

Parental time-budgets and breeding behaviour of the Little Eagle *Hieraaetus morphnoides* in northern New South Wales

S. J. S. Debus

Honorary Associate, Division of Zoology, University of New England, Armidale, New South Wales 2351.
E-mail: sdebus@une.edu.au

Received: 19 May 2010

The breeding behaviour and parental time-budgets of a pair of Little Eagles *Hieraaetus morphnoides* were studied throughout 115 hours of observation from nest-building to fledging at Armidale, on the Northern Tablelands of New South Wales, in spring–summer 2009. Supplementary observations were conducted on three other nearby pairs, and the breeding productivity of nine local pairs was monitored. Incubation lasted approximately 38 days (one nest), and one male eaglet fledged at 54 days. Fledgling productivity was 0.56 young per occupied territory in 2009, and 0.63 young per pair per year for 24 pair-years during 2006–2009. Sex-roles, parental time-budgets and nestling growth are described and quantified. Males contributed substantially to nest-building, but little to incubation. In the nestling period for one pair there was a sharp division of labour, with the male supplying all food to the female and young, and the female performing all nest-based parental care. Prey items at the nest ($n = 24$) consisted of immature Rabbit *Orcytolagus cuniculus* (79% by number, ~95% biomass), parrots (13%, ~4%) and ?lizard (4%, ~1%). Adult eagle turnover and mortality appear to have increased, and estimated life expectancy to have decreased, in New England since the 1980s.