

Routes and timing of Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* migration in the Ukraine

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Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* is a common and widespread breeding wader species in most of the Ukraine, except for the southern regions. The main winter grounds of the European population are situated in the southern part of western Europe and in Northern Africa (Gladkov 1951; Kistyakivsky 1957; Baumanis 1985). Most European ring recoveries are from areas situated south of the +2°C isotherm (Glutz von Blotzheim 1977). Because of this, knowledge about the migratory routes and migration phenology of Common Snipe is limited.

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Бекас *Gallinago gallinago* является обыкновенным и широко распространенным видом куликов на большей части Украины, за исключением южных районов. Главные зимовки европейской популяции расположены в южной части западной Европы и в Северной Африке (Гладков, 1954; Кистяковский, 1957; Бауманис, 1985). Большинство возвратов окольцованных птиц в Европе следуют из районов, расположенных к югу от изотермы +2°C (Glutz *et al.* 1977). В связи с этим знание о миграционных путях и фенологии бекаса по-прежнему ограничено.

New information about Common Snipe migration in the Ukraine was obtained during 1975-1990 by means of a questionnaire survey. Spring migration of Common Snipe occurs in March and April. In the southern parts of the Ukraine, however, these birds can sometimes appear in spring as early as the second half of February. The average dates of its arrival occur between 20-30 March or 1-10 April. There appears to be three main migratory fronts. The first birds appear on the west of the Crimea, in Zaporozhye and Odessa regions. From these areas Common Snipe move northwards through Zaporozhye to Dnepropetrovsk and then to Poltava, Kharkov and Sumy regions. The second front goes through the Odessa region and Moldova north and north-eastwards to Vinnitsa and Kiev regions. The third front occurs in the northern Ukraine and goes from west to east through the Volynia, Rovno, Zhitomir, Kiev, Chernigov and Sumy regions. The second and third migration fronts mix in the Kiev and Chernigov regions. There are two areas in particular, where Common Snipe appear comparatively late in the context of their spring arrival. The first occurs in the shadow of the Carpathian mountains within the territory of Ternopol and Khmelnytsk regions. Another occurs in the central Ukraine (Kirovograd and Cherkassy regions). The spring arrival pattern of Common Snipe is similar to that of Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*,

Black Kite *Milvus migrans* and Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*.

To describe the phenology of autumn migration of snipe, all available published data for the 1960-1975 period, in addition to our material of 1975-1990, was included. Phenological information for the autumn migration was not so abundant as for the spring. Most Common Snipe in autumn occur in October and November. The birds can, however, stay longer in southern parts of the Ukraine and have even been recorded during winter.

The dates of birds' arrival and departure have not been constant with time. An analysis of published literature shows that whilst some bird species have shown earlier arrival dates in the 20th century (White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*, Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*) the arrival dates of Common Snipe have become later.