Czech Republic

African and New Odyssey and black stork migration

Photos courtesy of Khalil Baalbaki

Black stork

In 1995, we launched a project called African Odyssey and since then monitored the migration of eighteen black storks, *Ciconia nigra*, from the Czech Republic to their wintering grounds spread between the southern edge of the Sahara and the Equator. They took either an eastern or western migration route. We followed one of the storks, a female called Kristyna, step by step to her wintering grounds in West Africa. Altogether, we tracked her for nearly four years. We also monitored some other storks for more than a year. We have undertaken many expeditions to the storks' final destinations as well as stopovers on their routes.

Besides providing a deeper insight into the migration pattern of the black stork, the African Odyssey project revealed the problem of insufficient protection of the species in Europe (three birds were intentionally shot to death). The project was organized by the public service Czech Radio which delivered regular updates on the migration of storks equipped with transmitters to hundreds of thousands of listeners.

The New Odyssey project aims to broaden the knowledge of migration patterns and wintering grounds of the black stork in the Asian part of its breeding area.

Miroslav Bobek releases a black stork

In 2002, a project called New Odyssey was launched to succeed the African Odyssey. The New Odyssey project is being organized jointly by Czech Radio and the zoo in the town of Chomutov. It aims to broaden the knowledge of migration patterns and wintering grounds of the black stork in the Asian part of its breeding area. It also aims to improve the protection of the species and raise the public awareness concerning this matter. We tracked three storks last year and two this year, all of them from the Novosibirsk region in Russia.

Miroslav Bobek, on behalf of the African and New Odyssey team

More information is available at www.rozhlas.cz/odysea; a downloadable publication with an English summary at www.rozhlas.cz/odysea/publications.

Denmark

Tracking king eiders and common eiders in West Greenland

Photos courtesy of Anders Mosbech and Christian Sonne-Hansen, respectively

King Eider

Since 1999, scientists have collected information regarding migration routes, staging areas and population segregation of king eiders and common eiders in West Greenland and eastern Arctic Canada through the use of PTTs. The gathering of information began by implanting PTTs in ten king eiders during their wing molt in Upernavik, West Greenland. This first project revealed surprisingly that king eiders migrated in the autumn directly to bank areas far offshore Southwest Greenland where they stayed during autumn and winter.

Since then we have implanted PTTs in wintering, breeding, and molting common eiders and king eiders to link breeding and wintering areas and to learn about the migration routes, staging areas and population segregation of these two species.

Large numbers of both king and common eiders winter in the open water area off Southwest Greenland, where there is concern over hunting pressure and disturbance. Scientific information shows significantly that the common eider population has declined in the West Greenland breeding areas. However, most of the Greenland winter population breeds in the vast eastern Canadian Arctic. Satellite tracking has given us vital information about local movements and habitat use in winter areas, showing that despite large differences in hunting pressure, most eiders stick to the same place for long periods. We have also learned where birds from the most heavily hunted area go to breed.

Large numbers of both king and common eiders winter in the open water area off Southwest Greenland, where there is concern over hunting pressure and disturbance.

Anders Mosbech

Most of the projects have been conducted with collaboration between National Environmental Research Institute (Denmark), Greenland Institute of Natural Resources, Copenhagen Royal Veterinary University and Canadian Wildlife Service.

Anders Mosbech, National Environmental Research Institute, Department of Arctic Environment, Denmark

For more information visit: http://www.dmu.dk/1_Om_DMU/2_Afdelinger/3_AM/4_Expertise/5_Research/6_Satellite_tracking/default_en.asp