

Rufford Small Grant for Nature Conservation

# Ark for White Stork 2007

(reconstruction of White Stork nests  
in Kharkov region, Ukraine)

## FINAL REPORT

Project leader: Tatiana Atemasova

Contact address: P.O.Box 4654, Kharkov 61022,  
Ukraine

E-mail: [atemasov@mail.ru](mailto:atemasov@mail.ru)

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## Introduction and project objectives



Since 1974 the monitoring of White Storks populations has been carried out in North-east Ukraine. During that period, 3 mass counts were conducted in Kharkov Region, and a list of sites with stork nests was obtained consequently. The questionnaire for preliminary data was developed, elaborated and distributed in the region.

The people of Ukraine maintain old tradition

concerning storks; this bird serves as the talisman and symbol. Such traditions are used in propagandistic campaigns. As a result of such campaign of 1998 (by financial support of Activity Fund Milieukontakt Oost Europa), 13 new man-made nests were placed, and 72 old nests supported by people were listed. It makes up 22% of the all stork nests registered in Kharkov Region.

The counts of 2005 showed a decrease in the number of nests. In 5 administrative districts of Kharkov Region showed that many man-made nests became worthless and need repairing, besides natural nests on the trees being destroyed for various reasons. The reason of this phenomenon is the natural ageing of trees and buildings where the nests are located. Moreover, birds make increasingly more nests on power transmission facilities poles that results in damages and birds' death. All these factors lead to general decrease in number of nesting birds. The list of such problem nests completed and would serve as a ground for the work now.

In 2005 one special platform on electric line pole was made. Such platforms are widely used in Poland and West Ukraine. They allow raising a nest 1 m above the pole top, preventing damages of the lines, and saving birds' lives. Earlier we counted 103 nests on electric poles in Kharkov Region. To begin with, we plan to make 14 special platforms in one administrative district.

It is high time to carry out new mass counts of White Stork nests in the Kharkov Region. The list of nests needs updated. In different parts of the region, the population trends influenced by different factors, the ascertainment of these factors is crucial for the conservation management.

**The Project Aim** – the stable and restoration of White Stork's population.

**The project objectives** are the following:

- restoration of man-made nests in the regions with the stable decline of stork population
- erection of decking under the stork nests on the electric line poles

- involving of wide sections of the population in renewal of old Ukrainian village traditions of stork protection;
- survey of the rest of the territory of the region in order to estimate the trends in the stork population and further planning of protection activities.

The project was run in May, 2007 being supported through Rufford Small Grants Scheme.

### Project team

The project team consisted of 5 members:

**Tatiana Ateasova**, project leader, lecturer at Chair of Zoology and Animal Ecology, Biology Faculty, Kharkiv national university, conservationist, involved in conservation activities since late 1980s.

**Tatiana Deviatko**, research worker at the Nature Museum, Kharkov National University, zoologists, highly experienced in fieldwork, has participated in some internationally recognised conservation projects since 1996, considerable practice in environmental education.

**Anton Vlaschenko**, scientific worker at the Laboratory of Applied Problems of Animal Ecology, Institute of Biology, Kharkov National University, zoologist, conservationist, highly experienced in fieldwork, has participated in 4 internationally recognised conservation projects since 2000.

**Sergey Saprykin**, student of the Chair of Zoology and Animal Ecology, Biology Faculty, Kharkov National University, highly experienced in fieldwork, has participated in the internationally recognised conservation project.

**Anton Biatov**, student of the Chair of Zoology and Animal Ecology, Biology Faculty, Kharkov National University, member of the Nature Conservation Team, highly experienced in fieldwork and nature conservation, has participated in 3 internationally recognised conservation projects since 2000.

### Fieldwork Methods

Restoration of stork nests in the areas where storks were earlier a common species, advertising of nest making, involving all section of the population in stork protection. With these methods, revivification of the White Stork population in North-eastern Ukraine will be ensured.

Setting platforms on electric line poles in one district will serve an example for decision makers in the other districts of how to solve out the conflict between technical progress and birds, and to avoid material losses.



Man-made nests reconstruction (June – October, including preparatory period). In

localities, where nests had existed before but were destroyed, we reconstructed old ones and placed new ones. We involved schools, clubs of young naturalists and local administrative institutions in this job. 16 stork nests were reconstructed in 13 settlements.

1. Krasnograd distr., v.Berestoven'ka (a tree with a platform)
2. Krasnograd distr., v.Berestoven'ka (a pole with a platform)
3. Balakleya distr., v.Ol'chovatka (a pole with a platform)
4. Zachepilovka distr., v.Zaimanka (a pole with a platform)
5. Zachepilovka distr.,v.Zabarino (a tree with a platform)
6. Zachepilovka distr.,v.Cherneschina (a pole with a platform)
7. Zachepilovka distr.,v.Novoselovka (a pole with a platform)
8. Zachepilovka distr.,v. Lebyazh'e (a pole with a platform)
9. Zachepilovka distr., v. Lebyazh'e (a tree with a platform)
10. Zmievskoi distr., v.Zadonetskoe (a pole with a platform)
11. Zmievskoi distr., v.Sokolovo (a pole with a platform)
12. Sachnovshansky distr., v.Olejniki (a pole with a platform)
13. Sachnovshansky distr., v.Olejniki (pole with a platform)
14. Sachnovshansky distr., v.N.Cherneshina (a pole with a platform)
15. Sachnovshansky distr., v.Mar'evka (a pole with a platform)
16. Sachnovshansky distr., v.Yakolevka (a tree with a platform)



10 special platforms were set on poles of electric lines:

1. Zmievskoi distr., v.Gineevka (a pole with electric lines (EL post))
2. Zmievskoi distr., v.Ch.Bishkin (EL pole at the outskirts)
3. Zmievskoi distr., v.Sokolovo (EL pole at the central street)
4. Zmievskoi distr., v.Zid'ki (EL pole at the central street)
5. Balakleya distr. v.Lysogorka (EL pole by the road)
6. Balakleya distr., v.Zavgorodnee (EL pole at the edge of the village)
7. Balakleya distr.city Balakleya (EL pole)
8. Balakleya distr. v.Ol'chovatka (EL pole)
9. Krasnograd distr., v.Î l'chovy Rog (EL pole)
10. Zachepilovka distr., v. Scalonovka (EL pole at the central street)

We examined 20 districts of Kharkov Region (April - July); as a result, 65 nests need reconstruction have been found:

1. Krasnokutsk district - From 19 nests known, there are 7 left. 8 nests in 5 localities need to be reconstructed in 6 localities
2. Bogodukchov district - From 20 nests known, there are 5 left. 3 nests in 5 localities

4. need to be reconstructed.
5. Valki district- From 16 nests known, there are 3 left. 11 nests in 9 localities need to be reconstructed
6. be reconstructed
7. Kolomak district- From 5 nests known, there are 2 left. 2 nests in 2 localities need to be reconstructed
8. be reconstructed
9. N.Vodolaga district - From 12 nests known, there are 4 left. 6 nests in 5 localities need to be reconstructed
10. Schevchenkovo district - From 9 nests known, there are 8 left. 8 nest needs to be reconstructed
11. Tchuguev district - From 14 nests known, there are 6 left. 4 nests in 3 localities need to be reconstructed
12. Pechenegy district- From 10 nests known, there are 4 left. 5 nests in 3 localities need to be reconstructed
13. Volchansk district - From 24 nests known, there are 20 left. 4 nests in 2 localities need to be reconstructed
14. Lozovaya district - From 7 nests known, there are 3 left. 4 nests in 3 localities need to be reconstructed
15. Bliznuki district –From 21 nests known, there are 18 left. 2 nests in 2 localities need to be reconstructed
16. Kegichivka district –From 6 nests known, there are 3 left. 5 nests in 5 localities need to be reconstructed
17. Dvourechnaya district - From 6 nests known, there are 5 left. Only 1 nest can be reconstructed.
18. V.Burluk district - Only 1 nest is known.
19. Koupyansk district - From 7 nests known, there are 6 left. Only 1 nest can be reconstructed.
20. Borovaya district - From 5 nests known, there are 3 left. Only 1 nest can be reconstructed.
21. Izum district - From 15 nests known, there are 8 left. 8 nests in 5 localities need to be reconstructed
22. Kharkv district - From 7 nests known, there are 6 left.
23. Dergachi district - From 10 nests known, there are 7 left.
24. Zolochiv district - From 19 nests known, there are 15 left. 2 nests need to be reconstructed



## **Scientific Results of the Project**

In the South-West of the region (traditionally most settled by storks), the most dramatic decrease of total number of breeding pairs can be observed. In comparison to the year 1994, only 35-67% of nests have been maintained in different villages. The main causes of that fact will be discussed below. The storks moved from trees to posts of electric lines; the ratio of nests on special bearings is significant too.

In the centre of the region, the number of breeding pairs is the most stable. Most nests are placed on the posts with electric lines and water towers. Such bearings are most durable, so the reasons of nests destruction are natural – periodically, 1 or 2 nests can be destroyed by strong wind or storm. More than 82% of nests are maintained, and during last several years, this ratio has been stable.

In the North-West of the region, in two districts, 25% to 37% of the nests, respectively, have been maintained since 1994. Most nests destroyed were placed on treetops and house roofs, and only two of them were on posts. Among the nests kept intact, 60% are placed on water towers; the others are on special posts, on a house pediment, and a single one – in a tree. Therefore, a change of breeding sites took place.



The south, east and north-east parts of the region are situated in the steppe zone with a deficiency of water. The Wight Stork has appeared there for breeding only since 1998, and it makes a small number of nests. The tendency of decrease of the number of breeding pairs has manifested during the last several years; a percent of abandoned nests is 50%. Mainly, it results from destruction of farm buildings and water towers as common sites for nesting.

Moreover, negative conditions of spring migration of the year 2006, when birds reached breeding places weary, influenced the general tendency of diminution of the number of breeding pairs. As a result, a population increase was insignificant.

As a whole, a tendency of slow decrease of the nest number for anthropogenic reasons is taking place.

The nests on water towers are not usually safe: periodically people throw down nests



when they repair towers (5 nests destroyed); laid eggs may die during a hot period (1); they may be drowned by the water from the tower (3); at abandoned farms, storks also abandon their nests (1); towers fall down (1).

General decrease of nests in every given village is due to a decrease of house dwellings or change of their owners (12). In addition, the natural death of nests should be taken into account. Its ratio was stable. Some nests were blown off by the wind (8); some of them were destroyed by the storm (3). Nests

built in the trees are short-lived; they fall down over their heaviness.

### **The Educational Campaign**

Protection of rare species is impossible without participation of various sections of the society. The local citizens were involved in practice of nature conservation. A network of correspondents among schoolteachers and nature-fanciers, organized in the course of project, signaled us about all tendencies in storks' life. Propaganda among children as well as their help in stork protection helped to form a positive attitude to the wildlife in young generation.



During the previous projects, we organized a network of school teachers and local naturalists helping us in stork monitoring. This network continues working. In the other districts, respondents who took part in previous counts and the members of Ukrainian Union for Bird Conservation involved.

A list of teachers who have received informational materials on the project

- Mironenko I.A. Volchansk distr., v.V.Chutora
- Zimovsky A.A. Volchansk distr, v.Volochovka
- Berezhna I. 2. Zachepilovka distr., v.Novomazharovo
- Tachtaulova A.V. Pervomajsk distr., v.Pravda
- Vermen N.I. Krasnograd distr, v.Dobren'ka
- Slobodyan M.F. Krasnograd distr, v.Nikolo-Kamyshevataya
- Balakleya's district station of Young Naturalists (town Balakleya)
- Lisnyak S.D., Sachnovshansky distr., v.Ogiivka
- Schevchenko G.V., town Borova
- Rybalko G.M. Bogoduchov distr., v. Polkova Mykitivka
- Astapova T.N., Bogoduchov distr., v.Ul'anivka
- Izum's district station of Young Naturalists (town Izum)

- Mischenko N.A., Izum distr., v.M.Kamyshevacha
- Ruda L.I., Dergachi distr., v.Tokarivka
- Guz' P.S. Bliznuki distr., v.Krystopovka
- Prychod'ko T.A., Bliznuki distr., v.Bashilivka
- Severin R.I., Zmievsky distr., v.Ch.Bishkin
- Kalita E.N., Izum distr., v.Ch.Oskol
- Bejnik L.N., Bliznuki distr., v.Novonadezhdino
- Svitlychaya E.V., town Zolochiv, the Centre of Children's Creation and Amateur activity
- Taranova T.V., Borovaya distr., v.Gorochovatka
- Buchel' S.V., Dergachi distr., v.Ch.Lofovaya
- Borodaj V.N. town Volchansk the Centre of Children's Creation and Amateur activity
- Velichko N.N., Pechenegy distr., v.Martovaya
- Belous N.B., town Zacepilovka
- Verbitska T.G., town Koup'ansk, the Centre of Children's Creation and Amateur activity
- Zheleznova T.D., town Valki, the Centre of Children's Creation and Amateur activity
- Momot N.V., town Krasnokutsk
- Alchimova G.M., Zmiev distr., v.Zid'ki
- Scherbyna L.P., town Sachnovshina, the Station of Young Naturalists
- Yeshenko E.M., Kegichivka distr., v.Krasnoe
- Mechnikova L.P., town Krasnograd, the Centre of Children's Creation and Amateur activity
- Markova C.N., Lofovaya distr., v.Orel'ka
- Larionova L.V., town Barvenkovo, the Centre of Children's Creation and Amateur activity
- D'yachenko L.E., v.Burluk distr., v.Ch.Hvylya
- Town Lofova, the Centre of Children's Creation and Amateur activity
- Town Shevchenkove, the Centre of Children's Creation and Amateur activity
- Kharkov, school N36
- Ovelyan V.K., Regional the Centre of Children's Creation and Amateur activity (Kharkov)
- Kurbatova O.P., school 129, Kharkov
- Ėrivopustov S.N., Regional Centre of Tourists



Informative actions, being conducted up to now, have been realized along with the work in nest restoration, and examination of settlements (June - September). Five articles have been published in local press.

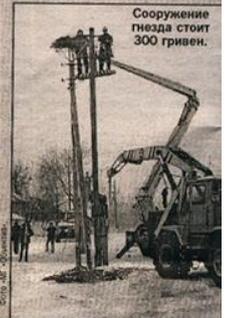


**ПОЧИН**  
**«Квартирний»**  
**вопрос аистов**  
**решают люди**

Дмитрий ГРУЗИНСКИЙ,  
 Светлана ШЕКЕРА

Этой весной харьковских белых аистов ждет «великое переселение». Сайтах на высоковольтных столбах гнезд больше не будет. Но и без дома эти птицы-гиганты не останутся. Для нового жилья белых аистов, которые уже недели через три должны прилететь из Африки, биологи начали сооружать специальные платформы.

Тревогу о судьбе аистов местные ученые бьют давно. По статистике, каждый третий аист обустраивает свое жилище на



Сооружение гнезда стоит 300 гривен.

высоковольтном столбе. Птицы это больше, и каждое разросшееся гнездо весит больше тонны. Из-за этого обрываются провода, птицы гибнут, а гнезда сгорают. Страдают и птенцы, которые только учатся летать: крыльями они задевают провода, калечатся сами и выводят из строя линии электропередач. Далеко переносить гнезда аиста - затея напрасная. Из теплых стран птицы возвращаются на старое место.

**6** № 130-131 **Голос Лозівщини** - ЦЕ ГАЗЕТА, В ЯКІЙ ВИ ЗНАЙДЕТЕ ЦІКАВЕ

**Лелеки та електричні дроти - чи є розумний вихід?**



Білий лелека завжди був обертом для українського села. Навіть і додні є люди, які спеціально спускають електричні дроти для того, щоб лелеки в класичних оселях - на щасті. А вже як проходилися зачистити або зруйнувати лісові насади - то завжди ставали лелеки-чужинці - щоб на втрачені птахи своїй оселі. З античних часів відомо, що лелеки - ніби то сенсори - то перетворили у пташів люди. Приблизно раз на 5-8 років проводяться загальноукраїнський облік білого лелеки. На жаль, наразі у разі пошкодження лісової заповідної області цих чарівних пташок.

Кількість білих лелеки у Лозівському районі завжди була невелика - 3-4 сім'ї у кожному селі. Можливо, це не всі пташки наші аистки. Червононогий білий лелека зустрічається на південному березі річки, і там сподіваємося, надрібною дитинкою історично наші королівські пташки, добрячі, небагато до приросту людей. Треба врахувати, що район степовий і на дні біля річки, отже - на заручку білих лелеки. Крім того, район з-за трьох днів від лісової області на південному

бережні платформ, що лірично, величезне гнездо від дротів на відстані 10-15 метрів. Збудовано або відрамонтовано близько 10 тисяч. Встановлення електричних платформ тут є виключно необхідним для енергетичних служб. Зокрема, у Лозівщині встановлено кілька платформ під лініями електропередач. Найбільш дорогі коштів дозволяють на ремонт ліній електропередач.

В Україні, що за чисельністю лелеки посідає друге місце після Польщі, також загальною розповсюдженію є спеціальний проект з встановлення платформ між природоохоронними організаціями, енергетичними службами та місцевими структурами енергетики. Встановлення цих платформ під лініями електропередач, відповідно до електричних платформ, є розв'язком на електричних платформах. На території Лозівщини встановлено кілька платформ (на біловольтних опорах) або дротів (на дротів ліній опорах) платформ, на яку переноситься пташ, і проводи в районі пташки зосереджені від пошкодження ліній електропередач і втрачаються. Це на сьогодні єдиний загальноукраїнський варіант рішення проблеми збереження аистів, енергетичних служб та місцевих структур енергетики.

У двох областях України, де сконцентрована найбільша кількість пташок білого лелеки - на опорах ЛЕП, у Львівській та Волинській, вартість однієї металеві платформи та вартість на її встановлення становить 300 грн.

Саме Волинська область запланувала загальноукраїнську акцію перенесу пташок білого лелеки. В селі Пулівці у Шацькому національному парку встановили перші 7 платформ електричних ліній. Пташки ще не прилетіли, щоб спокійно будувати пташів, але польськими та українськими природоохоронними організаціями.

Ця акція буде продовжуватися і поширюватиметься на інші області України, коли білих аистів стає

## **The Problems Encountered and the Solutions Adopted**

The problems encountered in the course of the project implementation were mainly related to:

- Difficulties of the general economic situation divert people's attention from the problems of nature conservation; they ignore propositions to restore sites for storks' nestling in their villages.
- The lack of an administrative system for encouraging employees of regional districts of the Electrical Lines Department to be tolerant to stork's nests: under the current direction, there is to be no other constructions on the posts of electric lines. An electrician who services the line is obliged to throw a nest down. Setting platforms on posts is also illegal according to the current system of legislative precepts (job descriptions for accident prevention of exploitation of electric lines). The platform settling, however solves the problem, is a private initiative and good will of the employees of regional districts of Electric Lines Department. This very reason prevented restoration of the number of platforms planned. Ukrainian Society for Bird Conservation lobbies this matter in the Ministry of Environment Conservation and Ministry of Fuel and Energy.
- The lack of system of encouraging teachers who promote conservation in local villages.



## **The Project Prospects**

Monitoring of the White Stork nests in Kharkov region will be continued. 65 nests found in the northeast part of the region are to be reconstructed.



## **Acknowledgements**

I am extremely grateful to the head of Zmiev District of Electric Lines Department N. I. Danilenko for his help and support.



## Financial Report

Budget items	Item details	Expended costs	
		UAH	£ (rate of exchange: 1£=10 UAH)
Travel expenses	Car rent (300 UAH per day x 50 days)	15000	1500
	Fuel (0,6 UAH per km x 4200 km)	2520	252
	Daily allowance (40 UAH per person/day x 5 persons x 50 days)	10000	1000
Supplies	Materials for nests reconstruction	11560	1156
	Stationery, paper, cartridges for printer, disks for computers etc.	1460	146
Medical kits		270	27
Mail expenses		2100	210
Post-project	Print the posters (size A2, 500 copies)	2300	230
	Report production	110	11
Banking services			168
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>4700</b>