

International Wader Study Group Annual Report for 2008

At its meeting in May 2009, the IWSG's Executive Committee decided that in future only the Chair's report and a brief summary of the other officers' reports will be published in the *Wader Study Group Bulletin* and that the full annual report and accounts will be published on the Group's website (www.waderstudygroup.org).

The major change in 2008 for the IWSG was the resignation of five long term Exco members, Hermann Hötter, Theunis Piersma, Nick Davidson, Bob Loos and Rodney West. All five have dedicated many years to the IWSG and have made it into an organization of international importance for shorebird research and conservation. They and Petra de Goeij (who resigned in 2007) established the success of the IWSG conferences, which are now extremely well attended happenings, where amateurs and professionals from all over the world feed from each other experiences. For many members they were the "faces" the IWSG. We will dearly miss them and hope they will attend meetings for many more years. Since 2007, Exco has many new faces: Tómas Grétar Gunnarsson (Vice-Chair), David Turner (Treasurer), Mark Collier (Colour-mark Officer), Jutta Leyrer (Conference Coordinator), Simon Gillings (Projects Coordinator and Webmaster), Pedro Lourenço (Publicity Officer), Hans Schekkerman (IWS Series Coordinator), Nils Warnock, Jannik Hansen, and me. For those members who fear the unfamiliar (and to the delight of the inexperienced new members), the Exco still mainly consists of long-term members (for a full list of all Exco members see the IWSG website or the inside front cover of the *Bulletin*). Together we form a hard-working and enthusiastic team; thus far we were able to accomplish the following:

- The 2008 IWSG annual conference, organised by the Waterbird Research Group KULING and the Avian Ecophysiology Unit of the Department of Vertebrate Ecology and Zoology of the University of Gdańsk was a great success. The workshops on Catching Techniques and Sanderlings were well attended and productive.
- The decline in membership, which has been a major concern in recent years, has been halted. The measures taken, (the introduction of a non-members annual conference fee equivalent to the annual subscription and the availability of online membership renewal) resulted in regaining lapsed members and recruiting new ones.
- The financial position of the group is healthy, but unfortunately membership fees need to be increased to maintain this, as can be seen from the treasurer's report.
- The website was completely renewed by Simon Gillings. This was a major investment that has already proved crucial for improving and updating membership and conference registration, and the handling of the colour-mark scheme.
- The *Wader Study Group Bulletin* has been updated. For members it is now fully available online on the IWSG website; for non-members, back issues are available to the end of 2004.
- In the International Wader Studies series, *The European Non-estuarine Coastal Waterbird Survey* was published, edited by N.H.K. Burton, M.M. Rehfish, D.A. Stroud & C.J. Spray (IWS 18).

Finally, I want to emphasize that the financial stability of the IWSG can be secured by donations to the *IWSG Foundation*. I also want to encourage everyone to publish his or her work in the *Bulletin*. If we maintain the *Bulletin's* quality, we will be able to acquire a listing on the Web of Science which will greatly improve the availability of our work.

Yvonne Verkuil,
Chair International Wader Study Group

The **Treasurer (David Turner)** reported that the 2008 financial year ended with a surplus of £1,996, but this was wholly due to an exchange rate profit, without this there would have been a significant deficit. A major, non-annual expenditure was £7,000 to make the *Wader Study Group Bulletin* and International Wader Studies Series available on the SORA website in electronic form. Membership subscriptions are now insufficient to cover expenditure which is mainly the cost of the *Bulletin*. This is a situation that needs to be remedied.

The **Conference Co-ordinator (Jutta Leyrer)** reported on the successful 2008 conference held in Poland that was attended by 120 members from 21 countries and was organised by the Waterbird Research Group KULING and the Avian Ecophysiology Unit of the Department of Vertebrate Ecology and Zoology of the University of Gdańsk. Preparations for the 2009 conference in the Netherlands are running smoothly, thanks to the active organizing team and to the enormous effort by Simon Gillings and David Turner in setting up online registration and credit card payment. The 2010 conference will take place from 1 to 4 October and will be hosted by José Pedro Granadeiro from the Museu Nacional de História Natural, Lisbon, Portugal, and colleagues.

The **Editor of the *Wader Study Group Bulletin* (Humphrey Sitters)** reported that, to raise its profile and standard, the *Bulletin* was given a facelift, a subtitle and an editorial board. The subtitle, *the international journal of shorebird science*, clarifies its role, especially for our friends in the Western Hemisphere for whom "waders" are "shorebirds". The three issues published in 2008 comprised 37 papers and short communications from 18 countries. The Editor thanked Marja Wren-Sargent for typesetting and layout, Silke Nebel for compiling *Notes & News*, Włodzimierz Meissner for coordinating the well-received *Ageing and Sexing Series* and Rob Robinson for compiling *Wader Thesis Abstracts*.

The **Membership Secretary (Robin Ward)** reported that at the end of 2008 the IWSG's membership stood at 467 and that the steady decline in membership of recent years may have been halted. A significant factor had been the introduction of a non-members annual conference fee equivalent to the subscription. This has led many conference delegates to realise the wisdom of becoming members!

The **Colour-mark Officer (Mark Collier)** reported good progress with the reorganisation of the register particularly plans to set it up on the Group's website with interactive facilities to report resightings. A recurrent problem was the many requests to register a scheme received at too short notice.

The **Project Coordinator (Simon Gillings)** reported on three current projects. The Sanderling Project, covering migration, phenology and population dynamics, emerged from the highly successful workshop at the 2008 IWSG Conference. The 2008 International Golden Plover Survey took place on schedule and is at the data collation stage. Project *Tringa glaeola* 2000 is at the analysis and writing-up stage and so far five peer-reviewed papers have been produced, and there are plans for more papers and a monograph.

The **Publicity Officer (Pedro Lourenço)** reported on the initiatives he had taken to raise the profile of the IWSG among organisations associated with BirdLife International. The Group also had publicity at the recent African Ornithological Conference (thanks to Magdalena Remisiewicz) and at the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Conference (thanks to Humphrey Sitters). The most important new source of publicity was the newly reconstructed website created by Simon Gillings. The effort put into this will pay dividends for years to come.

