



65. Participants in 5th Conference of European Rarities Committees, Czech Republic, September 1999. FRONT ROW Left to right, Dr Tom Conzemius (Luxembourg), Gunter De Smet (Belgium), Dr Martin Vavrik (Czech Republic), Andrea Corso (Italy), Marc Duquet (France), Prof. Colin Bradshaw (Great Britain), Gunnlaugur Þráinsson (Iceland). SECOND ROW Marnix Vandegehuchte (Belgium), Tony Marr (Great Britain), Dr Bernard Volet (Switzerland), Judy Dawes (Cyprus), Lionel Maumary (Switzerland), Hannu Jännes (Finland), Ricard Gutierrez (Spain), Vilju Lilleleht (Estonia). THIRD ROW László Szabó (Romania) (standing), Jozsef Szabó (Romania), David Whaely (Cyprus), Martin Riesing (Austria), Andras Schmit (Hungary), Dr Josef Chytil (Czech Republic), Patric Lorgé (Luxembourg), Jeff Gordon (Cyprus). BACK ROW Dr Alan Knox (Great Britain), Dr Gabor Magyar (Hungary), Tibor Hadarics (Hungary), Peter Barthel (Germany), Christine Barthel (Germany), Cecilia Johansson (Sweden), Dr Walter Mergen (*Carl Zeiss*), Christian Cederroth (Sweden). Absent from photograph: Vasył Demchyshyn (Ukraine).

available Slender-billed Curlew records. That was started in 1991 by the ICBP and continued in the framework of successive conservation initiatives for the species. Unfortunately, Slender-billed Curlews are likely to be seen in countries that lack an established rarities committee, and there is no formal process for the assessment of claims. It was, therefore, agreed to launch a Slender-billed Curlew Assessment Committee under the aegis of the AERC. Its objectives are:

1. To assess the acceptability of records of Slender-billed Curlews in countries where no national rarities committee exists.

2. To assist, on request, every national rarities committee in the assessment of Slender-billed Curlew records.

3. To encourage European rarities committees to collect as much detail as possible for every encounter.

4. To stimulate the submission to the relevant authorities of every Slender-billed Curlew observation, including historical and specimen records.

All reports, whether judged as proven or as unproven, will be kept, together with supporting documentation, to facilitate eventual future reassessment.

The current members of this AERC committee are Peter

Barthel (Germany), Andrea Corso (Italy), Marc Duquet (France), George Handrinos (Greece), Gabor Magyar (Hungary), Dr Jimmy Steele (GB) and Didier Vangeluwe (Belgium).

Meeting 2001

The next meeting of the AERC will take place in September/October 2001 in Poland.

Acknowledgments

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Combined mobbing of Northern Goshawk by three other raptor species

At 11.55 hours on 10th November 1995, at the Remolar-Filipines Reserve on the Llobregat Delta, Barcelona, Spain, we recorded what seemed to be a co-ordinated attack by three species of raptor on a subadult female Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*. The reserve comprises 110 ha of saltmarsh and reedbeds fringed by scattered trees and a poplar *Populus* wood. The goshawk was perched in the upper part of a bare poplar on the edge of the marsh when, suddenly, all the raptors over the marsh headed towards the tree. First, a nearby female Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* started to dive and attack the goshawk, being quickly followed by a juvenile Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* (a winter visitor to the area) and a pale-morph Booted Eagle *Hieraetus pennatus* (one of two overwintering). The kestrel was succeeded by the harrier, which passed very close to the hawk; then came the Booted Eagle, which, attacking with its feet and claws extended, gently brushed the goshawk; immediately thereafter, the kestrel made another pass, then the harrier and the kestrel once more. It seemed that all three mobbing raptors were waiting until the previous one had finished before mounting their own attack. After ten attacks by the kestrel, four by the harrier and one by the eagle, the goshawk left the tree; the kestrel pursued it for about 1 km, 'pecking' at its body and tail and looping around the much bigger raptor. The episode ended when the goshawk disappeared into the poplar wood.

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This Northern Goshawk, the only one of its species in the area, had been extremely active during the autumn and early winter of 1995, having captured several species of bird, including pigeons (Columbidae), waders (Charadriiformes) and ducks (Anatidae). Given that Northern Goshawks can prey on raptors up to the size of a Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*, and that Common Kestrels are among the most frequently captured (113 out of 243 victims, or 46.5%; Uttendörfer 1952), a kestrel might be expected to see a goshawk as an enemy, even outside the breeding season, the latter being a period when goshawks may kill other raptors in nest defence (Newton 1979). On the other hand, *BWP* (vol. 2) reports Common Kestrels defending winter territories against other raptors. What seems remarkable is that all three flying raptors combined their efforts in order to frighten the goshawk from its perch, despite reports of Northern Goshawks nesting in close proximity to Booted Eagles (Díaz Robledo 1991). No mention of antagonistic behaviour among the three bigger species appears in *BWP*.

References

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