© Biologiezentrum Linz/Austria; download unter www.biologiezentrum.at

Denisia 13 | 17.09.2004 | 551-554

Specimens of extinct and endangered ('E & E') bird species in the collection of the biology centre/museums of Upper Austria[1]

G. Aubrecht & J. Plass

Abstract: The bird collection of the Museums of Upper Austria/Biology Centre holds specimens of extinct and endangered (E & E) bird species according to the list of Adams et al. (2003). The following (sub)species are documented: *Circus macrosceles*, *Branta sandvicensis*, *Gymnogyps californianus*, *Ectopistes migratorius*, *Notiomystis cincta hautura*, *Otus capnodes*, *Sceloglaux albifacies*, *Strigops habroptilus* and *Geronticus eremita*. The specimens partly belong to the collections Reischek, Wieninger and Angele. Information about these bird collections and the collectors concerned is added.

Tab. 1: IUCN Red List criteria used to determine species included in the proposed E & E list (edited from complete set of criteria given in BirdLife International 2000) (Adams et al. 2003)

Threat category	General criterion	Main criterion
Extinct (EX)	no reasonable doubt that last individual dead (since 1500)	—
Extinct in the Wild (EW)	only known to survive in captivity	—
Critically Endangered (CR)	B small range and fragmented, declining or fluctuating	extent of occurrence estimated <100 km²
	C small population and declining	population <250 mature individuals
	D1 very small population	population <50 mature individuals
Endangered (EN)	D1 very small population	population <250 mature individuals
Vulnerable (VU)	D1 very small population	population <1000 mature individuals

The first European Symposium of Bird Curators in Tring, U.K., 1999, recommended the publishing of collection catalogues concerning extinct and endangered ('E & E') birds (Cooper & Steinheimer 2003). Such catalogues should elevate curatorial care and draw attention to valuable conservation information. Adams et al. (2003) published a proposed list for E & E bird species using the species listed in BirdLife International's (2000) „Threatened Birds of the world" but setting filters to eliminate species whose population levels are likely to remain high (Tab. 1). The proposed list contains 481 bird species, 129 extinct and 352 extant.

List of E & E bird specimens at the museum of Upper Austria/biology centre

Accipitridae

Circus macrosceles Newton 1863 [Madagascar Marsh-harrier]

Range: Comoro Islands and Madagascar.

Although this species is widespread, it is very thinly distributed and its nesting success in projected to be very low due to widespread nest-destruction and burning of grassland. It is thus likely to accelerate in the next 10 years. For these reasons, it is treated as **Vulnerable** (BirdLife International 2000).

1941/587, mounted, Coll. Angele, leg. ?, M juv., Madagascar, 1908.

Anatidae

Branta sandvicensis (Vigors 1833) [Hawaiian Goose]

Range: Endemic to the Hawaiian Islands.

This species qualifies as **Vulnerable** on the basis of its very small population. A reintroduction programme has contributed to its recovery from a low of perhaps just 30 birds in the early or mid-1900s, but has yet to result in self-sustaining populations on all islands (BirdLife International 2000).

[1] Dedicated to Univ.-Prof. Dr. Horst Aspöck for his lasting and sustainable friendship to and interest in all matters concerning the work and fate of the Biology Centre in Linz, Austria.

© Biologiezentrum Linz/Austria; download unter www.biologiezentrum.at

1984/56, mounted, leg. A. SCHÜTZENBERGER, F ad., bred in captivity, May 1984.

2004/176, mounted, leg. T.E. LIFKA, pullus,13 days old, bred in captivity, April 13th 2004.

2004/155, 1 egg, clutch from March 2004, see 2004/176.

Cathartidae

Gymnogyps californianus (SHAW 1798) [California Condor]

Range: USA, since 1937 disappeared from outside California.
The reintroduction and management of captive-bred birds is preventing the extinction of this species in the wild. There are currently no reproductive birds in the wild, which qualifies the species as **Critical** (BirdLife International 2000).

1941/524, mounted, Coll. Angele, leg. Kny-Scheerer, M ad., Mountains of San Louis, Ohapo County, California, USA, 20.1.1907.

Columbidae

Ectopistes migratorius LINNAEUS 1766 [Passenger Pigeon]

Former range: Canada and USA, occasionally wandering south to Mexico and Cuba.
Extinct during 19th century. The last wild bird was shot in 1900 and the last captive bird died in 1914 in the Cincinnati Zoo (BirdLife International 2000).

Old inventory (earlier than 1914), mounted, no dates.

Meliphagidae

Notiomystis cincta hautura MATHEWS 1935 [Stitchbird]

Range: The subspecies *N. c. hautura* on Little Barrier Island is now the last natural population.
This species is **Vulnerable** because it has a very small range and population. Intensive conservation efforts aim to improve its status, but the long-term survival of the three translocated populations is uncertain, in particular, the viability of one population appears poor, and is projected to decline in the long-term (BirdLife International 2000).

1924/69, mounted, Coll. Reischek, leg. A. Reischek, M ad., Little Barrier Island, New Zealand, 1883.

1924/70, mounted, Coll. Reischek, leg. A. Reischek, F ad., Little Barrier Island, New Zealand, 1883.

Strigidae

Otus capnodes (GURNEY 1889) [Anjouan Scops-owl]

Range: Anjouan, Comoro Island.
The species is classified as **Critical** since it has an extremely small population that is inferred to be declining because of continuing destruction and degradation of its extremely small range. Its prospects look bleak, given that levels of overpopulation and natural resource degradation on Anjouan are among the highest in Africa (BirdLife International 2000).

1941/395, mounted, Coll. Angele, leg. L. Humblot, M, Anjouan Island, Comoros, no date.

Sceloglaux albifacies (G.R. GRAY 1844) [Laughing Owl]

Range: Former endemic to New Zealand.
Birds were not uncommon until the first half of the 19th century, but were becoming rare by the 1840s. The last specimens of the North Island subspecies *S. a. rufifacies* were collected in 1889 (with reports until the 1930s), and of the nominate subspecies *S. a. albifacies*, in 1914 (with reports until the 1960s). **Extinct** (BirdLife International 2000).

1941/433, mounted, Coll. Angele, leg. A. Reischek, M ad., Oamaru, S New Zealand, 1878.

This species is only known from about 30 specimens (FISHER & WARR 2003)!

Strigopidae

Strigops habroptilus G.R. GRAY 1845 [Kakapo]

Range: Endemic to New Zealand, now restricted to Fiordland (S Island).
This species only survives in a tiny population on four offshore islands. With the instigation of close-order management in 1995, numbers are now increasing and, in 1999, no longer met the threshold specified for Critical status. However, it will be retained in the **Critical** category for a further four years after which it can be downlisted to Endangered, assuming that none of the criteria for Critical are met in this period. Previously Extinct in the Wild.

Old inventory (earlier than 1914), mounted skeleton, Coll. Reischek, leg. A. Reischek, M, Chalky Sound, S-Island, New Zealand, 1887.

1939/582, mounted, Coll. Wieninger, leg. ? (possibly A. Reischek), New Zealand, no date.

1941/289, mounted, Coll. Angele, leg. A. Reischek, F ad., New Zealand, no date.

1941/290, mounted, Coll. Angele, leg. A. Reischek, New Zealand, no date.

© Biologiezentrum Linz/Austria; download unter www.biologiezentrum.at

Threskiornithidae

Geronticus eremita (LINNAEUS 1758) [Northern Bald Ibis]

Range: Extinct in Europe by 17th century. Formerly bred in Middle East and North Africa. The last colony in Birecik, Turkey became extinct in 1989. In 2003 a colony was discovered in Syria (BirdLife International 2000, SERRA 2003, SERRA et al. 2004). The last North African colony is known in Morocco. This species has undergone a long-term decline and now has an extremely small range and population. Numbers are currently increasing, partly due to management actions and consequent improved breeding success. However, this improvement in its status is very recent and the species may still be undergoing a continuing decline. There is a particular concern that recent declines are unaccounted for. The species is therefore retained in the Critical category (BirdLife International 2000).

1927/151, mounted, leg. J. Aharoni, F ad., near Palmyra, N Syrian desert, 2.5.1912.

1927/152, 3 eggs, leg. J. Aharoni, S Palmyra, Syria (= Tadmor), 2.5.1912.

1927/195, skin, leg. J. Aharoni, pull., Hudria, N Syrian desert, 28.4.1914.

1989/50, 1 egg, bred in captivity, Inst. Staning, Lower Austria, 1989.

1994/176, mounted and parts of skeleton, ad., bred in captivity, Zoo Innsbruck, 25.10.1991.

1999/108, mounted and parts of skeleton, M, bred in captivity, Wildpark Grünau, Upper Austria, 1995.

1999/109, mounted and parts of skeleton, F, bred in captivity, Wildpark Grünau, Upper Austria, 1995.

Information about collections and collectors mentioned

The history of the bird collection at the museum of Upper Austria – biology centre since 1993 – goes back to the foundation year 1833 and was regularly documented (KERSCHNER 1932, AUBRECHT 1983, MAYER 1983, AUBRECHT 2003 b, c).

The collections mentioned in this E & E catalogue are Coll. A. Angele, Coll. A. Reischek and Coll. G. Wieninger:

Theodor ANGELE (April 5th, 1847, Erolzheim, Germany – June 28th, 1926, Linz, Austria).

The Coll. Th. ANGELE (AUBRECHT 2003a) was deposited at the museum in Upper Austria in 1927 and was purchased in 1941. It comprises 1473 specimens mainly Accipitriformes and Strigiformes world-wide as well as bird specimens from Natal (collected by A.G.H. RUDATIS, AUBRECHT et al., 2004 in print). Dated specimens were collected between 1867 and 1920. The majority of specimens was purchased from natural history dealers (i.e. Kny-Scheerer Co., New York) and collectors.

Andreas REISCHEK (Sept. 15th, 1845, Linz, Austria – April 3rd, 1902, Linz, Austria).

The Coll. A. REISCHEK (AUBRECHT 1995) - mainly containing specimens from New Zealand - came to the museum of Upper Austria at the end of the 19th century with the employment of A. Reischek there. The main part of Reischek's collection is held at the Naturhistorisches Museum (NMW) in Vienna, Austria. Reischek stayed and collected in New Zealand from April 18th 1877 until February 20th 1889.

Georg WIENINGER (April 5th, 1859, Schärding, Austria – November 3rd, 1925, Vienna, Austria).

The Coll. G. WIENINGER (KAINZNER 1986) deriving from his private museum in Otterbach near Schärding, Upper Austria came to the museum of Upper Austria in 1939 containing a variety of specimens world-wide, a special collection from Paraguay and specimens from Upper Austria with emphasis on applied agriculture. G. WIENINGER mostly purchased specimens from collectors and natural history dealers.

Collectors mentioned:

Israel AHARONI (1882, Vidz, Lithuania – 1946).

AHARONI started studying zoology and semitic philology at the university of Prague, but discontinued his studies in 1902 and settled in Palestine. First he worked as a schoolmaster at Rehovot. During the first world-war he was engaged as zoologist with the Turkish army. In 1915 he was deputed to Damascus for founding a zoological museum. After marrying Judith GOLDIN AHARONI relocated to Jerusalem teaching Hebrew, German and French. He became a zoologist and collector and in 1930 was appointed to head the Department of Zoology at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He studied the natural history of the Middle East and that of the Bible, the Talmud and other ancient literature, often assisted by his daughter Bat-Sheva. Between 1904 and 1946 he collected mainly birds, mammals and butterflies. Parts of his collections came to Berlin (ZMB), to the Rothschild Coll. (AMNH), to the Zoological Museum of the Hebrew University and Tel Aviv University. The NMW also possesses 2 *Geronticus eremita* from Palmyra bought in 1909. He published numerous articles and books including „Memoirs of a Hebrew zoologist" (1943) (pers. Comm. E. BAUERNFEIND, Vienna; F. STEINHEIMER, Berlin).

[Joseph-Henry] Léon HUMBLOT (June 3rd, 1852, Nancy, Meurthe-et-Moselle, France – March 20th, 1914, Grande Comore, Comoro Islands).

© Biologiezentrum Linz/Austria; download unter www.biologiezentrum.at

Humblot was a naturalist and entrepeneur starting his career as horticulturist in Paris. After visiting Cuba he was in charge of a zoological expedition to Madagascar (1879-1880). On his return to France he was shipwrecked at the Somalian coast where he collected birds that were erroneously attributed to Madagascar. In 1884 he moved to the Comoro Islands where he secured an enormous commercial concession from the Sultan Saïd Ali and ruled Grande Comore despotically from 1892 until 1896. As director of the Société Humblot he pionieered the cultivation of vanilla and introduced gutta-percha to the Comoro Islands. From 1892 until 1896 he was appointed French „Résident". He stayed politically influential until successfully sued by Sultan Saïd ALI in a French court of law in 1912. Humblot collected plants, birds, amphibians, insects, molluscs, annelids, echinoderms and coelenterates for the Paris Museum (MHNP). Copies of HUMBLOT's field books are preserved at MHNP (DORR 1997).

Andreas REISCHEK (see above).

Anton SCHÜTZENBERGER (September 4th, 1920, St. Georgen/Gusen, Austria – Feburary 29th, 1988, Linz, Austria).

Schützenberger attended school in Linz and worked at the tobacco factory there for 35 years. He was an enthusiastic breeder of waterfowl and kept his collection near the shipyard in Linz.

Thomas E. LIFKA is recently breeding waterfowl in Linz, Austria.

Acknowledgements

For helping with literature search we thank E. Bauernfeind and H.-M. Berg (NMW), F. Steinheimer (ZMB), M. Louette (Tervuren), C. Fisher (Liverpool), J. Hemetsberger (K. Lorenz Forschungsstelle (Grünau/Almtal) and M. Pfosser (Biology Centre Linz). Mrs. Ronit Adler was so kind to translate passages of Aharoni's autobiography from Hebrew.

Zusammenfassung

Die Vogelsammlung der Oberösterreichischen Landesmuseen/Biologiezentrum enthält Belege von ausgestorbenen und weltweit gefährdeten Vogelarten, die von ADAMS et al. (2003) aufgelistet sind. Vertreten sind die (Unter-)Arten *Circus macrosceles*, *Branta sandvicensis*, *Gymnogyps californianus*, *Ectopistes migratorius*, *Notiomystis cincta hautura*, *Otus capnodes*, *Sceloglaux albifacies*, *Strigops habroptilus* und *Geronticus eremita*. Die Belege stammen teilweise aus den Sammlungen Reischek, Wieninger und Angele. Kurze Informationen über diese Sammlungen und die erwähnten Sammler sind angeführt.

References

ADAMS M.P., COOPER J.H. & N.J. COLLAR (2003): Extinct and endangered ('E&E') birds: a proposed list for collection catalogues. — Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl. **123A**: 338-354.

AHARONI J. (1946): Memoirs of a Hebrew Zoologist. — Tel Aviv, Am Oved Publ. (In Hebrew).

AUBRECHT G. (1983): Wirbeltierkundliche Sammlungen. 1932-1945. — Jb. OÖ. Mus.-Ver. **128** (II): 125-127.

AUBRECHT G. (1995): Andreas Reischek (15.9.1845-3.4.1902) – ein österreichischer Ornithologe in Neuseeland. Illustrierte biographische Notizen. — Stapfia **41**: 9-50.

AUBRECHT G. (2003a): Linking specimens and collectors – a pilot study (The Th. Angele bird collection and the database ZOBODAT). — In: RHEINWALD G. (ed.), Bird collections in Europe: The challenge of mutual cooperation. Bonn. zool. Beitr. **51** (2002): 213-220.

AUBRECHT G. (2003b): Bericht über die Sammlung Wirbeltiere am Biologiezentrum von 1993 bis 2002. — Beitr. Naturk. Oberösterreichs **12**: 135-162.

AUBRECHT G. (2003c): Aus der Sammlung Wirbeltiere am Biologiezentrum in Linz, Österreich – Beiträge zur Geschichte von Sammlungen und Sammlern. — Beitr. Naturk. Oberösterreichs **12**: 163-167.

AUBRECHT G., SCHIFTER H., PLASS J. & WEIGL S. & D.G. ALLAN (2004, in print): The A.G.H. Rudatis Bird Collection (1904-1906) from Natal (KwaZulu-Natal) at the Museum of Upper Austria. — Durban Mus. Novitates.

BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL (2000): Threatened birds of the world. — Barcelona & Cambridge, U.K.: 1-852.

COOPER J.H. & F.D. STEINHEIMER (2003): Report from the workshops 14-15 November 1999: increased co-operation between bird collections. — Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl. **123A**: 355-360.

DORR L.J. (1997): Plant Collectors in Madagascar and the Comoro Islands. — Kew: 1-524.

FISHER C.T. & F.E. WARR (2003): Museums on paper: library & manuscript resources. — Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl. **123A**: 136-164.

KAINZNER F. (1986): Georg Wieninger. Ein Leben für die Landwirtschaft. — Diss. Univ. Wien: 1-232.

KERSCHNER Th. (1932): Berichte über die naturwissenschaftlichen Abteilungen. — Jb. OÖ. Mus. Ver. **84**: 34-45.

MAYER G.Th. (1983): Wirbeltierkundliche Sammlungen. 1945-1982. — Jb. OÖ. Mus.-Ver. **128** (II): 128-136.

SERRA G. (2003): The discovery of Northern Bald Ibises in Syria. — World Birdwatch **25** (1) (March 2003): 10-13.

SERRA G., ABDALLAH M., ASSAED A., ABDALLAH A., AL QAIM G., FAYAD T. & D. WILLIAMSON (2004): Discovery of a relict breeding colony of northern bald ibis *Geronticus eremita* in Syria. — Oryx **38** (1): 1-7.

Addresses of the authors:

Dr. Gerhard AUBRECHT
Jürgen PLASS
Biologiezentrum der
Oberösterreichischen Landesmuseen
J.-W.-Klein-Straße 73
A-4040 Linz, Austria
E-Mail: g.aubrecht@landesmuseum-linz.ac.at
j.plass@landesmuseum-linz.ac.at

ZOBODAT - www.zobodat.at

Zoologisch-Botanische Datenbank/Zoological-Botanical Database

Digitale Literatur/Digital Literature

Zeitschrift/Journal: Denisia

Jahr/Year: 2004

Band/Volume: 0013

Autor(en)/Author(s): Aubrecht Gerhard, Plass Jürgen

Artikel/Article: Specimens of extinct and endangered ('E & E') bird species in the collection of the biology centre/museums of Upper Austria 551-554