



## BULGARIAN SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

Bulgaria, Sofia 1111, Yavorov complex, block 71,  
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### 1 - Executive Summary

on the project

#### “Capacity Building to Support the Conservation of Migratory Egyptian Vultures (*Neophron percnopterus*) from the Western Palearctic on their Wintering Grounds in Ethiopia, Sudan and Chad” (Project ID: SSFA/CMSAD/2012/004)

**Funding:** Coordinating Unit of the UNEP/CMS Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MoU)

**Beneficiary:** Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds / BirdLife Bulgaria

**Date of reporting:** 14.03.2014

**Reported by:** Stoyan Nikolov (Project Manager; +359 878 599 372; stoyan.nikolov@bspb.org)

**Aim of the report:** To shortly summarize the information about (a) How the project met the objectives set out in the SSFA?; (b) What were the lessons learned?; and, (c) What have been the follow-up benefits?

#### 1. Achievement of the objectives set out in the SSFA

- **Objective 1:** To facilitate the implementation of conservation measures for the migratory populations of Egyptian Vultures in Eastern and Central Africa. **What was achieved:** The capacity built in the trainees during the project served as a good background for the implementation of conservation measures for the species (for examples see Follow-up benefits).
- **Objective 2:** To build capacity amongst African conservationists to work with the species by (i) broaden the understanding of threats to Egyptian vulture, (ii) by implementing field training on species-specific research and conservation methods in Africa. **What was achieved:** Capacity to work with the species (in terms of increased level of expertise and applying species-specific methods) was built in Ethiopia, Sudan, Djibouti, Chad and Somalia. For the first four countries the trainees demonstrated capacity to work with the species even after the project.
- **Objective 3:** To initiate research in two very little known wintering areas of the species in Western Sudan and Chad and made rough assessment of the population numbers and limiting factors. **What was achieved:** Studies were implemented in Sudan and Chad, and as an added value result – in Ethiopia. Important results on the numbers of wintering Egyptian vultures and threats were delivered for Afar, Ethiopia – the biggest congregation of the species in Eastern Africa. Direct persecution of Egyptian vultures because of satellite transmitters were evidenced in Sudan.



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- **Implementation of the foreseen activities:** all activities were implemented as foreseen except for the smaller number of participants from African countries on the seminar in Bulgaria.

### 2. Lessons learned

- It is logistically easier and less expensive to organize an event in African country than in an EU member state;
- Participants from African countries do not feel confident to travel to EU (we faced also some visa issue problems).
- Trainees demonstrated strong financial interest to the project (most of them were looking at the project as a source of financial benefit rather than an opportunity to increase their professional capacity).

### 3. Follow-up benefits

#### 3.1. Involvement of the trainees in Egyptian Vulture related projects and conservation actions

- All the trainees were included as members in the international Egyptian vulture e-mail group and regularly updated on the news on the species.
- Based on the skills obtained during the training seminar in Ethiopia, the trainee from Djibouti (Eleyeh Omar) participated in a project implemented by Djibouti Nature / BirdLife Djibouti related to monitoring the Egyptian vulture migration in Djibouti and [assisted satellite tagging of Egyptian vulture](#).
- The trainee (Yilma Abebe) from EWNHS / BirdLife Ethiopia demonstrated strong interest to continue working with the species and in February 2014, under the assistance of BSPB, he submitted a small grant project proposal ([to Fondation Ensemble](#)) dealing with threats analysis on the wintering Egyptian Vultures in Afar.
- Based on the networking created during the project, the trainee from the EWNHS was actively participating in the investigation on the mass dog poisoning in Addis Ababa and potential effects on vultures.
- The trainee (Ibrahim Hashim) from SWS played a key role in the [disconnection of the Egyptian Vulture killer power line](#) in Port Sudan.

#### 3.2. Publications

- Abebe, Y.D., 2013, Vulture News, 64: 74-76.
- Scientific publication on the results from the post-training survey in Ethiopia is under preparation by BSPB and EWNHS and will be submitted by April 2014 in ISI journal.

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### 2 - FINAL SUMMARY REPORT

on the project

“Capacity Building to Support the Conservation of Migratory Egyptian Vultures (*Neophron percnopterus*) from the Western Palearctic on their Wintering Grounds in Ethiopia, Sudan and Chad”

(Project ID: SSFA/CMSAD/2012/004)



Photo: Stoyan Nikolov ©

**Period covered by the report:** January-August 2013

**Funding:** Coordinating Unit of the UNEP/CMS Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MoU)

**Beneficiary:** Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds / BirdLife Bulgaria

**Date of report:** 12.12.2013

**Reported by:** Stoyan Nikolov (Project Manager; +359 878 599 372; stoyan.nikolov@bspb.org)

Project “Capacity Building to Support the Conservation of Migratory Egyptian Vultures (*Neophron percnopterus*) from the Western Palearctic on their Wintering Grounds in Ethiopia, Sudan and Chad”

**SSFA/CMSAD/2012/004**





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## 1. Abbreviations

**BSPB** – Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds

**DD** – Doga Dernegi

**HOS** – Hellenic Ornithological Society

**MES** – Macedonian Ecological Society

**PPNEA** – Association for Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania

**PTS** – Post-training surveys

**RSPB** – Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

**SPA** – Special Protected Area

**SSFA** - Small Scale Funding Agreement

**SWS** – Sudanese Wildlife Society

**TSB** – Training Seminar in Bulgaria

**TSE** – Training Seminar in Ethiopia

**WWF** – World Wide Fund for Nature

## 2. Background information

Based on the alarming situation with Egyptian vulture on the Balkans, an SSFA implemented by BSPB and funded by the Coordinating Unit of the UNEP/CMS Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MoU) started in September 2012.

The SSFA aimed to facilitate the undertaking of conservation measures for the migratory populations of Egyptian Vultures wintering in Eastern and Central Africa. The objectives were /1/ to build capacity among African conservationists to work with the species by (i) broaden the understanding of the Egyptian Vulture problems, (ii) by implementing of field training on species-specific research and conservation methods in Africa; and /2/ to initiate research in two very little known wintering areas of the species in Western Sudan and Chad and made rough assessment of the population numbers and limiting factors.

The project consisted of three actions: /1/ Training seminar and survey in Ethiopia; /2/ Supporting post-training surveys of the trainees; and /3/ Training seminar in Bulgaria.

The SSFA was implemented in close collaboration with the LIFE+ project "[The Return of the Neophron](#)" (project ID: LIFE10 NAT/BG/000152, funded by the European Union and co-funded by the "A. G. Leventis Foundation").



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### 3. Summary Technical Report

#### 3.1. ACTION 1: Training Seminar in Ethiopia (TSE)



Photo: Volen Arkumarev ©

#### Aim

The TSE represents an unique opportunity to gather conservationists from the wintering grounds of the critically endangered Balkan population of the Egyptian Vulture (Sudan and Chad) and some neighboring countries (Ethiopia, Djibouti and Somalia) in order to enhance their capacity for research and conservation of the species at local level.

#### Outcomes

The TSE took place in Ethiopia and consisted of two parts: theoretical (in Addis Ababa, 9-10.01.2013) and practical (in Afar, Central and Northern Ethiopia, 11-19.01.2013).



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A total of 5 conservationists from 5 countries (Chad, Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia and Djibouti) took participation in the TSE as trainees. Three persons from BSPB (project: LIFE10 NAT/BG/000152) took participation in the Seminar as trainers.

The TSE consisted of two parts: theoretical (2 days) and practical (9 days). During the theoretical part, presentations and information materials (on the status of the species in Europe and Africa; methodological guidelines for research and conservation activities) were provided to the trainees. During the practical part, trainees were directly involved in a survey on the wintering vultures in Afar. Demonstrations on the methodological approach to search for breeding Egyptian vultures and their nests, as well on the threats were made.

### Materials attached as *Annex I*:

1. TSE Programme
2. TSE List of participants
3. Presentation on the main concepts of the project LIFE10 NAT/BG/000152 and the funding agreement SSFA/CMSAD/2012/002
4. Presentation on the results from the project LIFE10 NAT/BG/000152 in 2012
5. Presentation on the global status of the Egyptian Vulture
6. Presentation on the methodologies for surveying wintering Egyptian vultures
7. Presentation on the methodologies for surveying breeding Egyptian vultures
8. Presentation on the limiting factors on the Egyptian vulture
9. Guidelines for age identification of Egyptian vultures
10. Short methodological guidelines for surveying Egyptian vultures



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### 3.2. ACTION 2: Post-training Surveys (PST)



Photo: Volen Arkumarev ©

#### Aim

The PTS followed after the training seminar held in January 2013 in Ethiopia. The most devoted and motivated trainees from Ethiopia, Sudan and Chad were advised to prepare small research projects on the species.

#### Outcomes

Three PTS have been implemented by trainees from Ethiopia, Sudan and Chad. The Action 2 of the project helped for building capacity of conservationist working with the Egyptian vulture in EWNHS/BirdLife Ethiopia, SWS/BirdLife Sudan and Ministry of Environment in Chad.

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### Survey in Ethiopia

The survey in Ethiopia was held in January 2013. A total of 1078 wintering Egyptian vultures were recorded. Notes on the pylons and habitats they are using were collected, together with information on potential threats. The survey in Ethiopia demonstrated lower number of wintering Egyptian vultures in Afar area (the highest known concentration of wintering Egyptian vultures in Eastern Africa) compared to previous years.

### Survey in Sudan

The survey in Sudan was held in January – February 2013. It was focused on the Kordofan and Darfur regions which were expected to shelter significant numbers of wintering Egyptian vultures, based on the data from satellite telemetry. Part of the data was collected directly in the field, and other part – distantly and from the literature, because of *force major* circumstances (war in the area). This report showed important information about direct persecution of tagged Egyptian vultures, because of the tracking devices which are considered as 'spy' tools.

### Survey in Chad

The survey in Chad was hold in March 2013, in the region Hadjer-lamis located north of the Capital and the Region of Batha located at 500 km northeast of the capital N'djamena. Data on the habitat type, potential concentrations, notes on ecology and threats on the Egyptian vultures were reported.

### **Materials attached as *Annex* @@**

1. Report on the survey in Chad
2. Report on the survey in Ethiopia
3. Report on the survey in Sudan





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### 3.3. ACTION 3: Training Seminar in Bulgaria



Photo: Dimitar Gradinarov ©

#### Aim

This seminar aimed to gather conservationists from the Balkans and Africa (the most devoted and motivated trainees from actions 1 & 2 from the current project) to consolidate the commitment and effectiveness in their work with the Egyptian Vulture by visiting an active international LIFE+ project (“The Return of the Neophron”, LIFE10 NAT/BG/000152) on the research and conservation of the species. By this event, the seminar participants are having the opportunity to visit the core population of the species on the Balkans and directly see how the system is working (real ‘know how’ lessons). Experts on Egyptian vulture from Bulgaria deliver training on vulture research techniques (nest monitoring, taking samples, fitting transmitters, data analysis).



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### Outcomes

As foreseen in the project document, 7-days training seminar was organized in Bulgaria (SPA Madjarovo) gathering EV experts and conservationists from the Balkans (all countries still sheltering EV breeding populations: Bulgaria, Greece, FYROM, Albania and Turkey), Western Europe (UK) and Africa (Sudan). Knowledge on the research and conservation of the EV was transmitted from team from the LIFE+ project "The Return of the Neophron" (LIFE10 NAT/BG/000152) by theoretical and practical activities.

A total of 27 participants from 7 countries (Bulgaria, Greece, FYROM, Albania, Turkey, UK and Sudan) took participation in the seminar. Organizations involved were BSPB/BirdLife Bulgaria, HOS/BirdLife Greece, WWF Greece, RSPB/BirdLife UK, DD/BirdLife Turkey, MES/BirdLife Macedonia, PPNEA, SWS/BirdLife Sudan.

The Seminar consisted of two parts: theoretical and practical. During the theoretical part, a total of 10 presentations were made, demonstrating different methods the research and conservation of the EV, as well as underlining the importance of the future international collaboration. During the practical part, participants were trained in practices for monitoring of breeding territories, nest guarding, supplementary feeding, tagging EVs with satellite transmitters, collecting blood samples and samples for pathogens. An open discussion on the priorities in the future research and conservation work for the EV Balkan population was held.

### Materials attached as *Annex*

1. TSB programme
2. List of participants
3. Presentation 1: Introduction
4. Presentation 2: Egyptian vulture status
5. Presentation 3: Monitoring techniques
6. Presentation 4: Nest guarding & Supplementary feeding



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7. Presentation 5: Public awareness
8. Presentation 6: Anti-poison work
9. Presentation 7: Collecting samples
10. Presentation 8: Telemetry
11. Presentation 9: Social lapwing – international species action plan
12. Presentation 10: Importance of the international collaboration
13. Results from the open discussion during the seminar

