

Regional overview – Western Europe



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Director

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Palm-nut Vulture



Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture



Egyptian Vulture



Hooded Vulture



American Black Vulture



Turkey Vulture



King Vulture



Greater Yellow-headed Vulture



White-headed Vulture



Red-headed Vulture



White-rumped Vulture



Slender-billed Vulture



Rüppell's Vulture



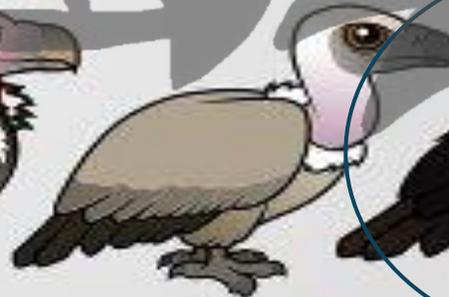
White-backed Vulture



Indian Vulture



Lappet-faced Vulture



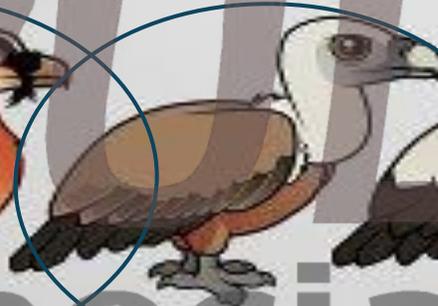
Cape Vulture



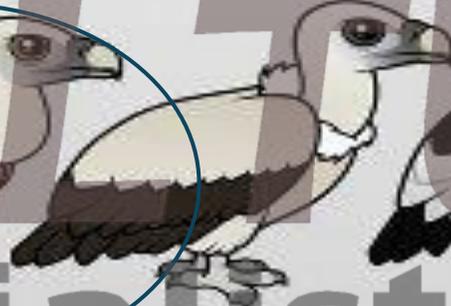
Cinereous Vulture



Lammerpelier



Eurasian Griffon



Himalayan Vulture



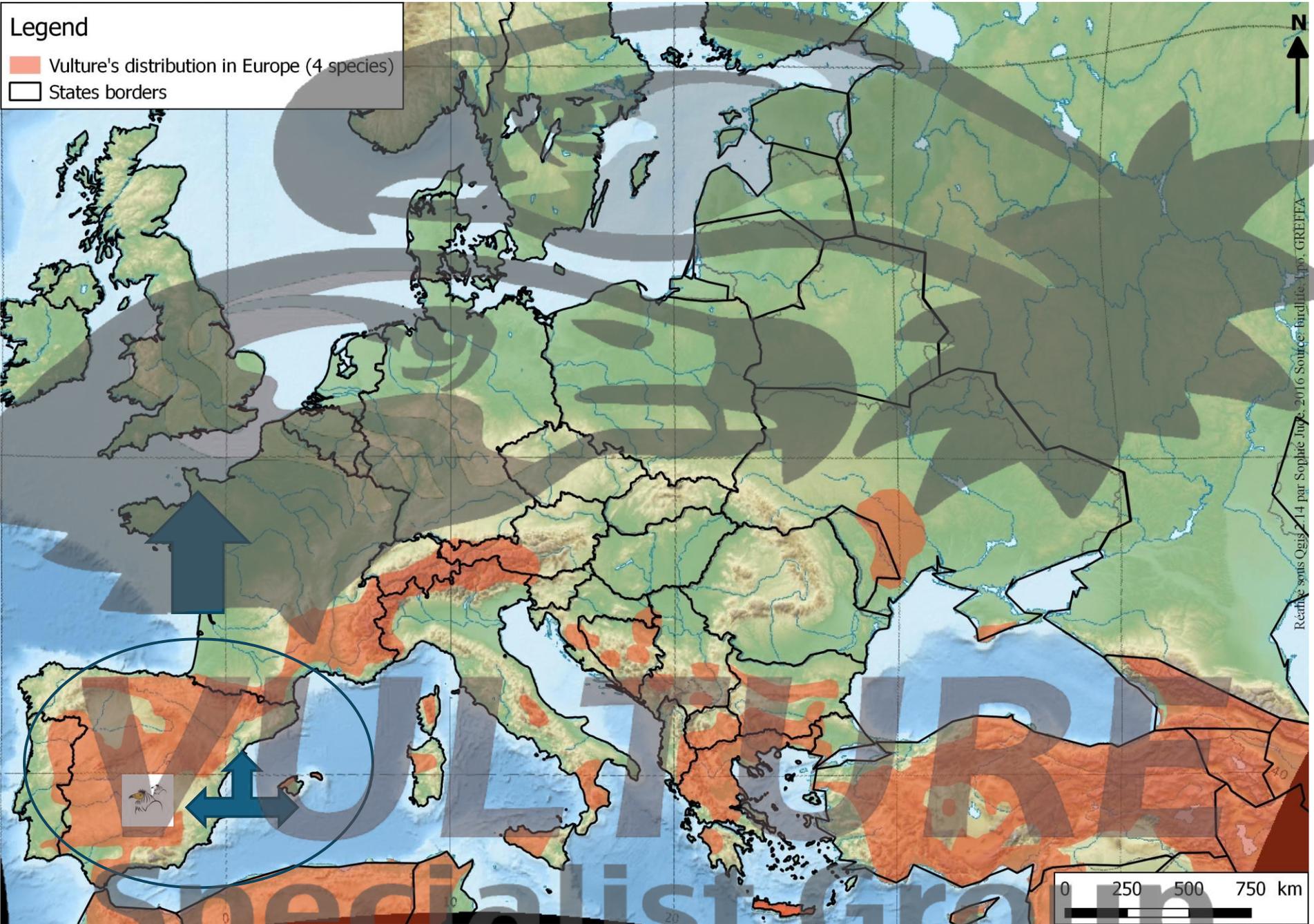
Andean Condor



California Condor

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birdorable.com/vultures



Message #1



- Europe as a land of vultures & vulture conservation best practice

- Vultures in Europe is a positive story.

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Need to fight the hopelessness, doom and gloom culture in the conservation world



Environment
Radical Conservation

Has hope become the most endangered species in conservation?

As wildlife continues to decline around the world, conservation has become a bleak calling. Can a new Optimism Summit help reframe the mission to save life on Earth?



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Advertisement

CITY DREAM

Colazione
fino alle 1

Check-out

25% Prenota s

> PRENOTA ORA

- 1986 – 5,000 pairs; now >30,000 pairs; Increase 600% in the last 40 years
- Spain: 18%-26% increase over the decade 2008-2018, growth rate declining
- France: keeps increasing, geographic expansion; 51% increase in the French Pyrenees between 2012 & 2019
- Balkans: trends overall positive, but spatial variations in population growth rates, strongest increases in Bulgaria & Serbia and decreasing trends in N Macedonia



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In Europe: extinct in several Mediterranean countries + recent successful reintroductions



50% increase in the last decade!!!

Population Status 3,200 bp	
Spain	3,000 bp
France	35 bp
Portugal	120 bp
Greece	35 bp
Bulgaria	15 bp



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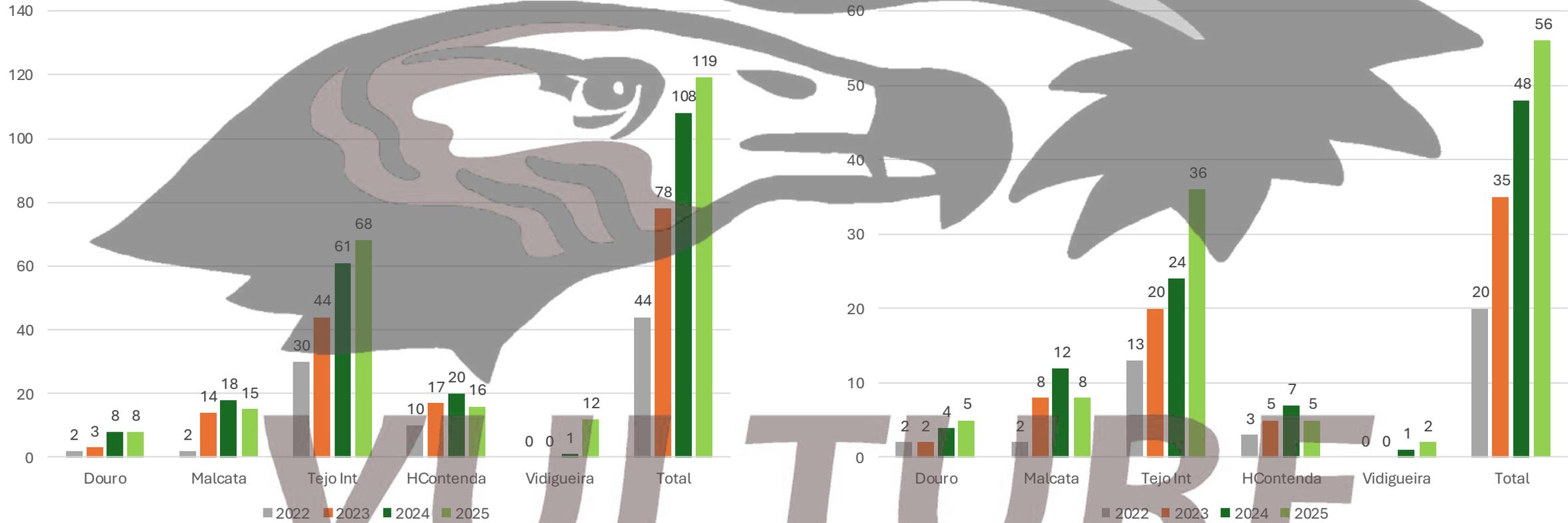
Global pop : 9,500-12,300 pairs
European pop: 3,200 pairs



LIFE Aegyptius Return (2025)



Co-funded by the European Union



Nesting pairs (119-126)

Fledged chicks (56)

Productivity: 0.45 | Breeding success: 0.50

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Message #2

Translocation of cinereous and griffon vultures from Spain to other countries

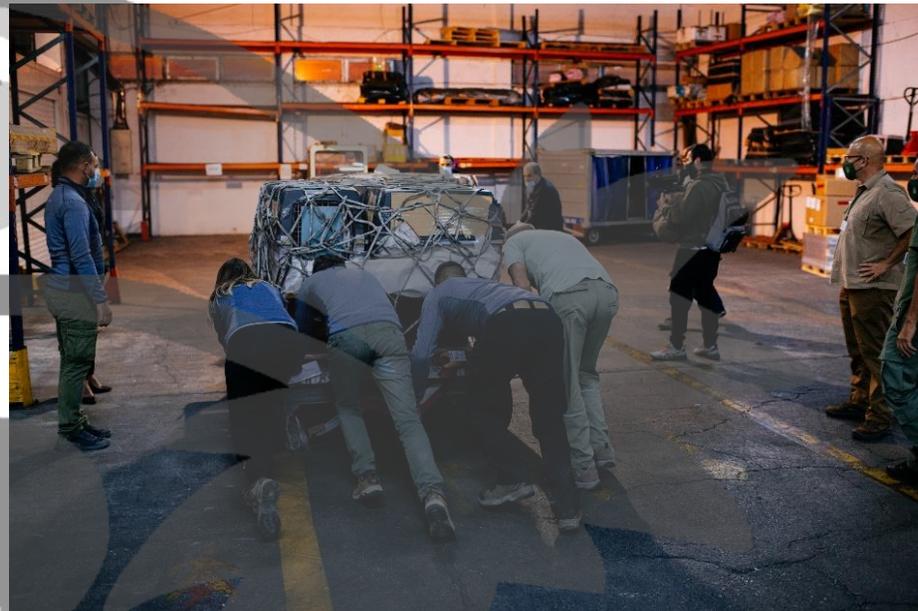
- Use birds from wildlife rehabilitation in a coordinated and prioritised way
- Soft-Release after long acclimatization (6 to 15 months) in aviary produces best results

Griffon vultures to Mainland Italy, France, Bulgaria, Sardinia, Cyprus, Sicily

Cinereous vultures to France, Bulgaria



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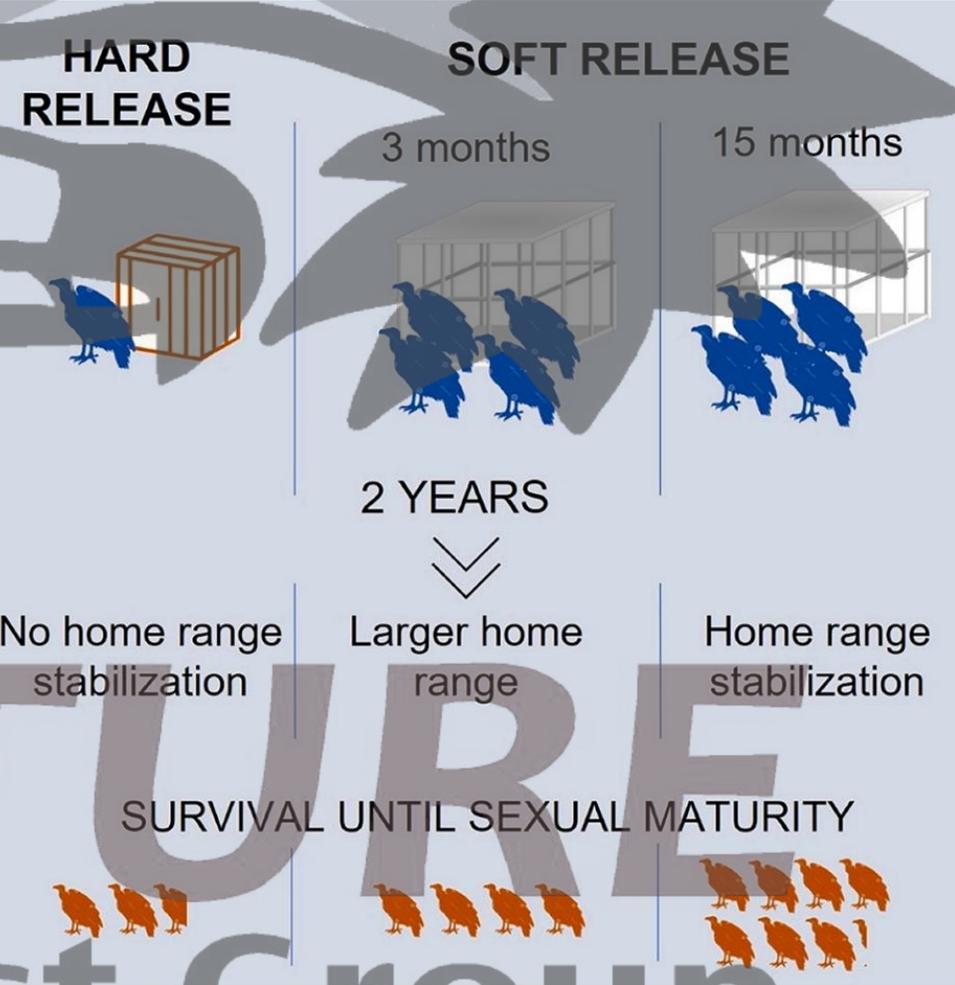


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Article

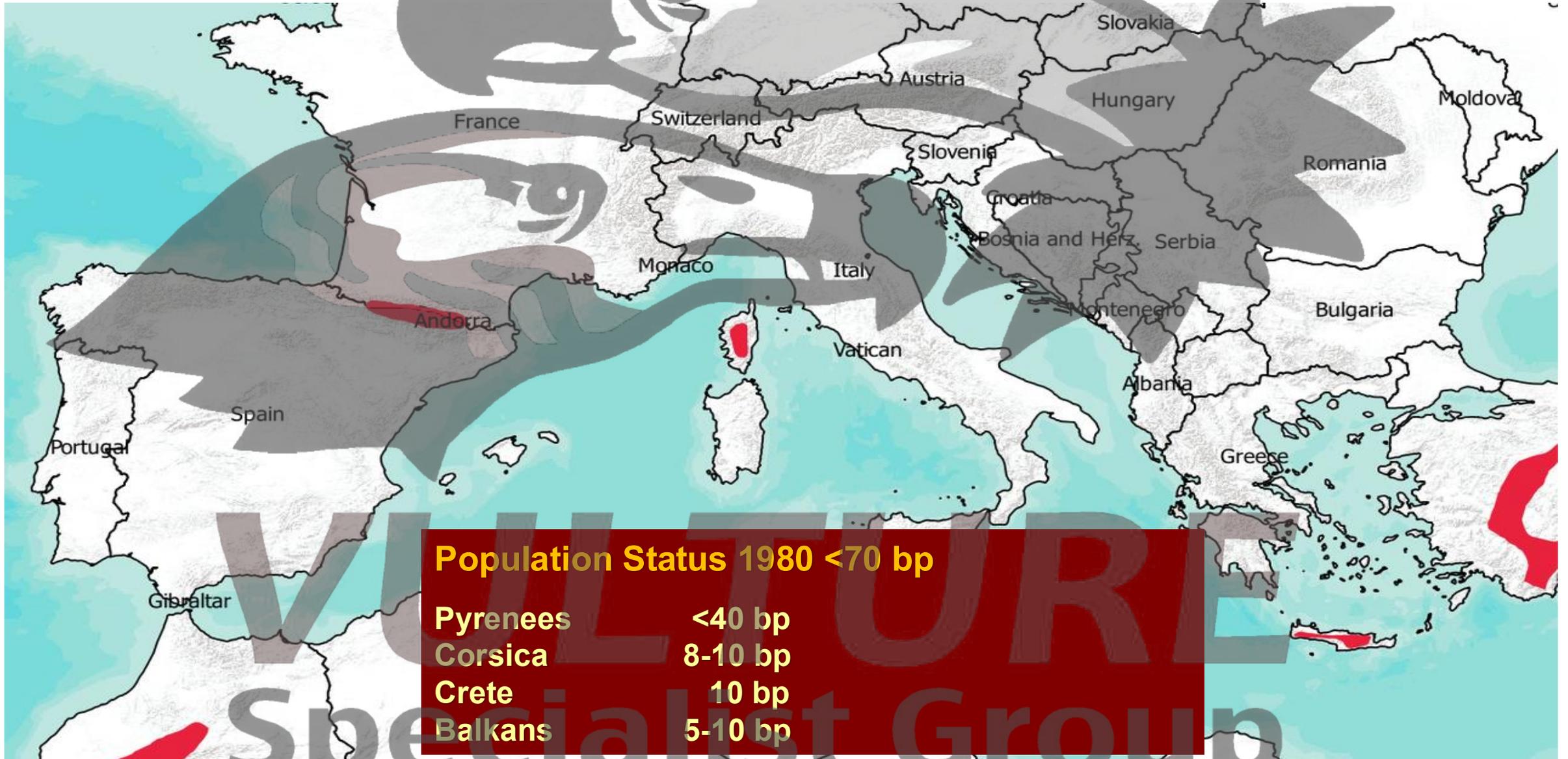
Insights on the best release strategy from post-release movements and mortality patterns in an avian scavenger

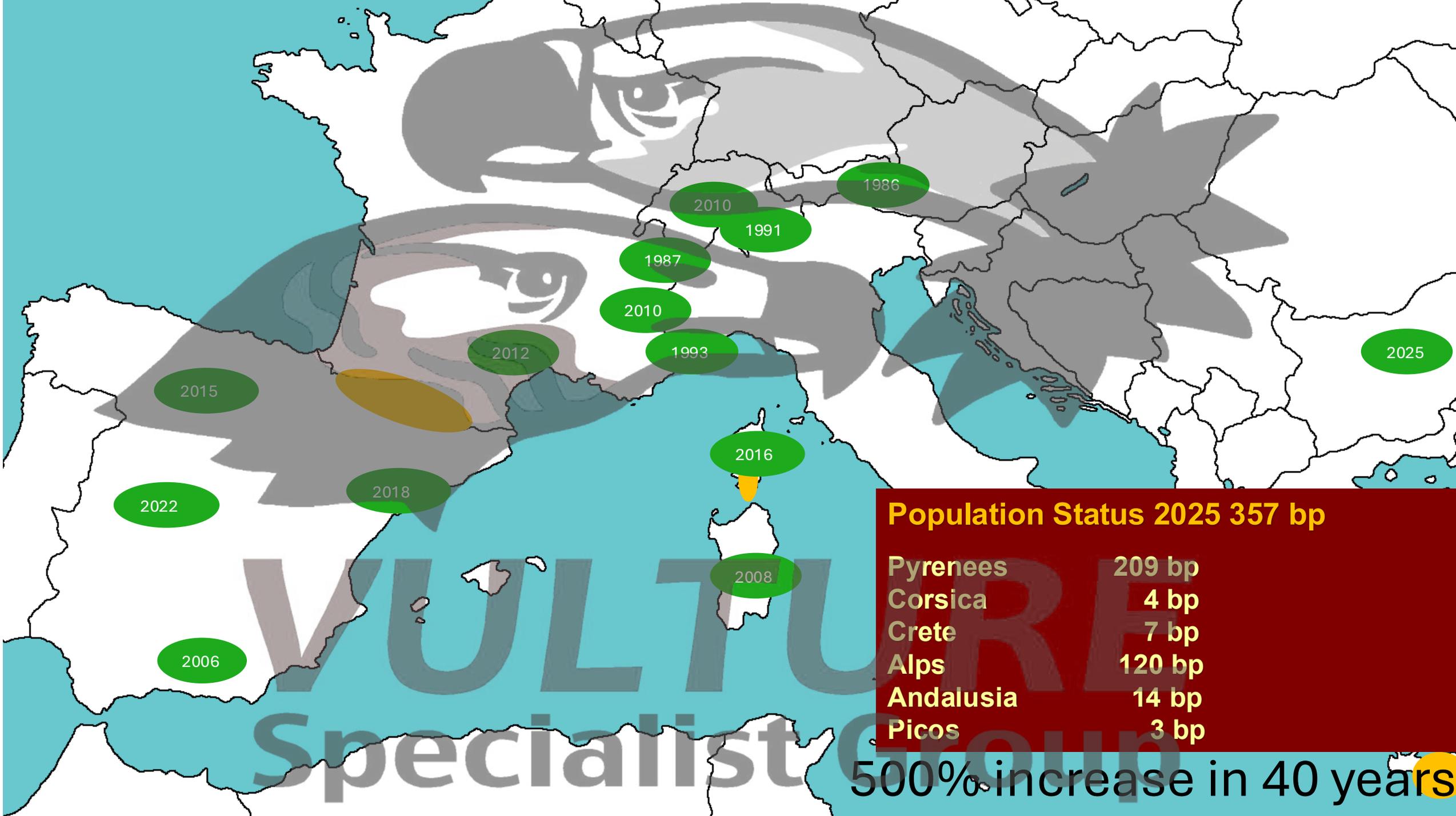
Ilaria Fozzi,¹ Rudy Brogi,^{1,3,*} Silvia Cavazza,¹ Roberta Chirichella,¹ Davide De Rosa,¹ Jacopo Cerri,¹ Marco Apollonio,¹ and Fiammetta Berlinguer¹



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Bearded Vulture BACK from the brink





2015

2022

2006

2018

2012

2010

1987

2010

1991

1993

2016

2008

1986

2025

Population Status 2025 357 bp

Pyrenees	209 bp
Corsica	4 bp
Crete	7 bp
Alps	120 bp
Andalusia	14 bp
Picos	3 bp

500% increase in 40 years



Captive-breeding

Richard Faust Center, Austria

Centro de cria Guadalentin

Centro de Fauna Vallcaient

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Results Captive-Breeding

From 1978 to 2025 - **712** chicks produced

In 2025 - 24 chicks / 43 pairs; Dealing with two new diseases (Cyathostoma & Circovirus), important zoonoses (WNV)

👉 **282** Zoos

👉 **430** Specialised captive breeding centers:

205	Richard Faust Zentrum
132	Centro de cría Guadalentín
48	Centre de Fauna Vallcaient
20	Asters
23	Tierpark Goldau
2	Parc Animalier des Pyrénées

431 Released

● Alps	260
● Andalucía	96
● Grands Causses	40
● Sardinia	3
● Corsica	12
● Maestrazgo	17
● Bulgaria	3



Markus P. Stähli

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Message#3: International collaboration underpins successful conservation

IBM (International Bearded Vulture Monitoring)

- 24 partners
- 130+ breeding pairs monitored
- Monitoring protocols, simultaneous census, common database, etc
- 2025: 6632 registered observations (152'243 in total)

IBM-PARTNERS



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- 6,000-19,000 pairs worldwide
- 1,700 pairs Europe (excl. Turkey)
- Spain: Largest European population with slight increase at the national scale (2018)
- Italy: stable
- France: long-term population stability

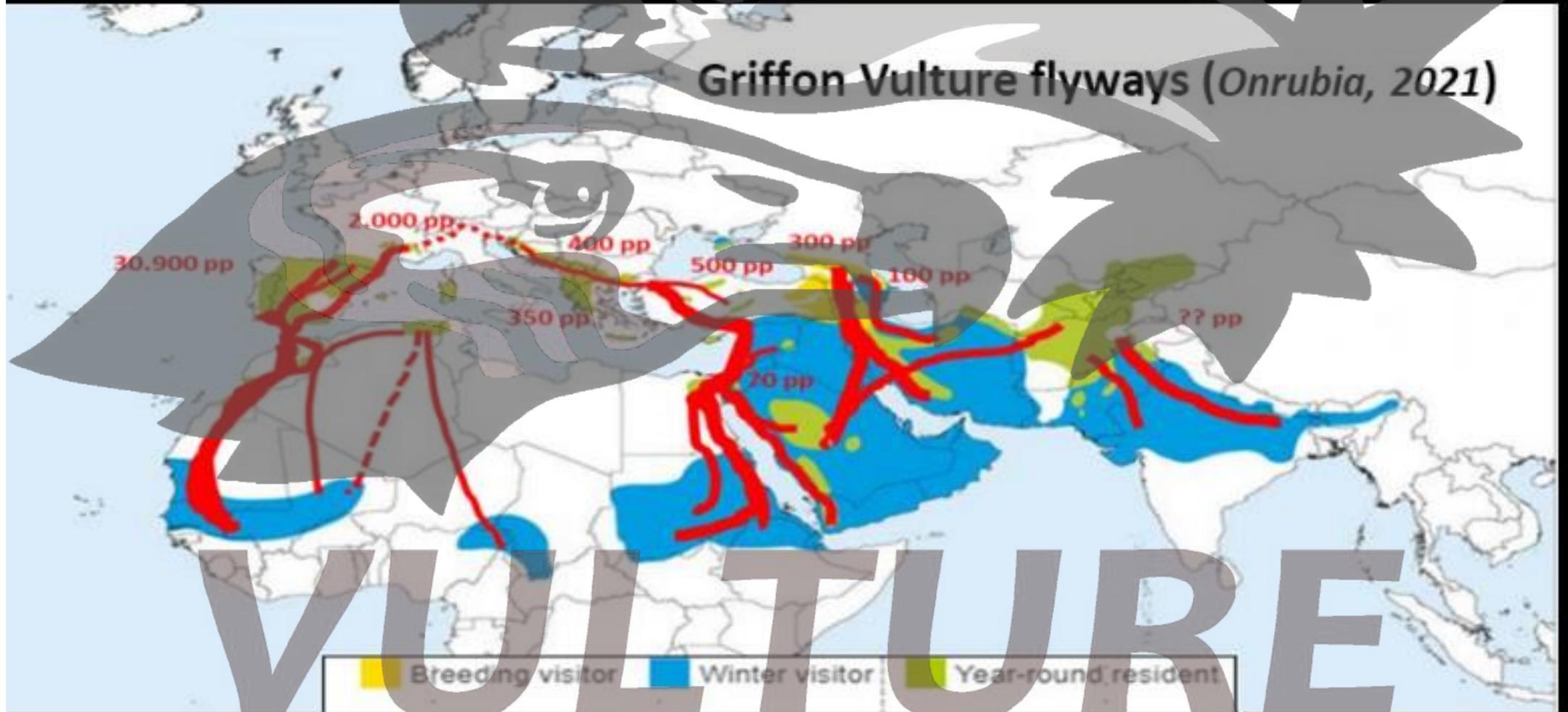




WORLDWIDE

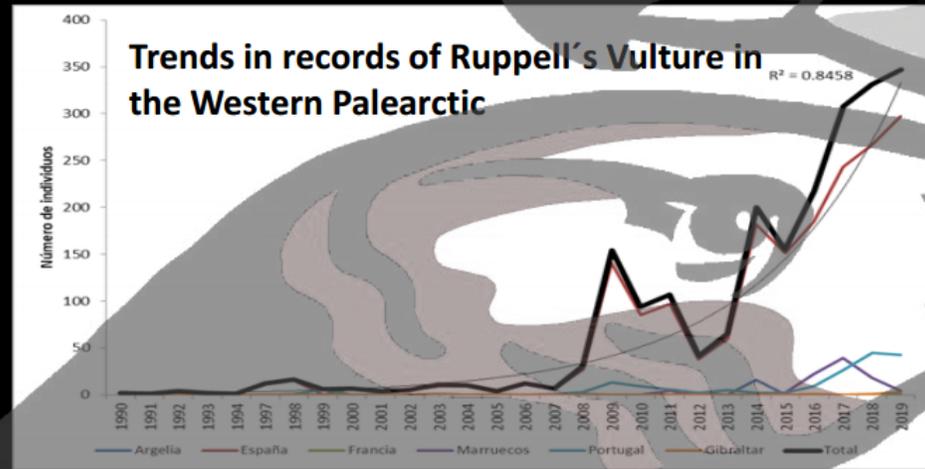
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Griffon Vulture flyways (Onrubia, 2021)

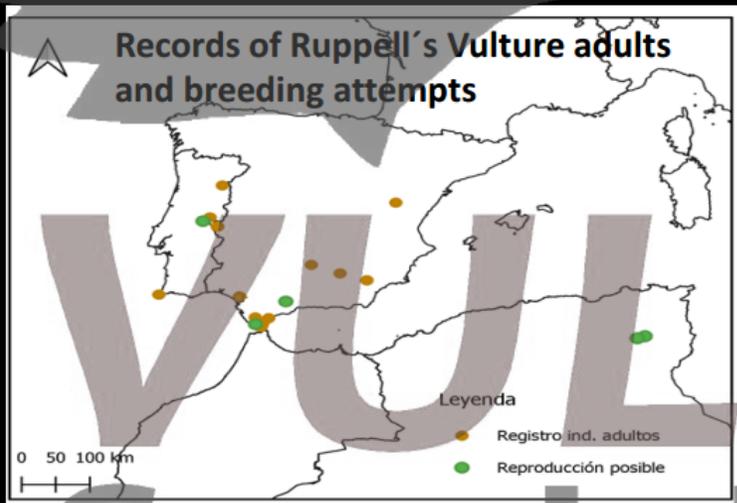


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THE RUPPELL'S VULTURE COLONIZATION PROCESS



Increasing records since 2008 and specially since 2014.



Some records of (possible) breeding since 1999, but always mixed pairs with Griffon Vultures.

- *Ebird and Observado records, filtered*
- *(Onrubia et al. 2020)*

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What kills vultures in
Western Europe?

European vulture mortality database



Assessing vulture mortality at a continental scale

The benefits of centralized and standardized data

Message #4: science & monitoring underpinning conservation action

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Message #5: Threat number 1: illegal wildlife poisoning



Donate



Зелени Балкани / Green Balkans N... 5d

С примамки с отрова: Кой уби 7 редки лешояда в котленския Балкан



17 Red kites found dead in central Portugal

📅 January 17, 2026

The Portuguese authorities – Institute for Nature Conservation and Forests (ICNF) and ...



👍 331



WildLIFE Crime Academy



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WildLIFECrimeAcademy LIFE-2023-SAP-NAT-GOV



- Strengthen national capacities to combat wildlife crime and raise awareness about the problem in Europe and North Africa

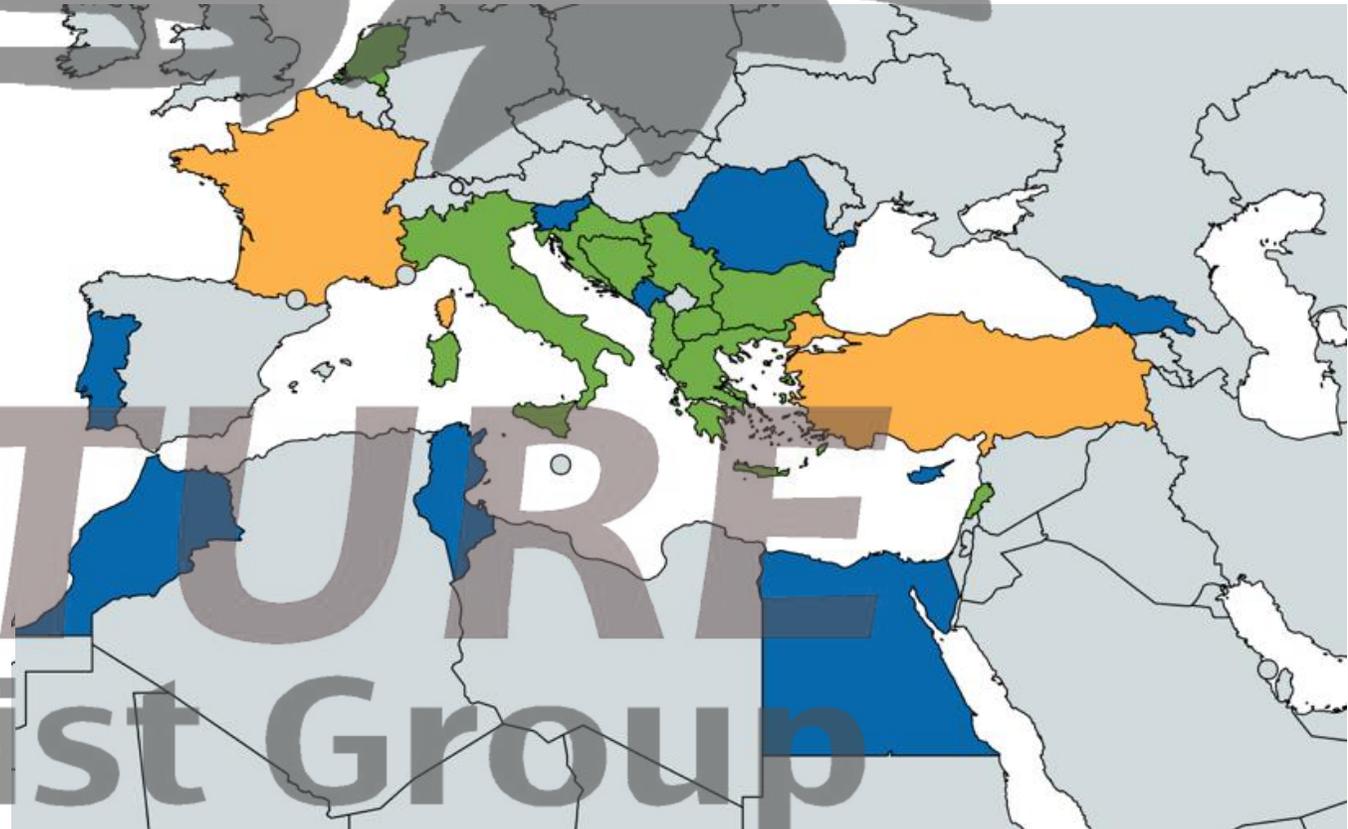
Partners:

- VCF
- MINISTERUL MEDIULUI, APELOR SI PADURILOR
- DRUSTVO ZA OPAZOVANJE IN PROUCEVANJE PTIC SLOVENIA
- CENTAR ZA ZASTITU I PROUCAVANJE PTICA UDRUZENJE
- Taskent Doga Parki (Taskent Nature Park)

Duration: 60 months

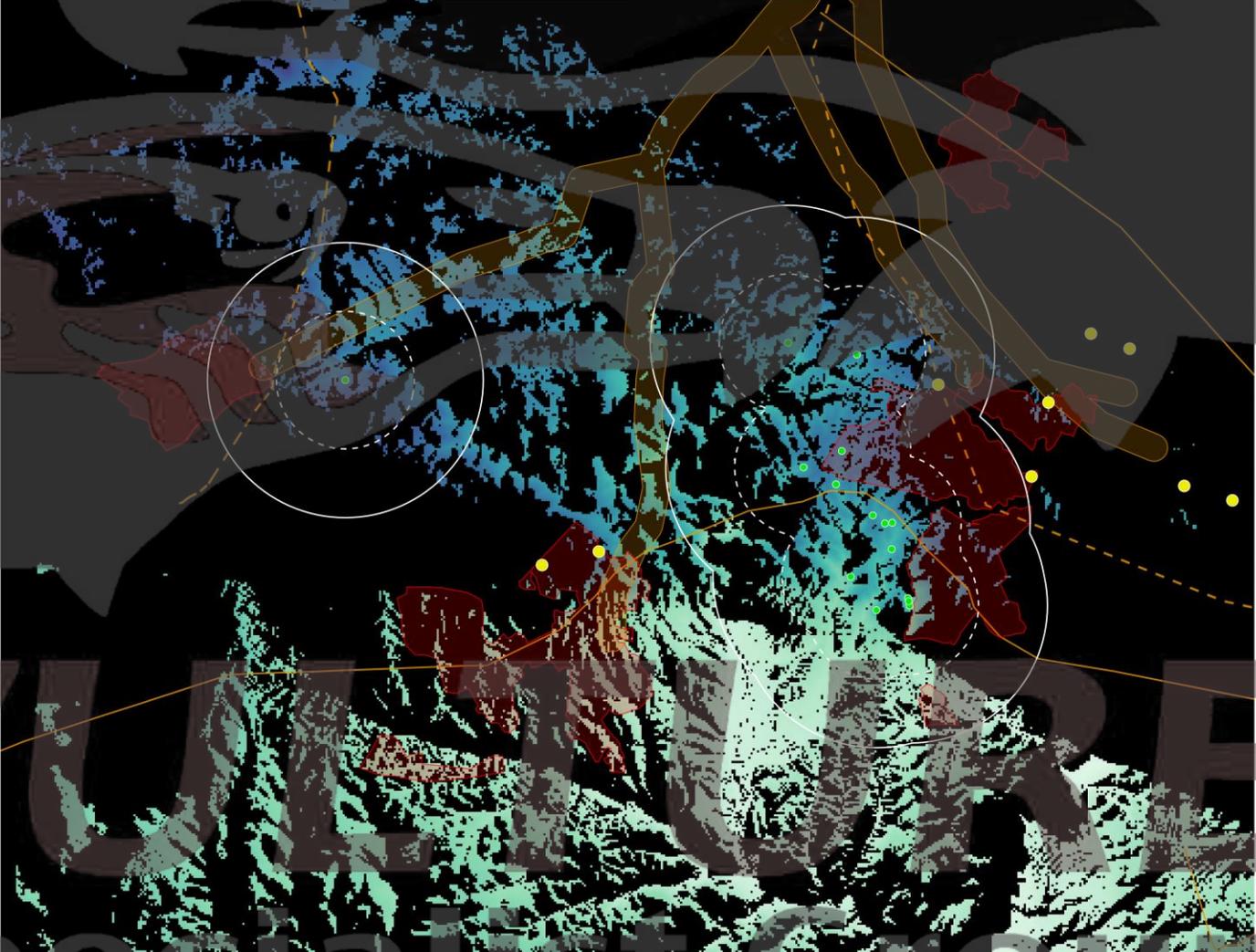
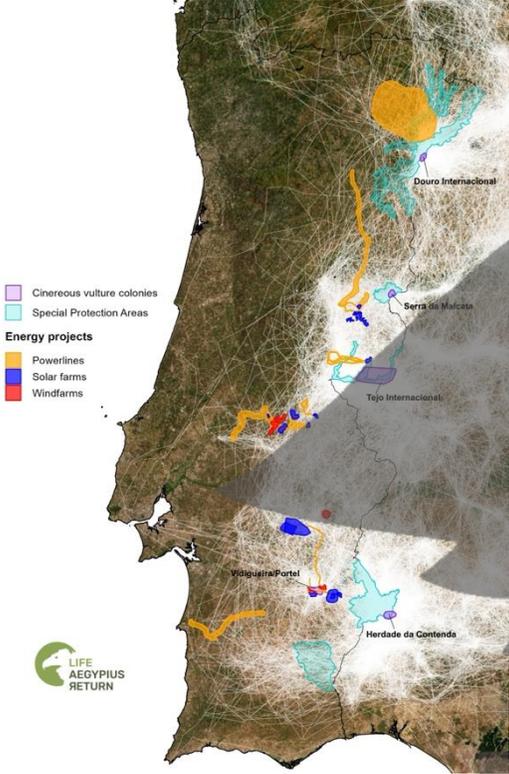
Budget: 2 millions - 60% EC

Countries:



Message #6: Threat number 2: Collision and electrocution against energy infrastructure

Áreas visíveis a partir dos ninhos de Abutre-preto na Colónia da Serra do Mendro



- Terreno visível dos ninhos/n(elevação; m)
- 400
 - 300
 - 200
 - 100
 - Áreas não visíveis
 - Ninhos de Abutre-preto
 - Buffer 1 km em torno do ninho
 - Buffer 2 km em torno do ninho
 - Parques solares fotovoltaicos
 - Aerogeradores
 - Corredores LMAT
 - LMATs Vidigueira e Alqueva-Divor
 - LMAT existentes



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Science & Monitoring



Spatial guidelines for wind farm expansion

(a) Conservation first



(b) Compromise



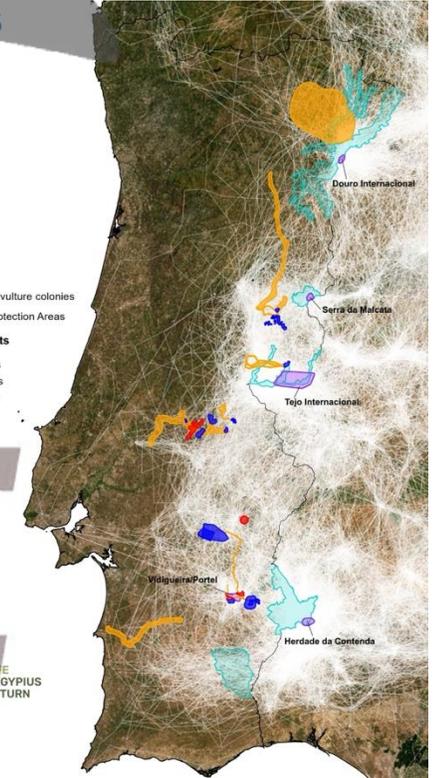
(c) Industry first



 **EARTH RANGER**
A product of  Ai2

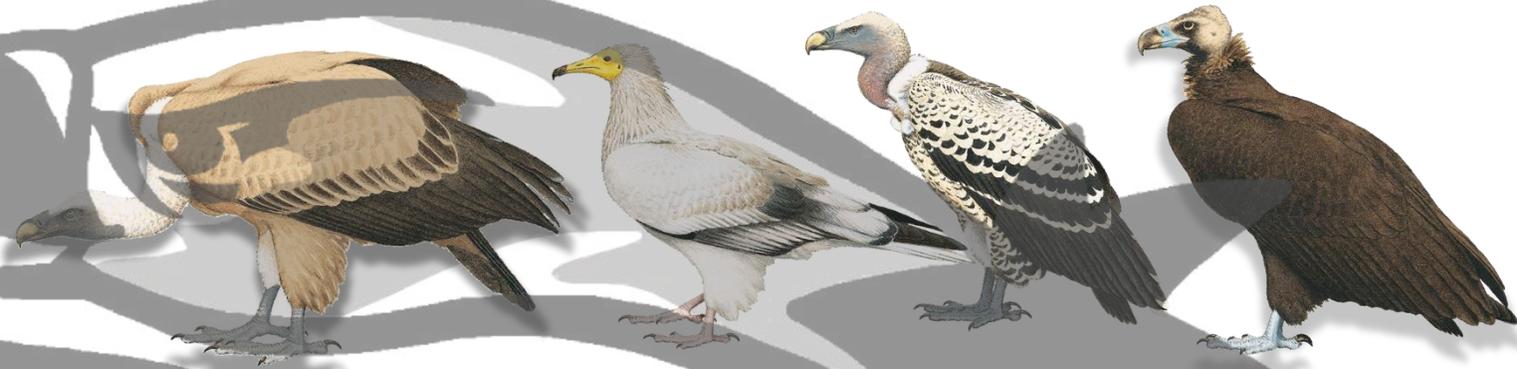
Informed contributions to public consultations

-  Cinereous vulture colonies
-  Special Protection Areas
- Energy projects**
-  Powerlines
-  Solar farms
-  Windfarms



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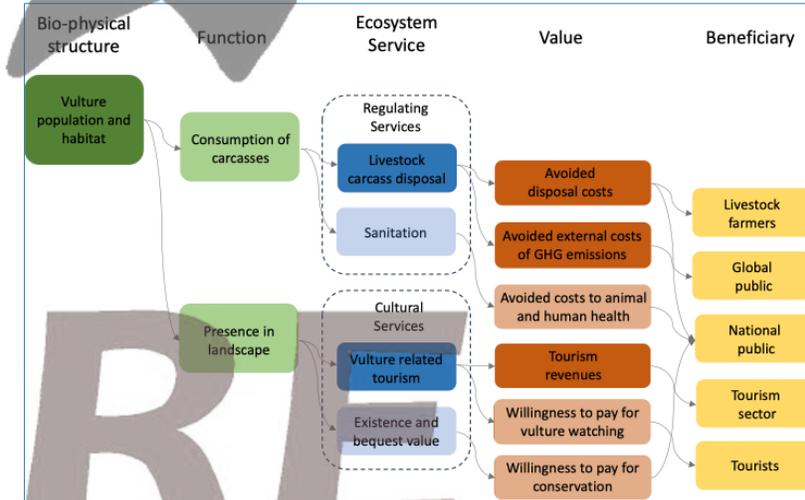
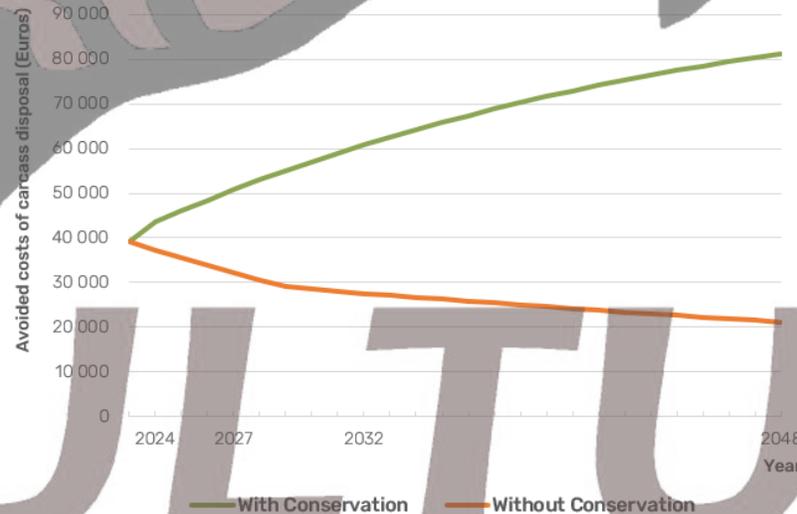
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Quantification and valuation of ecosystem services provided by vultures in Portugal.

Quantification of ecosystem services provided by vultures in Croatia

Quantifying ecosystem services

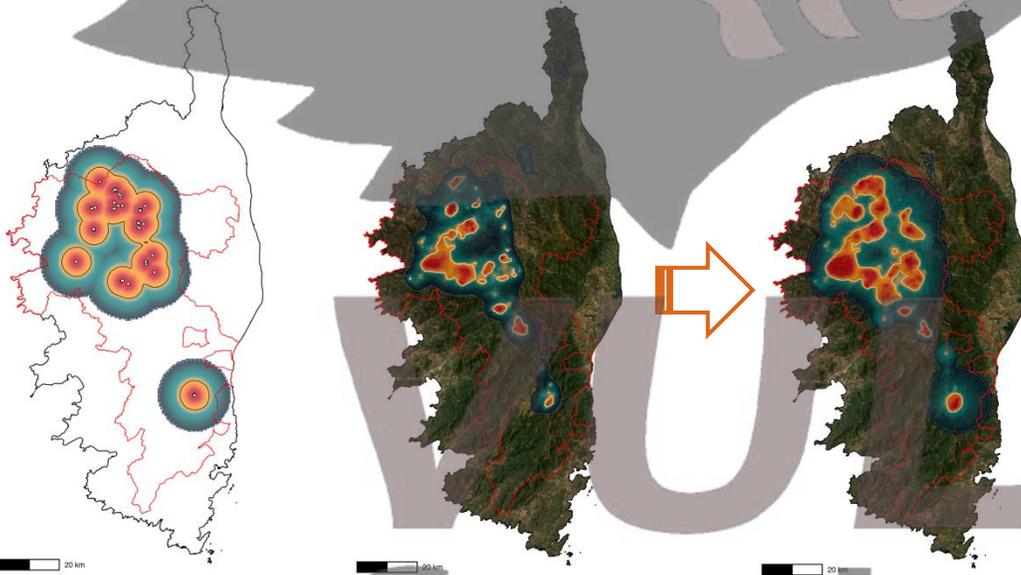


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Mapping important areas for the Corsican Bearded vulture (Masters M1)



Review of Bearded Vulture mortality causes in Europe ongoing

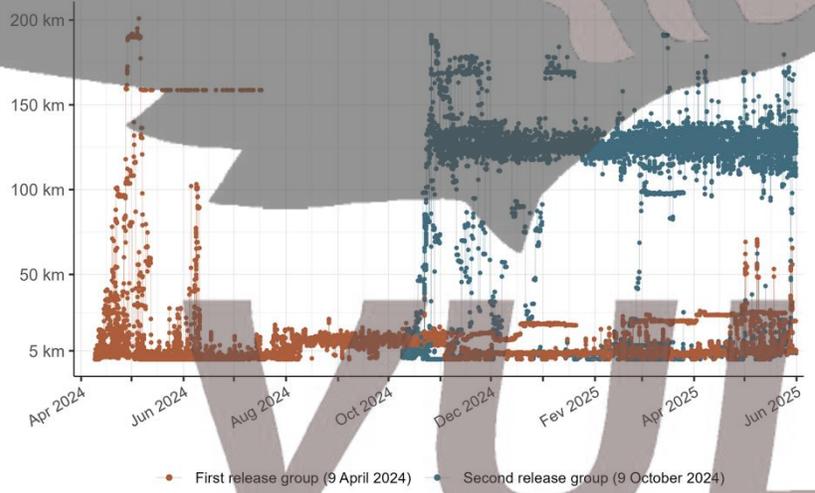
Bearded Vulture population connectivity and genetic diversity ongoing (PhD thesis)

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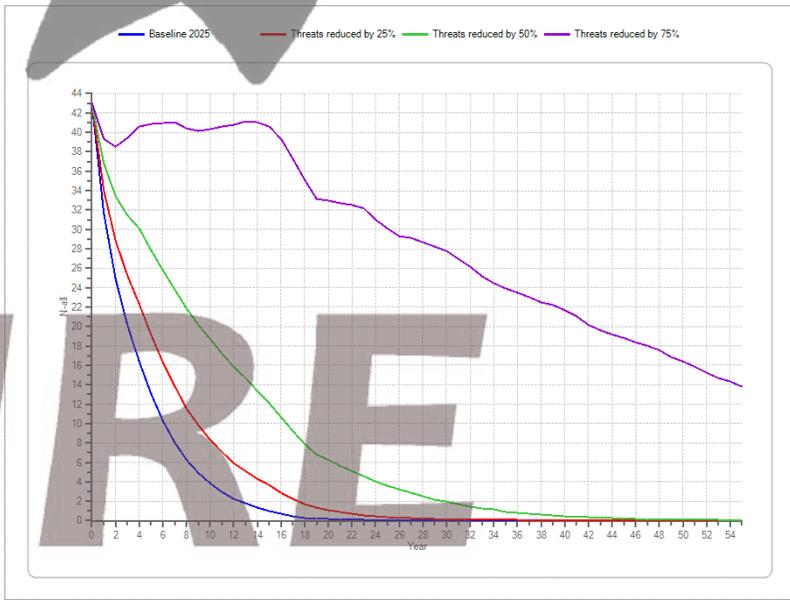
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Movements of restocked Griffon vultures in Sardinia



Population Viability Analysis Griffon vulture Cyprus

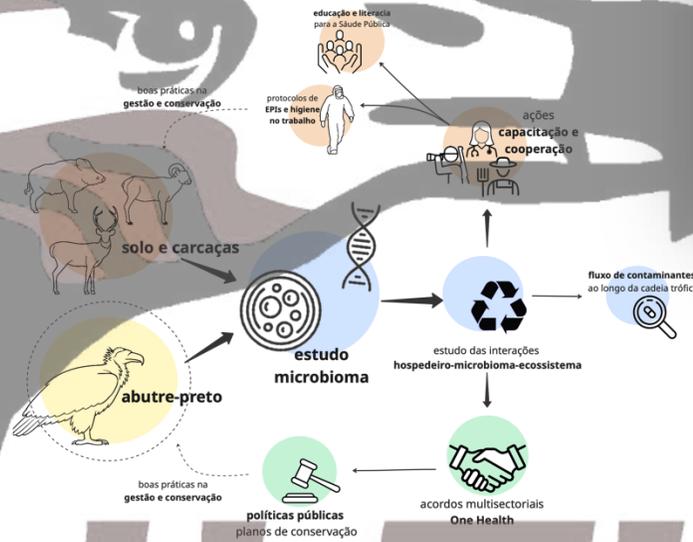


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Project NECROBIOME

Cinereous Vulture Microbiome

- Pathways for pathogen degradation in the vulture gut
- Role of vultures in pathogen transmission
- One Health approach



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Takeaways vulture work in Western Europe

Message #1 Europe as a land of vultures & vulture conservation best practice

Message #2 Translocation for reintroduction/restocking of vultures works well if properly done

Message #3: International collaboration underpins successful conservation

Message #4: Based on sound Science & monitoring

Message #5: Threat number 1 in western Europe: illegal wildlife poisoning. Enhancing work of enforcement agencies and judiciary essential

Message #6: Threat number 2 in western Europe: Collision & electrocution against energy infrastructure - increasing

• And remember:

1) Next European Vulture Conference in 2027 - stay tuned!

2) Join IVAD 2026!

3) Send us news about your projects in Western Europe

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On behalf of the many organizations, individuals,
and government officials involved in the work
presented here

Thank you!
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