

9th International Waterfowl Ecology Symposium 1992

The 9th International Waterfowl Symposium, convened by the Waterfowl Ecology Research Group of the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau (IWRB) in association with WSG and Kossuth University, Debrecen, will take place on 7-11 September 1992. The venue is the Hotel Delibab, Hajduszoboszlo, Hungary.

As explained elsewhere in this *Bulletin*, the symposium will immediately follow the 1992 WSG Annual Conference that will be held at the same venue.

The International Waterfowl Ecology Symposium is the ninth meeting of what used to be called the International Waterfowl Feeding Ecology Symposium, a series of meetings arranged at approximately two to three year intervals under the auspices of WSG and IWRB. This group used to

restrict most of its attention to waders (shorebirds) but now includes both waders and wildfowl.

The aim of the meeting is to allow papers to be presented on recently completed work, or work that has been in progress for sometime, in an informal and helpful atmosphere. The symposium is intended to be of interest primarily to research and university scientists and post-graduate students. The organisers would especially like to hear from people new to the field of waterfowl ecology. The symposium aims to allow plenty of time for informal discussions in the evenings.

Papers are invited on any aspect of the ecology of waterfowl. There is no set programme as yet, although it is planned to hold a special workshop on *Mating systems and parental care* during the symposium. In general the programme of topics to be covered by the various sessions will be arranged when a sufficient number of offers of papers have been received. There is therefore advantage in sending offers to give papers as soon as possible. Papers are usually about 20-25

minutes long, inclusive of time for discussion. Specialist workshops that meet in the evening can also be arranged. Suggestions for such workshops are also invited.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND BOOKINGS

A first information note about the symposium was circulated in *WSG Bulletin 62* (August 1992). It is planned to send further information, including booking forms, to all those who have expressed interest in the meeting, in early 1992. We plan to include this information also in *Bulletin 64* (April 1992).

Anyone wishing to attend the symposium should complete and return the form included in the first announcement leaflet, or contact directly (as soon as possible):

IWRB, Feeding Ecology Symposium, Slimbridge, Gloucester GL2 7BX, UK.

Shorebird ecology and conservation in the Western Hemisphere

Personal impressions of a symposium in Quito, Ecuador

Theunis Piersma

At first it may seem a little strange to organise a shorebird meeting in the Andes, at a height of almost 3 km and far from sea and shore. In retrospect, however, Quito, the capital of Ecuador and almost on the Equator, was not such a strange place after all to discuss waders. On 6 November 1991 not far from Quito in the Cotopaxi National Park (named after the 4,500 m high Cotopaxi volcano) we found flocks of Baird's

Sandpipers *Calidris bairdii* foraging on the dry 'tundra' vegetation of the Andean highlands, groups of 10-20 juvenile Pectoral Sandpipers *C. melanotos* and a Least Sandpiper *C. minutilla* feeding in the humid edges of a mountain lake, and also a Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* and a Wilson's Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor* on the water of a small lake.

On the nearby dry mountain slopes we heard and saw pairs of Andean Lapwings *Vanellus resplendens*. In Otavalo, north of Quito, beautiful duffel-bags and back-packs featuring male breeding-plumaged Ruffs *Philomachus pugnax* in Escherian motifs (a curious design since Ruffs are far from common here) were for sale in the flourishing Indian Market.

All this, however, was to come when I attended the inspiring shorebird symposium itself, held on 4 and 5 November 1991 at the Universidad Catolica in Quito, as part of the IV Neotropical Ornithological Congress. The shorebird symposium was convened by Gonzalo Castro and Julie Sibbing through the Western



Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN). It featured 28 presentations, about half of them in Spanish (mid and south Americans) and the other half in English (north Americans and one European). The availability of bilingual abstracts and the simultaneous translation from one language into the other, made the exchange of ideas and information particularly smooth and simple.

The symposium was attended by an average of some 60-70 people, of which slightly less than half (25-30) were female - a much better sex-ratio than achieved by recent WSG conferences (see Bruno Ens' article in *Bulletin* 57: 29-33) - and was characterised most strongly by the enthusiasm of its participants.

The range of topics was impressive. Work on the distribution and abundance of both migrant and resident waders at various sites in North and Latin America was presented by C. Laredo (Argentina), F. Delgado (Panama), J. Correa (Mexico), F. Rilla (Uruguay), P. Gonzalez (Argentina), Y. Vilina (Chile), G. Page (USA) and R.E. Gill (USA). Studies of foraging behaviour and habitat use were presented by A. Canales (Peru), M. Cervantes (Mexico), P. Gonzales (Argentina), R. McNeil (Canada), N. Warnock (USA) and L.G. Naranjo (Colombia), while A.I. Pereira (Costa Rica) showed an impressive dataset on seasonal changes in biomass abundance and the effect of shorebird-exlosures on the benthos on a tropical mudflat.

Wader energetics featured in J.R. Jehl's (USA) contribution and my own, whilst the theme of wader migration was the main subject of the talks by M. Sallaberry (Chile), B. Harrington (USA), I do Nascimento & P. Antas (Brasil) and R.I.G. Morrison (Canada). The breeding biology of both tropical resident waders (M. Groom, USA), temperate migrants (L. Oring, USA) and arctic migrants (B. McCaffery, M. Gilders, R.E. Gill and D.M. Troy, all

USA) was examined. Lew Oring and Declan Troy in particular came up with intriguing and very long-term datasets for Spotted Sandpipers *Actitis macularia* and high arctic sandpipers respectively, to shed light on the many factors which influence the decision of individual waders to start a breeding attempt on a particular spot, or not. The conservation of shorebird populations and habitats was picked up in detail by G. Castro (USA), M. Gilders (USA), J.D. Flores (Peru), S. Haig (USA), V. Pulido (Peru) and E. Tabilo (Chile). All this interesting material will be published sometime in the near future, most likely as another *Supplement* to the *WSG Bulletin*.

Personally it was immensely rewarding and inspiring to have the opportunity to meet up and spend considerable time together with wader enthusiasts from south, mid and north America. Amongst them I am especially grateful to Pablo Canevari and Gonzalo Castro for cheerfully sharing an annoying 24 hours of waiting for an airplane, when American Airlines failed to provide the connection from Quito to Miami on our return.

I was struck by the general enthusiasm for waders, their habitats, and their potential as vehicles to link places and people far apart. Equally the enthusiasm for the Wader Study Group and its modernised and up-to-date *Bulletin* as an mechanism for scientific exchange was exciting to discover. During the meeting a new Western Hemisphere Steering Committee of the WSG was formed, a Latin American regional editor for the *Bulletin* was appointed, and several plans for the future of WSG's involvement in the Americas developed. You will be able to read much more about these developments in the next issues of the *Bulletin*.

Let me finish by congratulating Julie Sibbing, Gonzalo Castro, Nancy Hilgert de Benavides and the rest of the organising committee for bringing together so many Western Hemisphere

shorebird workers and organising such an effective meeting. It will undoubtedly turn out to be a historic event in the development of co-operative shorebird studies in the Americas and elsewhere.

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compiled by Nick Davidson

SPECIAL OFFER PRICE FOR GRASSLAND BIRD REPORTS

Elsewhere in this *Bulletin* we give details of three recent reports concerning grassland birds and their conservation in Europe. One is the recently published *WSG Bulletin Supplement* on wet grassland waders. The other two cover the conservation of lowland dry grassland birds, and birds and pastoral agriculture. Each of these contains several papers covering waders, and each has much of more general interest to wader workers.

Copies of all three reports can be obtained from the UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee, and here is a special offer price of £25 post free for those ordering one copy of each report. This is a saving of £7.50 on the total cost of the reports. Details of ordering are given in the separate article in this *Bulletin*.

