

NOVE KNJIGE

New books

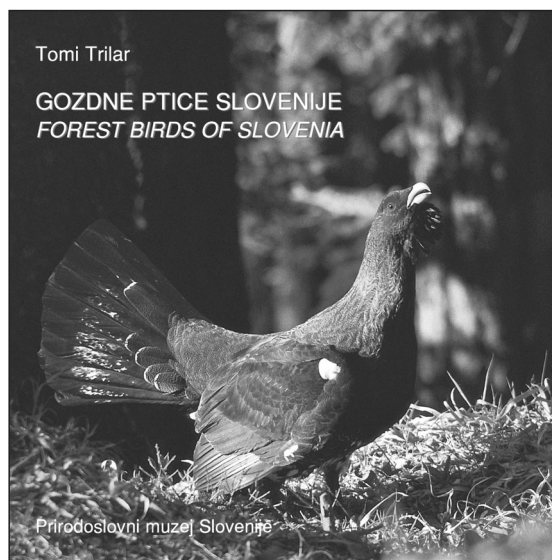
Trilar, T. (2002): Forest Birds of Slovenia. 2 CDs, Slovenian Museum of Natural History, Ljubljana. Recordings of 93 forest bird species and booklet with comments (in English and Slovenian languages). ISBN 961-6367-04-8. Buying: www2.pms-lj.si/cdgozd/english.html, Price: 30 EUR.

In 2002, a new CD by Trilar, his second now, was published by the Slovenian Museum of Natural History. This double CD is dedicated to Slovenia's forest birds, since forest is the most widespread habitat of birds in the country. All the recordings were made in Slovenia, with the exception of the Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans*, which was made in neighbouring Croatia.

The author has collected as many different vocalisations of birds as possible, e.g. territorial male song, contact calls, fledgling calls, etc. As every sound is well explained in the accompanied booklet, the recordings are easy to follow. The male song, which is usually used in territorial defence and as part of courtship behaviour, can vary markedly in some species of Passeriformes song birds, with a number of different song types, which can be very confusing for identification in the field. Tits are the best example in this respect. On the CD, the Great Tit *Parus major* is presented with four different song types, Blue Tit *P. caeruleus* with five, and Coal Tit *P. ater* with seven. These, however, are not the only song types used by these species but after careful listening to these recordings, the listener should also be able to identify other song types during a forest birdwatching trip. The most attractive recordings presented on the CD for me are those of Black Kite *Milvus migrans*, Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*, Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*, and Three-toed Woodpecker *Picoides tridactylus*. The most valuable comparisons are those between the male songs of Stock Dove *Columba oenas* and Woodpigeon *C. palumbus*. With attentive listening, even less experienced birdwatchers will be able to distinguish between the songs of these two typical forest pigeon species.

The major problem in observing forest birds is the fact that we are better able to hear them than to see them. In most cases we can see them only for a short period of time, when they are flying through the canopies. But there is a group of birds for which even

these short sightings are rare, and which can be identified only on the basis of their voices - owls. Males of forest owl species call very loudly in the springtime, when defending their territories. The loudest among them are males of Tawny Owls *Strix aluco*. Individual birds can be distinguished, just as humans, in the way they vocalise. On the CD, there



are several different hootings of male Tawny Owls and, by listening carefully to them, even amateurs should be able to distinguish between them. But it is not only males who sing. The CD presents an excellent recording of a female song by Ural Owl *S. uralensis*, together with rare twittering calls by Ural Owls while copulating. The CD also provides the key to the problem in identifying fledgling calls of the two most widespread owls in Slovenia, the Tawny Owl and the Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*, which are common species around human settlements.

Finally, I would like to point out an important feature cited in the accompanying booklet. Under natural conditions, birds sing in a particular sound environment. So, the author has presented the background sounds as well, and described them in the booklet. Furthermore, the recordings of some birds that vocalise less frequently, such as Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*, Eurasian Sparrowhawk *A. nisus*, Hazel Grouse *Bonasa bonasia* and Ural Owl, were not shortened in order to cut out the breaks between calls. They were left unchanged with the aim of presenting them in the most authentic manner.

Al Vrezec