Results of aquatic warbler translocation in the framework of the LIFEMagniDucatusAcrola project

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Webinar. Congreso final LIFE Paludicola

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Results of aquatic warbler translocation in the framework of the LIFEMagniDucatusAcrola project

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Project website: www.meldine.lt

Implemented by:

Basics

Main goal: develop and test a method and and support AW population recovery in Zuvintas biosphere reserve;

Endorsed by signatory parties of MoU for aquatic warbler conservation in 2015

Translocation program developed based on IUCN guidelines for conservation translocations

Success criteria:

- Until the time of release chicks survival rate has to be at least 74 %;
- At least 1 translocated bird has to come back after wintering to the release area.

Chosen sites

Source site - Zvaniec fen mire

- 14 000 ha area;
- The largest AW population globally (2-4 thous. singing males 20-30 % of global population);

Release site - Žuvintas fen mire

- Compact site (>200 ha) – easy to monitor return of translocated birds;
- Local population gradually decreased
- Good location in the context of stepping-stone habitat network

Methodological overview

Prior to translocation: management of areas, compensation measure for the source area

Principal stages of translocation

1. Search of nests and pickup;
2. Nestling transport from source area to the release site
3. Growing young in cages indoors
4. Moving young to the field aviaries outdoors
5. Soft release
6. Post release monitoring

Successfully translocated:

- 2018: 11 broods, 50 juveniles (May 25-July 7).,
- 2019: 10 broods, 50 juveniles (May 30 – July 12)

Search of nests and pickup

- Prescribed burning applied to the habitat made searching of nests a lot easier
- A team of ornithologists perform intensive seach of nests, estimate the age of brood

Pickup

Pickup in the morning,
After natural feeding and before the heat;

Brood age: 7-10 days

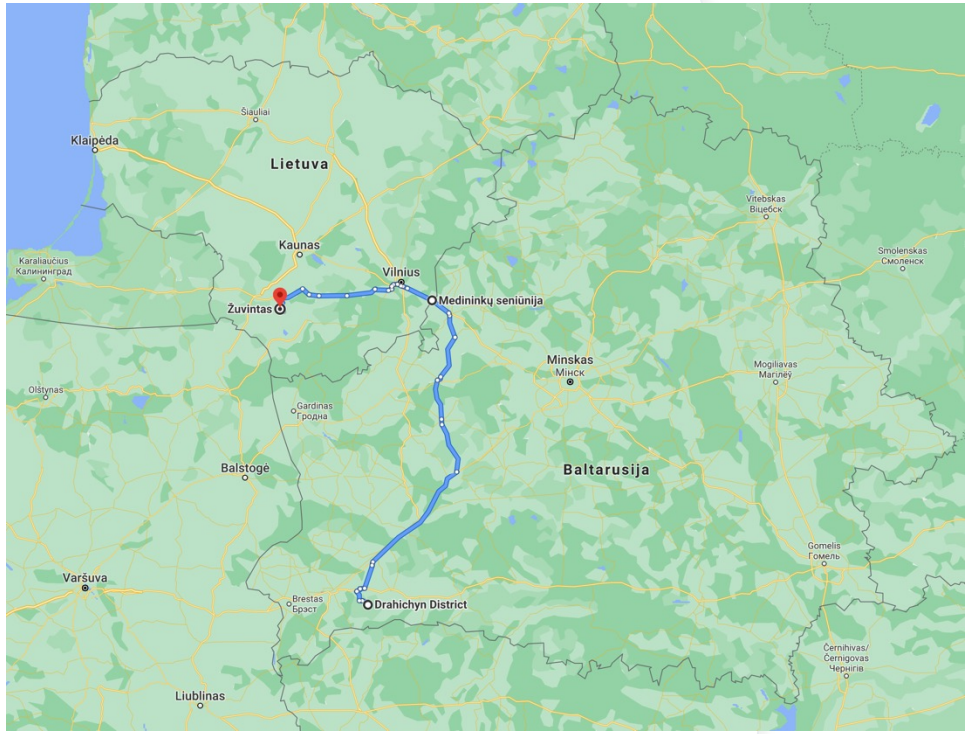
Local feeding camp

- Feeding interval – 20 min.
- From 4 a.m. till 9 p.m.
- A team of feeders working in shift
- A separate team for insect collection and primary treatment of food

Nestling transport from source area to the release site

- Transport during night
- Paper work

Nestling transport from source area to the release site



Feeding starts in the morning (at the boarder)


Growing young in cages indoors

Feeding interval 20 minutes, gradually increasing

Translocation menu:

INSECTS

- Wild insects:
  - horseflies
  - grasshoppers etc.
  - Ant ”eggs”.
- Cultivated insects:
  - mealworms,
  - crickets,
  - cockroach
  - Bee larvae

Mixture:

1) ant “eggs”,
2) Hard-boilded egg,
3) Special vitamin D mixture,
4) Fresh leaves (*Stellaria media, Taraxacum officinale*),
5) Crushed *Gammarus*.

Organization of the team

A team of 50 people involved

- importance of the care taker;
- Working in shifts

Team:

- Leadership
- Care taker
- Feeding team
  Communication team
- Household team
- Observation, monitoring
- Volunteers

Outside

Inside

Construction of the indoor cage

Moving young to the field aviaries outdoors

Forllowing facors important:

- Decision of the main care taker
- Birds able to feed themselves and staerting to hunt
- Weather conditions

Feeding

Soft release

- Birds release date defined by the development of the chicks and weather forecast;
- Release takes few hours to several days period;
- Released birds periodically returns to aviary for overnight;
- Continued feeding and monitoring in the aviaries;
- Monitoring stops until no birds observed for several days

Results

Defined success criteria and achieved results

Success criteria:

- Until the time of release chicks survival rate has to be at least 74 %;
- At least 1 translocated bird has to come back after wintering to Žuvintas Biosphere Reserve area.

Criteria	Target	2018 (2019)	2019 (2020)
Survival rate	74%	98%	100 %
Found returned birds	1	11	10 (7 1st year, 3 – 2nd year)

Aquatic warbler population in Žuvintas (1991-2020)

Blue: returned translocated singing males

Conclusions

- Applied translocation methodology was outstandingly succesfull;
- 1st year return rate (at least 14-22 %) of translocated birds is very good, close to what is expected at for natural conditions;
- Translocated birds keep returning 2nd and 3rd season;
- Translocation can be further applied as important tool of species conservation strategy;
- Need more translocation experience for method fine-tuning.

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