

07.01.2021

Tagged Red Kite of the LIFE EUROKITE project was found dead with 4 other Red Kites in Portugal!



The LIFE EUROKITE project is a cross-border and EU-wide project for the protection of the red kite (*Milvus milvus*), with the aim of sustainably reducing human-caused mortality. The red kite breeds almost exclusively in Europe and is endangered by illegal persecution. Within LIFE EUROKITE, the anthropogenic causes of mortality are investigated with the help of telemetry data and work is carried out to man-made cause of death in the future. The illegal use of poison is considered to be one of the biggest problems associated with the illegal killing of birds due to its serious impact on nature conservation and is considered to be one of the most powerful direct threats not only to the Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*) but also to e.g., the Spanish Imperial Eagle (*Aquila adalberti*), Eastern Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*), and Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*).



The system, which is connected to the bird's GPS transmitter, sends digital warning signals that indicate a possible death of the bird. After the check by the partner of the LIFE EUROKITE project, local partners and/or volunteers in different countries can be mobilized using the coordinates to look for the bird.



The red kite is one of the most endangered species in Portugal, which is why the team the coordination of Alfonso Godino (AMUS) together with the "Nature Conservation Service from the Republican National Guard" (SEPNA-GNR) carried out the search on December 4th, 2020. SEPNA-GNR is responsible for the prosecution and investigation of wildlife crime in Portugal. Shortly after the encounter, it became clear that the red kite may have been poisoned and the wildlife crime protocol has come into force. The dog unit was informed, and the

judicial police took the bird to the laboratory for further examinations. The next day the area was controlled by the dog unit in a track of approx. 4 km. Unfortunately, 4 more red kites were found dead and, like the day before, the police took them to the laboratory for further examinations.

At the moment it is suspected that all birds were poisoned, but the laboratory result is still pending. The LIFE EUROKITE team would like to thank everyone involved, especially Alfonso Godino from AMUS (LIFE Eurokite's partner in Portugal and southern Spain), SEPNA-GNR, Liga para a Proteção da Natureza (LPN), the Center for Recuperation and Investigation of Wildlife (RIAS) and the Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das AVES (SPEA-BirdLife) for the good cooperation.

