

## The Birds of Dicle Dam (Diyarbakır)

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**Abstract:** The birds of Dicle Dam, which is located 50 km north-east of Diyarbakır city centre, were studied between February 2000 and February 2002. During the observation period 116 bird species that belong to 15 orders and 38 families were determined and listed. Among these species defined, 44 of them certainly and 26 presumably breed in the area, while 46 of them are transitory migrating or wintering birds for the region. Three species are globally under threat. The determination of bird species will help in the evaluation and comparison of possible changes regarding the bird fauna in the future.

**Key Words:** Bird, Avifauna, Diyarbakır, Tigris, South-eastern Anatolia Region

### Dicle Barajı (Diyarbakır) Kuşları

**Özet:** Diyarbakır şehir merkezinin 50 km kuzeydoğusunda yer alan Dicle Barajı'nın kuşları, Şubat 2000 - Şubat 2002 tarihleri arasında araştırılmıştır. Çalışma sırasında belirlenen 15 ordo ve 38 familyaya ait 116 kuş türünün listesi sunulmuştur. Bu türlerden 44'ü kesin, 26'sı muhtemelen yörede üreyen türler olup, 46'sının ise transit göçücü yada kış konduğu olduğu belirlenmiştir. Yörede gözlenen türlerden 3'ünün küresel ölçekte tehlike altında olan türler oldukları saptanmıştır. Yörenin kuş türlerinin belirlenmiş olması ilerde kuş faunasında olacak değişiklikleri karşılaştırmak ve değerlendirmek açısından faydalı olacaktır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Kuş, Avifauna, Diyarbakır, Dicle, Güneydoğu Anadolu Bölgesi

### Introduction

The varied climatic and topographical conditions in Turkey mean that there is a great diversity of habitats. Therefore, the ornithological importance of Turkey has been revealed by many researchers both locally and generally (Ergene, 1945; Kumerloeve, 1961, 1967, 1969; Vielliard, 1968; Parr, 1981; Murphy, 1984; Beaman, 1986; Sıki, 1988; Kiziroğlu, 1989; Martins, 1989; Eames, 1990; Kasperek, 1992; Ayvaz, 1993; Kirwan and Martins, 1994, 2000; Biricik, 1996; Turan and Erdoğan, 1998; Kaya et al., 1999; Kılıç, 1999, 2001; Karakaş and Kılıç, 2002). Although Turkey has a rich bird potential, it was reported that there is no homogeneity between regions in ornithological studies (Yarar and Magnin, 1997).

It is known that South-eastern Anatolia has great importance for many animal groups because of the semi-

arid and fresh water ecosystems. Furthermore, this region, due to the large reservoir areas of dams which have been constructed in recent decades, is of special importance. The South-eastern Anatolia Project (GAP) will cause an increase in the watery land, which will likely cause some changes in the climate and flora of the region; therefore, this project will change the number and kind of bird species in the region, and both positive and negative effects on the avifauna of the region have been predicted (Ünlü et al., 1997). The determination of bird species will help us to evaluate and compare the changes in the bird fauna of the region in the future.

### Materials and Methods

Between February 2000 and February 2002, the bird species of Dicle Dam and near surroundings were observed by ornithological observations. Using line

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transects methodology, in total 60 ornithological observations were made, and during the breeding and transition seasons the number of observations was increased (Table 1). Field studies were performed with field glasses (10 x 50) and a telescope (20-60 x 60). Some birds were photographed using a 200 mm lens. The birds were identified immediately in the field using some ornithological handbooks (Harrison, 1975; Cramp and Simmons, 1978, 1983; Kızıroğlu, 1989; Heinzel et al., 1998). For the systematic list of birds, Kasperek and Bilgin (1996) was followed. The courtship behaviour, eggs/chicks and nests seen during field excursions were taken as criteria for the determination of any reproduction.

### Study Area

Dicle Dam is located at approximately 50 km north-east of Diyarbakır city centre and 7 km south-east of the province. It was constructed in 1998 for irrigation and energy production where the Maden and Dibni rivers join and become the Tigris River. The reservoir has an area of 24 km<sup>2</sup> (Figure 1). The water level of the dam lake varies according to seasonal rains. The main study area consists of the edges of the reservoir and 2 valleys, north and south of Eğil.

The region has a typical steppe climate with a 15 °C annual average temperature, and 42 °C maximal and -2.7 °C minimal temperatures in July and January,

Table 1. Number of observations for the periods.

Months/Years	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals
2000		1	3	4	4	4	2	1	3	4	2	2	30
2001	2	2	3	4	3	3	1	2	2	2	1	2	27
2002	1	2											3
Totals	3	5	6	8	7	7	3	3	5	6	3	4	60

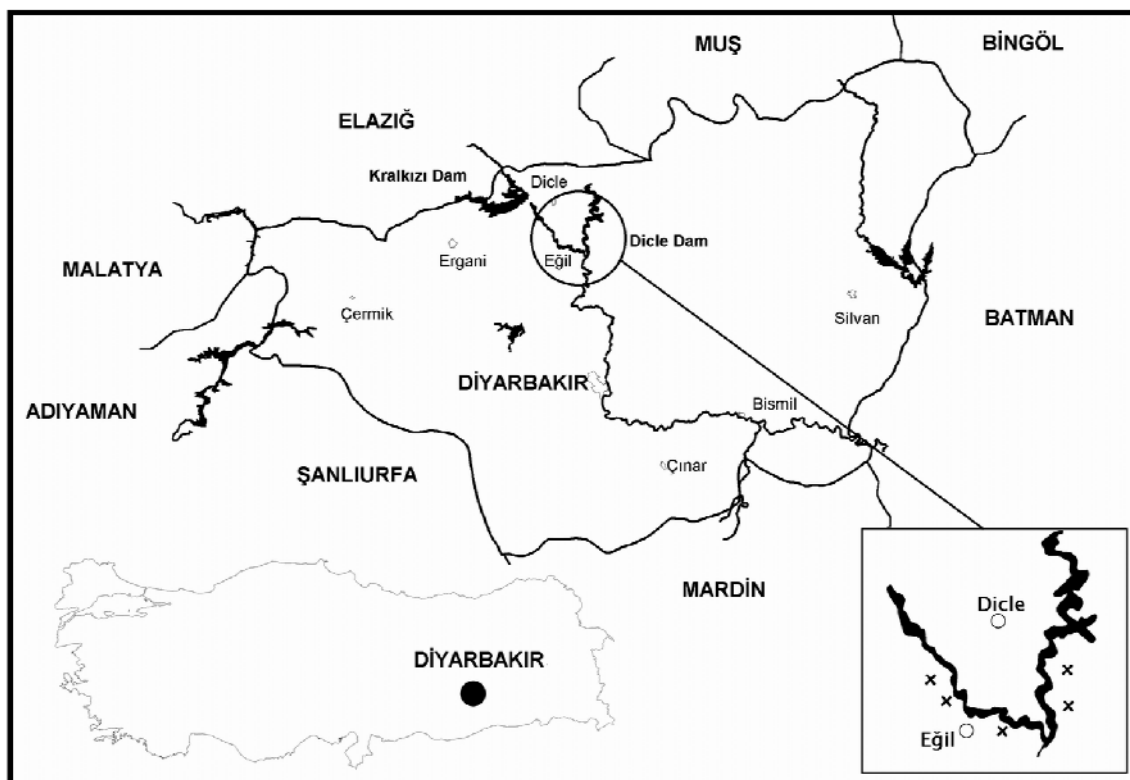


Figure 1. Map of the study area (x: Main observation points)

respectively. Precipitation primarily occurs in winter and spring, on average 491 mm, with snow during the winter, sometimes also in November and March, based on data of the Meteorological Station at Diyarbakır for the last 61 years.

In the region, different vegetation types are distinguished according to the altitude and character of the land. The main ligneous plants are 2 species of oak (*Quercus*), *Crataegus* sp., nettle tree (*Pistacia*), almond tree (*Amygdalus communis*), and fig tree (*Ficus carica*). Because of gradually negative human effects and the raising of livestock with excessive putting out to pasture the natural areas have been affected and some parts of the mountains have been destroyed by the loss of top soil. Human activities such as cattle and sheep grazing are widespread in the area. The area is subject to high hunting pressure, especially during winter.

## Results and Discussion

A list of bird species and related maximum numbers observed at Dicle Dam and its near surroundings during the observation period are given in Table 2. As a consequence, at Dicle Dam 116 bird species that belong to 15 orders and 38 families have been recorded.

As a result of this study, 57 species are threatened, with 3 species (*Circaetus gallicus*, *Aquila nipalensis* and *Grus grus*) being placed in the categories A.1.2 according to the Red Data Book (Kızıroğlu, 1993). Three species observed in the region are globally under threat. Among these, *Aythya nyroca* and *Gallinago media* are placed in the categories of Lower Risk/Near Threatened, whereas *Falco naumanni* is considered Vulnerable (Hilton-Taylor, 2000). *Falco naumanni* breeds in the area, but *Aythya nyroca* and *Gallinago media* use the region during transition.

Sixty-six bird species are passerines, while 50 are non-passerines. Among these species, 42 are summer migrants, 28 are native, 22 are winter visitors and 22 are transit migratory for Turkey, while the status of 2 species has not been determined yet. On the other hand, 44 species definitely breed and 26 species presumably breed in the study area (Table 2).

We compared this study the previous studies carried out by different researchers and found that some species reported to exist in the region were not observed during

our study period. Moreover, some species that were determined during our study were not mentioned by other researchers and these are first records for the region. Some species such as *Ciconia nigra*, *Aquila nipalensis*, *Falco vespertinus*, *Falco columbarius*, *Sylvia hortensis* and *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* recorded during this study are first records for Diyarbakır (Kumerloeve, 1967, 1969; Vielliard, 1968; Parr, 1981; Beaman, 1986; Martins, 1989; Eames, 1990; Kasperek, 1992; Ayvaz, 1993; Kirwan and Martins, 1994, 2000; Biricik, 1996; Kasperek and Bilgin, 1996; Kılıç, 2001; Karakaş and Kılıç, 2002).

Eames (1990) has given records for the species *Hieraaetus fasciatus*, *Falco eleonora*, *Haplopterus indicus*, *Pterocles alchata*, *Bubo bubo*, *Asio otus*, *Merops persicus*, *Ammomanes deserti*, *Sitta tephronota*, *Petronia brachydactyla*, *Petronia xanthocollis* and *Emberiza cineracea* from South-eastern Anatolia, which were not observed in our study area. Parr (1981) gave records for *Tetrax tetrax* and *Rhodospiza obsoleta* from the south-east, but during our excursions they were not observed and there is no record in the region to date. Murphy (1984) has recorded the rose-coloured starling (*Sturnus roseus*) in the south-east but not mentioned its breeding. Our study shows that this species breeds in the study area.

Kirwan and Martins (1994) have recorded 49 species from South-east Turkey. From these records, 10 of them recorded in Diyarbakır district were not observed in the present study. In the same report, they stated that the status is uncertain for the spotted flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*), but our study shows that this species uses the region only during transition.

Thirty species showing a dispersion in South-eastern Anatolia in a study carried out by Kasperek and Bilgin (1996) were not observed during the present study. However, in the same study they stated that some rare birds for South-eastern Anatolia, such as *Ciconia nigra*, *Falco subbuteo*, *Sterna hirundo*, *Alauda arvensis*, *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* and *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*, were recorded in the region.

We compared this study with other locality studies carried out in the region (Biricik, 1996; Kılıç, 2001; Karakaş and Kılıç, 2002). Forty-nine bird species out of 102 recorded by Biricik (1996) and 63 out of 136 reported by Karakaş and Kılıç (2002) were not observed during this study. The other important observation is the

Table 2. List of bird species recorded in the study area, with threatened status and maximal numbers counted each month (-: Fixed without counting). Seasonal status of species for Turkey (Kıran et al., 1999), regional status, and breeding status. Abbreviations: N = Native; SM = Summer migrant; WW = Winter visitor; TM = Transit migratory; D = Definitely breeding, P = Probable breeding, Red Data Book (Kızıroğlu, 1993) A.1.2 Threatened with extinction, A.2 Severely endangered, A.3 Endangered, A.4 Potentially endangered, B.2 Severely endangered (not nesting), B.3 Endangered (not nesting). Globally threatened status, (Hilton-Taylor, 2000): VU = Vulnerable, LR = Lower Risk/Near Threatened.

Species	Months												Seasonal status			Risk status		
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	Status for the Turkey	Status for the region	Breeding status	Red Data Book	IUCN 2000	
<b>NON-PASSERIFORMES</b>																		
<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>												8	N, WW	WW	-	A.2		
<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	1		1		3							1	N, WW	N	P	A.3		
<i>Ciconia nigra</i>						1							SM, TM, WW	SM	P	A.2		
<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>			2	5	3	3	4	2					N, SM, TM	SM	D	A.3		
<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	6	13								4			N, WW	WW	-	A.4		
<i>Aythya nyroca</i>								28					SM, WW, TM	TM	-	A.4	LR/nt	
<i>Milvus migrans</i>					3			1					SM, TM, WW	TM	-	A.4		
<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>				2	1	1	2	1					SM, TM	SM	D	A.3		
<i>Circus gallicus</i>				2									SM, TM	TM	-	A.1.2		
<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>			2					2	1				N, TM, WW	TM	-	A.3		
<i>Circus cyaneus</i>												1	SM, WW	WW	-	A.3		
<i>Circus pygarcus</i>				2									SM, TM	TM	-	A.3		
<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>				2									N, TM	TM	-	A.3		
<i>Accipiter nisus</i>						1							N, TM, WW	N	P	A.4		
<i>Buteo buteo</i>	1		2	4	2	1			38	1	1	1	N, TM, WW	N	D	A.3		
<i>Buteo rufinus</i>			7	2	2	1		1		1			N	N	D	A.2		
<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>													SM, TM	TM	-	A.1.2		
<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>													N	N	P	A.3		
<i>Hieraetus pennatus</i>					1				3				SM, TM	SM	P	A.2		
<i>Falco naumanni</i>				10	6	4	4	2	1	2			SM, WW	SM	D	A.3	VU	
<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>			2	10	8	6	4	2	1	2	2	2	N, WW	N	D	A.4		
<i>Falco vespertinus</i>					1	4							SM, TM	TM	-	A.2		
<i>Falco columbarius</i>													WW, TM	WW	-	B.2		
<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	1	1			1								SM, TM	TM	-	A.3		
<i>Falco peregrinus</i>													N, WW	TM	-	A.2		
<i>Ammoperdix griseogularis</i>								15					N	N	P	A.2		
<i>Grus grus</i>			40	42						4			N, SM, TM	TM	-	A.1.2		
<i>Vanelus vanellus</i>										28			N, WW	WW	-	A.4		
<i>Gallinago media</i>			5										TM	TM	-	B.2	LR/nt	
<i>Tringa totanus</i>			13										SM, WW, TM	TM	-	A.3		
<i>Tringa nebularia</i>													WW, TM	WW	-	B.3		
<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	2												SM, WW, TM	WW	-	B.2		
<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>								2	2	1			SM, WW, TM	N	P	A.3		
<i>Larus armenicus</i>	6	27	2	2							6	4	N	N	P	-		
<i>Sterna hirsundo</i>			2	1		1	1						SM, TM	SM	P	A.4		
<i>Columba livia</i>			100	28	12	12	10	6	40	38	35	103	N	N	D	-		
<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>			17	7						7			N	N	P	-		

Table 2. continued.

Species	Months												Seasonal status			Risk status	
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	Status for the Turkey	Status for the region	Breeding status	Red Data Book	IUCN 2000
<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>				33	16	7	4	6					SM, TM	SM	D		A.2
<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	3	7	2	5	3	10	9	8	4	1	6		N	N	D		A.2
<i>Cuculus canorus</i>				1	1	1							SM, TM	SM	P		-
<i>Otus scops</i>						1							SM, WW	SM	P		A.3
<i>Athene noctua</i>	1	1	1	2	2	5	4	3	1	1			N	N	D		A.3
<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>						1							SM, TM, WV	SM	P		A.2
<i>Apus apus</i>			42	75	25	90	100	7					SM, TM	SM	D		A.4
<i>Apus melba</i>					3	12							SM, TM	SM	P		A.4
<i>Merops apiaster</i>				40	40	22	11	22	16				SM, TM	SM	D		A.4
<i>Coracias garrulus</i>				8	8	4	2	2					SM, TM	SM	D		A.2
<i>Upupa epops</i>			3	4	2	2	1	1	1				SM, TM, WV	SM	D		A.2
<i>Dendrocopus syriacus</i>	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	2		N	N	D		A.3
<i>Dendrocopus minor</i>						1							N	SM	P		A.4
<b>PASSERIFORMES</b>																	
<i>Melanocorypha calandra</i>	130	45	7	15									N	N	D		-
<i>Melanocorypha bimaculata</i>		43	8										SM	SM	D		-
<i>Calandrella rufescens</i>						11							N, SM	SM	P		A.3
<i>Galerida cristata</i>	28	34	18	29	40	26	10	18	15	17	22		N	N	D		-
<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	35				4			17					N	N	D		-
<i>Riparia riparia</i>								40					SM, TM	SM	D		-
<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>				15				8					SM, TM, WV	SM	P		-
<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	55	230	35	125	27	8	20						SM, TM	SM	D		-
<i>Hirundo daurica</i>		15	10	24									SM, TM	SM	P		-
<i>Delichon urbica</i>		400	360	210	70	10							SM, TM	SM	D		A.4
<i>Anthus campestris</i>				3									SM, TM	SM	P		A.3
<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	7												N, TM, WV	WV	-		A.4
<i>Motacilla alba</i>	2	11	7	2	7			2	6	7	8		N, TM, WV	N	D		A.4
<i>Prunella modularis</i>	2	3											N, TM, WV	WV	-		-
<i>Prunella ocularis</i>	7												N	WV	-		-
<i>Cercotrichas galactotes</i>			1			2							SM, TM	SM	P		-
<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	2												N, WV, TM	WV	-		-
<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>						1							SM, TM	WV	-		A.3
<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	8	17	3	5	6	2		4	5	12	4		SM, WV, TM	WV	-		-
<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>								1	16				SM, TM	SM	D		-
<i>Saxicola torquata</i>									4				N, WV	TM	-		-
<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>	4	3	6	2	4	12	9	15	7				SM, TM	SM	D		-
<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>		3	6	1			4	2	1				SM, TM	SM	D		A.3
<i>Oenanthe pleschenka</i>		1	6	5									SM, TM	SM	D		-
<i>O.hispanica melanoleuca</i>			3	3	3	1							SM	SM	P		-
<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>							2						SM?	TM	-		-

Table 2. continued.

Species	Months												Seasonal status			Risk status	
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	Status for the Turkey	Status for the region	Breeding status	Red Data Book	IUCN 2000
<i>Oenanthe finschii</i>	1			12	8	10	1	4	4				SM, WV	SM	D	-	-
<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>								1	1				SM, TM	TM	-	-	-
<i>Monticola solitarius</i>			5	3	2	4		1	8	1			N	N	D	-	-
<i>Turdus merula</i>	2												N, WV	WV	-	-	-
<i>Hippolais languida</i>					3		1	2					SM	SM	D	-	-
<i>Sylvia hortensis</i>									3				SM, TM	TM	-	-	-
<i>Sylvia communis</i>				2	3		2						SM, TM	SM	P	-	-
<i>Sylvia borin</i>									6				SM, TM	TM	-	-	-
<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>				1		4							SM, TM, WV	SM	P	-	-
<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>													SM, TM	TM	-	-	-
<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>			21	14	4		3	2	5	12			SM	SM	P	-	-
<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>					15								TM	TM	-	-	-
<i>Muscicapa striata</i>					5								SM, TM	TM	-	-	-
<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	2										2		N	WV	-	-	-
<i>Parus major</i>											7	6	N	WV	-	-	-
<i>Sitta neumayer</i>	19	25	36	19	19	30	26	16	30	21	19	21	N	N	D	-	-
<i>Tichodroma muraria</i>		2											N	WV	-	-	-
<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>					4	5	1						SM, TM	SM	D	-	-
<i>Lanius collurio</i>				6	18	1	1	2					SM, TM	SM	D	-	-
<i>Lanius minor</i>				2	10				4				SM, TM	TM	-	-	-
<i>Lanius senator</i>				2	12	13	19	11	10				SM, TM	SM	D	-	-
<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>													N	WV	-	-	-
<i>Pica pica</i>		3		2		2				4			N	N	D	-	-
<i>Corvus monedula</i>		12	34	12	20	10	6	12	20	35	302		N	N	D	-	-
<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>			8										N	WV	-	-	-
<i>Corvus corone cornix</i>	5	5		2	1	1		1	1		9		N	N	D	-	-
<i>Corvus corax</i>				2	5								N	N	P	-	-
<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	1	22	20		160	40				55			N, WV	WV	-	-	-
<i>Sturnus roseus</i>													SM, TM	SM	D	-	-
<i>Passer domesticus</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		N	N	D	-	-
<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>				22	20								SM, TM, WV	SM	D	-	-
<i>Passer montanus</i>					12								N	?	-	-	-
<i>Petronia petronia</i>	161	58	9	16	32	32	12		24	300	160		N	N	D	-	-
<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	73	91							1	37	59		N, WV	WV	-	-	-
<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	23	14	15	13	19	5	2	27	11				N	N	D	-	-
<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>			15										N	N	P	-	-
<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	2	1											N, WV, TM	WV	-	-	-
<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	350	150								250	450		N, WV, TM	WV	-	-	-
<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>				28	39	15							SM, TM	SM	D	-	-
<i>Miliaria calandra</i>		50	29	42	28	3							N	SM	D	-	-

decrease in the group *Anseriformes*. Biricik (1996) has given records of 16 species, Kılıç (2001) 8, Karakaş and Kılıç (2002) 13 belonging to the order *Anseriformes*. In this study, only 2 species were defined from this group. It is supposed that the declining population of this group is due to increasingly intensive hunting pressure and other negative effects in the area.

Local people stated that chukars (*Alectoris chukar*) were seen from time to time in the region until some years ago. We could not define this species during our study possibly because of the declining population due to increasingly intensive hunting pressure in the area. In spite of negative effects, many bird species use the region, especially during April-May (Figure 2).

However, some species (e.g., *Egretta garzetta*, *Alcedo atthis*, *Ceryle rudis*) that are well known to use clear fresh water systems were not observed in the area. Therefore, it is likely that there is pollution, especially from housing, near Eğil province in the region.

One of the negative effects of the dams on the habitat was that for some species like *Ceryle rudis* and *Delichon urbica* that were using the riverbed could not nest in the area, because the water level of the dam and riverbed changed from time to time, resulting in the loss of their nestlings.

The determination of bird species will help to evaluate and compare the changes in the bird fauna in the future. It will also be helpful for the preparation of ornithological maps of the regions.

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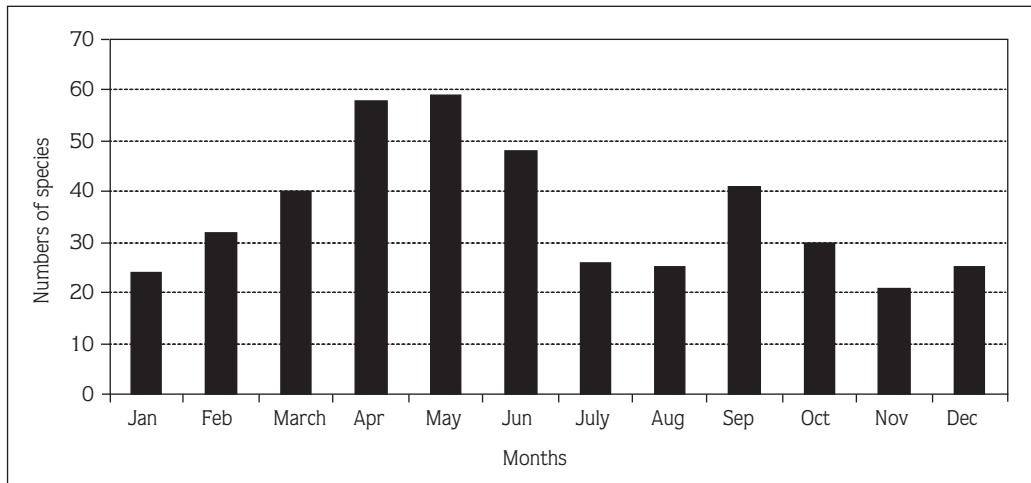


Figure 2. Dispersion of birds of Dicle Dam for each month.

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