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ORNITHOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS IN CIRIC AREA – IAŞI COUNTY

BY

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The Ciric area includes three dam lakes and an artificial forest. In the present note, we give information about the avifauna from Ciric area – Iaşi: a taxonomic list, the birds' species phenology and breeding status. We notice also some aspects viewing the level of human presence and the influence on the birds' populations.

Introduction

The Ciric River takes it source from Dealul Ciricului (112 meters altitude); it is about 17 kilometres length and has a surface of 58 km^2. It is a tributary river for Bahlui River basin. On this valley, three dam lakes are situated: Ciric I – 14 hectares, Ciric II – 8 hectares and Ciric III (Veneţia) – 7 hectares. These dams were achieved in order to forestall the flooding of the eastern part of Iaşi town and to create a place to pleasure for the inhabitants. In this area, the people come to swim, for sporting fishing and boating.

On the slopes, it is present a park-forest about 263 hectares – it is a plantation (in order to decrease the gliding risk and to fix the soils) of deciduous trees: *Quercus robur*, *Quercus petraea*, *Acer platanoides*, *Acer campestre*, *Ulmus sp.*, *Tilia sp.*, *Cerasius avium*, *Malus silvestris* and *Juglans regia* (the last is rare). Near the bank of the water, there are groups of poplars (*Populus alba*), willows (*Salix sp.*) and elms (*Ulmus sp.*). The paludous vegetation covers small areas and is represented by reedbeds – *Phragmites australis*, *Phragmites communis*, *Typha angustifolia* and *Typha latifolia* or small herbs – *Carex vulpina*, *Carex nutans*, *Scirpus lacustris* and *Juncus gerardi*. The meadow and grassland are present on very small areas.

The climate is temperate-continental, with an average yearly temperature of 9.3 $^{\circ}$C. The summers are dry and warm (usually, in July, the temperature is around 36 – 38 $^{\circ}$C) and the winters are very cold (could be weeks when the temperature is constantly around 15 – 17 $^{\circ}$C below zero). The rainfalls' average yearly value is about 517 millimetres. The dominant winds are from the north – western, south and north direction.

There does not exist any study focused on the birds' species situation in Ciric area. We notice that information about the avifauna of Ciric area appears especially in

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the works of C. V. Mândru and A. Papadopol (2, 5, 6) and in the monographic study about the Prut River basin avifauna published by Carmen Gache (1).

Methods of study

Our field observations began in 1992 and covers all the phenological periods. We used the method of transects and different counting methods, according to the birds species – points of counting (especially during the breeding period), circles counting (for passerines) or night counting (for owls). Transects were established during our first visits and we kept them during the whole study. The principal transects were choised in forest on a distance about 1.5 km, on two parallel lines with the western and eastern shores of the lakes Ciric I - Ciric II; for the lakes Ciric I and Ciric II, the transects follow the whole perimeter; for Ciric III lake, the transect covers the western shore. We used also the ringing method, especially for passerines .

Results and discussions

During the years, we identified in Ciric area 80 birds' species (table 1), 52 being breeding species (65%) and another 7 probably breeding species (figure 1). It is obviously that this great number of the breeding species it is possible because the birds can find habitats for nesting. Must of the breeding species are forest birds species (especially passerine species). We do not know if there exist any really correlation but we noticed, especially during the last two springs, that at the beginning of the breeding season the birds seem to divide their distribution areas. In forest, on the eastern slope, the Turdidae and Sylviidae families' species are dominant, than on the western slope the Fringillidae family's species are more numerously.

We suppose also that two woodpeckers species are probably breeding species – *Picus canus* and *Dendrocopos medius* – because they are present all the year in this territory and we heard their mating calling in spring, especially in the north – eastern part of the forest.

Between the breeding species, is present the Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*) which began nesting on the high buildings from Iaşi in the last three – four years and was seen frequently search for him food in Ciric area.

The pairs' number is small in the territories around the lakes but it is increasing if we are going far away, especially on the eastern slope. This part of the Ciric forest is more peaceful then the rest because there is present only the way to the Iaşi's town airport, so the human presence is no so great like near the lakes.

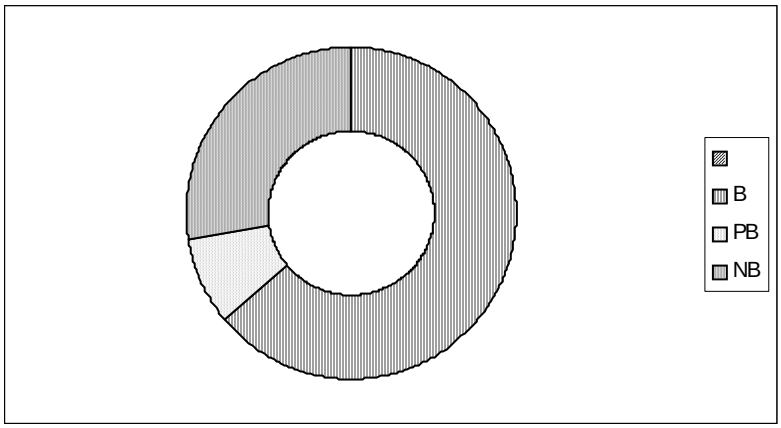

Figure no 1. – Breeding status of the birds' species identified in Ciric area (Iaşi): B – breeding species, PB – probably breeding species, NB – non-breeding species.

We must point out the fact that only 15 species are typically for the wetlands. The explanation for this very small number of aquatic or semi-aquatic birds consists in the scarcity of the paludous vegetation. The birds need reedbeds or hydrophyle vegetation in order to build their nests and to hide them in dangerous situation. By the other hand, the human pressure is very high. First, very close to lakes are present a lot of buildings and summer gardens where the Iaşi's inhabitants come to recreate them. There is present a large number of sporting fishing men, especially during the warm season, despite the fishes present in the lakes' waters are small and without economical importance. Sometimes, especially on the surface of Ciric I lake, it is possible to meet people which are coming to boating.

The aquatic and semi – aquatic birds species are present only in passage and in very small groups. For this reason we must notice the presence of the Little Bittern (*Ixobrychus minutus*) like breeding species – this bird species recorded a declining trend and has an unfavorable conservation status in Europe. Also like breeding species appear: *Gallinula chloropus* (sometimes with two breeding periods), *Fulica atra* (irregular breeding) and reedbeds passerines (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*, *A.scirpaceus* and *Emberiza schoeniclus*). Between the probably breeding species are two birds that are living close to water: *Larus ridibundus* and *Alcedo atthis*. We did not find the nests of these birds but we saw the both during the breeding season and we saw also juvenile flying birds. Maybe these species are breeding in other side and the birds are coming only to nourishing here.

If we regard the birds' phenological status (figure 2), the summer visitors are dominant (56.25%), following by the sedentary (22.50%) and passage species (18.75%).

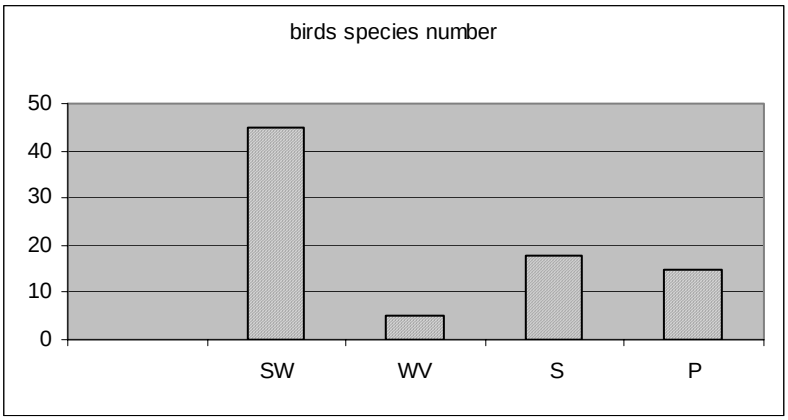

Figure no 2. – The phenology status of the birds' species identified in Ciric Area (Iaşi): SW – summer visitors, WV – winter or rare winter visitor, S sedentary species, P – passage species.

During the winter, there are present large groups of Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*) – during the 2003's winter, 16 exemplars were living close to the buildings from the eastern shore of Ciric II accumulation and in 2004, we found a group of 28 exemplars in the same area. Sometimes, the inhabitants try to drive away the Long-eared Owls and in the 2002's winter, it was necessary to call the authorities (Environmental Protection Agency) in order to confiscate one arm and ammunition from a hunter – despite the owls are under the protection of the hunting Romanian law. The differences between the Ciric area and Romania birds' phenology are not significantly. As we see in the table 1, the aquatic birds and the raptors species appear only in passage because the Ciric area's conditions are not favorable for these species.

The birds' species number identified in the Ciric area (Iaşi) is small because the wetland 's habitat is not so representative, so the aquatic and semi-aquatic birds are present only in passage, in spring or in autumn. The most of the forest birds' species, which are representative for the Ciric area avifauna, are present with small populations. The human pressure is high, influencing the breeding species presence and the breeding pairs numbers, especially close to the lakes' shores. We are not thinking that during the next years this situation will become more favourable for birds.

Table no. 1 Birds' species identified in Ciric area – Iași: phenology and breeding status

No.	Species	Ciric phenology	Romania phenology	Breeding species
1.	Ixobrychus minutes	SV	SV	B
2.	Ardea cinerea	SV	SV, RW	
3.	Ciconia ciconia	P	SV	
4.	Cygnus olor	P, SV	PM	
5.	Anas platyrhynchos	P	PM, WV	
6.	Anas crecca	P	P, WV, SV	
7.	Buteo buteo	P	PM	
8.	Falco tinnunculus	P	PM	
9.	Falco subbuteo	SV	SV	B
10.	Gallinula chloropus	SV	SV	B
11.	Fulica atra	P	PM	
12.	Larus ridibundus	SV	PM	B?
13.	Larus argentatus cachinans	SV	S	
14.	Streptopelia decaocto	S	S	B
15.	Cuculus canorus	SV	SV	B
16.	Athene noctua	S	S	B
17.	Asio otus	WV	S	
18.	Apus apus	SV	SV	B
19.	Alcedo atthis	SV	PM	B?
20.	Upupa epops	SV	SV	B
21.	Jynx torquilla	SV	SV	B
22.	Picus canus	SV	S	B?
23.	Picus viridis	S	S	B
24.	Dendrocopos major	S	S	B
25.	Dendrocopos syriacus	S	S	B
26.	Dendrocopos medius	S	S	B?
27.	Dendrocopos minor	SV	SV	B
28.	Galerida cristata	S	S	B
29.	Alauda arvensis	SV	PM	B
30.	Riparia riparia	SV	SV	B
31.	Hirundo rustica	SV	SV	B
32.	Delichon urbica	SV	SV	B
33.	Motacilla flava	SV	SV	B
34.	Motacilla alba	SV	SV	B
35.	Troglodytes troglodytes	SV, RW	SV, RW	B
36.	Erithacus rubecula	SV	SV	B
37.	Luscinia luscinia	SV	SV	B

No.	Species	Ciric phenology	Romania phenology	Breeding species
38.	Phoenicurus ochruros	SV	SV	B
39.	Phoenicurus phoenicurus	SV	SV	B?
40.	Saxicola rubetra	SV	SV	B
41.	Oenanthe oenanthe	SV	SV	B
42.	Turdus pilaris	WV	PM, WV	
43.	Turdus philomelos	SV	SV	B
44.	Turdus merula	SV	PM	B
45.	Acrocephalus schoenobaenus	SV	SV	B?
46.	Acrocephalus scirpaceus	SV	SV	B
47.	Acrocephalus arundinaceus	SV	SV	B
48.	Hippolais icterina	SV	SV	
49.	Sylvia curruca	SV	SV	
50.	Sylvia borin	SV	SV	B
51.	Sylvia atricapilla	SV	SV	B
52.	Phylloscopus collybita	SV	SV	B
53.	Regulus regulus	P	SV	
54.	Parus palustris	P	SV	
55.	Parus caeruleus	S	S	B
56.	Parus major	S	S	B
57.	Aegithalos caudatus	P	S	
58.	Sitta europaea	P, SV	S	B?
59.	Certhia familiaris	P	S	
60.	Oriolus oriolus	SV	SV	B
61.	Lanius collurio	SV	SV	B
62.	Garrulus glandarius	S	S	B
63.	Pica pica	S	S	B
64.	Corvus corax	P	S	
65.	Corvus monedula	S	S	B
66.	Corvus frugilegus	S	S	B
67.	Corvus corone cornix	S	S	B
68.	Sturnus vulgaris	SV, RW	PM	B
69.	Passer domesticus	S	S	B
70.	Passer montanus	S	S	B
71.	Fringilla coelebs	SV	PM	B
72.	Fringilla montifringilla	P	WV	
73.	Serinus serinus	P	SV	
74.	Carduelis chloris	SV	S	B
75.	Carduelis carduelis	S	S	B

No.	Species	Ciric phenology	Romania phenology	Breeding species
76.	Pyrrhula pyrrhula	WV	S	
77.	Coccothraustes occothraustes	SV	S	B
78.	Emberiza citrinella	S	S	B
79.	Emberiza schoeniclus	SV	PM	B
80.	Miliaria calandra	SV	PM	B

Explanations: P – bird species in passage, WV – winter visitors, RW – rare winter visitors, SV – summer visitors, S – sedentary species, PM – partial migratory species, B – breeding species, B? – probably breeding species

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