

Historical record of Richard's Pipit (*Anthus richardi*) on the territory of Upper Silesia

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Abstract: Historical ornithological literature contains so far scientifically underused data. In 1885 Richard's Pipit, *Anthus richardi* Vieillot, 1818, was found in the surroundings of Cieszyn in Upper Silesia, today's Poland. This species had not been known either in Upper Silesia or Silesia.

Key words: *Anthus richardi*, Josef Želisko, historical record, Upper Silesia, Poland

Introduction

Richard's Pipit, *Anthus richardi* Vieillot, 1818, nests in south-western Siberia and in north-eastern Kazakhstan up to Baikal Lake. Regularly flies throughout Europe and northern Africa (BirdLife International 2017, Alström & Mild 2010, Mayer 1958, Mascia 2009). The species Richard's Pipit (with five subspecies) was singled out from the superspecies New Zealand Pipit, *Anthus novaeseelandiae* (Gmelin, 1789), altogether five separate species (AERC TAC 2003). The subspecies *A. r. richardi* was described by L. J. P. Vieillot in France in 1818 (typ specimens in Baillon collections at La Chatre, Vieillot 1818, Mearns et al. 2015). Shortly after being described, Richard's Pipit was seen by experts near Vienna in Austria in 1819, and both later (Brehm 1823, von Pelzeln 1871, Lorenz von Liburnau 1892, Keller 1890, von Tschusi 1892). There might be a problem to distinguish Richard's Pipit, *A. richardi*, and Blyth's Pipit, *Anthus godlewskii* (Taczanowski, 1876), in the nature (Christensen & Olsen 1984, Moorhouse 1989, Alström & Mild 1997, Kratzer 1997, Copete & Amada 2001, Dupriez & Millington 2010, López et al. 2012). In the Czech Republic it was found near Postupice (coordinate 49 43 41/14 46 38) in Central Bohemia on July 17, 1963, and then given into the collection of the National Museum in Prague (decided by J. Hanzák, Hudec 1983, Hudec et al. 1995, Šťastný & Hudec 2011, Anonymus s. d., d, Vašák et al. 2006). It is not known why the Czech Rarities Committee for Ornithology crossed out Richard's Pipit from the list of Czech birds on December 12, 2013 (Anonymus s. d., b, Vavřík & FK ČSO 2015). The committee justified their deed by saying something about "mistakes" and "suspicious circumstances" without presenting picture documentation of the given record.

Richard's Pipit (*Anthus richardi*) in Silesia

In northeastern Moravia in environment of town Místek (coordinate 50 4 12/14 25 48), on the border with Czech Silesia, A. Schwab (1807-1891), pharmacist and collector of birds, saw two migrating specimen in September in different years (in year 1852 and 1856-68) and then he put them into his collection (Schwab 1869, with a detailed description, Jirsík 1955, Hudec 1983a, Hudec et al. 1966, 1995, Šťastný & Hudec 2011). Specimen's described as "Richard's Pipit", now in Moravian Museum in Brno, are Tawny Pipits, *Anthus campestris* (Linnaeus, 1758). The Moravian specimen were not part of Schwab's handwritten catalogue (Hudeček & Hanák 1999, 2000, revision: FK R 0052, 0053, Anonymus s. d., a). During his lifetime, Schwab gave away his collections also to schools and thus his findings might have correlated to the reality described by him (von Wurzbach 1876). In Czech Silesia Richard's Pipit has not been

seen yet (Molitor & Ševčík 2013). In Poland it has been seen thirty-five times on the Baltic shore, once by the Vistula estuary into the Odra River (Tomialojć & Stawarczyk 2003, Stawarczyk in litt.). In Polish Silesia, in the historical former Prussian part, it has not been seen (Floericke 1892, Kolibay 1906, Dyrz et al. 1991, Henel 2002, Smyk & Stawarczyk 2015). In literature we can find records about it in the former historical Austrian part, but very rarely migrating (Rzehak 1891, Holewa 1900, Blasius 1900). This general mention probably concerns the below described record in the surroundings of Cieszyn (Jagiello & Linert 2010). Sometimes there are discoveries of unknown reports or documents for given territories (e.g. Kirwan 2005).

Želisko's record

Josef Želisko, forester of archduke Albrecht, Duke of Teschen, on September 27, 1885, found seven specimen of Richard's Pipit ("Corydalla Richardi Vieill.", Spornpieper, = *A. richardi*, identification synonyms according to von Homeyer 1885 and Blasius 1900) near Dziengelau, now Dziegiełow (coordinate 49 43 23/18 42 17), municipality Goleszów, district Cieszyn, Silesian voivodeship, and he shot one to death for taxidermy (Želisko in von Tschusi & von Dalla-Torre 1888: 206). This report completes the whole picture of avifauna in the surroundings of Cieszyn, Upper and Polish Silesia. Želisko (Želiska) came from Telč in Moravia and since 1882 up 1888 he had been taking part in the activities of ornithological observatories in the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy by detailed observation of avifauna in the surroundings of his Silesian place of operation (von Tschusi 1887a, Anonymus 1890, Dalla-Torre & von Tschusi 1885, von Tschusi & Dalla-Torre 1888, etc.). For example he shot to death a Yellow-breasted Bunting, *Emberiza aureola* (Pallas, 1773) near Dziegiełow on December 7, 1886 and on December 10 he sent it to von Tschusi for his collection (von Tschusi 1887b, Pražák 1900, Kněžourek 1910, Jirsík 1955, Hudec 1983b, Hudec et al. 1966, 1995: there incorrect year like 1887). In the same place he saw a couple of Grey-headed Wagtails, *Motacilla flava thunbergi* Billberg, 1828. He summed up his experience in a treatise on birds of Austrian Silesia (Želisko 1888). Victor, empire knight Tschusi zu Schmidhoffen (1847-1924), was a Austrian ornithologist living in Hallein, Salzburg. He owned a collection of Palearctic birds counting 10 000 specimens, today placed in museums in Vienna, Munich, and Salzburg (Anonymus 1907, 1926, Kleinschmidt 1907, Gengler 1924, Mearns & Mearns 1998). His personality was a guarantee of reliable reports and he criticized a lot of incorrect information in footnotes. Karl Wilhelm von Dalla-Torre, aristocrat von Thurnberg and Sternhoff (1850-1928), was an Austrian taxonomist, entomologist, and botanist, professor of zoology at Innsbruck University (Anonymus s. d., c, Kilzer & Willi 2011). Both of them became editors of ornithological observatories in the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy.

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