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NEWSLETTER

January 2021

LIFE EUROKITE

(LIFE18 NAT/AT/000048)





"Saxony-Anhalt has a special responsibility for the red kite, because a large part of Germany's population lives here. That is why we support the red kite center at the Heineanum Museum in Halberstadt with funding. I am very pleased that the cooperation between the red kite center and the LIFE EUROKITE project started. We are jointly pursuing the goal of closing the knowledge gaps with regarding to the real causes of death of the red kite. These findings will then also help us to advance the environmentally friendly expansion of wind energy throughout Europe. This is exactly the right way to protect the climate and to understand species protection as two sides of the same coin. "

Prof. Dr. Claudia Dalbert
Minister for Environment, Agriculture and Energy of the State of Saxony-Anhalt

Many people in Saxony-Anhalt are familiar with the red kite in rural areas, after all, Saxony-Anhalt is the heartland of the distribution of the native but endangered species in Germany. I am very pleased that we can support the protection of this impressive bird of prey as part of the LIFE EUROKITE project with a total of € 150,000. We hope that the red kite population in the country can be stabilized with the project measures. "

Dr. Ekkehard Wallbaum, Head of the Nature Conservation and Water Management Department at the Ministry for the Environment, Agriculture and Energy Saxony-Anhalt

The picture shows Mr. Torsten Süß. His company carried out the necessary climbing work in the context of tagging red kites in June 2020 (© Nadine Becker).



Red kite protection in Saxony-Anhalt (Germany)

Text by Martin Kolbe

After the first comprehensive recording of birds of prey in the 1980s, it became clear that Saxony-Anhalt has one of the highest known settlement densities of the red kite. In spite of the population decrease that followed in the 1990s, the state is still more densely populated than any other in Germany. According to the results of a complete mapping of the red kite in 2012/13, around 2000 red kites breed in the state. Viewed globally, that is around 8% of the world's population. It is inevitable that the state of Saxony-Anhalt has an enormous responsibility for this species. Although Saxony-Anhalt has this responsibility for the protection of the red kite, it has long been neglected by the state despite intensive efforts by voluntary nature and species conservationists. This is also reflected in the development of the population. According to the data from the Monitoring of European Raptor and Owls (MEROS), the red kite population has declined by 1-2% per year since the 1990s. After the publication of the “Species Aid Program for Red Kites of the State of Saxony-Anhalt” in 2014, efforts to establish a “Competence Center for Red Kite Protection” were intensified again. These efforts by the voluntary nature conservationists were ultimately successful and led to the establishment of the Red Kite Center at the Heineanum Museum in Halberstadt. The Red Kite Center was attached to the Heineanum Museum, as it has been under the direction of Dr. Bernd Nicolai and contributed to researching and protecting the red kite in Saxony-Anhalt.



The federal state of Saxony-Anhalt has been financing the facility since spring 2016. Since then, the protection efforts have been coordinated by the two employees of the Red Kite Center. This makes the red kite center in Saxony-Anhalt the only place in Germany to date that can fully focus on protecting the red kite. The range of tasks of the Red Kite Center is broad and ranges from advising land users, authorities and offices, to developing new and evaluating known protective measures, to coordinating surveys. In addition, third-party funds are regularly acquired, and projects are carried out to answer specific questions. We can only hope that our efforts will bear fruit and that we can maintain the red kite population in the state of Saxony-Anhalt at a good level in the long term. By participating in the LIFE EUROKITE project, we hope to find out more about the whereabouts of the young birds that leave our nests. Little is known about this so far and the project can help close one of the most important knowledge gaps. Only if we know what dangers exist for the young red kites and what influence these have on the development of the population, we could protect the red kite more effectively and ensure its preservation in the long term.



Project: LIFE18 NAT/AT/000048 – LIFE EUROKITE

LIFE EUROKITE “Winter Count of Red Kite roosting sites in whole Europe” 08.01.-10.01.2021

As part of the LIFE EUROKITE project, we would like to take a look at the population development in the European Union.

Therefore, the winter census of red kite roosting places across Europe takes place from January 8th to January 10th, 2021. Within the LIFE EUROKITE winter census, we want to ensure that the same places are counted every year until 2027. A total of 20 countries will take part in the census: Austria (AT), Belgium (BE), Croatia (HR), Czech Republic (CZ), Denmark (DK), France (FR), Germany (DE), Greece (EL), United Kingdom (GB), Republic of Ireland (IE), Hungary (HU), Italy (IT), Luxembourg (LUX), Netherlands (NE), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Slovakia (SK), Spain (ES), Sweden (SE) and Switzerland (CH).

The LIFE EUROKITE winter census of red kite roosts across Europe should not be viewed as a competition with national censuses. LPO (Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux, BirdLife Partner) has been coordinating winter censuses across Europe for many years and, together with the LIFE EUROKITE project team, LPO is also responsible for the LIFE EUROKITE winter census. The goal of the winter census is to get a trend in the red kite population.

We are already excited to see how many red kites can be observed in the first LIFE EUROKITE winter census and will report on the results in March.

We want to thank the 200 volunteers in the different countries and look forward to the next years of cooperation.

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