

## **Conclusion on the results of a survey of the nesting site of the white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) in the territory of the Kurgalsky nature reserve**

On June 20, 2019 in the Kurgalsky nature reserve, employees of the Komarov Botanical Institute of the RAS, Elena Glazkova and Irina Sorokina and representatives of the non-governmental non-profit environmental organizations ‘New Ecological Project’ Anastasia Filippova and ‘Greenpeace Council’ Evgeny Usov independently monitored the nesting site of the white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) listed in the Red Books of the Russian Federation and of the Leningrad Region; status 3 – rare species. The nest of the white-tailed eagle is located at the distance of 50-55 m from the construction corridor of the Nord Stream-2 gas pipeline, 310-320 m from the coast of the Narva Bay (Photo 1-2). Prior to the construction of the gas pipeline, the nest was inhabited; this fact is confirmed by published ornithological data<sup>1</sup> and is reflected in the design documentation of Nord Stream-2, submitted in 2017 for state and public environmental assessments<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Bublichenko Yu. N. 2016. New encounters of rare bird species in the south of the Kurgalsky Reserve (Leningrad Region). Russian ornithological journal. Express release, 1328: 3125-3133.

<sup>2</sup> Conclusion of the expert commission on public environmental expertise of Nord Stream-2 design documentation. [https://ccb.se/Evidence2017/NS2/Conclusions\\_PEA\\_NS2\\_rus.pdf](https://ccb.se/Evidence2017/NS2/Conclusions_PEA_NS2_rus.pdf)



Photo 1. Nest of the white-tailed eagle near the gas pipeline route (E. Usov, June 20, 2019)

According to the data published by ornithologist Yu. N. Bublichenko, “while visiting the nest on June 22, 2016, both adult birds stayed nearby and produced load cries at those present. During the visit on June 27, 2016, the female was in the nest continuously, and the male flew to the nest twice within half an hour, and once with food that he dropped next to the tree. During the visit on July 14, 2016, the female stayed on the nesting site 100 m from the nest; there was no offspring visible in the nest. The remains of eagles' food were gathered under the tree”.

The 2019 survey of the nesting site of the white-tailed eagle was carried out at the same time as the above-described ornithological observations in 2016. However, neither the birds themselves, nor the remains of food/droppings, and no other signs of nesting and/or the presence of birds in the nesting area were found. In the nesting area, loud noise was constantly heard from the construction works being carried out in the reserve.



Photo 2. Nest of the white-tailed eagle in the apical fork of an old pine (E.A. Glazkova, June 20, 2019).

To verify the information that the nest is uninhabited, and the white-tailed eagles did not raise any offspring in it 2019, on July 07, 2019, independent expert ornithologist, PhD Biol. Sci., Vladimir Ivanovich Golovan visited the nesting site of the white-tailed eagle.

In the course of the ornithological examination, information that the nest is uninhabited was confirmed. The following was recorded:

- no fresh building material in the construction of the nest;
- no droppings on the ground under the nest and on tree trunks;
- no food remains;
- absence of the birds themselves in the area of the nest;
- constant presence of people near the nest and the construction works carried out in the reserve (Photos 3-4).



Photo 3. Construction works in the reserve (I.P. Kogotko, July 7, 2019).



Photo 4. Construction works on the coast of the Narva Bay in the Kurgalsky nature reserve (E. I. Usov, June 20, 2019).

The likely reason why the birds did not occupy the nest or abandoned it altogether in 2019 was the construction works on laying out the Nord Stream-2 gas pipeline, carried out several tens of meters from the nest.

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