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Status Report 2011 of the Swiss Bird Ringing Centre



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1. Organization and recent developments

Catching and ringing of wild birds in Switzerland is under the “Federal Law on Hunting and on the Protection of Mammals and Birds Living in the Wild”. The Swiss Ringing Scheme is put in charge for the coordination of bird ringing by the Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape SAEFL that also finances the running of the scheme. The contract for this invaluable support has been extended until 30 June 2012.

The Swiss Ringing Scheme is based at the Schweizerische Vogelwarte Sempach (Swiss Ornithological Institute; www.vogelwarte.ch). The Institute is a private foundation whose mandate is to contribute to the study and the protection of birds through excellence in avian monitoring, research, conservation, services, teaching and training. The Ringing Scheme reports to the Scientific Director, Dr Lukas Jenni.

The Bird ringing scheme at the Swiss ornithological institute in Sempach issues bird rings with inscription „Sempach Helvetia“ for use in Switzerland only.

The Ringing Scheme has developed and introduced a new software package for registration and online transfer of data from ringed and controlled birds. The new system has been installed by the end of March 2008 and since then periodically improved, in collaboration with the ringers' community.

2. Staff

The main people involved in the work at the bird ringing scheme are:

- Jacques Laesser (65 % for the ringing scheme): Head of scheme, licenses, data bank manager, rings, political and public issues. Email address: jacques.laesser@vogelwarte.ch.
- Sarah Althaus (55% for the ringing scheme): data bank manager, rings, equipment. E-mail address: sarah.althaus@vogelwarte.ch
- Guido Häfliger (Engineer, 10 % for the ringing centre): data bank maintenance and support, software development. Email address: guido.haefliger@vogelwarte.ch.

An advisory board of six highly experienced ringers is assisting the Sempach scheme on a voluntary basis.

Matthias Kestenholz keeps serving as Vice-Chairman of EURING up to this year (elected in 2005).

3. Bird ringers

286 ringers (111 with a licence of category A for all species, 175 with a licence of category B (only one or a few species) or C (injured or orphaned birds) are dealing with a total of 183 projects.

5 candidates successfully passed the ringer's examination in 2009 and 3 in 2010.

4. Ringing and recovery numbers

In 2009, 59'992 birds of 163 species were ringed in Switzerland. The most common species were Robin with 5'136 captures and Great Tit with 4'387. Among nestlings, Great Tit was number one with 3'334 chicks ringed. In total, 1'855 ringing recoveries entered the data base.

In 2010, 83'451 birds from 168 species were ringed in Switzerland. The most common species were Great Tit with 8'827 captures and Chaffinch with 7'322. Among nestlings, Great Tit was number one with 4'975 chicks ringed. In total, 4'953 ringing recoveries entered the data base.

The full reports (Laesser et al. 2010, 2011) are available from the Swiss Bird Ringing Scheme.

All Swiss ringing recovery data were transferred to the EURING data bank by March 2011.

5. Projects

The following projects are directed by the Swiss Bird Ringing Scheme:

The Swiss Ringing Scheme is running the Alpine ringing station "Col de Bretolet" at 1923 m a.s.l. on the Swiss-French border.

The nation-wide Integrated Population Monitoring Programme for the Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* and the Barn Owl *Tyto alba* continued. It aims at studying (1) how population changes are reflected by population parameters and (2) how they disperse.

6. Publications

6.1. Publications by the ringing scheme

Laesser, J., G. Häfliger & J. von Hirschheydt (2009): Numbers of birds ringed and recovered by the Sempach Ringing Centre in 2008. Typoskript, Schweizerische Vogelwarte Sempach. 8 S.

Laesser, J., G. Häfliger & J. von Hirschheydt (2010): Numbers of birds ringed and recovered by the Sempach Ringing Centre in 2009. Typoskript, Schweizerische Vogelwarte Sempach. 8 S.

6.2. Publications reporting studies under licence of the ringing scheme

Aebischer, A., P. Nyffeler & R. Arlettaz (2009): Wide-range dispersal in juvenile Eagle Owls (*Bubo bubo*) across the European Alps calls for transnational conservation programmes. *J. Ornithol.* 151, 1-9.

Almasi, B., Jenni, L., Jenni-Eiermann, S., Roulin, A. (2010): Regulation of stress response is heritable and functionally linked to melanin-based coloration. *J. Evol. Biol.* 23 (5), 987-996.

Arlettaz, R., Schaad, M., Reichlin, T.S., Schaub, M. (2010): Impact of weather and climate variation on Hoopoe reproductive ecology and population growth. *J. Ornithol.* DOI 10.1007/s10336-010-0527-7.

- Bächler, E., Hahn, S., Schaub, M., Arlettaz, R., Jenni, L., Fox, J.W., Afanasyev, V., Liechti, F. (2010): Year-round Tracking of Small Trans-Saharan Migrants Using Light-Level Geolocators. *PLoS ONE* 5 (3): e9566. Doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0009566.
- Baillie, S. & M. Schaub (2009): Understanding changes in bird populations – the role of bird marking. *Ringling & Migration* 24, 189-198.
- Bairlein, F. & M. Schaub (2009): Ringing and the study of mechanisms of migration. *Ringling & Migration* 24, 162-168.
- Bowlin, M. S., Henningsson, P., Muijres, F. T., Vleugels, R. H. E., Liechti, F., Hedenström, A. (2010): The effects of geolocator drag and weight on the flight ranges of small migrants. *Methods in Ecology & Evolution* doi: 10.1111/j.2041-210X.2010.00043.x.
- Coudrain, V. (2009): Food or nesting place? Identifying factors limiting wryneck populations. Masterarbeit, Institut für Ökologie und Evolution, Univ. Bern.
- Falsone, K., Jenni-Eiermann, S., Jenni, L. (2009): Corticosterone in migrating songbirds during endurance flight. *Hormones and Behaviour* 56, 548-556.
- Grüebler, M. U., Naef-Daenzer, B. (2010): Brood overlap and male ornamentation in the double-brooded barn swallow. *Behavioral Ecology* 21: 513-519.
- Grüebler, M. U., Naef-Daenzer, B. (2010): Survival benefits of post-fledging care: experimental approach to a critical part of avian reproductive strategies. *Journal of Animal Ecology* 79, 334-341.
- Hegelbach, J. (2009): Einfluss der Wassertemperatur auf das Überwintern der Wasserramsel *Cinclus cinclus* am Küssnachter Bach (Kanton Zürich). *Ornithol. Beob.* 106, 429-434.
- Helfenstein, F., Losdat, S., Möller, A. P., Blount, J. D., Richner, H. (2010): Sperm of colourful males are better protected against oxidative stress. *Ecology letters* 13, 213-222.
- Hofer, J., Korner-Nievergelt, F., Korner-Nievergelt, P., Kestenholz, M., Jenni, L. (2009): An indication of long-term group formation in Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*. *Ardea*, 97 (3), 349-355.
- Keller, V. (2009): The Goosander *Mergus merganser* population breeding in the Alps and its connections to the rest of Europe. *Wildfowl Special Issue* 2, 60-73.
- Korner-Nievergelt, F., Hofer, J., Sauter, A., Jenni, L. (2009): Measuring within-winter movement rates of Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* and Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* based on ring re-encounter data. *Wildfowl Special Issue* 2: 24-41.
- Martinez, N., Jenni, L., Wyss, E., Zbinden N. (2010): Habitat structure versus food abundance: the importance of sparse vegetation for the common redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*. *J. Ornithol.* 151: 297-307.
- Mayer, C., Schiegg, K., Pasinelli, G. (2009): Patchy population structure in a short-distance migrant: evidence from genetic and demographic data. *Molecular Ecology* 18, 2353-2364.
- Mermod, M., Reichlin, T. S., Arlettaz, R., Schaub, M. (2009): The importance of ant-rich habitats for the persistence of the Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* on farmland. *Ibis*, 151, 731-742.
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- Ott, M. (2009): Identifying potential predators of lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* chicks in the plain of Wauwil - A bait experiment with camera traps. Practical Training Report, University of Zurich, Faculty of Science, Institute of Environmental Sciences, 26 pp.
- Ravussin, P.-A., Arrigo, D., Roch, J. (2009): Un nouveau cas de trigynie chez le Gobemouche noir *Ficedula hypoleuca*. *Nos Oiseaux*, 56, 99-104.
- Reichlin, T. S., Schaub, M., Arlettaz, R., Jenni, L. (2009): Zugrichtungen europäischer Wendehälsen. *Schriftenreihe aus dem Nationalpark Harz*, Band 3, 82-85.
- Reichlin, T. S., Hobson, K. A., Wassenaar, L. I., Schaub, M., Tolkmitt, D., Becker, D., Jenni, L., Arlettaz R. (2010): Migratory connectivity in a declining bird species: using feather isotopes to inform demographic modelling. *Diversity and Distributions*, 643-654.
- Roulin, A., Altwegg, R., Jensen, H., Steinsland, I., Schaub, M. (2010): Sex-dependent selection on an autosomal melanic female ornament promotes the evolution of sex ratio bias. *Ecology Letters* 13: 616-626.

- Sauter, A., Korner-Nievergelt, F., Jenni, L. (2010): Evidence of climate change effects on within-winter movements of European Mallards *Anas platyrhynchos*. *Ibis* 152, 600-609.
- Schaub, M., Aebischer, A., Gimenez, O., Berger, S., Arlettaz, A. (2010): Massive immigration balances high anthropogenic mortality in a stable eagle owl population: Lessons for conservation. *Biological Conservation* 143, 1911-1918.
- Schifferli, L., Rickenbach, O., Koller, A., Gruebler, M. (2009): Massnahmen zur Förderung des Kiebitzes *Vanellus vanellus* im Wauwilermoos (Kanton Luzern): Nesterschutz vor Landwirtschaft und Prädation. *Ornithologischer Beobachter* 106: 311-326.
- Steiner, F. A., v. Hirschheydt, J. (2009): Nachtfang einer Türkentaube *Streptopelia decaocto* auf dem Col de Bretolet (Kanton Wallis). *Ornithol. Beob.* 106, 439-441.
- Stier, K. S., Almasi, B., Gasparini, J., Piault, R., Roulin, A., Jenni, L. (2009): Effects of corti-costerone on innate and humoral immune functions and oxidative stress in barn owl nestlings. *J. of Experimental Biology* 212, 2085-2091.
- Tolkmitt, D., Becker, D., Reichlin, T. S., Schaub, M. (2009): Variation der Gelegegrössen des Wendehalses *Jynx torquilla* in Untersuchungsgebieten Deutschlands und der Schweiz. *Schriftenreihe aus dem Nationalpark Harz*, Band 3, 69-77.
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21 September 2011, Jacques Laesser