

This column aims to collect a series of interesting observations, collected without time, space or species limitation, focusing on a limited series of category of interest.

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In this volume of Avocetta, you will find news items about the following species: Common Merganser (*Mergus merganser*), White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*), Eurasian Stone-curlew (*Burhinus oedicnemus*), Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*), Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*), Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*), Pallid Harrier (*Circus macrourus*), Monk Parakeet (*Myiopsitta monachus*)/Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis*), Zitting Cisticola (*Cisticola juncidis*), House Martin (*Delichon urbicum*)/Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), Isabelline Wheatear (*Oenanthe isabellina*).

Congratulations to all the dedicated observers whose contributions have enriched the content of this volume.

See more on Avocetta website: <https://riviste.unimi.it/index.php/avocetta/bird-news-column>

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1. COMMON MERGANSER *MERGUS MERGANSER*

Observers: Andrea Battisti
(andre.battisti@gmail.com)

Category: Species of unusual occurrence for a given area

Number of individuals: 1

Status: Unknown

Site location: Dora Baltea River, 389 m,

“Ponte del Borgo”, Montjovet (Aosta), Italy

Date of observation: 9th December 2018

Notes of the observers: The bird was below the “bridge of the Borgo”, it was an immature individual with female plumage with a white eye ring.

Reason of interest: First observation ever for the Aosta Valley region.

2. WHITE STORK *CICONIA CICONIA*

Observers: Agostino Brusco, Roberto Marchianò, Corrado Battisti (corradobattisti01@gmail.com)

Category: Unusual number

Number of individuals: 98

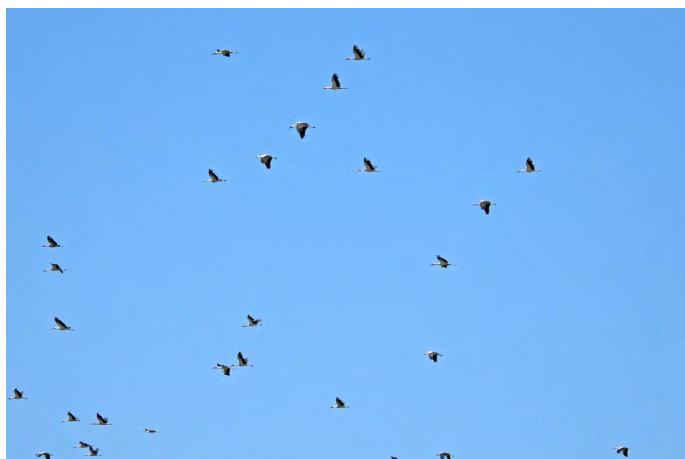
Status: Actively migrating

Site location: Mouth of the Crati river (Sibari, Cosenza; ZPS “Foce del fiume Crati” – IT9310044), Italy.

Date of observation: 27th April 2024.

Note of the observers: Birds landed to feed in the neighboring rice fields (included in the SPA IT9310052 “Casoni di Sibari”).

Reasons of interests: Unusual aggregation during the spring migration. Although this species breeds in this area from about a decade, records about migration along the Ionian coastlines of Italian peninsula are still limited.



3. EURASIAN STONE-CURLEW *BURHINUS OEDICNEMUS*

Observers: Simona Corbellini, Marco Pantalone (pantalone.marco@libero.it)

Category: Unusual number in wintering

Number of individuals: 32

Status: Wintering and actively migrating

Site location: Fields near Trebbia river, Piacenza (PC), Emilia Romagna, Italy.

Date of observation: November – December 2023, 13th February 2024

Notes of the observers: The area is near a Po River bend, where the species nests but

never wintered. Before wintering, 200 individuals roosted there. They left in mid-December, reappearing nearby on February.

Reasons for interest: Maximum gathering in wintering for the province of Piacenza

(PC) and one of the largest for Emilia Romagna region. Maximum pre migratory roost for the province of Piacenza.

4. BLACK TERN *CHLIDONIAS NIGER*

Observers: Marco Pantalone (pantalone.marco@libero.it), Simone Ottorino Bai

Category: Unusual number

Number of individuals: ≥ 515

Status: Actively migrating

Site location: Fano (PU), Marches, Italy. Three points of trophic activity along the coast: 1 km south of the mouth of the Metauro river, mouth of the Metauro river and former “shooting” beach.

Date of observation: 21st-28th April 2024

Notes of the observers: The northward migration began on April 21. By April 25, 515 individuals were counted. Numbers peaked on April 28 (>200) before declining. *Chlidonias hybrida* and *Chlidonias leucopterus* were also observed.

Reasons for interest: In numerical terms, unusual migratory movement for the coast of central Adriatic Italy.



5. BARN OWL *TYTO ALBA*

Observers: Alessandro Nardotto (alenard8@gmail.com), Cristian Bertolin

Category: Unusual behaviour

Number of individuals: 1

Status: Unknown

Site location: Portegrandi (Venice), Italy



6. SHORT-EARED OWL *ASIO FLAMMEUS* **Number of individuals:** 1

Observers: Andrea Battisti (andre.battisti@gmail.com)

Category: Species of unusual occurrence for a given area

Date of observation: 6th November 2024

Notes of the observers: A barn owl was filmed by a camera trap attempting to fish in a small wetland with several cyprinids.

Reasons for interest: Unusual hunting behaviour for a species that typically hunts on fields.

Status: Dead

Site location: Rocky outcrop/hill-top clearing in a chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) wood matrix, 438 m, Donnas (Aosta), Italy

Date of observation: 28th October 2023

Notes of the observers: The bird was identified from feathers on the ground, with chewing marks on the rachis suggesting predation or scavenging by a small to medium-sized mammal.

Reason of interest: The second confirmed observation of this species for the Aosta Valley region and an unusual habitat for the species in general.



7. PALLID HARRIER *CIRCUS MACROURUS*

Site location: Polesine Zibello (PR), Italy

Observers: Lucia Mattarozzi, Franco Roscelli, Paolo Zucca, Alessandro Pavesi (ale.pavesi18@gmail.com)

Category: Unusual phenology

Number of individuals: 1, female, first winter

Status: Wintering

Date of observation: 6th December 2023-23rd March 2024

Notes of the observers: It was observed repeatedly in an open rural area in the central Po Valley, dominated by crops (alfalfa, permanent pasture) interspersed with hedges, fallows, and farmhouses.

Reasons for interest: Pallid Harrier is an occasional wintering species in the north

of Italy. The observation reported represents the first winter record for Parma province.



8. MONK PARAKEET *MYIOPSITTA MONACHUS* & YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *LARUS MICHAELLIS*

Observer: Gloria Sabbatini
(gloria.sabbatini@istc.cnr.it)

Category: Unusual behaviour

Number of individuals: 1 adult Monk Parakeet and 2 Yellow-legged gulls (1 adult and 1 fledgling)

Status: Dead

Site location: Roof of the Museum of Zoology at Villa Borghese in Rome, Italy

Date of observation: 15th June 2023

Notes of the observers: A flying gull threw the Monk Parakeet onto a roof near its fledgling. The untouched corpse remained for an hour but disappeared the next day.

Reason for interest: Attacks on Monk Parakeets and interactions with native species are noteworthy, given the parakeet's success as an invader in urban and agricultural areas across Europe.



9. ZITTING CISTICOLA *CISTICOLA JUNCIDIS*

Observers: Pier Luigi Beraudo (igiberaudo@libero.it)

Category: Unusual breeding location

Number of individuals: 7-8 (1 male, a pair and 4-5 chick)

Status: Breeding

Site location: Bene Vagienna (Cuneo), Italy

Date of observation: 12th-14th September 2024

Notes of observers: Confirmation of nesting, after subsequent observations since July.

Reason of interest: first breeding event for the specie in Cuneo Province (Piedmont, Italy)



10. COMMON HOUSE MARTIN *DELICHON URBICUM* & BARN SWALLOW *HIRUNDO RUSTICA*

Observers: Carl Soulsbury (csoulsbury@lincoln.ac.uk)

Category: Unusual behaviour

Number of individuals: 4

Status: Nest building

Site location: Oulanka Field Research Station, Finland (66°22'N, 29°19'E)

Date of observation: 23rdJune 2024

Notes of the observers: House Martins and Barn Swallows were observed plucking feathers and down from a dead Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*) fledgling.

Reasons for interest: Feather collecting directly from carcasses observed for a few species. This is first observation of collecting feathers from a dead bird for House Martin and Barn Swallow.



**11. ISABELLINE WHEATEAR *OENAN-
THE ISABELLINA***

Observers: Marco Pantalone (pantalone.marco@libero.it), Francesca Passeri

Category: Species of unusual occurrence for a given area

Number of individuals: 1

Status: Actively migrating

Site location: Petriano (PU), Marches, Italy.

Date of observation: 26th-27th October 2022

Notes of the observers: Observed for two days feeding on cleared land, located at 245 m a.s.l. and 20 km from the Adriatic Sea. It is among the most inland sightings in peninsular Italy.

Reasons of interest: First observation for Marches region.

