

Received: 28.3.2023.

Accepted: 25.5.2023.

THE FIRST RESIGHTING OF A MONTENEGRO - RINGED DALMATIAN PELICAN *Pelecanus crispus* IN BULGARIA

*Prvo opažanje kudravog nesita *Pelecanus crispus* prstenovanog u Crnoj Gori u Bugarskoj*

ANDREJ VIZI¹, SVILEN CHESHMEDZHIEV², JOCELYN CHAMPAGNON³,
ALAIN CRIVELLI³

¹Natural History Museum of Montenegro, Trg Vojvode Bećir-bega Osmanagića
16, 81000 Podgorica, Montenegro

²Bulgarian Society for Protection of Birds, Yavorov quarter, Bl. 71, Entr. 4, app.
1, Sofia 1111, P.O. 50, Bulgaria

³Tour du Valat, Le Sambuc - 13200 Arles, France

One Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus* individual, marked with a green ring with inscription A025, was spotted on the Rozov Kladenec reservoir in central-east Bulgaria in January 2022 (Fig 1). This bird was ringed as a pullus on 27 March 2021 at Skadar Lake, Montenegro. This resighting is the first documented evidence that Dalmatian Pelicans hatched at Skadar Lake winter in the continental Balkans.

Skadar Lake colony is currently the westernmost breeding ground within the species' range. Color ringing of Dalmatian pelican juveniles has been performed there since 1984 (CRIVELLI *et al.* 1991), but never in large numbers due to the colony's small size and sensitivity. From 1984 to 2020, altogether 50 birds were ringed with blue rings within the Tour du Valat's international pelican research program; however, the evidence of the juveniles' movement remained scarce. The only documented resighting, originating from Lezhe lagoon in Albania in 1986 (CRIVELLI, A., TdV ringing database), was also the first evidence of their dispersion towards the wetlands situated along the Adriatic coast.

Seasonal dispersion of Dalmatian pelicans is documented within the Black Sea/Mediterranean flyway, which includes wetlands in the Balkans, Turkey, and Ukraine (CATSADORAKIS *et al.* 2017). Their movements along the Adriatic-Ionian route toward Montenegrin wetlands were confirmed by ring resightings from Greece and Albania (SAVELJIĆ & RUBINIĆ 2009).

e-mail: Andrej.Vizi@NHM-WIEN.AC.AT

In recent years, as the result of successful conservation measures, the Skadar Lake's population has experienced substantial growth (CATSADORAKIS *et al.* 2017), which allowed the ringing of a greater number of chicks at the colony. After ringing 20 chicks with new green rings in 2021, three re-sightings were reported already within the next year. Single juvenile pelicans from Skadar Lake were spotted in Ulcinj saline on 16 September 2021, near Karavasta lagoon in Albania on 10 October 2021, and the latest on Rozov Kladenec reservoir in Bulgaria on 22 January 2022, which also presents the furthest documented wintering distance yet (540 km).

The latest ring reports provide a new insight into the movement of juveniles from Skadar Lake after fledging. Due to the geographical barrier of Prokletije mountains, the whole population is bound to move south, along the Adriatic coast, at least as far as Karavasta lagoon. The dispersion is, however, not limited to the coastal wetlands; the re-sighting from Rozov Kladenec is new evidence of their eastward wintering dispersion between distinct metapopulations (BOUNAS *et al.* 2022).

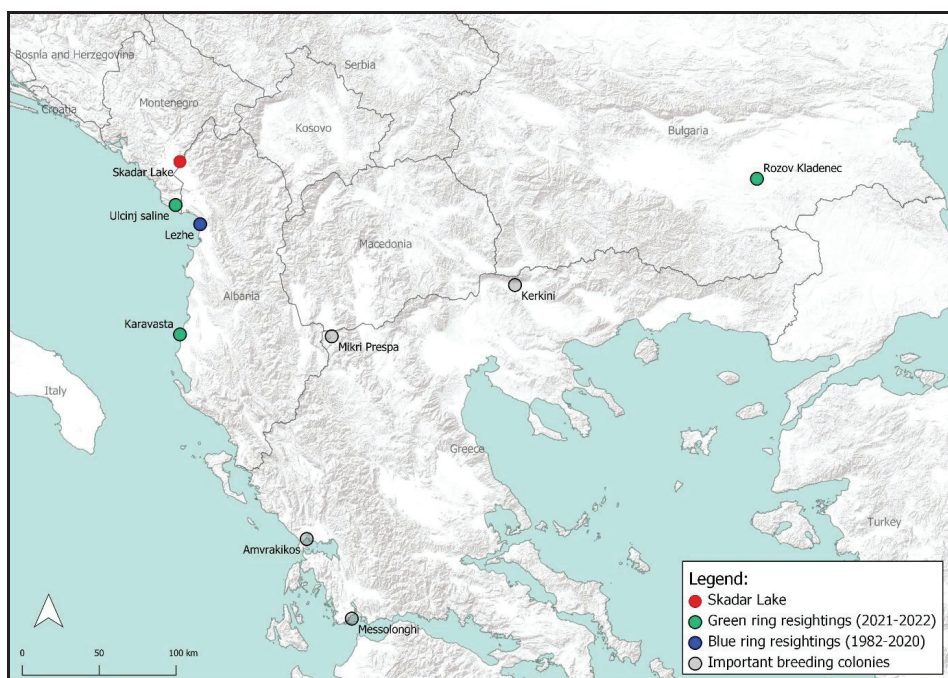


Figure 1: Locations of Dalmatian Pelican ring resightings and important breeding colonies.

Slika 1. Mjesta opažanja prstenovanih kudravih nesita i položaj važnijih gnijezdećih kolonija.

Acknowledgments

We would like to sincerely thank Nikolay Kolev from Bulgaria, Adrian Koci from Divjake Karavasta National Park in Albania, and Marija Šoškić from Center for Protection of Birds of Montenegro for communicating their re-sightings, as well as the members of PELECANUS group for sharing their data and literature.

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SAŽETAK

Nedavni rast gnijezdeće populacije kudravog nesita *Pelecanus crispus* na Skadarskom jezeru je omogućio prstenovanje većeg broja mladunaca tokom sezone gniježđenja, a time i više prijavljenih opažanja. Nalaz mlade jedinke u Bugarskoj, na udaljenosti od 540 km, predstavlja novi uvid u disperziju ove vrste, koja je nakon gnijezdeće sezone lokalizirana duž jadranske i jonske obale. Nalaz također ukazuje i na povezanost dvije razdvojene metapopulacije kudravog pelikana (mediteranske i crnomorske) u ovom dijelu areala.