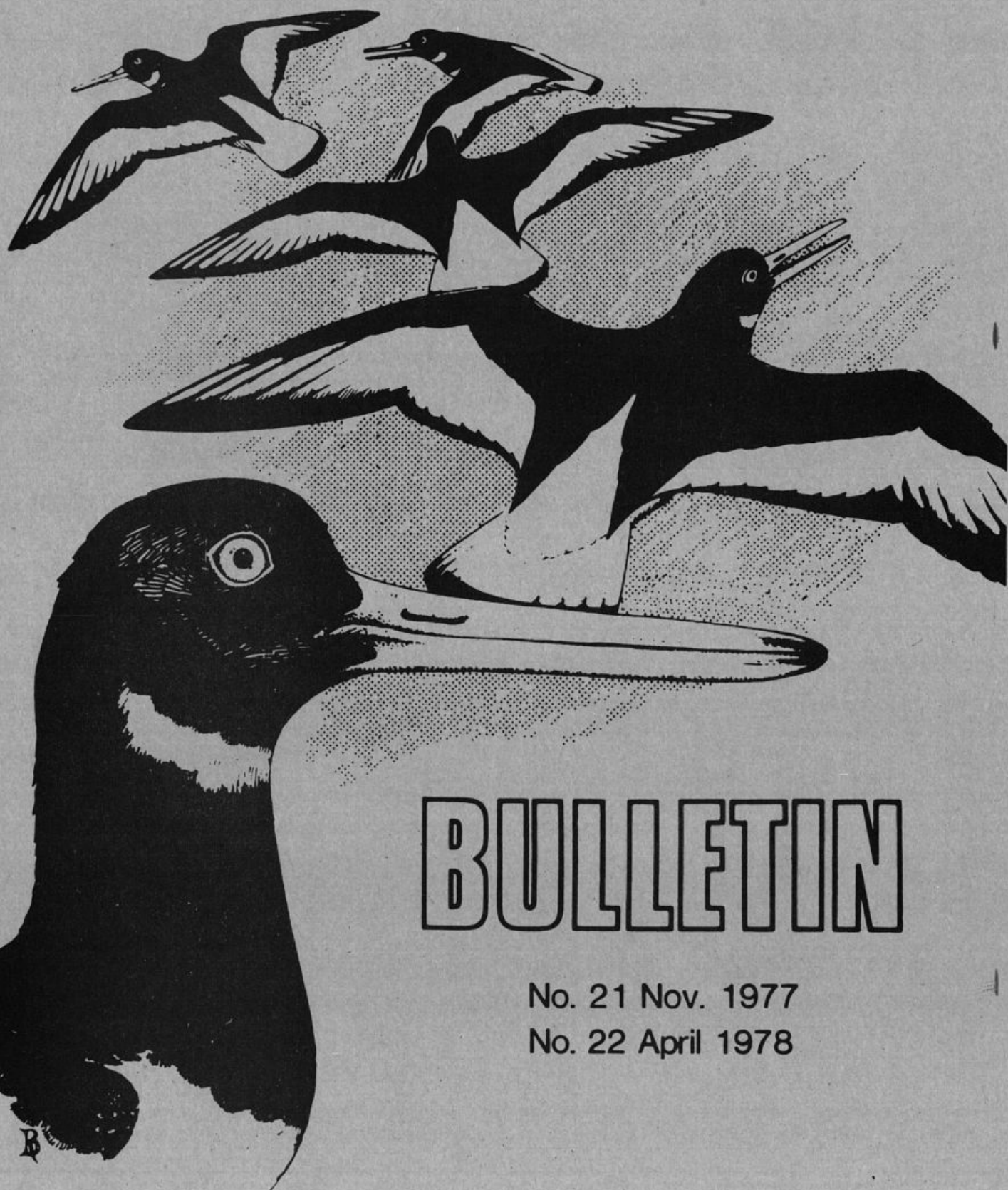


# WADER STUDY GROUP



# BULLETIN

No. 21 Nov. 1977

No. 22 April 1978

## WADER STUDY GROUP

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### New World

Steering Committee Officers listed above, and Dr. A.J. Baker and Dr. F.A. Pitelka.

### CORRESPONDENCE

All general enquiries should be sent to the General Secretary (Dr. S.R. Baillie).

All applications for membership, initial subscriptions and renewals, changes of address, matters relating to the circulation of the *Bulletin* etc. should be sent to the Membership Secretaries (N.A. & J.A. Clark).

Matters and proposals concerning co-operative research projects and objectives should be sent to the Co-ordinator (Theunis Piersma).

All material for the *Bulletin*, and enquiries about this, should be sent to the Editor (Dr. N.C. Davidson).

In the New World, material for the *Bulletin* may be sent to Dr. J.P. Myers or Dr. R.I.G. Morrison.

Matters and proposals concerning colour-marking schemes should be sent to Dr. D.J. Townshend, Department of Zoology, University of Durham, South Road, Durham DH1 3LE, U.K. (tel. 0385-64971 ext 547), who will also try to forward to the appropriate person details of any colour-marked wader sent to him.

### PAYMENTS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

See details on inside back cover.

### DEADLINES

For inclusion in the issue indicated	APRIL	AUGUST	DECEMBER
Material should be received before	1 February	1 June	1 October

If correspondence between editor and author(s) is likely to be needed, material must be received well before these dates if they are to be included in the next issue.

Cover designed by R.M. Bishop Printing by Minizen Ltd., Nottingham (0602-584942)

RE-ISSUE OF BACK NUMBERS OF WADER STUDY GROUP BULLETIN

We have reprinted WSG Bulletin numbers 1-22 in five volumes. They are facsimile reproductions and any errors in the first issue are still present.

Numbers 1-4 were originally produced on foolscap size paper and have been retyped on A4 to conform with later issues. The original pagination is indicated and should be used when citing references. Similarly bulletins should be referred to by number, not by re-issue volume.

WADER STUDY GROUP

Bulletin No 21

November 1977

Contents

Requests etc.  
Ringing totals, spring/summer 1977  
Recent recoveries  
Wader Ageing Guide  
Common Sandpiper studies  
Celtic Wader Research Group  
IWRB counts  
Durham University studies on Teesmouth  
Minutes of October WSG meeting  
Bibliography of WSG articles, Bulletins 1-20  
Recent publications  
Addresses  
Reprinting offer for back Bulletins  
Ringing totals form.

The next Bulletin will be prepared in January 1978 and all contributions would be welcomed. Please could you submit them by December 31st, to either of the editors:

M.W. Pienkowski, 1 West Fenton Cottages, North Berwick, East Lothian  
EH39 5AL. (Tel: Gullane (0620) 843580)  
A.J. Prater, BTO, Beech Grove, Tring, Herts.  
(Tel: Tring 3461)

Requests for information:

- 1) Colour ringed/colour dyed waders:- please report all schemes as well as all observations to Tony Prater (address above).
- 2) Weights of retrapped Ringed Plover chicks : Bull 17 (April 1976)
- 3) Ornithologists visiting Tunisia : Bull 18 (Aug. 1976)
- 4) Corpses of freshly dead waders : Bull 19 (Nov. 1976)
- 5) Colour ringed Oystercatchers: Exe Estuary : Bull 20 (June 1977)
- 6) Colour ringed Common Sandpipers - later in this Bulletin

REQUEST TO OBSERVE COLOUR-MARKED OYSTERCATCHERS

From 1975 to 1977 I colour banded nearly 600 adult Oystercatchers and a few first-calenderyear birds on the inland breeding area near Drachten (53 07 N 06 06 E) in the Netherlands (Friesland). This population winters in the Dutch Waddensea, along the continental coast to S.W. Iberia and in the British Isles (recoveries from the west, south and also west coast).

I use plastic rings (10 mm height): yellow, red, blue, green, black and white; 1 to 5 (maximally) colour-rings/bird; 0 to 2 under the intertarsal joint (left and/or right leg) and 0 or 1 above the intertarsal joint (left or right); in addition an aluminium ring above the intertarsal joint (left or right). All colours can be found in all positions, except 2 rings of the same colour on the same leg under the intertarsal joint.

One of the aims of this ringing programme is to study bill form in relation to feeding habits. We already have some evidence that the bill tip of individual birds may change from more or less blunt shortly after arriving on the breeding area, to pointed a fortnight or so later. We suppose that these birds feed on shell fish in the marine habitat and not on soft-bodied buried prey (worms).

Measurements: bill length to the tip of the longest bill half

a) from the feathers

b) from the proximal (hind) rim of the nose

bill thickness at the tip (over the first 3 mm length)

Classification of the bill tip: blunt, intermediate, pointed.

For precise documentation of bill form I take a photo of the (left) lateral side of head and bill, against a background of millimeter paper (for scale), together with a label indicating ring number and date; distance 20 to 25 cm.

If you catch one of my birds, please take the measurements as I did, including a classification of the bill tip. When possible, take a photo. When observing identified birds try to make notes on the type of food.

Recording of marked birds to:

Drs. J.B. Hulscher,  
Zoölogisch Laboratorium,  
Kerklaan 30,  
HAREN (Gr.),  
The Netherlands.

Ringing totals reported for March to June 1977

For species in which two figures are listed fully grown birds are given above and pulli below.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L *
Oystercatcher	3	21	11	-	-	33	5	13	-	119	3	754
	78	20	-	5	2	-	7	-	-	-	-	-
Lapwing	-	1	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	50
	272	18	-	-	56	99	103	-	-	-	-	-
Ringed Plover	2	2	-	1	-	6	243	-	17	-	-	1
	4	-	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	-	-	-
Grey Plover	-	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	4
Turnstone	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	32	-	-	151
Snipe	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	34	-	-	-
	6	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Woodcock	1	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Curlew	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	11	-	-	-	11
	43	2	-	-	1	-	4	-	-	-	-	-
Whimbrel	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bar-tailed Godwit	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	6
Common Sandpiper	-	5	-	-	32	-	-	-	17	-	-	-
	-	3	-	-	60	-	-	-	23	-	-	-
Redshank	1	-	8	1	-	-	61	2	1	-	5	16
	19	3	-	-	3	-	8	-	-	-	-	-
Purple Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	1
Dunlin	-	-	43	8	2	15	1378	6	353	153	507	92
	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sanderling	-	-	-	-	-	270	4	-	54	-	-	103
Knot	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	14

\* A = Andrew Ramsey: Orkney. B = Brian Etheridge: Moray.  
 C = C.M. Reynolds: Wash. D = S.H. Sporne: Hampshire.  
 E = South Pennine R.G. F = S.W. Lincs. R.G.  
 G = Morecambe Bay W.G. H = Barry O'Mahony: Co. Cork.  
 I = Durham University. J = Devon & Cornwall W.R.G.  
 K = Celtic Wader Research Group. L = Wash W.R.G.

A form for totals for July - October 1977 will be found at the end of this Bulletin.

Recent RecoveriesOystercatcher

SS 95708	Ad	19.1.69	Morecambe Bay	X Bear Island	11.6.77
FS 33559	Juv	21.10.71	Poole Harbour	X Rogaland, Norway	8.4.77
FS 82417	2Y	19.12.76	Anglesey	X Nordland, "	end.6.77

The following Oystercatchers ringed on the Wash were recovered (dead) in Norway

Ringed

1967	SS 59600	Rogaland	22.5.77	:	SS 75071	Rogaland	7.6.77
	ED 54201	Nordland	19.4.77	:	ED 54200	Nordland	4.6.77
	SS 75486	Nordland	23.6.77	:			
1968	SS 77191	Sogn & Fjordane	28.5.77	:	SS 76030	More & Romsdal	30.5.77
1969	SS 77733	Nordland	25.6.77	:	SS 88151	Hordaland	10.4.77
1970	SS 88279	Troms	26.6.77	:	SS 88308	Hordaland	10.6.77
1971	FS 15522	More & Romsdal	early.5.77	:			
1972	FS 29163	Hordaland	28.6.77	:	FS 29106	More & Romsdal	25.3.77
1973	FS 29581	Rogaland	21.4.77	:			
1974	FS 54168	Nordland	8.6.77	:	FS 54201	Rogaland	25.5.77
	FS 54682	More & Romsdal	7.5.77	:	FS 98009	Rogaland	15.8.77.
	FS 98230	Aust Agder	7.4.77	:	FS 99949	Nord Trondelag	27.6.77
1975	FV 04542	Rogaland	19.7.77	:	FV 04921	Hordaland	10.4.77
	FV 23112	More & Romsdal	24.8.77	:	FV 23294	Rogaland	10.4.77
	FV 23536	"	12.4.77	:	FV 23711	More & Romsdal	18.4.77
	FV 23779	Nord Trondelag	18.7.77	:	FV 24158	Rogaland	4.7.77
	FV 28125	Rogaland	25.6.77	:	FV 28494	"	19.7.77
1976	SS 12699	Sor Trondelag	11.5.77	:	FV 28685	More & Romsdal	Summer.77
	FV 28739	Vest Agder	15.3.77	:			

SS 14534	2Y	17.1.64	Dee	X Faeroes	1.5.77
SS 89995	Ad	3.11.68	Morecambe Bay	X "	22.7.77
FS 33538	Ad	21.10.71	Poole Harbour	V "	0.7.77
FS 99504	Ad	21.8.74	Wash	X Helgoland, W. Germany	3.8.77
FS 02098	Ad	5.3.72	Portsmouth	V Friesland, Netherlands	10.8.77
FS 29930	Ad	5.3.72	"	X Drente, "	4.5.77
SS 59698	Ad	24.7.67	Wash	X Friesland, "	13.6.77
SS 53408	Ad	7.9.68	Burry Inlet	X " "	0.4.77
FS 82008	Juv	14.9.74	Conway	V " "	29.4.77
FS 98558	Ad	5.10.74	Wash	+ Nord, France	30.7.77

SS 11852	Pull	27.5.64	Skokholm	V Camel, Cornwall	27.8.77
SS 99553	Pull	27.5.71	Dumfries	X Blackpool, Lancs	26.6.77
FS 93956	Pull	28.6.74	Shetland	V Ballycotton, Cork	12.3.77
FS 93963	Pull	29.6.74	"	V Exe, Devon	23.4.77
FS 09221	Pull	20.7.76	Foula	X S. Solway	11.4.77
FV 38482	Pull	22.6.77	Orkney	X Co Down, N. Ireland	1.9.77
SS 59505	FG	24.7.67	Wash	X Shetland	early.6.77
FV 04969	2Y	8.9.75	"	X "	9.7.77
SS 95866	Ad	19.1.69	Morecambe Bay	X "	early.5.77
SS 62205	Ad	21.9.66	Conway	X "	29.5.77
FS 61882	3Y	15.8.76	Camel, Cornwall	X "	27.8.77
FS 08228	Ad	23.11.69	Morecambe Bay	X Orkney	21.4.77
FS 99629	Ad	21.8.74	Wash	X "	29.3.77

A further 20 birds ringed on passage and in winter in Britain were recovered on Scottish breeding grounds and there were 3 long distance inter-British movements away from breeding grounds, these included

FV 24291	Ad	12.6.76	Wash	V Exe, Devon	23.4.77
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Lapwing

DS 78312	Pull	8.6.71	Salisbury, Wilts	+ Nord, France	12.3.77
DS 59165	Ad	15.2.76	Kinver, Staffs	X Southwold, Suffolk	8.7.77

Ringed Plover

BV 18078	Ad	13.8.75	Aylburton, Glos.	X Svalbardseyri, Iceland	6.6.77
BV 33431	Ad	29.9.73	Conway	X Jylland, Denmark	15.8.77
BV 25167	Ad	19.5.73	Newport, Gwent	V Morecambe Bay	22.5.77
BV 18086	Ad	24.8.75	Aylburton	V "	14.5.77
BV 38002	FG	19.12.76	Anglesey	V "	16.8.77
BV 34922	Ad	23.5.74	Dee	V "	22.5.77
BV 28866	Ad	1.3.75	Sandside, Caithness	X Lochinvar, Sutherland	6.6.77

Little Ringed Plover

BV 46755	Pull	29.6.76	Northwich, Cheshire	+ Nord, France	6.8.77
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Turnstone

CE 20688	Juv	25.9.76	Carnoustie, Angus	+ Angmagssalik, Greenland	2.6.77
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Woodcock

EF 37464	1Y	22.1.76	Co Mayo, Ireland	+ Uppsala, Sweden	15.7.77
EF 37365	1Y	8.1.77	" "	+ Skareborg, "	3.7.77

Curlew

SS 86387	Juv	30.7.75	Walcot, Shropshire	X Stade, W. Germany	7.4.77
FV 22128	Pull	6.7.76	Orkney	X Carrickfergus, Co Antrim	2.8.77
FV 41926	Ad	2.10.76	Ballycotton, Cork	X Oswestry, Shropshire	2.7.77

Bar-tailed Godwit

DA 01226	Ad	13.3.71	Dee	X Schleswig-Holstein, W. Germany	2.4.77
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Redshank

DR 29595	Ad	27.8.76	Wash	X Stokkseyri, Iceland	10.7.77
DS 64050	Ad	23.3.74	Conway	X Islay, Argyll	2.7.77
2074488	Juv	10.8.71	Pegwell Bay	V Ribble	22.6.77
DR 21267	Ad	23.7.74	Wash	X Halkirk, Caithness	17.6.77
DR 21049	Ad	20.7.74	"	X Moniaive, Dumfries	28.5.77
DS 74299	FG	5.11.69	E. Tilbury, Essex	X Doncaster, Yorks	22.5.77
DR 25120	Ad	9.5.75	Ribble	X Morecambe Bay	18.4.77
DR 03835	Juv	23.7.77	St. Cyrus, Kincard	X N. Solway	11.8.77
DR 03838	Ad	30.7.77	Montrose Basin	X Aberlady Bay, Forth	3.9.77

Knot

CC 94725	Ad	12.2.75	Wash	X Terschelling, Netherlands	1.9.77
CC 71993	Ad	11.8.71	"	X Kirkcaldy, Forth	1.6.77



Dunlin

BB 91664	Ad	20.11.71	Langstone Harbour	V	Mikoszewo, Poland	5.8.77
BB 98907	Ad	27.1.74	Portsmouth Harbour	V	" "	5.8.77
NB 17138	Ad	27.8.76	Wash	V	" "	8.8.77
BX 01941	Ad	21.5.77	Newport, Gwent	V	" "	5.8.77
NB 29505	1Y	18.5.77	Teesmouth	V	Rostock, E. Germany	31.7.77
636985	1Y	18.5.77	"	V	" "	2.8.77
BE 92032	Ad	7.9.67	Wash	V	Neubrandenburg, "	23.7.77

The following birds were controlled at 1) Ottenby and 2) Torham in Sweden in late July/early August 1977

- 1) Wash BX 65125 10.8.75, BX 93513 16.5.76, BB 32506 12.8.68, Humber BX 20419 9.1.73, Morecambe Bay BX 32077 11.5.74, BP 86755 17.2.73, Dee BX 06539 13.5.75, BB 72914 20.9.71, Conway BX 33750 16.2.75.
- 2) Humber BX 80419 24.10.76, Wash NB 18644 28.8.76, Outley Creek BB 29721 13.10.67, Newport, Gwent BX 52160 26.4.75.

BX 09805	Ad	25.8.76	Ribble	X	Jylland, Denmark	0.7.77
BB 55871	Ad	6.2.70	Morecambe Bay	X	Fano, "	10.4.77
BX 45069	Juv	14.10.74	Poole Harbour	X	Romo, "	9.8.77
BX 51675	Ad	17.1.75	Plym Estuary	X	North Sea	1.4.77
BR 67066	Ad	1.12.74	Portsmouth Harbour	X	Schleswig-Holstein, W. Germany	12.6.77
BX 63040	Ad	2.2.76	Poole Harbour	X	Oldenburg, W. Germany	14.4.77
BB 80096	1Y	3.3.73	Conway	X	Schleswig-Holstein, "	24.4.77
BX 98458	Ad	30.1.76	Belfast	X	" " "	20.3.77
NC 56799	Juv	16.8.77	Speymouth, Moray	+	Gironde, France	20.8.77
BX 38322	Ad	25.8.76	Shetland	+	Manche, "	23.7.77
BB 87484	Ad	19.5.74	Morecambe Bay	X	Morbihan, "	1.7.77
NB 09093	Ad	15.5.77	" "	X	Seine-Maritime, France	5.8.77
BX 95668	Ad	27.8.76	Wash	+	Lisbon, Portugal	4.1.77
NB 04083	Juv	27.10.76	Shannon	V	Teesmouth	18.5.77
NB 28187	1Y	9.2.77	"	V	Wash	9.4.77
BX 77844	1Y	12.3.77	Ballycotton, Cork	V	Newport, Gwent	21.5.77

There were an additional 23 distant recoveries of Dunlin within Britain which were ringed during previous years.

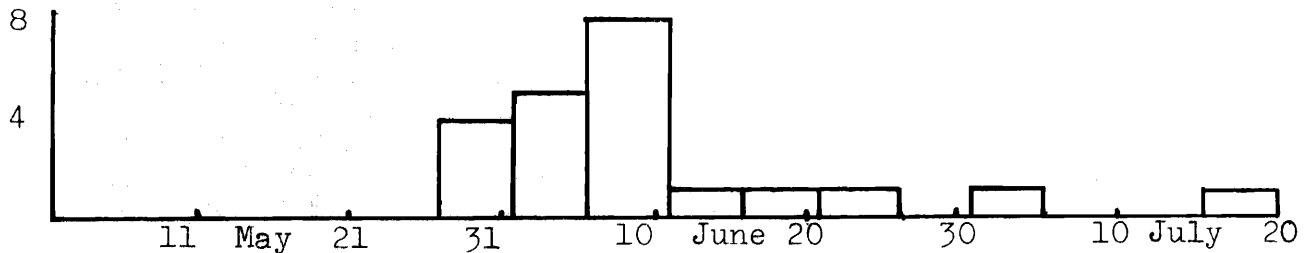
Sanderling

BB 65602	FG	30.8.70	Shetland	V	Margate, Kent	6.4.77
BX 58796	Juv	17.11.74	Wash	V	Morecambe Bay	17.8.77
BX 59101	Ad	25.5.75	"	V	Teesmouth	1.9.77

Avocet

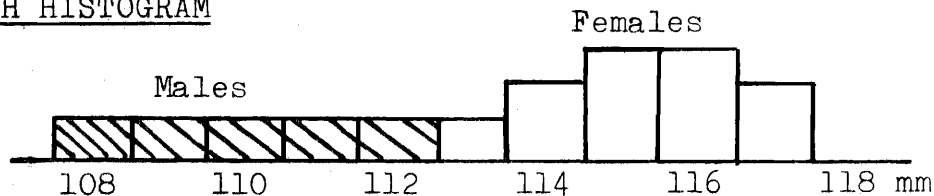
ED 55253	Juv	18.7.70	Butley Creek	X	Lisbon, Portugal	21.6.77
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Estimated dates of hatching of the pulli ringed

We can thus see that a Common Sandpiper with eggs will be about 20g up on normal (each egg weighs about 12g). The bird weighing 71g on 16 May was retrapped at 53g on 17 June.

We have been colour ringing these birds, so as well as the heavy females we have been able to sex some other birds on behaviour. For 11 females the average winglength is 115.3mm (SD= 1.2) and for 5 males 110.0mm. For all adults the average is 113.3mm (SD= 2.7)

WINGLENGTH HISTOGRAM

We urgently appeal for any observations of colour ringed Sandpipers. Full details of colour code are not nearly so important as the general fact of being colour-ringed, so please do not withhold a sighting because of incompleteness. A look at BTO recoveries of Sandpipers ringed on the breeding areas reveals 14 back around their breeding place (confirmed in our case with 24 caught again within the South Pennines in later seasons over the last 10 years), 2 in Africa, 6 in France and 1 in Portugal, but only 2 in Britain. However 7 ringed at likely stopping places (Abberton etc.) have been found in potential breeding areas in May and June. S. Brown suggests that they are long-hop migrants but as they appear to leave the breeding streams early we want to know where they hop from as well as to.

South Pennine Ringing Group, J.E. Robson, 1 Lawnfold, Hadfield, Hyde, Cheshire.

THE CELTIC WADER RESEARCH GROUP

What's in a name ..... admittedly The Celtic Wader Research Group (CWRG for short, pronounced K-whirr-g) is a rather grand title for a small group of people studying waders on the shores of South Wales and around the Severn Estuary. SEWAGE, a mnemonic appropriate for a group working on the shores of an estuary adjacent to large cities, was a promising alternative which started well .... Severn Estuary, Wales and ..... but it failed in the end so we were stuck with Chris Hemmings' idea - CWRG. In our early days we did have 'Celtic' aspirations and some of us had caught waders on the north, west and south coasts of Wales and even shown an interest in the Hebrides to say nothing of hopefully gazing westwards to

Ireland. But we have remained in South Wales. None of the Group are 'Celtic' (I think) and certainly none are Welsh. Of our 11 members only three are resident in Wales. Most of us are English Midlanders and several of us learnt about waders with the Wash Wader Ringing Group (WWRG) and are still members of that Group. I have heard it said that we have fled from Clive Minton's benign dictatorship in the east to set up our own democracy in the west - a tale quite without (well ..... nearly without) foundation! For several years we were wholly and gratefully dependent on the WWRG for cannon netting equipment and on occasions we even enticed a few WWRG members to abscond from east to west and help us, but now we are more settled and find our helpers nearer at hand. Several innocent pupils at extra-mural classes in ornithology have found themselves in unlikely, unexpected and insalubrious situations against their better judgement but some have survived to help another day. We now own two cannon nets, have an interest in Phhut-netting and muster enough mist nets between us for most purposes. We are not a ringing group as such and we do not hold group rings but we are meticulous in gathering all data centrally. The Group was founded in 1974 to give title to an assorted collection of wader ringers who had been active in South Wales since 1972. We call ourselves a Research Group to remind ourselves and others that our interests extend beyond mere ringing to the proper examination of the wader in the hand and associated study of numbers, the wader on the mud and the habitat. Every trapped bird is weighed and measured in proper fashion and Dunlin are subjected to detailed scrutiny. If we suffer casualties (birds!) they are subjected to laboratory analysis to determine fat free weight and fat load.

Although we are more than happy to catch any species of wader (or any other coastal birds for that matter) our primary study objectives have been the spring passage of Dunlins and Ringed Plovers near Newport and Cardiff and the wintering population of these species in the far west of Pembrokeshire. We have been fairly successful in the study of spring Dunlins and like to think we were prime movers in reminding ringers of the ancient knowledge that Dunlin races can be distinguished by breeding plumage on passage in May. We are now writing about various aspects of Dunlin spring migration, Dunlin races, their weight changes prior to migration and their plumages. Spring studies of Ringed Plovers have been less successful because although several thousands are present near Newport they are difficult to catch because they do not flock closely together and are often diluted by superabundant Dunlins. We have collected a little data which shows Ringed Plovers to be medium sized birds, probably bound for breeding grounds in Iceland and NE Greenland. Winter Dunlin studies in the mild, westerly, Atlantic-influenced climate of Pembrokeshire have been valuable for providing mean weights for comparison with the bitter east coast and elsewhere. This information is being incorporated in a paper on Dunlin weights by Lloyd, Pienkowski and Minton none of whom belong to CWRG - but to be fair we are only supplying about 5% of their data at the most! We started well with winter Ringed Plover in Pembrokeshire and caught quite a few. They were large British breeding birds, <sup>useful</sup> to compare with spring passage migrants. Recently they have become more difficult to catch and ever increasing activity at the oil terminals in Milford Haven may be having some effects. Certainly oiled beaches have curtailed our activities at times. The capture of 42 Whimbrel was an unexpected spin-off from more mundane wader studies and data from these together with Severn Estuary counts and an analysis of European ringing recoveries is at present being submitted for publication.

CWRG has always been a small group with specific aims and we plan to remain so. Soon our emphasis on spring Dunlin will probably change to autumn Dunlin. Hopefully we can improve our studies of Ringed Plover and Whimbrel and extend to other species - particularly Redshank. Additionally Group members do tend to get mixed up in other things such as recent cannon netting of gulls at rubbish tips in the Midlands and near Tenby and some of us are not sure whether we are true wader ringers or renegades from the gull cause returning to our true calling!

We have published one short report of 18 A4 duplicated pages which is mainly a recovery list enclosed in a fine and elegant cover depicting flying Dunlin drawn by Ray Bishop (A few copies are still available from the author, price 30p). Most of the recoveries listed are Dunlin and we have segregated them according to race. As well as the usual Scandinavian birds we have caught Dunlin from the Mauritian, the Moroccan and the Icelandic wader expeditions and while mentioning wader expeditions I should mention that a CWRG man visited NE Greenland for waders in 1972 and that three CWRG men were members of the Wader Study Group half of the Joint Biological Expedition to Greenland in 1974 the results from which ..... but I digress.

Waders ringed by CWRG: Snipe 1, Ringed Plover 189, Turnstone 42, Grey Plover 3, Oystercatcher 15, Redshank 19, Dunlin 3528, Knot 27, Curlew Sandpiper 1, Whimbrel 42, Curlew 14, Bar-tailed Godwit 9: Total 3890.

G.H. Green, Windy Ridge, Little Comberton, Pershore, Worcs.

#### WADER COUNTS: January 1976

(as reported to the 1977 IWRB Meeting)

Tony Prater

Almost the whole of the Atlantic coast of Europe was counted in January 1976. The numbers of the principle species recorded are presented in Table 1. Only NW Spain was not covered. The table includes estimates based on previous counts for countries where data were lacking for 1976 and can therefore be compared with Table 1 in the report presented at Alushta. Further details on the counts are summarised below.

Denmark. Apart from the Waddensea, a further 19 sites were counted. Very few waders were found with only C. alpina (2,300) and T. totanus (90) exceeding 50 individuals.

Waddensea. Counts were made in Denmark and the Netherlands, although details from the latter area have not yet been received. Relatively small numbers and no C. canutus were observed in the Danish Waddensea.

Delta. Details of counts made in this rapidly changing area were received for both January 1975 and 1976. Interestingly there are relatively few changes in the status of wintering birds since massive reclamation work has taken place. In 1976 the wintering flocks of R. avosetta (440); T. erythropus (53) and A. interpres (2,200) were of particular note. A detailed paper on the eight full

counts of the birds of the Delta region made since September 1972 will be published shortly.

Belgium. Following the first count of the 63 km. of beach in 1975, the 1976 counts in addition included the estuarine habitat of de IJzermonding and Het Zwin. Large numbers of A. interpres (524), C. maritima (315) and C. alba (307) were again recorded. The flock of 230 P. pugnax at Het Zwin is one of the largest wintering in Europe.

Ireland. The Irish Wildbird Conservancy 'Wetlands Enquiry' continued to provide most valuable comparative data of wader populations; numbers of most species in 1976 were slightly lower than the previous year.

Britain. The BTO/RSPB/WT 'Birds of Estuaries Enquiry' also maintained a full series of counts. In 1976 numbers were very close to those of 1975 with most species remaining at their previously high level. Numbers of C. canutus increased slightly but they remained about 200,000 fewer than in the early 1970's.

France. 1976 provided the first full series of counts since 1970. This most valuable contribution revealed many changes in the status of both species and wetlands. Large decreases in the numbers of C. canutus (from 110,000 to only 10,800) and L. limosa (15,000 to 7,800) were noted. Of the major coastal areas the numbers in Baie du Mont St. Michel (maximum 60-80,000) and L'Anse de L'Aiguillon/Baie d'Oleron) were noticeably lower, both mainly due to the lower numbers of C. canutus. On the other hand the true importance of Bassin d'Arcachon (with 220,000 C. alpina) was shown.

Portugal. A further expedition financed by C.E.M.P.A., La Tour du Valet Foundation and the RSPB provided more extremely valuable data on the waders in Portugal. The Tejo, the complex area of the Algrave and the Sado estuary, were again shown to be of international importance. Other species of special interest were those normally regarded as African wintering birds, C. minuta (510), C. alexandrinus (650), T. erythropus (200) and H. himantopus (90) being the most significant.

Morocco. Although full counts were not made a count of the important northern site of Merja Zerga was undertaken and almost 40,000 waders were seen. Principal species were C. alpina (17,500), L. limosa (9,000), C. hiaticula (5,000) C. alexandrinus (3,000), R. avosetta (1,700) and P. squatarola (1,600).

#### Counts made elsewhere

Pakistan. A number of lakes were counted by the IWRB mission in January/February 1976. Relatively small numbers of waders were observed, although emphasis was not placed on this group of birds. Only Lake Ghauspur with over 12,000 waders, including 8,000 L. limosa and 2,900 H. himantopus supported important concentrations.

Algeria. In January 1977 an extensive series of counts was made. The most important observations were at Marais de la Macta where almost 8,500 waders were seen; this included C. minuta (3,600),

TABLE 1. Counts of waders made in Europe in January 1976.

	Ireland	U.K.	Denmark Other areas Wadd- ensea	Delta	Belgium	France	Portugal	TOTAL	Other Areas	Estimated TOTAL
H. ostralegus	17.3	207.3	+	7.1	99.0	0.7	0.3	365.6	278.9	644.5
C. alexandrinus	-	+	-	-	-	0.1	0.6	0.7	-	0.7
C. hiaticula	0.7	8.4	+	-	0.1	1.1	1.8	11.1	3.4	14.5
P. squatrola	0.6	13.3	+	-	4.5	10.0	6.9	35.4	6.7	42.1
A. interpres	0.5	11.7	-	-	2.2	0.3	0.1	15.4	1.7	17.1
N. arquata	10.9	63.4	+	1.4	8.0	13.7	1.3	99.2	85.9	185.1
N. phaeopus	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	+
L. limosa	2.8	4.4	-	-	-	7.8	9.9	24.9	6.1	31.0
L. lapponica	16.7	41.6	-	6.2	6.0	1.3	6.2	78.1	18.1	96.2
T. totanus	7.5	79.1	0.1	1.2	3.8	3.1	5.3	100.4	15.6	116.0
T. erythropus	+	0.1	-	-	0.1	+	0.2	0.4	+	0.4
T. nebularia	0.1	0.3	-	-	-	+	+	0.5	+	0.5
C. canutus	17.7	198.4	+	-	17.0	10.8	0.7	245.0	48.5	293.5
C. alpina	47.2	564.6	2.3	5.7	81.0	349.0	56.1	1106.7	222.0	1329.6
C. alba	0.3	6.9	-	-	0.4	0.7	0.3	9.0	1.0	10.9
C. minuta	+	+	-	-	-	-	0.5	0.5	-	0.5
P. pugnax	+	0.1	-	-	+	0.3	+	0.6	1.5	2.1
R. avosetta	-	0.1	-	-	0.4	10.6	11.6	22.7	2.7	25.4
H. himantopus	-	-	-	-	-	+	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2

Note: numbers presented in thousands; + = Less than 50 counted.

\* based on 1975 winter counts in the Netherlands and Federal Republic of Germany, and 1969 counts of NW Spain.

C. alpina (2,100), R. avosetta (1,010), L. limosa (950), C. alexandrinus (300). Over a hundred waders were present at Salines d'Arzew, mainly R. avosetta (660) and Mare de Boufatis (170).

DURHAM UNIVERSITY TEESMOUTH SHOREBIRD RESEARCH PROGRAMME

L.R. Goodyer.

The Tees estuary in NE England formerly spread over about 6,000 acres (2,500 ha.) but during this century progressive reclamation, mainly for port facilities, the steel and chemical industries and, more recently, oil-based processes, reduced the intertidal area to about 1,000 acres (400 ha.) by 1970 and to about 400 acres (160 ha.) in 1974. Further reclamation is proposed. Large numbers of wintering waders and Shelducks continue to be supported by the estuary, so that densities of feeding birds are very high. The ecology and behaviour of the birds and their invertebrate prey species have been studied by Durham University personnel since 1970. Aims have included the prediction of the effects of proposed reclamations and, if reclamations take place, monitoring the effects. The results of the work have been used on several occasions in providing information for the planning and conservation bodies.

Catching of waders at Teesmouth by Durham University started in the autumn of 1975 as an extension of these studies when the need for individually marked birds arose. At present studies of individual behaviour are concerned with Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Grey Plover, Sanderling and Turnstone but work also continues on Oystercatcher, Redshank, Knot, Dunlin, and Shelduck. Ringing all species is the other aim of the catching programme, so that the detailed position of Teesmouth in the annual cycle of these birds can be examined, and any changes in pattern associated with further reclamation studied.

Catching at Teesmouth presents additional difficulties to those encountered at many other estuaries. Probably because of the continued large scale reclamation and associated engineering activity, the wader flocks at Teesmouth have not developed strongly traditional roosting sites and their roosting behaviour is very variable. Also, the highly unnatural shoreline on large parts of the estuary often makes net-siting difficult. Mist-netting has often been impracticable because of the illumination from the many industrial plants surrounding the area. In late 1975 the loan of cannon-netting equipment from the Wash Wader Ringing Group allowed a start to netting. Because of the practical difficulties and a restricted number of occasions when attempts were possible, only just over 200 birds were caught, but these did allow a start to the studies on individual birds - Turnstones, Grey Plovers and Curlews - by research students at Durham.



In 1976, with the aid of a grant from the Nature Conservancy Council, two cannon-nets were purchased and an additional staff member employed to co-ordinate the catching and counts. With catching possible throughout the year, 1,500 waders of 9 species had been caught by the spring of 1977. Evidence on movement patterns is already accumulating rapidly and a strong relationship between flocks on Teesmouth and at the Wash is becoming evident. Dunlins have shown seven local recaptures and six from the Wash while more distant movements have involved Shannon (Ireland), Netherlands, Norway, Sweden (2) and E. Germany. Three Knots from the Wash and one from Iceland have been recaptured and one Sanderling has also come from the Wash, there also being two local recaptures for this species. Norway has provided an Oystercatcher and a Turnstone and there have been two local Turnstone recaptures.

The ringing work is closely integrated with counts of high water roosts and low water feeding flocks, feeding and other behavioural studies, and invertebrate sampling. It is hoped that this will give a much clearer picture of the use made of Teesmouth by waders. This is of immediate conservation interest as proposals for the reclamation of the rest of the estuary are always present.

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MINUTES OF THE SUMMER W.S.G. MEETING HELD ON 9th OCTOBER, 1977  
AT 45 BODENHAM ROAD, HEREFORD.

Those present included Dr. C.D.T. Minton (Chairman), A.J. Prater (Secretary/Editor), M.W. Pienkowski (Editor) and representatives of the following groups: Celtic Wader Research Group, Devon and Cornwall Wader R.G., Durham University, Farlington R.G., Scan R.G., South West Lancs. R.G., Leigh R.G., and Wash Wader R.G. Apologies for absence were received from Merseyside R.G. and C.M. Reynolds.

- 1) Chairman's remark. A brief review was made of the advances in field work and particularly the much greater effort going into publications, several of which are now in press and others in final stages of preparation.
- 2) Secretary's report. Membership is now about 320, with almost a third coming from outside Britain. Most groups are sending in WSG data forms, although a few do not yet. All data were requested and it was suggested that as a minimum an annual submission of forms for species caught in small numbers would be ideal. Concern was expressed that much data on inland waders caught in small numbers was not received. Two members noted that some people had paid subscriptions recently but had not yet received a bulletin. This matter would be taken further by the Chairman and Secretary to ensure that it did not happen again.

3) Treasurer's Report. (The Treasurer was delayed in the U.S.A. and was unable to provide a report). The Secretary said that an application for a grant to help with a detailed breeding study of Common Sandpipers had been made by the South Pennine R.G. (via P. Holland) and that the grants committee thought it deserved help and suggested £15 be sent. The meeting approved this. An advance report on progress with the study in 1977 was most encouraging. (See elsewhere in Bulletin, Ed.)

4) Editor's Report. Apologies were offered for the recent delays, due mainly to typing; as a result several offers of assistance were made (from P. Jackson, R. Little and H.P. Sitters). The copy date for bulletins is March, June and October. To catch up, bulletins are planned for November 1977 and early February 1978. Contributions are urgently needed! G.F. Appleton offered to help with proof reading.

Congratulations were given to Paul Pratley for producing the much improved bulletin. A special tribute was paid to Jim Pratley, who died in late September. He had greatly helped the WSG in its early publications.

A number of members suggested back numbers of bulletins should be produced to sell to members and libraries to ensure that all the bulletins were widely available. G.H. Green and K. Lessels agreed to look further into this. It was also agreed that a small duplicated sheet setting out aims, methods and membership details should be produced. A.J. Prater was to draft it and to see if a copy could be inserted loose into each copy of the forthcoming wader ageing guide. It was suggested that a card cover should be put onto the bulletins in future. This would improve their permanency. G.H. Green agreed to approach R. Bishop about designing it.

5) Cannon-netting code of practice. J.M. McMeeking had almost completed a revised draft based on comments made at the October 1976 meeting and written comments sent directly to him. K. Lessels agreed to finish the drafting and to circulate copies to groups and to the R. and M. Committee for final comments. A single sheet with the main safety considerations for cannon and mist-netting for new recruits (written by K. Lessels) was circulated. It was felt that this was a very useful summary and with very minor modifications could be produced and distributed to all groups who would like copies.

6) Cannon-netting equipment a) projectile ropes. In view of the excessive wear on this item and recent projectile losses on firing several groups were experimenting with alternatives. The most promising appears to be a metal rod linked to the projectile, described by R. Little (SCAN R.G.). Synthetic ropes were noted as stronger than sisal but at least four, preferably five, tucks were needed to splice them.

b) other items. Some difficulties with an occasional fuse not firing was noted and specification/quality control was queried. Samples and details of failure to Dr. C.D.T. Minton who will then contact the manufacturers. SWLRG noted 24½ inch barrels appeared as effective as 30 inch (and cheaper and lighter).

7) Wader Ageing Guide. A.J. Prater reported on the current position and tabled examples of contents; it was expected to be available in late December 1977, price £2.50.

8) Programme for Ringers Conference. The members suggested that as the WSG session took place in the late evening, just a single talk after the business session was best. For the 1978 programme (January 7th) it was suggested and agreed that A.J. Prater should give an illustrated talk on 'Ageing of Waders'. A short film might also be available.

9) Group activities and reports a) International. The International Waterfowl Research Bureau has recently formed a Ringing Research Group. A discussion was held on a draft wader ringing programme that M.W. Pienkowski and A.J. Prater had prepared. It was hoped that a progress report can be printed in the February 1978 WSG bulletin together with draft suggestions.

b) National. Durham. 1900+ caught on the Tees. Five species of special study with colour-rings (Bar-tailed Godwit, Curlew, Grey Plover, Sanderling and Turnstone). The large number of wintering Sanderling appear mostly adult and have higher weights than the Wash.

Farlington. Just started, with some success, to use two half-sized nets. Selected sampling to be attempted.

Devon and Cornwall. Dunlin and Oystercatcher / Dr.J. Goss-Custard) main objectives. Detailed Dunlin study on Plym being continued and samples being obtained over many areas.

Scan. Moderate catching only, apart from last December. After Dunlin and wintering Geeenshank. Hope to expand in Anglesey.

Celtic. Autumn passage is now a main objective; Ringed Plovers all year and more on Redshank and Whimbrel. Spring Dunlin data being written up.

S.W. Lancs. Well off the ground. After all species but Sanderling (very large winter population) and Oystercatchers (study involving W. Sutherland) are main target species. Ruffs wintering and Golden Plovers are also hoped for.

Merseyside. Are becoming more active again and adding to their long history of wader catching.

Highland. Are extending into waders and very keen to obtain help from further south. (W. Dick and C. Minton already helped).

Wash. Continuing work with steady filling of gaps but large Knot autumn and winter catches, which are extremely important, have not yet been achieved. 11,500 waders have been caught so far in 1977.

10) Any other Business.

- a) Scan noted difficulties of communication between BTO, Scan and other Anglesey ringers and hoped that this general problem can be avoided elsewhere. It was noted that ringers must make every effort to check before moving to a new area.
- b) H.P. Sitters suggested that cooperative field projects should be considered by WSG members to answer certain problems. He agreed to examine possible projects.
- c) It was reported that there were several cases of inadequate receipt of data from multi-international controls. This was considered by all present to be an extremely serious failing in the present operation of the Ewing system. The meeting unanimously agreed that a return to double ringing of foreign controls should be requested on waders until such time as an infallible system of communicating later recoveries/controls to all interested parties had been set up. The Chairman was initially asked to make further representations to the R. and M. Committee of the B.T.O.
- d) Concern was expressed that many small inland wader ringers did not participate in the WSG. It was agreed that this was undesirable and a greater attempt should be made to involve them.
- e) The aims and activities of the WSG should be made more widely known via a note in the next Ringers Bulletin and in BTO News (action HPS/AJP.)
- f) It was noted that some people did not hear of the early April meeting of specialists on Wader feeding ecology in Durham. It was hoped that wider advertisement might be possible in future so that really keen interested parties might be invited. Numbers were limited however as it was intended to be a workshop and not a conference.

The meeting ended with a warm vote of thanks to Pat and Clive Minton for hosting it again.

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We would like to apologise to B. Mlody for misspelling his name in the last Bulletin.

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Ringer/Group .....

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Please enter totals below, in separate columns for different ringing sites, if so desired. Full grown and pullus may also be entered separately.

			Total				Total
Oystercatcher				Other species:			
Lapwing							
Ringed Plover							
Little Ringed Plover							
Grey Plover							
Golden Plover							
Turnstone							
Snipe							
Woodcock							
Curlew							
Whimbrel							
Black-t Godwit							
Bar-t Godwit							
Green Sandpiper							
Common Sandpiper							
Redshank							
Spotted Redshank							
Greenshank							
Knot							
Purple Sandpiper							
Little Stint							
Dunlin							
Curlew Sandpiper							
Sanderling							
Ruff							
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Please return to: M.W.Pienkowski, 1 West Fenton Cottages, North Berwick, East Lothian, EH39 5AL, Scotland - in early DECEMBER 1977.

The WADER STUDY GROUP (WSG) is an association of amateur and professional workers on the Charadrii (waders or shorebirds) from all parts of the world. By 1982, membership of the WSG was over 500 people, more than half of the members living in countries other than Britain (where the group was formed in 1970), and including people in the Americas, Asia, Africa and Australasia, as well as Europe. New World members have their own section within the WSG. Interests of the Group have diversified from the original concentration on migration-related studies to embrace all aspects of research on waders, e.g. counts, breeding biology, feeding ecology and behaviour.

The aims of the WSG are to maintain contact between both amateur and professional individuals and groups studying waders; to help organise co-operative studies; and to provide a vehicle for exchange of information. The main means of achieving these aims is by the publication of the *Wader Study Group Bulletin* (see below). WSG maintains contacts with many regional, national and international bodies interested in bird research and conservation, notably the International Waterfowl Research Bureau (IWRB), and often works alongside them in co-operative studies. The Group has been involved also in the organisation of expeditions to remote areas to fill gaps in the knowledge of waders. Projects co-ordinated by WSG have included studies of the spring migration of Siberian-breeding Knot through Europe and Africa, and of other species passing through western Europe. Current projects include a comprehensive assessment of the networks of coastal sites used by shorebirds in western Europe in the non-breeding season; a large-scale investigation of spring migration through the Americas; a long-term monitoring of the usage of inland sites in Europe; and an investigation into the effects of severe winter weather in Europe. Most of these studies have immediate relevance to conservation as well as increasing basic understanding of wader biology. These comments apply also to the current WSG co-operative projects concerning breeding waders, particularly an intensive study of wader distributions and densities in the Outer Hebrides of Scotland, where rapid changes are being made due to agricultural practices. WSG also co-ordinates (on behalf of several national authorities) the use on waders of colour-marks visible in the field, and attempts to forward sightings of these.

Membership of the WSG is open to all individuals or groups interested in waders, and application forms can be obtained from the Membership Secretaries, N. & J. Clark, Department of Zoology, University of Edinburgh, West Mains Road, Edinburgh EH9 3JT, U.K. The subscription is devoted mainly to the cost of production and circulation of the *Bulletin*. The annual subscription is £10 (or US \$17 or Canadian \$21). Outside Europe, *Bulletins* will be sent by airmail for a total subscription of £13 (or US \$22 or Canadian \$27). Rates for institutions and payment through subscription services are £25 (or US \$42 or Canadian \$52), or for airmail posting £28 (or US \$47 or Canadian \$58). All cheques should be payable to "Wader Study Group" and must be in British, US or Canadian currency. Alternatively, payments may be made by bank giro (in English pounds) to Lloyds Bank Ltd., 7 Victoria Place, Haverfordwest, Dyfed SA61 23Z, U.K. (Bank sorting code no. 30-93-98), with reference to WSG account (no. 0095972); or by British Post Office Giro to account no. 471204404. Please ensure that your name and initials appear on the transfer form and that a membership application form is sent directly to WSG. Persons with bank accounts in Britain may use the bankers order form provided with the application form.

The *WADER STUDY GROUP BULLETIN* provides a forum for news, notices, recent ringing recoveries, recent publications, new methods of catching and study, articles and preliminary or interim publication of results from all parts of the world. The editors try to maintain a balance of material ranging from newsletter, informal

descriptions of research activities, meetings and expeditions to formal presentation of results or preliminary analyses.

The *Bulletin* appears three times per year, in April, August and December; the deadlines for copy being the first of February, June and October respectively, for notices, but articles must be received well before these dates. Articles, notes, papers, notices, obituaries, requests for information, books for review, reprints of papers and other items should be sent to the Editor, Dr. N.C. Davidson, Department of Zoology, University of Durham, South Road, Durham DH1 3LE, U.K. Material relating to the New World may be sent to the editors of the New World Section (Dr. J.P. Myers, Vertebrate Biology, Academy of Natural Sciences, 19th and the Parkway, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103, U.S.A.; and Dr. R.I.G. Morrison, Canadian Wildlife Service, 1725 Woodward Drive, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0E7). Matters relating to the circulation of the *Bulletin* should be sent to the Membership Secretaries (address above).

The Editors are always pleased to discuss possible contributions with potential authors, and to advise on presentation. Manuscripts should be typed or written clearly, with all lines double-spaced, leaving wide margins, and following the style of *Bulletin 40 (April 1984)* or later issues. Pay particular attention to the style of headings and reference lists. Scientific names should appear at the first mention of each species or, if all species occur in a table, scientific names may be given there instead. Tables and figures should, wherever possible, be designed to fit a single column width of 12 cm. Full page width is 25 cm. A single column of text comprises 47 characters (including spaces).

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