

New record of White-tailed lapwing (*Vanellus leucurus* Lichtenstein, 1823) on the south Black Sea shore in Bulgaria

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Abstract. Two adult individuals of the White-tailed lapwing (*Vanellus leucurus*) were observed on 26.04.2022 on the sand beach near Veleka River mouth.

Key words: *Vanellus leucurus*, vagrants, Black Sea.

Introduction

The White-tailed Lapwing is categorized globally as “Least Concern” species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (BirdLife International, 2020). It breeds in Central Asia most western to Iraq and winters in northeast Africa and India (Wiersma & Kirwan, 2020). The occurrence of this species in Europe is accidental, although in 2000 seven nests were found in several small colonies in the region of the Danube Delta in Romania (Kiss & Szabo, 2000). In Bulgaria most observations occur along the Black Sea coast, but there are records from the Sofia region where the species was discovered for the first time in the country (Hristov *et al.*, 1999). The species was also observed near Obnova fishponds, Pleven region and in Blagoevgrad region (Shurulinkov *et al.*, 2005).

Material and Methods

The observation was carried out on sunset of 26 April 2022 on the sand beach near Sinemorets village, in the Veleka River Mouth Protected Area. We used binocular “Nikon Action 10x50” and the photographs were taken with a digital camera “Nikon CoolPix P900”. The weather was overall sunny with passing clouds and the daily temperatures reached 16 C.

Results and Discussion

Two White-tailed Lapwings were observed staging and feeding on the sand split between the Veleka River mouth and the Black Sea coast around 19:30 h.

This site falls in a protected area that is part of Nature Park “Strandzha” and is defined as a priority wetland of national importance. It is also part of the protected zone “Strandzha” designated under the European Union Birds Directive from Natura 2000 network.

The birds were together with six black-winged stilts (*Himantopus himantopus* Linnaeus, 1758) and one white wagtail (*Motacilla alba* Linnaeus, 1758). To our knowledge, that observation is the southernmost of this species along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast.



Fig. 1. Two individuals of White-tailed lapwing (*Vanellus leucurus*) staging on the beach near Veleka River mouth, 26.04.2022 (Photo by Yana Yordanova).

In the same year, there was an overall increase in sightings of white-tailed lapwings in Bulgaria and especially along the Black Sea coast. Few days before our observation six individuals were found by Pavel Simeonov in Shabla Lake area (BUNARCO, 2022). Another sighting occurred at Pomorie Lake (BBF, 2022) and later another one at Poda Reserve near the town of Burgas (BSPB, 2022). This appears to be some influx of the species, where they travel far away from their breeding grounds expanding over new territories.

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