

Bird news

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This column aims to collect a series of unusual observations and to make it accessible to the scientific community in future. We collect observations without time, space or species limitation but we focus on a limited series of category of interest. See more on Avocetta website: <http://www.avocetta.org/bird-news-column/>

1. Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca*

Observer: Michele Panuccio, Medraptors (Mediterranean Raptor Migration Network)
(panucciomichele@gmail.com)

Category: species of unusual occurrence for a given area

Number of individuals: 1

Status: unknown



Site location: Strait of Messina (Piani d'Aspromonte, Reggio Calabria), Italy

Date of observation: 18th March 2018

Notes of the observer: immature bird.

Reasons of interest: regular but rare species on the Strait of Messina with up to 3 individuals per migratory season, probably individuals wintering in Sicily.

2. Griffon vulture *Gyps fulvus*

Observer: Juan Ramirez (queperita@hotmail.com)



Category: unusual number

Number of individuals: 2.362

Status: actively migrating

Site location: Strait of Gibraltar, Moroccan side (Morocco)

Date of observation: 28 October 2015

Notes of the observer: 2.362 individuals observed in the same day. Vultures were counted arriving from the sea after the crossing of the Strait of Gibraltar. More details on the bulletin Vulture News 73 (2017).

Reasons of interest: observation of a very huge number of Griffon vultures. The species is a regular migrant across the Strait of Gibraltar.

3. Monk parakeet *Myiopsitta monachus*

Observer: Corrado Battisti
(c.battisti@cittametropolitanaroma.gov.it)

Category: unusual behaviour

Number of individuals: at least 5



Status: sedentary; locally present from at least a decade
Site location: suburban farmland of the Campagna Romana, included between the “Tenuta dei Massimi” and the “Valle dei Casali” nature reserves (41°51’49.1” Lat N, 12°24’56.5” E), Western sector of Rome, Italy
Date of observation: october 2018
Notes of the observer: the individuals foraged on persimmon *Diospyros kaki* L. fruits in a small orchard. All the damaged fruits were at the pick of maturation.
Reasons of interest: of concern because damaged fruits are not more collectable for human consumption. This represents the first published case for Italy and the second for Europe of an impact of Monk parakeet on orchards.

4. Bonelli’s eagle *Aquila fasciata*

Observer: Davide De Rosa (derosadavide@yahoo.it)
Category: species of unusual occurrence for a given area
Number of individuals: 1
Status: unknown
Site location: Rio Posada (Nuoro), Italy
Date of observation: 27 September 2018
Notes of the observer: immature.
Reasons of interest: the bird did not belong to the individuals released in the area as a part of “Aquila a-LIFE” project, as indicated by the GPS tracks of those individuals; the observation could therefore refer to a migratory bird, since the Sardinian breeding population has been declared extinct.

5. House martin *Delichon urbicum*

Observers: Tommaso La Mantia (tommaso.lamantia@unipa.it), Juliane Rühl
Category: unusual breeding location
Number of individuals: at least 5
Status: breeding
Site location: a ferry crossing the Świna river that flows from the Stettino lagoon to the bay of Pomerania in the Baltic Sea
Date of observation: 9th June 2004
Notes of the observers: House martins were observed with some active nests on a ferry in regular transport service. Nests was located under the eaves of the boat.
Reasons of interest: unusual breeding behaviour, with



birds nesting on a highly mobile structure (a ferry performing regular service).

6. Black headed gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Observers: Gaia Bazzi (gaiabazzi@gmail.com), Lionello Bazzi

Category: unusual behaviour

Number of individuals: at least 20

Status: unknown

Site location: Abbadia Lariana (Lecco), Italy

Date of observation: december 2016

Notes of the observers: the gulls were repeatedly observed foraging on persimmon *Diospyros kaki* and Caucasian persimmon *Diospyros lotus* fruits and European nettle tree *Celtis australis* drupes.

Reasons of interest: unusual foraging behaviour of a species that does not usually feed on fruits.

7. Saker falcon *Falco cherrug*

Observers: Gaia Bazzi (gaiabazzi@gmail.com), Luca Ilahiane

Category: species of unusual occurrence for a given area

Number of individuals: 1

Status: migrating

Site location: Ventotene Is. (Latina), Italy

Date of observation: 27th April 2013

Notes of the observer: the bird was insistently mobbed by a pair of Peregrine falcons, that breed on the nearby cliffs.

Reasons of interest: the Saker falcon is a regular but rare migrant in Central and Southern Italy.

8. Booted eagle *Hieraetus pennatus*

Observer: Alessandro Franzoi

Category: unusual number

Number of individuals: 7

Status: unknown

Site location: Valley of the Temples, Agrigento, Italy

Date of observation: 16th November 2018

Notes of the observer: a foraging flock of 7 individuals.

Reasons of interest: the Booted eagle has begun to overwinter in Sicily on a regular basis in the last few years. However, the overall number of individuals wintering in the area is still low and they rarely group as in this case.

9. House martin *Delichon urbicum*

Observer: Alessandro Franzoi

Category: unusual phenology and behaviour

Number of individuals: at least 4

Status: unknown

Site location: Caltagirone (Catania), Italy

Date of observation: 18th November 2018

Notes of the observer: the birds were seen entering the nests at dusk.

Reasons of interest: there are a few observation of House martins in late autumn/winter in the area and the use of nest as night refugees out of the breeding season is uncommon.