Fighting poisoning – reducing vulture (and other scavengers & predators) mortality due to the use of poison baits and lead ammunition across the Mediterranean (Mediterranean Anti-Poisoning Project - MAPP)



José Tavares Director Vulture Conservation Foundation









Objective: Decrease number of birds killed by the illegal use of poison in EU and North Africa + Hunting with lead ammunition banned in EU by 2022



Phase I Starting date – 1st June 2017 Finishing – 31st May 2020

Phase II Starting date – 1st June 2020 Finishing – 31st October 2022





Assessing vulture mortality at a continental scale The benefits of centralized and standardized data



European Vulture Mortality Database

- Europe-wide mortality database. Includes natural mortality.
- Not a public database. Developed for impact & conservation planning
- 7500 records from 25 countries, contributed by >50 organizations
- Main causes: Poisoning + collisions/electrocution
- Temporal and spatial biases
- Missing records











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MAPP project - Poison baits



- Three-pronged approach:
- Enhancing and reactivating existing structures in western Europe (Spain and Portugal), with focus on mitigating the threat in hotspots for vulture diversity
- Developing a solid and comprehensive anti-poisoning programme in the Balkans, where the first steps have already been taken but where glaring gaps still exist through the Balkan Anti-Poison Project BAPP + LIFE Balkan Detox
- Starting from low levels in north African countries, where little attention has been devoted to this matter, mainly information gathering, communication campaigns and capacity building of NGOs, government staff and laboratory experts (for toxicological analysis)





2- MOST COMMON POISONS USED IN BALKAN COUNTRIES Are they very different from the rest of the world?





Phase I - results



- Very successful BAPP project, with significant progress being made in the 5 Balkan countries (Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania, North Macedonia and Greece): development of national action plans, the establishment of national working groups & development of standard operational protocols for wildlife poisoning
- In Portugal & Spain, and building on decades of work, some further strides were also achieved: Spain - new anti-poisoning dog units were created, a lot of training organized, and several highprofile court cases reached a positive outcome; Portugal: the national Antidoto programme was successfully reactivated and firmly led by ICNF, the statutory conservation agency
- In North Africa the project has failed to achieve its objectives with the planned information gathering, communication campaigns and capacity building of NGOs, government staff and laboratory experts (for toxicological analysis) falling short of initial plans



Phase II – Poison Baits



- Phase II of the MAPP project picks up on the successes of Phase I, and consolidates them, while tries to give (again) a push to action in North Africa. It will:
- Consolidate the very successful BAPP project LIFE Balkan Detox
- Use the best practice in Spain in a more consistent and coherent way through a peer-to-peer, government to government training (Wildlife-crime Academy), where enforcement, veterinary and toxicology agencies from the Balkans, North Africa (Morocco and Tunisia), Cyprus and the Middle East (Turkey) will be trained by Spanish peers (a main focus of the Phase II project)
- Continues the implementation of site or regional anti-poisoning programmes in a series of critical sites for vultures in Spain (including Segovia, WWF's Spain main site, and home to many important vulture colonies), across the Balkans, Greece (Dadia/Thrace, the Balkan's only Cinereous vulture breeding colony, and Florina), Cyprus (isolated and threatened griffon vulture island population) and Turkey (Beypazari a stronghold for Egyptian Vultures).



Phase I – lead poisoning



Phase I of the MAPP project aimed at:

- an adopted restriction under the EU REACH regulation on chemicals on the use of lead shot on wetlands
- a new process under the EU REACH regulation on chemicals to restrict the use of lead bullets everywhere
- pilot projects testing non-lead ammunition implemented across Europe
- engaging the manufacturers of non-lead ammunition in the context of the REACH process

Three of the four objectives were met:

- **EU voted for ban on use of lead shot** (now transition period)
- The process for regulating use of lead bullets was initiated in July 2019
- Pilot projects on testing non-lead ammunition were conducted in France (3 sites), Portugal and Croatia, with very good results

But

- The contacts with the industry failed, as they were not interested to engage in the matter

Main gaps – wildlife poisoning



- Enforcement wildlife poisoning is a wildlife crime and should be treated as such by enforcement agencies
- Coordination between agencies to build robust cases importance of forensic investigation
- Judiciary follow up to end up impunity
- Research and implementation of alternative solutions to solve humanwildlife conflict – driver of most poisoning cases