

RECORDS OF REED WARBLERS (*ACROCEPHALUS SCIRPACEUS*) WITH BELGRADE BANDS IN AFRICA. Ivana Novčić¹ and I. Hulo². ¹Natural History Museum Belgrade, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro; and ²Municipal Museum, 24000 Subotica, Serbia and Montenegro

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Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*) is a Palearctic-breeding bird. It breeds in Europe (the northern boundary of its range runs through Southern Scandinavia), North Africa, and Central Asia. It belongs to the category of long-distance trans-Saharan migrants, and the whole Palearctic population spends the northern winter in sub-Saharan Africa (Cramp, 1992).

Records of specimens banded in Europe support the idea that reed warbler regularly winters in Africa from 14° N to Northern Namibia and Botswana (Cramp, 1992), although recent records of this species in the South African Republic point to its more regular presence in the extreme south of continent (Rajmakers and Rajmakers, 2002). The migratory flight of reed warbler is divided into several shorter flights by stopovers, when the individual renews the energy reserves necessary for the continuation of its migration (Rugibi-Idrissi et al. 2003) without accumulating any greater fat deposits. However, the

ans, which means that during their migration they do not enter the airspace of the Pannonian Plain (Csörgö et al. 1991).

From 1993, when the Center for Animal Marking was founded within the Natural History Museum in Belgrade, until 2003, *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* was the most commonly banded bird species, with a total of 10549 banded individuals. Out of that number, 47 birds were recorded again, including the three records of reed warbler with a Belgrade band in Central Africa (Chad and Nigeria). All three individuals were banded on Ludaš Lake (46°06'N 19°50'E) during actions organized by the Rihard Csornai Ecologists' Society. This activity is organized every year during August and September, in order to include the autumn bird migration. Since 1993, almost 90% of all reed warblers banded in Serbia (9467) were banded at Ludaš Lake.

All three individuals were banded as young birds in their first year



Fig. 1. African localities where reed warblers were found.

most recent studies (Buljarice, Montenegro) show that significant fat reserves are indeed accumulated before the bird flies over larger geographic barriers (Hulo, in script). Birds from the northwestern and the northern parts of Central Europe mostly start their autumn migration to Africa in a SSW or WSW direction, cross parts of the Atlantic and Mediterranean, France, and Iberia, and mostly enter Africa via Morocco. Another, less studied, migratory pathway of individuals from Europe to Africa leads across the Balkans (Cramp, 1992), over Turkey, and through the Nile Valley (Csörgö et al. 1991). Individuals from the Central European population use the eastern SSE and western SSW migratory pathways in a ratio of approximately 50:50 % (Gyurac et al. 2004). Individuals from Northern and Eastern European populations do not fly over the mountain massif of the Carpathi-

of life (hatched in the current calendar year, EURING code for age - 3). These birds belong to the Carpathian metapopulation, but as they were banded in the period of autumn migration (late July and August), it could not be precisely determined if they belong to the local population or come from northern habitats of the Carpathian Plain. The bird with the **Belgrade K7829** band was banded on 30 July 1995 and was found on 29 April 1996 in Chad (Darda, N'Djamena, 11°35'N 15°10'E). The distance between the banding site and the recovery place is 3863 km, the direction southerly (188°), and the time elapsed between banding and recovery 274 days. This bird was found dead (EURING code for finding condition - 2, for finding circumstances - 40). The second reed warbler (with the **Belgrade K36335** band) was banded on 21 Aug 1999 and was found on 20 Feb 2000, in Nigeria (Doro, Malamfatori, 13°37'N

Table 1 - Data on African records of reed warbler banded in Serbia

Ring scheme/ band number	Age	Banding/recovery place	Banding/recovery country	Banding/recovery coordinates	Banding/ recovery date	Finding condition and circumstances	Elapsed time (days)	Distance (km)	Direction
Belgrade K7829	3	Ludaš Lake N'Djamena, Darda, Chari	Serbia and Montenegro Chad	46°06'N 19°50'E 11°35'N 15°10'E	30.07.1995 29.04.1996	2 40	274	3863	s (188°)
Belgrade K36335	3	Ludaš Lake Malamfatori, Doro	Serbia and Montenegro Nigeria	46°06'N 19°50'E 13°37'N 13°19'E	21.08.1999 20.02.2000	8 20	183	3653	ssw (192°)
Belgrade K39578	3	Ludaš Lake Sarh	Serbia and Montenegro Chad	46°06'N 19°50'E 09°08'N 18°23'E	11.08.2000 16.03.2001	8 20	217	4099	s (182°)

Additional information on used EURING codes:

Age:	3 - first year: full-grown bird hatched in the breeding season of the current calendar year
Finding condition:	2 - freshly dead - within about a week 8 - alive and probably healthy and released by bander
Finding circumstances:	20 - hunted, trapped, poisoned intentionally by man (not shot) 40 - traffic accident 66 - taken by other species of birds (not conspecific)



Fig. 1. Reed Warbler with the ring Belgrade K39578 was brought from Chad to the Belgrade Ringing Centre thanks to Prof. Božidar Čurčić

13°19'E). The distance covered is 3653 km, the direction of travel south-southwest (192°), and the time elapsed 183 days. This bird was captured during a banding action (EURING code for finding condition - 8, for finding circumstances - 20). The third bird (with the **Belgrade**

K39578 band) was banded on 11 Aug 2000 and was also found in Chad, but more to the south than the first recovery (Békamba, Sarh, 09°08'N 18°23'E). The distance is 4099 km, the direction of flight southerly (182°), and the time elapsed 217 days. The bird was found alive (EURING code for finding condition - 8, for finding circumstances - 20).

From the date of the Chad record (mid-March and late April), it can be concluded that these individuals were on the spring migration, on their way toward the Palearctic breeding habitats, while the record of an individual in mid-February in Nigeria, inasmuch as the condition of the individual and the quantity of fat deposits at the time of catching are not known, leaves too little information to determine whether it spent the northern winter in northeastern Nigeria (Malamfatori) or if it was also caught on the spring migration. However, these three records of reed warbler in Central Africa represent valuable scientific data, which in combination with other African records of reed warblers banded in our region contribute to study of the Eastern-Mediterranean migratory corridor.

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