

Bird news

This column aims to collect a series of interesting 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/>

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Edited by Gaia Bazzi

gaia.bazzi@avocetta.org

 0000-0002-7220-6054

1. Little Bustard *Tetrax tetrax*

Observers: Nunzio Grattini, Alessia Leggieri, Alessandro Berlusconi (alessandro.berlusconi@live.it)

Category: Species of unusual occurrence for a given area

Number of individuals: 1

Status: Unknown (probably not-breeding)

Site location: ZPS Valli di Novellara (IT4030015), Novellara (Reggio Emilia), Italy

Date of observation: 24th June 2020

Notes of the observers: Observation of a female-like individual, probably a not-breeding juvenile in dispersion.

Reasons of interest: Unusual observation for the area; the species is considered rare and threatened in the Italian Peninsula, and does not breed in North Italy.

2. Common Loon *Gavia immer*

Observers: Samuele Ramellini (samuele.ramellini@gmail.com), Eduardo Dupré

Category: Species of unusual occurrence for a given area

Number of individuals: 1

Status: Unknown

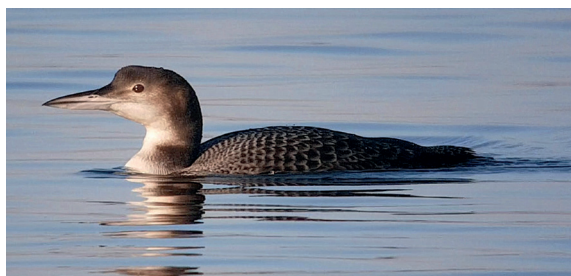
Site location: Fogliano Lake, Circeo National Park

(Latina), Italy

Dates of observation: From 30th December 2019 to 08th January 2020

Notes of the observers: Juvenile. The individual seemed to feed regularly and with success, suggesting a good overall body condition.

Reasons of interest: Scarce wintering species in Italy, this is the 8th record for the species in Latium.



3. Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

Observer: Salvatore Surdo (salvatore.surdo@unipa.it)

Category: Unusual number

Number of individuals: 19

Status: Migrating

Site location: Favignana island (Trapani), Italy

Date of observation: 11th October 2020

Notes of the observer: Observation of 19 Black storks in migration towards Marettimo island (Tra-

pani), Italy.

Reasons of interest: Possibly the largest flock seen in Italy.



4. Eurasian Thick-knee *Burhinus oedicnemus*

Observers: Daniele Ronconi, Giuliano Gerra (giuliano.gerra@alice.it), Franco Roscelli, Samuele Sereni

Category: Unusual breeding for location - Unusual phenology

Number of individuals: 4 (2 adults and 2 chicks)

Status: Breeding

Site location: Parma, Italy

Dates of observation: From 19th August 2020 to 1st September 2020

Notes of the observers: A pair of Eurasian Stone-curlews nested in a small hole in the asphalt of the parking lot of Parma Fairs. The nest with two eggs was discovered by the maintenance company on 19th August and the eggs hatched between 30th and 31st August. The parking lot had been closed for months due to the lockdown and some wild plants had grown around the hole.

Reasons of interest: The nest was built in an unusual location, on the asphalt, in a highly anthropized area. The hatching occurred unusually late, although similarly delayed breeding attempts are occasionally reported.

5. Arctic Jaeger *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Observer: Marco Pantalone

Category: Unusual behaviour

Number of individuals: 1

Status: Migrating

Site location: 200 metres offshore Metauro river mouth, Fano (Pesaro-Urbino), Italy

Date of observation: 18th August 2020

Notes of the observer: Hunting during migratory movement. The Arctic Jaeger attacked a flock of Barn Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*) flying over the sea, managing to isolate one individual. The prey, just before being attacked, made circular flights, managing to distance the aggressor more and more thanks to its greater agility, until it finally escaped. Then the Arctic Jaeger flew offshore.

Reasons of interest: Unusual hunting behaviour at the expense of migrating passerines.



6. Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Observers: Davide De Rosa, Ilaria Fozzi, Mauro Aresu, Gianluigi Caddeo

Category: Unusual number

Number of individuals: 87

Status: Wintering

Site location: North-West Sardinia (Sassari), Italy

Date of observation: 23rd December 2020

Reasons of interest: This is a very large number of wintering Red Kites in comparison to the previous 40 years, when a maximum of 40 birds were estimated in the whole Sardinia.

7. Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Observer: Marco Pantalone

Category: Unusual behaviour

Number of individuals: 1-2

Status: Breeding

Site location: Petriano (Pesaro-Urbino), Italy

Dates of observation: June-July-August 2019, July 2020

Notes of the observer: The individuals were observed several times hunting near some high street lamps (but never the two adults at the same time). They laid on a perch near the lamps since 20:30, waiting for them to light up and to attract numerous insects. In this way they manage not only to catch insects profusely, but to continue hunting even until 21.30, sometimes beyond the end of twilight and almost as darkness falls. Behaviour observed only in the nesting period, especially during chick-rearing.

Reasons of interest: Unusual behaviour of a diurnal species, observed hunting at dusk.

8. Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Observers: Giovanni La Grua, Salvatore Surdo (*salvatore.surdo@unipa.it*)

Category: Unusual breeding for location - Unusual phenology

Number of individuals: 4 (2 adults and 2 chicks)

Status: Breeding

Site location: Polizzi Generosa (Palermo), Italy

Date of observation: 12th July 2020

Notes of the observers: The nesting was probably successful because on the following date the presence of chicks at the nest was noted.

Reasons of interest: Nest built on a house, under

a balcony. Possibly one of the first cases of nesting of this species on man-made structures in an urban center.



9. Azure-winged Magpie *Cyanopica cyanus*

Observers: Letizia Campioni (*letiziacampioni@hotmail.com*), Ilaria Marengo

Category: Unusual behaviour

Number of individuals: 1

Status: Actively foraging (scavenging)

Site location: Piornal (40°07'26.2"N 5°50'52.3"W), Valle del Jerte (Cáceres), Spain

Dates of observation: 2nd December 2020

Notes of the observers: A flock of about 12 individuals has been observed scavenging on fresh meat (likely cow ribs and spine) left as baits on a rocky outcrop by a photographer, whose intention was to attract and photograph griffon vultures from a hide located nearby.

Reasons of interest: There is a shortage of published data on the feeding habits of Azure-winged Magpie in the Iberian Peninsula. According to the current literature, in southern Spain the winter diet of adult individuals comprises of insects and a large quantities

of plant matter, reaching a volume of 41% and 50% of total biomass. Although Azure-winged Magpies are considered facultative scavengers, only one publication has reported scavenging in natural environment in the Iberian Peninsula. This observation provides additional evidence of the scavenging foraging habits of the species. As suggested by other authors, understanding the role of facultative scavengers is relevant in the context of disease transmission, especially in a tuberculosis endemic area such as the Southern part of Central Spain.

10. Northern House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Observers: Luca Ambrosini, Andrea Ambrosini, Roberto Ambrosini (roberto.ambrosini@unimi.it)

Category: Unusual breeding for location

Number of individuals: Several

Status: Breeding

Site location: Alpe di Tires – Tierser Alpl (46°29'48.49"N, 11°37'58.22"E), (Bolzano), Italy

Dates of observation: 27th August 2015 and 7th August 2017

Notes of the observers: On 27th August 2015 we noted four nests under the roof of the South face of the Alpe di Tires – Tierser Alpl refuge at 2440 m a.s.l. Two nests hosted nestlings and we saw adults feeding them. On 7th August 2017 we found two more nests under the roof of the East face of the refuge, one of which with nestlings. Indeed, we saw one adult feeding nestlings. However, also the other nest was probably used for nesting in 2017, as suggested by the faeces accumulated on the floor under both nests. In 2017, only nests on the East face were intact, while those on the South face were broken. In 2017, we saw old broken nests on the West face of the refuge that we did not notice in 2015. According to the refuge keeper Mrs Judith Perathoner, colonization of the Alpe di Tires – Tierser Alpl refuge occurred in 2011, concomitantly with the demolition of the Dialer hotel (about 4.4 km from the refuge at 1700 m a.s.l.), which hosted a colony. Mrs Perathoner also reported that the species nested every year at the Alpe di Tires – Tierser Alpl refuge since then.

Reasons of interest: One of the highest nesting sites of the species on the Alps. The altitude of this colony at the Alpe di Tires – Tierser Alpl refuge is slightly lower than that of the highest nesting of Northern House Martin reported in literature (Grossglockner, Austria, 2450 m; Ausobsky 1961). However, nesting sites at even higher altitude has been recently reported. A slight shift toward higher altitudes of bird ranges has already been documented in the Alps. Reports of birds breeding at high altitude are therefore particularly interesting for assessing the effects of climate change on bird communities.

References - Ausobsky A. jr, 1961. Mehlschwalbe (*Delichon urbica*) brutvogel in 2450 m seehöhe. Egretta 4: 51-52.



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