



LIFE EGYPTIAN VULTURE - Measures for the conservation of the Egyptian vulture in Italy and the Canary Islands

LIFE16 NAT/IT/000659



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#### Project description:

##### Background

The Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) is listed as endangered in the European IUCN Red List and is included in Annex I of the Birds Directive and Appendix II of the Bern, Bonn and CITES conventions. The populations of the species are declining through much of the rest of its world range, owing to a variety of threats. In Europe the species has seen a severe long-term decline in Europe (>50% over the last three generations) because of a strong decrease in the breeding rate and an increase in the adult mortality rate, due to several factors associated with habitat quality, disturbance and persecution.

In Italy, the species is close to extinction as its breeding distribution is restricted to three southern regions (Basilicata, Calabria and Sicily), where only eight pairs were counted in 2015. An endemic non-migratory subspecies of high conservation value, *Neophron percnopterus majorensis*, lives on the Canary Islands; this population is apparently increasing, but human-related mortality is still affecting its demography. Furthermore, pairs are relatively few (about 60) and concentrated on the island of Fuerteventura.

##### Objectives

The LIFE EGYPTIAN VULTURE project aims to improve the conservation status of two Egyptian vulture populations, in Italy and the Canary Islands, by defining and spreading best practices for captive-breeding and restocking programs.

In particular, the main project goals are to:

- Avoid the extinction of the Egyptian vulture in Italy;
- Increase the demographics of both populations;
- Expand the breeding ranges;
- Make the migration of Egyptian vultures in Italy safer by mitigating the impact of dangerous medium-tension power lines;
- Share best practices for conserving the Egyptian vulture in Europe; and
- Increase the knowledge of limiting factors affecting the population dynamics.

Expected results:

- An increase in the number of individuals in the project areas;
- Settlement of 2-3 new territorial pairs in southern Italy;
- Settlement of 2-3 territorial pairs on the island of Lanzarote;
- An increase in the wild pairs' breeding success;
- Reduction of the poisoning risk;
- Reduction of human disturbances, direct persecution and poaching at nesting sites;
- Reduction in the electrocution risk (by 60% on the Canary Islands);
- Reduction of the poaching risk to migrating Egyptian vultures during their stopovers in southwest Sicily;
- Improvement of the captive-breeding techniques of the species;
- Release in Italy of about 25-40 captive-bred young Egyptian vultures;
- Release on the Canary Islands of about 3-8 captive-bred young;
- Improvement in the availability of captive-bred young individuals to be released in the project areas and in other European countries;
- Definition of the release techniques most suitable to ensure the highest survival rates of the released captive-bred young to contribute to the restocking of wild populations;
- Increased knowledge about the migration routes and wintering grounds of Egyptian vultures in Italy;
- Increased knowledge of the threats affecting the Egyptian vulture population in Italy (also during migration and in its wintering grounds) and in the Canaries, which will be useful for their long-term conservation;
- Enlargement and/or establishment of new special protection areas in sensitive sites for the species;
- A positive stance on the Egyptian vulture by local stakeholders; and
- Creation of a permanent network at European level of the stakeholders involved in the conservation of the Egyptian vulture.

Results

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Environmental issues addressed:

Themes

Species - Birds

Keywords

introduction of animal species

Target EU Legislation

- Nature protection and Biodiversity
- Directive 79/409 - Conservation of wild birds (02.04.1979)
- Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals - CMS (01/11/1983)
- COM(2011) 244 final "Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 ..."

Target species

Neophron percnopterus

Natura 2000 sites

SCI IT9130007 Area delle Gravine

SCI IT9220135 Gravine di Matera

SCI IT9310068 Vallone S. Elia

SCI ITA010005 Laghetti di Preola e Gorgi Tondi e Sciare di Mazara

SPAIT9210271 Appennino Lucano, Valle Agri, Monte Sirino, Monte Raparo

SPAIT9310303 Pollino e Orsomarso

SPAITA010031 Laghetti di Preola e Gorgi Tondi, Sciare di Mazara e Pantano Leone

SPAITA020050 Parco delle Madonie

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Beneficiaries:

Coordinator

e-distribuzione S.p.A.

Type of organisation

Large enterprise

Description	E-distribuzione is part of the Enel Group, a main Italian provider of electric energy, managing some 1.14 million km of electric power lines of medium and low tension. In the past, Enel has been involved in three LIFE projects: as beneficiary in LIFE95 NAT/IT/000617 - “Urgent protection, conservation and management measures for the Alviano Oasis - Special Protection Area”; as a partner in LIFE00 NAT/IT/007142 - “Improvement of the habitats of CIS through restoration and/or transformation of electrical plants existing and under construction in the Po Delta Park”; and as a partner in LIFE08 NAT/IT/000332 - “Measures for the conservation of Chiroptera and Avifauna in Central Italy”.
Partners	Gestión y Planeamiento Territorial y Medioambiental S.A., Spain Istituto Superiore per la Protezione e la Ricerca Ambientale, Italy ENDESA DISTRIBUCIÓN ELÉCTRICA, S.L., Spain Regione Basilicata - Dipartimento Ambiente e Energia, Italy Regione Puglia - Dipartimento Mobilità, Qualità urbana, Opere pubbliche, Ecologia e Paesaggio, Italy Gobierno de Canarias - Dirección General de Protección de la Naturaleza, Spain Federazione Italiana dei Parchi e delle Riserve Naturali Europarc Italia, Italy

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#### Administrative data:

Project reference	LIFE16 NAT/IT/000659
Duration	01-OCT-2017 to 30-SEP -2022
Total budget	5,084,605.00 €
EU contribution	3,813,146.00 €
Project location	Canarias(España) Puglia(Italia) Basilicata(Italia) Sicilia(Italia)

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