

# Columns

<https://doi.org/10.30456/AVO.2021207>

Avocetta 45: 195-198 (2021)

## 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/>

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. Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

**Observers:** Giovanni Picone, Rosario Balestrieri  
([rosario.balestrieri@szn.it](mailto:rosario.balestrieri@szn.it))

**Category:** Unusual breeding location

**Number of individuals:** 4 (2 adults, 2 chicks)

**Status:** Breeding

**Site location:** Calore River, Benevento, Italy

**Date of observation:** 14<sup>th</sup> April 2020

**Notes of the observers:** The pair and the chicks subsequently moved to the nearby Sabato river, Benevento, Italy. On 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021 three adults were observed at Sabato river.

**Reasons of interest:** Although the Egyptian Goose is considered a regular breeding species in Italy, nesting attempts are mainly concentrated in the north of the Country. This is likely the first successful breeding event in Campania.

### 2. Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

**Observer:** Michele Caldonazzi  
([michele\\_caldonazzi@hotmail.com](mailto:michele_caldonazzi@hotmail.com))

**Category:** Unusual breeding location

**Number of individuals:** 11

**Status:** Breeding

**Site location:** Colbricon Lakes in the Lagorai mountain chain (Trento) (1922 m a.s.l.), Italy

**Date of observation:** 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021

**Notes of the observer:** In summer 2021 two Little Grebe pairs nested at the Colbricon Lakes, the highest

reproductive site in Trentino, known since 2012 (Partel com. pers.).

**Reasons of interest:** This represents the highest nesting site currently known for Trentino and one of the highest of the entire Italian Alps. Its interest is increased by the continuity with which the site, in a strictly sub-alpine environmental context, has been used by the species since its first settlement in 2012.

### 3. Eurasian Thick-knee *Burhinus oedicnemus*



**Observers:** Andrea Cairone, Salvatore Surdo  
([salvatore.surdo@unipa.it](mailto:salvatore.surdo@unipa.it))

**Category:** Unusual breeding phenology

**Number of individuals:** 2 chicks

**Status:** Breeding

**Site location:** Roccapalumba (Palermo), Italy

**Date of observation:** 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021

**Notes of the observers:** Observation of two chicks of about three weeks, killed by a dog.

**Reasons of interest:** Late breeding. Considering 24-27 days of incubation and about three weeks of age of the chicks, the brood would have been laid at the end of August. Laying usually takes place from April to July, rarely to August. Generally, a single brood is raised each year, but two broods are not uncommon.

#### 4. Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dryobates minor*



**Observers:** Nicola Bonassin

(n.bonassin@gmail.com), Alessandro Pavesi

**Category:** Unusual behaviour

**Number of individuals:** 1 female

**Status:** Unknown

**Site location:** Sant'Anna, Lucca, Italy (43.851778, 10.475094)

**Date of observation:** 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021

**Notes of the observers:** Foraging on maize stems infested by European corn borer *Ostrinia nubilalis*. Despite the distance that made impossible to identify the prey at the moment, several maize stems were later checked and found infested by this widely distributed agricultural pest.

**Reasons of interest:** Outside the breeding season, the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker is known to extract insects from maize stems. Nevertheless, to date only five species of woodpeckers, not including the Lesser

Spotted Woodpecker, are reported eating *O. nubilalis* larvae: *Dendrocopos major*, *Picus viridis*, *Picoides pubescens*, *Picoides villosus*, *Dendrocopos syriacus*.

#### 5. Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*



**Observers:** Nicola Petruzzella, Rosario Balestrieri

(rosario.balestrieri@szn.it)

**Category:** Unusual breeding location

**Number of individuals:** 2 adults and 3-4 juveniles per year

**Status:** Breeding

**Site location:** Suburb of Molfetta (Bari), Italy (41.19351, 16.61813)

**Dates of observation:** From spring 2017 to spring 2021

**Notes of observers:** Breeding in a colonial nest of Monk Parakeet *Myiopsitta monachus* formed by ca. 10 pairs on the top of a coniferous tree 8 m high. The pair successfully reproduced every year. The two species did not show any forms of interaction, apart from the temporary movement of the parakeets

settled near the nesting hole of the kestrels when these approached to the nest.

**Reasons of interest:** The Monk Parakeet nests are often used by other vertebrate species, including the Common Kestrel. However, to the best of our knowledge, this is the first documented occurrence of Common Kestrel breeding in a Monk Parakeet nest in Italy.

## 6. Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*



**Observers:** Andrea De Palma, Rosario Balestrieri (rosario.balestrieri@szn.it)

**Category:** Unusual behaviour

**Number of individuals:** 1 female

**Status:** Breeding

**Site location:** Pulsano (Taranto), Italy (40.364633, 17.3417744)

**Dates of observation:** From 19<sup>th</sup> October 2019 to date

**Notes of the observers:** Found injured at Torre Guaceto (Brindisi, Italy), ringed and released on 21<sup>th</sup> March 2019 at Santo Spirito-Bitetto (Bari, Italy) after being treated at the Bitetto Regional Wildlife Center. On 19<sup>th</sup> October 2019 it was observed at Pulsano, ca. 122 Km from the release site. Since then, it inhabited the area. It successfully reproduced in 2020 (2 fledged chick) and 2021 (1 fledged chick) and effectively expelled both male and female conspecifics from its territory. Due to wing injuries, it hunts only from a perch, usually a pine tree *Pinus pinea*. Perches are distributed over a range of about 2 km around the

nest. The prey includes lizards, pigeon/dove chicks, small rodents, large insects (e.g. orthopterans and beetles).

**Reasons of interest:** Since the Common Kestrel usually adopt the “hovering” technique to hunt, individuals who have reported severe wing injuries that prevent them to hover are often deemed to be non-releasable after treatment. This report contradicts this common assumption.

## 7. Northern House Martin *Delichon urbicum*



**Observer:** Roberto Brembilla (bremby.var@gmail.com)

**Category:** Unusual breeding location

**Number of individuals:** 9 occupied nests, 4 partially destroyed nests

**Status:** Breeding

**Site location:** Passo dello Stelvio, Bormio (Sondrio), Italy (2758 m a.s.l.)

**Date of observation:** 30<sup>th</sup> July 2021

**Notes of the observer:** The colony has been active for at least 9 years.

**Reasons of interest:** This is one of the highest breeding colonies of the species in the Alps.

#### 8. Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*



**Observers:** Salvatore Surdo (salvatore.surdo@unipa.it), Davide D'Amico, Luigi Barraco, Giovanni Spinella

**Category:** Unusual phenology

**Number of individuals:** 1-5

**Status:** Wintering

**Site location:** Bosco Scorace (Trapani), Italy

**Dates of observation:** 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> December 2014, 11<sup>th</sup> January 2015

**Notes of the observers:** A single individual observed on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2014 and on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2015; at least five individuals together observed on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2014. On 11<sup>th</sup> January, at the same location where 4 of the 5 individuals were observed on 12<sup>th</sup> December, many branches of oak trees *Quercus* sp. were found broken due to a snowstorm. This unusual meteorological event has likely negatively affected the wintering of the individuals.

**Reasons of interest:** The Yellow-browed Warbler is an uncommon wintering species in Italy. Moreover, this probably represent one of the largest known concentrations of wintering Yellow-browed Warblers in Europe.

#### 9. Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans*



**Observers:** Davide D'Amico, Salvatore Surdo (salvatore.surdo@unipa.it)

**Category:** Unusual phenology

**Number of individuals:** 1

**Status:** Wintering

**Site location:** Palermo, Italy

**Dates of observation:** From 30<sup>th</sup> December 2012 to 13<sup>th</sup> January 2013

**Notes of observers:** A single individual observed in six different dates in an urban garden in Palermo.

**Reason of interest:** Unusual wintering species. First wintering occurrence reported for Sicily.