# CHRONOLOGICAL SYNTHESIS OF OBSERVATIONS OF THE EURASIAN GRIFFON VULTURE - *Gyps fulvus* (Hablizl, 1783) IN ROMANIA. CURRENT STATUS AND PERSPECTIVES

**RIDICHE Mirela Sabina, KISS J. Botond, MESTECĂNEANU Adrian, BĂLESCU Carmen-Daniela, PETRESCU Angela**

**Abstract.** In Romania, the griffon vulture – *Gyps fulvus* was known as a resident and breeding species (especially in Dobrogea and the Carpathians) until the second half of the last century, it having the most visible distribution among the carrion vultures from our country. Starting from 1955-1960, the species recorded a major decline, it was no longer found as a resident breeding bird in our country, ending up to be included on the list of extinct/critically endangered species. In this study, we attempt to provide a comprehensive overview of the species' distribution and dynamics in Romania from the earliest records (1842) to the present, including, of course, the factors that have caused or are still contributing to its decline in our country. Since the beginning of this century, we have noticed a slight increase in the frequency of records, but the species remains one with sporadic occurrence, most of the observed specimens being often immature, solitary and non-breeding birds. From the data synthesized by us, it appears that most of the observations reported in the last 25 years (period 2000-2024) come from Transylvania – 27 specimens / 23 reports and from Dobrogea – 23 specimens / 21 reports. The reports are much more limited from the rest of the regions of the country: Muntenia – 11 specimens / 11 reports, Banat – 4 specimens / 4 reports, Bucovina – 4 specimens / 2 reports, Oltenia – 3 specimens / 3 reports, Crișana and Maramureș – 1 specimen / 1 report each. The set of data gathered and updated in this study can contribute to a more extensive knowledge of the interrelationships between *Gyps fulvus* and the living environments from our country and to the identification/designation of the areas of repopulation and/or protection. We also promote several practices and actions that could ensure success in bringing of the species back into the resident avifauna of the country, then in the restoring of the population to safe levels, either naturally or through programs/projects.

**Keywords:** chronological observations, *Gyps fulvus*, current status, perspectives.

**Rezumat. Sinteză cronologică a observațiilor vulturului sur - *Gyps fulvus* (Hablizl, 1783) în România. Situația actuală și perspective.** În România, până spre a doua jumătate a secolului trecut, vulturul sur – *Gyps fulvus* era știut ca specie sedentară și clocitoare (în special în Dobrogea și Carpați), având cea mai vizibilă răspândire dintre vulturii hoitari din țara noastră. Începând din anii 1955-1960, specia a înregistrat un declin major, nu a mai fost găsită ca pasăre clocitoare sedentară în țara noastră, ajungând să fie inclusă în lista speciilor extincte/critic periclitate. În studiul de față încercăm să realizăm un tablou cât mai complet cu privire la răspândirea și dinamica speciei pe teritoriul României, de la primele consemnări (1842) până în prezent, incluzând desigur factorii care au cauzat sau contribuie încă la declinul ei în țara noastră. De la începutul acestui secol constatăm o ușoară creștere a frecvenței consemnărilor, însă specia rămâne una cu apariție sporadică, majoritatea exemplarelor observate fiind adesea imature, solitare și necuibăritoare. Din datele sintetizate de noi reiese că cele mai multe observații raportate în ultimii 25 de ani (perioada 2000-2024) provin din Transilvania – 27 exemplare / 23 semnalări și din Dobrogea - 23 exemplare / 21 semnalări. În restul provinciilor din țară semnalările sunt mult mai restrânse: Muntenia – 11 exemplare / 11 semnalări, Banat – 4 exemplare / 4 semnalări, Bucovina – 4 exemplare / 2 semnalări, Oltenia – 3 exemplare / 3 semnalări și câte 1 exemplar în Crișana și Maramureș. Ansamblul de date cumulate și actualizate în acest studiu pot contribui la cunoașterea mai extinsă a interrelațiilor dintre *Gyps fulvus* și mediile de trai din țara noastră și la identificarea/desemnarea unor eventuale zone de repopulare și/sau protecție. Promovăm totodată câteva practici și acțiuni ce ar putea asigura succesul în readucerea speciei în avifauna rezidentă a țării, apoi în restabilirea populației la niveluri sigure, fie pe cale naturală, fie prin programe/proiecte.

**Cuvinte cheie:** observații cronologice, *Gyps fulvus*, situația actuală, perspective.

## INTRODUCTION

*Gyps fulvus* (Hablizl, 1783) – the griffon vulture is one of the species of Palearctic birds of the order Accipitriformes, which has a distribution area of up to 3,000 m a. s. l., from the southern Europe, the northern Africa, the Middle East, the Arabian Peninsula, the mountains of Central Asia, to Afghanistan, Pakistan, India. The limits of the nesting area are, however, often exceeded by non-breeding (immature) specimens that travel long distances (hundreds of km), in search of food. The bio-ecological and behavioural characteristics give to this species a special status. The griffon vulture impresses with its size : the total body length (95-110 cm), the wingspan (230-265 cm), the weight (6,200-10,500 g. for the male and 6,500-11,300 g. for the female); it is a monogamous and social species (it feeds in groups and often nests in colonies on rocky slopes), has a low reproduction rate (it lays only 1 egg, rarely 2), and embryonic and postembryonic development is very slow: the incubation lasts 48-54 days, and the chicks remain in the care of the adults for about 6-7 months, after which they become independent. It reaches maturity at the age of 4-5 years (BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL, 2021; CRAMP & SIMMONS, 1977-1994; HAGEMEIJER & BLAIR, 1997; HARASZTHY & BAGYURA, 2022; HARASZTHY & et al., 2025; del HOYO et al., 2014; GLUTZ et al., 1989; SALVADOR, 2024, 2025; SNOW & PERRINS, 1998).

From the point of view of the conservation within its global range, *Gyps fulvus* is considered to be safely (Least Concern – by IUCN). The European population is estimated at 34,800-44,700 pairs, which it means 69,600-89,400 mature

individuals (https://datazone.birdlife.org/species/.). About 10% of the global range of the species is within Europe, so a rough estimate of the global population size is 696,000-894,000 mature individuals. However, BOTHA et al. (2017) consider that the population is much smaller than this – 80,000-120,000 individuals, while, by BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL (2021), it ranges between 80,000-90,000 mature individuals.

The aim of our study is to compose a complete picture of the distribution and dynamics of the species on the territory of Romania from the first records (1842) up to the present, including of course the factors that caused the decline/collapse of the species in the country. Although the consulted bibliography is not exhaustive, we think that it is useful to put together the known information on this species; thus, the data centralized and updated can contribute better to the knowledge of the interrelationships between *Gyps fulvus* and the living environments from our country and to identify/designate areas for repopulation and/or protection. Also, we want to promote in this way practices and actions that could ensure the success in the restoring of the species into the resident avifauna of the country, then to bring the population to safe levels, either naturally or through programs/projects of relocation and/or repopulation.

## THE METHOD AND THE MATERIAL OF WORK

The paper synthesizes and chronologically organizes the old and new data which we found regarding the presence of the *Gyps fulvus* species on the territory of the today's Romania, starting from 1842 until the end of 2024/beginning of 2025. For this purpose, we investigated over 150 bibliographic sources (volumes and scientific papers, collection catalogues, ornithological/zoogeographic notes), media sources (reports from the written and spoken press, Social-Media) and the electronic databases, either founded by members of the Romanian Ornithological Society and Milvus Group (https://rombird.ro), from the country, and from abroad – Vultures Conservation Foundation (https://4vultures.org/vultures/griffon-vulture/). Of course, some data referring to the same specimens, especially the recent ones, may appear in more than one source. A rich source of information was identified using the monographic volume elaborated by a team from Hungary, dedicated to the vultures (TÓTH et al., 2022). We also viewed numerous specialized studies from abroad, particularly for listing the general threats and the measures demanded for the revitalization of the species and for the repopulation of the old areas in the country.

## RESULTS

The oldest information about the presence of *Gyps fulvus* on the territory of our country comes from the archaeology/paleo-zoology. In this regard, the studies of JÁNOSSY (1965) performed in the Nandru Cave brought to light a fragment of *Gyps* skeleton, from the Mousterian (Middle Palaeolithic period: ca. 120,000 - 35,000 BC), while JURCSÁK & KESSLER (1986) mention fossil remains from Râpa, Cheile Turzi, Cheile Dâmboviței. Other evidences are reported by KESSLER (1977, 2018) based on the fossil remains discovered at Sasca Română – the Nera Valley, Torda, Girișul de Criș, Petrești, Suncuiuș.

The first publications we have, with references to the species of *Gyps fulvus* in the current borders of our country, are from the first half of the 19th century and belong to LANDBECK (1842). From his contributions to the field of zoogeography we found that the griffon vulture was not a rare species, and for almost a century (1857-1954) records in the specialized literature attest that the griffon vulture was a frequent/common species in the country's resident avifauna, with the largest area of distribution among the scavenger vultures from our country (DOMBROWSKI, 1912; LINȚIA 1954, etc.).

Beginning with 1956-1960, the species recorded a major decline, it was no longer found as a breeding bird in our country, and the occasionally observed specimens were rare/few and non-breeding (TĂLPEANU, 1967; IONESCU 1968, etc.). Consequently, towards the end of the 20th century, it was included in the list of extinct species (BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL, 2021; BOTNARIUC & TATOLE, 2005; OȚEL et al., 2000, https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22695219/157719127). Below, we present, chronologically, all the essential data we have regarding the species (Tables 1 and 2). The places of observation/capture, the number and characteristics of the specimens observed/collected (age, state of conservation, etc.) are particularly highlighted.

Table 1. Records /chronological observations regarding *Gyps fulvus*, during 1842-2000.

| **RECORDS / CHRONOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS** | | **BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SOURCE** |
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| **Year** | **The synthesis of the records** | |
| 1842 | The griffon vulture is not a rare species, it gathers (10-15 specimens) at carcasses and nests on cliffs and tall trees | LANDBECK, 1842 |
| 1848 | An egg, collected from Turda (Cluj County) in 1848, arrives at the Hungarian Museum of Natural History in Budapest | FUISZ et al., 2017 |
| 1846 | In 1846, the species bred at Rus (Hunedoara) | MADARÁSZ, 1899-1903 |
| 1857 | It comes to carcasses and is present everywhere in Transylvania where the animals graze | BIELZ, 1857 |
| 1860 | In 1860, it bred in the Danube Gorge | DUDÁS et al., 2016 |
| 1862 | At the beginning of June, near Sinaia, in the Dobra Valley, a nest with two chicks was threatened by the cutting down of the tree on which the nest was placed. The family of *Gyps fulvus* was saved | GUIST, 1862 |
| 1861-1863 | *Gyps fulvus* is mentioned on the list of birds of Transylvania | LÁZÁR, 1861-1863 |
| 1866 | The author saw about 20 pairs of *Gyps fulvus* breeding on the cliffs of the Bicaz Mountains a few years earlier | LÁZÁR, 1866 |

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| 1867 | The species is not very common in Transylvania and appears mainly in the southern part. It breeds in Retezat in February/March. An individual was observed on the Transylvanian Plain, on 11.05.1867 | FRIVALDSZKY, 1891 |
| 1876 | It was very common (in Dobrogea), in 1876, breeding in groups on the cliffs at Cerna, Greci, Slava Veche (Tulcea County), less often in trees in large forests, as in Ciucorova | SINTENIS, 1877 |
| 1876-1878 | A clutch from 1876 from the Danube Gorge arrives at the National Museum in Budapest | FUISZ et al., 2017 |
| 1879 | Impressive number of birds breeding on the rocks from the Măcin Mountains (Greci area); the author also notes some behavioural observations | SINTENIS, 1879 |
| 1882 | Cerna Valley, certainly breeding, in 1882 | DUDÁS et al., 2016 |
| 1882 | One individual was observed in July-August 1882 at Râu de Mori (Hunedoara County) and several specimens of *Gyps, Aegipius* and two bearded vultures (*Gypaetus barbatus*) at Lake Zănoaga (Hunedoara County) | FRANZ KARL, 1882 |
| 1885 | The species is seen in the studied areas (the historical regions Alsó-Fehér and Hunyad / Alba de Jos and Hunedoara), maximum 3 individuals on the carcass; the breeding of the species is mentioned in Retezat | CSATÓ, 1885 |
| 1886 | *Gyps fulvus* breeds on the Babadag Hills | ALLEON, 1886 |
| 1890 | In the early 1890s, in the Dubova Bay, groups of 20–30 birds coming from the Serbian side were not rare | LINȚIA, 1916 |
| 1890 | The author collected, in August 1890, 12 specimens from the Lotru Valley. On September 27, he counted 42 specimens in the Mraconia Valley on a bull carcass. He writes about a specimen landed on the ground, exhausted and later shot (without date and place) | DOMBROWSKI, 1891 |
| 1891 | Analysis of the stomach of an individual shot near Sibiu is showed | SPIESS, 1891 |
| 1892 | In small numbers in the area, they breed in the high mountains and leave in winter | CSATÓ, 1892 |
| 1894 | A clutch from 1894 from the Orșova area – the Cerna Valley arrives at the National Museum in Budapest | FUISZ et al., 2017 |
| 1895 | He affirms that the species breeds in the Făgăraș Mountains; 2 specimens were observed in flight | CZYNK, 1895 |
| | 3 specimens of *Gyps fulvus* from Transylvania, one of them being a juvenile, without places and dates of collection, while 1 specimen is from the Cibin Mountains, dated 1895, there are in the collection of the Naturalists' Society of Sibiu. | KAMNER, 1914 |
| 1897 | In the Făgăraș Mountains, the Arpaș Valley, about 40 vultures of all three species were observed together on a carcass | SPIESS, 1897 |
| 1898 | The species is a common occurrence on the Dobrogea Plateau. A nest has been found on Doloșman Cape and a group of up to 28 individuals was observed at Slava Rusă. | ALMÁSY, 1898 |
| 1899 | General data about the species. *Gyps fulvus* is observed in the Retezat Mountains, breeds in the Mehadia area | CHERNEL, 1899 |
| 1899-1903 | It is claimed that the species breeds on the rocks of the Danube, at Cazane, and that it rarely breeds around Băile Herculane. References are also made to old data (from 1846) and it is mentioned that the species bred at Strei-Plopu, in the 1860s | MADARÁSZ, 1899-1903 |
| 1903 | 3 occupied nests in the Danube coppices: one on the Strâmbu Islet, the second on Puiu Strâmbu, the third at Gura Ialomiței. The female of the breeding pair from Paiu Strâmbu was shot on February 29, 1903. Dombrowki tells in detail the story of a female he shot in April 1903, while it was sitting on the nest in the Giuvegea Forest. The forests from the rocky places from Giuvegea (Dobrogea) were populated by griffon vultures all year round; Dombrowki once counted 52 vultures on a single oak tree from here. He estimated that at least 300 vultures spent the night in the Giuvegea Forest at that time (it was the end of October and a strong murrain was raging among the sheep) | DOMBROWSKI, 1912; LINȚIA, 1954 |
| 1904 | More *Gyps fulvus* and *Aegypius monachus* flying over the ridges of 2,500 m a.s.l., without details | FÜHRER, 1904 |
| | The griffon vulture was listed on a list of the ornithofauna of Dobrogea | IONESCU, 1904 |
| | 1 specimen collected from Balta Brăilei, 01.1904, by Dombrowski, is present in the collection of the Antipa Museum | PAPADOPOL & TĂLPEANU, 1986 |
| | The author collected a *Gyps fulvus* specimen, without specifying the locality, in October, documenting it with a photo | SPIESS, 1904 |
| 1905 | 1 individual of *Gyps fulvus*, shot in June, in Cătina locality, the Cluj County | ANONYMUS, 1905 |
| 1905 | 1 individual collected from Danube Delta (the locality is not mentioned); the observation is documented with photo of the nest, vulture and *Milvus* together; the case is also quoted by LINȚIA (1909) | SPIESS, 1905a, b |
| 1906 | In the ornithological collection of the Mureș County Museum there is a specimen from 1906: the Fărăgău area | SZOMBATH, 2010 |
| 1907 | 1 juvenile-female specimen, collected at Cibin (Sibiu) – 07.1907, by Lajos Führe, is preserved in the ornithological collection of the Zoological Museum of Babeș-Bolyai University from Cluj (inventory no. 2202) | PANTE, 1988; OSVÁTH et al., 2022 |
| | In 1907, on the rocks from the Babadag Forest there was a large colony of *Gyps fulvus*, and nests of *Aegypius monachus* there were also on large trees | LODGE, 1908 |
| 1908 | In September 1908, in Retezat, the author observed and photographed *Gyps fulvus*; he noted 8-9 specimens simultaneously present on a carcass and the fact that the species is frequent there | LODGE, 1909 |
| | 1 specimen was collected from Bocșa Montană, in May 1908 | LINȚIA, 1908 |
| 1912 | A clutch from Mehadia (Caraș-Severin County), from 1912 (no other information) is preserved in the Birds Collection of the Hungarian Natural History Museum | FUISZ et al., 2017 |
| 1912 1913 | The author bought 1 individual of *Gyps fulvus* from a peasant from the vicinity of the city, which allegedly attacked a sheep while it was hungry and was captured by the shepherds | SPIESS, 1912 - 1913 |
| 1913 | 2 males and a juvenile were observed in Herculane (Caraș-Severin County), on 22.04.1913 | SZEMERE, 1913 |
| 1914 | It is specified that it does not breed around Sibiu, but only in the Făgăraș Mountains, the upper part of the Dâmbovița Valley and the Lotru cliffs | BERGER, 1914 |
| 1915 | 5 individuals of *Gyps fulvus* in flight, in Baziaș | HERMAN, 1915 |
| | Observed in the past at Rășinari, Sibiu County | PĂCALĂ, 1915 |

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| 1917 | The author mentions the species' observation sites from Transylvania and supports the breeding in the Retezat Mountains, the Făgăraș Mountains, on Negoi, and in the Danube Gorges, at Cazane | SCHENK, 1917 |
| | It is mentioned 1 individual came from Ozun, Covasna County, which was brought to the taxidermy workshop in 1917 (inf. Brósz Emil) | KOHL, 1970 |
| 1918 | Schenk advertises it in the Rodna Mountains | Paszlavszki, 1918 quoted by ARDELEAN & BERES, 2000 |
| 1920 | In the museum from Bârlad there is 1 individual of *Gyps fulvus* collected at Tutova (Vaslui County), in 1920 | TÓTH et al. 2022 |
| 1922 | H. dos Passos-Freitas observed a *Gyps fulvus* flying over the Lake Razelm, in April-May 1922 | PETRESCU et al., 2018 |
| 1923 | Through the Transylvanian Plain in groups of 10-12. On 18.07.1923, in the Retezat Mountains, Borăscu Peak, over 200 individuals on the corpses of 6-7 cattle, killed by lightning, and others were coming one after another in high numbers from Orșova and Mehadia | DOBAY, 1932 |
| 1924 | The last clutch from the Orșova area was found in 1923, an egg ends up at the National Museum in Budapest | DUDÁS et al., 2016 |
| 1925 | *Gyps fulvus* nested in the rocks from Greci, in April-Mai 1925 | HEINRICH, 1927 |
| | *Gyps fulvus* breeds on the Dobrogea Plateau among the rocks | SWANN & MCNEILL, 1935 |
| 1926 | Observations around Sibiu with references to the behaviour of the species. One specimen is kept in captivity in Orăștie | LEPSI, 1926/27 |
| 1927 | On Retezat, at ‹‹Slăvete››, around mid-August (1927), when a terrible plague struck the cattle on the mountain, about 700-800 vultures gathered, cleaning the carcasses from the mountains and thus performing a true sanitary and sanitation service | LINȚIA, 1954 |
| 1928 | The author recalls the plague caused by the attack of columbac flies in 1928 in Timișoara, when numerous specimens of *Gyps fulvus* came from great distances and gathered on the corpses of dead animals | ROSETTI-BĂLĂNESCU, 1957 |
| 1928 | 1 male, shot on 18.08.1928, close to the Zănoaga Lake, in Retezat, is found in the Collection of the Museum of the Hunedoara County, Deva | GHEORGHIȚĂ et al., 1969 |
| | On 14.07.1928, 1 individual is collected near Cernavodă (Dobrogea)<br>On 23.07.1928, 1 individual is collected near Babadag, the same place, also nests during the spring of 1929 | KORNIS, 1931a, b |
| | Previously, it was common, coming in the summer from the Cazane area, but now it is a rarity | LOVASSY, 1928 |
| | Brósz Emil (evoked by KOHL, 1970) claims that the last specimens reported in Covasna County were those brought to the taxidermy workshop on 5.07.1928 in Zăbala and on 28.02.1931 in Comandău – both specimens being kept at the Museum in Sfântu Gheorghe (Covasna County) | ARDELEAN & BERES, 2000 |
| 1929 | A chick of *Gyps fulvus* that fell from its nest into the Danube, at the Danube Gorge, is in the Naumann Museum in Köthen-Germany | GRESCHIK, 1929 |
| | It is sustained that the species regularly breeds in Dobrogea, without precise data and places | LEPȘI, 1929 |
| | 2 individuals collected on 25.05.1928 in Banloc and on 18.10.1929 in Otelec (Banat) | LINȚIA, 1930 |
| 1931 | On 30.05.1931 in the Rașova area (Dobrogea) the author sees a mixed group of 20-25 vultures, the most *Gyps fulvus*, and the others, *Aegypius monachus* | DOBAY, 1938 |
| | 1 individual from Comandău, dated 1931, is in the Museum from Sfântu Gheorghe (Covasna County) | KOHL 1970; TÓTH. et al., 2022 |
| | In July-August 1931, 2 individuals of *Gyps fulvus* were seen at Doloșman - Dobrogea | WÜST, I933 |
| 1930, 1936, 1939 | During his visits in Sinaia, in the summers of 1930, 1936, 1939, the author saw from the Zoological Station almost daily, griffon vultures soaring above the Bucegi Mountains (Pietrele Arse, Valea Jepilor, Caraiman, etc.), from 2 to 20-30 specimens. He claimed that flocks of hundreds of specimens sometimes were met in our mountains, especially in the summer, on the alpine pastures, during the time of grazing | LINȚIA, 1954 |
| 1933 | A specimen caught in 1933, in the locality of Vintilă Vodă (Buzău) and brought to the taxidermy workshop is mentioned (inf. Brósz Emil) | KOHL, 1970 |
| | An old male is seen under the crest of Caraiman, the Bucegi Mountains, in 1933 | CĂTUNEANU, 1933 |
| | The protection of the species *Gypaetus barbatus, Gyps fulvus, Aegypius monachus, Neophron percnopterus*, as Natural Monuments, is legislated | The Journal of the Council of Ministers No. 600/1933 |
| 1936 | Six areas in Dobrogea where the vultures breed are indicated on the map | SCHNELL, 1936 |
| 1938 | The species breeds on the coast of Cadrilater, measuring 22 km south from the current Romanian-Bulgarian border, between Sabla and Caliacra, and roams in flocks of up to 30 individuals | CĂLINESCU, 1938 |
| 1940 | *Gyps fulvus* is mentioned as declared Natural Monument | BORZA, 1940 |
| 1941 | The griffon vulture was observed nesting, in the past, in the limestone walls from Brezoiu, then in the Stănuleț region from the Retezat massif and in the steep cliffs from Dobrogea. In the Danube swamps it breeds quite often, both on trees and on bare rocks, not mentioning their powerful fortresses located in the black poplars and oaks from the lower Danube | SPIESS, 1941b |
| 1942 | The griffon vulture was observed at Lisa, Făgăraș County, and Brețcu/Trei Scaune, in 1942 | GEACU, 2018 |
| 1943 | *Gyps fulvus* was seen at Casian and Gura Dobrogei (Tîrgușor Commune, Constanța County), in 1943 | GEACU, 2018 |
| | In the Rodna Mountains, the Gârgălău Peak, 4 individuals of *Gyps fulvus*, of which a juvenile. This and 1 adult were shot | BÖMCHES, 1943 |
| 1945-1946 | At Basarabi, Stupina, Viișoara and Crucea (Constanța County) and Isaccea, Luncavița and Rachelu - Tulcea County, during 1945-1946 | GEACU, 2018 |

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| 1946 | At the beginning of September 1946, on Slăveiu in Retezat, after a pack of wolves attacked a flock of sheep and killed many of them, flocks of vultures appeared, numbering up to 32 at a time. It highlights the environmental sanitation role of this vulture | BĂCESCU, 1961 |
| 1946-1947 | During 1946-1947, the botanist engineer Artur Coman observes several vultures on corpses in the Maramureș Mountains, especially on Toroioaga and in the Rodna Mountains | ARDELEAN & BERES, 2000 |
| 1948 | In July 1948, near Marghita (Bihor County), 2 individuals of *Gyps fulvus*; they attacked some sheep, one of them was captured | KOHL, 1944-1947 |
| 1952 | The author describes a scene of a gathering of vultures (over 30 *Gyps fulvus* and ravens) coming to the carcasses of 3 cattle killed by violent lightnings during a torrential rain, in the Bucegi Massif - the Babele Mountain, towards the source of the Izvorul Dorului, on 25.08.1952. On 28.08.1952, on/over the steep cliffs of Jepii Mici, above Clăia, he observed about 10-12 *Gyps fulvus* together that kept circling and settling down again | BĂCESCU, 1961 |
| 1953 | The last individuals collected from Măcin (1953) and Cerna (1954) are mentioned | CĂTUNEANU, 1973 |
| 1954 | "The most widespread of its group members" is found throughout the country all year round | LINȚIA, 1954 |
| 1956 | A specimen from the ornithological collection of the Vrancea County Museum was found poisoned, together with 6 other specimens, on 16.09.1956, in Valea Sării (Vrancea County), near a corpse of horse poisoned with strychnine to combat the wolves | MIHALCIUC, 1983 |
| 1957 | The colonial nesting pattern (colonies scattered on rocks, sometimes on trees, occupying nests of white-tailed eagle, eastern-imperial eagles and even cinereous vulture) and the gregarious feeding behaviour are described | ROSETTI-BĂLĂNESCU, 1957 |
| 1960 | It is mentioned 1 individual shot at Brodina (Suceava County), in 1960 (NESTEROV, 1995) | MUNTEANU, 2009 |
| 1961 | This vulture is also known on the Bistriţa Valley, upstream of Ceahlău, where it comes to carrion | BĂCESCU, 1961 |
| | Known information about *Gyps fulvus* are resumed: it is the most widespread in Romania and breeds almost everywhere in the Carpathians, in Dobrogea, even on the banks of the Danube, making its nest on the rocks and trees. It often uses the abandoned nests by the cinereous vultures, eagles or white-tailed eagles | BREHM, 1961 |
| | Papadopol observes 7 individuals at Prundu (between Giurgiu and Oltenița) on 18.06.1961 | PAPADOPOL 1962, 1963; TĂLPEANU, 1967 |
| 1962 | The last sighting of the griffon vulture in Maramureș dates back to 1962; a specimen injured by a poacher in Huta was taken to the Zoo from Baia Mare, from where, through an exchange of animals with another Zoo, its trace was lost | ARDELEAN & BERES, 2000 |
| 1963 | The occurence of *Gyps fulvus* – immature or non-breeding individuals, in the Danube Delta, during summer, is sustained | CRAMP & FERGUSON-LEES, 1963 |
| 1964 | 1 individual of *Gyps fulvus* was caught on 20.09.1964, in the locality of Augustin, Harghita County, captured alive and gave to the Zoo from Brașov | Kováts (1974) quoted by ARDELEAN & BERES, 2000 |
| 1966 | The author includes the species in the list of birds existing in the Ineu Massif from the Rodna Mountains, at Poiana Ilvei | FILIPAȘCU, 1966a |
| | The existence of a *Gyps fulvus* egg collected from Transylvania, among the rare pieces of the Zoological Museum from Cluj-Napoca, is mentioned | FILIPAȘCU, 1966b |
| 1967 | It is claimed that the species bred in the past in the Carpathians, but it was eradicated from there | FEIDER et al., 1967 |
| | The need of protection of the birds of prey, including *Gyps fulvus*, is underlined | PUȘCARIU, 1967 |
| | Rare species characteristic of the alpine meadows and of the tetraonid floor | RADU, 1967 |
| | The species has been absent in the breeding season from the last 5 years. The author spent many days of field observation during 1956-1966, on large areas of the Bucegi, Făgăraș, Retezat, Buzău and Cozia Mountains from the Southern Carpathians, the Nera Valley in Banat, the Apuseni, Ceahlău and Suhard Mountains from the Eastern Carpathians, the Măcin Mountains and the cliffs at Gurile Dobrogei and Băneasa, during which time he never observed the species. He reminds the observation of PAPADOPOL (1962) and assumes that the specimens observed by him came from the Balkan Mountains where the species was still breeding in a low number of pairs | TĂLPEANU, 1967 |
| 1968 | It is sustained that *Gyps fulvus* is rare in Dobrogea and in the Carpathians and the reasons for the decrease in numbers are listed | IONESCU, 1968 |
| 1969 | Both species, the griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*) and the cinereous vulture (*Aegypius monachus*), are included on the list of the rare animals of the Romanian fauna. It is specified that their breeding strengths are limited to a few pairs | BĂNĂRESCU, 1969 |
| | The species is described as a rare, resident bird, in the summer on the mountains, where it can find cattle carcasses, in the winter on the hills and especially in Dobrogea. It breeds on rocky places or in the nests of other large raptors. It lays a single egg. The shooting is banned | COTTA & BODEA, 1969 |
| | In addition to presentation of the specimens of *Gyps fulvus* from the ornithological collection of the Hunedoara County Museum, from Deva, it is claimed that this vulture has not been reported on the territory of the Hunedoara County in the recent years | GHEORGHIȚĂ et al., 1969 |
| 1970 | The notes of Brósz Emil are evoked: in 40 years there were several specimens of *Gyps fulvus* brought to the taxidermy workshop (one from 01.06.1927 without locality, others were mentioned above – 1917, 1928, 1931, 1933) | KOHL, 1970 |
| | The factors that led to the local extinction of vultures, including of the *Gyps fulvus* species, are presented: the decline of the animal populations, the extinction of the marmot (*Marmota marmota*) and the use of the strychnine | PUȘCARIU, 1970 |
| 1971 | *Gyps fulvus* is listed on the list of the species subject to the nature conservation in the Danube Delta and in the Razelm Complex | PUȘCARIU, 1971 |

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| 1973 | It is claimed that the griffon vulture was considered as the most widespread vulture from our country. It has not been seen since 1954. Dombrowski collected 82 individuals of *Gyps fulvus*, from 1895 to 1916, of which only 2 pieces remained at the Antipa Museum. The figure 7 shows the location of the nests and of the observations | CĂTUNEANU, 1973 |
| | *Gyps fulvus* is classified as non-breeding, sporadic, Mediterranean type species | RADU, 1973 |
| 1976 | On 16.08.1976, a young male was found into a garden from Cristești (Mureș County). The bird was in clean plumage, but without strength and after a few hours it died. The sternum and pelvic bones were purchased for the ornithological collection of the High School No. 2 from Reghin | KOHL, 1983 |
| 1977 | An analysis of the situation of birds of prey from Romania between 1970 and 1974 is made, and *Gyps fulvus* is also discussed | PUȘCARIU & FILIPASCU, 1977 |
| | *Gyps fulvus* is listed on the list of the birds from the Danube Delta as erratic species | RADU, 1977 |
| 1980 | Brașov, 1 juvenile caught alive | Radu, 1994 quoted by MUNTEANU, 2009. |
| | 3 specimens without data from the Hausmann ornithological collection are mentioned | CIOCHIA & BARBU, 1983 |
| 1983 | It is stated that the griffon vulture has completely disappeared from the Vrancea Mountains. The last evidences of the presence of the species in the Vrancea area were the 6 specimens found poisoned in 1956 in Valea Sării | MIHALCIUC, 1983 |
| 1985 | *Gyps fulvus* – exhibit at the Natural History Museum from Iași, but there is no data about its origins | MÂNDRU, 1985 |
| 1986 | In the ornithological collection of The National Museum of Natural History "Grigore Antipa" from Bucharest are kept 5 individuals from the first decade of the last century: one individual from the Harghita Mountains, one from Balta Brăilei, three without place and date. Four of the 5 individuals were collected and naturalized by Dombrowski | PAPADOPOL & TĂLPEANU, 1986 |
| 1988 | Information from the literature is given: *Gyps fulvus* reproduced in Romania until a few decades ago, but today it is considered died out | FABRITIUS, 1988. |
| 1997 | 1 individual flying above the Bogdaproste Lake, from Dobrogea, in the Delta, on 9.09.1997 (occasional visitor) observed by Munteanu D. and Romer A. | MUNTEANU 2009; MARINOV et al., 2023 |
| | Among the rare pieces from the ornithological collection of the Natural History Museum from Sibiu there are 6 pieces of *Gyps fulvus* collected in 1895, 1896, 1898, without dates | POPESCU, 1997 |
| 1998 | In the summer of 1998, a griffon vulture was observed several times in the Bucegi Massif | Roberts, 2000 quoted by MUNTEANU 2009 |
| | A subadult of 2-3 years old was found dead at the Ciucorova quarry (Dobrogea) on 26.09.1998 – Fig. 1. Its body was given to the Tulcea Museum (KISS, 2000b). Being in an altered state, only some parts of the body could be preserved | RÉKÁSI & KISS, 1999; KISS, 2000a, b |
| 2000 | The species is considered extinct (marked with Ex) at the level of the Danube Delta | OȚEL et al., 2000 |

Figure 1. The specimen of *Gyps fulvus* found dead at the Ciucorova quarry (Dobrogea) on September 26, 1998 (Foto: Kiss J. Botond).

**The pressures that caused the collapse of the species** in our country beginning with the second half of the last century are multiple, but the most often invoked were:

- the hunting and/or poaching: Dombrowski collected 82 specimens *Gyps fulvus* from 1895 to 1916 years (CĂTUNEANU, 1973); numerous prepared birds were traded/exported in bulk (LODGE, 1909; SINTENIS, 1878); all the major museums

from the country owned one or more individuals (LINȚIA, 1954), fact confirmed by several authors (KAMNER, 1914; GHEORGHIȚĂ et al., 1969; KOHL, 1970; POPESCU, 1997; SZOMBATH, 2010; MÂNDRU, 1985; PAPADOPOL & TĂLPEANU, 1986; PANTE 1988; RIDICHE, 2011; OSVÁTH et al. 2022).

- direct or indirect poisoning: intense campaigns were carried out to combat wolves using baits poisoned with strychnine or other lethal substances (IONESCU, 1968; PUŞCARIU, 1970; BĂCESCU 1961; MIHALCIUC, 1983; DUDÁS et al., 2016).

- the collecting of eggs in quantities that seem unbelievable to us today (LINȚIA, 1954; SINTENIS, 1878), for museum collections (MUNTEANU 2005, 2009; DUDÁS et al., 2016); in this regard, the catalogues of some authors attest the presence of some nests/eggs of *Gyps fulvus* in the collections (FILIPAȘCU, 1966b; FUISZ et al. 2017; RIDICHE, 2003). SINTENIS (1878) offered for sale collections of eggs and collections of bird skins of 300 species from Dobrogea.

The studies performed in the recent years show that the birds of prey (including *Gyps fulvus*) are very susceptible to West Nile Virus (WNV) infection, which can cause death within a few weeks of infection. Since 1996, several outbreaks of WNV infection have been frequently reported on the European continent, including Romania (TSAI et al., 1998), with a noticeable seasonal pattern, during warmer weather – July to October (García-Carrasco et al., 2023, quoted by LOUREIRO et al., 2023).

Other factors that have contributed to the decline of the species or directly or indirectly maintain the precarious status of this species are: the lack of food as a result of the decline in domestic animal herds and sanitary-veterinary measures (immediate burial of dead animals from the farms is obligatory), human persecution and the increasingly intense disturbance caused by humans in the territories populated by the species (MUNTEANU 2005, 2009; KELEMEN & MERTENS, 2006).

More recent threats to the species are the collisions with the power lines and the wind turbines. Also, the high concentrations of toxic substances (e.g. veterinary Diclofenac, antibiotics or other drugs, heavy metals) from the domestic animal feed, which can end up being consumed by vultures, are lethal for the vultures, causing their death or decreasing their resilience and reproductive rate (https://4vultures.org/vultures/griffon-vulture/; https://www.birdlife.org/; MESTECĂNEANU, 2024).

**The situation of the species in Romania during 2000-2024**

During the last 25 years, we have noticed a slight increase in the frequency of records, but the species remains one with sporadic apparition (Table 2). The intensity of observations can be explained by the increasing number of the young specimens that move for food and that come from other countries. Also, the means of communication (mass-media), the provision of observers (specialists or amateurs) with high-performance optical equipments (binoculars, photo/video cameras), the accessibility of adequate documentation, etc., contribute to the increase in the frequency of *Gyps fulvus* reports in our country.

Table 2. Records/chronological observations regarding *Gyps fulvus*, during 2000-2024.

| **REPORTS / CHRONOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS** | | **BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SOURCE** |
|---|---|---|
| **Year** | **The synthesis of the records** | |
| 2001 | On 23.09.2001, 1 juvenile specimen, emaciated, malnourished and injured, was found in the yard of some villagers from Strâmtura (Maramureș County) and transported to the Maramureș Museum from Sighetu Marmației. Here, it was kept in an aviary until May 2002, then it was released in good condition. It was a young female, weighing 11 kg when was released to the wild | https://www.mediafaxfoto.ro.; Bereș & Manole, 2002 quoted by MUNTEANU, 2009; BÉRES & ARDELEAN, 2014 |
| 2003 | The egg collection of the Oltenia Museum contains 1 egg of *Gyps fulvus*, without collection data. The piece is part of the closed "I. P. Licherdopol" Collection, entered into the museum's heritage in 1958 | RIDICHE, 2003; RIDICHE, 2023 |
| 2004 | 1 specimen observed in the Măcin Mountains (Tulcea County) in 2004 (16.08 – 17.10) | FÜLÖP et al., 2018 |
| | 1 individual observed by Kovács István, Kis Réka Beáta and Kecskés Attila in the town of Măcin – Tulcea County, on 18.09.2004 | https://rombird.ro |
| 2005 | 1 immature (2 years) observed by Tănăsescu I. on 15.06.2005, at Bucșani, Ionești Dam (Vâlcea County) | https://rombird.ro; DARÓCZI et al., 2019 |
| | 1 juvenile observed on 10.10.2005, in Lugoj (Timiș County). The bird arrived at the Târgu Mureș Zoo and in 2019 it still was there (Bereczki B., Kopacz A., ulterior Daróczi J. Sz., Domokos Cs., Kelemen A. M. and others) | |
| | The distribution in the country, then the collapse of the species, are presented. Six observations from the period 1960-1980 are documented, and, in addition, one observation, *in verbis*, from the Danube Delta: 1 individual, at Bogdaproste, on 09.09.1997 | MUNTEANU, 2005 |
| | A picture of the negative trend of the *Gyps fulvus* population is presented. One map indicates the known nesting sites, the second map shows the observation points until 1950 and the third map indicates observation points until the present | KELEMEN et al., 2005 |
| 2006 | Documentation for the reintroduction of the species in Romania – respectively in the Retezat Mountains. The recolonizing of this mountain range, however, does not seem to be the best solution and it is proposed to search for other areas | KELEMEN & MERTENS, 2006 |
| | 292 people from the Retezat National Park were interviewed to assess the level of knowledge of the local people about the species and their attitude towards *Gyps fulvus* | MERTENS et al., 2006 |
| | It is mentioned that it is increasingly rare in the Carpathians, in Dobrogea and on the seashore, where it used to breed on trees or rocks | OPRIȘ, 2006 |
| 2007 | On 6.09.2007, a specimen ringed and marked in Croatia was caught near Marginea, Suceava County (information from S. Trelea); it was released after a few days (this was the only vulture captured in our country, whose origin is known, including the distance it travelled from the ringing site, over 900 km); at the beginning of October 2007, 3 specimens were observed flying together near the Suceava airport (inf. S. Trelea) | TRELEA, 2008; MUNTEANU, 2009; GIURGINCA, 2017 |

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| | 1 juvenile observed on 06.09.2007 at Marginea (Suceava County), by Dumitru A. and Vlaișan G. | https://rombird.ro; DARÓCZI et al., 2019; GIURGINCA, 2017 |
| 2008 | 1 juvenile specimen was observed and photographed in the Bucegi Massif, between the Cheile Tătarului and the tail of the reservoir, on 19.07.2008 | Manoliu, 2008 quoted by MUNTEANU 2009. |
| | 1 immature specimen was observed by Szabó J. senior, on 24.09.2008, at Odorheiu Secuiesc (Harghita County) | https://rombird.ro; DARÓCZI et al., 2019 |
| 2009 | The author shows the situation of *Gyps fulvus* in Europe and documents the situation of the species in Romania: it reminds the observations made from the second half of the 20th century until 2008, the projects to reintroduce the griffon vulture in some Romanian mountain massifs (Ciucaș, Bucegi, Retezat), from the recent years, including the factors that determined the decline of the species | MUNTEANU, 2009 |
| | 1 immature specimen was observed on 15.06.2009 at Satchinez - Bărăteaz (Timiș County) by Tatu Călin | https://rombird.ro; DARÓCZI et al., 2019 |
| 2010 | 1 immature specimen was observed on 22.05.2010 at Tulcea - Malcoci (Tulcea County) by Daróczi-Gy G., Daróczi J. Sz., Dehelean A., Dehelean L. | https://rombird.ro; DARÓCZI et al., 2015 |
| | 1 subadult observed by Komáromi I., Miholcsa T. and others on 20.07.2010, at Ihod (Mureș County) | |
| | *Gyps fulvus* is mentioned on the list of animal species for which methodological issues of conservation in natural habitats are discussed | MUNTEANU, 2010 |
| | The species is mentioned on the systematic list of vertebrates from Romania | MURARIU, 2010 |
| 2011 | In the collection of the Oltenia Museum there is a juvenile specimen without data of origin, which is part of the old collection (first half of the 20th century) of the museum patrimony | RIDICHE, 2011 |
| | 2 specimens were observed in the autumn of 2011 at Greci (Tulcea County) | FÜLÖP et al., 2012 |
| | 1 specimen was observed at Allah Bair Hill, 1 specimen at Ostrov – in the southern Dobrogea | FÜLÖP et al., 2018 |
| 2012 | 1 immature specimen was observed by Fasola L., Pârâu L., on 19.07.2012, at Zoltan (Covasna County) | https://rombird.ro; DARÓCZI et al., 2015 |
| | 1 specimen stationary and then in flight was observed in the Bucegi Mountains, on 6.09.2012 | https://buceginatura2000.com; GIURGINCA, 2017 |
| | 1 juvenile/subadult observed by Csiszér K., Kiss R. B., Táncos M., on 20.09.2012, at Greci - Cerna (Tulcea County) | https://rombird.ro; DARÓCZI et al., 2015 |
| | 1 specimen observed by Dehelean L. and Dehelean A. at Ciumeghiu – Ghiorac, in the Bihor County, on 17.03.2012 | https://rombird.ro |
| 2013 | 1 specimen observed by Kovács I., on 17.04.2013, at Cheia, in Cheile Râmețului (Alba County) | https://rombird.ro; DARÓCZI et al., 2015 |
| | 1 specimen observed by Petrescu D. and others, on 18.04.2013, at Codru, Babadag Forest (Tulcea County) | |
| | 1 immature (2 years old) observed on 30.04. 2013, at Ungureni - Mislea (Dâmbovița County) | |
| | 1 tired specimen, found on 30.04.2013, on the road, near Cobia Commune, Dâmbovița County by Ciprian Grigorescu, was taken by the Târgoviște Zoo. A reference is made to another specimen from the Timișoara Zoo, caught injured | https://www.gazetadambovitei.ro; https://adevarul.ro; https://ziare.com |
| | 1 immature observed by Péter Zs., Zeitz R., on 7.05.2013, at Răzoarele (Constanța County) | https://rombird.ro; DARÓCZI et al., 2015 |
| | 1 immature observed by Ifrim A., Scheres W., Vastenhouw B., Zekhuis M., on 24.05.2013 at Măcin, Măcin Mountains (Tulcea County) | |
| | 1 subadult ♂ found on 26.05.2013, at Cernavodă (Constanța County); the bird (caught by a local) was equipped with a GPS transmitter from Bulgaria | |
| | The media, on 16.06.2013, published news about the finding in May of the mentioned specimen: a two-year-old young male, arrived in our country from Bulgaria (Repopulation Program), originally from France, found near Cernavodă (Constanța County), with the *K4L* marking - information provided by Ovidiu Bufnilă – the Romanian Ornithological Society | https://hotnews.ro |
| | 1 juvenile observed by Gălan P., on 16.09. 2013, at Cogealac (Constanța County) | https://rombird.ro; DARÓCZI et al., 2019 |
| | On 21.10.2013, a report of a specimen marked on the wings with the code *K6X* is published, this being observed at Cârna, the Danube Meadow – Dolj County (Florea Moraru – local from Cârna); the specimen was released during August from a farm near Vraca Mountain, Northern Bulgaria, 74.48 km from the place of recovery - the "Green Balkan" Program (inf. Mirela Ridiche - Oltenia Museum Craiova) | https://cvlpress.ro; https://www.ecomagazin.ro |
| | In addition to the general data, the last breeding in Romania is mentioned (1939, Bucegi area) and two sites Nature2000 designated for conservation are listed: Măcin-Niculițel and Mlaștina Satchinez | BRÂNZAN et al. 2013 |
| 2014 | 1 immature (2 years old) was observed by Leterna A., Comsuta L. A., Crăciun C. and others on 28-29.04.2014, at Alba Iulia (Alba County) | https://rombird.ro; DARÓCZI et al., 2015 |
| | 1 specimen observed by Aba-Márk M. and Toth P. on 11.05.2014, at Târgu Secuiesc (Covasna County) | |
| | 1 immature observed by Čamlík G., Škorpíková V. on 31.07.2014, at Călățea (Bihor County) | |
| | 1 immature observed by Răzvan Isfan, on 5.08.2014, at Unip (Timiș County) | |
| 2015 | It is mentioned that, currently, *Gyps fulvus* is extinct from Romania | PRIPON, 2015 |
| | On 24.04.2015, the ecological inspectors from the Danube Delta Biosphere Reservation Administration (DDBRA) found in the village of Uzlina, Murighiol Commune, a specimen of griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*) in a state of visible fatigue. It was ringed in Israel in November 2014 and had a satellite tracking system installed. It has been treated and will continue to be cared for until its physical condition allows its release into the wild | https://www.info-delta.ro; https://jurnalulph.ro/international/ |
| | 1 specimen observed on 20.06.2015, at Cotești, the former mine from Aninoasa – Berevoești – Godeni (Argeș County) | MESTECĂNEANU, 2024 |
| 2016 | 1 specimen observed on 03.04.2016, at Hodișel (Bihor County); 1 immature observed on 9.06.2016, Tinca (Bihor County) | ILIE, 2016, 2018 |
| | The number of reports of *Gyps fulvus* in the country is increasing. The need for relocation is argued: umbrella species, the increase of the biodiversity, removing of the animal remains, tourist attraction. Feeding sites are proposed - 1.5 ha, fenced, desinfectable. Historical nesting sites are | DUDÁS et al., 2016 |

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| | mentioned: Retezat Mountains, Făgăraș Mountains (Negoiu), Clisura/Cazanele Dunării, Bicaz Mountains (Gheorghieni), etc. | |
| | 1 specimen observed by Kiss R.-B. and Kovács I. at Cerna - Tulcea County, on 08.05.2016 | https://rombird.ro |
| 2017 | 1 juvenile observed at 2.04.2017, during the spring passage, flying on the SSE-WNW direction over Piaţa Iancului - Bucharest | GIURGINCA, 2017 |
| | 1 immature observed on 7.07.2017 at Cheșa (Bihor County) | ILIE, 2019 |
| | *Gyps fulvus* has disappeared from the Bucegi – Leaota – Piatra Craiului mountains area, but a list of references to the species from the past is given | MESTECĂNEANU, 2017 |
| | 1 specimen observed by Dreghici A. at Berechiu – Arad County, on 21.09.2017 | https://rombird.ro |
| | 1 subadult specimen without ability to flight found on 14.10. 2017, in the Pecineaga-Amzacea area (Constanța County), by Cobzaru I. and V. D. Gavril – researchers at the Institute of Biology in Bucharest. The bird, which was in an advanced state of exhaustion, was taken to Deva, to the shelter of the Peregrinus Association, under the care of biologist Cărăbeț D., and is expected to be released back into the wild upon full rehabilitation. The age and physical condition are specified (subadult with black beak, very emaciated, weight - 11 kg). According to the subsequent notations, the specimen was released in Orșova and photographed in May 2018 | https://www.replicahd.ro; MANOLACHE, 2018 |
| 2018 | A ringed specimen with *K4N* wing markings, exhausted, unable to fly, found in a field, within the Gârliciu Commune (Constanța County), on 20.03.2018. It comes from the species reintroduction program, implemented in Bulgaria. The specimen was taken over by the volunteers of the Green Balkans Association and transported to Bulgaria, to the reintroduction centre | https://evz.ro/; https://www.b1tv.ro; https://rombird.ro |
| | A griffon vulture was photographed on 07.05.2018 at Orșova (Mehedinți County) | https://rombird.ro |
| | 7.05.2018. The Iron Gates Natural Park informs about the presence of an individual of *Gyps fulvus*, near the Orșova naval port, the bird being beset by the crows (a normal behaviour among birds, especially during the nesting period) | https://www.facebook.com/pnportiledefier/ |
| | Information about the griffon vulture captured and photographed by the biologist Ms. Dumbravă (Bălășoiu) Amalia Raluca in the "Iron Gates" Natural Park, on 8.05.2018. The presence of the bird was reported to the park biologist by Mr. A. Brăgaru | https://www.facebook.com/RnpRomsilva/ |
| | The news about the presence of a griffon vulture photographed on 08.05.2018 in the area of the Orșova port is published in the media | https://www.mediafax.ro |
| | On 9.05.2018, another media article was published about the griffon vulture released at Orșova. It is reminded that for more than half a year, the bird was cared for by the members of the "Peregrinus" Association and that "*Zeus*", the only griffon vulture from Romania, was returned to nature by the biologist Dorin Cărăbeț from Deva | http://glasul-hd.ro/ |
| | 1 specimen observed by Szabó J. and Ambrus L. on 02.09.2018, at Merești (Harghita County) | https://rombird.ro |
| 2019 | In June 2019, a specimen of *Gyps fulvus*, marked with a metal ring and wing tags was seen, photographed and filmed at Dumitrești (Vrancea County). It is specified that it originated from Estremadura, Spain, from where it was sent to Bulgaria as part of a colonization program. In April 2019, it was released from Bulgaria. It is not specified what happened after that with the bird | VULTURE CONSERVATION FOUNDATION, 2019 |
| | References are made to *Gyps fulvus*, which, according to the literature, was a common species in the Făgăraș Mountains, frequently breeding in the eastern part of the massif in 1920 (JACOBI, 1984), and in the Carpathians, until the mid-20th century (LINŢIA, 1954b; VASILIU & ŞOVA, 1968). | MESTECĂNEANU, 2019 |
| | 1 specimen observed by Köhler L. at Pianu de Sus - Alba County, on 16.07.2019 | https://rombird.ro |
| | 3 specimens observed by Chiriac D., Pantiru L. and Pantiru S., Sova D. and Madaras V., at Ovidiu – Constanța County, on 05.10.2019 | https://rombird.ro |
| | 1 specimen observed by Gavanescu T. and Popescu N., in Sălătrucel, Brezoi – Vâlcea County, on 28.07.2019 | https://rombird.ro |
| 2020 | On October 13-15, several media sources reported the discovery of a subadult of *Gyps fulvus* by the rangers of the Lunca Mureșului National Park. The bird was brought to the Injured Animal Rehabilitation Center from Târgu Mureș. It is believed that the bird comes from either Serbia (Uvac Nature Reservation) or Bulgaria (Green Balkans Federation reintroduction programs) | https://milvus.ro; https://www.digi24.ro; https://www.g4media.ro; https://www.agerpres.ro |
| | A general description of the species with its illustration is given. *Gyps fulvus* is mentioned as a rare species in the Danube Delta and its surroundings | BACIU, 2020 |
| | 1 immature observed on 28.02.2020 at Tinca (Bihor County) | ILIE, 2020 |
| | 1 specimen observed by Morogan M. and Herlo G., at Periam - Timiș County, on 08.10.2020 | https://rombird.ro |
| 2021 | 1 specimen observed by Bogdan Gogu M. at Sfântu Gheorghe on 2.10. 2021 (Tulcea County) | https://rombird.ro; MARINOV et al., 2023 |
| | 1 specimen photographed by Ersek Emma on 15.09.2021 on the Bucegi Mountains Plateau (Prahova, Dâmbovița, Brașov County) | www.facebook.com/SOR.BirdLifeRomania |
| | 1 specimen observed by Jan van Diermen at Scoreiu - Sibiu County, on 27.09.2021 | https://rombird.ro |
| 2022 | On 31.08.2022, the discovery of a specimen of a griffon vulture in Sebeș was published. Although very tired, the bird has no signs of lesions/injuries and on one of its legs it has a ring that says *CK5*. It was taken over by the Friends of Storks Association from Cristian, for evaluation and handover to representatives of the responsible organization from Bulgaria. It seems to come from Croatia | https://adevarul.ro/; https://alba24.ro |
| | The historical breeding of the species in the Retezat and Făgăraș Mountains, near Gheorghieni in the Bicaz Mountains, the Cerna Valley, and in the Mehadia Mountains is mentioned | HARASZTHY & BAGYURA 2022 |
| | Synthesizing the data from Transylvania, the authors considered the Fagaras Mountains as a likely breeding site, as well as the Bicaz Mountains, from the Eastern Carpathians, while the Cazane area (Mehedinti County) was regarded as a certain breeding site during the period 1800-1920 | TÓTH et al., 2022 |
| | 1 specimen observed by Dan Alex at Orșova – Sibiu County, on 10.07.2022 | https://rombird.ro |
| | 1 specimen observed by Pál Lajos at Fântâna Mare – Constanța County, on 21.04.2022 | |
| 2023 | *Gyps fulvus* is included on the list of the Natural Monuments from Dobrogea. It is recalled the past situation of the species from the forests of the Băneasa area from the southern Dobrogea (here 300 griffon vultures could be seen resting on the tall trees or on the rocks) and that this | SKOLKA, 2023 |

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|---|---|---|
| | figure is only surpassed by that recorded in the Retezat Massif in 1927 when, following a plague that killed a large number of cattle, about 700-800 specimens of griffon vultures gathered in that area. The specimen caught at Gârliciu (Constanța County) in 2018 is mentioned | |
| | It is highlighted that the griffon vulture (in Romanian, vulturul hoitar sur or pleșuv) is slowly but surely returning to the skies of the Southeastern Europe and that there are efforts to rehabilitate the species and increase the number of breeding pairs in the Balkan mountains, from where, from time to time, some specimens move and fly over the territory of the Romanian Dobrogea. The last observation dates from 14.10.2017, from the Constanța County (MANOLCAHE, 2018) | TUDOR, 2023 |
| | 1 specimen observed by Birsan E. at Călărași – Călărași County, on 14.04.2023 | https://rombird.ro |
| | 1 specimen observed by Dobroiu A. at Bucharest, on 10.05.2023 | |
| | 5 specimens observed by Dóczé K. M. at Cernat – Covasna County, on 25.08.2023 | |
| | 1 specimen observed by Brad G. and Nándor V.-S. at Dălnic – Covasna County, on 26.08.2023 | |
| | 1 specimen observed by Birsan E., at Călărași – Călărași County, on 09.11.2023 | |
| | 1 specimen observed by Brad G., in the Mădăraș locality – Bihor County, on 12.11.2023 | |
| | 1 specimen observed by Rotaru C. at Greci – Tulcea County, on 28.12.2023 | |
| | 1 specimen observed by Mestecăneanu F. at Dârmănești – Argeș County, on 26.07.2023 | MESTECĂNEANU, 2024 |
| 2024 | According to Law No. 407/2006, Annex 2, Position 109, the compensation value for the griffon vulture is 2,700 € | MONITORUL OF. nr. 720 (THE OFFICIAL MONITOR No. 720) |
| | 1 specimen observed by Pintea I. at Zăbala – Covasna County, on 16.03.2024 | https://rombird.ro |
| | 1 specimen observed by Tănăsescu M. at Mahmudia – Tulcea County, on 06.10.2024 | |
| | 1 specimen observed by Ștefîrcă O.-S. at Grădiștea – Brăila County, on 13.10.2024 | |
| | Review of the published material on the distribution and reproduction of the species *Gyps fulvus* and *Aegypius monachus* in the Făgăraș Mountains and nearby areas | MESTECĂNEANU, 2024 |

Reports from the last decades mostly refer to resident, non-nesting specimens. The data collected by us cover all regions of the country, but most come from Transylvania (Alba, Brașov, Bihor, Covasna, Harghita, Mureș, Sibiu Counties) – 27 specimens / 23 reports and from Dobrogea (Constanța and Tulcea Counties) – 23 specimens / 21 reports. The reports are much more limited from the rest of the regions of the country: Muntenia (Argeș, Brăila, Călărași, Dâmbovița, Ilfov, Vrancea Counties) – 11 specimens / 11 reports; Banat (Timiș County) – 4 specimens / 4 reports, Bucovina (Suceava County) – 4 specimens / 2 reports, Oltenia (Dolj and Vâlcea Counties) – 3 specimens / 3 reports, Crișana (Arad County) and Maramureș (Maramureș County) – 1 specimen / 1 report each. – Figs. 1, 2.

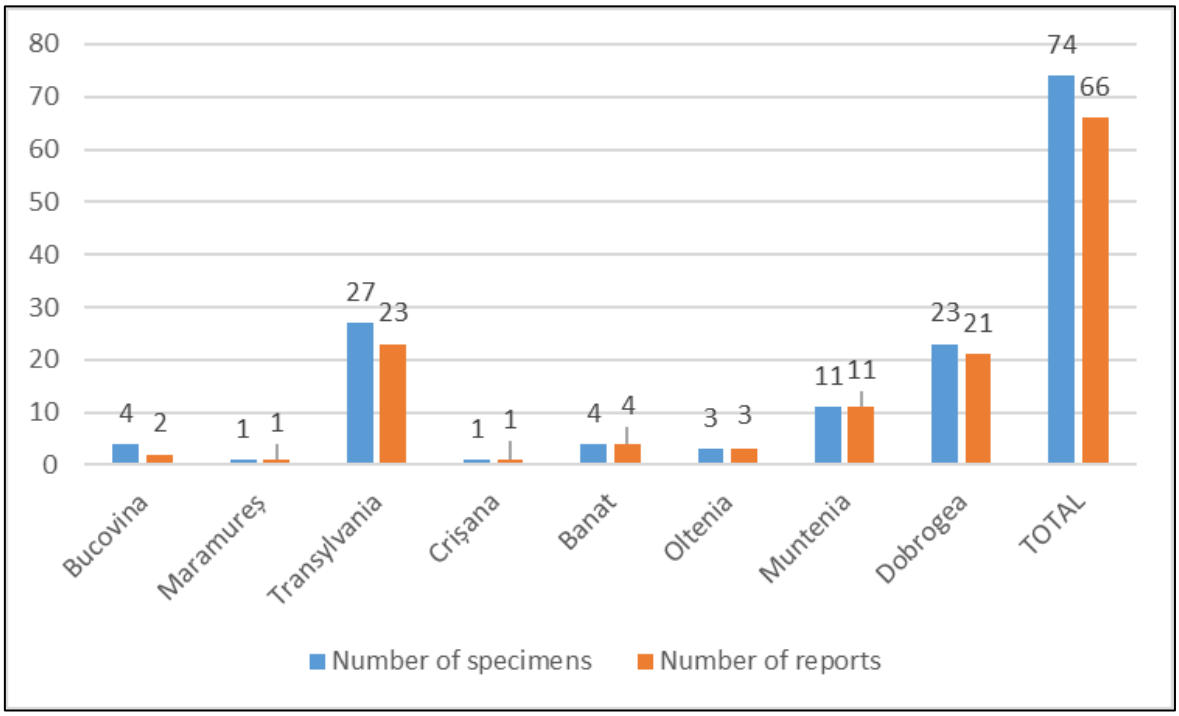


Figure 1. The graph of reports of the griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*), in Romania, on the geographical regions, in the period 2000-2024.

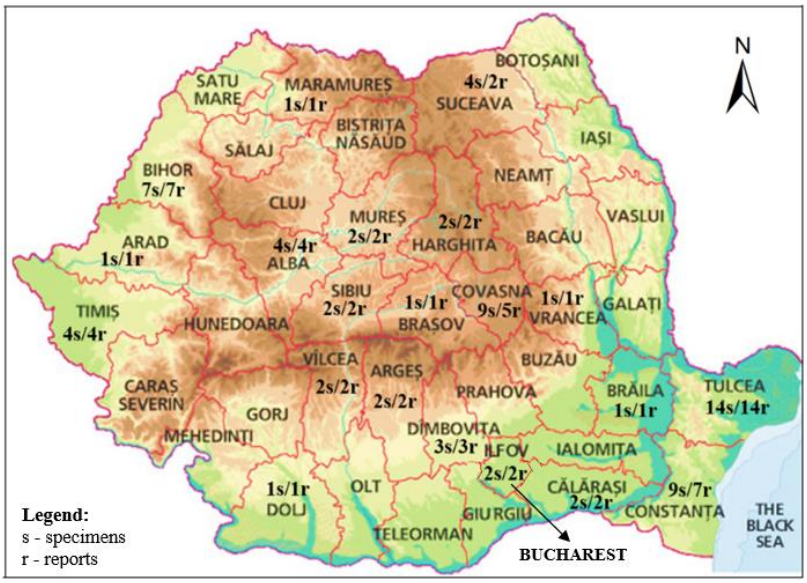


Figure 2. The Map with number of specimens of the griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*), reported in counties of Romania in the period 2000-2024. (Processing after https://www.infotravelromania.ro/harta-romania.html).

Some of the reported specimens were marked with rings/wing tags, which facilitated the knowledge of the places of origin: Croatia, Bulgaria, Serbia, Israel. In these countries, there are still cores of breeding populations that have been fortified and maintained through large-scale conservation programs/projects; some of the important known projects are those carried out by the Balkan countries in partnership with the Vulture Conservation Foundation and, in this case, we refer to the "Green Balkan" program for repopulation of the Balkans and BalkanDetox LIFE (https://4vultures.org/vultures/griffon-vulture/).

The issue of revitalizing and/or relocating populations of carrion vultures, implicitly of *Gyps fulvus*, has also been discussed in Romania, but it has remained to the project stage (KELEMEN & MERTENS, 2006, MUNTEANU, 2009). It is known that Romania is located on the northern edge of the historical distribution area of the griffon vulture (HAGEMEIJER & BLAIR, 1997; MUNTEANU, 2009), a fact that confers a certain vulnerability to the species. Therefore, a large number of factors must be effectively synchronized (area suitable for reproduction and with a rich trophic offer, appropriate legislation, consensus of local/national authorities and local communities, ecological education, national and international collaborations/NGOs, etc.) for a successful enterprise of recolonization. Each pair of griffon vulture may need a space more than 100 km$^2$, and the most recommended are the national parks that offer a high degree of protection and are large enough to support populations of this species, with sufficient wild prey or a mixture of wild prey and domestic animal carcasses (NEWTON, 1986).

From the analysis of the data recorded in the Table 2, we find that an important part of the observed/reported/caught specimens were exhausted or in poor condition - proof that they do not find sufficient food resources; implicitly, it means that the eventual spontaneous comeback or repopulation of the species finds its solution either in the existence of a natural or artificially provided trophic base; without the creation and maintenance of an adequate feeding system, under the current conditions the species cannot reoccupy its former area; therefore, it is imperative to establish in advance some locations for supplying with food resources (approved by the medical/veterinary authorities) before approaching plans for possible repopulation.

We list here other actions/practices that contribute or could ensure the success in the restoring of the *Gyps fulvus* population to safe levels (BOTHA et al., 2017; https://www.birdlife.org/news/2025/02/25; https://4vultures.org/vultures/griffon-vulture/):

- continuous monitoring of the species in the feeding areas, nesting sites (if the griffon vulture returns as a breeding species) and throughout its range;
- collection and rehabilitation of the injured birds;
- strict protection of the areas populated by vultures;
- continuous awareness campaigns among citizens/farmers/hunters about the ecological importance of the species and the economic value of the ecosystem services provided by vultures;
- strengthening of the vulture population with specimens from abroad;
- encouraging of the livestock farming using traditional methods in areas suitable for vultures; monitoring of the wind farms and discouraging of the development of wind farms in the areas where the vultures can feed;
- marking/insulating the electrical cables that cross the vulture habitats to prevent collisions – one of the solutions for the limiting of the collisions between birds and the electric wires is the installation of the special devices (diverters), reflective and coloured on the lines to increase their visibility, according to the model implemented

by the Romanian Ornithological Society with the support of the Danube Delta Biosphere Administration and the Dobrogea-Litoral Water Basin Administration (https://www.sor.ro/pasarile-si-liniile-electrice-.. /);

- campaigns to ban the veterinary drug Diclofenac and replace this harmful drug for vultures with available and non-lethal drug alternatives.

The touristic value of the vultures has to be underlined, because it will have a positive impact especially on the local economy; the enthusiasts of the nature and birdwatchers will come in the areas of relocation to see the birds and they will have need of the services of the local people, who, consequently, will be directly interested to protect them.

For the conservation of the species in Natura 2000 sites, in accordance with the EC Birds Directive, in addition to the sites indicated by BRÎNZAN et al. 2013, namely ROSPA 0073 Măcin – Niculițel (justifiably designated) and ROSPA 0078 Mlaștinile Satchinez (from which only one record is known), we propose other special avifaunal protection areas where the species was historically present and there is recent information about reappeared specimens. We list among these potential conservation sites: Cheile Bicazului – Hășmaș (ROSPA 0018), Cursul Dunării – Baziaș – Porțile de Fier (ROSPA 0026), Defileul Mureșului (ROSPA 0029 și ROSPA 0030), Delta Dunării și Complexul Razim-Sinoie (ROSPA 0031), Domogled-Valea Cernei (ROSPA 0035), Dunărea Veche – Brațul Măcin (ROSPA 0040), Munții Apuseni-Vlădeasa (ROSPA 0081), Munții Retezat (ROSPA 0084), Munții Rodnei (ROSPA 0085), Munții Trascăului (RO SPA 0087), Munții Vrancei (ROSPA 0088), Pădurea Babadag (ROSPA0091).

## CONCLUSIONS

From the analysis of the distribution over time of the records of *Gyps fulvus* in our country (the current territory) we observe that the most data were published during 1847-1960 (Table 1). From a qualitative point of view, the bibliography from this period provides us with complex information, on the one hand related to the quantitative distribution of the species in various geographical areas of the country; on the other hand, it offers aspects of the biology and ethology of this necrophagous species, rightly designated as a health worker of the environment.

During 1960-2000, the data provided are more general and scarcer, brief mentions are made with short data or without concrete data, or already published data are recalled (Table 1). In this interval, the collapse of the species and the causes of this collapse are often highlighted.

After 2000, the bibliographic sources with data on *Gyps fulvus* from our country are diversifying: scientific publications, media sources and electronic databases of Non-Governmental Organizations the country and from abroad. At the same time, there is an intensification of reports attributed to several factors: the increase in the number of the young specimens that move for food and that come from other countries, a larger number of observers equipped with adequate means of research etc. However, the species remains rare, with sporadic occurrences and low numbers of specimens, most often single and immature specimens being seen (Table 2). The most numerous observations of the species were made in Transylvania – 27 specimens / 23 reports and from Dobrogea – 23 specimens / 21 reports. The records are much more fewer in the rest of the regions: Muntenia – 11 specimens / 11 reports; Banat – 4 specimens / 4 reports, Bucovina – 4 specimens / 2 reports, Oltenia – 3 specimens / 3 reports, Crișana and Maramureș – 1 specimen / 1 report each – Figs 1, 2.

Most of the specimens observed/reported in the recent decades (the period 2000-2024) were caught/found in a state of exhaustion due to the malnutrition; we underline the fact that without the formation and maintenance of an adequate feeding system, the species cannot reoccupy its former area under the current conditions; the preliminary resolving of the issues related to the locations for supplying food resources (regulated) is a priority in the species' recovery efforts or in the potential repopulation projects.

We propose a series of practices/actions/activities (for instance, continuous monitoring and strict protection of the areas populated by vultures, rehabilitation of the injured birds; continuous awareness campaigns among citizens/farmers/hunters about the ecological importance of the species and the economic value of the ecosystem services provided by vultures, and others) that can help to revitalize and restore the *Gyps fulvus* population to safe levels; we also suggest the designation of several special avifaunal protection areas for this species, besides the two already designated SPAs (Măcin –Niculițel and Mlaștinile Satchinez), the areas proposed by us (Cheile Bicazului – Hășmaș, Cursul Dunării – Baziaș – Porțile de Fier, Defileul Mureșului, Delta Dunării și Complexul Razim-Sinoie, Domogled-Valea Cernei, Dunărea Veche – Brațul Măcin, Munții Apuseni – Vlădeasa, Munții Retezat, Munții Rodnei, Munții Trascăului, Munții Vrancei, Pădurea Babadag), being among those where the species was historically present and there is recent information about reappeared specimens. We emphasize that it is imperative to continue the observing and the monitoring of the areas preferred by *Gyps fulvus*, at the same time, continuous information of the civilian population is necessary regarding the role and the importance of this species in the ecosystems.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We express our sincere gratitude to all contributors whose records, submitted via the Rombird (Birding Romania) platform, have facilitated the compilation of the data presented in this article.
We are also deeply grateful to Mr. Szabo Joseph Junior and the entire Rombird team for their kind permission to access and utilize the data curated on the platform they manage (https://rombird.ro/).

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**Ridiche Mirela Sabina**
The Oltenia Museum, Nature Sciences Department, Popa Șapcă Street, no. 8, Craiova, Romania.
E-mail: ridichemirela@gmail.com

**Kiss J. Botond**
Danube Delta National Institute for Research and Development - Tulcea, Babadag Street, no. 165, 820112, Tulcea, Romania.
E-mail: jbkiss03@yahoo.com

**Mestecăneanu Adrian**
The Argeș County Museum, Armand Călinescu Street, no. 44, 110047, Pitești, Romania.
E-mail: mestecăneanua@yahoo.com

**Bălescu Carmen-Daniela**
University of Craiova, Faculty of Horticulture, Department of Biology and Environmental Engineering,
A.I. Cuza Street, no.13, 200585, Craiova, Romania.
E-mail: alcor3500@yahoo.com

**Petrescu Angela**
National Museum of Natural History "Grigore Antipa", Kiseleff Street, no. 1, 011341 București, Romania.
E-mail: angelap@antipa.ro

Received: April 15, 2025
Accepted: September 01, 2025