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ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ / RESEARCH ARTICLE

## EVALUATION OF BIRD WATCHING TOURISM FROM DIFFERENT ASPECTS

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### Abstract

*In today's conditions, people are crushed under the stress of city life. For this reason, it strives to reintegrate with nature and to raise awareness at every opportunity, and also contributes to the development of rural development. For this purpose, the concept of eco-tourism comes to the fore in terms of introducing ecosystems to people. Ecotourism is an important tool in raising awareness about the protection of the ecosystems they live in by the people who live in touch with nature. There are many activities within the scope of eco-tourism in Turkey. Bird watching is a meaningful activity among them. Bird watching tourism, as a branch of eco-tourism, is constantly developing and constitutes the largest group of eco tourists. On average, birdwatchers are well-educated, well-income, and deeply committed to what they do. Bird watching tourism is developing day by day and gaining importance. For this reason, in this study, the importance of bird watching tourism, its development, the points to be considered during observation, bird watching areas in Turkey, ecological and economic effects of bird watching will be discussed. In addition, it is aimed to contribute to a small extent in raising the consciousness of nature to human beings. Moreover, with alternative tourism, it is aimed to support the possibility of tourism in all seasons, to gain sensitivity to living things, the existence of different working areas, and to increase bird watching tourism, which is very rare in Turkey.*

**Keywords:** *Ecotourism, Bird, Bird Watching, Nature, Economic Impact*

## KUŞ GÖZLEM TURİZMİNİN FARKLI YÖNLERDEN DEĞERLENDİRİLMESİ

### Özet

*Günümüz koşullarında insanlar kent yaşamının stresi altında ezilmektedir. Bu nedenle her fırsatta uzaklaşmış olduğu doğa ile yeniden bütünleşme ve bilinçlenme çabası içinde olmakta ve aynı zamanda kırsal kalkınmanın da gelişmesine katkıda bulunmaktadır.*

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*Bu amaçla insanlara ekosistemlerin tanıtılması yönünden eko-turizm kavramı ön plana çıkmaktadır. Eko-turizm, doğa ile iç içe yaşayan kişilerin, içinde yaşadıkları ekosistemlerin ilk olarak kendileri tarafından korunması konusunda farkındalık geliştirilmesinde önemli bir araçtır. Türkiye’de eko-turizm kapsamında birçok faaliyet mevcuttur. Kuş gözlemciliği bunlar arasında anlamlı bir faaliyettir. Kuş gözlem turizmi, eko-turizmin bir dalı olarak sürekli gelişme göstermekte ve en büyük eko-turist grubunu oluşturmaktadır. Ortalama olarak kuş gözlemciler iyi eğitilmiş, iyi gelirli ve yaptıkları faaliyete gönülden bağlı olan insanlardır. Kuş gözlem turizmi, yerel halk için ekonomi, çevresel durumun geliştirilmesi, biyoçeşitliliğin önemi konusunda yerel halkın eğitimi, başarılı koruma ve doğal alanların muhafazasında yerel ve ulusal teşvikin sağlanmasında yüksek potansiyel oluşturmaktadır. Kuş gözlem turizmi, gün geçtikçe artan bir gelişme göstermekte ve önem kazanmaktadır. Bu nedenle yapılan bu çalışmada kuş gözlem turizminin önemi, gelişimi, gözlem sırasında dikkat edilmesi gereken hususlar, Türkiye’deki kuş gözlem alanları, kuş gözlemciliğinin ekolojik ve ekonomik etkileri tartışılacaktır. Ayrıca insanoğluna doğa bilincinin kazandırılması konusunda bir nebze de olsa katkı sağlamak amaçlanmaktadır. Dahası alternatif turizm ile turizmin her mevsim yapılabilme imkânı, canlılara karşı duyarlılık kazanma, farklı çalışma alanlarının varlığı, Türkiye’de çok az olan kuş gözlem turizminin artırılması konusunda destek olabilmek hedeflenmektedir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Ekoturizm, Kuş, Kuş Gözlemciliği, Doğa, Ekonomik Etki

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism activities in the world are increasing very rapidly. When the data of the United Nations World Tourism Organization is examined, it is stated that over 1.3 billion people participated in tourism activities in 2017. In 2030, it is predicted that the existing number will increase to 1.8 billion people (Arslan and Kendir, 2019; UNWTO, 2018).

Tourism activities, which are of great importance for economically developing countries, constitute an important source of income for the economies of countries. Since Turkey has the status of developing countries, tourism activities constitute an important share in Turkey's general economy (Arslan and Kendir, 2019).

In addition to mass tourism activities carried out with resources such as sea, sand and sun in Turkey, it also has unique alternative tourism opportunities with history, culture, art, natural beauties and local people (Aknay et al., 2022; Eroğlu, 2018; Genç and Seven, 2020; Güngör, 2022; Nemutlu 2028). In this direction, ecotourism, also called eco-friendly tourism movement, which gives priority to nature and local people in recent years, has started to come to the fore in Turkey (Karataş and Altunel, 2017). Especially in recent years, efforts have been intensified to ensure the sustainability of the natural resources and cultural riches existing in the Eastern Black Sea and North-eastern Anatolia Regions and to evaluate them in the eco-tourism sector (Orhan and Karahan, 2010). Instead of an

unlimitedly growing, standardized, stereotyped tourism product and service, there is an increasing trend towards tourism types that are more sensitive to nature and the environment (Sert and Arslan, 2019; Özer, 2021).

There is social responsibility, economic efficiency and ecological sensitivity in every part of ecotourism (Üzümçü and Koç, 2017). Ecotourism tries to create a profile that protects, not consumes. In addition to all its existing positive features, it is necessary to continue under control and supervision in order not to have negative consequences on the environment and ecosystems in protected areas with significant resource value (Akban and Bulut, 2021). In this research, the importance and effects of ecotourism and bird watching, which is a branch of it, are revealed.

## **1. DEFINITION OF ECOTOURISM**

According to the definition of the International Nature Conservation Society, ecotourism is environmentally responsible travel and visitation to unspoiled natural areas that support conservation by understanding nature and cultural resources, have low visitor impact, and provide socio-economic benefits to local people. The International Ecotourism Association TIES (The International Ecotourism Society) defines ecotourism as “responsible travel to natural areas that protects the environment and protects the welfare of local people” (Kurdoğlu, 2001). The International Ecotourism Organization defines ecotourism as “responsible travel to natural areas where the environment is protected and improving the economic level of local people” (Honey, 1999).

The concept of ecotourism is considered together with sustainable development. The understanding of ecotourism has started to become clear with the decision to provide a sustainable environment accepted in Habitat II. The concept of sustainable development is closely related to environmental and economic policies. Sustainable development aims to increase environmental values, meet human needs, increase the welfare of present and future generations and raise the living standards of all people. Ecotourism (sustainability in tourism) can be expressed as the preservation and development of regional and local characteristics that are the source of tourism (Demir, 2021).

Tourism development in sustainable development aims to protect the future and increase its value while meeting the present needs of the people of the region and tourists. In achieving this goal, it is important to plan the management of resources that provide cultural integrity, increase biological diversity, support the life of living things, and meet economic, social and aesthetic needs (Dinç and Ok, 2022; Özer, 2021; Pekçetinöz, 2006).

Some tourism activities based on ecotourism in Turkey: River sports (canoe-rafting), mountain, trekking, equestrian trekking, bicycle tours, cave tourism, sportive angling, bird watching (ornithology), botany (plant study), national parks, highland tourism, silk road , faith tourism (Çakıcı and Harman, 2006; Pekçetinöz, 2006; Trauer, 2006).

## **2. BIRD WATCHING, A BRANCH OF ECOTOURISM**

Recreational activities based on watching birds in their natural environment and performed individually or collectively are called bird watching. People of different ages, belonging to any occupational group who are interested in watching birds, can become bird watchers. It is possible to see different birds in every season in Turkey. Local birds can always be seen, but summer guests can be seen in summer, winter guests in winter, and migratory birds in spring.

Bird watching can be done in lakes, forests, seas, parks, gardens, almost anywhere in the world. Observation is sometimes done with the naked eye, mostly with binoculars and land telescopes, and sometimes by listening to bird sounds, depending on the species being watched and the experience of the observers. The basis of the activity, which is defined as an observation sport because it includes physical activities in some sources, is mostly silent and still bird watching. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to include bird watching in the wildlife observation group within the sub-components of ecotourism (UNEP, 2006:14).

Bird watching has become the most common outdoor recreational activity in the western world that does not harm nature. The number of bird watchers has increased quite rapidly since the 1970s (Kerlinger and Brett, 1995: 271). Bird watching can be defined differently by each bird watcher, due to the motivations that drive birdwatchers to bird watching and their different expectations from this activity. Bird watching is defined as "observing and identifying birds in their habitats" (Sekercioglu, 2002: 282). Bird watchers, as a result of bird watching, have led to an increase in the number of travels and the effects of bird watching. Therefore, bird watching attracts the attention of environmental organizations, local administrators and the national press (Çakıcı and Harman, 2006; Özer, 2021; Scott and Thipgen, 2003).

In the observations made, it has been seen that it is possible to encounter bird species more intensely than other times in the early morning and just before sunset, in windless weather, and especially during the beginning of the vegetation season with spring. Forests are the areas with the highest concentration of birds, but it is not easy to see birds in such areas. The

leaves and branches on the trees prevent the birds from seeing, only the sounds of the birds are heard. Wetlands are the areas where bird watching is easiest. Birds can be easily observed during feeding times in wetlands. Many people who are new to bird watching often go to such areas. Steppes and open areas are extremely important areas for birds. Information about the habitats of birds and good observation is gained over time (Çağlayan, 2006).

Bird watching areas should be jointly controlled by local municipalities, village headmen, non-governmental organizations, representatives of central government units (Ministry of Environment and Forestry, General Directorate of State Hydraulic Works, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Ministry of Culture and Tourism) and university representatives, and necessary decisions should be taken.

### **2.1. Important Bird Areas (IBA)**

The number of areas where birds have been throughout their lives is endless. Therefore, it is impossible to protect all these areas effectively. In the Important Bird Areas (IBA) approach, priority areas are determined that will make the most efficient contribution to the conservation of birds and biological diversity if they are protected and well managed. IBA is a project initiated by the “International Bird Protection Council” in 1989 and carried out in many countries of the world. The Wildlife Conservation Society has started the necessary studies for the Turkish part of the project since its inception, and published the book on important bird areas in 1997. The association, which is still carrying out new evaluation studies, continues its monitoring studies on the one hand.

Important bird areas are areas that allow birds to breed, spend the winter or are on their migration routes (BirdLife International, 2000). Important bird areas or other natural areas are preferred for bird watching (Picture 1). It becomes a center of attraction for thousands of visitors, bird watchers or avitourists (Asan et al., 2018; Çakıcı and Harman, 2006).

These regions are geographies that have special meaning for the survival of bird species. IBA is of international importance and aims to ensure the continuity of birds with other living things and ecosystems. These areas are selected according to scientific criteria developed by BirdLife International. The sensitivity criterion, which is one of the two main approaches under the concept of IBA, is used to determine the areas where important populations of bird species that are endangered worldwide are sheltered. The other criterion is the uniqueness criterion. This criterion is used to identify areas of importance for narrowly distributed species, species

dependent on a single biome, and concentrated species (Kılıç and Eken, 2004).



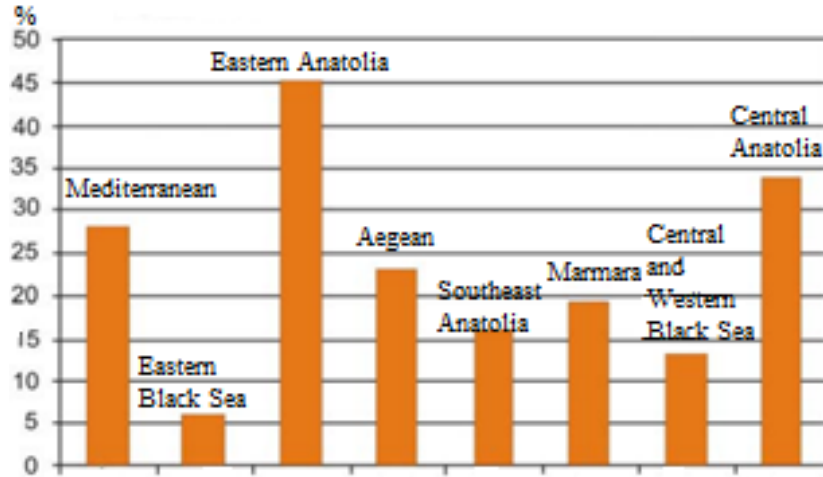
**Picture 1:** Lake Manyas, one of the Important Bird Areas<sup>2</sup>

The first Important Bird Area (IBA) inventory in Turkey was made towards the end of the 1980s and 78 IBAs were identified (Ertan et al., 1989). The second was made towards the end of the 1990s and was developed to cover 97 IBAs (Yarar and Magnin, 1997). Later, this information was published as a summary inventory named “Turkey's Important Bird Areas 2004 Update” (Kılıç and Eken, 2004). With this update, a total of 184 IBAs representing different biogeographic features of Turkey were defined. Undoubtedly, the biggest factors in the increase in this number are the increase in scientific research on birds and the number of bird watchers in Turkey. IBAs set a precedent for Anatolia's priority habitats for conservation, as they host not only birds but also other living communities.

The total surface area of IBAs in Turkey is 11,638.525 hectares and covers 14% of Turkey. There are 45 IBAs in the Eastern Anatolia Region, 34 in the Central Anatolian Region, 28 in the Mediterranean Region, 23 in the Aegean Region, 19 IBAs in the Marmara Region, 16 in the Southeast Anatolian Region, 13 in the Central and Western Black Sea Region, and 6 in the Eastern Black Sea Region (Shape 1) (Kılıç and Eken, 2004).

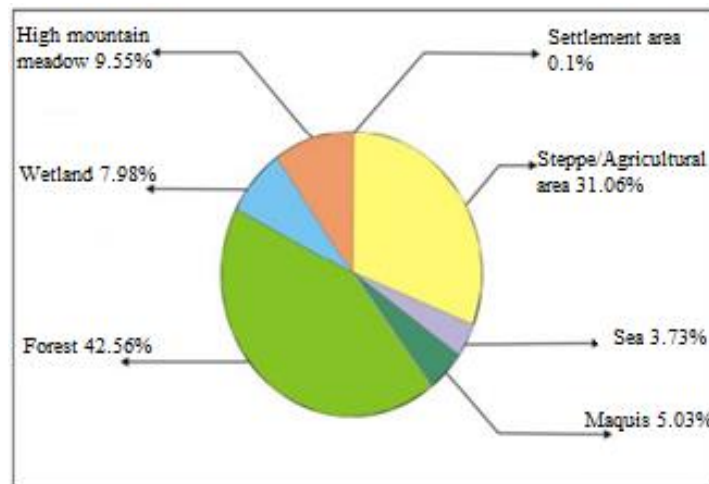
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<sup>2</sup> Picture 1. Erişim (05.01.2013): <https://www.dogadernegi.org/onemlikusalanlari/> (Photograph: Alper Tüydeş)



**Shape 1:** Distribution of IBAs Numerically by Region (Kılıç and Eken, 2004; Pelçetinöz, 2006) (Edited by Author).

The distribution of natural habitats represented by IBAs by surface area is as follows: Forest 42.56%, Steppe/Agricultural area 31.06%, Wetland 7.98%, High mountain meadow 9.55%, Maquis 5.03%, Sea 3.73% and Settlement area 0.1% (Shape 2).



**Shape 2:** Percentages of Living Areas Represented in the Total of IBAs (Kılıç and Eken, 2004; Pelçetinöz, 2006) (Edited by Author).

### **3. BIRD WATCHING IN TURKEY AND ITS IMPORTANCE**

Although bird watching in Turkey is not known and shown much interest, it is quite common in Europe and North America. For example, while 6 million people are active bird watchers in England, this number is around 1000 in Turkey and the number of active ones is quite low. Approximately 466 bird species can be observed in Turkey. One of the biggest reasons why Turkey is a bird paradise is that it is on the migration routes of birds. There are bird watching opportunities in every region of Turkey. Due to its rich nature resources and its structure suitable for nature tourism, Turkey is extremely suitable for bird tourism and eco-tourism in general, and has a worldwide potential in this field (Peker, 2018).

Bird watching is an observing sport that allows to get to know nature from the world of birds. The total number of bird species in Turkey is higher than the number of bird species found in the whole of Europe. The most important reasons why Turkey is rich in birds are that it has rich wetlands and is on bird migration routes. Bird watching in Turkey has been spreading rapidly in recent years in parallel with the developments in the world (Özkan, 2019).

For bird watching, which is a sport that does not force people physically and can be done easily, it will be sufficient to observe the immediate environment at first. The bird-watching process can be started and the flapping of their wings can be observed with the sparrows and pigeons in the vicinity and the seagulls that come to mind especially when Istanbul is mentioned. In a wooded area, you may encounter finches and tit birds among the branches. There are grouse and ducks by the lakes and streams, and seabirds such as seagulls and cormorants by the sea (Picture 2). In autumn, storks can be observed in the Marmara Sea, Büyükçekmece and Küçükçekmece (TR Dergisi, 2019). The most important thing to consider before starting to observe the birds is not to disturb the birds, not to disturb their habitat, to be at one point and to ensure that they are not nervous.





**Picture 2:** Birds and Bird Watching Tourism in Wetlands<sup>3</sup>

Most bird watchers are educated and high-income people. The average annual income of a birdwatcher in the United States is over \$50,000, with at least one-third of them college graduates (Cordell and Herbert, 2002). Their high awareness of nature and spending significant amounts of money on birds make bird watchers ideal eco-tourists (Sekercioglu, 2002). In addition, bird watchers prefer local guides in the regions where they watch birds (Sekercioglu, 2002: 287). As bird watchers prefer local guides, bird watchers and local people get to know each other and an interaction occurs. Social tolerance towards bird watchers (avitourists) visiting the area can arise if local people earn income from bird watching in the area. Therefore, it is possible that changes will begin in the socio-cultural structure of the local people (Kurt and Düzgün, 2021; Sert and Arslan, 2019).

Bird watching can have positive or negative environmental effects. As the number of visits by bird watchers and/or avi-tourists to the region increases, the awareness of the local people to protect bird species increases and the protection of areas with endangered bird species accelerates. In addition, the number of education programs on the use of natural resources may increase as important bird areas are protected and become a center of attraction for avi-tourists. Bird watching has less negative environmental effects compared to mass tourism (Sekercioglu, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> Picture 2. Erişim (08.01.2023): <https://www.turizmebakis.com/kus-gozlemciligi/>

Bird watching can have various negative effects as well as positive effects on local people, natural environment and bird watchers. The main negative effects of bird watching can be listed as follows (Sekercioglu, 2002: 284; www.birdsaustralia.org):

- Uneven distribution of income from bird watching among local people,
- Disturbing endangered species,
- Disruption of the natural cycle due to environmental pollution caused by visitors,
- Unpleasant behaviour of local people towards bird watchers and/or avitourists visiting the area,
- To draw the attention of wildlife traders to endangered species,
- Disturbing rare bird species,
- It is disturbing the birds in their sensitive times (breeding, hatching) (Çakıcı and Harman, 2006).

### **3.1. How to Do Bird Watching?**

Birds are less sensitive if they do not see their bird watchers (Knight and Temple, 1995). Therefore, bird watchers should wear discreet clothing (ochery, khaki tones, camouflage) to minimize being seen by birds (Gutzwiller and Marcum, 1993) and take care not to be inconspicuous (Picture 3) (Larson, 1995). Like many outdoor sports and hobbies, one of the conditions for enjoying bird watching is to wear the right clothes at the right time. Since being cold or overheating will cause discomfort, attention can be prevented from paying attention to the birds.

Bird watching does not require a lot of equipment. The most comfortable and healthy way to carry equipment on the back is a bag. The fact that the bags are made of water-resistant and durable fabrics will help protect the items.

Since it is not possible to get close enough to the birds, using binoculars while observing is the most important tool for close observation. Seeing birds with binoculars improves as observations are made. Experienced bird watchers can be asked for help in this regard. Specially produced telescopes also serve the purpose very well during bird watching in open areas and long distances. It should not be forgotten to carry a notebook and take notes in the notebook for the permanence of what is seen during the observation.



**Picture 3:** Bird Watching in Nature with Appropriate Clothes<sup>4</sup>

It is helpful for people who have just started to observe to have a guidebook with bird species (Peker, 2018). Guidebooks provide an opportunity to instantly verify the birds seen in the field. In addition, bird watchers who want to have more detailed information about certain bird groups can find more detailed guidebooks for bird groups on the internet. They can consult the Nature Association or a bird watching society in their vicinity about guidebooks.

There are also some rules to be followed while bird watching. These rules are;

- Not disturbing the birds,
- Not to enter the nesting areas of birds,
- Not buying eggs and nesting materials,
- Not to leave any items in the area at the end of the observation.

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<sup>4</sup> Picture 3. Erişim (08.01.2023): [https://www.google.com/search?q=ku%C5%9F+g%C3%B6zlemcili%C4%9Fi+turizmi&xsrf=AJOqlzX9fmmnm0AAPARPK2fldVRF2HKfsA:1677276222897&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjZwNlRlK\\_9AhUjX\\_EDHdJECrIQ\\_AUoAXoECAMQAw&biw=1522&bih=738&dpr=1.25#imgrc=kBRRnGSUqdANzM](https://www.google.com/search?q=ku%C5%9F+g%C3%B6zlemcili%C4%9Fi+turizmi&xsrf=AJOqlzX9fmmnm0AAPARPK2fldVRF2HKfsA:1677276222897&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjZwNlRlK_9AhUjX_EDHdJECrIQ_AUoAXoECAMQAw&biw=1522&bih=738&dpr=1.25#imgrc=kBRRnGSUqdANzM)

### **3.2. Where Bird Watching should be done in Turkey?**

Although bird watching can be done anywhere, the following areas are more preferred.

\*In the Marmara Region: Meriç Basin, Igneada Forests, Manyas, Uluabat and Iznik Lakes.

\*In the Black Sea Region: Kızılırmak Delta, Kelkit Valley, Sarıkum Desert; Eastern Black Sea and Ilgaz Mountains.

\*In the Aegean Region: Gediz and Büyük Menderes Deltas; Marmara and Bafa Lakes.

\*In the Mediterranean Region: Seyhan, Ceyhan and Göksu Deltas; Amanos, Bolkar and Beydaglari, Tuzla Lake, Yumurtalık Lagoon.

\*In Central Anatolia Region: Tuz, Akşehir, Eber, Kula, Seyfe, Sultansazlığı and Palas Lakes.

\*In the Eastern Anatolia Region: Munzur Mountains, Bulanık and Malazgirt Plain, and Arın, Erçek and Haçlı Lakes.

\*In the Southeast Anatolia Region: Southern Euphrates Valley and Birecik Steppes (TR Dergisi, 2019).

### **3.3. Economic and Ecological Effects of Bird Watching**

Like many other eco-tourists, bird watchers are generally highly educated, highly ecologically conscious and aware of nature conservation issues (Cordell and Herbert, 2002). For example, two-thirds of the 600,000 members of the National Audubon Society, a renowned environmental conservation organization, state that they are birders (Dickonson and Edmonson, 1996). Compared to the average eco tourist, bird watchers are more independent, more knowledgeable and more committed (Page and Dowling, 2002). The expectations of many birdwatchers, combined with their high incomes, can make huge economic contributions to the areas visited (Kerlinger and Brett, 1995).

In light of their good education and high expectations, bird watchers do more to reduce their environmental impact than other eco-tourists, respect the diversity and importance of various ecosystems, and pay the required protected area entrance fees during their trips (Hill et al., 1997).

A national survey of nature hobbies was conducted in the USA. This latest survey estimates (NSRE) that 69 million people over the age of 16, or one-third of America's 16+ population, had observed, described, or photographed birds in the 12 months preceding the survey. This number is as

large as those who have gone fishing or hiked in the 12 months preceding the survey. Since 1983, the number of bird watchers in the USA has increased by 332%, making it the fastest growing nature activity in the country (Cordell and Herbert, 2002).

Bird watchers' expectations to see birds and bird diversity provide a direct link between a place's bird diversity and local income. Bird watchers are sometimes criticized for creating an economic income for nature by doing "notching" or "listing" (seeing and listing as many species as possible). Despite this, these bird watchers constitute a more important source of income for the local people in regions where rare birds live than other tourists. Many rare birds are very sensitive to human presence. Because they are endangered (Birdlife International, 2000), bird watchers and guides should exercise particular care to minimize disturbance of rare species.

Because bird watchers know what they want to see and have expectations that they will see certain species, they are willing to pay more to see bird species in their natural habitat than the average eco-tourist who is not interested in birds. The impact of raising local awareness in areas with high bird diversity may be key to protecting natural areas close to human-populated areas. Local people, who earn money directly from biodiversity by showing various species to bird watchers, will be more willing to protect ecosystems that host extraordinary birds. Generally, eco-tourists who simply enjoy a muddy jungle trek, a waterfall, or an exotic adventure with a few extraordinary creatures don't leave as much income as birders who care about rare bird species.

Independent birders often contribute more to low-budget local organizations than tour groups, as they stay in more modest and smaller venues (Page and Dowling, 1992). Because they don't make use of a tour guide, independent birdwatchers often hire local guides and are less isolated from the communities they visit. But independent birders can be more of a nuisance to the birds as they are often not followed by well-trained guides.

Bird watching tours (especially those from developed countries) are more expensive than independent bird watching but contribute less to the local economy. These tour companies have their own guides, and the best accommodation and organization options they choose often belong to foreigners and urban elites (Weaver, 1998).

Companies engaged in bird watching tourism should encourage the promotion and support of nature conservation in the regions they visit, and if possible, they should contribute to nature conservation activities in direct proportion to the number of species seen in the tours they organize. This will

have significant financial and symbolic value to the local community and will benefit the publicity and public relations of the companies that do so.

Bird watching guides are key to the success of a birding tour. For aspiring birdwatchers, hiring a guide is very helpful because it increases the chances of seeing rarer and native species, contributes to the local economy, and encourages local people to protect birds (BirdLife International, 2000).

In many places, indigenous peoples lack education and significant economic resources that need to be invested in ecotourism; they often do menial and low-paying jobs (King and Stewart, 1996). Compared to these jobs, guiding for birdwatchers is a less strenuous job that pays well, makes natural history awareness valuable, and can be done with a little knowledge of the language. The English knowledge of many successful bird guides consists of the names of the bird species of that region.

Many bird watchers prefer guides who can speak their language. Guides from outside the region may sometimes be preferred to local guides as they are even more knowledgeable. Using local guides as much as possible will not only allow seeing more birds for the same money, but also contribute to the local community (Sekercioglu, 2002).

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

There are approximately 9700 bird species in the world. At least 1000 species, about one in nine, are in danger of extinction. There are factors such as pollution, hunting, competition among species that threaten bird life. But the real danger for birds and other wild creatures is the destruction of their natural habitats. Like all animals, birds' survival, reproduction and offspring depend on finding suitable and safe places (Brooks and Gibbs, 2000).

Bird watching tourism also includes the risks of disturbing the birds. If birds must be approached, it is preferable to approach slowly from a certain angle (Knight and Cole, 1995). Also, birds are more tolerant of vehicles approaching them than humans approaching them (Holmes et al., 1993). Bird watching groups should be kept small, preferably less than 10 people, as birds are very sensitive to noise and crowding. Birds that frequently encounter humans are more accustomed and approachable to humans, as long as they are not hunting (Knight and Cole, 1995). Bird watching in areas with human traffic, such as dirt roads, minimizes disturbance to virgin areas and allows for closer viewing of birds.

Wetlands are areas where biodiversity is rich and serve as a reserve for the regions where they are located. In order for migratory birds to complete their migration, they need resting and feeding stations on the routes

they have determined. For example, the existence of important wetlands on the Gallipoli Peninsula, which are stations for many bird species, increases the importance of the area in terms of bird species diversity and migration mobility.

Compared to other forms of ecotourism, bird watching has the most potential to provide the most economic benefit to local people, educate local people about the value of biodiversity, and encourage local people to successfully conserve and protect natural areas. Especially the governments of developing countries, national and international non-governmental organizations and companies engaged in bird watching tourism should give priority to the promotion and education of bird watching. Since bird watching is an activity that can generate income from the promotion of nature protection and natural areas, these organizations should make an intense effort to contribute more to the rural people and local associations (Sekercioglu, 2002).

The whole world accepts that good environmental protection can only be achieved through education, and Turkey is a country rich in biodiversity. For this reason, it is necessary to instill a love of trees and animals, especially in primary school children, by walking around these protected areas, both in their schools and in the examples in developed countries. Thus, a person who gains this love from a young age will be much more sensitive in the future, both while making use of these areas for recreational purposes and while working in these areas.

An observation tower compatible with nature should be built in the region. Then, training should be given to the local people. Those who are willing to receive training should be provided to serve as bird watching guides. Thus, they should be helped to provide economic and social benefits to the region and to themselves.

It may be beneficial to offer binoculars and telescope rental services for people who do not do bird watching activities professionally and visit the observatory just to spend their free time to participate in this activity. In addition, it is recommended to install observation systems at certain points, such as viewing binocular systems on the viewing hills in cities.

Binoculars can also be given to visitors who visit these areas in bird observatories, if they wish. However, it is necessary to turn this into a service and to provide explanatory information in the form of renting binoculars on information signs. Otherwise, unfortunately, visitors will not be aware of such an application.

For the development of bird watching tourism, the strengths of the region should be used well, the weaknesses should be strengthened, opportunities should be evaluated well and the situations that could pose a threat should be kept at a minimum level.

Care should be taken to map the breeding and sheltering areas of all sensitive bird species, to inform the residents and visitors about this issue, to limit ecotourism activities, especially during breeding periods, and to take necessary precautions.

As a result, bird watching makes a high contribution to the science of ornithology. The creation of protection opportunities against unprotected areas, the training, encouragement and employment of local guides provide the spread of tourism mobility to other regions. Most importantly, it reduces the consumption of the environment and helps people integrate with nature.

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