

Endesa and Birding Natura installed radio tracking devices on six eagle owls in 2021

- *This action is part of an Endesa biodiversity conservation project that involves the tagging of a total of twelve individuals from all over Catalonia and the project has the collaboration of the Regional Government of Catalonia and MITECO*
- *The objective of this action is to gather data to study the behaviour of these species and define measures to reduce their mortality rate.*
- *In Catalonia it is estimated that there is a stable population of between 550 and 700 pairs and the latest studies suggest that half of the deaths in this species are caused by unnatural factors*

Les Garrigues, Berguedà and Baix Empordà, 30 December 2021 (5444) – From September to today, a total of six eagle owl specimens have been tagged and released by Birding Natura technicians as part of the project launched together with Endesa to contribute to their preservation. The project envisages the installation of geolocator emitters in a total of twelve birds, of which six were tagged in 2021. The objective of the programme is to monitor these birds over a year to study their behaviour, as well as to record data and information that will enable defining actions to contribute to their preservation. The latest studies suggest that half of the deaths that occur in this species are due to unnatural causes (direct hunting, collisions with vehicles, rodenticide poisonings, collisions, electrocutions, etc.). In Catalonia it is estimated that there is a stable population of between 550 and 700 pairs of birds. This project has the collaboration of the Department of Climate Action, Food and Rural Agenda of the Regional Government of Catalonia and the Ministry of Ecological Transition of the Government of Spain.

So far, two birds have been tagged and released in the natural area of Más de Melons, Les Garrigues, after undergoing recovery treatment in the Vallcalent Fauna Centre; two more in Berguedà, from the Camadoca Centre for Wildlife Conservation and Environmental Education, managed by ADEFA (Association for the Defence and Study of Native Fauna and Flora) in Santa Maria de Merlès, and finally, two more in the Baix Empordà, which were captured, tagged and released in the area surrounding the municipalities of Calonge i Sant Antoni and Albons. Next spring six chicks are expected to be tagged in a number of areas in Catalonia.



The eagle owls are fitted with a transmitter, which consists of a remote tracking device that has a GPS module and a power supply system using a battery that has autonomy for one year. It is like a small rucksack that weighs 44 grams and is fitted on the back of the bird. It only accounts for 3% of its body weight. The data is downloaded daily to a server and is also stored in the device itself.

The information obtained will enable reports to be made that include daily activity, developments and incidents shown as graphs, data tables and maps, before finally drawing the appropriate conclusions. In the case of adult specimens, it is intended to be able to discover their territorial areas, rest areas, hunting areas, places frequented both during and outside the breeding season. In the case of chicks, radio tracking will enable data to be obtained on their first flights once they leave the nest, their dispersal movements and how they establish new territorial areas.

In a next phase of the project, it is planned to monitor a nest using an infrared camera so as to be able to verify the correct development of the chicks, analyse their interaction with the adults and make an analysis of the results. It will also be possible to view the images captured by the camera via a link that will be public and open to everyone.

The final objective of all these actions is to acquire greater knowledge with regard to the reasons and exact location of possible deaths of the specimens, with a view to establishing measures that will enable them to be minimised.

About the eagle owl

The eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*) is the largest species of nocturnal bird of prey in Europe and one of the most elegant. Its spectacular facial expression and the beauty of its plumage make the eagle owl one of the jewels in the crown of the Iberian fauna.

Its population is widely distributed throughout Europe and Asia, from the Iberian Peninsula to Kamchatka. In Europe as a whole, there is estimated to be a population of between 12,000 and 42,000 pairs. In Spanish territory, it is widely distributed except for the Cantabrian coast and the islands. With regard to Catalonia, the species appears to be distributed throughout most of the territory, especially in Mediterranean environments and low altitude forests.

Its conservation status is included in the SPEC3 category at European level, a category that indicates that, despite the fact that its global population is increasing, this species has an unfavourable conservation status due to threats from a number of problems. In fact, at the Spanish level it is included in the "List of Wild Species under Special Protection" and in Catalonia it is listed as a protected species.

About Endesa and its biodiversity conservation projects

Endesa has been firmly committed to the conservation of biodiversity since its first Environmental Policy was approved and published in 1998. This established as one of its benchmark principles "the conservation of the natural environment of its installations by adopting measures to protect the different species of fauna and flora and their habitats".

In Spain, the Company develops some 25 annual projects for the protection and conservation of biodiversity and the protection of threatened species, areas and habitats, thus increasing



scientific knowledge and highlighting the importance of biodiversity. In 2020, the first policy focussing on biodiversity was published and the Endesa Biodiversity Committee was constituted with the participation of the different businesses within the Company.