfowl* 24: 135–139.
- Tinbergen J.M. 1981. Foraging decisions in Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris* L.). *Ardea* 69: 1–67.
- van de Kam J., Ens B., Piersma T. & Zwarts L. 2004. Shorebirds, an illustrated behavioural ecology. KNNV Publishers, Utrecht.
- van den Hout P.J., Spaans B. & Piersma T. 2008. Differential mortality of wintering shorebirds on the Banc d'Arguin, Mauritania, due to predation by large falcons. *Ibis* 150 (Suppl. 1): 219–230.
- Verkuil Y. & de Goeij P. 2003. Do Reeves make different choices? Meadow selection by spring staging Ruffs *Philomachus pugnax* in Southwest Friesland. *Limosa* 76: 1–12.
- Vrugt J.A., van Belle J. & Bouten W. 2007. Pareto front analysis of flight time and energy use in long-distance bird migration. *J. Avian Biol.* 38: 432–442.
- Weber T.P., Ens B.J. & Houston A.I. 1998. Optimal avian migration: A dynamic model of fuel stores and site use. *Evol. Ecol.* 12: 377–401.
- Wetlands International. 2006. Waterbird Population Estimates – Fourth Edition. Wetlands International, Wageningen.
- Wiersma P. & Piersma T. 1995. Scoring abdominal profiles to characterize migratory cohorts of shorebirds: an example with Red Knots. *J. Field Ornithol.* 66: 88–98.
- Whitfield D.P. 2003. Redshank *Tringa totanus* flocking behaviour, distance from cover and vulnerability to Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* predation. *J. Avian Biol.* 34: 163–169.
- Ydenberg R.C., Butler R.W., Lank D.B., Guglielmo G., Lemon M. & Wolf N. 2002. Trade-offs, condition dependence and stopover site selection by migrating sandpipers. *J. Avian Biol.* 33: 47–55.
- Zar J.H. 1996. Biostatistical Analysis. Third edition. Prentice-Hall, London.

## SAMENVATTING

In deze studie is onderzocht in hoeverre bij de Rosse Grutto *Limosa lapponica* predatierisico een rol speelt bij de plaatskeuze tijdens het foerageren. In de Waddenzee komen twee ondersoorten voor: *lapponica* en *taymyrensis*. Zij houden er in het voorjaar een verschillende trekstrategie op na (*lapponica*, die in het waddengebied overwintert, een energie minimaliserende strategie; *taymyrensis*, die het waddengebied tijdens de noordwaartse trek alleen in mei gebruikt om op te vetten, een tijd minimaliserende strategie). We hebben van beide ondersoorten in 2007 op Terschelling de voedselplaatskeuze, tijdsbesteding en opnamesnelheid bepaald tijdens de periode dat beide ondersoorten hier aanwezig zijn (midden april tot eind mei). Bij de keuze van de foerageerplek is als maat voor gevaar de afstand tot de dekking (bijv. dijk, bomen of struiken) genomen. Het bleek dat er meer wordt gepoetst en gerust en minder wordt gefoerageerd naarmate de afstand tot de dekking groter is (voedselbeschikbaarheid is hoger dicht bij de dekking dan verder weg). Individueel gekleurrende vogels lieten zien dat de twee ondersoorten tijdens de laagwaterperiode niet mengen, zodat de groepen van beide ondersoorten goed zijn te onderscheiden. Het bleek dat *lapponica* gemiddeld verder van de dekking foerageerde dan *taymyrensis*. De laatste foerageerde langer en was waakzamer dan *lapponica*, maar rustte en poetste minder. De dagelijkse voedselopname lag bij *taymyrensis* hoger dan bij *lapponica*, voornamelijk doordat *taymyrensis* langer foerageerde (67% tegen 33% van de tijd) en tijdens hoogwater ook in de weilanden foerageerde. Het lijkt erop dat bij de afweging tussen voedselopname en predatierisico *taymyrensis* meer voor een maximale voedselopname kiest. Ze foerageren in rijkere voedselgebieden, maar moeten hiervoor wel een hoger predatierisico accepteren. Vanuit de noodzaak om in korte tijd het noodzakelijke vertrekgewicht te bereiken, ligt deze keus in de lijn met hun trekstrategie. *Lapponica* daarentegen heeft veel langer de tijd om lichaamsreserves op te bouwen. Omdat hun broedgebied minder ver weg is, hebben ze waarschijnlijk ook minder reserves nodig. Deze vogels kunnen het zich blijkbaar permitteren te foerageren in de minder rijke gebieden waar het predatierisico veel kleiner is.

Corresponding editor: Yvonne I. Verkuil

Received 19 July 2008; accepted 22 February 2009

# ARDEA

TIJDSCHRIFT DER NEDERLANDSE ORNITHOLOGISCHE UNIE (NOU)

*ARDEA* is the scientific journal of the Netherlands Ornithologists' Union (NOU), published bi-annually in spring and autumn. Next to the regular issues, special issues are produced frequently. The NOU was founded in 1901 as a non-profit ornithological society, composed of persons interested in field ornithology, ecology and biology of birds. All members of the NOU receive *ARDEA* and *LIMOSA* and are invited to attend scientific meetings held two or three times per year.

## NETHERLANDS ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION (NOU)

**Chairman** – J.M. Tinbergen, Animal Ecology Group, University of Groningen, P.O. Box 14, 9750 AA Haren, The Netherlands

**Secretary** – P.J. van den Hout, Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research (NIOZ), P.O. Box 59, 1790 AB Den Burg, Texel, The Netherlands (hout@nioz.nl)

**Treasurer** – E.C. Smith, Ir. van Stuivenbergweg 4, 6644 AB Ewijk, The Netherlands (ekko.diny@planet.nl)

**Further board members** – E. Boerma, G.J. Gerritsen, J. Komdeur, J. Ouweland, G.L. Ouweneel, J.J. de Vries

**Membership NOU** – The 2009 membership fee for persons with a postal address in The Netherlands is €42 (or €25 for persons <25 years old at the end of the year). Family members (€9 per year) do not receive journals. Foreign membership amounts to €54 (Europe), or €65 (rest of the world). Payments to Postbank account 285522 in the name of Nederlandse Ornithologische Unie, 8897HZ Oosterend-Terschelling, The Netherlands (BIC: PSTBNL21 and IBAN: NL85 PSTB 0000 285522). Payment by creditcard is possible.

Correspondence concerning membership, payment alternatives and change of address should be sent to: J.J. de Vries, Oosterend 10 b, 8897 HZ Oosterend-Terschelling, The Netherlands (jacobird@xs4all.nl).

**Research grants** – The NOU supports ornithological research and scientific publications through its Huib Kluijver Fund and the 'Stichting Vogeltrekstation'. Applications for grants can be addressed to the NOU Secretary. Donations to either fund are welcomed by the NOU treasurer.

**Internet** – [www.nou.nu](http://www.nou.nu)

## ARDEA

**Editors of *ARDEA*** – Rob G. Bijlsma, Wapse (Editor in chief); Christiaan Both, Groningen; Niels J. Dingemanse, Groningen; Dik Heg, Bern; Ken Kraaijeveld, Leiden; Jouke Prop, Ezinge (Technical editor); Julia Stahl, Oldenburg; B. Irene Tieleman, Groningen; Yvonne I. Verkuil, Groningen

**Dissertation reviews** – Popko Wiersma, Groningen

**Editorial address** – Jouke Prop, Allersmaweg 56, 9891 TD Ezinge, The Netherlands (ardea.nou@planet.nl)

**Graphics** – Dick Visser, Haren

**Artwork** – Jos Zwarts, Bunnik

**Internet** – [www.ARDEAJournal.nl](http://www.ARDEAJournal.nl)

**Subscription *ARDEA*** – Separate subscription to *Ardea* is possible. The 2009 subscription rates are €35 (The Netherlands), €41 (Europe), and €49 (rest of the world). Institutional subscription rates are €52, €67, and €76, respectively). Payments to Postbank account 125347, in the name of Nederlandse Ornithologische Unie, Ir. van Stuivenbergweg 4, 6644 AB Ewijk, The Netherlands (BIC: PSTBNL21 and IBAN: NL65 PSTB 0000 125347). Correspondence concerning subscription, change of address, and orders for back volumes to: J.J. de Vries, Oosterend 10 b, 8897 HZ Oosterend-Terschelling, The Netherlands (jacobird@xs4all.nl).

**Exchange of publications** – All periodicals sent in exchange for *ARDEA* should be addressed to: Library of the Netherlands Ornithologists' Union (NOU), c/o Tineke Prins, Institute of Systematics and Population Biology, Zoological Museum, P.O. Box 94766, 1090 GT Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

**Books for review** – should be addressed to: *ARDEA* Secretariat, c/o J. Prop, Animal Ecology Group, Biological Centre, P.O. Box 14, 9750 AA Haren, The Netherlands. After review, the books will be deposited in the NOU Library in Haren.

**NOU Library (journals)** – Mauritskade 57, Amsterdam, Mo–Fr 10:00–16:00 (to check in advance by telephone + 31 20 525 6614).

**NOU Library (books)** – Library Biological Centre, Kerklaan 30, Haren (G.), Mo–Thu 09:00–17:00 (to check at [www.rug.nl/bibliotheek/locaties/bibfwn/index](http://www.rug.nl/bibliotheek/locaties/bibfwn/index)).

© Nederlandse Ornithologische Unie (NOU), 2009

Layout by Dick Visser, Haren, The Netherlands

Printed by Van Denderen, Groningen, The Netherlands, April 2009

Downloaded From: <https://complete.bioone.org/journals/Ardea> on 23 Apr 2024

Terms of Use: <https://complete.bioone.org/terms-of-use>