

Notice of the 2006 Annual General Meeting of the International Wader Study Group

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the International Wader Study Group (IWSG) will be held at 9h00 on Saturday 14 October 2006 during the Annual Conference at Falsterbo, Sweden. Nominations for the election of Officers and other members of the Executive Committee may be made in writing to the General Secretary not less than 14 days before the AGM. Each nomination must be proposed and seconded by fully paid-up members and accompanied by the nominee's written consent.

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the 2005 AGM
3. Chairman's report (Hermann Hötker)
4. a) Treasurer's report (Bob Loos)
b) Auditor's report (Martin de Jong & Tom van der Have)
5. Membership Officer's report (Robin Ward)
6. Editor's report (Humphrey Sitters)
7. Project Coordinator's report (Ole Thorup)
8. Conference Coordinator's report and future conferences (Petra de Goeij)
9. IWSG–Wetlands International Liaison Officer's report (David Stroud)
10. IWSG support foundation (Bob Loos)
11. Election of Officers and other members of the Executive Committee
12. IWSG Annual Conference 2007
13. Any other business

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Officers' reports for 2005

Chairman's report (Hermann Hötker)

Chairman's reports usually begin with lists of achievements that have been made over the past year. There are some the IWSG has to mention, but I would like to start with a rather worrying development: the decline in our membership. Membership is of crucial importance for the Group; firstly because the Group lives through its members; and secondly because membership is by far the largest and most stable part of its income. The IWSG needs a stable income, especially to maintain its publications. It is vital that we increase our membership so that we can ensure the future and sustainability of the services we offer. The decrease in membership is in contrast to the evident and increasing interest in IWSG conferences. Many people enjoy the enthusiastic atmosphere and excellent programmes of our conferences. Organising these conferences, however, means a great effort for the local organisers and the Group. Conferences can only be organized for as long as the Group itself is functioning. The EXCO has therefore decided that in future non-members attending conferences will be charged an extra fee.

Another way in which we hope that the income of the Group can be improved is through the new IWSG Founda-

tion. This will enable money raised through donations and legacies to be stored for future purposes. Provided there is enough money in the Foundation, the capital and income may be utilised to sustain the publications and other activities of the IWSG. We will be most grateful for all donations to the IWSG Foundation, and I would particularly like to emphasise that it is a suitable recipient for legacies made under one's last will.

Of course, the life of the IWSG in the past year was not dominated by fears about decreasing membership or financial problems. In fact the financial position of the group is (still) very healthy, as may be seen from the treasurer's report. One of the highlights of the year was the remarkable conference in Knockadoon, Ireland. Again the conference was accompanied by two workshops, one on Golden Plovers and one on merging population ecology theory with field data.

Another benchmark was the publication of *Breeding Waders in Europe 2000* compiled by Ole Thorup. Thanks to substantial financial support from the UK's Joint Nature Conservation Committee, this volume of our *International Wader Studies* was published in 2005. As with others in this series, this volume was a product of the IWSG network, with many members being involved in the production process.

Members are used to the very high standard of IWSG publications. This not only holds true for the *International Wader Studies* but also and in particular for the *Wader Study Group Bulletin*. I would like to stress again that all the work which results in such high quality publications is done on a voluntary basis. Thank you to all my colleagues in the EXCO and other volunteers for their high personal involvement in the Group.

We always are in need of volunteers to help with the running of the group. Most of the members of the committee are hopelessly overworked both in their civil jobs as well as in their volunteer involvement. Anybody indicating her or his willingness to help will be greatly welcomed. Help needed ranges from editorial work on the Bulletin and other publications to finding new members.

Treasurer's report (Bob Loos)

Receipts and Expenditure account

The year 2005 ended with a small surplus of £263.89, strongly influenced by an exchange loss of £813.24 which compares with an exchange profit of £179.87 the previous year.

During the year, the British Pound increased in value against the Euro by 2.8%. Therefore the part of our savings held in Euros had a lower value in terms of British Pounds, resulting in an exchange loss. Unfortunately we cannot always 'play the market' successfully as it is completely impossible to predict how currency exchange rates will move in future! Moreover nowadays it is even more complex because our financial transactions are conducted in five different currencies: Euros, South African Rands, British Pounds, as well as American and Canadian Dollars.

Subscription income in 2005 was on about the same level as the year before, but it is important for this to increase in future, through the recruitment of new members, if we are to maintain our output, especially our publications. Hopefully this will soon be the result of the membership secretary's recent proactive approach to inducing former members to rejoin and recruiting non members who have written for the *Bulletin* or have attended a conference.

Although interest rates did not change dramatically in 2005, the interest we received was considerably higher than the previous year. However, the amount of money owed to creditors will be much lower next year and it is unlikely that the figure will be as high in future years.

The sale of back issues of the *WSG Bulletin* and *IWS* series remains a welcome source of income and we hope that this will increase through selling Volume 100 of the *WSG Bulletin* and *Breeding Waders in Europe 2000*. When purchasers discover that these publications come free with membership of the IWSG, they may be convinced about the benefits of joining!

If you need any of these publications, just contact the Treasurer. He will be very pleased to help you!

At 282, the aggregate number of pages of the *Wader Study Group Bulletin* funded during 2005 was more than the 204 budgeted. However, this is not a matter of concern. The main reason was the inclusion of a 56-page section giving the results of the 1999 IWSG workshop on Avocets breeding in Western Europe. We are more than happy to publish the output of our members in this way! We will be even happier if

the membership increases proportionally, as this will put us in a strong financial position.

It cannot be emphasised enough that all the work of the officers of the IWSG is done on a voluntary basis. It is very time consuming; e.g. for the Editor, editing means not so much time for birding!

Balance sheet

As a result of the profit our capital increased slightly in 2005, but it is still slightly below the desirable minimum of one year's running costs.

We encourage our members to take out a Lifetime Membership; with one payment you have paid all your financial dues to the International Wader Study Group for the whole of your life! This enables the Group to enjoy additional interest whilst the money is held on deposit. It also enables us to hold the membership fee down for a longer period. From a different viewpoint, if someone becomes a Lifetime Member, it suggests that that person is very happy with the way the Group is operating, so there is moral support as well as financial!

The value of the stock of back *WSG Bulletins* and *IWS* issues is hard to quantify in monetary terms; therefore it is recorded as "p.m." which means "pro memori". The stock is unquestionably of value, but it is just paper, which can only be turned into money by selling it. Therefore it is selling the stock that makes money, not the possession of it!

The conferences held in Papenburg and Knockadoon both resulted in surpluses for the Group.

Half of this money has been added to the Conference Fund and half to the Reserve Fund for the *IWS* series and the *IWS* Curlew Sandpiper volume.

We received a generous grant from the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries of the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Moscow for the production and distribution of the *IWS* Curlew Sandpiper volume. This prepayment appears in the balance sheet under *IWS* Curlew Sandpiper.

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

I am afraid that this report is very similar to the ones I have given for the past few years! The Wader Study Group Conferences are a sequence of really great events. The last one in 2005 in Ireland showed that the members do not get enough of these meetings. There were so many enthusiasts wanting to attend that the organising committee almost had to say 'no' to some members that were late with their registration. However in the end everything worked out OK. Therefore for the Swedish meeting we have done our best to let people know that they better register sooner than later. We also decided that there should be a limit to the number of participants and that IWSG members would be favoured above non-members. We hope that the meetings will stay like they are now: wonderful moments to hear about wader research and to meet wader enthusiasts from all over the world.

Membership Secretary's report (Robin Ward)

At the end of 2005, the International Wader Study Group's membership stood at 483. This was made up as follows:



Life Members	5
Individual members	398
Institutional members	18
Gratis members	46
Exchange	16

This is slightly (4%) down on the preceding year and continues a slow decline in individual memberships. Much of the decline in recent years can be attributed to a reduction in gratis membership (36% reduction since 2002) with a much lower reduction in individual memberships.

On the positive side, through our membership the Bulletin is reaching ever more countries: 51 in 2005. However we still need new members to help keep us financially strong. Thank you for supporting us and please help to recruit new members.

Project Co-ordinator's report (Ole Thorup)

In October 2003, a co-ordinated count of Eurasian Golden Plovers took place, covering a large part of Europe. At the 2005 annual conference of the International Wader Study Group in Cork, a one day Golden Plover workshop was held, when results from the 2003 survey were presented and analysed, and ideas for future work on the winter ecology and monitoring of the species were developed and discussed. It was decided that there should be an international survey of Eurasian Golden Plovers in October 2008. A summary of the outcome of the 2005 workshop is published in *WSG Bulletin* 108: 5–7.

Results from earlier WSG projects “Tringa glareola 2000”

and “Ruff spring censuses 1998 and 2004” are now being written up for publication in the near future.

Finally, the publication from the project “Breeding Waders in Europe 2000” was circulated to IWSG members in late summer 2005. Extra copies are now available and may be purchased from Petra de Goeij or the Project Co-ordinator. An electronic version will be available at the IWSG website as soon as manpower and technology allows.

Editor's report (Humphrey Sitters)

In 2005, the three issues of the *Wader Study Group Bulletin* comprised 47 papers and short communications including a special 56-page section on Avocets breeding in Europe as well as regular features such as *Notes & News*, *Recent Publications*, *Wader Thesis Abstracts* and *Conference Reports*. The 2005 *Bulletins* covered an aggregate of 252 pages which is almost exactly the average for the past five years.

Producing the *Bulletin* is very much a team effort and I would like to express the Group's thanks to everyone involved in 2005: Marja Wren-Sargent for typesetting, Silke Nebel for compiling *Notes & News*, Henk Koffijberg for *Recent Publications* and Rob Robinson for *Wader Thesis Abstracts*.

I have now completed five years as Editor and it is instructive to look at the contents of the 15 issues (1,356 pages) that have appeared over that time. Altogether we have published 214 manuscripts (172 papers and 42 short communications) from lead authors representing no less than 37 countries. Truly, we are the “International” Wader Study Group!



IWSG Chairman, Hermann Hötter, and Conference Coordinator, Petra de Goeij, manning the IWSG table at the International Ornithological Congress in Germany, August 2006. (Photo by Michael Exo.)