SPI-Birds Newsletter

Welcome to the December edition of the SPI-Birds newsletter. With 2020 fast approaching we will look back on our achievements from 2019 and the exciting plans we have for 2020. We also introduce our new team-member, Dr. Chloe Nater who will be taking over Liam Bailey's work on the construction of data standardization pipelines. We wish you all relaxing and happy holidays, and look forward to continuing collaboration in 2020!

Looking back at 2019

2019 was a year of some major milestones for SPI-Birds. SPI-Birds officially launched in June 2019. We are very proud that in this short time we have attracted 70 members, representing 21 county. More importantly, we have received data for 30 populations, and we have created pipelines for 22 of these so far. The data can easily be requested via the SPI-Bird website. Further, our website offers a search interface to search for 51 populations for which we have received meta-data (data describing a population). Importantly, as a community we have agreed on the standard data format, which can be found here (and is open for comments). The SPI-Birds team creates tailored pipelines that convert primary data (as stored with the data owner) into the standard format. Pipelines can be found here. We also provide a standard quality check on this data, to detect any potential errors or inconsistencies.

All of this wouldn't have been possible without the committed work from our core team members, and the support from the SPI-Birds community, who have provided valuable feedback on all the aspects of this project, and also (and essential to the all project) the primary data for their populations.

Looking forward to 2020

With 2020 we welcome a **new team member**, Dr. Chloe Nater. Chloe describes herself as a quantitative ecologist with a keen interest in how environment and human activity affect individuals, and through that shape population dynamics. Chloe is replacing Liam Bailey, and will be based in NTNU in Trondheim for 2 years, staring in April 2020. However, Liam will stay in contact with us, providing his expertise in pipeline construction.

In 2020 we aim to increase the number of populations with standard data hosted through SPI-Birds, as well as the number of populations listed (and searchable) through our website. Furthermore, we plan to

improve the functionality of the website and the database, and create a **SPI-Birds logo**. The Wytham team has sent us a blue tit photo (featured in this newsletter, in a festive edition) which we will use to create the logo.

In 2020, we are also starting with a series of **SPI-Birds Technical reports**. These are aimed at introducing or discussing methodological approaches and conventions used in our research, and exploring how methodological approaches can influence the results obtained. Everyone is welcomed to contribute to technical reports, and/or to become a peer reviewer for these. Please email Antica (A.Culina@nioo.knaw.nl) if you're interested. To give an idea about what these technical reports might include, we plan to feature a report on different approaches to measure tarsus and conversions between measurement methods, and a report on the influences of the frequency at which nest-boxes are checked on the estimation of laying date.

Finally, we expect to submit the **SPI-Birds paper** in early 2020 – and to send you the draft version for comments in January 2020. In this way, we will introduce SPI-Birds to a wider audience, and hopefully inspire other community to adopt our approach in standardizing data.

How can you contribute?

To contribute to our efforts, you can:

- Provide us with access to your primary data, in the exact format as you store them from which we can build a pipeline. This pipeline will convert your primary data into the standard protocol. To be clear, these data will not be shared, distributed, or used for any purpose without your direct permission. If you still have any questions or concerns about the process, please contact our co-ordinator Antica Culina (A.Culina@nioo.knaw.nl).

- Tell us some interesting facts or describe a seminal paper that involves your population (if you have already provided us with the data). We will use this information to introduce your population on Twitter.

- Let us know if you would like to contribute a technical report, or would be willing to peer review one.

- Follow us on Twitter.

- Let us know of any papers, conferences, or workshops that you feel will be interesting to SPI-Birds.

- Provide feedback on any component of the SPI-birds initiative.

   The main contact point for the above is our co-ordinator, Antica Culina (A.Culina@nioo.knaw.nl)

Thank you again for your contribution and support so far. We look forward to sending you another update in two months time.