

# International workshop on the movement ecology of nightjars Lund University, Sweden.

## Workshop report

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From March 2-3 I attended the inaugural meeting of researchers studying the two species of nightjar that breed in Europe, the European nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*) and the Red-necked nightjar (*Caprimulgus ruficollis*). I was invited by the Centre for Animal Movement Research, or CANmove of Lund University, to share my findings from our long-term study of the Sherwood Forest population of European nightjars. This population has been monitored during the breeding season for the past 15 years, while subject to heavy disturbance from the general public visiting the forest, which has led to a decline in the number of breeding pairs. This lengthy and detailed reproductive dataset was the envy of other nightjar researchers and made me realise what a fantastically skilled field team I have behind me.

While the European nightjar has been recently downgraded from the Red to the Amber list (vulnerable but not considered endangered) and the species is considered to be relatively stable across its range, some populations have shown unexplained declines. Part of the key to conservation is to better understand migration, and it was exciting to hear about new data from geolocators and preliminary data from the latest GPS tracking technology. The next field season promises to be especially exciting as the first long-distance GPS tracks are hopefully recovered, giving us unprecedented fine-scale information on the winter habitat-use crucial to survival and return in spring.

The passion for these unusual and beautiful birds was expressed in many different ways over the course of the workshop, most clearly in the huge amount of time spent traipsing around forests at night! I met a small but dedicated group of researchers, foresters, and bird ringers from six different EU countries and on the second day of the workshop we hammered out plans to collaborate and extend our research into new areas, and share data to replicate field sites and strengthen conclusions. One of the problems of studying a cryptic, nocturnal species is the phenomenal amount of work required to gather quality data on even a single population, and we all hope that by joining forces we can produce high-quality evidence-based management and conservation guidance and higher impact publications.

I would like to thank my Swedish hosts: Gabriel Norevik, Susanne Åkesson and Anders Hedenström; for funding my trip and especially for the fika (coffee and cake vital to the running of Swedish academia), and the tour of a giant wind-tunnel (only one of two in all Europe!) for performing experiments on the dynamics of flight in animals.

For more information you could read this blog post from CANmove on the workshop, I seem to feature prominently in too many photos:

<http://www.canmove.lu.se/article/with-nightjars-in-focus>



Here is possibly the largest collection of nightjar enthusiasts ever assembled, I am 5<sup>th</sup> from right.