

Present state of population of the White-tailed
Sea-eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) in Ukraine

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The White-tailed Sea-eagle belongs in Ukraine to rare species. It is included in the Red Book of the country. At the 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th century this Eagle was a common breeding species and had relatively big numbers for such a large raptor (Zubarovsky 1977). Later the population began rapidly to decrease. Main reasons of this decrease: shooting (in Ukraine money prizes for the destruction of "harmful raptors" were paid up to 1969) and destroying of habitats. The majority of old forests had been felled. Creating of the cascade of hydroelectric power stations on the Dnieper had big negative influence too. Many breeding habitats have been inundated or destroyed. In last two decades numbers of the White-tailed Sea-eagle are increasing in Ukraine. This is connected with the improvement of the protection of Birds of Prey and with the adaptation of big raptors to the changed environment. Census carried out in 1989 has shown that the breeding population of the White-tailed Sea-eagle makes in Ukraine about 30-40 pairs (Grishchenko et al, 1991, 1993). Followed number increasing and new investigations permit to estimate the current population at least in 50-70 pairs. The majority of nests is situated in the Dnieper valley and its environs. The statement, that the main breeding places are found in Polissya (northern forest part of Ukraine) and east regions (Gorban & Salyga 1996), is misunderstanding. Main wintering places in Ukraine are not freezing parts of the Dnieper and north-west Black Sea coast. Total numbers of wintering Eagles can be estimated at least in 150-200 individuals.

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