

Current Status of the White-tailed Sea Eagle ***Haliaeetus albicilla* in Ukraine**

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The present-day breeding range of the White-tailed Sea Eagle includes all the territory of Ukraine. During the last 150 years, investigations were chiefly devoted to questions of breeding biology and phenology, and little attention has been paid to the study of the species' distribution and density dynamics. The main observations were made during the first half of the 20th century.

The White-tailed Sea Eagle occurs mainly in the central part of Ukraine. The first census was conducted in 1933, when nearly 20 pairs were counted; in 1965 there were nearly 15 pairs, but this census did not include the western part of Ukraine. We believe that at that time there were altogether 50-60 breeding pairs and that no great changes took place in their number between 1930 and 1960. The principal changes occurred during the period when protection of birds of prey in the country was poor. Between 1965 and 1980 the number of breeding pairs throughout Ukraine may have declined to only 15-20 pairs, but during work on the atlas of breeding birds in Western Ukraine and the efforts of a specialist group studying the species in 1989-90, nearly 40 breeding pairs were located and we anticipate this rising to nearly 50. This increase took place during the 1980s.

The main breeding places of the White-tailed Sea Eagle in Ukraine are Polissya, with almost 35% of the breeding population, and also the eastern part of the country. Together with an increase in the breeding population has been a growth in the number of wintering birds. Whereas in 1983 nearly 50 birds wintered on the Black Sea coast, many have taken to wintering in the west and central parts of Ukraine during the last 10 years. In 1989-90 there were 20-25 wintering eagles on the River Dnipro and nearly 15 in western Ukraine. In general, 130-150 eagles may to-day winter in the country.

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