



**REPORT REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON
THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY BIRDS OF PREY IN
AFRICA AND EURASIA DURING THE PERIOD 2012-2013**

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Scientific research and monitoring

Romanian Ornithological Society/BirdLife Romania and Milvus Group Bird and Nature Protection Association participated to the International Waterbird Count – IWC for collecting data on raptors species.

For scientific research and monitoring the implemented projects were the following:

- ❖ *“For nature and local communities – the bases for a Natura 2000 integrated management in Hârțibaciu – Târnavă Mare area”;*
- ❖ *„Conservation of the Lesser Spotted Eagle (Aquila pomarina) in Romania”;*
- ❖ *“Conservation of Saker Falcon (Falco cherrug) in Northeast Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia”;*
- ❖ *“Integrated management of biological and landscape diversity for sustainable regional development and ecological connectivity in the Carpathians” - BioREGIO Carpathians funded by the European Regional Development Fund within the South-East Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme.*

- ❖ The projects were implemented by WWF Romania in partnership with ADEPT Foundation, Mihai Eminescu Trust, Local Environment Protection Agency Sibiu, Eco-Tur Association, the Romanian Ornithological Society/BirdLife Romania and Milvus Group Bird and Nature Protection Association.
- ❖ The baseline survey for assessing the raptors populations was carried out by BirdLife Romania and Milvus Group Bird and Nature Protection Association in Dobrudja region, in the Special Protected Areas ROSPA0073 Măcin-Niculițel, ROSPA0100 Stepa Casimcea, ROSPA0040 Old Danube-Brațul Măcin, Babadag Forest, Măcin Mountains and in the western part of the country in the Special Protected Areas ROSPA0069 Lunca Mureșului Inferior, ROSPA0015 Câmpia Crișului Alb and Crișului Negru.
- ❖ 753 medium voltage pylons were checked in the Western part of the country and the collected data was introduced in a GIS database.
- ❖ 6 pairs of Saker Falcon were found, among them, a new successfully breeding pair. One juvenile was marked by PTT.
- ❖ The biggest threats to the raptors are the power lines which increase the mortality caused by electrocution. Among the victims are individuals of endangered species such as the Saker Falcon (*Falco cherrug*), the Lesser Spotted Eagles (*Aquila pomarina*), the Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*), the Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*).

- ❖ Other factors which affect the raptors populations are the wind turbines, loss and degradation of natural nest sites, degradation of feeding habitat and the pesticide use.

Activities:

- Work field for the collection data regarding the birds of prey and their habitats;
- Identification of the most endangered habitats and raptors species;
- Develop the Carpathian Protected Areas Clearing House Mechanism which is the basis for the Carpathian Joint Biodiversity Information System;
- Elaborate the Carpathian Red List of species and habitats and of a list of invasive alien species;
- Establish of the geo-web reference interactive Carpathian Joint Biodiversity Information System which develop the Carpathian Protected Areas Clearing House Mechanism;
- Collecting the information about the power lines network and create a basic national potential conflict hotspot map using the information about the Critical Site Network Tool and the Important Bird Areas.

Education and awareness

The International Day of Biodiversity, the World Migratory Bird Day were celebrated in all counties highlighting the importance of raptors populations for environment.

Activities:

- ❖ Organizing the Carpathian Protected Areas Conference involving the stakeholders;
- ❖ Educational activities in schools, birdwatching in the Special Protected Areas;
- ❖ 5000 posters, 7500 booklets, 500 DVD's, a documentary about the Lesser Spotted Eagle (*Aquila pomarina*) and its conservation were produced;
- ❖ Local Environment Protection Agency Sibiu together with international, national and local authorities, NGOs and the scientific institutions joined forces to contribute to the protection and development of the Carpathian Mountain region;
- ❖ Articles about the projects achievements have been prepared by BirdLife Romania and Milvus Group Bird and Nature Protection Association;
- ❖ Building web page about the species of Community interest and the natural protected areas;
- ❖ Milvus Group Bird and Nature Protection Association launched a contest, to which more than 500 pupils were registered;
- ❖ TV channels broadcasted information about the birds of prey conservation and online newsletters were published the main issues about these species;
- ❖ 400 copies of Guideline about the effect of wind farms on Saker Falcon population were prepared for stakeholders in Romanian, Hungarian, Bulgarian and Slovak languages;

- ❖ 4000 copies of leaflets and 1000 copies of DVD were produced for public awareness.
- ❖ An intensive communication programme targeting farmers and decision-makers has increased awareness at local and national level and created support for protection of raptors populations.

Strengthening institutional capacity

Training courses for custodians and the administrators of the natural protected areas were organized for a better implementation of the Management Plans.

International cooperation

The LIFE09 NAT/HU/000384 project “*Conservation of Saker Falcon (Falco cherrug) in Northeast Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia*” involving BirdLife Romania, Milvus Group Bird and Nature Protection Association created favourable conditions and a steady growth of population in Central and Eastern Europe and transferred the experience of Hungarian and Slovak partners to Romanian and Bulgarian partners, for implementing the best practices for Saker Falcon conservation.

Protection of migratory species, conservation measures

BioREGIO is building on the existing framework of the Carpathian Convention, its Biodiversity Protocol and other related networks and initiatives.

One of the most successful methods to stabilize and increase the raptors populations is the installation of artificial nests on the electric pylons.

An agreement concluded between the Romanian Electricity Companies (ENEL, Electrica and Transelectrica) and BirdLife Romania regarding the nest boxes installation.

In the Western part of the country, nest boxes were installed in Satu Mare, Bihor, Arad and Timiș counties.

In the Eastern part, in Dobrudja region, the nest boxes were installed in the bordering area of ROSPA0073 Măcin-Niculițel, Babadag Forest, ROSPA0100 Stepa Casimcea and ROSPA0040 Old Danube - Brațul Măcin.

The dangerous electric pylons were insulated in Bihor, Arad, Satu-Mare, Timiș counties and Dobrudja region.

The decision makers of the Romanian Electricity Companies accepted to insulate the dangerous pylons of medium-voltage power lines and are ready to help the projects team in this activity.

The Management Plans for the Natura 2000 sites provide conservations measures for raptors species as well as conservation measures for the habitats of Community interest.

The National Action Plan for the conservation of the Lesser Spotted Eagles (*Aquila pomarina*) was elaborated.

An Environmental Impact Assessment for any project potentially adversely impacting sites on raptors and their habitats is undertaken.

Strategic Environmental Assessments of planned significant infrastructure developments within major flyways identify the key risk areas.

The working group of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development was contacted in order to introduce raptors specific measures into the agri-environment scheme in 2014.

Administrative, institutional, legislative measures

The National Action Plan for the conservation of the Lesser spotted eagles (*Aquila pomarina*) was elaborated by the Romanian Ornithological Society/BirdLife Romania and Milvus Group Bird and Nature Protection Association and will be approved in this autumn.

There is an appropriate assessment procedure for projects that could affect birds of prey in Natura 2000 sites.

Activities planned for next year

- ✓ Review the relevant legislation and improve the legal protection;
- ✓ Monitoring the special protected areas with high density of raptors: distribution, number of breeding pairs, status of conservation;
- ✓ Develop existing microchipping schemes to monitoring the raptors populations;
- ✓ Conserve the endangered species as well as the species with an unfavourable conservation status;

- ✓ Elaborating and approval of the National Action Plan for conservation of the Saker Falcon;
- ✓ Include the conservation measures for the birds of prey into the Management Plan of the Special Protected Areas;
- ✓ The approval and the implementation of the Management Plans for the Special Protected Areas with conservation measures for the raptors species;
- ✓ Implementing the programme of habitat management for the raptors populations;
- ✓ Develop the cooperation between Government agencies, IGOs, NGOs and with the neighbouring countries for monitoring and conservation the most vulnerable birds of prey species;
- ✓ Prepare the special conservation measures for compensatory payments by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development;
- ✓ Collaborate with the relevant utility companies to decrease the impact of electricity transmission lines in causing injury and death to the birds of prey and to minimize the risk in the long term;
- ✓ Identifying opportunities for cooperation and coordination at national and regional level through the creation of synergies.