

Wash Wader Research Group

Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31st December 2025

Charity Number 1196663

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Charity Trustees

Philip Atkinson	Chair	Elected: 8th April 2023
Kirsty Turner	Hon. Treasurer	Retired: 22th January 2026
Guy Anderson	Vice Chair	Elected: 27th June 2021
David King		Retired: 1st February 2026
Michele Shaw		Elected: 8th April 2023
Molly Brown		Elected: 8th June 2024

Charity Address and registered office
Plough Farm, Thorpe Street, Hinderclay, Diss, Norfolk, IP22 1HT

Registration
Charity number 196663

Bankers
HSBC
Co-operative Bank

Aware of responsibilities
The trustees are aware of their responsibilities to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity. They are also aware of the responsibility for maintaining proper accounting records and safeguarding the assets of the charity. The trustees believe that the Wash Wader Research Group is exempt from audit under Section 145(1) of the Charities Act 2011 and instead has had its accounts examined by an independent examiner.

Report of the Trustees

For the period 1st January 2025 to 31st December 2025

Activities

The Trustees have paid due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in deciding what activities should be undertaken. The Charity's activities increase the understanding of wild bird populations that make use of The Wash estuary particularly in the areas of habitat preferences, food supply and migration patterns. Through training of people from the UK and further afield alongside the manufacture and supply of specialist equipment we promote safe catching and monitoring of wading birds (family: *Charadriidae)* and educate and inform the general public.

Objectives

The Charity's objectives are:

To advance the education of the public in the study and understanding of wild bird populations using The Wash estuary in particular but not exclusively by:

A. Undertaking research in the United Kingdom and overseas, the useful results of which will be disseminated for public benefit, into their ecology, demography, behaviour, other aspects of their biology, and related matters.
B. Supporting, assisting and helping to develop the skills of others doing similar work, both elsewhere in the United Kingdom and overseas.

Status

The organisation is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) that was incorporated and registered as a charity on 19th November 2021 under the number 1196663. The charity is governed following its approved constitution.

Organisation Structure

The Charity is governed by its Board of Trustees. Under the Charity's Constitution the Board of Trustees comprises the Chairman and up to six other Trustees appointed at the AGM. At the time of this report there are six elected Trustees. The number of trustees must not fall below three and one third of the Trustees retire annually by rotation. The Board of Trustees may at any time co-opt a person willing to be appointed as a Trustee to fill a vacancy in their number but a co-opted trustee holds office only until the next AGM when they must be voted in. Decisions are made by virtue of a two-thirds majority of votes cast at a Board meeting. The board met on 4 occasions in 2025. The board is assisted by three working groups for maintenance, equipment and communications and one advisory group for science. The membership of these groups includes individuals from across the general WWRG membership with appropriate expertise and experience. If the CIO is wound up, the members of the CIO have no liability to contribute to its assets and no personal responsibility for settling its debts and liabilities. The total number of such guarantees on 31st December 2025 was 153 memberships.

Review of activities and developments from 1st January 2025 to 31st December 2025

During the year, WWRG continued with its core activities, monitoring and catching waders on The Wash and providing outreach and education alongside increasing scientific knowledge of these species, their behaviours and their habitats. Its core funding from membership was supported by its trading of specialist catching equipment and scientific data requests.

Fieldwork

Over the year, the fieldwork teams spent 34 days in the field, 101 people took part and 668 volunteer days were spent in the field. A total of 14 cannon net catches were made and 14 mist-netting sessions were carried out. A total of 2,524 birds were caught (2,059 new and 465 controls or retraps).

The group continues to dedicate fieldwork time to identifying previously colour-marked waders around the Wash. We recorded over 1600 sightings of birds marked in six separate projects run by the group and over 400 sightings of birds marked by other wader research groups. We manage an online data entry portal ("Shiny") which provides instant feedback to observers (both the general public and group members) regarding the ringing location and subsequent encounters of marked birds. The group has been able to contribute frequent observations of "headstarted" Curlew released as part of the East of England Curlew recovery project, recording 129 observations in 2025. These birds are regularly encountered alongside Curlew colour-marked by WWRG, of which 745 encounters of 213 individuals were made. We now have accrued large datasets allowing unique survival analysis for five species using the Wash: Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Knot, Redshank and Turnstone using colour marked birds. Additionally, flyway-level survival analysis is possible using WWRG sightings of Black-tailed Godwit and Knot not marked by the group from 2025. The number of wader species we are able to undertake survival analysis upon is unique in the United Kingdom.

In 2025 we deployed three new Bar-tailed Godwit tags which have worked well showing movements around the Wash intertidal areas and moving in early 2026, migration movements to continental Europe. 20 Curlew tags from previous years continued to report showing spring migration to Sweden, Finland and Russian breeding grounds as well as return migration movements back to Wash. In addition, our expertise was used to help tag Turnstone in the USA for migration studies on their Atlantic flyway. These again provided valuable data on their movements to the Arctic to breed and their return journeys back to winter quarters.

Science and outreach

There were 13 blog posts on our website in 2025, and we continued to promote and explain our work on Facebook and Bluesky. An article describing our work was published in the Lincolnshire Bird Report.

In addition to its long-term monitoring, WWRG supported research in two particular areas by making its data available for analysis. Firstly, quantifying the impact of shellfishing on oystercatcher populations. Shellfishing has been shown to have a detrimental effect on Oystercatchers, causing increased incidence of incomplete moult and elevated mortality. WWRG ringing data were used to quantify survival and simulate the outcome of different fishery regimes, informing decisions by Natural England regarding renewal of the Wash Fishery Protection Order. Secondly, we continued to support efforts to improve the

conservation status of Curlew and understand the factors contributing to the success of head-starting chicks as a means to increase productivity.

We supported fieldwork by a PhD student studying the movement and behavioural ecology of Red Knot, and sampling of a range of species for the Darwin Tree of Life project (https://www.darwintreeoflife.org/). Additionally, twelve members volunteered with the Delaware Shorebird Project in 2024.

Publications using WWRG data
Beal, M., Nightingale, J., Belo, J.R., Batey, C., Belting, H., Bocher, P., Burgess, M., Craft, T.B., Crockford, N., Delaporte, P., Donaldson, L., Gélinaud, G., Gill, J.A., Gunnarsson, T.G.,Þórisson, B., Gutiérrez, J.S., Hooijmeijer, J.C.E.W., Howison, R.A., Hunke, P., Jomat, L., Lemke, H., Ludwig, J. Majoor, F.A., Marlow, C., Masero, J.A., Melter, J., Nicholson, I. Parejo, M., O'Mahony, B., Pasanen, E., Pessa, J., Piersma, T., Rocha, A.D., Robin, F., Roodbergen, M., Rousseau, P., Salewski, V., Schmidt, L., Smart, J., Staneva, A., Tibbitts, T.L., Timonen, S., Alves, J.A. & Dias, M.P. (2025). Site-level connectivity identified from multiple sources of movement data to inform conservation of a migratory bird. *Journal of Applied Ecology* **62**, 303–316. https://doi.org/10.1111/1365-2664.14839

Maintenance of our field base and field kit
Apart from the regular catching trips, volunteers undertook two maintenance weekends and regular visits to maintain the house and keep the grounds in good order. A major development was the installation of a bank of solar panels on the annex roof funded by donations in memory of Mark Smart. The panels are out performing their predicted electricity generation so they are likely to make the Old School House more sustainable for years to come. We have had ongoing problems with storms flooding the floor of the equipment store for a number of years, so we used the paving slabs lifted from the old patio in front of the house to raise the height of the floor by about 50mm. This together with putting in a drain to take water away seems to have solved the problem. The equipment store was rearranged to reflect the changing usage of our equipment. The remaining concrete was lifted from the patio and a lorry load of rubble taken away leaving a much increased parking area. The kitchen was also painted and new plates obtained. We also increased the shelving in the utility room and produced new storage for the mist nets. The main fieldwork equipment development was the purchase of wader mist netting and sourcing extra strong shelf string for them. Much of the threading of the 30 nets made up by the group was done by Michelle Shaw. In all, she threaded 2 miles of netting over the winter. With the need to wash bird bags between use to minimise the risk of Avian Influenza transmission, group members made a large number of new bags for the group. Our thanks to all those, particularly the house and maintenance committees for ensuring the upkeep of our fieldwork base and equipment.

Current and historical data
All our current data are now submitted to the BTO via the bulk uploading system using a bespoke R script, written by group members, to format and check the data. This makes submitting the data much easier and we now input, check and load the vast majority of current data within ~14 days of collection. We have loaded all historical processing data back to the early 1980s, which we now need to check for completeness. We will continue loading both these data and our resighting data in 2026.

Communications
The electronic newsletter and virtual discussion groups continue to be appreciated and used with many members able to discuss additional thoughts on WWRG and waders throughout the year even when unable to attend trips. Eight membership newsletters were circulated in 2025. These included interesting bird ringing recoveries from birds ringed or seen during

fieldwork, papers and blogs relevant to wader conservation, committee updates and fieldwork trip reports. Other communications include a WhatsApp group (open to anyone who has attended a trip) for more informal chat, providing advice, support and friendship.

Community Engagement

The online activities of the group through the regular blogs, Facebook and Twitter posts have had high levels of interaction and promoted engaging discussions with local stakeholders about waders' use of their land and habitats. Whilst conducting fieldwork in more public locations for catching and resighting birds, group members were able to interact with the passing general public - explaining our research and how catching and then subsequently monitoring birds (through GPS tagging, colour-marking and resighting/recatching) has increased our knowledge of waders' behaviour, ecology, habitat preferences, annual survival rates and lifespans. The Wash report (biennial) is also produced and distributed to all landowners and stakeholders as well as interested bodies (such as the BTO) and our members - the report for 2022-2023 was published during this period.

Trustees and Officers

At the June 2025 AGM, Phil Atkinson (Chair), Guy Anderson (Vice-Chair), Kirsty Turner (Treasurer), Molly Brown, David King, Michele Shaw were (re-)elected as trustees.

Reserves and Investment Policy

The Trustees have reviewed the needs for reserves in line with the guidance issued by the Charities Commission.

As most income is generated from fieldwork charges, selling equipment and selling specialist expert services and varies widely, and regular membership income is insufficient to meet regular ongoing costs, Trustees will endeavour to set aside sufficient unrestricted funds to enable the Charity to meet its basic commitments, for two years. These funds will be kept in an interest bearing account.

These basic commitments include the cost of servicing the Old School House, insurance and health and safety considerations.

The Trustees believe that reserves need to be at this level to ensure that the Charity can continue to function should there be a shortfall in grant revenue. At 2025 prices, the amount to be kept in reserve is £18,150.

The required financial reserve will be reviewed annually, and noted in the minutes of the Board of Trustees at the time of submission of the annual accounts.

Risks

The Board of Trustees regularly reviews the risks to which the charity might be exposed and can confirm that systems have been established to mitigate those risks. The financial situation and risks are reviewed at Trustee meetings.

Funds

In 2025 the Charity received no restricted donations or grants.

Financial Summary

This Financial Summary covers the period from 1 January 2025 to 31st December 2025.

Total charity cash funds at 31st December 2025 = £60,758 (plus £411 on in US dollars on a Travelex card and cash).

The WWRG financial reserves policy sets out that two years reserves (at present£18,150) are to be ringfenced. This is to cover servicing the main asset of the group, the Old School House, for a 2-year period. This money is held in an account with HSBC separate from the'day-to-day' WWRG account with the Co-operative Bank.

WWRG have restricted funds in the form of a bursary in memory of Mark Smart which stands at £9,224.59.

The principal sources of funding for the WWRG are memberships and donations, income from fieldwork, trading specialist equipment and providing scientific services. Income in this reporting period totalled £64,055.42**.**

The main expenditure of the group are the costs associated with running fieldwork, maintaining the Old School House field base, and the purchase of ringing equipment for the group's activities. Total expenditure for this financial period was £54,437.55.

At 31st December the group had one debtor of £6,010 (trading). This was settled in January 2026 and for foreign trading an upfront payment is now requested.

The Group's assets have not changed significantly during this accounting period.

WWRG Receipts and Payments summary 1/1/25 - 31/12/25

	RECEIPTS		**2025**	2024				**PAYMENTS**		**2025**	2024	
	Membership (annual and temporary)		**2,925.95**	3,056.00				OSH maintenance and consumables		**11,236.49**	**7,556.92**	
	Donations		**1,290.95**	23,821.80				Services for OSH (2025 inc council tax rebate)		**-963.01**	**3,832.86**	
	Donations to MAS legacy		**0.00**	8,067.94								
	Donations for bursary fund		**0.00**	0.00				Bursary use: flight to Delaware		**0.00**	**704.44**	
	Grant funding for radios		**0.00**	1,183.92				Radios		**0.00**	**1,183.92**	
	Gift Aid for previous year		**4,481.34**	4,142.47				Insurance		**2,773.34**	**2,622.10**	
	Fieldwork Charges UK		**9,042.00**	7,924.93				Costs of running Fieldwork		**6,706.09**	**5,413.07**	
	Use of field base		**362.50**	75.00				Fieldwork Equipment		**5,962.30**	**7,378.17**	
	Scientific services		**34,162.63**	31,688.98				Costs of servicing scientific contracts		**19,775.84**	**18,649.90**	
	Trading		**11,033.09**	9,655.85				Servicing Trading		**7,412.19**	**1,921.51**	
	Bank interest		**756.96**	391.93				Prepayment for 2025 fieldwork costs		**0**	**10,556.26**	
	Misc		0.00	0.00				Report Compilation & distribution		**37.31**	0.00	
								Bank Charges		**40.00**	**60.00**	
								Misc (2025 professional services)		**1,457.00**	**141.35**	
	TOTAL RECEIPTS	**£**	64,055.42	**90,008.82**				**TOTAL PAYMENTS**	**£**	**54,437.55**	**60,020.50**	
	NET RECEIPT/(PAYMENT)	**£**	9,617.87	**29,988.32**								
	CASH AT 1/1	**£**	**51,140.13**	**21,151.81**								
	CASH AT 31/12	**£**	**60,758.00**	**51,140.13**								

Wash Wader Research Group
Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 31st December 2025

	As at 31/12/25		As at 31/12/24£	
	£			
FIXED ASSETS (NOTE 2)				
Old School House	425,000.00		425,000.00	
House contents	31,585.50		31,585.50	
Fieldwork Equipment and trailers	38,138.00		38,138.00	
	494,723.50		494,723.50	
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS	**494,723.50**		**494,723.50**	
CURRENT ASSETS (NOTE 3)				
Cash at bank and in hand:				
Co-operative bank	6,232.82		20,368.06	
HSBC	54,525.18		30,772.07	
	60,758.00		51,140.13	
Other monetary assets	411.00		165.00	
Total monetary assets	61,169.00		51,305.13	
Debtors (NOTE 4)	6,010.00		0	
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		**67,179.00**		**51,305.13**
TOTAL ASSETS		**561,902.50**		**546,028.63**
Creditors		**0**		**0**
TOTAL NET ASSETS		**561,902.50**		**546,028.63**
CHARITY FUNDS (NOTE 6)				
Unrestricted		552,677.91		536,804.04
Restricted		9,224.59		9,224.59
TOTAL CHARITY FUNDS		**561,902.50**		**546,028.63**

Notes to the accounts:

1 - These accounts for the WWRG Charity cover the period 1st January 2025 to 31st December 2025.

2 - When considering assets, the values for contents, trailers and fieldwork equipment are those used for insurance purposes. Fieldwork equipment will be maintained, and replacement equipment will be purchased when necessary. A physical stock-take of fieldwork equipment is made annually but no values are assigned to individual items.

Property is valued as per surveyors valuation in 2022.

Assets are not depreciated but are valued at acquisition/replacement cost and not considered to be disposable. At present the cost of replacement is not appreciated by inflation.

3 – No costs were incurred in 2025 for the DE2026 contract, in 2024 this had amounted to£10,556.

4 – Outstanding invoice of £6,010 for trading with the French Department of Biodiversity. Note– this was received in January 2026.

5 - No members have requested the charity to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year. The

trustees acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to charities

6 - Restricted Funds

	At 1 January 2025	**Income**	**Expenses**	**At 31 December 2025**
Bursary Fund	9,225	0	(0)	9,225
Total	**9,225**	**0**	**(0)**	**9,225**

Approved and agreed by WWRG Board of Trustees

Philip W. Atkinson

Chair of Trustees

Date: 16 June 2026



Report of the Independent Examiner

Examination of WWRG accounts for period 1 Jan 2025 to 31 Dec 2025

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent Examiner's Statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

1 accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; or

2 the accounts do not accord with those accounting records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Giles Kerkham FCA DChA
Date: 16 June 2026

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