

# 10TH INTERNATIONAL WATERFOWL ECOLOGY SYMPOSIUM AND WSG MEETING, AVEIRO

The September joint WSG/IWRB meeting was not only extremely successful but also very enjoyable - in large part due to the local organisation efforts of Rui Rufino, Renato Neves and Antonio Luis. I am not sure even that the organisers were certain how many people attended: there seemed a constant flux of participants during the course of the week of the combined meeting. The attendance list indicated 254 participants from 47 countries, as far afield as Australia and Hong Kong in one direction and Alaska, California and Argentina looking the other way. This must be the biggest ever joint symposium by a large margin.

For my part, I will remember the meeting not just for the extremely wide range of stimulating talks, but - ever a characteristic of WSG meetings - the number and scope of *ad hoc* get-togethers in evenings and at other times. A veritable intellectual feeding-frenzy seems always to occur when a critical mass of wader workers assemble!

The abstracts of talks and posters presented at both the WSG and IWRB Feeding Ecology Symposium will be included in the April *Bulletin*.

David A. Stroud

## A SPANGLISH ACCOUNT OF THE AVEIRO MEETING

The history of this article began in Aveiro when David and Nick were drinking coffee together whilst preparing the contents of this *Bulletin* - and in the process searching for suitable prey in order to do it. I, in that moment, had the luck that they noticed me passing, and with

malicious smiles they called to me: "Pérez-Hurtado, please come here!"

In that moment I knew that my career as a researcher had arrived at a higher point: while I approached their table I thought of possible international projects that they wanted me to co-ordinate, and of that expedition to South Africa that I was to be asked to organise.... David began to explain my mission, but after a time of that strange language, I had to ask Nick to translate into English. I understood him since his accent coincides with that which I had learnt in Oxford and other universities. Their words were encouraging for my career as a researcher: "We want the most informal section of the *Bulletin* to be written by the most informal person at this meeting - you! Well, I knew another, even more informal person than myself: Francisco Hortas.

So I hope that you enjoy reading this as much as we did writing it!

Alejandro Pérez-Hurtado

Once more we had the opportunity of finding ourselves in the company of others who also dedicated their time and effort to the study of birds and their conservation. This very large meeting was different compared to the previous WSG/IWRB Waterfowl Ecology Symposium in Hungary. The organisation of the Aveiro meeting was excellent, and in congratulating our Portuguese friends we took the opportunity of taking many beers with them to stress this point.

The Wader Study Group Conference was full of good moments. We must highlight the reception in the Hotel Imperial with a nice talk by Mike Pienkowski. It was curious how the same people always seem to stand next to the tables with the food on. Whilst listening to the talk they can thus capture food with one hand at the same time as drinking an excellent wine with the other!

The excursion to Mondego served amongst other purposes, to allow many people to sleep in the bus and thus to recuperate strengths which the beer had sapped the previous night.

The excursion allowed us to inspect abandoned salinas. It brought home how we must all fight for the conservation of these important wader areas.

The 10th International Waterfowl Ecology Symposium was very interesting and dense with communications. More than one person was observed hidden away and snoring in those comfortable armchair type seats. Those that attended the Kentish Plover Workshop, as well as listening to some very interesting presentations also witnessed how a slide could be ejected from the projector and travel at incredible speed towards the ceiling. Care with such apparatuses is clearly very important to reduce danger to the audience!

The night-time environment was full of surprises. Many had the good fortune to see Nick Davidson's impression of Eric Clapton singing whilst people knelt on the floor in acclamation of the singer. This was entirely possible thanks to a small orchestra (that is to say two persons). Whilst dancing we could also observe that the sex-ratio was quite wrong and that the few women were totally surrounded. Why is it that there are so few women devoted to ornithology? This is the question of the millions of dollars!

Speaking of the Spanish people, although we followed with desires of party we didn't finish learning to speak groins. We would like to speak more and better so we can converse with the people and discuss our problems. I believe that one of these years we will get it: patience, please! There was again a poster competition and the winner was a very original and interesting one by Alain Tamisier.

I forgot to mention the social evening at the Aveiro Museum which involved a wine-tasting. These excellent wines went to the head of more than one participant and also to more than one the foigras for the ears went out.

Those that did not miss anything at the meeting neither slept by night or by day and took advantage of any lull in activity in order to recuperate their strengths.

(Continued page 17)