

## 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](mailto: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 15<sup>th</sup> January 2019 to 10<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019; B) from 21<sup>st</sup> May 2019 to 30<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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:** 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](mailto: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 20<sup>th</sup> June 2016 to 08<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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:** 5<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:salvatore.surdo@unipa.it)),  
Andrea Cusmano, Bruno Massa, Camillo Cusimano

**Category:** unusual breeding for location/nest features

**Number of individuals:** 8-10 breeding pairs

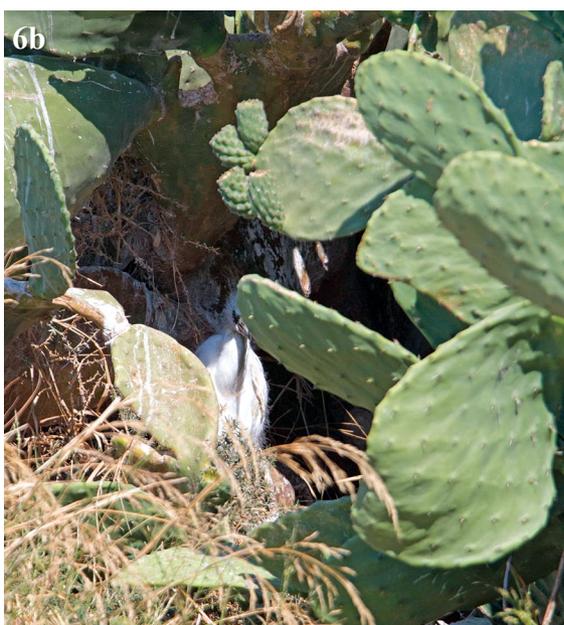
**Status:** breeding

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

**Date of observation:** 1<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto:salvatore.surdo@unipa.it))

**Category:** unusual number

**Number of individuals:** 7

**Status:** wintering

**Site location:** Saline di Trapani (Trapani), Italy

**Date of observation:** 24<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:salvatore.surdo@unipa.it))

**Category:** unusual number

**Number of individuals:** 15-33

**Status:** wintering

**Site location:** Saline di Trapani (Trapani), Italy

**Date of observation:** 17<sup>th</sup> December 2018; 14<sup>th</sup> January 2019





**Notes of the observer:** observation of a group of 15 individuals on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2018 and a group of 33 individuals on 14<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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:** 23<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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 20<sup>th</sup> May 2019 to 22<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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 29<sup>th</sup> April 2017 to 30<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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:** 24<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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 02<sup>nd</sup> June 2019 to 05<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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

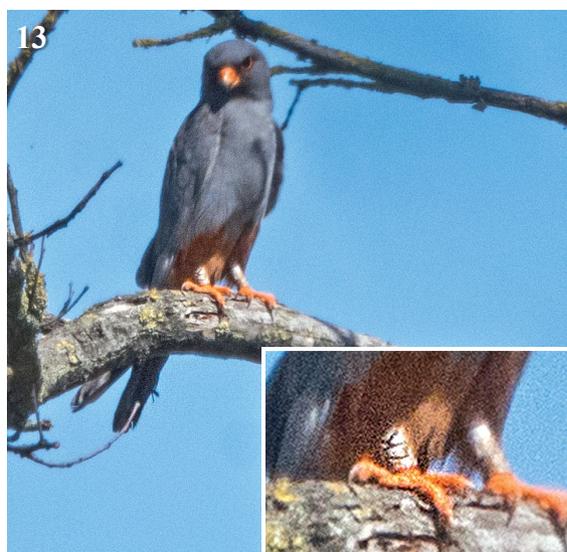
**Date of observation:** 29<sup>th</sup> April 2017

**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](mailto:salvatore.surdo@unipa.it))





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



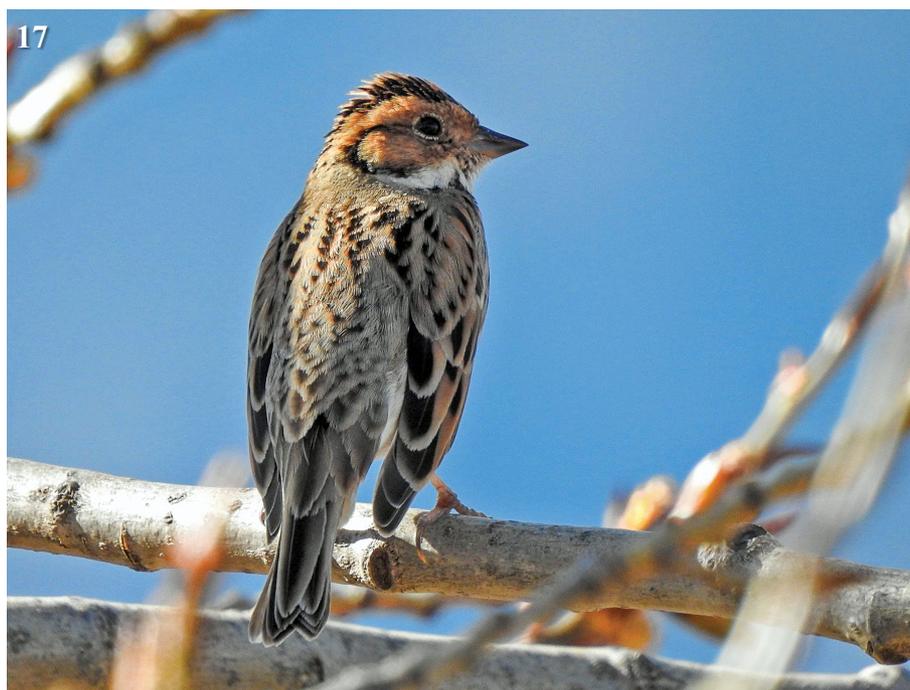
**Notes of the observer:** recovery of a melanic individual.  
**Reasons of interest:** unusual chromatic aberration for this species.

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

**Observers:** Mohsen Kalboussi ([mkalboussi@gmail.com](mailto: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 14<sup>th</sup> June to 27<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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 24<sup>th</sup> January 2019 to 11<sup>th</sup> 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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