

The Balkans, Caucasus, Central Asia

2025 Overview

VSG OPEN ONLINE MEETING
January, 20th

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IUCN SSC Vulture Specialist
Group*

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BALKANS



VULTRINE
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Egyptian vulture in 2025

- A restocking program in Bulgaria started in 2016 with 46 birds released so far, huge success
- Captive breeding and work within the EV EEP with Green Balkans and the Prague Zoo
- Egyptian vulture monitoring across the Balkan countries continues
- Slight increase in Bulgaria to 37 occupied breeding territories, the level from 2008 reached, new pairs
- Supplementary feeding and nest guarding with volunteers continues in 2025 in Bulgaria
- Monitoring breeding pairs with trail cameras and online streaming camera
- More birds tagged, 38% of the pairs have at least one tagged bird
- The worst year in recent times with 3 adults lost to poisoning and electrocution
- Anti-poisoning work, retrofitting power lines



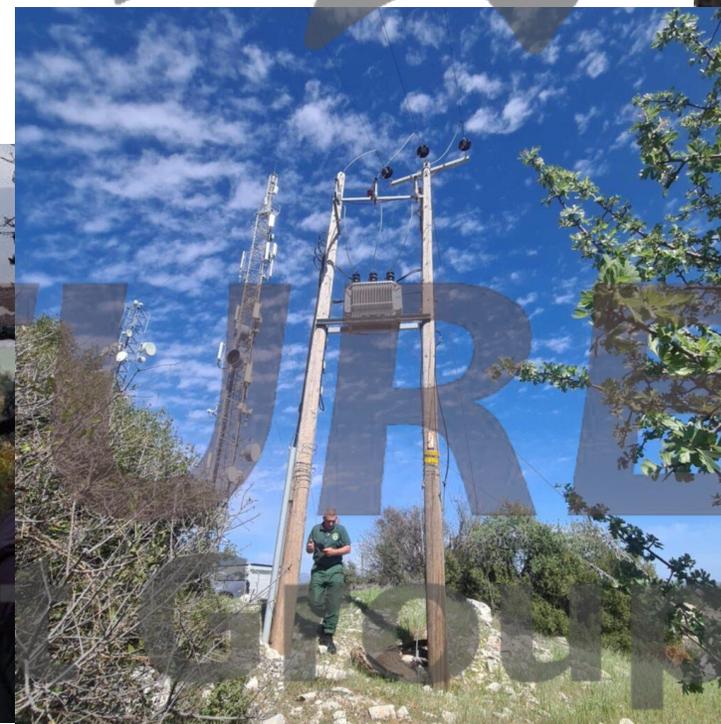
Bearded vulture in 2025

- *The reintroduction program started in 2023*
- *For the first time in fifty years, BVs returned to Bulgaria in 2025*
- *3 juveniles released*
- *A new, 3rd pair arrived at the breeding center in Bulgaria, 2 of them breeding*



Griffon vulture in 2025

- *Reintroduction/Restocking programs running in Bulgaria and soon in mainland Greece and North Macedonia*
- *Cyprus received 15 GVs from Spain, In the last 6 years, 59 GVs have been transported to Cyprus, including 3 translocations as part of the LIFE With Vultures project*
- *The GV population in Kvarner Islands, Croatia is growing, with a record of 152 nesting pairs*
- *In Bulgaria, the BSPB team recorded 145 territorial pairs of GV that hatched 97 juveniles in the Eastern Rhodopes (BG population around 220 pairs ↑)*
- *Highest number of birds so far recorded during the GV Roosting sites census in November – 1275 in BG, GR, NM, SR*
- *GV rescued in Albania*
- *The pair in the breeding center in Bg layed an egg*
- *In March, a poisoning event in SE Bulgaria affected GVs – 2 are known to have died, 4 are rescued and in a rehab center*
- *Three GVs were found dead in Cyprus: two males that were electrocuted, and a female died of unknown causes*
- *The LIFE SUPport project, together with VCF, produced a study on the ecosystem services of GV in the Kvarner Islands*
- *.High juvenile mortality was recorded with at least 14 dead chicks in Bulgaria*
- *Two juveniles, rescued after fledging, were tagged with GPS-GSM transmitters in Bg*
- *Two GV chicks from Stara Zagora Zoo were released in March 2025*



Cinereous vulture in 2025

- Reintroduction programs running in several areas across Bulgaria
- 24 (17+7) CVs arrived to Bulgaria for another release in 2025
- The highest number of pairs registered in Dardia, Greece for the last 30 years - 41
- 12-13 pairs with 8 chicks in the Balkan mountains and 4 pairs in the Eastern Rhodopes, Bulgaria
- Several birds died for different reasons with a huge blow in January 2026 when at least 6 CVs were poisoned



CAUCASUS



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4 BREEDING VULTURE SPECIES



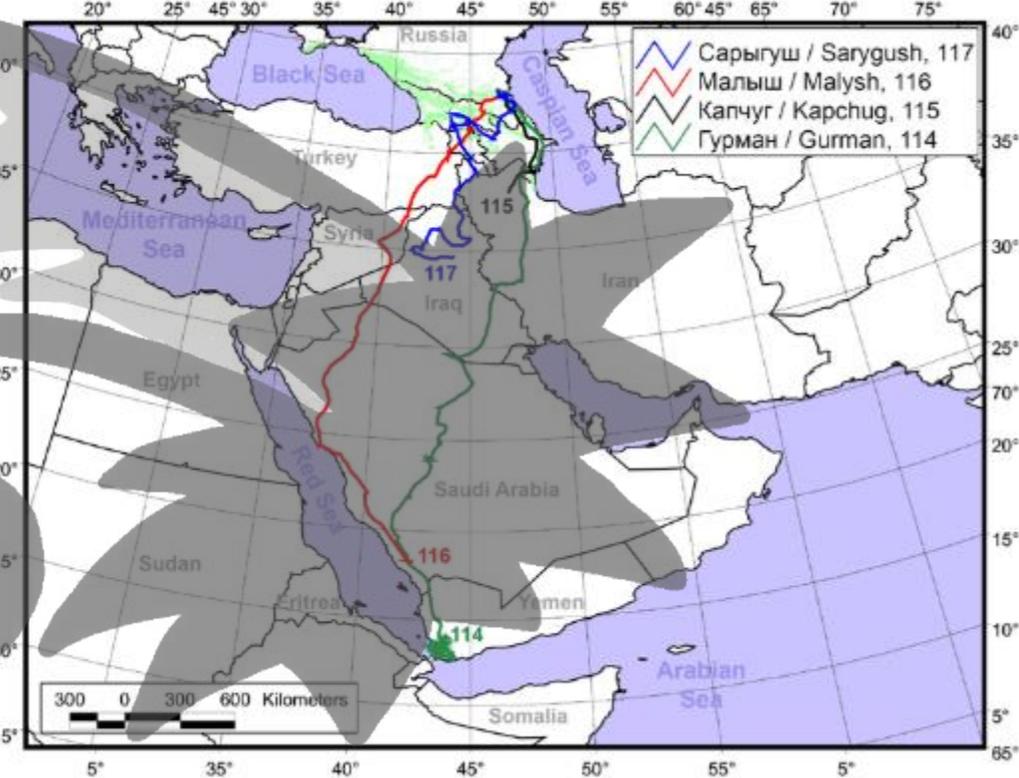
**Himalayan griffon vulture observed in 2024 by Ani Sarkisyan*

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Northern Caucasus

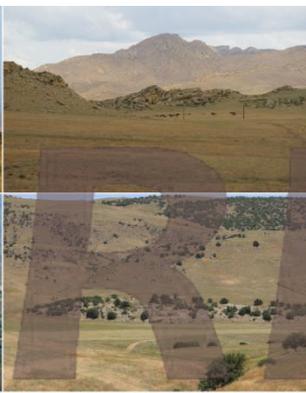
70–120 pairs?

- Most of the work is on the EV
 - Abuladze & Shergalin (1998)*
 - Miszhenko et al. (2004)*
 - Belik (2005)*
 - Action plan for the EV (Dzhamirzoev & Bukreev, 2008)*
 - Dzhamirzoev & Bukreev (2009), EV status in North Caucasus*
 - Karyakin et al. (2018), EV tracking*
 - Strizhova (2025), EV around Nizhnii Novgorod*



**ПЛАНЫ
ДЕЙСТВИЙ**
ПО СОХРАНЕНИЮ
ГЛОБАЛЬНО
УГРОЖАЕМЫХ
ВИДОВ ПТИЦ
В КАВКАЗСКОМ
ЭКОРЕГИОНЕ

**ACTION
PLANS
FOR
CONSERVATION
OF GLOBALLY
THREATENED
BIRDS
IN CAUCASUS
ECO-REGION**



Southern Caucasus

- Egyptian vulture in Armenia and Georgia
 - Education
 - Population assessments
 - 7 EV tagged in Armenia and 3 in Georgia
 - Trail cameras in nests
 - Feeding station in Georgia
 - Fighting wind energy projects



Sothern Caucasus

- Cinereous vulture in Armenia and Georgia
 - 6 CV tagged in 2024-2025 in Armenia*
 - 1 CV tagged in 2024 in Georgia (+2? In 2025)*
 - Identifying breeding areas and population estimates*



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Sothern Caucasus

15 nesting pairs

- Bearded vulture in Armenia
 - 3 BV tagged in Armenia (2022-2024)
 - 1 BV in Georgia?
 - Population monitoring
 - Trail cameras in nests



Southern Caucasus

60-70 nesting pairs

- Griffon vulture in Armenia
Population estimates



48-54 pairs in 2019
(Aghababyan 2019)

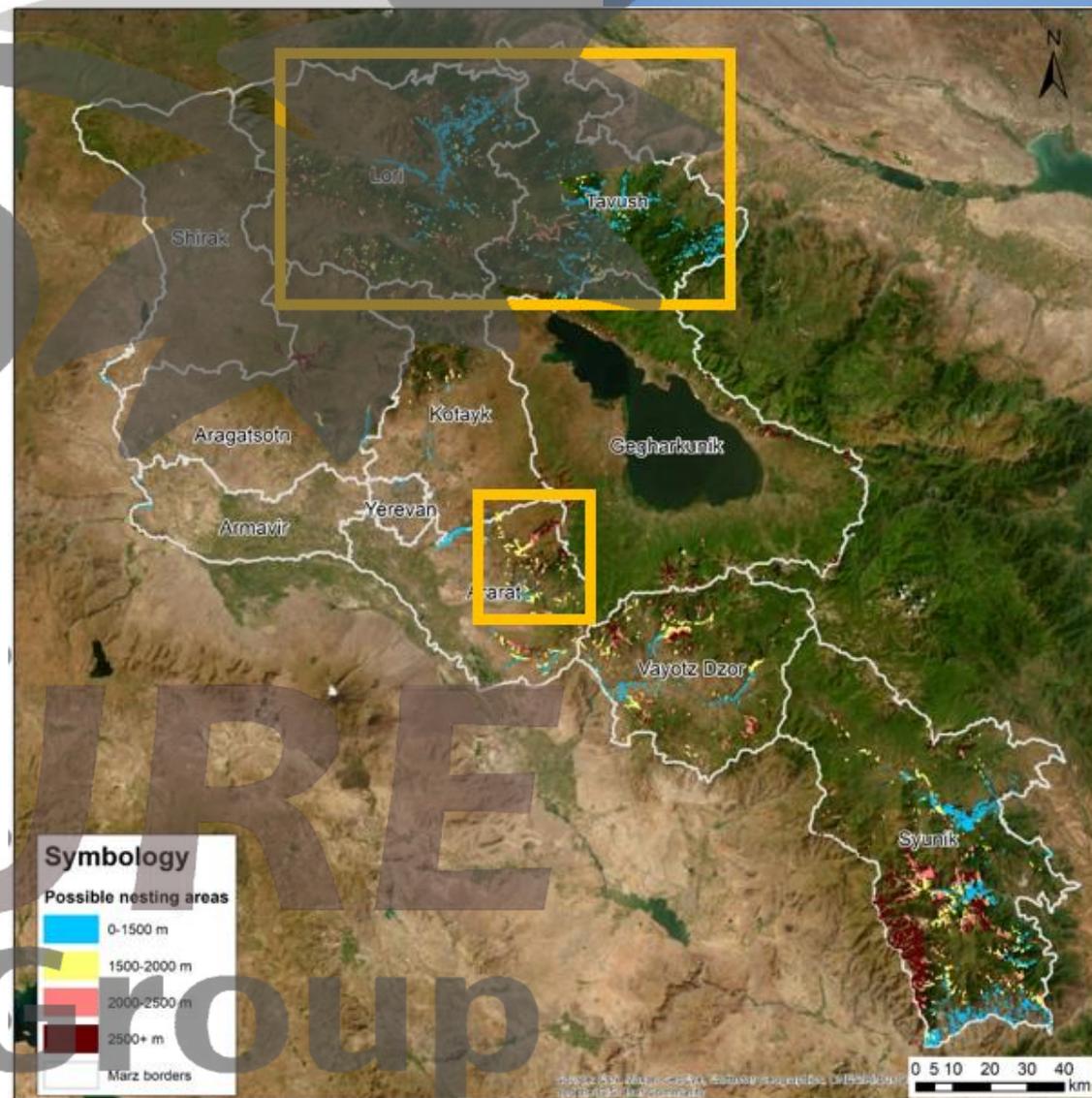
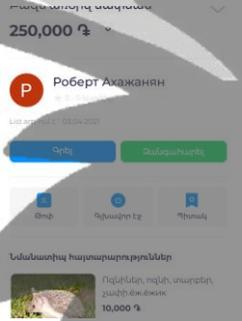


Fig. 1. Distribution map of Griffon Vulture in Armenia in 2019.
Obr. 1. Distribuce supa bělohlavého v Arménii v roce 2019.

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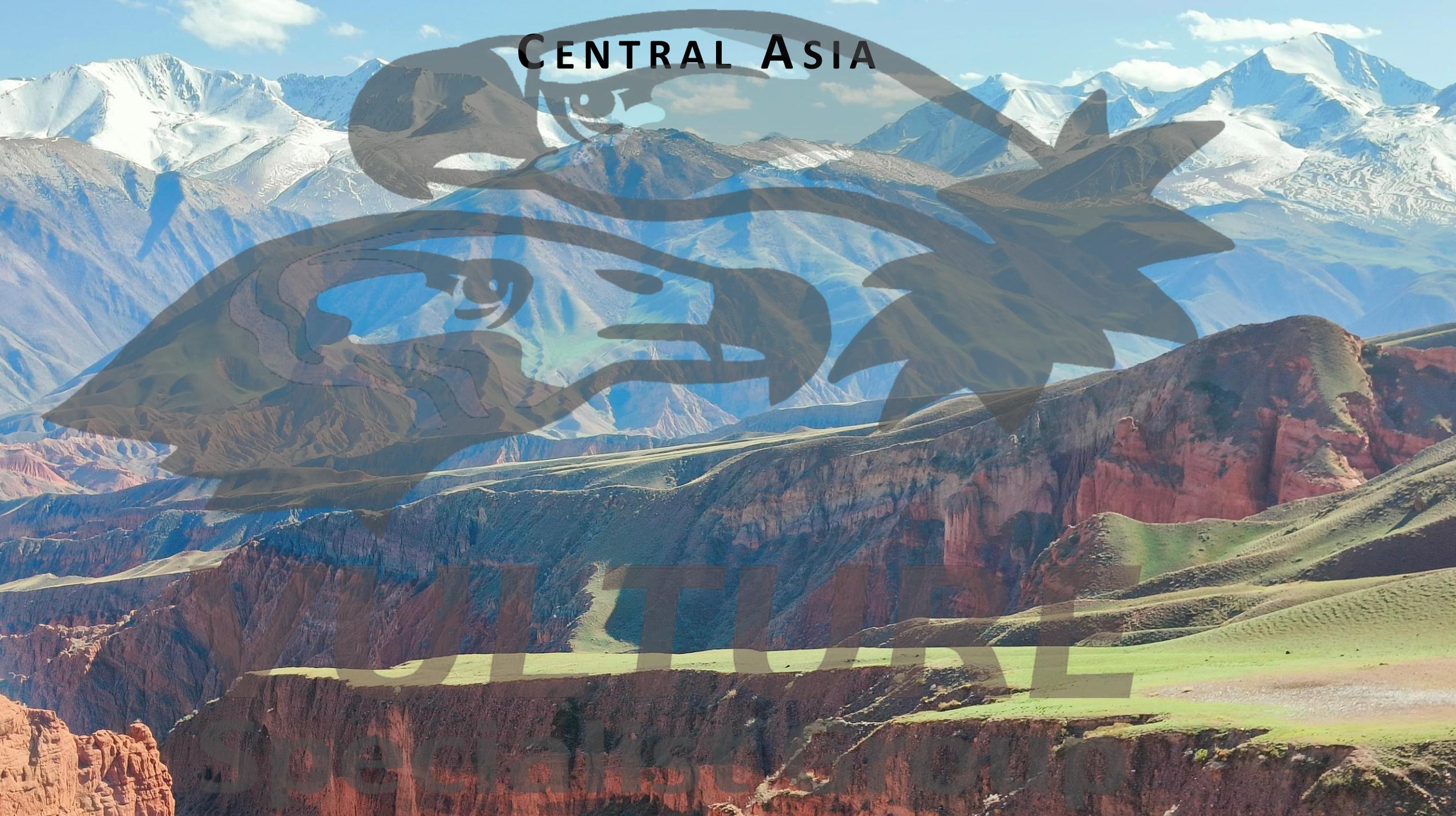
Threats to vultures in Armenia & Georgia

- 1. Poisoning
- 2. Shooting
- 3. Stealing chicks /Illegal trade
- 4. Disturbance – tourism infrastructure, drones
- 5. Collision with energy infrastructures



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CENTRAL ASIA



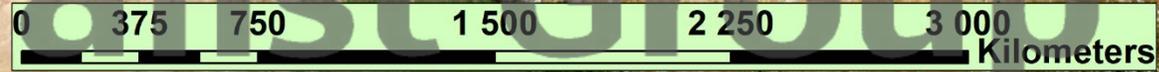


Central Asia

- *Vast region*
- *Almost no systematic or any research on vultures*
- *Central Asian Flyway*



Central Asian Vultures Project



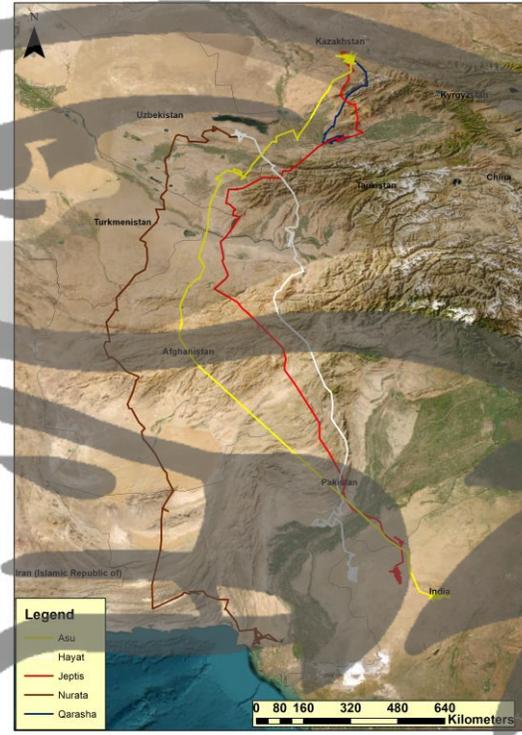
- **Tagging EV and CV**
Population estimates
Threats and Mortality

EV

- Total tagged birds: 31 (18 UZ, 11 KZ, 2 KG) (2021-25);
- Majority wintering in India and Pakistan;
- Analysis of 2021-22 data published in Burnside et al. 2023

CV

- 9 birds tagged in 2024-2025
- Migratory in Central Asia
- Wintering grounds in Pakistan and India



- Congregation sites count and breeding sites monitoring



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Workshops and trainings



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Work and collaboration on the CAF



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**THANK YOU
FOR
YOUR ATTENTION!**

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