

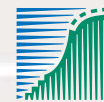
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Waterbirds around the world

A global overview of the conservation,
management and research of the
world's waterbird flyways

Edited by G.C. Boere, C.A. Galbraith and D.A. Stroud

*Assisted by L.K. Bridge, I. Colquhoun, D.A. Scott,
D.B.A. Thompson and L.G. Underhill*



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Ukraine as an ecological corridor for the transcontinental migration of birds in the Afro–Eurasian region and questions of epidemiological safety

I. Rusev¹ & A. Korzuykov²

¹Ukrainian I.I. Mechnikov Antiplague Research Institute, Laboratory of Ecomonitoring, 1A Ap., 42 Home Pastera str., Odessa, 65026, Ukraine. (email: wildlife@paco.net)

²Odessa I.I. Mechnikov National University, Biological Department, 2, Shampansky str., Zoological Department, Odessa, Ukraine. (email: olegk@te.net.ua)

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Ukraine acts as an ecological corridor for the transcontinental migration of birds in the Afro-Eurasian region. This paper suggests that migrating birds may carry potentially dangerous viruses from Africa to Europe via the Ukraine.

A total of 416 species of birds reside in Ukraine for at least some part of the year (Fesenko & Bokotej 2002); of these, 19 are listed on the IUCN Red List and 67 in the Red Book of Ukraine. These include a number of important migratory birds. Over 100 of the 170 birds listed in the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement either nest in Ukraine or stop during migration: the Azov-Black sea coastal area is therefore a very important migration ecological corridor for many species of birds from Europe, Asia and Africa. Snake Island in the Black Sea is a key point for migrating non-passerine birds (Korzuykov *et al.* 1998).

The wetlands in the coastal areas of the Azov- Black Sea, particularly in the deltas of the Danube and Dniester, and along the Azov-Black Sea corridor provide habitat or resting sites for over then 200 species of waterfowl many of which migrate to Africa and some to Asia (Shegolev & Rusev 1993; Rusev & Barker 1995). For example, the well-known Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* nesting population which in the Dniester delta consists of only 2 500 pairs, migrates to Mali, Chad and Niger (Rusev 1999). Some birds have also been found in Russia to the east, and to the west in France, Germany, Spain and Italy (Fig. 1).

It is known that Africa has many natural foci of arboviruses – West Nile Fever, Sindbis fever and others (Lvov & Ilichev 1979), and this natural migration root could be a possible transmission route for viruses and infection of people. Our previous serological and virology investigations of ticks, mosquitoes and birds in the Azov-Black Sea region during 1986-2002 showed that they are significant factors in the potential spread of infection to human populations, and a practical system of monitoring and managing the epidemiological situation is needed (Rusev & Boshenko 1977; Rusev *et al.* 1998). This is particularly relevant given the need to monitor avian influenza in Europe and elsewhere.

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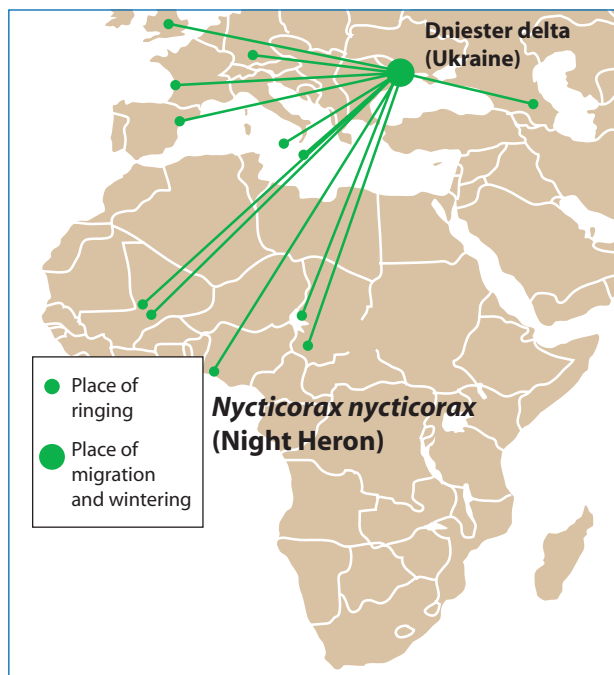


Fig. 1. Migration of the Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* from Dniester delta population.