

birds in June is relatively low, but in 2006 there was a 100% success rate in June on five trips between 11th and 28th, producing 20 birds. Overall success rate was lowest in 2003 (19 individuals from 59 trips), highest in 2006 (66 individuals from 47). Annual variation is to be expected given that winter snow may arrive early in the Antarctic forcing the early departure of Antarctic breeders, and that there is a multitude of poorly understood oceanic factors that influence migration between Antarctic and sub-antarctic breeding grounds and Scilly.

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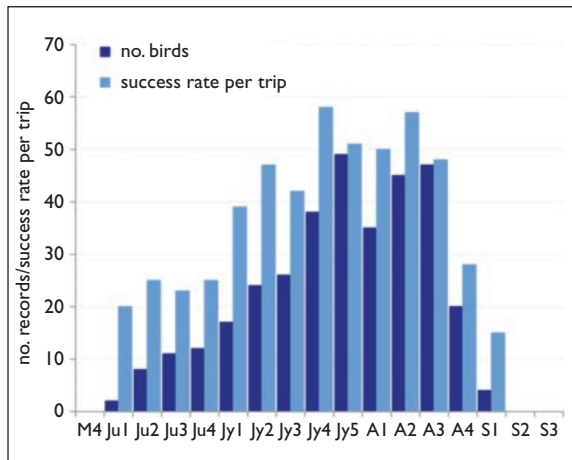


Fig. 2. Cumulative total of Wilson's Storm-petrels *Oceanites oceanicus* recorded off Scilly in particular weeks of the spring/summer period, 2000–09. Dark blue bars show the actual number of records. Pale blue bars show the percentage of trips in that week when at least one Wilson's was recorded (success rate, derived from table 1; note that week numbers relate to those in table 1 also).

First breeding record of North African Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus cirtensis* in continental Europe

Two subspecies of the Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus* are recognised. Nominate *rufinus* is a partial migrant, and occurs from the Balkans and Asia Minor to western Mongolia and northwest India, while the smaller and less well-known *B. r. cirtensis* inhabits North Africa, from Mauritania and Morocco to Egypt (del Hoyo *et al.* 1994). The latter is regarded as sedentary and dispersive, but has recently been found breeding on Pantelleria, in the Sicilian Channel, 70 km north of Tunisia (Corso 2009). In Spain, the species is rare, and the distribution of records has a marked southerly bias (de Juana 2006). The closest African breeding grounds are on Morocco's Tangier Peninsula (thus within 20 km of the Iberian Peninsula), where the species is uncommon to locally common (Thévenot *et al.* 2003). In recent years, sporadic breeding attempts have been recorded in Ceuta (an autonomous Spanish city on the southern shore of the Strait), and nesting was confirmed there in 2004 (Ávila *et al.* 2004;

Cambelo 2008).

Prior to our observations, there has been no recent or historical record of the Long-legged Buzzard, which is listed as Vulnerable in Europe (BirdLife International 2004), breeding in the Iberian Peninsula (Martí & del Moral 2003). However, during the last decade, there have been an increasing number of observations from the Spanish shore of the Strait and here we report the first confirmed breeding of *cirtensis* in the Iberian Peninsula (and continental Europe).

Methods

During 2008 and 2009, a 5 km² area within Parque Natural del Estrecho (Cádiz, Spain) was monitored regularly. It is a densely forested area of predominantly Cork Oak *Quercus suber* and Olive *Olea europaea* groves, with narrow valleys, sandstone cliffs and scrubby pastures (with *Erica* and *Cistus* spp.). The altitude ranges from sea level to 360 m. Regular observations were carried out

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220 & 221. Breeding Long-legged Buzzards *Buteo rufinus cirtensis*, Parque Natural del Estrecho, southern Spain, July 2009 (above, adult; below, fledged juvenile).

by experienced ornithologists from fixed watchpoints and along road transects. Field notes and digital photographs were used to facilitate individual recognition of birds.

Results

During 2008, there were 35 records of Long-legged Buzzards. In January, three individuals were seen together, and a displaying pair was seen in March. In October–November one was seen performing territorial flights (diving and calling) and on two occasions a

second individual was observed simultaneously. However, there was no confirmed evidence of breeding in 2008.

In April 2009, a displaying pair was seen again. Then, on 18th July, an adult was located calling loudly and persistently, and at the same time the calls of two fledglings were heard, from a densely forested area. Two fledglings were observed on two separate occasions on 20th July, both times being fed by an adult. On 27th July, two fledglings and one adult were observed soaring in a neighbouring area. The nest was not found but our observations suggest that it may have been in a Cork Oak (Long-legged Buzzard is typically a cliff-nesting species, but will occasionally breed in trees).

At the time of writing, early in the 2010 season, tentative evidence of

breeding has been detected in several possible territories over a broader area, but these records have yet to be confirmed.

Discussion

This appears to constitute the first breeding record of *cirtensis* in continental Europe. Ornithologists have visited the Strait of Gibraltar regularly during the last two centuries (e.g. Irby 1895, Verner 1909, Bernis 1980, Barros & Ríos 2008), yet there are no recent or historical references to the breeding

of Long-legged Buzzard on the European shore. Although this constitutes a short-distance expansion of the species' range, it is a major step in biogeographical terms, since the Strait is still an important barrier separating North African and European flora and fauna. This may be just an isolated event, or perhaps the beginnings of a northwards colonisation in response to a changing climate. The more regular appearance of the species in this region in recent years, together with the recent colonisation of Pantelleria (Corso 2009), suggests that the latter explanation may be the case.

During the past few decades, the Iberian Peninsula has been colonised by other African bird species, such as the Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*, White-rumped Swift *Apus caffer* and Little Swift *A. affinis* (Ferrero 1996; Ramírez *et al.* 2002; Martí & del Moral 2003). In each case, the initial records were concentrated around the Strait of Gibraltar, but the species have now spread much more widely throughout Spain. Similarly, most of the rapidly increasing number of Spanish records of vagrant Rüppell's Vulture *Gyps rueppellii* occur around the Strait of Gibraltar (de Juana 2006; Ramírez 2009). In this context, this area becomes a potential focal point for the colonisation of Europe by African species. If our climate continues to warm, further arrivals of potential colonist African bird species to the European shore of the Strait are to be expected.

Acknowledgments

We should like to thank ornithologists from Fundación Migres who participated in the fieldwork; Andrea Corso and Dick Forsman for their help with the birds'

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subspecific identification; Stephen Daily (Andalucian Guides) for sharing his data; G. Muñoz (Fundación Migres) and K. L. Bildstein (Hawk Mountain Sanctuary) for valuable comments on an earlier version of this article; and J. D. Wright for improving our English.

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Rapid moult to breeding plumage by a first-summer Curlew Sandpiper

There are very few data on the time taken for any species of wader to moult to breeding plumage, since it is usually difficult to follow the progress of moult shown by any particular individual, so the following seems worthy of record.

Hitoshi Naya found a Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* largely in non-breeding

plumage, but in the process of moulting to breeding plumage, at Otsu River, Japan (Izumitsu City, Osaka Prefecture), on 9th May 2009. Curlew Sandpipers are uncommon in Japan in spring, as in the East Asian–Australasian Flyway they move inland on reaching China, thus largely avoiding Korea and Japan (Minton 1998; Minton *et al.*