

Challenges of flyway conservation: The case for the Egyptian Vulture



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LIFE+ project
„The Return of the Neophron“
(LIFE10 NAT/BG/000152)
www.LifeNeophron.eu

Once upon a time there was a Sacred bird...



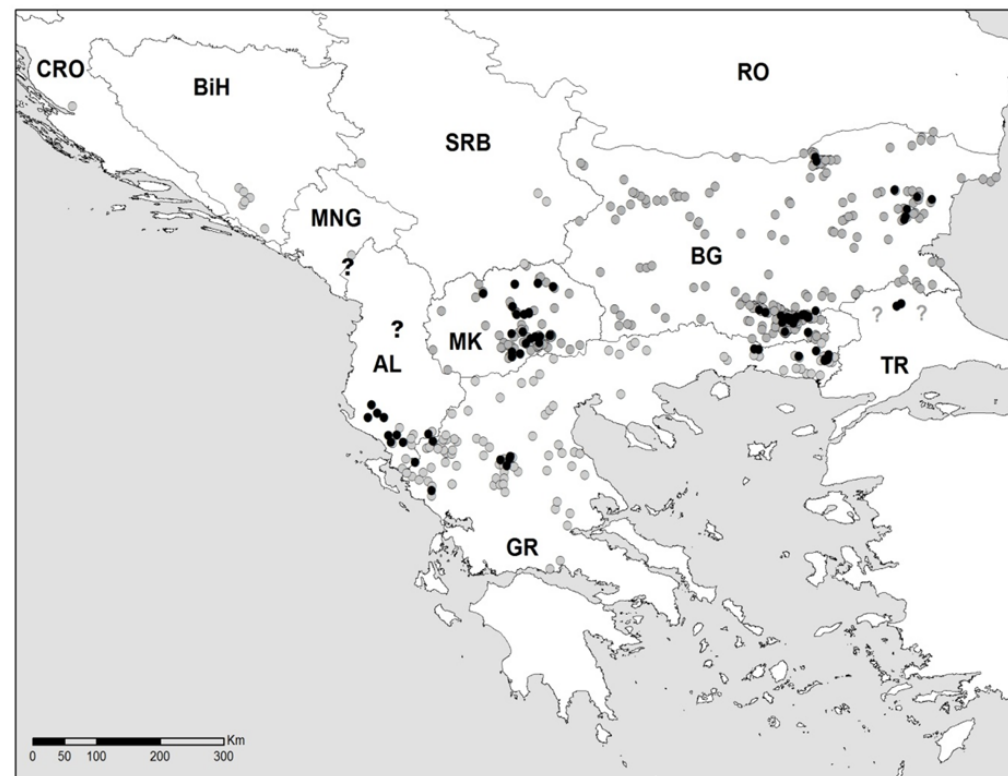
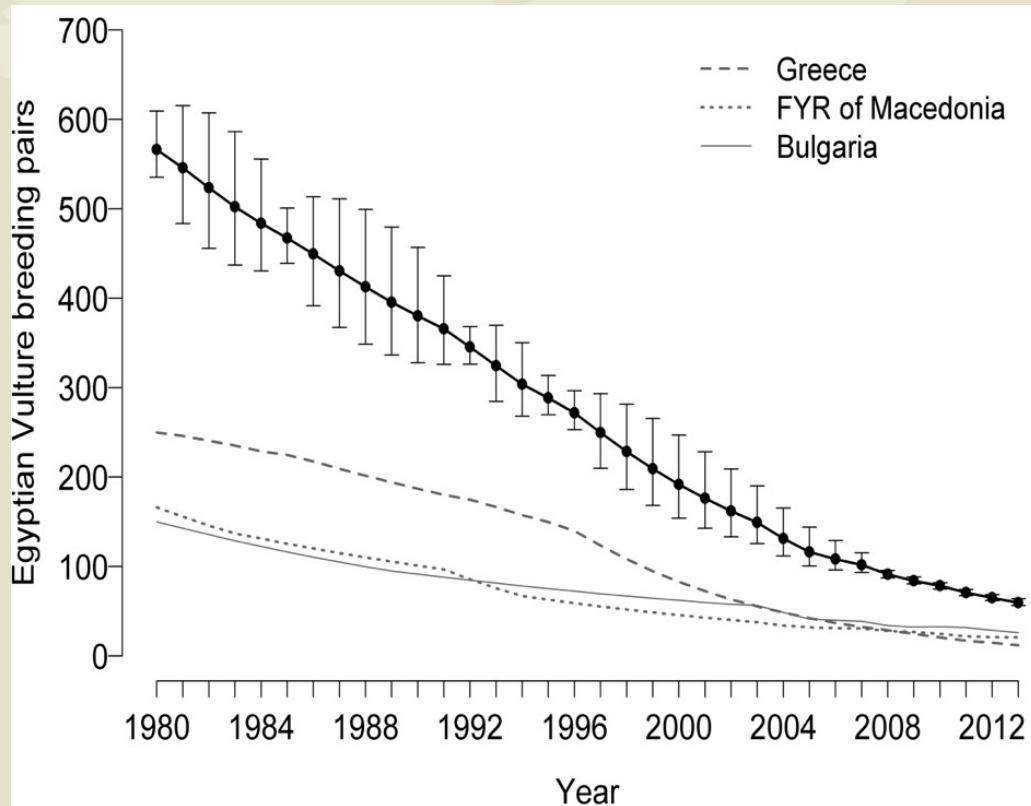


EV global status nowadays





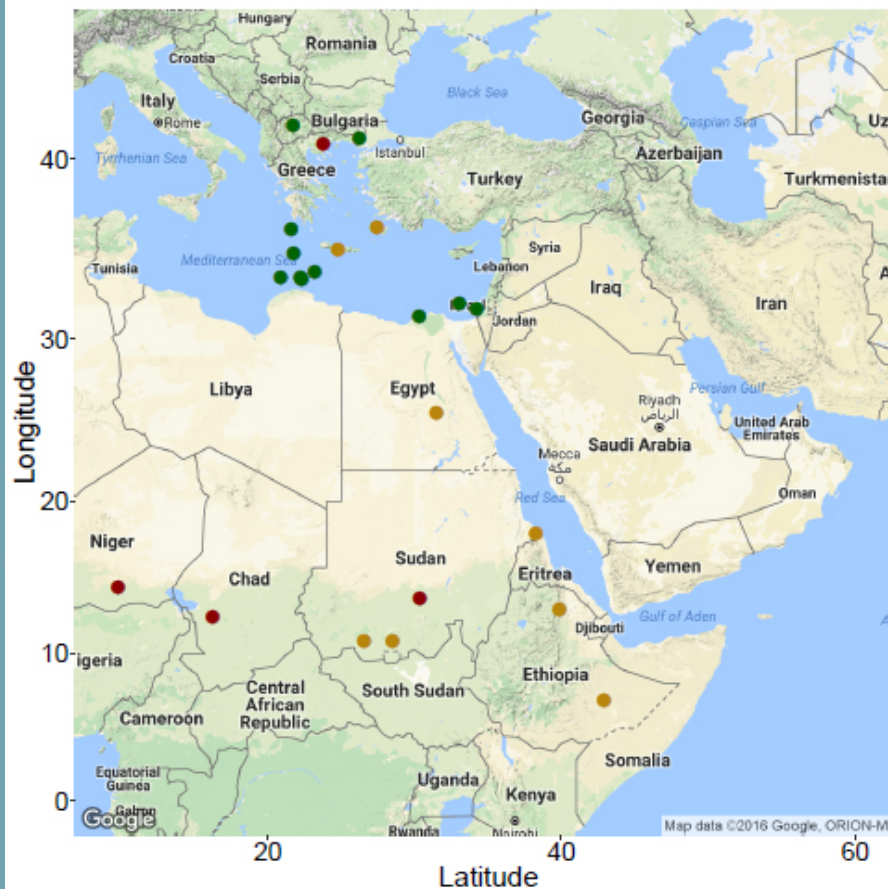
EV status in the Balkans



Velevski et al. 2015



New project – new hope



Vulture Multi-species Action Plan



Flyway Action Plan for the Conservation of the Balkan and Central Asian Populations of the Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* (EVFAP)



Vu

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EVFAP



Geographical scope: Balkans, Central Asia, Caucasian region, Middle East, Central and Eastern Africa

Overall goal: In the long term to improve the conservation status of the EV in the FAP range, initially leading to its downlisting to Vulnerable and eventually achieving a favourable conservation status of the species across its range.

Objective: Maintain the current population level in the areas with stable populations, population decline reversed and population increased by 20% by 2025 in those parts of the FAP range where large declines were reported over the last 30 years.

Expected results: (1) Significant reduction of mortality due to poisoning; (2) Significant reduction of mortality due to illegal killing; (3) Significant reduction of mortality due to electrocution and collision with energy infrastructures; (4) Enhanced breeding population's size and productivity; (5) The EVFAP is endorsed by Range States and effectively implemented in all of them.

Delivery and coordination: It is envisaged that the EVFAP will be implemented over a 10-year period (2016 – 2025). It should be reviewed every five years (with the first review in 2020) and updated every 10 years (first update due in 2026).

Adoption: Integrated as a key component of the Vulture MsAP (submitted for adoption at CMS COP12, October 2017).

NB: EVFAP public consultation exercise until 20th of February!

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The importance of the Middle East region in the life cycle of the Egyptian Vulture



BREEDING

Population size: 3,000 pairs

Strongholds: Turkey (1,500 p.); Yemen (>800 p.), Iran (300 p.) & Oman (>100 p.)

Population trend: Stable

Precision of estimate: Poor to medium

MIGRATION

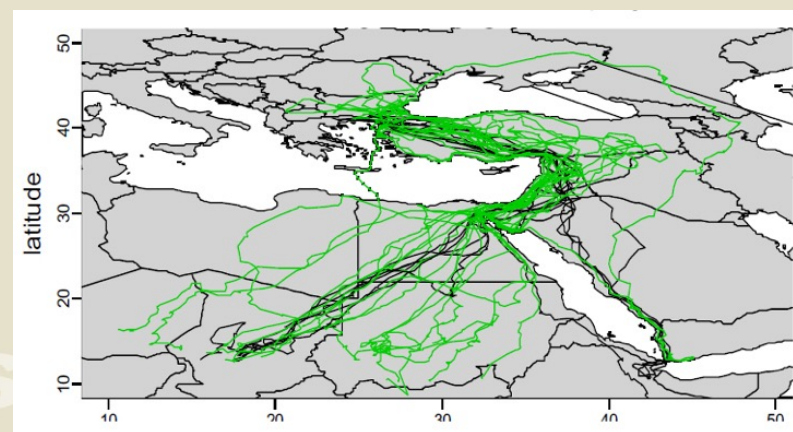
Population size: 2,000 ind. migrating over the region annually

Bottlenecks: Bab-el Mandeb (Red Sea: ca 1,200 ind.)
Iskenderun (Turkey: ca 550 ind.) & Suez (Egypt / ?)

WINTERING

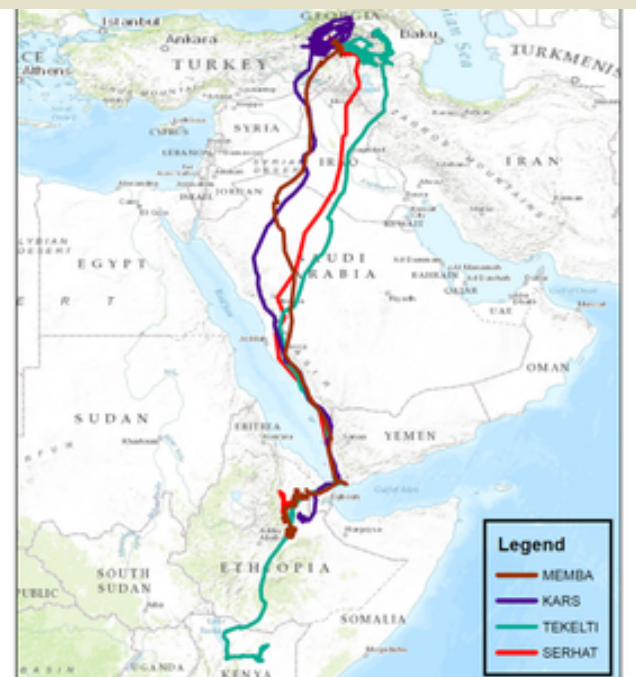
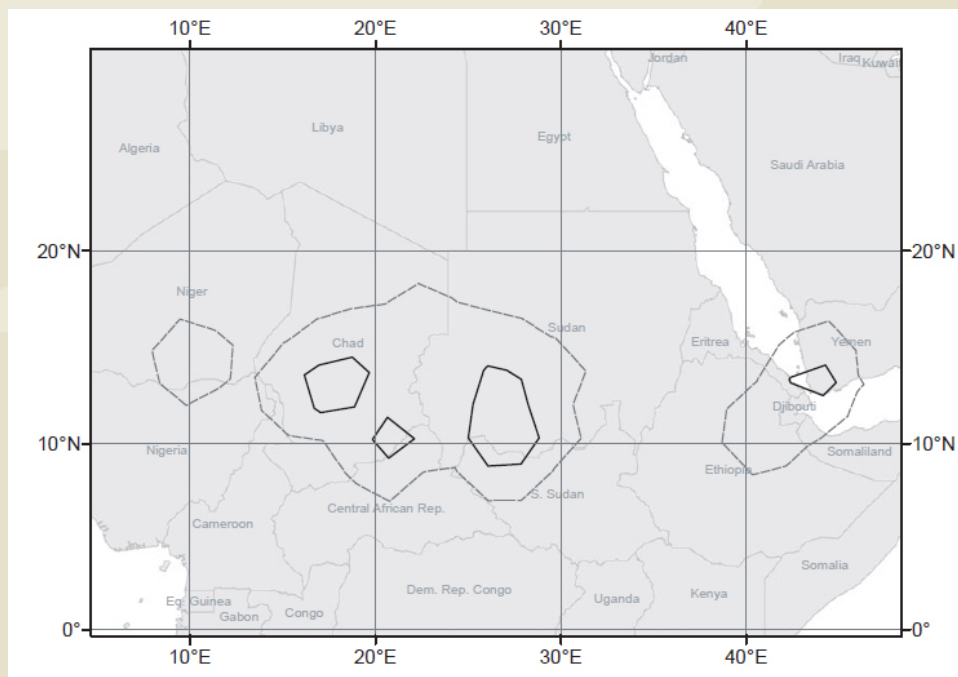
Population size: > 1,000 wintering ind.

Strongholds: Yemen, Oman (resident) & Iran





Partial overlap of wintering grounds in Africa with Balkan and Central Asian populations (based on tagging)



Afar region (Ethiopia), holding > 1,000 wintering ind. per year

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Main threats for the breeding EVs in the Middle East



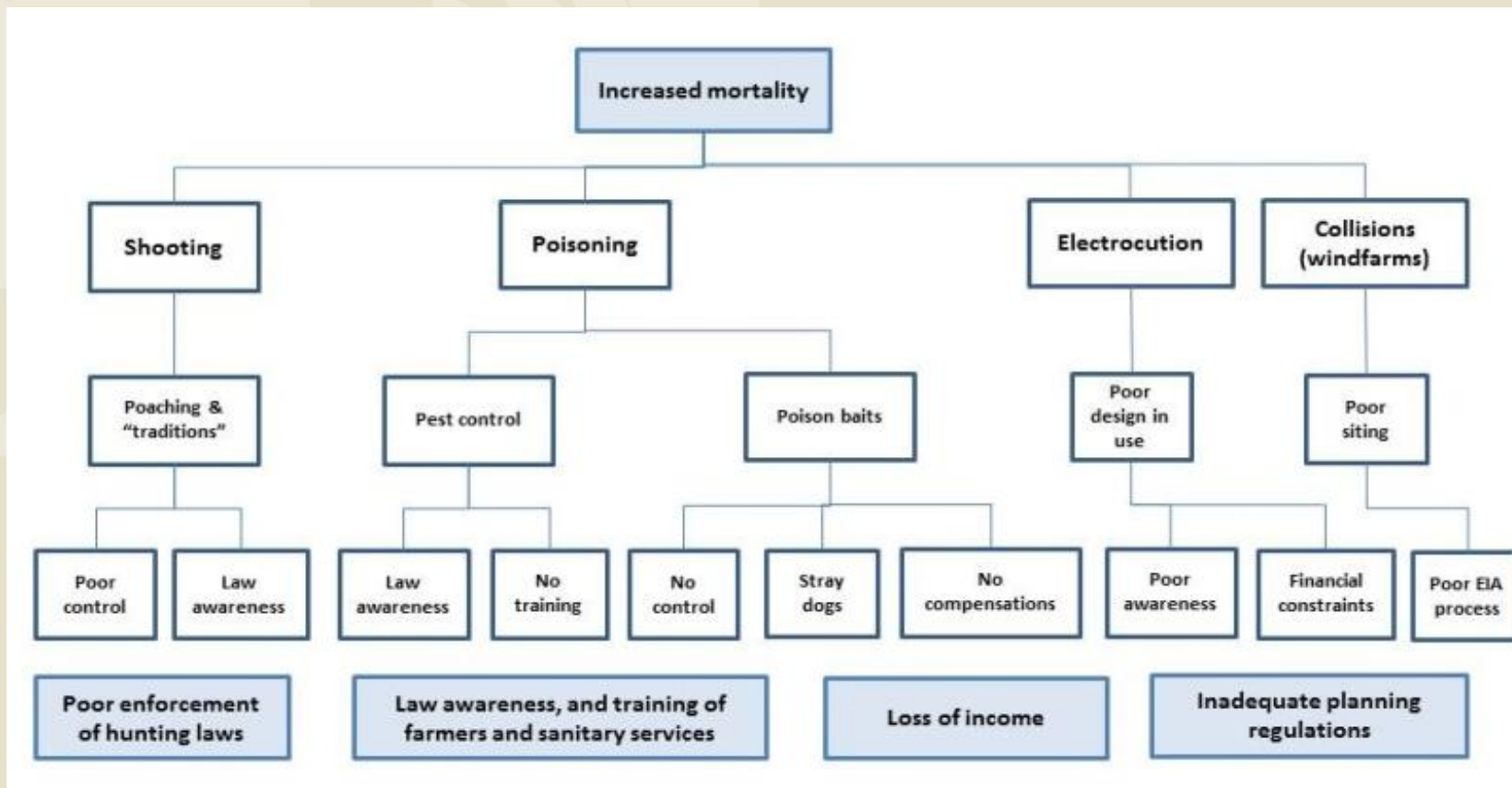
Information collected through the EVFAP questionnaire (2015):

- Habitat loss & degradation
- Construction of large power infrastructure (i.e. collision & electrocution)
- Illegal shooting
- Poisoning

Information collected through the Vulture MsAP questionnaire (2016):

- Unintentional poisoning
- Collision with wind turbines
- Collision with power lines
- Decline of wild ungulates (lack of food) – Iran
- Poisoning at dumping sites – Lack of waste management
- Disturbance
- Hunting / Poaching
- Habitat loss

Problem tree for the migrating EVs through the Middle East



EVFAP conclusion regarding threats: The major common threats along the flyway were poisoning, electrocution, collisions, and direct persecution.



Proposed strategic direction for conservation in the context of the EVFAP and Vulture MsAP



Conservation priorities:

- Reduce threat from all types of poisoning
- Reduce illegal killing, trade and disturbance
- Prevent electrocution and collisions (turbines)
- Build capacity in Asia, Africa and Middle East
- Promote research
- Improve exchange of information

Mechanisms to promote conservation priorities

- Coordination mechanism(s)
- Information exchange
- Support of MEAs, Governments, NGOs, etc.

Vulture Multi-species Action Plan



Proposed strategic direction for conservation in the context of the EVFAP and Vulture MsAP



Existing instruments

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) – National SAPs
- CITES (International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime)
- Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) - Raptors MoU
 - CMS Resolution 11.15 – Preventing poisoning of migratory birds
 - CMS Resolution 11.16 – Preventing illegal killing of migratory birds
 - CMS Resolution 11.27 – Multi-stakeholder Energy Task Force
- EU LIFE Programme (can include actions outside of the EU)
- EU African Wildlife Strategy (European Commission DG DEVCO)
- Bilateral donors, GEF, Foundations, Grants, etc.

Needs:

- Long-term research and monitoring
- Designation of protected areas (outside the EU)
- Building conservation capacity
- Improving exchange of information
- Coordination of NGO driven initiatives
- Partnerships with industry (e.g. energy, agriculture)
- Improving awareness-raising and publicity

Vulture MsAP Species Action Plan



Will our children know what is an Egyptian vulture?

THE RESPONSIBILITY IS TO ALL OF US!



Vulture Multi-species Action Plan

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