

This is the second update from the project “An integral approach to the conservation of the endangered Chaco eagle in semiarid habitats of Argentina” (Rufford 1st Booster Grant 44634-B). In January, we have been two weeks doing fieldwork at the Gran Chaco realm, particularly at the provinces of San Luis, Santa Fe and Santiago del Estero. In these visits, we have focused our efforts in searching Chaco eagle territories, installing camera traps at active nests, and banding nestlings.

EXPLORATION OF TERRITORIES AND NEST MONITORING → We can now confirm the first active Chaco eagle nest in Santiago del Estero province, thanks to all the outreach efforts carried out during last project and this one. This achievement will be published in the next few months at a regional ornithological journal. Apart from it, we discovered a new nest in Santa Fe province which is in incubation stage. In total, nine Chaco eagle nests have been confirmed so far, of which four have failed, four have been successful and two are still active. The reasons of nest failure have been variable, one of them being predated, the other lost due to a hailstorm and two of unknown cause. Camera traps are now installed at three nests in the study area.

BANDING OF CHACO EAGLE FLEDGLINGS → Of the four successful nests so far, two fledglings were already flying when we discovered the nest, so we could not band them. We successfully banded two Chaco eagle nestlings in San Luis and Santa Fe provinces, and we expect to band two more (one at each province) in the upcoming weeks.

CHACO EAGLE CAUSES OF MORTALITY → We found a dead Chaco eagle adult in southern Santiago del Estero province, probably shot in an act of persecution, in an area where we did not develop education programs yet. This means that environmental education and outreach are necessary to avoid killing by retaliation. In a week, we will hold a meeting with Fundación Vida Silvestre, an NGO of Argentina devoted to wildlife conservation, to coordinate conservation efforts at the Canal de la Patria, the open-to-air water canal that is killing wildlife in northern Santiago del Estero province (and of which we published a paper in Biological Conservation). These field campaigns will theoretically start in march 2025 and extend throughout the whole year. We will monitor wildlife drownings, give talks at local councils to train the community to help us report these deaths, and propose solutions to this conservation issue. On the other hand, in partnership with a company of systems development of Cordoba province, we are developing an application for cell phones to report wildlife deaths (electrocution, drowning, roadkill, persecution) in an easy and user-friendly way. This app will be available in the next couple of months.

CHACO EAGLE LEGAL PROTECTION → We are now working on a preliminary project to declare the Chaco eagle a Natural Monument of the province of Cordoba. We will have a meeting in February or March with all the authorities to boost this initiative, which is the first step to carry out a specific conservation program, as happened in Santa Fe province.