



DJIBOUTI RAPTOR MIGRATION CREW, FALL 2017

Location: Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, Djibouti

Duration: Late-August to late-November, 2017

Overview: Three seasonal positions available: one crew leader / counter, and two counters to conduct the first-ever full migration-season count at the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, Djibouti. This site is expected to be perhaps the largest migratory bottleneck along the Eurasia – East Africa flyway, with 32 raptor species congregating by the hundreds of thousands to millions. This project is a collaboration between HawkWatch International and the University of Utah.

Job description: Duties will be primarily to conduct standardized daily counts of migrating diurnal raptors. But navigating field and social logistics at an expeditionary site in a challenging location will be integral to the job. Specific tasks will include:

- 1) Accurately identifying, aging, and sexing Afro-Palearctic migrant raptor species;
- 2) Collecting precise and reliable data;
- 3) Communicating effectively with local communities and regional and national governmental authorities.

Qualifications: Applicants must: 1) be in good physical condition; 2) be able to endure long hours in the field in highly variable weather conditions (including high winds and hot temperatures); 3) have prior experience conducting raptor migration monitoring at other large volume sites (preferably in Europe, Asia, or Africa); 4) have a demonstrable ability to identify and count migratory raptors; 5) be able to work well and camp for extended time periods in an exceptionally remote and rugged desert setting; 6) work well in a team; and 7) adapt well to different cultures, customs, and food. Top applicants will: 1) have conducted extensive raptor migration monitoring at major count sites in Europe, Asia, or Africa; 2) have prior experience working in developing countries, particularly in Africa; and 3) have excellent note-taking skills (detailed and accurate). French, Arabic, or Afari language proficiency will be highly valued in applicants. All crew members must supply their own camping gear and binoculars.

Compensation: This is an amazing opportunity to work on an expeditionary count at one of the top raptor migration bottlenecks in the world. All field expenses, airfare, food and lodging will be covered by the project. Additional compensation is commensurate on prior experience and will be negotiated with the top candidates.

Accommodations: The Bab-el-Mandeb Strait is in a remote part of Djibouti. Applicants should expect rudimentary facilities, including pit toilets, tent camping 6 nights/week, and local hotels 1 night/week. There will be no internet 6 days/week and limited cell coverage throughout the season. Food will be basic and likely without much variation over the season.

To apply: Send inquiries or application packet (cover letter, resume, and contact information for two current references—preferably in a single pdf file) to Evan Buechley ebuechley@gmail.com. Review will begin immediately, positions open until filled. We encourage you to apply ASAP.



Additional Details

It has been estimated that over 1.5 million soaring birds (primarily raptors) use the strait to migrate to and from Eurasia and Africa. This estimate, however, is based on relatively few observations over the past 50 years, mainly partial-season counts in 1985 and 1987. In recent years, the importance of this site has been supported by satellite and other tracking devices attached to multiple species that have demonstrated passage via this route. Nonetheless, this site has been minimally studied, largely due to its remote location and harsh desert conditions. An impressive 32 diurnal raptor species have been observed migrating through the site, including eight species at risk of extinction. The goals of this project are to investigate the magnitude of bird migrations across the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, to identify potential threats to and to work to conserve these migratory birds, to highlight the global importance of this site, and to develop local capacity to conduct long-term ecological research and conservation in Djibouti.

Species List:

Vultures (2 species): Egyptian Vulture (EN), Eurasian Griffon Vulture (LC)

Eagles (8 species): Booted Eagle (LC), Bonelli's Eagle (LC), Short-toed Eagle (LC), Steppe Eagle (EN), Eastern Imperial Eagle (VU), Lesser Spotted Eagle (LC), Greater Spotted Eagle (VU), Tawny Eagle (LC)

Buzzards (3 species): Eurasian Buzzard (LC), Steppe Buzzard (LC), Long-legged Buzzard (LC)

Falcons/Kestrels (9 species): Common Kestrel (LC), Lesser Kestrel (LC), Eurasian Hobby (LC), Eleonora's Falcon (LC), Red-footed Falcon (NT), Sooty Falcon (NT), Saker Falcon (EN), Peregrine Falcon (LC), Lanner Falcon (LC)

Accipiters (Hawks) (3 species): Eurasian Sparrowhawk (LC), Levant Sparrowhawk (LC), Shikra (LC)

Harriers (3 species): Western Marsh-harrier (LC), Montagu's Harrier (LC), Pallid Harrier (NT)

Other Raptors (3 species): Black Kite (LC), Osprey (LC), European Honey-buzzard (LC), Oriental Honey-buzzard (LC)

Select Non-Raptors: Common Crane (LC), Black Stork (LC), Abdim's Stork (LC), White Stork (LC), Glossy Ibis (LC)