

## 1999 WSG ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 1999 WSG Annual General Meeting will take place at 0900 h on Saturday 25 September 1999 at Ile de Berder, Vannes, France.

### AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the 1998 AGM (WSG *Bulletin* 88: 1–3)
3. Chairman's Report
4. General Secretary's Report
5. Membership Secretary's Report
6. Treasurer's Report
7. Project Co-ordinator's Report
8. Conference Co-ordinator's Report
9. WSG/Wetlands International Liaison Officer's Report
10. Election of Officers and members of the Executive Committee

The terms of Vice-Chairman (Theunis Piersma), Membership Secretary (Rodney West) and Projects Co-ordinator (Ole Thorup) end this year. Each has indicated his willingness to stand for a further term. David Stroud was co-opted as WSG/Wetlands International Liaison Officer in 1997, with the co-option continuing in 1998, and is now formally proposed for election to this post. The Executive Committee therefore nominates the following for election:

**Vice-Chairman: Theunis Piersma**  
**Membership Secretary: Rodney West**  
**Project Co-ordinator: Ole Thorup**  
**WSG/Wetlands International Liaison Officer: David Stroud**

The term of ordinary Committee Member Nicola Bacetti ends this year, and he has indicated his willingness to stand for a further term. The Executive Committee therefore nominates the following for election as ordinary Executive Committee member:  
**Nicola Baccetti**

Alternative nominations for the posts of Officers and Executive Committee members listed above 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 indicating that he or she is willing to stand. All these people must be paid up members of the Wader Study Group. Nominations should be sent to the General Secretary, Nick Davidson, to arrive by 10 September 1999.

### 11. Subscription rates for 2000

The Executive Committee proposes that there be no changes to the subscription

rates for 2000.

12. Future Conferences
13. Any other business

### OFFICERS' REPORTS FOR 1998

#### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The great strength of the International Wader Study Group lies in its members and their enthusiasm for sharing and collaborating on finding out more about all the different aspects of waders. This enthusiasm is vital for the continuing role of the WSG. The huge amount of knowledge and information held by the Group's members is witnessed by the very high quality of talks at our annual conferences, the wealth of material published in the *Bulletins* and the capacity of the Group's members to pull together this information into special volumes such as in the *International Wader Studies* series. It is all this that is the life-blood of the Group.

As the Group has grown and evolved there have been many *ad hoc* discussions about the objectives, goals and priorities for the Group's activities. But a very thorough discussion of this has, as far as I know, never taken place. As we move into the next millenium the time is ripe for such a discussion so as to develop a clear view of the WSG's future priorities. As a starting point we have an excellent document prepared by David Stroud in his capacity as WSG-Wetlands International Liaison Officer. In 1998 David prepared an overview of WSG activities and a long-term strategy for its co-ordinated tasks and outputs for the next five to ten years. This used as its basis the 1992 Odessa Protocol, and provides an excellent basis for revisiting this at the planned "Odessa Revisited" conference in 2002 (see below). The major part of this strategy is included in David's Officer's Report below. The document was part of the discussions at Wetlands International's triennial meeting in Senegal in November 1998. We plan to now use this document as the basis for initiating discussions with members at our annual conference in France in September 1999, with the intention of bringing a future strategy to the 2000 conference when we return to our roots in the United Kingdom.

It is particularly timely to discuss the WSG's priorities and ways of operating since the Group is increasingly being recognised as a vital source of knowledge and information about waders that is urgently needed to help guide the flyway conservation of these wonderful birds. Wetlands and waterbirds continue to be an important focus of attention in international conventions, for example in the Ramsar Convention whose almost 120 Contracting Parties (countries) met recently, in May 1999, in Costa Rica. The WSG's expertise in the distributions and migrations of waders is important through our work reviewing and updating information on population sizes that forms the basis for setting 1% population thresholds as a key criterion for Ramsar Contracting Parties to use in designating wetlands of international importance. Waders have formed the driving force behind much wetland conservation action, and it is timely to remember that Wetlands International's now large Asia-Pacific activity started out as a small-scale operation called *Interwader*.

1999 is a top year for international meetings of relevance to the WSG. In addition to the Ramsar Convention meeting, in November the first Meeting of Parties to the Bonn Convention African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) takes place in Cape Town, followed by the full meeting of Contracting Parties to the Bonn Convention. In both meetings wader species, their research and conservation, form an important issue and a number of WSG members will be attending in a variety of professional capacities. Our current work preparing phase 1 of the wader flyway atlas will be presented to this meeting and provides another example of the Group's capability in drawing together wader knowledge and information to help strengthen their conservation.

Earlier, in October, is the BirdLife World Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; and in September many of us will migrate to a classic bird ringing site, Helgoland in the German Bight, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the German schoolteacher Mortensen being the first person to put numbered rings on birds. As I reminded members in my closing message to our 1998 Annual Conference in Hungary, a real "congress-tiger" and waderologist can be busy at meetings from mid-September until late November

1999 – but remember that we must still get out into the field to collect the data!

Looking back, there have been other interesting events in which waders were prominent on the agenda. In late September we formally launched the Odessa proceedings in a nice ceremony in Kiev, Ukraine (and they will really reach members soon now, after being printed in South Africa!). At that launch it was unanimously agreed that in 2002 we should have a “Odessa Revisited” meeting, 10 years on from the first WSG Odessa Conference. Our aim will be to review what we have achieved of the goals we set ourselves in April 1992 in the Odessa Protocol. Waders were an important agenda item at the April 1999 CAFF (Working Group Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna) meeting in Yellowknife, Canada, where the meeting adopted a report by Derek Scott: *Global Overview of the Conservation of Migratory Arctic Birds Outside the Arctic*. In spring 2000 experts of the eight Arctic countries will meet in Wageningen (Netherlands) to discuss the report in more detail and provide countries with recommendations on how to ensure Arctic birds are protected and used in a sustainable way once they have left the Arctic – and a large proportion of the Arctic avifauna is waders.

This is not meant, however, to be just a report on the travel programme of WSG’s Chairman – but it does serve to show some of the numerous occasions on which policy makers are seeking data, information and knowledge from wader experts, or data collected during WSG projects, to guide their decision making. Our enthusiasm for finding out more about waders forms part of this complicated international network of research and its transfer to those who need it. At the same time we must ensure that the increasingly frequent requests for data, information and guidance does not take up all our time and so distract us from continuing to go out and collect that vital new data, and to review and revise scientific positions and theories so that we can understand better how waders work. All this, I think, stresses the importance of reviewing out future directions and priorities.

For the rest, WSG continues to be in good shape. We have a stable membership (I would love a little growth but maybe we have reached the limits of our market); we are proposing

no increase in membership fee (for the ninth year running!); and we continue to publish on time three excellent *Bulletins* despite the Editor-in Chief’s recent breeding productivity (once again, our congratulations, Julianne). Well, you can read all about this and more in the Officers’ Reports that follow. I thank the Officers, committee members and many others behind the scenes for their continuing strong, and often time-consuming, support to the International Wader Study Group.  
*Gerard Boere*

#### GENERAL SECRETARY’S REPORT

The role of the General Secretary has somewhat changed over the last few years with the advent of increasingly widespread access to electronic networks (e-mail, listservers and Web-sites). This means that very few general inquiries now reach the General Secretary. The primary role of the General Secretary is now the essential, but largely behind-the-scenes, activity of arranging Executive Committee meetings and Annual General Meetings, ensuring that materials for these, and their minutes, are prepared on time and in line with the terms of the WSG Constitution, and harassing the other Officers for timely annual reports for publication in the Bulletin!

So as to manage the business of the Group effectively the Executive Committee now meets twice each year. A full Executive Committee meeting takes place once per year, on the day before the start of the annual conference, since this is the best time for bringing together the geographically scattered membership of the Committee. However, to ensure the smooth running and forward planning of the Group, since 1996 we now hold an annual spring Business Meeting of the Officers. This allows us to keep track of the management of the key business of the Group and to identify early enough in the planning process issues that need discussion by the full Executive Committee and/or endorsement by an Annual General Meeting of members.

It is important to stress that Officers of the Group put a considerable amount of their own time in a voluntary capacity into ensuring the smooth running of the Group, and meet the costs of Committee meeting attendance largely themselves, without cost to the Group. Such volunteer effort contributes substantially towards keeping the administrative costs

of the Group low, so helping to avoid increases in membership dues.  
*Nick Davidson*

#### MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY’S REPORT

The total membership, including single members subscriptions, institutional members and gratis members, of the Wader Study Group was 632 at 31 December 1998. This matched the membership total at the end of 1997 and may reflect a new high plateau for WSG membership. Three high quality *Bulletins* were produced during the year and these surely must have helped keep our membership at such a high level. The old WSG membership form was very much out of date and a new revised form was produced during 1998. If anyone would like copies, please let me know and I will gladly post a number on to them. 1999, will also be a ‘value for money’ year to join with not only three *Bulletins* but also further issues in the *International Wader Studies* series being published, which are provided at free of extra cost to members!

I hope that during 1999 we are able to continue to build on our current membership numbers. I encourage all members to help promote the group. If anyone would like publicity material including membership forms, logos etc., please contact the Membership Secretary.  
*Rodney West*

#### TREASURER’S REPORT

This year we have again succeeded in running the Group on a financially healthy basis, substantially due to all the work done within the Group on a voluntary basis. In addition, our recent change of Bulletin printers has made a substantial saving of printing costs (see also the 2000 Budget below).

By seeking such savings we have been able to keep subscriptions rates at the same level since 1992. In addition we received a larger amount of bank interest on capital during 1998 owing to a temporary increase in interest rates in Great Britain. Furthermore, the Colour Marking Register received an impressive increase in income in 1998 due to improving the efficiency of invoicing over the last two years. The Register is now back on line to be self financing thanks to the excellent volunteer work by Stephen Browne in maintaining the register.

In the Group’s accounts for 1998

presented here there are several points to note. External contributions to publications are excluded from the Receipts and Expenditure account (R&E). This is to make the figures more readily comparable between years in the future by "cleaning" them from the receipts and expenditure that is not concerned directly with the running costs of the Group. Also all the expenses of producing International Wader Studies volumes, since these are resourced from external funding, are excluded from the R&E. Only if there are not adequate Balance funds will such costs appear in the R&E account.

In 1998 we received £3,500 from Wetlands International as a second interim payment for the publication of the Odessa Proceedings, which will be published in 1999. Much of the preparatory work for this volume is now completed and paid, leaving a small sum (£73) on the Balance sheet at the end of 1998. This is insufficient to cover the very substantial costs of printing and distribution of the volume, but we are delighted to report that Wetlands International has recently confirmed that it will cover the additional printing and distribution costs of this very impressive volume! During 1998 the decrease in the strength of the British Pound against the other currencies gave us a small profit on currency exchanges.

Our entire computer equipment has, from an accountancy point of view, depreciated to zero over the past four years (see balance sheet 31.12.1997) so there is no further depreciation recorded for 1998. In 1999 we will, however, need to invest in new computer equipment for the Editor, so that a figure for depreciation reappears in the 2000 Budget.

In 1998 the Group ran at a very small deficit (£560) and our capital remains sufficient to cover the running costs of the Group for a year. With this in mind and the fact that a growing Capital is not one of the Group's goals, I am pleased to propose to the Annual General Meeting to hold the basic subscription rate for 2000 at the same rate as in 1999: £17. The subscriptions will therefore have remained the same for nine years! Our proposal to keep the same subscription rate for 2000 also recognises that owing to the recent strength of the GB £ members paying in some other currencies have already had an effective increase in subscription

## RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

	GB £ 1997	GB £ 1998
<b>Receipts</b>		
Subscriptions	9,381.75	9,416.90
Subscriptions from past year	204.85	—
Interest received	747.96	858.41
Colour Marking Register	244.68	1,003.07
Sale of back Bulletins and Publications	466.07	229.72
External contributions to publications	7,500.00	—
Conference	1,711.92	—
Miscellaneous	123.00	117.92
Exchange Profit	—	260.46
<b>Total income</b>	<b>20,380.23</b>	<b>11,886.48</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>
Bulletin costs		
– printing	4,895.00	4,399.00
– typing	—	—
– dispatch	2,313.17	2,142.81
Editorial	24.12	—
–Secretarial costs and miscellaneous	2,603.95	3,748.71
Colour Marking Register	159.50	662.76
Bank charges	168.11	190.74
Depreciation on computers etc.	650.00	—
Exchange loss	983.54	—
Investments	—	611.00
International Wader Studies	4,850.00	541.89
Reservation Breeding Waders	150.00	150.00
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>16,797.39</b>	<b>12,446.91</b>
<i>Excess of income over expenditure</i>	<b>3,582.84</b>	<b>–560.43</b>

## BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1998

All figures in GB £

	31.12.97	31.12.98	31.12.97	31.12.98
Computers & printers	0	0	Capital	12,176
Stock back Bulletins and Publications	p.m	p.m.	Subscriptions in advance	2,498
			Conference Fund	3,027
			Bulletin 69	
			Methodology	
			Issue	2,000
			Breeding	
			Waders in	
			Europe	321
Cash at Bank and on Deposit	23,405	18,553	Great Basin	
			Shorebirds	103
			Odessa	
			Proceedings	3,120
Debtors	340	0	Hebrides	
			Project	500
	<b>23,745</b>	<b>18,553</b>		<b>23,745</b>
				<b>18,553</b>

rate. Continuing changes in exchange rates may force us to further change the subscription rates in other currencies, but as you can probably understand we have no influence upon that! Members should note that so as to avoid the

Group falling into deficit on running costs over the next few years the Executive Committee anticipates that a rise in subscription rate will, however, be needed in 2001.

Bob Loos

**BUDGET 2000**

<b>Receipts</b>	<b>GB £</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>GB £</b>
Subscriptions	9,400	Bulletin costs	
		–printing	4,200
		–typing	100
Interest received	550	–dispatch	2,300
		Editorial	200
Colour Marking Register	400	Secr.costs and misc.	2,500
		Colour Marking Register	400
Sale back Bull. and Publ.	200	Bank charges	200
		Depreciation	650
	<b>10,550</b>		<b>10,550</b>

**EDITOR'S REPORT**

After spending a year finding my feet, my second year as WSG Editor-in-Chief seems to have passed much more smoothly. Although this has been partly due to my increasing experience, it has helped enormously that Rodney West has taken over task of Bulletin lay-out. However, because of Rodney's workload and the extra time involved in posting drafts for proof-reading and correction, the *Bulletin* is now taking longer to produce. This means that it has become more important than ever for me to receive material for publication at least two months in advance of the publication date. The other reason for needing material as early as possible arrived at 0015 hours on 1st March 1999 – my daughter, Emily!

Overall, by the December 1998 issue, we had established a good system. Although there have been a few initial problems with the new printer, these have been minor and the change has saved the WSG a significant amount of money. Jean Patterson has continued to do a phenomenally thorough job of copy-editing, and I hope you agree that the *Bulletin* looks even better than ever.

The amount of material published increased again in 1998 with a total of 228 pages. We have continued to receive an extremely good geographical spread of papers, with the Americas particularly well represented, and we are keen to keep on improving links with wader workers outside Europe. However, I would encourage everybody to send in material they consider to be of interest, whether it is a short note or a long paper. Although no volumes of *International Wader Studies* were published during 1998 there has been substantial progress behind the scenes: much of our efforts

have been expended on completing the mammoth Odessa proceedings volume. This is going to press as I write, and all paid-up members will receive a copy of this 500-page volume free of charge. We are particularly grateful to Wetlands International for their financial support in bringing this project to completion.

Following a suggestion received at the conference in Hungary, we plan to publish photo-montages of interesting or unusual wader ecology, something that has been made possible by the print quality we now achieve (see *Bulletin* 88: 39–42 for the first example of this). We hope this will become a regular feature, so please submit any photos you consider suitable, with some explanatory text. If the idea takes off we even have a volunteer for Pictures Editor!

Once again, I have had a great deal of support, help and encouragement from the members of the Executive Committee and the editorial team. David Stroud, Henk Koffijberg (who also has recently had a daughter, Aafke) and Robin Ward continue to be unsung heroes. A huge thank-you to all of them.  
*Julianne Evans*

**PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT**

Two WSG projects completed final field work during 1998. *Ruff Census Spring 1997/1998*, co-ordinated by Eddy Wymenga, had its second, and most comprehensive, field season in 1998. The results were published in the April 1999 *Bulletin* (*Bulletin* 88: 43–48). More than 200 counters participated, and a maximum of 55,000 Ruffs were counted at 171 sites in 13 European countries. The project has provided a much better picture of Ruff migration through Europe.

In December 1997 and January 1998 field work was conducted for the Winter 1997/98 *European Non-estuarine Coastal Waterfowl Survey (NEWS)*. This project covered coastlines in large parts of Europe (*Bulletin* 83: 10–11). Results are to be compiled and analysed and it is hoped to publish these as an *International Wader Studies* volume.

Another WSG project involving fieldwork was active in 1998: "*Tringa glareola 2000*", co-ordinated by Magdalena Remisiewicz. The project aims to throw light on the migration pattern of the Wood Sandpiper by colour ringing and observations at a large number of sites primarily in Eastern and Central Europe (*Bulletin* 84: 21–22). Preliminary results were presented at the 1998 WSG conference in Hungary (abstract in *Bulletin* 88: 12) and abstracts of a workshop held in Poland in November 1995 are published in this *Bulletin*. 25 groups and individuals from 15 countries in Europe, Asia and Africa are participating in the project.

Up-dates of national breeding populations of waders in a number of European countries have been compiled for the WSG project "*Breeding Waders in Europe 2000*". Due to the fact that the gathering of important data from several major wader countries is not yet finalized, the deadline for collection of updates is postponed till summer 1999. By that time national co-ordinators will have compiled the most recent population estimates together with data quality estimates, and a report will be developed to update European breeding wader totals. An up-dated list of national co-ordinators of the project is provided later in this *Bulletin*.

In the 1980s WSG organized and performed surveys of breeding waders in the Outer Hebrides in Scotland. Since then, major changes are known to have taken place in the area, for example in the presence of predators. As a follow-up to the surveys in the 1980s Rob Fuller resurveyed a number of sites in 1998. A paper for the *Bulletin* with the 1998 results is under preparation. The results of two WSG Projects that ended some years ago – the Inland Wader Counts and the Kentish Plover Projects have yet to be published, largely because of lack of funding. It is planned to publish some of the papers prepared during the Kentish Plover project in the *Bulletin* in the coming year.

*Ole Thorup*

## CONFERENCE CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

The annual conferences held by the Wader Study Group are a very important part of the Group's activities since they provide the major opportunity of the year to bring together a large number of members, to meet up with old friends and to meet new people. The chance to share experience and new results of working on waders, to discuss new ideas and to plan new research is very important for the continuing health of the Group. To help as many members as possible to attend the conferences, it is WSG's policy to try to keep costs as low as possible, and to hold its annual conference every other year close to the Group's main membership in north-west Europe. But we also look for venues elsewhere in Europe so as to give members in these areas a better chance to attend. In addition, as opportunity arises we are increasingly holding additional special conferences in other parts of the world; the first of these was the important conference in Odessa, Ukraine in April 1992. The Group is very grateful to all those people who take on the considerable, but we hope rewarding, task of hosting a WSG conference.

In 1998 the Wader Study Group held two Conferences. The Annual Conference took place in Keszthely, Hungary, on the shores of Lake Balaton from 16–18 October with a workshop on 'Population Estimates Revisited' on Monday 19 October. The Conference was hosted Birdlife Hungary and the Hungarian Wetland Foundation and we are most grateful to Gyorgy Szimuly and his team for making the meeting a great success. There were many interesting talks, many new faces and many people attending from the middle and eastern part of Europe.

There was an extra WSG Conference in Cape Town, South Africa from 12–14 August, with a workshop on Curlew Sandpipers. The meeting was hosted by Les Underhill and the Avian Demography Unit of the University of Cape Town. This meeting also was a big success, with members from as far afield as New Zealand, Australia and Canada attending!

In 1999 the Annual Conference will be on Ile de Berder, Golfe du Morbihan, France, from 24–27 September, with Monday 27th being a Workshop on "Understanding population dynamics of Avocets". The meeting will be hosted by

Guillaume Gelinaud of the SEPNB, with the Avocet workshop organised by Guillaume and Hermann Hotker.

The 2000 Annual Conference will be back to the Group's roots in Great Britain, hosted by the British Trust for Ornithology. The Conference will be from 8–11 September at the University of East Anglia, Norwich in eastern England. The 2001 Annual Conference will most likely be in the Netherlands, and it is planned to make this a major event looking at the current state of wader research as we enter the 21st century.

There are also discussions underway about an extra WSG meeting in spring 2001 in North America. The idea is to hold this close to Delaware Bay around the time of the spectacular spring staging of shorebirds feeding on horseshoe crab eggs. To help in planning this Conference it would be helpful to know how many people would be likely to attend this meeting. We need to estimate the number of people so as to choose suitable accommodation! So please let me know if you are interested.  
*Petra de Goeij*

## WSG–WETLANDS INTERNATIONAL LIAISON OFFICER'S REPORT

1998 was another extremely busy and productive year. In preparation for the triennial meeting of Wetlands International's Board of Members (its international governing body on which the International Wader Study Group is represented by the Liaison Officer) in November 1998, a detailed summary of the activity of the Group was prepared (parts of which are reproduced below). It was an illuminating experience trying to pull together a comprehensive summary of three years of activities: conferences, workshops, committee meetings, projects, publications and much field activity, – a valuable reminder of the breadth of the Group's international activities. The full progress report runs to 18 pages! The WSG arguably achieves as much as many small professional societies, all the more impressive since all this activity is co-ordinated without any salaried co-ordination at all! Of all Wetlands International's Specialist Groups, it is clear that the WSG is one of the most active and productive (by a significant margin).

Wetlands International requires its Specialist Groups to produce a forward

plan of activity to link with the main directions and goals of the organisation. The previous plan was prepared by Nick Davidson and published in the Bulletin three years ago. This plan is reproduced below with an assessment of our achievements since that time against each of the goals.

For the next three year period, a new plan has been drafted (see pages 7-16). This was discussed by the Executive Committee at their meeting last year in Hungary and also presented to, and discussed by, last year's annual conference. It has subsequently undergone additional minor amendments and endorsement by Wetlands International's Board of Members.

The Plan sets out a broad framework for the Group's activities. It distinguishes clearly between those activities we intended to progress as priorities, and lists a wide variety of other activities that may be progressed during the course of the next three years, subject to additional funding or other resources becoming available. Needless to say, the most limiting resource is volunteer time from Group members to co-ordinate activity!

The three-year plan will materially assist the Executive Committee in reviewing and guiding the activity of the WSG. We will use it to report progress on an annual basis.

Significant progress has been made in a number of areas of conservation activity during 1998: the development of the wader count database by Lieuwe Hanstra (of IBN-DLO/Wetlands International) has continued apace and the final fruits of this activity are becoming apparent with revised population estimates for East Atlantic flyway populations being presented to the Seventh Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention in May 1999. A full update on this project will be provided elsewhere.

Progress has been made with the development of a flyway atlas for waders in the African–Eurasian region with Wetland International funding. A full report on this activity will be published in the next *Bulletin*.  
*David A. Stroud*