

FIRST DATA ON THE BREEDING OF FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris* IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Prvi podatki o gnezdenju brinovke *Turdus pilaris* v Bosni in Hercegovini

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Till 2006, the Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris* had been recorded in Bosnia and Herzegovina mainly during the periods of autumn migration and wintering. In the area of Sarajevo, the earliest record of the species was made in August 2004. During the regular bird watching carried out in April and May 2006, nesting of Fieldfare was recorded in the area of Ilidža near Sarajevo (UTM BP85). On those occasions, four nests were found. One on of them was located in a hollow of a Small-leaf Lime *Tilia cordata*, the remaining three among the branches of maple *Acer* sp. and ash *Fraxinus* sp. trees. The presented data confirm the Fieldfare's first nesting in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Key words: Fieldfare, *Turdus pilaris*, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Ključne besede: brinovka, *Turdus pilaris*, Bosna in Hercegovina

1. Introduction

In the course of the 20th century, Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris* spread its breeding range from the north of Europe towards central and southern Europe. Especially significant spreading of the species was recorded in the second half of the 20th century (TIAINEN *et al.* 2003).

According to MATVEJEV (1976), Fieldfare had not bred in the Balkans until mid 1970s. According to the "avifauna overview" (as there were no numeric parameters in Catalogus made in the former Yugoslavia), the species was registered in the area, although not as a breeder (MATVEJEV & VASIĆ 1973). The first actual nesting in the former Yugoslavia was recorded in 1975 at Podkoren, 3 km away from Kranjska Gora (Slovenia), when the species apparently spread its nesting range towards the south (GREGORI 1977). During the 1980s, its nesting was for the first time recorded in Macedonia (TIAINEN *et al.* 2003). At the turn of the century, the first nesting of Fieldfare in Croatia was registered in Gorski kotar (near Prezid, and in Singer near Mrkopalj) (RADOVIĆ *et al.* 2003).

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Fieldfare has so far been registered mainly during the periods of autumn migration and wintering, while in the region of

Sarajevo the first record was made in August 2004 (KOTROŠAN 2005).

The aim of this article is to present the first data on the nesting of Fieldfare in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

2. Research area and methods

During the avifaunal research carried out in April and May 2006 in Sarajevo and its close surroundings, several field trips were made to the area of Ilidža. In its wider area, spreading at an altitude of about 550 m a.s.l., nesting of Fieldfare was being observed at Veliki Park, situated between the hotels Bosnia, Herzegovina and Serbia (UTM BP85).

Deciduous trees dominate in the park. The most numerous species of trees and shrubs in the park are of the Maple genus (Common Maple *Acer campestre*, Boxelder *A. negundo*, Norway Maple *A. platanoides* and Sycomore *A. pseudoplatanus*), Forsythia genus (European Forsythia *Forsythia europaea* and Border Forsythia *F. intermedia*), White Cedar *Thuja occidentalis*, European Larch *Larix decidua*, European Silver Fir *Abies alba*, Common Spruce *Picea abies*, Chinese Juniper *Juniperus chinensis*, Common Horse Chestnut *Aesculus hippocastaneum*, Silver Birch *Betula*



Figure 1: Position of the research area

Slika 1: Lega raziskovanega območja

pendula, European Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, Small-leaf Lime *Tilia cordata*, Tatarian Honeysuckle *Lonicera tatarica*, Common Elder *Sambucus nigra*, Snowberry *Symphoricarpos albus*, Mock Orange *Philadelphus coronarius* etc. (ŠILIC & ABADŽIĆ 1981).

3. Results and discussion

During the visit to Iliđa on 6 Apr 2006, 6 – 7 Fieldfare specimens foraging around the park near Velika Aleja were noted. The same situation was recorded during the ensuing visits to the area on 2 and 3 May. On 3 May 2006, two individuals were noticed chasing each other in a tree. An individual carrying something in its beak was also noticed, indicating a possibility of nest building, but the nest was not found on that day.

Three days later, on 5 May 2006 in the afternoon (around 15.00 h), the first author of this article noticed, after a long watch, a Fieldfare carrying earthworm to the hollow in the Small-leaf Lime, and eventually tossing droppings out of it. Also, during the watch, a Fieldfare's fight with a Hooded Crow *Corvus corone cornix* and a Jackdaw *Corvus monedula* was also witnessed. Around 18.00 h, a pair was seen collecting caterpillars and carrying them to the nest. On 9 May 2006 (around 16.00 h), we visited the same area in order to confirm Fieldfare's nesting and make photo-documentation. On that occasion, we heard chicks calling from the nest. In the adjacent grass,

6 foraging Fieldfares were noticed. During our stay there, a Fieldfare was seen on several occasions chasing a Jackdaw and a Hooded Crow that clearly came too close to the nest. Three days later, the first author found two more Fieldfare's nests in the same area. The second nest was in a maple tree *Acer* sp., 20 m away from the nest seen previously. The nest was among branches, and there were also the chicks seen when the parents came close to it. The third nest, too, was in a maple tree, on forked branches at some 10 m above the ground. Chasing of crows and Jackdaws was seen here as well. The last nest was seen on 16 May 2006, near the second nest in an ash tree *Fraxinus* sp., some 12 m high. Chasing of crows was seen yet again. One of the Fieldfares hit a crow with droppings, and after



Figures 2: Hollow of a Small-leaf Lime *Tilia cordata* in the area of Iliđa near Sarajevo, where Fieldfare's *Turdus pilaris* nest was situated (April and May 2006)

Slika 2: Duplo v lipovcu *Tilia cordata* na sarajevski Iliđi, v katerem je bilo odkrito gnezdo brinovke *Turdus pilaris* (april in maj 2006)

the attack it sang in flight. The observed specimens were usually foraging together with Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris*, but fights between these species were not noticed. In the area between Velika Aleja and Stojčevac, no Fieldfares were observed.

A comparison of the Fieldfare's behaviour during its nesting at Iliđa with that in Stockholm and Uppsala, observed on 23 and 24 Apr 2006, has shown that the "Swedish" individuals were somewhat tamer during their encounters with humans than the "Bosnian" ones, but generally the species does not show great fear of human presence. Namely, if they are found on the ground they can be approached very closely, without them flying away. This confirms a high degree of the species' adaptation to humans.

It is generally known that this species nests

individually and in colonies (TIAINEN *et al.* 2003; HOGSTAD 2004). Data on the nesting of Fieldfare in Bosnia and Herzegovina coincide in many details (smaller colony, ways of building the nest etc.) with the first data obtained on its nesting in Slovenia (GREGORI 1977). The only special feature is its nesting in a tree hollow, a fact that was not found in the literature. Also, its behaviour towards other species found near the nests (e.g. Hooded Crow) is in accordance with descriptions given by HOGSTAD (2004).

Finally, it can be concluded that the data on the Fieldfare's occurrences in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the summer of 2004 (KOTROŠAN 2005) showed a possibility of the species' nesting in the area of Sarajevo and its close surroundings, which has actually been confirmed during the recent research. Data from Croatia (RADOVIĆ *et al.* 2003) and Europe generally (TIAINEN *et al.* 2003) confirm the observations made by GREGORI (1977) about the species spreading its nesting range, so the process is expected to continue.

4. Povzetek

V Bosni in Hercegovini je bila brinovka *Turdus pilaris* do leta 2006 opažena večinoma v času jesenske selitve in prezimovanja. Na območju Sarajeva so jo prvič zabeležili avgusta 2004. V obdobju rednega opazovanja ptic (april in maj leta 2006) je bilo gnezdenje brinovk zabeleženo na območju Ilidže in Sarajeva (UTM BP 85), ko so bila najdena štiri gnezda, eno v duplu lipovca *Tilia cordata*, preostala tri pa na vejah javorja *Acer* sp. in jesena *Fraxinus* sp. V članku predstavljeni podatki potrjujejo prvo gnezdenje brinovk v Bosni in Hercegovini.

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