Analysis of nests of the White-tailed Sea Eagle *(Haliaeetus albicilla)* in Ukraine

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Material for this report was collected in 1988-1998. Except for own and literature data the unpublished materials kindly given by V.M. Babko, V.V. Vetrov, A.I. Guziy, S.V. Domashevsky, N.L. Klestov, Yu.V. Kuzmenko, V. Manyuk, A.I. May, A.A. Orlov, N.G. Pirogov were used. In total, we have informations about 61 nests of 34 pairs of the White-tailed Sea Eagle. Now all known eagles nests are built in trees. 50.8% of them are placed in pines, 19. 6% - in black poplars, 13.1% - in alders, in 6.6% - in oaks and white poplars, in 1.6% - in willows and asps. V.M. ZUBAROVSKY (1977) have found nests of Sea Eagles in Ukraine also in birches. Placing of nests has changed. We analysed information about 38 nests built from middle of the last century up to 1970s. Formerly 34.2% nests were built in black poplars, 23.7% - in pines, 18.4% - in oaks, 13.2% - in willows, 5.3% - in alders. Different authors have written that Sea Eagles prefer nesting in oaks, black poplars and willows. Pine became the main nesting tree species after felling old oak forests and flooding flood-plains of the Dnieper. Besides, the general rejuvenation of forests has taken place. Now the pine has the most convenient crone for building bulky nests. All known nests were built in living trees. Majority of pairs have 2-3 nests. There were 37 nests on 21 investigated territories, on average 1.76 per pair. 9 pairs had only one nest, 8 - 2, 4 - 3. Diameter of breeding trees fluctuates from 39 to 85 cm, on average it makes 59.2 cm, height of trees fluctuates from 15 to 27 m, on average is 20.8 m (n = 28). Height of nests above ground is from 6 to 25m, on average is 16.0 m (n = 35). Analysis of the literature shows that formerly Sea Eagles selected for nesting very high trees. They nested at height 26-30 m (ZUBAROVSKY, 1977). Change of height of nest building is an adaptation to present conditions. There is the positive correlation between height of nests and height of tree (r = 0.87). 50.0% nests were built in the middle part of the crone, 28.6% - in upper third of the crone, in 10.7% - in lower third and on top of the tree (n = 29). 70.0% of nests were built close to trunk on side branches, 20.0% - in furcations of the trunk (n = 30). Diameter of nest (n = 31) fluctuates from 130 to 250 cm (on average 168.3), height of nest - 33 to 310 cm (128.8).

ABSTRACTS

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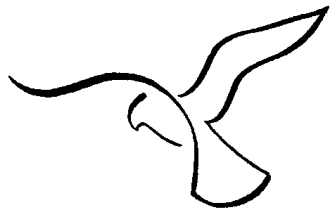

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