

Conservation of Egyptian Vulture in Lesser Caucasus within the territory of Azerbaijan.



INTERIM REPORT



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Project Summary

important flyway and it hosts an important number of globally threatened raptors. Different species of raptors has been studied by projects but it is still not covering the whole territory of the country. Project was focused on the population of Egyptian Vulture in Lesser Caucasus. The area has never been studied for this species before therefore project results will be very valuable for the future conservation activities.. Project had involved different stakeholders including local communities, non-governmental and governmental organisations, scientific institutions.

Working group created within project did surveys of species and awareness activities at project areas. New scientific information about species for the Lesser Caucasus is collected as a database. So, new nesting sites for this bird were found in Lesser Caucasus part of Azerbaijan. In general 7 new living nests besides additionally 3 flying birds in different sites and 9 proposed nests of EV were found during researches of 2012. For finishing of project we plan to conduct monitoring of autumn migration, creation of full of Data Base for Lesser Caucasus (distribution exactly, coordinates of nests, population size, threats) and then prepare and present Final report.

Regular public awareness activities during the project implementation increased the knowledge of local population about importance of birds and their habitats.

Objectives of the project

1. Poster about Egyptian Vulture
2. Data Base about Egyptian Vulture in Lesser Caucasus- which created on the base of field surveys. This data base will be combined with previous data base established for the other parts of the country. Data Base will include map of distribution, coordinates of nests in Lesser Caucasus, population size and threats for Egyptian Vulture.
3. Establishment of Species Support Groups (SSG) from representatives of local communities – This will ensure the long term monitoring of project species as the member of SSGs will be trained and provided with necessary equipment.
4. Information in Mass Media (articles, radio speeches etc.), scientific publication.
5. Project Reports (for 6 months and final report which includes all activities).

Achievements of the project

- **Working groups established**

In the beginning of the project team members organized group for studying the project species and for public awareness activities. Team members divided into two sub-groups. First sub-group started the preparation of printing materials for public awareness activities. As well they started informing the relevant organizations about the project start. Second sub-group started planning of the field surveys and other organizational questions for implementation of project. Initial meeting of working group for EV held on 11 May 2012 at Azerbaijan Ornithological Society for presenting the project.

- **Description of field survey**

Expeditions to Lesser Caucasus were organized in July because unusual raining weather during May-June prevented conducting of expedition earlier.

4 flying birds and four nests were revealed on the territory of Dashkasan district, near village Dastafur on the elevation 1300-1400 m on cliffs covered by forest. All nests were located in perforations or small caves. We noted chick in one from 4 revealed nests but we could not see inside of left 3 nests so we can suppose all nests had chick. 2 nests were located just on the border of village (distance about 500 m between nests) and we could see it's from centre of village but two others were located about 500-800 m before entry in village on the distance about 15-20 m between nests. All nests were located at a height about 100-150 m from ground where we stayed.

4 living nest on distance about 300-500 m were found in similar conditions on elevation 1500-1600 m near village Yolqullar but we could not see flying birds (only one pair of Long legged Buzzard) so we suppose that as minimum some of these nests belong to EV.

2 nests were revealed in similar conditions near the village Chanakhchi on the distance about 500 m. Again we could see only pair of long legged Buzzard. Two flying EV were found near village Gyzyldzha in Goygol district of Azerbaijan.

During special travel along Bozdag range (between Kura river, then Mingachevir w.r. and Bozdag range on the area of Korchay Sanctuary with participation of ranger during about 16 kms way in 3 areas with EV nests (2-3 nests for every area) were found. In different from high mountain areas elevation here was just on elevation about 150 m and no forest cover, just some bush somewhere and open areas (dry semi desert). Locations of all nests were at a height about 50-60 m. from ground. One flying pair was registered on the 3-rd area.

Habitat on Bozdag range is interesting for birds because they have a lot of dead fishes along the Kura River and Mingachevir w.r.

One flying bird was founded on the road of Shamkir. Meetings and discussions with local people were organized during all expeditions.

So, new nesting sites for this bird were found in Lesser Caucasus part of Azerbaijan. In general 7 new living nests besides additionally 3 flying birds in different sites and 9 proposed nests of EV were found during researches of 2012. For finishing of project we plan to conduct monitoring of autumn migration, creation of full of Data Base for Lesser Caucasus (distribution exactly, coordinates of nests, population size, threats) and then prepare and present Final report.

These data give us opportunity for to calculate of nests distance and population size of species in this area.

- **Public awareness materials produced**

Posters produced (Poster includes important facts and information about Egyptian Vulture and used for awareness activities) –1500 examples

- **Public awareness activities carried out by team members**

Team members did several meeting at each site during the visits with local people living nearby. We organized different competitions and seminars for schoolchildren, 2 meetings with local decision makers for protection of Globally Threatened Species.

Meeting in the Azerbaijan Agrarian University

Meeting in the Peace Corps in Ganja

Meeting with representatives of NGO “Young leaders”

Meeting with the director of NGO “Intelligent citizen”

Meeting with local peoples at all sites where field work was conducted

Excursion with members of Ganja nature Watching Club to area near the Goygol National park

- **Species Support Groups (SSG) are established**

For more effective conservation of “project species” our team members created the Species Support Groups on sites: Dastafur and Bozdag area. We plan for future identifies nests near villages Yolgullar and Chanakhchi exactly and create here local SSGs too.

Group member are from representatives of local communities(the local people living at or around the project studied areas, school teachers, rangers of protected areas and hunting associations, schoolchildren) . AOS is working on to organize

regular meeting of group members for their more effective work for conservation of project species in Azerbaijan.

- **Work with Mass Media**

During project work regular contacts with representatives of Mass media occurred.