

Ways of seeing ringed birds

An Eco-Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

This thesis examines how birds being ringed as a conservation effort, are represented in five selected articles from the Norwegian bird magazine Our Bird Fauna [Vår Fuglefauna]. The representations found in the magazine have been evaluated by conducting an Eco-Critical Discourse Analysis, with a phenomenologically inspired eco-philosophy as the normative framework. Rather than being represented as serving a conservational purpose, the ringed birds were represented as inferior, objectified artefacts - captured for the sake of being consumed as entertainment. The conservation effort of *ringing* birds and the hobby of bird *watching* were metaphorically constructed as one and the same. The bodies of the ringed birds were represented as satiations of children's and adult's curiosity, as spectacles for public displays, as tools for constructing one's bird watcher-identity and as objects of demystification. The thesis draws the conclusion that the representations of ringed birds in the articles analysed facilitate a destructive discourse. This discourse is not considerate of the birds as subjective beings, nor is it sensitive to the power relation embedded in human-animal interaction

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My profound gratitude also goes to

my best friend, who happens to be my husband

my brother

On August 3rd a remarkable occurrence took place, we were visited by the Arctic rose gull (rhodostethia rosea). I wrote as follows about it in my diary:- "To-day my longing has at last been satisfied. I have shot Ross's gull", three specimens in one day. This rare and mysterious inhabitant of the unknown north, which is only occasionally seen, and of which no one knows whence it cometh or whither it goeth, which belongs exclusively to the world to which the imagination aspires, [...]I had always hoped to discover as my eyes roamed over the lonely plains of ice.

Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen (1897, p. 414-415)

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1 Introduction

In Berger's essay: *Why look at animals*, he argues that animals have gradually disappeared and today we live without them. The cultural marginalisation of the animal, he argues, has transformed the animal into two domains: The family (mainly as pets), or spectacle (as entertainment or for scientific purpose). The latter category is exemplified by the Christmas sale in bookshops, where books on animals fill up the windows of the shop. Animals are in these books presented as something to be observed as through the glass plate of an aquarium, in a domain which the spectator is never able to experience beyond the iconography. The technology utilised to capture such photos is ever increasing, and the use of CVC cameras, remote controls, telescopes and so forth all underscore the animals' remoteness and inaccessibility. "The images exist thanks only to the existence of a technical clairvoyance" (Berger, 1991, p. 16). The ideological foundation behind the aquarium-like-exhibition of animals, is that animals always represent the ones being observed. The observational and technical power we possess as humans, has resulted in an ever-increasing accumulation of knowledge about animals, whereas their ability to watch us back has been rendered completely insignificant (Berger, 1991). Our knowledge has come to manifest man's separation from animals, and "the more we know, the further away they are" (Berger, 1991, p. 16).

The distance between man and animal, which Berger narrates above, can be illustrated by an incident described in a reader's letter in *Helgelands Blad* in 1988. The author of the article, Kåre Knutsen, argues that the conservation effort of ringing birds is deprived of consideration to the fact that one is dealing with living creatures. He substantiates this claim by referring to an encounter between a group of bird-ringers and a bird in a ringing session. A Red-throated pipit [*Anthus cervinus*, lappiplerke] was captured, and three bird ringers were involved in ringing the bird. Person A clamped the band only halfway on the Red-throated pipit's leg, followed by person B who closed the band completely. Person C then reopened the band, just in order to close it again. In this way, three bird ringers could check off Red-throated pipit on their lists of bird ringing-merits (Knutsen, 1988).

I see the encounter here portrayed as a demonstration of one of Berger's categories of marginalised animals: The Spectacle. Through the concealment of serving an overall conservation effort, the bird ringers can justify their lust and excitement for conquering yet another species. Such a close encounter offers a unique spectacle, exclusively available to them due to their technical superiority as bird ringers. The ring around the Red-throated pipit's leg becomes an epitome of the distance between man and animal.

1.1 Ways of seeing ringed birds – a research gap

In this thesis, I will contribute to the increasing body of critical research on conservation efforts within the *animal turn*. This turn is, broadly speaking, a shared critique of the investment in “the human” in social sciences. The animal is here recentred as a subjective *being* who makes sense of the world (Cederholm et al., 2014). Conservation research within this animal turn is predicated on the criticism of contemporary nature conservation still being entrenched in Cartesian ideas from enlightenment, where subjects in nature are understood as objects to be controlled. Natural science is commonly assumed to describe the world *as it is*. The endeavour of conservation critique is thus to dismantle this taken-for-granted presumption, by elucidating how conservation science also rests on inherently ideological assertions (Coimbra, 2014). Insisting that the animals' own lifeworld is worthy of consideration, it argues for including animals' individuality, agency and intrinsic worth in conservation science (Pedersen, 2014).

Apart from a few exceptions (Isaacs, 2021; Whitney, 2013; Whitney, 2021), birds tend to be ignored within this new wave of conservation-critique. More importantly, though, is that textual and visual representations of animals who find themselves in the very situations of *being conserved* – in situ - also have been largely overlooked. This is striking, considering the deliberate attempts of recentring non-humans in conservation critique. The ringing of birds, which is the conservation practice of clamping a metal ring around the bird's leg, is considered to be in the bird's best interest (or at least its species best interest). However, as the birds are captured and held against their will, the interaction between bird and bird ringer is inevitably also an execution of asymmetrical power. As bird ringing is widely presented in

various types of literature on birds and bird watching, these forceful and unbalanced interactions should be of key interest to study in the animal turn.

1.2 The endeavour of this thesis

Textual and visual representations of the non-human world contribute to shape our perceptions of- and interaction with wildlife. Representations are *discoursal matter* and the embedded ideologies produce and maintain particular relations of power and domination (Fairclough, 2003). Arran Stibbe (2012) argues that there has never been a more important time to critically analyse these discourses of relationships between humans, animals and nature. Considering the environmental collapse we are facing, Zimmerman also argues that the scrutiny of nature-discourses contributes to disclose the inherently social origins of the ecological crisis (Zimmerman et al., 1993).

As shown above, there is a lack of research on representations of animals undergoing conservation efforts. This thesis wants to contribute to closing this research gap, and at the same time answer the calls of Stibbe and Zimmerman to scrutinise the discourses of human-nature relations. The ambition is to do a discourse analysis, and for empirical material I have chosen the most influential non-scientific ornithologist-magazine published in Norway: Our Bird Fauna [Vår Fuglefauna]. The birds being ringed in Our Bird Fauna's articles, finds themselves in the very situations of *being* conserved. The endeavour of this thesis, then, is to examine *contemporary ways of seeing* birds, by analysing articles containing representations of birds forced to endure conservation efforts. For a research question, the following has been chosen: *How are birds – as objects of conservation efforts – visually and linguistically represented in Our Bird Fauna?*

1.3 Why birds though?

The last few years, I have been a member of Birdlife Norway, and have therefore been reading their member-magazine for some time. As a student of sociology, I have realised the impossibility of departing from a sociological frame of reference in everyday life. Inevitably then, the articles in Our Bird Fauna have over the last few years been a victim of this frame.

As I was looking for a subject for my master thesis, I got intrigued by John Berger and his writings on the marginalisation of animals. What invoked my curiosity was his claim that today we live without animals. After further readings on literature on the animal turn in social sciences, I found there to be a lack of research on the representations of birds in conservation efforts. This, coupled with a personal interest in birdlife, led to my choice of topic for research.

1.4 The need for social sciences

As briefly introduced above, the theoretical foundation of this thesis is the growing body of critical research on nature conservation efforts as part of the animal turn. Environmental sociologist Elsa Coimbra, co-author of the book *Exploring the animal turn: Human-animal relations in science, society and culture*, calls for an interdisciplinary approach to conservation research. She argues for the importance of recognising the multitude of human-environmental aspects as part of our ecological crisis (Coimbra, 2014). Natural science is not sufficient to understand the collapse of ecosystems and environmental sustainability. In this regard, knowledge production through nature conservation must be critically analysed within its inescapable social context. All human perceptions of nature are mediated by cultural and social ideologies and assumptions, and these inevitably impact and shape our relationship with non-human beings (Coimbra, 2014).

Coimbra further argues that underlying social commitments appear to be overtly ignored in the formulation of nature conservation management. Modern knowledge production in nature conservation is shaped by ideas of commodification and unrevised techno-solutions. Subjects in nature are here perceived as objects to be controlled and managed - a perception which obstructs the much-needed reorientation of human/non-human relations (Coimbra, 2014). The contemporary model of nature conservation still anchors its perception of human-environment relations in an objective and biophysical frame of reference. It is largely influenced by the Cartesian legacy from the 17th century, where animals were perceived as machines, devoid of subjective experience. Consequently, nature conservation and knowledge production must be questioned and critically assessed on account of their

underlying and invisible social constructions. For this purpose social sciences are essential (Coimbra, 2014).

1.5 How will this be conducted?

In this thesis, five articles from the magazine *Our Bird Fauna* will be analysed. Common to all five chosen articles is the representation of birds being ringed in one way or the other. The representations of birds being ringed will be examined by conducting an Eco-Critical Discourse Analysis (Eco-CDA). Eco-CDA is an explicitly normative and critical approach which incorporates the larger ecological system into its analysis (Stibbe, 2014). The primary focus will be the scrutiny of how particular ways of representing the world through language impact our perceptions of nature – and thus our interaction with it.

Eco-philosophy constitutes Eco-CDA's normative framework for evaluating discourses (Stibbe, 2021). Stibbe encourages Eco-CDA researchers to find their own eco-philosophical adherence, and this thesis will be largely inspired by phenomenology. The phenomenologically inspired eco-philosophy of this thesis rests on the deeply rooted premise of recognising non-humans as purposeful, subjective beings with objective, intrinsic worth. It follows that every individual being ought to be encountered as a fellow subject (Burgat, 2015).

The main theorist of this thesis is the environmental philosopher Arne Johan Vetlesen (2015) and his book *The Denial of Nature - Environmental Philosophy in the era of global capitalism*. Vetlesen is a central, contemporary philosopher of Nordic eco-philosophy, and this thesis will in particular make use of his theories of consumption and abstraction of nature. The concept of consumption will also be discussed by drawing on John Liep's (2001) article of the embedded consumptiveness in the hobby of bird watching. He argues that birds being observed equals that of appropriated possessions. This seemingly bold claim will provide an interesting perspective in analysing and discussing the complex relation between bird watching and bird ringing.

Finally, the Eco-Critical Discourse Analysis of this thesis will make use of two separate analytical concepts for enabling a more in-depth analysis of the representations. Both rests on

theories of ecological consciousness and the recentring of non-humans, but they will here be utilised as tools for analysis. The first one is Eileen Crist's dichotomous category of *technical* and *ordinary* language (Crist, 1999). This will be utilised for valuing whether non-humans are linguistically constructed as natural objects or as acting subjects embodying intrinsic meaning. The second concept is Stibbe's *stories* of ideology, framing, metaphor and erasure. These stories operate through linguistic characteristics and constitute particular ways of seeing the world around us. They are hidden in textual and visual representations of nature, and by exposing them through Eco-CDA they can be valued and judged against eco-philosophical ethics (Stibbe, 2021).

1.6 Structure of the thesis

The upcoming chapter 2 will introduce the concept of bird conservation. Here, the organisation Birdlife Norway will be introduced as well as a brief elaboration of the practice of ringing birds. Chapter 3 will give a brief account of the history of the scientific animal, interpreted through the development of zoological gardens. Chapter 4 gives an account of the constructive and explicitly normative approach to the sociological discipline, which this thesis positions itself within. Chapter 5 will give a brief historical contextualisation of how nature and animals have been excluded from sociology, as well as a recent attempt by Norwegian sociologists to transcend the nature/society dualism. Chapter 6 introduces the new paradigm of *The Animal Turn* which is social sciences' attempt to re-centre the animal in social research. Chapter 7 will introduce the dissertation of Isaacs, which has been a great inspiration for this thesis. Chapter 8 is the theory chapter where discourse theory, eco-philosophy, phenomenology and theories of consumption and animal representations will be elaborated. Chapter 9 will describe the methods of this thesis, including methodology and the empirical data. Thereafter follows the analysis - chapter 10, which is divided into five chapters – one for each magazine article analysed. Finally, I will be discussing the representations found in the analysis in chapter 11, before giving a brief conclusion in chapter 12.

2 The conservation of birds

2.1 Birdlife Norway

“The birds are disappearing” are written in bold, capital letters filling the front page of Birdlife Norway’s web page. This assertion is followed by an encouragement to become a member in Birdlife Norway, in order to contribute to stop biodiversity loss. Birdlife Norway (previously The Norwegian Ornithological Society / NOF) is a non-governmental- and non-profit organisation for nature conservation, established in 1957 (Birdlife Norway, 2022). The organisation aspires to represent a collective for everyone interested in birdlife across the country. Birdlife Norway is part of the global organisation Birdlife International, and their overall ambition is to “conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity” (Birdlife International, 2022).

Birdlife Norway’s work is conducted by documenting the needs for protecting species, as well as lobbying, in order to serve birds’ best interest (Birdlife Norway, 2022). The organisation is well reputed, and they have considerable power to influence and shape both public opinion, but also authorities’ perception of – as well as behaviour towards - birdlife. Birdlife Norway offers a crucial and invaluable contribution to counter devastating interventions in Norwegian nature, and every year they prevent harmful legislations from being passed. Their official non-scientific magazine: Our Bird Fauna [Vår Fuglefauna], which constitutes the empirical data in this thesis, is also significantly influential among its members. This magazine will, as mentioned, be introduced in the method-chapter.

2.2 The ringing of birds

The practice of ringing birds is a scientific field-method used for the accumulation of knowledge on bird behaviour and the environments in which they live. Birdlife Norway officially promotes the activity of ringing birds as a crucial activity for conservation success and knowledge accumulation. The first attempt of modern bird ringing was initiated in 1890,

by the Danish Hans Christian Cornelliuss Mortensen. His motivation was the same as today; to increase knowledge on birds. The method used for ringing is to capture wild birds, most commonly by using nets, and then clamp a ring on the bird's leg. The colour of the ring and the number engraved in it, makes it possible to recognize the bird when it later is rediscovered (or recaptured) (Norsk Ringmerkingssentral, 2022).

When a bird is rediscovered, the number and colour of the ring is reported in an online database (ringmerking.no) and this way ringed birds can be tracked and surveilled (Jacobsen, 2022). The feedback loops of reporting and registration of ringed birds is, according to Norway's Bird Ringing Centre, essential for the successful conservation of bird species (Norsk Ringmerkingssentral, 2022b). The knowledge accumulation from bird ringing is largely dependent on the public to report their findings (Miljødirektoratet, 2022). Primarily, the key scientific interests from bird ringing is knowledge of age and demography, reproductive success, cause of death, stopover sites and migration routes. In Norway, bird-ringing began around 1914 and each year about 200 000 to 250 000 wild birds are ringed. The total amount of ringed birds in Norway are today close to 10 million individuals (Jacobsen, 2022).

All scientific bird ringing in Norway is organised by the Norwegian Bird Ringing Centre [Ringmerkingssentralen] at Stavanger Museum. Hence, all bird ringing occurring in relation or affiliation to Birdlife Norway is also conducted through this centre. According to the Norwegian Bird Ringing Centre:

The main goal of bird ringing is to gather data that can be used in researching, managing and mapping bird populations. Bird ringing is not a goal in itself, but a scientific method for generating goal-oriented results (Norsk Ringmerkingssentral, 2022).

Despite being a scientific method, ringing is primarily conducted by volunteering hobby-ornithologists. In order to conduct bird ringing, an official bird ringing licence must be permitted. These permits are issued by the Norwegian Environment Agency [Miljødirektoratet]. In order for permits to be granted, trainees must qualify for a formal recommendation from the official ringing centre (Norsk Ringmerkingssentral, 2022c). There are different rules depending on what licence one wants to obtain. As an example; being allowed to ring birds without the use of traps requires licence B. This license is obtained after

attending the ringing of 1500 birds, of which 500 of the rings must have been clamped on by the trainee (Runde & Anker-Nilssen, 1991). Bird ringers in Norway must obey the current wildlife act: When utilising traps or capturing-equipment for ringing birds, captured individuals must rapidly be ringed and immediately released (Viltforskriften, 2020, § 2-6, my translation). It is important to stress that the way of conducting bird ringing described in the introduction, taken from Helgeland's Blad, is undoubtedly not representative of most bird-ringers. Birdlife Norway would also, in all probability, be opposed to such an approach.

2.3 Do they suffer?

For legal guidelines to bird ringing, The Norwegian Bird Ringing Centre refers to an online edition of *Bird Ringers guidebook [Ringmerkerens håndbok]* from 1991. Under the headline: "Does ringing hurt the birds?", the guidebook assures readers by saying:

It is a fundamental premise for bird ringing that the ringed birds are acting in the same way as non-ringed birds of the same species. If the ring hinders the bird in living a normal life, rediscovered birds will only give information on what handicapped birds do, and will therefore be of no value (Runde & Anker-Nilssen, 1991, my translation).

The Bird Ringers guidebook here gives a pragmatic account to answer the question of whether ringing hurts the birds. The birds are here constructed as objects serving a scientific purpose. In consequence, the strive to avoid hurting them is first and foremost grounded in the risk of occluding the knowledge production of conservation. On the other hand, if one were to turn to natural sciences for finding information on this question, whichever answer one is hoping to find would be obtainable - there is no consensus (e.g. Savage, 2009 for disapproval; Selicht & Kempnaers, 2018 for confirmation). Besides, the concept of *suffering* within the realm of natural science is likely to be addressed narrowly, as only measurable suffering can be proved to exist. In opposition to this, suffering will in this thesis be interpreted in a phenomenological sense. Phenomenology will be elaborated on in the theory chapter, but it will in this thesis be used for the recognition that animal's live their lives in *first person*. As such, in relation to the question of whether birds suffer; this will be evaluated on the premise that birds' unique and subjective *lived experience* is given primacy (Burgat, 2015).

3 A brief history of the scientific animal

In this chapter, I will introduce a brief historical contextualisation of how *the animal* has transformed into a scientific object. By viewing this process from the perspective of zoological gardens, it contributes to shed light on how our perception of animals has changed from perceiving them with awe into perceiving them as objects in need of conservation. This thesis examines *representations of birds as objects of conservation efforts*, and the development of zoological gardens here serves as a valuable contextualisation.

From the 17th to the 19th century, animals came to be characterised by their *difference* to humans, rather than by their resemblance. As modern science evolved following the enlightenment, animals were no longer perceived as agents in the theatre of nature. They were reconstructed into representatives of genera and species, classified into “tableaus” as representatives of units belonging in the same group. The category of the animal was strictly separated from the category of the human observer, and animals came to be considered as pure mechanisms (Zerlang, 1996). The Western scientific practice of nature and environmental conservation is still largely influenced by enlightenment ideas. It is “rooted in the assumption that humans – as controllers of the natural world – bear full responsibility for the survival or extinction of wildlife species” (Ingold, 2000, p. 68). The doctrine of conservation is founded on the idea of nature as situated on the *inside* whereas the human realm is placed on the *outside*. Following this, modern scientific conservation perceives animals as detached entities of an objective world, where they come to represent spectacles of scientific observation (Ingold, 2000, p. 59).

3.1 The scientific animal – A zoo story

In the article *Zoo Story*, Nielsen & Nielsen illustrate how animals have been transformed into objects of scientific inquiry by the historical development of zoological gardens (Nielsen & Nielsen, 1985). They argue that the modernisation of zoos has enabled us to get ever closer to

animals. However, despite these close encounters, they ask the question: *Where are the animals?* (Nielsen & Nielsen, 1985, p. 7).

During the baroque, animals in menageries did not amount to any scientific interest. Encaged animals were then utilised as representations for demonstrating the possession of power by virtue of the animals' dreadfulness and atrocity. The power, as such, was manifested by the ability to assert power over nature. In his work on the history of incarceration, Michel Foucault refers to a menagerie in Vienna for illustrating the inspiration of modern imprisonment practices. This menagerie was shaped as a panopticon, where each cage with animals was placed around a pavilion from where all cages could be surveilled simultaneously (Nielsen & Nielsen, 1985).

During the French revolution, the autocracy's demonstration of power over nature was abolished. In exchange, nature as pristine and untouched by man came to symbolise *the morally good*, contradictory to the unnatural staginess of authoritarianism. This romanticised perception of nature emerged simultaneously with a scientific interest in nature. However, the heydays of nature-adoration succumbed shortly after the birth of capitalism (Nielsen & Nielsen, 1985). An unsentimental idea of nature as utilitarian and profitable took the stage, whereas the scientific and didactic orientation to nature was further developed. As part of this change, the representation of animals changed as well. Animals now became objects of public exhibitions, manifested as a potpourri of both amusement and zoological science - though still in a menagerie-fashion with enclosures and rows of cages.

In the beginning of 20th century, zoological gardens began striving towards imitating true-to-nature conditions as walls, cages and symbols of imprisonment were removed. Their ambition was to present their visitor with an illusion of animals roaming in freedom, however continuously strictly separated from the audience. The motivation for this change, which is still today a guiding principle for modern zoos, was that the more true-to-nature animals were represented, the more attractive they would be to observe (Nielsen & Nielsen, 1985). This change enabled spectators to;

construct the ideal zoological garden of our thoughts: A revelation of beauty, where animals and plants fusion just as in the wild, only much more concentrated for the amused nature-adorer to have it all presented as in a nutshell. (Nielsen & Nielsen, 1985, p. 11, my translation)

As Nielsen & Nielsen (1985) argue, modern scientific knowledge makes us capable of transplanting a piece of nature right into the heart of civilization. We have mastery over nature to such an extent that we can reconstruct it in accordance with our own pleasure. These modern principles of representation, Nielsen & Nielsen (1985) argue, threaten to make the very animal invisible. The animal no longer comes across as exceptional in all its uniqueness, but is transformed into objectified scientific experiments for pedagogical exhibition. Today, zoological gardens survive on the very virtue of contributing conservation-value, founded on the argument that they represent endangered species' ultimate lifelines. However, as animals are transformed into objects for scientific purpose, our ability to empathise and relate to their lifeworld is rendered obsolete (Nielsen & Nielsen, 1985).

4 From *what is* to *what ought to be* in sociology

The sociologist Ragnvald Kalleberg argues that “sociologists should not only analyse the world as it is, they should also contribute to improvement of the same world” (Kalleberg, 1992, p. 1). According to him, sociology is a constructive science and the descriptive and interpretive role is not sufficient. Social sciences should seek to alter social reality by changing it towards what it ought to - and potentially could be and hereby strive towards transforming it into something better. As such, Kalleberg (1992) explicitly encourages sociologists to infer from *what is* to *what ought to be*. Despite the recent change where sociology has begun accepting an advocacy-driven approach, the construction of objectivity is still intimately related to the very identity of science – including social sciences (Peggs, 2013). However, despite most scientists do not adhere to an idea of science as absolute objective or neutral, value-free research continues to be the sacred ideal (Kalleberg, 1992).

The distinct separation between theory and value constructs an artificial barrier between sociology and ethics. Sociology is a question driven science and critical questions are foundational (Buch-Hansen & Nielsen, 2005; Kalleberg, 1992). In this regard, Kalleberg (1992) encourage sociologists to question “what is the value of the object under study?” (p.

36), whereupon a critique of a particular phenomenon can be scrutinised and evaluated by the value standards applied. This requires the introduction of an explicitly normative dimension which will constitute the argumentative basis of the research. Hence, the essential task of a constructive sociologist is to develop alternative social structures and cultures which are better (according to the value standards applied) than the existing ones (Kalleberg, 1992). This thesis resonates with Kalleberg's advocacy-driven sociology. The explicitly normative value standard Kalleberg calls for, will here constitute a phenomenologically inspired eco-philosophy.

5 Nature in sociology

In the second half of the 19th century, the establishment of an independent sociological discipline was attempted. Sociology was founded on the idea of a distinct separation between society and nature. This separation was grounded on the axiom that social phenomena could not be explained by biology or biophysical laws, and the sociological discipline was established to address this void. The natural environment was thus excluded as an object of sociological study (Taylor et al., 2018). Sociology has not, however, only proved unwilling to include the natural environment, but non-human species have also been left out - regardless of their (social) relation to humans (Taylor et al., 2018). The animals' exclusion from sociological inquiry must in part be understood as a legacy from the influential sociologist Herbert Mead. He asserted that animals are exterior to the realm of sociology due to their lack of language, perception and imagination. Mead (1934) argued that these features were essential for the development of shared meanings, and that this essential difference strictly separates humans from animals. Sociological inquiry should therefore be limited to humans exclusively (Peggs, 2013).

5.1 Recent initiatives of including nature

In 2019, the Norwegian journal *The Sociologist* [Sosiologen] initiated a new vignette named *Environmental Sociology Today*. Here, sociologists were invited to contribute to a debate about sociology's role in the establishment of a new green social order. All the contributors

published by the journal strongly advocated for sociologists to widen their analytical lens by embracing nature/society-relations in sociological studies. Gisle Andersen, one of the vignette contributors, stressed the importance of including processes of scientific knowledge production on nature in sociological inquiries (Andersen, 2019). This is important, he argued, for our understanding of how we relate to environmental problems. According to Andersen, environmental sociology has failed in its attempts to transcend the social/natural dualism, and this has made it particularly difficult for sociology to analyse relations between society and natural environments. Humans cannot perceive themselves as disconnected from material reality, nor from nature, Andersen states, and for society to increase its understanding of itself we must transcend this dualism (Andersen, 2019).

Willy Guneriussen, another sociologist contributing to the vignette in the journal *The Sociologist*, strongly advocated for sociology to include perceptions of nature in order to keep abreast with the significant societal changes of our time (Guneriussen, 2019). Guneriussen questioned and criticised sociologists' unwillingness to thematise the relation between humans and nature, and suggested a renewed sociology where the natural dimension was to be included as an object of study for sociological inquiry (Guneriussen, 2019). In an interview given in 2015, Guneriussen argued that the biggest weakness of today's sociology is that dealing with conceptions of nature has been entrusted to other disciplines. He sees sociology as being too 'sociocentric', whereas nature has been perceived as a given - a stable and predictable matter of course. As of today, Guneriussen continued, our conception of nature is undergoing a transformation from something sturdy and self-regulative into something vulnerable. Society is facing immense environmental challenges and sociology ought to contribute by offering societal diagnosis (Guneriussen, 2015).

5.1.1 For what purpose ought nature to be included?

The contributors to the Norwegian journal-vignette *Environmental Sociology Today* all advocate for an inclusion of nature in sociology. They also agree that such an inclusion ought to involve the dismantlement of a dualistic opposition between nature and society. But for whose sake are sociologists encouraged to cross the threshold into the realm of nature? What underlying perceptions constitute this request? In the vignette, the answer to these questions

are largely anthropocentric. Nature is given attention because it is somehow beneficial to humans - not because it has an intrinsic value in and of itself (Garner, 2015).

An example of this can be seen in Guneriussen's (2019) contribution, where he advocates for including nature-perceptions in sociology to 'keep up with' societal challenges. The concern for sociology's continued societal relevance is thus the underlying motive for going beyond the social realm. For a second example, Andersen (2019) argues that nature ought to be included as an object of study in sociology in order to improve society's self-understanding. As these examples are representative of the whole debate as it played out in the vignette in *The Sociologist* in 2019, it follows that Norwegian sociologists' recent advocacy for including the natural realm is predominantly rooted in a continued human centralisation. Considering the historic hegemony of human-centeredness within social science, any attempt of deviating from an anthropocentric perspective in sociological research is required to be explicitly articulated.

6 The animal turn

The animal turn represents a new research paradigm across the disciplines of humanities and social sciences, which seeks to recentre *the animal* in their research (Pedersen, 2014). This paradigm recognises that animals have their own lifeworld, culture and biology, and that every individual is perceptually aware and hold the ability to experience both pain and pleasure. This recognition requires a paradigmatic leap through a complete reorientation in the production of knowledge (Cederholm et al., 2014). Ingrained in the animal turn is also the acknowledgement that human/non-human relationships are deeply entrenched in structures of power, and human/nature relations ought therefore to be scrutinised on account of their inherently social constructions. The commonality across different approaches to the animal turn is a shared critique and dissociation from the traditional emphasis and investment in the human. It seeks to disrupt this investment by recentring the animal as a key actor - an independent being who makes sense of the world, by and through itself (Cederholm et al., 2014; Coimbra, 2014).

Essential to the paradigm of the animal turn is a striving to analyse and understand animals' encounters with humans. Theories of ideology and hierarchies of power, characteristic strengths of sociology, are particularly useful for understanding such complex multi-species relations (Taylor et al., 2018). In this thesis, the representations of ringed birds will be the centre of attention, but these representations are products of initiated multi-species encounters between bird and bird ringer. By analysing these encounters, long-held and deeply rooted assumptions of the human/nature bifurcation in sociology will be challenged. Contrary to the sociologists' contributions to the vignette above, this thesis will oppose an explicitly human-centred approach when including nature. In Howard Becker's cult classic-essay *Whose side are we on?*, he argues that we cannot avoid taking sides and encourages researchers to explicitly articulate which side they are championing (Becker, 1967, p. 245). Inspired by this encouragement, as well as the paradigm of the animal turn: This thesis will side with the ringed birds. This will be conducted by centring the representations of the birds, as well as scrutinising the power asymmetry embedded in multi-species interactions. It will strive to debunk the naturalisation of oppression conducted by humans over non-humans, and it will critically analyse the complexities of these systems of domination (Peggs, 2013). By making this value judgement, this thesis complies with Kalleberg's (1992) prompt for inferring from *what is* to *what ought to be* in sociological analysis. This stance is not viewed as unobjective and biased, but rather as making explicit a value orientation that always underlies the social scientist's choice of method, theoretical framework and field of study.

7 Previous research:

The banders grip

One of the very few scholars of the humanities that engage critically with the practice of bird ringing, is Jenny R. Isaacs. This thesis is largely inspired by her research, despite taking a different approach to analysing ringed birds. Isaacs (2021) wrote her doctor's degree: *The Banders Grip: A techno-political ecology of Western Atlantic shorebird conservation*, in philosophy/geography on the conservation efforts of preserving the shorebird Red knot [Caldris canutus, polarsnipe]. *Bander* is the American English word for a bird ringer, and the

banders grip is the term used for ornithologists' grip on birds when ringing them: "The bird's head in between their index and middle finger, using their thumb and pinky to steady the bird, while allowing its feet to dangle freely» (McNamara, 2015, quoted by Isaacs, 2021). Isaac spent several weeks on the bird ringing sight, observing and documenting episodes of hands-on contact between humans and the Red knot. Isaacs herself has contributed to the ringing of thousands of birds. Despite that, or perhaps because of it, she finds it pivotal to offer a critical discussion of the practice of bird ringing. As she argues: "I wrestle here with my own complicity in these disturbing practises" (Isaacs, 2021, p. 88).

Isaacs advocates for a dismantling of the polished and seemingly apolitical innocence that swathes bird ringing conservation. She rejects what she sees as a widely held notion, that due to the useful data extracted from bird ringing, birds' suffering are not as worthy of assessment. In light of this rejection, Isaacs recentres the birds' experience of asymmetrical power and suffering for the purpose of giving it a critical examination. She applies a feminist and postcolonial more-than-human theoretical framework to analyse the inherently asymmetrical encounters between man and bird. Isaacs point of departure is that encounters of conservation-dynamics are inherently off-balanced and need to be analysed utilising critical theories of knowledge production. Thus, science and environmental knowledge is perceived as socially constructed processes.

7.1 Animality/coloniality

In her dissertation, she advocates for a critical perspective on the production of environmental knowledge by asking; *who benefits?*. For her analysis, she construct the theoretical pair *animality/coloniality*. At the ringing sight, a power struggle is played out between the bird ringer and the bird. In the name of environmental knowledge production, the physical bodies of the Red knots are forcefully enrolled into the system of environmental governance. The physical contact between human and non-human contributes to the reproduction of control over nature within the geographical conservation areas. Isaacs describes the hands-on encounters as explosive and theatrical. The birds are being captured, held, measured, sampled, and tagged, as well as aged, sexed, taken blood samples from and weighted by being forced into round tubes (Isaacs, 2021). Information is sampled from the bird bodies by

holding them in the *bander's grip* and hands-on methods are used for gathering the information. The birds are then marked with a plastic ring, metal band, harness, geo transmitters and/or tracking device. Some of these devices require the birds to be recaptured, and re-traumatised, in order for the bird ringing to be of any value. But regardless of recapture; “once brought under the manager’s techno-scientific gaze, the animals stay within it until they die or escape” (Isaacs, 2021, p. 113).

Despite the fact that many conservationists view the birds as individual subjects with intrinsic value, they are deprived of sovereignty and subjectivity. Isaacs (2021) argues that due to the forceful capture and the robbery of birds' subjectiveness, wildlife management ought to be perceived as *animality/coloniality*. It is a heuristic device, meant for the utilisation of analysing uneven and asymmetrical relationships between human and non-human. It explicitly criticises rationalist reductionism, which narrowly defines, separates, categorises and oppresses animals in the name of science. By analysing the production of conservation-knowledge using animality/coloniality, objectified rationalistic knowledge accumulation is opposed to through a recentring animals’ subjectivity.

Isaacs claims, in other words, that our interaction and relation with non-humans can be viewed as a form of colonialism. As such, animality/coloniality invites a critical reflection regarding the execution of power asserted over one's subject of research. Within this theoretical approach, conservation is understood as a Western, colonial separation between man/nature and human/animal (Isaacs & Otruba 2021). The normative logic underpinning conservation-efforts is that the overall well being of a population justifies the harm inflicted on individual subjects - despite the individuals attempt to resist being utilised as experimental research objects. This is referred to as *harm as care* (Isaac, 2021). As Isaacs (2021) argues; when narrowly focusing on the bird's desperate flight-response in a hands-on encounter, the coercive and asymmetrical contact between man and bird manifests itself as striking (p. 117). Isaacs’ work has been of great inspiration when writing this thesis and the idea of *harm as care* will be central in my empirical analysis.

8 Theoretical Framework

Discourse analysis is as much a theory as it is a method (Fairclough, 2008), and I have chosen to elaborate on my approach of Eco-Critical Discourse Analysis in the first part of my theory chapter. Next, I will explain how *representations* are understood, as well as its affiliation with discourse and *ways of seeing*. This will be followed by the eco-philosophical framework, which constitutes the main body of theory. The eco-philosophy will be joined by phenomenology, which will be introduced next. Arne J. Vetlesen and John Liep's theories of abstraction and consumption will be elaborated on towards the end of the chapter, where I will close with a brief reflection on an ethical problematisation with my chosen philosophical framework.

8.1 Discourse

Discourses are here understood as standardised ways of utilising linguistic and visual representations, shared by particular groups in the society (Stibbe, 2021, p. 20). Discourses are internalised by individuals, through the process of constructing oneself as a member of a community. Both individual and collective consciousness is constructed by ideologically manifested discourses (Tenorio, 2011). In this way, discourses “control and organise what can be talked about, how it can be talked about and by whom” (Tenorio, 2011, p. 186). Thus, peoples' scope of action is governed by discourses, and their discursive actions are what constitute social reality (Tenorio, 2011). Discourses become hegemonic when they are jointly held as ‘natural’ and ‘common sense’, despite being ideological. In this way, society comes to perceive dominating ideological ideas as innate and unquestionable, and this contributes to obscure the reproduction of asymmetrical power relations (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

8.1.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) originates in the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory and Critical Linguistics. Language is here perceived as a socially constructed means of domination (Machin & Mayr, 2012), and power is perceived as fundamentally discursive.

The key mandate of CDA is the increased awareness and critique of asymmetrical power relations in language (Tenorio, 2011). Taken-for-granted assumptions in written texts are thus of major importance (Machin & Mayr, 2012), and this is conducted by analysing how linguistic features serve powerful ideologies. The main object of scrutiny is destructive discourses harming vulnerable groups (Stibbe, 2012). Non-humans have, however, largely been ignored in CDA. As Stibbe (2018) argues, groups who experience suffering are changing, as ecological systems are increasingly facing severe oppression. As a response to the ignorance of ecology in CDA, Eco-Critical Discourse Analysis has emerged as a subcategory. This ecological turn of CDA will be the foundation of my analysis and I will now elaborate on this new turn.

8.1.2 Eco-Critical Discourse Analysis

Eco-Critical Discourse Analysis (Eco-CDA) emphasise how language impacts not only on humans, but also on the environment and non-humans (Oozeerally & Hookoomsing, 2020). As such, Eco-CDA rejects the traditional approach to discourses as something limited to the human realm. Despite this difference, the overall understanding of discourse, as elaborated above, is shared with CDA. Eco-CDA is an explicitly normative framework of discourse-studies, which embraces the larger ecological systems in its analysis. Here, ecology is treated as literal (Stibbe, 2014). As such, discursive power relations are further complicated, as the impact and exposure to both humans and non-humans are considered. The objects of study are discourses which impact how humans interfere with the physical environment. Perceiving ecology as literal makes Eco-CDA particularly suitable for examining discourses of conservation (Stibbe, 2014).

In Eco-CDA, discursive world views are accessed and normatively valued by criteria of ecological philosophy (eco-philosophy) (Stibbe, 2014). As such, they are judged based on their ability to foster and support life in a holistic ecological system. In consequence, the ambition of Eco-CDA is to raise awareness of how language shape our perceptions- and interventions in nature (Stibbe, 2014). Eco-CDA rests on an *eco-linguistic* framework, which is the study of how language forms, maintains, destroys and impacts relations between humans, non-humans and the environment (Alexander & Stibbe, 2014). How we treat the natural world is shaped by our ideologically manifested thoughts and ideas, which are

imbedded in language (Stibbe, 2021). Clusters or groups of people assemble their world views and practise-in-the-world through particular discourses, and each has its own linguistic peculiarities. Through distinct ways of talking, writing and representing the world, models of reality are produced and reality is thus discursively constructed. These models are the primary focus of eco-linguistics (Alexander & Stibbe, 2014). Eco-linguistic analysis contributes to a reassessment of our relationships and connectedness with the non-human environment. As such, it challenges us to increase awareness of our discursive affiliations, and consequently become more alert to ecological issues caused by humans (Oozeerally & Hookoomsing, 2020).

The *eco* part of discourse analysis is specifically equipped for the scrutiny and critique of world views which erodes or weakens the sustenance of life in ecological systems (Stibbe, 2014). In this master thesis, choosing such a framework may appear as self-contradictory. Intuitively, the practice of ringing birds as part of conservation work may seem like the very manifestation of sustaining and supporting life. However, as Stibbe (2014) argues, a key interest of Eco-CDA is to examine discourses which *appear* to be in harmony with ecological values, but are rather ambiguous when further scrutinised. An example of this ambiguity in conservation efforts, is that non-humans tend to be ontologically constructed as populations. In this way, it becomes rational to utilise individuals in the name of science (Srinivasan, 2014). This is what Isaacs (2021) refers to as *harm as care*, mentioned previously. The sacrifices each of these beings are forced to make, are justified by the greater good of the population. The result of this, Srinivasan (2014, p. 506) argues, is that “the individual becomes chiefly a means to an end”.

Stibbe (2014) refers to discourses of conservation as an example of *ambivalent discourses*. These are discourses which are partly in agreement with, and partly opposing eco-philosophical values (Stibbe, 2018). In consonance with CDA’s aspirations of effectuating real change in the world, Stibbe (2018) emphasises the opportunities that come with analysing ambivalent discourses. It is possible, he argues, to contribute to an increased awareness of the ambivalent story being told, in an attempt of altering people’s perceptions. In relation to this thesis, the way bird magazines choose to construct and represent the ringing of birds, inevitably impact readers’ perceptions of wildlife. By analysing these representations and *ways of seeing* birds, an increased consciousness regarding perceptions of birdlife and bird conservation can be achieved.

8.2 How to understand representation?

Fairclough describes representations as being clearly “discoursal matter” and understands discourses as “different *ways* of representing” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 26 & 124, italics in original). Particular representations operate through repetition and stability, and are shared by groups of people (Fairclough, 2003). Furthermore, representations can be understood as *embodying* discourses (Fälton, 2021). What is important however, as Fairclough (2003) emphasises, is that representations do not *equal* discourses. In any text, many different representations of the world will be present simultaneously, but discourse transcends these representations. As such, in order to talk about discourses, a broader tendency must be identified wherein particular groups make use of particular representations over time (Fairclough, 2003). In this qualitative thesis, as mentioned, five articles will be analysed. Drawing on Fairclough (2003), the magazine’s representations of the ringed birds cannot be equated to discourses of ringed birds. Rather, the Eco-Critical Discourse Analysis of this thesis has as a goal to contribute to an increased understanding of the complex language of nature conservation. It will scrutinise these complexities in visual and linguistic representations, not to find a discourse, but to untangle and unveil meaning and motives that are not obviously present at a glance.

Among these motives will be the ones of power and voice. Fairclough argues that ideologies are representations of world views which operate by “establishing, maintaining and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation» (Fairclough, 2003, p. 9). Tenorio furthers this argument, stating that *representation* is inevitably linked with power. The powerful one has the power to represent others, as well as themselves, in a favourable or convenient manner. As such, the powerful gives voice – or choose not to give voice – to the ones being represented (Tenorio, 2011, p. 205).

These perspectives will be of key importance for analysing the representations of ringed birds. In nature conservation, power asymmetry is already a given as humans - as the only species - have the cognitive ability to choose whether we want to act in a reciprocal manner. How this relation of power is then represented in text and images, reveals ideological views that are maintained through articulation and repetition. The same applies to the motive of voice. As the articles in Our Bird Fauna are written by the one holding the power, the

question must be asked of how, or even if, the voices of the ones being represented exist in the material studied.

8.2.1 How to understand *Ways of seeing*?

The relation between discourse, representation and ways of seeing is in this thesis inspired by Fälton's (2021) dissertation: *Shapeshifting Nature: Ambivalent Ways of Seeing the Non-Human World within Swedish National Park Tourism and its Visual Culture*. According to her, all three concepts; discourses, representations and ways of seeing, are interdependent upon each other, and they co-exist in a continuous state of fluidity (Fälton, 2021). Fälton understands discourses as generating particular ways of seeing the world. These ways of seeing are thus discursive components, controlled and shaped by the conditions of the discourse (Fälton, 2021, p. 75). Furthermore, ways of seeing should be understood as ways of representing. Representations, Fälton argues, construct and shape our understanding of what a non-human is and how it is perceived– and consequently how we approach and treat them. Ways of seeing ought thus to be perceived as “immaterial phenomena with material consequences”, which then becomes visible through representation (Fälton, 2021, p. 75).

In the book *Ways of seeing* by art critic John Berger (1972), he argues that seeing establishes our place in the surrounding world. Further, he emphasises that “we never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves” (Berger, 1972, p. 9). Attempting to interpret Berger; we understand and construct ourselves in relation to what we see, and this construction comes to determine our sense of place in the world. As such, seeing is self-constitutive. Again drawing on Fälton, representations and ways of seeing ringed birds, construct - not only the birds, but also ourselves and our relation to the birds. Inspired by all the perspectives above, this thesis perceives discourse, representation and ways of seeing as interconnected and inseparable. Ways of seeing ringed birds in the magazines are expressed through linguistic and visual representations. Discourse is the overarching construction which both generate and govern the particular ways of seeing and representing them.

8.3 Eco-philosophy

I hold that eagle to have intrinsic value regardless of my,
or any other humans, actually seeing it (Vetlesen, 2015, p. 180)

Radical eco-philosophy rests on the idea that analysis disclose “the conceptual, attitudinal, and social origins of the ecological crisis” (Zimmerman et al., 1993, p. vii). Following this, eco-philosophers argue for the need for a revolution or a fundamental shift of paradigm, involving a transformation of the social and economic system, in order to cease the further destruction of nature (Zimmerman et al., 1993). One of the key mandates of eco-philosophy is to respect the nature of animals, and to criticise discursive representations which turns them into unfeeling objects (Stibbe, 2012). The eco-philosophy of this thesis is inspired by the philosophical world view of ecocentrism. Its tenet is the interdependence of all living things in nature, of which humans holds membership on the same terms as non-humans (Zimmerman et al., 1993).

Each living individual of the biotic communities are perceived as teleological agents, “pursuing its own good, in its own way” (Zimmerman et al., 1993, p. 70). To pursue “good” in a teleological sense must not be perceived in an anthropocentric fashion, where it can be evaluated whether the pursuit is moral or immoral. Rather, good in this sense must be perceived as every being’s potential to fulfil its biological powers; it’s success in preserving its own survival, and thus its own purpose (Zimmerman et al., 1993). Eco-philosophy building on ecocentrism can also be understood using Kant’s categorical imperative. However, Kant limited his ascription of intrinsic value only to that of rational beings, and the non-humans were strictly reduced to having instrumental value (Vetlesen, 2015). In light of this, it might be odd to make use of his imperative in order to declare the moral standing of animals. However, the intelligibility and weighty symbolism of Kant’s imperative makes it too tempting. By applying the Kantian imperative to that of non-humans: Animals’ ought to be treated as ends in themselves, and never as means (Zimmerman et al., 1993).

8.3.1 Natures intrinsic worth?

The question of whether nature holds intrinsic value or not, is one of the most important questions in a broad range of eco-philosophical debates. In this thesis, the question of

intrinsic worth is foundational to the discussion of birds' representations, due to being inseparable from the essential concepts of nature's intrinsic, subjective purposefulness. Due to its importance, I will give a brief reflection of this question here.

In his book, *The Denial of Nature*, Vetlesen (2015) warns against our tendency to perceive constructedness as given – the Kantian idea that subjectivity is inescapable. Such a view, he argues, derives from a misleading perception of ethics and philosophy, where what exists in the world is reduced to that of our linguistic and cognitive limitations. He advocates for perceiving intrinsic worth as a quality existing in nature itself. When we value living beings, he argues, it is not because they *should* be valued, but because they *have* intrinsic worth, a priori of human valuation. As Vetlesen (2015) articulates it:

It makes no sense to suggest that the value we are talking about is a value of our (human, subjective) making; the value is there, in the plant and not in me [...] the value is at work in the entity as such, in re, being operative there in a mind-independent manner and so prior to as well as subsequent to my, or any other human subject's, appraising it – or failing to. (p. 127)

Vetlesen's (2015) main tenet, which is shared by this thesis, is that intrinsic worth must be understood through the ecological perspective of holism. Value is not perceived as something localised residing in an individual being. Rather, value is anchored in the system as a whole, and thus exists independent of an exterior human (subject) ascribing the valuation. He manifests this argument by the contention that beings in nature are valuing their own existence, as well as their continued existence - just as human beings do. This individual valuation of *self* does not conflict with the intrinsic value of the holistic system, but it fundamentally depends on it. If the being is removed from this system, its value collapses as well (Vetlesen, 2015). Vetlesen's understanding of nature's intrinsic worth resonates with an ecocentric approach to eco-philosophy. Ecocentrism rests upon the idea that all living beings in the world of nature, as well as all their interrelationships, have intrinsic worth - independent of the presence of the human realm (Ingold, 2000).

8.4 An experiential approach

Both Vetlesen (2015), Stibbe (2021) and Kalleberg (1992) stress the importance of striving to make a real change through research. This resonates with Pedersen, who argues that the most

important part of research in the *animal turn* is “what we *do* with this knowledge – that is; how we put it to work, and for whose benefit” (Pedersen, 2014, p. 16, italics in original). According to Stibbe (2021), Eco-CDA contributes to an increased awareness of destructive jargon by using ecological philosophy as a normative basis. Eco-linguists, he argues, must themselves find their eco-philosophical adherence to value discourses against. Following Stibbe’s suggestion, the eco-philosophy of this thesis will make use of an experiential point of reference.

8.4.1 Borrowing from phenomenology

A phenomenological perspective suggests an ontological approach to animals by giving primacy to their *lived experience*. It presupposes the dismantling of the idea that existence is limited to humans. Animal lives are considered to be both transcendental and embodied, and they contemplate both depth and substance. Of key importance is the recognition that non-humans live their lives in *first person* (Burgat, 2015). The primacy Burgat here ascribes to lived experience resonates well with Critical Realism. As will be shown in the method-chapter, it acknowledges both existence and *being* to non-humans. Animals’ existence in a phenomenological perspective further means that they are individual “subjects of their own experience” (Burgat, 2015, p. 56). Imbedded in Burgat’s advocacy for phenomenology is a critique of the utilitarianist and animal rights-based approach to non-humans, where individuals are sacrificed for the greater good of a majority. Such an approach is devoid of consideration or concern for the subjective individual being - “for the uniqueness of every life, of each life that was meant to be lived in and of itself” (Burgat, 2015, p. 57).

8.4.2 Margaret Morse Nice and the birds

Margaret Morse Nice, born in 1883, was an American ornithologist and bird ringer. Despite barely being mentioned today, compared to her male contemporaries, she was at her time recognised as a specialist in bird behaviour. Nice was best known for her grand research project carried out on Song sparrows [*Melospiza melodia*, sangspurv] in her garden. (Whitney, 2021). Her legacy from this research is her explicit devotion to phenomenology - both in her research methods and methodology. Nice referred to her phenomenological research methods as *fellow-feeling* and *sympathetic observation*. This method involved close

and extensive observation, while imagining the birds' subjective experiences (Whitney, 2021). As Nice argued in a letter in 1953: "Study of a live animal is different from a problem in chemistry. No one can understand birds and other animals without a real sympathy for them" (Nice, 1953, cited by Whitney, 2021, p. 127). This sympathy, according to Nice, presupposes the ability to embody the sense of the individual under study.

In this thesis, the analysis of ringed bird's textual and visual representation is considerably inspired by both Burgat (2015) and Nice's phenomenological perspectives. Answering Stibbe's call of eco-linguists having to choose their own normative framework, this is my choice. Phenomenology may not be considered a traditional school of ethics, but as Nice and Burgat show, a centring of the animal as subject and being enables both a defence (of animals) and a critique (of human practices).

8.5 Abstraction & consumption of nature

The contemporary eco-philosopher Arne Johan Vetlesen's theory of abstraction and consumption will be central to the analysis of representations of ringed birds. The theory seeks to explain modern relations between man and nature, and Vetlesen makes use of a metaphor of the relation between a woodworker and a tree for portraying this relation (Vetlesen, 2012). His metaphor is key to understand the theory of abstraction and consumption, and it will here be briefly introduced.

Today, woodworking no longer involves heavy manual labour. Modern forestry work is managed utilising a self-driving vehicle equipped with an advanced computer system. By feeding operations into the computer, the machine is able to pick out the right tree, prune it, chop it, lift it and place it on the pile of already chopped trunks. The tree, perhaps hundreds of years old, is taken down in a matter of minutes. Possibly with a vacant vehicle as its only witness (Vetlesen, 2012).

Prior to modern forestry practices, the lumberjack was reliant on hands-on interaction and intimacy with the tree. Every tree was unique and required individual customisation due to differences in shape, height, age, position etc. - all in the absence of technological perfection. This required an immediacy and vigilance: To hear, smell and touch the tree - and to feel the

tree's yielding of resistance (Vetlesen, 2012). Today, handling the tree requires no such physical intimacy, nor any sensuous experience of hearing, smelling or touching. The tree's unique properties have been rendered insignificant, and the tree has been transformed into an *abstract entity* - replaceable and devoid of individuality (Vetlesen, 2012). The forestry machine in Vetlesen's metaphor illustrates how man has seized control over what was previously beyond reach. By virtue of technology, the earth and everything that lives on it has become domesticated and available for our consumption (Vetlesen, 2015; 2012). As a result of this commodification, Vetlesen argues, we are no longer *in-the-world* but are transformed into *consumers of the world* (Vetlesen, 2015, p. 153).

Vetlesen's metaphor is key to understand the process of *abstraction*. He does not himself give a detailed account of this concept in his book *The Denial of Nature* (2015), but attempting to interpret him: Abstraction is the inescapable result of utilising technology for rendering entities in nature available for our consumption. When entities in nature are broken loose from their past and present context, any trace of the entities' origin or prehistory, as well as any intrinsic meaning or ways of belonging in the world, are nullified. Technology is omnipresently available, and therefore entities in nature are omnipresently available for the gratification of our lusts. The technological expansion has thus emancipated us from the inconvenient restraints of time and space (Vetlesen, 2015).

In an elaboration, Vetlesen argues that "abstraction is the principal tool of enlightenment" (Vetlesen, 2015, p. 56). He is here inspired by Horkheimer and Adorno who perceived enlightenment as a continuous scientific process of disenchantment and demystification of nature. As scientific knowledge production is characterised by the endeavour of transforming all secrets in nature into knowledge, the only things that can be said to have real, objective existence is whatever can be calculated, measured and counted. Consequently, the uncountable is rendered not worth knowing (Vetlesen, 2015, p. 57).

8.6 The consumption of birds

In the article *Airborne Kula – The appropriation of birds by Danish Ornithologists*, the author John Liep aspires to "reveal the significant sociological and mental features of birdwatching" (Liep, 2001, p. 11). In the material studied in this thesis, the majority of bird

ringers are volunteering, recreational bird watchers. As such, bird ringing and birdwatching are here perceived to be closely intertwined activities, and Liep's article will be a valuable theoretical contribution to the analysis and discussion of ringed bird's representations.

In his article, Liep (2001) draws the conclusion that the hobby of birdwatching is fundamentally consumptive. In consumption research, he argues, there are two distinct interpretations: *Other directed* and *inner directed* consumption. Through *other directed consumption*, consumers appropriate items for the sake of attaching them to themselves. Here, a consumptive competition plays out in a hierarchy of consumers, and the appropriation of goods are considered to give status and recognition. As such, the type of objects a consumer has managed to appropriate determines his/her ranking in the hierarchy of other consumers. *Inner directed consumption*, on the other hand, refers to a drive to achieve personal pleasure. To satisfy one's personal desires, there is a continuous urge to achieve ever more noble experiences, as well as ever more physical objects. According to Liep, both other directed- and inner-directed consumption is fundamental for birdwatchers (Liep, 2001).

Closely intertwined with consumptiveness is the strive for promotion- and construction of *the self*. Liep argues that both consumption and self-construction are deeply ingrained in the hobby of birdwatching (Liep (2001). In order to understand the relation between observed birds and the process of self-construction, birds must be understood in a hierarchical manner. In this hierarchy: "the most important birds are usually those which are the rarest" (Liep, 2001, p. 13). The motivation to see a rarity then, is inherently competitive and closely related to the modern consumption of commodities. Interpreting Liep's article, the hierarchy of bird species must be understood as parallel to the construction of self into the hierarchy of fellow birdwatchers. As such, self-construction is inseparable from consumption, and consumption is inseparable from the rarity-ranking of birds.

In addition to the two forms of consumption, Liep develops a theory of *possession*. In the old days, it was common for bird watchers to kill the 'keep-worthy' birds they discovered for the sake of adding them to their taxidermic collections. The hobby of watching birds was thus performed by the act of physical appropriation, as birds were turned into physical possessions. These possessions functioned as *proofs* of the bird watchers' merits. Today, it is no longer legitimate or legal for bird watchers to kill birds for the sake of proof. As a replacement for physical specimens, bird watchers now keep checklists where bird species -

once observed - are checked off (Liep, 2001). One of the main findings of Liep's research on bird watchers, is that ownership does not presuppose possession. In his own words: "one may as well possess – that is appropriate and incorporate into the self – something one can never own" (Liep, 2001, p. 15). This potent argument will be central to the analysis undertaken in this thesis.

8.7 The representation of the animal – ordinary & technical language

In the book *Images of Animals*, Crist (1999) distinguishes between two epistemological approaches of representing animals through language: *The ordinary* and the *technical*. The ordinary language is the one used for describing human affairs. In representing animals utilising such ordinary language, the representations are closely affiliated with reasoning normally applied to the human mind and agency. Animals are here constructed as *acting subjects*, and their own experiential perspectives are perceived as real and invaluable for our understanding of them. Being a subject, Crist (1999) argues, means:

To experience the world as a meaningful place, rather than merely existing in it; to accomplish actions, rather than sleepwalking through them; and to live in a flow of a temporally extended space rather than in disconnected pockets of time. (p. 5)

Following Crist (1999), ordinary language prerequisites a recognition of the subject being described as having intrinsic meaning. The subject's behaviour and actions thus emanate from their own experience both in and of the world, and the experience is - as such - embodied in the being itself.

The technical language, however, is rather densely theoretical. Here, animals are conceptualised as *natural objects*, who's experiences are rendered empty of meaning due to their insignificance for scientific knowledge. The concepts applied to animals as objects are extrinsic to their world of experience. As Crist (1999, p. 5) explains: "Technical terms cannot be understood as connecting to the animals' phenomenal world, for they are alien to any possible experience or perspective of animals". As such, by utilising theoretical, technical language to describe animals, they are inevitably portrayed as entities devoid of subjective, intrinsic lifeworlds. The animals cannot relate or have any reference to the jargon applied for

describing them, and as a consequence; “a view of inner life becomes blocked” (Crist, 1999, p. 7).

Technical language strictly runs counter to a phenomenologically inspired approach, where lived life is given primacy. Judging whether animals are linguistically represented as either subjects or objects is not conducted through analysis of explicit descriptions of animal’s minds. Rather, it is determined through the scrutiny of lexical features and the construction of reasonings (Crist, 1999). While animals as subjects are portrayed as agents initiating and steering their own action, animals as objects are portrayed as entities controlled by exterior forces. The two different categories of language result in contrasting representations, and thus divergent understandings of animal life. The use of ordinary language bring the world of humans and animals into alignment, whereas the technical language manifests the world of animals as strictly separated from that of ours (Crist, 1999).

According to Stibbe, the most important difference between animals and objects is that animals have “intelligence, feelings and mental lives, and act in the world pursuing their own purpose and their own ends” (Stibbe, 2021, p. 149). On the contrary, animals represented as objects are withdrawn from the domain of moral consideration. This is rarely articulated in an explicit manner, but rather expressed through subtle connotations and implicit ideologies (Stibbe, 2021).

8.8 Ethical problematisations –

The (im)possibility of an ecocentric outlook

Radical interpretations of eco-philosophy, such as the *ecocentrism* drawn upon in this thesis, tend to proclaim their strong opposition to anthropocentrism both in their perception of nature and in their approach to research. But is a non-anthropocentric outlook possible? The proclamation of a non-anthropocentric outlook suggests an elevated position – exterior to and emancipated from the social realm. The normative values applied must then be anchored in nature itself - a nature as independent of humans. Such an approach implies that humans have the ability to take on the perspective of non-humans. In the book *The Idea of Wilderness*, Oelschlaeger (1991) refers to John Passmore (n.d.) who argues that exterior to humans, there

is no wilderness. Consequently, he draws the conclusion that since humankind cannot view the environment from any other position than human, ecocentrism must be considered “an inherently flawed and nonsensical position” (Oelschlaeger, 1999, p. 296).

Birds being ringed do not have a voice of their own, at least not one which ringers can understand. However, as proclaimed in the introduction, this thesis will explicitly side with the ringed birds. But what does this *siding* really equate to, if the birds cannot themselves utter their desires? Arguably, if the explicit valuation of bird’s representations is to be purposeful, their subjective experiences must be somewhat interpreted. An example of the need for such an interpretation is the question of “do they suffer?”, discussed in the introduction. The alternative to pursue an understanding of the bird’s lifeworld, is to value their representations against an explicitly human outlook - where the human itself becomes the yardstick . Such an approach would be conflicting with the key principles of Eco-CDA, eco-philosophy and phenomenology. The proclamation of an ecocentric position in this thesis, entails an endeavour to deviate from an explicitly anthropocentric gaze. However, Passmore’s claim that ecocentrism is fundamentally flawed, due to the infeasibility of such a perspective, is well-grounded. I will turn to Critical Realism for some elucidation.

8.8.1 Turning to critical Realism

According to Critical Realism, the impossibility of deviating completely from an anthropocentric gaze is obvious. All ideas are linguistically and culturally enframed, and we can only reach birds through our ideas. This renders it impossible to transform our outlook into a non-human one. As argued in the book *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*; the attempt to establish a neutral ground, from where relationships between man and nature can be analysed, must be dismissed (Zimmerman et al., 1993). This does not mean, however, that one needs to agree with Passmore’s argument regarding ecocentrism being a flawed perspective. De-centring the subjectivity of human experience in an analysis does not inevitably result in a world view of non-anthropocentrism, nor any claim of such a view. As John (2014) argues in the book *Keeping the Wild*, humans may never be truly able to acknowledge non-humans as having moral standing and intrinsic worth. However, as John further argues:

If we do not behave as if we are [able], if we continue on the current path, we will impoverish the Earth and at last become the “stewards” of a grave- yard. (Wuerthner et al., 2014, p. 43)

Inspired by John’s (2014) reasoning, this thesis argues that we ought to strive towards an ecocentric outlook, despite acknowledging our failure to ever achieve it fully- because the alternative is far more destructive.

9 Methods

In this chapter, I will give a reflection on why I chose the method of Eco-Critical Discourse Analysis. The choice was based upon Eco-CDA’s affiliation with Critical Realism, and this will be briefly summed up. Following this, I will introduce my empirical data: The magazine *Our Bird Fauna*. Here I will defend my choice of this magazine, as well as reflect on the process of selecting articles. Next, Arran Stibbe’s eco-linguistic tools ‘*stories*’ will be introduced. This analytical tool has been invaluable for enabling in-depth analysis of the representations of the birds', and will here be given a detailed account. As photographs are also a part of the material analysed in this thesis, I will include an explanation of my approach to multi modal discourse analysis. This will be followed by a brief explanation of how I have strived to achieve trustworthiness and reflexivity in the thesis. Finally, I will offer two ethical reflections on possible weaknesses in my chosen methods.

9.1 Why Eco-Critical Discourse Analysis?

- A reflection on methodology

Discourse analysis commonly rests ontologically and epistemologically on postmodernist social constructivism (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Originally adhering to this school of thought, it became apparent during initial readings that such an approach would be self-contradictory. The price of (radical) postmodernism is the realisation that no truth exists, and it follows that nothing holds existence apart from what is constructed. In the absence of truth, we are left in a vacuum deprived of reason and basis for action, and this undermines the basis

for critical philosophy. As this thesis seeks to take an explicit stance in acknowledging the objective existence and intrinsic worth of nature, utilising postmodern discourse analysis appeared paradoxical. How could it be meaningful to critically analyse the discursive construction of birds, if their (ontological) existence do not transcend this construction? This nihilistic ambiguity led to a search for a method of analysis better suited to the insistence on the objective existence of external reality, as held by this thesis. The philosophy of science underlying Eco-Critical Discourse analysis turned out to provide ontological remedy.

9.1.1 Critical realism

Eco-Critical Discourse Analysis is grounded in Critical Realism as its fundamental philosophy of science (Skrede, 2017). Roy Bhaskar, a core thinker of Critical Realism, advocates for the distinct separation between ontology and epistemology. The realist ontology of Critical Realism involves the recognition of a world which exists independent of human beings. However, its relativistic epistemology upholds the notion that our knowledge about the world is always fallible and temporary. As such, we are not in possession of any absolute or infallible truths about the world, but the fallible knowledge we *do* possess does concern an exterior, independent reality 'out there' (Jakobsen, 2021). Knowledge is thus socially produced, but not socially determined. What is important, is that the realist perspective transcends the empirical: We cannot reduce the world to the knowledge we hold or to what we can observe. Bhaskar argues that this reductionism has been a fundamental misunderstanding in Western philosophy, as it is a confusion of ontology with epistemology. Critical Realism is the imminent critique of the misconception that what we have knowledge about in the world (epistemology) equals what exists in the world (ontology) (Jakobsen, 2021).

If scientific practice is to be meaningful, critical realists argue that it needs to rest on the assumption that what we are researching also exists independent of the research conducted (Jakobsen, 2021). The epistemological realism underlying Eco-CDA is what renders it meaningful to conduct a discourse analysis of representations of birds, as it rests on the claim that reality exists independent of the human mind. As such, birds' representations can only be assessed and valued through discursive constructions. However, the birds being visually and textually constructed in *Our Bird Fauna* are also corporeal beings exterior to and independent

of their representations. This then, is what I have called the ontological remedy of Critical Realism. As the philosophical basis for Eco-Critical Discourse Analysis, it aligns with my own basic metaphysical assumptions of the relationship between language and nature. I therefore chose Eco-CDA as the main method of analysis applied in this thesis.

9.2 The analysis

Five individual articles from Our Bird Fauna have been analysed in this thesis. The chosen articles were published in editions of Our Bird Fauna between 2018 and 2021. Considering this thesis' endeavour of examining contemporary representations of birds being ringed, I found this time frame to be fitting. The reason for only choosing five articles was the aspiration of conducting an in-depth and thorough analysis of each of the chosen representations of the birds. Critical Discourse Analysis is a fundamentally qualitative approach, and the researcher primarily deals with the *opacity* of texts and utterances. As such, the discursive representations are not readily available for scrutiny, and this renders it a demanding and time-consuming process (Flowerdew & Richardson, 2018; Locke, 2004). In this thesis, the ultimate ambition of doing an Eco-Critical Discourse Analysis was to look for hidden ideologies of domination and exploitation in the textual and visual representations (Stibbe, 2001). Such an extensive analysis would not be possible if the empirical data material was widened.

The five magazine articles were analysed one by one in their own respective chapters. The headline of each of these chapters refers to direct quotations or relevant concepts from the analysed article. All the empirical data was written in Norwegian, and to incorporate and refer to the direct quotations in my analysis I had to translate them into English. This translation process is a potential weakness of the analysis, but I chose to write in English due to feeling more confident with the English jargon of discourse analysis. In an attempt of countering the potential weakness of translation, I chose to de-emphasise the close reading of grammatical structures, as well as extensive interpretations of individual words and concepts which do not have apparent equivalents in English. As a counterweight, I have also made extensive use of Arran Stibbe's eco-linguistic heuristic. In the process of translation, subtleties and nuances are hard to get right, and Stibbe's heuristic tools proved to be a

significant help in enabling analysis of broad ideas and concepts, rather than close readings using meta-language. That being said, I pledge that the overall intended meaning in all articles and quotations analysed has not been lost in translation.

9.2.1 The magazine: Our Bird Fauna

Our Bird Fauna [Vår Fuglefauna] is the official membership magazine of Birdlife Norway. It came into existence in 1978, and all members of Birdlife Norway receive this magazine. Birdlife Norway also publishes a scientific magazine, as well as a recruitment-magazine, but they proclaim Our Bird Fauna to be their flagship magazine. The magazine is published four times a year - one edition for each season- and it is “filled with great bird photos and exciting bird-news” (Birdlife Norway, 2022b). The magazine has multiple regular columns, such as editorials, artistic renderings of birds, international bird-news, ornithologists reporting from the field, photography competitions and a column of conservation efforts. In addition, they often have articles on uncommon bird observations, reports on endangered species and descriptions of harmful, state-led interventions in nature.

9.2.2 Why Our Bird Fauna?

When starting this thesis, I did not want to take a historical approach to the representation of birds. Taking into consideration the acuteness of the ecological disaster we are facing, I wanted to look at contemporary nature representations. Critically analysing representations of non-humans deepens our understanding of how humans relate to - and perceive - the non-human world. This is a crucial aspect for comprehending our escalating ecological disaster (Fälton, 2021). Choosing the textual and visual representations of a magazine whose primary concern is the preservation of birdlife, adds a particularly imperative dimension to the analysis. Most discourse analysis conducted as part of the animal turn appear to be concerned with animals in the food industry, tourist industry or jargon in children’s books, commercials or colloquial language. Discourse analysis considering representations of conservation efforts conducted by idealistic, non-governmental and non-profit organisations seem to be largely missing from the *animal turn*.

Perhaps overtly destructive representations, such as the meat industry, are believed to be of greater importance to scrutinise. This is a sound and reasonable line of thought considering the large proportion of the public being exposed to such discourses. However, it will here be argued that perceptions of nature underlying idealist, pro-wildlife organisations are of key importance to critically scrutinise. The members of such organisations amount to a minority of the population, but their wildlife-lobbyism has a significant impact on both nature management policies as well as perceptions of wildlife in society at large. Idealistic wildlife organisations are perceived to be a noble gold standard regarding how to both comprehend and interact with the natural world. It is a mistake to take for granted that such organisations are beyond reproach due to their high standing and wildlife-advocacy.

9.2.3 Choosing the articles in Our Bird Fauna

As mentioned in the introduction, I have been a member of Birdlife Norway for the last few years, and I have collected all published member magazines since the start of my membership. When I was starting on this thesis and began to leaf through the magazines, I was looking for articles explicitly articulating perceptions or attitudes concerning the act of ringing birds. I soon came to realise that articles primarily concerned with bird ringing were predominantly comprised of statistics, numbers, calculations and maps. These articles were written in a pragmatic and rational jargon, and they did not contain any normative perspectives on the practice of bird ringing. These articles were of great interest, considering how the ringed birds were described scientifically. However, finding these articles did not change my desire to analyse explicit articulations concerning the act of bird ringing.

I sent an e-mail to the administration of Our Bird Fauna, asking whether there had been any articles debating or discussing the practice of bird ringing. They replied that the practice of bird ringing not had been given a proper discussion or presentation in Our Bird Fauna. I realised that I had to widen my lens, and after looking through the magazines one more time I found multiple articles where bird ringing was mentioned, despite not being the foci of the article. These articles were much less pragmatic, but forthright remarks on ringing birds were still absent. The commonality across these articles was how all of them were portraying and representing some form of interaction with ringed birds - either by text or photographs.

Coupled with the realisation that I had not read any research with a similar approach, I decided to analyse representations of birds being ringed.

Two of the articles I chose were editorials, and both of these were explicitly motivating people to get involved with birds. Another two articles were from the regular column *news from the field*, and they were both reporting from the famous, annual birdwatching-week on the Norwegian island Utsira. The final article was a field report composed by a bird watcher who had successfully been trying out some new technology in the field, in an attempt to catch birds for ringing.

9.3 Stories as an eco-linguistic framework

Arran Stibbe's *stories* is a cognitive framework for analysing the connection between language and ecology (Stibbe, 2021). Stories are deeply embedded cognitive structures and only appear indirectly in between the lines of texts. When stories are shared across society, they are referred to as the *stories we live by* (Stibbe, 2021). Eco-linguistics, which *stories* are built upon, enables critique of how language impact how we perceive and interact with ecosystems. The concern is that we may forget that stories are only possible perspectives among a multitude of other possible perspectives regarding reality. As such, one may faultily take for granted that the *stories we live by* are pure transparent reflections of reality, rather than a constructed image of it (Stibbe (2014; 2021). The essence of a story is that it is neither necessarily true nor false, but merely a version or perspective of the world which dictates how we perceive it. We do not consciously choose the stories we live by, as they are not intuitively recognisable as such. On the contrary, they are deeply entwined in our minds as innate shared realities. Therefore, stories need to be unveiled and critically scrutinised (Stibbe, 2021).

Stibbe distinguishes between nine types of *stories*, and four of them will be utilised in my analysis: Ideology, metaphor, framing and erasure. These four stories were chosen based on their aptness for analysing *representations*, which will be further demonstrated in the elaboration of the stories below. Each type of story specialises in exposing certain types of linguistic patterns and effects, but they are not isolated concepts and narratives. Rather, they overlap and co-exist in texts.

In this thesis, the four stories have not been applied categorically to each article but have rather been utilised as complementary analytical tools across the analyses for furthering a critical look on the representations of the birds. All critical studies, Stibbe argues, “are based on an explicit or implicit philosophy which gives an ethical vision of where societies should be heading” (Stibbe, 2014, p. 120). In Stibbe’s *stories*, eco-philosophy constitutes the explicit basis for valuing discourses against, however eco-linguist must find their own eco-philosophical adherence (Stibbe, 2021). As introduced in the theory chapter, phenomenology will be applied to the eco-philosophical framework of this thesis, and the stories revealed will be critically valued against this framework.

9.3.1 Ideologies

Ideologies are “belief systems about how the world was, is, will be or should be which are shared by members of particular groups in society” (Stibbe, 2021, p. 21). Ideologies are disguised as obvious or unquestionable truths existing in the minds of group members, and they are therefore considered cognitive (Stibbe, 2021). They operate implicitly by influencing people’s cognitive representations – and consequently their actions. How group members communicate through speech and writing reflects these cognitive ideologies. When analysing texts looking for underlying discursive ideologies, reoccurring linguistic features are of key interest. If a story of ideology is present in a group or society, it will be revealed through analysing patterns of commonalities across multiple texts, which subtly and repeatedly promote the same fundamental ideas (Stibbe, 2021).

Valuing ideologies against a phenomenologically inspired eco-philosophy, the question to be asked in this thesis is whether the exposed ideological ideas promote birds as purposeful, subjective beings with the right to live their own lives. Analysis of ideologies are the most effective if those most responsible of promoting harmful ideas, unknowingly or not, become aware of their destructive use of language. Exposing such a discourse may contribute to its decrease and replacement, in favour of a more empathic discourse which resonates with eco-philosophical values (Stibbe, 2021).

9.3.2 Framing

Frames represents an abundance of different *packages of knowledge* about how the world is, and how it should become in the future. When *framing* occurs, knowledge from one area of life (a frame) is applied to another area of life, in order to conceptualise and structure it in a new way. Stibbe refers to the structure of a building, to give a better understanding of the analytical category of frames. If the building-frame changes, the building undergoes a fundamental change as well. Just as with ideologies, frames are also cognitive. Sequences of memories, emotions or material things which we associate with one specific frame is used to further certain frames of associated references. This is what Stibbe refers to as the use of trigger words (Stibbe, 2021).

Analysing frames requires the identification of a *target domain*: The topic or area being talked about. Next, the *source frame* must be identified, and this is the subject one comes to *associate* with the target domain. Stibbe demonstrates this by using *nature* as the *target domain*, and *resource* as the *source frame*. If nature primarily is perceived as a resource for the human realm to utilise and exploit, the fundamental perception of nature is reframed (Stibbe, 2021)

9.3.3 Metaphor

The analytical tool of metaphor has much in common with that of a frame, but it is more specific as an analytical category. The relation between the two is described by Stibbe in the following way: “Metaphors use a frame from a specific, concrete and imaginable area of life to structure how a clearly distinct area of life is conceptualised” (Stibbe, 2021, p. 59).

Metaphors are effective linguistic instruments due to their ability to construct vigorous images in the mind of their recipients. As such, metaphorical reasoning involves drawing conclusions about the target domain – the thing being talked about – by utilising concepts from a source frame – what we associate with it. The target domain is thus structured by the specific use of metaphor. Just as with the other *stories*, the exposed metaphors must be valued against an eco-philosophical framework (Stibbe, 2021).

9.3.4 Erasure

In eco-linguistics, participants who are backgrounded, suppressed or completely excluded from a text are of key importance to its analysis. The systematic absence of certain participants “tells a story in itself – that they are unimportant, irrelevant or marginal” (Stibbe, 2021, p. 139). As such, exclusion, abstraction or any other means of drawing attention away from participants signals them as not worthy of consideration. These are who Stibbe (2021) refers to as *victims of erasure*. When eco-linguistic analysts become aware of the erasure of certain participants, it enables them to argue for their return to consideration and attention. This step is fundamental for the story of erasure to become significant and meaningful. Whether the absence of certain participants is problematic or not, is up to the analyst to value in accordance with their eco-philosophical adherence.

Despite being given little attention, Stibbe briefly mentions the erasure of animals by referring to John Berger’s essay: *Why Look at Animals?*. Drawing on Berger, Stibbe (2021) argues that our encounter with animals increasingly happens at a distance through their mediation in cartoons, stuffed toys and books. However, it will here be argued that Berger referred to man’s dissociation from animals in a less literal and more cognitive sense. As Berger argues, animal’s cultural marginalisation – what happens in our minds - is a much more complex process than their physical marginalisation (Berger, 1991). Applying Stibbe’s analytical tool of *erasure*, by drawing on Berger, has proved to be even more effective than Stibbe himself narrates. Erasure’s analytical vigour is not limited to that of revealing non-human’s marginalisation into cultural caricatures, but more importantly: It enables an exposure of how representations of animals *qua* animals are largely missing. This broadened comprehension of *erasure* has been significantly valuable in this thesis.

9.4 Multimodal analysis

Visual elements convey meaning equal to written text, and images and photos are utilised for communicating what written language cannot. Visual features are used for the sake of foregrounding certain ideas, as well as for backgrounding others. They contribute to the construction of meaning in the text they are part of. The choice of visual features reflects the ideas the author wants to get across, and these choices contributes to shape the

representations in the text. When analysing visual elements in CDA, it is referred to as a multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA). Visual features can be understood as the 'doing' of discourse, and MCDA is conducted by looking at how social practices such as relations, ideas and activities are communicated non-verbally in texts (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

By analysing visual features, the depicted representations are denaturalised (Stibbe, 2021). When examining non-textual elements, the knowledge they represent and the values they hold can be scrutinised. This enables a critically driven multi-modal analysis of ideologies embedded in visual features (Ledin & Machin, 2018). In relation to animals, Stibbe argues that animals' erasure in visual features must be counteracted. The reductionistic symbolism of depicted animals must be transcended by looking at them directly. A photograph is easily accessible to readers, and it manifestly construct transparent representations of the subject in the photo. Visual communication thus play a crucial role in shaping people's perception of animals (Stibbe, 2012).

9.4.1 How will this be conducted?

In this thesis, photographs will be analysed by utilising semiotic theory of how images *denote* and *connote*. When analysing what pictures are *denoting*, this equals asking: What is depicted here? Hence, the denotation of a picture refers to the particular or concrete content the picture is documenting - such as people, events or places. The abstract ideas and concepts behind a picture, however, is what semiotic terminology refers to as *connote*. This equals asking: What particular or abstract sets of ideas and values are communicated here? What a picture connotes refers to what it symbolises and signals, and what meaning-making the denoted objects in the picture represent. Both steps of denotation and connotation are important (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

Two photographs will be analysed in this thesis, respectively in article 1 and 4. Both these pictures accompany an editorial article. The first picture will be analysed in its direct relation to the headline of the article. The body text of this article does not explicitly comment or relate to the picture, and I will therefore not give it particular attention. The second photograph will first be analysed by itself, and thereafter in relation to the accompanying headline. The body text of the second article will be used as a contextualisation to give the

photograph a more thorough analysis. Both headlines of the respective articles articulate a forthright encouragement to its readers. As mentioned above, the visual features represent *the doing* of the discourse, and the photographs will here be interpreted as *the doing* of the headlines (Ledin & Machin, 2018). The correlation between photograph and headline of these two articles will therefore be emphasised.

9.5 Trustworthiness & reflexivity

To ensure rigor in this qualitative and explicitly normative thesis, I have strived to fulfil two criteria in particular: Trustworthiness & reflexivity. Embedded in the method of Critical Discourse Analysis is the rejection of neutral and objective research. This results in an overt possession of power in the hands of the researcher. It requires the researcher to be conscious and aware of possible underlying motives, coupled with an acknowledgement that the researcher does not occupy a superior position (Mullet, 2018). In an explicitly normative thesis such as this, it is of uttermost importance to articulate one's position in order to meet the criteria of trustworthiness (Mullet, 2018). In this regard, I have strived towards ensuring transparency in my account of underlying attitudes and motives. Additionally, the theoretical framework has been consciously introduced by emphasising the underlying normative values it rests on. This thesis has further been written in an explicitly normative jargon. As such, there should not be any doubt about my intentions and incentives for conducting this research, and this hopefully contributes to the transparency required for achieving trustworthiness.

Closely linked with trustworthiness is the criteria of reflexivity. This is a subjective process, and in order for it to be achieved a detailed reflexive accounts must be incorporated (Mullet, 2018). In this thesis, reflexivity has been strived for by two measures in particular. The first one is a reflection offered regarding the problems and controversy surrounding an ecocentric outlook. This has been elaborated on at the end of the theory chapter (8.8). The second measure is an ethical reflection on two possible paradoxes entailed in my choice of method. The first is the paradox of objectification, where I reflect on the inevitability of objectifying the birds when using them as research subjects. The second paradox is the choice of analysing *representations* of birds, rather than addressing their material existence. Both these

paradoxes can be viewed as self-contradictions, considering my plea to abstain from reductionistic accounts of the birds. These will be elaborated on in the upcoming part.

9.6 Weaknesses of the chosen method – An ethical reflection

9.6.1 The paradox of objectification

Making ringed birds the object of my study inevitably result in objectifying them. In fact, by conducting research within the *animal turn*, the animal is already objectified through subsumption into a category separating it distinctly from humans. This is a paradox, considering that the critical point of departure for this thesis is the critique of objectifying animals into spectacles of scientific purpose. Isaacs (2021) neatly sums up this paradox by emphasising that: “Critical reflexivity is thus required as researchers risk [...] ironically reinforcing the dualisms they seek to deconstruct” (p. 81). As such, analysing representations of birds inevitably contributes to reinforce and reproduce the dichotomy of human subjects and animal objects.

Pedersen (2014) argues that by decentring the human and making the animal emerge as the subject of our scientific research, we must ask ourselves “to what extent animals, their bodies and lifeworld are, and should be, *accessible* to us” (p. 16-17, italics in original). Viewed in relation to the acknowledgement above - that researching animals inevitably objectifies them - Pedersen here raises a crucial concern. She goes on to further stress the importance of understanding that research in the *animal turn* is not conducted in isolation from the factual life-situations of the animals being researched. Although we are only “doing theory”, she argues, our endeavour must be to develop knowledge which can contribute to factual resistance to animals’ oppression (Pedersen, 2014). Perhaps it can be normatively justified, then, to make animals our subjects of research, and to make their bodies and lifeworld available to us, on the premiss that the research conducted carries the potential to improve the lives of non-humans. However, the answer is not clear. A paradox inevitably has no obvious

solution, and showing willingness to reflexively engaged with this problem is, in my opinion, all the researcher can do.

9.6.2 The paradox of analysing representations

The philosophical premise of birds' purposeful objective existence, is limited to that of a realist ontology. As such, it constitutes my philosophical position which is decisive for the formulation of an eco-philosophical framework. Conversely, though, apart from being a philosophical yardstick for valuation, the factual material reality of the birds is not incorporated into my analysis. This pertinent critique is addressed by Angelique Richardson:

While animal studies in the humanities concerns itself primarily with representation, what of the animals themselves? An overemphasis on language can lead to a blindness to materiality beyond language. (Richardson, 2013, p. 8)

Pedersen's reasoning is in line with this, as she argues that: "Animals are overloaded with discourse, which sometimes directs our attention away from the fact that they are, above all, living, feeling beings whose life situation matters to them" (Pedersen, 2014, p. 13).

Following Richardson and Pedersen, it may appear self-contradictory to constrict my analysis to the *representations* of birds, and not also address their material existence. In Berger's (1972) book *ways of seeing*, he argues that our ways of seeing is influenced by what we know and what we believe. Following his assertion, it can be argued that our *ways of seeing birds* are subject to alteration, depending on what we know and think about the particular representations we are exposed to.

Following this line of thought inspired by Berger; becoming aware of how we are exposed to and influenced by certain representations and *stories* of birds, carries a potential for changing our ways of seeing them. As claimed, pro-wildlife organisations constitute a significant influence on our perceptions of the non-human world. Therefore, how they choose to visually and textually construct wildlife should be of prime concern. Widening our knowledge and thinking concerning the wildlife representations we are exposed to may alter our ways of seeing the natural world. However, these reflections ought not to be read as hard-line defence. The potential value of analysing animal's representations do not spirit off the limitation and contradiction of not attempting to analyse birds as material, living beings. All one can hope for by conducting a social and philosophical analysis such as this, is to

contribute to a change in our ways of seeing, and by hoping that a change of seeing may change our practice in the world as well.

10 Analysis

10.1 Article 1: It's simply about looking at birds



Figure 1 Solbakken (2020, p.144) *Our Bird Fauna*

In the editorial article in *Our Bird fauna*, fall 2020, readers are met with the headline: “It's simply about looking at birds”. The one-page article sets forth a strong advocacy for people to spend time outdoors, looking for - and at - birds. It argues for bird watching’s many advantages, among other amusement and an increased interest, curiosity and knowledge. The jargon of the article leaves an unmistakable impression of the target audience

being those having little or no previous experience with birdwatching. The article only displays one photo, and it depicts two girls in primary-school-age occupying the majority of the frame. One of the girls holds a passerine bird in a tight bander's grip. Both girls are looking down at the bird and are paying attention to it, but the bird is barely visible as only the tip of its head is pointing out between two fingers. The passerine bird makes up such a proportionally minor part of the picture that one may easily oversee it if not explicitly looking for it. The text under the photo informs readers that the two girls were excited by bird ringing, even though the article does not mention any such activity.

10.1.1 Photo-analysis

The picture connotes the feeling of a rare opportunity to experience a close-up, hands-on encounter with a wild being. Due to the composition of the photo, the children represent the main participants. This signals a human-oriented perception of the activity, which can be analysed using Stibbe's story of erasure. The children's enchantment and curiosity is in focus, and the bird's perception or experience of the event is devalued. This predicates an encounter of domination and asymmetrical relations of power between the children and the bird.

Whereas the human symbolises the superior part, the bird is restrained, unfree and inferior. To draw on Stibbe's (2021) story of *erasure*, the presence of the bird in the photo is rendered marginal and unimportant, and its consciousness is thus erased. The visual feature of the photo draws attention away from the bird, and this represents a way of seeing the bird as not worthy of consideration. Consequently, the depicted bird corresponds to what Stibbe considers a *victim of erasure* (Stibbe, 2021).

By choosing a photo where the partakers are youngsters, the activity depicted appears more approachable and inviting. The accompanying headline (*It's simply about looking at birds*) also represents something playful, low effort and easily obtainable. The apparent ease with which the children are holding the bird contributes to represent the activity as accessible. Coupled with the headline, the article intends to communicate an enchanting gateway into the world of birdwatching. However, if adults were depicted holding the bird, the reader would presumably get a different impression. Such a picture would construct an impression of a professional session of bird-ringing, performed by licensed bird-ringers. This impression would be less correspondent to the headline, which suggests *watching* birds. Accordingly, the connotations of the photo would have come across as far more unattainable, as an experience belonging to the few, rather than to commoners. As established previously, images can be utilised for describing ideas and concepts which would otherwise prove difficult or impossible to get across relying on linguistic features alone (Machin & Mayr, 2012). If the body text of the article described the act of physical hands-on encounter with a captured bird as similar to that of *simply watching* birds, it would appear controversial. The photo therefore has an efficacious role in the article, in foregrounding and naturalising the idea of hands-on human/bird-interaction as a core part of the wider activity of recreational bird watching.

10.1.2 Dissonance between photo and headline

Making use of Stibbe's (2021) category of a metaphor, birdwatching (as the headline of the article suggests) represents the article's target domain- what is being talked about. The accommodating photo, on the other hand, can be perceived as the source frame – our associations. As Stibbe argues: "A metaphor, to put it simply, is a story that conceptualises something as if it were something else" (Stibbe, 2021, p. 58). The concept of bird watching is here metaphorically constructed as an activity of physical, hands-on encounter between human and bird. This view resonates with Fairclough, who describes the metaphor as an available resource for "producing distinct representations of the world" (Fairclough, 2003, pp. 131-132). The metaphorical representation produces a dissonance between the lucid encouragement to *watch* birds, and the photo depicting a *captured* bird in the hands of a child. By structuring the activity of looking at birds as an activity of capture and hands-on interaction, the article reinforces and substantiates a representation of an overtly asymmetrical man-nature relation. The former dominates the latter.

One must assume that the bird in the photo has been captured for the purpose of ringing, considering scientific conservation value would be the only legitimate object of capture. The children depicted, however, are not depicted as contributing to the activity of ringing the bird themselves. This means that their curiosity and amusement of the rare, physical contact with an apparently wild bird is the only motive for their physical inclusion. As readers, the information we hold indicates that we are looking at a wild bird being held against its will. We have no reason to believe that the bird experiences any joy by being held. Rather, considering it being in the grips of an alien species, the bird is likely to experience freight and an urge to escape. This stress on the bird cannot be counterbalanced or justified with the potentially indirect advantage of increased knowledge of this species (due to its ringing), since the children's physical inclusion is superfluous. As such, the hands-on encounter between children and bird can be seen as a form of consumerist amusement, solely benefitting the children.

As Vetlesen argues, due to man's technological expansion in nature, what was previously beyond reach has now become easily obtainable (Vetlesen, 2015). For the purpose of ringing birds, technologies such as cameras, speakers, binoculars, radio senders, transmitters and mist nets have been introduced into the birds' habitats. Further, following Vetlesen, this

technology has enabled us to make entities (beings) in nature come to us. The encounter between human and bird is thus a product of our intentionality. The body text in the article suggests that readers who comply with its encouragement of taking a stroll - if they're in luck - might be rewarded with spotting a bird. This is a prompt that symbolises interaction and intervention by humans in nature on an equal footing with whatever one might be lucky enough to come across. The image, on the other hand, signals an ambiguous and contradictory idea which is the very opposite of being in luck; an activity of watching and physically interacting with a wild bird in captivity. This interaction represents a fundamentally unbalanced relation with a bird deprived of its sovereignty. The latter type of encounter is the very manifestation of a product of our intentionality.

Choosing to hand over the captured bird into the hands of a child, for the sole purpose of pleasing their curiosity, must be perceived as an act of transgressing the overarching objective of ringing the bird. Regardless of any initial altruistic intentions, this act represents a perverted intervention. The bird's suffering is prolonged for the sake of the child's enchantment, and this ought to be perceived as fundamentally consumptive. The bird, initially being captured for a scientific purpose of conservation, is by the choice of extending its captivity beyond this purpose objectified into a commodity to be consumed as a spectacle of entertainment. By virtue of the photo chosen for this article, readers are implicitly encouraged to experience and interact with entities and beings in nature, by taking advantage of fundamentally unbalanced relations of power. Borrowing from Vetlesen (2012, p. 30): Having the world of nature at our feet by such consumptive means, "makes for the most primitive narcissism". The metaphorical reasoning provided by this article, where the reader is encouraged to watch birds through an image of interaction with a captured being, must be questioned.

10.2 Article 2: 'Bomb week'

Every autumn, bird watchers and hobby ornithologists from all over Norway meet on the island of Utsira for one week of birding. The island sits on the West coast of Norway and due to its location far out in the ocean, many uncommon birds take a stop-over here on their migration. This week is known as the bomb-week, due to the increased likelihood of

observing ‘bombs’ on the island. Bombs are a hobby-ornithologists metaphor for particularly rare and unusual birds. When such a bomb-bird is discovered, a bomb-alert is announced on specific apps, chats and Facebook groups where hobby-ornithologists attend (Berge, 2019) . In this way, as many bird watchers as possible get the chance to observe and photograph the rarity. Utsira has its own scientific bird station and bird ringing is very common on the island, also during the bomb-week.

10.2.1 ...Not leaving the island undiscovered

In Our Bird fauna winter 2019, an article was written about that year’s bomb-week on Utsira. Torborg Berge, the author of the article, writes:

In order to receive important knowledge regarding nesting birds, bird ringing is also conducted on Utsira. Bird ringing also increases the chances of rare birds not leaving the island undiscovered. (Berge, 2019, p. 230)

Here, an argument for bird ringing on the island is first represented and justified by the need for increased knowledge on nesting birds. In the following sentence, the activity of ringing birds is legitimised on the ground that unusual birds ought not to leave the island before their presence is discovered and documented. As we see, the underlying objective of gaining knowledge from bird ringing is first introduced. A second justification for bird ringing then follows, namely that of minimising the risk of missing out on rare species. This second justification makes no claim to be grounded in conservation. The two sentences are juxtaposed, and thus represented as equivalent in their argumentative importance. The decreased risk of birds leaving undiscovered could have been introduced as a desirable or enjoyable side-effect of ringing birds for scientific purposes. However, the juxtaposition of the arguments results in a claim where the risk of them leaving unnoticed is sufficient for legitimising their capturing - in and of itself.

The *modality* of this claim, following from Stibbe’s (2021) view of the degree to which an author is committed to the statement proposed, are in these two sentences high. There is no question or hesitation considering whether the two different justifications for bird ringing are legitimate or not. The author draws on an authority of consensus, where the two legitimisations are naturalised and represented as taken for granted.

The above quotation also resonates with Stibbe's *story of ideology*. Here certain ideas about the world are disguised as unquestionable truths (Stibbe, 2021). Discursive ideologies, he argues, are not explicitly encouraging oppression, but are rather implicitly represented as unequivocal factualness. The second justification in the above quote thus relies on the expert-jargon of the first justification. By forthrightly declaring bird ringing as important for scientific purposes, the author has already established a relation vis a vis the reader where he possesses specialist knowledge. The credibility of the following sentence then, is inevitably influenced by the already established jurisdictional role of the author.

The second justification, where bird ringing is represented as important for rare birds not to leave undiscovered, represents a skewed relation of power between the birdwatcher and the bird. Beyond the value of knowledge, justifying bird ringing for the sake of discovering rare species must be perceived as an act of dominance and control. As Machin & Mayr (2012) has argued, power over subordinated groups is reproduced when there is a collective understanding of it as legitimate. Such a constructed legitimacy can be further analysed utilising Stibbe's *story of framing*. The *target domain* of the frame is bird ringing conducted for the purpose of knowledge production, whereas the *source frame* is the opportunity to observe and experience close up encounters with rare and exotic birds. As such, the overall frame of conservation effort has been reframed into a measure conducted for increasing the chances of uncommon birds being discovered. The categorisation of rare birds constitutes the trigger word in this frame. By virtue of potentially experiencing rare species, the use of bird-capturing- technology is legitimised. Through justifying such an intervention for the sake of increasing the chances of experiencing ornithological rarities, the birds are also turned into objects of human enthrallment. Their objectification is legitimised on the ground of relieving the distress of birdwatcher's fear of 'missing out' on potentially exotic bird-experiences. When transcending the overall purpose of scientific value, birds are caught in mist nets for the sake of entertainment and personal pleasure.

This can be viewed in light of our legacy from enlightenment when the Cartesian perception of nature evolved, as briefly introduced in the chapter *The Animal Turn*. When birds are perceived as having "no inside, no inner life, no end or purpose (Vetlesen, 2015, p. 58), their existence is linguistically represented as mechanical objects. Through the lens of the Cartesian world view there is no rational reason to question the legitimacy of capturing birds for reasons beyond scientific value. Such a reductionistic perception of birds are in absolute

disharmony with a phenomenological outlook. Here, primacy is given to each individual non-human being who's life is meant to be lived in and of itself (Burgat, 2015). Drawing on Merleau-Ponty (1962); having a body equals *being in the world*. Each body identifies itself with its own projects, as well as its continuous commitment to these projects (Ingold, 2000). Interfering with and transgressing this purposefulness runs strictly counter to the phenomenological approach advocated for in this thesis.

10.2.2 Swainson's thrush

In the Our Bird Fauna article about bomb week on Utsira, the author describes a scenario where it “exploded properly”. In other words, a real bird-bomb was discovered. A Swainson's thrush [*Catharus ustulatus*, brunkinnskogtrost], a very rare visitor to Norway, had been captured in a mist net. The bomb-alert messaging system was set off, and birders from all around the island hurried to the bird ringing sight. Berge, the author of the article, recounts his experience:

When we got there, and the bird was done being ringed, a public display was held for all the attendees. The few [birdwatchers] on the island who didn't get a chance to see it during the first round, got to see it when it flew in the net yet again. (Berge, 2019, p. 232)

In this passage, the bird is lexically represented as passive. The only mentioning of the bird's experience or behaviour is when it flew into the mist net for a second time. Apart from this, the bird is presented as an object having things done to it. It is being ringed and it is being seen. Despite not using technical language per se, this way of describing the bird equals that of Crist's (1999) category of *technical language*. The bird has no agency of its own. This is also discernible in the remainder of the two quotations above, where the bird's presence is merely implicit. It can be understood from the context that the bird is being showcased, but this is not mentioned explicitly. Wilbert and Philo (2004, p. 5) argue: “If we concentrate solely on how animals are represented, the impression is that animals are merely passive surfaces on to which human groups inscribe imaginings and orderings of all kinds”. This resonates with Stibbe (2021), who asserts that mainstream linguistics have come to erase the physical and mindful participation of non-humans, as well as interactions between humans and the ecosystem they are part of. The birdwatchers, on the other hand, are represented as active participants ‘doing something’: “when we got there”, “who didn't get a chance” and

“got to see it”. As such, the bird is passivated, whereas the birdwatchers are activated. Additionally, the bird’s physical and cognitive presence is *erased* from the situation, whereas the salience of the birdwatchers is fore fronted (Stibbe, 2021).

This way of linguistically representing the Swainson's thrush further substantiates an *ideological story* (Stibbe, 2021). Here, an asymmetrical power relation is established between birdwatcher and bird. The former does not only dominate the latter, but accordingly makes the deliberate choice of physically acting out their ascendancy by their willingness of making it suffer needlessly through prolonged captivity. Stibbe (2021, p. 21) refers to Foucault (2013, p. 54) who argues that discourses are “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak”. Such a view supports the assertion that the ringed birds in the Our Bird Fauna article are linguistically formed as objects whose physical bodies are utilised to alleviate birdwatcher’s voracity. The bird’s capture, and subsequent suffering and distress, is wilfully prolonged for the sake of a public exhibition. Its body is forcibly transformed into a good for consumption - not as an object on display in a bookshop window, but as the spectacle of a live show with live audience.

The commodification of the Swainson's thrush is caused by virtue of it being an uncommon species. This substantiates Liep’s (2001) previously recalled argument, wherein birds are hierarchically ranged by their degree of rareness. It is for this reason that the Swainson's thrush capture is prolonged. It is being publicly showcased, for the sole reason of it being a *bird-bomb*. Such a practice is very much in line with Srinivasan’s (2014), where in conservation efforts, individual beings are ontologically constructed as representatives of their entire population. By fixing one’s gaze on the Swainson's thrush at the public display, all the attendees become entitled to check off the uncommon species on their list of observational merits.

The emblematic scene of eager bird watchers gathering around a captured rarity is a befitting example also for Stibbe’s (2021) story of metaphorical reasoning (Stibbe, 2021). Here, the target domain is the very species of Swainson's thrush, and the source frame is the single individual specimen of this species. The Swainson's thrush at exhibition is metaphorically constructed as a simulation of its species in its entirety. This metaphorical reasoning is substantiated by how the Swainson's thrush is referred to by *mass noun* rather than *count noun*. Instead of writing *a Swainson's thrush*, some of the sentences in the article refer to

Swainson's thrush as a mass noun without an article. An example of this is the following sentence: "Swainson's thrush *Catharus ustulatus* was the second "yankee" at Utsira this fall" (Berge, 2019, p. 232). According to Stibbe, such use of mass nouns erases the individuality of the non-humans referred to. It rests on an ideological assumption that "each animal is just a (replaceable) representative of a category" (Stibbe, 2012, p. 24).

Valued against the normative foundation of phenomenological eco-philosophy, the mass noun metaphor is destructive as the "uniqueness of every life" (Burgat, 2015, p. 57) is ignored. Drawing on Ingold's (2000) phenomenological advocacy, active engagement with the natural world is encouraged. He argues that our disengagement has caused the ecological crisis. However, perceiving individuals as first and foremost representatives of species, renders engagement difficult. Only individuals can be "seen, heard, and empathized with, but a «species» cannot" (Stibbe, 2012, p. 73).

This lack of consideration for the individuality of the non-humans, as argued by Stibbe and Burgat, is exemplified not only by the use of mass noun in Berge's text. In the quotation from his experience with viewing the Swainson's thrush, the following is said "The few [birdwatchers] on the island who didn't get a chance to see it during the first round, got to see it when it flew in the net yet again" (Berge, 2019, p. 232). It is textually represented as an outcome of sheer luck that the remaining birdwatchers got to see it as well. The bird, who had already undergone the distress of being captured once, must have been detained and forced through yet another round of public display. Considering the bird had already been identified and gotten the ring attached to its leg, there was no reason for not releasing it immediately. No reason other than for gratifying the unlucky latecomers. This linguistic representation of the bird confirms again how a single specimen is metaphorically constructed as an entire species. The act of prolonging its captivity is beyond reproach due to not conducting any harm or distress on the population as a whole.

The Swainson's thrush captured during bomb week at Utsira is in Berge's article represented as an objectified entity devoid of purpose of its own. The Bird ringers can do with it as they please, by virtue of their capability to capture it. The zoo, Berger (1991) argues, where people go to meet and observe animals - is a monument of the impossibility of a real encounter between man and animal. The same impossibility pervades the exhibition of the Swainson's thrush. The rare, wild bird people have come to see is no longer there. The birdwatchers leave

everything in their hands to rush to the public display while it is still `on`, but the exotic encounter they were hoping to reach in time, was never taking place. By virtue of prolonging the confinement of the bird, through means of objectifying and transforming it into an instrument of public parade, it is deprived of individuality, subjectiveness and sovereignty.

10.2.3 Swainson's birdreward

At Utsira, the local grocery store manager also takes an interest in birds, and he arranges a unique tradition ever time there is a particularly rare bird showing up. As Berge (2019, p. 230) writes “When bombs appear, he quickly brings forth gullbrød [«bread of gold», a Norwegian chocolate bar] as reward for the different new species people may have seen”. This was also the case when the Swainson's thrush was captured in a mist net and displayed. Berge (2019, p. 232) writes: “At the store, a new reward was arranged: Swainson's-bird reward [brunkinnskogtrostbelønning]”. As mentioned, Berge refers to this tradition as something which happens when a `bird-bomb` is “seen”. The use of the verb *to see* implies that a birdwatcher has come across the rare bird, either by coincidence or by deliberately making an effort to spot it. However, this is not the case for the Swainson's thrush. On the contrary, the Swainson's thrush was caught in a mist net which was set up for the very purpose of birds to get tangled up in. No human was present when it got caught, meaning no skills or hands-on effort was directly involved in the capture, nor any use of senses such as hearing or sight. Regardless of this, the reward for the Swainson's thrush was put forward side by side with the reward for those who had managed to *spot* a Red-eyed-vireo [Vireo olivaceus, rødøyevireo] in the field.

By representing the reward for the bird who was captured in a net, as juxtaposed and equivalent to the bird spotted by the use of skill and senses, it further contributes to substantiate the consumptiveness of ringing birds. *Seeing* the bird is here linguistically equated with *capturing* the bird by the use of equipment. This can be viewed in light of Vetlesen's (2012) metaphor of the transformed relation between a woodworker and a tree. The modernisation of woodworking has rendered bodily senses such as hearing and seeing superfluous, Vetlesen argues, and the tree has been abstracted into a commodified object handled by a vacant vehicle. This is comparable to the vacant mist net of bird ringing, where capturing the bird is equalised with *seeing* the bird. Both the tree and the bird serve the same

purpose as previously, when the use of bodily senses were required. What has changed is our relation to them. What could have been a fellow subject is formed to make an object for consumption.

Drawing on Stibbe (2021), the activity of ringing birds for conservation purposes is metaphorically framed as equal to the activity of birdwatching. Furthermore, when rewarding the capturing of a bird on the sole premise that it is an exotic and rare species, the bird is constructed as a trophy. By virtue of laying their eyes on it at the public exhibition, all the attendees at the public display of the Swainson's thrush fulfil the requirement for a reward (Berge, 2019). As such, the birdwatchers are awarded with a prize for their ability to attend an exhibition displaying a captured bird. Choosing not to differentiate between *seeing* a wild bird in the field by the use of eyesight (or hearing), and *seeing* the bird after it has been captured by the use of technology, raises a question: How is such a practice different from being an spectator at a zoological garden?

As Nielsen & Nielsen (1985) argue in *Zoo story*, modern zoological gardens survive by virtue of contributing pedagogical and conservational value. Due to the overarching doctrine of conservation and science, not only are the encaging of their bodies justified, but once under such a *scientific gaze* (Isaacs, 2021) their bodies are also legitimately transformed into objects of consumption. Following Nielsen & Nilsen (1985), when the animal is transformed into a scientific object, we are no longer able to empathise with it. The chocolate reward at Utsira illustrate our deficiency for experiencing *fellow-feeling* – the aforementioned phenomenological approach of Margaret Nice. The visibility of the bird is celebrated by a ritual, irrespective of how it was rendered visible. In a zoological garden, the observed tiger or gorilla cannot be brought back home after the visit in the zoo. As a replacement, a stuffed animal – a *reproduction of the original* (Berger, 1991) is purchased in the souvenir shop at the end of the day. Similarly, the *Swainson's-thrush-reward* symbolises the milestone of having laid eyes on an exotic animal in captivity. Both the chocolate reward and the stuffed animal-souvenir epitomise a *way of seeing* animals as marginalised spectacles.

10.3 Article 3: Yankee-drought

In Our Bird Fauna winter 2020, there was yet another article reporting from the 2019 bomb-week at Utsira. The article starts off with articulating a worry: The past 20 years on Utsira has been characterized by a “Yankee-drought”. By this, the author is referring to American (Yankee) birds who have not been observed at the island. Yankees, such as for instance the Swainson's thrush, are considered rare and exotic species and they are ranked high on many bird watchers' lists of wants. The author of the article, Bjørn Mo (2020), writes that two Swainson's thrushes were observed in Scotland during his stay at Utsira. In order to increase the chances of luring the potential thrushes into the mist-net, he chose to;

turn on pure sound of Swainson's thrush every night on one of the speakers. I did not get last year's Catharus-thrush and I was therefore craving to *get* this species. (Mo, 2020, p. 251, italics added)

10.3.1 The construction of self - possession and consumption

What Mo is referring to above is the use of audio recording of a bird's song played through a loudspeaker close to the mist net. The song of a congener is likely to attract other individuals of the same species to the location. The lexical choice of the verb “get” in the quotation above represents a common jargon among birdwatchers, and refers to the checklists they hold for keeping track of bird species observed. When a birder utters a desire to “get” a particular species, this likely corresponds to a gap in their list where a particular bird is wanted in order to tick it off. Such jargon of ownership implies possessiveness towards the object one wants to *get*. It substantiates the argument of Liep (2001), that one can possess – and thus appropriate – objects, even if they can never be owned. Drawing on Stibbe's (2021) stories, such representation should be understood as a particular *ideological framing* of non-humans as objects to be possessed and consumed. By linguistically representing the bird as something one can *get*, it manifests the bird as an inferior object available for appropriation.

The framing of birds as possessions rests on an underlying ideology of perceiving the birds as tools for self-construction. As discussed in the chapter *the consumption of birds*, the killing of birds for the sake of physical proof has today been replaced by the bird watcher's list of

observations (Liep, 2001). The possession of birds has thus been transformed from specimens into crosses on a list, of which the latter now function as proofs of the bird watcher's appropriation of them. In the quotation above, Mo (2020) legitimises his use of bird ringing technology for the sole purpose of appropriating (*getting*) a Catharus thrush. This can be interpreted as a form of both inner- and outer- directed consumption, as described by Liep (2001). The appropriation of the thrush will saturate both a personal (inner) pleasure, as well as elevating Mo's (outer) status as a birder among other birders. Both ways of consuming contribute to the construction of self. As Liep (2001) argues:

The list of species possessed becomes a yardstick of accomplishment, self-esteem and personal biography for the birder. The almost compulsive collection of species thus represents a construction of self. (p. 15)

Following Liep, promotion and cultivation of the *self* is acquired, as well as maintained, through the appropriation of unusual and desired birds. Conversely, Liep's article only concerns the self-promotion of *watching* birds. Mo in his quotation goes further, exhibiting a willingness to utilise conservation equipment for this very purpose. Following this, one can argue that naturalists' previous collection of physical specimens has not only been replaced by a list of merits. Additionally, owing to the utilisation of bird-ringing equipment, it has also been replaced by the self-declared entitlement to demarcate one's appropriation. Through provoking an exclusive opportunity to clamp a ring around an exotic bird's leg, the bird is physically betokened by its conqueror. By capturing the bird, other birdwatchers also get the opportunity to see it. This raises the status of the bird ringer among his birdwatching competitors.

This self-constructive feature can also be interpreted by looking at another description in the same article. As it happened, the Swainson's thrushes didn't appear on the island, but another even more uncommon (Yankee) bird got tangled up in the net: A Cape may warbler [*Setophaga tigrina, brunkinparula*]. Mo (2020) writes that before he was able to identify the bird, he realised that it was "something sick". Therefore, in order to

speed up the process of determining its species and gather the people on the island, I immediately posted a couple of pictures I had taken [...] with the comment: «Have no idea what it is. But my heart is racing and I've got the shakes». Comments and congratulations were soon flowing in. (Mo, 2020, p. 251)

The mist-net-capture of the uncommon Cape may warbler generated a massive response on the communication app used by the birders at Utsira. By being congratulated by other bird watchers, Mo's identity was elevated to that of a more eminent, noble and reputable birder. To repeat Liep's claim as quoted above, the list of species possessed becomes a yardstick to measure one's prestige as a birder. Bird ringing is in Mo's article textually represented as a remarkably rewarding approach for raising this level of prestige.

10.3.2 The abstraction of the thrush

As seen, Bjørn Mo chose to make use of an audio system in order to broadcast the sound of the Swainson's thrush. He did this because a couple of rare thrushes had been seen in a country close to Norway. His employed rationale for using audio technology was solely that he did not *get* last year's Swainson's thrush on Utsira, and therefore he was particularly eager to *get* it this year. Such reasoning exemplifies Vetlesen's concept of *abstraction*, in which entities of the world have been removed from their "pre-existing and distinctive origins" (Vetlesen, 2012, p. 31). Vetlesen's analogy of the relation between a woodworker and a tree, as a metaphor for the relation between man and nature, exemplifies the abstraction of natural entities. The technology of the forestry vehicle transformed the relationship between the woodworker and his tree, and the same process is apparent in the bird watcher's relation to the bird. Just as with the tree, the Swainson's thrush has been transformed into a replaceable abstract entity, available for our utility and consumption.

The vacant forestry machine in Vetlesen's metaphor is here replaced by the loudspeaker playing artificial sounds of a Swainson's thrush, as it is utilised for luring the thrush into the net on Utsira. Through such a measure, the thrush has been broken loose from its pre-existing and particular contexts by the process of abstraction. Technology's ultimate objective is the consumption of commodities, and it "carries with it a promise as well as a pretence of instant accessibility and availability of everything in the world that might be desired" (Vetlesen, 2015, p. 152). Accordingly, the pragmatism swathing the textual representation of utilising bird ringing technology for discovering new species, here transforms the thrush into an entity of our making and intentionality. The thrush's past or future, as well as any trace of purpose of its own, has been rendered insignificant. Technology has emancipated us from the inconvenience of being dependent upon time and space. As such, the bothers of distance and

waiting have dissolved, facilitating the instant gratification of our desires (Vetlesen, 2015, p. 147-159).

To readers of *Our Bird Fauna*, the Swainson's thrush is textually represented as an object: It is not an object to be owned, but one to be gotten and possessed. Its existence is commodified by virtue of rendering it accessible and available for our utilisation. Readers are presented with a view of bird ringing as a reasonable and productive means for adding ever more rare species to their list of merits. As such, birds are represented as something we can manipulate by having them come to us, rather than us coming to them. The Swainson's thrush is represented as a consumer good who's "capacity to be what it is, do what it is designed to do – is perfectly abstract" (Vetlesen, 2015, p. 157). Consequently, the bird's "sole raison d'être is the human need it is designed to meet" (Vetlesen, 2015, p. 149). Consumers of the commodity need only to relate to the here and now of the consumption, for thereupon to forget it. Technology facilitates the use of the commodity in such a fashion that the consumption of it becomes omnipresent. Bird ringing technology transforms birds into a state of omnipresent subjugation to our alteration and conquering, as their own subjective *being* and purposefulness is subverted.

Drawing on Crist's framework for analysing descriptions of non-humans, Neither *ordinary* nor *technical* language is present in Mo's article (Crist, 1999). This means that the birds in the article are described neither as subjects nor objects. Particularly considering the use of bird ringing equipment, it would be reasonable to anticipate a technical language of conservation-jargon. However, not once in the article is there any mentioning of conservation efforts. The factual ringing of the thrush is not mentioned once in the body text, but is briefly mentioned under one of the article-photos. The body text gives a detailed account of how the author experienced finding the rare thrush in the mist net. However, in the encounter between the bird and the author, the bird's presence is merely reduced to an artefact. As such, the thrush can be interpreted as a victim of erasure (Stibbe, 2021). Valuing this article against a phenomenologically inspired eco-philosophy, the representation of the thrush is destructive. Following Kant's famous imperative, birds ought to be treated as ends in themselves, and never as means. In Mo's article, the Kantian imperative is turned upside down; the thrush is linguistically represented as a means to satiate the birder's desires.

10.4 Article 4: We must involve the young!

Our Bird Fauna's summer edition of 2018 had an editorial article written by Michael Fredriksen, titled "We must involve the young!" (Fredriksen, 2018). Accompanying the article is a photo, depicting a child holding a Eurasian siskin [*Spinus spinus*, grønnsisik] in her hands. The child is young, presumably seven or eight years old considering her front tooth has not yet grown out. She is wearing a t-shirt and the blurred background is lush, indicating mid-summer. Sunlight is reflected in the girl's hair, and the photograph is edited with a warm filter. The girl's hands encircle the Eurasian siskin, and the bird's head, feet and tail point out between her fingers. She holds the bird close to her face in what appears to be a hug or cuddle, and she appears joyful.



Figure 2 Fredriksen (2018, p. 60) *Our Bird Fauna*

The connotations of the photograph, understood as the symbolism and ideas communicated (Machin & Mayr, 2012), is that of a euphoric moment during a close encounter between a child and a bird. The girl's gentle and affectionate handling of the bird makes the picture burst with innocence and sincerity. The warm coloured-tones, the blurred background and the subtle sunlight paints the scene as inviting and captivating. It appears as if the girl doesn't know she is being photographed – a candid photo - and this further emphasises the purity, genuineness and naiveté of the depicted moment. As Machin & Mayr (2012) argue, visual features reflect the particular ideas the authors attempts to communicate. This photo appears to connote the idea of a spontaneous moment of compassionate camaraderie between two living beings, apparently on an equal footing. However, by analysing the non-verbal communication of a text, the knowledge and value embedded in the visual features can be denaturalised (Ledin & Machin, 2018; Machin & Mayr, 2012). The photo in question connotes the idea that the threshold between the human and the natural realm has been transcended. Both individuals appear to participate willingly, and the girl and the siskin have become one. However, such

an encounter between a bird and a child inevitably constitutes a skewed power relation, and it should therefore be scrutinised.

10.4.1 The framing

The text accompanying the photo states: “The interest in birds awakens through close encounter with the birds! Here, Ida will release the Eurasian siskin after bird ringing”. This quotation must here be perceived as a response to the headline: “We must involve the young!”. Despite the outspoken encouragement of the headline, there is no other suggestion in the article about how to involve the young. The editor, Fredriksen (2018), expresses a worry about the fact that the average age among the members of the Norwegian Ornithological Society (now Birdlife Norway) is 58 years. However, the picture and the photo-text are the only concrete remarks addressing the need to involve young people in order to decrease the average age of members. The assertion under the photo - that an interest in birds is awakened through close-up encounters - should therefore be perceived as an explicit suggestion on how this problem can be addressed.

One can assume that the picture chosen intends to capture the interest of two groups in particular: Parents and children. Children who see the photo are likely to get thrilled and excited by the rare and unique opportunity to hold a living creature usually out of reach. Parents, on the other hand, are likely to see an opportunity for their children to get involved with wildlife and develop sympathy and an interest in nature. By analysing the photo and headline using Stibbe’s (2021) story of frames, the target domain – what is being talked about – is the involvement of young people, whereas the source frame – how it is conceptualised – is the physical involvement of children by hands-on encounters with birds. In the article, Fredriksen (2018) draws attention to the ecological crisis we are facing, as well as questioning what kind of future we are handing over to the next generation. As Stibbe (2021) argues, frames are cognitive and often comprised of trigger words provoking certain emotions. As such, the trigger words in this article are the future prospects of the next generation and their relation to nature. By referring to the ecological crises, the article vindicates the urgency of involving youngsters, and it contributes to evoke a feeling of responsibility for involving them.

The artefact utilised in the article for furthering this interest is the ringed Eurasian siskin. As such, the conservation-activity of bird ringing is here reframed and reconceptualised as an instrument for involving the young. The overall goal of ringing birds, which is the scientific value it brings, is not mentioned in the article. Readers of the magazine, who must be assumed to be both familiar with and knowledgeable about bird ringing, are presented with a corrupted framing of conservation efforts. The ringed bird is transformed into a mascot of enthrallment for the sake of changing the demographics of the organisation. This resonates with Stibbe's (2021) argument, that there is a tendency for well-intentioned organisations to reframe their activities for the sake of gaining favourable advantages. The *activity* in this situation, unfortunately, involves a living being.

10.4.2 Engaged on what premise?

Just as with the analysis of the children depicted with the bird in the first article, one needs to ask how the message would come across if the children were replaced with adults. Such a photo, accompanied by a text encouraging that grown-up's interest in birds should be awakened through the close encounter with them, would likely be considered controversial. Readers would be left with an ambivalent sentiment. Such a photo would be likely to make the spectator question whether it is morally sound to prolong birds' detainment for the sake of increasing adults' engagement – or for increasing the number of members. But why is this not the case with children? What justifies utilising a captured bird for the sake of furthering *their* engagement? Or perhaps more interestingly, why are we opposed to the idea of furthering adults' engagement making use of the same means?

The *means* is here represented as a willingness to sacrifice the bird's well being for a moment, for the *end* purpose of furthering the children's engagement for them. However, there is a cognitive dissonance in this reasoning. Our hesitation to utilise the same means towards adults implies that there is an underlying respect for the individual bird somewhere in our culture. As it turns out, this respect is worth abandoning in relation to children - presumably due to the pedagogical value of stimulating their senses and sympathy through touch, smell, cuddle etc. But despite perhaps succeeding in increasing children's engagement; on what premise have they become engaged? An answer to this question can be found in Stibbe's (2021) story of ideology and erasure. The willingness to erase the bird's

subjectiveness rests on an underlying ideology of perceiving non-humans as inferior and available for our utilisation. According to Stibbe (2021), an eco-philosophical framework must be used to value and judge whether ideologies promote the well being of all species. Through studying the stories in Fredriksen's article, it is revealed that his message runs counter to core eco-philosophical values.

10.5 Article 5: Get to know the mystical wader

“For a long time, the Jacksnipe has been a species piquing my curiosity. The curiosity has been caused by this bird's cryptic way of life, which is the reason why Jacksnipes are rarely seen. [...] During the fall of 2020, however, I found an opportunity to get a little closer to the secrets of this mystical wader”. (Langbråten, 2021, p. 94)

In the summer edition of *Our Bird Fauna 2021*, Jonas Langbråten introduces his article with the short passage above. In the article, Langbråten describes his curiosity of the rarely seen wader, the Jacksnipe [*Lymnocyptes minimus*, kvartbekkasin]. Jacksnipes are hard to spot in the field and are rarely observed due to their terrific camouflage and defence mechanism of “freezing” (not moving despite being in the presence of potential enemies) (Langbråten, 2021). The *opportunity* Langbråten is referring to in the quotation above, was thermal imaging technology. Through thermal binoculars, birds can be discovered in pitch darkness due to their heat signature. Langbråten's six-page article gives a detailed account on his experience trying to find Jacksnipes using such technology:

As I went out on the farmlands of Lista with this device, I quickly realised that it enabled efficient discovery of birds so well camouflaged in the vegetation that they would have otherwise been difficult or impossible to see. [...] The ability of locating squatting Jacksnipes in the dark [i.e. frozen birds playing possum], eventually triggered a desire to attempt capturing and ringing them. (Langbråten, 2021, p. 94 & 97)

The reason Langbråten gives in the article for wanting to try out capturing and ringing is, apart from satisfying this stated curiosity, an interest in exploring the demography of the local Jacksnipe population. Langbråten writes that he wanted to get an indication of whether the same birds were dwelling at the same location over time, or if the fields at Lista had a flow of individuals passing through. Thermal imaging was not sufficient for capturing the birds, however, and Langbråten describes that:

A torch and a hand net became an essential part of my field gear, in order to be ready if the opportunity occurred. To capture the birds in the dark, one must distract them with artificial light in order to get close enough for capture with a hand net. (Langbråten, 2021, p. 97)

10.5.1 The Jacksnipe's demystification

As seen in Langbråten's article, the mysticism swathing the Jacksnipe triggered Langbråten to take the necessary steps to countervail the bird's furtiveness. The Jacksnipe is here linguistically represented as an objectified, mysterious creature of which a birder can make use of high-tech equipment for the sake of demystification. The mystique and 'crypticism' surrounding the bird is textually represented as the initial, overarching motive for utilising thermal imaging. As seen, however, after learning that the bird's tactic was to lay still, Langbråten decided to capture and ring the Jacksnipes in order to increase his knowledge of their demographic compositions. As such, observing the Jacksnipes from a distance through heat seeking binoculars proved to be an unsatisfactory measure for illuminating their secrets.

Langbråten's intervention using thermal imaging and ringing equipment resulted in a detailed field report. This portion of the article is distinguished by its pragmatic, informative jargon, as seen in the following examples:

"This indicates a significant turnover of individuals, but there is not yet enough data for drawing conclusions", "173 unique observations as well as 25 ringed Jacksnipes indicates that [this area] has great potential" and "A few, simple adjustments would facilitate a more thorough examination of the bird's behaviour, as well as increasing the percentage of catches". (Langbråten, 2021, p. 97-98, 98 & 99)

As seen, Langbråten employs two very different jargons in his article. The first jargon is of curiosity, mystique and secrets. In his field report however, these unearthly and abstract descriptions are countered and neutralised by a pragmatic jargon. The Jacksnipes' mystique and secrecy are here replaced with that of surveillance, measurements and calculations, in which their secrets have been substituted for knowledge. As such, Langbråten's article provides a good illustration of Vetlesen's writing on modern knowledge production, grounded in the doctrine of nature's demystification and disenchantment. In Langbråten's field report, the birds are represented as objects passively awaiting our scrutiny (Vetlesen, 2015). They must be depleted of all mysteries in order for their existence to be translated into de facto scientific value.

Langbråten's intervention in the Jacksnipes' habitat resulted in a complete paralysation of the birds' camouflage and "freezing-defence". The Jacksnipes are thus rendered outright unshielded with nowhere to hide. The consequence of this intervention is the *abstraction* of the birds. By virtue of the modern world's ubiquitous goal of scientific knowledge production, the bird's experiential and secretive ways of *being-in-the-world* are rendered obsolete. Here, the birds' are represented as objectified entities whose primary function is to serve as satiation of man's bottomless appetite for knowledge (Vetlesen, 2015; Berger, 1991). To readers of *Our Bird Fauna*, the abatement of birders' curiosity towards secretive creatures is represented as an outcome so captivating that no measures are too invasive.

10.5.2 Ordinary language

Despite Langbråten's intervention as described above, his article is the only publication analysed in this thesis that can be said to draw on Crist's epistemological approach of *ordinary language*. As described in the theory chapter: When non-humans are described by the use of ordinary language, they are represented as *acting subjects* rather than *passive objects* (Crist, 1999). In Langbråten's article, ordinary language is discernible in one single sentence. It occurs as he describes the birds' tactic when he approaches them with his hand net. The Jacksnipe is then, in Langbråten's words: "Simply hoping not to be discovered" (Langbråten, 2021, p. 98).

The use of the verb *to hope* here resonates with Crist's category of ordinary language. Applying such ordinary language presupposes an understanding of the non-human described as an experiential being, whose experiences are embodied in that being itself (Crist, 1999). By choosing to ascribe the Jacksnipes with the agency of *hoping*, Langbråten demonstrates a willingness to perceive the birds as subjective beings whose lifeworld is intrinsic to them. From a phenomenological perspective, such a description can be said to harmonise with Margaret Nice's advocacy of striving to imagine the subjective experiences of the birds. As such, Langbråten's representation of the Jacksnipe provides one instance of Nice's concept of *fellow-feeling* (Whitney, 2021). Despite the fact that such jargon of ordinary language is absent in the remainder of Langbråten's article, the sole narration of the birds as *hoping* contributes an argument for including birds to in a domain of moral consideration (Stibbe, 2021).

10.5.3 The zoological spectacle

In *Why Look at Animals*, Berger describes how people come to the zoological garden in order to meet and observe animals (Berger, 1991). Children, he says, often expresses their disappointment when the animals of the zoo are not entertaining enough by not showing themselves. As a response to this behaviour, Berger exclaims: “It’s not a dead object you have come to look at, it’s alive. It’s leading its own life. Why should this coincide with its being properly visible?” (Berger, 1991, p. 24). The expectancy of the children in the zoo is analogous to Langbråten’s expectancy of unveiling the secret life of the Jacksnipes. Rather than devoting himself to the game of patience and waiting, within the boundaries of space and time, Langbråten wants his acquaintance with the birds to occur immediately. As such, the Jacksnipes are transformed into a spectacle where their visibility and accessibility is manipulated in order to coincide with his ad hoc presence and corresponding desires. The Jacksnipe is thus rendered omnipresently available for Langbråten’s utility (Vetlesen, 2015).

Langbråten sums up his article as follows: “The use of thermal imaging binoculars has, briefly summarised, opened up opportunities for better getting to know a cryptic bird with nightly habits” (Langbråten, 2021, p. 99). The author’s endeavour to *better get to know*, has resulted in a prosaic relation where the subject he wants to make acquaintance with is reduced to an object of his own making (Vetlesen, 2015). Drawing further on Berger, the zoo is “an epitaph to a relationship which is as old as man” (Berger, (1991, p. 21). The initiated acquaintance between Langbråten and the omnipresently available birds can thus equally be interpreted as a burial, where any attempt of *getting to know* is rendered out of reach (Vetlesen, 2015; Berger, 1991).

10.5.4 “Invited for a running competition”

In the fields of Lista, Langbråten continues to describe his experience with thermal imaging technology: “During the period, some «by-catch» was also caught” Langbråten (2021, p. 98). The Water rail [*Rallus aquaticus*, vannrikse], he explains, has a different tactic of defending itself. Rather than “freezing” like the Jacksnipe: The two Water rails encountered “invited me for a running competition (Langbråten, 2021, p. 98)”. This quote indicates that Langbråten and the Water rail both partook in the encounter by choice. The Water rail’s alleged invitation contributes to obscure the unequivocal asymmetry in their encounter. Langbråten’s quote also

implies that the bird perceives his attempt of capturing it as a game in which both competitors willingly and playfully compete on equal terms. However, considering Langbråten's use of heat-seeking technology, followed by the aforethought dazzle and distraction with artificial light, the attempt of a witty description here culminates in a perverted anthropomorphism.

Stibbe argues that 'the speaking animal' can be perceived as a mask. When turning animals into objects which speak a human language, their reality and contextualisation is erased (Stibbe, 2021). The Water rail's alleged invitation contributes to textually constructing Langbråten's intervention in the bird's habitat as a form of entertaining conduct, where the bird is metaphorically constructed as an object of his game. The Water rail's anthropomorphist *invitation* can be viewed in light of Vetlesen's argument that nature is perceived as "eminently open to, vulnerable to, human purposes of all kinds: a vast *tabula rasa*, passively awaiting whatever humans decide to do with it" (Vetlesen, 2015, p. 58, italics in original). From a phenomenological perspective, the lived experience of the birds is textually represented as non-existent. Langbråten projects his own purposefulness onto them in order to satisfy his desire.

11 Discussion

In this thesis, the overarching problem formulation has been: *How are birds – as objects of conservation efforts – visually and linguistically represented in Our Bird Fauna?* Through the analysis, the representations of birds being ringed have crystallised into three distinguishable categories: The scientific bird, the Objectified bird and the Zoological bird. Here, I will take a step back and discuss these three categories in light of a broader view of conservation and knowledge production.

11.1 The scientific bird

Crist's (1999) epistemological tool of *ordinary* or *technical* language was introduced in the theory chapter, in order to evaluate whether the ringed birds were described as either objects or subjects. However, neither of the two categories turned out to be of significance in the

articles analysed. Machin (2013) argues that representations cannot contain all aspects of a phenomena, and thus emphasise the importance of asking: *What has been deleted?*. In answering to this question, the claim will be that ringed birds were neither portrayed as acting subjects holding intrinsic meaning, nor as scientific objects described by the use of a technical jargon. Common to all representations analysed, however, was the encompassing situation of ringing the birds. Considering technical use of language is closely related to that of conservational knowledge production, the absence of linguistic representations of the bird as a scientific object is conspicuous and striking. It does, however, give an interesting and unforeseen dimension to the problem formulation of; *how birds – as objects of conservation efforts – are represented?* – because they are not.

The concept of conservation was not explicitly mentioned in any of the five articles analysed. Two of the articles had one sentence each where the endeavour of knowledge production was mentioned in relation to ringing or capturing the birds. This can be interpreted as indirectly relating to the idea of conservation. Within conservation discourse, as mentioned previously, interventions are justified by the utilitarian rationale of *harm as care* (Isaacs, 2021). Through this lens, the greater good of a population as a whole justifies the suffering of a few individuals (Srinivasan, 2014). Isaacs, however, advocates for dismantling the polished, apolitical innocence swathing the conservation efforts of bird ringing, by analysing the encounter between bird ringer and bird as colonial intervention (Isaacs, 2021). The close to complete absence of representing bird ringing as having conservational value, as revealed in this thesis, sheds a new light on her advocacy. The representation of birds being ringed in *Our Bird Fauna* leaves readers with a view of a colonial intervention completely without justification. As such, what remains of the rationale is merely *harm*, but no *care*. In relation to bird ringing specifically, Isaacs emphasises the importance of asking: *Who benefits?* (Isaacs, 2021). In the analysis undertaken in this thesis, the birds are certainly not represented as beneficiaries.

The absenteeism of the ringed birds serving a conservation purpose could, however, be viewed in the broader scope of a conservation discourse. The very core of animal conservation efforts is the survival and well being of species as a collective, rather than seeing each individual as an end in itself. By this rationale, individual birds are ontologically constructed as representatives of their entire species. If conservationists were to give each individual animal ethical consideration, it would compromise the overall ambition of

preserving the population as a whole (Srinivasan, 2014). It could thus be argued that objectification of individuals *being* conserved is inescapable, and that the linguistic and visual representations of birds being ringed in Our Bird Fauna are mere reflections of such an inevitability. Such a view resonates with Zimmerman's argument, that:

Conservationist organisations traditionally have been concerned with ecological issues. They make no pretense of acting for the sake of individual animals; rather they attempt to maintain diversity, integrity and beauty and authenticity of the natural environment. (Zimmerman, et al., 1993, p. 87)

Despite not having the opportunity to here reflect on whether conservation practices in the *field* inevitably involve some degree of objectification, in Our Bird Fauna; it all depends on the representations. Looking to phenomenology: Each individual ringed bird ought to be visually and textually represented as a unique being through which life is meant to be lived in and of itself (Burgat, 2015). Given the non-scientific content of Our Bird Fauna, who's readers are mainly recreational bird watchers, the magazine arguably has a particular responsibility of countering such objectification. How birds are linguistically and visually represented inevitably impacts the nature perception of its readers. As Stibbe (2012) emphasises:

In particular, it is important to discover discourses that overcome the assumption that other animals and plants are objects, human possessions, individually inconsequential tokens of species, or that their value lies only in their rarity or short-term utility to humans. (p. 147)

By uncovering such destructive discourses, it does not however follow that any use of animals must be abolished. Stibbe (2012) draws on Plumwood (2003), who argues that it is possible to make use of animals without constructing them as inferior objects without intrinsic value. Plumwood refers to her position as *respectful use*, which involves utilising animals to a minimum. In any utilisation, the animals ought to be viewed as *more than* the services they provide. Using animals in any way, Plumwood argues, must rest on the recognition of animals' right to live their own lives fulfilling their own roles in the ecosystem (Stibbe, 2012, p. 15-16). This normative framework of utilisation is fully in line with the phenomenologically inspired eco-philosophy of this thesis. Following Plumwood's *respectful use*, the representations of the ringed birds *could* have been characterised by gratitude of the sacrifice the birds had been coerced to make. If this had been followed by an emphasis on alleviating the birds' suffering immediately after the ringing session, the readers of Our Bird

Fauna would have been exposed to a representation rooted in a profound respect for their lives. Instead, the representations imply that the ring around their legs transforms the birds into objects. As scientific entities, they have been deprived of any subjectiveness, and their purpose is replaced with whatever the bird ringers find to be meaningful on their behalf.

The need for conservation originates from a hegemonic discourse of humans perverted domination and commodification of nature. However, as discussed above, in our attempts to fix what we have corrupted, the very same distorted dominance is reapplied. This reverberates Coimbra's (2014, p. 100) argument; that the solutions engendered in nature conservation are rooted in the very same perceptions that created the problems to begin with. Coimbra (2014) emphasises the urgency of situating the ecological collapse and its conservation-policies in a social context. However, the analysis of Our Bird Fauna's articles undertaken in this thesis, bear witness of a need to broadening this scope even further. The scrutiny of representations of factual conservation efforts taking place *in situ*, must also be analysed within its social context. As Stibbe (2021) argues:

It is through language that the natural world is mentally reduced to objects or resources to be exploited, and it is through language that people can be encouraged to respect and care for the systems that support life. (p. 2)

Stibbe's quotation underscores the finding of this thesis: That linguistic representations of animals finding themselves in the very situations of *being* conserved are of uttermost importance to incorporate when analysing the realm of conservation in a social context. For this purpose, as demonstrated in this thesis, an interdisciplinary approach is necessary, of which sociological inquiry is invaluable.

11.2 The objectified bird

Even though the ringed birds in Our Bird Fauna were not represented as objects for scientific purposes, they were still represented as *objects*. As such, despite not being described by the use of technical terms, the representation of the birds were largely distinguished by an objectifying language, equal to that of Crist's (1999) category of technical language. Apart from the one exception in article 5, where the birds were described as *hoping*, all articles represented the ringed birds as passive surfaces. Wilbert & Philo (2004, p. 5) argue that

humans inscribe such passive surfaces with *imaginings of all kinds*, which is here interpreted as ascribing meaning to them according to humans own discretion. However, apart from article 5, the representations of ringed birds in Our Bird Fauna were all rather characterised by *absenteeism*. As such, they were not ascribed with *imaginings*, as the representations of the birds were rendered marginal. Despite containing descriptions of birds being handled, held, observed and displayed, their presence was merely artefactual. Following this finding, the representations resonate far better with Vetlesen's (2015) description of how nature is perceived as "a vast tabula rasa, passively awaiting whatever humans decide to do with it" (p. 58). The birds being ringed in Our Bird Fauna can broadly be categories into two distinctly objectified *ways of seeing* them:

1. As exotic, mystified bird-bombs of entertainment- spectacle, and thus as artefacts for self-construction and possession
2. As artefacts utilised for furthering increased passion for birds among existing members, as well as for stimulating interest among children.

Common to both these ways of seeing is the way the representations of ringed birds are transformed into spectacular objects for consumption and use. The commonality of all the ringed birds in this spectacle, is that they have been objectified through metaphorically constructing *bird ringing* as equal to *bird watching*. To readers of Our Bird Fauna, the ringed birds are represented as subverted entities whose bodies are utilised to serve as satiations of children's and adult's curiosity, as spectacles of public displays, as tools for achieving yet another list tick, and yet another confirming nod or congratulation from fellow birders. The hobby of bird watching and the realm of conservation science have become synthesised and dovetailed, and they are visually and linguistically represented as one and the same. As such, the willingness to utilise bird ringing equipment for the purpose of *seeing* birds, has rendered them ever-presently available and "at hand-to-be consumed" (Vetlesen, 2015, p. 31).

11.3 The zoological bird

The zoo, Berger argues, "is a demonstration of the relations between man and animal; nothing else" (Berger, 1991, p. 26). Our Bird Fauna's visual and textual representations of

bird ringing can also be interpreted as a testimony of the relation between the bird ringer and the bird. Once birds are ringed, their minds and bodies are incorporated into not only a scientific gaze, but also into a zoological gaze. In the articles of *Our Bird Fauna*, the ring around the birds' legs manifests them as objectified entities who have been forced into a zoological spectacle of entertainment. This can be viewed by returning to Berger's (1991) categories of marginalised animals, introduced previously. Apart from pets, Berger argues that today we live without animals due to their marginalisation into the category of either science- or entertainment-spectacle. In order to understand the zoological gaze of birds, both these spectacles must be included, in addition to Stibbe's (2021) story of framing.

In light of Stibbe's frames, the entertainment spectacle here amounts to the target domain – what we talk about-, whereas the spectacle of conservation science here amounts to the source frame – our associations. The representations in *Our Bird Fauna* predominantly promote representations of the birds drawing on the target domain of entertainment. However, the source frame of conservation purpose – however distant it may be – is lurking between the lines of the representations. As such, the entertainment-jargon where the ringed birds are represented as objects of enchantment, is shielded by an underlying justification of conservation value. The conservation activity of ringing birds has thus been reframed into the recreational hobby of watching birds. The representations of ringing birds as an act of entertainment are however beyond reproach, due to being neatly wrapped in a pupa encompassed by the hazy idea of *doing good*.

In the 1900s, zoological gardens began to strive towards true-to-nature representations of animals, in order to give the nature-loving spectators a *concentrated* experience of nature– as presented as in a nutshell. The truer to nature, the more attractive to the observer (Nielsen & Nilsen, 1985). The public exhibitions of the ringed birds in *Our Bird Fauna* can be interpreted within the same spectacle. Due to the availability of bird ringing technology, bird watchers are offered relief from the burden of waiting and searching in order to achieve noble experiences with exotic and uncommon birds. Equivalent to the audience at the zoo, bird ringers are presented with a concentrated, nutshell-view of birdlife. Common to both the zoo and the close-up gazing at captured, ringed birds is the framing of conservation-value, which renders them both unambiguous.

The effect of turning non-humans into objects of scientific purpose, is that they are no longer subjects of our empathy, and we cannot relate to their lifeworlds (Nielsen & Nielsen, 1985). The loss of ability for feeling compassion must be viewed as intrinsic to and inseparable from the synthesising of bird watching and bird ringing. Only by perceiving birds as exterior to the realm of moral consideration, can such a fusion appear sound and justifiable. As objects not worthy of sympathy, there is no reason to scruple the effort of synchronising birds' visibility with our presence. The wild bird rendered visible for the sake of being the recipient of a spectator's gaze, has been replaced by a zoological bird who's artefactual body is the only remainder. This is the inevitable result of a bird who has been rendered absolutely marginal (Berger, 1991).

12 Conclusion

In this thesis, I have examined the research question: How are birds – as objects of conservation efforts – visually and linguistically represented in the bird magazine *Our Bird Fauna*. This was conducted by an Eco-Critical Discourse Analysis of five individual articles, where all of them contained representations of birds undergoing the conservation efforts of bird ringing. The representations of birds being ringed were explicitly valued against a normative framework of eco-philosophy inspired by phenomenology. Arran Stibbe's analytical stories of ideology, framing, metaphor and erasure, as well as theories of consumption and abstraction were utilised for enabling an in-depth analysis of the representations found.

A main finding in this thesis has been that representations of the conservation effort of ringing birds and the recreational hobby of watching birds are closely intertwined, and in *Our Bird Fauna* they are represented as one and the same. In light of the research question of examining bird ringing as serving conservation value, the representation of any such purpose was close to absent. Instead, the ringed birds were represented as objectified artefacts, whose bodies were utilised to serve as satiations of children's' and adults' curiosity, as spectacles of public exhibitions, as consumable objects and as mystical creatures accessible for demystification.

Through analysing the discourse of the articles, I found the presence of three distinct ways of seeing birds that I have called: The Scientific Bird, The Objectified Bird and The Zoological Bird. These categories are not segregated concepts of which each representation corresponds to a specific category. Rather, the representations are deeply intertwined and operate in a fluid manner. By drawing on all three representations simultaneously, the articles in *Our Bird Fauna* provide a justification for interventions in nature and interaction with birds that are questionable from an ethical perspective. Utilising bird ringing equipment is represented as a legitimate tool for rendering birds properly visible, for the purpose of bird watchers to *look* at them. The ringed birds themselves are represented as absolutely marginal, devoid of subjectivity, agency or purpose of their own.

Readers of *Our Bird Fauna* are inevitably influenced by the magazine's representations of wildlife. By representing the conservation efforts of bird ringing as first and foremost a means of recreation and entertainment, readers are exposed to a destructive way of seeing birds. As argued in this thesis, the need for conservation originates from humans' corrupted perceptions of and interventions in nature. The representations of conservation efforts in *Our Bird Fauna*, then, rests on the very same distorted ideas of nature that created the need for conservation practices in the first place. Following my findings, this thesis demonstrates the importance of understanding and scrutinising the social structures underlying non-profit and idealistic wildlife organisations. For this purpose, a sociological inquiry has proved to be invaluable. In such social undertakings, representations of non-humans *being* conserved *in situ* is of uttermost importance to include. The objects of conservation, whose life we are trying to protect, must be recognised as living, feeling subjects - both in textual representations as well as in real life. Their lifeworlds matters to them

13 References

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Figures

Figure 1: Solbakken, A., K. (2020). Det handler helt enkelt om å se på fugler. *Vår Fuglefauna*, 43(3), 134.

Figure 2: Fredriksen, M. (2018). Vi må få med oss de unge. *Vår Fuglefauna*, 41(2), 60

14 Attachments: Analysed articles from Our Bird Fauna

Article #1

Generalsekretæren har ordet

LEDER

Det handler helt enkelt om å se på fugler

I dag bør du ta en tur ut for å se på fugler. Alene eller kanskje helst sammen med andre. Det er det beste tipset vi i Norsk Ornitologisk Forening kan gi deg. Hvis du gjør det ofte nok så vil mye annet bra komme av seg selv. Først og fremst så er det jo rett og slett veldig artig med fugler. De er helt fantastiske skapninger, som det er lett å bli fascinert av og glad i. Når man først har begynt å følge med på dem så leder det også fort videre til en bred naturinteresse og nysgjerrighet for alt det andre spennende som finnes i naturen.

Men fugler er likevel spesielle. De er vakre, hemmelighetsfulle og kan fly mellom kontinenter og over verdenshav. Vi kan spekulere på hvordan de greier det. De fortjener virkelig vår oppmerksomhet.

Vi har mye å lære av fuglene. Hvis du følger med på dem og ser hva de gjør vil du forstå dem på nye måter. Du vil skjønne hvilke områder som er viktige for dem gjennom døgnet, gjennom året og gjennom livet. Som hekkeplasser, rasteområder under trekket og som ulike funksjonsområder. Fuglene lærer oss hele tiden mye om utviklingen og tilstanden til kloden vår. Deres antall og forekomst ender seg hele tiden. Hvorfor det? Hva er det som skjer?

Hvis du er årvåken nok til å få det med deg, så vil du finne mange av svarene selv. Du vil ikke trenge å lese om det i en rapport som noen andre har laget. Fasiten ligger jo ute i naturen hver dag, og den er i kontinuerlig endring.

Det er også alle våre fugleturere som er kilden til fuglevernarbeidet i NOF. Det er det vi har sett og opplevd, og oppsummert sammen over tid. Når vi har sett hvilke områder fuglene bruker og er avhengige av så vet vi at de trenger dem og hvorfor. Når vi etterpå oppdager trusler mot disse områdene så vet vi at vi må si i fra, og vi vet at vi har



Tindra og Astrid lot seg fenge av ringmerking. Foto: Beathe Dømbe.

rett i det vi sier. Nei, det er ikke en god idé å fylle sprengstein i fjæra. Fuglene trenger dette området. Nei, fuglene kan ikke bare fly et annet sted. Det er ikke sånn det fungerer. Hvis man ødelegger områdene som fuglene trenger så blir det bare mindre fugler igjen etterpå.

NOF ble i sin tid stiftet av folk som hadde brukt mye tid på å studere fugler. De fant ut at det var viktig å få flere til å fortsette å gjøre det, og foreningen drives i dag videre av slike folk i alle fylkesavdelinger og lokallag.

Hvis du driver lokalforening i NOF så har du muligheten til å ta med andre ut på fugletur. Det er kanskje det viktigste du kan gjøre. Ta andre med ut og se på fugler sammen med dem, slik at de også kan oppdage hvor fantastiske de er og få fugler inn i livene sine. Livet

er tross alt bedre med fugler! Det er lett å holde et par meters koronaavstand ute i felten når man først har kommet seg ut.

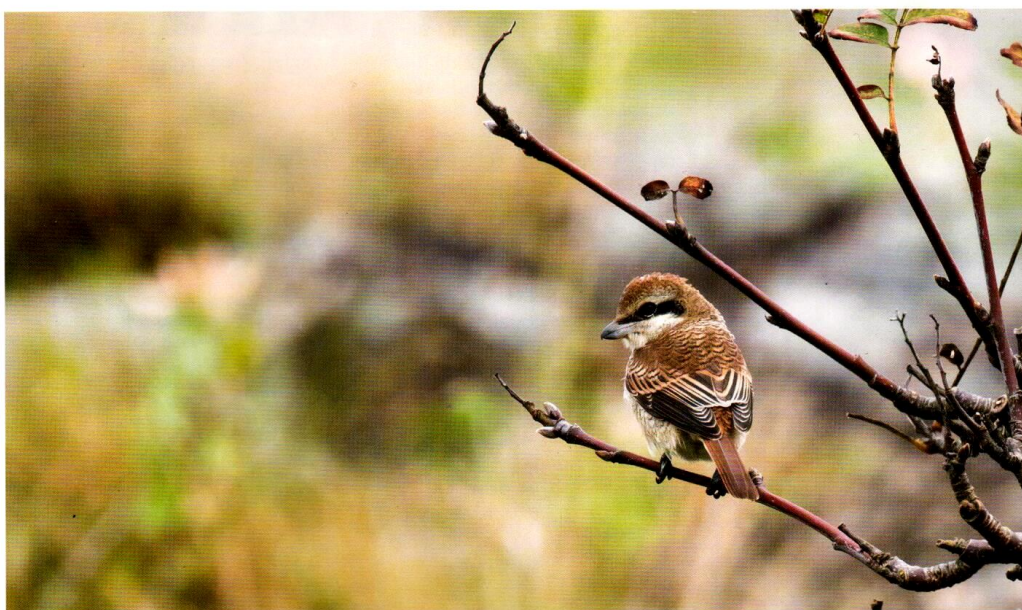
Høsten er en god årstid for å oppleve fugler, og vi er midt i den beste tiden nå. Høsttrekket er en høytid for alle fugleinteresserte. Millioner av fugler er på trekk. Her gjelder det å kjenne sin besøkestid.

Det er viktig at du bruker tid i naturen på å utforske og finne ut av disse tingene selv. Så ta turen ut for å se på fugler nå. Hvis du i tillegg noterer det du ser og legger det inn i artsobservasjoner.no slik at andre kan ta del i det nå eller senere, så blir det en ekstra stjerne i margin. Jeg håper du får en fin tur!

Kjetil Aa. Solbakken
Generalsekretær



Magiske dager på Utsira høsten 2019



En brunvarsler *Lanius cristatus* startet serien av spektakulære funn på Utsira i høst. Det foreligger kun fire funn av arten fra før i Norge. Foto: Bjørn Mo.

Det er alltid spenning i luften når høsten nærmer seg, og for mange er «Bombeuka» på Utsira selve høydepunktet. «Bombeuka» er tradisjonelt i uke 40, når store deler av landet har høstferie. Navnet har den fått fordi det statistisk sett har vært i denne uka at det har blitt observert flest «bomber», altså sjeldne fugler, på øya. Mange legger høstferien sin fast til Utsira, nettopp for å få med seg disse.

Av Torborg Berge

De siste åra kan det derimot virke som at flere av de sjeldne fuglene har latt vente på seg til uke 41, hvis de i det hele tatt kommer. Noen mener at dette skyldes at fugletrekket generelt går seinere, som tilpasning til klimaendringer. Andre mener det er mer tilfeldig, og er prisgitt værsystemene

som bringer fuglene ut av kurs og tar dem med seg til Utsira.

Beliggenheten til Utsira, ei ensom øy langt ute i havet vest for Haugesund, fungerer som en siste skanse før det svære havet, eller som det første snev av fast land etter å ha krysset det store havet. Dette gjør at mange fugler går

ned og hviler seg før de flyr videre, og fører til at Utsira, i likhet med andre utposter, er bra for fugler generelt, og sjeldne fugler spesielt. Trekkende norske arter forekommer ofte i store antall, som f.eks. fuglekonge, rødstrupe og troster. En kan ofte komme tett på dem, og sjeldne arter er enklere å oppdage.



Blåstjerten Tarsiger cyanurus lever opp til sitt navn! En voksen hann blåstjert er aldri før registrert i Norge, fra før foreligger det kun funn av hunner og unge hanner. Foto: Bjørn Mo.

Noen arter, som sjelden blir observert på fastlandet, er så å si faste på Utsira hver høst, f.eks. sibirpiplerke, tartarpiplerke, svartrødstjert, blåstjert, dvergfluesnapper, gulbrynsanger, hawksanger, dvergspurv m.m. Gulbrynsangerne er ofte så vanlige og tallrike i Bombeuka, at de ikke en gang legges ut på «Bombevarsel for Utsira» – varslingsappen som brukes for å melde hverandre om sjeldne fugler.

Før «Bombeuka» hadde flere gulbrynsangere, to sibirpiplerker og en blåstjert blitt observert. Det hadde også mer eksklusive norske hekkefuglarter som ringgås, vaktel, dobbeltbekkasin, kvartbekkasin, myrhauk, lerkfalk og nattravn.

Selve «Bombeuka» startet uten de store bombene, og mange begynte nok å kjenne på litt rastløshet i kroppen. Hva om det dukket opp en bombe et annet sted, når de var på Utsira? Værmeldingen ble nøye sjekket og analysert med tanke på hvilke fugler de ulike værsystemene kunne ta med seg. Hva var sjansen for at de skulle ta med seg bomber til Utsira de kommende dagene? For personer med over 350 arter på Norgeslista skal det ganske

mye til for å få seg en ny Norgesart. Det er derfor viktig å være på rett sted til rett tid!

Brunvarsler

3. oktober kl. 10.12 smalt det. Det kom ut melding på «Bombevarsel for Utsira» at en brunvarsler hadde blitt funnet av Martin Dagsland bak huset til Håkon Heggland. Da meldingen kom ut, var det bare å skynde seg dit. Noen jogga, noen kjørte, og noen freste rundt på el-sparkesykkel. Brunvarsleren var samarbeidsvillig, og mange fikk knipset seg fine bilder fra kort hold. Alle som var på øya, og alle som kom med de to første båtene fra fastlandet, fikk sett fuglen, men de som ikke kom seg utover før med siste båten, fikk den ikke med seg. Fuglen ble ikke sett neste dag, men forhåpningen hadde steget, og spenningen var til å ta og føle på. Nå kunne alt skje!

Utsira fuglestasjon arrangerer «Bombeuka». Med mange besøkende fuglefolk på øya, er det kjekt å ha noe å samles om på kvelden. Når det nærmer seg helg, er det felles logg, gjerne kombinert med quiz, eller et foredrag. En av kveldene i helga avholdes årsmøtet

for fuglestasjonen. Det passer fint, da både de som har høstferie i uke 40 og uke 41 har muligheten til å få det med seg. Denne helga er det som regel ekstra mye fuglefolk på øya, noe som også øker sjansen for å oppdage sjeldne fugler. Selv om det ikke ble de store sjeldenhetene, ble det funnet både fjellerke, sibirpiplerke, lappiplerke, varsler, dvergfluesnapper, duetrost, dvergspurv, lappspurv, myrhauk, fjellvåk og jordugle.

Det var mye fugl i felt. Rødstruper, gransangere og fuglekonger kravla rundt over alt; i graset, ja til og med på veggen. Det var gode muligheter til å få studert dem godt og lenge. Dette minnet meg om første gangen jeg var på Utsira tidlig på 90-tallet.

Blåstjert

Mandag den 7. oktober smalt det igjen. Trond Ove Stakkeland og Finn Nilsen hadde gått seg en tur til hogstfeltet i Kutre, sør for Merkeskogene, og mens Stakkeland slo lens bak ei gran, ropte plutselig Nilsen: «Oi, den var blå!» Han hadde oppdaga en blå fugl som fløy raskt gjennom hogstfeltet. Den satte seg ned et par sekunder, og det



Rødøyevireo *Vireo olivaceus* på Utsira! Arten er en tallrik hekkeart i skogene i Canada og det nordlige USA. Årets funn er det tredje i rekken her til lands av denne nord-amerikanske spurvefuglen. De to første funnene er fra oktober 2014 – begge fra Rogaland. Foto: Bjørn Mo.

var nok til at de fikk bestemt den til å være en utfarga, voksen blåstjert hann; den første som er observert i Norge. (Utsira har hele 26 av de rundt 60 (61) blåstjertregistreringene i Norge (utenom hekkefunn), men så langt har det bare blitt observert hunner, eller unge hanner.) Fuglen var svært sky og kryptisk, og holdt seg stort sett på bakken, eller i ei grøft inne i den mørke, tette granskogen. Folk strømte til for å se på den, men måtte jobbe lenge for å få et lite glimt, for den var bare framme et par sekund, før den forsvant inn i skogen igjen. De som satt ekstra lenge, fikk belønning i form av at den kom opp og fram, så de fikk sett den bra og fotografert den. Dagen etter var den også på plass, og den ble flittig fotografert, nå som folk visste hvor den holdt seg.

Den 9. oktober ble det lett etter blåstjerten, men uten hell. Det kom inn meldinger om småsnacks som grålire, skogdue og dvergspurv, før det kl. 11.49 tikket inn melding om en brun-

sanger, funnet av Kendt Myrmo. Noen mangla denne arten, og fløy avgårde for å få sett den. Som brunsangere flest, var den ganske sky og skulky til å begynne med. Den responderte veldig godt på lyd, og etter hvert viste den seg villig fram, bare noen smattet litt. Den ble derfor hyppig fotografert, og den holdt seg helt fram til den 13. oktober.

Rødøyevireo

For å få viktig kunnskap om trekkende fugler, ringmerkes det også på Utsira. Ringmerking øker også sjansen for å at sjeldne fugler ikke drar uoppdaget fra øya. Renate Berg og jeg var i Merkeskogen da hun fikk telefon fra mannen sin, Atle Espen Helgesen, om at Aleksander Landsverk hadde funnet en rødøyevireo i Helgesenhagen i Herberg. Vi slengte oss i bilen og styrtet nedover. Fuglen viste seg godt fram og var alt annet enn sky.

Ikke alle ble like raskt informert. Noen satt og spiste på butikken sør på øya da alarmen gikk. De satte maten

i halsen og styrtet bare ut – selv om regningen ikke var betalt. De tok heller ikke med seg Simon Carrington, en svenske som var «langligger» på Utsira denne høsten. Han var inne og handlet da meldingen kom. Det endte opp med at butikkeier Kjetil Klovning, kjørte Simon nordover, så han også fikk med seg den sjeldne amerikaneren. Dette var det tredje funnet av rødøyevireo i Norge, så denne dagen var det mange som fikk seg et kryss.

Belønning

Butikkeieren er interessert i fugler og følger med på «Bombevarsler for Utsira». Når det dukker opp noen bomber, er han snar med å sette fram gullbrød som belønning for de ulike nye artene folk kan ha fått sett. Det er en tradisjon at en kan kjøpe seg gullbrød når en har fått sett en ny art. Denne dagen kom det fram både brunsangerebelønning og rødøyevireobelønning i butikken.

Etter denne dagen kunne alt skje. Undertegnede skulle egentlig dradd



Ringmerker Renate Berg viser fram brunkinnskogtrosten *Catharus ustulatus* som ble fanget på Utsira den 10. oktober. Da ble det stor stemning blant de framfotete! Foto: Atle Espen Helgesen.

heim med siste båten, og var på nippet til det, da røddøyvireoen dukket opp. Nå ble det tatt noen telefoner for å ordne seg fri en ekstra dag.

Brunkinnskogtrost

Det viste seg å være en lur avgjørelse, for den 10. oktober smalt det ordentlig igjen. Klokkå 12.55 kom det melding om at det hadde blitt fanget en brunkinnskogtrost i Merkeskogen. Renate Berg var på nettrunde da hun så en fugl på nederste grein av et tre mellom henne og nettet. Hun tenkte at dette ikke var noen vanlig rødstrupe, og gikk nærmere for å se den bedre. Da fløy den rett i nettet, og da hun tok den ut derfra og så under vingen, skjønte hun at det var en skogtrost.

Renate ringte så mannen sin, som var på Pedleneset og kikket på havsfugl sammen med to andre. Da hun



Med røddøyvireo og brunkinnskogtrost på Utsira hhv. 9. og 10. oktober, ble det godt salg av gullbrød på butikken på øya. Det er fast tradisjon blant tuglekikkere å innta et gullbrød når man har sett en ny Norgesart. Foto: Torborg Berge.



Brunkinnskogtrost *Catharus ustulatus* ble den andre «yankee» på Utsira i høst – fanget dagen etter at rødøyevireo ble oppdaget. Den er litt snarlik en måltrost *Turdus philomelos* i drakten, men er betraktelig mindre enn denne. Foto: Atle Espen Helgesen.

så sendte bilde av fuglen, satte alle tre fra seg de dyre teleskopa sine og la på sprang mot Merkeskogen. Øystein Nilsen var den neste som ble oppringt, og alle som så han kjørte over øya, skjønte at nå var det alvor.

Undertegnede var med barna i bassenget. De måtte forte seg opp, og hadde knapt tid til å kle seg, før vi suste oppover til Merkeskogen. Da vi kom fram, og fuglen var ferdig ringmerket, ble det felles framvisning for alle de fram møtte. De få som var på øya og som ikke fikk den med seg i første omgang, fikk sett den da den gikk i nettet igjen. På butikken ble det satt fram en ny belønning: Brunkinnskogtrostbelønning.

Det var fremdeles skummelt å skulle dra fra øya, men jobben kallet, og det var ikke mulig å bli til fredag.



Det er mange fugleinteresserte på Utsira i den mest spennende perioden på høsten. Her er det samling i påvente av at en ringmerket dvergfluesnapper skal vises fram. Foto: Bjørn Mo.

Brunkinnparula – ny art for Norge



Norges første brunkinnparula ble ringmerket på Utsira 23. september i høst. Denne nordamerikanske spurvefuglen er ekstremt sjelden i vår del av verden – funnet er kun det fjerde i Europa! Foto: Bjørn Mo.

Da Europas fjerde brunkinnparula (Cape May Warbler) dukket opp på Utsira den 23. september, var det ikke bare nordmenn som sperret opp øynene. Nyheten spredte seg raskt til det ganske kontinent! I europeisk sammenheng er arten pr. dags dato den sjeldneste fuglen som er sett på Utsira noen gang.

Av Bjørn Mo

Med sin lange historie og imponerende artsliste er Utsira regnet som «bombeøyen» over alle øyer i Norge, blant annet på grunn av flere funn av nordamerikanske småfugler. I de senere årene har imidlertid konkurransen tatt seg opp, og flere andre «nyoppdagede» bombeøyer har slått

til med mange gode arter, inkludert amerikanere! Men på Utsira har det dessverre vært «yankee-tørke» i 20 år. Dette endret seg heldigvis i fjor da en rødøyevireo og brunkinnskogtrost var på øya samtidig – to meget gode arter i norsk sammenheng! Men ser man på Europa og inkluderer Asorene,

blekner disse funnene. Med over 450 funn av rødøyevireo og over 80 funn av brunkinnskogtrost er dette årlige og forventede arter i Europa. Med kun tre tidligere funn i Europa, er brunkinnparulaen av et helt annet kaliber!

I forkant av begivenheten (eller begivenhetene, se sak om klatreparula

på s. 252) hadde et spennende vær-system forlatt Amerika. Jeg befant meg på Utsira, og flere hintet til meg at det var potensial for at været kunne dra med seg noe. To brunkinnskogtroster i Skottland gjorde at jeg kjørte ren lyd av brunkinnskogtrost på ett av anleggene hver natt fra og med kvelden 17. september. Selv fikk jeg ikke med meg fjorårets skogtrost og var derfor sugen på å få denne arten. Den 23. september bød på kraftig vind fra sørvest og mye regn – ikke helt ulikt værforholdene i 2019 da rødøye-vireoen og brunkinnskogtrosten dukket opp på Utsira. Ved ankomst merkeskogen la jeg merke til at fyrlykten lyste spesielt mye opp denne morgenen. Tanken om en yankee streifet meg, og det syltynne håpet om en fugl fra den andre siden av Atlanteren bidro til motivasjon for å stå opp tidlig og sette opp nettene i regn. De fem foregående dagene hadde det stadig blitt færre og færre fugler, og jeg regnet med at dette ble den sjettede i rekka. Håpet om sjeldenheten forsvant fort, og lenge så det ut til å bli nok en dag uten de store høydepunktene. En fugl endret alt!

Kl. 10.30 var jeg akkurat ferdig med å merke en munk og to gjerdsmett fra runden. Jeg planla å ta meg en liten tur for å se etter fugler i noen hager. Men før jeg gikk, tok jeg en rask titt i nettene, for å konstatere at de var tomme. Da fikk jeg øye på en fugl i nettet som jeg ville ta først. I starten minnet fuglen litt om en grønnsisik, men i det jeg nærmet meg gikk pulsen opp fordi det var flere ting som skurret. Da jeg nesten var borte ved fuglen innså jeg at dette var noe «sykt» – det lignet faktisk en parula! Dette medførte at blodet startet å pumpe heftig! Alle mulige tanker begynte å strømme på. Det må definitivt være en av de heftigste «jeg drømmer, klyp meg i armen-opplevelsene» jeg noen gang har erfart. Da jeg kom helt bort, konstaterte jeg at det var en parula, men verken myrteparula eller svarthetteparula. Jeg kunne heller ikke huske å ha sett en slik fugl avtegnet i Gyldendals store fugleguide. «Dette må være en ekstremt sjelden parula» var dermed min tanke! Fuglen hang på andre side av nettet, og da jeg skulle gå under nettet for å komme til motsatt side, innså jeg hvor mye jeg skalv i knærne. Beina holdt på å gi etter. På grunn av svært skjelvende hender, tok det også uvanlig lang tid å plukke ut en så medgjørilig fugl. Egentlig var det bare å løfte den ut av nettet. Mens jeg plukket fuglen, kjente jeg meg litt



Brunkinnparulaen hekker i barskoger i det nordlige USA og Canada, og overvintrer normalt i Karibia og Mellom-Amerika. Den er sterkt tilknyttet granskog og grantrær – også under trekket. Arten må naturligvis – som på bildet – tidvis ta til takke med å søke næring i løvtrær og buskas. Foto: Bjørn Mo.

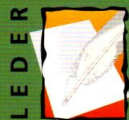


Brunkinnparulaen hadde tilhold på Utsira i perioden 23.–26. september, og mange ornitologer fikk gleden av å se fuglen. Foto: Bjørn Mo.

susen. Tanken om hva som ville skje dersom jeg svømte av, kom også. Derfor fyrte jeg av litt bilder med mobilen umiddelbart etter at jeg plukket fuglen, slik at den i det minste var dokumentert. For å få fortgang i prosessen, både med artsbestemmelse, og å få samlet folk på øya, la jeg umiddelbart ut et par av bildene jeg hadde tatt på «Band» for Utsira med kommentaren: «Aner ikke hva det er. Men har heftig puls og skjelver.» Kommentarer og gratulasjoner strømmet raskt på, og flere skrev at dette var en brunkinparula (Cape May Warbler, *Setophaga tigrina*). Det ble også konstatert gjennom sjekk i litteratur i ringmerkingsbua. Etter en rask fotoseanse ble den sluppet. Brunkinnparulaen ble senere på dagen

gjenfunnet sør på øya, hvor den holdt seg frem til 26. september. Den siste dagen, var fuglen svært aktiv i godt og varmt vær. Med stjerneklar himmel påfølgende natt, var det ingen overraskelse at den hadde trukket videre, slik mye annet på øya også hadde gjort.

Det bør nevnes at 2020 er det andre året i en prøveperiode med lys i fyret på Utsira. Begge årene har det kommet amerikanske småfugler til øya. De tidligere amerikanerne har også blitt sett mens det har vært lys på fyret, mens det i tørkeperioden har vært mange år uten lys. Dette er gjenstand for mye diskusjon, meninger og undring på øya. Til slutt vil jeg takke Utsira fuglestasjon for å få lov til å merke i skogen! Det settes pris på.



Vi må få med oss de unge!

Da fikk vi gjennomført et vellykket årsmøte i Skien med Telemarkavdelingen som vertskap i regi av deres 50-års jubileum. Vi besøkte Børsesjø på lørdagen og avsluttet med tur til Jomfruland på søndagen, og strålende vårvær gjorde at begge lokalitetene fikk vist seg frem fra sin beste side.

Igjen trakk årsmøtehelgen mange deltakere fra det ganske land, og dette var også første årsmøte etter at vi innførte delegatbasert system. Nå var det ikke lagt opp til nye omfattende saker som ville sette det nye systemet på prøve, så vi får vente til neste gang med å evaluere om systemet fungerer etter hensikten. Styret hadde likevel lagt opp til et omfattende program med diskusjon på fredagskvelden rundt dette med merkevarebygging og navnetting. Dette er tydelig en sak som engasjerer, og vi kommer til å jobbe videre med dette til høsten. Saken kommer ut på en god høringsrunde i organisasjonen, slik at vi setter oss i stand til få en avgjørelse til neste år.

Jeg merket meg også at sesjonen med Artsobservasjoner (AO) viste at her er det helt klart et stort behov for å komme ut til brukerne med tips og grunnleggende innføring i systemets mange muligheter. AO har jo ganske hurtig utviklet seg til å bli en kunnskapsdatabase med et imponerende bilde på forekomsten av våre fuglebestander både i nåtid men også i fortid. Mange har lagt ned mye tid i å få inn historiske data, og dette bør vi i NOF i enda større grad gripe fatt i og se på hvordan vi kan ytterligere stimulere våre medlemmer til å bidra med. Det er vel kanskje et av de områdene vi trygt kan si at det er en fordel at gjennomsnittsalderen i foreningen er en ubetinget fordel.

Jeg bet meg merke i plansjen til generalsekretæren under hans gjennomgang av årsberetningen da han snakket om medlemsutviklingen, både den som viste at vi nå gledelig nok har passert grensen på 10 000 medlemmer,



Fugleinteressen vekkes gjennom nærkontakt med fuglene! Her skal Ida slippe en grønsisik etter ringmerking. Foto: Halvor Sørhuus.

men også den hvor han viste at gjennomsnittsalderen var på hele 58 år!

Vi er nok ikke den eneste foreningen hvor man ser den samme tendensen, men dette er likevel en utvikling vi må ta på alvor og se på når vi skal oppdatere våre langtidsplaner. Det er et økende miljøengasjement også blant unge i dag, og jeg registrerer av debattene som raser i media og på sosiale plattformer at mange er opptatt av de skremmende scenarier vi nå er vitne til gjennom tap av arter, forsøpling av havene, overdrevet ressursbruk og hvilken fremtid vi overlater til neste generasjon. Miljøsidene blir latterliggjort for å kjøre på med dommedagsprofetier, mens næringsinteressene kjører på etter gammel oppskrift. Det så vi også i

den tidlige debatten rundt klima, men i dag tas problemet på alvor og man jobber intenst for å få ned skadelige utslipp. Det er langt frem fortsatt, men jeg registrerer at det er litt færre som i dag prøver å overbevise oss om at plastforsøplingen er en bagatell. Det gjenstår å se om tap av biologisk mangfold og fortsatt nedbygging av naturtyper også vil få den samme oppmerksomheten. Fortsatt synger fuglene våren inn, men mange steder registrerer vi allerede at det er blitt foruroligende stille og variasjonen er heller ikke den samme.

Dette må snarest bli den neste oppvåkningen – det begynner å haste.

Ha en god sommer og registrér for all del så mange hekkefunn som mulig.

Michael Fredriksen

Bruk av termisk kikkert avdekker kvartbekkasinens nattlige vaner og tilholdssteder

Kvartbekkasinen har lenge vært en art som har pirret min nysgjerrighet. Dette skyldes i hovedsak dens kryptiske levesett, som gjør at den sjelden blir sett. Mine observasjoner av arten har, sikkert som for mange andre, stort sett vært begrenset til relativt få tilfeller av fugler som har blitt støkket opp på kort hold, eller den «galopperende» lyden under spillet på hekkeplass. I løpet av høsten 2020 så jeg imidlertid muligheten til å kunne komme litt nærmere innpå denne mystiske vadefuglens hemmeligheter.

Av Jonas Langbråten

Foranledningen til satsingen høsten 2020 var da jeg i jobbsammenheng ett år tidligere – høsten 2019 – så smått startet med å teste bruk av termiske kikkerter i felt. Dette er kikkerter med varmesøkende egenskaper som gjør at man lett kan oppdage mennesker og andre dyr under omstendigheter hvor det ellers ville vært umulig. Mens vanlige nattkikkerter forsterker alt tilgjengelig lys, er det evnen til å oppfatte temperaturforskjeller som gjør at termiske kikkerter stiller i en litt annen klasse. Objekter som avgir varme, oppfattes lysende eller glødende i kontrast mot de kjøligere omgivelsene. Kikkertene kan brukes både i dagslys og i mørke, og gjør det også mulig å se objekter gjennom hindringer som tåke og røyk. Med slike egenskaper får

kikkertene et bredt bruksområde, og er bl.a. et viktig hjelpemiddel under søkeoppdrag. Mange husker kanskje de dramatiske bildene etter naturkatastrofen i Gjerdrum mot slutten av desember 2020, hvor man brukte varmesøkende kikkert for å oppdage mennesker i krateret etter jordskredet, slik at disse kunne heises opp i sikkerhet.

Da jeg bega meg ut i kulturlandskapet på Lista med dette hjelpemiddelet, oppdaget jeg raskt at det åpnet seg muligheter for å effektivt oppdage fugler som satt såpass kamuflert i vegetasjonen at de ville ha vært vanskelige eller umulige å oppdage ellers. De termiske kikkertene har liten forstørrelse. De fungerer derfor først og fremst som et verktøy for å oppdage de kamuflerte fuglene, mens en vanlig

kikkert deretter overtar for å få sikret artsbestemmelsen. I områdene jeg testet kikkerten – vest på Lista – var det på denne tiden en god del bekkasinere å se. Jeg fant mange enkeltbekkasinere, og etter hvert også en kvartbekkasin på denne måten. Den hardt trykkende kvartbekkasinen ble plukket opp og ringmerket, og jeg begynte så smått å se noen muligheter med bruk av dette tekniske hjelpemiddelet som jeg ikke hadde tenkt på tidligere.

Høsten 2020 gikk jeg personlig til anskaffelse av en termisk kikkert, etter igjen å ha testet et par ulike modeller i jobbsammenheng på sensommeren. Raskt var det igjen bekkasinere som kom i fokus. Rundt månedsskiftet september/oktober ble de første kvartbekkasinene observert





Kvartbekkasinen trykker hardt, og stoler på kamuflasjen. De aller fleste blir ikke oppdaget før de flyr opp, men bruk av termisk kikkert gjør at man kan oppdage fuglene i tide. Foto: Harald Dahlby.

innenfor Lista Fuglestasjons dekningsområde ved Lista fyr. Den 6. oktober så jeg selv en kvartbekkasin komme trekkende inn fra havet da jeg satt i sjøfuglbuå og talte trekkende sjøfugler. Dette var nok en opplevelse som trigget lysten til å bli litt bedre kjent med denne mystiske vadefuglen. Noen dager senere tok jeg turen ut i mørket med den termiske kikkerten, og fant de første kvartbekkasinene på nattetid ved hjelp av denne. Tilfeldige observasjoner utviklet seg så etter hvert til litt mer systematiske undersøkelser av utvalgte områder.

Etter å ha oppdaget kvartbekkasin på et par ulike lokaliteter, valgte jeg meg ut tre flater som jeg sjekket regelmessig etter mørkets frembrudd videre gjennom senhøsten. Flatene ligger på

enger og beitemark helt vest på Lista, to av dem ved Lista fyr (og dermed innenfor Lista Fuglestasjons dekningsområde), og den tredje litt nord for fyret, knyttet til lokaliteten Stavestranda. Felles for de tre flatene er at de er lett tilgjengelige, og samtidig ganske lette å få oversikt over. Totalarealet er på til sammen rett i underkant av 2,5 hektar. Flatene ble sjekket så ofte som mulig. Selv om jeg forsøkte å sjekke alle tre flatene hver kveld jeg var ute, var ikke dette mulig å gjennomføre 100 %. Faktorer som raskt skiftende og dårlig vær (slik det gjerne er på Lista om høsten), oversvømmelser og menneskelige forstyrrelser gjorde at gjennomføringen noen ganger måtte avbrytes. Jeg startet hver gang med å skanne områdene fra avstand med den

termiske kikkerten, før jeg beveget meg inn i området og gikk en fast rute.

De termiske kikkertene har ikke spesielt stor forstørrelse. I mitt tilfelle har kikkerten en fast forstørrelse på 2x, med mulighet for digital zoom opp til 8x. Når fuglene kommer i søkeren og lyser opp i de mørke omgivelsene, er det dermed ikke alltid lett å se hvilken art det dreier seg om. Noen ganger kan det være vanskelig nok å se om det er en fugl eller et lite pattedyr! Terrenget påvirker også hvordan det varme objektet oppfattes. En fugl kan virke mindre om den sitter delvis bak f.eks. en gress-tue, og kan virke større om den sitter i kanten av et vannspeil. Med litt trening vil man imidlertid ofte kunne oppfatte en viss forskjell både i størrelse, form, atferd og bevegelser som kan være

med på å sikre artsbestemmelsen, eller at man i det minste lander på riktig familie.

Når det gjelder de to aktuelle artene – kvartbekkasin og enkeltbekkasin – er det et par momenter man kan bite seg merke i. Kvartbekkasinen blir ofte gjenkjent ved at den ligger flatt og trykker, og dermed gir den en litt spesiell og avlang kontur. Enkeltbekkasinen kan også trykke på denne måten, men er som regel litt mer oppreist og årvåken. Selv om den stort sett sitter i ro, har den litt mer tendenser til å bevege på seg enn kvartbekkasinen. Rugde er en annen aktuell art, som i det aktuelle området på Lista dukker opp utover senhøsten. Denne kan både ligge og stå i vegetasjonen, men når den ligger så oppfattes den ikke like flat som en kvartbekkasin, og man ser som regel også greit at man har med en betydelig større fugl å gjøre, selv om det ofte kan være en utfordring å bedømme størrelse og avstand gjennom kikkerten. Troster som overnatter på bakken, kan også utgjøre en forvekslingsrisiko, da disse er jevnstore med bekkasinene. I løpet av høsten kom jeg over en del trost på bekkasinflatene. Hovedsakelig var dette gråtroster, men også noen rødvingetroster.

Observasjoner

Med unntak av én kveld, fant jeg kvartbekkasin på de tre flatene hver gang jeg var ute i perioden 12. oktober til 20. desember, totalt 37 kvelder. Den ene kvelden jeg ikke fant noen på flatene, fant jeg likevel kvartbekkasin like utenfor det avgrensede området, i tilsvarende biotop. Antallet innenfor flatene lå som regel på fire til fem individer pr. kveld, men opptil ni individer ble sett flere ganger. Totalantallet når alle kvartbekkasinene ble summert opp ble 173 individer. Antallet må sies å være temmelig konservativt, da jeg ikke talte individer som jeg ikke fikk artsbestemt til kvartbekkasin med 100 % sikkerhet. I tvilstilfeller om dobbelttelling, hvor f.eks. en bekkasin ble støkket opp og landet et annet sted innenfor den samme flaten før jeg hadde oversikt over de andre individene, valgte jeg også en konservativ tilnærming. Flere kvelder var det også forholdsvis mange enkeltbekkasiner på de samme flatene. Disse gjorde jeg ikke noen nøyaktige opptellinger på, men antallet gjorde nok sitt til at enkelte kvartbekkasiner noen ganger «druknet» i mengden.



En flittig brukt plass for næringsøkende kvartbekkasiner – en kortvokst gresseng ved Lista fyr. Fuktige partier, som det til høyre på bildet, hadde oftest størst tetthet. Rundballene fungerer fint som referansepunkter når man ser gjennom den termiske kikkerten for å lokalisere fuglene i mørket. Foto: Jonas Langbråten.



En annen god biotop for kvartbekkasin er dette feltet i tilknytning til brakkevannsområdet Vågsvollvåien. Her er det gressstuer og forekomst av lyssiv/knappsiv (*Juncus effusus*/conglomeratus). Det litt mer kupert terrenget med hindringer som fuglene kan sitte skjult bak, gjør at man må bevege seg mer for å oppdage dem. Man behøver ofte ikke flytte seg mange centimeter eller meter før en glødende prikk vises i den termiske kikkerten, og fuglen blir lokalisert. Foto: Jonas Langbråten.

I løpet av den samme perioden ble det av andre observatører rapportert totalt 33 individer på 17 ulike lokaliteter i Farsund kommune. Med unntak av ett individ som er rapportert som overflygende, med en kommentar om at den ble sett flygende over en vei før den landet på et jorde, er det ingen funn som har tilleggsinformasjon oppgitt som indikerer hvordan fuglene ble oppdaget. Jeg går likevel ut fra at de fleste eller kanskje alle funnene ble gjort på «tradisjonell» måte ved at en bekkasin støkkes opp tilfeldig. Kun

ett individ av de totalt 33 ble rapportert fra en av flatene som jeg sjekket regelmessig. Resten ble rapportert fra forskjellige lokaliteter spredt over store deler av Lista.

Utenfor Lista ble det ellers i Agder (både gamle Vest-Agder og gamle Aust-Agder) i løpet av den samme perioden rapportert 14 observasjoner av kvartbekkasin fra 11 ulike lokaliteter i fem ulike kommuner. Med unntak av én observasjon av tre individer fra Landvikstranda i Grimstad, var alle observasjonene av enkeltindivider. På kun tre

lokaliteter ble det observert kvartbekkasiner mer enn én gang; Landvikstranda i Grimstad, Kjerkevågen i Lindesnes og Galgjemyra i Lyngdal. Heller ikke noen av disse observasjonene i Agder utenfor Lista mistenker jeg at er gjort ved hjelp av varmesøkende hjelpemidler. De gjenspeiler derfor heller en mer normal oppdagelsesfrekvens.

Kvartbekkasiner ble ellers i samme periode registrert i alle fylker med unntak av Troms og Finnmark, med de nordligste funnene i Flakstad i Nordland. Det høyeste antallet på en enkeltlokalitet var åtte individer ved Børsesjø i Skien. Nå skal det sies at det ble gjort flere funn med høye antall helt i starten av oktober, før jeg startet med mine registreringer på Lista. Bl.a. var dagsrekorden på Utsira i «bombeuka» hele 28 individer den 3. oktober. På Melværet i Askvoll ble 12 individer registrert den 5. oktober. Funn på de to sistnevnte lokalitetene på denne tiden av året er nok et resultat av målbevisst trækking etter sjeldenheter, noe som de fleste feltornitologer vet kan frembringe en og annen kvartbekkasiner. Kilde for alle observasjonene jeg har nevnt her er artsobservasjoner.no.

Ringmerking

Lokalisering av trykkende kvartbekkasiner i mørket trigget etter hvert også lyst på å forsøke fangst og ringmerking. En lommelykt og en hån ble en essensiell del av feltutstyret for å være klar om muligheten skulle by seg. For å kunne fange fuglene i mørket er man avhengig av kunstig lys for å distrahere dem, slik at man kommer nær nok for fangst med hån.

Ved hjelp av blending og hån fanget og ringmerket jeg totalt 25 kvartbekkasiner. Jeg hadde i forkant brukt samme metode et fåtall ganger for å fange andre vadefugler, men å nærme seg bekkasiner på nattetid var en ny erfaring. Det ble dermed naturligvis noe prøving og feiling. Det var forskjell på hvordan de ulike individene reagerte på å få lysstrålen rettet mot seg. En del lettet og fløy allerede i det øyeblikket jeg skrudde på lyset, mens andre ble sittende helt til jeg gjorde utfall med hån. De som trykket aller hardest beveget seg heller ikke når jeg la hån over dem, men startet først å bevege seg når jeg skulle til å legge hånden over dem for å plukke de ut av hån. Med den termiske kikkerten fikk jeg mulighet til å følge de individene



En kvartbekkasiner har fått ståring rundt foten. Foto: Jonas Langbråten.

som unnslopp fangstforsøket. Mange av dem fløy opp til ganske stor høyde, men landet likevel ikke langt unna etter å ha flydd noen runder rundt området. Jeg lot være å gjøre et nytt fangstforsøk på fugler jeg allerede hadde støkket opp én gang, selv om de landet innenfor rekkevidde.

Et av målene med å fange fuglene, var å få en indikasjon på om de samme individene holdt seg i området over

tid, eller om det var mer utskiftning av individer. Kun én gang gjenfanget jeg en kvartbekkasiner jeg allerede hadde merket. Gjenfangsten skjedde kun et døgn etter merking, på nøyaktig samme sted. Ellers var det nye, umerkede individer hver gang jeg fanget fugl. Dette til tross for at fuglene som ble fanget, stort sett satt på akkurat de samme stedene. Dette indikerer en del «gjennomtrekk» av individer, men materialet er fore-

altfor lite til å konkludere med. Motivasjonen til å fortsette med samme aktivitet over flere sesonger er desto større. Alle bekkasinene som ble fanget ble forøvrig aldersbestemt etter beste evne, og av totalt 25 merkede individer var det to voksne fugler (2K+), mens de resterende 23 var ungfugler (1K).

I løpet av perioden ble det også noe «bifangst», da det ikke bare var kvartbekkasiner som brukte de aktuelle engene til næringsøk eller rasteplass om natten. I løpet av november og desember fanget og merket jeg ni rugder, fire enkeltbekkasiner, to vannriksker og én gråtrost. Mens bekkasinene og rugdene hovedsakelig trykker og eventuelt flyr «eksplosivt» opp, har vannriksene en litt annen strategi. De to individene jeg kom over på den aktuelle enga, inviterte meg til en løpsduell!

Atferd

De fleste kvartbekkasinene sto i «frosset» positur eller lå og trykket allerede på det tidspunktet jeg oppdaget dem. Dette tyder på at de var oppmerksomme på min tilstedeværelse selv på lang avstand.

Selv om en kvartbekkasin trykker hardt og sitter helt i ro, reagerer den lynraskt hvis den må. Dette fikk jeg erfare flere ganger ved fangstforsøk, hvor enkelte fugler lettet eksplosivt ved den minste brå bevegelse eller lyd. Hvor tolerante kvartbekkasinene var for lyd og brå bevegelser, varierte en del. Generelt virket kvartbekkasinene vare på lyder i mørket. Lyder generert av alt fra gnisinger i klær og gummistøvler i gjørme på nært hold til traktor i fart på langt hold, fikk fugler på vingene. Jeg fikk et inntrykk av at individene som satt helt eller delvis ute i et vannspeil, eller på svært fuktige partier, hadde en tendens til å trykke hardere enn de individene som satt på tørrere grunn. De individene som trykket på de mest åpne og tørreste partiene med kort gress, virket nærmest som om de hadde blitt «tatt på fersken» i det de var på vei over fra et fuktig parti til et annet når de ble oppmerksomme på min tilstedeværelse.

Noen individer var opptatt med næringsøk når jeg oppdaget dem, men «frøs» til eller la seg raskt ned når de oppfattet at jeg beveget meg. To individer ble sett utføre den særegne «bobbing»-bevegelsen, hvor hele kroppen til fuglen gynger rytmisk opp og



Her har kvartbekkasinen blitt avbrutt i sitt næringsøk på grunt vann, og legger seg ned. Taktikken er å holde seg i ro og stole på kamuflasjonen, eller rett og slett bare håpe på å ikke bli sett. Foto: Jonas Langbråten.



Termiske kikkerter kan ikke se gjennom hindringer som steiner og tykke greiner. Denne kvartbekkasinen eksponerer imidlertid såpass mye kroppflate at den likevel oppdages lett med det varmesøkende hjelpemiddelet. Foto: Jonas Langbråten.

ned. Funksjonen til denne bevegelsen synes noe uklart, men det er nærliggende å tro at den er direkte knyttet til næringsøket på et vis. Næringsøket foregikk som regel i de fuktigste partiene, typisk i tilknytning til større eller mindre vannansamlinger på engene. En glimrende dokumentasjon på kvartbekkasinens natthlige næringsøk er for øvrig filmet av fuglekameraet på Ilene i Tønsberg. Opptaket kan sees her: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2uMPY210Y0>

Flere steder i litteraturen fremgår det at kvartbekkasinens næringsøk er mest aktivt om natten, og at de da



En typisk kontur av en kvartbekkasin sett gjennom termisk kikkert. Nebbet holdes ned mot bakken eller vannflaten når den trykker. Foto: Mikael Ranta.



For å kunne fange kvartbekkasinene i mørket er man avhengig av kunstig lys for å distrahere dem, slik at man kommer nær nok til å få tak i dem. Foto: Jonas Langbråten.

oppsoker åpnere områder enn hva de gjør på dagtid. Termisk kikkert kan også brukes i dagslys, og jeg sjekket de tre aktuelle flatene på Vest-Lista et par ganger på dagtid i løpet av høsten. Jeg fant da ingen kvartbekkasiner. Dette tyder på at de gjerne holder seg mer skjult i andre områder på dagtid, mens de kommer ut i de åpne områdene etter mørkets frembrudd. Nøyaktig når de kommer frem fra sine daglige gjemmesteder på kvelden for å furasjere på de mer eksponerte engene, gjenstår å finne ut av. Jeg gjorde én kveld en artig observasjon av en kvartbekkasin som ankom en åpen eng i mørket. Med mitt varmesøkende hjelpemiddel lokaliserte jeg ved ankomst raskt en bekkasin midt på enga. Dette skulle vise seg å være en enkeltbekkasin. En ny bekkasin kom plutselig flygende inn, og tok en ekstra runde lavt over enga akkurat der hvor enkeltbekkasinen satt, før den landet ca. 15 meter unna. Den flygende bekkasinen viste seg å være en kvartbekkasin.

Resultater og potensiale

Kort oppsummert har bruk av termisk kikkert åpnet nye muligheter for å bli bedre kjent med en kryptisk fugl med nattlige vaner. Det har også økt oppdagelsesfrekvensen betydelig, og muligheten for å finne ut hvor fuglene sitter i god tid før man normal ville ha støkket de opp. 173 enkeltobservasjoner og 25 ringmerkinger av kvartbekkasin innenfor et lite område vest på Lista noen senhøststuser viser et potensiale. Siden dette er første høst jeg har satsset på denne type observasjoner og fangst, velger jeg å se på det som en begynnelse. Med enkelte justeringer er det fullt mulig å legge til rette for grundigere studier av fuglenes atferd samt øke fangstprosenten. Jeg kunne iallfall tenke meg å finne ut enda mer om kvartbekkasinene som gynger og trykker i nærområdet på høsten. Da blir bruk av termisk kikkert et viktig hjelpemiddel.

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Jonas Langbråten



Jonas Langbråten (f. 1985) er fra Kongsvinger, men bor nå på Lista hvor han jobber for Natur og Fritid i tillegg til at han er naturveileder på Besøks-senter Våtmark Lista. Driver også med fotografering og naturformidling på frilansbasis. Interessen for fugl er allsidig, og er blitt nærmest som en livsstil å regne. Den inkluderer bl.a. ringmerking og en del fugleturer i både inn- og utland.