



## Report on ringing of migratory birds in the Ilon Marsh 2020

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In 2020 we carried out two different ringing protocols at the Ilon Marsh site (marais de l'Ilon, Paradou, 13, FR):

- The VOIE protocol, which aims to document variations in migration routes between individuals, in space and time, for a few species with a high incidence of ringing in Europe, and generating a large number of external controls. At Ilon, the main objective is to target Barn swallows, which gather and form one of the largest and most regular roosts in Europe.
- The aim of the PHENO protocol is to document the variations in migratory phenology of passerines between individuals, in space and in time. We carry out this protocol throughout the post-nuptial migration season, i.e. from the end of August to the end of November.

In 2020, we carried out 26 ringing sessions on this site (14 for the PHENO protocol, 12 for the VOIE protocol). In total, we captured 5,211 birds of 41 species.

### Report by protocol

#### *VOIE protocol*

For this protocol, in 2020, we captured 4,359 birds of 11 species including 4,264 Barn swallows and 77 Sand martins. (The capture of a Least bittern during this session was the third capture for A Rocha France.) We obtained 4 foreign controls (1 German, 1 Finnish, 1 Norwegian and 1 Swiss), the first two inter-annual controls of a swallow on the site (1 individual ringed in 2018 controlled in 2020, 1 individual ringed in 2019 controlled in 2020) and 1 intersessional control (20 days between the two captures, on 15/09/2020 and 04/10/2020). The foreign controls carried out fully confirm the North-South migration route (Scandinavia - Rhine Valley - Rhone Valley) identified by the controls obtained in previous years (Figure 1).

The VOIE protocol has been carried out at the site since 2006. However, during the capture seasons up to 2012, the capture site sometimes varied, so I will only compare the results since 2013. For 2020, this is the third best year in terms of numbers caught since 2013 with a total only slightly lower than that of 2014 (Figure 2).

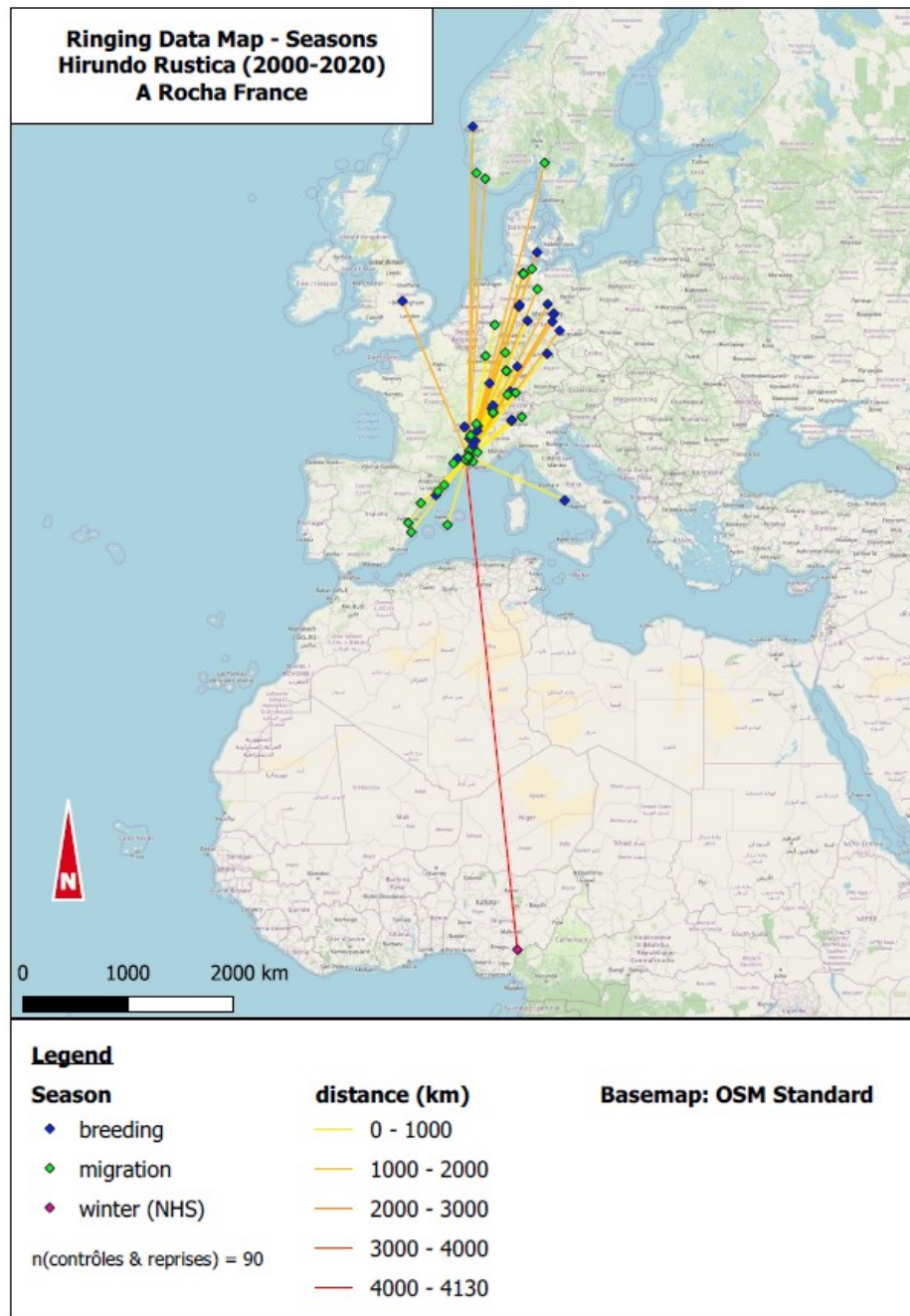


Figure 1: Map of ringing sites or controls of Barn swallows captured in the Ilon Marsh between 2006 and 2020

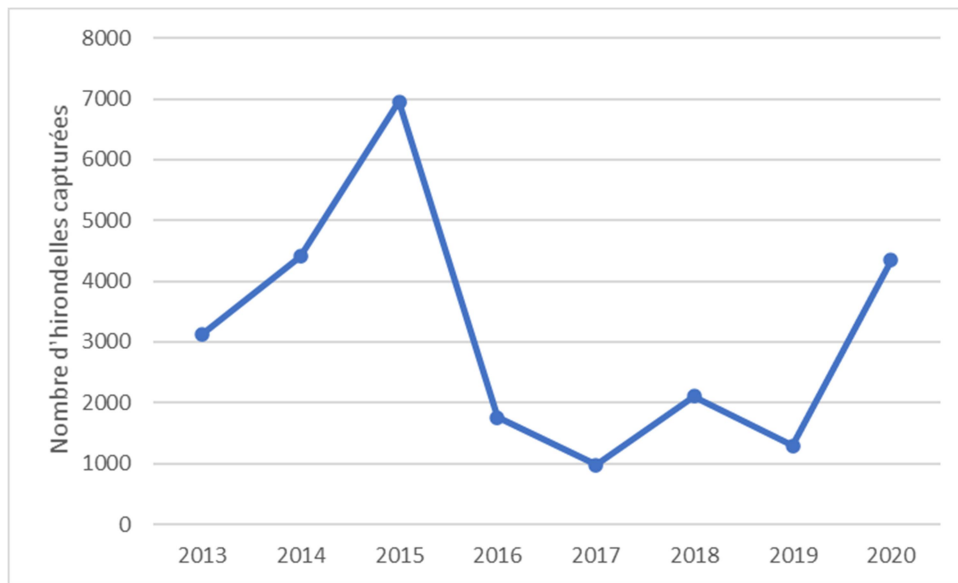


Figure 2: Evolution of the number of hirundines (Barn swallow, Sand martin, Red-rumped swallow, House martin) captured in the Ilon Marsh between 2013 and 2020.

### ***PHENO protocol***

In 2020, we captured 852 birds of 38 species. It should be noted, however, the capture site was the same as for the VOIE protocol, where a swallow dormitory was present between late August and early October. This meant that a significant proportion of the individuals captured during this period were Barn swallows, although this species was not targeted by the PHENO protocol. Apart from Barn swallows and Sand martins, 586 individuals of 36 species were captured for the PHENO protocol in 2020. After the Barn swallow, the most common species was the Blackcap, followed by the Chiffchaff. The next most common species were the Reed warbler, the Kingfisher and the Reed bunting. One control of an off-site ringed bird was obtained (a Moustached warbler ringed in the Camargue). It should be noted that 29 different kingfishers were ringed or checked on the site, which confirms its importance for this species, following the spectacular results of 2019 (see below). Of note in 2020 were the captures of the first Yellow-browed warbler (*Phylloscopus inornatus*) and the first Thrush nightingale (*Luscinoid Locustella luscinioides*) for A Rocha France.

It is only possible to compare the data from the 2020 PHENO protocol with that of 2019 as this was the first year that this protocol was conducted on the Ilon Marsh site. In 2019 we captured 633 birds of 35 different species. These figures are broadly similar to those for 2020. The most common species in 2019 was the Reed warbler followed by the Blackcap, Blue tit, Swift, Kingfisher and Reed bunting. One foreign control was made (a Blackcap ringed in Germany). 30 different kingfishers were ringed or controlled at the site!

Table 1: Numbers of birds caught by species and by protocol at the Ilon Marsh in 2020.

*Note: These numbers include recaptured individuals already ringed the same year (self-monitoring) and are thus more than the number of different individuals captured.*

PROTOCOL	SPECIES	Total captured
PHENO	Barn swallow, <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	263
	Blackcap, <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	132
	Chiffchaff, <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	109
	Reed warbler, <i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	60
	Kingfisher, <i>Alcedo atthis</i>	51
	Reed bunting, <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	46
	Cetti's warbler, <i>Cettia cetti</i>	31
	Garden warbler, <i>Sylvia borin</i>	18
	Moustached warbler, <i>Acrocephalus melanopogon</i>	17
	Bluethroat, <i>Luscinia svecica</i>	16
	Penduline tit, <i>Remiz pendulinus</i>	16
	Willow warbler, <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	12
	Firecrest, <i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>	10
	Blue tit, <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	9
	Sedge warbler, <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	7
	Robin, <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	6
	European bee-eater, <i>Merops apiaster</i>	5
	Goldcrest, <i>Regulus regulus</i>	5
	Melodious warbler, <i>Hippolais polyglotta</i>	4
	Sardinian warbler, <i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>	4
	Pied flycatcher, <i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	3
	Wryneck, <i>Jynx torquilla</i>	3
	Sand martin, <i>Riparia riparia</i>	3
	Whitethroat, <i>Sylvia communis</i>	3
	Great reed warbler, <i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	2
	Tree pipit, <i>Anthus trivialis</i>	2
	Coal tit, <i>Parus major</i>	2
	Subalpine warbler, <i>Sylvia cantillans</i>	2
	Song thrush, <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	2
	Chaffinch, <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	1
	Thrush nightingale, <i>Locustella luscinioides</i>	1
	Nightingale, <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	1
	Black redstart, <i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	1
	Redstart, <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	1
	Western Bonelli's warbler, <i>Phylloscopus bonelli</i>	1
	Yellow-browed warbler, <i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>	1
	European stonechat, <i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	1
	Wren, <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	1
Total PHENO		852

PROTOCOL	SPECIES	Total captured
VOIE	Barn swallow, <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	4,264
	Sand martin, <i>Riparia riparia</i>	77
	Reed warbler, <i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	5
	Great reed warbler, <i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	4
	Kingfisher, <i>Alcedo atthis</i>	2
	Hobby, <i>Falco subbuteo</i>	2
	Cetti's warbler, <i>Cettia cetti</i>	1
	Zitting cisticola, <i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	1
	Little bittern, <i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>	1
	Blue tit, <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	1
	Willow warbler, <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	1
Total VOIE		4,359
TOTAL ALL PROTOCOLS		5,211