

DIURNAL RAPTORS AND OWLS IN THE MURMANSK REGION

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The list of diurnal raptors and owls recorded from the Murmansk region territory is provided. The status of the species in the area is briefly described.

Key words: diurnal raptors, owls, Murmansk Region, Russia.

ХИЩНЫЕ ПТИЦЫ И СОВЫ МУРМАНСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ. Корякин А.С. Кандалакшский государственный природный заповедник.

Приведен список видов хищных птиц и сов, отмеченных к настоящему времени на территории Мурманской области, кратко охарактеризован статус видов на данной территории.

Ключевые слова: хищные птицы, совы, Мурманская область, Россия

The paper briefly reports about the status of birds of two orders – *Falconiformes* and *Strigiformes* – in the Murmansk region.

Since the 1930s, information about birds in the Murmansk region has been gathered predominantly by the Kandalaksha and Lapland state strict nature reserves. After the Pasvik strict nature reserve had been designated in 1992 and formed a single transboundary protected area with the Norwegian reserve bearing the same name, extensive ornithological information accumulated by Norwegian colleagues became available. That is why the reserves are constantly mentioned in brief species accounts.

So far, 17 species of diurnal raptors (12 breeding) and 9 species of owls (7 breeding) have been recorded from the region (table 1). The basic review on birds of the Kola Peninsula published by F. Pleske (1887) reported of 12 diurnal raptor species (3 breeding) and 6 owl species (2 breeding) for the territory of the present-day Murmansk region, but one should note that the status of some species was not specified clearly enough. Despite considerable fluctuations in the abundance of many of the species over the past 125 years, no significant changes have occurred in the fauna of the orders. For most species, the change in the status (see tab. 1) is an artefact, reflecting better information coverage rather than actual population changes in the area.

1. Order *Falconiformes*

1.1. Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*. Breeder. Abundance in the region is 25 pairs at maximum (Gilyazov & Kokhanov 2003a). Red-listed in the Murmansk Region (category 3 – rare species). Nests in forest areas little disturbed by human activities around large lakes and lake systems rich in fish, as

Table 1. Checklist of diurnal raptors and owls in the Murmansk region.

No	Species	Status	
		Pleske, 1887	current
1.	<i>Falconiformes</i>		
1.1	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	breeder	breeder
1.2	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	absent	vagrant
1.3	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	absent	breeder
1.4	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	present	migrant
1.5	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	absent	vagrant
1.6	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	present	breeder
1.7	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	present	breeder
1.8	<i>Buteo lagopus</i>	breeder	breeder
1.9	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	present	vagrant
1.10	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	present	breeder
1.11	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>	present	breeder
1.12	<i>Falco rusticolus</i>	breeder	breeder
1.13	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	present	breeder
1.14	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	absent	breeder
1.15	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	present	breeder
1.16	<i>Falco vespertinus</i>	absent	vagrant
1.17	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	present	breeder
2	<i>Strigiformes</i>		
2.1	<i>Nyctea scandiaca</i>	present	breeder
2.2	<i>Bubo bubo</i>	present	breeder
2.3	<i>Asio otus</i>	absent	vagrant
2.4	<i>Asio flammeus</i>	breeder	breeder
2.5	<i>Aegolius funereus</i>	breeder	breeder
2.6	<i>Glaucidium passerinum</i>	absent	nomadic
2.7	<i>Surnia ulula</i>	present	breeder
2.8	<i>Strix uralensis</i>	absent	breeder
2.9	<i>Strix nebulosa</i>	present	breeder

well as on the islands and coast of the Gulf of Kandalaksha. The northernmost breeding area is the Pasvik reserve (Makarova et al. 2003, Frantzen et al. 1991, Wikan et al. 1994). The species has not been recorded from the tundra zone or the Murman coast.

1.2. Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*. Rare vagrant species. First recorded on 24 October 1938 in the Chuna tundra, Lapland reserve (Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky & Gilyazov 1991). Breeding not confirmed but possible in the southwest of the region.

1.3. Black Kite *Milvus migrans*. Rare breeder. First recorded on 29 May 1950 from Chunozero, Lapland reserve (Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky & Gilyazov 1991); the same year breeding was recorded on Lake Rugozero, at the border with Karelia (Zimin et al. 1993). Breeding has not been recorded thereafter, although a few pairs may be nesting in the southwest of the region. Thus, Black Kites have lately stayed at the head of the Gulf of Kandalaksha, near Luvenga in the summer season (E. Shutova, personal communication). A vagrant Kite was noted on Harlov Island, Seven Islands (Sem' Ostrovov) Archipelago, Eastern Murman (Gerasimova et al. 1967).

1.4. Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*. Rare migrant. Breeding has been recorded from an area in the Norwegian part of the Pasvik reserve by the border with Russia (Frantzen et al. 1991, Giershaug et al. 1994). Breeding in the Ponoï depression area has been surmised but no nests found (Ganusevich 1988). Recorded from the White Sea bottleneck by the Three Islands Archipelago (Pleske 1887). A visit to the Ainovy Islands, Western Murman (Kohanov & Skokova 1967) and the Gavrilovskiy Archipelago area, Eastern Murman (Paneva 2001) has been recorded.

1.5. Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*. Visitor. Observed in the Pasvik reserve in 1986 (Wikan et al. 1994).

1.6. Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*. Uncommon breeder. The breeding range covers the forest zone and forest tundra. Nesting was first recorded in the tundra zone in 1999 – Eastern Murman, mainland coast by Gavrilovskiy Archipelago, and since 2002 – on islands of the archipelago (Paneva 2001, personal communication). Migratory and nomadic birds were observed on the Murman coast, islands and archipelagoes along the coast – Ainovy, Kildin, Gavrilovskiy, Seven Islands (Kartashev 1948, Kohanov & Skokova 1967, Nikolskiy 1885, Spasskiy 1925, Formozov 1929). Some individuals overwinter in the area, in human settlements as well (Kohanov 1985, Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky & Gilyazov 1991, Shutova & Kohanov 2001).

1.7. Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*. Rare breeder. Nesting was first recorded in 1937 in Chuna tundra (Vladimirskaya 1948). The breeding range is within the forest zone. Encounters are known on the Kildin Island and the White Sea bottleneck (Smirnov 1926, Formozov 1927). In Kandalaksha the Sparrowhawk was recorded in the winter season (Shutova & Kohanov 2001).

1.8. Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus*. Breeder. Occurs throughout the region, but avoids large closed-canopy forest areas. The number of

breeding pairs and their distribution depends on the abundance of *Muridae*.

1.9. Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*. Vagrant. Breeding presumed in the south of the region (Kohanov 2003a), but no nests have been found. The species was recorded in the Pasvik reserve (Wikan et al. 1994), by Lake Notozero (Pleske 1887), by Lake Bolshoi Vudjavr (Kohanov 2005), on the downstream of Ponoï (Mikhailov & Fil'chagov 1984), in the Chavanga area (Kvartal'nov et al. 1984), but most encounters occurred in the Kandalaksha area and further south (Blagosklonov 1960, Kohanov et al. 1987).

1.10. Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*. Breeder. There are no more than 10 pairs in the Murmansk region (Gilyazov & Kohanov 2003b). Red-listed in the Murmansk Region (category 3 – rare species). Nests in the western part of the region, namely in the Pasvik and Lapland reserves (Vladimirskaya 1948, Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky & Gilyazov 1991, Wikan et al. 1994). Nesting presumed around Ondozera lakes, Tersky coast (Kvartal'nov et al. 2004). Some birds may overwinter in the area (Vladimirskaya 1948). Known to have visited Ainovy Islands, Gavrilovskiy and Seven Islands Archipelagoes (Paneva, personal communication; Tatarinkova & Chemyakin 1975, Tatarinkova et al. 1989).

1.11. White-tailed Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*. Breeder. Red-listed in the Murmansk Region (category 3 – rare species). Abundance estimated at 30–35 pairs (Gilyazov & Kohanov 2003c). The main breeding areas are the Ponoï depression (Ganusevich 1988), Gulf of Kandalaksha coast and islands (Koryakin & Boyko, *ibid.*, Kohanov & Bianki 1986). The species breeds also in the Pasvik and Lapland reserves (Vladimirskaya 1948, Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky & Gilyazov 1991, Wikan et al. 1994). Occasional visits have been recorded from the tundra zone and Murman coast islands (Kartashev 1948, Kishchinskiy 1960, Mikhailov 1972, Nikolskiy 1885, Tatarinkova & Chemyakin 1975, Formozov 1929). May overwinter in the area (Flyorov 1970).

1.12. Gyrfalcon *Falco rusticolus*. Breeder. Red-listed in the Murmansk Region (category 2 – vulnerable species). There are 12–15 nest areas known from the region (Gilyazov et al. 2003). Nests mainly in forest tundra and tundra (Pleske 1887), including archipelagoes Gavrilovskiy and Seven Islands, Eastern Murman coast (Dementiev 1951, Shklyarevich & Krasnov 1980). Some birds may overwinter in the area (Kohanov 1970, Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky & Gilyazov 1991).

1.13. Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*. Breeder. Red-listed in the Murmansk Region (category 2 – vulnerable species). No more than 20–30 pairs nest in the region (Bianki et al. 2003). The main breeding area is the Ponoï depression (Ganusevich 1988). Cases of overwintering in the head of the Gulf of Kandalaksha are known.

1.14. Hobby *Falco subbuteo*. Rare, occurs irregularly, occasional breeder. First recorded offi-

cially in August 1951 from the Severnyi Archipelago, Gulf of Kandalaksha (Kohanov et al. 1987). Red-listed in the Murmansk Region (category 3 – rare species). Nesting reported from the Gulf of Kandalaksha area: Velikiy Island (1957 & 1984), Karelian Coast opposite the Tarasikha Archipelago (1980 & 1981) (Kohanov 1987). In addition to the Gulf of Kandalaksha, the species was noted in the Pasvik reserve in 1973 (Wikan et al. 1994), on Harlov Island, Seven Islands Archipelago, Eastern Murman coast in 1986 (Krasnov & Nikolaeva 1992).

1.15. Merlin *Falco columbarius*. Breeder. Red-listed in the Murmansk Region (in need of surveillance). Estimated abundance is 100–200 pairs. The most abundant species among falcons. Occurs throughout the region, but rare in the tundra zone, although in 1955 nesting was recorded even from Harlov Island (Kishchinskiy 1960). Winter encounters have been recorded from Kandalaksha (Shutova & Kohanov 2001).

1.16. Red-footed falcon *Falco vespertinus*. Vagrant. First recorded on Imandra Island in July 1921; the same August recorded on the Khibines, later on a dead bird was found in the Gulf of Kola area (Shibanov 1927). No records thereafter.

1.17. Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*. Breeder. Red-listed in the Murmansk Region (category 3 – rare species). Breeding reported from SW parts of the region, from the Pasvik reserve to the Gulf of Kandalaksha (Blagosklonov 1960, Vladimirskaia 1948, Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky & Gilyazov 1991, Wikan et al. 1994). The species abundance is closely related to the dynamics of *Muridae*. The species abundance in the Gulf of Kandalaksha – the main breeding area – has decreased several times since the 1950s–1960s (Bianki & Boyko 1985), and breeding in the area is now not annual. The species has been noted in the tundra zone and on Murman Coast islands (Mikhailov & Fil'chagov 1984, Paneva 1992, Tatarinkova et al. 1989).

2. Order *Strigiformes*

2.1. Snowy Owl *Nyctea scandiaca*. Uncommon migrant and nomadic species, accidental breeder. Red-listed in the Murmansk Region (category 3 – rare species). Previously, the first case of nesting was recorded only in 1982 from coastal tundra near Dalnije Zelentsy village (Krasnov 1985). No case of breeding recorded thereafter.

2.2. Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo*. Very rare, accidental breeder. Red-listed in the Murmansk Region (category 1b – endangered species). The species was noted quite a few times in the Kandalaksha area in the 1950s but became very rare afterwards (Kohanov 2003b). Nesting first noted in 1961–1964 on Velikiy Island, Gulf of Kandalaksha (Kohanov et al. 1987), but not recorded thereafter. Visits by the species to the Gulf of Kola area (Spasskiy 1925) and Harlov Island, Seven Islands Archipelago, Eastern Murman coast (Karpovich 1985) are known. Re-

corded from the Lapland reserve in wintertime as well (Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky & Gilyazov 1991).

2.3. Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*. Rare vagrant. The first registration was on 20 August 1921, the bird was taken from the Murmansk area (Shibanov 1927). In 1973, the species was observed on Velikiy Island, Gulf of Kandalaksha (Kohanov 1987). In the Norwegian part of the Pasvik reserve, the species was observed in 1930 and 1967 (Wikan et al. 1994).

2.4. Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*. Uncommon breeder. The breeding range covers the forest zone and reaches slightly into forest tundra. The species was recorded from the Barents Sea coast (Kishinskiy 1960, Mikhailov 1993, Paneva 1992), from Ainovy Islands (Kohanov & Skokova 1967) and from the Seven Islands Archipelago (Kartashev 1948).

2.5. Tengmalm's Owl *Aegolius funereus*. Uncommon breeder. The breeding range is limited to the forest zone. All cases of breeding were registered from the Kandalaksha and Lapland reserves and their surroundings; of 16 known nests 13 were in nest boxes made for the Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula* (Boyko & Shutova, *ibid.*, Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky & Gilyazov 1991). No contacts have been reported from forest tundra or tundra. May overwinter in the area.

2.6. Pygmy Owl *Glaucidium passerinum*. Rare species. First officially registered from Lake Chunozero, Lapland reserve in December 1930 (Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky & Gilyazov 1991). Red-listed in the Murmansk region (in need of surveillance). Breeding not confirmed yet, but quite possible in the southwest of the region. The report of the species breeding in the Murmansk region (Bianki et al. 1993) is not based on direct observations. The species registered from the forest zone only. May overwinter.

2.7. Hawk Owl *Surnia ulula*. The most common owl species in the Murmansk region. Its abundance is closely related to the dynamics of small rodent numbers (Semyonov-Tyan-Shanskiy & Gilyazov 1985). The breeding range covers the forest zone but may reach into forest tundra as well. Vagrant visits to the Eastern Murman coast (Gebel 1903, Kishinskiy 1960), including the Seven Islands Archipelago (Kartashev 1948) have been registered.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*. The only published observation of the species (Makarova 2003) was a technical error (Khlebosolov, E.I., personal communication).

2.8. Ural Owl *Strix uralensis*. Rare accidental breeder. First official registration of the species was on 14 June 1932 from the Kurki River valley (Semyonov-Tyan-Shanskiy & Gilyazov 1991). Red-listed in the Murmansk region (category 2 – vulnerable species). Abundance declined considerably since the 1950s. Only one case of breeding is known: Luvenga village area, Gulf of Kandalaksha, 1982 (Kohanov 2003c). Does not reach outside the forest zone, but a vagrant having visited the Ainovy Islands is known (Tatarinkova 1985). The species was registered from the region in March–November,

one registration was made in January (Semyonov-Tyan-Shanskiy & Gilyazov 1991, Kohanov et al. 1987).

2.9. Great Gray Owl *Strix nebulosa*. Rare breeder. Red-listed in the Murmansk region (category 3 – rare species). Breeding registered only from Kandalaksha, Lapland, Pasvik nature reserves. The species was recorded there in all months except December (Kohanov 1990, Kohanov et al. 1987, Makarova et al. 2003, Semyonov-Tyan-Shanskiy & Gilyazov 1991). Not observed outside the forest zone.

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