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OBSERVATIONS ON THE DISTRIBUTION AND CALENDAR OF COMMON SWIFT *Apus apus* (Scopoli, 1777) IN TURKEY

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Abstract: There are four Swift species have been recorded in Turkey. The most common one is Common swift *Apus apus*. Besides the population density of this species is higher than the other three swift species. Common swift is a summer visitor and partially migrant in Turkey Also, they go through Turkey at the time of north-south and south-north migration. This species is widely found in the whole country. Generally it comes to Turkey in March and leaves the country between September and November in autumn.

Key words: Calendar, Common swift, *Apus apus*, Distribution, Turkey.

Ebabil (Scopoli, 1777) Türlerinin Türkiye'deki Dağılımı ve Takvimi Üzerine Araştırmalar

Özet: Türkiye’de bugüne kadar dört farklı Ebabil türü kaydedilmiştir. Bu türler arasında en yaygın olanı *Apus apus*’dur. Ayrıca bu türün popülasyon yoğunluğu diğer 3 Ebabil türünden daha fazladır. *Apus apus* Türkiye’de yaz göçmeni statüsünde olup ülkenin büyük bir kesiminde yayılım gösterir, mart ayı içerisinde ülkemize gelir. Türkiye’den ayrılış tarihi ise sonbahar aylarına isabet eder.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Takvim, Ebabil, Dağılım, Türkiye.

Introduction

Common swift is a member of Apodidae family. This family includes the most air dependent terrestrial bird species. According to the reference is named *Handbook of the Birds of the World*, Apodidae family has 98 species and 17 genera. One of those genus is *Apus* (Scopoli 1777) and it involves 19 species. The three species apart from the Common swift are as follows: Alpine Swift *Apus melba*, Little Swift *Apus affinis* and Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus* (Kızıroğlu, 1989).

The Common swift has an important status among other bird species regarding its life style and behavioral characteristics. That’s why, in Europe observations, on the Common Swift calendar, have been realizing and systematic records have been getting since 19th century. The observations carried out by Necker (1823), Steinmüller (1827), Bree (1832), Couch, (1832), Hintz, (1857), Csato (1885), Schrader, (1891) and Garnier, (1903) in 19th century have still been carried out in our time. That is, the observations and records have gone back 2 centuries.

On the other hand, there is no systematic study on the Common swift in Turkey. Turkey, which has a relatively rich avifauna, does not have any detailed research regarding the distribution of any bird species in the country. In the only research carried out by Turan (1992) in a four year period the distribution of the Common quail *Coturnix coturnix* in Turkey, had been examined. With realizing this sort of study, it was also aimed to provide a contribution to Turkey about this subject.

Methods

In this study, the arriving and leaving dates of Common swifts to Turkey and their distribution have been observed. The following have been evaluated in this study:

The data obtained from the ornithological observations we carried out between the years 2001 and 2004; The published work of foreign researchers and observers such as Eriksen (2004), Kasper (2004), Bonser (2004) and Bates, (2004) who carried out ornithological observations in Turkey between 2001 and 2004; The data presented in internet media by bird observers in Turkey. (Toygar, 2001-2004)

The distribution of the observations in respect to years that had been carried out by the author of this paper and the other observers between the years 2001 and 2004 has been presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of ornithological observations concerning with the Common Swift in Turkey between 2001 and 2004.

Years	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total
Author	45	36	37	28	146
Others	279	373	393	714	1759
Total	324	409	430	742	1905

By evaluating all the data presented in Table 1, a map that shows the distribution of Common swifts in Turkey has been surveyed (Map 1.).

Results and Discussion

According to the results of the ornithological observations carried out in Turkey between the years 2001 and 2004, the number of the individuals of Common swift may be very high. Even though they live in groups, their number may increase especially during migration period. Table 3 shows the highest numbers and the registration date of those numbers between the years 2001 and 2004.

Table 2. Some interesting numerical records between the observation years of 2001-2004 on the Common Swift in Turkey.

Date of Observation	Location	Number of recorded Ind.	References
02.06.2002	İzmir Karine Lake	200	Toygar, 2002
06.06.2002	Konya-Kulu	500	Toygar, 2002
08.06.2002	Ankara-Çeltikçi	500	Toygar, 2002
09.06.2002	Konya-Bolluk Lake	500	Toygar, 2002
12.06.2002	Mersin	100	Toygar, 2002
15.06.2002	Niğde Aladağlar	80	Toygar, 2002
20.06.2002	Van-Erçek Lake	400	Eriksen, 2003
21.06.2002	Ağrı-Doğubayazıt	500	Eriksen, 2003
27.08.2003	Muğla- Ortaca	150	Toygar, 2003
13.09.2003	İstanbul	100 +	Toygar, 2003
02.04.2004	Ankara-Mogan	200	Toygar, 2004
06.04.2004	Ankara-Centrum	132	Turan, 2004
13.04.2004	Ankara-Mogan	300	Toygar, 2004
17.04.2004	Konya-Uyuz Lake	150	Toygar, 2004
17.04.2004	Konya-Kulu Lake	150	Toygar, 2004
18.05.2004	Ankara-Mogan	200	Toygar, 2004
18.05.2004	Ankara-Eymir	100	Toygar, 2004
22.05.2004	Adıyaman-Akincılar	100	Toygar, 2004
03.07.2004	Gaziantep-Araban	150	Toygar, 2004

Calendar data for the year 2001

In 36 ornithological observations out of 324, records related to Common swift take place. According to the results of those observations, the Common swift had been first observed in 29 March in 2001. The latest observation record was in 7 October.

Calendar data for the year 2002

The Common swift had been observed in 54 of the observations out of 409 in 2002. The data indicates that the earliest date that the Common swift was observed on 13 March, and the latest date was 21 September.

Calendar data for the year 2003

The number of the observations had increased to 430 in 2003. Among those observations there were 75 records regarding the Common swift. According to the obtained data, the earliest date that the Common swift was observed on 20 March, and the latest date was 24 November.

Calendar data for the year 2004

The number of the observations had been duplicated in 2004. 111 records regarding Common swift took place in 742 observations. When those 111 records were examined it is observed that the earliest date the Common swift was observed on 13 March, and the latest date was 3 October.

The results of the evaluation regarding the first and last time that the Common swifts had been observed in Turkey have been presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Earliest and latest recording dates of Common Swifts in Turkey between the years 2001 and 2004.

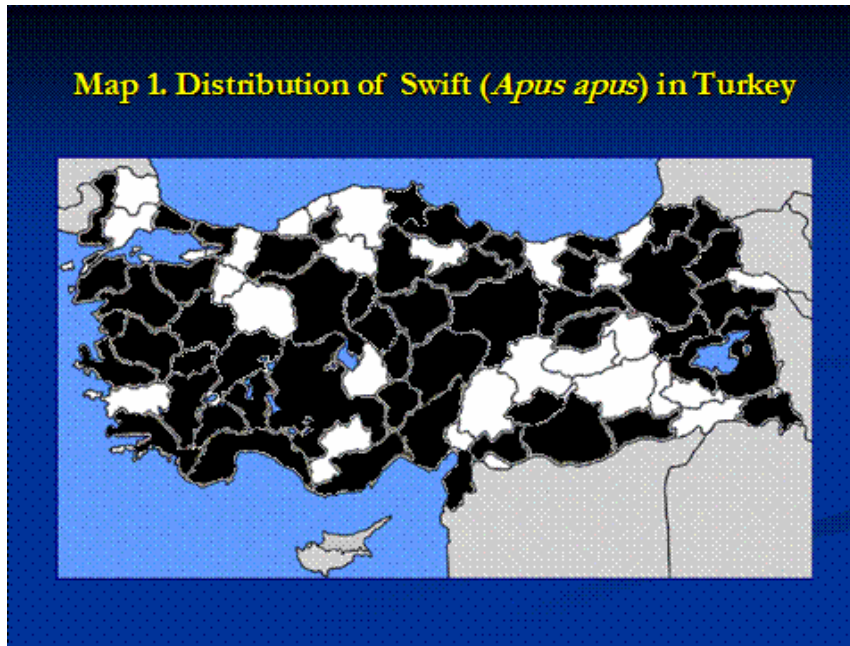
OBSERVATION YEARS											
2001			2002			2003			2004		
early	latest	nr.of observ. Apus rec.	early	latest	nr.of observ. Apus rec.	early	latest	Nr.of observ. Apus rec.	early	latest	nr.of observ. Apus rec.
29.03	07.10	36	13.03	21.09	54	20.03	24.11	75	13.03	03.10	111

According to the results of the 1905 ornithological observations carried out in Turkey between 2001 and 2004, Common swift comes to Turkey in March and leaves the country generally in October. The data obtained from observations had been compared to the literature and it was observed that the date that Common swift arrives in Turkey in spring coincides with the date their wintering period in Africa finishes. The arrival of this species to north latitude in Europe is later than that of Turkey. For example, Hintz (1857) indicated that according to the results of the observations carried out between the years 1829 and 1851, the species arrived in North Poland in 29 April and left the country in 26 May. Tigges (2000a) emphasized that the Common swift arrived in Bern, Germany in 7 May, and left the region in 11 August.

In southern latitudes, the arrival and departure of that species is earlier than the northern latitudes. For example, Cornfeld (2002) indicated that the Common swift arrived in Jerusalem (Israel) in 26 February and stayed there until the beginning of June in 2001. In 2002, it is reported that the species arrived in the region in 19 February.

Geron (2002) indicates that the species generally migrate in August and those breed in Israel leave Tel Aviv in the beginning of June.

(Map 1)

Map 1. Distribution of Common Swift in Turkey

According to the results of the observations, Common swift generally stays in Turkey until October or December. However, it is a known fact that the individuals of Common swift that breed or not, start to migrate at different dates. According to Tigges, the Common swift arrives in Europe in four different waves. The same thing happens in Middle East. The first group includes the lonely individuals or groups of 3-5 individuals. 12-14 days after the first wave comes to the region, the second wave arrives. Those individuals probably are the ones who do not breed in the area. As known, Common swifts gain the breeding ability at the end of the second year. According to Tigges the third wave arrives in Europe 2-3 days later. This group is quite heavy and formed out breeding individuals. Approximately 4-6 weeks after fourth and the last group arrives. These are individuals don't join into breeding activities, because those individuals will not have enough time to raise their youngster.

The data regarding the species in Turkey indicate that the Common swift species can be observed in Turkey for 7 months. However, it is known that species stay in Africa 9 months in a year (Tigges, 2000b). The same study also indicates that this period is 3 months for North Africa, Europe, and North Asia. The difference between those areas can be explained with the immigration characteristic of the species. Under the light of data obtained from the observations, it is seen that the Common swifts observed in Turkey in 7 months are those who immigrates in 4 different waves. The staying period of those individuals, probably is different for each group. Tigges (2000 a,b) indicates that the individuals that come to Israel to breed, arrive in the country in 7 May and stays until 11 August. That is, they stay in the country for three months.

The groups of 300-600 individuals that were observed in April and June and presented in the Table 3 most probably are those who come in groups.

It is believed that there is a need for sound data regarding the reproduction of those species in order to examine the case of Turkey in details. A risk on confusing the species as, there are four Swift species recorded in Turkey, they can be seen on ascend while flying with high speed, esc.70-150 km/h (Blotzheim and Bauer, 1980), and they are very similar. May be for this reason, getting details about the subspecies of this species could not possible until now.

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