

Agostini N., Coleiro Ch., Panuccio M. 2003. *Autumn migration of Marsh Harriers (Circus aeruginosus) across the Central Mediterranean in 2002*. Ring 25, 1-2: 47-52.

Abstract

Observations on the autumn migration of the Marsh Harrier were made at two sites of the central Mediterranean: the Circeo promontory (central Italy) and the island of Malta. The aim was to investigate the passage of birds belonging to different sex and age classes. At the Circeo promontory a total of 787 individuals was counted, 37.5% of which were juveniles. Over the island of Malta the passage of 1535 Marsh Harriers was recorded with an evident peak comprising 906 birds on 13 September. At both sites males outnumbered females, mostly within the first half of September. Because, at least among adults, an imbalance towards females has been reported in the population wintering in central Europe, our results suggest that adult males could have a stronger tendency to migrate over a long distance, crossing the central Mediterranean area in large numbers. Whereas females, being larger than males, are able to tolerate colder temperatures and fast longer. Finally, our counts confirm the increase of the European population of the Marsh Harrier, which has occurred for the last three decades.

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Key words: migration, Marsh Harrier, *Circus aeruginosus*, Central Mediterranean