

Atlas work participants in Russia

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Part 1: Preface

Russian Atlas is an important part of EBBA2 Project, it can move the eastern border of Europe covered by the Atlas far to the East.

Some experience in the work upon atlas was collected at the beginning of 1990s, but the contribution to the First European Atlas was rather low.

As you already know, it is a huge territory (>1,800 squares 50 x 50 km, >10 natural zones) and it has to be surveyed during a rather short period of time, the data collated before 2005 are not useful now.

Part 1: Preface

The last point:

our main task is to find people who will survey birds
in **1,800 squares**.



Part 2: Why am I here?



Probably because I'm a head of the unofficial club of citizen scientists named Program "Birds of Moscow City and the Moscow Region"

Part 2: Why am I here?

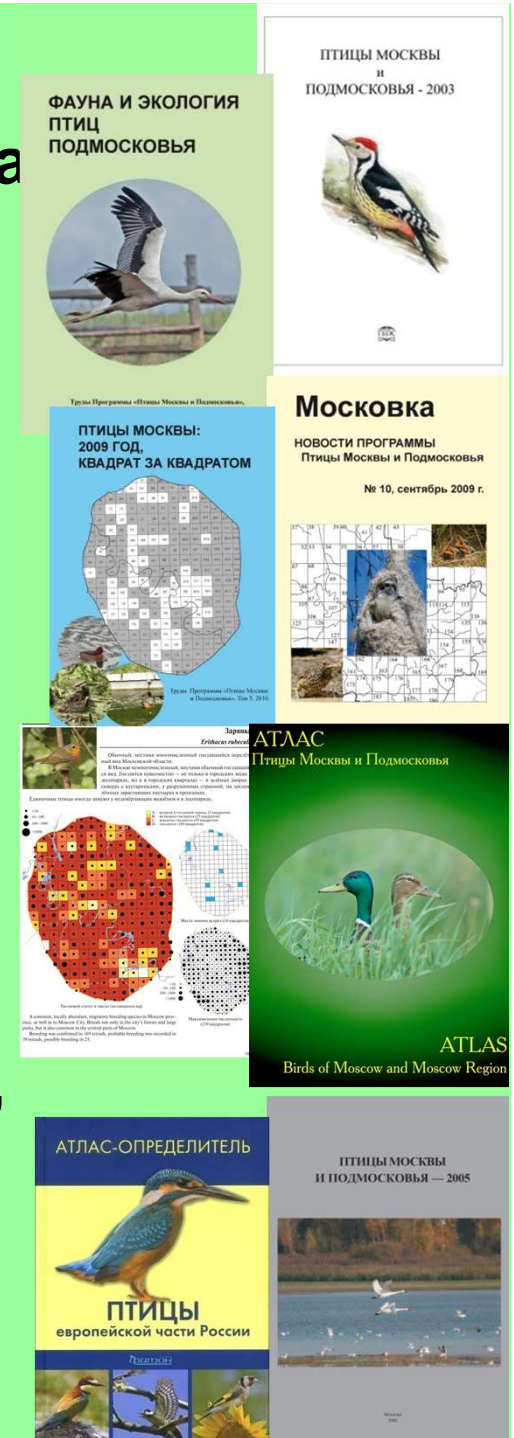
The Program was established in the Zoological Museum of Moscow Lomonosov State University **in 1999**.

It is an example of cooperation of several **professional ornithologists** and many **volunteers**.

Up to 1,000 birdwatchers and ornithologists have already taken part in the activity of the Program,

more than **35 issues** (Program's Proceedings, magazines, books, etc.) were published,

the **Project "Atlas of birds of Moscow City"** was successfully realized.



Part 2: Why am I here?



For more information please visit our web-site

www.birdsmoscow.net.ru

(English version is also accessible)

As you see, we have some experience in the work with ornithological community of **volunteers** (birdwatchers) and **professional ornithologists**

Part 3: How did we start?

First step:

We sent personal invitations to c. 600 persons

We received more than 200 answers with an agreement to take part in the project



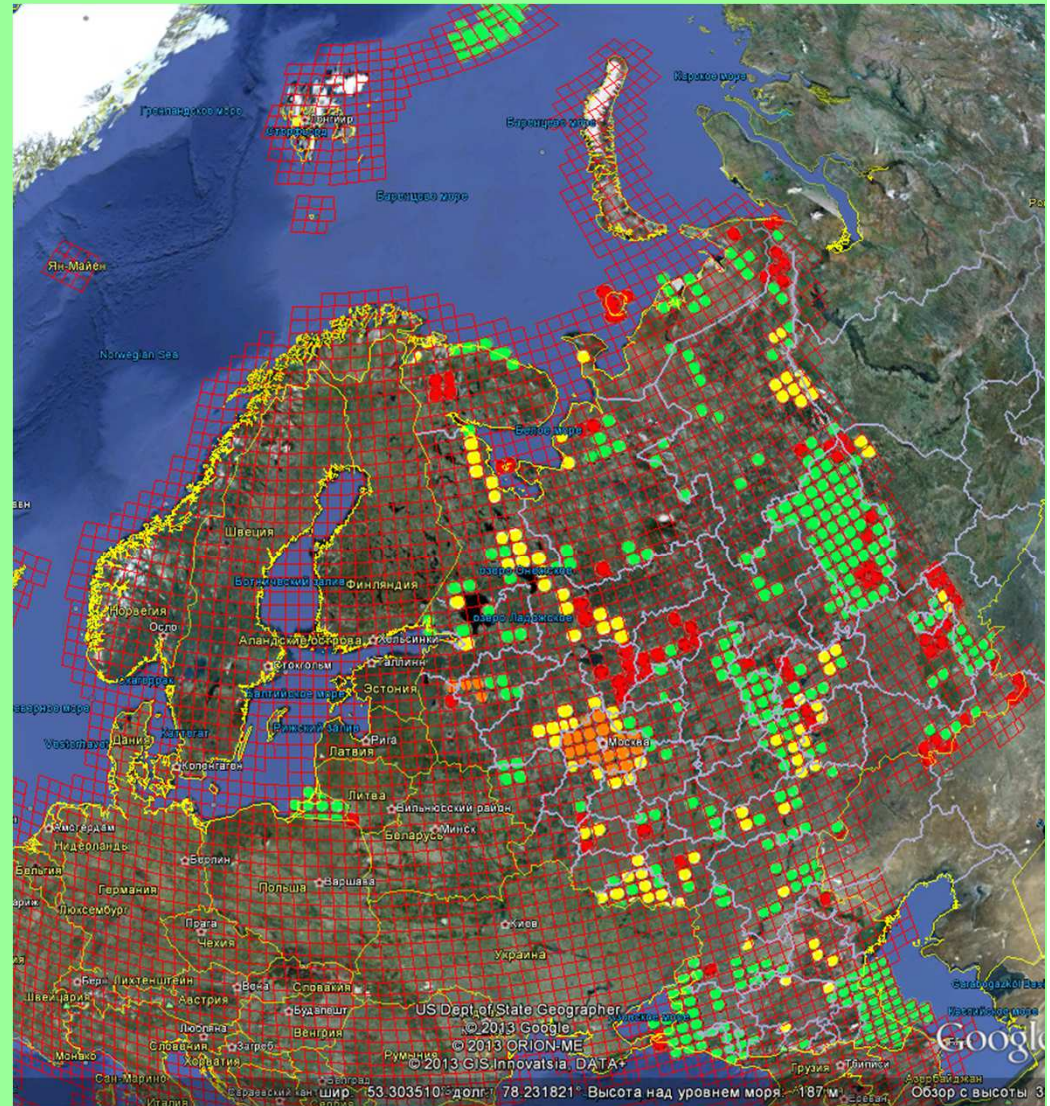
Part 3: How did we start?

The recent situation:

The pilot studies were done in 2010,

the Project started in 2011,

now we have data on birds for **c. 150 squares** received from first **60 observers**, so we have a base for a preliminary consideration of our future participants



Part 3: How did we start?

The main information has been received:

from professional ornithologists – c. 50% of all participants,

from the staff of the natural reserves and national parks – c. 35%,

from other observers – not more than 15%.



Part 4: Volunteers/professionals – trade-off?

The real number of birdwatchers in the European part of Russia is low, very roughly – **not more than several hundreds,**

they are not united in any really working organizations,

it is only during the last 15–20 years that some traditions of bird-watching were established in our country.



Part 4: Volunteers/professionals – trade-off?

What do we need for our Atlas?

We need a **standardization** of the following data:

the **list of the bird species** recorded in each square during the breeding time,

status of bird species (confirmed breeding, probably breeding, possibly breeding),

estimation of their abundance.

Part 4: Volunteers/professionals – trade-off?

On the average, the professional ornithologist can do it more precisely and more fast than the volunteer



Part 4: Volunteers/professionals – trade-off?

Two main problems **with volunteers:**

1. Not enough experience – it can be solved if people are really interested in participation in the Atlas Project
2. Not enough time – it is a real problem which can be solved only for a small number of birdwatchers

Part 4: Volunteers/professionals – trade-off?

Two main problems with professional ornithologists:

- 1. Many of them are involved in their own scientific research**
- 2. The number of them is limited**

Part 5: Practical part – what we will do?

Our real human resources:

We do not have more than 600 ornithologists in European part of Russia, and it will be a good result of our promotion if 20–30% of them make any contribution in the Atlas.

Now the number of birdwatchers who are really interested in taking part in the Project is roughly estimated as **200–300** persons living mainly in big cities, first of all in Moscow and St.-Petersburg.

Part 5: Practical part – what we will do?

Of course, we will address to both these subgroups.

The effectiveness of their work will be not equal, but we will be happy to have any contribution more than zero.



Part 5: Practical part – what we will do?



The **effectiveness** of the participation of volunteers will be higher if we put into the training and education less time and money plus if they have progress in knowledge of birds due to **their-self** education.

So we need two things:

we need an on-line platform (**web-site**) where they can easily store their data in a format that is easily accessible for us;

we have to put on this web-site **information** on the methods of atlas work and information on identification of birds, voices, habitat and biology which will be helpful for volunteers.

Part 6: Summary

The Russian Atlas is a big Project, so we as an organizers have to be very pragmatic.

We will be happy if the number of birdwatchers would grow in Russia actively, but in reality we have not enough time and capacities for their training and education.

They have to do it themselves, and the participation in a real scientific project will allow them to learn quickly and collect their experience.

Of course, we try to do as much as possible for establishing of information sources for volunteers.

Thank you!

