

Date and venue of next AGM

OAG Munster offered to act as hosts for next year's AGM. This was agreed and the members of OAG Munster were thanked for their kind offer. Most of the people present were prepared to go to Munster and it was agreed that costs etc should be investigated.

WSG ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - DISCUSSION SESSIONS

1. O. Fournier opened the discussion by requesting more international co-operation particularly in connection with the IWRB and to investigate the declining Knot population. O. Fournier also asked that forms and methods for projects exchanged between countries should be less complicated, he was particularly concerned about the Inland Wader Counts from Germany.

The representatives from OAG Munster asked that the instructions be adhered to if possible to produce uniform data but said that any data would be welcome. In view of this O. Fournier thought that the counters in France would probably carry out counts but not as frequently as requested due to other commitments. W. J. A. Dick suggested putting summaries of IWRB counts in the WSG bulletin to aid communication.

On the subject of colour ringing O. Fournier suggested that the WSG write to individual ringing schemes to inform them the co-ordination taking place.

2. Dutch section of WSG - it was thought that it would be useful to have a Dutch section with a 'contact man'. The Dutch decided to discuss this amongst themselves and possibly elect a co-ordinator. It was confirmed that WSG would welcome the establishment of a Dutch section. It was pointed out that a country co-ordinator could translate the languages on WSG forms.
3. Catching methods - N. A. Clark asked if anyone was interested in a new type of mist net which is useful for catching small numbers of birds in light sites. Any information on the availability of these nets will be published in a future bulletin.
4. B. Witts described a mini cannon net which he had used on a recent expedition. The net measured about 12m x 8m and had two small cannons, the whole net set weighs only 50lb and can be carried in a rucksack.
5. O. Fournier asked that details of cannon nets and equipment should not be published in order to prevent unsuitable persons making or obtaining cannon nets. W. J. A. Dick said that cannon nets are not sold without thorough investigation, and proper training. P. L. Ireland said that generally the responsibility for supplying cannon nets from Britain lies with the Wash Wader Ringing Group and assured O. Fournier that every care is taken. C. M. Lessells said that a cannon net can be obtained 'off the shelf' in the U.S.A. and P. Prokosch added that a firm in W. Germany is advertising a cannon net in its catalogue but has never sold one.

P. L. Ireland said that punt gun powder is no longer available unless an order for 500kg is placed. This is obviously impossible so alternative powders are being investigated. Rifle number 0 has been suggested. TS6 has been tried on the Wash, 19g of this has been found to give the same result as a full cartridge of punt gun powder. A further suggestion was that Silver Knight 2 - a powder used in mock Mediaeval jousts - might be suitable! (Subsequent tests have shown this to be unsuitable.) The safety of fine grain powder was questioned and two safety measures were suggested: i. that only cartridges of the correct size should be used to avoid over-filling. ii. Weld a piece of metal onto the bottom of the projectile so there is a space for the gases from the finer powder. This has been tried in France and was successful. (Please write to WSG before making experiments *.)

6. Finally there was a discussion, initiated by the members of the Netherlands Ornithological Mauritania Expedition, about where the large numbers of wintering waders wintering in Mauritania bred. It was suggested that estimates of breeding density are generally too low. Although the large number of birds could not be accounted for in Scandinavia it was thought possible the Icelandic estimates are far too low. It was generally agreed that more estimates of breeding density are required.

* STOP PRESS: Punt Gun powder is now available again: cannon-netters requiring supplies should contact P. L. Ireland.

INFORMAL MEETING 10 JANUARY 1981

About 50 WSG members attended an informal meeting held during the British Trust for Ornithology's Ringing & Migration Conference, Swanwick, Derbyshire, England on 10 January 1981.

The Chairman informed the meeting that the next AGM was to be held at Munster, West Germany, in September and he expressed the hope that a good contingent would travel from Britain. Some sort of communal transport was to be arranged and costs etc. would be published in the April Bulletin. Members heard from B. E. Murray (Treasurer) that our financial position was still sound thanks to a good paid-up (to end 1980) membership and the Royal Society grant. M. W. Pienkowski gave a progress report of the Durham Project 'Movements of waders in Europe' and he said that excellent progress had been made. H. Galbraith outlined the 1981 pilot project surveying waders breeding on Scottish Agricultural land (mainly in straths and glens) and R. Fuller told of the related BTO survey of breeding waders in wet meadows south of the Border. W. Dick told of his forthcoming visit to West Africa in search of new (to wader-philés) wader wintering grounds. Finally P. R. Evans gave an interesting discourse on the problems facing waders in cold weather in winter, possible wildfowling bans in such weather and how we badly need data to enable us to understand these matters. His discourse, enlarged and modified, is printed elsewhere in this Bulletin together with reports on many of the other matters discussed at the meeting.