Osprey in the Altai-Sayan Region, Russia
СКОПА В АЛТАЕ-САЯНСКОМ РЕГИОНЕ, РОССИЯ
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Osprey (Pandion haliaetus) is a breeding species of Sayan rivers in mountain-taiga habitat (Kustov, 1978; 1982; Staheev, 1983, 1985; Baranov, 1991; Kohanovskiy, 1991; Valyukh, 1991; 1996; Savchenko et al., 2011; Gavrilov, Baranov, 2014). It’s assumed that the breeding population in northern Sayan is less than 200 breeding pairs: 120–150 pairs in the mountain-taiga habitat of Krasnoyarsk Region (Savchenko et al., 2011) and about 40–50 pairs in Khakasia (Gavrilov, Baranov, 2014). In the Tuva Republic, the number of Osprey in 1979–1989 was estimated at 180–200 individuals at the beginning of summer and up to 400 individuals at the end. The overall trend was population decline (Baranov, 1991; 1992). At the beginning of the 2000s, the population number was 120 breeding pairs at least, 90% of this population inhabited the eastern part of Tuva Republic. We got no estimation on population number of Osprey in Altai, but dozens of observations of this species were recorded (Kuchin, 2004). At the beginning of the 2000s, about 30 pairs of Osprey bred in the Altai Republic mainly in its northern and north-eastern parts. There no number estimations for Kemerovo Region as well (Gagina et al., 2012). Only few breeding cases are known in Kuznetskiy Alatau and probably in Gornaya Shoriya. While in the period from 2000 to 2016, the species was regularly observed at river Tom and its tributaries.


Для Алтая-Саянского региона численность скопы к 2005 г. оценивалась в 360–380 гнездящихся пар, а к 2015 г. – около 400 пар за счёт лучшей обследованности территории региона. Вероятно, от этих оценок численности можно отталкиваться как от минимальных, потому что сплошных близких по времени учётов скоп на гор-
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Breeding territories of Osprey along 216 km of river Mrasu. From 2008, Osprey is frequently observed at the lake Tanay in Salair Ridge near the border with Novosibirsk Region. For the whole Altai-Sayan region, the total number of Osprey was estimated at 360–380 breeding pairs in 2005, and at 400 pairs in 2015 due to the better exploration of the region. This estimation should be considered as minimal since no thorough surveys of mountain-taiga rivers of Altai-Sayan were done yet.

The population dynamics of Osprey is even more obscured. According to data of O.B. Mitrofanov (2015), the number of Osprey’s nests reduced from 4 to only 1 nest on the territory of Altai Nature Reserve in 2008–2015 due to increased recreation load on a lake shore. At the same time, numbers of Osprey at Ulagan Lakes remain stable, and breeding pairs were found near Katunsky Nature Reserve (Rakin, same issue). At the beginning of XX century, Osprey bred on a quite high altitude at Oyskoye Lake and rivers Buyba and Kuyarta (Tugarinov, Buturlin, 1911; Sushkin, 1914), but in the recent decades breeding data from that places are absent. Most probably, the Sayan population of Osprey decreased at the beginning of XX century, but from the end of the 90-th slowly begun to recover. A regular monitoring of Osprey population is conducted only at the river Bolshoy Abakan (Khakasia) and at Sayano-Shushenskoye Reservoir (Krasnoyarsk Region), and Osprey numbers on that sites are obviously increas-
19 places of ornithological visits (Fig. 1). This information is based on a total of 20 nests and 36 records of sightings (our data; Stakheev, 2003). For instance, at the Enisey canyon in Sayano-Shushenskiy Nature Reserve there were 3 living nests of an Osprey in 1980, and 12 living nests out of 16 in 2012. Taking into account a number of fledglings, the population of Osprey in Sayano-Shushenskiy Nature Reserve in 2012 was more than 40 individuals, that is 4 times higher than 30 years ago (Stakheev, 1983; 1988; Kovyrtsev, 2012). In Western Sayan, three new nests were found from 2011 to 2016, including a nest located on a power line along a highway Abaza-Ak-Dovurak (Karyakin et al., 2017). In Eastern Sayan and Eastern-Tuvinian Highlands, a population of an Osprey has remained stable since 80th, but at the same time the species disappeared from river Tes-Khem and from Tuvinskaya Lowlands in summer.

Today, a Center of Field Research got information about 99 breeding territories (5 in Kemerovo Region, 11 in the Altai Republic, 24 in Khakasia, 30 in Krasnoyarsk Region, 29 in the Tuva Republic) and 19 summer observation (fig. 1). Additional information on about 20 nests and 36 points of summer encounters is stored in a WEB-GIS system “Faunistica”, database “ODN” and on a website of local birdwatching community. Information about 13 more nests and 20 more encounters with the species is published in different scientific papers and article collections, but it is hard to check whether this data is unique or coincide with an already known data.

Analysis of the species distribution revealed the existence of three subpopulations: - a western subpopulation “Western-Sayan”; estimated numbers 100–150 breeding pairs; in habitats lakes of north-eastern Altai, south-western Kuznetskiy Alatau and the very western part of Western Sayan, with a core located in the upper part of river Abakan; - a central subpopulation “Sayano-Shushenskaya”, estimated numbers 30–60 breeding pairs; inhabits Sayan part of river Enisey valley and its tributaries; the biggest part of this subpopulation breeds on banks of Sayano-Shushenskoye Reservoir; - an eastern subpopulation “Eastern-Sayan”; estimated numbers 200–250 breeding pairs; in habitats lakes of north-eastern Altai, south-western Kuznetskiy Alatau and the very western part of Western Sayan, with a core located in the upper part of a basin of river Abakan; - at the Enisey canyon in Sayano-Shushenskiy Nature Reserve there were 3 living nests of an Osprey in 1980, and 12 living nests out of 16 in 2012. Taking into account a number of fledglings, the population of Osprey in Sayano-Shushenskiy Nature Reserve in 2012 was more than 40 individuals, that is 4 times higher than 30 years ago (Stakheev, 1983; 1988; Kovyrtsev, 2012). In Western Sayan, three new nests were found from 2011 to 2016, including a nest located on a power line along a highway Abaza-Ak-Dovurak (Karyakin et al., 2017). In Eastern Sayan and Eastern-Tuvinian Highlands, a population of an Osprey has remained stable since 80th, but at the same time the species disappeared from river Tes-Khem and from Tuvinskaya Lowlands in summer.

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The monitoring was conducted in periods when osprey nests were located on towers of the power lines.

It is evident that osprey prey on fish, but species composition is unknown. No ringing or tagging with transmitters was conducted thus migration routes and wintering sites of Ospreys from Altai-Sayan region are not studied.