

**Ruff**  
**With colour rings**

Date: 20th July 2004

Time: 11.30hrs

Location: Oare Marshes KWT Reserve Kent UK

Observers: Dylan & Gadget

Ring Combinations:

Left leg Red over Yellow Darvic Rings

Right leg Yellow Flag

The birds are all ringed in SW-Friesland, a province in the north of Holland. The project only started this spring and they have ringed over 1200 Ruffs so far. Due to that, the administration is not up to date yet but we will get a full report later on. The peak of Ruffs migrating through SW-Friesland lies in the first two weeks of April, when numbers are at least as high as 50.000. The total period of spring migration runs from mid February till the end of May. On the way back (from July – September) numbers are much smaller.

The background of this project is virtually the same as that of the Godwit-research. Unlike Black-tailed Godwits, Ruffs are close to extinction as a breeding bird in The Netherlands! Large numbers still use Dutch grasslands during north- and southward migration. Ruffs have become famous for their 'extravagant' mating systems, with the colourful, large, males competing for the dull and smaller females. Ruffs staging in The Netherlands fan out to an enormous boreal breeding range with recoveries as far away as eastern Siberia. Most Ruffs spend the non-breeding season in West Africa, but some winter as far north as The Netherlands. Although there is evidence that males and females use different flyways, no evidence exists for population structuring of the kind known in many other long-distance shorebirds, such as Red Knots. This is surprising, as the timing of migration and reproduction varies strongly between different parts of the range.

The study of the stopover ecology and turnover of Ruffs in Western Friesland is carried out in co-operation with the Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Biology, The Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Canada.



**Colour - marked Ruff at Oare Marshes KWT Reserve. 20.07.2004**