



**«Actions to protect, conserve and promote biodiversity. Field studies of endemic, endangered and nationally important species of Greece». Funded by the Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency (NECCA)**

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## **TITLE**

**Wintering Movements of Egyptian Vultures: novel insights and management implications**

(Project ID: 13694)

## **PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR**

**ANASTASIOS BOUNAS**

## **HOST INSTITUTION**

UNIVERSITY OF IOANNINA

## **ABSTRACT**

The Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) is an endangered species that suffers a steep decline throughout its range. In Greece the species has also showed a dramatic decline in the last decades thus leading to its assessment as Critically Endangered (CR) according to the IUCN criteria. Populations of the Egyptian vulture in continental Europe are migratory, moving from their breeding territories to wintering areas in sub-Saharan Africa. However, as is the case with other migratory raptors, during the last decade Egyptian vultures have been observed in southern Spain, southern Turkey, Crete and Sicily during the winter. The survival of these wintering individuals may facilitate a change in strategy of long-distance migrants and ultimately lead to a regular wintering or even resident populations in those areas. Population monitoring is a major first step towards systematic data collection that can be used to better understand and assess factors that underlie ecological and evolutionary processes in migration ecology and integrate them in conservation and management decisions. The aim of this proposed project is to provide further insight into the Balkan population's wintering strategy changes by means of an overview of current occurrences of Egyptian vultures wintering on the island of Crete. To achieve this, the project will implement a combination of (1) direct field observations and (2) monitoring of vulture feeding sites. Collected data will be supplemented by (a) observations retrieved online (citizen science platforms and/or social media searches) and (b) satellite telemetry data, to further assess habitat use and possible threats faced by wintering individuals. Such study will fill the knowledge gaps on the wintering movements of Egyptian vultures in the Balkan population and will allow for the design of management actions that increase the species' resilience to environmental change.

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