

Thérèse fitted with a 22g Argos solar tag.
©François Baillon IRD - Damien Chevallier CNRS - Pascal Cavallin



A first: booted eagles tracked by ARGOS tags

The booted eagle is Europe's smallest species of eagle. It is distributed over a narrow band from North Africa to Lake Baikal with about 17,000 couples worldwide.

France is home to between 400 and 500 couples. We still know little about their lifestyle and that is why scientists wanted to fit this species with Argos tags.

In 2005 a national programme to monitor the booted eagle was conducted in partnership with CRBPO (F. Jiguet), SEPOL, Pascal CAVALLIN, Therese NORE, plus Francis BAILLON of the IRD and Damien Chevallier of the CNRS. François Baillon and Damien Chevallier are two West African specialists.

They are using the data transmitted by the 22g Argos Solar tags and revealing more of this mysterious species.

The first tag was fitted to an adult female in July 2007 at Saint-Martin-la-Méanne (19) in the Dordogne valley. The data collected has allowed scientists to observe how a female lives during reproduction. The researchers were also able to identify two days of hunting carried out at a location more than 40 km from where its young chick was. They have then gone on to study three migration seasons in 2007, 2008 and 2009, drawing a narrow zone of migration between Europe and Africa. The wintering zone of this bird (North-West Nigeria), which is divided into two distinct areas some 300 km apart, has already demonstrated that it remains committed to particular wintering areas. Each year, the booted eagle, christened Thérèse by the scientists, has flown smoothly from one site to the other, behaviour probably due to the scarcity of available resources in the dry season. In 2008 and 2009, two adult females (Simonne, Marthe) and 3 young birds (Denis, Antonio, Pimprenelle) were fitted with this technology.

The hazards of life in the wild has clearly taken its toll on these birds, as only two of them (Thérèse, 2007-2009, Marthe, 2009) were able to be tracked, enabling large amounts of data to be collected. The other birds died a few months after the break for fitting the tag, thus demonstrating the fragility of this species in their environment, both at the juvenile stage (in plain terms, death during the African migration) and the adult stage (death whilst hunting).

At the end of 2009 Thérèse was located in Nigeria and Marthe in south-eastern Mauritania, providing the team with a new season of studying wintering areas for this species, about which little is still known. In 2010 two more birds will again be fitted with devices, thus bringing the field phase of the programme to a close. The analysis phase for this quite remarkable data has already begun and will increase our knowledge of this species, both regarding its breeding grounds in Europe and its wintering grounds in Africa.



7,000
animals fitted
with Argos tags

10
offices and subsidiaries

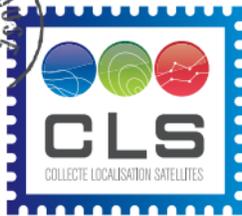
330
staff

3
areas of operation

-  sustainable resource management
-  environmental monitoring
-  maritime safety

3
specialist
fields

-  location
-  collection of data
-  ocean observation



François Baillon

Francois.Baillon@ird.fr - 00 33 (0)2 38 87 95 33

Damien Chevallier

damien.chevallier@c-strasbourg.fr - 00 33 (0)3 88 10 69 30

Anne-Marie Breonce

abreonce@cls.fr - 00 33 (0)5 61 39 47 21

Amélie Proust

aproust@cls.fr - 00 33 (0)5 61 39 37 95

