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The principal migration routes of Eurasian birds - With a focus on Israel and Central Europe

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Israel is a small country, yet it blessed with an extremely varied wildlife. Its avifauna is especially plentiful, with well over 485 species of birds recorded during various seasons of the year. Lying at the crossroads of one of the main migration routes from Africa to the Palearctic, Israel attracts many species of migrant birds, often in huge numbers. It is situated at the meeting point of three continents - Europe, Asia and Africa. Israel's avifauna includes representatives from all three of them, as well as species of this region alone. It is one of the best places in the world for watching a great variety of migrating birds within a small geographical area. Several excursions have been made by the author to Israel during spring migration in March and April. Depictions of the highest seasonal totals of the six most abundant raptors over Israel in autumn and spring are shown, as well as figures of migration routes and major watch points. The Marburg area has always been on the classical migration route of the Common Crane and other bird species, too. Systematic counts of migrating birds have been performed since 1987. Especially migrating cranes were counted at a width of some 80 km using binoculars and strongly magnifying telescopes. From 1987 until 2014 the number of cranes increased continuously. The biggest ever count was registered in autumn 2014 when more than 240,000 cranes crossed the Marburg area and surroundings in central Hesse (Germany). The Marburg area is one of the best places in Germany for watching these huge numbers of cranes as well as other migrating birds. There is also a great variety of resting birds especially in the Lahn Valley and Ohm Valley near Marburg but we never registered a case of fowl pest in our area. My opinion is, to change the industrial bird breeding, especially the large scale poultry farming, into a more biological one with freer living chicken, geese and ducks. This should be a possibility to prevent the distribution of the avian flu!

Biography

Martin Kraft is professor in Philipps University of Marburg, Germany. He is Ornithologist and his research is mainly focus on migration of birds.

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