

## **Biometrics of Breeding Common Sandpiper *Tringa hypoleucos* in Glen Clova, Angus.**

The Common Sandpiper *Tringa hypoleucos* is a summer migrant with a widespread breeding distribution on Tayside where it breeds along the banks of upland streams and river courses (V. M. Thom (1986) *Birds in Scotland*. T. & A.D. Poyser. Calton). From a general ornithological survey of Glen Clova, organised by the author and carried out by the Dundee branch of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club in June, 1978 (B.M.Lynch 1979; *The Birds of Glen Clova*), the riparian survey data showed that the glen supported a breeding population of Common Sandpipers which could lend itself to a ringing project.

During each of the five breeding seasons from 1979 to 1983 inclusive, visits were made between late April and mid-July to Glen Clova, Angus to catch and ring adult Common Sandpipers, map territories, locate nests and subsequently ring pulli and fledged young.

### i) Catching Adults

Most of the adults were caught using mist-nets set across the River South Esk on known territories, or at territory boundaries, to intercept birds moving up and down the river. Birds were encouraged to move towards the net mainly by walking the banks to flush birds but on several occasions the controlled use of taped song was successfully used. A few adults were nest trapped using either a conventional nest-trap of chicken wire set over a nest, or a fine mesh landing-net dropped onto a close-sitting adult. No desertions occurred using either method.

### ii) Adult Biometrics

:-The biometrics measured were as follows;

Wing-length was measured as maximum wing-chord, to the nearest millimetre using a stopped 300mm rule (Svensson1992).

Foot-length was measured to the nearest millimetre, from the tarsal joint to the end of the fleshy part of the middle toe using a stopped 300mm metal rule.

Bill-length was measured to the nearest 0.1mm from the bill tip to the feathering at the base of the culmen, using dial calipers (Svensson1992).

Nalospis was measured to the nearest 0.1 mm from the bill tip to the distal edge of the nostril, using dial calipers (Svensson1992).

Mass was measured to the nearest gramme using a 200g Pesola balance.

The biometrics of adult Common Sandpipers, caught in Glen Clova, Angus during the Breeding Season are shown in the following table.

Biometric	n	Mean Std.	Dev. Range	Max. Chord
Winglength(mm)	59	113.5	3.38	107.0 -120.0
Mass (g)	57	55.4	8.56	44.0-85.0
Bill (mm)	10	25.28	1.18	24.0 - 28.0
Nalospa(mm)	22	17.15	1.20	16.0 - 20.5
Foot (mm)	38	50.1	1.95	45.0-54.0

These biometrics accord closely with published data for other British breeding populations such as in the Peak District of England (P.K. Holland *et al* 1982, Bird Study. Vol 29;pp99-110).

However, this species is monomorphic and it is intended to analyse the data sets to evaluate the possibility of sexing Common Sandpipers by discriminant analysis. It is intended that this analysis, and other information collected from the population breeding in Glen Clova, Angus, will be published in the next Tay RG report.

Bruce M. Lynch,  
27 Luke Place Broughty Ferry, Dundee, DD5 3BN