

EHDEN RAPTOR COUNT – REPORT
Autumn 2021

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1 OUTLINE

As mentioned in all previous publications, Lebanon lies on the world's second most important bird migration route; the Eastern Mediterranean Flyway. The **Association for Birds Conservation in Lebanon (ABCL)** and **Lebanon Birdwatching Tours (LBWT)** together with **Horsh Ehden Nature Reserve** and the support of the **Municipality of Zgharta Ehden** started an initiative to raise awareness and highlight the importance of Lebanon for bird migration in 2020, This year 2021 with the support of **Global GreenGrant Fund (GGF)** we aimed for a longer and better count.

Ehden is located in the center-north area of the Mount Lebanon range with an altitude of 1,500 meter (at Midan square) above sea level. It is 120 kilometers (75 mi) from Beirut, 30 kilometers (19 mi) from Tripoli and 25 kilometers (16 mi) from Zgharta. Ehden provides a commanding view and overlooks coastal towns and villages as far as Akkar to Shikka. Horsh Ehden Nature Reserve is situated on the upper north western slopes above the town, covering approximately 450 ha at altitude of 1,200 to 2,000 masl. The reserve is considered as a very important part of the country for its unique biodiversity and as an Important Bird Area (Birdlife International).



ABCL and **LBWT** with support from the relevant authorities initiated a bird migration observation point in the autumn of 2020, and had 8 days of counting, this autumn and for the second year we extended the period for a full month, the focus of the count was birds of prey.

During that time the team recorded the passage of more than 30,495 birds, of which 29,556 were raptors of 24 different species. Two species, the **Lesser Spotted Eagle** and the **Levant Sparrowhawk**, were the most abundant. Lebanon is especially important for these two species as almost the entire world population migrates across the country.

The project was a success due to the involvement and support of the municipality and reserve. The counting spot proved to be a good place for bird watching and as an educational site.

2 BACKGROUND

After last year's successful count and collaboration with the Municipality and Reserve, we agreed to plan for a better, and a longer one this year. Preparations started earlier, first meeting was held on the 16th of June with Ms. Mira Tadros from the Municipality, we agreed on the date of the count, and divided the tasks. Meetings with the Reserve management was done later on due to the busy schedule of Mme. Sandra Koussa, the Reserve manager. I had 3 visits afterwards to the reserve, Follow up was made through WhatsApp and phone calls to check on the progress, which was slow due to all the problems going on, so most of the Reserve task were done at the last moment, and the fixed structure that we agreed on was replaced by a temporary metal tent provided by Mr. Chadi Yammine from the Municipality, who had a big part in preparations, from the tents to the trail, in addition 2 smaller tents were installed by Chadi and a team from the Reserve, that we used to keep some of our equipment on spot (chairs, table, water, some food ...).

With everything in place, and the support from local authorities and community, we started to work on publicizing the event through ABCL, LBWT and other social media channels.

3 TARGET

We set four targets for the period of the Ehden Raptor Count 2021, these were:

- Building up a solid Database about numbers migrating through Lebanon.
- Developing eco-tourism in Ehden through Birdwatching.
- Improve knowledge of raptor migration through this area.
- Raise awareness of bird migration among Lebanese people.

4 PARTICIPANTS

Samer Azar (Founder of LBWT) was the coordinator present on site for almost the whole count.

For the Opening: Group of 20 persons from ABCL, headed by the president Mr. Fouad Itani. From the Municipality Mms. Mira Tadros was representing the Mayor who were outside of the country at that time, along with Mr. Sayed Marcos, Mr. Joseph Saade and Mr. Chadi Yammine

For the WMBD event: We had a group from the reserve headed by Mme. Sandra Koussa Saba (Reserve Director), The Municipality of Zgharta Ehden was represented by Mr. Chadi Yammine. Mr. Fouad Itani along with a group of 20 persons from ABCL, plus a team from Aalmat - Jbeil. Mr. Challittah Tanios, manager of Tannourine Cedars Forest Nature Reserve. Official representative included the Ambassador of the Embassy of Poland, Mr. Przemyslaw Nieslowski, Attaché of the Embassy of Austria, Mr Harold Zankl, delegate from UNSCOL, Mr. Michael Cygan, and Major Ismat Yassine (ISF) representing Major General Imad Othman. Press and reporters were also covering the event.

We had many people form Ehden and the neighboring villages joining, some brought their friends for a second round, also some of the tourists in town passed by to check out the new activity, after seeing flyers that Chady Yammine distributed on most of Ehden's hotels; Mr. Assaad Saadeh joined with his 2 kids, Mr. Jamil Koussa, a hiker from Ehden passed during one of his hikes, a group of hikers "Hike Queen" also made a stop at the spot and enjoyed the experience. Among our regular visitors we had

Mr. Chady Yammine, Mr. Sayed Marcos, Mr. Andre Ndaira, Mr. Paul Ndaira from Ehden, and Mr. Bachar Boka joined from Beirut 3 times. Mr. Michael Gisick, a videographer from USA, joined for 3 days, one of them with his wife and 2 kids. Mr. Mr Harold Zankl also joined the next day after the WMBD event. A group from LMT joined and members were delighted by what they witnessed, and showed big support to our work. Most of the participants were surprised by the numbers and species observed. It was clear that most participants were unaware of how important Lebanon is for migrating birds, highlighting the need for awareness training activities such as migration counts.



Panoramic view from the spot

© Samer Azar



Sayed Marcos, Mira Tadros, Samer Azar, Layla Yammine, Fouad Itani.

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Mr Przemyslaw Niesiolowski (Polish Ambassador) speech at the WMBD event.

Left to right: Roger Saad, Major Ismat Yassine, Sandra Koussa, Dalida Sneifer, Samer Azar, Fouad Itani, Tony Fenianos, Michael Cygan.



Mr. Fouad Itani talking to Al Jadeed TV during WMBD event.



Group from Aalmat – Jbeil



Group from LMT enjoying the migration.

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[Assaad Saadeh](#) with his kids

© Samer Azar



[Harold Zankl](#), delegate from UNSCOL

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Andre Ndaira Paul Ndaira, Bachar Boka

©Samer Azar



Joseph Saade, Dalida Sneifer, Johnny Fenianos

©ABCL



*Sayed Marcos, Challitah Tanios, Nadira Masri,
Chady Yamine, Andre Ndaira, Samer Azar*



*Mira Tadros, Layla Yamine
(Municipality of Zgharta Ehden)*



Group from "Hike Queen"

©Chady Yammine



Andre Ndaira, Michael Gisick

© Samer Azar



Michael Gisick's Daughter

© Samer Azar



Bachar Boka

© Samer Azar



Challitah Tanios, Nadira Masri

© Samer Azar



Jamil Koussa

© Samer Azar



Elsa Yazbeck Charabati (filming an episode about Ehden for her show 'Voyage Voyage')

© Samer Azar



Atef Azar

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5 COUNT SITE

Horsh ehden is a nature reserve located in north Lebanon, was declared important bird areas (IBA) in 1992. It contains a particularly diverse and beautiful remnant forest of the cedar of Lebanon. Located on the northwestern slopes of Mount Lebanon and pampered by mist and relatively high precipitation, a multitude of rare and endemic plants that flourish in it. Our spot is located on top of “Jabal el Sin” in the south east part of the reserve, overlooking a vast area from Kfar Hazir (south-west) to Akar plain (north-west) and Jered el 40 (north). Coordinates of the count site: 34°17'58.2"N 35°58'36.2"E, at an altitude of 1,750m

This location was chosen for the following reasons:

- The count site is within the municipality of Zgharta - Ehden and, most importantly, within the reserve. The local authorities fully support the project.

- It offers a view of 300 degrees from NE to the N, the W and the S. In clear weather Tripoli (20 km) and Palm Island 28 (km) can be seen. This makes it useful to cover different migration routes.
- Birds often fly close past the count site giving excellent views to novice birders and allowing excellent photography opportunities.
- In quiet days with few migrating birds to see you still have a stunning view over the reserve and surrounding villages, and nature around the spot is beautiful.
- Being within the reserve means that hunting is prohibited and there should be no hunters to bother us.
- The count site is easily accessible by car, as it is not far away from the entrance of the reserve, it takes only about 50 minutes to drive there from the center of Beirut. A short to medium level walk is required to reach the site.

The count site consists of a flat area on the hill side, with a flat rocky base. A simple outdoor tent 4x4m. It offers enough space for about 6 people to sit and count and move around, but the shade was not big enough when there were many visitors. The municipality offered a plastic table and six plastic chairs at the count site.

6 METEOROLOGY

The general weather conditions were effectively consistent for most of the count period, with minor daily changes in wind strength and direction as well as the development of haze, fog and clouds.

The weather during the days of counting was mainly dominated by high pressure. The mornings were normally very clear with no clouds at all. Later in the day, mainly around early afternoon, haze often crept in from the west (from the sea) and the visibility got worse. On some days the visibility remained good all day and some days the haze turned into high clouds. Also, not to forget the air pollution effects on visibility. However, sometimes we also experienced low clouds, which then covered our count site in fog so that we could not see anything at all and had to give up counting. There was rain on three days, so I had to stay in the hotel for the day, the wind was mainly light, except for some days. The prevailing wind direction was W to NW, but local winds sometimes changed according to thermal changes. On many days, there was a light easterly wind in the early morning that stopped about 9 or

10 am to give way to a westerly breeze. The temperatures were very pleasant from a birdwatching perspective, fresh in the morning and quite warm at noon, particularly in the sun, between 13 and 27°C. While the temperature at the site is manageable it is very exposed to the sun and artificial shade is needed.

The sudden changes in wind direction and force was extremely effective on bird's passage and routes, changing them some days from the coastline routes to high mountainous ones in seconds.



Clouds coming from the west

©Samer Azar



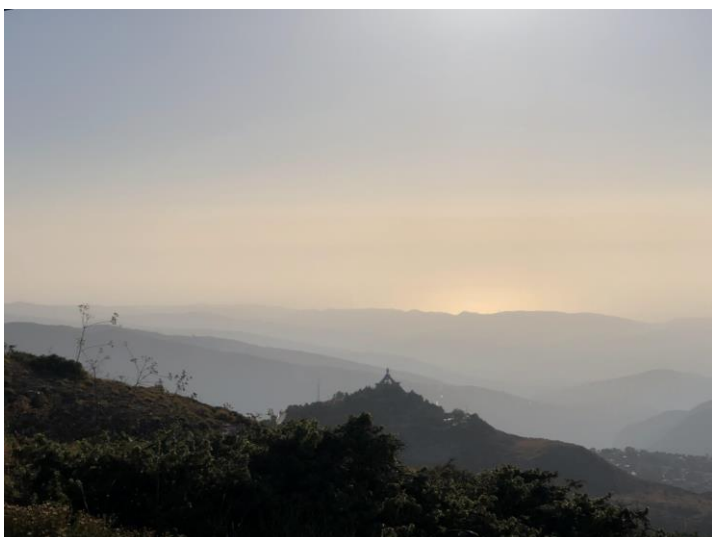
Clouds on the way to our spot

@Samer Azar



Seconds before full "blindness".

@Samer Azar



Saydet el Hosn with a light haze in the afternoon.

@Samer Azar



Pollution over Tripoli and the Costline

@Samer Azar

7 COUNTING

An account on Trektellen (<https://www.trektellen.nl/>) was set for raptors and soaring bird sightings, all the other species were submitted to eBird (www.ebird.org). Counting took place every day from the 18th of September to the 18th of October. We started daily between 8 and 9 am and finished in the late afternoon (exact times are available on Trektellen), depending on the weather conditions and the number of birds. The total observation time of those 30 days was 177 hours.

The count site was visited by a good number of people (skilled Lebanese bird watchers and Photographers, and nature lovers with no birding experience). We counted all raptors, storks, and bee-eaters that we could see and identify from the count site, even if they were far away. On some days we had excellent visibility, so we were able to identify birds up to 3 km away.

8 RECORDED SPECIES

8.1 DATA RECORDING

All recorded data for Raptors and Storks at the count site in Ehden is public and can be seen on the website of Trektellen: <https://www.trektellen.nl/species/totals/0/2876/20200926/20201003>

In addition to Trektellen, we submitted an eBird list for every day, for other birds, such as swallows and passerines. This data is also public and can be accessed here: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L12378303>.

8.2 RAPTORS

We recorded 24 species of raptors, some in their thousands, others only once or twice. Two species, Lesser Spotted Eagle and Levant Sparrowhawk, made up 24,040 out of the 29,556 raptors counted. Total numbers of the count might be considered moderate, though it must be remembered that the count was done mostly by one counter on site, other days we experienced periods of low visibility. However, the variation in different species in one day must be regarded as excellent.

That was both entertaining and also convincing for the site given the social and awareness raising aspects.

The following list shows the total number of these birds recorded at the count site:

English Name	Scientific name (Latin name)	Number Observed
Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	4
European Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	899
Short-toed Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	373
Lesser Spotted Eagle	<i>Clanga pomarina</i>	11,632
Greater Spotted Eagle	<i>Clanga clanga</i>	52
Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	33
Steppe Eagle	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>	16
Imperial Eagle	<i>Aquila heliaca</i>	2
Levant Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter brevipes</i>	12,804
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	566
Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	117
Pallid Harrier	<i>Circus macrourus</i>	6
Hen/Montagu's/Pallid Harrier		3
Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	1
Montagu's/Pallid Harrier		3
harrier sp.	<i>Circus</i>	5
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	1,865
Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>	6
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	16
Steppe Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo vulpinus</i>	293
buzzard sp.	<i>Buteo</i>	30
raptor sp.		1,110
MediumRaptor		14
Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	1
Common / Lesser Kestrel		2
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	24
Red-footed Falcon	<i>Falco vespertinus</i>	5
Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	52
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	5
Falcon sp.		13



GREATER SPOTTED EAGLE (*Clanga clanga*)



GREATER SPOTTED EAGLE (*Clanga clanga*)



GREATER SPOTTED EAGLE (*Clanga clanga*)

BOOTED EAGLE (*Hieraetus pennatus*) & GREATER SPOTTED EAGLE



BOOTED EAGLE (*Hieraetus pennatus*)

BOOTED EAGLE (*Hieraetus pennatus*)



BOOTED EAGLE (*Hieraetus pennatus*)



BOOTED EAGLE (*Hieraetus pennatus*) - Dark Morph



LESSER SPOTTED EAGLE (*Clanga pomarina*)



LESSER SPOTTED EAGLE (*Clanga pomarina*)



LESSER SPOTTED EAGLE (*Clanga pomarina*)





LESSER SPOTTED EAGLE (*Clanga pomarina*)



STEPPE EAGLE (*Aquila nipalensis*) - Subadult



STEPPE EAGLE (*Aquila nipalensis*)

STEPPE EAGLE (*Aquila nipalensis*) - Juvenile



EUROPEAN HONEY BUZZARD (*Pernis apivorus*) (Different Morphs)



EUROPEAN HONEY BUZZARD (*Pernis apivorus*) (Different Morph)



EUROPEAN HONEY BUZZARD (*Pernis apivorus*) (Different Morph)



EUROPEAN HONEY BUZZARD (*Pernis apivorus*) (Different Morph)



COMMON BUZZARD (*Buteo buteo*)



COMMON BUZZARD (*Buteo buteo*)



COMMON BUZZARD (*Buteo buteo*)



EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK (*Accipiter nisus*)

EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK (*Accipiter nisus*) - Adult Female



EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK (*Accipiter nisus*) - Adult Male



EURASIAN HOBBY (*Falco subbuteo*) - Adult Female



EURASIAN HOBBY (*Falco subbuteo*) - Adult Male



EURASIAN HOBBY (*Falco subbuteo*) - Adult Male



Mixed Flock of LEVANT SPARROWHAWK (*Accipiter brevipes*) & LESSER SPOTTED EAGLE (*Clanga pomarina*)



LEVANT SPARROWHAWK (*Accipiter brevipes*) - Juvenile



LEVANT SPARROWHAWK (*Accipiter brevipes*) - Adult Female



LEVANT SPARROWHAWK (*Accipiter brevipes*) - Juvenile



LEVANT SPARROWHAWK (*Accipiter brevipes*) - Adult Female



Cattle of LEVANT SPARROWHAWK (*Accipiter brevipes*)



WESTERN MARSH HARRIER (*Circus aeruginosus*) - Adult Male



WESTERN MARSH HARRIER (*Circus aeruginosus*) - Juvenile



WESTERN MARSH HARRIER (*Circus aeruginosus*) - Juvenile



PALLID HARRIER (*Circus macrourus*) - Juvenile



SHORT-TOED SNAKE EAGLE (*Circaetus gallicus*) - Juvenile



SHORT-TOED SNAKE EAGLE (*Circaetus gallicus*) - Adult



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SHORT-TOED SNAKE EAGLE (*Circaetus gallicus*) - Adult



Pascal Azar

EGYPTIAN VULTURE (*Neophron percnopterus*) - Juvenile



EGYPTIAN VULTURE (*Neophron percnopterus*) - Adult



EGYPTIAN VULTURE (*Neophron percnopterus*) - Juvenile



EASTERN IMPERIAL EAGLE (*Aquila heliaca*) - Juvenile



BLACK KITE (*Milvus migrans*)



PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*) - Adult Male



PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*) - Adult Male vs **NORTHERN RAVEN** (*Corvus corax*)



RED-FOOTED FALCON (*Falco vespertinus*) - Juvenile



RED-FOOTED FALCON (*Falco vespertinus*) - Adult Female



RED-FOOTED FALCON (*Falco vespertinus*) - Adult Female



RED-FOOTED FALCON (*Falco vespertinus*) - 2nd Winter Male



RED-FOOTED FALCON (*Falco vespertinus*) - Adult Female



COMMON KESTREL (*Falco tinnunculus*) - Adult Female



COMMON KESTREL (*Falco tinnunculus*) - Adult Male

8.3 CRANES, STORKS AND PELICANS

Except for the Great White Pelican, all the other species has been recorded this year, luckily the timing was perfect for the crane migration.

English Name	Scientific name (Latin name)	Number Observed
Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	18
White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	62
Common Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>	859



BLACK STORK (*Ciconia nigra*)



COMMON CRANE (*Grus grus*)

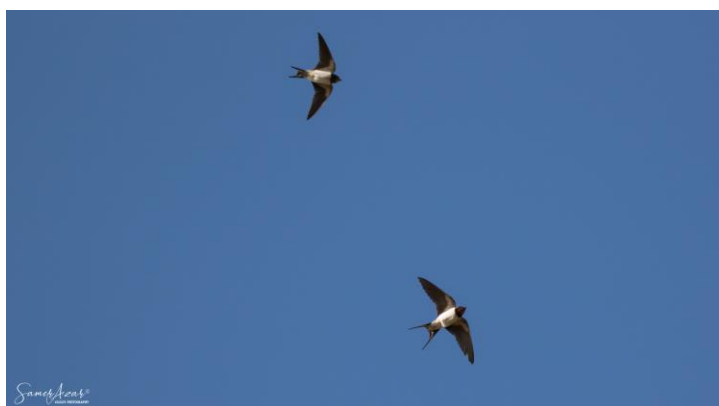
8.4 OTHER MIGRATING AND LOCAL BIRDS

In addition to the target birds of the count listed in chapters 8.2 and 8.3, we also recorded other birds that migrate by day and other species that can be found in the area. Barn Swallow and European Bee-eaters were the most abundant.

The following list shows the total number of these birds recorded at the count site. For full details see eBird lists:

English Name	Scientific name (Latin name)	Number Observed
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	2,967
Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>	5
Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	643
European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	2,440
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	46
Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>	5
Alpine Swift	<i>Apus melba</i>	21
Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	5
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	4
Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>	5
Masked Shrike	<i>Lanius nubicus</i>	3
Isabelline Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>	1
Finsch's Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe finschii</i>	1
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	1
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	4
Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	1
Rock Bunting	<i>Emberiza cia</i>	3
European Serin	<i>Serinus serinus</i>	9
Chukar	<i>Alectoris chukar</i>	Heard almost daily basis and seen once (10)
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	6
Western Rock Nuthatch	<i>Sitta neumayer</i>	16
Eurasian Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	9

Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	3
Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	81
Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	18
Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	2
Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	1
White-spectacled Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus xanthopygos</i>	1
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Curruca curruca</i>	3
Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>	1
Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	13
Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	3
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	7
Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>	3
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	10
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	2
Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	3

EUROPEAN BEE-EATER (*Merops apiaster*)BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*)



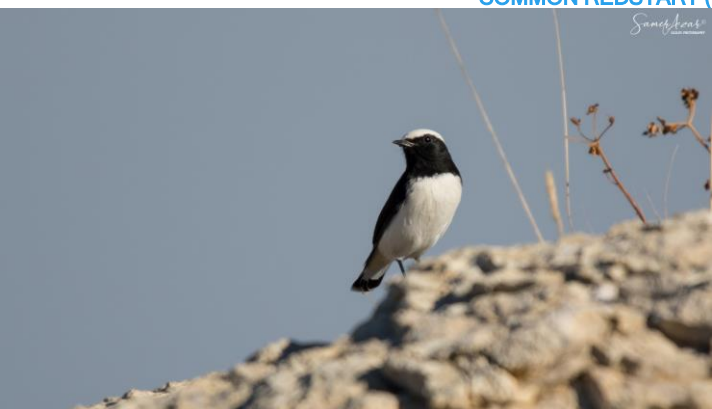
RED-BACKED SHRIKE (*Lanius collurio*)



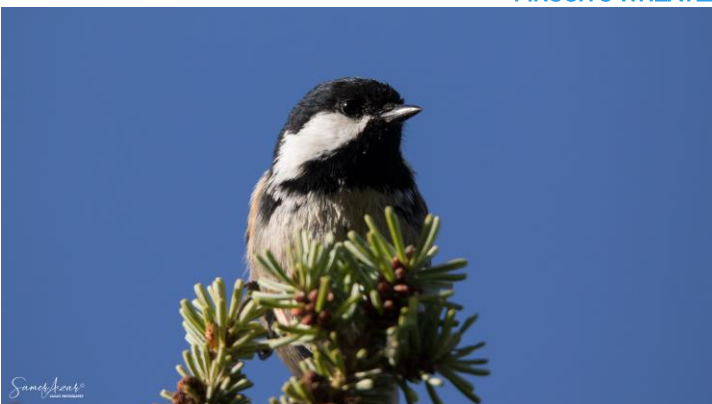
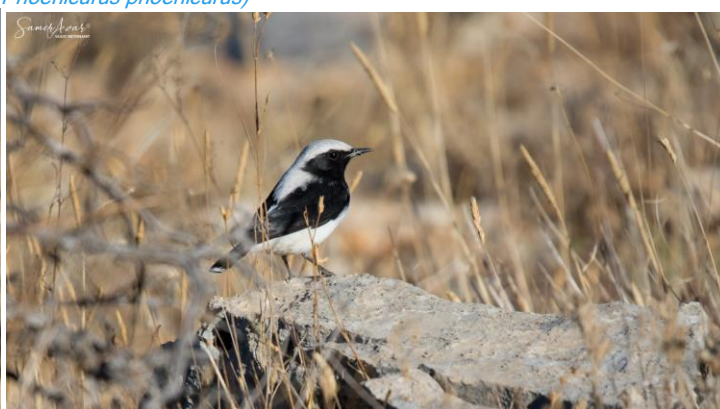
WILLOW WARBLER (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)



COMMON REDSTART (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)



FINSCH'S WHEATEAR (*Oenanthe finschii*)



COAL TIT (*Parus ater*)



8.5 DISCUSSION

The total numbers were ok for this year, however if we have had counted the European Honey Buzzards, it would've been much higher. I strongly believe that the results are valuable and they clearly demonstrate the potential of longer counts at Ehden. The chosen site in Ehden sits high with extensive views towards the north and west, past experience has shown that the raptor stream along the western slopes of Mount Lebanon is intensive here. The weather during the period was mostly fine for raptor migration.

Some factors might have affected the numbers of birds observed;

1. Low clouds and fog disrupted visibility in the afternoon during a good number for days.
2. At noon birds flew too high for us to see due to perfect thermals.
3. Mostly the count was done by one qualified person on site, which makes it hard to cover the whole area properly, especially on days where the migration was going strong and fast, this definitely led to a 10 to 15 % decline in numbers observed.

It is possible that the raptor passage over Lebanon takes place on a geographically wide east-west front across the country. Depending on winds, weather and visibility the best observation places vary from day to day, but the Ehden site remains better than any other we are currently aware of for migration counting.

With 24 species of raptors we recorded a good selection of species. Levant Sparrowhawk was the most abundant raptor with 12,408 individuals, followed by Lesser Spotted Eagle with 11,632 individuals recorded. The majority of the populations of these two species migrate along the eastern Mediterranean, and Lebanon is in the center of their flyway.

9 EVALUATION

Looking back at our targets; and despite all the setbacks we faced; we can conclude that we have achieved most of them well, but of course there is room for improvement.

We have improved our knowledge of raptor migration through this area, as indicated previously. We counted a good number of migratory soaring birds, composed of a wide range of species. The most important finding is that migration across the Lebanon doesn't necessarily happen on a narrow front although in a wider perspective, the Lebanon itself is a kind of a bottle neck), but migration happens anywhere between the coastline and the mountains of the Anti-Lebanon. The width of the country varies from 50 to 80 kilometers and has different altitudes from the sea up to high mountains (3,000m) with deep and narrow valleys as well as the wide valley of Bekaa. This landscape forms many thermals and offers many options for the birds to find their best route according to the weather situation. So, they will not always migrate on the same local routes. However, we believe that our site in Ehden proved to be a good spot for counting and will benefit from longer term efforts.

The economic benefits for Ehden this year was not to be ignored, during the 30 days count period, we had at least 15 persons renting accommodation in the town, we all had our dinner in the town restaurants, Ehden has some good places to enjoy food with different cuisine, to name some of them:

- Ehden Resto Café, Situated at 1568 m height above sea level, just near Saydet Ehden Church with one of the best mountain views, serving home-style food, whether oriental or international.
- Reef Ehden, surrounded by nature, with great traditional Lebanese food, some local specialties and one of the best views.
- Platanus, international cuisine, located on Al Midan, (the Roulade plate is a must try!!!!).
- Sahlab Airout, located on Al Midan, for cold nights nothing better than sahlab to warm up.
- Teshreen Resto, perfect place for breakfast.

Plenty of other places to enjoy food, but these should be on top of the list.

10 INTERPRETATION

If the project to continue for another year, we need to have better preparations and higher commitment from all partners. Lots of experience has been gained by this year's project and numerous contacts have been established. There is a lot of goodwill that we need to build on!

The main future goals for this project can be identified as:

- Develop the Birdwatching concept and engage more local people as birding guides, Chady Yammine showed interest in learning, and he was with us most of the time helping
- Build bird watching skills for the reserve guides, that's why we need them to participate more.
- Raise awareness of birds (in particular bird migration) and thereby contribute to better protection of birds and stop illegal hunting, especially in the nearby villages.
- Create income for the local economy by establishing some kind of ecotourism in Ehden, with activities in the reserve and around the village, including bird watching and nature spotting: During our stay in Ehden, we had to cover for food and petrol, around 12,000,000 LL were spent by one person on these, in addition we had more than 12 people coming to Ehden and reserving rooms in different Hotels in Ehden (rental between 40 & 60\$ per night). During our 2 events, we ordered food from a local caterer, which costed around 3,000,000LL. After the count, I stayed in Ehden for an extra day, had a tour in the reserve with one of the best hiking guides in Ehden, Chady Yammine from North Trail Hiking Group, we also had a lot of discovering and walking inside the town with information about the history, if you are going to visit Ehden and the nearby villages, look no more, he is the one to help you.
- Attract international bird watchers by continuing bird migration counts in Ehden and the nearby villages, and thereby putting Lebanon onto the international bird watching map: We had a lot of positive feedback through our social media from avid international Birdwatcher on our work and the numbers submitted during our count.

There are many ways to achieve these goals and things have to be taken step by step, especially considering the current crises in Lebanon.

For next autumn, the following steps could be done:

- Secure a second full time counter is a must, this would increase accuracy and scope of the count.
- Prepare appropriate teaching materials and presentations that are available at the count site for visitors.
- Improve information and infrastructure (parking, signs, and toilet) at the count site.
- Establish a nature trail with information panels along the path to the count site.
- Receive groups and schools at the count site and schedule these visits properly.
- Do another migratory bird count next autumn in Ehden and other count sites in area.
- Organize a bird tour for foreign bird watchers during autumn migration.

In a later stage, the following steps could be done:

- Do a migratory bird count in spring in Ehden and thereby explore the opportunities for spring migration.
- Establish more bird watching opportunities around Ehden, especially in the forest at lower altitudes.
- Extend walking trails within the reserve but also around the village of Ehden.
- Invite young birdwatchers from other Middle East countries to join.

In the future, strong international partner is needed (or a group of international partners), to fund it, other partners should be involved, but the lead will be by ABCL and LBWT.

11 ACKNOWLEDGMENT

All in all, we experienced a great time in Ehden. We not only saw a lot of interesting birds, but we also met a lot of very friendly people, and we experienced fantastic hospitality with excellent food. This wouldn't have been possible without the help of numerous people who opened doors for us and made us feel at home.

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Until next time ...