

## **Final Report**

After the end of the Imperial eagle project supported by Rufford Small Grants the conservation activities have not stopped. Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds/BirdLife Bulgaria (BSPB/BirdLife Bulgaria) succeeded in raising funds to continue the work. BSPB/BirdLife Bulgaria took the lead in a joint international project with partners in Serbia – Natura Balkanica and Macedonia - Fond for the Wild Flora and Fauna. The donor is Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) through the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe. In the frame of the new project that will finish in October 2003 the following important activities were carried out till now:

- A workshop “Cooperation for the conservation of the Imperial eagle on the Balkan peninsula” was held in BSPB Nature Conservation Centre in Madjarovo, South of Bulgaria. Forty-two participants from Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Rumania, Serbia, Germany and Hungary took part. Participants presented latest data on the species status in their countries. Bulgarian and Hungarian representatives shared successful practices for Imperial eagle conservation. Common and specific threats were identified and analysed. Conservation objectives and common activities were discussed.

- A draft of Strategic Action Plan for the conservation of the Imperial eagle on the Balkan Peninsula was prepared.

- Three new nests were discovered. Now the number of the known nests in the country is 16. One of the newly discovered nests was saved from distraction as for as local authorities did not know about the presence of the eagles and carried out logging operation close to the nest. It was much likely that the tree with the nest would be cut in the next days. The meeting with the mayor prevents it. There were some problems



also. The tree with another nest was cut illegally two days after our team discovered it. Fortunately the eagles built a new one a few meters aside.

- Three nests were guarded permanently during the breeding season. The chicks fledged successfully in two of them. The eggs turned to be unfertile in the third. About thirty volunteers were trained and took part in the guarding and monitoring activities.

- Nine lectures on birds and their conservation were held in Sofia University and Forestry University. Lectures with slide shows were delivered by leading conservationist and ornithologists following in advanced announced program. Meetings with forestry authorities and hunting society were held in the region of Sredna gora. Important meetings were held with mayors of the villages, local hunters and forestry authorities in Strandja and Sakar mountains where 3 new nests were discovered. Information about the significance of the eagles was spread during informal meetings in the field and especially in local pubs/cafes which are places visited by almost all of the men.

- A half an hour TV program on the Imperial eagle with the participation of the project leader was shown on the TV "Evrocom" Information on the project and activities was included 7 times in the news of the in TV "Sedem dni", "Bulgaria cable", and Union TV. Eleven articles on the Imperial eagle and project activities were published in the newspapers "Trud", "Stariat most", "Forum", "Novinar Jug", and in the electronic "South East Europe Environment Watch".