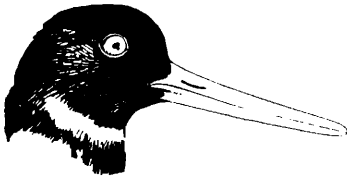


approach, although the advantages of modern computer-based techniques have allowed us to adopt a clearer format that now more closely resembles that of many journals.

Wader Study Group membership continues to expand, and the *Bulletin* to become more widely known. Papers and articles published in the *Bulletin* are now listed in abstracting journals such as the US Fish & Wildlife Service's *Wildlife Review*. Hence material published in the *Bulletin* is reaching an increasingly wide audience, and is quoted increasingly frequently in papers published elsewhere. This can only reflect the healthy state of the *Bulletin*, and we would not wish to discourage authors from quoting material published here. However, we do point out in our notes to contributors that some of the material is of a preliminary nature, and that this should be borne in mind if it is quoted.

To make the status of each article as clear as possible to readers, we have recently changed the format to distinguish between more formal papers and preliminary material. From *Bulletin* 49 onwards, more formal papers appear with an indented citation, abstract and author's address at the start. Preliminary material appears in the old-style format, with a summary (where appropriate), and author's addresses, at the end of the text. To indicate the status of these preliminary and progress reports we try also to indicate their nature in the title.

We do not intend that publication of such



## NOTES AND NEWS 1

Compiled by Nick Davidson  
& David Stroud

The *Wader Study Group Bulletin* provides a means of airing all kinds of information and news about waders worldwide. Of recent we have felt that the *Bulletin* has been increasingly focussed on scientific reports and papers, besides the regular features such as Recent Publications and the administrative matters of the group. However, it is equally important that the *Bulletin* reports topical issues and events, and serves its members by reporting their own activities and news. Accordingly we have started this "Notes and News" section, which we intend to be a regular feature for the future.

The material and types of topic covered in the section will be very varied, as is illustrated by those of this inaugural issue. We hope that items will fall into two main categories:

1. news of activities, projects and observations from members. Let us know of your recent activities, new projects and studies, changes in the membership of project teams, the end of old projects, or anything else, serious or light-hearted, that would be of interest to other readers;
2. brief news of forthcoming events, publications, meetings, conservation initiatives, and WSG activities.

But do not let this listing restrict you -

preliminary reports and results should generally preclude publication of the full results as a paper elsewhere (or in *WSG Bulletin*). Where such a risk is apparent, we try to advise authors that insertion of a brief summary might be more appropriate than publication in detail. Despite these safeguards, questions do sometimes arise over the repetition of material that originally appeared in preliminary form in *WSG Bulletin*. Ultimately decisions of this kind must rest with the journal editor and the author concerned, but we are of course happy to advise on the status of any particular item.

We believe that the forum available in *WSG Bulletin* provides a valuable means of stimulating interest, ideas, and co-operation between wader workers worldwide, and that the transmission of provisional ideas and material is vital to the effectiveness of this forum. Members may rest assured that *WSG Bulletin* will continue to publish this wide range of material, and to be a topical information-exchange of material about waders. Our publication policy will remain the same for the foreseeable future.

N.C. Davidson  
Editor, *Wader Study Group Bulletin*

"Notes and News" is the place for wader information that no other wader medium reaches. Above all, its success will depend on your sending us your information, news and views.

### Index for Wader Study Group Bulletin

To celebrate the 50th issue of the *Wader Group Bulletin*, we felt it was appropriate to ease the task of consulting back issues for that vital missing piece of information by preparing an index for *Bulletins* 1 - 50. The index is being prepared by Arjo Bunscoe on behalf of WSG, and the complex work of indexing is well under way. We hope to issue the index as a supplement to *Bulletin* 51 in December 1981. The index will be divided into subject, species and author indices.

### Conference on Wetland and Waterfowl Conservation in Asia

This conference, organised jointly by the International Waterfowl Research Bureau (IWRB) and INTERWADER, was held between 23-28 February 1987 in Malacca, Malaysia, and was hosted by the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, Peninsular Malaysia. It was attended by 103 participants from 23, mainly Asian, countries. The meeting aimed to:

1. review the progress of the Asian Wetlands Inventory;
2. present results of recent studies on wetlands and waterbirds in Asia;
3. present information on the activities of IWRB and INTERWADER;
4. discuss international and regional agreements on wetland and waterfowl conservation;
5. discuss principles and practice of wetland management; and
6. promote exchange of information and experience between participants concerned with wetland conservation in Asia.

The meeting was formally opened by the Minister of Science, Technology and the Environment of Malaysia, who invited the meeting to report to him on the reasons for countries in South-east Asia to join the Ramsar Convention, and for guidelines and mechanisms for the implementation of national wetland policies.

The Report of the Conference summarises the conclusions and recommendations of the meeting on wetland and waterfowl conservation in Asia, and the discussions and conclusions on the management of wetlands in Asia. In addition, the Report provides an outline of the other activities of the meeting, and titles of the talks presented.

Copies of the Report are available from: IWRB Slimbridge, Glos GL2 7BX, UK; or INTERWADER, PO Box 10769, 50724 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

#### INTERWADER expands its role



#### **IPT ASIAN WETLAND BUREAU**

INTERWADER, the East Asia/Pacific Shorebird Study Programme, began in 1983, based in Malaysia. INTERWADER has now expanded its role by setting up the IPT-Asian Wetland Bureau for Conservation, Research and Management, in conjunction with the University of Malaysia. INTERWADER will become a sub-programme of the Bureau, and will continue to conduct studies on waterbirds. Other wetland studies such as habitat inventories, Environmental Impact Assessments, training and education will be conducted by separate programmes of the Asian Wetland Bureau. This change will give INTERWADER a better institutional base and better links with other fields of wetland activities.

The *INTERWADER Newsletter* will be replaced by the *Asian Wetland News*, which will give considerable emphasis to waterbirds.

The postal address has now changed to: IPT-Asian Wetland Bureau, Institute of Advanced Studies, University of Malaysia, Lembah Pantai, 59000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, but all mail sent to the old address will be forwarded until the end of 1987. The street address of the office will change late in 1987, when a new headquarters building is ready on the campus of the University of Malaysia.

#### News from New Zealand

Paul Sagar of the Ornithological Society of New

Zealand, has reported recent shorebird activities in New Zealand to us.

The fourth national (southern) winter wader count was completed in June 1987. Since most of the New Zealand breeding species congregate at defined coastal sites, these counts cover the vast majority of the wintering populations of Pied Oystercatcher *Haematopus longirostris*, Wry-billed Plover *Anarhynchus frontalis*, Double-banded Plover *Charadrius bicinctus*, Pied Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* and Black Stilt *H. novaezelandiae*. However, the other New Zealand breeding species tend to be either dispersed along the coast, or at inland sites, and so need separate and specific efforts to obtain population estimates. Detailed analyses of counts will begin after completion of the summer 1987 and winter 1988 counts.

In January 1987, a team of ringers from Auckland, under the direction of Stephen Davies, began cannon-netting arctic-breeding migrant waders, for the first time for 5 years. In a fine start to the programme, amongst several hundred Knots *Calidris canutus* caught were 7 that had been banded in Australia. Although Knots are proving relatively easy to catch, Bar-tailed Godwits *Limosa lapponica* are much more wary and so far have been very difficult to catch.

Black Stilts, Wry-billed Plovers and Double-banded Plovers are also under special study this winter, with observers asked to make checks for colour-marked birds, as part of studies aimed to assess movements and identify favoured wintering areas of these species.

#### Peatlands of global importance threatened

Peatlands of global importance in Caithness and Sutherland in northern Scotland are in danger of being destroyed, resulting in possibly the largest single loss of important wildlife habitat in Britain since the Second World War.

This is one of the findings of "*Birds, Bogs and Forestry: the peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland*", a major report by the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC), which summarises a comprehensive eight-year study of the regions peatlands - the largest unspoiled primaevial habitat in Britain and one of the largest single expanses of blanket bog in the world. The study particularly concentrated on the breeding waders of the area.

The report points out that the outstanding international importance of these peatlands lies in their total extent, continuity and diversity as mire forms and vegetation complexes, and in the total size and species composition of their bird populations. However, the habitat is being destroyed by widespread coniferous afforestation.

Twenty years ago, threats to these peatlands on this scale would have seemed inconceivable, but a major land-use change is now taking place. The total area of blanket bog in Caithness and Sutherland is estimated to have covered 401 375 ha before afforestation. Since then about 67 000 ha have been planted or are programmed for planting, and only eight of 41 hydrological systems in Caithness and eastern Sutherland have been left free from afforestation.

Nature conservation interests in the peatlands are largely compatible with the traditional

land-uses, which include crofting, game management and fishing. However, afforestation forecloses future options on the traditional forms of land-use as effectively as it damages nature conservation.

These blanket bogs support an assemblage of northern birds not found in identical composition elsewhere in the world. There are important breeding populations of Golden Plover (17% of the European Economic Community (EEC) total), Dunlin (35% EEC total), Greenshank (66% EEC total) and Arctic Skua (2% EEC total). The lochs and smaller pools (dubh lochans) support breeding Red-throated (14% EEC total) and Black-throated Divers (20% EEC total), Greylag Geese (43% GB total), Wigeon (20% EEC total), Teal, Common Scoters (16% EEC total) and Red-breasted Mergansers. Rare breeding waders include Temminck's Stint, Ruff, Wood Sandpiper and Red-necked Phalarope. Raptors such as Hen Harrier (1% EEC total), Golden Eagle (6% GB total), Merlin (4% EEC total), Peregrine (5% GB total) and Short-eared Owl (4% EEC total) also use the bogs as breeding or feeding areas.

The report also points out that the physical and chemical effects of coniferous planting extends far more widely than the plantations themselves. They reduce the quality of water for breeding birds as well as affecting the freshwater fisheries, which are of major economic importance in Caithness and Sutherland.

At the launch of the report, the Chairman of the NCC, William Wilkinson, called for a moratorium on further afforestation within the area whilst appropriate solutions were worked out that would "protect in perpetuity this unique piece of our national and indeed of the world's heritage".

"Birds, bogs and forestry: the peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland" by David A. Stroud, T.M. Reed, M.W. Pienkowski and R.A. Lindsay is available from the NCC, Dept. PR, Northminster House, Peterborough, PE1 1UA, UK price £10, post free. The report will be fully reviewed in a later *WSG Bulletin*.

#### Breeding wader survey of Coll and Tiree

In 1982 a joint NCC/WSG survey of the breeding waders of the machair habitats of the Scottish Outer Hebrides was undertaken, some of the results of which appeared in *WSG Bulletin* 39. Further such studies were undertaken by the NCC in 1987 on the Inner Hebridean islands of Coll and Tiree, with particular emphasis on the machair breeding waders.

The machair of these islands shows both similarities and differences with those of the Outer Hebrides, and is potentially threatened as a result of an EEC funded Agricultural Development Programme (ADP). The survey aimed to quantify use of the Tiree and Coll machair and to provide information for use when considering ADP applications. It is hoped that a summary of the wader survey will appear in a future *WSG Bulletin*.

#### The Third Ramsar Conference, Regina, Canada, May/June 1987

The Ramsar Convention on the Conservation of Wetlands especially as Waterfowl Habitat is currently one of the most effective international agreements that safeguard waders

and their habitats. The third Conference of the Ramsar Convention took place at Regina, in mid-west Canada during late May and early June 1987. Besides hearing reports from the Contracting Parties to the Convention, and from other participating states, on their progress under the directive, four workshops were held. These were on: the criteria for identifying wetlands of international importance; the convention as a clearing-house for development co-operation; the wise use of wetlands; and the flyway population sizes of waterfowl. The Proceedings of the Workshop on the Conservation of International Flyway Populations of Waders, published jointly by the Wader Study Group and the International Waterfowl Research Bureau, as the Supplement to *WSG Bulletin* 49, formed background material of particular relevance to the flyway workshop at Regina.

Theunis Piersma, WSG Co-ordinator, gave a paper in the flyway workshop, and represented Wader Study Group at the conference. He, together with Nicola Crockford, and Hugh Boyd of the Canadian Wildlife Service, will report in more detail on the conference in *Bulletin* 51 (December 1987). Their report will be both a summary of the major conclusions and successes to emerge from the conference, and a personal view of the meeting.

#### Aspirin Migrants?

From a selection of exam howlers made by children in the north of England, and published by *The Independent* newspaper of 10 September 1987:

Question: What is migration?

Answer: It is a headache that birds get when they fly south for the winter.

We can add only that what the birds may suffer seems slight in comparison to the headaches they cause the wader workers who try to disentangle their migration patterns.

