

East Ross buzzard study

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This is an ongoing long-term study of breeding buzzards on the east Ross peninsular, to the east of Tain in Ross-shire. Since 1991 up to 60 territories have been checked each year to ascertain occupancy and chick production. In addition, information is gathered on clutch size and brood size. A sample of chicks is also ringed with BTO rings. Additional information is gathered on territory habitat, nest location and diet. It is hoped to ultimately link variations in breeding output from territories to habitat and diet.

The project revealed a gradual increase in the number of occupied territories up to the mid 2000s, since when there has been a slight decline, possibly linked with the removal of set-a-side. Generally speaking there is little overall variation in clutch size or breeding output from year to year. Clutch size averages 2.8 eggs per nest, whilst the number of chicks fledged per occupied territory has averaged 1.3. This does, however, hide much variability between individual territories.



Photo caption: buzzard nest in the study area (Photo by Bob Swann)