

# The griffon vulture

Nature’s majestic winged scavenger



**Griffon vulture**  
(*Gyps fulvus*)

Bird of prey belonging to the Accipitridae family.

Scavenger

Wingspan: 2,4–2,8 m  
Weight: 7–12 kg

The griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*) is one of Europe’s most impressive and aerially graceful birds, which feeds exclusively on carrion.

From the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, poaching and poisoning caused its slow decline in Italy, leading to its eventual extinction – except for a small population that survived in Sardinia.

In the Central Apennines, where the species was reintroduced around 30 years ago, there are now around 70 breeding pairs. These are drawing growing numbers of wildlife lovers and nature enthusiasts to the area.

Rewilding Apennines has been working with the Carabinieri Biodiversity Department of Castel di Sangro to study and protect the griffon vulture in the Central Apennines since 2021.

## Griffon vulture calendar

| DECEMBER–JANUARY                                                                                                                                         | JANUARY–FEBRUARY                                                  | FEBRUARY–JUNE                           | JULY–SEPTEMBER                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Nest building.                                                                                                                                           | Each pair lays one egg, which is incubated for almost two months. | The chick is cared for by both parents. | The young griffon vultures are ready to leave the nest and fly into the world. |
|                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                   |                                         |                                                                                |
| Griffon vultures only reproduce when they are 4–5 years old and lay only one egg a year. This is why it is essential that the breeding season goes well! |                                                                   |                                         |                                                                                |

# Closing the circle of life

## *The griffon vulture's vital ecological role*



Griffon vultures play a key role in nature and are an iconic and ecologically important part of the Apennine landscape. As with all vulture species, which are **scavengers**, they help to remove the bodies of dead animals from the landscape and **circulate nutrients**.

They also prevent the spread of disease, save farmers money by naturally disposing of carcasses, and help to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, which would otherwise contribute to climate change.

## Griffon vultures need our help!



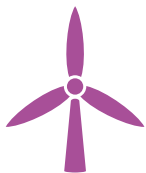
### *Poisoning*

Scavengers such as griffon vultures are highly vulnerable to **poisoned baits** left out in nature to kill predators such as wolves. They are also sensitive to some anti-inflammatory drugs intended for livestock, and to **lead poisoning** (from bullets), since they also feed on the remains of carcasses of poached animals.



### *Human disturbance*

**Loud noise and physical disturbance** can lead griffon vultures to abandon their nests. This can negatively impact breeding success and, over time, lead to reductions in colony size. We understand that viewing this species is exciting, but please maintain an appropriate distance and keep voices and music at a low level, particularly during nesting season.



### *Collision with wind turbines and power lines*

Griffon vultures mostly glide while they are in flight, which means it is very difficult for them to avoid the **blades of moving wind turbines**. They can also be electrocuted, physically injured or killed by **suspended electrical cables**.

## How can you help griffon vultures?

Educate others about the importance of vultures and the threats they face.

**Raise awareness** about their role as scavengers and their benefits for the environment and for humans.