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Abstracts

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

DO NEARCTIC NORTHERN WHEATEARS (*OENANTHE OENANTHE LEUCORHOA*) MIGRATE NONSTOP TO AFRICA?

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Abstract. We present data suggesting that Northern Wheatears (*Oenanthe oenanthe leucorhoa*) breeding in West Greenland and Canada may be able to accomplish migration to their wintering grounds in West Africa in one direct, transatlantic crossing of more than 4000 km (great circle distance). This conclusion is based on analyses of wing lengths, body weights, and timing of departure from West Greenland and arrival on an island 350 km off the coast of Morocco. Previously, it has been suggested that Nearctic wheatears migrate to Africa by a two-step journey, the first leg comprising a shorter transatlantic crossing to western Europe. A long, direct flight has previously been considered unfeasible as the predicted flight costs were considered to be too high. However, recent insights in aerodynamic theory make these long ocean crossings appear more feasible, especially when taking the use of tailwinds into account.

Key words: maximum flight range, migration, *Oenanthe oenanthe leucorhoa*, transoceanic flights.