

Two overlooked specimens of Slender-billed Curlew *Numenius tenuirostris* from Turkey

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Gretton (1991), within a wide-ranging review of the species' declining status, and subsequently Kirwan *et al* (2008), in the context of a national avifauna, endeavoured to present a complete record of the Slender-billed Curlew *Numenius tenuirostris* in Turkey. The former included, as noted by Kirwan (1997), several 'records' that were in fact either erroneous or had never been claimed as definite, whilst Gretton was unaware of four specimens, all from the late 19th or early 20th centuries, held in museums in Sofia and Istanbul, and all of which have been personally examined by GMK (for full details see Kirwan 1997, Kirwan *et al* 2008), while Boev (2003) initially reported the two in Sofia. Remarkably, both Gretton (1991) and Kirwan *et al* (2008), and others who have published detailed reviews of the Turkish avifauna, most notably Kumerloeve (1961), overlooked two specimens held in what is now the Natural History Museum, Tring (BMNH), despite that they were listed in the relevant volume of the *Catalogue of birds of the British Museum* (Sharpe 1896).

Both specimens were collected by Thomas Robson within the general environs of Istanbul, from whence comes all of this collector's material. BMNH 1892.8.3.452, a male, was taken at Ismid (= Izmit, 40° 46' N, 29° 55' E), just east of Istanbul, on 1 April 1867, and was subsequently in the collection of Henry Seebohm before coming to BMNH. BMNH 1879.4.5.1318, an immature female, was taken at Cartal (= Kartal, 41° 07' N, 28° 03' E), now part of Istanbul, on the Asian side of the Bosphorus, on 19 December 1867, and came to BMNH via the Godman & Salvin collection. Their identification was separately confirmed by AC and JFJ during preparatory work on Corso *et al* (2014). These are the earliest records of the species in Turkey.

Kirwan *et al* (2008) listed a total of 28 records of Slender-billed Curlew in Turkey. However, with hindsight, a great many of these must now be regarded as unsafe, and a review of these, and records from elsewhere in the Middle East is in progress (Kirwan, Porter & Scott in prep).

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