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## **Tracking methods for lesser kestrel (*Falco naumanni*) used in the course of the species' recovery as breeder in Bulgaria**

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### **ABSTRACT**

According to IUCN requirements, in species reintroduction, a monitoring of the process, and its results are compulsory. Considering this, when Green Balkans started the lesser kestrel reinforcement in Bulgaria, the following key methods for marking and tracking were chosen – ringing, radio and satellite tracking. The species was considered extinct from nesting in this country for the past several decades, and the organization started reinforcing the specie. Little chicks were used, hatched ex-situ conditions in specialized centers. The chicks were released in a specialized Lesser Kestrel Release and Adaptation Module. Considering that young and inexperienced chicks are being released in the wild, the need for tracking for the subsequent adaptation, threat evaluation, and determination of other ecological aspects is of the utmost importance. Every single released bird has a standard ornithological ring on one leg and a specialized PVC one (orange with two or three symbol code, a combination of letter and/or numbers in black) on the other. In the 2013 – 2015 period we have marked a total of 289 individual birds. In addition, 6 birds varied in age as in gender, were marked with radio transmitters (2.38 gr. – PIP Ag393 Tag.). 4 Platform Terminal Transmitters – PTTs (5g Solar PTT-100 backpack) were used to track lesser kestrels. Radio and satellite tracking is used for the first time in this country in tracking lesser kestrels, and there has been no one to use this method for studying this specie.

**Key words:** lesser kestrel, *Falco naumanni*, tracking, ringing, reinforcement, re-stocking, recovery