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Status Report 2007 of the Swiss Bird Ringing Centre



Swiss Ringing Scheme
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1. Organization and recent developments

Catching and ringing of wild birds in Switzerland is under the “Federal Law on Hunting and on the Protection of Mammals and Birds Living in the Wild”. The Swiss Ringing Scheme is put in charge for the co-ordination of bird ringing by the Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape SAEFL that also finances the running of the scheme. The contract for this invaluable support has been extended until 30 June 2009.

The Swiss Ringing Scheme is based at the Schweizerische Vogelwarte Sempach (Swiss Ornithological Institute; www.vogelwarte.ch). The Institute is a private foundation whose mandate is to contribute to the study and the protection of birds through excellence in avian monitoring, research, conservation, services and teaching and training. The Ringing Scheme reports to the Scientific Director, Dr Lukas Jenni.

The Bird Ringing Centre at Schweizerische Vogelwarte Sempach issues bird rings with inscription „Sempach Helvetia“ for use in Switzerland only.

The Ringing Scheme has been working to introduce a new software package that will allow the ringers to submit their data on-line via an external web server but also to download their own ringing recoveries and to produce maps. The new system shall be installed by January 2008.

2. Cooperation within Switzerland

A new reference book on the Birds of Switzerland will be available in a German and a French edition by November 2007. It describes all 419 species so far recorded in Switzerland and adjacent parts of neighbouring countries and covers all topics including distribution, population trends, migrations, habitat, behaviour, food, reproduction, threats, and conservation. For the first time, maps will show the 80'000 ringing recoveries stored in our data bank.

The Swiss Ringing Scheme is actively involved in the Avian influenza topic that came up in late summer 2005. We have given scientific advice on bird migration to the Federal authorities and we collaborated with the monitoring of wild birds in relation to the potential transmission of High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI).

The Swiss ringing scheme considers that it is vital for bird ringing to be maintained in order to provide sound data on changing patterns of bird movements and demography in relation to avian influenza and other applied issues. It is co-ordinating information on best practice with respect to the hygiene of ringers and birds to ensure that this can be done safely.

3. Staff

The main people involved in the work at the bird ringing scheme are:

- Dr. Matthias Kestenholz (Scientist, 40 % for the ringing centre): head of scheme, licenses, scientific, political and public issues, trapping fieldstation
matthias.kestenholz@vogelwarte.ch
- Elisabeth Wiprächtiger (Technician, 70 % for the ringing centre): data bank manager, rings, equipment,
elisabeth.wipraechtiger@vogelwarte.ch

- Guido Häfliger (Engineer, 10 % for the ringing centre): data bank maintenance, data management work
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An advisory board of six highly experienced ringers is assisting the Sempach scheme on a voluntary basis.

Matthias Kestenholz keeps serving as Vice-Chairman of EURING (elected in 2005).

4. Bird ringers

233 ringers (109 with a licence of category A for all species, 124 with a licence of category B (only one or a few species) or C (injured or orphaned birds) are dealing with a total of 188 projects.

7 candidates successfully passed the ringer's examination in 2005, and 4 in 2006.

5. Ringing and recovery numbers

In 2005, 112'068 birds from 171 species were ringed in Switzerland. The most common species were Coal Tit with 12'222 captures and Chaffinch with 12'074. Among nestlings, Great Tit was number one with 5'448 chicks ringed. In total, 1'645 ringing recoveries entered the data base.

In 2006, 65'790 birds from 175 species were ringed in Switzerland. This strongly reduced total is partly due to ringing restrictions caused by avian influenza. The most common species were Chaffinch with 11'048 captures and Robin with 7'126. Among nestlings, Great Tit was number one with 3'553 chicks ringed. In total, 1'528 ringing recoveries entered the data base.

The full reports (Wiprächtiger et al. 2006, 2007) are available at the Swiss Bird Ringing Scheme.

All Swiss ringing recovery data were transferred to the EURING data bank.

6. Projects

The following projects are directed by the Swiss Bird Ringing Scheme:

The Swiss Ringing Scheme is running the famous Alpine ringing station "Col de Bretolet" at 1923 m a.sl. on the Swiss-French border.

The nation-wide Integrated Population Monitoring Programme for the Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* and the Barn Owl *Tyto alba* continued. It aims at studying (1) how population changes are reflected by population parameters and (2) how they disperse. A further paper on demographic effects of extreme winter weather in barn owls was published (Altwegg et al. 2006).

7. Publications

7.1. Publications by the ringing scheme

- Altwegg, R., A. Roulin, M. Kestenholz & L. Jenni (2006): Demographic effects of extreme winter weather in the barn owl. *Oecologia* 149: 44–51.
- Hofer, J., F. Korner-Nievergelt, P. Korner-Nievergelt, M. Kestenholz & L. Jenni (2005): Herkunft und Zugverhalten von in der Schweiz überwinternden Reiherenten *Aythya fuligula*: Eine Ringfundanalyse. *Ornithol. Beob.* 102: 181-204.
- Hofer, J., F. Korner-Nievergelt, P. Korner-Nievergelt, M. Kestenholz & L. Jenni (2006): Herkunft und Zugverhalten von in der Schweiz überwinternden oder durchziehenden Tafelenten *Aythya ferina*. *Ornithol. Beob.* 103: 65–86.
- Korner, F., P. Korner, E. Baader, L. Fischer, W. Schaffner & M. Kestenholz (2007): Herbstlicher Tagzug auf der Beringungsstation Ulmethöchi im Jura: Veränderungen in den Fangzahlen über 40 Jahre (1966-2005). *Ornithol. Beob.* 104: 3–32.
- Korner, F., P. Korner, E. Baader, L. Fischer, W. Schaffner & M. Kestenholz (2007): Jahres- und tageszeitliches Auftreten von Singvögeln auf dem Herbstzug im Jura (Ulmethöchi, Baselland). *Ornithol. Beob.* 104: 101–130.
- Schmitz, P., F. Steiner & M. Kestenholz (2007): Analyse des données suisses de reprises du Bruant des Roseaux *Emberiza schoeniclus*. *Nos Oiseaux* 54:
- Wiprächtiger, E., G. Häfliger & M. Kestenholz (2006): Numbers of birds ringed and recovered by the Sempach Ringing Centre in 2005. Typoskript, Schweizerische Vogelwarte Sempach. 8 S.
- Wiprächtiger, E., G. Häfliger & M. Kestenholz (2007): Numbers of birds ringed and recovered by the Sempach Ringing Centre in 2006. Typoskript, Schweizerische Vogelwarte Sempach. 8 S.

7.2. Publications reporting studies under licence of the ringing scheme

- Aschwanden, J., L. Jenni & S. Birrer (2005): Abwanderung von Waldohreulenweibchen *Asio otus* während der Brutzeit. *Ornithol. Beob.* 102: 49–52.
- Aschwanden, J., S. Birrer & L. Jenni (2005): Are ecological compensation areas attractive hunting sites for common kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*) and long-eared owls (*Asio otus*)? *J. Ornithol.* 146: 279-286.
- Baillie, S., F. Bairlein, J. Clark, C. du Feu, W. Fiedler, T. Fransson, J. Hegelbach, Z. Karcza, L.F. Keller, M. Kestenholz, M. Schaub & F. Spina (2007): Bird Ringing for Science and Conservation. EURING, Thetford.
- Duplain, J., I. Henry & M. Baudraz (2005): Âge, poids et sex-ratio des Jaseurs boréaux *Bombycilla garrulus* lors de l'invasion de l'hiver 2004-2005 dans le vignoble de Lavaux (Vaud, Suisse). *Nos Oiseaux* 52: 235-240.
- Henry, I. & J. Duplain (2005): Nouvelles données de mue suspendue des rémiges secondaires chez le Jaseur boréal *Bombycilla garrulus*. *Nos Oiseaux* 52: 241-242.
- Hirschheydt, H. von, M. Schaub & F. del Fante (2006): Le Rondine della Bassa Riviera: sviluppo degli effettivi, successo riproduttivo e tasso di sopravvivenza negli anni 1997-2004. *Bollettino della Società ticinese di Scienze naturali* 94:
- Korner-Nievergelt, F. & B. Leisler (2005): Dienen die Zehensohlenballen von Singvögeln der Wärmeisolation oder der Lokomotion? *Vogelwarte* 43: 261-265.
- Lardelli, R. (2006): La migrazione degli uccelli attraverso il Ticino: analisi delle ricatture di uccelli inanellati. *Bollettino della Società ticinese di Scienze naturali* 94: 17-24.
- Loyau, A., B. Moureau, M. Richard, P. Christe, P. Heeb & G. Sorci (2005): Cross-amplification of polymorphic microsatellites reveals extra-pair paternity and brood parasitism in *Sturnus vulgaris*. *Molecular Ecology Notes* 5: 135-139.
- Ravussin, P.-A., D. Arrigo, M. Schaub. & A. Roulin (2007): Succès de le reproduction et taux de survie du Gobemouche noir *Ficedula hypoleuca* dans l'ouest de la Suisse, en marge de son aire de répartition. *Nos Oiseaux* 54: 29-40.

- Roulin, A., P. Bize, N. Tzaud, M. Bianchi, P.-A. Ravussin & P. Christe (2005): Oxygen consumption in offspring tawny owls is associated with colour morph of foster mother. *J. Ornithol.* 146: 390-394.
- Saladin, V., M. Ritschard, A. Roulin, P. Bize & H. Richner (2007): Analysis of genetic parentage in the tawny owl (*Strix aluco*) reveals extra-pair paternity is low. *J. Ornithol.* 148: 113-116.
- Schmitz, P. & F. Steiner (2006): Autumn migration of Reed Buntings *Emberiza schoeniclus* in Switzerland. *Ringling & Migration* 23: 33-38.
- Tschirren, B., P.S. Fitze & H. Richner (2005): Carotenoid-based nestling coloration and parental favouritism in the great tit. *Oecologia* 143: 477-482.
- Tschirren, B., V. Saladin, P.S. Fitze, H. Schwabl & H. Richner (2005): Maternal yolk testosterone does not modulate parasite susceptibility or immune function in great tit nestlings. *J. Anim. Ecol.* 74: 675-682.
- Wegler, M. (2006): Constraints on, and determinants of, the annual number of breeding attempts in the multi-brooded Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*. *Ibis* 148: 273-284.
- Wirthner, S. (2006): Conservation ecology of the Alpine Black grouse (*Tetrao tetrix*): 1) modelling the impact of snow sports on local density; 2) arthropod food supply in different habitat types. Diplomarbeit an der Philosophisch-Naturwissenschaftlichen Fakultät der Universität Bern.

20 August 2007, Matthias Kestenholz