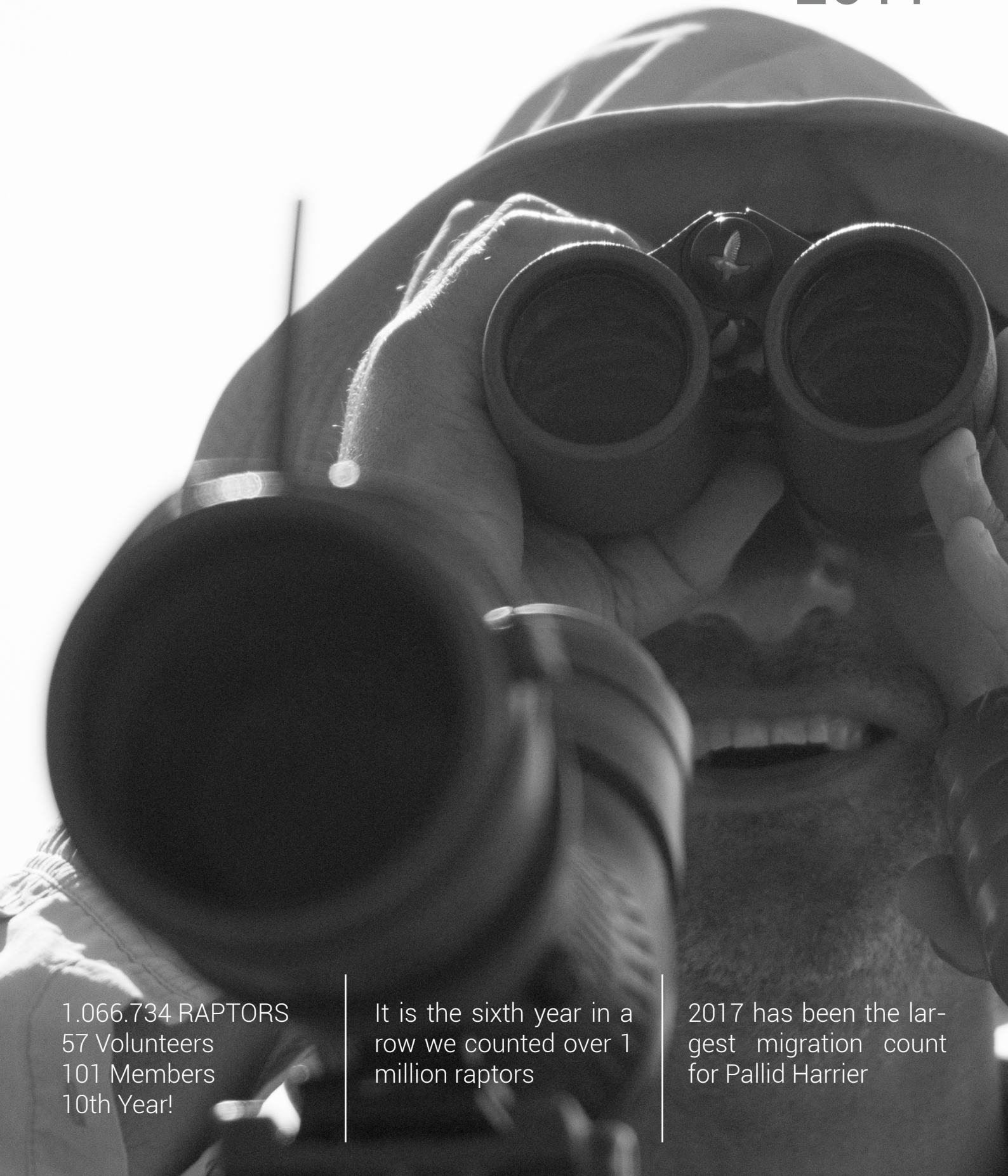


# BRCMAGAZINE

BATUMI RAPTOR COUNT MEMBER MAGAZINE

2017



1.066.734 RAPTORS  
57 Volunteers  
101 Members  
10th Year!

It is the sixth year in a  
row we counted over 1  
million raptors

2017 has been the lar-  
gest migration count  
for Pallid Harrier

# WELCOME!

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Dear BRC member,

Welcome to the second edition of the Batumi Raptor Count magazine, specially made for our dear members. By supporting BRC, you contributed to a splendid season again.

As it was the 10th year we organized a raptor count, last season was especially one to remember. The atmosphere was, as ever, fantastic and the birds didn't let us down either. We had a great celebration dinner, and I would like to repeat my gratitude towards all BRC supporters.

Moreover, I hereby would also like to thank again the BRC-team, the local villagers, our coordinators and most of all, the volunteers. Volunteers are the heart of our project and your never-ending enthusiasm and dedication make every count a party again! We are also very happy that after the count Lolo Frei (Switzerland), Andrea Maier (Germany) and Giacomo Biasi (Italy) gave presentations about the BRC in their home countries.

In February we had our yearly board meeting in which we decided that the following years we will focus on our core business: the count of migratory raptors. Over the years, we had several great and successful side projects on conservation, education and hunting monitoring, but these topics will be dealt with increasingly by other organizations in the region. During the board meeting it also became clear that some of us will become less active, but we are happy to announce that our team was joined by several new members, ensuring a fruitful future for BRC. In case you might have missed our previous calls and you're also interested in becoming active, don't hesitate to contact us!

I'm already looking forward to the coming season again. Coincidentally, the call for counters just opened! So be sure to register soon if you want to join as a counter! To all others, also book your flights, because 2018 is going to be great again! With the help of Richard Porter we received a £1000 from the British Birds Charitable Trust which is to be used for the accommodation and training of Georgians in our count. As this is one of the main objectives of our project, we are very happy with this support.

Last but not least, I would state that the quality of the count is also something we can be very proud of and as a result of this Wouter Vansteelant wrote a fantastic article which will be published soon. You can read a sneak preview in this magazine.

I hope you enjoy reading this magazine and to meet you in Batumi again,

Folkert de Boer, BRC President



# NEW IN BRC



**Triin Kaasiku**, from Estonia, will help in preparing the annual autumn count and be coordinator for the 2018 season.



**Karen Aghababyan**, from Armenia, will join the board and use his network to look for funding and other ways to support BRC.



**Alice Tribe**, from England, will help the communication team of BRC.



**Frank Haven**, from the Netherlands, will join the communication team of BRC.



**Wim Bovens**, from Belgium, will help developing a new website for the BRC.



**Bart Hoekstra**, from the Netherlands, will take care of the memberships and be count coordinator for the 2018 count.

# TEN YEARS &

## *Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of Batumi Raptor Count*

**T**his was a special year for the BRC as we celebrated our **10th anniversary**. For the occasion a festive banquet was held as closure to the 6th Batumi Bird Festival (co-organised by SABUKO). We were joined by local and international people who all contributed to our project over the last 10 years and without whom it would not have been possible to keep things running all this time. Highlight and eagerly awaited moment of the evening was the auction of the only available print of the highly limited edition t-shirt of the Batumi Roller Count. A true bidding war ended with a generous donation to our project!

As with every birthday, there should be some presents. The first we already got before the count started when we heard that hunting was now officially banned in the Chorokhi Delta! The area was actively surveyed for illegal shooting and for the first time in BRCs existence, volunteers could enjoy birds, peacefully making a stop-over on their way to Africa. Large flocks of Purple Swampphen were finally seen foraging instead of hanging from the belt of a hunter. We also observed the **first ever Egyptian Nightjar recorded for Georgia!**

The first half of the season was traditionally characterized by strong migration of Honey Buzzard, some days preceded by beautiful morning migration of **Montagu's Harrier** (summing up to a nice season total of 3.710 birds) and **European Rollers** (106 passed Sakhalvasho station on September 1st). In the hot air of August unbelievable numerous flocks of HBs filled up the sky, every now and then traversed by a flock of cheerful and colourful Bee-eaters in swift flight. Strong thermals provided the lift for the soaring raptors that concentrate at the Batumi bottleneck. Our splendid **Honey Buzzard** migration peaked a bit late this year, at the start of September, with 3 peak days of around 70.000 birds (2nd, 3rd and 6th September). Finally the total reached 525.687 individuals for the entire season, not much less compared to last year. However, the absolute highlight with regard to this species was on 17th of September when one of our loyal long-term counters (John Wright) noticed an immature individual. As **immature Honey Buzzards** usually stay in Africa, this is a very rare sighting in Europe and could possibly be the **first one ever documented during autumn** (details: <http://www.batumiraptorcount.org/news/unexpected-plumage-immature-honey-buzzard>).





# COUNTING

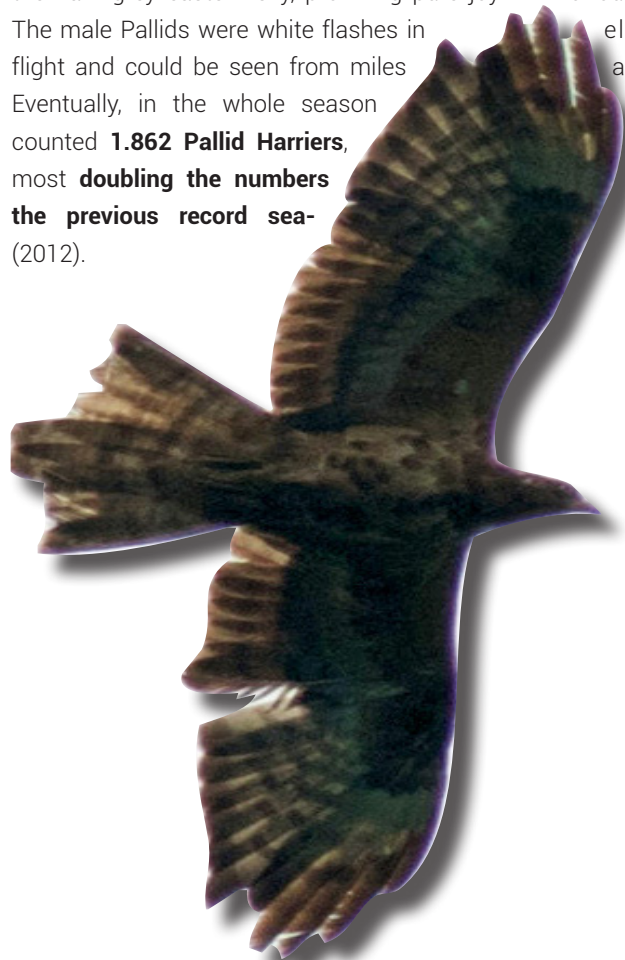


First record of Egyptian Nightjar in Georgia © Simon Cavaillès

Another true anniversary present! Other birthday gifts that blew our minds were the 4 **Eleonora's Falcons** that passed our stations this season, which is more than all previous years combined.

The middle part of the count season always sees a nice mixture of species while Honey Buzzards are replaced with Steppe Buzzards, White Storks with Black Storks and Montagu's Harriers with Pallid Harriers. Some early migrants pass late while some traditionally late migrant species can make an early appearance, such as the seven **European Cranes on September 25th**. Generally **Black Kites** forms the backbone of the migration during this period and we counted over 172.000 this year - again an impressive total after last year's record of ~180.000. Another species whose migration is in full swing during this time is **Booted Eagle**. A decent **7.129 individuals** of this light and dark morphed bird were observed this year.

But definitely the mid-season period this year belongs to the species of the BRC logo (and thus fitting our anniversary): **Pallid Harrier!** Juveniles came first, and the birds increased their numbers through September. These beautiful birds peaked on the 24th, an unforgettable day, with a total of **389 birds** observed from the two stations. **This is very likely the highest ever day count for this species in the world.** That day, after a storm in the night, the sky was still cloudy but the harriers started an early morning crossing in the drizzle. It has been an endless stream throughout the day, with most of the birds flying low and close by. At the end of the day the show was awesome: the sky was open in the west, over the sea. The light of the afternoon sun hit the birds against the dark grey eastern sky, providing pure joy for our eyes. The male Pallids were white flashes in flight and could be seen from miles away. Eventually, in the whole season we counted **1.862 Pallid Harriers**, most **doubling the numbers of the previous record season** (2012).



Possible first autumn record of an immature Honey Buzzard in Europe  
© John Wright



One of the 4 Eleonora's Falcons this season - © Bjorn Alards

**A**lthough last year the good days for Pallid Harrier coincided with great days of Red-footed Falcons, this year unfortunately this was not the case. The season total only reached a meager 33 birds. However, for this species, it is quite normal to observe big fluctuations from season to season.

Throughout every season we observe changes in the species of birds, just like every season we have a turnover of volunteers as well. Together with a few who stayed for the full count, a new set came for the impressive migration of the Steppe Buzzards and Eagles. Among them, also a new coordinator arrived: Giacomo, from Italy, at his second Batumi Raptor Count. He took over on Aki as a coordinator for the last three weeks of the count, allowing our Finnish veteran to employ his eagle ID skills for the sake of the count.

The weather in the second part of the season was very changeable and we had an alternation of good and bad days. During the sunny days it was harder to spot birds against the blue sky. While rain can halt the migration, some clouds in the mountain are always welcomed by the counters as in those conditions the raptors are funnelled between the shoreline and the hills. In the last weeks of September, we finally had a **second peak of migration**. The bulk was Steppe Buzzards in their typical migratory fashion: crazy, lazy and disorganised flocks, kettling slowly higher and higher and then streaming at different dis-

tances and altitudes, kettling again, splitting, re-joining, drifting... A challenge for the counters who needed to keep calm and, at time, to start over the count again and again, while a correct and continuous communication between the stations became crucial. After reaching 54.355 and 44.678 birds on the 29th and the 30th of September, their migration was halted by several days of raining, but we knew there was more to come! Surely, as expected, their number exploded, with **79.837 Steppe Buzzards** on October 4th. That day, tally clickers were on fire and volunteers stared at endless streams blinding their eyes, but all this effort was finally rewarded: for **the 6th consecutive year more than 1 million raptors were counted**, using the Batumi bottleneck. The season total of **Steppe Buzzard (291.376 birds)** contributed greatly to reaching that total again.



© Rafa Benjumea





A huge kettle of Black Kites on the foreground  
of the Greater Caucasus - © John Wright

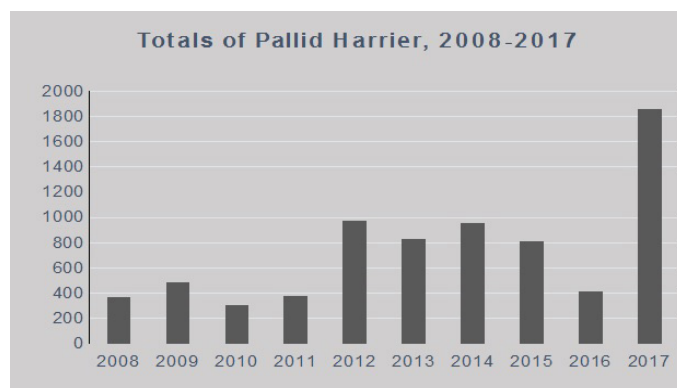


Pallid Harrier, immature male (left) and juvenile male (right) - © John Wright

## 389 Pallid Harriers observed from the two stations is very likely the highest ever day count for this species in the world!

**A**s we entered October and the last two weeks of the count, days became shorter, nights colder, and the shield bugs started seeking for a place to hibernate. During the first sunny days of the month, swarms of these stink bugs invaded the counting stations, crawling on our scopes, bags, clothes, pockets and releasing their stinky secretions when accidentally squashed or touched - a real test for our nerves and concentration. Luckily, those annoying moments were more than compensated by the migration of raptors: Eagles, Eagles, Eagles! They always cheer us up! Coinciding with the Steppe Buzzard peak and our count passing the 1 million bar, eagle migration boomed on 4th of October: more than **one thousand Lesser Spotted Eagles**, as well as **63 Steppe Eagles**, **88 Greater Spotted Eagles** and **284 Short-toed Eagles** were counted from both stations! Some of the birds passed so close that we could hear the wind through their feathers! We especially remember a juvenile Imperial that passed 20 meters from the station, leaving the counters in religious silence.

Talking about Imperial Eagles, this year has been special for them: adult birds are an unusual observation here but this season we counted 9. One of them let us admire its golden head while perching on a tree during a rainy day. Additionally we observed 23 juvenile and 12 immature Imperials this season, giving a nice total of 44 individuals.



The wonderful juvenile Imperial Eagle that left us in awe - © John Wright



This year has been special for vultures as well. Egyptian vulture, the only regular vulture we have, completely disappeared in the October and we only counted 19 in total. But other vultures made their appearance: five Griffon Vultures have been counted, and four of them on the same day: October 13th. That day, incredible and unforgettable, when on Shuamta four amazing birds crossed before our lenses one following the other: Imperial Eagle, Cinereous Vulture, Griffon Vulture, Steppe Eagle. Yes, you read right, a Cinereous Vulture! Its huge, dark figure, slowly and powerfully flapping is impressed in our memory. After 2008, 2011, 2012 and 2015 only the fifth observation of this species during 10 years of counting (apart from the one Aki and Giacomo still remember, seen in Shuamta just 2 days after the count ended in 2016).





## Extreme climbing for the BRC!



BRC anniversary on top of mount Kazbegi (5047m) - © Brecht de Meulenaer



Meanwhile other great news had reached us: the group of climbers that set out to mount Kazbegi as a **fundraising event** for our anniversary had reached the 5047m peak and planted the BRC flag. They would soon join the counters in Batumi to enjoy a rightfully earned migration spectacle.

# CLIMBING MOUNT KAZBEG FOR BRC

by Brecht De Meulenaer:

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**W**e successfully organised a fundraising climbing of Mount Kazbeg in September 2017.

"After two days under a clear blue sky acclimatising and birding, the weather forecast started to look more and more grim with strong winds and heavy snowfall. Were we coming too late? Was the autumn window for climbing Kazbeg coming to an end? And although the next update of the weather forecast wasn't the best, we decided to go for it. We went to bed early and set our alarms for 2 in the morning!

Nine hours later we were climbing the last steep icefield towards the summit, the wind picked up but the sky was clear, and we were sure we were going to make it! A bit later we were all standing on the summit, hurray!

We quickly took out the BRC-flag, made some photos, and enjoyed the views, and shortly after we started our descent. Later that night we celebrated in the hut with a drink and some freeze dried food (garlic-stew?) and obviously some dried pineapples!

The next day, back in Stepansminda, we had a proper Georgian celebration dinner (should we order some more Khachapuri?), looking back at a summit covered in fresh snow and hit by strong winds, just in time indeed. It was a nice trip with a lot of laughing, many birds and last but not least a nice summit!"

The team consisted of Ruben Meersman, Roman Bühler, Martin Lofgren, Klaas Bovin and Brecht De Meulenaer, and raised about 500€ for the Batumi Raptor Count. Thank you!







Base camp at the Gergeti's glacier



Caucasian Snowcocks, one of the highlights of the climbing.



Güldenstädt's redstart

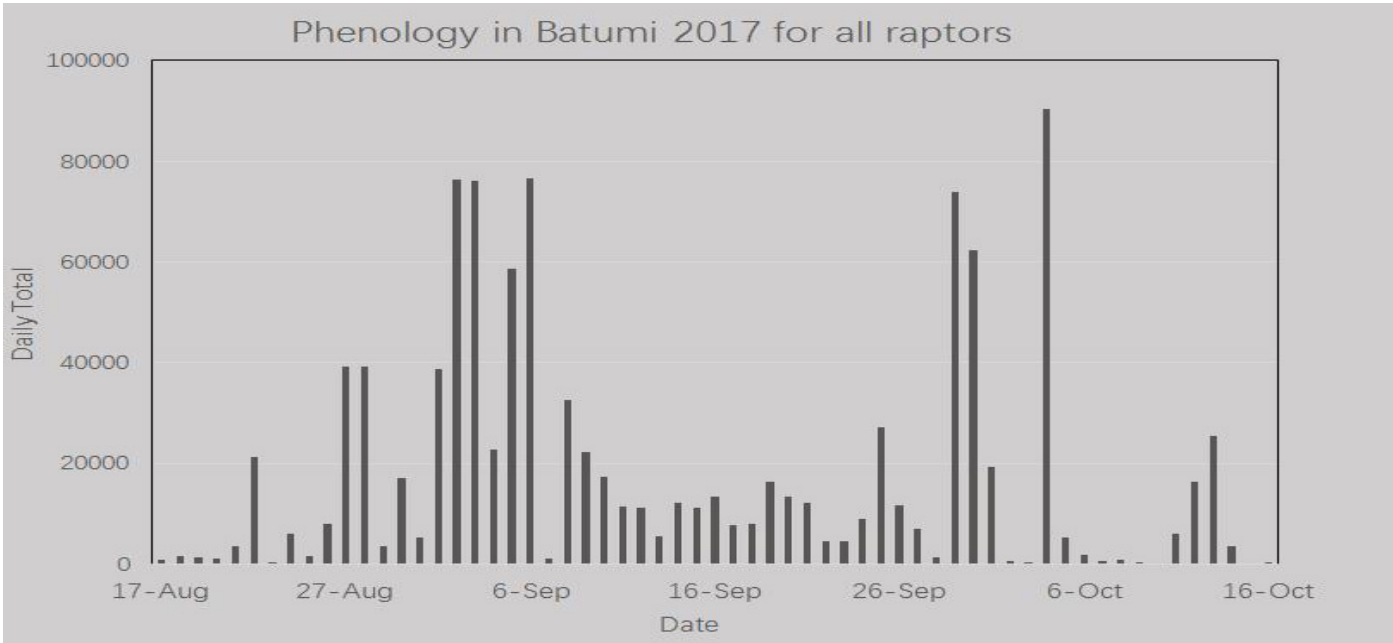




Pied Wheatear at the Sakhalvasho station - © Bjorn Alards

n the last days we also saw many passerines, filling up the sky with large flocks as soon as the winds decreased. They formed interminable lines that we could see against the sea. Their flight and their calls let us identify them: Chaffinches, Hawfinches, Bramblings, Woodlarks and late Swallows and Martins. We also picked up a few migrating Pallas's Gulls this season, a bimbo for most people on station.

The rushing of these birds is really justified, when looking at the snowy chain of the Greater Caucasus standing white in the North, and hearing about snow in higher relieves not far inland from our counting posts. Luckily we got no snow here, but we ended the mission in the rain, strong winds and cold. A perfect time for the last counters and coordinators to gather around a glass of wine to warm up and share stories and good moments.





# THANKS!

A big thanks to the host families for providing housing and meals to so many people; our coordinators Xu, H      , Aki and Giacomo for managing the streams of new counters and birds; and the counters that came from places all over the world to support our project and raptor conservation. We were extra happy to welcome our first African and Chinese volunteers as well, making the celebration of our anniversary all the more international. Thanks everybody for your commitment, motivation, patience, humour and competences. We hope you all learned something and enjoyed your stay in Batumi and will join the count again in the future!

Finally we would like to thank Gerard Troost for the trektellen App which made data recording a lot more straightforward and less prone to mistakes. Our daily count result can be seen on **Trektellen.nl**

Please stay tuned also for a short documentary called '**Worlds collide**' from Oropendula productions about our project and the conservation challenges in the Batumi Bottleneck.



# NO MORE HUNTING AT

**T**he Chorokhi Delta is a fantastic place to go birdwatching and is often visited by our counters to spend some time away from the count stations. The diversity of habitats with open fields, bushes, ponds, reed beds and river banks makes it a perfect place for birds to make a stopover during their migration. Over the years, several rare species (such as the **Sociable Lapwing**) and new bird species for Georgia or even the western Palearctic have been observed here (such as the **Black-crowned Sparrow-lark**). Sadly though the place is also very popular with hunters and despite it being a Birdlife IBA, many birds are shot here every year. Furthermore the area is under threat of the continuing encroachment of Batumi city. Last year the BRC and SABUKO organized a youth exchange to raise more awareness for Chorokhi and with success! Upon arrival this year, we heard that **hunting was now officially banned!** The area is reclaimed by the military and is actively surveyed for illegal activities. To celebrate this great news, we'd like to mention some species observed by several volunteers from last autumn.



# THE CHOROKHI DELTA

The delta is one of the best places to see rare or even new species for Georgia. This year some volunteers saw the first **Egyptian Nightjar** for the country (photo Triin Kaasiku).



On good days the bushes can be stuffed with different species of warblers, chats, shrikes and nightingales. This juvenile **Cuckoo** was also a beauty (photo: Thijs Schippers).



All species of heronry can be observed here, as well as storks, cranes and these **Glossy Ibises** (photo: Thijs Schippers).



The open areas of the Delta are mostly home to cows, but a closer look might also give you a Stone Curlew from time to time or even a **Little Bustard**! (photo: Jasper Wehrmann).





Dunlin is one of the many wader species that can be found foraging at the mouth of the river (Photo: Biljana Jecmenica – Association BIOM).



The delta is used as a roosting place for migratory Harrier species. During the last years we observed an increasing number of dark morph Marsh Harriers also (photo: Maarten Mortier).



While scanning the open areas, you can find Stone Curlews (photo: Maarten Mortier).



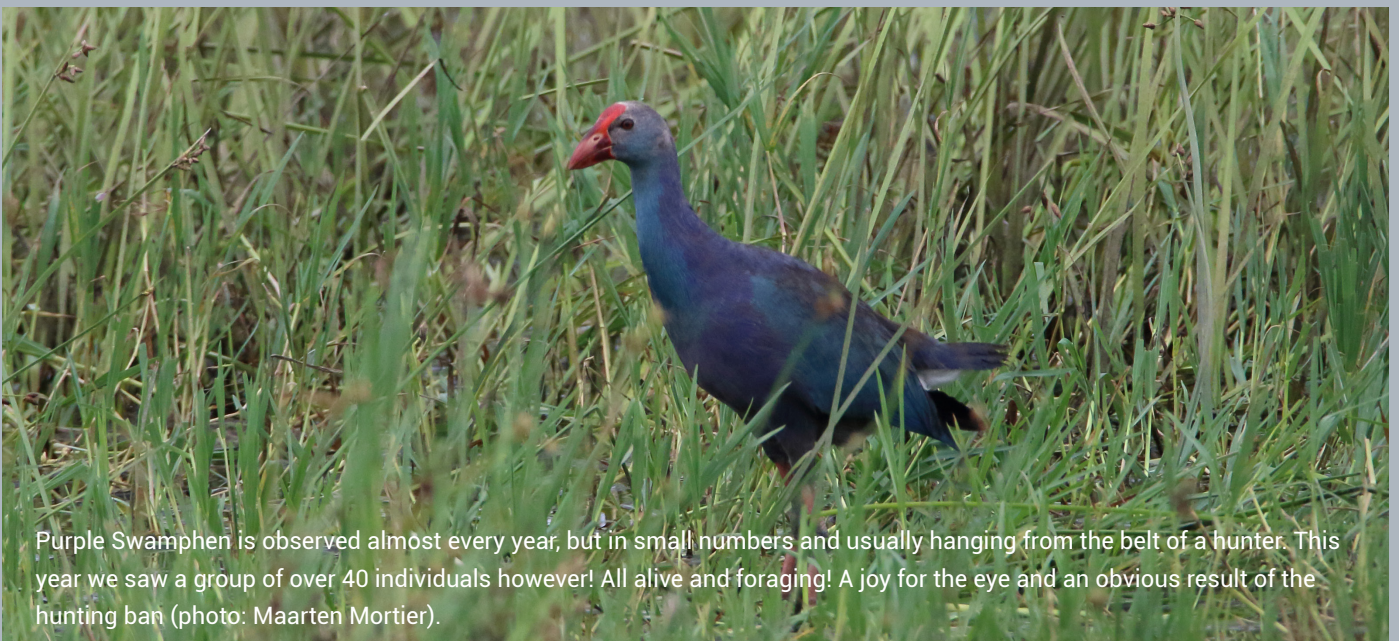




Both Northern and Isabelline Wheatears are often seen at the pebble beach (photo: Thijs Schippers).



The ponds are popular with all kind of waterfowl, such as these Ferruginous Ducks (photo: Bart Hoekstra).



Purple Swamphen is observed almost every year, but in small numbers and usually hanging from the belt of a hunter. This year we saw a group of over 40 individuals however! All alive and foraging! A joy for the eye and an obvious result of the hunting ban (photo: Maarten Mortier).



Over the last 10 years BRC has been joined by **over 300 volunteers from all over the world** to help us counting all those raptors. It's always nice to enjoy the migration with likeminded people from other countries and, apart from the raptors, the team atmosphere is one of the main reasons for many counters to come back again. This year was particularly great in that respect as we had volunteers coming from **4 different continents**, including our first counter from Africa. We are also happy to see a **growing interest from Georgian people** to join the count. This year we hosted four of them!

**Thanks to all volunteers** from the last 10 years! Without you it would not have been possible to run this project and to create such a high quality dataset about the raptors passing the Batumi Bottleneck.

#### Martha Nzisa, Kenya



Every time I correctly identify a Pallid or a Montagu's Harrier, I make a mental happy dance and celebrate the one-month spent counting raptors that cross the Batumi Bottleneck in Georgia. When I applied to take part as a volunteer counter, I had no clue about how difficult the journey to get there was going to be. All that was forgotten, the moment I got to Batumi. The local community and already-present coordinators and volunteers were most welcoming. The diversity and experience of the counters provided a great hands-on learning opportunity. The combination of daily outdoor and occasional indoor raptor identification training aided in mastering some of the minute features that are easy to overlook when birding. The internship turned out to be a really good experience.

#### Xu Shi, China



BRC is a vibrant group of enthusiastic bird watchers and open-minded conservationists. It provides second-to-none opportunities to observe raptors and experience the Georgian culture. Through long-term monitoring the BRC also becomes an excellent example in citizen science, environmental education and bringing benefits and involvement for the local people. It has been a pleasure enjoying the magnificent migration, but also working with the BRC and its volunteers.

#### Diego Jansen, The Netherlands



Of course 2017 wasn't an ordinary year, as the BRC was celebrating its 10 year anniversary. This ended in a nice banquet with a very diverse group of people, reaching from locals to internationally well-known conservationists. For me 2017 was already the fourth time in a row I joined the count and this time I went 'full Batumi' and stayed over for 6 weeks. I arrived on a morning during the Honey Buzzard peak, which was, luckily for me, a bit later than usual. Arriving on station was a mixture of seeing old friends and meeting new ones, which is one of the many reasons to come back every year. As I stayed for a longer period, I was able to see the composition of the migration change over time: from Honey Buzzards into Black Kites, being followed by the Steppe Buzzards and eagles. Also the group of counters changed over

time, which gave it a very dynamic character. Within the group you could see people growing in experience with counting and identifying. As always the presentations given by Aki really helped with getting a head start when facing the harriers and eagles. When I look back at the season it puts a smile on my face, and makes me eager to be there on the station again, counting streams of raptors and cracking jokes with friends.

#### Gizo Seskuria, Georgia



Batumi Raptor Count gave me such a great opportunity to know more of birds. Since a very young childhood I have been interested in birds. I became young ranger of Kolkheti National Park because I wanted to learn more about birds. With the help of park rangers I could learn about some water birds. My special interest was raptors. I could hardly identify just 5-6 species. Joining BRC counter team in Ajara in September 2017 was such a great experience for me to know more about raptors. Counter team and volunteers were very helpful, friendly and professional. They taught me and other Georgian students to identify raptors as well as different methods used in raptor count. Especially interesting were the presentations they gave after finishing each day counts. I think Ajara is fantastic place for watching raptor migration. Since we have such a fantastic location I think more and more Georgia youth should know more about raptors and BRC is really giving such a great opportunity for ones who are really interested and who really care about birds.





**During 10 years over 300 volunteers from 30 different countries helped us counting all the raptors!**



Pictures by Aki Antila

# BRC SCHOOL OUTREACH

by Sandy Wold, BRC Volunteer 2017

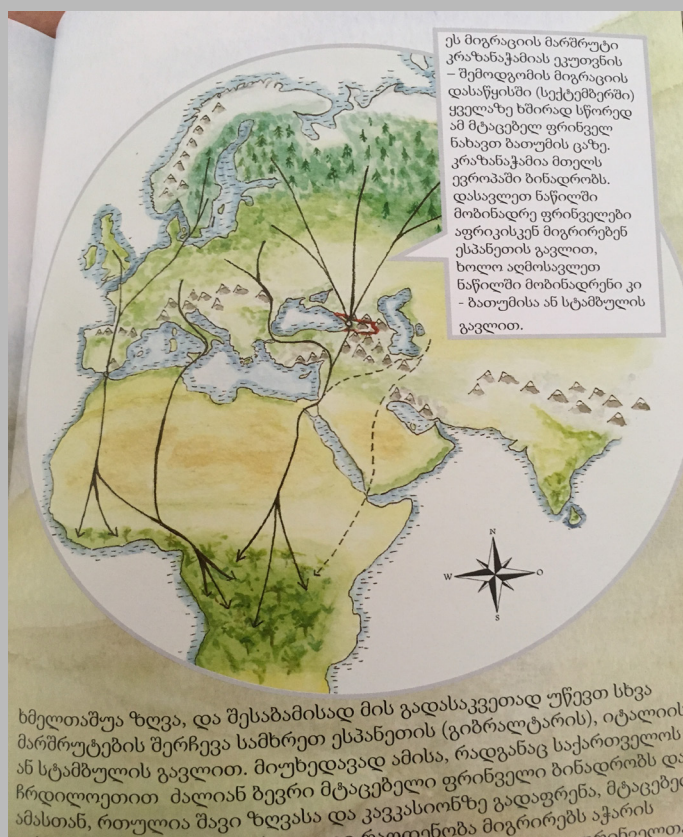
The Georgian students, ages 9-12, stared blankly at me. I quickly rephrased "what raptor" for "what birds of prey?" and Elza, my teacher host, translated. Hands shot up: Hawks! Eagles! Owls! Falcons! They knew, and we were off and running! Next, I asked what do these "raptors" eat? Hands up again: Mice! Snakes! Rabbits! "Great," I said, "and what do the mice, snakes, and rabbits eat?" Class: Snakes eat frogs! Frogs eat insects! Rabbits eat grass! The precocious one: Mice eat vegetation! Me: "And what happens to the grasses, vegetation, and insects in the fall? No response. Me: "Can they grow in winter?" Class indicated no with heads. Me: "So what happens to the grasses, vegetation, and insects in fall? The precocious one indicated that vegetation dies or animals hibernate. Me: "So what do birds do if they do not have enough mice and rabbits to eat in winter?" No response. Me: Using the maps on the walls, I then explained how they fly south where there is food.



I then showed the major fall migration routes that happen every year all over the world and explained what makes Batumi special, why westerners come here, and why we count them. I then drew the Honey Buzzard and the Steppe Buzzard on the chalkboard, emphasized their similarities and differences and told them how to tell them apart. With my sketchbook, I explained how I was trying to learn the other 29 species, which were more tricky. The students were most excited, engaged, and curious by my black and white stylized sketches. Near the end of our inside-time, we reviewed everything we had just discussed by going through the Batumi Raptor Count raptor conservation booklet (BRC/GCCW, c2013). We then went outside to look through my scope. While I

fumbled to set it up, a kettle of Black Kites, Honey Buzzards, and Steppe Buzzards was forming above the school roof! We were less than a half mile below Station One; and they were too close and gone before I switched to binoculars. A few days later, I did the same lesson with the 6-7th graders in the Village of Khala, located in Mtirala National Park. There were no kettles or birds to be seen during the short period of time we had, but we did figure out a way for students to queue up and look through my Swarovski binoculars at the tree across the street.

The experience was rewarding and gave me a deep appreciation for the Georgian people and spirit. It would be wonderful if volunteers would make time to visit classes every year to share what they know of raptor conservation in Batumi and their homeland. It would be also great if volunteers could bring second-hand binoculars to donate to the biology teachers to get bird clubs up and running! And there is ample wall space in the schools to paint murals (bring acrylic paints)! Thanks to SABUKO for getting the booklets out of storage, Wouter Vansteelant for behind-the-scenes support, and Elza and my host, Ruslan, for making the school visit possible!

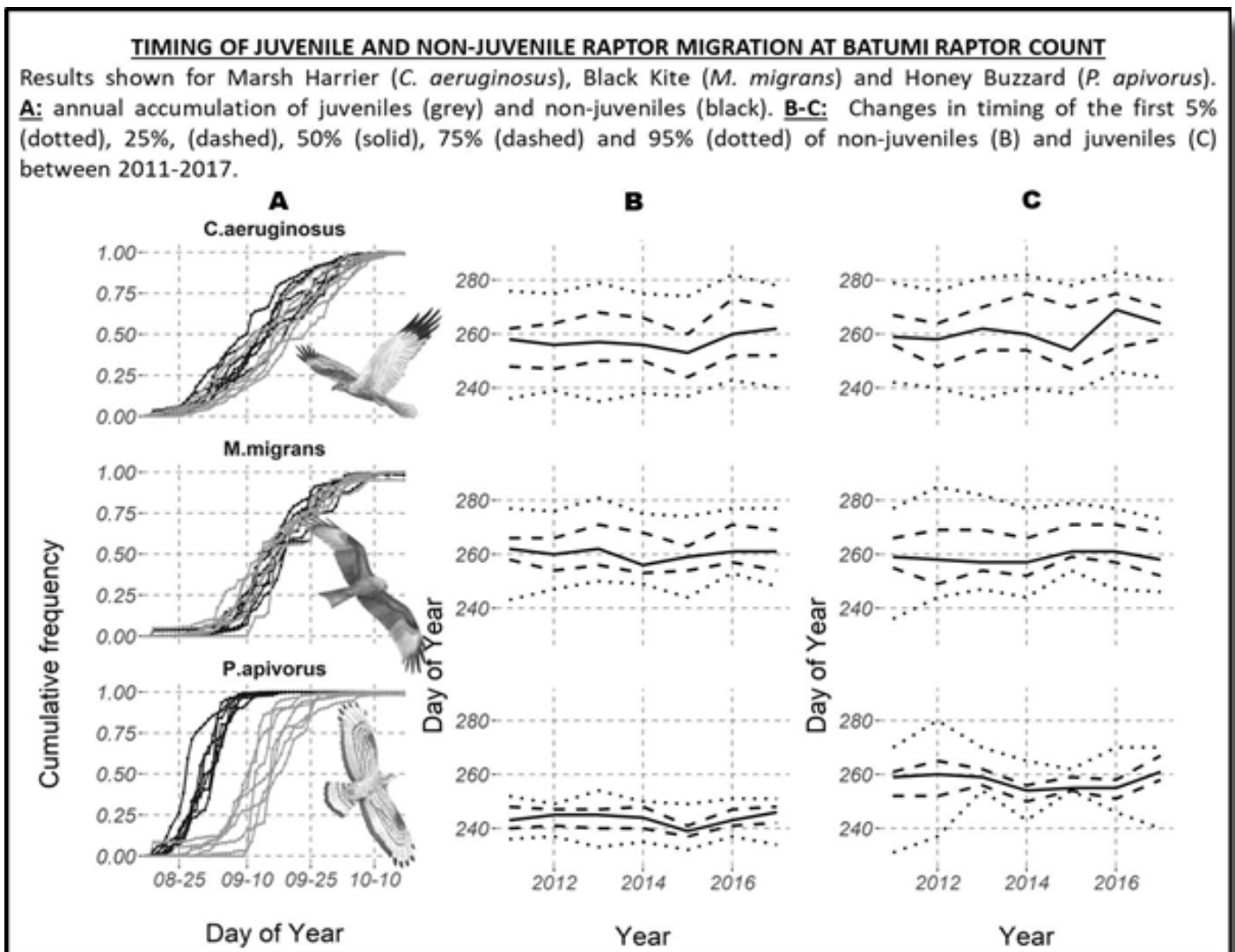




# NEW SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS IN THE MAKING

Ten years of counts. After we reached this milestone in 2017 it was high time for us to publish the BRC dataset and to analyse recent trends in the abundance and timing of migrating raptors in Georgia. To achieve this goal the Dutch-Georgian Ornithological Foundation ([www.dugof.nl](http://www.dugof.nl)), founded by members of the Dutch Avifaunistic Circle (AKN) and the BRC, solicited a grant of ca. 20.000EUR from the Netherlands Biodiversity Information Facility (NLBIF). Under the lead of Jasper Wehrmann a data paper is being prepared explaining the BRC methodology and the final dataset which we will publish open access in the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF). Simultaneously, Wouter Vansteelant has analysed recent trends in the abundance and timing of juveniles and non-juveniles of the most important species at Batumi. We don't want to give away

the most important results before the paper is published, but a teaser of the results is shown in the figure below. We think this paper is important for several reasons. First and foremost it provides an important baseline for future raptor monitoring in the eastern flyways. Second, but no less important, is that this is the first study in which trends in abundance and timing were estimated separately for juveniles and non-juveniles. This allowed us to detect demographic trends which we would not have been able to detect if we had simply estimated trends for the entire population. The manuscript will be submitted to a reputable ornithological journal in the coming weeks and we'll report back to you with more details as soon as the paper has been reviewed and published.



# FINANCIAL YEAR REPORT

**W**ith this report we inform you about the financial in- and outcome of the year 2017.

Apart from annual expenses to run the count, we had to use some extra budget to celebrate our ten year anniversary, which was attended by most (former) BRC people and many locals. Furthermore we had Martha Nzisa from Kenya joining our count in order to facilitate communication and collaboration with persons from other countries along the Eastern Flyway. Finally some of this year's budget was invested to renew the material of our stall, so we can attend birdfairs again with a fresh spirit.

If you have ideas to increase our income to fund the long-term monitoring, please contact us. Your help is much appreciated and important for the project. [board@batumiraptorcount.org](mailto:board@batumiraptorcount.org)



BRC - FINANCIAL YEAR REPORT 2017	IN		OUT	
	Euro	GEL	Euro	GEL
Left from 2016	6562,45			
Administrative costs			261,35	
Material			116,99	1674
Accommodation	14994		21045	
Transportation	117	255	2463,01	4712
Promotion Material	2102,5	2985	1328,06	3080
Memberships	1000		84,75	
Grants	10200			
Donations	2977,7	465		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>37953,65</b>	<b>3705,00</b>	<b>25299,16</b>	<b>9466,00</b>
Totals Euros (1 € = 2.7 GEL)	€39.325,87		€28.805,09	
<b>INCOME - EXPENSES</b>		<b>€10.520,79</b>		
Account Balance per 01-Jan-2018		€9.744,26		
Paypal Balance per 01-Jan-2018		€776,53		
<b>TOTAL BALANCE (Euros)</b>	<b>€10.520,79</b>			

Thanks to the following sponsors for supporting us in 2017.





# MEMBERSHIP



photo: Ecolybride

## Where your fee goes to:

Membership fees contribute directly to raptor conservation in Batumi, and cover our autumn raptor count monitoring, illegal shooting monitoring, training of regional students and involvement of Georgians. All members receive the BRC annual magazine with the annual monitoring report and conservation issues.

## Continue your membership.

Members can easily continue their membership by just transferring the fee to BRC. Make sure to write down your name in the the subject. No need for more forms. **BRC volunteers receive a free Mimino membership** for the year they participate and the following year.

Choose **annual automatic transfer** to not miss a year with BRC.  
[batumiraptorcount.org/membership](http://batumiraptorcount.org/membership)

## Transfer details:

Name: Batumi Roofvogel Club  
 IBAN: NL08TRIO0198379056  
 BIC/ SWIFT: TRIONL2U  
 Bank: Triodos Bank, Postbus 55,  
 3700 AB Zeist, The Netherlands  
 Subject: Current year

Paypal: [batumiraptorcount.org/transfer](http://batumiraptorcount.org/transfer)



photo: John Wright

Membership Category	Details	Fee
Trans-Caucasian	For Georgian, Azeri or Armenian citizens.	Free
Mimino (Sparrowhawk)	Basic membership.	25€
Irao (Honey Buzzard)	Membership + BRC T-shirt	50€
Artsivi (Imperial Eagle)	Membership + BRC T-shirt +acknowledgement on the website	100€

# THE 11<sup>TH</sup> COUNT IS ON, JOIN IT!

Spring is onto us in the Northern Hemisphere and many of our favourite raptors have started to move northwards. Although still a breeding season away, preparations for the **11th edition of the Batumi Raptor Count** have already started as well. We have opened the application form for counters and welcome applications to be a coordinator in the upcoming season. If you are unable to join us this Autumn in Batumi, please consider forwarding this newsletter to birders who may be able, and make sure to follow us on Facebook or Twitter.

This year we are **looking for up to 50 volunteers**, both experts and beginners, who can stay at least 12 days and pay a small daily fee to cover count expenses (for accommodation, food and transport). In return, you will be able to experience incredible raptor migration with up to 30 species of raptors per season and frequent days with 10 000s or even over a 100 000 birds. We will provide discounted daily fees for half season and full season counters and free stay for **Georgian counters**. If you have considered applying

for a long-term counter role in the past but found the costs to be prohibitive, you should definitely reconsider it now.

In addition to counters, we are also looking for **dedicated count coordinators** to lead the daily operation and ensure the quality of the count. They are the backbone of our counts as they know the protocol by heart, delegate tasks on the station, keep an overview of all the migratory movements and make sure everyone contributes to a successful count independent of the level of expertise. Candidate coordinators ideally should have experience in BRC already, or have relevant experience from other bottlenecks, speak fluent English, able to coordinate a group of international volunteers with different cultural backgrounds and have a decent identification skills. We need a 1 full season coordinator and 1 for the second half of the count (mid-September until the end). **Flight, food and accommodation will be covered and you will even receive a stipend of 400€ per month.**







photo: Eoolybride

We hope to see you in Sakhalvasho soon to enjoy not only the birds, but also the local gastronomy and the Georgian hospitality. Gaumarjos!