

## **Project Update: December 2011**

Developing ecotourism opportunities is a crucial activity through which BRC increasingly involves local communities. BRC organised homestay accommodation with three local families in 2011. From intensive follow-up and feedback of this pilot project we gathered better insight into the needs and expectations of tourists and locals for future capacity-building.

This pilot project attracted much attention from the regional Tourism Department and tour operators. We are currently using our position to advise and inform all initiative takers about good solutions for developing their services. Current initiatives include: investments in bird watching platforms; broad advertisement of Ajarian ecotourism opportunities; and the write-up and distribution of information packages for locals aiming to develop independent homestays.

We expect that bringing fair and sustainable wages to local communities will benefit protection of migratory raptors at political level but also increase social pressure within local communities on poachers to consider alternative activities.

