



LIFE with VULTURES

COMMUNICATION PLAN

*LIFE WITH VULTURES: SAVING GRIFFON VULTURES IN CYPRUS THROUGH
CONCRETE CONSERVATION ACTIONS
(LIFE18 NAT/CY/001018)*

Prepared by: BirdLife Cyprus

Project Partners:



Funded by:



About the project

LIFE with Vultures is a targeted conservation project for the protection of the Griffon Vulture in Cyprus. In this four-year endeavor (2019-2023), BirdLife Cyprus, the Game and Fauna Service, Terra Cypria – The Cyprus Conservation Foundation and the Vulture Conservation Foundation have joined forces to tackle the main threats facing the Griffon Vulture and prevent Cyprus’ most threatened bird of prey from going extinct. The project has a €1,375,861 budget and is co-funded (60%) by the EU’s LIFE programme. Find out more at: www.lifewithvultures.eu

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Brief description

This document identifies the target audiences and the main messages that should be communicated to support the implementation of the LIFE with Vultures project, as well as key communication channels and outputs. It also presents a timeline of all the communication actions that will take place during the project, as well as guidelines for partners on project branding and communication to ensure consistency in messaging.

How to use this document

Project partners can use this document to implement the communication actions foreseen in the project as well as share project news and progress through their respective communication channels.

Core Conservation Problem

Currently, the remaining Griffon Vulture breeding population in Cyprus stands at 20 individuals, a critically low number. Without active conservation support, the Griffon Vulture population is unlikely to bounce back. Illegal use of poison bait (targeting foxes and stray dogs) is the most critical threat facing the Griffon Vulture in Cyprus. Other critical threats are food shortage and collisions with electricity wires. These threats as well as occasional disturbance to the main remaining breeding colony and incidents of shot birds indicate lack of awareness on the importance of vultures.

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Goal & Objectives

Goal

To inform and raise awareness on the importance of the Griffon Vulture in Cyprus, the threats it is facing and the urgent need for its recovery and conservation. In particular, to focus on the problem of illegal use of poison bait in the countryside, in order to change attitudes and behaviors, with the aim to allow for the effective protection and recovery of the Griffon Vulture population in Cyprus.

Objectives

- Create a positive image and positive attitudes about the Griffon Vulture and dispel any misconceptions related with the species
- Raise awareness around the conservation value of the Griffon Vulture and its importance in the ecosystem (ecosystem services)
- Raise awareness on the threats facing the Griffon Vulture, its critical status and especially the impact of the illegal use of poison bait on the Griffon Vulture and other wildlife and the penalties that apply
- Change of attitudes towards illegal use of poison bait in the countryside and inform of alternatives to placement of poison bait according to the needs of each target audience
- Inform the local communities on the importance of the 9 key N2K sites for the Griffon Vulture
- Provide target audiences with information on what to do in case they encounter a poisoning incident in the countryside
- Raise awareness on the project itself, its aims and conservation efforts to ensure maximum visibility throughout Cyprus
- Engage with stakeholders who have a key role in the fight against poison use

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Target Audiences & Messages

Definitions

Primary target audiences are those who have the power to effect the changes the project calls for. They need to be influenced in order to reach the goal. If the primary target audiences cannot be reached directly, or if communicating with the primary target alone is not sufficient to bring about change, people with influence on the primary target need to be mobilized, i.e. the *secondary target audiences*. **These are typically organization/individuals who have the power and ability to influence large numbers of people, as well as those who are in a position to make change.**

Primary audience(s)

1. Local communities within 9 key N2K sites
2. Livestock keepers and farmers
3. Individual hunters
4. Warm Supporters (nature lovers, outdoor lovers, social media followers of project partners)

Secondary audience(s)

1. Journalists
2. Local Hunting Groups / Associations
3. Animal lovers / animal welfarists
4. Families and school children

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Key Messages

Theme	Messages
Griffon Vulture (wow factor, interesting facts, ecosystem services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Griffon Vulture is a magnificent creature but too often misunderstood • Largest bird of Cyprus • Vultures are a marvel of evolution (special adaptations, behavior, biology/physiology, ecology) – unique diet • It is protected by national and EU law • The Griffon Vulture is a characteristic and spectacular component of the biodiversity of the environment it inhabits • Its diet is what makes the Griffon Vulture an integral part of ecosystems. By consuming carrion the Griffon Vulture performs essential ecosystem services and is also an indicator of ecosystem health. Scavengers perform a vital ecological function by removing dead animal carcasses from the countryside.
Threat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vultures are among the most highly threatened groups of animals on earth. The threats are all caused by human activity and are predominantly preventable. • In Cyprus, the Griffon Vulture is the largest bird of prey and also the most threatened. • The species is on the brink of extinction from Cyprus. Only 20 vultures remain today (2020), which is not sustainable or viable. Without conservation measures, the Griffon Vulture is unlikely to bounce back. • Losing vultures will have negative implications for our own health and well-being. • The fate of the GV is in our hands. We cannot afford to lose our one and only vulture species. • Other than poisoning, which is the most critical threat to the species, the GV faces other threats such as shortage of food, collision with powerlines and can also fall victim to illegal shooting.

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Poison

- Poisoning is considered to be vultures' biggest threat worldwide according to the Multi-species action plan to conserve African-Eurasian vultures (Vulture MsAP) co-developed by the VCF and endorsed by the Convention for Migratory Species.
- Placement of poison baits in the countryside is illegal under national and EU legislation.
- Placement of poison baits is a devious and condemnable act, and a wildlife crime punishable by law.
- It is an indiscriminate threat, killing lots of non-target wildlife
- Deliberate poisoning has been documented as one of the most severe factors threatening wildlife and biodiversity conservation across the globe. It has adverse consequences on wildlife and vultures. For every poison bait that is placed in the countryside a death chain is created and its victims can be many and unknown
- It is not just wildlife that's at risk: poisons are also dangerous to people, their pets and the environment
- Placement of poison baits is unnecessary. There are clear alternatives to resolve human-wildlife conflict
- Combating this problem requires a team effort at all levels: from the people using the countryside every day and those affected by this, to the communities and their responsibilities, to the authorities enforcing the laws and protecting our wildlife
- If you become aware of poison baits or poisoned animals in the countryside, do not stay silent. Speak up. Inform the GFS immediately (we will provide number when available).
- Do not touch the dead animals though! This is important. You may be putting your health, and the criminal investigation of the event, in jeopardy
- Reporting a poisoning incident to the authorities helps save more animals from being poisoned. Do not stay silent. **Silence is complicit.**
- Wilderness requires zero-tolerance towards illegal killing. Adopting this will need coordinated and integrated efforts. This means the engagement of stakeholders as well as relevant governmental

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	<p>authorities and enforcement agencies to improve law enforcement at EU as well as national level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solutions to poisoning: political willingness and commitment to solve the problem, proper management of a poison incident (collection of evidence, investigation, prosecution, penalty), law enforcement, countryside patrols, change of mind set in local communities.
<p>Anti-poisoning Dog Units (ApDU)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ApDU dogs are the tireless heroes of the countryside and protectors of wildlife (and the GV's best friend!) • The skill, professionalism and dedication of an ApDU are what makes it an integral part in the efforts against poisoning in the countryside • The mission of a ApDU is both vital and critical. With their powerful sense of smell, dogs can help detect poison baits or poisoned animals, which can help prevent or minimize the impact of wildlife poisoning incidents. Often they can also detect a poisoned animal on time to be treated and save their life. They can help find poisoned vultures/other for recovery, treatment and re-release. • They contribute in the investigation research (i.e. detection of evidence / poisoned animals) • They help prevent further poisoning (they can spot more poisoned victims than a human in a big ratio around the incident) • ApDUs are not the sole solution to address poisoning
<p>Natura 2000 network (key 9 N2K sites)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Cyprus, the Griffon Vulture is an SPA qualifying species for 6 SPAs (Xeros River, Hanoutaris Cliffs, Diarizos Valley, Paramali River, Ha Potami River and Limnatis Valley) • The importance of the Natura2000 network to the GV: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Diarizos Valley: a historically important site for the species, as it used to host one of its most important breeding colonies. During the last years, the site is being used by the species as an important feeding area. ○ Episkopi Cliffs: the top and only remaining breeding colony of the Griffon Vulture ○ Ha-Potami river: a historically important site for the species, as it used to host one of its most important breeding colonies.

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During the last years, the site is partly being used by the species as a feeding area, even though a wind farm project has been placed. Feeding station.

- **Akamas Peninsula:** a historically important site for the species, as it used to host one of its most important breeding colonies.
 - **Limnatis Valley:** the only area, besides Episkopi Cliffs, where the GV has nested during the last decade while it remains an important feeding area. Feeding station.
 - **Xeros River:** a historically important site for the species, as it used to host one of its most important breeding colonies. During the last years, the site is being used by the species as an important feeding area. Feeding station.
 - **Hanoutaris Cliffs:** a historically important site for the species, as it used to host one of its most important breeding colonies. During the last years, the site is being used by the species as an important feeding area.
 - **Paramali River:** a historically important site for the species, as it used to host one of its most important breeding colonies. During the last years, the site is being used by the species as an important feeding area. Feeding station.
- The disturbance threat at GV nesting sites has been managed and reduced through the inclusion of important vulture nesting cliffs within the boundaries of designated Natura 2000 sites.
 - Natura 2000 is a positive contribution to the community, because it benefits people, nature and local economy (tourism potential)
 - Natura 2000 is about working in partnership with local stakeholders to conserve nature in a living landscape
 - Natura 2000 aims to bring endangered species back from the brink of extinction
 - Natura 2000 provides areas for wildlife and man to cohabit in harmony

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Communication and outreach actions (all under project action E2)

List of actions

- **Dedicated website** hosted on BC website, to reduce costs and ensure viability after project end. Website will explain the problem, share project news, material produced, events, number for reporting poisoning, a map on vulture movements in Cyprus (Action D1) and a Replicability and Transferability “Toolkit” (Action E3).
- **News through partners websites**
- **Project logo** to create project identity.
- **Information leaflet** (GR, 3000 copies) targeted at farmers and hunters, on impact of poisons and penalties, plus benefits of predators.
- Two **posters**: One (GR, 200) for hunters and farmers, on vulture and poisoning threat. Second (GR/EN 1000) on what to do in case of poisoning incident.
- Three **notice boards** (EN/GR) at key locations to enhance project visibility.
- Two highway **billboards** (GR) with anti-poison message to go up for 4 weeks at points within the vulture range, in two years.
- **Project sticker** (1000) for target groups and children.
- **Vulture T-shirts** (200) as reward for project ‘ambassadors’.
- **Vulture Cotton bags** (200), also as rewards.
- **Two project banners and two pole flags** for events.
- **Limited edition pin badge** (2000) for project supporters
- **60 sec animation** on poisoning threat
- **Photography series and short film** focusing on the ApDUs, capturing unique moments in the dogs’ lives as they turn into anti-poison ‘heroes’. Photographs and film used in communication activities and end of the project exhibition (E2.4).
- **Animation** videos for social media
- **Layman’s report** (EN&GR, 1200 copies) to present project results.
- **Media**: At least 12 Press Releases, with target of 40 mentions, 2 radio and 1 TV interview.
- **Social media**: extensive promotion through Facebook pages of project partners.
- Project news also shared in BC e-newsletter and magazine. Two magazine issues dedicated to the project.

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Campaign tools and associated target audiences

Tool	Target Audiences
Notice boards	Communities, Hunters, Farmers, Families
Billboards	Communities, Hunters, Farmers
Leaflets, Posters	Communities, Hunters, Farmers, Decision Makers
Project promo freebies (t-shirt, pin, cotton bag, stickers)	Communities, Hunters, Farmers, Families & school children
End of project event	Families, Warm Supporters, Communities, Decision Makers
Project website	All
Social media posts	Warm Supporters, Journalists, Animal Welfarists, Hunters
Press Releases and articles	Journalists, Decision-makers, Warm Supporters
Stakeholder meetings	Communities, Farmers, Hunters,
Events (with local communities, vulture awareness day, end-of-project event)	Communities, Journalists, Hunters, Farmers, Warm Supporters
School visits	School children
Animation, videos	All

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Monitoring and Success indicators

Monitoring of communication actions progress

Objectives	Target	Indicators
General awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media reach: posts reach 4000 users on average - Project website visits: 3000 - Media coverage (12 PRs and 40 mentions in the media) - Events: 1150 people attending. 70 (vulture awareness day event) and 1080 (end of project event) - Participation at the Hunting Fair: 1000 people reached over 2 participations - Total project reach: 80,000 people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of people reached (through social media analytics – FB, Instagram, Twitter) - Website analytics - Number of PRs and media mentions (online and offline) through media monitoring - Record of attendance during events through photos and attendance lists (wherever possible) - Number of leaflets handed out - A total number of all communication outputs combined (incl. billboards, notices, information leaflets handed out, website visits etc).
Awareness and attitude change within the communities & stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 54 community visits (6 in each of the 9 targeted N2K sites) - Two visits to each of the 10 primary schools within the N2K sites, 1000 students to reach - Awareness and attitude change positively > 15 % 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of visits and people attending - Number of school visits and number of students reached - Questionnaire comparison at the start and at the end of the project on representative samples

A template for tracking communication impact will be developed to enable the project team to collect the key specific output indicators connected to actions E2.2 and E2.3.

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Project Communication and Branding

Reference to the project

LIFE with Vultures is a targeted conservation project for the protection of the Griffon Vulture in Cyprus. In this four-year endeavor (2019-2023), BirdLife Cyprus, the Game and Fauna Service, Terra Cypria – The Cyprus Conservation Foundation and the Vulture Conservation Foundation have joined forces to tackle the main threats facing the Griffon Vulture and prevent Cyprus' most threatened bird of prey from going extinct. The project has a 1,375,861 Euro budget and is co-funded (60%) by the EU's LIFE programme.

Find out more at: www.lifewithvultures.eu

Visibility of Union Funding

Any communication or publication made by the beneficiaries jointly or individually that relates to the project, including at conferences, seminars or in any information or promotional materials (such as brochures, leaflets, posters, presentations, in electronic form, etc.), must follow the conditions as described in GENERAL CONDITIONS ARTICLE II.8 — VISIBILITY OF UNION FUNDING (found in ANNEX I of Grant Agreement).

Partner logos to be presented in the following order: BirdLife Cyprus, Game and Fauna Service, VCF, Terra Cypria, followed by **placement of LIFE and Natura 2000 logo** accompanied with the wording: With the contribution of the LIFE financial instrument of the European Union / Με τη συνεισφορά του χρηματοδοτικού εργαλείου LIFE της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης.

LIFE and Natura 2000 logos as well as usage guidelines can be found here:

<https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/section/life/life-communication>.

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Disclaimers excluding Agency/Commission responsibility

Any communication or publication that relates to the project, made by the beneficiaries jointly or individually in any form and using any means, must indicate:

(a) that it reflects only the author's view; and

(b) that the Agency/Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Concrete conservation actions

Action C1. Reduction of direct mortality from poison-bait use.

Sub-actions:

C1.1: Production & dissemination of anti-poison first-aid kits for wildlife

C1.2: Creation of anti-poison dog units (ApDUs) & operation

C1.3: Adequate judicial follow-up of poisoning cases

Action C2: Increase feeding opportunities

Action C3: Reduction of direct mortality from collisions with power lines

Action C4: Bolster the Cyprus population with restocking

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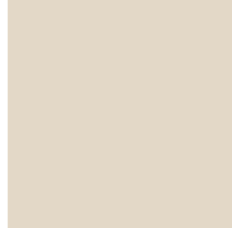


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Project logo

For the full logo usage guidelines project partners are encouraged to use the logo manual that was sent to them.



C10
M12
Y20
K0

PANTONE
7501



C50
M45
Y50
K30

PANTONE
Warm Grey 11



ON WHITE BACKGROUNDS



ON LIGHT BACKGROUNDS



ON DARK BACKGROUNDS



ON DARK BACKGROUNDS

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Social Media

Project partners are encouraged to use the hashtag **#LIFEwithVultures** on all social media posts related to the project and tag the rest of the project partners as well as the LIFE programme on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). Photos and videos should carry the appropriate monochrome version of the LIFE with Vultures project logo whenever possible as well as credit to the photographer. Posts will link to the **project's website** www.lifewithvultures.eu whenever possible and relevant. Additional hashtags that can be used where appropriate are: **#Natura2000 #EUBiodiversity #LIFEprogramme #LIFEproject**

Interview with the Media – 5 key messages & aims

1. **Highlight the Griffon Vulture (wow factor, but critical status).** Griffon Vultures used to be a common sight in Cypriot skies. Now the species is on the brink of extinction from Cyprus. Only 20 vultures remain today, which is not sustainable. Mention historic numbers. Without conservation measures, the Griffon Vulture is unlikely to bounce back. The fate of the GV is in our hands. We cannot afford to lose our one and only vulture species.
2. **Inform about the project.** See 9.1, always mentioning the LIFE programme and project partners & budget.
3. **Create alertness about the threat of poison:** Placement of poison baits in the countryside is illegal under national and EU legislation. It is a wildlife crime punishable by law – **mention penalties**. It has adverse consequences on wildlife, vultures and human health.
4. **Create feelings of hope. Mention solutions brought by the project:** See 9.2 (Dog units, restocking, policy)
5. **Inform the public on what to do in case of poisoning incident in the countryside**

Other useful info

Full project name: Saving Griffon Vultures in Cyprus through concrete conservation actions

Short project name to be used throughout the communication actions: LIFE with Vultures
(Ζωή με τους Γύπες)

Total Project budget: 1,375,861 Euro

Project code: LIFE18 NAT/CY/001018

Project Partners:



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