

Potential new project in Croatia –
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HISTORY OF THE BLACK VULTURE (*Aegypius monachus*) AND ITS POSSIBLE REINTRODUCTION IN CROATIA

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ABSTRACT

At the end of the last century, there was a large population of Black Vultures on the Kvarner Archipelago where it nested with Griffon Vultures on the Island of St. George. At the beginning of this century, Black Vultures were rare in Central and Southern Dalmatia. The last Black Vulture however was observed in Croatia in 1947. The compilation of those data, together with the stable and protected population of Griffon Vultures (60 pairs) in two special ornithological reserves offer the opportunity to consider the reintroduction of the Black Vulture on the Island of Cres where there is enough natural food and a small sanctuary for injured birds.



Objectives potential project in Croatia

- Promote the recolonisation of Velebit Mountain by the Griffon Vulture, and enhance and consolidate their breeding colonies in the Kvarner Archipelago and in the Eastern Alps.
- Reintroduction of the Black Vulture in Croatia (Velebit Mountain and Kvarner Archipelago)
- Reinforce the population of Bearded Vulture in the eastern Alps (Italy, Austria).
- Enhance a safe vulture migration corridor between the Alps and the Balkans throughout Croatia, thus connecting vulture populations of West and East Europe.
- Minimise threats to vultures in the vulture flyway from the eastern Alps to the southern Balkans, including poison & lead poisoning, and electrocution
- Raise public awareness and acceptance of vulture conservation along the flyway

Suitability

- Velebit Mtn. is 150km long and 30km wide, and includes 2 national parks and one strict reserve. Inside National Parks even hunting is forbidden, so there is no lead poisoning at all.
- The last poisoning incidents in the region - end of 2004, so it was 10 years ago
- Several years of extensive antipoisoning campaign
- Today only some rare incidents in other parts of Croatia (where there is a conflict with wolfs), but not in the area with vulture's colonies, including Velebit Mtn.