

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.

In this volume of Avocetta, you will find news items about the following species: Greater Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus roseus*), Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*), Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*), Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*), Griffon Vulture (*Gyps fulvus*), Three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides tridactylus*), Yellow-billed Blue Magpie (*Urocissa flavirostris*), White-throated Dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*), and Common Stonechat (*Saxicola torquatus*).

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>

How to cite a single news:

Barbera A. Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra* (N. 1). In: Bazzi G. (ed.), 2019. BIRD NEWS. Avocetta 43 (2): 169. <https://doi.org/10.30456/AVO.2019207>

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## 1. GREATER FLAMINGO *PHOENICOPTERUS ROSEUS*

**Observers:** Iacopo Burattini, Angelo Giuliani, Marco Pantalone (pantalone.marco@libero.it)

**Category:** Species of unusual occurrence for a given area, Unusual rescue record

**Number of individuals:** 9

**Status:** Actively migrating / Dead

**Site location:** Monte Catria, Frontone (Pesaro-Urbino, Marche), Italy

**Date of observation:** 14th-15th March 2025

**Notes of the observers:** A flock of this species was hit by a storm during migration over the Apennines. The following day, the birds were found: seven had died after colliding with rocky walls at 1500 m a.s.l. The two survivors were recovered by the Marches Wildlife Rescue Center (CRAS) and later released at the Saline di Cervia (Ravenna, Italy).

**Reason of interest:** Uncommon causes of death. One of the two survivors had a metal and color ring (CZTS), applied when it was a flightless chick in 1997, in Bouches-du-Rhône (France).



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## 2. GLOSSY IBIS *PLEGADIS FALCINELLUS*

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

**Category:** Unusual number

**Number of individuals:** 49

**Status:** Actively migrating

**Site location:** Stagno Santa Rita and Lago Vicini, Fano (Pesaro-Urbino, Marche), Italy

**Date of observation:** 15th April 2025

**Note of the observers:** In the days preceding the observation, there had been heavy rainfall, which ended on the night of April 14. Some individuals had been present in the area for several days and remained there in the days that followed.

**Reasons of interests:** This was the highest number recorded in the Marche region, at least in the 21st century.

### 3. NIGHT HERON *NYCTICORAX* *NYCTICORAX*

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

**Category:** Unusual number

**Number of individuals:** 147

**Status:** Actively migrating

**Site location:** Stagno Santa Rita and Lago Vicini, Fano (Pesaro-Urbino, Marche), Italy

**Date of observation:** 15th April 2025

**Notes of the observers:** In the days preceding the observation, there had been heavy rainfall, which ended on the night of April 14. Some individuals had been present in the area for several days and remained there in the days that followed

**Reasons for interest:** This was the highest number recorded in the Marche region, at least in the 21st century.

### 4. PURPLE HERON *ARDEA PURPUREA*

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

**Category:** Unusual number

**Number of individuals:** 27

**Status:** Actively migrating

**Site location:** Stagno Santa Rita and Lago Vicini, Fano (Pesaro-Urbino, Marche), Italy.

**Date of observation:** 15th April 2025

**Notes of the observers:** In the days preceding the observation, there had been heavy rainfall, which ended on the night of April 14. Some individuals had been present in the area for several days and remained there in the days that followed

**Reasons for interest:** This was the highest number recorded in the Marche region, at least in the 21st century.

### 5. SHORT-TOED OWL *ASIO FLAMMEUS*

**Observers:** Davide Aldi (davide.aldi@gmail.com), Davide Meggiorini

**Category:** Unusual rescue record

**Number of individuals:** 1

**Status:** Actively migrating

**Site location:** Mantova (Lombardia), Italy

**Date of observation:** 13th March 2025

**Notes of the observers:** An adult female found in the city center of Mantua died after rescue; toxicology confirmed brodi-

facoum poisoning, supporting the clinical and pathological suspicion of rodenticide exposure.

**Reasons for interest:** The Short-eared Owl, strictly protected, faces growing risk from rodenticide poisoning; 11 of 14 raptors submitted to CRAS tested positive, highlighting the urgent need for tighter regulations.



**6. GRIFFON VULTURE *GYPS FULVUS***

**Observers:** Maurizio Saltarelli, Marco Pantalone (pantalone.marco@libero.it)

**Category:** Unusual number

**Number of individuals:** 24

**Status:** Actively migrating

**Site location:** Furlo gorges, Fermignano (Pesaro-Urbano, Marche), Italy

**Date of observation:** 25-26th April 2025

**Notes of the observers:** Birds, both adults and immatures, arrived above the gorge at 5 p.m. and perched on the pinnacles and highest rocks. The local pair of Golden Eagles *Aquila chrysaetos* did not show any aggressive behavior toward them. On the morning of 26 April, five individuals were still present.

**Reason of interest:** The highest number observed in the Northern Apennines.

**7. THREE-TOED WOODPECKER  
*PICOIDES TRIDACTYLUS ALPINUS***

**Observers:** Pierandrea Brichetti (pierbrichetti@gmail.com), Stefano Sandrini

**Category:** Unusual breeding location

**Number of individuals:** 2 adult birds and 2 juveniles

**Status:** Breeding

**Site location:** Pezzo di Ponte di Legno, upper Camonica Valley (Brescia, Lombardia), Italy

**Date of observation:** 29th September 2022, between late March and early July 2024 (active nest found on 17th June) and in May-June 2025

a steep slope with S-SW exposure with the presence of large clearings with many trees on the ground, caused by the passage of the "Vaia" storm at the end of October 2018. The nest-hole was excavated on a dead spruce (c. 15 cm in diameter at the height of the entrance) at c. 2.60 m above the ground, with SW exposure. Considering that the two young birds fledged on 29 June, the start of egg laying can be dated between May 20th and 27th. Breeding was successfully repeated in May-June 2025 in the same nest.

**Reasons for interest:** First certain case of nesting in the Province of Brescia and one of the rare cases recorded in Lombardy, confirming the south-west expansion of this woodpecker.

**Notes of the observers:** A pair successfully nested in a mature forest of *Picea abies* and *Larix decidua* at 1,730 m asl on



*One of the two young birds one day before fledging*

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## **8. YELLOW-BILLED BLUE MAGPIE** ***UROCISSA FLAVIROSTRIS***

**Observer:** Tiziano Londei (londei.tiziano@gmail.com), Giuliana Marzi

**Category:** Unusual behaviour

**Number of individuals:** 1

**Status:** Unknown

**Site location:** Dobato, Nepal (N 27.072°, E 88.005°)

**Date of observation:** 31st March 2025

**Notes of the observers:** This individual fed for about one minute on the nectar of the tree rhododendron *Rhododendron arboreum*, one second per flower, then showing a lot of pollen stuck to the feathers around its bill. It was part of up to six conspecifics used to congregate for human food scraps near a homestay close to an extensive oak and rhododendron forest.

**Reason for interest:** This is the first report of nectarivory for this omnivorous, though chiefly carnivorous, species, and the second for its genus (Chand et al. 2022. *Scientia Forestalis*, 50, e3783).



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**9. WHITE-THROATED DIPPER *CINCLUS***

**Date of observation:** 15th December 2024

**Observers:** Redaelli Giuseppe (giuseppe.redaellibw@gmail.com)

**Notes of observers:** An active nest was found, and two juveniles fledged between 26 and 28 December 2024.

**Category:** Unusual breeding for timing

**Reason of interest:** This represents an unusual breeding period for the species.

**Number of individuals:** 2 juveniles

**Status:** Chicks still unable to fly

**Site location:** Robbiate (Lecco, Lombardia), Italy; 195 m a.s.l.

**10. COMMON STONECHAT *SAXICOLA TORQUATUS***

**Observers:** Luigi Barraco, Salvatore Surdo (salvatore.surdo@unipa.it)

**Category:** Unusual chromatic aberration

**Number of individuals:** 1

**Status:** Foraging

**Site location:** Saltpan of Trapani (Trapani, Sicily), Italy

**Date of observation:** 20th January 2025

**Notes of the observers:** an individual with a 'Dilution' colour aberration, caused by a defect in melanin deposition in the feathers.

**Reasons for interest:** colour aberration.

