Nacionalna komisija za redkosti – zakaj jo potrebujemo

The National Rarities Committee – why do we need it

Komisija za redkosti (KRED) je bila v reviji Acrocephalus prvič omenjena leta 1984 s kratkim stavkom, ki je naznanjal začetek njenega delovanja (Hočevar 1984). Potem je bila še dvakrat omenjena v društvenem programu (Izvršilni odbor 1986 & 1987), leta 1989 pa je svoje delo predstavila s člankom "Seznam doslej ugotovljenih ptic Slovenije s pregledom redkih vrst" (Komisija za redkosti 1989), ki je bilo prvo tovrstno delo in kljub previdnim besedam, da gre le za osnutek dokončnega seznama, mejnik na področju zbiranja favnističnih podatkov. Skozi čas je KRED z objavami rednih letnih poročil o redkih vrstah utrjevala svojo vlogo delovnega telesa, ki presoja in zbira podatke o opazovanjih redkih vrst.

Odveč je poudarjati, da so zanesljivi in pravilni favnistični podatki temelj za nadaljnje ornitološke raziskave. Pri redkih vrstah, kjer je po definiciji podatkov malo, lahko že en napačen podatek ustvari lažno sliko o pojavljanju neke vrste. Seveda komisije za redkosti niso nezmotljive in morajo v luči novih spoznanj o determinaciji vrst ter ponovnih pregledov že obravnavanih poročil skrbeti za kakovost svojega dela. Eden najbolj odmevnih tovrstnih primerov je prvo opazovanje tamariskovke *Acrocephalus melanopogon* v Veliki Britaniji. Leta 1946 je skupina vodilnih britanskih ornitologov tistega časa več tednov opazovala gnezdeči par (domnevnih) tamariskovk, ki je uspešno speljal tri mladiče v osrednji Angliji (Hinde & Thom 1947). Nekateri drugi ornitologi, med njimi tudi Richard Meinertzhagen, zloglasni zbiratelj ornitološkega "materiala", so podvomili o določitvi, vendar je ugled opazovalcev v kombinaciji s tedaj nepopolnim poznavanjem razlik med tamariskovko in bičjo trstnico *A. schoenobaenus* prevladal. Vse do leta 2006 je tamariskovka tako veljala za enkratno gnezdilko Velike Britanije. Takrat je britanska komisija za redkosti vnovič pregledala dokumentacijo o opazovanju in tudi zaradi novih spoznanj na področju določanja podatek soglasno zavrnila (Melling 2006). V Sloveniji smo bili prav tako priče naknadnemu črtanju opazovanj ptic, in sicer kratkonogega skobca *Accipiter brevipes*, rjaste kanje *Buteo rufinus* in pritlikave tukalice *Porzana pusilla* (Božič 2001, Hanžel & Šere 2011).

Vloga komisije pri preverjanju podatkov o opazovanju redkih vrst in posodabljanju seznama v Sloveniji ugotovljenih vrst ptic je nesporna, zastavlja pa se vprašanje, kako lahko komisija prispeva k vedenju o pticah v času, ko so favnistične raziskave nekje v ozadju ornitološke znanosti. Zbiranje podatkov o pojavljanju redkih vrst je dobro izhodišče za natančnejše raziskave selitve ptic (seveda ob upoštevanju dejstva, da na opazovanja redkih vrst pomembno vpliva razporeditev opazovalcev) – že dolgo namreč ne velja več, da je pojavljanje redkosti izključno posledica nepredvidljivih vremenskih razmer. Na podlagi analize pojavljanja redkih vrst sta se med drugim izoblikovali teoriji obratne in zrcalne selitve (Newton 2008). Po prvi teoriji ptice zaidejo na območja, kjer se sicer ne pojavljajo, in so zato tam označene kot redke, ker se odselijo ravno v nasprotno smer od tiste, v katero bi se običajno. Zdi se, da teorija dobro razloži pojavljanje kraljičice *Phylloscopus proregulus* (Rabøl 1969) in malega muharja *Ficedula parva* (Cottridge & Vinicombe 1996) v SZ Evropi, seveda pa to ne

pomeni, da velja tudi za druge vrste. Po drugi teoriji se ptice odselijo v zrcalni smeri, gledano vzdolž osi sever–jug, od siceršnje (npr. proti JZ namesto proti JV), kar bi lahko držalo za zeleno listnico *Phylloscopus trochiloides* in ostrožno cipo *Anthus richardi* (Newton 2008). Izbira selitvene smeri je vsaj do neke mere določena tudi gensko. Sprva odklonska selitvena orientacija lahko vodi v oblikovanje novih prezimovališč. Ta sprememba se zgodi še posebno hitro, če nov selitveni cilj ponuja dobre možnosti za preživetje vrste in če se "selitveni mutanti" pogosteje parijo med seboj kot z "običajnimi selivci", kar je lahko posledica razlik v času prihoda na gnezdišča med obema subpopulacijama. To verjetno velja za beloglavega strnada *Emberiza leucocephalos*, ki je iz redkega gosta prerasel v rednega, a maloštevilnega prezimovalca na primer v Izraelu (Shirihai 1996) in Italiji (Occhiato 2003). Na poti do slednje zagotovo preleti tudi naše kraje, na kar navsezadnje kažejo številne obročkovalske najdbe iz Slovenije (Hanžel & Šere 2011).

Pomembna vloga komisije za redkosti je bila nakazana že v uvodniku k seznamu ugotovljenih vrst ptic leta 2001 – spremljanje pojavljanja alohtonih vrst (Vrezec 2001). Problematične so predvsem alohtone gnezdilke, kot je denimo fazan *Phasianus colchicus* – prikrita kompeticija s to vrsto bi bila lahko vzrok za upad populacije jerebice *Perdix perdix* (Vrezec 2006). O teh vrstah KRED žal nima natančnih podatkov, saj se pojavljajo prepogosto za obravnavo, a se podatki o njih uspešno zbirajo v okviru drugih projektov (npr. Novi ornitološki atlas gnezdilk Slovenije). Imamo pa natančne podatke o negnezdilkah, ki se pojavljajo kot posledica neuspešnih namernih naselitev, pobega iz ujetništva in disperzije iz naturaliziranih populacij v drugih evropskih državah. V primerjavi s seznamom iz leta 2001 je število vrst iz ujetništva (kategorija E), naraslo s sedem na 29. Zdi se, da situacija še ni problematična in da Slovenija nima "svoje" belolične trdorepke *Oxyura jamaicensis* in beloglavke *O. leucocephala*, vendar lahko ob površnem spremljanju pojavljanja tujerodnih vrst še prehitro zaidemo v težave. Nekatere tujerodne vrste, ki se pojavljajo pri nas, v drugih evropskih državah že nekaj desetletij uspešno gnezdijo in ni razloga, da se to ne bi moglo zgoditi tudi v Sloveniji – četudi trenutni podatki še ne kažejo v to smer.

Prav pri tujerodnih vrstah se je KRED spopadala s precejšnjimi težavami pri pridobivanju podatkov – do teh vrst smo na terenu pogosto brezbrižni in jih odpravimo le s skomigom z rameni, ne pa z zapisom v terensko beležnico in kasnejšo objavo, ki bi si jo zaslužile. V trenutku opazovanja se še ne moremo zavedati njegovega pomena v prihodnosti: Peter Grošelj si 29. 8. 1988 verjetno ni predstavljal, da je povodna trstnica *A. paludicola*, ki jo je obročkal, zadnji obročkani osebek te redke in ogrožene trstnice v Sloveniji. Podatek je bil vestno zabeležen v arhivu Prirodoslovnega muzeja Slovenije, nato citiran v monografiji o pticah Ljubljanskega barja (Tome *et al.* 2005), nikoli pa v članku, ki bi obravnaval pojavljanje te vrste v Sloveniji. Povodna trstnica pri nas nikdar ni bila pogosta, vendar se je pojavljala dovolj redno, da sta jo pri objavljanju zasenčili (tedaj) redkejši sorodnici plevelna *A. agricola* in robidna trstnica *A. dumetorum*. Če se je to zgodilo z razmeroma redko opaženo in globalno ogroženo vrsto, si ni težko predstavljati, da je situacija pri "manjvrednih" ubežnicah še precej bolj črna. V Dodatku 1 aktualnega seznama je ob nekaterih vrstah objavljen poziv k zbiranju podatkov, saj v KRED menimo, da je trenutno vedenje o pojavljanju teh vrst zaradi ne najbolj vestnega objavljanja precej pomanjkljivo. Kljub 32-letni časovni razdalji je še vedno aktualno sporočilo iz uvodnega nagovora Iztoka Geistra na ustanovni skupščini društva:

… "Toda kljub opazovanju in določanju ptic s priročnikom v roki ostaja nacionalna naravoslovna kultura praznih rok, če si nedeljski opazovalec ne zapiše kraja in datuma opazovanja. Medtem ko so si drugi, ne samo veliki narodi s favnističnimi podatki bogatili svoje poljudno znanstvene zakladnice, so se opazovanja naših srčnih mož kot prividi izgubljala v gostilniškem ozračju."

Podatke je treba objavljati, da se znanje lahko širi – podatke o redkostih bo KRED vestno in objektivno preverila ter poskrbela za njihovo objavo, saj skriti v beležnicah ne koristijo nikomur, še najmanj pa pticam.

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The Slovenian Rarities Committee (Komisija za redkosti – KRED) was referred to for the first time by our journal Acrocephalus in 1984 with a short sentence announcing the actual beginning of its functioning (Hočevar 1984). Thereafter, it was mentioned a couple of times in the programme of the Bird Study and Bird Watching Association of Slovenia (Izvršilni odbor 1986 & 1987), while in 1989 the Committee presented its work with the article titled "The list of birds of Slovenia including rare species" (Komisija za redkosti 1989), which was the very first work of this kind and a landmark in the sphere of faunistic data gathering, in spite of the cautious words that this was merely a draft of the final list. Through publishing of its regular annual reports, KRED gradually consolidated its role of a working body assessing and gathering data on rare species observations.

It is needless to say that reliable and accurate faunistic data serve as the basis for further ornithological research. In rare species, where data are of course bound to be few, even single incorrect record may create a false picture of the occurrence of a species. Indeed, Rarities Committees are in no way infallible and should take care of the quality of their work in light of new insights concerning species identification and by re-evaluating reports assessed in the past. One of the most notable cases of this kind is the first observation of Moustached Warbler *Acrocephalus melanopogon* in Great Britain. In 1946, a group of leading British ornithologists of that time observed, for several weeks, a breeding pair of (allegedly) Moustached Warblers, which successfully reared three young in Central England (Hinde & Thom 1947). Some other ornithologists, including Richard Meinertzhagen, the infamous collector of ornithological "material", had serious doubts about the bird's identification, but in the end the observers' reputation in combination with (at that time) incomplete knowledge of the differences between Moustached Warbler and Sedge Warbler *A. schoenobaenus* prevailed. Until 2006, the Moustached Warbler had thus been considered a breeding bird of Great Britain. At that time, the British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee reviewed the documentation on the observation of this species and, also owing to some new insights in the sphere of bird identification, unanimously rejected the reported observation (Melling 2006). In Slovenia, we too have had cases of subsequent deletions of the Levant Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipes*, Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus* and Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla* (Božič 2001, Hanžel & Šere 2011).

Although the Committee's role in the verification of data on rare species observation and in updating of the list of birds identified in Slovenia is undisputed, the question is raised as to how the Committee can contribute to the knowledge of birds at a time when faunistic research is somewhere in the

background of ornithological science. Gathering of data on the occurrence of rare bird species presents a solid foundation for more accurate research in bird migration (if we take into account the fact, of course, that bird observations are significantly affected by the observers' distribution), for it is no longer thought that unpredictable weather conditions are the sole cause for the occurrence of rarities. Based on the analysis of rare species' occurrence, the theories of reversed-direction and mirror-image migrations have been formed (Newton 2008). According to the first theory, birds stray into areas where they do not occur otherwise and are thus marked as rare there, as they migrate in the very opposite direction to the one in which they normally do. It seems that this theory smoothly explains the occurrence of Pallas's Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus* (Rabøl 1969) and Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva* (Cottridge & Vinicombe 1996) in NW Europe, although this, of course, does not mean that the same holds true for other species as well. According to the second theory, birds opt for mirror image migration, looking along the north–south axis, instead of the usual one (e.g. towards SW instead of SE), which could be true for Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* and Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi* (Newton 2008). Migration route selection is, at least to a certain degree, determined genetically. The initially "deviant" migratory orientation may lead to the formation of new wintering quarters. This change occurs particularly fast if the new migration destination offers good possibilities for the survival of a species and if the "migrating mutants" mate more often with each other than with the "usual migrants", which could be the consequence of differences in the time of arrival on breeding sites between both subpopulations. This is most probably why the Pine Bunting *Emberiza leucocephalos* turned from a rare visitor into a regular although sparse winter resident, for example in Israel (Shirihai 1996) and Italy (Occhiato 2003). On its way to Italy, it certainly flies over our country as well, which is mirrored by the number of birds ringed in Slovenia (Hanžel & Šere 2011).

Another important role of the Committee was highlighted in the Editorial to the list of confirmed species in 2001 – monitoring of the occurrence of introduced species (Vrezec 2001). The most problematic are introduced breeders such as the Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus* – the apparent competition with this species could be the reason for population decline of the Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix* (Vrezec 2006). Unfortunately, the Slovenian Rarities Committee has no accurate data on these species, for they occur just too often to be dealt with. Data on them, however, are being successfully collected within the framework of other projects (e.g. New Ornithological Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Slovenia). On the other hand, we do have precise data on non-breeders that occur here as the consequence of their unsuccessful intentional introduction in our country, escapes from captivity, and dispersion from naturalized populations in other European countries. In comparison with the list from 2001, the number of species from captivity (category E), increased from seven to 29. Although it seems that the situation is not yet critical and that Slovenia does not have "its" Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis* and White-headed Duck *O. leucocephala*, we can get into trouble only too quickly, if we do not monitor the occurrence of introduced species carefully enough. Some of the introduced species occurring in our country have been successfully breeding for several decades in other European countries, and there is no reason why this should not happen in Slovenia as well – even though the current data do not point in this particular direction as yet.

The Slovenian Rarities Committee has faced great trouble particularly in the acquisition of data concerning introduced species, for the fact is that we are often indifferent to these species in the field, where we do away with them simply by shrugging our shoulders, instead of writing information on them in our notebooks and eventually have these data published – what they would certainly deserve. At the moment of observation we cannot predict their meaning in the future: on August 29th, 1988, Peter Grošelj did probably not imagine that the Aquatic Warbler *A. paludicola* he ringed would turn out to be the very last ringed individual of this rare and globally threatened species in Slovenia. The record was duly documented in the archives of the Slovenian Museum of Natural History and then cited in the monograph of birds of Ljubljansko barje (Tome *et al.* 2005), but never in an article that would deal with the occurrence of this species in our country. The Aquatic Warbler has never been common in our country, but still occurred often enough that it was overshadowed, as far as publishing of its occurrence was concerned, by its (at that time) rarer congeners Paddyfield Warbler *A. agricola* and Blyth's Reed Warbler *A. dumetorum*. If this happened to the relatively rarely observed and globally threatened species, it is not difficult to imagine that the situation in "inferior" escapees is even gloomier. In Appendix 1 of the current list, an appeal to gather information on certain species was published, for in the Slovenian Rarities Committee we believe that the current knowledge on the occurrence of these species is deficient owing to haphazard publishing. Although 32 years have passed since then, the message from the introductory address by Iztok Geister at the founding meeting of the Bird Watching and Bird Study Association of Slovenia is still highly topical:

" … But in spite of birds being observed and identified with a field guide in people's hands, the national natural history culture remains empty-handed, if a Sunday observer does not write down the place and date of their observation. While other, not only great, nations have enriched their treasuries of popular science with faunistic data, the observations by our hearty men have been constantly lost as apparitions in the environs of public houses."

Data must be published to enable the spread of knowledge – the Slovenian Rarities Committee will conscientiously and objectively assess all data and ensure their timely publication, because data hidden in notebooks serve nobody and particularly not the birds.

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