



LIFE RE-Vultures

Conservation of Black and Griffon vultures  
in the cross-border Rhodopes mountains



LIFE 14 NAT/NL/000901



19th & 20th of February, 2019 – Dadia, Greece

## International Workshop on Vultures & Veterinary Drugs

### INTRODUCTION

This Workshop will be organized within the Life Project: [RE-Vultures \(LIFE14 NAT/NL/000901\)](#), Action E13 by the [Vulture Conservation Foundation, VCF](#) in close collaboration with [WWF Greece](#), and the rest of the project partners.

### Background and Objectives

The negative impact of toxic products and contaminants (wildlife poisoning) is the main threat facing the conservation of vultures and other scavenger species all over the world, but this is a complex issue.

The VCF and its partners are working through various projects on fighting the illegal and direct poisoning of wildlife. But others form of secondary poisoning also occur, notably through veterinary products used to treat livestock and domestic animals.

There is ample evidence that contaminants and products such as NSAIDs (Non Steroidal Anti Inflammatory Drugs), antibiotics, antiparasitics and anthelmintics, euthanasia drugs, esp. barbiturates represent an increasingly serious threat to the health of vultures and other scavenger species feeding on domestic animals. Veterinary diclofenac (a NSAID) has been proved to cause a +95% decline in the Indian vulture populations in India, and it is now, quite surprisingly, marketed legally in Spain and Italy (the VCF and others are leading a campaign to ban it in the EU). Recently, the first case of a lethal poisoning of a griffon vulture by flunixin (another NSAID) has come to light. Today many farm animals receive small/large doses of antibiotics and other veterinary drugs. The EU sanitary regulations enacted to prevent disease transmission have actually led to a scarcity in the number of animal carcasses originating from extensive animal husbandry (with less chemicals) in some feeding stations, and a parallel increase in the use by avian scavengers of animals originated in industrial operations– mostly intensive farmed pigs. This is a potential problem impacting on vultures, that needs to be monitored. From the food safety perspective, parameters that ensure human safety relative to animal carcasses but do not apply to scavengers.

Veterinarians, researchers and even governmental authorities on the ground may be unaware that certain veterinary products can be toxic to wildlife.

All these veterinary products can cause acute or chronic intoxication, depended of the product and the exposure. Is well known that exposure to NSAIDs and euthanasia drugs can be acutely toxic to vultures and other scavengers, long-term exposure to other compounds like antibiotics can have sublethal effects (e.g., development of antibiotic resistant strains).



[www.life-vultures.com](http://www.life-vultures.com)



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In some cases, veterinary drugs can act similar as pesticides or heavy metals, some veterinary products have a pesticide as the active ingredient and lead poisoning and exposure to barbiturates can results with similar symptoms, something that need to be taken in account for investigation of illegal poisoning incidents.

### Workshop objectives

- To inform about current research projects and recent findings on negative effects to vultures of veterinary products (current Life Projects and best practice experience form Spain and France).
- To identify widely used veterinary products with potentially harmful effects to vultures across the project area (Bulgaria and Greece). Name of products and uses.
- To review the current sampling and analyses protocols, guidance, practice and resources, identify gaps and make recommendations for improvements.
- To inform LIFE Re-Vultures After-Life plan about this subject and include recommendations and action to wider vulture conservation plans and policies

### Target audience:

International experts from this field and staff from the different LIFE projects implementing closely related activities on this subject, representatives from the veterinary service from Bulgaria and Greece.

**Working language:** English



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Dadia-Lefkimi-Soufli Forest National Park

19th &amp; 20th of February, 2019 – Dadia, Greece

## WORKSHOP AGENDA

DAY 1 - 19/02/19		
9:00	Welcome notes and programme	VCF & WWF Greece
<b>Session I – Background and Context</b>		
9:30	Vulture conservation activities in Thrace, NE Greece	Skartsi Theodora, WWF Greece
9:45	Taking up the batton of vulture monitoring and conservation in the Dadia National Park and Northeastern Adjacent SPAs	Sylvia Zakkak, Management Body of National Park of the Dadia-Lefkimi-Soufli forest
10:00	Scene setting – literature review on known impacts of vet medicines and vultures	L. Phipps - VCF
10:20	Special case – the impact of diclofenac on vultures	J. Tavares - VCF
10:35	Questions and short discussion	
10:45	Coffee break	
<b>Session II – National Screening Programmes</b>		
11:15	Toxicity to vultures from veterinary drugs used in farm animals, the overview from France	R. Florence – CNITV (National Information Center of Veterinary Toxicology)
11: 35	The use veterinary products and their potential toxicity to vultures in Spain, an update from research projects	I. Marco Sánchez – UAB (University of Barcelona)
11:55	The situation in Bulgaria – brief testimony	I. Asenova Lazarova & G. Nikolova Balieva - Vet Faculty, Bulgaria
12:05	The situation in Greece – brief testimony	E. Kastellanou, Directorate of Animal Welfare, Medicines and Veterinary Applications, MRDF, Greece
12:15	Comparison between countries - discussion	
13:00	Light lunch	
<b>Session III – Actions and Results from LIFE and Other Projects</b>		
14:30	Screening vet medicines within LIFE Re-Vultures	Dobromir Dobrev, BSPB
14:45	Screening vet medicines within Vultures Back To Life	Ivelin Ivanov, Green Balkans
15:00	Screening vet medicines within Life Return of the Neophron and New Egyptian Vulture Life	Volen Arkumarev, BSPB
15:15	Screening vet medicines within LIFE Under Griffon Vulture Wings – Sardinia	D. Secci - Forestas (Forestry Service)
15:30	Screening vet medicines within LIFE Rupis	Jovan Andevski, VCF



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15:45	Discussion	
16:00	Coffee break	
16:30	Baseline methodology and recommendation for development of national research projects (screening of vet products)	I. Marco Sánchez - UAB (University of Barcelona)
16:45	Discussion – identification of gaps in Bulgaria and Greece	
17:30	End of day one	
20:00	Dinner	

<b>DAY 2 - 20/02/19</b>		
9:00	Summary conclusions from Day 1 and short discussion	
<b>Session IV – Discussions</b>		
9:30	List of target vet drugs dangerous or presumably dangerous to vultures	
10:30	Screening methods and existing capacities in Bulgaria and Greece (labs, toxicologist and funding)	
11:00	Coffee break	
<b>Session V – Conclusions</b>		
11:30-12:00	Conclusions	
12:00	Field visit and lunch	

