

Articles

ACT Little Eagle migrates to Daly Waters (NT)

In previous publications, for example Olsen *et al.* (2008, 2009), we proposed radio-tagging Little Eagles *Hieraaetus morphnoides* in the ACT because home ranges recognised by planners and government agencies were much too small. The first Little Eagle we radio-tagged was a juvenile male. The area of his home range increased in size progressively over the 12 weeks of the post-fledging period, from 0.001 km² minimum convex polygon (MCP) in Week 1 after fledging, to 3.085 km² MCP in Week 12 after fledging, just before he dispersed from the natal area. The juvenile gradually moved his night roosts from 140 m away from the nest in Week 1 to 900 m from the nest in Week 12 (Olsen *et al.* 2015 and in press).

In 2015, after the Little Eagle breeding attempt failed at Strathnairn Art Galleries, JO ABBBS-banded, colour-banded, and satellite-tagged the adult male. The Little Eagle used a large home range in 2015–2016 after his breeding failure, about 65 km², then he disappeared and the transmitter stopped working, so it wasn't clear where he spent the winter.

In the spring of 2016 he returned and he and his mate fledged a single young, then he left in late summer and the transmitter continued working as he migrated. The male Little Eagle's flight path stretched 3,300 km north to an area near Daly Waters in the Northern Territory. He travelled the distance in a three-week period, 1800 km in the first 8 days, and during his journey reached speeds of up to 55 km/hr.

At the time of writing his transmitter has stopped working again, but hopefully it will restart and he will return to Strathnairn. As he is colour-banded, we should be able to identify him if he returns, even if the transmitter fails.

Thanks to Stephen Debus for helpful comments, to David Drynan and the ABBBS for advice on banding, and to David Maxwell for access to the Strathnairn property. Thanks also to Geoffrey Dabb, Michael Lenz, Peter Christian, Colin MacLaren, Mark Osgood, Dalice Trost, Rosemary Blemings and Tom Long for advice and assistance in the field, and to Bern Gruber and Renee Brawata for analysing data.

References

- Olsen, J., Osgood, M., Maconachie, M. & Dabb, G. (2008). Numbers of breeding Little Eagles *Hieraaetus morphnoides* in the Australian Capital Territory in 2007. *Canberra Bird Notes* **33**: 77–80.
- Olsen, J., Osgood, M., Maconachie, M., Dabb, V & Butterfield, M. (2009). Numbers of breeding Little Eagles *Hieraaetus morphnoides* in the Australian Capital Territory in 2008. *Canberra Bird Notes* **34**: 81–85.
- Olsen, J., Long, T. & Trost, S. (2015). A radio-tagged Little Eagle. *Canberra Bird Notes* **40**: 276–277.
- Olsen, J., Trost, S., Gruber, B. & Long, T. (in press). Home-range and behaviour of a fledgling Little Eagle *Hieraaetus morphnoides* in the Australian Capital Territory. *Corella*.

Jerry Olsen and Susan Trost
source: ABC News 21 April 2017



Satellite-tagged adult male Little Eagle: Photo– S. Trost & J. Olsen

...latest news (11/08/17) is that the tagged eagle has returned to his Strathnairn territory in the ACT (Geoffrey Dabb per Don Fletcher and Jerry Olsen). This is exciting as the first evidence that breeding Little Eagles undertake intra-continental migration. Note also the movement of a juvenile Little Eagle from near Perth to eastern Vic. (Debus 2015, *Corella* 39: 67–72). (Ed.)



Figure 1: The adult male Little Eagle travelled from the ACT to an area near Daly Waters in the Northern Territory