

## **Project Update: December 2021**

During December 2021, we traversed the study area, checking the eight known Chaco eagle nests and confirming one more nest, all of them in Santa Fe province. From the total of nine active Chaco eagle nests, one already failed before we could install the camera trap. Strong winds and hailstorms before we arrived (in mid and late November 2021) could have been responsible for the loss of the egg (or young chick) at this nest. From the remaining eight nests, in two of them we were unable to install the camera trap (two nests which were in difficult to access places in the tree, more than 16 m high and in a risky situation for both myself and the nest). At the remaining six nests, we successfully installed five camera traps and one live camera (streaming online in our YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1iLabx8wpl1sV-5bQQ8KiA>).

Concerning this last activity, it became a trending topic in social and mass media, and had a huge impact in the society, not only in Santa Fe province, but also in Argentina. In the last 3 weeks (the time that the live camera has been streaming online), our project has gained visibility and we have appeared in several radio, TV and newspaper programmes. It has been the first time in South America that a live camera has been installed at an active nest of a raptor species.

Unfortunately, the chick fell from the nest some days ago and died. When our collaborators from Santa Fe recovered the chick, it weighed less than what we could expect, and the tarsi were very thin. Checking the events of the live camera, we noticed that the parents had not fed the chick properly during the last days. The possible reason lies in the fact that central and northern Argentina experienced extreme temperatures during early and mid-January 2022 (above 43° C) that, together with the severe drought that we have been suffering since late 2021, could have provoked the parents to be unable to find prey for their chick. Also, shading behaviour events (performed by parents in order to give shade to the chick, which is unable to thermoregulate) had been reduced during the last days. Thus, in a desperate intention of finding some shade and/or some food, the chick may have tried to abandon the nest. However, given its inability to fly, it fell to the ground and died.

Additionally, we performed more individual interviews with rural people and local producers and found two old Chaco eagle territories which currently are not active.

Last but not least, we started installing rescue ramps at water reservoirs located near nests in order to reduce drowning events of wildlife at these human infrastructures. Taking into account the rescue ramps that we installed ourselves and the ones that have been installed by the rural workers and local producers (given by us), there are already 25 rescue ramps installed in different parts of Santa Fe province. Moreover, at two of these water tanks we also installed camera traps to monitor the use of these structures by wildlife.

Now, we are starting the first ringing campaign. We will traverse the study area, checking active nests and installing more rescue ramps. In those nests where nestlings are big enough, we will climb the trees and ring the young eagles. Some of them will be equipped with GPS satellite transmitters, being key to understanding the movement ecology and juvenile dispersal of this species in northern Argentina.























