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DYED WADERS FROM AFRICA

The studies of the migration of waders in Africa are still in their infancy when compared with those in North Western Europe. This is partly due to the fact that wader enthusiasts are few and far between, the majority being found in Kenya and South Africa. Also waders are smallish birds and therefore do not lend themselves to high recovery rates, and it is significant that the majority of recoveries are made by other ringers. As a result, the recovery rates of African ringed waders is very low. We therefore know little about the migration routes through Africa and between the African and Palaearctic regions.

In an attempt to improve our understanding of the migration patterns of waders, large numbers of Knots, Sanderlings, and Curlew Sandpipers will be dye-marked in the Cape Province by the Western Cape Wader Study Group in early 1976 before the birds depart for their northward migration.

We appeal to all bird watchers to look out for these marked birds during the spring and autumn passage of 1976. If you do see a marked bird, which should be especially obvious in flight, please contact either: A.J. Prater, British Trust for Ornithology, Beech Grove, Tring, England, or: Dr R.W. Summers, Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, University of Cape Town, South Africa, giving as many details as possible, including the colour of the dye and its position on the bird.

The scanty ringing evidence suggests that the migration routes of these 3 species may cross anywhere between western Europe and central Asia, so if you know a site where any of these species occur on spring (April-May) or autumn (August-October) passage, please keep a special lookout.

WSG winter meeting, January 1976

This was held during the Ringing and Migration Conference at Swanwick, Derbyshire. About 80 members attended and Dr. Minton chaired the discussion.

The business session was short with three principal reports.

Secretary (A.J. Prater)

The membership has grown steadily through the year and at 31/12/75 244 persons were members, although 68 had not paid up by that date. A breakdown of members showed that 167 were from Britain, Ireland (12), Europe (40, including 15 from the Netherlands), Africa (12), America (8) and Asia (5). This spread of participation and information was very encouraging and it was hoped it would continue.

In general data forms were being filled in by most groups.

Treasurer (R. Birch, who was unfortunately absent, had circulated the accounts for the year ending 31 December 1975)

WADER STUDY GROUP

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1975

INCOME

	£	p
Subscriptions. 176 members @ 50p	88	00
Sales (Ageing Guide)	0	90
Donations. IWRB for Bulletins for E. Europe.	10	00
Donations. WSG members outside UK.	2	40
Interest (Deposit Account @ 7%)	11	56
	112	86

EXPENDITURE

	£	p
Stationery	20	75
Postage	44	38
Printing	5	00
Secretary's Expenses	2	00
	72	13
EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	40	73

BALANCE SHEET AS ON 31 DECEMBER 1975

ACCUMULATED FUND

	£	p
Balance as on 31.12.75	74	83
Subscriptions paid in retrospect	27	00
Add.. Excess of income over expenditure	40	73
	142	56

ASSETS

Balance at Bank	188	47
Deduct liabilities (subscriptions paid in advance)	45	91
	£ 142	56

Although the balance was healthy it was unusually high due to 1) the research grants available last year were not taken up by members, 2) the large amount received as retrospective membership and 3) the IWRB donation. Compared with previous years it was higher as the money was kept in a deposit account.

There was a discussion on the subscription rate in view of the recent increases in postal charges. To send a bulletin (excluding cost of envelopes & paper etc) to Europe by air would cost 24p, and further afield either 24½p or 28p depending on weight. The 50p annual subscription would clearly not cover this cost. It was decided that as from 1st January 1977 the subscription should be increased to £1.00 per annum.

Editors (M. Pienkowski; A.J. Prater)

Reported that bulletins are often delayed while material is gathered and that prompt returns of ringing totals and analytical studies were needed.

After the reports Tony Prater reported on progress on the new ageing guide. He and John Marchant had almost completed the basic work and writing was well underway. The guide was expected to be in first complete draft by June 1976 and that the BTO would publish it. The contents would be sections on identification, ageing, sexing, geographical variation and biometrics. The 110 species of North America and the Palearctic would be included in the guide.

There then followed three talks on studies of waders.

Keith Grant spoke about Greenshank, enlarging on the summary given at the summer meeting. He stressed the need for more data.

Chris Reynolds looked at the biometrics of Little Ringed Plovers and Jack Snipe, based on the data forms. He found plenty of fascinating trends but also stressed that much more data was needed to complete the picture.

William Dick considered in much greater depth than he had time to do last winter, the scientific results of the Mauritanian Expedition, in particular the data relating to the geographical populations of Knot and Dunlin, which occur in the Banc d'Arguin

WASH WADER RINGING GROUP REPORT 1973/74

The WWRG has now adopted the policy of issuing reports every two years rather than annually. The present document reports the activities and progress over the two years as well as indicating the intended future work and publishing plans. As is usual in these reports, details are given of all ringed birds reported during the period, but additionally a summary of all known movements to and from the Wash reported to date is included, with recovery maps for all species.

During the period reported, the WWRG was deeply involved in the Feasibility Study for the Wash reservoirs proposal. Extracts from that report included in the present report concern movements of waders within the Wash & a presentation of the weight variations of the major study species during the year. This fills many of the gaps in the earlier paper in the 1971/72 report.

The report of approx. 100 pages is available from Dr C.D.T. Minton, 65 St John's Hill, Shenstone, Lichfield, Staffs. Price £1.25 + 25p postage.