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Bird Census News is the Journal 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.

EDITOR:

Anny Anselin
Research Institute for Nature and Forest, INBO
Kliniekstraat 25, B-1070 Brussels, Belgium.

home: E. Poetoustraat 13, B-9030 Mariakerke, Belgium

email: anny.anselin@inbo.be

Illustrations: Toni Llobet

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Bird Census News

Volume 22 n°1, June 2009

Preface

With the first hot summer days you find this first issue of 2009 in your mailbox.

We start with good news from the Pan European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme. The PECBMS-team has just published the 2009 report. The brochure presents the population trends of 135 common bird species as well as multi-species indices (indicators), based on data collected from 21 European countries, covering the period 1980-2006. With more countries contributing their data, and improvements in data quality control, the results are now more representative and more precise than before. Further in this BCN you can read the report of last PECBMS workshop in Prague.

At the end of this issue you find the first announcement for the next EBCC Conference 2010 that will be held on 23-26 March in Cáceres, Extremadura, Spain and is organised by SEO, the Spanish Ornithological Society/BirdLife Spain, together with EBCC. Do not forget to registrate and to submit your abstract in time!

This time Sergi Herrando and Gabriel Gargallo tell us more about website based communication of monitoring results in Catalunia, Andre Raine gives a summary of the findings in the Malta breeding bird atlas, and Vadim Yanenko & colleagues present the status of the Quail in Ukraine.

Enjoy BCN!

Anny Anselin
BCN Editor
anny.anselin@inbo.be

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The importance of sampling-site data when communicating the results of monitoring schemes: the case of www.sioc.cat

Sergi Herrando & Gabriel Gargallo

Catalan Ornithological Institute, Museu de Ciències Naturals de la Ciutadella, Passeig Picasso s/n, E-08003 Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain.

Introduction

The communication of results is an essential part of any monitoring scheme and should be carried out in an appropriate way for all the many potential stake-holders (Vorisek & Gregory 2008) – national governments, members of the scientific community, participants in fieldwork, territorial managers and the general public. The number of possible communication tools is myriad and ranges from printed reports to websites, from talks on TV to press releases (see Vorisek & Gregory 2008 for a longer list of potential target groups and tools).

Release of results

Whatever the methods used or the group of people targeted, released results usually deal with general trends in species and indicators in a given country or region, which are precisely the main aims of most monitoring schemes. However, the release of results at sampling-site level (species' abundance and trends, site location, observer information, etc.) entails certain benefits and a number of drawbacks. The following are some of the positive aspects:

- Publishing results indicates transparency and reveals the availability of the data: the information is public and everyone can thus see that sharing data is part of any collective project.
- Publishing results gives a sense of cohesion to the network of volunteers that conduct field censuses independently of each other (all participants can see the results from other sampling sites, species lists, etc.).
- Results are generally well received by participants who thus see that the

fruits of their labours are not only part of a large-scale project and analyses (the most important result), but also important at the level of their own site.
- Although monitoring projects usually have their own team of experts to filter data, publishing site-level data enables previously undetected errors to be detected by anyone consulting the data.
- The coordination of fieldworkers can be facilitated by the communication of site-level results. For instance, new participants have easy access to expected species lists and abundances; furthermore, detailed maps can help new observers to localise the exact location of surveying sites. This may lead to considerable savings in terms of coordination costs.
- When access to general results is easy, local results enable rough comparisons of trends and abundances to be made between specific sites and those of the whole country/region.
- Site-level results may be very useful for territorial managers and planners working at local scale. Results can often not be directly used in planning and management; however, they can easily see that there is data available for their purposes.
- Scientists are provided with a very interesting source of data for a number of local studies. For example, local data from monitoring projects may provide excellent control data for experimental work.

The following are some of the drawbacks to publishing site-level results or aspects that need to be carefully taken into account before releasing such results:

*The publication of these results implies that we should decide what to do with data that have been considered an error and hence have not been included in the general trend analyses. We could either decide to publish all data, including these invalidated field observations, or reject them and show only the filtered data. The latter option is surely the most suitable in terms of data quality; however, potential problems may then arise with the observers who provided the data that was invalidated (if they have not been informed already).
*Potential problems arising from the misuse of information. This is not a problem that only concerns site-level information. However, given its generally low reliability compared with general results, it is worth mentioning here. It is important to explain how the data was obtained and – if necessary – how it was analysed. Furthermore, legal warnings regarding data-use should be made clear to all users.
*One of the most important aspects to be taken into account when releasing this kind of information is the sheer amount of data involved: the number of figures or tables to be published can be calculated roughly by multiplying the number of general national trends for common birds by the number of sites in which each species has occurred. Consequently, internet is probably

the only available means of publishing such a large quantity of data.
*Maintenance costs. As mentioned in the previous point, the *site x species* matrix generates a huge number of figures. Although the automatisms included in software packages are extremely useful, the yearly costs of updating information must be taken into account. This could be especially relevant when volunteers are asked to provide supplementary information such as photos of sampling sites.

A specific website

In 2007 the Catalan Ornithological Institute launched a website specifically designed to communicate the results of its monitoring projects in Catalonia (Northeast Spain), both globally and at site level www.sioc.cat (Figure 1). The data from the Catalan Common Bird Survey provided in this website at local level are as follows: 1) participants' names; 2) a zoom to the line-transect location; 3) a photograph of the area; 4) the mean number of birds for both breeding and wintering seasons; and 5) species trends at the site, which correspond to the F1 values given by TRIM analyses (Pannekoek & van Strien 2001). It is worth commenting that the use of F1-imputed counts to estimate missing data on the basis of other points in the same time series and data from other sampling sites greatly contributes to the idea that site-level results are part of a process that goes beyond one particular observer recording at one particular site.

In conclusion, our experiences suggest that the provision of results of monitoring schemes at site level is a new and interesting communicative tool and if properly designed and financed the advantages of providing such information outweigh the disadvantages.

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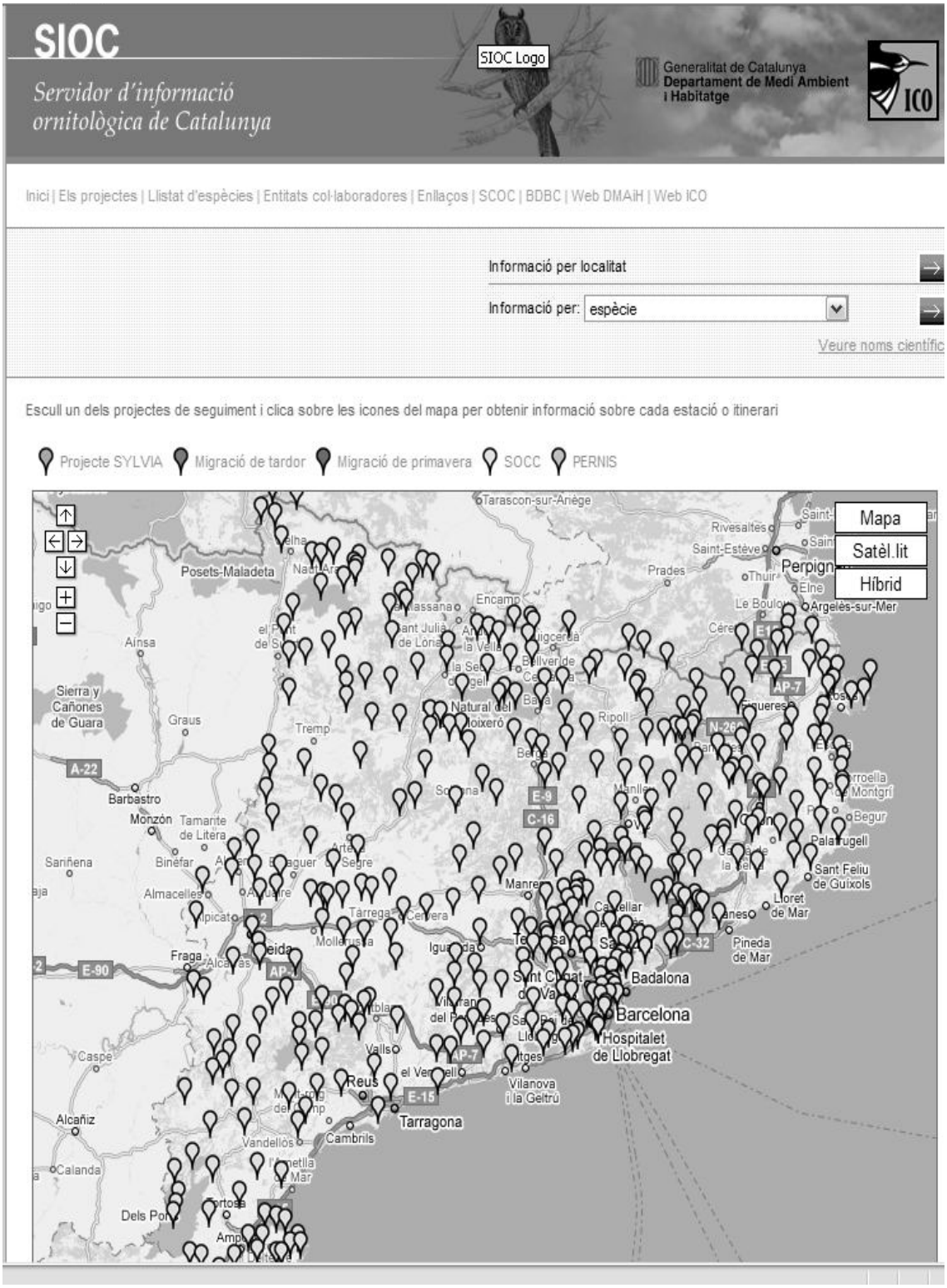

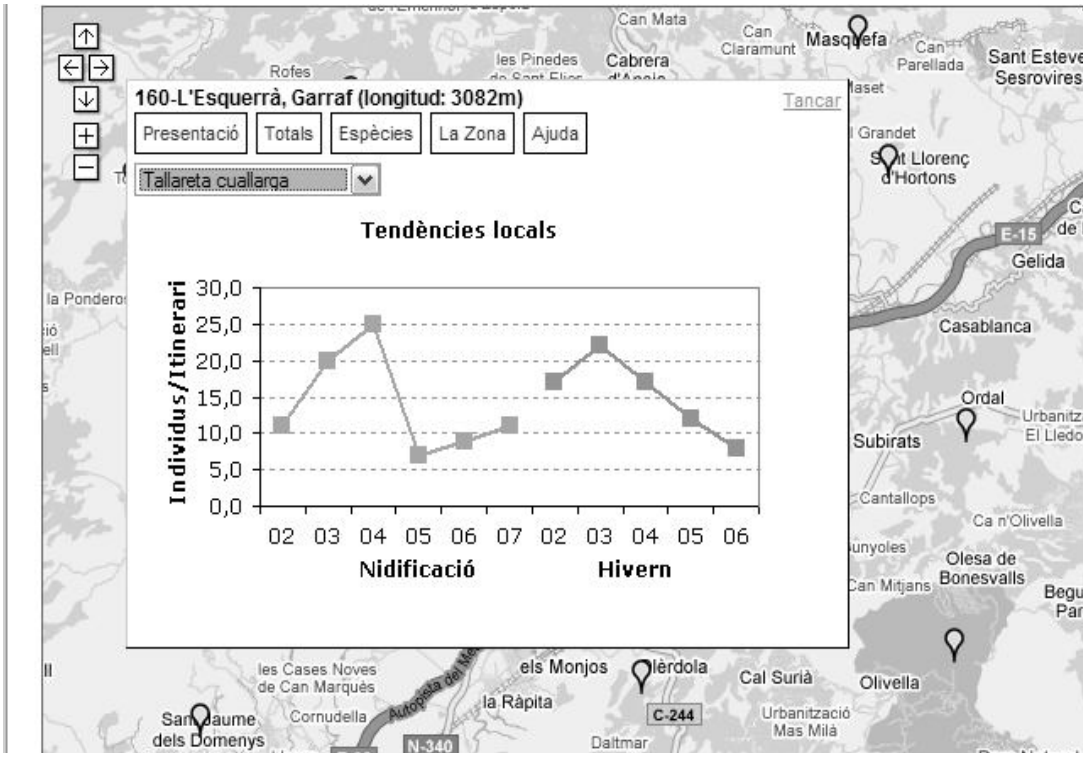

Fig. 1: The web www.sioc.cat is an internet tool that communicates the results of the monitoring schemes promoted by the Catalan Ornithological Institute. Site-level results can be seen by clicking on 'informació per localitat'*, at which a Google Map window opens providing access to data for several monitoring schemes (those corresponding to the Catalan Common Bird Survey are labelled 'SOCC'). Users can then zoom in and out with the Google Map window and select a given site to see its results (upper). One of the most interesting possibilities is the generation of graphics showing trends at a given site for both breeding and wintering populations. This example shows the population change in breeding* ('nidificació') *and wintering* ('hivern') *Dartford warbler* Sylvia undata *populations at a particular sampling site located in the coastal mountains (lower).*

Acknowledgements

The Catalan Common Bird Survey and the website www.sioc.cat have the support of the Department of Environmental and Housing of the Catalan Government. Finally, we would like to express our warmest thank to the

more than 300 field ornithologists who have collaborated in the Catalan Common Bird Survey.

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Results of the first Breeding Bird Atlas for Malta

Andre F Raine

BirdLife Malta, 57/28 Marina Court, Triq Abate Rigord, Ta' Xbiex XBX1120, Malta. andre.raine@birdlifemalta.org

Introduction

The Maltese archipelago consists of a small group of low-lying islands, situated in the central part of the Mediterranean Sea. They lie approximately 95 km south of Sicily and 290 km north of the Libyan coast. There are three main inhabited islands, Malta, Gozo (Ghawdex) and Comino (Kemmuna), and a number of uninhabited islets, the most important being Cominotto (Kemmunett), Filfla, St. Paul's Islands and Fungus Rock.
Due to Malta's importance as a resting and refuelling stop-over for migratory birds on the central European-African migratory flyway, ornithology has been studied on the island for centuries. Early figures in the study of birds include Antonio Schembri (1813-1872), Charles A. Wright (1834-1907) and Giuseppe Despott (1878-1936). More recently, in 1962 the Malta Ornithological Society (MOS) was formed, and was subsequently renamed as BirdLife Malta in 1992. BirdLife Malta continued the tradition of ornithological studies and brought a more scientific and concentrated approach to the study of the island's avifauna.

While much work has been undertaken on the island's avifauna over the centuries, a breeding bird atlas remained lacking. Breeding bird atlases are critical to the understanding and conservation of a country's breeding species, as they can then be used to chart population and distribution changes over time. In 2008 it was decided to rectify this gap in Maltese ornithology, and the Malta Breeding Bird Atlas project was initiated. The project was undertaken by BirdLife Malta in collaboration with the British Trust for Ornithology, and with funding from the Ministry of Resources and Rural Affairs.

Methods

After almost five decades of atlas work there have now been over 400 ornithological atlases published worldwide (Gibbons *et al.* 2007). The majority of atlases have divided their territory into grid cells, usually

squares. With a total land area of 316 km², a basic grid cell size of 1-km squares was chosen for the 2008 Maltese Breeding Bird Atlas. Squares of this size are sufficiently large to contain a range of habitats and species but not so large that they cannot be effectively surveyed by volunteers. The choice of 1km grid cells offered an additional benefit as field methods for measuring bird abundance and population trends at the 1 km square scale are well-developed (e.g. Risely *et al.* 2008) and could be applied with relatively little modification in Malta.

The Maltese islands were therefore divided into 394 grid squares, based on the squares of the Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) grid (Figure 1). Of these, 300 were in Malta, 85 in Gozo, 8 in Comino and one in Filfla. These grids were then sampled based on a combination of three methodologies; (i) Basic Squares, (ii) Key Squares and (iii) Top-up records. Basic Squares were visited for one hour between dawn and 10:00, during which the observer visited all the major habitats within the square. All birds were recorded during the survey and given a Breeding Status Code as set out by the European Bird Census Council (EBCC). Key Squares were visited in more detail, with two 1 km transects being walked in each square and all individual birds counted and recorded in distance bands from the transect itself. Data collected in Key Square surveys was used to create population estimates wherever possible. Lastly, Top-up records were accepted from the ornithologists taking part in the study throughout the breeding season (up until 1st August), which helped to provide a more accurate picture of the distribution of rare breeding species. The methodologies used in this Atlas were standardised methods common to other European Atlases, and thus the results of this atlas can be directly comparable to the results of other European Breeding Bird Atlases.
Fieldwork was carried out between March 15th and August 1st 2008 and was undertaken by 30 ornithologists, who were trained in the methodologies before the field season commenced.

Seabirds

Seabirds were treated separately in this atlas, using a combination of species-specific methods, as they are predominantly nocturnal at colonies and would thus not be accurately surveyed by the standard Atlas methodologies. Seabird distribution was thus mapped using data obtained from a variety of other techniques, including direct observations of birds arriving at colonies during the night, the use of play-back recordings, counting calling birds in suitable but inaccessible areas, counting flying and rafting birds in front of colonies after the egg-laying period and long-term ringing and monitoring studies. All coastal areas were visited by seabird researchers in 2008 using a combination of these methods, and the distribution maps and population estimates are a function of this research.

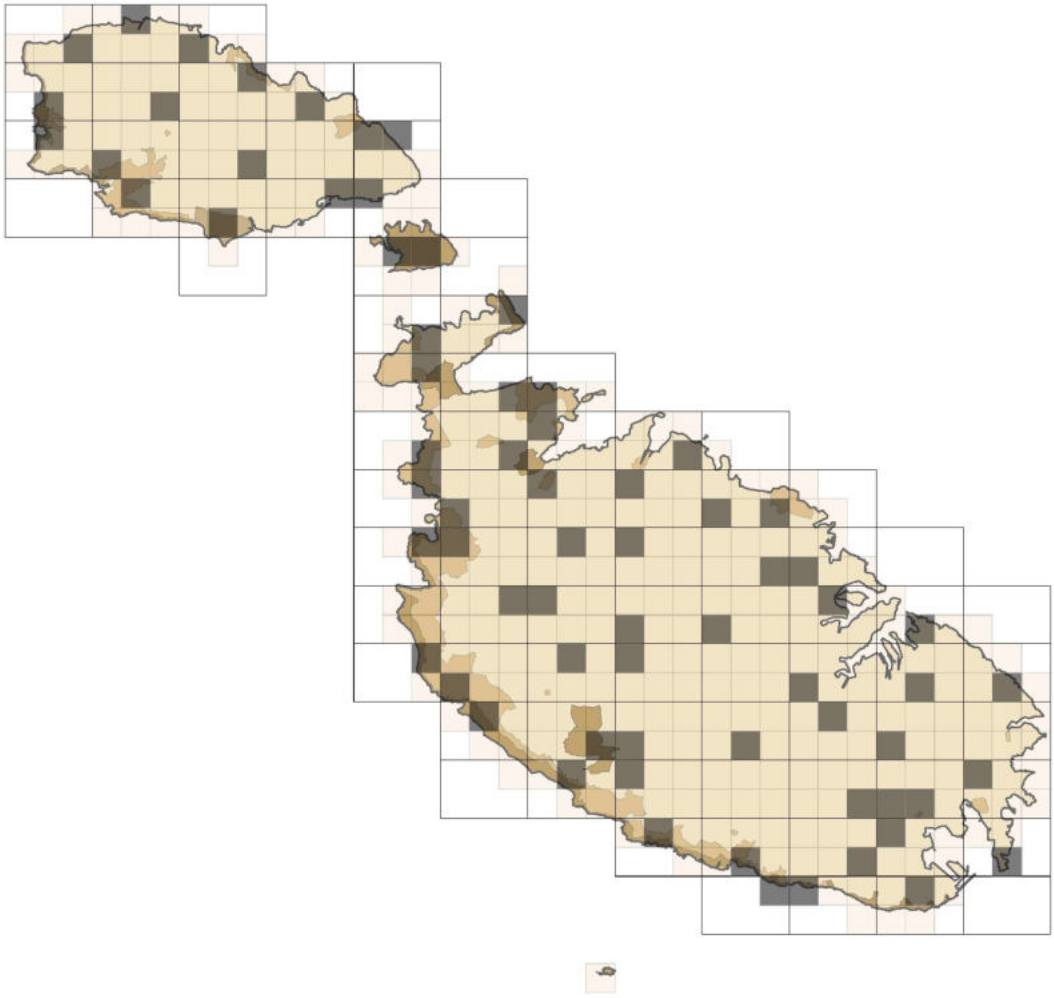

Figure 1: Map of the Maltese islands showing 1-km grid cells, 3 km × 2 km blocks and Key Squares (black squares). The shaded areas are Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation.

Population estimates

For many of the species recorded breeding in 2008, population estimates were relatively easy as so few pairs were recorded. In these cases, a minimum population estimate was based on the actual known number of pairs confirmed breeding, while the maximum was based on the number of pairs that were listed as 'Possible' or 'Probable' breeders in the squares where they were recorded. For example, the Barn Swallow was recorded as breeding in 6 squares, of which two were listed as 'Confirmed breeding'. The breeding population was therefore estimated as 2 to 6 pairs. For rare species where breeding was not confirmed, such as the Linnet, then the minimum estimate was set at 0, while the maximum was the number of pairs that were listed as 'Possible' or 'Probable' breeders in the squares where they were recorded.

For species where sufficient data was available (over 60 observations during Key Square surveys), population estimates were created using the DISTANCE 5.0 (Release 2) program (Thomas *et al.* 2006). All records of juveniles (only adults are used for population estimates) and flying birds which were not necessarily breeding in the square were first removed from the data collected during the Key Squares surveys and then the remaining data entered into DISTANCE. Count data were fitted with a half-normal detection function in cases, as recommended for binomial data of this kind (Buckland *et al.* 2001). The analysis engine was set to MCDS (Multiple covariates distance sampling) to incorporate sex as a covariate (where possible, with the model with the lowest AIC value being chosen if sex was found to affect the model) and the analysis was run twice, once with no stratification, and then stratified by island. This allowed us to produce population estimates for the Maltese islands as a whole, and island-specific estimates (Malta and Gozo only).

As stated previously, seabird population estimates were calculated separately, using a combination of methods.

Mapping

Two maps were produced for species recorded in the Atlas – Distribution Maps (Figure 2, produced for all species) and Abundance Maps (Figure 3, produced for species where sufficient data was available). For distribution maps, data from Basic Squares, Key Squares, Top-up Records and Seabird Surveys were pooled to produce the most comprehensive and up to date picture of bird distributions in Malta in 2008. Multiple records of the same species in the same square were summarised by taking the maximum category from the following sequence (lowest to highest): Migrant, Non-breeder, Possible breeder, Probable breeding or Confirmed breeding. A distribution map was produced for any species with at least one record at the 'Possible' status or higher.

Abundance maps were produced using data from the Basic Square surveys (rather than Key Squares) because their geographic coverage (82 % of the area) meant little interpolation was necessary (it was not possible to pool Basic and Key Squares for these maps, as their methodologies were different). The maximum count of a species across the two visits to a square was taken; only adult birds were included so that late season congregations of juveniles did not influence the maps. Each count was georeferenced to the centre of its grid cell and then the ordinary kriging algorithm in the Spatial Analyst extension in ESRI ArcMap (version 9.2) was used to produce a smoothed interpolated surface of estimated counts across the whole of the Maltese islands. The colour ramps for the maps were derived by dividing the range from lowest to highest value into 10 equal width bands and colouring them accordingly. These interpolated maps were only produced for species where significant spatial autocorrelation was detected (as measured by Moran's I) and where there were at least 10 squares occupied with some level of breeding evidence on which to base the analysis.

Results

A total of 37 species were recorded during the 2008 fieldwork period. Of these, 29 species (3 of which were introduced species) were listed as 'Confirmed breeding' under EBCC criteria, with another 8 species recorded as 'Possibly' or 'Probably' breeding. In terms of abundance categories, 3 species were classified as Abundant, 1 Common, 7 Frequent, 3 Scarce, 2 Localised and 21 Rare.

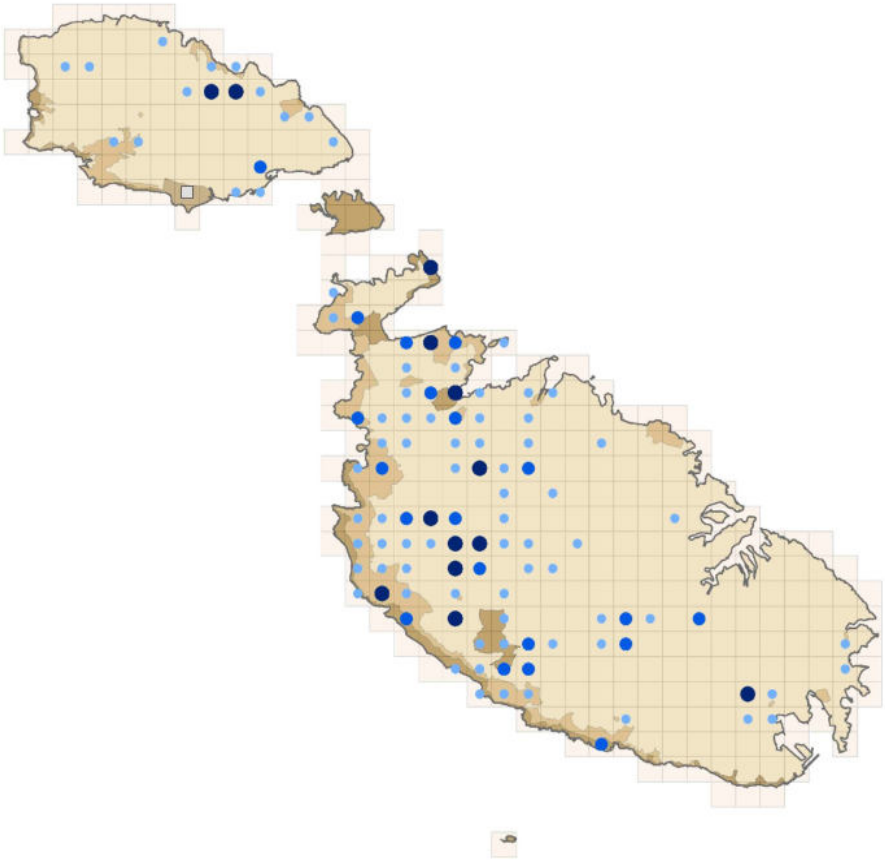

Figure 2: An example of a species distribution map (in this case Cetti's Warbler Cettia cetti). For all distribution maps, breeding categories are presented as follows; 'Confirmed Breeding' is shown as a large dark blue circle, 'Probable Breeding' as a medium-sized blue circle and 'Possible Breeder' as a small, pale blue circle. Birds recorded as 'Non breeding' are presented as a pale grey square and Migrants are excluded.

Species distribution varied considerably (Table 1). Some species, such as Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*, Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* and Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala* were widespread and recorded in most squares. However the majority of species, particularly those targeted by illegal hunting or trapping, were highly localised and restricted to only a few key areas. The top 10 most common species (in terms of number of

breeding pairs), along with their population estimates are presented in Table 2.
A further 15 species that have been confirmed as breeding in Malta historically (only considering records from the 1950s onwards) were not recorded in 2008. Three species that have become extinct in recent years due to illegal hunting, the Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* (extinct since 1982 (Sultana & Gauci 1981-1983), Barn Owl *Tyto alba* (extinct since 1988 (Fenech & Balzan 1988) and Eurasian Jackdaw *Corvus monedula,* extinct since 1956 (Sultana & Gauci 1982), were also not recorded breeding in 2008.

Discussion

The Malta Breeding Bird Atlas 2008 has filled an important gap in Maltese ornithology and has set the standard for all future Maltese Breeding Bird Atlases. In this way, future population trends (both in range and numbers) can be accurately assessed and measures put in place to safeguard Malta's breeding bird species in the future.
The results of the Atlas have highlighted the contrasting fates of Malta's breeding birds. Species such as the Spanish Sparrow were found to be widespread, and were recorded in 97.2 % of all of the grid squares. The same was true for the Zitting Cisticola, a species which only colonised Malta in 1973 (Sultana & Gauchi 1982). This species was recorded in 83.5 % of all grid squares, although it remains conspicuously absent on the island of Comino. The Atlas also highlighted the continued importance of Malta at an international level for seabirds, namely the Yelkouan Shearwater *Puffinus yelkouan*, Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea* and European Storm-petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*. Although the shearwater populations in particular have declined in recent years due to a combination of factors (including accidental by-catch in fisheries (Dimech *et al* 2008), illegal hunting at sea (Raine & Temuge 2009), the effects of light pollution (Raine *et al.* 2007) and rat predation of chicks (Sultana & Gauci 1982; Raine *et al.* 2009), the Atlas has shown that Malta still retains important populations.

Indeed, Malta has approximately 10 % of the world's breeding population of Yelkouan Shearwater (which is currently the focus of an EU LIFE project) and 5 % of the Mediterranean population of Cory's Shearwater.
The Atlas also demonstrated the conservation benefits inherent from a ban on spring hunting. Hunting of birds in spring, when they are on their pre-nuptial migrations, is banned in Europe under the Birds Directive. Malta is currently at the European Court of Justice due to the continuation of spring hunting after Accession to the European Union in 2004. Due to interim measures imposed by the European Court of Justice, 2008 therefore marked the first year that spring hunting was banned in Malta, meaning that the Atlas fieldwork coincided with the first ever ban on spring hunting. The

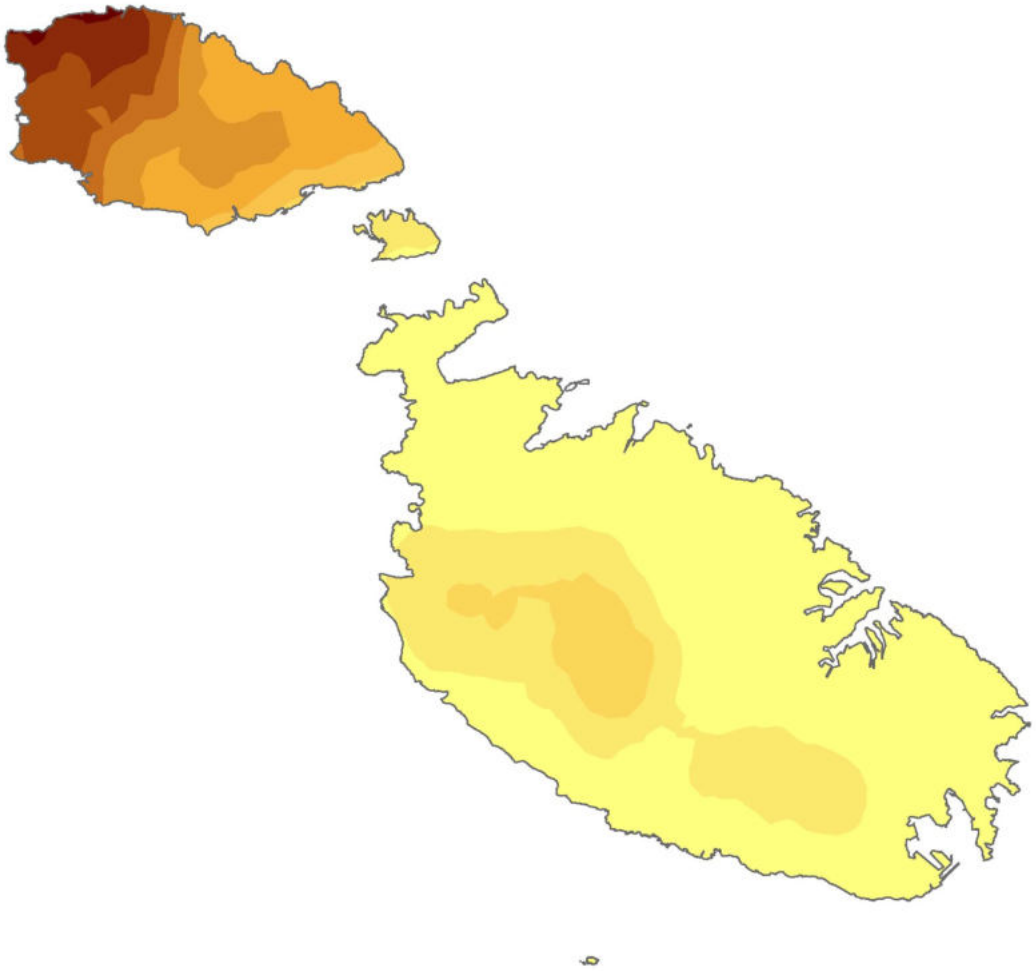

Figure 3: An example of a species abundance map (in this case Short-toed Lark Calandrella brachydactyla). For all abundance maps, the darker the colour the more abundant the species is in that area.

conservation benefits were immediately apparent when comparing Atlas results with historical ornithological data (a database of bird sightings and breeding records have been collected by BirdLife Malta since the 1960s). The Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* dramatically increased its breeding range in 2008, spreading outwards from its stronghold in the north of Malta (where it had previously been restricted), and was recorded in 19 squares in both Malta and Gozo. This species is often shot illegally during spring, along with very large numbers of Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*. Another species which benefited from the ban on spring hunting was the Common Swift *Apus apus*, a species often shot illegally as target practice in spring (Sultana & Gauci 1982). It was recorded in 7 squares during the 2008 Atlas, representing the largest number of prospecting swifts ever recorded in Malta.

However, the majority of birds recorded in the 2008 Atlas remained highly localised and restricted to key areas. While some species, such as the Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* and Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*, were restricted by availability of habitat (particularly wetland habitat which in the Maltese islands is mainly restricted to key areas such as the Ghadira and Simar Nature Reserves), the distribution of many other species was restricted due to human activity. The Corn Bunting, for example, is now in danger of extinction in Malta, due to a combination of human disturbance and urbanisation. It was only recorded in 19 squares in the 2008 Atlas with a population estimate of 39-55 pairs, despite being described as a 'common breeding resident' as recently as the 1980s, when 'during the summer months congregate in large flocks of up to 500 birds' (Sultana & Gauci 1982).

However, the species that were found to be most significantly reduced in 2008 were those that are (i) regularly targeted in large numbers in spring, such as the Turtle Dove, (ii) regularly targeted by poachers, such as birds of prey, or (iii) caught in significant numbers by trappers, such as finches. Only one pair of Common Kestrel was recorded in 2008, and this was listed as a 'Probable Breeding'. This is despite the fact that the Common Kestrel historically bred annually in Malta (Sultana & Gauchi 1982) and is an adaptable species that breeds readily in rural areas (51 % of the Maltese islands are cultivated as agricultural land (MEPA 2008). This species is one of the most commonly shot protected birds of prey in Malta (Raine & Temuge 2009). Furthermore, in 2008, no Peregrine Falcons or Barn Owls were recorded breeding in Malta, despite these species breeding historically and in numbers on the islands (Sultana & Gauchi 1982). The last pairs of both of these species were shot illegally in the 1980s by poachers (Sultana & Gauci 1981-1983; Fenech & Balzan 1988).

While illegal hunting has excluded viable breeding populations of raptors, widespread trapping has resulted in the near extinction of Malta's breeding

finches. Indeed, tens of thousands of finches are caught every year during migration periods and over the winter. A study by MEPA (2004) estimated the catches of the target finch species to amount to a total of 103,000 birds per annum, and included 34,538 Linnets *Carduelis cannabina* and 37,924 Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*. Despite Malta's small size, there is sufficient breeding habitat, food and water sources in Malta to easily sustain viable breeding populations of several finch species – particularly Linnet, Serin *Serinus serinus*, Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*, Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* and Greenfinch, all of which are targeted by trappers. Indeed all five species have been recorded breeding in Malta historically (Sultana & Gauci 1982).

Furthermore, this can be ably demonstrated by examining the status of these species in nearby islands of similar size and habitat in the Mediterranean (such as Lampedusa and Pantelleria), which hold viable breeding populations of many of these finch species (Valvo *et al.* 1994). Despite this, the 2008 Atlas results show that breeding finches are highly restricted, with Common Chaffinch only recorded in 5 squares, and European Serin, Greenfinch and Linnet each restricted to a single square.

Goldfinch was not recorded at all during the surveys. Under Accession Treaty negotiations, Malta agreed to end the practice of bird trapping by the end of 2008, a milestone that has now passed. As long as Malta abides by these binding Agreements, and actively controls illegal trapping (which is still a serious problem in spring), then finch populations should slowly begin to increase in the Maltese islands in the future.

The Malta Breeding Bird Atlas 2008 has set the standard for all future Breeding Bird Atlases. In this way, future population trends (both in range and numbers) can be accurately assessed and measures put in place to safeguard Malta's breeding bird species in the future. The Atlas has also highlighted the current perilous state of many breeding species in Malta. Due to serious conservation issues such as intensive and illegal hunting and widespread trapping, many species that should have viable breeding populations in Malta (such as birds of prey and finches) are currently rare and highly localised, or even locally extinct. The results of this 2008 Atlas therefore stress the need for the government to take these conservation issues seriously, if breeding populations of these species are to ever recover.

Table 1. All species recorded during the 2008 Malta Breeding Bird Atlas fieldwork, and the number of grid squares that each species was recorded in.

Species	Total	Island Malta	Gozo	Comino	Filfla
Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*	1	1	0	0	0
Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea*	48	28	18	1	1
Yelkouan Shearwater *Puffinus yelkouan*	43	26	13	4	0
European Storm-petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*	3	1	1	0	1
Mallard *Anas platyrhinchos*	na	na	na	0	0
Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*	1	0	1	0	0
Chukar *Alectoris chukar*	5	0	0	5	0
Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*	1	0	0	1	0
Golden Pheasant *Chrysolophus pictus*	1	0	0	1	0
Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*	1	1	0	0	0
Moorhen Gallinula chloropus	7	7	0	0	0
Common Coot *Fulica atra*	1	1	0	0	0
Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*	2	2	0	0	0
Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*	1	1	0	0	0
Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*	14	8	5	0	1
Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*	14	12	2	0	0
Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*	19	14	5	0	0
Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*	89	77	6	6	0
Common Swift *Apus apus*	7	6	1	0	0
Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*	153	75	73	5	0

Species	Total	Island Malta	Gozo	Comino	Filfla
Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*	6	5	1	0	0
Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius*	121	75	39	7	0
Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*	110	93	17	0	0
Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*	329	258	71	0	0
Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*	3	3	0	0	0
Sardinian Warbler Sylvia melanocephala	360	274	79	7	0
Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata*	93	53	35	5	0
Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*	10	10	0	0	0
Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*	3	2	1	0	0
Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*	5	2	0	3	0
Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*	383	291	84	7	1
Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*	44	42	2	0	0
Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*	5	5	0	0	0
Serin *Serinus serinus*	1	1	0	0	0
Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*	1	1	0	0	0
Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*	1	0	1	0	0
Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*	19	14	5	0	0

Table 2. The top 10 most common species recorded during the 2008 Malta Breeding Bird Atlas fieldwork, in order of breeding pairs

Species	Population Estimates (bpr) Minimum	Maximum
Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*	110.910	306.170
Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*	13.702	19.544
Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala*	12.736	16.998
European Storm-petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*	5.025	8.035
Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea*	4.340	4.860
Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*	2.039	5.728
Yelkouan Shearwater *Puffinus yelkouan*	1.680	1.990
Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*	978	2.281
Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata*	691	1.823
Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius*	595	1.305

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Bird Census News 22/1: 23 - 26

The population status of the Quail *Coturnix coturnix* in Ukraine: an update

Vadim Yanenko, Valentin Serebryakov & Sergey Loparev

Biological Department, Shevchenko National University in Kiev, Volodymyrska Str., 64, KIEV 01601, Ukraine. bcssu@univ.kiev.ua

Introduction

The Quail is a common breeding species in Ukraine except in the Carpathian mountain region (NW) and the woodlands of Polissya (N & NW). In the western part of the country the species is present as breeding bird in the plains. Through river valleys it has spread into some mountainous areas up to 700-800 meters (Tatarinov 1973). Wintering birds have been recorded in the southern part of the country, in the Crimea (Figure 1).
However, during the last 30-40 years, the number of birds has drastically declined. The main reasons of this negative trend are intensification of agriculture with increased use of chemicals, mortality during migration, increased hunting pressure and high mortality during harvesting of the fields. In this article we try to give a review of known data from the different regions in the country. Although numbers are not always easy to compare due to the use of various methods and different scales of census and time periods, it should at least be clear that the species has shown a marked decline in the last decades.

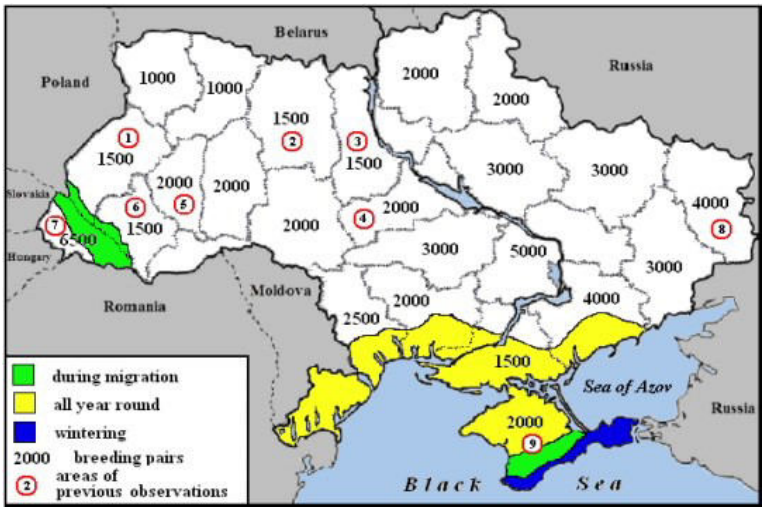

Fig. 1: Quail's area in Ukraine

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Status of the Quail in Ukraine

For region numbers mentioned in the text we refer tot Figure 1. In the Lviv region (1) and the Zhytomyr region (2) the species showed a decrease of resp. 30 % during the last 20 years (Bashta 1996) and of 40 % during the last decades (Melnitchuk 1982). In the Kiev region (3) it has become rare. Hunting during migration and at wintering sites could be the major reason for the decline, as the habitat has not undergone important changes (Kistyakovski 1982). In the Cherkasy region (4) the Quail was clearly more numerous 30-40 years ago. Here, a high mortalitiy has been recorded during the harvesting of fields and pastures (Yevtushevski 1987; Goroshko 1989). In the Ternopil region (5) the species was common and more numerous in the Lanovets and the Shumski districts, as well as in the north part of the Kremenets district (Marisova 1960). No recent data exist. In the Ivano-Frankivsk region (6) Quail density along the Dniestr river is on average 1.6 singing male per 10 km river bank (Bokotey 1999). In the Transcarpathian region (7) the species showed also a clear decline. A comparison of census results three decades ago and more recently in Chornyi Mochar (7) (fields on drained wetlands) shows that densities have decreased by 5 times, from 1,6 to 0.3 pairs per 1 km^2 (Hrabar, 1997). In the "Striletski Steppe" Reserve of the Lugansk region (8), the breeding density of Quail reached 5 pairs/km^2 in mowed hayfield areas. However, the species is almost extinct now in this region and has become scarce mainly due to heavy hunting pressure (Kochegur 1989). In the Crimea (9) breeding and migrating numbers have drastically decreased (Kostin 1983). At the end of the 19th century numbers were certainly much higher than nowadays. There is a record from 1876 that three hunters killed a total of 720 birds during one day (Bakanovskiy 1890)

The Quail in the Vinnitsa region

A special Quail inventory was conducted in the Vinnitsa region in the period 1996-1997 and in 2002 . Four different study areas were selected:
I) Stryzhavka – 6 km^2, II) Mykulyntsi – 12 km^2, III) Vinnitski Khutory – 11 km^2 and IV) Airport Ring Road zone – 13 km^2. The results of the census are presented in Table 1 (number of pairs) and Figure 2 (densities).

year/area	I	II	III	IV
1996	7	23	7	22
1997	9	18	3	12
2002	4	14	4	11

Table 1: Numbers of breeding pairs of Quail, *Coturnix coturnix* in four study areas in the Vinnitsa region

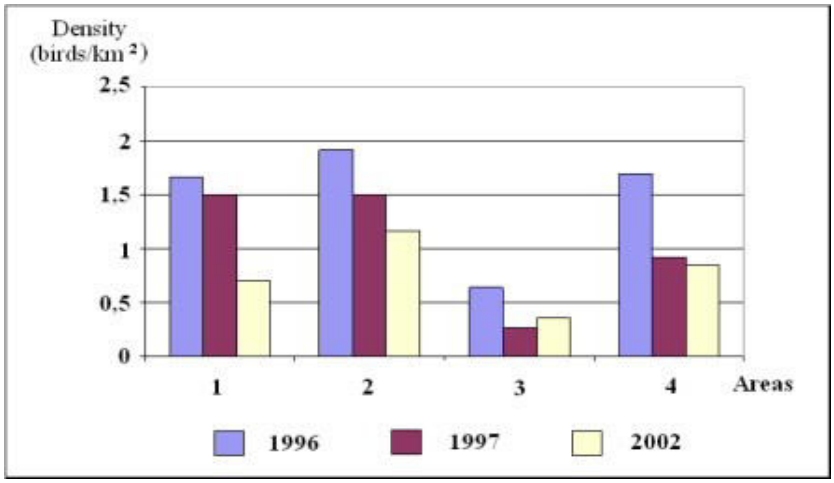

Fig. 2: Quail densities (birds/km^2) in different areas of the Vinnitsa region: (1) Stryzhavka, (2) Mykulyntsi, (3) Vinnitski Khutory, (4) Airport Ring Road, in 1996, 1997 and 2002.

Quail populations in Europe have often shown great fluctuations (Hagemeijer & Blair 1997) but it is clear that there is an overall decline in the whole continent. To estimate the present population in Ukraine is a difficult task and we should certainly need more information. The population could be near to 60 thousands breeding pairs, but this figure should be treated as preliminary.

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Bird Census News 22/1: 27 - 30

Report on the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme workshop 2009

Jana Škorpilová[1], Petr Voříšek[1] & Richard Gregory[2]

1. Czech Society for Ornithology, Na bělidle 34, CZ-150 00 Prague 5, Czech Republic, EuroMonitoring@birdlife.cz
2. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL United Kingdom, richard.gregory@rspb.org.uk .

Introduction

The third workshop of the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (PECBMS) was held on 25th – 29th January 2009 at the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague, Czech Republic. In four days, 66 participants, mostly national scheme coordinators and other monitoring experts, coming from 27 European countries discussed the future directions and further improvements of the PECBMS. Several other, sometimes quite technical issues were discussed too.

The aims of the workshop were:
*To report on development of the project since the last workshop in 2005
*To get feedback from national coordinators and other stakeholders in order to improve the scheme
*To discuss (and find and accept solutions if possible) to several technical issues of the PECBMS
*To help setting scheme priorities for a next 5-year period

The agenda of the workshop and all presentations and outputs from discussions are freely available on a CD-ROM (please contact: Jana Škorpilová on skorpilova@birdlife.cz).

Brief selected conclusions that came out of the discussions are as follows:

Indicators and policy

The session brought a discussion on various difficulties that can arise in advocating the use of common bird indicators in policies and decision making in Europe. For example, the existence of different versions of national wild bird indicators that differ in species classification or computation procedure usually cause problems in their interpretation and

use that can lead to misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the indicators. For that reason, the specific purpose of single indicators and their proper labelling always has to be clearly stated. However, these differences in various versions of national indicators deserve more exploration to clarify their credibility and interlinkage. Regular communication, explanation and promotion of the indicators is needed. The convincing fact that voluntary field work is unique, cheap, reliable and effective should be also emphasized in relevant biodiversity reporting processes.

Developing indicators for other habitat types and improving quality of the existing one for forests

The PECBMS currently produce indicators for 3 habitat types: farmland, forest and all common species (http://www.ebcc.info/index.php?ID=368). The PECBMS farmland bird indicator has been already adopted by the European Union as a Structural Indicator, a Sustainable Development Indicator, and a baseline indicator for monitoring the implementation of the Rural Development Regulation under the Common Agricultural Policy. The common forest bird indicator has been a subject of discussions and needs to be developed further. The main problems with the common forest bird indicator are different and sometimes unclear driving forces in different European regions, diversity of forest habitats across Europe and misunderstanding of a role of various biodiversity indicators. Creating more specific forest bird indicators for different European regions or single forest types needs to be considered as well as careful selection of species typical of these habitats to acquire an indicator ideally representing trends not only of groups of bird species, but also other taxa and responding to driving forces. A challenge for the future development of the project is obtaining a habitat-specific data that would simplify development of other indicators too.

There is also an increasing demand for indicators of other habitat types. The discussion identified the indicators for inland wetlands, Mediterranean forest, shrubland and rocky habitats, and urban habitats as the most feasible to create. The one for inland wetlands being potentially the easiest to develop and create as the PECBMS already produces indices for some inland wetland species. Concerning Mediterranean habitats, poor data coverage could reduce the quality and significance of the indicator at the moment, as only four south European countries (France, Italy, Spain and Portugal) provide the indices to the PECBMS. The fact that we have no data from many others (Balkans, Turkey) means a big gap in geographical coverage for this important habitat. The south-western aspect of the current data coverage could therefore bring unwanted bias. For the urban habitats, an indicator based on 'urban' species can sometimes be hard to interpret as there are so few species characteristic of urban habitats only. On the other

hand, having habitat-specific data for urban habitats (that could be more likely available in the future) could allow the more valuable comparison of species trends in and outside of the urban sites. At last, indicators for another habitat type calls for more discussion on their purpose, resolving deficiencies and identifying relevant European policies for such indicators.

SEED BI project and what next?

The project ´Support Eastern Europeans to Develop Bird Indicators´ (http://www.ebcc.info/seedbirdindicators.html) was designed to support NGOs in eastern and south-eastern Europe in starting to produce wild bird indicators. The project finished at the end of 2008, but had provided great assistance to monitoring schemes that had recently started and to brand new ones in eastern Europe. The countries involved in the project experienced considerable progress, but the question is what will happen with their new schemes now the project has ended. The possible answer could be in matching these less experienced schemes with some more developed ones to create more sustainable cooperation. For that reason, workshop participants representing less-experienced schemes specified their needs for running and developing their schemes and participants representing the more advanced schemes presented the kind of assistance they might offer. Matching the schemes in accordance with the defined ´demands´ and ´offers´ (´twinning approach´) might allow an effective partnership between countries that need help and those that can provide appropriate assistance. However, this is just a beginning and more effort needs to be invested in building existing partnerships and links and in creating new ones.

Spatial modelling

The session on spatial modelling was dedicated to introducing and explaining the types of data and computation methods required to produce Pan-European distribution and trend maps. In the discussion, the issues that have to be resolved before creating such maps were listed (e.g. spatial coverage, heterogeneity of observations, data access constraints, availability of environmental data, statistics etc.). The session clarified the questions comprehensively, attracted the attention of all workshop participants and showed their interest in participating in the initiative. All participants agreed that having abundance maps for species would allow deeper insight into bird distributions in Europe and give background for further exploration of potential driving forces that stand behind the changes in the occurrence and abundance of species. They might also provide valuable knowledge for nature conservation policies (e.g. in identifying new SPA's etc.). In conclusion, there were suggestions to organise a special training workshop

as well as to finalise the procedures for data collection, processing and coordination.

Further development of PECBMS

After eight years of existence, the PECBMS project is at a stage where it is able to produce its main outputs on regular basis. The twenty-two European countries contributing to the project now represent excellent coverage of species trends among widespread and common birds in Europe. Species indices and indicators are produced on a routine basis with careful control of data quality. However, proposals and ideas for further technical and strategic development of the project generated at the workshop have to be taken into consideration. Ideas for the project development include e.g. exploring possibilities for collecting species-specific and habitat-specific data, application of distance sampling and taking detectability into account etc. Constant effort has to be also devoted to helping countries in establishing their new national breeding bird monitoring surveys, or in assisting existing schemes in cooperation with policy makers. Wider use of the PECBMS data in scientific research is also desirable, either through increasing the capacity of PECBMS team, or through cooperation with external experts, including many in the scheme's own network. There are still many options available to explore the use of the PECBMS outputs and thus build a deeper understanding of the driving forces influencing species´ populations in Europe. Recent studies have focused on emerging factors, such as climatic change, and this area of work is likely to grow.

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Books, reports & journals

Vermeersch G. & A. Anselin 2009.
Breeding birds in Flanders 2006-2007. Recent status and trends of scarce, colonial and feral species and species of the Red List and Annex I of the European Birds' Directive. INBO.M.2009.3, Research Institute for Nature and Forest, Brussels, 99 pages. (in Dutch: *Broedvogels in Vlaanderen 2006-2007. Recente status en trends van Bijzondere Broedvogels en soorten van de Vlaamse Rode Lijst en/of Bijlage I van de Europese Vogelrichtlijn*, with English summary and English captions for figures and tables).ISBN 978-90-403-0296-1.
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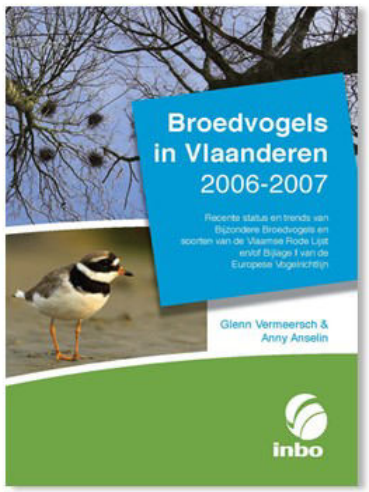

This report summarizes the monitoring results in Flanders in 2006-2007 of rare, colonial and feral breeding bird species. These data are supplemented with the first results of our common bird monitoring scheme that was started in 2007. A total of 108 species is discussed of which 90 in more detail. Integrated breeding bird monitoring and research in Flanders is co-ordinated by the Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO) in close collaboration with the BirdLife Partner Natuurpunt vzw. INBO guarantees the scientific foundations of the monitoring schemes and data processing and reports to regional, national and international levels whereas Natuurpunt is responsible for the network of volunteers. In future reports more attention will be paid to explanatory projects such as the Constant Effort Sites project (CES) and we will focus more on developments within and outside the Natura 2000 network. In this report special attention is given to species of the Flemish Red List and/or species of the Annex I of the European Birds Directive. In a nutshell, we found that most Annex I species are doing better than (other) Red List species, almost all of which have been continuously decreasing in Flanders since the turn of the century.

Typical species of (old) forest predominantly show increasing trends whereas farmland and heathland specialists are mostly declining. The on average positive trend of marshland bird species is biased by the increasing numbers of scarce and critical species like Bittern and Little Bittern. These species are still recovering from severe earlier losses and have not yet re-established a sustainable population.
It has been a long time (1996/1997) since we had a severe winter in Flanders. This has positively affected certain species that are sensitive to sharp frost such as Gey Heron, Kingfisher and Grey Wagtail. Also species that are expanding their range northwards such as Bee-eater, Little Egret, Cetti's Warbler and Fan-tailed Warbler reached peak numbers in 2007.
We do not have detailed counts of feral breeding birds. This is partly due to the fact that some of these species (i.e. Egyptian and Canada Goose) have become too

numerous to be counted on a yearly basis. On the other hand, volunteers traditionally do not tend to pay much attention to feral birds. Nevertheless, in some cases it was possible to obtain a general idea of the trends for species like Ring-necked Parakeet (clearly increasing) and Ruddy Duck (first breeding attempt for Flanders in 2006).

Traditionally some surprises were noted. In 2006 a pair of Whiskered terns bred successfully and the first breeding attempt of Great Egret was discovered. In 2007 a couple of Hen Harriers raised three young in a small forest patch in the middle of a large agricultural area. A colourful species like Bee-eater continues to do well and bred for the sixth successive year in 2007. Unfortunately quite a few species have become increasingly rare and are now on the verge of extinction. Whinchat, Wheatear, Crested Lark and Corn Bunting are all Red List species that are very rapidly declining. We doubt that the current and very localised efforts to save the last Corn Buntings will be effective in the long run as long as there is no major turn in agricultural politcy. After a peak in the early 1990's, the Penduline Tit is now becoming an increasinly rare breeding bird again. The very low numbers of Serins in 2006-2007 could be part of large population fluctuations, typical for this species.

The first results of the common bird monitoring scheme show a continuous and severe decline of species like Golden Oriole, Spotted Flycatcher, Nightingale, Turtle Dove and Willow Tit. Other species typical of hedgerows and small, young forest patches are also declining: Linnet, Willow Warbler, Whitethroat, Icterine Warbler and Tree Sparrow. On the other side of the picture the increase of forest species is confirmed by the positive trends for Nuthatch, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and Marsh Tit. In heathlands, the only typical species that is doing very well is the Stonechat. Another satisfying development is the increase of Goldfinch in rural and urban landscapes.

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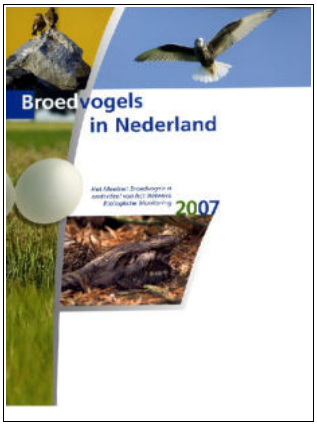
van Dijk, A., A. Boele, F. Hustings, K. Koffijberg & C. Plate 2009.
Breeding birds in the Netherlands in 2007. SOVON-monitoring report 2009/01. SOVON, Vogelonderzoek Nederland, Beek-Ubbergen, 160 pages.(In Dutch: *Broedvogels in Nederland 2007*, with English summary and English captions for figures and tables). ISSN 1874-169X.
Download for free pdf file at www.sovon.nl/default.asp?id=135 or order (15 €) at: SOVON, Rijkstraatweg 178, NL-DG Beek-Ubbergen.



This report presents the results of monitoring of breeding birds in the Netherlands in 2007. The main part consists of species accounts in which details on numbers, trends and distribution are given. Besides, chapter 4 gives a general overview of the results and allows quick access to the data, also with respect to e.g. Red List species and trends in Natura 2000 species. Chapter 5 deals with a number of specific monitoring schemes, i.e. the Wadden Sea, national freshwater bodies, farmland birds, Nest Record Scheme and Constant Effort Sites. These chapters can be read on their own, highlight some results and reveal some of the backgrounds for the trends observed. National population figures and estimates for all rare and

colonial breeding birds are listed. All national indices are available at www.sovon.nl.

The breeding season of 2007 followed an extremely mild winter and early spring and completed a series of 10 mild winters in a row. Spring was characterised by a prolonged dry period, lasting from 22 March to 7 May. During this period, many regions did not report any rainfall. Compared to the previous five seasons, 2007 was dominated by slightly more negative trends in breeding bird numbers. All species combined, a 2 % decline was found. Among the thriving species in 2007 are those that have been subject to recent increases, like Peregrine Falcon (41 breeding pairs) and Middle Spotted Woodpecker (120-140 bp). Common Kingfisher (700-800 bp), Grey Wagtail (425-500 bp), Cetti's Warbler (70-80 bp) and Zitting Cisticola (80-100 bp) still benefit from the long series of mild winters, and meanwhile have expanded their breeding range within The Netherlands. Also long term upward trends in Eurasian Spoonbill (1910 bp) and Barn Owl (3300 bp) continued in 2007. Some coastal breeding birds were thriving as well (notably Mediterranean Gull, Common Tern, Little Tern). After three years with low numbers, Corncrakes were reported in high numbers again (320-360 singing males). For the first time, breeding in Whitewinged Tern (4 bp, following an influx in May) was observed. Paddyfield Warbler (Island of Vlieland) and Red-breasted Flycatcher (Island of Schiermonnikoog) were trapped during the breeding season and showed strong evidence of local breeding (females with breeding patch and recently hatched juveniles). Other recent new breeding birds like Whooper Swan (1 bp), White-tailed Eagle (1 bp) and Common Crane (3 bp) were able to breed again in 2007.

Many species that have been subject to declines in previous years did not recover in 2007: Hen Harrier, Kentish Plover, Ruff, Short-eared Owl, Eurasian Wryneck, Crested Lark and Corn Bunting. When the current trends continue, some of these species might well go extinct in near future. The status of Northern Wheatear, Whinchat and Great Reed Warbler is worrying as well. Formerly expanding species like Fieldfare, Penduline Tit and Common Rosefinch have contracted their breeding range in the past decade, along with a considerable decline in numbers. The prolonged drought in spring probably affected (low) numbers of Black-necked Grebe, Great Bittern and Spotted Crake. Recent declines in Common Raven are thought to be linked to food shortage, whereas Rook suffers from disturbance at urban breeding sites. Local conditions in Oostvaardersplassen for the first time halted the ongoing increase in Great Egret (46-55 bp).

Generally speaking, resident breeding birds are doing better than migratory breeding birds, despite declines reported in residents like Long-tailed Tit, Willow Tit, Coal Tit and Crested Tit. Especially among long-distance migrants wintering in Africa, many species show declines (e.g. Eurasian Hobby, European Turtle Dove, Icterine Warbler, Wood Warbler). When comparing trends in different habitats, most obvious declines are going on in farmland birds (though high numbers/ increases were observed in Gadwall, Tufted Duck,Meadow Pipit and Yellow Wagtail) and heathland birds (extinction of Tawny Pipit and Great Grey Shrike, decline in Northern Wheatear). In half-open agricultural landscapes, trends in Yellowhammer and Stonechat are going up. Woodland birds and species breeding in marshy habitats are generally increasing as well. Exceptions to this rule are Great Crested Grebe, Great Bittern, Pochard and Spotted Crake.

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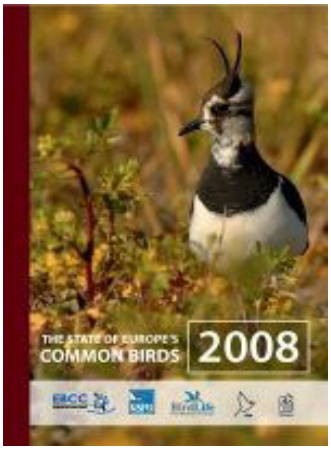
PECBMS, 2009.
The State of Europe´s Common Birds 2008. CSO/RSPB, Prague, Czech Republic. Electronic version of the brochure is available for free download from the EBCC website: www.ebcc.info/index.php?ID=375&Preview=1, hard copies (free) on request at the project coordinator Petr Voříšek (EuroMonitoring at birdlife.cz).



This new PECBMS report was published in June 2009. The brochure presents the population trends of 135 common bird species, as well as multi-species indices (indicators), based on data collected from 21 European countries, covering the period 1980-2006. With more countries contributing their data, and improvements in data quality control, the results are now more representative and more precise than before.

Of the 135 species covered, 36 have increased moderately and one strongly, 53 have declined moderately and two steeply, while 29 have remained stable. In only 14 cases do species trends remain uncertain.

The latest set of wild bird indicators shows that common birds as a whole are still in moderate decline in Europe. Average population levels have fallen by 10 % over the last 26 years. The numbers of common farmland birds have on average fallen by 48 %. Although the decline appears to have levelled off in recent years, Europe has still lost half of its farmland birds in the last quarter of a century. The numbers of common forest birds have declined on average by 9 %, but there are regional differences.

Over the last few years, the indicators produced by PECBMS have been used increasingly widely for policy purposes, both at European and national levels, illustrating the relevance of the indicators. For example, the Farmland Bird Indicator (FBI) has been adopted by the EU as a Structural Indicator, a Sustainable Development Indicator, and a baseline indicator for monitoring the implementation of the Rural Development Regulation under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Furthermore, SEBI2010 (Streamlining European 2010 Biodiversity Indicators), a pan-European initiative led by the European Environment Agency, has also incorporated the wild bird indicators in a set of 26 indicators to assess progress towards the European target of halting biodiversity loss by 2010.

Individual species trends and full set of PECBMS indicators can be also found on the EBCC web site. Follow the links for indices and indicators.

Sikora A., Z. Rohde, M. Gromadzki, G. Neubauer & P. Chylarecki 2007. The atlas of breeding birds in Poland 1985-2004. Bogucki Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Poznán, 639 pages. (In Polish: *Atlas rozmieszczenia ptátow lęgowych Polski 1985-2004,* with an extensive English summary and shortened species accounts -over 65 pages in total- including generalized maps). ISBN 978-83-61320-01-2.
Orders: http://www.bogucki.istore.pl/sklep,933,,,03,,en-eur,688704,0.html. Price: 38,44 €

The Atlas of Breeding Birds in Poland was a nationwide project involving over 1200 volunteers. The overall project was coordinated by the Ornithological Station of the Institute of Ecology, Polish Academy of Sciences (now the Ornithological Station, Museum and Institute of Zoology). The fieldwork was coordinated by over 20 professionals in several regions, so as to ensure the most comprehensive within-region surveys. To explore areas with the poorest coverage, special expeditions were organised. Breeding criteria used followed those in EBCC. Data were collected in 2993 of the 3105 Polish 10×10 km grid squares, a remarkable performance!

The data used in the book cover two periods. During the first (1985-1993) all breeding species were recorded. However, since that time, the distribution of 51 species were found to have significantly changed. Therefore, additional information from recent literature and unpublished observations from the period 1994-2004 was added to the database. The most intensive fieldwork took place between 1987 and 1991.

A total of 224 species have been recorded. The number of species recorded within one grid square ranged from 1 to 178 and is a reflection of true variation in species richness and of observer effort. As in all field studies, there was a positive relationship between the number of species recorded and the fieldwork effort, which highlights the objective variation in the probability of species detection. At ca 100 records per square and c. 70-80 species detected, there is a distinct point of inflection. Therefore it was agreed to consider squares with 80 or fewer species to have been inadequately surveyed. If all the grid squares surveyed are used (2993, 604164 records) the estimated average species richness is 90.32. This value increases to 105.69 when the inadequately surveyed grid squares are omitted and data of 2057 sq, 525732 records are used. Owing to the uneven fieldwork effort, particular regions differed with respect to coverage. In the whole of Poland, 53.3 % of squares were adequately surveyed.

The main part of the book is taken by the species accounts. The 244 species presented are divided into three categories: (i) species recorded in a wild state, breeding confirmed (234 species, with text and map), (ii) species recorded in a wild state, but breeding probable (7 species, text only) and (iii) introduced species which have established self-sustaining populations (3 species, text only). Each species account starts with information on its status in Poland: descriptive information on the area of occupancy (estimated, using the grid squared adequately surveyed) and size of population. This is followed by the most typical range of habitats used by

the species, a description of its breeding area and vertical range and example densities (including within-habitat and landscape densities). If data on long-term population trends or short term (e.g. between-year variations) are available, they are mentioned at the end of the account. Short accounts of species belonging to categories (ii) and (iii) follow those of category (i) species. Each account has a bird drawing of the species.

For the first time, preliminary estimates of population sizes of many widespread and common bird species (until recently with "total population unknown") have been produced and could be included to the species texts. These estimates are based on the Polish Common Bird Census (MPPL) in which standardised bird surveys are performed each year on more than 350 1×1 study plots, selected according to survey planning methodology. They should however be treated as preliminary. Progress in modelling techniques using survey sampling data will enable the estimates presented in the book to be verified or defined more precisely in the near future.

Special chapters are dedicated to the comparison of Polish breeding avifauna with the European avifauna. Poland has a number of key species, defined as species whose populations in the country comprise 5 % or more of its European population. 11 species make up at least 10 % of their European populations: White Stork, Grey Partridge, Aquatic Warbler, Crane, Yellowhammer, Black Stork, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Marsh Warbler, Grasshopper Warbler, Great Bittern and Tawny Owl. In addition, Poland supports significant proportions (5-10 %) of the European populations of a further 26 species. Regarding the habitat, the populations of 29 % of farmland species exceed 5 % of their European populations, while 22 % of species of aquatic habitats make up at least 5 %.

Of the 195 bird species listed on the Annex I of the EU Bird Directive, 69 bred in Poland between 1990 and 2004. Among these, Red-backed Shrike, Ortolan Bunting and Wood Lark were the most numerous. Others were White Stork, Aquatic Warbler, Black Stork, Crane, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Great Bittern, White-tailed Eagle, Middle Spotted Woodpecker and Marsh Harrier. Compared to the whole continent, Poland has a lower number of globally threatened breeding bird species (SPEC1-defined by BirdLife International) and a lower number of SPEC3 species.

During the 1990s, population trends in 231 species in Poland and Europe were far more optimistic in the former: 22 % of declining species (36 % in Europe). At that time, land changes were particularly favourable to farmland birds. The last few years however, have witnessed a dramatic turnaround. The increasing intensification of agriculture across the country has reversed this trend. The Common Bird Census scheme has shown the Farmland Bird Index to have decreased by an average of 10 % between 2000 and 2004, in particular in regions of previously low-intensity agriculture (western and northern Poland). More recent results suggest even a decrease of as much as 20 %. This situation is especially alarming since Poland holds substantial populations of many farmland birds.

At the end of the atlas, an extensive English summary -over 65 pages- describes geography, climate and land use, material and methods, and the most important results. Generalized maps of 30×30 km grid squares together with shortened species accounts make this very important book easily available to the non-Polish reader.

Bird Census News 22/1: 37 - 40

EBCC
European Bird Census Council

SEO/BirdLife

Bird Numbers 2010

18th Conference of the European Bird Census Council
Spain 2010

22-26 March 2010, Cáceres (Extremadura), Spain

"Monitoring, indicators and targets"

BIRD NUMBERS 2010

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT
Website: www.seo.org/ebcc2010
Mail: ebcc2010@seo.org
Abstract submission deadline: 15 September 2009
Online registration deadline: 1 December 2009

Bird Census News 22/1: 37 - 40

The European Bird Census Council (EBCC) and the Spanish Ornithological Society (SEO/BirdLife) are pleased to invite you to attend the 18th International Conference of the EBCC, which will be held in the historic city of Cáceres (Extremadura), western Spain, from 22 to 26 March 2010.
The official language of the Conference will be English.

SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM
The schedule of sessions, symposia and guest speakers is currently under discussion. The conference programme will be finalised in the autumn once all submissions have been received. Therefore, we kindly request that the titles and summaries of all proposed presentations be sent to the conference organizing committee (ebcc2010@seo.org) as soon as possible, under any of the following main topics:

Session/Symposium
Birds as indicators
Monitoring influencing policy, 2010 targets
Citizen science
Monitoring: Censuses, Atlases and Demography
Steppe habitats monitoring
Climate Change
Models, distribution and abundance
Migration monitoring
New methods in bird monitoring
Introduced/Alien and invasive species
Monitoring of rare and endangered species
Site-based monitoring and assessment

Round Tables/Workshops
Internet/web-based monitoring platforms
European network of migration stations
New European Atlas
PECBM and CBM in new countries and improvement of the existing schemes
Poster session
Posters will be displayed during the whole Conference.
We are open to suggestions on new sessions, symposia, workshops and round tables.

ABSTRACT BOOK AND PROCEEDINGS
Abstract submission deadline is 15 September 2009. The abstracts should have a maximum of 2,500 characters (one page, A4 standard). It is possible to include one figure or one table, reducing the number of characters to fit the page.
The final programme and the abstract book will be provided to participants at the conference and will also be available on the EBCC website before the conference date.
The proceedings of the conference will be published as a special issue of **Ardeola** (the Scientific Journal of SEO/BirdLife, the Spanish Ornithological Society) and in EBCC's Journal **Bird Census News**. To be considered for possible inclusion we ask that short papers (10.000-25.000 characters, including figures and tables) are submitted at the conference, at the latest.

CONFERENCE DAILY PROGRAMME
The conference will include sessions, symposium, poster sessions, workshops and round tables.
This program is a draft. It is likely to be modified, and changes will be communicated as soon as possible on the Conference website (www.seo.org/ebcc2010).

Day Day Timetable Conference Centre
Monday 22/03/2010
AM/PM Arrival and registration at Conference Centre
Monday Late afternoon: Presentation (Local authority, SEO/BL president, Chairman EBCC)
Monday Early evening: Welcome reception

Tuesday 23/03/2010
09:00 - 11:00 Session, symposium, round tables and workshop
11:00 - 11:30 Coffee break
11:30 - 13:00 Session, symposium, round tables and workshop
13:00 - 14:30 Lunch
14:30 - 16:30 Session, symposium, round tables and workshop
16:30 - 17:00 Coffee break
17:00 - 19:00 Session, symposium, round tables and workshop

Wednesday 24/03/2010
09:00 - 11:00 Session, symposium, round tables and workshop
11:00 - 11:30 Coffee break
11:30 - 13:00 Session, symposium, round tables and workshop
13:00 - 14:30 Lunch
14:30 - 16:30 Session, symposium, round tables and workshop
16:30 - 17:00 Coffee break
17:00 - 19:00 EBCC Annual General Meeting

Thursday 25/03/2010
07:30 - 19:30 EXCURSION
20:30 Conference banquet

Friday 26/03/2010
09:00 - 11:00 Session, symposium, round tables and workshop
11:00 - 11:30 Coffee break
11:30 - 13:00 Session, symposium, round tables and workshop
13:00 - 14:30 Lunch
14:30 - 16:30 Session, symposium, round tables and workshop
16:30 - 17:00 Coffee break
17:00 - 19:00 Closing remarks, thanks and farewell reception

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
EBCC: Dr. Richard D. Gregory, Dr. Hans-Günther Bauer, Dr. Anny Anselin, Dr. Ruud Foppen, Dr. Åke Lindström, Dr. Frederic Jiguet, Dr. Alexander Mishenko, Dr. Svetoslav Spasov, Dr. Ian Burfield, Dr. David Noble and Dr. Petr Voříšek.

SEO/BirdLife: Dr. Alejandro Sánchez, Dr. David Serrano, Dr. Javier Seoane, Dr. Lluís Brotons, Dr. Alejandro Onrubia, Dr. David Palomino, Dr. Ana Bermejo and Juan Carlos del Moral.

LOCAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE
Fernando Barrio, Blas Molina, Javier de la Puente, Virginia Escandell, Ana Bermejo, David Palomino, Arancha Leal, Carmen Fernández, Josefina Maestre, Marcelino Cardalliaguet and Juan Carlos del Moral.

REGISTRATION FEES
The registration fee (approximately € 250,00, but to be confirmed in the next announcement) will cover: the costs associated with the conference itself, all coffee breaks (AM/PM), the lunches during the three full conference days, conference services, the proceedings and some conference material, the welcome party, one day excursion, and the conference

banquet. The fee will not cover the accommodation costs, breakfasts or dinners during conference days. Accompanying person fee is € 130,00.

LOW INCOME COUNTRIES PARTICIPANTS
We are trying to do our best to help as many participants as possible from low income countries. People interested in financial aid may ask for a partial (reduced fee: € 100,00) or full support. People needing financial aid are required to send their curriculum vitae, contribution abstract and status (EBCC delegate, monitoring organizer, etc.) to the Conference Secretariat.

An appropriate form will be available on the conference website in the near future (please check status).
Participants from high-income countries are encouraged to contribute to supporting participants from low income countries by volunteering to increase their conference fee by a small amount (about € 25,00; more details later).

EXCURSION
The Conference will include a series of exciting bird watching excursions on Thursday 25 March. We will visit a number of Important Bird Areas (IBA's), including mediterranean forest like “Monfragüe National Park”and “Sierra de San Pedro” and steppe areas like “Llanos de Brozas”and “Llanos de Cáceres”. Some of the key species in the areas visited will include: Black Stork, Black-shouldered Kite, Egyptian, Griffon and Monk Vulture, Spanish Imperial and Bonelli’s Eagle, Lesser Kestrel, Purple Swamp-Hen, Great and Little Bustard, Black-bellied and Pin-tailed Sandgrouse, Great Spotted Cuckoo, European Bee-eaters, Calandra, Thekla and Short-toed Lark, Subalpine, Sardinian and Orphean Warbler and Spanish Sparrow.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
All details about:
Conference location
Accommodation
Registration fees
How to arrive
Banks
Protected areas in the vicinity
Low income countries participants
Etc,

will be included in www.seo.org/ebcc2010

Postal Address For Correspondence:
Bird Numbers 2010 – Conference Secretariat
C/ Melquíades Biencinto, 34
E-28053 Madrid, Spain

Phone: +0034914340910
Fax: +0034914340911
e-mail: ebcc2010@seo.org

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,

Do not hesitate to let us know this!

Send text (in MSword or Open Office), figures and tables (and illustrations!) by preference in digital format. Figures and tables in colour will be shown in colour in the PDF version on our EBCC website: www.ebcc.info

* By email to:
anny.anselin@inbo.be

* or by mail on CD to:
Anny Anselin
Research Institute for Nature and Forest, Kliniekstraat 25,
B-1070 Brussel, Belgium

You receive your article in pdf-format to use for reprints

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