

Unprecedented nesting activity by the Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* in the Foreste Casentinesi, Monte Falterona and Campigna National Park

PIER PAOLO CECCARELLI¹, NEVIO AGOSTINI²

¹ Coop. St.e.r.n.a - Via Pedriali 12, 47121 Forlì; pierpaolo.ceccarelli@fastwebnet.it

² Parco Nazionale Foreste Casentinesi - Via Nefetti 3, 47018 Santa Sofia (FC); nevio.agostini@parcoforestecasentinesi.it

The Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* is present with one pair in the Foreste Casentinesi National Park, where it has been regularly monitored since 1993. Between 1993 and 1999 it nested on a rock at 900 m a.s.l.; then it built at least 4 nests on large fir trees along the north slopes with dense forest cover. Tab. 1 summarizes nesting data.

The nest located on the rock was used 10 times with the fledging of 8 young; confirmed nesting on fir trees was observed on 7 occasions, while in 3 other occasions breeding could not be confirmed; 5 young fledged from the nests on fir trees. Two fledglings occurred in 1993 (rock) and again after 24 years in 2016 (fir). In 2016 a research program was carried out in the Sasso Frati Nature Reserve, within the National Park of Foreste Casentinesi, M. Falterona and Campigna, in the Romagna region (province of Forlì-Cesena, Italy). A 10x binoculars and 20-60x telescopes were utilized for direct observations. The reproduction phase was followed regularly between March and August.

The 2016 breeding (after 6 years of apparent failures) is unprecedented for the great difference in the development between the two chicks, the first fledged in mid-July (between 12 and 18) while the second left the nest in mid-August (between 13 and 21), with a delay of about one month compared to its sibling.

At the end of the season, on September 29th 2016, the reproductive site located at 950 m a.s.l. was surveyed. The nest located 25 m off the ground, on a 35 m-high white fir and with a 92 cm diameter, was found to be almost completely destroyed with fragments on the ground.

The use of nesting trees, uncommon in the rest of the northern Apennines, can be an adaptation to the park's environment, mainly forested and with only few rocky cliffs suitable for nesting. This behaviour is already historical-

ly-known for the Casentino area, based on the testimony by Fiorini, cited by Giglioli (1889-91), who detected Golden Eagle's nests on old firs in inaccessible places in Monte di Scalo towards the end of the nineteenth centu-

Table 1. Nesting results between 1993 and 2016.

Year	nest	substrate	N. young fledged
1993	A	rock	2
1994	A	rock	0
1995	A	rock	1
1996	A	rock	1
1997	A	rock	1
1998	A	rock	1
1999	A	rock	1
2000	?	?	0
2001	?	?	0
2002	?	?	0
2003	B	fir	0
2004	B	fir	0
2005	C	fir	1
2006	?	?	?
2007	D	fir	1
2008	A	rock	1
2009	?	fir?	1
2010	A	rock	0
2011	?	fir?	?
2012	A	rock	0
2013	?	fir?	0
2014	E	fir	0
2015	E	fir	0
2016	E	fir	2
Total			13

ry (Zangheri 1938). The Foreste Casentinesi National Park shared on its YouTube channel a video that documented this unprecedented nesting activity: www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfLtfPbNtE

REFERENCES

Zangheri P., 1938. Primo censimento completo della Avifauna Romagnola. Forlì, c/o author.