LISTA BIRD OBSERVATORY
Activity report 2020

By Aïda López, January 2021

Photo from Lista Bird Race. Several teams are watching on the sea, trying to record as many species as possible.

Executive summary

During this year, the main tasks for the daily leader have been completing the winter and summer logs 2019/2020, keeping updated the facebook page and the BO website, providing accommodation/compensation to volunteers, guiding schools and families, training volunteers and ringers, bird-ringing and birdwatching especially under standardized frames, hiring the fieldworkers of the station and co-work in a scientific study. She has been responsible for that the cover page from logs 2002-2008 were introduced in the website, as well as to continue the Wheatear project, the Rock Pipit's trapping, co-work with the Visitor Center, organize the Lista Bird Festival, hold one ringing course, publish the spring and autumn reports for 2020 and write the annual report for 2020. She has also worked on searching funding for the station, done presentations to possible contributors and produce informative brochures for both public and companies.

Standardized ringing

The spring and autumn ringing campaigns were run by Rubén Piculo and occasionally by Aïda López.

Lista Bird Observatory completed in 2020 its 31th consecutive year of spring ringing campaign. During the **spring** ringing campaign, the bird observatory was run for a total 87 days from March 15 until June 10. A total of 13 mist-nets were currently used on the standardized (138 meters) and the results were **19% lower than normal** years with 675 birds ringed (average 1990-2019 for spring is 833) of 41 different species. Note that average numbers have changed from earlier reports because standardized numbers have been adjusted to the first 6 hours of ringing.

Weather in spring: The average temperature was 1.3 ° C higher than normal from March 1 to May 1. The precipitation was around double in March and lower than normal in April and May. Average precipitation from March until May was 15% above average.

During the **autumn** ringing campaign, the bird observatory was run for a total of 124 days from July 15 until November 15. The same 13 mist-nets were currently used on the standardized (138 meters). The results were **11% lower than normal** years with 3533 birds ringed (average for autumn is 3975) of 67 different species.

Weather in autumn: The average temperature was 1.4°C higher than normal from July until October, being August 2.3°C above normal. Average precipitation from July until October was 23.3% above average.

The next table shows standardized bird ringing in spring and autumn 2020:

Species	English	Scientific	Spring	Autumn
1	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	*Accipiter nisus*		4
2	Common Cuckoo	*Cuculus canorus*		1
3	Eurasian Wryneck	*Jynx torquilla*	2	4
4	Grey-headed Woodpecker	*Picus canus*		1
5	Great Spotted Woodpecker	*Dendrocopus major*		5
6	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	*Dendrocopos minor*		4
7	Barn Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*	3	2
8	Tree Pipit	*Anthus trivialis*		29
9	Meadow Pipit	*Anthus pratensis*	18	34
10	Rock Pipit	*Anthus petrosus*		20
11	Yellow Wagtail	*Motacilla flava*		8
12	Grey Wagtail	*Motacilla cinerea*		3
13	White Wagtail	*Motacilla alba*	1	4
--	White Wagtail	*Motacilla alba alba*	6	31
--	Pied Wagtail	*Motacilla alba yarrellii*	1	
14	Winter Wren	*Troglodytes troglodytes*	12	160
15	Dunnock	*Prunella modularis*	26	24
16	European Robin	*Erithacus rubecula*	97	152
17	Black Redstart	*Phoenicurus ochruros*	2	
18	Common Redstart	*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*	1	8
19	Whinchat	*Saxicola rubetra*	5	7
20	Stonechat (hibernans)	*Saxicola torquata hibernans*		1
21	Northern Wheatear	*Oenanthe oenanthe*	9	3
--	Northern Wheatear	*Oenanthe oenanthe oenanthe*	8	48
--	Greenland Wheatear	*Oenanthe oenanthe leucorhoa*	3	4
22	Common Blackbird	*Turdus merula*	27	64
23	Fieldfare	*Turdus pilaris*		8
24	Song Thrush	*Turdus philomelos*	7	28
25	Redwing	*Turdus iliacus*	1	18
26	Sedge Warbler	*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*	2	2
27	Blyth´s Reed Warbler	*Acrocephalus dumetorum*	1	
28	Marsh Warbler	*Acrocephalus palustris*	3	1
29	European Reed Warbler	*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*	1	2
30	Icterine Warbler	*Hippolais icterina*		2
31	Barred Warbler	*Sylvia nisoria*		2
32	Lesser Whitethroat	*Sylvia curruca*	17	16
33	Common Whitethroat	*Sylvia communis*	17	37
34	Garden Warbler	*Sylvia borin*	4	22
35	Blackcap	*Sylvia atricapilla*	28	82
35	Pallas´s Leaf Warbler	*Phylloscopus proregulus*		1
35	Yellow-browed Warbler	*Phylloscopus inornatus*		2

37	Chiffchaff	*Phylloscopus collybita*	51	39
--	Siberian chiffchaff	*Phylloscopus collybita tristis*		8
38	Willow Warbler	*Phylloscopus trochilus*	118	306
39	Goldcrest	*Regulus regulus*	14	230
40	Firecrest	*Regulus ignicapilla*		4
41	Spotted Flycatcher	*Muscicapa striata*		2
42	European Pied Flycatcher	*Ficedula hypoleuca*	1	8
43	Long-tailed Tit	*Aegithalos caudatus*		54
44	Willow Tit	*Poecile montanus*		4
45	Crested Tit	*Lophophanes cristatus*	1	
46	Coal Tit	*Periparus ater*		9
47	Blue Tit	*Cyanistes caeruleus*	2	1299
48	Great Tit	*Parus major*	17	135
49	Eurasian Nuthatch	*Sitta europaea*		11
50	Eurasian Treecreeper	*Certhia familiaris*		11
51	Red-backed Shrike	*Lanius collurio*	1	3
52	Western Jackdaw	*Corvus monedula*		1
53	Common Starling	*Sturnus vulgaris*	38	145
54	House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*	20	88
55	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	*Passer montanus*	11	37
56	Common Chaffinch	*Fringilla coelebs*	7	38
57	Brambling	*Fringilla montifringilla*		12
58	European Greenfinch	*Chloris chloris*	10	15
59	European Goldfinch	*Carduelis carduelis*	2	32
60	Eurasian Siskin	*Carduelis spinus*	17	77
61	Common Linnet	*Carduelis cannabina*	29	37
62	Twite	*Carduelis flavirostris*		2
63	Common Redpoll	*Carduelis flammea*	2	1
64	Lesser redpoll	*Carduelis cabaret*	29	25
65	Common Rosefinch	*Carpodacus erythrinus*		1
66	Eurasian Bullfinch	*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*		3
67	Yellowhammer	*Emberiza citrinella*	3	35
68	Little Bunting	*Emberiza pusilla*		1
69	Common Reed Bunting	*Emberiza schoeniclus*		16
Totalt			**675**	**3533**

A new species was ringed in the standardized ringing. It was a Western Jackdaw caught during the first round on 17.10.2020.

In the standardized ringing we have continued colour ringing all Northern Wheatears, White Wagtails, Rock Pipits and Stonechats, taking part of a national project of colour ringing, most of it run by Kjell Mork Soot.

The Stonechat has had the highest number of ringing and observations in 2020, since there have been two pairs breeding in the area.

This is the first time that this species breeds in the lighthouse area since our monitoring began in 1990.

Non-standardized ringing

Since 2015 have monitored the Northern Wheatear breeding in the station area, ringing both adult and young birds with colour-coded rings. The project has been mainly run in 2020 by Christian Stolz, Rubén Piculo and Aïda López. We suspect it has been a bad year, resulting in 10 nests found in the lighthouse area (Gunnarhaug, Vågsvollvåien, Vågsvollvika). Some nests became wet and failed nesting after heavy rain on June 5. Most of the parents and 18 chicks were colour ringed.

In addition, we have been catching and colour-ringing Rock Pipits with playback and walk-in traps. A total of 17 individuals were ringed by the use of traps this autumn, which is a very low number compared to other years (85 in 2019 and 79 in 2018).

Although the coronavirus has made us recruit less amount of volunteers this year, the effort for trapping Rock Pipits has not been significantly reduced. It is unknown what the problem has been for having such a low number of Rock Pipits in the traps. Both observations and standardized ringing show numbers above average for this species in spring and autumn 2020. We could actually see in the field that even when there was a high number of birds around, they were not especially attracted to the sound/trap.

Playback of Owl's were used during the nights in autumn when weather was suitable, catching 3 Tengmalm's Owl on the non-standardized ringing. Compared to previous years this was a low number indicating low or moderate migration activity by this species.

Slevdalsvann

During the autumn, a non-standardized ringing campaign has been run from 1st August until 31st October in Slevdalsvann nature reserve. A total of 14 nets have been up the whole period (including 5 nets in the reeds) resulting with 5.553 ringed birds of 62 different species, which is 13 species more than the year before. Some interesting species have been caught, including 1 Sand Martin, 42 Common Grasshopper Warbler, 2 Paddifield Warbler, 3 Blyth´s Reed Warbler, 7 Barred Warbler, 12 Yellow-browed Warbler and 46 Bearded Reedling.

We would like to remark that 1004 Sedge Warbler and 41 Marsh Warbler were ringed, reaching both the second highest number ever.

A Paddyfield Warbler and a Blyth's Reed Warbler were some of the 107 birds that were during the first day of the ringing campaign in Slevdalsvann.

The coded colour-ring project for monitoring the breeding Bearded Reedling at Slevdalsvann was started in 2019, marking adults and juveniles. There have been colour ringed 46 individuals, reaching the highest number since 1993. This is part of a project coordinated by Rune Aae, from Østfold University College.

Bird counts

Lots of hours have been also spent on covering the study area. A total of 247 species within the area have been seen in 2020, with three new species for the observatory area and including 29 uncommon/rare species: Tundra Swan, Surf Scoter, Smew, **Willow Ptarmigan (1st!)**, Great Egret, White Stork, Spoonbill, Black Kite, Pallid Harrier, Montagu's Harrier, Long-tailed Skua, Mediterranean Gull, Sabine's Gull, Black Tern, Hawk Owl, Bee-eater, Hoopoe, Three-toed Woodpecker, Citrine Wagtail, Blyth's Reed Warbler, **Booted Warbler (1st!)**, Pallas´s Leaf Warbler, Dusky Warbler , Firecrest, Red-breasted Flycatcher, **Turkestan Shrike (1st!**), Rose-coloured Starling, Serin and Corn Bunting.

At least 3 hours have been spent every morning on counting birds migrating on the sea. This equals at least 630 hours of counts during spring and autumn campaigns.

Volunteering project

This year we have continued offering the opportunity for volunteers to stay at the observatory, especially those who were already involved in biological and ornithological activities. Although our goal is to build significant connections with biologists, students and birdwatchers, this year the biggest challenge was the management of people in the house, following the **COVID-19** measures/restrictions. Every person staying in the observatory had to be able to arrive to Norway and do a quarantine for the first 10 days.

There has been a total of 2 volunteers (from Germany and Greece) staying in the house this year, compared to 11 volunteers in 2019.

Both volunteers have worked at the station for a long period (8-16 weeks), making possible their stay under the COVID-19 issues.

In this way we are contributing to community education, public awareness and have opened our network of contacts which definitely benefits Lista Bird Observatory in terms of national and international development.

Media

The reach of Lista Bird Observatory on social media, and Facebook in particular, continued to increase this year. The LIFU Facebook page has 3007 likes in November 2020. It has been posted 69 updates to the page since January 2020.

A total of 7 posts on the website have been published this year, which have been mainly reports, articles and advertisement for events or course offers.

Guiding and schools

Besøksenter Våtmark Lista (Visitor Center) is responsible of the nature guidance for schools and families, together with the Bird Observatory.

A total of 12 groups have been guided by Lista Bird Observatory in 2020. This is almost double amount of guiding than in 2019, despite the COVID-19.

Accommodation

We currently offer 2 beds and the fee is 150 NOK per person and night. No guests have overnight in the house because of the COVID-19.

Ringing course

We have continued this year offering a ringing course for beginners. It's a combination of 2,5h of theory and 10h practice in the field. Standardized ringing, identification, biometric measurements, age, sex, moult and bird cycle are some of the contents. The course in spring was cancelled because of COVID-19, and a course was carried out in autumn with a total of 5 participants from all over Norway.

We have got very positive feedback and have already some bookings for the courses next year.

Lista Bird Festival

The weekend 22.-23rd August we celebrated the Lista Bird Festival and it went great! Despite a slightly more modest arrangement due to the corona situation and accompanying infection control measures, there was good support and good feedback from the participants during this weekend's festival!

Compared to previous years, the area for the **Lista Bird Race** was reduced (see photo below). This year we recommended walking or using a bicycle. There was only one team that decided to cycle and it was actually the team that observed more species in the competition with 100 species registered during the day!

All teams together registered **129 species** (134 species last year) this day. One team reached 100 species.

Jan Erik Røer, with a **lecture** about the results of 30 years of bird monitoring at Lista Bird Observatory.

After the lecture, it was time to vote «Norwegian champion in bird watching 2020». Jonas Langbråten was the quiz master, and presented a series of pictures of individual birds or flocks of birds that were to be species determined and counted in a few seconds, a real test for field ornithologists. It was smooth and exciting. The winner was in the end, as in 2019, Bjørn Mo.

Sunday was the family day at Lista lighthouse, with various events for both children and adults. You could participate in ringing in the morning with the bird station staff.

Jonas also ended the day by leading a new tour in the afternoon, this time under the Naturlos guiding. This trip went to Nordhasselvika and Tjørveneset, where the focus was on the waders on Lista beaches. *Natur og Fritid* shop was also open on Sunday, and visitors here could test the Swarovski's new binocular NL Pure.

Reasearch

We are involved in the first radio telemetry project for passeriforms in Norway, in collaboration with the bird observatories at Mølen, Store Færder and Jomfruland.

Two antennas were installed at Lista in autumn 2019. This will allow us to follow the movements of individual birds during their stopover.

The nanotags used are from the **Motus Wildlife Tracking System**, which is an international collaborative research network that uses coordinated automated radio telemetry to facilitate research and education on the ecology and conservation of migratory animals.

During 2020 a total of **10 nanotags were placed** on: 4 Robin, 4 Reed Bunting and 2 Northern Wheatear.

Through radio-telemetry it is possible to learn more about stopover behaviour, timing of departure and departure directions, especially of nocturnally migrating songbirds.

In addition, a **scientific article** have been published with data from Lista Fuglestasjon in 2020. The reference is below:

- Hasle, G., Leinaas, H.P., Heier, L., López Garcia, A., Røed, K.H. 2020. Mitochondrial DNA in Ixodus ricinus (Acari: Ixodidae) on birds reflects ticks' transportation routes to Lista, Norway. Ticks and Tick-borne Diseases, Volume 12, Issue 1.

We have this year collaborated with a new project at the Natural History Museum in Oslo, which aims to map the feather lice fauna in Norway. The project is financed through the species project and Artsdatabanken.

During autumn, we collected 60 samples with **feather lice** from 12 different species.

During spring, we were invited by *Max Planck Institute for Animal Behavior* to participate in a unique project. A new outstanding collaborative network: mass tagging of Common Blackbirds with **ICARUS tags**. The project consists in GPS tagging blackbird populations all over Europe in a systematic way. There is large scientific resources to evaluate and run the project. Sadly, Norway was excluded to participate by Mattilsynet, which let our application down despite that all other countries in Europe + China/USA regarded the project to have moderate effect on bird welfare, and accepted the project in all other countries.

Skagen & Ottenby

The ‘Scandinavian Triple’ is a pack where volunteers apply for working at all three places (during autumn or spring). It has been cancelled during 2020 because of COVID-19.

Special visits

In August 2020 Ola Elvestuen visited Lista Bird Observatory. He is a Norwegian politician for the Liberal Party who served as Minister of Climate and the Environment from 2018 to 2020.

The background for the visit is that Farsund Venstre (local Liberal Party) visited the bird station in June. The bird station has for 30 years collected systematic information on migratory birds and the data base is unique. Lista BO is the only year-round manned bird station in Norway and it is threatened with cuts in funding. With this as a background, Ola Elvestuen was invited for a presentation about our work and listen to the challenges and gain first-hand knowledge. Biodiversity and management is one of the Liberal Party's most important core issues for the Party and they have shown interest for that the bird station gets secured stable funding.

Ola Elvestuen, Aïda López, mayor Arnt Abrahamsen and Beate Marie Johnsen were together to talk about financing the Lista Bird Observatory.

Aknowledgements

There is a long list of people I would like to thank for their collaboration, help, encouragement, and professionalism this year. Thanks to Rubén Piculo for doing such a good job in the field, working hard and being always helpful with the rest of the team. Thanks to Christian Stolz and Christina Ninou for helping cover the ringing and counts, creating a learning environment and spirit of comradeship. Thanks to Jonas, Marco, Oddvin and the anonymous birdwatchers for proving valuable information and covering part of the counts within the study area. Thanks to our funders including Miljødirektoratet, NOF and Natur og Fritid, our work would be impossible to carry out without their contributions. Thanks to Partiet Venstre (Norway's social liberal party) for showing so much interest in our work and make effort in a local and a national level to contribute to improve our economy. Thanks to Gunnar Gundersen, Tor Olsen and Nils H. Lorentzen for providing help and experience on the field whenever is needed and taking over the main tasks in Slevdalsvann. And at last, thanks to Jan Erik Røer for being always helpful with positivism and diligence despite the distance.

Photo from Lista crew, volunteers and workers at the observatory, after putting down the nets. November 2020, end of campaign.