TICHODROMA
monografie del Gruppo Piemontese Studi Ornitologici "F.A. Bonelli"- Onlus

ISSN 2421-261X

XIX CIO
TORINO 2017
XIX CONVEGNO ITALIANO DI ORNITOLOGIA

Riassunti del XIX Convegno Italiano di Ornitologia
Torino, 27 settembre - 1 ottobre 2017

A cura di: Sergio G. Fasano & Diego Rubolini

Settembre 2017. Numero 6

Habitat and landscape preferences of short toed eagle *Circaetus gallicus* population breeding in the italian Alps

Enrico Caprio[1,2], Massimo Bocca[3], Guido Cattaneo[4], Antonio Rolando[1]
[1] DBIOS – Università di Torino, E-mail: enrico.caprio@gmail.com; [2] Scuola di Biodiversità di Villa Paolina - Asti; [3] Parco Naturale Mont Avic; [4] GPSO

The short-toed eagle *Circaetus gallicus* is a summer resident in Europe, wintering in tropical Africa (Zalles & Bildstein 2000). In Italy, a breeding population of about 626-1025 pairs has been estimated (Premuda *et al.* 2015), mostly distributed in the Alps, pre-Alps, Ligurian Apennines and along the western slope of central Italy. To our knowledge no previous study has described so far habitat and landscape preferences of short toed eagle nest site in the Alps. With this contribution we analyze 40 nests located mainly in intra alpine valleys of Aosta Valley and Piedmont.

Nests were found on trees with a diameter at breast height ranging from 22 to 117 cm, showing a preference for an altitude ranging from 430m and 1700m asl. Observations of first flight in the morning showed that the birds started hunting on average 2-3 hours after sunrise. In intra alpine valleys the average distance between nests and hunting territories was 2200m (1400-4000m, n=14). At the habitat level nests were placed on the superior third of prominent evergreen coniferous trees (*Pinus sp., Picea abies, Abies alba*). In few instances deciduous species were selected (*Castanea sativa, Fagus sylvatica, Larix decidua*). Landscape analysis showed a clear preference of the species to build nests far from human infrastructure, facing North-Eastern exposition with increasing slopes. Landscape analysis showed a clear preference of the species to build nests far from human infrastructure, facing North-Eastern exposition with increasing slopes. This is particularly marked in most intra-alpine valleys and looks surprising considering the harsh climatic conditions that may last until mid April compared to those in southern slopes (i.e. residual snow cover and later vegetation activity).

Bibliografia - Premuda, G., *et al.* 2015 Avocetta 39:5-12. • Zalles J. I. & Bildstein K. L. (eds), 2000. Raptor Watch: A global directory of raptor migration sites. BirdLife Conservation Series 9, BirdLife International, Cambridge, UK; Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, Kempton, USA