

Annual conference of the International Wader Study Group, Cádiz, Spain, 25–28 September 2003

The 2003 WSG annual conference was hosted by Grupo de Conservación de Humedales Costeros (Group for the Conservation of Coastal Wetlands) based at the University of Cádiz and was sponsored by the Andalusian Regional Ministry of the Environment, the University-Enterprise Foundation of Cádiz (FUECA) and the ANDANATURA Foundation. It was held in the beautiful old part of Cádiz, close to the Atlantic shore.

As we soon realised, Grupo de Conservación de Humedales Costeros is a pioneering and very enthusiastic group of coastal ecology researchers that made wonderful conference hosts. They came together in 1989 and, as demonstrated by several of the conference talks and posters, their work now covers a wide variety of studies, ranging from the feeding and breeding ecology of waders, especially in salt pans, to wader and seabird migration, to bird-human conflicts as well as wetland management and restoration.

All who took part were grateful to the organising committee for everything they did to make it such a successful and enjoyable weekend:

- Alejandro Pérez-Hurtado acted as General Coordinator
- Jose Antonio Masero acted as Scientific Coordinator
- Gonzalo M. Arroyo acted as General Assistant and Treasurer
- Francisco Hortas organised communications and the conference website

- Macarena Castro, Sora Marin and Gonzalo Olias were in charge of logistics and accommodation
- Coral G. Gago, Mayca Lozano, Isabel T. Escribano, Blanca Lopez-Varela and David Cuenca assisted

The conference started on the Friday morning with a special workshop addressing the question: “Are waders worldwide in decline?” This was all a bit depressing because the inescapable conclusion was “Yes, a great many wader populations are in decline”. Saturday morning began with the usual WSG Annual General Meeting followed by talks throughout the morning. After lunch and a poster session we set forth on an excursion to the nearby salt pans to see waders, such as Avocets, Black-winged Stilts and Kentish Plovers, as well as Greater Flamingos, Slender-billed Gulls and Audouin’s Gulls. We all had a nice time and the weather was just perfect.

All day Sunday, it was back to work with a full programme of talks, followed in the evening by the highlight of the weekend: the conference dinner. This took place outdoors, on a balmy evening, in a beautiful location overlooking the ocean shore. It was an interesting and excellent meal accompanied by much chatter and was washed down with more than adequate quantities of cerveza, vino y sangria. Afterwards we were entertained with flamenco guitar songs, a delightful conclusion to a fantastic weekend!

* * *

Minutes of the 2003 International Wader Study Group Annual General Meeting

The 2003 WSG Annual General Meeting was held at 09.00 hours on Saturday 27 September during the annual conference at Cádiz, Spain.

The Chairman (Hermann Hötker) opened the meeting, welcoming everyone to Cádiz.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Gerard Boere, Ralf Joest, Mike Pienkowski and Magdalena Remisiewicz. The Minutes of the 2002 AGM were agreed by the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

2. Chairman’s report

Hermann Hötker thanked the Executive Committee for their work over the past year, the conference organisers at Hel, Poland in 2002 and Cadiz, Spain 2003, and the WSG Con-

ference Co-ordinator Petra de Goeij. The chairman also thanked Humphrey Sitters, the Bulletin Editor, in particular for his hard work to bring about the excellent Bulletin 100, and the team in South Africa who have been responsible for producing the Bulletin. In 2003, Bulletin 69 finally came to fruition, a compilation of methods papers published in back issues of the Bulletin. Thanks were also extended to the other officers. An invitation was extended to members to become more involved in the work of the group; a note will appear in the Bulletin to seek help from other members. The Global Flyway Conference, in Edinburgh in April 2004, was announced, at which a substantial WSG presence is planned, with “Rodney’s (Membership Secretary) 5-day stand” to promote the WSG and its publications, and a symposium on declining waders drawing on the outcome of the Cadiz workshop.

The Chairman also made reference to the Two-Tier Membership “pilot” and the proposal to offer a Life Membership



category, as well as the need to increase the WSG membership subscription. Tamas Szekely suggested the ability to join on-line via the WSG website. Bob Loos and Rodney West pointed out that it is possible to join via e-mail with credit card payment.

3. Treasurer's report

Bob Loos referred to his written report that would appear in the next bulletin. He presented the report from the Auditors, Tom van der Have and Martin de Jong, which found the group's finances to be in good order.

4. Membership Secretary's report

Rodney West reported that there were 539 members at the end of December 2002, representing a slight decline in the number of individual members. Consequently, there will be more proactive marketing of WSG membership in the next few months – starting at the Cadiz conference. Rodney then asked for a show of hands firstly by members, then by non-members, and pointed out that there would be membership materials near the poster display. Robin Ward has taken on the day-to-day running of membership matters, releasing the Membership Secretary to spend more time on promotion.

5. Editor's report

Humphrey Sitters presented a verbal report on 2003, stressing that he was only keen to continue as editor if folks submit papers for publication. He also invited responses to the often-controversial articles in Bulletin 100. This was the first of Humphrey's rousing presentations to the Cadiz meeting, providing a good demonstration of how to project the voice, without the need of a microphone, audibly to the whole audience! Tamas Szekely has offered to co-ordinate a Research News & Views section in the Bulletin and invited material.

6. Project Co-ordinator's report

Ole Thorup reported that Breeding Waders in Europe 2000 has been written up and peer-reviewed, and will be circulated around Christmas 2003. In the absence of Magda Remisiewicz, Ole presented her report on the *Tringa glareola* migration study, in its 7th year in 2003, and involving 40 sites in 26 countries. There was great enthusiasm to continue fieldwork in 2003. Fat scores have been included over last 3 years. Highlights include a bird colour-ringed in Italy that was caught 2 weeks later in Poland, among 32 resightings of colour-ringed birds. There have been counts of migrating birds at each ringing site. Database collation is progressing. The final workshop will take place in February 2004, with a target of 2005 for the IWS publication. Lars Maltha Rasmussen, of Denmark, announced that a co-ordinated count of Golden Plover across Europe was planned in October 2003. The aim of this project was to provide an estimate of how many Golden Plovers occur in different countries and states, to identify the most important sites along their autumn migration route through NW Europe, and how numbers change. The need for a co-ordinator in France was identified and, hopefully, resolved at the meeting. Les Underhill informed the meeting that the IWS publication on Curlew Sandpiper was being compiled and requested any further papers to enable this project to be completed.

7. Wetlands International Co-ordinator's report

David Stroud told the meeting that a new Memorandum of Agreement between WI and WSG was in preparation. There had been a recent meeting with WI about completion of the Wader Atlas when agreement was reached on a way forward for securing the progress of this work. The increased costs of publication and distribution of the IWS series has led WSG to explore web and CD publication of volumes that do not have adequate external funding for production. IWS publications due in the near future are those on Avocet, Curlew Sandpiper, Breeding Waders 2000, UK Wetland Bird Survey Low Tide Counts Atlas, NEWS in Europe (Non-Estuarine Waterbird Survey), and there are others in development. The Africa–Eurasian population estimates review will be published on the WSG website soon.

8. Increase in membership subscription

The Treasurer expressed the need to raise the membership subscription, which has been held at £17 for 12 years. The proposed increase to £22 would enable WSG to produce IWS volumes with less dependence on external funds and to continue to produce the Bulletin to a high standard. The group had made substantial savings on the cost of producing publications by moving these operations to South Africa, but needed once again to manage increased costs associated with production and circulation of published materials to members. The conference voted to accept the proposed new rate of individual membership subscription at £22.

9. 2004 conference

Jutta Leyrer extended an invitation to Papenburg in northern Germany for the WSG Conference, from 5–7 November 2004. There will be two concurrent workshops, on Coastal Saltmarshes throughout the world: their significance and mechanisms in the life histories of waders, and on Methods for studying aspects of wader ecology

10. Election of officers

Robin Ward (Assistant Editor), Les Underhill, and Bob Gill were all due to stand down, but agreed to stand for a further term. Their re-election was carried. There were no other nominations.

The Auditors, Tom van der Have and Martin de Jong were re-appointed.

11. Any other business

Hermann Hötter expressed disappointment that the Wet Grassland Group, formed at the Kollermerpump WSG Conference in 2001, had not got off the ground through lack of time. He invited volunteers to come forward to run the group, otherwise it would be closed. Mark Smart offered to revitalise this group.

12. Colour-marking register

Rob Robinson has stepped down. A vote of thanks was offered to Rob for his work in running the register, and a warm welcome was extended to Mark Collier (wsg@bto.org) who has taken over the task.

Rowena Langston, General Secretary



Wader Study Group Annual Conference 2004 Welcome to Papenburg!

The annual conference of the WSG will be held during 5–7 November 2004 at Papenburg, Germany, organised by the Institut für Vogelforschung “Vogelwarte Helgoland”, Wilhelmshaven. The conference will start with two workshops on Friday 5 November on “Coastal saltmarshes throughout the world: Significance and mechanisms in life histories of waders” and on methods for analysing bird populations. The Annual General Meeting and talks will take place on Saturday and Sunday, 6–7 November.

Further details are available at the web page: <http://www.ifv.terramare.de/wsg2004>. Please keep checking the page regularly, since new information on the conference will be posted there first.

Contact address: **Gregor Scheiffarth, Institut für Vogelforschung “Vogelwarte Helgoland”, An der Vogelwarte 21, D – 26386 Wilhelmshaven, Germany, phone: +49 4421 96890, fax: +49 4421 968955, e-mail: gregor.scheiffarth@ifv.terramare.de**

* * *

Officers' reports

Chairman's report (Hermann Hötker)

Being the chairman of the Wader Study Group fortunately means being a member of a rather big team. As in previous years, this team worked very well during the past year. It is one of the amazing features of the committee that its good team spirit helps in nearly all situations, in particular when individual members (including the chairman himself) have to reduce or even temporarily cease work for the WSG due to reasons from outside the group.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues for all their work that has helped to keep the Group very active during the past year. You can read about the achievements of the group in the officers' reports. Perhaps the three most important of the WSG's activities that are running particularly well are:

1. The conferences – We had a heaven-like conference in Hel in Poland last year, and we are looking forward to a spectacular conference in Cadiz in Spain this year. There are more invitations and possibilities in the pipeline.
2. The publications – The Bulletin see below; several IWS volumes are in the pipeline.
3. The projects – the next milestone, the new compilation of waders breeding in Europe is imminent (see Ole Thorup's report).

There has been quite a lot of communication within the committee, usually via e-mail, and in addition, thanks to their kind invitation, there was an interim meeting of part of the team in Petra's and Theunis's (wonderful) new home in Gaast (Friesland, The Netherlands) during 25–27 April 2003. The amazing landscape, wilsternetting and good numbers of meadow waders made it difficult, however, to keep working on WSG matters!

One of the highlights of the year was the appearance of *WSG Bulletin* 100, a further milestone in the history of the group. The great enthusiasm, effort and the particular skills of Humphrey Sitters allowed us to celebrate this remarkable

event. Congratulations! There are many more behind the scenes involved in producing our Bulletins. In particular, I would like to mention Les Underhill and his team, who helped us to keep the costs of the Bulletin production to an acceptable size without losing quality.

Besides the activities and events that pop up in public from time to time, much work has been done continuously and silently just to keep the Group running. I would like to thank in particular Petra de Goeij, Rowena Langston, Bob Loos, David Stroud and Rodney West for their work.

It cannot be emphasized often enough that nearly all of the work of the group has to be done on a voluntary basis. This should not be taken as an excuse for any delays or shortcomings but it also means that we need help from group members to run the WSG. Being so successful in the past and therefore having created some expectations, the standards are quite high. It is important to say that not all tasks that have to be fulfilled are always very joyful, but I am sure that the good company within the group gives a good reward.

A few thoughts for the future management of the WSG:

- 1) We have to keep a careful eye on our finances. It is hoped that the two-tier membership system will help members from low-income countries, and it is also hoped that it will help us to get more members from these countries. We are also discussing life-membership, and we also have to consider rises in membership fees. Generally speaking, getting more members would solve many potential financial problems.
- 2) We need more volunteers to help with running the group. The workload of an average WSG officer has probably increased over recent years. Some officers are very much involved in their (life earning) jobs and the time available for the WSG is getting less predictable. It is essential that we get fresh people to help run the group in the future.
- 3) We need to continue keeping the WSG as an open forum for wader enthusiasts and people involved in wader conservation. I admit that this thought is not new but it is absolutely essential for the future of the group.



Treasurer's report (Bob Loos)

Receipts and Expenditure account

Although we had to bear the burden of a bankruptcy in relation to phase 2 of the Wader Atlas, which was totally unforeseen, and resulted in the writing off of £2,204 (expenses: Wader Atlas) the financial state of the International Wader Study Group continues to be rather satisfactory. Income from membership remains stable as in previous years. What has been of note, however, is the decrease in interest received during the current year. This dropped considerably, though it was partly offset by receiving an additional £120 interest that had been withheld in respect of tax during 2001 (see Treasurer's Report 2001).

The sale of back *Bulletins* and *International Wader Studies* issues, remain a welcome extra source of income; which helps compensate for the lower interest income received during the year.

Selling a complete run of our Bulletin to a Japanese customer resulted in an extra £300.

If you need one of these publications, just contact Rodney West; he will be very pleased to help you!

After a long period when the British pound increased in value against other currencies, during this financial year it decreased by 5.7% against the Euro. Therefore our savings in Euros resulted in a higher British Pound value, and therefore an exchange profit. Unfortunately it is really impossible to predict how currency values will change in the (near) future!

The Bulletins published in 2001 comprised in total 192 pages, which is comparable with the previous year. Printing costs in Britain increased greatly, and we therefore searched for a cheaper option which we found in South Africa. We have begun to use this new printer since August 2002 beginning with *WSG Bulletin* 98. As a rule, the printing and postage of the December Bulletin is paid and booked in the following year. During 2001, which was an exception, we paid for the dispatch of four Bulletins. As a result, dispatch costs in 2002 are lower, because we only paid for the dispatch of two Bulletins. On the other hand, the Editorial and DTP expenses refers also to the August 2001 Bulletin, which resulted in £720 more than budgeted. About 75% of our income is invested in the publication and dispatch of the Bulletin!

Depreciation on computers is on the same level as last year. Our entire computer equipment has, from an accountant's point of view depreciated to zero over the last years, so there will be no depreciation in 2003.

Balance sheet

Due to the deficit, our capital decreased by 14%, nevertheless it remains more than the required minimum for one year's running costs. The stock of back Bulletins and IWS issues is hard to quantify in monetary terms; therefore it is recorded as p.m., which means "pro memori". This stock is unquestionably of value, but it is very hard to quantify it because it is just paper, which can only be turned into money by selling it; so it is selling the stock makes the money, not having the stock!

Debtors: the Wader Atlas phase 2 ended unfortunately in a bankruptcy and the whole amount is written off as uncollectable. For the local organisation of the Kollumerpomp

meeting we had to refund the guarantee (£1,111) before all the grants were received. At the beginning of 2002, the grants were received, as expected.

It only remains to me to thank all who have invested so much enthusiasm, time, energy and money in the International Wader Study Group to keep our Group as healthy as it is now. Without them and you, dear member, it would be really impossible to maintain the high output, which is quite exceptional for "just a group of volunteers" for more than 30 years now!

Editor's report (Humphrey Sitters)

The three issues of the *Wader Study Group Bulletin* published in 2002 comprise 168 pages. This is marginally less than the long term average, but even so the variety of the contents was very wide covering the usual features, Robin Ward's Notes & News, another invaluable list of Recent Publications compiled by Henk Koffijberg as well as 19 papers and 15 short notes of from all continents of the world (except Antarctica!).

One innovation that is particularly welcome is a new series on "Research news and comment". This was Tamás Székely's idea and I am very grateful to him not only for having it, but also for being prepared to act as co-ordinator. The plan is that the series will act as an informal means of disseminating news about the activities of wader researchers and their results. We also hope that it will become a forum for comment and debate as well as for airing views, floating theories and stimulating research in new directions.

The recent success of the special 100th volume of the *Bulletin* containing a wide range of valuable and thought-provoking articles on "the big issues in wader science and conservation" suggests a new way forward for our *Bulletin*. I had included a general invitation to contribute to volume 100 in the August 2002 issue, which I followed up with many personal invitations. The excellent and enthusiastic response was a real eye-opener. Undoubtedly it was the opportunity to express ideas, arguments and concerns and to write on major issues without the restraints of formal paper writing that led to such a wonderful response. A typical comment was "This is an opportunity too good to miss!" However, there is absolutely no reason why the *Bulletin* should not include similar articles at any time. The role of the *Bulletin*, indeed that of the International Wader Study Group as a whole, is to act as a catalyst, stimulating research and conservation action for waders. If the type of articles in volume 100 is one means of achieving this, let's have more of them!

Membership Secretary's report (Rodney West)

At the end of 2002, the International Wader Study Group's membership stood at 518. This was made up as follows:

Individual members	415
Institutional members	17
Gratis members	72
Exchange	14

This membership total is slightly down on the preceding year and continues a slow decline in individual memberships, which has been evident for the past 6-7 years.

On the positive side, it is truly impressive to see to just how many countries the Bulletin finds its way. This really is



the dissemination of knowledge! Look at this list below and be amazed! Apologies if I have missed any countries out.

Argentina	Japan
Australia	Kazakhstan
Austria	Kenya
Belarus	Lithuania
Belgium	Malaysia
Brazil	Mauritania
Bulgaria	Morocco
Canada	New Zealand
Chile	Norway
Columbia	Pakistan
Croatia	Poland
Denmark	Portugal
Estonia	Russia
Finland	Saudi Arabia
France	Senegal
France	South Africa
Germany	Spain
Ghana	Switzerland
Hungary	The Netherlands
I.R. of Iran	The Philippines
Iceland	Ukraine
India	United Kingdom
Ireland	United States of America
Italy	

Forty-seven countries, in all but we still need new members to help keep us financially strong. Thank you for supporting us and please help if you can by finding a new member.

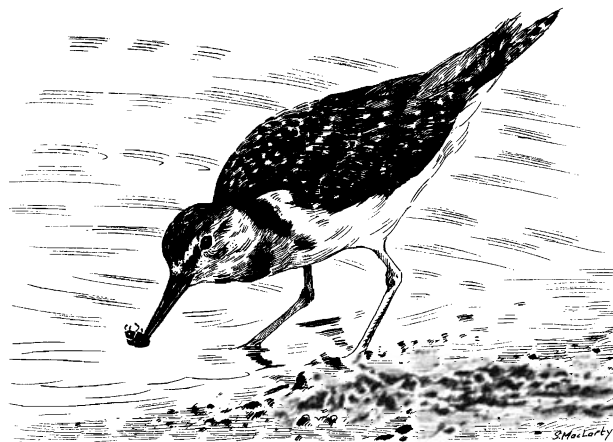
Project Co-ordinator's report (Ole Thorup)

There were two active Wader Study Group projects in 2002. "Tringa glareola 2000" aims at throwing light on the migration pattern of the Wood Sandpiper, primarily in Eastern and Central Europe (*WSG Bulletin* 84: 21–22, 89: 30–32). 2002 was planned to be the last year of fieldwork, which included surveys and ringing with colour rings. In October, after the field season, there was a workshop on the progress and results of this project held together with the Wader Study Group Conference 2002 in Hel, Poland. During the winter various additional datasets were collected, and the writing up was started.

Early in 2002, the last data for the project "Breeding Waders in Europe 2000" were collected. During the year, the manuscript was worked out and the first editing was performed. National co-ordinators from 29 countries have collected data on breeding populations and breeding data quality and have compiled lists of national references of recent papers and other publications on breeding waders for "Breeding Waders in Europe 2000". The publishing date of this special volume in the International Wader Studies series: "Breeding waders in Europe: a year 2000 assessment" will be late 2003, and the publication will be circulated to all Wader Study Group members.

Conference Co-ordinator's report (Petra de Goeij)

From 25–28 September 2003, the WSG held its Annual Meeting in Cadiz in southern Spain. It was a long time ago that we came together in a Mediterranean country – and Mediterranean it was thanks to the high temperatures and the attendance of many south European members! Around 120 specialists from 20 countries attended the meeting, with a very good female representation. The meeting started on Friday with the workshop: "Are waders worldwide in decline? Reviewing the evidence". It was a very interesting workshop, with presentations from all over the world. However the sad conclusion was that indeed the majority of the wader populations in the world are declining. The Saturday morning started with the AGM followed by many interesting talks and a poster session. In the afternoon the excursion brought us to different salinas where waders and other waterbirds were abundant. Those people who could find it spent the evening in El Hoyo. Sunday also offered many interesting talks and the poster competition. We might have broken the record in the number of presentations. The Sunday ended with the presentation of the WSG Statement from the declining populations workshop. Details of the workshop and the Statement are presented in this issue of the WSG Bulletin and on the website. A wonderful meal at a wonderful location by the sea was the present from the conference organisers on the Sunday evening. The evening ended with flamenco singing that went deep into the souls of many, even when they did not understand a word of it. The organising team from UCA did a tremendous job. Thanks for all your efforts!



Line art: p. 6. S. MacLarty; p. 12. G. Krottje; p. 20 M. Dementiev; p. 29 R. Denison; p. 41 G. Krottje; p. 65 S. MacLarty, A. Clarkson, S. MacLarty; p. 68 C.M. Wojak; p. 73. E.A. Koblik. (Denison, Clarkson and MacLarty taken from Harrison, J.A. *et al.* 1997. *The atlas of southern African birds*, vol. 1: Non-passerines. BirdLife South Africa, Johannesburg. Reproduced by permission of the Avian Demography Unit, University of Cape Town.)



Accounts of the International Wader Study Group for the year 1st January to 31st December 2002

(All figures are in British pounds)

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

Receipts	2000	2001	2002	
Subscriptions	8,567.18	8,538.44	8,549.17	
Subscriptions from past year	675.78	262.08	354.89	
Donations	0	132.21	22.56	
Interest received	546.08	695.45	542.02	
Colour Marking Register	336.77	247.39	428.41	
Sale back Bulletins and publications	247.70	333.53	640.64	
Miscellaneous	41.29	20.82	0	
Exchange profit	0	0	279.33	
Wader Atlas	0	0	0	
Total income	10414.80	10229.92	10817.02	
Expenses				
Bulletin costs – printing	2,920.00	3,765.00	4,122.08	
– dispatch	2,916.47	3,126.89	1,324.32	
Editorial and DTP	0	0	2,760.00	
Secretarial costs and miscellaneous	1,743.34	1,595.65	1,580.91	
Colour Marking Register	241.22	150.10	300.00	
Bank charges	252.21	238.92	246.96	
Depreciation on computers etc.	480.00	240.00	240.00	
Exchange loss	16.87	65.42	0	
Investments	0	0	0	
International Wader Studies	0	0	0	
Wader Atlas	0	0	2,204.00	
Reservation Breeding Waders	150.00	150.00	150.00	
Miscellaneous	0	14.58	2.34	
Total expenditure	8,720.11	9,346.56	12930.61	
<i>Excess of income over expenditure</i>	<i>1,694.69</i>	<i>883.36</i>	<i>2,113.59</i>	<i>Deficit</i>

BALANCE SHEET

	31.12.2001	31.12.2002		31.12.2001	31.12.2002
Computers & printers	240	0	Capital	15,118	13,005
Stock back bulletins & IWS	p.m.	p.m.	Subscriptions in advance	637	345
Cash at Bank and on deposit	18,064	23,488	Conference Fund	2,278	1,565
Debtors	3,315	0	Bull. 69 Methodology Issue	2,000	2,000
			Breeding Waders in Europe	823	3,255
			Odessa Proceedings	252	252
			Hebrides Project	92	92
			Creditors	287	2,842
			Bulletin 100	132	132
	21,619	23,488		21,619	23,488

BUDGET 2004

Subscriptions	9,800	Bulletin costs: printing	3,500
Interest received	450	DTP	2,250
Colour Marking Register	300	postage	2,750
Sale back Bulletins and IWS	200	Secretarial costs & misc.	1,700
		Colour Marking Register	300
		Bank charges	250
	10,750		10,750

