

Columns - Rubriche

The 'Columns' section of *Avocetta* is dedicated to official communications on the activity of the CISO, rare-bird reports validated by the Italian Ornithological Committee (COI), updates on the status of the Italian avifauna, forums, book reviews and any other communication. Readers interested to propose new sections are invited to contact the Editorial Board.

The general purpose of the 'Columns' is to favour the communications between the CISO board and its members, with a focus on the initiatives promoted by the association itself.

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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. Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Observer: Antonino Barbera
(abarberamail@gmail.com)

Category: Species of unusual occurrence for a given area

Number of individuals: 1 (juvenile)

Status: wintering

Site location: Laguna di Tonnarella, Mazara del Vallo (Trapani), Italy

Date of observation: from 15th January 2019 to 10th February 2019

Reasons of interest: the species is considered vagrant in Sicily; this is the first record for western Sicily.

2. Goosander *Mergus merganser*

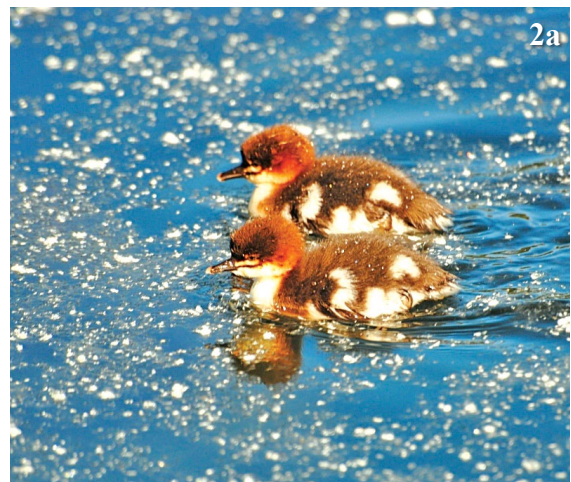
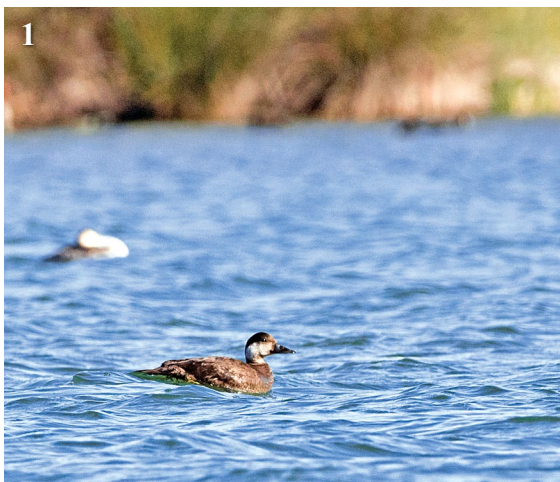
Observers: Sandro Formini, Marco Marina; compiled by: Giacomo Assandri (giacomo.assandri@gmail.com)

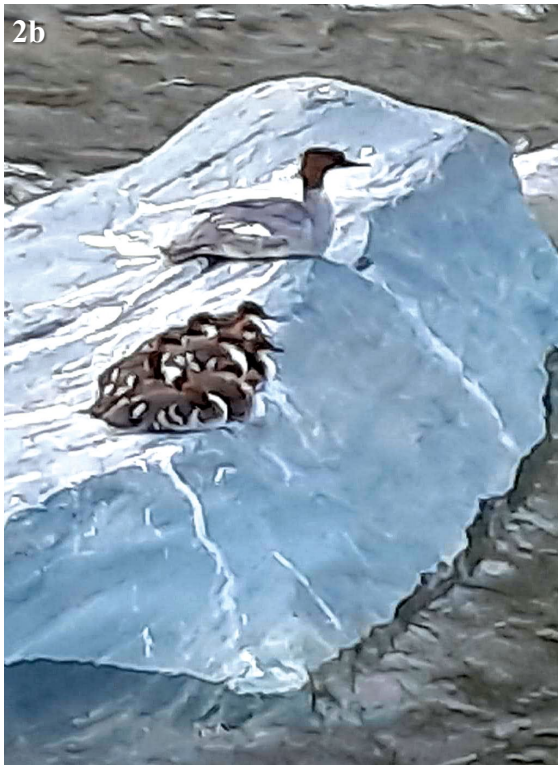
Category: unusual breeding for location

Number of individuals: site A) 2 pulli; site B) 11 pulli

Status: pulli unable to fly

Site location: A) Lago Sirio, Ivrea (Torino), Italy (WGS84:





45.485924 N; 7.884030 E; 270 m asl); B) Torrente Sangone near Devesio, Bruino (Torino), Italy (WGS84: 45.028701 N; 7.468610 E; 320 m asl)

Date of observation: A) from 13th to 14th May 2019; B) from 21st May 2019 to 30th June 2019

Reasons of interest: these two successful breeding attempts represent the first known reproduction events of the species in Torino Province, being the closest known breeding sites located along the Ticino Valley (approximately 60 km NE from site A and 120 NE from site B).

3. Species: Laughing Dove *Spilopelia senegalensis*

Observer: Antonino Barbera (abarberamail@gmail.com)

Category: unusual breeding for location

Number of individuals: 5 (4 adults and 1 recently fledged young)

Status: breeding

Site location: Mazara del Vallo (Trapani), Italy

Date of observation: 2nd June 2019

Notes of the observer: the recently fledged young was with the adults.

Reasons of interest: this is the first observation, for mainland Sicily, of a recently fledged Laughing Dove young.



4. Species: Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

Observers: Alfonso di Rienzo, Gaia Bazzi, Giacomo Assandri (giacomo.assandri@gmail.com)

Category: unusual breeding for location

Number of individuals: 8 (2 adults, 6 juveniles)

Status: breeding; chicks unable to fly and actively fed by adults (still in August)

Site location: Lago Nero, Cesana Torinese (Torino) (WGS84: 44.901298 N, 6.794815 E, 2025 m s.l.m.), Italy

Date of observation: from 20th June 2016 to 08th August 2016

Notes of the observers: in August the chicks appeared to be of considerably different size from each other.

Reasons of interest: this represents the highest successful breeding event of the species recorded in Piedmont, and likely one of the highest in Italy and in the entire Alpine region.

5. Species: Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Observers: Salvatore Surdo (salvatore.surdo@unipa.it), Andrea Cusmano

Category: unusual breeding for phenology

Number of individuals: 2

Status: breeding

Site location: Artificial lake "Arancio" (Agrigento) Italy

Date of observation: 5th August 2019

Notes of the observers: observation of two pulli of an estimated age of three weeks.

Reasons of interest: in the Palearctic Region, the breeding season of the Grey Heron usually lasts from January to June. A single brood is raised each year, although two broods have been occasionally recorded.



6. Species: Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Observers: Salvatore Surdo (salvatore.surdo@unipa.it),
Andrea Cusmano, Bruno Massa, Camillo Cusimano

Category: unusual breeding for location/nest features

Number of individuals: 8-10 breeding pairs

Status: breeding

Site location: La Scuola Island, Stagnone di Marsala (Trapani), Italy

Date of observation: 1st July 2019

Notes of the observers: observation of 8 -10 nesting pairs on Prickly pears (*Opuntia ficus-indica*) at La Scuola, the smallest of the Stagnone islands, uninhabited.

Reasons of interest: this plant species had never been listed among those used by the Little Egret for nesting.



7. Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

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

Category: unusual number

Number of individuals: 7

Status: wintering

Site location: Saline di Trapani (Trapani), Italy

Date of observation: 24th December 2018

Notes of the observer: a single group feeding in a semi-dry pond at the Saline di Trapani.

Reasons of interest: observation of a relevant number of wintering individuals of Little Ringed Plover. The species overwinters in Italy with few individuals.

8. Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

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

Category: unusual number

Number of individuals: 15-33

Status: wintering

Site location: Saline di Trapani (Trapani), Italy

Date of observation: 17th December 2018; 14th January 2019





Notes of the observer: observation of a group of 15 individuals on 17th December 2018 and a group of 33 individuals on 14th January 2019. In both occasions birds were feeding at the same semi-dry pond.

Reasons of interest: the species overwinters in Italy with very few individuals. These records represent the largest flocks ever recorded in Italy.

9. Barn owl *Tyto alba*

Observer: Deborah Ricciardi (debric@tin.it)

Category: unusual breeding for phenology

Number of individuals: 1 (chick)

Status: ca. 2-weeks old

Site location: Siracusa, Italy

Date of observation: 23th January 2019

Notes of the observer: the chick has been found out of its nest and delivered to the Recovery Center of Messina.

Reasons of interest: it is the earlier known laying date for the Palearctic Region. In fact, the presence of a 2-weeks old chick at the end of January indicates that the laying date dates back to December. In the Palearctic, the breeding season of the species generally



starts in March, though, in the Southern part of the Region, it could start as early as February.

10. Species: Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Observers: Salvatore Surdo (salvatore.surdo@unipa.it), Luigi Migliore, Bruno Massa

Category: unusual breeding for nest features

Number of individuals: a breeding pair with pulli

Status: breeding

Site location: Paceco (Trapani), Italy

Date of observation: from 20th May 2019 to 22th July 2019

Notes of the observers: observation of a Barn Owl pair nesting in a dry phreatic wall five meters below the ground level. The pulli were hidden in an overturned bucket.

Reasons of interest: it is the second known underground nest in Italy.

11. Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Observer: Giacomo Assandri (giacomo.assandri@gmail.com)

Category: unusual breeding attempt for location

Number of individuals: 2 (adult male and female)

Status: breeding attempt

Site location: Mezzocorona (Trento), Italy

Date of observation: from 29th April 2017 to 30th May 2017

Notes of the observer: nest material transportation, various mating events and prey exchanges between male and female were observed, although successful breeding was not confirmed. The presence of a pair during the breeding season was recorded also in 2015.

Reasons of interest: this represent the first breeding attempt of the species in Trento Province and one of the few cases in the Italian Alps. Additionally, the breeding site is somewhat surprising, being a very small (1.5 ha) reedbed remnant in an intensively cultivated vineyard landscape.

12. European Roller *Coracias garrulus*

Observers: Valentina Bergamini, Cristiano Mantovani, Nunzio Grattini (cristatus@virgilio.it)

Category: unusual breeding for location

Number of individuals: 2 adult and pulli in the nest

Status: breeding

Site location: Poggio Rusco (Mantua), Italy

Date of observation: 24th July 2019

Notes of the observers: the pair was seen entering the nest



several times with food; as we approached the nest, we heard the pulli calling. The nest was located in an old Great Spotted Woodpecker nest, in a tree at a height of about 4 m.

Reasons of interest: this is the first known breeding pair of the species for Mantua Province.

13. Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus*

Observer: Alessandro Berlusconi
(alessandro.berlusconi@live.it)

Category: unusual breeding for location

Number of individuals: 1 (adult male)

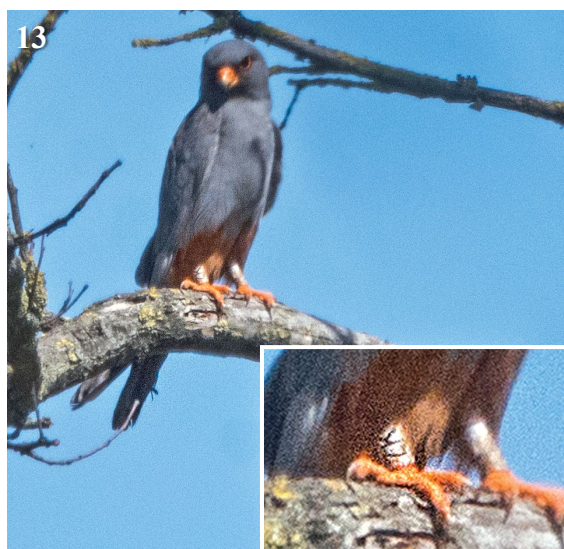
Status: breeding

Site location: province of Modena, Italy, location not given for conservation reasons

Date of observation: from 02nd June 2019 to 05th June 2019

Notes of the observer: colour-ringed individual, born in 2010 in Mezocsát (Maklári tanya) - (Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén – Hungary).

Reasons of interest: unusual observation of a Hungarian Red-footed Falcon breeding in Italy, more than 800 km far from the place of birth.



14. Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola*

Observer: Giacomo Assandri
(giacomo.assandri@gmail.com)

Category: species of unusual occurrence for a given area

Number of individuals: 2

Status: stop-over during migration

Site location: Le Coe, Mezzocorona (Trento), Italy

Date of observation: 29th April 2017

Notes of the observer: in the high grass along a ditch in a vineyard area.

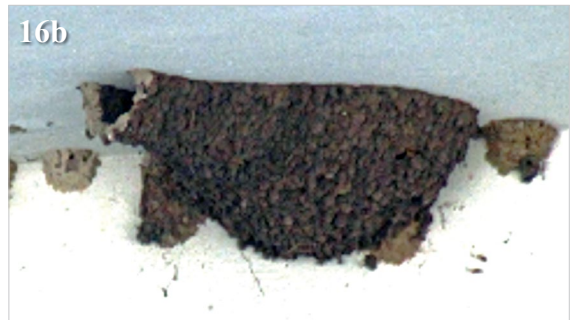
Reasons of interest: the species is a very rare migrant in Italy. Less than ten confirmed records for Trentino-Alto Adige Region.

15. Species: House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Observer: Andrea Cortese, Aldo Sarto; compiled by. Salvatore Surdo (salvatore.surdo@unipa.it)



Category: unusual chromatic anomaly
Number of individuals: 1
Status: unknown
Site location: Caltanissetta, Italy
Date of observation: 15th June 2019



Notes of the observer: recovery of a melanic individual.
Reasons of interest: unusual chromatic aberration for this species.

16. Species: Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*

Observers: Mohsen Kalboussi (mkalboussi@gmail.com)
Category: unusual breeding for location
Number of individuals: 2
Status: breeding
Site location: public plant nursery for the production of forest seedlings, situated East of Tabarka city, Tunisia.
Date of observation: from 14th June to 27th September 2019
Notes of the observers: observation of a pair of Red-rumped Swallow extracting mud from a small pond and building a nest.
Reasons of interest: in Tunisia, the Red-rumped Swallow occurs during migration only. This is the first report of a nesting pair for the Country.

17. Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*

Observer: Giacomo Assandri
(giacomo.assandri@gmail.com)
Category: species of unusual occurrence for a given area
Number of individuals: 1



Status: wintering

Site location: Torrente Avisio, Maso delle Roste, Trento, Italy (WGS84: 46.132304 N, 11.102247 E; 220 m asl)

Date of observation: from 24th January 2019 to 11th March 2019

Reasons of interest: it is the second record of the species

for Trentino-Alto Adige Region and represents one of the very few confirmed wintering events for Italy.

How to cite a single news:

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