

White-tailed Eagles poisoned in Denmark

Title

For the first time in almost a century a pair of White-tailed Eagles *Haliaeetus albicilla* bred in the Danish island of Funen, but tragically the birds were found dead at the end of June. The eagles were a symbol of recent years' nature restoration in Odense Bay and increased optimism on behalf of nature.

The local branch of DOF (BirdLife in Denmark) put up the nest platform at the end of 2009 and if everything had worked out according to plan, the nestling would have left the nest at the beginning of July, but sadly, the nestling and the adult male died after feeding on a poisoned bait.

DOF has settled the probably highest reward in Denmark's history in relation to fauna crime. Members of BirdLife Denmark and concerned locals have promised to double the reward from 25,000 to 50,000 Danish kroner (almost 7000 Euros) for crucial information.

Last July, French laboratory tests ordered by the Veterinary Institute of the Technical University of Denmark and the National Forest and Nature Agency proved that the birds were poisoned with the prohibited and extremely powerful toxicant carbofuran which blocks up the nerve system. "There is no doubt that DOF / BirdLife Denmark considers it vital to solve the case as fast as possible, and we believe that this reward is a good initiative which will increase birds protection", stated Lennart Pedersen, head of BirdLife Denmark's Eagle Project.

"It is encouraging that our members and others who are appalled by this case are calling us to offer financial support, which can persuade the public to provide information that may help the police in their investigation of the poison killing of the two birds. This shows that friends of nature will not accept attempts on our shared natural amenities and rare birds", concluded Mr Pedersen.

Before 1850 The White-tailed Eagle was relatively common in Denmark with an estimated 50 breeding pairs. However, due to the intense raptor persecution which began after 1850 the species was eradicated from Denmark and the last pair bred in 1911. Fortunately The White-tailed Eagle returned to Denmark in 1995, when one pair bred successfully and the number of breeding pair in 2009 was a healthy 28.



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