

First Remains of Fossil Ostriches (Aves: Struthioniformes: Struthionidae) from Bulgaria

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Abstract: Two finds, distal end of right tarsometatarsus and a proximal pedal phalanx of the left 3rd toe, from two sites (Kalimantsi – the middle Turolian levels, and Hadzhidimovo-2, MN 11/12 boundary, SW Bulgaria) are reported. They are referred to *Struthio* cf. *karatheodoris*. The paleoecological and paleozoogeographical aspects of the presence of struthionids are discussed. *Struthio* remains supported the concept that the openlands were a typical element of the mosaic landscape of the open woodlands/park type forest landscape in the western Pontic part of the Pikermian biome of the Balkan-Iranian late Miocene zoogeographical province.

Key words: Fossil birds, Ostriches, Bulgarian Miocene avifauna, Balkan Neogene vertebrates, Rila-Rodope Mountain region, Hipparion fauna