

The occurrence of Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhyncus* in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and its status in Central Asia

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Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhyncus* has two distinct groups of populations. The southern one, of five different subspecies, is mainly sedentary and breeds from Pakistan over the Indian subcontinent and southeast Asia to the Philippines, Borneo, Sumatra and Java. The northern populations, subspecies *orientalis*, breed in southern Siberia east to Amurland, on Sakhalin, and south to Manchuria, Japan and possibly Korea. In autumn, these northern populations migrate south to winter on the Indian subcontinent, in southeast Asia, Indonesia and the Philippines (del Hoyo *et al* 1994, Ferguson-Lees & Christie 2001). However, there is also a western migration route passing through Kazakhstan, where it has been recorded from the Altai, the Alakol region, south of Lake Balkhash, and at the Karatau and western Tien Shan mountains. Along this route in Kazakhstan, Crested Honey Buzzard is a rare to scarce passage migrant from late April to mid-June and late August to mid-October (Wassink & Oreel 2007, Gavrilov & Gavrilov 2005). The largest numbers have been recorded at the Chokpak Pass (Figure 1) which is well south and over 10° west of the known western breeding limit (Ferguson-Lees & Christie 2001).

Our recent observations of Crested Honey Buzzard in Uzbekistan have led us to review its status in Central Asian (Middle Asian) countries other than Kazakhstan (Plate 1). Only few published records of Crested Honey Buzzard in these other countries exist, mainly in the Russian literature and solely in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Table 1 shows these published records together with the recent observations from Uzbekistan. There are 13 records from Uzbekistan and three from Tajikistan, of altogether 62 individuals. Eight records refer to spring migration, eight autumn migration. Although Crested Honey Buzzard has apparently not been recorded in Turkmenistan or Kyrgyzstan, the record of two juveniles migrating at Kosmostanzyi in the Ili-Alatau national park of Kazakhstan (Wassink & Oreel 2007) was only about 15 km from the Kyrgyz border (Arend Wassink *in litt*).

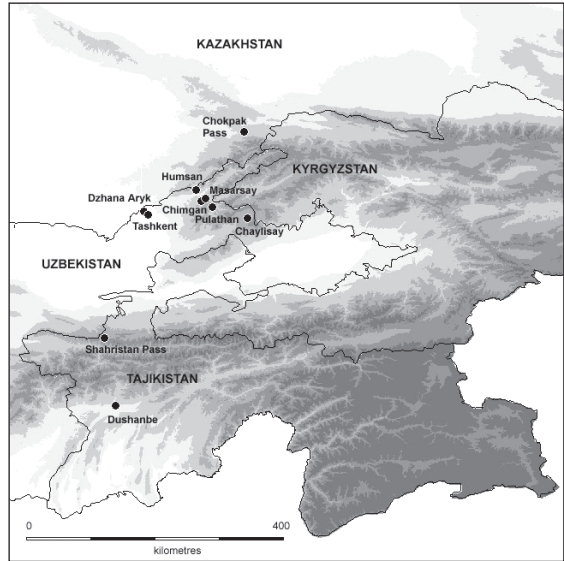


Figure 1. Map of localities with Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhyncus* records listed in Table 1 and position of the Chokpak Pass.



Plate 1. Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhyncus*, Chimgan, Uzbekistan, May 9 2006. © Daniel Kreuzberg

DISCUSSION

The recent observations from Uzbekistan show that the Crested Honey Buzzard may migrate regularly through this country. All records are from the vicinity of the Chatkal range, the north-western end of the Tien-Shan mountains. Crested Honey Buzzards observed here consist most probably of the same birds that migrate through the Chokpak Pass in southern Kazakhstan (Figure 1). The Chokpak Pass lies between the Zhabagly Tau and the Boroldai ridge (Karatau range) and birds in spring flying to the north along the western end of the Chatkal range would reach one of these mountain ranges and birds crossing the Chokpak Pass on their way south in autumn would reach the Chatkal range.

The Central Asian migration route of this species could be the result of an unrecorded westward breeding-range expansion or might be part of a migration route around and perhaps through the Tien Shan and Hindu Kush evolved to avoid crossing the Himalayas (Ferguson-Lees & Christie 2001). However, there are only two certain records of Crested Honey Buzzard from Afghanistan so far, one juvenile bird on 12 September 2007 at Ishkashim (Badakhshan, 36°42' N 71°34' E) and one adult on 21 September 2007 at Nakhchirshitk (Great Pamir valley, Wakhan, 37°12' N 72°57' E) (Raffael Ayé, Wildlife Conservation Society/USAID, *in litt*). Additionally, a sight record of 29 European Honey Buzzards *P. apivorus* in NE Afghanistan on 15 May 1978 by Thiollay (1978) might refer to Crested Honey Buzzard, according to Rasmussen & Anderton (2005).

European Honey Buzzard is a scarce passage migrant in Kazakhstan, and also migrates over Chokpak Pass and through Uzbekistan (Wassink & Oreel 2007, pers obs), and Crested Honey Buzzards might be caught up in migrating flocks of European Honey Buzzards in autumn and then spend the non-breeding season with them in Africa (Ferguson-Lees & Christie 2001). In the United Arab Emirates, Crested Honey Buzzard has become a regular winter visitor in very small numbers to Abu Dhabi island in recent years and there are 10 records from elsewhere in the country (Pedersen 2007). In Kuwait, after the first record in 2001, Crested Honey Buzzard is considered a scarce passage migrant with three records in September and one each in April, May and October (Gregory 2005). In recent years, there have also been the first six records of Crested Honey Buzzard in Iran and it may be a scarce but almost regular winter visitor and passage migrant in the southern part of this country (Sehhatiasabet *et al* 2006, Duquet & Richardson 2000, Raffael Ayé *in litt*). There are also seven records of Crested Honey Buzzard in Oman, more than 20 from Israel and it has also been found in the Caucasus, Turkey and Egypt (Eriksen *et al* 2007, Ferguson-Lees & Christie 2001).

Given the comparatively low ornithological coverage of Uzbekistan and especially Tajikistan, Crested Honey Buzzard may be a much commoner migrant than the records suggest and may have a similar status as in Kazakhstan. Hopefully, the true status of Crested Honey Buzzard in all countries of Central Asia can be clarified in the near future.

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ERRATUM

Schweizer M & M Mitropolskiy. 2008. The occurrence of Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhyncus* in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and its status in Central Asia. *Sandgrouse* 30: 161–163.

The editor apologises for the omission of Table 1, which is reproduced in full below.

Table 1. Published records of Crested Honey Buzzard in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and recent observations from Uzbekistan. (coll NUUz = Collection of National University of Uzbekistan, Tashkent).

Country	Date	Locality	Number of birds	Observer	Source
Uzbekistan	12 May 2007	Chimgan	1	S Rooke, Sunbird	unpublished
	18 August 2006	Pulathan	1	M Mitropolskiy	unpublished
	19 July 2006	Chaylisay	6	M Mitropolskiy	unpublished
	9 May 2006	Chimgan	20	Manuel Schweizer, Samuel Bachmann, Daniel Kreuzberg	unpublished
	8 May 2006	Masarsay	10	Manuel Schweizer, Elena Kreuzberg-Mukhina, Samuel Bachmann, Daniel Kreuzberg	unpublished
	8 May 2006	Chimgan	2	Manuel Schweizer, Elena Kreuzberg-Mukhina, Samuel Bachmann, Daniel Kreuzberg	unpublished
	3 November 2005	Dzhana-aryk	1	M Mitropolskiy	Mitropolskiy 2007
	18 May 1999	Chimgan	13	M Mitropolskiy	Mitropolskiy 2002
	9 May 1998	Humsan	1	M Mitropolskiy	Mitropolskiy 2002
	9 September 1970	Tashkent	1	AN Aupov, coll NUUz	Mitropolskiy <i>et al</i> 1987
	12 September 1966	Tashkent	1	R Meklenburtsev, coll NUUz	Mitropolskiy <i>et al</i> 1987
	18 October 1949	Tashkent	1	MM Ostapenko	Ostapenko 1960
	27 May 1948	Tashkent	1	R Meklenburtsev	unpublished
Tajikistan	24 April 1969	Dushanbe	1	HH Mamsurov	Abdusalyamov 1971
	13/19 September 1949	near Shahristan Pass	2	AV Popov	Popov 1950