

WSG/IWRB LIAISON OFFICER'S REPORT

Discussions about how best to maximise benefits of the work of WSG in relation to the need of the International Waterfowl & Wetlands Research Association (IWRB) for expert technical advice on wader issues were reactivated during 1992. This has led to a formal agreement between the two organisations that, for the purposes of links with IWRB, WSG will act in the rôle of an IWRB research group. A Memorandum of Agreement to this effect was formally signed at the 1993 WSG Annual General Meeting and its text appears in *Bulletin* 71: 2-3. By joint agreement I have been elected to the rôle of WSG/IWRB Liaison Officer (the equivalent of an IWRB Research Group Co-ordinator) by IWRB at its November 1992 Board Meeting and by WSG at its 1993 AGM.

The underlying objective of the agreement is to improve the flow of information between the two organisations and to avoid unnecessary confusion and duplication of effort through the operation of several expert groups undertaking similar work.

It is important to stress that nothing in the agreement affects in any way the independent status of WSG. Rather the agreement recognises that WSG has long been fulfilling a rôle analogous to that of an IWRB research group, and that formalising the link neatly avoids any duplication of groups covering the same tasks and topics. Indeed the extent and quality of WSG information exchange through its *Bulletins* and *Special Publications* more than adequately meets the rôle required of a research group. IWRB is now also looking at the agreement with WSG as a model for link-ups with other independent groups.

The work of the WSG/IWRB Liaison Officer has initially concentrated on developing the most effective ways of maintaining links with IWRB staff and other research groups, and with the IWRB Western Palearctic Wader Counts Database and its co-ordinator,

Cor Smit. In line with current IWRB practice this database, formerly managed as part of the Wader Research Group co-ordination, is now managed separately.

One consequence of establishing the link is the need further to consider the most effective ways of developing contacts and information flows outside WSG's main sphere of operations in the Western Palearctic, and in particular with both northern and southern parts of the New World and with AWSG in Australasia. Options are under discussion with the relevant WSG Executive Committee members and others to agree the most effective structures.

Since the initial set-up phase covered by this report further benefits of the improved link with IWRB are now beginning to emerge. In January 1994 I participated in an international workshop on "Estimating Waterfowl Populations" held in Kalø, Denmark. One consequence of this workshop was identifying the need to review and update population estimates for western Palearctic waders. This will form a major co-ordinating task for the WSG/IWRB Liaison Officer during 1994/5 and forms the first big challenge to WSG to demonstrate its effectiveness in meeting the needs of the research group. A further recent development is the drafting by IWRB of a Strategic Plan for future research group operation. More detailed information about these developments will appear in the *Bulletin* and progress will be reported to future WSG Annual General Meetings.

Nick Davidson

WSG Annual Conference, Büsum, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany

See page 49 for location map

The 1994 Wader Study Group Annual Conference will take place from Friday 21 October to Sunday 23 October with an additional day, Monday 24 October for a workshop on measuring and monitoring breeding success of

waders. On Tuesday 25 and Wednesday 26 October there will be an optional guided two day field trip to one of the Halligs in the North Frisian Wadden Sea (see April *Bulletin*).

The meeting is to be held at the Haus des Kurgastes situated at the harbour of Büsum. Hosts to the conference will be the Forschung- und Technologiezentrum Westküste (FTZ) of the University of Kiel, with the assistance of the Landsamt für den Nationalpark Schleswig-Holsteinisches Wattenmeer (NPA) and the Wattenmeerstelle Schleswig-Holstein der Umweltstiftung WWF Deutschland.

Delegates are recommended to arrive on Friday afternoon. Dinner will be at 19.00 in the Youth Hostel (5-10 min walk from the conference hall), and will be followed by some introductory talks on the Wadden Sea National Park (in the Haus des Kurgastes, where the bar will be). As in previous years, the formal part of the meeting will begin with the AGM on Saturday morning (22 October) which will be followed by talks for the remainder of the morning session.

Further talks will take place on Sunday morning, with field trips during the afternoon to the Meldorfer Bucht and the Speicherkoog Dithmarschen, both close to Büsum. The field trips will end at 17.00.

The talks at the meeting will cover a variety of topics, ranging from general theories of wader migration to applied problems of the conservation of breeding habitats of waders. We hope to see many contributions from central and east European countries.

The Monday after the meeting (24 October) will be given over to the one-day workshop on measuring and monitoring the breeding success of waders. This will finish at approx. 17.00. For more information see *Bulletin* 72 and map on page 49.

We look forward to seeing you in October in Büsum!

Hermann Hötter