

WADER STUDY GROUP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, COMACCHIO - LIDO DEGLI ESTENSI, ITALY, 6 OCTOBER 1990

The Annual General Meeting of the Wader Study Group will be held during the annual conference at Comacchio - Lido degli Estensi, Italy on Saturday 6 October 1990 at 0900 hours.

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the last AGM, held on 23 September 1989 at Ribe, Denmark (*Bulletin* 57:1).
3. Chairman's Report.
4. Membership Secretary's Report.
5. Treasurer's Report.
6. Editor's Report.
7. Co-ordinator's Report.
8. Election of officers and members of the Executive Committee. The Chairman, M.W.Pienkowski, and the Vice-Chairman, Th. Piersma, complete their terms of office this year as do committee members D.Bredin, P.E.Jonsson, M.E.Moser and J.P.Myers. The Membership Secretary, J.S.Kirby, stood down during the year and the Executive Committee co-opted R.West to fulfil this role. The Editor, N.C.Davidson, has indicated his intention to retire.

The Executive Committee therefore propose the election of the following officers:

Chairman	M.W.Pienkowski
Vice-Chairman	Th. Piersma
Editor	J.S.Kirby
Membership Secretary	R. West

The Executive Committee also propose the election of the following members to the Executive Committee:

N.Baccetti	J.Gromadzka
M.Barter	B.Klinner
N.C.Davidson	

Alternative nominations for the officers listed above and for ordinary members of the Executive Committee may be made by any members of the Wader Study Group. Nominations must be signed by a proposer and seconder and must include a signed statement by the candidate that they are willing to stand. All these people must be paid up members of the Wader Study Group. Nominations should be sent to the General Secretary, P.L.Ireland, to arrive by 30 September 1990.

9. Any other business

P.L.Ireland, General Secretary

OFFICER'S REPORTS

Chairman's Report

The past year has been an exciting time for organisations concerned with promoting international contact and cooperation in any field. The Wader Study Group studies birds whose migrations span many nations. For many years, contacts and friendships have been made despite many difficulties of communications between countries. The changes which have taken place, particularly in Europe, in the past year have vastly improved the ease of communication and travel. This presents tremendous opportunities on which to build. Some of these are evident in the reports of my fellow officers.

The prime means of communication is, of course, *WSG Bulletin*. As the Editor reports, the contributions to this go from strength to strength. However, the difficulties we have in maintaining the publication schedule remains a source of great concern. In part, of course, this is a product of the success of the *Bulletin* and the consequent work heaped upon its volunteer staff. For some time, Nick Davidson has indicated his need to transfer the burdens of editorship, and the other officers have persuaded him to stay on while a replacement could be found. After several false starts, we seem to be reaching that state, and I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Group, to thank Nick for his efforts in seeing the *Bulletin* through a remarkable series of developments.

I should also thank Jeff Kirby for his stalwart efforts (and those of his wife, Kim) in vastly improving the quality of our membership system during his period of office; as well as the other Committee Members whose term finishes: Denis Bredin, Paul-Erik Johnsson, Mike Moser and Pete Myers.

The problem of finding volunteers to fill the voluntary jobs necessary for the Group to function is not limited to the *Bulletin*. This is a subject to which your Executive Committee has to devote a large part of its consideration. Where possible, we seek alternative solutions, and the increasing use of computer-based technology to reduce the human work needed is one of these. Other approaches include reviews of the manner of the Group's operation, in order to reduce work to a number of more manageable tasks.

In parallel with these considerations, your Executive Committee is concerned that the increasing opportunities for international co-operation might lead (simply because of lack of organisers) to some neglect of the more local activities. The latter are the main area of involvement for many members, and also provide the essential base on which co-ordinated studies on any wider scale depend.

Accordingly, the Executive Committee are actively considering ways in which this aspect of the Group's activities can be emphasized and developed.

This will be done in parallel with increased international co-operation. In this context, it is pleasing to note that, a few days before writing this report, I received an invitation from colleagues in the USSR for WSG to hold a meeting in the Soviet Union. The Executive Committee will be considering this possibility in detail shortly.

Thus, we look forward to a period of co-ordinated development on a variety of geographical scales. I invite all Group members to consider carefully whether they are able to contribute by taking on responsibility for some aspect of the Group's work. This can continue only if enough people volunteer so that the load on any one is not too great.

M.W. Pienkowski

Membership Secretary's report

Membership of the Group showed a slight overall decline during 1989. The drop in membership in the first three categories listed in Table 1 was, however, partly offset by an increase in Group membership in Australasia. This is a pleasing sign and is undoubtedly a direct benefit of our reciprocal membership arrangements between WSG and AWSG.

Table 1. WSG membership at 31 December 1989

	Continuing	New	Leaving	Net change
Britain & Ireland	220	10	23	-13
Rest of Europe	233	27	32	-5
New World	80	10	18	-8
Rest of World	55	16	8	+8
Totals	588	63	81	-18

A more detailed summary of the current membership is provided below. The figures represent the number of current subscriptions to the group, including both individual members and institutions:

UK	210	Norway	11
Netherlands	62	Italy	11
USA	46	Ireland	10
		Portugal	5
FR Germany	30	South Africa	4
Canada	27	Brazil	4
Australia	22	Switzerland	4
Spain	19	Pakistan	3
Sweden	14	Japan	3
Denmark	14	Austria	2
Belgium	13	Bulgaria	2
France	13	Canary Islands	2
German DR	11	Chile	2
Poland	11	Malaysia	2
USSR	11		

In addition, there is one member from each of the following countries:

China, Czechoslovakia, Finland, Ghana, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, India, Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Mauritania, Mexico, New Zealand, Phillipines, Tanzania, Yugoslavia and Zimbabwe.

J. Kirby

Treasurer's report

The accounts summarised below for the year to 31 December 1989 do not include the costs associated with the late production of the August 1989 Bulletin and so appear better than would otherwise have been the case. Indeed if the August 1989 Bulletin costs had been included there would have been a deficit of over £1,000 for the year. Such a loss is not, however, a problem for the Group since the subscription is set a level designed to average out rising annual costs over a period of several years. Nevertheless on current forecasts a subscription rise seems likely to be needed in 1991 or 1992 if the size of *Bulletins* is to be maintained. Overall the Group remains financially sound.

During the year great efforts have been made to get the Colour Ringing Register up to date, working efficiently and self-funding into the future. Most costs during 1989 were covered by a contribution from the British Nature Conservancy Council in order to establish an operational system, but in 1990 we hope to see some income too.

High interest rates in the UK have helped the Group substantially over the last two years. The Hebrides project has also produced a net income for several years but in 1989 the follow-up studies were financed from the accumulated funds. As planned these will also enable the work to continue over the next few years.

The Group has a strong bank balance and the Executive Committee looked carefully at a forward budget before authorising purchase of further computer equipment to help editorial and membership work. Some further purchases may become necessary in the future to upgrade existing outdated equipment. We are conscious that the workloads of those people who keep the Group going are heavy and trust that the membership will continue to appreciate our efforts to help them.

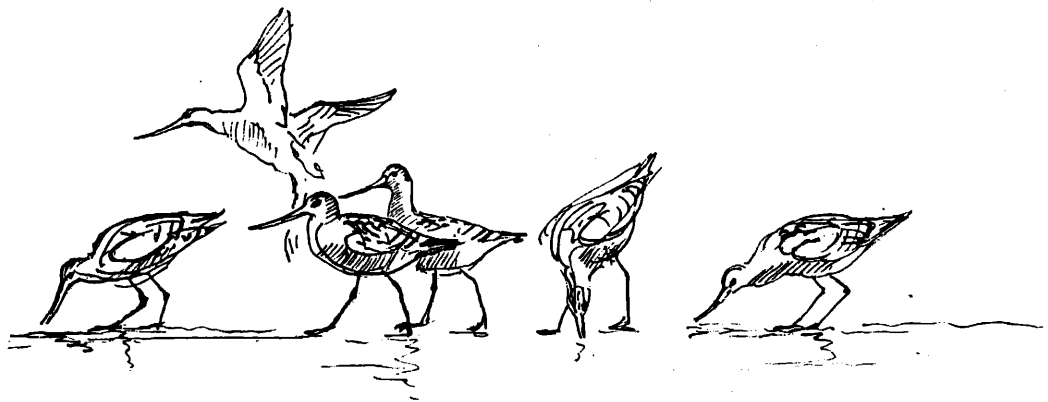
S.J. Sutcliffe

Editor's report

A most encouraging feature to report for 1989 is the increase in the volume of material arriving for publication in the *Bulletin*. The number of pages of *Bulletin* reading in the three issues of 1989 totalled 179 pages, the highest ever. This trend is continuing and there are many interesting articles and papers in the pipeline for future publication. It is now getting to the stage when we are having to schedule paper publication beyond the next issue of the *Bulletin* after receipt. Members will see from the Treasurer's Report that continuing to print *Bulletins* of this size may necessitate a subscription increase in the next few years. We are, however, very resistant to the alternative of having to turn potentially publishable material away from the *Bulletin*, or delay its publication into later *Bulletins*,

Wader Study Group Receipts and Expenditure Account for the year to 31 December 1989

		1989	1988
Receipts:			
Subscriptions		5,680	5,277
Interest Received		737	589
Colour-Marking Register	Grant (Note 1) income	1,700 8	- -
Conference	Income (Note 2) (Expenses)	- -	3,080 (3,576)
Hebrides Project		-	100
Sale of Back Bulletins		141	362
Sale of Publications		66	174
Profit on sale of car stickers		3	34
	TOTAL INCOME	£8,335	£6,040
Deduct Expenses:			
Bulletin Costs:	Printing (Note 3)	2,865	3,685
	Envelopes	73	106
	Typing	122	255
	Postage	620	688
	Editorial Expenses	267	193
Secretarial Costs and Miscellaneous		139	1,133
Colour-Marking Register	Updating Costs	1,593	-
	Running Costs	521	-
Hebrides Project Costs (Note 4)		465	53
Bank Charges (Note 5)		14	4
Depreciation of Micro-computers and Printers		1,026	482
	TOTAL EXPENSES	£7,705	£6,599
Excess of Income over Expenditure (1988 - Deficit)		£630	(£559)



Wader Study Group Balance Sheet as at 31 December 1989

	1989	1988
Accumulated Fund (Note 6)		
Balance Sheet as at 1 January 1989	10,064	10,623
Excess of Income over Expenditure for the year	630	(559)
	<u>£10,694</u>	<u>£10,064</u>
Represented by:		
Assets:		
Micro-computers & printers (not after deducting depreciation)	2,295	1,701
Cash at Bank, On Deposit and In Hand	10,424	9,703
Debtors	297	54
	<u>13,016</u>	<u>11,458</u>
Deduct:		
Creditors	(2,228)	(1,252)
Subscriptions in Advance	(94)	(142)
	<u>£10,694</u>	<u>£10,064</u>

Notes

1. A grant was received from the Nature Conservancy Council to bring the organisation of the Colour-Marking Register up to date. The costs include this work and arrangements to get the register working and self-financing for the future.
2. The 1989 Conference in Denmark was organised in conjunction with the 8th International Waterfowl Feeding Ecology Symposium: no costs or income have been directly allocated to the WSG.
3. At the end of the year the invoices for both the August 1989 and December 1989 Bulletins were still due. Normally the August costs would fall within the 1989 financial year, but its February invoice date means that these costs fall within the 1990 year. The cost is approx. £1,749. If this had been included in the 1989 accounts these would have shown a deficit of £1,119 for the year.
4. The Hebrides fund (incorporated in the Accumulated Fund) now stands at £2,182.
5. Bank Charges exclude costs for negotiating subscriptions paid in foreign (non-UK) currency: these subscriptions are treated as being received net of costs.
6. The Accumulated Fund also includes the Cannon Net Fund (£774).
7. No Co-ordinators costs have been advised for the year.

since this would undermine a key objective of the Group.

In addition to the three ordinary *Bulletin* scheduled for 1990, there are two *Bulletin Supplements* currently in preparation. These will be the third and fourth special supplements produced by WSG, and both emanate from workshops held as part of the joint WSG Annual Meeting and 8th International Waterfowl Feeding Ecology Symposium held in Denmark in September 1990. One is on *Breeding Waders in Wet Grasslands* and is being edited by Hermann Hotker. The other is recent *Advances in Understanding Knot Migrations*, edited by Theunis Piersma and Nick Davidson. We are currently collecting sponsorship to cover the cost of publishing these substantial Supplements, and hope to issue them free to WSG members. Publication is currently scheduled for the end of 1990.

Two notable features are contributing to this trend of a healthy amount of material arriving for ordinary *Bulletins*. One is the continuation of a pleasing amount of New World material reaching us via the encouragement of our New World Editors, Peter Hicklin and Greg Ruiz. The other is an even more recent trend of papers and information reaching us from eastern Europe and the USSR, seemingly as a consequence of the *glasnost and perestroika* remarked on in the Co-ordinator's Report. We are actively seeking to encourage this trend and it is a great pleasure to be able to report through the medium of the *Bulletin* papers describing recent research in these areas which have hitherto been largely inaccessible to most WSG members.

Although this amount of incoming material is most encouraging, its handling has unfortunately a down side as well, that of increasing the difficulty the Editors face in handling and processing the material and in getting each *Bulletin* to publication on schedule. Members will have been only too aware that the end result of this, coupled with the other ever increasing work commitments faced by the Editors, has been to continue the prolonged delays to *Bulletin* publication. We have recognised this as a very serious problem for some time, since the *Bulletin* is the main medium through which the Group communicated with its members. Regrettably I have been able to see no easing of my own work commitments in the near future that would ease the difficulty of getting a *Bulletin* out on schedule. All this led me to advise the WSG Executive Committee at its meeting in Denmark in September 1989 that I could not continue as WSG Editor beyond 1990.

In any case I have now edited *WSG Bulletin* for almost eight years, since being persuaded to take on the task from its previous editor, the current WSG Chairman, so it is high time that a fresh view came to bear on editorial matters. Unfortunately an even more paramount need has been to find a replacement editor in a position to take over smoothly the running of the *Bulletin*, since otherwise the Group would gain nothing in maintaining contact with its members. This has, however, proved a major difficulty and after extensive discussions with other members of the Executive Committee no solution had yet been found by the end of the period (1989) covered by this report.

It is a pleasure to report however that at the time of preparing this report that the Executive Committee has found a replacement

editor, who is proposed for election in the Agenda found above this report. The Committee proposed that Jeff Kirby, formerly WSG's Membership Secretary, be elected as Editor, effective from the end of 1990. In practice we have agreed with Jeff that, subject to membership approval, he will take over overall running of *Bulletin* editing at the head of an expanded editorial team, and that I will retain a lesser involvement to oversee the transition during the following year.

We anticipate that during the next year, in addition to expanding the editorial team so as to cover the expanded workload inherent in *Bulletin* editing, there will be some major changes in how the *Bulletin* is produced. We are currently considering shifting onto a more sophisticated desk-top publishing procedure for *Bulletins*, using IBM-compatible computers and software. This will enable us to greatly improve the appearance of the *Bulletin*, and should smooth some of the production procedures. It will, however, need some future decisions to be made on acquisition of computer hardware and software to replace existing BBC (Acorn) computers used in *Bulletin* production.

We are currently receiving an increasing amount of material for the *Bulletin* in IBM machine-readable form, and anticipate that this trend will continue. We are pleased to continue to receive text on disc in either IBM or BBC formats, but authors should check with the Editor first to confirm appropriate formats. In general, if an author submits material in IBM-compatible form it should be in ASCII (i.e. un-formatted) text as well as word-processed form, and be accompanied by a 'hard-copy' printed version. We can usually now accept text formatted through a number of commonly used word-processing packages.

All these improvements are, however, for the future. Our first priority is to keep *Bulletins* appearing and to try to reduce some of the production delays.

I shall hand over *Bulletin* editing with considerable relief that there really is someone else out there with sufficient dedication (and possibly a streak of insanity) to take on such a complex task, but also with considerable regret. I shall miss the excitement of picking up the mail each day to discover from just which far-flung part of the world the latest thrilling wader news has arrived. The message to all members for the future is: keep the news flowing in.

N.C.Davidson

Co-ordinator's Report

The work of the Co-ordinator in 1989 was strongly influenced by the recent political changes in East Europe. Due to *Glasnost* and *Perestroika* for the first time since a very long time ago the possibility arose of visiting the Siberian tundra, the breeding range of a major part of the wader populations we deal with in west Europe and Africa. The 1989 expedition to the Taymyr Peninsula, which had been organised by Peter Prokosch (WWF Germany) and Prof. E.Syroechkovsky (Soviet Academy of Sciences) was the first for a series involving different scientists and institutions from different countries (a report will appear in a future *WSG Bulletin*). The political chains which had prevented non-Soviet researchers from working in Siberia break down more and more, so

that in future it will probably remain only a logistical problem to reach such places. A regular access to data from these formerly unreachable areas now seems to be close. This affects the work of WSG. The Co-ordinator was involved in the first expedition, and also tried to arrange contacts for other interested scientists.

Another effect of the opening of the East that we welcome very much will change the activities of WSG even more. The contacts between colleagues from the 'East' and the 'West' become more liberal and the co-operation increases. The area where the co-ordination activities of WSG may be helpful is enlarging. It has to be discussed and decided very soon if and how the structures of WSG should be changed or strengthened so as to cope with these new developments.

Keeping and developing contacts with East European colleagues were among the activities of the Co-ordinator in 1989. It was possible to involve more of these colleagues in WSG projects, such as the Inland Wader Counts and the WIWO East Mediterranean project in spring 1990. It may be hoped that the forthcoming WSG conference in Italy will see numerous participants from the 'East'.

In this time of quick developments there is also a large field of possible typical WSG research activities opening up. Several times in the history of WSG the group has organised or co-ordinated international projects whose aims could only be fulfilled by the joint operation of many field teams working in different parts of the East Atlantic flyway. Besides their scientific purposes these

projects helped to strengthen the contacts between the working groups in the different countries. At present it seems to be the right time to think about a new project of this kind.

The aims of such this new project would be to study the population fluctuation of arctic waders and their influence on migration patterns. Key species could be the Little Stint *Calidris minuta* and the Curlew Sandpiper *C. ferruginea*. The climate for organising such a joint project with good participation from the eastern part of the East Atlantic flyway seem to be very good. The next WSG conference in Italy will provide a forum for discussing this topic.

The 1989 work of the Co-ordinator also included the preparation of the WSG workshop on breeding waders on wet grasslands, which was held at the WSG conference in Ribe in September 1989. The fruitful discussions during this workshop resulted in extensive recommendations. These will be included in the proceedings of this workshop, which are in preparation at present and will be published as a *WSG Bulletin Supplement*. The aims of the proceedings include an attempt to give an overview of the situation of wet grassland and its waders for the countries of the European Community. Hence the proceedings will include some papers not presented at the workshop itself.

Further activities of the Co-ordinator include assisting in some WSG or WSG-related projects such as 'Ruffnet' (see *WSG Bulletin* 53) and the inland wader counts, as well as preparing for the the next WSG conference.

Hermann Hotker

WADER STUDY GROUP ANNUAL CONFERENCE, COMACCHIO, ITALY, 5-8 OCTOBER 1990

As announced in *Bulletin* 57, the 1990 WSG Conference and Annual General Meeting takes place at Comacchio- Lido degli Estensi, on the Adriatic Coast of Italy south of Venice between 5-8 October 1990. Full details of the arrangements for the conference were included in *Bulletin* 57, and along with Officer's Reports and the Agenda for the 1990 AGM were also mailed to all members separately.

At the time this *Bulletin* is going to press the programme for the conference is taking shape. As for all recent WSG Conferences, the programme for the meeting begins on Saturday morning (6 October 1990) with the Annual General Meeting. After that the first part of the conference will deal with a theme linked to the location of the meeting: wader migration in the Mediterranean region. The results of this years' WIWO expeditions to various sites in the East Mediterranean Sea will be a nucleus of that conference block. The Mediterranean region will also feature importantly in the informal workshop on the highly endangered Slender-billed Curlew *Numenius tenuirostris* to be held in the morning of Monday 8 October.

Other talks at the meeting during Saturday and Sunday morning will cover the East Atlantic Flyway from all its ends - Canada, Siberia and South Africa - with a special emphasis on studies in the arctic breeding regions. In this context we look forward to many contributions from our East European colleagues with whom some of us shared common fieldwork

this year. Besides the East Atlantic Flyway the East African Flyway will also receive special attention during this conference, and some new research programmes will be presented.

As is traditional for WSG conferences, the talk programme ends at midday on Sunday 7 October. That afternoon there will be an excursion to the nearby Comacchio lagoon, with Spotted Redshanks *Tringa erythropus* a speciality.

Monday 8 October offers opportunities for meetings of special interest groups. In addition to the Slender-billed Curlew workshop there will also be an Avocet meeting. Others will be convened as requested - please contact me if there is a topic you wish discussed.

As well as talks there will also be the opportunity to display posters, and we would especially welcome posters on topics other than those mentioned above.

The meeting is being held the Hotel "Conca del Lido" in Lido degli Estensi, Comacchio (tel. (0)533-327459).

For conference bookings and any other queries about the conference, contact Nicola Baccetti, Fernando Spina or Alberto Massi, at *Istituto Nazionale Biologia Selvaggina, Via Ca' Fornacetta 9, I-40064 Ozzano emilia BO, Italy* (tel. (0)51-798746).

Hermann Hotker
WSG Co-ordinator