

## **Project Update: November 2021**

During the talks and interviews organised in the first fieldwork campaign, several data on the presence of Chaco eagle individuals in the study area appeared. Indeed, lots of people engaged with our project and started sending messages to us (via either social media or WhatsApp) with pictures and information of possible sightings. The results were amazing, especially in Santa Fe province: more than 30 different people from different places sent us pictures of Chaco eagle individuals. Some of them were able to see the pair together, and a few of them even managed to find Chaco eagle territories and/or nests on their own, only with the information we gave them during the talks.

Taking into account the overwhelming number of sightings that we had, and the fact that it was possible that Chaco eagle pairs were building their nests or already incubating their eggs, we decided to carry out the second fieldwork campaign straightforward, conceived to follow the trails of all data received, search for territories, find nests and, if it was possible, start installing camera traps.

During the 2 weeks that we spent in the study area, we were able to confirm eight active nests in Santa Fe province: three were directly found by local people, four were found by us thanks to data provided by sightings of local people and one nest was found on our own. At this point, I must say that the outcomes of the divulgation campaign have been better than expected: locals have engaged with our project and have been critically important in order to find new Chaco eagle nests in an area where, 2 years ago, nobody had ever confirmed any successful reproduction of Chaco eagle. However, we were not able to install any camera trap, since all nests discovered were in incubation stage and thus, we decided not to disturb them. During the next fieldwork campaign (December 2021), when eggs have hatched, we will install camera traps in all those nests.

Nevertheless, we had "the bitter with the sweet": in Santiago del Estero province, although we did a huge effort concerning talks and interviews, we were unable to find any Chaco eagle active nest. Despite the fact that people are also involved with the project and that there have been some sightings, local people have been unable to identify any territory, and our field survey has not been successful for the moment, in what refers to nest searching. We did find an old nest which had been used 2 years ago by a Chaco eagle pair, but a local producer told us that one of the members of the pair was shot a year ago, and this may mean that no eagle is breeding in the area. Moreover, after traversing the study area for 1 week and a half (during the divulgation campaign of September 2021), I realised that this province has suffered a terrible deforestation during the last 20-30 years, transforming the landscape and removing a huge proportion of the native forests. Local people think that the retraction of the original habitat may be an important factor explaining the disappearance of Chaco eagle territories in this area. Still, they (and we) are hopeful that we will find a Chaco eagle territory (and nest) during the following field campaigns.

In a week's time, we will return to the study area. We hope to install some camera traps at active Chaco eagle nests, as well as to discover (if possible) more territories. Furthermore, we will start installing rescue ramps (which we have already bought) at water reservoirs/tanks to mitigate one of the main sources of mortality for this (and other wildlife) species in Argentina: drowning in water reservoirs.











