

## The Swedish Raptor Migration Group - a Presentation

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During more than 15 years the migration strategies of raptors has been studied by the raptor migration group at the Lund University, Sweden. The aim has been to understand aspects affecting the birds' travel decisions, which are highly affected by local prey abundance, foraging strategies, weather conditions and landscape patterns along the migration routes. In most of our studies we have used satellite telemetry. We studied five raptor species: Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), European Honey Buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*), Eurasian Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*), Western Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*) and Eurasian Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*). Migrating birds often alternate between flight steps, when distance is covered and energy consumed, and stopover periods, when energy reserves are restored. Our tracking results showed that Ospreys partly use an alternative strategy of fly-and-forage migration. By such a strategy it is possible for birds to increase migration speed by reducing time at stopovers. Tracked adult Marsh Harriers used specific post-migratory stopover areas in tropical Africa before moving on to a second winter area, where they stayed throughout winter. By these movements, the harriers presumably exploit short-term regional variation in food abundance. During migration from Sweden to southern Africa the Hobbies traveled through many different environmental and geographical regions. A strong route convergence occurred towards a restricted area just south of the equator. We found a striking relationship with the distribution of continuous rain forest suggesting that Hobbies minimized crossings of this habitat. We think that the reason for the route convergence is that the rain forest might form an ecological barrier for these trans-equatorial migrants.