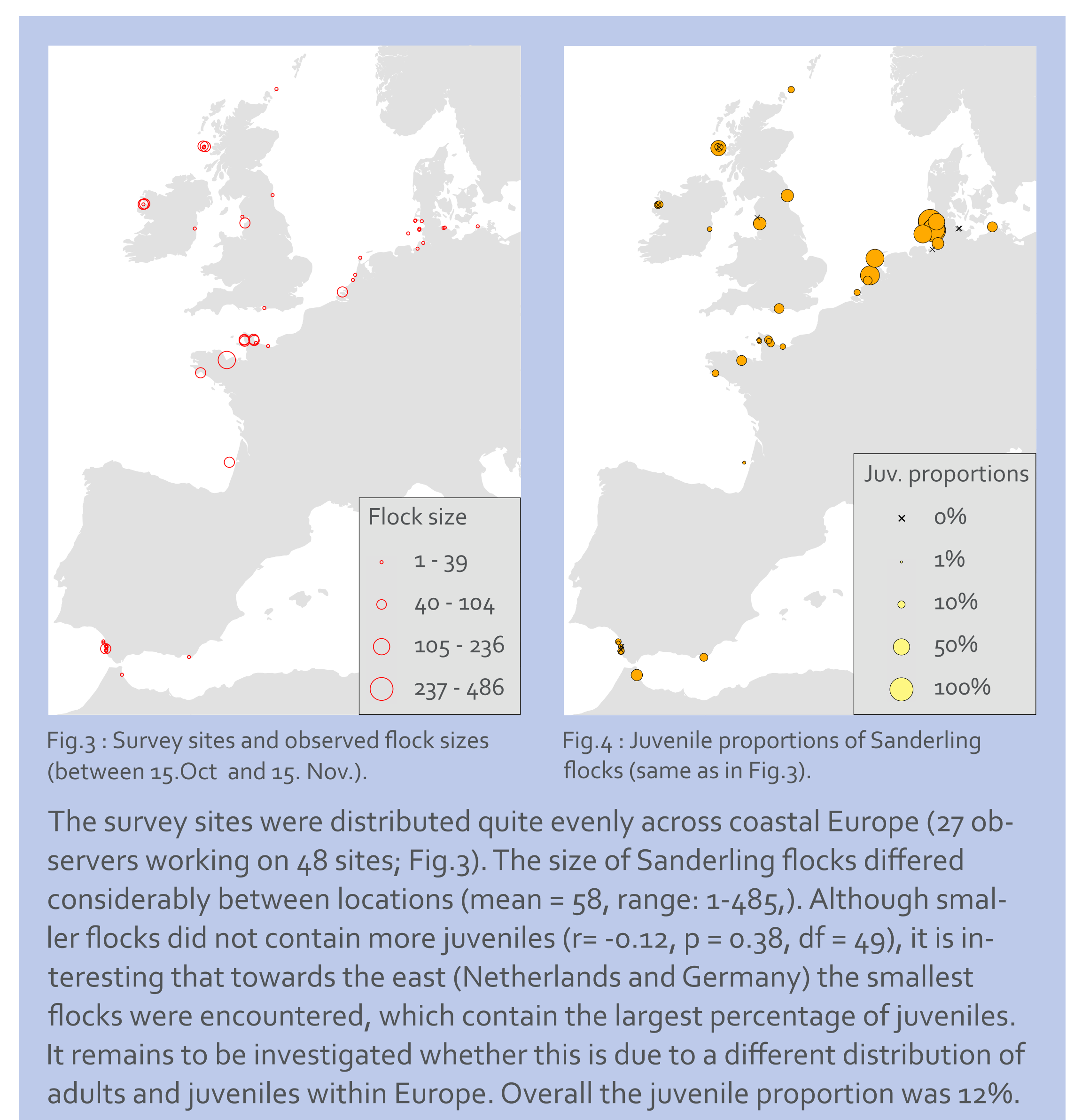
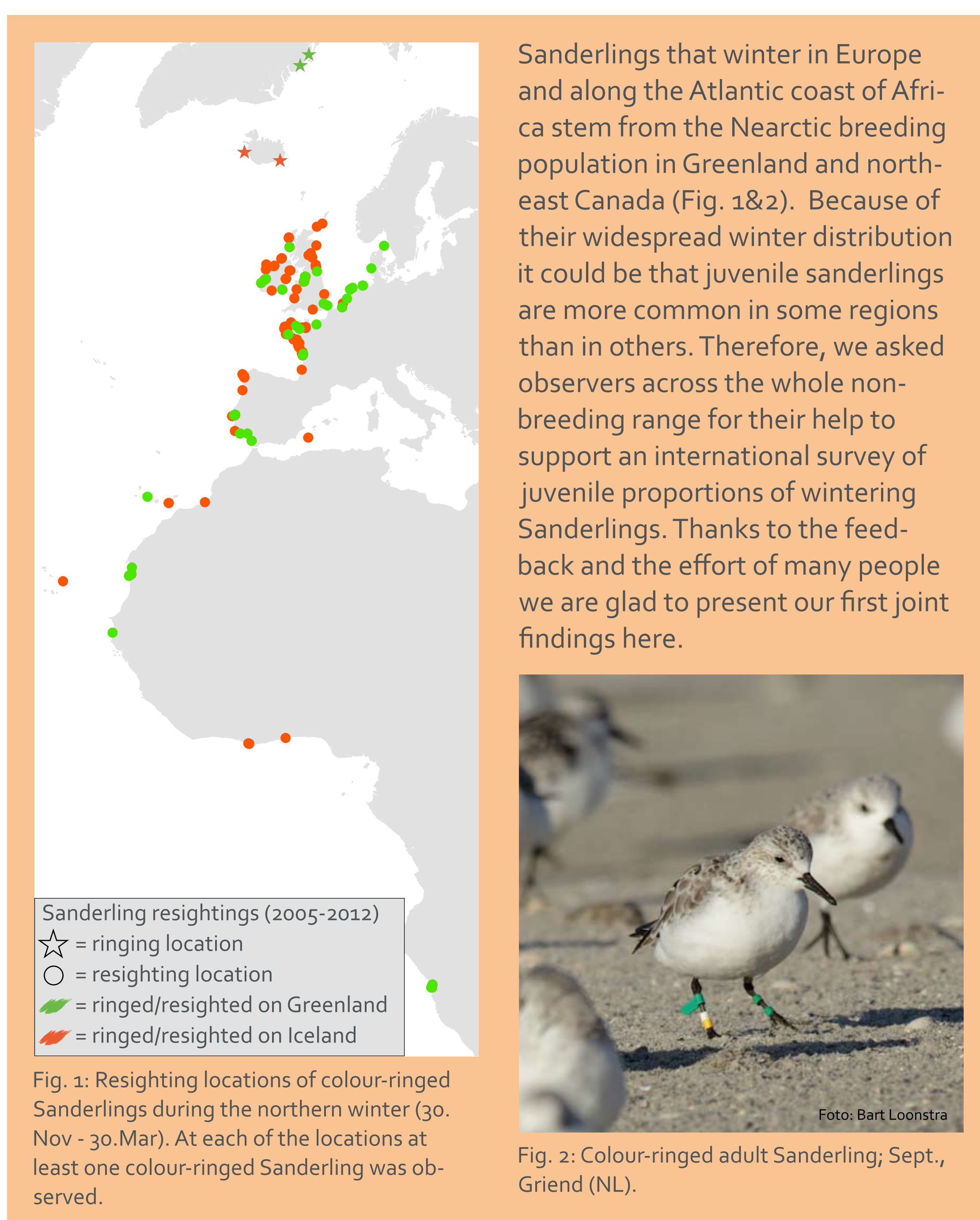


Juvenile proportions of wintering Sanderlings in Europe: first results of 2012



Conclusion: For the first time ever we were able to reliably estimate the age ratio of sanderlings wintering in Europe. The average proportion of juveniles was 12%, but there were considerable differences between sites in the percentage of juveniles within flocks. To assess annual differences of Sanderling juvenile proportions and relate this to environmental conditions in Greenland, we need to continue our joint international effort of counting juvenile proportions in the future. We hope to count on your help again next year and hope to get more data from African wintering areas as well.



The juvenile proportion of 12% reflects a moderate breeding success of the Nearctic Sanderlings in 2012, although we currently have no other years or studies to compare this number with. Breeding success is known to vary with differing predation pressure of Sanderling eggs and chicks by Skuas and Arctic Foxes, which usually prefer Lemmings as their main prey. When Lemmings are abundant, Sanderlings usually have a good reproductive success. In several areas in northeast Greenland there were good numbers of Lemmings last summer (J. Reneerkens, personal observations). The number of Lemmings, and thus the predation pressure on shorebirds such as Sanderling, varies considerably between years and possibly also between areas. It will be interesting to see how the number of juvenile sanderlings in Europe and Africa depends on the number of lemmings in the breeding grounds, which will be measured in the future years by researchers at several locations in Greenland. The enormous variation of juvenile proportions between locations in Europe shows that we should continue to study sanderling juvenile proportions at as many as possible different locations to get a reliable number. This can only be done with the continued help by you and many other international collaborators.

