other) environments. Both of these studies have a roost in the area, but at the Bronkhorstspruit study there was a sudden disappearance of all the birds at the roost. The B.S.K. roosts appear to serve at least as communication centres.

Apart from this ecological research, there has also been an increase in the number of birds ringed per annum (200 - 300 per year now); and a considerable amount of data available from the bird in the hand has been analysed by J. Mendelsohn and others - this is to be published soon. The current return on the ringing effort is ± 3%. Many road counts were also done on all raptors. These have proved of little value in assessing population densities, but have proved of real value in assessing distribution of raptors in the Transvaal in the recent Transvaal Bird Atlas Project.

At the most recent meeting of the group, there was a fairly clear ideological split between "ecologists" and "ringers". The ecologists feel the ringing effort is a high-cost-low-return activity, and that the ringers should give up the impossible task of monitoring B.S.K. movements and confine their activities to limited area marking studies. The ringers, on the other hand, point out that only by continual ringing of the B.S.K. has it been shown that the species is capable of considerable movement (500 - 1 000 km), and that only by keeping this up, will any movement pattern finally emerge.

In an attempt to unite these two fields of activity, it was suggested that the Springbok Flats be divided into grids, and that ringers do roost censuses, and colour mark birds on a regional basis. There were various practical motivational problems, and after the recent Ringing Conference, Alan Kemp suggested that the B.S.K. group as such be dissolved, and that the Transvaal Raptor Group define a new project on all raptors. This project will at once replace and partially include the B.S.K. project. This reorganisation would then fairly accurately reflect the situation that most of the really productive B.S.K. work being done in the Transvaal (now that the bird-in-the-hand data has been analysed) is that being done by Tarboton and Kemp. The new general raptor project proposed will involve analysis of a detailed set of specialised measurements to be taken by trappers, and the detailed photography of each individual - this proposal is to be discussed by the T.R.G. soon.

WESTERN CAPE WADER STUDY GROUP

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The W.C.W.S.G. was founded in 1971 to co-ordinate the activities of people interested in studying waders in the Western Cape. The main objectives have changed little since they were first proposed by Geoff Wilson (Safring 1972). These were:

1. To determine the origins and migration routes of our palaearctic waders, including local movements,
2. To determine the structure of populations each year in terms of age and sex,
3. To monitor population levels,
4. To describe the seasonal changes in mass,
5. To describe the sequence of moult.

These objectives are achieved by trapping waders and also from censuses. The group began with 6 members but has grown little as people have come and gone. At present there are 11 members, although occasionally various helpers come along.

The commonest species in our area, the Curlew Sandpiper, is also relatively easy to trap. Therefore, most interest was initially directed towards this species. Several recoveries have been obtained and the moult and weight cycles are now known. A paper on the migration system within Africa is now in preparation and incorporates data obtained in Mauritania, Ethiopia, Kenya and other parts of South Africa. Co-operation with wader ringers in other areas helps to give a more complete picture than would otherwise be obtained by only using data from one locality. International co-operation has also been made in the writing of a paper on the Knot to show that our populations are likely to be of Siberian origin whilst those found in the north west of Europe are Greenlandic. Unpublished data on various species has also been made available to Glutz von Blotzheim who is writing the "Handbuch der Vogel Mittel Europas".

In order to improve our understanding of the migration routes we started a dye-marking scheme in 1976 on Curlew Sandpipers, Knots and Sanderlings. This gave information on local movements but only one long distance sighting - a Curlew Sandpiper from Ethiopia. However, this is our first recovery for East Africa and adds another link to our knowledge of the migration route.

Analysis plays an important part within the group. At present the data obtained on the mass is being tackled to show the seasonal fluctuations for each species. Such data is rarely found in standard bird books and will make useful comparisons with work done on the same species in other areas (e.g. East Africa and Europe).

Wader habitats in the western Cape have diminished in numbers and size ever since the group was formed. Others are still threatened with development. Reliable population figures had only been obtained for the vleis of the Cape Flats and virtually nothing was known for the rest of the area. There was, therefore, a need to know more about the wader populations if they were to be conserved. On the recommendation of Professor Siegfried a wader census of Langebaan Lagoon was undertaken in 1973, and each year the population has been monitored. Steve Pringle and John Cooper were given the task of organising the counts and a paper on the first two years' work has been published. In the summer of 1975/76 these counts were extended to cover all the

coastal wetlands and coastline in the south-western Cape. This gave estimates of the total population for each species, distribution and habitat choice. The most important coastal wetlands have been identified and it is hoped that conservation bodies will follow the recommendations for creating reserves. The work was sponsored by the S.A.C.S. and the project was completed within seven months. It is hoped that similar surveys will be conducted in other parts of the country.

Counts are of interest when combined with data on the age ratios obtained from trapping. On account of this we know that all the first year Curlew Sandpiper overwinter. From our summer counts and age ratios we can forecast the approximate overwintering population. The input of juvenile birds is known to influence the total population considerably. It varies from year to year, presumably reflecting the success of that breeding season in the Arctic (1974 was disastrous). A long-term population study involving the monitoring of each age group will be of interest and is being conducted by the group.

A feature of the group is the co-operation between professionals and amateurs. The guiding qualities of Dr. Elliott, Dr. Summers and John Cooper are readily acknowledged and sought after by the amateur members. They are leading workers on and off the field. I shall go as far as to say, that the success of the group is in no small way due to the co-operation mentioned above.

TABLE 1

NUMBER OF WADERS RINGED

SEASONS:	1970/1	1971/2	1972/3	1973/4	1974/5	1975/6
Curlew Sandpiper	1 421	1 785	2 247	2 962	1 475	1 334
Knot	10	173	290	939	323	340
Sanderling	56	132	115	189	281	552
Terek Sandpiper	8	17	14	14	22	27
Turnstone	2	2	2	2	2	67
Grey Plover	2	5	10	-	2	6
Greater Sandplover	-	-	-	-	-	-
Whimbrel	3	3	-	-	-	1
Bartailed Godwit	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ringed Plover	8	5	5	1	1	5
Marsh Sandpiper	1	15	20	20	-	-
Wood Sandpiper	-	7	5	1	-	-
Common Sandpiper	7	2	-	-	-	2
Greenshank	10	18	8	3	-	-
Ruff	5	70	31	45	-	-
Little Stint	168	193	282	133	-	-

TABLE 2

SUMMARY OF AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENTS OF SOUTH AFRICAN PALAEARCTIC WADERS

Recovered	Knot	Curlew	Sanderling	Lt. Stint	Terek	Ringed Pl.	Common S.P.	Ruff, Grey Pl, & B.T. Godwit
U.S.S.R.		12	2	5	1	1	2	1 each
IRAN		2	1					
IRAQ			1					
SWEDEN	2							
E.GERMANY	1							
W.GERMANY	1							
ENGLAND	1		1					
BELGIUM	1							
DENMARK	1							
FRANCE						1		
MALTA			1					
TUNISIA		1	1					
ETHIOPIA		1			1			
MAURITANIA	1							
ZAIRE		1						
ANGOLA		1						

RAND WADER GROUP

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The Rand Wader Group, unlike other study groups, does not exist. It started with two people and after six years again consits of two people. Altogether 14 people participated in the activities, but dropped out after a very short time. The most likely reason for the high dropout rate is the conditions under which wader ringing is carried out: through the night, walking through mud - sometimes waist deep, and occasionally doing this on very cold and/or rainy nights. It is furthermore very likely that people only joined wader ringing to obtain A-permits, as many dropped out after qualifying as A-ringers.

Only five species of palaearctic waders are being captured regularly and only the Ruff is being captured in sufficient numbers to warrant serious work, this might also act as a deterrent for prospective members.

Communication between members was done verbally or by phone, no newsletter or similar paper was ever sent out.