

Slender-billed Curlew (*Numenius tenuirostris*) in the Czech Republic: the historical occurrence of this species in Bohemia and its return on the checklist

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Abstract: The Slender-billed Curlew (*Numenius tenuirostris*) is a highly endangered, almost extinct shorebird species in Europe. This paper describes little-known evidence about its occurrence in the Bohemian territory, which could help to get this species back on the checklist of birds in the Czech Republic.

Key words: Slender-billed Curlew (*Numenius tenuirostris*), occurrence, Jiří Janda, Bohemia, Czech Republic, historical ornithology

Introduction

The Slender-billed Curlew, a highly endangered species very common in Europe in the 19th century, but rare in the 20th century, used to nest in the vicinity of Tomsk in Russian Siberia between 1909 and 1925. It could be seen flying more often in southern Europe, in the Middle East and in northern Africa (Gretton *et al.* 2002; Cleeves *et al.* 2008; Buchanan *et al.* 2010; Corso *et al.* 2014; Kirwan *et al.* 2015). The causes if its vanishing might have been environmental changes, hunting and other factors (Vangeluwe *et al.* 1998; Have & Gallo-Orsi 2001; Donald *et al.* 2010; Brown *et al.* 2014; BirdLife International 2015). Today there might be fifty individuals. This species was described in 1817 by L. J. P. Vieillot, based on findings from Egypt in 1798 (typus in NHM Paris, France, Oehler 1948; Voisin & Voisin 2012; Jansen 2015). In Europe it was seen for the first time in Italy and Greece (Bonaparte 1833; Anonymus 1842; Schlegel 1844; Naumann 1851) and in Germany in the first half of the 19th century (Bauše 1899; Fritsch 1870).

The Slender-billed Curlew in the Czech Republic and in central Europe

The historical occurrence of the Slender-billed Curlew in the Czech Republic was presented by Hudec & Černý (1977), Hudec *et al.* (1995), Kren (2000) and Hudec & Šťastný (2005). Anděra (2003) claimed that this occurrence cannot be backed up any trustworthy evidence and Mlíkovský (2004) questioned it all. The Czech Rarities Committee has crossed out this species from the birds checklist without giving any sources, saying: confusion, mistakes in localization, insufficient description (to 15.XII.2011, Anonymus s. d. a, b; 2013; Vavřík 2015). Because the possibility of repeated occurrences in central Europe is nowadays low (last time it was seen in Hungary in 2001, Oláh & Pigniczki 2010), the historical reports about its occurrence in individual countries are carefully kept (Renner *et al.* 1995; Gallo-Orsi *et al.* 2001; Barthel & Helbig 2005; Koválik *et al.* 2010; Stawarczyk in litt.). If it is not possible to trace back evidence of a literary source, there is no reason to cross that item out. The absence of evidence after World War II was mainly caused by uncontrolled perishing of historic ornithological collections and connected writings (Crockford 2009; about their extent, see Štěpánek 1956). Elimination of sources (literature) and rewriting of facts might destroy historic ornithology in Czech countries. It is nice to see that in the world avibase, this species is still to be found in Czech Republic (Lepage 2015).

The occurrence in Bohemia

Factually, J. Janda's report is totally unknown. He gave it to K. Hudec for the needs of AERC (Hudeček in Hudec *et al.* 1995).

Janda (1927: 297) clearly said that the Slender-billed Curlew had been seen a few times in Bohemia and Moravia, he hadn't excluded its next occurrence and that was why he was enclosing its description. Following that Janda (1913: 505; 1930: 441) clearly wrote in a footnote: "A few years ago this report was sent to me from Bohemia. Unfortunately I do not have it on me". This might have been between 1902 and 1913 (Janda 1902: not evidence). J. Janda also justified the spatial and time incompleteness of the data. Similarly incomplete reports are accepted in geographical localization in biology and in European literature (see Anonymus s. d. c, specimen in collection by C. L. Brehm, Thüringen, Germany, Rost & Grimm 2004).

Jiří Janda (1865-1938) was a accidental school teacher, a founding member of the Czech Ornithology Society and an important Czech zoologist and ornithologist (Štokán 1934; Musílek 1938; Gebhardt 1964; Hudec 1999; Heráňová 2013; 2014).

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Koliha tenkozobá (*Numenius tenuirostris*) na území České republiky: historický výskyt v Čechách a návrat druhu na checklist

Koliha tenkozobá (*Numenius tenuirostris*) je kriticky ohrožený, téměř vymřelý druh bahňáka v Evropě. Je popsán málo známý důkaz výskytu na území Čech, zakládající návrat vyškrtnutého druhu zpět na seznam druhů ptáků České republiky.

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