

Study: Ring ouzel is global warming victim

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Scottish scientists say global warming's first major British wildlife victim is the ring ouzel -- a close relative of the blackbird.

Researchers from the Macaulay Land Use Research Institute in Aberdeen, Scotland, said the ouzel lives in cool mountain and moor areas. But a nearly 60-percent decline in the ring ouzel population during the past decade across Scotland and the English and Welsh moorlands is linked to rising temperatures.

Scientists told The Independent they fear higher temperatures in late summer, prompted by climate change, are causing the birds' demise.

"They just seem to be dying out rather than adapting and moving elsewhere," lead researcher Colin Beale told the newspaper. "But that isn't to say there isn't hope for them. We think that it is changes in the availability of food, rather than higher temperatures themselves, that is the problem and we may be able to do something to help."

Although the effect of global warming has been observed on British wildlife, such as flowering times, the ring ouzel is the first case in which a whole species has been seen to be at risk, The Independent said.

The research appears in the Journal of Animal Ecology.

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