

Notice of the 2004 Annual General Meeting of the International Wader Study Group

The Annual General Meeting of the International Wader Study Group will be held at 09.00 hrs. on Saturday 6 November during the Annual Conference at Papenburg, Germany. Nominations for the election of Officers and other members of the Executive Committee may be made in writing to the General Secretary not less than 14 days before the AGM. Each nomination must be proposed and seconded by fully paid-up members and accompanied by the nominee's written consent.

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the 2003 AGM
3. Chairman's report (Hermann Hötker)
4. (a) Treasurer's report (Bob Loos) (b) Auditor's report (Martin de Jong & Tom van der Have)
5. Membership Officer's report (Rodney West)
6. Editor's report (Humphrey Sitters)
7. Project Coordinator's report (Ole Thorup)
8. Conference Coordinator's report and future conferences (Petra de Goeij)
9. WSG-Wetlands International Liaison Officer's report (David Stroud)
10. WSG Annual Meeting 2005
11. Election of Officers and other members of the Executive Committee
12. Any other business

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Officers' reports for 2003

Chairman's report (Hermann Hötker)

The past year has been filled with WSG activities on several levels. This is evident from what appears in the *Bulletin* and other recent and forthcoming publications. The group is the organisation for wader enthusiasts worldwide, and is developing a more and more comprehensive range of activities related to waders and their habitats. Examples are the CHASM initiative that has already spawned two special workshops on Arctic shorebird monitoring during the WSG conference in Papenburg. Another example is the workshop on migration turnover led by the BTO at the same conference. WSG involvement in wet grassland conservation, a major concern in West Europe, has been revitalised. Also, earlier this year, a new memorandum of cooperation was signed between Wetlands International and the WSG. This provides for the WSG to continue as WI's wader specialist group and sets out a framework for cooperation between both organisations until 2007.

The Group runs so well because there is a (mad) band of people doing all the work for nothing! I would like to thank all members of the EXCO for their high personal involvement. I would particularly like to mention the 'Publications Unit' (Humphrey Sitters and Les Underhill and his team), the 'Business Unit' (Bob Loos, Rodney West and Robin Ward), and all the others who are vital for running the group:

Rowena Langston, Petra de Goeij, David Stroud and Ole Thorup. I also would like to thank our honorary presidents Mike Pienkowski and Gerard Boere and our vice presidents Theunis Piersma and Nick Davidson for their good advice. The EXCO had a brief interim meeting during the Global Waterbird conference in Edinburgh. During that remarkable conference the WSG was continuously represented by a stand, mostly manned by Rodney West. Thank you for this, Rodney.

In spite of the still very informal character of the Group, the services it is offering – notably in its publications and in its relationships with other organisations – are professional. However, I would like to reiterate that nearly all the work of the group is done on a voluntary basis, and that there is no guarantee that this will continue for ever. In order to maintain the same high level and quality of output as we have in past years, we need money and the voluntary involvement of many skilled people. In both aspects, you may be able to help.

We are grateful for any donation to the Group, and the Group may even be considered as a beneficiary in one's last will. The WSG's most stable and the most important income, however, is membership subscriptions. A substantial increase in membership would make all the difference to the running of the Group. Some processes would become easier, some quicker, but more particularly, economies of scale would



enable us to increase the quality and quantity of the Group's output, especially its publications. Please try to convince as many of your friends and colleagues as possible to become members of the WSG.

All the time, we need volunteers to help us with the running of the group. Most of the members of the committee are hopelessly overworked both in their civil jobs as well as in their volunteer involvement. Anybody willing to help is extremely welcome. This may range from editorial work for the *Bulletin* and other documents to recruiting new members, organising events and running surveys.

Treasurer's report 2003 (Bob Loos)

Receipts and expenditure account

For the second year in succession we had a deficit (£4,498). This arose from some non-recurring expenses, and also from a disappointing 10% decrease in membership income.

One of the reasons for the reduced membership income was the delayed dispatch of reminders, which were not sent out until the end of November. As a result of these, we received about £950 in early 2004. Therefore, when this is taken into account, membership income remains comparable with previous years.

As a result of the combined effects of increasing expenses, diminished availability of funds for publications in the International Wader Studies (IWS) series as well as increased output from our members for publication in the *Bulletin* and IWS, it became necessary to increase the membership subscriptions in 2004.

Although interest rates declined in 2003, the interest we received was considerably higher than in previous year. Unfortunately, however, this arose from unusual circumstances that are unlikely to be repeated. In May, we received a prepayment for the production of *Estuarine Waterbirds at Low Tide* (IWS 16). This amount was partly spent in 2003 and the remainder at the beginning of 2004. Therefore the interest on this money has come and gone!

Estuarine Waterbirds at Low Tide is the first publication in the IWS series that has not been provided free to all members. This was due to lack of funds. The publication of occasional IWS volumes is always additional to the regular issues of the *Wader Study Group Bulletin* and it remains our policy to provide IWS publications free to members whenever possible. We hope that IWS 16 will simply be an exception that is not repeated too often. However, in view of the decline in the availability of funds for IWS-type publications, it has been decided to create our own reserve fund for IWS and this is included in the budget for 2005.

The sale of back issues of the *WSG Bulletin* and IWS series remains a welcome extra source of income. We hope and expect to increase this by selling volume 100 of the *WSG Bulletin* and this may also be helpful in convincing wader enthusiasts to join the Wader Study Group!

If you need one of these publications just contact Rodney West; he will be very pleased to help you!

During the 2003 financial year the British Pound decreased by 8% against the Euro. This means that our savings held in Euros resulted in a higher British Pound value, and therefore an exchange profit. Unfortunately it is completely impossible to predict how the currency exchange rates will move in future!

In the past we have created reserves for the publication of

the famous Methodology Issue of the *WSG Bulletin* (Vol. 69) as well as the jubilee *WSG Bulletin* 100, both published in 2003, therefore these reserves were liberated, together with the residue of the money allocated to the earlier publication of the Odessa Proceedings (as we do not expect any further expenses in relation to that issue).

The special jubilee *WSG Bulletin* Vol. 100 on *The big issues in Wader Science and Conservation* contained more pages (224) than all three regular bulletins published in a year put together.

On the other hand, our choice of having the typesetting and printing of the *Bulletin* done in South Africa resulted in a considerable saving. Nevertheless, with a record 312 *Bulletin* pages in 2003, production and dispatch costs were higher than budgeted.

Secretarial costs were negatively influenced by the dispatch of *Arctic Birds* No. 5, the Newsletter of the International Breeding Conditions Survey, which is traditionally sent free to members with help from external funding. However, no such assistance was available in 2003.

The value of all our computer equipment had already declined to zero in previous years (from an accountant's point of view!), so there was no further depreciation to be written off in 2003.

Balance sheet

As a result of the deficit our capital decreased considerably, dropping below the required minimum of one year's running costs.

The stock of back *Bulletins* and IWS issues is hard to quantify in British Pounds; therefore it is recorded as "p.m." which means "pro memori". This is unquestionably of value, but it is very hard to quantify it because it is just paper, which can only be turned into money by selling it; so it is selling the stock makes money, not having it!

WSG-Wetlands International Liaison Officer's report (David Stroud)

The fruitful relationship between WSG and Wetlands International has been formally renewed during the year with a new Memorandum of Cooperation negotiated and agreed. This new Memorandum replaces existing arrangements put in place in 1993. Needless to say, after 11 years, the negotiations provided a timely opportunity for both organisations to renew and refocus their relationship with each other.

In recent years, Wetlands International has convened an annual meeting of the Coordinators of its Specialist's Groups – the most recent being held in the Netherlands in May 2004. That meeting gave an opportunity to present a summary of WSG's recent activities, as well as learning of proposed organisational changes within Wetlands International – in particular the development of a new Strategy which will guide the work of the organisation until 2011. WSG will provide input into the development of this strategy in the months to come. The Strategy will be finalised at the Board of Members meeting in Bangkok in November this year.

Several issues of the occasional series *International Wader Studies* progressed during the year. The long-awaited review of population status of migratory waders in Africa and western Eurasia (IWS 15) was published on WSG's website in May 2005 (see feature elsewhere in this *Bulletin*).

The publication of a major review of UK low tide counts



in the IWS series was financed by the UK Partnership (*Waterbirds at low tide. The WeBS Low Tide Counts 1992–93 to 1998–99. IWS 16*). The 310 page report was launched by the UK's Environment Minister in January 2004 during his personal participation in a low tide count on the Humber Estuary Ramsar site! The publication is available from the Natural History Book Service (www.nhbs.com).

Future IWS volumes are anticipated to be published as follows:

13. *Review of European Avocet status (proceedings of 1999 WSG workshop)*. Edited by Hermann Hötter *et al.* (Publication due 2004?)
14. *Breeding Waders in Europe: a year 2000 assessment*. Edited by Ole Thorup. (Publication due in 2004.)
17. *Australasian Wader Studies Group Conference Proceedings, 2003*. Edited by Phil Straw. (Publication due in 2004.)
18. *European Non-Estuarine Waterbird Survey*. Edited by Mark Rehfishch *et al.* (Publication due in 2005.)

WSG's publishing activities remain constrained by lack of finance, and we would welcome suggestions from the membership as to possible sources of grant aid or charitable foundations that might potentially fund future issues of *International Wader Studies*.

The quality and extent of WSG's review activities has resulted in continued high profile for the group during the year. In particular the Cadiz Conclusions (*WSG Bulletin* 101/102: 8–12) was widely disseminated in international conservation circles in late 2003, as also was the African-Eurasian population review (*IWS 15*) in 2004. These WSG outputs have been influential in maintaining an important focus on the conservation problems faced by waders around the world.

It will be important to sustain such awareness.

The commitment of world leaders to reduce biodiversity loss by 2010 provides a particular opportunity. To that end, the fifth edition of *Waterbird Population Estimates*, due to be published and submitted to Ramsar CoP 10 in 2008, will be especially influential since it will be this publication that will largely inform the assessment for waterbirds of the delivery of this target. Accordingly, WSG should put special effort into assessing the status of trends of as many populations as is feasible in the immediate years ahead.

Conference Coordinator's report (Petra de Goeij)

The Wader Study Group can be very grateful for the many offers from different countries for organising the Annual Meeting. It is not easy to organise the meeting. The organisers have to find a cheap venue and have to find funding. The delegates pay for their accommodation, pay a registration fee to cover the basic costs for paperwork, coffee, tea, etc., and pay for the excursion. However, there are many more expenses for the organisers, who have to think of helping poor participants to attend the meeting, the slide-

projector, poster-boards, photocopies, the social event, music, etc. I have to admit that every year I think the organisers are very courageous. The WSG members are known for their late registration. This means that the organisers have to negotiate a lot with the owners of hotels, youth hostels or other institutions. Some (many) members only decide two weeks before the meeting that they want to attend. This, of course, can drive the organisers nuts, since the venue often wants the money for accommodation and food six months in advance! Every year, somehow, the organisers manage. Teams of volunteers find a venue, plan a good programme, organise workshops, excursions, entertainment, etc. And, every year I wonder: how they manage, how they stay so nice to everybody, when they sleep. The meetings are great, year after year. I want to express my gratitude to all these people who have been organising meetings over the past 12 years (the years I have attended them). I have enjoyed them all very, very much. Also, I express my gratitude to those people who are going to organise the meetings in the years to come. Last year, we were in Spain, this year the meeting will be held in Papenburg, Germany. Good Luck to the German team this time. And members, please if you can, do not book at the last minute, but try to book as early as possible!

Editor's report (Humphrey Sitters)

In 2003, the *Wader Study Group Bulletin* comprised a record 312 pages, almost twice the number in 2002. This was the direct result of the huge success of the special 100th volume on "the big issues in wader science and conservation". Because all thirty nine of the volume 100 articles were specially written, they created a backlog of 'ordinary' *Bulletin* material. Furthermore, it is now evident that volume 100 also gave the *WSG Bulletin* a real boost in that the number of submissions has since increased considerably. What is more, the quality of recent material has been excellent. This is really good news for the WSG. It means that more and more people are happy to publish in the *Bulletin*. In consequence, authors achieve what they cannot through any other publication: a worldwide wader audience; and members receive a journal that publishes good quality material about waders everywhere. Generally therefore I am most encouraged by recent trends in relation to our *Bulletin* and view its future with considerable optimism.

The production of our *Bulletin* is very much a team effort and I thank all those involved in 2003. However, on this occasion, I would particularly like to record my appreciation to Felicia Stoch of the Avian Demography Unit at the University of Cape Town who was primarily responsible for typesetting during 2001 to 2003 when unfortunately she had to relinquish the task on account of ill health. It was she who redesigned the *Bulletin* in 2001 enabling us to make more economical use of space while at the same time enhancing the journal's professional appearance. She always took great pride in her work and I am sure the whole of the International Wader Study Group is grateful for her contribution.



Accounts of the International Wader Study Group for the year 1st January to 31st December 2003

(All figures are in British pounds.)

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

Receipts	2002	2003	Budget 2003
Subscriptions	8,549.17	7,614.76	8,550
Subscriptions from past year	354.89	509.56	
Donations	22.56	7.99	
Interest received	542.02	800.20	700
Colour Marking Register	428.41	20.00	300
Sale back Bulletins and publications	640.64	248.44	200
Miscellaneous	0	19.02	
Exchange profit	279.33	537.58	
Wader Atlas	0	0	
Liberated reserves	0	2,384.00	
Total income	10,817.02	12,141.55	9,750
Expenses			
Bulletin costs: printing	4,122.08	4,986.27	3,700
dispatch	1,324.32	3,437.52	2,700
Editorial and DTP	2,760.00	2,723.16	1,050
Secretarial costs and miscellaneous	1,580.91	1,709.27	1,600
Colour Marking Register	300.00	100.00	300
Bank charges	246.96	203.72	250
Depreciation on computers etc.	240.00	0	
Exchange loss	0	0	
Investments	0	0	
International Wader Studies	0	3,312.44	
Wader Atlas	2,204.00	0	
Reservation Breeding Waders	150.00	150.00	150
Miscellaneous	2.34	17.61	
Total expenditure	12,930.61	16,639.99	9,750
<i>Excess of income over expenditure</i>	<i>2,113.59 Deficit</i>	<i>4,498.44 Deficit</i>	

BALANCE SHEET

	31.12.2002	31.12.2003		31.12.2002	31.12.2003
Computers & printers	0	0	Capital	13,005	8,507
Stock back bulletins & IWS	p.m.	p.m.	Subscriptions in advance	345	704
Cash at Bank and on deposit	23,488	41,056	Conference Fund	1,565	1,007
Debtors	0	0	Bull. 69 Methodology Issue	2,000	0
			Breeding Waders in Europe	3,255	3,304
			Odessa Proceedings	252	0
			Hebrides Project	92	92
			Creditors	2,842	10,973
			Bulletin 100	132	0
			Low Tide Atlas	0	16,469
	23,488	41,056		23,488	41,056

BUDGET 2005

Subscriptions	11,000	Bulletin costs: printing	3,500
Interest received	450	DTP	1,300
Colour Marking Register	0	postage	2,750
Sale back bulletins and IWS	200	Secretarial costs & miscellaneous	1,700
		Colour Marking Register	0
		Bank charges	250
		Reserve Fund Intern. Wader Studies	1,000
		Excess of income over expenditure	1,150
	11,650		11,650

