

WADER STUDY GROUP CONFERENCE, GDANSK, POLAND, 24-28 SEPTEMBER 1987

The Wader Study Group's conference was held from 25 to 28 September at Gdansk, Poland, at the kind invitation of the Institute of Zoology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and was organised by the Institute's Ornithological Station.

The Group was honoured by the attendance of the Director of the Institute, Professor Bogdan Piasarski, who welcomed the attendees at the opening of the meeting. This was followed by an introduction to Gdansk and the Ornithological Station by Dr Maciej Gromadzki, Manager of the Station. Dr Mike Pienkowski, on behalf of WSG, thanked the Institute for its kind words of welcome. He noted that ornithologists from many countries have valued greatly their contacts with the Ornithological Station, and commented that the numbers present testified to the importance these workers placed on taking advantage of the opportunity to visit it.

The conference was attended by 103 persons from 18 countries. These are listed below.

The conference was held near the Ornithological Station, at the Baltic Youth Centre, a comfortable and well-appointed building set among trees a short walk from the sea. Visitors were made welcome with attractive posters and specially prepared logos (drawn by Michal Skakuj) and individually drawn name badges (by Przemyslaw Chylarecki) featuring the appropriate study species; the combination of research and artistic skills was impressive!

Both the meeting room and the adjoining areas were covered by an excellent range of informative posters and a superb series of photographs by Ivek Chojnacki depicting aggressive behaviour by shorebirds. Abstracts or papers on many of the posters as well as the talks are included in this Bulletin.

Visits were made to the mouth of the Vistula, the site of many of the wader studies, and to the Ornithological Station, where a very pleasant reception was held. An excursion included a visit to the small peninsula of Szpyrk where a wide range of coastal birds roost; the meadows of the Reda valley; Bielawa Bog, the most easterly of the Atlantic-type bogs in Europe; and the historic city of

Gdansk, where the reconstruction of the old city to its former state after destruction is most impressive - as indeed are its more modern monuments. Lunch was taken as a superbly organised picnic in the woods near the Bielowa Bog.

WSG is grateful to the Institute of Zoology of the Polish Academy of Sciences for inviting the Group to Gdansk, and to Maciej Gromadzki and all the staff at the Ornithological Station, as well as Group Kuling, for their excellent hospitality. The efforts of the organisers of the "WSG-bus", an exercise in integrated international transport, are also gratefully acknowledged. WSG Executive Committee are very grateful to Hermann Hotker for handling programme co-ordination and liaison on their behalf.

Only those who have organised conferences know how much work is involved in making one run smoothly, especially when so many individuals from different backgrounds and with different travel arrangements are gathered in one place. In closing the conference, Mike Pienkowski commented that some conferences are superbly organised but do not manage to be friendly, whilst others stay friendly but the organisational arrangements leave something to be desired. The members of the conference readily agreed that this was certainly one of the best organised and most friendly international conferences they had ever attended (and we hope the selection of photographs by Tadeusz Plodowski helps to convey this). To achieve this combination requires a great deal of hard work by many people. This hospitality depended greatly on all members of staff (including some retired) of the Ornithological Station: Maciek Gromadzki, Jaga Gromadzka, Benia Galer, Marysia Wieloch, Basia Lachwicz, Ania Czerniakiewicz, Irka Filipionek, Alicja Szostakowska, Marysia Filipionek, Terenia Zylko, Wojtek Kania, Bogdan Przystupa, Waldek Pagowski, Stas Pilch and Tadek Plodowski (with apologies to any omitted). Everyone knew that a special thanks was due to Jaga Gromadzka, who received a well deserved ovation from all present.

Thank you, Gdansk. We shall not forget any of it.





List of Participants

UNITED KINGDOM

1. BAILLIE Stephen R.
2. CLARK Nigel A.
3. CLARK Jacquie
4. CROCKFORD Nicola
5. DAVIDSON Nick C.
6. FLETCHER Mark
7. GOSS-CUSTARD John D.
8. HOLLAND Philip
9. IRELAND Philip
10. KIRBY Jeff
11. O'CONNOR David
12. PIENKOWSKI Mike W.
13. PRYS-JONES Robert P.
14. SMITH Ken
15. STROUD David A.

AUSTRALIA

1. LANE Brett A.

AUSTRIA

1. KOHLER Bernard
2. RAUER Georg

BULGARIA

1. NANKINOV Dimiter N.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

1. DOHNAL Karel
2. HROMADKOVA Vera
3. KOZA Vaclav
4. ZDAREK Pavel

DENMARK

1. JENSEN Niels Odder
2. RATTENBERG Nis

FRANCE

1. BREDIN Denis
2. DOUMERET Alain
3. DUBOIS Philippe
4. DUBOIS-HOWLETT Corinne

GREECE

1. GOUTNER Vassilis

THE NETHERLANDS

1. BEINTEMA Albert J.
2. BLOMERT Anne Marie
3. BUNSKOEKE Arjo J.
4. DIJKSEN Lieuwe J.
5. DIRKSEN Sjoerd
6. ENGELMOER Meinte
7. van der HAVE Tom M.
8. LAMBECK Rob
9. MEININGER Peter
10. NIEBOER Ebel
11. PIERSMA Theunis
12. de ROOS Gerlof Th.
13. SMIT Cor J.
14. SPIEKMAN Henk
15. VISSER G.Henk
16. van der VEN Joost

JUGOSLAVIA

1. BARTOVSKY Vladimir
2. RADOVIC Dragan
3. STIPCEVIC Mauricio



NORWAY

1. WILSON James

GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

1. BRENNING Ulrich
2. LAMBERT Kurt
3. LIEDEL Klaus
4. MULLER Hartmut
5. NIEHLS Hans-Wolfgang
6. SCHEUFLER Horst
7. SEEGER J. Joachim
8. STIEFEL Arnd

PORTUGAL

1. RUFINO Rui

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

1. HOTKER Hermann
2. KAISER Hartmut
3. KLINNER Brigitte
4. KOLSCH Thomas
5. MELTER Johannes

6. MLODY Bernd
7. NEHLS Georg
8. NIKOLAUS Gerhard
9. NIKOLAUS Marlies
10. PETERSEN Walther
11. PROKOSCH Peter
12. ROSNER Hans-Ulrich
13. SCHULZ Rainer
14. STRUWE Bernd

SWEDEN

1. GUDMUNDSSON Gudmundur
2. HOLMGREN Noel
3. JONSSON Paul-Eric
4. LINDBLAND Thomas

ITALY

1. BACCETTI Nicola

USSR

1. TOMKOVICH Pavel S.
2. GORBAN Igor

POLAND

1. ANTCZAK Jacek
2. BEDNORZ Jan
3. BOGUCKI Zdzislaw
4. CHOJNACKI Ireneusz
5. CHYLARECKI Przemyslaw
6. DYRCZ Andrzej
7. GRABINSKI Wojciech
8. GROMADZKA Jadwiga
9. GROMADZKI Maciej
10. GUZIAK Roman
11. KANIA Wojciech
12. KUPCZYK Michal
13. LONTKOWSKI Jan
14. NAWROCKI Przemyslaw
15. STAWARCZYK Tadeusz
16. TOMIALOJC Ludwik
17. WIATR Bogdan
18. WIELOCH Maria
19. WITKOWSKI Jozef
20. ZYSKA Przemyslaw
21. PISARSKI Bohdan
22. BAGINSKI Wieslaw
23. ZARZYCKI Jacek

THE 1987 WSG ANNUAL CONFERENCE - A PERSONAL VIEW

Robert Prys-Jones

On the morning of 24 September, 11 of the 16 British participants met up on the ferry for the crossing to Hook of Holland. Arriving there in a thunderstorm, we quickly found the WSG bus and eventually the drivers also. Travelling through a very wet evening, we picked up Dutch and West German contingents and then experienced the apparently endless formalities of two East German border crossings during the night and early morning. Throughout the subsequent day we cruised through the Polish countryside, somehow acquiring two speeding fines in the process, before arriving after dark at the Baltic Youth Centre, near Gdansk, where the conference was to be held. The bird most in evidence en route had been the domestic goose, happily still an integral component of most Polish farms.

The conference was opened by the Director of the Institute of Zoology of the Polish Academy of Sciences. 103 people from 18 countries attended, all European (including 2 from the USSR) except for the welcome antipodean presence of Brett Lane, author of the recent *Shorebirds in Australia*. Western and Eastern European wader enthusiasts were present in the ratio of ca. 2:1, allowing good scope for interactions between them. This theme was developed in the opening address of Maciej Gromadzki, manager of the Gdansk Ornithological Station, who looked forward to increasing possibilities of linking studies on migrating and wintering waders with research on their Siberian breeding grounds. Mike Pienkowski deserved full marks for delivering another introductory address partly in Polish, although his name belies his fluency in the language!

Among the talks, what high spots stick in the mind? Above all, without doubt, was Pavel Tomkovich's illustrated evening overview of the breeding distribution of Palearctic *Calidris* sandpipers, his third talk in a busy day. His slides spanned the length and breadth of Siberia and the full range of species likely to

be encountered. A shot of a Spoon-billed Sandpiper with two young drew spontaneous applause, and others of an Ivory Gull colony in Franz Josef Land stick particularly in my mind. The Taimyr Peninsula has been heard much of in recent wader literature, and now we had a chance to see it; maybe the possibility of actually visiting the Soviet arctic is closer than one might think? Ludwik Tomialojc's historical analysis of trends in the status of breeding waders in Poland was also absorbing, as well as particularly appropriate for the illustration it provided of Polish wader habitats.

The entire first morning was devoted to Dunlin, with the perplexing diversity of findings from studies in different countries leading to general agreement that the time is right for increased cross-border co-operation among

