Notice of the 1996 WSG Annual General Meeting and WSG Conference, Belgium

The 1996 WSG Annual General Meeting will be held at 09.00 hr on Saturday 9 November 1996 during the annual conference in Belgium.

The full agenda of the AGM will be published in Bulletin 80 in August 1996.

The Conference will be held on 9-10 November with a one day workshop on 11 November. Arrival will be on the Friday evening, 8 November.

Full Conference details, booking forms, and talk and poster offer forms, together with details of the elections of Officers and Executive Committee Members will be posted separately to WSG members in early May.

Those needing urgent information concerning the organisation of the Conference before May should contact Dr Patrick Meire, Institute of Nature Conservation, Kiewitdreef 5, 3500 Hasselt, Belgium.

IWRB Research Group Questionnaire 1993-95

The Wader Study Group, whilst retaining its independence, acts in the role of Research Group to the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau (now Wetlands International). These arrangements were outlined in Bulletin 73: 17-18.

As part of its reporting to IWRB's triennial Executive Board meeting (in this case in Malaysia in October 1995) WSG (acting as IWRB's Wader Research Group) prepared both a questionnaire summarising activity in the last three years and a forward plan giving the Group's objectives for the next triennium. We reprint the questionnaire and forward plan here since it provides a useful and accessible summary of WSG's recent and planned activities.

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which, with its wide geographical membership (incl. South and North America, Australia, Russia and Poland as well as western Europe), fulfills an analogous rôle to that of assistant Research Group co-ordinators etc.

- Research Group co-ordination is undertaken by the WSG/IWRB Liaison Officer, who is an Executive Committee member of WSG.

Aims of the Group
The aims of the Wader Study Group are to:

- maintain contact between both amateurs and professionals studying waders;
- help organise co-operative studies; and
- provide a vehicle for exchange of information on waders and their biology.

The main means of achieving these aims are through:

- holding an annual conference;
- publishing, three times per year, the Wader Study Group Bulletin, and more recently also publishing Special Issues of the Bulletin each covering a major topic of wader biology and conservation; and
- acting as the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau's (IWRB) expert Wader Research Group.

Long-term projects


- WSG Register of colour marks. Co-ordination of registration of wader colour-marking schemes (permanent and temporary marks) and identification of colour-mark sightings for much of Europe. 123 marking schemes active in 1995.

- WSG-supported International projects. Current projects are: Inland wader counts in Europe (started 1979; analyses in progress); Kentish Plover project (started 1990; workshop summarising results at 1995 WSG conference).

- Western Palearctic wader population estimates. Re-evaluation of trends and population sizes, for input to next IWRB Waterfowl Population Estimates volume. Begun 1994; currently awaiting restructuring of IWRB Western Palearctic Wader Database before most analyses possible.

- Arctic waterfowl breeding conditions survey. Questionnaire survey (pilot year 1995) assessing presence, breeding conditions and (where possible) breeding performance of waders and other birds. Jointly with IWRB Goose RG and, in Canada, with Canadian Wildlife Service.

- Argentine waterfowl breeding conditions survey. Questionnaire survey (pilot year 1995) assessing breeding conditions in various parts of South America.

Implications for conservation/ management issues

- Much of the group's work, e.g., the development of strong links with Eastern Europe/North Asia, the WSG Bulletin Special Issues/International Wader Studies providing an improved science base for the development of flyway conservation plans, and making standard research methods more widely available worldwide, delivers implementation of the 1992 Odessa Protocol on international co-operation on migratory flyway research and conservation.

- Participation in the 1995 Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network workshop has resulted in improved collaboration in developing wader expert group links, and in evolving ideas for a global shorebird network.

- Participation in the workshop on estimating international waterfowl populations (Kale, Denmark, Jan. 1994) and first Steering Committee Meeting for the IWRB Western Palearctic Waterbird Monitoring Programme (Peterborough, UK, May 1995): contribution to improved protocols for population estimation as a basis for conservation actions.

Meetings


- Workshops (held associated with the annual conference): 1 November 1993, Understanding patterns in Dunlin migration; 24 October 1994, Measuring and monitoring breeding success in waders; 18 September 1995, Kentish Plovers, and Black-winged Stilts.

Collaboration with other Research Groups

- Goose and Swan RGs: joint development of arctic waterfowl breeding conditions survey.


Publications


Davidson, N.C. 1995. Assessing distribution and trends in population sizes and productivity


Stroud, D.A.(ed.) Wader Study Group Bulletin. No. 67 (April 1993); No. 70 (August 1993); No. 71 (December 1993); No. 72 (April 1994); No. 73 (August 1994); No. 75 (December 1994); No. 76 (April 1995); No. 77 (August 1995); No. 78 (December 1995).


**Membership**

- WSG Executive Committee operates in an analogous rôle to a core RG membership. Committee is as follows:
  
    Dr M.W. Plenkowski (Honorary President)
    Dr G.C. Boere, The Netherlands (Chairman)
    Dr T. Piersma, The Netherlands (Vice Chairman)
    Dr N.C. Davidson, UK (Vice Chairman, WSG/WI Liaison Officer)
    P. de Goeij, The Netherlands (General Secretary)
    R.B. West, UK (Membership Secretary)
    D.A. Stroud, UK (Editor-in-Chief)
    B. Loos, The Netherlands (Treasurer)
    Dr H. Hötker, Germany (Co-ordinator)
    B. Klinner-Hötker, Germany
    Dr J. Gromadzka, Poland
    N. Bacetti, Italy
    M. Barter, Australia
    P. Canevari, Argentina
    Dr P.S. Tomkovich, Russia
    E.A. Lebedeva, Russia
    A. Yurlov, Russia

    Improved flow of compiled baseline information on waders through expanded publication base.

**Priority Actions**

- Publish three times per year Wader Study Group Bulletin, ensuring wide international coverage of subjects.

- Publish, as funds permit, further volumes of International Wader Studies, each covering a species, topic or geographical area. Volumes in preparation for publication during this triennium include Wader Study Methods Parts one and two; Shorebird ecology and conservation in the Western Hemisphere; Monitoring, conservation and management of shorebirds in the Great Basin, USA; Migration and international conservation of waders; Research and conservation on European and North Asian flyways; and, Kentish Plovers in Europe.

- Establish a network of regional research group co-ordinators especially in the Western Hemisphere and Pacific/Australasia.

- Prepare a Wader Monitoring Action Plan for developing co-ordination of expanded Western Palearctic wader population estimates, so as to deliver on three-year and nine-year update cycles for the Ramsar Convention and to provide information to the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds(AEWA) under the Bonn Convention. Effective delivery depends on the planned redevelopment by IWRB/IBN-DLO of the Western Palearctic Wader Database. Several WSG projects and initiatives will be developed to support this work, notably:
  
  - Breeding waders in Europe II;
  - Non-estuarine wader counts in the UK and elsewhere;
  - Establishment of a 'surveys co-ordinator' to encourage gap-filling in geographical coverage;
  - Establishment, in conjunction with the IWRB Goose Research Group and others, of an annual Arctic breeding conditions survey and database.

**TRIENNIAL PLAN FOR 1996-98**

**Aims**

The Wader Study Group will continue to develop its role as an international association of amateurs and professionals from all parts of the world interested in Charadrii. It will continue to provide a major forum for research, with the objective over the next three years of developing stronger links with members in the Pacific-Australasia and Western Hemisphere regions.

**Priority Issues**

- Improved links (in parallel with IWRB/AWB/WA developments) with wader groups in the Pacific-Australasia region and the Western Hemisphere.
- Improved delivery of species and geographical coverage of wader population estimates, in the Western Palearctic and elsewhere.
- Improved coverage of Arctic breeding conditions data for waders.
Group structure

Group structure and management will continue as present, but planned are:

- Improved links outside Western Palearctic developed through regional co-ordinators;
- Stronger representation in the Western Hemisphere developed in association with the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network;
- Target of 10% increase in membership.

N.C. Davidson, WSG/WI Liaison Officer

NEWS FROM THE IWRB
WOODCOCK AND SNIPE RESEARCH GROUP

Woodcock Scolopax rusticola, Great Snipe Gallinago media, Common Snipe G. gallinago and Jack Snipe Lymnocryptes minimus differ considerably from all other European wader species in many respects. For this reason, the Woodcock and Snipe Research Group was established as a distinct Research Group of IWRB in 1974.

Due to their cryptic colouring and secretive behaviour, Woodcock and Snipes are rarely seen and may therefore not be counted as most other waders. However, since all of them are huntable species over most of their range, indirect population estimates have been calculated using two parameters, namely bag statistics and the recovery rates of ringed birds.

The most recent population estimates are published in the proceedings of the Fourth European Woodcock and Snipe Workshop (IWRB Publ. 31, 114 pp. 1994) [reviewed in WSG Bulletin 75: 7].

(continued p. 9)