

PannonEagle

LIFE project

Conservation of the eastern
imperial eagle by decreasing
human-caused mortality in the
Pannonian Region - LIFE15
NAT/HU/000902

LIFE PannonEagle
Márton Árvay

Overview of wildlife
poisoning in whole Europe
11/11/2021



Basic information

Project duration: 2016.10.01-2022.03.31

Total budget: 3 583 577 € (75% EU contribution)

Coordinating beneficiary:
BirdLife Hungary (MME)

Associated beneficiaries:

Kiskunsági Nationa Park Directorate, Hungary

Hortobágyi Nationa Park Directorate, Hungary

Vychodoslovenská distribučná a.s (VSD), Slovakia

Raptor Protection of Slovakia, Slovakia

Czech Society for Ornithology (CSO) – Czech Republic

Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic - Czech Republic

BirdLife Österreich – Austria

WWF Österreich - Austria

Bird Protection and Study Society of Serbia – Serbia

Institute for Nature Conservation of Vojvodina Province - Serbia



Ministry of the Environment
of the Czech Republic



INSTITUTE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION
OF VOJVODINA PROVINCE



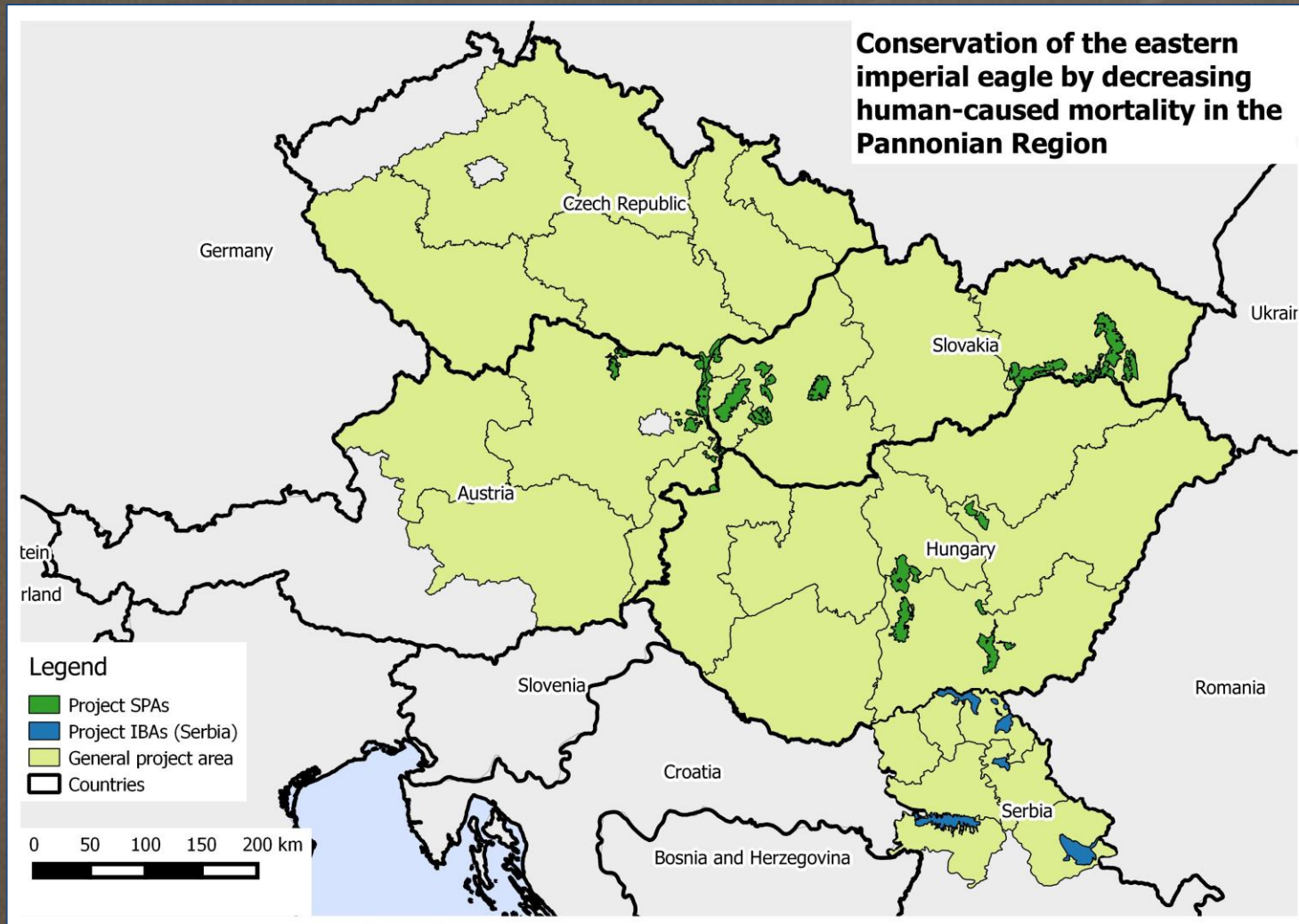
Project objectives

The main objective of the project PannonEagle Life is to increase the population of the eastern imperial eagle in the Pannonian Region through significantly decreasing the non-natural mortality caused by persecution incidents.

- Decrease the direct adverse effects of persecution incidents on the Pannonian imperial eagle population
- Increase the chance of detecting illegal activities and imposing precedent judgments in the case of bird persecution incidents.
- Increase stakeholder awareness about the overestimated effect of raptor species on game populations and about alternative eagle-friendly game management methods.
- Increase public awareness about the conservational importance of imperial eagles and about the possible consequences of persecution incidents.



Project area



Ministry of the Environment
of the Czech Republic



Establishment of specialized dog-units in three countries

- altogether four units with 6 search dogs were established:
Hungary, Czechia, Slovakia
- Cooperation with conservation dogs in Austria
- field searches – according to the national protocol
- Dogs are capable of smelling the most-used poisons & carcasses



Establish stakeholder network and best-practice protocols

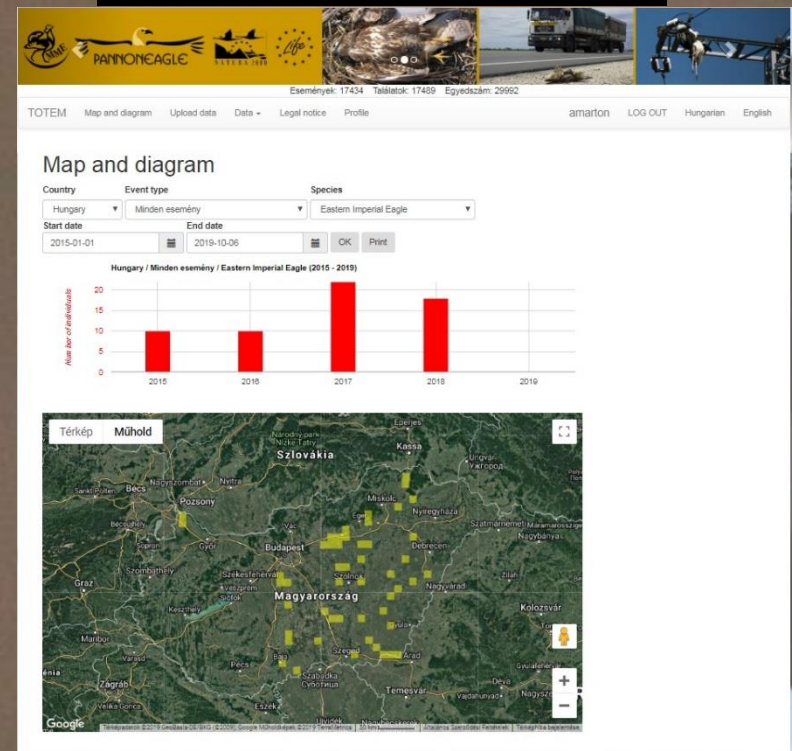
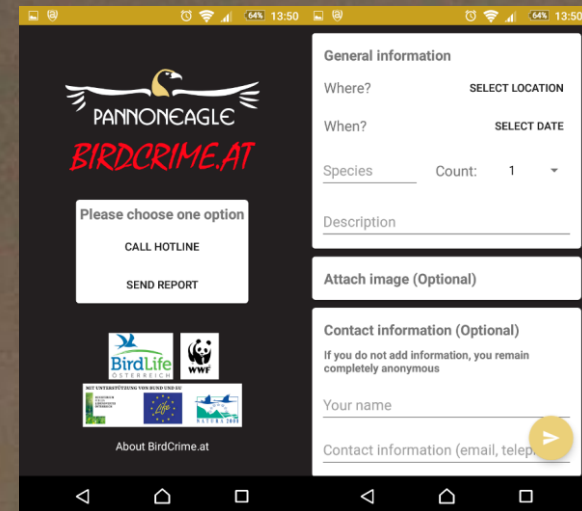
National reporting surfaces

- Birdcrime App produced in Austria
- Reporting hotlines
- Cooperation with national laboratory

Regional bird crime database TOTEM

<https://totem.mme.hu/>

- 498 cases from the Pannonian region (from 2016-2019)
- 339 poisoning or suspected poisoning
- 33 imperial eagle, 52 WTE
- 229 police case



Genetic tracking – Execute population viability analyses

- PVA is carried out according to breeding – GPS data
- collaboration with the University of Veterinary Science



Monitoring of breeding success

- Pannonian population of imperial eagles exceeded 400 pairs
- 130 successful breeding in Hungary in 2021
- One nest with 4 chicks, all fledged!



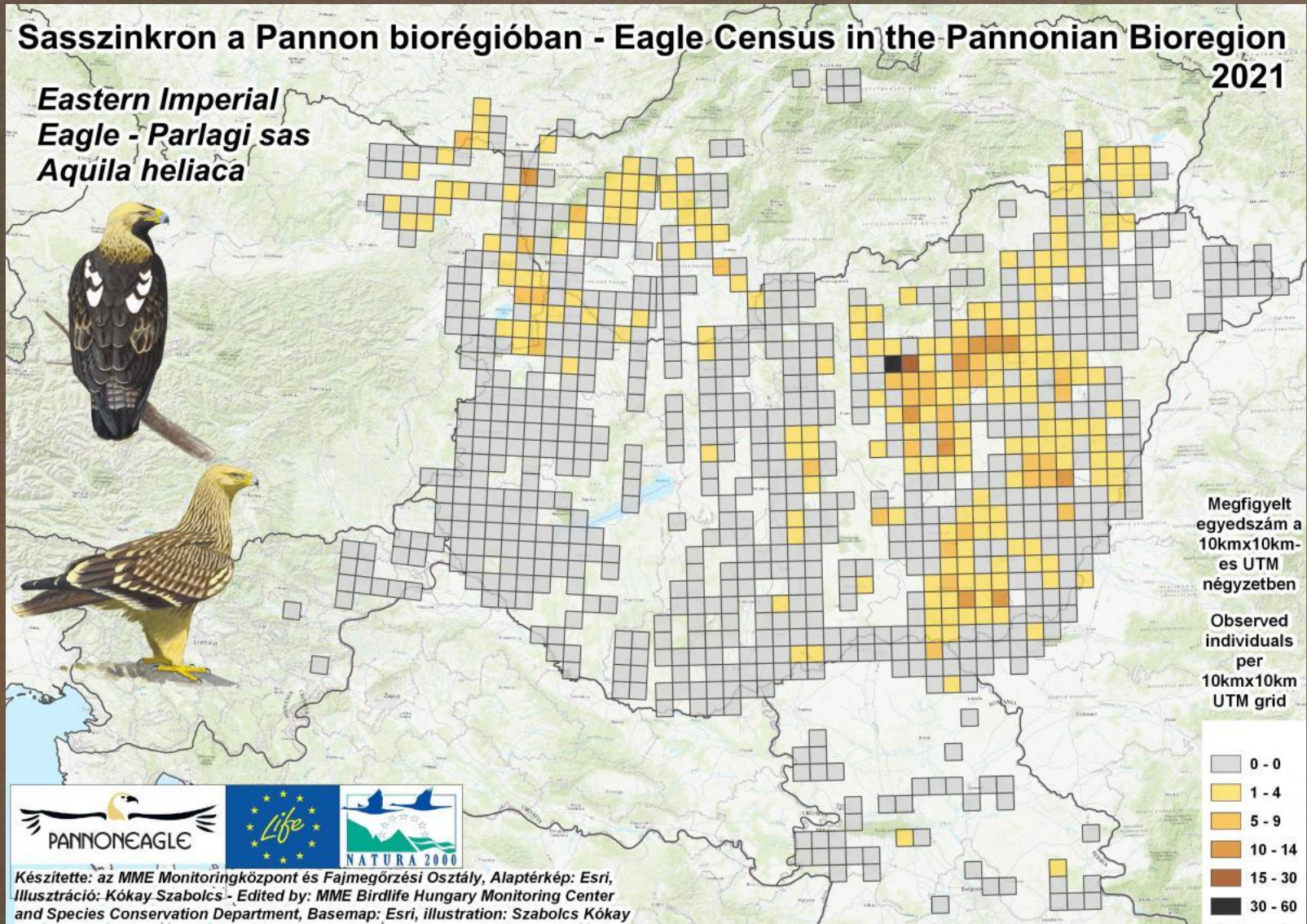
Monitor mortality of immature imperial eagles by GPS tracking

- Previously tagged imperial eagles are monitored throughout the year
- Imperial eagles tagged in the previous years show decreased persecution mortality
- 2 imperial eagles were tagged in Serbia by BPSSS & MME



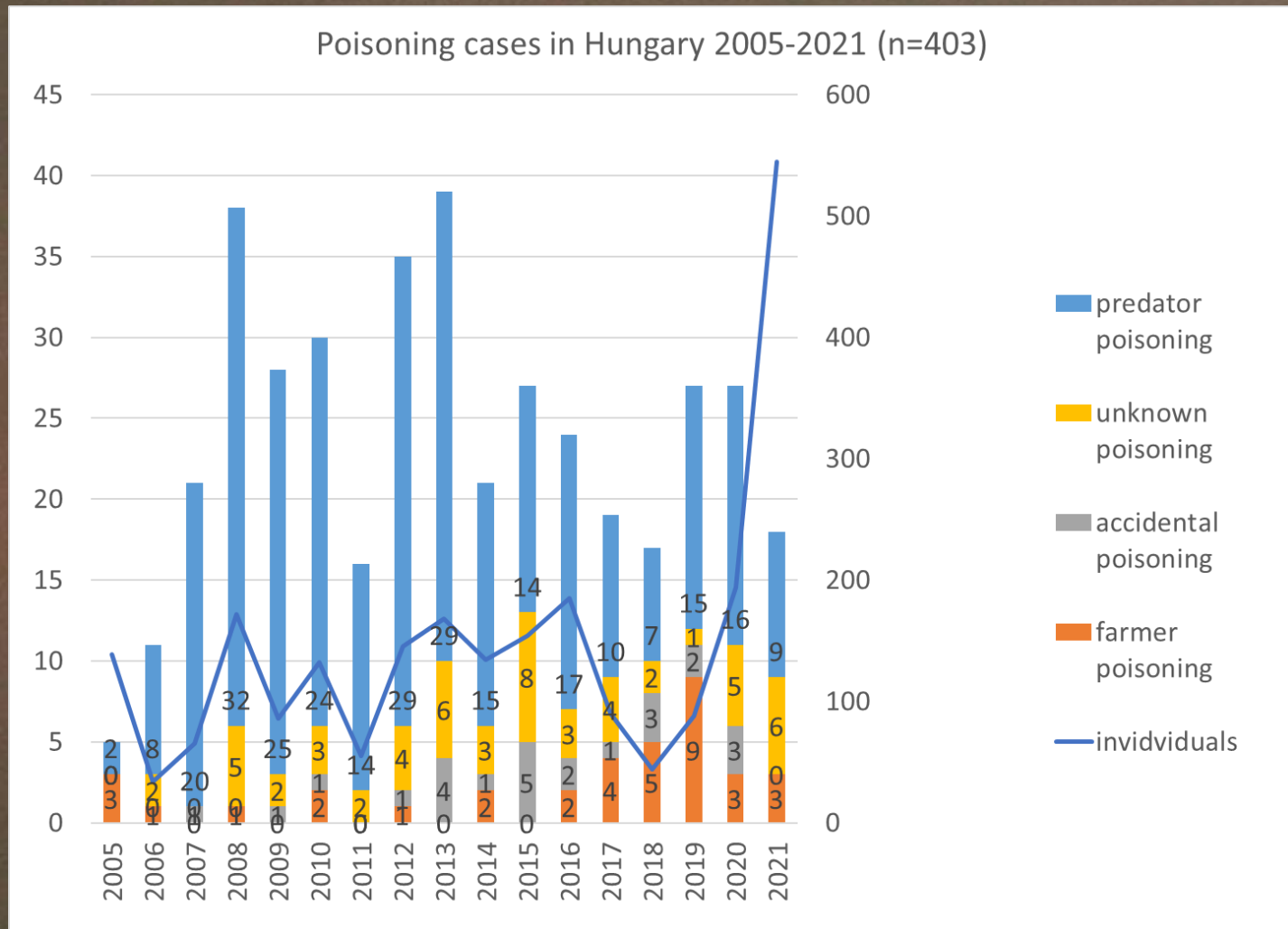
Eagle census of the Pannonian region

- Annual eagle census was carried out in January 2021 with partner organisations



Bird crime reports

- 2021 there were less cases in Hungary, but with record number of casualties



Case studies 2021 March – Kisbér poisoning

- 29 common buzzards, 8 ravens, 1 white-tailed eagle, 6 baits and 17 other animal carcasses were found
- Poisoning baits – deer and roedeer head (hunting origin)
- Police investigation was suspended, but prosecution office made the police re-open the case



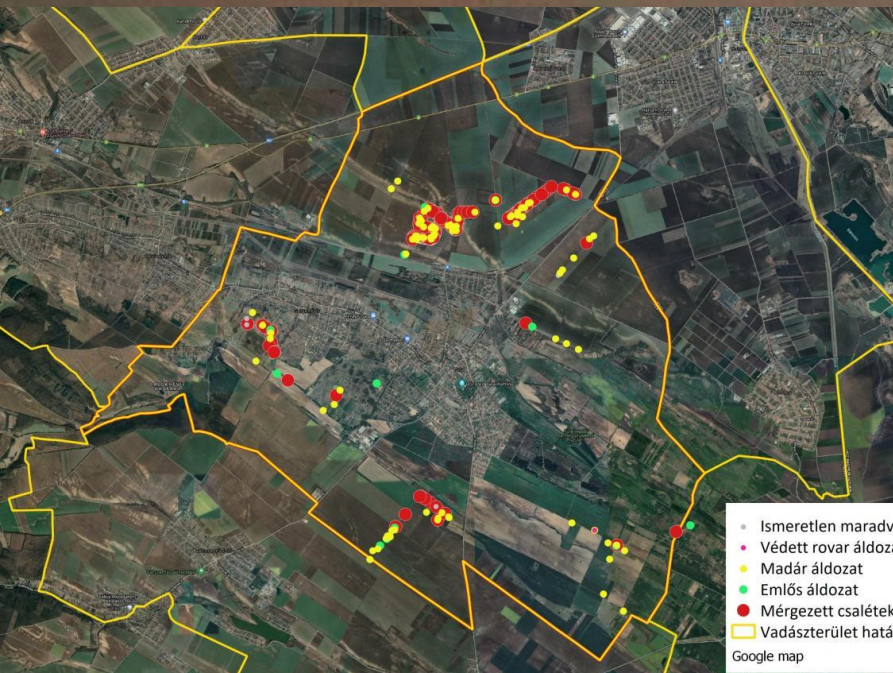
Case studies – Shooting a GPS tagged cinereous vulture

- A Bulgarian cinereous vulture, tagged by Green Balkans – Bulgaria, was shot in East-Hungary
- Offenders tried to throw the GPS tag to the river but MME's dog unit found it anyway according to the GPS signals
- Police field investigation – DNA samples from the GPS tag and feathers of the vulture
- Ongoing investigation – local hunters already admitted „finding the vulture”



Case studies – Tura - worst ever poisoning case in Hungary

- Territory of Szent András Dombi Hunting Association
- 77 marsh harriers, 7 common buzzards, 3 ravens, 3 tree pipits, 2 strictly protected black kite and 1 Montagu's harrier, 1 white tailed eagle, 141 baits and 24 additional animal
- The laboratory results also showed record carbamate concentration in the baits (6000 mg/kg!)
- Police investigation is in progress for nature destruction, animal cruelty, poaching, illegal possession of poison.
- Large media fuss, multiple press releases -> law modification on animals cruelty



First conviction in Czechia with involvement of CSO dog unit

- Klára Hlubocká, a dog handler in the Czech Society for Ornithology, testified in court, as she is searching the field for poisoned baits and their victims and handing over the documents to the police
- The appellate court in České Budějovice confirmed the judgement for the bird poisoner, who killed two White-tailed eagles and two ravens near Mečichov in the Strakonice region in March 2019.
- The man was given suspended sentence - 2,5 years of imprisonment with a delay of 3,5 years. For the first time in history, bird of prey poisoner was convicted in Czechia.



Viky and Ibris, CSO's search dogs

Thank you for your attention!

<https://imperialeagle.eu/>

<https://www.facebook.com/PannonEagleLIFE/>



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