

**„Message from Helmbrechts“**

# **European Whinchat Resolution**

Conclusion of the  
1st European Whinchat Symposium  
from 27th-29th of Mai 2015  
in Helmbrechts, Germany

1st European Whinchat Symposium: **LIVING ON THE EDGE OF EXTINCTION** – Resolution by the ornithology, conservation and agronomy scientists from 18 European countries gathered in Helmbrechts for policy-makers:

**Whinchats are an iconic bird species that act as an indicator of the status of grassland habitats, migrant birds and overall biodiversity throughout Europe.**

It is representative for many other plant and animal species in high natural value farmland, which benefit from measures to protect the Whinchat.

The participants of the 1st European Whinchat Symposium are concerned about the fact that **Whinchats have dramatically declined by 50 to far more than 90% in many European countries** in the last 20 years. In some areas they even got fully extinct. We ignore this clear signal of the loss of European ecosystem services at our peril. Conservation measures are thus an urgent need to save this species from further decline.

The contributors of the symposium conclude that **modern intensified agriculture is the main cause of the population decline** and the species' critical situation.

To protect and recover the Whinchat and its habitats the symposium urges for measurements from the regional to the European scale:

- Far-reaching improvements of farmland to vitalize Whinchat populations, their habitats and communities, especially through protection, generation and promotion of species rich hay fields, extensive arable fields and a network of semi-natural grass strips and fallows in cooperation with farmers and other relevant stakeholders;
- Comprehensive and economically attractive subsidy programs for participating land-users, rendering conservation measures more profitable than intensive farming;
- Implementation of measurements by regional coordination and local biodiversity extension for farmers;

To protect the Whinchat and its habitats the participants stress the **necessity of conservation across national borders**. This includes the consequent prohibition of illegal bird-trapping. Trans-boundary cooperation needs to be intensified to **develop conservation strategies from regional to continental scales**.

In conclusion the participants of the 1st European Whinchat Symposium call for **immediate and coordinated action to implement effective measurements for the conservation of the Whinchat throughout Europe**. Only thus it will be possible to meet the European biodiversity targets on farmland by 2020.

WHERE DOES THIS MESSAGE COME FROM:

From 27th – 30th Mai 2015 more than 90 ornithologists, conservation and agronomy scientists gathered together at the 1st European Whinchat Symposium in Helmbrechts, Germany. In 42 contributions the experts on the Whinchat presented actual scientific findings from 18 countries. During the symposium the participants decided on this resolution unanimously.



The 1st European Whinchat Symposium is organized by LBV Kreisgruppe Hof e. V..  
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