



## The Bonelli's Eagle in Greece & Cyprus

The Bonelli's Eagle is present throughout the Mediterranean countries, with Spain holding the largest population.

With approximately 100 breeding pairs, Greece has the species' highest population density in the eastern Mediterranean. Most of these pairs are found on the islands of the Aegean Sea and on Crete. Other areas hosting a significant proportion of the national breeding population are southern Peloponnese, the island of Euboea and western Greece, whereas a few more pairs and single adults can be found in the regions of Attica, Thrace and Macedonia.

The Bonelli's Eagle is the only eagle species breeding in Cyprus. The island hosts a significant population of around 50 pairs, most of which are situated in the Natura 2000 area of Paphos forest, while some pairs are also found at the area of Pentaschinos river, Troodos Forest National Park and elsewhere.

The species favourite habitats include Mediterranean shrublands, areas with low garrigue vegetation, forests with sparse trees and areas where there is a mix of agricultural and natural habitats.

Habitat suitability depends mainly on low human presence and high prey availability.

Equally important is the existence of suitable nesting sites such as steep cliffs and, in the case of Cyprus, large trees, where the eyries are built.



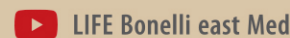
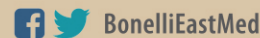
## Cooperation for the protection of the Bonelli's Eagle

The LIFE Bonelli eastMed Project "Conservation & Management of the Bonelli's Eagle population in east Mediterranean" addresses the most critical threats to the Bonelli's Eagle populations in Greece and Cyprus.

The overall objective is to ensure the long-term favourable conservation status for the species' interconnected local populations, through the establishment and operation of the East Mediterranean Bonelli's Eagle Network.

Project actions are implemented by the Natural History Museum of Crete - University of Crete, the Game and Fauna Service (Game Fund) - Cyprus, the Hellenic Ornithological Society/BirdLife Greece, the Ministry of Environment & Energy - Greece, the Department of Forests - Cyprus and the NCC Environmental Studies Ltd in 22 Natura 2000 sites in Greece and Cyprus with the financial contribution of the LIFE instrument of the EU and the co-funding of the Green Fund and the A.G. Leventis Foundation.

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With the contribution of the LIFE financial instrument of the European Community



## Bonelli's Eagle The Mediterranean Eagle



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# The Bonelli's Eagle

The Bonelli's Eagle is a medium-sized eagle with a wing span reaching up to 165 cm. The female is always larger than the male.

Juvenile birds have rufous-buff underbody and underwing coverts and dark brown plumage on the upper side. As they gradually approach adulthood (from their 4th calendar year onwards) their plumage transforms: the greater coverts become darker while the body plumage grows whiter, until it becomes completely white with black streaks.

A unique characteristic of the adult Bonelli's Eagle is the white patch on its back. It varies in size and shape and can be used to identify different individuals.

**The Bonelli's Eagle official name in Greek is "Spizaetos". In Cyprus, the species is known as "Pertikosiachino" (meaning the hawk that hunts partridges).**



Being one of the most dynamic eagles, the Bonelli's Eagle is a characteristic species of the Mediterranean landscape, mainly foraging on medium-sized mammals and birds. Despite its moderate size it is bold enough to fight against or even hunt down birds of larger size.

Each pair maintains a large number of nests (up to 10) alternating them each breeding season.

Being very territorial birds, the Bonelli's eagles zealously defend their nesting sites and have a large home range, stretching in an area that can vary from 40 to up to 120 Km<sup>2</sup>.

In the Aegean region however, pairs breeding in localities with high prey availability and low human disturbance, are known to be able to cover their foraging and nesting needs in much smaller areas; this exceptional adaptation can be found most frequently on some uninhabited islets of the archipelago.



# Rare & Endangered



**Although it used to be relatively common in the past, the Bonelli's Eagle is nowadays an endangered species.**

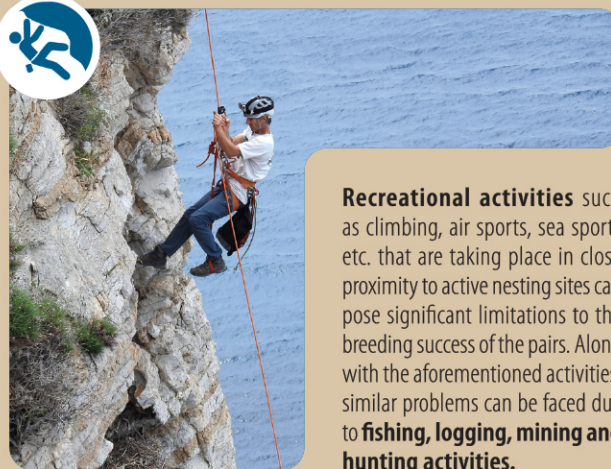
According to the Red Data Book of Threatened Animals of Greece, the species is considered as **Vulnerable (VU)**, while at **European level** the species is considered **Endangered (EN)**. As a result, it is strictly protected by law at both national and EU level.



One of the most important threats that the species faces is **persistent habitat degradation**, mostly due to land-use changes, prey shortage and human-induced disturbance.



Like all raptors, the Bonelli's Eagle is **highly sensitive to human-induced disturbance**. The mass development of infrastructure such as roads, renewable energy facilities, human settlements and intensive farming are common causes for its displacement.



**Recreational activities** such as climbing, air sports, sea sports etc. that are taking place in close proximity to active nesting sites can pose significant limitations to the breeding success of the pairs. Along with the aforementioned activities, similar problems can be faced due to **fishing, logging, mining and hunting activities**.



**Collision and electrocution** on power lines are critical threats for the Bonelli's Eagle. Electrocution is considered the most severe threat for juvenile and immature birds in particular as once they leave the nest they disperse to other areas covering great distances, often visiting places with high human presence and thus, a dense power line network.



Incidents of **direct persecution** are also common for the species due to the false belief that the eagles cause losses in livestock and game species such as partridges, hares etc.



## How does the LIFE Bonelli eastMed Project help the Bonelli's Eagle?

- **Monitors the Bonelli's Eagle population and its nesting sites** in order to collect data on the demography and ecology of the species and to map the home-range of each pair.
- **Tags Bonelli's Eagle individuals with satellite transmitters** to enable their tracking through the dispersal phase in order to identify the most important areas for the species' survival and ensure their protection.
- **Cultivates abandoned agricultural lands, creates forest openings and constructs watering sites** in order to increase prey availability.
- **Works on mortality risk mitigation of the power transmission network** by insulating and signaling dangerous components of the grid.
- **Raises awareness for the species within the climbing community** to avoid cases of disturbance and takes action to restrict the access of vehicles and hunters in sensitive areas.
- **Operates Antipoison Dog Units** to reduce the cases of poisoning.
- **Informs and educates** the public and target groups about the rarity and the importance of the Bonelli's Eagle, and invites them to be involved in conservation efforts for the species.
- **Publishes a Good Practice Guide and develops a spatial planning tool for renewable energy infrastructure** to avoid degradation of vital habitat for the Bonelli's Eagle.
- **Establishes and operates EMBONET (East Mediterranean Bonelli's Eagle Network)**, an international network for the protection of the Bonelli's Eagle in the wider area of the eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans.



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Bonelli's Eagle

*Aquila fasciata*

The Mediterranean Eagle

