

## WSG PROJECT ON THE EFFECTS OF SEVERE WEATHER ON WADERS: PLANS FOR 1986/7

by N.A.Clark and N.C. Davidson

This project has now been running for 4 winters, during which time there have been several periods of very severe winter weather in western Europe. Through the heroic efforts of the many participants in finding and collecting decaying wader corpses in bitter weather, it has been possible to greatly extend understanding of when and where waders are affected by severe weather, and which parts of the populations are most at risk (see *WSG Bulletin* 44: 7-9 and *WSG Bulletin* 46: 7-8).

Much is still to be discovered about the impact of severe weather on waders. Unfortunately, changes of job, increased workloads and freezers now very full of corpses, mean that neither of the current project organisers will be able to devote sufficient time to the administration of the project for the forthcoming winter. Hence we are requesting participants not to collect data and corpses on a regular basis for the project during the 1986/87 winter. However last winter we found that it was very valuable to examine wader corpses when there was substantial localised mortality, as occurred on the Wash and the Stour in eastern England in early 1986. For this reason we ask all members to contact us

immediately they notice increased mortality of waders during severe weather. We will then try to make arrangements for the collection and examination of corpses. It is particularly valuable to identify the age and sex composition of large samples (more than 20 birds of one species) that have died in severe weather.

Although the shortage of time means that we must put the project 'on ice' for the present, we hope that it will be possible to reactivate the project when time allows in the future. We would also be delighted to hear from anyone who would be prepared to take on the task of administering the project, but should warn them that an essential qualification for the task of examining corpses collected from the tideline is a very strong stomach!

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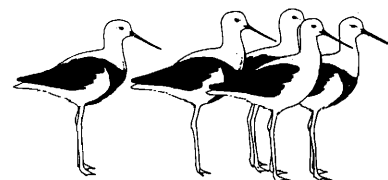
## THE AUSTRALIAN WADER STUDIES GROUP: FUTURE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

by Brett Lane

To better inform WSG members of the current and future activities of the AWSG, we are reprinting here, with some modifications for a wider audience, an article that first appeared in *The Stilt* No. 7 (October 1985), with kind permission of the Editor. This is part of a reciprocal arrangement between WSG and AWSG that is aimed at improving links and contact between the two groups. Further details of the AWSG can be obtained from the Administrative Secretary, Mrs. Brenda Murliss, 34 Centre Ave., Vermont, Victoria 3133, Australia.

The Australian Wader Studies Group (AWSG) is an independent group of wader enthusiasts of the Royal Australian Ornithologists Union (RAOU). Its aims are:

1. To develop and assist with plans for wader research in Australasia in conjunction with other interested bodies.
2. To co-ordinate and encourage counting, banding, feeding studies and other scientific programmes involving amateur and professional skills.
3. To encourage and assist with the publication of results.
4. To maintain effective communication between wader enthusiasts within Australasia and with similar groups overseas.



5. To formulate and promote policies for the conservation and management of waders and their habitat.

AWSG publishes *The Stilt* twice-yearly.

### BACKGROUND

The Interim Committee of the AWSG appointed a scientific sub-committee to establish goals and priorities for the group's research and to formulate a practical research programme. These tasks have now been completed. The sub-committee decided that the ultimate aim of AWSG research should be to provide information to enable the effective protection and management of wader populations in Australia.

We discussed a number of possible directions for wader research in Australia. Population monitoring, migration studies, documenting the waders of northern Australia, banding, feeding studies and research into Australian-breeding species were all considered. Obviously the AWSG lacks the resources to organise research in all these directions. Given the ultimate aim, we decided that the current fate of waders in Asia was an important consideration in deciding our final programme.

Duncan Parish, the co-ordinator of the Interwader project in eastern Asia, has