INTRODUCTION

The haemosporidian parasites of birds usually infect wild birds in natural conditions and could modulate their health status.

The rehabilitation centres have a remarkable role in avian conservation. This study is focused on the influence of rehabilitation period over the presence of haemosporidian infection in the recovered individuals in a rehabilitation centre in Madrid (Central Spain).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

- We carried out haemosporidian diagnosis on owls at the beginning and at the end of the rehabilitation stint.
- Blood samples from five different species of owls were collected from March to September 2014. The number of hospitalized juveniles was higher than adults.
- In total, 132 blood smears was screened.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

- We identified one specie of *Leucocytozoon* in adults and juveniles at the beginning of the rehabilitation stint. The prevalence of infection varied between birds species.
- Our preliminary results show that infection levels by these blood parasites decrease during the period spent in the rehabilitation centre.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

- A non-specific treatment against haemosporidians could be use to reduce the parasitemia.
- It would be interesting to identify potential differences in the level of parasitemia between bird sexes (male vs female).
- Samples obtained at the end of the rehabilitation stint will be compared with those samples from the beginning.
- Further molecular analyses are needed in order to know more accurate details about the parasites.