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The Sardinian Warbler, *Sylvia melanocephala* (J.F. Gmelin, 1789), a new species for Russia's fauna

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At the Biological Station Rybachy, bird trapping projects are done at two field sites, "Fringilla" and "Rybachy" (Bolshakov & Dolnik 2001). Field station "Rybachy" is located on Cape Rossitten on the Courish Spit, Eastern Baltic, (55°09'N, 20°51'E). Cape Rossitten, which juts out into the Courish Lagoon, is isolated from the rest of the Courish Spit by the village and a large meadow. The trapping station has an area of 6 ha. Vegetation includes two main habitats: (1) reed bed and (2) shrub with deciduous trees. Since 1993, trapping is done from 27 March to 1 November in standard mist-nets (size 7 × 2 m, 14-mm mesh). Mainly passerines at migration stopovers are captured.

On 14 April 2010 at 17:00 Eastern European summer time at "Rybachy" field station we captured a male Sardinian Warbler, *Sylvia melanocephala*. According to the identification guide to European passerines (Svensson 1992), it was an adult individual (at least in its third calendar year). It had relatively large subcutaneous fat stores (score 6 following a 9-score grade, Kaiser 1993) and weighed 11.7 g. This species has not been recorded in Russia before (Koblik et al. 2006). In the former Soviet Union, Baltic countries including, Sardinian Warbler was only recorded in the Crimea, Ukraine (Grishchenko 2004) and on 22 October 2001 in Ventės Ragas Ornithological Station, Lithuania (33 km northeast from Rybachy; Patapavičius 2006). Even though our individual was captured on 14 April, it had probably arrived to the Courish Spit several days earlier. Synoptic weather data suggested that between the

nights 9/10 April and 13/14 April, unfavourable for northward migration headwinds prevailed (mainly north-easterly winds).

Sardinian Warbler breeds in southernmost Europe and juts into Asia in Turkey and eastern Mediterranean. In the late 19th century its range began to expand. From 1970 onwards, it colonized several warm and dry pre-Alpine areas in Italy, inland in southern France, Bulgaria and probably Romania. This species is also increasing in Spain, Malta, and Slovenia (Fraissinet & Sultana 1997). Range expansion and global climate change in the recent decades resulted in increasing instances of vagrancy well away from the breeding range, as far as Norway, Sweden, Finland, United Kingdom (<http://avibase.bsc-eoc.org/>). In the U.K., for instance, 73 records of Sardinian Warblers were made between 1950 and 2007, most of them (66 out of 73) after 1980 (<http://www.bto.org/>). It is assumed that the general rise in mean annual temperature in the northern hemisphere was the main cause of recording on the Courish Spit another new species for Russian Federation, the closely related Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans*. Three individuals in this species were captured on May 28, 1992, April 24, 1997 and May 10, 1997 (Shapoval 1998; Loskot et al. 1999).

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