

**EURING GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
**KOLLUMEROORD, GRONINGEN, 26-27 AUGUST 2001**  
**ITALIAN REPORT**

1. **Staff:** changes have recently occurred in the staff, which is now of 5 full-time positions: 2 Academic (Fernando Spina 40%, Davide Licheri 100%), 4 clerical (Stefano Macchio 50% & Ezio Orfelini 50% - licensing & data analysis, Rosita Mantovani 50% - ringing data & rings, Dario Piacentini 100% - recoveries).
2. **Ringers:** in the last two years the positive trend in the number of ringers and trainees has continued. In the year 2000, exams have been organised to release new licenses and test already licensed ringers. Over 150 trainees and ringers took part into the exams, with very positive overall results. Since 2000, licensed ringers who have not been active for at least three years are invited to these exams, in order for the scheme to check their technical level and invite them to update their protocols, if necessary. Ringers who showed unsatisfactory levels have been withdrawn their licenses. Presently the overall number of licensed ringers is around 360.
3. **Regulations:** ringing regulations have been published and widely distributed in 1999, with details on all possible aspects of the organisation of bird ringing in Italy. This document is now the formal reference for the Scheme, the ringers and the local Authorities issuing the licenses.
4. **New ringers' software:** with the year 2000, the new version of the software for ringers (Nisoria 2000) has been produced and freely distributed to our ringers, together with a 150 pages manual which also summarises field techniques and protocols in data collection.
5. **Ringings:** annual numbers around 230-240,000. Presently a bad delay in annual reports, which we hope will soon be overcome.
6. **Recoveries:** a total of 3500 recoveries have been processed since July 1999; presently the situation is relatively good, with processing time of few weeks to few months (in case of missing ringing details).
7. **Retraps:** the updated version of Nisoria allows ringers to enter and send their retraps on floppy. This has started in these last months, and we're getting quite large numbers of data, which are processed automatically and entered in the main data bank of recoveries/controls of Italian rings.

## 8. **Projects:**

- **Progetto Piccole Isole:** the project is still going on, with a large number of participants (over 300/year). Italian, Spanish, French and Maltese stations have joined the activities in these last two years (2000, 2001). Over 510,000 birds have been ringed, and 34 papers published since the start of the project in 1988. In 2001, thanks to a financial support offered by the Italian Ministry of the Environment, two volumes of reports have been published, a first one with the results of 1997, together with a special report on the first 10 years of activity (*Messineo et al., 2001 – Dieci anni di Progetto Piccole Isole. Biol. Cons. Fauna, 106: 1-244*), a second one with the results of the 1998-1999 campaigns (*Messineo et al., 2001 – Progetto Piccole Isole: risultati 1998-1999. Biol. Cons. Fauna, 108: 1-148*).
  - **EURING Swallow Project:** intense activities have been carried on in these last years. A record total of over 51,000 have been ringed in 1999, and over 45,000 in 2000. A series of analyses have been completed on the patterns of pre-migratory fattening, aiming to investigate differences between sex- and age-classes, as well as on a latitudinal basis. For a brief summary of results, please see ESP newsletter n. 3.
  - **Progetto Alpi:** the project has been launched in 1988 as a co-operative co-ordination effort between the Ringing Scheme and the Museo Tridentino di Storia Naturale of Trento. Stations have been distributed both along a W-E longitudinal gradient along the barrier represented by the Alps, as well as among different typologies (valleys, slopes passes). Ringing activities are concentrated on post-breeding migration. Aside to a series of fixed pentades of activity, different periods have been sampled during the years in order to investigate the whole migration period, collecting data both on long- and short-distance migrants. Overall, 24 stations have joined the project (17% western Alps, 62% Central Alps, 21% Eastern Alps). A total of 14 sites (58%) were below 1200m a.s.l., 7 sites (30%) between 1200-1700 m., a.s.l., and 3 stations (12%) between 1700-2200 m a.s.l. As for typology of sites, 8 sites (33%) are on valley bottoms, 3 (12%) on slopes, and 13 (54%) on passes. A total of 52,768 birds have been ringed, belonging to 128 species. Preliminary analyses have been performed on aspects like species composition of catches on a seasonal, geographical and typological basis, as well as on physical conditions and morphology of birds samples in the different situations.
9. **Use of data by the Ringing Scheme:** during these last two years the Scheme has been involved in improving the use of the large data-sets collected at the national level. Ringings have been computerised since 1982, together with an increasing detail in morphometrics. After a first atlas describing the spatio-temporal distribution of ringing activity in Italy published in 1999 (*Macchio et al., 1999 – Atlante della distribuzione geografica e stagionale degli uccelli inanellati in Italia negli anni 1980-1994. Biol. Cons. Fauna, 103: 1-276*), a first contribution on morphological variability of Passerines in Italy has been published (*Spina et al., 2001 – Biodiversità dell'avifauna italiana: variabilità morfologica nei Passeriformi*