

## Final Evaluation Report

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Your Details	
Full Name	Lusine Aghajanyan
Project Title	Vulture Culture
Application ID	29515-1
Grant Amount	6000
Email Address	Lusine.aghajanyan@nabu.am
Date of this Report	25.02.2022

**1. Indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.**

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
Vulture nests count				Surveys in Syunik and Vayots Dzor provinces are yet to be implemented.
Seminars at schools – vultures of Armenia				
Birdwatching excursions				
Analysis and visualization of the data				
Egyptian vulture nesting ecology studies via online camera				
Eco-educational impact of the online camera				
GPS tagging of EV juvenile				

**2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled.**

The main difficulty during the project was the situation with the COVID 19 pandemic, especially during the first two quarters of the year. Due to this, it was almost impossible to conduct eco-educational seminars at schools from March until May 2021. Even online seminars were being rejected by schools, due to the difficulties of organisation of online classes (many schools in villages of Armenia were not able to organise regular studies even). Our main goal was to organise those seminars especially in rural areas, close to the places where different species of vultures are nesting. And the situation described above with difficulties of online studies organisation, we were not able to conduct seminars until September 2021. From summer 2021 the situation with pandemic regulations was easier, schools were open again and we were able to organise all seminars, contests and excursions we planned.

The second difficulty was in the field, while conducting the nest count. Due to the absence of drone the field work took much longer, then expected and in the end, we did not succeed to conduct survey in Syunik and Vayots Dzor regions (it was done partly), but we plan to continue our work in 2022. Also, the border situation (tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan) in Syunik region were not making easier to conduct the survey and the branch of NABU also cancelled many projects which

were planned in this region. Hopefully in 2022 it will be possible to organise survey in Syunik region to complete the nest count of vultures.

### **3. Briefly describe the three most important outcomes of your project.**

- Vulture nest monitoring, which allows to have a full information about nesting sites, threats and population dynamics of those species. This information, after completion of the work, will be also provided to the ministry of the Environment of RA and can be used in EIA surveys. Also, after continuous surveys within 5 years (and more) we will be able to rate vulture population status and to predict potential threats to their nesting sites, etc.
- Eco-educational impact via seminars and online camera. Both had a huge impact in our society by increasing the knowledge about Armenian vulture species. Seminars in schools were so successful, that after finishing them we still were getting requests to organise more in other schools and also with other topics. All participants, who in the beginning had no information about vultures as a scavenger group of birds and the species, which breed in Armenia, got complete information about them, participated in competitions and the best ones won presents. Sometimes competitions were so intensive, that instead of giving presents to three winners, we had to give to five to seven winners. All the participants of school seminars had also participated in birdwatching excursions later. The success of online camera was also very dramatic. It was the first online camera on the EV nest in Armenia and it got very popular among followers. People were following EV chicks grow, discussing their habits, etc.
- Migration research of EV by GPS tag. We managed to install a GPS tag on one EV chick in 2021, which successfully migrated to Ethiopia. In 2022 we plan to tag more EV chicks, to make our studies more relevant.

### **4. What do you consider to be the most significant achievement of this work?**

### **5. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefited from the project.**

The benefit of communities was the knowledge we spread during the project. We were mainly working with school students during our seminars and can say, that 250 participants of rural areas gained an important knowledge about the role of vultures in nature, studied why they shouldn't disturb them or destroy their nesting areas and surely, students themselves had distributed this information among other students. The printing materials helped in visualization and were very effective while "attracting" students to love vultures.

### **6. Are there any plans to continue this work?**

The vulture nest survey will continue to be conducted for at least 5 years, starting from 2021. It will become a stable yearly nest monitoring. We also plan to continue our research of EV migration and EV online nest camera. For other vulture species

we plan to conduct more research about their local movements, areas of impact, and interactions with populations.

**7. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?**

As already was mentioned, we plan to provide the information about nesting sites to the ministry of Environment of RA, which they can use in EIA surveys.

We also plan to publish papers after 5 years, when proper data will be collected.

**8. Timescale: Over what period was the grant used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?**

The only deviation from the timetable provided in the application was the organisation of the seminars and excursions. We were planning to organise seminars and excursions from the beginning of 2021, but due to pandemics, we were able to organise it only during the second half of the year. Rest of the activities of the project were conducted as planned.

**9. Budget: Provide a breakdown of budgeted versus actual expenditure and the reasons for any differences. All figures should be in £ sterling, indicating the local exchange rate used. It is important that you retain the management accounts and all paid invoices relating to the project for at least 2 years as these may be required for inspection at our discretion.**

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Expedition costs	1608	2024	+416	625 rate NABU investment
Birdwatching excursions	627	627		625 rates
Printing materials	1278	1278		625 rates
Equipment	1680	1920	+240	625 rate NABU investment
Operating costs	872		-872	
Hall for public lectures	145		-145	
Expedition food	285		-285	
Lunches during birdwatching	485		-485	
Petrol for expedition and lecture travel	243		-243	
Buses for birdwatching excursions (2 public, 8 schools)	970		-970	
Vulture colouring book (for fundraising)	485		-485	
Vulture cups (for fundraising)	162		-162	

Vulture T-shirts (for fundraising)	243		-243	
Vulture Eco-bags (for fundraising)	243		-243	
Vulture certificates (for schools)	15		-15	
Vulture games A4 (for schools)	29		-29	
Vulture stickers (for schools)	41		-41	
Vulture booklets (for schools)	146		-146	
Scope	808		-808	
Binoculars for children	246		-246	
Binoculars	582		-582	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6000</b>	<b>5849</b>	<b>-151</b>	

#### 10. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

The most important steps are to continue yearly monitoring, to continue migration research via GPS trackers and to continue eco-educational activities as much as possible, because education is the key.

#### 11. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the Foundation receive any publicity during the course of your work?

The Rufford Foundation logo was used in all printing materials, which were given to students and their curators during school seminars and public events.

#### 12. Please provide a full list of all the members of your team and briefly what was their role in the project.

**Lusine Aghajanyan** – coordinator of the project, field worker (conducted nests survey)

**Levon Harutyunyan** – field worker, conducted nests survey, GPS tagging, Installation of online camera

**Arayik Tovmasyan** – volunteer, conducted nests survey, GPS tagging, Installation of online camera, GPS tagging, Installation of online camera

**Narek Tarasyan** – GIS specialist, created habitat suitability maps and the final map of the discovered nesting sites.

**Ruzanna Petrosyan** – lecturer, organized and conducted lectures at schools, worked on printing materials, organized birdwatching excursions.

#### 13. Any other comments?