

Bird surveys by amateur ornithologists in Finland

MARTTI SOIKKELI

SOIKKELI, M. [Department of Zoology, University of Turku, SF-20500 Turku 50, Finland] 1976. — *Bird surveys by amateur ornithologists in Finland*. *Ornis Fenn.* 53:140—141.

At the present time, two organized census projects are monitored in Finland. The Winter Bird Census was started in 1956. Today, about 600 routes covering nearly 7000 km are surveyed by 300—400 persons. A list of 8 increasing and 10 decreasing species is given. The Ornithological Atlas of Finland is part of an international project. The survey is based on a 10-km grid, with over 3000 squares in Finland. About 30 % of these squares have been investigated. The surveyors numbered 256 in 1974 and 369 in 1975. The work is much more complete in Southern than in Northern Finland.

Amateur ornithologists have played an important role in elucidating the distribution of many bird species. However, the question arises to what extent a distribution map constructed on the basis of occasional observations may be considered reliable. Of course it gives a rough idea of the distribution of the birds, but it may also reflect the non-random distribution of the ornithologists. In a country like Finland, there are large areas inhabited or visited by few, if any, ornithologists. Another shortcoming of occasional observations, the lack of permanent and standardized methods for survey, hampers comparison of distribution maps from different periods. At the present time, hundreds of Finnish amateur ornithologists are participating annually in two organized census projects: the Winter Bird Census, started 20 years ago, and a survey of breeding birds for the Ornithological Atlas of Finland, in operation since 1974.

The Winter Bird Census. Dr. J. KOSKIMIES started this "Christmas Bird Census" in 1956. The current director of the project is Dr. LASSE SAMMALISTO

of the Zoological Museum, Helsinki University. The aim of the census is to map the distribution and relative abundance of wintering birds. In the census, the same routes, varying in length from 2 to 35 km, are surveyed by the same small group of observers in the first half of January each year. About 600 routes, covering nearly 7000 km and mostly located in the southern part of the country, are surveyed by 300—400 persons. The most numerous winter birds have been *Passer domesticus*, *Emberiza citrinella*, *Parus major* and *Corvus corone*. From 1960 to 1972, the following species have increased in numbers: *Picoides tridactylus*, *Parus caeruleus*, *Passer domesticus*, *Picus canus*, *Dendrocopos major*, *Pica pica*, *Parus major* and *Carduelis chloris*. The following show a decrease in numbers: *Lyrurus tetrrix*, *Tetrao urogallus*, *Perdix perdix*, *Corvus monedula*, *Perisoreus infaustus*, *Carduelis carduelis*, *Acipiter nisus*, *Lagopus lagopus*, *Tetrastes bonasia* and *Corvus corone*.

The Ornithological Atlas of Finland. The Finnish scheme is part of an inter-

national project for compiling distribution maps of all the breeding bird species in Europe. Many European countries have already carried out, or are still running, corresponding national atlas projects. In Finland, the atlas project is organized by Mr. Kalevi Hyytiä, M.Sc., of the Zoological Museum, Helsinki University, and the five-year period of field work started in 1974.

The survey of breeding birds is based on a 10-km grid system, with over 3000 squares in Finland. In southern Finland most of the 10-km squares will be surveyed, but in the northern part of the country we are obliged to select a few 10-km squares in each 50-km square.

Two years' field work has yielded

observations from nearly 1200 squares, i.e. 30 % of all the Finnish squares. The squares surveyed fairly thoroughly constitute only 10 % of the total. The surveyors numbered 256 in 1974 and 369 in 1975.

Selostus: Talvilaskenta ja Atlas-projekti - kaksi lintujen harrastajien suorittamaa tutkimusta

Talvilaskennat aloitettiin v. 1956. Nykyään tutkitaan n. 600 reittiä, joiden yhteinen pituus on lähes 7000 km:a. Osanottajia on 300—400. 8 lajia yleistyti ja 10 lajia taantui vuosina 1960—1972. Atlas-projekti on osa laajaa kansainvälistä tutkimusta. Tutkimus nojaa maamme alueen jakoon 10 kertaa 10 km:n suuruisiin neliöihin, joita yhteensä on yli 3000. Näistä noin 30 % on tutkittu. Tutkijain lukumäärä oli 1974 256 ja 1975 369. Tutkittujen neliöiden tiheys on paljon pienempi Pohjois- kuin Etelä-Suomessa.