



## Vulture updates No. 22: April 2025 Around the World of Vultures & VSG activities

Key meetings held in Bolivia, Cambodia and for European Bearded Vultures feature strongly in this edition - see the respective regional sections below. And a new feature which we're adding as a separate PDF to the mailing is a list of all peer-reviewed (and some other) vulture publications that appeared over the past six months. Our thanks to Cat Taras for compiling this, which we hope you find valuable, and we'll try to continue this in future. Otherwise, your greater inputs (from VSG members and indeed others) mean this newsletter continues to grow - and we hope you like the slightly updated layout? Your feedback and suggestions welcome via [vsg-cat-taras@outlook.com](mailto:vsg-cat-taras@outlook.com).

The next edition of our VSG journal, *Vulture News* is expected later this month (April), so do check [here](#) soon, also for back issues – the most recent volume focuses on three African vulture species. Future articles should be submitted to chief editor Volen Arkumarev on [iucnvulturenews@gmail.com](mailto:iucnvulturenews@gmail.com).

Start planning your IVAD events for September, and please do remember to register them [here](#), however great or small. In 2024 [IVAD](#), 119 events were registered in 39 countries, but we know there were more. The refreshed IVAD website (thanks to VCF and Hawk Conservancy Trust) has multiple [new materials](#) available for organising activities for adults and children including vulture fact sheets and social media toolkits. For 2025 IVAD, the team is creating a bigger and more comprehensive photo gallery. To develop this, the IVAD team is organising a vulture photo contest, please [enter your photos BEFORE April 30](#). The rules and conditions are being posted on the [website](#).

### Table of Contents

<i>Asia</i> .....	2
South & SE Asia: .....	2
Central Asia: .....	3
West Asia/Middle East: .....	3
<i>Europe</i> .....	4
Bearded Vulture (BV): .....	4
(Eurasian) Griffon Vulture (GV): .....	5
Cinereous Vulture (CV): .....	6
Egyptian Vulture (EV): .....	6
<i>Africa</i> .....	6
North Africa: .....	7
West Africa: .....	7
East Africa: .....	7
Southern Africa: .....	8
<i>North America</i> .....	8
<i>South &amp; Central America</i> .....	9
<i>Global/Multi-regional News</i> .....	10
And finally... ..	10



## Asia

### **South & SE Asia:**

Probably the most significant development of the period was the **India** Government announcement of a [ban of veterinary nimesulide](#) on 31 Dec! This [gazettement](#) follows many years of surveys and IVRI and BNHS safety-testing work, and is an important further example of India leading the way.

[SAVE](#) held its [face to face meeting](#) after two years on 17-21 Feb, and for the first time this was in Phnom Penh, **Cambodia**. Hosted by the Cambodia Vulture Working Group and [NatureLife Cambodia](#), the two day meeting prompted an audience with Dr. Eang Sophalleth, Cambodia's Minister of the Environment. Importantly, the Minister confirmed that Cambodia is taking up the invitation to Chair The inter-governmental Regional Steering Committee for Vulture Conservation and gave other positive commitments for vulture conservation in the country. The meeting reviewed threats in the region, the regional Blueprint Recovery Plan (a refresh will appear imminently), and discussed the urgent need for clearer breeding programme and release planning for the four Critically Endangered species. All six **S & SE Asia** SAVE countries updated on actions and progress, with **Thailand** and for the first time **Laos** also represented at the meeting. Most delegates also visited Siem Pang where the main wild populations of Cambodia vultures persist, viewing the impressive initiatives of [Rising Phoenix](#) in the area. The detailed outputs of the meeting will be posted [here](#) during April, but meanwhile [here](#) is an overview. Further tagging in **Cambodia** by Rising Phoenix during 2024 added 6 WRV, 4 RHV and 2 SBV for monitoring. No checks across the **Laos** border were made last year, but 1 SNV has adopted an artificial nest platform so far. Overall, the coordinated feeding site counts indicated the populations remained stable at a low level of just 134 birds altogether.

300 vulture conservationists including Govt representatives attended a [national vulture symposium](#) for **India** hosted by [Bird Conservation Society, Gujarat](#) (BCSG) 29 Sept in Ahmedabad. There were 24 presentations plus panel discussions crammed into a one-day meeting. BCSG President Dr Bakul Trivedi emphasised how the [meeting's call to action](#) will be presented to the Indian Government, which particularly highlights the need for safety-testing of veterinary drugs before they are licensed for veterinary use among other state level priorities. BNHS listed that over the past four years 84 vultures (79 White-rumped Vulture (WRV) and 5 Long-billed Vultures (LBV) total) have been released. This includes a release of 25 WRV which [went ahead in Dec](#) at the breeding centre at Pinjore, Haryana, although [BNHS](#) reported 4 of the birds were electrocuted in the first two weeks. Released birds in Maharashtra in tiger reserves included one WRV that [did a tour of much of India](#) covering 3500km! Meanwhile, evidence that toxic NSAID use (much of it now illegal) remains high in much of the country and a publication on this is under review and eagerly awaited.

In **Nepal**, 14 of the released WRV have now become parents in the wild as reported by [BCN](#). BCN also managed to locate an impressive 711 nests last year (658 WRV) for monitoring, and these teams also established that the toxic NSAID nimesulide is now at lower (very low) levels than previously. Five [EVs were successfully tagged](#) in Sept by Krishna Bhusal and a wider team, with 5 more tags donated by RSPB ready



for deployment this coming winter. A new non-profit organisation, [Himalayan Raptors](#), dedicated to the conservation of raptors, their habitat, and livelihoods of local people was launched. [Pokhara Bird Society](#) has partnered with [Aankhijhyal Technologies](#) to develop [a mobile app](#) for recording sightings of vultures and other raptors. [Hemanta Dhakal](#) plans tagging 10 Slender-billed vultures (SBV) in Nepal as part of a PhD with the Univ. of Oviedo. Workshops were conducted in four provinces of Nepal as part of [a Rufford Foundation funded project](#).

In **Bangladesh**, the 2023-24 breeding season had a success rate of 78% over nine nests. For the 2024-25 breeding season, seven nests have been observed in their early stages in Rema. Following a [poisoning incident](#) of 12 vultures (including one satellite-tagged) in 2023, a survey was initiated from July 2024 to better understand community use of poison baits and their knowledge of vultures. The planned survey has almost been completed with 1.95% of 430 respondents admitting to using poison baits to protect livestock from predators such as dogs and jackals. In 2024, three White-rumped Vultures (WRVs) were tagged in **Bangladesh**: two from Rema and one from Khulna. Two of these already confirmed transboundary movements into **India** : [one already travelled c.10,000 km, west into Jharkhand](#) and back three times within the last nine months. 32 Himalayan Griffons (HG) were rescued, rehabilitated, and released during the 2024-2025 period from **Bangladesh**. Five of the rescued HGs were also satellite tagged, and one has successfully shifted to **Myanmar** and **Bhutan**.

Despite the challenges, a **Myanmar** Vulture Working Group meeting was held with the Myanmar Veterinary Association, and there are new plans to push for a diclofenac ban following new information that its veterinary use has increased over recent years as the main veterinary NSAID available. The safe drug meloxicam was only just introduced in the country.

Finally, WWF **Pakistan** reports evidence that overall population trends are still declining, and toxic NSAID use remains quite high (including illegal diclofenac use). The captive WRV population meanwhile has increased to 34 birds, but releases are not planned largely due to the unsafe environment.

#### **Central Asia:**

All [Egyptian vultures \(EV\) tagged](#) within the [Central Asian Vultures project](#) (CAVP) survived in the wintering grounds and started their spring migration. Four of five [Cinereous vultures \(CV\) tagged in the summer](#) spent the winter in **India**, with the other remaining in **Uzbekistan**. Since Nov 2024, 2 Griffon vultures (GV), 3 CVs and 2 Bearded vultures (BV) illegally taken from the wild were confiscated in **Uzbekistan** by the state authorities. Partners from the [CAVP](#) met online in March to discuss future collaborations and research across **Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan** and **Tajikistan**, and have plans to create a unified database. Further meetings are planned to create a regional strategy. [Nature Foundation Kyrgyzstan](#) is organising a workshop in Bishkek, **Kyrgyzstan** in April 2025 titled “Building Momentum for Biodiversity Conservation along the Central Asian Flyway” where a panel dedicated to vultures will discuss the most recent data on distribution, threats and conservation of vulture species across the region.

#### **West Asia/Middle East:**

One of three EVs tagged in **Armenia** in 2024 has overwintered in NE **Kenya**. The other two individuals are predicted to be in **Yemen**, but roaming connection was lost. Another EV tagged in 2022, with a stable roaming connection, made it safely to Yemen. One of the two GPS tagged CVs has overwintered in SE



**Saudi Arabia**, near the border with **Iraq**. Connection with the other bird is lost, likely because it is wintering in **Iran** and there is no roaming signal there. The GPS tagged BV moved to the border of **Armenia, Iran** and **Nakhijevan**, after spending time near a nest and is wintering in that area. The other two BVs tagged in previous years, are mostly spending their time in **Armenia**, showing high natal philopatry. The NABU Armenia team visited **Saudi Arabia** to ground-truth the wintering grounds of CVs and to assess possible threats.

In **Saudi Arabia**, [King Salman Royal Nature Reserve](#) held a workshop on the impacts of veterinary drugs on vultures and dead livestock handling and disposal methods. The reserve plans to ban veterinary diclofenac use, and is running a vulture safe feeding station. It is also setting up a GV nest camera.

**Iraq** hosts important GV, BV and EV populations along with other resident and migratory raptors, and [Nature Iraq](#) has an EV program. Unfortunately, illegal trading, hunting, trapping, and poisoning are frequently reported with both GV and EV found captured and for sale in local markets over recent months.

A CV was recently confiscated in **Afghanistan** and is currently at a rehabilitation facility in Kabul. The team there is seeking expert advice and any support from anyone in the region willing to help – we will pass on the message as appropriate.

In **Israel**, the [Israeli Nature Protection Authority](#) (INPA) has led another field season with many recaptures and many GPS deployment. They also continue to respond to poisoning instances – analysis is in progress. Multiple cases of apparent mortality due to NSAIDs diclofenac and especially flunixin have been reported and will be presented in more detail in May at the EAZWV conference in **Hungary** and are being written up for publication.

## Europe

1000 electricity pylons in the Badajoz province of SW **Spain** have been isolated as part of a [red kite reintroduction project](#) in partnership with the electric company ENDESA – this will be especially beneficial to GV and CVs, noting a reported power line mortality event in **Portugal** where apparently 20 vultures died.

### **Bearded Vulture (BV):**

On 12 Oct 2024 the 19<sup>th</sup> International [Observation Day](#) for BVs took place. These counts are a powerful tool for estimating the BV population in the Alps, involving over 1000 participants. On 2-3 Oct, the [Parc Animalier des Pyrénées](#) in **France** hosted the [Workshop on artificial incubation and rearing of BV chicks](#), organised by VCF in collaboration with Parc Animalier des Pyrénées and the Asters team. The [International BV Meeting](#) was held at the beginning of Nov. (7-8) in Ajaccio (Corsica). It celebrated a 365% growth of the European BV population over the past 40 years, and the record-breaking breeding season within the EEP captive-breeding programme. The Alpine population achieved a record of 85 breeding pairs in the 2023-2024 reproductive season. Peripheral populations are still vulnerable to declines with lower breeding productivity and higher mortality rates. The newly developed national action plans for BV in **France** and **Iberia, (Spain & Portugal)** were also presented. This meeting included the final [LIFE GypRescue seminar](#). The [LIFE GypRescue](#) project addresses Corsica's critically endangered BV population (only 4-6 pairs) through a restocking initiative, cooperation with hunters to adopt lead-free ammunition, mitigation of



electrocution and collision risks, enhancement of food supply, and this year the use of cameras to monitor five nests. The project has also contributed to the preservation of unique Corsican gene pool by artificially incubating three eggs that would not have hatched in the wild, plus using some of the breeding stock. Lastly, the seminar hosted the world premiere of [a new documentary](#) by a Corsican filmmaker Martin Van Boone.

After being rescued at the end of Nov. in the Punta Entinas-Sabinar Natural Area in Almería, **Spain**, suffering from dehydration and difficulty flying, [young female BV 'Veleta' fully recovered and was released back to the wild](#) in the Sierra Nevada Protected Natural Area by Junta de Andalucía in mid-Dec. As of the beginning of March, Andalusia already registered [11 BV pairs](#), breaking the two digits for the first time since the reintroduction efforts in the region begun in 1996. The [BV EEP](#) welcomed the [first chick of the 2024-2025 breeding season](#). BG1254 hatched on 28 Jan. at the Richard Faust Breeding Centre in **Austria**, weighing 163 grams. In **Spain**, Vallcalent Breeding Centre welcomed their first chick on 20 Feb, and Guadalentín on 25 Feb. At the end of 2024, a [new pair of BV arrived at the Green Balkans BV Breeding Unit](#) in **Bulgaria**. On 12-13 Jan, a [two-day meeting](#) was held in Silven within the [BVs LIFE](#) project to coordinate with the local police and judicial prosecutors for the upcoming reintroduction of BV in Bulgaria – an eagerly awaited milestone for many years. The 1st Release of the species in the Balkans is scheduled for 17 May. Two BV pairs at the Bulgarian breeding unit have [begun incubation](#), and the first chick has already hatched.

#### **(Eurasian) Griffon Vulture (GV):**

In **Italy**, the [LIFE Safe for Vultures](#) team [rescued a young GV in Alghero \(Sardinia\)](#) from a house roof; it is being taken care of by the Wildlife Rescue Centre in Bonassai. In Oct, [22 GVs](#) were released from the acclimatisation aviary in Villasalto. On 26 Oct. LIFE Safe For Vultures celebrated [50 years of vulture conservation in Sardinia](#) with a public initiative at Molentargius Regional Natural Park in Cagliari. In Nov, a record number of volunteers (98, in 26 teams) participated in the [Sardinian GV Census](#), which confirmed the significant increase there for the first time. A new group of [30 GVs was transferred into the acclimatisation aviary in Villasalto](#) at the beginning of Dec. for release in Spring.

In **Croatia**, the GV population in Kvarner Islands is growing, with a [record of 152 nesting pairs confirmed in Sept](#). At the end of the month the local GV mascot, named [Grif, was rescued in Albania](#) after its satellite transmitter signalled it was not moving for several days. The young vulture was found stuck on a tree by the Albanian Ornithological Society volunteers contacted by the LIFE SUPport team. He is now well and will be released soon. At the end of Jan, **Cyprus** [received 15 GVs from Spain](#), donated by the regional government of Andalusia (Junta de Andalucía) and rehabilitated at Mundo Park Zoo in Seville. These birds will be released later this year after a period of acclimatisation. In the last 6 years, 59 GVs have been transported to Cyprus, including 3 translocations as part of the [LIFE With Vultures](#) project.

In Nov. 2024, during the 20th consecutive GV roosting sites census on the Balkans, 331 GVs were counted in the Eastern Rhodopes, and a total of 953 individuals across the whole Balkan Peninsula (**Bulgaria, Greece, North Macedonia, Serbia**). As of Feb, the Eastern Rhodopes, **Bulgaria**, has a population of more than 140 pairs of GVs. In mid-Feb. the [BV LIFE](#) project recorded [three GV nests](#) in Vrachanski Balkan Nature Park. Another pair formed in captivity in Green Balkans Wildlife Rehabilitation and Breeding Centre and are [incubating an egg](#). Two GVs hatched and raised by Stara Zagora Zoo were [successfully released](#)



recently. In March, a [poisoning event in SE Bulgaria](#) affected GVs – 2 are known to have died, 4 are rescued and in a rehab center, and there may have been further fatalities which have not been found.

### **Cinereous Vulture (CV):**

On 2 Oct. [a dead ringed CV was found](#) on a French beach. It was a 2024 juvenile ringed in June in a breeding colony in the Grands Causses, **France**. Unfortunately, it appears the bird unsuccessfully attempted a sea crossing. In **Bulgaria**, the LIFE project, “[Restoration of the CV Population and Trophic Chain in the Bulgarian-Greek Cross-border Region](#)” (LIFE Rhodope Vultures), coordinated by the [Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds](#) started with a [three day Vulture festival](#) (18-20 Sept) in Madzharovo. On 15 Nov, the project had its first [meeting in Ivalyovgrad \(Bulgaria\)](#) with partners from 12 organisations across **Bulgaria, Greece, Portugal, and Spain**. In the Eastern Rhodopes, **Bulgaria**, released CVs are adapting well and socialising successfully with other vultures in the area. [Four pairs](#) have already been confirmed: two of the pairs are formed by birds released in the programme, while the other two pairs are formed by males released in the programme and females originating from **Greece's** Dadia colony. Six CVs will be released in spring 2025 from an adaptation aviary in the Rhodope Mountains as part of the LIFE Rhodope Vultures project. On March 11, 17 CVs rescued and rehabilitated in Spain, [arrived in Bulgaria](#) as part of the BV LIFE project, for release in the summer. The BV LIFE project announced the [start of the breeding season in Stara Planina \(Bulgaria\)](#) in Feb - this reintroduction project has seen several successes, with 10 pairs of CV breeding in 2 localities in the previous year. Thanks to cross-border cooperation, the CV [B14 has recovered](#) from lead poisoning, and is ready for release.

In Cáceres, **Spain**, a juvenile CV was [hit by a car](#), and sadly did not survive, despite prompt action. During the month of Oct, [14 additional artificial nests were installed in the Douro International Nature Park, Portugal](#) by a specialised team from [GIAM, Spain](#), and technicians from [Palombar](#), as part of [LIFE Aegyptius Return](#), which [released](#) 3 female and 1 male CV in Douro INP from an acclimatisation aviary – all recovered birds from wildlife rehabilitation centres in Portugal. One of the [first private unfenced feeding areas](#) for vultures in **Portugal** has been approved at Herdade da Contenda – this new regulation has the potential to change radically food availability in **Portugal**, as it allows for farmers to dispose of their carcasses for vultures, rather than being taken away for incineration. Sadly, an [increase in poaching since Nov 2024](#) has been reported, with 1 CV shot in western **Portugal** in Nov, a second (with GPS transmitter) shot in Dec in **Spain**, and the last, the only known chick from [Herdade do Monte da Ribeira](#) new breeding colony, was shot in Jan, and is now recovering from extensive surgery.

### **Egyptian Vulture (EV):**

BSPB celebrated the [most successful year](#) for the EV reinforcement programme in **Bulgaria**.

## Africa

The latest edition of VSG’s journal [Vulture News](#) has an African theme, including articles on [Palm-nut](#), [White-backed](#), and [White-headed](#) Vultures.



### **North Africa:**

Four African White-backed Vultures (WBV) tagged in **Morocco** in 2024 in a collaboration between Moroccan Association for the Protection of Birds and Wildlife (AMPOVIS), the National Agency for Water and Forests (ANEF), and the Moroccan Association for the Protection of Raptors (AMPR), with support from the IUCN-Med PPOSCAN III programme, have now [all been listed as lost](#). One drowned in **Spain**, the second was shot in **Mali**, the cause of the third's death in **Morocco** is undetermined, and signal was lost to the fourth in **Mauritania**. [An article](#) was published documenting the monitoring of 90 Rüppell's Vultures (RV) that were wing-tagged in 2022 at the Vulture Recovery Centre (CRV) Jbel Moussa, **Morocco**. A VCF GPS transmitter has been applied on a Rüppell's Vulture (RV) at Jbel Moussa by (CRV Jbel Moussa). Unlike the previous RV tagged in May 2024 which ventured north into **Spain** and **Portugal**, this bird headed towards the Sahara Desert. In Jan., [an immature Hooded Vulture \(HV\)](#) was spotted by Valentin Moser, Michel Kilcher, and Demian in the parking lot of Dakhla Airport in southern **Morocco**. This sighting the fourth recorded instance of the species in Morocco. (Also see W Africa section below for a GV movement). By March, [the reintroduction programme](#) for GV led by AMPOVIS and ANEF in N Morocco, continued: approximately five pairs successfully established themselves in the wild around Jbel Moussa and its surroundings this year while most of the breeding adults and subadults are Spanish birds returning from West Africa. The Peregrine Fund, with support from RSPB, recently sent two students, a Kenyan and Ugandan, to **Egypt**'s Galala Raptor Count along a spring migration corridor. They counted ~40 EV and 1 GV, but noted peak season for EVs is later, at the end of Mar through mid-Apr.

### **West Africa:**

Preliminary results from monitoring of HV age ratios at a number of assembly points in the **Gambia** is showing evidence of a bias towards recording immatures. In **Benin**, [SOS SAVANE](#), continues its HV conservation efforts with financial support from the [IUCN France Small Initiatives Programme](#) and participation of [IBCP](#). To date, results include: 11 workshops organised, presenting the laws on HV to 165 hunters and healers, 12 forestry officers, and 33 local elected officials living near HV nesting sites; 11 local nesting site monitoring and surveillance committees have been created, receiving technical and material support for nest site surveillance; Two HV feeding areas near butcher shops and slaughterhouses have been fenced with wire mesh to help vultures access food and reduce competition. Feb. saw the [first recorded sightings of the GV in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire](#). This vulture was equipped with a GPS device at the CRV Jbel Moussa in **Morocco**! A [study](#) in Plateau State, **Nigeria** has recorded HVs as the only remaining vulture species, and even these are showing a 94% decline in the past 7 years. Sadly, another poisoning incident was reported from **Guinea-Bissau** in early Jan. 2025 with 18 vulture mortalities.

### **East Africa:**

In **Uganda**, [Ivan Oruka](#) recently completed his MSc on the Breeding Dynamics of Rüppell's Vultures (RV) in Luku Central Forest Reserve. Also in **Uganda**, Florence Okoda recently began her PhD research on the ecology and breeding dynamics of vultures in Kipedo Valley NP. **Uganda** also became the 65th [Signatory to the CMS Raptors MOU](#) at a signing ceremony in Kampala on the 19 March. The signing ceremony was followed by a workshop to initiate the drafting of a National Raptor Conservation Action Plan that will also include a focus on vultures.



N Carolina Zoo deployed 18 satellite tags in **Tanzania**, making a total of 33 tags monitored in 2025. N Tanzania has particularly high poisoning rates with >500 dead birds detected in the past 2 years (since Feb. 2023), with heads being taken for belief-based use. [An article](#) was published to highlight the growing concern around this. 30 community trainings on Hazard of Pesticide Use were delivered to 480 participants, plus 900 people attending awareness raising events at local markets. 60 'lion lights' were given to 8 participants to pilot efficacy in protecting traditional bomas, with positive response to preventing hyena attacking bomas.

15 vultures were tagged in Boma-Badingilo-Jonglei landscape in **South Sudan** by a partnership between African Parks, NCZ and Endangered Wildlife Trust. Inselbergs in the landscape were observed to have many roosting and nesting RVs and are likely a critical breeding area for this species. In **Chad**, Djikillamber Djekadjim has completed surveys of vultures in N'Djamena, the results of which are currently in preparation for publication. Sahara Conservation also deployed a further 7 satellite tracking units on 3 LFV and 4 RVs in the OROA Faunal Reserve, Chad in Nov.

### **Southern Africa:**

A review on the status of vulture conservation in the SADC-region was completed and submitted to the SADC Secretariat in Oct. A draft vulture conservation strategy for the region is currently under review and should be finalised in May 2025. 15 Satellite tags were deployed on WBV in the Buby Valley Conservancy and the Gonarezhou National Park in **Zimbabwe** in Jan/Feb.

25 vultures tagged in Kafue, North Luangwa and Hwange in **Zambia** and Victoria Falls in **Zimbabwe** continue to be monitored by N Carolina Zoo. 10 additional tags have been added to WBVs in Hwange, a 'gap' area for vulture movement monitoring. 4 standardised transect surveys (310 km) were completed in Kafue National Park in 2024 by BirdWatch Zambia, trained and funded by NCZ researchers.

In **South Africa** a further 273 vultures have been poisoned in the Greater Limpopo Trans-frontier Conservation Area, which includes the Kruger National Park, during 2024 to present according to the [African Wildlife Poisoning Database](#). Many of these mortalities are associated with belief-based use, the poisoning targeting lions, vultures and other carnivores. Various partners are working together towards curbing this scourge in the region. Vulpro had a [busy end of 2024](#), with 160 Cape (CV) and WBV [relocated to a new breeding facility in Shamwari Game Reserve](#) in the Eastern Cape. Vulpro had a [busy end of 2024](#), with 160 Cape (CV) and WBV [relocated to a new breeding facility in Shamwari Game Reserve](#) in the Eastern Cape.

### **North America**

**California Condor** (CCs) numbers from the US Department of the Interior's 2024 population status update are as follows: the total world population of as of Dec. 2024 is 566. This breaks down to 369 free flying, 16 wild chicks fledged, 56 captive-bred released to the wild, and a total captive population of 197. For a PDF of the full CC 2023 update email [steve\\_kirkland@fws.gov](mailto:steve_kirkland@fws.gov). The Baja CC population in **Mexico** has reached 50 individuals, including 2 wild-hatched juveniles from last year's breeding season, with a potential third.





Nesting behavior has been confirmed for 4 breeding pairs. Two birds are expected from the Chapultepec Zoo later this year, with their release into the wild to be determined.

Shaver's Creek Environmental Center in central Pennsylvania, **USA** hosts an event year-round called [Meet the Creek](#) that features vultures in free weekend programming for the community to increase compassion and conservation action for vultures across the state. Researchers from Mississippi State University have studies underway on the movements of translocated **American Black Vultures** (ABV), the microbiome of ABVs, physiological processes within these birds, and the role of vultures in the transmission of diseases, including several zoonotics. In a [recent publication](#) they explored the role of ABV in the spread of antimicrobial resistance. Additional ongoing projects involve estimating state-wide populations and demographics of ABVs and **Turkey Vultures** (TVs) in Mississippi, as well as assessments of landscape features most relevant to their seasonal distribution. Hawk Mountain Sanctuary (HMS) in Pennsylvania is tracking 12 TVs and 1 ABV fitted with satellite transmitters. HMS monitored 12 ABV nests in Pennsylvania in 2024; 2 were in caves (50% success) and 9 were in human-made structures (78% success). 16 ABVs and 4 TVs were wing-tagged. A team at the University of Georgia has deployed transmitters on 12 TVs and 14 ABVs. Collaborative research involving the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Wildlife Services, National Wildlife Research Center, and Purdue University led to [a publication](#) on public perceptions of ABVs. Researchers applied the Wildlife Tolerance Model to examine livestock producers' interactions with ABVs and found that perceived ecological values increase ABV tolerance. The study also revealed that economic losses were not a significant predictor of ABV tolerance. Authors concluded that socio-psychological factors, more than economic factors, shape ABV tolerance and that the Wildlife Tolerance Model is useful for assessing tolerance of less charismatic species.

## South & Central America

The 5th International AC Congress was held in Sure, **Bolivia** in March, where the first [symposium on New World vultures](#) also occurred. The meetings included presentations from researchers working throughout the Americas and across species and brought together vulture specialists who initiated working towards the first New World Vulture Multi-species Action Plan. Updated versions of the New World Vultures fact sheets for Birds of the World have also been an output. Results and proceedings from this congress will be published in *Vulture News* later this year as part of a special issue on Cathartid vultures.

A [short film](#) has been produced on the AC from Aves Rapaces in **Bolivia**, Programa de Investigación. A book on AC in **Perú** entitled *El condor andino (Vultur gryphus) en el Perú*, was published by the Peruvian Forestry Service.

The Fundación Parque Jaime Duque has been working for over 12 years on the conservation of the Andean Condor (AC) in **Colombia**, focusing on ex situ and in situ conservation, and working with communities in the northeastern Andes. In 2024, the Latin American Association of Zoos and Aquariums (ALPZA), through its Conservation Committee, certified this program as one of the leading conservation efforts in Latin America. They recently celebrated the birth of the first AC under artificial incubation in their facilities and in **Colombia** since 2003. A male was raised with puppets and remains physically isolated from humans and visually accompanied by 2 adult condors. The aim is towards future population supplementation for the



páramos of **Colombia**. The group also reports 35 individual AC, the largest total so far, as well as confirmation of an AC pair in El Almorzadero páramo with a chick under 8 months old and a juvenile under 2 years old, both cared for by the same adults. These findings suggest potential resting, nesting, and reproductive activity areas in the region, and possibly a pair with annual offspring. This same team gathered more than 500 people in one of the municipalities to celebrate the III National AC Festival, with educational activities that allowed rural children to learn more about the condor, its biology, its habitat, threats, and other species with which it coexists. They worked with 15 local producers to improve AC habitat and reduce negative human-condor interactions. A recent publication proposed a spatial roadmap to define where and how to implement conservation actions for the AC in **Colombia**. A systematic planning tool, spatially explicit models, and risk area analysis were used to identify Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs) for AC in **Colombia**. Results suggested that only 30% of PCAs fall within National Natural Parks while another 30% are classified as medium to high risk due to the Human Footprint Index. In **Colombia** there are also ongoing studies on the potential interspecific interactions between obligate and facultative scavengers through activity patterns and camera traps in high-risk areas for AC conservation, and the negative interactions between scavengers and local communities to better understand how and where to direct conservation strategies in areas most affected by human impact.

In **Argentina**, 3 AC received in a rehabilitation center were successfully released with satellite tags in Quebrada del Condorito National Park, Cordoba province. The AC Foundation of **Ecuador** is collaborating on 3 projects: 1) a study of molting patterns in wild ACs, through photographs, with the aim of identifying molting patterns in this species to improve age-class estimation; 2) developing a statistical conceptual model based on scores to assess the risk of AC collisions with wind turbines, which will allow authorities to request studies from companies in the sector and assess the feasibility of such projects; and the movement patterns of ACs. This work begins with monitoring an adult male AC released after a rehabilitation process following lead poisoning. Over a 5-month period, the individual traveled a total of 9,414 km between **Chile** and **Argentina**, indicating its successful reintegration to the wild. The first community meeting to train community condor rangers and researchers was held in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, **Colombia** in late 2024. This strategy is intended for the Sierra Nevada, where different social, ethnic, native, and settler groups coexist in natural and transformed landscapes, with diverse cultural and commercial activities.

## Global/Multi-regional News

A study showing [how GVs change their behavior as they age](#) and a study [describing links between Mycoplasma \(a prevalent pathogen bacteria\) and GV behaviour](#) (mostly lack of effect on the social network, hinting towards a possible chronic infection) have been published.

### And finally...

There's new evidence that GVs featured [in the Old Testament](#) (Holy Bible) and a [new type of pyroclastic fossil](#) has been found containing a GV feather in Italy.



Do [let us know](#) if you receive this newsletter indirectly and wish to be added to the circulation list.

Please send items to Chris or Cat for inclusion ahead of the next edition in September or submit longer articles [to the editor](#) of the VSG journal, Vulture News. Reminder that [Vulture News including back copies is available free](#) online – do read it!



**Chris Bowden**

[chris.bowden@rspb.org.uk](mailto:chris.bowden@rspb.org.uk)

**Andre Botha**

[andreb@ewt.org.za](mailto:andreb@ewt.org.za)

**Co-chairs: Vulture Specialist Group, IUCN Species Survival Commission**

<b>Editor &amp; Asia:</b>	Chris Bowden
<b>African Regional Co-chair:</b>	Darcy Ogada
<b>European Regional Co-chairs:</b>	José Tavares, Vladimir Dobrev
<b>Latin America Regional Chair:</b>	Sergio Lambertucci
<b>North America Co-Chair:</b>	Evan Buechley
<b>Americas Compiler:</b>	Zoey Greenberg
<b>Editor Vulture News:</b>	Volen Arkumarev
<b>VSG Admin/Newsletter Assistant:</b>	Cat Taras

**Additional newsletter contributors:** Lusine Aghajanyan, Ibrahim Al Hasani, Nili Anglister, Nicole Arcilla, Farid Bahleman, Clive R Barlow, Claire Bracebridge, Enrica Calò, Hemanta Dhakal, Dobromir Dobrev, Rachid El Khamlich, Alfonso Godino, A B M Sarowar Alam (Dipu), Orr Spiegel, Scott A. Tidmus, Michael Manja Williams.

*Erratum:* In the previous newsletter (21) there was confusion between the King Salman Royal Nature Reserve and the Prince Mohammed bin Salman Royal Reserve. These are two different reserves with separate governing structures. The new KBA referred to is within the [King Salman Royal Nature Reserve](#). Our apologies.