



On the following pages you will find abstracts and summaries of new papers with a focus on Whinchats, mostly published in 2019. English summaries are shown as available. Please help us to keep our “paper shows” as complete as possible and send us abstracts of your newest publications (English preferred).

Africa/Asia/International

Mancuso E, Toma L, Polci A, d’Alessio SG, Di Luca M, Orsini M, Di Domenico M, Marcacci M, Mancini G, Spina F, Goffredo M, Monaco F 2019: Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever Virus Genome in Tick from Migratory Bird, Italy. *Emerging infectious diseases* 25.7, 1418-1420. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3201/eid2507.181345>

They detected Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever virus in a *Hyalomma rufipes* nymph collected from a whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*) on the island of Ventotene in April 2017. Partial genome sequences suggest the virus originated in Africa. Detection of the genome of this virus in Italy confirms its potential dispersion through migratory birds.

Rajabi AM, Ostrowski S 2019: First confirmed record of Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* from Afghanistan. *Sandgrouse* 41: 93 - 94.

„On 29 May 2018 at 15.25 h AMR saw in Qilae Panja village (Wakhan district, Badakhshan province, Afghanistan), a small passerine moving on the ground with small hops, in a wet meadow with scattered sea buckhorn *Hippophae rhamnoides* shrubs. It was feeding on insects or other small invertebrates. Initially thought to be one of the

many Siberian Stonechats *Saxicola maura* present in the area, a prominent white supercilium and relatively long wings piqued our curiosity. It had a buff-streaked blackish face and crown, a strong white malar stripe, and a bright orange throat and breast. The upperparts and rump were mottled dark, the tail was dark brown with white outer feathers. The bird was observed for 10–15 minutes and good photographs were taken (Plates 1,2). SO confirmed that it was a male Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* in breeding plumage. The Whinchat is a migratory passerine breeding in Europe and western Asia, east to the Ob river basin in Russia and wintering in tropical Africa. Although Afghanistan could be part of the migratory flyway of individuals from the easternmost Asian populations, there has been so far only a single observer sight record from Afghanistan and that needs verification. The staff of the Wildlife Conservation Society have been present continuously in Wakhan district (which became a national park in 2014) since July 2006 and have recorded all bird observations in a database, but ours is the first confirmed record of Whinchat in Wakhan and Afghanistan.“

Germany

Evers A, Sohler J, Hötker H 2018: Populationsökologische Untersuchungen zum Braunkehlchen in Schleswig-Holstein. Projektbericht für das Ministerium für Energiewende, Landwirtschaft, Umwelt und ländliche Räume des Landes Schleswig-Holstein. Bergenhusen, 21p.

Zusammenfassung: Im Jahr 2018 wurde das Projekt „Populationsökologische Untersuchungen zum Braunkehlchen in Schleswig-Holstein“ im Auftrag des MELUND im vierten Jahr am Michael-Otto-Institut im NABU weitergeführt. Es wurden auf 2511 ha Probestfläche in der Eider-Treene-Sorge-Region (ETS) Untersuchungen durchgeführt. Insgesamt konnten nur 26 Reviere des Braunkehlchens festgestellt werden. Damit verringerte sich der Bestand im Untersuchungsgebiet auf einen neuen Tiefstwert seit Projektbeginn. Verglichen mit den Ergebnissen der SPA-Kartierung von 2008-2012 bedeutet dies eine Abnahme um etwa 75 % in etwa 10 Jahren. Von den 26 Revieren konnte bei 11 Brutpaaren eine erfolgreiche Brut festgestellt werden. Neun Brutpaare verblieben ohne Bruterfolg und weitere sechs Reviere wurden von unverpaarten Männchen besetzt. Eine Betrachtung der Daten aller Untersuchungsjahre ergab, dass die Wahrscheinlichkeit, in Revieren mit intensiver landwirtschaftlicher Nutzung flügge Jungvögel zu erzeugen, signifikant geringer war als in Revieren mit extensiver Nutzung. Auch der Anteil unverpaarter Männchen war in Revieren mit intensiver Nutzung höher als in Revieren mit extensiver Nutzung. Einen Schwerpunkt der Untersuchungen stellte die Erfassung der zum Nahrungserwerb genutzten Habitate, der notwendigen Flugdistanzen, sowie der Dauer der Nahrungssuche während der Jungenaufzucht dar. Daten aus den Jahren 2017 und 2018 wurden für insgesamt 16 Brutpaare ausgewertet. Die Untersuchungen hinsichtlich der zurückgelegten Distanzen während der Nahrungsflüge ergaben im ersten Unter-

suchungsjahr teils deutliche Unterschiede in Abhängigkeit zur Intensität der landwirtschaftlichen Nutzung in der Nestumgebung. Dabei legten Brutvögel an landwirtschaftlich intensiv genutzten Standorten signifikant längere Distanzen zur Nahrungssuche zurück als solche an extensiv genutzten / ungenutzten Standorten. Trotz erneut großer Unterschiede hinsichtlich der Habitat Ausstattung an den Neststandorten konnten diese Diskrepanzen im Jahr 2018 nicht bestätigt werden. Weder hinsichtlich der Flugdistanzen noch der Dauer der Nahrungsflüge ergaben sich signifikante Unterschiede zwischen den einzelnen Neststandorten. In beiden Untersuchungsjahren war erneut eine starke Bindung an lineare Saumstrukturen festzustellen. Diese wurden vor allem von den Vögeln an landwirtschaftlich genutzten Standorten während der Nahrungssuche stark frequentiert. Aus diesem Grund erscheint das Ausweiten der vorhandenen Säume zu breiten Brachestreifen als eine zielführende Schutzmaßnahme für Braunkehlchen im Wirtschaftsgrünland, um geeignete Strukturen zur Nestanlage sowie ein gutes Nahrungsangebot in direkter Nestumgebung zu schaffen. Erste Erfahrungen mit alternierenden Brachestreifen auf Flächen der Stiftung Naturschutz SH werden diskutiert.

Robra N, Stanik N, Thielen J, Rosenthal G 2019: Versuche zur Wiederansiedlung und Lebensraumoptimierung von Braunkehlchen (*Saxicola rubetra*) und Wiesenpieper (*Anthus pratensis*) in der hessischen Rhön. Jahrbuch Naturschutz in Hessen 18, 111-115.

Abstract: The chapter summarises the results from field experiments in large-scale pastures for the repopulation of the whinchat and habitat optimisation of the meadow pipit in the Hessian part of the biosphere reserve Rhön. In the experiments, measures were tested to provide whinchats with more song

posts (bamboo sticks) and to increase habitat heterogeneity for meadow pipits. We found that the increased number of song posts had no positive effects on the repopulation of whinchats, which suggests the presence of additional limiting factors in habitat quality. For meadow pipits, temporarily fallow areas provided more heterogeneous vertical vegetation structures for nesting and foraging, which resulted in a higher number of breeding territories. The findings highlight the specific importance of diverse habitat structures and the need of considering landscape-level limiting factors for the conservation of these two ground-breeding bird species.

Russia

Grudinskaya V, Makarova T, Samsonov S, Grabovsky A, Shitikov D 2019: Low first-year apparent survival of passerines in abandoned fields. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335540899>

Abstract: The first-year survival is one of the key life history traits in migratory passerines. Quantifying this trait is necessary to identify factors affecting population dynamics. Here we used a long-term mark–recapture dataset (2002–2018) to examine apparent first-year survival in three migratory passerine species breeding in abandoned fields in north-western Russia: booted warbler *Iduna caligata*, whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* and yellow wagtail *Motacilla flava*. We examined apparent survival rates of birds ringed as nestlings using Cormack–Jolly–Seber model in MARK. The analysis was conducted for each species separately and within the multispecies approach. Additionally, we tested effect of the fledge date on apparent first-year survival. Our results showed that apparent first-year survival rates were extremely low in all three species and reached the lower limits known for migratory passerines. We found no species-specific differences in first-year survival. The fledge date had a significant impact on first-year survival of whinchat but did

not affect first-year survival of booted warbler and yellow wagtail. The possible reasons of the observed apparent first-year survival rates are discussed. We assume that observed low values could be determined by the habitat quality in abandoned fields. The study was funded by the Russian Foundation for Basic Research, grant number 18-34-00466 and 19-04-01043.

Shitikov D 2019: Nest survival of open-nesting passerines: species differences, temporal variability and the impact of weather conditions. *Zoologicheskii zhurnal* 98(12), 1408–1419.

Abstract: Nest survival is one of the key life-history traits of open-nesting birds, affecting the population numbers both directly, through changes in breeding productivity, and indirectly, via variations in the apparent survival of adult birds. This determines the importance of obtaining any reliable estimates of nest survival and of identifying the environmental factors that affect this parameter. A wide range of methods have been developed that allow for such estimates to be made. The objective of the present paper is to introduce Russian-speaking researchers to the modern technique for estimating the nest survival as implemented in the free software MARK. The analysis is based on a sample of 523 Booted Warbler, *Iduna caligata* nests and 553 Whinchat, *Saxicola rubetra* nests monitored on abandoned fields of the Vologda Region in 2005–2018. The daily survival rates of the nests failed to differ between the two species and showed significant interannual variations. Intraseasonal variations in the daily survival rates were weaker than interannual ones. The daily survival rate of the nests depended nonlinearly on nest age, this effect showing different directions in different years. In some years, the mean daily air temperature rendered a significant impact on the nest daily survival rate.

Shitikov D, Samsonov S, Makarova T 2019: Cold weather events provoke egg ejection behaviour in open-nesting passerines. *Ibis* 161.2 (2019), 441-446.

Vaytina TM, Shitikov D 2019: Age-related changes in song repertoire size and song type sharing in the Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*. *Bioacoustics* 28.2, 140-154. 9.

Abstract: In many oscine passerines males' songs, the repertoire size increases with age. At the same time it often remains unknown when and where males learn new songs. To infer the Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* song learning strategy, we described and catalogued song-type repertoire, revealed age differences and examined song sharing strategies among neighbouring and distant males. We recorded song vocalizations of 40 males in a limited (104 ha) study plot during four years. Whinchats produce short and discrete songs with clear intersong pauses. In total 45 song types were allocated, the individual repertoire size averaged 23.5 ± 7.6 song types (range 9–34 song types). The males' age significantly influenced the song-type repertoire size. The second calendar year (first breeding) males had a lower repertoire size than the older males. The majority of song types were shared by less than half of males in our sample. The Jaccard similarity indexes varied from 0.5 to 0.7. We could not find a relationship between males' song sharing and geographic distances between their nests. We assume that Whinchat males learned new songs in the local population before territory establishment.

Vaytina TM, Shitikov D 2019: Advertising song type vocalisation in Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* L.: age-related changes and song type sharing in local population. *Вестник ТвГУ. Серия „Биология и экология“*. 2019. № 1(53). DOI: 10.26456/vtbio48

Summary: Here we provide the results of a

study of the age-related variability of individual repertoires in Whinchat *S. rubetra* at the population and individual levels. To infer the Whinchat song learning strategy, we described and catalogued song-type repertoire, revealed age differences and examined song sharing strategies among males. We recorded song vocalizations of 40 males in a limited (104 ha) study plot for four years. Whinchats produce short and discrete songs with clear intersong pauses. Total 45 song types were allocated, the individual repertoire size averaged 23.5 ± 7.6 song types (range 9–34 song types). The males' age significantly influenced the song-type repertoire size. The second calendar year (first breeding) males had a smaller repertoire size than the older males. The majority of song types were shared by less than half of males. The Jaccard similarity indexes varied from 0.5 to 0.7. We could not find a relationship between males' song sharing and geographic distances between their nests.

Slovenia

Lenarčič, David 2019: Vpliv košnje na številčnost repaljščice (*Saxicola rubetra*) na Ljubljanskem barju. Diss. Univerza v Ljubljani, Biotehniška fakulteta, 2019. (<https://repozitorij.uni-lj.si/IzpisGradiva.php?id=109788>)

Summary: The numbers of grassland birds are declining due to several reasons, like the use of pesticides and global warming. The most important reason for that is probably agricultural intensification, predominantly mowing, which directly causes bird mortality and indirectly lowers the availability and diversity of food. The same goes for the whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*), which is an important indicator of extensively managed grasslands which also appear on Ljubljana Marsh. To determine the influence of changes in the mowing regime on the local Whinchat population, we mapped mown surfaces and whinchat territories. We found that mo-

wing did not start earlier each year. However, the dates when the 10 % and 50 % of the surface was mown, happened increasingly earlier. The changes we've measured were not strictly linear. In the period when the last half of whinchats was susceptible to death by mowing, the percentage of mown surfaces increased through the years. These results show that mowing started becoming increasingly faster. The percentage of nests failed due to mowing also increased through the years. An earlier onset of the day, when 10 % or 50 % of surfaces were mown, also caused greater nest mortality due to mowing. Rainfall delayed mowing more than nesting. Even though most of our indicators of the effects of mowing are indirect, we are estimating that the changes in them are negatively impacting the numbers of whinchats on Ljubljana Marsh.

Ukraine

Banik MV 2019: Trends and synchrony in fluctuations of the numbers of Whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*) and European Stonechat (*S. rubicola*) in chalk steppe of Northeastern Ukraine). The Journal of V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, Zoology and Ecology, 45-51. (<https://periodicals.karazin.ua/biology/article/download/12945/12257>)

Summary: The problem of coexistence of related species within the same communities poses a question of how similar are the fluctuations of their numbers. Whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*) and European Stonechat (*S. rubicola*) is an example of such a pair of phylogenetically related bird species, which are members of a foraging guild of sit-and-wait insectivores in open habitats. In Ukraine both species are quite common in meadows, steppes, fallow lands and other grassland habitats including undisturbed areas in nature reserves. In North-eastern Ukraine Whinchat and European Stonechat are characteristic of the bird communities of hills with chalk outcrops where they represent a group of

species linked to chalk steppe. The trends in numbers and synchrony in fluctuations in the numbers of both species in this habitat were studied in national nature park 'Dvorichanskyi', Kharkiv region, North-eastern Ukraine for 9 years' period (2010–2018). The data were retrieved from the results of yearly monitoring bird counts in chalk grassland habitats. The total-area census method was used on 3 plots of unequal size (17.8, 33.2, and 41.0 ha). The trends were analysed in programme TRIM (TRENds & Indices for Monitoring data) vers. 3.53. The extent of synchrony was estimated by means of zero-lag cross-correlation between the time series of log-transformed growth rates. Additionally, the coincidence of the direction of changes and the coincidence of peaks in series were checked. The trend in Whinchat abundance is characterised as significant steep decline (multiplicative slope 0.840, standard error 0.03; $p < 0.01$). The trend in European Stonechat abundance is classified as non-significant uncertain (multiplicative slope 0.909, standard error 0.06). The trends in both species correspond to general trends in Europe evidenced in Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme for 1980–2016 and 1989–2016 for Whinchat and European Stonechat accordingly. The synchrony in fluctuations of the numbers of Whinchat and European Stonechat in chalk steppe habitats proved to be weak. Time series of both species abundances run in different directions almost in all cases where the comparison was possible, which indicates probable differences in the causes of the dynamics of their populations. The study prompts to launch new or extend existing monitoring schemes in nature reserves and national parks in Ukraine to get reliable estimates for the trends in numbers of both rare and common bird species.

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