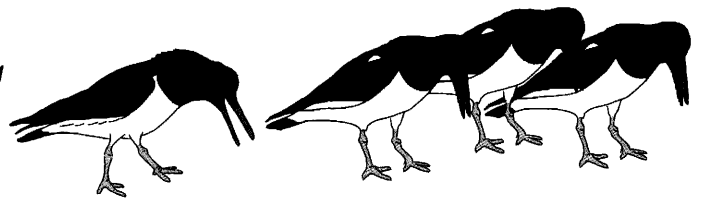


NOTES & NEWS



Professor Peter Evans

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Professor Peter R. Evans (University of Durham, UK), a founder member and long-time supporter of the International Wader Study Group. In April 2001, Peter was diagnosed as suffering from Myeloma (cancer of the bone marrow). He appeared to be responding well to treatment and had a very positive outlook throughout his illness. However, in late August his health took a turn for the worse and he died in hospital on 28th September 2001.

An obituary will appear in a future issue of the *Bulletin*.

All members of The International Wader Study Group extend their sympathy to Peter's family and friends in this time of sorrow.

NEW! – Formation of the WSG Wet Grassland Group

Wet grasslands are important habitats for breeding waders all over the world. In many European countries, waders breeding in this habitat are declining and this is giving rise to concern. These declines are occurring despite great efforts to protect the birds and their habitat.

In many countries, ongoing research aims to understand the reasons for the population declines and to improve the management of wet grassland for waders. Many very different institutions, groups and individuals carry out both research and management. However sometimes there is a lack of communication between them. The WSG is in the unique position of co-ordinating a worldwide net of amateurs and professionals involved in research and conservation of waders. People working on grassland waders – or “meadowbirds”, as they are often known – are well represented within this network.

As research topics and management problems are much alike in wet grasslands over a huge geographical range, the idea has arisen of seeking closer co-operation among those with an interest in wet grassland worldwide. At the Workshop on Waders on Farmland at Kollumerpomp, The Netherlands, a new Wet Grassland Group (WGG) was founded within the WSG.

The aims of the group are first to facilitate communication and scientific exchange between volunteers, managers and scientists involved in research, management and conservation of wet grassland waders and their habitats. This might involve topics like research methods, regional population developments, as well as experiences with different types of management and conservation activities. A major aim will be to increase awareness among participants of each other's activities with respect to wet grassland waders. The group plans to feed back information on wet grassland waders and activities around them to the *Bulletin*, and to link up with other bodies working in related fields (e.g. pastoralism). In future, depending on the development of the group, activi-

ties may be extended to, for example, the establishment of standards for monitoring wet grassland wader populations and organising workshops on specific research or management topics.

At present, the WGG consists mainly of a list of e-mail addresses (more than 40) that will be used to circulate news, views and requests. The plan is to keep the group as informal and as flexible as possible with minimum of bureaucracy! Members interested in joining the WGG should just indicate their wish to be included in the e-mail list to one of the co-ordinators of the group listed below.

Already we have been asked several times: which habitats and which species will the WGG be concerned with? For example, what about Lapwings breeding on arable farmland? We – the co-ordinators – have a rather relaxed view on this topic. All aspects of the biology and conservation of the group of waders usually called “meadowbirds” (Oystercatcher, Lapwing, Dunlin, Ruff, Snipe, Curlew, Black-tailed Godwit, Redshank, etc.) can be included, as well as matters affecting grassland as habitat for breeding waders. We also welcome contributions on waders using wet grasslands outside the breeding season (when more species make use of them). If in doubt, join the group!

Hermann Hötter (NABU-Inst.hoetker@t-online.de)

Hans Schekkerman (H.Schekkerman@Alterra.wag-ur.nl)

David Stroud (David.Stroud@jncc.gov.uk)

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Which grade of Darvic?

When identifying cohorts or individuals in the field, researchers have often marked shorebirds with colour rings made from Darvic (pressed PVCU sheet). This plastic is in common use for long-lived species such as shorebirds because of the material's colourfast properties, hard wearing and malleability. Since publication of a paper I wrote on colour retention of Darvic colour-rings in shorebird studies (*Wader Study Group Bull.* 91: 30–34), it has come to my attention that there are in fact two grades of Darvic available from the sole manufacturer, Wardle Storey (UK). Recent enquiries suggest that many shorebird researchers using Darvic rings are unaware that Darvic is made in two grades. The importance of this for wader studies is that only one grade, the *outdoor* or *safety* grade, is designated by the manufacturers as UV stable and therefore guaranteed colourfast in sunlight. The *outdoor* grade of Darvic is sold in at least six colours (yellow 2077, red 4121, green 6169, brown 5102, blue 7205 and white) whereas the *standard* grade material is available in a more extensive colour range (generally coded by Wardle Storey with three letter codes).

So which grade of Darvic should shorebird researchers use? In the UK and Europe, including all studies at Durham University, colour-rings used by most researchers have been



made from *standard* grade Darvic. As shown in my paper, this has proved adequate for shorebird studies of at least 17 years duration. A review of the literature has not found any comparative study of the two Darvic grades when used for colour-ringing birds. Any further comments on this subject would be most welcome.

I thank Michael Robin Haggie for raising this issue.

Robin M. Ward

Darvic and colour-rings

Farlington Ringing Group (UK) has a supply of Lime (Light Green) Darvic, colour code 661, thickness 0.5 mm, available for sale as sheets or off-cuts. FRG can probably help if you need colour-rings made. For further details please contact Ruth Croger at ruthcroger@beeb.net.

Bukidnon Woodcock *Scolopax bukidnonensis* – new to science

In the latest issue of the Forktail, the journal of the Oriental Bird Club (OBC), Kennedy et al (2001) describe a Philippine wader species new to science, the Bukidnon Woodcock *Scolopax bukidnonensis*.

For more info on the OBC see www.orientalbirdclub.org or contact mail@orientalbirdclub.org.

Reference: R.S. Kennedy, T.H. Fisher, S.C.B. Harrap, A.C. Diesmos & A.S. Manamtam, 2001. A new species of woodcock from the Philippines and a re-evaluation of other Asian/Papuan woodcock. *Forktail* 17: 1–12.

Plover Alert

Marked *Pluvialis* plovers might come your way this season. We have been banding Pacific and American Golden-Plovers (*Pluvialis fulva* and *P. dominica*) and Black-bellied Plovers (*P. squatarola*) for many years at Oahu, Hawaii and/or Nome, Alaska. More recently, we started marking Pacific Golden-Plovers at Johnston Atoll south of Hawaii. Each bird wears a metal band plus some combination of colour-bands (a few have flags). Please send sightings to: Wally Johnson, Dept. of Ecology, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT 59717 (e-mail owjohnson2105@aol.com; phone: 406-587-7305; fax 406-994-3190).

Wally Johnson

NEW! The Second Edition of the *United States Shorebird Conservation Plan*

The *United States Shorebird Conservation Plan* is a partnership effort being undertaken throughout the United States to ensure that stable and self-sustaining populations of all shorebird species are restored and protected. Originally published in August 2000, the second edition is now available. This document summarises all of the technical reports and recommendations produced by the various working groups that participated in developing the Plan. The authors have

developed conservation goals for each region of the country, identified critical habitat conservation needs and key research needs, and proposed education and outreach programs to increase awareness of shorebirds and the threats they face. The partnerships responsible for development of the plan are remaining active and are working to improve and implement the plan's many recommendations.

Copies of The Second Edition of the *United States Shorebird Conservation Plan* are available from Brad Andres, USFWS, Division of Migratory Bird Management, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA 22203. The Second Edition can be downloaded from: <http://www.manomet.org/USSCP.htm>.

WSG subscriptions can now be paid by VISA, MASTERCARD or EUROCARD

To make it easier for members to pay their subscriptions, arrangements have been made for payment by VISA, MASTERCARD or EUROCARD. The new membership renewal forms sent out to all members provide for payment by any of these credit cards. However, members can pay their subscription at any time by writing to the Treasurer (Bob Loos, Benardlaan 60, 1791 XG DEN BURG, Texel, The Netherlands) giving details of the type of card (VISA etc.), the full number, the expiry month and year and the name as it appears on the card. Members may also authorize the Treasurer to take payment of future subscriptions when they are due up to the date of expiry of the current card.

Congratulations Dr Petra!



Hearty congratulations to WSG Conference Co-ordinator, Petra de Goeij, on being awarded a doctorate by the University of Groningen for her thesis on "Burying depth as a trade-off in the bivalve *Macoma balthica*". Petra's final examination took place on 4th September 2001 in the ornate hall of the Rijks-universiteit in the centre of Groningen before ten examiners and an audience of

200. Among the audience were many members of the Wader Study Group including most members of the Exco. Whereas other universities insist that the victim wears some drab black gown, at Groningen plumage is the victim's choice. Petra chose well! She looked absolutely gorgeous in a beautiful deep burgundy dress. Her supporters, or "paranimphs", also leading shorebird researchers, were Yvonne Verkuil and Patricia González and were adorned in similar shades of burgundy. The photo shows Petra being congratulated by her supervisor, Professor Rudi Drent.

This was a great occasion. All WSG members present were proud of its Conference Co-ordinator!

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