Tiedonantoja — Meddelanden

Moult and measurements of Redpolls *Carduelis flammea* in North Sweden, 1968

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This brief report gives information from 63 Redpolls, including 15 adults, caught near Killingi, in Norrbotten, Sweden (68°N) between 10.8. and 25.8.1968.

The study area was a forest in which pine and birch were the dominant trees. In most parts, especially where a forestry scheme to eradicate Birch was in operation, there was a predominance of Pine, but in other, unspoilt and damper parts Birch predominated. Near one large area of Birch was the settlement of Killingi, with several fields of hay, at the centre of which was a patch (20 × 20 m.) of dense Sallow where most birds were caught. After 22.8.1968 many Redpolls were seen in the cultivated area, flying in and out of the Sallow and feeding on the cut and uncut hay. At this time most of the stacked hay was being taken in from the fields. Before this date, our occasional visits to Killingi yielded us no records of Redpolls, though at least one large flock was seen every day in the forest. Redpolls were locally abundant, but were difficult to catch. They were always highly active, often flying 20 or 30 feet above the ground. Most birds were caught in mist-nets erected among Birch trees on the side of a hill. Of the birds caught, none had an unstreaked white rump (an accepted characteristic of *Carduelis hornemanni*) so they were all *C. flammea.*

Moult and plumage

The moult scores of 12 adults were compared with the data of Evans *et al.* (1967) from Sor-Varanger (200 miles N.E. of Killingi; lat. 70°N) in 1964. It appeared that the earliest Killingi birds were about a fortnight ahead in moult in 1968.

By 18.8.1968 some juveniles already had red crowns, though on 25.8.1968 there were still some which had not started post-juvenile moult, and even some with pink legs. (Evans (1966) observes that the legs darken "well before" the start of moult). This indicates a spread of several weeks in the timing of post-juvenile moult, and hence in the fledging dates. The last young must have hatched from eggs laid in the latter half of July; surprisingly late, in view of the fact that some adults had already started to moult then. Also there is a greater spread in the adult moult scores than in the Sor-Varanger birds, suggesting a greater spread in date of onset.

Measurements

Wing-lengths were obtained by measuring the unflattened chord of the wing, as in Sor-Varanger. Nearly all the adults were affected by moult. However the mean of 42 juveniles was 72.0 mm (range 68—77 mm, Standard error 0.34 mm), close to the mean of 73.0 mm found among juveniles in Sor-Varanger.

The bill lengths of 40 full-grown juveniles were measured to the nearest mm. Of these, 25 were 8 mm, 14 were 9 mm and one was 10 mm (Av. 8.4 mm).

The mean weight of adults in Norrbotten was 12.5 g (S.E. 0.29, $n = 14$) compared with a mean in Sor-Varanger of 13.6 g (S.E. 0.02, $n = 53$). The difference between the means is highly significant ($P < 0.001$, t-test), but it must be noted that the majority of the adults in Norrbotten were caught in the morning, whereas the Sor-Varanger birds were caught throughout the day. The juveniles in Sor-Varanger were on average lighter in the morning than in the afternoon (Means: 12.84 ± 0.13 and 13.25 ± 0.12, Numbers: 61 and 67;

$P < 0.02$). This did not seem to be the case in Norrbotten (Means: 12.24 ± 0.19 and 12.04 ± 0.21, Numbers: 25 and 23). The Sor-Varanger birds were significantly heavier, both in the morning ($P < 0.01$) and in the afternoon ($P < 0.001$).

Food

Between 10.8. and 26.8.1968 observations were made throughout every day in the forest. Of 13 instances of feeding flocks of redpolls, 9 were in conifers, where they appeared to be feeding from the young cones. Sometimes the birds were selecting a Pine tree from a surrounding predominance of Birch. (The Birch crop was described by the local forest warden as 'average').

Feeding took place at all hours of a 20-hour day, though activity was highest at 0400—0800 hours and lowest at 1400—1800 hours (local time).

Acknowledgements

For the field expedition we would like to thank the Ford (Dagenham) Trust for financial support and the following for their help and advice; The Riksmuseum in Stockholm (for rings), The Dept. Biological Sciences at Dundee University, D. Oliver, Capt. C. R. S. Pitman, G. R. Sinclair, R. Spencer. We also thank especially Dr. P. R. Evans, J. J. D. Greenwood and Dr. I. Newton for their great help before and after the expedition, and particularly in the production of this note.

Selostus: **Urpiaisen sulkasadosta ja mitoista Pohjois-Ruotsissa.**

Elokuussa 1968 mitattiin ja punnittiin Pohjois-Ruotsissa 63 urpiaista. Aikuisten lintujen sulkimisastetta verrattiin EVANSin saamiin arvoihin (1964 Etelä-Varanki). Nyt tutkitut linnut olivat pari viikkoa edellä Etelä-Varangin lintuja. Nuorten lintujen sulkimisen alku vaihtelee eri yksilöillä useita viikkoja. Siiven keskipituus 42 täysikasvuisella linnulla oli 72 mm, nokan mitta 8.4 (n=40). Aikuisten lintujen keskipaino oli 12.5 g (n=14) ja nuorten lintujen aamulla 12.24 ± 0.19 g ja illalla 12.04 ± 0.21 g (n=25 ja n=23). Urpiaiset ruokailivat vuorokauden kaikkina tunteina, aktiivisimmin klo 4.00—8.00. +3 ruokailevaa parvea koskevasta havainnosta 9 tehtiin havupuissa tavatuista parvista ja joskus nähtiin parven valisevan männyn koivujen joukosta.

References

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Havaintoja päiväpetolintujen muutosta ja esiintymisestä Itä-Hämeessä

REIJO EROLA, EERO HIETANEN & REINO NIEMI

Jokakeväisen ja -syksyisen muutontarkkailun tuloksena on kirjoittajille kertynyt havaintoaineistoa haukkojen melko vähän tunnetusta muutosta sisämaassa. Valtaosa havainnoista on Heinolan kaupungin ja maalaiskunnan alueelta, mitä kaikki keskiarvot koskevat. Täydentäviä tietoja on otettu Asikkalasta, Hartolasta, Hollolasta ja Sysmästä. Näissä tapauksissa pitäjät on mainittu erikseen. Fenologisen aineiston keräystyön ovat suorittaneet 1957—61 opettaja Aarre Laaksonen ja sen jälkeen tämän kirjoittajat. Lisätietoja ovat antaneet pääasiassa seuraavat henkilöt: Anthony Bosley, Kari Häkkinen, Lauri Kahanpää, Juha Kokko, Asko Lai-