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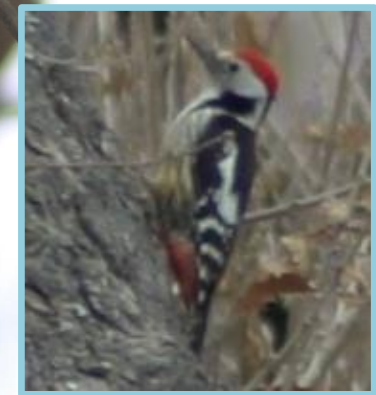
Foraging preferences of middle spotted woodpecker

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Background

The middle spotted woodpecker (*Dendrocopos medius*) has declined in its distribution range. The bird depends upon old, large stands of deciduous trees. This type of habitat has declined throughout western Europe and is the major cause of the decline of the species. The woodpecker depends on arthropods as a food resource. It primarily hunts upon thick and rough barked trees.

Aim

The aim was to identify important characteristics of trees used for foraging by the middle spotted woodpecker.



The Turkey crew. Photo Nicklas Jansson.

Methods

The field work was located to southern Turkey in a vast pasture with a high amount of old oaks and some ashes. A 110 ha area of the pasture was used. In the area 400 trees were selected as control trees. 98 of these trees were studied more closely.

The area was walked through by random to locate middle spotted woodpeckers. When discovered, trees used for foraging were observed. The observed trees used for foraging were compared with the control trees.

Results

The results showed that the middle spotted woodpecker preferred to forage upon trees which had greater circumference, were taller and had deeper bark fissures. They also preferred to forage upon trees which had greater distances to neighbouring trees and trees with more than one stem at breast height (figure).

Conclusions

The middle spotted woodpecker preferred the larger trees in the stand. They also preferred denser areas of trees. This information can be important during conservation efforts of the species to assure that areas are managed in the right manner and to make it appealing for the middle spotted woodpecker.

