

# 8

## Reproduction

*'It seems to me probable that an eagle has a breeding territory, which it is prepared to defend with some violence against other birds of its kind, but which is very loosely defined towards the edges... It is true enough that eagles of any particular species are spread out more or less evenly over a particular stretch of country ...'.*

Leslie Brown (1955).

### **Territory and nest density**

Eagle territories are important and exclusive, and, where the landscape allows, tend to be relatively evenly spaced. Although most paired adults are resident year round, their territories are more easily located in the breeding season. The eagles nest as solitary pairs, typically several kilometres apart. Territories are pegged to the nest trees and defended against other eagles; their boundaries appear to remain relatively stable from year to year. As the breeding season approaches, in about March-April on much of the mainland, July in Tasmania, the owners step up their defence and territorial displays, aggressively evicting stragglers and would-be usurpers, and consolidating boundaries with neighbours. Pairs patrol ridges, gliding on outstretched wings, occasionally rocking from side to side. Boundaries with adjoining pairs are respected and when pairs meet they coolly perform undulating territorial displays either side of the boundary. Dangerous combat is usually avoided by ritual in the form of displays and observance of hierarchies; intruders tend to defer to incumbents,