BULLETINS ON SCHEDULE...ALMOST!

After the longest ever delays in getting *WSG Bulletins* 51 and 52 published, we are delighted to say that this *Bulletin*, the August 1988 issue, is going to the printers in late August. This means that most members should receive their copy of *Bulletin* 53 in early September, just a few days behind schedule.

Our task is now to ensure that we continue to achieve our recovered schedule for the publication of future *Bulletins*. Our next target is to go to the printers with *Bulletin* 54 by the end of November 1988. We already have a number of interesting articles and papers in preparation for this issue, including prey size selection in Oystercatchers, wader feeding in an artificial part of the Wadden Sea, migratory waders in Sarawak, and shorebird counts in San Francisco Bay. In addition we will of course be reporting fully on the proceedings of the annual meeting held in Ipswich, England in early September. *Bulletin* 54 will include abstracts of all talks and posters given at the meeting.

There is still time to include other material such as notes and announcements in the December issue, but any material must reach us very soon.

Nick Davidson

BTO/WSG BREEDING WADER MONITORING SCHEME - THE STORY SO FAR

Ken Smith

With the 1988 field season the BTO/WSG Breeding Wader Monitoring Scheme will have been running for five years. What has been achieved this time? Over the period about 50 or 60 grassland sites in Great Britain have been surveyed each year and, given a small annual turnover, this has allowed data from about 50 sites to be used to estimate year to year population changes for the key wader species. Table 1 shows the results for the 1986 and 1987 seasons.

Table 1. Population changes of breeding waders in grassland in 1986-87.

	Year Totals 1986	1987	% change with 95% confidence intervals			No. of plots	1987 Index
Lapwing	368	370	-14	+ 1	+17	40	71
Snipe	143	161	- 3	+13	+31	30	82
Curlew	68	57	-36	-16	+ 9	14	94
Redshank	107	107	-15	0	+16	26	70
Oystercatcher	64	67	-14	+ 5	+27	14	140

The 1987 population indices shown in the final column were all arbitarily set at 100 in 1984. For Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* and Redshank *Tringa totanus* the results indicate small but significant declines over the four years. For Curlew *Numenius arquata* and Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* the sample sizes are really too small to be certain of any trends.

Although the sites covered have a wide geographical spread (see the map in Smith 1986), they may not be representative of the population as a whole. For instance, Redshank breeding on saltmarsh and Snipe on moorland are not covered. It is useful to draw comparisons with the results of two other British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) surveys which monitor breeding wader numbers: the Common Bird Census (CBC) for Lapwings on farmland, and the Waterways Bird Survey (WBS) for Lapwing, Oystercatcher and Redshank on land adjacent to waterways. In 1987 the CBC and WBS indices for Lapwing fell to 62% and 92% of their 1984 values respectively. For Redshank in 1987, the WBS index was 80% of its 1984 value and for Oystercatcher it stood at 104%. Thus for Lapwing and Redshank the results for the various monitoring schemes over the four year period are in general agreement. However, for Oystercatcher the WBS results suggest stable numbers whilst the breeding wader monitoring scheme indicates a large rise. For Snipe there are no other monitoring schemes with which to make comparisons.

When all the 1988 results have been collected, I am planning to carry out a detailed analysis of the five years' data. In particular I will look at regional trends and the site habitat data.

It is clear that, in spite of site protection and new iniatives in agriculture such as Environmentally Sensitive Areas, lowland breeding wader numbers are still in decline. This is causing such concern that in 1989, and in conjunction with the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), there are plans to carry out a sample survey of about 200 wader sites that were last covered in the full survey in 1982. Some of these sites will be BTO/WSG monitoring sites, but is important that we also continue to run the montioring scheme as usual in 1989. In this way we will be able to compare our annual monitoring results with those collected in the wider survey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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REFERENCE

Smith,K.W. 1986. BTO/WSG breeding wader monitoring scheme. *Wader Study Group Bull.* 46:12.

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