

Copenhagen Bird Ringing Centre, Zoological Museum

Short annual report for EURING GM August 2003

The Zoological Museum at the University of Copenhagen and the Ministry of Environment and Energy jointly finance the Copenhagen Bird Ringing Centre according to an agreement that runs in periods of three years. Currently, we are in the second 3 year period, which began August 1. 2001 and runs to July 31. 2004. The contract needs to be mutually renewed 9 month before expiring, i.e. by the end of this year.

The new general guidelines for ringers, where every ringed bird can be traced back to a specific project and purpose following guidelines approved by both the museum and the Ministry of Environment and Energy, is now fully implemented and working without problems. The same goes for the procedure, where all metal ringing in Denmark is done with Copenhagen rings (i.e., Kalø metalrings are no longer used) and all recoveries of metal rings are also handled in Copenhagen (incl. those regarding old Kalø rings).

We are at the end of our major public awareness campaign (including a popular newsletter to all finders of rings etc., information brochures, two mobile exhibitions and organisations of ringing events), which has been a fantastic success – especially the ringing events open to the public and the popular “newsmagazine”. Coverage of these public events as well as our “news-stories” has repeatedly made it to the pages of regional as well as national newspapers, radios and televisions. Stable, “friendly” contacts with free-lance journalists looking for (positive) stories are likely to become a “permanent” benefit from this campaign.

We are about to begin the third out of four years of completing the Danish Migration Atlas, presenting the results of 100 years of Danish ringing. We have received and processed a lot of data from foreign ringing centres, as well as we have got access to ringing recoveries from old, now terminated, Danish ringing schemes. We are much obliged to all the ringing schemes that provided us with their “Danish” data. Thus, the atlas will be based on all recoveries concerning birds either ringed or recovered in Denmark. In total, the atlas will be based on approx. 170.000 recoveries of Danish ringed birds and 62.000 recoveries of non-Danish ringed birds. Furthermore, we have received valuable and important help from our Swedish, Norwegian and British colleagues, whose work has helped clear our thoughts about the design and analysis. A presentation of the project in Danish and English can be seen at <http://www.zmuc.dk/ringatlas>, including examples of two species accounts (Danish only). The atlas will be in Danish with an English summary, as well as English subtitles to tables, figures and maps.

Additionally, we have several major and minor research projects of which the most important ones are:

- a) “Wildlife as a source of salmonella infection in food-animal production”;
- b) an EU-funded project trying to establish a publicly accessible database on the geographical distribution of Palaearctic migratory birds in Africa to guide conservation decisions (see <http://www.zmuc.dk/CommonWeb/research/migratorybirds-africa.htm>);
- c) “The migratory programme in birds: the ecological and evolutionary consequences” (including analyses of recovery data) (see <http://www.zmuc.dk/VerWeb/STAFF/kt3.htm>);
- d) the “Background Ringing Project” aimed at collecting information through general ringing on target species (ca. 170 spp.) of which we still do not have sufficient ringing material to answer even basic biological, phenological and natural history questions.

In addition to these, we also participate in the EURING Swallow project and the ESF Optimality in Bird Migration programme.

We are continuing to provide financial and moral support to the ringers with regard to their work in establishing and maintaining their relatively new Danish Ringers Society. We expect a lot of synergetic effect from enhancing collaboration with our volunteer ringers through this organisation.

Numbers of birds ringed

During 2002, 58,584 birds of 174 species were ringed in Denmark and 4,135 birds of 33 species on the Faeroe Islands. The most numerous ringed species in Denmark in 2002 was Robin with 5,235 (153 rec.), Cormorant 4,335 (237 rec.) and Great Tit 3,086 (171 rec.), respectively. On the Faeroe Islands Fulmar was the most common species ringed with 1,563 (2 rec.).

Numbers of recoveries

Copenhagen Bird Ringing Centre received and handled 2,275 recoveries of metal rings of birds ringed in Denmark and 70 recoveries concerning birds ringed on the Faeroe Islands during 2002. The vast number of readings of rings in connection with the very large colour-marking projects on Mute Swan and gulls are handled separately by project holders. The most numerous recovered species in Denmark in 2002 was Cormorant with 237, Herring Gull 202, Great Tit 171, Robin 153, Blackbird 126 and Greylag Goose 104. On the Faeroe Islands, Puffin was the most numerous with 17 recoveries. The figure for Mute Swan is not yet known.

Numbers of ringers, ringing groups, and ringing stations

During 2003, the Copenhagen Bird Ringing Centre had 196 licensed ringers. Currently (July 2003), we have 180 ringers, 9 ringing groups, and 7 ringing stations. Although there is a slight turnover in our ringers, the number of ringers has been relatively stable for the last 3 years.

Staff at the Copenhagen Bird Ringing Centre, Zoological Museum

Allocation of time by permanent Zoological Museum staff:

- Carsten Rahbek, Dr., Professor, Head of the ringing scheme, part-time.
- Jan Bolding Kristensen, Assistant Curator, part-time.
- Berit Ree, Assistant Curator, part-time.
- Gert Kristensen, Assistant Curator, full-time

Staff on external funding:

- Jesper Johannes Madsen, M.Sc., Research and Project Co-ordinator, full-time.
- Kjeld T. Pedersen, Assistant Curator, full-time.
- Jesper Bønlykke-Pedersen, ringing atlas, full-time (until 2005)
- Morten Bjerrum, ringing atlas, full-time (until 2004)

Computerising

All recovery data (incl. retraps, controls, and readings of metal rings) are stored in databases, except short-term retraps at the ringing site. Ringing data is still handled manually. It was our hope to introduce one of the existing ringing- and recovery-programmes used at other ringing centres –, as we currently have no funds to redevelop a new database system. We are still working on that option.

Ringing projects

In addition to our own research projects, we have approved 67 external ringing projects under our license. These include 14 colour ringing, 2 experimental, and 13 projects involving national Red Data Book species. All these projects are external projects managed by amateur ringers or professional researchers from Denmark as well as abroad.

Carsten Rahbek and Jesper Johannes Madsen