

[← Back to 2025](#)

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# Yellow-billed Choughs descending to sea level to drink

January 2025



During the afternoon of 5th October 2023, I observed a flock of c. 80 Yellow-billed Choughs *Pyrrhocorax graculus* soaring high above a steep valley at Kotor, coastal Montenegro. The birds spiralled in a slow descent and alighted on the stones of the moat alongside the wall of the medieval town (plate 17), where they drank from the water there. Having spent several minutes

drinking, most of the birds flew up onto a nearby stone wall for a short while before the flock took off, regaining height and disappearing from view.



**17.** The moat at Kotor, Montenegro, where the flock of Yellow-billed Choughs *Pyrhocorax graculus* were observed drinking, October 2023.

The observation was made in sunny, temperate conditions and there was no snow on the hills that might have forced the birds to lower altitudes. It is possible that, during the period of extreme heat experienced in the area over the summer, the birds had found this water source and were prepared to fly down to sea level, an action not normally expected in this montane species.

*Malcolm Calvert, Hilbre, 12 Hill Drive, Handforth, Cheshire SK9 3AR*

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