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From thermal to flyway: how weather shapes the soaring migration of European Honey Buzzards *Pernis apivorus* at multiple scales

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Propositions

accompanying the doctoral thesis

From thermal to flyway: how weather shapes the soaring migration of European Honey Buzzards *Pernis apivorus* at multiple scales

1. The flight speed of migrating Honey Buzzards is strongly determined by the soaring conditions and the winds they encounter along the way.
2. Honey Buzzards achieve higher speeds during spring than in autumn because they are pushed by tailwinds, not because they work harder.
3. By travelling along strategic detours Honey Buzzards are more likely to catch tailwinds than by flying straight to their destination.
4. Migrants should not maximize reproductive success every single year but across their entire lifetime. Therefore, long-lived Honey Buzzards prefer to avoid risks rather than to race against the clock on migration.
5. Complex migration routes are most likely inherited through social learning, and thus they can be considered a form of avian culture.
6. Tracking studies help us to understand birds as individual beings and to resolve how environment and early-life experiences shape their individual behaviour.
7. The widespread illegal killing of migrating raptors can only be stopped when conservationists and hunters work together, rather than against each other.
8. The societal value of ecological research cannot be measured in euros.
9. Citizen scientists have strengthened ornithology for over a century. Researchers need novel tools to engage volunteers in tracking studies.
10. Ecology can change the way we think about society in the 21st century. Anthropocentrism and individualism will make way for '*connectivism*'.

Wouter Vansteelant
Amsterdam, 21st Dec 2015