



## EURING GENERAL MEETING 2011

Mount Saint Joseph, Malta

### Report of the Helsinki Ringing Centre (Finland)

#### Organization

The organization of the Finnish Museum of Natural History has recently been restructured. The Ringing Centre belongs to the Monitoring Team, which is one of the five teams at the Zoology Unit.

Catching permits of birds are issued by 13 Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment and by the "Finlands Viltcentral" (game species). Application procedure is extremely bureaucratic and time-consuming.

The personnel of the Ringing Centre consists of director (Jari Valkama), planner (Markus Piha) and five assistants (Jukka Haapala, Juha Honkala, Seppo Niiranen, Pekka Puhjo and Jarmo Ruoho; Haapala and Puhjo are partly retired). The assistants have specialized in slightly different topics (e.g. input and maintenance of ringing & recovery data, correspondence with ringers and the public, administrative tasks, etc.). We also have one PhD-student (Heidi Björklund) who is preparing her doctoral thesis on the bird of prey monitoring data. Furthermore, our staff includes one person who is undergoing non-military service (Joni Laukkanen). He will help in routine jobs and with processing of the old ringing data until the end of September, 2012.

#### Rings

We acquire our rings from Aranea and to a lesser extent from I. Ö. Mekaniska AB for all species except the Black Cormorants whose rings we order from Porzana. At the moment, there are a total of 26 ring sizes of differing diameter in use, but due to use of both aluminium and steel rings the number of different ring types amount to 36.

#### Ringers, numbers of birds ringed and number of recoveries

We have nearly 700 licenced ringers of which approximately 550 use their licence every year. The proportion of women is only 8 %, but has been growing constantly.

Since 1913, more than 10.2 million birds have been ringed in Finland. The top 3 species are the Great Tit (942,000), the Pied Flycatcher (635,000) and the Willow Warbler (597,000). In 2010, a total of 204,162 birds got a Finnish ring.

There are now more than 1.1 million recoveries of Finnish birds, but many of them are less interesting retraps from the same site within a couple of days. When these are omitted, approximately 511,000 "interesting" recoveries remain.

#### Database

All ringing data since 1974 and all recoveries (and associated ringing data) are computerized. The older ringing data (1913-1973) will be checked and moved to the database during 2011–2012.

Nowadays some 95% of ringing and recovery data from ringers come in electronic format. We have developed an electronic archive in which all original ringing and control files sent



to us by the ringers are stored. The purpose of this service is (i) to keep original raw data (so that potential errors can be later traced) and (ii) to reduce the amount of space needed for excessive paper copies. The ringers can retrieve recovery reports of the birds they have ringed from a web server. This has remarkably reduced our mailing and handling costs. We are grateful for Jarno Lehtimäki, Jan Lindström, Mikko Pelkonen, Esko Piirainen, Petrus Repo and Heikki Lokki for their help and expertise with the planning and construction of databases.

#### Finance

We have been able to keep both rings and ringing permits free of costs for all ringers. Rings are paid from the budget of the Zoology Unit, and the annual costs have been approx. 15,000 euros.

#### Projects

- Monitoring of birds of prey
- Colour ringing (e.g. Common Crane, Lesser Black-backed (Baltic) Gull, Curlew, Rook, Jackdaw, Siberian Jay)
- Barn Swallow (we still continue this as a domestic project)
- CES
- The Finnish Bird Ringing Atlas. We hope that the first part is ready by the end of this year and the second (and last) by the next summer.

#### Address

Ringing Centre  
Finnish Museum of Natural History  
P.O. BOX 17  
FI-00014 University of Helsinki  
Finland

Email: elmu\_ren@helsinki.fi  
Telephone: +358 9 191 28847  
Fax: +358 9 191 28843  
Website: [www.luomus.fi/english/zoology/ringing/index.htm](http://www.luomus.fi/english/zoology/ringing/index.htm)