2015 annual bearded vulture meeting – a full programme
...and some conclusions
Conclusions - Corsica

✓ Corsica population – decrease 50% of the population since 2009; down to 5 pairs, no breeding; productivity very low, very low genetic variability.

✓ Number of heads of cattle did not decrease – but their distribution did

✓ Deer increasing but poor availability to bearded vultures

✓ Mouflon: introduced from Zagros mountains 8000 years ago; two nucleus which can genetically be differentiated; 40% decrease in population in 2015 (reasons not fully understood). Corsican stakeholders do not consider at present external reintroductions (genetic and adaptations) and movements intra island; Mouflon management at present not articulated with bearded vulture priorities. Slow results, long term.
Conclusions - Corsica

✓ Corsica emergency action plan to be implemented
✓ Adequate food provisioning crucial, in view of slow developments with mouflon and pastoralism
✓ Reevaluate:
  - Egg collection in all nests rather than only in two
  - Parallel research – lead poisoning + adult foraging patterns (capture and marking of adults)
  - Restocking with available adults?
Conclusions- South Africa

- Declining population in range and size – 110 pairs/400 individuals
- Poison, powerlines & direct capture main threats
- Low productivity & low survival (productivity affected by adult mortality)
- Reduce adult mortality first priority
- Started conservation breeding (captive breeding programme) – VCF to support technically.
Conclusions - Other

- Lead poisoning – important issue. LIFE GYPHELP will deliver some important actions for the French Alps. Other projects-sites should work on this area too.

- Andalucia – hope! First breeding in the wild, highlights investment and all work done. To be continued...

- Lot of work currently going on on collision and electrocution. Testing of new devices. Continuing need for promotion of best practice; Good communication with electrical utilities, need to capitalise

- Potential of nest cameras amply demonstrated – research, public engagement
Conclusions - Alpine reintroduction project

- The bearded vulture alpine reintroduction project continues to be a great success – one of Europe’s great conservation achievements, and one of Europe’s greatest wildlife comeback stories.

- Central Alps/ NW Alps – doing really well (but first signs of density-dependence in the Engadine/Stelvio nucleus?), less so SW Alps/Eastern Alps, where population slow to re-establish – need continuing monitoring and investment.

- 2015: 9 birds released in Austria-Switzerland-Italy-France.

- Across the Alps, the population continues to increase – 2015 – new record: 33-34 territories, 20 fledglings!

- Very high productivity, low mortality.

- Number of bearded vultures hatched in the wild will surpass the number of released birds soon.

- First signs of linkages between the Alps and the Pyrenees continue.

- IBM the backroom service center.
Conclusions - Alpine reintroduction project

- EEP at the base of the reintroduction projects
- Continued investment in captive breeding network (guidelines, documents, technical visits, closer relationship with Zoos)
- Increasing recognition of the merits, expertise and effectiveness of the EEP
- Best season ever – 26 fledglings produced, 15 released
- Managed to balance sex ratio in the captive stock
- New pairs coming into breeding, including new founders
- EEP expanding – new partners
Conclusions – Alpine reintroduction project

✓ Exit phase of the alpine reintroduction project
✓ Releases in the Alps continue with two (interrelated) strategic objectives  a) increase genetic diversity until genetic effective population size reaches 50 and founder genome equivalents reaches 20; b) create a corridor to link Alpine population with Pyrenean one (first phase of the European metapopulation restoration)
✓ GYPHELP consolidates Alpine population & GYPCONNECT enhances the corridor component
✓ Alpine, Andalusia & Grands Causses projects - Metapopulation strategy to restore the species in Europe
Conclusions – Alpine reintroduction project

- Recommendation to mark (colour rings – darvics and GSM) and sample (genetics) wild young when nests accessible, pairs stable and capacity exists – ASTERS lead

- Satellite tagging – very useful methodology – determine mortality and direct threats, ecology and use of space

- Sharing and disseminating maps and info on tracking movements – more work to be done - composite picture Europe, bearded vulture – sharing map with all IBM partners
Conclusions – Pyrenees and elsewhere

- Pyrenees – population has grown, but worrying results regarding breeding productivity
- Pyrenees – Feeding site strategy needs to be reevaluated
- Elsewhere - Crete stable, species hanging on in North Africa, including in Algeria – good news
- Update on international species action plan will underpin future conservation programs