

## Birds of Prey (*Falconiformes*) in National Park Central Balkan

Dimitar N. NANKINOV & Nikolay D. NANKINOV

### Summary

Birds of Prey in National Park Central Balkan were recorded along the whole extent from west to east and all of the published information about the nesting in the region was generalised. 29 species were recorded. The population of the Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*, Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*, Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*, Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* increase their number. There is progress in the number of the Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*, which is not so numerous. The lack of Vultures has a favourable influence upon the Golden Eagle and the Long-legged Buzzard. On the other hand, the rapid increase in the number of these two species slows down the Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca* and the Saker *Falco cherrug*. The nesting of the Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus* in the next ten years is possible. This process can be precipitated if a consistent feeding with carcasses starts near the nesting places or in the reserves. This will lead to the return of the other Vultures and the carrion birds in the fauna of Central Balkan.

### Zusammenfassung

Die Greifvögel im Nationalpark Zentralbalkan wurden in dessen Gesamtausdehnung von Westen nach Osten beobachtet und alle veröffentlichten Informationen über ihr Brüten in dieser Region wurden in großen Zügen dargestellt. 29 Arten wurden beobachtet. Die Populationen des Steinadlers *Aquila chrysaetos*, Adlerbussards *Buteo rufinus*, Habichts *Accipiter gentilis*, Turmfalken *Falco tinnunculus* vergrößern sich. Es gibt eine Zunahme beim Wanderfalken *Falco peregrinus*, der nicht so zahlreich ist. Das Fehlen von Geiern wirkt sich positiv auf den Steinadler und den Adlerbussard aus. Andererseits beeinträchtigt die rasche Zunahme dieser zwei Arten den Kaiseradler *Aquila heliaca* und den Würgfalken *Falco cherrug*. Das Nisten des Gänsegeiers *Gyps fulvus* ist in den nächsten zehn Jahren möglich. Dieser Prozeß kann beschleunigt werden, wenn konsequentes Füttern mit Kadavern in den möglichen Brutgebieten oder in den Reservaten beginnt. Das wird zur Rückkehr der anderen Geier und aasfressender Vögel in die Fauna des Zentralbalkans führen.

## 1. Introduction

Stara planina, which stretches out from west to east and separates the territory of Bulgaria into northern and southern parts, is rich in birds of prey. Five years ago National Park Central Balkan was founded on an area of 73 000 hectares in the most preserve from anthropogenic influence parts. It includes vast territories of the alpine and the wooded zone, the best Bulgarian reserves (Boatin, Caricina, Kozia stena, Steneto, Stara reka, Djendem, Peeshti skali, Sokolna) and the vast prepark areas. One of the purposes of this article is to find out all old and present finds of the birds of prey, in order to make the searching of ways for their return and conservation easier in the Central Balkan fauna.

## 2. Materials and methods

Materials for the article were collected in July 1996, during the exploration of Central Balkan, along its extent from west to east, and also from numerous visits in the prepark zone during the previous decades. All the publications about the birds of prey in the region were found and used, for example: HRISTOVIC (1894), REISER (1894), FLOERICKE (1913), DRENSKI (1934), BALAT (1962), BAUMGART (1966, 1971, 1989), MICHEV (1968), MICHEV ET AL. (1984), DONCHEV (1974, 1977), SPIRIDONOV (1974, 1977, 1982, 1983, 1985), SPIRIDONOV & MILEVA (1988), SPIRIDONOV ET AL. (1983), ROBERTS (1979), POPOV (1980), LAMBUROV (1984, 1985), NANKINOV (1985, 1994), GEORGIEV & ALEKSANDROV (1988) and so on. We try

to show the information about every species in chronological order, to make clear how the observation was made and the participation of each ornithologist in it.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Black Kite

#### *Milvus migrans* BODDAERT

It is a bird, which penetrates in the prepark and the wooded zones of Central Balkan. At the end of the past century it was recorded in the mountain over Teteven, near Han Karnare and the town of Karlovo (REISER 1894). One bird was shot on 29.XI.1954 over Pirdop, another bird was recorded near the village of Sokolicha (Karlovo) on 17.IV.1970, a pair was observed near the dam lake „Koprinka“ on 7.VII.1974 (DONCHEV 1974, 1977), 3 birds flying west were recorded over the village of Klisura on 15.III.1978 (ROBERTS 1979).

### 3.2. Lammergeier

#### *Gypaetus barbatus* HABLIZL

In the past it lived in the rocky massifs and the abysses in the alpine zone, as well as in the lower parts of Stara planina. The first written reports about the Lammergeier in Central Balkan and in the neighbouring regions are from REISER (1894), who during 1893 watched 2 specimen, on 29.V. on the summit of Etropolevska Baba, on 9. and 12.VI. a brooding bird over the rocky gorge near Karlovo, on 14.VI. 2 specimen in the Kalofer mountain and on the same day a

### Map of the National Park Central Balkan

- · — · — hired ridge of Stara Planina mountains
- borders of National Park
- ..... borders of biosphere reserves
- - - - - prepark zone



very old bird on the summit of Botev. Almost at the same time a Lammergeier was recorded near the summit of Rusalka (HRISTOVIC 1894). ZANKES (1932) writes about many nesting pairs in Stara planina and Rodopi, despite at the beginning of the century poisons (strychnine) were beginning to be used against wolves and common red foxes. The number of the Lammergeiers strongly declined. In 1928 - 1930 Alexi PETROV repeatedly recorded the species near Kalofer (BOEV 1985), and in 1935 it was recorded between the summits of Vejen and Klisura (OSININ 1978). In the later publications (POPOV 1980; STOILOV 1984) we read that in the reserve Djendem „very rarely a Lammergeier can be met“. SPIRIDONOV (1983) includes the species in the alpine and subalpine faunistic complexes. The last observation of the Lammergeier in Stara planina was to the east of the observed region, in the pass of Haimbuaz (by the village of Pchelinovo), where on 3.X.1990 Svetlan KIRILOV watched a bird, standing on the rocks.

### 3.3. Egyptian Vulture

#### *Neophron percnopterus* L.

It inhabited Central Balkan from its lowest to the most upper parts. During June 1893 it was observed on the rocks, near Teteven, Ribaricha, Karlovo and the summit of Botev (REISER 1894); on 4.VI. and 12.VII.1962 by the hut Ray and town Zlaticha (MICHEV 1968); during May - July 1962 - 1971 over the hut Ray and Klisura (DONCHEV 1974). It breeds in the reserve Steneto (MAJDRAKOVA 1982; STOILOV 1984). There an adult and an immature bird were recorded on 14.IX.1987. It is

considered as: „vanished“ from Boatin, Caricina and from the limy rocks over the hamlet Briazovo, although during the late summer it visits the high mountain pastures of the place called Patjovoto (SPIRIDONOV 1982; SPIRIDONOV ET. AL. 1983; SPIRIDONOV & MILEVA 1988). Near nesting places (to the north-east from the observed region) are preserved near Preobrajenski monastery (a pair in 1995) and on the rocks over Drjanovski monastery (a pair in 1979).

### 3.4. Black Vulture

#### *Aegypius monachus* L.

Once it has been nesting in the territory of Central Balkan. It was recorded in the region of the Trojanski pass (REISER 1894) and during the thirties. It was a frequent species in the low parts of the Trojanski Balkan. It was also nesting in the alpine zone, on the rocky places around the summit of Kozia stena and Vanchite (DRENSKI 1934). It was breeding in the reserve Steneto till 1958 (SPIRIDONOV & MILEVA 1988).

### 3.5. Griffon Vulture

#### *Gyps fulvus* HABLIZL

It has been nesting in Central Balkan two or three decades ago. After that separate specimen visits the region. It is possible to revive the old nesting places of the Griffon Vulture. We can consider their location from the published until present information. 3 - 4 pairs were recorded on 2.VI.1893 on the rocks over Teteven, and later - over Karlovo and Trojanski pass (5.VI.1893) (REISER 1894). It was a common bird in the fauna of the rocks and the big rocky places over the venerable beech woods in the Trojanski



Balkan (DRENSKI 1934). It was recorded on 15.VI.1951 near the summit of Rusalka (DONCHEV 1974), during 1952 30 specimen between Zlaticha and Pirdop (BAUMGART 1989), 30.IX.1957 on the rocks under the summit of Botev (BALAT 1962). Over the village of Ribaricha, in the high parts of the mountain, Griffon Vultures were nesting till 1955 - 1960. It vanished from the fauna of the reserves Boatin and Caricina. During August 1965 2 specimen were recorded among a flock of sheep on the summit of Jumruka; one bird was killed in the autumn of 1967 on the summit of Goljama shalia; 2 birds were feeding on a dead sheep during October 1970; in the spring and summer of 1970 and 1971 a pair was in the place of Patjovoto. During the nesting period of 1972 a fresh feather from a Griffon Vulture was found on the north slope of the summit of Vejen (SPIRIDONOV 1982). In Central Balkan Griffon Vultures were observed on 19.IX.1984 - 2 specimen; 1987 on two places during the nesting period; in 1986 and 1987, and on 23.VI.1987 a one-year-old bird was caught near the village of Mirkovo (JANKOV & PROFIROV 1991). It is reported from the reserve Steneto (MAJDRAKOVA 1982), that some shepherds said that in 1990 2 birds were observed over the rocks of the reserve Kozia stena.

### 3.6. Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus* L.

A male bird was recorded near the breeding-pool of the village of Sokolicha on 18.IV.1970 (DONCHEV 1977) and another male near Zlaticha on 19.VII.1996.

### 3.7. Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* GMELIN

It is a rare bird in the prepark zone. It was sighted on 30.X. near the village of Ribaricha (SPIRIDONOV 1982). On chasing Quails *Coturnix coturnix* it is possible this bird is able to penetrate meadows, pastures and cultivated fields inside of the mountains.

### 3.8. Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* L.

A male bird was recorded in the reserve Steneto, to the south of the mountain ridge on 3.XI.1986 (SPIRIDONOV & MILEVA 1988). The appearance of this species is more frequent in the prepark zone, on both sides of Stara planina, during its migrations and wintering, from autumn to spring. It winters regularly on the breeding pools of the village of Sokolicha (sometimes up to 3 - 4 specimen).

### 3.9. Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* L.

It rarely occurs along the reservoirs in the prepark zone of the mountain. It is regular only during spring on the breeding-pools near the village of Sokolicha. We watched it on 1.IV.1986 by the dam lake Koprinka.

### 3.10. Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* L.

It is a common nesting bird in the woods of Central Balkan, as during the winter its number increases near the villages and in the low parts of the mountain 1 specimen with a prey was recorded on

6.VI.1962 on the mountain over Kalofer; at the end of April 1969 near Klisura a nest with 3 eggs was found. It was built on a black pine at a height of 7 m; 11.X.1971 near the summit of Botev (DONCHEV 1974). It is a regular bird in the reserve Steneto. A pair is nesting in a beech wood in the place called Stanchev popugar. It has 700 - 800 hectares hunting territory at 1 000 - 1 600 m altitude. A second pair nests in a pine forest on the rocky slopes at 1 400 m altitude. There a male was feeding its young on 7.V.1987. It is possible for a third pair to be nesting in the north part of the catchment area of the river Beli Vit. It nests in the reserve Caricina and Chemirut, and also in the reserve Boatın (a nest on a high beech) (SPIRIDONOV 1982; SPIRIDONOV ET AL. 1983; SPIRIDONOV & MILEVA 1988). According to SPIRIDONOV ET AL. (1987) in the territory of Caricina 2 pairs nest (with hunting territory not bigger than 1 200 - 1 500 hectares), which cannot be found over the upper border of the wood. We observed a migrating Sparrowhawk together with a flock of Swallows *Hirundo rustica* and House Martins *Delichon urbica* on 24.VII.1996 on the saddle between the summits of Maluk and Goljam Kupa.

### 3.11. Goshawk

#### *Accipiter gentilis* L.

Before in connection with its persecution it was recorded as very rare for the region. It was met near Han Karnare (REISER 1894), in the compound woods of Trojanski Balkan (DRENSKI 1934), near Pirdop (DONCHEV & IVANOV 1978), near Koprivchicha on 15.III.1978 (ROBERTS

1979), in the reserves Caricina, Steneto and Boatın. A nest was found on 15.IV.1978 in Boatın on a beech tree at a height of 18 - 20 m, from which 2 young flew away at the beginning of July. The following years 2 young also flew away on 26.VI., but during 1980 the nest was destroyed (SPIRIDONOV ET AL. 1983). The pair nesting in Steneto inhabited 3 000 hectares hunting area, including the south and north mountain ridges. The birds were hunting in it also during November (SPIRIDONOV & MILEVA 1988). During the nesting periods of 1983-1988 it was recorded numerous times near Teteven and Trojan (GEORGIEV & ALEKSANDROV 1988), and also near the village of Jamna. A pair was nesting in the reserve Djendem - to the south-east of the summit of Triglav (1996). During the last years its population in Central Balkan was gradually increasing its number. We can thus record from this an increase in the number of Goshawks wintering on both sides of the mountain.

### 3.12. Levant Sparrowhawk

#### *Accipiter brevipes* SEVERTZOV

It can be found in the mountain region of Central Balkan. One bird was shot by DONCHEV (1977) on 15.VIII.1964 near Kazanluk.

### 3.13. Honey Buzzard

#### *Pernis apivorus* L.

It lives in the wooded zone of Central Balkan, and prefers beech forests with meadows and glades. It is recorded in most of the reserves: Boatın, Caricina, Steneto, Stara reka (STOILOV 1984; SPIRIDONOV 1985), Kozia stena, Djendem



(June 1996), without any doubt it also lives in the reserves Peeshti skali and Sokolna. The chronology of its appearance in Central Balkan is the following: in the woods along the river Osum in Trojanski Balkan (DRENSKI 1934); over the town of Kalofer from May to July 1962 and 1972, in the reserve Steneto, in Caricina (10.VI.1972) 1 bird near the hut Vejen, near the town of Kazanluk (10.X.1951) and the town of Pirdop (DONCHEV 1974, 1977; DONCHEV & IVANOV 1978); it is not rare in the Zlatishko - Teteven mountain, where it was recorded near the natural landmark Chernia rut, in the reserve Boatin, near the summit of Bratanicha, the place called Vurtopa (over the village Anton), reserve Caricina (3.VIII.1981 - a pair with a flown away young), reserve Steneto (15.VI.1977 and 10.VII.1986 in the upper part of the canyon) (SPIRIDONOV 1982, 1985; SPIRIDONOV ET. AL. 1983; SPIRIDONOV & MILEVA 1988) and on the north slope of the summit of Bulivanja on 20.VII.1996.

### 3.14. Buzzard

#### *Buteo buteo* L.

It breeds in all reserves and in many places in the woods and the prepark zone of Central Balkan. It prefers old deciduous and compound woods. It is a common species for Boatin, Caricina, Stara reka. Some of its nests in Central Balkan are unknown and unlocated. There was a nest over Karlovo during 1983 - 1986 and youngs flew away at the end of May. In 1987 the nesting was late and at the end of May hatching was just finished (LAMBUROV - by word of mouth). We sighted it in the reserve Kozia stena

on 21.-25.VII.1996. There was a pair on the slope of Ogleden vrh (reserve Steneto), on the summit of Kostenurkata and in the low part of the reserve Djendem, to the south of the summit of Rusalka. In addition to the nesting period the Buzzard is very common at the foot of the mountain: in the middle of November 1977 about 15 specimen near Pirdop, in the winter of 1984 - 85 about 50 specimen near Karlovo; 20.XI.1991 2 birds near Sopot; 25.VIII.1992 1 bird at each village (Chelopech, Pirdop and Karlovo).

### 3.15. Long-legged Buzzard

#### *Buteo rufinus* CRETZSCHMAR

The first record of Long-legged Buzzard in Stara planina is from 5.VI.1893, when REISER (1894) recorded 1 bird at Trojanski pass. Near this place on the south rocky slopes of the reserve Steneto, there now live „at least 2 pairs“ (SPIRIDONOV & MILEVA 1988). These pairs keep close to the low mountain zone (up to 1 000 m) and in the neighbour region of Podbalkanski poleta. It nests in the reserve Sokolna (MILEVA 1982). During the nesting period the habitats of the pairs of the Long-legged Buzzard and the Golden Eagle are separated, while during autumn (1. - 3.XI.1987) they stay together on the ridge of the mountain. We observed birds flying round near hut Paskal (19.VII.1996) and in the region of shelter Orlovo gnezdo (22.VII.1996). MICHEV ET. AL. (1984) announced the possibility of nests near the villages of Jamna, Ignatovo and Gabarovo.

### 3.16. Rough-legged Buzzard

#### *Buteo lagopus* PONTOPPIDAN

During the winter of 1984 - 85 there were dozens of birds near Karlovo and Sokolicha. They stood near the stocks of rodents or concentrations of wintering birds in places, situated under 1 000 m altitude (NANKINOV 1994).

### 3.17. Golden Eagle

#### *Aquila chrysaetos* L.

The most numerous population of Golden Eagle in Bulgaria is in Central Balkan. From the existing observations we know the location of about 20 pairs, but their number is greater. There is at least one pair in every reserve. The other pairs nest in the alpine, wooded and prepark zones and even outside of them, in the low parts of the mountains. There are nests used for more than 100 years (REISER 1894; SPIRIDONOV ET. AL. 1983).

### 3.18. Imperial Eagle

#### *Aquila heliaca* SAVIGNY

In the territory of Central Balkan it was recorded for the first time on 14.IV.1893, near Kalofer monastery (REISER 1894). It was sighted in the mountains of Etropole on a summer day of 1893 (FLOERIKE 1913). On the north side of the ridge this species inhabited the valley of the river Osum (DRENSKI 1934). Next it was recorded near the village Anton - 1 bird feeding on a European Souslik *Citellus citellus* - on 21.III.1972; near the village of Sokolicha on 18.IV.1970; near the dam lake Koprinka on 4.VI.1972 (DONCHEV 1974, 1977); near the shelter Orlovo gnezdo

and near the canyon a pair on 29.VII.1975 (SPIRIDONOV & MILEVA 1988). It vanished from reserve Caricina, but is included in the fauna of Steneto and Stara reka (SPIRIDONOV 1974; MAJDRAKOVA 1982; STOILOV 1984). Also in Steneto on 16.VI.1981 LAMBUROV (1985) recorded 1 bird over the meadows, where European sousliks and Lesser Mole Rats *Spalax leucodon* lived. During the summers of 1977 - 1983 the same author recorded Imperial Eagles several times near the breeding-pools of the village of Sokolicha. We watched a pair of adult Imperial Eagles on the ridge of the summit of Paradjuka (reserve Djendem) on 24.VII.1996.

### 3.19. Lesser Spotted Eagle

#### *Aquila pomarina* C. L. BREHM

It nests in the region and is recorded during migrations. One pair was observed near Etropole (REISER 1894) on 27.V.1893. During the nesting period it was recorded over an old beech wood, near the place of Beklemeto (23.VI.1971 and 6.VII.1972), near the village of Sokolicha (DONCHEV 1974, 1977) and the region of Pirdop (DONCHEV & IVANOV 1978). SPIRIDONOV (1982) spoke for a single observation and a questionable nesting in Caricina. 1 bird was recorded to the north-west of the reserve in the place called Cherna reka, near the village of Ribaricha on 19.X.1985 (GEORGIEV & ALEKSANDROV 1988). 1 bird was observed in the subalpine zone of the reserve Caricina, under the summit of Pupa, on 20.VII.1996.



### 3.20. Booted Eagle

#### *Hieraaetus pennatus* Gmelin

It is recorded many times as a common bird for Central Balkan and the neighbouring regions. The first observations are from O. REISER (1894) who when climbing up the summit of Baba (to the south of the Zlatishki pass) on 28.V.1893 together with K. FLOERICKE killed a bird over the orchard gardens near Han Karnare. The later observations are as follows: a nesting bird in the zone of the lowstem compound woods along the valley of the river Osum (DRENSKI 1934); 30.IX.1957 2 specimen over to Botev (BALAT 1962); 15.VII.1964 - over Pirdop (BAUMGART 1971); May - June 1963, 1966, 1971 pairs (light and dark phase) over Kalofer, Klisura and near the village of Cherni Osum, and from June to August separate specimens and pairs - near Kalofer and the village of Goljamo Drjanovo (DONCHEV 1974, 1977); near Pirdop (DONCHEV & IVANOV 1978); Kazanluk, Karnare and Srednogorie on 20.VII.1973 (NANKINOV 1985). SPIRIDONOV (1977, 1983) includes the Booted Eagle in the nesting fauna of reserve Steneto and also in the faunistic complexes: lowmountains and mountains (coniferous woods) of Sredna Stara planina.

### 3.21. Short-toed Eagle

#### *Circaetus gallicus* Gmelin

Very rarely it breeds and flies in the region. It inhabited the compound woods along the river Osum (DRENSKI 1934). It was sighted on 15.VII.1964 over Pirdop (BAUMGART 1971); during August 1965 a pair near the village of Cherni Osum; on 30.III.1969 near the village of

Manolovo (DONCHEV 1974, 1977) and in the middle of April 1975 over Zlaticha. We observed it on 22.VII.1996 on the saddle between the summit of Kozia stena and Baljova planina. MAJDRAKOVA (1982) and STOILOV (1984) write that it nests in the reserve Steneto, SPIRIDONOV ET. AL. (1987) - on the south rocky slopes of the reserve Caricina. Besides Z. SPIRIDONOV (1983) adds the species to the lowmountain and the mountain faunistic complexes of Central Balkan.

### 3.22. Osprey

#### *Pandion haliaetus* L.

During migrations it visits the reservoirs in the foot of the mountains. A pair was recorded near the village of Oreshaka (Trojan) during the spring of 1964 and on 15.III.1967 near the village of Koprinka (DONCHEV 1974, 1977). It stays annually near the breeding-pools of the village Sokolicha. 1978 - 1982 1 bird was there for about 20 days each spring (LAMBUROV 1984). According to hunters during the summer of 1980 one pair was nesting in Central Balkan, not far from the village of Sokolicha.

### 3.23. Red-footed Falcon

#### *Falco vespertinus* L.

Annually migrating flocks of red-footed falcons are recorded in Podbalsanski poleta and near the south slopes of Central Balkan. According to LAMBUROV (1984) spring flocks number not less than 50 specimens and stay about 2 weeks on the meadows around village Sokolicha. On 9.V.1983 a flock of 150 birds remained there till the end of the month.

### 3.24. Kestrel

#### *Falco tinnunculus* L.

It is a common nesting bird in the whole territory of the National Park, but the location of most of the nests remains undesignated. From the existing information we know that the Kestrel was recorded during the nesting period of 1893, at the summit of Botev and the summit of Rusalka (REISER 1894), along the valley of the river Osum (DRENSKI 1934), on 30.IX.1957 in the reserve Djendema, below the summit of Botev (BALAT 1962), on 29.IV.1964 a nest with 3 eggs in the mountains over Kalofer (DONCHEV 1974), it nests in the reserves Boatin, Caricina (SPIRIDONOV 1982; SPIRIDONOV ET. AL. 1983) and on the rocks in the reserve Steneto - 2 pairs on 20.VI.1981 (LAMBUIROV - by word of mouth). We saw it on 19. - 25.VII.1996 in the alpine zone of the mountains below the summits of Kartala and of Bratanicha (a pair), over Markova livada (reserve Kozia stena), near hut Kozia stena (a pair), Vetroviti Preslap (a pair), the east part of the reserve Kozia stena (a pair), on the ridge of the summit of Goljam Kupa and on the rocky peaks - Krustchite. During migrations the species is numerous in the region. Only near Karlovo, in spring and autumn, flocks of dozens specimens concentrate. Some of the birds remain wintering there.

### 3.25. Hobby

#### *Falco subbuteo* L.

During the nesting period of 1893 REISER (1894) recorded some pairs at Trojanski pass, in the mountains of Karlovo - near Julti kamuk - and 2 pairs in an oak wood

near Kalofer. Twice it was recorded and most probably was nesting in the reserve Caricina (SPIRIDONOV 1983). During 1980 some pairs were breeding in the reserve Steneto (H. HRISTOV - by word of mouth). A pair was sighted over the east slopes of the summit of Vasiljov (Vasiljovska mountain) on 9.VII.1986; a hunting bird on 22.VI.1984 in the surroundings of the village of Lesidren (GEORGIEV & ALEKSANDROV 1988). We saw a Hobby flying to the east of the summit of Vejen, near Kamenna porta on 20.VII.1996. During migrations hunting birds are recorded regularly on the south and north areas of the prepark zone.

### 3.26. Lesser Kestrel

#### *Falco naumanni* FLESCHER

It is a regular migrant in the low mountain slopes, as separate birds cross the ridge of the mountains (24.VII.1996 - on the saddle Rusenski grobove - 1 specimen). Early in spring on 17.IV.1970 DONCHEV (1977) saw 1 bird in the mountains over the village Vasil Levski (Karlovo). More than 100 years (21.VI.1893) ago there was a stock of 100 pairs near the town Karlovo (REISER 1894). Now small stocks or separate pairs breed in the south of the prepark zone of Central Balkan.

### 3.27. Peregrine

#### *Falco peregrinus* TINSTALL

It was recorded in Central Balkan on 31.V. and 14.VI.1893 near Etropole and on the summit of Botev (REISER 1894), and also on 8.IX.1963 over hut Ray (BAUMGART 1971). It is included in the fauna of the reserve Sokolna (MILEVA

1982) and reserve Stara reka (STOILOV 1984). On 3. and 4.IV. some birds were recorded around the village Ribaricha and also a single bird at the end of August. On 26.IX.1987 2 adult birds were hunting in the reserve Steneto (SPIRIDONOV 1982; SPIRIDONOV & MILEVA 1988). It was also recorded on 2.II.1954 and 4.III.1972 near Kazanluk and the village Koprinka (DONCHEV 1977). The meetings of peregrines during June 1996 (a hunting bird under summit of Bratanicha, at Ribarski pass, over the rocks of reserve Kozia stena and over the weather station on the summit of Botev) show that the species increases its number in Central Balkan.

### 3.28. Merlin

#### *Falco columbarius* L.

Separate migrants pass the region during autumn, winter and early spring. On 9.XI.1963 a merlin was recorded on the summit of Botev (BAUMGART 1971), and on 31.I. - a male near the village of Ribaricha (SPIRIDONOV 1982).

### 3.29. Saker

#### *Falco cherrug* GRAY

There are few records of this bird in the observation region: reserve Sokolna (MILEVA 1982), on 16.VII.1964 below the summit of Botev - a family with flying youngs (BAUMGART 1966); on 29.VII.1975 and 5.V.1987 an adult bird over the canyon Haidushko igrilo in the reserve Steneto (SPIRIDONOV & MILEVA 1988); on 24.IX.1928 near Kazanluk (DONCHEV 1977). It is regular during the spring migrations near the village of Sokolicha. It was recorded there on 29.VII.1983

(LAMBUROV 1984). During the past century the natives of this village were Falconers and Sakers were common nesting birds in the region. Today, although there is plenty of food (mainly sousliks) this species is very rare in Central Balkan. It is possible that the populations of other bigger birds of prey have a negative influence upon it (for example Golden Eagle and Long-legged Buzzard).

## 4. Discussion

In the territory of National Park Central Balkan 29 species of birds of prey are recorded until now. The population of the Golden Eagle, Goshawk, Kestrel, Long-legged Buzzard increase their number. There is progress in the number of the Peregrine, which is still not numerous. The population of the Honey Buzzard remains comparatively stable in the vast woods in the region, where there is enough food and the usage of insecticides is limited. The population of the Buzzard, Booted Eagle, Sparrowhawk and the Hobby are stable too. The Short-toed Eagle, the Lesser Spotted Eagle, the Imperial Eagle and the Saker are not numerous nesting species. During winter the Rough-legged Buzzard and the Merlin appear in Central Balkan and its prepark zone, and during migrations the observation territory is visited by the Osprey, the Lesser Kestrel, the Red-footed Falcon and the Harriers (Marsh, Hen, Pallid and Montagu's ones). The Lammergeier, the Griffon and the



Black Vultures do not nest, because they are affected by the poisonous blandishments, traps and firearms and also by the gathering, digging and burning of the carcasses of the ungulates. The number of the Egyptian Vulture strongly decreases. We suppose that a future stock of the Griffon Vulture in Central Balkan is in the process of formation and in the next 10 years these birds may start nesting again. Their return can be precipitated by consistent food supplying of the platforms in the region of the previous nestings or in the territories of some of the reserves, for example Djendem (especially the summit of Botev), Steneto, Kozia stena, Caricina, Boatin and others. The consistent feeding of the Griffon Vultures will help the return of the Black Vultures and the Lammergeiers in the fauna of Central Balkan and also for the revival of the population of the Egyptian Vulture and the other carrion species. It is a happy fact, that their habitats in the alpine area and in the reserves are nearly the same as they were in the years before the Vultures were destroyed with poisonous blandishments. There is a revival in cattle-breeding and the flocks of sheep, cattle and horses, which feed on the vast pastures in the mountains. The population of the Griffon Vulture in Central Balkan will be revived most probably with specimens from the east rodopian population or from the Croatian population, which every year during the migrations passes through Bulgaria (SUSIC 1992). Lammergeier will come from west Caucasus, Greece, Turkey or other nesting places, close to

Bulgaria. Occasionally separate specimens from these populations visit our country (for example the last observation at the pass Haimboaz in 1990). The striving of young for movement, the existence of comfortable nesting places in Stara planina and the supply with food will help the return of the Vultures in the National Park Central Balkan.

Now, the lack of Vultures in Central Balkan has favourable influence upon the Golden Eagle, which continuously increases its number and so there are dozens of pairs. To a certain extent the Long-legged Buzzard can be a competitor to the Golden Eagle, because its population also increases its number, but during the nesting period these two species have well separated habitats. The nests of the Long-legged Buzzard are situated on the lower slopes of the mountain, whether the Golden Eagle prefers the alpine area and the rocky parts over 1 000 m altitude. The advanced development of these two species slows down the Imperial Eagle and the Saker, from which some pairs try to remain in the National Park.

All the birds of prey, recorded in the fauna of Central Balkan, are protected by the Law for Protection of Nature in Bulgaria. In the Red Book they are included in the categories: vanished (Lammergeier, Black Vulture), threatened with extinction (Honey Buzzard, Black Kite, Egyptian and Griffon Vulture, Short-toed Eagle, Marsh Harrier, Goshawk, Sparrowhawk, Levant Sparrowhawk, Long-legged Buzzard, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Imperial Eagle, Booted Eagle,

Osprey, Lesser Kestrel, Hobby, Saker, Peregrine) and rare (Hen Harrier, Golden Eagle, Red-footed Falcon). It is clear only from these observations in Central Balkan that this classification is very old in connection with the revival and the development of the population of number of species. The Goshawk, the Sparrowhawk, the Long-legged Buzzard are not threatened with extinction, and the Golden Eagle is not rare. Among the species in Central Balkan threatened in worldwide importance are the Black Vulture (in the category „vulnerable“), the Imperial Eagle (in the category „rare“) and the Lesser Kestrel (in the category „insufficiently known“). Many of the negative factors, acting harmfully upon the population of the birds of prey in the past, are expelled today or used illegally and very seldom (strychnine blandishments, traps, firearms, scattering with poison, clearing the venerable woods). This helps the revival of the population and the increase in the number of the species and the turn of the National Park Central Balkan into the most favourable place for the birds of prey in Bulgaria.

## LITERATURE

- BALAT F. (1962): Contribution to the Knowledge of the Avifauna of Bulgaria. - In: Prace Brnenske ak. CSAV. 10, 434: 445-496.
- BAUMGART W. (1966): Der Würgfalk als Brutvogel im Gebirge der Volksrepublik Bulgarien. - In: Der Falke, 8, 256-260.
- (1977): Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Greifvögel Bulgariens. - In: Beitr. Vogelkd., 17, 33-70.
- (1989): Verbreitung und Existenzbedingungen von Gänse-, Kuten- und Bartgeier (*Gyps fulvus*, *Aegypius monachus*, *Gypaetus barbatus*) in Bulgarien in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart. - In: Acta ornithoekol., 2, 15-38.
- BOEV N. (1985): Bradat leshojad, brdet orel, *Gypaetus barbatus*. - In: Chervena kniga na Bulgaria, 2. jivotni. BAN, Sofia, 82-83.
- DONCHEV S. (1974): Ptichite na Sredna I Iztochna Stara planina. - In: Izv. na Zool. in-t s muzei pri BAN, 41, 33-63.
- (1977): Ptichite na Rozovata donina. - In: Acta zool. bulgarica, 6, 15-34.
- DONCHEV S. & B. Ivanov (1978): Prouchvane na vlianieto na promishlenoto zamursjavane vurhu ptichite v rajona na MDK „G. Damjanov“ krai Pirdop. - In: Ecologia, BAN, 4, 12-19.
- DRENSKI P. (1934): Faunata na Lovchansko i Trojansko. - In: Lovech i Lovchansko, 6, 107-125.
- Floericke K. (1913): Charski orel. - In: Pirdip, 4, 67-68.
- GEORGIEV D. & D. ALEKSANDROV, (1988): Prinos kum ornitofaunata na Vasiljovskata planina. - In: Orn. inf. bjuletin, 23-24, 56-66.
- HRISTOVIC G. (1894): Sreshta li se bradatijat orel v Bulgaria. - In: Priroda, 9, 144.
- JANKOV P. & L. PROFIROV (1991): Suvremenno sustoianie na popula-

- chiata na beloglavia leshoiad (Gyps fulvus Hablizl) v Bulgaria. - In: Ecologia, 24, 44-52.
- LAMBUROV G. (1984): Niakoi nabljudenia vurhu redki ptici na teritoriata na Karlovskoto pole I blizkite rajoni. - In: Orn. inf. bjuletin, 15-16, 18-19.
- (1985): Sreshti s krustatia orel (Aquila heliaca Sav.). - In: Orn. inf. bjuletin, 17, 70-71.
- MAJDRAKOVA I. (1982): Naroden park „Steneto“. - In: Gorsko stopanstvo, 2, 34-39.
- MICHEV, T. (1968): Vurhu razprostranienieto I gnezdovata biologia na egipetskia leshoiad (Neophron percnopterus L.) v Bulgaria. - In: Izv. na zool. in-t s musei pri BAN, 27, 65-79.
- MICHEV T., I. Vatev, P. Simeonov, & L. PROFIROV (1984): Razprostranenie I gnezdova biologia na beloopashatia mishelov (*Buteo rufinus* Cretzchmar, 1827) v Bulgaria. - In: Ecologia, BAN, 13, 74-82.
- MILEVA L. (1982): Rezervatut „Sokolna“. - In: Gorsko stopanstvo, 4, 22-23.
- NANKINOV D. (1985): Maluk orel, *Hieraetus pennatus*. - In: Chervena kniga na Bulgaria, 2. jivotni. BAN, Sofia, 75.
- (1994): Distribution, Migration and Wintering of the Rough-Legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus* in Bulgaria. - In: Raptor Conservation today, Berlin, 173-178.
- OSININ D. (1978): Jitata putuvat. Nauka i izcustvo, Sofia, 1-200.
- POPOV V. (1980): Zashtiteni prirodni obecti v NR Bulgaria. Narodna prosveta, Sofia 1-150.
- REISER O. (1894): Materialien zu einer Orn. Balcanica. II. Bulgarien. Wien, 1-204.
- ROBERTS J. (1979): Observations on the migration of Raptors and other large soaring birds in Bulgaria, 1975-1978. - In: Ibis, 121, 301-312.
- SPIRIDONOV Z. (1974): Rezerbatut „Caricina“. In: Nashi rezervati i prirodni zabelejitelnosti, 3, 52-73.
- (1977): Oazisi na divata priroda. Zemizdat, Sofia, 1-191.
- (1982): Ptците v gornata chast na vodosbora na reka Beli Vit i neinoto opazvane. - In: Orn. inf. bjuletin, 11, 56-71.
- (1983): Teritorialno opazvane na grubnachnata fauna vuv bisokite djalove na Sredna Stara planina. „Mejdunar. simp. - Vzaimootn. chovek - planinski ekosistemi, Vrachа 24.-29.10.1983, 41-51.
- (1985): Osoiad, *Pernis apivorus*. Chervena kniga na Bulgaria. 2. jivotni. BAN, Sofia, 69.
- SPIRIDONOV Z. & L. MILEVA (1988): Zastrasheni I redki vidove ptici v biosfernia rezervat „Steneto“. - In: Orn. inf. bjuletin, 23-24, 99-105.
- SPIRIDONOV Z., L. MILEVA, N. Spasov & P. Simeonov (1983): Gnezdovara ornitofauna v biosfernia rezervat „Boatin“. „Mejdunar. simp. - Vzaimootn. chovek - planinski ekosistemi, Vrachа 24-29.10. 1983g“, 83-90.
- SPIRIDONOV Z., L. MILEVA & N. Spasov (1987): Gnezdovaaia ornitofauna biosfernogo rezervata charicgina. „Rezervat biosfery-Caricina“, PAN, BAN, Krakov, 104-121.



STOILOV D. (1984): Prirodata pod zakrila.  
Nauka i izkustvo, Sofia, 1-259.

SUSIC G. (1992): Wing-marking of Griffon  
Vulture *Gyps fulvus* in Croatia:  
Evolution and Initial Results. - In: IV.  
World Conf. on Birds of Prey. Berlin,  
10.-17.5.1992. Abstracts, 49-50.

ZANKES K. (1932): Ornithologisches aus  
Bulgarien. - In: Anz. Orn. Ges. Bayern,  
2, 151-152.

## ANSCHRIFT DER VERFASSER

Dimitar N. NANKINOV &  
Nikolay D. NANKINOV  
Institute of Zoology. BAS  
Boul. Tzar Osvoboditel 1  
1000 Sofia, BULGARIA

## DANK

Für die Korrektur des englischen Textes  
möchte ich Frau Hazel ZEINER herzlich  
danken.

NIEDERWOLFSGRUBER

## Spenden für monticola

*Seit dem Erscheinen der letzten „Spender-Liste“ (7, Seite 96) sind zwischen dem 1. Jänner 1994 und dem 31. Dezember 1996 insgesamt ca. ATS 40.000 an Spenden eingegangen. Wir danken all jenen, die über den Mitgliedsbeitrag hinaus durch ihre Spenden helfen. Wie in Nummer 79 erwähnt wurde bei der Jahrestagung 1995 beschlossen, von einer Erhöhung des Mitgliedsbeitrages Abstand zu nehmen, und dafür die Mitglieder um „freiwillige“ Erhöhung ihres Jahresbeitrages (ATS 200) zu bitten. Diese Bitte bleibt weiterhin aufrecht!*

### 34 Mitglieder haben Spenden bis zu ATS 100 gegeben;

**bis ATS 250** St. Bandelin, Dr. E. Baumgärtner, H. Bänziger, L. Braun, E. Carrara, K. Fiedler, A. Forstinger, M. Ganso, W. Fuchs, H. Hambrusch, A. Hipper, F. Lacchini, Dr. E.v. Krosigk, Cl. Mainetti, R. Mertl, Dipl.-Ing. G. Müller, F. Neuberger, G. Nitsche, F. Nittmann, K. Pointner, Dr. U. Saint Paul, Dr. H. Schratter, A. Vögtli, Mag. W. Windsberger, H. Zencica;

**bis ATS 500** L. Albert, Mag. H. Bayer, Dr. K.H. Berck, Dr. G. Berg-Schlösser †, Mag. W. Bernhauer, Dr. H. Denoth, Dr. G. Dippell, E. Don, D. und H. Flück, St. Gysel, R. Hauri, P. Hilsenbeck-Fritz, H. Kaiser, H. Karcher, I. Kolb, Dr. J. Kühtreiber †, A. Lüscher, H. Meyer, Dr. H. Meyer, L. Mittelstaedt, J. Pletzer, P. Schmidt †, H. Schenk, Dipl.-Ing. G. Schwarzer, R. Trummer, Dr. P. Weber;

**bis ATS 1.000** E. Baruffol, B. Carrara, P. Cordt, Dr. W. Gschwandtner, H. Herren, E. Hornberger, Dr. F. Loeber, Dr. Kl. Mayer, N. Mieslinger, Dr. R. Pickel, E. Zbären;  
**über ATS 1.000** Verein f. Vogelschutz u. Vogelpflege Mainz, E. Hable, R. Surber, W. und P. Oberhänsli, W. Jöris, U. Hammer, E. Walti, Mag. W. Gstader, Dr. H. Einhauser.

# ZOBODAT - [www.zobodat.at](http://www.zobodat.at)

Zoologisch-Botanische Datenbank/Zoological-Botanical Database

Digitale Literatur/Digital Literature

Zeitschrift/Journal: [Monticola](#)

Jahr/Year: 1996-2001

Band/Volume: [8](#)

Autor(en)/Author(s): Nankinov Dimitar N., Nankinov Nikolya D.

Artikel/Article: [Birds of Prey \(Falconiformes\) in National Park Central Balkan. 1-15](#)