

THE KENTISH PLOVER (CHARADRIUS ALEXANDRINUS) IN ITALY: POPULATIONS DISTRIBUTION AND CONSERVATION CONSIDERATION.

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On 18 September 2010 GAROL (Gruppo Attività e Ricerche Ornitologiche del Litorale) organized the first National Conference on Kentish Plover in Bracciano (Rome), Italy. The main goal of the conference was to go deep into the effective situation of this species in Italy. During the conference 70 Italian researchers from 15 different regions presented a total of 38 works. This paper represents, therefore, the synthesis of information regarding to the species: during the conference, ornithologists of each region introduced the

current state of Kentish Plover based on survey results from the period of 2008-2010. The constant monitoring of nesting and wintering sites throughout the seasons and years shows that in many Italian littorals Kentish Plover is dramatically decreasing. In particular, considering the breeding populations, in Friuli Venezia Giulia, in Latium and in Campania, *Charadrius alexandrinus* seems to be close to the extinction (<10 breeding pairs).

Kentish plover in Italy: synthesis . Data collected are referred to the period 2009-2010: C=counts; E=estimates.

REGION	wintering individuals	breeding pairs	data type	trend (%)	threats
Liguria	no	probable?	?	?	?
Veneto	247	328-383	C,E	-30	a,c,d,A,e,h,L,1,2,4
Friuli Venezia Giulia	16-35	1-3	C	-80	A,e,n,o,2,3,4,
Emilia Romagna	21-67	40-50	C,E	-65	A, d,o,h,e,2,4,5
Marche	?	18-24	C	?	a,d,A,e,h,L,m,1,2,4,7
Tuscany	92	31-43	C	-39	a,d,A,e,o
Latium	< 80	10	C	-33	a,b,c,d,A,e,f,g,h,i,L,m,n,o,1,3,4,5,6
Abruzzi	30-37	52	C	?	a,d,A,h,L,1,
Molise	?	20	C,E	-50	a,c,d,A,e,p
Campania	10-15	2-8	E	-50	a,b,A,e,q,m,o,
Apulia	216-719	45-81(*)	C,E	?	c,A,e,d,g,h,5
Basilicata	74-85	25-30	E	?	a,d,A,e,g,h,
Calabria	50	100	E	?	a,A,e,g,
Sardinia	1387	580-645	C	fluctuation	a,b,d,A,e,g,h,s,q,r,L,5
Sicily	200-400	250-400	C,E	-20/30	a,c,A,e,h,n,o,1,2,34,6
TOT.	2421-3214	1502-1851			
Italy 2004	2300-3300	1300-2000			Brichetti e Fracasso 2004

(*) not included S.M. Savoia salt pans [pairs 2000-05 seasons: mean value=32.6 (G. Albanese, pers. comm.)]

Threats code: a=habitat transformation and habitat loss, b= habitat fragmentation, c=marine and coastal erosion , d=beaches mechanical cleaning, A= leisure activities and generalized anthropic disturbances ; e=sun-baths/trampling, f=fishing, g=off road vehicles, h=dogs, i=kite surfing, L=natural predators, m=competition with Little Ringed Plover, n= vegetation growth, o= unfavourable water levels, p= fires ; q= eggs collecting; r= chicks collecting; s= wetland drainage ?= unknown or no data.

Predators code: 1=*corvidae*, 2=*laridae*, 3=feral mammals, 4= rats; 5=cats/dogs ; 6=snakes, 7=Kestrel.

About 80% of the pairs are located in three Regions (Sardinia, Veneto and Sicily) and in particular in a few large sites. During the 2008-2010 survey period, the Italian breeding population

were estimated between 1,500-1,850 pairs and where data allowed calculation resulted negative trends exclusively (compared to result of 2000-2005 survey period). The future of this unstable

breeding populations of the Italian littorals is dramatically uncertain. For each region the most important causes of the significant decline in the size of breeding populations of Kentish Plover are as follows:

- habitat degradation (transformation and habitat loss; habitat fragmentation; marine erosion; wetland drainage, water levels and vegetation growth);
- anthropic disturbances due to leisure activities (sun baths and trampling; fishing; off roads vehicle transit; kite surfing; eggs and chicks collecting);
- mechanical cleanings of beaches during the entire reproductive season.

REFERENCES

Biondi M. & Pietrelli L. (Eds) 2011. Il Fratino: status, biologia e conservazione di una specie minacciata. Proc. Nat. Congress, Bracciano Ed. Belvedere, le scienze (13), 240 pp.

- Data on breeding success are scarce and dishomogeneous. As a typical example on Latium the breeding success of Kentish Plover plummeted from 29.3% to 11.4%.
- Kentish Plover populations were estimated of a range of 2,421-3,214 individuals during the wintering period (2008-2010) which is more or less equal to the previous survey.
- Natural predation (feral mammals, vagrant dogs and cats, Corvidae, Laridae, snakes and Kestrel) is an additional problem for the survival of the species in Italy.

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