

## Korta rapporter *Short communications*

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### The appearance of the white primary patch in adult Swedish males of the Common Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

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In the family Caprimulgidae it is not uncommon to have a white primary patch, especially among males. The Common Nightjar is one of the species where the males show this plumage detail. Apparently, the patch has a sexual function during courtship and other similar display activities. The patch is formed by white markings on the distal parts (about 50 mm from the tip) of primaries (rarely 7), 8, 9 and 10, numbered descendantly. According to the literature the size of this patch varies in a cline over the species' range (through nearly the whole middle and southern parts of the Palearctic region). The patch is reported to be small in the west of the area and larger eastwards. The three outer primaries (8-10) all have white on the inner web. What seems to differ, among populations and subspecies over the range, is if there exists any white on the outer webs of p8-p9 and even the amount of white.

We are conducting a study of museum material that will deal with this issue in a larger geographical context (Asteling & Strandberg *in prep.*). In this paper we will only describe the issue and comment on the information given in the new "standard handbooks". We also describe the appearance of the patch of birds breeding on the Swedish west coast and point to some inconsistencies with the information given in the handbooks of Cramp (1985), Glutz & Bauer (1980) and Fry *et al.* (1988), and the recent family monograph on Caprimulgidae and allies by Cleere & Nurney (1998).

#### *Study area and materials*

We are conducting a field-study of breeding Common Nightjars in the surroundings of Varberg, a town situated about 80 km south of Gothenburg on the Swedish west coast. During the three season of 1996-98 we trapped 30 Common Nightjars and of them 21 adult males. One male was trapped in two different seasons.

To catch the birds we used an ordinary tape recorder with a tape that included both song and wing claps. The volume was regulated to sound like a normal Nightjar in strength or a little bit stronger. The tape recorder was usually placed in a little tree or hanged on a branch that could be likened with a song post. Three to four mist nets were placed around the tape recorder. No decoy or other dummy was used. We started the tape recorder around sunset just before the first Nightjars started to sing. The birds seemed most interested and were most likely to be caught between dusk and midnight. The white markings on primaries 8 and 9 of each trapped male were carefully described verbally into a dictaphone and reproduced as precisely as possible (in full scale on a pre-designed sketch of the wing patch area of p8 and p9; see Figure 1 for an example).

#### *Results*

All birds caught were breeding birds and we are sure that no migrants were involved. The different categories of white markings among our birds are explained below and shown in Figure 2. The frequency of each category is showed in Table 1. All birds had white on the inner web of primary 8-10, reaching the shaft on at least p8 and p9. No bird had white on the outer web of p10. We categorised our birds as follows:

A: White reached over the whole outer web of

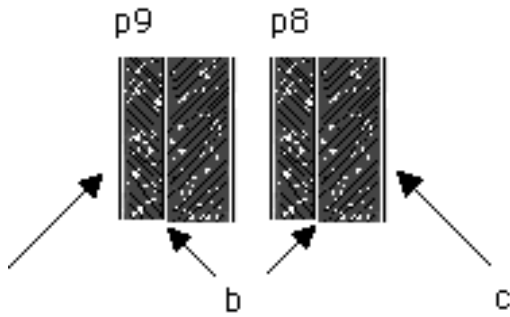


Figure 1. Sketch of primary 8 and 9 of the right wing. a = outer web, b = shaft, c = inner web.

Skiss av handpenna 8 och 9 på höger vinge. a = ytterfan, b = spole, c = innerfan.

primaries 8 and 9 and joined the white on the inner webs, and a band was created on both primaries.

B: White reached over the whole outer web of primary 8 and joined the white on the inner web, and a band was created on the primary. A white spot on the outer web of primary 9 that did not reached the shaft.

C: White reached over the whole outer web of primary 8 and joined the white on the inner web, and a band was created on the primary. No white on the outer web of primary 9.

D: A white spot on the outer web of both primary 8 and 9 that did not reached the shaft.

E: A white spot on the outer web of either primary 8 or 9 that did not reached the shaft.

F: No white markings on the outer webs of primary 8 or 9.

The male that was trapped in two different seasons had a wing patch that looked the same at both occasions. As a peculiarity, one bird had a white spot on the inner web of primary 7 (a bird in category C). This feature is not mentioned in Cramp *et al.* (1985), Glutz & Bauer (1980) or Fry *et al.* (1988) but is noticed by Cleere & Nurney (1998, see below)

### Discussion

We take it for granted that the authors/editors of the handbooks mentioned above have studied earlier work and we are also aware of the fact that erroneous information can be “inherited”. Cleere & Nurney (1998) seems to have made their own investigations for the descriptions. They mention the spot on primary 7 (rare) but fail to mention that the nominate subspecies does, at least sometimes, have some white on the outer web of primary 8 and/or 9. We have not made a thorough literature search so far.

A comparison of our results with the descriptions in the “standard handbooks” raises a few questions. Cramp *et al.* (1985) describes the wing patch in adult male as: “large rounded-triangular patch of white on inner web of p8-p10”. They further mention that: “rarely (1 of 35 west European birds examined), white of p8-p9 forms broad band across both webs (this more common in eastern races)”. Glutz & Bauer (1980) described adult male as: “auf Handschwingen 9 und 8 greift er nicht selten auf die Aussenfahne über”. Fry *et al.* (1988) mentioned that white existed “very rarely” on the outer web of p8 and p9 (but they included the eastern subspecies *plumipes* and lumped it with the nominate subspecies). Our interpretation of this is that at least most birds (of the nominate subspecies) do not have white markings on the outer web of primaries 8 and 9 according to the literature. In our material 33% had broad white bands over the entire outer primaries and only 14% looked as described by Cramp *et al.* (1985) for western European birds. The rest of the birds (53%) had an appearance that must be considered intermediate. The result is a little more in phase with the description in Glutz & Bauer (1980). This means that 86% of our birds had more or less white on the outer web of primary 8 and/or 9 and this is in strong contradiction to the information given by Cramp (1985), Glutz & Bauer (1980), Fry *et al.* (1988) and Cleere & Nurney (1998).

Since the white patch of the male’s tail apparently grows to some extent with age (V. Peiponen *in litt.*) it would be reasonable to assume that the same applies to the wing patch. Since we only have one

Table 1. The number of Nightjars belonging to each category. See Figure 1 and the text for explanation.

Antalet nattskärnor tillhörande varje kategori. Se Figur 1 och texten för förklaring.

Category <i>Kategori</i>	A	B	C	D	E	F
Number <i>Antal</i>	7	1	5	1	4	3

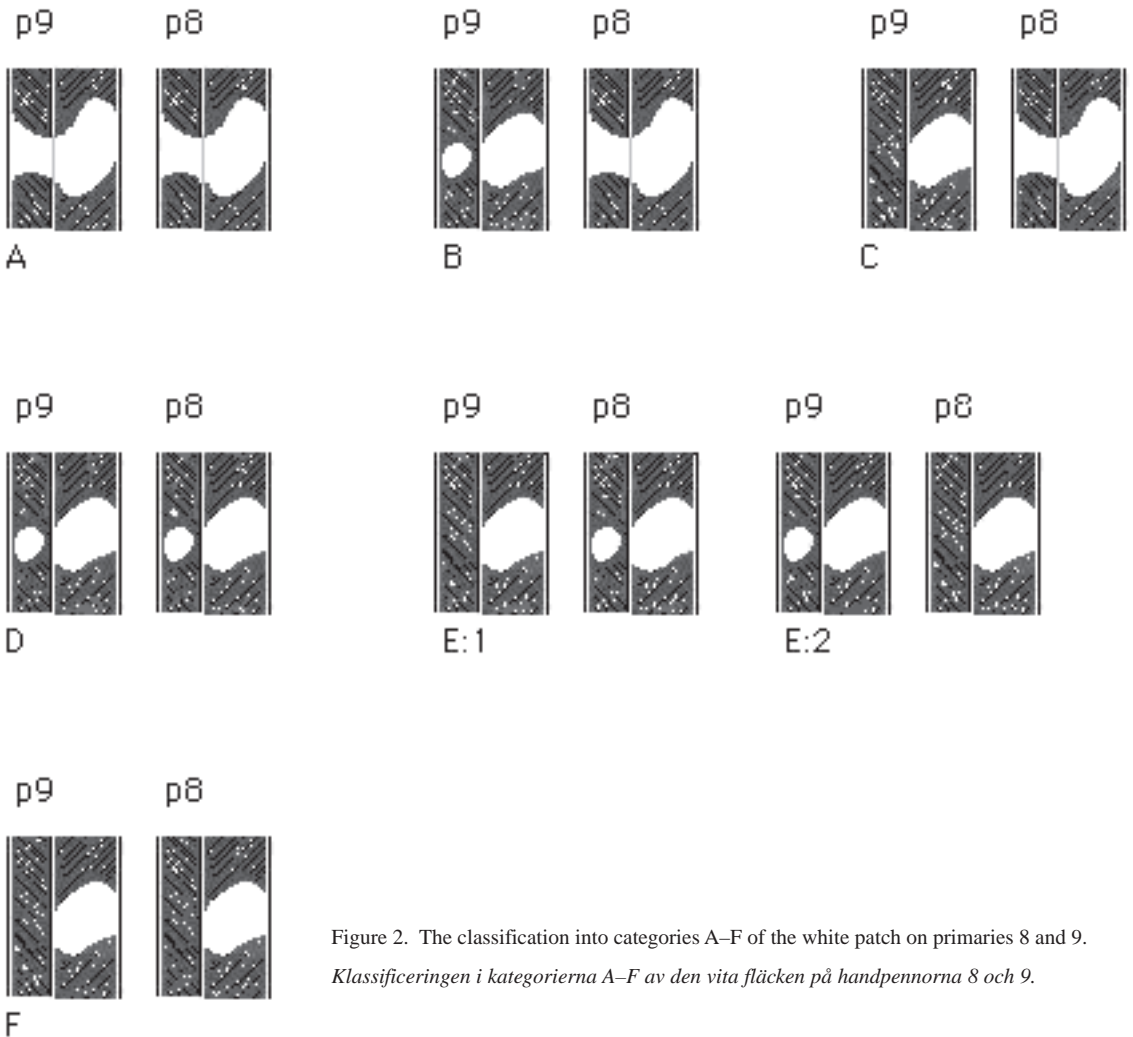


Figure 2. The classification into categories A–F of the white patch on primaries 8 and 9.  
 Klassificeringen i kategorierna A–F av den vita fläcken på handpennorna 8 och 9.

bird that has been recaptured in a later season (no differences between the seasons) it is too early for us to confirm if age has anything to do with this issue.

If a cline for the wing patch starts on the British Isles (and if the description in Cramp *et al.* (1985) is correct for western Europe, which seems most likely), then, our results might be considered to be in line with the theory that the cline exists.

### Acknowledgements

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## Sammanfattning

### *Den vita handpennefläckens utseende hos adulta svenska nattskärrehannar*

Hannen hos vår vanliga nattskärria har en fläck som bildas av vita teckningar på de yttre tre handpennorna (omkring 50 mm från spetsen). Fläckan varierar över artens utbredningsområde. Den är liten i västra delen och blir större österut. Vad som skiljer, bland populationer och raser, är om det finns något vitt på ytterfanen och även mängden vitt på handpennorna (hp) 8-9. Vi håller på med en studie som kommer att behandla denna sak i ett större geografiskt sammanhang (Asteling & Strandberg *in prep.*). I denna uppsats vill vi bara beskriva saken och ge en kommentar till informationen som ges i de större standardverken. Vi vill också beskriva utseendet av fläckan hos fåglar från svenska västkusten och peka på avvikelser från den gängse litteraturen.

Vi studerar nattskärrior i Varbergstrakten. Under åren 1996-98 har vi ringmärkt 21 adulta hannar. Fläckan på de fångade hannarna beskrevs omsorgsfullt på en diktafon och avritades mycket noga i full skala på en fördesignad skiss; se Figur 1. Fåglarna delades in i olika kategorier, som beskrivs nedan och i Figur 2, beroende på hur fläckan såg ut. Antalet individer i varje kategori visas i Tabell 1.

A: Vitt på hela ytterfanen på handpenna 8 och 9, som då bildade ett band på båda pennorna med innerfanen.

B: Vitt på hela ytterfanen på handpenna 8, som då bildade ett band på pennan med innerfanen. En vit fläck på ytterfanen av handpenna 9 som inte nådde skaftet.

C: Vitt på hela ytterfanen på handpenna 8, som då bildade ett band på pennan med innerfanen. Inget vitt på ytterfanen på handpenna 9.

D: En vit fläck på ytterfanen på både handpenna 8 och 9 som inte nådde skaftet.

E: En vit fläck på ytterfanen på antingen handpenna 8 eller 9 som inte nådde skaftet.

F: Inget vitt på ytterfanen på handpenna 8 eller 9.

En jämförelse med standardverken medför en del frågetecken. Vår tolkning av Cramp (1985), Cleere & Nursey (1998), Glutz & Bauer (1980) och Fry m.fl. (1988) är att de flesta hannar inte har vitt på ytterfanen av hp 8 och 9. I vårt material hade 86% mer eller mindre vitt på ytterfanen av hp 8 och/eller 9. Endast 14 % såg ut som det beskrivs i Cramp (1985) för västeuropeiska fåglar. Informationen som ges i standardverken är väldigt avvikande vid en jämförelse med vårt material.

Om det nu finns en klin när det gäller handpennefläckan, som börjar på Brittiska öarna (och om beskrivningen i Cramp (1985) är riktig för västra Europa), då kan våra resultat vara ett led i teorin att fläckan blir större österut.

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## Nordliga gransångaren *Phylloscopus collybita abietinus* i kris?

LARS BERGGREN

### Inledning

När vi fågelskådare är ute i markerna blir vi förr eller senare hungriga. Då tar vi fram kaffetermosarna ur våra stolryggsäckar. Sitta på marken, det är länge sedan vi slutade med det. När sedan den värsta hungern har stillats brukar samtalet ofelbart halka in på ämnet "Vilka fågelarter har blivit ovanligare eller vilka ses i större antal än normalt?". Sällan är vi helt överens, men en art som de flesta anser ha minskat i antal sedan 1970-talet är gransångaren. Min nyfikenhet vaknade, och jag bestämde mig för att undersöka saken med hjälp av de inventeringar som är gjorda i Norrbotten. Jag analyserar och kommenterar de inventeringar som är gjorda inom Svensk häckfågeltaxering 1975-98 och ringmärkningsstatistiken från Haparanda Sandskärs fågelstation. Jag jämför också resultaten med de som presenteras i den nya finska atlasen (Väisänen m. fl. 1998).

Gransångaren är spridd i hela Europa utom på öarna Island, Sardinien och Kreta. I en stor del av södra Spanien och mellersta Europa är arten sällsynt. Grova uppskattningar säger att det finns ca 16 miljoner gransångare i Europa. De tätaste populationerna finns i västra, centrala och östra Europa, över 10000 par per 2500 km<sup>2</sup>. I Skandinavien är populationen uppskattad till över 2000 par per 2500 km<sup>2</sup>. Dessa uppgifter är hämtade ur Hagemeyer & Blair (1997).

I Europa är arten för närvarande uppdelad i sex raser (Svensson 1992). Det är möjligt att dagens moderna forskning kommer att omkullkasta den gamla art- och rasindelningen (t.ex. Hansson &