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When the Ibis comes knocking at the window

Surprise for a "Tierwelt Online" ("Animal Kingdom Online") reader from the canton of St. Gallen: A northern bald ibis landed in front of his window – and then returned and knocked on the pane.



1 - A curious bald ibis comes to visit. (Picture: zVg)

«On the Saturday evening of the Whitsun weekend, I had an unexpected visitor at the open workshop window. It was an initially exotic-looking large bird, the likes of which I had never seen before,» reports "Tierwelt online" reader M. N.* «I photographed it and had my son research it - it's a bald ibis!»

The man from the canton of St. Gallen does not want to be named and does not want to disclose his place of residence. He doesn't want any onlookers. When the Northern Bald Ibis visited him, he had time to take a closer look at the bird. «A beautiful animal with an intelligent look. It looked into my eyes for a long time without blinking and seemed to be interested in what I was doing.»

The Northern Bald Ibis was wiped out in Europe around 400 years ago. The bird in front of the workshop window was part of the European reintroduction programme - which was clearly recognisable by the rings around its legs and the GPS transmitter on its back. «I gave him the name Agent 007 because he was kitted out like James Bond,» says N.

Agent 007 presumably belongs to the project's youngest breeding colony near Überlingen on Lake Constance. These Northern Bald Ibises often roam around Switzerland after returning from their wintering grounds - especially when they are not yet sexually mature and therefore do not yet breed. This is exactly what the female Sonic did last year, for example ("Tierwelt online" reported). This year, Sonic could have bred for the first time. Unfortunately, she died of an electric shock on the way to the breeding area (we also reported).



2 - The open window and the noises from the workshop were no deterrence for the feathered visitor. (Picture: zVg)

Four Northern Bald Ibises in eastern Switzerland

The first Northern Bald Ibises from the reintroduction project were reared by hand and are therefore not so shy of humans when they are travelling alone. However, as soon as they are among their own kind again, this will change, as project manager Johannes Fritz told Tierwelt online in 2019.

In all likelihood, Agent 007 is one of these bald ibises, as he even turned up outside our informant's workshop window. «The next day, shortly before midday, he was there again. He just knocked on the window. I don't know how long he'd been there. He seemed to like it on my windowsill,» says N. «When I left, he tapped the window with his beak. I thought it must be a coincidence and went back to him and then away again - and he tapped it again!»

His son is now tracking the bird's GPS signal on the computer. «Fortunately, you couldn't see that it landed right on my windowsill. He probably did it for the sake of better entertainment, because at least he got to see something interesting at my place,» jokes N. According to the "Animal Tracker" app, which can be used to track the paths of tagged animals, there are currently four Northern Bald Ibises in eastern Switzerland. One of them is probably Agent 007. If he returns to N.'s workshop, the son wants to let him know immediately.