

The Conference venue is de *Hoge Riel* near Kasterlee in the Campine area of the Province of Antwerp (in the north east part of Flanders). It is situated about 40 km east of the city of Antwerp and 65 km northeast of Brussels. It is easily accessible by highway from all directions and within easy reach (a 20 minute walk) of the railway station of Tielen. However, we will organise a shuttle bus (car) service from the station to the conference site.

De *Hoge Riel* is a 230 ha 'green' family holiday park in a woodland area. Sleeping facilities during the conference are available in three pavilions, two large ones with 52 beds each, and a smaller one with 36 beds. In the large pavilions, there are two dormitories for 24 people and two small rooms with four beds each. In the small one, six two-bed and six four-bed available. Each pavilion has its own washing rooms, toilets, small meeting rooms and common room. If necessary, extra sleeping space will be available.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner will be held in the park's restaurant (within easy reach of the pavilions). Meetings will be held in the 'Theatre', a lecture hall with a capacity for 250 people.

The all-important social evening will be held in the café (pub) situated nearby.



OFFICER'S REPORTS FOR 1995

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

More than a year of activities of the International Wader Study Group, as we informally call ourselves now, will have passed between our 1995 meeting in Aveiro and the 1996 meeting in Belgium. A long year in which the WSG, step by step further settled its policy to co-ordinate and stimulate wader research world-wide.

A highlight in this respect was the attendance by many WSG members, as well as members of the Executive Committee and including your Chairman at the international shorebird conference organised by our colleagues in the Australasian Wader Study Group. The meeting took place in the days before the start of the 25th anniversary Conference of the parties to the Ramsar Convention and the venue was the beautiful Museum of Natural History in Brisbane.

Besides many bilateral contacts between AWSG and WSG officers we enjoyed an enjoyable working dinner, in the open air, with members of the two Executive Committees and agreed various ways to increase co-operation and joint activities. These included: the publication of a joint recent publications listing, the free exchange/reprinting of interesting articles and news items from the *WSG Bulletin* and *The Stilt*; and the continuation of the present representation of AWSG officers on the WSG Executive Committee. We agreed that WSG should remain the overall co-ordinating body and the official link with Wetlands International and its network of specialist Groups.

The situation with the Americas, as far as WSG members, contacts and activities go, is less developed. Within Wetlands International-Americas, the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network will continue its active policy of developing a network of important wader sites and stimulate research, surveys and exchange of information.

Another promising start for wader conservation is the initiation of a similar network of important wader sites in the Asia Pacific flyway (reported elsewhere in this Bulletin). This initiative - part of Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy - was launched during the 25th anniversary of the Ramsar Convention celebrated in Brisbane in March this year. I had the pleasure to be present and to congratulate Karin Weaver and Doug Watkins of the Australian Nature Conservation Agency and Wetland International for this success which has taken several years of careful preparations.

Brisbane bought more to celebrate: Wetlands International was formally launched, and at the same time it was announced that the global headquarters and operations for Africa, Europe and the Middle east would be moved to the Netherlands. The move will not affect the continued close working of WSG and Wetlands International.

An issue that has worried me for some time is that of balanced representation and activity: WSG is a world-wide organisation, but still very European-based. It is therefore promising that a WSG project in South America is well underway. More activities, however, could be undertaken or stimulated and new members recruited. To give an example in which I was involved: after the Brisbane Ramsar Conference I travelled to New Zealand to visit a former colleague from the Netherlands. Although nowadays a successful green-mussel farmer, he is also very active in counting waders at Farewell Spit, a Ramsar site at the northern part of South Island. With his team of 5-6 volunteer ornithologist colleagues they will soon start a wader ringing programme as well. So far they have operated much on their own and thus in an isolated manner, but at least two will now become WSG members, contact the AWSG and will co-ordinate their activities on a flyway level...

I am convinced that at many more places similar activities, mainly on a small scale are undertaken. I encourage all WSG members to search for them and stimulate them to become WSG members and so

increase the world-wide size of our research and communication network.

Gerard Boere

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Wader Study Group had 625 members at the end of December 1995 - a slight but welcome increase on that of 1994. Although the increase is pleasing, we have still a significant way to go towards our target of 750.

As stressed in the Chairman's Report above, all members can assist the group to grow by persuading colleagues to join (or libraries to take out subscriptions!). If all members joined at least one other member, the Group's financial base would allow us to consider a much wider range of activity.

Please help us find more members: the value for money is excellent (although if you are reading this you are probably aware of this already!). Spread the word - if you require membership forms, copies of the logo or any other materials that might assist you in persuading other wader workers to join the group, I would be more than please to help.

Rodney West



EDITOR'S REPORT

As in previous years, the main focus of editorial activity during 1995 was to maintain the publication of three WSG *Bulletins* to timetable, whilst still

further enhancing the scope of *Bulletin* coverage.

Further improvements to the publication timetable were made with many members receiving both the December 1995 and April 1996 *Bulletins* early in the month of publication.

A total of 204 *Bulletin* pages were published in 1995, an increase over that achieved in 1994 (166 pages) and 1993 (201 pages).

Nick Davidson continued to undertake considerable much work related to the new WSG publication series *International Wader Studies* announced in *Bulletin* 72. As noted last year, the incubation periods for such volumes are often lengthy and although no volume was published in 1995, the first in the series' house style (although actually numbered as the eighth supplementary *Bulletin*) was published in April 1996.

Shorebird ecology and conservation in the Western Hemisphere is the long awaited proceedings of a shorebird symposium held in Quito, Ecuador in 1991, and has been published with the aid of generous financial support from the Canadian Wildlife Service.

A number of other volumes in *International Wader Studies* series were prepared during 1995 and will appear in 1996. The largest of these will be the proceedings of the 1992 Odessa WSG conference. With the assistance of a publication grant from the British Ornithologist's Union, it is intended to publish this major volume during 1996.

During the year Nicola Crockford resigned from the editorial team after several years, and we thank her for her considerable assistance since she joined the team.

As ever, particular thanks are also due to the many WSG members who act regularly as referees for papers as well as those who have given time to act as book reviewers. The continued inputs of Phil Holland in summarising recent ringing recoveries, and of Henk Koffijberg in collating recent publications are also much valued.

David A. Stroud

TREASURER'S REPORT

1995 was a financially healthy year with an excess of income over expenditure a little more than £3 000. This was mainly due to the 1994 Conference which gave us a substantial but unexpected surplus. We have reserved this surplus, suggestions as to how to use this fund will be made at the next AGM.

For the first time ever, the total subscription income for the current year exceeded £10 000! A substantial part of the subscriptions are paid in foreign currency; the decreases rate of the British pound makes it possible, however, to obtain more pounds from exchange of currencies such as US \$, Dutch Guilder and the German Mark. The decreased exchange rate (-/-10%) is also the reason for the exchange profit - our outstanding claims against the bank are partly in the UK and partly in the Netherlands.

Due to additional efforts, including at the Aveiro Conference, the sale of back *Bulletins* and other publications have increased substantially.

It should be noted that following a comprehensive audit of WSG property, we have also depreciated the value of computers held in 1994, thus slightly changing the figures for 1994 also.

The accounts show that printing and dispatch of the *Bulletin* takes a greater part of the expenditure; approximately 60% in both years. It should also be noted that in 1995 as in previous years, a very considerable amount of the work of the Group is undertaken for free: one of the main reasons for the current healthy financial state.

It will not be necessary to increase the subscription rate in 1997, although the currency exchange rates of the different currencies may force us to surcharge membership fees when these are paid in foreign currencies. It may, nonetheless be necessary to increase membership fees in 1998, but you can help us avoid this by paying on time and actively seeking new members for the Group so as to broaden further of financial base.

Bob Loos

Balance sheet as at 31 December 1995

	1994	1995		1994	1995
Computers & printers	2 800	1 725	Capital	15 670	14 913
Stock of back <i>Bulletins</i> and publications	p.m.	p.m.	Subscriptions in advance	1 275	1 432
Cash at bank and on deposit	17 145	20 673	Conference fund	-	1 982
Debtors	-	586	<i>Bulletin</i> No. 69 (methodology reprints)	2 000	2 000
			Dunlin special issue	1 000	-
			Breeding waders in Europe	-	150
			Arctic waterfowl monitoring	-	470
			Creditors	-	2 037
	£19 945	£22 984		£19 945	£22 984



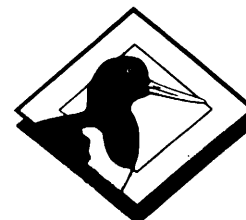
Receipts and expenditure account

Receipts

	1994	1995
Subscriptions	8 452.76	9 017.01
Subscriptions from the previous year	252.13	407.50
Subscriptions from the next year	1 275.41	1 432.43
Interest received	684.85	714.91
Colour Marking Register	557.21	545.43
Sale of back <i>Bulletins</i> and other publications	244.00	1 056.76
External contributions to publications	2 000.00	1 250.00
Conference	43.58	1 982.73
Miscellaneous	62.14	209.00
Exchange profit	101.51	262.01
Untraced	145.18	-
Rounding	-	0.07
TOTAL INCOME	£13 818.77	£16 877.85

Expenditure

	1994	1995
<i>Bulletin</i> costs:		
Printing	4 176.00	5 049.50
Supplement	663.50	1 026.96
Typing	88.00	-
Dispatch	2 115.98	2 980.87
Editorial	-	82.23
Secretarial costs and miscellaneous	1 763.22	2 980.87
Colour Marking Register	710.21	451.57
Bank charges	148.50	190.93
Depreciation on computers <i>etc.</i>	716.78	1 075.00
Unpaid cheques	17.00	-
Untraced	46.85	-
Investments	-	160.36
<i>International Wader Studies</i>	-	542.29
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£10 446.04	£13 839.50



EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	£3 372.73	£3 038.35
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WSG/WETLANDS INTERNATIONAL LIAISON OFFICER'S REPORT

Three years into the formal agreement between WSG and Wetlands International (then IWRB) for WSG to act as IWRB's Wader Research Group, and WSG has been able to play an increasingly beneficial rôle working to provide specialist wader advice to Wetlands International's programmes.

I have fully documented in the last few *Bulletins* how WSG works with Wetlands International (see especially *Bulletin 79*: 1-4) and the main activities during 1995. Whilst the WSG link has continued, there have been very substantial changes made to how IWRB/Wetlands International operate. In October 1995 I attended IWRB's Board Meeting in Selangor, Malaysia at which IWRB was restructured to become Wetlands International, with IWRB's Research Groups retitled to become Specialist Groups (WSG is now the Wader Specialist Group), and a Strategic Plan for Specialist Group development was adopted (see *Bulletin 79*: 8-9). It was clear at the Board Meeting that the nature of the link between Wetlands International and WSG (as an independent group) provides an excellent model for the way in which other Specialist Groups might develop their rôle.

With the new regional structure of Wetlands International, in which there is a small global co-ordination unit and three regional licencees (Africa, Europe, Middle East; Asia-Pacific; and, most recently, the Americas), we have been considering how best to improve links with wader/ shorebird groups worldwide so as to mirror the Wetlands International structure and provide appropriate advice at both global and regional scales. This will form a key task in the coming years, and further discussions about these links took place at the 1996 Brisbane Meeting of Ramsar Contracting Parties.

On a similar theme, I and co-Vice Chairman Theunis Piersma attended the May 1995 Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network Workshop, held in Ottawa to celebrate the tenth anniversary of this highly

successful wader conservation network. Discussion there helped focus on how WSG and WWSRN can operate together effectively in the future.

Another recurrent theme has been the need to provide updated wader population estimates in line with the procedures agreed with Wetlands International for the three-yearly production of global *Waterfowl Population Estimates* reports. The Wader Counts Database and its national co-ordinators network, managed for Wetlands International by IBN-DLO in the Netherlands, is now undergoing substantial redevelopment, and a workshop will be held at the WSG 1996 Conference in Belgium. As well as developing the national co-ordinators network this workshop will aim to compile best recent national estimates for a number of wader populations, so as to aid compilation of new international estimates. Linked to this has been the recognition that there is little recent information available for several major African wader wintering sites, notably the Banc d'Arguin. A joint WSG/WIWO project, with Wetlands International support, is now being developed to help provide such vital information over the next few years.

*Nick Davidson, WSG/Wetlands
International Liaison Officer*

CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

The scientific activities of the WSG proceeded well in 1995. One reason for this was the smooth running of the colour-marking register, a sometimes concealed, but nevertheless absolutely essential backbone of many research projects. Jane Marchant deserves our special thanks for undertaking this invaluable job so effectively.

1995 was a year of WSG projects without field activities. Two projects have come to an end. The Inland Wader Counts had their last season in 1994, although counts are being continued at some of the sites involved in the project (*Bulletin 77*: 10). The Kentish Plover Project was concluded by a workshop held at the WSG Conference in Aveiro, Portugal

(*Bulletin 79*: 30-33). During that workshop, the results of the work so far were summarised and brought together. Writing up the results is continuing. The workshop papers are currently being edited for an issue of *International Wader Studies*.

Three new projects are in the pipeline: migration of Red Knots in South America 1996-2000 (*Bulletin 78*: 40-44; contact Patricia M. González), the Winter 1997/98 European Non-estuarine Coastal Waterfowl Survey (*Bulletin 78*: 5-6; co-ordinated by Mark Rehfish for the UK Wetland Birds Survey), and Breeding waders in Europe 2000 (co-ordinated by Ole Thorup). Other activities include a planned WIWO-WSG field trip to Mauritania.

The preparations for Breeding waders in Europe 2000 have already been considerably developed. National co-ordinators for most countries have been found, and the work plan is about to be finalised. A full description of the project will be published in a future *Bulletin*.

Hermann Hötter & Ole Thorup

Help with translations wanted

With increasing size the *Bulletin* reaching an ever growing international readership, manuscripts and notes are now occasionally submitted in languages other than English (especially in French and Spanish). Whilst much of the time of the editorial team is spent improving the English style of papers submitted by non-English speakers we do not currently have translation capability.

Are there any WSG members who might be able to assist the editors from time to time in translating material for the *Bulletin*? Please contact the Editor if you feel you may be able to assist in this way occasionally. French and Spanish translations would be especially valuable.