

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Wader Study Group will be held at Münster, West Germany on 12 September 1981.

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held 1 November 1980
3. Chairman's Report
4. Administrative Secretary's report
5. Treasurer's report
6. Editors' report
7. Advisory Panel Co-ordinator report
8. Election of officers. Nigel and Jacquie Clark have been acting Administrative Secretary since last November and are willing to continue in office. There have been no further nominations.
9. Any other business
10. Date and venue of next year's Annual General Meeting

The texts of the officer's reports follow.

Chairman's Report

The most important development during the year has been the organisation of the WSG project 'Movements of wader populations in Western Europe' masterminded by M.W. Pienkowski based at Durham University and funded by the EEC Environmental Programme and the Nature Conservancy Council (Britain). The regular reports in the Bulletin show widespread co-operation throughout Europe. The project is, simply, to study the movements of waders between estuaries during the winter (rather than migration) and the results will have important conservation implications. Associated dye-marking schemes are already yielding rapid and often surprising results. The 'dying' depends on the birds being caught; equally importantly the 'sightings' depend on an observer network. Both sides of the scheme are succeeding thanks to the help of a great many people both amateur and professional.

A second project 'Waders at Inland Sites' has also commenced, organised by OAG Münster. The number of sites at which regular counts are being made is steadily increasing and again the results will be extremely interesting and they can only be obtained through international co-operation.

Reports of the WSG Spring Migration Project (1979) written by Peter Ferns are being published in the Bulletin and we are very pleased to present the results so promptly. The last paper will appear in December 1981 - our thanks to Peter Ferns.

The Register of Colour Marking Schemes, also based at Durham, is functioning well and we are pleased to see some order appearing in the previous chaos. We do urge everyone to co-operate in this scheme to avoid invalidation of each other's results.

In Britain two important projects have reached the stage of pilot studies prior to launching a full national effort. The British Trust for Ornithology is organising a survey of the waders breeding in wet meadows in England and Wales. In Scotland, largely as a result of WSG encouragement, Hector Galbraith and Robert Furness are organising a similar study of the waders breeding in the more complex habitats of valleys, with an emphasis of farmland. Both projects are guided by a steering committee of representatives from British Trust for Ornithology, Nature Conservancy Council, Wader Study Group, Scottish Ornithologists' Club and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. The latter organisation is funding the England/Wales study. The results of these two surveys will be of great conservation value in the face of agricultural improvement which is rapidly destroying the majority of wader breeding habitats in farmland.

William Dick, true to form, has taken on another chunk of Africa to supplement his earlier efforts by a visit of the Archipel des Bijagos, Guinea-Bissau where he and other WSG members made a preliminary survey of what appears to be an important wintering ground for waders - congratulations to our more intrepid travellers!

During the year WSG became a Contributor Member (non paying) to the International Waterfowl Research Bureau (IWRB) and we are glad of this official association following a long-standing unofficial one.

Finally, I expect you have all noticed that our cover has been changed. I miss the Oystercatchers but a lot of people seem to prefer the Sanderlings! Of all waders I find Sanderling migration the most dramatic and challenging. We still do not understand its complexities and this exemplifies the fact that, despite about fifteen year's cumulative research, waders are still fascinating and challenging birds to study, especially on the international scale. I hope this will lead to further development of WSG. My apologies for being unable to come to Münster - I hope you have a splendid meeting.

G.H. Green.

Administrative Secretary's Report

Since the last administrative secretary's report a year ago there has been a slight growth in membership, although as can be seen from the figures (as at June 1981) the balance of membership has changed (1980 figures in brackets).

	<u>U.K. & Ireland</u>	<u>Rest of Europe</u>	<u>N.America</u>	<u>Elsewhere</u>	<u>Total</u>
Paid 1981	187	116	65	26	394
Unpaid 1981	48	19	47	11	125
	235 (256)	135 (120)	112 (96)	37 (32)	519 (504)

The U.K. members now form less than half of the total, the decline being mainly due to lapsed payments. There were however 21 new U.K. members. The European membership has continued to increase, 22 members joining during the past year. The steep decrease in N.American membership seen in 1979/80 has halted, recently we have gained 22 new members. The "Rest of the World" membership has also risen, new countries now represented are Ecuador, Papua/New Guinea and India.

We would like to thank Ted Miller who looks after the N.American members subscriptions and also produces the address labels. Thanks are also due to the other officers who have eased our take-over of the administrative secretary's post and particularly to Graham Appleton who handed over to us last December.

N. & J. Clark

Treasurer's Report

As can be seen from the accounts the Group's financial position has improved considerably since the end of 1979. The increase in subscription income is, in the main, due to the doubling of the rate of subscriptions for 1980 but also due in part to a greatly improved position over outstanding subscriptions and an increase in membership. Despite chronic inflation bulletin production costs have been kept to a minimum, showing an overall increase of 11% over 1979. The position at the end of 1980 is very close to my forecast produced when proposing the increase in the subscriptions in October 1979. At that time I said that the proposed increase should enable the Group to hold the subscription level for three years. The 1980 results strengthens my belief that we can continue to be self sufficient until 1982 but I very much doubt if we can go beyond then.

Wader Study Group Receipts and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st December, 1980

<u>Receipts</u>	1980	1979
Subscriptions received to date	2,389	1,063
Interest received	65	8
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
A	£2,454	£1,071
<u>Deduct</u>		
<u>Bulletin costs</u>		
Printing	(1,055)	(875)
Envelopes, Paper, etc	(104)	(82)
Typing	(132)	(116)
Postage	(466)	(464)
Editors' Expenses	(207)	(252)
Sundries	(78)	(49)
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
B	£(2,042)	£(1,838)
<u>Add</u>		
Profit on back issues	28	206
Profit on Autumn meeting	39	36
Royal Society Grant	-	400
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
C	67	642
<u>Excess of receipts over expenditure (A+B+C)</u>	<u>479</u>	<u>(125)</u>
<u>Balance sheet as on 31st December 1980</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1979</u>
<u>Accumulated fund</u>		
Balance at 1.1.80	(243)	(118)
Excess of receipts over expenditure for year	479	(125)
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	£236	£(243)
<u>Assets</u>		
Cash at bank and on deposit	1,174	895
<u>Deduct: liabilities</u>		
Creditors	(375)	(550)
1981 Subscriptions in advance	(84)	(168)
Royal Society Loan (due 1982)	(400)	(400)
Balances due to Officers	(79)	(20)
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	£236	£(243)

B.E. Murray

Editors' Report

As foreseen in the last Editors' report, the Bulletin has continued this year in much the same way as last, with articles on a wide range of subjects, including migration, counts, breeding biology, feeding studies, nutrient reserves, catching and analytical techniques and conservation problems, as well as news, notices, requests for information, WSG business items and abstracts of talks at meetings both of WSG and other bodies. We were pleased to receive articles from many parts of the world, notably Hong Kong, Spain, Poland and Hawaii and from expeditions to Ellesmere Island, Morocco, Mauritania and Guinea Bissau. On the export side, Jeremy Greenwood's series of articles on statistics is now being reprinted in the Finnish journal 'Lintuit', following its success in the Dutch publication 'Twirre'.

Three new major WSG projects were launched in the Bulletin this year and the results of an earlier one on spring migration are appearing as a current series. Regular features continue. The colour-ringing register and its summary in the Bulletin are meeting with increasing success in overcoming confusions present before its instigation.

Issues have appeared on time except for no. 31 which was about one month late for various technical reasons and because both editors are grossly overworked! In an attempt to spread the load, we have co-opted Nick Davidson as an additional assistant editor. Members will already be familiar with Nick's efforts from his papers on weights and nutritional reserves, his recent editing of Recent Publications, occasional cartoons and, since issue 31, the new article titles, which we introduced in response to requests to make the various articles stand out rather more. Nick has rapidly learnt the problems of compiling Recent Publications and consequently is taking this opportunity to pass the task on to Theunis Piersma who will edit this section in future. Being a Netherlands Frieslander, Theunis speaks at least three times as many languages as the rest of the editors put together, so that some of the items included might be more appropriate than in the past!

Other innovations this year have been the full list of members in Bulletin 31 (the last appeared in August 1978 since when there have been many changes), and the new cover. This was originally prepared as something of a joke by the artist and one of the editors for the special Sanderling issue but has been retained by popular demand! Thanks also to North American editors, Guy Morrison and Pete Myers, for their efforts; our typists, Ann Perry and Ann Pienkowski for translating the unreadable; John McMeeking, as proof-reader extra-ordinary and hawk-eye spotter of inconsistencies the editors should have seen before; and printer Reg Davis and his team at Lake Shore Graphics for continued co-operation and efficiency.

Having given out the credits, we now come to the problems: the Bulletin is too successful. After a marked increase in content we adopted the small print size in Bulletin 24 in December 1978 allowing an even greater increase. The size of the Bulletin stabilized at 40 to 54 (usually 44 to 48) pages for over two years until issue 31 when we had enough material for 72 pages and printed 60, holding the rest over for later issues. We do not like to turn away material and we are fortunate in only very rarely receiving material which is not of a suitable standard. We feel that it is inappropriate to build up a waiting list (even though it would make life easier for the editors) as this would lose the Bulletin's topicality and, anyway, could be only a temporary solution. Any reduction in size of print would probably lead to excessive eye strain with consequent problems for field workers. Thus we shall all be faced with a choice between increasing the size of the Bulletin (and thus the subscription) or turning away quite a lot of articles offered. The turning away would involve quite a high proportion of those offered because a large part of each Bulletin is occupied by regular items (which all appear to be popular and/or required).

It is likely that, as predicted by the Treasurer in his last report, the officers will have to propose, at the 1982 AGM, an increase in subscriptions from 1983, because of inflation. It is likely that a slightly higher increase than otherwise would allow us to increase the size of each issue to about 60 pages. Any further increase would demand too much editing time as well as expense. The advantage of about 60 pages is that it would keep the Bulletin within the same postage weight step for all but air-mail despatches, so that the extra cost would be paper and printing, but not postage (which is very expensive). However, before we make such a proposal we would like the comments of members as to what they want - either at the AGM or directly to us. Please let us know.

Michael W. Pienkowski

Co-ordinator's Report

In my report a year ago, I commented that the role of the Co-ordinator had moved towards that of gathering ideas for the future development of the Group, particularly for co-operative projects. Members of the "Think-Tank" or Advisory Panel will not, I hope, give me up for lost, but the lack of circulars is more a reflection that the Group seems to be operating efficiently at present! The content and quality of material in the Bulletin has not engendered criticism from members, and in fact the continued production on schedule of a Bulletin of high quality is largely thanks to the dynamic efforts of our two editors. Co-operative projects are still being put into practice.

WSG continues to increase its international involvement, which has perhaps been its most important recent achievement. The WSG/Durham University project and the Inland Wader Movement project would both have been difficult to put into effect without the wide network of members willing to participate and be co-ordinated through the WSG. The first meeting of the WSG to be held outside Britain will be at Münster in September, hopefully making it easier for members in mainland Europe to attend. Some countries have talked about the possibility of forming their own sections of the WSG. Of particular importance has been the formalising of our links with the International Waterfowl Research Bureau, details of which are outlined elsewhere in this Bulletin.

The majority of WSG projects so far have been concerned with the migration and movement of waders. The range of topics covered in the Bulletin has increased considerably to include feeding ecology, distribution, and so on. Members may like to consider whether any project concerned with research of a more directly applied type may be possible. One has in mind particularly the management of wetland habitats for optimum conditions for waders, by agricultural or other methods.

Any comments which members may have on any subject concerned with WSG will always be most welcome.

W. J. A. Dick

WADER STUDY GROUP AND THE INTERNATIONAL WATERFOWL RESEARCH BUREAU (IWRB)

"The IWRB was established in 1954 by the International Council for Bird Preservation to stimulate and co-ordinate research on and the conservation of waterfowl and their wetland habitats, particularly where international co-operation is necessitated by the migratory nature of waterfowl."

"Waterfowl are birds ecologically dependent on wetlands."

"Wetlands are areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water to a depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres."

These extracts are taken from IWRB's constitution and rules. WSG has been involved with the work of the IWRB for some years so it was with considerable pleasure that we received an invitation to become a Contributor (non paying) to that organisation. This was discussed by WSG officers and put to the WSG AGM last November which agreed that WSG should accept the invitation. In effect this means that the WSG can sit in at IWRB meetings and receives copies of all documents issued by the Bureau. WSG thus has the opportunity to comment on or assist with matters relating to waders as they arise within IWRB.

WSG representative (who will receive all communications) to IWRB will be M.W. Pienkowski. His role in the Durham scheme on the Movements of waders in Western Europe makes him the obvious person for the job.