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NEWSLETTER

June 2021

LIFE EUROKITE

(LIFE18 NAT/AT/000048)





“The protection of nature and the environment is very important to me personally. The Red Kite is an important part of our native fauna. Unfortunately, the Red Kite is repeatedly the victim of illegal killings. The LIFE EUROKITE project makes an important contribution to the preservation and reintroduction of the rare birds of prey. “

Climate Protection Minister Leonore Gewessler Federal Ministry for Climate Protection, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (Austria)



The breeding time started

Many of the tagged red kites in the course of the LIFE EUROKITE project spent the winter in France or Spain. In the meantime, almost all of them have returned and settled in their breeding area. After a successful partner search, mating and nest building, young red kite will hatch soon.



A big thank you goes to Zdenek Pachovsky who was able to photograph a pair of red kites mating in March.
(<https://www.facebook.com/digi.scoping1>)



© Boris Maderič

The rearing

Approx. 2-3 eggs are laid in most areas between the end of March and the end of April. These are short-oval, a dull, dirty white colour and with many small dark spots. The size corresponds roughly to that of a chicken egg. The female takes over most of the incubation and is fed by the male during this time. The first young birds hatch after approx. 31-34 days. The young birds weigh about 50g when they hatch, and their eyes open in the first few hours, but are initially cloudy. The wing length is about 20mm shortly after hatching and increases continuously, so that it allows a very precise age estimate.



© Boris Maderič

Even before red kites can fly, they occasionally leave the nest from the age of six weeks and climb around a little. However, they regularly return to the nest. When they are 7-8 weeks old, they make their first attempts at flight. Their parents looking after the young ones for another 3-4 weeks after they have left the nest. During this time they only spend a short time in flight and usually stay within a radius of about 500 meters around the nest.

The first glider flights can be observed about 10 to 20 days after leaving the nest. Only when the youngsters have mastered this type of flight they can go hunting themselves. But even in the following days they are occasionally fed by their parents.

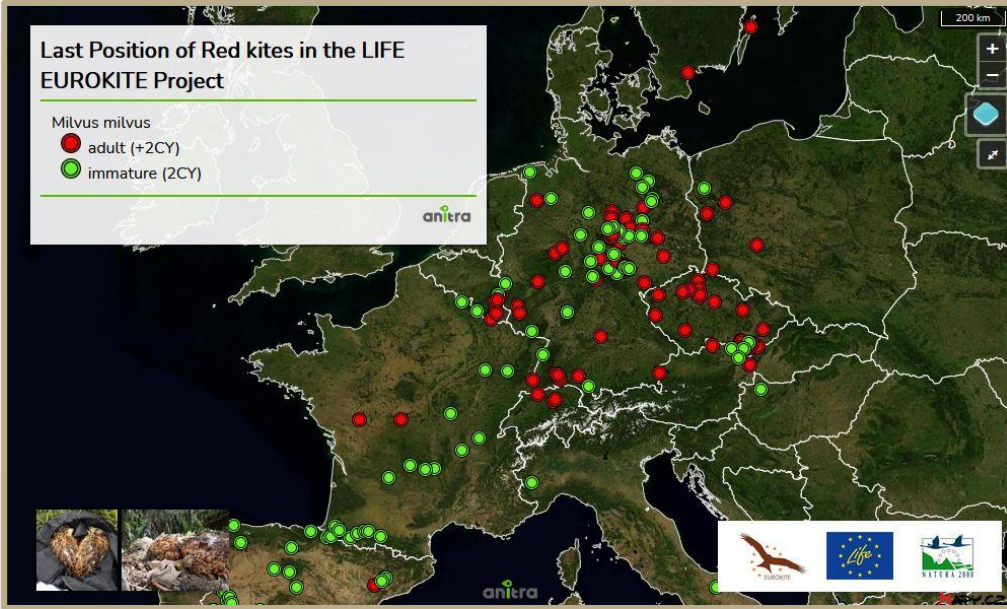


© Franz Josef Kovacs

Tagging Red Kites in the course of the LIFE EUROKITE project

From 2020 to 2024, 615 red kites and 80 other birds of prey (white-tailed eagles, imperial eagles, black kites) in approx. 40 project areas in 12 countries are to be equipped with GPS transmitters, so that their activities can be permanently tracked. In the event of death, the bird is searched for by team members of the local / regional partners and the cause of death is determined after following a mortality protocol. In this way, the project can gain a precise understanding of the various causes of death for red kites and other birds of prey along their migration (e.g. red kites breeding in central Europe and wintering in Spain and southern France). A great advantage of this method is that the GPS tracking of birds and the post-mortem analysis works “in real time” and enables immediate action. With this project, a representative sample of all causes of death in a large geographic area can be independently determined, and a better overview of the hotspots of illegal as well as non-criminal deaths is obtained.





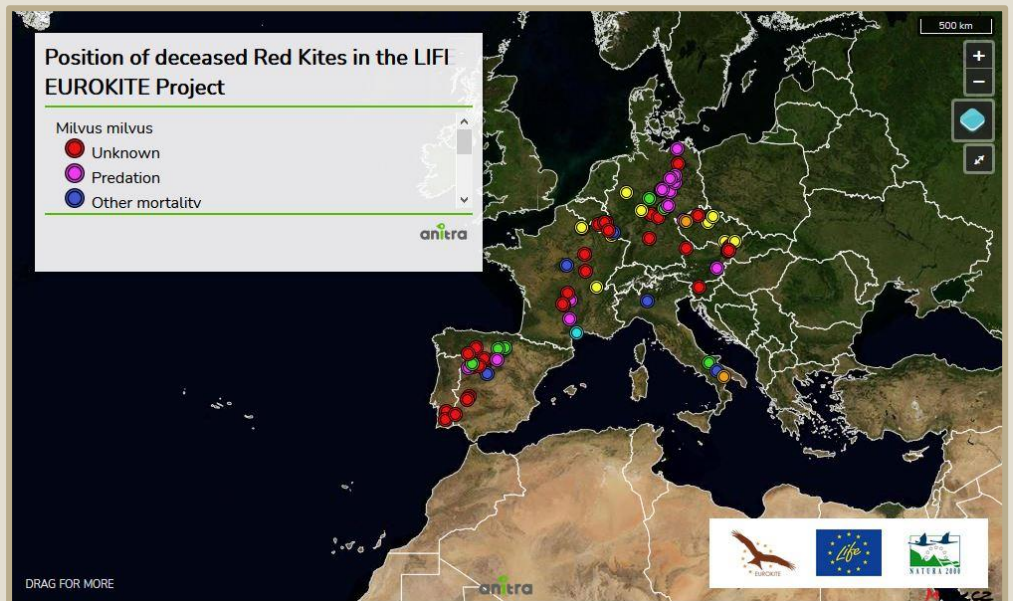
Telemetry map (last location) of tagged Red Kites in the course of the LIFE EUROKITE project.

Red: Adult Red Kites (+2. Calendar year)
Green: Juvenile (2. Calendar year)

<https://www.life-eurokite.eu/de/663.html>

Map of deceased Red Kites and their reason of death.

Purple: Predation
Yellow: Poisoned
Orange: Electrocution
Green: Collision
Turquoise: Shot
Red: Unknown
Blue: Other mortality reasons



<https://www.life-eurokite.eu/de/664.html>

Also this year, red kites will be tagged in the course of the project (e.g. in Germany, Spain, Austria, France & Belgium). We will of course report about it on our social media.

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Coordinating Beneficiary



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



Project partner (Associated Beneficiary)



Co-financier



Cooperation partner



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