

Sex Ratio, Biometrics and Fat Score of Migratory and Wintering Reed Buntings *Emberiza schoeniclus* (Aves: Passeriformes) in Bulgaria

Boris P. Nikolov, Dimitar N. Nankinov, Svetla Y. Dalakchieva, Konstantin S. Popov, Svetlan K. Ivanov

Bulgarian Ornithological Centre, Institute of Zoology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd., 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria; E-mail: bulg_orn_centre@zoology.bas.bg

Abstract. The overall sex ratio of 397 Reed Buntings (*Emberiza schoeniclus*) captured between October and December 1988 was significantly different from the expected even (50:50) distribution between the two sex categories; in October the females outnumbered males by 2:1, in November and December the sex ratio was not skewed towards any of the sexes. Males were found to be significantly larger than females. Progressive decrease from October to December was found in tarsus length, bill length to plumage and bill width in both males and females, while bill length to nostrils decreased significantly only in females. Biometrics data show that the large-sized subspecies breeding on the Balkans and adjacent areas were gradually outnumbered by the smaller *schoeniclus* arriving from further north and northeast. The increase in fat score from 2.25 in October to 3.25 in December, in both sexes, could be a sign for ceasing the migration at least in part of the birds, which have chosen the wetlands along the Bulgarian Black Sea Coast as wintering ground and which have started refueling after the energy-consuming migration.

Key words: sex ratio, biometric parameters, fat score, Reed Bunting, *Emberiza schoeniclus*, Bulgaria