

Whinchats from Ljubljansko barje, Slovenia – four years on

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As I reported in the symposium proceedings »Living on the edge of extinction in Europe« (BASTIAN & FEULNER 2015), the breeding population of Whinchats in our study site, Ljubljansko barje (Slovenia), declined from 80 bp./km² in 2002 to 30 bp./km² in 2014. Subsequently the population has fluctuated but it still averages about 30 bp./km². Is this good or bad news? The answer, I guess, depends on what kind of person you are, but from Whinchats from Ljubljansko barje point of view anything but an increase in population must be regarded as bad news.

However, something else struck me while I was preparing this news. Suppose that we had star-

ted monitoring at Ljubljansko barje in 2010, when the population size was already reduced to 30 bp./km², and that we had no previous knowledge about population size, my answer to the question “good or bad” would definitely be much more positive than it is now. Yes, I would be aware, thanks to reports from elsewhere in Europe, that 30 bp./km² is not a high density for breeding Whinchats, but at least the results would have indicated a stable population during the monitoring, which is good. I am also wondering how many such “false optimistic views” we all have world-wide, simply because we have so little data on bird population sizes before the start of systematic monitoring.

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ZOBODAT - www.zobodat.at

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