Censuses and Observations from a Raptor Migration Bottleneck, Hatay Turkey: Phenology and Threats

Результаты учётов и наблюдений за мигрирующими хищными птицами в «бутылочном горлышке» Хатай, Турция: Фенология и угрозы

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Hatay is one of the most important bottle-necks for soaring bird migration in the Palearctic region. It is the meeting point of two different migration routes from Europe and Asia. Unfortunately, bird migration monitoring studies have not been extensively carried out in this region. This study covers seasonal spring and autumn migration observations from a wind power plant near Hatay, near a secondary migration route, starting from 2014 until 2018. During nine migration seasons, a total of 262,090 birds have been counted in 511 observation days. 71,589 raptors were observed in total. Of the observed raptors, 64.6 % (46,276) were Lesser Spotted Eagles (Clanga [Aquila] pomarina). Greater Spotted Eagles (Clanga [Aquila] clanga) and Steppe Eagles (Aquila nipalensis) were also observed regularly in small numbers. The observation point is in a secondary route of migration, numbers and phenology differ greatly between seasons and from one year to another. Local route preference and abundance depend on wind conditions. There are several wind power plants in this small bottleneck, however the most significant threat is illegal hunting of raptors. Local people hunt raptors for food. The shooting of raptors is the most crucial and urgent matter of conservation to be solved in the region as soon as possible, as each year more than 2,000 raptors are estimated to be shot.