

# Migrationsprojekt Waldrappteam.at

Report 2004



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## **Basics**



Our aim is to establish a self-sustaining ‘model-colony’ of 30 to 40 NBI in Scharnstein (Upper Austria), with a migration tradition to a wintering area in the southern Tuscany and to address several of the questions on migration behaviour, habitat use and feeding ecology..

We assume that the ability to control autumn migration is of significant relevance for every reintroduction attempt, independent of the origin of the birds and the geographical location. Thus, the choose of the locations during this experimental phase (Almtal, Laguna di Orbetello) is of secondary relevance. However, due to the experiences of the first two years of our project and with the Grünau birds (see the Grünau report) we assume, that a reintroduction of the NBI in Europe, in particular along our planned migration route from the Alps to the southern Tuscany, will be possible and reasonable, provided that we succeed with our program.

Despite the proximate aim for the reintroduction of the NBI, flying with human-imprinted birds offers a broad range of options not only for bird conservation but also for behavioural and physiological research in the context of bird flight and migration. We are not the first and not the only one who use this approach, but we see the potential and want to contribute to the development of this innovative method.

## ***Migration Project Waldrappteam.at 2004***



*Flight along the Lido di Jesolo; August 2004*

Our migration 2004 could be terminated successfully. From August 17th till September 22th we migrated with a group of eight handraised Waldrapp ibis over 860 km from Scharnstein, Upper Austria, to Laguna di Obetello, Tuscany.

Migration lasted over 37 days: 14 days flying with a mean of 61 km per day; during 8 days flying was not possible due to the weather conditions; 10 days stopover were necessary due to technical problems, all of them already in Austria at beginning of the migration; finally 5 days rest were necessary due to a lack of motivation of the team members resp. the birds.

The birds were highly motivated and willing to fly from the beginning. We could increase the daily distances from 30 km up to almost 90 km. Even after such long flights the birds showed no sign of exhaustion or other kinds of stress. Just once after a long flight from San Sepolcro to Pantalla they didn't follow for the next two days, then it work well again. Due to the good condition of the birds we could increase the daily trips from 35 up to 90 km. Flight speed was about 50 kmh, but sometimes the ground speed was much higher, up to 100 kmh, up to back winds.

The one seated microlight, we used this year, was perfectly suitable for the use. Flight speed is between 45 and 55 kmh and low weight in combination with a big makes it very manoeuvrable. However, at the beginning we had serious problems with the engine. Support by the company Hirth was very insufficient, but finally our team sorted out and solved the problems with the support of local technicians.



Sometime the birds flew in a separate formation, sometimes they flew directly with the microlight, even under the wings close to me. They soon learned to use aerodynamically advantageous positions at the microlight, in particular at the edges of the wing. There they sometimes sailed in the upwind for minutes without wing flap.

Before and after migration we did a veterinary check up. All birds were healthy and free of infections/parasites before start. A Veterinary from the University Padova checked them after arrival in the wintering area. He confirmed that all of them are in a very good condition, well trained. We controlled body weight over the whole migration period. Some birds lost body weight during the migration period (max. -5.5 % loss) but others increased their weight (max. 7.7 % increase); mean 0.2 % increase of the body weight from beginning of migration to the end of migration. Before, during and after migration we sampled faeces from every bird to analyse for hormonal changes. But these data are not available yet. Our data will be published the next month. I will send these files as soon as available.

The public interest for our activity was very high. Lots of people read the daily news at our homepage. People from Austria even ask to come to the Tuscany particularly to visit our birds. This year migration was filmed by a Japanese Film team. They produce a documentation which will be broadcast in Japan in November.

The birds are now in the Laguna di Orbetello. They stay there during winter. One or two people of our team are permanent with them. They fly free during day, but at night they stay in an aviary.



*Our aviary in the WWF Oasis Laguna di Orbetello.*

## ***Other activities 2004***

### ***Project Burghausen***



*Visions of our exhibition in Burghausen, Bavaria.*

On October 3th the Garden Show in Burghausen, Bavaria, finish. We had an exhibition there and raised a group of five NBI. Our presentation was a highlight there. More than 800.000 visitors (!) saw the exhibition.

The reason for this activity was two fold. First, Burghausen is a small city with a huge castle along the river Salzach, just about 60 km north of Salzburg. Along this river we know from at least three historical Bald Ibis colonies. They nested in the sandstone cliffs along the river. Close to Burghausen there are numerous such cliffs. The Garden show offer the unique opportunity to proof the suitability of such historical Bald ibis habitats for a recent group of such birds. Therefore, in co-operation with the Konrad Lorenz Research Station we collected data on the behaviour of the free flying birds, on the feeding ecology at some meadows at the outskirts of the town and on the bird human interactions.

Due to the small number of birds and the short time of free flight the data set are small. Anyway, it adds some new facts to the data we collected during the last years together with the scientists of the Research Station.

It was never our plan to install a permanent group of NBI in Burghausen. On September 22th we brought the birds from Burghausen to the Zoo Rosegg, Carinthia, where they stay with the 21 birds from our last year migration trip (see below).

A second reason for the Burghausen Project was the great opportunity of 800.000 visitors for PR. It was much interest in the birds and in our activities. Many people already knew about the birds and the project due to the medial presence of the last years. Posters, a Power Point presentation, a Video presentation, interactive showcases and preparations informed visitors about the biology of NBI, their history, the situation of the wild population and, more general, about nature conservation and the relevance of Zoos as a resource for reintroduction. A special showcase informed about the situation of the wild birds in Morocco. There we also collected money for the conservation of these birds (C. Böhm is informed about this; after October 3rd we will pass this money on).

Just recently an attentive visitor of an art exhibition in Burghausen recognised a bird, very similar to a NBI, at a painting of the 15th century. It shows a juvenile bird with a worm in it's



beak. The artist originates from Munich and the detailed illustration of the bird, even with food, indicated that he had the opportunity to observe living specimen.

Our Burghausen exhibition is now available for other locations, related to the Bald ibis project. Potential locations for the next year are locations in Austria, Bavaria and Tuscany.

### ***Project Rosegg, Carinthia***



The owner of the Zoo Rosegg, Prince Emanuel v.u.z. Liechtenstein, is a very active supporter of our project since the beginning. He decided to take the 21 birds from our 2002/03 generations to found a semi wild population similar to the one in Grünau. Me and a technician, Ing. Jochen Leeb, got the order to plan and to build the necessary structures there. In spring 2004 an aviary was build. It was planned similar to the one in Grünau, with a lot of input by "Austrian NBI professionals". During summer the birds fly free with roosting platforms on top of a hill in the centre of the Zoo.

The first free flight period from end of April till end of July 2004 free flight worked very well. A former member of our team and foster mother of all the birds were employed to care for the birds. There were no losses and End of July all the birds were enclosed in the new aviary. There they stay over winter and in Spring 2005 the next free flight period starts, potentially also the first reproduction attempts.

As already mentioned, the birds from Burghausen were brought to Rosegg and they are now with the other birds in the aviary (the carrying capacity of the aviary is for at least 36 birds).

We have an agreement with Prince Liechtenstein that the group will be available for our scientific needs and that the offspring of the group will be available for our further activities. That's highly relevant for us, because with support by C. Böhm we got birds from different genetic lines and so the three generations of the Rosegg group have a high genetic variability (as far as this is possible within the Zoo population).

## Extract from publications 2003

12.03.2003	Post vom Märchenerzähler	Ein Vogel der wenig Glück gehabt hat.
21.03.2003	Format	Wie Zoos zu den letzten Refugien bedrohter Tierarten werden
05.04.2003	Radio Oberösterreich 20°-21°	"Waldrapp & Bergschrott"; Die Märchenstunde mit H. Wittman;
05.04.2003	Radio Salzburg 20°-21°	Waldrapp & Bergschrott; Die Märchenstunde mit H. Wittman;
21.05.2003	Salzburger Nachrichten	Vogelschau
June 03	Universum Magazin	Der Waldrapp hebt ab
11.06.2003	Oberösterreichische Nachrichten	Waldrappe für TV "Forsthaus" vor der Kamera
13.06.2003	Extrablick Oberösterreich	Das Almtal wird bayrisch
25.06.2003	Das Neue Blatt	Christian Wolff; jetzt hat der TV-Förster einen Vogel
August 03	Facts	Auf die Sprünge helfen
04.08.2003	Öberösterreichische Nachrichten	Auf zum großen Flug in die Toskana; Motordrachen "zieht" Waldrappe
04.08.2003	Oberösterreichische Nachrichten	Auf zum großen Flug in die Toskana; Motordrachen "zieht" Waldrappe
14.08.2003	Extrablick Oberösterreich	Auf zum Flug über die Alpen
20.08.2003	Il Gazzettino	Lo stormo di ibis atteso a Osoppo
20.08.2003	Il Gazzettino	Ibis "a scuola di Volo", tappa in Friuli
25.08.2003	Corriere della Sera	In Vaggio Uno die 21 ibis eremita che stanno per arrivare in Italia
26.08.2003	Corriere della Sera	Ibis eremita in volo con "mamma-deltaplano" Partiti dall'Austria, domani arrivo in Friuli
26.08.2003	The Daily Telegraph	This way, baldies; Microlight plays mother to teach northern bald ibis to migrate
26.08.2003	Oberösterreichische Nachrichten	Waldrapp-Projekt spießt, Flugtraining geht weiter
28.08.2003	Kurier	Der mühsame Fluf des Waldrapp nach Italien
28.08.2003	Il Gazzettino	É stato ripreso l'ibis indisciplinato
29.08.2003	la Nuova	Ibis guidati da un deltaplano
01.09.2003	la Nuova di Venezia	Ibis dispesi in volo tra Eraclea e il Lido
03.09.2003	Kurier	Der Waldrapp wird wieder selbständig
03.09.2003	la Nuova	Ibis, favola a lieto fine; I volatili sono arrivati a Spiaggia Romea
04.09.2003	Standard	Nicht alles, was Flügel hat, fliegt; Waldrappe legen Weg ins Winterquartier teils im Auto zurück
06.09.2003	Salzburger Nachrichten	Waldrappe?
11.09.2003	Oberösterreichische Nachrichten	Waldrappe am Ziel in Italien
Okt.03	Quercus	Neuvas esperanza para el ibis eremita tras el hallazgo de una pequena colonia en Siria
10.10.03	ORF Town Trophy	Live Auftritt von Klara Tuckova
14.10.03	Neue Deutsche Welle	Radiointerview mit Elizabeth Mortimer; wiederholt am Tag ausgestrahlt
Nov. 03	ORF Nachlese	Waldrapp im Anflug
04.11.2003	TV Vorschau	OFR Fernseh Tipp des Tages: Der Flug des Waldrapp
04.11.2003	Oberösterreichische Nachrichten	Wo, bitte, geht's denn hier in die Toskana?
04.11.2003	Salzburger Nachrichten	Dem Waldrapp eine Chance
04.11.2003	Kronenzeitung	Universum: Der Flug des Waldrapp; Eine gar verrückte Idee
04.11.2003	Kurier	TV Tipp Universum: Der Flug des Waldrapp
04.11.2003	Die Ganze Woche	TV Tipp: Universum Der Flug des Waldrapp
06.11.2003	Tiroler Tageszeitung	TV Kritik: Sturer Tiroler und störrische Vögel
06.11.2003	Kurier	TV Kritik: Wahre Qualität
06.11.2003	Kronenzeitung	TV Kritik: Universum Waldrapp

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