

66. Pohjolan linnut värikuvien I, pp. 491—498. Otava, Helsinki.

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Merenkurkun merikotkakanta v. 1971

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Jatkona 1960-luvulla vuosittain suoritettuun merikotkakannan selvitykseen (PALOKANGAS, KOIVUSAARI & NUUJA 1970, *Ornis Fenn.* 47: 180—184) tehtiin v. 1971 entistä perusteellisempi tutkimus Merenkurkun merikotkatilanteesta.

Merikotkakannan laskenta, uusien pesien etsintä ja pesintätuloksen tarkastus Kaskisten ja Uudenkaarlepyyn välisellä rannikkoalueella suoritettiin pääasiallisesti huhti-, touko- ja kesäkuussa. Maastossa oltiin 55 vrk.

Jo 1960-luvulla todettujen merikotkaparien lisäksi tutkimusalueelta löytyi kolme meille ennestään tuntematonta vanhaa merikotkaparia. Alueella voitiin varmuudella todeta olevan 21, mahdollisesti jopa 26, merikotkayksilöä, joista kaksi oli nuoria lintuja. Viisi paria onnistui munimaan, mutta kaikki munat (yht. 8 kpl) jäivät kuoriutumatta. Lisäksi kolmella eri reviirillä olevat pesät oli kunnostettu, mutta vain yhdellä reviirillä todettiin merikotkapari, yhdellä yksinäinen kotka ja yhdellä ei nähty kotkaa ollenkaan, mutta kunnostettu pesä joka tapauksessa edellyttää ainakin yhden kotkan olemassaoloa. Mainituista pesistä ei tavattu mitään selvää munintaan viittaavaa merkkiä. Loput pesistä olivat autioita, mutta kahden parin ja yhden yksinäisen merikotkan todettiin kuitenkin oleskelevan vanhoilla reviireillä. Havaitut kaksi nuorta kotkaa oleskelivät yhdessä, mutta eivät pesineet.

Elokuun lopulla löydettiin kuollut vanha merikotka erään saaren rannasta. Kotka oli

todennäköisesti toinen yksilö alueella vuosittain pesintää yrittäneestä parista. Kotkan kuoliinsyytä ei tiedetä.

Kokkolasta saadun tiedon mukaan yksi merikotkapari yritti siellä tuloksettomasti pesintää. Mainittua paria ei ole laskettu mukaan em. tietoihin.

Haluun kiittää kenttätöihin päätoimisesti osallistuneita Eero Murtomäkeä ja Matti Finlundia sekä Suomen Kulttuurirahaston Etelä-Pohjanmaan rahastoa, jonka myöntämän apurahan turvin tutkimus suureksi osaksi suoritettiin.

Summary: White-tailed Eagles of the Quarken Straits region in 1971.

This report gives additional data on the White-tailed Eagles of the Quarken Straits, the history of which in the 1960's was discussed in *Ornis Fenn.* 47:180—184.

In 1971 a very thorough inventory of the White-tailed Eagle population in the Quarken Straits was made and 21 (or possibly 26) different individuals were found, of which only 2 were immature. Five pairs laid eight eggs, but none of these produced any young. Three additional nests were repaired but nothing indicative of egg-laying was observed. Two pairs and one single White-tailed Eagle were observed in their old territories but they made no attempt to nest.

Great Spotted Woodpecker: two letters

Irruptions of the Great Spotted Woodpecker: a reply

In his paper "Irruption and wintering ecology of the Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*" published in the last issue of *Ornis Fennica*, Eriksson has quoted incorrectly my analysis of the recoveries of Great Spotted Woodpeckers ringed in Finland (HILDÉN 1969. *Activities of Finnish bird stations in 1968.* *Ornis Fenn.* 46:179—187) and drawn erroneous conclusions as to the age of these ringed

birds. For this reason I consider it proper to make some corrections.

In the last paragraph of his discussion (p. 75) Eriksson states: "A detailed analysis of ringing recoveries shows that, contrary to the opinion expressed by HILDÉN (1969), even birds which have nested in Fennoscandia may move eastwards". There are two errors in this sentence. First, I never expressed such an opinion; I did not even mention the age of the birds when analysing the distant recoveries of Great Spotted Woodpeckers ringed in Fin-

land. All I said about the age of irrupting Woodpeckers was that "... out of 1,500 ringed at four stations, only about 9% were adults"! Second, the only evidence Eriksson presents for his claim that even breeding birds of Fennoscandia may move eastwards in the autumn, is based on regrettable misconceptions. The bird ringed at Hauho during breeding time on 23 June, 1957, and recovered in the USSR, Leningrad, on 5 December, 1957, which Eriksson declares to be an adult male, was in fact a nestling, as is clearly stated in the ringing report (NORDSTRÖM 1959. Die Vogelberingung in Finnland im Jahre 1957. Mem. Soc. F. Fl. Fenn. 34:1—48). Two other ringing recoveries mentioned by Eriksson as proof of long-distance eastwards movements by adult Great Spotted Woodpeckers, actually prove nothing of the sort. These birds were ringed in March—April in South Finland and recovered one and two years later respectively in the USSR. Eriksson declares them to be adult males which "may have nested in Finland", but as juveniles cannot be separated from adults after their first autumn moult, there is no justification for this statement. On the contrary, bearing in mind the strong preponderance of juveniles among irrupting Woodpeckers, it seems probable that even these two birds were juveniles from the previous summer, which had remained in Fennoscandia in the course of the autumn irruption and returned to their eastern native region the following spring. Thus, it is more likely that the birds had nested in the USSR than in Finland before being recovered.

The same objection can be made to Eriksson's statement in the second sentence of the last paragraph, that even "... adult males that have wintered in Fennoscandia may move eastwards in the following spring, apparently returning to their earlier nesting places, which indicates a tendency to true migration". Again, the single piece of evidence for this is a bird ringed at Pori on 10 March, 1959, and recovered in the USSR, Udmurtien, on 3 May in the same spring. But here, too, nothing certain can be said about the bird's age. However, the fact that this very bird was found no less than 1,940 km from the ringing place, the remotest recovery so far of Great Spotted Woodpeckers ringed in Finland, strongly suggests that it was a young bird — it appears me hardly probable that an adult woodpecker would migrate from Siberia to Fennoscandia and then return the following spring to its earlier breeding grounds.

Summarizing, then, evidence that adult Great Spotted Woodpeckers perform large-scale migratory movements as juvenile birds is still lacking. All that can be said so far is that a small fraction of irrupting Woodpeckers

ringed in late summer at bird stations consists of adult birds, but how great distances they can migrate remains open to discussion until more recoveries are available.

OLAVI HILDÉN

On the irruption of Great Spotted Woodpeckers in 1962: some corrections and remarks

In some papers it has been stated that in 1962 130,000 Great Spotted Woodpeckers were observed at Signilskär Bird Station, Åland, during the peak day of the woodpecker irruption. As a member of the Editorial Board of *Ornis Fennica* and as secretary of *Societas pro Fauna et Flora Fennica*, in whose archives all records from the Signilskär Bird Station are deposited, it is my duty to inform that the observations on Signilskär at the actual time do not fulfill normal demands on reliability.

The number of woodpeckers actually counted was much smaller than 130,000 and there is no satisfactory explanation of the way in which the number 130,000 has been calculated. Even the day of the migration peak and the description of the flight direction are somewhat uncertain. Despite many requests and promises the observer has not delivered any reports on his observations and the conclusion is, that he never made any field notes. Only through personal communication he has given some informations. The data given in *Die Vogelwarte* 1963 (22, editorial, p. 41), by WILLIAMSON 1963 (in *Bird Migration* 2, pp. 224—251), by v. HAARTMAN, HILDÉN, LINKOLA, SUOMALAINEN & TENOVUO 1967 (in *Pohjolan linnut värikuvin* II; p. 618), and by ERIKSSON 1971 (in *Ornis Fennica* 48, pp. 69—76) are based on such personal communications.

According to ERIKSSON the migration peak on Signilskär occurred already on 26 July, 1962, but according to the other reports mentioned above the peak was on 26 August, 1962. The results of a request sent by the Zoological Museum, Helsinki University, to all Finnish bird ringers suggest 26 August as the main peak day at Signilskär. Along the whole W coast of Finland there were rather few reports of woodpeckers in July, but a very strong migration has been reported from several places along the coast in August, first from the northern parts, after the middle of August even from the southern coastal bird stations. On the island Sääppi (off Pori) about 200 km NE from Signilskär the migration culminated on 17 August (estimation: more than 10,000 woodpeckers on the island). On the other hand, there are some valid observations of a considerably smaller irruption peak already