

Bill deformation in a Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator senator*

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During a study on Seeböhms's Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe seebohmi* in the high plateau of the Moroccan Middle Atlas near the village of Ifrane (coordinates: 23°29'N/ 05°04' E) we caught and ringed on the 24th of April 2008 accidentally a Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator senator* with an unusual bill deformation (Photo 1 and 2). The upper mandible was very long and strongly curved with a bill length of 25.7 mm to skull and 18 mm to nostril. The bill height was 6.6 mm and the bill width 6.5 mm. The lower mandible measured 15.7

mm. Despite the obvious handicap for prey handling and foraging the shrike showed a surprisingly good body condition. The female bird was aged as a 2nd calendar year bird. Its body weight reached 28.4 g. The latter stands within the normal range of body weight recorded for Woodchat Shrikes during spring migration in Morocco (see Fig. 1). Apparently the shrike was able to feed properly despite its extraordinary bill structure.

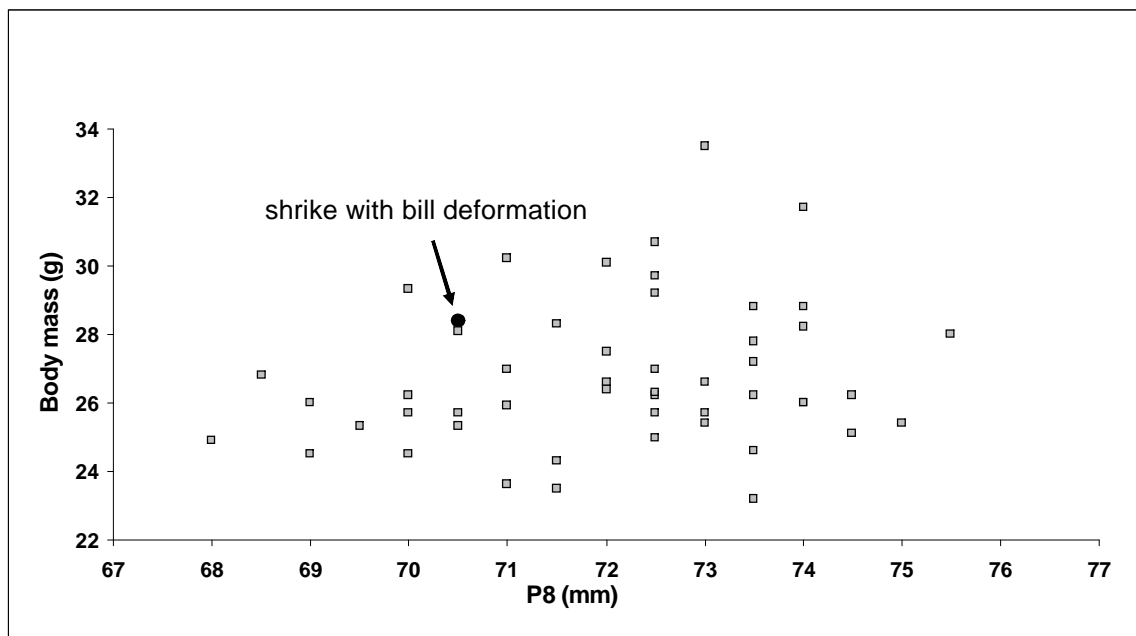


Figure 1. Measurements (body mass versus P8 length) of the Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator senator* with bill deformation close to Ifrane/ Morocco on the 24th of April 2008 and for comparison of conspecifics during spring migration in April-May 2005 (bird ringing data base "Vogelwarte Helgoland", Institute of Avian Research)

Bill deformation in a Woodchat Shrike



Photos 1 and 2: Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator senator* with bill deformation close to Ifrane/ Morocco on the 24th of April 2008