

The Bonelli's eagle is a top predator from the Languedoc. This eagle doesn't migrate, but the young birds move around before settling to breed.

It's a medium size eagle with a wingspan of about 165 cm. The Bonelli's eagle can be identified by their rather short but broad and rounded wings and longish tail. Adults have a white patch on their back between their dark wings. From below, the body is white with dark flecks and the underwings are dark. From a distance the silhouette in flight is rather similar to adult Honey buzzard although it can also be confused with Short-toed eagle, due to the pale body colour. Their body is however, bigger in proportion compared to other eagles.



©P.Gourdon - Adult Bonelli eagle. Note: white patch on back

The Bonelli's eagle habitat, breeding and feeding

The Bonelli's eagle can be found in the hilly parts with rocky walls open to wooded land in the Languedoc. Outside breeding season young birds can descend to lowlands. It starts breeding in March and eggs will hatch in the beginning of April. Adults often hunt in pairs flying close to each other along the cliffs and mountain ridges. The Bonelli's eagle is capable of tremendous stoops, similar to booted eagle, especially when hunting birds, which are often taken in flight. Their main prey consists Pigeons, Red legged partridges and rabbits.



©P.Gourdon - Adult Bonelli's eagle (left) with a juvenile (right) - Note rufous colouring of

juvenile. ©PGourdon

There are about 30 breeding pairs of Bonelli's eagles in France. A very Mediterranean species they are known locally as the "Lord of the Garrigue", where they hunt Red-legged partridge and Pigeons amongst other prey.

Population trends for the Bonelli's eagle

The Bonelli eagle is a protected species on the IUCN red list.

According to the [IUCN](#):

The population is declining drastically throughout its range owing to over-use of pesticides, habitat degradation, loss of prey species, collision with power lines and persecution by hunters and pigeon fanciers (Ferguson-Lees and Christie 2001, Barov and Derhé 2011). However in Europe the population size is currently stable.