

Summary of bird monitoring 2020

Within the framework of the INTERREG project "AgriNatur AT-HU", monitoring of different organism groups in the area of the Upper and Lower Lobau in the Danube Floodplain National Park in Vienna will be carried out from 2019 to 2021. BirdLife Austria records the bird fauna of the project area. The aim is to work out the importance of the open areas of the Lobau from an ornithological point of view and to establish biodiversity-promoting measures after the surveys in 2021.

The surveys in 2020 took place between 17 April and 19 June. 97% of the surveyed areas were fields on which (early) potatoes, green pea, rye, barley, and wheat were cultivated, 2% were grassland fallow, and 1% were three small semi-arid grasslands.

In 2020, 2296 bird individuals and 69 different breeding and visiting bird species could be recorded. Twenty-one of the species were feeding visitors or migrants, 48 were breeding birds. Existing comparative data from 2001 were used to assess population trends. There was a slight increase in the number of breeding bird species (44). Between 8 and 27 species were counted on the individual project areas in 2020, and between 6 and 25 in 2001. Between 7 and 13 species were recorded on the dry grasslands in both years (2001 and 2020), and the number of species on the grassland fallow doubled in the same period. In 2020, 9 species were recorded that were not found in 2001: stock dove, middle spotted woodpecker, red-backed shrike, nightingale, wryneck, lesser spotted woodpecker, long-tailed tit, house sparrow, and tree sparrow. The most common species in 2020 were the starling with 395 individuals (13.7%), the great tit with 338 (11.7%), and the chaffinch with 282 (9.8%), followed by the blackcap, carrion crow, blue tit, great spotted woodpecker, yellowhammer, woodpigeon, and goldfinch. If one compares the data with those from 2001, there has been a strong increase in the number of starlings in the area; while five territories were documented in 2001, there were more than five times as many territories in 2020. The goldfinch also increased from 1 to 10 territories.

In the case of breeding bird species that are characteristic of dynamic floodplains and sedimentation zones (e.g. Reed Warbler, Reed Warbler), as well as those that depend on structurally rich open land (e.g. Corn Bunting, Skylark), there has been a decrease in species since 2001, in favour of forest species (e.g. Stock Dove, Middle Spotted Woodpecker). In 2020, forest species are most frequently represented with a total of 60%. Semi-open land species (e.g. whitethroat, yellowhammer) accounted for 25% in both years, species with a distribution focus in settlement areas (e.g. redstart, house sparrow) for 4% in 2001 and 6% in 2020. 47% of the total area is covered by forest and fringe areas, so open land species are only poorly represented in the project area. While in 2001 pheasant, quail, skylark, and corn bunting can still be named as breeding birds of the open land, only pheasant and quail were found to be breeding in the current study. In both years, five breeding territories of the Turtle Dove were found on the project areas. Due to the dramatic worldwide population decline in recent decades, the habitat conservation of this endangered species is of great importance.

In the course of the bird monitoring, eight breeding birds relevant to nature conservation were documented. Four of these species belong to the "strictly protected priority species" of the City of Vienna. Just as many are listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive. In the BirdLife Austria Ampellist, five of these species are listed as yellow (need for action given) and one species is listed as red (urgent need for action given). The species are Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*), Wryneck (*Jynx torquilla*), Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*), Red-backed Shrike (*Lanius collurio*), Middle Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos medius*), Black Woodpecker (*Dryocopos martius*), Stock Dove (*Columa oenas*) and Collared Flycatcher (*Ficedula albicollis*).