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I. Abstracts



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**A Study on Wintering Wetland-dependent Waterbirds in South-east Caspian Wetlands (Northern Iran), I.R.**

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This study reveals the distribution, abundance and status of all 115 species of wintering wetland-dependent waterbirds in Mazandaran province during the period 2005–2014, and gives their last decade population estimations and their importance in national and international scope. Divers & Grebes (7), Pelicans (2), Cormorants and Darter (2), Herons and Egrets (8), Storks, Ibises and Spoonbills (4), Flamingos (1), Geese, Swans and Ducks (24), Cranes (2), Rails, Gallinules and Coot (4), Waders (32), Gulls, Terns and Skua (18), Raptors (8), Little and Great Bustards (2), and Turkestan Shrike (1) are wintering migratory species in wetlands of Mazandaran province. In 2005 mid-winter census, minimum population size of all waterbird species recorded was 320.037 birds. The most abundant population census was for 2007 with 1.490.357 birds. The population size of Common Coot *Fulica atra* in these two years was 71.127 and 1.075.850 birds, respectively. The survey showed that Miankaleh international wetland attracts an average population of over 52 thousand of Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber* in winter and serves one of the most important winter habitats for this species in the region. 37 species of migratory birds to Mazandaran wetlands are under national conservation legislation and 12 species are included in IUCN threatened species categories. Siberian Crane *Grus leucogeranus* (CR), Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis* (EN), Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus* (VU), Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus* (VU), Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* (EN), Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca* (VU), White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* (VU), Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga* (VU), Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* (NT), Little Bustard *Tetrax tetrax* (NT), Great Bustard *Otis tarda* (VU), and Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius* (CR) are the most important wintering migratory threatened species to wetlands of northern Iran in Mazandaran

province. In average, every year more than 800 thousand migratory birds of more than a hundred species spend at least one stage of their life cycle in these wetlands.

### **Review of Kazakhstan fossil birds**

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Along with the study of the avifauna of modern vertebrates great interest are presented the researches of paleontological materials with a view of establishing the diversity of extinct birds inhabited the territory of Kazakhstan in different geological periods and epochs. Research of fossil mammals already has done a lot, but fossil birds are still not enough studied. Information on finds of bone remains of Kazakhstan fossil birds were accumulated, since the 40th of the last century. There are currently determined about 30 species of fossil birds from the Mesozoic and Cenozoic of Kazakhstan. Their remains in the form of feather prints, vertebrae, limb bones and eggs shell are timed to different geographic regions and stratigraphic levels of the Mesozoic and Cenozoic deposits in Kazakhstan.

The earliest discoveries of Mesozoic birds *Praeornis sharovi*, Rautian, 1978, are defined from the Upper Jurassic of Karatau Ridge; *Cretaaviculus sarysuensis*, Bazhanov, 1969 from the Late Cretaceous of North-Eastern Aral Sea region (Taldysay); *Asiahesperornis bazhanovi*, Nesson et Prizemlin, 1991 from the Late Cretaceous of Kostanai region (Quarry "Lake").

To the most ancient finds from the Cenozoic sediments should be attributed *Eopuffinus kazakhstanens*, Nesov, 1986; *Zhilgaia aestifula*, Nesov, 1988; *Tshulia linorea* Nesov, 1988, as well as the remains of owl, Anseriformes from Paleocene location Jilga, of South-Kazakhstan region.

Eocene birds are presented by *Progrues turanicus*, Bendukidze of Kalmakpay (Zaisan basin).

Oligocene birds are known mostly from the Central and Eastern Kazakhstan. On the northern edge of hollow of Kyzyl-Kak dried up-lake (southwest of Zhezkazgan) are found bone fragments of Podicipediformes, Aquilornis sp., Gruidae and small Otitidae. Near the lake Shalkar-Teniz on the east of Aktobe region *Agnopterus turgaiensis*, *Cygnopterus lambrechtii*, *Somateria* sp., *Megagalinula harundinea*, Pelecaniformes, Anatidae, Cygnae, Accipitres, Galliformes were found; in Kyzyl-Orda region – *Anas oligocena* (Anseriformes); in the mountains of Aktau – Ergilornitidae. In Eastern Kazakhstan, in 60 km south of lake Zaisan, from localities Kusto and Kyzyl-Kain are established *Ergilornis* sp., Phoenicopter, Anatidae,