

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Wader Study Group will be held at the Group's Autumn Scientific Meeting commencing at 10.00 on 1 November 1980 at Denstone College, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire, England.

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the last AGM held 6 January 1979
3. Chairman's Report
4. Administrative Secretary's report
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Editors' Report
7. Advisory Panel Co-ordinator's Report
8. Any other business.

Texts of reports from the officers follow.

Chairman's Report

Our last full AGM was held 6 January 1979 during the British Trust for Ornithology's Ringing and Migration Conference (minutes WSG Bulletin 25: 8-12). An Extraordinary General Meeting was held on 13 October 1979 at Nottingham, England (WSG Bulletin 27: 2). In accordance with the change in policy the next AGM (for which this report is prepared) will be held at the Group's Autumn meeting. In future the AGM will continue to be held at the Autumn Scientific meeting. However, those members attending the BTO conference will meet informally and matters of interest will be reported in the Bulletin (e.g. 28: 4).

Since 1978 we have been forced to raise members' subscriptions twice to the current level of £5 per annum as agreed at the Extraordinary General Meeting. These increases were absolutely essential to enable us to maintain the size and standard of the Bulletin. Hopefully we shall remain on a fairly stable financial footing for a few years. However the continued production of the Bulletin during the period while we waited for the new subscriptions to take effect was only possible through a grant from the Royal Society of London of £400 plus an interest free loan of £400 repayable in three years. This money enables us to continue and we are most grateful to the Royal Society for their support.

In 1979 we prepared a formal constitution for the Group and this was accepted at the Extraordinary General Meeting - the draft (which was accepted) is printed in Bulletin 26:3. Apart from the continued production of the Bulletin perhaps the most successful innovations undertaken by the Group were the two co-operative projects. One, on the spring migration of Siberian Knot *Calidris canutus*, arose mainly from William Dick's enthusiasm and involved many members in Europe and Africa. The results have increased our knowledge and understanding of Knot migration and have stimulated further continuing research. The other project, on the spring passage of Sanderling *C.alba*, Dunlin *C.alpina*, Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* and Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* through Britain and Ireland, was perhaps too ambitious but nevertheless is revealing new details about these species' migrations as Peter Ferns (the organiser) analyses the data collected. Again this is stimulating further research - we hope to make a special study of Sanderling migrations.

As William Dick points out, the WSG does not employ staff and have its own bureaucracy, so the Group cannot provide back-up to any project. Thus the success of a project depends on an organiser being forthcoming. However the Bulletin is a good means of communication and reporting. It seems likely that a future co-operative project will concern the migrations of inland waders and it will be organised by OAG Münster, Germany. The project will cover Europe.

Startled readers of Bulletin 28 will already have sensed the shape of some of the things to come in the shape of the new WSG data collection form and the instructions on how to use it. They herald what promises to be the most important of European wader projects ever promoted. Some details appeared in Bulletin 28 and more are in the current issue. Durham University (through Dr. P.R. Evans) has received funding from the Nature Conservancy Council and the EEC to carry out a three year study of the movements of waders between estuaries - a concept of great conservation importance. Our redoubtable editor Mike Pienkowski is to be the main organiser. I hope the WSG will appreciate the importance of the project. One major facet is the computerisation of as much wader data (measurements etc.) as possible including those much neglected but invaluable retraps and controls. In Britain, especially, I hope this scheme will utilise a great deal of the information which lies in many notebooks and on many forms - at last! I hope all members will join in and help enthusiastically because apart from the main aims of the project, we now have a chance to get vast amounts of data into a manageable form - this will be advantageous to every prospective analyst.

WSG Bulletin has long printed lists of British wader ringing recoveries - an item started by Tony Prater at the inception of the Group. Thanks to the BTO and their new computerised handling of recoveries we have, for the last year, received full printouts of all wader recoveries. Our policy has been to print the details of as many recoveries as is practical. As I write (June 1980) there is some doubt about the continuance of this arrangement with the BTO. I should like to hear member's views on the value (or otherwise) of such lists as soon as possible.

Colour ringing and dye-marking are powerful research tools in a variety of wader studies but they are also powerful confusers if there is no liaison or co-ordination between users within geographical zones of likely overlap. WSG is now acting as co-ordinator and clearing house for European schemes. This should be of great assistance to our members and others who are using these techniques. It is advisable and sensible that anyone embarking on a scheme should contact us first.

I think we can be reasonably happy with progress since January 1979. I hope members agree. The smooth running of the group depends on relatively few people. I am sure members will wish me to thank my fellow officers, their assistants and all those who help in producing the Bulletin. I would like to thank all those members who have given us help and guidance.

G.H.Green.

Administrative Secretary's Report

Since my last report given at the Annual General Meeting on 6 January 1979, there has been a slight growth in membership. The current roll is made up as follows (1-1-79 figures are in parentheses).

	<u>Britain & Ireland</u>	<u>Europe</u>	<u>Americas</u>	<u>Elsewhere</u>	<u>Total</u>
Paid 1980	190	107	46	25	368
Unpaid 1980	66	13	50	7	136
Membership 31-5-80	256 (220)	120 (60)	96 (160)	32 (30)	504 (470)

Since the beginning of last year there have been major changes in the British, European and American membership figures. On this side of the Atlantic, we have gained 70 new recruits and there were three resignations during 1979, and 13 so far in 1980 plus 18 deemed to have resigned because their 1979 subscriptions have not been paid. (A final reminder will be circulated to members who have not forwarded their 1980 dues to either Ted Miller or myself and they will not receive this issue until payment is received.) Of the thirteen British resignations in 1980 four are due to members now compounding subscriptions, 3 on marriage. Europe has been the area of WSG's major expansion with a doubling of the membership; in America initial enthusiasm has waned somewhat and we are left with 96 members. The details of gains and losses are in the hands of Ted Miller, so I cannot comment further, but one reason for the losses was my inability to furnish new American members with back Bulletins as soon as they joined. With our current larger print runs I no longer find this a problem.

Whilst on the subject of back numbers the following issues are still available at the prices indicated: Bulletin numbers 16 - 20 (as one volume) £2 plus postage; numbers 21 and 22, £1 each including postage; numbers 26, 27 and 28, £2 each including postage. No further reprinting is planned at the moment but may be considered if the demand arises.

The only other matter which I need to deal with is the distribution of bouquets. Each issue of the Bulletin contains a list of the members and non-members who have assisted me with collation and despatch but I should especially like to thank Ted Miller, who has provided the labour saving address labels; Phil Ireland, who took charge when I was in James Bay (Canada) during the birth of Bulletin 26; Matthew Cooke, who looks after WSG data, and my long suffering parents who provide storage, a poste restante and slave labour.

Graham F. Appleton

Treasurer's Report

The accounts shown below have been prepared in the same way as in 1978 - that is they only reflect cash received up to December 1979 whereas full provision has been made for all known outstanding expenses.

The receipts and expenditure account shows the impact of having to pay the full cost of printing the three Bulletins published in 1979 - the total costs being £875 against £330 for paper and materials in 1978. The increase in total costs of about £800 was only partly covered by the increase in subscriptions received. We were fortunate indeed to receive the Royal Society grant and loan to tide us over into 1980; we also had to use the cash received for the Bulletin back issues. The future looks brighter with the increase in subscription to £5 for 1980 and with the membership remaining very loyal, and indeed increasingly steadily, we should be able to maintain the subscription at the present level for three years. The only reservation I have refers of course to inflation which seems to be rising uncontrollably at the present time.

Receipts and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 December 1979

<u>Receipts</u>	1979	1978
Subscriptions received to date	1063	711
Interest (net of charges)	8	2
	<u>1071</u>	<u>713</u>
<u>Deduct-</u>		
<u>Bulletin costs -</u>		
Printing (inc. paper)	875	-
Envelopes, paper (1978) etc.	82	361
Typing	116	87
Postage	464	439
Editors' & secretary's expenses	<u>252</u>	111
Sundry costs	49	31
	<u>1838</u>	<u>1029</u>
	(767)	(316)
<u>Add</u>		
Profit on sale of bulletin back issues	206	-
Profit on autumn meeting	36	-
Royal Society grant	<u>400</u>	-
<u>Excess of Expenditure over receipts</u>	£ (125)	£ (316)

Balance Sheet as on 31 December 1979

<u>Accumulated Fund</u>		
Balance at 1.1.79	(118)	198
Excess of expenditure for the year	(125)	(316)
	<u>£ (343)</u>	<u>£ (118)</u>
<u>Assets</u>		
Cash at bank and on deposit	895	393
<u>Deduct - Liabilities</u>		
Creditors	(550)	-
Bulletin back issues	-	(232)
1980/81 Subscriptions in advance	(168)	-
Royal Society loan (repayable 1982)	(400)	-
Balance due to officers	<u>(20)</u>	-
	(1138)	<u>511</u>
	<u>£ (243)</u>	<u>£ (118)</u>

Bryan E. Murray

Editors' Report

Due to the change of date of the AGM from January to October, this is the fifth number of the Bulletin to appear since the last report was written. Numbers 25, 26, 27 and 28 contained 46, 48, 54 and 48 pages respectively, together with various forms and even what might be described as a colour supplement in number 27. Despite a remarkably tolerant view of 'deadlines' by the editors and considerable problems with the postal service, all bulletins have appeared on schedule. We owe this achievement to the readiness of our typists, Ann Perry and Ann Pienkowski, to work all hours, to the efficiency of our printers, Lake Shore Graphics, and to the resilience of the Appleton clan in collating and posting 700 copies, aided now by Ted Miller's computer-printed addresses.

The change in printing arrangements have been fully detailed in various bulletins and will not be repeated here except to echo the Chairman's thanks to the Royal Society. The format of the Bulletin has now stabilized somewhat but we retain the flexibility necessary for its varied content and its ability to include topical items at short notice (and MWP's need to squeeze a quart (1.14 l.) into a pint (0.57 l.) pot when preparing the pre-printing paste-up). We continue to attempt minor improvements and are working on the type-face incompatibilities.

In terms of content, as envisaged in the last report, we have been able to publish articles on a wider range of subjects than previously, including counts and distribution, body composition, catching and marking methodology, breeding biology, population dynamics, foraging behaviour, ecology, habitat-usage, territoriality, size selection and song display, whilst retaining a strong representation of ringing-based studies. The North American section has become a regular feature, under the editorship of Guy Morrison, now in collaboration with Pete Myers. Other contributions have come from S.America, Australia, many parts of Europe and Africa and Mongolia. Our popular series on 'Introductory Statistics' by Jeremy Greenwood has been successfully completed (and reprinted in Dutch in the magazine 'TWIRRE'), and we have started an occasional series on summaries of the current work of various wader research groups. Other innovations include publishing fairly detailed abstracts of meetings, both of WSG and of other organisations, including the International Waterfowl Research Bureau Shorebird Ecology Working Group and wader papers from several American conferences; book reviews, rather than brief notices; and the development of the colour marking register which is already proving of great value in passing on sightings to the correct workers and preventing confusion between schemes. WSG is now providing the wader colour marking co-ordination for British ringers and for Euring. We have also been particularly pleased to be able to publish the results of our two co-operative spring migration projects so soon after their completion.

There have also been two recent changes in arrangements for regular items. The computerisation of ringing recoveries at the BTO has enabled them to supply a full list to Harry Green who prepares the published version in the Bulletin. Second, I have been trying for years to find someone foolish enough to take over the listing of recent publications: at last most of this is now handled by Nick Davidson - thanks to him and the many people who help with obscure publications and the journals we do not usually see.

What of the future? More of the same - but we remain ready to consider anything new as well, and constructive criticism is always welcome. The current issue contains details of new projects as well as a wide range of articles and we are planning something special for December!

Michael W. Pienkowski

Co-ordinators' Report

When the Advisory Panel was initially set up, it was involved in considering the changes which have resulted in the present structure of the Group. As there do not seem to have been any serious crises since then, the Panel has not had to concern itself with administration. The role of the Panel is now more to promote ideas for future co-operative projects or any other development that seems desirable. Any such ideas are always gratefully received by myself from anyone, whether on the Panel or not.

Unlike larger organisations with large administrative structures, the running of WSG falls on rather few part-time individuals. In this respect it is worthwhile remembering that the organising of any project or analysis can only be done if a member is prepared to take on the work involved. Generally approaches to the Group are made by members with firm projects in mind, although we may be able to put members in touch with others in the formative stages.

The first two co-operative projects (Knot migration and Spring migration in Britain) of the Group have proved successful. Migration studies are clearly well suited to this type of project, where local studies and observations can be made more meaningful in synthesis with others. The new project in conjunction with Durham University will involve a great deal of work but will give results of scientific and conservation importance in an area of Europe where movements of waders is least clear.

Hopefully in the future it will be possible to extend the scope of WSG projects to areas such as feeding ecology, breeding biology, distribution and habitat registration.

W.J.A.Dick.

CHANGING AGRICULTURAL PRACTICE, SCOTLAND AND BREEDING WADERS

by G.H.Green

Ornithologists visiting the valleys north of the edge of the Highlands of Scotland in the past must have been impressed by the large numbers of waders breeding in the fields of the straths (Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, Oystercatchers *Haematopus ostralegus*, Redshank *Tringa totanus*, Snipe *Capella gallinago*, Curlew *Numenius arquata*) and by the abundance of other birds searching the pastures for invertebrate food. Many of the fields on the floors of the larger glacially formed valleys were poorly drained, managed as rather wet pastures and grazed by sheep and cattle. However, in many places all this is changing as the changing pattern of land use (from mixed farming to intensive arable) sweeps north from England to insert its tentacles into the valleys of Scotland. For example, when I first visited Strathardle (Perthshire) five years ago most fields were pasture and waders were abundant but in 1980 many fields had been ploughed, other pastures had been improved and there remained only a handful of wildlife rich fields where many waders were breeding. The modern usage of under draining, herbicide and fertilizer are resulting in botanical, invertebrate and ornithological poverty - a familiar English scene.

Obviously the march of agricultural progress will continue, especially in the present harsh economic climate, and farmers cannot be expected to maintain vast areas for wildlife at their own economic loss. The main object of this note is to point out to wader ornithologists the changing faces of the Scottish valleys. I know the conservation bodies are aware of the situation but I do not think much quantitative survey work on breeding waders of these valleys (as opposed to the poorer areas subject to forestry development) has been done. If some could be organised in those valleys as yet unchanged at least we may be able to quantify the losses and perhaps pin-point areas worthy of conservation.

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