

## WADER STUDY GROUP ANNUAL MEETING AND AGM, LA ROCHELLE, FRANCE, 5-7 OCTOBER 1985

As was announced in *Bulletin* 42: 3 and *Bulletin* 43: 2-3, the Wader Study Group 1985 AGM and autumn meeting will be held at La Rochelle on the Atlantic coast of France, between 5 - 7 October 1985, hosted by the Ligue Francaise pour la Protection des Oiseaux (LPO). As in previous years, the formal part of the meeting will begin with the AGM on Saturday morning (5 October) and finish on Sunday afternoon (6 October). We advise participants to arrive on the evening of Friday 4 October. The meeting will take place at La Rochelle youth hostel, the 'Centre de Rencontre International', so that the costs of accommodation will be kept to a minimum. Accommodation will be available for those arriving at La Rochelle from the evening of Friday 4 October onwards. An excursion is planned for Monday 7 October (see later). A notice and the agenda of the AGM appear elsewhere in this *Bulletin*. Anyone wishing to attend, but who has yet to book, must return a booking form immediately: a booking form is enclosed.

La Rochelle is situated on the Atlantic coast of France north of the Gironde (see map). Although it was, in the long-distant past, an English possession, this has nothing to do with our reasons for arranging the meeting there! La Rochelle is now an attractive seaport with 3 harbours. The programme has been planned to leave the Saturday evening free (after a reception with the Mayor of La Rochelle) and we strongly recommend that participants take the opportunity to have a meal in one of the famous seafood restaurants around the "Vieux port". Better than any description that we can give, come and visit the city for yourselves.

### Programme

Final details of the programme are being arranged at the moment. As always, talks will cover a wide range of topics involving waders. There will be several about spring migration along the East Atlantic Flyway, including:  
 Spring migration in 1985 of coastal waders on the Atlantic coast of France (*D. Bredin*),  
 Migration studies of Senegalese Ruffs (*H. Hotker - DAG Munster*),  
 Spring passage of Whimbrels in the Vendee (*ONC*),  
 Spring migration studies in the Banc d'Arguin, Mauritania (*T. Piersma*),  
 Spring migration of waders through the Ribble estuary (*F. Mawby*),  
 Origins and destinations of Knots in northern Norway in spring (*N.C. Davidson*),  
 Food and feeding of Knots at an arctic spring staging area (*N.J. Crockford*),  
 A synthesis of the results of the spring 1985 East Atlantic Flyway project (*T. Piersma*),

Talks about breeding waders will include:  
 Estimates of British breeding wader populations (*T. Reed*),  
 The timing of breeding of Avocets in France (*ONC*),  
 Spatial organisation of an Avocet colony (*ONC*),  
 Habitat utilisation by breeding Ringed Plovers on the Outer Hebrides (*M.J. Wells & D. Jackson*),  
 Surveys of breeding waders in France (*P. Dubois*),

Other talks will include:

Estimating the percentage of Icelandic and British Redshanks in mixed populations (*R. Summers*)  
 Annual cycles of waders in Marais d'Olonne (*ONC*)  
 Food of Snipes in France (*ONC*)  
 Wintering waders in the Baie de l'Aiguillon (*J. Blanchon*)

Anyone wishing to offer a talk, but who has yet to do so, should do so in the immediate future: please complete the appropriate section on the booking form, and also contact *Nick Davidson*, Department of Zoology, University of Durham, South Road, Durham DH1 3LE, U.K. immediately. Intending speakers should note that the time that can be allocated during the weekend for talks must, as in past meetings, be somewhat limited, to allow time for the informal discussions that are such an important feature of WSG meetings. Offer your talk now to avoid disappointment. Those offering talks will be informed of their acceptance (or otherwise) in due course.

As announced in *Bulletin* 42 we require speakers to supply an abstract of their talk in advance, so that translations can be prepared in time for the meeting. The reasons for this are repeated below. Although the main language used by WSG is English, the group is becoming increasingly international in its membership and views, and we recognise that there are many members whose main language is not English. Accordingly we intend to make the 1985 meeting as bilingual (English and French) as possible. We do, however, anticipate that most speakers will use English, and the main language of the group will, for practical and administrative reasons, remain English.

At the meeting we aim to have abstracts of talks available in both English and French, so that all talks can be more readily followed by participants both from the host country and elsewhere. Intending speakers should therefore supply an abstract to us now so that we can prepare translations of the abstracts and have them available at the meeting. Speakers will be relieved to hear that they need supply an abstract in only one language (provided that it is English or French!). We will arrange for translations to be made. We will of course be delighted to receive bilingual abstracts from speakers who can manage this.

We hope that speakers will also label all figures and tables bilingually, so that the finer points of talks can be understood by all participants. Help with these translations is also available on request, and all illustrations should therefore be drafted well in advance of the meeting.

We must stress that WSG will make all necessary translations for those who need this service. Denis Bredin has most generously agreed to help with translations. Anyone wishing to use his translation services should contact him at: LPO, La Corderie Royale, B.P. 263, 17305 Rochefort cedex, France.

### Costs and Booking

The programme will run from Saturday morning until Sunday afternoon. We anticipate that most people will wish to arrive on Friday evening. For those intending to go on the excursion on Monday, accommodation will be available on the Sunday night. Flexible booking arrangements are available, so that participants can book only for the parts of the meeting they require. The cost for someone arriving on Friday evening, staying in the dormitory accommodation, dining out on Saturday night, and departing on Sunday afternoon will be 210 Francs (approximately £20 at the exchange rates at the time of writing). For someone staying for the excursion on Monday, the cost will be 360 Francs (about £33). Please note that most accommodation will be in 6-bedded rooms. Some single and double rooms are available: if you wish to stay in a single or double room please mark the booking form accordingly and note that there is a supplementary charge for these rooms.

Payment should be made in French Francs, either on booking, by cheque payable to L.P.O., or immediately on arrival at La Rochelle. If you intend to pay on arrival, please do so as soon as you arrive, otherwise the organisers end up spending the entire meeting trying to find people to extract payment. All bookings, whether or not enclosing payment, must be made before 31 August 1985, otherwise we cannot guarantee you accommodation and meals.

### Travel to La Rochelle

There is a frequent train service to La Rochelle. Travellers coming by rail from Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany etc. should travel via Paris. On most days there are 5 or 6 trains from Paris-Austerlitz leaving between about 0600h and 2230h (these times are approximate as a winter timetable will be in operation by October, but details are unavailable at the time of writing), with a journey time of 4 to 5h. Costs are: second-class single 188 F, second class return 376 F. In addition, a couchette costs about 70 F and for some rapid trains there is a supplement of 26 F.

By road from Paris, travel via Orleans, Tours and Poitiers on the A10, N10 and N22. For those driving from Britain, the most convenient (although expensive) ferry route is Portsmouth - St. Malo (Brittany Ferries). Departures are from Portsmouth at 2130, and from St. Malo at 1100, with a crossing time of 9 h. A '5 day tourer return' costs £34 per person and £45 per car.

La Rochelle can be reached also by plane (Air France). Paris to La Rochelle return costs 1220 F (c. £110) and leaves twice daily on Monday to Friday at 0915 and 2015.

For travellers from Britain there may be some possibilities of arranging some joint travel (in private cars) should the demand warrant it. Anyone interested in such travel arrangements should contact Nick Davidson immediately.

### Excursion

La Rochelle is approximately at the centre of a vast complex of coastal wetlands, Les Marais de l'Ouest, which are a very important migration and wintering area for waders and wildfowl. We have arranged an excursion for participants at the meeting to one part of this area (the Ile de Re) on Monday 7 October. Although only a small island, the Ile de Re is surrounded by very rich saltmarshes and mudflats. The excursion will finish back at La Rochelle at 1500 h, and the cost, to cover transport and picnic lunch, will be 60 F. Please book for the excursion on the booking form, so that we know the numbers wishing to make this trip.

For any further queries or information about the meeting, please contact *Michel Metals or Denis Bredin, L.P.O., La Corderie Royale, BP 263, 17305 Rochefort cedex, France*, to whom booking forms should be returned.

