

Whinchats on Ljubljansko barje (Slovenia) – update to report from 2015

National Institute of Biology

DAVORIN TOME (Ljubljana, Slovenia)

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On National institute of Biology we are performing a population study on Whinchats since year 2000. Our study site is 1km² of grasslands on the west side of Ljubljansko barje, Slovenia, and several important breeding parameters are collected on a yearly basis; breeding density, clutch size, brood size, number of successful nests, etc. Main findings of the study were presented on a 1st European Whinchat Symposium in Helmbrechts, Germany (TOME 2015). Here I present short update for 2016.

In 2016 number of breeding pairs was about

the same as in 2014 and 2015, that is about 30 breeding pairs. In spite of the fact, that population decline seems to stop (at least on a temporally basis), this is not considered as a very good news. Population of Whinchats is still less than half as strong as it used to be in 2000.

The research area for Whinchats represent less than 1% of the whole Ljubljansko barje area. Back in 2000 it was selected as a research site since it was one of the best places for Whinchats. There alone and only there over 80 breeding pairs per 1 km² were nes-



Fig. 1: Barje oslad / Ljubljansko barje in Slovenia (Photo: © D. TOME).



Fig. 2: Feeding Whinchat pair in Ljubljansko barje / Slovenia (Photo: © D. TOME).

ting. Our fear is, that on the whole Ljubljansko barje, where there used to be about 2000 breeding pairs (TOME et al. 2005) population declined for even greater proportion as on our study site. This is enhanced with a findings, that on Ljubljansko barje population of two ecologically similar bird species, the Corncrake (*Crex crex*) and the Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*) shrunked considerably too. In last 20 years population of Corncrake decreased for more than 50% (Božič, 2005, DOPPS 2016) and population of Quail for about 80% respectively (TOME et al. 2016). Bad times for grassland birds on Ljubljansko barje, which is, by the way, Natura 2000 site!

Literature

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Author's address:

Davorin Tome, National Institute of Biology, Slovenia, davorin.tome@nib.si



Fig. 3: Whinchat in Ljubljansko barje / Slovenia (Photo: © D. TOME).



Fig. 4: Whinchat in Ljubljansko barje / Slovenia (Photo: © D. TOME).

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Autor(en)/Author(s): Tome Davorin

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