

Report on the National Bird Ringing Programme 2007



Chaminda Jayarathna

C. D. Kaluthota and S.W. Kotagama

Field Ornithology Group of Sri Lanka
fogsl@slf.lk

Field Ornithology Group of Sri Lanka (FOGSL) launched the National Bird Ringing Programme (NBRP) in 2005 with the collaboration of Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC). This programme was successfully continued through its third year in 2007. This report provides a summary of the results.

The major objective of the National Bird Ringing Programme is to identify the areas from which the migratory birds originate. The second objective is to ascertain whether the migrants show site fidelity to their wintering grounds. As some species have both migratory and resident populations, the third objective is to study the sub species that are breeding residents. In order to achieve these objectives it is essential to carryout continuous, long term ringing programmes in selected locations. As an initial step, Bundala National park was selected to conduct a long term ringing programme with the aim of achieving the above mentioned objectives.

Netting Sessions

Four ringing sessions were conducted at the Bundala

National Park during 2007. These included three sessions during the migratory period (September to April) and one session during the non-migratory period. Session for the end of migrant period (2006/07) was conducted in April. A session for the non-migratory period was done in July. The next migratory season (2007/08) sessions were conducted at the beginning of the season in October and mid-migratory session in December. Each ringing session lasted 4-5 days.

Methods

After conducting a preliminary survey of the area to identify concentrations of birds, suitable sites were identified for mist netting. Netting operations were carried out between 1800h and 0700h for waders. The number of nets and actual netting periods varied somewhat, depending on the availability of human resources and other factors.

Short netting sessions were also conducted to capture forest birds, primarily as an exercise for trainees. For this purpose netting operations were carried out between 0600h and 1800h in the Scrub forest habitat. As in the case of waders, netting period and the number of nets used varied depending on the availability of people and prevailing whether conditions.

Results

A total of 390 birds, including 359 water birds, were captured during these four main ringing sessions. A further 33 species including forest birds were captured and ringed during the training sessions which included 13 species of waders.

Table 1 shows the numbers of birds captured. Numbers of waterbirds captured from each species are given in the table 2. Table 3 shows the numbers of forest birds captured. This also includes birds accidentally captured in the mist nets established for waders.

Recaptures

Obtaining recaptures is the most important aspect of a ringing programme. NBRP was successful in this aspect having the highest number of recaptures in the year 2007 after its commencement. A total of six recaptures were made during the year. The species recaptured were of the four most commonly ringed species. Full details of re-encounters are given in Table 04. Difference of seasons between ringing date and recapture date is given in the last column. Repeated recaptures of an individual bird obtained during the same session are excluded here.

Highlights

A total of eight Broad billed sandpipers were captured during the year. This is the first occasion that the species is netted in Sri Lanka. These birds were captured in two netting sessions during the 2007/08 migrant season. This high capture rate could be due to a higher number of the birds visiting Bundala this particular season compared to the previous seasons.

A total of 42 terns were captured during the netting session of October 2007. Twenty three of these were Little terns. In addition, few Whiskered and White winged terns were also captured. There was a large roost of terns on the ground close to the netting area during the session. Around 4000 birds were observed in this mixed species roosting flock. Number of terns captured may have increased due to the presence of this roosting flock in the vicinity.

Training

The National Bird Ringing Programme provides training in bird ringing and other ornithological field studies. One of the major activities is the provision of training to field officers of the Department of Wildlife Conservation. Under the National Bird Ringing Programme, a total of 19 staff officers were trained in the year 2007. Their participation in training programmes is certified after thorough supervision by FOGSL instructors.

Other bird ringing activities in the year

FOGSL research team was also engaged in many other bird ringing sessions during the year 2007. Those sessions were conducted mainly for research programmes. Further two training sessions were also conducted for members of FOGSL during 2007. A summary of the captures made during these netting sessions are given in table 5. A total of 142 birds represented by 37 species were captured during these sessions.

Participation

Prof. S.W. Kotagama is the Chief investigator of this Programme. The NBRP team consists of FOGSL research

Table 1: Summary results of the National Bird Ringing Programme 2007

Water birds	2007 Mar	2007 Jul	2007 Oct	2007 Dec
Number of birds captured	106	23	128	102
Number of species	10	4	13	10
Number of recaptures	2	-	1	3
Other species				
Number of birds captured	1	21	3	6
Number of species	1	11	3	3
Number of recaptures	-	1	-	-

Table 2: Waterbird Species captured in each ringing session

SPECIES	COMMON NAME	Mar	Jul	Oct	Dec	Total
Waders						
<i>Limosa limosa</i>	Black-tailed Godwit	1	-	-	-	1
<i>Tringa totanus</i>	Common Redshank	11	6	19	9	45
<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	Marsh Sandpiper	4	-	4	3	11
<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	Common Greenshank	3	-	1	1	5
<i>Calidris minuta</i>	Little Stint	42	-	16	32	90
<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	Curlew Sandpiper	25	11	18	11	65
<i>Limicola falcinellus</i>	Broad-billed Sandpiper	-	-	4	4	8
<i>Esacus recurvirostris</i>	Great Thick-knee	1	-	-	-	1
<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	Black-winged Stilt	1	-	-	-	1
<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	Kentish Plover	8	2	11	17	38
<i>Charadrius mongolus</i>	Lesser Sand Plover	10	4	10	21	45
<i>Vanellus indicus</i>	Red-wattled Lapwing	-	-	1	-	1
<i>Glareola lactea</i>	Small Pratincole	-	-	2	-	2
Other water birds						
<i>Sterna albibrons</i>	Little Tern	-	-	23	-	23
<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>	Whiskered Tern	-	-	16	1	17
<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	White-winged Tern	-	-	3	-	3
<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	Pond Heron	-	-	-	3	3



Chinthaka Kaluthota

staff and volunteer members. The team for 2007 included Rahula Perera, Chinthaka Kaluthota, Kasun Dayananda, Ranga Widanapathirana, Susantha Sanjeewa, Harsha Sathischandra, Chaminda Jayarathna, Upul Wickremasinghe, Sameera Ariyaratna and Sarath Sanjeewa. Field officers of the Department of Wildlife Conservation also participated in these programmes as trainees.

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Table 3: Forest bird species captured in each session

SPECIES	COMMON NAME	Mar	July	Oct	Dec	Total
<i>Dendrocopus nanus</i>	Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker	-	1	-	-	1
<i>Caprimulgus atripennis</i>	Jerdon's Nightjar	-	-	1	-	1
<i>Caprimulgus asiaticus</i>	Common Nightjar	-	-	-	1	1
<i>Pitta brachyura</i>	Indian Pitta	-	-	1	-	1
<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>	Common Iora	-	1	-	-	1
<i>Tephrodornis pondicerianus</i>	Common Woodshrike	-	2	-	-	2
<i>Saxicoloides fulicata</i>	Indian Robin	-	2	-	-	2
<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Barn Swallow	-	-	-	1	1
<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	Red-vented Bulbul	-	2	-	-	2
<i>Pycnonotus luteolus</i>	White-browed Bulbul	-	7	1	-	8
<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>	Common Tailorbird	-	2	-	-	2
<i>Turdoides affinis</i>	Yellow-billed Babbler	-	1	-	-	1
<i>Eremopterix grisea</i>	Ashy-crowned Sparrow Lark	1	-	-	4	5
<i>Nectarinia zeylonica</i>	Purple-rumped Sunbird	-	1	-	-	1
<i>Nectarinia asiatica</i>	Purple Sunbird	-	1	-	-	1
<i>Nectarinia lotenia</i>	Loten's Sunbird	-	1	-	-	1

Table 04: Details of ring re-captures

Species	Ring No:	Ringling date	Recapture date	New ring No: (if changed)	Difference of seasons
Lesser Sandplover	AB 802	26-10-2007	23-12-2007	-	Same season
Lesser Sandplover	AB 200	04-12-2004	24-12-2007	-	3
Kentish Plover	A 360	26-10-2007	24-12-2007	AB 823	Same season
Kentish Plover	A 340	02-04-2005	24-03-2007	-	2
Common Redshank	AB 551	03-04-2005	26-10-2007	AB 663	2
Curlew Sandpiper	AB 580	26-02-2006	21-03-2007	-	1

Table 05: Summary results obtained in other netting sessions

Location	Month	Purpose	No. of birds captured	No: of Species
Thanamalwila	Feb	Research	53	20
Thanamalwila	Aug	Research	52	12
Thanamalwila	Dec	Research	7	7
Aranayaka	Feb	Research	8	7
Buttala	Apr	Training	8	5
Buttala	Apr	Training	14	8
			142	37