



Little Eagle

Hieraaetus morphnoides

Vulnerable

The objective of the Action Plan is to maintain in the long term, a viable, wild population of Little Eagles as a component of the indigenous biodiversity of the ACT and region.

Strategies in the Action Plan include:

- **Survey, Monitoring and Research:** promoting and participating in a program of survey, monitoring and research, aimed at better understanding the ecology of the species and identifying and managing causes of population decline.
- **Habitat Protection:** identifying and protecting habitat critical to the survival of the species.
- **Regional Co-operation:** co-operating with state and local government agencies in formulating and implementing conservation measures.
- **Community Engagement:** increasing community awareness of the need to protect the species and its habitat and supporting related community-based conservation action.

Population Trend (2013–23): Declining

The purpose of Little Eagle monitoring has been to:

1. establish where Little Eagles breed, and their foraging range during breeding and non-breeding periods.
2. record breeding and fledging success rates.
3. understand diet and feeding preferences over time.
4. monitor movements, including during breeding and non-breeding periods, as well as migration.
5. improve overall understanding of the ecology of the species in urban environments.

The main priorities of the Action Plan in the first five years were to establish a monitoring program looking at breeding success, habitat use and movement ecology of Little Eagles in the ACT.

The Little Eagle remains vulnerable in the ACT.

Over six years of monitoring, the number of nesting pairs has declined in recent wet years, despite stable nest productivity as illustrated in Figure 1.

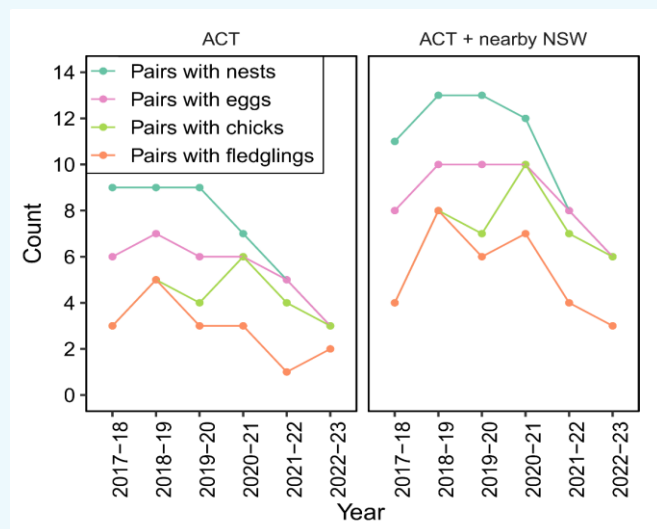


Figure 1: Little Eagle nesting pair data collected from the ACT and nearby NSW from 2017–18 to 2022–23.

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Action Indicator	Progress to 2023
Survey, monitoring and research	
There is improved understanding of the ecology of the Little Eagle (in particular, distribution, breeding success, habitat use, home range, territory overlap with the Wedge-tailed Eagle), and this information is used to inform conservation actions to protect the species.	Achieved
Information on the ecology of the Little Eagle is taken into consideration in preparing pest control programs, to lessen the risk of incidental poisoning.	Achieved
Habitat protection	
Formal measures have been taken to protect and manage Little Eagle habitat in the ACT, with a high priority given to nest sites and foraging areas.	Mostly achieved - ongoing
Management actions have been taken on ACT Government managed land aimed at protecting habitat.	Achieved
Specifications and advice on conserving Little Eagle habitat have been provided to other landholders and land managers where habitat occurs.	Achieved
Regional Co-operation	
Regional liaison is maintained and ACT conservation efforts are complemented by actions throughout the Southeastern Highlands bioregion.	Partially achieved
Community engagement	
There is active, well-informed and ongoing involvement of the community in the conservation of the Little Eagle.	Achieved

Note: this is a summary of progress for action indicators. For the full Effectiveness Review Report, please contact OfficeofNatureConservation@act.gov.au.

Outcome: The Little Eagle remains vulnerable in the ACT and nearby NSW. Over six years of monitoring, the number of nesting pairs has declined in recent wet years, despite stable nest productivity. The main limiting factor for population recruitment appears to be the number of established nests, rather than egg or chick losses. The report underscores the importance of protecting suitable nesting trees and maintaining quality nesting and hunting habitats to support population recovery. Research also suggests that high vegetation growth in wet years may reduce prey detectability that negatively impacts breeding success.



What’s next for the Little Eagle?

- Continue monitoring and adaptive management are needed to ensure habitat connectivity and quality for Little Eagles in the future.
- Undertake ongoing research to further understand nesting conditions and the impacts of environmental variables on breeding success.
- Continue community engagement to raise awareness of the Little Eagle’s conservation needs and continue volunteer involvement in nest monitoring and other conservation activities.