

# European news

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This is the fourth summary of interesting records on the Continent, now established as a regular six-monthly feature. From the six participating countries in the first summary (*Brit. Birds* 70: 218-219), the total has now grown to 19 countries supplying records six-monthly or annually. We are

[*Brit. Birds* 71: 582-587, December 1978]

continued...

pleased that, for the first time in this selection of observations, 'European news' now includes records from Austria, Bulgaria and Romania.

Records awaiting formal verification by national assessment committees are indicated by an asterisk (\*).

**Unless otherwise stated, records refer to 1978**

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus* NORWAY Breeding population increasing and spreading: from about 50 pairs in 1970 to about 200 pairs in 1978.

**Red-necked Grebe** *Podiceps grisegena* AUSTRIA Bred Seewinkel 1970 and Neusiedlersee 1972; displaying at ponds in southeast Styria, but no broods seen yet.

**Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis* AUSTRIA Breeding range includes ponds of Waldviertel in northwest Lower Austria.

**Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo* AUSTRIA Has not bred since late 1960s.

**Pygmy Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax pygmeus* AUSTRIA Sixth record: immature Gralla in southeast Styria on 20th November 1977.

**Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax* AUSTRIA Marchegg, deserted since late 1960s, recolonised in 1978.

**Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis* PORTUGAL See Little Egret.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* PORTUGAL Colony at S. Jacinto (Aveiro Marsh), established 25 years ago, where 200 pairs of egrets (Little and Cattle) nested in 1977, abandoned in 1978. On other hand, at least seven other egret colonies now exist.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* AUSTRIA Burgenland: c. 20 pairs in one to three reed-bed colonies at Neusiedlersee; Carinthia: c. 15 pairs in one colony, plus a few isolated pairs on Drau; Lower Austria: c. 60 pairs in seven colonies on Danube and c. 65 pairs in two on March; Upper Austria: c. 45 pairs in three colonies on Danube; Salzburg: two isolated pairs successfully breeding in Flachgau; Styria: c. ten pairs in one colony on lower Mur, but none on upper Mur and Raab.

**Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* AUSTRIA Total of 30-40 pairs, mainly in Lower Austria, also central and south Burgenland, southeast Styria and southeast Upper Austria.

**White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia* FINLAND Many in south in spring: never commoner.

**Bewick's Swan** *Cygnus columbianus* AUSTRIA Becoming more frequent in winter on Bodensee (cf. increase in Poland, *Brit. Birds* 71: 255).

**Whooper Swan** *Cygnus cygnus* AUSTRIA Wintering regular Bodensee since late 1960s: 20 or more on Austrian shore in 1977/78.

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser* AUSTRIA Neusiedlersee: 300-400 pairs, plus 300-500 non-breeders.

**Barnacle Goose** *Branta leucopsis* SWEDEN Remarkable increases in numbers on migration (especially in autumn) and summering. More than 200 summered on island of Gotland, where colony of at least 20 pairs now established.

**Red-breasted Goose** *Branta ruficollis* BULGARIA In various localities in district of Tolbuhin, flocks totalling 1,000 on 6th January 1976, one flock of 1,500 on 17th March 1976 and one flock of 1,580 on 12th February 1978. SWEDEN Increasing: now observed every year.

**Teal** *Anas crecca* AUSTRIA Locally distributed Salzburg, Styria and southeast Carinthia.

**Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina* AUSTRIA As well as regular breeding on Bodensee, bred Seewinkel/east Neusiedlersee in 1968, where regular during migration and sometimes summering since mid 1960s. CZECHOSLOVAKIA As well as long-established sites at and near Lednické ponds in southern Moravia, had bred since 1952 in České Budějovice basin and since 1971 in Třeboň basin, both in southern Bohemia.

**Pochard** *Aythya ferina* AUSTRIA Breeding range includes southeast Styria; in central Carinthia, first breeding 1977.

**Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca* AUSTRIA Main concentration Neusiedlersee and Seewinkel (no broods seen northwest Lower Austria since 1961).

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula* AUSTRIA Breeding range includes ponds of Waldviertel in northwest Lower Austria (largest concentration in the country) and of southeast Styria; in central Carinthia, first breeding 1977.

**Eider** *Somateria mollissima* AUSTRIA A few summering Zellersee/Salzburg since 1972

(five in 1978), and one pair attempted breeding in 1975.

**King Eider** *Somateria spectabilis* SWEDEN Considerable and continuing increase in number wintering on Baltic coast in recent years (cf. Steller's Eider): one to two a year in early 1960s, about ten a year in late 1960s and early 1970s, but now about 20 a year.

**Steller's Eider** *Polysticta stelleri* SWEDEN Considerable and continuing increase in number wintering on Baltic coast in recent years (cf. King Eider): observed every year since end of 1960s, with peak of 130 individuals in 1977 (cf. increases in Finland and Poland, *Brit. Birds* 71: 255).

**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator* SWITZERLAND Mixed pair of male Red-breasted Merganser and female Goosander seen Lake Thun April-May 1977 and 1978; in May-June 1978, hybrid seen on Lake Thun, presumably reared there.

**Goosander** *Mergus merganser* AUSTRIA Breeds (less than ten pairs) north Vorarlberg and north Tyrol. SWITZERLAND See Red-breasted Merganser.

**Red Kite** *Milvus milvus* DENMARK After two years with exceptionally high numbers on passage (*Brit. Birds* 70: 495), 1978 rather normal.

**Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus* SWEDEN Increasing: 114 individuals in 1977; in last four years, one to four breeding pairs outside island of Öland.

**Buzzard** *Buteo buteo* DENMARK 3,500 migrants on 15th October 1977 at Dorns Klint, Langeland.

**Rough-legged Buzzard** *Buteo lagopus* DENMARK Up to 650 per day on migration in autumn 1977 at Due Odde, Bornholm (cf. more than usual in winter 1977/78 in Finland, *Brit. Birds* 71: 255). SWEDEN High breeding numbers (cf. Snowy Owl).

**Saker** *Falco cherrug* AUSTRIA One pair still present at breeding site in east throughout summer, but no evidence of any success.

**Rock Partridge** *Alectoris graeca* ROMANIA Considered absent since 1938, but heard in Nera Gorges (Banat) on 24th July 1976.

**Allen's Gallinule** *Porphyryla alleni* SPAIN Second record: one captured in Murcia on 14th December 1975 (first also in Murcia, in 1854) (*Doñana* 3(1): 99-101).

**Little Bustard** *Tetrax tetrax* MALTA Eighth record: one March.

**Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta* PORTUGAL In January, 6,520 present (6,080 on Tejo Estuary); in February, flock of 1,000 on Aveiro Marsh.

**White-tailed Plover** *Chettusia leucura* ROMANIA First record: Techirghiol on 17th May 1977.

**Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos* AUSTRIA Eleventh record: Gralla Reservoir in southeast Styria on 18th May, the first in spring.

**Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis* FINLAND First breeding record.

**Wilson's Phalarope** *Phalaropus tricolor* DENMARK Second record: June-July, Kongelunden, Copenhagen.

**Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus* DENMARK Three or four times normal numbers in autumn.

**Long-tailed Skua** *Stercorarius longicaudus* SWEDEN High breeding numbers (cf. Snowy Owl).

**Great Skua** *Stercorarius skua* NORWAY Nested in county Finnmark since 1975; pair nested in Spitsbergen in 1977 and again present 1978.

**Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus* AUSTRIA Pair hatched three young at Seewinkel in 1977, one young found dead after three weeks; two adults and two first-summers present in 1978, but no breeding evidence.

**Caspian Tern** *Sterna caspia* PORTUGAL Continues to occur in Algarve (especially Faro Marsh and salt-pans of Ludo Nature Reserve) from end of summer through to spring.

**Sooty Tern** *Sterna fuscata* SWEDEN First record: northwest Scania in July 1977.

**Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybridus* DENMARK First record: one Hasle Sydstrand, West Bornholm, 31st May 1977.

**Puffin** *Fratercula arctica* MALTA One December 1977, the first since 1938.

**Snowy Owl** *Nyctea scandiaca* SWEDEN Breeding in great numbers in various parts of Lapland. Total of several hundred pairs: apparently one of highest ever peaks. Most pairs reared more young than usual: several nests with more than ten young.

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus* SWEDEN High breeding numbers (cf. Snowy Owl).

**Egyptian Nightjar** *Caprimulgus aegyptius* MALTA One April, the first since 1973.

**Little Swift** *Apus affinis* MALTA Sixth record: one April 1977.

**Bee-eater** *Merops apiaster* AUSTRIA Four colonies in Lower Austria, including one north of Danube, where none since 1950s; two colonies in Burgenland; Austrian total c. 30 pairs. SWEDEN Small colony near Jönköping (*Brit. Birds* 70: 495) again occupied: three pairs attempted to breed, one raised young almost to fledging, but then killed by fox *Vulpes vulpes*.

**Roller** *Coracias garrulus* DENMARK 'Rather heavy influx, exact numbers not known yet.'

**Syrian Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos syriacus* CZECHOSLOVAKIA First (in south) in 1949, then expanded north and northwest; reached southern Moravia in 1953, central Moravia (Olomouc) in 1960 and northern Moravia (Sumperk) in 1966; by 1967, only 10 km from frontier with Poland (Opava in Silesia); reached eastern Bohemia in 1974. Mixed pairs with Great Spotted Woodpecker *D. major* rather frequent. YUGOSLAVIA Mixed pair of female Syrian and male Great Spotted bred successfully in Park Tivoli in Ljubljana.

**Hoopoe Lark** *Alaemon alaudipes* MALTA Thirteenth record: one December 1977, fourth for 1977 (see *Brit. Birds* 71: 256), most ever in one year.

**Red-rumped Swallow** *Hirundo daurica* ROMANIA First record: male and female Cobadin (Dobrogea) on 14th July 1976; one Nera Gorges (Cheile Nerei-Banat) on 25th July 1976.

**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis* AUSTRIA Before 1977, believed to be confined to Rhine Valley. In 1977, broods Wallersee/Salzburg; in 1978, more sites Salzburg, singing males Walchsee in Tyrol and several broods at two sites at Waldviertel in Lower Austria.

**Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava* AUSTRIA A few pairs of *M. f. feldegg* breeding Neusiedlersee and Seewinkel in 1974-77, only singing males there in 1978, but bred at two sites in Salzburg. In addition to usual sites of *M. f. cinereocapilla* (Rheindelta in Vorarlberg and Zellersee in Salzburg), several new ones found in Salzburg, Styria and Carinthia in 1978.

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea* SWEDEN Remarkable increase in south in last decade; now, in last few years, some breeding records in Lapland, 1,000 km

north of previous limit: abundant suitable habitat there, so we may be seeing start of considerable range extension and population increase (cf. first Estonian nesting in 1975, *Brit. Birds* 71: 256).

**Alpine Accentor** *Prunella collaris* FINLAND First record: Lågskär in spring\*.

**Nightingale** *Luscinia megarhynchos* BELGIUM Spring passage stronger than usual, breeding numbers high and present in summer at sites where absent for many years.

**Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica* AUSTRIA Small population of red-spotted race *L. s. svecica* at Radstätter Tauernpass in Salzburg discovered in 1975: six successful pairs in 1978 (several clutches lost due to severe weather), but site threatened by expansion of Obertauern skiing resort. ROMANIA First breeding records: nests with eggs and young in Danube Delta in June 1967 and May 1968.

**Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata* DENMARK One of Siberian race *S. t. maura* on Christiansø in spring.

**Desert Wheatear** *Oenanthe deserti* MALTA Seventh record: one November 1977.

**Eye-browed Thrush** *Turdus obscurus* FINLAND First records: singly at two localities in spring\*.

**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris* AUSTRIA Range expanding eastwards. Vorarlberg, Tyrol and Salzburg almost entirely colonised, as is most of Upper Austria (but still scarce in central part); in Lower Austria, only in Waldviertel; expansion now most obvious in Styria and Carinthia, where colonies have reached Lower Austrian border at Semmering and Yugoslavian border near Bleiburg (cf. westerly expansion in France and Low Countries, *Brit. Birds* 71: 256 and *Ardeola* 21: 801; and colonisation of Scotland and northern England since 1967, presumably by Scandinavian birds). YUGOSLAVIA Since discovery of breeding in valley of Sava Dolinka in 1975, has spread southeastwards and more frequent and regular in central Slovenia, on Ljubljana Marsh.

**Redwing** *Turdus iliacus* AUSTRIA Third breeding record: one pair bred Karwendel in Tyrol in 1977; previous records were of single pairs in Tyrol in 1939 and in Carinthia in 1974; in late May 1978, one singing in mountains at border of Salzburg and Carinthia.

**Fan-tailed Warbler** *Cisticola juncidis* NETHERLANDS First breeding: in 1976 in

IJsselmeerpolders, hatching as late as between 1st and 6th October (*Limosa* 51: 69-73). YUGOSLAVIA After discovery of breeding in valleys of Dragonja, Mirna and Rasa, now becoming more frequent and regular in whole Istra archipelago; two nests in 1978 at Vransko Lake near Zadar in Dalmatia: in one, young hatched after 4th September.

**Blyth's Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus dumetorum* ROMANIA First records: near Sulina on Danube Delta, four on 1st-2nd August 1975, three on 6th August 1975. In May-June 1976, nine ringed at Sulina and Eforie Nord.

**Marsh Warbler** *Acrocephalus palustris* NORWAY Influx in early June to counties Akershus and Östfold; in former (where only two previous records), at least seven singing males and probably bred at one locality.

**Great Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* SWEDEN Very large recent increase: about five males a year in early 1960s, but now 125-150 annually.

**Olive-tree Warbler** *Hippolais olivetorum* ROMANIA First record: one in wood of willow *Salix* in southwest Dobrogea on 25th June 1977.

**Melodious Warbler** *Hippolais polyglotta* MALTA Fourth record: one in April.

**Subalpine Warbler** *Sylvia cantillans* ROMANIA First record: Nera Gorges (Cheile Nerei—Banat) on 25th August 1976.

**Sardinian Warbler** *Sylvia melanocephala* DENMARK First record: one ringed Christianse on 1st June. ROMANIA First records: at Agigea, one on 27th March 1970 and several on 31st March 1970.

**Rüppell's Warbler** *Sylvia rueppelli* ROMANIA First record: male on Black Sea coast in southeast Dobrogea on 30th June 1977.

**Orphean Warbler** *Sylvia hortensis* MALTA Fifth record: one in April.

**Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochiloides* DENMARK. 'Heavy influx, exact numbers not known yet.' FINLAND Very common in whole country in summer. POLAND Range extension: in Białowieza Forest, where in most years only one itinerant singing male, at least 12 singing males, some of them in territory; at least one pair reared young, the first breeding record for the forest. Three other singing males: near Olsztyn, on Biebrza Marshes and in urban park in

Legnica, the last being first record in Silesia. All records between 26th May and 25th July.

**Pallas's Warbler** *Phylloscopus proregulus* SWEDEN One at Ottenby on 28th May: spring records very rare.

**Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva* BELGIUM First record outside August to October: singing male in coppice of beech *Fagus sylvatica* near Brussels for several weeks in May and June.

**Collared Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicollis* DENMARK 'Rather heavy influx, exact numbers not known yet.'

**Willow Tit** *Parus montanus* DENMARK First record and first breeding record: two adults with seven or eight fledglings in forest Grib Skov, North Zealand, on 27th May 1977; adults with three young seen nearby one week later; appearance and locality indicated Scandinavian subspecies *P. m. borealis*.

**Penduline Tit** *Remiz pendulinus* SWITZERLAND One brood reared at Ins.

**Jay** *Garrulus glandarius* SWITZERLAND Many reports of high numbers of migrants during 20th to 30th April, maximum 250 flying east over Gaissau area between 06.00 and 08.00 on 22nd April (cf. autumn 1977 movements, *Brit. Birds* 71: 257).

**Nutcracker** *Nucifraga caryocatactes* AUSTRIA One of two shot in Styria in December 1977 was Siberian race *N. c. macrorhynchos*. SWEDEN Strong movements in autumn 1977 (see *Brit. Birds* 71: 257) led to breeding in 1978 in many southern towns where species not recorded before.

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus* AUSTRIA Total of c. 250 pairs, in six colonies in north Burgenland and two in Lower Austria; all except one in or near towns or villages, where protected from shooting. SWEDEN Unusually abundant in spring 1977 in east-central and north, where usually sparse. Several thousand north of normal range, compared with about one hundred in previous springs, including 200 as far north as Umea.

**Arctic Redpoll** *Carduelis hornemanni* ROMANIA First records: ten male and six female *C. h. exilipes* collected in south during period 18th November 1972 to 1st April 1973.

**Scarlet Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus* AUSTRIA Expansion continuing: most 1977 sites reoccupied, new sites found in north-west Lower Austria, Salzburg, Styria and

Tyrol (cf. colonisation of Norway, *Brit. Birds* 70: 219). YUGOSLAVIA Two pairs summered on Ljubljana Marsh and nest with five eggs found in young willow *Salix* less than 1 m from ground, but young killed by predator just before fledging.

**White-throated Sparrow** *Zonotrichia*

*albicollis* NETHERLANDS Third record: near IJmuiden on 24th April 1977 (*Limosa* 51: 75-76).

**Rustic Bunting** *Emberiza rustica* SWEDEN Strong and rapid expansion to west and south from northern Bothnian area, where initially colonised from Finland.

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