



**MINUTES OF THE 1998 WSG
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
KESZTHELY, HUNGARY**

The 1998 WSG Annual General Meeting was held at 0900 h on Saturday 17 October 1998 during the annual conference in Keszthely, Hungary.

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Hermann Hotker, Mike Pienkowski, Jim Wilson, Guy Morrison, Alan Baker, Hugh Boyd, Gudmundur Gudmundsson and Bob Gill.

2. Minutes of the 1997 AGM

The Minutes of the previous AGM, held on 9 August 1997 in Vetsjer Vedsted, Denmark and published in Bulletin 84: 1-2 were accepted as a true record of the meeting, noting that the title as published should have read "1997 WSG Annual General Meeting" and not "1996".

3. Chairman's Report

The Chairman noted that working from within a government department there is a growing bureaucracy associated with international conservation, but that working with the WSG is very refreshing because it is non-bureaucratic and produces such high quality work.

The expertise of WSG is needed in various conservation initiatives and it is the motivation and drive of its members that provide the power of its role. Of particular importance is the Bonn Convention African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), which is due to come into force in 1999. Waders form an important part of this treaty, and this is especially important in view of moves in the Ramsar Convention to shift from its original focus on waterbirds towards a broader wetlands focus. To keep the issue of waterbirds on the political agenda the AEWA is increasingly important. The Dutch postal service is issuing a special AEWA stamp on 2 February 1999.

The WSG is developing smoothly and producing good output. Bulletins have appeared on time and new volumes have been published in the IWS series. The largest output is the forthcoming Odessa proceedings volume which is nearly completed. This has involved a huge input by many members, but the process has stretched the limits of the group's capacity - it has taken almost 3.5 years of people's time to produce the volume, a huge task for a voluntary group.

Membership is stable and the finances are healthy even if the group is not wealthy, and no increase in membership fees are proposed this year.

The group is becoming increasingly global in activity, with a meeting held in Cape Town in August 1998, and there are more proposals for meetings such as in the USA. There is a need to give more attention to Africa, and a delegate from Morocco was welcomed to the meeting.



The WSG is healthy, active and going strong, and the Chairman wished members an enjoyable and successful meeting.

4. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported that the group's finances were healthy although the capital had decreased a little from the previous year and the strength of the British pound had led to a reduced income from membership dues. No subscription increases were proposed for 1999, although an increase may be needed in 2000. There were some minor printing errors in the Balance Sheet and 1999 Budget as presented in Bulletin 86. These would be corrected and republished.

In response to a question, the Treasurer explained that research on the Hebrides in the 1980s had been partly financed by WSG and that there had been some capital left at the end of the project that was earmarked for further work. A request had been received for use of this residue in follow-up work in 1998. Most of the membership now pays on time, and members were encouraged to pay their 1999 membership dues in cash at the conference.

5. Membership Secretary's Report

The Membership Secretary reported that membership remained stable at about 630, which seemed to be a natural plateau. An increase in membership would be good and a reprinted membership form was now available. Raising the groups' profile was important and a much fuller Web-page was being designed.

In reply to a question about how the group might be made more attractive to amateur birdwatchers, it was noted that the priority was to involve active wader workers and to continue to ensure a mix of amateur and professional members.

6. Editor's Report

The Editor reported that she was progressively getting up to speed with the role, and that Rodney West was assisting with layout. During the year

some progressive changes in layout style had been introduced. The geographical spread of papers was increasing and continuing good mix of papers is needed. Members are encouraged to submit material on any topic concerning waders. Robin Ward is continuing his excellent work compiling Notes & News but needs more members to supply information. Members are also encouraged to submit more photographs and drawings.

Rodney West was thanked for his help in arranging a change of printer for the Bulletin, which had reduced costs and improved quality. Jean Patterson was thanked for her excellent help in copy-editing.

7. Project Co-ordinator's Report

The Project Co-ordinator reported that WSG-supported projects are designed to involve all members including amateur birdwatchers. Two new projects were underway. The Ruff Spring 1997 census had been reported in the Bulletin, and further work had continued in spring 1998. In the 1997 pilot phase six countries were involved with over 40,000 Ruffs counted. Tringa glareola 2000 involves especially colour-marking and colour-ringing in central and eastern Europe, and its results will be further reported in the Bulletin. The European NEWS project, undertaking mid-winter counts on non-estuarine shores, had completed data collection and the results were being compiled and analysed.

Breeding Waders in Europe 2000 (BWE2000) had been underway for some years, with a workshop held at the 1997 WSG Conference. Completion of the first phase, updating European breeding population sizes, was awaiting a major update on Russian population due for publication in 1999. There are national co-ordinators in almost all European countries and an updated list will be published shortly. Members who have important unpublished data were urged to inform the Project Co-ordinator.

Two projects have yet to be progressed to completion. Inland Wader Counts has no funds for completion of analyses and publication of results. The Kentish Plover project ended two years ago and it had been planned to publish results as an IWS volume, but lack of time by the project's co-ordinators meant that results will now be published as papers in the Bulletin.

8. WSG-Wetlands international Liaison Officer's Report

The Liaison Officer reminded members that the WSG is wholly independent but also acts for Wetlands International in the capacity of a Specialist Group. This brings considerable benefits to both organisations. A detailed report was published in Bulletin 86. Most time in the last year had been spent in progressing the Odessa proceedings.

There were a number of ideas for further IWS volumes, all of which were provisional dependent on funding for their publication. These include BWE2000, the Tringa glareola project, European NEWS, the Arctic Breeding Conditions project and the 1988 Curlew Sandpiper workshop.

In its role as a Wetlands international Specialist Group the WSG's major contribution is in the collation of information held by members to underpin better conservation. There are three main areas of activity: globally-threatened waders, preparation of wader flyway atlases, and updating wader population estimates - initially for the East Atlantic flyway.

To progress this work it is important to establish what members know, and to encourage them to contribute this knowledge and expertise. To assist in this, WSG is developing a register of members' expertise, information and knowledge, starting with a species expert network that will directly contribute to the population and flyway atlas projects. All members were encouraged to identify their areas of expertise and knowledge.



9. Election of Officers and Members

The Chairman reported that the terms of several members of the Executive Committee were ending. Nominations for Chairman, Vice-Chairman,

Conference Co-ordinator and General Secretary had been published in Bulletin 86. The nomination of Bob Loos to continue as Treasurer for a further term had been omitted in error from this list. No further nominations had been received. The following Officers were then elected unanimously:

Chairman **Gerard Boere**
Vice-Chairman & General Secretary
Nick Davidson
Conference Co-ordinator
Petra de Goeij
Treasurer **Bob Loos**

Two ordinary Committee members had been proposed for re-election, and no further nominations had been received.

The following were unanimously re-elected as Executive Committee members:

Elena Lebedeva
Pavel Tomkovich

Subsequent to the publication of the Agenda in Bulletin 86, Mark Barter had resigned as Executive Committee member representing the link with the Australasian Wader Study Group (AWSG). As a replacement, his successor as Chairman of AWSG, Jim Wilson, had been proposed and seconded for election, in line with the terms of the Constitution.

Jim Wilson was unanimously elected as an ordinary member of the Executive Committee.

The Chairman thank Alexander Yurlov and Jan van Gils who had completed their terms on the Executive Committee.

10. Subscription rates for 1999

The Executive Committee proposed that there would be no changes to the basic subscription rates for 1999, and noted that it was likely that no changes would need to be made to the equivalent subscription rates in other currencies. An unchanged subscription rate for 1999 was approved.

11. Registration as a Dutch Society

The English-language Constitution had been approved by the membership. To finalise the legal requirements it was now necessary to translate this Constitution in Dutch. This was underway and it was anticipated that formal registration would take place by the end of 1998. With a legal status in place the group would be in a better position to receive grants and funding from outside bodies.

12. Future Conferences

1999. The Group had accepted an offer from France. The conference would be held on 24-26 September 1999, on a small island near Vannes on the south coast of Brittany, in an area important for Brent Geese, ducks and waders. The dates had been fixed to fit in between numerous other conferences taking place in autumn 1999.

2000. An invitation from the British Trust for Ornithology to host the conference in eastern England had been accepted. This would be an excellent opportunity to revisit the Group's roots at the turn of the millenium.

2001. A provisional invitation had been accepted to hold the meeting in the Netherlands. This was planned as a large and high profile conference focussing on new advances in global flyway research.

2002. A possibility of revisiting Odessa, at the kind invitation of Anatoly Korzyukov, 10 years on from the 1992 conference was described.

It was also noted that a possible extra WSG meeting in spring 2000 on the US East Coast (possibly Delaware Bay) was under discussion.

13. Any Other Business

Audit Committee. It was reported that Peter Evans had indicated his willingness to continue as a member of the Audit Committee for a further three years, but that Les Underhill wished to step down. Les Underhill was thanked for all service on the committee.

Humphrey Sitters had offered to take on the role for the next three years. Peter Evans and Humphrey Sitters were unanimously appointed to serve as the Audit Committee for the next three years.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting.

1999 WADER STUDY GROUP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, VANNES, FRANCE

All WSG members are warmly invited to the 1999 Annual General Meeting which will be held near Vannes, France between Friday 24 and Monday 27 September. The conference will take place in a holiday centre that was previously a covent, built on Île Berder. This small island is situated in the middle of the Golfe du Morbihan, on the south coast of Brittany. The Golfe du Morbihan is one of the most important areas in France for wintering and migrating waders and wildfowl.

As usual, the conference will start on Saturday morning and end on Sunday evening. The Sunday afternoon

excursion will allow us to visit the Golfe du Morbihan by boat. On Monday 27, there will be a workshop on

population dynamics of Avocets (see below).

The easiest ways to reach Vannes are as follows:

By train and plane

From Paris, Vannes is a 3 hr 30 min train journey. Take the TGV from Paris Montparnasse to Vannes. A bus and boat transfer will be arranged from Vannes railway station to Île Berder.

