



Tracking Sakers: A Tool for International Co-operation

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In the last issue of Tracker News, we wrote about the results of satellite telemetry of Hungarian Sakers. Currently, we are receiving signals from 4 Sakers out of ten equipped juveniles. Three of them have Microwave Telemetry's 22g solar Argos/GPS PTTs. Two falcons are still in Sicily, one roaming around in Slovakia and Northern Hungary and one is still in Serbia.

This latter bird, named Lehel, has proved recently that satellite telemetry can be a useful tool for building international co-operation. According to our policy, we were sending the GPS co-ordinates of the falcon to our reliable local colleagues in Serbia. Goran Sekuli from Serb Nature Conservancy found Lehel near Belgrade. However, Goran informed us that apparently "something had been hanging" from Lehel's legs. After a short consultation, we decided to have a look at Lehel and try to trap him if necessary. On January 29, 2008 a three-man Hungarian "expedition" left for Serbia.



Photo by Mátyás Prommer

Observing Lehel perched near Belgrade in Serbia.

We were very lucky to find Lehel with Goran's guidance almost instantly after our arrival. We spent half a day observing him and found that everything was fine with the PTT and the harness. Lehel moved without any problem and we saw him hunting as well. After this lucky day, we were invited to give a presentation to Serb ornithologists in Belgrade about our Saker conservation project and also we were told about Serb conservation projects.

Lehel's story has confirmed again that satellite telemetry is an excellent tool not only for learning about bird migration, but also for building co-operation with colleagues in other countries and for learning about each other.

As of April 8, 2008 Lehel has now returned home to Hungary and is in the area where he fledged.



Photo by Zorbo Ibarrola

Navarre after release.

Navarre, the Iron Woodcock

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The woodcock is a very popular bird in Europe: its habits and habitats make it a very singular and special

bird, targeted by hunters all over Europe. There are woodcock-hunters' clubs at least in France, Ireland, Italy, Germany, Hungary, Greece, Turkey, Wales and Switzerland. In Spain, the CCB has over 800 members enrolled. Most of these clubs have formed a federation: Fanbpo (*Fédération des Associations Nationales des Bécassiers du Paléarctique Occidental*, <http://fanbpofr.blogspot.com>).

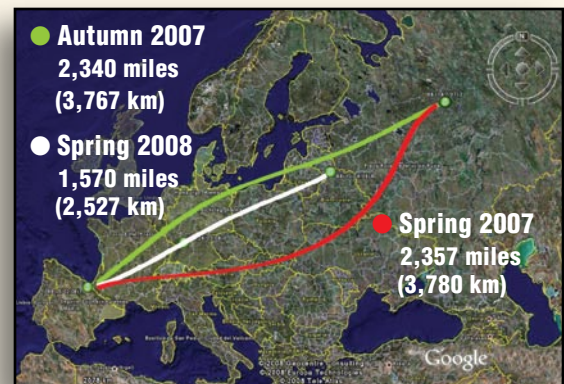
Following MTI's guidance, the CCB has been tracking woodcocks during the last two years. *Navarre* is a young woodcock we caught in Bakaiku (province of Navarre) in March 2007; the bird is a female (known by genetic analysis). *Navarre* went up to Russia, came back to 11 km from the point she was released (traveling more than 7,600 km) and is now again on her way to Russia (having passed Latvia, traveling more than another 2,525 km) and keeps going up...

According to some European people in charge of the most famous clubs of woodcock hunters, our *Navarre* has almost become a kind of *mythological hero*.

We did know about the woodcock's habitats and habits. In this particular case, *Navarre* has proved

that she has come back--right to her wintering ground, the beautiful beech grove of Aralar.

Moreover, in order to reach her winter resting place, she has had to come through several regions of Europe



Navarre's whole way from Spring 2007 to Spring 2008.

during the open hunting season, with hunters everywhere. This is why some European fellows have named her the **Iron Woodcock**.

Being female, almost a mythological hero, and, above all, an iron woodcock, some friends of ours wish this bird had lots of chicks, to give them her biological strength and her intuition, so that they would also be able to navigate all these dangerous obstacles.

Long live Navarre!

As William Shakespeare wrote, "*Navarre shall be the wonder of the World*".

MTI Conference

In our last issue of Tracker News, we indicated that we were considering hosting our own conference if there was enough interest. We thank you for the very positive response. Unbeknown to us, CLSAmerica had also been planning their conference in Annapolis in the fall of 2008. To avoid conflicting with theirs, we have decided to host ours in 2009. Tentatively mark your calendars for late March 2009. Look for details in our next issue and on our website.