

The Corncrake (*Crex crex*) in Macedonia

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1. Introduction

The status, distribution and abundance of the corncrake population in Macedonia is not known as there has never been a study of this species in Macedonia. The most recent data on Macedonian corncrake are by RAŠAJSKI (May 1986), and cited in SCHNEIDER-JACOBY (1991). His data are for the northwestern part of Macedonia in the Polog plain. In this paper the author only presented the exiting data for this species and measures which should be taken for better understanding of the distribution and protection of corncrake in Macedonia.

2. Development of knowledge about the corncrake in Macedonia

Mc Gregor, the first author who published on the corncrake in Macedonia, was the English Consul

in Macedonia based in the town of Bitola (in Turkish) or Monastir. He had heard corncrake in the vicinity of the town of Monastir in April 1904 (MC GREGOR 1906).

Later, during the First World War, an English Major Viereck, on the front-line between the Serbs and English Army, near the town of Vlandovo, Macedonia, gave data on breeding of this species along the Vardar valley (Table 1).

Stresemann, according to the results of the German Natural Science Commission, during the World War I, did not find this species and only cited the results from the above authors. Fehringner also mentioned data from Viereck for Dedeli near the town of Valandovo, SE Macedonia. KARAMAN (1929) noted this species as a migrant in the vicinity of Skopje. Makatsch published data from the previous authors. JOVETIK (1961) in his article on the hunting ground of the Faculty of Forestry in the vicinity of Skopje mentioned this

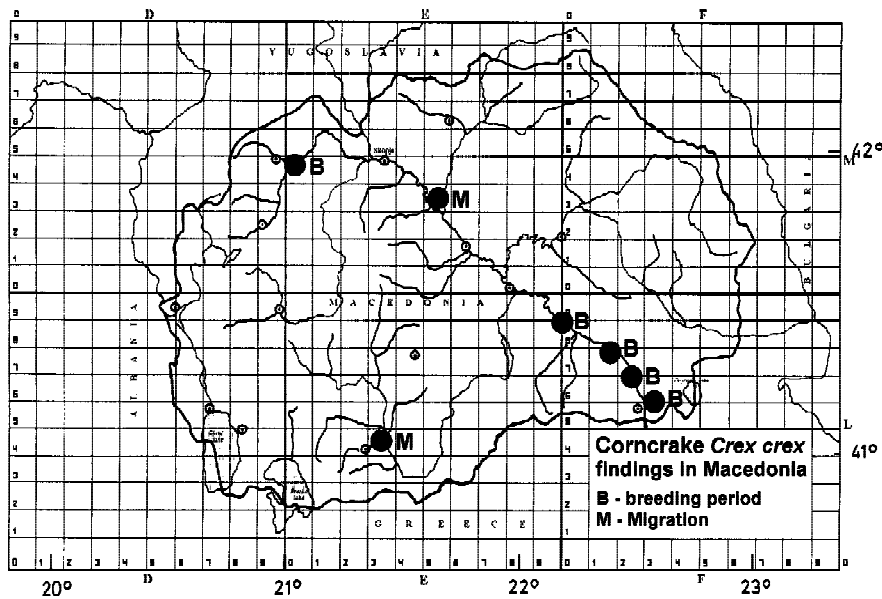


Figure 1: Corncrake findings in Macedonia.

Table 1: Chronology of corncrake findings in Macedonia.

Author	Year	Transcribing of the data
MC GREGOR, P.	1906	Evidently not common. On 29th and 30th of April, 1904, I heard the Corn-Crake in some fields near the town.
VIERECK, H. v.	1917	Brutvogel in den Vardar-Wiesen. [Breeding in the Vardar meadows.] Period: Oct. 1915 - June 1916
STRESEMANN, E.	1920	Brutvögel in den Vardar-Wiesen (VIERECK), ebenso in Serbien und Bulgarien, dagegen nicht Griechenland. Mc GREGOR vernahm den Ruf am 29. und 30. April. [Breeding in the Vardar meadows (VIERECK), just as in Serbia and Bulgaria, though not Greece. Mc GREGOR noted the calls on 29 and 30 April.] Period: 1917- 1918
FEHRINGER, O.	1922	Der Wachtelkönig scheint in der Wardar-Ebene in der Nähe von Dedeli Brutvogel zu sein. Man konnte dort im Mai seinen Ruf hören. [The corncrake seems to be breeding in the Wardar plains near Dedeli. One could hear its call there in May.]
KARAMAN, S.	1929	During the autumn migration I found them in very small numbers. They often hide themselves and often take off , so it is difficult to estimate their numbers. Two examples in the NH Museum - one from September another from 10th of October 1927 from the Skopje vicinity.
MAKATSCH, W.	1950	Der Wachtelkönig kommt in Südosteuropa bis Mazedonien vor, in Griechenland ist die Art nach REISER nur seltener Durchzügler (Mitte September - Ende November, April). Mc GREGOR hörte die Art am 29. und 30. 4. bei Bitolj, wo sie offenbar nicht häufig war. KARAMAN hat die Art merkwürdigerweise nur auf dem Herbstzug bei Skopje beobachtet, nicht aber zur Brutzeit. FEHRINGER vermutet das Brüten bei Djevdjelija und nach VIERECK ist der Wachtelkönig Brutvogel auf den Vardarwiesen. [Corncrakes occur in south eastern Europe as far as Macedonia; in Greece is it only a rare migrant (REISER) (mid September and November, April). Mc GREGOR heard the corncrake on 29 and 30 April near Bitolj, where it was obviously not common. KARAMAN observed the species actually only during the Autumn migration near Skopje but not during the breeding period. FEHRINGER guessed breeding near Djevdjelija and following VIERECK, corncrakes breed in the Vardar meadows.]
JOVETIK, R.	1961	According to the data from another author corncrake occur to a higher elevation up to 1300 m (MATVEJEV, KARAMAN), but we find him only in real lowland. In the hunting ground this nice hen we found in autumn and spring migration. Because of hurrying in spring it is nearly absent but from September up to December every year we noticed on the wet meadows up to 10 examples.
SCHNEIDER-JACOBY, M.	1991	Meldungen rufender Wachtelkönige während der Brutzeit liegen aus fast ganz Jugoslawien vor. Nur in den Landesteilen mit mediterranem Klima an der Küste und im südlichsten Makedonien fehlen Nachweise. Die südlichsten Vorkommen konnten an den Oberläufen der großen Flüsse in Makedonien und Montenegro festgestellt werden. In der Polog-Niederung am Oberlauf des Vardar fand RAŠAJSKI (briefl.) bei Tetovo in Mai 1980, 1984 und 1986 rufende Männchen. [Records of calling corncrakes during the breeding season come from almost all Yugoslavia. Only from parts with a Mediterranean climate along the coast and in southern Macedonia are there no records. The most southern breeding sites were found along the upper parts of the large rivers in Macedonia and Montenegro. RAŠAJSKI (letter) found calling males in May 1980, 1984 and 1986 in the Polog valley upstream of the Vardar near Tetovo.]
TRPKOV, B. & MALETIK, V.	pers. comm.	He shot 1 example at the Archinovo swamp (near the Skopje) in spring 1962; Katlanovo swamp - 60-ies; 80-ies they have find somewhere but forget where.

species only for Spring and Autumn migration. Finally, SCHNEIDER-JACOBY (1991) presented the data from RAŠAJSKI for the north-west part of Macedonia or Polog plain which is the most recent data for this species in Macedonia.

3. Distribution, size and development of national corncrake population

No data available. Neither Mr. Trpkov nor Mr. Maletik (pers. comm.) from the Faculty of Forestry in Skopje have any new information on this species in Macedonia.

Based on previous data and according to habitat conditions we believe that the Vardar valley in the Polog plain, Katlanovo, and near to Valandovo would be potential places which should be studied (see Fig. 1).

In any case, no good data on the corncrake in Macedonia exists.

5. Ongoing or planned conservation or study projects

- Undertake a national corncrake census identifying key sites and corncrake status
- Develop national corncrake action plan for Macedonia
- Revitalise Katlanovo Swamp and promote it as a nature reserve
- Monitor the corncrake population
- Prepare publicity, posters, etc. to introduce this species to the public

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