

The Marsh Warbler (*Acrocephalus palustris*) and Blyth's Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus dumetorum*) in the district of Lappeenranta, Summer 1960.

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The reed warbler has been seen fairly regularly in the Lappeenranta district since 1949 (TOIVARI 1950, PAATELA & KAILA 1960), but the marsh warbler had not been observed in the area. Its appearance in the summer of 1960, therefore, aroused attention; it was seen in five different spots while the reed warbler was found in three.

The following notes contain observations and a description of the habitats.

Acrocephalus palustris. (1) On June 5, 1960, at 21.45 hours a singing male was seen at Pappilanniemi, Lauritsala, at the junction of two busy roads, in a thicket of willow and alder where the ground flora consisted mainly of *Graminae* species and of *Filipendula ulmaria*. The bird was watched regularly at this spot until June 11, after which date no more observations were made. (2) On June 7, 1960, at 22.22 hours, a singing male bird was found 500 metres east of the mouth of the Saimaa Canal, in a luxuriant thicket by the roadside. Its song was last heard on June 17, at 23.17 hours. Habitat: on the canal, on the top of the road embankment, in a 3—10 metre high thicket dominated by the following species: *Salix* sp., *Sorbus aucuparia*, *Prunus padus*, and *Sambucus racemosa*, with particularly luxuriant ground flora, in which *Chamaenerium angustifolium*, *Aegopodium podagraria* and *Filipendula ulmaria* were predominant. (3) On June 10, 1960, at 01.30 hours, a singing male was discovered at the mouth of the Saimaa Canal on the Imatra highway, in a thicket between the road and a clearing. The singing was strong. There was no other observation recorded at this spot. (4) On June 11, 1960, at 22.15 hours, a singing male was found in a luxuriant thicket on swampy ground south of Lappeenranta railway station, right by the side of the railway embankment. The bird sang regularly in the same thicket until June 19. Habitat: 2—4 metre high thicket (*Alnus glutinosa*, *Populus tremula*, *Salix* sp.) of a density of approx. 60 per cent; the predominant species in the ground vegetation were *Chamaenerium angustifolium*, and *Deschampsia caespitosa*. (5) On June 12, 1960, at 23.15 hours, a singing male bird was observed in a roadside thicket on the southern part of Toikka moor at Lappeenranta. On June 15 the bird was found to have moved its singing spot westward on the same open moor, where in a ditch-side thicket, it continued to sing until June 19. Habitat: first, a roadside thicket of 6 metre high *Salix* sp., density 100 per cent; subsequently, a 3—5 metre high thicket of *Salix* sp. along a ditch, ground vegetation about 1 metre high, with *Filipendula ulmaria* and *Anthriscus silvester* predominant.

Acrocephalus dumetorum. (1) June 6, 1960, a singing male was found at the mouth of the Saimaa Canal near a roller bridge, quite close to the marsh warbler habitat. Singing, at first weak, began at 22.15 hours, and after 22.25 hours continued uninterrupted and strong. The bird sang at the same site regularly up to June 21. Habitat: 4—5 metre high thicket on top of a road embankment (*Salix* sp., *Betula* sp., *Sambucus racemosa*, *Ribes rubrum*, *Rubus idaeus*), ground vegetation was luxuriant (*Chamaenerium angustifolium*, *Urtica dioeca*, *Anthriscus silvester*, *Aegopodium podagraria*). (2) On June 9, 1960, at 22.15 hours, a singing male was found near Lappeenranta railway station on the Viipuri highway, in a brook valley thicket. On the same day at 24.00 hours another singing male was heard near the first in the same thicket. The birds frequented the place regularly, and singing was last heard on June 18 and 19. Habitat: thicket some 6 metres high (*Salix* sp.), with a luxuriant unbroken ground covering of *Filipendula ulmaria*, with *Anthriscus silvester*, and *Lysimachia vulgaris*. (3) On June 18, 1960, at 01.15 hours, a singing male was found south of Lappeenranta railway station, by the roadside in dryish thicket (*Salix* sp., *Betula* sp., *Alnus incana*). There was only this single observation of this particular individual.

The large number of marsh warblers is particularly surprising: MERIKALLIO (1958), for example, estimated that in the whole country there were only five to ten pairs. It might be mentioned that in the same summer other rare southern species of birds were also observed fairly frequently in the Lappeenranta area, and included the grasshopper-warbler, the thrush-nightingale, the sedge warbler and the corncrake. This may be connected with the recent extension of the south-eastern species, in particular, over the whole country (cf. e.g. PAATELA & KAILA 1960).

The two warbler species mentioned, which must be considered true night-singers, were observed very regularly for a few hours before midnight (in addition to the writers, observations were made by Matti Kyöstilä and Paavo Kankaanranta). Special attention was devoted to singing. Using a battery run magnetophone, samples of the songs of all the individuals observed, apart from one marsh and one reed warbler were recorded. Both species began to sing at approximately 22.00 hours, sometimes before and occasionally slightly after, depending on the weather. It was often found that both species began singing at the same time. In windy and chilly weather the singing was weaker. It often happened that nightingales were silent while both species of warblers sang. The singing however, was not limited to twilight hours but went on in the morning even after sunrise; the reed warbler has even been heard in day-

time too (cf. the singing of the nightingale, PIIPARINEN & TOIVARI 1958). Singing usually began intermittently but after a few minutes of hesitation it went on almost uninterrupted except for occasional pauses of a few seconds. The bird usually performed from the high branches in the thicket, and when the singing site was changed the bird flew below thicket level. The singing sites were in the immediate neighbourhood of human habitation, though the thicket was very dense (often over 60 per cent), and the ground vegetation so thick that it was practically impossible to locate the nest. No certain evidence of nesting exists, but nesting may be assumed since the birds were usually seen for a fairly long time in exactly the same place.

References: MERIKALLIO, EINARI 1958, Finnish Birds, their distribution and numbers. Soc F. Fl. Fenn. V: 122—123. — PAATELA, JUHANI & KAILA, LEO 1960, On the expansion of Blyth's Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus dumetorum*) into Finland. O.F. 37: 1—11. — PIIPARINEN, TAISTO & TOIVARI, LAURI 1958, Über die Tag-rhythmik im Gesang des Sprossers (*Luscinia luscinia*). O.F. 35: 65—70. — TOIVARI, LAURI 1950, Viitakerkkunen (*Acrocephalus dumetorum*) pesivänä Lappeenrannassa. L.T. 54: 54—56.

Selostus: Luhtakerkkusen (*Acrocephalus palustris*) ja viitakerkkusen (*Acrocephalus dumetorum*) esiintymisestä Lappeenrannan seudulla kesällä 1960.

Molemmat mainituista lajeista esiintyivät harvinaisen runsaslukuisina. Luhtakerkkusta tavattiin viidessä eri paikassa 5. VI—19. VI. 1960. ja viitakerkkusta neljässä eri paikassa 6. VI—21. VI. 1960. Laulu oli jokseenkin yhtenäistä klo 22.00 ja auringonnousun välisenä aikana, joskin sitä kuultiin myös päivällä. Kumpikin laji esiintyi suunnilleen samanlaisilla paikoilla tiheässä aluskasvustoltaan hyvin rehevässä pensastossa kulttuurin välittömässä läheisyydessä. Mitään varmoja merkkejä pesimisestä mainittuna kesänä ei ole olemassa.
