

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.