

# “Citizen science” Journal in Ornithology: an experience burdened by prejudices (Scientists), low cultural levels (non-Scientists) and institutional conflicts (Associations).



*“Citizen Science” Journal in Ornitologia: un’esperienza gravata da pregiudizi (mondo scientifico), basso livello culturale (i non-scientifici), conflitti nell’associazionismo (Associazioni e comunicazione c.d. “social”).*

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To cite this version:

“Cavina E., Lipparelli T. (2024): “Citizen science” Journal in Ornithology: an experience burdened by prejudices (Scientists), low cultural levels (non-Scientists) and institutional conflicts (Associations)- IJWR, Vol.7 (February,2024), 1-22.

## KEY WORDS:

CitizenScience, database, Journals, Hunters/citizens, cultural level, mobbing, social, human factors.

## ABSTRACT

Lo scopo del presente Lavoro è quello di rendere evidenti le difficoltà, più o meno varie, che si possono presentare nell’ introdurre e gestire un Journal con finalità di diffondere conoscenze “Citizen Science” e più specificatamente in tipologia “di nicchia” come Ornitologia ed ancor più focus di oggetto (singola Specie avaria “*Columba palumbus*”).

Vengono quindi presentati elementi analitici vissuti nella evoluzione gestionale (6 anni) del Journal di un Club (Federazione di Sezioni regionali) attivo nel raccogliere

materiale “Citizen Science” (monitoraggio della migrazione) per oltre un quarto di Secolo. Oltre a risultati positivi si evidenziano difficoltà insite in tre settori distinti: Scientists, non-Scientists (Citizens), Associazionismo.

Tutto va riferito a “fattori umani” che possono portare a concreti risultati scientifici ma anche a conflitti “social-umani” capaci di portare alla dissoluzione.

La presa di coscienza di queste difficoltà può aiutare a correggere e supportare nuove iniziative “Citizen Science”.

## PREMESSA

Il percorso di una Ricerca promossa dall’osservazione “sul campo” di un importante fenomeno dell’Avifauna (Migrazione) può oggi essere analizzato nelle varie fasi di costruzione, progressione, aggiornamento e molteplici aspetti positivi e negativi. È il nostro, un percorso reale e documentato in 25 anni di attività, sfociato infine anche nella realizzazione di un Journal on-line quale serbatoio possibilmente documentale delle esperienze sulla fenologia migratoria di una singola Specie (*Columba palumbus*) migratrice nel Paleartico Occidentale.

È un percorso che rientra pienamente nella così detta “Citizen Science” e si confronta e si integra con la Scienza ufficiale in Ornitologia.

Rispetto ad altri monitoraggi della Migrazione (ad esempio: Trektellen) l’accuratezza della raccolta dei dati di osservazione è stata garantita dalla presenza costante e continuativa sul campo di Segnalatori molto esperti, sempre presenti in siti di rilevamento fisso per tutti i 45 giorni della stagione migratoria.

È nella seconda metà degli anni ‘90 che, anche sulla guida di contemporanee esperienze in Francia (GIFS), si realizza in Italia una Federazione Nazionale (**Club Italiano del Colombaccio**) di più Sezioni Regionali, formata da Cacciatori di Colombacci, cultori di antiche e tradizionali forme di Caccia specifica. Partendo da un’iniziale raccolta regionale (Romagna 1996 – ideatore: Rinaldo Bucchi), con la partecipazione attiva di decine e decine di Cacciatori sparsi in Italia come Segnalatori volontari giornalieri, a partire dal 1997 iniziò un vero monitoraggio “spontaneo”, senza alcuna base di metodologia scientifica, tale da fornire dati certi sull’andamento stagionale della migrazione peninsulare.

Va sottolineato che sino ad allora nessuno studio scientifico specifico era stato realizzato in Italia, fatta eccezione per alcune note ante-guerra (anni ’30) nel

libro “La migrazione degli uccelli in Italia” di Alessandro Toschi, Professore dell’Università di Bologna, in assenza completa di interessi sulla Specie da parte delle Istituzioni scientifiche ufficiali, disinteresse che, purtroppo, permane tutt’oggi. La Ricerca del Club Italiano del Colombaccio (*Progetto Colombaccio*), documentata su Pubblicazioni autonome e non su Riviste o Journals riconosciuti nel mondo scientifico, si protrasse negli anni (Rinaldo Bucchi) sino a che tutti i dati raccolti in un decennio (2007) trovarono l’attenzione di un affermato Ornitologo Europeo (Prof. P. Busse, Professore Emerito della Università di Danzica - Polonia) e l’elaborazione statistica scientifica consentì (2018) la pubblicazione di “Cavina E., Bucchi R. and Busse P. - 2018 - The general pattern of seasonal dynamics of the autumn migration of the Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus* in Italy. - The Ring 40: 3-18” e di poter iscrivere il Citizen Rinaldo Bucchi come Ricercatore in ResearchGate.

Subito a seguire viene pubblicato un testo Monografico: “La migrazione autunnale del Colombaccio in Italia” (Ed. Aracne - Roma 2018) dove vengono anche sviluppate prospettive e proposte di Ricerca oltre alla presentazione di alcuni dati tratti da Progetto Colombaccio Italia (S. Giannerini, F. Merli: “Analyse des prélevements de pigeon ramier dans le programme scientifique italien” – Association scientifique et culturelle UNIFAUNA – Poster – XIX° Congrès italien d’Ornitologie – Torino 2017) quale naturale evoluzione di Progetto Colombaccio (R. Bucchi 2007).

Il Club successivamente entra a far parte di un’Organizzazione di Ricerca Internazionale (<http://www.bighunter.it/Caccia/ArchivioNews/tabid/204/newsid730/23583/Default.aspx>) e produce alcuni Lavori inerenti la fenologia della migrazione (vedi CV del Club). Di particolare rilievo l’evoluzione delle metodologie di monitoraggio (selezioni territoriali: <https://journal.ilcolombaccio.it/cv-curriculum-vitae-of-club-italiano-del-colombaccio/>) come MSM con Rinaldo Bucchi e MCL con Vasco Feligetti.

È in questa fase evolutiva (2017) che nasce l’esigenza di creare, aperto ad ogni collaborazione in Italia ed all’estero, un Journal on-line di facile e libero accesso, pur soggetto ad alcune norme pubblistiche possibilmente attinenti ai canoni di pubblicazione vigenti nelle più accreditate Riviste di Ornitologia, seguendo lo schema sequenziale di “Abstract - Introduzione - Materiali e metodi - Risultati - Discussione - Conclusioni - Bibliografia e Web-Links”. **ITALIAN JOURNAL WOODPIGEON RESEARCH** - Giornale Italiano della Ricerca sul Colombaccio (*Columba palumbus*) -  
LINK: <http://journal.ilcolombaccio.it>

Tutto il lavoro svolto 2017-2024 è verificabile on-line:  
<https://journal.ilcolombaccio.it/>

A latere, un tentativo (2020-2021) di promuovere e realizzare una Videoconferenza Internazionale finalizzata ad un coordinamento Europeo per tutte le attività di Ricerca sulla Specie “Columba palumbus” è totalmente fallito per mancanza di adesioni, pur sollecitate da un’intensa e prolungata azione promozionale presso Istituzioni e singoli qualificati Ricercatori. Questa iniziativa si affiancava anche ad una dettagliata proposta di Progetto di Ricerca in Unione Europea:  
<https://journal.ilcolombaccio.it/proposal-draft-for-a-european-union-management-plan-for-wood-pigeon/>



Diversamente di successo, pur costosamente sponsorizzata, è stata la realizzazione di un progetto finalizzato all’identificazione delle Origini dei Colombacci che transitano in Italia, il c.d. “Progetto Hobson”, basato sulla valutazione degli Isotopi secondo la tecnica sviluppata su tutti i Migratori “animali” nel mondo e qui condotta dallo stesso K. Hobson e suo team su 550 Colombacci abbattuti in Italia e collegato data-base realizzato da Vasco Feligetti.

<https://www.ilcolombaccio.it/CMS/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Progetto-Hobson-Facciamo-il-punto.pdf>

Anche questo Progetto è stato collegato con un altro imponente Data-base realizzato da Vasco Feligetti (<https://www.ilcolombaccio.it/CMS/mcl-monitoraggio-colombaccio-live-2022/>) e ha portato all’esaustiva Tesi di Laurea di Tommaso Lipparelli, basata su 5 anni di monitoraggio su 6 corridoi di transito peninsulare, accessibile con testo completo, in Inglese ed Italiano, sul Journal.

Tutte le citazioni, i Links le e voci bibliografiche che abbiamo esposto sinteticamente (lasciando eventuali approfondimenti alle verifiche on-line) realizzano una sequenza documentale di quanto lavoro sia stato svolto partendo da una pionieristica iniziativa di monitoraggio della Migrazione (R.

Bucchi 1996) poi sviluppatisi in un quarto di Secolo, sempre prioritariamente in termini di Citizen Science.

I riferimenti che abbiamo dato sono quasi totalmente connessi ad attività di “ricerca applicata” con dati ottenuti “sul campo”, ma anche in termini di “Ricerca pura” abbiamo prodotto Lavori focalizzati, in termini di ecologia sensitiva, sulle risposte comportamentali ed anatomo fisiologiche legate alle variazioni fisiche della Pressione Atmosferica più ancora in dettaglio dipendenti dall’Organo Paratimpanico di Vitali (PTO) quale presupposto barometro/altimetro biologico. È stato quindi pubblicato, dopo revisione editoriale, un Lavoro sintetico ma anche esaustivo in “Academia Edu” derivandone dalla platea mondiale oltre 2000 accessi di lettura in poco più di un anno da parte di Ricercatori di oltre 30 Paesi:

**Cavina, E. (2021). The “Organ of flight”: Paratympatic Organ (PTO) of Vitali in Wild Birds as Biological Barometer-Altimeter.** Academia Letters, Article 1613. <https://doi.org/10.20935/AL1613>.

Il Journal ha raccolto parallelamente, con variabile valenza propriamente scientifica, contenuti propri di Ricerca e la visibilità on-line è dimostrata da semplici ricerche su Google Search anche con poche parole chiave come “Woodpigeon migration research” e con aggiunta “Europe Italy”.

## INTRODUZIONE

Fatti “base” gli elementi evolutivi “Citizen Science” esposti nelle premesse, dobbiamo subito sottolineare che lo scopo di questo Lavoro non è l’analisi dei risultati di una pionieristica iniziativa prodotta inizialmente senza basi scientifiche, ma qui si vogliono evidenziare le difficoltà realizzative e di contro gli effetti positivi insiti in una esperienza (anche editoriale on-line) sviluppata per molti anni. Nello stesso Journal qui oggetto di analisi sono stati affrontati elementi propri di “Citizen Science”, ciò anche a testimonianza che si è posta alle problematiche proprie di un tentativo di portare contributi concreti alle conoscenze di un settore scientifico.

<https://journal.ilcolombaccio.it/citizen-scientists-meet-scientific-science/>

### **Citizen scientists meet “Scientific science”**

(approfondimento in abstract, testo, conclusioni)

“The text of the Editorial uses as basis a short overview of a very recent (4th February 2021) paper <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0246572> that analyzes

*the relationship between contributions from citizen science and official science, documenting the need with statistical details that citizen science contributions must be considered and accepted in strictly scientific researches.”*

<https://journal.ilcolombaccio.it/864-2/>

**“Hunters as citizen scientists: a difficult pathway characterized by obstacles and errors. Focus on “Ethics in Research”.**

(approfondimento in abstract, testo, conclusioni)

*“The present report is a living testimony that even a small group of people with solid faith in the values of scientific research can continue to act concretely even in the face of internal association conflicts and in the face of the persistent indifference of official Ornithology. The present report is a living testimony that even a small group of people with solid faith in the values of scientific research can continue to act concretely even in the face of internal association conflicts and in the face of the persistent indifference of official Ornithology.”*

Ora, pur in presenza di risultati importanti “evidence based”, la nostra analisi critica si sviluppa principalmente sull’importanza del “fattore umano” dei singoli attori partecipanti a vario titolo nell’esperienza “Citizen Science” :

- Scienziati/Ricercatori disponibili o meno a collaborare.
- Non-sciensiati propriamente “citizen”.
- Associazioni e loro attività “social”, incluse responsabilità dirigenziali.

## MATERIALI e METODI - RISULTATI - DISCUSSIONE

### ▪ SCIENTISTS

Una Ricerca importante che nasce dall’idea, e prima ancora dalla curiosità, di un “dilettante” che tutto d’un colpo diventa Ricercatore “citizen scientist”, ma passano più di 20 anni prima che tutto il materiale raccolto possa ricevere l’interesse di un vero (e famoso) Ornitologo che per una serie di casuali contatti, spesso forzati, si rende conto che questo materiale merita un dettagliato approfondimento statistico-scientifico e quindi meriti la pubblicazione in una Rivista ornitologica accreditata a livello internazionale: “Cavina E., Bucchi R. and Busse P. 2018. The general pattern of seasonal

dynamics of the autumn migration of the Wood Pigeon (*Columba palumbus*) in Italy. The Ring 40: 3-18." <https://www.researchgate.net/>.

In questa piccola ma lunga storia sta tutto il senso delle difficoltà che esistono perché un lavoro di Ricerca pluriennale trovi infine la strada d'incontro con l'attenzione propriamente scientifica, ed il riconoscimento di valore scientifico: una storia emblematica. Qui affrontiamo un settore specifico "Ornitologia" dove agiscono ed operano Ricercatori e Scienziati di prevalente estrazione istituzionale (Università, Centri di Ricerca, Istituzioni governative, Federazioni associative). Molto spesso le Ricerche di queste istituzioni si svolgono su canali poco più che monotematici e difficilmente i Ricercatori sono disponibili ad esplorare nuove linee di ricerca ed ancor più se inviti di nuove ricerche vengono da Citizen Scientists pregiudizialmente ritenuti lontani dalle metodologie "liturgiche" della Scienza ed improvvisatori pseudoscientifici.

In questo senso di diffidenza e supposta inutilità di impegno di studio giocano un ruolo importante interessi di sovvenzioni economiche ottenibili per le ricerche. E qui incidono poi regole a circuito chiuso e non sempre trasparenti (anche a vari livelli istituzionali burocratici amministrativi) che permettono l'ottenimento dei "grants". Molto difficilmente un Ricercatore porrà attenzione a suggerimenti che non vengono dal suo mondo, rimarrà diffidente se non dichiaratamente ostico laddove il suggerimento provenga da un supposto mondo non-ambientalista come nel ns. caso specifico mondo venatorio.

Come fare a superare questi ostacoli? Certamente occorre applicarsi ad una ricerca bibliografica continua ed approfondita con focus sul tema di proprio interesse e da qui trarre indirizzi di Ricercatori potenzialmente collaboranti con i nostri interessi e così cercare contatti senza recedere mai dalla perseverante ricerca di contatti costruttivi: la tenace perseveranza in questa ricerca forse darà qualche limitatissimo frutto.

L'altra chiave di successo sta nella possibilità di instaurare un rapporto di corrispondenza e possibile collaborazione con interlocutori di elevato livello culturale: piano piano da cosa nasce cosa. Al di là di possibili collaborazioni concrete, diverse sono le condizioni per attrarre Ricercatori a pubblicare su un Journal "Citizen Science" o partecipare all'organizzazione di un Meeting o Congresso e per tali iniziative è necessario il supporto gestionale di autorità scientifiche istituzionali. Nella nostra esperienza, pur perseguita con determinazione scientifica, il risultato è stato negativo.

Quando però si creano condizioni per condivisioni di finalità di studio, una volta accertata la serietà degli intenti e la connessa base culturale, ecco che si

realizzano reali Lavori scientifici dove si sono incontrate ed integrate le “sapienze” degli Scientists e gli entusiasmi dei Citizen scientists.

Ancora una chiave di successo va segnalata: l'applicazione dei metodi di statistica ornitologica alla enorme quantità di dati che possono essere forniti dalle attività sul campo, esse stesse più volgarmente tradizionali che non scientifiche. Così è stato nella nostra esperienza. Questa nostra ricerca e realizzazione di concrete collaborazioni e nostra credibilità e stima, ha trovato soluzioni con cinque autorevoli personalità della Ornitologia Internazionale.

- **Keith Hobson** (Dept. Biology – University Western Ontario – Canada).
- **Leonida Fusani** (Institute Konrad Lorentz – Dept. Veterinary – University of Wien – Austria).
- **Andrew Farnsworth** (Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology – Cornell University – USA).
- **Przemysław Busse** (Professore Emerito Università di Danzica Polonia - Presidente NGO, Foundation supporting the bird migration studies).
- **MISCHENKO Alexander** (SeniorResearcher, Severtsov's Institute of Ecology and Evolution – Russian Academy of Science – Moscow – RUSSIA).

Tutti questi Ricercatori di altissimo livello hanno offerto ed aperto collaborazioni concrete basate sulla validità scientifica delle nostre iniziative. Abbiamo ritenuto doveroso citare questi Nomi dato l'effetto di credibilità scientifica determinato in buona parte dalla loro disinteressata disponibilità per i nostri Lavori di monitoraggio sul campo. Di particolare rilievo è stato l'interesse di “Ricerca pura” in tema di rivalutazione della Ricerca (ecologia sensoriale) sull'Organo Paratimpanico di Vitali, tuttora aperto a necessari approfondimenti documentali come sottolineato in “Cavina, E. (2021). The “Organ of flight”: Paratympatic Organ (PTO) of Vitali in Wild Birds as Biological Barometer-Altimeter. Academia Letters, Article 1613. <https://doi.org/10.20935/AL1613>.”.

È a questo proposito che, rimanendo nella evidenziazione delle insufficienti attenzioni del mondo scientifico “liturgico” su temi segnalati da Citizen scientists, succede ancor oggi che un Lavoro di assoluto valore sperimentale (il primo in assoluto che pone evidenza documentale della risposta barometrica PTO in Natura) non cita minimamente fonti bibliografiche che dovrebbero essere altrimenti ineludibili per la serietà scientifica nel 2023 (N.W.Cooper e alt. - Atmospheric pressure predicts probability of departure for migratory songbirds. <https://movementecologyjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.118>

[6/s40462-022-00356-z](#)). Molti altri esempi e considerazioni potrebbero essere ulteriormente sviluppati sul tema “ignoriamo Citizen Science”.

Questa supponenza è anche nei risultati numerici di pubblicazioni edite in Italian Journal Woodpigeon Research in 5 anni.

#### ▪ CITIZENS

La chiave di lettura di tutte le nostre riflessioni attuali, derivate e dedicate alla realizzazione di un Journal a tema (tema di nicchia su singola Specie aviaria - 2017) è ovviamente e semplicemente il “Citizen” preso così com’è nella sua semplicità culturale e che ad un certo imprevedibile momento prende coscienza che un suo specifico interesse, hobbistico o quant’altro, potrebbe avere uno sviluppo scientifico, e lui, il semplice Citizen, potrebbe avviare un progetto scientifico coinvolgendo altri “Citizen” e quindi guidarne un percorso.

Qui sta il nostro processo evolutivo in tema di “*Columba palumbus*”: sta nascendo (anni ‘90) un’Associazione o, meglio, una Federazione di più Sezioni regionali, e quindi potremmo coinvolgere più soggetti, legati tra loro da uno specifico interesse di miglior conoscenza, tutti soggetti che potrebbero essere attori nel raccogliere “sul campo” dati di osservazione in Natura tali da costruire dal nulla una Ricerca sulla fenologia migratoria di “*Columba palumbus*”.

Per anni decine e decine di Cacciatori/Segnalatori coordinati dal Club Italiano del Colombaccio hanno registrato giornalmente nella stagione venatoria i risultati delle loro osservazioni poi pubblicati in Opuscoli in occasione delle Feste annuali del Club (località Poggibonsi). Tutto questo materiale rimane noto nei limiti di queste attività per oltre 10 anni. Poi succede che un anziano Cacciatore, di lunghissima esperienza e con un background culturale derivato da attività di Ricerca (settore Medicina e Chirurgia) come Professore Universitario, ha accesso al materiale accumulato in Progetto Colombaccio (R. Bucchi), ne nasce così un percorso più propriamente guidato da metodologia scientifica sino alla evidenziazione del rapporto eco-sensitivo tra involi di massa da stop over migratorio (foresta della Mesola) e PTO (presupposto barometro biologico) (2014) ed infine (2018) con la collaborazione con il già citato Prof. P. Busse e quindi pubblicazione su Rivista Ornitologica Internazionale e successive ricerche propriamente scientifiche. Quindi, in sintesi: ideazione pionieristica da semplice Citizen, un’Associazione sul tema e suoi membri Citizens mobilitati a raccogliere dati di osservazione sulla Migrazione, attività pseudo-scientifica e pubblicistica “borderlines” per decenni, inserimento nella Ricerca di Citizen strutturato con esperienze (altro settore) di Ricercatore Universitario,

continuativa ricerca di contatti e collaborazioni propriamente scientifiche Ornitologiche ed infine attenzione e collaborazione del Prof. Busse.

Ma alla base di tutto c'era e c'è un livello culturale basso, molto basso, e comunque il contributo inconsapevolmente scientifico fu molto alto e così andò formandosi un database di tutto rispetto per lo studio della migrazione autunnale della Specie. Se la massa dei Cacciatori Segnalatori era caratterizzata da impreparazione culturale, era anche supportata dalla voglia di partecipare a qualcosa d'importante per la scienza e relativo protagonismo. La gestione di questa evoluzione è poi passata di mano ma per anni tutto il materiale raccolto non trovò mai la strada di pubblicazioni propriamente scientifiche ed il livello pseudoscientifico medio-basso divenne anche uno status culturale da difendere come tale atto a mantenere posizioni gestionali diffidenti per sostenere un salto propriamente scientifico. Quando il percorso “Citizen Science” è divenuto seriamente scientifico, ciò è stato ritenuto pericoloso o quasi nemico per alcuni dell'Associazione interessati a mantenere un loro potere dirigenziale od anche solo protagonista.

Molti sono stati negli anni i Cacciatori/Segnalatori, alcuni continuativamente e tanti saltuariamente e senza vero impegno di Citizen scientist. Il monitoraggio è stato svolto sul territorio peninsulare dell'Italia, e ciò per molti anni sino a che non si è sentita la necessità di razionalizzare ed analizzare la raccolta dei dati selezionati per corridoi, segmenti e fasce, utili ad analisi territoriali. A lato di un'esperienza ideata da Rinaldo Bucchi si è realizzato un sistema di raccolti per “pettini”, utili a filtrare in sequenza i transiti (MSM).

<https://journal.ilcolombaccio.it/m-s-m-suivi-selectif-migration-etude-de-la-migration-post-nuptiale-2019-du-pigeon-ramier/>

Contemporaneamente è stato ideato un sistema di monitoraggio “in tempo reale - LIVE” (MCL)(Vasco Feligetti, Enrico Cavina) a partire dal 2017 e la sintesi esaustiva dei risultati di un quinquennio ha trovato realizzazione in una Tesi di Laurea all'Università di Firenze (disponibile sul Journal).

<https://journal.ilcolombaccio.it/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/The-Autumn-Migration-of-the-Wood-Pigeon-in-Italy-Tommaso-Lipparelli-.pdf>

Questo studio così esteso e dettagliato ha raccolto anche i risultati pubblicati in numerosi Lavori (oltre 40 in 5 anni) presenti sull'Index del Journal.

<https://journal.ilcolombaccio.it/>

Qui è d'obbligo sottolineare che decine e decine di Cacciatori/Segnalatori hanno partecipato alla raccolta dei dati numerici e ne fa esempio per tutti un

quinquennio di MCL con 489 Segnalatori senza i quali tutti mai sarebbe stata possibile l’evoluzione dei ns. studi su MCL, i quali elaborati, ottenuti con l’inevitabile supporto della Statistica (obbligatoria in un lavoro di Tesi Universitaria 2024), s’incontrano pienamente con la metodologia propriamente scientifica. Più profondamente, rimanendo in tema già citato di “Ricerca pura” (PTO) e Citizen Science, ecco quindi il contributo documentativo, in assoluto “evidence based”, della continuativa (6 anni) registrazione “Citizen Science” in video di tutti gli involi di massa dalla foresta della Mesola come nella esaustiva pubblicazione sul Journal: (Denis Bianchi) Woodpigeon’s (*Columba palumbus*) autumn migration: biological barometer (PTO) and mass-take-offs “Images-evidence-based” document.

<https://journal.ilcolombaccio.it/woodpigeons-migration-take-offs-italy-2017-2023-by-denis-bianchi/>

<https://youtu.be/RntDJjtRoto?si=125H7yVmSkoUgHKs>

La quantità di citazioni, referenze bibliografiche e web-Links utili a sottolineare il contributo Citizen Science nella nostra esperienza sino al Journal è troppo vasta per non rischiare di perdersi in citazioni ripetitive. L’evidenza di partecipazione di centinaia di ipotetici “Citizen scientists” dobbiamo comunque inquadrarla in fisiologici limiti culturali che si identificano in una prevalente attività di “mano d’opera” collaborativa, quando poi la reale partecipazione di “analisi Citizen Science” rimane appannaggio di pochissimi Cacciatori/Segnalatori come risulta dai nominativi in vari contributi sul Journal. Questi limiti culturali medio-bassi, o anche solo legati a supponenza o indifferenza, trovano spesso un superamento apparente in attività “social” come Facebook e similari, o anche solo gruppi che si organizzano in chat o gruppi in collegamento radio-telefonico “sul campo”.

Di certo, nel nostro caso specifico, le attività di discussione e di osservazione si sono svolte e si svolgono sul Forum, nel Website del Club Italiano del Colombaccio (<https://www.ilcolombaccio.it/bacheca/index.php>), dove durante la migrazione i “post” possono anche essere utilmente integrativi delle registrazioni ufficiali (MCL, PCI), ma molto raramente hanno versioni di comunicazioni accettabili sul piano del monitoraggio scientifico anche in termini di Citizen Science. Come è ben noto nell’infinitamente grande campo comunicativo dei “social”, spesso le polemiche si trasformano in risse verbali scritte e non utili per una corretta analisi fenologica della migrazione.

Riteniamo che non sia questa la sede per sviluppare le tematiche offerte dal Forum. Di fatto; nello specifico del contributo “Citizen Science” al Journal, la partecipazione utile alla costruzione dei data-base è stata massiccia e fondamentale e per contro solo in pochissimi hanno contribuito alle

pubblicazioni nominali. L’“Italian Journal Woodpigeon Research – IJWR – Citizen Science journal free on-line” è nato per la volontà e l’esigenza culturale di mettere a disposizione di tutti in Europa quanto è stato fatto e si sta facendo in Italia in tema di Ricerca sul Colombaccio ed allo stesso tempo un Journal aperto a pubblicazioni internazionali.

Alcuni elementi d’impostazione editoriale applicabili alla creazione e gestione di un serio Journal “Citizen Science” si possono trovare in “Open Journals - Open Science, Citizen Science and Science 2.0 - Research Guides at Eastern Michigan University <https://guides.emich.edu/c.php?g=188061>”. Crediamo comunque che l’impostazione non debba soggiacere ad eccessi di burocratizzazione restrittiva né eccessi di incontrollabile libertà di accesso a pubblicare on-line.

La serietà, anche in assenza di esperienza pubblicistica, degli Editors dovrebbe essere semplicemente e serenamente la base culturale delle finalità di un Citizen Science Journal. Tra queste finalità indubbiamente giocano un ruolo importante la volontà di dare accesso veloce, completo e senza costi a quanti Scientists e Non-scientists desiderano porre a disposizione di tutti i risultati delle proprie esperienze. Questa impostazione dovrebbe essere accettata anche al di sopra di un criticismo basato sugli eccessi di un’ortodossia liturgica spesso in mano ad interessi anche economici di grandi Case editoriali. A questi principi si è ispirato il nostro tentativo creativo e gestionale del Journal.

Una prima valutazione positiva per la nostra pluriennale iniziativa ci viene da una semplice ricerca di “Google search”: se infatti immettiamo nel motore di ricerca “citizen science journals in woodpigeon migration research” i primi risultati della ricerca sono tre citazioni del nostro Journal nelle prime 5 posizioni. Ed anche, se più semplicemente ancora immettiamo, “Woodpigeon migration research” la nostra citazione appare 3 volte sulle prime 9.

Al di là di qualsiasi diffidenza, questi sono risultati concreti al livello di “ricerca mondiale Google”. Citazioni indubbiamente selezionate risultano su ResearchGate, Scopus ed Academia Edu. Il referente Editor del nostri Journal, che si avvale dei Risultati di Ricercatore in altra disciplina Universitaria, ora aggiunti agli attuali, presenta garanzie di profilo scientifico Scopus con 2048 citazioni in 1744 documenti, dei quali 94 in selezione e 26 in indice di alta selezione. Ci è sembrato necessario riportare questi pochi dati, garanti di serietà scientifica, per dare anche garanzia di serietà alla conduzione del Journal.

Abbiamo già scritto “È in questa fase evolutiva (2017) che nasce l’esigenza di creare, aperto ad ogni collaborazione in Italia ed all’estero, un Journal on-line di facile libero accesso, pur soggetto ad alcune norme pubblicistiche possibilmente

attinenti ai canoni di pubblicazione vigenti nelle più accreditate Riviste di Ornitologia, seguendo lo schema sequenziale di “Abstract - Introduzione - Materiali e metodi - Risultati - Discussione - Conclusioni - Bibliografia e WebLinks”.

Ricerca sul Colombaccio (*Columba palumbus*) - ITALIAN JOURNAL WOODPIGEON RESEARCH - Tutto il lavoro svolto 2017-2024 è verificabile on-line - LINK: <http://journal.ilcolombaccio.it>.

Il Journal ha ben funzionato come accessibile contenitore dei nostri Lavori di Ricerca, evidentemente esplorati sul Web da una selezionata platea di Ricercatori, come dimostrano i già citati risultati evidenziati dalle classifiche di Google Search. Altrimenti, il risultato è fallimentare per la partecipazione internazionale evidentemente condizionata dalla supponenza dei Ricercatori verso un Journal dichiaratamente “Citizen Science”. Dobbiamo però rilevare e sottolineare la scarsissima produzione di Lavori in Letteratura in tema di “*Columba palumbus*” e lo scarso, o quasi nullo, interesse degli Ornitologi ufficiali per una Specie in enorme, inspiegabile, aumento numerico nel Paleartico Occidentale, ora in presenza dei cambiamenti climatici. Anche in ragione di ciò, riteniamo che i nostri contributi sul Journal, numerosi e dettagliati, possano rimanere on-line importanti testimonianze documentali, tutto nel segno del valore della “Citizen Science”.

#### ▪ ASSOCIAZIONI

Le attività “Citizen Science”, di ricerca e di studio, si svolgono prevalentemente sul campo e si basano, in buona parte, su conteggi anche analitici, utili a creare data-base, appunto, “evidence-based”. È quindi necessario che i Citizen scientists “Ornithologists” si organizzino in Gruppi di Ricerca più o meno articolati e in Associazioni necessariamente strutturate con quadri di comando capaci di guidare le attività di Ricerca, financo a trovare mezzi di comunicazione (possibilmente controllabili) e di pubblicazione scientifica o pseudo-scientifica su Journals (come nel nostro caso) e/o Portali telematici. Se poi i metodi di comunicazione e diffusione si appoggiano a sistemi telematici “social”, tipo Facebook, Instagram e similari, facilmente sfugge il controllo di serietà e veridicità delle informazioni e risultati pubblicati, a volte anche ai limiti della legalità.

Inoltre, le strutturazioni organiche di guida o comando di un Gruppo (Associazioni, ecc.), quali Consigli Direttivi, Boards, Presidenze e quant’altro, possono poi divenire centri “di potere” o di protagonismo (forum) e sfociare in conflitti di varie personalità, tali da vanificare il significato stesso di “Citizen

Science". Il panorama di questi Gruppi, Fondazioni, Federazioni Associate, Associazioni, Centri di Ricerca, Istituzioni governative o Sociali, o più semplicemente Portali telematici, è un panorama estremamente vasto e vario, anche in Ornitologia e scienze collaterali. Ogni organizzazione ha proprie finalità di studio tali da spaziare da "tutte le Specie di Avifauna" oppure con focus su singola Specie (come nel nostro caso), singolo territorio, o altre attività connesse (come la Caccia nel nostro caso).

Per completezza di documentazione riportiamo un elenco di solo alcuni Links tra i più significativi:

- <https://www.palombe.com/migration/comptages.php>
- <http://migrantlandbirds.org/>
- [https://www.gifs-france.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=71&Itemid=294](https://www.gifs-france.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=71&Itemid=294)
- <https://www.birds.cornell.edu/citizenscience/social-science-research/citizen-science-research/>
- <https://www.migration.net/>
- <https://www.trektellen.org/>
- <https://www.birds.cornell.edu/citizenscience/about-the-projects/>
- <https://uia.org/s/or/en/1100042830>
- <http://torcaces.com/>
- <https://www.isprambiente.gov.it/it/banche-dati/atlante-delle-specie-marine-protette/animali/vertebrati/uccelli>

Di questi Links ci sembra vada segnalato, per l'efficienza ai fini di studio, quello della Cornell University (USA) e, per l'inefficienza, quello istituzionale italiano di ISPRA. Professionalmente scientifico il Link di Falsterbo (Svezia):

- <https://www.falsterbofagelstation.se/?lang=en>

Questa lista vuole essere solo indicativa della varietà di funzioni e di organizzazioni "Citizen Science" in Ornitologia.

Nel nostro caso il Journal è nato e si è sviluppato nell'ambito delle attività già da anni consolidate e sviluppate da un'Associazione (Federazione di Sezioni regionali) che a partire dal 1996 ha fornito materiale "Citizen Science" di tutto rispetto ai fini propri di Ricerca Scientifica. Gli Autori sono grati al CIC per la disponibilità di data-base fornito per le ricerche svolte e pubblicate. Ne fanno testimonianza piena il CV del Club e l'Index del Journal:

- <https://journal.ilcolombaccio.it/cv-curriculum-vitae-of-club-italiano-del-colombaccio/>
- <https://journal.ilcolombaccio.it/>

## CONCLUSIONI

Lo scopo di questo Lavoro era quello di evidenziare le difficoltà che possono presentarsi nel percorso “Citizen Science” di una Ricerca “di nicchia” ornitologica (singola Specie “*Columba palumbus*”) condotta in pluriennali attività di monitoraggio della Migrazione autunnale nell’ambito di una Associazione di Cacciatori che si sono trasformati in Segnalatori/Osservatori in Natura ed alcuni hanno impostato e guidato l’analisi fenologica utile ad integrarsi con metodologia propriamente scientifica sino a creare un Journal dedicato ed attivo per oltre 5 anni, sempre in termini di “Citizen Science” online.

I tre “punti” (fattori umani) sui quali abbiamo impostato l’analisi sono stati:

- Ruolo dei professionisti scienziati.
- Ruolo dei dilettanti “cittadini”.
- Ruolo delle “associazioni”.

Per tutti questi “punti focus” abbiamo cercato di valutare in positivo ed in negativi elementi propri di un percorso “Citizen Science”, comunque basato su principi propri generalisti della Scienza. Per il primo punto abbiamo sottolineato la tendenza di supponenza spesso presente nei professionisti vs. i dilettanti. Difficoltà comunque a volte superata dalla disponibilità di alcuni Scienziati veri anche di alto livello. Per il secondo punto il livello culturale non-alto dei Cacciatori-Segnalatori non ha impedito la realizzazione concreta di una “forza di mano d’opera” capace di realizzare alcuni data-base di monitoraggio (nello specifico di Specie) nemmeno lontanamente pensabili per attività istituzionali. E va sottolineata anche la capacità, per pochi Segnalatori, di trasformarsi in veri Ricercatori di analisi, forti di insostituibili esperienze di osservazioni tradizionali sul campo.

I deficit culturali incidono negativamente nei fattori umani dell’Associazionismo. Per questo punto (Associazionismo) giocano un ruolo assolutamente negativo “arroganze pseudo-culturali”, protagonismo, voglie di “potere”, interessi vari ed anche incapacità assoluta a comprendere la necessità di regole scientifiche.

Nel percorso supposto di “Citizen Science” questi elementi negativi possono risultare devastanti. Tutto ciò va riferito anche nelle potenziali attività di pubblicazione di un Journal che (come è stato nella nostra esperienza), pur dichiaratamente “Citizen Science”, si finalizza ad essere contenitore di messaggi scientifici che derivano non da “Science” ma da “Citizen Science” e può

comunque, il Journal, essere annullato dall'indifferenza insita addirittura nella stessa Associazione che lo ha promosso e sostenuto con materiale di data-base. Questa indifferenza, se non anche opposizione concreta nei fatti, può esplicarsi anche in un silenzio “colpevole” di personaggi pur sollecitati ad impegnarsi in “Citizen Science”. Quando questo si verifica siamo di fronte, con assoluta evidenza, a metodologia di “Mobbing associativo”. Allora non resta che cambiar strada nel pieno rispetto delle libertà intellettuali degli attori, a tutti i livelli culturali, che si sono impegnati per decenni nelle Ricerche sulla fenologia della migrazione autunnale di “*Columba palumbus*”.

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Nello stesso Journal qui oggetto di analisi, sono stati affrontati elementi propri di “Citizen Science”, ciò anche a testimonianza che si è posta alle problematiche proprie di un tentativo di portare contributi concreti alle conoscenze di un settore scientifico.

- <https://journal.ilcolombaccio.it/citizen-scientists-meet-scientific-science/> - Citizen scientists meet “Scientific science” (approfondimento in abstract, testo, conclusioni)

“The text of the Editorial uses as basis a short overview of a very recent (4th February 2021) paper: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0246572> that analyzes the relationship between contributions from citizen science and official science, documenting the need with statistical details. that citizen science contributions must be considered and accepted in strictly scientific researches.”
- <https://journal.ilcolombaccio.it/864-2/> - Hunters as citizen scientists: a difficult pathway characterized by obstacles and errors. Focus on “Ethics in Research”. (approfondimento in abstract, testo, conclusioni)

“ The present report is a living testimony that even a small group of people with solid faith in the values of scientific research can continue to act concretely even in the face of internal association conflicts and in the face of the persistent indifference of official Ornithology The present report is a living testimony that even a small group of people with solid faith in the values of scientific research can continue to act concretely even in the face of internal association conflicts and in the face of the persistent indifference of official Ornithology”.

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# "Citizen science" Journal in Ornithology: an experience burdened by prejudices (Scientists), low cultural levels (non-Scientists) and institutional conflicts (Associations).



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To cite this version:

"Cavina E., Lipparelli T. (2024): "Citizen science" Journal in Ornithology: an experience burdened by prejudices (Scientists), low cultural levels (non-Scientists) and institutional conflicts (Associations)- IJWR, Vol.7 (February,2024), 1-22.

## KEY WORDS:

CitizenScience, database, Journals, Hunters/citizens, cultural level, mobbing, social, human factors.

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this work is to highlight the difficulties, more or less varied, that can arise in introducing and managing a Journal with the aim of disseminating "Citizen Science" knowledge and more specifically in "niche" types such as Ornithology and even more focus of object (single avian species "*Columba palumbus*").

Analytical elements experienced in the management evolution (6 years) of the Journal of a Club (Federation of Regional Sections) active in collecting "Citizen Science" material (monitoring migration) for over a quarter of a century are then presented. In addition to positive results, there are difficulties inherent in three distinct sectors: Scientists, non-Scientists (Citizens), and Associationism.

Everything refers to "human factors" that can lead to concrete scientific results but also to "social-human" conflicts capable of leading to dissolution. Awareness of these difficulties can help correct and support new "Citizen Science" initiatives.

## PREMISE

The path of a research promoted by the observation "in the field" of an important phenomenon of Avifauna (Migration) can now be analyzed in the various phases of construction, progression, updating and multiple positive and negative aspects. It is ours, a real and documented path in 25 years of activity, which finally also resulted in the creation of an on-line Journal as a possibly documentary reservoir of the experiences on the migratory phenology of a single migratory species (*Columba palumbus*) in the Western Palearctic.

It is a path that is fully part of the so-called "Citizen Science" and is confronted and integrated with the official Science in Ornithology.

Compared to other monitoring of the Migration (e.g. Trektellen), the accuracy of the collection of observation data has been guaranteed by the constant and continuous presence in the field of very experienced Beacons, always present in fixed survey sites for all 45 days of the migration season.

It was in the second half of the 90s that, also on the basis of contemporary experiences in France (GIFS), a National Federation (**Italian Wood Pigeon Club**) of several Regional Sections was created in Italy, formed by Wood Pigeon Hunters, lovers of ancient and traditional forms of specific hunting. Starting from an initial regional collection (Romagna 1996 – creator: Rinaldo Bucchi), with the active participation of dozens and dozens of Hunters scattered throughout Italy as daily volunteer Signals, starting from 1997 a real "spontaneous" monitoring began, without any basis of scientific methodology, such as to provide reliable data on the seasonal trend of the peninsular migration.

It should be emphasized that until then no specific scientific study had been carried out in Italy, with the exception of some pre-war notes (1930s) in the book "The migration of birds in Italy" by Alessandro Toschi, Professor at the University of Bologna, in the complete absence of interest in the species on the part of official scientific institutions, a lack of interest that, unfortunately, still persists today. The research of the Italian Wood Pigeon Club (*Wood Pigeon Project*), documented in independent publications and not in Journals or Journals recognized in the scientific world, continued over the years (Rinaldo Bucchi) until all the data collected in a decade (2007) found the attention of a well-known European Ornithologist (Prof. P. Busse, Professor Emeritus of the University of Gdansk - Poland) and the scientific statistical processing allowed (2018) the publication of "Cavina E., Bucchi R. and Busse P. - 2018 - The general pattern of seasonal dynamics of the autumn migration of the Wood Pigeon

*Columba palumbus* in Italy. - The Ring 40: 3-18" and to be able to register the Citizen Rinaldo Bucchi as a Researcher in ResearchGate.

Immediately afterwards, a monographic text is published: "The autumn migration of the wood pigeon in Italy" (Ed. Aracne - Rome 2018) where perspectives and research proposals are also developed as well as the presentation of some data taken from Progetto Colombaccio Italia (S. Giannerini, F. Merli: "Analyse des prélevements de pigeon ramier dans le programme scientifique italien" – Association scientifique et culturelle UNIFAUNA – Poster – XIX<sup>o</sup> Congrès italien d'Ornitologie – Turin 2017) as natural evolution of Progetto Colombaccio (R. Bucchi 2007).

The Club subsequently became part of an International Research Organization (<http://www.bighunter.it/Caccia/ArchivioNews/tabid/204/newsid730/23583/Default.aspx>) and produced some papers related to the phenology of migration (see CV of the Club). Of particular importance is the evolution of monitoring methodologies (territorial selections: <https://journal.ilcolombaccio.it/cv-curriculum-vitae-of-club-italiano-del-colombaccio/>) such as MSM with Rinaldo Bucchi and MCL with Vasco Feligetti.

It is in this evolutionary phase (2017) that the need arises to create, open to any collaboration in Italy and abroad, an online Journal of easy and free access, although subject to some public regulations possibly pertaining to the publication canons in force in the most accredited Ornithology Journals, following the sequential scheme of "Abstract - Introduction - Materials and methods - Results - Discussion - Conclusions - Bibliography and Web-Links". **ITALIAN JOURNAL WOODPIGEON RESEARCH** - Italian Journal of Wood Pigeon Research (*Columba palumbus*) - LINK: <http://journal.ilcolombaccio.it>

All the work carried out 2017-2024 can be verified online:  
<https://journal.ilcolombaccio.it/>

On a side note, an attempt (2020-2021) to promote and implement an International Videoconference aimed at European coordination for all Research activities on the "Columba palumbus" species has totally failed due to lack of adhesions, despite being prompted by an intense and prolonged promotional action at institutions and individual qualified researchers. This initiative was also accompanied by a detailed proposal for a Research Project in the European Union: <https://journal.ilcolombaccio.it/proposal-draft-for-a-european-union-management-plan-for-wood-pigeon/>

Woodpigeon "Columba palumbus" in Europe :  
Research and state of art 2021

[www.woodpigeoncolumbapalumbus.com](http://www.woodpigeoncolumbapalumbus.com)

WEBCONFERENCE by Club Italiano del  
Colombaccio & Italian J.Woodpigeon Research  
Friday - 26 February 2021 - h.11 am

**WOODPIGEONS in EUROPE**  
PLANNING DEAD-LINE for interested  
RESEARCHERS  
30th JUNE 2020

Differently successful, although expensively sponsored, was the realization of a project aimed at identifying the origins of wood pigeons transiting in Italy, the so-called "Hobson Project", based on the evaluation of isotopes according to the technique developed on all the migratory "animals" in the world and here conducted by K. Hobson himself and his team on 550 wood pigeons killed in Italy and connected to the database created by Vasco Feligetti.

<https://www.ilcolombaccio.it/CMS/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Progetto-Hobson-Facciamo-il-punto.pdf>

This project was also connected with another impressive database created by Vasco Feligetti (<https://www.ilcolombaccio.it/CMS/mcl-monitoraggio-colombaccio-live-2022/>) and led to the exhaustive Degree Thesis by Tommaso Lipparelli, based on 5 years of monitoring on 6 peninsular transit corridors, accessible with a complete text, in English and Italian, in the Journal.

All the citations, links and bibliographic entries that we have summarised (leaving any further information to on-line verifications) create a documentary sequence of how much work has been carried out starting from a pioneering initiative of monitoring Migration (R. Bucchi 1996) then developed in a quarter of a century, always primarily in terms of Citizen Science.

The references we have given are almost totally connected to "applied research" activities with data obtained "in the field", but also in terms of "pure research" we have produced works focused, in terms of sensory ecology, on the behavioral and anatomical physiological responses related to the physical

variations of the Atmospheric Pressure more in detail depending on the Paratympatic Organ of Vitali (PTO) as a barometer/biological altimeter prerequisite. A concise but also exhaustive work was then published in "Academia Edu" after editorial review, deriving from the world audience over 2000 reading accesses in just over a year by researchers from over 30 countries:

**Cavina, E. (2021). The "Organ of flight": Paratympatic Organ (PTO) of Vitali in Wild Birds as Biological Barometer-Altimeter.** Academia Letters, Article 1613. <https://doi.org/10.20935/AL1613>.

The Journal has collected in parallel, with variable scientific value, own Research content and the online visibility is demonstrated by simple searches on Google Search even with a few keywords such as "Woodpigeon migration research" and with the addition "Europe Italy".

## INTRODUCTION

Having made the "Citizen Science" evolutionary elements described in the introductions "basic", we must immediately emphasize that the purpose of this work is not the analysis of the results of a pioneering initiative initially produced without scientific basis, but here we want to highlight the difficulties of implementation and on the other hand the positive effects inherent in an experience (including online publishing) developed over many years. In the same Journal that is the subject of analysis, elements of "Citizen Science" have been addressed, also testifying to the problems of an attempt to make concrete contributions to the knowledge of a scientific sector.

<https://journal.ilcolombaccio.it/citizen-scientists-meet-scientific-science/>

### **Citizen scientists meet "Scientific science"**

(in-depth analysis in abstract, text, conclusions)

*"The text of the Editorial uses as basis a short overview of a very recent (4th February 2021) paper <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0246572> that analyzes the relationship between contributions from citizen science and official science, documenting the need with statistical details that citizen science contributions must be considered and accepted in strictly scientific researches."*

<https://journal.ilcolombaccio.it/864-2/>

**"Hunters as citizen scientists: a difficult pathway characterized by obstacles and errors. Focus on "Ethics in Research".**

(in-depth analysis in abstract, text, conclusions)

*"The present report is a living testimony that even a small group of people with solid faith in the values of scientific research can continue to act concretely even in the face of internal association conflicts and in the face of the persistent indifference of official Ornithology. The present report is a living testimony that even a small group of people with solid faith in the values of scientific research can continue to act concretely even in the face of internal association conflicts and in the face of the persistent indifference of official Ornithology."*

Now, despite the presence of important "evidence-based" results, our critical analysis mainly develops on the importance of the "human factor" of the individual actors participating in various capacities in the "Citizen Science" experience:

- Scientists/Researchers willing or not to collaborate.
- Non-scientists properly "citizen".
- Associations and their "social" activities, including managerial responsibilities.

## MATERIALS & METHODS - RESULTS - DISCUSSION

### ▪ SCIENTISTS

An important research that was born from the idea, and even before that from the curiosity, of an "amateur" who all of a sudden became a "citizen scientist" researcher, but more than 20 years passed before all the material collected could receive the interest of a real (and famous) Ornithologist who, due to a series of casual contacts, often forced, realized that this material deserved a detailed statistical-scientific study and therefore deserved publication in an ornithological journal internationally accredited: "Cavina E., Bucchi R. and Busse P. 2018. The general pattern of seasonal dynamics of the autumn migration of the Wood Pigeon (*Columba palumbus*) in Italy. The Ring 40: 3-18." <https://www.researchgate.net/>.

In this small but long story lies all the sense of the difficulties that exist for a multi-year research work to finally find the way to meet the proper scientific attention, and the recognition of scientific value: an emblematic story. Here we deal with a specific sector "Ornithology" where Researchers and Scientists of predominantly institutional extraction (Universities, Research Centers,

Government Institutions, Associative Federations) act and operate. Very often the research of these institutions is carried out on channels that are little more than monothematic and it is difficult for researchers to explore new lines of research and even more so if invitations for new research come from Citizen Scientists prejudicially considered far from the "liturgical" methodologies of Science and pseudoscientific improvisers.

In this sense of mistrust and supposed uselessness of commitment to study, the interests of economic subsidies that can be obtained for research play an important role. And this is also where closed-circuit and not always transparent rules (even at various institutional, bureaucratic, administrative levels) that allow the obtaining of "grants" come into play. It is very difficult for a Researcher to pay attention to suggestions that do not come from his own world, he will remain suspicious if not openly hostile where the suggestion comes from a supposed non-environmentalist world as in ours. Specific case of the hunting world.

How do you overcome these obstacles? Certainly, it is necessary to apply oneself to a continuous and in-depth bibliographic research with a focus on the topic of one's interest and from here to draw directions of researchers potentially collaborating with our interests and thus seek contacts without ever giving up the persevering search for constructive contacts: tenacious perseverance in this research will perhaps bear some very limited fruit.

The other key to success lies in the possibility of establishing a relationship of correspondence and possible collaboration with interlocutors of a high cultural level: little by little, one thing leads to another. Beyond possible concrete collaborations, there are several conditions to attract researchers to publish in a Journal "Citizen Science" or participate in the organization of a Meeting or Congress and for these initiatives the management support of institutional scientific authorities is necessary. In our experience, although pursued with scientific determination, the result was negative.

When, however, the conditions are created for the sharing of study purposes, once the seriousness of the intentions and the related cultural basis have been ascertained, real scientific works are carried out where the "wisdom" of the Scientists and the enthusiasm of the Citizen scientists have met and integrated.

Another key to success is the application of ornithological statistical methods to the enormous amount of data that can be provided by field activities, which are themselves more vulgarly traditional than scientific. So it was in our experience. Our research and realization of concrete collaborations and our

credibility and esteem has found solutions with five authoritative personalities of International Ornithology.

- **Keith Hobson** (Dept. Biology – University Western Ontario – Canada).
- **Leonida Fusani** (Institute Konrad Lorentz – Dept. Veterinary – University of Wien – Austria).
- **Andrew Farnsworth** (Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology – Cornell University – USA).
- **Przemysław Busse** (Professor Emeritus, University of Gdańsk, Poland - NGO President, Foundation supporting the bird migration studies).
- **MISCHENKO Alexander** (Senior Researcher, Severtsov's Institute of Ecology and Evolution – Russian Academy of Science – Moscow – RUSSIA).

All these researchers of the highest level have offered and opened concrete collaborations based on the scientific validity of our initiatives. We felt it was our duty to mention these names given the effect of scientific credibility determined in large part by their disinterested availability for our monitoring work in the field. Of particular importance was the interest of "Pure Research" in the field of re-evaluation of Research (sensory ecology) on Vitali's Paratympanic Organ, still open to necessary documentary insights as pointed out in "Cavina, E. (2021). The "Organ of flight": Paratympanic Organ (PTO) of Vitali in Wild Birds as Biological Barometer-Altimeter. Academia Letters, Article 1613. <https://doi.org/10.20935/AL1613>."

It is in this regard that, remaining in the highlighting of the insufficient attention of the "liturgical" scientific world on topics reported by Citizen scientists, it still happens today that a Work of absolute experimental value (the first ever that provides documentary evidence of the PTO barometric response in Nature) does not cite bibliographic sources that should otherwise be unavoidable for scientific seriousness in 2023 (N.W.Cooper et al. - Atmospheric pressure predicts probability of departure for migratory songbirds. <https://movementecologyjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40462-022-00356-z>). Many other examples and considerations could be further developed on the theme of "ignoring Citizen Science".

This arrogance is also in the numerical results of publications published in Italian Journal Woodpigeon Research in 5 years.

- **CITIZENS**

The key to reading all our current reflections, derived and dedicated to the creation of a themed Journal (niche theme on a single avian species -2017) is obviously and simply the "Citizen" taken as it is in its cultural simplicity and that at a certain unpredictable moment becomes aware that a specific interest, hobby or whatever, it could have a scientific development, and he, the simple Citizen, could start a scientific project involving other "Citizens" and then guide a path of it.

This is our evolutionary process on the subject of "*Columba palumbus*": an Association or, better, a Federation of several regional Sections is being born (90s), and therefore we could involve several subjects, linked to each other by a specific interest of better knowledge, all subjects who could be actors in collecting "in the field" observation data in Nature such as to build from scratch a Research on the migratory phenology of "*Columba palumbus*".

For years, dozens and dozens of Hunters/Signallers coordinated by the Italian Wood Pigeon Club have recorded the results of their observations daily during the hunting season, which are then published in brochures on the occasion of the Club's annual festivals (Poggibonsi). All this material remains known within the limits of these activities for over 10 years. Then it happens that an elderly Hunter, with very long experience and with a cultural background derived from Research activities (Medicine and Surgery sector) as a University Professor, has access to the material accumulated in the Wood Pigeon Project (R. Bucchi), thus a path more properly guided by scientific methodology is born up to the highlighting of the eco-sensitive relationship between mass flights from migratory stop over (Mesola forest) and PTO (presumed biological barometer) (2014) and finally (2018) with the collaboration with the aforementioned Prof. P. Busse and then publication in the International Ornithological Journal and subsequent scientific research. So, in summary: pioneering conception by a simple Citizen, an Association on the subject and its Citizens members mobilized to collect observational data on Migration, pseudo-scientific and "borderline" publicity activity for decades, inclusion in Citizen's Research structured with experiences (other sector) as a University Researcher, continuous search for contacts and collaborations properly scientific Ornithological and finally attention and collaboration of Prof. He knocked.

But at the base of everything there was and is a low, very low cultural level, and in any case the unconsciously scientific contribution was very high and so a respectable database was formed for the study of the autumn migration of the Species. If the mass of Signal Hunters was characterized by cultural

unpreparedness, it was also supported by the desire to participate in something important for science and its protagonism. The management of this evolution then changed hands, but for years all the material collected never found its way to properly scientific publications, and the medium-low pseudoscientific level also became a cultural status to be defended as such, capable of maintaining distrustful managerial positions to support a properly scientific leap. When the "Citizen Science" path became seriously scientific, this was considered dangerous or almost an enemy for some of the Association interested in maintaining their managerial or even just protagonist power.

Over the years, there have been many Hunters/Reporters, some continuously and many occasionally and without real commitment as Citizen scientists. The monitoring was carried out on the peninsular territory of Italy, and this for many years until the need was felt to rationalize and analyze the collection of data selected by corridors, segments and bands, useful for territorial analysis. Alongside an experiment conceived by Rinaldo Bucchi, a system of crops for "combs" was created, useful for filtering transits in sequence (MSM).

<https://journal.ilcolombaccio.it/m-s-m-suivi-selectif-migration-etude-de-la-migration-post-nuptiale-2019-du-pigeon-ramier/>

At the same time, a "LIVE" monitoring system (MCL) was designed (Vasco Feligetti, Enrico Cavina) starting from 2017 and the exhaustive synthesis of the results of a five-year period was realized in a Degree Thesis at the University of Florence (available in the Journal).

<https://journal.ilcolombaccio.it/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/The-Autumn-Migration-of-the-Wood-Pigeon-in-Italy-Tommaso-Lipparelli-.pdf>

This extensive and detailed study has also collected the results published in numerous papers (over 40 in 5 years) in the Journal Index.

<https://journal.ilcolombaccio.it/>

Here it is necessary to emphasize that dozens and dozens of Hunters/Reporters have participated in the collection of numerical data and an example of this is a five-year period of MCL with 489 Reporters without whom all of them would never have been possible the evolution of our studies. studies on MCL, which, elaborated, obtained with the inevitable support of Statistics (mandatory in a 2024 University Thesis work), they fully meet with the properly scientific methodology. More profoundly, remaining on the already mentioned theme of "Pure Research" (PTO) and Citizen Science, here is the documentary contribution, absolutely "evidence based", of the continuous (6 years) "Citizen Science" video recording of all the mass flights from the Mesola forest as in the

exhaustive publication in the Journal: (Denis Bianchi) Woodpigeon's (*Columba palumbus*) autumn migration: biological barometer (PTO) and mass-take-offs "Images-evidence-based" document.

<https://journal.ilcolombaccio.it/woodpigeons-migration-take-offs-italy-2017-2023-by-denis-bianchi/>

<https://youtu.be/RntDJjtRoto?si=125H7yVmSkoUgHKs>

The amount of citations, bibliographic references and web-links useful to underline the contribution of Citizen Science in our experience up to the Journal is too vast not to risk getting lost in repetitive citations. The evidence of the participation of hundreds of hypothetical "Citizen scientists" must however be framed in physiological cultural limits that are identified in a prevalent activity of collaborative "workforce", when then the real participation of "Citizen Science analysis" remains the prerogative of very few Hunters/Signalers as shown by the names in various contributions on the Journal. These medium-low cultural limits, or even just linked to arrogance or indifference, often find an apparent overcoming in "social" activities such as Facebook and the like, or even just groups that organize themselves in chats or groups in radio-telephone connection "in the field".

Certainly, in our specific case, the discussion and observation activities have taken place and are taking place on the Forum, on the Website of the Italian Wood Pigeon Club (<https://www.ilcolombaccio.it/bacheca/index.php>), where during the migration the "posts" can also be usefully supplementary to the official records (MCL, PCI), but very rarely have versions of communications acceptable in terms of scientific monitoring also in terms of Citizen Science. As is well known in the infinitely large field of communication of "social media", controversies often turn into written verbal brawls that are not useful for a correct phenological analysis of migration.

We believe that this is not the place to develop the themes offered by the Forum. Actually; in the specific "Citizen Science" contribution to the Journal, the useful participation in the construction of the databases has been massive and fundamental and on the other hand only very few have contributed to the nominal publications. The "Italian Journal Woodpigeon Research - IJWR - Citizen Science journal free on-line" was born for the desire and the cultural need to make available to everyone in Europe what has been done and is being done in Italy in terms of Wood Pigeon Research and at the same time a Journal open to international publications.

Some elements of editorial approach applicable to the creation and management of a serious "Citizen Science" Journal can be found in "Open

Journals - Open Science, Citizen Science and Science 2.0 - Research Guides at Eastern Michigan University <https://guides.emich.edu/c.php?g=188061>". We believe, however, that the approach should not be subject to excesses of restrictive bureaucracy or excesses of uncontrollable freedom of access to publish online.

The seriousness, even in the absence of journalistic experience, of the Editors should be simply and serenely the cultural basis of the aims of a Citizen Science Journal. Among these aims, the desire to give fast, complete and free access to those Scientists and No-scientists who wish to make the results of their experiences available to everyone undoubtedly plays an important role. This approach should also be accepted above a criticism based on the excesses of a liturgical orthodoxy often in the hands of the economic interests of large publishing houses. These principles inspired our creative and managerial attempt at the Journal.

A first positive evaluation for our long-standing initiative comes from a simple search for "Google search": in fact, if we enter "citizen science journals in woodpigeon migration research" into the search engine, the first results of the search are three citations of our Journal in the first 5 positions. And also, if we simply enter, "Woodpigeon migration research" our citation appears 3 times out of the first 9.

Beyond any mistrust, these are concrete results at the level of "Google world search". Selected citations are on ResearchGate, Scopus and Academia Edu. The Editor of our Journal, who makes use of the Results of Researcher in another University discipline, now added to the current ones, presents guarantees of the Scopus scientific profile with 2048 citations in 1744 documents, of which 94 in selection and 26 in high selection index. It seemed necessary to report these few data, guarantors of scientific seriousness, to also give a guarantee of seriousness to the conduct of the Journal.

We have already written "It is in this evolutionary phase (2017) that the need arises to create, open to any collaboration in Italy and abroad, an online Journal of easy free access, although subject to some public regulations possibly pertaining to the canons of publication in force in the most accredited Ornithology Journals, following the sequential scheme of "Abstract - Introduction - Materials and methods - Results - Discussion - Conclusions - Bibliography and WebLinks".

Research on wood pigeon (*Columba palumbus*) - ITALIAN JOURNAL  
WOODPIGEON RESEARCH - All the work done 2017-2024 is verifiable on-line -  
LINK: <http://journal.ilcolombaccio.it>.

The Journal has worked well as an accessible container for our Research Works, evidently explored on the Web by a selected audience of Researchers, as demonstrated by the aforementioned results highlighted by the Google Search rankings. Otherwise, the result is a failure for the international participation evidently conditioned by the arrogance of the Researchers towards a Journal declared "Citizen Science". However, we must point out and underline the very scarce production of works in literature on the subject of "*Columba palumbus*" and the scarce, or almost non-existent, interest of official ornithologists for a species in enormous, inexplicable, numerical increase in the Western Palearctic, now in the presence of climate change. Also for this reason, we believe that our numerous and detailed contributions to the Journal can remain online as important documentary testimonies, all in the name of the value of "Citizen Science".

#### ▪ ASSOCIATIONS

The "Citizen Science" activities, research and study, are mainly carried out in the field and are based, for the most part, on analytical counts, useful for creating "evidence-based" databases. It is therefore necessary that the Citizen scientists "Ornithologists" organize themselves into more or less articulated Research Groups and in Associations necessarily structured with command cadres capable of guiding Research activities, even to find means of communication (possibly controllable) and scientific or pseudo-scientific publication on Journals (as in our case) and/or telematic Portals. If the methods of communication and dissemination are based on "social" telematic systems, such as Facebook, Instagram and the like, it is easy to miss the control of the seriousness and truthfulness of the information and results published, sometimes even at the limits of legality.

In addition, the organic structures of leadership or command of a Group (Associations, etc.), such as Boards of Directors, Boards, Presidencies and so on, can then become centers of "power" or protagonism (forums) and result in conflicts of various personalities, such as to nullify the very meaning of "Citizen Science". The panorama of these Groups, Foundations, Associative Federations, Associations, Research Centers, Governmental or Social Institutions, or more simply Telematic Portals, is an extremely vast and varied panorama, even in Ornithology and collateral sciences. Each organization has its own study

purposes such as to range from "all species of birdlife" or with a focus on a single species (as in our case), a single territory, or other related activities (such as hunting in our case).

For the sake of completeness of documentation, here is a list of just a few of the most significant links:

- <https://www.palombe.com/migration/comptages.php>
- <http://migrantlandbirds.org/>
- [https://www.gifs-france.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=71&Itemid=294](https://www.gifs-france.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=71&Itemid=294)
- <https://www.birds.cornell.edu/citizenscience/social-science-research/citizen-science-research/>
- <https://www.migration.net/>
- <https://www.trektellen.org/>
- <https://www.birds.cornell.edu/citizenscience/about-the-projects/>
- <https://uia.org/s/or/en/1100042830>
- <http://torcaces.com/>
- <https://www.isprambiente.gov.it/it/banche-dati/atlante-delle-specie-marine-protette/animali/vertebrati/uccelli>

Of these Links, it seems to us that the one of Cornell University (USA) should be mentioned, for the efficiency for study purposes, and, for the inefficiency, the Italian institutional one of ISPRA. Professionally scientific, the Link in Falsterbo (Sweden):

- <https://www.falsterbofagelstation.se/?lang=en>

This list is intended to be only indicative of the variety of "Citizen Science" functions and organizations in Ornithology.

In our case, the Journal was born and developed as part of the activities already consolidated and developed for years by an Association (Federation of Regional Sections) that since 1996 has provided respectable "Citizen Science" material for its own purposes of Scientific Research. The authors are grateful to the CIC for the availability of the database provided for the research carried out and published. The Club's CV and the Journal's Index bear full witness to this:

- <https://journal.ilcolombaccio.it/cv-curriculum-vitae-of-club-italiano-del-colombaccio/>
- <https://journal.ilcolombaccio.it/>

## CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this work was to highlight the difficulties that can arise in the "Citizen Science" path of an ornithological "niche" research (single species *Columba palumbus*) conducted in multi-year monitoring activities of the autumn migration within an Association of Hunters who have become Signalers/Observers in Nature and some have set up and guided the phenological analysis useful to integrate with methodology Scientific journal to the point of creating a dedicated and active journal for over 5 years, always in terms of online "Citizen Science".

The three "points" (human factors) on which we based the analysis were:

- Role of professional scientists.
- Role of amateur "citizens".
- Role of "associations".

For all these "focus points" we have tried to evaluate positively and negatively elements of a "Citizen Science" path, in any case based on generalist principles of Science. For the first point, we pointed out the tendency of arrogance often present in professionals vs. amateurs. However, this difficulty is sometimes overcome by the availability of some real scientists, even at a high level. For the second point, the non-high cultural level of the Hunter-Signalers has not prevented the concrete creation of a "workforce" capable of creating some monitoring databases (specifically of Species) not even remotely thinkable for institutional activities. And it should also be emphasized the ability, for a few Signals, to transform themselves into true Researchers of analysis, strengthened by irreplaceable experiences of traditional observations in the field.

Cultural deficits have a negative impact on the human factors of the Association. For this point (Associationism) "pseudo-cultural arrogance", protagonism, desires for "power", various interests and even absolute inability to understand the need for scientific rules play an absolutely negative role.

In the supposed path of "Citizen Science" these negative elements can be devastating. All this must also be reported in the potential publication activities of a Journal that (as it has been in our experience), although openly "Citizen Science", aims to be a container of scientific messages that derive not from "Science" but from "Citizen Science" and can in any case, the Journal, be annulled by the indifference inherent even in the same Association that promoted and supported it with data-base material. This indifference, if not also concrete opposition in facts, can also be expressed in a "guilty" silence of

characters even though they are urged to engage in "Citizen Science". When this occurs, we are confronted, with absolute evidence, with a methodology of "associative mobbing". So all that remains is to change course in full respect of the intellectual freedoms of the actors, at all cultural levels, who have been engaged for decades in the Research on the phenology of autumn migration of "*Columba palumbus*".

## INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLIOGRAPHY

In the same Journal under analysis, elements of "Citizen Science" have been addressed, also testifying to the problems of an attempt to make concrete contributions to the knowledge of a scientific sector.

- <https://journal.ilcolombaccio.it/citizen-scientists-meet-scientific-science/> - Citizen scientists meet "Scientific science" (in-depth analysis in abstract, text, conclusions)

"The text of the Editorial uses as basis a short overview of a very recent (4th February 2021) paper: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0246572> that analyzes the relationship between contributions from citizen science and official science, documenting the need with statistical details. that citizen science contributions must be considered and accepted in strictly scientific researches."

- <https://journal.ilcolombaccio.it/864-2/> - Hunters as citizen scientists: a difficult pathway characterized by obstacles and errors. Focus on "Ethics in Research". (in-depth analysis in abstract, text, conclusions)

" The present report is a living testimony that even a small group of people with solid faith in the values of scientific research can continue to act concretely even in the face of internal association conflicts and in the face of the persistent indifference of official Ornithology The present report is a living testimony that even a small group of people with solid faith in the values of scientific research can continue to act concretely even in the face of internal association conflicts and in the face of the persistent indifference of official Ornithology".

## BIBLIOGRAPHY AND WEB-LINKS

SEE Bibliographies in the Works cited above.

- <https://group.rspb.org.uk/bristol/news-blogs/news/citizen-science-sundays-2024-guide/>
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**Challenges and benefits of using unstructured citizen science data to estimate seasonal timing of bird migration across large scales.**

- Nadja Weisshaupt.

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