

SPI-Birds Newsletter



Welcome to the August edition of the SPI-Birds newsletter. With the addition of the populations in Bandon Valley, Ireland (John Quinn), Velký Kosíř, Czechia (Miloš Krist), and the famous Wytham Woods population in Oxford, UK, SPI-Birds now includes pipelines for 15 hole-nesting bird populations. In this second edition of the SPI-Birds newsletter, we give an update on the progress of the project over the last two months and discuss our future plans.

Standard Protocol

We previously circulated a draft version of our *Standard protocol* that describes the standard format and structure for storing individual bird data into which individual studies can be converted using the SPI-Birds pipelines. We received a lot of useful feedback on the draft protocol from SPI-Birds members and, after taking this feedback into account, we have released a full version of the standard protocol ([version 1.0.0](#)). All 15 existing pipelines now follow this newest protocol version. We are still interested in any further comments which can be integrated into new versions of the protocol in the future. Please get in touch with team member Liam Bailey with your input (liam.bailey@liamdbailey.com).

Quality checks

Over the last two months, team members Stefan Vriend and Liam Bailey have created a data quality check that is used to test the integrity of data after it has been converted to follow the *Standard protocol* using the SPI-Birds pipelines. This quality check tests for several possible errors that may occur in the data, mostly concerning the detection of impossible or improbable values in breeding parameters (e.g. laying date and hatch date in different years, brood size larger than clutch size). **Over the next months, we plan to run this quality check on data from all existing pipelines and contact data owners to inform them of potential errors detected during these checks.** Data owners can use this if they wish to improve their data integrity. Note that we will make no changes to the data ourselves and any corrections that are made by the data owners will become available the next time data owners upload their data (usually once a year). By building a quality check that works on the *Standard protocol* we now have a way to consistently test for the same potential errors in all populations included in the SPI-Birds database, regardless of their original format or data storage method.

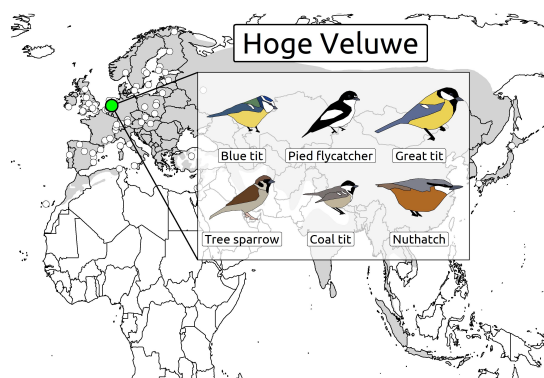


Figure 1: Major species in Hoge Veluwe

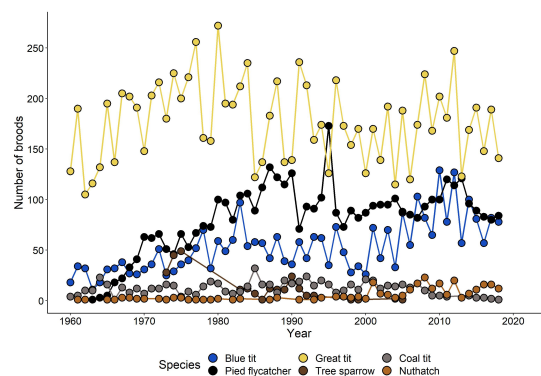


Figure 2: Number of nests for each species over time

Twitter

The official SPI-Birds twitter account was launched in June, to coincide with our first SPI-Birds newsletter. Thank you to all the members who now follow us! One of the goals of the Twitter account is to introduce each population currently represented in the SPI-Birds database. We have begun by introducing some of those datasets run by, and administered at, the Animal Ecology group at NIOO, using maps and animated graphics to present information about the species present and the number of nests with available data. See an example of these figures above or view one of our tweets [here](#) to see the animated version. Next, we want to begin introducing other populations from around Europe. **For those members who have provided access to their primary data, please let us know an interesting fact or describe a seminal paper involving your population that we can use as part of the Twitter introduction.**

ESEB 2019

The Congress of the European Society of Evolutionary Biology is happening this week in Turku, Finland and Marcel Visser will be attending as a representative of the SPI-Birds team. If you are attending the conference, we would love to hear your thoughts about the SPI-Birds project so far. Please have a chat with Marcel, possibly using the congress app to set up a place and time. We would also like to hear about any talks or posters at the congress that you feel might be relevant to the SPI-Birds project.

How can you contribute?

If you're interested in contributing towards the SPI-Birds project, here's what you can do:

- Provide us with access to your primary data from which we can build a pipeline. This pipeline will convert your primary data into the *Standard protocol* described above. To be clear, these data will not be shared, distributed, or used for any purpose without your direct permission. If you still have any questions or concerns about the process, please contact our co-ordinator Antica Culina (A.Culina@nioo.knaw.nl).
 - If you have already provided access to your primary data, tell us some interesting facts or describe a
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seminal paper that involves your population. We will use this information to introduce your population on Twitter.

- Follow us on Twitter.
- Let us know of any papers, conferences, or workshops that you feel will be interesting to SPI-Birds members.

Thank you again for your contribution and support so far. We look forward to sending you another update in two months time.