

INFORMATION

SE EUROPEAN BIRD MIGRATION NETWORK

Workshop 6-8 February 2004, Istanbul, Turkey

48 participants from 12 countries came to the 6th SEEN workshop. This time meeting lasted 3 days and this was a very good opportunity for really impressive number of presentations, *i.e.* more than twice as many as at the last workshop: 15 station reports, 10 presentations on “*Birds on migration*”, and special session on “*Orientation experiments*” (10 presentations). Not only the number of presentations was higher but also their quality, according to SEEN President, Przemysław Busse. The workshop was organised by our colleagues from Turkish Bird Research Society (KAD) and supported by the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks (Ministry of Environment and Forestry), UNDP/GEF-SGP and BTC Co. Organisation was PERFECT and we had a very good, fruitful SEEN meeting in Istanbul. Sincere THANK YOU: our hosts and sponsors for your efforts.

Friday, 6 February 2004

Opening speeches

- Dr Can Bilgin, KAD President
- Prof. Dr Przemysław Busse, SEEN President
- Mr Cem Çakiroğlu, Environmental Investment Programme Coordinator, BTC Co.
- Mr Mustafa Akıncioğlu, Deputy General Director of Nature Conservation and National Parks
- Mr Mehmet Ali Çeliker, Istanbul Deputy Governor

Station reports

TURKISH NATIONAL RINGING SCHEME

Özge Keşaplı Can (Turkey)

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Turkey

The Turkish National Ringing Scheme was jointly launched by KAD, Middle East Technical University (ODTÜ) and the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks in March 2002. In spring 2002, altogether 15 487 birds of 107 species, and in autumn 2002 – 12 340 birds of 99 species were ringed. In addi-

tion, 26 birds from 13 countries were recovered while 7 birds ringed in Turkey were reported from 4 countries and 1 from Thrace (Turkey). Ringing was carried out at Manyas Kuşçenneti (run by KAD-MPG), Cernek (run by Ondokuz Mayıs University), Titreyengöl (run by Reinhard Vohwinkel and Werner Prünste) and ODTÜ (run by KAD) stations.

In 2003, Akyatan (run by KAD) and Diyarbakır (run by Dicle University) stations became part of the scheme at the pilot scale. Totally, around 28 000 birds of over 100 species were ringed in 2003 (data is still being compiled). In addition, 18 birds from 9 countries were recovered while 7 birds ringed in Turkey were reported from 4 countries. Apart from international recoveries, a Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) ringed at Cernek was controlled at Akyatan.

These two years of ringing studies also yielded the first Turkish record of the Arctic Warbler (*Phylloscopus borealis*), the third and fourth Turkish records of the Blyth's Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus dumetorum*), and the fourth Turkish record of the Yellow-browed Warbler (*Phylloscopus inornatus*).

In December 2002, KAD initiated a project called "Expansion, Improvement and Publicisation of Turkish National Ringing Scheme" with the support of UNDP GEF-SGP. This project aims to improve national capacity through training new ringers, to inform and involve local conservation authorities, to raise public awareness, to build up a stations network in Turkey, and to integrate fully the national ringing scheme with international initiatives. Within this project two basic ringing courses were organised in March and August 2003 with the participation of 100 people interested in ringing.

Within two years, 6 Turkish candidate ringers from KAD and Cernek stations fulfilled qualifications for a ringers licence as a result of intense training with experts from SEEN.

Within the scope of national ringing scheme, White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*) colour-ringing project by KAD and Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) colour-ringing project by Nature Society (DD) were launched in summer 2003.

BIRD MIGRATION AT CHOKPAK PASS IN 2003

A.E. Gavrilov and E.I. Gavrilov (Kazakhstan)

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The Chokpak Pass (42°31'N, 70°38'E) is located in the territory of Kazakhstan in the Western Tien Shan at the height of 1200 m a.s.l. The studies on migration were carried out since 21 March till 30 May, and from 17 August till 26 October 2003. Birds were counted up by visual observation and trapped using mist-nets and large stationary Heligoland-type traps. In total 16 935 birds of 129 species were ringed and 335 individuals were recaptured in the same season.

In spring 118 species were observed. Demoiselle Crane (*Anthropoides virgo*) – 26 471 individuals counted, Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*) – 4585, Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*) – 555, Woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*) – 605, Spanish Sparrow (*Passer hispaniolensis*) and Indian Sparrow (*P. indicus*), European Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*) and Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) dominated. And 6848 birds of 74 species were ringed – Spanish and Indian Sparrows, Barn Swallows, and European Bee-eater mostly.

In autumn 141 species were observed. Numerous on flight were: Black Kite, Common Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*), European Bee-eater, Barn Swallow, Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*), Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), Rose-colored Starling (*S. roseus*), Rook, Jackdaw (*C. monedula*), Spanish Sparrow, Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*) and Brambling (*F. montifringilla*). And 10 087 birds of 116 species were ringed – Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*), Stock Dove (*C. oenas*), European Bee-eater, Pale Sand Martin (*Riparia diluta*), Barn Swallow, Rock Pipit (*Anthus petrosus*), Yellow Wagtail, Starling, Jackdaw, Rook, Blyth's Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus dumetorum*), Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*), Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*), Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*), Spanish Sparrows, Chaffinch, Brambling, Linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*), Pine Bunting (*Emberiza leucocephala*) mostly.

Two individuals of the Eastern House Martin (*Delichon dasypus*) were trapped in September. This species is new for Kazakhstan and Middle Asia.

Species subjected to special protection like Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*), Pallid Harrier (*Circus macrourus*), Black Vulture (*Aegypius monachus*), Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*), Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*) and Yellow-eyed Stock Dove (*C. eversmanni*) were observed too.

Only one Barn Swallow marked on 10 December 2001 in Ngulia station (Kenya) was recaptured.

RINGING ACTIVITIES AND ORIENTATION EXPERIMENTS AT TWO TEMPORARY STATIONS IN BULGARIA – GENERAL REPORT

Dimitar Ragyov (Bulgaria)

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The previous year two temporary ringing stations were opened in Bulgaria. The birds were caught with standard mist-nets. Orientation experiments with Busse's cages were made in the daytime.

- **Ringing station "Sakar"** (during spring):
 - total number of catches – 666
 - number of ringed birds – 561
 - number of retraps – 105
 - number of controls – 0
 - number of foreign controls – 0

- number of birds ringed in “Sakar” and recovered in another country – 1
- total number of orientation experiments – 224
- number of significant experiments – 217
- the most numerous species: Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*), Red-backed Shrike (*Lanius collurio*), Thrush Nightingale (*Luscinia luscinia*) and Nightingale (*L. megarhynchos*)
- **Ringling station “Dragoman”** (during autumn):
 - total number of catches – 1273
 - number of ringed birds – 1090
 - number of retraps – 181
 - number of controls – 1
 - number of foreign controls – 1
 - number of birds ringed in “Dragoman” and recovered in another country – 1
 - total number of orientation experiments – 549
 - number of significant experiments – 538
 - the most numerous species: Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*), Reed Warbler (*A. scirpaceus*), Great Reed Warbler (*A. arundinaceus*), Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*), Savi’s Warbler (*Locustella luscinioides*) and Marsh Warbler (*A. palustris*).

The results from the orientation experiments were presented in standard way used in SEEN. Sixteen sector charts were used in analyses of the demonstrated directions.

GENERAL REPORT OF RINGING AND ORIENTATION EXPERIMENTS AT KALIMOK STATION

Mihaela Ilieva (Bulgaria)

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In 2003, 1723 birds from 68 species were ringed during the migration periods at Kalimok ringing station (44°00’N, 26°26’E – NE Bulgaria). Birds were caught with mist-nets situated in reedbeds and deciduous forest during the spring (7 March – 28 May) and the autumn (5 August – 14 October) season. Species from genus *Acrocephalus*, the Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*) and the Spanish Sparrow (*Passer hispaniolensis*) were most numerous.

Beside ringing, 711 orientation experiments with long-distance migrants were made. Birds were tested in two types of orientation cages – Busse’s cage for daytime tests and Emlen funnels for night tests. Strong prevalence of non-migratory directions was observed in some species. Main headings in reversed pictures coincide with the observed directions obtained with the moon-watch method for free-flying birds in this place.

JORDAN'S BIRD RINGING SCHEME

Khaldoun Alomari (Jordan)

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Jordan is located on one of the main migration routes between Eurasia and Africa. The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), being a leading NGO in the region, through its wide knowledge of the importance of Jordan for migrating birds and the country's special habitats has taken part in the "Birds Know No Boundaries" Project. This project aims to study bird migration using high-tech methods and to establish a comprehensive education programme concerning birds and their migration. As a part of the project, bird ringing is one of the main research methods used to study bird migration. Azraq Wetland Reserve was chosen to be the first site where a bird ringing station was established. The research in this station would help in understanding the site and conserving it in a better way. A team of three national bird ringers was formed. This team was trained on site and also outside Jordan. Four migration seasons were covered in the past two years in the site. Being the first comprehensive bird ringing effort in Azraq, a lot of data was collected and many special species were recorded. RSCN has taken the initiative to set a bird ringing law in order to put this sensitive activity under control on the national level. In order to be a part of the international bird ringing community, RSCN became a member of the SEEN. More potential sites for bird ringing were visited and a report was prepared in order to prioritise these sites and carry out future activities in them. For the promotion of the national bird ringing scheme, a special web page was designed as part of the project's website. RSCN is seeking to have bird ringing as a tool for better conservation in the country.

The study site – Azraq Wetland Reserve – is a desert oasis that is located in the Eastern Desert about 100 km east of the capital, Amman. It is a Ramsar site and an IBA that has several habitats including reedbeds, marshlands, open water and mud-flat and it is considered as one of the main stop-overs for migrants in Jordan.

RINGING SEASON 2003 ON THE COURISH SPIT:
PRELIMINARY RESULTS*Nadejda Zelenova (Russia)*

Biological Station Rybachy, Zoological Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences

During the year 2003 generally 77 973 birds of 99 species and 137 bats of 7 species were ringed on the Courish Spit (SE Baltic Sea coast), by the Biological Station

Rybachy. For 65 of these species, the number of ringed individuals in 2003 was higher than average yearly number, and for ten of them the yearly number was the highest recorded since 1956. During May-December 2003, 75 birds of 22 species ringed on the Courish Spit were reported found outside it; these reports come from 14 different countries. During the whole year 2003, 364 birds of 29 species were trapped or found on the Courish Spit with foreign rings of 15 different countries.

Short overview of running research projects is given. Weather influence on the annual migration dynamics, and individual variations in timing of migration according to the ringing data are discussed.

RESULTS OF BIRD RINGING IN SPRING 2002 AND 2003 AT TITREYENGÖL/SOGUN, MANAVGAT (TURKEY)

Reinhard Vohwinkel and Werner Prünke (Germany)

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In spring of 2002 (25 March – 11 May) and 2003 (23 March – 11 May), my friend Werner Prünke and myself captured birds near the River Manavgat, not far from the coast of the Mediterranean Sea in Turkey. During these seasons, with the help of people from Akdeniz University, Antalya and more than 20 volunteers, we caught 24 953 birds of 116 subspecies. On our best day we ringed 1203 birds.

To reach our goal of getting these high numbers during these short seasons we used tape lures with the songs of 15 species, some during the night and some during the day. In both years our mist-nets (108 m long) were standing in fields along a hedge. In the year 2003 we used additional mist-nets (120 m long) in the field on the other side of the hedge to trap wagtails and pipits. Also in this year we had a special “high net” (5 m high and 24 m long) and one extra mist-net over flat water (12 m long) on a pond for swallows. On the bank of this pond we used three cages to trap rails. On a few days we took the chance to trap Holarctic waders on a riding-place filled with water after rain.

We took measurements of most of the birds and looked at the moult of rare species. All the birds were ringed with a national Turkish metal ring we obtained from Turkish Bird Research Society (KAD).

In our presentation we introduce our area. Further, we present the total of our first traps from all species and the results of the spatio-temporal course and phenology of selected species with high numbers during migration. Dates of retrapping our birds and of 31 foreign controls are also shown.

RINGING RESULTS IN 2003 AT MANYAS KUŞCENNETİ
STATION (TURKEY)

Özgür Keşaplı Didrickson, Jno Didrickson and Özge Keşaplı Can (Turkey)

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In 2003 the ringing at Manyas Kuşcenneti station was carried out at 2 sub-stations; Soltra (40°13'N, 28°04'E) and National Park (40°14'N, 28°02'E). The National Park sub-station is mainly composed of seasonally flooded deciduous woodland (mostly willows) and reedbeds. Soltra sub-station lies within an oak coppice and is surrounded by agricultural fields. Due to the high level of water, much of the park area is inaccessible in spring so ringing studies were then carried out at Soltra. In autumn ringing studies were carried out at National Park. Mist-netting was the only method used during both ringing seasons and Busse's cages were used for experiments.

Spring study was conducted from 27 March till 26 May, 1382 birds of 52 species were ringed. The most numerous five species were: Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*) – 253 individuals caught, Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*) – 185, Marsh Warbler (*Acrocephalus palustris*) – 140, Red-backed Shrike (*Lanius collurio*) – 81 and Olivaceous Warbler (*Hippolais pallida*) – 62. Altogether 489 orientation experiments were carried out with the Blackcap being the most numerous (155 experiments).

Autumn study at Kuşcenneti National Park was conducted from 26 August till 19 October. Altogether 2672 birds of 53 species were ringed; Willow Warbler (*P. trochilus*) – 930 individuals caught, Reed Warbler (*A. scirpaceus*) – 526, Blackcap – 213, Cetti's Warbler (*Cettia cetti*) – 89, and Red-backed Shrike – 75, were the top five species of the season. The capture of one Yellow-browed Warbler (*Phylloscopus inornatus*) was especially important since it was the fourth record for this species in Turkey. No orientation experiments were carried out during this season as there was no suitable open area available.

2003 RINGING SUMMARY OF CERNEK RINGING STATION

Arzu Gürsoy, Kiraz Erciyas, A. Cemal Özsemir and Y. Sancar Barış (Turkey)

A. Gürsoy, K. Erciyas, A. Cemal Özsemir, Ondokuz Mayıs University,
Biology Department, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Kurupelit, Samsun, Turkey;
Dr. Y. Sancar Barış, Ondokuz Mayıs University Ornithological Research Center,
Samsun, Turkey

In 2003 the spring and autumn activity took place between 19 March – 30 May and 15 August – 29 October. Due to strong wind and rain nets were closed during

1-2 April, 5-6 September and 11 October. 1749 new birds of 56 species were ringed in spring while during autumn ringed birds number reached 5865 and the number of species was 65. The activity was possible due to volunteer help from Ondokuz Mayıs University Birdwatching Club.

In spring five most common species were: Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*) – 244 individuals caught, Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*) – 187, Chiffchaff (*Ph. collybita*) – 187, Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) – 168 and Garden Warbler (*S. borin*) – 118. The Red-rumped Swallow (*Hirundo daurica*) and the Orphean Warbler (*S. hortensis*) were ringed for the first time. Both species have their breeding ranges further south from Kizilirmak Delta and possibly represent overshooting migrants.

In autumn five most common species were: Garden Warbler – 894 individuals caught, Blackcap – 705, Robin – 630, Willow Warbler – 591, Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*) – 485. The Corn Crane (*Crex crex*) and the Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) were ringed for the first time.

A dead Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) ringed in Russia was collected and a Garden Warbler ringed at Cernek Station in autumn was reported from Egypt. Another Kingfisher, ringed at Cernek in autumn was retrapped 3 days later at Akyatan ringing station.

In total 594 and 975 orientation experiments were done during spring and autumn ringing camps, respectively.

RESULTS OF 2003 RINGING STUDIES AT AKYATAN STATION (S TURKEY)

Özge Keşaplı Can (Turkey)

Turkish Bird Research Society (KAD), PK 311 06443 Yenışehir/Ankara, Turkey

Akyatan station (36°36'N, 35°17'E) is situated on the coast of the biggest lagoon of Çukurova Delta (S Turkey). Between the lagoon and the sea there lies an extensive area of dunes covered by a plantation of *Acacia*, *Eucalyptus* and *Pinus* trees. Mist-nets were placed among reedbeds and bushes along the coast of the lagoon and among bushes at the edge of the forest.

During spring, a pilot study was carried out between 4-15 April and 494 birds of 38 species were ringed. Except for the first day – which was probably the last day of a migration wave peak – daily numbers were low with an average of 41 birds. The most numerous 5 species were: Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*) – 188 individuals caught, Lesser Whitethroat (*S. curruca*) – 78, Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) – 36, Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*) – 31 and Whitethroat (*S. communis*) – 29. On 15 April, an immature Cyprus Wheatear (*Oenanthe cypriaca*) was caught. This species is rarely recorded in Turkey. During the pilot study, 271 orientation experiments were carried out with Busse's cages.

In autumn, the study started on 8 September and continued till 5 October. Daily figures were moderate with an average of 57 birds (maximum 111 birds on 28 September). Totally 1546 birds of 44 species were ringed. The most numerous species were Blackcap – 312 individuals caught, Garden Warbler (*S. borin*) – 264, Spanish Sparrow (*Passer hispaniolensis*) – 157, Willow Warbler (*P. trochilus*) – 151 and Lesser Whitethroat – 105. In addition, on 24 September an Blyth's Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus dumetorum*) was caught, comprising the fourth Turkish record of the species. Altogether 450 orientation experiments were carried out using Busse's cages on 16 species – most of them on Blackcap (119), Garden Warbler (91) and Willow Warbler (76). During the autumn study, the nets were closed between 12.00 and 4.00 *p.m.* due to high temperatures.

A Yellow-vented Bulbul (*Pycnonotus xanthopygos*) and a Cetti's Warbler (*Cettia cetti*) ringed at Akyatan in spring, and a Kingfisher ringed at Cernek station only couple of days before were controlled.

PALESTINIAN RINGING STATIONS DATA AND METHODS

Simon Awad (Palestine)

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Palestine is located on the junction of three continents and maintains several globally and regionally important ecosystems and habitats. Talitha Kumi ringing station is located in the western hills of Bethlehem area to the south west of Jerusalem. It is located on one of the major bird migration routes for diurnal and nocturnal migrants. Radar data indicate that some nights more than 600 passerines pass the area. Jericho ringing station is located in Jordan rift valley, which is world famous for being the lowest place on Earth (400 m b.s.l.). We use many methods to track birds in these two ringing stations, such as the acoustic system, the radar, the monitoring and the ringing.

Ringing stations' data are given to the students as outdoor activities to increase the importance of ecological awareness, the environment and ways of conservation. Students can use the data and follow the movement of migrating birds to study biology, geography, physics and other subjects.

Ringing stations could be used to develop an educational model capable of transferring the educational process from a traditional and non-interactive to a meaningful one, which is based upon active participation and individual approach. This model will not only change the classical way of education but also will develop the way of thinking and increase the awareness towards the environment.

Birds are often the most visible forms of bio-diversity to many people, regardless of whether they live in the countryside or in the city. In this sense, I believe that birds are our good neighbours and should be a part of our daily life. Therefore, bird protection that comes out from education, knowledge, ethics, and culture, is much

better and more effective than the enforced laws. This is an open invitation to this meeting to use the ringing stations as a modern tool for education and conservation programmes.

RESULTS OF 30-YEARS STUDIES OF RAPTORS MIGRATION IN GEORGIA

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The territory of Georgia has a special importance for migrating birds of prey because of its specific location on the cross-roads between Europe and Asia – on the way from breeding grounds in Fenno-Scandinavia, European part of Russia, Ural and Western Siberia to the Mediterranean, Middle East and African winter quarters. The Black Sea coastlands and Kolkhida Lowland is particularly important as it is a migratory corridor and stop-over area, which is known as the “Eastern Black Sea migration route”. According to data systematically collected since 1973, in total 36 species of *Falconiformes* were registered in the territory of Georgia. Out of them 28 are regularly recorded on passages and are considered migrants through the area – Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), Honey Buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*), Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*), White-tailed Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*), Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), Short-toed Eagle (*Circus gallicus*), Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*), Hen Harrier (*C. cyaneus*), Pallid Harrier (*C. macrourus*), Montagu’s Harrier (*C. pygargus*), Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*), Sparrowhawk (*A. nisus*), Levant Sparrowhawk (*A. brevipes*), Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*), Long-legged Buzzard (*B. rufinus*), Rough-legged Buzzard (*B. lagopus*), Lesser Spotted Eagle (*Aquila pomarina*), Greater Spotted Eagle (*A. clanga*), Tawny Eagle (*A. nipalensis*), Imperial Eagle (*A. heliaca*), Booted Eagle (*Hieraetus pennatus*), Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*), Kestrel (*F. tinnunculus*), Red-footed Falcon (*F. vespertinus*), Merlin (*F. columbarius*), Hobby (*F. subbuteo*), Saker (*F. cherrug*), Peregrine (*F. peregrinus*). Four species – Bearded Vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*), Griffon Vulture (*Gyps fulvus*), European Black Vulture (*Aegypius monachus*), Golden Eagle (*A. chrysaetos*) – are year-round residents with nomadic movements outside the breeding period. Besides, two species – Bonelli’s Eagle (*H. fasciatus*) and Lanner (*F. biarmicus*) – are occasional breeders. Red Kite (*M. milvus*), Pallas’s Sea Eagle (*H. leucoryphus*) and Eleonora’s Falcon (*F. eleonora*) are vagrant.

Complex study of birds of prey in Georgia started in 1973. Seasonal migration of birds of prey in Georgia was monitored regularly during spring and autumn passages. Observations and counts took place during 52-64 working days every year (8-14 h every day). Results of counts for each year are presented. The data on species composition, numbers, directions of movements, patterns of diurnal activity of

different species, height of flight, location of stop-over places, *etc.*, as well as the importance of all main inland migratory routes for raptors are discussed. The ringing data is analysed. A review of the bibliography, relating to the raptors migrations across Georgia and adjacent areas is given, together with data on threats, reasons and level of mortality and problems of conservation. The practices of hawks trapping for falconry and illegal shooting of migratory birds of prey present major raptors conservation problems in Georgia.

RINGING PROGRAMMES OF THE IRANIAN
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT

Sadegh Sadeghi Zadegan (Iran)

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Bird ringing in Iran has been carried out by a number of people and organisations in 1961-1965. In 1966 the Iran Game and Fish Department (further Department of Environment) initiated its own project of ringing wildfowl and issued its own rings. The scheme has undertaken a number of special ringing programmes with selected species. These include ringing projects of: (1) wildfowl, (2) Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*), (3) White Pelican (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*), (4) shore birds, (5) birds of prey and (6) passerines. As the ringing scheme expanded and more and more birds were caught and ringed, there was a great increase in recovery data and other information from ringing schemes in neighbouring countries.

ADVANCED POPULATION STUDY OF THE BLACK VULTURE
(*Aegypius monachus*) IN DADIA NATIONAL PARK

*Skartsi Theodora, Kostas Poirazides, Javier Elloriaga
and Demetres Vasilakis (Greece)*

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An annual scientific monitoring plan for the Dadia national park (Dadia NP) has been implemented by the WWF Greece since 2000 and it includes the monitoring of ecological status of the forest, raptor populations, and human and natural factors. Particular emphasis has been given to the Black Vulture, a priority species for conservation according to the EU Birds Directive. In 1979, this species was near extinction with a population of 26 individuals and 6 breeding pairs. Since then with the aid of conservation and feeding support measures, the population has increased to 20-22 breeding pairs and a total population of 22 individuals in 1999. This popu-

lation increase trend did not continue in the period afterwards and has not been expanded to adjacent regions, raising concerns about the future of the population.

To promote the protection of the species, a management plan for the Black Vulture in Dadia NP, which evaluates the recent status of the population and proposes measures for the short and long term conservation of the species, was drawn up in 2002 and started to be implemented in 2003. Actions as the study of the movements using radio-telemetry, satellite telemetry and visual marks (rings and patagial tags) are implemented. Moreover, studies on the population's genetic diversity, the physiological condition and the influence of environmental contaminants on the vultures are included. Marking and sampling of vultures was realised by trapping the vultures in a specific movable cage. In October 2003 and during 7 days, 28 Black Vultures and 46 Griffon Vultures (*Gyps fulvus*) were trapped, handled, sampled and released. Radiotracking equipment was set in 7 Black Vultures, of which 6 are still tracked around Dadia NP.

Saturday, 7 February 2004

Birds on migration

MOVEMENTS OF BEARDED TITS (*Panurus biarmicus*) IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND SLOVAKIA

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A total of 360 ringing recoveries of Bearded Tits ringed or recovered in the territory of the Czech Republic and Slovakia during 1934-2001 were analysed with respect to their natal philopatry, site fidelity, movements, age and mate fidelity. Migration system of the Bearded Tit has a complicated pattern, some individuals are sedentary, others migrate in winter to other areas. Several recoveries confirm breeding and wintering site fidelity. Some birds, however, changed their breeding grounds. The Czech Republic and Slovakia are used as wintering grounds by Bearded Tits both from the North (Germany, Poland) and the South (Hungary). The oldest male was controlled at its breeding site after six years. A couple of recoveries document mate fidelity in the Bearded Tit not only in the subsequent breeding seasons, but also in the non-breeding period and during movements. Mate fidelity could be an advantageous adaptation to colonisation of new breeding sites. The results of the analysis of ringing recoveries show that the subspecies *biarmicus* and *russicus* come into contact in Central Europe.

AUTUMN MIGRATION OF THE SEDGE WARBLER
(*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*) IN THE WESTERN UKRAINE

Oksana Zakala (Ukraine)

Zoological Museum of the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv,
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The daily captures dynamics of the Sedge Warbler during summer-autumn appeared as a curve, which was strongly influenced by the weather conditions (often with negative impact) and by the level of bird fat reserves. Migration intensity varied in different years and depended on climatic conditions, food supply and physiological conditions of a bird. The highest migration intensity of the Sedge Warbler during 1995-2002 was recorded in 1996 (2.27 birds per net), the lowest – in the 1997 (0.52). The highest migration intensity was noted just after dawn (between 6.00 and 7.00 a.m. – 25% of all birds), when birds stopped after night migration, and small peak in the evening (3.5%) that was caused probably by increased activity of night migrants. The daily migratory intensity was influenced by temperature and precipitation. No birds were trapped when the temperature was high or during the rain. An increase in fat score of birds was evident starting from the turn of August. Adult individuals of the Sedge Warbler that were trapped during migration had higher fat score and mean weight ($p < 0.001$) than the young. Adults started to migrate earlier, and as early as in the middle of September only young birds constituted migratory flocks. Young birds stayed for a longer time on the migration stop-over places than adults. The post breeding dispersion was characteristic for young individuals of the Sedge Warbler. During the migratory period these birds did not have completely developed wings and tail. According to ringing and recovery data we can state that the birds from Northern Europe fly through the territory of the western Ukraine, and that the birds from the western Ukraine fly to the south-west direction. Three birds from Estonia and one from Finland were recorded in “Cholginsky Ornithological Reserve”. One bird from “Cholgini” was found in Hungary.

DO WHITE STORKS (*Ciconia ciconia*) IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC
BREED EARLIER? AN ANALYSIS OF RINGING DATA
FROM LAST 40 YEARS

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In the Czech Republic, the White Stork is a regularly breeding species (about 800 pairs in 2003). Altogether 16 311 individuals were ringed in the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1964-2002. We analysed basic ringing data (ringing date, number of hatchlings) obtained from 2432 nests in the Czech Republic during this period.

Number of hatchlings per nests slightly increased within the last 40 years. Ringing data show that the storks are currently ringed about a week earlier than in the 1960s. This result is supported by the analysis of the young birds recoveries shorter than 100 km from the nest, which show that the fledging date is earlier too. Based on the ringing date we suppose that there has been a change in timing of breeding – similar as in other bird species in Europe.

These results show that common ringing data are valuable and can be used for further analysis – e.g. long-term trends in reproductive characteristics and their comparison with ecological factors (climate, food availability, etc.).

STUDIES ON SOARING BIRD MIGRATION AT THE BELEN PASS AND HATAY PROVINCE

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Turkey is a land bridge between Europe, Asia and Africa, that support suitable “thermal pathway” for soaring birds. Turkey has three important bottlenecks: the Bosphorus in the Northwest, Arhavi/Borçka in the Northeast, and the Belen Pass in southern Turkey. Hatay is the southeasternmost extension of Turkey on the Mediterranean coast, and is an important corridor for bird migration from Europe and Anatolia to Africa and the Middle East. The importance of the Belen Pass for thermal-dependent birds has been known since 1965 but there has been no systematic survey covering both spring and autumn migration at the Belen Pass.

In this study, soaring migratory birds were counted and identified by ground-based observations during spring and autumn migration period in 2000. The observation data enable to figure out the magnitude, timing and duration of spring and autumn migration as well as migration routes of some species. During autumn and spring, a total of 148 938 soaring migratory birds were observed and this number has been the highest recorded for the Belen Pass so far. Since the study did not cover whole migration period, the real passage number is estimated around 500 000. The White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*) is the most abundant bird comprising 91.5% and 53.6% of spring and autumn totals, respectively. Lesser Spotted Eagle (*Aquila pomarina*), Honey Buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*), Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*), Levant Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter brevipes*), Short-toed Eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*), and Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*) figures follow that of the White Stork.

Although this study clearly shows the importance of the Belen Pass for soaring birds, it is only a preliminary survey that indicates the necessity for further migration research.

SEASONAL MIGRATION PATTERN OF OWLS
AT BUKOWO-KOPAŃ STATION IN 2000-2003

Damiana Michalonek (Poland)

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Owl migration is rather poorly studied. Studies are quite complicated because of bird nocturnal activity, low number of caught and ringed individuals and small number of recoveries as a result.

We used data collected at the Operation Baltic stations with over 2000 ringed owls caught at Bukowo-Kopań station in autumns 2000-2003. Birds were caught with special raptor nets. They were ringed and measured according to the Operation Baltic standards.

The Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*) migration has wave-like pattern with few nights of very high owl number after nights with very low passage intensity. In some years there are more migrants than in others. This is a result of fluctuations associated with small mammal population dynamics.

It is possible to distinguish two groups of owl species according to terms of passage peaks. Both the Short-eared Owl (*A. flammeus*) and the Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) are most numerous in the same time as the Long-eared Owl, *i.e.* at the beginning of November. Correlation is statistically significant every year, though not very high. Migration pattern of the Tengmalm's Owl (*Aegolius funereus*) is conspicuously different. Passage maximum of this species occurs at the beginning of October and by 25 October the passage is almost finished. But even then individuals that migrate later are caught during the same migration peaks as the Long-eared Owl.

Obtained results point out that the passage of different owl species is similar to the most numerous and typical migrant species – the Long-eared Owl. This suggests that some common factors influencing owl migration exist.

A SHORT REPORT ON FLAMINGO (*Pheonicopterus ruber*) RINGING
AT LAKE UROMIYEH (IRAN) AND RECOVERIES IN TURKEY

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Flamingo Ringing Project at Lake Uromiyeh initiated in August 1970 when 242 moulting adult Flamingos were ringed with metal leg rings, and 2250 chicks were

banded with blue neck-bands. Later on, only metal leg rings were used. By the end of 1999 breeding season a total of 30 002 Flamingos including 29 313 chicks (leg rings and blue collars) and 689 adults were marked throughout 23 operational years. Out of them 216 recoveries (0.72%) from 28 countries were reported (including 19 recoveries from Turkey). Of these, 209 belonged to the chicks (comprising five blue collars), and seven belonged to the adult ringed birds. There were 15 recoveries from Lake Uromiyeh. Recovery period varied between 1-162 months. Recoveries ranged from Morocco in the west, south to Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia, north to Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, and east to India and Sri Lanka. This demonstrates a very wide post-juvenile dispersal of Flamingos, which had not hitherto been suspected. The adult birds from the Lake Uromiyeh colony, however, seem to winter almost entirely in Fars Province and along the coast of the Persian Gulf and Omar Sea.

Colour Ringing Programme initiated in 1999, with 295 chicks. These birds were ringed using both plastic green mono-colour rings and metal rings. It is not possible to administer bands with alphanumeric codes allowing individual identification, but birds can be still identifiable by their metal rings. The first and only colour ring was recovered in 2002 in Khur Dubai (United Arab Emirates).

THE COURSE OF THE MOULT OF FLIGHT FEATHERS
IN THE YELLOW-VENTED BULBULS (*Pycnonotus xanthopygos*)
CAUGHT DURING AUTUMN SEASON
AT STATION AKYATAN (S TURKEY)

Magdalena Remisiewicz and Özge Keşaplı Can (Poland, Turkey)

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Moult in bulbuls is described in literature only generally; it is known that both adults and immatures undergo a complete moult after the breeding season. Due to lack of clear dimorphism and similar period and range of moult, in all species ageing and sexing is very difficult if possible at all. During autumn ringing at station Akyatan (36°36'N, 35°17'E – S Turkey), we described moult pattern in 52 Yellow-vented Bulbuls (according to the method of Jenni and Winkler 1994), caught in period 3 September – 5 October 2003. Four birds were retrapped and progress of their moult was checked. We described advancement of primary, secondary and tertial moult, then moult scores were calculated and analysed. In addition, we noted number of new and old upperwing coverts, allula feathers, rectrices, head and body moult advancement (in % scale), range and colour intensity of the yellow patch on undertail. Primaries were renewed descendently (from inside towards the edge of the wing), secondaries – ascendently (towards the body), tertials – with no clear se-

quence. In general, two larger groups of birds can be distinguished according to the timing of renewal of both primaries and secondaries, with the dates of moult start 9-10 days apart. Both types of flight feathers were renewed simultaneously (correlation of their moult scores: $r_s = 0.89$, $p < 0.05$), however, the moult of secondaries started only when first few primaries had been already growing. Some birds renewed both types of feathers relatively quickly while another group kept a similar rate of the primary moult but the renewal of secondaries was retarded. In the timing of tertial moult two groups can be also distinguished. Moult of flight feathers will be analysed against the remaining noted features. The presented results are of preliminary character. Larger sample and data from other parts of the species range could allow to describe the pattern of moult of this species better and possibly to find some clues to ageing and sexing.

MIGRATION OF BIRDS OF PREY AT ARHAVI IN SEPTEMBER 2003

Reinhard Vohwinkel (Germany)

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In the autumn of 2003, we, (Reinhard Vohwinkel, Hermann Knüver and Okan Can) were invited by Cavit Bilen to look at the migration of birds of prey in his homeland, at the 600 year old traditional falconry of Sparrowhawks (*Accipiter nisus*) near the coast of the Black Sea in the northwestern part of Turkey.

In this presentation I will introduce the impressions of our journey between 12-23 September 2003. You will see the photo collection of Hermann Knüver and myself, of the fantastic landscape and of the birds of prey during their migration through the valleys and over the hills coming from the coast.

I present also some facts on how the Sparrowhawk hunting in this region is done and I will show you pictures of birds of prey, which we trapped to take data, to weigh and to band before we released them again. Pictures of some subspecies of songbirds that we caught during our trip are also shown.

WEIGHING AND FAT SCORING – SIMPLE MEASUREMENTS OR A COMPOSED PROBLEM?

Przemysław Busse (Poland)

Bird Migration Research Station, University of Gdańsk, Poland

Apparently simple diploma work on relations between body mass and fat load, as defined by standard fat scoring, gave a very surprising result. Average body mass of Robins (*Erithacus rubecula*) migrating through Polish Baltic coast declined within 18 years of study by around 0.2 g. In the same period the fat level did not changed at

all. More deep study showed that the average body mass was negatively correlated with the number of migrating birds. During last years the number of Robins grown on average, so decline in the body mass was explained. However, stability of fatness forces a conclusion that the fat-free body mass was influenced already in the breeding grounds, far out of the migration period. The migratory fuel load is defined at different levels and depends probably on the migration strategy.

Orientation experiments

BIRD NAVIGATION MODEL – AN INHERITED PROGRAM WITH AZIMUTHS AND SWITCHES – AS A THEORETICAL BASIS TO THE FIELD CAGE TESTS

Przemysław Busse (Poland)

Bird Migration Research Station, University of Gdańsk, Poland

A young bird migrating from the breeding ground to a winter-quarter is so composed problem that we must treat it as a “black box”. If we ringed it in a nest and we have recovery from *e.g.* Central Africa we know the “input” and “output”. The question is: how it managed the travel? If we ringed it in the nest and next year we caught it when breeding we still have the input and output, but the bird performed two travels: so and forth. Hence, we face with even more complicated system: (1) starting the autumn migration (“switching on” migrational activity, “switching on” southward direction); (2) navigation to the winter-quarter (azimuth of migration); (3) ceasing the migration (“switching off” migrational activity); (4) wintering; (5) starting the spring migration (“switching on” activity and “switching on” northward direction), and so on. If the bird inherited not straight-line navigation it must have in the navigation programme additional “switch(es)” when to change subsequent azimuths. If the individual is an interpopulational hybrid it has at its disposal more than one navigation programme (with their azimuths and switches) and our problem became even more black “black box”.

We know very little what our black box contains – something about physiology of start (*e.g.* fattening, migrational restlessness), something about orientation cues (visual, magnetic). We know that sometimes directional switch can work improperly, so we observe “reversed” migration. In classic cage experiments the main question was which properties of the environment could be used as the orientation cues. Birds were held in captivity and their environment was regulated, sometimes to a great extent. Experimental birds responded to changing cues, but their status did not changed – they did not move according to their activity.

Within our orientation tests we put the black box into an artificial situation just for a short while. The bird is on a real migration stop, but it is tested during the day-

time when visual cues useful both for nocturnal orientation and diurnal feeding movements are cut off. How far does it react by switching on other – long-distance navigation cues? Does it show us its inherited azimuth (or azimuths!) and direction? Or does it behave remembering the closest environment? How does it respond to experimenter manipulations, actual weather situation, shadow and sunlight in the cage, *etc.*?

We want to know from where birds arrive and to where they direct in different localities. But we cannot skip the problems how our black box is constructed and what we really see from collected data.

DEVELOPMENT IN CAGE DATA ELABORATION

Przemysław Busse (Poland)

Bird Migration Research Station, University of Gdańsk, Poland

Assumptions and the basics of elaboration of data collected using the orientation cages were listed and discussed in first papers presenting new design of orientation cage (Busse 1995, Busse and Trocińska 1999). The standard accepted was to show individual bird behaviour as pointers demonstrating direction and “a power” that gives an idea about concentration of recorded scratches. To show a population pattern it was used summing up individual pointers and presenting its distribution in 60 six-degree sectors. Obtained pictures showed distributions in detail, but they were very difficult to analyse and it was hard to convince people not acquainted to such pictures (strange “asterisks” of broad and narrow pointers). There were some trials to simplify these patterns but results were of limited value as the pointer type presentation forced to look at detail elements not at more general pattern. The next idea was to group the data in bigger sectors. The first concept was to put individual pointers into eight sectors, exactly as data were collected, and present the result as a polygon that could show general pattern. However, such pictures were too generalised and not useful enough. Finally, grouping the individual pointers into 16 sectors was chosen and the pattern is shown as the polygon. This possibility is available in the new version of ORIENTIN programme.

This method of presentation gives very good visualisation of headings and possibility to calculate average azimuths for bird groups and to test correspondence of different groups headings. A number of good examples will be presented as well as arguments for standard use of “reversed” patterns in the data presentation.

THE EMLÉN FUNNEL CAGE AND BUSSE'S FLAT CAGE –
COMPARISON OF TWO METHODS USED
IN ORIENTATION STUDIES

Agnieszka Ożarowska, Reuven Yosef (Poland, Israel)

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The Emlén funnel cage was introduced in 1966. Since then it has been used in numerous studies on bird orientation. In 1995, Busse proposed another technique – in the form of flat, round cylindrical cage. Busse also tested nocturnal migrants in the daytime. He, and Nowakowski and Malecka (1999), proved that birds tested in daylight and at night displayed similar distributions of their preferred directions. This study also supports their findings. Zehtindijev *et al.* (2003) found that results in the Emlén funnel and Busse's flat cage were coherent, despite the tests were performed in different conditions (night-day) and in different years. This study is the first one that compares results of the same individuals tested in the two types of orientation cages during the day ($N = 75$) and night ($N = 17$). Results of both methods did not differ (Watson-Williams test of mean angles, Mann-Whitney U -test of angular dispersion) both during the day and at night. Multiheading bird behaviour is common in both types of cages and seems to be a normal feature of orientation data. The only difference was found in bird activity (*i.e.* number of scratches during 10 minutes of testing) that was higher for Busse's flat cage in daytime tests.

DIRECTIONAL PREFERENCES OF *Acrocephalus*
WARBLERS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Petr Procházka, Richard Policht and Jiri Reif (Czech Republic)

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We studied directional preferences of three *Acrocephalus* warblers at four sites in the Czech Republic in 2001-2003. Out of 375 tests, 335 were carried out in summer (July-August) and 40 in spring (May). Birds were tested shortly after their capture with Busse's orientation cages for 10 minutes. The majority of experiments (74%) were done on the Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*). Mean vectors of individual birds for each site showed high orientation scatter. Significant results

were obtained only for the Reed Warblers when excluding experiments carried out during overcast. Reed Warblers tested in summer showed mean directions heading SSW-SW. We found no significant intraspecific differences in the mean headings among the study sites.

The attendance at the workshop was supported by the foundation Nadani Josefa, Marie a Zdenky Hlavkovych.

DIRECTIONAL PREFERENCES OF PASSERINES CAUGHT DURING AUTUMN MIGRATION AT CERNEK RINGING STATION (N TURKEY)

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In 851 experiments in Busse's cages carried out at Cernek Ringing Station (N Turkey) in autumn 2002 we studied directional preferences of 10 species of passerines. We proved high similarity of the preferred direction for almost all species – 8 of them chose the direction of *ca* 290° (SW) and out of these 5 showed an additional direction – 230° (NW). Based on that fact we discuss the possible interpretation of results that are found in Busse's cages and we formulate a new hypothesis considering navigation of passerines during their first autumn migration to wintering grounds.

WHAT DO LOW ACTIVE BIRDS SHOW IN BUSSE'S EXPERIMENTAL CAGES?

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In autumn 2002 at Cernek Ringing Station (N Turkey) we compared directional preferences of 52 individuals which were the least active during experiments in

Busse's cages (up to 55 scratches in a 10-minute experiment) with the remaining 850 more active birds (over 56 scratches). We stated significant differences in their directional preferences – birds of low activity headed to the two northern directions (*ca* 30° and *ca* 325°) while the remaining ones – to W and SW (different directions, from *ca* 210° to 300°). Directions preferred by birds of low activity were exactly opposite (180° difference) to those from which the birds were most often put into the experiment cage. This shows that in birds of low activity the crucial influence on the result is made by the disturbance connected with the way of conducting the experiment. Such data should be excluded from analyses of birds' directionality in Busse's cages.

RESULTS OF THE ORIENTATION TESTS IN SPRING AND AUTUMN IN DIFFERENT EXPERIMENTAL CONDITIONS

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During 2003 year two temporary ringing stations were operated in Bulgaria. Orientation experiments with Busse's cages were made. In spring season 217 significant experiments were obtained at ringing station "Sakar". The most numerous tested species were: Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*) – 71 individuals, Red-backed Shrike (*Lanius collurio*) – 33, Thrush Nightingale (*Luscinia luscinia*) – 27 and Nightingale (*L. megarhynchos*) – 17. Two main directions were demonstrated – NNE and W. In autumn season 538 significant experiments were obtained at ringing station "Dragoman". The most numerous tested species were: Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*) – 154 individuals, Reed Warbler (*A. scirpaceus*) – 151, Great Reed Warbler (*A. arundinaceus*) – 55, Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*) – 51, Savi's Warbler (*Locustella luscinoides*) – 49 and Marsh Warbler (*A. palustris*) – 18. The main demonstrated direction was SSW. According to the above results some problems are discussed: (1) influence of the researcher and how it reflects in the demonstrated directions, (2) opportunities for excluding human influence using special platform (not allowing birds to see the researcher during putting them into the cage). Results obtained before and after using this platform are compared and discussed. More westward azimuths of autumn migration became noticeable in the latter case.

ORIENTATION BEHAVIOUR OF LONG-DISTANCE MIGRANTS – SUN AND RESEARCHER INFLUENCES

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In 2001, 2002 and 2003 long-distance migrants were tested at Kalimok station (NE Bulgaria) in two type orientation cages – Busse's cages in the daytime and Em-

len funnels at night. Possible influences of the sun and the researcher are noticed, mainly in the daytime experiments.

Influence of the researcher on the directional preferences of tested birds is shown for two species – the Great Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*) and the Sedge Warbler (*A. schoenobaenus*) in daytime experiments during two autumn seasons. The activity of birds in directions opposite to the researcher's side increases in all cases. Although main directions of the two species for the different years are almost opposite, reversed pictures show nearly equal main directions, confirmed also from the night experiments. Hence, reversing of directions in cases of researcher's disturbance is useful method for comparison of different distributions.

Influence of the sun in experiments was also registered in some cases. Distributions of directional preferences of Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*) in day- and night-time experiments during the autumn are presented. In all cases when sunlight influence is possible, similar NNW directed "sun vectors" appear. We suppose that birds prefer this direction in two cases. First, when they are attracted from sun reflection on the screen of Busse's cages in daytime tests and secondly in early night tests with Emlen funnels when sunlight from the sunset is still visible on the sky. Reversing all data in these cases might give a non-existing direction or extend a weak one.

Detailed analysis of the orientation experiments reveals impact of different environmental factors on the results. Preliminary consideration of possible impact factors must precede reversing the results. Only after this preliminary stage, reversing pictures are useful tool for comparison of different cases.

RESULTS OF BIRD ORIENTATION EXPERIMENTS
IN THE BUSSE'S CAGES AT THE ZVENIGOROD
BIOLOGICAL STATION (MOSCOW REGION, RUSSIA)

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Researches were carried out in 1999-2002 at the Zvenigorod Biological Station (55°44'N, 36°51'E – Moscow Region, Russia). The Zvenigorod Biological Station is located 60 km to the west of Moscow in the Moscow river flood plain and in the forest in a natural reserve. Birds were caught with mist-nets. Ringed and measured birds were placed in the Busse's cages for 10-minute experiments. In total 3465 birds were tested. 374 birds were tested in autumn 1999, 507 – in spring 2000, 580 – in autumn 2000, 412 – in spring 2001, 832 – in autumn 2001, 613 – in spring 2002,

and 147 – in autumn 2002. Most numerous experiments were made with: Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) – 952 birds, Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*) – 312, Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*) – 311, Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*) – 193, Willow Warbler (*P. trochilus*) – 179, Pied Flycatcher (*Ficedula hypoleuca*) – 141, Marsh Warbler (*Acrocephalus palustris*) – 94.

Sunday, 8 February 2004

Minutes from the session on formal matters

1. SE European Bird Migration Network (SEEN) – report from 2003 activities of the Network and future plans, communicational and financial matters – Przemysław Busse
2. Discussion – orientation experiments, organisation of the next workshop, discussion groups, training scheme
3. Study of migratory divide in the Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*) – an invitation to cooperation – Petr Prochazka

REPORT / FUTURE PLANS

- SEEN Network

SEEN members come from 22 countries, which means that activities of our Network cover area from Belgium, Finland, Omsk (Russia) to Egypt, Jordan, Palestine and Israel in the Middle East and SAFRING in South Africa.

- Trainings/Visits

Four new ringing stations started to work: Sharm el Sheikh and Aswan in Egypt, Akyatan and Diyarbakir in Turkey, pilot studies were also conducted at a new ringing place in Bulgaria. The aim of all trainings and visits was: (1) to establish uniform methodology for SEEN members, so effectiveness of research of bird migration could be increased and (2) at the new stations – to train local ringers that will be able to continue SEEN ringing programmes on their own.

– in Poland 2 persons from Russia and Belarus were trained in bird migration field-work methods.

- Egypt project (2003)

Ringing station at Wadi El Rayan Protected Area continued to work, ran by our Egyptian colleague – Wed Ibrahim. Thanks to his effort ringing projects started also at two other places in Egypt: (1) at Sharm el Sheikh, located on the Red Sea Coast and (2) near Aswan, close to first cataract on the Nile. At Sharm el Sheikh ringing programme continued for 1.5 month in spring and one month in autumn. In both seasons number of ringed birds was low, thus decision was made to stop the studies there. It seems that this place holds some number of migrants only at suboptimal conditions for migration, e.g. during sandstorms. Studies near Aswan started in autumn and lasted for 1.5 month; results were promising and ringing programme will be continued in spring 2004.

- Jordan project (2003)

Unfortunately, because of very difficult political situation in the Middle East, ringing at Azraq in spring was not conducted. In autumn it was run for one month in Azraq. Number of birds caught was very low, so it was confirmed that this place in autumn is not suitable for migration studies.

- Turkey project (2003)

Development of the SEEN ringing/training scheme in Turkey is much quicker than could be expected. In spring Polish ringers only assisted Turkish colleagues at Manyas and Cernek ringing stations, in autumn both stations were run only by Turkish ringers. In spring ringing studies were conducted at a new place also – Akyatan. The results were promising and studies were continued in autumn. In autumn another new ringing station was established as well – Diyarbakır; ringing at this station lasted for two weeks only. Ringing programme at this station will be continued in spring 2004.

- SEEN development – ringing/training scheme

After just a few years of this scheme, it can be said that in the whole process of establishing of the on-going ringing programmes in different countries, the key element are people. “Catching people is really more important than catching birds at the initial steps.” At this workshop initial arrangements on ringing schemes in Iran and Georgia were discussed.

COMMUNICATION

There is a need of current update on work of SEEN members, this could be achieved by:

- system of SMS send *e.g.* to SEEN Chairperson;
- WEBSITE – is vital!
- regular distribution of lists of ringed birds from different stations;
- publications in our journal (this includes also station reports) – *The Ring*;
- workshops.

FINANCES

Development of SEEN is very promising but it also means facing financial problems of many stations. At the moment mainly Polish sources of funds were exploited to support work of SEEN stations.

- Polish Committee of Scientific Research grant

SEEN development is well recognised and for sure we will be supplied with funds for next period.

- “Orientation” grant

This grant finished in 2003 and we will apply for the next one. This time money that will be available can be used only to cover costs of Polish ringers going abroad but still these money can be used abroad to cover at least some expenses.

- Local sources / new projects

All SEEN members are kindly encouraged to apply for funds in any projects available in their countries. Usually joined programmes are welcome; any documents that could help to apply for funds can be obtained from SEEN Board.

- Work organisation / SEEN agreement

There is a proposal of having simplified agreements before every season that will clearly state responsibilities/duties of each party involved in the project. The general rule should be applied that local organisers are responsible for organisation “at site”, *i.e.* accommodation, ringing place facilities, covering living expenses, preferably also transport costs within the country. SEEN usually covers travel expenses and supply new stations with some equipment. There are some cases that SEEN covers all expenses but then local organisers will apply for a kind of SEEN grant.

DISCUSSION

- Orientation

Several problems concerning interpretation of orientation data and influence of different factors, like weather, observer, *etc.* were raised. Final conclusion was to summarise all questions and problems, give clear answers to those questions that we already studied and make appropriate, well designed experiments in order to test and solve other problems.

- NEXT workshop – organisation

Przemysław Busse:

- WHEN – it seems that the beginning of February is much better time than December, because it allows preparing detailed presentations of SEEN member-stations work.
- WHERE – any partner that wants to host next workshop will be very welcome! Another proposal is to have every second year workshops organised by different members and in the meantime in Poland, as it is easily accessible by most members.

Sancar Barış:

- there is a need for a session on mortality and bird safety, especially problem with predators – how to cope with it (usually closing the nets helps) and manage catching capacity at the same time.

- Discussion groups

Özgür Keşaplı Didrickson

- there is a need for such groups. Nadia Zelenova and Can Bilgin could run these.

- Training scheme

Nadia Zelenova

- specially developed computer programmes can offer new possibilities in ringers training;

- “colour” book – it would be useful to have a kind of colour reference that would be helpful to ringers, as in bird identification the colour is an important character or a supporting character in ageing and sexing a bird – but it is quite obscure.

- Presentations

Przemysław Busse

- think about audience – assume they do not know anything about your study;
- key steps MUST be very clear;
- lecture should give comments to pictures rather than talk;
- try to speak instead of reading;
- graphs, tables MUST be big enough, with clear colours; lots of lines make them completely unreadable.

Power Point presentations:

- make it clear and simple – be very careful with all these “special effects” that could draw audience attention instead of your study;
- comments must be synchronised with picture.

Sancar Barış:

- there is a need for STANDARD formats of presentations, at least of general station reports, *e.g.* general station characteristic, description of area, habitats, net distribution, *etc.*;
- “things to do” – to develop form of a general station report and station characteristics.

Jarek Nowakowski:

- such general SEEN stations characteristics could be published in *The Ring*.

STUDY OF MIGRATORY DIVIDE IN THE REED WARBLER
(*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*) – AN INVITATION
TO COOPERATION

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Populations of migratory bird species often differ with respect to the location of their wintering grounds and therefore travel in distinct migratory directions. A region in which two populations showing different migratory directions meet is called a migratory divide. A classic example is the migratory divide between SW- and SE-migrating White Storks (*Ciconia ciconia*). Similar divide is assumed also for the Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*) in Central Europe. In spite of the massive ringing effort of reedbed passerines, the latter divide has not been clearly demarcated yet. In the proposed study a combination of different approaches will try to identify the migratory divide in the Reed Warbler. The project will adopt both traditional methods (analysis of ringing recoveries, morphology, orientation cages experiments) and mod-

ern approaches (molecular markers, stable isotopes, blood parasites). The data can be then also used to measure migratory connectivity, to analyse the phylogeographic population structure and perhaps to reconstruct the post-glacial colonisation of Europe by the Reed Warbler. All people willing to participate in the project are warmly welcome and asked to contact the project coordinator.

Compiled by Turkish Bird Research Society staff (**Dr Can Bilgin, Özge Keşaplı Can, Özgür Keşaplı Didrickson, Jno Didrickson**) and SEEN Secretary (**Agnieszka Ożarowska**)