

WADER STUDY GROUP MEETING 1983, DELTA AREA, THE NETHERLANDS

As previously announced, the 1983 Annual General Meeting and scientific meeting of the Wader Study Group will be held on Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 November 1983, in the Delta area of SW Netherlands, at the invitation of Dutch WSG members, assisted by Belgian colleagues who also work on the birds of this area. The conference buildings are "De Schouwse Boer" (the Schouwen Farmer), near Haamstede on the island of Schouwen (now linked to the mainland by dams and bridges). There are ample accommodation, restaurant and bar facilities, lounge and meeting rooms, and the centre is pleasantly positioned in dunes 1 km from the shore and 4 km from one end of the site where an enormous tidal surge barrier is under construction across the Oosterschelde estuary. The area is extremely rich in wintering waders and wildfowl. The AGM will be held on Saturday morning, followed by the scientific meeting for the rest of Saturday and Sunday morning. There will be an excursion to see the birds and the sea-defence works on the Delta on Sunday afternoon. Accommodation will be available from Friday evening or Saturday morning until Sunday, but accommodation on Sunday night can easily be arranged for those who require it. Executive Committee members please note that a committee meeting is planned for Friday 18 November.

Our hosts are attempting to keep the costs as low as possible so as not to discourage visitors from abroad (especially the British as the £ sinks slowly beneath the waves). The estimated cost (including all meals, coffee, accommodation) should be about Dfl 80 (less than £20 at current rate). As the exact cost cannot be given at present, about half (i.e. £10 or Dfl 40) should be paid at the time of booking. Bookings are definite, so that this is non-returnable. The balance will be charged later. There is still time to book, but please do so as soon as possible.

The programme will follow requests and suggestions made at last year's meeting, and will also allow plenty of time for informal discussions. At the time of writing the programme is not finalized, but we hope to include the following contributions, amongst others:

- Studies on waders of the Zeeland Delta, in relation to habitat changes associated with the current construction of the tidal surge barrage, by Henk Baptist (Delta Department, Netherlands); and Patrick Meire (University of Gent, Belgium).
- Wader numbers on lowland agricultural land in Scotland and England, by Hector Galbraith and Ken Smith (Joint surveys by Wader Study Group, British Trust for Ornithology, Scottish Ornithologists' Club, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, U.K.).
- WSG study on the breeding waders of the Western Isles of Scotland, 1983: a study in connection with proposed agricultural changes, by Rob Fuller (Wader Study Group, U.K.).
- Food of chicks of meadow birds, by Johan Thissen. (Research Institute for Nature Management, Netherlands).
- French breeding wader survey, by Philippe Dubois (France).
- Reproductive strategies of Ruffs in particular and waders in general, by Johan van Rhijn (University of Groningen, Netherlands).
- Wader research in Greenland, by Hans Meltøfte (Vadefugle gruppen, Denmark).
- Two methods of estimating breeding wader density in the Reda mouth, Poland, by Elzbieta Krol (Ornithological Station, Gdansk, Poland).
- Wader studies on Ellesmere Island, Canada, by Brian Witts (Joint Services Expedition, U.K.).
- New WSG spring migration project, by Mike Moser (Wader Study Group and Birds of Estuaries Enquiry, U.K.).
- Shorebird migration studies in North America, by Guy Morrison (Canadian Wildlife Service and Wader Study Group).
- Expedition to Guinée Bissau, by Leo Zwarts (World Wildlife Fund, Netherlands).
- Wader studies in Egypt, by Peter Meininger (Netherlands Ornithological Expeditions to Egypt, Netherlands).
- We also hope to include a paper by an ornithologist from the Soviet Union.

A booking form for the meeting is enclosed with this issue and should be returned to Theunis Piersma, Korte Nieuwstraat 4, 9724 LC Groningen, The Netherlands. Either enclose a cheque for £10 (English sterling) payable to "Wader Study Group" or transfer Dfl 40 to giro account 5485692 T.Piersma.Rek.WSG, Groningen. Any queries concerning accommodation or transport in Holland should be sent to Henk Baptist, Deltadienst-Rijkwaterstraat, P.O. Box 439, 4330 AK Middleburg, The Netherlands.

A note for British visitors

The timing of the meeting will allow British visitors to travel by the overnight ferry Friday-Saturday and Sunday-Monday. Our Dutch hosts have kindly offered to arrange transport by minibuses from the ferries on Friday night or Saturday morning and back to the ferries on Sunday evening. To take advantage of this, British visitors should use either the Hull-Rotterdam Europort (North Sea Ferries) service or the Sheerness-Vlissingen (-Flushing) (Olau-Line Ferries) service. (The service from Harwich arrives at Hook of Holland, and transport cannot be provided from there.)

The Hull-Rotterdam Europort service is daily in each direction, departing at 1800 and arriving at 0800 (both ways). The return costs (which includes evening meal and breakfast) are from £48 (£36 for students) for reclining chair, £60 for couchette (i.e. berth in simple 2-berth cabin); £72 for berth in 2-berth cabin with toilet and wash-basin; £88 for berth in 2-berth cabin with toilet, wash-basin and shower. (Half price fares are available for senior citizens in the 3 higher price categories: the company presumably feels that reclining seats are unsuitable for senior citizens; at least one of your officers thinks that reclining seats are unsuitable for people.)

The Sheerness-Vlissingen service is twice daily in each direction, departing from Sheerness 11.00 and 23.00 (arriving Vlissingen 19.00 and 07.00) and departing Vlissingen 12.00 and 22.30 (arriving Sheerness 18.00 and 07.00). The return fare is £16.50 provided a return is started within 52 hours of arrival; otherwise £33. Unlike the Hull ferry, these figures do not include meals. Nor do they include accommodation which will be required on overnight ferries. The costs of accommodation per journey (i.e. multiply by 2 for return) are: £2.50 for a set, £4.00 for a berth in a 3- or 4-berth couchette, £7 for a berth in a 4-berth cabin with shower and toilet, £8 for a berth in a 2-berth cabin with shower and toilet. (Luxury cabins are also available but it seems unlikely that these will be required by WSG members.)

Members should arrange their own bookings. If you would like to take advantage of the minibus travel from the ferries, please complete the appropriate section of the booking form.