

Project Update: July 2021

Monitoring and conservation activities

Monitoring studies started in the rice fields in the villages of Yörükler, Düden and Üçpınar at the beginning of April 2021. In order to find northern lapwing nests, the rice fields were observed with a telescope from afar at sunrise and sunset. Incubating individuals helped us find the nests. Detected nests were checked every 3 days. Finding new nests and checking existing ones continued until the end of June 2021. A total of 75 northern lapwing nests were recorded in the three villages. 17 of these nests, recorded in the field before ploughing were marked with bamboo sticks. The rest of the nests were not marked because they were on the fields borders called 'kaş' and there was no operation (ploughing, flooding etc.) in that part. 4 of the marked nests were skipped during the ploughing activity. It was observed that the others emptied before the ploughing started, or the chicks hatched before the ploughing. Some fields were not dried out due to the rainy weather and the ploughing process started later this year than last year. Thus, the chicks in some nests hatched before the ploughing process started. In the same way, it was determined that all the nests detected on the field borders were emptied before the chicks hatched. The rapid emptying of the nests was thought to be due to predation.



Figure 1. Nest in the rice field (A) Yörükler (B) Düden borders (A) Yörükler. **Figure 2.** Nest on the rice field (B) Üçpınar.



Figure 3. Northern Lapwing incubating in the rice field. **Figure 4.** Northern Lapwing chicks in the rice field.



Figure 5. Marked Northern Lapwing nest in the rice field (A) Before plowing (B) After plowing.

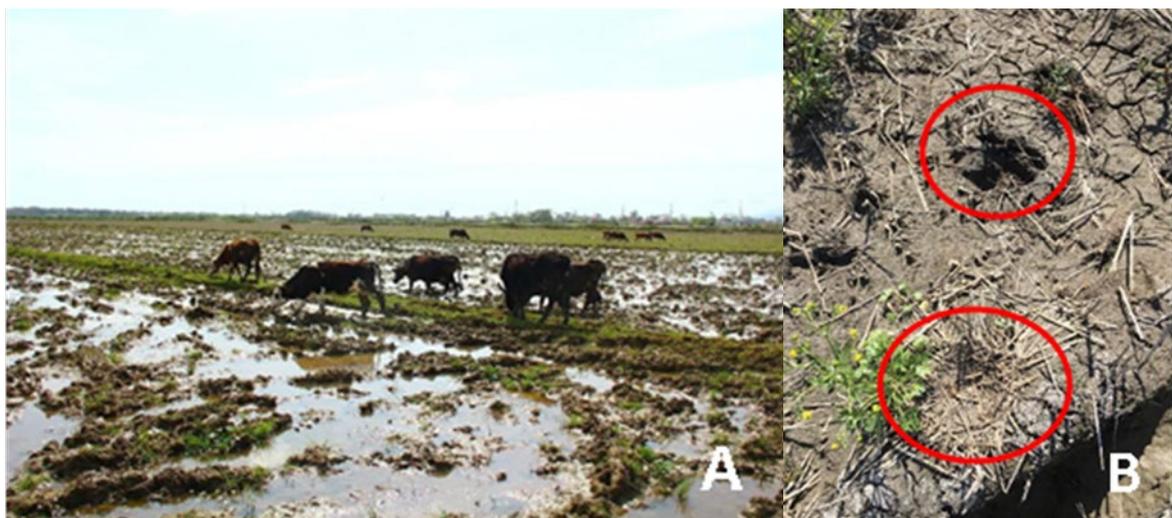


Figure 6. (A) Livestocks in the rice fields (B) Livestock footprint near the lapwing nest.

During the nest monitoring studies, it was observed that the livestock trampling, crows, shepherd dogs and hunting dogs of the villagers could pose a threat to the nests. Likewise, it was thought that the mammal footprints observed on the field borders might belong to a golden jackal and/or fox, as the villagers stated. In

addition, a large number of partially punctured northern lapwing eggshells found in the fields showed us that these eggs may be predated by crows.

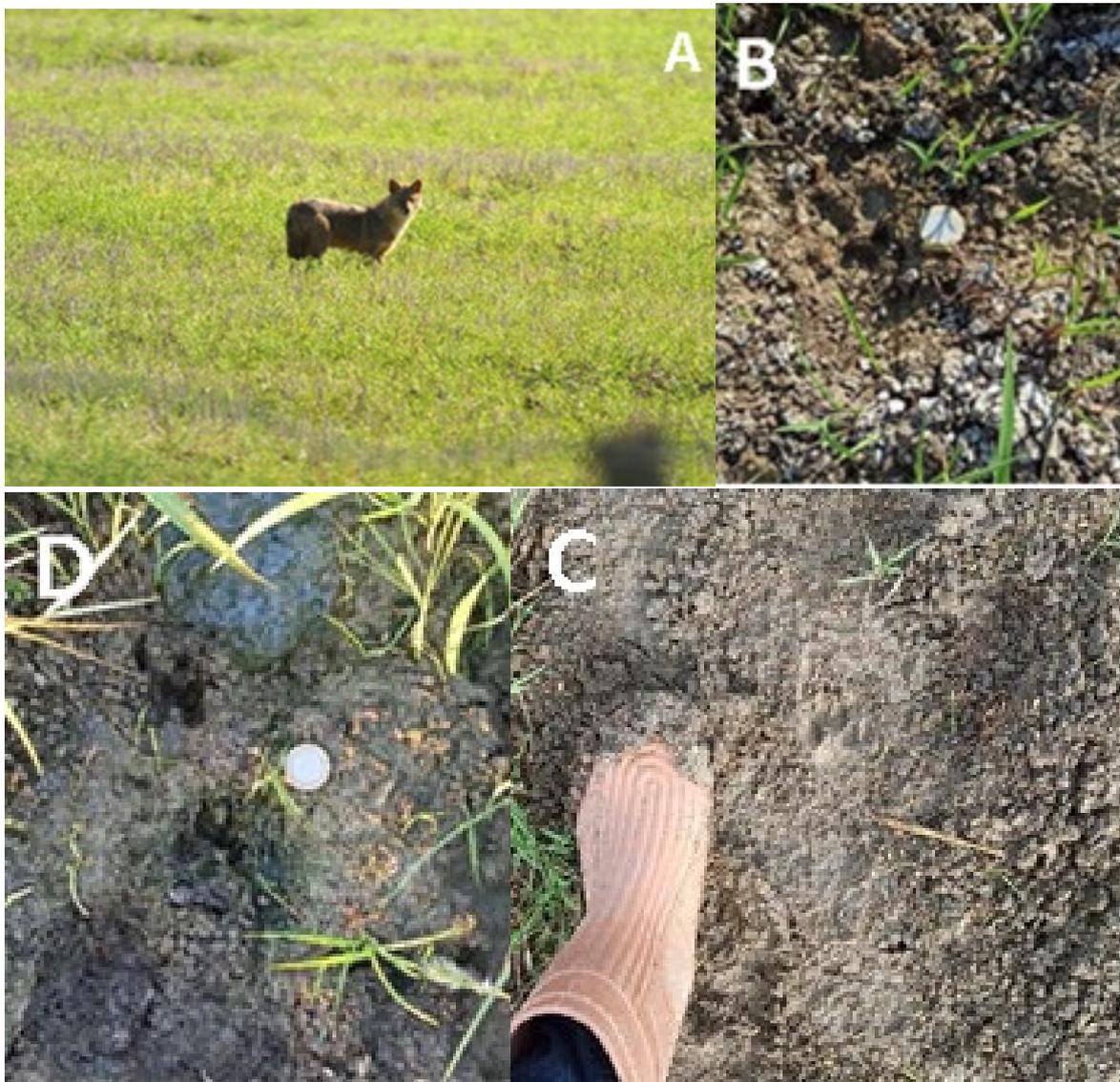


Figure 7. (A) Golden jackal in the rice field (B) (C) (D) Mammal footprints on the field borders



Figure 8. Predated lapwing egg.

Although our project aims to protect northern lapwing nests, 16 nests found in the field in Üçpınar, which were black-winged stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*) nests, were marked with bamboo sticks and the farmers were asked to skip these nests during the ploughing. 8 nests were moved to the field border by the farmers as it would be difficult to skip during the ploughing. Incubation did not continue in nests that were moved to the field border. However, awareness was raised for the farmers who stated that there were no nests in these fields before. 2 nests were left while ploughing. Stilt chicks in these nests have hatched.



Figure 9. Marked Black-winged Stilt nest in the rice field (A) Before plowing (B) After plowing.

Awareness raising activities

Within the scope of awareness raising activities, farmers were interviewed. Northern lapwing nests in the rice fields were shown to farmers. In addition, information was gathered from farmers about threats to lapwings in the Kızılırmak delta. All of the farmers interviewed stated that the biggest threat is golden jackals. In addition, there were some who said that fox, marten and badger can also eat lapwing eggs.



Figure 10. A farmer observing the lapwing's nest in the rice field



Figure 11. Interviews with locals.

Posters were hung in coffee houses, restaurants, university and primary and secondary schools where we will go to trainings in the fall. In addition, brochures containing information about northern lapwings were distributed to the locals.





Figure 12. Posters and brochures distributed to certain places in the Kızılırmak delta.

Facebook (Take Action for the Northern Lapwings / Kızıkuşları için Harekete Geçelim), Instagram (@savenorthernlapwings) and Twitter (@ALapwings) accounts were created and published to share updates about the project. In addition, a website (en.savenorthernlapwings.com) has been published where information, updates and useful resources about the project can be found.

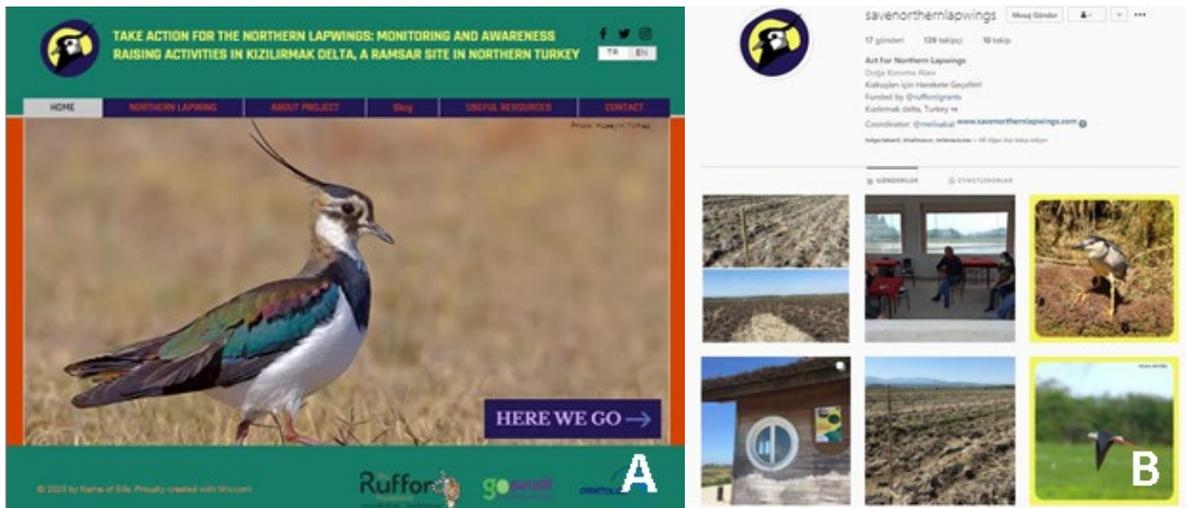


Figure 13. (A) Project website (B) Project Instagram account.

Upcoming activities:

- In September 2021, we will continue monitoring studies in rice fields whether there are threats to immature northern lapwings.
- In September and October 2021, we will organise training and birdwatching activities for 4th and 6th grade students in Yörükler, Üçpınar, Doğanca, Yeşilyazı and Kaygusuz village primary and secondary schools. We met with the principals and vice principals these schools for obtain their permission for the training and birdwatching activities. The administrators of all schools welcomed us positively and said that they would be very happy to be a part of such a project.
- We will organise meetings with the farmers. We will inform them about the data we collected during monitoring activities in April-June 2021. We will determine what changes have occurred in their awareness since the beginning of the monitoring studies. Also, we will continue to gather information about the threats to northern lapwings in the delta and try to find

possible solutions to these threats.

- We will organise a meeting with other stakeholders. We will share them about the data and information we collected during monitoring activities and we will try to find possible solutions to threats to northern lapwings.



Figure 14. Project team with Northern Lapwing t-shirts.