

# Numbers of breeding Little Eagles *Hieraaetus morphnoides* in the Australian Capital Territory in relation to atlas counts

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The Little Eagle *Hieraaetus morphnoides* is undergoing a severe decline in parts of south-eastern Australia, including the Australian Capital Territory, even though atlas reporting rates may suggest that Little Eagle numbers are stable or declining only moderately. We compared trends in atlas reporting rates of the Little Eagle, and the number of occupied Little Eagle breeding territories (active nests), in the ACT during 1988–2011. We found that, although the number of occupied territories or breeding pairs declined from 13 to one (i.e. >90% decline), the number of reported Eagle sightings fluctuated about a rather constant level. Because atlas surveys may not accurately reflect declines, or the severity of declines, in some raptors, we suggest that atlas data are combined with surveys of nesting raptors to assess trends in raptor numbers.