SPRING RAPTOR MIGRATION IN DADIA NATIONAL PARK, NE-GREECE: WHERE DO THEY COME FROM, WHERE DO THEY GO?

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Migrating raptors and Black Storks (*Ciconia nigra*) were studied in Dadia National Park (Dadia NP), NE Greece, during spring 2003, 2004 and 2005. Vantage point surveys were used to record the flights of the migrating birds to evaluate 1) the numbers of individuals per species, 2) the migration phenology, 3) the best migration spotting points, and 4) the direction of migrating raptors. We observed 23 migrating species and 2030 migrating individuals, including among others 715 Common Buzzards (*Buteo buteo*), 547 Black Storks, 136 Short-toed Eagles (*Circaetus gallicus*), 124 Eurasian Sparrowhawks (*Accipiter nisus*), and 114 Honey Buzzards (*Pernis apivorus*). We found an overall decline from 739 individuals in 2003 to 629 in 2005 and detected species specific migration peaks starting at the second half of March, e.g. Common Buzzard, Short-toed Eagle, Black Stork and Sparrowhawk, and ending early May, e.g. Levant Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter brevipes*), Red-footed Falcon (*Falco vespertinus*), Honey Buzzard, and Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*). Most of the raptors were observed from vantage points close to the river Evros, which might function as an important migration route for several species. The mean direction of passing raptors was north (359°). We discuss how our results match with species' numbers, proportions and phenology at Bosphorus, Dardanelles and other entering points into the Balkan Peninsula. Not least because of the current wind farm development, a systematic migration monitoring should be established in Eastern Thrace and along the Greek side of the river Evros to determine the most important flyways and stopover areas in the region.