

# WADER STUDY GROUP

BULLETIN No. 39

DECEMBER 1983

## AN APOLOGY

Readers will have noted both the late arrival of this Bulletin, and its large size (76 pages). We apologise for the delays in production, which in part arose from the increased volume of material in this issue. Further improvements to production methods are now being effected, and details will be announced in Bulletin 40 (April 1984).

## WADER STUDY GROUP AGM AND CONFERENCE, HAAMSTEDE, THE NETHERLANDS, 19 - 20 NOVEMBER 1983

The meeting, which was highly successful and attended by over 100 people, took place at too late a date for details to be included in this Bulletin. A full account of the meeting, including Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, and Abstracts of Talks, will appear in Bulletin 40 (April 1984).

## SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE FOR 1984

Subscriptions for 1984 became due on 1 January 1984. A subscription renewal form is included as a loose insert with this Bulletin. The annual subscription remains the same as last year: for Europe, and surface mail elsewhere, this is British £10, U.S. \$17 or Canadian \$21. For airmail to addresses outside Europe, rates are British £13, U.S. \$22 or Canadian \$27.

Please note that subscriptions are payable for one year, 1984, only: the three-year payment offered last year is not available for 1984. If you paid in 1983 for three years, you do not, of course, have to pay a further subscription for 1984. If you already pay by Bankers Order, there is no need to return a completed form for 1984.

WSG has applied to open a British Post Office Giro Account. However, we are still awaiting an account number, so subscription payments cannot yet be made by this method. Details of the account will appear in the Bulletin once they become available.

## ADDRESSES FOR CORRESPONDENCE

The smooth running of the WSG can be aided greatly if members address forms, enquiries, material for publication etc., to the correct people, as listed on the inside front cover of this Bulletin. Sending correspondence to the wrong people creates a lot of extra work, and results inevitably in delays. However, if you do not receive a satisfactory reply to correspondence, by all means contact any of the Officers.

## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT : PAYMENT OF ANNUAL SERVICING FEES FOR COLOUR-MARKING WADERS

by D.J. Townshend

The new regulations and arrangements for colour-marking waders were set out in Wader Study Group Bulletin 38:5-6. This note is an additional warning that annual servicing fees for all colour-marking schemes (using colour-ringing, dyeing or any other form of colour-marking) operating within the BTO scheme may become due in January 1984. As the organising body for waders WSG hereby gives notice that fees for colour-marking waders will become due in and should be paid by 1 January 1984. (Fees will not necessarily be introduced at this stage for colour-marking other species of birds.) Below I set out details of the procedure that will be involved for waders.

The annual servicing fee has been introduced by BTO, and approved by NCC, in order to cover the ever-rising costs inherent in the administration of colour-marking (see Ringer's Bulletin 6:30, June 1983; the arrangements should also have been announced in the new edition of Ringer's Manual, but production delays mean that this will not be circulated until early 1984). The costs are unavoidable because all reports of marked birds must be serviced, even if the original marker is not interested in the reports. It is felt that these costs should be borne by the markers concerned, rather than the general WSG and/or BTO membership. (Some queries received appear to be based upon the assumption that certain current dye-marking projects are in some way increasing the level of fees for other projects involving colour-marking. This is not the case, and the fee for each project has been calculated directly from the expected costs of administering it.)

The fee will cover the year beginning 1 April, ie the same period as the BTO Ringing Permit. Payment will become due on 1 January, starting 1 January 1984, and should be paid by that date. This allows time for co-ordination between WSG and BTO before new permits are distributed.

### Existing projects using BTO rings

Every organiser of an existing project colour-marking waders will receive, annually, a letter asking if he/she wishes to continue his/her project in the year beginning 1 April next. If so, he/she must complete the form enclosed and return it together with the full payment, to WSG. The form will list all the species for which the marker has a colour-marking scheme registered with WSG. An annual servicing fee must be paid for each species to be registered for colour-marking in the coming year.

### New projects using BTO rings

New proposals to colour-mark waders must be submitted to WSG, who assess their practicality and potential scientific value (see WSG Bulletin 38:5-6). If a proposal is approved, the organiser will receive a letter requesting payment of the annual servicing fee, for each species to be marked, before the colour-marking project commences.

Failure to comply with the payment of appropriate fees would infringe the conditions of the marker's BTO Ringing Permit or NCC licence. This may place his/her activities outside the law and could also, of course, result in his/her Permit/Licence being revoked.

### British projects not using BTO rings

All new and existing projects in which waders are colour-marked but not given BTO rings should already operate under a NCC licence. The new regulations and procedures outlined above apply equally to them as to projects using BTO rings.

### Outside Britain

NCC and BTO have no powers to apply these regulations in countries other than Great Britain (except to markers operating elsewhere within the BTO scheme). However, WSG members will appreciate the importance of continued international co-operation in studying this highly migratory group of birds. Furthermore, the administrative costs of dealing with sightings of marked birds apply as much to birds marked outside Britain as within. WSG will, therefore, send, annually, to all non-British ringers who are colour-marking waders a letter asking them to donate an annual fee per species based on that required from British markers. We know that in several countries currency regulations prevent such payments. As suggested in WSG Bulletin 38:5-6, it is hoped that operators of marking projects there would be prepared to help WSG in other ways.

Euring requested some years ago that WSG operate a colour-marking registration scheme for Europe and, in effect, this is now happening. Because of the uncertain basis of funding of expenses, however, WSG has until now felt unable to offer this service formally to national ringing authorities. We hope to do this in the near future, soon after the administrative load of introducing the new charges has decreased.

### Assessment of fees

The level of the annual servicing fees has been set out to achieve the stated overall aim: to cover the administrative costs of the WSG Colour-marking Register (but not the cost of the actual work involved in operating the Register). For 1984 the fees are the minimum required to pay for the expenses of stationery, photocopying, reprographics, telephone charges and postage. Any increases in these charges due to inflation or the ending of, for example, subsidised photocopying must in future years be passed on to the markers.

The annual servicing fee will comprise a sum for registration and one for sightings. However, rather than charge all markers a standard fee for the cost of dealing with sightings, part of the fee for each species will be weighted according to the number of combinations allocated to a scheme, the permanency of the mark, the use of individual versus cohort marks, and other factors likely to influence the chance of subsequent reports. It must be stressed that the fee will not be based upon the number of combinations already used or the number expected to be used in the coming year. Thus, a marker who has been allocated temporary marks and/or no more than 50 different colour combinations will be charged less than one requesting a large number of combinations of colour-rings; this applies regardless of the number of combinations actually used. The annual servicing fee per species for U.K. schemes in 1984 will be £5-£10. (Fees for large national or international projects will normally be dealt with by the co-ordinators, rather than individual ringers or groups who agree to participate in the marking.)

It will be apparent from the method of costing outlined above that, in future, markers will be able to reduce the level of their annual servicing fee by asking for fewer combinations. This would lessen the demand upon the remaining (ever decreasing) marking possibilities.

It will also be apparent that the fees do not provide for employment of anyone to operate the colour-marking register. Markers should bear in mind, therefore, that they are relying on the services of a WSG co-ordinator who is providing his time and skills without charge! Accordingly, while every effort will be made to provide a speedy service, a rapid reply to enquiries is not always possible. Markers (and observers of marked birds) can help by replying promptly to enquiries from the Register co-ordinator, but using letters rather than telephone calls. As matters usually require reference to large and complex files, it is rarely possible to deal with them by telephone, without wasting a great deal of time.

### Administration of payment

Markers sending annual servicing fees to WSG will receive an acknowledgement of receipt. The names of U.K. markers who have paid their fees will be forwarded to BTO or NCC (whichever is the appropriate body for issuing permits and licences) for cross-reference.

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## **RINGING TOTALS**

As announced in WSG Bulletin 36: 24, the ringing totals listing has now become both international, and an annual feature. A new design of ringing totals form is enclosed as a loose insert with this Bulletin. This form covers the period January to December 1983. The species listing is designed to include the most frequently ringed species of shorebirds from Europe, Africa, the Americas, Asia and Australasia. We hope that this will ease the task of ringers, especially those active outside Europe, in reporting totals. Please return all completed ringing totals forms to the Editor by 1 February 1984.