



spring  alive

Spring Alive Annual Report

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Prepared by:

Joanna Kalinowska
Spring Alive European Project Coordinator
OTOP, ul. Odrowęża 24,
05-290 Marki k/Warszawy, Poland
Tel +48 22 761 82 05
Email: joanna.kalinowska@otop.org.pl

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1. Summary of the Spring Alive Project – season 2007

This document will give you an overview of the 2007 season of the Spring Alive Project.

After the first season of the project in 2006, the Spring Alive Steering Committee has decided to continue the organisation of Spring Alive. The results from the pilot season 2006 proved that the project worked and that partners, as well as the BirdLife partnership could gain great benefits from the initiative in the future.

During the preparations for the season 2007 some major improvements, especially considering the Spring Alive website, and cooperation between partners have been undertaken.

Over 16,000 records from over 9400 participants have been collected, 35% of them online, the rest on paper. 11% of all online-participants declared that they would want to join the national BirdLife Partner, an additional 15% of all online-participants would like to receive more information about the project. Both groups together form the group of “hot names”, making up 26% of all online-participants.

In some countries (Ireland and Poland around 5,000 records each; Italy, Russia around 1,000 records each), the project proved to be very effective in drawing the interest of the general public.

The project proved that it can be the basis of great media stories and provides a perfect opportunity to attract the interest of the wider public.

Thanks to the engagement of the partners and their involvement in the project we managed to develop the project and identified further challenges for the future.

All the detailed information you can find below.

2. Coordination of the project

a) Steering committee

The Steering Committee of the project currently consists of the following members:

- Representative of BirdLife European Division Office (Communication officer - Tania Paschen which was replaced in June 2007 by Herlinde Herpoel)
- Representative of the RSPB (Country Programmes Officer for Poland - Lars Lachmann)
- Representative of LIPU (Education Officer - Chiara Manghetti)
- Representative of BirdWatch Ireland (Development & Legal Officer – Niall Hatch)
- Representative of Vogelbescherming Nederland (Education Officer – Lars Soerink)
- Representative of OTOP (Chief Executive Officer – Izabela Flor, replaced in July 2007 by Development Director Danuta Pawlak)

Last years' participant of the Steering Committee - BirdLife Turkey – Doga Dernegi resigned temporarily from the works in the Steering Committee, due to the fact that they have not enough capacity.

The Steering Committee met twice in the season 2006/2007. First in January 2007 to assess the preparations for the season 2007, and afterwards in July 2007 to review the results of the project in 2007 and take the decision about the continuation of the project in the year 2008 and to prepare strategy and work plans for the new season. Minutes from those meetings were prepared by the project coordinator and presented to the meeting attendants.

At this point it is noted that the post of the foreseen representative of the BirdLife European Committee as a member of the Steering Committee of the Spring Alive Project is currently vacant. It would be highly desirable to have a representative of the European Committee in the Project Steering Group.

The official assessment for the Spring Alive Project - Season 2007 made by the Steering Committee, can be found at the end of this report.

b) Project coordination and supervision

The coordination of the project was continued by the European Spring Alive Project Coordinator Joanna Kalinowska, hosted by OTOP-BirdLife Poland, and supervised jointly by, CEO of OTOP (replaced as of July 2007 by the Development Director of OTOP) and by the RSPB Country Programme Officer for Poland.

As of November 2007, it was decided that also the Communications Officer at the BirdLife EDO will take a more prominent role in the supervision of the coordinator's work.

3. Spring Alive Website – redevelopment.

a) Change of the Subcontractor

In July 2006 the decision about the re-development of the Spring Alive Website has been taken. Afterwards there was an open tender conducted to choose a subcontractor based in Poland, to replace the previous subcontractor based in the UK. Having a subcontractor from Poland was supposed to secure cost-effectiveness of the redevelopment and ensure better communication between Spring Alive Project Coordinator and the subcontractor.

A Polish company named "SkyGroup" was finally selected.

b) System redevelopment

SkyGroup prepared a completely new website according to the technical specifications provided by the coordinator, which in turn were based on the prototype-website from 2006. Technology of the website development has been changed and from HTML and PHP it was taken to Flash 8 technology.

The system construction stayed mostly unchanged, but the looks of the website and the possibility of influencing the website by the local administrators has been greatly improved. Interactive elements were added, and much improvement was made on the map facility. The whole website has been ‘refreshed’ so it would be more attractive than its prototype 2006 version.

The administrative tools of the website have also much improved. The local administrators’ rights have been widened, which caused some difficulties for the national coordinators in the beginning. Nevertheless it allowed to nationalize the project more and gave partners more possibilities to influence the website.



The most important change however was the technologies used on the Spring Alive website – Flash 8 technology was used to allow an improved interactive presentation of the results and the educational content on the website. More maps were added – this year every species had its own map, but the results were also shown in a cumulative version on one map. Under the maps, a graph was added illustrating the development of records over the spring..

The data-collection-form was also improved – accordingly to suggestions of partners The data that was collected in the form included more information about the participants, and was easier to adjust by the partners. There was also a small place for participants to describe their observations.

The new website was more interactive and attractive than the previous one. The change was positively assessed by the partners and by the participants (see part „Evaluation”). General impression was that changes are going the right way, and the website should be further developed.

The change of technology showed some new challenges that have to be faced in the future:

- The Flash technology was too complicated for many old computers used by children and teachers, especially in central and eastern Europe.
- The mapping tool was slowing down older computers and it took too much time to load it.
- The delay in the realization of the website excluded some partners from full participation

Those problems were addressed and the Spring Alive Team is working on further improvements of the website.

c) Did the new system meet the ideas of improvements decided by the Steering Group?

The website was assessed by the participants, partners and Steering Group as much better than in season 2006. All the improvements decided as crucial at the meeting of the Spring Alive Steering Group in July 2006 were addressed and implemented:

- The communication on the website was much clearer than in the previous version
- A set of the teacher's materials was prepared and available on the website
- The layout was much more child-friendly
- There was more 'fun' on the website (postcards, games, screensavers)
- There were more pictures of birds, texts were more appropriate for younger children
- considerably shorter and simplified, but containing all the important information.

4. Partners participation and evaluation of the project

Project participation:

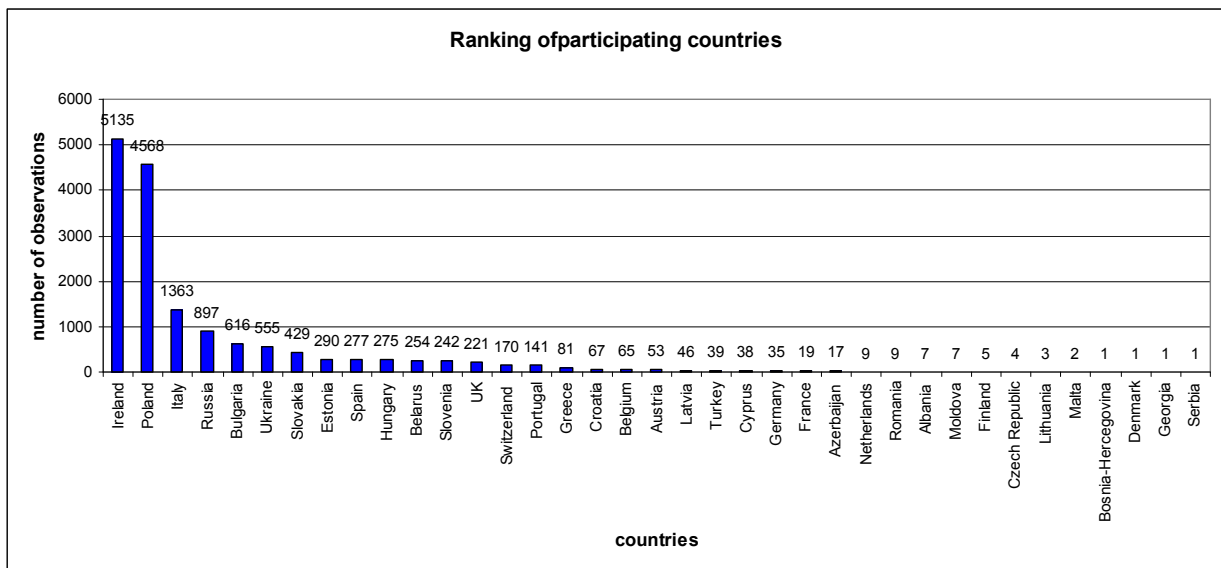
29 countries declared participation in the Spring Alive Project in 2007. We had results coming from 37 countries, and overall number of entries exceeded 16 000.

This year, partners that had participated in the Spring Alive season 2006, were more clear on what to do and how to conduct the project in their countries – which audiences to target and how to advertise the initiative. That brought some good results in many participating countries but especially in Ireland, Poland, Italy and Russia.

There were also few partners (like Cyprus, Hungary, Slovakia, Estonia, Croatia), which got involved this year much more than in 2006, and started Spring Alive in their country this season. They were more concentrated on testing the audiences and checking how the project works for them, rather than on proper dissemination of the idea.

The 2007 season also proved that the Spring Alive project is a very different tool for every country, the aims of running it (e.g. as PR project, as membership recruitment tool, as education project for schools) and the practices involved for every country are different.

There were three countries (Ireland, Poland and Italy) that have reached a level over 1000 observations. Two of them (Ireland and Poland) have collected around 5000 observations. There were also four countries that managed to collect between 500 – 1000 records. Comparing to the season 2006 this year's results were much better. The ranking list of countries that participated in the project can be found below:



The ranking list is slightly different if we take into consideration the number of records per number of inhabitant of the country.

Number of records/ inhabitants:

	Country	Percent of population
1.	Ireland	0.1251%
2.	Estonia	0.0218%
3.	Slovenia	0.0123%
4.	Poland	0.0120%
5.	Bulgaria	0.0080%
6.	Slovakia	0.0080%
7.	Cyprus	0.0039%
8.	Hangary	0.0027%
9.	Belarus	0.0026%
10.	Italy	0.0023%

Also ranking by number of records/member looks different. Please remember that this table does not show the real distribution of records among members, but was calculated by dividing the number of records by the number of members in each country.:

1	Poland	2.28
2	Ireland	1.03
3	Bulgaria	0.77
4	Croatia	0.67
5	Estonia	0.48
6	Slovakia	0.46
7	Belarus	0.42
8	Ukraine	0.37
9	Russia	0.37
10	Slovenia	0.24

Evaluation made by the partners at the end of the season showed that the partners from the top of the ranking list are satisfied with the project. Each of them has thought of a different strategy of approaching

participants. Some of them like Italy, have been approaching teachers, others have been targeting mainly the media channels (Ireland). Most of the successful partners have also created publicity for the project in their country via members and local groups. The experiences of partners around Europe are being collected and will be sent out to the partnership in form of a Spring Alive Best Practice Guide.

Some examples of „good practices” can be found below:

Ireland:

Ireland did a lot of media work on the project. Nevertheless, one of the most successful ideas was a special telephone line where people could register their sightings - “Spring Alive Telephone Hotline”, encouraging members of the public to call them with their sightings if they couldn’t, or didn’t want to, enter the data on-line.

Niall Hatch said:

„Our receptionists were provided with a special Excel spreadsheet to enter each caller’s details, and the data was then periodically entered into the project website by volunteers. This was a big success, and generated well over 1,500 records.”

Ireland collected over 5000 records.

Italy:

LIPU promoted the project mostly to teachers and via local groups. They organized trainings for volunteers and local branches and suggested promoting the project to schools. The Spring Alive Project appeared to be a great activity for local activists, who wanted to involve local community into LIPU’s activities. Chiara Manghetti, education officer at LIPU says:

„Training local branches of volunteers and organizing an event with the cities were both very successful. I found out that in Italy the project has big potential with schools; they love it.”

LIPU collected 1363 observations.

Poland:

In Poland the most successful idea was a contest for participants. Every first observation in every region was awarded with a swallow pin badge. Children were also encouraged to enter their stories about the first spring observation. Every week best stories were chosen and awarded by OTOP with a bird guide provided by a publishing house for free (they became a partner in the project). Danuta Pawlak OTOP’s Development Director says:

The contest was a great idea – children entered wonderful stories and we know from those reports that they were really excited about the Spring Alive Project”.

OTOP collected almost 5000 observations.

Medium sized partners were the most active in the project.

The above-mentioned best practices come from medium-sized partners, that are just developing their education programmes. We can generalize and say that the season 2007 has proven to be very attractive to medium-sized partners which have the capacity to deal with it on the one hand and have no similar projects on the other hand. Bigger partners were not really interested and did not participate actively in the project, though they have collected a number of records that allowed to cover the map of Europe with the observations.

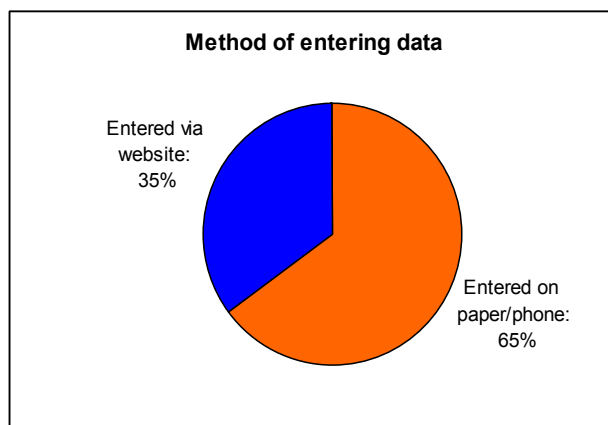
14 partners took part in the mentioned evaluation. Most of them were partners who made the most efforts for the promotion of the Spring Alive project.¹ Most of them estimated their efforts to promote the project as medium (7/14), but also judged the season as positive (also 9/14 answers). 5 out of fourteen were judged the season as not satisfying enough. The amount of effort partners putted in the project was correlated with the level of satisfaction of the project. In most cases, the more effort partners putted in the project, the more effective the project was for them in their eyes. Only one partner evaluated the project as a lot of effort and very little success.

Depending on the country, regarding the partners' reports, the audience that was most interested in the project was different – it depended on the partner and its approach to the Spring Alive idea. Nevertheless, all the partners promoted the project to their own members and they found that a lot of records come from them. This was also confirmed by the data from the Spring Alive database.

Additionally knowing that not all Spring Alive birds are present in all the participating countries, analysis of data proved that the Spring Alive Project has a „Flag” species that collects much more entries than other species in this particular country (White Stork in Poland, Russia, Bulgaria, Swallow in Ireland, Spain, Swift in Italy) – this species can be easily used for communication and project promotion.

5. Participation –data analysis -members, children, families and general public.

Information about the participants has been collected in the database this year as well. We did not manage to get information about every participant of the project due to the fact that many observations were entered on the paper or via telephone (Ireland). Nevertheless, we manage to analyze the collected data to get valuable information about the project realization.



5756 records were collected through the website. This is approximately 35% of all records. It shows that, although internet technology is very important, a project like Spring Alive still needs a lot of support through paper data collection. Most of the data entered by national coordinators on paper came from schools and groups of observers. Paper and telephone data collection can be also important for the project promotion in the future.

The analysis below is based on the internet data, as we managed to get precise information only from those data (excluding age information – see description below)

The analysis showed that approximately we collected 1.7 observations per observer. This shows that a lot of participants entered only one observation in the course of the project. It is in accordance to the fact that countries have their „flagship” species that are much more popular than others, but also maybe due to the fact that it still proves difficult to involve all participants enough so that they would return to the website as soon as they see their second species.

The most interesting seems to be the analysis of the age of the participants: the data that we gained from the website shows that the number of participant under 14 (our target group) was only around 40% of all website entries. This implies that the project is also attractive for older participants, and that the online-entry facility is used to a larger percentage by older people (as we have to remember that most of

¹ List of those countries: Ukraine, Slovenia, Slovakia, Ireland, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Switzerland, Russia, Portugal

the paper and telephone data were entered by groups and school classes including mostly children, families and teachers).

Although if we consider the fact that practically all paper records came from schools and were entered by children in our target group we can roughly say that the percentage of participants aged less than 14 years over the total number of records (website and paper) is 86% of records, so we can say that the project generally meets its target group.

We have to be of course cautious here and remember about the records entered on paper by adults. Nevertheless, taking into consideration the fact that it is very hard to say which paper data were entered on paper by children and which by adults we decided to count all the paper data as participants under 14 years old.

The summary of age group participation would therefore read as follows: the project meets its target group, additionally there is a considerable number of adults that is participating in the project.

	Total observations:	Entered on paper/phone:	Entered via website:	Together paper + under 14	Observations under 14 (web):	Observations over 14 (web):
Numbers	16277	10521	5756	12841	2320	3436
Percent of total		65%	35%	79%	14%	21%
Percent of website entries					40%	60%

Most interesting are the data regarding the membership participation in the project. Here we can base only on the data from the internet entries. The results of the analysis are following:

The number of records collected via website was 5756, but we have to consider that the factor of records per observer was 1.7. Therefore, the number of records has to be divided by 1.7 to get an approximate number of participants.

30% of the online-participants of the project were members of the appropriate BirdLife Partner, 70% were not:

The table below shows how many „hot names” the project can produce – this is very important knowledge, to assess the potential of Spring Alive for membership recruitment.

11% of all online-participants declared that they would want to join the national BirdLife Partner², an additional 15% of all online-participants would like to receive more information about the project. Both groups together form the group of “hot names”, making up 26% of all online-participants.

46% of participants were female, while 54% were men. This shows that there is no specific audience of the project as far as gender of the participants is concerned.

² Here we have to consider, that some of them were children, who were unaware that membership comes with a membership fee. Therefore, the potential number of actual new members would have been lower than that.

PARTICIPANTS:	Number of records	Number of observers (records/1.7)	In % of all online-participants
Non-members	4008	2358	70%
Members	1748	1028	30%
Total:	5756	3386	

NON MEMBERS:			
Don't want to join	3393	1996	58%
Want to join	615	362	11%
Total:	4008	2358	

NON MEMBERS, THAT DO NOT WANT TO JOIN:			
Want more information about the project:	853	502	15%
Don't want more information about the project:	2540	1494	44%
Total:	3393	1996	

Together - non-members that want to join or want more info about the project (hot names):	1468	864	26% of all participants
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6. Results – what do the collected bird data show?

The results of the project showed that the project concept works well. An overview of those results is given below.

Taking into consideration the whole of Europe and all four species, the week when most observations were made was this year in the week between: 26/03 - 01/04 – the same week as last year (27/03 – 02/04 in 2006).

If we show these results split by countries, taking into consideration only countries where a minimum number of observations (over 70 observations in 2006 and over 100 observations in 2007) were collected (see table below), the results are slightly different: Spring species were spotted by Spring Alive participants this year approximately 0,5 weeks or 2.6 days earlier than last year.

If we analyze data more in more detail – separate by countries and species (only in countries and with species that had more than 100 records per species in each of 2006 and 2007), we can see that the results are not obvious. Here it become obvious, that the relatively low number of records, especially in 2006, still allows for too many accidental irregularities (varying delays of project start, different ways of promotion, large promotion event on specific dates), that should become less, the more observation will be submitted, and the more the project implementation becomes standardized.

As an example, it could be assumed, that with a growing number of records the peak day of records would normally fall within the peak week of records, which is currently not always the case.



Country	Overall records		2006			2007			Difference	
	2006	2007	peak day	peak week	peak week	peak day	peak week	peak week (dates)	days	week
All species										
Belarus	267	254	2006-05-23	21	21/05-27/05	2007-03-22	13	26/03 - 01/04	-62	-8
Bulgaria	440	616	2006-03-25	13	19/03-25/03	2007-03-26	13	26/03 - 01/04	1	0
Hungary	120	275	2006-03-25	14	25/03-01/04	2007-03-31	13	26/03 - 01/04	6	-1
Ireland	299	5135	2006-04-22	17	16/04-22/04	2007-05-20	20	14/05 - 20/05	28	3
Italy	216	1363	2006-05-05	17	16/04-22/04	2007-06-07	23	04/06 - 10/06	33	6
Poland	432	4568	2006-05-07	19	30/04-05/05	2007-04-01	13	26/03 - 01/04	-36	-6
Portugal	106	141	2006-03-16	12	12/03-18/03	2007-04-10	11	12/03 - 18/03	25	-1
Russia	168	897	2006-05-14	19	30/04-05/05	2007-04-15	18	29/04 - 06/05	-29	-1
Slovenia	98	242	2006-04-09	16	09/04-15/04	2007-03-20	12	19/03 - 25/03	-20	-4
Spain	311	277	2006-03-11	11	05/03-11/03	2007-03-11	11	12/03 - 18/03	0	0
Switzerland	130	170	2006-03-31	14	25/03-01/04	2007-04-24	17	23/04 - 29/04	24	3
UK	77	221	2006-04-29	14	25/03-01/04	2007-04-28	17	23/04 - 29/04	-1	3
EUROPE AVERAGE									-2.6	-0.5

Country	Overall records		2006			2007			Difference	
	2006	2007	peak day	peak week	peak week	peak day	peak week	peak week (dates)	days	week
Cuckoo										
Ireland	124	755	2006-04-21	17	16/04-22/04	2007-05-20	20	14/05 - 20/05	29	3

Country	Overall records		2006			2007			Difference	
	2006	2007	peak day	peak week	peak week	peak day	peak week	peak week (dates)	days	week
Stork										
Bulgaria	278	755	2006-03-17	13	19/03-25/03	2007-03-26	13	26/03 - 01/04	9	0
Poland	339	2264	2006-04-01	16	09/04-15/04	2007-04-01	13	26/03 - 01/04	0	-3
Average									4.5	-1.5

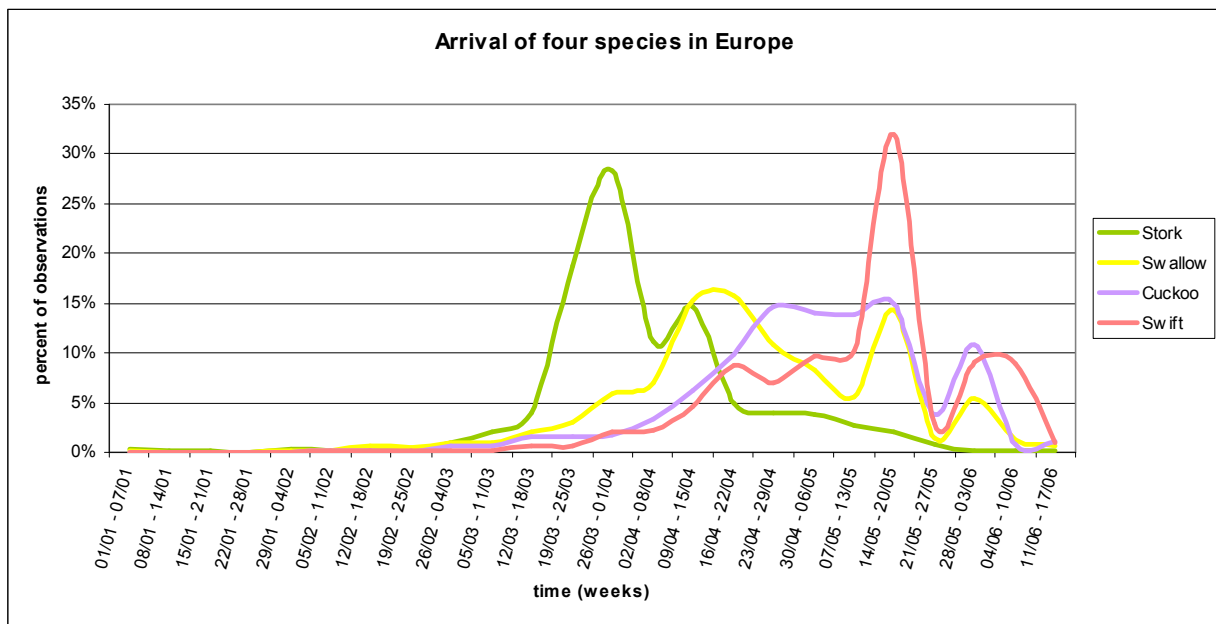
Country	Overall records		2006			2007			Difference	
	2006	2007	peak day	peak week	peak week	peak day	peak week	peak week (dates)	days	week
Swallow										
Italy	112	509	2006-03-27	13	19/03-25/03	2007-04-01	18	29/04 - 06/05	5	5
Ireland	339	2721	2006-04-01	16	09/04-15/04	2007-05-20	20	14/05 - 20/05	49	4
Poland	104	999	2006-04-21	17	16/04-22/04	2007-04-14	15	09/04 - 15/04	-7	-2
Spain	164	143	2006-03-04	11	05/03-11/03	2007-03-11	11	12/03 - 18/03	7	0
Average									13.5	1.75

Arrivals of birds – species arrivals:

The graph below shows how the birds arrived in Europe:

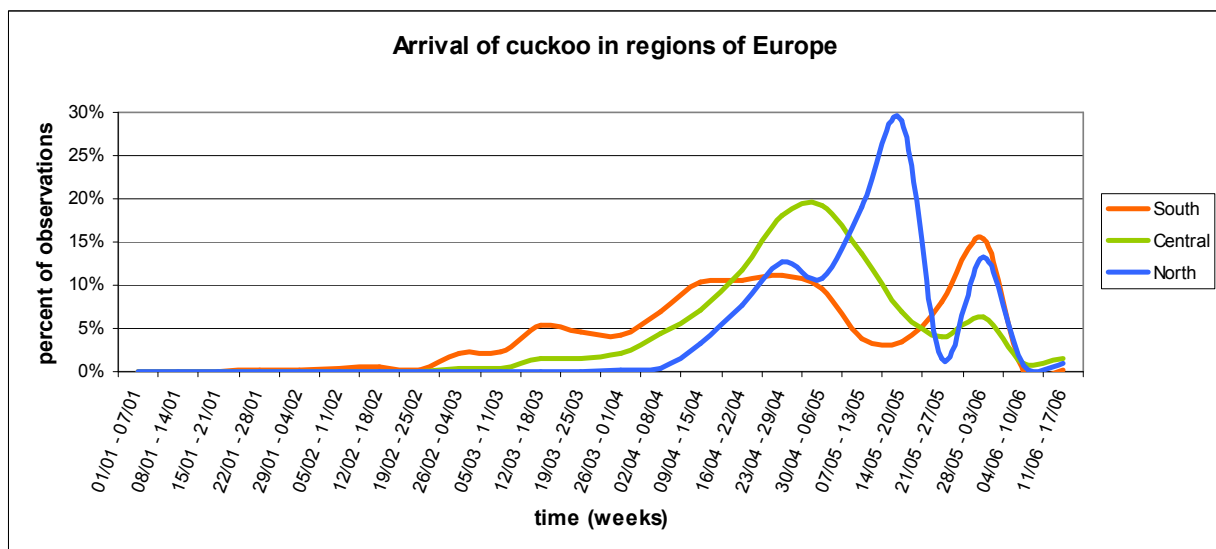
First the White Stork arrived, then the arrival of Swallows, Cuckoos and in the end arrival of Swifts, which proves that the data we are collecting coincide with the general knowledge about birds.

The graph below shows the distribution of the compiled arrival data for each species from the whole of Europe over the weeks of spring:



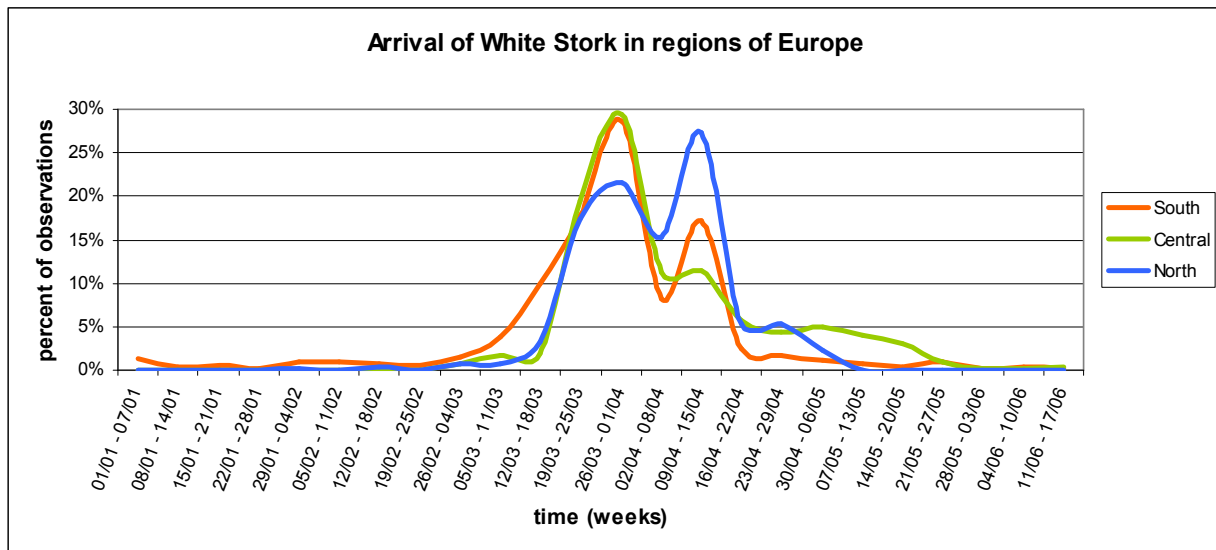
The graphs below show the arrival of four Spring Alive species. The orange line always presents the arrival in southern countries, the green line marks central Europe, and blue line shows the arrival in the North of Europe.

Cuckoo:



The large first peak of Cuckoo arrivals in the Northern countries has largely been caused by a big promotional event by BirdWatch Ireland on 20 May. Here, the influence of specific promotion events in certain countries at a relatively low number of records becomes apparent.

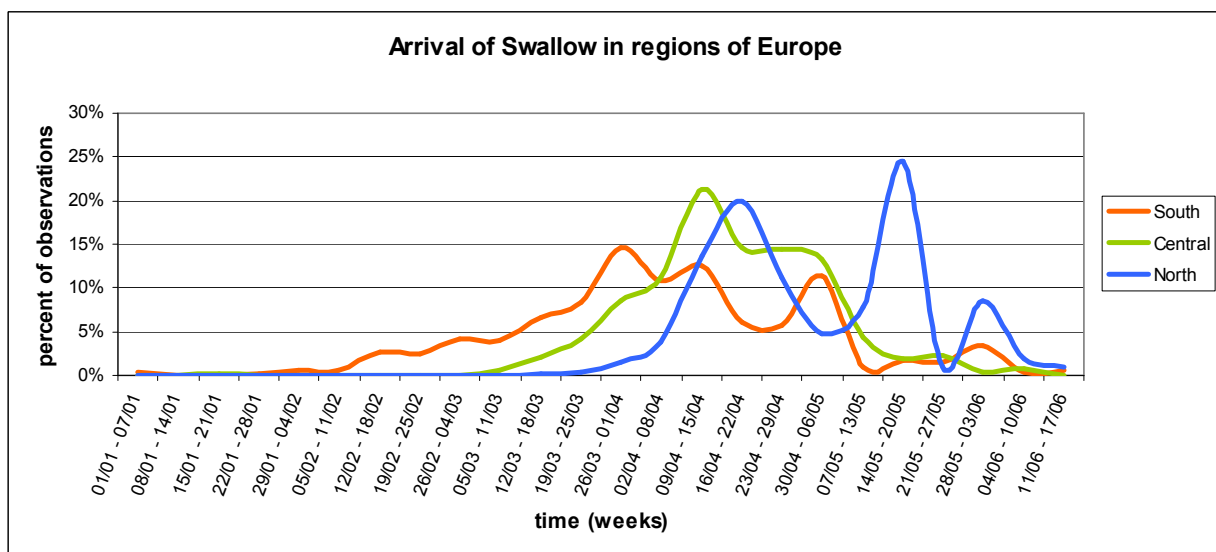
White Stork:



The two peaks of White Stork arrival are probably not related to peculiarities of the promotion of Spring Alive, but to weather patterns along the eastern migratory route over the Bosphorus, bringing the storks in two waves. Most White Stork observations in Spring Alive 2007 refer to storks migrating along the eastern route. Stork arrival along the western route (relatively few observations, Jan-Mar only) is not related to these two peaks.

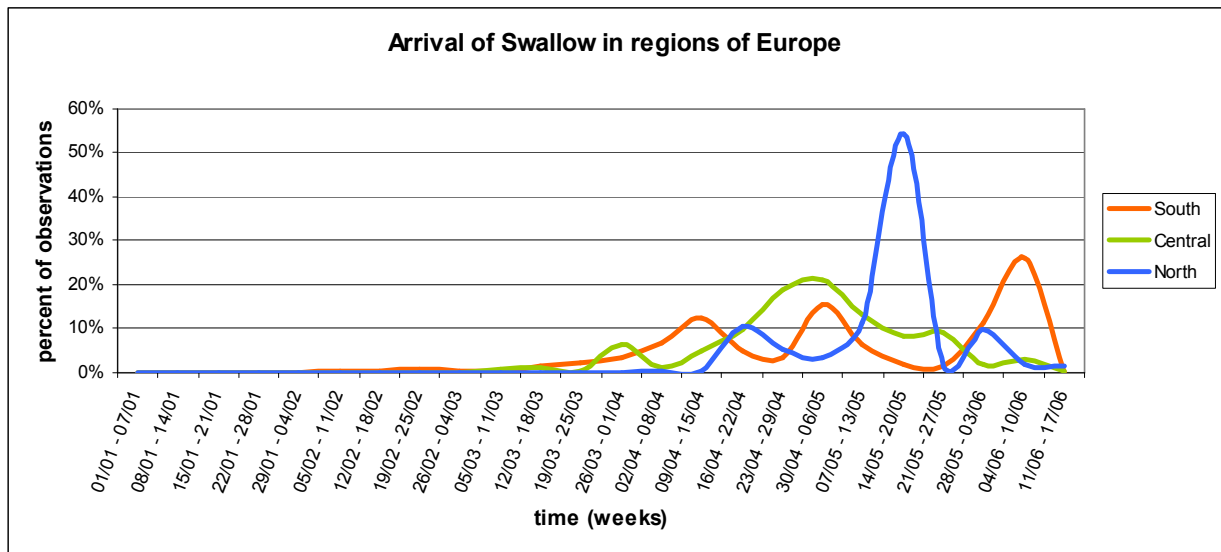
It would be good to be able to prove this additionally by weather data, which unfortunately were not yet available for the current season. At the moment, we are only able to obtain national weather data, but not data for the whole of Europe.

Swallow:



Again, here the second peak in the northern countries is probably attributable to the promotional event in Ireland.

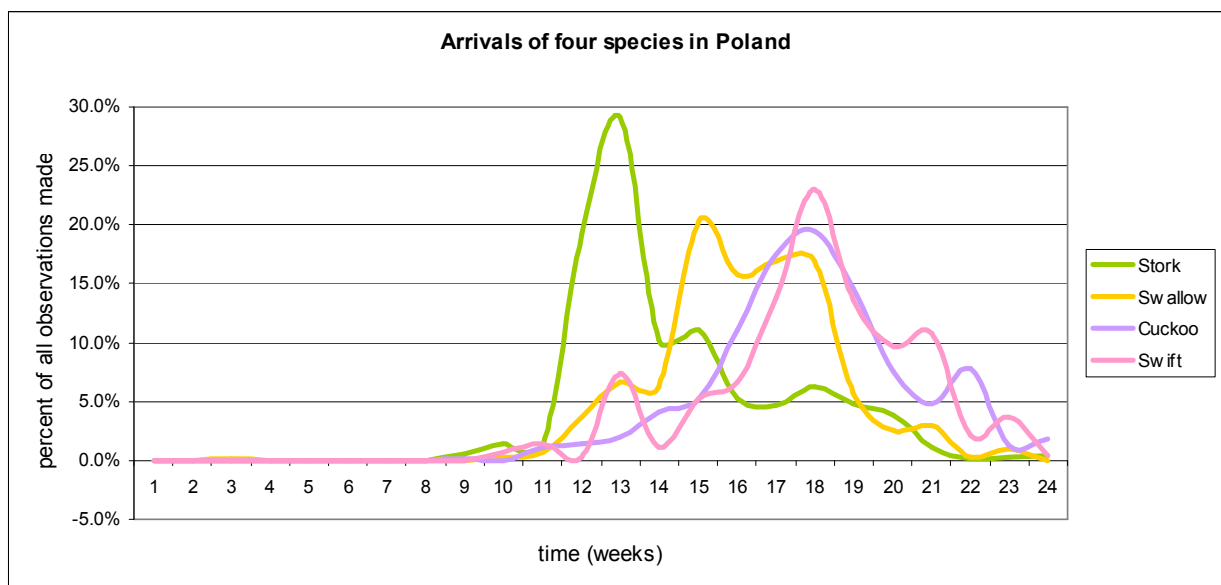
Swift:



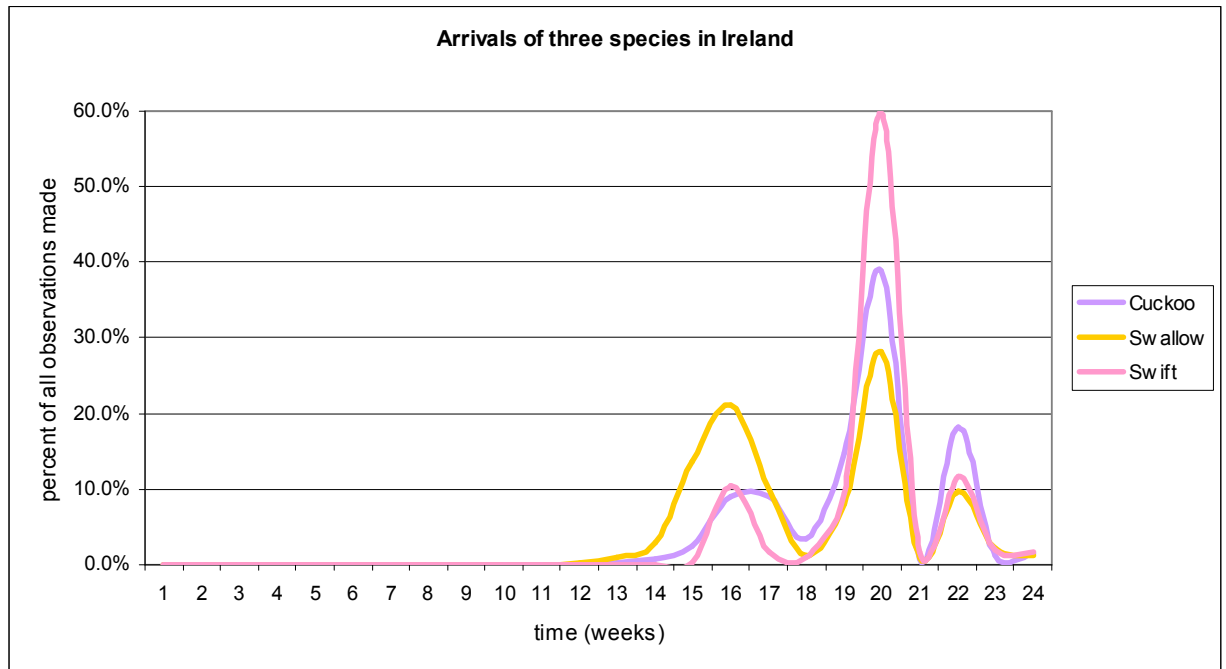
The last peak in the southern countries is attributable to a promotional event in Italy focusing on swifts.

We now use the records of those countries with a large number of observations (Poland and in Ireland) to show the distribution of records over the season. By doing so, we were able to show that the distribution of records largely follows the ideal graph that we expected.

- a) in Poland where data were collected in equal manner over the whole season (no specific promotional events), the results show what we expected – i.e. the distribution of records is continuous, with one obvious peak either in the middle (swift, cuckoo, swallow) or nearer the start of the graph (stork). Smaller peaks either side of the main peak probably reflect additional waves of arrival caused by weather conditions. In Poland it can be assumed that people correctly understand the idea of the project, and therefore really recorded their first observations only, and did not refrain from entering their first observations after somebody else has recorded the species earlier.



- b) In Ireland, data were collected during certain peak activities over the season, created a graph that shows 3 coinciding peaks for each of the country's three species. Here, the graphs rather reflect the distribution of the promotional events than the timing of the arrival of birds.



7. Funding and cooperation – what was prepared and what we achieved

a) RSPB funding

Basic funding of 20,000 GBP for the Spring Alive Project for this year was secured by the RSPB. Of these, 18,000 GBP were used for the core activities and the Spring Alive coordination in 2006/2007, additional 2,000 GBP were spent to support the implementation of the project in Russia.

There was additional fund for the Spring Alive Website development that also came from the RSPB. It was an amount of 5552 GBP, which has covered the costs of the new website production.

Additionally there was 5000 Euros secured for the project funding by AEWA, which was spent to support 5 project partners with 1,000 Euro each.

b) Cooperation with AEWA



The cooperation with AEWA (African – Eurasian Waterbird Agreement) on the Spring Alive Project was set up in the beginning of 2005. The exchange of information was followed by a meeting in July 2006, when the Spring Alive Project was presented in Bonn, at the exhibition organized as a celebration of the 10th anniversary of the constitution of the Agreement.

The event organized by AEWA – World Migratory Birds Day – was promoted to all the partners participating in Spring Alive and we received information about organizing and promoting the event from the following countries: Ireland, Italy, Poland, Russia, Hungary and Bulgaria.

The total amount of funding secured by AEWA for 2006/2007 season is 5000 EUR.

c) **Eurogeographics**



During the preparations for the second season and website redevelopments there was a problem with the maps used for the Spring Alive project: We wanted to have the map fit the European standard used for statistical purposes by Eurostat. We decided that regions we use should be on the level NUTS 2 of the Eurostat division. Nevertheless the map with a proper division necessary for the maps production was not available for free, which would generate more costs for the project budget, and these extra costs were not planned.

That is why we started to look for a sponsor that can provide us with the appropriate maps. The association that decided to help us was Eurogeographics (<http://www.eurogeographics.org>) - representing 49 National Mapping and Cadastral Agencies from 42 countries across Europe. Their mission is to deliver the **European Spatial Data Infrastructure** to help governments, businesses and citizens enjoy a safe and sustainable future.

Thanks to cooperation with Eurogeographics we received a free map (from the set called EuroBoundary Map, which offers the combined strength of **detailed European administrative units** and the **linkage to its corresponding NUTS codes**) together with copyrights for two years. .

Accordingly Eurogeographics became one of the project sponsors. Its logo appeared on the Spring Alive Project Website and has been presented on all printed materials prepared within the project.

8. Project presentations

a) Presentation of the project at the European Partnership Meeting in Slovenia

The Project was presented to the BirdLife Partner representatives at the European Partnership Meeting in Slovenia, Ljubljana, 13-15 October 2006.

There was a presentation of the project given by the Chief Executive of OTOP – Izabela Flor and a stand at the Partnership Fair, where all partners could contact the Spring Alive Project officer and discuss the current issues connected to the initiative.

The results and the Annual Report of the project for 2006 were distributed there.

9. Spring Alive Project evaluation

The season 2007 was the start of the official Spring Alive Project and provided the opportunity to undertake a proper evaluation. Thanks to the work of Chiara Manghetti from LIPU, there was especial evaluation plan and form prepared.

The evaluation was prepared in March, and conducted in three countries: Italy, Ireland and Poland, between April and June 2007 on the following groups of participants: school children and teachers.

The evaluation was mainly targeted at children and teachers in schools. The decided objectives that we wanted to evaluate were the following:

- After attending Spring Alive! this spring, children aged 8-14 will recognize the 4 species “messengers” of the spring ;
- 40% of the children participating will share on the website at least one emotion that the arrival of the spring inspired;
- 70% of the children aged 8-14 will know what “migration” means
- 70% of the children aged 8-14 participating will agree that conserving the habitats is fundamental to protect the birds;
- Within 6 months of completion, 30% of the children or their families who entered their observations will join BirdLife Partners association or asked BirdLife about other conservation or education activities.
- 60% of the teachers will be interested in participating again next year to the project

The evaluation was the most important for the partners in the appropriate country, so they could decide on what is the further development of the project. Nevertheless the results of this evaluation helped deciding on the development of the project core and some of the conclusions drawn from the project were included in recommendations for the next year.

The evaluation took place in two classes in Poland and Italy and in one class in Ireland and covered telephone talks to the teachers in Italy and Poland. We checked the knowledge gained by children during the participation in the project (pre- and post-tests);

This brought the following results:

- From the pre and post tests we know that after the project the children were able to recognize the 4 species better than before (in average **from 60% to 85% in Italy and from 30% to 74% in Poland**)



- From the website and observation we know that 40% of the children participating will share on the website at least one emotion that the arrival of the spring inspired;
- 90% of children from test group understood what migration means after participation in the project
- 75% of the children aged understood what is conservation of birds and that conserving the habitats is fundamental to protect the birds after the end of the project.
- 100% of the teachers will be interested in participating again next year to the project

10. Steering Committee assessment

Assessment

BirdLife International Spring Alive Project – Spring 2007

prepared by the Spring Alive Steering Group, based on the results of an evaluation meeting on 11-12/07/07

2007 was the first year of the pan-European Spring Alive project, following the pilot edition in 2006. This season the project achieved the indicators of success that were decided by the Steering Group in July 2006. The number of individual records registered was 16000, exceeding largely the 10000 records that were expected for this year's Spring season.

Additionally, two BirdLife Partners (BirdWatch Ireland and OTOP-BirdLife Poland) managed to get 5000 observations from the participants in their country. The best practices used during the project realization included contacts with teachers, distribution of printed materials, live radio interviews, telephone hotline, involving local branches and promoting at the events.

The Spring Alive website has been revised and amended, and comparing to the pilot season it was much improved. It invites children to enter their observations while giving information about the characteristics of the birds and their environments. This forms part of the Spring Alive Campaigns objectives, which are to create and heighten awareness with young children for migratory birds and to increase their critical thinking on environmental issues.

The highest numbers of entries were reached by the medium BirdLife partners from the European partnership. BirdLife's biggest partners are more reluctant to take part in the Spring Alive programme as they already promote their own programmes that cover the same objectives Spring Alive wants to reach through its project. Other partners from the smaller member states have, although they declare the project very useful, no capacity to prepare a proper campaign.

The three partners that implemented the initiative most successfully (Ireland, Poland and Italy) found the project very valuable for their development because it puts them in contact with potential members and additionally it got them very good media coverage during springtime. Moreover, the Spring Alive campaign helps them to build a positive attitude of people towards the BirdLife partnership.

The number of participants that entered their data directly through the Spring Alive website was close to 4000, while most observations were sent to the partners on paper or reported by telephone. Overall the number of participants is estimated to be around 8 000..

In many countries the anticipated large media potential of the project could be confirmed. Accordingly the Steering Group suggests also that the project can be a very good communication tool for the ongoing BirdLife Flyways Campaign.

The Steering Committee recognizes that there is still a lot of room for improvement in the Spring Alive project: Strengthening communication, finding additional funds to sponsor national and international activities and further improvements of the Spring Alive website were pointed out as important goals for the upcoming season 2007/2008.

As the Spring Alive Campaign has grown significantly in 2007 and carries a lot of potential, the Steering Group decided to continue the project in 2008.