

Copenhagen Bird Ringing Centre, Denmark

Short annual report for EURING GM August 2007

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All ringing of wild birds with metal rings in Denmark is done with rings from the Zoological Museum at the University of Copenhagen, and all recoveries of metal rings are handled by the museum (incl. those few regarding old Kalø rings).

The Zoological Museum 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 (since 1998). At the moment we are negotiating a renewal of the last contract which ran out on 31 July 2007. The Ministry is likely to continue funding at the current level of a new strategy for the Centre with more emphasis on research on threatened species, monitoring of changes in population sizes and migratory behaviour and research on bird migration. Part of the new strategy also includes a thorough revision of our instructions to ringers.

The Danish Migration Atlas, presenting the results of 100 years of Danish ringing, was published in early 2007. The atlas presents all recoveries of birds either ringed or recovered in Denmark, approx. 181.000 recoveries of birds ringed in Denmark and about 53.000 recoveries of birds ringed abroad and recovered in Denmark. The atlas went out of stock already after 3 months, but we anticipate a reprint in the autumn. We are of course much obliged to all the ringing schemes that provided us with their "Danish" data.

As a follow-up on the ringing atlas, the Centre is planning free access to maps of recoveries of Danish ringed birds via an interactive web page based on Google Earth. This project is in collaboration with GBIF (Global Biodiversity Information Facility).

The handling time of reports of recoveries of ringed birds has been somewhat longer than usual in 2007 due to a periodic lack of staff members. Otherwise, most activities are running smoothly, including a reintroduction of a news-letter to the ringers (3 issues in 2007).

In early 2007, the scientific staff at the Centre was accused of scientific misconduct by Anders Pape Møller, who accused the Centre for not taking action against a claimed high number of errors in the ringing data. Our evaluation of the data set in question indicated insignificant errors only. As for other schemes, several steps have been taken to minimise the number of errors in our data and we do not believe that the rate of errors are higher than for other schemes' data. As such the accusation is general against the scientific use of ringing data as done through EURING. However, no formal complaint was filed with the Danish Committees on Scientific Dishonesty.

Projects at the Ringing Centre

Important research projects at the Centre include:

- a. The "Background Ringing Project". The aim of this project is to collect basic information on biology, phenology and natural history through general ringing on target species (c. 170 spp.) of which we still do not have sufficient ringing material. Additionally, ringing of a certain number of individuals annually allow for monitoring of changes in migratory behaviour.
- b. Conservation projects including radio tracking of little owls, 5 years ringing of sandwich terns, and a pilot project on white-tailed eagles in which the first Danish eagles have been ringed (in 2007).
- c. Development of tracking system for smaller birds using satellites in collaboration with the Danish Technical University (DTU).
- d. Phd-project, analyses of trends in timing of migration of birds ringed at the Danish Island of Christiansø in the Baltic Sea, 1976-1997.
- e. Four CES are in operation in 2007.
- f. Monitoring of Avian Influenza.
- g. Ringing of cured diseased and injured birds that are released back into nature.

Numbers of birds ringed and numbers of recoveries (Copenhagen Bird Ringing Centre)

2005	Denmark	Faeroe Islands	Greenland
Birds ringed	69,979	508	854
Bird species ringed	175	29	10
Most numerous ringed	Goldcrest 9,391 Robin 6,463 Barn Swallow 4,567 Great Tit 4,396 Greenfinch 3,475	Storm-petrel 213 Starling 83 Great Skua 27	Little Auk 473 Arctic Tern 206 Gyrfalcon 96
New ringing species	Marmora's Warbler		
Received and handled recoveries of DKC metal rings	1,524	37	18
Most numerous recovered species	Mute Swan c. 400 Cormorant 168 Eider 132 Herring Gull 132 Blackbird 95	Starling 11 Fulmar 9 Storm-petrel 4	(> 2 rec.) Canada Goose 4 Eider 3

2006	Denmark	Faeroe Islands	Greenland
Birds ringed	68,689	3,164	461
Bird species ringed	164	52	3
Most numerous ringed	Robin 6,138 Great Tit 5,196 Barn Swallow 4,479 Goldcrest 4,166 Cormorant 2,631	Storm-petrel 1,907 Starling 180 Fulmar 150 Leach's Storm-petrel 123 Manx Shearwater 116	Arctic Tern 434
New ringing species	Ring-billed Gull		
Received and handled recoveries of DKC metal rings * The figure for Mute Swan is not yet	c. 1,550	54	13
Most numerous recovered species	Mute Swan c. 350 Cormorant 201 Herring Gull 119	Puffin 20 Fulmar 12	(> 2 rec.) Brünnich's Guillemot 2 White-fronted Goose 2

Remarks: The vast number of readings of rings in connection with very large colour-marking projects on Cormorant, Pink-footed Goose, Mute Swan and gulls are handled separately by project holders. Excluded are also all local controls.

Numbers of ringers, ringing groups, and ringing stations

In 2006, the Copenhagen Bird Ringing Centre issued 192 individual licenses. Ten ringing groups and 7 ringing stations were licensed to operate under our license. In 2007 (august), we have 185 ringers, 10 ringing groups, and 7 ringing stations. The number of ringers has been relatively stable for the last 10 years.

Staff at the Copenhagen Bird Ringing Centre, Zoological Museum (aug. 2007)

Allocation of time by permanent Zoological Museum staff:

- Kasper Thorup, Dr., Head of the ringing scheme, part-time.
- Jan Bolding Kristensen, Assistant Curator, part-time.
- Anne Marie Warfield, Assistant Curator, part-time.

Staff on external funding:

- Jesper Johannes Madsen, M.Sc., Research and Project Co-ordinator, full-time.
- Kjeld T. Pedersen, Assistant Curator (database), full-time.
- Gert Christensen, Assistant Curator, part-time.

Student worker:

- Peter Søgaard Jørgensen, part-time

Students:

- Anders Tøttrup, PhD-student

Computerising

From 2006 the ringers could use a computer interface (based on Access) supplied by the Ringing Centre to report their ringing data. All recovery data (incl. retraps, controls and readings of metal rings) are stored in databases, except older short-term retraps at the ringing site and recoveries of dead pullus. Incoming recovery data are still handled manually at the Centre. It is a high priority to introduce a new computer program for handling all ringings and recoveries within the next year.

External ringing projects

In addition to our own research projects, we have approved 47 external ringing projects under our license in 2007. These include 14 colour ringing projects, 2 experimental projects and 14 projects involving nationally red-listed species. All these projects are external projects managed by amateur ringers or professional researchers from Denmark as well as abroad. Each project is approved annually based on a status report.