

Vulture Conservation Foundation



In order to protect and recover all four European vulture species (Bearded Vulture, Black Vulture, Egyptian Vulture and Griffon Vulture) in the long term, the Vulture Conservation Foundation (VCF) seeks to attain these goals through a wide series of activities and programs. Vultures occupy the highest part of the ecological pyramid and therefore it is necessary to work on different levels of this ecosystem. Balancing the ecological and human processes compatible to the conservation of the biodiversity and the development of socio-economic activities. One of the main tools is to protect habitats, to battle the vultures' threats, raising awareness and to support the rural development, promoting the pastoralism, transhumance and ecotourism. The Vulture conservation actions contribute to the conservation of many species and habitats and recover ecological processes.

In September 2009 the Black Vulture Conservation Foundation (BVCF) and the Foundation for Conservation of the Bearded Vulture (FCBV) merged into a single entity: the Vulture Conservation Foundation (VCF), based as well at Wassenaar, The Netherlands. The VCF continues the successful work of its founding organizations and coordinates actions for all four European vulture species: the Black vulture (*Aegypius monachus*), the Griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*), the Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) and the Bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*).



Vulture recovery success

The conservation of vultures has a long history in Europe. In the 60's the first vulture feeding places were built in Navarra and a close cooperation was born between Spain, France and experts from IUCN. Following these first efforts, the first Griffon vulture reintroduction project (into the Cevennes) began in 1968.

In 1978, experts decided to breed and reintroduce Bearded vultures to the Alpine mountain ecosystem. After 30 years of efforts over 150 birds have been reintroduced, and now 15 pairs of Bearded vultures are breeding again in the Alps. In 2006 the reintroduction of the bearded vulture started in the mountains of Cazorla, Andalusia. Now, 10 Bearded vultures fly over this territory. In Mallorca the Black vulture population had been reduced to only 20 individuals in the early 1980s. However thanks to an extensive program of interventions, the last black vulture island population in the world now stands at 120

individuals and 14 reproductive pairs. In 1992, the reintroduction of the Black vulture in France started. Presently France counts with three vulture colonies: Cevennes with 21 pairs and Verdon and Barronnies with 4 pairs. In the Catalan Pyrenees the black vulture was recently introduced and counts at the moment with 14 individuals.

Bearded and black vulture breeding program

The VCF, in collaboration with the European Endangered Species Breeding Program (EEP), carries out the breeding in captivity program of Bearded and Black Vultures. This program maintains a network of more than 50 institutions across Europe (zoos and breeding centres). Breeding of the Bearded vulture in Europe is coordinated by the Richard Faust Breeding Centre in Vienna, Austria, maintaining a breeding pool of 35 pairs of Bearded vultures. The

Black vulture breeding program manages a breeding pool of 80 pairs.

Stop Poison in Europe: Antidote program

Since 1997 the campaign against the illegal use of poison in the wild has been one of the priority assignments in order to conserve scavenger species.



This campaign has recently been reinforced by the creation of the European Antidote Secretariat and the green telephone line SOS POISON, a free telephone service whose purpose is to enable cases of poisoned fauna to be reported all over Spain. Since the beginning of the program police units and authorities of several autonomous communities of Spain, Portugal, Italy,

Macedonia, Serbia, Bulgaria and other countries have been trained. Action protocols against the illegal use of poison have been established in several countries and various local antidote programs have been created across Europe. The Foundation has prosecuted more than 12 cases with positive results on The Courts.

The Balkan Vulture Action Plan

The Balkan Vulture Action Plan (BVAP), coordinated by the VCF at the centre in Mallorca, unites at least 23 organizations in seven Balkan countries so far. During the last eight years, by these joint efforts it was possible to know the status, threats and conservation needs of the four vulture species across the Balkans. It made it possible to stabilize the Griffon vulture population in Macedonia and Croatia and increase the colony of Serbia, which has the largest population of the Balkans. Work has been done to provide the best conditions for all four vulture species in the framework of the Balkan Vulture Action Plan, combining activities against the poison, education and raising capacity of the local NGOs.

After 6 years creating the right conditions, in 2009 the reintroduction of the griffon vultures took off in the Stara Planina



Local and international cooperation for nature conservation as a tool for socio-economic development

Mountains in Bulgaria. This is a unique reintroduction project, where at the same time animals will be released in four places covering a mountain range of more than 500 km connecting in the west the Stara Planina Mountains in Serbia, with the black sea in the East.



www.balkanvultures.org

Ecodevelopment Projects

Along the implementation of direct conservation measures as well socio-economic actions are being developed within the BVAP project framework. Through these actions pastoralism and ecotourism is being linked with conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems. These actions are crucial for local development, combating poverty and to gain the support of a broad sector of the society in the work of biodiversity conservation. In

Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia significant results have been achieved in this regard.

Environmental education

The environmental education program is a fundamental segment of all the recovery projects of the Foundation across Europe. In the headquarter in Mallorca, the foundation



Raising environmental awareness

developed a multi language Education program for the primary and secondary schools, adults and tourists. International groups and students are also attended. Groups are approached with the biodiversity conservation tasks in Mallorca and the rest of Europe through the projects of the VCF.

Environmental volunteering

The collaboration of volunteers is an important support to the conservation programs. Without the volunteers it would be impossible to develop those successful projects.

Apart from the staff, the centre in Mallorca hosts permanently about five European volunteers, in turns of 6 months. Additionally local volunteers in Spain and other countries are collaborating in the conservation activities. Through the interchange of volunteers the program promotes the social compromise of young people in conservation tasks, their training, tolerance between cultures and the European cohesion.

Old and new challenges

Despite the long run of conservation efforts, continuity is needed in order to face old challenges threatening the new reintroduced vulture populations as well as the still existing populations of all four vulture species in their original habitats. In the spotlight for future activities of the new organization are activities to stop the massive decline of Egyptian vultures in its breeding habitats in the Mediterranean basin, but also on their migration routes and wintering habitats in Africa.

VCF Headquarter

The Headquarter of the VCF is in the Mediterranean Wildlife Conservation Centre (MWC) in Son Pons state, Majorca. The Centre was created in 2002 (together with Fundació Vida Silvestre de la Mediterrània

and with the support of the Prins Bernhard Natuurfonds). The centre has 20 hectares of oak and pine forest with agriculture areas and a large building infrastructure (about



1200m2), donated for 30 years by the Fundación para la Conservación Internacional de las Aves (based in Madrid).

VCF Affiliated organizations

Vienne, Austria: Richard Faust Breeding centre (EGS).

Mallorca, Spain: Black Vulture Conservation Foundation (BVCF)

Mallorca, Spain: Mediterranean Wildlife Conservation Centre (MWC)

France: Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux/Mission Rapaces (LPO)

Germany: Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS)

Honourable Members

Luc Hoffmann — Honourable President
Maarten Bijleveld
Jan Louwman

Board Members

Michel Terrasse — President
Juan José Sánchez Artés — Vice-President
Wolfgang Fremuth — Treasurer
Alex Llopis Dell — Secretary
Winfried Walter
Hans Frey
Christof Schenck
Richard Zink
Evelyn Tewes
Jesús Garzón Heydt
Álvaro Camiña Cardenal
Marleen Huyghe
Pierre Gay
Fulvio Genero
Daniel Hegglin

For more information please contact the headquarter by telephone: (+34) 971 516620, fax: (+34) 971 509541, by e-mail: vcf@4vultures.org or by post at the following address:

**Vulture Conservation Foundation
Mediterranean Wildlife Centre
Finca Son Pons
Ctra. Palma-Alcúdia, km. 38.200
07310 Campanet · Mallorca · Spain**