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Bird Census News is the Journal of the European Bird Census Council or EBCC. The EBCC exists to promote the organisation and development of atlas, census work and population studies in all European countries; it promotes communication and arranges contacts between organisations and individuals interested in census and atlas work, primarily (but not exclusively) in Europe.

Bird Census News reports developments in census and atlas work in Europe, from the local to the continental scale, and provides a forum for discussion on methodological issues.

Cover illustration by Marti Franch

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EDITORIAL

With all the important monitoring, atlassing, data compiling and analysing activities at full gear, one would barely notice that 2017 was in fact a special year for the EBCC. It was our Association's 25th birthday! In 1992 the first EBCC conference held in Noordwijkerhout, the Netherlands marked the end of the two former separate census (IBCC) and atlas (EOAC) committees. They merged to form the EBCC, the European Bird Census Council, an association with an Executive Committee and statutes. For practical reasons, the Board decided to postpone the celebration of this birthday until the next EBCC conference which will be held in spring 2019 in Evora, Portugal. We expect a high attendance!

With the projects coordinated by the EBCC, in particular the new European Breeding Bird Atlas EBBA2, the EuroBirdPortal EBP and the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme PECBMS, decisions have to be made about the future species order and the nomenclature used, and an avian taxonomic system that is both standardized and globally accepted. In the first article of this issue, Ruud Foppen and Hans-Günther Bauer for the EBCC Board shortly outline the rationale behind the Board's decision on this matter. We strongly recommend the reading of this text and you can also find more detailed information at the EBBA2 website.

The presence of non-native parrot species is becoming increasingly obvious in many countries around the world. Esra Perr presents here a first report and preliminary observations on escaped parrot species in Turkey, collected through a citizen science project.

In the European Atlas News section, Dawn Balmer and Justin Walker explain how they fill the data gaps in Ireland and Britain in order to provide complete information to EBBA2. Marina Kipson presents a summary of the final workshop of the MAVA project, which took place in Croatia at the end of 2017. The financial support by the MAVA foundation during three years proved very important for EBBA2 implementation by providing the possibility for improving coordination at national level, mainly in South-Eastern and Eastern European countries.

In the European Monitoring News section Glenn Vermeersch and co-authors present the results of the common birds monitoring in Flanders (Belgium) running since 2007.

In the next section, Gabriel Gargallo, coordinator of the European Bird Portal informs us about the release of a new improved version of its online viewer at the end of this year, and describes the improvements and functionalities.

Finally, the last contribution to this volume brings the sad news of Igor Gorban's death last September. Without exaggerating, Igor could be called a "living legend" of Ukrainian ornithology. Andriy Bokotey and Yuriy Strus, his friends and colleagues in monitoring and atlas projects, wrote his in memoriam. Igor was also active within EBCC as a delegate for his country and during both atlas data collecting periods.

Enjoy this issue!

Anny Anselin
Editor Bird Census News

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Proposal for nomenclature and taxonomy in EBCC projects

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Abstract. Within the projects coordinated by the European Bird Council EBCC, in particular the new European Breeding Bird Atlas EBBA2, the EuroBirdPortal EBP and the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme PECBMS, binding decisions have to be taken about the species order and the nomenclature to be used. The underlying question is the use of an avian taxonomic system that is both standardized and globally accepted. The system used should also be in line with that used by the main EBCC partners to facilitate collaboration and data exchange. But we have to recognize that in this time of constantly changing techniques and analytical methods for measuring species relationships it is far from easy to reach a valid and unassailable conclusion on systematics. And yet, the users of the EBBA2 book and other EBCC project outputs will require a competent and trustworthy system that will also pass the test of time. The EBCC board and the EBBA2 Atlas steering committee (ASC) discussed these issues thoroughly reflecting the importance that EBCC board places on a unified and widely accepted European avian taxonomy. Here, we shortly outline the rationale behind EBCC board's decision.

The EBBA1 publication produced in 1997 (Hagemeijer & Blair 1997) mainly relied on the nomenclature and taxonomy adopted by the authors of Birds of the Western Palearctic (BWP, Cramp et al. 1977–1994). This system was considered conservative and cautious, as it took over the established taxonomic order of Voous (1977) starting with divers and grebes and ending with buntings. Since it was used in most European bird atlases and field guides of that time, it was hardly controversial. But things have changed, as many new insights on the species-level and higher-level taxonomic relationships have emerged. These changes obviously have consequences for the number of orders accepted, and their sequence, the number of families recognized within the orders, the number of species accepted within the families, and their sequence, the splitting or lumping of species or subspecies and, last but not least, the nomenclature employed within all taxa. Recent publications by various authors differ in their approaches to these insights and show a multitude of taxonomies and nomenclatures used. As regards the global classification of birds, there are currently four major taxonomic systems available which EBCC could adopt in its new atlas, the eBird/Clements list (Clements 2007), the HBW/BirdLife list (del Hoyo & Collar 2014, 2016), the Howard & Moore list (Howard & Moore 2013), and the IOC World Bird list (Gill & Donsker 2017). They all are based on new scientific evidence, but considerable controversy remains in many details and even in general issues such as the underlying species concept. After discussing the four classification systems and assessing the argumentation of other scientific groups and conservationists on the systems' pros and cons, the Board (assisted by the Atlas Steering Committee) decided to make a choice between those two taxonomic lists it considered most likely to stand up to the hardest scrutiny, and which were considered the most transparent in discussing their taxonomic decisions, namely

1. IOC World Bird List (see Gill & Donsker 2017),
2. HBW/BirdLife List (see del Hoyo & Collar 2014, 2016)

A number of considerations were thought to be of greatest importance for the board's decision on the list to be employed.

Scientific credibility and robustness

The systematics underlying the list to be adopted needs to be scientifically valid and widely accept-

ed. It should also be rather robust and consistent between updates so that users do not have to expect massive changes in the years to come. But this may be very hard to be achieved and does not affect the decision for the current European atlas. The scoring system to denote species limits that is used in the HBW/BirdLife list ("Tobias criteria", see Tobias et al. 2010), has direct implications for the range of species and subspecies accepted in Europe. Thus, it will be very important to follow up on this system's further refinement and future acceptance by the scientific community. Del Hoyo & Collar (2014) acknowledged themselves that their checklist will have to be adapted regularly with respect to new evidence and insights, which is also the case with the IOC World Bird List.

Comparability with EBBA1

Wherever possible, the nomenclature and taxonomical status of species should be consistent with the former system used in EBBA1. A large number of species-level changes might render comparisons of the two atlases difficult, e.g. distribution maps or summary tables, if many species were split after the realization of EBBA1. However, this aspect was seen as almost impossible to be fulfilled by any of the major classification systems.

Decisions by partners

It is vitally important for EBCC to use a list that is used by its main partners and institutions in conservation and biosciences to facilitate the use of data from EBCC projects for purposes such as global and European Red Lists, action plans for species (or other taxa), scientific analyses based on distribution and abundance data or range change maps, monitoring programs, European nature conservation policy, etc. It is obvious, that the unique and enormous data set on the breeding birds of Europe to be provided by the EBBA2 and other EBCC projects will be widely taken up in the arena of biosciences, modelling and habitat and species conservation.

Based on the discussions on these 'criteria' the EBCC board decided to adopt the HBW/BirdLife list. Mainly because it was difficult for the board to detect major differences in scientific credibility or comparability between the lists. But also because it became clear that none of the systems was "final" and that the differences or even flaws could be re-evaluated and solved in both systems in the near future. Finally, the board considered the choice of EBCC's main network partners to be the 'heaviest' criterion. BirdLife International is the most important partner of EBCC at the European level. Adopting a list that was different from the one used by this partner would complicate collaboration in common projects. Furthermore, other global and European institutions have already adopted the HBW/BirdLife list, namely: (i) The European Union; (ii) The Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA); (iii) The United Nations Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS); (iv) The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), including the IUCN Red List Committee of Threatened Species, and others. Especially the link to the relevant nature conservation initiatives is essential to maximize acceptance by policy makers. And in view of this, starting with a different list may jeopardize the acceptance already reached.

We realize that in some countries another classification system was or will be adopted, also for atlas work or conservation. It is also undeniable that the taxonomy of birds will change again following new scientific evidence. We are aware that as a consequence the European species list will change, as it has done in the past. In the near future, this may be the case in the order in which species are presented, in the splitting or lumping of some forms etc. EBCC will keep track of such changes to keep consistency with the global list, and will also aim to make sure that readers and users of EBBA2, PECBMS and EBP data and publications will get easy access to tables of change. We are grateful that the IOC already provides a good overview of the taxonomic status and nomenclature of the world's bird species by different authors (http://www.worldbirdnames.org/ioc-lists/master-list-2/) and hope that this will be maintained and kept as a standard practice in the ongoing scientific discussion of the classification of our birds.

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The First Report and Preliminary Observations on Escaped Parrot Species (Psittaciformes) in Turkey through Citizen Science

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Abstract. The presence of non-native parrot species (Psittaciformes) is becoming increasingly obvious in many countries around the world. To establish their actual status in Turkey, a citizen science focused observation project was set up in 2006 to collect records of escaped parrots in several cities. Until now, nine new species have been identified: Cockatiel (*Nymphicus hollandicus*), Yellow-crested cockatoo (*Cacatua sulphurea*), Grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*), Senegal parrot (*Poicephalus senegalus*), Orange-winged amazon parrot (*Amazona amazonica*), Plum-headed parakeet (*Psittacula cyanocephala*), Eastern rosella (*Platycercus eximius*), Budgerigar (*Melopsittacus undulatus*) and Masked lovebird (*Agapornis personatus*). The project also includes two species already present for several decades and categorized as non-native resident, the Ring-necked parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*) and the Alexandrine parakeet (*Psittacula eupatria*) which are monitored. The presence of the nine new species is discussed in relation to legal regulations on trade and their natural distribution range.

Introduction

Invasive alien species (IAS) in general are one of the drivers of biodiversity loss, causing negative effects on native species and the environment. They are found all over the world and still extending to new areas, in most cases as a result of human activities (Lövei 1997). To reduce the introduction of invasive alien species in the future, preventive measures need to be implemented (NOBANIS 2015). More than 16% of all parrot species (Psittaciformes) have currently established at least one breeding population in areas outside their natural distribution ranges. For most of them, their influence on native species and their environment is still poorly known (Menchetti & Mori 2014). These introductions outside of their natural range may have widespread and unpredictable environmental and economic consequences (Dyer 2017). Psittaciformes could potentially affect economy and human wellness, being responsible for damage to crops and to electrical infrastructures. Many alien populations breed in urban parks or close to human settlements which causes noise pollution (Menchetti & Mori 2014). In countries where non-native exotic parrot species occur, their status is categorized as “invasive alien”, “alien” or “escapes”.

In Turkey the first Ring-necked parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*) was recorded in 1975 (Boyla et al. 1998), followed by the Alexandrine parakeet (*Psittacula eupatria*) in 1998 (Kirwan et al. 2008). Both were included in The Birds of Turkey Checklist with the status of “resident species” (exotic origin). Their area of distribution is expanding and their numbers increasing every year. If this trend continues in the future, their status of “alien” species should change into “invasive alien”.

It is widely accepted that collection of biodiversity and environmental data by volunteers, now called “citizen science”, contributes to our knowledge about the natural environment (Tweddle et al. 2012, Dickinson & Boney 2012). In Turkey, the database KuşBank (http://ebird.org/content/turkey/) was the first ornithological citizen science project in the country. Since birdwatchers started in 2004 submitting their observation records to this online database, it has played a very important role to increase the knowledge on bird distribution and their numbers in Turkey. Standardized monitoring of several specific species as Swift, White stork and of some common birds has been set up between 2003 and 2007. Unfortunately this scheme could not be continued due to several practical problems and the fact that not enough participants had a sufficient knowledge

Table 1. The escape status of the 9 parrot species which have been observed throughout Turkey: Cockatiel (*Nymphicus hollandicus*), Yellow-crested cockatoo (*Cacatua sulphurea*), Grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*), Senegal parrot (*Poicephalus senegalus*), Orange-winged amazon parrot (*Amazona amazonica*), Plum-headed parakeet (*Psittacula cyanocephala*), Eastern rosella (*Platycercus eximius*), Budgerigar (*Melopsittacus undulatus*) and Masked lovebird (*Agapornis personatus*) with vernacular species name (Species), number of individuals (N), status (S: R=only one observation, C=observed in captivity), observation date (Date), city and site (Locality), validation (V: P=record without pictures as proof, mostly records from less experienced observers, C=confirmed, with picture and from experienced birdwatchers) and observer name (Observer).

Species	N	S	Date	Locality	V	Observer
Cockatiel	3	R	01.07.2016	İstanbul, Silivri	P	Ayhan Erdemgüler
Cockatiel	1	R	13.06.2016	Samsun, Merkez	P	Hülya Akar
Cockatiel	1	C	05.01.2015	Yalova, Merkez	P	Ozan Kral
Cockatiel	1	C	10.07.1997	İstanbul, Bakırköy	P	Serkan Yaman
Yellow-crested cockatoo	1	R	07.07.1993	İstanbul, Etiler-Beşiktaş	C	Kerem Ali Boyla
Yellow-crested cockatoo	1	R	22.07.1992	İstanbul, Rumelihisarı	C	Kerem Ali Boyla
Grey parrot	1	C	21.08.2017	Bursa, Nilüfer	C	İbrahim Sargın
Grey parrot	1	C	31.03.2016	İstanbul, Maltepe	C	İnanç Sarı
Grey parrot	1	R	01.15.2016	İstanbul, Galata Kulesi	P	Şener Çelik
Grey parrot	1	C	14.02.1998	İstanbul, Altunizade	C	Nilay Tezsay
Senegal parrot	1	C	21.07.2017	Ankara, Çayyolu	C	Can Eray Aydemir
Senegal parrot	1	R	24.02.2017	İstanbul, YTU Davutpaşa	P	Duygu Eserdağ
Senegal parrot	1	R	20.01.2016	Ankara, Çankaya	C	Jose Tavares
Orange-winged amazon parrot	1	M	01.24.2017	Adana, Atatürk Park	C	Özgün Sözüer
Plum-headed parakeet	1	R	18.12.2016	İstanbul, Maçka Park	C	Kerem Ali Boyla
Eastern rosella	1	R	03.02.2012	İstanbul, Yıldız Parkı	C	Kerem Ali Boyla
Masked lovebird	1	R	18.06.2017	İstanbul, Küçük moda	C	Duygu Eserdağ
Budgerigar	1	R	07.11.2017	Şanlıurfa, Birecik	C	Soner Bekir
Budgerigar	1	M	17.11.2017	Antalya, Korkuteli	C	Şefik Yıldız
Budgerigar	1	R	04.09.2017	Antalya, Korkuteli	C	Şefik Yıldız
Budgerigar	2	R	09.07.2017	Yalova, Merkez	C	Ozan Kral
Budgerigar	1	R	11.10.2016	Antalya, Merkez	C	Nilay Güler
Budgerigar	1	C	05.10.2013	İstanbul, Sabiha Gökçen	C	Nilay Tezsay
Budgerigar	1	R	04.05.2002	İstanbul, Silivri	P	Ayhan Erdemgüler

to recognize a set number of species. However from 2013 on the new European Breeding Bird Atlas (EBBA2) project presented a new opportunity to train volunteers and increase their skills for bird identification to collect data for the Turkish contribution to this international project. But this is a long-term investment and does not yet involve a large number of participants.

Species as Ring-necked parakeet and Alexandrine parakeet however, which are mainly present in urbanized areas, are very suitable for a citizen science project. They are both charismatic and sufficiently known by the general public and hereby have a much higher potential for citizen involvement. With more people involved, there is not only a better coverage of both species but also a higher chance to detect new non-native escapes. To that goal, a volunteer census network for parakeets was established in 2016.

Methodology

The Parakeet Census of Turkey has been widely promoted through the national press and various other media. The interest for collaboration was high. Since 2016 about 820 observers have participated in the project. Records could be filled in on a simple standardized Google Sheet document via Google Drive that was originally created for the monitoring of Ring-necked and Alexander parakeet but was occasionally also used to record observations from escapes. However, most records from escapes were submitted directly via email. In order to increase the reliability of the

observations, observers were asked to submit their records with photographic evidence. Species recordings supported by photographs and/or seen by experienced birdwatchers were classified as confirmed; species records not supported by photographs were classified as probable recordings (see Table 1).

Results

Table 1 shows data from nine species from records submitted within the project since 2016 completed with 24 additional random observations. None of this species has been observed as breeding and most of them have been recorded only once. They have been classified as "escapes".

The escaped species records came from Adana (1), Ankara (2), Antalya (3), Bursa (1), Istanbul (13), Samsun (1), Şanlıurfa (1) and Yalova (2) (Figure 1–2). Especially the city parks and woods in Istanbul are hosting these exotic species.

Discussion on trade and origin of the escapes

A total of 9 escape parrot species were reported from Turkey between 1992 and 2017. The most common species is the Budgerigar. Fifteen observations reported by citizens and birdwatchers are confirmed, and 9 considered as probable. Fourteen birds were not seen again on the site of their first observation, 2 birds were seen again and 6 birds were observed as caged.

There are legal regulations on wildlife trade in Turkey. The Department of Hunting and Wildlife Service of the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs is working on this issue. All parrot species are subject to the treaty of CITES except Rosy-faced lovebird (*Agapornis roseicollis*), Cockatiel and Ring-necked parakeet. Currently 52 parrot species are traded in Turkey, of which 54% are Psittaculidae, 36% Psittacidae, and 10% belonging to the family Cacatuidae. Species with the highest level of import in Turkey are Fischer's lovebird (*Agapornis fischeri*), Grey parrot, Crimson rosella (*Platycercus elegans*) and Eastern rosella (*Platycercus eximius*). The Budgerigar is the most imported bird species that is kept as pet. According to the 2013–2014 annual illegal trade report which the Ministry has prepared for CITES, a total of 2000 illegal cases concern Orange-winged Amazon, Fischer's lovebird, Grey parrot, White cockatoo (*Cacatua alba*) and Ring-necked Parakeet.

The most traded species in the world are Rosy-faced lovebird, Fischer's lovebird, Masked lovebird, Grey parrot, Senegal parrot and Monk parakeet (*Myiopsitta monachus*) (CITES Secretariat 2012).

The most common domestic parrot species are Cockatiel, Grey parrot and Crimson rosella (Evcilkuşlar 2017). The cheapest parrot species are Budgerigar, Peach-faced lovebird, Fischer's lovebird and Cockatiel.

African Grey parrot is native to equatorial Africa. This species has become a very popular pet, largely due to their attractive appearance and their ability to mimic human speech. They can be very easily captured. Large numbers of African greys have been taken from the wild. This large-scale capture coupled with significant habitat loss and the species' low reproductive rate has led to

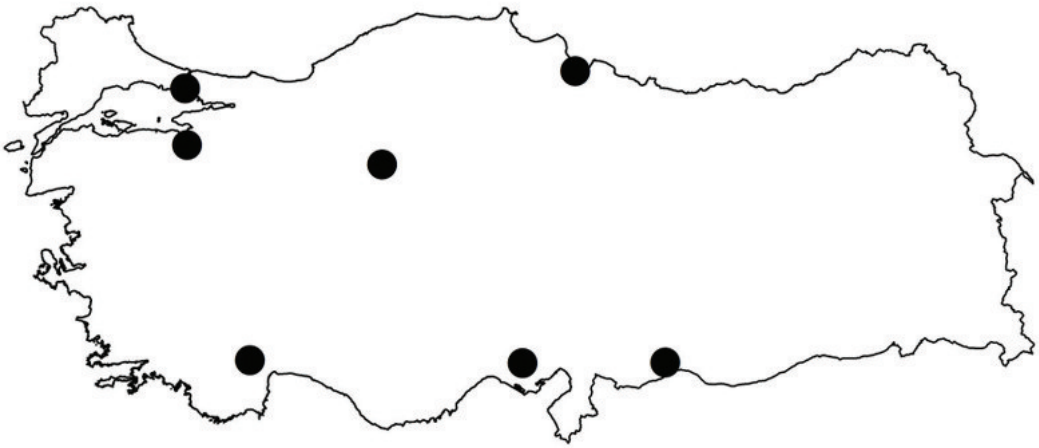
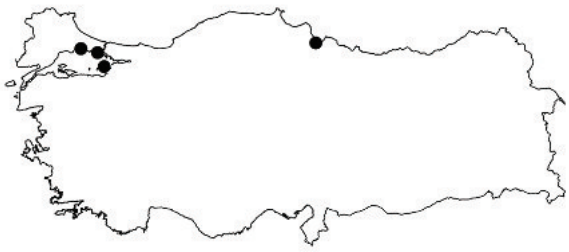
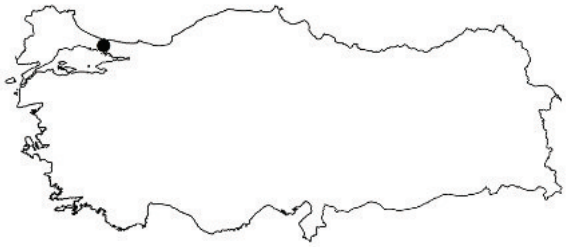


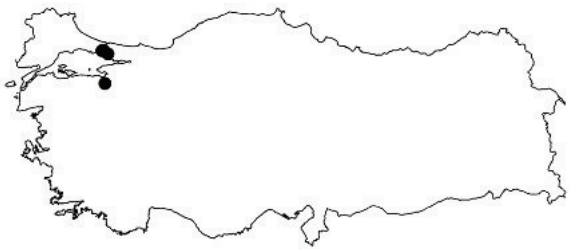
Figure 1. Dots indicate Turkish cities where parrot species have been observed.



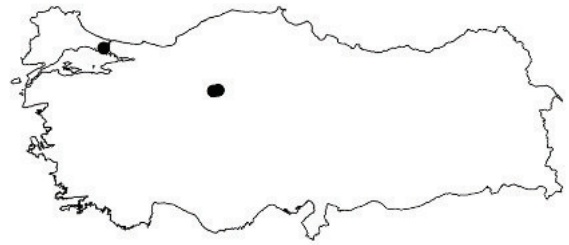
a. *Nymphicus hollandicus*



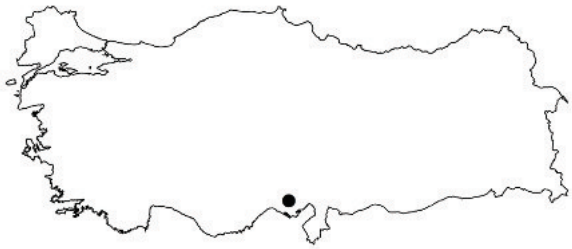
b. *Cacatua sulphurea*



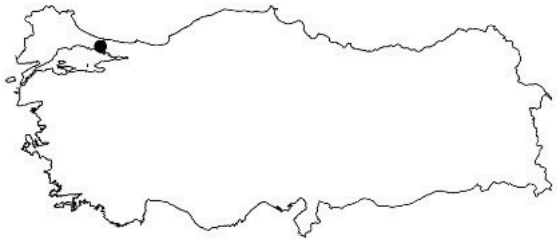
c. *Psittacus erithacus*



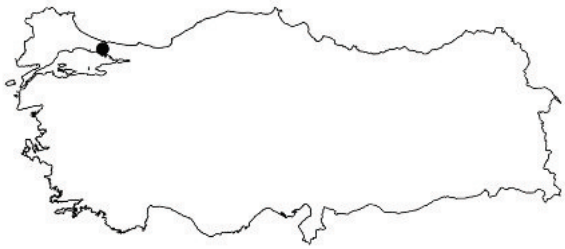
d. *Poicephalus senegalus*



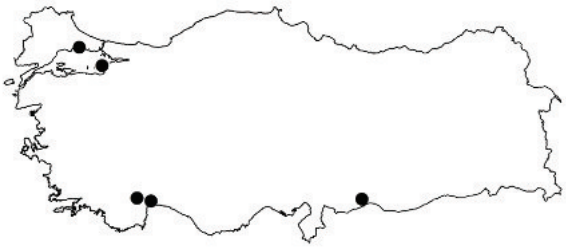
e. *Amazona amazonica*



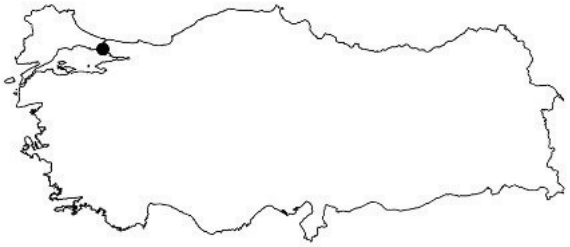
f. *Psittacula cyanocephala*



g. *Platycercus eximius*



h. *Melopsittacus undulatus*



i. *Agapornis personatus*

Figure 2 a–i. Dots indicate observation sites of the different parrot "escapes" in Turkey.

a collapse and fragmentation of the wild populations throughout the species historic range, with declines exceeding 90% in some countries (Environment and Climate Change Canada 2017).

In 2017 Grey parrot was included in the Appendix I list of CITES. This resulted in a ban of the global trade, also in Turkey. The species was one of the most imported parrots in the country and a very popular pet. In spite of the ban, it is still smuggled illegally into Turkey. The Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs is active to prevent these illegal trade.

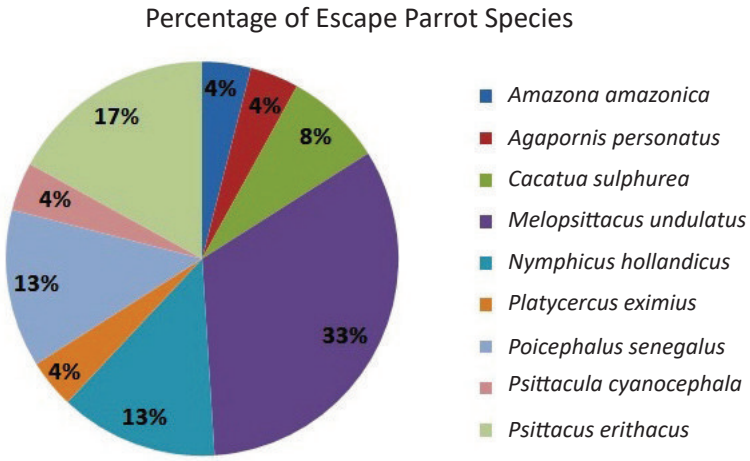


Figure 3. Percentage of number of observations on the total observations for nine species observed as "escapes": 4 species of Psittaculidae, 3 species of Psittacidae, and 2 species belonging to the family of Cacatuidae. Budgerigar is the most observed species, Orange-winged amazon parrot, Masked lovebird and Eastern rosella the lesser observed.

Table 2. Summary of trade status of some of the escapes that have been observed during the project

	Most traded in the World	Most imported in Turkey	Most common in pet bird statistics in Turkey	Cheapest in Turkey	Most common cage escape in Turkey
1	Peach-faced lovebird	Fischer's lovebird	Cockatiel	Peach-faced lovebird	Grey parrot
2			Grey parrot	Fischer's lovebird	Cockatiel
3	Masked lovebird	Crimson rosella	Crimson rosella	Cockatiel	Senegal parrot

The natural range of the Senegal parrot is Senegal and surrounding countries. It has been observed in the Netherlands, England, Spain, Portugal, Puerto Rico, and Greece (eBird 2017). The Senegal parrot is listed in the CITES Annex 2 list. It is a species that is highly traded in the world (CITES Secretariat 2012). It is not frequently imported in Turkey nor popular as pet, hence it is remarkable that the last two years, the Senegal parrot has been recorded as escape in Istanbul and Ankara. The species should be monitored in Turkey in the future.

The Budgerigar is a native species in Australia. It has been observed in England, France, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands and Israel (eBird 2017). In Turkey the species is recorded almost exclusively in the spring and summer months. The most interesting observation of the Budgerigar comes from Antalya where in October 2017 a couple was observed in the Korkuteli district at an altitude of 1070 meters. The male disappeared after two weeks but the female could be observed during two months. At night, this specific female was seeking cover in the parasitic mistletoe (*Viscum album*) on wild Oleaster-leafed pear (*Pyrus elaeagrifolia*) and in woodpeckers' nests during daytime. Mistletoe is distributed throughout Asia and Europe and is known to be toxic. Hence, it is very unusual that this individual chose to use these plants as a roost. It is thought that Mistletoe offers protection from cold, predators and other environmental threats. If this individual survives, it would be the first Budgerigar wintering in Turkey.

The Orange-winged amazon parrot is a native species in the Amazon bassin and has been observed in Portugal and Spain (Mori et al. 2017). One individual has been observed in the Atatürk park of Adana for more than two years. As there are reports of illegal smuggling of the Orange-winged amazon in Turkey, the monitoring of this species should be continued.

Conclusion

There is a low probability that an solitary escape may survive the weather conditions, find a partner and establish a population. The release of a large number of exotic birds belonging to the same species into the same environment is something else. The history of Ring-necked parakeet, nowadays very common in Istanbul, is unique for Turkey. These parakeets were released at Atatürk Airport in 1997 and have subsequently spread

out, started breeding and form now a substantial population. Such release actions could also occur with other non-native parrot or parakeet species. The census project is therefore of great importance to detect these activities and take proper actions.

A majority of the introduced species does not become invasive and cause problems in their new environment. But if they do this can have significant environmental, economic and public health impacts and present a significant risk of a wholesale homogenization of ecosystems (Genovesi & Shine 2004). Even though a breeding population has not yet been reported, the "escape" parrot species occur already in various locations all over Turkey. Problems caused by these species have not been identified yet. In the future continuous monitoring will be needed to find out if they will become "resident species" such as the Ring-necked and the Alexandrine parakeet. Therefore, it is important that the monitoring of exotic parrot species through citizen science will be continued in Turkey.

Acknowledgements

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Bird Census News 2017, 30/2: European Atlas News 53–57

EUROPEAN ATLAS NEWS

Filling the gaps: how Britain and Ireland have contributed to EBBA2

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Abstract. In order to fulfill the two key requirements for EBBA, distribution maps were updated using the already existing annual data (2013–2017) as a basis for species lists in 50 × 50-km squares and birdwatchers were encouraged to undertake fieldwork in 2017 to fill in gaps. The species list was compared with the records from the Bird Atlas 2007–2011. A simple online application, the "gap tool" that showed a map of Britain and Ireland was produced, providing a filter system to finetune the recordings. The system was promoted through various media. Twitter was an important route to target local birdwatchers, and Facebook was used to promote the gap tool. For the modelling of the abundance, data were used from the Breeding Bird Survey together with complete lists submitted by BirdTrack.

Introduction

Having completed our own bird atlas during 2007–2011 (Balmer et al. 2013) we have settled back down into a routine of core breeding season monitoring through our Breeding Bird Survey in the UK, Countryside Bird Survey in the Republic of Ireland, bird ringing and nest recording. We have undertaken a few species specific surveys such as, Nightingales (Hewson et al. 2018), Woodcock (Heward et al. 2015) and Peregrines (Wilson et al. 2018) to help fill important gaps in knowledge and produce updated population estimates. We also have BirdTrack (www.birdtrack.net), an online bird recording tool for birdwatchers to store their complete lists and casual records from their birdwatching.

We are fortunate to have an active monitoring programme and so many keen birdwatchers submitting over five million records to BirdTrack each year, feeding through to our network of county bird recorders, and in turn to the Rare Breeding Birds Panel and the Irish Rare Breeding Birds Panel.

Data gathering for EBBA2

For EBBA2, the two key requirements were up-to-date species lists, with breeding evidence for each 50 × 50-km square to show species distribution, and timed counts across all 10-km squares for use by the EBBA2 team in modelling abundance across Europe. For the latter, we decided we could use data from our Breeding Bird Survey, undertaken in 1-km squares, each with a start and end time, together with complete lists submitted to BirdTrack. The most difficult task was to remove the non-breeding birds from these lists.

In order to provide accurate data for the distribution maps, we took the approach to use the wealth of annual data (2013–2017) we already held as a basis for species lists in 50 × 50 km squares, and encourage birdwatchers to undertake 'top-up' fieldwork in 2017 to fill in gaps. Our first task was to compile a species list for each 50 × 50 km square using records within the BTO dataset, and working with other key data providers to gather relevant records. The datasets we initially compiled during late 2016 were:

- BirdTrack records with a breeding evidence code (2013–2016)
- Nest Record Scheme (2013–2015)
- Ringing records of pulli ringed and females with brood patch code 5 (2013–2015)
- Rare Breeding Bird Panel data (2013–2014)
- RSPB reserves records (2013–2016)

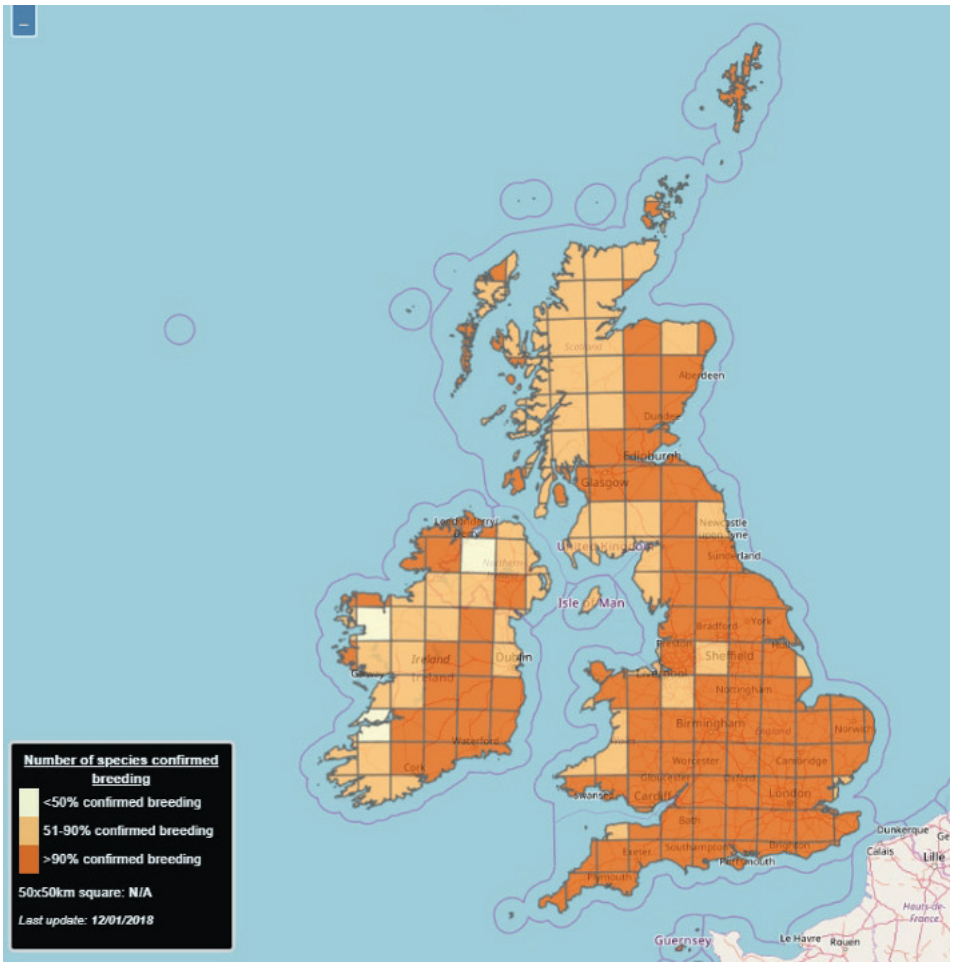

Figure 1. The British and Ireland coverage map

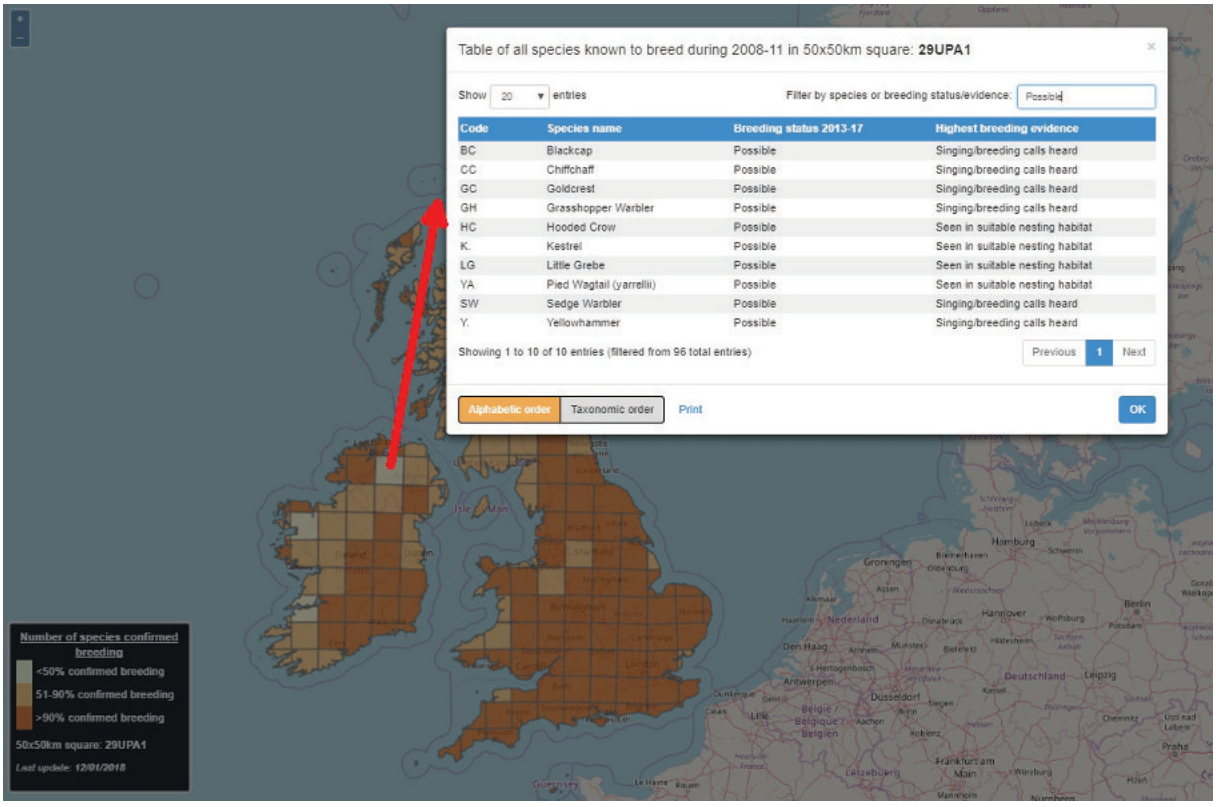

Figure 2. Northern Ireland example square

Figure 3. Twitter examples

Once we had a species list for each 50 × 50 km square, we compared this to the records we collected for *Bird Atlas 2007–2011* in the same 50 × 50 km square, to identify 'species gaps'. We then produced a map and colour-coded the 50-km squares to show, in broad categories, what percentage of the *Bird Atlas 2007–2011* species target had been achieved, and we highlighted these 'species gaps' to target birdwatchers to the squares which needed the most survey effort in 2017. It is important to recognise that this was an approach to help target effort and that there have been some real changes in distribution since *Bird Atlas 2007–2011*; some species will have been lost as breeding species and others will be new colonisers within the square.

EBBA2 gap-filling map online

We produced a simple online application that showed a map of Britain and Ireland. Each 50 km square was colour-coded as described above, and when you clicked on a square a species list for the square was displayed. Using a filter, it was possible to select a list of species that are currently at 'Possible' or 'Probable' breeding evidence and use this list to target effort. You could also filter species that are so far 'Unrecorded' in 2013–2017 but were recorded as 'Possible', 'Probable' or 'Confirmed' breeding in *Bird Atlas 2007–2011*. We encouraged birdwatchers to submit records into BirdTrack, with the appropriate breeding evidence code. We updated the map weekly to show progress towards our target (Figure 1 & 2).

Motivating volunteers

We promoted the gap-filling fieldwork for EBBA2 through the BTO magazine *BTO News*, our network of Regional Representatives who could spread the request locally to volunteers and through social media. Twitter was an important route to target local birdwatchers through tagging bird clubs and particularly active volunteers (Figure 3). The BTO Twitter account has over 70,000 followers, so there is the potential for a very wide reach to birdwatchers.

We also used Facebook to promote the gap tool and to remind birdwatchers to look for breeding records of specific species thoughout the breeding season. The BTO Facebook account has over 23,000 followers (Figure 4).

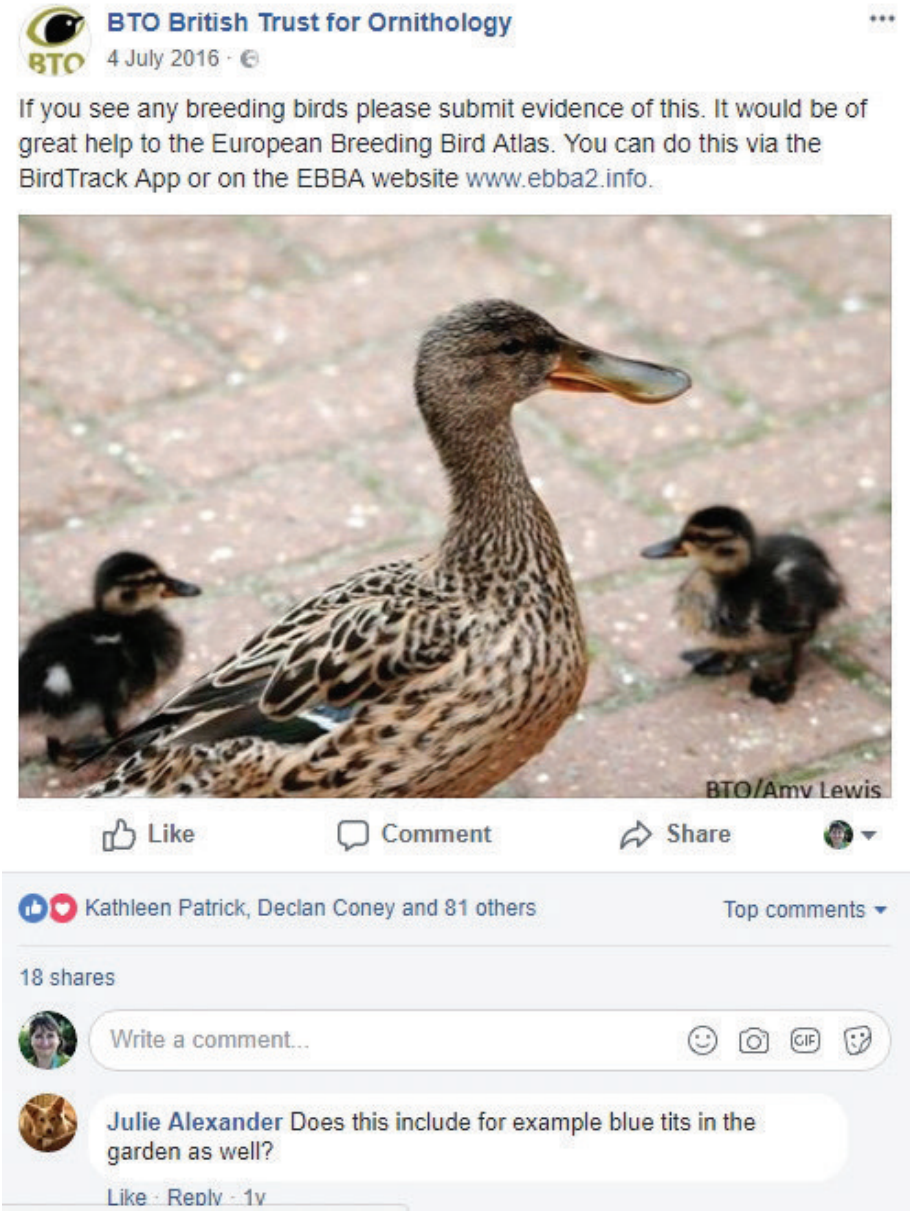

Figure 4. Facebook example

Final gap-filling

At the end of the 2017 breeding season we worked closely with other key data providers to provide further datasets that would help fill gaps. These were:

- Rare Breeding Birds Panel (2015, plus notable records from 2016 and 2017. Data collation still in progress for RBBP 2016 report)
- Irish Rare Breeding Birds Panel (2013–2017)
- Records from BirdWatch Ireland (2013–2017)
- RSPB reserves data (2017)
- Nest Records Scheme
- Bird ringing

The final step

We were able to achieve acceptable coverage across most of Britain and Ireland using this approach and generated more than 5 million records for EBBA2. The task of verification of records, i.e to exclude records likely to be non-breeders, was significant, and took much longer than expected. Given the range contraction and range expansion of species since *Bird Atlas 2007–2011*, it was necessary to carefully check the maps and assess the breeding status codes for species in each 50-km square. The removal of non-breeding records from the timed-count dataset was also a difficult task. During the

Breeding Birds Survey and BirdTrack birdwatchers record all species, regardless of their breeding status, which of course includes many birds on passage. Using known ranges and expert judgement based on knowledge of the seasonal movements of each species, as well as reports of new colonisations, we were able to exclude a large number of non-breeding records before submitting our data to the EBBA2 team.

Acknowledgements

Andy Musgrove produced a tool in QGIS for verifying records; thanks to Stephen McAvoy and Scott Mayson for helping with this process. Thanks to all the volunteers, Bird Clubs and Bird Observatories who submitted records to help fill gaps. Datasets from RSPB, Rare Breeding Birds Panel, Irish Rare Breeding Birds Panel and BirdWatch Ireland were extremely valuable in this project. The BTO Ringing Scheme and Nest Record Scheme are funded by a partnership of the British Trust for Ornithology, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (on behalf of: Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland, The National Parks and Wildlife Service (Ireland) and the ringers themselves. David Noble and Simon Gillings provided advice throughout.

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The final workshop of the MAVA project in Croatia: preparing for the real data submission

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Abstract. From 3rd to 7th of December, we had the opportunity to organise a workshop for national coordinators from 23 countries that received support during the EBBA2 data collection period, in Croatia, on Mount Medvednica. This was the final evaluation workshop for the MAVA project that has helped us immensely during the last three years in order to receive better coverage and to support coordination mainly in South-Eastern and Eastern European countries. The focus of the workshop was to facilitate better exchange and revision of data collected for EBBA2, to share the atlas experience from different countries and to learn from the project for the future.

Introduction

During the last three years, with the support from MAVA foundation, the EBBA2 coordination team has managed to make agreements with 23 countries in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, supporting the data collection and coordination at national level. In order to evaluate the entire project and its impact in different countries, and also to facilitate better data exchange, a workshop was held in Croatia, with representatives from 20 countries attending.

Working with real data for the final EBBA2 provision

Due to the fact that the deadline for real data submission is approaching fast, the EBBA2 coordination team decided to dedicate the first part of the workshop to all issues related to data. The main aim was to answer questions of national coordinators and help them to compile the datasets from different sources, control the quality of the data, and provide them in the right format for the final data submission. In order for this part of the workshop to run as smoothly as possible, the coordination team was joined by two additional members from the Catalan Ornithological Institute, where overall EBBA2 data management is taking place. Although this part of the workshop included hard work from everyone, the participants agreed that it helped them a lot in solving their individual issues and enabled them to provide the final data set. There is still much more to be done by the end of the year, but we are positive that the national coordinators will manage this challenging task in the upcoming weeks.

Evaluation of the project

Before the workshop started, we wanted to hear from national coordinators about their experience and about the role the MAVA project played in the context of their contribution to EBBA2. The overall evaluation was very positive:18 replies (out of 20) said that the project has met their expectations, additionally one of the “no“ replies indicated that the project had achieved more than their expectations, and all replies indicated that the project was important for EBBA2 implementation in their countries. In terms of what they gained the most, it was increased expertise, professional and volunteer capacities, and in many countries it brought a better cooperation with different organisations within the country as well as with neighbouring countries. The difficulties they were facing varied between countries, but one that came at the top of the list was the lack of fieldworkers, others included large territory or territories where access is not possible, but positive news was that 18 countries would like to do a follow up project after EBBA2 finishes.

Participants of the workshop (photo by P. Voříšek)

Sharing the experience from individual countries

In Croatia, the project helped in doubling the number of volunteers compared to 2014, to study some poorly surveyed species and to organise, for the first time, a national meeting of ornithologists sharing their experience. The latter point was shared with their neighbouring country, Serbia, where they also managed to organise national meetings where people could directly discuss the atlas data. The project there helped in filling the gaps in remote areas and to increase their professional capacities, however it did not manage to mobilise some professional ornithologists and raise interest of institutions. In Moldova, the situation was very different where a new NGO was created in 2016 and their work was mainly focused on mapping the country as much as possible, with very little human resources. It did bring new knowledge on breeding of some rare birds, and though the project they managed to make a nation wide census of White Storks which doubled the number of previously known nests. In Turkey, the project helped to gather data for EBBA2 but due to many complicated political and economic issues, there is very little chance for a follow up project. Despite the very complex situation in Ukraine, they managed to collect data from all parts of the country and bring the ornithologists together which enabled them to now plan their first national breeding bird atlas. Other countries provided a short overview of what worked well, e.g. making dedicated atlas camps and providing volunteers with simple methodological instructions in Greece, using the application SmartBirds for recording of birds and GeoNode platform for sharing and checking the data in Bulgaria, connecting all regional coordinators and mobilising existing data in Poland, and keeping the people involved and providing them with regular feedback in Russia.

Looking at the future and beyond EBBA2

Through the workshop, it became clear that the majority of countries supported through the pro-

ject want to continue with their work in the future and will aim to produce their own national atlas or will try to establish a monitoring scheme. A common issue most of them are facing is the lack of financial support for their activities and in the majority of cases the lack of governmental support. Most of the partners involved face problems in securing the funding for their activities and have so far been dependent on foreign donations and projects. At this point in time, there seems to be a lot of enthusiasm among volunteers across countries, making it a good basis to use that potential and continue their work which we hope, that despite all difficulties, will be the case in the future.

Text from EBBA2 website, 12.12.2017

Acknowledgements

The organisation of the workshop was kindly organized by the Association BIOM from Croatia that assured that everything ran smoothly and to whom we own many thanks. We would also like to thank the **MAVA foundation** that enabled us with the funds to support the countries in the last three years and organize this workshop. Finally, we would especially like to thank to all national coordinators for their enthusiasm and ability to mobilize numerous volunteers during the last three years in collecting the data in the field – thank you for all of your hard work!

Bird Census News 2017, 30/2: European Monitoring News 61–65

EUROPEAN MONITORING NEWS

Monitoring common breeding birds in Flanders (Belgium): results after the first 10 years and future developments

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Abstract. In 2006, Flanders was one of the few regions in Europe where a common breeding bird census had not yet been established. Fortunately, the Flemish government finally decided to financially support a voluntary-based monitoring scheme. As a result, a common breeding bird scheme started in 2007. Fieldwork is conducted by both volunteers and professionals in a randomly selected subset of 1200 plots (1×1 km), stratified over 6 common habitat types (farmland, woodland, urban, suburban, heathland and marshland). The census is based on a three year cycle in order to increase the geographical scale and sample size. In this article, we mainly go into the results after the first ten years of fieldwork for the common bird census in Flanders. Additionally, the development and growing popularity of some new websites for bird observations and territory mapping are discussed.

Introduction

Since 1994, the populations of rare, colonial and exotic breeding bird species are monitored (BBV-project) by the Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO, the former Institute for Nature Conservation) and Natuurpunt, Flanders' largest voluntary-based organisation (Anselin et al. 1999). In 2007, the first year of data collection for the common bird census in Flanders started. INBO is responsible for developing a standardised method and for reporting to regional governments and the scientific community. Natuurpunt coordinates the volunteer network and reports to INBO on a regular basis. Initially, data were collected online through a project-specific website but this has now shifted towards a new online platform (meetnetten.be) that gathers information on different taxonomic groups.

Common Bird Census: methodology

In 2006 we compared all existing European common bird census schemes in order to implement a method in Flanders. Almost all member states use either point counts or transects or a combination of both to monitor common birds. Both systems have their strong points (Table 1) but after internal consultation and several contacts with fieldworkers, we chose for a method based on point counts.

The atlas of breeding birds in Flanders was based on territory mapping in 5×5 km UTM-squares with additional information collected in a subset of 8 1×1 km squares (Vermeersch et al. 2004). So, since we already had information in over 5000 1×1 UTM-squares, we chose that grid as a basis for the new census. The grid was then randomly stratified over 6 habitat types (farmland, woodland, urban, suburban, heathland and marshland) and finally, 6 points were randomly assigned to each grid cell. Each point has to be counted three times in a year in predefined periods: 01/03–15/04, 16/04–31/05 and 01/06–15/07. All six points in a square must be counted on the same day and subsequent counts of the same points in different periods should lie apart for at least two weeks (Vermeersch et al. 2007).

Table1. A comparison between point and transect counts (free after Gregory et al. 2004)

Transect counts	Point counts
Excellent in open, extensive areas	Excellent in forest and scrub
Large, mobile and conspicuous species	Also cryptic, shy and skulking species
Excellent in cases of low densities and species poor areas	Excellent in cases of higher densities and more species rich areas
Time efficient	Time is lost moving between points, but counts give time to spot and identify shy birds
Double counting of birds is a minor issue	Double counting of birds is a concern within the count period, especially for larger counts
Suited to situations where access is good	Suited to situations where access is restricted
Can be used for bird-habitat studies	Better suited for bird-habitat studies

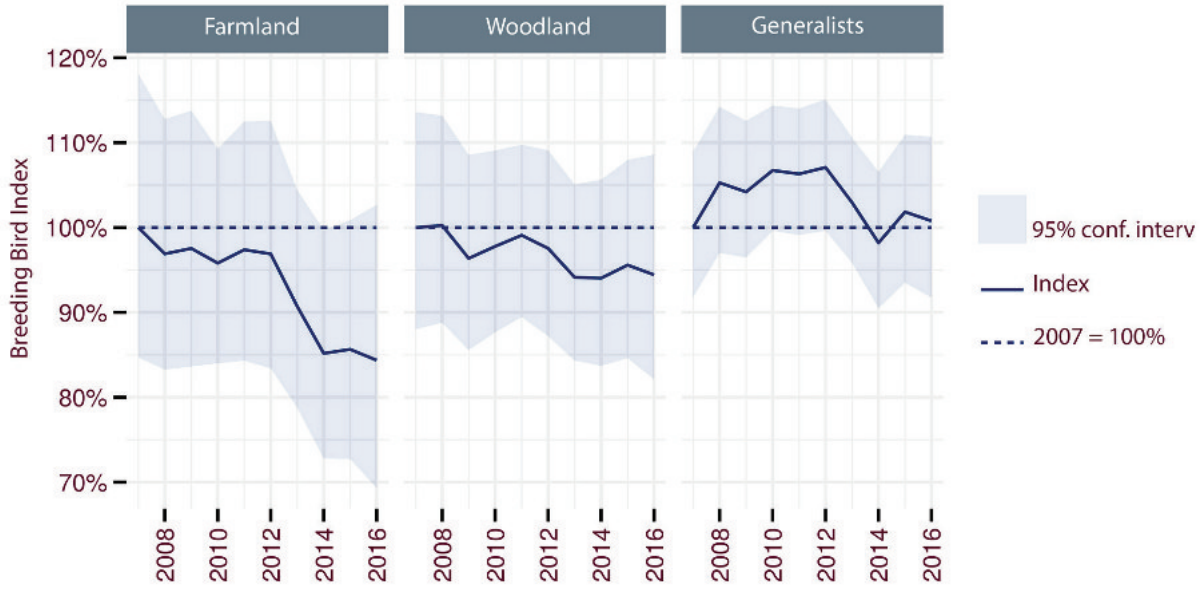

Figure 1. Combined trends for farmland birds, woodland birds and generalist species based on the common bird census in Flanders (2007–2016).

A separate study (Onkelinx et al. 2006) was carried out to estimate the sample size needed to calculate good indices for the majority of common species. The study was based on density-figures in 1×1 km squares from the previous atlas. Finally, 1200 squares were randomly chosen from the abovementioned grid. Considering the number of volunteers and to increase geographical coverage and sample size, we chose for a three-year cycle. The new common bird census scheme was called ABV.

Results

The new monitoring project was well adopted by volunteers although after a very successful first year the number of squares in which data are collected now lies around 200/year. This allows us to make accurate trend calculations for approximately 80 species.

In general, the trends in Flanders do not differ much from large-scale European trends: farmland birds are still significantly decreasing whereas woodland birds and generalists show more stable or slightly negative (statistically non significant) trends (Figure 1). However, woodland birds that migrate over long distances such as Garden warbler and Spotted flycatcher (Figure 2) are also significantly and rapidly declining. Exceptions to the negative farmland bird index are species like stonechat (although these also occur in large numbers in heathland), yellow wagtail and Yellowhammer (Figure 2). Skylark populations now seem stable after the enormous decline in the past centuries (Figure 2). However, large farmland regions no longer hold singing skylarks in

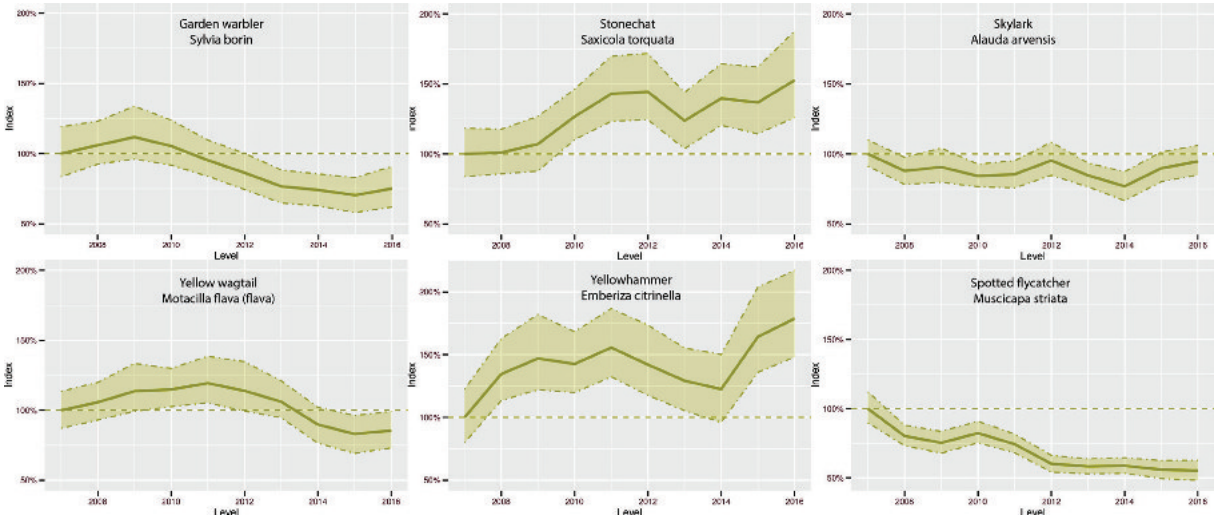

Figure. 2. Individual trend graphs for Garden warbler, Spotted flycatcher, Stonechat, Yellowhammer, Yellow wagtail and Skylark. Based on data from the common bird census in Flanders (2007–2016).

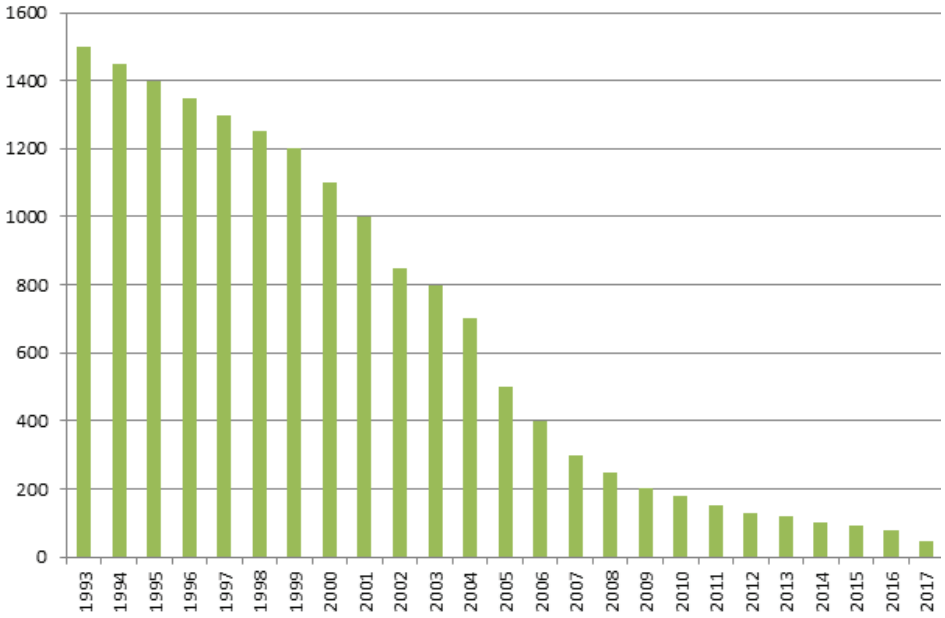

Figure 3. The decline of the Corn bunting in Flanders

spring. Corn buntings are almost exctinct (a maximum of 45 breeding pairs in 2017, Figure 3) and species like Grey partridge, Meadow pipit and Lapwing continue to decline at an alarming pace (Figure. 4). After a few relatively severe winters in 2008–2012 populations of Goldcrest, Crested tit and Coal tit collapsed and have not yet fully recovered (Figure 5).

Future prospects: implementation of new projects in monitoring reports

During the last 10 years, after the start of the common bird census, we have witnessed a growing popularity among birdwatchers to use new websites for local bird observations and territory mapping of breeding birds. These data can be used to create accurate distribution maps for almost all breeding bird species in Flanders but are insufficient for calculating trends of bird species that are now 'missed' by both the ABV- and BBV-project. For example Great crested grebe and Little grebe are quite common breeding bird species but they are not common enough to be picked up by the common bird census (Figure 6). In collaboration with our Dutch colleagues from Sovon, we are currently working on a method to cluster available observations based on generally

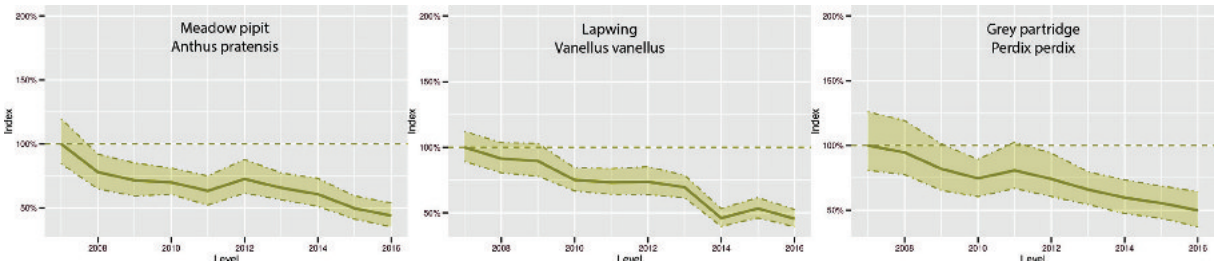

Figure. 4. Individual trend graphs for Grey partridge, Meadow pipit and Lapwing. Based on data from the common bird census in Flanders (2007–2016).

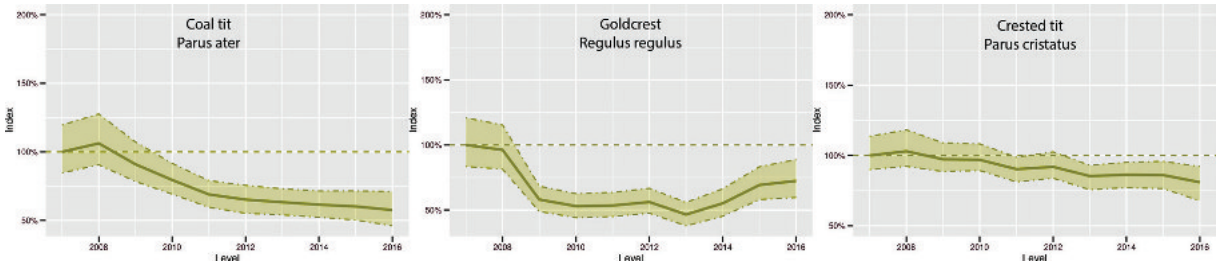

Figure 5. Individual trend graphs for Goldcrest, Crested tit and Coal tit. Based on data from the common bird census in Flanders (2007–2016).

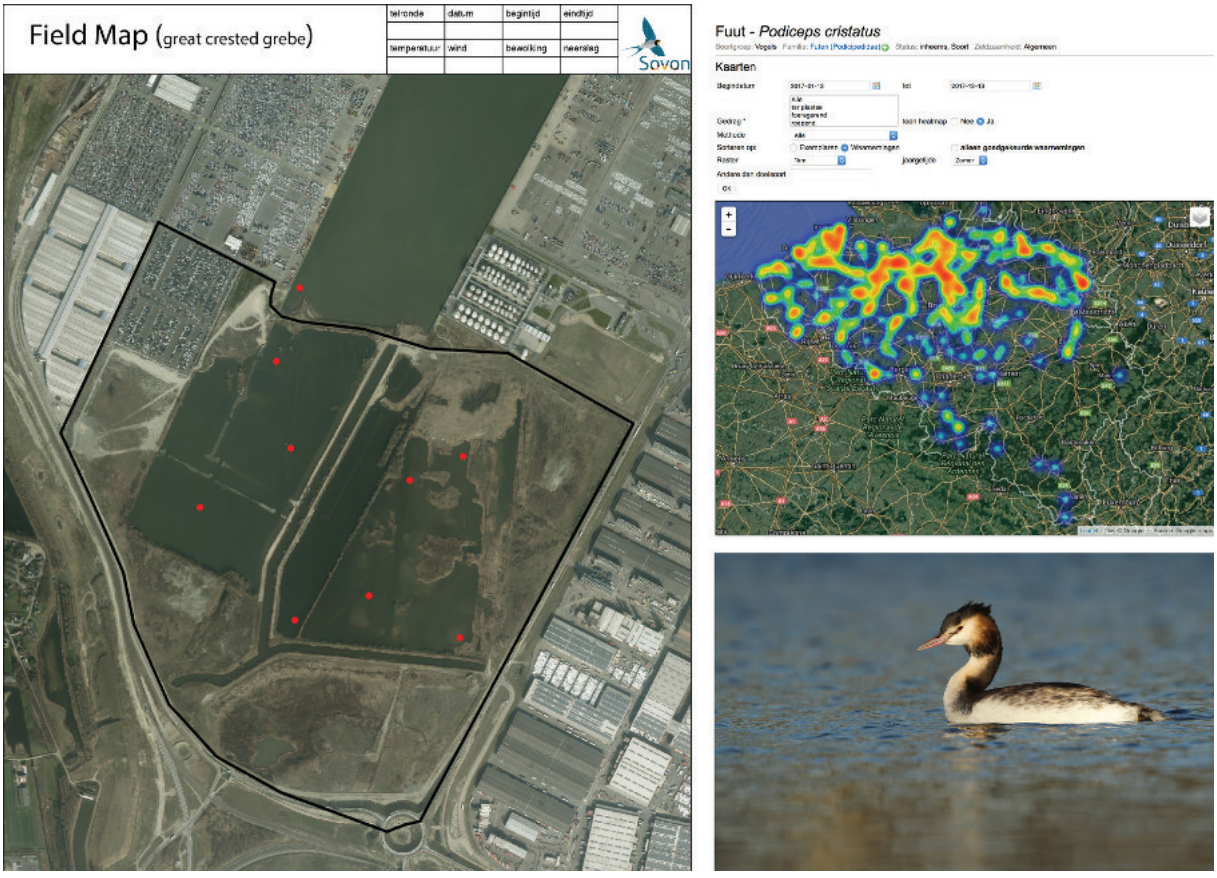

Figure 6. Data-mining in large sets of recent bird observations could result in detailed distribution maps and — maybe — in trend calculations for species not well covered by the existing monitoring schemes. Example for Great crested grebe.

accepted rules in territory mapping (breeding period, fusion distances for separate observations etc…). We believe that such a method could be a very useful tool for future monitoring reports and it could increase the number of species for which accurate trends or population estimates can be calculated.

Acknowledgements

A very big 'thank you!' to all volunteer birdwatchers that have contributed to the data collection. Without their countless hours of fieldwork, we would not be able to present the abovementioned data.

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EUROPEAN BIRD PORTAL NEWS

The EBP project releases a new improved version of its online viewer

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Abstract. During the last two years most of the work done in the framework of the EBP has been focussed to fulfil the objectives established in the LIFE EBP preparatory project. In this context, the launch of a new version of the EBP viewer has been a key milestone. This is expected to be put in place by the end of 2018. The partnership increased largely, particularly in 2017. Hence, the geographical area shown in the previous version of the viewer had become far too limited to properly show the new collected data. Also some important technical developments to the system were required. We describe here the improvements and functionalities of the new version.

Introduction

The European Bird Portal is a project of the European Bird Census Council (EBCC) developed through a partnership of 81 institutions from 29 different countries that mobilizes the data collected by more than 100,000 volunteer birdwatchers. The partnership involves biodiversity data centres and reference ornithological institutions in their respective countries, accumulating a long-time experience collecting high quality monitoring data from thousands of volunteer birdwatchers and turning this information into sound science.

The main purpose of EBP is to combine the data collected by the different online bird recording portals operating in Europe in order to describe large scale spatiotemporal patterns of bird distribution (seasonal distributional changes, migratory patterns, phenology) and their changes over time.

The EBP demo viewer aims at showing the scope and potential of the project depicting the week-by-week distributional patterns of 105 bird species using a total of nine types of species maps and climatic variables. Since two animated maps of any type and year can be selected to be shown simultaneously for direct comparison, all in all, millions of different map combinations are available to choose from.

Why a new EBP viewer?

During the last two years most of the work done in the framework of the EBP has been focussed to fulfil the objectives established in the LIFE EBP preparatory project (cf. http://life.eurobirdportal.org/overview#objectives). And, in this context, the launch of the new version of the EBP viewer has been a key milestone.

There were two main reasons behind the decision of developing a new version of the viewer. On one hand, the partnership increased largely, particularly in 2017, thanks to the participation of the key ornithological institutions in Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Romania and Turkey and their respective online portals (Figure 1). This meant that the geographical area shown in the previous version of the viewer was far too limited to properly show the data collected by the new partners. Moreover, the increase in geographical coverage would require also doubling the capacity of the current cloud mapping and da-

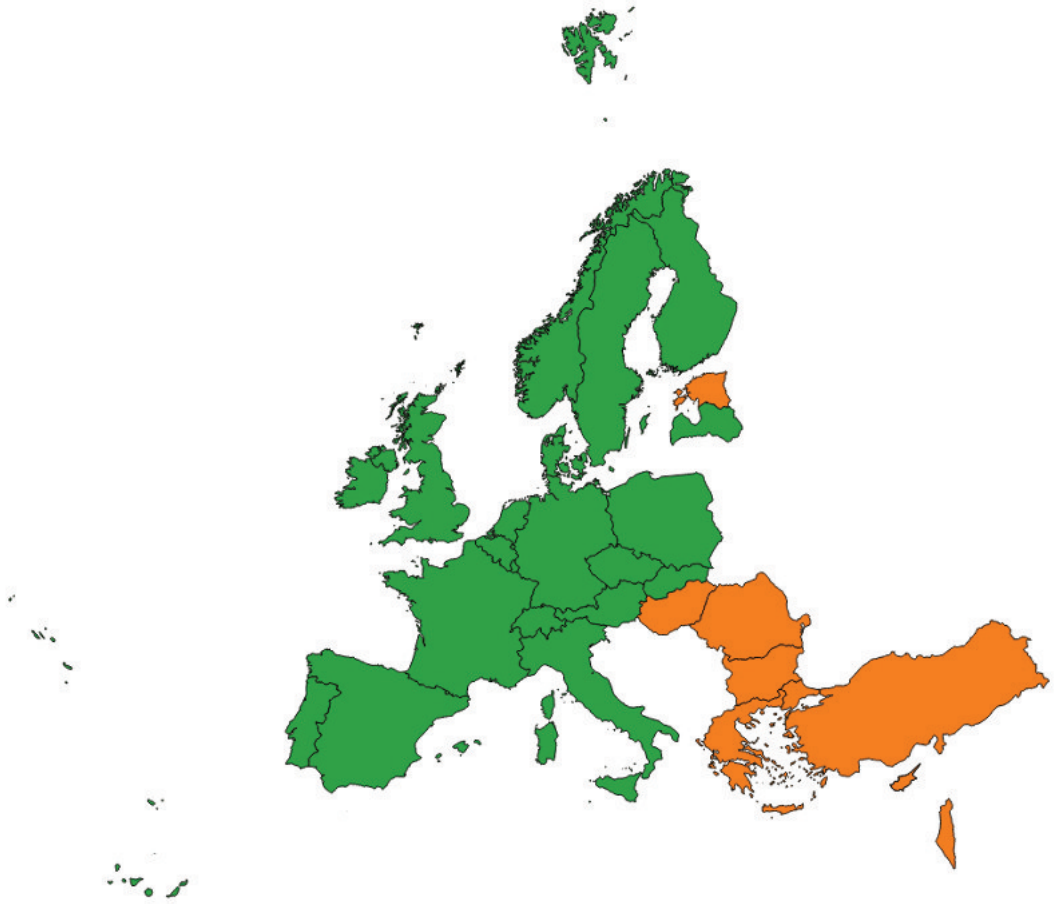

Figure 1. The recent increase in the geographical coverage of the EBP project is one of the reasons prompting the development of a new version of the EBP viewer (in green the countries already part of the project in 2015 and in orange those incorporated subsequently).

tabase repository that handles the processed data used to visualise the animated viewer maps.

On the other hand, it was required to adapt the old version of the EBP viewer to the much higher updating frequency expected to be put in place by the end of 2018, when a new data sharing standard, automated data flow and database repository will be fully functional (cf. https://goo.gl/TsgGaF and https://goo.gl/44i5J4). Up to know, the data has been uploaded to the viewer once a year and the whole data flow has been managed on a manual or semiautomatic basis (the partner's datasets are not directly connected with the central EBP data repository). By the end of 2018, thanks to these new technical developments the content of the EBP viewer will be updated at a weekly basis and showing data up to the previous week.

The new EBP viewer in figures

The new version of the viewer incorporates 40 million more new bird records and now shows animated all-year round maps of 105 bird species for a period of seven years, ensuring that the EBP maintains its position as the largest and most dynamic citizen science biodiversity data flow in Europe.

The species maps are based on 205 million bird records submitted between 2010 and 2016 to the on-line bird recording portals run by the project partners, a 24% increase with respect to the previous version. These records were subsequently aggregated by week and 30×30 km square (based on the European Environment Agency reference grid ETRS89-LAEA) summarizing information on the number of observations of each species, the number of counted birds and the recording effort (number of complete lists and total number of records and observers). Four of the species maps (occurrence, traces, counts and phenology) reflect, in different ways, the raw information contained in the aggregated data, while the fifth one (corrected regional occurrence) uses various analytical procedures to account for heterogeneity in

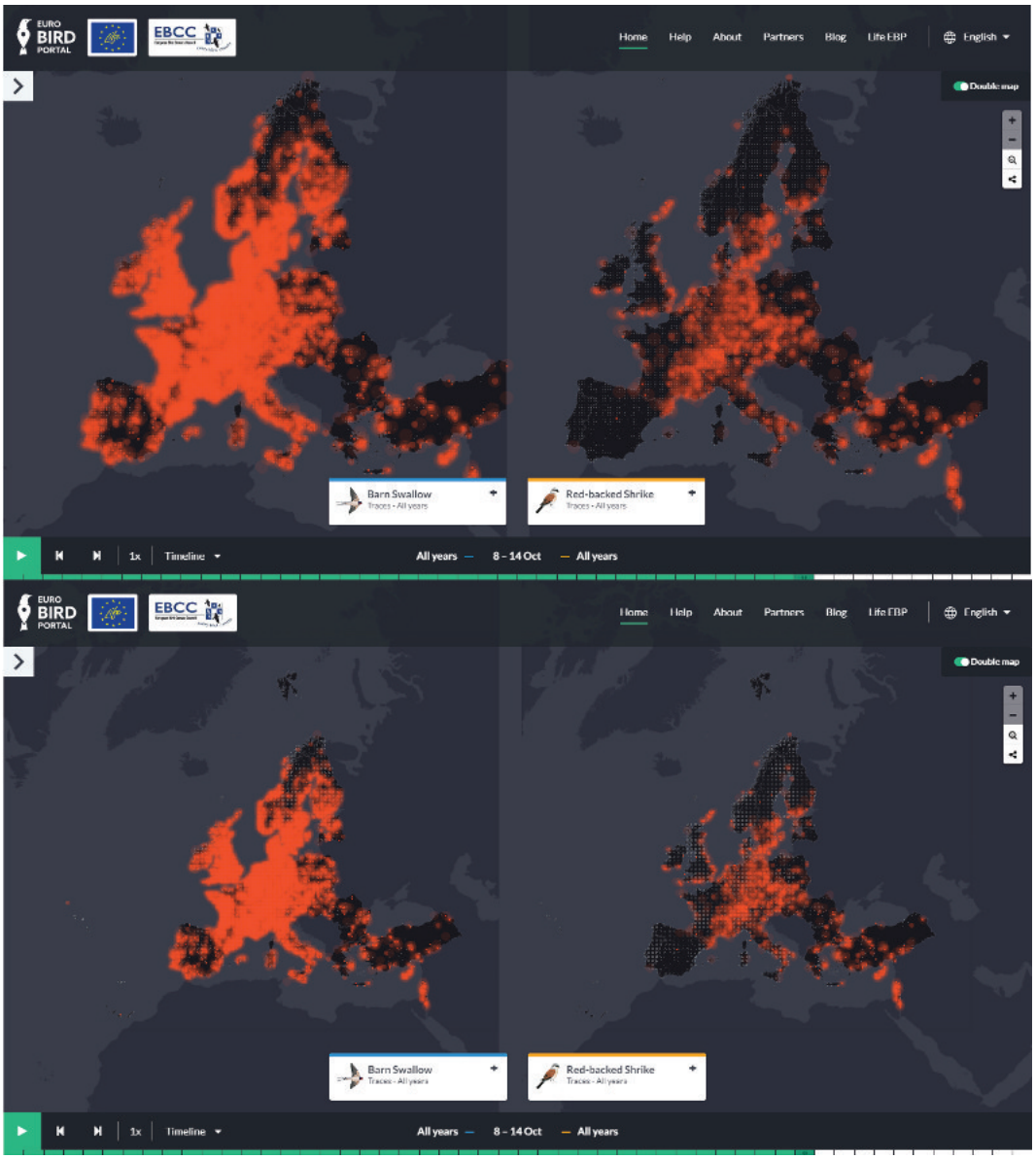

Figure 2. The new EBP viewer allows two viewing options: "Core area" (above) and "Full coverage" (below).

observational effort and species reporting rates. Overall, about 44,000 weekly maps can be seen. However, since two animated maps of any type and year can be selected to be shown simultaneously for direct comparison, all in all, currently more than 30 million different map combinations are available to choose from.

Main improvements and new functionalities

The new version of the viewer was launched in December 2017 and, despite that some of its new technical improvements will not be apparent until it works in near real-time by the end of the year, many of the new functionalities are certainly already helping to further foster the interest with the project and to promote overall data collection and participation by giving more added value to the own local portals.

1) Geographical coverage and map viewing options

The new version of the viewer now properly shows the new, expanded, geographical coverage of the EBP project, including the whole of Europe and parts of the Middle East (e.g. Turkey and Israel; Figure 2).

Moreover, a new button allows switching between two different map views: "Core area" and

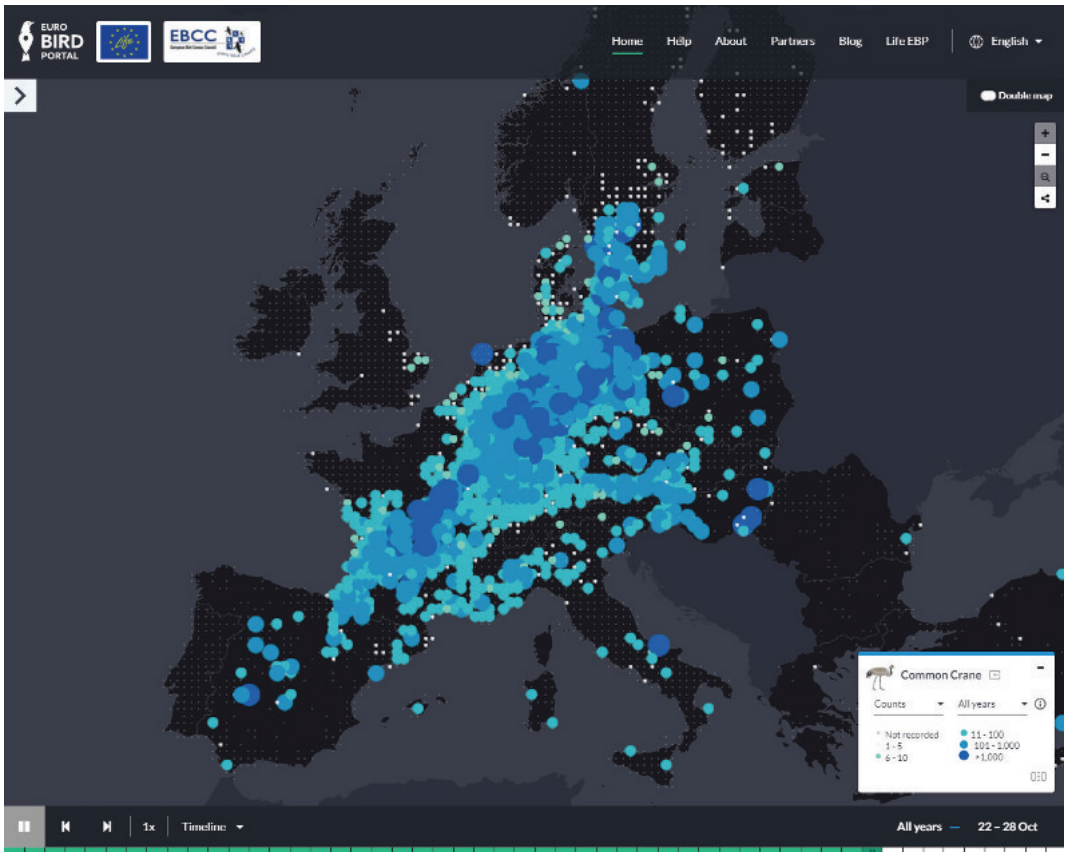

Figure 3. The new EBP viewer allows the visualization of a single map and to apply some zooming.

"Full coverage". The former option is the predetermined one and focusses the view on the area with the bulk of the data, while the later one ("Full coverage") also shows all the archipelagos (e.g. Azores, Canary Islands, Svalbard) and a larger part of the Middle East (e.g. the whole of Turkey).
Another improvement refers to the option of selecting the visualization of a single map (previously a double map was always shown; Figure 3). This map shows the whole area covered by the project and, unlike the double map, allows three zoom levels. This way, the user can better focus the attention in specific areas or zoom out if the area of interest is not fully shown in the computer screen. Note, however, that despite the improved zooming options, the geographical resolution of all the maps has been kept unchanged (a 30×30 km grid).
Also note that now both the double and the single map views allow some panning (unavailable in the previous version).

2) Visual design and usability

The new version of the EBP viewer has a completely new visual design and some new features that make it more user-friendly and attractive to the broader audiences (see this video for further details: https://youtu.be/zrkWkCNz4hM).
Now, users can change the species, map type and time period of each map (left/right or single) directly from the legend info windows or using a lateral drop-down menu. Moreover, attractive species drawings have been added to improve aesthetics and make the viewer more attractive to the general public (Figure 4).
The viewer also incorporates now a helpful timeline that makes really easy to grasp the temporal patterns that lay behind the species maps.
Finally, this new version is fully responsive and tablet and mobile friendly, allowing people to enjoy the EBP maps from a much bigger array of devices than previously (Figure 5).

3) Sharing options

Now, sharing the EBP animated maps is easier than ever. The new viewer's sharing options makes very easy to copy the url of any double map combination or single map in the most popular media networks. And more importantly, now any animated EBP map can also be easily embed-

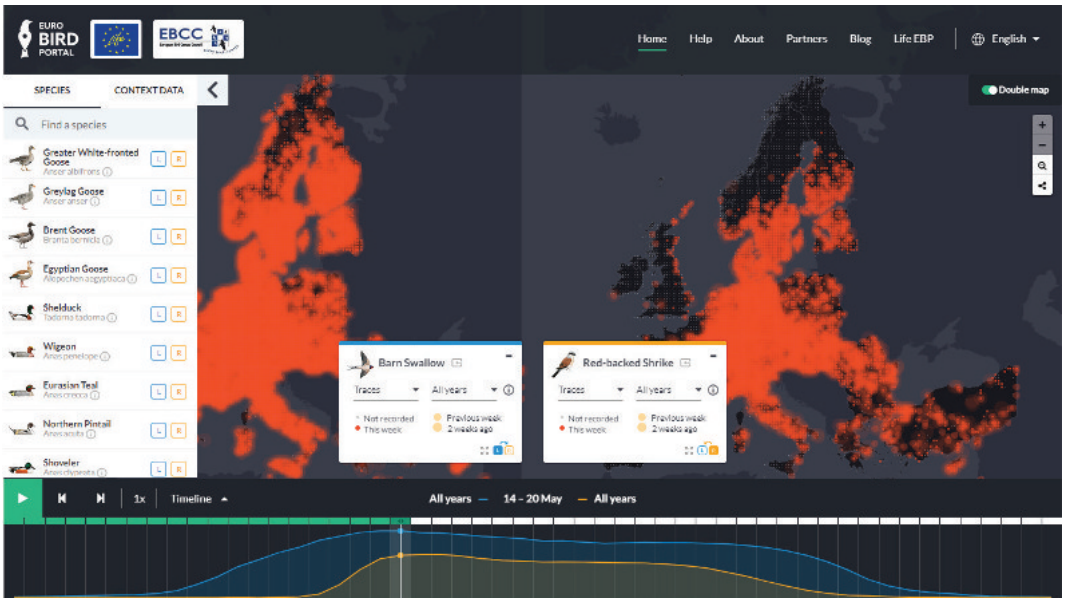

Figure 4. The new version of the EBP viewer has a completely new visual design and incorporates a helpful timeline to easily grasp the temporal patterns behind the species maps.

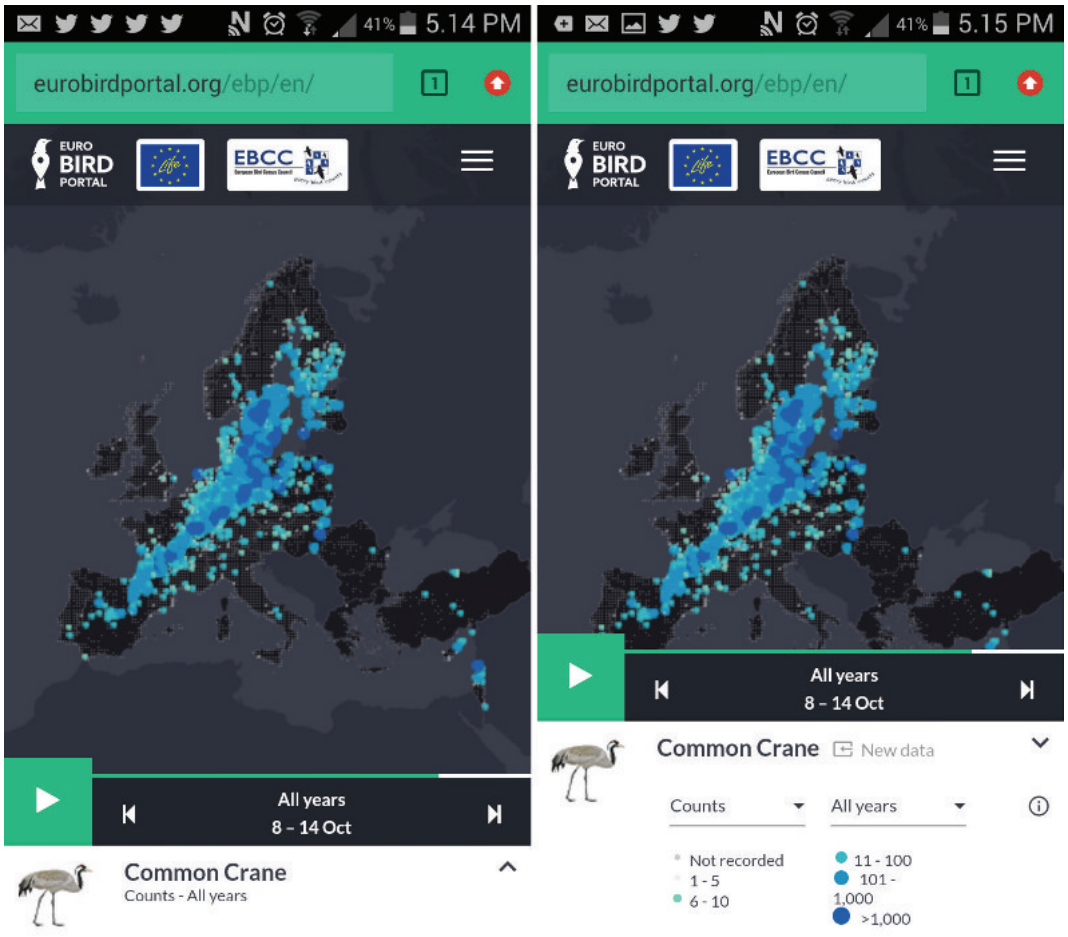

Figure 5. The new version of the EBP viewer can also be enjoyed from mobile devices.

ded to any blog or website using the code provided in the sharing options window (Figure 6).

We expect embedded maps to help significantly to popularize the viewer. Note that embedded

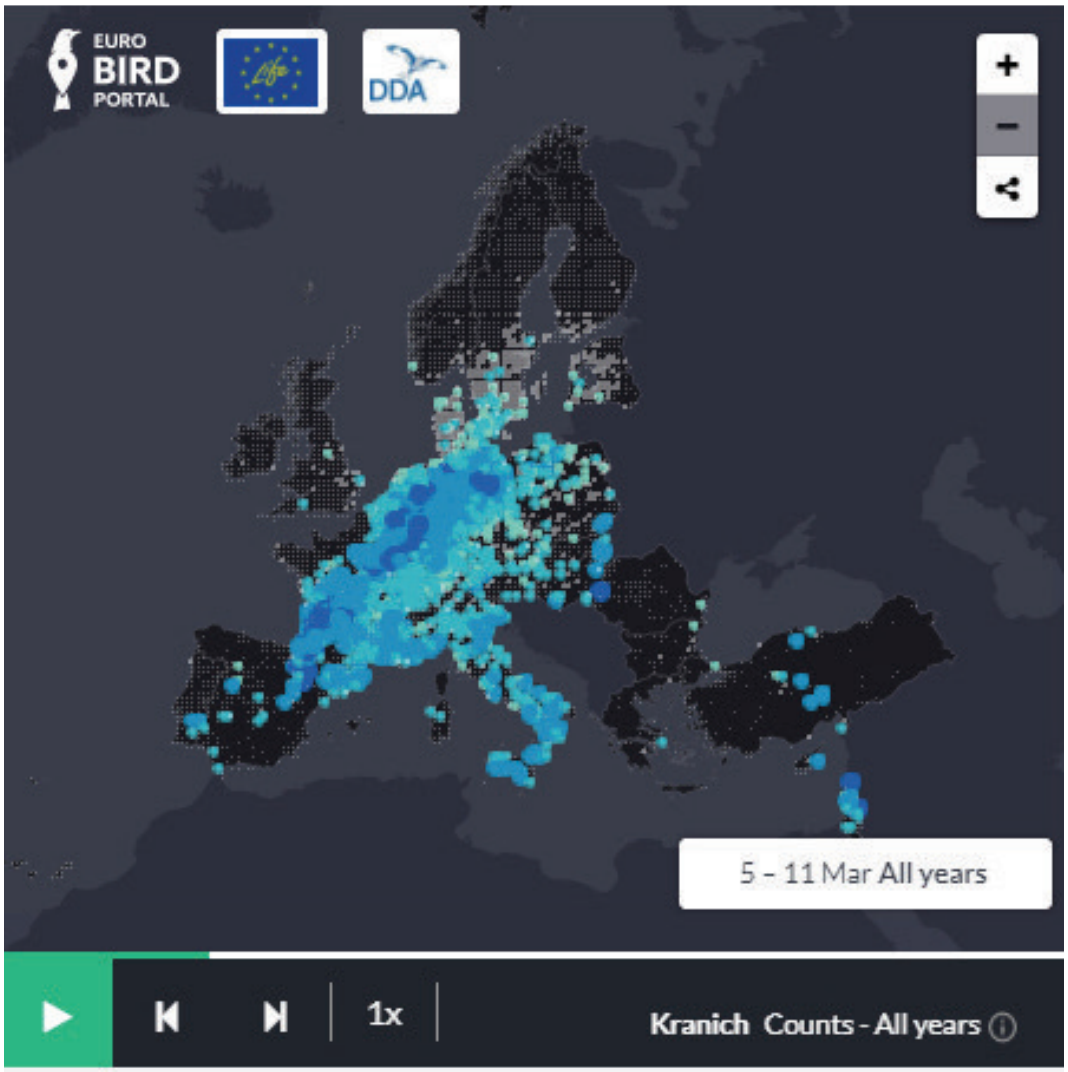

Figure 6. EBP animated maps can be easily embedded in any blog or website thanks to the new version of the viewer.

maps only show the particular map type, time period and species selected by the user and that to see further map combinations or species it is required to go to the EBP viewer.

4) Real-time solution

The new version of the viewer is already adapted to work in near-real time (i.e. with weekly updates up to the previous week), processing the data stored in the new central database (cf. https://goo.gl/TsgGaF) and creating the maps automatically. These functions, however, will not be operating until late 2018, once the automated data flow will be put in place.

The new features developed to adapt the viewer to the near real-time mode include a new time selection option that will allow the visualization of the last 52 weeks. Currently, only natural years (e.g. 2016) or July to June annual cycles (e.g. July 2015 to June 2016) are available.

Acknowledgements

We hope that the new improved version of the EBP viewer will help highlight the value of the data collected through the online bird portals operating in Europe and the relevance of sharing bird observations. The EBP main objective is to unravel the seasonal large-scale patterns of bird distribution in Europe, but this can only be possible thanks to the contribution of 100,000 volunteer birdwatchers that share their observations in the online portals and by the efforts of EBP partners to combine this huge amount of data in a sound and structured way. Without their continuous contribution in time, effort and expertise

the EBP project would be unfeasible. Our big thanks to all of them.

The new version of the EBP viewer has been possible thanks to the LIFE preparatory project LIFE15 PRE/ES/000002/2016-2018 granted in 2016 by the European Commission and to the additional financial support given by the Swiss Ornithological Institute and the Directorate-General of Telecommunications and Information Society of the Government of Catalonia.

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NEWS

In memory of Igor Gorban

Igor Gorban, one of the leading ornithologists in Ukraine, passed away on 12 September 2017 after a severe illness.

Igor was born on 8 April 1960 in Novogrodovka, Donetsk region, the oldest son of three in a family of workers. Igor's childhood passed among beautiful landscapes of Small Polissia, among vast grasslands and fields surrounded by forested hills and ponds in the Bug river valley; the rich wildlife set him on the path to being an ornithologist. In particular, Igor's first birdwatching was near home, in the old cemetery of Zhovkva town, where two-hundred-year trees covered with ivy grew, and his earliest publications were devoted to observations made there.

After graduation from school, Igor worked for two years in forestry near Zhovkva town, with a lot of attention paid to raptor studies in the forests, before two years in the Soviet Army.

In 1981 he entered the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, where he met ornithologist and docent of zoology department Natalia Srebrodolska. Under Igor's initiative, a student's ornithological section was created within the department – a section Igor led following the death of Natalia Srebrodolska in 1983.

From the start of his time at university Igor attended different ornithological conferences, making contacts with leading ornithologists of the former Soviet Union, Poland, Slovakia, Germany and Great Britain. In countries of West Europe Igor discovered the developing movement of amateur ornithologists and he burned with the desire to develop such a movement in his own country. He started to group students of the biology faculty who were interested in birds around him, and beyond the university walls he searched for amateurs who observed birds in nature or in captivity and established constant contacts with them. Moreover, he tried to find school children interested in birds and nature.

Igor's first push to develop ornithological studies in the region were the breeding and wintering bird atlases of West Ukraine (1982–1986), started as part of pan-European atlas project at that time. Ornithologists from other cities in West Ukraine joined these studies. Results of that collaboration are represented in the first EBCC Atlas of European Breeding Birds.

Next, followed programs of studies of birds in wetland reserves, counts of wetland colonial birds, winter counts on non-freezing ponds, and synchronous bird counts of migrating birds in the Carpathians and Polissia. Ornithologists from West Ukraine joined Ukrainian national counts of a White Stork and national bird ringing programme, and in1984 national the 'Bird nest and clutch bank' was founded.

In 1982 Igor founded the Ukrainian Ornithofaunistic Committee (e.g. rarities committee) at Lviv University. Igor was a good ornithologist and was very thorough and critical about his own observations, being regarded as an authority in bird identification and habitats. In 1984 he convened a meeting of

leading ornithologists, in Ternopil, which led to the formation of the West-Ukranian Ornithological Society. As head of that new Society, Igor organized several ornithological conferences, in Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv and Lutsk. Even in student years, Igor initiated the creation of ornithological clubs in Lviv (1985) and in Volyn region (1986) through which many ornithologists came to the Society.

In 1986 after graduation from the Lviv University, Igor worked in the newly created Shatsk National Nature Park, continuing to plan the further development of ornithology in Ukraine. In 1989 he came back to Lviv, to work at the department of ecology in Ukrainian National Forestry University, alongside his work for the West-Ukrainian Ornithological Society. Firstly, the ornithological library was founded in Lviv, with Igor contributing a large part of his personal library; this library is now the Ukrainian Public Ornithological Library, one of the biggest collections of professional literature in Ukraine.

Igor Gorban was the initiator and editor of the first issues of the society's publications 'Information materials' and 'Catalogue of bird fauna of West Ukraine'. In 2010 these two bulletins were merged into the ornithological journal 'Troglodytes'.

In 1990 Igor started to work for biology faculty of Lviv University, where he stayed until his death. In 1992 he defended his dissertation; during his scientific life, he published 180 publications including 7 monographs. He taught zoology courses, giving lectures which were innovative and non-standard, therefore highly appreciated by students. Many new ornithologists defended their thesis under his supervision. He was also supervised summer field practice for students at University bases in the Carpathians and Polissia, and in 1995 founded the ringing station 'Avosetta'.

Igor Gorban was a member of not only Ukrainian scientific and nature protection societies but also of many international organisations: BTO, Lublin Ornithological Society (Poland), and Romanian Ornithological Society. He worked in the International group on Raptors and Owls (since 1982), International Wader Study Group (since 1987), the Special commission on rare and endangered bird species commission of IUCN (since 1998). He was the Ukrainian correspondent of British Birds journal, and since 1989 the national delegate to the EBCC. He attended several IBCC / EBCC conferences e.g. in Prague, Czech Republic (1989), Cottbus, Germany (1998) and Kayseri, Turkey (2004), and in 1996 the Workshop on Monitoring Birds in Europe, in Villa Cipressi, Italy. He also contributed several times to Bird Census News.

Since 2013 Igor Gorban was the national coordinator of European Breeding Bird Atlas 2. Due to his great ability to coordinate and gain the cooperation of observers, by 2017 all the squares in Ukraine were surveyed. Many ornithologists from different regions of Ukraine were involved in Atlas works and with everyone Igor could find understanding. The resounding success of the Ukrainian contribution to EBBA2 is the result of Igor's professional coordination work.

Igor's ornithological activity was closely targeted towards nature conservation: he often said that there is no meaning in studying birds if this knowledge cannot be used for their conservation. Because of Igor's considerable contribution, in 1994 the Ukrainian Society for the Protection of Birds (the national BirdLife International partner) was founded.

The conservation activities of Igor Gorban were also demonstrated by his work in the Red Book Commission between 1989 and 1994. He justified the creation of several nature protection territories in Ukraine, among them the local protected area 'Starytsi Dnistra' and 'Cholgyni' ornithological reserve. Igor was a regional coordinator for eight IBAs (Important Bird Areas) and until his last days he monitored these territories, tried to prevent threats and regularly updated the available data. He cared deeply for nature and its conservation, could feel and appreciate its beauty, could touch the hearts of people and teach them to love the birds and nature in general as he did.

Igor always was friendly and willing to communicate; he was glad to share his experience with everyone who needed it. Igor was a deep thinker, with his own opinion about many things but always was ready to change his mind and to accept somebody else thoughts if there were appropriate evidence and reason. If we were to characterise Igor Gorban in brief we would say he was a highly professional ornithologist and nature conservationist, a good friend and kind person, who found the meaning of his life in ornithology.

Without exaggeration, we can say that Igor Gorban was a living legend of Ukrainian ornithology. Science and society have suffered a great loss with his passing. We will miss his knowledge and warm smile. But his heritage will live for ages in his friends, students, and descendants. Rest in Peace Igor!

Andriy Bokotey, Yuriy Strus

Your text in the next issue?

Bird Census is meant as a forum for everybody involved in bird census, monitoring and atlas studies. Therefore we invite you to use it for publishing articles and short reviews on your own activities within this field such as (preliminary) results of a regional or national atlas or a monitoring scheme, species-specific inventories, reviews or activity news of your country (as a delegate: see also below).

Instructions to authors

– Text in MS-Word.
– Author name should be with full first name. Add address and email address.
– Add short abstract (max 100 words).
– Figures, pictures and tables should not be incorporated in the text but attached as separate files.
– Provide illustrations and figures both in colour.
– The length of the papers is not fixed but should preferably not exceed more than 15 pages A4 (including tables and figures), font size 12 pt, line spacing single (figures and tables included).
– Authors will receive proofs that must be corrected and returned as soon as possible.
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– References in the list: Gregory, R.D. & Greenwood, J.J.D. (2008). Counting common birds. In: A Best Practice Guide for Wild Bird Monitoring Schemes (eds. P. Voříšek, A. Klvaňová, S. Wotton & R.D. Gregory), CSO/RSPB, Czech Republic; Herrando, S., Brotons, L., Estrada, J. & V, Pedrocchi, V. 2008. The Catalan Common bird survey (SOCC): a tool to estimate species population numbers. Revista Catalana d'Ornitología, 24: 138–146.

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