

SPECIES INFORMATION SHEET

Tringa totanus

English name: Redshank	Scientific name: <i>Tringa totanus</i>	
Taxonomical group: Class: Aves Order: Charadriiformes Family: Scolopacidae	Species authority: Linnaeus, 1758	
Subspecies, Variations, Synonyms: –	Generation length: 6 years	
Past and current threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): Overgrowth of open areas (A04.03), Construction (J02.01), Alien species (I01), Competition and predation (I02), Extra-regional threats (hunting; XO)	Future threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): Overgrowth of open areas (A04.03), Alien species (I01), Competition and predation (I02), Extra-regional threats (hunting; XO)	
IUCN Criteria: A2ac	HELCOM Red List Category:	NT Near Threatened
Global / European IUCN Red List Category LC / LC	Annex I EU Birds Directive -yes Annex II EU Birds Directive-II B (DK, FR, IT)	
Protection and Red List status in HELCOM countries: <i>Subject of special conservation measures in the EU Member states (Birds Directive, Annex I)</i>		
Denmark: LC, Estonia: LC, Finland: NT, Germany: V (Near threatened), Latvia: –, Lithuania: 2 (V, Vulnerable), Poland: –, Russia: –, Sweden: LC		

Range description and general trends

The redshank is a widespread breeder across much of Europe. The European breeding population counts >280 000 bp, of which about 10–15% are breeding in the Baltic Sea area. The species has undergone a moderate decline across much of its European range, and this trend is also true for the Baltic Sea area.



Tringa totanus. Photos by Jürgen Reich.

Distribution and status in the Baltic Sea region

The **Swedish** population counts about 15 000–25 000 bp, of which 11 400 are found in the mountain area and 7 500 bp at the Baltic coast. Another 400 bp breed at the Swedish Skagerrak coast (province of Bohuslän), outside the Baltic Sea area. On the Baltic Sea coast however the population has suffered a decline during the last 30 years and this decline is believed to have continued also into the 21 century.

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In **Finland**, the species occurs along the coasts and scattered in the inland. The population has been declining during recent decades, the overall decline being about 26% in the last 10 years. With -22% the trend has been similar in the archipelago.

In **Russia**/PET the population is characterised by considerable fluctuations, however, the short term trend seems to be increasing. In appropriate habitats, the species may be found all over the region, but it is more common in the south-western parts.

The population numbers in **Estonia** are estimated at 5 000–7 000 bp, the species is declining both in the short and long term run (Eltis *et al.* 2009).

In **Poland**, the redshank is a widespread, but usually scarce breeder in the lowland with highly patchy distribution. The species prefers flooded meadows and pastures along rivers with muddy banks. It is most numerous in central and eastern Poland. Important breeding areas are the Biebrza (240 bp), Narew (326 bp) and lower Bug valleys. In western Poland, the Ujście Warty National Park hosts a larger population (80 bp), in southern Poland the Nida river valley (112–131 bp). The recent population trend is negative. Surveys in western Poland during the periods 1980–1990 and 2000–2010 revealed a decrease of the species by 57.8% (Ławicki *et al.* 2011). The total Polish population is estimated at 2 000–2 500 bp (Sikora *et al.* 2007).

At the **German** Baltic coast the breeding population of the redshank counts 400–470 bp. In former times, the redshank was also a widespread breeder on inland meadows, but got much reduced in these areas.

Redshanks are widespread in coastal meadows along all Baltic coasts of **Denmark**, but survey data are sparse. Based on data from Fuglenes Danmark (Grell 1998) and unpublished information, Thorup (2006) estimated the Danish total population in the 1990s at 12 000–15 000 bp, of which 6 000–7 000 bp were breeding in the Baltic Sea area. Since then the population has apparently been stable or slightly declining. Between the two Danish Bird Atlases 1971–1974 and 1993–1996, the redshank disappeared from several inland squares (Grell 1998), but the magnitude of the decline in numbers is difficult to estimate. In 32 coastal meadows in the former Storstrøms Amt the number declined with 19% from the late 1980s to 2003 (Jørgensen 2006), whereas numbers were increasing on Læsø from 1973 to 1996 (Møller 1975, Rasmussen 1996 unpublished) and Saltholm from 1976 to 1999 (Mortensen & Hansen 1999).

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Table 1: Population numbers of the redshank in the Baltic Sea area. For population trends 0=stable, -=decreasing, +=increasing, F=fluctuating, ?=unknown.

Country	Population size		Short-term population trend (10 years)	Long-term population trend (50 years)
	Breeding pairs	year		
Sweden ¹	15 000–25 000	2010	0	-
Finland	5 200	2009	-	+
Russia, PET	250–500	2009	+ (F)	?
Russia, KAL	50–60	2003–2009	-	-
Estonia	5 000–7 000	2003–2008	-	-
Latvia	300–700	1990–2000	-	?
Lithuania	600–800	1999–2001	-	-
Poland	2 000–2 500	1995–2002	-	?
Germany – SH	220	2005–2009	-	-
Germany – MV	160–250	2005–2009	0	-
Denmark	6 000–7 000	1990s	0 (or slightly -)	?
Baltic Sea	35 000–49 000			

¹ This numbers include c. 400 bp breeding in Bohuslän, outside the Baltic Sea area.

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Distribution map

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Habitat and ecology

The redshank breeds on marshland, including salt marshes, usually formed by grazing. It is not an exclusively coastal bird, but the highest abundances in the southern Baltic and at the North Sea are reached on coastal grasslands. In the northern archipelagos, the species frequents all zones fairly evenly, typically occurring on rocks and skerries with patchy grass vegetation. It associates with small larids to a greater extent than expected merely from habitat distribution, whereas larger Gulls seem to repel redshanks (Numers 1995).

Description of major threats

The reasons for the decline relate to overgrowth of suitable coastal habitats and to increased predation. At the German Baltic coast, the long-term trend has been declining, with habitat loss obviously being a main factor. However, increased predation by mammals has been an important factor in recent times. There is a clear trend of decline of redshank numbers on coastal meadows with unlimited access of predatory mammals, whereas the numbers on islands from which the predatory mammals are removed has been about constant (Herrmann 2010). In the northern Baltic, it is also suggested that the redshank suffers from increased predation pressure even on small islets after the expansion of larger Gulls and corvids there (*e.g.* increase of the raven *C. corax* in the archipelago).

The redshank currently is only hunted in France. The annual hunting bag is estimated at 5–8 000 birds but the real present figure is unknown. It has to be assumed that hunting may contribute to the decline (European Commission 2009).

Assessment justification

The overall observed decline in the Baltic Sea area over 3 generations (18 years) exceeds 15%, but is <20%, and the species meets the criteria A2ac under *Near Threatened* (NT).

Recommendations for actions to conserve the species

The main measures to conserve the species are a grazing and water management at the breeding existing sites directed to the habitat requirements of the species. Habitat restoration (restoration of the natural flood regime of coastal and riverine polders; establishment of appropriate grazing regimes) of former or potential breeding sites is also recommended. Control of predatory mammals is essential for many breeding sites. Though hunting is probably not the main factor for the decline, it poses an additional pressure and should be banned. The species should be deleted from Annex II of the EU Birds Directive.

Common names

Denmark: Rødben, Estonia: Punajalg-tilder, Finland: punajalkaviklo, Germany: Rotschenkel, Latvia: Pļavas svilpis, Lithuania: Raudonkojis tulikas, Poland: Krwawodziób, Russia: Травник, Sweden: Rødbena

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