

BREVI NOTE / SHORT NOTES

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IS THE WOOD SANDPIPER *TRINGA GLAREOLA* (*Aves Scolopaciidae*)  
REGULAR WINTERING IN SICILY?

The Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* is a relatively common wader species breeding in Scandinavia (except the South) and further East in Finland, the Baltic States and Russia, all the way to the Bering Strait (CRAMP & SIMMONS, 1983) and from 1969 irregular breeding in North America, Aleutian islands (WHITE *et al.*, 1974). According to data reported in bibliography it is considered as an occasional wintering, a transaharan migrant common during migrations, but irregular in winter (BRICHETTI & FRACASSO, 2015).

The species is subdivided into four biogeographic populations. A waterbird “population” can be defined as a distinct assemblage of individuals which does not experience significant emigration or immigration. This definition can only be fulfilled if the interchange of individuals between populations remains at a low level. The degree to which exchange of individuals occurs will determine gene flow and hence the justification for recognizing subspecies or merely populations. In Italy the North-West Europe/West Africa population occurs, with breeding range in Scandinavia, Baltic and wintering range in West Africa (source: [www.wpe.wetlands.org](http://www.wpe.wetlands.org) - Waterbird Population Estimates online database – May 2018 - **North-West Europe**: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland. **West Africa**: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Ivory Coast, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo).

Similarly to the methodology of many winter ornithological atlases (FORNASARI *et al.* 1992; FRAISSINET, 1995; CUCCO *et al.*, 1996; STIVAL, 1996; TELLINI FLORENZANO *et al.*, 1997; BIONDI *et al.*, 1999) we collected 52 sightings of Wood Sandpipers from Sicily during 16 of the last 23 winters (1 December-15 February, 1996–2018). We obtained data through: a) bibliographic survey; b) regional ornithological mailing-list (Ebn Sicilia birdwatching); c) interview to ornithologists and birdwatchers; d) Ornitho; e) periodical visits in suitable sites.

Only observations documented by photos or by observers with tested experience were considered. All our observations and photos have been uploaded on Ornitho platform.

RESULTS

*Bibliographic Survey*

SICILY. In the past reported only from March to October (IAPICHINO, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1989; IAPICHINO & MASSA, 1989), the first observation in November dates back to 26.XI.1988 in Siracu-

sa (IAPICHINO, 1993). More recently it has been reported as wintering in Sicily (CORSO, 2005; MASCARA, 2013, 2014; SURDO, 2016; ZAFARANA, 2017).

PENINSULAR ITALY AND SARDINIA. BIONDI *et al.* (1993) reported 2 ind. wintering in 1990 in Latium, ARCAMONE & PUGLISI (2006) one ind. on 21.XII.1992 in Orbetello. In the period 1991/2000 in Italy there were only four observations in winter, all in Sardinia: 2 ind. wintering in 1993, one at Cagliari pond and 1 ind. at Simbirizzi (Cagliari); 1 ind. in 1993 at Oristano; 1 ind. in 1999 at Cagliari pond (BACCETTI *et al.*, 2002); in the period 2001/2010 the Wood Sandpiper became more frequent with 9 ind. wintering in 2002 in 6 sites; 1 ind. in 2003; 3 ind. in 2 sites in 2004; 1 ind. in 2005 and 2006; 7 ind. in 3 sites in 2007; 1 ind. in 2009 (ZENATELLO *et al.*, 2014).

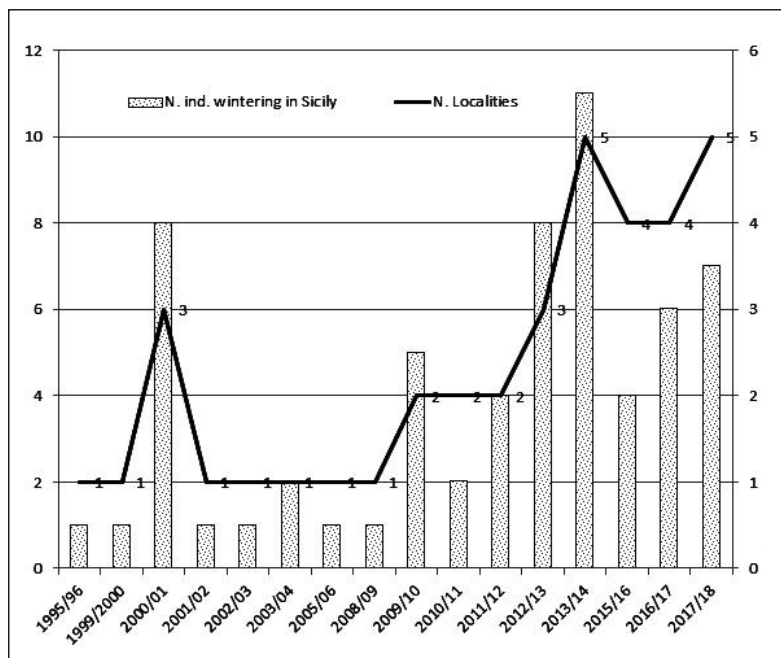


Fig. 1 — Sicilian localities of wintering Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*. The digit indicates the number of winters (Dec 1<sup>st</sup>-Feb 15<sup>th</sup>) during which the species has overwintered (years 1996-2018).

Distribution is not strictly coastal. The species, like the congener Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*, prefers freshwaters, often small rivers, small ponds, ditches. All this makes it difficult to census it carefully. Currently the Wood Sandpiper has been found wintering in 27 different localities corresponding to 21 UTM quadrants. Altitudinal range: 1-330 m. a.s.l.; average: 35 m.

The two European “populations” of Wood Sandpiper, mostly wintering in subsaharan Africa, are considered probably stable (DELANY *et al.*, 2009). Similarly other transaharan species, like Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* and Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*, also considered stable (DELANY *et al.*, 2009), are currently increasing (ZENATELLO *et al.*, 2014).

More investigations in the wetlands of Sicily (mainly in inland freshwater lakes and reservoirs, muddy marshlands, grassy stream banks, small temporary pools, flooded grassland and irrigation channels) are necessary in the future to better estimate the number and wintering distribution of this species.

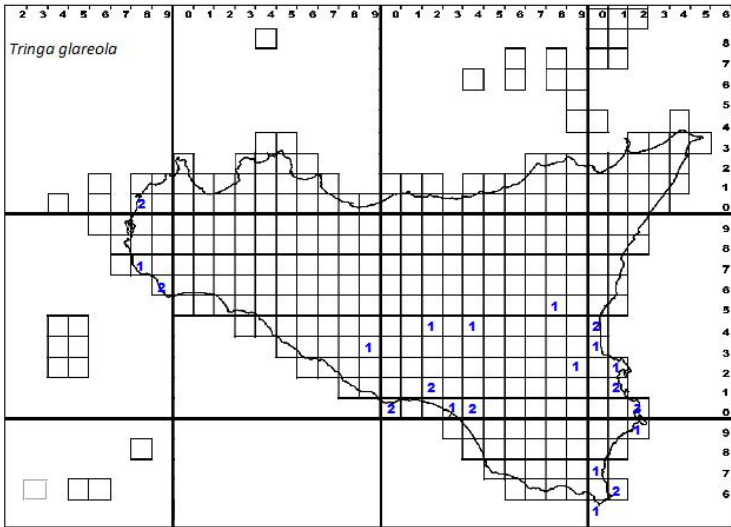


Fig. 2 — Total number of wintering Wood Sandpipers *Tringa glareola* (ordinate sx) and number of wintering localities (ordinate dx) within the period 1996-2018.



Fig. 3 — Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* (Photo by A. Barbera).

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