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A synantropic breeding of the Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* in Abruzzo (Italy)

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In several European countries the Chough (*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*) breeds in man-made, usually abandoned, structures, especially in Scotland where synantropic breeding reaches 30% of the total (Bignal *et al.* 1989). The percentage is lower in Spain (Blanco *et al.* 1991). In Italy seems to be no breeding in buildings (Sorci *et al.* 1971; Lovari pers. comm.).

Methods - The site was found during a research project on the distribution of the species in Abruzzo. In 1992 signs of breeding activity were observed and two inspections were made in May and June 1993 and two in the same period of 1994 to check the breeding.

Results - The nest is situated in a cavity 35 cm (h) x 25 cm x 50 cm at a height of 10 m on the south side of the Church of Madonna dei Monti, 1420 m a.s.l., near Calascio (L'Aquila). Between 19 and 24 June 1993 three pulli fledged. In the 1994 the breeding failed due to the reconstruction of the church, which caused the abandoning of the eggs. In 1993 on the opposite side of the same church in three cavities there were a pair of Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*) and two pairs of Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*).

Discussion - In 95 breeding sites observed in Abruzzo only that of Calascio is synantropic. The reason for choosing this site is probably the lack of cliffs suitable for reproduction in a large area of the Gran Sasso National Park normally exploited by this species. On the notification of breeding given by the Abruzzo W.W.F, the Superintendance of B.A.A.S. began modifying the reconstruction operation. We are grateful to Emily Schenkman.

References - Blanco G. *et al.* 1991. *Ardeola* 38: 91-99. ● Bignal E. *et al.* 1989. In: Bignal E., Curtis D.J. (eds). *Choughs and land-use in Europe*. *Conv. Nov.* 1988, Scottish Cough Study Group, pp.102-109. ● Sorci G. *et al.* 1971. *Riv. ital. Orn.* 41: 1-10.