

Proof of nesting by a second pair of White-tailed Sea Eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) in Eastern Slovakia

Doložené hniezdenie druhého páru orliaka morského (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) na Východnom Slovensku

Ján LIPTÁK & Jozef MIHÓK

Lipták J & Mihók J 2007: Proof of nesting by a second pair of White-tailed Sea Eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) in Eastern Slovakia. Slovak Rapt J, 1: 43-44.

Address for correspondence: Ján Lipták, Lomnická 44, SK-040 01 Košice, Slovakia.

Jozef Mihók, Buzulucká 23, SK-040 01 Košice, Slovakia. E-mail: mihok@centrum.sk

The increasing population of White-tailed Sea Eagles throughout Europe during the 1980's and 1990's has led to the birds' progressive revitalization. The first repeated successful nestings in our territory (after 34 years of stagnation) were recorded in Western Slovakia in 1998, when 2 pairs nested in the Danube lowlands (Chavko 2002, Stollmann 2004). The first proven successful nesting in Eastern Slovakia was recorded by Danko (2005) in the Vihorlat Hills in 2004. In that year and in 2005, two young birds were successfully raised at that nesting site, and similarly again in 2006 (Danko *in verb.*).

The greatest number of sightings of the presence of White-tailed Sea Eagles in Eastern Slovakia during the nesting period have been made in the Medzibodrožie area (Danko 2005). Up to that point, there had been no observational proof of nesting by this species in the East Slovakian Plain area; only Hrabár (1932) writes in general terms that in the past (i.e. prior to 1932) it used to nest in the woods around the river Latorica.

On 22nd March 2005 near the village of Oborín on the East Slovakian Plain we observed 6 circling Sea Eagles, one of which had immature plumage while the others were adult individuals. One adult bird flew into nearby plain-type woods and called. Another responded from a height above the woods. After this all the eagles disappeared from observable range, but about half an hour later the bird with immature plumage returned above this location and flew down to join the adult bird which had previous-

ly remained in the woods. In that year we observed two eagles on 3 other occasions in the same location, but we were unable to check the woods themselves because of flooding in that area.

In 2006 we visited the location on 20th April, and several times we spotted a circling eagle, though no signs of courtship. The first indications of courting were recorded on 29th April, when we heard an eagle calling from the woods. On 12th May an adult bird flew into the woods carrying something in its talons, but it was not possible to identify clearly whether it was nesting material or food being brought for the female or the young in the nest. When we checked the approach point on 17th June, we found an occupied eagles' nest. When the female flew from the nest, we could observe from the ground one young bird that was visible in it. It was completely white, which indicated in connection with the inspection date that this was a late nesting. At the next direct physical checking on 30th June, one young bird was found in the nest which was by then almost completely brown.

The nesting environment was of the character of wetland woods, with the rivers Laborec and Latorica flowing nearby, leading to the presence of ox-bow lakes. The land here is regularly flooded, and the wider surroundings are made up of a mosaic of wetland woods, arable land and meadows. Tree growth around the nest consisted mainly of poplar and ash.

The nest itself was built in a partially-overturned white poplar at a height of about 20 metres. The nest

construction was relatively shallow, and judging from the thickness of the branches used for building the body of the nest, it had certainly been built from scratch by these eagles.

It is probable that the eagles nested at this location for the first time in 2006, as evidenced by several facts. The nest body was relatively shallow, indicating that it was used for nesting that year probably for the first time. In addition the progress of nesting was delayed by about one month compared with other nests in Slovakia. One of the pair still had immature plumage in 2005, and in 2006 both birds were in full adult colours. It is not possible to state, however, whether the composition of the pair was the same in both years.

Súhrn

Prvé úspešné doložené hniezdenie na východnom Slovensku zaznamenal Danko (2005) v roku 2004 vo Vihorlatských vrchoch. V tom roku a v roku 2005 boli na tomto hniezdisku úspešné vyvedené po 2 mláďatá, podobne aj v roku 2006 (Danko in verb.). Najviac pozorovaní výskytu orliakov na východnom Slovensku v hniezdnom období bolo zaznamenaných v Medzibodroží (Danko 2005). Zatiaľ nebolo doteraz dokladované žiadne hniezdenie tohto druhu z územia Východoslovenskej roviny, iba Hrabár (1932) všeobecne píše, že v minulosti (teda ešte pred rokom 1932) hniezdil v lesoch okolo Latorice.

Dňa 22. 3. 2005 v okolí obce Oborín na Východoslovenskej rovine sme pozorovali 6 krúžiacich orliakov, z ktorých bol 1 v imaturnom operení a ostatné boli adultné jedince.

V r. 2006 sme navštívili lokalitu 20. 4. a pozorovali sme viackrát krúžiaceho orliaka bez známok prejavov toku. Prvé prejavy toku sme zaznamenali 29. 4., keď sme zaregistrovali hlas orliaka ozývať sa z porastu. Dňa 12. 5. zaletel dospelý jedinec do porastu a niečo niesol v pazúroch. Nebolo jednoznačne možné určiť, či to bol hniezdny materiál alebo potrava nesená pre samicu alebo mláďa na hniezde. Pri kontrole miesta záletu dňa 17. 6. sme našli obsadené hniezdo orliaka. Z hniezda vyletela samica a pozorovaním zo zeme bolo v hniezde viditeľné jedno mláďa. Bolo úplne biele, čo naznačovalo, že podľa dátumu kontroly ide o oneskorené hniezdenie. Pri ďalšej priamej fyzickej kontrole 30. 6. bolo v hniezde zistené jedno mláďa, ktoré bolo už takmer celé hnedé (Obr. 1).

Stavba hniezda bola pomerne nízka a podľa hru-

bých konárov použitých na stavbu hniezda išlo určiť o hniezdo postavené od základu orliakmi.

Je pravdepodobné, že orliak na tejto lokalite zahniezdil prvýkrát v r. 2006, čomu nasvedčujú viaceré skutočnosti. Hniezdo bolo pomerne nízke, čo by naznačovalo, že bolo na hniezdenie použité tohto roku pravdepodobne prvýkrát. Zároveň priebeh hniezdenia bol oneskorený asi o jeden mesiac oproti iným hniezdam na Slovensku. Jeden z páru bol v r. 2005 v imaturnom vyfarbení a v roku 2006 obidva jedince boli plne vyfarbené ako dospelé. Nie je možné konštatovať, či zloženie páru bolo v obidvoch rokoch totožné.



Fig. 1. Young Sea Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) in the nest in the East Slovakian Plain on 30th June 2006.

Foto: J. Lipták

Obr. 1. Mláďa orliaka morského (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) z hniezda na Východoslovenskej rovine, 30. 6. 2006.

Foto: J. Lipták

References

- Danko Š 2005: Vzostup hniezdnej populácie orliaka morského (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) v strednej Európe: prvý záznam hniezdenia na východnom Slovensku. *Tichodroma* 17: 63-67.
- Hrabar A 1932: Ptactvo na Podkarpatské Rusi. Sborník zemské muzejní společnosti v Užhorodě: 59-86.
- Z originálu Grabar A 1931: Ptactvo Podkarpatskoj Rusi (Avifauna Carpathorossica). Podkarpatska Rus, Užgorod VIII: 1-32 preložil A Malich.
- Chavko J 2002: Orliak morský (*Haliaeetus albicilla*), 172-174. In: Danko Š, Darolová A & Krištín A (eds.): Rozšírenie vtákov na Slovensku. VEDA, Bratislava, 668.
- Stollmann A 2004: Národná prírodná rezervácia „Ostrov orliaka morského“ má 50 rokov. *Chránené územia Slovenska* 60: 8-9.