

YELLOW-BILLED CHOUGH

Pyrrhocorax graculus

Planinska kavka – jata več kot 50 osebkov v središču Mostarja dne 7.3.2002: posamezni pari in osebki obiskujejo, pregledujejo in izginjajo v luknjah granatnih izstrelkov in nišah vrh nenaseljenih blokov (UTM YJ20, Hercegovina)

On March 7th 2002 I observed, together with the participants of the international workshop on the lower Neretva valley, a group of at least 50 Yellow-billed Choughs in the centre of Mostar. The birds were flying from one building to another, looking for food. Some of them kept visiting, inspecting and disappearing in holes made by a number of projectiles and in niches at the top of the abandoned blocks of flats. After 14.30 hrs, the Choughs disappeared and were not noticed again that day, probably due to the vertical migration to their roost sites. The Yellow-billed Choughs regularly wintering in Mostar had already been described by Reiser [REISER, O. (1939): *Ornis balcanica*. I., Bosnien und Herzegowina. *Annalen des naturhistorischen Museums, Wien*]. The tradition of these birds wintering in Mostar at an altitude of no more than 59 metres has thus been known since at least 1893. Although the Yellow-billed Choughs have not been known to breed in Mostar, I suspect that the behaviour of separate individuals and pairs visiting the town's buildings is reminiscent of the birds' inspection of potential breeding sites [GLUTZ VON BLOTZHEIM, U.N. (1993): *Hanbuch der Vögel Mitteleuropas*. Bd. 13, Passeriformes – Teil 4. *Aula-Verlag, Wiesbaden*].

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