

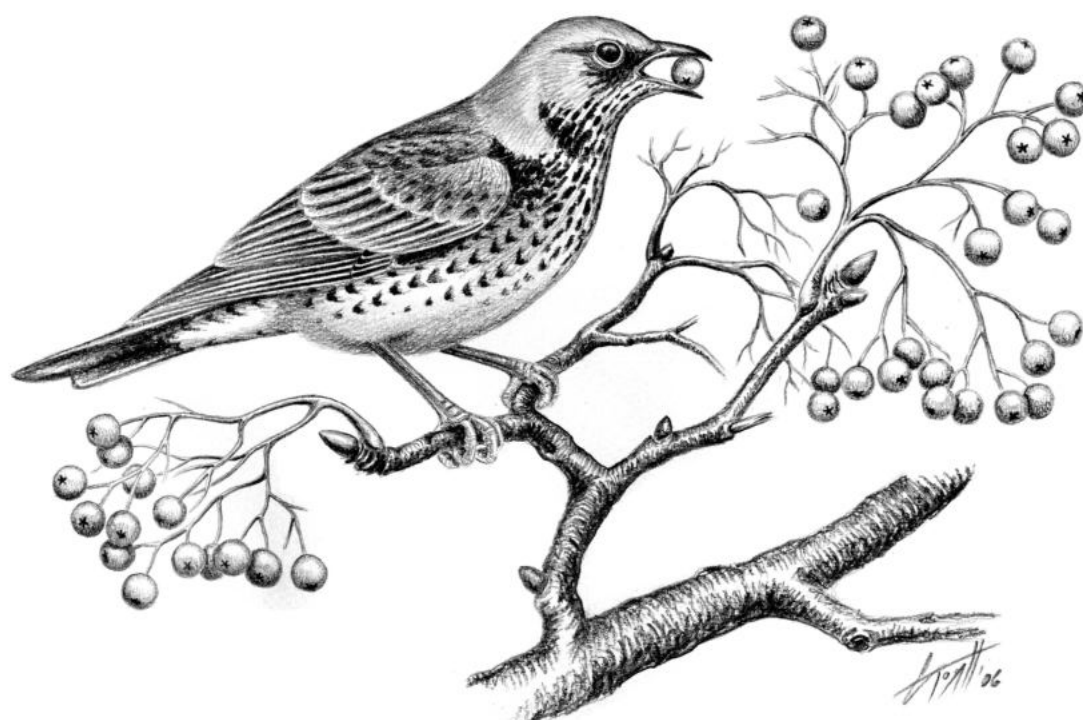
# Bird Census News

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*Newsletter of the European Bird Census Council*

[www.ebcc.info](http://www.ebcc.info)



**2006**  
**Volume 19 n°1**

## **Bird Census News** **2006, volume 19 n°1**

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Bird Census News is the Newsletter of the European Bird Census Council or EBCC. The EBCC exists to promote the organisation and development of atlas, census work and population studies in all European countries; it promotes communication and arranges contacts between organisations and individuals interested in census and atlas work, primarily (but not exclusively) in Europe.

Bird Census News reports developments in census and atlas work in Europe, from the local to the continental scale, and provides a forum for discussion on methodological issues.

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**Bird Census News**  
**Volume 19 n°1, June 2006**

**Preface**

As promised, here you have the extra voluminous first BCN issue of 2006, full of interesting articles from all over Europe (and beyond?): using new methods for atlas work in Bulgaria, the breeding bird monitoring scheme in Portugal, the famous Kuşbank project in Turkey and a new farmland bird monitoring scheme in Russia. Further you find a short report on the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring workshop last autumn in Prague and the “as usual” Books & Journals. For those interested to subscribe to our next Bird Numbers Conference in March 2007 in Italy, don't forget to have a look at [www.ebcc.info](http://www.ebcc.info). I would also like to thank Stoyan Nikolov who kindly provided some very nice illustrations for this issue!

Enjoy BCN,

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**Please note:**

- the new email address: [anny.anselin@inbo.be](mailto:anny.anselin@inbo.be)
  - the new EBCC Bank account number (see inside of cover)
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# **The use of new techniques for Breeding Bird Atlas data presentation: combination of qualitative and quantitative information in three-dimensional space**

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## **Introduction**

Mapping of geographic distributions of birds dates back the beginning of the past century and has become fundamental part of a broad spectrum of ornithological works (Davis 1997). Atlas and census works provide information that is valuable for answering a variety of questions in ornithology and ecology and that is essential for bird conservation (Hagermeijer & Blair 1997). Grid-based atlases are more recent invention and the pioneering work in this field starts with a botanical survey in the 1950<sup>s</sup> (Perring & Walters 1962). The first ornithological work based on this mapping method is the Atlas of breeding birds in Britain and Ireland (Sharrock 1976). After establishment of European Ornithological Atlas Committee (EOAC) in 1971 and North American Ornithological Atlas Committee (NORAC) in 1980 an amount of atlas work has started in different countries at a variety of scales. One of the problems of breeding bird atlas works is the abundance data gathering and presentation (Davis 1997). At first the most serious problem seemed to be the lack of information on species quantitative distribution. Consequently many atlases present maps on breeding bird species composition and status only (e.g. Dybbro 1976, Yeatman 1976, Schifferli *et al.* 1980, Milchev 1994). The next group of atlas works are based on more careful studies and shows both bird distribution and abundance (e.g. Rheinwald 1985). Despite of this the problem for abundance data presentation is still available. One of the difficulties is related to the range of each abundance scale category. Very often this range is very large because of the limited number of categories. As a result a block with one breeding pair cannot be distinguished from a block with 1000 pairs as in the work of Langhlin & Kibbe (1985). Even after some modification of these categories, for example scale of 1 pair only, 2 – 10, 11 – 100, 101 – 1000 etc. (Roberson & Tenney 1993), the visual information could be misleading regarding some groups of birds as raptors (the difference between 20 and 80 breeding pairs is significant). The second difficulty is related to

the supplement space needed for presentation of two maps (one showing breeding evidence and second showing abundance) for each species (e.g. Cadman *et al.* 1987, Peterson 1995, Palmer-Ball 1996) that reflects directly on the publishing volume and budget of the atlas. The most recent atlas works found solution in combining qualitative and quantitative data in one map only (e.g. Hagemeyer & Blair 1997). Nevertheless the last and may be the most essential difficulty remains. It is related with the main aim of grid-based atlases: comparison of bird quantitative distribution over years. Actually the second generation snapshot atlases (Gibbons *et al.* 1993, Yeatman – Berthelot & Jarry 1994, CORA 2003) are able to provide such information and make reliable inferences but on a large scale mainly. For example if the number of Chaffinches in a given 10x10 km square was decreased from 750 to 150 breeding pairs, this threefold difference rests invisible on the map falling into the same abundance category (101 – 1000 bp).

The aim of this paper is to find solution of the problem about combining qualitative and quantitative data presentation discussed above. We provide a new alternative technique for Breeding Bird Atlas data presentation and we hope it will be helpful and applicable in the future atlas works.

## **Methods**

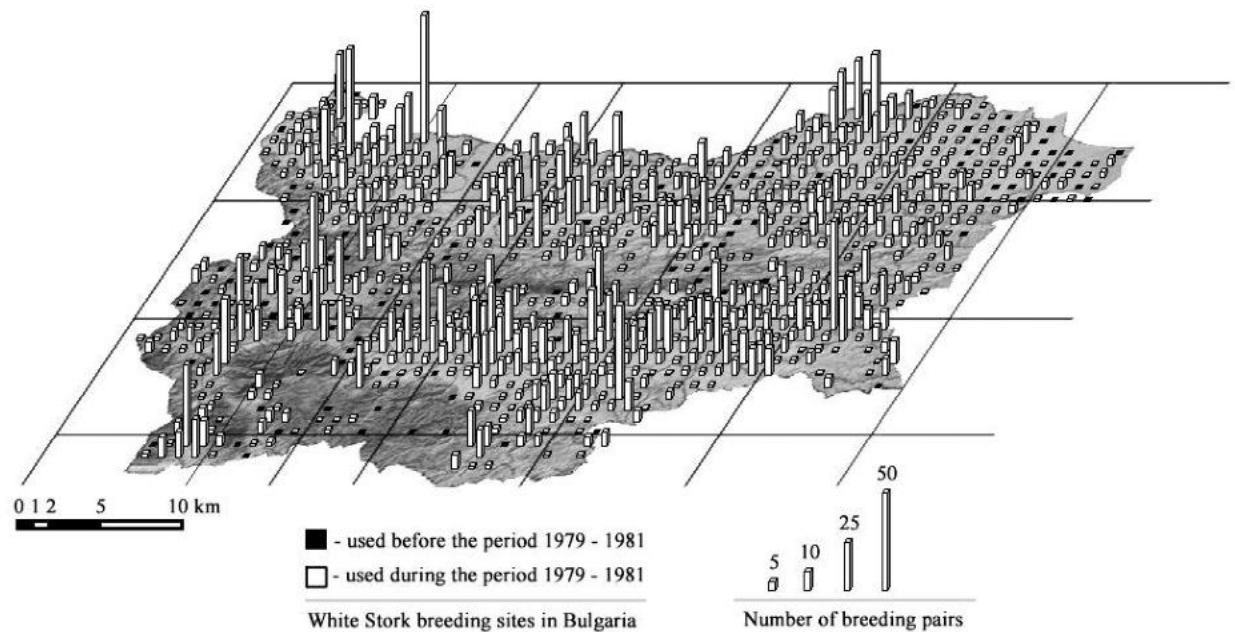
For illustration of our idea we used atlas works on both national and regional scale. The first one represents the breeding status and abundance of White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* in Bulgaria up to 1981 using grid of 10x10 km (Michev & Stoyanova 1986 with some extra data). The second one shows the breeding status and abundance of Skylark *Alauda arvensis* in the Ponor Mountains (Western Bulgaria) for the period 2000 – 2002 using grid of 2 x 2 km (Nikolov & Vassilev 2003, 2004).

The new maps we created were in three-dimensional space. UTM grid lies above a background that represents an informative map of study area. In this way direct inferences on habitat use of birds could be made. The breeding evidence being qualitative information was shown by qualitative symbols – different colors. Respectively the breeding bird numbers were illustrated using quantitative symbols - columns with different sizes. Therefore the number of breeding pairs observed per square could be shown as absolute value that enables the comparison of bird numbers in different grid-units or in the same square over time.



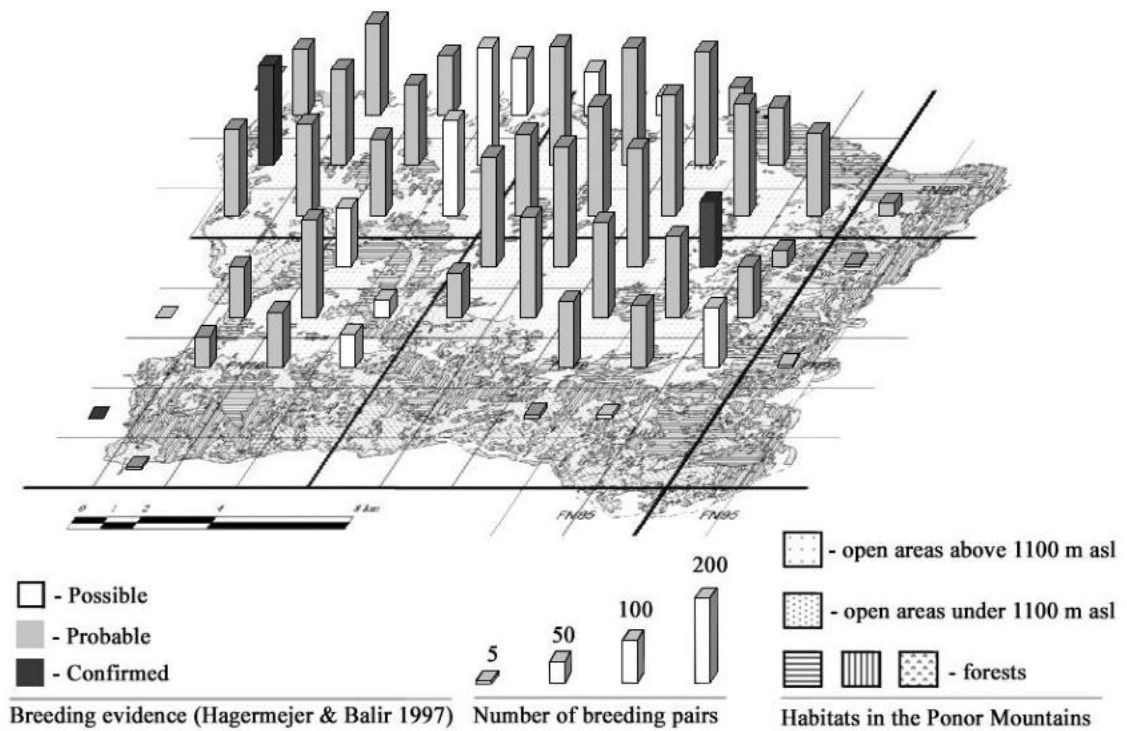
## **Results and Discussion**

Map of altitudinal gradient was applied as a background in the three-dimensional atlas of White Stork breeding distribution in Bulgaria a (Fig. 1). As a result it becomes obvious that the species inhabits mainly areas at low elevation and that it is rare in mountainous regions. In the paper of Michev & Stoyanova (1986) the foregoing statement concerning White Stork altitudinal distribution could not be seen directly on the map. The areas with higher concentration of the species are easily distinguished: the region between Vidin and Lom towns, the region between Tutrakan and Silistra towns, the region of Burgas wetlands, the region between Plovdiv and Pazardjik towns, the region of Sofia city and the region of Sandanski town. The strong reduction of species in NE Bulgaria is also well visible.



*Fig.1: Three-dimensional presentation of White Stork breeding distribution and abundance in Bulgaria up to 1981 according to data of Michev & Stoyanova (1986).*

The relative density of Skylark in the Ponor Mountains (western Bulgaria) was found to be 5.2 breeding pairs/sq. km. in the open areas under 1100 m a.s.l. and 71.2 bp./sq. km in the open areas above 1100 m a.s.l. The quantitative distribution of species was created on the basis of these densities and land cover in each grid-square. Map of habitats in the Ponor Mountains was used as a background for the three-dimensional atlas of Skylark breeding distribution (Fig. 2).



*Fig.2: Three-dimensional presentation of Skylark breeding distribution and abundance in Ponor Mountains (Bulgaria) in 2000 – 2002 according to data of Nikolov & Vassilev (2003, 2004).*





As a result it is directly visible from the map that the species is much more frequent and numerous in the open areas above 1100 m a.s.l. than in those under this elevation.

By use of the new technique submitted bivariate data concerning some species could be shown in only one map being enough informative and in the same time simplified and easily comprehensible for users. This technique is applicable in atlas works on both regional and national levels. However we do not recommend its use on larger level (e.g. continental). This will disable distinguishment of the populations belonging to different countries especially those inhabiting near borders. What is more in atlas works that have more than 40 – 50 squares in south – north direction some overlapping of columns occurs that makes data inarticulate and therefore confusing.

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# Common Bird Monitoring is up and running in Portugal

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## Introduction & methods

Portugal is one of the key European countries for the maintenance of avian biodiversity. For example two of Europe's rarest and most threatened birds - Azores bullfinch *Pyrrhula murina* (critical) and Zino's petrel *Pterodroma madeira* (endangered) are endemic (BirdLife International 2004). In addition to these flagship species, Portugal is one of the most important countries in western Europe for many of the widespread species of extensive habitats that have declined so drastically in recent decades. The relatively recent onset and slow rate of agricultural change in Portugal means that species dependent on large arthropods such as lesser kestrels *Falco naumanni*, shrikes *Lanius spp.*, bee-eaters *Merops apiaster*, and rollers *Coracias garrulus*, as well as granivores such as little bustards *Tetrax tetrax*, corn bunting *Miliaria calandra* and tree sparrow *Passer montanus* are still present in good numbers. However, agricultural abandonment and intensification are now causing rapid change, bringing with it the threat of losing these valued populations (Rufino & Neves 2000). With this background, it is timely that Portugal has just become one of the newest members of the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring club.

The Portuguese 'Censo de Aves Comuns' (CAC - Common Bird Census) began in 2004. It is managed by the 'Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves' (SPEA - BirdLife in Portugal). The scheme is modelled largely on the highly successful Spanish equivalent, managed by the 'Sociedad Española de Ornitología' (SEO - BirdLife in Spain) since 1996. The fieldwork is conducted by volunteers, each of whom is assigned one or more 10km squares from the Portuguese national grid, based on a random selection from those squares that are logistically feasible for the observer. Within the square, the volunteer defines 20-30 count locations. The point locations are determined based on convenience (the route round the square is generally completed by driving), with the stipulations that (1) they should be sufficiently spaced (>1 km) to prevent double-counting of individual birds; (2) the major habitat types of the point locations should be in approximate proportion to the coverage of habitats within the 10km square; (3) for ease of habitat characterisation, point locations should not be placed at boundaries



between habitat types. At each point location, observers record habitat details during a reconnaissance visit in early spring, and then conduct two five-minute point-counts - one in April and one in May, between dawn and 11:00 hours. During each count, birds are assigned to one of two distance bands (cut-off point 25m).

Annual population indices for CAC species will of course form the basis of data analysis, and the source for the composite indices that are produced. A definitive statistical method has yet to be defined, but certain key issues are clear. We must deal with the spatial autocorrelation that results from using many point-counts per 10km square, without losing large amounts of information. We must also handle potential biases caused by uneven coverage of different regions and habitat types within Portugal. At present, we have high coverage in Madeira, and the greater Lisbon -Tejo valley region, but low coverage in Alentejo and the Centre, and no coverage in Azores. Following the principles of the UK and Pan-European schemes, the intention is to produce a Common Bird Index that can be disaggregated into different major habitat types (agricultural and forest), and also by region.

## **Results**

The fifty-five 10km squares visited in 2004 increased to 58 in 2005. In each year, there were over 2,100 point-locations, over 17,000 records and over 42,000 birds detected. Fig. 1 shows that, while greater Lisbon and the Tejo Valley are well covered, the interior generally, and in particular the centre-north, are poorly covered. Among the major habitat types ca.36% of points are in forest, with 33% in agricultural areas, 8% in scrub and 8% in urban areas; pending formal analysis, this appears to be a reasonable reflection of their coverage in the country as a whole.

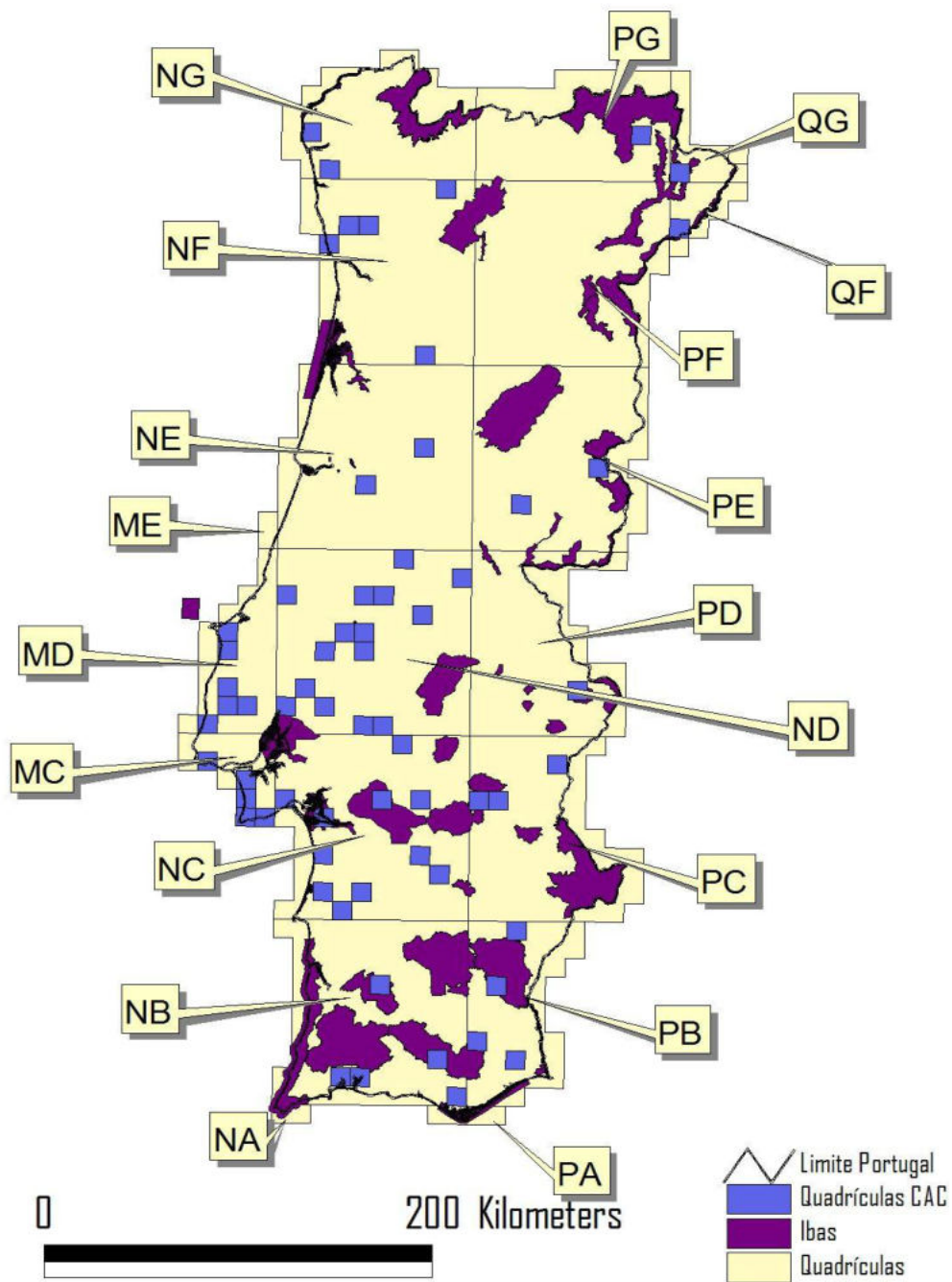


Fig. 1. Distribution of visited CAC squares and Important Bird Areas in Continental Portugal, 2004-5.

A total of 192 species, including vagrants and passage migrants, has been recorded thus far. Unsurprisingly, the most abundant species was the house sparrow *Passer domesticus*, while the Eurasian blackbird *Turdus merula* was the most widespread. Barn swallow *Hirundo rustica*, house martin *Delichon urbicum*, European serin *Serinus serinus*, European greenfinch *Carduelis chloris* and European goldfinch *C. carduelis*, chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*, blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*, common nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* and Sardinian warbler *Sylvia melanocephala* are the other highly abundant species, along with the Iberian endemic spotless starling *Sturnus unicolor*. However, as an indicator of the extent to which Portugal still retains good populations of farmland birds that are declining at a European level, corn bunting is in the top 10 for both abundance and distribution. Other declining species of low-intensity farmland such as wood lark *Lullula arborea* (SPEC 2, BirdLife International 2004b), woodchat shrike *Lanius senator* (SPEC 2), and European Hoopoe *Upupa epops* (SPEC 3) are all counted in reasonably large numbers. Although the scheme is not designed with these species in mind, terrestrial bird species of global concern such as cinereous vulture *Aegypius monachus* (NT), little bustard (NT), lesser kestrel (VU), European roller (NT), Madeira laurel pigeon *Columba trocaz* (NT) are being detected in appreciable numbers.

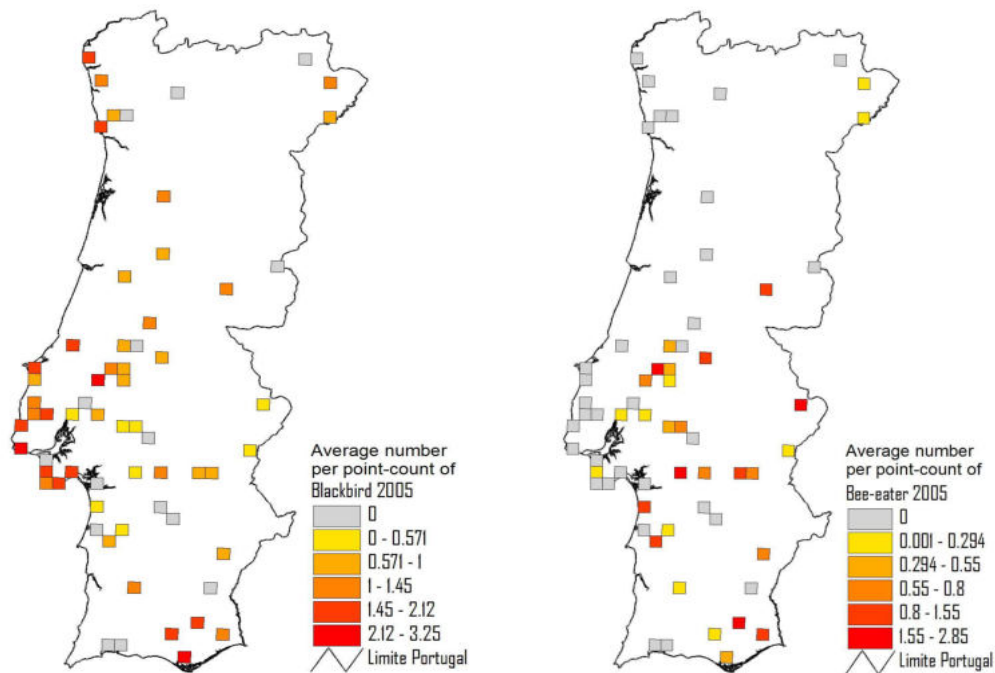


Fig. 2. Contrasting regional abundance patterns in two common Portuguese species demonstrate the twin influences of Mediterranean and Atlantic climates. Blackbird is most abundant in the maritime areas, whereas the bee-eater is most common in the south and east.

Strong geographical patterns in bird abundance emerge strongly from the data, reflecting the dual influences of Mediterranean and Atlantic-type climates (Rufino & Neves 2000). The coast and north-west of Portugal has a bird community dominated by species such as blackcap and blackbird, whereas the interior and south is characterised by Mediterranean species, with, for example, bee-eater among the top-ten in abundance (Fig. 2). It is of course too early to start adducing population trends from CAC data. However, comparison of 2004 and 2005 data showed some large and interesting fluctuations, such as substantial drops in the population of cold-sensitive resident species, such as zitting cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* Sardinian warbler, and winter wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*, following a relatively harsh 2004/5 winter (Fig. 3). Mixed fortunes among the migrants included substantial increases in house martin and bee-eater, but a decrease in hoopoe numbers.

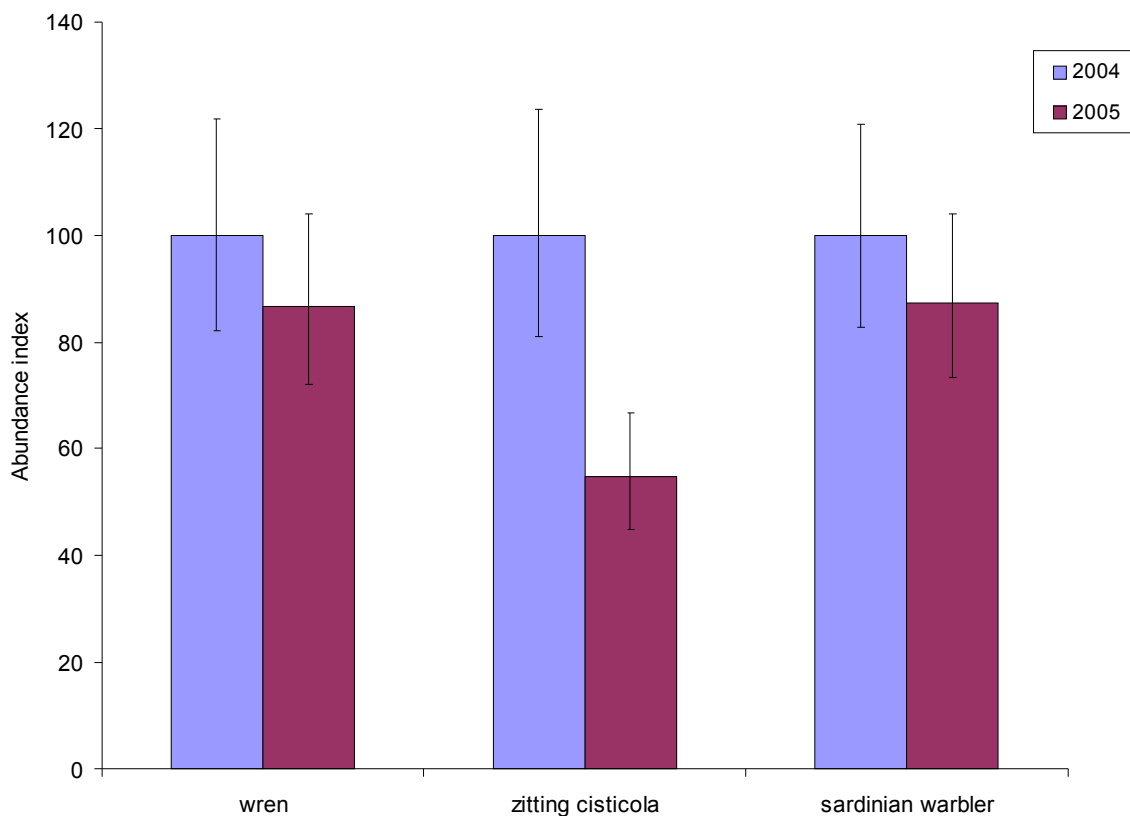


Fig. 3. Decreases in abundance of cold-sensitive resident species between 2004 and 2005.

Data are from provisional analyses using poisson-distributed Generalised Linear Models, declaring point as a random effect, but not correcting for spatial autocorrelation. All inter-annual changes were significant ( $P < 0.05$ ) in this provisional analysis.

## **Discussion and conclusions**

The fundamental reason for CAC's existence is to inform land-use and development policies in the Portuguese (and wider European) countryside, so that they are more biodiversity-friendly and environmentally sustainable. The massive steps taken in recent years towards political recognition of common birds as indicators of the state of the environment means that we are well placed to achieve this goal.

During May 2006, data from CAC were submitted to the European Bird Census Council for the first time. This is a valuable addition to the Pan-European initiative, particularly since Portugal holds very important populations of a number of species on the index, such as Eurasian thick-knee *Burhinus oedicanus*, Sardinian warbler and corn bunting (BirdLife International 2004b). By this means, the data gathered by Portuguese volunteers will contribute to the Pan-European Common Bird Index, which in turn has been selected as an indicator of Structural and Sustainable Development for the EU (Gregory et al. 2005). Very encouragingly, the Portuguese government has also decided to adopt a Portuguese Common Bird Index derived from CAC as a Sustainable Development Indicator, and SPEA is currently working to determine the best way to produce this index. We also plan to link CAC data to the SPEA GIS, in order to assist with IBA and SPA monitoring and, and to use CAC results for farmland species to support advocacy for sustainable agricultural policies.

As with all such fledgling schemes, the challenge now is to ensure that CAC continues to grow sustainably. The sparse rural population of Portugal, with birdwatching growing from a low base, means that it will not be straightforward to ensure the growth and longevity of the CAC programme. With this in mind, a detailed plan for the next two years of CAC has been developed. Key issues are the development of a really effective data-management system, which allows volunteers to enter and query their data, while allowing scientists to rapidly export and analyse the global data-set; setting up a system of rapid, interesting and well-presented feedback to volunteers; and maximising the advocacy opportunities that the data gives. It is to be hoped that, given the Portuguese government's adoption of the scheme, funding to put the scheme on a firm footing will be found.

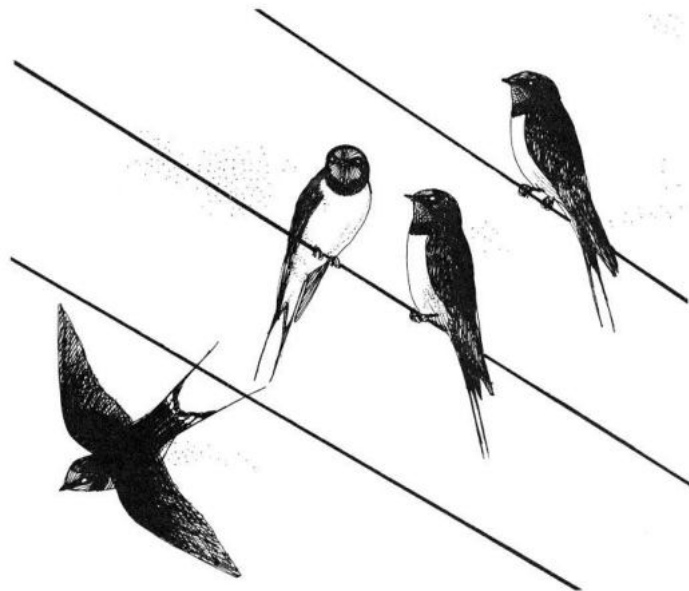
## **Acknowledgements**

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# **Birdwatching with a Purpose in Turkey: KuşBank - An Internet Based Bird Database and Citizen Science Project**

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*"As for the future, your task is not to foresee it,  
but to enable it." - Antoine de Saint-Exupery*

## **Introduction**

Six years ago, in spirit with Saint-Exupery our goal was not to foresee or design the future of birdwatching and conservation in Turkey, but to enable the growth of a conservation-minded birdwatching community. As any community, the birdwatching community acquires specific characteristics based on initial conditions and subsequent historical developments. The birdwatching community in Turkey can therefore be defined as an *institution* "a group of people who come together with specific interests and goals and behave within formal or informal rules and a frame that is socially acceptable" (Ostrom, 1996). Birdwatchers all around the world share an interest towards birds, but how they express that interest is as diverse as finches on the Galapagos.

Let us first define the current institutional structure of the Turkish birdwatching community and then outline how KuşBank – an internet based citizen science project for bird conservation - has contributed to build capacity and strengthen the existing institutional structure towards conservation-minded birdwatching. The Turkish birdwatching community has gone through a rapid growth from only about 20 people in 1990 to about 1000 in 2006. But when we projected this increase in 2000 it was also a cause of anxiety. Because if the community would have not found ways to sustain the enthusiasm and the conservation orientation, the institutional evolution could have lead to a direction that values birdwatching for personal enjoyment and listing (twitching) only. Through the institutional structures built and maintained we ended up with a birdwatching culture

that believes in birding with a purpose and primarily values conservation of birds and their habitat.

## **Institutional analysis**

The institutional analyses show that birdwatchers in Turkey are organized through:

1. an internet based email group called Toygar,
2. an internet site called KuşTR,
3. a regular bulletin edited and distributed to all the birdwatchers by Doğa Derneği,
4. National Birdwatching Conferences and regular community birdwatching.
5. an internet based database called - KuşBank.

### ***Toygar, an internet based email list:***

Toygar is an email group (listserver) that works under the platform of Yahoogroups (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/toygar>). Emails sent to Toygar by its members are distributed to all other members. The birdwatching community is not new to listservers. Between 1995 and 1999, there was a birdwatching listserver on the computer system of Middle East Technical University but the number of its members never exceeded 20-30. Founded in September 1999, Toygar has more than 10 emails per day and has 580 members. By June 2006, 15000 messages were sent to Toygar. While in 2000 one email per day was data and counts from a birdwatching trip today there are on average 5 emails coming via KuşBank, which shows a five fold increase in total reporting. Other mails include photo or sound quizzes, questions and notices about birds, organizing activities, and conservation problems. Toygar over time has taken on the role of the public-eye on submitted bird records to KuşBank. Unusual records are questioned without being offensive, and participants are able to take criticism without being defensive. Those unwritten rules are generally accepted. Toygar has become a respectable, productive and enjoyable environment for information exchange among birdwatchers. Also "Lark" a parallel yahoogroup has been established for English speaking expatriate Birdwatchers in Turkey.

### ***KuşTR – [www.kustr.org](http://www.kustr.org)***

This website mostly operates as a living bulletin. At this website bird watchers can learn what is happening in the birdwatching community, the

latest events. They write articles and share information on birds, on the website.

### ***National Conferences and Community birdwatching events***

Even though the cyberworld of Toygar and KuşTr seems enough to the birdwatchers, it is not sufficient to get to know each other. National Birdwatching Conferences are organized since 1991 of which the 8th was organized in 2005. These conferences enable to have the largest gathering of all birdwatchers in Turkey. The sessions enable birdwatchers to present to others what kind of projects they have been doing in the last year and learn from others. Of course the best way to interact with another birdwatcher is to watch birds with him/her. The conference always includes a trip to a nearby IBA (Important Bird Area) for birdwatching. In addition to conferences "Birdwatching Days" are organized by local birdwatching clubs, who host other clubs for a few days of birdwatching together. During these visits generally 20 to 30 birdwatchers get to know each other, and learn that one of the most important aspects of birdwatching is "sharing". Through the organization of Birdwatching Days and national conferences the hosting birdwatching club makes itself and its purpose known to local organizations and strengthens its social contacts with the outside. The bird data that are recorded during "Birdwatching Days" are sent to KuşBank and to Toygar. The visit and observed environmental problems are reported in an article in "Birders Bulletin". Special reports are sent to local authorities about the environmental problems observed during the visit.

### ***Bulletin***

The first printed bulletin specifically about birds was "The Bulletin of the Bird Conservation Group" which was sent out in October 1988 and only published once by DHKD. The same fate followed for bulletins such as "Binocular" (Beykus), "Lesser Kestrel" (AKGT) and the scientifically orientated "Crane" (TOK). The "Hoopoe" Bulletin by KAD published 4 issues till 1999 and then published 5 issues as a magazine. The "Birders Bulletin" edited and distributed for free by DHKD started in October 1999 and continued as "Birders Post" with a renewed design by Doğa Derneği until now. The graphic design of this bulletin is very attractive and the content is very engaging. There are 3 functions of the bulletin. First, it provides a reality check for the cyber personality of Toygar. It provides a permanent reference in the world of "electron recycelante, scripta remenante" *sensu* "verba evaporante, scripta remenante". Second, it provides an alternative communication medium for people without an internet connection or who choose not to use it. Third, it organizes and condenses the unordered and unstructured flood of information in Toygar into a logical framework every

three months. It also highlights important events that have happened or will happen and the important bird observations from the previous months.

### ***Other Forums***

Emphasizing these forums does not mean that other forums are not contributing to the birdwatching community. There are other forums which help Turkish and even visiting birdwatchers. These forums include up-to-date web pages of clubs and individuals. Some clubs have their own internal email servers with up to 70 members and all communicate effectively via email. There were also 7 "Birdwatching Schools" in the last decade and these have introduced birdwatching to several hundred people.

### ***Summary of Institutions:***

During the last ten years birdwatching in Turkey has passed the point of no return. There are bird clubs in 24 different provinces and others are being founded. The birdwatchers exchange information and build community through three successful forums (Toygar, Bulletin, National Conferences, Community birdwatching events). The institutional structure provided by these forums is what has helped the community to grow. For example community birdwatching events are organized through Toygar and the events and observations are reported there as well. The summary account and collected data is later published in the Birders Bulletin. These 3 forums serve different goals, yet they all support each other. With the help of these forums the observers have produced common values and created tradition, which has helped the institutional structure to develop. For example to be able to accept submitted bird records there are informal rules requiring date, place, weather conditions, observers, etc. All birdwatchers are expected not to disturb birds while watching them. For the community to harm birds while observing them is morally unacceptable (some bird groups have posted codes of ethics on their web sites). However, there was still a need for an establishment of a conservation-minded birdwatching community that gives great emphasis to bird data collection for conservation. The tradition of birding with a purpose had to take roots in the community while it is growing.

### **A new birdwatching philosophy**

As stated so far the current development of the birdwatching community especially with the introduction of KuşBank has led to an emphasis to bird data collection for conservation. By providing new institutional structures

we enabled a community that puts bird conservation in front. In countries with a high percentage of birdwatchers an ethic of birdwatching has been established. The "code of ethics" from all around the world can provide examples, but we ought to recognize that those examples bear the traces and philosophy of their past. They may not be appropriate for the conditions in Turkey, since they have evolved when the threats on birds were less severe. The basis of our ethical rules ought to stand upon a "birdcentric philosophy". The birdcentric philosophy can be practiced when we consider the benefit of birds in every social activity we take part in and in every individual move we make. In practice this philosophy prevents the activities and behaviours that may cause harm to birds and promotes a birdwatching activity for bird conservation. It is different from the existing "code of ethics". The birdcentric philosophy is not only concerned about the welfare of birds, but it necessitates to work directly to conserve birds and their habitat.

The number of birdwatchers in developed countries is high compared to that of birdwatchers in the less-developed countries. Unfortunately little percentages of these birdwatchers behave according to birdcentric philosophy. Birdwatching for a majority of people is a hobby only to have good time and enjoy being out in nature. For some it is a competitive activity in which keeping and comparing lists of birds seen is a prestige. Fortunately birdwatching only for the purpose of listing is not very prominent in Turkey and is considered degrading. Data that are submitted to KuşBank and to Toygar include information about number of birds, reproduction and habitat. Excitement is shared not only for rarities seen but also for common birds like white stork. When inclinations for raptor fetishism appear on the list (Toygar), voices of protests appear, which is already an indication of an institution that fosters birdcentric philosophy.

As we know philosophical movements do not survive unless they have their followers, supporting institutions, structures and activities. One of these institutions to support a birdcentric philosophy for bird conservation is to have a common purpose. In her book "Birding with a Purpose" Fran Hamerstrom expresses the necessity of purpose and meaning for birdwatching on behalf of birds. The meaning of birdwatching for Hamerstrom is to produce scientific data for the conservation of birds (Hamerstrom 1984). For bird conservation Fran and her husband did important research that helped birds including some endangered species. Research for conservation therefore provides an excellent purpose for birdwatchers. They can contribute to something by just doing what they enjoy most, watching birds. So how can birdwatchers who are not scientists contribute to conservation?

## **Citizen Science**

In its widest definition, citizen science is scientific research done by people from every level of society in collaboration with scientists, to end the discrepancy between science, politics, and decision making and planning. To be able to bridge the gap society requires proper scientific approaches with full participation of the public. Citizen science requires balanced and flexible management with democratic values, capable institutions and a powerful civil society. The public watches environmental problems in frustration. Environmental problems worry everyone in every level of society. Once whispers in the wind, the statements of scientists are beginning to be heard and interpreted by different sections of society. The public, which was once looked down upon as "ignorant," wants to be part of the democratic decision-making process. For sustainable development and real democracy, the notion of citizenship must be settled and the participation of the citizens must be assured. In contrast with current scientific approaches that value generalization, the knowledge and experience of citizens are specific to local conditions (Irwin 1995). Therefore to make sustainability a real and down to the earth concept, it is crucial to incorporate the knowledge and experience of the local. Citizens, once taken seriously, are willing to share their knowledge and experiences in the decision making process. They are pleased to collaborate with scientists through citizen science. Professional scientists gain credibility through science that is respected and backed up by the public. Citizens have the opportunity of being involved in scientific studies while doing what they enjoy as a hobby. By participating in studies on the environment citizen scientists will learn more about environmental problems. The more they learn about the scientific issues, the more consistent their decisions will be with science. Once they become proficient in scientific issues their effectiveness in environmental advocacy will increase. In this respect citizen science empowers civil society, it strengthens democracy (Irwin 1995, Irwin & Wynne 1996). Research that involves different parts of society and their local experiences and knowledge result in more harmonious institutions and sustainable development (Lee 1993, Gunderson *et al* 1995). Therefore for the maintenance of a sustainable society and a healthy environment citizen science is central.

As Citizen Science is a collaboration between professional scientists and amateurs, it is usually done on a voluntary basis. It is especially useful for research subjects that require large data sets that need to be collected across large geographic regions. Bird watching has pioneered Citizen Science from the very start. It should be no surprise that the oldest known citizen science project is the "Christmas Bird Count" which has been held in the USA since 1900. We can easily consider birdwatching to be the founding institution of citizen science. Even "Bird Marathons" organized for fund raising for bird conservation, can be accepted as citizen science. Birdathons

can provide information on bird species found in a place at a given time. More organized and systematic studies may provide us with more important data for bird conservation purposes.

Today distinguished research centers such as Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and Patuxent Wildlife center collect scientific data and raise awareness by Christmas Bird Counts, backyard bird counts, and breeding bird surveys. A new initiative by BirdLife, RSPB, Audubon and other partners called "WorldBirds" is expanding to do the same on a global scale. These schemes collect the data from participants with the help of the internet. The participants directly input their records through the internet. The submitted records in online databases can be viewed by participants and visitors to the internet sites. The data is later analyzed and distributed to participants and to the larger society. Participants in citizen science projects learn how science operates and the importance of scientific data and the pleasure of conducting science and contributing towards bird conservation. Participation increases the sensitivity of the participants to conservation issues and it also helps them realize that they have power to change things. Data about birds provided by citizen science is also very useful for bird conservation research (Barker & Rosenberg 1997).

#### *Early Attempts at Citizen Science in Turkey:*

There were early attempts to start a form of citizen science for bird conservation by DHKD in the 1990s. For years different versions of birdwatching data forms were being distributed and collected. The main goal was to harness bird observations collected by foreign birdwatchers, but also from a few Turkish birdwatchers. A set of maps based on a grid system drawn on aviation maps was sent to some birdwatchers and used for data collection. Thereby the geographic locations of the collected data could be referenced. An expert from RSPB established a database appropriate for these data forms. This program is now very old and does not run on existing computer platforms. But even if it could a database of this form is highly vulnerable to being lost or outdated. The data cannot be viewed and used by people who collect it, and it is not suitable for further analysis. No feedback was received for the efforts although there were rumours that it was used to write the "Important Bird Areas" book.

When bird observation data collected by Turkish birdwatchers started to be sent regularly to Toygar and other listservs there was a concern about where these data ended up and whether all the effort was being wasted. Some were archived by individuals in forms that were not very suitable for data analyses, others were being lost. It is still not clear where they are stored or how accessible it is, whether there is redundancy, and whether they are



going to be used for bird conservation. Birdwatchers who value data and who input it into personal databases with great effort might not be able to share that information because of time, technology and the availability of the software and platform. With the rise of the internet we are now in a new era with incredible opportunities for citizen science. The internet enables citizen birdwatchers to actively gather, use, and analyze data for bird conservation directly. Therefore we developed KuşBank – an internet based citizen science project for bird conservation.

## **KuşBank**

KuşBank is a database where bird watchers enter their observation records via Internet. It is a “citizen science” project by which bird watchers, citizen scientists, help conservation of birds through their observations. Kuşbank is a project lead by Doğa Derneği and Erciyes University with the support of the Royal Society For Protection of Birds (RSPB). It all started in two workshops with the bird watchers, who stated the need for such a system. KuşBank then was designed through the suggestions and wishes of the bird watching community (Özesmi, 2000; Özesmi, 2002a). Later it was turned into a proposal and presented to RSPB as a project. The Project was formulated, designed and lead by Uygur Özesmi and the software was coded by Sezgin Erdoğan. The Project was administered for a while by Handan Tezbaşaran. Today the Project is lead by Esra Per and advised by Uygur Özesmi, Ian Fisher, Jose Tavares, and Guven Eken. Furthermore, KuşBank is part of a worldwide project called Worldbirds ([www.worldbirds.org](http://www.worldbirds.org)) which is initiated by BirdLife. Worldbirds project aims to aggregate various national databases, like KuşBank, in order to use these data for the conservation of birds. KuşBank can be reached through the Internet address: [www.kusbank.org](http://www.kusbank.org) and is open to all birdwatchers who would like to contribute (Fig. 1).

### ***Why KuşBank Is Essential?***

Before KuşBank, it took great efforts to reach hand written data or data in individual databases. It was almost impossible to compile records for use, and to share observations with others. As the records were not collected in a Standard way, they were mostly incompatible. Thus, bird watchers needed a common database where they can record their observations and share them with others. For conservation use there was a need for a database that would be upto date with the latest information from which breeding, wintering and migration distributions and trends could be derived.

Home Türkçe

# of observations in Kuşbank: 134497 # of species in Kuşbank: 399 # of visits in Kuşbank: 10767

LAST 20 SUBMISSIONS

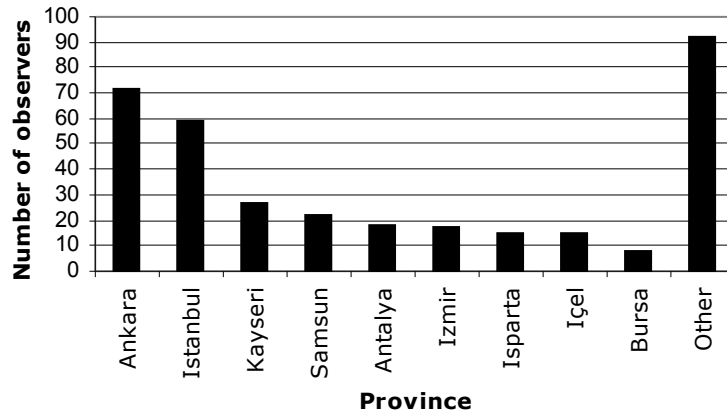
Info	Province	IBA	Area	Date	Observer(s)
	MUĞLA	Güllük Deltası	Tuzla East only	2005-07-08	Brian Stoneman
	MUĞLA	Güllük Deltası	Ekinanbari Stork village	2005-07-08	Brian Stoneman
	MUĞLA	Unknown	Sleepy Vally	2005-07-08	Brian Stoneman
	MUĞLA	Güllük Deltası	The Wash - Akyol River	2005-07-08	Brian Stoneman
	IÇEL	Göksu Deltası	GÜKSU DELTASI	2006-04-29	Bahar Bilgen, Emin Yogurtcuoğlu, Kerem Ali Boyla
	IÇEL	Göksu Deltası	GÜKSU DELTASI	2006-04-29	Bahar Bilgen, Emin Yogurtcuoğlu, Kerem Ali Boyla
	TEKİRDAĞ	Unknown	barbaros kasabası su anıtma tesisi yakını	2006-06-12	fatih seyhan
	TEKİRDAĞ	Unknown	YSE kampı ve etrafı	2006-06-10	fatih seyhan
	BURSA	Unknown	uludağ üni .kampusü	2006-06-15	fatih seyhan
	BURSA	Unknown	uludağ üni .kampusü	2006-06-15	fatih seyhan, burcin alev
	ANKARA	Mogan Gölü	mogan gölü parkı	2006-06-17	fatih seyhan
	BURDUR	Unknown	unknown	2006-06-24	Orbay Turan
	BURDUR	Unknown	Eşeler yaylası	2006-06-22	Orbay Turan
	ANTALYA	Unknown	Migrosun Yanındaki Vadi	2006-06-23	Özgin Sözüer
	Unknown	Unknown	IĞDIR	2006-06-19	UTKU PERKTAŞ, Hakan Gür
	ANKARA	Kızılçahamam Ormanları	soguksu milli parkı	2006-06-21	fatih seyhan, Franziska Arıcı, Gozde Coskunserce
	ANKARA	Kızılçahamam Ormanları	soguksu milli parkı	2006-06-21	fatih seyhan

Fig. 1: KuşBank main page.

As birds are fairly good indicators on how the environment changes, as the information on birds in KuşBank increases to make statistical analysis, KuşBank aims to provide changes in the distribution and abundance of birds. The bird species, number, reproductive state, habitat and threats entered at KuşBank leads to the effective observation of Important Bird Areas (IBA). The essential data about an area that fulfills IBA criteria can be obtained from KuşBank. We hope that KuşBank will become the basis for IBA determination and the update of IBA's bird, habitat and threat data. Data entered into KuşBank will not only determine a new IBA, but will also assess whether there is development or regression in bird diversity and population in current IBAs. The data in KuşBank already contributed to the IBA update book that was published in 2004 (Kılıç & Eken, 2004). In 2004, 41 records of 27 species provided the update of status of IBAs. The bird observation data in the database were used easily for the conservation of birds and nature as in this example. Also, KuşBank contributes to Turkey's EU adaptation process by providing data to the conservation studies.

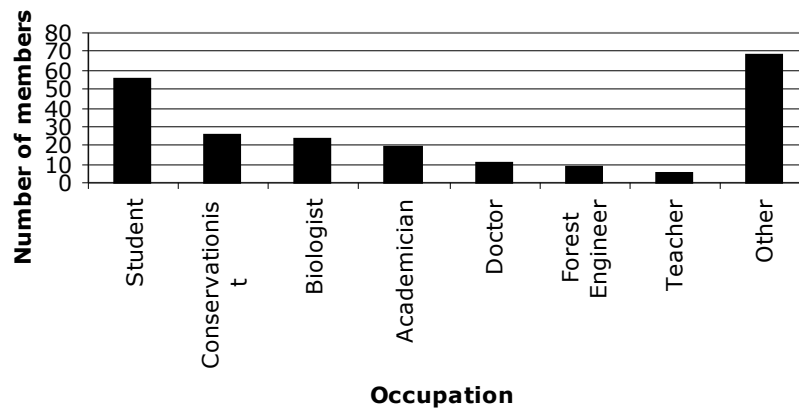
## **KuşBank Member Statistics**

The names of the bird watchers who have the highest number of observation records in Kuşbank are announced at “the ranking of the first 50 records and observations” link at the main page of the web site: [www.kusbank.org](http://www.kusbank.org). In 2004 Ian Richardson, Emin Yoğurtçuoğlu, Bahar Bilgen were the highest ranking birdwatchers. The users of KuşBank are mostly birdwatchers who are in the bird watching clubs in various provinces. This is due to the success of Doğa Derneği in establishing bird clubs all around the country (Fig. 2).



*Fig. 2: Number of KuşBank users by provinces*

Of the total users 22% are from Ankara and 17% from Istanbul. KuşBank users are 74% male and 26% female, 26% of the users are students. The profession distribution of the users is shown at Fig. 3. Birdwatchers who enter observations to KuşBank were watching birds on average for 5 years.



*Fig. 3: Number of professional occupation types of users.*

### **KuşBank Use Statistics:**

KuşBank with its 300 users is continuing to develop and data is increasing rapidly. All known bird observations in 2004 were completely entered and retrospectively data has started to be entered between the years 1984 and 2003 (Fig. 4). Among the past observations there is data from the Erciyes Mountain Bird Atlas that was done by Erciyes University Bird Watching Society in 2001. (Per *et al.*, 2002) As of 29 June 2006, there are 134.497 bird records, 399 bird species and 10.767 observations" in KuşBank. The collection of this high number of data about birds in a such a short time has been a first in Turkey's bird watching history. Starting in May 2004, KuşBank has received on average monthly 500 observation entries and 50.000 hits. During this time KuşBank is used most frequently on Mondays between 16:00-17:00. Bird watchers who generally made their observations on weekends, prefer to enter their records on Monday. When the distribution of observation records from KuşBank in 2004 was analysed, we found that bird data from 56 cities in Turkey were entered (Fig. 5).

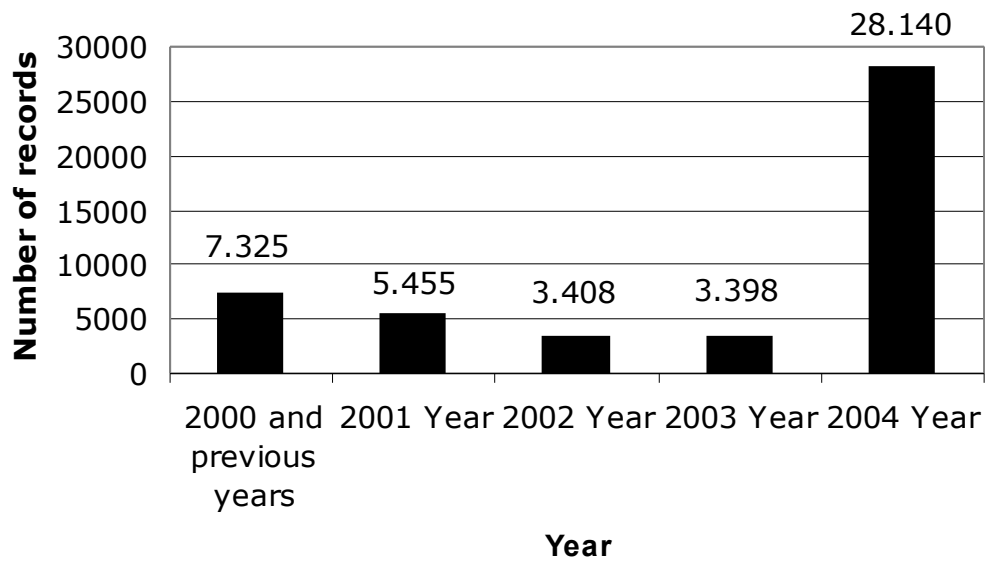


Fig. 4: Number of records in KuşBank by years (as of 15.05.2005)





## Distribution of Bird Records in Turkey in 2004

When all records in 2004 are mapped onto 376 squares of 50X50 km we see calculated that there were on average 75 records per square (Fig. 7). Most records (2371) came from the square in Ankara that included Mogan Lake, Eymir Lake, Altinpark and ODTÜ Campus.

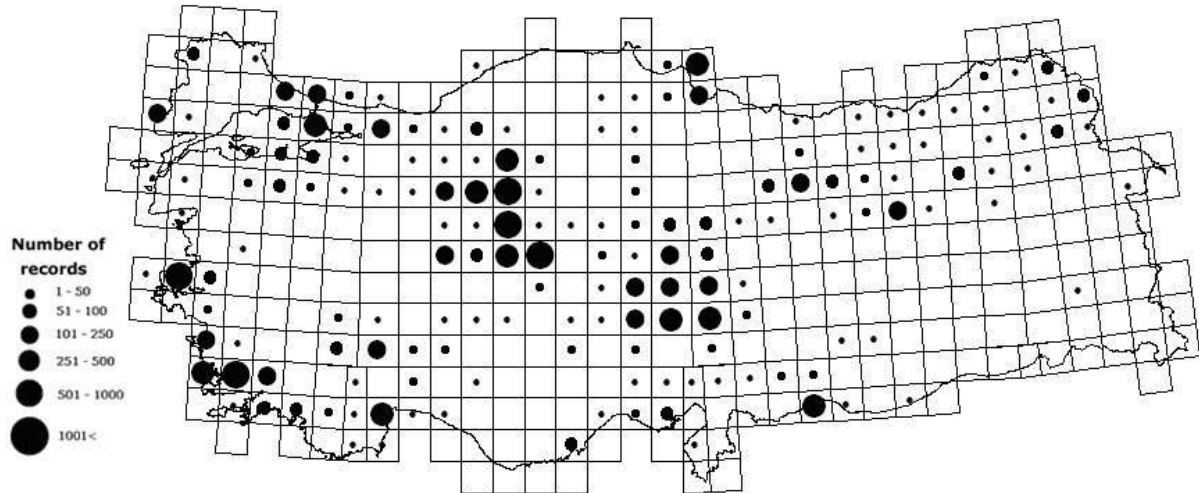


Fig. 7: Total number of records in 50x50 km squares in 2004.

### *The breeding distribution of 8 bird species*

In 2004 we produced maps for 10 species to demonstrate how records in KuşBank can be useful in mapping bird distributions. We mapped the known distributions of birds before KuşBank and how records collected by citizen scientists in 2004 only can improve our knowledge (Fig. 8-15). For previous distributions we used the database from Metehan Özen who collected data from Toygar before KuşBank became operational, the bird distributions from the Konya Basin Atlas Study from DHKD (Eken & Magnin, 1999), The South East Anatolia Bird Atlas Study (Welch, 2004) and the distribution maps from “Songbirds of Turkey” (Roselaar, 1995).

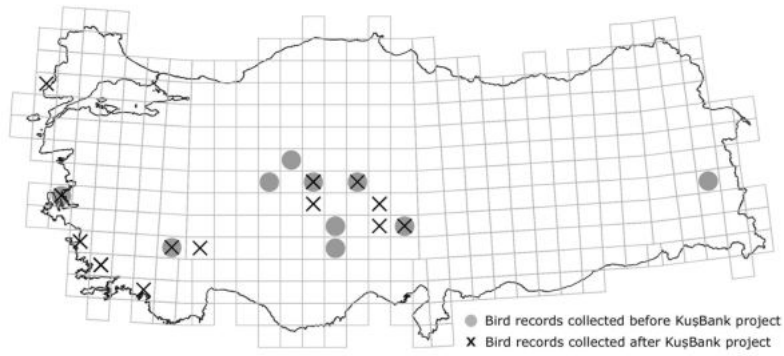


Fig. 8: Flamingo, *Phoenicopterus ruber* breeding and summer distribution

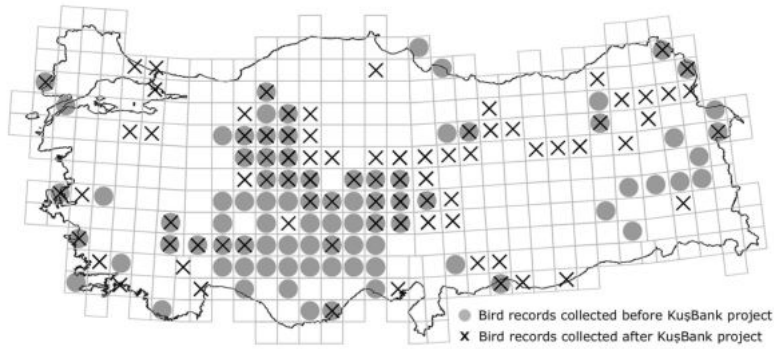


Fig. 9: Long-legged buzzard, *Buteo rufinus* breeding distribution

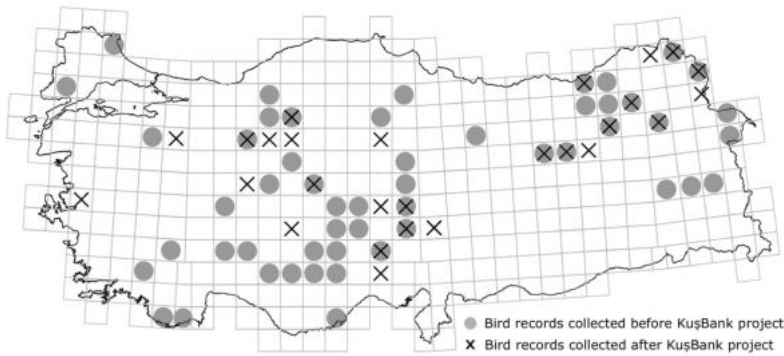


Fig. 10: Golden eagle, *Aquila chrysaetos* breeding distribution.

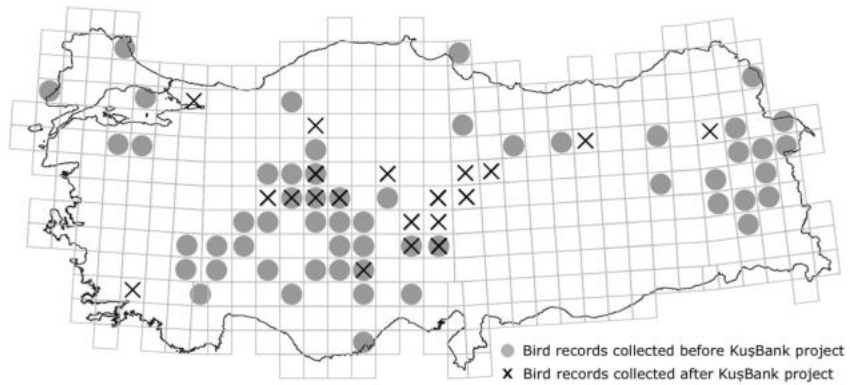


Fig. 11: Lapwing, *Vanellus vanellus* breeding and summer distribution

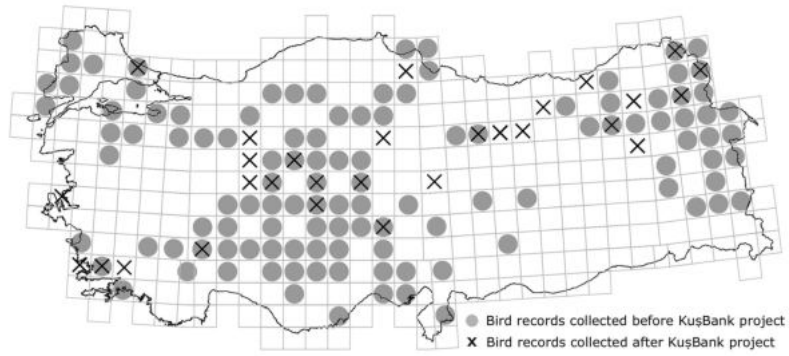


Fig. 12: Skylark, *Alauda arvensis* breeding distribution

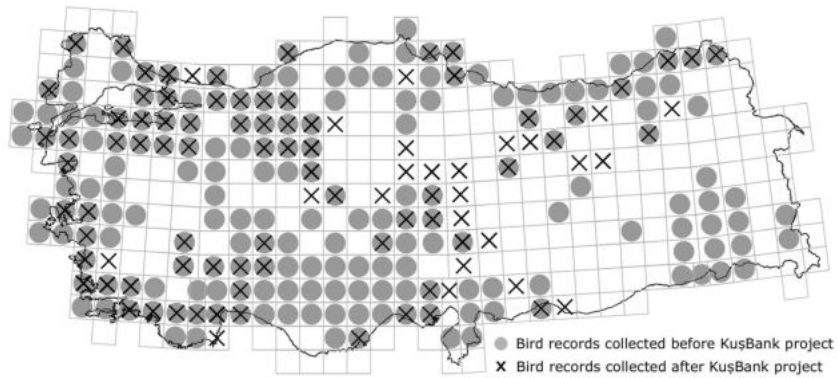


Fig. 13: Blackbird, *Turdus merula* breeding distribution

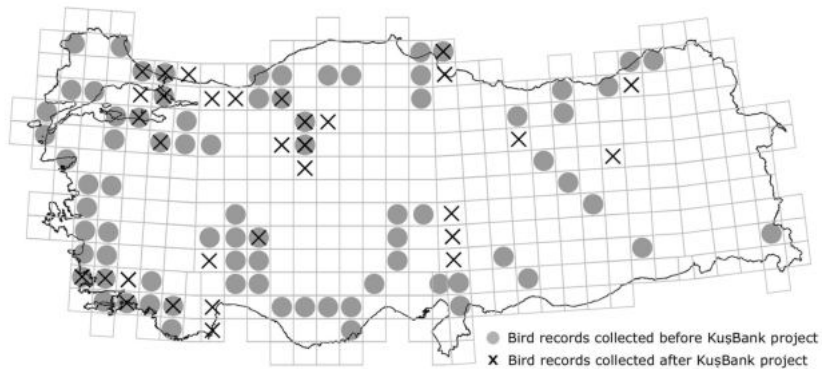


Fig. 14: Long-tailed tit, *Aegithalos caudatus* breeding distribution

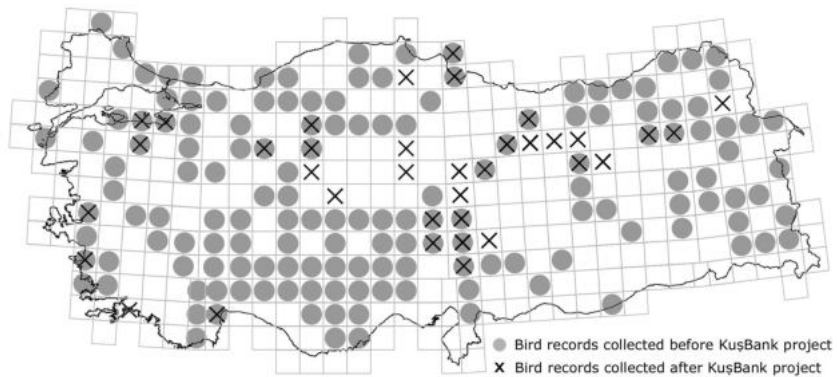


Fig. 15: Ortolan Bunting, *Emberiza hortulana* breeding distribution



## **Conclusion**

KuşBank through the services it provides to the birdwatching community has contributed to the institutionalization of the bird watching community in Turkey and an to the establishment of a bird watching practice that puts bird watching for data gathering for conservation at the front. Thereby birdwatching in Turkey has come to have a strong purpose.

In KuşBank, birdwatchers can store their sightings in a standard way and share with other birdwatchers. KuşBank, as a citizen science project for bird conservation, has shown that volunteers can contribute to scientific work.

Turkey is a rich country in terms of bird diversity and hosts 456 species. 362 (79%) of those have been seen and entered into KuşBank during 2004. Among those species entered in KuşBank 158 are threatened species in Europe.

During 2004, 2000 field observations by 400 birdwatchers were collected in KuşBank which include a total of 28.140 bird sightings. The sightings correspond to 166 50x50 km squares in 56 provinces from the total of 376 squares found in Turkey. The majority of the observations and sightings in KuşBank date from spring and autumn. The breeding data was used to prepare breeding distribution maps of Turkish birds. Many sightings come from Important Bird Areas (IBA) and 53% of those are from Central Anatolian IBAs. Mogan Gölü (Lake Mogan) in Central Anatolia is the most frequently visited IBA.

According to the statistics collected through KuşBank 74% of users are male and 26% female. Twenty-six percent of the users are students who make up the most frequent profession among the users. Similarly, 45% of the users are university graduates. The majority of the birdwatchers in Turkey are young adults; average age of the user is 30 and birders have 5 years of experience on average.

During 2004, KuşBank started providing information about IBAs. KuşBank has become the most important source of information to update information on the state of birds, their habitats and the threats on IBAs. Information from KuşBank allows us to update the species that trigger the IBA criteria and more importantly help us monitor IBAs. KuşBank is a partner of the Worldbirds project and has contributed significantly in its initial stages to the software development of this international platform.

KuşBank is not only the largest collection of accessible information on Birds in Turkey but also one of its kind in terms of a citizen science projects in Turkey. Through KuşBank an almost entirely amateur community of

birdwatchers are contributing towards the production of scientific information on the distribution and trends in bird abundance in Turkey. Doğa Derneği is continuing to work towards expanding the birdwatching network in Turkey and building capacity among birdwatchers. Doğa Derneği and its partners will continue to improve the services and software of KuşBank together with birdwatchers for birding with a conservation purpose.

## **Acknowledgements**

KuşBank project is the making of birdwatchers who have contributed their records to the system with patience and trust in us. We would like to thank all birdwatchers and volunteers who input data. We would like to thank Handan Tezbaşaran, Sezgin Erdoğan, Ian Fisher, Rachel Roberts, Martin Sneary, Johan Nilsson, and Naci Kişnişci who have contributed significantly in the initial stages of KuşBank. The continuation of KuşBank has been possible with the generous support and dedication of Sezgin Erdoğan, Jose Pedro Tavares, Ian Fisher, and Güven Eken.

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# **Starting of farmland bird monitoring in European Russia**

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## ***Background***

In the conditions of huge territories and a variety of landscapes of the European Russia, at the restricted amount of professional ornithologists and very insufficient modern financing of ornithological and conservation researches, it is extremely difficult to obtain enough exact data on farmland bird trends.

Now there are essential changes in the Russian agriculture, which directions are variously in different regions of Russia. In southern regions and in the Volga District the intensification of agriculture gradually begins, whereas in northwest and northern regions recession of agriculture and abandonment of farmland proceeds. An absence of long-term monitoring in Russia is significantly risky for some farmland bird populations. Without long-term monitoring we have no opportunities to notice the beginning of numbers decrease, and to accept preclusive measures for protection of some species. It is very serious, because Russian populations of some birds are the largest in Europe. They can be considered as the important reserve for additional charge and restoration of local (regional) populations in some European countries. In this connection, starting of the farmland bird monitoring in European Russia and its accession to the Pan-European Bird Monitoring Scheme (PECBM) is extremely important.

In 2006 we could begin monitoring of farmland birds in the European Russia due to financial support of the Dutch embassy in Moscow. Russian coordinator of this program is Alexander Mischenko.

## ***Resources***

Basis of the farmland bird monitoring in the European Russia are experienced volunteers, circles of young ornithologists and some professional ornithologists, who agree to participate in the monitoring voluntary, in addition to their basic work.

After wide dissemination of the information about the probable beginning of the Farmland Bird Monitoring in Russia via the magazine of RBCU “World of birds” and the web-site of the Russian Bird Conservation Union (RBCU) we have received the offers on participation in the monitoring from 36 volunteers, some from them can cover several census routes.

Thus we plan to cover more than 40 census sites. They are enough widely distributed on the territory of the European Russia (from Komi and Karelia republics in the north taiga zone to Dagestan Republic near the Caspian Sea; from the Kaliningrad Region on coast of Baltic in the West to the Volga basin in the East).

## ***Objectives***

The objectives of the work are:

- ◆ Making the network of volunteers, participating in bird counts, attraction their attention to problems of the biodiversity conservation in farmlands.
- ◆ Including the European Russia into the PECBM scheme, producing relative national indices and trends on the standard PECBM methods in the nearest years, first of all for the indicator farmland bird species.
- ◆ The wide information about results of the first stage of monitoring in the European Russia in the magazine and the web-site of the RBCU and some other magazines, with the purpose of money search for continuation of the farmland bird monitoring the next years, increase in number of voluntary participants and amount of census plots.

## ***Methods***

Beforehand, prior to the beginning of field works, the detailed guidelines and special standardised survey forms were dispatched to all participants of the monitoring. The experience obtained during the voluntary based Corncrake Monitoring in European Russia (2002-2005), was critically analysed and used. After receiving of the guidelines, participants sent many questions, which the coordinator constantly answered by e-mail or by mail.

In connection with that in Russia is impossible to cover the territory with systematic survey squares (1x1 km) now, census routes will be selected freely by observers: participants of monitoring will choose places of their summer vacations, vicinities of summerhouses (dachas), areas of basic field works, biological stations, etc. We have decided to use the method of routing counts in the length of 2 km, developed by Jury Ravkin (Ravkin, 1967) and widely used by Russian ornithologists; with registration of birds on a distance from the surveyor. Application of this method will allow using earlier data, available in some regions for comparison. However, the census plots should be typical for regional farmland. Data on bird numbers will be collected annually by the censuses on transect routes 2-kilometer length. Observers will make three visits to selected sites, the first to record habitat types and to set up a suitable survey route, and the second and third to record birds that are seen or heard while walking along the route. Their terms will vary a little, depending on latitude.

For motivation of volunteers an annual newsletter will be issued, in which participants of monitoring can publish short notes on results of the work. Also gifts for the most active observers are supposed (binoculars, t-shirts, field guides etc.).

### ***Supposed results***

We suppose that the main result of the work in the first year will be starting of the farmland bird monitoring in the European Russia. It will be the first step to yearly provision of bird species indices in Russia by the national coordinator. In the next years these data can become an important part of the Pan-European Bird Monitoring Scheme.

In 2006 volunteers will do surveys only in different types of farmland, not mentioning forest sites and others habitats, because we did not manage to find money by the beginning of woodland bird monitoring. But nevertheless, by way of experiment, we have decided to try to carry out counts in several wood sites, also with application of volunteers, on the similar methods.

We are planning actively search money for the continuation of monitoring of all common birds (in farmland and woodland habitats) in the next years. In this case European Russia can be integrated into the PECBM. We hope that in the next years Russian data will enable to calculate more correct indices and trends of the farmland birds for Europe as a whole.

## **Short report of the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring (PECBM) workshop in September 2005.**

The workshop was held on September 22 to 25, 2005 at Czech University of Agriculture in Prague, Czech Republic. The main goals of the event were:

- to report on development of the project since the last workshop in 2002,
- to get feedback from national coordinators and other stakeholders in order to improve the scheme,
- to discuss (and find and accept solutions if possible) several issues (e.g. species selection, data access policy, data processing and analysis, fundraising), and finally,
- to set up priorities for a next period.

More than 60 experts from 30 European countries took part. The full programme of the workshop including conclusions is available on CD-ROM from Petr Vorisek, project coordinator, EuroMonitoring@BirdLife.cz

Thursday afternoon, the 22th, the official opening was conducted by Karel Štátný, on behalf of CSO and the University of Agriculture, and by the minister/deputy minister on behalf of the Czech Ministry of Environment. After the report of coordinator Petr Vorisek on PECBM progress and development since 2002, the first plenary session started chaired by David Gibbons: **Turning science into policy and future challenges**. Following presentations were held:

Dominique Richard: Birds as indicators from European and international point of view.

Richard Gregory: New approaches to the development of population level indicators of biodiversity.

David Noble: Bird indicator development in the UK and their impact on policy.

Lluís Brotons: Spatial modelling of large scale bird monitoring data: towards pan-European quantitative distribution maps

After these presentations followed a discussion on how to promote birds as indicators at national level.

Friday 23th started with a first morning session on **Delivering indicators** chaired by Anny Anselin with two presentations:

Richard Gregory: Current situation in species selection.

Arco Van Strien: Principles of new species selection proposal, followed by a general discussion.

In the afternoon a discussion was held of the regional species list, in groups by biogeographical region. Richard Gregory chaired the reporting of the

groups and presented the conclusions. The last part of the day was dedicated to **Data access policy**. Ruud Foppen gave a presentation on: Why we need data access policy?, followed by a discussion on the principles and rules and conclusions.

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> the first session was about **The planning and time table for production of updated indices and indicators**, chaired by Ian Burfield.

After the presentation by Arco Van Strien & Petr Vorisek:

Problems in current data collation and analysis & possible remedies, followed a discussion on how to improve current data collation and analysis procedure.

In the afternoon Uygur Ozesmi chaired a session on **Improving a monitoring scheme and securing funds**, with two main discussion groups: Group 1 discussed about how data can be combined from two or more schemes within a country. An introductory presentation was given by Arco Van Strien: Need of combining data from more schemes, statistical problems.

Group 2 discussed about the promotion and funding at national level, how a national scheme is (or is not) funded. Three introductory presentations were given:

Ruud Foppen: Experience from The Netherlands

Rastislav Rybanič, Rudolf Kropil and Jozef Ridzoň: Experience from Slovakia

Henning Heldbjerg: Danish experience and Nordic indicator project, followed by a discussion on what works and what does not in securing funds and financial sustainability of a monitoring scheme.

In the evening we all enjoyed the well organised boat trip on the river in Prague City. On Sunday a field trip was held.

### **Conclusions-data access policy**

- Proposal of data access policy required and principles defined
- EBCC Executive Committee to consider next steps with PECBM
- Finally to be approved by national coordinators

### **Conclusions-species selection**

-Proposed approach - development of biogeographical regions is accepted built on Tucker & Evans *For comments see outputs from discussion groups*  
Four regions:

- Central & East Europe 'Continental': *Reg. coord.: Attila D. Sandor & Hans Schmid*
2. West Europe 'Atlantic': *Reg.coord.: Henning Heldbjerg*
3. South Europe 'Mediterranean': *Reg. coord.: Lorenzo Fornasari*
4. North Europe 'Boreal': *Reg. coord.: Sören Svensson*



- The Regional Coordinators in liaison with national coordinators and central coordinator are to proceed further according to the procedure. The final species list has to be approved before Christmas 2005.

#### Important tasks:

- To define precisely the specific habitats using Tucker & Evans and Corine habitat classification - how they interrelate, what they mean defined very precisely, what we include in forest and farmland
- There are three linked options to go forward – the short term choice depends on the progress made in next few months
- Species name – Tucker & Evans classification – regional habitat classification (forest, farmland, other) - % in that habitat (0-25, 25-50, 50-75, 75+) – pressure\driving force indicator for this habitat(?forest?)
  - Option 1 = Tucker & Evans (as in 2005) or 2 = Tucker & Evans plus biogeographical assessment via regional teams
  - Option 3 = Tucker & Evans plus biogeographical assessment via regional teams plus national refinement

#### **Delivering updated indices & indicators**

- Advance species selection by end of 2005 – make decision
- Start of data collation in January 2006 end April (May) 2006
- Data analysis June-July 2006
- Outputs aim for September-October - before the end of 2006

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**Organisers:** Czech Society for Ornithology; Czech University of Agriculture, Faculty of Forestry and Environment; European Bird Census Council; BirdLife International; Royal Society for Protection of Birds and Ornithological Station of Comenius Museum

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Speakers, chairs, all participants



## Books and Journals

**Bauer, H.-G., Bezzel, E. & Fiedler, W. 2005. Das Kompendium der Vögel Mitteleuropas. 3 Vol., 808 + 622 + 337 pp., Hardcover, AULA (Wiebelsheim), ISBN 3-89104-696-0, 129.- €.**

After 6 years of planning and preparation the German-language “concise edition” of the Handbook of Central European birds has finally been published. It is a completely revised and extended version of the two-volume Kompendium by Bezzel from 1985 (non-Passeriformes) and 1993 (Passeriformes), combined with sections from the conservation-oriented volume on Central European birds by Bauer & Berthold from 1996. In ~ 600 species accounts the Kompendium covers all taxonomic units which have been recorded until now in an area encompassing The Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Liechtenstein, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republik, and Poland, with additional aspects from neighbouring European countries where appropriate. Again, Vol. 1 and 2 are dedicated to the non-passeriform and passeriform birds, respectively. In Vol. 3 short notes are presented for the over 200 exotic species (neozoa) that have also been registered in this region, next to summary tables, an extensive references section with well over 4000 citations, a glossary, a list of bird names in all Central European languages and an index. The main species accounts feature some 20 sections including breeding biology, population dynamics, distribution, migration, threat factors, conservation, voice, moult, measurements and others. Of special importance is the presentation of a completely revised taxonomy of birds, summarized from extensive new literature and well explained in introductory chapters to each order and family by the late Andreas J. Helbig. The authors have decided to reduce the formerly wordy sections on field characters and species identification and to abandon the use of drawings or photographs of birds, since this subject is better dealt with in special books. However, the CD version of the Kompendium, planned for release in 2007, will contain these aspects as well as acoustic examples of songs and calls. The Kompendium is a reference book suited for use both by amateur and professional ornithologists with at least some knowledge of the German language. Since it focuses on Central European birds and offers information in a distilled form, its “niche” lies somewhere between the two-volume Concise Edition of the “British” handbook by Snow & Perrins (1998) and the multi-volume handbooks of the Western Palearctic by Cramp et al. (1977-94) and of Central Europe by Glutz & Bauer (1966-97).

**Bakken, V., Runde, O. & Tjørve, E. 2006. Norsk ringmerkingsatlas. Vol. 2. Stavanger Museum, Stavanger, 446 pp. (in Norwegian with extended English summaries for chapters, species texts and captions), ISBN 82-90054-65-3, 398 Nkr, available from: Natur og Fritid, <http://www.naturbokhandelen.no>**

The “Norwegian Bird Ringing Atlas”, published in two volumes, presents the results of more than 80 years of ringing in Norway. This second volume gives the results from Pigeons and Passerines. From the ringing of the first bird, a House Martin in 1914, and until 1999, almost five million birds had been ringed. Almost all of this is due to the great number of voluntary ringers who have contributed an enormous amount of work through many years. In the course of the same period of time almost 100 000 recoveries have been reported to the Norwegian Ringing Scheme.

The aim of the Ringing Atlas is to present a unique material that has remained inaccessible for far too long. By means of maps and text the Atlas gives an outstanding insight into the migratory habits and movements of the birds throughout the year. After a first chapter with an overview of the ringing at Norwegian Bird Observatories, the major part of the book consists of the species texts. Each species is illustrated with a nice drawing. The Norwegian, English and scientific names are given. For most species the presentations consist of text comprising a short introduction about the distribution of the bird, its food, information on ringing data and recovery data and also one or more sections on migration and other kinds of movements. Two maps are shown: one with the ringing sites of recoveries and one with the breeding distribution. A histogram is shown indicating ringing activity in the period 1914-2000. Reported causes of death are presented as a pie-chart. Recovery maps present the distribution as elemental recoveries, recovery areas, mean positions and country/country distribution, with colour indications of the period of the year. An age distribution graph gives a good indication of the survival. A handy 'facts-capsule' is added to the text with all kind of statistics on totals, means and extremes of data. The authors hope that the Atlas may be an inspiration to more detailed analysis, as well as the initiation of new ringing projects. The atlas is a cooperative project between Stavanger Museum, The Natural History Museums and Botanical Garden – University of Oslo, and Lillehammer University College. The books are published in cooperation with the Norwegian Ornithological Society and Norsk Naturbokhandel (the Norwegian Nature Bookshop), and with economic support from the Directorate for Nature Management.

**Lindström, Å. & Svensson, S. 2006. Monitoring population changes of birds in Sweden. Annual report 2005, Department of Ecology, Lund University. 68 pp. (in Swedish with English summary and English captions of figures and tables). Download pdf file (919 kb) at: [www.biol.lu.se/zoekologi/birdmonitoring](http://www.biol.lu.se/zoekologi/birdmonitoring) (in menu choose first "Årsrapport", then "Årsrapport-2005").**

This report presents the results of the Swedish National Bird Monitoring programme, run by the Department of Ecology, Lund University, as a part of the National Monitoring Programme of the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency. The results from 2005 include data from 706 winter point count routes (30th year), of which 309 were carried out during the Christmas/New Year count, and 252 summer point count routes (31st year). A third program is running since 1996 with 716 Fixed routes, systematically (and therefore semi-randomly) distributed over Sweden (combined line transect and point counts). In total 402 Fixed routes were completed in the summer of 2005 and 708 routes (99%) have been censused at least once since 1996. Trends were analysed using TRIM. In the Christmas/New Year count 2004/2005, about 141,000 individuals of 125 species were counted by 267 different observers. Winter indices increased in 57% of the species compared to the winter before (Table 5). Strong long-term increases are present in many water birds like Cormorant, Grey Heron, Mallard, Tufted Duck, Goldeneye, Smew and Canada Goose, as well as in various species such as White-tailed Eagle, Raven, Rook, Blue Tit, Wren and Greenfinch (Appendix 3). Long-term declines are prominent in Black Grouse, Black-headed Gull, Collared Dove, Hooded Crow, Willow Tit, Marsh Tit, Siskin, Common Redpoll, House Sparrow and Tree Sparrow. The declines in winter of the two sparrows are more pronounced than shown by the

statistics, since in 1975-1989 many birds were reported as *Passer* sp., birds that can not be included in the analysis afterwards. On the point count routes in summer 2005, almost 93,000 birds of 206 species were counted by 172 different observers. The TRIM indices increased in 54% of the species compared to the summer before (Table 7). The strongest long-term positive trends in summer are present in Cormorant, Barnacle, Canada and Greylag Geese, Whooper Swan, Marsh Harrier, Red Kite, Crane, Raven, Wren, Blackcap, and the collybita subspecies of Chiffchaff. The following species show clear negative long-term trends (Appendix 5): Black Grouse, Snipe, Curlew, Redshank, Common Gull, Black-headed Gull, Stock Dove, Cuckoo, Swift, Green Woodpecker, Wryneck, Skylark, House Martin, Sand Martin, Hooded Crow, Willow Tit, Marsh Tit, Wheatear, Dunnock, Tree Pipit, White Wagtail, Yellow Wagtail, Red-backed Shrike, Starling, Linnet, Yellowhammer, Ortolan Bunting, Reed Bunting and House Sparrow. From the Fixed routes were reported 116,000 birds of 210 species. Trends for the first ten years are presented in Table 9 and there are graphs for a few species in Appendix 5. More graphs are shown on the homepage (address below). We used multiple regression to analyze between year changes in population size in fifteen species wintering in Sweden or Northwest Europe. For only four species did we find an effect of winter temperature on between-year changes, all of them were short-distance migrants (Grey Heron, Wren, Blackbird and Goldcrest). Resident species seemed unaffected by winter temperature. Bird indicators were calculated for Sweden based on the species selection and methods of the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (page 8). Farmland birds ("Vanliga jordbruksfåglar", 11 species) show a 40% decline since 1975 and 2005 had the lowest value so far. Woodland birds ("Vanliga skogsfåglar", 26 species) have declined with 20%, whereas a group of other common birds ("Övriga vanliga fåglar", 21 species) show no average change in population size. Appendix 6 holds a list of Swedish and scientific names of birds as help for foreign readers when interpreting the tables.

**Escandell, V. 2006. Monitoring Common Breeding Birds in Spain. The Sacre Programme. Report 1996-2005, SEO/BirdLife Spain, Madrid, 16 pp. This English translation of the original Spanish report is available in pdf-format. Contact: [sacre@seo.org](mailto:sacre@seo.org)**

The Sacre programme started in 1996 and has now collected details on bird populations for some areas going back 10 years. In 2000 priority squares for the whole of Spain were designated with the objective of giving a minimum coverage, in a homogeneous way, of all environments in each province. In 2005 583 out of the 875 available 10×10 km squares have been surveyed and data from 536 have been considered. The coverage and distribution of sampling areas has increased considerable. Areas in all provinces of Spain have been surveyed and monitoring has taken place in all of the different habitats. Taking into account the fact that the population trends of birds associated with farmland has been adopted as one of the structural indicators in Europe, it is very important that more farmland areas are monitored, in particular in the region of Castilla-La Mancha, where relative participation is very low. A total of 236 species have been recorded, but in the report raptors and aquatic birds have not been taken into account, neither have those that have a national census, such as the White Stork, *Ciconia ciconia* and the Little Bustard, *Tetrax tetrax*. Graphs of population trends for each species are

shown according to the habitat associated with the data of 2005. The species that have been recorded in the greatest numbers are the House Sparrow, *Passer domesticus*, Common Swift *Apus apus*, Spotless Starling *Sturnus unicolor*, and Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*, which number more than 20.000 individuals. Species recorded in the most squares (more than 475) are the House Swallow, Barn Swallow, Blackbird *Turdus merula*, Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*, and European Serin *Serinus serinus*. Amongst the species associated with woodland, Marsh Tit, *Parus palustris* and Common Chiffchaff, *Phylloscopus collybita* show a negative trend. Amongst the scrub species, the Dartford Warbler, *Sylvia undata* is declining. The majority of the farmland species show a negative trend. For four wetland species, Great Reed Warbler, *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*, Common Kingfisher, *Alcedo atthis*, Penduline Tit, *Remiz pendulinus* and Sand Martin, *Riparia riparia*, have declined in recent years.

**Vermeersch, G., A. Anselin & K. Devos, 2006. Special breeding birds in Flanders 1994-2004: population trends and recent status. Report INBO, Brussels, 64pp (in Dutch with English summary and captions of figures and tables).**

**Download as pdf file (1164 kb) at: [www.inbo.be](http://www.inbo.be) (in menu choose: Publicaties).**

**Contact: [glenn.vermeersch@inbo.be](mailto:glenn.vermeersch@inbo.be)**

The “Special Breeding Birds in Flanders” project was started in 1994, and will lead to population estimates for all gregarious, rare and exotic breeding birds in Flanders. The project is coordinated by the Research Institute for Nature and Forest, in cooperation with a network of volunteers. This report presents an overview of over 10 years of Special Breeding Bird surveys, but focuses mainly on data from 2003-2005. In this way, it complements the Atlas of Flemish Breeding Birds, which spans the period from 2000-2002. Extensive territory surveys were carried out to make as detailed population estimates as possible. However, this turned out to be not always possible to the same extent. The summarizing table therefore includes a score that indicates the accuracy of the counts for each species. Naturally, a species like Cormorant, breeding in conspicuous colonies that have been intensively monitored for years, was easier to survey than Serin, which is far less obtrusive and mostly nests in urbanized areas too – not exactly the most frequented habitat of the average surveyor! Weather conditions in 2003-2005 were characterised by mild and relatively wet winters, and warm to hot summers (2003). The long summer of 2003 caused many pools to dry up, a condition that basically remained throughout 2004-2005. At least locally, this led to a strong decline in species like Black-necked Grebe and Spotted Crake. On the other hand, the mild winters offered opportunities to species that have been increasing for some time, such as Fan-tailed and Cetti’s Warbler, but Kingfisher, Grey Heron and Grey Wagtail also benefited from the favourable conditions. This report deals with a total of 83 species. In addition to the winter-sensitive species mentioned above, the numbers of rarities like Little Egret, Spoonbill, Red-backed Shrike and Middle Spotted Woodpecker also increased (dramatically). Other birds fared less well, such as Winchat, Wheatear and Crested Lark. The decline in these species is such that their disappearance from Flanders seems inevitable. Better news were the breeding cases of Eagle Owl (2005, new breeding species for Flanders), Great Black-backed Gull (2004, idem), and Whiskered Tern (2005, first breeding record since 1957). The information in the breeding bird atlas, together with the data on special

breeding birds presented in this report, allow us to make a first assessment of the existing Bird Directive Areas. The results clearly illustrate the importance of the Bird Directive to many Appendix I species in Flanders. However, additional efforts are possible and necessary, especially towards woodland species like Honey Buzzard, Middle Spotted Woodpecker and Black Woodpecker. The 'Voerstreek' and the wooded area south of Leuven may be suitable for a possible, future extension of the number of Bird Directive Areas. In accordance with the water bird counts, it should be possible in the future to enter data on special breeding birds online. A trial version of the system will be available by the 1st of November the latest.

## **Your text in the next issue?**

Bird Census is meant as a forum for everybody involved in bird census, monitoring and atlas studies. Therefore we invite you to use it for publishing news on your own activities within this field:

- you have (preliminary) results of your regional or national atlas,
  - you have information on a monitoring campaign,
  - you have made a species-specific inventory,
  - you are a delegate and have some news on activities in your country,
  - you are planning an inventory and want people to know this,
  - you read a good (new) atlas or an article or report on census and you want to review it.
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B-1070 Brussel, Belgium

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