

## NEWS

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### MONITORING SHOWS WHITE-TAILED EAGLE NESTING SUCCESS THIS YEAR



The annual monitoring of white-tailed eagles has been completed by inspecting 113 nesting areas throughout Latvia. The monitoring results show that the number of nesting populations of white-tailed eagles recorded this year is the largest in Latvia so far.

“About 80% of the Latvian white-tailed eagle population nest in the forests managed by LVM. Of the 113 nesting areas inspected this year, 98 have been inhabited. This is the largest number of inhabited nests in Latvia so far,” says LVM Environmental Expert Aigars Kalvāns.

During the monitoring, nests were found in LVM forests in 13 new nesting districts and 14 new nests in already known districts, where birds have changed nests. The majority – 73.5% – of the known inhabited nests in 2021 were located in the western part of Latvia – in the regions of Zemgale, North Kurzeme and South Kurzeme. The majority of the newly discovered districts (8 out of 13) are also located in the western and central part of the country – five nests were found in the South Kurzeme region, two in the Zemgale region and one in the North Kurzeme region.

“Although the number of inhabited nests has been recorded the highest so far, the success of white-tailed eagle nesting in 2021 is generally low – there were 0.85 baby birds per inhabited nest in LVM forests this year, while the average result in the last ten years is 1.00 baby bird per inhabited nest. Comparing the productivity indicators in different regions of Latvia, there is a difference between the western and eastern part of the country. A significantly lower proportion of productive nests was found in the western regions of LVM. 56% of the nests were productive in the western regions of LVM, but 73% in the regions in the eastern part of Latvia. The decrease in nesting success is also observed in the long run, which is probably to be assessed in connection with the increase in the number of nesting couples,” says Aigars Kalvāns.

The white-tailed eagle is one of the largest nesting eagles both in Latvia and Europe. In Latvia, white-tailed eagles are early nesters – already in February, both birds make a new nest or improve a well-maintained old nest and then decorate it with green conifer twigs. If all goes well, the air dance, the “wedding” song and sometimes even the mating season will start in February. In March or early April, the first egg appears in the nest; after a while, a second egg is laid, and laying three eggs is a rare occurrence. Each white-tailed eagle's egg must be hatched for 38 days and, as is the case with all birds of prey, birds begin to hatch the first egg immediately, without waiting for all the eggs to be laid. Due to this particularity, eagles of different ages can inhabit the same nest at the same time. Each young bird must live for about two and a half months after hatching before it can fly.



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