Ace navigator Erzhan emerges in Sudan for a fourth consecutive winter

Title

After an absence of any firm location data since early October, Erzhan - our most experienced traveller - has just popped up on our radar again. For the fourth year running we can confirm he is now back in a wintering flock in Sudan. The variability in the destinations of individual Sociable Lapwings returning to breed or winter each year is fascinating. This year Erzhan is in an area much further north than he has wintered before. Currently he is located in northern Sudan about 200k north of Dagash, and quite near to the Egyptian border whereas previously he has wintered to the south, much closer to Ethiopia. This last migration, Erzhan's journey began back in the central Kazakhstan steppes where he summered near Lake Tengiz until at least late August. Almost certainly the oldest and most experienced of our tagged birds, Erzhan set off ahead of the others pushing south west. By mid September he was north of the Caspian Sea and following a now familiar path towards the big staging sites he helped discover in Turkey back in 2007. In early October we learnt he had passed right through south western Russia and Georgia and had arrived safely, as expected, in eastern Turkey. Despite a slightly tense period with no transmissions for three months, news of his rediscovery in Sudan completes yet another amazing journey he has undertaken safely. To read more about Erzhan's previous exploits follow this link. Five of our satellite-tagged birds are still transmitting regularly. Right now we know Erzhan is in northern Sudan, Abaj is near Tabak in Saudi Arabia and Dinara is still just west of Ahmedabad in Gujarat, India. Raushan, last positively located in Northern Pakistan, might still be present there but is probably at least a little further south and Tatyana - who wast last tracked to either Central Iraq or northern Saudi Arabia, close to the border with Jordan - is still sending out infrequent signals that are too sporadic to pin down. What has become of the others is open to speculation. Possible reasons for a lack of signals from our birds 'missing in action' include damaged tags, battery failure, birds shedding their tags, natural sickness or predation or death by hunting. With the many perils Sociable Lapwings face on their hazardous migrations a few losses are sadly inevitable. With Erzhan back in Sudan another chapter chronicling the Sociable Lapwing's precarious foothold on planet earth has been written. Under the guidance of RSPB and with the help of BirdLife International Partners and other participating conservation organisations in range states throughout the Sociable Lapwings flyway, followers of the Amazing Journey website including birders, naturalists, conservation scientists, journalists and a wide cross section of the general public from all around the world have witnessed and participated in an amazing conservation journey together. We thank you for joining us and look forward to continuing the dialogue in future. With Spring migration commencing in just over a month we will soon be bringing you news of these birds next adventures... If you'd like to keep in touch with Erzhan and the other Sociable Lapwings' *Amazing Journey* you can sign up for email alerts that will advise you whenever we add new information to this website. If you've enjoyed following this migration and would like to contribute to the vital conservation required to prevent the extinction of Sociable Lapwings in future please click here.