

## SHORT COMMUNICATION

### Marine and coastal birds of the Istanbul Strait

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#### Abstract

The Istanbul Strait is an important bird area where 61 bird species can be observed during the year. In this study, 40 marine and coastal birds easily observed and identified in the Istanbul Strait are presented.

**Key words:** Istanbul Strait, sea birds, bird migration.

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#### Introduction

The Istanbul Strait (Bosphorus) shows dynamic flow both in water as currents and in air. Native and migratory birds fly, swim and dive in this region each day of the year. Some feed, some settle down and breed, while others use this area just for a few hours. Ertan *et al.* (1989), Eken (1997), and Öztürk and Öztürk (1996), Kılıç and Eken (2004), Boyla and Aslan (2008) and Ertan (2008) reported the seabirds of the Istanbul Strait. This is an important bird area accepted undisputedly by all local, national, and foreign birdwatchers. During migration periods, hundreds of thousands birds can be seen over the strait. As the number of species, approximately 200 bird species pass over Istanbul.

It is possible to observe both bird species and their habitats that are conserved by national and international legislations and agreements (Heath *et al.* 2000). There are 61 bird species which can be observed in the Istanbul Strait during the year. In this short communication, the most common and easily observed 40 marine and coastal bird species are presented. Other 21 species, which use the region only temporarily are mostly shore birds, are not included. Those are migratory birds which generally migrate to north during fall and south during spring.

**Table 1.** Marine and coastal sea birds of Istanbul Strait

| <b>English</b>           | <b>Latin</b>   | <b>Turkish</b>        |
|--------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Red-Throated Diver       | <i>Gavia stellata</i> Pontoppidan 1763                         | Kızıl Gerdanlı Dalgıç |
| Black-Throated Diver     | <i>Gavia arctica</i> Linnaeus 1758                             | Kara Gerdanlı Dalgıç  |
| Great Crested Grebe      | <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> Linnaeus 1758                        | Bahri                 |
| Red-Necked Grebe         | <i>Podiceps grisegena</i> Boddaert 1783                        | Kızıl Boyunlu Batağan |
| Black-Necked Grebe       | <i>Podiceps nigricollis</i> C. L. Brehm 1831                   | Kara Boyunlu Batağan  |
| Yelkouan Shearwater      | <i>Puffinus yelkouan</i> Acerbi 1827 NT                        | Yelkovan              |
| Cormorant                | <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> Linnaeus 1758                       | Karabatak             |
| Shag                     | <i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i> Linnaeus 1761                 | Tepeli Karabatak      |
| White Pelican            | <i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i> Linnaeus 1758                     | Ak Pelikan            |
| Night Heron              | <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i> Linnaeus 1758                     | Gece Balıkçılı        |
| Squacco Heron            | <i>Ardeola ralloides</i> Scopoli 1769                          | Alaca Balıkçıl        |
| Little Egret             | <i>Egretta garzetta</i> Linnaeus 1766                          | Küçük Ak Balıkçıl     |
| Great White Egret        | <i>Egretta alba</i> Linnaeus 1758                              | Büyük Ak Balıkçıl     |
| Grey Heron               | <i>Ardea cinerea</i> Linnaeus 1758                             | Gri Balıkçıl          |
| Purple Heron             | <i>Ardea purpurea</i> Linnaeus 1766                            | Erguvani Balıkçıl     |
| Mute Swan                | <i>Cygnus olor</i> Gmelin 1789                                 | Kuğu                  |
| Common Teal              | <i>Anas crecca</i> Linnaeus 1758                               | Çamurcun              |
| Garganey                 | <i>Anas querquedula</i> Linnaeus 1758                          | Çıkrıkçın             |
| Tufted Duck              | <i>Aythya fuligula</i> Linnaeus 1758                           | Tepeli Patka          |
| Scaup                    | <i>Aythya marila</i> Linnaeus 1761                             | Karabaş Patka         |
| Red-Breasted Merganser   | <i>Mergus serrator</i> Linnaeus 1758                           | Tarakdiş              |
| Coot                     | <i>Fulica atra</i> Linnaeus 1758                               | Sakarmeke             |
| Oystercatcher            | <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> Linnaeus 1758                     | Poyrazkuşu            |
| Great Black-Headed Gull  | <i>Larus ichthyaetus</i> Pallas 1773                           | Büyük Karabaş Martı   |
| Mediterranean Gull       | <i>Larus melanocephala</i> Temminck 1820                       | Akdeniz Martısı       |
| Little Gull              | <i>Larus minutus</i> Pallas 1776                               | Küçük Martı           |
| Black-Headed Gull        | <i>Larus ridibundus</i> Linnaeus 1766                          | Karabaş Martı         |
| Slender-Billed Gull      | <i>Larus genei</i> C. L. Brehm 1839                            | İncegagalı Martı      |
| Common Gull (Mew Gull)   | <i>Larus canus</i> Linnaeus 1758                               | Küçük Gümüş Martı     |
| Lesser Black-Backed Gull | <i>Larus fuscus</i> Linnaeus 1758                              | Karasırtlı Martı      |
| Yellow-Legged Gull       | <i>Larus cachinnans</i> Pallas 1811                            | Gümüş Martı           |
| Sterna Nilotica          | <i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i> Gmelin 1789                       | Gülen Sumru           |
| Caspian Tern             | <i>Sterna caspia</i> ( <i>Hydroprogne caspia</i> ) Pallas 1770 | Hazar Sumrusu         |
| Sandwich Tern            | <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i> Latham 1787                         | Kara Gagalı Sumru     |
| Common Tern              | <i>Sterna hirundo</i> Linnaeus 1758                            | Sumru                 |
| Little Tern              | <i>Sterna albifrons</i> Pallas 1764                            | Küçük Sumru           |
| Whiskered Tern           | <i>Chlidonias hybridus</i> Pallas 1811                         | Bıyıklı Sumru         |
| Black Tern               | <i>Chlidonias niger</i> Linnaeus 1758                          | Kara Sumru            |
| White-Winged Tern        | <i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i> (Temminck 1815)                  | Ak Kanatlı Sumru      |
| Kingfisher               | <i>Alcedo atthis</i> Linnaeus 1758                             | Yalıçapkını           |

## Results

Due to the increasing human population and subsequently losing natural habitats, the Istanbul Strait can lose its quality as an important sea area. Migratory bird species need special areas for resting, feeding, and sheltering in difficult weather conditions. Disruptions in this area caused by human activities may prevent their migration. The Istanbul Strait known as the most significant bird area is increasingly difficult for native and migratory bird species.

Especially, skyscrapers on the top of the surrounding hills, high-voltage lines and bridges over the strait, effect bird migrations adversely. This small but also very important area in which 61 marine and coastal bird species can be seen must be well protected. Increase in the number of concerned people, transferring observation results to related management authorities as well as active participation of non-governmental organizations are very important in activating conservation actions on paper to real life. The Istanbul Strait with dynamic habitats of coasts, sea and air space has an unprecedented value which indeed needs special protection.

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## İstanbul Boğazı'nın deniz ve kıyı kuşları

### Özet

İstanbul Boğazı 61 kuş türünün yıl içinde görülüp izlenebileceği önemli bir kuş alanıdır. Bu çalışmada İstanbul Boğazı'nda kuşları gözlemek isteyenlerin kolaylıkla görüp teşhis koyacağı 40 deniz ve kıyı kuşu belirtilmektedir. Önemli kuş alanlarında yapılacak gözlemler yeni türlerin ve populasyonların izlenmesinde, bilime kazandırılmasında etkili olmaktadır.

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