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Abstracts and program



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IMPORTANCE OF THE RIVER DANUBE FOR SOME DUCK SPECIES DURING THE WINTERING PERIOD IN SERBIA

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Large river systems show great importance for wintering birds. One of such wintering refuges for many duck species is the river Danube. Within its flow through Serbia, it very rarely completely freezes over, therefore it provides secure food and shelter for various wintering migrants. During the administering of International Waterbird Census (IWC), on the Serbian part of the Danube the most numerous waterbirds were ducks, both diving ducks and surface feeding ducks. This paper shows which were the most numerous duck species recorded on the river, so that better protection of particular sites and species can be conducted. The IWC results collected for 2010, 2012 and 2013 were compared together with the same years with countries within the IWC region: Eastern Mediterranean/Black Sea. Within the Region, the results show that the greatest numbers of Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) were recorded in 2010 and 2012 mostly at the upper part of the Danube. Common pochard (*Aythya ferina*) and Smew (*Mergus albellus*) were recorded as the most numerous in Eastern Mediterranean/Black Sea in 2010 at the lower part of the river, where it shows greater depth. At last, Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*) occurred at lower part of the river as well, in 2010, 2012, 2013. Although none of the studied species is listed as endangered on the global level, their appearance at Serbian portion of the Danube during the wintering period is very important. The river provides food and shelter for more than 60% of the Eastern Mediterranean/Black Sea regional wintering populations of Smew and Goldeneye, while Mallard and Common Pochard even if occurring in less percentage, do not have to be neglected for they deserve protection too and reduction of hunting pressure.