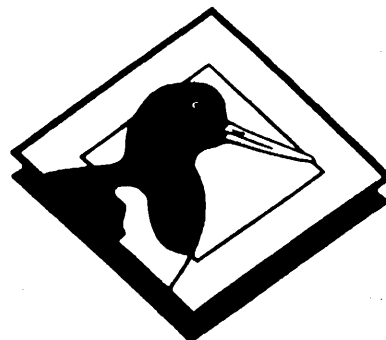


WADER STUDY GROUP



BULLETIN 79 April 1996

Notice of the 1996 WSG Annual General Meeting and WSG Conference, Belgium

The 1996 WSG Annual General Meeting will be held at 09.00 hr on Saturday 9 November 1996 during the annual conference in Belgium.

The full agenda of the AGM will be published in *Bulletin 80* in August 1996.

The Conference will be held on 9-10 November with a one day workshop on 11 November. Arrival will be on the Friday evening, 8 November.

Full Conference details, booking forms, and talk and poster offer forms, together with details of the elections of Officers and Executive Committee Members will be posted separately to WSG members in early May.

Those needing urgent information concerning the organisation of the Conference before May should contact Dr Patrick Meire, Institute of Nature Conservation, Kiewitdreef 5, 3500 Hasselt, Belgium.

IWRB Research Group Questionnaire 1993-95

The Wader Study Group, whilst retaining its independence, acts in the rôle of Research Group to the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau (now Wetlands International). These arrangements were outlined in *Bulletin 73*: 17-18.

As part of its reporting to IWRB's triennial Executive Board meeting (in this case in Malaysia in October 1995) WSG (acting as IWRB's Wader Research Group) prepared both a questionnaire summarising activity in the last three years and a forward plan giving the Group's objectives for the next triennium. We reprint the questionnaire and forward plan here since it provides a useful and accessible summary of WSG's recent and planned activities.

Name of Group Wader Study Group (WSG)

Co-ordinator(s) Dr Nick Davidson, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough, UK

Structure

- Under an memorandum of Agreement approved by WSG and IWRB in 1993, the WSG acts as IWRB's Wader Research Group.
- An international association of amateurs and professionals from all parts of the world interested in Charadrii (waders or shorebirds), WSG is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. The interests of the group have diversified from its original focus on ringing and migration-related studies to embrace all aspects of wader biology. Membership of the WSG is currently over 600 worldwide, of which about one-third are in the United Kingdom, where the group was formed in 1970. Members now come from over 50 countries around the world, including all European countries, and the Americas, Asia, Africa and Australasia. Membership costs £17 per year. Members receive all WSG *Bulletins* and *Special Issues*.
- Business is managed by a 16-strong Executive Committee

which, with its wide geographical membership (incl. South and North America, Australia, Russia and Poland as well as western Europe), fulfils an analogous rôle to that of assistant Research Group co-ordinators *etc.*

- Research Group co-ordination is undertaken by the WSG/IWRB Liaison Officer, who is an Executive Committee member of WSG.

Aims of the Group

The aims of the Wader Study Group are to:

- maintain contact between both amateurs and professionals studying waders;
- help organise co-operative studies; and
- provide a vehicle for exchange of information on waders and their biology.

The main means of achieving these aims are through:

- holding an annual conference;
- publishing, three times per year, the *Wader Study Group Bulletin*, and more recently also publishing *Special Issues* of the *Bulletin* each covering a major topic of wader biology and conservation; and
- acting as the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau's (IWRB) expert Wader Research Group.

Long-term projects

- **Wader Study Group Bulletin**, published thrice-yearly (April, August and December). A4 format, 1993: 197pp; 1994: 164pp; 1995 (to date): 147pp.
- **WSG Bulletin Supplements/Special Issues**. Special topic occasional volumes. Volumes published in this period: *Disturbance to waterfowl on estuaries* (1993); *Numbers and distribution of waterbirds in the Wadden Sea* (1994; joint with IWRB/Com. Sec. Wadden Sea).
- **International Wader Studies**. Occasional, fully-refereed, journal series replacing *WSG Bulletin Special Issues*. Launched in 1995. Forthcoming volumes: *Migration and international conservation of waders: research*

and conservation on north Asian European flyways; Wader study methods; Shorebird ecology and conservation in the Western Hemisphere; Monitoring, conservation and management of shorebirds in the Great Basin, USA; Kentish Plovers in Europe.

- **WSG Register of colour marks**. Co-ordination of registration of wader colour-marking schemes (permanent and temporary marks) and identification of colour-mark sightings for much of Europe. 123 marking schemes active in 1995.
- **WSG-supported international projects**. Current projects are: *Inland wader counts in Europe* (started 1979; analyses in progress); *Kentish Plover project* (started 1990; workshop summarising results at 1995 WSG conference).
- **Western Palearctic wader population estimates**. Re-evaluation of trends and population sizes, for input to next *IWRB Waterfowl Population Estimates* volume. Begun 1994; currently awaiting restructuring of IWRB Western Palearctic Wader Database before most analyses possible.
- **Arctic waterfowl breeding conditions survey**. Questionnaire survey (pilot year 1995) assessing presence, breeding conditions and (where possible) breeding performance of waders and other birds. Jointly with IWRB Goose RG and, in Canada, with Canadian Wildlife Service.

Short-term projects

None

Implications for conservation/management issues

- Much of the group's work, *e.g.*, the development of strong links with Eastern Europe/North Asia, the *WSG Bulletin Special Issues/International Wader Studies* providing an improved science base for the development of flyway conservation plans, and making standard research methods more widely available

worldwide, delivers implementation of the 1992 *Odesa Protocol on international co-operation on migratory flyway research and conservation.*

- Participation in the 1995 Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network workshop has resulted in improved collaboration in developing wader expert group links, and in evolving ideas for a global shorebird network.
- Participation in the workshop on estimating international waterfowl populations (Kalø, Denmark, Jan. 1994) and first Steering Committee Meeting for the IWRB Western Palearctic Waterbird Monitoring Programme (Peterborough, UK, May 1995): contribution to improved protocols for population estimation as a basis for conservation actions.

Meetings

- **Annual WSG Conference**: 29-31 October 1993, Ipswich, UK; 21-24 October 1994, Büsum, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany; 15-18 September 1995, Aveiro, Portugal (jointly with IWRB Waterfowl Ecology RG).
- **Workshops** (held associated with the annual conference): 1 November 1993, *Understanding patterns in Dunlin migration*; 24 October 1994, *Measuring and monitoring breeding success in waders*; 18 September 1995, *Kentish Plovers*, and *Black-winged Stilts*.

Collaboration with other Research Groups

- **Goose and Swan RGs**: joint development of arctic waterfowl breeding conditions survey.
- **Waterfowl Ecology RG**: joint conference in September 1995 (regular 3-yearly arrangement).

Publications

Davidson, N.C. 1994. WSG's Liaison Agreement with the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau. *Wader Study Group Bulletin* 73: 17-18.

Davidson, N.C. 1995. Assessing distribution and trends in population sizes and productivity

in arctic breeding shorebirds: some suggestions. *Wader Study Group Bulletin* 76: 47-52.

Davidson, N.C. & Rothwell, P.I. 1993. *Disturbance to waterfowl on estuaries. Wader Study Group Bull.* 68, *Special Issue*. 106 pp.

Davidson, N.C., Rothwell, P.I., & Pienkowski, M.W. 1995. Towards a flyway conservation strategy for waders. *Wader Study Group Bulletin* 77: 70-81.

Davidson, N.C., & Stroud, D.A. 1995. International coastal conservation: conserving coastal habitat networks on migratory waterfowl flyways. A.H.P.M. Salman, H. Berends & M. Bonazountas (eds.), *Coastal Management and Habitat Conservation*: 177-199. EUCC, Leiden.

Marchant, J. 1995. Report of the WSG Register of permanent colour marks. *Wader Study Group Bulletin* 76: 8-11.

Meltofte, H., Blew, J., Frikke, J., Rösner, H.-U., & Smit, C.J. 1994. *Numbers and distribution of waterbirds in the Wadden Sea. Wader Study Group Bull.* 74, *Special Issue/IWRB Publication* 34. 192pp.

Rose, P. & Stroud, D.A. 1994. Estimating international waterfowl populations: current activity and future directions. *Wader Study Group Bulletin* 73: 19-26.

Stroud, D.A. (ed.) *Wader Study Group Bulletin*. No. 67 (April 1993); No. 70 (August 1993); No. 71 (December 1993); No. 72 (April 1994); No. 73 (August 1994); No. 75 (December 1994); No. 76 (April 1995); No. 77 (August 1995); No. 78 (December 1995).

Tomkovich, P.S. 1994. Breeding conditions for waders in Russian tundras in 1993. *Wader Study Group Bulletin* 75: 27-34.

Membership

- Current membership is over 600. Full membership list last published in *WSG Bull.* 67: 6-18 (April 1993).
- WSG Executive Committee operates in a analogous rôle to a core RG membership. Committee is as follows:

Dr M.W. Pienkowski (Honorary President)
Dr G.C. Boere, The Netherlands (Chairman)
Dr T. Piersma, The Netherlands (Vice Chairman)
Dr N.C. Davidson, UK (Vice Chairman, WSG/WI Liaison Officer)
P. de Goeij, The Netherlands (General Secretary)
R.B. West, UK (Membership Secretary)
D.A. Stroud, UK (Editor-in-Chief)
B. Loos, The Netherlands (Treasurer)
Dr H. Hötter, Germany (Co-ordinator)
B. Klinner-Hötter, Germany
Dr J. Gromadzka, Poland
N. Bacetti, Italy
M. Barter, Australia
P. Canevari, Argentina
Dr. P.S. Tomkovich, Russia
E.A. Lebedeva, Russia
A. Yurlov, Russia

TRIENNIAL PLAN FOR 1996-98

Aims

The Wader Study Group will continue to develop its role as an international association of amateurs and professionals from all parts of the world interested in Charadrii. It will continue to provide a major forum for world-wide wader (shorebird) research, with the objective over the next three years of developing stronger links with members in the Pacific-Australasia and Western Hemisphere regions.

Priority Issues

Improved links (in parallel with IWRB/AWB/WA developments) with wader groups in the Pacific-Australasia region and the Western Hemisphere.

Improved delivery of species and geographical coverage of wader population estimates, in the Western Palearctic and elsewhere.

Improved coverage of Arctic breeding conditions data for waders.

Improved flow of compiled baseline information on waders through expanded publication base.

Priority Actions

Publish three times per year *Wader Study Group Bulletin*, ensuring wide international coverage of subjects.

Publish, as funds permit, further volumes of *International Wader Studies*, each covering a species, topic or geographical area. Volumes in preparation for publication during this triennium include *Wader Study Methods* Parts one and two; *Shorebird ecology and conservation in the Western Hemisphere*; *Monitoring, conservation and management of shorebirds in the Great Basin, USA*; *Migration and international conservation of waders*; *Research and conservation on European and North Asian flyways*; and, *Kentish Plovers in Europe*.

Establish a network of regional research group co-ordinators especially in the Western Hemisphere and Pacific/Australasia.

Prepare a Wader Monitoring Action Plan for developing co-ordination of expanded Western Palearctic wader population estimates, so as to deliver on three-year and nine-year update cycles for the Ramsar Convention and to provide information to the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds(AEWA) under the Bonn Convention. Effective delivery depends on the planned redevelopment by IWRB/IBN-DLO of the Western Palearctic Wader Database. Several WSG projects and initiatives will be developed to support this work, notably:

- Breeding waders in Europe II;
- Non-estuarine wader counts in the UK and elsewhere;
- Establishment of a 'surveys co-ordinator' to encourage gap-filling in geographical coverage;
- Establishment, in conjunction with the IWRB Goose Research Group and others, of an annual Arctic breeding conditions survey and database.

Group structure

Group structure and management will continue as present, but planned are:

- Improved links outside Western Palearctic developed through regional co-ordinators;
- Stronger representation in the Western Hemisphere developed in association with the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network;
- Target of 10% increase in membership.

N.C. Davidson, WSG/WI Liaison Officer

NEWS FROM THE IWRB WOODCOCK AND SNIPE RESEARCH GROUP

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*, Great Snipe *Gallinago media*, Common Snipe *G. gallinago* and Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus* differ considerably from all other European wader species in many respects. For this reason, the Woodcock and Snipe Research Group was established as a distinct Research Group of IWRB in 1974.

Due to their cryptic colouring and secretive behaviour, Woodcock and Snipes are rarely seen and may therefore not be counted as most other waders. However, since all of them are huntable species over most of their range, indirect population estimates have been calculated using two parameters, namely bag statistics and the recovery rates of ringed birds.

The most recent population estimates are published in the proceedings of the Fourth European Woodcock and Snipe Workshop (*IWRB Publ. 31*, 114 pp. 1994) [reviewed in *WSG Bulletin 75*: 7].

(continued p. 9)

NOTES & NEWS & NEWS & NOTES NOTES & NEWS

Compiled by Lys B. Muirhead & Robin M. Ward

HAPPY 25TH BIRTHDAY RAMSAR CONVENTION!

On 6 February 1996, the Ramsar Convention celebrated its 25th birthday. The Convention has had enormous influence in the conservation of wetlands, and has a current total of 90 Contracting Parties. A total of 765 wetlands of international importance covering over 51 million ha (as of November 1995) are listed by its signatory nations, a total that grows monthly. It is fitting that Australia, the first country to sign the Convention, should be host to this year's Conference of the Contracting Parties (the sixth since the Convention came into force).

The Conference of the Parties is being held in Brisbane between 19 and 27 March and waders are due to feature prominently in a number of the Resolutions and Recommendations proposed.

The Ramsar Conference is being preceded by an international meeting organised by the Australasian Wader Study Group focussing on "Shorebird conservation in the Asia-Pacific region" (see insert in *Bulletin 78*). The aims of this meeting relate especially to means of enhancing international co-operation in shorebird conservation along the East Asian/ Australasian flyway (see below). The Asian Wetlands Bureau's Shorebird Flyway Officer Doug Watkins outlined some of the issues in *Bulletin 77*: 63.

A full report on the outcomes of both the Ramsar and AWSG Conferences will appear in *Bulletin 80*.

David Stroud

EAST ASIA-AUSTALASIAN SHOREBIRD FLYWAY PROJECT

This project has been developed as part of the implementation of the 'Kushiro Initiative' (see *Bulletin 75*: 18-19).

A Shorebird Reserve Network proposal developed by AWB was presented to bilateral migratory-bird meetings involving Japan, China and Australia in June 1995. At the meetings, Australia announced that it proposed to draft a recommendation for the next Ramsar meeting in support of the Shorebird Network Proposal.

In September, the recommendation supporting the development of a network of sites for the conservation of shorebirds was formally presented by the Australian Government to the Ramsar Standing Committee meeting in Brisbane. Japan joined Australia in co-sponsoring the recommendation.

Also in September, the Australian Minister for the Environment wrote to each of the countries that are Parties to the Ramsar Convention in the East Asia-Australasian Flyway to encourage them to support the recommendation and nominate a site for the Shorebird Reserve Network.

Plans are well on track for the launch of the Network at the Ramsar Conference in Brisbane in March 1996. In addition to Australia and Japan, the UK (Hong Kong) and New Zealand have formally indicated support for the recommendation. At Government officer level, the recommendation has strong support in the Philippines, China, Indonesia and the US (Alaska). With all the countries there is a need for follow-up work to discuss the potential sites for nomination to the Network.

In late November and December 1995, AWB plans follow-up discussions in New Zealand, China, Hong Kong and Vietnam.

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