

LIFE EUROKITE PROJECT

LIFE18 NAT/AT/000048

JUNE & JULY 2024

NEWSLETTER

NEW RECORD

More than 3,000 tagged red kite individuals

UNITING FORCES

to release red kites

UNDERGROUND CABLING

in the area of Gattendorf (Austria) is completed

UNEXPECTED

human-caused mortality of birds

© Hansreudi Weyrich





Photo: Tagging of red kites in Austria
© TB Raab GmbH

The red kite is the most frequently tagged bird species using advanced tracking technologies. During this year tagging season the LIFE EUROKITE reached a new milestone and set a record. Now, data from more than 3,000 tagged red kites is currently available through data exchange with partners and cooperation partners of the project. It promises to enhance our understanding of red kites and other birds of prey species behaviour and reduce their human-caused mortality reasons.

This year during the breeding period more than 100 red kites were tagged in the course of the LIFE EUROKITE project in countries including Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden.

Unfortunately, our team found unusually many individuals with feather stress bars (poor feather conditions). They were found on birds in every country. The development of stress bars is triggered by low food availability, high stress level, illness during the time that the feather is formed or bad weather conditions (low temperature, rain).

NEW RECORD

MORE THAN 3,000 TAGGED RED KITE INDIVIDUALS



Photo: Feather stress bars
© TB Raab GmbH



Photo: Participants of the red kites releasing
© AMUS

In June 2024, 32 red kites from England have arrived to Extremadura region to reinforce the red kite breeding population in southwest Spain. This action already started in 2022 in the framework of the LIFE EUROKITE project.

After arriving at Madrid airport, the red kites underwent a veterinary check-up at the wildlife hospital in accordance with regional, national and international biosecurity regulations. They were then taken to the reintroduction facility, where they will stay for a few weeks during an acclimatization period before being released into the wild in the village of Valencia del Mombuey.

On arrival, there was a special welcoming committee where some of the participants and partners of the project had direct contact with the red kites. The mayors of Valencia del Mombuey and Olivia de la Frontera, the President of the Municipality Association Sierra Suroeste, Ecological Transition Deputy of Diputación de Badajoz, the regional wildlife authorities (Junta de Extremadura), SEPRONA of the Guardia Civil, E-Distribución, landowners and livestock breeders rejoiced with the "new neighbors".

After some weeks, and previously to the releasing, all the red kites will be equipped with GPS-transmitters to monitor their movements and potential threats.

This year is a very special year for the project. Some of the red kites which were released in 2022, have reached their maturity and started to breed, which is the main goal of this project. There are currently two breeding pairs and a third has settled in a territory that will probably start to breed next year.

This new group of 32 red kites, which will be released this year, is an important part of the red kite population reinforcement project.

UNITING FORCES TO RELEASE RED KITES



Photo: The arrival included a special welcome committee, where some of the stakeholders and partners of the project had a direct contact with the red kites
© AMUS



*Photo: Underground cabling in Gattendorf, Austria
© Peter Ujfalusi*

Electrocution and collision with power lines are threats for many different kinds of birds. Within the LIFE EUROKITE project we define high risk sections and make them safer.

First steps have been already taken by our project partner Netz Burgenland GmbH. With the help of the telemetry data of tagged red kites we selected most relevant sections of power lines and together with employees from PORR AG, new cables were put underground. Now, the last step was finished.

In the last weeks the pylons and overhead cables were completely removed on a length of 2,1 km. By this underground cabling, we can avoid the collision of birds with the power lines.

UNDERGROUND CABLING IN THE AREA OF GATTENDORF (AT) IS COMPLETED



*Photo: Pylons removing
© Peter Ujfalusi*



Photo: Drowned bird in open slurry tank

© TB Raab GmbH

UNEXPECTED HUMAN-CAUSED MORTALITY OF BIRDS

Open water and slurry tanks are death traps not only for birds, but also for other animals which can access these tanks. Data of the LIFE EUROKITE project now show, that these open water and slurry tanks are an unexpected death trap which is apparently completely underestimated.

As a water source, open water tanks attract thirsty birds, which without chance to escape become trapped and drowned.

On the other hand, slurry deaths can arise from drowning or gassing. Without a cover, the surface of the slurry tanks looks like a solid surface for landing for birds. As soon as the bird lands it gets stuck and has no chance to escape.

What is the solution? Water and slurry tanks should always be covered. Open water tanks should be provided with a 'bird islands' made of floating wooden board, to easily drink from and climb out of it. This solution is an easy way to save many lives of birds and other animals.



Photo: Open slurry tank without coverage

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Coordinating beneficiary



The TB Raab GmbH was commissioned to implement the LIFE EUROKITE project after a pan-European public tender.




Project partner (Associated Beneficiary)



Dirección General de Política Forestal y Espacios Naturales
Viceconsejería de Medio Ambiente
Consejería de Agricultura, Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo Rural
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Co-financier

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LE GOUVERNEMENT DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG



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Cooperation partner



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