

# **Protocol of the activities of the Bird migration Research Centre of Ponza**

*In collaboration with:*

- *Centro Italiano Studi per la Conservazione e l'Ambiente, (CISCA) (Pres. Prof. Massimiliano Cardinale)*
- *Austrian Ornithological Centre, Konrad-Lorenz Institute of Ethology, University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna, Wien, Austria (Prof. Leonida Fusani)*
- *Max Planck Institute for Ornithology, Germany (Prof. Wolfgang Goymann)*
- *Istituto per la Ricerca e Protezione Ambientale (ISPRA), (Dott. Fernando Spina)*

## **The responsible of the Centre**

The manager of the Centre, Prof. Massimiliano Cardinale, can delegate for limited periods of time the functions of station manager to a person of his choice who will promptly carry out his directives.

## **The CISCA Team**

It is a restricted body that carries out all the technical-operational, intelligence, diplomatic and consultancy activities necessary to ensure the best functioning of the station. The members of the CISCA Team, chosen by the station manager on the basis of their human qualities and experience, carry out their functions following the directives of the station manager. The composition of the CISCA Team is available on [www.inanellamentoponza.it](http://www.inanellamentoponza.it), it may vary during the season and is renewable each year.

## **The Technical Committee**

It is made up of the ringers present at the station. As delegated by the station manager, he takes care of the technical operations that take place at the ringing table and at the nets. In the first days of stay, the ringers will carry out a measurement calibration session with the station manager in order to standardize the detection methods.

## **The Scientific committee**

It is made up of researchers who coordinate the research carried out at the Center.

## **Duration of the project: March-May**

Research activities take place every day from one hour before sunrise up to two hours after sunset during the entire duration of the project. The center is equipped with 342 meters of mist-nets for catching birds divided into 14 transects (highlighted by red segments in Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Positioning of the transects for the capture of birds.

The capture of birds is suspended or reduced to part of the transects only in the presence of the following conditions: heavy rain, wind over 8 m / s (about 15 knots), significant number of migrants related to shortage of personnel. The assessment of the need for suspension or reduction of activity is the prerogative of the research center manager pursuant to the ringing manual ([see Regulations for ringing activities](#)) and adopted on the basis of the weather forecast provided by the specialized centers listed below. The head of the Ponza migration research center and the coordinator of all activities is Prof. Massimiliano Cardinale.

**List of suggested centers for monitoring weather conditions:**

[www.wxmaps.org](http://www.wxmaps.org); [www.wxcharts.com](http://www.wxcharts.com)

(forecasts of general conditions and weather maps for Europe up to 15 days)

[www.ilmeteo.it](http://www.ilmeteo.it)

(local conditions forecasts up to 15 days)

[www.windfinder.com](http://www.windfinder.com); [www.windy.com](http://www.windy.com)

(forecasts of the state of wind and sea up to 7 days)

## **The first check of the nets**

*Timetable:*

*1 March - last Sunday in March (at the change of solar time):*

*about 07<sup>30</sup> solar hours*

*Last Sunday of March - 15 May: approximately 06<sup>30</sup> legal hours*

*May 15 - May 30: approximately 05<sup>30</sup> legal hours*

The first check of the nets is carried out by the staff of the Center. The meeting place is at the research center (Figure 1). All the other participants in the project must in any case be readily available (i.e. contactable by cell phone or radio, in case of need), but in any case present at the center in good psychophysical condition no later than 8<sup>20</sup>, except for exceptions granted by the station manager, to plan the activities of the day. The subsequent checks of the networks will take place on an hourly basis and the attendance shifts of the participants will be decided on a daily basis. There are two scheduling and verification appointments every day, one at 8<sup>25</sup> am at the station and one before the last check of the networks. The activities of the Center are coordinated through a special whatsapp chat (Ponza Team) while the ringing Ponza chat (Inanellamento Ponza) is used to exchange photos and general information.

The control of the nets involves the following activities:

1. Extraction of the birds, insertion of the same in the appropriate cloth bags and transport to the research center;
2. Cleaning and maintenance of the nets: removal of any objects from the nets, such as weeds, insects, etc.; checking and reporting of any damage; check that the nets tie rods are correctly mounted
3. Check that the nets are opened correctly, the tie rods must always be taut so that the net covers the maximum possible surface. The exact positioning of the tie rods is explained to all participants during the first day of activity.

Once the transects have been checked, the birds must be immediately transported to the research center for inspection, ringing and release operations; which must take place as soon as possible, in order to minimize the risk of stress for the individuals captured. Photography activities of captured specimens are allowed only immediately before release, as long as these take place quickly and are compatible with the physiological characteristics of the species. Photographs of individuals on the net or selfies with birds are never allowed. The rechecking of the plumage conditions (recognition of the species, sex and age of individuals) and individual conditions (fat and muscle) by the collaborators are also allowed, but always in a short time. The aforementioned operations are not permitted in the case of individuals in poor physical condition or belonging to particularly stressful species.

All participants who are guests of the Ringing Center are morally obliged to carry out, according to their abilities, the normal tasks required by life in common (food preparation, dish washing, local cleaning, etc.) on the basis of informally adopted shifts. Abnormal behavior in this sense will be taken into consideration when accepting further requests to participate. Participants are also warmly invited to maintain relationships based on cordiality and mutual respect among themselves and with the local population.

In conditions of normal migratory activity, the activities of control, ringing and release, at the technical table of the station, require the presence of an authorized ringer, a person in charge of filling in the survey forms and one for the weighing and release operations. of individuals. However, in cases of high migratory flow, the presence of a second authorized ringer and a person in charge of opening the bags will be required.

**The ringing and control of the species includes:**

1. Recognition of the species
2. Ringing of the individual bird
3. Recording of the time of capture (summer time)
4. Collection of the biometric measurements
5. Recording of the individual physical conditions
6. Identification of age and sex
7. Weighting of the individual
8. Release of the individual

Details of the survey activity and the scales used are described in the Manual of the Small Islands project.

### **Recommended texts for the identification of the species:**

Collins Bird Guide: The Most Complete Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe, Lars Svensson, Killian Mullarney, Dan Zetterstrom and Peter J Grant Harper Collins

### **Recommended texts for the identification of sex, age and subspecies:**

Svensson L., 1992. *Identification guide to European Passerines*. Stockholm.

Baker K., 1993. *Identification guide to European Non-Passerines*. B.T.O. Guide, 24.

Jenni L. & Winkler R., 1994. *Moult and Ageing of European Passerines*. Academic Press.

Shirihai H., Gargallo G. & Helbig A., 2001. *Sylvia Warblers. Identification, taxonomy and phylogeny of the genus Sylvia*. Christopher Helm, London

Bricchetti P. & Fracasso G., 2004. *Ornitologia Italiana. Vol 1-6*. Alberto Perdisa Editore, Bologna

Demongin 2016. *Identification guide to birds in the hands*. Beauregard-Vendon.

Jenni L. & Winkler R., 2020. *Moult and Ageing of European Passerines*. Academic Press.

### **Recommended website consigliati for the identification of sex, age and subspecies:**

[www.ibercajalav.ne](http://www.ibercajalav.ne)

[www.birdphoto.fi](http://www.birdphoto.fi)

## **Experimental activities**

In conjunction with the experimental activities of the center, a maximum number of 20 individuals is detained daily for the experiments. The species used for the experiments are indicated in the permit issued by ISPRA and the Lazio region (responsible Prof. Leonida Fusani). For the experimental activities only the individuals captured from the first control of the nets up to the control of 13<sup>00</sup> hours are used. The species and individuals are selected according to the research protocol decided daily in concert between the head of the research center and the head of the activities. experimental. The individuals used in the experimental activities are ringed and controlled only by the head of the research center, for the standardization of the detection of biometric measurements and the physical conditions of the individuals. The detained individuals are transported in the appropriate bags by the persons in charge of the experimental activities to the experimentation center located at the research center.

## **Volunteers training activities**

For those who are at the first experience, in a migration research center, there is a practical lesson on the first day for teaching the removal of birds from nets, placing them in the appropriate bags, transporting birds to the center. research, and cleaning and maintenance of networks. The lesson is held on the first day by the center manager or by an expert collaborator (authorized ringer or aspiring ringer).

The control, ringing and release activities are allowed to first-time employees only in the presence of an authorized ringer and on days of low catch. However, this activity is initially limited to medium-sized species and to the detection of conditions, species, sex and age. Any learning of ring affixing techniques will take place only after the employee has acquired the necessary knowledge of the other activities.

### **Participation scheme and forms for carrying out the research activity at the center**

Before starting the activity, and in any case on the first day of presence at the center, all participants must have read and signed the disclaimer form (see Disclaimer document) and the aforementioned protocol. The discharge of responsibility must be delivered to the center manager on the first day of presence and in any case before the start of the research activity. For information and contacts, participants can contact the regional Coordinators of reference (see List of Regional Coordinators at the end of the aforementioned document).

The minimum length of stay at the station is 7 days. The center has a maximum of 7 beds available for collaborators. For information on how to reach the center and accommodation costs, consult [www.inanellamentoponza.it](http://www.inanellamentoponza.it). Lunch and dinner are organized by volunteers at the centre's kitchen. The accommodation consists of 2-bed apartments with bathroom and kitchen. Cleaning, tidying, washing dishes and garbage management are the responsibility of those staying at the research center. All participants are required to present themselves at the station with suitable clothing. The weather conditions are very variable and, especially in the first period of activity (March-April) and in the early part of the morning, raincoats, anoraks and hats as well as mountain boots are often indispensable.

### **Maintenance activities of the Center**

At intervals of 15 days, the bags for transporting birds must be turned inside out and cleaned of feathers and droppings. The cleaning of the bags is organized by the research center manager according to the above deadlines. Damaged nets, once reported, must be replaced immediately. The same is true for tie rods and other equipment used in the transects. The center is equipped with separate collection of plastic, paper and glass. The correct management of recycling and its affixing at the appropriate differentiation collection centers are the responsibility of those who participate in the activities of the research center.

## **Activity valid for training credits at Italian universities and internship for aspiring ringers**

Participation in the project can give entitlement to training credits at Italian universities. Those who are interested in receiving the certificate of participation for obtaining credits, must print and bring with them the appropriate form (see Form for requesting university credits) which will be completed and signed by the center manager or manager scientific activity at the end of the period of stay at the center. Each week of stay at the center entitles you to 75 hours of training. The ringing activity is also valid as an internship for aspiring ringers. The application for the internship must be submitted to ISPRA (Ezio Orfellini, licenses@isprambiente.it) after completing the appropriate form (available on the web page as a form for aspiring ringers).

### **Preservation dissemination activities**

Guided tours for local schools may be arranged during the research activity. Lessons on ringing and bird conservation are also provided at local schools. The lessons will be conducted by the staff of the center free of charge. Lessons will be organized in concert with local teachers. Students must be authorized by the home school. The dissemination activity is managed by the teaching coordinator.

### **Temporary participation in the project**

The participation and temporary visit of friends, acquaintances and people interested in the research activities of the center is allowed and welcome at any time of the day.

### **CISCA (Italian Center for Conservation and Environment Studies)**

Each participant in the project must register with CISCA upon payment of 10 € for the annual participation fee (see the section of the website 'Get involved / Participate').

For the composition of the CISCA team, see the page of the website called 'CISCA onlus'.

#### **List of affiliated restaurants and recommended commercial activities:**

*Ristoranate "Zia Anna", Localita Punta Incenso, Le Forna, Ponza*

*Tartaruga Bar e Pizzeria, Localita Forna Chiesa, Le Forna, Ponza*

*Sun and Moon Bar, Localita Forna Chiesa, Le Forna, Ponza*

*Bar Tripoli, Ponza*

*Affita barche, da Achille e Lucia ([www.ponzabarchenoleggio.it](http://www.ponzabarchenoleggio.it))*