

Lesser and Greater Spotted Eagles *Aquila pomarina* and *A. clanga* in Ukraine

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For a long time, and in some cases even to-day, data on the distribution and status of Lesser and Greater Spotted Eagles in the different parts of Ukraine have been rather contradictory (Dzieduszycki 1885 in Bokotey 1992; Strautman 1963; Zubarowskyi 1977). The contradictions in these data are due primarily to problems over determining the diagnostic characteristics of the two species. In Ukraine these problems have persisted for a long time and have often proved difficult and sometimes impossible to solve. This is largely because specialist literature and reliable books on identification are lacking.

It is known that the broad line of demarcation between the two species in Europe runs through Ukraine, but peculiarities of its nature on Ukrainian territory are still under discussion. According to our study of the literature and work in the field during 1976-91, we conclude that the dividing line between the two species is the River Dnipro. But this borderline shows a particular density of Greater Spotted Eagles. For example, whereas during the past 100 years on the left bank of the Dnipro only two nests of Lesser Spotted Eagle were found, there have been 12 known nests of Greater Spotted on the right bank during the same period.

The Lesser Spotted Eagle is concentrated mainly in Western Ukraine where, according to the Atlas of Breeding Birds of Western Ukraine (1982-86), between 60 and 70 pairs are estimated to breed, with the exception of certain regions including Zhytomyrka, Khmel'nitska and Chernivetska. To-day the number of Lesser Spotted Eagles throughout Ukraine amounts to 220-250 pairs. This population is more stable than that of the Greater Spotted Eagle. The main line defining the range of the latter in Ukraine passes through Chernigivska, Poltavska, Kyivska, Cherkaska and Kirovogradska regions.

During our work with the collections of the Lvov Natural History Museum we found a reference to a nest of Greater Spotted Eagle with two young in 1854. We could find no subsequent reference to breeding, but it is

nevertheless possible that it took place. We believe that *Aquila clanga* used to breed in Ukraine between the late 18th and early 19th centuries, after which it slowly disappeared. During the last 70 years the Ukraine population of the Greater Spotted Eagle has decreased by 12%-20%. In 1992 both species will be included in the Ukraine Red Book.

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