

soon as possible, so that meeting arrangements can be arranged. For others arriving by "WSG Tours" or in private cars, a simple map is given here, showing how to reach the Ornithological Station from the centre of Gdansk. All participants should go directly to the Ornithological Station. Thereafter, its staff will take care of you.

The Ornithological Station is about 18 km from Gdansk centre. Choose the Warsaw road no. 7 (until recently this was road no. E81). In Przejazdowo village turn left towards Sobieszewo and Krynica Morska. After crossing the Vistula river by a pontoon bridge, turn left at the roundabout and drive for about 2 km along the river. The buildings of the Ornithological Station, with big white walls, should be easy to recognise on the right-hand-side of the road.

All this information, other instructions, and letters of invitation will be sent directly to all those who have booked. This will be the last full announcement of the meeting in Poland, since all booking arrangements must be completed before the press date of the August 1987 issue of the *Bulletin*.

We look forward to meeting with everyone in Poland, at what we are sure will prove to be one of the most exciting and stimulating WSG meetings ever.

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WSG SURVEYS OF BREEDING WADERS IN THE OUTER HEBRIDES, 1986

by R.J. Fuller

This note summarises the findings of the fourth consecutive year of survey work on breeding waders carried out by WSG in the Southern Isles (the Uists) of the Outer Hebrides. As in previous years, numbers and distribution of breeding waders were assessed using a transect method. The eight study areas were spread throughout the western seaboard of the Southern Isles and covered a total area of 31 sq. km. Reports on the surveys of previous years have appeared in *WSG Bulletin* 39: 5-29, 43: 14-15.

Further checks on the accuracy of the transect method were made. The results obtained by two different teams of observers, each of which covered the same two study plots, were compared with independent population assessments derived from colour-marked adults and nest finding. A further site where the 'real' populations of breeding waders were also known was covered by just one team. The different teams obtained very similar results. The absolute accuracy of the method proved poor at one site where there had been particularly heavy predation by gulls and where a high proportion of the waders were either sitting on repeat clutches or had left the site by the time of the survey. The accuracy of the transect counts was much higher at the other two sites although numbers of Ringed Plovers were over-estimated.

Numbers of estimated pairs of breeding waders on the eight study areas combined, with percentage changes from 1985 in parentheses, were: Oystercatcher 630 (-5%), Ringed Plover 568 (-27%), Lapwing 1005 (-4%), Dunlin 636 (-18%), Redshank 463 (-23%). Some of these decreases may have been a result of many birds not breeding at the time of the survey, perhaps as a result of bad weather conditions during the spring. There is evidence that Snipe have decreased substantially over the period 1984 to 1986.

Breeding wader numbers were studied in relation to drainage at two study areas where substantial drainage had occurred since 1983. As with previous years, there was no evidence of any clear decreases in numbers of waders that might be associated with the drainage. However, there was some indication that Oystercatchers were increasing on those parts of the study areas that had been drained. In studying the effects of such habitat changes, however, it is important to conduct observations over a long period of time because the site fidelity of individual birds may mask changes in habitat quality in the short-term.

Further observations were made on the role of cultivation as a factor influencing the distribution of waders on dry machair. Numbers and distribution of waders since 1984 were studied on two large areas of dry machair, each more than 80 ha, where there had been large-scale changes from cultivation to fallow and vice versa. On neither site was there any evidence that the gross distribution of waders had changed in response to the changes in cultivation.

In 1986 the wader surveys were conducted by Dave Chandler, Tim Davis, Rob Fuller, Anne Goodall, Tim Jones, Steve Percival and Mike Pienkowski. Checks on the accuracy of the method were made possible by Digger Jackson who worked out the 'real' wader populations of various areas of machair as part of a separate detailed study. We also thank Paul Boyer and Mary Elliott for their advice and hospitality during the survey. The work was carried out under a Nature Conservancy Council contract.

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