

Copenhagen Bird Ringing Centre, Zoological Museum

Short annual report for EURING GM August 2001

The Zoological Museum, 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. The first period started 1 August 1998 and has just been renewed to run from 1 August 2001 to 31 July 2004.

The new general guidelines for ringers, where every ringed bird can be traced back to a specific project and purpose following general guidelines approved by both the museum and the Ministry of Environment and Energy, has overcome the first years of transition and is now working without problems. The same goes from the new procedure from 1 January 1999, 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 (also those regarding old Kalø rings.).

Major news include that we have succeeded in attracting substantial funds to run a public awareness campaign (including the production of a popular newsletter to, e.g., all finders of rings, information brochures, establishment of two mobile exhibitions and organisations of ringing events freely available to the public). We have also received private funds to fully finance and complete within 4 years a Danish Migration Atlas presenting the results of 100 years of Danish ringing.

In addition, 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, the ESF Optimality in Bird Migration programme as well as a German-Finish-Danish Satellite project on Lesser Black-backed Gull.

This year, we had the great pleasure that our ringers have organised themselves in a 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 2000, 56,301 birds of 164 species were ringed in Denmark and 1034 birds of 31 species on the Faeroe Islands. The most numerous ringed species in Denmark in 2000 was Robin with 5,588, Willow Warbler with 5097 and Barn Swallow (new top-three species) with 3,504. On the Faeroe Islands Puffin was the most common species ringed with 457 specimens.

Numbers of recoveries

Copenhagen Bird Ringing Centre received and handled 2,293 recoveries of metal rings of birds ringed in Denmark and 147 recoveries concerning birds ringed on the Faeroe Islands during 2000. The vast number of readings of rings in connection with the very large colour-marking projects on

Mute Swan and gulls is handled separately with the help of the projectholders. The most numerous recovered species in Denmark in 2000 was Herring Gull with 241, Cormorant 218, Black-headed Gull with 188, Greylag Goose with 149, Eider with 130 and Great Tit and Blackbird with 113. On the Faeroe Islands Puffin was the most numerous with 117 recoveries. The figure for Mute Swan is not yet known.

We are still in the progress of specifying which recovery data we want to include in our database - especially with regard to controlled/recaptured birds. Many Danish ringers follow the traditional 'rule' to only report birds ringed by themselves if there are more than 30 days between ringing date and recapture date, or if the distance between ringing site and recapture site is more than 10 km. Our goal is to include all recoveries, including retraps, but lack of software for the ringers and our out-dated software at the ringing central prevent this.

Numbers of ringers, ringing groups, and ringing stations

During 2000, the Copenhagen Bird Ringing Centre had 179 licensed ringers. At present (July 2001), we have 181 ringers, six ringing groups, and six ringing stations. Although there is a slight turnover in our ringers, the number of ringers has been stable 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)

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 70 external ringing projects under our license. These include 14 colour ringing, 1 experimental, and 12 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