

Project Update: January 2004

In 2003, 24 localities of lesser-spotted eagle (*Aquila pomarina*) were monitored in the Slovensky raj National Park and its surrounding areas. From these, 14 were used as nesting sites by eagles. At these sites 9 young eagles were successfully reared. To identify habitat preference, 35 forest stands with nests used by eagles were studied. For the nesting of lesser-spotted eagle the most important four parameters are: age of forest stand, coverage ratio of forest stand, distance of forest stand from foraging habitat, and the presence of suitable structures for building of the nest. The results indicated that eagles prefer nesting forest stands from 80 to more than 120 years old.

To support the lesser-spotted eagle population, 20 artificial nesting supports were made. Four of them were used for stabilization of nests in spring before nesting and ten were located to old and new selected sites in autumn. The rest will be used in the next process of the long-term support of eagle population. To inform the public and especially the owners and users of forests, an information brochure and a display for the parks visitor centre has been developed.

Support and stabilization of lesser-spotted eagle population in and around Slovensky raj National Park is a long-term process. On the basis of habitat preference results we will continue to survey potential forest stands suitable for the nesting of eagles and also management of the forests. This will include creation of conditions for successful nesting, e.g. improvement of forest management plans and providing artificial support structures for nests.