

New developments in worldwide wader flyway conservation

Nick Davidson

This section of the *Bulletin* brings together a number of papers and articles that describe important new activities that are contributing to improving the conservation of migratory waders on various international flyways. Although the WSG is generally not directly involved in the delivery of wader conservation, it has a vital role to play by drawing on the technical skills and scientific expertise of its members to provide new information on waders and their biology. Such information and understanding is, as several of the following contributions stress, the essential basis on which conservation practice is built. Without a sound understanding of how and why waders use and depend on their flyways in the way they do, conservation measures at worst risk failing to provide safeguard for the essential features of the flyway networks needed by the birds, or at least that the limited resources available to promote flyway conservation do not get focussed on the highest priorities.

Several of WSG's activities, for example the publication of *Bulletin Supplements* and now the *International Wader Studies* series, bring together new information about waders into a form which can be used by conservationists developing flyway conservation. Similarly WSG's rôle in acting as IWRB's wader research group ensures that expertise on waders is available to those implementing international conventions such as the Ramsar Convention and the Bonn Convention, for example in helping to produce updated international population size estimates as the basis for setting 1% population thresholds for Ramsar site designation. This is an important international rôle to which organisations are increasingly looking towards WSG to fulfil.

In this section we include the following items:

- an update of current news relating to conservation activity on the East Asian-Australasian flyway by Doug Watkins of the Asian Wetlands Bureau;
- texts of the two talks (by Enrique Bucher and George Finney) that summarised the conclusions of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network Workshop "Towards a shorebird action plan for the

Americas", held in Ottawa, Canada in May 1995, and which set out some of the future directions that WHSRN and Wetlands for the Americas will be taking;

- an article from Rob Butler (Canadian Wildlife Service) proposing ways of developing global shorebird flyway reserve networks.
- an analysis (Davidson *et al.*) of the information needs for putting in place a flyway conservation strategy for waders, focussing on examples from the East Atlantic flyway; based on a paper presented at the 1992 WSG Odessa conference; and
- a description (Gill *et al.*) of the conservation of North Pacific shorebirds, reprinted (with kind permission of the editors) from the Transactions of the 59th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in 1994;

Several other important developments are taking place in the field of flyway conservation. These will be reported in more detail in later *Bulletins* and include the launching of an Asian-Australasian Shorebird Reserve Network, and the completion of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement under the Bonn Convention on the conservation of migratory species. A workshop to be held during the AWB/IWRB/WA International Conference on Wetlands and Development in Malaysia in October 1995 will also be addressing priorities for waterbird and wetland conservation. This workshop will be looking at how to improve international mechanisms for the conservation of waterbirds, at implementing and evaluating conservation actions for waterbirds, and at future information needs for waterbird and wetland conservation. Reports of the workshop will appear in a future *Bulletin*.

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