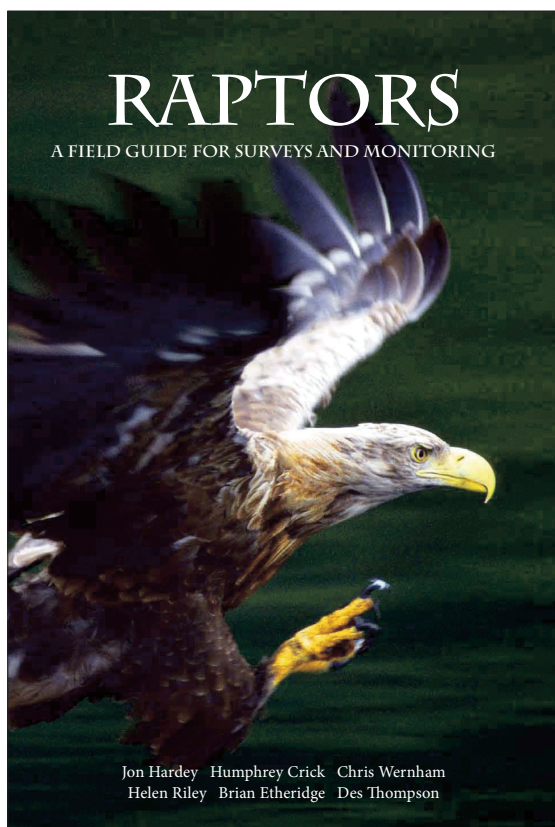


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New books

Harley, J., Crick, H., Wernham, C., Riley, H., Etheridge, B. & Thompson, D. (2009): *Raptors, a Field Guide for Surveys and Monitoring. Second Edition.* – The Stationery Office, Scottish Natural Heritage, Edinburgh. pp. 370. ISBN 978-011 4973452



Because of their elusive life, low densities and low detectability by commonly used ornithological methods, raptors are usually excluded from general bird surveys and monitoring schemes. There is even no common methodological approach that would be generally applicable to the study of all raptor species, since they greatly differ by their way of life, diurnal activity and behaviour. This is reflected in numerous research methods for surveying raptors as well as in the fact that raptors appeared to be quite understudied or not studied at all in many countries simply due only to the lack of suitable methodological protocols.

It is therefore not surprising that many National Coordinators for raptor monitoring in the scope of EURAPMON claimed research techniques as the main benefit, which can be delivered by international networking.

The first and crucial step towards development of common and standardized raptor monitoring protocols was made by British, mainly Scottish raptor experts by preparing a field guide for surveys and monitoring of raptor populations. Although the field guide is dealing only with species occurring in Britain and Ireland, many of considered raptors are actually widely distributed in Europe, what makes the field guide of a broader pan-European or even global interest.

This manual for raptor monitoring has quite extensive introductory part (Part 1), which should be relevant to all raptor monitoring schemes across the globe. In the introductory part, the authors give an overview of raptor monitoring in the UK as an example, solve important distinctions between terms of survey, surveillance and monitoring, which are still not fully understood within the ornithological community, give an overview of topics dealing within comprehensive raptor monitoring scheme (e.g. population estimates, breeding and non-breeding birds), identify key breeding parameters important for raptor monitoring, deal with problems of identification at different levels (including sex, age, prey remains, pellets, etc.) and breeding behaviour aspects including vocalizations, give an overview of different additional techniques important in raptor studies (e.g. individual marking techniques, nomograms, nestboxes) and offer some useful good practice guidelines for the fieldwork with raptors.

The core part of the book is dealing with methodological guidelines and protocols for 22 raptor species regularly occurring in Great Britain and Ireland, including 15 birds of prey, six owls and the Raven *Corvus corax*, and only briefly five irregularly occurring raptors (4 birds of prey and 1 owl). Each species account is structured with the species introduction, description of species ecology (e.g. habitat, home range, nests, breeding biology), and an overview of survey techniques in the breeding and non-breeding seasons. Part 3 is devoted to the feathers and the last Part 4 to the development of raptor chicks. In both parts, extensive photographic materials are provided, which can help fieldworkers as a useful identification guide.

For people studying raptors, this book is indispensable as it was written by Ian Newton in the foreword, and since this is a fundamental step

towards raptor monitoring methods standardization across Europe, the book PDF is fully available at EURAPMON website (http://www.eurapmon.net/sites/default/files/raptors_2nd_ed_001_intro_sections.pdf) thanks to the authors and publisher. We can only wish that this field guide, which is highly valuable for raptor researchers, will be upgraded in the near future with all European raptors and will serve as a key reference for setting raptor monitoring schemes in Europe in a standardized, comprehensive and pan-European way.

AL VREZEC

Slovak Raptor Journal. – Published by: Raptor Protection of Slovakia (RPS). ISSN: 337-3463



As top predators and usually as species of special conservation concern, raptors are frequent research objects to which a special raptor research community is devoted. Raptor researchers are commonly organized in specific raptor research societies, leading also to special raptor related journals. The Raptor Research Foundation from North America, for example, is publishing the most renowned raptor

focused journal *The Journal of Raptor Research*.

However, the raptor research community is also strong in Europe and is becoming more and more united, but not yet covered with a common scientific journal. One of the possibilities is the *Slovak Raptor Journal*, a new European raptor focused journal covering birds of prey and owls launched in 2007 by the Raptor Protection of Slovakia society. The journal is published annually, with all papers published in English with Slovak abstracts. All papers are also available through De Gruyter Online (Versita) at <http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/srj>. The journal is aimed to be international and is fully opened to all topics related to birds of prey and owls. Papers in all six currently published issues are focused mainly on raptor studies in Slovakia and in eastern Europe, although some published studies are also dedicated to raptor studies in Siberia as well as to some large-scale review studies such as an overview of colour ringing and satellite telemetry tracking of the Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina*, Greater Spotted Eagle *A. clanga* and hybrids. Some issues have been more focused on certain raptor species compiling several papers on, for example, the Lesser Spotted Eagle or Imperial Eagle *A. heliaca* biology and ecology.

There were several attempts to unite the specific and very diverse raptor research community in Europe and to launch European scientific journal for raptor research, which would cover all different aspects of raptor studies in Europe, including monitoring issues. The Slovak Raptor Journal is currently the most perspective journal to reach this goal.

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