

British literature on European waders 1960-65

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At the instigation of the International Wildfowl Research Bureau, lists of literature published on European waders are to be compiled on similar lines and to perform a similar valuable function to those on wildfowl (*antea* pp. 100-108). This is the first British contribution and covers the years 1960-65. The annual reports on ringing and on rare birds that appear in the journal *British Birds* will be found in the wildfowl publications list and are not repeated here.

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The W.A.G.B.I. Report and Year Book. Reports for 1964-65 and for 1965-66

The Wildfowlers' Association of Great Britain and Ireland, 43 The Albany, Old Hall Street, Liverpool, 3. Free to members, price to non-members not stated.

Until recently the W.A.G.B.I. annual report was essentially a document for its members. The inclusion of article of scientific and conservation interest began a few years ago. This new trend has been accelerated in the two latest editions, which should appeal to wider audiences.

The most important achievement of W.A.G.B.I. in the years under review was to secure from the Crown Estate Commissioners authority for Association members to carry guns on Crown foreshores. Such authority became necessary when the Firearms Act, 1965, came into force. That powerful measure has already done much to reduce irresponsible shooting and it is good to know that this has been achieved without seriously curtailing the freedom of law-abiding wildfowlers. In three areas, local associations have gone further and obtained leases of the foreshore. It seems likely that such arrangements will be made elsewhere in the near future, so that clubs will exercise an increasing powerful influence on the sport of wildfowling.

Various other aspects of policy, administration and records of activities take up nearly half of the 1964-65 Report. The remainder is devoted to articles, a few primarily academic, but the majority very relevant to management problems. Contributors include members of the staff of the Nature Conservancy and of the Wildfowl Trust. A paper by Harrison, Harrison and Meikle on 'The establishment of a winter wildfowl population on a local reserve', a detailed analysis of wildfowl usage of the Sevenoaks gravel pit reserve, should be read by anyone contemplating setting up a reserve of that type. The 1965-66 Report includes a register of local reserves, privately-owned or administered by a variety of organisations. Who would have imagined, a dozen

years ago, that W.A.G.B.I. would be urging fowlers to add to this already extensive list?

The progress of the Association duck- and goose-rearing schemes continues to be reported in detail. 11,364 ducks were reared, ringed and released in 1964, and 13,265 in 1965, bringing the total reared since the scheme began in 1954 to nearly 64,000. The establishment of colonies of Greylag Geese, particularly in north-west England seems to be flourishing too. The art of duck-rearing is illuminated by Ernest Blezard's account of Sir Richard Graham's work at Netherby, Cumberland, between 1890 and 1926. Perhaps the most discouraging feature of that programme is that, despite its exceptional success, local stocks of most of the species reared did not persist for very long after artificial rearing has ceased.

In 1965 W.A.G.B.I. established a Conservation Centre at the old Boarstall Decoy, in Oxfordshire, as a base for its rearing programme where intensive and long-continued technical experiments will be possible. A paper by Wardell and Harrison analysing the recoveries of W.A.G.B.I.-reared Mallard in 1965-66, and in earlier years, suggests that the mortality rates of these birds resemble those of wild ducks, an encouraging sign. A paper on the sex-ratio of dabbling ducks shot in Kent carries 'blinding with science' to depths unprecedented in these Reports.

One critical note: much of the wealth of information in the 1965-66 report may well remain undetected, because it lacks either a list of contents or an index. The new covers, taken from photographs by Pamela Harrison, are a welcome change from the rather plain and matter-of-fact presentation of previous years.