

# **EUROSITE Spoonbill network newsletter**

## ***Breeding season 2003 in The Netherlands***

By Otto Overdijk (NL)

The weather circumstance in Holland for up-growing juvenile Spoonbills was excellent in 2003. No heavy spells of rain and relativ good temperatures. The chicks were healthy and growing well, not many dead juveniles were found onto the colonies. In contrast, during the breeding season of 2002 many juveniles were found dead due to the bad and cold weather.

At the colony of the Wadden Sea island of Schiermonnikoog (5331N-0611E) a re-production rate of 1.8 juveniles for each breeding pair was found. In contrast, in 2002 the re-production rate was 0.44 juveniles. The size of this colony was in 2003 170 breeding pairs, thus approximately 306 juveniles fledged. Last year, the size of this colony was bigger, 240 breeding pairs but re-produced 105 juveniles which is 200 juveniles less than this year. The same development was also found on other colonies in Holland. The size of the total Dutch breeding population decreased from 1576 bp. in 2002 to 1300 this year. In 2003 the number of breeding sites in Holland was 25.

Juvenile Spoonbills spend their period of immaturity in Western Africa mainly. After 3 or 4 years they are mature and return to their natal area for re-production. The lower number of returning (first time breeding) adults can be related to the re-production in 1999 or 2000.

### **Colour ringing effort in Holland in 2003**

On 7 different breeding sites were ringing activities. In total 200 juveniles are ringed. This number of newly ringed birds is enough to keep the percentage of colour ringed birds into the population between 10 and 15 %. This percentage of colour ringed birds into a population can be considered as high enough for statistical scientific research like estimation of survivalrates.

### **Recoveries in 2003**

During the breeding period many readings are made close by or into the colonies. Up to the moment of writing this article (June 2003), 416 recoveries are made.

Most readings are made on the post breeding staging sites. During August and September both, adults and juveniles are gathered onto those post breeding staging sites in very large flocks (upto 6-800 individues) and it is easy to read many rings there. Normally around 1000 recoveries are made on these sites every year.

## ***Ringling in the Danube Delta Romania***

by Atilla D. Sandor (Ro)

In de delta of the Danube river in Romania are hugh reedbeds and lakes. In this area a large Spoonbill colony (approx. 330 breeding pairs in 2003) is established and on 15-June-2003 the BirdLife Romania partner did visit this colony in orde to colour ring a random sample of nestlings. Fifty nestlings were ringed with colour rings received from the Workinggroup for Spoonbills International (NL). The rings are in colour Red (left leg) and Black (right leg) both with an equal inscription, 90 degrees rotated and two times repeated on each ring. The rings were put on the tibia and below the black ring, a metal ring from the Centrala Ornitol Romania was put on. This metal ring has an unique number inscription.

The ringing took place at the the colony Prundul cu Pasari, Sinoie Lake, Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve. Recoveries of these birds can be send to the Centrala Ornitol Romania (mailto: [office@sor.ro](mailto:office@sor.ro)) or to the Workinggroup for Spoonbills (mailto: [o.overdijk@natuurmonumenten.nl](mailto:o.overdijk@natuurmonumenten.nl))

### ***Spoonbills in Serbia***

by Marko Tucakov and Antun Zuljevic (Yo)

The actual sitiation for Spoonbills in Serbia in 2003:

1. **Carska bara** (UTM: DR51) is huge complex of alluvial wetlands, forests, ponds, marshes, reedbeds and artificial carp fishpond that is situated near town Zrenjanin, at the mouth of The Begej and The Tisha rivers (western Banat region, Vojvodina province, Serbia). It is Ramsar site since 1996, and a part of the area forming Special nature reserve "Stari Begej - Carska bara". The site holds very significant concentrations of breeding herons. In the recent times, there are heronries on several localities: Mala Carska bara, Botoski rit, Perleska bara, Ecka fishponds. In the 1998, during last census, colony of Spoonbills was in Perleska bara marsh. The number of breeding pairs on the whole locality in 1998:

Phalacrocorax carbo: 100-110;

Nycticorax nycticorax: 140-140;

Ardeola ralloides: 12-14;

Egretta garzetta: 5-5;

Egretta alba: 45-50;

Ardea cinerea: 50-50;

Ardea purpurea: 35-40,

Platalea leucorodia: 20-21.

The place is very traditional breeding site for Spoonbills.

2. **Okanj** is depression situated near left bank of the Tisa river (UTM: DR43), and representing fossil meander of the river itself. It is situated near village Elemir (Zrenjanin commune, western Banat, Vojvodina province, Serbia). The whole depression is 200 ha large, and contains brackish water. In some parts edges are covered by reed, and there are also extreme saline edges, with short halophylous vegetation. The place is traditional for breeding of herons, but mixed colony with Spoonbill was formed in 1998. In that year it was contained 47 pairs of Egretta alba, 33 pairs of Ardea cinerea, 27 pairs of Ardea purpurea and 59-60 pairs of Platalea leucorodia. The place is not protected!!!

3. **Becej** fishpond. It is buildt in 1969 on the pastureland near Becej town, the lower Tisa river basin. Coordinates: Becej town is in UTM DR 25 square (45.37. N, 20.02. E), and Becej fishpond, situated near the town (eastern Backa area, Vojvodina province, Serbia) is in UTM DR24 square (45.33. N, 20.02. E)

Habiatat and breeding niche: reedbed on one of the ponds

History of the colony: mixed colony in the fishpond is old, but

Spoonbills are breeders since 1990 (1 pair). In 1992 45 pairs bred, after the forming of artificial platform in the midle of the colony.

Number of pairs: estimate in 2003 is done just for Spoonbills. Other data are from 1998, when our last official census of all colonies is done.

Our presumption is that number of breeding pairs of all species is very similar in this year, but you should anyway note that we done precise estimate just for Spoonbills!

Platalea leucorodia 50-70 pairs  
Nycticorax nycticorax 330-360 pairs  
Ardeola ralloides 110-140 pairs  
Egretta garzetta 85-105 pairs  
Ardea cinerea 50-60 pairs  
Ardea purpurea 180-200 pairs  
Egretta alba (new breeder in the colony, estimate for 2003) 1-2 pairs

Other informations: On May 31, 2003, when we ringed the birds, about 70 chicks were already completely feathered (one capable for flying). All of them were outside of the nests on one place. We also found about 10 nests with eggs and 5 with very young chicks.

In Serbia the nestlings are colour ringed with on both legs (tibia) white colour rings with on both rings the same inscription, 90 degrees rotated and two times repeated one each ring. Below the colour ring on its right leg, a metal ring of the birdringing centre with an unique number engraved. Recoveries can be sent to local birdringing centre or to the Workinggroup for Spoonbills (mailto: [o.overdijk@natuurmonumenten.nl](mailto:o.overdijk@natuurmonumenten.nl) )

4. **Jazovo** fishpond (UTM: DR 38) is 400 ha large carp fishpond situated at the river Tisa, near Jazovo village (Kikinda commune, northern Banat region, province Vojvodina, Serbia). Fishpond is formed in 1972. Spoonbill is irregular breeder on it: at the 1980s there were 40 breeding pairs, in 2002 6pairs, and in this year 4 pairs. Census carried out in 1998 has showed presence of the mixed colony, but without the Spoonbills. In that years situation was as follows: Nycticorax nycticorax 60-70 pairs, Egretta garzetta 2-5 pairs, Ardea cinerea: 15-20 pairs, Ardea purpurea 30-40 pairs and Plegadis falcinellus 4 pairs (breeder just in that year!). It seems that Spoonbill becomes regular breeder in recent years. Unfortunately, very valuable complex of fishpond together with surrounding saline meadows and temporary shallow saline lakes is not protected! It is inside of the IBA area Jazovo-Mokrin, and on the very eastern edge of Special nature reserve "Great Bustard meadows". The colony itself is every year endangered by rising a water level on the fishpond during the breeding season (in this year all Spoonbill nests are destroyed!), or even by burning of dry reed in the start of the breeding season.

5. **Obedska bara** : our oldest protected area, since the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. It is large floodplain area (UTM: DQ 25) of the Sava river (between Kupinovo and Obrez settlements, pecinci commune, southern Srem area, Vojvodina province, Serbia) with large surface of forests (some communities are primeval), eutrophic ponds, swamps, reedbeds and water bodies. The largest water body is former meander of the river, that is now totally overgrown by dense emergent vegetation. Since 1977 it is Ramsar site, and since 1989 IBA area.

The large breeding colony of herons was enriched with Spoonbill in 2002 (1-2 pairs). Situation is expecting to be improved due to large-scale reconstruction activities. At the moment, 100 hectare large surface of wet meadows is resaturated again, and that is contributing to presence of Spoonbills. In this only place where Spoonbills were breeding on the bushes (willows): on other ones, breeding niches are Phragmites-Typha stands.

6. **Southeastern Montenegro**: in this year colony of 20 Spoonbills was formed on the lake between Skadar lake and Ulcinj town (Saveljic, pers.com.). It is a new breeding site, but further informations remained scarce.

Total number of breeding pairs of Spoonbill in Serbia (1998):130-141  
Total number of breeding localities in 1998:3

Total number of breeding pairs in Serbia in 2003:135-157  
Total number of breeding localities in Serbia and Montenegro in 2003: 155-177  
Total number of breeding localities in Serbia in 2003:4-5  
Total number of breeding localities in Serbia and Montenegro in 2003: 5-6